



National College for  
Teaching & Leadership

# **Transition to Headship Evaluation and Impact Study**

**Research Report**

**November 2013**

**Abigail Diamond, Jon Adamson, Hayley Lamb,  
Sarah Neat & Sophie Spong - CFE Research**

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## Executive Summary

This report is submitted by CFE Research to the National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL). It is the final report of our longitudinal evaluation of the redesigned National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and Head Start programmes, which was commissioned in February 2010 and ended in June 2013.

### NPQH and Head Start

Through its 2005 Letter of Remit from the Secretary of State, the National College was requested to review NPQH and subsequently commission the design, development and delivery of a model more in-keeping with the needs of headship. Throughout 2006 and 2007 the programme was redesigned to reflect the changing educational and political context and prepare aspiring headteachers for the challenges of headship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The redesigned NPQH programme commenced delivery in March 2008 and concluded in November 2012<sup>1</sup>. From April 2009 NPQH became a mandatory qualification for all candidates seeking their first appointment as a headteacher in the maintained sector in England.

The NPQH model was redesigned to deliver more personalised, flexible provision in order to more closely meet the needs of individuals, schools and local systems. Following attendance at a regional introductory day (RID) where trainees learned more about NPQH and met others on the programme, individuals could draw upon all or some of the following six elements of NPQH in response to their particular needs:

- A mandatory placement at a leadership and development school (LDS) of between 5 to 20 days
- Up to 7 hours of coaching
- National, regional and local events, seminars and master classes
- Work based learning in their own school
- Peer learning with other trainees on the qualification
- Online learning opportunities, including short course units and modules and an online community

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<sup>1</sup> A small number of additional Graduation Boards were undertaken after November 2012 to cover those trainees returning from maternity or long term sickness, deferrals and those who were unsuccessful following the November national moderation board.

Following graduation from NPQH, graduates are eligible to undertake the Head Start programme. This is designed to offer a seamless provision to both enable graduates to move quickly into a headship post and support them during their first two years as a headteacher. The programme is split into two phases, with phase one being open to NPQH graduates and phase two being available to headteachers, designate headteachers and acting headteachers:

Phase One:

- Pre-headship short online courses
- Pre-headship online learning modules
- Graduates online network

Phase Two:

- 20-30 hours of support from a professional partner
- Online learning modules/short courses discussions and seminars
- The new heads online community

## **Research aims and objectives**

The National College commissioned CFE Research in February 2010 to undertake a longitudinal evaluation of the then redesigned NPQH and Head Start programmes.

The overarching aim of the evaluation is to answer the following two research questions:

- What difference is the redesign of the programmes making to the quality and impact of headship?
- What impact are the programmes having on improving the leadership effectiveness of newly appointed headteachers?

Consideration will be given to the overall effectiveness of the programmes in meeting the needs of participants and outcomes for trainees and graduates through the examination of:

- How effective and efficient the provision is in meeting the needs of participants.
- The outcomes of NPQH and Head Start for participants, including the development of the leadership and management skills required for headship, motivation for and progression into headship, and increased awareness, confidence and engagement with government structures and legislation.
- The wider outcomes and impacts of the programmes for young people, the schools in which participants work and the wider community.

## Methodology

The methodology comprises both primary and secondary research in order to construct a rigorous evidence-base. It combines self-reporting on the part of trainees and graduates with robust, objective evidence collected through consultation with key stakeholders. It includes:

- A longitudinal survey of trainees/graduates at three strategic sampling points:
  - Sampling Point A (SPA) following their attendance at the RID and prior to commencing NPQH. A total of 1,815 responses were received equating to a 48% response rate.
  - Sampling Point B (SPB) as they prepare for their graduation board on completion of NPQH. A total of 1,811 responses were received equating to a 48% response rate.
  - Sampling Point D<sup>2</sup> (SPD) 18 months following graduation. A total of 410 computer assisted telephone interviews (CATI) were undertaken equating to a 60% response rate.
- Surveys contained a small number of baseline questions which were replicated through all of the surveys to measure and track the outcomes and impacts of the programme.
- Follow-up depth interviews with trainees and graduates at each sampling point. A total of 30 in depth interviews were undertaken: 11 at SPA, 11 at SPB and 8 at SPD.
- A total of 25 depth interviews with trainees' line managers (primarily headteachers) following their completion of NPQH. A further five interviews were undertaken with governors following completion of the SPD survey.
- In depth interviews with 10 NPQH coaches and 16 LDS headteachers alongside seven professional partners from the Head Start programme.
- Research with the four centres delivering NPQH. Site visits with the Central and London delivery centres in order to engage in consultation with a range of staff, whilst research in the North and South was undertaken by telephone.
- Secondary data analysis of Ofsted and Key Stage 2 data on a small sample of graduates who had moved into a headship role at SPD.

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<sup>2</sup> Sampling Point C (9 months following graduation) was discontinued.

## Key findings

### At the start of NPQH

At the start of the qualification trainees were asked about their previous leadership experience, and satisfaction with the various aspects of the NPQH application and assessment processes and RID. Their motivation for headship was also explored alongside the timescales in which they wanted to move into a headship role and the skills they wished to develop through NPQH.

- One in five trainees had previous leadership experience outside the education sector.
- Line managers/headteachers and other colleagues was the main vehicle for trainees to learn about NPQH, and these individuals were also influential in trainees decisions to undertake the qualification.
- Awareness of Head Start was low amongst trainees even following their RID, with only 53% who had heard of it. Those who had rated their awareness as only 4.37 out of 7.
- Trainees scored most aspects of the application and assessment process highly, with the exception of the 360 degree diagnostic which split the opinions of trainees and stakeholders. Some found it useful, whereas others found that it did not include enough detail and was not clear to fill out.
- Trainees are highly motivated to become headteachers (scoring this at 6.65 out of 7), and the majority (75%) anticipate they will be a headteacher within 18 months of commencing NPQH. This is significantly higher among acting headteachers (93%).
- Trainees want to develop a wide range of skills through NPQH. The most frequently reported include:
  - Managing budgets (77%)
  - Working with Human Resources (HR) and legal issues (69%)
  - Understanding and implementing strategic change (69%)
  - Leading and influencing others (63%)
  - Engaging with the wider community (63%)
  - Developing own confidence (58%)

## Engagement with NPQH

Trainees were asked about how they had engaged with NPQH including which of the six elements they used, how often they accessed them and how useful they were in addressing their development needs. Their awareness of Head Start and timescales for pursuing headship was also examined.

- Trainees use a variety of elements, with 80 per cent using 5 or 6 elements of NPQH.
- Trainees found all elements of NPQH useful in addressing their development needs, scoring nearly all at over 6 out of 7. Trainees scored coaching as the most beneficial element, and on average accessed 6 ½ hours of support. Two-thirds of trainees used 7 or more hours, however, one-third did not use their 7 hour entitlement.
- Peer learning received the lowest score at 5.35, however, trainees stated that although this element did not develop their skills it did provide them with the support and encouragement to complete the programme. It was seen by trainees as an important element to gain support and advice, to share information and to mentor each other through the programme.
- Trainees rated their placement at a LDS highly (6.29 out of 7). The average placement lasted 7 days, and most trainees were assigned projects which were diverse in nature.
- Over two-fifths of trainees had already started looking for a headship position as they prepared for graduation from NPQH. 85% stated that they still planned for their next role to be as a headteacher, with only 2% stating that they did not intend this to be their next role.

## Short-term impacts of NPQH on trainees

A number of impacts were experienced by trainees whilst they were undertaking the qualification including their reported readiness for headship (against the National Standards for Headship).

- Trainees are just as likely to state that they would have undertaken NPQH if it had not been mandatory at SPB as they were at SPA (5.4 out of 7).
- Trainees' motivations for headship remained high throughout the qualification, with no changes in the average score given by trainees between SPA and SPB (6.6 out of 7).
- An overall increase was experienced by trainees when assessing their readiness to become a headteacher, from 5.66 at SPA to 6.24 at SPB (out of 7).

- Alongside overall readiness for headship, trainees reported an increase in their skills in relation to the six National Standards for Headship and across all of their self-assessed leadership skills and capabilities between SPA and SPB, with overall scores of over 6 out of 7 across most statements at SPB.
- When trainees were asked (unprompted) what skills NPQH had had the most impact on, trainees reported the following skill areas:
  - Understanding strategic school development (45%)
  - Coaching skills and understanding how to develop others (42%)
  - Performance/conflict management (29%)
  - Leadership and management (29%)
  - The top three skills trainees thought they had developed through NPQH were:
    - Performance/conflict management
    - Coaching/mentoring/developing others
    - Strategic school development/management/vision
- The three skills trainees thought NPQH had enabled them to develop the least were:
  - Legal and HR
  - Working with parents and the wider community
  - Finance/budget (although a quarter also thought they had developed this skill)
- Managing budgets and working with HR and legal issues were the top two skills that trainees wanted to develop through NPQH (at SPA), but they were the two least developed skills at SPB. However, many stakeholders highlighted that they felt trainees did not need to know about these two areas in detail as they would have staff and external agencies to support them.

## Experience after graduating

18 months after graduation from NPQH trainees were asked about the roles they were in (and for those not yet in a headship position whether or not they still intended to become a headteacher) and wider responsibilities they have gained as a result of taking part in NPQH. The use of the Head Start programme was also examined, including the elements of the programme accessed and how useful they found it.

- 18 months post-graduation from NPQH nearly half of all graduates were headteachers or waiting to take up a headship position (49%).

- Over three-quarters of graduates who were not already a headteacher still intended to achieve headship in their next role, and therefore in total 92% of graduates were either a headteacher or intended to be in their next role.
- 65% of graduates who had achieved a headship position in a different school to the one they had been in when undertaking NPQH had moved into a school with different characteristics to their previous school.
- Over half (56%) of graduates who had not moved into a new role since starting NPQH had been given additional responsibilities in their existing role as a result of undertaking NPQH.
- The use of Head Start is lower than expected, with only 61% of graduates having accessed any elements of Head Start since they graduated from NPQH.
- The most popular element of Head Start was the professional partner, which was used by 42% of graduates who were eligible. Graduates also rated the professional partner as being the most motivating reason for taking part in Head Start (6.3 out of 7) and the most useful element of the programme (6.4 out of 7).
- The two Head Start online networks were the least popular elements of the programme and were rated the least useful.
- Those who had not engaged in Head Start primarily report a lack of time as the main reason for not doing so (34.% due to workload pressures, 12% due to not having time during school time and 7% due to personal reasons).
- Although awareness of Head Start was low before trainees graduated from NPQH (at SPB), only 4% of graduates who had not used Head Start reported that this was because they were not aware of the programme.
- More than two-thirds (67%) of graduates who had not used the programme planned to access Head Start in the future.

## **Long-term impacts of NPQH on trainees**

A number of long-term impacts were reported by trainees 18 months post-graduation. In addition, they were also asked to rate their readiness for headship, their abilities in relation to the six National Standards for Headship and a wide range of leadership skills and abilities. The extent to which graduates attributed their skill development to NPQH and Head Start was also discussed.

- Trainees' self-reported readiness for headship increased from the start of the programme (SPA) to the end (SPB). However, when asked at SPD (18 months post-graduation) there was a small reported drop from 6.4 at SPB to

6.0 at SPD. There was no statistically significant change between SPA and SPD on participants' readiness for headship.

- During depth interviews, trainees stated that they had originally overestimated their readiness at SPA which could account for the lack of change between trainees' scores from SPA to SPD. The drop in readiness between SPB and SPD was attributed to trainees realising the challenges involved with the role (for those who had moved into headship) and then re-appraising their own skill levels, whereas those who had not moved into a headship position stated that they may feel less confident due to not yet gaining a position.
- Graduates also reported a small decrease in all of their leadership skills and capabilities and other skills in relation to the six National Standards for Headship. During the depth interviews trainees provided the same reasons as highlighted for readiness for headship above to explain why these self-reported skills levels had decreased.
- At SPD, the two skills areas which continue to receive lower self-reported scores are managing budgets and working with HR and legal issues. Trainees also rank these skills amongst the lowest when asked to what extent NPQH and Head Start has helped them to improve. When asked what skills areas they would still like to improve (unprompted), 47% stated managing budgets and 26% stated HR and legal issues.
- Although scores have dropped, graduates continue to score themselves highly (out of 7) in a range of skill areas including:
  - Leading learning and teaching (6.28)
  - Leading and influencing others (6.09)
  - Understanding of reflective practice (5.99)
  - Engaging with the wider community (5.94)
  - Working in collaboration and partnerships (5.90)
- During the in depth interviews, graduates highlighted that leading and influencing others alongside them and developing their own confidence were key areas they had developed.
- Although graduates scored their leadership skills and capabilities and other skills in relation to the six National Standards for Headship lower at SPD than SPB due to them re-appraising their skill levels, they did report that NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken) had enabled them to improve in those areas, with all skill areas receiving a score of 4 or more out of 7.
- Across a number of skill areas, those who had undertaken Head Start scored themselves higher than those who had not engaged in the programme. These

trainees also perceived that NPQH and Head Start had a greater impact on those skills than those who had not taken part in Head Start.

- Graduates attributed just over 40% of their skills development to NPQH (41% if undertaken Head Start and 43% if not undertaken Head Start). Graduates who have engaged in Head Start attribute a further 17% of their development to this programme.
- At SPD graduates' motivations for undertaking NPQH were still fairly high, and they remain unchanged between SPA, SPB and SPD with a score of 5.18 out of 7.

## Wider impacts

As a result of individuals taking part in NPQH, the wider impacts on a trainee's school whilst undertaking the qualification and 18 months later was explored alongside the wider impact on the LDS at which they undertook their placement.

- Overall, graduates and stakeholders highlighted that NPQH and Head Start has had a positive impact on the school which they worked at whilst undertaking NPQH and the subsequent school they have moved into as a headteacher.
- Although at SPD graduates scored a number of impact statements slightly lower than at SPB, overall they agreed that NPQH and Head Start had enabled them to have a positive impact on their school (5.95 out of 7) and on a range of other aspects including improving teaching and learning standards, improving outcomes for children and improving attainment. Managing pupil behaviour was the only area to receive a score lower than 4 out of 7.
- Those trainees who had undertaken Head Start were more likely to score the school impact statements higher than those who had not.
- The most frequently reported impacts (unprompted) on trainees' schools at SPB and SPD reported by trainees include:
  - Staff development through coaching/mentoring (44% at SPB, 22% at SPD)
  - Leadership and management (31% at SPB, 22% at SPD)
  - Improved performance management/monitoring and assessment (18% at SPB, 18% at SPD)
  - Improved community engagement (17% at SPB, 10% at SPD)
- These areas were also highlighted by graduates and key stakeholders as the key areas of impact, with improved community engagement and working with external organisations being the most frequently reported followed by improved school leadership and assessment and monitoring of the school.

- During the in depth interviews governors were unable to attribute the impact of the new headteacher on the school to NPQH or Head Start, however, they all stated that the headteacher had made a big impact on the school since they started in their headship role.
- Trainees also had a positive impact on the LDS at which they undertook their placement. Most trainees stated that their project had impacted on the school, with an overall score of 6.14 (out of 7).
- During the depth interviews the majority of LDS headteachers also reported that the trainee had a positive impact on their school. LDS headteachers most commonly stated that trainees' projects had an impact on improving teaching and learning, pupil attainment and increasing staff aspirations.

## Programme feedback

Through the SPB survey and depth interviews with trainees and wider stakeholders we explored trainees' satisfaction with NPQH and Head Start. We explored what parts of the programme they thought worked well alongside those elements they thought needed improving.

- Overall, trainees were very satisfied with the majority of aspects of NPQH and Head Start. The time required to undertake NPQH was the aspect which least satisfied trainees, however, this still scored 4.89 (time due to workload pressures) and 5.37 (time due to personal reasons) out of 7.
- A wide range of aspects of the programme were highlighted as being positive, including the range of elements available, the content within elements, the individualised journeys trainees make through the programme and the face-to-face opportunities for networking.
- Nearly all NPQH graduates who took part in the in depth interviews strongly agreed that there needed to be some parameters in place (which are mandatory) to prepare you/assess that you are ready for headship, and most thought that this should be NPQH.
- All governors recognised the value of the qualification, and they also thought that there should be some kind of mandatory qualification to show that teachers are ready for headship and meet the standards needed. Governors perceived NPQH to be of high quality and stated that it could be a qualification which should be mandatory.
- Although trainees were satisfied with NPQH, a wide range of improvements or gaps were highlighted, however, there was little consistency in those gaps reported. The most common areas for improvements or gaps were related to

subject knowledge (such as managing budgets and HR and legal issues) reported by trainees and stakeholders.

- Common delivery elements that trainees and stakeholders thought needed improving are listed below, however, only a small minority of respondents reported these:
  - More time out of school
  - Less paperwork to complete
  - To have a mentor/tutor
  - Easier website to navigate
  - Tackle the variable experiences with LDS and coaches for trainees, providing LDS headteachers with clear guidance on their role
  - Lack of support from a substantive head
- Also, those who were in a small school, a non-mainstream school or not currently working in a school reported that NPQH was not always tailored towards them, with small schools finding it difficult to release staff and other trainees finding some of the online courses less applicable to their situation.

## Conclusions and key considerations

### Conclusions

#### Experience of NPQH

- The RID increased trainees' motivations for both headship and for undertaking NPQH. NPQH is successfully maintaining trainees' aspirations for headship whilst they are on the programme, with overall scores remaining extremely high.
- There are high levels of engagement with almost all elements of NPQH, with the majority (80%) of trainees drawing upon at least five or six of the components available to them. Overall trainees believe the elements of NPQH help to address their development needs, although peer learning was rated less favourably in this regard, yet trainees still valued the opportunities it provided for informal advice and support.

#### Development of skills

- The overwhelming majority of trainees graduate within 13 months, indicating that NPQH is providing trainees with the opportunities to develop the skills required for headship in the timescale stipulated. Overall, trainees report positive impacts of participation in NPQH in relation to the leadership and

management skills required for headship. Trainees feel more ready for headship in terms of knowledge, skills and attributes on graduation from NPQH than at the start (just after their RID).

- Furthermore, there is a statistically significant increase in trainees' perceptions of their skills in all six areas of the National Standards for Headship and on trainees' wider leadership skills and capabilities between starting NPQH and completing the training.
- Overall, graduates are positive about the extent to which NPQH and Head Start have helped them to develop. Graduates report high levels of readiness for headship at SPD (18 months post-graduation), although this has slightly decreased since SPB (graduation).
- Graduates rated themselves highly against the statements reflecting the six National Standards for Headship, however, as with their readiness for headship they did experience a slight overall decrease across all six statements between SPB and SPD. This was also the case when examining graduates' perception of their broader leadership skills and capabilities, where graduates scored themselves relatively highly across most statements but experienced a small decrease between the two sampling points (SPB and SPD).
- Those who were headteachers scored themselves lower across a number of statements around skills, capabilities and readiness for headship when compared to those who were not yet in a headship position. This was also evident for those who had moved into a new role in a *different* school, with these graduates scoring themselves lower than those in a new role in the *same* school. Qualitative aspects of the evaluation suggest that this may partly relate to the adjustment necessary when moving to a new school and, in some cases, a new phase (new staff team/systems/procedures, different community, etc).
- One explanation for the decreases in scores was that this may be as a result of them realising the challenges involved in headship once they had moved into the position, and therefore feeling less ready than on graduation from NPQH. Alongside this, for those who were not yet in a headship position it was felt that they may feel less confident in their skills and abilities due to not yet being successful in gaining a position, therefore moving from a theoretical perspective of headship (and the necessary skills and capabilities it demands) to the practical, lived experience of fulfilling that role. As a result there appears to have been an element of "response shift bias" with regard to self-reported perceptions of leadership skills and capabilities
- Despite a small overall fall in self-assessed leadership skills and capabilities and against the six areas reflecting the National Standards for Headship,

graduates overall stated that NPQH and Head Start had helped them to improve in these areas.

- Graduates attributed over 40 per cent of their development since they started NPQH to 18 months post-graduation to their participation in NPQH. Those who have undertaken Head Start attributed a further 17 per cent of their development to this programme.
- Across many statements about the impact of participation, those who have undertaken all six elements of NPQH score the impact higher than those who did less. Those who took part in Head Start also scored themselves higher across a number of statements when compared with those who had not.
- Trainees reported developing a wide range of skills through the programme, including strategic school management and vision, coaching/mentoring and developing others, performance and conflict management, leadership and management skills and reflective practice. Wider stakeholders including substantive headteachers, LDS headteachers and coaches also agree that trainees had developed a wide range of skills through taking part in the programme.
- There are, however, two main skill areas which receive consistently lower scores and where a high proportion of graduates state they need to develop, and these are budget and financial management skills and skills in respect of Human Resources and legal issues. These two areas were the two top skill areas that trainees stated they wanted to develop on starting NPQH, yet have received consistently low scores across the three sampling points and, when asked at SPD, they also emerged as the two top skill areas they would still like to develop (47% stated managing budgets, 26% stated HR and legal issues). Interestingly, a high proportion of trainees did report developing financial management and budgeting skills through NPQH at SPB, but they still rated themselves lower overall than in other areas.

### **Experience on graduating from NPQH**

- Just under half of all graduates interviewed at SPD (18 months post-graduation) had moved into a headship position, were waiting to take up a headship position or were already a headteacher (when they started NPQH). Although the proportion of graduates in headship positions is lower than expected, in total 92% of graduates were either a headteacher or *intended* their next role to be as a head.
- Just over one-third of graduates who are not yet in a headship position have moved into another role. Just over half who have not changed roles have been given additional responsibilities in their school as a result of taking part

in NPQH. In total, 86% are either a headteacher, have moved in to a new role or taken on additional responsibilities at their school.

- Trainees' awareness of the aims and objectives of the Head Start programme is low around the time they graduate from NPQH (SPB). However, when asked eighteen months after graduating (SPD) very few trainees who had not taken part in the programme had not heard of Head Start or were unsure of the aims and objectives.
- Three-fifths of graduates (at SPD) have used at least one element of the Head Start programme. For the remaining graduates who have not used any aspect of Head Start, this was primarily due to a lack of time.
- Support and advice from a professional partner was the strongest motivating factor for participation in Head Start. This was the element accessed by most graduates and ranked as the most useful element of Head Start.

### **Wider outcomes and impacts**

- Graduates reported that NPQH and Head Start have enabled them to have a positive impact on the school in which they currently work. They have rated a range of different impacts relatively highly and, although some have decreased since SPB this shows that graduates still believe that the skills learnt through NPQH and Head Start are having a positive impact on their school.
- Through in depth interviews graduates reported that the Head Start programme had had fewer direct impacts on the school, but that the support, primarily from the professional partner, had provided them with the confidence to make changes in their school along with new ideas for ways to do things differently, thereby showing the importance of the programme.
- Further impacts were also experienced by LDSs, with trainees reporting that overall they believed that the projects and work they had carried out as part of their placement had a positive impact on the school. A wide range of projects were carried out, and as a result a wide range of impacts were described. As a result of these projects a range of impacts on the school were observed, including strategic or policy development in the school, understanding and using data, improving teaching and learning in the school, and leadership and management.

### **Views on the programme**

- Overall, trainees were very satisfied with the majority of aspects of the NPQH and Head Start, with time to take part in the programme being the aspect which least satisfied trainees. A wide range of aspects of the programme were highlighted as being positive, including the range of elements available, the

content within elements, the individualised journeys trainees make through the programme and the face-to-face opportunities for networking. A wide range of improvements or gaps were highlighted, however there was little consistency in those reported. The most common were trainees and stakeholders reporting that the gaps in the programme were related to subject knowledge rather than programme design.

- The majority of trainees recognise the value of NPQH and stated that they would undertake the qualification without it being mandatory to become a headteacher in the maintained sector in England. Throughout their participation on the programme trainees' overall scores remain unchanged across all sampling points (SPA, SPB and SPD), thus indicating that trainees continue to recognise the benefits of their participation in the programme.
- The wider views of NPQH no longer being a mandatory qualification were explored with graduates at SPD and with governors. Nearly all NPQH graduates who took part in the in depth interviews and governors strongly agreed that there needed to be some parameters in place to prepare you for headship, even if this was not through NPQH. The majority thought that this parameter should be the NPQH programme.

## Key considerations

Two elements of NPQH which rated highly on the quantitative assessment and also stood out for particular praise in interviews were the coaching and the LDS placement. Both of these elements should be retained for the new leadership curriculum. Although for both elements a small minority of trainees had negative experiences, the vast majority were positive. Therefore any future programmes should consider including these elements but licensees would need to ensure that appropriate quality assurance is in place.

Once someone moves into a headship position the support trainees gain from a professional partner is seen by trainees and governors as very important, therefore this support should also be included in any future programmes. Often this support worked well with the professional partner adopting a mentoring role in the early stages of the relationship, changing to a coaching role as the relationship developed and the support requirements of the new headteacher evolved. Both types of support – mentoring and coaching – are important to the successful delivery of this element of support.

Those who were in a small school, non-mainstream school or not currently working in a school reported challenges with the programme. These ranged from the budget and time constraints in small institutions to online modules not being tailored to those in a non-mainstream school setting. Future programme delivery through licensed

provision will need to be flexible enough to work for all types of schools. In the fast-changing education landscape it will be necessary to ensure that a system of reviewing the content and delivery of programmes is in place to ensure that needs are being met for all those wishing to undertake the programme.

Although only a minority, some trainees experienced a lack of support from a substantive headteacher, either due to there not being one in place (e.g. they were an acting head) or due to their line manager not giving them the support they needed (such as time out of school). Licensed providers will need to consider the best way to support individuals in these situations to enable them to undertake NPQH and gain the experience they need to move into headship.

Due to the consistently low score trainees provide to the areas of financial management and budgeting and HR and legal issues, these elements could be reviewed in order to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. The qualitative research (with site visits, substantive headteachers and LDS headteachers) suggests that for HR and legal issues and financial and budgeting skills the problem may be more about graduates knowing what they need to know as a headteacher and the things that are the responsibility of someone else such as a school business manager, a HR advisor, a governor, or a solicitor. Therefore it may be that trainees need an element of NPQH which better focuses on the understanding of roles and responsibilities around these areas rather than needing to know more and more detail about specific issues. Financial management, budgeting and HR and legal issues should be a mandatory element of any future headship course. This should also include consideration of the various roles and responsibilities of other key individuals in supporting headteachers in this area, particularly in the current, changing environment (e.g. school business managers, HR consultants/solicitors).

With regards to the evaluation of future programmes, provision should be made within the methodology to address the re-assessment of self-perceived skills, capabilities and attributes in retrospect.

# 1 Introduction

This report is submitted by CFE Research to the National College for Teaching and Leadership. It is the final report of our longitudinal evaluation of the redesigned National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) and Head Start programmes, which was commissioned in February 2010 and ended in June 2013.

## Research aims and objectives

The National College commissioned CFE Research in February 2010 to undertake a longitudinal evaluation of the then redesigned NPQH and Head Start programmes. The evaluation focuses exclusively on the model of the programme operating at that time and implemented by the National College in response to their 2005 Letter of Remit from the Secretary of State. The NPQH leadership curriculum programme currently being delivered through licensed provision has been designed in response to the 2010 White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching*. Previous interim reports for this longitudinal evaluation helped inform the design of the programme, and this summative report is intended to further inform the evolution of the new programme. Licensed provision of the new leadership curriculum is the focus of a separate longitudinal evaluation, also being undertaken by CFE Research, and due to report in 2016.

The overarching aim of this evaluation is to answer the following two research questions:

- What difference is the redesign of the programmes making to the quality and impact of headship?
- What impact are the programmes having on improving the leadership effectiveness of newly appointed headteachers?

Consideration will be given to the overall effectiveness of the programmes in meeting the needs of participants and outcomes for trainees and graduates through the examination of:

- How effective and efficient the provision is in meeting the needs of participants.
- The outcomes of NPQH and Head Start for participants, including the development of the leadership and management skills required for headship, motivation for and progression into headship, and increased awareness, confidence and engagement with government structures and legislation.
- The wider outcomes and impacts of the programmes for young people, the school in which participants work, and the wider community.

## NPQH and Head Start

Through its 2005 Letter of Remit from the Secretary of State, the National College was requested to review NPQH and subsequently commission the design, development and delivery of a model more in-keeping with the needs of headship. Throughout 2006 and 2007 the programme was redesigned to reflect the changing educational and political context and prepare aspiring Headteachers for the challenges of headship in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. The redesigned NPQH programme commenced delivery in March 2008 and concluded in November 2012<sup>3</sup>. From April 2009 NPQH became a mandatory qualification for all candidates seeking their first appointment as a headteacher in the maintained sector in England.

The redesigned NPQH programme was aimed at individuals deemed ready to take up a headship role within 12-18 months of starting the qualification. It follows that the model was designed to be more rigorous in its assessment process and had a focus on enabling trainees to move rapidly towards headship in order to support succession planning in schools.

To gain a place on the course individuals had to undergo the entry stage of the programme, which commenced with a written application supported by their headteacher/line manager. If successful individuals would then attend a two day assessment and development event (ADE) designed to examine their strengths and areas for improvement in depth, which was in line with the National Standards for Headship. Subject to being deemed ready by the assessors, at this event individuals would be given their own development record and accepted onto the course.

The NPQH model was redesigned to deliver more personalised, flexible provision in order to more closely meet the needs of individuals, schools and local systems. It follows that the length of time taken to complete the qualification varied from 4 to 12 months based on the needs of participants. Following attendance at a regional introductory day (RID) where trainees learned more about NPQH and met others on the programme, individuals could draw upon all or some of the following six elements of NPQH in response to their particular needs:

- A mandatory placement at a leadership and development school (LDS) of between 5 to 20 days
- Up to 7 hours of coaching
- National, regional and local events, seminars and master classes
- Work based learning in their own school

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<sup>3</sup> A small number of additional Graduation Boards were undertaken after November 2012 to cover those trainees returning from maternity or long term sickness, deferrals and those who were unsuccessful following the November national moderation board.

- Peer learning with other trainees on the qualification
- Online learning opportunities, including short course units and modules and an online community

Following graduation from NPQH, graduates are eligible to undertake the Head Start programme. This is designed to offer a seamless provision to both enable graduates to move quickly into a headship post and support them during their first two years as a headteacher. The programme is split into two phases, with phase one being open to NPQH graduates and phase two being available to headteachers, designate headteachers and acting headteachers:

Phase one:

- Pre-headship short online courses
- Pre-headship online learning modules
- Graduates online network

Phase two:

- 20-30 hours of support from a professional partner
- Online learning modules/short courses discussions and seminars
- The new heads online community

## Changes to NPQH

Throughout the period of the evaluation there have been a number of changes to NPQH. Although still seen as the qualification of choice for those aspiring to headship, the 2010 White Paper, *The Importance of Teaching* saw the Government's intention to redesign NPQH to focus on the key skills required for headship and the occupational requirements of being a head. NPQH was to be delivered by a range of providers, including universities, under a licensing model. Furthermore, following a review of the programme in February 2012 the mandatory status of the qualification was lifted in order to enable schools to have greater autonomy.

In response to this, the National College redesigned NPQH and a number of other courses they delivered to create the leadership curriculum. A range of qualifications were introduced under the leadership curriculum which were designed to support leaders at each stage of their career, including their move into headship. NPQH is level 3 of a 5 level curriculum:

- Level 1: National Professional Qualification for Middle Leadership
- Level 2: National Professional Qualification for Senior Leadership
- Level 3: National Professional Qualification for Headship and Children Centre Leadership (Children Centre Leadership still in development)

- Level 4: Serving Headteachers (still in development)
- Level 5: System leaders (still in development)

The leadership curriculum was delivered through licensed providers where groups of schools, universities and private organisations deliver the qualifications. A high entry bar is set for NPQH in order to ensure that only those whose next step is headship are accepted on the programme.

With the numerous changes that NPQH has gone through whilst the evaluation has been undertaken, where possible we have amended research tools in order to explore these developments. For example, questions were added to the in depth interview guides to explore interviewees' views of the changes to the mandatory status of NPQH. The views of the leadership curriculum were not explored due to it being in its infancy and the programme still being developed whilst the majority of the fieldwork for this evaluation was undertaken.

## Methodology

The methodology for the evaluation comprises both primary and secondary research in order to construct a rigorous evidence-base. It combines self-reporting on the part of trainees and graduates with robust, objective evidence collected through consultation with key stakeholders including substantive headteachers, leadership development school headteachers, school governors, NPQH coaches and Head Start professional partners. Additional analysis incorporating secondary datasets was also undertaken.

A summary of the methodology for the evaluation is outlined below, with a more detailed technical report available separately.

### Online/CATI survey

A mixed method longitudinal survey of trainees and graduates was undertaken in order to explore their experiences of the NPQH and Head Start programmes and the outcomes and impacts of provision throughout their transition to headship at three strategic sampling points:

- Sampling Point A (SPA) following their attendance at the RID and prior to commencing NPQH
- Sampling Point B (SPB) as they prepare for their graduation board and after completing NPQH

- Sampling Point D<sup>4</sup> (SPD) 18 months following graduation

The survey involved the completion of an online survey at SPA and SPB and participation in a computer-assisted telephone interview (CATI) at SPD.

### **Sampling Point A**

The SPA survey was administered to all trainees in Intakes 7-13<sup>5</sup> following their attendance at the RID. A total of **1,815** responses were received, equating to a 48% response rate. The survey focused on trainees' readiness and motivations for headship, experiences of the application process and RID, the skills they wished to develop through NPQH, and awareness of the Head Start programme. It also contained a small number of baseline questions which were replicated through all of the surveys to measure and track the outcomes and impacts of the programme. These questions focused on leadership skills and capabilities, the National Standards for Headship, motivations and aspirations for headship, and their motivations for undertaking NPQH.

### **Sampling Point B**

The SPB survey was sent to trainees as they prepared for their graduation board and was submitted and completed by them prior to the outcome of this been known by them. The survey was administered to all trainees, regardless of whether or not they responded to SPA with a total of **1,811** responses received. This amounted to a 48% response rate<sup>6</sup>. The survey explored trainees' experiences of NPQH, the elements of the programme they undertook and the extent to which they supported their development needs. Trainees were also asked to assess their skill levels and state which they considered they had developed as a result of taking part in NPQH. Their awareness of Head Start was also explored alongside their future intentions around headship.

### **Sampling Point D**

A computer assisted telephone interviewing (CATI) survey was undertaken with NPQH graduates eighteen<sup>7</sup> months after they graduated from the programme.<sup>8</sup> In total **410** CATI surveys were undertaken, equating to a 60% response rate<sup>9</sup>. Those surveyed had either completed both the SPA and SPB survey (n=258) or SPB only (n=152). In both instances longitudinal data was obtained from trainees in order to capture the outcomes and impacts of their participation in the programmes. The survey explored the experiences of graduates eighteen months after completing

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<sup>4</sup> Sampling Point C (9 months following graduation) was discontinued.

<sup>5</sup> Survey completions were received between September 2010 and December 2011.

<sup>6</sup> Survey completions were received between October 2010 and December 2012.

<sup>7</sup> A one month tolerance was used for the CATI surveys, therefore graduates were between 17 and 19 months post-graduation.

<sup>8</sup> Surveys were undertaken between May 2012 and April 2013.

<sup>9</sup> The response rate is of those who could have potentially taken part in an interview, for example where telephone numbers were incorrect these were removed.

NPQH, their transition into headship, and the elements of Head Start they had undertaken and their usefulness. Graduates also provided an assessment of their skill levels and the extent to which NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken) had enabled them to develop these skills and the impact on their school.

### **Depth interviews with trainees/graduates**

Follow-up depth interviews were undertaken with trainees and graduates at each sampling point in order to further explore key themes emerging from survey data. Respondents were recruited via a recall question, with a total of **30 depth interviews** undertaken: 11 at SPA, 11 at SPB and 8 at SPD. A cross-section of trainees and graduates were recruited to ensure exploration of a number of key themes. The topic guides were tailored to each sampling point and explored their experiences of NPQH and Head Start, participants' leadership skills and capabilities and the role of the programmes in the development of these, and the impact of any skill acquisition on their school, on children and young people, and on the wider community.

### **Depth interviews with substantive heads/line managers**

Depth interviews were undertaken with trainees' line managers (primarily headteachers<sup>10</sup>) following their completion of NPQH. A total of **25 in depth interviews** were completed with line managers across a range of trainees in different roles. The interviews were not designed to assess the trainee, but rather to gain an objective view of a trainee's development and the impact this had on the school in which they were employed at the time of undertaking NPQH. A further **five interviews** were undertaken with governors following completion of the SPD survey in order to explore the impact that headteachers with NPQH are having in their school and governors' views on the qualification.

### **Depth interviews with coaches, leadership development school headteachers and professional partners**

Interviews were undertaken with a range of individuals involved in the delivery of NPQH and Head Start in order to gain their reflections on the outcomes and impacts of the programmes. In depth interviews were undertaken with 10 NPQH coaches and 16 leadership and development school (LDS) headteachers alongside seven professional partners from the Head Start programme. The interviews were designed to explore their reflections of the programmes, how they support trainees and

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<sup>10</sup> The role of other line managers include: Chair/Vice Chair of Governors, Strategic Manager for Access and Inclusion, Senior Adviser (Early Years and Primary) and Lead Teaching and Learning Adviser.

graduates whilst on NPQH and Head Start, and the impact of the programmes on participants and, where applicable, the schools they manage.

## Site visits

Through the evaluation we undertook research with the four centres delivering NPQH. Site visits were undertaken with the Central and London delivery centres in order to engage in consultation with a range of staff, whilst research in the North and South was undertaken by telephone.<sup>11</sup> Through these visits a wide range of strategic and operational staff were interviewed in order to gain an understanding of their experiences of delivering the qualification. An interview was also undertaken with a representative from the Graduation Centre run by EMLC.

## Secondary data analysis

Secondary data analysis was undertaken on a small sample of graduates who had moved into a headship role at SPD. Slightly different approaches were undertaken for the analysis. When analysis in the Ofsted data analysis was undertaken on a small sub-sample of graduates who had been in a headship position for more than one year before they were Ofsted inspected, analysis was undertaken to explore if their overall Ofsted score had changed and their quality of leadership and management score. When analysing Key Stage 2 data, analysis of the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and mathematics was undertaken to examine if scores had changed between 2010 and 2011 where trainees had been a headteacher in a school from at least September 2011.

## Report content

All differences in findings have been tested for statistical significance to ensure they are genuine, robust and generalisable to the population from which they were drawn and are not a side-effect of sample selection. **Throughout the report we only report findings which are statistically significant, unless otherwise stated.** Where findings are not statistically significant, these are included because we consider them to be of potential interest to the National College. These are clearly marked in the text and on charts and graphs with an asterisk\*.

Some of the fieldwork and analysis was designed for reporting back formative evaluation findings and was not intended for inclusion in the final summative report. In particular this includes theoretical questions, for example about how useful trainees thought the various elements *would be* for which we subsequently gathered

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<sup>11</sup> Due to the changes in the delivery of NPQH two delivery centres were unable to facilitate a site visit.

actual, experiential data, for example, about how useful the elements *actually were*. In such instances, and in line with the aims of the evaluation outlined above, we report here the actual impact of NPQH and Head Start rather than data which is hypothetical.

After this introduction the rest of the report is structured as follows:

- **Chapter 2:** Starting NPQH
- **Chapter 3:** The NPQH journey
- **Chapter 4:** Short-term impact on trainees
- **Chapter 5:** Experience on graduating
- **Chapter 6:** Long-term impact on trainees
- **Chapter 7:** Wider impacts
- **Chapter 8:** Programme feedback
- **Chapter 9:** Conclusions and areas for consideration

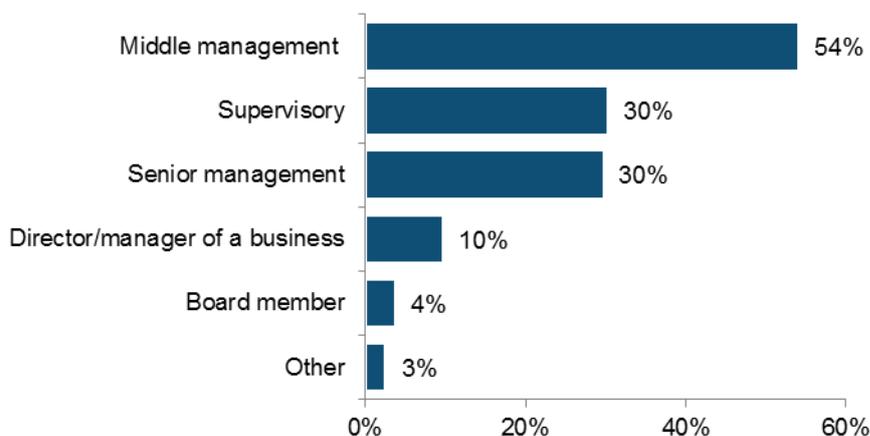
## 2 Starting NPQH

This section will examine the previous leadership experience of trainees starting NPQH. It will then examine the application process and trainees satisfaction with the various elements. Trainees' awareness of Head Start will be explored alongside their motivations for headship and NPQH. Finally, it will outline the key skills trainees want to develop through the programme and those areas identified by the assessment and development event (ADE).

### Previous leadership experience of NPQH trainees

Before entering the teaching profession one-fifth (20%) of trainees had held a professional role outside of the education profession which involved leadership and management responsibilities. Of those who had, just over half (54%) had held a middle management post, followed by 30 per cent who had held a supervisory role. A senior management position was held by 30 per cent, whilst 10 per cent had been a director or manager (Figure 1).

Figure 1: Type of leadership or management role before joining the teaching profession



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The length of time someone had been in a leadership or management role varied between 1 year and more than 10 years, with 62 per cent having been in this role for between 1 and 5 years, 25 per cent having been in a role for between 6 to 10 years and the remaining 13 per cent who had been in this role outside of the teaching profession for more than 10 years.

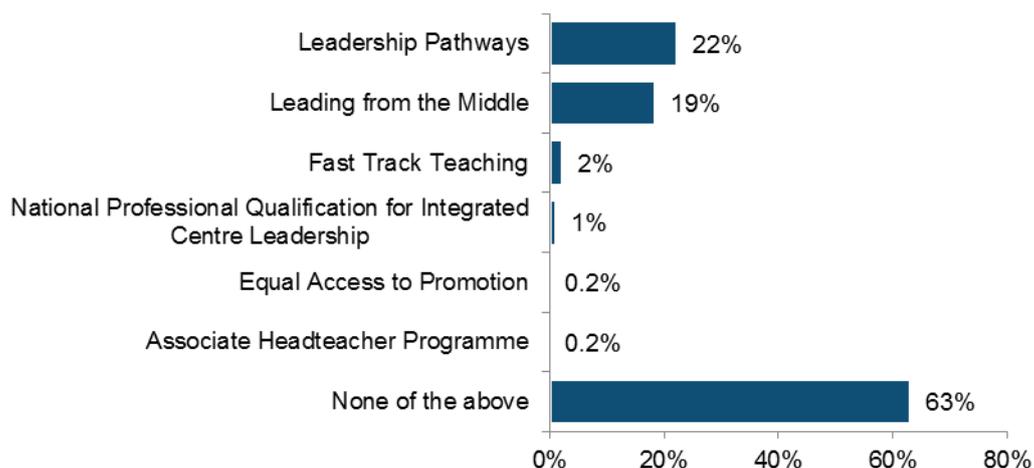
The extent to which trainees' wider leadership roles would help them in their role was explored through the in depth interviews. Although only a minority had this experience, they thought it would help them in their role as a headteacher as they were used to managing groups of people and being accountable for the decisions which are made. They also highlighted that they were used to holding people to account through these roles. One trainee who had run their own business highlighted that it gave them an insight into meeting deadlines, financial planning and seeking help from other agencies. Another trainee highlighted how it had helped them learn to deal with stressful situations and be the representative of an organisation:

I was a bank manager...underwent a lot of change and training for change. Within that you had to manage staff and lead staff in difficult times, through very stressful situations, such as armed raids, hostage situations, so in terms of coping under stressful situations I've got a lot of experience with that. I understand how different people react differently in different situations. Also, in terms of the customer, as head teacher you're the figurehead of the school, high profile in terms of, in the sense, our customers, our pupils and the community. It was very much the same with the bank manager.

SPA trainee

Nearly two-thirds (63%) of trainees had not previously undertaken any of the National College programmes featured in the survey (see Figure 2). Of those who had, the most common courses undertaken were Leadership Pathways, with 22.4 per cent of trainees stating this, and Leading from the Middle (19%).

Figure 2: National College programmes previously undertaken by trainees



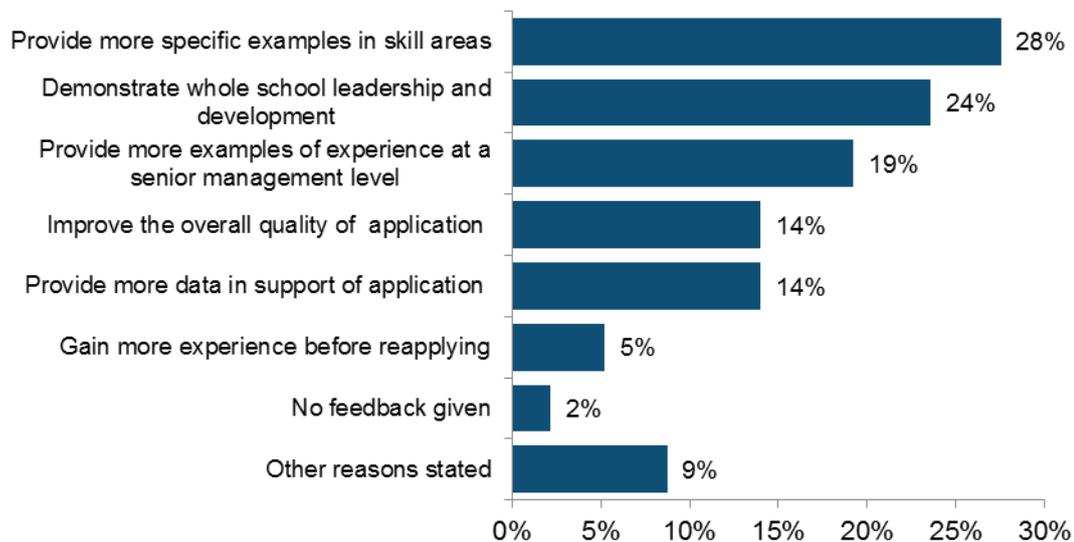
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## NPQH application process

A high proportion of trainees (87%) were accepted onto NPQH on their first application. When examining this by trainees there were small differences by age as to whether or not they were accepted on their first application, with younger trainees being more likely to have been accepted on their first application than older trainees. Trainees who were aged 40 or less<sup>12</sup> (90%) were accepted on their first application, compared with 88 per cent of those aged 41-45, 85 per cent of 46-50 and 84 per cent of those aged 51 or older.

For those who were not accepted on their first application, they were given a range of feedback on how to improve their subsequent applications or areas in which they needed to develop further before reapplying (Figure 3). The most common way in which applicants needed to improve their applications was through *providing more specific examples in relation to the key skill areas* (28%), followed by *demonstrating whole school leadership and development* (24%) and *providing more examples of experience at a senior management level* (19%). Following the feedback they received the majority (91%) were successful on their second application and the remaining 9 per cent on their third.

**Figure 3: What needed to be developed for trainee's application to be successful based on feedback from National College**

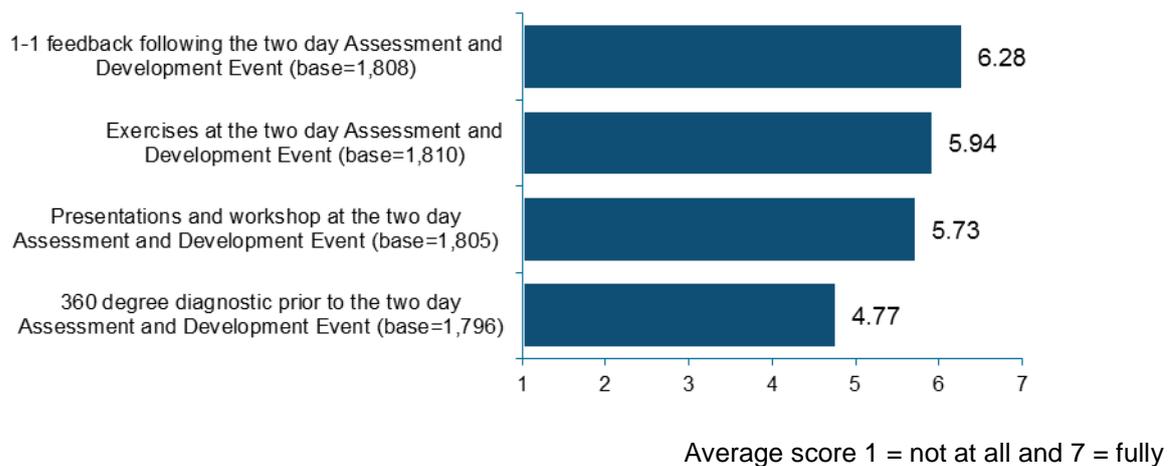


Base=229; multiple responses possible; prompted

<sup>12</sup> Given trainees started the programme at different ages and the length of time to graduation differed for trainees, the age of trainees would be different across various sampling points. Therefore, for ease of comparison the age of the trainee was calculated as at the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2013, meaning that ages reported throughout the report will be based on this and could vary by up to three years, however this still enables us to explore whether or not age has an impact the trainee.

Trainees were asked to state to what extent, on a scale from one to seven, the different elements of the assessment and development process identified areas for development (where one equals “not at all” and 7 equals “fully”). The one-to-one feedback sessions following the assessment and development event (ADE) were rated the highest in terms of identifying areas for development with a mean score of 6.28. This was followed by the exercises at the event (5.94) and the presentations and workshop at the event (5.73). The 360 degree diagnostic was rated the lowest at 4.77 (Figure 4).

**Figure 4: The extent to which the application and assessment stage identified trainees’ development areas**



There were differences in the mean scores given by trainees based on their demographic characteristics. Female trainees scored all of the elements more highly than male trainees, with the exception of the 360 degree diagnostic: presentations and workshops 5.79 compared with 5.59, exercises 5.98 compared with 5.82, and 1-1 feedback 6.33 compared with 6.19. Those who were White British scored the 360 degree diagnostic lower at 4.76 than those from a different ethnic background (5.09).

Opinions of the 360 diagnostic which were expressed during in depth interviews with trainees were mixed in line with the lower score given for this element. On the positive side, many trainees and substantive heads thought that it was a useful element of NPQH which allowed trainees the time to reflect and focus on what their priorities were and that it had enabled them to reflect on their development needs. For some it enabled them to identify new areas for development which they previously thought were strengths:

When we did the first 360, I had only been in my new school for a few months and I was class based three days a week. The 360 was up and down for me because I had all of my consultants at my old schools saying

one thing and all of those at my new school saying something completely different almost...I found it really useful, it made me rethink. I thought I understood the context of things, I thought that I knew who the lead people were and stuff. It definitely highlighted that I didn't, and that's something I am working on more.

SPA trainee

Trainees reported that it was good to get colleagues views on their development needs through an anonymous process. Some trainees who did not think the 360 degree diagnostic was useful reported its anonymity as a negative aspect, as the level of detail it provided the 360 degree diagnostic was insufficient for them to understand the reasons behind respondent's answers.

Alongside this, those trainees who did not think it was useful also thought that the feedback from the 360 degree diagnostic was too long and difficult to interpret, especially given the number of people who were required to contribute to it, and this was particularly a problem for those in small schools. Some trainees and substantive headteachers also thought that the questions in the 360 degree diagnostic were often over complicated and were sometimes misunderstood:

I got confused with one of the questions, which needed a 'no' instead of a 'yes', and I think that was put in there deliberately ... I didn't quite understand what they were getting at with some of [the questions]. It wasn't the plainest of English... it was very difficult sometimes to actually know what they were aiming at and what they actually wanted from the questioning.

Substantive head

During the in depth interviews trainees were asked about the assessment and development event (ADE) they attended. The majority highlighted that it was a positive but stressful experience. Trainees reported that like the 360 diagnostic it was a useful experience to enable them to reflect and focus on what their development needs were, with some new areas for development highlighted through this process. It was seen as beneficial, for example, by being able to talk to other trainees and assessors who deemed it as challenging but supportive.

So I got onto this mindset of how can we sort out problems internally ... which is wrong ... I can still remember [name of assessor] sitting there and saying, 'Have you realised you've written a really good school development plan here but you haven't once asked for any outside support at all? What do you think about that?' I was just floored. I was like, 'Oh yes. Why not?' That questioning yourself was the biggest motivator for a lot of work that I've done in the past six months really.

