Educational Leadership:
An Exploration of the Impact of Educational Reforms Post-1988 on the Role of the School Leader and a Proposed Alternative Model

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Abstract

The complexities of educational reform in England, introduced over the past three decades, have led to greater challenges for educational leaders and implementing the educational policies imposed by government requires a ‘new set of skills’ (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007). Southworth argues that the role of headteacher ‘has become too large for anyone to do single-handedly’ (Southworth, 2008) but it could be argued that the challenges faced by school leaders are about the complexity and diversity of skills that the role requires rather than the quantity of work. The number of policies implemented by central government over the past twenty-five years has led to a significant change in the headteacher’s role, according to findings made by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007, no pagination) and there is a risk that the shift from a teaching headteacher to a desk-based headteacher could lead to a detachment and dilution of the profession.

This paper explores how the role of the headteacher has changed in response to educational reforms, the impact of the transfer of responsibilities from local authorities and the subsequent reduction in service provision and the relatively new role of school business manager. The paper will determine whether the current model of headteacher is sustainable and relevant or if a business professional could be a suitable alternative option of school leadership in a time of headteacher shortages in England.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

1.1 Rationale

Since 1988, education in England has been subjected to radical and relentless reforms which have led to education becoming ‘complex’ requiring ‘diverse types of expertise and forms of leadership’ (Harris & Spillane, 2008, p. 31). The 1992 Local Management of Schools (LMS) programme saw decision-making powers for finance, staff deployment and premises management transferred away from Local Education Authorities (LEAs) to schools and the role of the headteacher became more managerial and less teaching-focused. This change was acknowledged, and undoubtedly accelerated further, by the government’s decision, in 2001, to abolish the requirement for headteachers to hold qualified teacher status (QTS) and the subsequent abolition, in 2012, of the mandatory National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH). These moves suggest that the Conservative administration supports alternative, unconventional models of school leadership, a concept favoured by PricewaterhouseCoopers who believe that ‘there should be no barrier to an individual without qualified teacher status taking on that role’ (2007, p. 109).

In 2014 the National Association of School Business Managers (NASBM) published a case study about a school business manager, without QTS, who became headteacher of a failing school, demonstrating that business skills taken into the education sector could provide school business managers with an opportunity to move into headship roles (2014). With headteachers spending less time on conducting classroom activities, in order to focus on managerial issues, combined with the removal of compulsory qualifications for headteachers, there is an argument for an alternative, unconventional, business professional model of school leadership.
1.2 Aims and Objectives

The aim of this research is to assess how educational policies and reforms, implemented since 1988 in England, have impacted on schools and school leadership, to determine whether the conventional model of headteacher is relevant and sustainable. The objectives of the research are to conduct an extensive literature review in order to explore educational reforms and policies since 1988 and their impact on schools; to examine how policy reforms have impacted on the role of the headteacher; to assess qualities and skills needed to lead an autonomous school; and to explore the role of the school business manager in order to determine whether a business professional is a realistic alternative option to the traditional headteacher model.

1.3 Context

Since 1988 the education system in England has undergone changes that have led to marketization within the sector and a reduction in support from local education authorities (LEAs). The reforms have resulted in significant changes to the role of the headteacher and the skills required to carry out the role, which Ironside and Seifert (1995, p. 220) believe have led to headteachers ‘becoming human resource managers and budget resource allocators, rather than senior figures among teams of like-minded professionals’. The changes to the educational landscape have led to schools working within a quasi-market and this has undoubtedly contributed to the national headteacher shortage as the role focuses more on management and less on teaching.

The key educational reforms imposed on schools since 1988 are explored within this paper through reference to relevant literature by Ball (2008, 2012), Gunter (2011), etc., to determine the impact the policies have had on schools and school leaders, to determine how school leadership has changed and to explore whether new models of headteacher are more suited to the current educational context.
1.4 The 1988 Education Reform Act - the Decline of Local Authorities and the Development of Marketization

A clear intention of the Conservative Party, led by Margaret Thatcher, during the 1980s, was the removal of powers held by local authorities. The abolition of the Greater London Council and Metropolitan County Councils had led to a high profile political battle and could be considered as the catalyst for the Conservative’s agenda of control. The reduced powers and control held by local authorities was developed further by the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) which brought about the abolition of the Inner London Education Authority, the opportunity for schools to opt out of local authority control by becoming grant-maintained, and the introduction of the Local Management of Schools (LMS) programme, which transferred specific powers to schools and ‘hundreds of new powers to the Secretary of State’ (Gillard, 2011). The ERA, according to Tomlinson (1992, p. 69), ‘destroyed the local education authority’.

The reforms that schools, and other public services, were subjected to during the Conservative’s administration resulted in marketization being introduced to the public sector with the government arguing that education would be delivered ‘more efficiently and effectively in [by] market forces’ (Grace, 1994, p. 126). Professor Le Grand introduced the term quasi-market to recognise public institutions that compete for consumers while being funded by the state. Open enrolment, introduced as part of the ERA, was promoted as a move to give parents greater choice, although it has been argued that its true purpose was to further develop the concept of competition and marketization. While open enrolment has been promoted by the government as a system of choice, Swinford & Bingham (2015) report that in 2015 almost half of pupils ‘did not receive their first choice secondary school’. With over-subscription criteria established at school level and a lack of choice of school, particularly in rural areas, the concept of school choice is fundamentally flawed.

Despite opposition, the Conservative Party continued to pursue reforms to the public sector that would lead to public services working within a competitive
market-place. Mckenzie (1993, p. 17), however, argues that the concept of consumer sovereignty was ‘theoretical and superficial’ while Ball (1993, p. 3) maintains that a marketized education system leads to ‘class advantage’ and a ‘stratified system of schooling’.

1.5 New Administration, New Schools, More Marketization

When New Labour came into power in 1997 there seemed to be little change in the approach to education and while grant-maintained schools were abolished the implementation of the academies programme became a highly discussed and controversial topic. The model introduced by New Labour was promoted as a solution to underperforming schools in socially deprived areas and were funded by private sponsors, a move that Gunter (2008, p. 162) describes as an ‘attack on state provision embodied in the comprehensive ideal’. When the Conservative led Coalition Government came into power in 2010, the academies programme was extended but the shape of academies changed and the Academies Act (2010) provided an opportunity for all state schools to convert to academy status. The government argued that academies raised standards although critics argue that the programme is designed to ‘privatise the state education system by stealth’ (Machin & Vernoit, 2010). Although the academies programme was met with criticism hundreds of schools took the opportunity to convert, allowing them greater freedom to operate than they previously had been afforded under local authority control. The impact on state schools was increased competition and pressure to raise standards in order to retain their state school status.

The free schools model, introduced by the Coalition, operates freely from local authority control in the same way as academies and came into being, according to the government, in order to give parents greater choice. The Academies Act 2010 stipulates that any new school must be a free school or an academy leading to local authorities having no power to open new schools. Critics rightly question whether academies and free schools are in place to improve choice and raise standards or are simply an extension of the Conservative’s aim to devolve power
from local authorities and create an education sector that is dominated by competition and marketization.

1.6 The Impact of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) on Headteachers

The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) placed significant new responsibilities on headteachers which, in turn, resulted in them undertaking managerial roles and reducing their pupil contact time. The managerial roles that became necessary to accommodate the changes arising from the ERA are reported to have increased workloads and created extra pressure on headteachers which, according to Paton (2011), contributed to the increased difficulties in filling vacancies, correlating with findings by others such as Morrison (2014), Mangen (2006) and Whitaker (2003). Before the implementation of Local Management of Schools (LMS), headteachers naturally progressed to headship following an extensive and successful teaching career and were considered to be ‘the most single influential person in the school’ (Southworth, 1995, p. 13). However, the impact of LMS and the quasi-market concept led to headteachers being moved ‘away from educational values and collegial processes towards the marketised performance that we have witnessed and experienced in the post-1988 period’ (Gunter, 2002, p. 96).

To compensate for the increased workloads that headteachers experienced as a result of the Local Management of Schools programme and the subsequent need to adopt business principles, a new professional School Business Manager (SBM) role came into fruition during the early 2000s. Reports suggest that the SBM has led to a significant saving of headteacher’s time and, interestingly, the Professional Standards for Headteachers, published in 2004, point out that ‘the core purpose of the headteacher is to provide professional leadership and management for the school’ (Department for Education and Skills, 2004, p. 3). The latest version of the standards, published in 2015, replaces the term management with leadership, demonstrating the impact that the school business
manager has had in terms of releasing headteachers from managerial duties to allow them to resume a leadership role.

### 1.7 Managing School Business

The increased workloads and responsibilities that schools experienced as a result of Local Management of Schools (LMS) led to the government’s decision, in 2001, to make training available to allow bursars to operate as school business managers (SBMs), sparking an unprecedented interest in the role by individuals, headteachers and governors. Bursars were introduced to state schools in response to de-centralisation and, according to O’Sullivan *et al.* (2000, p. 13) were ‘initially appointed to fill the role of the school’s financial expert’ although they recognise that many took on management and marketing roles. At that time there was no clear career pathway for bursars, and schools turned to models adopted in independent schools. A post in which the SBM would have ‘a portfolio of responsibilities and skills that supplement and complement those of other school leaders’ (Southworth, 2010, p. 3) led to the role developing rapidly, particularly in secondary schools. Support for the new profession grew and a suite of training programmes provided by the National College of School Leadership (NCSL), specifically for SBMs, were developed, while the National Bursars Association, established in 1997, became the National Association of School Business Managers (NASBM) to support the developing profession.

Reports show that school business managers save headteachers a third of their time and, according to the government, between 2002 and 2009 National College qualified SBMs had ‘generated £306m in savings and income’ (Department for Education, 2013, p. 16). This demonstrates the impact and benefits that a school business manager has in terms of time, money and resources.

### 1.8 Summary

The educational reforms of the past two decades have significantly changed the way in which schools operate. The adoption of business principles to
accommodate school-based management and raising standards in an increasingly competitive market, have become a necessity rather than a choice.

