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annual survey of trends in secondary education

report for 2005

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Local Government Association



INVESTOR IN PEOPLE



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1 About the project

1.1 Background and purpose of the research

The *Annual Survey of Trends in Education* is a unique series of questionnaire surveys which aims to provide an insight into headteachers' views on a variety of current issues in education. The survey has been conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in maintained primary schools, each year since 1994.

In 2005, the series was extended to include a questionnaire survey of maintained secondary schools. *The Survey of Trends in Secondary Education 2005*, sponsored by the Local Government Association (LGA), was the first of what is hoped will be a regular series of surveys of secondary schools. The main purpose of the surveys will be to obtain up-to-date information from headteachers and to ensure that their views are given widespread coverage as part of the continuing debate on education. The 2005 survey aimed to provide both a 'snapshot' of the current position in secondary education and also a baseline for future surveys.

Where possible, in order to enable comparison between the views of primary and secondary headteachers, the content of the 2005 secondary survey mirrored the most recent *Survey of Trends in Primary Education* (conducted in autumn 2004). The 2004 primary survey and the first survey of secondary schools comprised a number of 'barometer' questions on headteachers' main concerns and budgetary issues. Some of these questions have been included in the primary surveys since 1994 and it is envisaged that these questions will also be included in future secondary surveys to enable the comparison of headteachers' views over time. Both surveys also contained a number of questions about emerging issues in education (specifically in relation to the introduction of DfES' *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners* (DfES, 2004), *Every Child Matters* (Her Majesty's Treasury, 2003) and the *Children Act* (England and Wales Statutes, 2004).

Specific topics covered in the 2005 secondary survey included:

- headteachers' main areas of concern
- budgetary issues
- curriculum issues
- inspections
- admissions
- changes to the school year
- extended schools
- parental involvement in school issues
- LEA role in supporting school improvement
- schools' working relationships with other local authority services.

1.2 Research design

In the spring term of 2005, a questionnaire was sent to the headteacher of each maintained secondary school in England. Completed questionnaires were received from 1224 headteachers (an overall response rate of 36 per cent). Headteachers were given the option to complete the questionnaire on-line. The majority of headteachers (85 per cent of those responding) chose to complete the survey on paper.

1.3 Report structure

The report that follows presents the main research findings. It is divided into three broad chapters. Chapter 2 presents the main findings from the survey. Chapter 3 compares primary and secondary headteachers' responses to key questions contained in both the current survey of trends in secondary education and the 2004 survey of trends in primary education. Chapter 4 presents a summary of key findings.

2 Survey findings

This chapter presents the main findings from the 2005 survey of secondary headteachers. For key topic areas, headteachers' responses were compared by type of LEA, overall level of pupil attainment, proportion of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM) and school size. Findings from this further analysis are included where statistically significant differences were found.

2.1 Headteachers' main concerns

Headteachers were asked to indicate from a list of items which three issues caused them the most concern and why. As can be seen in Figure 2.1, budgets and staffing were the main sources of headteachers' concern, followed by worries about pupil behaviour.

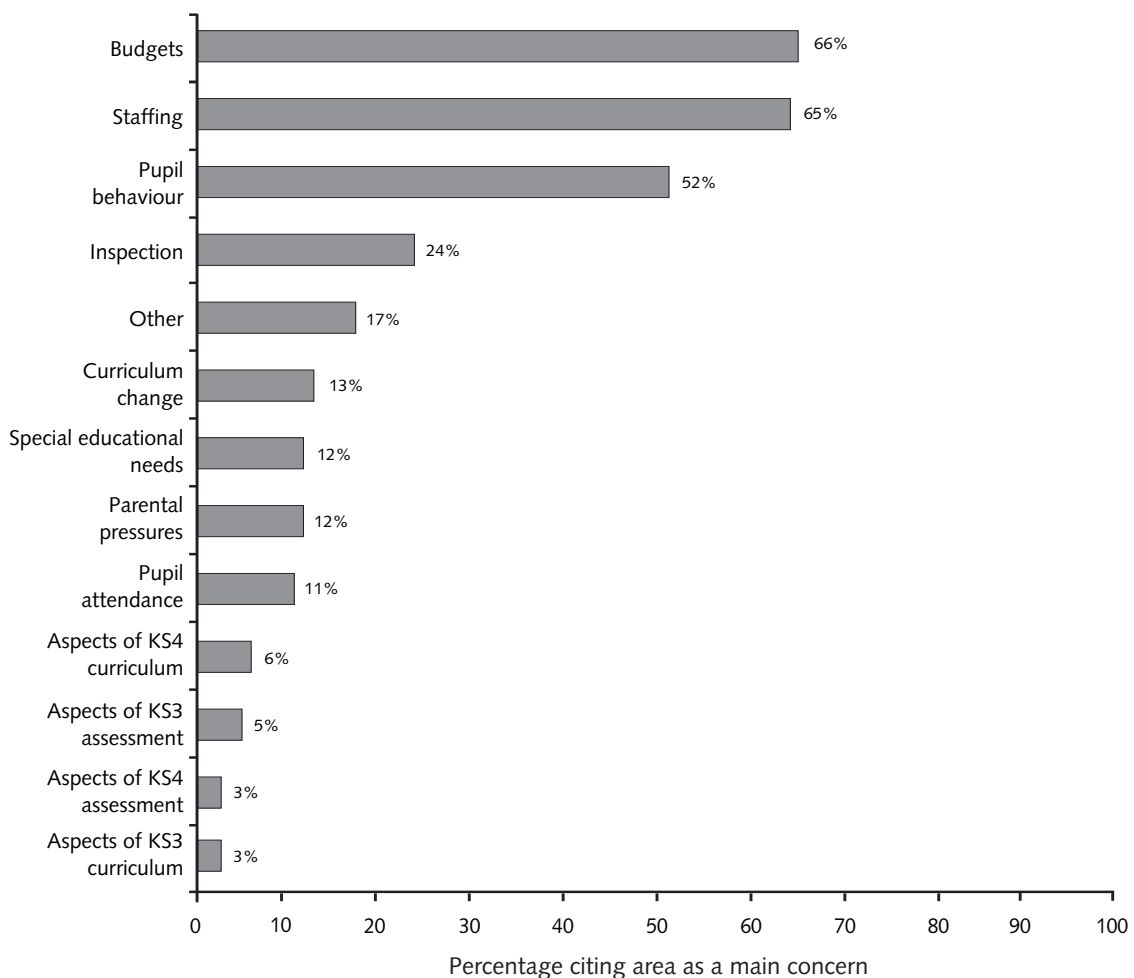
2.1.1 School budgets

The majority of headteachers (66 per cent) indicated that they were worried about their school budget. Around a third of these headteachers highlighted budget constraints as a key reason for their concern – as one headteacher described it 'infinite wants, limited resources!'

A quarter of headteachers identifying school budgets as a source of concern attributed their concerns to staffing costs. A similar proportion of headteachers cited the cost of workforce reform as a cause of their budget worries, as one headteacher explained:

Budgetary pressures are massively increasing with workforce reform, including a pressure to recruit many support staff to

Figure 2.1 Headteachers' main concerns



deliver on the government's raised expectations of removing administrative tasks from teachers....

Other commonly cited reasons for budget concerns included: being situated in a poorly funded LEA (25 per cent); uncertainty about future funding (22 per cent); facing a declining budget (15 per cent) and having to manage a budget deficit (11 per cent).

Further analysis showed that headteachers from the highest attaining band of schools were more likely to highlight budgets as a concern than headteachers from the lowest band of attaining schools (70 per cent compared to 59 per cent).

Further analysis also revealed that more headteachers from smaller schools (600 pupils or fewer) than larger schools (more than 1300 pupils) were concerned about their school budgets (75 per cent compared to 66 per cent).

2.1.2 Staffing

Staffing was a key source of concern for just under two-thirds of headteachers. The majority of these headteachers (72 per cent) reported that the key reason for their concern was difficulty in recruiting suitable teachers, as illustrated by the following comments:

Recruiting high quality staff is an issue. Despite the constant tinkering with teacher salary spines during my career, we still have difficulty attracting the best graduates and quality middle managers.

Recruiting high quality staff, at any level, remains an issue. We advertised three times for a head of year post and the best we could do was to appoint someone with 'potential'.

Other commonly cited reasons for headteachers' staffing concerns included: difficulty in retaining staff (20 per cent); the effect of workforce reform (20 per cent) and the costs of staffing (19 per cent).

Further analysis revealed that staffing was an area of particular concern to headteachers from London boroughs. Over three-quarters of headteachers from London boroughs highlighted staffing as a concern compared to over two-thirds of headteachers from unitary authorities and county authorities and just over half of headteachers from metropolitan authorities.

Further analysis also showed that the highest attaining schools were more concerned about staffing than the lowest attaining schools (75 per cent compared to 68 per cent).

2.1.3 Pupil behaviour

Overall, just over half of the headteachers responding to the survey were concerned about the behaviour of some of the pupils at their school.

In March 2005, Ofsted published a report entitled *Managing Challenging Behaviour* which gave an account of behaviour in schools based on national evidence and provided an analysis of behaviour in a range of different educational settings. Analysis of inspection judgements since 1997 showed that the proportion of secondary schools in which behaviour had been judged good or better had declined from just over three-quarters in 1997 to approximately two-thirds in 2004. The report also found that the most common form of poor behaviour was 'persistent, low-level disruption of lessons' (Ofsted, 2005).

Findings from the 2005 survey show that around a third of headteachers highlighting pupil behaviour as a source of concern felt that behaviour had deteriorated in recent years and many headteachers commented that in particular 'low-level indiscipline' was a source of concern.

Approximately a fifth of headteachers attributed worsening pupil behaviour to poor parenting and/or a lack of parental support for the school – a theme which was highlighted at the National Association of Head Teachers (NAHT) conference in 2005. At the conference, David Hart, general secretary of the NAHT, commented that:

All parents must sign up to basic standards, including respect for school staff and a recognition that violence, threats and abuse are unacceptable.

(BBC, 2005)

A headteacher responding to the 2005 survey wrote:

We have noticed increasingly challenging behaviour from students and parents who feel they can take a school on about anything, but not in a spirit of working in harmony.

