



Evidence for
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Education



National
Governors'
Association

Launch presentation

Executive Headteachers: What's in a name?

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Hosted at TFLT, N1 9UU

Executive Headteachers: What's in a Name?

1. About this research: Why do EHTs matter?
2. Key messages
3. Findings: Who and where are the EHTs in England?
4. Findings: Why have an EHT?
5. Findings: Skills, facilitators and challenges; and developing the EHT role
6. Recommendations and conclusions

1. About this research: Why do EHTs matter?

- EHT: an increasingly prevalent role
 - 621 EHTs in 2014 (SWC)
 - up by 240% since 2010
- EHT: a relatively new and evolving role
 - with no ‘legal’ definition, multiple sector-led interpretations
 - a range of accountability arrangements, roles and responsibilities
- EHT: a role requiring ‘a new and different mix of skills and experience’ (DfE White Paper, March 2016)
 - as yet no comprehensive guidance on the skill-set they need
 - limited and largely outdated research

1. About this research: a collaboration

- A collaborative research project
 - NFER, NGA and TFLT
 - Suite of six outputs *Executive Headteachers: What's in a Name?*
- Main research question(s)
 - What is distinctive about EHTs compared with HTs (profile, role, governance)?
- Carried out
 - over 30 interviews with EHTs, senior leaders and governors
 - analysis of latest SWC data
 - review of 30 HT and EHT job application packs

2. Key messages

1. EHTs increasingly prevalent – as schools continue to form groups, there will be a demand for more EHTs in future
 - potential demand for at least 3,200* more EHTs by 2022
 - workforce planning must account for this
2. SWC defines EHT as a ‘HT who directly leads two or more schools in a partnership arrangement’
 - we identified an EHT as either ‘a lead professional of more than one school; or a lead professional who manages a school with multiple phases; or who has management responsibility significantly beyond that of a single school site’
3. EHTs and HTs compared – what is distinctive? EHTs require:
 - higher levels of strategic thinking, collaborative skills, achieving change through others, and strong capacity to look outward

* Taking into account a continuation of schools forming groups, and senior leader retirement rates

3. Who and where are the EHTs in England?

621* EHTs in schools in England in Nov 2014 (*SWC data)

- almost all have QTS
- higher pay than HTs
- slightly older than HTs
- women under-represented in the EHT population (compared to women in HT population)
- higher proportion of EHTs in academies than maintained sector

Motivations for becoming an EHT

- professional development (career progression)
- moral purpose (to make an impact on pupils)
- to meet a particular need (i.e. interim role in underperforming school)

4. Why have an EHT?



4. Governance and accountability structures

Structures above the EHT

Governance/executive structures that EHTs work within are often complex and unclear. The different models identified are:

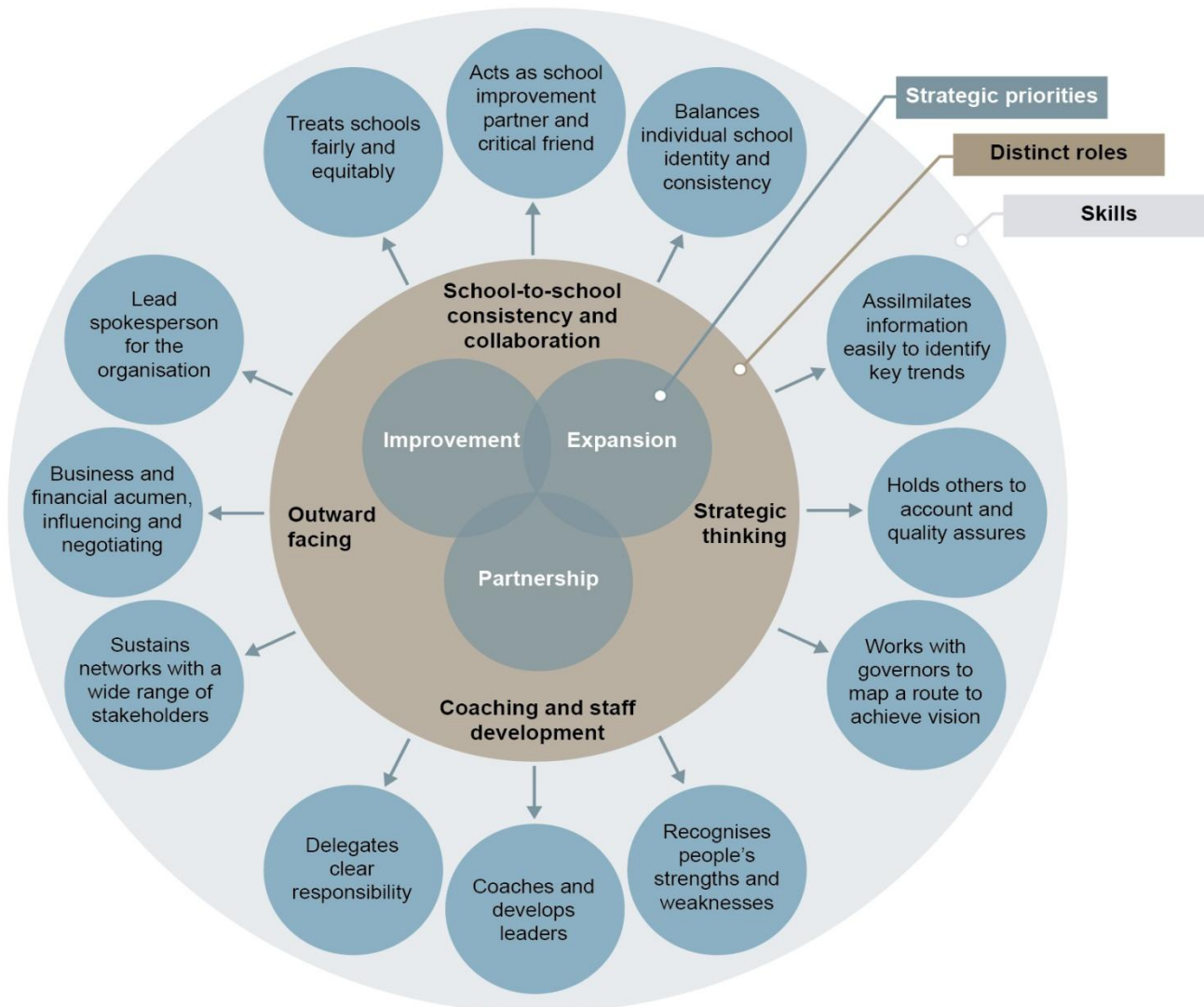
- EHT reporting to a governing board of trustees and a governing committee
- EHT reporting to one governing board
- EHT reporting to multiple governing boards
- EHT reporting to governing committee and line managed by executive tier

