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National College
for Leadership of Schools
and Children's Services

Schools and academies

The changing role and influence of senior support staff in schools

Report

Resource

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Acknowledgements

The research team would like to thank the schools that agreed to participate in the study and their staff who took the time to contribute to the research. We would particularly like to thank the senior non-qualified teaching status (QTS) staff who agreed to be interviewed and who helped set up the interviews.

We would also like to thank Jenny Hudson and Julie Thompson, project administrators, who have provided outstanding administrative support to the research team.

Finally, the research team would like to thank the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services for funding and managing this research, and in particular Sarah Ginns for consistently co-operative, responsive and facilitative support and research management.

Executive summary

Report brief

This report sets out the findings from a research study designed to explore the range and roles of non-qualified teacher status (QTS) staff in schools who are members of their school's senior leadership team (SLT).

The changing role of senior support staff

A number of previous policy developments (including the Every Child Matters agenda, extended services and the Children's Plan) had placed schools at the core of an educational delivery system where leadership on key tasks needed to be distributed to those with appropriate expertise.

In parallel, workforce reform had greatly expanded the number of non-QTS staff working in schools and the roles that they fulfil.

Scope of the study

The research aimed to explore the range and roles of non-QTS staff in schools who are members of their school's SLT.

The study was commissioned in October 2009 by the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services (henceforth the National College) and carried out by a team at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

The study comprised investigations into the:

- roles being undertaken in schools by non-QTS staff who are members of the school's SLT
- impact of these roles on wider leadership teams and school effectiveness and improvement
- extent to which career routes are emerging for non-QTS staff in schools to move into leadership

The report's findings were drawn from interviews with 19 non-QTS staff on the SLT; 14 headteachers; 10 governors; 8 other staff who worked most closely with the non-QTS staff member; and 2 non-QTS staff who were not on the SLT.

Conclusions and overview of findings

Overall, the study found that schools valued the contribution senior non-QTS staff were making to school life. This study has shown that, rather than remaining static, non-QTS roles have continued to evolve. Interviewees reported that the roles and contribution of non-QTS staff benefitted a range of staff and pupils, including the SLT and wider school workforce, and that they contributed in a variety of ways to school improvement. These are messages that could be promoted and celebrated at the national, regional and individual school level.

Roles and background

- The types of roles that non-QTS staff took on in schools could be grouped into three broad categories: business and finance roles; community and extended services roles; and inclusion roles.

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- There was evidence that the advancement of non-QTS staff onto schools' SLTs is a relatively recent phenomenon: four years ago less than a quarter of the schools involved in the research had non-QTS staff members on their SLT.
 - The rationale given by schools for promoting non-QTS staff to the SLT included: a perceived need to represent the views of non-QTS staff on the SLT; an acknowledgement of the important contributions that non-QTS staff can make to strategic decision-making; their responsibility for areas of the school that are integral to its ethos and success; and a recognition that non-QTS staff can bring complementary or missing skills to the SLT.

Benefits and impact

- Key benefits for the SLT and the wider school staff were the different perspectives, knowledge and expertise non-QTS staff brought, as well as enabling teaching staff to concentrate on pupil learning.
- Most interviewees reported that being on the SLT contributed significantly to the impact of non-QTS support roles. For example, being on the SLT was said to allow non-QTS staff to more effectively contribute to strategic direction and planning and allowed non-QTS staff to have a wider and more strategic impact. Moreover, many interviewees reported that having non-QTS staff on the SLT enhanced the credibility and profile of non-QTS staff in general, and that this in turn had resulted in improvements in the impact and effectiveness of the wider school workforce.
- The most frequently cited benefits for pupils were the provision of time and support for students and increased opportunities for an extended curriculum. Improved attendance and behaviour, improved attainment results and better quality teaching and learning were also cited. Benefits for the pupils tended to be linked to community and inclusion roles.
- One of the most important ways in which non-QTS staff contributed to school improvement was by reducing teachers' workload, although they also contributed by improving outcomes for children. Those in business and finance roles contributed by managing the budget, generating income and producing efficiency savings, as well as putting in place effective systems and structures, for example, for data management.

Issues and challenges

- More than half of the non-QTS staff we interviewed identified that they were unhappy with their pay and conditions. Many felt that their pay was not commensurate with their skills and expertise, and several interviewees reported a lack of parity between QTS and non-QTS salaries.
- Some non-QTS staff reported experiencing problems in relation to the size and scope of their role due to the nature of their responsibilities: they were often required to work additional hours to meet the needs of parents and families, and staff working in extended services roles were frequently required to work at evenings and weekends, as well as during holiday periods.
- Non-QTS staff also reported having problems with their understanding of teaching and learning. Some reported finding it challenging to learn school protocols, and to understand the educational terminology used by teachers and other SLT members.

Professional development and career progression

- Non-QTS staff were generally very positive about the support and training that had been made available to them, and most felt that their role-specific support needs were being met.

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- Bursars and school business managers (SBMs) appeared to derive a lot of their training from the National College suite of programmes (specifically CSBM, DSBM and ADSBM¹). This was in contrast to the majority of the other non-QTS support staff who indicated that most of their training had been delivered in-house or by their local authority.
 - The main barriers cited by non-QTS staff to accessing training included: the cost of training; the time taken to go on training; and finding training that was of sufficient quality and relevance to the role being undertaken.
 - With the possible exception of SBMs, it was notable that few non-QTS staff said they had undertaken training with a leadership and/or management focus.
 - For many of the support staff interviewed, their current roles represented the pinnacle of career progression opportunities for support staff within their schools.
 - Several non-QTS staff commented that having opportunities to train was not the same as having genuine opportunities for career advancement, and in this sense, many non-QTS staff could not see how they could develop further. Two non-QTS staff, however, aspired to becoming headteachers.

Future development

- There was widespread agreement among the non-QTS staff we interviewed that the number of roles occupied by non-QTS staff in schools would be likely to increase in the future. The reasons given for this varied, but included a perceived need for non-QTS staff to: address out-of-school issues such as working with parents; move into senior management or leadership positions; take on more responsibilities and become more involved in running the school.
- Most, but not all interviewees agreed that the number of non-QTS staff working in schools was also likely to continue to rise. The reasons given for this included: schools needing to offer more wraparound services; the increasing role of technology in education; and the low cost of support staff relative to teaching staff.
- A number of drivers were identified as contributing to the future roles of non-QTS staff. These included: ongoing changes to the school workforce; a need to meet the whole needs of the child; the issue of cost and financial savings; and a perceived need to develop the skills of non-QTS staff.

¹ Respectively, the Certificate in School Business Management, Diploma in School Business Management and Advanced Diploma in School Business Management. See www.nationalcollege.org.uk/index/professional-development/professionaldevelopment-schools.htm

Introduction

This report sets out the findings from a research study designed to explore the range and roles of non-qualified teacher status (QTS) staff in schools who are members of the school senior leadership team (SLT). The study was commissioned in October 2009 by the National College for Leadership of Schools and Children's Services and carried out by a team at the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER).

In recent years the educational landscape has shifted from one in which schools were very much single units, to the current situation where schools are required to work in partnership with other schools and agencies in order to deliver the best possible outcomes for their pupils.

A number of previous policy developments (including the Every Child Matters agenda, extended services and the Children's Plan) had all placed schools at the core of an educational delivery system where it was not possible for one individual (the headteacher or equivalent) to lead on everything, but where leadership on key tasks needed to be distributed to those with the appropriate expertise. In parallel, workforce reform had greatly expanded the number of non-QTS staff working in schools and the roles that they fulfil.

This research seeks to inform the National College's programme of support for non-QTS staff, and to provide valuable information on how non-QTS staff can move into leadership roles.

1.1 Research aims

The overarching aim of the study was to explore the range and roles of non-QTS staff in schools who are members of the school SLT.

Specific objectives for the study included an assessment of the:

- roles being undertaken in schools by non-QTS staff who are members of the school's SLT
- impact of these roles on wider leadership teams and school effectiveness and improvement
- extent to which career routes are emerging for non-QTS staff in schools to move into leadership

In order to achieve these aims, a two-strand approach was adopted, as detailed in section 1.2.

1.2 Methodology

The research methods included the following strands:

Strand 1: Scoping of national data and research literature

Strand 2: Interviews with 19 non-QTS staff on school SLTs in 17 different schools (including primary, secondary and special schools)

1.3 Strand 1: Scoping of national data and research literature

Strand 1 comprised an analysis of current national data and existing research literature pertaining to the deployment, development and impact of senior non-QTS staff in schools. The findings from the scoping exercise were used to inform the selection of the case studies and the design of the research instruments used in strand 2.

Existing knowledge and contacts within NFER and the National College were used to support the identification of case-study schools. In particular, existing information from the National College's work on models of leadership was used to identify and facilitate engagement with case-study schools. Schools were selected in order to explore a range of different leadership roles, and to cover a range of different school types and structures.

1.4 Strand 2: Interviews

Following the scoping stage, and in collaboration with the National College, the research team then selected a sample of 19 non-QTS staff on school SLTs encompassing a range of different role types. Non-QTS staff were drawn from a total of 17 different individual schools or partnerships (7 secondary schools, 5 primary schools, 3 federations/clusters, and 2 special schools).

The characteristics of the schools that non-QTS staff worked in varied. Most could be characterised as having low numbers of pupils from minority ethnic groups and above-average proportions of pupils with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Slightly more schools had above-average proportions of pupils eligible for free school meals than those with below average proportions. The sample included schools in both deprived and affluent areas. For example, when compared against the English Indices of Deprivation 2007 – the government's official measure of multiple deprivation – 6 schools were situated in areas among the top 50 per cent of least deprived areas. Of the remaining 11 schools, 4 were situated among the bottom 20 per cent of deprived areas.

Visits were made to two secondary schools, one primary school and one special school. The remaining interviews were conducted by telephone. Interviews were conducted with:

- 19 non-QTS staff on the SLT
- 14 headteachers
- 10 governors
- 8 other staff who worked closely with the non-QTS staff member
- 2 non-QTS who were not on the SLT

These interviews also provided material for a series of case studies.

1.5 Report structure

The report covers the topics: introduction; findings from scoping stage, roles and background; impacts and benefits; issues and challenges; professional development and career progression; future development; and conclusions. Where possible, any similarities or differences between roles or sectors have been highlighted throughout the report, although it is not possible to draw generalisations due to the size of the sample. Summaries of the case studies can be found under separate cover.

Scoping the literature

This section presents the findings from the literature scoping, which set out to examine the following questions:

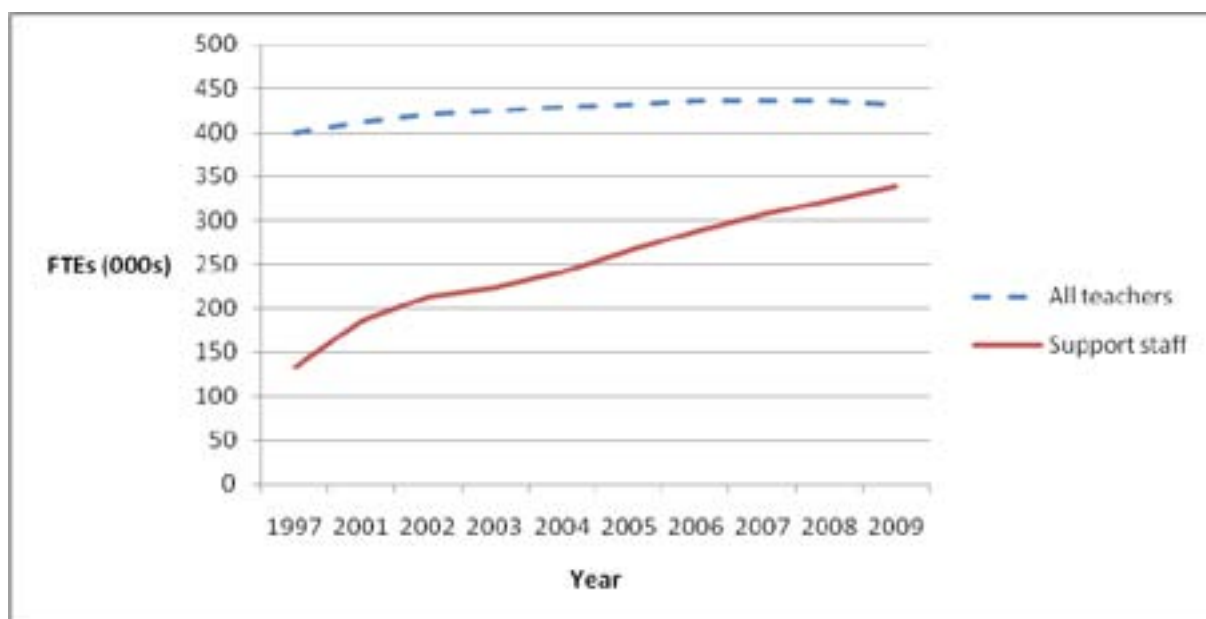
- What roles are being undertaken in schools by non-QTS staff on SLTs?
- What have been the drivers for change?
- What is the impact of these roles on wider leadership teams and school effectiveness and improvement?
- What are the professional backgrounds of these leaders?
- To what extent are career routes emerging for non-QTS staff in schools to move into leadership?
- What leadership development or continuing professional development (CPD) provision is currently in place for non-QTS staff on SLTs?
- What are the issues around pay and conditions for non-QTS staff in schools?
- How might the range of roles of non-QTS staff continue to develop in schools?