Although the neo-liberal policies of the Conservative Party have been heavily criticised, they have continued to be followed despite changes to the political parties in power. The rise of specialist schools, who are allowed to select a proportion of pupils by aptitude, adopted by the New Labour Party, along with the academies and free schools programmes of the Coalition Government demonstrate the government’s approach to education. Schools are no longer education providers to the local community, but are quasi-businesses providing an education service within a competitive and rapidly changing field and in accordance with established regulations imposed by central government. While schools are expected to provide high quality education provision and improved standards, they are expected to be efficient and to understand complex legislation around health and safety, financial management and employment law that are normally more closely associated with the private sector. The traditional headteacher, appointed after years of teaching expertise, could potentially have little or no concept of good business and marketing practice, yet they are expected to take the lead in business decisions. In considering the changes to education and the expectations for schools this paper aims to answer the following research question:

*Is the traditional headteacher model relevant in today’s education sector and is there justification for considering an alternative business leadership model?*

To answer the research question the context of education post-1988 will be explored along with the impact of Local Management of Schools and the 1988 Education Reform Act, together with subsequent relevant policies and legislation. Chapter 2 of this paper reviews existing literature and research relating to education reform, new public management principles, the role of the headteacher and the role of the school business manager. The methodology used for the research is outlined in Chapter 3 with the results of the qualitative study.
presented in Chapter 4 and discussed in chapter 5. Final conclusions are given in Chapter 6.
Chapter 2: Literature Review

2.1 Introduction
A review of the literature has been undertaken in order to contribute to answering the research question as to whether the conventional model of school headship in England is still relevant. The research question has arisen in response to the changing shape of education post-1988 and the resulting adoption of new public management principles to accommodate self-management within a quasi-market. To facilitate the findings an extensive review of literature relating to school leadership, business leadership and management, educational reform, the role of the headteacher and the evolution of the school business manager, has been undertaken. The literature shows that while there has been much research on leadership styles and traits by Bush (1995), Bass (1990), Fiedler (1964) and Burns (2010), there has been little research on new models of school leadership within a quasi-market educational field and very little on the role of the school business manager.

2.2 Leadership or Educational Leadership – Does It Matter?
The literature identified conflicting views on whether educational leadership is different from leadership. A simple definition of leadership as offered by the Collins English Dictionary (2015) is ‘a person who rules, guides or inspires others’ while Leithwood and Riehl (2005, p. 3) consider it to be the provision of direction and exercise of influence. Moos and Moller (2003, p. 356) believe that education can be conceptualised and managed like any other service and institution, because ‘there is nothing distinctive about education’, while Southworth (2005, p. 75), on the other hand, argues that school leaders are different from other leaders because they have ‘a desire and responsibility to enhance’ students’ learning. This could be challenged because the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) has effectively forced schools to operate within a quasi-market concept competing for consumers in the same manner as a business and, as such, the needs of the school in terms of leadership are that the leader has the ability to
ensure the school remains in the market through their understanding of the core product irrespective of its context.

Like Moos and Moller (2003), Mills (2005, p. 10) recognises that leaders and educational leaders should not be differentiated, pointing out that effective leadership ‘enables a not-for-profit organization to fulfil its mission’ and ‘makes a business organization successful’. Researchers such as Gunter (2002), Bush (1995), and Southworth (2004), agree that good leadership is critical to the success of a school or, as Leithwood et al., (2006, p. 4) put it, in their U.S study, ‘second only to classroom teaching’, while Volz, referring to leadership of a business organisation, simply states ‘leadership and effective management is important to the success of any organization’ (2010).

The literature shows that opinions on whether educational leadership differs from leadership are subjective, but on considering the definitions provided it seems appropriate to conclude that leadership principles should not change in response to the context of the organisation, and that the end product or service should not impact on business principles. What is critical in any organisation is the leader’s ability to guide, inspire and support the organisation for it to achieve its intended outcomes.

2.3 Educational Reforms in England 1988 and beyond

The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA), introduced under Margaret Thatcher’s Conservative Party administration, proved to be the most radical education act England had seen in more than forty years and was responsible for the changed landscape of education that is seen today in which schools compete with neighbouring schools to attract pupils and subsequent funding.

2.3.1 Marketization of the Education Sector

A key outcome of the ERA was greater choice for parents, achieved through open enrolment, which purportedly provided parents with an opportunity to
choose their child’s school. Publication of school results and inspection outcomes contributed to the government’s drive for more information to be made available to parents in order to help them reach an informed decision on school choice. While parental choice was welcomed by many parents, (Cole, 2004, p. 28) the literature found that others were more critical. Slater (1998), for example, believes that the government’s motive was that parental choice would extend market forces within education ‘so that good schools expanded while poor ones closed’, and, although his report goes on to recognise that there were no widespread closures, he believes this was due to schools taking up the opportunity to opt out of local authority control and become grant-maintained.

The government promoted parental choice as a way of raising standards within schools although the literature found no evidence of this. Critics such as Whitty (1997), Hill (1997), and Shepherd (2009), for example, argue that open enrolment led to inequality, selection and segregation and where school performance has improved Lubienski (2009, pp. 27-8) points out that it may ‘result from factors other than quasi-market incentives’, an argument that can be justified by the quality of teaching in England’s schools.

As education moved into a quasi-market, headteachers were reported to be uncomfortable because they had ‘come into teaching as a public service, not in order to market their own school to the disadvantage of neighbouring schools’ (Downes, 1998, p. 27). The introduction of performance related pay for teachers, in 2013, confirmed Ball’s belief that under the Coalition Government’s administration schools would be ‘subjected to market accountability’ and ‘government performance requirements’ (2012, p. 96). This was reflected in the 2013 School Teachers Pay and Conditions Document (STPCD) which gave schools the freedom to set their own salaries for teachers, allowing state schools the same salary freedoms as academies and further demonstrating the government’s desire to free schools from local authority control.

The literature review found that, despite concerns and criticisms about the changes to education, the concept of the marketization of education is growing,
rather than shrinking, and the Coalition Government has maintained its commitment to the establishment and development of academies and free schools. Although the government argue that these schools provide parents with greater choice, critics believe that they are simply an extension of the decentralisation agenda introduced under Margaret Thatcher’s administration.

2.3.2 Local Management of Schools – Implications for Headteachers

The Local Management of Schools (LMS) programme transferred decision-making powers from local authorities to schools and central government, with the former being given responsibility for the school’s financial management, staff deployment and premises maintenance. Gillard (2011) believes that the principles of LMS transformed headteachers ‘from educationalists to institutional manager’, while others, such as Hellawell (1990), and Ball, (1990) liken the role of headteacher to that of chief executive. LMS challenged headteachers as they were expected to take on the role of chief executive alongside that of the lead professional and Southworth (2008, p. 415) believes that ‘many [headteachers] resolved the dilemma by taking on one role at the relative expense of the other’, implying that to manage the LMS tasks required of headteachers, their role as a lead professional role may have been compromised. Southworth goes on to say that headteachers were dealing with ‘too many operational issues and administrative tasks’, findings that correlate with those of Mason (1996), who reported that during the implementation stages those headteachers undertaking LMS spent 16% more time on financial matters than those who had not yet implemented LMS. According to the Audit Commission (1993) most secondary headteachers delegated financial management to a deputy head or an administrator (p. 11), but most primary headteachers had not done so for fear of ‘weakening financial control’ (p. 31). The same report found that this led to deputy heads spending only half of their time teaching and recommended that schools increase administrators’ hours to allow them to undertake all financial management, releasing headteachers and deputy heads to allow them to return to teaching (ibid. p. 14).
The traditional headteacher had skills, knowledge and experience within the field of teaching and learning but LMS required them to make business decisions around the school budget, premises and staff deployment, areas that they potentially had little understanding of. While educationalists maintain that non-teachers cannot serve as headteachers because of a lack of knowledge of teaching and learning, the same argument was not given when headteachers were entrusted to undertake a business role, and it is appropriate now to challenge the assumption that headteachers were equipped with the appropriate skills and knowledge to do so.

2.3.3 The Need for a Business Model

As headteachers took on managerial issues previously undertaken by the local authority, it ‘prevented them from being inside the classroom as much as they wanted to’ (Southworth, 2008, p. 415), indicating the start of the change to the role of the headteacher. Broadbent et al (1993, p. 151), believe that LMS was not ‘an isolated set of changes being imposed on schools’ but ‘part of a much wider agenda of change’ correlating with the beliefs by Gillard (2011) that the government’s agenda was one of control through the devolution of power.

Schools were expected to raise standards while improving efficiencies and to achieve this New Public Management (NPM) principles were adopted in schools.

According to Vigoda (2003, p. 813) NPM is

an approach in public administration that employs knowledge and experiences acquired in business management and other disciplines to improve efficiency, effectiveness, and general performances of public services.

To facilitate business-related decision-making schools had to adopt the principles of NPM, an approach that more closely resembles business methods, a move supported by Lubienski (2009, p. 25) who argues that ‘school leaders need to
adopt a more business [-like] mentality’. While it would seem that in order to accommodate the changes required of schools business models had to be adopted, McEwen et al (2002, p. 150) argue that applying a ‘commercial metaphor to school management has serious limitations with respect to the values that underpin schools’. Yet the transfer of responsibilities for financial management, staff deployment and site management require business methods in order to manage them effectively.

2.3.4 Headteachers Today
The literature review has shown that the educational reforms of the 1980s and 1990s had significant, and, potentially, damaging, impacts on schools and specifically on headteachers as school leaders. As Downes (1998) points out, the change to the headteacher’s role that occurred as a result of the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) was ‘dramatic’ (p. 25) although he goes on to say that the additional powers headteachers had been granted lifted their morale (p. 26). Stevens et al. (2005, p. 5) found that the administration of Local Management of Schools (LMS) was the major cause of headteacher demotivation, correlating with the findings of Smithers and Robinson (2007, p. ii) who claimed that ‘admin, external interference and excessive regulation’ was ‘irksome’. Yet Woods et al., (2012, p. 12) believe that that some headteachers have ‘grown comfortable with a more desk-based job’ going on to say that they are reluctant to return to leading teaching and learning.