SPB trainee

This was also corroborated by coaches and site visit representatives, as described by one coach:

What I get from the feedback from the trainee head teachers is that the assessment and development is fantastic...I guess that's why that experience for them, although intensive... is so powerful.

NPQH coach

Primarily, substantive headteachers thought that the ADE mirrored their views of the trainees' development needs, as did trainees, with only a minority stating that they thought key development areas had been missed out. A minority of trainees had negative experiences at the ADE for various reasons, such as finding it too stressful or feeling that it did not accurately reflect their development needs or wasn't tailored to their non-school role.

Trainees were asked to state how satisfied they were overall on a scale from one to seven (where one equals "not satisfied at all" and 7 equals "very satisfied") with the way the application process enabled them to reflect on their own development needs. The mean score from trainees was 6.07, with only 3 per cent of trainees scoring this at three or less. This highlighted that overall trainees were satisfied with the way the process enabled them to reflect on their own development needs. Those trainees from a school with more than 100 pupils scored this higher at 6.09 when compared with those from smaller schools (5.95). Trainees who were younger also scored this statement higher than those who were older, with significant differences found between those who were 40 years old or younger (6.17) and those who were 46-50 (6.00) and 51 or older (5.92)<sup>13</sup>.

Trainees were then asked to consider the extent to which the application and assessment stage accurately identified their development needs on a scale from one to seven (where one equals "not at all" and seven equals "fully"). The mean score given by trainees was 5.98, with only 2 per cent scoring three or less and 94 per cent scoring five or more. Therefore, overall trainees felt that the application and assessment stage was fit for purpose in identifying their development needs. This was particularly apparent for female trainees who reported that the application and assessment stage identified their development needs more fully than men did (with a mean score of 6.01 compared with male trainees at 5.90).

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<sup>13</sup> The small difference between those age 46-50 and 51 or older is not statistically significant.

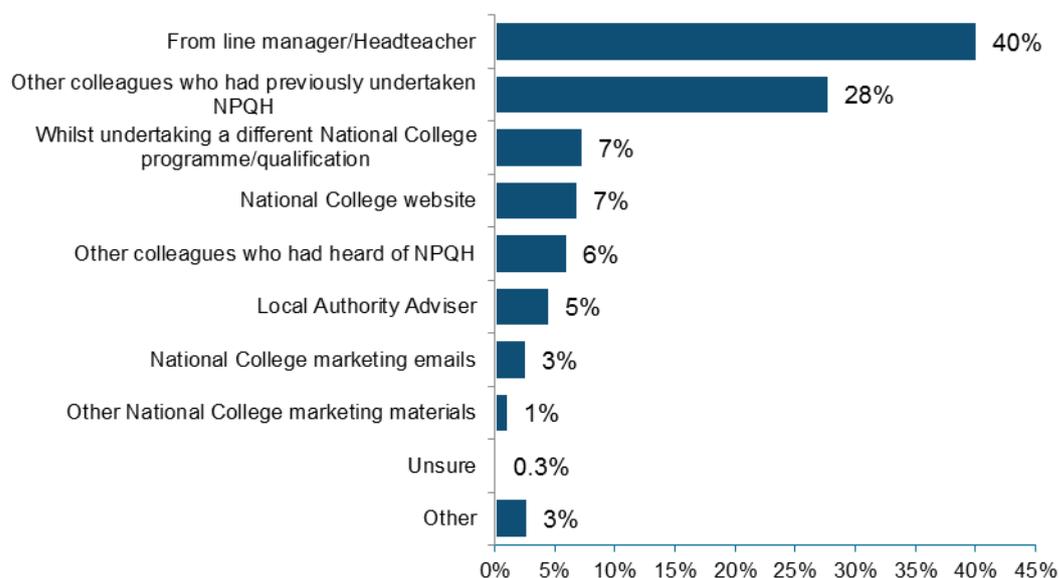
## Awareness of NPQH and Head Start

### NPQH

The majority of trainees first found out about NPQH through individuals they work with.

Figure 5 highlights that two-fifths (40%) first found out about NPQH through their line manager/headteacher, followed by just over one-quarter (28%) who had known other colleagues who had previously undertaken the qualification.

Figure 5: How trainees first heard about NPQH

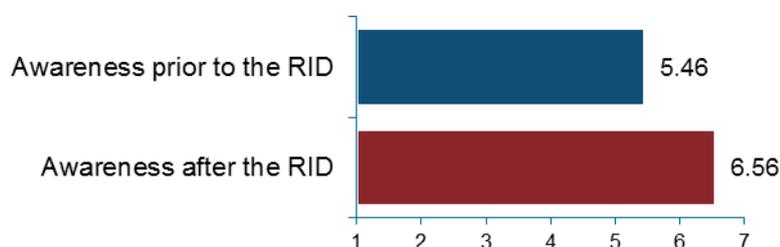


Base=1,808; prompted

Trainees were asked to rate, on a scale of one to seven, how aware they were of the aims and objectives of NPQH both before and after the regional introductory day (RID) at SPA (where one equals “not at all aware” and 7 equals “completely aware”). The overall average scores are shown in

Figure 6. Awareness of the aims and objectives of NPQH before the RID was fairly high at 5.46, showing that National College marketing materials and events are reaching individuals and informing them about NPQH *before* they start the programme. Awareness amongst trainees did increase to 6.56 after attendance at the RID, thus indicating that the delivery centres are clearly presenting the aims and objectives of NPQH to ensure that trainees are completely aware of the aims and objectives.

Figure 6: Awareness of aims and objectives of NPQH



Average scores 1 = not at all aware, 7 = completely aware; base=1,784

Almost all trainees (98%) agreed that the RID provided them with sufficient information to understand the aims and objectives of NPQH. For the small minority who did not agree, common areas or information that trainees would have liked included were understanding the graduation requirements, being given less information to simplify the process/programme and so they could understand how to organise their development areas, information on how to navigate the website and the chance to speak to someone to ask questions.

## Head Start

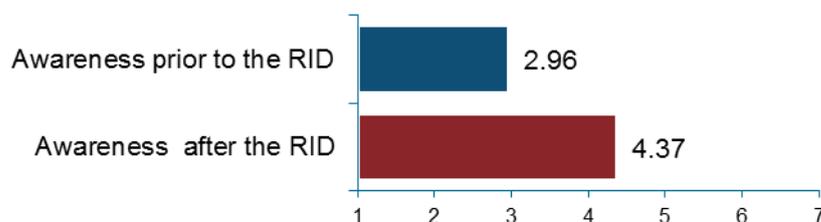
Awareness of the Head Start programme is fairly low, with just over half (53%) of all trainees having heard of the Head Start programme following their regional introductory day (RID). Around half of those who had heard of it (57%) already knew about it before their attendance at their RID, while the remainder did not (43%). The awareness of Head Start differed by delivery centre, with a higher proportion (60%) of trainees from the South being aware of this programme after the RID and a lower proportion (42%) from the London delivery centre being aware when compared with the other centres (Central 51% and North 52%).

Those trainees who had heard of the Head Start programme following the RID were asked to rate, on a scale of one to seven, how aware they were of the Head Start programme's aims and objectives before and after the RID (where one equals "not at all aware" and seven equals "completely aware"). For those who had heard of the programme awareness of the aims and objectives of Head Start was low, with an average rating of 2.96 (before the RID), although after trainees' attendance at the event this had significantly increased to an average score of 4.37 (Figure 7).

However, as can be seen trainees are not fully aware of the aims and objectives of Head Start with a score of 4.37 out of 7. Moreover, only half (50%) of trainees stated that the RID had provided them with sufficient information on the aims and objectives

of the Head Start programme. This suggests that more needs to be done to promote Head Start at the start of the programme.

**Figure 7: Awareness of aims and objectives of Head Start of those who had heard of the Head Start programme**



Average scores 1 = not at all aware, 7 = completely aware; base=892

Of those trainees who were not aware of Head Start following their RID, 36 per cent were aware that there was a further programme of support offered to those who became headteachers, therefore although they did not know that this was called Head Start they knew that some provision of further support was available (52% were aware of this before their RID).

## Motivations for Headship

In order to explore trainees<sup>14</sup> motivation to become a headteacher they were asked on starting NPQH, to what extent they wanted to become a headteacher of an educational institution (where one equals “I do not wish to become a headteacher” and seven equals “I definitely want to be a headteacher”).<sup>15</sup> The mean score was high at 6.65, indicating that trainees have very high levels of motivation, with 99.0 per cent of all trainees scoring this statement as 5 or more highlighting that overall most trainees entering the programme are motivated to become a Headteacher in the future.

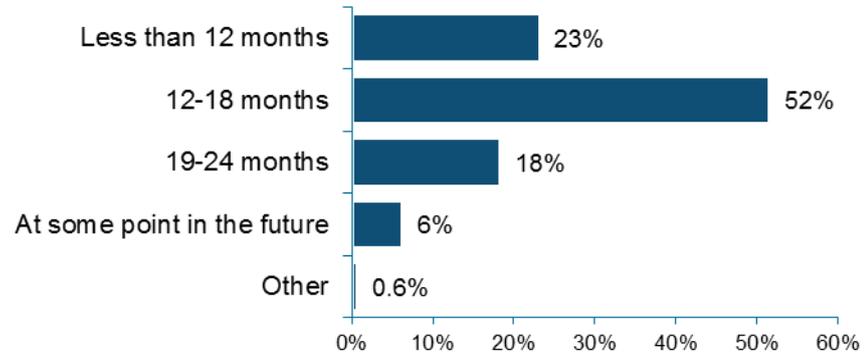
A high proportion – around three-quarters (75%) – of trainees expressed a desire to become a headteacher within 12 to 18 months or less (see Figure 8). However, it is interesting to note that nearly a quarter (25%) of trainees stated that they wanted to become a headteacher either in 19 to 24 months or at some point in the future, highlighting that they are not 12-18 months from headship as expected when accepted onto the programme.

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<sup>14</sup> Excluding those who were already a Headteacher

<sup>15</sup> This question was also asked at SPB to identify if there is any change in this score whilst undertaking NPQH. Changes in this score will be reported in a later section of the report.

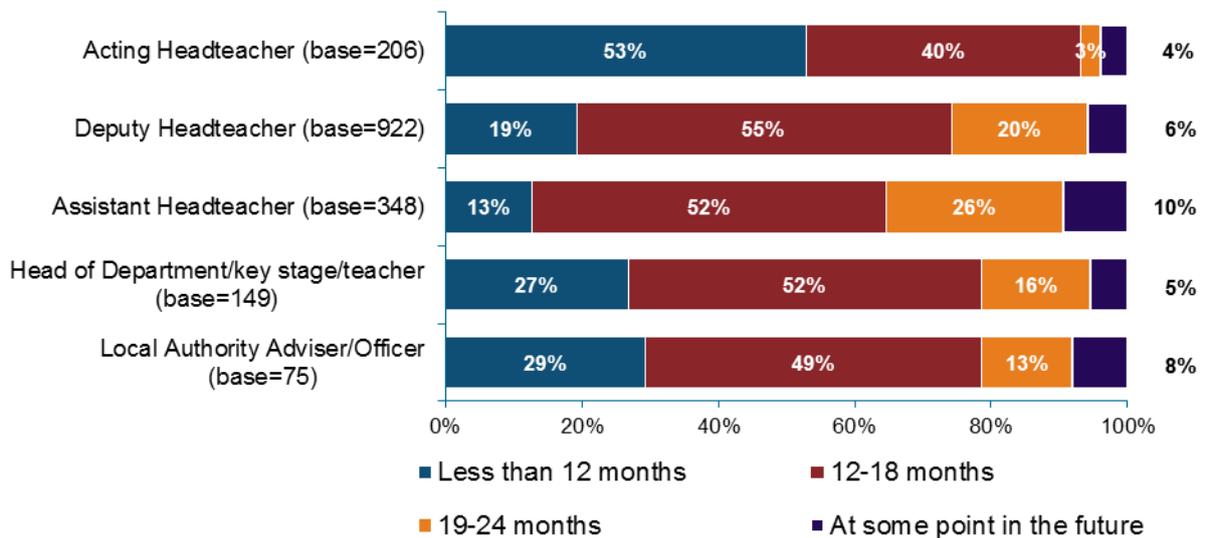
**Figure 8: Timescale in which trainees want to become a headteacher at SPA**



Base=1,755

The timescale in which trainees want to become a headteacher differs by the role they were undertaking when starting NPQH. A higher proportion of acting headteachers reported less than 12 months (53%) when compared with all other roles (see Figure 9). Assistant headteachers reported longer timeframes, with 26 per cent reporting 19 to 24 months and 10 per cent reporting at some point in the future.

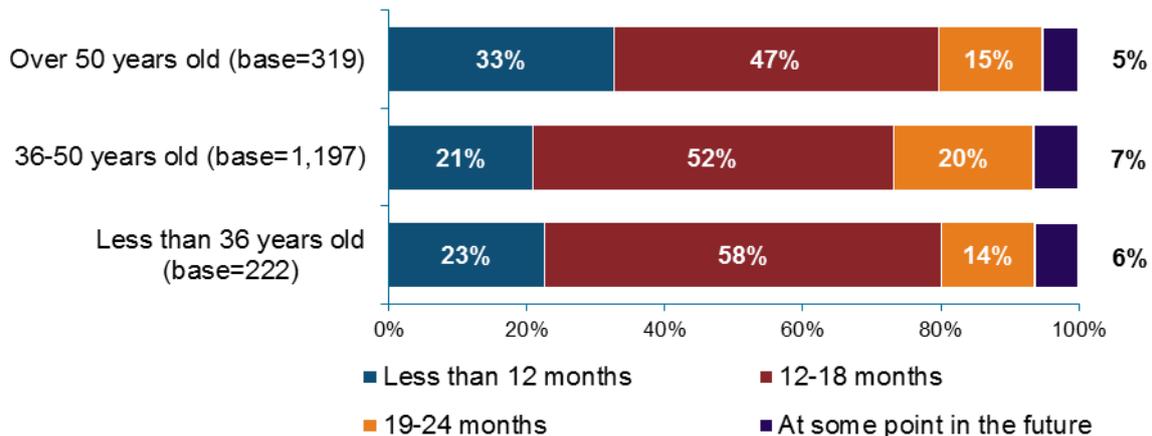
**Figure 9: Timescale in which trainees want to become a headteacher by role**



When examining the differences by trainees, as seen in Figure 10 a higher proportion of those trainees who are older stated that they wanted to become a headteacher in less than 12 months (33%) when compared to younger trainees. A higher proportion of those who were in the middle age range of 36-50 reported 19-24 months when compared with those who were less than 36 years old or over 50 years

old. This highlights that those who are older are more likely to be motivated to move into a headship role quickly when compared with younger trainees.

Figure 10: Timescale in which trainees want to become a headteacher by age



A higher proportion of those with no previous leadership experience outside of the education sector reported that they wanted to become a headteacher *at some point in the future* (7%) when compared with those with previous leadership experience outside of the education profession (2%). There was also a difference in timescales between those who were working in a small school (100 pupils or less) when compared with those working in larger schools, with 32 per cent of trainees in small schools focused on becoming a headteacher in less than 12 months when compared with those in larger schools (21%).

Through the depth interviews, trainees' reasons for stating when they wanted to become a headteacher was explored. Those (one in four) trainees who reported that they wanted to become a headteacher in more than 19 months primarily stated that this was due to them wanting to gain further experience before moving into a headship role, including having time to complete NPQH before they start looking for a role. Those trainees who planned to move into a headship role more quickly thought they had the skills necessary and were motivated to move into that position.

I feel I'd be ready in September to actually apply for headships, because I've been very fortunate that I've got a fantastic head and he's given me a range of leadership roles on the SLT and, in some cases, I've done as much as the deputies would be doing in other schools. So, I do feel I'd be ready in twelve months...I've gradually been taking on more and more leadership roles and deputising for him more and more, and I recognise that I could do it within twelve months but I would only do it in the right situation and you can't guarantee that, at the end of twelve months, that

the right job's going to be there for you... but I do feel that I'll have the skill set and experiences at September point to actually look at jobs.

SPA trainee

There is also anecdotal evidence that some trainees may be using NPQH as a CPD opportunity. Although none of the trainees stated this, two substantive headteachers stated that some trainees were not intending to go in to headship and were using it as a CPD opportunity:

The impression I got was that a lot of schools, or some schools were using it as a CPD type course, and possibly some of the people doing it were not at the point where having qualified they would be right to become a head teacher of a school but that's purely me reporting what views were passed on to me in some cases.

Substantive headteacher

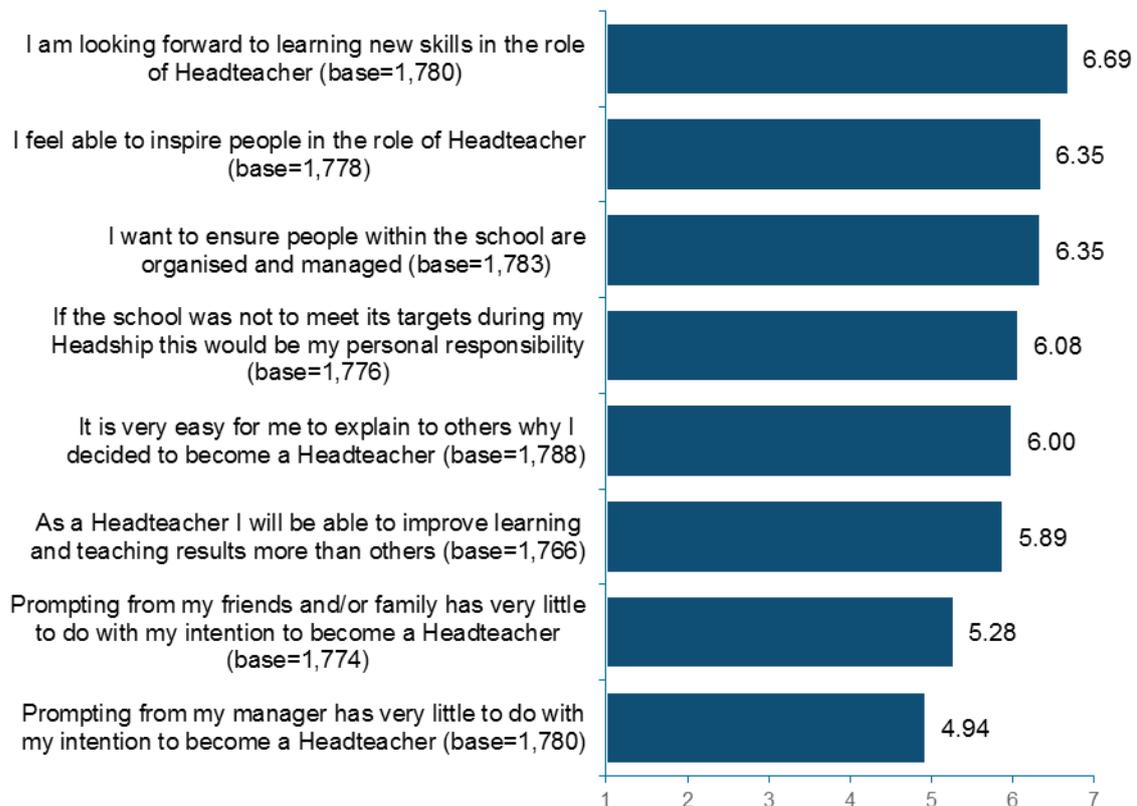
Trainees in the survey were presented with a series of statements concerning their current attitudes towards headship and were asked to rate them on a scale from one to seven (where one equals "less true" and seven equals "more true"). The statements were designed to capture a variety of attitudinal dimensions that reflect the nature and intensity of their motivation levels towards headship. These dimensions include:

- the role of external influences versus the role of internal drives in pursuing headship;
- the awareness of the reasons behind their aspiration to become a headteacher;
- their focus on self-improvement through the role itself;
- their aspiration to make a difference; and
- their sense of responsibility around what the role demands.

Figure 11 presents the average ratings on the statements and shows overall that motivation levels are high (consistent with responses to other questions on motivation, described above). Motivations appear largely internalised, as external influences from others and from their line manager both received scores indicating that they had little influence on their motivation to become a headteacher (5.28 and 4.94, respectively). Their motivation for self-improvement is rated highly (6.69), thus indicating that orientation towards headship is interwoven with personal aspirations for self-fulfilment. At the same time, respondents illustrate their commitment to headship through their strong focus on measurable and non-measurable work outcomes that include improving teaching and learning results (5.89), as well as inspiring others (6.35). Trainees indicated that failure to achieve school targets would

be as a consequence of their own under-achievement (6.08), and this suggests that trainees would feel responsible for an underachieving school.

**Figure 11: Current attitudes towards headship**



Average score where 1 = less true and 7 = more true

Trainees were asked to rate, on a scale of one to seven, if they were more motivated to become a headteacher following their attendance at the regional introductory day (where one equals “less true” and seven equals “more true”). Trainees’ average score was 5.89, showing that trainees strongly supported the statement that the regional introductory day had increased their motivation. The majority of trainees (86.4%) scored this statement as 5 or above, with only 6.4 per cent stating 3 or below. Female trainees overall reported that they felt more motivated after the RID with a score of 5.96 when compared with male trainees at 5.74, and those with no previous leadership responsibilities outside of the education profession also scored this higher at 5.94 when compared with those who had previous experience at 5.71.

## Motivations to undertake NPQH

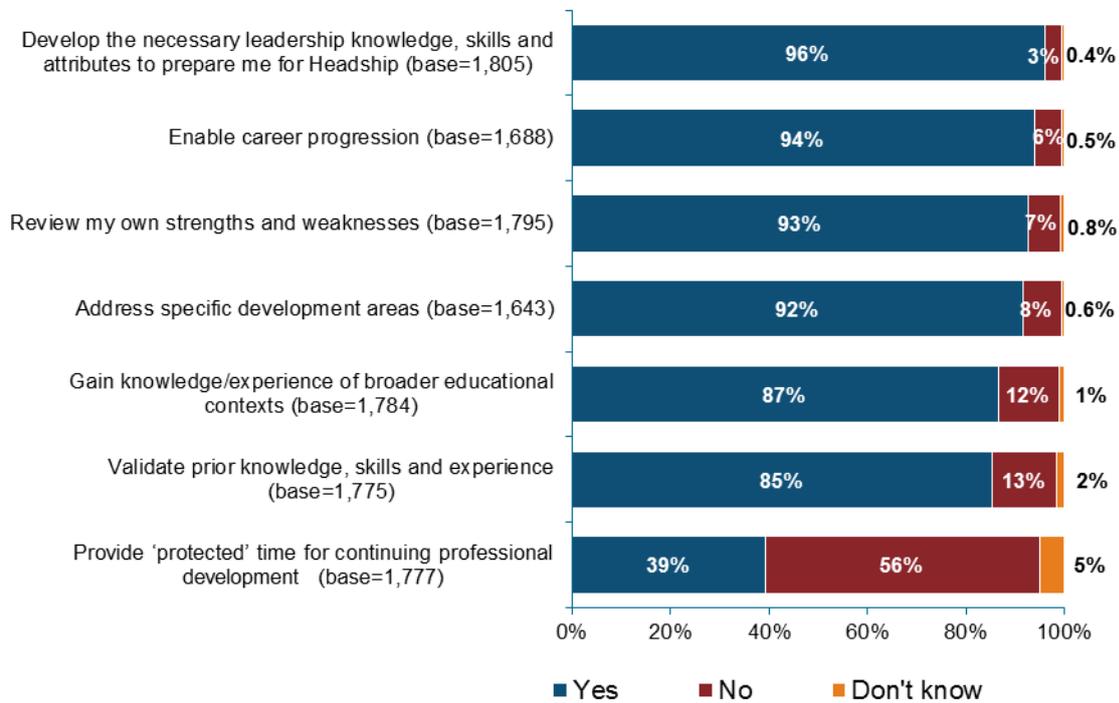
Trainees were asked to rate how likely they would be to undertake NPQH if it had not been a mandatory qualification to become a headteacher in the maintained sector in England<sup>16</sup>. Trainees were asked to rate between one and seven (where one equals “definitely not” and seven equals “definitely would”). The overall average score was 5.37, therefore indicating that trainees recognise the value of the qualification in developing their skills. In total, around eight-out-of-ten (79%) trainees scored this at 5 or above (out of 7), with only 11% scoring this statement at 3 or less. Those who were already in the role as acting headteachers when they started NPQH scored this statement lower than most other trainees (excluding headteachers and those whose role was other) with a mean score of 4.92. No statistically significant differences were found between any other roles.

In order to best reflect the complexity of trainees’ motivations for undertaking NPQH, questions were developed that explored both their intrinsic and extrinsic reasons for applying. For example, providing protected time for continuing professional development (CPD) activities was examined alongside enabling career progression. This enables us to better understand their attitudes to NPQH. Trainees reported a wide range of reasons for undertaking NPQH (as shown in Figure 12). Most reasons were reported by a high proportion of trainees, except for to *provide ‘protected’ time for CPD* which was reported by only 39 per cent of trainees, thus highlighting that for most trainees there were a broad range of motivating factors relating to the development of the skills and experience needed for headship and having these skills validated.

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<sup>16</sup> This question was asked when the qualification was still a mandatory qualification.

Figure 12: Reasons for undertaking NPQH



Prompted

During the depth interviews trainees' motivations for undertaking NPQH were explored. The primary reason highlighted by most trainees at SPA was to enable them to develop the leadership skills to be a headteacher:

It was more skills based rather than the mandatory based. Academies you don't have to have NPQH so it was more, for me, my personal professional development. It always has been for me because I am so into teaching and education that I want to know more about it all the time... For me it's the skills that they can help embed in me to make me a really, really, good, effective head teacher. It's more than just the mandatory nature of it.

SPA trainee

The next most commonly reported reason was as a result of it being a mandatory requirement to become a headteacher, as highlighted by one trainee: *"NPQH is a means to an end, if you want to be a headteacher it's something you require. Our headteacher was retiring and I had a lot of support for the role and I needed NPQH to get it."* A minority of interviewees also reported that they were currently working in a local authority role and were undertaking NPQH to enable them to re-enter the education system. A minority of trainees reported that they were motivated to

undertake NPQH to enable them to make a difference to children's' lives on a bigger scale than being a teacher, as reported by one trainee:

As a class teacher you are very much able to influence, if you like, a group of children you've got and perhaps some of the parents of those children into helping them to understand how important education is and how important learning is. Then as you step up and become, say a year leader, then that group of children can be even bigger. You've got 100, 120 children, and then when you step up to kind of headship then the influence becomes where you've got the whole school, plus the teachers, plus all the parents, so it's wanting to serve and wanting to help and wanting to be able to help to bring about that. That love and that desire to learn, really, as you go through, become a class teacher, then head of year, head of key stage, whatever it is, assistant head, you're able to influence even more and hopefully bring about even more change within schools and in the community and people's lives.

SPA trainee

Trainees were also asked to rate a series of statements concerning their attitudes towards NPQH, on a scale from one to seven (where one equals "less true" and seven equals "more true"). Similarly to when we explored motivation levels towards headship, these statements were again designed to explore the characteristics and magnitude of motivation to undertake NPQH. The statements reflect a variety of motivation-related attitudes including self-determination, actively searching for information, confidence in success, focus on socially desirable outcomes and results and internal drive to self-improvement and self-fulfilment.

Figure 13 shows that motivation levels towards NPQH are high. Trainees score highly in self-confidence related statements, including *If I fail NPQH, it will be my responsibility* (6.42) and *I am confident I will succeed in achieving NPQH* (6.32). This is an indication that those involved in NPQH are prepared for the challenges ahead and that they have made informed decisions to participate in the programme. At the same time, trainees acknowledge that a potential failure will be a personal failure that can only be attributed to them. Trainees believe that undertaking NPQH will enable them to improve learning and teaching in their school (6.25).<sup>17</sup> Trainees were less confident in their ability to undertake the qualification without outside assistance, with a mean score of 4.33.

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<sup>17</sup> Changes in this score will be report in a later section of the report.

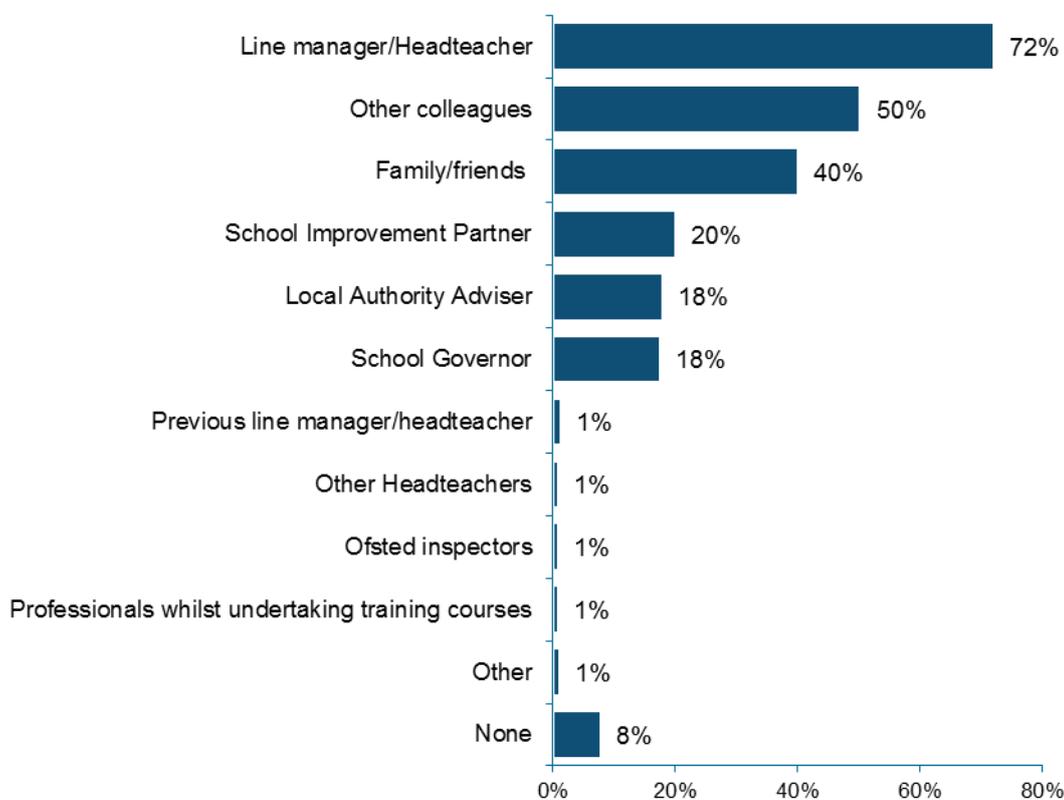
Figure 13: Current attitudes towards NPQH



Average score where 1 = less true and 7 = more true

Trainees identified a range of individuals who were influential in them undertaking NPQH. Just under three quarters (72%) stated that their line manager or current headteacher had encouraged them to participate, and half (50%) stated that other colleagues had been influential (see Figure 14). This was followed by 40 per cent who stated that their family/friends had encouraged them to participate, highlighting the fact that in many cases those people who trainees work with are more influential than friends or family overall. This further indicates that support from other people, whether it be family, friends or work colleagues, is a very important factor in the decision to undertake NPQH. Relatively few people – only 8 per cent – stated that no individuals had been influential in their decision to undertaken NPQH.

**Figure 14: Individuals who were influential in trainees' decision to undertake NPQH**



Base=1,812; multiple responses possible; prompted

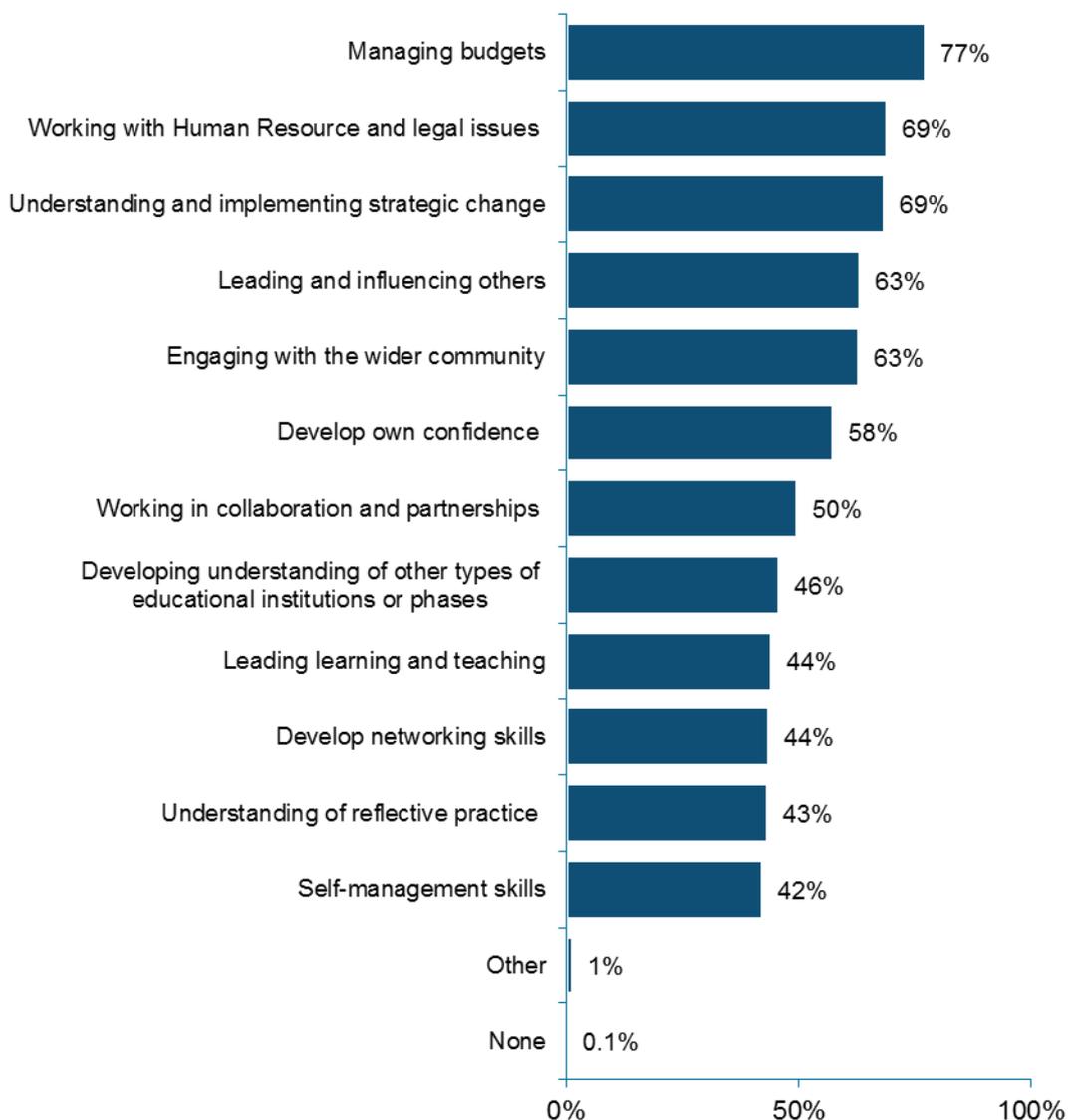
Trainees were asked to rate, on a scale of one to seven, to what extent they felt more motivated to undertake NPQH following their attendance at the regional introductory day (RID) (where one equals “less true” and seven equals “more true”). Trainees’ average score was 5.90, showing that trainees strongly supported the statement that the RID had increased their motivation. In total, 87 per cent of trainees scored this statement as 5 or above, whilst only 6 per cent scored this as 3 or below.

As with motivations for headship following the RID, those who were female reported a higher score for them feeling more motivated to undertake NPQH following the RID at 5.98 compared with 5.73, and likewise a difference was found by those who had previous leadership experience with a lower score of 5.66 compared with 5.97 with no previous leadership experience.

## Skills trainees want to develop through NPQH

A series of statements relating to skills that trainees may develop were designed based upon the National Standards for Headship to identify those that they wished to develop through NPQH. Trainees were looking to develop a wide range of knowledge, skills and attributes by undertaking NPQH, which can be seen in Figure 15. Managing budgets was the most frequently reported at 77 per cent, followed by working with human resources and legal issues (69%), understanding and implementing strategic change (69%) and leading and influencing others (63%).

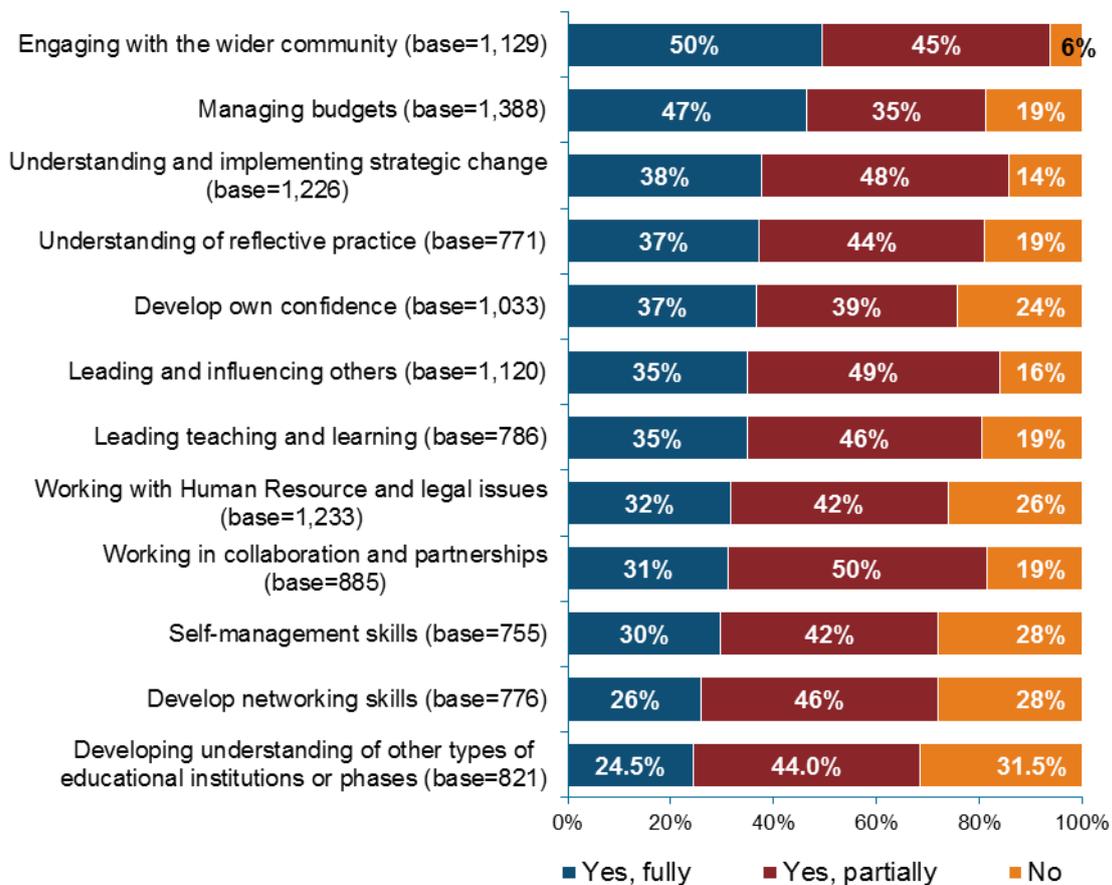
Figure 15: Skills trainees are looking to develop



Base=1,815; multiple responses possible; prompted

The next set of questions were devised to identify the extent to which the areas respondents had identified they wanted to develop through NPQH matched those that were formally identified as development areas through the assessment process. Respondents who stated each answer were then asked to state whether the skills identified had been fully, partially or not identified during the assessment process. Figure 16 shows that overall engaging with the wider community (450%), managing budgets (47%) and understanding and implementing strategic change (38%) were the most commonly (fully) identified areas for development for trainees following the assessment process, and this therefore matched the trainees own self-perceptions. As can be seen across all skill areas, for some trainees these skills areas had not been formally identified as needing to be developed, thus highlighting that trainees intend to use NPQH to develop wider skills than those identified as needing to be developed for headship.

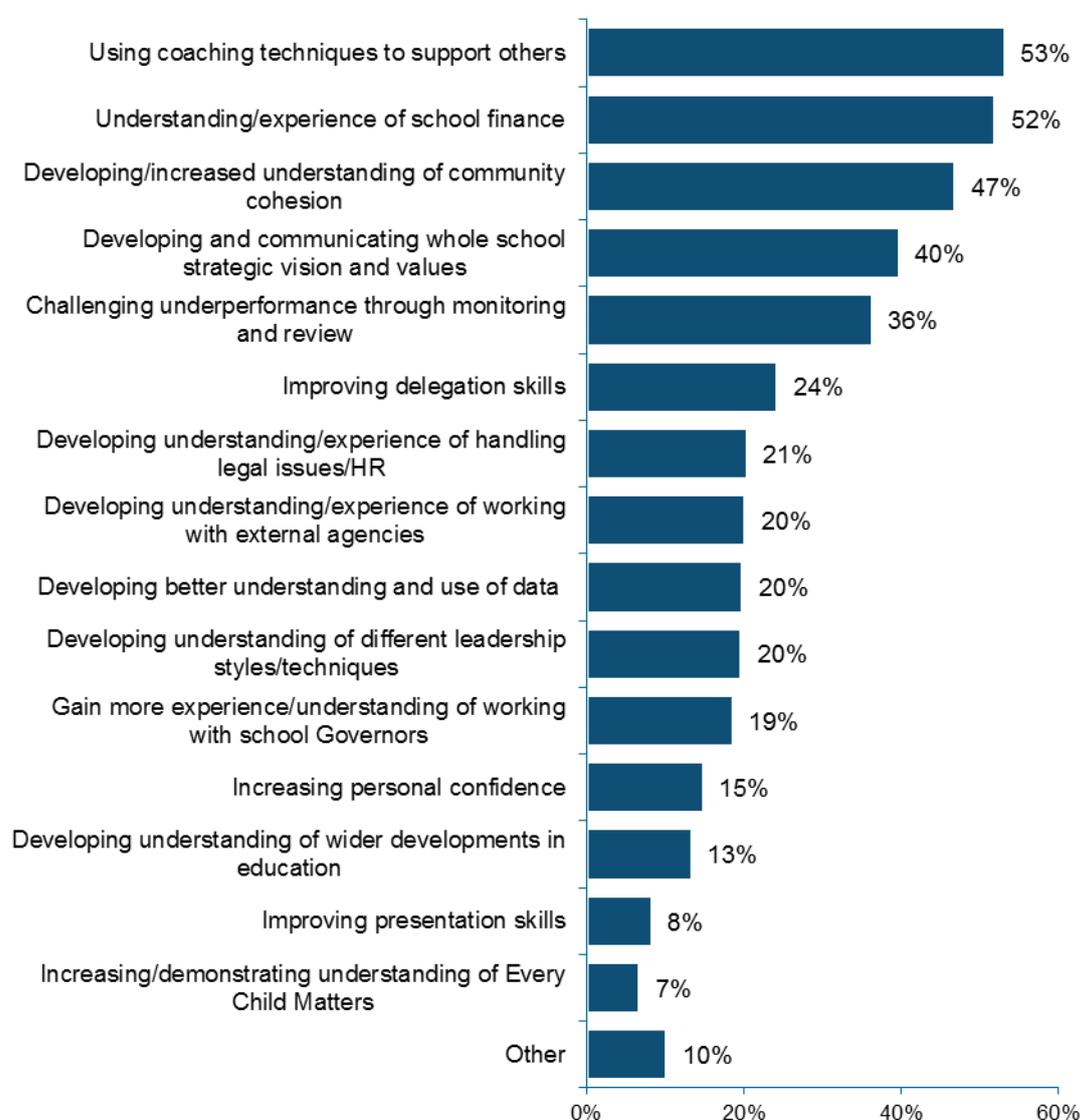
**Figure 16: The extent to which the application and assessment process identified these as areas for development**



Prompted

Trainees were asked to state what specific skills had been identified for them as an area for development by the application and assessment process. The most reported skill areas highlighted by over half of all trainees (see Figure 17) were *using coaching techniques to support others* (53%) and *understanding/experience of school financial management*. These areas were closely followed by *developing or gaining experience of community cohesion*, reported by 47 per cent of trainees, *developing and communicating a strategic vision* (40%) and *challenging/monitoring underperformance* (36%).

**Figure 17: Skills identified during the application and assessment process that trainees needed to develop**



Base=1,740; multiple response possible; prompted

Trainees were then asked to rate, on a scale of one to seven, to what extent they thought that NPQH and elements within it would address the development areas identified during the assessment and development process (where one was “will not address at all” and seven was “will fully address”). Overall, NPQH was rated highly, with an average score of 6.22, and the vast majority of trainees (98%) reported a score of 5 or above with only a small minority (0.6%) stating 3 or below. This indicates that trainees had very high expectations of NPQH with regards to meeting their personal development needs. A difference was found in the overall score reported by gender, with female trainees scoring this slightly higher at 6.26 compared with males at 6.15.

## Summary

The key findings from this chapter are:

- One in five trainees had previous leadership experience outside of the education sector.
- Trainees scored most aspects of the application and assessment process highly, with the exception of the 360 degree diagnostic which split the opinions of trainees and stakeholders. Some found it useful, whereas others found that it did not include enough detail and was not clear to fill out.
- Line managers/headteachers and other colleagues was the main vehicle for trainees to learn about NPQH, and these individuals were also influential in trainees decisions to undertake NPQH.
- Awareness of Head Start was low amongst trainees even following their regional introductory day, with only 53% of trainees who had heard of it, and amongst those who had, they rated their awareness as 4.37 out of 7.
- Trainees are highly motivated to become headteachers, and the majority (75%) anticipate they will be a headteacher within 18 months of commencing NPQH; this is significantly higher among acting headteachers (93%).
- Trainees want to develop a wide range of skills through NPQH; the most frequently reported include:
  - Managing budgets (77%)
  - Working with Human Resources and legal issues (69%)
  - Understanding and implementing strategic change (69%)
  - Leading and influencing others (63%)
  - Engaging with the wider community (63%)
  - Developing own confidence (58%)

### 3 The NPQH journey

This section of the report will explore the journey of trainees through the NPQH programme, examining the elements of the programme they used, their subsequent satisfaction and the extent to which they used them. It will then go on to explore trainees' awareness of the Head Start programme.

#### NPQH elements undertaken

Overall, the majority of trainees used a variety of elements of NPQH on their journey through the programme to graduation. Over half (50%) had used all of the elements available to them, and over a quarter (30%) had used five. The average number of elements used by all trainees was 5.23. Female trainees reported a slightly higher number of elements used, with an average of 5.28 when compared with male trainees at 5.13. There was also a difference seen by role, with those who were headteachers or acting headteachers using on average 4.95 elements when compared with all other roles (on average reporting 5.27 excluding those with the role "other").

The most commonly used element that was reported to have been used by trainees was coaching at 98 per cent (see Figure 18), followed closely by a placement at a leadership development school (95%)<sup>18</sup>. Trainees were least likely to engage in peer learning (69%) and national or local face-to-face events (75%).

Figure 18: Elements of NPQH undertaken by trainees



Base=1,810; prompted

<sup>18</sup> Although this is a mandatory element of NPQH, a number of trainees did not select this option in the survey. However to successfully complete NPQH this element must have been undertaken.

## Use of elements by trainees

The use of peer learning differed by trainees, with 69% of White British trainees using this compared with a higher proportion of those from a different ethnic background (76%). Differences were also found between those who had previous experience of leadership outside of the education profession (74%) compared with those who did not (67%). A lower proportion of headteachers and acting headteachers also report using peer learning at 62 per cent, and a higher proportion of local authority advisers and officers report this as highest at 80 per cent. When asked during the depth interviews why trainees had not used the peer learning element of NPQH, those who did not use it primarily reported that this was due to the group they were in not being successful (explored in peer group section), rather than to them not wanting to access this support.

A higher proportion of female trainees (78%) reported attending national or local face-to-face events when compared with male trainees (70%). Headteachers and acting headteachers also reported this less frequently at 65 per cent than individuals in other roles. Local authority advisers/officers reported this more at 82 per cent. Attendance also differed by delivery centre, with only 68 per cent from the North attending compared with 81 per cent from the Central centre, 76 per cent from the South and 76 per cent from London.

Trainees from small schools reported using learning opportunities less at their own school (88%) when compared with those from schools with more than 100 pupils (94%). This could reflect the lack of opportunities available to those from small schools given the trainees full-time teaching commitments, as highlighted by one substantive headteacher:

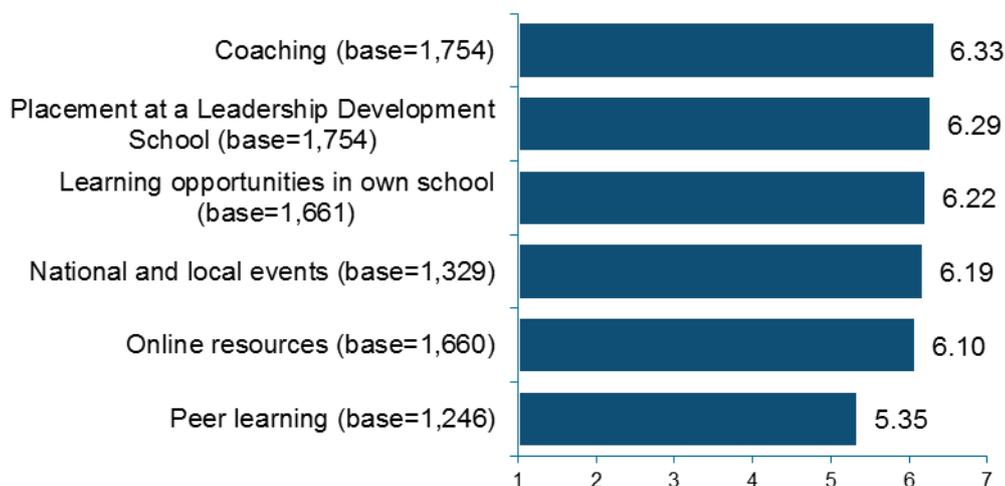
The challenge it does pose, particularly for a very small school like we are, is ... the release element... [The trainee] gets one afternoon a week management time. The rest of the time she's in the classroom ...She's actually a full-time teacher as well. So that does pose a difficulty.

Substantive headteacher

## Usefulness of NPQH elements

On a scale of one to seven (where one equals “not beneficial at all” and 7 equals “very beneficial”), trainees were asked how beneficial each element was in addressing their development needs as identified at the assessment and development events. Trainees were most likely to identify coaching (6.33), LDS placement (6.29), and learning opportunities in own school (6.22) as most beneficial in contributing to the development of their skills (Figure 19).

**Figure 19: How beneficial trainees stated that different NPQH elements were in addressing their development areas as identified during the assessment and development process**



Average scores 1 = not beneficial at all and 7 = very beneficial

How beneficial trainees found the different elements of NPQH in addressing their development areas differed by gender, age and delivery centre. When examining the benefits of national and local events female trainees reported these to be more beneficial, with a mean score of 6.28 when compared with male trainees (5.99). There was also a difference by the age of trainee, with those aged 41 to 45 reporting this less beneficial at 6.05 when compared with those aged 46-50 (6.29) and 51 or older (6.31).<sup>19</sup> This highlights that those who were older found national and local events more beneficial in addressing their development needs.

The LDS placement was another element of NPQH that was seen to have differential levels of benefit by gender, with female trainees again rating this higher at 6.24 than male trainees at 5.79. Although peer learning was rated lowest overall there were differences found by delivery centre. Those who attended the North delivery centre rated this as more beneficial 5.67 when compared with the Central delivery centre (5.27) and the South (5.16).

## Coaching

Trainees reported engaging in between one hour and 35 hours of coaching, with an average of 6 ½ hours used in total during the NPQH programme. Interestingly, 58 per cent used their full seven hours, whilst one-tenth (10%) of trainees reporting using more than their seven hours of entitlement. The remaining 33 per cent used

<sup>19</sup> No significant differences were found between those who were aged 40 or less and those who were in older age categories.

less than 7 hours. The number of hours utilised varied by gender and ethnicity, with male trainees using on average more hours at 6.61 compared with female trainees (6.37), and those from another ethnic background using more hours at 6.78 than those who are White British (6.40).