Similarly, another headteacher commented, 'some parents do not support the school. They try to justify

pupil misbehaviour or defend it to prevent sanctions being taken’.

Around a fifth of the headteachers who were concerned about pupil behaviour attributed many of their concerns to the inclusion agenda, as illustrated by the following comments:

The inclusion agenda has led to a misguided perception that disruptive behaviour has to be tolerated.

Some pupils' needs are NOT best served through inclusion in mainstream. At best, we accommodate not include these pupils.

Other commonly cited reasons for concerns about pupil behaviour included the amount of staff time needed to manage behavioural issues (14 per cent) and the impact of poor behaviour on attempts to raise standards (14 per cent), as one headteacher explained:

A small minority of pupils take up a disproportionate amount of staff time and can deprive other students of their right to learn and teachers their right to teach without interruption.

Further analysis found that headteachers of lower attaining schools were most likely to be worried about pupil behaviour – 55 per cent of headteachers from the lowest band of attaining schools highlighted pupil behaviour as a major concern compared to 33 per cent of headteachers from the highest band of attaining schools.

Pupil behaviour was also an area of particular concern for headteachers from unitary and county authorities. Fifty-seven per cent of headteachers from unitary authorities and 54 per cent from county authorities indicated that they were concerned about pupil behaviour compared to 48 per cent of headteachers from metropolitan authorities and 46 per cent of headteachers from London boroughs.

2.1.4 Inspection

Just under a quarter of headteachers were concerned about school inspections. The reasons for headteachers’ concerns varied considerably. Just under half of the headteachers concerned about inspections were worried about the Government’s plans to change the way schools are inspected and around a fifth were particularly concerned about the new emphasis on

school self-evaluation. A similar proportion of headteachers, however, were concerned about the current amount of time needed to prepare for inspection (an issue which the new arrangements seek to address). Just under a quarter of headteachers highlighting inspections as an area of concern had more general worries about the effect of inspection on staff morale.

Further analysis found that overall, headteachers from London boroughs were less likely than headteachers from other types of authority to be concerned about inspections. Just under a third of headteachers from metropolitan authorities were worried about school inspections compared to around a quarter of unitary authorities, and under a fifth of headteachers from London boroughs.

2.1.5 Curriculum change

Overall, around 10 per cent of headteachers indicated that they were concerned about curriculum change. Further analysis found that more headteachers from the highest attaining schools were concerned about curriculum change than headteachers from the lowest band of attaining schools (19 per cent compared to 7 per cent).

2.1.6 Pupil attendance

Pupil attendance was highlighted as an area of concern by just over 10 per cent of headteachers. Headteachers of schools in the lowest attainment band tended to be more likely to be concerned about this issue than headteachers of schools in the highest attainment band (25 per cent compared to 2 per cent). Further analysis also revealed that pupil attendance tended to be more of a concern for headteachers of schools with the highest percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals (FSM), than for headteachers of schools with the lowest percentage of FSM (23 per cent compared to 4 per cent).

2.1.7 Other key areas of concern

Around 10 per cent of headteachers indicated that they were concerned about pressure from pupils’ parents and pupils with special educational needs. Overall, only a relatively small proportion of headteachers (around 5 per cent) were concerned about specific aspects of the curriculum and curriculum assessment.

Headteachers were given the opportunity to specify any other issues which caused them concern. Seventeen per cent of headteachers responded to this question. The most commonly cited concern was workforce reform, which was mentioned by around a quarter of headteachers who raised further issues. Other issues mentioned by a very small number of headteachers included: teachers' pay, raising attainment and LEA reform.

professional development and just over half were worried about finding available resources for staff professional development.

Headteachers' views on the administrative burden on teachers were more mixed, with just over half of secondary headteachers agreeing that this issue was a major concern. The workload of teaching assistants was a major source of concern for 30 per cent of headteachers.

2.2 Teachers in secondary schools

Headteachers were asked to what extent they agreed with a list of statements relating to staff workload and professional development (see Figure 2.2).

As can be seen in Figure 2.2, almost all headteachers agreed that the workload of senior managers was a major concern. Over 80 per cent were worried about teachers' workload and a similar proportion of headteachers were concerned about the work-life balance of the staff at their school. Around three-quarters of headteachers were concerned about finding time for teachers' and senior managers' continuing

2.3 Budgetary issues

2.3.1 Headteachers' priorities for additional funding

All headteachers were asked to indicate, from a list of items, the top three areas they would prioritise for additional funding if they were to receive a hypothetical 5 per cent increase in their school budget.

As can be seen in Figure 2.3, classroom/welfare assistants were the most commonly cited priority area for additional funding. Further analysis revealed that headteachers of schools in the lowest attainment band

Figure 2.2 Staffing issues (staff workload and professional development)

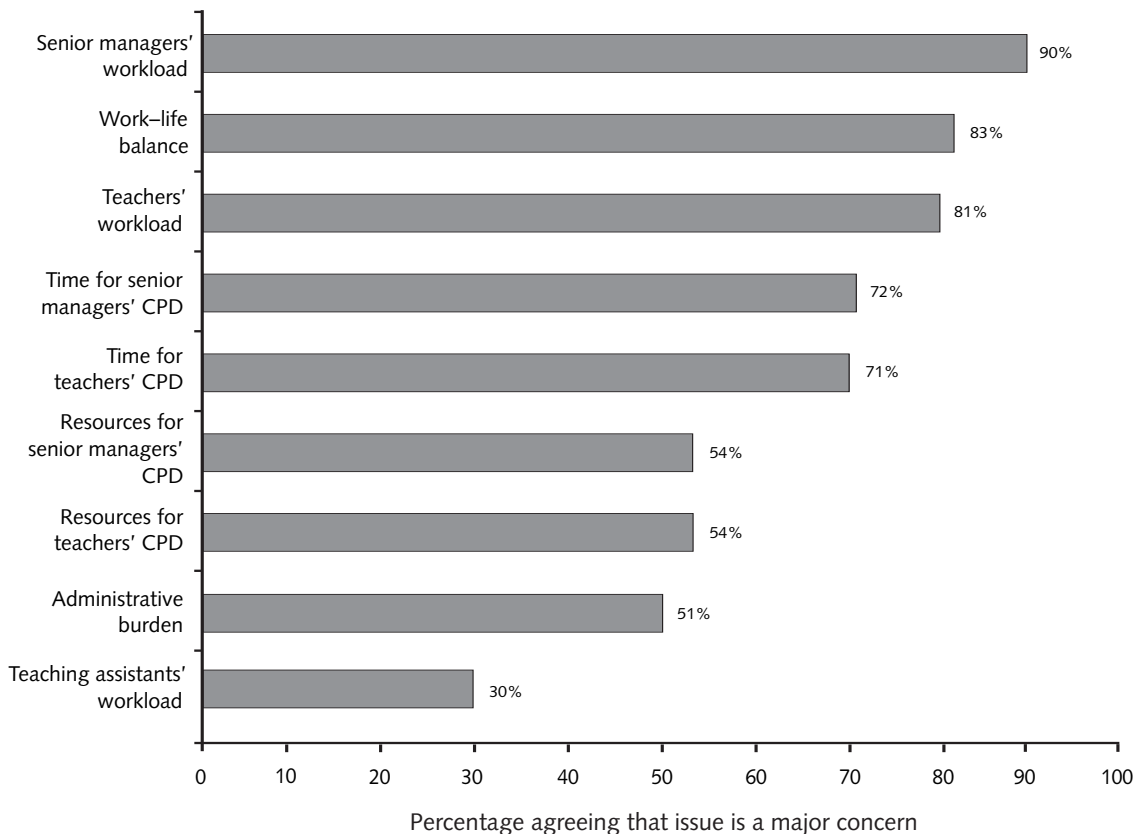
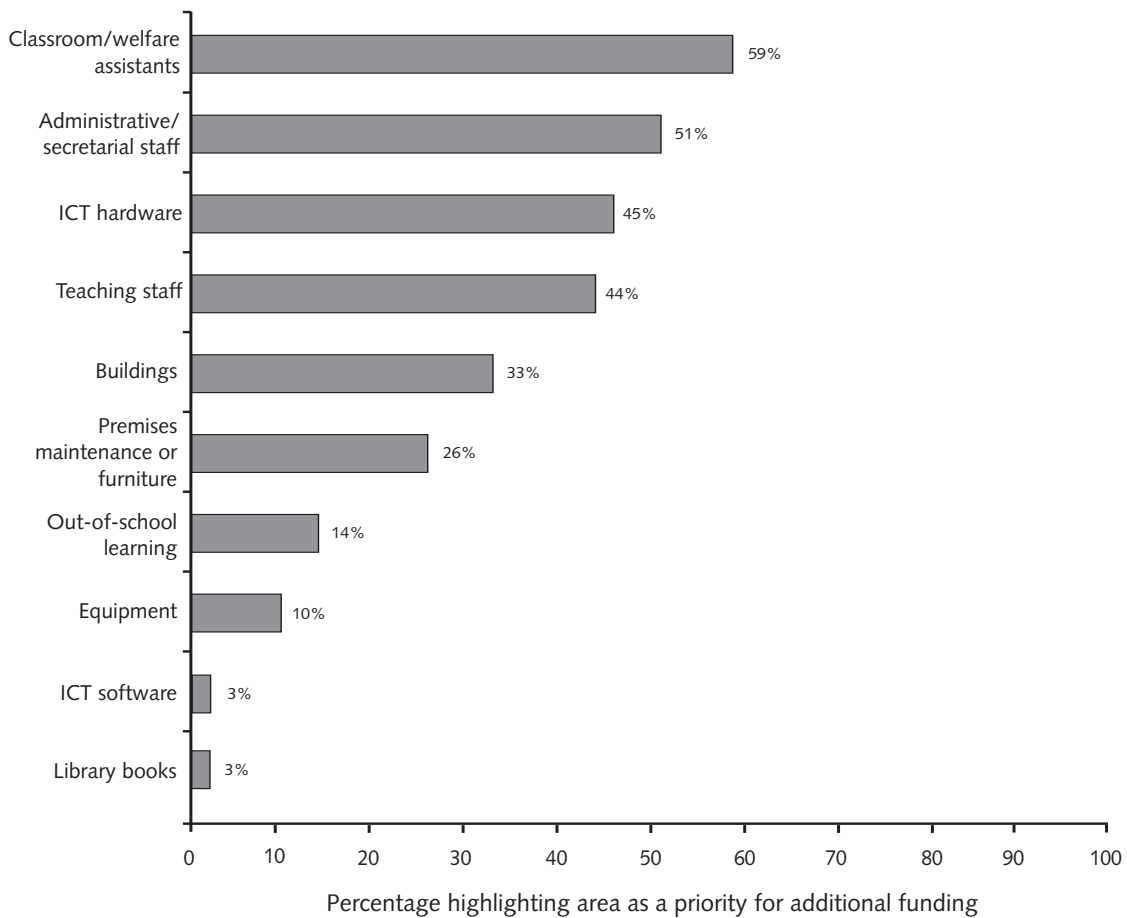


Figure 2.3 Priority areas for additional funding



and schools with the highest percentage of pupils eligible for FSM were particularly likely to prioritise this type of support staff for additional funding. For example, just over two-thirds of headteachers from schools in the lowest attainment band highlighted classroom/welfare staff as a priority, compared to around a third of headteachers from schools in the highest attainment band.