To help headteachers manage the increased workload from policy reforms there has been a ‘widening of senior leadership teams’ within schools (Earley, et al., 2012, p. 27) and, according to a study by the National College (2011, p. 11), 56% of secondary schools and 15% of primary schools include senior members of the support staff on their leadership team. This indicates that the distributed leadership model has developed significantly in response to the changing shape of educational leadership. Harris & Spillane (2008, p. 8) consider distributed leadership to be ‘shared’ believing that ‘it is the result of the interactions between all those who contribute to the life of a school’. Yet Creasy et al., (2004, p. 10) argue that a shared leadership approach is not always appropriate and point out
that, irrespective of how leadership is distributed, the headteacher is the sole person that is held accountable. Therefore, while leadership tasks may be distributed, and senior staff members can contribute to decision-making, the final decision remains one that is made by the headteacher and governing body.

Concerns relating to a headteacher recruitment crisis, in England, have been reported for the past ten years with the government considering it to be an outcome of the baby boom, although researchers argue that it is due to the educational reforms resulting in schools ‘finding it more difficult to recruit head teachers than at any time since 2000’ (Richardson, 2013).

A potential solution to the crisis could be the adoption of alternative non-teaching models of school leadership. The abolition of mandatory qualified teacher status (QTS) for headteachers in 2001 was described by Gunter (2008, p. 163) as ‘highly significant’ but recognised that it ‘made little public impact’ while headteachers describe the abolition of the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) as ‘a backwards step’ (Coughlan, 2011). Yet these changes could ‘make it easier for school finance officers and others without Qualified Teacher Status to consider applying for headships’ The Guardian (2012). Bush (2013, p. 458) believes that the government wanted to ‘allow schools the freedom to make their own choices’ correlating with PricewaterhouseCoopers’ (2007, p. 109) suggestions that ‘there should be no barrier to an individual without QTS taking on that [Chief Operating Officer] role’ although the report acknowledges the importance of a qualified teacher being on the senior leadership team. Woods et al., (2012, p. 12) however, report that some stakeholders ‘feel hostile to the idea that people who are not trained as educators should have a greater say in how the school is run’ while critics have seen it as an implicit de-professionalization of the role of headteacher.

The literature review has highlighted that policy reforms have resulted in headteachers spending less time undertaking classroom activities and leading on teaching and learning, and suggests that professionals without QTS could, with
the support of a strong teaching senior leadership team, take on the role of headteacher.

2.4 Managing the Business of Schools

2.4.1 The Rise of the School Business Manager

The devolution of financial management to schools was considered by Whitehead (1997, p. 23) to be the time when ‘the scene was set for bursars’ who, until then, were relatively unknown in the state education sector although Independent Schools had appointed bursars for ‘hundreds of years’ (O’Sullivan, et al., 2000, p. 3). The Collins English Dictionary (2015) defines the bursar as ‘an official in charge of the financial management of a school, college or university’ (2015). The announcement by central government in 2001 that a thousand bursars would be trained in school business management over the forthcoming five years was considered by Southworth (2010, p. 3) to be the start of ‘a quiet revolution’ and a move that Berliner (2012) considers appropriate to ensure schools have access to business skills required as a result of the reforms.

A search of the literature for a definition of a school business manager (SBM) brought results that include ‘a senior member of non-teaching staff responsible for managing non-teaching activity in the school’ (Wikipedia, 2014) while Southworth (2010, p. 3) considers the SBM to have a wide range of responsibilities and skills which would ‘supplement and complement’ other leaders within the school. It is interesting to note that these definitions refer to both leadership and management with Southworth’s definition identifying the school business management role as one of leadership. Bubb & Earley (2004, p. 123) recognise how school business managers (SBMs) save schools significant amounts of money and believe that SBMs could replace deputy and assistant headteachers when they leave although they fail to acknowledge restrictions placed on such a move by many local authorities.
While the National Audit Office (2011) acknowledge that ‘financial pressures are growing on local authority maintained schools and the need to reduce costs is becoming greater’ they believe that financial management capabilities have improved as a result of employing school business managers (SBMs) while PricewaterhouseCoopers acknowledge the extent of the SBM role and point out that a well-trained SBM will allow headteachers to resume their role as the leader of teaching and learning because the managerial business role is completed by the SBM. An article, published in January 2015 (Jones, 2015), contends that SBMs are a specialist form of leader’ arguing that deploying the headteacher to lead on non-teaching elements is not a good use of resources, when a business professional, with greater knowledge of business, could make the decision quicker and more effectively.

The literature has shown that schools have recognised the need to appoint a professional to undertake business leadership and a survey, carried out in 2014, found that only a small group of these professionals are still known as bursars (National Association of Headteachers, 2014) demonstrating that the role is no longer solely focused on financial management.

Although current literature does not identify the extent to which school business managers form part of the schools senior leadership team, national associations including the National College and the National Association of School Business Managers (NASBM) have highlighted the benefits of including the SBM on the leadership team and encouraged headteachers to make that move. Jones (2015) however, believes that ‘many are still not considered to be part of the senior leadership team’, indicating that the school business management profession is still not fully acknowledged as one of leadership.

2.4.2 Professionalising the Profession

Wood & Sullivan (2008, p. 9) report that the school business managers (SBMs) profession has risen and that the administrative activities they carried out have decreased while their leadership and management duties have significantly
increased. This demonstrates how the role has grown and moved from that of administration to one of leadership and management. As the profession has developed so has the support of, and recognition by, national associations.

**National Association of School Business Managers**

The National Association of School Business Managers (NASBM) was originally established in 1997 as the National Bursars Association and in 2008 it ‘made a conscious move away from the term ‘bursar’ to reflect the broader responsibilities and complexities of School Business Management’ (NASBM, n.d). The association offers guidance, support and continued professional development (CPD) opportunities for school business managers (SBMs) nationally and there are currently 2,675 members, representing almost 17% of SBMs. In 2014 NASBM recognised that, despite its growth, school business management has remained a pseudo-profession with many characteristics of a profession but not yet acknowledged as one, and in an effort to develop it as a recognised profession, NASBM has proposed the adoption, nationally, of professional standards to be published in 2015. The Professional Standards for teachers and those for headteachers served as the basis for the SBM Standards which will incorporate specific competencies along with a code of ethics.

According to NASBM (2015) there is ‘total commitment from across the education sector of the absolute need to define a suite of professional standards for those working in school business management’ while the National Association of Headteachers (2015) believe that the new standards should be viewed as a ‘professional benchmark’.

The Draft Standards Wheel, shown in Appendix 1, developed by NASBM to demonstrate the skills and competencies required of a SBM is shown in Appendix 1.

**National College of Teaching and Leadership**

The National College of Teaching and Leadership (NCTL), established under the New Labour Government in 2008, provides professional development and
support to school leaders. By commissioning this body to deliver the suite of school business management (SBM) qualifications, the government has demonstrated that it considers SBMs to be part of the school senior leadership structure. The National College consider the qualifications to be necessary to expand the skills and knowledge of SBMs to allow them to lead the non-teaching aspects of school' (National College for Leadership of Schools and Children’s Services, 2009, p. 7). The qualifications range from entry-level through to the advanced diploma designed for ‘experienced school business managers who are working as a member of the senior leadership team’ (Anglia Ruskin University, n.d.). This supports Whitehead’s (1997, p. 23) suggestion that school business managers should work in a senior management capacity and substitute for the headteacher, a controversial argument that reinforces the seniority role that the SBM is designed to be.

**National Association of Headteachers**

The National Association of Headteachers (NAHT), ‘an independent trade union and professional association [that] represents over 28,500 members in England, Wales and Northern Ireland’ and whose members ‘hold leadership positions’ (NAHT, n.d). Initially established to support teachers and school leaders, it now offers membership to school business managers (SBMs) and, in recent years elected a SBM to serve on the Association’s national executive, contributing to a recognition of the professionalization and leadership qualities of a School Business Manager.

It is clear that ‘school business management is a complex, generalist but highly context specific role’ (Wood & O’Sullivan, 2008, p. 14) that has developed and grown significantly over the last decade, yet the literature review has indicated that full acknowledgment and, indeed, acceptance of the role has yet to be achieved amongst other professionals. This lack of recognition could be due to inconsistencies of the role in terms of job description, pay grades and membership of the senior leadership team yet the impact on schools and headteachers has been widely reported, with the government’s 2010 White Paper pointing out that ‘School Business Managers make a significant contribution to
the effective financial management of a school, saving on average 20-33 per cent of a headteacher’s time. These findings correlate with those of others such as Southworth (2010), Woods (2009) and Ball (2012) but further research would facilitate an understanding of the impact of a SBM in terms of other business areas for which they are now responsible.

2.5 From School Business Manager to Headteacher – a Reality

Although the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) has been abolished as a compulsory qualification for headteachers, the option to undertake the programme is still available to anybody who aspires to be a headteacher. There is no restriction on who can apply and no requirement for applicants to hold QTS, demonstrating that the government is not opposed to non-teachers becoming headteachers, possibly as a means of resolving the headteacher shortage. By 2014 twenty school business managers had undertaken the NPQH and in 2013 one was appointed as a headteacher to a school that had been placed in special measures. A case study of the appointee highlighted that the school was ‘innovative’ and that if a person is good enough to undertake a leadership post their background should not prejudice them. It does go on to say, however, that the biggest challenge for a SBM seeking headship is ‘finding a governing body that is prepared to take a risk with someone who is not from a traditional teaching background’ (National Association of School Business Managers, 2015).

At the time of his appointment as headteacher the school had been judged by Ofsted to be requiring improvement and the monitoring inspection report that took place four months after his appointment found significant improvements being made under his leadership, serving as evidence that a SBM can successfully lead, and even transform, a school despite having no teaching qualification.