The findings are set out under these questions before presenting the concluding comments. This is preceded by examination of the current situation with regard to the number and role of non-QTS staff in schools.

The number of support staff in schools has risen in recent years

According to data from the (then) DCSF (2009a) – now the Department for Education - over a million people currently work in schools or other educational settings, of which 338,000 full-time equivalents (FTEs) are members of support staff. The number of support staff in the local authority maintained school sector rose by 15,600 to 338,000 in January 2009 compared with January 2008. Of these, 130,600 FTEs are teaching assistants; 70,800 are administrative staff; 24,200 are technicians and 61,800 are other support staff (DCSF, 2009a). Moreover, as Figure 1.1 indicates, the number of support staff in schools has increased more rapidly than teaching staff between 1997 and 2009, indicating that support staff also now make up a far greater proportion of the school workforce.

Figure 1.1 FTE teaching and support staff (000s) 1997–2009



Source: DCSF 2009a (adapted)

The role and influence of support staff has changed

In many schools, the increasing influence of support staff is accompanied by their growing role on the SLT. According to the independent study into school leadership conducted by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007), 56 per cent of secondary schools, and 15 per cent of primary schools have one or more members of senior support staff on their leadership teams, with diversity being greatest in special schools.

A number of previous policy developments had placed schools at the core of an educational delivery system where it was not possible for one individual (the headteacher or equivalent role) to lead on everything, but where leadership on key tasks needed to be distributed to those with the appropriate expertise. In parallel, workforce reform had greatly expanded the number of non-QTS staff working in schools and the roles that they fulfil.

2.1 What roles are being undertaken by non-QTS staff on SLTs in schools?

The growth and diversification of senior leadership roles in schools has opened up a range of opportunities for non-QTS staff to occupy influential roles on SLTs. These roles include bursars; school business managers (SBMs); office managers; managers responsible for extended services and inclusion; ICT co-ordinators and special educational needs co-ordinators (SENCOs) (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007; Robinson et al, 2008). Staff in all of these roles are vital in supporting the management of systems and services within school, enabling qualified teaching staff to focus on their core task of delivering teaching and learning. However, the evidence-base relating to many of these roles is limited, with most focusing on the roles of bursars and SBMs. Therefore, the majority of this section is occupied with evidence relating to non-QTS staff in SBM roles.

The role of the SBM has become particularly prominent under the stewardship of the National College. In 2007, 60 per cent of maintained secondary schools and 13 per cent of maintained primary schools had an SBM on their leadership teams (National College, 2008). Overall, 38 per cent of headteachers now have access to support from an SBM or school business director. SBMs tend to work within one school, while directors 'operate in larger, more complex groups of schools such as federations, trusts and other formal partnerships including those in cross-phase and multi-agency settings' (National College, 2009: 58–9).

The independent study into school leadership by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007) found that SBMs and bursars perform similar roles, although there are differences between the responsibilities of the two professions. The research found that SBMs spent more time managing premises and support staff, as well as strategic planning, whereas bursars played a more influential role in school improvement planning.

By contrast, Robinson et al (2008) found that bursars often assume overall responsibility for the training and development of support staff, particularly in secondary schools. Both roles spend a significant amount of time on finance, office management and, to a lesser extent, extended services.

The main responsibilities for office managers are office management; finance; staff recruitment and retention; and administration. Some senior support staff also have an external role. For example, project or development managers may provide external support for other schools and liaise with colleges (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007). Support for particular groups of staff may be led by non-QTS staff with particular expertise in that area. For example, ICT co-ordinators are often responsible for technicians in both primary and special schools, and SENCOs for staff members responsible for teaching assistants and pastoral staff (Robinson et al, 2008).

2.2 What have been the drivers for this change?

The changing nature of school leadership can be best understood in the context of numerous policy reforms that challenged the traditional concept of the school as a single unit in favour of an integrated approach to learning in which school leaders were asked to work as partners with a whole range of services to meet the needs of children, young people and the wider community (Craig & O'Leary, 2006). This collaborative approach to delivering educational outcomes (Coleman, 2006; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007) is now very much embedded within schools and wider children's services. A recent NFER study suggested that the challenge for school leaders is 'to develop and implement models of leadership that are effective in addressing this agenda, and that facilitate and sustain effective partnerships with other agencies' (Atkinson et al, 2007: 1).

School leaders have been required to develop a range of skills and approaches in responding to these challenges and a fundamental reconsideration of the ways in which schools operate has taken place (Coleman, 2006), which reflects schools' need to be more outward facing, working in partnership across the children's services sector (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007). These changes have brought together responsibility for education and children's social services under a single director of children's services, provoking more effective integrated working practices and creating a more accountable structure for responding to children's needs.

Schools are taking a wider view of education, with a broader perspective that considers the whole needs of the child. Patterns of school leadership have shifted to encompass a wider range of skilled professionals distributed across strategic, management and operational roles (Munby, 2007). This approach was driven by a number of previous policy priorities (such as the 2020 Children and Young People's Workforce Strategy [DCSF, 2008]); the dissemination of distributive leadership; and the clear moral purpose and belief in the benefits of extended services, which are seen as key to sustaining this model (Coleman, 2006; Cummings et al, 2004; PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007).

Chapman et al's (2009a) research into emerging patterns of school leadership also identified that a need to redefine local provision in response to national drivers (such as multi-agency working, the Primary Capital Programme and Building Schools for the Future) had affected the constitution of the school workforce; alongside the drive to ensure high-quality leadership across schools, including those schools causing concern. However, Chapman et al (2009a) go on to say that local drivers also play an important role in catalysing change, which can be broadly categorised into: dissatisfaction with current arrangements for school leadership coupled with opportunities to improve; individual drive and vision demonstrated by existing school leaders; and more philanthropic motives to effect change. An example of the latter 'is exemplified by the case of a housing trust becoming involved in the creation of a new academy within the locality. Under the slogan "improving the life chances of our tenants", the housing trust is seeking to extend the positive impact it has had within the community into two of its schools' (Chapman et al, 2009a: 9).

2.3 What is the impact of these roles on wider leadership teams and school effectiveness and improvement?

The positive impacts of an increased role for the wider school workforce can be clearly demonstrated, particularly upon school effectiveness and pupil performance. In particular, the literature focuses on the role of SBMs in enabling teachers to focus on their core mission of teaching and leading learning. No major negative effects were reported, although it was found that evaluation of such effects in school is limited.

Previous research by NFER for the National College has shown that strategies to transform the roles of the wider school workforce have been very successful in realising leaders' commitment to a holistic child-, parent- and community-centred approach to learning, and found that embedding such strategies into school structures and systems is likely to ensure sustainability of this approach (Kendall et al, 2007).

Research by Ofsted (2008) into the deployment, training and development of the wider school workforce showed that the role of senior support staff had an indirect but important impact on pupils' achievement and the effectiveness of the school, by reducing the 'workload of senior and middle leaders who were therefore able to devote more time to monitoring the quality of teaching and learning' (Ofsted, 2008: 8). This has had a positive impact on both learning and school performance outcomes, as 'the increasing effectiveness of these staff meant that senior managers and teachers were better informed about pupils' learning needs and therefore better able to provide the necessary support to bring about improvement' (Ofsted, 2008: 8). Ofsted (2008) also found that:

...support from well qualified and experienced personnel from professions outside education enabled headteachers and senior teams to spend more time on strategic leadership and management. The substantial expansion of the wider workforce at all levels was allowing schools to extend the curriculum, provide more care, guidance and support for pupils, and use data more effectively to monitor pupils' progress.

Ofsted, 2008: 7

In particular, the appointment of SBMs is viewed as a major contribution to improving efficiency within schools. Evidence has shown that the use of SBMs in school can both reduce costs and generate income for schools (National College, 2008). The employment of specialist personnel in areas such as purchasing, finance and human resource management is creating opportunities for pooling resources and sharing budgets across federated schools and collaborative partnerships. This is intended to allow qualified teachers to concentrate fully on their teaching and development of their professional knowledge (Chapman et al, 2009b). However, 'although there was a strong perception that the reforms were having a positive effect on pupils' achievement, few of the schools visited at that time were evaluating the impact of their actions on raising standards...' (Ofsted, 2008: 7).

2.4 What are the professional backgrounds of these leaders?

None of the literature examines in depth the professional backgrounds of non-QTS staff in school leadership positions, although examples highlighted by Mongon & Chapman in their 2009 report, *Emerging Patterns of School Leadership: ECM Perspectives*, indicate that these backgrounds may be quite diverse. For example, Mongon & Chapman refer to a member of non-QTS staff from a housing association on secondment within an academy. This role is motivated by the potential community benefits offered by the partnership, and the background of this member of staff makes her well placed to develop wraparound services for pupils (Mongon & Chapman, 2009).

2.5 To what extent are career routes emerging for non-QTS staff in schools to move into leadership?

Chapman et al (2009a) report that a key consequence of the increasing role and influence of non-QTS staff in schools has been a challenge to traditional line-management hierarchies in favour of a broader and more complex set of management relationships. This has, in turn, opened up opportunities for school leaders to develop new skills as 'negotiators, facilitators and brokers within often diffuse relationships with minimal history and competing agendas' (Chapman et al, 2009a: 13). Increasingly, other senior staff within schools are taking on tasks previously carried out by headteachers. This provides new opportunities for such colleagues to take on responsibility and, in so doing, gaining greater possibilities to develop their leadership and management skills (Chapman, 2009a).

PricewaterhouseCoopers found that many non-QTS staff would value more opportunities for development and training at all levels of leadership, arguing that ‘many support staff felt disenfranchised in terms of career progression’ (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007: 102). PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007) also found that:

there was evidence from responses relating to the future of school leadership that a cultural divide between teaching and support staff was hindering the effective working of the school and that the development of support staff in terms of career progression could receive greater emphasis.

PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007:103

2.6 What leadership development or CPD provision is currently in place for non-QTS staff on SLTs?

There is consensus that in order for support staff to achieve their full potential they require appropriate professional development and support.

Previous NFER research has reported that CPD is moving along a continuum towards: a more strategic role; a focus on the whole-school workforce; highlighting in-school provision, such as coaching and mentoring; identifying needs through performance management and review, and balancing the needs of the individual and the school; and monitoring and evaluating the short- and long-term impact of CPD (Teeman et al, 2008).

Leadership and CPD provision for certain roles among non-QTS staff on the SLT is good. Research by the National College (2008; 2009) showed that the introduction of a strategic-level Diploma in School Business Management (DSBM) has helped SBMs to develop their role within the school’s SLT and has provided them with a clear framework for progression. According to the National College:

Over 90 per cent of graduates from the College’s certificate and diploma programmes for school business management say their ability to operate as leaders has been enhanced as a result of their work on the programmes. Among diploma graduates, 77 per cent subsequently became full members of their senior management team.

National College, 2009: 58–9

The research also showed that some SBMs have progressed beyond this to study for a BA in school business management. Internally, SBMs felt that their role and impact within school was heavily dependent on their relationship with the school’s headteacher, and in some cases the local authority. However, across support staff more widely, Robinson et al (2008) found that CPD leaders kept up to date on current developments for support staff far less frequently than they kept up to date for teachers (Robinson et al, 2008:24).

The picture is likely to be somewhat different across different sectors of the school system. Blatchford et al (2009), in their report on the deployment and impact of support staff in schools between 2004 and 2009, report differences between primary, secondary and special schools in terms of appraisal, supervision, and line management and performance review of support staff. Overall satisfaction with training was high but support staff in secondary schools were less satisfied with the training received and training opportunities available to them, compared with staff in primary and special schools (Blatchford et al, 2009).