Further analysis also found that headteachers from London boroughs were the least likely to prioritise this group of staff for additional funding. Just over 40 per cent of headteachers in London said that they would prioritise classroom/welfare assistants compared to approximately 60 per cent of headteachers from unitary and county authorities and 66 per cent from metropolitan authorities.

All headteachers were given an opportunity to specify which types of classroom/welfare assistants they would prioritise for additional funding. Around a third of headteachers prioritising classroom/welfare assistants would spend additional funding on Learning Mentors and around a quarter indicated that they would want

to employ more Higher Level Teaching Assistants. Around 10 per cent would spend additional funding on cover assistants and a similar proportion would prioritise teaching assistants and behaviour support assistants.

Overall, just under half of all headteachers reported that they would spend additional funding on Information and Communications Technology (ICT) hardware. The most commonly cited types of hardware were: whiteboards (54 per cent), laptops (37 per cent), computers (18 per cent) and projectors (11 per cent). Only 3 per cent of headteachers, however, indicated that they would spend any additional funding on ICT software.

Over 40 per cent of headteachers would prioritise teaching staff for additional funding and over 30 per cent would prioritise school buildings. Further analysis showed that headteachers from the highest band of attaining schools were more likely than those from the lowest band to prioritise school buildings for additional funding (43 per cent compared to 19 per cent). Overall, maintenance work on school premises would be a priority for over 25 per cent of headteachers.

Just under 15 per cent of headteachers completing the survey would use any budget increase to fund out-of-school learning activities for pupils and around 10 per cent would spend the money on sports or music equipment. Further analysis found that headteachers from the lowest attaining schools and schools with the highest percentage of FSM were the most likely to prioritise out-of-school learning activities for pupils. For example, 25 per cent of headteachers from schools with the highest percentage of FSM highlighted out-of-school activities for pupils as a priority compared to 4 per cent of those with the lowest percentage of FSM.

Overall, only 3 per cent of headteachers indicated that they would spend additional funding on library books.

2.3.2 New school funding arrangements

Following the publication of the *Five Year Strategy*, the Government outlined plans to introduce a three-year budgetary cycle for every school from 2006. The planned changes aimed to improve security and predictability over funding. Funding would be geared to pupil numbers and schools would have an annual guaranteed minimum per pupil increase.

All headteachers were asked to comment on the implications of these planned changes for their school. The majority of headteachers (59 per cent) expected the changes to have a positive impact on their school. Just over half of these headteachers thought that the changes would lead to improved planning, as one headteacher explained:

We will be able to plan more clearly for the future and invest in young staff knowing that we will still be able to afford them in future years.

Other perceived benefits included having a clearer picture of the school's financial situation and greater security for schools.

Just over 20 per cent of headteachers thought that the proposed changes would have no impact on schools, and 16 per cent were unsure as to what impact the changes would have.

Only 4 per cent of headteachers felt that the changes would have a negative impact on schools. Around a quarter of these headteachers thought that the budgets would be inadequate and a similar proportion felt it

would be difficult to safeguard against falling rolls. Just under a fifth thought that funding needed to be fairer across the country and around 10 per cent of headteachers felt that the arrangements would have a negative effect because schools would realise how poor they would be in the future.

2.4 Changes to school inspections

In September 2005, the Government introduced a number of changes to the way schools are inspected. Key aspects of the new approach include: shorter, more frequent inspections; a reduction in the amount of time schools have to prepare for inspection and more emphasis placed on schools' own self evaluation as a starting point for inspection. These measures, in part, aim to reduce the anxiety and stress in schools caused by weeks of waiting and preparation for inspections. Whilst many of the teachers' unions welcome the shorter inspection process, a number of union representatives and members of the teaching profession are still concerned that these changes will not significantly reduce the stress of Ofsted visits for schools. As Professor Ted Wragg commented during an online discussion on the future of Ofsted, 'There is actually no way of rebranding Ofsted – it is now a general synonym for terror' (NCSL, 2005).

Representatives from a number of teachers' unions, associations, and professional bodies have been advocating a stronger role for school self evaluation in the inspection process for some time. Many recognise that schools are getting better at evaluating their own performance and that there is much good practice to draw on. However, there is some concern that this is far from the norm (The Education Network, 2004). Concerns have also been raised about the lack of opportunity for schools to be involved in formulating the criteria and methodology to apply in their self evaluations. In a document commissioned by the National Union of Teachers, Professor John MacBeath suggests 'there is a paradox in the very central issue of a 'self'-evaluation system being imposed or driven by an external source' (NUT, 2004).

Findings from the 2005 survey show that although the introduction of the new inspection arrangements was a source of anxiety for some headteachers, overall the majority of headteachers (64 per cent) felt that the new

arrangements would have a positive impact on their school. Just under half of these headteachers welcomed the new emphasis on school self evaluation and just under a third thought that schools would be more focused on continuous improvement. Approximately one-fifth of headteachers felt that the changes would help to reduce staff stress or 'the pre-inspection hysteria' as one headteacher described it.

Overall, only a minority of headteachers (around 10 per cent) thought that the new inspection arrangements would have a negative impact on schools. Just under a quarter of these headteachers thought that more frequent inspections would mean more constant pressure for schools. Other headteachers who thought that the new arrangements would have a negative impact were concerned that spot checks may actually increase stress on staff (16 per cent) and some were worried that the new style of inspection reports would lack depth (13 per cent). The same proportion of headteachers (13 per cent) felt that the inspection process would be a negative experience until Ofsted was able to convince teachers otherwise. One headteacher explained:

Until Ofsted can overcome the view of teachers that the inspection process is a highly negative experience then it will serve little to improve performance.

Six per cent of headteachers thought that the new inspection arrangements would have no impact on their school and 19 per cent were unsure about what impact the arrangements would have on schools.

2.5 Changes to admission arrangements

The Education Act 2002 (England. Statutory Instruments, 2002) required LEAs to coordinate admissions to secondary schools for entry in September 2005. All parents with children at the point of transfer were required to fill in one application form and received offers of school places at the same time, with the LEA acting as a 'clearing house'. Headteachers were asked what impact they thought this new arrangement would have on their schools.

The largest proportion of respondents (just over a third) considered that the impact was likely to be positive. Further analysis revealed that headteachers of schools with the highest percentage of pupils eligible for FSM

were significantly more likely to think that the new arrangements would have a positive impact on schools than headteachers of schools with the lowest percentage of FSM (42 per cent compared to 22 per cent).

Overall, the most common reasons given by headteachers for anticipating a positive impact were that the system would be simpler (16 per cent), it would reduce the effect of the unfair admissions criteria applied by selective schools (14 per cent) and schools would have a clearer picture of their intake (14 per cent). The following comment is typical of respondents with a broadly positive view of the new admission arrangements:

[The new arrangements] will give a clearer picture to schools on their intake and thus enable them to make decisions on curriculum and staffing levels at an earlier stage, especially in LEAs that have a large number of denominational and independent schools.

This positive view, however, was not shared by all respondents. A quarter of headteachers thought that the arrangements would have a negative impact on schools. Just over 20 per cent of these headteachers commented that coordination of admissions by the LEA was likely to be ineffective or mismanaged. Other respondents considered that the system would give schools less autonomy (18 per cent) or be less efficient (17 per cent). Smaller proportions of headteachers concentrated on the perceived impact on parents. These comments focused on potential confusion caused by the new system (9 per cent), problems caused by parents not getting their preferred school (9 per cent), the anger this might generate (7 per cent) and the larger number of appeals the new system could lead to (8 per cent). One headteacher from an LEA which had been involved in a pilot of the new arrangements commented:

The scheme offers a very much poorer service to parents (earlier deadline for submission, much later offers) with no increase in their chance of receiving an offer in a school they want, even if it works. In our area it was late, inaccurate and increased our workload massively. Parents are more angry and upset than they have ever been. The whole scheme was a sledgehammer of centralised administration to crack a small nut of insisting that all admissions authorities cooperated with each other.

Twenty-two per cent of headteachers thought that the changes to admission arrangements would have no

impact and 17 per cent were unsure as to what impact the changes would have.

2.6 Changes to the pattern of the school year

In recent years, there has been considerable interest in the organisation of the school year. In 1999, the LGA set up an Independent Commission on the Organisation of the School Year (Price, 2000). The Commission concluded that there was a need to reform the school year and decided in favour of a six-term year with:

- more regular term lengths
- a fixed spring and summer term (irrespective of the date of Easter)
- an extended break in the middle of the current autumn term.

The decision was taken to refer to the proposed changes as the 'standard school year'. It was hoped that these changes would lead to three main benefits: a reduction in pupil and teacher stress; a reduction in social exclusion, especially in relation to easing transition from school to higher education; and a smoother process of learning, assessment and transfer.

In September 2004, it was reported that 13 authorities would be introducing a number of the proposals from that date (BBC, 2004). A number of other local education authorities have undertaken consultations on the issue and the out-comes have been put to members for decision making.

The LGA wanted to explore headteachers' knowledge and perceptions of the proposed changes at the time of the survey.