2.6 Conclusions of the Literature Review

In order to respond to, and implement, government policies, headteachers have been spending less time on teaching and learning. The reforms have led to
significant reductions in service provision from local authorities resulting in New Public Management (NPM) principles being adopted in schools with headteachers, effectively, acting as chief executives. The literature found that the development of the school business manager (SBM) role freed up headteacher’s time, allowing them to return their focus to teaching and learning, confident that the non-teaching responsibilities of the school were being led and managed by a suitably qualified professional, although it also highlighted that many headteachers have grown accustomed to a non-classroom environment role.

Over recent years, and in response to the changing shape of education in England resulting from the academies and free schools programmes and the government’s drive for system leadership, new models of school leadership have emerged. The executive headteacher is one that has ‘some kind of lead managerial responsibility for more than one school’ (National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services, 2010, p. 2) while National Leaders of Education (NLEs) ‘increase the leadership capacity of other schools to help raise standards’ (National College for Teaching and Leadership, 2015). These new models demonstrate the importance of a strong senior leadership team to ensure that the school maintains its standards during the headteacher’s absences. Downes (1998, p. 30) acknowledges the importance of a senior leadership team and points out that ‘Heads can do what the Government, OFSTED, the parents, governors, the public and the pupils all demand of them, but not without a strong senior management team and substantial administrative support’. The literature has shown an increase in the application of the theory of distributed leadership in schools although critics, such as Lumby (2013), question whether teacher involvement is truly reflective of a model of shared leadership. Where a distributed leadership model is adopted in schools, and the hierarchical structure is deflated, there is an opportunity for the senior leadership team to act as a corporate, accountable body in a model similar to that of the governing body.

The literature review has shown that the headteacher recruitment crisis in England has not yet been resolved and that deputy headteachers and teachers
are reluctant to move into headship because of the excessive workload, while Moorhead (2012) suggests that this reluctance is due to the excessive scrutiny and accountability that headteachers are subjected to. As professionals from outside the teaching profession could now be employed as headteachers as a means of resolving the shortage, the National Union of Teachers (NUT) believes that ‘recruiting from outside the profession is not the answer. Moves to divorce the leadership of schools from teaching and learning and replacing heads with chief executives will make things worse’ (Smithers & Robinson, 2007, p. 9), while headteachers insist that the person in charge needs to understand teaching and that employing non-teachers would ‘dilute the profession’ (Berliner, 2012). However, with reduced support, relentless reforms, and the expectation on schools to serve in an education quasi-market, the suggestion by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007, p. 109) that ‘non-educational individuals can indeed lead schools provided they are appropriately supported’ should be considered as a serious and contending option.
Chapter 3: Research Methodology

3.1 Introduction
This chapter identifies what was considered to be the most appropriate method for the collection and compilation of data. By explaining the general research approach, and how primary research was undertaken, it shows how the aim of this research, which was to answer the research question of whether the conventional model of headship is sustainable and relevant, has been achieved.

3.2 Research Philosophy
Research philosophy depends on the way a person ‘think[s] about the development of knowledge’ (Saunders, et al., 2000, p. 84), referred to as the ontology and epistemology. During research one of two paradigms, positivism and interpretivism, is adopted, with the positivist paradigm maintaining that reality is fixed and the interpretivist researcher believing that it is socially constructed.
Both paradigms lend themselves to a different method of data collection, although, as Bell (2005, p. 7) points out, ‘no approach prescribes nor automatically rejects any particular method’. The researcher’s ontological and epistemological viewpoints determine which research paradigm is adopted (see table 3.1), although according to Roth and Mehta (2002) and Lin (1998) the two paradigms can be combined, with Lin arguing that doing so ‘makes more sense’.

A research paradigm is ‘a network of coherent ideas about the nature of the world and of the functions of researchers which, adhered to by a group of researchers, conditions the patterns of their thinking and underpins their research actions’ (Bassey, 2007, p. 13). In their examination of research techniques for business students Saunders et al., (1997) outline the main advantages and disadvantages of the two paradigms with interpretivism being recorded as phenomenology and shown in table 3.2.
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<th><strong>Interpretivism</strong></th>
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| **Ontology**
| *What is real?*     | Researcher and reality are separate | Researcher and reality are not separate |
| **Epistemology**
| *What is true?*     | One objective truth exists, independent from the human mind | Knowledge is socially constructed |
| **Research Method**  | Quantitative   | Qualitative        |

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| **Ontology**
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| *What is true?*     | One objective truth exists, independent from the human mind | Knowledge is socially constructed |
| **Research Method**  | Quantitative   | Qualitative        |

**Table 3.1 – Research Paradigms**

*From Research Methods for Business Students*
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<th>Advantages</th>
<th>Positivism</th>
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<td>Economical collection of large amount of data</td>
<td>Facilitates understanding of how and why</td>
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<td>Clear theoretical focus for the research at the outset</td>
<td>Enables researcher to be alive to changes which occur during the research process</td>
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<td>Greater opportunity for researcher to retain control of research process</td>
<td>Good at understanding social processes</td>
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<td>Easily comparable data</td>
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<tr>
<td>Disadvantages</td>
<td>Inflexible – direction often cannot be changed once data collection has started</td>
<td>Data collection can be time consuming</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Weak at understanding social processes</td>
<td>Data analysis is difficult</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Often does not discover the meanings people attach to social phenomena</td>
<td>Researcher has to live with the uncertainty that clear patterns may not emerge</td>
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<td>Generally perceived as less credible by “non-researchers”</td>
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**Table 3.2 Paradigms – advantages and disadvantages**

*From Research Methods for Business Students*

There is little known about the phenomenon of a new business model approach to school leadership other than qualitative data already examined in the Literature Review. As the answers to the research question will be subjective and with no hypothesis to test, an interpretive paradigm approach was adopted. This allowed the researcher to develop a greater understanding of the perspectives of individuals and would also accommodate any potential changes that may occur during the research process.
3.2 Research Approaches

Qualitative research, according to Hennink et al., (2011, pp. 8-9) ‘is an approach that allows you to examine people’s experiences in detail’ while Denzin & Lincoln (1994, p. 2) define it as a study of ‘things in their natural setting, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meanings people bring to them’. Qualitative research usually comprises interviews, observations or focus groups.

The ontological and epistemological stance adopted was that of subjectivity and in order to understand perceptions of educationalists and the roles of school leaders and business managers, a collection of quantitative data was not relevant.

3.4 Research Strategies

Research strategies must be appropriate to the objectives of the research and, in considering the advantages and disadvantages of the three core methods, the interview method was considered to be the most appropriate as it would allow the researcher to determine opinions and gain a greater understanding of the rationale for those opinions. Interviews are used in research as a way of trying to ‘understand something from the subjects point of view’ (Kvale, 1996, no pagination) or, as defined by Easwaramoorthy and Zarinpoush, ‘a conversation for gathering information’ (2006) which would allow the researcher to achieve the understanding needed for this research.

The three primary interviews used in research are structured, unstructured and semi-structured. Structured interviews comprise pre-determined questions, asked in a specific order, that do not allow for deviation. Gill et al. (2008, p. 291) point out that, while structured interviews are quick and easy to manage, they ‘only allow for limited participant responses and are, therefore, of little use if “depth” is required’. Structured questions are generally used in quantitative studies within a positivist research paradigm and they allow little exploration of
topics beyond what has been pre-determined. To allow the researcher to develop an understanding of the rationale for participants’ perspectives the researcher rejected this method of interview.

In unstructured interviews there are no pre-determined questions and although a plan might be formed, the interview process is very much spontaneous. This interviewing technique is ‘far more difficult to conduct’ and the interviewer needs to be ‘very well versed with the underlying research thesis’ (Harvey, 2014). Unstructured interviews tend to be most useful when ‘virtually nothing is known about the subject’ (Gill, et al., 2008, p. 291). The researcher wanted to use pre-determined questions, designed as a result of the interviewer’s knowledge of the participant groups, which were relevant to the study and each group. Therefore, the unstructured method was rejected.

Semi-structured interviews are ‘organised around a set of pre-determined open ended questions, with other questions emerging from the dialogue’ (DiCicco Bloom & Crabtree, 2006, p. 315) and they allow ‘for the discovery or elaboration of information that is important to participants but may not have previously been thought of as pertinent by the research team’ (Gill, et al., 2008, p. 291). This method allows the interviewer or interviewee to ‘diverge in order to pursue an idea or response in more detail’ (Britten, 1999, pp. 11-19). The semi-structured method would therefore allow the researcher to ask pre-determined questions but allow flexibility to deviate in order to clarify and gain a better understanding of the interviewee’s perspectives which, in turn, would help to refine the research findings. This method was deemed to be the most appropriate and was adopted for the qualitative study.

3.5 Triangulation

Triangulation, in which more than one method of research is undertaken, is used to enhance the validity and reliability of research findings and can consist of theoretical, data or analysis. Data triangulation ‘depicts the use of multiple data sources in the same study for validation purposes’ (Hussein, 2009, p. 3).
Consideration was given to examining quantitative data to determine whether there is any correlation between groups of individuals, gender and age, in terms of their views on educational leadership. However, the researcher considers that further verification and exploration was unnecessary for this research although it could contribute to further research in the future.

3.6 Bias

In the context of research, bias occurs through a systematic error in which a specific outcome or response is encouraged over others. The Association for Qualitative Research (2014) recognises that bias in qualitative research is problematic because ‘by definition the qualitative researcher is part of the process, and all researchers are different’. By adopting an interpretive research paradigm there is a risk of bias through the interpretation of responses, and to minimise this risk the researcher sought clarification on responses where there was any doubt or ambiguity. Interview responses were transcribed by the researcher.

Sampling bias occurs as a result of under-representation of specific groups of people and, in an attempt to ensure an unbiased representation, the research was confined to one geographical area but comprised a variety of school phase and type. The headteacher and school business manager, along with a selection of senior leadership team members, teachers and governors from each school was selected.

