

Issue

The need for consistency of staffing and expectations in multi-school leadership teams.

Headline position

Over time multi-school groupings have developed around Scotland where one headteacher, and sometimes other promoted staff, are responsible for leadership across all establishments. These arrangements have developed in a piecemeal way and should be aligned.

Full position

AHDS believes that multi-school headships can work provided they are properly resourced and managed. Currently we have a landscape where different local authorities have developed wholly different models and approaches, some with no formal policy in place for how these arrangements should operate or be staffed.

In some areas head teachers are asked to take on additional schools with no recognition in their salary, no additional management team/time and no clarity about expectations. In others there are management team members in each school and protocols attempting to provide clarity about roles, responsibilities and expectations.

As these arrangements have become more common place there is a need to learn from the experience of local authorities and school leadership teams to develop clear, consistent, approaches which bring uniformity to the role, staffing and expectations of school leadership teams who are responsible for two or more schools.

It is worthy of note that the rationale for introduction of these roles in some areas has been the lack of applications for headship of small schools. As these multi-school roles have emerged it appears that they are no more appealing than their predecessors due to the scope of these roles, the lack of clarity about expectations and the lack of adequate financial recognition via job-sizing arrangements.

Urgent action is required to safeguard the quality of education in these schools and to protect the health and wellbeing of the school leadership teams involved.

We call on the Scottish Government and SNCT to:

- Formally recognise the role of multi-school leaders and provide clarity about remit and expectations.
- Properly account for the role in mechanisms to define salaries.

Establish guidance for local authorities seeking to introduce multi-school headships which sets out the key issues to be addressed in policy and practice before such an arrangement is progressed and when in operation. It would be imperative that such guidance included consideration of expectations in relation to engagement with multiple communities and defined levels of staffing and support from local authorities.