Over three-quarters of secondary headteachers had received information about the proposed changes to the school year. The majority of these headteachers (80 per cent) had been sent information from their LEA, just over half had read information in the press and just over a third had received information from one of the teachers' unions.

The survey asked headteachers to indicate whether their LEA planned to adopt the proposed changes to the

school year and, if so, whether they would fully or partially adopt the plans.

As can be seen in Table 2.1, only a small percentage of schools had fully or partially adopted the changes from September 2004 and only 3 per cent thought their LEA was planning to fully adopt the proposals from September 2005. Just under a third of headteachers stated that their LEA had no plans to introduce the Standard School Year proposals. Forty per cent did not know what their LEA plans were for the future.

Table 2.1 Adoption of proposed changes to the school year

Changes to the school year	Percentage
Fully adopted from September 2004	6
Partially adopted from September 2004	11
Plan to fully adopt from September 2005	3
Plan to partially adopt from September 2005	11
LEA has no plans to introduce proposals	31
Don't know LEA plans	40

N = 1224

More than one answer could be given so percentages do not sum to 100

Headteachers were asked for their views on the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed changes to the school year. The most commonly cited advantages were: more even term lengths (21 per cent); a better balance to the school year (21 per cent); easier to plan the curriculum (18 per cent) and a reduction of teacher fatigue (13 per cent).

Headteachers of the small number of schools which had already fully introduced a standard school year also perceived the main advantages to be more even term lengths and a better balance to the school year, as one headteacher stated:

It's much more even and less prone to pressures of very short/very long terms. The fixed Easter break is very welcome and two weeks in October is also appreciated.

However, just under 20 per cent of these headteachers could not see any advantages having introduced the changes.

Around a third of headteachers did not respond to the question asking about views on the main disadvantages of the standard school year proposals. The most commonly cited disadvantage amongst those who did respond was the shorter summer break (12 per cent).

2.7 Involving parents in school life

As part of the policy direction in education towards greater coordination of services, the *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners* (DfES, 2004) indicated that parents should be part of a partnership of schools, employers, volunteers and voluntary organisations aiming 'to maximise the life chances of children, young people and adults'. In particular, it argued for 'schools at the heart of their communities, working closely with parents to support children'.

Respondents were asked to indicate which strategies were used in their school for involving parents in school life. Figure 2.4 shows the range of different strategies used by schools.

As can be seen in Figure 2.4, schools employed a broad range of strategies to involve parents in school life: only two of the eight strategies suggested were used by fewer than 50 per cent of respondents. Further analysis found that the highest attaining schools were more likely than the lowest attaining schools to have an active Parent Teacher Association (PTA) in place (88 per cent compared to 38 per cent) and to involve parents via their school website (95 per cent compared to 70 per cent).

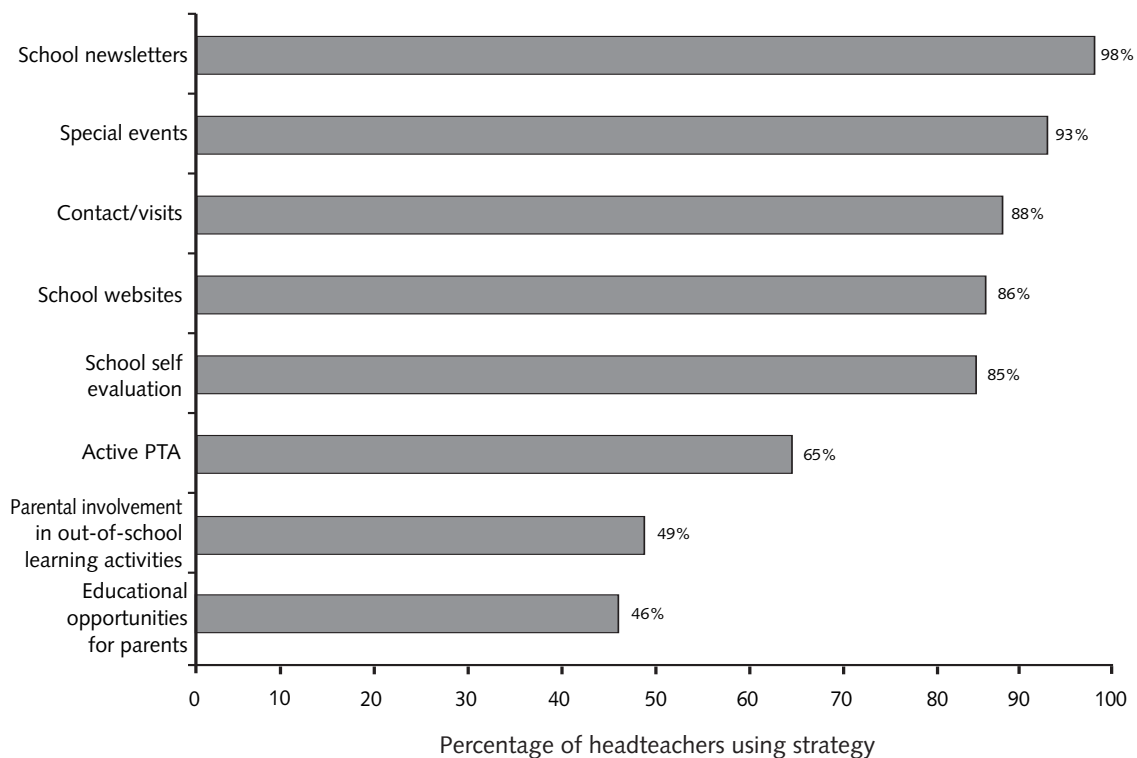
All headteachers were given the opportunity to specify other strategies their school had in place. Thirteen per cent of headteachers responded to this question. Amongst these responses, the most commonly cited strategies included parents' forums or focus groups (16 per cent) and the involvement of parents in target setting (12 per cent).

Headteachers were also asked what they felt were the most effective ways of involving parents in school life. The largest proportion of respondents considered that meetings to gain the views of parents on particular issues were effective (15 per cent), as one headteacher explained:

Most effective way we have found to date is by inviting parents to a target setting/review with an individual teacher by appointment, the times available being from 12.30pm-6pm – resulting in high turnout (89% years 7-10) and much easier follow-up even with hard to contact parents.

Other headteachers felt that newsletters (13 per cent), invitations to specific activities involving their children (12 per cent) and parents' evenings (11 per cent) were effective. Similar proportions of respondents offered more generalised principles for involving parents such as engaging their interest via their children (10 per cent) and ensuring there is an open door policy (8 per cent).

Figure 2.4 Strategies for involving parents in school life



When respondents were asked to identify the barriers to greater parental involvement, just under two-thirds (62 per cent) stated that the key obstacles were parents' work commitments, parental apathy and time restraints.

In particular, some headteachers' comments referred to the difficulties in arranging mutually convenient times for parents and teachers to meet:

[There is a] mismatch between expectations of parents that teachers will be available out-of-school hours to run events, workshops etc, and staff work-life balance agenda. You would not expect to see a solicitor at 7pm, so why a teacher? No less a professional.

Other barriers to greater parental involvement mentioned by headteachers included: parents' own negative school experience (16 per cent), children's reluctance for parents to come to school (8 per cent) and transport difficulties (6 per cent).

It is worth noting that some headteachers contested the view that increasing parental involvement was, in fact, either desirable or necessary, as illustrated by the following comments:

When parents are relatively happy with a school, they tend to leave schools just to get on with things.

It is not a desirable end in itself. Schools are for young people. The question should be about what is appropriate involvement by parents in school life. It is about their involvement reinforcing their child's activities, achievements and successes and in partnership with the teachers to help their child achieve.

2.8 Extended schools

Many schools offer a range of services that extend beyond the school day, for example after-school clubs, study support, arts and sports activities. The DfES wants more schools to develop extended services for pupils, their family and the local community. The Government's *Five Year Strategy for Children and Learners*, published in 2004, outlined plans for every secondary school to provide a core offer of study support activities, widespread community use of the school's facilities and family learning activities. There have also been funding initiatives such as the *Extended Schools Pathfinder Initiative* (2002-2003)

which has helped develop and disseminate good practice. The DfES prospectus, *Extended Schools: Access to Opportunities and Services for All* (DfES, 2005) contains further information on the Government's vision for extended schools and states that all schools, including special schools, will be expected to offer extended services by 2010.

Respondents were asked for details of the extended services which are currently provided on the school premises, whether there are plans to develop the range of services and what, if any, obstacles exist in developing them. Figure 2.5 shows the services which respondents reported are currently being offered at their schools.