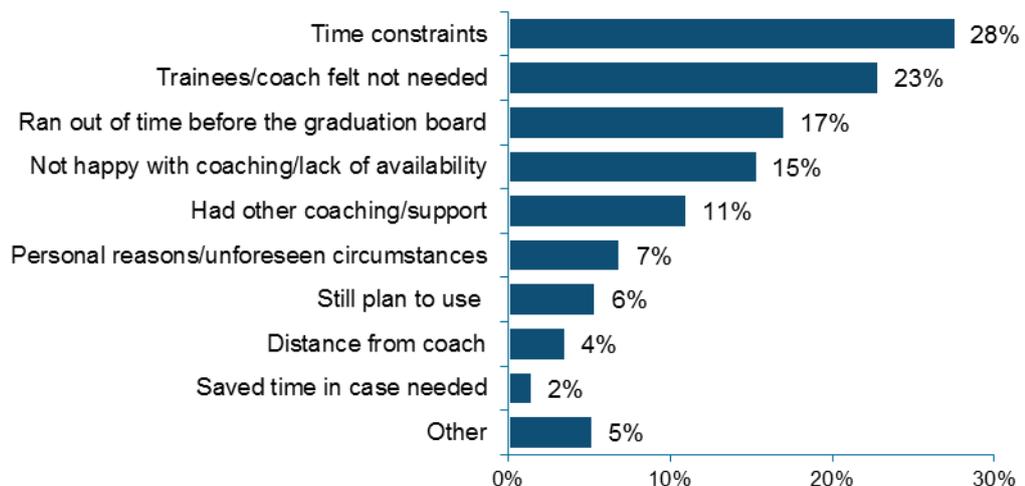
Those trainees who had not used all of their seven hours of coaching were asked why (Figure 20). A variety of reasons were given dependent on the trainee. The most frequently reported reason was time constraints at 28 per cent, with a further 17 per cent reporting a lack of time between RID and their graduation board. Nearly one-quarter (23%) reported that either they or their coach did not believe that they needed the extra time as they had already developed the skills needed for graduation, as highlighted by one trainee:

The coach was excellent. He helped me enormously to gain confidence in my ability as a person. He gave me the confidence to believe in myself as a headteacher. My graduation date was timed after our second meeting and we felt we had arrived at a natural conclusion. I will always be grateful to my coach for the time he gave, listening to me.

NPQH trainee, SPB survey respondent

Just under one-sixth of trainees reported not using their hours due to some dissatisfaction with this element of the programme, primarily due to the availability of the coach with them being too busy to meet with the trainee whilst the trainee was on the course, however a small proportion were also unhappy with the coaching they received.

Figure 20: Why trainees have not used their full 7 hours of coaching



Base=532; multiple responses possible; unprompted

Overall, coaches reported during the in depth interviews that the majority of trainees used their seven hours coaching. With one-tenth of trainees reporting that they have used more than their seven hour entitlement, coaches were asked if they had given trainees more support. The majority reported that they were relatively strict about the seven hour guidelines to ensure that all trainees were treated equally, however a minority reported that they did offer their trainees more support:

I always put them at ease by saying... I am fairly flexible with your time and I have a little bit more time than some people have.' So to get them out of that notion that it's set out taught to time and to get across to them that some of the learning can be an email in between or a chat on the phone, that kind of thing.

NPQH coach

A range of methods were used by trainees to engage with their coach. The majority had engaged face-to-face (96%), while many also stated methods such as via email (58%), telephone (52%) and Skype (2%). A small proportion stated other methods of communication (2%). A variety of reasons were given as to why trainees engaged with their coach. Nearly four-fifths (79%) engaged to *reflect on my learning and practices*, followed by 78 per cent to *identify or discuss my development areas* and 74 per cent to be challenged. Over two-thirds used this opportunity to *develop their own coaching and leadership skills*.

Figure 21: Reasons why trainees engaged with their coach



Base: 1,755; multiple responses possible; prompted

During the depth interviews, coaches stated that they do not receive any information on the trainee before they meet them for their coaching session. For most they saw this as a benefit, as it ensured that the coaching was tailored and driven by the individual, as highlighted by one coach: *“It is meant to be a sort of neutral ground so they tell me what they want to tell me... when we start coaching.”*

During the depth interviews most trainees reported a wide range of positive experiences, while only a minority reported negative aspects which reiterate those highlighted above. The majority of trainees and about half of the coaches reported that the coaching successfully challenged trainees, thus enabling them to self-reflect on their current skills and their journey through NPQH:

She was brilliant. [Name of coach]...She was extremely supportive and very understanding that I had to complete it in a short time if I wanted to apply for a position. She was very flexible regarding meeting times and I just found those sessions invaluable. She was really challenging and really made me reflect on my learning and the placement and the whole process. I found that was the most important element to me really.

SPB trainee

The majority of trainees and a minority of coaches also reported that coaching had provided them with support through the qualification. This focused on the coach supporting trainee’s decisions during the different elements of the programme, exploring their development needs and preparing them for graduation. Coaches and trainees also reported that as a result of the support trainees had developed specific skills. Primarily this was coaching skills, but other areas included strategic thinking, confidence to tackle current school issues and distributive leadership:

It helped me develop to be clear, to improve my clarity when talking about my vision, so it was things like that, and also to develop my confidence as a leader.

SPB trainee

Although coaches highlighted that they were in a coaching and not a mentoring role, many highlighted that this was a challenge they faced with trainees who often asked for advice, especially where they did not have a mentor in their school.

I mean it isn’t part of the coach’s role to support them, if you like, in other aspects of NPQH. You know, it’s very clear. It’s made very clear right from the regional introductory day...So, for example, if they’re going towards graduation, we would not see it as part of our role to look at their paperwork or to give them a mini interview

NPQH coach

The [area] that people feel most pertinently in NPQH is people wanting to look at their documentary evidence that they send in before the graduation board, which for me isn't the role of the coach, that's a tutoring role or a mentoring role. I think some coaches do it, and I don't, I make it clear that they don't need me to look at that, and we might talk it through but I am certainly not going to check it for them.

NPQH coach

A small proportion of trainees reported that they did receive advice from their coach about the course, with one stating that they had a mentoring relationship rather than a coaching relationship with their coach. This highlights that, as with the number of hours of coaching available, some trainees receive a differential experience of coaching.

### Placement at a leadership development school

Trainees report undertaking placements of between 2 and 153 days<sup>20</sup>, with the average placement lasting 7 days. The length of the placement for the majority of trainees was five days (56%), whilst 0.9 per cent undertook a placement of less than five days and just over a third (38%) undertook placements of six to ten days in duration. The remaining trainees undertook placements lasting more than ten days (5%). Interviews with LDS headteachers corroborated the varied length of placements.

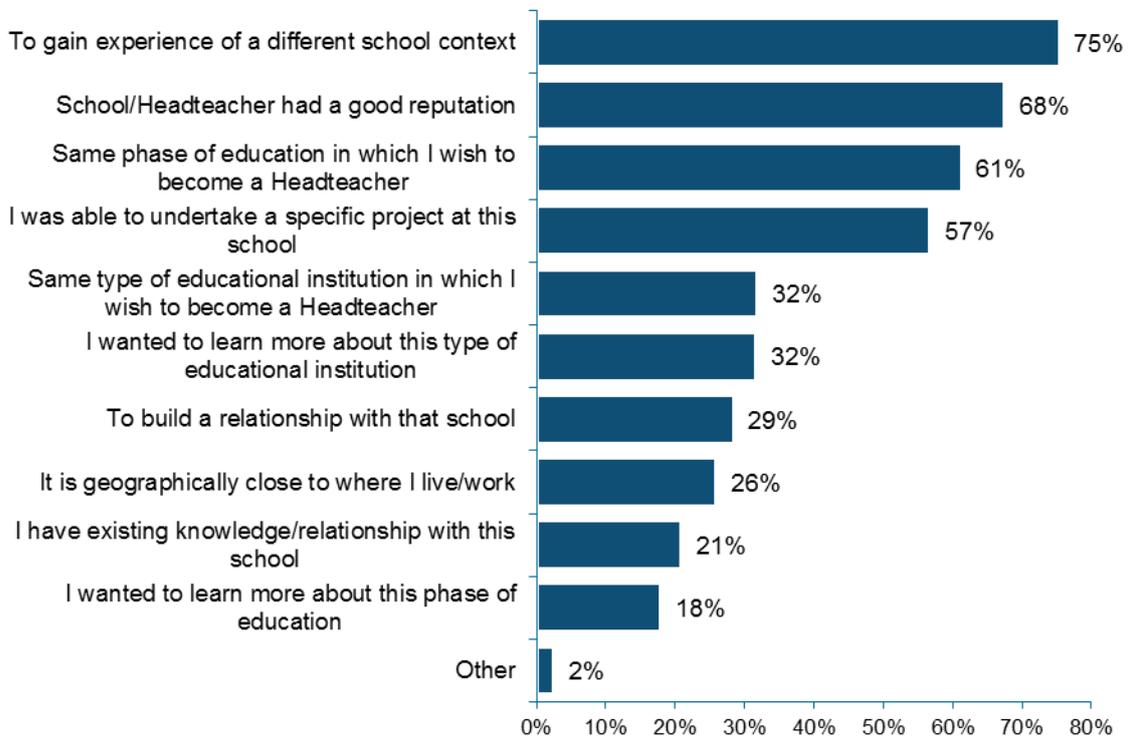
They also highlighted that the days were often non-consecutive and that trainees sometimes worked outside of the school environment; for example if they needed to conduct research, or when they were planning for their project. In some instances, trainees identified that they may have benefited from a longer placement, however time taken away from their own school and the cost of supply cover were frequently cited as reasons why they could not engage in this.

Trainees were asked to indicate the reasons why they had chosen their placement school. Over three-quarters of trainees report they chose it to gain experience of a different school context. Just over two-thirds report that it was due to *the school or headteacher having a good reputation*, and 61 per cent stated that it was the *same phase in which they wished to become a headteacher*. A desire to learn more about a type of school (32%) and phase of education (18%) were reported less commonly.

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<sup>20</sup> Only 16 trainees out of 1,708 undertook a placement of two, three or four days

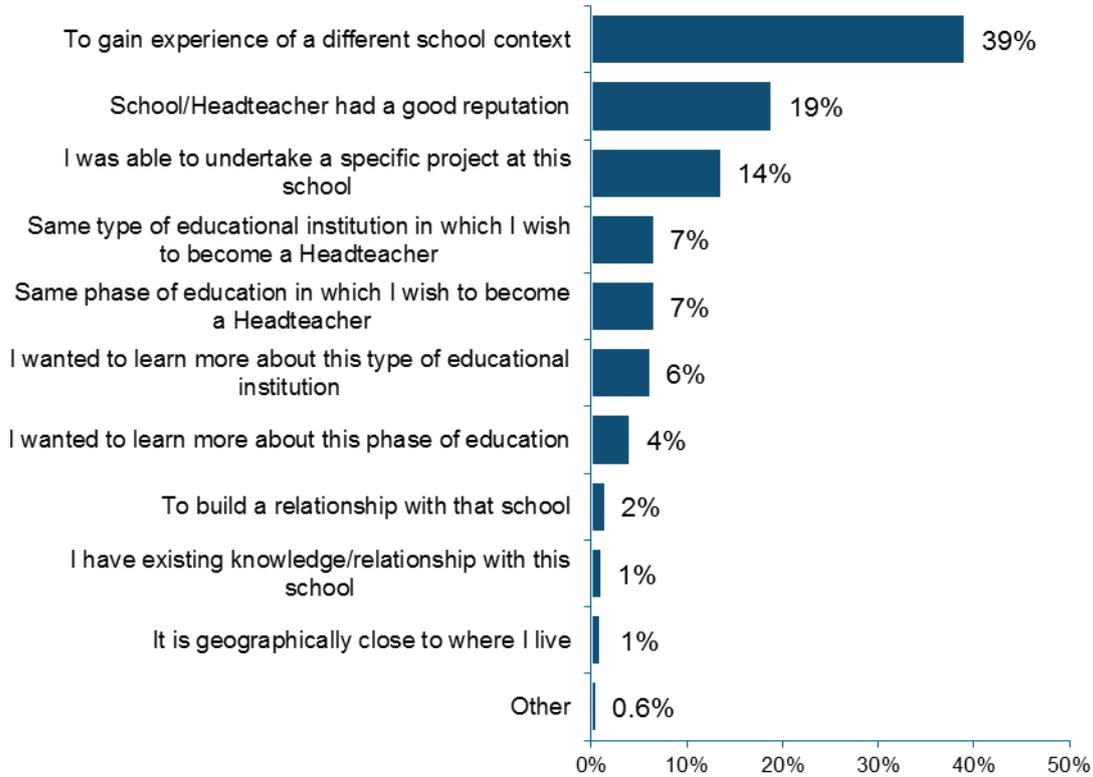
Figure 22: Reasons why trainees chose their placement



Base=1,715; multiple responses possible; prompted

Trainees were also asked to select the single most important reason as to why they selected their placement (Figure 23). To *gain experience of a different school context* was the most important reason given at 39 per cent, followed by *the school or headteacher having a good reputation* (19%). Being able to *undertake a specific project* was the third most important reason reported by 14 per cent of trainees.

**Figure 23: Most important reason why trainees chose their placement**



Base=1,701; prompted

### Activities undertaken whilst on placement

The majority (95%) of trainees were assigned a project whilst on their placement. For those who had a project, most (98%) had contributed or inputted into its content through deciding the aims of the project and how it would be delivered. LDS headteachers reported that they worked with the trainees to design the project they would undertake at the school. The majority reported that they designed projects which would successfully meet trainees development needs alongside those of the school, although a minority of LDS headteachers reported that meeting their own needs was more important.

They came to me saying, 'I'd like to look at this.' I said, 'Okay, that's interesting. Come in and talk to me.' Then I said, 'What we want out of it is this.' Then we tried to marry the two together.

LDS headteacher

Maybe it's because I am a bit selfish. I do make sure that the project is going to benefit both of us. If one of them came in and wanted to do

something that I really didn't want or wasn't interested in, I'd probably say, 'I don't think this is the school for you.'

LDS headteacher

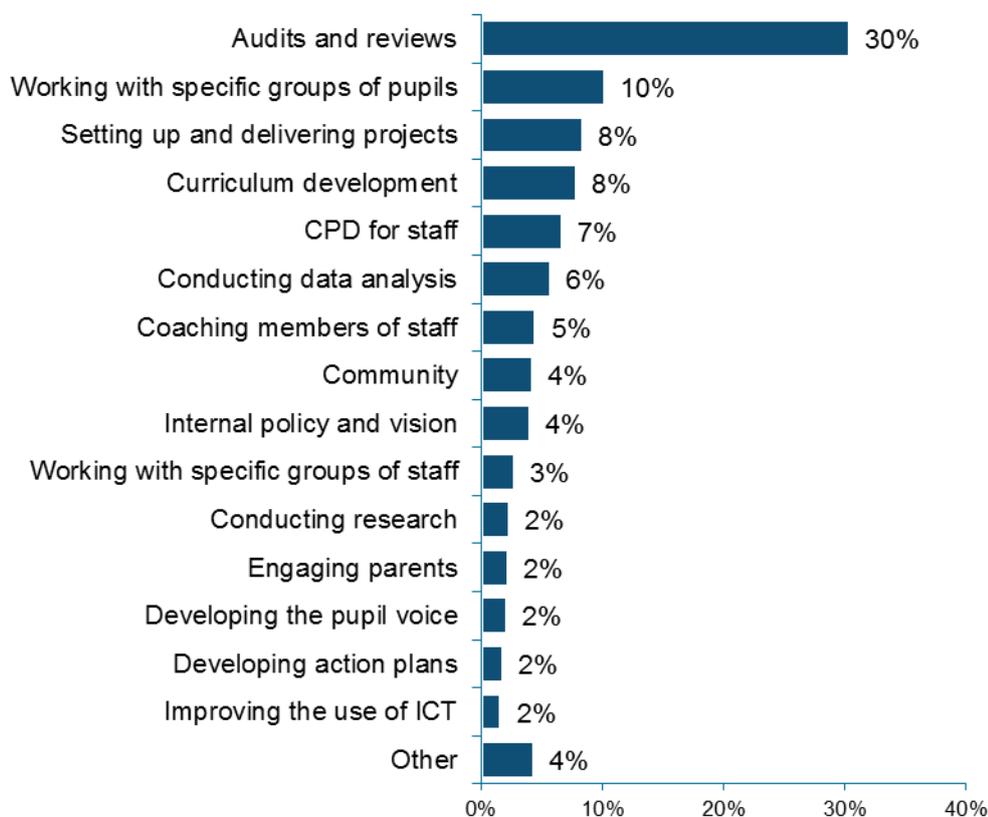
However, during the site visit interview one of the WebEx trainers highlighted the importance of the placement meeting the needs of trainees and stated: *"If the head says I don't think I can meet that need, go somewhere else."*

The projects trainees undertook were diverse in nature, as highlighted in Figure 24. The most frequently reported were audits and reviews (not undertaking a specific project but providing the school with the information to make changes in the future), highlighted by nearly one-third (30%) of all trainees. The areas trainees reviewed span the whole school and include areas such as leadership styles, behaviour management, assessment systems, underperformance, the curriculum and attainment, and one example highlighted by a trainee was: *"To review current provision for specific cohorts within the school who were making little or no progress in order to identify strategies to promote progress."* Just over one-in-ten trainees (10%) reported they *worked with specific groups of pupils* to undertake projects, and a further 8 per cent *set up and delivered projects across the whole school* to respond to an existing area for development. Other areas included *curriculum development* (8%), *CPD for staff* (7%), *undertaking data analysis* (6%) and *coaching members of staff* (5%).

I worked with the senior leadership team to implement a coaching culture into the school in order to move the school's teaching and learning from good to outstanding.

NPQH trainee, SPB survey respondent

Figure 24: The type of project trainees reported undertaking at their placement school



Base=1,603; unprompted

As highlighted through in depth interviews with LDS headteachers, alongside the projects trainees undertook other activities in the school such as shadowing staff, reading school plans, spending time talking to the senior leadership team, doing briefing meetings, and attending a variety of different meetings in an observatory capacity:

He attended a staff development planning day, really interviewed lots of staff, generally visited the school, talked to people. They spent quite a lot of time reading documents, talking to my leadership team, and that sort of thing.

LDS headteacher

These activities in the school were seen as being as important as the project they were undertaking, as described by an interviewee during the site visits:

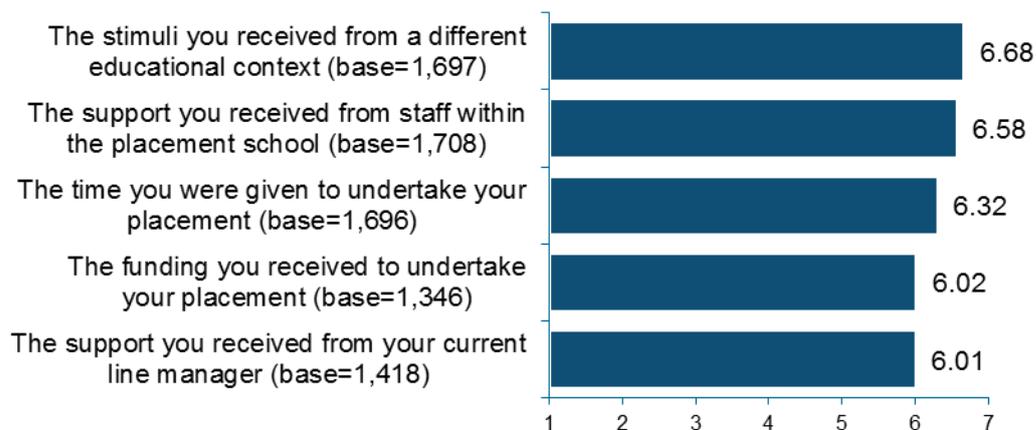
The other thing that makes a really good placement is where you can negotiate the experiences that you have, so that you can get yourself into a governor's meeting, get yourself into a finance meeting, into an SLT meeting, into a staff meeting, a TA [teaching assistant] meeting.

Whatever's going on, maybe capability or redundancy, all of those things that you never get to see, if you can get yourself in there, you know, and be flexible with when you'll turn up, if the head will allow you to take part in things. It's a warts and all, kind of, scenario, you know, not just showing all the best bits, it's not about showcasing your school, it's about showing the ins and outs of everyday headship.

Site visit

Trainees were asked to rate how satisfied they were with various elements of their placement, (where 1 equals “not satisfied at all” and 7 equals “very satisfied”). Overall, trainees were satisfied with all aspects of their placement (Figure 25), although they were less satisfied with the support they received from their current line manager (6.01) and the funding they received to undertake their placement (6.02) when compared with their satisfaction with other aspects of the placement.

**Figure 25: Trainees satisfaction with aspects of the placement**



Average scores where 1 = not satisfied at all and 7 = very

Most trainees were satisfied with the support they received from the LDS school and valued the opportunities that the placement presented, including coaching from the headteacher, dedicated time with and support from the senior leadership team, implementing a variety of projects within schools, and delivering lessons. Overall, trainees indicated that placement schools were very supportive. This was summarised by one trainee when referring to their interaction with the headteacher:

I had pretty much the attention of the head teacher for the whole time and their CPD coordinator was very supportive as well. All of the management team really, were really welcoming and took me on board.

Acting headteacher

However, support from the headteacher was not always forthcoming, and was a source of dissatisfaction for a minority of trainees:

I only really spent one session with the headteacher, and so I spent most of the time with the other members of the leadership team, who seemed relatively new to the senior leadership team...I think, when attempting to develop your understanding of what a Headteacher does, you need to be able to have access to the Headteacher with experience.

Deputy headteacher

Whilst most trainees were satisfied with the funding they received to undertake their placement, substantive headteachers did not always share their satisfaction. Whilst substantive headteachers were mostly accommodating of the placement, a minority did note that there was a cost involved in covering the responsibilities of the trainee or arranging their placement due to them having to take time out of their teaching hours. One trainee highlighted how this is a particular problem for schools in the independent sector:

We don't get any funding at all for me going out on placement...I do teach so my staff were bearing the brunt of me being on NPQH, because they're losing all of their non-contact time so that's not quite right really... That isn't fair and the school can't fund supply cover for me to go out

SPB trainee

Overall the majority of trainees and LDS headteachers reported that the placement was a positive experience. It was highlighted by both that trainees were able to develop a range of skills by taking part in the placement, and a minority of trainees reported that it improved their reflective thinking skills. LDS heads and trainees reported that the placement enabled them to share good practice by learning from each other

It's always beneficial to have people because you learn from them and they learn from you, and you're also developing your own interpersonal skills in training people. So, from that point of view, we always benefit from having the people in.

LDS headteacher

For a minority, interviewees also reported continuing this relationship after NPQH and working together after the programme.

## Online resources

The amount of time trainees spend engaging with online resources varies significantly from trainee to trainee, ranging from trainees reporting just one hour through to 600 hours with an overall average of 47 hours (41 hours if using a trimmed mean<sup>21</sup>). Just over one-third (36%) of trainees reported spending between 1 and 20 hours, whilst a further 27 per cent stated between 21 and 40 hours. The remaining trainees (37%) reported spending over 60 hours in total on this activity. The number of hours trainees spent engaging with online resources differed based on gender, age, role, previous leadership experience and their delivery centre. Female trainees reported on average engaging with online resources more at 51 hours compared with male trainees at 40 hours. Those who held previous leadership and management roles before entering the teaching profession used online learning more (54 hours) when compared with those who had not (45 hours).

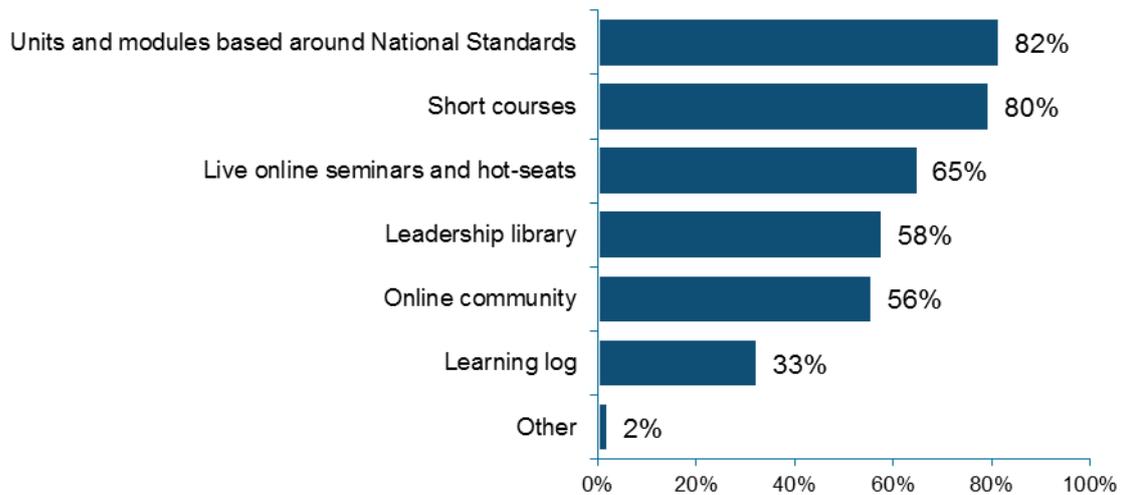
Surprisingly, those who were younger (40 years old or less) reported lower engagement with online resources (43 hours) than those who were 51 or older (53 hours), but no other differences were found between the remaining age groups and levels of engagement. Those who were acting headteachers reported lower levels of engagement at 32 hours compared with those in non-acting headship roles (48 hours). A difference was also found in the use of online modules by delivery centre, as trainees from the South delivery centre reported a higher level of engagement with online resources at 53 hours compared with London at 41 hours and the North at 43 hours.

Figure 26 indicates that trainees used a variety of online resources. The most common resources were *units and modules based around National Standards* (82%) and *short courses* (80%). The resource used least by trainees was the *learning log* (33%).

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<sup>21</sup> A 5 per cent trimmed mean was used to calculate the average due to a number of outliers in the data

Figure 26: Type of online resources used by trainees



Base=1,668; multiple responses possible; prompted

Online learning was explored through the depth interviews and was an area which divided trainees opinions, with some highlighting a range of positives with this types of learning compared with those who expressed negative perceptions. As highlighted by one of the site visit representatives: *“online elements are very, very personal, they either love it or hate it”*. Trainees reported that online learning enabled them to gain access to a wide range of information in one place which they could pick and choose from to meet their own development needs. Trainees highlight that the courses enable them to learn a wide range of skills which they would then be able to implement in the future. Although only highlighted by a minority of trainees, the networking opportunities presented through the online resources was seen as a positive.

I engaged with it. Not the actual courses that you had to book onto, but I did do the online unit, I used all of that. Initially they were a bit time-consuming, finding your way around, but once you got used to the process, because it's slightly different to the way the leadership pathways were organised, once I got my head around it, dipping in, and I was cherry picking again the sections I needed, I did find those useful.

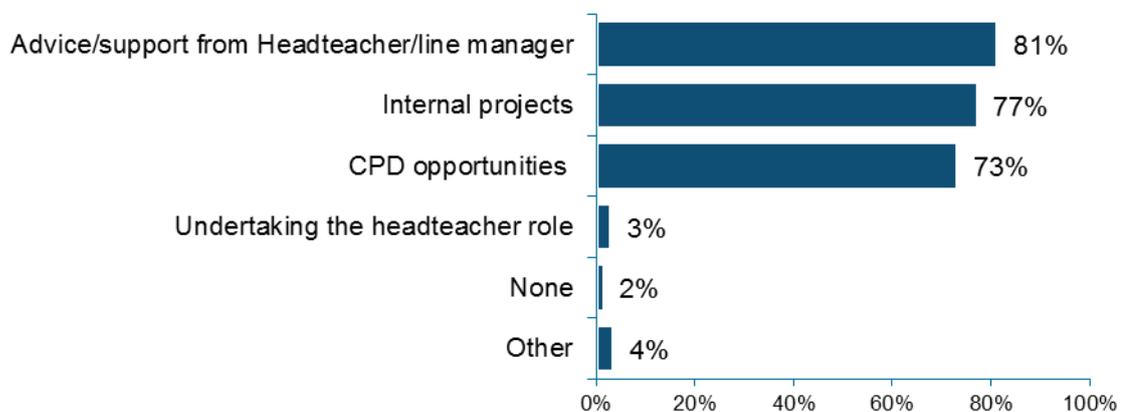
SPB trainee

Those who reported negative perceptions surrounding the online resources primarily reported this was due to a lack of time using them rather than the resources themselves. Those negatives that were reported were primarily regarding navigating the website and being an inappropriate learning style.

## Learning opportunities at own school

A range of learning opportunities was available for trainees at their current school whilst undertaking NPQH. Over four-fifths (81%) of trainees stated they had received *advice or support from their headteacher*, whilst 77 per cent had undertaken a specific project at their school and 73 per cent stated they had *CPD opportunities within the school*. Only a small proportion (2%) reported that although they used their school to develop, they could not identify any specific learning opportunities that were available to them at their own school (Figure 27).

Figure 27: Type of learning opportunities available at own school



Base=1,666; multiple responses possible; prompted

Through the depth interviews, the majority of substantive headteachers reported that they supported their trainee on the programme as a mentor and someone to discuss NPQH with, and where possible were helping them to develop specific skills by providing them with learning opportunities. Many of the substantive headteachers highlighted a range of development opportunities they had made available to trainees, as highlighted below:

I've supported her in her placement school, because she'd come back from those meetings and sometimes say to me that a member of staff was particularly difficult to deal with. So we'd talk through the scenario together and she'd then go off, you know, with a different frame of mind.

Substantive headteacher

In previous times, she would have asked for more help. Instead she was very proactive in that she came to me and said, 'Look, I really think I need to deal with this and it's down as one of my development areas. Can I observe you in a difficult conversation?' Then she asked for the

opportunity to deal with them so, when we had difficult parents coming in to us, she was happy to take that off and go through what she'd done

Substantive headteacher

The majority of substantive headteachers reported that they did not receive any specific guidance on NPQH and how to support their trainees whilst they were on the programme. Around half of those thought that they did not need any specific guidance, however the remaining substantive headteachers reported that this would have been useful. A minority did report they had received a booklet but that this did not adequately explain the role:

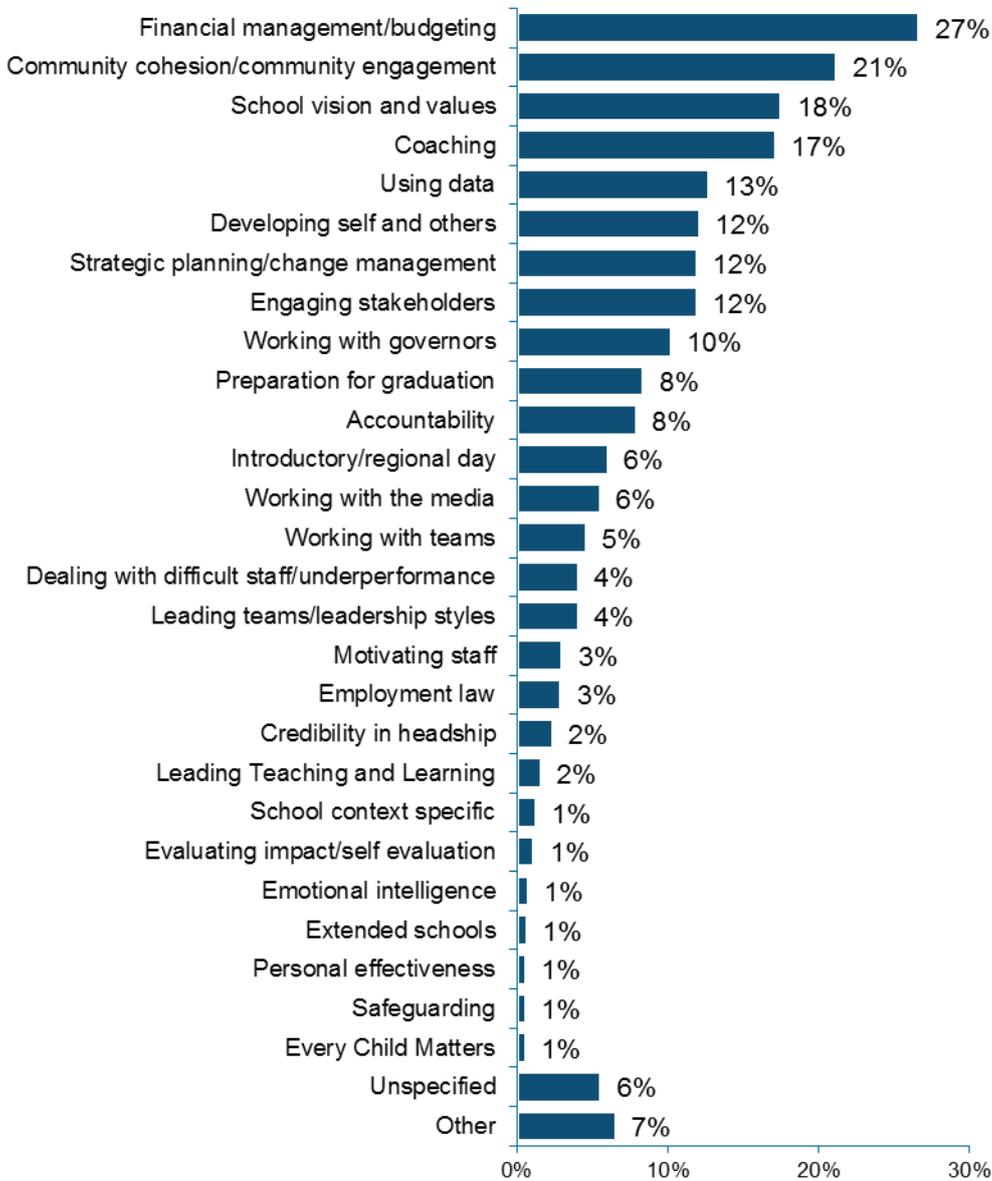
We had a booklet, which was a head teacher's booklet. It explains the process, but to me it didn't explain the practice around appropriately supporting somebody. I guess that the support that people need is very much individualised to their needs, so that might be a difficult document to produce, but what it would be looking at is good practice.

Substantive headteacher

## **National or local face-to-face events**

Trainees undertook training in a wide variety of subject areas through national and local face-to-face events, with many trainees highlighting that they attended two or more events. The most frequently reported areas (as highlighted in Figure 28) were financial management/budgeting events reported by just over one-quarter of trainees, community cohesion/community engagement events (21%), events focused on understanding the school vision and values (18%) and coaching events (17%).

Figure 28: National and local events trainees reported attending



Base=1,281; multiple responses possible; unprompted

A minority of trainees reported during the depth interviews that they found it difficult to find the time to engage with or attend national or local events. Those trainees who reported positive features of the events report that it was useful to have face-to-face time to network and discuss issues with other trainees.

I travelled up to a couple of them with other people so I've had a chance to talk to them about it and talk to them about the process on the way home.

SPB trainee

Trainees reported that it enabled them to develop a range of different skills to implement in their school:

I went on a course called Managing Organisational Change so I have used some of the strategies I was taught in that course...so I have used some of the TDA pack that we were given on the course and looked at ways to involve to all stakeholders... I have involved all the parents, the staff and the governors ... we are [working] ... with the pupils and all they're doing some questionnaires to help me inform my decision making in where the schools development plan needs to sit.

**[Interviewer: And is that something that you would have done anyway?]**

No, I would have just decided myself probably because that was the model that I was used to dealing with.

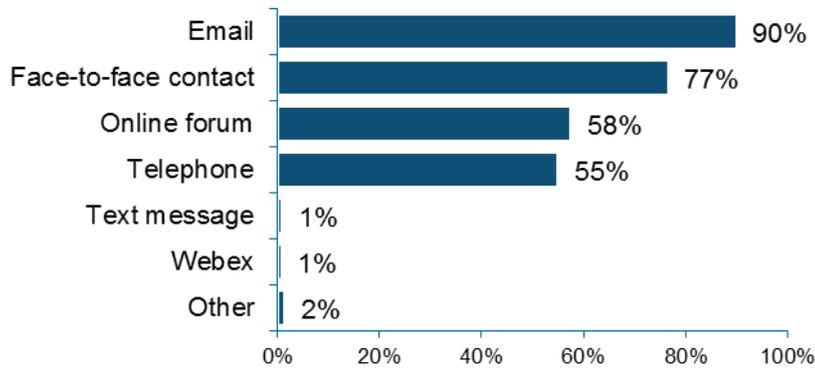
SPB trainee

## Peer learning

Different trainees reported engaging with their peer group in a variety of ways and a number of different times. The lowest reported number of times was once, and the highest was reported as 300. The average number of times trainees engaged with their peer group, stood at 13 times (11 if using a trimmed mean). Those trainees who had previous leadership experience outside of the education profession reported a higher use of peer groups, with a mean of 14 hours compared with 11 hours with those who have no previous leadership experience outside of the teaching profession.

Trainees engaged with their peer group in a variety of ways, with email being the most popular at 90% (see Figure 29 below). Face-to-face contact was reported by over three-quarters (77%) of trainees, followed by using online forums (58%) and having telephone conversations (55%).

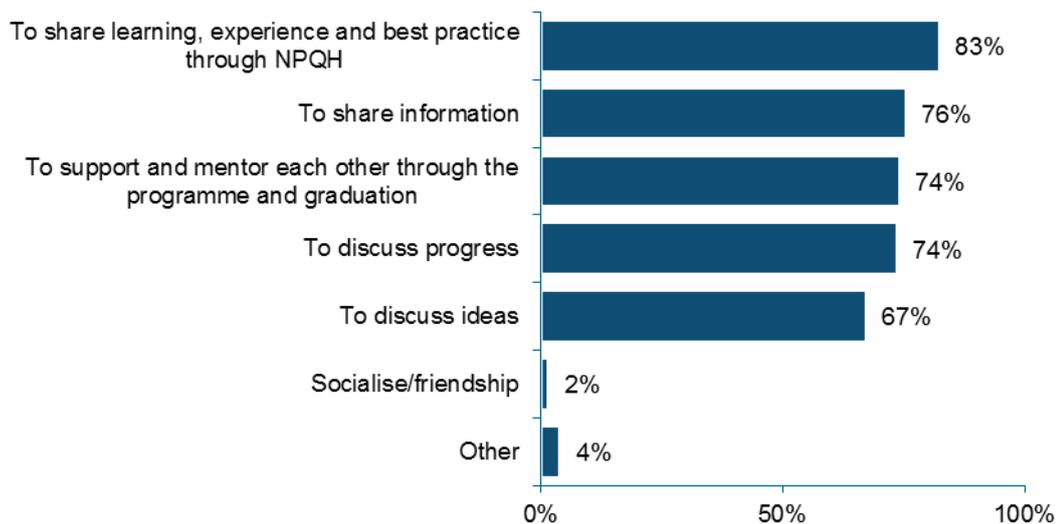
Figure 29: How trainees engaged with their peer group



Base =1,251; multiple responses possible; prompted

Trainees primarily engaged with their peer group to enable them *to share learning, experiences and best practice* through NPQH, as reported by four-fifths (83%) of trainees (Figure 30). Reasons reported by three-quarters of trainees included to *share information* (76%), to *support and mentor each other* (74%) and to *discuss progress* (74%).

Figure 30: Why trainees engaged with their peer group



Base=1,249; multiple responses possible; prompted

Whilst trainees rated peer learning as the least beneficial area of NPQH in contributing to the development of their skills, trainees do find these groups important to their NPQH journey. Throughout the depth interviews it became apparent that trainees value these groups for numerous reasons such as having a means to obtain advice and support on NPQH and their school and discuss the pressures they are experiencing, coaching each other, making links with other schools, resource exchanging, and reassurance. This trainee highlighted the value of resource exchanging:

Sometimes you can just fire out a question about something random that you've got nobody else to ask that you want a quick response to and get pretty quickly back about, 'This is what we do in my school. Do you want our paperwork for that?' 'Brilliant. ... and it makes you go on and move forward.

SPB trainee

The peer learning groups provide them with a vehicle in which they can seek guidance from and support other trainees, as well as acting as a medium in which they can forge connections and share resources, which in turn helps their development:

It's mainly helped with the practical aspects, and advice, and people sharing experiences, particularly around the placement. So it is more the practical help rather than the learning development, but then through professional discussion as well, that's enhancing the moment, so I think a bit of both.

Acting headteacher

Peer learning was seen to work well where a trainee or group of trainees took an active role in organising and coordinating the group. Some trainees suggested that you only get out of the peer network what you are willing to put in:

[Phase and type of education of peer group members] always relies on that, you always have to have a catalyst somewhere in the system. Somebody has got to take responsibility or else things fall apart. Exactly the same as when I had got my whole networks of schools, if I didn't facilitate it, it slowly dropped apart.

Site visit

However, trainees highlighted the importance of geographical distribution of peer group members and, whilst email and telephone contact can be maintained regardless of location they stated that the learning potential of the groups could be enhanced through geographical proximity and being able to meet each other face-to-

face. This was considered more important than the phase and type of education of peer group members by some trainees:

It isn't necessarily the most important thing, because we're all trying to be Headteachers, and there are certain skills and knowledge that straddle all phases, that we're all trying to develop. So the phase, in some respects, I think is less important...I think geographical closeness is probably better.

Deputy headteacher

Some trainees indicated that the informal peer groups they formed at ADE were more beneficial to them than those developed at the RID (although for some trainees this was the same group of people) as these were built on relationships which were formed through the assessment process. This was outlined by one acting headteacher: *'You all go through a trauma together and you're mates for life, aren't you?'* The acting headteacher further explained:

I've got a really good peer group ... On the introductory day we all arrived at the hotel, all checked into our assessment development groups because it is a tough process and that pushes people together. It bonds you ... everybody has got to be in this thing together.

Acting headteacher

## Length of time to graduate

Trainees took on average 10 months to graduate from NPQH<sup>22</sup>. As seen in Figure 31, the majority of trainees graduated in 13 months or less, with only a small proportion (7%) taking more than 13 months. The length of time it takes trainees to graduate varies by role. As could be expected, headteachers and acting headteachers take less time to graduate when compared with all other trainees with over one-quarter (28%) graduating in 7 months or less, and a further 25 per cent graduating in between 7 and 9 months. This was supported by an interviewee from the site visit, as they highlighted that they often had less development needs than other trainees:

Particularly when you get people who are in acting head positions, people who have really big responsibilities in large organisations you could say

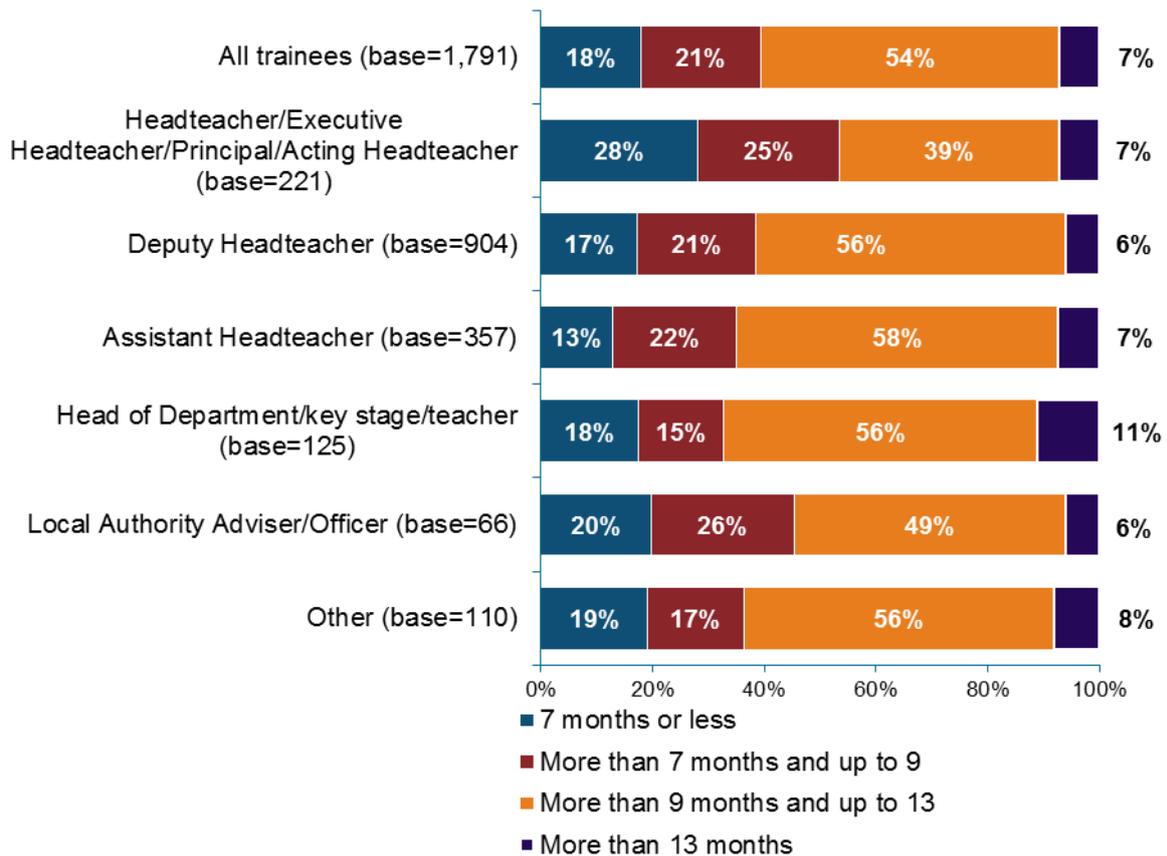
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<sup>22</sup> Length of time till graduation was developed by calculating the number of months from the date of the last regional introductory day which trainees could have attended for their intake to the national moderation day for the graduation window in which they graduated. These figures should therefore be treated as indicative as it is acknowledged that trainees may have graduated approximately 4-6 weeks earlier than our figures suggest; however, they are calculated to determine the relationship between the length of time to graduation and trainees' characteristics rather than to check the accuracy or replace NCTL's management information.

they are very much at the cusp when they come to an assessment development centre. There isn't a huge amount that they need to do, because they're nearly ready for headship anyway.

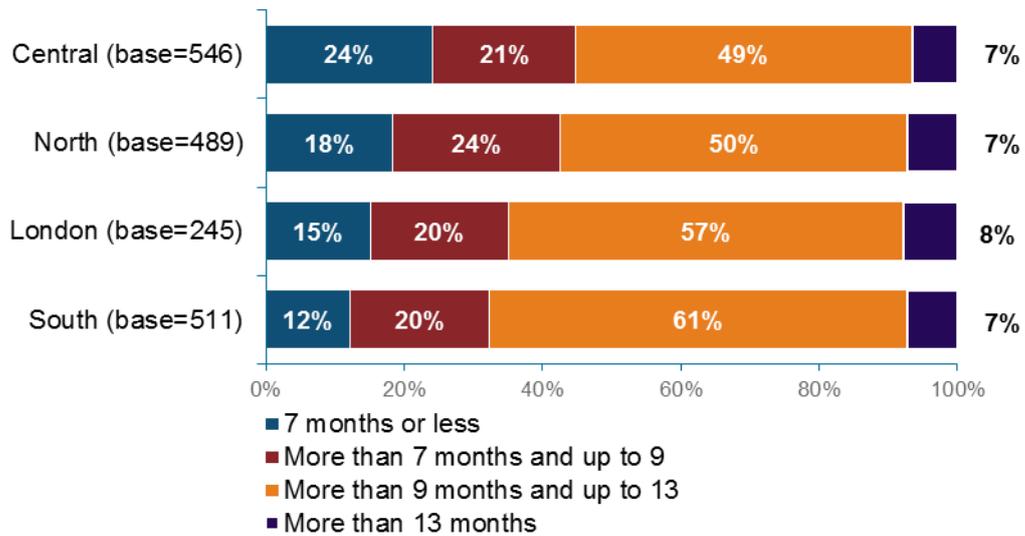
Site visit

Figure 31: Length of time to moderation by role



The length of time it takes a trainee to graduate also differs by delivery centre (Figure 32). A higher proportion of trainees from the Central and North delivery centres graduate within 7 months or less (24% and 18% respectively) compared with London and South (15% and 12% respectively).

Figure 32: Length of time to moderation by delivery centre

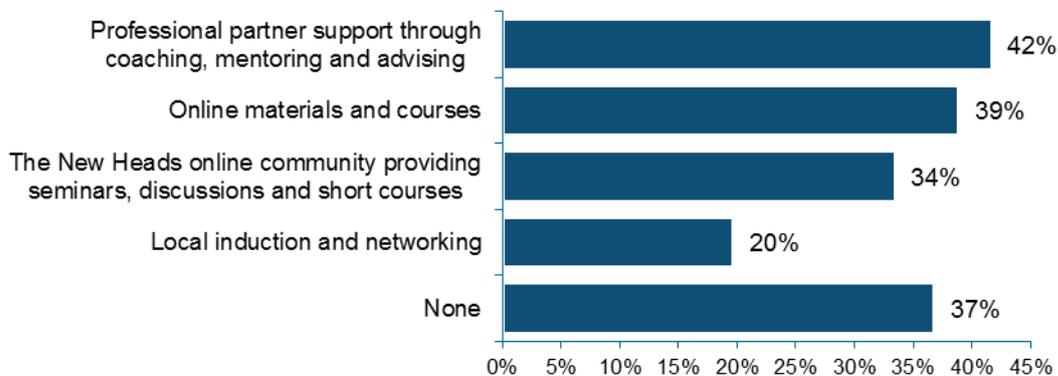


Base=variable

## Awareness of Head Start

At SPB all trainees were asked to state which elements of the Head Start programme they were aware of in order to explore recognition of the Head Start brand (Figure 33). Over one-third (37%) of trainees were unaware of any of the elements of Head Start on approaching graduation from NPQH. The elements which trainees were most likely to be aware of were the professional partner (42%) followed by the online materials and courses (39%).

Figure 33: Awareness of the elements of the Head Start programme



Base=1,757; multiple responses possible; prompted

Trainees were also asked to rate, on a scale of one to seven, their awareness of the **aims and objectives** of the Head Start programme (where 1 equals “not at all” and 7 equals “completely aware”). When examining the scores for those trainees who took part in both SPA and SPB, the mean score increased from 2.82<sup>23</sup> to 3.53.

Although this is low, it is higher than the mean score reported at SPA. Although awareness at SPB remains low, trainees are sent additional information about the Head Start programme following their successful graduation from the programme, which should therefore raise their awareness of the programme as they become eligible to access it.

I think with my NPQH letter I've got something about Head Start. I only heard a week ago so I haven't actually done any more about it. I did think actually that that would be something useful to do.

SPB trainee

During the in depth interviews trainees were asked to state when they thought they should find out about Head Start. The majority thought they should find out about it near the end of the NPQH journey as trainees are approaching graduation:

It would be really useful if on your final NPQH coaching session, if they could almost help you with those next steps. Even if you read an email, you get so many, it would be quite easy to delete it, but if there's somebody that could, as you're having a face to face meeting with them, almost have, kind of, an exit, 'This isn't the end of the support, because you can get it from here, here, or here.' That would be quite useful.

SPB trainee

A minority of trainees report that it would be useful to find out about Head Start at the start of the programme, but do state that this does not need to be a detailed explanation but a summary of the programme so that trainees are aware of the continued support that is available to them as they graduate from NPQH:

I would prepare them on the two-day assessment. I would make it clear that this is the progression, because clearly they probably want it to be a progression, and I think you need to introduce it at the beginning so people are already lined up and clued up for it, and they know that's where they're going upon graduation. That's where I'd put it.

SPB trainee

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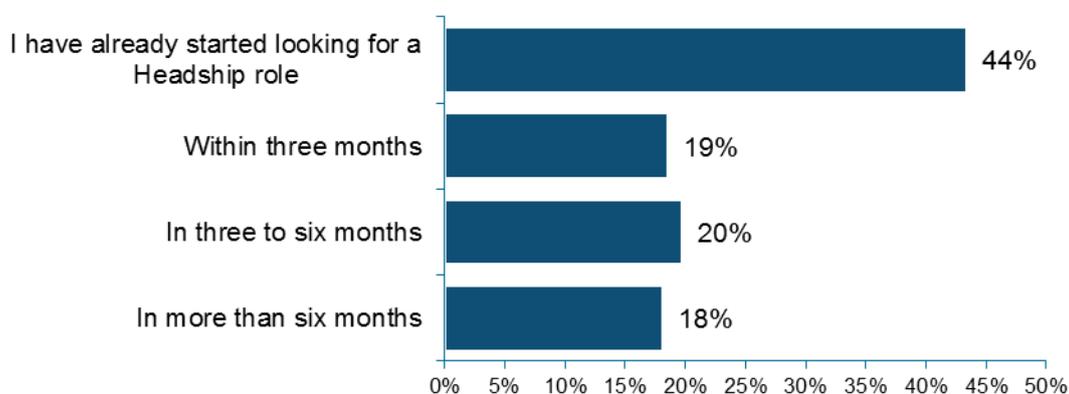
<sup>23</sup> Those trainees who had no awareness of Head Start at SPA received a score of 1 for the awareness of the aims and objectives and combined with the scale data to enable us to examine the uplift in score amongst those who were aware at SPA and those who were not.