3.7 Ethics

An explanatory letter, shown in Appendix Two, was sent to each school prior to the interviews, confirming that responses would remain anonymous and confidential, and that individuals could choose to participate in an online survey, comprising of a replica of questions to be asked at interview, if they favoured this approach. The covering letter provided details of the researcher, the university, the purpose and nature of the research and clarified that data protection would be
complied with. This ensured that participants had sufficient information in order to give informed consent to participating to the research study.

### 3.8 Research Design

The purpose of the qualitative interviews was to examine current school leadership models and determine the views of professionals about alternative models in a sector that is being politically driven to achieve marketization. The research aims were to identify whether the conventional model of headship in England is sustainable and to consider if an alternative model, in which a business professional with support from a teaching senior leadership team, would be appropriate.

#### 3.8.1 Research Questions

A set of research questions was established and, while these were thematically matched, there was a slight adaptation to ensure they were appropriate to the participant. The open-ended questions, shown in Appendix 3, centred on leadership, the headteacher and the school business manager. The interviews had three objectives:-

- To determine the current model of leadership within a variety of schools.
- To determine if a school business manager is employed and, if so, in what capacity.
- To determine interviewees’ perspectives of a business professional undertaking the role of school leader with support from a teaching senior leadership team or senior teacher.

#### 3.8.2 Interviews

Face-to-face interviews were conducted at the interviewee’s school to ensure the participant was in comfortable surroundings that would facilitate a more relaxed interview and remove the need for excessive travel. In an attempt to minimise disruption the participating schools attempted to secure dates when each group of interviewees would be available together although this proved unachievable in some instances due to individual commitments. Each individual was interviewed
separately, with the exception of governors who were interviewed together in an effort to replicate the model of governors as one corporate body.

### 3.8.3 Sample

A non-probability purposive sample, where ‘the researcher samples on the basis of wanting to interview people who are relevant to the research question’ (Bryman, 2008, p. 458) was selected as it was the most appropriate. Twenty schools, within a defined geographical location, were selected for interview. Some of the respondents were unable to commit to a specific date for interview and requested that they respond by survey. A survey creation website was used to facilitate this method and maintain anonymity: the same interview questions were used. Table 3.3 depicts how each group of professionals contributed to the interview and shows that the lowest number of participants was the headteacher group who declined for various reasons as outlined in the Findings Chapter. Where more than one participant from a school took part in the same method of interview the table shows this as one response.

### 3.9 Response Rate

Staff and governors of twenty schools, within the selected geographical location, were approached to participate in the qualitative research. The schools comprised maintained primary, secondary and special schools, a quarter of these being academies or free schools. At least one person participated from nineteen of the schools, with one school declining to take part. Overall the response rate was good with the poorest response rate being that of the headteachers. Twenty headteachers were invited to participate and although twelve agreed to do so, three subsequently withdrew while a fourth, who had requested to participate to the online survey, failed to submit the completed questionnaire. Therefore, less than half of the headteachers who were approached took part.

Eighteen of the schools had a school business manager (SBM) in post, seventeen of whom participated in the research. Twelve of the seventeen SBMs are members of the school’s senior leadership team.
In order to achieve a diversity of views, a combination of deputy headteachers, assistant headteachers and special educational needs co-ordinators, who are members of the school’s senior leadership team, were interviewed. From the teaching group, a selection of experienced teachers, newly qualified teachers and middle leaders, were selected in an attempt to obtain a wide range of views. In the primary phase one teacher from early years was selected along with one from key stage 1 or key stage 2. Fifteen senior leadership team members participated along with twenty-four members of the teaching staff.

The final group of interviewees comprised members of the governing body or board of trustees (the board). The logistics of interviewing a corporate board proved unachievable and, in an attempt to obtain both diversity and greater representation, three members of the board from each school were invited to participate. A total of 30 board members representing 16 schools took part in the data collection, 4 of which were chairs of the board and all had served for at least one year, with the majority (31) having served on a board for at least 3 years.
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**Table 3.3 – Sample’s selected methods**

**Key:**
- I: Face to face interview
- T: Telephone interview
- S: Survey
3.10 Summary

Based on the research question, philosophy and paradigm, the researcher considered the semi-structured interview method, within the context of a non-probability purposive sample, to be the most appropriate for this study. While the researcher made every effort to interview each participant, time constraints and commitments led to almost half of the respondents being interviewed either by telephone or via an online survey. It was disappointing that 40% of headteachers did not participate and this poor representation may impact on the findings analysed in the next chapter.
Chapter 4: Findings

4.1 Introduction

This chapter outlines the key findings of the qualitative research undertaken with heads, school business managers (SBMs), teachers and governors. Interviews were conducted over a period of two months and were based on a pre-defined set of questions (Appendix Three). Many of the questions led to further discussions with the interviewees, predominantly to clarify answers that the researcher was unclear about and to develop the response.

To address the research question around the sustainability of the conventional headteacher model, the questions were designed to discuss the role of the headteacher, the role of the SBM, the school's senior leadership team (SLT) structure and the concept of unqualified professionals serving as headteachers. Interviewees were asked to share their perceptions of schools operating as a business before presenting the final question of whether a chief executive model is an appropriate alternative to the traditional headteacher model.

4.2 Qualitative Data – Qualifications, Models & the Future

In order to address the research question of the sustainability of the conventional model of school leadership, the researcher was keen to explore how the abolition of Qualified Teacher Status (QTS) and the mandatory National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) had impacted on individual schools and academies.

4.2.1 Qualifications and Experience

The research found that the headteacher of every school that participated held both QTS and the NPQH, but in sixteen of the schools the headteacher conducted no classroom teaching, although one did so ‘in an emergency’ while another carried out classroom teaching ‘for two hours per week just to keep in practice’. Although the qualitative study found that the majority of headteachers no longer conduct classroom teaching, seven of the eight participating
headteachers maintain that QTS should be mandatory and that, as one headteacher stated, ‘a person without QTS and teaching experience has no business running a school’. In contrast to this view a principal of an Academy told the researcher that, although he held QTS, it was ‘no longer important’, explaining that:

*I do not conduct any teaching, ever, and I have no desire to. I moved into headship because I wanted to lead schools, not teach. I have an exceptionally strong senior leadership team who are proactive and not afraid to question any judgments I make. As a team, we work together to ensure our standards are consistently high and they are responsible for providing me with information gained from observations while I do the comparative analyses. So, do I think we need QTS to do that? No, I don’t. I think what every principal or headteacher needs is a strong team to support him or her but teaching qualifications are not the be all and end all that they once were.*

In contrast to this, the headteacher of a community primary school told the researcher:

*I might not teach but I still need to understand the profession. How can anybody with no teaching experience or qualification say they are suitably equipped to make a judgment on the standards of teaching and learning? I have a strong SLT but they are all subjected to the same scrutiny that the teachers are subjected to. We are rigorous in ensuring that we maintain the high standards that we are known for and this could not be achieved if I didn’t understand the core principles of teaching.*

The majority of board members interviewed agreed that it is crucial that headteachers hold QTS, with many expressing concern that it is no longer a mandatory requirement and a small minority considering the importance of the qualification to be:

*Exaggerated – our head doesn’t teach, he leads the teaching profession so why does he need to be a teacher? What we need now is a qualification that teachers and non-teachers can undertake that equips them with the knowledge needed to lead a school.*

On exploring the question further a trustee referred to the appointment of the academy’s principal, in which a number of candidates were shortlisted, and went on to say:
The candidate that seemed to bring the most in terms of leadership skills, developing staff, understanding the whole organisation from a leadership perspective, was not a qualified teacher. The whole of the board agreed that this person was the best candidate but felt that they were unable to justify appointing somebody without QTS. There’s a shortage of headteachers but there are some fantastic leaders out there that could easily do the job but people won’t accept such a controversial move.

Another governor alluded to the headteacher shortage and emphasised the need to:

…ensure that deputy heads and outstanding teachers are given an opportunity to fast-track into headship by bringing in a more appropriate qualification.

However, discussions with teaching staff indicated little interest in moving on to headship, as they considered it to be ‘too onerous’ and ‘a thankless job’. A small number of SBMs indicated an interest in pursuing a headship qualification with nine of the participants acknowledging that, although QTS is no longer mandatory, a suitable alternative qualification should be offered. One SBM, who works across a chain of academies, believes:

The time is right for education to move on and for people like me and other SBMs to be supported to become school leaders of the future. I am applying for the next round of NPQH, my headteacher supports me although some of the teachers thought it a little odd.

Other SBMs believe that teaching responsibilities should be overseen by a suitably qualified person:

What do I know about teaching? Nothing. What does any SBM know about teaching? How can we decide if a teacher is good or not? Heads definitely need to be experienced teachers.

Another SBM recognised that ‘the world of schooling has changed. I know very few heads teach now and so effectively don’t need QTS but I don’t see how that helps pupils’.

The majority of headteachers that were interviewed felt that the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) was ‘not as useful as it could be’ with one headteacher, who completed the course two years ago, suggesting
that ‘it needs a complete re-vamp; it needs to be more current and useful’. When headteachers were asked if they would support a non-teacher to undertake the NPQH, only half agreed that they would support it, although one of these commented:

I’d support a non-teacher to do it but only for professional development purposes. It shouldn’t be used as a pre-requisite to appointment as a headteacher because he or she still wouldn’t have the understanding of teaching and learning.

While the majority of headteachers, according to the study, no longer conduct classroom teaching, there is an overwhelming view amongst them that qualified teaching status should be reinstated as a mandatory requirement and that an unqualified person should not be leading schools. The justification for their argument was predominantly that headteachers have a duty to make judgments on the quality of teaching and learning which would not be possible without relevant teaching experience. In considering the abolition of QTS many of the participants believed that the qualification provides headteachers with ‘credibility’ and that it ‘empowers them to make difficult decisions on whether the teaching and learning is of a suitably high standard’. One governor commented:

Would you have surgery from somebody who was an engineer? No you wouldn’t, so why on earth would we want our schools to be led by somebody who doesn’t understand teaching?