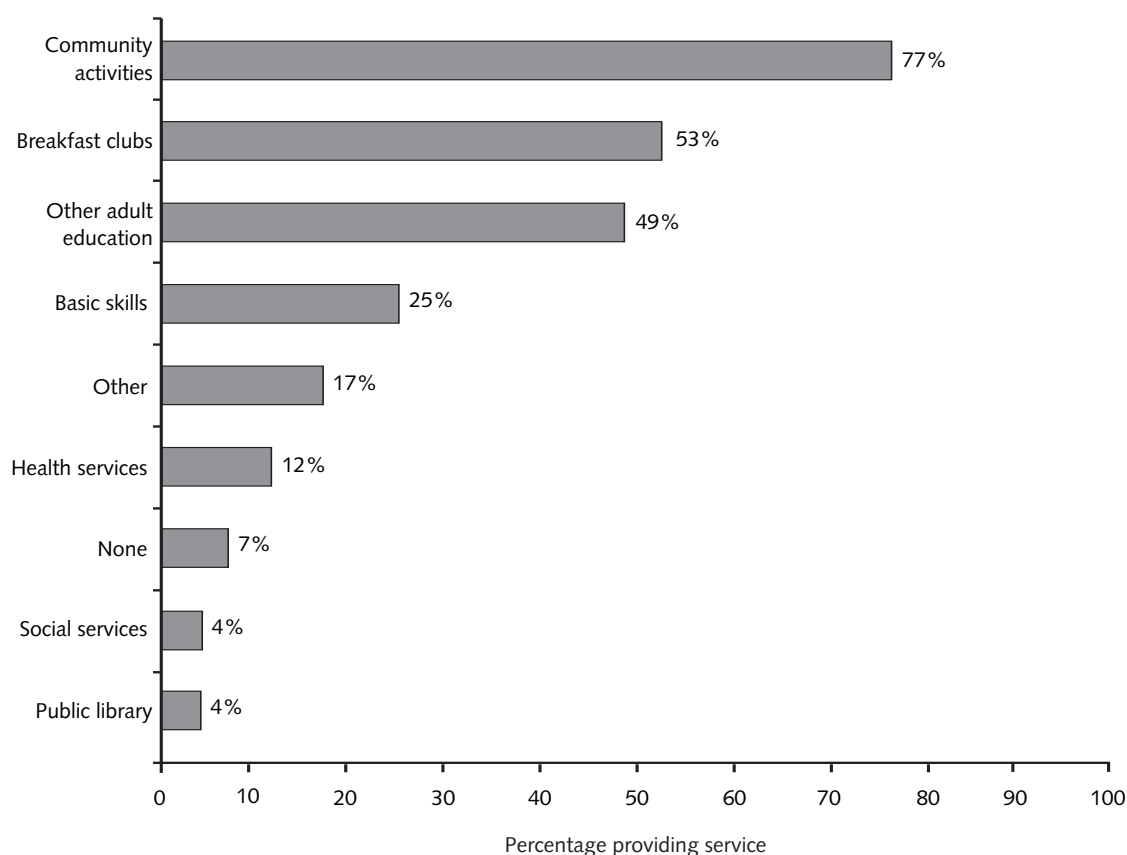
The vast majority of respondents (92 per cent) reported that their school already offered some kind of extended service. Over three-quarters of headteachers reported that their school premises were used for community activities. Of these schools, by far the largest proportion offered sporting facilities (61 per cent). Other commonly cited community activities included: drama (11 per cent), ICT (8 per cent) and music groups (7 per cent).

Just over half of headteachers reported that their school provided a breakfast club and a similar proportion allowed their school to be used for adult education classes. Basic skills classes were offered in a quarter of schools.

Only a relatively small proportion of schools provided health and social services on site (12 per cent and 4 per cent respectively).

Findings suggest that extended services were more likely to be provided in the lowest-attaining schools and in schools with the highest percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals. For example, over three-quarters of headteachers of schools with the highest percentage of FSM provided breakfast clubs, compared to a third of schools with the lowest percentage of FSM. Schools with the highest percentage of FSM were also more likely than schools with the lowest percentage to provide: adult basic skills classes (35 per cent compared to 7 per cent), health services (19 per cent compared to 2 per cent) and social services (10 per cent compared to 1 per cent). Similar differences were found between headteachers of schools in the lowest and the highest attaining bands.

Figure 2.5 Extended services currently provided on school premises



Headteachers were invited to specify any other types of service provided on school premises. Seventeen per cent of headteachers responded to this question. The vast majority of these responses (just under 70 per cent) related to provision for children and young people in addition to mainstream education. These included child care and playgroups, summer schools, children's clubs and young people's services such as Connexions. Other types of provision included either parenting or family learning classes (7 per cent), meeting/training facilities for LEA staff, parish councillors or local business people (6 per cent) and police services (5 per cent).

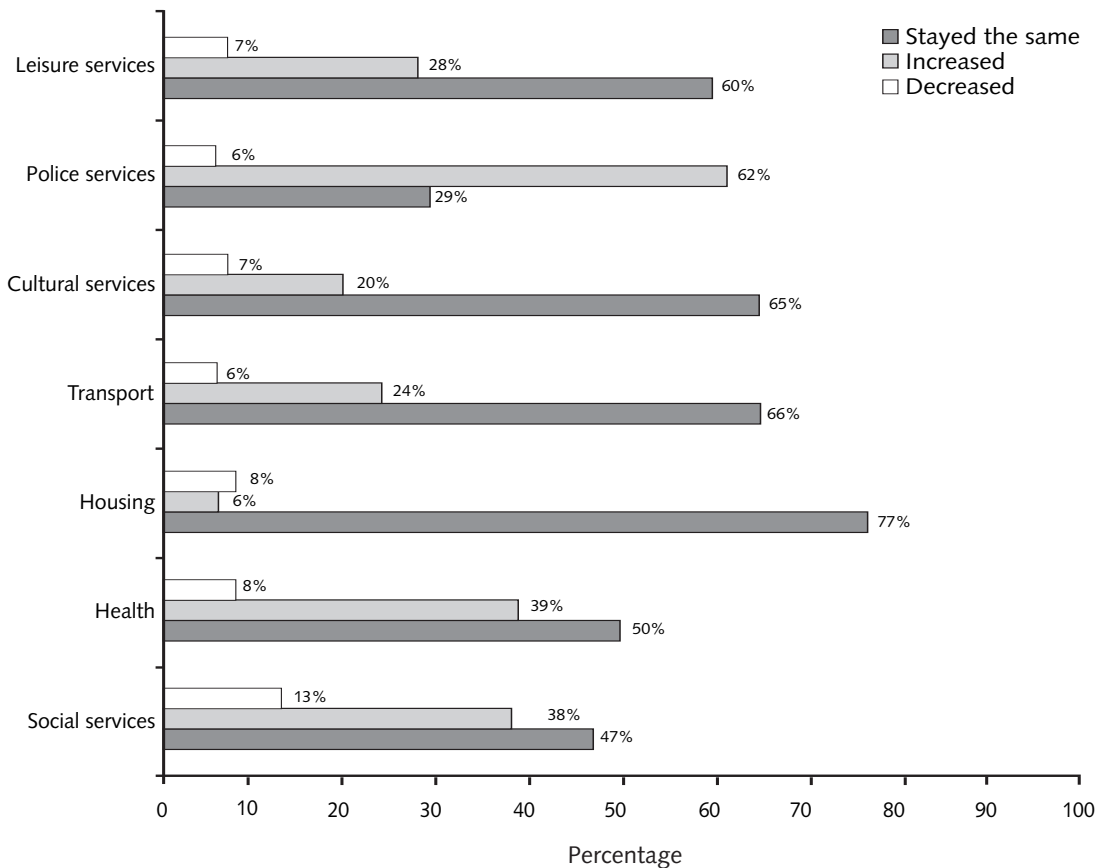
Two-thirds of headteachers reported that they were planning to develop the range of services available to pupils, families and the wider community on their school premises. More headteachers from the lowest attaining schools than the highest attaining schools reported that they were planning to develop the range of services available to pupils and families in the future (79 per cent compared to 51 per cent). Around three-quarters of headteachers of schools in the highest FSM percentage band were planning to develop the services provided on school premises in the future, compared to less than half of schools within the lowest percentage band.

Amongst the headteachers planning to develop their range of services, the largest proportion (18 per cent) was planning to develop services in line with the specialist status of the school. Thirteen per cent wanted to develop services in community/family learning or adult education and a similar proportion were moving towards Full Service Extended School (FSES) status. Ten per cent of headteachers planned to develop their schools' sporting facilities (in some instances in association with the Sport for All initiative). Smaller proportions of headteachers (ranging from 6 to 9 per cent) were planning to develop health, ICT or arts facilities.

Amongst those not planning to develop their range of services, the largest proportions of comments related either to a lack of funds, a lack of space or to the importance of other priorities. The following are typical of comments given:

We would like to enhance this element of the school's work but we are inhibited as a semi-rural community in a socio-economically deprived area. There are significant hidden costs that are transport driven and there are cultural issues in some villages.

Figure 2.6 Contact between schools and local authority services



Antiquated buildings, erected for a 1950s' secondary modern, do not lend themselves readily to the kind of open access one would ideally wish to see.

All respondents were invited to comment on the perceived barriers to developing extended services within their schools: 43 per cent of comments related to budgetary matters, such as a perceived lack of sustainability in funding. For example, one headteacher commented:

Everything we have done as a Community School has been self-funded through grants and charges. We have a successful Activities Club each day from 3.30 to 6.00 and all day in every holiday – but it loses money. If I closed it and started up a new one I could get a short-term grant but I cannot get funding for its continued use.

A quarter of comments related to lack of space and just over 10 per cent referred to either staffing implications or to a lack of time in which to develop services further. One headteacher described the barrier to extending services:

Finding staff willing to be involved and take on an interest in developing these areas when they are already working to capacity in their current posts.

Another headteacher commented:

I am apprehensive that the new approach to 'joined up services' is going to increase my responsibilities significantly. I am passionate about education and ensuring the best offer possible for pupils. I am wary of extending my remit.

2.9 Working with other services

The publication of *Every Child Matters* (Her Majesty's Treasury, 2003) exemplified the Government policy of increased alignment and coordination of the work of agencies which have traditionally provided discrete services for young people. Different models of multi-agency working have since been developed. However, as a recent Ofsted report (Ofsted, 2005) shows, coordination of services by LEAs is still inconsistent. To establish more detail about the coordination of these services, respondents were asked about whether contact between their school and a range of local authority services had increased, decreased or stayed the same during the past three years (see Figure 2.6). Headteachers were also asked to comment on the nature of any changes and any implications this had for their school.

Overall, the majority of headteachers (62 per cent) felt that contact between their school and the police had increased over the last three years. Headteachers from the lowest-attaining schools, and schools with the highest percentage of pupils eligible for FSMs, were most likely to report an increase in contact between their school and the police service. Seventy per cent of headteachers from the lowest attaining schools reported an increase in contact compared to 52 per cent of headteachers in the highest attaining schools. Contact with the police service was reported to have increased by 70 per cent of headteachers from schools with the highest percentage of FSM compared to 43 per cent of headteachers with the lowest number of pupils eligible for FSM.

The most commonly cited response in relation to each of the remaining services was that the degree of contact had 'remained the same'.

Overall, the reasons for any reported changes in contact with services varied considerably. One of the largest proportions of comments (10 per cent) referred to the greater tendency in local government for alignment of services and indicated that in many cases schools had developed into proactive, multi-agency collaborators. One headteacher explained:

We have more frequent (and better organised) multi-agency meetings to support individual pupils. I am now involved as a headteacher representative on three LEA bodies and my involvement with other agencies has increased, as a result. All other agencies have become more proactive in seeking our views and assistance, and this is warmly welcomed by the school.