A minority of trainees had the perception that Head Start was designed to support trainees once they had moved into a headship role, and the pre-headship support available seemed to be misunderstood amongst those who were aware of the programme: *“I hadn’t been given an awful lot of information, but I knew it would be available to me as a new headteacher.”*

## Next steps

Trainees were asked to state when they planned to start actively looking for a headship role; 3 per cent reported that they were already in a headship role. Just over two-fifths of those who were not currently headteachers (44%) reported that they had already starting looking for a headship role, with a further 19% reporting that they would start looking within three months.

**Figure 34: When trainees plan to start looking for a headship role at SPB who are not already headteachers**



Base=1,656

Through the depth interviews the trainees’ plans for headship were explored. A minority had already applied and had a headship post lined up. A minority also stated that they would be looking for a headship role but that they planned to wait to find the right headship role or to develop their skills further. Substantive headteachers highlighted that they would support the trainees to find a new post through encouraging them to apply for posts, giving them advice, supporting their application, providing them with references, and talking to them about the timescales in which they want to become a headteacher:

Yes, now she has been successful we talked about the timing and what challenges that she wants, when she wants it,[and] what she wants ... I am supporting her but I don’t want her to leap in just for the sake of being

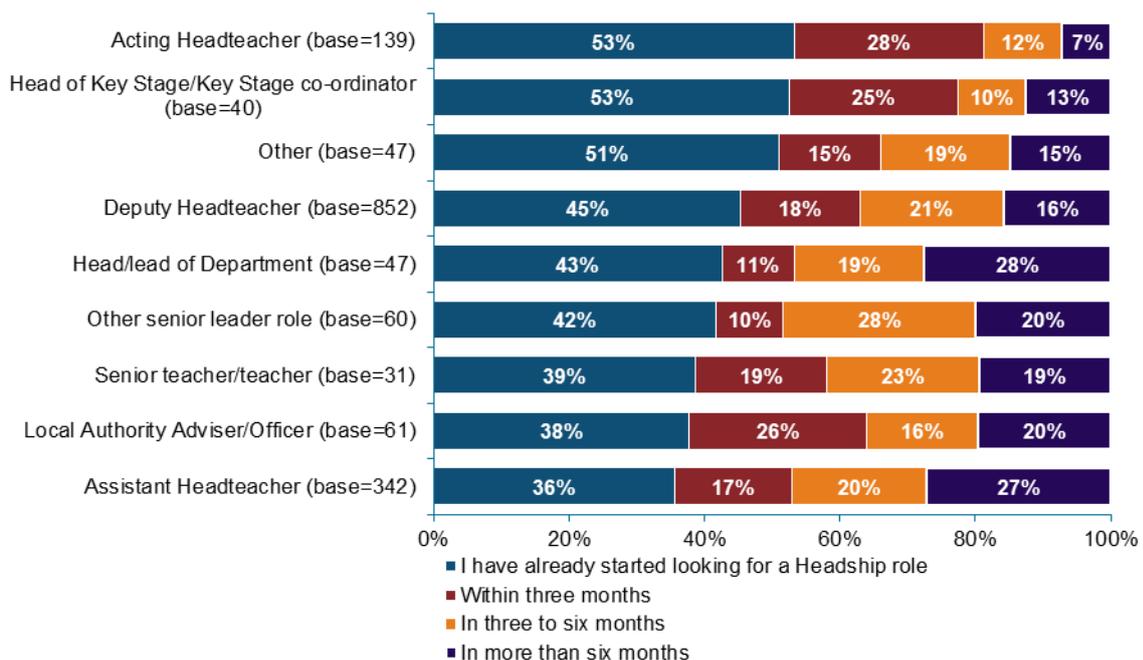
a head. I think it is case of helping her appreciate what a demanding role it is so it has to be the right school for you.

Substantive headteacher

The timescale in which trainees planned to look for a headship role differed by their role on starting NPQH, their age and the size of their school. A higher proportion of trainees who were at small schools (55%) had already started looking for a headship role when compared with those in a larger school (44%).

Those who were acting headteachers planned to start looking for a headship position faster than some other groups of trainees (Figure 35), with 53 per cent of acting heads having already started looking for a position before they had graduated and only 7 per cent planning to wait for more than six months before they start.

**Figure 35: When trainees plan to start looking for a headship role at SPB who are not already headteachers by role**

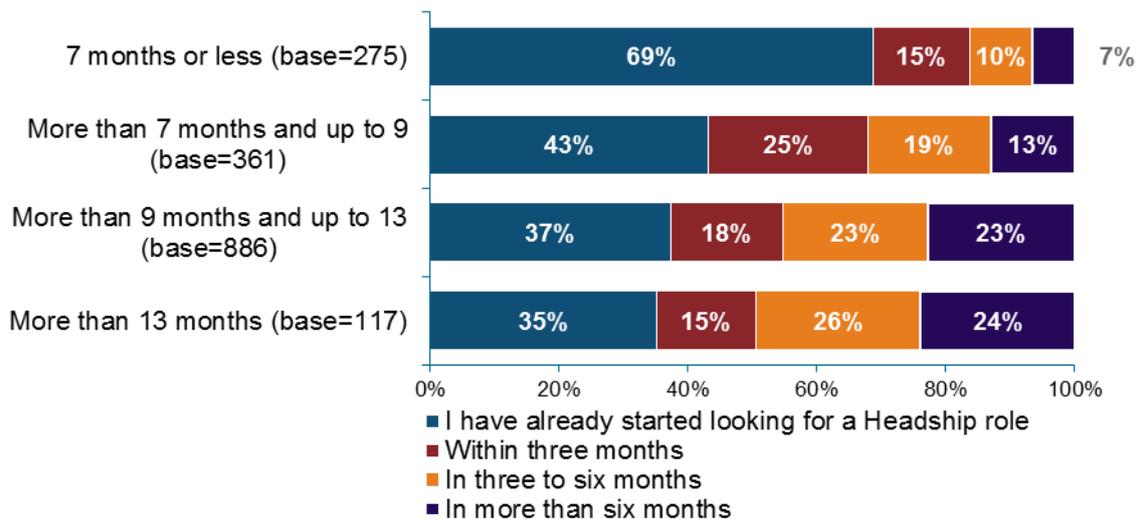


Younger trainees were more likely to state that they would start looking for a headship position in more than six months, with 24 per cent of 40 year olds or less stating this compared with 18 per cent of 41 to 45 year olds. Just over one-sixth (15%) of 46-50 year olds would start looking for a headship position in more than six months, while 11 per cent of those aged 51 or more would do so.

Those trainees (Figure 36) who graduated faster were more likely to be already looking for a headship role, with 69 per cent of trainees who graduated in 7 months

stating this compared with 43 per cent who took more than 7 months and up to 9 months. More than a third (37%) took more than 9 months and up to 13 months, and 35 per cent took more than 13 months.

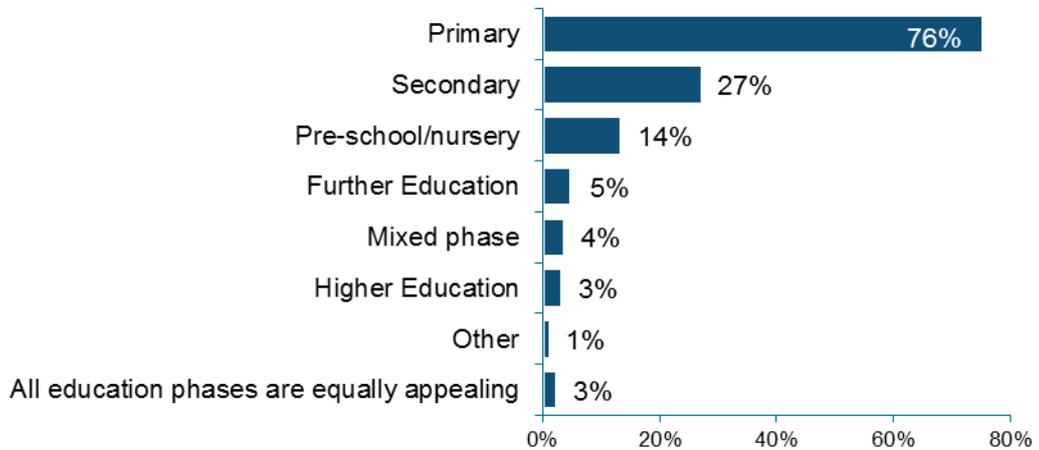
**Figure 36: When trainees plan to start looking for a headship role at SPB who are not already headteachers by how long it took them to graduate from NPQH**



When asked to state whether they still planned for their next role to be as a headteacher following their participation, 85 per cent of trainees stated yes, 2 per cent stated no and 13 per cent stated not sure, and this did not differ by any of the differences found above.

Trainees were asked to state which phases of education they would consider working in (at SPB). Overall, almost three-quarters (76%) envisage working as headteachers in the primary phase of education, followed by 27 per cent in secondary education. Higher education was the least preferable destination, selected by only 3 per cent of respondents (Figure 37).

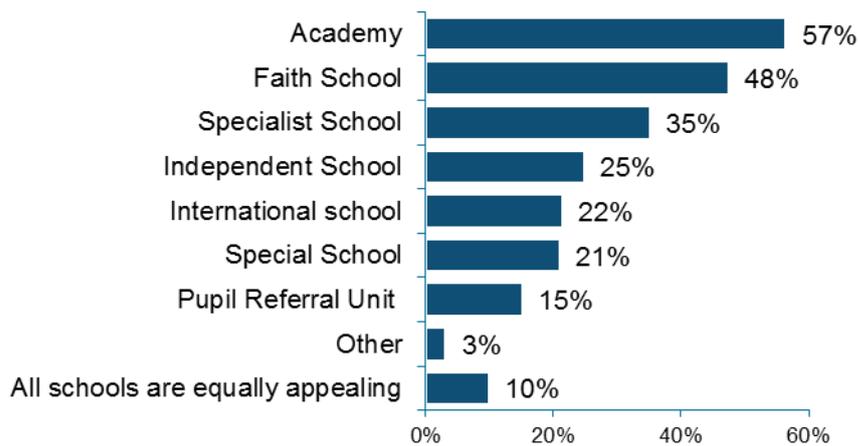
**Figure 37: Phase of education trainee would consider working in following NPQH**



Base=1,526; prompted

Trainees were also asked to consider if they would work in a school with any of the characteristics shown in Figure 38. One-tenth (10%) of trainees stated that all characteristics were equally appealing when surveyed at SPB. The most commonly reported characteristic amongst trainees was an academy (57%), followed by faith school (48%) and specialist school (35%).

**Figure 38: Educational context in which trainee would consider working following NPQH**



Base=1,392; prompted

Interviewees were asked to what extent NPQH enabled trainees to move into a different educational context (such as changing the phase or type of school) to the one they were in. The opinions from trainees, coaches, professional partners and a minority of LDS headteachers were mixed, with some stating yes, some no, and further interviewees having mixed opinions. Those interviewees that stated yes highlighted that this was due to NPQH providing trainees with transferrable leadership skills, and as the programme is structured around the National Standards this ensures all key areas are covered that are needed:

Because the headteacher standards are generic, the skills of leadership are generic... As we see in the private sector all the time, you can transfer from one particular type of industry to another, provided you've got high level emotional intelligence and leadership skills.

NPQH coach

Those who reported mixed views or thought it couldn't provide transferrable skills report that although NPQH teaches them generic leadership skills that are transferrable, those individuals may not have the range of experience needed to move into a different school, especially in a different phase to one they have worked in previously. Changing type of school was seen to be a more realistic move amongst most than phase.

Only a minority of the trainees who took part in an in depth interview at SPB were actively considering moving into a different educational context in the future, however the majority of interviewees stated that NPQH had provided them with the skills to do so if they wanted to. Some trainees outlined that these skills had been developed as a result of the placement, as they now had experience of working in a different educational context.

Of the trainees at SPB there was an equal split between those who were considering moving to a different type or phase of school and those who were not.

I wouldn't be fazed to go anywhere. I've even done some reading up on academies. I'm not fazed about any of it. I know that I would have a lot to learn in different settings but I'm quite prepared to have a go. I think everything I have learned from the NPQH and from the peers that I've worked with; I think all the skills are transferable.

NPQH trainee, SPB trainee

## Summary

The key findings from this chapter are:

- Trainees use a variety of elements to complete NPQH, with 80 per cent using 5 or 6 elements.
- Trainees found all elements of NPQH beneficial in addressing their development needs, scoring nearly all at over 6 out of 7. Peer learning received the lowest score at 5.35, however trainees stated that although this element did not develop their skills it did provide them with the support and encouragement to complete the programme. .
- Trainees scored coaching as being the most beneficial element, and on average trainees accessed 6 ½ hours of support. Two-thirds of trainees used 7 or more hours, however, one-third did not use their 7 hour entitlement.
- Trainees also rated their placement at a leadership development school highly (6.29 out of 7). The average placement lasted 7 days and most trainees were assigned projects whilst at the school which were diverse in nature.
- Although trainees found peer learning less beneficial than other elements of NPQH in developing their skills, it was still seen as an important element to gain support and advice, to share information and to mentor each other through the programme.
- Although trainees' awareness of the aims and objectives of Head Start was higher than that at SPA, it was still relatively low at 3.53 out of 7.
- Over two-fifths of trainees had already started looking for a headship position at SPB. 85% of trainees stated that they still planned for their next role to be as a headteacher, with only 2% stating that they did not intend this to be their next role.

## 4 Short-term impact on trainees

This section of the report will examine the short-term impacts of NPQH on trainees from SPA to SPB. It will explore changes in their motivation and attitudes towards headship and NPQH and will examine trainees' readiness for headship. Changes in trainees' self-assessed scores will also be examined across statements designed to reflect the National Standards for Headship and across a range of leadership skills and capabilities.

### Attitudes towards NPQH

The survey explored motivation levels towards NPQH by asking trainees if they would undertake the qualification if it was not mandatory to become a headteacher in a maintained school in England. Willingness was captured as a rating on a scale from one to seven (where one equals "I would definitely not undertake NPQH if it was not mandatory" and seven equals "I would definitely undertake NPQH if it was not mandatory"). This question was asked at SPA and SPB to understand if trainees' perceptions of the value of NPQH changed throughout the qualification.

Analysis found that the average ratings given by trainees remain statistically unchanged between SPA (5.40) and SPB (5.44). This shows that overall there has been no increase or decrease in trainees' motivation to undertake NPQH if it was not mandatory between starting and completing the qualification. It also indicates that NPQH has maintained the fairly high level of trainees' willingness to undertake the programme.

Trainees were asked to state their reasons behind the high or low scores they gave to this statement through an unprompted question. A high proportion of trainees (41%) reported that they would have undertaken the qualification as it ensured you developed the skills needed for headship:

I would take this qualification mandatory or not. You need it's rigour to prepare for headship and it develops your learning in ways that work and experience cannot. It keeps you up to date, able to move with the times and keeps you networked. Working within a school can make you insular, but NPQH opens up you outlook.

NPQH trainee, SPA survey respondent

Trainees (37% who responded to the open response question) reported that it was a high quality programme, and as such they would have taken part anyway, with nearly one-fifth (20%) reporting that even it was not mandatory it was the industry standard, as highlighted by one trainee: *"It is the industry standard even if it is not compulsory for academies where I work."*

Further reasons outlined included that they thought the programme enabled trainees to understand headship (16%), they were committed to learning (14%), that it was a personalised programme (14%), it provided them with networking opportunities (12%) and would increase their self-awareness (11%). Just under one-in-ten (9%) reported that if asked at the start of the programme they would have said no, however they have now been 'converted' through their positive experience on the programme:

As a senior manager I am engrossed in the work that I do to impact on my school and our students. The idea of taking on additional work would always deter me. Having been through the process, I found the opportunities for reflection and the impact on my leadership to be valuable; I therefore think it should be mandatory!

NPQH trainee, SPB survey respondent

A small minority of trainees who reported why they had scored themselves low on this statement (n=30) highlighted that the primary reason as to why they would not have undertaken the qualification was that gaining experience on the job was a better way to learn (30%), with many of those stating this already being in an acting head or headship role. Time restraints were also noted (30%) as a reason as to why individuals would not have taken part in NPQH at both work and home. Only a small minority stated that they hadn't found the course useful (7%), and some stated that they already had the necessary skills for headship (10%):

I was told that I had the necessary skills by many headteachers before I undertook NPQH and although I have enjoyed the process I think it would have been useful to undertake some of the support programmes once I was employed as a headteacher.

NPQH trainee, SPB survey respondent

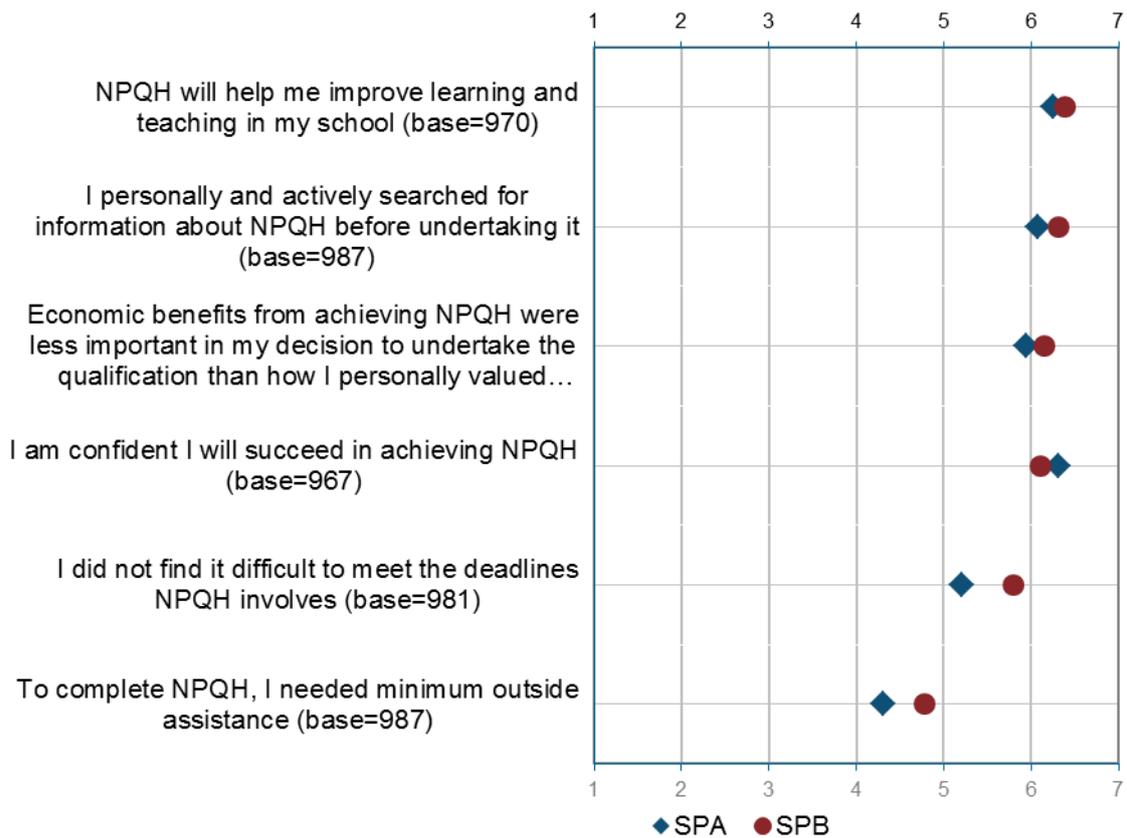
Trainees were also asked to rate a series of statements relating to their attitudes towards NPQH at SPA and SPB on a scale from one to seven (where one equals "less true" and seven equals "more true"). Analysis reveals that between SPA and SPB there have been changes in the average scores for six out of the nine statements measured<sup>24</sup> (Figure 39). The findings show that for most statements the overall average scores increased between SPA and SPB, thereby indicating an increased positive attitude towards NPQH with trainees now considering it less difficult to meet deadlines, need less outside assistance than previously envisaged to complete the qualification and, importantly, they are more likely to think it will help them to improve teaching and learning in their own school. Trainees also report an

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<sup>24</sup> No significant differences were found for the three statements: *The sense of fulfilment I will have by achieving NPQH mostly drives my decision to undertake the qualification, Since I heard about NPQH, I have had a very strong drive to undertake it and If I fail to achieve NPQH, it will be my personal responsibility*

increase in how true it is that they searched for information regarding NPQH, which indicates an increase in their own motivation to actively search for information about the qualification. There was a small decrease in how confident trainees felt about achieving NPQH between SPA and SPB, however this was undertaken whilst trainees were waiting to find out whether or not they had graduated from NPQH.

Figure 39: Attitudes towards NPQH at SPA and SPB



Average ratings where 1 = less true and 7 = more true

Depth interviews with trainees provided further insight into the positive change in attitude towards the NPQH. The majority of interviewees found that their attitude towards the qualification improved as they underwent it, which was largely attributed to the personalised journey and the developments they saw in themselves. One trainee who was an acting headteacher described how they warmed towards the qualification:

I suppose when I was first starting to think about doing it, I saw it as a hurdle... Now that I've done it, I very much appreciate the value of it and what it means... I feel quite proud that I've got it now, and it doesn't feel like it was anything other than really necessary. You know, an essential part of my development. I don't think I really got it at the start.

SPB trainee

Approximately half of coaches also noted that trainees had an improved attitude towards NPQH as they went through the programme. They attributed this to them letting go of their anxieties towards the qualification and trainees seeing it as a valuable experience which provides them with the opportunity to develop and learn new skills.

## Motivations and attitudes towards headship

Changes in trainees' attitudes towards headship were also explored between SPA and SPB. Trainees were asked to rate the extent to which they aspire to become a headteacher on a scale of one to seven (where one equals "I do not wish to become a headteacher" and seven equals "I definitely want to be a headteacher").

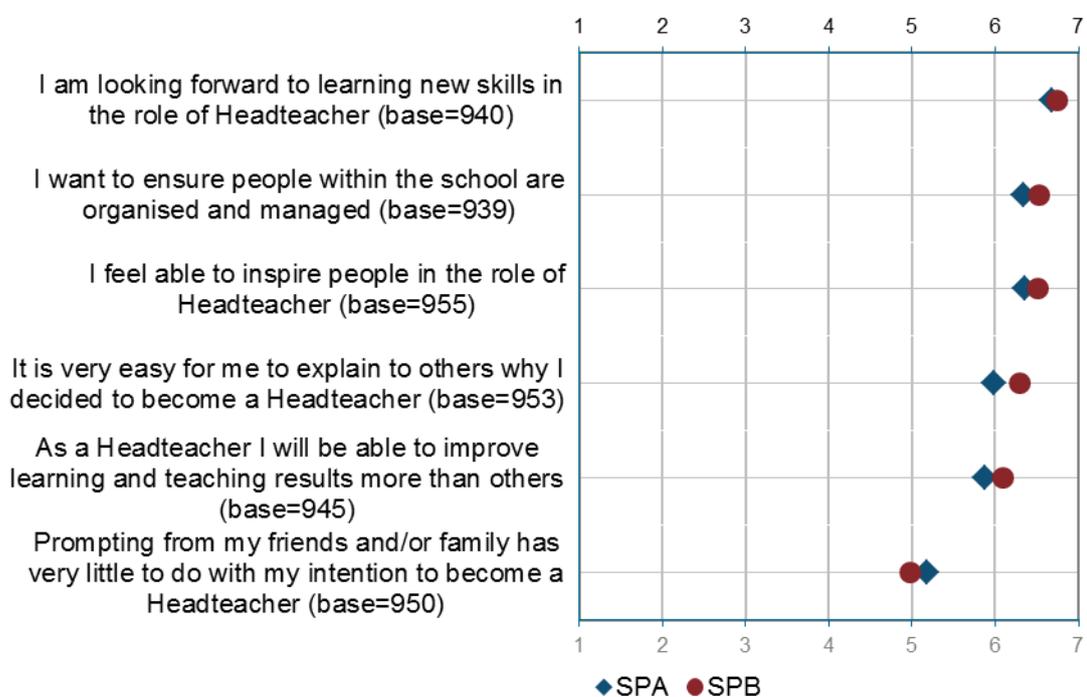
Respondents had very high aspiration levels at SPA, with their ratings reaching almost the upper extreme of the rating scale. Therefore these aspiration levels remained relatively unchanged throughout the duration of the qualification, with average scores of 6.65 at SPA and 6.59 at SPB (no statistically significant difference was found between scores). At SPB the mean score given by trainees differed by the size of the school, with an overall mean score of 6.77 given to those who were in small schools compared with 6.57 given by those in schools with more than 100 pupils. Although overall motivation levels have not increased between SPA and SPB, the majority of trainees at SPA reported that they already felt more motivated for headship following the RID, therefore indicating that NPQH had had an impact on aspirations.

Although the data indicates that trainees' attitude towards headship remains largely unchanged as they undergo the programme, the majority of interviewees described how the qualification had "*re-affirmed*" and "*re-enforced*" their desire for headship and had "*validated*" their skills to do the job.

Trainees at SPA and SPB were also presented with a series of statements relating to their attitudes towards headship and asked to rate how true they were on a scale from one to seven (where one equals "less true" and seven equals "more true"). The statements were designed to capture and quantify a variety of attitudes that overall reflect the nature and intensity of motivation levels towards headship.

Overall, for six out of eight of the statements<sup>25</sup> measured there were changes in the scores between SPA and SPB (Figure 40). Across five of the statements there has been a small increase in the overall mean scores given, thus showing that their attitudes towards headship were slightly more positive than at SPA. Trainees' scored all five of these statements at 6 or above, with trainees *looking forward to learning new skills in the role of headteacher* scoring the highest at SPB at 6.74, followed by *ensuring people within the school are organised and managed* at 6.53 and *inspiring people in the role of headteacher* at 6.52. There was a small decrease in the statement relating to *friends and/or family having little influence*, showing that informal support networks become more important as trainees overcome the challenges of completing the qualification.

Figure 40: Attitudes towards headship at SPA and SPB



Average score where 1 = less true and 7 = more true

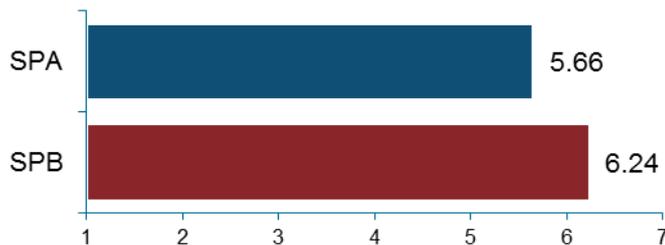
## Readiness for headship

Trainees were asked to rate their readiness for headship at SPA and SPB based on their knowledge, skills and attributes on a scale from one to seven (where one equals “not at all ready” and seven equals “very ready”). Analysis shows that there

<sup>25</sup> No significant differences were found for the three statements: *Prompting from my manager has very little to do with my intention to become a Headteacher*, *Prompting from my friends and/or family has very little to do with my intention to become a Headteacher* and *If the school was not to meet its targets during my Headship this would be my personal responsibility*

has been a statistically significant increase in self-reported readiness for headship between SPA (5.66) and SPB (6.24) (Figure 41); confirming that overall trainees believe they are more ready for headship as they prepare for graduation from NPQH compared with when they start.

Figure 41: Readiness to become a headteacher at SPA and SPB



Average score where 1 = not at all ready and 7 = very ready; base=981

The score given by trainees at SPB was further analysed to examine if there were any differences given in this score by groups of trainees. Small differences were found by the trainees' role on starting NPQH, age, size of school and their previous leadership experience outside of education, however as highlighted below all of the groups scored themselves relatively highly:

- Those who had previous leadership experience outside of the education profession scored themselves slightly higher (6.33) than those without such experience (6.20).
- Trainees who were in small schools scored themselves higher (6.38) than those at larger schools with more than 100 pupils (6.20).
- Acting headteachers scored themselves more ready for headship, with a mean score of 6.59 when compared with those who were not acting headteachers (6.18).
- There was also a difference between age groups with those who were older being more ready for headship than some of the younger age groups. Those who were 51 or older scored themselves at 6.41, compared with trainees who were 41-45 (6.15) and 40 or less (6.14). Those who were aged 46-50 also scored themselves higher than younger trainees, with a mean score of 6.29.

Analysis was undertaken to explore the changes experienced by individuals in this score. Only 7.8 per cent of trainees reported a decrease in their score between SPA and SPB, while 36.9 per cent experienced no change and 55.2 per cent experienced an increase.

The role trainees were in when they started NPQH affected the proportion of trainees reporting an increase in their scores for readiness. As may be expected, a smaller proportion of those who were headteachers or acting headteachers reported an increase (42% and 39%, respectively) when compared with other roles including deputy headteachers (55%), assistant headteachers (60%), head of department/key stage leads/teachers (61%) and local authority advisers/officers (70%). A higher proportion of those trainees who are White British reported an increase (56%) when compared with those from other ethnic backgrounds (44%), however there was no overall difference by these two groups on the scores they gave at SPB.

Trainees were asked why they had scored themselves at either a 6 or 7. A high proportion of trainees who scored themselves as a 7 (40%) reported that this was as a result of NPQH providing them with the necessary skills to prepare them for the role. A further 37 per cent reported scoring themselves as a 7 due to the experience they have gained in a headship or acting headship post: *"I'm an acting head and had a recent Ofsted visit whilst head and achieved a 'good' where my leadership skills were commented on."* Other highly reported reasons included the previous experience they gained in school (15%) and that they generally felt confident and prepared for the role (15%). Many of the trainees reported a mix of different reasons as to why they felt ready, as highlighted by one trainee:

On reflection of the headteachers standards, I feel I have achieved an understanding and proven knowledge and skill of each of these. I have received very positive feedback from my headteacher and other headteachers as well as staff that they feel I am ready to go on to headship. I have taken part in conferences where I could put forward valued information that was well received by experienced heads. I am chairing forums involving other deputies and headteachers and am supporting my headteacher in her role as NLE. Through my placement during my NPQH I found that I could make a difference and impact in a short space of time. My confidence and skills and knowledge have increased dramatically, and I regularly take on the role as acting head whilst my head is out supporting other schools.

NPQH trainee, SPB survey respondent

Those trainees who scored themselves as 6 out of 7 as opposed to 7 out of 7 reported more mixed views, with a high proportion (35%) stating that there is always more to learn and that for many this is experience which needs to be gained in the role: *"I know that wherever I happen to become head teacher there are issues relating to context that I will only be able to address once I am in post...there will always be an element of the unknown that I feel I cannot prepare for until I am in role."* Just over one-quarter (26%) reported that they still felt that they had areas for development, and as such they did not score themselves as a 7 as one trainee

highlighted: *“I know I still have some training needs for the financial side of things which is going to be addressed within my current school, allowing me to be part of setting the budget for the next financial year with my current head teacher.”* Nearly one-in-six (16%) reported that NPQH had provided them with the necessary skills and had prepared them for the role as a headteacher, and 14 per cent reported that they felt confident and prepared.

For those who scored either 6 or 7 the validation they gained from others (6%) explained why they felt ready for headship, and 3 per cent reported this was due to support received from colleagues and their line manager to develop a wide range of skills and to progress through the qualification.

Because this is the feedback I have been given by my NPQH leadership coach, my Future Leaders leadership coach, my headteacher, and my placement headteacher, along with previous headteachers. Also, under my line management English A\*-C increased by 34 per cent in 2 yrs and whole school results, 5A\*-C including English and Maths went up by 18 per cent in one year. I also run the school frequently in the absence of the headteacher.

NPQH trainee, SPB survey respondent

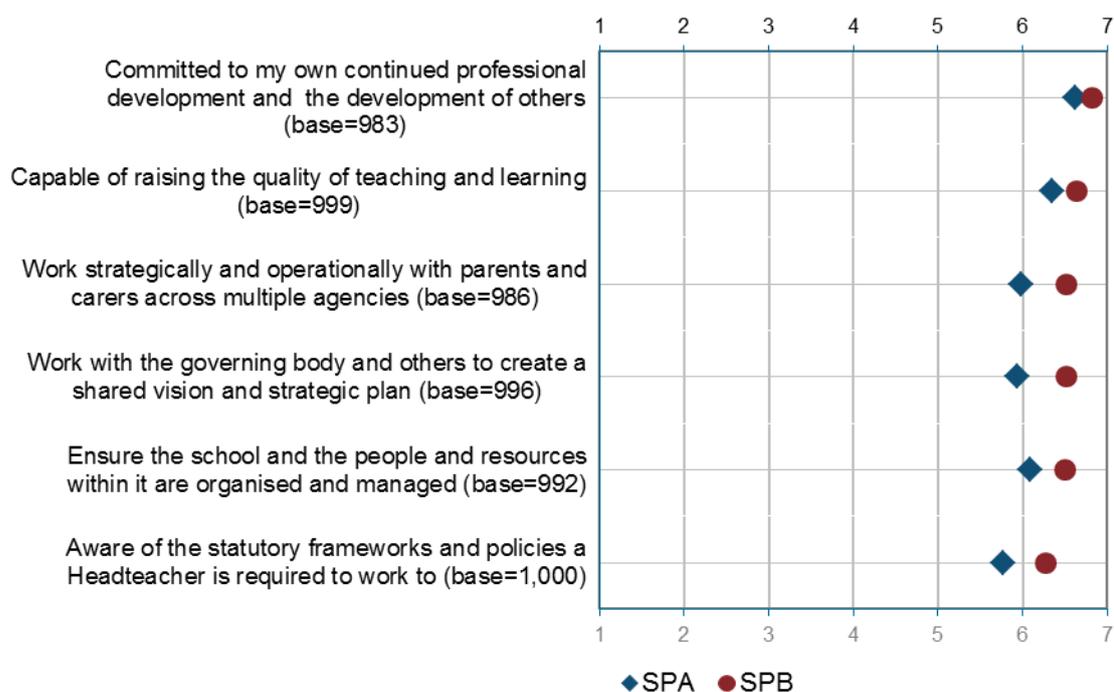
Within the depth interviews most trainees highlighted that they felt more ready to undertake headship now than when they first began the qualification. The majority of these trainees explained that NPQH had provided them with development opportunities and taught them new skills which resulted in improved confidence in being ready to take on the challenge. One interviewee outlined how the qualification had showed them that they were not as ready as they thought they were when they first began it:

I probably thought I was ready for it before I started NPQH. Maybe I was to some degree, but I think it's filled in a lot of gaps. A lot of those gaps I didn't know were there, to start with... It's given me more confidence, I think. I do feel more confident about taking on the role. So yes, I'm much more ready than I was.

SPB trainee

Respondents at SPA and SPB were asked to assess their skills against statements which reflect the six strands of the National Standards for Headship on a scale from one to seven (where one equals “less true” and seven equals “more true”). Overall, at SPB trainees scored themselves highly against all statements. The areas trainees rated most highly were committed to my own CPD and to the development of others (6.82), *capable of raising the quality of teaching and learning* (6.64) and *work strategically and operationally with parents and carers across multiple agencies* (6.51). Analysis confirms a statistically significant increase across all six strands from SPA to SPB (Figure 42), and this supports the above finding in relation to readiness for headship by indicating that trainee’ perceptions of their skills levels has increased.

**Figure 42: How reflective statements are of trainees’ current abilities in relation to the National Standards for Headteachers at SPA and SPB**



Average score where 1 = less true and 7 = more true

Some notable differences emerge in average scores for the National Standards when broken down by gender. Female trainees scored themselves higher than males for the standards relating to CPD (6.83 compared with 6.75), statutory frameworks (6.32; 6.14) and working with parents and carers (6.55; 6.37). Those from smaller schools (100 pupils or less) also scored themselves higher than those from schools with *more* than 100 pupils for strategic and operational work with parents and carers (6.70; 6.46)

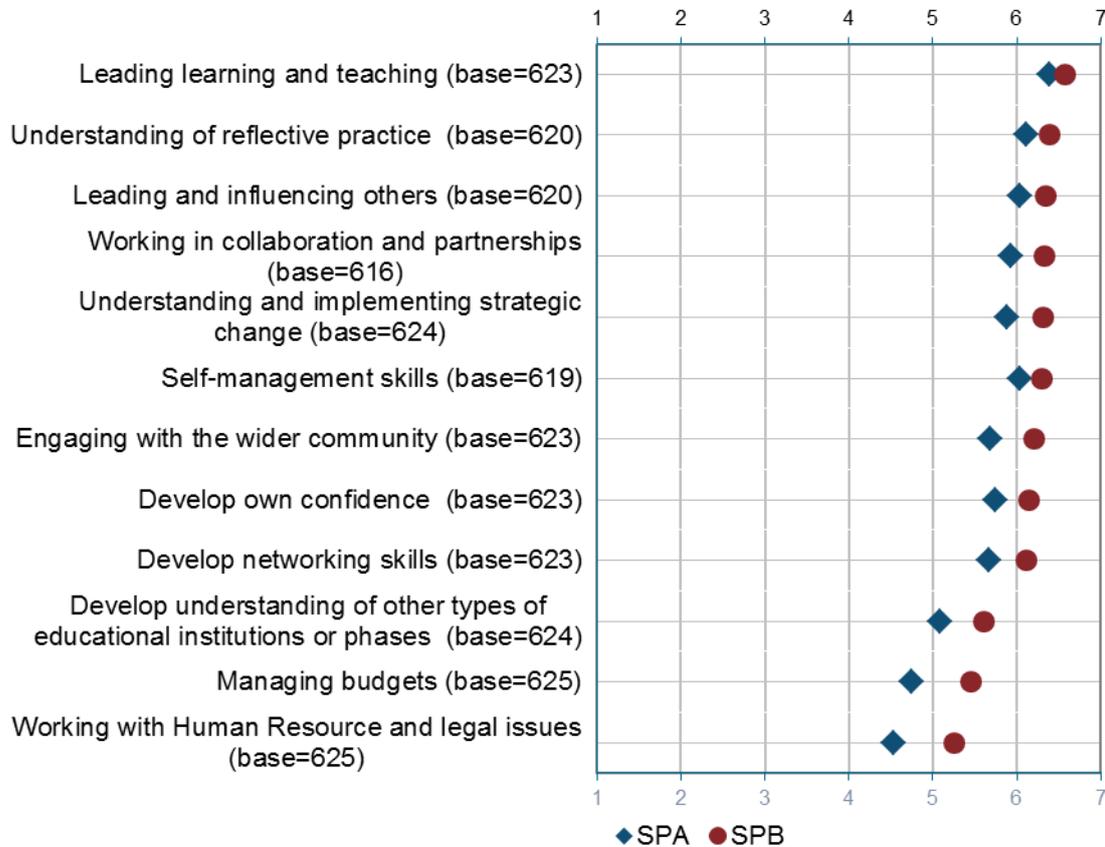
Those trainees who undertook more elements of NPQH scored themselves higher against the national standards than those who undertook fewer elements for the national standards around teaching and learning, CPD and statutory frameworks and policies. The average ratings for these three standards (where 1 equals “less true” and 7 equals “more true”) were significantly higher for those trainees who had undertaken 6 elements of NPQH than for those who had undertaken just 1 to 3 elements. This suggests that the positive impact of NPQH is greater where trainees complete a higher number of elements of the programme.

Differences also emerged in trainees’ average scores for whether or not they had improved against the National Standards (where 1 equals “have not improved at all” and 7 equals “have improved significantly”). Taking the National Standards as a whole, those from smaller schools (100 pupils or less) scored higher on how much they had improved against the National Standards through NPQH compared with those from larger schools with more than 100 pupils (6.31 compared with 6.10). Females had improved more than males, and those from an ethnicity other than White British had improved more (6.29 compared with 6.12) while those in the age group of 46 – 51 years improved more than any other age group (all self-assessed scores).

## Leadership skills and capabilities

A series of statements relating to the leadership and management skills that trainees may develop through NPQH were designed. Trainees were asked to rate their knowledge, skills and attributes in these areas by providing ratings on a scale from one to seven (where one equals “very weak” and seven equals “very good”). Overall, trainees scored themselves highly at SPB across most statements (Figure 43). Only three skills areas received mean scores of less than 6, with *working with Human Resources and legal issues* at 5.26, *managing budgets* at 5.45 and *developing understanding of other types of educational institutions or phases* at 5.60. Despite a fairly high baseline at SPA, there were increases across the overall mean scores for all of the leadership skill and capability areas between SPA and SPB. The biggest changes were seen in those areas where, at SPA, the overall scores were lower such as working with human resources and legal issues, and managing budgets, and therefore although they are still scored lower at SPB there is less difference between these skill areas and other areas than in SPA.

Figure 43: How trainees would describe their knowledge, skills and attributes at SPA and SPB



Average score where 1 = very weak and 7 = very good

On graduation (SPB) some distinctions emerge in the average (self-assessed) ratings for leadership skills and capabilities (where 1 equals “very weak” and 7 equals “very good”) across different characteristics.

In relation to *engaging with the wider community*, those from smaller schools (100 pupils or less) rated higher than those from larger schools (more than 100 pupils), with average ratings of 6.30 and 6.18 respectively. Those from non-White British ethnic groups also rated higher (6.36 compared with 6.18), as did those with previous experience in a leadership role (6.28 compared with 6.18) and females (6.26 compared with 6.07).

A similar picture emerges with regards to *developing understanding of other types of educational institutions or phases*, where those from smaller schools, those with previous experience in a leadership role and females all rated comparatively higher. With regards to *working in collaboration/partnership* and *developing networking skills*, again those from smaller schools and females had higher average ratings.

Females also rated higher on average with regards to *leading learning and teaching* (6.62; 6.51), *understanding reflective practice* (6.42; 6.29) and *self-management*

*skills* (6.32; 6.21). The only leadership skill/capability where males scored themselves higher than females was for *managing budgets* (5.58 compared with 5.45).

With regards to *working with Human Resources and legal issues*, those who had previously been in a leadership role outside of education rated higher (5.45 compared with 5.29), as did those who were acting head (5.60 compared with 5.31 deputy head; 5.16 assistant head and 5.20 head of department/key stage/teacher). This suggests that previous 'on-the-job' experience was a strong factor in an individual's self-assessment of their capability with regards to HR/legal issues. This may also be a factor with regards to *leading and influencing others*, as those with experience in a leadership role outside of the education profession also had a higher average rating for this (6.42 compared with 6.32).

During the depth interviews trainees were asked to what extent they thought their previous leadership experience outside of education would support them in their role. The minority who had this experience all thought that they had learnt skills in those previous roles which would help them in their leadership role, as outlined by one trainee: "*I think one of the big ones is working with the adults really, in a management capacity, making people accountable or trying to hold people to account.*"

There was an emergent pattern whereby those who had completed more elements of NPQH felt that they had improved more than those who had completed fewer elements of NPQH. For the following leadership skills and capabilities, those who had completed 6 elements of NPQH felt that they had improved more than those who had completed 1-3 elements:

- Leading and influencing others
- Leading learning and teaching
- Working in collaboration and partnership
- Develop networking skills
- Understanding of reflective practice

At SPB trainees were asked to state what knowledge, skills and attributes they had developed as a direct result of undertaking NPQH. Trainees reported developing a wide range of skills, as seen in Figure 44. The area receiving the highest score was *developing own confidence*, reported by over four-fifths of trainees (83%), closely followed by *leading and influencing others* (81%). Only 36 per cent of trainees reported *developing working with Human Resources and legal issues*, which was the skill area which received the lowest mean score at SPB (Figure 43). The second lowest mean score was *managing budgets*, however 61 per cent of trainees reported developing this skill at SPB, therefore indicating that many have improved their

knowledge and skills in this area through NPQH even though they may still not rate this as a strong skill area.

**Figure 44: The knowledge, skills and attributes trainees stated they had developed as a result of undertaking NPQH**



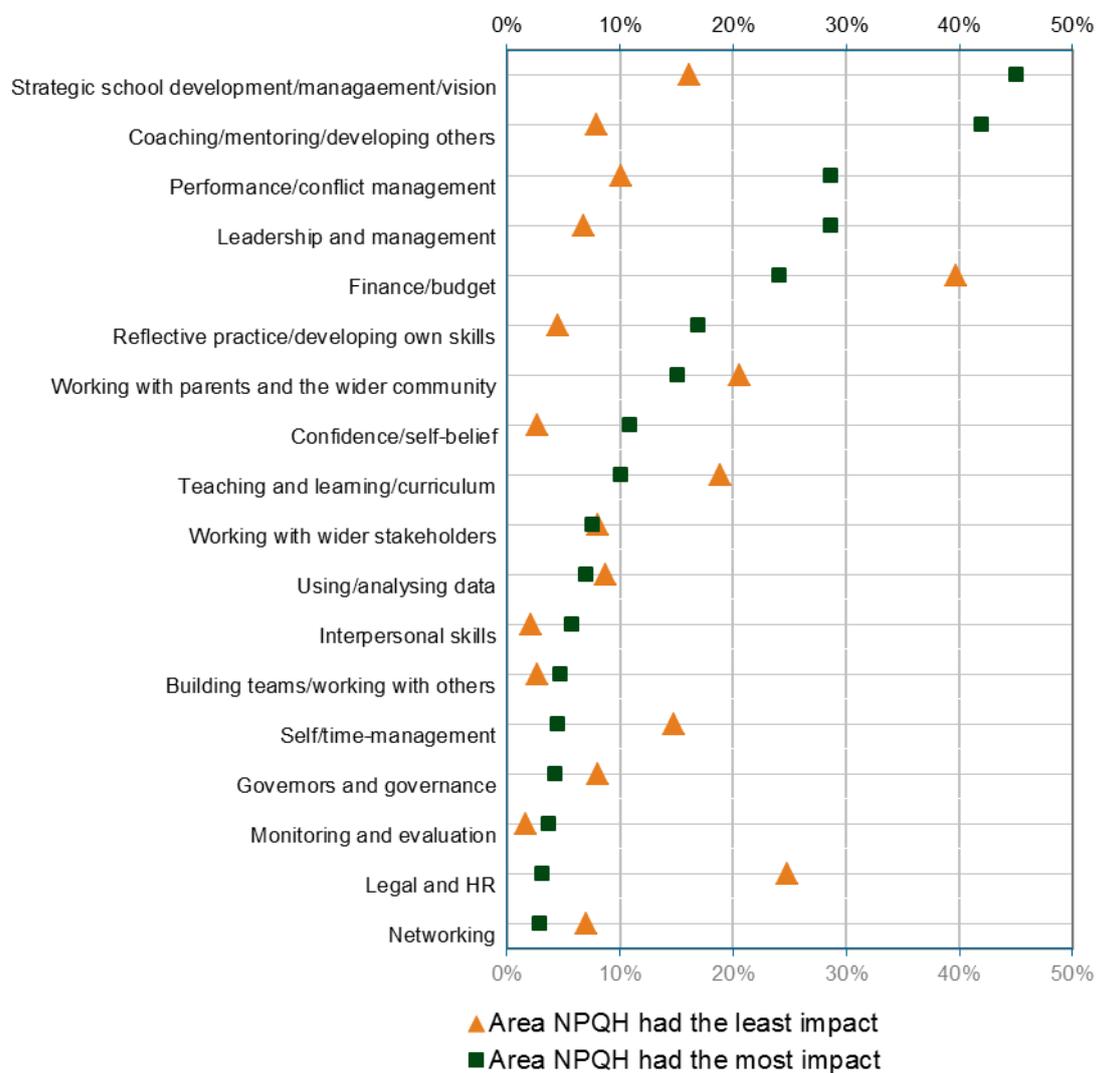
Base=1,807; multiple responses possible; prompted

The majority of NPQH trainees and graduates reported that the qualification enabled them to meet their skills needs and explained that it was “*very thorough in that way*”. Trainees highlighted that the personalised learning journey was important; as one trainee explained: “*Because those development needs were made out in such a structured way, and then the online units, the learning days that were available... were linked to those key areas... Each of the development needs was obviously within those areas. It addressed everything.*”

Trainees were asked (unprompted) which three skill areas have improved the most and least as a result of participation in NPQH. The top 18 areas highlighted by trainees as the areas which had improved most and least can be seen in Figure 45.

Interestingly, those areas identified as NPQH having the most impact on are also the areas which other trainees thought that NPQH had the least impact on. This may in part reflect the individual routes that trainees can take through NPQH and might also be related to the fact that these are the most important areas for trainees, and they are therefore prominent when asked about skills areas (whether in a positive or a negative sense).

**Figure 45: The top three skills trainees thought NPQH had the most impact on and the three skill areas NPQH had the least impact on**



Base=1,721 – most developed; base=1,344 – least developed; multiple responses possible; unprompted

The highest reported impacts on skill areas was for *understanding strategic school development including strategic management of the whole school* and *developing*

*and communicating the vision (45%) and developing the individuals coaching skills and understanding how to develop others (42%).* The impact of NPQH on *financial management and budgeting skills* split trainees, with 24 per cent of trainees reporting this as one of the top three skills that NPQH has had an impact on and a further 40 per cent reporting that this was one of the three skills that NPQH had the least impact on. Nearly one-quarter of trainees (25%) reported that NPQH had the least impact on their understanding of *Human Resources and legal issues*, which has consistently received lower scores on previous measures in the survey.

Using in depth interviews we were able to further explore how NPQH has impacted on the development of trainees' knowledge, skills and attributes. All interviewees stated that NPQH had positively impacted on the development of trainees' knowledge, skills and attributes. The most commonly reported impacts (by all interviewees) are discussed next in order of frequency mentioned, and overall these mirror the findings of the survey at SPB.

## **Leading and influencing others**

The majority of trainees reported that NPQH had helped them to develop a range of skills which would enable them to lead others, and this finding was corroborated by substantive and LDS headteachers as well as coaches. Many trainees noted that they had an improved knowledge of leadership and management styles, thus enabling them to manage others more effectively. Some trainees reported that they had learnt the value of collaborative working, whilst others felt that they had learnt how to play to people's strengths to get the best out of them. One trainee reported:

I am more confident in terms of how I need to present myself as a leader, how I need to motivate and engage with my staff.

SPB trainee

Over half of substantive headteachers reported that their trainees had developed their leadership style and management of others. Some substantive headteachers reported that their trainees had a better understanding of the importance of engaging with staff, particularly when introducing new things, and one interviewee explained that their trainee *"developed his ability to... listen to... others and then set his vision. That worked quite well"*. Whilst other substantive headteachers commented that their trainees had developed their knowledge of different leadership styles and had gained the confidence to exercise what they had learnt and pick up the challenges associated with a headship role, one substantive headteacher commented:

I think she also developed a much greater sense of herself as a leader... when she was doing the NPQH she said there are different types of heads...So she could see that other leaders could develop in other ways

which would be very effective even though they didn't have the style that she has

Substantive headteacher

Several trainees commented that their coach was instrumental to their learning of different leadership styles, as one trainee commented: *"I talked quite a lot with X about distributed leadership across my team. She was exceptionally useful in sounding out ideas around that."* The role of coaching in developing this trainee's leadership style was also acknowledged by their substantive headteacher, who described the coach as *"a bit of a catalyst in the sense of teasing things out with X in terms of how she might be a more effective manager"*.

Over half of all coaches interviewed corroborated trainees' development of leadership styles and managing others. Coaches reported how trainees had a better understanding of leadership styles, how they might need to change to achieve the best outcomes for their schools, and how they developed the confidence to practice these new approaches. One coach reported:

Definitely more self-awareness, more understanding of, you know, the behaviours that they are going to have to adopt as a leader... I would say 90 per cent of my coaching time is used talking about their leadership of other people, and practicing those difficult conversations, and exploring why they find it so hard to hold people to account sometimes. It's that kind of thing that they develop, and they then look for headship with a far more confident and informed approach.

NPQH coach

Almost half of LDS headteachers also commented on trainees' development of leadership styles and highlighted how the placement had given them the opportunity to witness other styles of leadership in action, which had broadened their understanding.

Related to the development of leadership styles and management of others, over half of trainees reported how they had developed their understanding of performance management and accountability. Trainees explained how they now understood the importance of accountability for all members of staff and the importance of holding poorly performing staff to account. Trainees also reported an increased level of confidence in this area and taking a more hands on approach to implement steps to performance management. One trainee explained how NPQH had opened their eyes to this:

I think the thought of having absolute accountability has made me think about how everybody is accountable and whether I hold everybody to account equally. Again, this is another one of these seeds that's sewn at

assessment and development, but there's one particular member of staff that I came to the conclusion that I'd let him off the hook a bit in terms of certain things... That's led me to think in a wider sense about whether everybody really understands what they're accountable for, which ultimately is people's lives. It's children and their development and then their lives... some excuses that I think I'd have accepted in the past for why things weren't done I'm now more open to challenging. That is because, as I say, assessment and development, and the challenge and support from my peer group and from my coach as well actually. I'm better at that now. I'm better at not needing everybody to like me as much, if that's the right way to put it.