Robinson et al (2008) recommend that ‘there may be benefits in giving further consideration to providing training, information and support specifically for all those in schools who are responsible for the professional development needs of support staff’ (Robinson et al, 2008). CPD leaders’ preferred methods of support would be practical and proven methods such as toolkits for training and development, leadership induction packs, and research evidence of effective practice. Schools have also identified a need for more than one person to assume CPD responsibilities for staff.

There is evidence that measures are being put in place to rationalise the process of CPD and leadership development for non-QTS staff in schools. The Training and Development Agency for Schools (TDA) has led on the development of an Integrated Qualifications Framework (IQF) for the children’s workforce. As part of this, a process now exists to enable higher education institutions (HEIs) to be endorsed to provide qualifications or school support staff which are eligible to be included in the IQF.

2.7 What are the issues around pay and conditions for non-QTS staff in schools?

The research by PricewaterhouseCoopers (2007) identified a number of issues relating to pay and conditions for non-QTS staff in schools, which have a negative impact on the appointment of senior support staff to leadership teams. PricewaterhouseCoopers report that levels of pay offered are sometimes lower than equivalent QTS positions. Its survey data showed that 60 per cent of QTS members of the senior leadership team earned less than £40,000 compared with 83 per cent of senior support staff members (PricewaterhouseCoopers, 2007: 126), and that there are contractual differences and potential inequalities between QTS and non-QTS staff in respect of holidays and overtime. PricewaterhouseCoopers found that the issue was most pertinent in community schools where support staff are employed by the local authority rather than the individual school, as salaries of senior support staff are generally higher for those employed by the school than by the local authority.

Research by Blatchford et al (2009) endorses this view. They found that several factors influenced pay and conditions for support staff, including individual characteristics such as qualifications, gender and age; and school characteristics such as school size and geographic location. Pay was also affected by a disadvantage effect, reflected in higher wages being more likely where there was a higher percentage of pupils with SEN and pupils eligible for free school meals. Blatchford et al (2009) found that support staff were generally positive about their level of job satisfaction, how much they felt appreciated by their school, their contracts and conditions of employment, working arrangements, and the training and development they had received in their role. Whilst there was relatively less satisfaction with training and development opportunities available to them (see section 2.6), there was still less with their pay (Blatchford et al, 2009).

2.8 How might the range and roles of non-QTS staff continue to develop in schools?

Little of the literature specifically addresses how the range and roles of non-QTS staff may continue to develop in schools from this point onwards. However, the National College (2008) identified that some graduates of the DSBM had suggested the need for greater recognition in school, possibly to include further training leading to a consultant school business manager role. In response, the (then) DCSF – now Department for Education – commissioned the National College in December 2007 to develop and run 35 (27 core and 8 rural) senior school business manager demonstration projects across England. The aims of the projects were to explore the practical implications and impact of fully utilising an advanced school business manager (ASBM) or school business director (SBD) to lead the school business management function within a range of school settings. Since the launch of the demonstration projects, the College has developed an Advanced Diploma of School Business Management (ADSBM) programme. This is designed to help SBMs to make enhanced contributions in increasingly complex organisational settings, such as consortiums, federations, clusters or schools providing extended services. In addition, the School Business Director programme provides experienced and aspiring school business directors with the opportunity to provide direction and manage resources in some of the most innovative and challenging settings in the education sector.

2.9 Concluding comments

The evidence-base for the changing role and influence of senior support staff indicates that there is a growing niche for personnel with well-developed skills outside the teaching profession to drive forward school effectiveness and improvement and in doing so enhance pupils' learning. It is clear, however, that this approach to school leadership is still in the process of emerging and that a range of issues relating to the professional background of non-QTS staff, their professional development and conditions of service, and the wider school environment require further investigation. In particular, the key issues identified for further study in this scoping phase relate to the professional background of non-QTS leaders and their future professional development, and the range and roles of non-QTS staff and their opportunities to move into senior leadership positions. In addition, in terms of professional development, the more specific issue around the needs of non-QTS staff who aspire to become headteachers, on which there appeared to be no literature available, was also raised. Strand 2 of this research is therefore timely in helping to further understand these roles in order to increase the positive benefits of senior support staff in schools.

Roles and background

Key findings

- Across the 17 case-study schools, it was uncommon for more than one member of the senior leadership team (SLT) to be from a non-teaching background.
- The majority (over half) of non-QTS staff who were on the SLT had been in post for less than three years. Indeed, the creation of non-QTS staff roles on SLTs appears to be a recent phenomenon in the case-study schools: less than one-quarter of the schools had non-QTS staff members on the SLT for four years or more.
- The types of roles that non-QTS staff took on in schools can be grouped into three broad categories: business and finance roles; community and extended services roles; and inclusion roles.
- The most common responsibility of the case-study non-QTS staff on SLTs was line managing support staff. They were also commonly responsible for: links with parents; community-based work; links with external service providers; human resources/personnel; extended services; and inclusion/learning support.
- The majority of non-QTS staff on SLTs came into post internally. Staff carrying out business and finance roles were more likely to have been sourced externally, whilst the community or inclusion posts were more likely to have been created in-house.
- Non-QTS staff brought a variety of professional backgrounds to their role. This naturally differed according to the roles they were undertaking in school. Prior experience included: previous bursar posts/business management experience; youth work; learning support experience; community work; and project management/senior responsibilities in local authorities.
- The schools involved in the research recognised the value that non-teaching professionals brought to their workforce, in particular freeing up teachers to focus on teaching and learning. They also met the demands of modern schooling by having a broader school workforce.
- The reasons given for conferring senior status on non-QTS staff included: the logic of representing non-QTS staff on SLTs; the important contributions that they can make to strategic decisions; their responsibility for areas of the school that are integral to its ethos and success; the complementary or missing skills non-QTS staff bring to the SLT; and their role as a voice for the sometimes large and valued body of support staff.

This section of the report sets out the kinds of roles carried out by the non-QTS staff on SLTs. It goes on to explore the rationale behind the development of non-QTS staff roles, as well as the reasons behind the inclusion of these staff members on SLTs.

3.1 Prevalence and length of time in post

Of the 17 schools involved in the research, only 4 had more than one non-QTS member of staff on the SLT. It was therefore uncommon for more than one member of an SLT to be from a non-teaching background.

The majority (over half) of the non-QTS staff who were on SLTs had been in post for less than three years. Indeed, three SLT posts were created within the last year, two had been in post for between one and two years, and six members of staff had been on the SLT for between two and three years. The creation of non-QTS posts on the SLT therefore appears to be a relatively recent phenomenon.

Less than one-quarter of the non-QTS staff had been in post for four years or more. The longest serving case-study staff member was an SBM who had been on the SLT for seven years.

3.2 Roles and responsibilities of non-QTS staff on SLTs

The non-QTS staff had a number of different job titles, but when considering the responsibilities they hold in school, their roles can be grouped into three broad categories:

1. business and finance
2. community and extended services
3. inclusion

The responsibilities typically associated with these roles are set out in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1: Roles and responsibilities of non-QTS staff

| Role | Typical responsibilities |
|--|---|
| Business and finance (eg business manager) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Financial management — Facilities/premises — Line managing support staff (eg catering staff, office staff, premises staff) — Human resources/personnel |
| Community and extended services (eg extended schools co-ordinator, community manager) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Community cohesion — Links with parents/parental support — Extended services — Multi-agency work/work with external services — Line managing support staff (eg community team, family liaison officer, learning mentors) |
| Inclusion (eg access and inclusion manager, teaching support manager) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Behaviour support — Inclusion/learning support — Links with parents/parental support — Pastoral care — Multi-agency work/work with external services — Safeguarding/child protection — Extended services — Line managing support staff (eg learning mentors, extended schools co-ordinator, parent support advisers) |

As Table 3.1 shows, there was some overlap between the roles and responsibilities of the non-QTS staff involved in the research. Although some tasks were common to those taking on community/extended services roles and inclusion roles (eg multi-agency work and links with parents), the difference lay in the focus on learning and behaviour in these inclusion roles. Staff in inclusion roles were more likely to contribute directly to teaching and learning in the school, and to focus specifically on raising educational attainment. Staff in community/extended services roles, however, tended to carry out a more outward-facing

role and have an indirect influence on teaching on learning. There were no discernible differences in the roles held by staff in primary and secondary schools.

By far the most common responsibility of the non-QTS staff was line managing support staff. Indeed, two-thirds of the staff took on this role. The responsibilities carried out most frequently by the non-QTS staff in the research were:

- **line managing support staff** (eg line management of catering staff, finance staff, premises staff, learning mentors, parent support advisers, community teams, extended services co-ordinators etc)
- **links with parents/parental support** (eg running parent councils, parent education, family visits, parent support adviser, events for parents etc)
- **community cohesion/community work** (eg neighbourhood regeneration work, community engagement, community involvement etc)
- **links with external service providers** (eg liaison with police, health services, social care, training providers, Connexions etc)
- **human resources/personnel** (eg dealing with grievances, recruitment, performance management etc)
- **extended services** (eg overseeing activities, linking with providers etc)
- **inclusion/learning support** (eg managing learning, managing behaviour and support centres, taking responsibility for learning mentors, youth work, informal education etc)

Other responsibilities, each identified in a few instances, included: finances; safeguarding/child protection; behaviour support/SEN support; pastoral care; health; health and safety; PR/marketing; line managing teaching staff; and transition.

The roles most commonly carried out by the non-QTS staff on leadership teams are therefore those focused on areas that complement the core work of teaching and learning in schools. They reflect ongoing priority areas, such as the role of schools in the community, the need to link with parents, and the importance of multi-agency work in order to achieve effective and efficient children's services. The line management of support staff also reflects the growing importance of non-QTS staff in schools and the widening school workforce. The roles carried out by the case-study staff are broader than those traditionally carried out by school leaders. They are also calling for skills and types of experience that might best be gained through non-teaching routes.

3.3 Development of roles

This section sets out how the non-QTS staff came into post, as well as their prior experience.

3.3.1 Internal and external recruitment

The majority of the non-QTS staff on SLTs came into post internally. In the research, 13 posts were filled internally, and 6 through external advertisement. Three of the externally advertised posts were for bursars/SBMs. Three fell into the community/extended services arena. This suggests that staff carrying out business and finance roles were likely to have been sourced externally, whilst the community or inclusion posts were more likely to have been created in-house.

It was apparent that the majority of the internally filled posts were a result of a culmination of experience in the school and a growing realisation of the importance of their role in the strategic development and effective operational management of the school. Further detail on the development of non-QTS staff roles and career development is provided in the following sections.

3.3.2 Professional background

Non-QTS staff come from a variety of professional backgrounds, which naturally differ according to the roles they currently undertake in school.

It was common for staff with **business and finance roles** to have qualifications such as the Certificate of School Business Management (CSBM) or other National College school business manager qualifications. Two people who carried out a business role had already worked in the school for some time, for example, one had begun in school as the head's personal assistant 13 years previously and had gradually overseen personnel, site management, catering and office staff, while another had been the finance and personnel clerk in the school office. Of the SBMs that were externally appointed onto the SLT, two had previous experience of this role in a different school and one came from a banking background.

Staff who took on **inclusion roles** had all joined the SLT through internal appointments. Commonly they had previously been learning mentors or support assistants in the school, and/or had experience of youth work or childcare.

Those who were in **community and extended services roles** had a broader set of professional backgrounds. These included prior experience of:

- project managing the development of the school as it became an academy
- senior leadership in the local authority
- youth/community work
- family liaison
- teaching assistance

Having knowledge of the children, young people and families in the school or being a member of the local community was considered particularly valuable by those in both the inclusion and community roles. This knowledge was seen as key to engaging with vulnerable young people and those at risk of exclusion, as well as to engaging with the local community.

3.4 Rationale for non-QTS staff roles

The schools involved in the research recognised the value that non-teaching professionals bring to their workforce (see section 4 for more details). School leaders realised that some tasks in schools were best carried out by personnel with experience other than teaching. By freeing the headteacher or other senior leaders from such tasks, they were able to focus on the core business of leading teaching and learning, whilst their colleagues developed the schools' financial capabilities, community links, extended services, or provided an inclusive education for disaffected pupils. One headteacher spoke of his growing realisation that schools need a broader workforce to meet the wide remit of schools:

The lesson we learned was that not only can the significant number of jobs that were once regarded as the preserve of teachers be done by non-teachers, but also a significant amount of the stuff that goes on in schools that teachers once did, are actually better done by people who are not teachers.