The same proportion of respondents (10 per cent) attributed the change to the nature of the pupils and families they worked with. A slightly smaller proportion (7 per cent) made the more specific point that there was more contact with social services due to increased family difficulties.

There are increasingly high numbers of pupils from dislocated families, high number from traveller community, and decrease in respect for authority. With school being the most regular contact with authority for so many of these families we become the brunt of their frustrations.

Reasons for increased contact with the police included: having a good relationship with a community police

officer; police officers being proactive in resolving community issues; more crime within school and having a school-based police officer on site. One headteacher commented 'the Community Liaison role is a real help. It increases our feeling of security and the behaviour of pupils in the local area'.

Headteachers were also asked to describe the implications of any changes in contact with services for their school. Fifty-three per cent of headteachers responded to this question. The most commonly cited implications included: increased demands on headteachers' time, and more administration, phone calls, meetings and case conferences.

2.10 LEA support for school improvement

One of the aims of the survey was to explore headteachers' perceptions of using LEA support for school improvement. Headteachers were asked to rate, from a given list of items, how good the support from their LEA was in helping to improve their school. Table 2.2 reports the findings.

Overall, the majority of headteachers indicated that LEA support for school improvement was either *good* or *excellent*. Over 80 per cent of headteachers rated their LEA as *excellent* or *good* as a data provider and over 60 per cent as an *excellent* or *good* critical friend. Responses in relation to LEA leadership were more mixed with around 50 per cent of headteachers describing their LEA as *not very good* or *poor* at providing leadership.

Responses from headteachers in county and metropolitan authorities were particularly positive in relation to LEA provision of data and training, and more headteachers from metropolitan authorities than from other types of authority described their LEA as *excellent* or *good* at providing leadership (see Table 2.3).

Further analysis also revealed that, overall, headteachers from the lowest band of attaining schools were more likely than headteachers of schools in the highest band to rate their LEA as *good* or *excellent* at providing training (63 per cent compared to 41 per cent), advice on budget setting (61 per cent compared to 40 per cent), and leadership (56 per cent compared to 38 per cent).

Table 2.2 LEA support for school improvement

LEA support	Excellent %	Good %	Not very good %	Poor %	Not applicable %	No response %
Data provider	25	57	13	4	<1	1
Training provider	3	51	32	12	<1	2
Advice on budgets	8	43	27	14	7	2
Leadership	5	42	34	16	<2	2
Service as whole	4	52	31	10	1	3
Good practice	5	47	34	12	<1	2
Critical friend	9	53	25	10	1	2

N = 1224

*A series of single response questions
Due to rounding percentages may not sum to 100*

Headteachers' views on LEA support also differed according to school size, with a higher percentage of headteachers from the smallest schools, than headteachers from larger schools rating their LEA's advice on budgets as *good* or *excellent* (64 per cent compared to 51 per cent for schools as a whole). Headteachers of schools with 600 pupils or fewer were also more likely to rate their LEA advisory service as a whole as *good* or *excellent* (66 per cent compared to 49 per cent of headteachers from schools with over 1300 pupils).

Overall, just under 10 per cent of headteachers indicated that they received other types of support from their LEA. The most commonly cited other type of support was personnel services (18 headteachers), followed by support with pupil behaviour (8 headteachers). Almost all of the headteachers mentioning personnel services described this type of service as *good* or *excellent*, but all of the headteachers who mentioned receiving behaviour support from their LEA described this support as *poor*.

Headteachers were asked an open ended question about which type of LEA support they found most useful in relation to school improvement. Provision of data was the most frequently mentioned type of support (20 per cent) followed by support for advisors (12 per cent).

When asked to specify what further support they would like from their LEA, headteachers mentioned budget support (9 per cent), training and professional development (6 per cent) and more support from advisors with relevant experience (5 per cent). Thirty-eight per cent of respondents did not answer the question.

Table 2.3 Percentage of headteachers describing LEA service as good or excellent by type of authority

LEA service	London borough %	Metro-politan authorities %	English unitary authorities %	County authorities %
Data provider	74	80	75	86
Training provider	45	59	39	59
Advice on budget	45	54	47	53
Leadership	46	56	35	46
Service as a whole	49	58	45	59
Good practice	46	56	43	52
Critical friend	54	64	62	64
Nothing rated as good or excellent	9	5	8	4
N=	138	259	173	654

Series of single response questions.

3 Comparison with 2004 annual survey of trends in primary education

The NFER has carried out an annual survey of trends in primary schools each year since 1994. The most recent primary survey was completed by headteachers in autumn 2004. Completed questionnaires were received from 413 primary headteachers (an overall response rate of 52 per cent). It was decided that, where possible, in order to enable comparison between the views of primary and secondary headteachers, the content of the first survey of trends in secondary education would mirror the most recent survey of trends in primary schools.

Both surveys included questions on the following topic areas:

- headteachers' main concerns
- staffing issues
- priority areas for additional funding
- extended schools

- involving parents
- LEA support for school improvement.

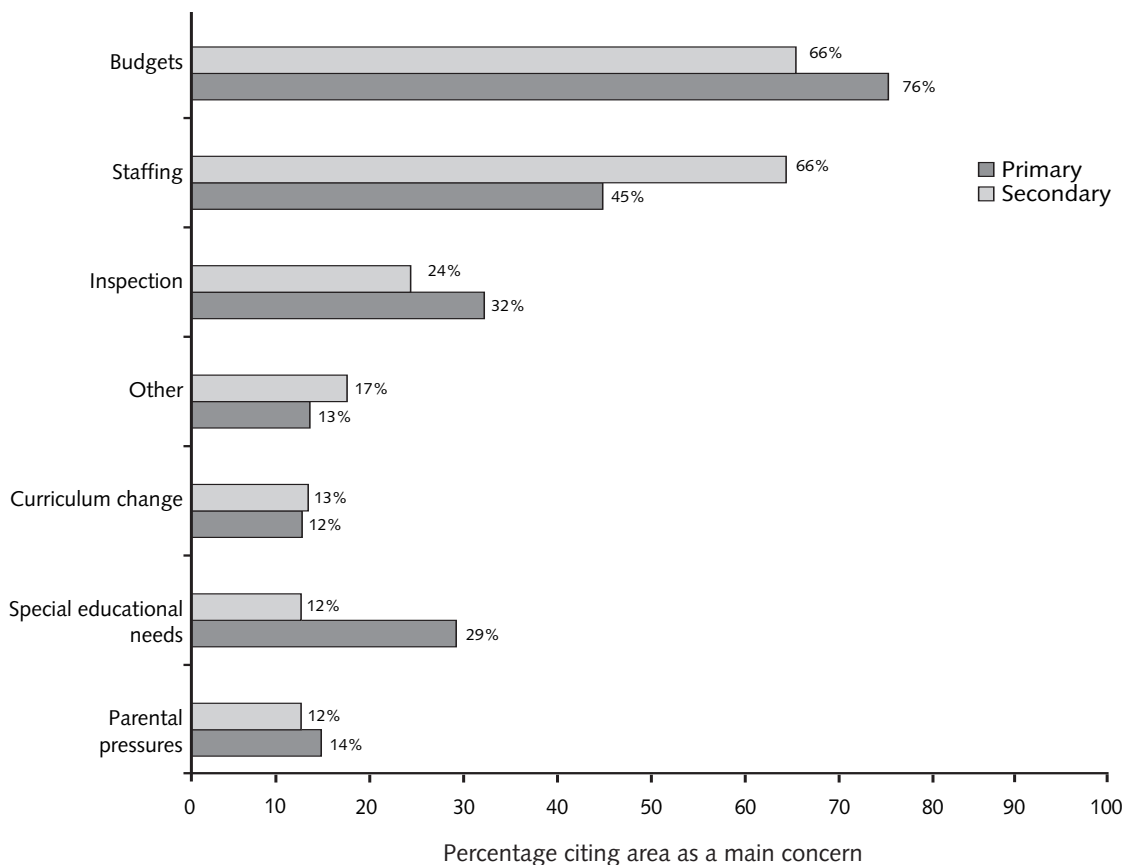
This chapter aims to give a general indication of variations in patterns of response. It should be noted that tests of statistical significance have not been conducted.

3.1 Headteachers' main concern

Figure 3.1 shows that school budgets were the top concern for both primary and secondary headteachers, although a higher proportion of primary headteachers highlighted it as a source of concern than secondary headteachers.

Secondary headteachers were more likely than primary headteachers to identify staffing issues as a source of concern.

Figure 3.1 Comparison of primary and secondary headteachers' main concerns



Special educational needs (SEN) was an area of particular concern to primary headteachers – over twice the proportion of primary headteachers, compared to secondary headteachers highlighted this as an area of concern.

The most commonly cited ‘other’ main concern for both primary and secondary headteachers was workforce reform.