SPA trainee

Approximately half of substantive headteachers also reported that they had noticed a development in their trainees understanding of accountability and performance management. Interviewees explained how their trainees were now more confident and stronger in challenging underperformance, and one interview elaborated on how NPQH brought this about:

I think with the course, it gives you the tools to be able to do it, in a way that maybe you can do it without feeling as awkward and uncomfortable. So... those types of meetings were handled better as a result of it. On holding people to account, which I think out of all the areas is the hardest area to do, and I think that was certainly an area that did improve over the course.

Substantive headteacher

Half of the coaches interviewed also noted how trainees developed their understanding of accountability and performance management through their NPQH journey. They also remarked on how they had developed the confidence to deal with difficult situations and be more assertive in holding people to account. One coach shared their experience of trainees developing this skill:

Having those difficult conversations and holding people to account is almost invariably an area for development and I think NPQH does address that... through the coaching they gain confidence and they gain a sharper way of looking at the problems that arise and the stronger motivation to actually deal with it, and then that is backed up by the face to face days and various things that they can do online and some of the short courses which really help with that very large element of a head teachers job.

NPQH coach

Outside of leadership styles the main way in which trainees thought they had developed their leadership and management skills was through an enhanced understanding of different communication methods which enabled them to more successfully lead other members of staff. One commonly reported method was coaching; substantive headteachers agreed that trainees have developed this technique, with one substantive headteacher commenting that their trainee's "*coaching skills are one of the [skills] that have been enhanced most.*" Most of these interviewees commented on how their trainees were now able to use a coaching style to manage staff, particularly when dealing with difficult situations, however one interviewee also remarked that their trainee was now able to use a coaching style to "*persuade and influence*" their staff to help get them on board with new ideas and strategies.

Over half of the trainees interviewed at SPB stated how the development of coaching techniques had increased their ability to successfully lead others. They outlined how the development of this skill was largely attributable to trainees' own coaching sessions throughout NPQH. During these sessions they explored the development of this technique with their coaches, and they also learnt through observation of their coach:

It's about listening to what is said but also listening to what is not said...  
Now, I wouldn't have been able to do that [skill] without the input from my coach or the input from that training day.

SPB trainee

Over half of coaches also explained how trainees had developed a coaching style as a result of their experience during the NPQH. One coach explained:

What they take from coaching and I've had feedback about this, is that they realise actually using a coaching style and a coaching model in their own context has really changed relationships in their schools. For example, one trainee head teacher I'm working with at the moment has said that they modelled the coaching type of questions with their staff and they have suddenly seen them grow and take responsibility and empowered them really.

NPQH coach

A minority of trainees also reported that local and national events were valuable in the development of their coaching skills.

A further communication technique that around half of trainees reported they had developed was improved awareness of the importance of interpersonal skills in leading a team. This predominantly came to light through the placement they undertook as part of NPQH. During this time trainees had to adapt to a new environment and develop effective relationships with existing staff in a short space of time. Some LDS headteachers agreed that the placement helped to improve trainees' interpersonal skills, and just under half of substantive headteachers noticed a difference in their trainees' interpersonal skills when dealing with members of staff. One interviewee explained how their trainee was now better at asking staff questions in a non-aggressive/confrontational manner and one noted:

His skills in working and managing others staff have gone through the roof... What he was sometimes doing was, he was explaining things, staff would be very puzzled, and he would explain it again. His manner was quite humiliating. Staff used to get quite cross. So he has really stepped up in terms of that.

Substantive headteacher

## Improved confidence

The majority of trainees reported that they had an improved level of confidence in undertaking a headship role as a result of participating in NPQH. Trainees explained how the qualification had helped them to identify their strengths, which then gave them confidence in their abilities in addition to highlighting solutions to help them improve their areas for development. They also explained how NPQH provided them with credibility and generally boosted their confidence in taking on headship. Several trainees explained how the placement had been instrumental in building this confidence, and they described how being "*received well*" in another school with other staff "*reinforced skills*" and gave them a taster of what it might be like in their first few weeks of headship in a new school.

Approximately half of all LDS and substantive headteachers and coaches corroborated the trainees' increased levels of confidence. Interestingly LDS headteachers also commented on how the placement played an important role here and described how it enabled trainees to "*benchmark themselves as leaders*" and "*practice skills*" in a manner where they had to get to know the school and the staff in a short space of time. Substantive headteachers explained how the qualification had "*de-mystified the role*" and provided them with confidence in their abilities. Some also remarked that their trainees were able to take on more responsibility and deal with situations from "*start to finish*". One interviewee described their trainee's increased confidence:

I think it gave her, a lot of these things were already there but it made things more obvious, it gave her confidence in herself... it is solidified in her own mind what she can do and pushed her that bit further.

Substantive headteacher

Coaches were also able to describe how trainees' confidence increased as they went through the qualification. They described how it provided them with the confidence to do things that they had previously feared. One coach outlined:

Their self-confidence blossoms over the development phase, and of course, as a coach, I witness that... it's a gradual building of understanding, focus on leadership, strategies, reflection, so they become more reflective.

NPQH coach

## Understanding school strategy and vision

The majority of trainees described how NPQH had improved their understanding of how to develop a school's strategy and vision. They reported improvements in this skill such as an improved understanding of the *"bigger picture"* (NPQH trainee, SPB). Others described how they now understand the challenges involved with articulating a school vision, but they also felt able to develop their own in the future. Just under half of trainees learnt about the importance of engaging staff in formulating and leading school visions to achieve buy in and drive forward change within the school. A minority also described how they now understood the importance of certain activities to action visions such as greeting parents in the mornings to display that the school values all community stakeholders, and sharing the school vision with children and parents. This finding was corroborated by coaches and substantive and LDS headteachers, who described how trainees' strategic thinking had improved. Trainees were now able to take a step back and approach situations from a strategic point of view and think about what it might mean for the future. One substantive headteacher noted:

I think he's stepped up to the next level in terms of seeing the big picture, rather than just what's happening in the here and now. He's looking at things from a much more strategic point of view.

Substantive headteacher

## Understanding of reflective practice

Approximately half of trainees reported that NPQH had enabled them to develop their understanding of reflective practice. It has provided them with the opportunity to examine their own ideas and practice, work through and contemplate the

consequences of decisions, and tackle issues with a fresh pair of eyes. Trainees reported that coaching had been key to this development due to them having someone that asks you those “*deep and searching questions, but in a non-threatening way*” (deputy headteacher, SPB) which helped trainees to work through issues. The majority of coaches similarly indicated that they had a key role in developing trainees’ reflective thinking:

I think what the coaching programme does for them is it models a process... It’s given people the opportunity to be able to take some genuine reflection on what they are actually doing... I have noticed in some of the conversations that I have had that... rather than having to draw things out, people will start to articulate something and then take it on a stage further anticipating the question, if you know what I mean.... Which sort of means that they are coming to you at that stage having done some significant reflection on what it is they want to talk to you about which you don’t often see in those initial conversations.

NPQH coach

Trainees’ improved reflective practice was also noted by substantive headteachers, who found that trainees were able to reflect on their own skills, put things into context and reflect on their learning when making decisions. One substantive headteacher described their trainee’s development of reflection:

I think the most important thing is it’s allowed him to think about things or encouraged him to think about things rather than to react to situations. He’s been able to think his way through and come up with a solution to whatever his problem has been, because the NPQH has given him, if you like, carte blanche to sit back and say, ‘Well actually what do I think about this long term?’

Substantive headteacher

## **Engaging with the wider community**

Over half of trainees outlined how NPQH had raised their awareness of the importance of the school’s outward-facing role to the wider community. This was most commonly recognised in relation to engaging parents, followed by engaging with the wider community (such as community groups and other schools) and, to a lesser extent, working in collaboration with other schools and support agencies. Trainees described how, as a result of NPQH, they now understood the importance of headteachers being involved in outward-facing activities. They explained that this can improve levels of community engagement, which can subsequently provide a range of benefits to the school, such as improved parental feedback and awareness of the outside community to its pupils. They also explained that NPQH had opened

their eyes to new ways of conducting external facing work and understanding that the school can ask the community for their own ideas and suggestions instead of always having to provide them itself.

Substantive headteachers also noted that trainees had exhibited improved skill levels in relation to their outward-facing work. A couple of interviewees commented on their trainees increased engagement with parents, whilst several others commented on their trainees increased awareness of partnering with other schools and the benefit this can bring to the school. One commented that their trainee now realised that their *“presence at events that are outside the school day actually have a big impact on what the community thinks”*, whilst another added that their trainee had *“an increased awareness of how all the agencies fit together within the whole children’s services”*.

## **Managing budgets**

Trainees reported mixed findings regarding their development of financial management and budgeting skills. Approximately half of trainees indicated that they had developed this skill and reported how they had improved levels of confidence in getting involved in financial management. This learning was attributed to online courses and development days which provided them with a holistic overview of the subject. However, the majority of trainees who reported a development in this area stated that they had been given opportunities within their current school to develop this skill by their line manager, which was instrumental to their learning. Those trainees who were given the experience were more likely to report higher levels of impact in this area. The majority of substantive headteachers also indicated that they had provided opportunities for their trainees to develop these skills. These opportunities included working alongside budget officers and business managers, attending finance committee meetings, and working alongside the headteacher to discuss budget planning.

## **Skills developed less**

When asked about the skills which trainees had not developed during the in depth interviews there were only two skill areas which were reported by more than one interviewee that had been developed less through NPQH. These mirror the quantitative findings as managing budgets and HR/legal issues. Although many trainees stated they had developed financial skills, approximately half of trainees felt that this skill had not been sufficiently developed and needed improvement. These trainees described how they did not know enough about different sources of income and the practicalities of managing a budget. Some reported a complete lack of understanding in this area, whilst others found that NPQH had equipped them with a

theoretical understanding but provided little practical experience of managing a budget, and therefore they lacked confidence in this regard. As one trainee pointed out *“the only way you develop your knowledge of finance is by doing it”* (Acting headteacher, SPB).

The majority of substantive headteachers and half of LDS headteachers also identified the importance of gaining practical financial experience, and some outlined reasons to explain why trainees might have difficulties in doing so and are therefore not developing this skill sufficiently. Such reasons included the reluctance of line managers to relinquish budget management, and lack of time on the part of trainees and their line managers due to existing commitments. The lack of development in this area was worrying to trainees, and as one deputy headteacher exclaimed: *“Now I’m in a position where I’ve got to set a budget in the new school, about two days after I start. It’s a big issue for me now.”* One substantive headteacher outlined the importance of practical experience for their trainee’s development:

I think obviously the financial element, again is one of those areas that is very much dependent on how much the actual head teacher lets the deputy in on. It’s a bit like the holy grail, some deputies or some staff members are not allowed anywhere near the budget, but I think it’s not something that’s rocket science. I think it’s just a case of being able to have a look at the figures, and where they’re going. I think just the fact that X was able to be privy to those meetings, and have involvement in where the money was spent, and how it was spent, that her knowledge of that just grew at the same rate really.

Substantive headteacher

HR and legal issues were also highlighted as an area which a minority of trainees and stakeholders thought was not covered by NPQH but would be useful, as stated by one substantive headteacher:

What was interesting is that there isn’t a great deal on the whole thing around staffing and staff management. There was nothing that you can do around the whole competency procedure, and little things like knowing that if you put a member of staff on a temporary contract it doesn’t mean a temporary contract. The whole thing about the management of stress, the whole thing about the HR side, I suppose, of line management, which I don’t feel is very well covered.

Substantive headteacher

Although interviewees reported a variety of ways in which they could develop this skill there were numerous examples through the site visits, substantive headteacher and LDS interviews of where they thought that trainees did not need the detailed knowledge about finance and HR or legal issues that trainees thought they needed.

Many interviewees reported how trainees often got “*hung up*” on wanting to learn these issues in detail, but that in reality when they move into a headship position they will have staff around them who will support them with these things. As reported by one site visit representative: “*when they actually become heads they realise that in fact they didn’t need to be that concerned about it, it is just some mythical thing which they are not sure about.*” As highlighted by one site visit representative they need to know who to go to for support:

I mean, I’m not saying it’s not a significant part of their role because it is, and they do have to get their head around it, but actually what they have to understand more importantly is how to ask the questions. Unless you remove yourself out of that system into an academy or something like that, then you’ve got all the support you need within your budget and your HR issues. What they need to understand is actually, before I recruit somebody, I just need to check it out that what I’m doing is okay. Or before setting the budget, maybe I should spend some time with my business manager. If I don’t have a business manager, I should spend some time in understanding what the requirements are from my bursar or my local authority finance person. So to me it’s them understanding the questions that they need to ask of other people, not that they need to have that really

Site visit

## Summary

The key findings from this chapter are:

- Trainees are just as likely to state that they would have undertaken NPQH if it had not been mandatory at SPB as they were at SPA (5.4 out of 7).
- Trainees’ motivations for headship also remained high throughout the qualification with no changes in the average score given by trainees between SPA and SPB (6.6 out of 7).
- An overall increase was experienced by trainees when assessing their readiness to become a headteacher from 5.66 at SPA to 6.24 at SPB (out of 7).
- Alongside overall readiness for headship, trainees reported an increase in their skills in relation to the six National Standards for Headship and across all of their self-assessed leadership skills and capabilities between SPA and SPB, with overall scores of over 6 out of 7 across most statements at SPB.

- When trainees were asked (unprompted) what skills NPQH had had the most impact on, trainees reported that it had had the most impact on the following skill areas:
  - Understanding strategic school development (45%).
  - Coaching skills and understanding how to develop others (42%).
  - Performance/conflict management (29%).
  - Leadership and management (29%).
- During the depth interviews trainees and stakeholders also agreed that NPQH had had the biggest impact on a trainee's ability to lead and influence their staff and to understand the strategic vision of the school. Trainees' confidence and ability to reflect were also seen as being key during the in depth interviews.
- The top three skills trainees thought they had developed through NPQH were:
  - Performance/conflict management
  - Coaching/mentoring/developing others
  - Strategic school development/management/vision
- The three skills trainees thought NPQH had enabled them to develop the least were:
  - Legal and HR
  - Working with parents and the wider community
  - Finance/budget (although a quarter also thought they had developed this skill)
- Managing budgets and working with HR and legal issues were the top two skills that trainees wanted to develop through NPQH (at SPA), but these were the two least developed skills at SPB. However, many stakeholders highlighted that they felt trainees did not need to know about these two areas in detail as they would have staff and external agencies to support them in these areas.

## 5 Experience on graduating

This section of the report explores NPQH graduates experiences 18 months post-graduation. It highlights that in total 92 per cent per cent of graduates had either become a headteacher or still intended their next role to be as a headteacher and shows the varied roles graduates now hold. It examines graduates use of the Head Start programme and the usefulness of the elements while also investigating why other trainees have not yet used the programme since graduating.

### The role of graduates 18 months post-graduation

#### New roles and responsibilities

Overall, just under half (49%) of all graduates were headteachers or were waiting to take up a headship post 18 months post completion of NPQH (at SPD). Of these, the majority (94%) were not a headteacher when starting NPQH. The remaining graduates that are not currently headteachers were mainly deputy headteachers (33%), assistant headteachers (7%) or acting headteachers (5%) so were in a senior leadership role in the school.

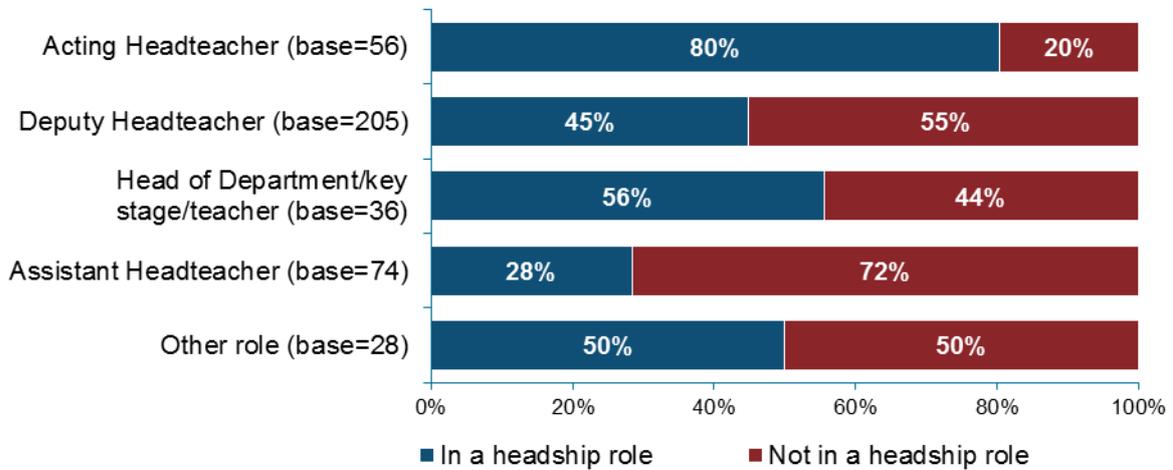
When graduates were asked if they had changed roles since starting NPQH, just under three-fifths (61%) of all graduates had changed roles, or were waiting to take up a post since starting NPQH. Of those who had changed roles, just under three-quarters (71%) are now in a headship position, 16 per cent are deputy headteachers and 6 per cent are acting headteachers. Just over one-third (36%) of trainees who are not a headteacher have moved into a new role since starting NPQH.

As might be expected, those who were in the role of acting headteacher when starting NPQH were more likely to have moved into a headship role (compared with those in other roles when starting NPQH), as seen in Figure 46. A considerable proportion of those in other roles when starting NPQH had also moved into a headship role, including over half of those who were either a head of department or key stage teacher (56%) and half of those in other roles<sup>26</sup> (50%).

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<sup>26</sup> Other roles included local authority advisers, other senior leaders, special needs co-ordinators and trainees in all other roles.

Figure 46: Role of graduate by the role they were in when they started NPQH



The low proportion of assistant headteachers who have moved into a headteachers role could perhaps be explained by their having less experience, as highlighted by one interviewee:

Then you've got assistant heads who feel that they're on the program, but, actually, they'll be moving to deputy headship, because lots of governors don't view assistant heads as ready for headship, strangely, but there you go.

Site visit

A higher proportion of graduates who were working in a small school when starting NPQH were now in a headship position (62%) when compared with those in larger schools (46%).

For those who are now headteachers, on average it took them between four and five months after graduating from NPQH to formally accept an offer for the role of headteacher. This ranged from 0 months reported with graduates gaining a headship before they had graduated from NPQH to a small minority (6 out of 183) taking the full 18 months to gain their first role. Graduates reported that on average they had been a headteacher for between 10 and 11 months. This differed by the role of the graduate when starting NPQH with acting headteachers being in this role for longer (13 to 14 months) than those who were deputy/assistant headteachers or heads of department/key stage teachers (8 to 9 months).

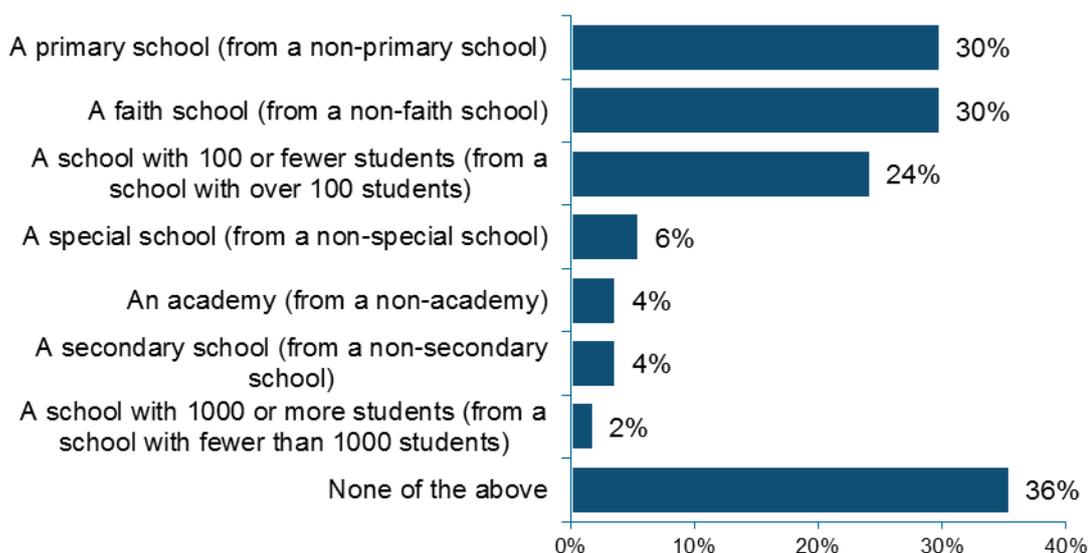
On average, graduates now in a headship position applied for between one and two positions before they gained their first headship post, with 70% reporting that they had applied for only one position before being successful.

Just under three-fifths of graduates who are now headteachers (58%) moved into a headship in a different school to the one they were working in when they started NPQH. The remaining graduates (42%) became a headteacher in the same school.

For those graduates who were more likely to have moved into a headship position (acting headteachers and those in small schools), this could be as a result of them moving in to a position in the same school at which they undertook NPQH. 63 per cent of graduates from small schools moved into a headship position in the same school compared with those from larger schools (40%). Nearly four-fifths of acting headteachers became the headteacher of the same school (79%) compared with graduates in other roles (47%). This could explain why these groups of trainees moved into a headship role more quickly as they were already working in the school.

Just under two-thirds (65%) of those who moved into a headship post at a different school moved into schools with different characteristics to their own (see Figure 47). Just under one-third of the headteachers (30%) moved into a primary school (from a non-primary school), and an equal proportion (30%) also moved into a faith school. Nearly one-quarter moved into a small school, however only a small minority (2%) moved into a large school with over 1,000 students from a smaller school.

Figure 47: Type of school the headteacher has moved into

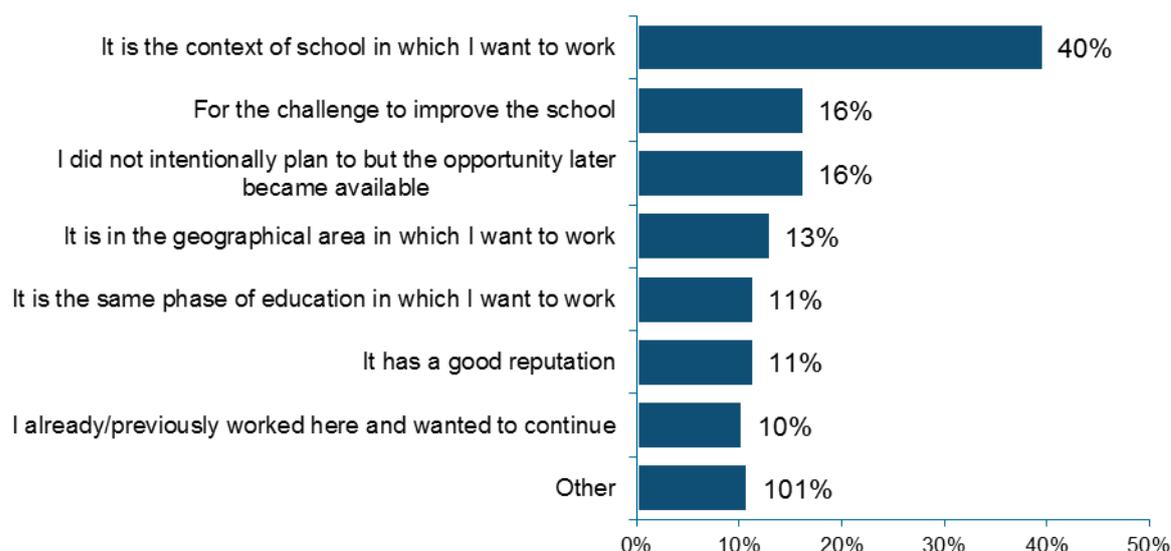


Base=107; multiple responses possible; prompted

Those who had moved into a headship position were asked to state the reasons why they either stayed in the same school or moved to a different school to become a headteacher. The most frequently reported reason was that it was the *context of*

school in which they wanted to work in (40%) (Figure 48). The second most reported reason was that they wanted the challenge to improve the school (16%) and they did not intentionally plan to but the opportunity became available later (16%), this was followed by in the geographical area they wanted to work (13%).

**Figure 48: Why headteachers chose a role in that school**



Unprompted base=184; multiple responses possible; unprompted

For those who stayed in the same school, 55 per cent stated that they enjoyed working in the school and that this was why they chose to become a headteacher in that school, which was therefore the highest reported reason compared with the above statements. Just over one-third (35%) stated that they did not want to move school, and 5 per cent engaged in NPQH with the intention of pursuing a headship in that school.

### **New responsibilities**

Those graduates who had not moved into a new role since starting NPQH and were not already a headteacher (33%) were asked whether they had taken on or had been given any additional responsibilities in their existing role as a result of undertaking NPQH. Just over half (56%) stated that they had been given additional responsibilities, and 53 per cent of those had been formally given these responsibilities through changes in their job description. A higher proportion (66%) of trainees who had undertaken all 6 elements of NPQH reported that they had been given additional responsibilities, compared with 42 per cent of those who had undertaken 5 elements and 46 per cent who had undertaken between 1 and 4

elements. Therefore only 14 per cent of graduates were not a headteacher, had not moved in to any new role or had not been given any new responsibilities as a result of undertaking NPQH.

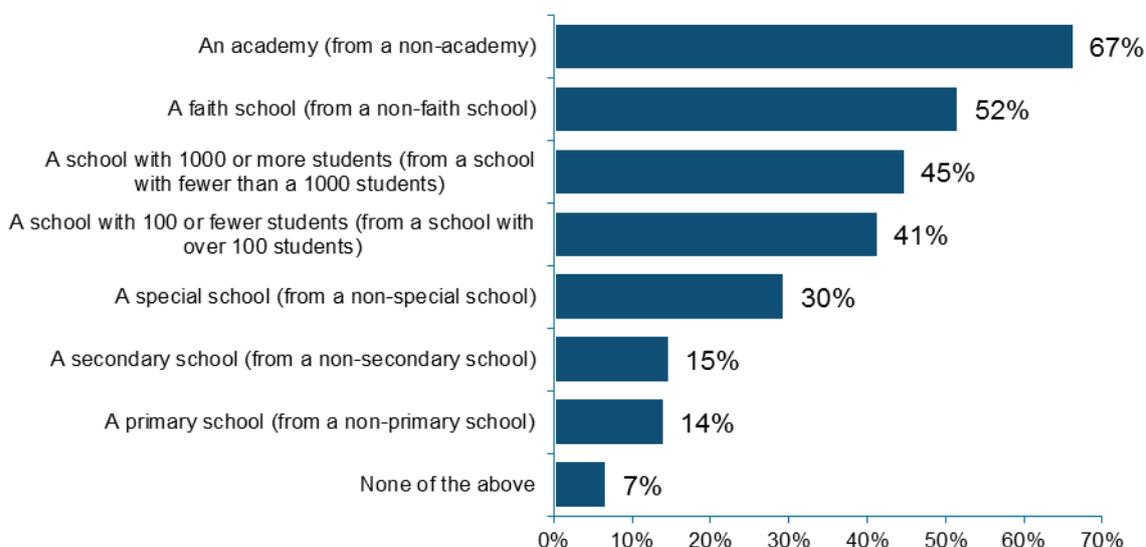
The opportunities they have been given are varied and include the strategic development of the school (vision, strategy and planning) (27%), general head/acting headship duties (23%), supporting teachers through coaching/training (17%), general leadership/management responsibilities (13%), budget and financial management (13%) and overseeing or developing the curriculum (13%). Additional responsibilities reported by a minority of graduates include safeguarding/child protection (8%), dealing with external agencies and schools (8%) and attending more meetings (5%); 27 per cent also stated a variety of other responsibilities.

### **Are graduates still looking for headship?**

Just over half of all graduates (51%) are not currently a headteacher. Over three-quarters (85%) of graduates who were not already a headteacher stated that they still intended their next role to be a headteacher. Therefore, in total 92 per cent of graduates had either become a headteacher or still intended their next role to be as a headteacher. Of those that stated that they still intended for their next role to be as a headteacher, the majority (84%) had already started looking for a headship post, with 58 per cent having attended interviews, a further 16 per cent had applied for posts and 27 per cent have begun searching for job opportunities. Those who have applied for a post or have attended interviews have applied for an average of 3 to 4 posts, with some applying for as little as two, and two trainees reporting having applied for 30 posts.

Of those who intended their next role to be a headteacher most would consider moving into a different type of school, with only a small proportion (7%) who would not (Figure 49). Two-thirds (67%) stated that they would consider moving into an academy, 52 per cent stated they would move into a faith school, 45 per cent into a school with more than 1,000 students and 42 per cent into a small school. Graduates were less likely to report that they would move into a school in a different phase to the one they were in already.

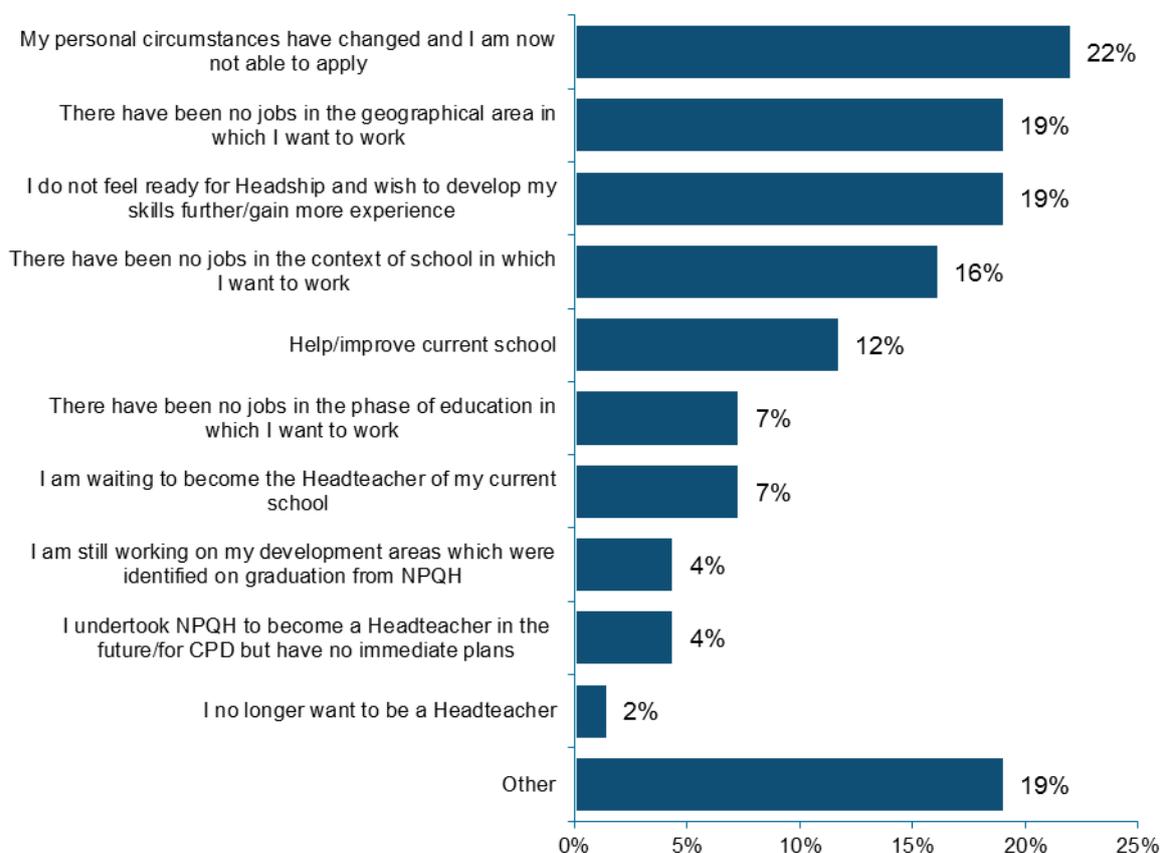
**Figure 49: Type of school graduates who are not headteachers and who want to move into headship would consider moving into**



Base=176; multiple responses possible; prompted

For those who still intend to be a headteacher, graduates were asked for what reasons they had not yet started looking for a headship or had not yet applied for a headship post (but had started looking). The reasons given varied amongst graduates, with the most common being a change in personal circumstances (22%), no jobs in the geographical area (19%) and not feeling ready for headship (19%) (Figure 50). For those who have not yet applied for a headship role but intend to in the future, 1 year is the average length of time they plan to wait before they begin applying, with three graduates planning to wait 5 years.

**Figure 50: Reasons given by graduates to explain why they had not yet starting looking for a headship role or had not yet applied for a headship role (but had started looking)**



Base= 68; multiple responses possible; unprompted

Of those who are not already a headteacher and do not intend their next role to be as a headteacher (8%), just over one quarter (9 out of 32) plan to apply for a headship post in the future (one-quarter stated that they do not intend to apply (8 out of 32), and the remaining half stated they were unsure (15 out of 32). Of those graduates who no longer want to be a headteacher or are unsure about this (3% of the sample) five state that this is for personal reasons. Other reasons included that they were considering different options (5 out of 6), 5 reported it was due to the political landscape and government changes and two thought that the expectations on them were too great<sup>27</sup>.

<sup>27</sup> Although these findings have a low base, they have been included as indicative only and are provided to illustrate the findings from this group of graduates.

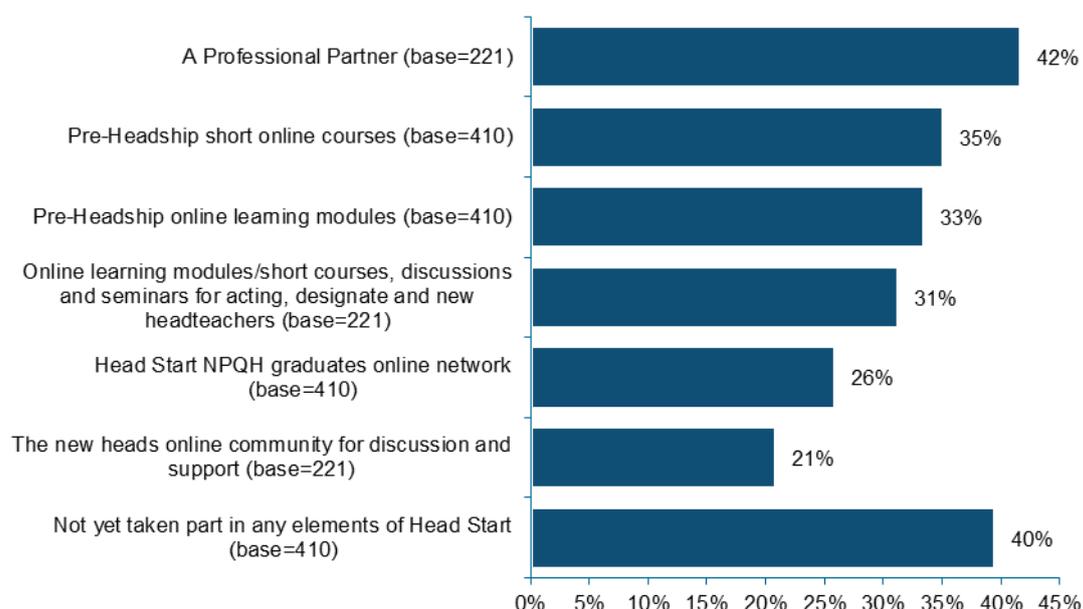
I don't like what the government are doing to schools and I don't want to take part in it. Also I've spent 4 years working through a qualification and a new government comes in and decides it's no longer mandatory - I'm not very happy about this

NPQH graduate, SPD survey respondent

## The use of Head Start

Overall, just over three-fifths (60%) of NPQH graduates had taken part in at least one element of the Head Start programme, while the remaining graduates (40%) have not taken part in any elements so far (see Figure 51). For those who have taken part in the programme the most popular element of Head Start was a professional partner with just over two-fifths (42%) of those who were eligible for this support<sup>28</sup> accessing it. Pre-headship short online courses were the next most popular at 35 per cent, followed by pre-headship online learning modules (33%). The online networks were the least popular elements used for NPQH graduates and new headteachers.

**Figure 51: Proportion of graduates who took part in the elements of Head Start that they were eligible for**



Multiple responses possible; prompted

<sup>28</sup> Only those who are acting headteachers, headteacher designates or headteachers can access support from a professional partner, online learning modules/short courses, discussions and seminars for acting, designate and new headteacher and the new heads online community for discussion and support.

A higher proportion of graduates who were headteachers or waiting to take up a headship post had used at least one element of Head Start (70%) compared with those who were not yet headteachers (51%). Those who had previous leadership experience outside of the teaching profession reported higher use of Head Start (71%) when compared with those who had not (57%).

There were also differences between the number of elements a graduate took part in as part of NPQH and whether or not they used Head Start, with a higher proportion of those who took part in all 6 NPQH elements (67%) using Head Start when compared with those who took part in 5 elements (59%) or 4 or less (46%).

Those who took part in Head Start were asked to rate the extent to which different possible reasons reflected why they took part in elements of the Head Start programme (on a scale from one to seven where one equals “not at all true” and seven equals “totally true”). *To draw upon confidential support and advice from a professional partner* received the highest mean score at 6.28. This was followed by *to accelerate the development of their leadership skills and capabilities* at 5.91 and *to draw upon resources to help them in their role as a headteacher* at 5.70 (Figure 52). *To find and move into a headship role* was the lowest reported reason at 3.92.

**Figure 52: To what extent the reasons reflected why graduates had taken part in Head Start**



Average scores where 1 = not at all true and 7 =totally true

During in depth interviews with graduates who had undertaken Head Start they also highlighted that it was the support aspect of Head Start that had motivated them to take part:

I think it was the offer of support, because once you become a head teacher, I think the last thing that you want is to become isolated, and your role changes within school. I think most new head teachers recognise that if you can have support from an experienced professional partner, as well as other people in the same situation, for you it can only be a good thing.

SPD graduate

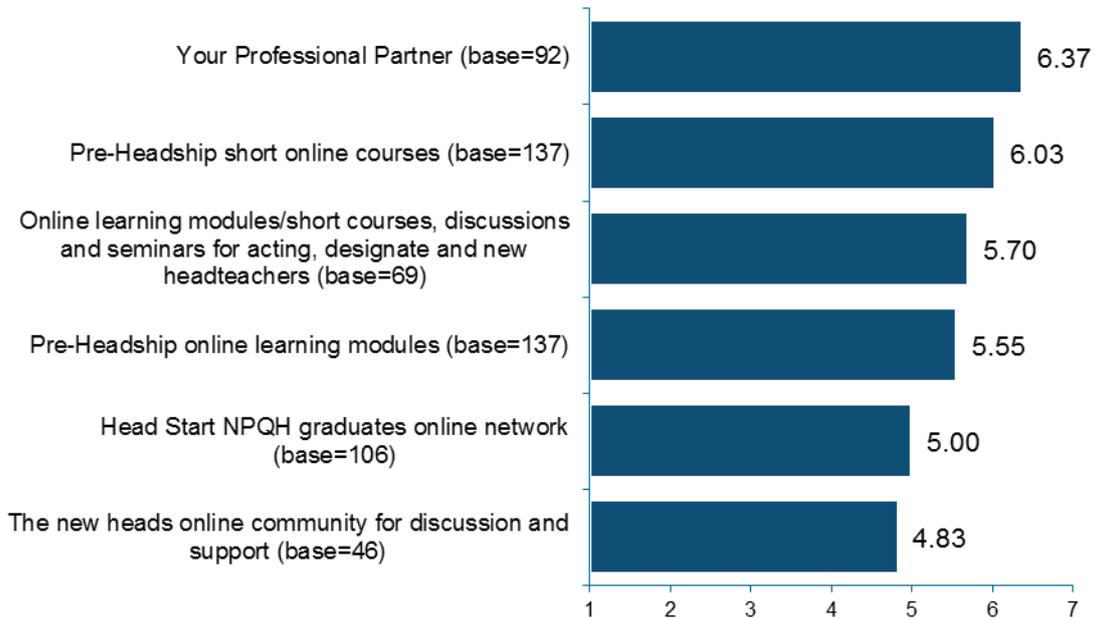
One of the trainees highlighted that they became aware of the importance of having someone to support them, and it was for this reason they had taken part in the Head Start programme:

I think that is probably something that came through from NPQH, is how distinct a role it [headship] is, how pressurised a role it is, and how crucial it is to have a network of support...at the time I was very conscious that I was going to need support going into a headship of a big school.

SPD graduate

Figure 53 shows the average score for how useful graduates of NPQH found the various elements of Head Start they used. Graduates were asked to rate these elements on a scale from one to seven (where one equals “not at all” and seven equals “very useful”). The element of Head Start that received the highest mean score (6.37) was the professional partner, with 65 per cent of graduates giving this reason a score of seven out of seven. The next most useful element was the pre-headship short online courses at 6.03. The least useful elements were the online networks for both graduates and new headteachers (5.00 and 4.83 respectively), which reflects the elements of Head Start that are least used.

**Figure 53: To what extent graduates found the elements of Head Start useful**



Average score where 1 = not at all and 7 very useful

Graduates who took part in the Head Start programme were asked to rate to what extent they considered Head Start to be a natural extension of NPQH on a scale from one to seven (where one equals “not at all true” and seven equals “totally true”). The overall mean score given by graduates was fairly high at 5.62. Female graduates overall report this higher at 5.77 when compared with male graduates (5.26).

Only four of the graduates we spoke to during the depth interviews had accessed the Head Start programme. During depth interviews all three NPQH graduates who had used Head Start and were eligible to access support from a professional partner stated that this was the most useful element of Head Start, as described by one graduate: *“That’s someone who is just a port of call, if you have a, sort of, a problem in the day to day running of the school, it’s just someone that you know is there to give you a quick answer,”* whilst another graduated explained that *“having a confidential, impartial sounding board who has been doing the job for ages... Where if there’s a difficult situation I can sit down and talk it through with X.”* was the most beneficial element of the professional partner support. Another interviewee explained that it was the only element of Head Start that they had used because they *“realised, the quickest way to solve most of my issues was either to go to them, or to another head”*.

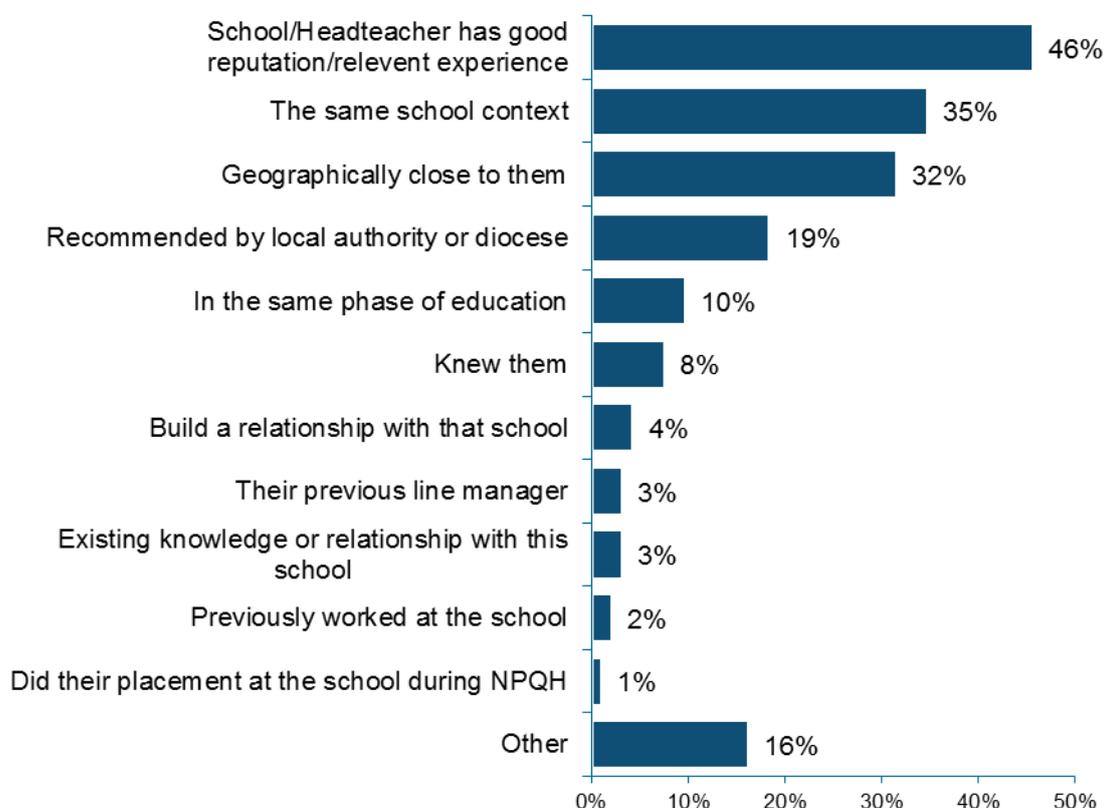
Only a minority of graduates had taken part in the additional elements of Head Start. Those who had taken part in the online modules highlighted this was to learn new

information and “clarify things that you’re unsure about and just extend your learning opportunities,” whilst undertaking the modules with the networking opportunities available with other graduates was highlighted as important: “to be in contact with people in the same situation... sharing information, sharing expertise”.

## Professional partner

As stated above, just over two-thirds (42%) of all eligible NPQH graduates have accessed support from a professional partner. On average these graduates have been accessing support for ten months and have received an average of ten hours of support so far. Graduates were asked to state why they had chosen their professional partner (Figure 54). The highest reported reason was due to the *headteachers’ or schools’ good reputation/experience*, stated by 46 per cent. Other highly reported reasons were that they were working in the same school context (35%), they were *geographically close to them* (32%) and they were *recommended to them* (19%).

Figure 54: The reasons why graduates chose their professional partner



Base=92; multiple responses possible; unprompted

Graduates were asked to rate to what extent the following reasons reflected why they engaged with their professional partner on a scale from one to seven (where one equals “definitely not” and seven equals “definitely”). As shown in Figure 55, graduates scored most of the reasons highly overall, with the exception of *gaining support for personal issues* which received a mean score of 3.90.

**Figure 55: To what extent the following reasons reflect why they have engaged with their professional partner**



Average score where 1 = definitely not and 7 = definitely; base=92

This result suggests that it is the practical support and advice offered by a professional partner that is valued by graduates and not the more general ‘personal’ type of support. This finding was supported by professional partners in feedback from in depth interviews who highlighted the practical support which graduates sought. As one professional partner stated:

Without putting specifics on it, unusual situations that come along that you almost could never quite be prepared for. One of the heads I’ve worked with had a really sticky situation with the press that came out of nothing at all. The local rag was just trying to find a story or something. I know the NPQH does deal with media, but that was a very specific situation where just having someone to talk through it was very useful I think.

Professional partner

In depth interviews with two NPQH graduates explored the reasons why they engage with professional partners in more detail. They engaged with their professional

partner to gain support from experienced headteachers who would be able to guide them and give them advice. As one graduate explained:

Once you become a headteacher, I think the last thing that you want is to become isolated, and your role changes within school. I think most new headteachers recognise that if you can have support from an experienced professional partner, as well as other people in the same situation, for you, that it can only be a good thing. In terms of support, I think it's been very useful.

SPD graduate

All interviews with professional partners confirm that a key part of their role is to provide new headteachers with support. They described how they offered them reassurance, advice and guidance and helped them to reflect on their development from an experienced viewpoint. As stated by one professional partner:

Headship can be a lonely job and it's having that other person there to talk things through, because you might not necessarily want to talk things through with people from your own school. And you might not want to talk it through with a head in another local school, because of the circumstances of whatever it is. But to talk it through with somebody who you know is going to remain ultimately confidential, is not going to go anywhere else, is not going to judge you in anyway, I think it gives them an arena to be truly reflective about their own feelings, their own practice and their own learning really.

Professional partner

Approximately half of the professional partners we interviewed also commented that new headteachers require more than just coaching and reported that they also provided them with mentoring support:

You can use some coaching techniques but a lot of it, yes, I would say it's a halfway house between mentoring and coaching... So I think the first half of the meeting is going to be really about issues from their school and it's coming from them with me interjecting. Then having got that out of the system you can go into, sort of, more overarching things and then you can start asking, and perhaps giving advice and suggestions throughout development as well.

Professional partner

Just over half of professional partners also indicated that new headteachers often feel overwhelmed by their new role, and as a result they help them to prioritise their workload to achieve their goals. One professional partner explained:

The other one that comes across to me from all of the people that I have worked with is supporting them in prioritising what they are going to focus on first, because most new heads are quite overwhelmed with so many things that need doing... it is really identifying what they need to focus on and also developing a strategic plan of how they want their job to look in three years time and how they can get there.

Professional partner

NPQH graduates explained how their professional partners had enabled them to work through and overcome a range of difficult situations and helped them make sure that they were *“handling situations appropriately”*. Such circumstances included school planning, potential pupil exclusions, re-structuring of the governing body and staff, performance management and HR issues, and finance issues. One graduate outlined the impact of their professional partner’s support:

I think it’s just in terms of confidence, and also knowledge of certain aspects of school, that I feel I have dealt with much more confidently and competently than I might otherwise have done.

SPD graduate

Those governors who were aware that their headteacher had received support from a professional partner highlighted the importance of this role to enable the headteacher to discuss their school with someone in the education profession. Governors highlighted that whilst their role was to support and help the headteacher, they did not have that direct experience of being a headteacher:

She does meet with a much more experienced head from a local school...he’s obviously a guy with a lot more experience than she has. He’s been a head for a long while, but I’m fully supportive of that sort of thing, there’s absolutely no doubt I think mentoring, and that style of learning is vitally important, and much underrated...I meet with her regularly, to talk about day-to-day stuff, but I’m not from an educational background... I can help by challenging, and doing day-to-day stuff, and I’m not, sort of, talking down my role, but this guy adds another dimension that I couldn’t possibly do.

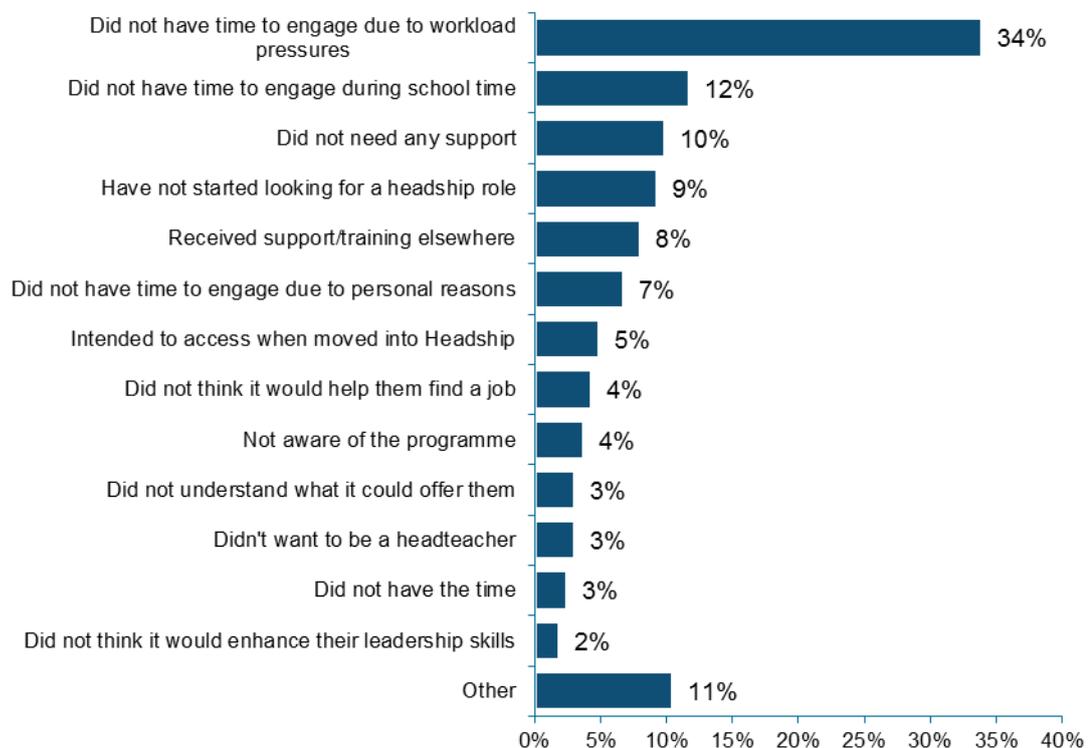
Governor

## Those who have not taken part in Head Start

Just under two-fifths (40%) of graduates had not yet taken part in any elements of the Head Start programme. The most common reasons reported by graduates for not engaging with Head Start (Figure 56) were a *lack of time due to workload pressures or not having time during the school day* (34% and 112%, respectively).