Another headteacher, of a non-QTS member of staff in a community role, also felt that support roles were sometimes best filled by someone with experience other than teaching:

The rationale is that the school sees itself as an inclusive institution, as a centre of its community, and therefore, what [name of non-QTS staff] can bring to the party is techniques and strategies that could be described as informal education, and what he brings is youth engagement and community cohesion

A deputy headteacher in a school where a former youth worker takes responsibility for inclusion on the SLT also spoke of the logic of having non-QTS staff in senior posts in schools:

It might be unusual, but the rationale behind it isn't. It's logical really isn't it? Someone like [name of non-QTS staff] comes with a skill set that equips him better than most to deal with inclusion.

The rationale behind the deployment of the non-QTS staff differed slightly with role. This is discussed below.

3.4.1 The rationale for business and finance roles

The development of the bursar/SBM role was more likely to have been influenced by national drivers, as opposed to local ones. For example, as a consequence of previous workforce remodelling, a key rationale for a business manager post was to relieve pressure on the headteacher, allowing them to focus on leading teaching and learning in their schools (also see section 4.1.1). Indeed, one headteacher commented on the need for a business manager in school:

You've got headteachers wasting an awful lot of time and effectively public money looking at asset management, procurement, buildings management, buildings regulations, health and safety checks. Our impact has been reduced significantly on teaching and learning – we've been moved away from our core tasks, and core teaching and learning role. It allows me to be more hands on, helping direct teaching and learning across school and to use my expertise. My expertise certainly isn't ordering sinks and looking at drainage. I feel more like an educator now rather than a manager at Butlin's.

An SBM also recognised the role of relieving headteachers of some of their workload:

The chair of governors realised how much pressure the head was under. They didn't have any time to lead the school, and were being taken away from the teaching and learning aspects of it. No one goes into teaching to do the kinds of things a business manager does. The object of the whole thing is obviously improving outcomes for children. If you have got your lead teacher spending time doing finance, that detracts from the outcomes for children.

Given the growing demands on headteachers, it was recognised that having someone with the skills and experience to oversee finances, premises and business matters etc, is becoming increasingly important. There is also a need for someone to oversee the growing prevalence and role of support staff in schools. All of the staff in business management roles in the research took responsibility for line management of support staff in school.

3.4.2 The rationale for community/extended services roles

The roles focusing on the community and extended services evolved as a result of both national and local drivers, which meant that schools have needed personnel who can take on responsibility for these new areas. An increasing emphasis on the role of schools in their communities and recognition of the potential for schools to contribute to community regeneration and cohesion also called for inclusion of staff with more outward-facing roles in the school workforce. These national drivers reiterate those highlighted by the scoping study.

Local drivers of the community/extended services roles included the degree of importance placed on parental involvement in some of the case-study schools (particularly in the special school sector), and the need for school staff to have local language skills and an understanding of the local culture. A headteacher of an academy, sponsored by a housing trust, described their local motivation to focus on community issues:

[The sponsors] argue, as social landlords, that their job is not just about bricks and mortar. They are trying to provide great neighbourhoods and to do this you need great schools. They define great schools not just between 9 and 3.15, but they are looking for the impact of the school on the community. We are trying to put together structures that offer 360-degree support for families and the young people that we serve.

Another headteacher commented: 'Whilst the core purpose of school for me is the learning, the culture of schools has changed considerably. So it is not just about learning, it is about care. It's about families and the community.'

There was a view that personnel carrying out such roles needed to be on different contracts than those that applied to the teaching workforce; such staff needed to be available throughout school holidays and in the evenings, and to work beyond teachers' normal conditions, as illustrated by this quote from a headteacher:

He [non-QTS staff member in a community role] is not on a teacher contract so he is available to the campus for 48 weeks a year, and he does things with children in term time, and non-term time. He works not just with the children, but also the community...the whole thrust is to provide comprehensive services for pupils and their families, 52 weeks a year, 7 days a week and you can't do that with teachers.

Therefore, employing a non-teacher was beneficial as the more flexible terms and conditions helped to manage the range of in- and out-of-school opportunities on offer in the case-study schools (see also section 4.1.3).

3.4.3 The rationale for inclusion roles

Inclusion roles carried out by non-QTS staff on SLTs were also driven by both national and local factors. Again, interviewees spoke of the importance of allowing teachers to teach, and others to focus on the social issues and barriers to learning experienced by some children and young people. Whilst speaking about a multi-agency meeting that he attends, a non-QTS assistant headteacher in an inclusion role, noted:

Teachers don't have the time to do this and in my view they shouldn't be doing that as they are there to teach. They are the experts in teaching so let them do that, and let the experts in the social education deal with that side.

The growing need to link with external agencies, particularly over matters concerning social care and child protection, as well as the need to include parents in their child's education, were all cited as drivers behind the development of non-QTS staff inclusion roles in the case-study schools. The value of support or learning assistants/mentors in schools, many of whom come into a school without teaching experience, was also a key driver. In some schools, the learning support provided by non-QTS staff and the management of support/inclusion centres in the schools was considerable and contributed significantly to school improvement (see also section 4.2).

3.5 Rationale for inclusion of non-QTS staff on the SLT

Interviewees were quick to identify a host of reasons for placing the non-QTS staff member on the SLT. Indeed, the reasons given link closely to some of the benefits for the SLT outlined in section 4.1.1.

- Logical development of the role: Interviewees felt that it was a logical decision to place the non-QTS staff on the leadership team because of the role that they are taking in school and the contributions that they make to school management and development, as noted by this SBM:

It was a natural thing. I was involved in all of the decisions, and a lot of the things I was saying were being passed back to the SLT. The head said it was ridiculous, you may as well be on it. So it was a natural thing to do.

-
- Contribution to strategic decisions: In many cases, it made sense to have the member of non-QTS staff on the leadership team so he or she could contribute to strategic decision-making (particularly those in business management roles). The value of involving personnel with an oversight of finances in strategic decisions was recognised, as was the fact that the bursars/SBMs tended to oversee important aspects of the school (eg support staff, site management, office staff etc). According to one headteacher:

[The SBM] has a large remit of school development matters with regard to all things financial [and] personnel. Lots of the operational roles within the school are carried out by him as business manager, and therefore I think it is essential that he has the ability to feed that into the [senior management team] meetings, because he has a large influence on these things.

- Responsibility for areas integral to the school's ethos and success: As set out above, the non-QTS staff were carrying out important roles in schools, and were driving agendas that contributed to school success. For example, the strategic objective of some of the case-study schools to be at the centre of their communities also led to the need for a community/extended services team member on the SLT. In recognition of the importance of their area of work to the school, it was deemed valuable to represent non-QTS staff on the SLT, as indicated by this deputy head:

The school are promoting themselves as a community school, and the person leading that needed to be on the SLT. The obvious person to do that was [the non-QTS staff member in a community/extended services role] because she already had a lot of links with families, and already had done a lot of organising of events. I feel we need someone on the SLT that has got the community as the focus.

- Provision of complementary or missing skills: It was felt that non-QTS staff, with their varied background and experience, helped to form a well-rounded leadership team. It was recognised that they contributed some skills not typically held by teaching staff, and in some cases they were also considered to have management and leadership skills that went beyond those of some of their teaching colleagues. They were also valued for their vision and drive.
- Representation of support staff: The expanding role and prevalence of support staff meant that it was important for some schools to represent support staff on the SLT and to demonstrate their value in doing so. According to one deputy headteacher, speaking of a non-QTS staff member in an inclusion role:

We looked at a needs-based approach for the staffing structure, looking at the young people and the service we needed to provide. I think the strength there is in not just having teaching staff. The different perspectives and different roles people can play and contribute to really add strength to the SLT. I really embrace the fact that we do have staff who are not teachers and play a major role on the SLT.

There was widespread commitment to placing non-QTS staff on the leadership teams, and all interviewees felt that they were contributing successfully to the school. This success is covered in the next section.

Benefits and impact

This section focuses on the benefits of the non-QTS support roles, their contribution to school improvement, the impact of their presence on the SLT and evidence of this impact.

Key points

- Key benefits for the SLT and the wider school staff were the different perspectives and the knowledge and expertise non-QTS staff brought, as well as enabling them to concentrate on teaching and learning. This was particularly the case for business and community roles. Support staff were said to be able to challenge or question thinking on the SLT.
- The most frequently cited benefit for the school staff by headteachers was the message to the wider staff group that non-QTS staff roles were valued. In contrast, the benefits most frequently cited by support staff were support for school staff and, particularly for inclusion roles, improved communication throughout the school.
- The most frequently cited benefits for pupils were the provision of time and support for students and increased opportunities for an extended curriculum. Improved attendance and behaviour, improved attainment and better quality teaching and learning were also cited. Benefits for the pupils tended to be linked more frequently with community and inclusion roles.
- The most frequently identified benefits for families were parental engagement and advice and support for parents. Non-QTS staff also played a role in developing community relations and furthering community cohesion, as well as addressing community needs and providing activities for the community. These benefits were most frequently linked to community and extended services roles.
- One of the most important ways in which non-QTS staff contributed to school improvement was by reducing teachers' workload, although they also contributed by improving outcomes for children. Those in business and finance roles contributed by managing the budget, generating income and producing efficiency savings, as well as putting in place effective systems and structures, for example, for data management.
- Being on the SLT enabled non-QTS staff, particularly those in business and finance roles, to contribute to strategic direction and planning and therefore to have a wider and more strategic influence. Support staff felt that being on the SLT demonstrated their contribution to the whole school was valued and allowed them input into the decision-making process.
- There was some agreement that evidencing impact was difficult. The most frequently cited evidence of impact was participation and attendance rates, although interviewees also referred to attainment data. There was also reported to be anecdotal evidence of impact from parents and children.

4.1 Benefits of non-QTS support roles

This section looks at the benefits for the SLT, the wider school staff, pupils, and families and the community.

4.1.1 Benefits for the SLT

The most frequently identified benefit of the non-QTS staff to the SLT was that of bringing a different perspective to discussions, one not focused solely on teaching and learning. This was a key feature identified by all types of interviewees, across all types of support roles and in primary and secondary schools. Comments like this one from a headteacher were typical: 'He [non-QTS staff member in a community and extended services role] has brought a whole new pair of eyes and a whole new approach to how we do things.' Those in inclusion roles stated that they enabled the SLT to have a holistic view of the children. Those in community and extended services roles stated that they enabled the SLT to focus on the wider impact of the school on the community. Those in business and finance roles stated that they enabled the SLT to look upon the school as a business. According to headteachers, this gave the SLT a greater understanding, for example, of the benefits of extended services or of the financial implications of decisions. A few non-QTS support staff and a few headteachers explained how support staff contributed to the strategic overview, thereby enabling the SLT to have the whole picture and to undertake more effective planning.

A number of non-QTS staff in business and community roles highlighted that support staff challenged or questioned the thinking on the SLT and thereby instigated innovation and change. According to these interviewees (from across the sectors), it was easier for non-QTS staff to question existing practice, as indicated by this non-QTS staff member in a community role: 'I ask the stupid questions that nobody else will ever ask.' This was also reiterated by an SBM: 'They [teaching colleagues] don't want to raise their head above the parapet.' This non-QTS staff member described herself as a 'catalyst for change'.

Another key benefit of their role was saving headteacher and SLT time on administrative and organisational tasks, or providing dedicated time for specific tasks. This allowed teaching staff to fulfil their own roles more effectively. This was identified by all types of interviewees and in relation specifically to business and community roles, and mainly in the secondary sector. Headteachers talked about this in relation to school improvement (see section 4.2). One interviewee in a community and extended services role spoke of meeting with service providers: 'I am a dedicated person who can meet with these people [service providers], when teachers don't have the time, and see a project through from start to finish'. A vice-principal, referring to a community role, spoke of the non-QTS staff member dealing with local residents and shopkeepers, something that the SLT previously had had to do:

That takes you away from the focus of what's actually happening in the school. The idea [is] that someone who can take on these responsibilities allows the rest of us to concentrate on what we do.

For those working with non-QTS staff, another key benefit was the expertise and knowledge that these staff brought to the SLT. Two headteachers referred in particular to business and finance roles:

Many heads don't have that tight handle on their own budget... we've got someone on site who knows the budget inside out and is able to help us make the improvements that we need.

Teachers can be fantastic thinkers but they need detail attached to what they are doing; the fine detail comes through the practicalities of the business manager.

4.1.2 Benefits for the wider school staff

The most frequently cited benefit for the school staff by headteachers, and also cited by other interviewees, was the message to the wider staff group that non-QTS staff roles are valued and make a significant contribution to the whole school. This was the case regardless of the type of role and appeared to be particularly the case in special schools. According to headteachers, this factor raised the profile of support staff and allowed those in similar positions to have career aspirations: Speaking of a member of non-QTS

staff in a community and extended services role, one headteacher commented 'He has been a positive role model [in terms of his philosophy] of, "if you are good enough, you can make it and it is worth having a go"'. The importance of this was also recognised by others, including an assistant headteacher:

Sometimes we need reminding of just how important [the support staff] are... you can sometimes take the support staff role for granted so it is good to have someone considering the impact on their jobs as well as they are all working for the common good.