3.2 Staffing issues

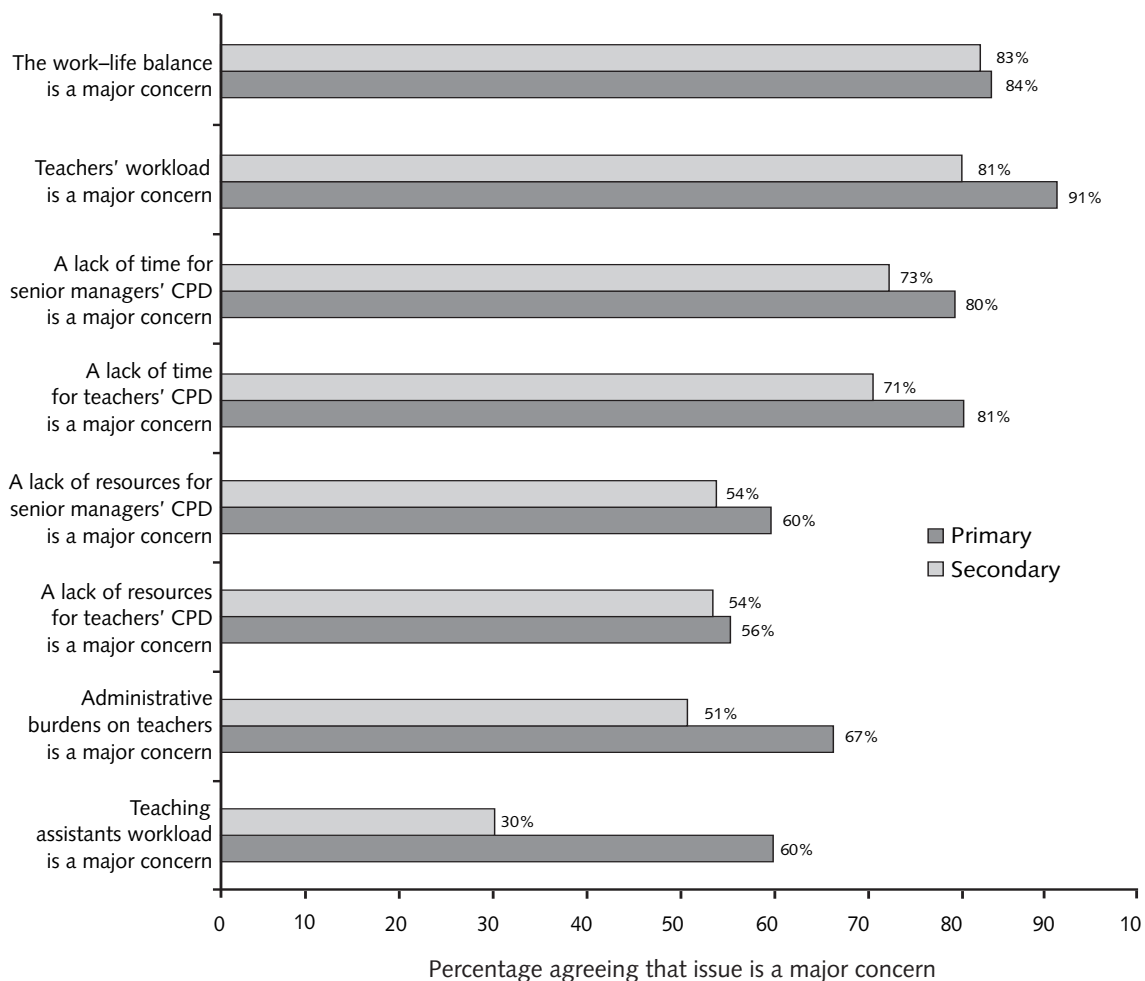
Both primary and secondary headteachers were asked to what extent they agreed with a range of statements relating to staffing issues. Figure 3.2 shows the proportion of respondents in both surveys who *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with each statement.

A larger proportion of primary headteachers than secondary headteachers *agreed* or *strongly agreed* with each statement.

Over 80 per cent of secondary headteachers and over 90 per cent of primary headteachers were concerned about teachers’ workload. The majority of both primary and secondary headteachers were also concerned about the work–life balance of staff at their school and finding time and resources for teachers’ and senior managers’ professional development.

The difference between primary and secondary headteachers’ views was most marked with regard to concerns about the administrative burden on teachers and the workload of teaching assistants. Just over two-thirds of primary headteachers agreed that the administrative burden on teachers was a major concern compared to approximately half of secondary headteachers. Primary headteachers were also more likely to be worried about teaching assistants’ workload – 60 per cent of primary headteachers agreed that this was an area of concern compared to just 30 per cent of secondary headteachers.

Figure 3.2 Comparison of primary and secondary headteachers’ views on staffing issues



3.3 Priority areas for additional funding

Both primary and secondary headteachers were asked to indicate, from a list, the top three areas they would prioritise for additional funding, if they were to receive a hypothetical five per cent budget increase.

As can be seen in Figure 3.3, secondary headteachers were more likely than primary headteachers to prioritise administrative staff and school buildings. A higher proportion of primary headteachers than secondary headteachers would spend additional funding on employing more teaching staff and classroom/welfare assistants.

3.4 Extended schools

Both primary and secondary headteachers were asked to indicate, from a given list of services and activities, those that they provided on site (see section 2.8). Findings suggest that more secondary schools than primary schools provided breakfast clubs (53 per cent compared to 31 per cent) and allowed their facilities to be used for community activities (77 per cent compared to 48 per cent).

Primary and secondary headteachers were also asked whether they planned to develop the range of services offered on site and whether they felt there were any barriers to this. Just over half of primary respondents, compared to around two-thirds of secondary respondents reported that they were planning to develop the range of services. The most commonly cited barriers to extending services in both the primary and secondary survey were lack of space, financial constraints and staffing issues.

3.5 Involving parents

Figure 3.4 shows the variations in response to the question asked in both surveys 'what mechanisms are in place for involving parents in school life?' Whilst the responses are very similar as regards some mechanisms, such as school newsletters and the organisation of special events, there are some marked differences. For example, the findings suggest that there is more of an emphasis in primary schools upon encouraging parental involvement in out-of-school learning activities and informal contact with the school, perhaps by having an 'open door' policy. Furthermore, a larger proportion of primary respondents indicated that having an active PTA helped to increase parental involvement.

Figure 3.3 Comparison of primary and secondary headteachers' priorities for additional funding

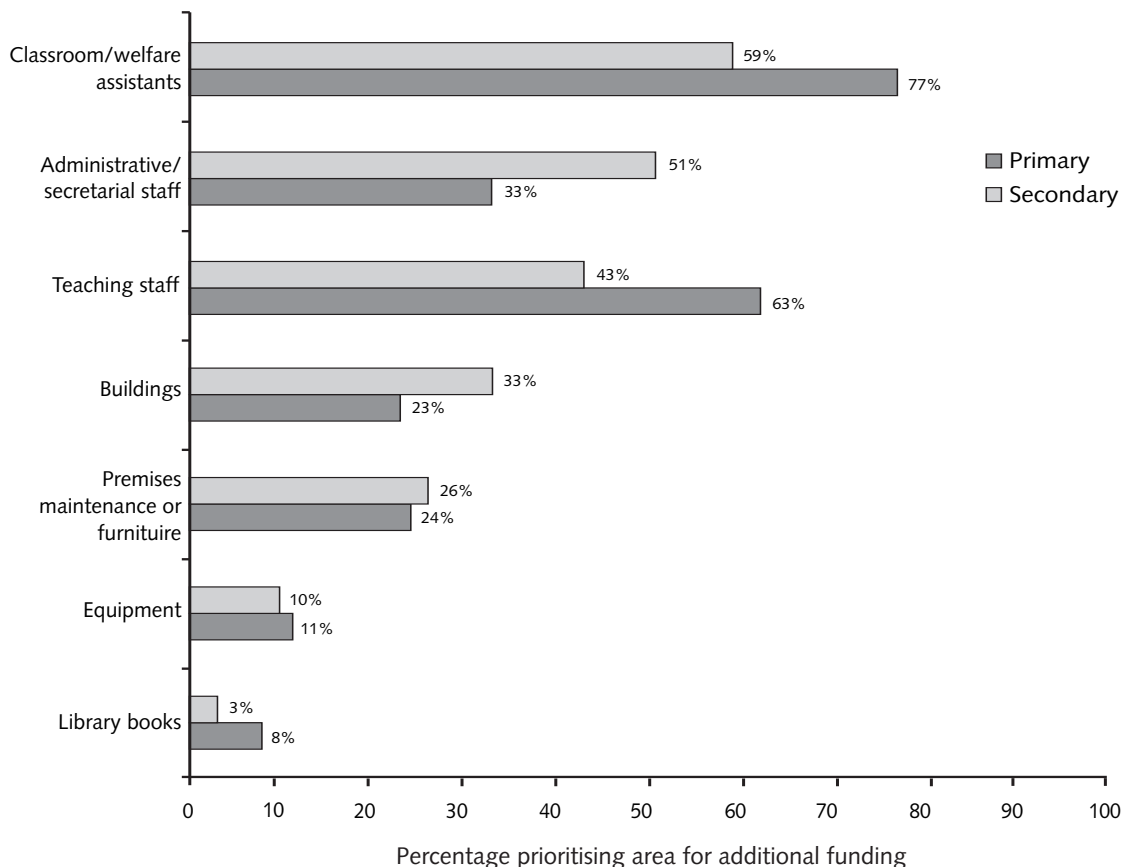
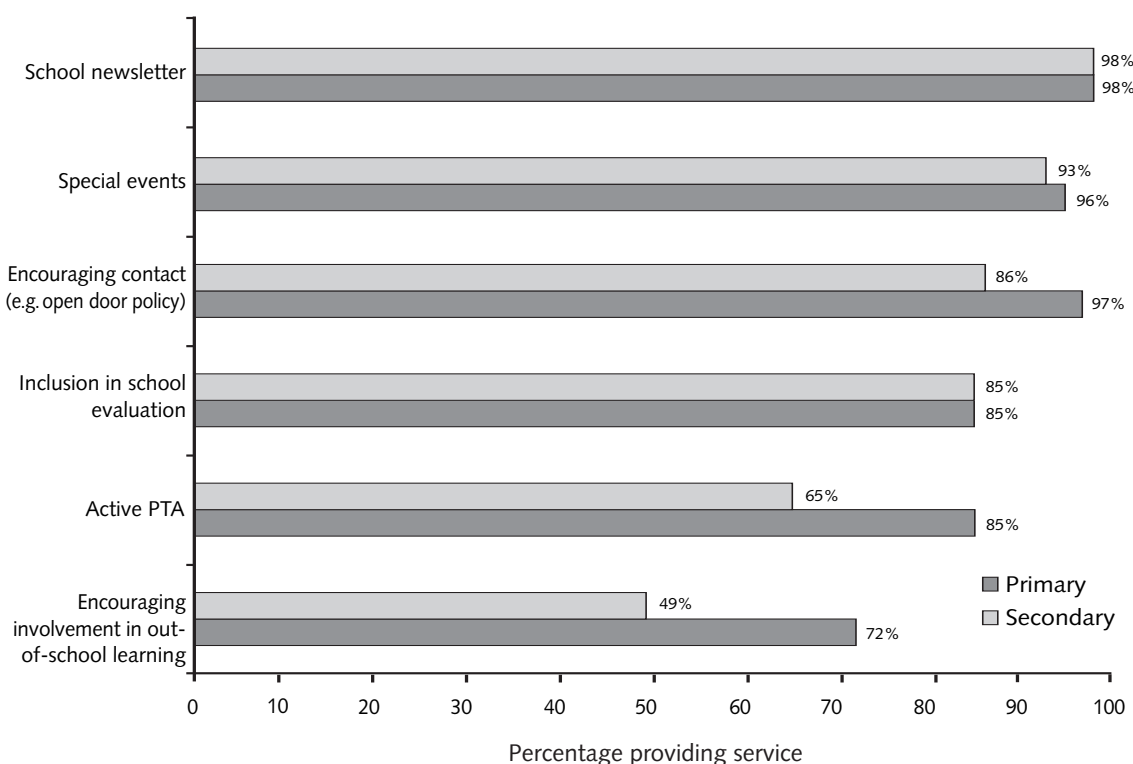


Figure 3.4 Comparisons of mechanisms in place for involving parents in school life



3.6 LEA support for school improvement

Table 3.1 shows the extent to which both primary and secondary respondents considered their local authority to be either *excellent*, *good*, *not very good* or *poor* in providing certain services to schools. The table shows that primary respondents were more likely to have a

favourable view of some of these services than secondary respondents. For example, compared to secondary headteachers, larger proportions of primary headteachers considered the training and leadership offered by their LEA as *excellent* or *good*. Primary headteachers were also more likely to rate their LEA advisory service as a whole as *excellent* or *good*.