In considering this perspective a SBM argued:

There’s a view from most people that you can’t be the head of a school unless you’ve been a teacher. I disagree. I’ve been a school governor for many years, I’ve worked in schools most of my life moving from admin to my current role as SBM on the senior leadership team. I understand the data, the school, the children and the strategic focus. I know our financial situation and most of the parents. My head doesn’t go into classes to teach, he doesn’t know the budget like I do and he definitely doesn’t know many parents. What makes him better placed to be the head than me?

It was interesting that specific post-holders had different views, as demonstrated by an argument from another experienced SBM, who considers teaching experience to be ‘crucial’, explaining:
I’m a business professional and couldn’t do my job without the business knowledge that I have just like a head couldn’t do the job without the teaching knowledge’, going on to say ‘Whether the head teaches or not is irrelevant, what’s important is that they know good teaching, that they have the knowledge to make judgments and that they can lead a team of teachers.

When discussing the concept of an unqualified individual taking on leadership of the school, teachers felt that such a concept would be ‘challenging’ and questioned whether they could adapt to accepting leadership from a person with no experience in the classroom. Yet almost half of those interviewed from senior leadership teams (SLTs) believed that there could be some justification for an alternative model. One SLT member, whose role is that of special educational needs co-ordinator and has been teaching for fifteen years, told the researcher:

I’ve seen some huge changes in schools. Administrators are now managers, headteachers are now administrators. So, I guess there is some argument for a new model to be considered. I’m sure some free schools and academies have already moved away from the traditional headteacher model.

4.2.2 Education Reforms

There was a mixed response to discussions around the changing educational landscape. No headteacher participating in the study had been in post prior to the implementation of Local Management of Schools (LMS) and was, therefore, unable to compare the role pre-LMS to the current day. Around 35% of board members interviewed had been involved in education prior to the implementation of LMS and consider it to be the start of ‘the decline of the profession’ with one governor pointing out that:

Before 1992 we had local authorities that dealt with the bureaucracy of employment law, budget setting, premises and so on. The government changed that and schools have suffered as a result.

Like the headteachers, the majority of teachers and SLT members interviewed had been appointed after LMS was brought in, and the small minority that had been in education prior to 1992 agree that LMS had a significant impact, with one SLT member explaining:
I planned on being a headteacher. I believed I would be one, but then LMS came in and I saw how much the job changed – it’s not about teaching anymore and that’s a real shame. Suffice to say I chose to refrain from moving into headship.

4.2.3 School Business Management and School Leadership

The researcher asked interviewees about school business managers (SBMs) and, in particular, their views on whether the SBM should be involved in school leadership. Half of the headteachers felt that the SBM role is a strategic leadership role but, according to one headteacher, this should only be in terms of ‘the business-side – e.g., finance, premises’ while another long-serving headteacher dismissed the idea, commenting that:

School business managers are a great idea but they shouldn’t be involved in strategic decision making. Their job is a managerial one, as the job title says, not a leader. SBMs can really help heads to concentrate on teaching and learning but they shouldn’t be allowed to intervene in the strategic direction of the school.

A similar response came from a headteacher who had been in post for almost twenty years, telling the researcher ‘I value my SBM immensely but she has no place on SLT as we only look at curriculum development’, while another headteacher found it difficult to contemplate a SLT with no SBM representation:

Why would the SBM not be part of the school’s leadership team? I often wonder how our SLT functioned before [the SBM] joined it. [The SBM] keeps us on track, can advise us on what will work and what won’t work based on our financial position. She puts things into perspective and gives us a different view. She has allowed the school to make some difficult decisions by keeping us informed and by bringing in her business expertise.

The majority of interviewees felt that SBMs should be part of the school’s leadership team and one trustee expressed concern at the number of headteachers who do not include the SBM on their SLT, claiming that this may be because some heads are ‘threatened by SBMs’.

When teachers were asked about the role of the SBM, many of them considered the post-holder to be responsible for ‘the budget’, ‘ordering resources’, ‘providing
admin support’, and ‘managing health and safety’ with only one teacher making reference to leadership. SBMs expressed frustration that the strategic leadership role they play in school is not recognised and that ‘too many teachers think I’m an administrator with a fancy title’. The diversity of responsibilities of a school business manager were discussed and one SBM told the researcher:

When I think of the amount of responsibilities I have – a £3m budget, health and safety of over 400 children and 70 staff, ensuring all recruitment checks are carried out and that all our staff members are safe to work with children, legal compliance, managing maintenance contracts, ensuring value for money, liaising with governors not to mention managing the admin team and helping out on reception. What the deputy and assistant heads have to do doesn’t compare at all.

This SBM explained that the school has one deputy headteacher and one assistant headteacher and that:

The deputy teaches 3 days per week and is responsible for pupil assessments and community connections while the assistant head teaches two days per week and is responsible for child protection and special needs. I know that these are really important areas but I have a lot more responsibility yet I don’t get the same respect by staff that they do. What’s more I get half of their salary. Something has to be done to change this.

There appeared to be a sense of recognition amongst board members of the importance of the SBM role, with comments such as ‘….it has truly liberated our head who can now concentrate on the core purpose of his role’ and:

All of the governors feel secure that our school complies with all the legal requirements expected of it thanks to [the SBM] who makes sure that everything is as it should be.

4.2.4 Chief Executives as School Leaders
Interviewees were asked to consider a new model of educational leadership comprising of a chief executive supported by a teaching senior leadership team. The question was intentionally controversial and provoked a number of reactions. One headteacher responded:

I understand that education is perceived to be competitive now, and this has intensified with the ever increasing number of academies offering all kinds of
promises and outcomes. However, we are not a business. We may compete for pupils because we have no choice, but we are not a business.

Interestingly the principal of a free school, who has been in post for less than three years, was extremely positive about the model, commenting that he could see ‘real benefits’ of business professionals taking over school leadership, telling the researcher:

I absolutely see my academy as a business. I want pupils to come here and have a wonderful experience and I want money to come in so that we can give the children even greater experiences. I challenge anybody who tells me that service providers are not businesses, of course they are. If we look at utility companies and public transport providers; they are service providers, but ultimately they see themselves as businesses and, as a business, they have chief executives responsible for the strategic development of that business. I know lots of heads say that an unqualified person can’t be a headteacher because they have no teaching experience. I disagree, and my response is to ask them if they think the chief executive of Southern Rail or Virgin Trains is a train driver.

The majority of SLT members and teachers that were interviewed felt that they could not reasonably respond to the question because such a model is ‘unknown’ while three of the SBM interviewees agreed that ‘It could work’, going on to say that ‘it might take a little while but I think it will probably happen’. One board member, however, argued:

The government wants us to believe that schools are corporate businesses, but they’re not and they never will be. Why on earth would I ever consider allowing this school to be led by a chief executive? I can’t see the rationale behind the theory.

Another board member considered such a model to be ‘an absolutely ludicrous idea’. Trustees were more receptive than governors, possibly due to the different culture in which academies operate. One trustee responded:

I believe it’s the way forward and actually I totally support it. There is a drive for privatisation of education and it’s moved on tremendously since 2010 with so many converter academies and free schools opening. I think a chief executive model, supported by a Head of Teaching & Learning could work and be the solution to the fact that recruiting headteachers has become very challenging.
4.3 Summary of Qualitative Study Findings

The interviews presented headteachers, school business managers, teachers and governors with an opportunity to consider the current model of school leadership and assess its sustainability. It gave staff members and governors an opportunity to reflect on what constitutes school leadership in the current educational climate and it provided them with an opportunity to consider both current and future models.

An analysis of the findings is presented in Chapter 5 along with similarities and contrasts to the findings of the Literature Review.
Chapter 5: Discussion

5.1 Introduction
The aim of this research was to explore and challenge the relevance and sustainability of the conventional headteacher model that is used in England, and to obtain views on the role of the school business manager (SBM), in order to determine whether a business professional is better placed to serve as a school leader. This was achieved by an in-depth study of the relevant literature and a qualitative study comprising interviews with educational professionals. The qualitative study was conducted to examine whether the abolition of compulsory qualifications for headteachers has impacted on school leadership; to explore how educational reforms have impacted on schools; and to obtain the views of educational professionals and volunteers, on school leadership, the rise of the SBM, and the concept of appointing non-educationalists as headteachers.

This chapter analyses the findings of the qualitative research and compares it to the findings of the Literature Review to determine similarities and disparities, in order to determine a conclusion to the research question. The chapter will be sub-divided and thematised to match the pre-defined interview questions and themes that arose from the interviews.

5.2 Leadership or Educational Leadership – It Does Matter
The starting point of the Literature Review in Chapter 2 was an exploration of the concept that leadership and educational leadership are not the same. It found that although individuals' perceptions vary and the topic is subjective the evidence suggested that leadership and educational leadership are the same and that leadership can be adapted to support the context of the organisation. On exploring this question with those participating in the qualitative study the views were mixed, both within the groups of participants as much as between individuals, and the researcher found that specific factors, namely length of service and school type, appeared to influence perspectives.
5.2.1 Length of Service
The qualitative research found that members of staff and board members who had served for more than ten years disagreed with Mills’ findings (2005) that leadership should not be differentiated according to the context of the organisation. There was a general view within this group that educational provision is a specialist service and, as such, specialist leaders, with relevant skills and experience, are needed in schools. They argue that an individual with no educational leadership skills would not have sufficient knowledge to lead schools and raise standards correlating with the headteachers identified in the literature review. In contrast, the majority of participants who had been working, or volunteering, in education for less than five years, felt that the context of the organisation is irrelevant. They argue that education has been subjected to relentless and significant changes, and that a leader who can keep abreast of change and ensure staff are inspired and equipped to adapt, are more valuable than a teaching qualification and experience within the education sector.