Just under 1 in 10 (10%) graduates reported *not needing any support*, and a similar proportion (9%) stated that they had *not yet started looking for a headship role* so had not yet used it. Positively, only 4 per cent of graduates were *not aware of the programme*, and a further 3 per cent of graduates *did not understand what the programme could offer them*. This suggests that there is generally a good level of knowledge and understanding of the support available to graduates through the Head Start programme for all but a small minority of graduates.

**Figure 56: Reasons why graduates have not yet accessed the Head Start programme**



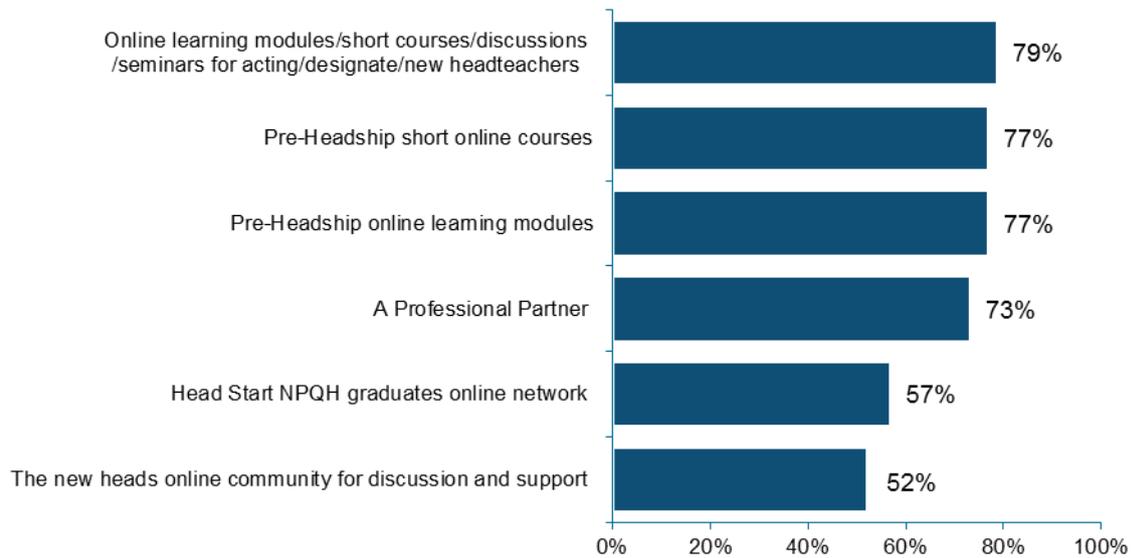
Base=162; multiple responses possible; unprompted

One in depth interviewee who was eligible to undertake all elements of Head Start indicated that they had made the conscious decision not to engage in the programme because they are *“lucky enough to have a supportive network of Heads around”* them already.

More than two-thirds (67%) of those who have not yet used the Head Start programme plan to use Head Start in the future. On average, these graduates plan to start using this programme in between eight and nine months, with a further 14 per cent who were unsure when they would start using it. For those who have not yet started the Head Start programme there was an even spread across most elements, with between 70 and 80 per cent of graduates intending to use them. Only the two

online networking elements for 'NPQH graduates' and 'new heads' reported the lowest intended use at 57 per cent and 52 per cent, respectively.

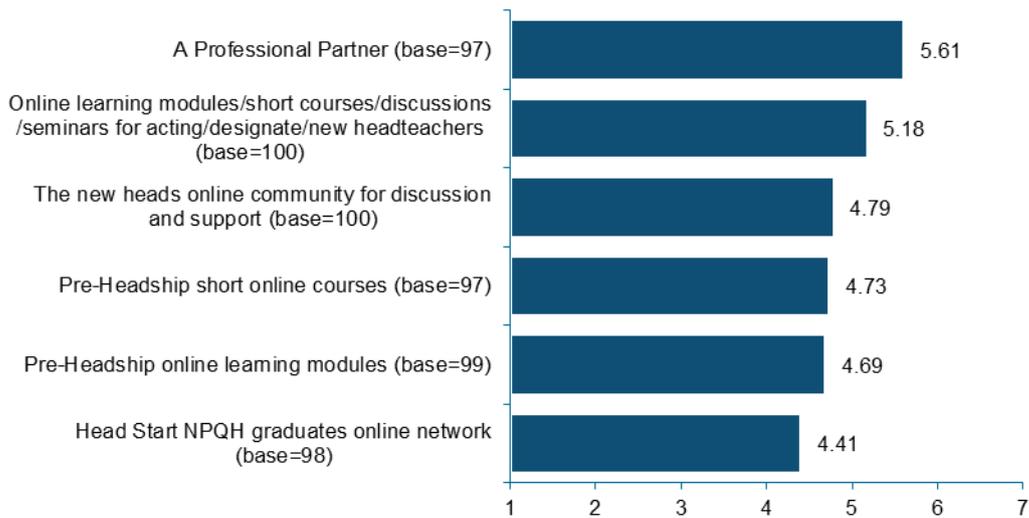
Figure 57: Elements of Head Start graduates plan to use in the future



Base=109; prompted

Graduates who had not accessed the programme but who plan to use it in the future were also asked to consider how useful they thought they would find the various elements of Head Start on a scale from one to seven (where one equals “not at all” and seven equals “very useful”). Graduates provided a fairly high score for *professional partner* with a mean score of 5.61, followed by the learning modules and courses at 5.18 (Figure 58).

**Figure 58: To what extent graduates think they will find the elements of Head Start useful**



Average score where 1 = not at all and 7 = very useful

Of those who do not plan to use Head Start (33%), the most frequently reported reason was that they already had alternative support or information to help them such as from other headteachers they know or help from their local authority (28%). Other reasons included *not needing the support/having previous experience to draw on* (23%) or *not having the time* (19%). Again, awareness of the programme was generally good, with only a small number were unaware either of the programme or what it entails (11%) or who thought that they were not eligible to access the programme (4%).

## Summary

The key findings from this chapter are:

- 18 months post-graduation from NPQH, nearly half of all graduates were headteachers or waiting to take up a headship position (49%).
- Over three-quarters of graduates who were not already a headteacher still intended to achieve headship in their next role, and therefore in total 92% of graduates were either a headteacher or intended to be in their next role.
- Two-thirds (65%) of graduates who had achieved a headship position in a different school to the one they had been in when undertaking NPQH had moved into a school with different characteristics to their previous school.
- Over half (56%) of graduates who had not moved into a new role since starting NPQH had been given additional responsibilities in their existing role as a result of undertaking NPQH.

- The use of Head Start is lower than expected, with only 61% of graduates having accessed any elements of Head Start since they graduated from NPQH.
- The most popular element of Head Start was the professional partner, which was used by 42% of graduates who were eligible. Graduates also rated the professional partner as being the most motivating reason for taking part in Head Start (6.3 out of 7) and the most useful element of the programme (6.4 out of 7).
- The two Head Start online networks were the least popular elements of the programme and rated the least useful.
- Those who had not engaged in Head Start primarily report a lack of time as the main reason for not doing so (34% due to workload pressures, 12% due to not having time during school time and 7% due to personal reasons).
- Although awareness of Head Start was low before trainees graduated from NPQH (at SPB), only 4% of graduates who had not used Head Start reported that this was because they were not aware of the programme.
- More than two-thirds (67%) of graduates who had not used the programme planned to access Head Start in the future.

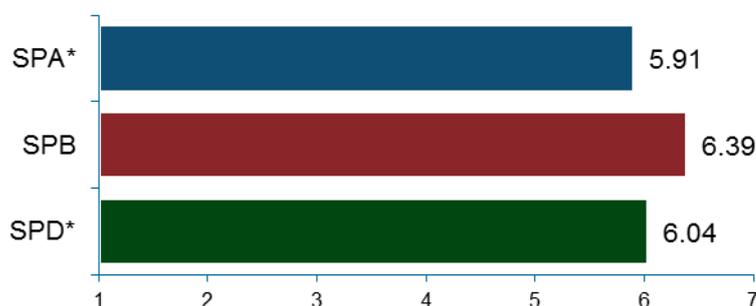
## 6 Long-term impact on trainees

This section examines the long-term impact of NPQH and Head Start, exploring changes in graduates' self-reported scores for readiness for headship and their leadership skills and capabilities between SPA, SPB and SPD. The extent to which NPQH and Head Start have enabled graduates to develop their skills is also explored, together with the attribution of graduates' skills development to NPQH and Head Start.

### Readiness for Headship

Graduates were asked to rate their readiness for headship at SPA, SPB and SPD based on their knowledge, skills and attributes on a scale from one to seven (where one equals "not at all ready" and seven equals "very ready"). Analysis shows that there has been a statistically significant decrease in the mean score for self-reported readiness for headship between SPB (6.39) and SPD (6.04) (Figure 59). Although there has been a small increase in the mean score from SPA to SPD, it is not statistically significant. When looking at the movements between individuals' scores, 36.1 per cent of graduates experienced a decrease in how ready they feel for Headship between SPB and SPD, while 47.6 per cent of graduates reported no change and 16.3 per cent reported an increase in their scores. However, when examining these changes between SPA and SPD graduates reported an increase in their score (38.6%), with only 23.2 per cent reporting a decrease.

Figure 59: Readiness to become a headteacher at SPA, SPB and SPD



Average score where 1 = not at all ready and 7 = very ready; base=234

\*Differences between SPA and SPD are not statistically significant

When prompted, the majority of SPB in depth interviewees indicated that initially they may have over-estimated their readiness for headship before participating in NPQH.

Most trainees explained that participating in NPQH had “*opened their eyes*” to things that they had not considered when they set out on their NPQH journey. To illustrate this, one trainee explained how this had changed for them:

I think if you’d have asked me at the start of this, ‘Are you ready for headship?’ I’d have said, ‘Yes.’ On a sort of upfront level, I thought it was true, but I now know a lot more than I did when I started it. So I don’t know if what you’d have been getting was front or arrogance, or what it was, but I know so much more now than I did a year ago. I now feel more ready. Looking back at myself, I don’t think that I was ready. I might have told you I was ready, but I don’t think I was.

SPB trainee

Therefore, although there is no statistically significant difference between SPA and SPD, trainees did report that at SPA they had overestimated their readiness.

When examining the scores of all of those who responded at SPD, there were no significant differences in readiness for headship when comparing those who were headteachers (6.05) with those who were not (6.07). Therefore those who were in a headship position did not feel they were more ready for the role than those who were not. Those graduates who had previous leadership and management experience before entering the teaching profession also scored themselves higher (6.26) when compared with those who did not (5.96).

The score that trainees gave at SPD for their readiness for headship was further analysed to investigate whether there is a relationship between this and how they scored themselves in relation to the six strands of the National Standards for Headship and their knowledge, skills and attributes at SPD. The modelling techniques<sup>29</sup> revealed a link in relation to six skills areas and capabilities. Those aspects that affect the score positively are presented below in order of how strongly they affect a trainee’s readiness for headship:

- Leading learning and teaching
- Ability to work with the governing body and others to create a shared vision and strategic plan which inspires and motivates pupils
- Levels of self confidence
- Networking skills
- Managing budgets

The above evidence outlines the importance that trainees attribute to these specific areas in their assessment of their readiness for headship because it shows that

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<sup>29</sup> Regression analysis

those trainees who score themselves highly in relation to these aspects at SPD are more likely to rate their readiness for headship higher at SPD.

Although some NPQH graduates described how they felt more ready now – 18 months post-graduation – other interviews with NPQH graduates provided some insight as to why this apparent decrease could have occurred. One graduate who had not experienced this decrease in readiness thought that for those who had applied for headship positions and had not yet been successful this could impact on their confidence, thus making them feel less ready than they felt on graduation. Another graduate pointed to several reasons why they felt less ready, including factors relating to their current role that had knocked their confidence and wanting to broaden their experiences at a deputy level. Along with another trainee who cited the “*pace of change*” in the education sector as being a reason why some graduates might feel less ready, this graduate referred to a change in culture in the sector whereby headteachers lose their jobs more frequently if results are not achieved:

I think in the last two years... more so than any time before, we hear more about heads who lose their jobs... That really is a new concept for education... I just found out last week that two of the group that did NPQH before me who became heads have both been sacked because their results didn't go up... It's become a culture where heads are more frequently sacked... you know, if you've got a secure deputy, you like working for your head and you've got job security and you're happy, actually, would you go for something when you've just heard those two men have just been sacked?

SPD graduate

Two other graduates both stated that they had experienced a decrease in readiness and attributed it to the fact that once you move into that position you realise what your weaknesses are and how difficult the job is. As stated by one graduate (headteacher):

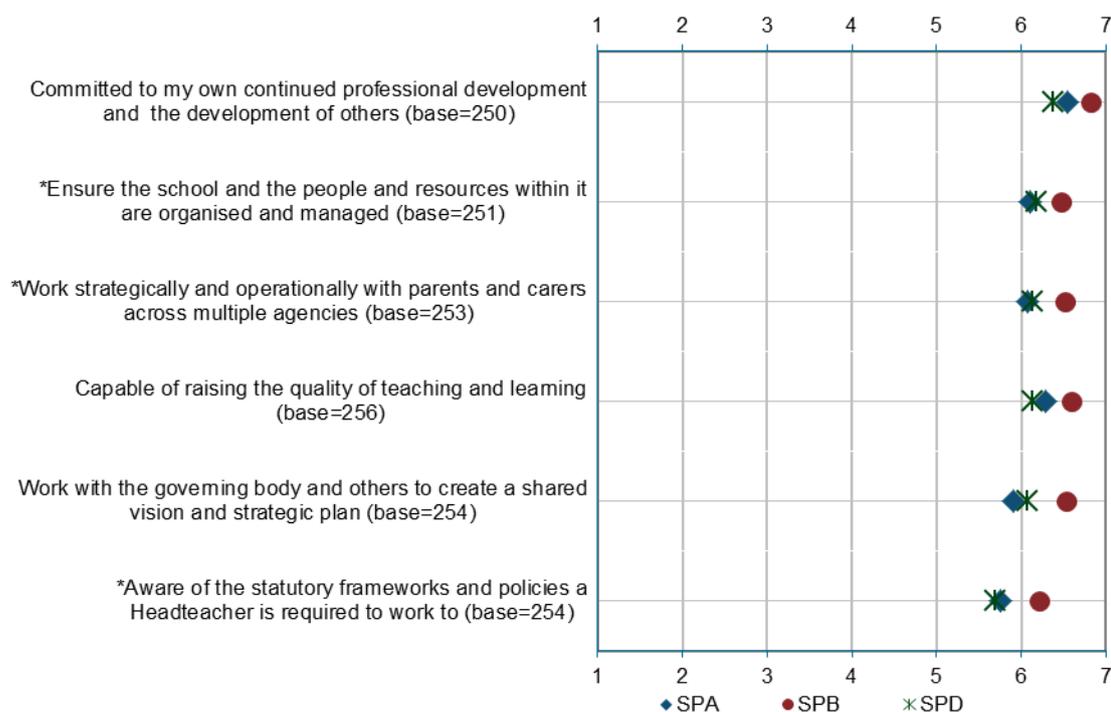
I do think you go through quite a lot of soul-searching when you get a headship, because however much you have been prepared as a deputy, you suddenly realise that you are the final port of call, and I think that throws up an enormous amount of soul-searching and consideration of yourself. You are acutely aware, because as I say it becomes apparent every day, of your own areas of weakness, or if you like, the areas that you are lacking skills or knowledge. I think that can make you feel very quickly, ‘Gosh, I don't feel like I've got the skills to do this,’ and I think that is where having the coaching is so much more valuable

SPD graduate

## National Standards

Examining the scores given by trainees when self-assessing their abilities against the National Standards for Headship, graduates scored themselves slightly lower overall at SPD than SPB in all of the six standards, although they still scored themselves fairly highly across the statements. When further examining the changes in scores between SPA and SPD, there were only statistically significant differences found across three out of the six statements (those in Figure 60 without a \*). Of those three statements, only one (*work with the governing body and others to create a shared vision and strategic plan*) received an overall increase in mean score. For the other two areas, a small but statistically significant decrease was observed.

**Figure 60: How reflective statements are of trainees' current abilities in relation to the National Standards for Headteachers at SPA, SPB and SPD**



Average scored where 1 = less true and 7 = more true

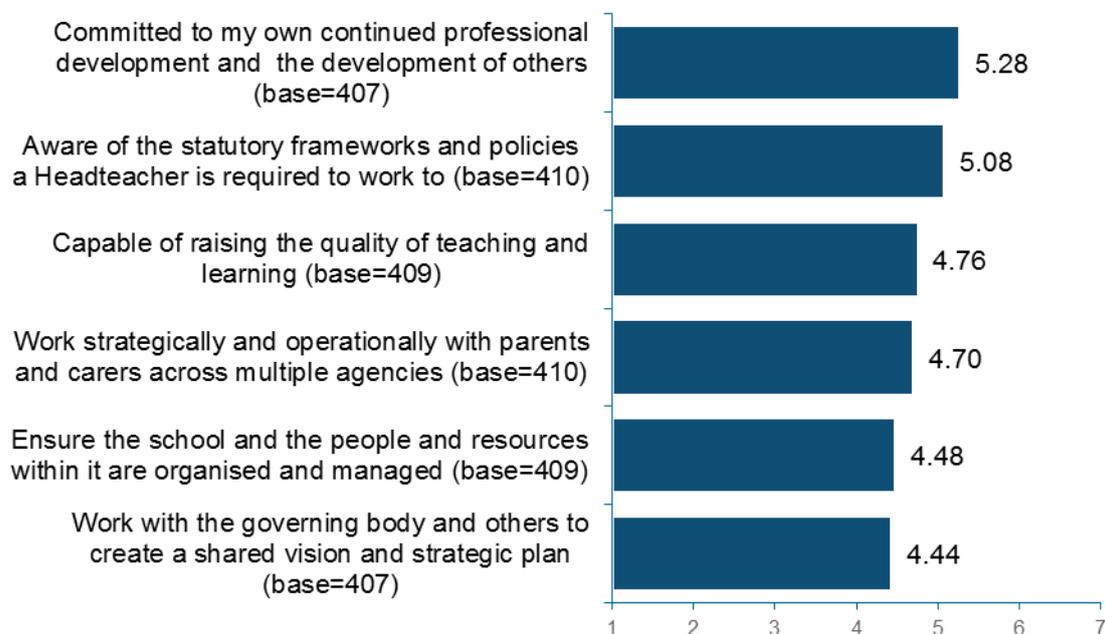
\* Indicates no significant difference between SPA and SPD

Eighteen months after graduation (SPD) there are some differences between average ratings for current abilities against the National Standards, and according to different characteristics (where 1 equals “less true” and 7 equals “more true”) the following differences in self-assessed ability were evident:

- Ability to raise the quality of teaching and learning was rated higher by those who were not headteachers (6.24) than those who were headteachers (6.01).
- Ability to organise and manage school resources and people was rated higher by those in smaller schools (100 or less pupils – 6.29) than by those in larger schools (more than 100 pupils – 6.09) and higher by those aged 51 years and over (6.33 compared with 5.99 for those aged 40 or less).
- The ability to work strategically and operationally with parents and carers was also rated higher by those from smaller schools (6.32 for graduates from schools with less than 100 pupils compared with 6.11 for graduates from schools with more than 100 pupils) and for female graduates (6.23. compared with 6.02) and those aged 51years and over (6.37 compared with 6.07 for those aged 40 or less).
- Commitment to own professional development and that of others was rated higher by graduates who had previous experience in a leadership role (6.51 compared with 6.29)

Although for most statements there was either no change between the self-reported assessment of their abilities between SPA and SPD or a small decrease, graduates did believe that NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken) had had a positive impact on their abilities in these areas. Respondents at SPD were asked to state to what extent NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken) had helped them to improve in the areas in relation to the National Standards for Headship rated on a scale from one to seven (where one equals “did not improve at all” and seven equals “improved significantly”). Overall, graduates rated the impact of NPQH and Head Start relatively highly, with the biggest impact being on their *commitment to their own, and others, CPD* at a mean score of 5.28.

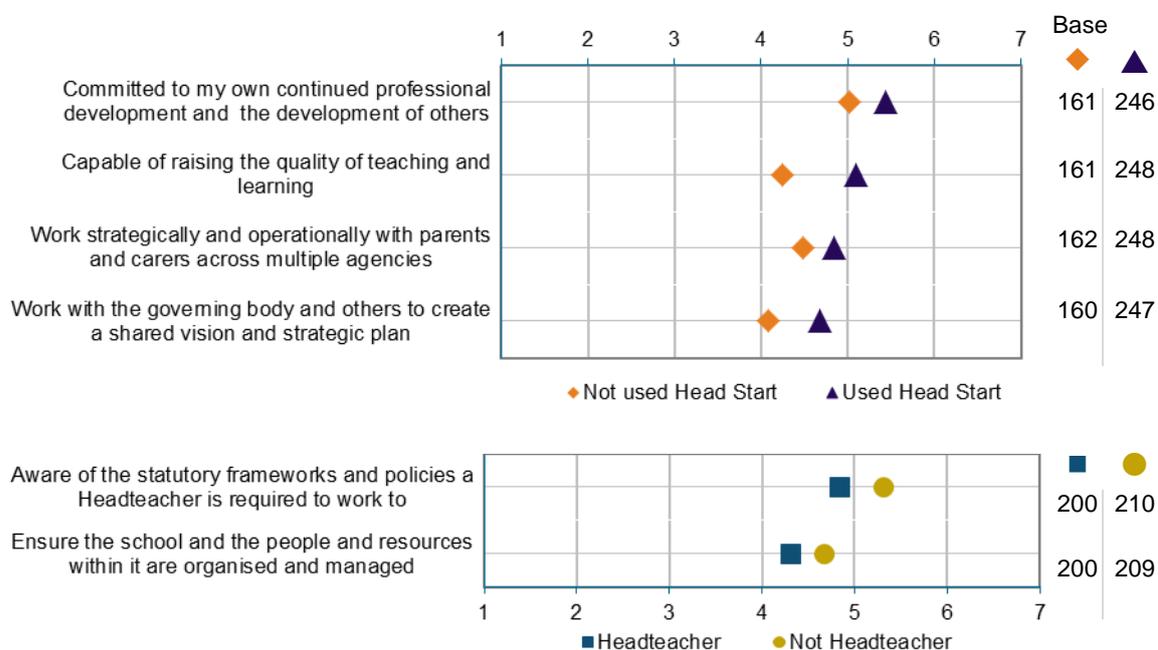
**Figure 61: To what extent NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken) have helped them to improve in the areas in relation to the National Standards for Headteachers at SPD**



Average score where 1 = did not improve at all and 7 = improved significantly

Further analysis was undertaken to identify any differences in the scores given by graduates by their role and other factors. In four of the six statements there was a significant difference found in the rating by whether or not someone had participated in Head Start. Those who had used the Head Start programme rated the impact that NPQH and Head Start has had on their abilities higher than those who had not, especially in relation to being *capable of raising the quality of teaching and learning* with a difference in mean scores of 0.84 (4.25 for those who have not used Head Start and 5.09 for those who have used Head Start). There were also differences in the two remaining statements by whether or not someone had moved into a headship position. Those who were headteachers scored these statements slightly lower than those who were not headteachers.

**Figure 62: To what extent NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken) have helped them to improve in the areas in relation to the National Standards for Headteachers at SPD by role and Head Start participation**



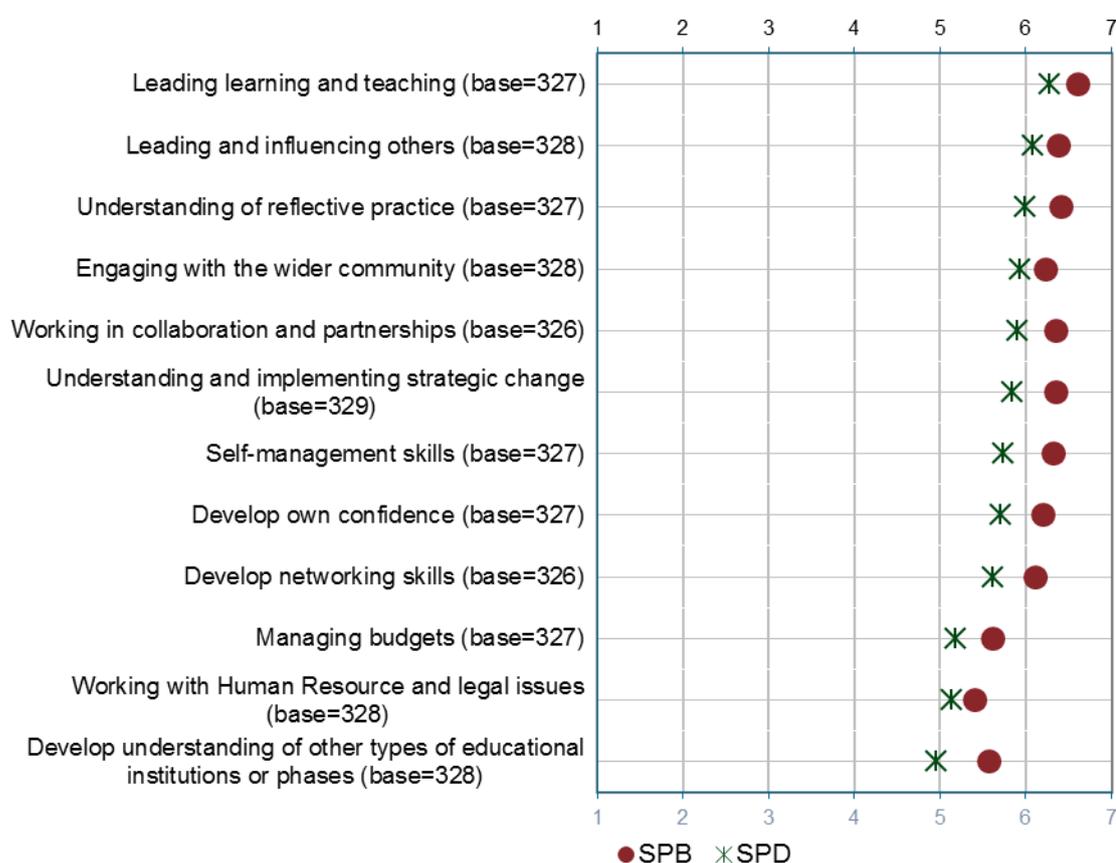
Average score where 1 = did not improve at all and 7 = improved significantly

Those who were in a small school when they started NPQH scored the impact of NPQH and Head Start on their *capabilities to raise the quality of teaching and learning* higher at 5.17 when compared with those who work in a school with more than 100 pupils (4.62). Female graduates scored the impact of NPQH and Head Start higher on their *awareness of the statutory frameworks and policies a headteacher is required to work to* at 5.20 compared with males at 4.88. Those who were 51 or older scored the impact of NPQH and Head Start on *ensuring the school, people and resources are organised* at 4.98, which is higher than those who were young at 4.26. Across all 6 statements, those graduates who undertook all six elements of NPQH scored the impact higher than all other trainees.

## Leadership skills and capabilities

Graduates were asked to rate their knowledge, skills and attributes on a scale from one to seven (where one equals “very weak” and seven equals “very good”).<sup>30</sup> Overall, at SPD graduates rated themselves lower across all statements than at SPB (findings were statistically significant). Although the perceptions of their own skill levels have decreased slightly, graduates still score themselves relatively highly across most statements, especially in relation to *leading learning and teaching*, *leading and influencing others* and *understanding reflective practice*. The areas that were scored lowest at SPB remain the same three lowest areas at SPD.

Figure 63: Self-assessment of knowledge, skills and attributes at SPB and SPD



Average score where 1 = very weak and 7 = very good

Looking at the different characteristics of graduates, there are some significant differences in self-assessed ratings against leadership skills and capabilities. Those

<sup>30</sup> This question was not asked in the first waves of SPA. Therefore there is not a big enough sample of graduates who responded at SPA to look at the changes in scores from SPA, only changes from SPB to SPD are reported.

who took part in Head Start rated their skills at *engaging with the wider community* and *developing networking skills* higher than those who had not taken part. This suggests that these are two key areas in which participation in Head Start has had a positive impact for graduates.

The characteristic that resulted in significant differences across the biggest range of leadership skills and capabilities was for those who held other professional roles that involved leadership and management responsibilities prior to entering the teaching profession. Where this was the case, graduates rated themselves higher for the following:

- Understanding and implementing strategic change
- Leading and influence others
- Leading learning and teaching
- Working with Human Resources and Legal issues
- Managing budgets
- Develop understanding of other types of educational institutions or phases
- Working in collaboration and partnerships
- Self-management skills
- Develop own confidence
- Develop networking skills

This could have important implications with regards to new routes into headship and addressing the current issues in relation to a high proportion of headteachers moving closer to retirement and the estimated twenty-year ‘apprenticeship’ headteachers serve as teachers. This finding suggests that there could be potential benefits in routes to headship for those with leadership and managerial experiences outside of teaching, both in terms of specific skills and capabilities and also levels of confidence.

Interestingly, there were some leadership skills and capabilities for which those who *were not* headteachers rated themselves higher, on average, than those who *were* headteachers. These were around understanding and implementing strategic change (5.94 compared with 5.75), self-management skills (5.92 and 5.47) and understanding reflective practice (6.06 and 5.88). This may be an expression of the difficulty in making the transition from the theoretical understanding of such skills to their practical implication in the work place. This was highlighted by one of the trainees who had moved into headship during the in depth interviews:

Let’s take performance management. I’ve done some reading of it, but in a weeks’ time, I’ve got to make some very hard decisions on that, and I

can't think, 'Oh well, the head is there to just double check.' They have got to be the right decision, and you know, if you've got a difficult HR case, you've got to get it absolutely right. So I think you become acutely aware of needing to solve things properly, and I guess that accounts for it.

SPD graduate

Those graduates who were from smaller schools (100 pupils or less) rated themselves higher for their understanding of other types of educational institution or phase (5.23) than those from large schools (more than 100 pupils – 4.91).

Those graduates who had secured a headship at the same school rated their skills in managing budgets (5.28) and in engaging the wider community (6.06) higher than those who had secured a headship at a different school (4.82 and 5.80). This may in part reflect a familiarity with budget management systems and with the local community.

Several differences were evident by age group, with older graduates (51 years and above) rating their self-assessed leadership skills and capabilities higher than younger graduates (40 years and under). This included:

- Engaging with the wider community (6.20 compared with 5.85)
- Understanding of other types of educational institutions (5.20; 4.81)
- Working in collaboration and partnerships (6.15; 5.80)
- Develop networking skills (5.93; 5.55)  
(also rated higher than those aged 41 to 45 years – 5.44)

The only significant difference in relation to gender was that females rated their skills and capability at engaging with the wider community higher (6.03) than men (5.81).

Those who undertook more elements of NPQH seemed to get more out of it, with those who undertook six elements of NPQH rating their skills and capabilities for leading learning and teaching higher (6.40) than those who undertook fewer elements (1 to 4 elements – 6.10; 5 elements 6.20).

## Why have skill levels dropped?

The reasons NPQH graduates provided to explain the reduction in perceived leadership skills were similar to those they gave to explain the reduced scores for readiness for headship. One graduate highlighted that if someone has not yet secured a headship, then their “confidence [in their skills] is bound to decline”. A couple of other graduates provided explanations that help to explain why those in the role might rate their skills lower 18 months following graduation: *“the problem is that until you are actually in that situation [headship], you just don't know and can't quite gauge how big a role it is”* and another added *“there is just so much to the job that is*

*flying at you all of the time. It is very easy to lose confidence.”* This highlights the importance of the professional partner in the Head Start programme.

## Impact of NPQH and Head Start on skills levels

Respondents at SPD were then asked to state to what extent NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken) had helped them to improve these leadership skills and capabilities on a scale from one to seven (where one equals “did not improve at all” and seven equals “improved significantly”). Graduates scored many skills fairly highly (Figure 64) including *understanding of reflective practice* (5.61), *develop own confidence* (5.49) and *understanding and implementing strategic change* (5.27). Graduates thought that NPQH and Head Start had less impact in helping them to learn about *working with Human Resources and legal issues* (4.05), *understanding other educational institutions and phases* (4.23) and *managing budgets* (4.33). This reflects the three skill areas that graduates scored themselves the lowest on in the previous question.

**Figure 64: To what extent NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken) have helped them to improve their knowledge, skills and attributes at SPD**



Average score where 1 = did not improve at all and 7 = improved significantly

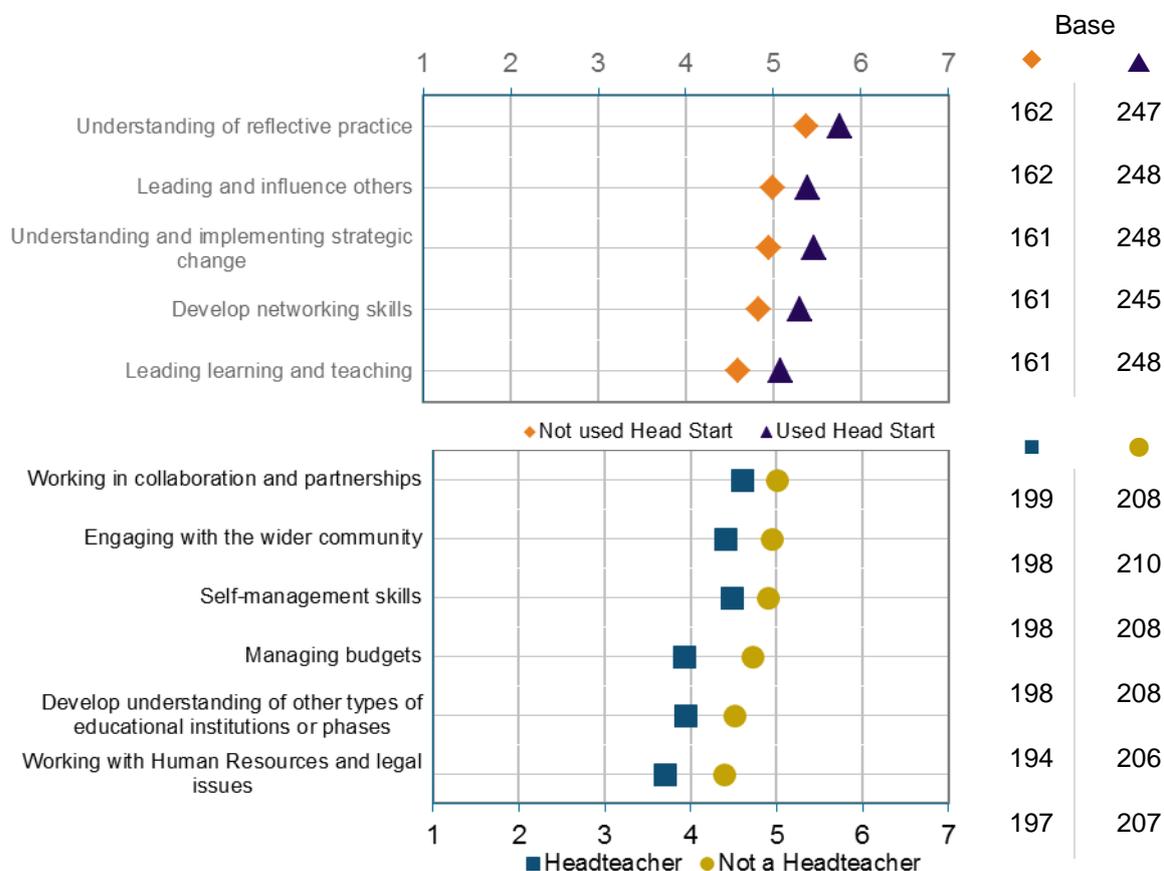
As with the National Standards for Headship, analysis was undertaken to explore the differences in scores given by different groups of graduates. As with the National Standards, differences were found in scores by those who are in a headship position compared with those who are not and those who took part in Head Start and those who did not.

Certain characteristics of graduates are associated with the extent to which they believe NPQH and Head Start impacted on their development of leadership skills and capabilities. Firstly, whether or not an individual took part in Head Start was a significant factor, with those who did take part believing that NPQH and Head Start helped to improve their leadership skills and capabilities to a greater extent than those who had not taken part. This was true for the following skills/capabilities:

- Understanding and implementing strategic change (5.47 compared with 4.96)
- Leading and influencing others (5.39; 4.99)
- Leading learning and teaching (5.08; 4.60)
- Develop networking skills (5.31; 4.83)
- Understanding of reflective practice (5.77; 5.37)

This suggests that these are the leadership skills and capabilities on which Head Start has the greatest impact.

**Figure 65: To what extent NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken) have helped them to improve their knowledge, skills and attributes at SPD**



Average score where 1 = did not improve at all and 7 = improved significantly

Those graduates at smaller schools (100 pupils or less) thought that NPQH and Head Start helped to improve their leadership skills to a greater extent than those at larger schools (more than 100 pupils) with regards to *understanding and implementing strategic change* (5.58; 5.21), *Human Resources and legal issues* (4.43; 3.89) and *understanding of other types of educational institutions or phases* (4.72; 4.14).

Furthermore, whether or not a graduate had secured a new role at the same school or at a different school also made a difference, with those who had secured a new role at the same school reporting that NPQH and Head Start improved their leadership skills to a greater extent than those who secured one at a different school. This was evident for the same areas as before:

- Human Resources and legal issues (4.14 compared with 3.65)
- Managing budget (4.33; 3.85)

- Understanding of other types of educational institutions or phases (4.27; 3.81)
- Understanding reflective practice (5.73; 5.39)

This result indicates that the extent to which graduates are able to put their learning and development into practice – moving from a theoretical perspective to a practical one – makes a significant difference to how they assess their experience of NPQH and Head Start. Furthermore, the difference with regards to *where* they secure a new role (i.e. whether at the same school or a different school) may be related to the additional challenges faced by graduates who take up a new role at a different school and the requirement to familiarise themselves with a new ethos, new structures/procedures, new staff team and a different local community.

What was also influential in the extent to which graduates thought NPQH and Head Start had improved their leadership skills was the number of elements of NPQH that they had undertaken. Those who had undertaken more elements of NPQH thought that it had been more of a contributory factor in improving their leadership skills than those who had undertaken fewer elements. More specifically, those who had undertaken all six elements of NPQH thought that it had improved all of their leadership skills to a greater extent than those who had only undertaken 1 to 4 elements, and for several skills/capabilities this also held true compared with those who had undertaken 5 elements which provides evidence that to get the most out of NPQH and Head Start individuals need to undertake as many elements as possible.

In depth interviews with NPQH graduates and professional partners identified a range of knowledge, skills and attributes that NPQH and Head Start have helped graduates to develop, many of which mirror the higher rated skills from the survey data. This section presents the most common findings from this qualitative research.

## NPQH graduates

### Developed own confidence

The majority of NPQH graduates identified that their experiences throughout NPQH and Head Start had increased their confidence in undertaking a headship role. Graduates reported that the programmes gave them “*credibility*”, allowed them to build confidence in their skills across all six areas for headship and gave them the confidence to deal with difficult situations. One graduate described how graduation from NPQH boosted their confidence further:

I think having undertaken the course and the graduation process, I think it reaffirmed, in my own mind that not only did I feel ready for a leadership role, but that a group of other well qualified individual, also shared the same opinion

SPD graduate

### **Leading and influencing others**

An overwhelming majority of interviewees described how they had an increased understanding of accountability and performance management processes as a result of undertaking NPQH and Head Start. Graduates explained how their experiences on the programmes had helped them to understand the importance of holding others to account and how to go about having these difficult conversations and challenge behaviour. One graduate highlighted the importance of the on-going nature of performance management as follows:

I think probably one of the biggest skills is about dealing with people, especially in terms of maybe having difficult conversations with them. I suppose in a lot of respects, it's about the confidence of dealing with them. You know, I always, I think, throughout my career, have had to have-, I've not been afraid of having difficult conversations with people, but I think through the NPQH I've gained a greater understanding of how that should happen, the context of it, and how that impacts on other things, and also how that needs to be followed through as well. It's not just about having a conversation, it's about what happens after that. That's looking at the bigger picture and thinking about that, in reality, the staff are the key people to driving things forward and you cannot actually accept anyone who doesn't perform to their potential, and you've got to actually challenge that all the way through. Not just in terms of one conversation, but a constant dialogue.

SPD graduate

Over half of the professional partners interviewed highlighted that after the two years of working with new headteachers they had improved their leadership skills and ability to manage difficult situations with staff in their schools:

She had some really difficult HR issues that she inherited as she took headship, and it is all very well and good getting advice from HR but actually you need some exercises to help you think about what the needs of the institution are and that they don't teach you through HR so that I think the Head Start and the professional mentoring gave her that so there was a lot of work she was able to do about assessing the needs of the institution to do with staff, staff restructure, staffing, how you do that which I don't think you would just know that.

Professional partner

Related to the above, approximately half of the interviewees reported that they had improved their leadership style and interpersonal relationships with staff. A wide variety of improvements to their leadership style were discussed by graduates; examples include one graduate reported that the programmes had helped them to shape what type of leader they wanted to be, whilst another now understood that all staff need to look to you, and therefore you need to be consistent. Another trainee learnt the importance of supporting other members of staff when leadership responsibilities are distributed to other members of staff. One trainee commented that they now understood the importance of ongoing informal dialogue with staff to help nip small problems in the bud, they outlined:

One of the strategies that I've used since the NPQH is to have an open door policy... I sometimes have a queue of staff outside waiting to see me, generally just for, you know, it was a little bit of a catch up... which is something I would not have thought about doing before. The other thing I also do as well is spend a lot of time walking around the school, talking to people having informal conversations during the day. If they're not teaching I might pop into their classroom, have a little chat with them, see how things are going... When it gets to the more formal things and I'm having difficult conversations, one of the key things that I now do is make sure that everything I do is documented, everything is planned in advance.

SPD graduate

### **Understanding and implementing strategic change**

Over half of NPQH graduates described how the programmes had helped them to develop their strategic thinking, "*thinking more long term and big picture*". A minority of professional partners also highlighted that through the work they undertake with new headteachers, this has helped them to improve their strategic planning and vision:

Certainly with one headteacher who had inherited a school improvement plan that was not focused... Certainly as a result of being involved with me, they ended up with a more streamlined and focused school improvement plan that enabled them to raise standards in teaching and learning, because they only had to focus on three things and not the whole range of things.

Professional partner

One graduate explained how NPQH had also highlighted the importance of having a clear vision:

I think that before I actually did the NPQH, though I had my own clear ideas of what the head teacher was, it actually just made it more realistic in terms of the fact that... it's not just the person who runs the school and is responsible for the school. It's more of it is the person who actually has the very clear vision to drive the school forward with the changes that need to happen. I think that vision part of it is the thing that came across much more by doing the NPQH that previously I found.

SPD graduate

### **Reflective practice**

Approximately half of interviewees at SPD commented on how the programmes had helped them to become more reflective. One graduate explained how their experiences helped them to reflect on what type of school they wanted to lead in, whilst another described how they were now able to reflect on situations and deal with them differently to how they might have done previously. Half of the professional partner interviews also highlighted that this was one of the areas which Head Start had an impact on, primarily through the work they undertake with the trainee, as highlighted by one professional partner:

Reflection. You know this thing of being able to work in different styles of leadership in different situations, it's probably that. What I hope because of the reflection that goes into it and the ability to have somebody there who can see something in a different way, not necessarily that you're going to do what that different way is, but just that ability to work in and out of different leadership styles. I think it's quite a big one, see things a different way, getting outside your own constraints, being prepared to share.

Professional partner

## Professional partners

Outside of the specific skills outlined above, interviews with professional partners highlighted the importance of their role in providing new headteachers with support in their first two years of headship. This was the most commonly reported way in which they were able to impact upon their development though supporting them in their role to increase in confidence and the decisions they make.

Overall, the skills which professional partners described being developed by trainees during the Head Start programme were varied. Professional partners were only able to comment on the skills which they themselves had enabled the graduate to develop, and these differed depending on the needs of the graduate and the school they had moved into. Examples of areas of impact (not already highlighted above) include understanding of financial issues, improving monitoring and evaluation processes, improving pupil attainment, developing emotional intelligence and working with parents. Professional partners highlighted that there was no help and support that they were not able to offer to graduates and that through their role graduates could access support and training from them on any development needs. As highlighted by one professional partner who stated that yes, Head Start does equip new headteachers with all of the necessary skills for headship, “as long as the professional partner has the necessary experience themselves.”

## Key impacts and attribution of NPQH and Head Start

Further statistical analysis<sup>31</sup> was undertaken to explore the differences in graduates scores at SPD in relation to the impact NPQH and Head Start has had on their leadership skills and their abilities and in relation to the National Standards. Three groups of trainees were identified (as highlighted in Figure 66):

- Group 1: represents almost one-sixth (16%) of trainees and is characterised by low scores across most of the statements, highlighting that they thought NPQH and Head Start had little impact on their skills and capabilities.
- Group 2: represents nearly half (49%) of trainees and is characterised by fairly moderate scores across most areas, with some areas such as managing Human Resources and understanding other types of educational institutions and phases scored lower. This indicates that for these graduates they believe that NPQH and Head Start had some impact across most of the skills areas highlighted.
- Group 3: represents just over one-third (36%) of trainees and is characterised by higher scores across all of the statements when compared with the other

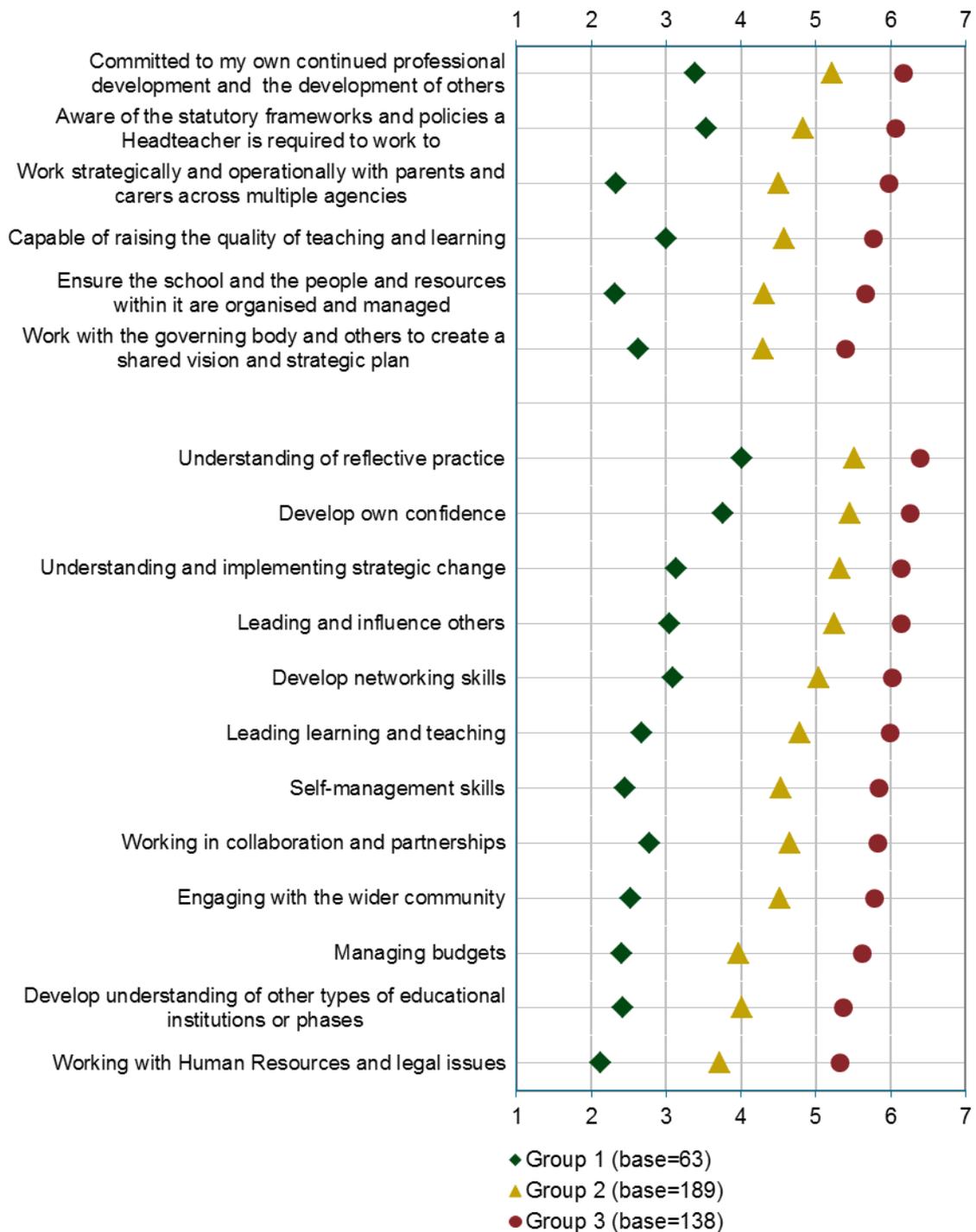
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<sup>31</sup> Cluster analysis

groups. All mean scores for this group received 5 or more, highlighting the impact that this group of graduates think NPQH and Head Start has had on their skills and abilities.

A higher proportion of graduates who had used all 6 elements of NPQH were in Group 3 with higher scores (46%) when compared with those who used 5 elements (26%) or 4 or less (19%). Only 9 per cent of graduates using all 6 elements were in Group 1 compared with 24 per cent who took part in 5 elements and 23 per cent who took part in 4 or less.

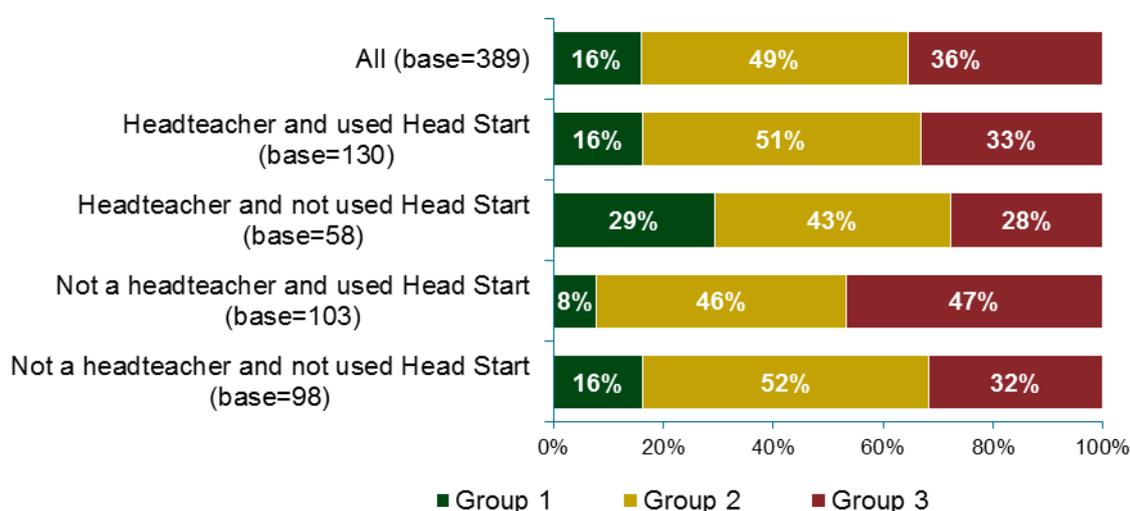
**Figure 66: To what extent NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken) have helped them to improve in the areas in relation to the National Standards and their leadership skills and capabilities for headteachers at SPD**



Average score where 1 = did not improve at all and 7 = improved significantly

Whether or not an individual was a headteacher or not had no significant difference on the group graduates were in, however when coupled with their different usage of Head Start differences were found (Figure 67). Primarily those who did not use Head Start were more likely to be in Group 1 when compared with those who had used the services, especially for those who were headteachers, with 29 per cent of heads who did not use Head Start appearing in Group 1 compared to those who had used it at 16 per cent.