Table 3.1 Primary and secondary headteachers' views on LEA support for school improvement.

LEA support	Primary				Secondary			
	Excellent	Good	Not very good	Poor	Excellent	Good	Not very good	Poor
Data provider	27	60	11	1	25	57	13	4
Training provider	7	68	19	3	3	51	31	12
Advice and guidance on budgets	15	53	21	6	8	43	27	13
Providing leadership	7	58	27	6	5	42	34	16
Sharing good practice	5	57	31	4	5	46	34	12
Critical friend	9	62	23	5	9	55	25	10
Advisory service as a whole	7	66	20	4	4	52	31	10
N = 413					N = 1224			

Series of single responses

4 Summary of key findings

This chapter presents key findings from the survey of secondary headteachers.

- School budgets and staffing were the main sources of headteachers' concerns, followed by worries about pupil behaviour.
- The workload of senior managers was a major issue for nearly all headteachers. The majority of headteachers were also worried about teachers' workload and the work–life balance of staff at their school. Only a minority of headteachers, however, agreed that teaching assistants' workload was an issue.
- Most headteachers thought the introduction of the three-year budgetary cycle would have a positive impact on their school, making it easier to plan ahead and giving a clearer picture of the school's financial situation.
- Although the introduction of the new inspection arrangements was a source of anxiety for some headteachers, most headteachers thought that the new arrangements would have a positive impact on their school. Many felt that the new arrangements would lead to schools becoming more focused on continuous improvement and would help to reduce staff stress.
- Headteachers' views on the changes to the admissions system were more mixed. Around a third of headteachers thought the new system would lead to improvements by simplifying the current system, reducing the effect of the unfair admissions criteria applied by selective schools and giving schools a clearer picture of their intake. Other headteachers, however, felt that coordination of admissions by the LEA was likely to be mismanaged or ineffective, and were worried that schools would have less autonomy.
- The majority of schools provided some form of extended services and activities on site. Over three-quarters of headteachers reported that their school premises were used for community activities, and just over half provided breakfast clubs for pupils. Two-thirds of headteachers planned to develop the range of services available to pupils, families and the wider community on school premises, in the future.
- Almost every school had strategies in place to involve parents in school life. In particular headteachers felt that holding meetings to gain parents' views on particular issues was an effective strategy to increase parental involvement in school life.
- Headteachers' contact with the police service had increased during the past three years. The main reasons for this increase included: better relationships with community police officers, more proactive police involvement in resolving community issues; and school link police officers being more readily available.
- Overall, headteachers were positive about the support their LEA provided for school improvement. In particular, headteachers thought that LEAs were good at providing data. Responses in relation to LEA leadership were more mixed, with just over half describing their LEA as 'not very good' or 'poor' at providing leadership.

4.1 Future research

The LGA has commissioned the NFER to conduct the *Annual Survey of Trends in Education 2006*. In 2006, a questionnaire will be sent to all secondary schools and a sample of primary schools in England. Some of the areas covered in the present report will also feature in the next survey.

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Appendix

The following tables show the proportion of headteachers that responded to the questionnaire by LEA type, pupil attainment, school size and percentage of pupils eligible for FSM.

Table A.1.1 Responses by LEA type

Type of LEA	No. of schools responding	Percentage of schools responding
London borough	138	11
Metropolitan authorities	259	21
English unitary authorities	173	14
County authorities	654	53

N=1224

Due to rounding, percentages may not always sum to 100

Table A.1.2 Number of responses by overall pupil achievement

Achievement band	No. of schools responding	Percentage of schools responding
Lowest band	195	16
Second lowest band	226	19
Middle band	227	19
Second highest band	229	19
Highest band	256	21

N=1224

*Due to rounding, percentages may not always sum to 100
Attainment data was unavailable for 91 schools.*

Table A.1.3 Number of responses by school size

Number of pupils in school	No. of schools responding	Percentage of schools responding
600 or fewer	159	13
601-1000	506	41
1001-1300	300	25
1301 or more	259	21

N=1224

Due to rounding, percentages may not always sum to 100

Table A.1.4 Number of responses by FSM

Percentage of pupils eligible for FSM	No. of schools responding	Percentage of schools responding
Lowest 20 per cent	95	8
Second lowest 20 per cent	331	27
Middle 20 per cent	357	29
Second highest 20 per cent	286	23
Highest 20 per cent	155	13

N=1224

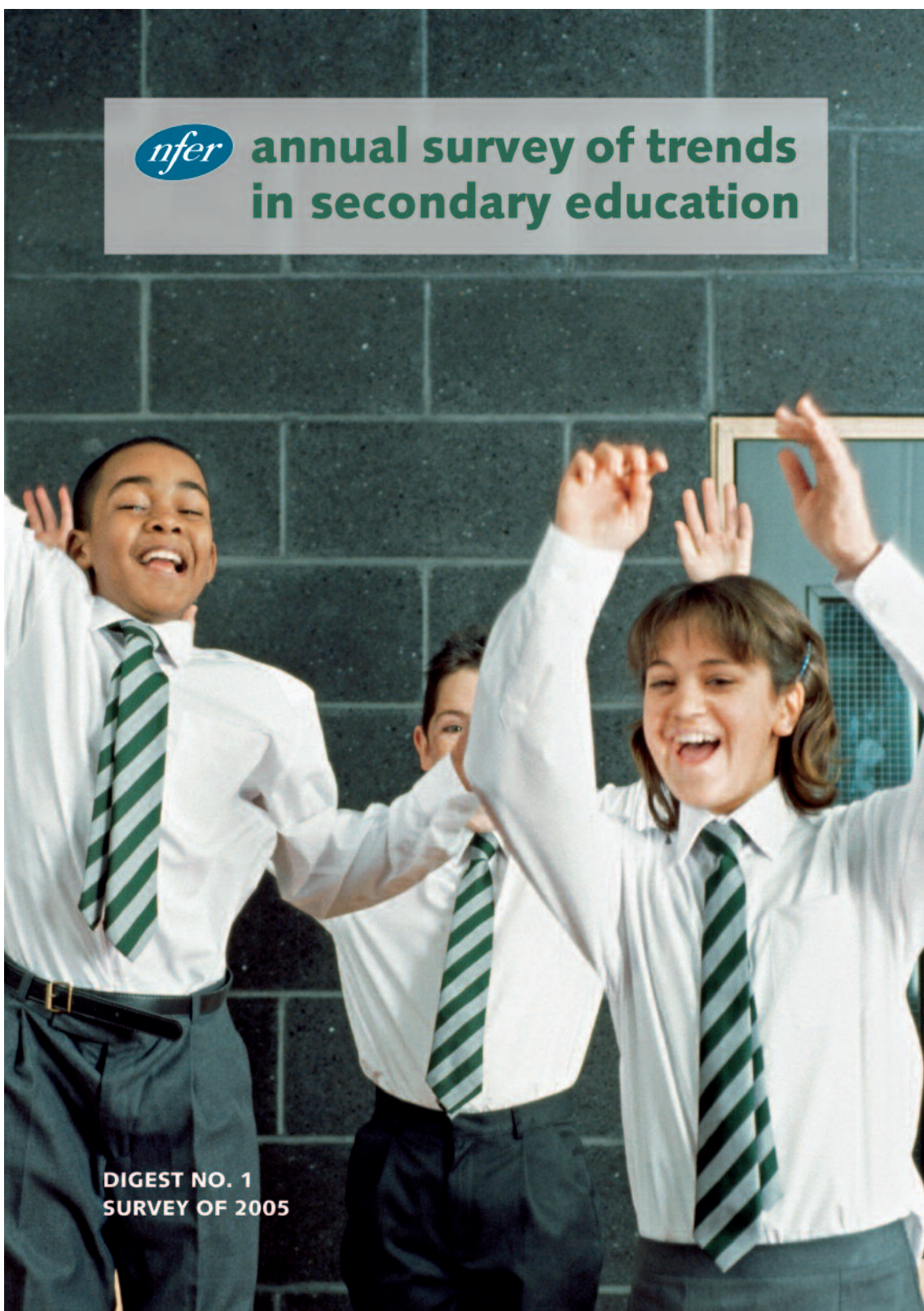
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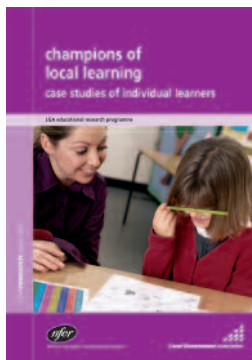
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Key findings include headteachers' views about:

- their main concerns: budgets, staffing and pupil behaviour
- the workload of senior managers
- the three-year budgetary cycle
- new inspection arrangements
- changes to the admissions system
- extended services offered by schools
- contact with the police service
- support from local authorities on school improvement.

A comparison of the results of the 2004 survey of trends in primary education highlights differences and similarities between the two sectors.

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