A governor commented:

It's a bit of a sea change in the way people think about their colleagues.

The benefit most frequently cited by support staff, but also recognised by headteachers and governors, was support for school staff. This included being a sounding board, problem-solving and supporting staff through change. It extended across the different types of support role and across the primary and secondary sectors. Their knowledge and background were said to be beneficial in providing support for staff, as illustrated by the comments of non-QTS staff in business and finance roles:

I guess I have become a pastoral support for staff. I think the teaching staff value that... because of my involvement in so many areas... people don't necessarily want to go to other senior staff or to the head about some things.

I am almost the go-between sometimes. I am the one that everybody and anybody can talk to.

A further benefit, which reiterated the findings from the scoping study and one acknowledged by all types of interviewees, was the time saved for other staff, thereby enabling teachers to concentrate on teaching and learning. This was the case for business and finance roles, where the burden of administrative and organisational tasks was relieved for teachers, and for extended services and community roles, where support staff had knowledge of the local community and teachers did not have time to make these links. It also appeared to be a particular benefit for primary school staff. One deputy headteacher, who described a support staff colleague as their 'main prop', explained the benefit of the non-QTS role:

It is very difficult, from a deputy's point of view, to be able to discuss certain things with teaching staff... I think that it is an important role in that it is away from teaching.

One governor commented that, in her school:

We have gone beyond just relieving [teachers] of work and we have people who are proactive in non-QTS roles.

Another benefit identified by non-QTS staff and headteachers, particularly for inclusion roles, was improved communication throughout the school. This was the case in primary, secondary and special schools. As a result, staff had greater awareness and understanding of support roles, as well as shared knowledge of pupils and students. The importance of being on the SLT was highlighted by an interviewee with an inclusion role: 'Being on the SLT makes sure that, right from the top, the communication is good throughout the staff'. Similarly, according to one headteacher, '[The business and finance role] has made the whole communication business so much better.'

Other benefits, each identified by a few non-QTS staff and a few headteachers, included: the resolution of behaviour problems; improved links with the community; effective deployment of resources; increased professional development and career development opportunities; and the development of new teaching methods.

4.1.3 Benefits for pupils and students

The most frequently cited benefit for pupils and students, mainly as a result of inclusion and community roles, was that of providing time and support for students. This benefit was identified across primary, secondary and special schools.

According to one non-QTS staff, teachers were increasingly finding it difficult to find the time for pupils:

Teachers teach and they are often unavailable to speak to students. We are, in effect, on call all the time because we are in an area that is accessible to them. They know where they can find us.

In addition, the different relationship between pupils and non-QTS staff compared with their relationship with teachers was said to make it easier for pupils to talk to support staff.

The factor of increased opportunities for an extended curriculum was identified by support staff and headteachers alike as a benefit for students, and which extended across the different types of support roles. It was a particular benefit for secondary schools, but was also identified in the case of one primary and one special school. Those in business and finance roles talked about finding funding for extra activities or to improve the school environment. Extended services and inclusion staff recounted how schools were able to offer more activities and to extend the curriculum beyond the normal school day: 'Our whole way of working has changed... people are more flexible in their hours and we don't think of ourselves as a 9am until 3.30pm school,' said one non-QTS staff member in a community and extended services role.

Support staff also spoke of improved attendance and behaviour as a result of community and inclusion roles, across the sectors, whilst a few headteachers cited raised aspirations for pupils (they referred to improved outcomes for children when asked about school improvement – see section 4.2). Non-QTS staff and their close colleagues stated that pupils had better attainment results or received better quality teaching and learning as a result of their input. This was attributed not only to the support given to pupils and work within the community to raise aspirations, but also to teachers being able to focus on teaching and learning: One SBM interviewed said that the role of undertaking administrative and organisational tasks for teachers:

leads to a better educational experience for the children, better outcomes, because the people who are trained in the teaching and learning side are concentrated solely on that. It is bound to be better for the pupils; it has to be.

A few interviewees, particularly from primary and special schools, highlighted understanding the holistic needs of pupils as a benefit of community and inclusion roles: 'We get familiar with the children earlier on... so we can tailor things more consistently for them throughout the whole school,' said a non-QTS staff member in a community/extended services role. The importance of being on the SLT was stressed by this non-QTS staff member in an inclusion role: 'Teaching is only one element of the whole package... if your SLT is made up of a wider group... there is a bigger understanding of the holistic needs of our pupils.' This reiterates findings in the scoping study, which indicated that the wider staff group was better informed about children's needs as a result of the input of non-QTS support staff.

4.1.4 Benefits for families and communities

The most frequently identified benefit for families, mostly attributed to community and extended services roles, and highlighted by more primary than secondary school headteachers, was that of parental engagement. Improved links with parents had led them to have greater confidence in schools, as suggested by a non-QTS staff member in a community/extended services role:

[The parents] get to know the whole setting and are comfortable with it. They know the positive aims and values of the school and are very happy before they have actually accessed it.

Having worked as a teaching assistant and a parental involvement worker previously, another non-QTS support staff member was well placed to bridge the gap between home and school. Similarly, another key benefit, identified mainly by non-QTS staff, was the advice and support offered to parents. Compared with teachers, they were said to be more accessible and to be able to direct parents to appropriate complementary services. Where non-QTS year managers had replaced teachers, an SBM noted: 'It has just been an absolute revelation; [the year managers] are accessible and able to solve problems.' Headteachers also highlighted that non-QTS staff roles had improved the skills and confidence of parents and played an important part in advocacy for parents.

The role of non-QTS staff, particularly those in community and extended services roles, in developing community relations and furthering community cohesion was considered a benefit mainly by non-QTS staff themselves. It was a benefit identified across the sectors. This was attributed to the freedom non-QTS staff had to form networks and get involved in the community: 'I am someone else who does not have to be involved in teaching and learning and can do other things,' said one non-QTS staff member in a business and finance role. In an area where community relations had been difficult historically, the community and extended services role was said to have brought the school and the community together: 'The residents now feel that they are part of school life'. In addition, interviewees referred to how non-QTS roles had helped schools address community needs and provide activities for the community. According to one headteacher, the community and extended services role allowed the school to 'get a feel from the local community about how well we are progressing and addressing their needs'. Others talked about community participation in school-based activities: 'We do get our children out into the community... We do invite people in a lot to mix with our pupils and to invite them to take part in activities that take place here,' said one non-QTS staff member in an inclusion role. The ability to engage young people and prevent them from being excluded, as cited by two support staff, was also considered beneficial for the community.

4.2 Contribution to school improvement

Support staff and headteachers agreed that one of the most important ways in which the non-QTS staff contributed to school improvement was by reducing teachers' workload and enabling them to spend their time more effectively. This was particularly the case for community and business manager roles, and in secondary schools. Contributions included easing the workload of teaching staff by dealing with support issues and taking overall responsibility for extended services, as well as relieving teachers of administrative tasks. It was said to be less about saving them time and more about allowing them to work more effectively, as noted by this SBM:

If you were to ask those headteachers [who had received business and finance support] if they were now spending less time on things they shouldn't be and more time on things they should be spending time on, such as raising standards and teaching and learning, then there would be a 'yes' across the board.

Interviewees also agreed that another key way in which the support roles, and community and inclusion roles specifically, contributed to school improvement was through improved outcomes for children. This was highlighted as a benefit in primary and secondary schools alike. One interviewee talked about pupils who, without the support provided by a colleague in an inclusion role, might otherwise have underachieved:

They have been able to get their [grades] A*C in English and maths... The work has had an impact... I wouldn't say it was the sole contributing factor... but it has been significant.

Support staff also contributed to achievement and thence to school improvement by removing barriers to learning and enhancing teaching and learning. This was identified most commonly in relation to non-QTS support roles in primary schools and attributed to helping children in the classroom, addressing behavioural problems, preventing exclusion, supporting emotional development and motivating children to attend.

Commensurate with the findings from the research literature (see section 2.3), those in business and finance roles, regardless of the sector, stated that they contributed to school effectiveness by managing the budget, generating income and producing efficiency savings, and also by putting in place effective systems and structures, such as data management systems: 'If we don't have good systems, particularly administratively, and information management systems, then teachers can't be effective'. Those in business and finance roles also made a direct contribution to the school development plan.

4.3 Impact of non-QTS staff on the SLT

All but a few of the interviewees (who were uncertain) stated that being on the SLT contributed significantly to the impact of non-QTS support roles. They articulated this in a number of ways.

The importance of the contribution of non-QTS staff to strategic direction and planning was particularly evident for business and finance roles and identified across all sectors. Coupled with this, headteachers and support staff agreed that being on the SLT enabled non-QTS staff to have a wider and more strategic impact. According to one business manager, 'You have to know what is going on in the school. Even if it is to do with teaching and learning, there will be an impact that the business manager can have on it.' Headteachers noted that having the responsibility and accountability associated with being on the SLT had allowed individuals to grow, to use their experience to develop their role and had made them more focused.

Interviewees from all sectors agreed that being on the SLT enhanced the credibility and profile of non-QTS staff, and therefore their impact. Non-QTS staff stated that they received respect and had more influence, whilst their close colleagues indicated that more significance was attached to their role as a result:

One SBM on the SLT said:

It has helped because, being on the SLT, I can actually ask people to do things and there is an element of expecting them to do it for you.

A deputy head said:

[Being on the SLT] has freed up [name of non-QTS staff member in inclusion role] to have a greater impact and has attached more significance to the role that he oversees... If he had remained a middle manager I think the work he does would have taken less value than it does now.

Some interviewees felt the influence of this factor was more important in respect of the dealings of non-QTS staff outside school, for example, when talking with parents or outside agencies: 'The mere title gives [the non-QTS staff member in a community role] gravitas, seniority and kudos,' remarked one headteacher.

There was also a sense from some non-QTS staff that being on the SLT demonstrates that they are part of the whole school: 'Being part of that makes me [an SBM] part of the community, the whole SLT and I get respect from everybody, from support staff and from teaching staff as well.' A few non-QTS staff also pointed to their being part of the decision-making process as a key factor in facilitating impact:

You have to be on the SLT to do an effective job. If you're remote from these decisions, you can't play a part in it.

If I [non-QTS member of staff in an inclusion role] was a middle leader, I wouldn't have the impact that I have now. To effect significant change in the school you need to be in the [senior management team]... decisions are made at senior management level... It is essential.

4.4 Evidence of impact

A number of support staff and headteachers, from across sectors and role types, stated that evidencing impact of non-QTS roles is difficult either because roles were in their infancy, because it was difficult to attribute impact directly to the role or because outcomes were difficult to measure.

The most frequently identified evidence of impact was to do with participation and attendance rates. This was more frequently cited as evidence in primary schools and federations than in secondary schools. It included the attendance and participation of parents, for example in parents' evenings and consultation meetings, as well as pupil attendance. According to one interviewee in an inclusion role within a primary school, since taking up the role, attendance had gone up from 80 to 95 per cent. Interviewees also talked about evidence of parents and pupils having a voice.

Interviewees from all sectors referred to improvements in attainment data as evidence of impact. Whilst this was attributed to direct input from support roles and to teachers having more time to focus on teaching and learning, interviewees often clarified this by saying that it was not the sole contributing factor.

Instances were cited of improved reception scores and improved Year 6 SATs results where non-QTS community and extended service staff were on the SLT. There was reported to be anecdotal evidence of impact from parents and children, particularly in special schools. Support staff also cited dealing with staff issues and professional development for staff as having an important impact, although the former was said to be very difficult to evidence.

A few interviewees also referred to each of the following as evidence of impact: new systems and structures; partnerships with external agencies; achievement of targets; behaviour records; inspections; targeting of funding and resources; the range of activities and opportunities for pupils; and development plans. The evolution of the role was cited as evidence by one interviewee, as was involvement in a national pilot to develop leadership skills. A few interviewees also spoke about evidence-gathering in terms of evaluation and monitoring of services and questionnaires used with parents and young people.