5.2.2 Type of School
The analysis found that the type of school in which the participant works contributed to their views on whether leadership and educational leadership are the same. The headteachers of maintained schools in the sample agreed with Southworth (2005) that the two types of leadership are different from each other while leaders of academies, including free schools, were more inclined to consider the two terms to be the same. Teachers and board members had mixed views but the majority that considered educational leadership to be different from leadership were, on the whole, from maintained schools.

The only group that were unanimous in their agreement with Moos and Miller (2003) and Mills (2005), that leadership should not be differentiated according to the organisational context, was the school business managers.
5.3 Leadership and Headship – Qualifications Do Matter

Chapter 2 found that qualified teacher status (QTS) was abolished as a mandatory requirement for headteachers in 2001 and the researcher wanted to explore how many of the headteachers in the sample hold QTS. The qualitative study also served as an opportunity to determine perspectives about the abolition from the various participants. Every headteacher in the sample had QTS but as the number of headteachers participating was low, the findings may not be truly reflective and could be more accurately determined by a larger research study.

The majority of board members felt strongly that it is crucial that headteachers are qualified teachers with many expressing a view that they would not appoint a headteacher without the qualification, correlating with the findings of Woods et al. (2012). The remaining board members acknowledged that the role of headteacher is significantly different to how it was before the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) and that the desk-based model alluded to by Woods et al. (2012) indicates that a teaching qualification is no longer a necessity, although there was unanimity amongst all participants that a professional qualification similar to the NPQH for headteachers should be mandatory.

The Literature Review implied that headteachers are spending less time, if any, carrying out classroom activities. The majority of headteachers who contributed to the qualitative study no longer carry out any teaching duties and those that do only do so in an emergency and for a limited period of time. There were concerns raised by some participants that the current model of school headship, in which the headteacher is predominantly desk-based, may lead to a disassociation from teaching and learning. The same group suggested that where a practitioner is not conducting regular classroom teaching their QTS becomes redundant as it does not facilitate an understanding of current practice.

There was unanimity amongst the sample headteachers that the abolition of the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) was disappointing as it had served as a useful resource during the induction period, while all
participant groups agreed that a revised qualification is needed. Around half of the board members responsible for appointing headteachers concurred that they would refrain from appointing an individual to the post of headteacher if the applicant did not hold a professional qualification. There was a general consensus amongst participants that the findings of Bush (2013) and PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007), that the government abolished mandatory qualifications for headteachers in an attempt to attract non-educationalists to the role, was an accurate assumption. The majority of participants, particularly from teaching backgrounds, considered the abolition of qualifications to be a de-professionalization of the role of headteacher.

There was little information within the literature as to the views of educational professionals on non-teachers undertaking the NPQH programme, but the qualitative study found that very few headteachers would support a non-teaching member of staff to undertake it. Six headteachers, and around three quarters of the board members that contributed to the study, expressed a view that schools should not appoint an individual with NPQH if that individual is not a qualified teacher. While this view was shared by many participants, those from academies and free schools were more receptive to the concept of non-teachers achieving NPQH and pursuing a career as headteacher. School business managers were, on the whole, receptive to non-teaching staff achieving a national professional qualification although many of them acknowledged that achieving credibility as a school leader without qualified teacher status would be challenging, correlating with the case study in paragraph 2.5.

It is clear from the literature review that employing unqualified teachers as school leaders could be a potential solution to the headteacher recruitment crisis although the qualitative study found resistance to such a model, concurring with Berliner (2012) that such a move would ‘dilute the profession’. However, there was less resistance amongst participants from academies and free schools and the school business manager group, although all participants agreed on the need for a strong national qualification to be introduced as a mandatory requirement.
Around three quarters of the schools involved in the study were maintained schools with the remaining comprising academies and free schools.

5.4 Education Reform – A Continuous Impact

It is clear from the literature and the qualitative study that educational reform since 1988 has had a significant impact on schools. The literature emphasised that the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) was promoted as an act that would empower parents although it concluded that in reality the Act was part of an agenda to remove power from local authorities and bring schools into the marketplace. Although the literature found that headteachers had concerns about the concept of competing with neighbouring schools (Downes, 1998), the qualitative study did not support this finding, indicating that the concept of competition across schools is now embedded in school life. The headteachers that participated in the qualitative study were appointed after the ERA and, as such, were not able to confirm or refute the literature review findings about the impact of the Act, but a small number of other participants who were in post pre-1988 confirmed the pressures schools faced following implementation of the ERA. There was general agreement amongst headteachers and teachers that the growth of academies and free schools has intensified competition, particularly within the secondary phase.

Most of the interviewees were able to relate to education reforms post-2010, and many referred to the relentless drive by the government for schools to convert to academy status, which they believed was being pursued in order to achieve greater parity with the private sector. The sample agreed that the implementation of performance-related pay demonstrated this, with the majority of participants viewing it negatively and three-quarters of schools not yet fully engaged with awarding pay based on performance.

Although the government has remained committed to marketization of public services this appeared to be of no concern to schools participating in the qualitative study, indicating that schools have adapted to the concept.
5.5 New Public Management in Education – A Necessity

According to the qualitative research, policy implementation is challenging in schools and has led to them adopting alternative working practices and models, comprising New Public Management (NPM) principles, to facilitate the achievement of greater efficiencies. These principles are comparable with those adopted in the private sector and the study found that all schools now have established business models in place. However, all school business managers and the majority of other participants, consider these models to be normal working practice which is possibly due to the high number of participants that are relatively new to the education sector.

Many of the teachers that participated in the study were unenthused by the business principles their school had adopted and agreed with McEwen et al. (2002) that they should not be incorporated into the field of education. These teachers argue that business models result in unnecessary bureaucracy which, in turn, inhibits teachers, with particular reference being made to school procedures around procurement and health and safety, which they considered ‘hoops to jump through’. In contrast all of the headteachers in the study value the principles of new public management and acknowledge that the lack of service provision by local authorities has served as a contributing factor to the need for business methods to be adopted. The headteachers in the study had been appointed to headship following many years of teaching and were unanimous in the view that they had insufficient business knowledge to manage those areas relating to non-teaching for which they were ultimately responsible.

Like headteachers and school business managers, the majority of the board members considered business methods to be critical in order to achieve greater efficiencies and the accountability required of schools. School business managers agreed with the majority of board members that adopting business models, similar to those in the private sector, have become a necessity concurring with the findings of Lubienski (2009).
5.6   Is Distributed Leadership Really Happening?

The literature review concluded that distributed leadership has accelerated in recent years and all headteachers in the sample told the researcher that this model was in place at their school. Yet on exploring this with teachers, there was a general feeling of uncertainty about the concept of distributed leadership because, as they pointed out, final decisions are made by the headteacher, correlating with the findings of Creasy et al. (2004), and these decisions are, at times, not necessarily supported by staff. This view was shared by many of the senior leadership team members who felt that while they regularly contribute to strategic discussions their views are, at times, dismissed by the headteacher. On exploring this issue further there was an intimation that some headteachers potentially confuse the concept of distributed leadership with that of delegation while a small number of board members suggested that such a model is defined by the headteacher and will differ between schools. The qualitative study suggests that while headteachers may have a desire to share leadership responsibilities there is evidence that this is not happening, but the reason for this needs further investigation and would be an interesting topic for future research.

The researcher wanted to understand how senior leadership teams (SLTs) in the sample schools developed in order to determine if the 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) was a contributory factor to the growth of these teams. Many of the SLT members agreed that the workload pressures and increased accountabilities of headteachers, emanating from education reforms and policies, led to the development and growth of the SLT, correlating with the findings of Earley et al. (2012). There was general agreement amongst SLT members that such a team is crucial in schools in order to contribute to school improvement and facilitate the shared leadership concept. While more than two-thirds of the teachers in the sample agreed that SLTs are important in a school environment there were suggestions that they are viewed by some members of staff with caution, suggesting a potential misunderstanding of the purpose of the team and the context of its membership. This is particularly pertinent in the case of school
business managers (SBMs) on senior leadership teams with less than one-fifth of teachers interviewed agreeing that SBMs should be part of the SLT. This confirms the findings of the National Association of School Business Managers (NASBM) that SBMs are not yet fully acknowledged as part of the school’s leadership structure.

The size and composition of senior leadership teams (SLTs) varied between the schools in the sample, ranging from three members in one school to eight in another. Three quarters of the SBMs in the study are members of SLT although the majority of these suggested that they do not feel completely integrated due to their lack of knowledge on issues about curriculum matters. This would suggest that while the function of SBMs is non-teaching related, there is potential for training in teaching and learning issues to facilitate their development and subsequent engagement within the leadership team. This, in turn, could contribute to SBMs achieving greater credibility from the teaching staff.

5.7 The School Business Manager – a pseudo-profession

The literature review explored how the school business manager (SBM) role developed and made reference to the conscious move away from job titles that are associated solely with financial management to ones that capture the diversity of the tasks undertaken by SBMs. However, on discussing this role with teachers in the qualitative study there was a strong misconception as to the purpose of the SBM, with more than two-thirds of teachers considering it to be one of financial and administrative management. Three headteachers referred to the SBM role as operational management, failing to acknowledge the strategic leadership role identified in the literature review and by some participants.

The school business managers that participated in the qualitative study suggested that the level of responsibility of the post is not fully recognised both internally and more widely. The majority of this group alluded to a feeling of being under-valued, with many suggesting that they have more responsibility than other members of the senior leadership team and senior teachers, and all
except two of the SBMs identified significant disparities between salaries of SBMs and those of other members of the SLT. Board members acknowledged the significant responsibilities that SBMs have and the majority were in agreement that SBMs should form part of the senior leadership team, although just under half of those interviewed suggested that when they make reference to SLT they are predominantly referring to the teaching members.

The qualitative study found many disparities surrounding the strategic and leadership work in which SBMs are involved. The National Association of School Business Managers (NASBM) have identified the need for the profession to be recognised for its professionalism and the implementation of professional standards will undoubtedly contribute to achieving greater recognition and credibility.