Structures below the EHT

These are similar to traditional HTs with two distinct differences:

- EHT often manage Heads of Schools (HoS)
- EHT often manage executive business managers

5. Skills, facilitators and challenges



5. Skills, facilitators and challenges

Challenges and facilitating factors related to the EHT role

- defining the role at both a system and local level
- division of leadership at a local level
- well-informed governance and accountability arrangements
- balancing the needs of multiple schools
- size and capacity
- recruiting the right individuals

Is further training for EHTs needed?

- many of the EHTs interviewed were highly qualified
- many current EHTs and aspirant EHTs noted the need for more formal and informal training and partnerships

6. Recommendations and conclusions

For national system policy

- More clarity needed at a national level around the true scale and purpose of EHTs in a school-led system
- The DfE should facilitate a profession-led definition of executive headship, that allows for a range of appropriate operating models
- Workforce planning must ensure sufficient numbers of leaders progress upward

For governing boards

- Governing boards should actively decide whether to add a level of strategic leadership and must consider who will step into the HoS role

For workforce development

- More professional development/support networks for EHTs and aspirant EHTs needed – increase the number of women EHTs

For future review and data monitoring

- Keep EHT role under review, and explore EHT/HoS and EHT/CEO roles
- Develop national data recording systems

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Outputs suite

A Full Report of the Findings

The full report of findings, including key messages and recommendations for policy and practice, why executive headteachers (EHTs) matter, the distinctive characteristics and distribution of EHTs, the circumstances under which schools appoint an EHT, and the facilitating factors, challenges, and development of the EHT role.

How to cite this publication:

Lord, P., Wespieser, K., Harland, J., Fellows, T. and Theobald, K. (2016). *Executive Headteachers: What's in a Name? A Full Report of the Findings*. Slough, Birmingham and London: NFER, NGA and TFLT.

Executive Summary

A two-page concise summary of the full report.

How to cite this publication:

Theobald, K. and Lord, P. (2016). *Executive Headteachers: What's in a Name? Executive Summary*. Slough, Birmingham and London: NFER, NGA and TFLT.

Technical Appendix

The technical appendix provides a detailed account of the methodology used to obtain the data on which the full report is based.

How to cite this publication:

Harland, J. and Bernardinelli, D. (2016). *Executive Headteachers: What's in a Name? Technical Appendix*. Slough: NFER.

Literature Review

The literature review encapsulates existing research on the EHT position in England. It covers three main areas: the history of EHTs in England; the skills, qualities and motivations identified in EHTs; and the governance and school structures associated with EHTs.

How to cite this publication:

Fellows, T. and Odell, E. (2016). *Executive Headteachers: What's in a Name? A Review of the Literature*. Birmingham and London: NGA and TFLT.

Case Study Compendium

The compendium provides an overview of each of the 12 case studies that were conducted as part of the research. Each case study includes a description of the setting, the purpose of appointing an EHT, the focus of the EHT role, qualifications of the EHT and replicable features.

How to cite this publication:

Wespieser, K. (Ed) (2016). *Executive Headteachers: What's in a Name? Case Study Compendium*. Slough: NFER.

Infographic Poster

The infographic poster – included in the full report – displays quantitative data about the distinctive characteristics and distribution of EHTs.

All outputs are available from the following websites:

www.nfer.ac.uk

www.nga.org.uk

www.future-leaders.org.uk

About the organisations who carried out this research



The National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) is the UK's largest independent provider of research, assessment and information services for education, training and children's services. Our purpose is to provide independent evidence which improves education and training for children and young people.

The research team at NFER for this project included: Daniele Bernardinelli, Jennie Harland, Pippa Lord, and Karen Wespieser.

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The National Governors' Association (NGA) is an independent charity representing and supporting governors, trustees and clerks in maintained schools and academies in England. The NGA's goal is to improve the wellbeing of children and young people by increasing the effectiveness of governing boards and promoting high standards. We do this by providing information, guidance, research, advice and training. We also work closely with, and lobby, UK government and educational bodies, and are the only campaigning national membership organisation for school governors and trustees.

The research team at NGA for this project included: Ellie Cotgrave and Tom Fellows.

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The Future Leaders Trust's mission is to give children equal opportunities in life, regardless of background, by developing a network of exceptional school leaders. We run a range of leadership development programmes, providing a progression pathway from middle leadership right through to system leadership. All of the programmes are informed by evidence and the expertise of leaders within and beyond education. They all support participants to develop more effective leadership behaviours, so they can drive improvement in schools and multi-academy trusts and help close the attainment gap.

The research team at TFLT for this project included: Evan Odell, Katy Theobald and Rosaria Votta.

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