Issues and challenges

Key findings

- Non-QTS staff in 12 case-study schools identified problems related to their pay and conditions. In five schools, the capacity of school leaders to place non-QTS staff on the leadership scale was constrained by local authority guidelines.
- Five members of non-QTS staff had experienced problems related to the size and scope of their role due to the nature of their responsibilities: they are often required to work additional hours to meet the needs of parents and families, and staff working in extended services roles are frequently required to work at evenings and weekends, as well as during traditional school holiday periods.
- Five members of non-QTS staff had experienced difficulties surrounding their understanding of teaching and learning. Non-QTS staff found it challenging to learn school protocols, and to understand the educational terminology used by teachers and SLT members.
- Six members of non-QTS staff reported that managing relationships with colleagues had been a challenge associated with their role on the SLT. Another six recognised the potential for such challenges to arise, although they had not experienced any difficulties themselves.
- Concerns about relationships with colleagues were felt more keenly by members of non-QTS staff who were promoted from a junior position within the school than those who were appointed directly onto the SLT. There may be an issue that whilst headteachers are likely to recognise intuitively when a teacher excels in his or her role, it may be more difficult to recognise talent in non-QTS staff. Headteachers may benefit from becoming more attuned to identifying the skills that non-QTS staff have, and in this sense, headteachers' skills could be developed.
- Non-QTS staff, colleagues, headteachers and governors alike reported that initial challenges had been largely resolved as the roles of non-QTS staff had become more established and the benefits of their roles more widely recognised.

Non-QTS staff from six case-study schools had not experienced any problems or difficulties associated with their role on the senior leadership team (SLT). This included staff from three primary schools, two secondary schools and one special school. However, other case-study respondents identified four key areas of concern:

1. pay and contractual conditions, including pay progression opportunities
2. non-QTS staff's understanding of teaching and learning
3. working conditions as a result of the scale and scope of non-QTS roles
4. non-QTS staff members' working relationships with colleagues

5.1 Pay and conditions

Commensurate with the findings from the literature scoping study, non-QTS staff in 12 case-study schools identified concerns relating to their pay and contractual conditions. These concerns were evenly distributed between primary and secondary schools. Eight members of non-QTS staff reported that their schools had difficulty placing them on a pay scale that would lead to pay progression opportunities commensurate with their skills and expertise, and a further three reported lack of parity between QTS and non-QTS salaries. Two members of non-QTS staff reported that their schools had difficulty placing them on a contract that adequately reflected their roles and responsibilities.

The findings show that the practice of employing non-QTS staff in some schools is ahead of national and local policy, which has led to concerns about pay and conditions. In five schools, the capacity of school leaders to place non-QTS staff on the leadership scale was constrained by local authority guidelines. This was identified as a particular issue by non-QTS staff occupying business and finance roles. There was a view that many local authorities have been slow to recognise the value of non-QTS staff, and have therefore been reluctant to reflect this in their job descriptions and salary bands. One school suggested that school job descriptions and pay scales are traditionally hierarchical and determined by the number of line management responsibilities held. This can sometimes disadvantage non-QTS staff because line management responsibilities do not always fall within their remit. One headteacher commented:

It's a nonsense that pay is linked to the number of people you manage. [It is easy to] appreciate their importance to the school and their value to the students. And yet because they don't line manage people in the performance management sense, we're limited in what we can pay them.

A non-QTS member of staff agreed:

For many colleagues there is a huge issue around local authorities recognising the responsibilities of the post and the remuneration that should go alongside... I bring to that table my skills and my knowledge that [teachers] don't have, [members of the SLT] bring theirs that I don't have and that is the way it should be.

Of the two members of non-QTS staff who reported difficulties in gaining a contract that adequately reflected their position, one found that her local authority struggled with the wording and content of a school contract without teaching responsibilities. The other had experienced similar difficulties, and had been placed on a support staff contract which did not reflect the hours she was required to work during school holidays. This was not comparable with the contractual conditions of other SLT members, who were paid for holidays as well as term time.

Concerns around pay and conditions were echoed by seven headteachers, one of whom reported 'a huge disparity in the pay and conditions of support staff and teaching staff'. In order to overcome this, some headteachers have had to use antiquated clerical pay scales in order to most closely match non-QTS salaries with the other members of the SLT. Headteachers commented that they felt restricted by regulations and frustrated that they could not offer non-QTS staff an appropriate level of pay within the normal leadership scale. One school had managed to overcome some of these concerns by sharing the salary of a non-QTS staff member with the youth service within their local authority.

5.2 Understanding of teaching and learning among non-QTS staff

Five members of non-QTS staff had experienced problems related to their understanding of teaching and learning. This was felt most keenly by staff in secondary schools. In particular, non-QTS staff found it challenging to learn new protocols and processes, as well as to understand the educational terminology used by teachers and SLT members. One non-QTS staff member described joining the school from a different professional culture as a 'steep learning curve'.

Understanding of teaching and learning was a particular concern for non-QTS staff who were required to give feedback on curriculum-based activities. For example, one recently promoted member of staff with a sports specialism had agreed with school leaders that it would be beneficial to observe and give feedback on PE lessons. Despite his subject expertise, this responsibility required the member of non-QTS staff to gain an understanding of areas such as professional targets and Ofsted criteria to enable him to make professional judgements of the quality of teaching and learning. He was able to address these challenges by drawing on support from senior teaching staff in the department.

Colleagues of non-QTS staff reported that staff members from different backgrounds are often able to bring a new perspective to the SLT. As a result they are well placed to encourage SLT members to be more reflective when making decisions, and to challenge established routines and procedures within the school. Indeed, this was highlighted as one of the main benefits to the SLT (see section 4.1.1). Several members of non-QTS staff had developed an excellent understanding of teaching and learning (for example, by undertaking professional development courses).

Other non-QTS staff recognised the importance of understanding teaching and learning processes, but commented that it was also important to value the distinction between teaching and other activities within the school. This view was echoed by governors, who reported a growing understanding among teachers that school staffing is becoming more complex, reflecting an understanding of the wider needs of children beyond teaching and learning. One governor felt that it was a helpful distinction to consider the membership of the SLT as pertaining to two distinct groups: first, those curriculum leaders who have qualified teacher status and are focused on improving standards and attainment, and second, school managers who are non-QTS and who perform tasks that are unrelated to learning. The governor reported that this approach would be beneficial in improving school effectiveness as well as pupils' experience of learning. Similarly, a non-QTS staff member commented:

There is a blurring of the lines in terms of people's understanding, but there is no blurring of the lines in terms of the jobs that I am given to do... Staff would view me as someone on the SLT who can help them deal with particular issues. If it's teaching and learning, it's not me... if it's about working with local employers, working with health, then I am the conduit who can help.

5.3 Size and scope of non-QTS roles

Five members of non-QTS staff had experienced difficulties in relation to the size and scope of their role, which was attributed to lack of clarity about what could reasonably be expected of staff without a teaching timetable. This included staff in two primary schools, two secondary schools and one special school. In particular, colleagues and non-QTS staff working in community roles identified problems relating to the outward-facing nature of their responsibilities: they are often required to work additional hours to meet the needs of parents and families, and staff working in extended services roles are frequently required to work at evenings and weekends, as well as during holiday periods. For example, one non-QTS community manager reported that he often visited families in their homes after work, and took telephone calls from parents at his own home.

Two colleagues of non-QTS staff also raised concerns about the scale of the responsibilities that non-QTS are expected to fulfil. This was echoed by non-QTS staff themselves, who reported difficulties in completing their tasks within normal contracted hours. One non-QTS staff member in a business and finance role reported working in excess of 60 hours a week as a result of the range of responsibilities within her remit. Colleagues also noted that non-QTS staff are not given the same level of administrative support as senior leaders in teaching roles, and often work as part of smaller teams with few networks of professional support.

The colleague of non-QTS staff member described his role as ‘massive’ and added:

There is a risk that it could grow out of all proportion... he is very busy, and a weakness is that we haven't given him a big enough team.

Three members of non-QTS staff had been able to overcome concerns about the size and scope of their role by working with their school to develop flexibility within their contracts. This enabled staff with a requirement to work outside normal teaching hours to take time off in lieu and to take annual leave during term time. Others reported that they were able to share the burden of work with other senior leaders within the school. For example, one non-QTS staff member works a greater number of hours in the holidays, and is compensated by other members of the SLT taking on the majority of evening responsibilities. Measures such as these have alleviated additional burdens on non-QTS staff, allowing them to concentrate on their primary responsibilities. However, one headteacher noted that much greater contractual flexibility would be required to facilitate this approach in the long term.

5.4 Relationships with other staff

Six members of non-QTS staff reported that managing relationships with colleagues had been a challenge associated with their role on the SLT. Another six recognised the potential for such challenges to arise, although they had not experienced any difficulties themselves.

Concerns about relationships with colleagues were felt more keenly by members of non-QTS staff who were promoted from a junior position within the school than those who were appointed directly onto the SLT. This was the same across school sectors. For example, one recently promoted member of staff had experienced difficulties in establishing a new dynamic with colleagues after assuming line management responsibilities within her school. In some cases this has been a source of tension: one headteacher reported that on promoting a member of staff to the SLT, other members of non-QTS staff resigned as they felt that their contribution to the school had been overlooked. In other cases, non-QTS staff experienced difficulties in winning the support of school leaders. One non-QTS staff member found it difficult to establish a new role within a longstanding leadership team, many of whose members held a traditional view of how schools should be managed: ‘It was something quite different for them to think that someone who wasn't a qualified teacher could have an impact or a contribution.’ There may be an issue that whilst headteachers are likely to recognise intuitively when a teacher excels in their role, it can be more difficult for them to recognise talent in non-QTS staff. Headteachers may benefit from becoming more attuned to identifying the skills that non-QTS staff have, and in this sense, headteachers' skills could be developed.

Non-QTS staff who did not have difficulty in managing relationships with colleagues attributed this to colleagues' recognition of the specific value they add to the school. This was particularly true for non-QTS staff members who joined the school via an external appointment or secondment. In many cases this was because these staff had the opportunity to establish their authority in a previous role. For example, one non-QTS staff member reported the ability to manage relationships with colleagues was aided by his previous engagement with this school in a well-respected position within the local authority. Non-QTS staff, their colleagues, headteachers and governors alike reported that initial challenges had been largely resolved as the roles of non-QTS staff had become more established and the benefits of their roles more widely recognised.

Professional development and career progression

Key findings

- Non-QTS staff were generally very positive about the support and training that had been made available to them, and most felt that their role-specific support needs were being met.
- Bursars and SBMs appeared to derive a lot of their training from the National College suite of programmes (specifically CSBM, DSBM and ADSBM). This was in contrast to the majority of the other non-QTS support staff who indicated that most of their training had been delivered in-house or by their local authority.
- The main barriers cited by non-QTS staff to accessing training included: the cost of training; the time taken to go on training; and finding training that was of sufficient quality and relevance to the role being undertaken.
- With the possible exception of SBMs, it was notable that few non-QTS staff said they had undertaken training with a leadership and/or management focus.
- Less than half of the non-QTS staff interviewed said they were part of a local or national support network of professionals in similar roles.
- For many of the support staff interviewed, their current roles represented the pinnacle of career progression opportunities for support staff within their schools.
- Several non-QTS staff commented that having opportunities to train was not the same as having genuine opportunities for career advancement, and in this sense, many non-QTS staff could not see how they could develop further. Two non-QTS staff, however, aspired to becoming headteachers.
- Given the perceived lack of career progression opportunities available to non-QTS support staff, it is perhaps not surprising that many of the support staff interviewed were unsure or unclear about how their roles would develop over the next 12 months.

This section explores the training and development opportunities offered to non-QTS support staff and the opportunities provided by case-study schools to progress the careers of senior support staff in general. Specifically, this section (6.1 to 6.4 respectively) presents information on the:

- types of training being undertaken by senior support staff and the perceived usefulness of this training
- availability of local support networks
- opportunities for career progression
- non-QTS support staff views on how their roles would develop over the next 12 months.

6.1 Training and development opportunities

All of the non-QTS support staff we spoke to said they had been given opportunities to build on their existing skills or to develop new ones since taking up their current roles. A range of training and development opportunities had been undertaken, including general training in areas such as improving computer skills, health and safety, and fire regulations, to training designed to meet the roles and needs of specific individuals (see Table 6.1 below).

It should be noted that within the three broad groupings of non-QTS role types (as identified in section 2), there appeared to be a dearth of qualifications available for non-QTS staff in the community and extended schools group, while bursars and SBMs had a much clearer idea of the qualifications available to them. Those staff identified as working in the area of inclusion reported holding a range of qualifications related to childcare which reflected the range of professional backgrounds and prior experience held by staff in this category.

