6. WHERE HAVE ALL THE TEACHERS GONE?
GONE TO BE LEADERS, EVERYONE

FROM TEACHING TO LEADERSHIP

The past

In days of old, when teachers were bold, schools were simple places. Teachers delivered, in oracular fashion, the curriculum they thought suitable to their pupils, whose role it was to receive it. Schools had small staffs, Head Teachers taught regularly, their deputies nearly always had full teaching time-tables. Education was locally administered, with few other than very general central government guidelines, funding was single stream. Historically, schooling developed in this way reflecting its origins from the time when education was family and community based. While in present days such a view may be seen as quaint, one of the writers experienced such schools in London in the 1940’s and 50’s. Schools at that time and later were also simple in terms of facilities and resources. He learnt his early number and word skills on a sand tray and a slate, and used toilet paper [which in those days appeared to be designed for the purpose] for tracing maps. The secondary school he attended had no library and no duplicator. Courses were delivered via a single, often shared, textbook, augmented by the eager pupil with trips to the local library. Later on he taught P.E. drama and craft in a classroom with double desks screwed to the floor. The most common form of curriculum delivery was teacher dictation. Lest this sound like a tale of woe, the writer has always appreciated his schooling, which would appear not to have significantly handicapped his career progress and life.

TODAY

Present day English schools provide a stark contrast. We have gathered some indication of the extent of the growing number and complexity of leadership roles and duties of teachers from schools participating in research projects the authors have worked on. In many secondary schools few teachers only teach. For example, a listing of the 68 teachers in one reveals only 16 [24%] without a significant leadership role or roles. These include the Leadership Team consisting of: a Head Teacher, three Deputy Heads, three Assistant Deputy Heads and a Senior Manager, together with Heads of Year and Subjects, with Seconds in Charge. Leadership listings or plans are often very detailed, for example, in another similar school the team consists of:

- Head, Learning and ethos
- Deputy Head, Learning and teaching
- Deputy Head, Learning and curriculum

Senior Assistant Head, Learning and learning support
College Manager, Facilitating learning
Assistant Head, Learning and community
Assistant Head, Learning and inclusion
Assistant Head, Learning and behaviour
Assistant Head, Learning and pastoral support Key Stage 3
Assistant Head, Learning and pastoral support Key Stage 4
Assistant Head, Learning and achievement

Each of these is followed by a list of between 10 and 19 specific responsibilities. Indeed, the Staff Handbook lists almost 250 roles and responsibilities in a hopefully comprehensive A-Z that are carried out by teachers.

While smaller in scale Primary schools display a similar pattern. They are required to have Head Teacher and Deputy, Co-ordinators for each of the seven National Curriculum Subjects and for Key Stages 1 and 2. Consequently, in the large number of such schools with less than 11 teachers the roles have to be combined. But this is but the tip of an iceberg, since the schools have a large number of less formal leadership roles to be undertaken. Most will have a role in respect to special educational needs (SEN) provision and the deployment of teaching assistants. Those involved with Government initiatives, such as Education Action Zones (EAZs), Excellence in Cities Partnerships, Federations, Networked Learning Communities and the like will have leaders for these. In some cases these create several further roles related to aspects of the initiatives, for example, parental involvement, ICT, continuing professional development (CPD), accelerated learning, boy’s and ethnic underachievement, etc.

LEADERSHIP OR MANAGEMENT?

Our use of the term leadership for what traditionally has been seen as management is more than justified in contemporary English schooling. The shift in usage is clearly epitomised by the setting up of the National College of School Leadership and the term’s adoption by many schools. The shift might be assumed to have implications of a change in schools’ regimes and the style of relationships within them. This is implicit in the literal meanings of the words: to manage is to be in charge of/ to administer; to lead is to show the way/ to guide. The extent to which these implications were intended, or have been realised, is open to speculation. Our experience across a number of schools indicates that the full range of perspectives derived from both terms exist and often co-exist.

HOW DID WE GET WHERE WE ARE? FROM NEO LIBERAL TO NETWORK MARKET

Some of the change from teaching to leadership is the result of the increased size of schools, caused by an increased child population [post war baby boom], urbanisation and the closure of large numbers of small schools deemed to be uneconomic, together with the rapid development and adoption of technology. Most, however, is