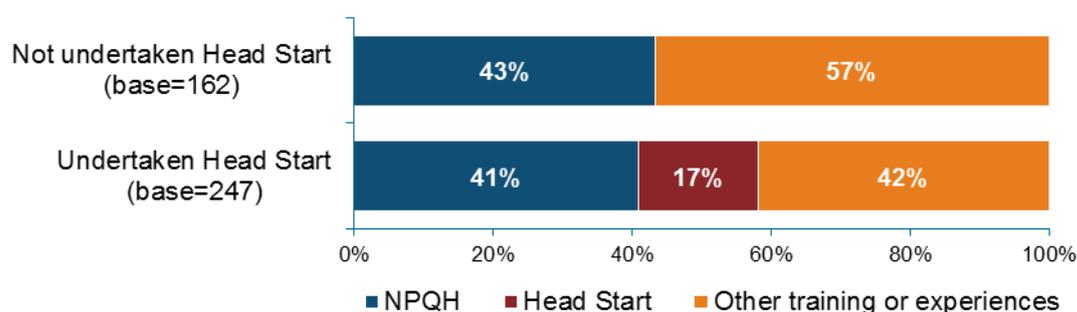
Figure 67: Group membership by role and use of Head Start



## Attribution

Graduates were asked to think about the overall development of their leadership skills and capabilities from when they started NPQH to 18 months post-graduation, and were then asked to attribute a proportion of this development to NPQH, Head Start and other training and experiences. Across all graduates, when considering their development since starting NPQH to the present they attributed on average just over 40 per cent to learning they undertook whilst on NPQH (43% when not taken part in Head Start and 41% when individuals took part in Head Start). Those who took part in Head Start allocated, on average, a further 17 per cent of their development to the Head Start programme (Figure 68).

**Figure 68: Graduates' perceptions of the contribution of NPQH, Head Start and other training or experience had to the overall development of their leadership skills**



Mean scores

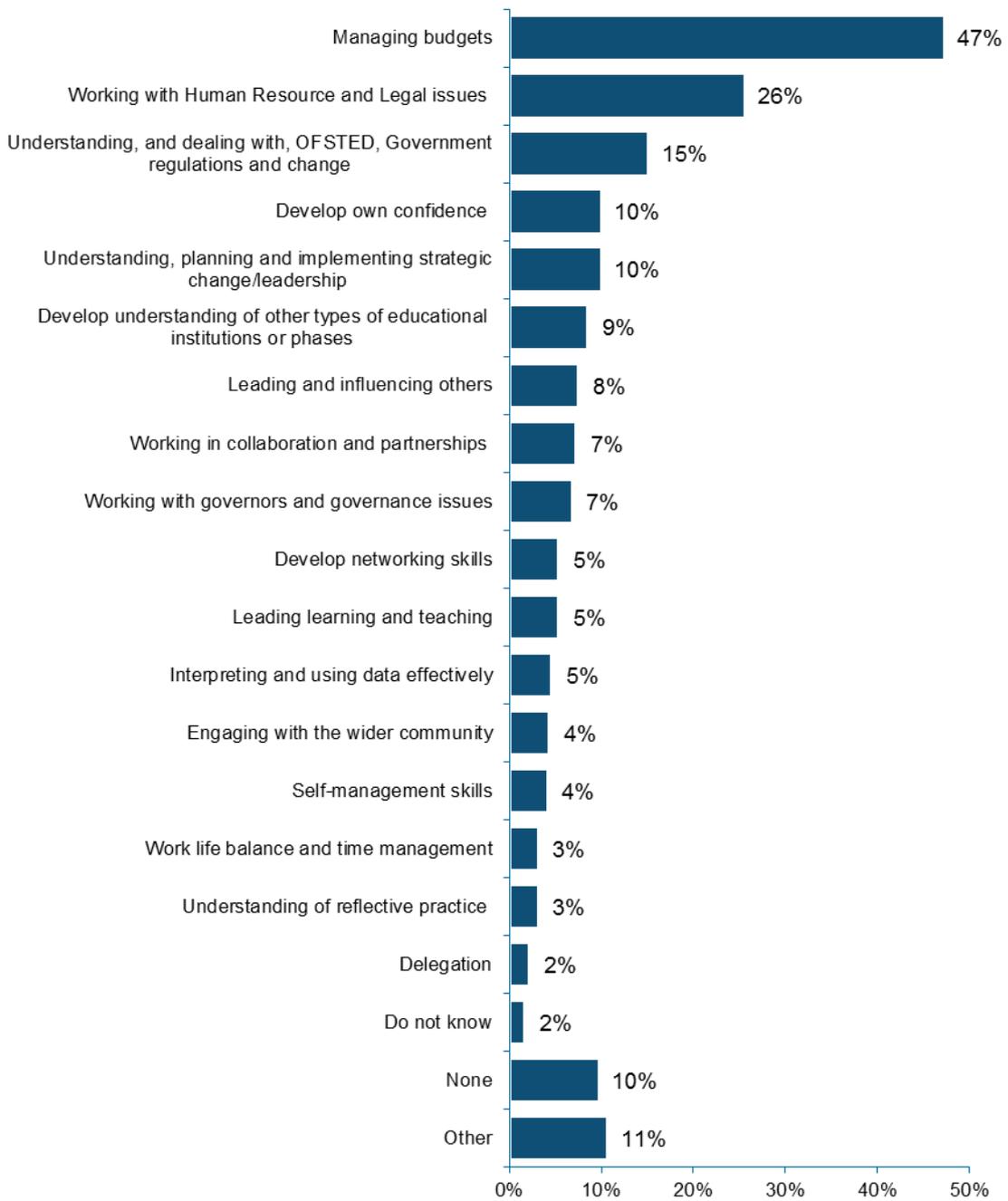
For those who allocated part of their development to other training or experiences, graduates were asked what training or experience this was. 29 per cent stated that part of their development was attributable to working with other senior leaders/local authority leaders, 26 per cent stated through networking and meeting with other headteachers and schools (outside of NPQH and Head Start), 25 per cent reported other training and 25 per cent stated on the job experience as a senior leader.<sup>32</sup> Other experience included local training opportunities (23%), general on-the-job experience (20%), working with colleagues (12%), wider reading and research (3%), attending conferences (3%) and a range of other responses (6%).

## Skills trainees still want to develop

Graduates were asked to state what (if any) knowledge, skills and attributes they considered that they still needed to develop further. As seen in Figure 69, the majority of graduates still thought that they had areas that they needed to develop, with only 10 per cent stating none, while two of the skills areas reported low at SPA, SPB and SPD *managing budgets* (47%) and *understanding Human Resources and legal issues* (26%) continue to be the two areas which trainees wanted to develop.

<sup>32</sup> Multiple responses possible to this question.

**Figure 69: Knowledge, skills and attributes graduates considered they still needed to develop further**



Base=410; multiple responses possible; unprompted

Interviewees provided some insights to explain that they thought that primarily in relation to HR and legal issues and managing budgets that this was not fully covered during the NPQH programme. For example, one graduate outlined that whilst they covered a small amount regarding finances during NPQH, if they did not currently have a good business manager they would be lacking in knowledge to manage their school finances. The same interviewee also highlighted that there is “*such a huge gamut of areas of HR*” it is difficult to be confident in your ability to deal with HR issues.

A professional partner also highlighted that this was something which was not covered in the NPQH or Head Start programme:

they don't teach you that on the NPQH, about the legality of redundancies, union work and doing that and actually I would say that was a failing in the NPQH, there wasn't enough time spent on those elements of HR and even on the Head Start programmes it doesn't go into that really, she basically had a member of staff who was under serious investigation and there were a lot of legal issues she had to work through and stuff and although I wasn't privy to the information I was helping her manage the process of having to go through all the information, how she would prioritise that on top of her workload and all of those sorts of things.

Professional partner

However, as previously highlighted professional partners explained that they were able to fill any skills gaps through the support they offer through the Head Start programme as highlighted in the quote above.

However, another interviewee explained that they thought that some trainees and graduates do not take enough responsibility for undertaking their own research and learning. This graduate explained:

Actually, there was somebody in my group who said, 'Oh I didn't think the finance wasn't very good' and I thought, 'You're making a choice not to engage with this.' ... there are some colleagues who want it fed to them... There was one colleague in particular who actually got mistakes and there was a couple of us saying, you know, 'Actually, you've got to do that yourself. You know, it's not your head's fault that you're not reading that book, you know, it's your professional accountability.'

SPD graduate

## Attitudes towards NPQH

As highlighted previously, the survey explored motivation levels towards NPQH by asking trainees if they would undertake the qualification if it was not mandatory to become a headteacher in a maintained school in England. Willingness was captured as a rating on a scale from one to seven (where one equals “I would definitely not undertake NPQH if it was not mandatory” and seven equals “I would definitely undertake NPQH if it was not mandatory”). When examining the sample of graduates tracked from SPA to SPB to SPD no statistically significant differences were found in the mean scores provided to this statement, showing that 18 months after completing NPQH graduates could still see the value in undertaking this qualification with a mean score of 5.18.

## Summary

- As highlighted in the previous chapter, trainees’ self-reported readiness for headship increased from the start of the programme (SPA) to the end (SPB). However, when asked at SPD (18 months post-graduation) to rate their readiness for headship there was a small reported drop from 6.4 at SPB to 6.0 at SPD. There was no statistically significant change between SPA and SPD on participants’ readiness for headship.
- During in depth interviews at both SPB and SPD trainees stated that they had originally overestimated their readiness at SPA, which could account for the lack of change between trainees’ scores from SPA to SPD. The drop in readiness between SPB and SPD was attributed to trainees realising the challenges involved with the role (for those who had moved into headship) and them re-appraising their own skill levels, whereas those who had not moved into a headship positive stated that they may feel less confident due to not yet gaining a position.
- As with readiness for headship, graduates also reported a small decrease in all of their leadership skills and capabilities and other skills in relation to the six National Standards for headship. During the in depth interviews trainees provided the same reasons as highlighted for readiness for headship above to explain why these self-reported skills levels had decreased.
- At SPD the two skills areas which continue to receive lower self-reported scores are managing budgets and working with HR and legal issues. Trainees also rank these skills amongst the lowest when asked to what extent NPQH and Head Start have helped them to improve. When asked what skills areas they would still like to improve (unprompted) 47% stated managing budgets and 26% stated HR and legal issues.

- Although scores have dropped, graduates continue to score themselves highly (out of 7) in a range of skill areas including:
  - Leading learning and teaching (6.28)
  - Leading and influencing others (6.09)
  - Understanding of reflective practice (5.99)
  - Engaging with the wider community (5.94)
  - Working in collaboration and partnerships (5.90)
- During the depth interviews graduates highlighted that leading and influencing others alongside them while developing their own confidence were key areas they had developed.
- Although graduates scored their leadership skills and capabilities and other skills in relation to the six National Standards for Headship lower at SPD than SPB due to them re-appraising their skill levels, they did however report that NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken) had enabled them to improve in those areas, with all skill areas receiving a score of 4 or more out of 7.
- Across a number of skill areas, those who had undertaken Head Start scored themselves higher than those who had not engaged in the programme. These trainees also perceived that NPQH and Head Start had a greater impact on those skills than those who had not taken part in Head Start.
- Graduates attributed just over 40% of their skills development to NPQH (41% if undertaken Head Start and 43% if not undertaken Head Start). Graduates who have engaged in Head Start attribute a further 17% of their development to this programme.
- At SPD graduates' motivations for undertaking NPQH were still fairly high and remain unchanged between SPA, SPB and SPD, with a score of 5.18 out of 7.

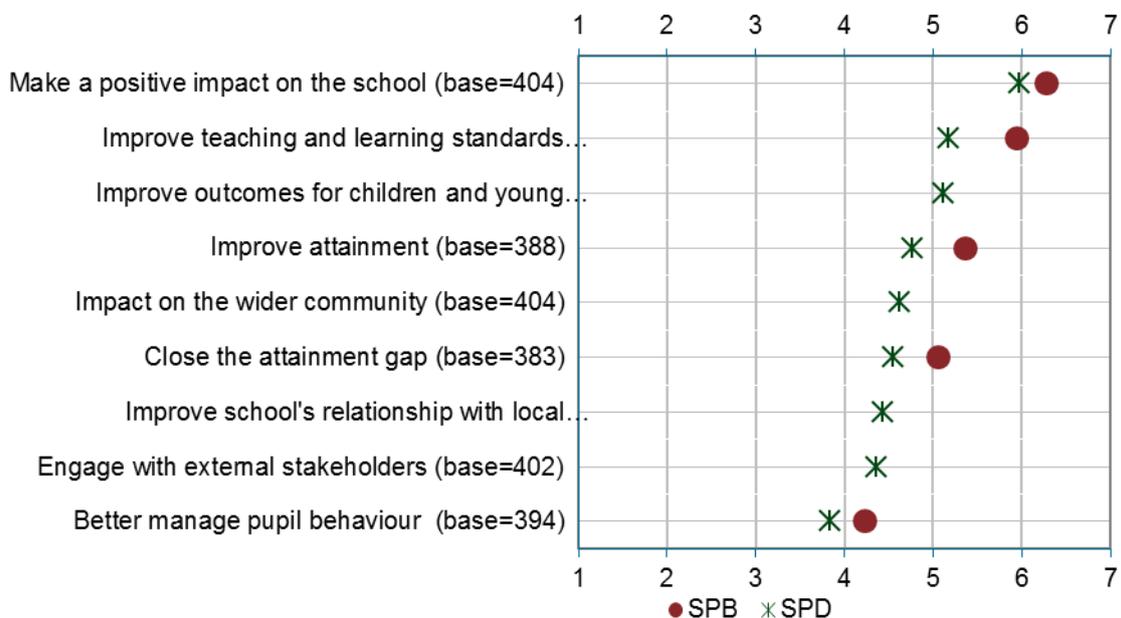
## 7 Wider impacts

This section outlines the wider impact of the NPQH and Head Start programmes on the graduate's own school and the leadership development school they visited whilst on placement during NPQH.

### Own school

Graduates were asked to state to what extent they agreed that NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken) had helped them to do a range of things in their school across a range of areas on a scale from one to seven (where one equals "completely disagree" and seven equals "completely agree"). Overall statements were rated slightly lower at SPD than at SPB (where questions were asked at both sampling points). Graduates reported that NPQH and Head Start had helped them to make a positive impact on the school in which they worked at SPD with a mean score of 5.95 (Figure 70). *Managing pupil behaviour* was the only area which graduates thought that NPQH (and Head start) had less impact.

Figure 70: To what extent NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken, asked at SPD only) have helped them to do the following at SPB and SPD



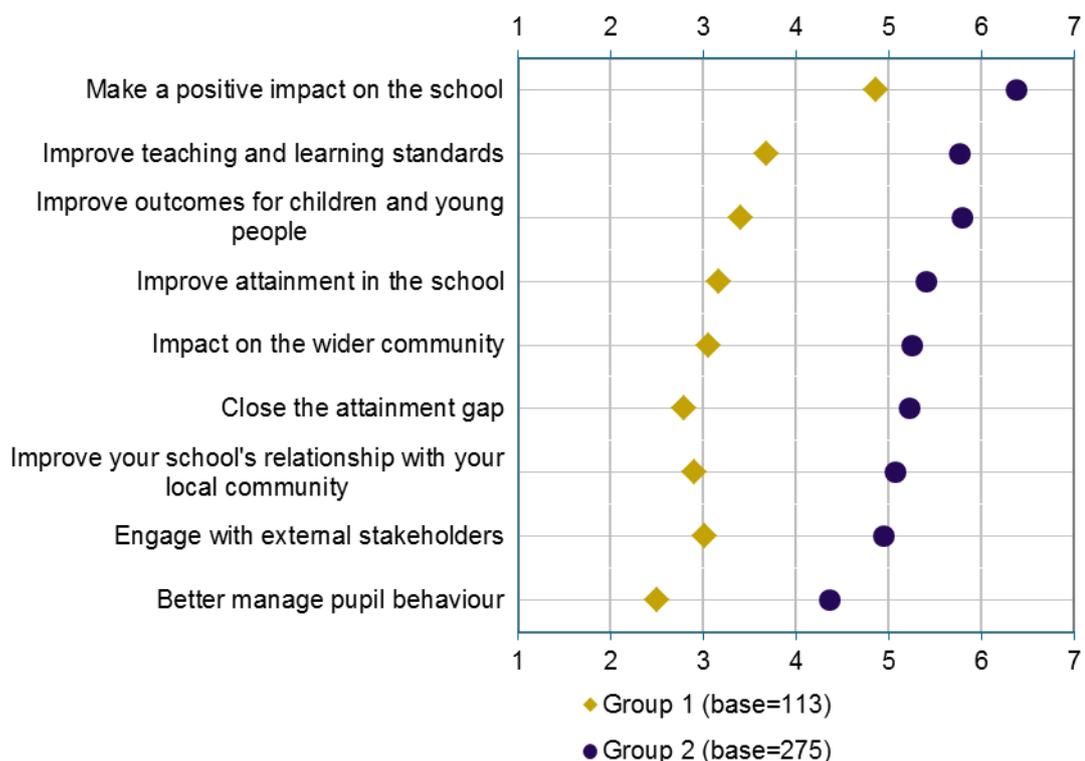
Average score where 1 = completely disagree and 7 = completely agree<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> Some questions were asked at SPD only, therefore no figures are displayed in the graph for SPB.

Cluster analysis was undertaken to explore the differences in graduates scores at SPD in relation to the impact NPQH and Head Start had on their school. Two groups of trainees were identified (as highlighted in Figure 71):

- Group 1: represents almost one-third (29%) of trainees and is characterised by low scores across the majority of statements for specific impacts of NPQH and Head Start, however these trainees did score the overall impact on their school moderately at 4.87.
- Group 2: represents over two-thirds (71%) of trainees and is characterised by much higher scores across the majority of statements and an overall score of 6.37 for the impact on the school. Managing pupil behaviour still received a relatively low score of 4.37 when compared with the other areas of impact.

**Figure 71: To what extent NPQH and Head Start (if undertaken) have helped them to do the following at SPB and SPD**



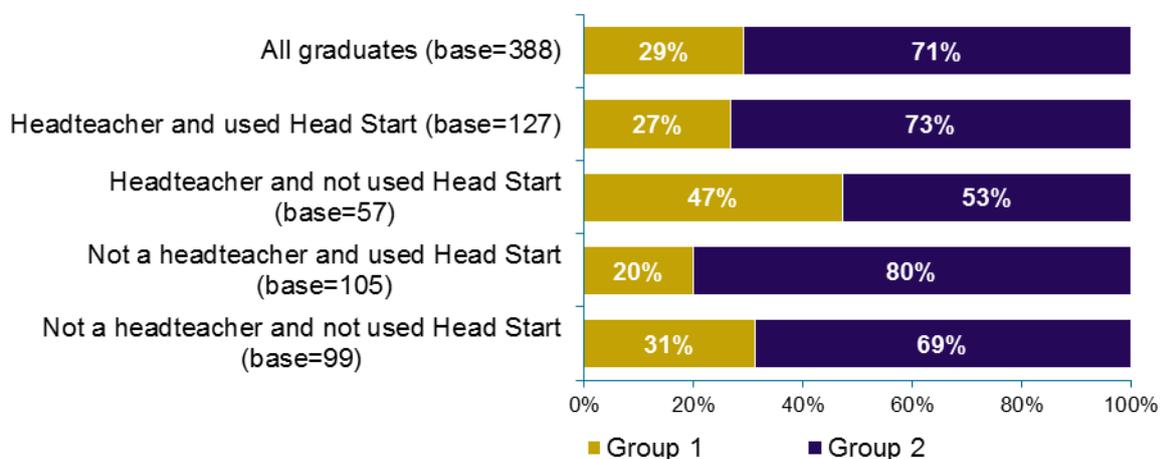
Average score where 1 = completely disagree and 7 = completely agree

Analysis was undertaken to explore the extent to which the graduates' characteristics had an impact on the cluster they were in.

There was no statistically significant difference in cluster membership by role alone, however when this was combined with the use of Head Start a difference was found.

Figure 72 shows the breakdown of graduates in these two clusters against the use of Head Start and whether or not the graduate was a headteacher. The proportion of graduates in each cluster who were a headteacher and used Head Start was fairly similar to the numbers in each cluster or group. However, when comparing those who were in a headship position and had not accessed support through the Head Start programme, a much higher proportion (47%) than would be expected (29%) were in Group 1. In other words, those who had not used Head Start and were now a headteacher were disproportionately in the group characterised by low scores with regards to the impact of NPQH. A similar pattern was found, albeit to a slightly lesser extent, amongst those who were not yet headteachers, with fewer than expected (20% compared with an expected 29%) non-headteachers who used Head Start in the group characterised by low impact scores (group 1). This compares with a slightly higher level than expected (31%) of those who were not yet in a headship position and had not used Head Start in the group characterised by low impact scores (group 1). This suggests that NPQH had a bigger impact on graduates who also accessed Head Start (irrespective of whether or not they were now in a headship position).

Figure 72: Group membership by role and use of Head Start



Differences were also found by ethnicity and the use of NPQH, with those who are White British less likely to be in Group 2, higher impact scores, (70%) than those from another ethnic background (87%). As with the impact on skill levels, those graduates who took part in all 6 elements of NPQH are more likely to appear in Group 2, higher impact scores, (83%) when compared with 5 elements (57%) or 4 or less (59%).

## How NPQH and Head Start had enabled them to impact their school

Graduates were asked during the SPB survey to describe three ways in which undertaking NPQH had enabled them to make a positive impact on their school, as shown in Figure 73. The highest reported impact, which was reported by just over two-fifths of respondents was that although they had not yet graduated from NPQH it had enabled them to make a positive impact on the professional development of the school workforce through coaching/mentoring and 1-2-1 staff development. One example which is indicative of positive impacts enabled by undertaking NPQH is as follows:

Developed the use of coaching with heads of departments in English and Mathematics. They have also been using coaching with their teams to develop teaching and learning. Results in both departments went up by over 10 per cent in 2010.

Just under one-third (31%) of trainees reported developing new leadership and management styles in the school, and nearly one-quarter (23%) reported that NPQH had an impact on their ability to manage the school workforce, particularly surrounding tackling underperformance and holding individuals to account. For example:

I have further developed my ability to have crucial conversations with senior managers and teachers in school which impact on attainment as a result of the coaching I undertook on my NPQH.

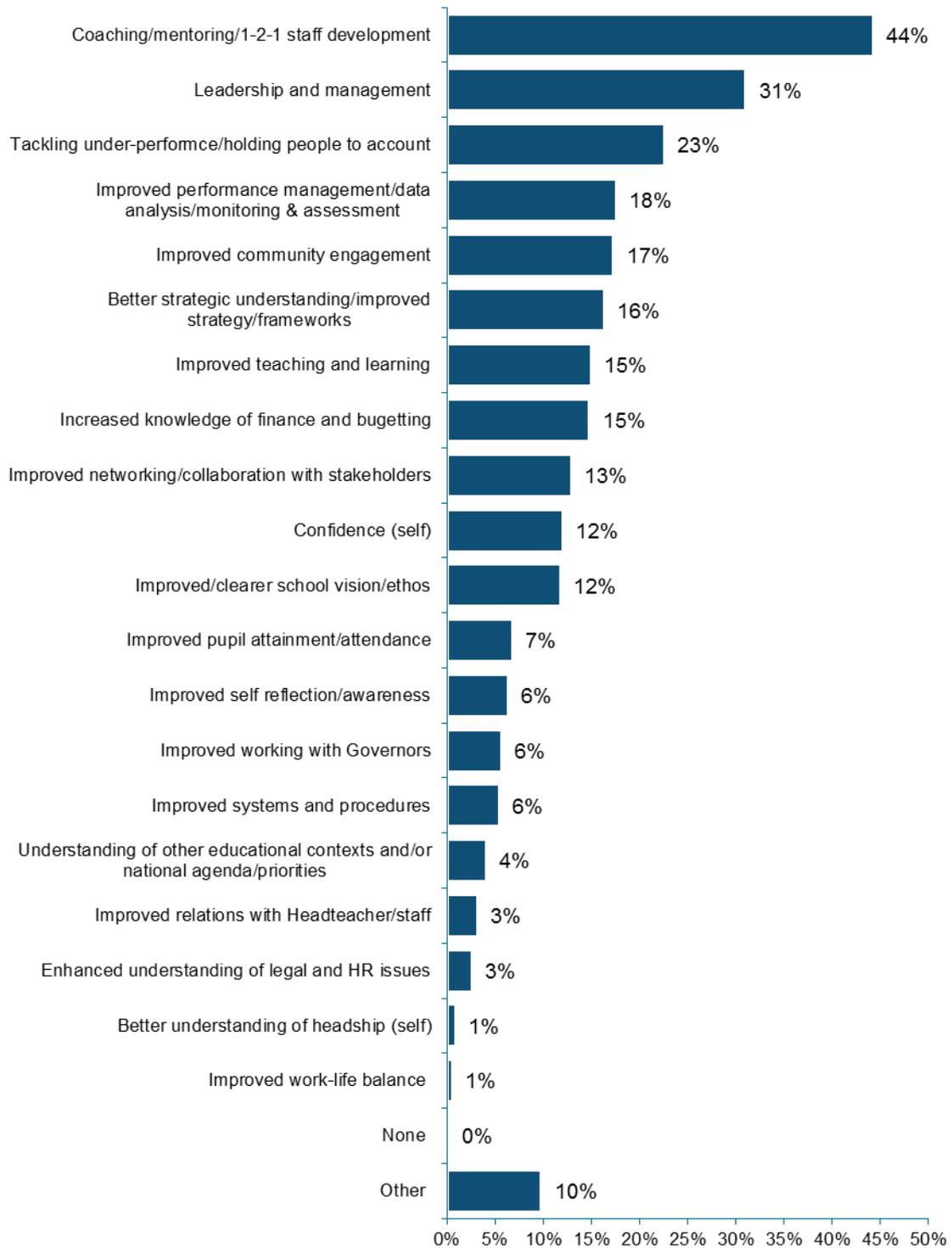
NPQH graduate, SPD survey respondent

A wide range of further impacts were identified, including improving performance management systems, data collection and analysis (18%), improved community engagement with parents, businesses, churches and wider community members (17%), increasing the trainees and the understanding of strategic management and vision, which in turn led to updated frameworks and visions that are communicated with the wider staff (16%):

Developing Vision within the school and drawing links between systems to develop a cohesive approach to Teaching & Learning and the school community. Staff now know how various policies and practices fit together to deliver the Vision in practice.

NPQH graduate, SPD survey respondent

**Figure 73: Self-reported impact of NPQH on a trainee’s school at SPB**



Base=1,522; multiple responses possible; unprompted

Graduates were also asked during the SPD survey to describe three ways in which undertaking NPQH and Head Start had enabled them to make a positive impact on their school. This question was asked in order to explore the longer-term impact of NPQH and Head Start on the school trainees were working in. A wide range of impacts were reported, as shown in Figure 74. The highest reported impact was on the leadership and management of the school. A variety of leadership and management impacts were noted, including restructuring staff, increased use of distributed leadership and different management styles:

The most useful [part of NPQH] was on management and staffing issues - so personal management strategies, coaching and mentoring. I improved my understanding of different styles of management, working on interpersonal relationships etc. I still mentally refer to some of the workshops we did in NPQH for how to work in certain situation and dealing with certain people.

NPQH graduate, SPD survey respondent

Re-structuring the staffing which resulted in appointing new staff which resulted in raising standards - NPQH helped me to think about school improvement and coaching which fed into these changes.

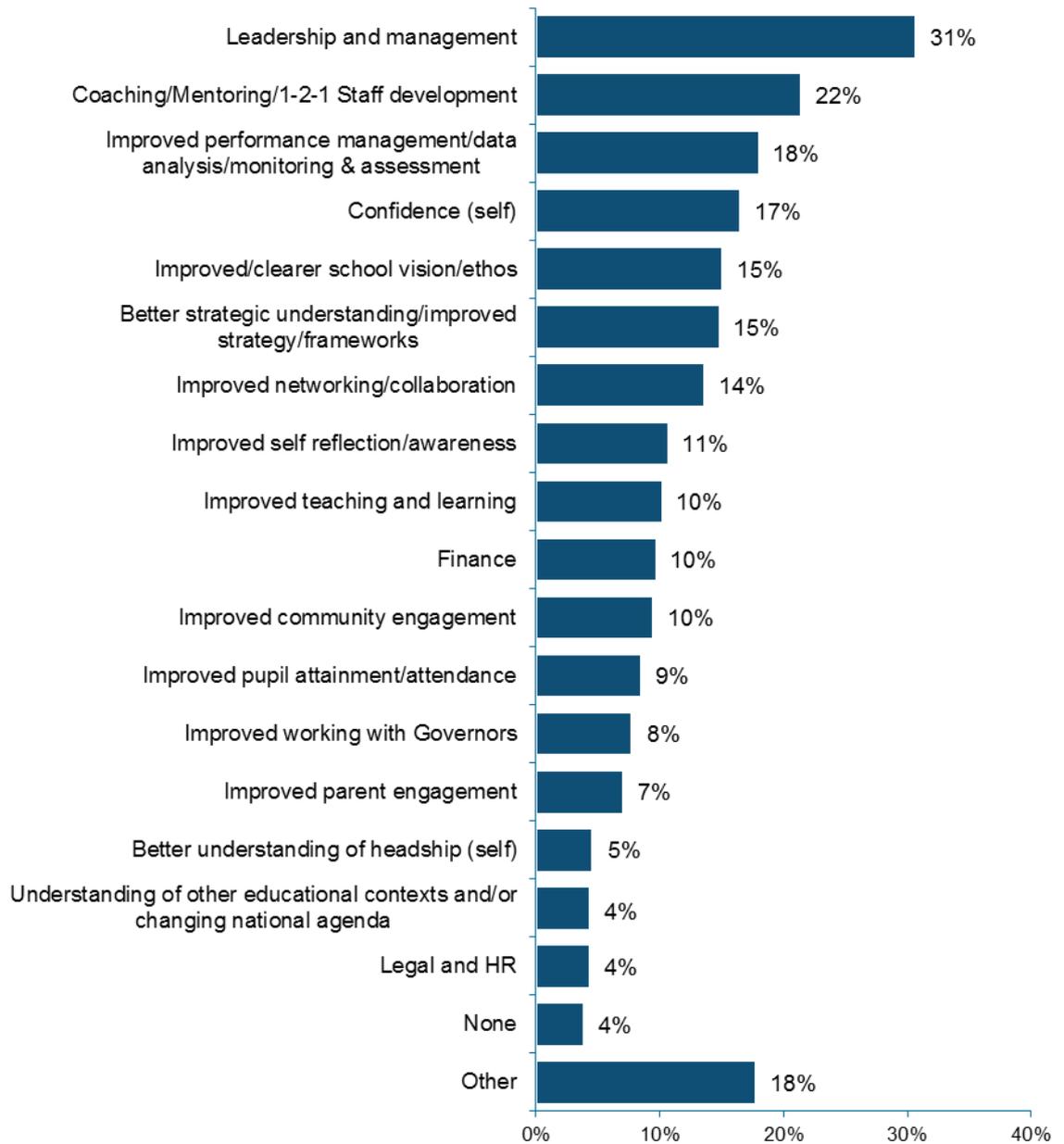
NPQH graduate, SPD survey respondent

The second most reported area was coaching/mentoring and staff development. Graduates highlighted how learning coaching/mentoring skills through NPQH and Head Start has enabled them to use these skills in their own schools to support colleagues to develop and recognise their own strengths, with examples of where this has led to wider improvements in the school:

Working with my coaching, so being coached myself and the courses I did as part of the NPQH. We now use it in my own school and it has made teachers more pro-active in finding solutions and therefore improving the teaching and learning.

NPQH graduate, SPD survey respondent

Figure 74: Self-reported impact of NPQH and Head Start on a trainee’s school at SPD



Base=410; multiple response possible; unprompted

Setting up data/performance management processes has also had an impact on graduates' schools, with increased monitoring and data analysis of the underperformance of staff and students:

The assessment and tracking procedures have had the greatest impact. We have tightened the systems and raised the children's attainment. We know that the children have made progress, the system is much better now.

NPQH graduate, SPD survey respondent

Looking at performance management in NPQH, it gave me time for reflection and brought a few things to light and embedded some things for me. It has raised awareness for me that I set targets that are relevant and it also helped in a scenario for dealing with an awkward member of staff

NPQH graduate, SPD survey respondent

Just under 1 in 6 graduates (17%) also explained how NPQH had enabled them to develop their confidence. Although this primarily was an impact on them rather than the school, some of the graduates highlighted that their increased confidence had impacted on the school through improving their ability to do their job, and in particular improving their decision making:

Developed my own confidence, has enabled me to go out into the wider community and raise the profile of the school." and "realise my confidence is good and I do know what I'm doing! It helped me carry out changes in the school quicker.

As shown in Figure 74, graduates believe that NPQH has enabled them to have a positive impact on their school, with only a small proportion (4%) reporting no impacts. Analysis was undertaken on a small sub-sample of graduates who had been in a headship position for more than one year before they were Ofsted inspected. Only 15 graduates met this criteria, but analysis shows that 8 of the graduates had increased their overall Ofsted score. Six graduates retained their score (5 out of 6 had a good score) and 1 graduate had a decrease in score. The scores given for the quality of leadership and management in their school were also analysed, with the same 8 graduates gaining an increase in this score. Five graduates maintained the same score and 2 experienced a decrease.

Further analysis was also undertaken on Key Stage 2 data (July 2011 and 2012). Analysis of the percentage of pupils achieving level 4 or above in both English and mathematics was examined to see if trainees who had been a headteacher in a school from at least September 2011 (or longer) had had an impact. A total of 40 graduates met this criteria, and for 26 – around two-thirds–, they had an increase in the proportion of students achieving level 4 in both English and Maths. One graduate maintained the proportion and 13 – around one-third– experienced a decrease.

Although this is only a small sample, it highlights the fact that graduates who are leading schools are making successful changes to their schools. The extent to which these changes are attributable to NPQH is unknown, however graduates believe that NPQH and Head Start have enabled them to develop skills which have been used to improve their schools.

Depth interviews provided insight into the impact of NPQH and Head Start on trainees' and graduates' current schools, which provides further insight to the data gathered from the surveys.

## **Improved practice of working with community and external organisations**

Approximately half of the trainees spoken to during the in depth interviews (unprompted) reported that changes they had made in their school through implementing or improving activities as a result of NPQH had led to improved engagement with the community and parents and increased collaborative working with other schools and external organisations. Activities included engaging parents and children as well as staff and governors on the school development plan, improving school-wide plans to develop future community links, and conducting activities to forge new or develop existing, links with community groups, parents and schools in their locality and other parts of the world. One NPQH graduate was able to describe how their heightened awareness of engaging with the community had impacted on children's learning:

It's enabled me to look outside the school, to use the community in a way that we've not before. I've established more links... where we have older members of the community, who come in and help the children... I think that they've [the children] been able to relate to the members of the community that have been into school in a way that has made their learning more meaningful, because, for example, we've done a topic on farming and agriculture; we had some people who came in, they actually brought in old farm implements, and the children had a look at them, and we had these people talking about how they would work with horses, instead of tractors. I think the pupils engage much more readily with someone who's telling them something like that, other than just hearing about it second or third hand.

SPD graduate

Others developments included mechanisms to improve parental engagement such as forums to establish their views, which in turn delivered practical positive changes' such as the school gates closing too early to improving resources to aid parents in helping their children with school work. Both of these examples are useful ways of

building the relationship between the school and parents and of contributing towards better outcomes for children.

Substantive headteachers agreed that NPQH had impacted positively on trainees in this area and reported that there had been increased parental and community interest in learning opportunities at school and improved parental interaction with schools. One substantive headteacher described how an increased presence with the parents had “*settled the parent body down,*” whilst another described how having an open door policy had enabled their trainee to talk to a parent and help them understand that their child’s behaviour needed addressing.

A minority also reported that as a result they now had an improved standing in the community and amongst external agencies. A couple of substantive headteachers reported that they now had more relationships with other schools, and one substantive headteacher was able to describe how this had resulted in cluster training days which provided staff with more training opportunities that are tailored to their needs:

X’s done a lot of cluster work as well, which has helped our school, partnership work with other schools, and taken quite a leading role in organising cluster training days... because it sort of made her see that within the small school we needed to offer opportunities for staff training that we can’t offer here, but we can when we offer them in partnership with others.... it’s meant that we’ve got lots of training opportunities now. So, for example, we had a teacher training day in January... There were 70-odd teachers that attended the training day, plus I think about another 70 teaching assistants, so it was a big gathering, and she worked together to organise and to deliver the training in that scenario. That was really impactful, because obviously it impacted on the teaching assistants here. They quite often came back with quite a negative image of training days, however this time they came back with a positive image of training days because the training day had been tailored to what their needs were.

Substantive headteacher

## Improved school leadership

Over half of the trainees and the majority of substantive headteachers (unprompted) noted that trainees’ involvement in NPQH had resulted in improved school leadership.

Despite only being highlighted during the interviews by one trainee (unprompted), approximately half of the substantive headteachers highlighted that their trainees wanted to “*find out more and do more and take on more responsibilities*” and that they had been able to delegate tasks to them which they previously would not have

done, which was beneficial to both them and the school. Some outlined an improved confidence in the ability of their trainee to run the school when they were not present. As one substantive headteacher outlined:

I think it's enabled her to deal with those day-to-day issues that come up when a head and deputy are away and she's been able to deal with them calmly and get on with it and not immediately phone me and say, 'What shall I do?'

Substantive headteacher

In addition to taking on jobs that the substantive headteacher would ordinarily do, one substantive headteacher explained how their trainee was also delegating more tasks to other members of the senior leadership team who were rising to the challenge. One substantive headteacher also described how their trainee's involvement in NPQH had impacted on their own leadership practice by making them more aware of distributed leadership models, which they were now implementing in the school.

Approximately half of trainees also reported (unprompted) that they had improved their leadership style and management of others. These trainees commonly reported using a coaching style of leadership with their staff. In some cases this model was being embedded across the wider school. One local authority trainee described how, through the use of this technique they had directly helped one of their team leaders to recognise a problem with their own management approach which they were then able to change. As a result their team, who were threatening to leave their jobs, decided to stay at the organisation with the same team leader. Substantive headteachers also reported how their trainees had adopted a coaching style of leadership and how this had helped an underperforming member of staff:

Well, certainly the coaching side has benefited the school greatly... We had a struggling member of staff, a member of staff that was underperforming... and [name of trainee] was able to tackle the situation. Through her work, in coaching and in mentoring this member of staff she made her more confident, and actually a better quality of education came from that teacher as a result. That didn't involve me.

Substantive headteacher

In addition to adopting a coaching technique, some trainees also reported that they now understood the value of collaborative working, and as a result they reported that they were working "*more directly with staff...as a team*" (SPB) which was having a positive impact on the school. Substantive headteachers supported this and one commented:

[As a result of NPQH] I think there's a greater emphasis now on building up the internal dynamic of the group. I think she appreciates that as a leader there are certain qualities of leadership, and that how you orchestrate that dynamic of the staff that you're working with. . . I think what is most rewarding is to see how the team itself has got a very strong internal structure to it. It's quite a distinct feature of her area of operation.

Substantive headteacher

Several trainees also provided examples of how their improved performance management technique had positively impacted on their school. Substantive headteachers corroborated these impacts on their schools, and one interviewee provided an example of how their trainee had helped to improve the performance of an under-performing member of staff; she outlined:

There is a member of the teaching staff that... has been only satisfactory so she has had to actually draw together a development plan for that member of staff and to help them improve and had the interview with the staff to draw their attention to the fact that lessons were not up to standard and has dealt with that very successful I have to say... I think their teaching is now improving, and what has happened is the member of staff has been re-enthused because I think it was an issue where a member of staff had been in position quite some time and perhaps had lost the...had taken a slightly more traditional approach which the school had moved on from and so X has had to address that.

Substantive headteacher

## Assessment and monitoring

NPQH is having a positive impact on assessment and monitoring procedures in some trainees' and graduates current schools. A minority of trainees reported that their placement provided them with new data gathering techniques which they were then able to use in their current schools to improve monitoring and assessment processes. Another graduate reported that they were able to identify a pupil tracking system through online discussions with other NPQH trainees. The NPQH graduate explained how this had positively impacted on pupil attainment:

The NPQH programme put me in touch with other members who had trialled different systems. Having made contact with them, it reduced the workload for myself because I would be talking to somebody, maybe online, about something, and someone might have done quite a bit of research in that area. Again, I think it probably made things easier for me, and also, the result for the school was that I was able to put things in place very quickly... Which has helped the teachers identify intervention

groups, in particular. Certainly, last year, our Year 6 SATs, the standard had risen quite considerably, which I think was probably down to the intervention groups that we had in place.

SPD graduate

Over half of the substantive headteachers also noted that their trainees' involvement in NPQH had had a positive impact in this area. They reported that trainees had "*sharpened*" their practice and had been able to improve processes to better track pupil progress. They also commented that trainees were taking more of a lead role by ensuring that other staff understood the importance of the task and providing training and support where necessary. One interviewee noted that making this data easily accessible by all teachers made it "*less threatening for staff*". One substantive headteacher noted a particular impact of improvements in this area:

There has been some definite earlier intervention in children who are slipping but, in her phase, she's keeping an eye on the tracking and looking at it carefully and therefore intervening before it comes to me and before I do the one to one conversation.

Substantive headteacher

## **Increased/improved school vision/strategic understanding**

Several trainees pointed to how their increased understanding of the importance of a school vision and a wider strategic overview had enabled them to make positive changes in their current schools. A couple of trainees explained how they had involved more stakeholders in creating a shared school vision, and one trainee described how this had resulted in "*positive attitudes, and just a feeling of being able to influence the decisions*" from stakeholders, whilst another trainee explained how having another member of staff communicating the school vision to staff had increased its prominence in the school.

Just under half of the substantive headteachers also reported that their trainees had had an impact in this area. Interviewees described how their trainees were now able to help them with strategic planning, which helped take the pressure off them, how involving more staff helped them to feel included, and how their trainees wider strategic understanding had enabled them to carry the vision forward with staff, and in another case helped to ensure that the senior leadership teams knowledge was now "*embedded in current thinking*".

## **Improved teaching and learning**

A couple of trainees reported that as a result of NPQH they have implemented new activities which are having a positive impact on teaching and learning. These

activities included improved baseline assessments of pupil performance and behaviour to inform the level and method by which they are taught, thereby leading to positive impacts on pupil attainment. An LDS headteacher outlined how a trainee had observed “*learning walks*” on their placement and as a result had implemented them in their current school to improve teaching. These involved visiting classes across the school to see what children were doing and where learning was taking place instead of using typical lesson observation techniques which focus on the teacher’s performance. A coach provided an account of how a trainee’s improved management technique had resulted in their staff members being able to articulate where areas of their teaching was good and had subsequently allowed them to recognise where improvements were necessary, which had previously been difficult for them to demonstrate. As a result the trainee’s staff were also able to tackle behavioural issues more confidently.

Just under half of the substantive headteachers reported that their trainees had improved teaching and learning in the school as a result of their learning on NPQH (unprompted). Substantive headteachers described different ways in which their trainees had achieved this, including re-structuring the school day, introducing more school trips, involving teachers in devising strategies to improve teaching and learning, and two interviewees explained how their trainees had implemented lesson studies as a result of their trainees’ NPQH experience. These interviewees explained how the lesson studies involved small teams of teachers who would plan lessons together and then take it in turns to deliver lessons, whilst the other teachers would observe the quality of the learning. One interviewee explained how this worked and how it had positively impacted on teaching and learning, and in turn had improved pupil attainment:

It is not observing the teacher, it’s improving the quality of the learning. Then the observers annotate what the children have done during the lesson, what the learning is that has taken place during the lesson, and then talk to the children afterwards about what they feel they have learned during the lesson... The children are not passing a judgment on the teacher, but they’re passing a judgment on what they feel they have learned. X was very instrumental in that. We did lesson study in maths last year, because our data showed that Key Stage One maths wasn’t as strong as it could be and we were concerned about it, and also we just wanted to improve the quality of teaching of maths across the school. We got 100 per cent Level 4 in maths at the end of last year, 50 per cent at Level 5, and I do strongly feel that the lesson study experience, which X was really instrumental in, helped attain that level. Also our Key Stage One stats improved dramatically, and that was one of our points for improvement from Ofsted, so very impactful.

Substantive headteacher

The other interviewee also explained that using this method was also useful in providing a “*pat on the back*” for those teachers who are performing well, and “*it almost helps the other teachers understand maybe why we’re having to-, how we hold people to account and the reasons behind it*”.

## Improved staff aspirations

A minority of trainees, substantive headteachers and LDS headteachers described how trainees’ involvement in NPQH had increased other staff members’ career aspirations. One trainee reported that others were interested in what NPQH entailed, whilst a substantive headteacher reported that their trainee’s involvement in the programme had a positive influence on a middle leader. Although this was only reported by a minority of interviewees, it is worth noting that nearly half of LDS headteachers noted similar impacts in their schools.

## Governors

Governors were also asked about the impact that they thought NPQH had had on the headteachers they had appointed, and ultimately on their school. For most, due to the nature of their role they were unable to comment on the impact NPQH had had on the trainee, especially where the trainee was not at the school when they took part in the programme. However, all governors highlighted that since starting their role the headteachers had made a “*massive*” impact on their schools.

Three of the five governors we spoke to had recruited headteachers who were already working at their school and undertook NPQH whilst at the school. Two of the governors reported that whilst on NPQH the (now) headteachers reported to them that the programme challenged them and made them more reflective

All I can think of is the fact that he talked about self-evaluation of himself, and I think that is something that you don’t usually have to do in a job. Usually, you’re too busy getting your head down and getting through the week. So from a point of having to evaluate yourself, that I think he found uncomfortable, and that, in a way, I found the most valuable thing, because I think you have to look at yourself and decide whether or not you are the right person for the job.

Governor

Although those governors were able to highlight anecdotally that NPQH had had an impact on the trainee and then on the school, one governor was able to attribute the impact on one aspect of school change to NPQH:

One of the things he felt he got from it a great deal was working with parents. That was an area that he obviously had benefited from... he's developed some work with parents, either parent workshops, particularly with, we're quite a culturally diverse school, quite a large Somali group in school. That's always been a challenge, I think, for the school... I think that, in a rather more nebulous way, I think parents are more willing to engage with the school... certainly as far as the parent thing's concerned, I'm sure that's a direct result of the NPQH.

Governor

Governors reported a wide range of impacts that the graduates have had on the school (but cannot attribute them to NPQH), which corroborate the impacts trainees have highlighted that NPQH and Head Start have had on their school through the SPD survey and in depth interviews. Two of the governors have reported that the school has improved their Ofsted rating since the headteacher starting. As highlighted by one governor:

She's come with real, sort of, drive, and energy, and determination, to get the school where it should be. It's quite measurable as well, because it's moved the school from a satisfactory Ofsted rating to a good rating...It has been measured externally that she's really lifted the school up a level. Just to, sort of, compare and contrast, the previous headmaster, who'd been in place for quite a while, hadn't done any, sort of, formal headship training, and didn't seem to have the same abilities to lead.

Governor

An improvement in attainment levels has also been identified by governors we spoke to, or they were able to explain why they expected to see a rise in attainment. One governor said:

She's introduced a creative curriculum, which the school was lacking before... the SATs results last year were phenomenal. I think that is down to the introduction of that curriculum, making learning fun.

Governor

Further impacts identified include updating and revising school policies, improving team work, opening a pre-school and tackling the underperformance of teaching staff:

She's also got straight onto tackling an issue with an underperforming teacher, and we're just going through the capability process now, but, you know, it really is a case of, sort of, shake it up, sort it out, and get it in the shape it's supposed to be.

Governor

Governors were also asked about the impact that headteachers engagement with the Head Start programme had had on the school. Those who had headteachers who had been through the Head Start programme were primarily aware of the professional partner support from the programme. Governors saw the value of the programme as highlighted previously but were unable to attribute specific impacts with participation on NPQH and Head Start. This mirrors the view of graduates, who report that their professional partner was important for support and discussing ideas and experienced but found it difficult to attribute specific impacts to the programme:

Those conversations which she's having as part of the Head Start, because that's, really, for her to go and get what she wants out of it. She's implemented so many new things that I'm sure some of it will have come out of that, and it's probably her exploring ideas that she already had with the people on the Head Start programme, who will have the best idea as to how best to do it. So, I'm sure that some of the many things that have been implemented would have been explored on that programme.

Governor

## Leadership development school

The impact that trainees had on their LDS school whilst on the NPQH placement was also explored with trainees and LDS schools. Overall, trainees were asked at SPB to what extent the work they did as part of the placement impacted positively on their placement school on a scale of 1-7 (where 1 equals "not at all" and 7 equals "very much"). Trainees thought that they had had a high impact on these schools, with a mean score of 6.14, and 96.4 per cent of trainees scoring this at 5 or more (out of 7).

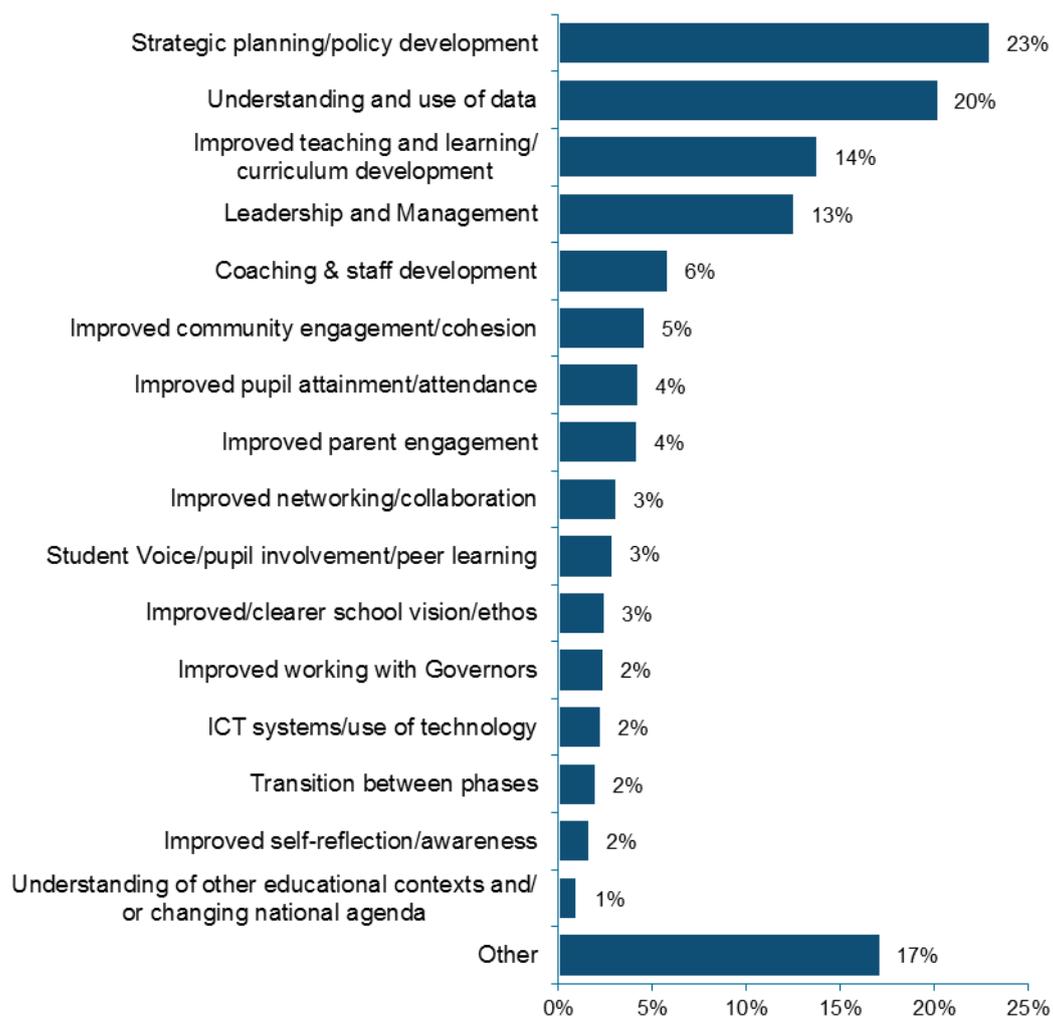
Only a small proportion thought that their project had not had an impact on the LDS, the main reason given through the survey was due to the project being designed to meet the needs of the trainee and not to impact on the school:

The project gave me the opportunity to develop my knowledge and understanding of how to create an ethos of accountability, this is a strength of the school, and as such there wasn't really much impact on the school.