Table 6.1: Examples of role-specific training undertaken by non-QTS support staff on SLTs

| Role type | Area of training | Qualifications undertaken / programmes of study |
|---------------------------------|---|--|
| Business/finance | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Financial management | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Certificate of School Business Management (CSBM) — Diploma of School Business Management (DSBM) — Advanced Diploma of School Business Management (ADSBM) — International Leadership Programme |
| Community and extended services | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Multi-agency work — Homeschool relations — Sports leadership — Community cohesion — Community engagement — SEN registers — Data systems (eg PLASC, SIMMS) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL) |
| Inclusion | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — Behaviour management — Attendance — Safeguarding/child protection — Common assessment framework (CAF) — Social care | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> — National Leaders in Behaviour and Attendance course (NLBA) — National Diploma in Nursery Nursing (NNEB) — NVQ level 4 in Childcare — NVQ level 2 child protection training |

The bursars and SBMs we spoke to appeared to derive a lot of their training from the National College suite of programmes (specifically CSBM, DSBM and ADSBM). This was in contrast to the majority of other non-QTS support staff, who indicated that most of their training had been delivered in-house or by their local authority. Any differences in the type of training or non-QTS staff's experience of access to training appeared to be related to the role they occupied rather than whether they worked in a primary or secondary school.

Headteachers reported that non-QTS staff were offered training on a needs-led basis, guided by schools' performance review processes. In addition to role-specific training (see Table 6.1 above), senior non-QTS staff were reported to receive the same training as other members of the SLT. This included training in the use of school data and data management systems, and in at least three cases, training in leadership and management. It was notable that almost half of the non-QTS staff were being supported in studying for degrees. Eight non-QTS staff indicated they were being supported to pursue Bachelor's or Master's degrees, either financially or by being released from work to study one day a week, while one SBM was studying for a Doctorate.

A small number of headteachers said that, when first established, they had needed to raise awareness of new non-QTS posts. However, in all the case-study schools, non-QTS staff roles were now considered to be largely established or embedded. Thus, in most cases, headteachers reported that teaching staff had a good understanding of the roles and value of their non-QTS colleagues, albeit in some cases this was said to have been built up over several years. As a result, most headteachers did not see a need for additional support or guidance for teaching staff to help develop their working relationship with non-QTS staff.

Non-QTS staff were generally very positive about the support and training that had been made available to them and identified the support of the headteacher as being significant. This was the case in primary, secondary and special schools. Most felt that their role-specific support needs were being met. For example, one interviewee in a community role said his headteacher 'valued his knowledge and experience' and that 'no training opportunity had been denied' him. Another interviewee, also in a community role, said that she could not have met the needs of her role without the support of her headteacher and the SLT. Similarly, another interviewee said she could access support from 'staff at all levels' whenever she needed it. These comments typified the supportive, collaborative nature that most non-QTS staff reported they shared with their colleagues and senior leaders.

Non-QTS staff were also very positive about the external training they had undertaken. For example, an SBM, who had recently completed the ADSBM, described the course as 'unbelievably useful', and particularly valued the system leadership aspects of the course which accorded with her plans of supporting more than one school. She praised the headteacher and governing body for their support and encouragement. Indeed, many non-QTS staff pointed to the role of the headteacher in particular as being instrumental in developing their skills and in elevating their status within the school. This often manifested itself in a close working relationship. For example, one extended schools co-ordinator explained:

The head is very approachable and available. He has been very helpful in establishing my role and I feel like I have a one-to-one mentor, which is great.

In addition, headteachers were keen to highlight the value and benefits of having non-QTS support staff on the SLT for both them and the SLT (see section 4.1.1).

There was evidence to suggest that while co-training opportunities with teachers were valued, there needed to be bridging courses for support staff who felt they were at a more intermediate level than teachers. For example, one interviewee in a community and extended services role explained:

I don't want to sit in a room full of teachers because I would feel out of my depth... there seems to be a missing link for support staff who want to do some sort of intermediate course.

The main barriers cited by non-QTS staff to accessing training included: the cost of training; the time taken to go on training; and finding training that was of sufficient quality and relevance to the role being undertaken. The latter appeared to be a particularly salient point for staff in community and extended services roles: as one interviewee explained: 'You can't get a qualification in extended services'. While headteachers were generally described as being extremely supportive, one non-QTS support staff member said they felt they would need to make a compelling case in order for the headteacher to release them for training: 'The main problem would be finding the time'.

With the possible exception of SBMs, it was notable that few non-QTS staff said they had undertaken training with a leadership and/or management focus. In particular, the management of people was consistently identified as an area in which senior non-QTS staff lacked knowledge and experience. One SBM remarked that coaching and mentoring skills were essential skills for a leader:

These skills are really important for a leader nowadays because you have got to be a 'people person'. Managing change and being able to communicate that in a professional manner is important.

The same interviewee welcomed additional training in this area and suggested that colleagues who did not have these skills 'invariably don't manage their staff very well'. However, there were a small number of non-QTS staff who felt that training with a leadership and/or management focus was being targeted at teachers at the expense of non-QTS staff in senior management positions.

A small number of non-QTS staff commented on the need to gain 'a wider understanding of school leadership and a better understanding of teaching and learning processes'. One interviewee, in a community and extended services role, said he felt he needed this training 'in order to be accepted as a leader'. There was, however, evidence that where non-QTS staff had raised this, headteachers had been supportive and quick to arrange the necessary training or provision. In one example, this included giving an SBM a small group of Year 11 pupils to mentor.

6.2 Availability of support networks

Non-QTS support staff were asked if they were part of a local or national support network of professionals in similar roles. Over half said they were not, with most explaining they were not aware of the existence of any such group. This view extended across the different types of support role and across the primary and secondary sectors. However, there was general consensus that access to a support network would be beneficial, as one interviewee in a community role explained: 'I would love to meet someone else who does the same sort of job to share experiences and to discuss ways of overcoming obstacles'. A small number of interviewees reported being aware of networks for teachers that could be relevant to their roles but felt that support networks, run by support staff for support staff, would be more useful.

In total, nine non-QTS staff (five in a finance role, three in a community/extended services role, and one in an inclusion role) reported being part of a local and/or national support network. Of these, seven said they were members of local authority or county council-based networks, two said they worked with similar professionals in local schools as part of a federation or trust, and three said they were part of national networks (specifically, the National Association of School Business Management (NASBM), as part of the arrangements for the National Professional Qualification in Integrated Centre Leadership (NPQICL) or the Youth Sport Trust). Networks tended to meet face-to-face termly or every six weeks. Those attending these networks (mainly bursars/SBMs) described them as 'vital' and 'really useful'. A bursar who attended a local authority-run forum for fellow professionals every six weeks explained: 'I'm able to send emails out to people to ask them what to do for this or that and they will phone you back. I'm really lucky to be part of this network'. Another bursar, who was a member of NASBM, said that being part of the network gave her a feeling of community: 'It's good because it means you are not alone with problems and you know that others are experiencing the same difficulties as you'.

6.3 Opportunities for career progression

There was general recognition among non-QTS staff that while support staff roles were 'developing massively at the moment', it was not always clear 'where to go next' in terms of career progression. Several interviewees commented that having opportunities to train was not the same as having genuine opportunities for career advancement, and in this sense, many non-QTS staff could not see how they could develop their careers further. For many of the support staff interviewed, their current roles represented the pinnacle of career progression opportunities for support staff within their schools. One interviewee in a community and extended services role described her frustration with the lack of opportunities available for career progression:

The head said to me that one day, someone like me, who has not been a teacher, will be head of this school. That would be fantastic, but I can't wait around forever for that to happen. I feel like I'm at the top of where I can be in this job. I feel like I've mastered it so what is the next challenge? There is absolutely nowhere to go. It's very frustrating.

Similarly, an SBM felt that the only way she could progress was to leave the school and take up a new role: 'I am at the top of my game at the moment. For me, career progression will mean leading my own school or going out and doing consultancy work'.

Two of the non-QTS staff interviewed said they would ultimately like to move into a headteacher role. Their headteachers were supportive but they were uncertain whether they would qualify for the course. This links to the question raised in the scoping study about the professional development needs of non-QTS staff who wish to become headteachers. For example, an SBM who was planning to undertake the National College's National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) explained: 'The head and governing body have encouraged me to take NPQH. They are 100 per cent behind me and I am absolutely up for that'. She felt there might be problems getting on to the course, however, although her determination had not waned:

They have changed [the entry] criteria and it has made it a little bit more difficult for those without QTS to get on the course... but by hook or by crook I'll get on it.

It should be noted that while the NPQH has been revised to ensure that those getting onto it are within 12-18 months of headship, this is not a barrier to potential applicants without QTS. However, generally, non-QTS support staff were keen to stay outside teaching, and instead preferred to look for opportunities to develop their existing roles and expertise.

Headteachers were generally aware of the lack of genuine career progression opportunities available to non-QTS staff, but they were all keen to further develop their staff, albeit within their existing pay scale. Many headteachers also emphasised that support staff roles were constantly evaluated as part of performance review processes, and that job descriptions were reviewed regularly. However, there was general consensus that more could be done. One headteacher, talking about the career opportunities available to a member of the support staff with aspirations for deputy headship, acknowledged:

It's an area we need to look at. I wouldn't say we have got it right for support staff. Generally speaking, governing bodies are looking for deputies who are aspiring heads and who have the qualifications to support that. That might be a bit of a block for him.

Some headteachers also acknowledged that it was often difficult to 'plot career progression opportunities for support staff'. There was widespread belief that it was easier to see how some role types could be developed than others, as one headteacher explained:

Teaching assistants have a clearly defined route into becoming [higher level teaching assistants] (HLTAs)... but it is more difficult to develop administrative staff because there isn't a clear ladder to climb.

In this sense, it was suggested that federations or trusts could provide more opportunities for progression because of the flexibility of this structure and the diversity of school needs, as one headteacher explained:

Being part of a trust there is wider scope [for the development of non-QTS staff], in that we have five schools with varying pay spines and roles for staff. Newly appointed staff don't take on a contract with a school, but with all five schools, so they have the freedom to move between organisations. It makes it easier for internal promotions if appropriate.

Despite the apparent lack of opportunities for non-QTS staff to progress their careers, the fact that many of the non-QTS staff interviewed occupied senior — and sometimes newly created — positions in school meant that other support staff now had a new step on the career ladder to aim for, a point that was acknowledged by non-QTS staff and headteachers (see also section 4.1.2).

Some non-QTS staff felt they had limited career progression opportunities because they did not hold a teaching qualification. Indeed, many interviewees commented on how they thought there were more opportunities for career advancement for teachers than for support staff. Some headteachers were of the view that governing bodies expected members of the SLT to have, or to be able to have, teaching responsibilities, and that this view posed a challenge to progressing the careers of support staff. Despite this, one headteacher explained that it was necessary for members of the SLT to specialise in particular roles:

We get greedy [about the number of responsibilities we want members of the SLT to hold]... we have somebody who is dedicated professionally to a particular role, and they need to be — it's a massive task.

Several interviewees suggested that the perceived differences between teaching staff and support staff, including status and the types of roles held, had begun to break down in recent years, but that there was more to do, particularly in addressing differences in pay. One headteacher explained:

I would like to abandon the notion that there are cohorts of people in schools who are somehow tribal: that teachers are a tribe; [teaching assistants] are a tribe; and finance are a tribe. It's all the same – it is a workforce – and at some point someone will need to address the issues of pay scales because it is clearly the case that there are people who play a vital and significant role who are paid a lot less than people who have a professional qualification.

Despite this, many non-QTS staff described what they saw as an improving situation for support staff. For example, many non-QTS staff were aware of the availability of a training budget, and while funding appeared to be rarely if ever ring-fenced for support staff, many said they had been encouraged to access it. There was also evidence that schools were developing new staff structures and that support staff roles and positions were evolving. A bursar explained how things had progressed since she took up her post:

Before my role there was nothing. Now [the school] is starting to put a structure in place for admin and teaching assistants. It's evolving and developing, but before I took up my role there was no career structure for support staff.

Similarly, an interviewee in a community and extended services role explained how, until recently, his school 'had been making it up as they went along' but that now there was 'a longer term vision of what can be achieved and of the process [of developing people] more widely'. There was also evidence that groups of schools were working together to address this issue. For example, an SBM working as part of a federation of schools described how schools in her partnership were working together to 'try and map out career paths for support staff'. As part of this process they 'were looking at succession planning... doing their own internal training... and running a leadership course'.

