

# Tomorrow's leaders today

*Developing the next generation of School Leaders*

## A Discussion Paper for Governing Bodies

Recruiting a headteacher is one of the most important tasks a governing body undertakes. This will become increasingly important in the next few years as significant numbers of headteachers will be retiring in the next four years.

Finding the next generation of school leaders is going to be a challenge for governors. It is an issue we must all address.

### Why now?

- Half of heads and deputies are aged over 50
- There has been a decline in the group who would be the obvious replacements – teachers in their late 30s to mid-40s
- The most acute recruitment period will be between 2009 and 2011.

### What are the issues?

- Headship is an increasingly demanding role and perceptions of the pressures may deter teachers from aspiring to headship
- It has been the norm to appoint teachers with 20 years experience to headships. This long apprenticeship is not typical for most other professions
- No governing body can solve this problem by working alone. It needs a collaborative approach
- Few governing bodies have wide experience of appointing heads and so recruitment is not always successful at the first attempt
- There is a lack of long term succession planning, with most governing bodies only addressing the issue on the resignation of the current headteacher
- Schools are losing headteachers to early retirement which exacerbates the overall problem
- Some schools have particular difficulties in recruiting headteachers, including faith schools, small schools, rural schools, and some inner-city schools

### What are the solutions?

- Making sure that the rewards of headship are not outweighed by negative perceptions
- Spotting and nurturing talent among younger teachers and being confident in appointing them to headship
- Collaborating locally to provide leadership experiences for talented younger teachers across a group of schools
- Using better planned and more effective recruitment processes to increase success rates
- Considering varied models of headship including co-heads or executive heads of federations
- Re-energising long-serving heads with opportunities such as short sabbaticals to minimise early retirements

## Questions every governing body should ask themselves

Please ✓

Are we aware of the future plans of the leadership team at our school?

Have we explored our middle managers' prospects and future plans?

What do governors do to identify talent and potential within our school?

Do we ensure that leadership experiences are provided for younger talented teachers?

Do we see the promotion of young leaders to outside appointments as a positive outcome?

Have we considered working with other local schools to extend leadership opportunities?

What are we doing to ensure that teachers gain a positive perception of the headteacher role?

Have we considered other models of leadership such as co-headship?

Have we as a governing body received training in recruitment processes?

Have we developed effective ways of collaborating with other schools?

Have we considered using existing structures such as school clusters as a vehicle for succession planning?

Have we explored the range of services for recruitment advice available from our local authority and other providers?

Have we explored how governors can act as agents of change by bringing our wider experience to challenge the status quo?

### For further information:

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