NPQH trainee, SPB survey response

Trainees in the SPB survey were asked to report what impact they had had during their placement on the school. A wide range of different impacts were reported by trainees due to the varied nature of the placements and projects they undertook whilst on NPQH. As seen in Figure 75, the most commonly reported impact was improving the strategic planning of the school or developing policy documents for use in the school (23%). As highlighted by one trainee: *“The newly appointed Parental Involvement Worker I worked with was able to share, discuss and refine her ideas. From this I was able to contribute to the school development plan, putting in place a schedule of aims, objectives and targets.”* Understanding and using data was reported by one-fifth of trainees (20%), followed by improving teaching and learning/curriculum (14%) and improved leadership and management (13%): *“I developed the leadership skills of the senior management team. I received positive feedback from the headteacher and she commented that I developed her own leadership skills.”*

Figure 75: The impact that trainees reported they had on their LDS



Base=1,525; multiple responses possible; unprompted

Depth interviews with SPB trainees identified a range of impacts that the trainee had on their LDS school, both during and after their placement, however there were no strong trends in the areas of impact reported. This is partly because trainees were involved in a broad variety of tasks whilst on placement which were dependent on the specific needs and priorities of the LDS. Interviewees were, however, able to add some depth of understanding to the areas frequently reported in the survey. One trainee explained how their placement school was joined to their current school, and they described how they were able to help to improve the visions of both schools to make them align better and therefore make the transition between one school to the other a smoother experience for students. In relation to monitoring and using data, a trainee explained how they reviewed their LDS schools monitoring processes and use of data to track pupil progress, and as a result of their work the school had reviewed its marking and feedback policy. Another trainee explained how they had developed subject leadership in their placement school which had improved the teaching and learning in this area and *“had moved the school forwards”*.

Through the depth interviews the LDS headteachers also highlighted how trainees had impacted on their schools. The majority of trainees and LDS headteachers highlight that when the trainee had undertaken a specific project the level of impact was higher than if they had not, as it was primarily related to the project area.

Impacts on LDSs included:

- supporting curriculum development, both in individual subjects and through cross-curricula activity;
- improving systems for safeguarding pupils by working with the school trainers on child protection issues;
- developing external partnerships through developing ‘twinning’ projects with local and international schools;
- sharing monitoring systems to help improve pupil attainment;
- identifying methods to improve pupil attendance;
- resource sharing to improve teaching and learning; and
- improving staff understanding and awareness of the school improvement plan.

Whilst these LDS headteachers also reported a range of different impacts as outlined above, trends have emerged. LDS headteachers most commonly reported – just under half of interviewees – impacts to the areas of teaching and learning, pupil attainment and increased staff aspirations, as highlighted below.

## Teaching and learning

LDS headteachers described a range of different impacts on teaching and learning in their schools as a result of trainee placements. These included the introduction of more structured learning outside, and one interviewee reported that the “*children just love it*”. Other impacts included a better learning support system as a result of a trainee identifying that colleagues could work together more effectively, and improved teaching as a result of a learning study. One interviewee explained how a trainee had introduced a concept whereby children track elements of their own development and how this impacted on their learning:

The children track their own progress in a number of areas of development... like spiritual growth, organisational skills... taking care of their work and thinking carefully, organising their work well, handing their homework in - those sorts of things. And it is just a skill that the children track themselves on so they decide where they think they are up to regularly during the year and then the teachers chat through it with them... I think it has made the children more aware of where they are and what they need to do next and maybe help them to be a bit more honest with themselves about some of the things that get in the way of their learning... Yes I would say it has [impacted on their attainment].

LDS headteacher

## Pupil attainment

Increased pupil attainment was achieved in a number of different ways. LDS headteachers described how specific projects had positive impacts on their schools. For example, one LDS headteacher explained how a trainee had introduced a breakfast reading club at the school, which also increased parents engagement in reading with their children, which then impacted on the children’s reading ability, whilst another LDS headteacher described how a trainee had implemented an initiative to increase the number of gifted and talented students in the school for GCSE.

The interviewee explained how the trainee’s recommendations positively impacted on the school’s results:

He interviewed staff, students, he went through all the policies that we had here, he brought his own policies in from his own school, he used his own initiative on what he did in his own school and brought that through and put it together... He wanted to know more about data and use data to have an end product. So, he used data as well as being in charge of something and seeing a whole thing from beginning to end.... So, those that were monitored

that were on As and A\*s, it was to make sure they got their A and A\*s. Anybody that was falling down to a B, we put a member of staff in charge of that group of students and her job is called now raising attainment and her job is to get the As and A\*s from that... Gifted and talented raised last year. So, using what he said to us, it actually did help us

LDS headteacher

## Increased staff aspirations

As mentioned previously, LDS headteachers reported that having trainees in their school increased the aspirations of their own teachers, and whilst one interviewee explained that this simply gave teachers the motivation to introduce new things, other interviewees explained how the trainee helped their teachers to think about their own development, made them less frightened about pushing forwards and helped them to see that they could “*have those aspirations too*”. One interviewee highlighted this:

I think it's been great for my staff to see this because I've got a fantastic team of teachers but I've got a whole group who don't really see themselves moving to leadership, and that really worries me....Actually, to see people coming in, doing these projects, moving forward and going on to headship is opening their eyes to more strategic leadership.

LDS headteacher

## Summary

The key findings from this chapter are:

- Overall, graduates and stakeholders highlighted that NPQH and Head Start has had a positive impact on the school which they worked at whilst undertaking NPQH and the subsequent school they have moved into as a headteacher.
- Although at SPD graduates scored a number of impact statements slightly lower than at SPB, overall they agreed that NPQH and Head Start had enabled them to have a positive impact on their school (5.95 out of 7) and on a range of aspects, including improving teaching and learning standards, improving outcomes for children and improving attainment. Managing pupil behaviour was the only area to receive a score lower than 4 out of 7.
- Those trainees who had undertaken Head Start were more likely to score the school impact statements higher than those who had not.

- The most frequently reported impacts (unprompted) on trainees' schools at SPB and SPD reported by trainees include:
  - Staff development through coaching/mentoring (44% at SPB, 22% at SPD)
  - Leadership and management (31% at SPB, 22% at SPD)
  - Improved performance management/monitoring and assessment (18% at SPB, 18% at SPD)
  - Improved community engagement (17% at SPB, 10% at SPD)
- These areas were also highlighted by graduates and key stakeholders as the key areas of impact, with improved community engagement and working with external organisations being most frequently reported followed by improved school leadership and assessment and monitoring of the school.
- During the in depth interviews governors were unable to attribute the impact of the new headteacher on the school to NPQH or Head Start, however they all stated that the headteacher had made a big impact on the school since they started in their headship role.
- Trainees also had a positive impact on the leadership development school at which they undertook their placement whilst on NPQH. Most trainees stated that their project had impacted on the school, with an overall score of 6.14 (out of 7).
- During the depth interviews the majority of leadership development school headteachers also reported that the trainee had a positive impact on their school. LDS headteachers most commonly stated that trainees' projects had an impact on improving teaching and learning, pupil attainment and increasing staff aspirations.

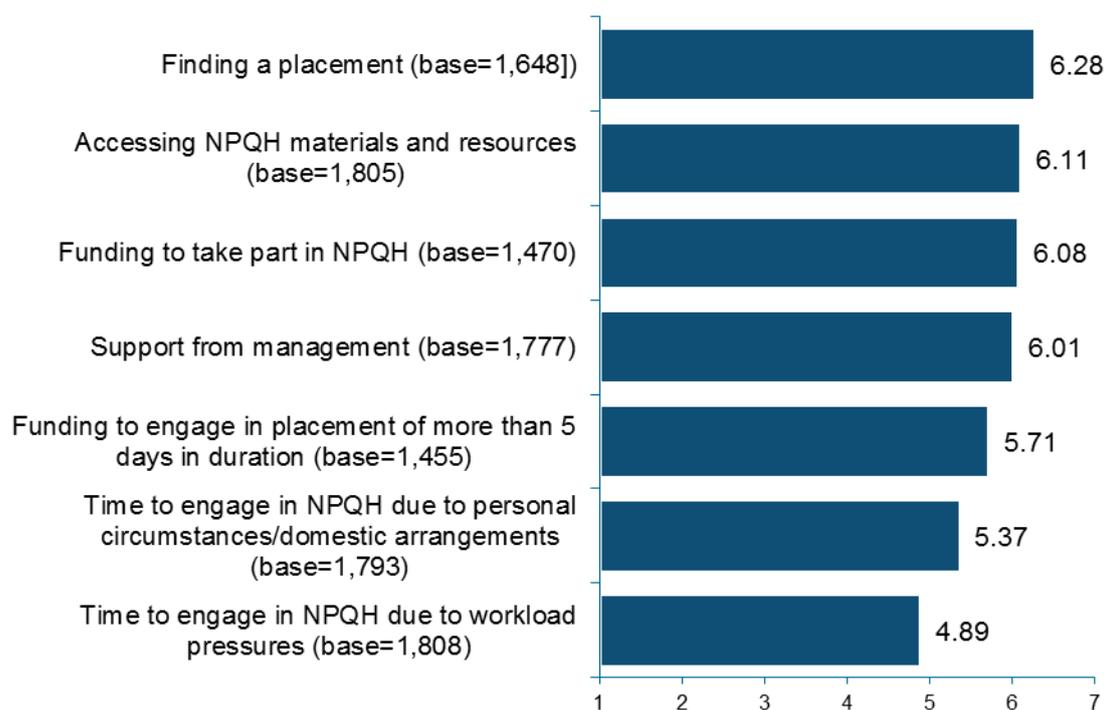
## 8 Programme feedback

This section highlights the key areas of NPQH and Head Start that trainees thought worked well, areas for improvement and any potential gaps in provision.

### NPQH

Trainees were asked to rate, on a scale of one to seven, their satisfaction with various aspects of NPQH (where 1 equals “not satisfied at all” and 7 equals “completely satisfied”). Overall, trainees were very satisfied with most of the aspects of NPQH (Figure 76), although *trainees scored time to engage in NPQH due to workload pressures* and *time to engage in NPQH due to personal circumstances/domestic arrangements* lower at 4.89 and 5.37 respectively.

Figure 76: How trainees rated their satisfaction with various aspects of NPQH at SPB



Average scores where 1 = not satisfied at all and 7 = completely satisfied

### What works well?

Trainees and wider stakeholders thought that NPQH was a valuable qualification, and many have highlighted (in the depth interviews) that they see this as an

improvement on previous versions of the qualification. Interviewees reported that the programme provided trainees with a good introduction to headship and the day-to-day role that needs to be carried out, as highlighted by one substantive headteacher: *“you’re actually preparing people for the shock of sitting in the chair!”*

Around half of substantive headteachers’ thought that the programme provided trainees with the skills necessary for headship and *the “confidence to put your head above the parapet and say yes I am going to try and lead,”* whilst the other half felt that *“it’s one of those jobs [headship] that until you’re in it, you just don’t really know what you’re going to be met with”*. However, they still recognised the value of the programme and that it *“makes people aware of what the expectation is of a head”*

Whilst substantive headteachers’ views were split, the majority of LDS headteachers interviewed felt that NPQH did not equip trainees with all the necessary skills for headship, and a couple of interviewees thought that there was a lack of focus on financial management in the programme. However, interviewees were very quick to caveat this by saying that nothing can fully prepare you for the role. One interviewee explained:

I think it helps but it can’t possibly do that because the only thing that can do that is actually getting a headship but it can give you the confidence and that is the most important thing, that’s what it gave me

LDS headteacher

However, overall NPQH was seen to provide trainees with a level of credibility amongst peers and governors, which was primarily highlighted by substantive headteachers and site visit representatives:

I think the governors recognised, through the fact that I’d just graduated, that I had the skills necessary to take on the job. I think they understood that to even be accepted on NPQH, there was quite a rigorous structure in place to make sure that the right people, or people with the right experience, who are ready for that opportunity, were accepted onto the course.

SPD graduate

A minority of further interviewees also highlighted that one of the strengths of NPQH was its ability to raise the standard of leadership in schools.

I grew up in the educational service where if you were a good teacher, you got promoted, and the assumption was because you were a good teacher you could be a good leader. I think what NPQH does, and this is complimented by the other leadership programmes of the college, it does raise the importance of the skills and knowledge of leadership itself.

There's a whole range of skills and competencies associated with that, and I believe the NPQH and the other programmes address those and I'm confident that our service is better led, the standards are higher, and people are clearer about their roles and responsibilities.

NPQH coach

The area of NPQH that was most often cited during all of the in depth interviews as a positive of NPQH (excluding the individual elements) was the individualised learning journey that trainees could take through the programme. This enables trainees to be able to access not only the volume of training they want but also to pick and choose the elements which suit their style of learning.

All the elements I've mentioned, like the placement and the online network and so on and so forth, all really worked for me... but what I liked about it was that it wasn't, 'Everybody has to do it this way.' You get your own personal pathway through it, and you choose the bits that are going to work the best for you, with the support of the coach and your headteacher. So it's so personalised that my experience was really powerful and I know that the head at another school about a mile from here, who was on NPQH the same time as me, did it absolutely differently but had an equally powerful experience.

SPB trainee

Although peer networking was scored overall as less useful in meeting trainees' development needs, through the in depth interviews trainees identified working with other trainees as a positive aspect of the programme, especially during sessions which were face-to-face.

During the depth interviews trainees were asked which elements of NPQH they thought had the biggest impact on their development. Both coaching and the LDS placement scored equal first amongst trainees, and this reiterates the findings at SPB whereby they were both rated highly in enabling trainees to meet their development needs. This was a common finding amongst LDS headteachers, coaches and representatives from the site visits. Although other areas were rated lower, they were still seen as useful by many trainees and, as highlighted above, the individualised journey trainees can make through the programme is seen as positive.

## **Gap/improvements to the programme**

At SPB nearly one-in-five (18%) trainees stated that there were gaps in NPQH provision (at SPB), and a further 13.4 per cent stated that they did not know and 68% of trainees stated that there were no gaps in the NPQH provision. Of those who reported that there were gaps, a high proportion (68%) reported aspects relating to

the delivery of the programme, whilst the remaining one-third (32%) reported gaps in subject areas which reiterate earlier findings including budget management (9% of all trainees who thought there was a gap), employment law/performance management (7%), legal issues such as health and safety/child-protection (6%), tailored leadership training for different school contexts (4%) and day to day practicalities of being a headteacher (3%). These areas were also highlighted through the in depth interviews with trainees and wider stakeholders.

Of those trainees who reported gaps during the SPB survey in relation to the delivery of the programme, the areas reported varied greatly between trainees. During the depth interviews a wide range of areas for development were also identified and the most common areas for development have been highlighted below. However, only a minority of trainees during surveys or in depth interviews and wider stakeholders identified these are areas for development.

As highlighted above, time constraints were mentioned during the depth interviews as something which was difficult when undertaking the programme. Trainees would have liked more time away from their current role to be able to take part in more elements of NPQH and longer placements, and some found this difficult to negotiate time out at their current school:

Need more time and resources built in to allow trainee headteachers to be involved in training and projects beyond existing job. This was a real source of tension at my school and was difficult to organise the minimum placement required.

NPQH trainee, SPB survey respondent

The challenge this posed for schools was also highlighted by many substantive headteachers and representatives from the site visits who struggled with the time and cost implications of having staff out of the school. With regards to time, the amount of paperwork trainees were required to fill in was also seen as too great given the difficulties trainees were having to fit in their current job and NPQH.

A minority of trainees also highlighted (as with the 360 diagnostic) that some of the questions/areas they needed to fill in were not clear, with no examples given to explain what is needed.

I think with the paperwork, everybody struggles with the paperwork situation that I've spoken to. Not because they actually don't know what they're supposed to be doing, but there isn't an example or a template giving you an idea of how to start that and I think there should be some guidance on that as part of the assessment and development day. ...every course that I've been on, everybody's been asking, 'Well, what does this actually mean? How do you do it?' If I can be honest with you, most people turn to a colleague who's been through the process and say, 'Can I have a look at your paperwork?'

which tends to lead me to believe you've got a range of very, very bright people and a lot of them, actually, are unsure about what has been specifically asked of them within those areas.

SPB trainee

Linked to the paperwork were views surrounding the graduation board and the lack of understanding trainees had around the process and the aims of the day, alongside trainees not believing this was the best way to assess whether or not they were ready for headship.

At graduation you're forced to answer questions in a particular way which sometimes hinders the responses of some questions. If you presented yourself and what you have done and then answered and responded to questions it would be far better. Then you feel like you have had best possible opportunities to show your development.

SPB trainee

Of those who thought there were gaps in NPQH, the allocation of a mentor or tutor was seen as a gap. A number of trainees in the survey highlighted the need for mentoring and not just coaching to guide them through the qualification alongside answering questions trainees had about the programme, as stated by one trainee: *"I felt that after the introductory day we were left very much to make our own way with little or no guidance. I think a 'mentor' who has recent experience of completing NPQH would have been a great help."* Trainees also stated that they would have liked more face-to-face events and sessions where trainees could learn and network with other trainees on the course. Trainees recognised that these opportunities were available online, however they thought they were more effective face-to-face. A further improvement that was stated by a number of trainees was improving the website. Trainees thought that it held valuable resources, however they found it difficult to navigate, as highlighted by a further minority in the survey as a way to improve the RID.

Improvements to specific elements of the programme were also highlighted. Placements were seen as one of the most beneficial aspects of NPQH, and as such trainees reported that longer or multiple placements would be beneficial, or the chance to shadow Headteachers in other schools. A minority of LDS headteachers also stated this, alongside other areas for development including gaining information on trainees skills needs before they start the placement and ensuring that there is clear guidance and briefings for LDS headteachers when they sign up to be an LDS, thereby ensuring they are committed to the role and are accountable for the placement they are delivering. Representatives from the site visits during the depth interviews all highlighted that whilst overall LDS placements were positive and had

an impact on the trainees, there were minorities of placement schools which were not supporting the trainee or giving them a high quality placement.

The support received from substantive heads, for a minority of interviewees, was also seen as an area for improvement. Although overall in the SPB survey this was rated fairly highly (as highlighted above), there are examples from trainees and LDS headteachers and all site visit representatives where trainees have not received support from their managers, especially in relation to taking time out of their role to undertake NPQH.

I needed more support to deal with my head. I would have benefitted from knowing how much money had been allocated to pay for cover as my head told me I was costing the school too much and couldn't go. This affected my learning and my confidence.

NPQH trainee, SPB survey respondent

The only barriers that I have come across are when heads haven't supported, and it is only a very small number of cases, because if heads don't support then the person is going nowhere.

Site visit

A minority of trainees also reported that they had no line manager whilst on the programme.

Interestingly, although trainees overall thought that the individualised learning journey of NPQH was a positive, a minority of trainees and stakeholders stated that NPQH should have more compulsory elements. Given the low scores given by trainees to some skill areas, and as highlighted above nearly one-third of people who thought there was a gap in provision highlighting similar skill areas.

I feel there needs to be some compulsory units; particularly in relation to child protection and your responsibility as a headteacher, finance and how best to manage the finances of a variety of institutions, not just your own settings, and basic legal responsibilities of a headteacher (HR etc).

NPQH trainee, SPB survey respondent

I honestly believe that the NPQH should have a module that is finance, that is essential and everybody has to take and is quite a lengthy one, because that's what drives everything. If you haven't got any money, you can't have the staff. If you haven't got the staff, you won't get the results. ...So I think the idea of a little bit of theory behind it and some models, you know, this is the type of thing-, spreadsheet that you would put it into, but then actually, like everything, I think if they refer that to actual practice so they invite people who are doing this on a day-to-day basis, then that gives the candidates, if you

like, more information on how to react. So, not role-play, but actual hands-on, 'This is your school. This is what you've got. What are you going to do next?

Substantive headteacher

A further area for improvement identified by a minority of trainees, substantive headteachers, site visit representatives and LDS headteachers surrounds the difficulties faced by those in a non-education setting, small schools or non-maintained schools. Interviewees stated that individuals from these settings found it difficult to be accepted onto the programme due to limited senior leadership experience in a school. It was also stated that the elements of the programme were tailored to those in a mainstream school setting

It disadvantages people in small schools...They're on the senior leadership team but because you only have four staff and a head, the head is very often conscious that teaching is important so they try and shield their staff. There's only so much you can give a teacher on your senior management team without giving them time out of the classroom, which you can't afford to do. I feel really sorry for staff now in small schools because their routes to promotion are becoming more and more limited...it's also reflected in headships of small schools which are not being filled. I suspect they're not being filled...my job was advertised twice and we finally got somebody. I know at least three small schools who have not been able to get headship for September...if they can do something to develop that, whether that's a different NPQH programme or something.

Substantive headteacher

The most difficult part of doing it from a non-school setting is that most of the work, and I can absolutely see why it is like this, is geared towards people being in schools. A lot of the short courses ask you to go away and do some work in your school.

SPB trainee

## **Non-mandatory nature of NPQH**

The wider views of NPQH no longer being a mandatory qualification were explored with graduates at SPD and with governors. Nearly all of the NPQH graduates who took part in the depth interviews strongly agreed that there needed to be some parameters in place to prepare for headship, even if this was not through NPQH.

I think it should be [mandatory]. I think there needs to be some kind of development programme that covers all of the areas that it covers in preparation for headship...So, it kind of, like, guarantees that whoever

gets the job has had the opportunity to explore everything that's provided within the course, and that's done it at an acceptable level, because otherwise you could walk in quite blindly. You know, it's a protection for schools, but it's a protection for the person as well. You could walk in quite blindly, not necessarily knowing what the job is.

SPD graduate

The majority of trainees thought that this parameter should be the NPQH programme, with only one stating it should be up to the school (with no parameters) and a minority stating that some form of training or "*threshold*" should be in place. One interviewee stated that for those who are already in an acting headteacher role before starting the qualification, an alternative route or just being assessed rather than going through the whole programme might be appropriate rather than undertaking NPQH:

I think that there should definitely be a, kind of, a threshold that you have to achieve. It might be that you can just do, almost, if you're doing an acting headship, like the exit interview bit. To see whether you're up to scratch or not, so I think there needs to be something, a threshold to get through. Whether you have to go through the whole course or not, I'm not sure.

SPD graduate

This alternative route for acting headteachers and existing headteachers was also identified a small number of times during the SPB online survey. Those who thought that NPQH should still be mandatory held strong views about this, and they were disappointed that NPQH was no longer a mandatory qualification. They stated that they developed a wide range of skills through the programme and that it successfully prepared them for their role as a headteacher. They highlighted how it helped prepare you for aspects of the job which could be unexpected, and as one highlighted it makes recruiting headteachers riskier for governors:

To get a headship ultimately you need to be good at interviews and the assessment process, that doesn't necessarily mean you're ready to do the job...I look back now and can't believe it. It was my awareness of the school as a community hub. Now, I might have got a headship without that, and I would be a different head teacher if I didn't have that understanding and experience. That was immensely powerful for me and it changed me as a leader of a school...I wouldn't have had any of that if I hadn't had NPQH, I wouldn't be looking at things that way, and the fact that it's not mandatory, it's optional, is sad...It's really, really important and it genuinely has an impact and the colleagues that I went through NPQH with would say the same thing. I think it's a shame...I think it certainly

counted for something for some governors because it's like being rubber stamped, isn't it? It's like saying, 'Yes this person is ready for headship.' I think certainly there is going to be some element of that where it's a validation that the person you're applying for is qualified.

SPD graduate

The governors we spoke to during the in depth interviews had all recruited their headteachers whilst NPQH was still a mandatory qualification. However, they all recognised the value of the qualification and, as with trainees, thought that there should be some kind of qualification that is mandatory for teachers to gain in order to show that they are ready for headship and meet the standards needed. As outlined by one governor:

I think the dumbing down that's going through the educational process at the moment is appalling. I think it's a long-term disaster, because I think standards should be set and maintained, to ensure-, so that people rise to that level. I can't see that lowering the standards is in anybody's long-term interests.

Governor

Governors thought that NPQH was high quality and could be the qualification that should be mandatory. By individuals gaining NPQH, this enabled governors to be confident in their decision to appoint them as headteachers and showed that they were committed to the role:

I think it shows a determination, I think it shows an idea of-, other than, 'I'm a great teacher.' I think you can be a great teacher, but you may not be able to lead a school. I think it allows teachers to re-evaluate where they are, and look at themselves and see whether or not they have it within themselves to become leader of a school. I also think it shows the, sort of, time pressure to be honest, it's quite harsh, that they put upon themselves, i.e. you've got to work all day and then still want to do more. I think it shows a commitment to, you know, yourself and furthering your career, your ambition. I think it just shows a mental strength which, again, I think you need to lead a school.

Governor

Although we did not specifically ask professional partners, coaches, substantive heads or trainees at SPA and SPB to comment on the change of the mandatory nature of NPQH, a small proportion talked about this during their in depth interviews (if undertaken after the decision to remove mandatory status). Those who talked about it were all concerned and disappointed with the decision to remove its mandatory status. One coach outlined the frustration experienced by those she was

coaching when this decision was announced which was also highlighted by a minority of SPA and SPB trainees who we spoke to after the announcement:

When it became non-mandatory my 'coachees' were, without exception, furious, 'I can't believe they have done this to us', and 'now it doesn't matter whether I have it or not' and 'I've done all this and learnt all this', but they have gone on to say 'never mind, it's been worth it' but they feel a bit cheated that they are not now, or they don't have to be recognised. I mean the fact is that for the next two years at least they will be at a great advantage won't they in any headship interview, which we point out to them.

NPQH coach

One professional partner also had strong concerns regarding the change to the mandatory nature of NPQH and how that could impact on the abilities of new headteachers and their support needs. They explained their concerns in the context of supporting one of their new headteachers who had been through the NPQH and another who had not:

I am a bit concerned because some of them aren't going to do the NPQH anymore... she had done the NPQH and that was really good because then it was more of a transition and challenge to the expectations. The new one I have got hasn't done the NPQH... so actually she hasn't got as much strategic direction and strategic thinking which is what the NPQH promotes a lot more so I would suggest that actually that's a big mistake.

Professional partner

## Head Start

As previously outlined, the three interviewees who were eligible to undertake all support mechanisms within the Head Start programme all indicated that the professional partner was the most valuable element of the programme. These interviewees valued the confidentiality of the relationship and the fact that the professional partner acted as a sounding board to guide them through the new and difficult situations they were experiencing as headteachers.

Professional partners provided insight to highlight the value of the programme to new headteachers. They explained that Head Start provides new headteachers with *"focussed support, but driven by them,"* which is important as, in what can be a *"lonely job"*, to have *"that other person there to talk things through, because you might not necessarily want to talk things through with people from your own school"*. They explained that new Headteachers need guidance, and as a result they will

continue to develop through their first two years of headship. One professional partner highlighted the importance of their role as follows:

I think it is about sustaining new heads' confidence, and energy, and passion for the job in what is a very difficult part of their career because the first year or two to establish yourself in a school is very tough no matter how nice the situation is or how supportive the situation is. And I see it as being an integral part of the support mechanism

Professional partner

## Summary

The key findings from this chapter are:

- Overall, trainees were very satisfied with the majority of aspects of the NPQH and Head Start. The time required to undertake NPQH was the aspect which least satisfied trainees, however this still scored 4.89 (time due to workload pressures) and 5.37 (time due to personal reasons) out of 7.
- A wide range of aspects of the programme were highlighted as being positive, including the range of elements available, the content within elements, the individualised journeys trainees make through the programme and the face-to-face opportunities for networking.
- Nearly all NPQH graduates who took part in the in depth interviews strongly agreed that there needed to be some parameters in place (which are mandatory) to prepare you/assess that you are ready for headship, and most thought that this should be NPQH.
- All governors recognised the value of the qualification and also thought that there should be some kind of mandatory qualification to show that teachers are ready for headship and meet the standards needed. Governors perceived NPQH to be of high quality and felt that it could be the required mandatory qualification.
- Although trainees were satisfied with NPQH, a wide range of improvements or gaps were highlighted, however, there was little consistency in those reported. The most common areas for improvements or gaps in the programme were related to subject knowledge (such as managing budgets and HR and legal issues) reported by trainees and stakeholders.
- Common delivery elements that trainees and stakeholders thought needed improving are listed below, however only a small minority of interviewees and survey respondents reported these:
  - More time out of school

- Less paperwork to complete
  - To have a mentor/tutor
  - Easier website to navigate
  - Tackle the variable experiences with LDS and coaches for trainees, providing LDS headteachers with clear guidance on their role
  - Lack of support from a substantive head
- Also, those who were in a small school, a non-mainstream school or not currently working in a school reported that NPQH was not always tailored towards them, with small schools finding it difficult to release staff and other trainees finding some of the online courses less applicable to their situation.

## 9 Conclusions and areas for consideration

This section presents the key conclusions emerging in relation to both the overarching aims and objectives of this evaluation and the three subsidiary research questions:

Aims and objectives:

- What difference is the redesign of the programmes making to the quality and impact of headship?
- What impact are the programmes having on improving the leadership effectiveness of newly appointed headteachers?

Three research questions:

- How effective and efficient the provision is in meeting the needs of participants.
- The outcomes of NPQH and Head Start for participants, including the development of the leadership and management skills required for headship, motivation for and progression into headship, and increased awareness, confidence and engagement with government structures and legislation.
- The wider outcomes and impacts of the programmes for young people, the school in which participants work, and the wider community.

### Conclusions

Overall, trainees were satisfied with the application and assessment process for NPQH and rated this highly with regards to identifying their development needs accurately.

Views on the usefulness of the 360 degree diagnostic were mixed, with some trainees and substantive headteachers reporting this was a useful tool to enable them to reflect on their development needs and identify new areas for development and others stating it was not due to not understanding the reasons why individuals scored them in a certain way and stating that questions were often misunderstood. The regional introductory day increased people's awareness of the aims and objectives of NPQH and, although to a lesser extent, of Head Start. It also increased trainees' motivations for both headship and for undertaking the qualification.

There are high levels of engagement with almost all elements of NPQH, with the majority (80.1%) of trainees drawing upon at least five or six of the components available to them as part of their personalised package of support, although as may be expected those with some previous experience of the role – acting headteachers

and current headteachers – reported on average, using less elements of NPQH than those in other roles.

Moreover, whilst fewer trainees participate in national and local face-to-face events and peer learning compared with all other elements of the programme, the proportion is not insubstantial at over two-thirds of participants.

Trainees not only access the elements available, they also make significant use of them. There is evidence of high levels of engagement with coaching, online resources and peer learning, although around a third of trainees do not utilise the full seven hours of coaching available to them. Lack of time to engage due to existing commitments was typically cited as the main reason why trainees did not make use of their full entitlement; however, this is at odds with the high levels of participation observed in relation to the other elements of NPQH such as online learning and peer learning.

The leadership development school (LDS) placement is the one element of NPQH where the number of days participating is comparatively low. Trainees typically undertook a placement lasting 7 days, with very few taking part in placements of more than ten days. However, this does not appear to impact on trainees' satisfaction with aspects of their placement. High mean figures were reported in relation to all aspects included in the survey: including the stimuli received, support provided, time given to undertake placement, funding received and support received from their substantive head.

Overall, trainees believe the elements of NPQH help to address their development needs as identified at the assessment and development event, although peer learning was rated less favourably than the other components in developing the skills the need for headship. That said, there were high levels of engagement by those who used the element, and trainees valued the opportunities it provided for informal advice and support and the provision of resources and contacts at schools outside of developing skills for headship.

The overwhelming majority of trainees graduate within 13 months, indicating that NPQH is providing trainees with the opportunities to develop the skills required for headship in the timescale stipulated. However, notable differences in relation to delivery centres persist, with fewer trainees from London and the South graduating within six months or less. The job role of trainees at the start of NPQH is also significant, with acting headteachers typically graduating within a shorter time period, perhaps reflecting that their experience in the role means that they have fewer development needs when compared with other trainees and are therefore able to progress faster.

## Head Start

Trainees' awareness of the aims and objectives of the Head Start programme is low around the time they graduate from NPQH (Sampling Point B of our evaluation). This may indicate that the programme is not promoted extensively throughout NPQH (which some trainees believe would be a good idea), however trainees are informed about the programme on graduating from NPQH (which many trainees thought was the right time). When asked eighteen months after graduating (at Sampling Point D of our evaluation), very few trainees who had not taken part in the programme had not heard of Head Start or were unsure of the aims and objectives, however there were a minority who reported not knowing the programme was available (3.7%) or who thought it was only available to those in a headship position (3.8% of those who did not plan to use it in the future).

Three-fifths of graduates (at SPD) have used at least one element of the Head Start programme. For the remaining graduates who have not used any aspect of Head Start, this was primarily due to a lack of time. More than two-thirds of graduates who have not yet used Head Start plan to use it in the future and think that they will find most of the elements useful.

National College had a target of 90 per cent of designate and new heads registering for the new heads phase of Head Start. Based on our data, although designate headteachers and new headteachers are more likely to use Head Start than other graduates, it is a lower proportion (70%) than the target. Overall, for those who have used Head Start graduates have reported that it has been a fairly seamless transition from NPQH, and graduates have found most of the elements useful.

Support and advice from a professional partner was the strongest motivating factor for participation in Head Start. This was the element accessed by most graduates and ranked as the most useful element of Head Start. Professional partners have supported graduates to be confident in the decisions they make and have supported them to deal with difficult staffing issues and develop new ideas and new ways of doing things in their school. Online networks were the elements of Head Start accessed the least and were ranked as the least useful by graduates.

## Movement into headship

Overall, trainees' aspirations for headship remain unchanged between starting NPQH (Sampling Point A of our evaluation) and graduating (SPB), with overall scores remaining extremely high. In this context, NPQH is successfully maintaining trainees' aspirations for headship whilst they are on the programme.

Just under half of all graduates interviewed at SPD (18 months post-graduation) had moved into a headship position, were waiting to take up a headship position or were already a headteacher (when they started NPQH). This was lower than the National

College's key performance indicator (KPI) of 90 per cent of graduates being in a headship position 12 months after graduation. This could impact on the programmes capacity to ensure there is a sufficient supply of headteachers in future years. Although the proportion of graduates in headship positions is lower than expected, over three-quarters of those graduates who are not headteachers still intend their next role to be as a headteacher and are actively looking for a post. In total, 92.4% of graduates were either a headteacher or intended their next role to be as a head.

Furthermore, just over one-third of graduates who are not yet in a headship position have moved into another role, and just over half who have not changed positions have been given additional responsibilities in their school as a result of taking part in NPQH. This indicates that NPQH has enabled people to move into different roles which may enable them to gain further skills and experience in order to help them move into headship in the future. In this regard, whilst NPQH has not helped them reach their goal of being a headteacher yet, it has helped them to make demonstrable progress on their journey to achieve that aspiration. Only 14.4 per cent of graduates were not a headteacher, had not moved in to any new role or had not been given any new responsibilities as a result of undertaking NPQH.

For those who have not yet begun applying for a headship role, most (85%) still intend for their next role to be a headship but they plan to wait, on average, another 12 months before they will start applying. This indicates that they were not "12-18 months from gaining a headship post" on commencing NPQH, which is a requisite for starting the qualification.

At SPB there were mixed views from trainees and stakeholders as to the extent to which NPQH could prepare trainees for a headship role in a different type of school. Around half of all interviewees reported that the skills they learnt were transferrable and could be implemented in another setting, whilst others thought that whilst they were transferrable they would not have the relevant experience necessary to move to a different context. There is evidence to show that graduates have moved into headship positions in schools which have different characteristics to their previous school. A high proportion (65%) of headteachers who have moved to a different school from that they had been working at on joining NPQH had moved into a different *type* of school, with a move into a primary school or a faith school being the most common for 30 per cent of graduates. Those who are not yet headteachers would also consider moving into a school with characteristics different to their own, with only a small minority stating that they would not consider this.

## **Outcomes of NPQH and Head Start for participants**

### **Short-term impacts**

Overall, trainees report positive impacts of participation in NPQH in relation to the leadership and management skills required for headship. Trainees are more ready

for headship in terms of knowledge, skills and attributes on graduation from NPQH than at the start (just after their regional introductory day). Those trainees who were older reported higher levels of readiness, as did those with previous leadership experience outside of the education profession, those in small schools (less than 100 pupils) and those who were already undertaking the role of an acting headteacher.

Furthermore, there is a statistically significant increase in trainees' perceptions of their skills in all six areas of the National Standards for Headship and on trainees' wider leadership skills and capabilities between starting NPQH and trainees completing the course. As with readiness for headship, those with previous leadership experience outside of the education profession rated many of the statements higher, as did those from small schools. Across many of the areas those who had undertaken all six elements scored themselves higher than other trainees, thus highlighting a link between self-assessed leadership skills and the use of NPQH.

Trainees reported developing a wide range of skills through the programme, including strategic school management and vision, coaching/mentoring and developing others, performance and conflict management, leadership and management skills and reflective practice. Wider stakeholders including substantive headteachers, LDS headteachers and coaches also agree that trainees had developed a wide range of skills through taking part in the programme.

There are, however, some skill areas which trainees consistently rate lower than others, and they state that they have been developed to a lesser extent through NPQH. These include managing budgets, developing an understanding of other types of educational institution phases and working with Human Resources and legal issues. These findings mirror those of previous interim reports and provide further indications that NPQH is addressing the needs of trainees to a lesser extent in these areas. Interestingly, a high proportion of trainees did report developing financial management and budgeting skills through NPQH, but they still rated themselves lower overall than for other skills areas. The same pattern did not emerge for legal skills and HR, with few trainees reporting development in this area.

### **Long-term**

Overall, graduates are positive about the extent to which NPQH and Head Start have helped them to develop. Graduates report high levels of readiness for Headship at SPD (18 months post-graduation), although this score has slightly decreased since SPB (graduation). There was no difference in the score given by those who had moved into a headship role and those who had not. One explanation for this which emerged through in depth interviews with headteachers was that this may be as a result of them realising the challenges involved in headship once they had moved into the position, and therefore feeling less ready than on graduation from NPQH. Alongside this, for those who were not yet in a headship position it was felt that they

may feel less confident in their skills and abilities due to not yet being successful in gaining a position.

Graduates rated themselves highly against the statements reflecting the six National Standards for Headship. However, as with their readiness for headship they did experience a slight overall decrease across all six statements between SPB and SPD. This was also the case when examining graduates' perception of their broader leadership skills and capabilities, where graduates scored themselves relatively highly across most statements but experienced a small decrease between the two sampling points (SPB and SPD). Those with previous leadership and management experience outside of the education profession continue to score themselves higher across a range of skills and capabilities. Those who were now headteachers scored themselves consistently lower in many of these areas than those who were not yet in a headship role. Again, what came across strongly in the qualitative aspects of the evaluation was the challenge of moving from a theoretical perspective of headship (and the necessary skills and capabilities it demands) to the practical, lived experience of fulfilling that role. Therefore there appears to have been an element of "response shift bias" with regard to self-reported perceptions of leadership skills and capabilities

Other factors which affected a number of scores include the age of the trainee (with older trainees rating their skills higher) and school size on starting NPQH (with those from smaller schools rating some of their skills and abilities higher).

Despite an overall fall in self-assessed leadership skills and capabilities, and against the six areas reflecting the National Standards for Headship, graduates overall stated that NPQH and Head Start had helped them to improve in these areas. This is not necessarily a contradictory statement, as graduates of the programme may feel they have improved against these areas whilst at the same time rate themselves lower than they did eighteen months previously. This could be a reflection of being more self-aware of their skills and attributes and also being more aware of the level of competency which they need to achieve in these areas in order to carry out the role of headteacher.

Graduates attributed over 40 per cent of their development since they started NPQH to 18 months post-graduation to their participation in NPQH. Those who have undertaken Head Start attribute a further 17 per cent of their development over this period to this programme. This shows that NPQH and Head Start is having a positive impact on graduates' development and is therefore enabling individuals to move more quickly towards headship. This, in turn, will support succession planning in schools. It also provides evidence of the added value which Head Start provides over-and-above that which is brought about through participation in NPQH.

Across many statements about the impact of participation, those who have undertaken all six elements of NPQH score the impact higher than those who did

less. Those who took part in Head Start also scored themselves higher across a number of statements when compared with those who had not. Those who were headteachers scored themselves lower across a number of impact statements around skills, capabilities and readiness for headship when compared to those who were not yet in a headship position. This was also evident for those who had moved into a new role in a *different* school, with graduates scoring themselves lower than those in a new role in the *same* school. Qualitative aspects of the evaluation suggest that this may partly relate to the adjustment necessary when moving to a new school and, in some cases, a new phase (new staff team/systems/procedures, different community, etc).

The depth interviews highlight that the difference in self-reported leadership skills between SPB and SPD can therefore be attributed, in part, to graduates re-appraising their capabilities rather than a decrease in such skills. This could be as a result of a change in self-awareness and in their awareness of the role as headteachers and all that it entails. At SPB, (soon to be graduates) are responding hypothetically i.e. how well they think they are equipped for headship – whilst at SPD they are able to respond to the same questions based on actual experience. Another factor may be that not securing a headship in this eighteen month period (post-graduation) has a detrimental impact on an individuals' self-perception of their skills, capabilities and 'readiness' for headship.

There are, however, two main skill areas which receive consistently lower scores and where a high proportion of graduates state they need to develop; these are budget and financial management skills and skills in respect of Human Resources and legal issues. These two areas were the two top skill areas that trainees stated they wanted to develop on starting NPQH, yet they have received consistently low scores across the three sampling points and, when asked at SPD, they also emerged as the two top skill areas they would still like to develop (47% stated managing budgets, 26% stated HR and legal issues). Further areas which trainees wanted to develop include understanding and dealing with government changes and Ofsted (15%), developing their confidence (10%) and understanding and implementing strategic change (10%).

## **Wider outcomes and impacts**

Trainees and other interviewees report a wide range of impacts that NPQH has had on the school in which they worked at the time of their graduation from NPQH, the LDS in which they undertook their placement, and the wider community.

Graduates reported that NPQH and Head Start have enabled them to have a positive impact on the school in which they currently work. They have rated a range of different impacts relatively highly and, although some have decreased since SPB this shows that graduates still believe that NPQH and Head Start are having a

positive impact on their school. The area in which graduates reported the least impact was in better managing pupil behaviour, which was the lowest at SPB and has experienced a further decrease at SPD. Areas receiving the highest scores were improving teaching and learning, improving outcomes for children and young people and improving attainment.

Through the depth interviews graduates reported that the Head Start programme had had fewer direct impacts on the school but that the support, primarily from the professional partner, had provided them with the confidence to make changes in their school along with new ideas for ways to do things differently, thus showing the importance of the programme. Those trainees who took part in Head Start rated the overall impact of NPQH and Head Start higher than those who did not, thereby indicating that Head Start does have an impact on trainees' schools outside of the support role given by professional partners.

Graduates were asked both during the SPB and SPD survey to describe three ways in which undertaking NPQH and Head Start (at SPD if undertaken) had enabled them to make a positive impact on their school. A wide range of impacts were reported, but the areas which were reported most frequently included coaching and staff development along with leadership and management. Further areas of impact that were described by graduates included:

- improved performance management
- confidence to bring about change
- improved data analysis and monitoring
- increased community engagement
- better strategic understanding and vision
- improvements in teaching and learning
- increased networking and collaboration.

This therefore shows that NPQH and Head Start has encouraged graduates to make a number of changes in their school which they believe have had a positive impact on staff and pupils. This is supported by data analysis on Ofsted and Key Stage 2 data, where many of the graduates who had become headteachers had made improvements in their schools, however the extent to which these are attributable to NPQH or Head Start is unknown and the sample is small, so these findings are only indicative.

Further impacts were also experienced by LDSs, with trainees reporting that overall they believed that the projects and work they had carried out as part of their placement had a positive impact on the school. A wide range of projects were carried out, and as a result a wide range of impacts were described. The most common related to a review or audit of a specific aspect of how the school functions, while

other projects included engagement with parents and the wider community, the role of Pupil Voice or aspects of teaching and learning. As a result of these projects a range of impacts on the school were observed including strategic or policy development in the school, understanding and using data, improving teaching and learning in the school, and leadership and management. The impact that trainees had on placement schools was confirmed by LDS headteachers, with the majority stating that the trainee had made a positive impact on their school through:

- improving attainment
- increasing staff aspirations
- improving their engagement with the community
- a wide range of other impacts specific to individual schools

## View on the programme

Overall, trainees were very satisfied with the majority of aspects of the NPQH and Head Start, with time to take part in the programme being the aspect which least satisfied trainees. A wide range of aspects of the programme were highlighted as being positive, including the range of elements available, the content within elements, the individualised journeys trainees make through the programme and the face-to-face opportunities for networking. A wide range of improvements or gaps were highlighted, however there was little consistency in those reported. The most common were trainees and stakeholders reporting that the gaps in the programme were related to subject knowledge rather than programme design. Those who were in a small school, a non-mainstream school or not in a school reported that the elements in NPQH were not always tailored towards them, with small schools finding it difficult to release staff and other trainees finding some of the online courses not applicable to them.

The majority of trainees recognise the value of NPQH and stated that they would undertake the qualification without it being mandatory to become a headteacher in the maintained sector in England. Throughout their participation in the programme trainees' overall scores remain unchanged across all sampling points (SPA, SPB and SPD), thereby indicating that trainees continue to recognise the benefits of their participation in the programme. The wider views of NPQH no longer being a mandatory qualification were explored with graduates at SPD and with governors. Nearly all NPQH graduates who took part in the in depth interviews strongly agreed that there needed to be some parameters in place to prepare you for headship, even if this was not through NPQH. The majority of trainees thought that this parameter should be the NPQH programme. Although the governors we spoke to during the in depth interviews had recruited their headteachers whilst NPQH was still a mandatory qualification, they all recognised the value of the qualification and thought that there

should be some kind of qualification that is mandatory for teachers to gain in order to show that they are ready for headship and meet the standards needed. Governors perceived NPQH to be of high quality and felt it could be used as a mandatory qualification. Although we did not specifically ask professional partners, coaches, substantive heads or trainees at SPA and SPB to comment on the change of the mandatory nature of NPQH, a small proportion talked about this during their in depth interviews, and all of them were concerned and disappointed with the decision to remove its mandatory status.

## **Recommendations for the leadership curriculum**

Two elements of NPQH which rated highly on the quantitative assessment and also stood out for particular praise in interviews were the coaching and the LDS placement. Both of these elements should be retained for the new leadership curriculum. Although for both elements a small minority of trainees had negative experiences, the vast majority were positive. Therefore any future programmes should consider including these elements but licensees would need to ensure that appropriate quality assurance is in place.

Once someone moves into a headship position the support trainees gain from a professional partner is seen by trainees and governors as very important, therefore this support should also be included in any future programmes. Often this support worked well with the professional partner adopting a mentoring role in the early stages of the relationship, changing to a coaching role as the relationship developed and the support requirements of the new headteacher evolved. Both types of support – mentoring and coaching – are important to the successful delivery of this element of support.

Those who were in a small school, non-mainstream school or not currently working in a school reported challenges with the programme. These ranged from the budget and time constraints in small institutions to online modules not being tailored to those in a non-mainstream school setting. Future programme delivery through licensed provision will need to be flexible enough to work for all types of schools. In the fast-changing education landscape it will be necessary to ensure that a system of reviewing the content and delivery of programmes is in place to ensure that needs are being met for all those wishing to undertake the programme.

Although only a minority, some trainees experienced a lack of support from a substantive headteacher, either due to there not being one in place (e.g. they were an acting head) or due to their line manager not giving them the support they needed (such as time out of school). Licensed providers will need to consider the best way to support individuals in these situations to enable them to undertake NPQH and gain the experience they need to move into headship.

Due to the consistently low score trainees provide to the areas of financial management & budgeting and HR & legal issues, these elements could be reviewed in order to ensure that they remain fit for purpose. The qualitative research (with site visits, substantive headteachers and LDS headteachers) suggests that for HR & legal issues and financial & budgeting skills the problem may be more about graduates knowing what they need to know as a headteacher and the things that are the responsibility of someone else such as a school business manager, a HR advisor, a governor, or a solicitor. Therefore it may be that trainees need an element of NPQH which better focuses on the understanding of roles and responsibilities around these areas rather than needing to know more and more detail about specific issues. Financial management, budgeting and HR & legal issues should be a mandatory element of any future headship course. This should also include consideration of the various roles and responsibilities of other key individuals in supporting headteachers in this area, particularly in the current, changing environment (e.g. school business managers, HR consultants/solicitors).

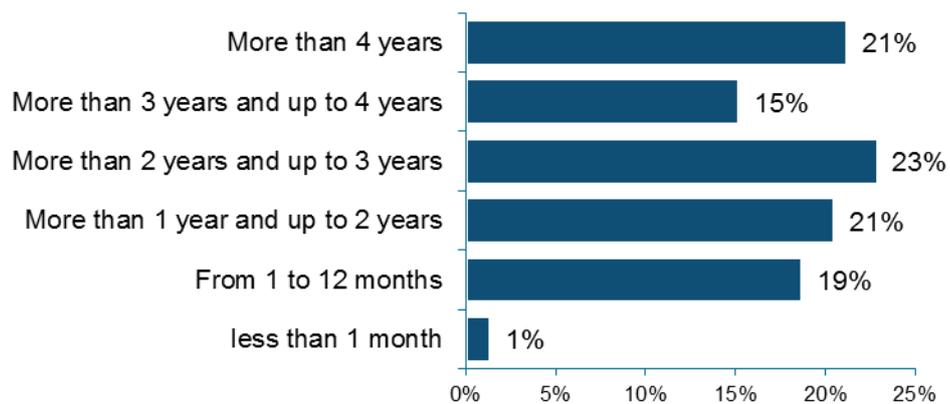
With regards to the evaluation of future programmes, provision should be made within the methodology to address the re-assessment of self-perceived skills, capabilities and attributes in retrospect.

## Appendix 1: Profile of respondents

Below is the profile of respondents who completed SPA, SPB and SPD. Their profile relates to the roles they were in when they started NPQH, and not their current role.

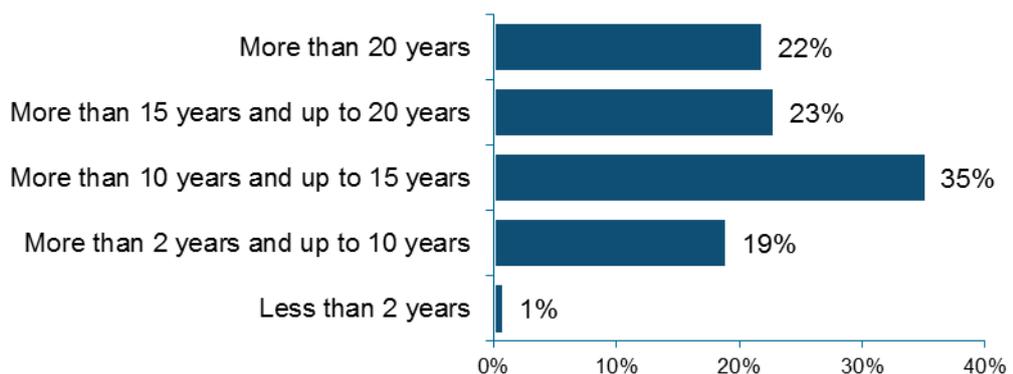
### Time in teaching

Figure 77: Length of time in current role



Trainees at SPA, Base=1,815

Figure 78: Length of time in the teaching profession



Trainees at SPA, Base=1,815

## Gender

	SPA	SPB	SPD
Male	32%	33%	33%
Female	68%	67%	67%
<b>Base</b>	<b>1,809</b>	<b>1,801</b>	<b>407</b>

## Age at 31<sup>st</sup> May

	SPA	SPB	SPD
35 years old or less	12%	12%	10%
36 – 40 years old	24%	24%	22%
41 – 45 years old	24%	25%	24%
46 – 50 years old	21%	21%	22%
51 years old or older	19%	18%	22%
<b>Base</b>	<b>1,809</b>	<b>1,801</b>	<b>407</b>

## Ethnicity

	SPA	SPB	SPD
Other	8%	10%	8%
White British	92%	90%	92%
<b>Base</b>	<b>1,783</b>	<b>1,773</b>	<b>404</b>

## Phase of school at SPA

	SPA	SPB	SPD
Primary	68%	67%	72%
Not applicable	12%	13%	13%
Secondary	17%	18%	12%
Nursery	1%	1%	2%
Middle deemed secondary	1%	1%	1 %
Early years setting	<1%	<1%	<1%
Other	<1%	<1%	–
<b>Base</b>	<b>1,663</b>	<b>1,674</b>	<b>389</b>

## Type of school at SPA

	<b>SPA</b>	<b>SPB</b>	<b>SPD</b>
Community school	50%	50%	49%
Foundation	7%	7%	7%
Voluntary aided school	16%	16%	19%
Voluntary controlled school	9%	8%	10%
Other	18%	19%	15%
<b>Base</b>	<b>1,662</b>	<b>1,674</b>	<b>389</b>

## School size at SPA

	<b>SPA</b>	<b>SPB</b>	<b>SPD</b>
100 pupils or less	15%	15%	20%
More than 100 pupils	85%	85%	80%
<b>Base</b>	<b>1,650</b>	<b>1,547</b>	<b>331</b>



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**Reference: DFE- RR382**

**ISBN: 978-1-78105-434-5**

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