6.4 Role development over the next 12 months

Given the perceived lack of career progression opportunities available to non-QTS support staff, many of the support staff interviewed were unsure or unclear about how their roles would develop over the next 12 months. Many non-QTS staff reported that their roles had progressed and developed significantly over the previous two to three years (see section 2). Consequently, the year ahead was more commonly anticipated to be one of consolidation rather than further progression. For example, an SBM explained: 'My role has changed enormously over the last two years... [but]...you cannot maintain that pace of change'. Similarly, an interviewee in a community/extended services role explained that 'in the last three years my role did develop' but that now she expected to enter a period of consolidation. These views were echoed by headteachers and governors, many of whom viewed the roles of senior non-QTS leaders as 'already being highly developed'. One headteacher echoed the views of others when he said that instead of further development 'we need to reflect on the work that has already been done'.

Broad areas of development were identified for each of the three role groupings. For example, bursars/SBMs spoke of a desire to concentrate on 'more strategic planning', including getting more involved in their school development plans and in making their roles more sustainable by planning and allocating school resources three to five years ahead. Those working in a community and extended services role generally envisaged that their remits would widen over the next 12 months, with added focus given to staging activities that would bring members of the community into the school, and on establishing projects that would in turn take pupils and teachers out of the school into the local community. Finally, some of those staff working in an inclusion role expressed an interest in playing a bigger role in the delivery and development of the curriculum, and in further developing their skills to support different pupil groups, such as those with special or additional educational needs.

Future development

Key findings

- There was widespread agreement among the non-QTS staff we interviewed that the number of roles occupied by non-QTS staff in schools would be likely to increase in the future. The reasons given for this varied, but included a perceived need for non-QTS staff to: address out-of-school issues such as working with parents; move into senior management or leadership positions; take on more responsibilities and to get more involved in running schools.
- Most, but not all interviewees agreed that the number of non-QTS staff working in schools was also likely to continue to rise. The reasons given for this included: schools needing to offer more wraparound services; the increasing role of technology in education; and the low cost of support staff relative to teaching staff.
- Several drivers were identified as contributing to the future roles of non-QTS staff. These included: ongoing changes to the school workforce; a need to meet the whole needs of the child; the issue of cost and financial savings; and a perceived need to develop the skills of non-QTS staff.

In a slight change to preceding sections, this section explores respondents' views and opinions on how the range and roles of non-QTS staff could continue to develop in schools in the future. Specifically, this section 7.1 7.3 respectively) presents respondents' views on the:

- range of roles that could be undertaken by non-QTS staff
- numbers of non-QTS staff required in the future
- drivers that could influence the range and roles of non-QTS staff

7.1 Range of non-QTS staff roles

There was widespread agreement among the non-QTS staff we interviewed that the number of roles occupied by non-QTS staff in schools would be likely to increase in the future. The reasons given for this varied, but generally related to the expectation that the value and impact of non-QTS staff would begin to be recognised more widely.

For example, several interviewees commented on an increasing need for schools to deal with out-of-school issues, a role that many suggested could be taken by non-QTS staff. One headteacher who had employed non-QTS staff in a pastoral role anticipated that this type of deployment would become more common as headteachers realised the benefits of 'always having support staff available to deal with issues that arise, such as speaking to parents'. Removing this responsibility from teachers, he argued, allowed them to focus on their core task of teaching and leading learning.

Another interviewee, in an extended services role, suggested that in the future schools would continue to focus on home-based issues which would create additional roles for non-QTS staff:

We already do a lot of work with parents, and continue to face issues at home around behaviour which are not school issues but which parents expect schools to sort out. I think schools will increasingly move in this direction.

There was a perception that more non-QTS staff would move into senior management or leadership positions and that more leadership roles would be created. One interviewee in a community role suggested that in the future, SLTs would be more frequently populated by non-QTS staff:

I don't think an SLT should be just run by teachers. If you are truly going to change the educational agenda of deprived neighbourhoods and schools you need to look wider.

Interestingly, of the 14 headteachers interviewed, only 2 had firm plans to expand the number of places on the SLT to non-QTS staff. In both cases the headteachers were looking to appoint non-QTS staff in community cohesion/extended services roles. While most of the other headteachers had not ruled out the possibility of creating new non-QTS posts on the SLT at some point in the future, there was a general feeling that in the short- to medium term, there was no identified need to bring additional skills onto the SLT.

Looking to the future, there was a view that non-QTS staff would continue to take on more responsibilities and to get more involved in the running of schools. This, several interviewees suggested, would ultimately lead to the appointment of more non-QTS headteachers. It was suggested, however, that such a change would require the removal of any remaining stigmas attached to not holding qualified teacher status.

Whatever the precise nature of the roles being undertaken by non-QTS staff in the future, it is likely that the type of roles held by support staff will be dynamic and responsive to changing needs, as one headteacher explained:

Demands change so new roles and responsibilities to meet the new challenges need to be put in place. We need to take a fresh look at the demands and then come up with roles and responsibilities that are not your traditional model. How many people would have thought 8 to 10 years ago that we would have supervisors in, or would have predicted the changing role of support staff in education generally?

7.2 Numbers of non-QTS staff

Most, but not all interviewees agreed that the number of non-QTS staff working in schools would be likely to continue to rise. The reasons given for this varied, and are explored in more detail below.

Some interviewees attributed this anticipated rise in numbers to the need for schools to offer more wraparound services. For example, one interviewee in a community role explained:

The numbers of staff will grow...they'll have to because of the changing needs of pupils in a lot of schools...It will no longer just be about their quality of education but also the quality of their lives.

Another suggestion was that the increasing role of technology in education could lead to the creation of new roles for non-QTS staff. For example, an SBM suggested: 'With the advances of technology, more teachers... will deliver lessons remotely, with many support staff left to manage the process on the ground.'

One headteacher, reflecting on the already high numbers of non-QTS staff working in schools, suggested that current school structures had developed accidentally because of the low cost of support staff relative to teachers. He explained: 'The bottom line is that increasing numbers of schools are increasing their numbers of the wider workforce because they are cheap. Anyone who argues differently is being disingenuous.' The same interviewee suggested that a more strategic approach to the employment and deployment of non-QTS staff would need to be taken in the future.

However, not all interviewees agreed that non-QTS staff numbers would continue to rise. For example, one non-QTS staff member in a community role said he anticipated that the numbers of support staff would decrease over subsequent years because of what he perceived to be a new focus on the importance of qualifications:

I think there will be fewer support staff in the coming years because the talk politically is around higher qualified people who have gone through rigorous training as a teacher to get any sort of role within a school.

7.3 Drivers

The main driver identified as contributing to the development of non-QTS staff in the future was said to be the change in focus from solely the academic development of a child to that of their academic development in the context of their wider needs. Several non-QTS staff argued that to do this would require the continued involvement of staff that brought with them a range of skills to help support the broader development of the child. One interviewee in an inclusion role explained that by embracing the views of non-QTS staff, her school had gained 'a bigger understanding of the holistic needs of our pupils'. She hoped that such an understanding would spill over into other schools. This was a view echoed by the headteacher of a special school:

It will develop because schools are diversifying. I think it's here to stay because schools are offering universal services now and we have got to make sure we deliver the most appropriate service for the children's needs and that we have got the people to deliver it and that is not always teachers.

The issue of cost and the financial savings of employing support staff relative to the benefits of employing teaching staff was something that headteachers were trying to grapple with and attracted mixed views. One headteacher recognised that at a time of cuts in public spending, high-quality support staff could offer good value for money when compared with teachers whom he said were 'an expensive commodity'. Two other headteachers were not so sure, suggesting that at a time of financial austerity school leaders could be forced to focus on recruiting teachers rather than support staff. One headteacher singled out the role of higher level teaching assistants (HLTAs), asking whether in a 'climate of accountability': 'Can heads really afford for that amount of time to be taught by a non-qualified teacher?' Similarly, a governor who was interviewed stated the opinion that it would be difficult to justify keeping someone in a community role, but not having a mathematics teacher.

Another point that was raised by several headteachers was that there was a need to develop the skills of non-QTS staff and to invest in them in general in order to unlock their potential. One headteacher captured this best when he said:

There is a reservoir of huge untapped potential and the danger is that we place limits on it and ceilings on it and we put it in boxes when in actual fact what these guys can contribute to the wellbeing of children and to the education of children and the development of community is immense if you have the confidence to release them.

Whatever the precise nature of the drivers and policy developments that will shape the future numbers and roles of the wider school workforce, it is clear that schools will continue to rely on non-teaching staff as part of their offer of support to pupils. As one headteacher explained: 'Schools in general can't fail to see the need and necessity of non-QTS staff'.

Concluding comments

The overarching aim of the research was to explore the range and roles of non-QTS staff in schools who were members of the SLT. This section provides some key messages regarding: the importance of the role played by the headteacher; issues around pay and conditions; and the continuing development of senior support staff.

Key message: the role of the headteacher

If there was one thing that unified the experiences of the non-QTS staff interviewed as part of this study, it was that all had the unwavering support of their headteacher. In all cases, a headteacher had promoted the non-QTS staff member to the SLT, and in most cases, it was the vision and leadership of the headteacher that led to the creation of the non-QTS role in the first place. This was commensurate with the scoping study finding with regard to the key role headteachers play in the development of non-QTS staff. The existence of a range of non-QTS roles was in large part due to headteachers identifying a need in their school and then adapting the roles of existing non-QTS staff or bringing in new staff to meet their school's particular needs, priorities and organisational structures.

The headteachers we spoke to recognised the value of deploying non-QTS staff on the SLT. For example, being on the SLT was said to allow non-QTS staff to more effectively contribute to strategic direction and planning and allowed non-QTS staff to have a wider and more strategic impact. Moreover, many interviewees reported that having non-QTS staff on the SLT enhanced the credibility and profile of non-QTS staff in general, and that this in turn had resulted in improvements in the impact and effectiveness of the wider school workforce.

Non-QTS staff roles and responsibilities appeared to be fluid and in the process of evolving, as schools work out the most effective arrangement for their particular circumstances. The headteachers we spoke to recognised that both new and existing non-QTS staff roles are important in supporting the core teaching and learning outcomes of the school.

Key message: pay and conditions

More than half of non-QTS staff interviewed were unhappy with their pay and conditions. In line with the findings of the scoping study, many felt that their pay was not commensurate with their skills and expertise, and several interviewees reported a lack of parity between QTS and non-QTS salaries. While these issues are not new, they continue to present a challenge to school leaders who are trying to appoint senior support staff and non-teaching professionals to leadership teams.

In some schools, the capacity of school leaders to place non-QTS staff on the leadership scale was constrained by local authority guidelines. This was identified as a particular problem by non-QTS staff occupying business and finance roles. There was a view that many local authorities have been slow to recognise the value of non-QTS staff, and have therefore been reluctant to reflect this in their job descriptions and salary bands.

Some non-QTS staff also reported experiencing difficulties relating to the size and scope of their role due to the nature of their responsibilities: they were often required to work additional hours to meet the needs of parents and families, and staff working in extended services roles were frequently required to work at evenings and weekends, as well as during holiday periods.

Key message: the continuing development of senior support staff

Non-QTS staff were generally very positive about the support and training that had been made available to them, and most felt that their role-specific support needs were being met. However, several non-QTS staff commented that having opportunities to train was not the same as having genuine opportunities for career advancement, and in this sense, many non-QTS staff could not see how they could develop further. This was commensurate with the scoping study finding that more emphasis needs to be placed on career progression for non-QTS staff. The National College might wish to consider establishing new training routes and qualifications and/or broadening the entry criteria for existing provision so that more non-QTS staff have an opportunity to develop their skills and progress in their careers.

Bursars and SBMs appeared to derive a lot of their training from the National College suite of programmes (specifically CSBM, DSBM and ADSBM). This was in contrast to the majority of other non-QTS support staff, who indicated that most of their training had been delivered in-house or by their local authority.

The main barriers cited by non-QTS staff to accessing training included: the cost of training; the time taken to go on training; and finding training that was of sufficient quality and relevance to the role being undertaken.

With the possible exception of SBMs, it was notable that few non-QTS staff said they had undertaken training with a leadership and/or management focus, due largely to the lack of availability of such training. However, many said they would find such training useful. The findings suggest there is a need for a more systematic approach to professional development for support staff, and to consider how non-QTS staff's increased professionalism should most appropriately be reflected in their pay and conditions.

Overall, the study has found that schools valued the contribution senior non-QTS staff were making to school life. This study has shown that, rather than remaining static, non-QTS roles have continued to evolve. They include newer roles for work in community and extended services and inclusion, together with the more established roles in business and finance. Interviewees reported that the roles and contribution of non-QTS benefitted a range of staff and pupils, including the SLT and wider school workforce. Benefits included: helping to bring different perspectives, knowledge and expertise to SLTs; reducing teacher workloads; and generating income and efficiency savings. These are messages that could be promoted and celebrated at the national, regional and individual school level.

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