5.8 The Chief Executive Model – Too Much Too Soon

The literature review suggested that the changing role of the headteacher has resulted in it being to a non-teaching desk-based post that could be filled by a chief executive. There was an argument that headteachers who are not practising teachers are less able to judge standards that comply with current practice. More than two-thirds of the sample agreed that new models of headship are undoubtedly imminent, particularly with reforms that have made it increasingly easier for non-teachers to enter the profession. While headteachers and principals of academies and free schools were receptive to the concept of a chief executive model, the headteachers of the maintained schools in the study strongly opposed the concept, arguing that a model in which the headteacher is not a qualified teacher, would dilute the profession. This view was shared by many board members and one that correlates with the findings of Smithers & Robinson (2007) and Berliner (2012). While many of the teachers in the study felt unable to engage in a discussion about the chief executive model, just over half of those that contributed were opposed to it.
The qualitative study concurred with the review of the literature that a new model of headship taken on by a chief executive, or a similar unqualified teacher model, is one that is seen differently by different people, but almost half of the participants were not opposed to such a model, suggesting that professionals have become receptive to alternative models. The headteacher shortage, the significant change to the role and the shift towards marketization within the sector are factors that may well lead to alternative models of school leaders in the near future.

5.9 Summary
The qualitative study emphasised how individuals' views on school leadership vary greatly but also demonstrated that long-serving educationalists and those from the maintained sector are less likely to accept a non-teaching headship model. In contrast those that are new to education and those working in academies and free schools, are more receptive to the concept of non-teachers as school leaders provided they are supported by a senior teacher and strong leadership team.

The majority of those that participated in the qualitative study agreed with the literature that the role of school business manager has grown increasingly important within schools to ensure that best model business principles are applied. There was, however, misunderstanding amongst teachers about the role particularly in terms of the strategic leadership aspect of school business management.
Chapter 6: Conclusions

6.1 Introduction

This study set out to explore educational leadership in England since 1988 to assess the impact that policy reforms have had on the role and to determine if the traditional model of headteacher is one that is relevant and sustainable. The rationale of the study was that the educational landscape has changed significantly since 1988, leading to schools enduring greater responsibilities and accountability. The outcome of the reforms are far and wide but, most notably in schools, the impact has been a significant change to the role of the headteacher and an implicit need to adopt new public management principles to accommodate the responsibilities and accountabilities that schools now have.

In order to address the research question surrounding the sustainability and relevance of the conventional headteacher model it was necessary to examine the impact of educational policies and reforms, particularly on headteachers, but also to explore how the school business management profession has grown in order to assess the potential of business professionals becoming future school leaders.

6.2 Research Findings

The educational reforms of 1988, which introduced greater powers for parents in terms of school choice, were clearly a major contributory factor to the concept of marketization within the education sector. The research has shown that, despite initial concerns about schools operating within a quasi-market, it no longer appears to be a concern, indicating that the marketization concept has been accepted as a generic part of school life. This demonstrates that, potentially, changes can be accepted and adopted irrespective of how radical the proposal may seem at the outset.

Although the degree of subjectivity of this topic was underestimated prior to the study being undertaken, the literature and qualitative study demonstrated the extent and diversity of opinions of both researchers and educational
professionals. It is clear from this research that professionals working within the more recently developed educational establishment models of academies and free schools are more receptive to the concept of unqualified teachers serving as headteachers or principals, and it is suggested that this receptiveness may be an outcome of the relative freedoms to which the staff of these establishments are accustomed. Schools from the maintained sector were strongly opposed to the model with concerns that employing unqualified teachers to work as school leaders would de-professionalise the role and that such a model would not be equipped to judge the quality of teaching and learning. Yet the study showed that while the majority of headteachers hold qualified teacher status (QTS), very few headteachers are regularly participating in classroom teaching. This prompts the question of whether a headteacher with qualified teacher status (QTS) who does not carry out current teaching is more equipped than a business professional without QTS.

This study found that the Local Management of Schools (LMS) programme transferred responsibilities for business management to headteachers whose skills were in teaching and learning. Any potential lack of knowledge about business was not challenged in the way that an alternative model of a headteacher without qualified teacher status (QTS) is. The abolition of the compulsory requirement for headteachers to hold QTS, followed by the removal of the compulsory National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH), indicates that the government is receptive to alternative models of school leaders. The literature shows that the abolition of the NPQH received more attention than the abolition of the mandatory QTS and there is an overwhelming consensus that a revised qualification, which incorporates teaching practices and standards, needs to be implemented.

While educational professionals acknowledge the headteacher recruitment crisis in England, there is no unanimous agreement that appointing a professional without QTS could be a potential solution. Headteachers are particularly opposed to such a model as they feel it would de-professionalise their role and there was collective recognition of the importance of a school business manager
professional in post to lead on business decisions. The literature review found strong support for SBMs forming part of the senior leadership team but the review and qualitative research found disparities in terms of this in practise. Work currently underway by both the National Association of School Business Managers (NASBM) and the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) to professionalise the role of SBMs and ensure the role is recognised, and rewarded, for its leadership aspect, could justify further research on SBMs as leaders, in the future.

Reduced services from local authorities have had a significant impact on schools and SBMs in the qualitative study demonstrated this impact during discussions. It would seem appropriate, therefore, to suggest that while schools need a headteacher who understands teaching and learning, they equally need a business professional who understands business principles.

6.3 Limitations
The research was limited to a representative sample due to restrictions in terms of time and resources, but a variety of school types and groups of people were interviewed to facilitate a greater understanding of people’s perceptions of school leadership and school business managers. The qualitative study showed that a larger scale research study on this topic would be informative.

6.4 Summary of Conclusions
Educational reforms have resulted in tremendous changes to the education sector, and will undoubtedly continue to do so, and there is no doubt that schools need skilled, knowledgeable and inspiring professionals that can lead them through change.

This paper has shown that, while the current traditional headship model works, it has significant weaknesses particularly in relation to the detachment of headteachers from day-to-day teaching and learning. The study has been unable to determine if the desk-based role, now prominent amongst headteachers, is
purely a result of the changes to the role or if it may be a result of individual’s preferences. It is evident from this paper that headteachers need to be more engaged in practical teaching in order to understand current practice and inform judgments, and to facilitate the achievement of greater credibility from colleagues, parents and the wider community. While headteachers consider the abolition of mandatory qualifications to have been responsible for diluting the profession, it could be argued that non-participation in classroom teaching may have been a further contributory factor.

This paper concludes by addressing the initial research question of:

*Is the traditional headteacher model relevant in today’s education sector and is there justification for the implementation of an alternative business leadership model?*

It would seem appropriate to surmise from this paper that the traditional headteacher model is likely to remain as the most popular and prominent headteacher model, for the foreseeable future, particularly within maintained and controlled schools. As more academies and free schools emerge there is potential for alternative models to be adopted.

In response to the research question, the researcher concludes that the traditional model is not relevant or sustainable and that there is a need for headteachers to re-engage with classroom teaching. The paper suggests that a business professional as the school leader is not more relevant than the traditional headteacher model but if headteachers remain disengaged from teaching and learning such a model, supported by a senior teaching leadership team and an appropriate targeted qualification, would be a suitable alternative.
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Bibliography


Appendix 1: Professional Standards Wheel for School Business Managers

Core purpose: Ensuring the optimal strategic leadership for the benefit of the whole learning community

- To safeguard institutions from legal and reputational risk
  - health and safety
  - legal compliance

- To ensure a fit-for-purpose and safe teaching and learning environment
  - estate management
  - capital planning

- To ensure the effective management and deployment of resources
  - financial control
  - budget planning
  - recruitment
  - salaries and payroll

Areas of specialism (levels 4 + 6)

Government policy

Human resource management

Capital planning and estate management

Data management and ICT

Strategic and leadership behaviours

Procurement

Financial management

Governance and assurance

Commerce and communications
Appendix 2: Cover Letter to Sample for Qualitative Study

Dear Sir/Madam

Re: MA Research Project

I am writing to ask for your participation in a research project which I am currently conducting as part of my MA studies with the University of Derby. This research project forms my Independent Studies dissertation and its focus is on school leadership with a view to answering a research question of whether the conventional model of headteacher is sustainable and whether a business professional serving as a chief executive might be a suitable alternative.

I am seeking participation from headteachers, two members, where possible, of the Senior Leadership Team, 2 teachers, members of the board of governors or trustees (2-3 of each school, interviewed together) and school business managers, and to participate you are asked to take part in an interview. The interview comprises of twelve questions focusing on leadership, the role of the headteacher and the role of the school business manager. I estimate that the interview will take no longer than forty-five minutes to one hour, but this is of course dependent on the quality of discussion. The interviews will be anonymised in the publication and, as such, there is no risk of a breach of data protection. No responses will be shared with other members of the school.

The research project will be shared with the supervisor of my studies, the course tutor and the independent review board. You may contact my supervisor, Mr. David Stoten through the University of Derby, Kedleston Road, Derby or by email D.Stoten@Derby.ac.uk.

I do hope you can find the time to participate to allow my report to be reflective of a group of individuals and would like to take this opportunity to thank you very much for your support.

Yours faithfully
Caroline Collins
## Appendix 3: Pre-Defined Questions for Interview Participants

1. How long have you (your head) been a headteacher? If this is pre-1992 how did you (they) adapt to the changes required by LMS?

2. Do you (your Head) hold QTS? How long have you (your head) had this?

3. Do you (your head) hold NPQH? When did you (your head) undertake the study?

4. How do you feel about the abolition of QTS? And NPQH?

5. What do you think are the core differences, if any, between leadership and educational leadership?

6. How often, and for how long, do you (your head) teach now? Is this sufficient to retain an understanding of teaching and learning?

7. Do you think that QTS is still important for headteachers? Why is that?

8. What are your views on the potential for a person without QTS to become heads in the future?

9. Do you have a SBM in post? Why?

10. Is your SBM on the Senior Leadership Team? Why? What is their input? How important is it for a SBM to be on SLT?

11. What do you consider to be the SBM’s role?

12. What are your views about a new model of leadership in which a chief executive leads the school with support from a senior teacher?