Teaching, leadership and governance in Further Education

Research report

February 2018

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Contents

A note on terminology

Throughout this report, the terms "lecturer" and "teacher" are used interchangeably depending on which term is used in the primary literature.

Glossary of acronyms

A

AAETO   Association of Adult Education and Training Organisations

AET   The Award in Education and Training

ACL   Adult Community Learning

AoC   Association of Colleges

AELP   Association of Employment and Learning Providers

ATLS   Associate Teacher Learning and Skills

B

BAME   Black, Asian, and minority ethnic

BIS   Department for Business, Innovation and Skills

C

CAVTL   The Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning

Cert Ed   Certificate in Education

CET   The Certificate in Education and Training

CETTs   Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training

CPD   Continuing Professional Development

CTLLS   Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector

D

DET   The Diploma in Education and Training

DfE   Department for Education

DfES   Department for Education and Skills

DTLLS   Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector

E

EEF   Education Endowment Foundation

ESOL   English for Speakers of Other Languages

ETF   The Education and Training Foundation

F

FE   Further Education

FENTO   Further Education National Training Organisation

G

GCSE   General Certificate of Secondary Education

H

HE   Higher Education

HEI   Higher Education Institutions

HoD   Head of Department

HOLEX   Heads of Local and External Institutions

I

ICT   Information and Communication technology

IfL   The Institute for Learning

INSET   IN-SErvice Training day

ITT   Initial Teacher Training

L

LLUK   Lifelong Learning UK

LSC   Learning and Skills Council

LSDA   Learning and Skills Development Agency

LSIS   Learning and Skills Improvement Service

O

OECD   Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

Ofsted   Office for Standards in Education

OTL   Observation of teaching and learning

P

PGCE   Post Graduate Certificate in Education

ProfGCE   Professional Graduate Certificate in Education

PTLLS   Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector

Q

QTLS   Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills status

QTS   Qualified Teacher Status

R

RAMR   Reality, Abstraction, Mathematics and Reflection

RME   Realistic Maths Education

S

SMT   Senior Management Team

STEM   Science, technology, engineering and mathematics

SVUK   Standards Verification UK

T

T-levels   Technical qualifications to be phased in between 2018 and 2022

V

VET.   Vocational education and Training

Executive summary

Introduction

The Further Education (FE) Sector is now undergoing significant reforms. Apprenticeships 2020,[1] the Report of the Independent Panel on Technical Education (usually referred to as the Sainsbury Review[2]) and the subsequent Post-16 Skills Plan[3] provide a framework under which the Department for Education (DfE) will reform the skills landscape. The specific immediate challenges to which teachers and leaders in the sector must rise are those relating to the new technical education routes, the delivery of high quality apprenticeships and raising standards in English and mathematics. For the Department's reform programme to be successful there is a need to ensure that FE teachers, leaders and governors are of high quality and are high performing.

Research objectives

In April 2017 Professor David Greatbatch (working with Sue Tate) was appointed to conduct a rapid evidence review in order to synthesise the available evidence on teaching, leadership and governance in the FE sector. The evidence reviewed covered the whole FE sector but with a specific focus on FE colleges.

Methodology

Key publications and statistical data were gathered through online searches of national and international online bibliographic and information databases. The findings from the individual studies were summarised, synthesized and critically assessed under key headings and research questions agreed with DfE. The evidence review was supplemented by semi-structured telephone interviews with 14 sector stakeholders and academics.

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[1] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeships-in-england-vision-for-2020

[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education

[3] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/post-16-skills-plan-and-independent-report-on-technical-education

Key findings

Teaching quality

Findings from the literature review

The tensions between lecturers[4] in FE being both occupational professionals passing on their expertise and teachers with access to pedagogical theories and techniques (dual professionalism) is identified as a challenge in the literature.

Most FE teachers teach in the sector for a year or more before beginning 'initial' teacher training. Initial teacher training (ITT) courses are largely generic in nature and rely on trainees' ability to contextualise their learning for their own specialism with the support of subject mentors. The quality of subject mentoring available in colleges remains variable.

There is a consensus in the literature that high quality vocational education always involves a blend of methods, is often experiential in nature, and involves feedback, questioning, application and appropriate theoretical models and explanations. However, evidence of the impact of different pedagogical approaches on learners is weak. Recent attempts to define vocational pedagogy have been hampered by the huge diversity of the sector.

Teaching quality has largely been monitored through lesson observations modelled on Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) practices but there is a lack of evidence on how current practices operate to improve quality and improve learners' outcomes.

There is evidence that English and maths provision remains an area of weakness in FE due to a shortage of specialist English and maths teachers on the one hand, and a lack of English and maths expertise among vocational teachers on the other. There is some evidence to suggest that FE learners benefit from integrated approaches to teaching English and maths that contextualise learning within vocational areas.

Interviewees' views

The quality of teaching in FE is variable but nonetheless includes examples of outstanding teaching, with pockets of good teaching and learning even in the weakest colleges. People with industry expertise do not necessarily require teaching qualifications to teach effectively in FE, as they can contribute in a range of ways.

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[4] In this review the terms "lecturer" and "teacher" are used interchangeably and reflect the terms used in the primary literature.

Continuing professional development

Findings from the literature review

Analysis of (partial) FE workforce data from 2015-2016 shows that, on average, teachers spend 15 hours on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) per year, although over 60 per cent of teachers report spending no time at all on CPD. The literature does not indicate how far the nature of the professional development on offer is determined by teachers' own priorities and/or informed by an organisation-wide workforce development strategy. The impact of different forms of CPD on teaching quality and, ultimately, on learners also remains unknown.

The limited research evidence suggests that: collaborative forms of CPD are most valued by teachers, which can include peer observations, formal and informal networks, coaching and mentoring and action research. The research base also includes evidence that professional development centred on teachers' subject specialism is important - including through coaching and mentoring. However, some teachers operate in limited teacher/CPD networks without the opportunity to forge links with similar subject-specialist teachers and are therefore left to develop subject and occupational expertise in isolation. It has been argued that external mentors/coaches from within teachers' subject specialisms may help address this gap

Interviewees' views

Senior leaders in FE often have an insufficient focus on teaching and learning and this can lead to a lack of CPD to enable FE teachers to improve. CPD opportunities in FE are few and access is made difficult by lack of funding, the sessional nature of the work, and there being less of a tradition of inter-institutional collaborative networks to share good practice than there is in schools.

Leadership

Findings from the literature review

Several largely qualitative studies have explored the link between approaches to leadership and organisational performance as measured by Ofsted inspections and, in some case, attainment data. These studies suggest that in high performing colleges principals and chief executives are highly skilled in using flexible forms of leadership and sensing and responding to the complex and changing contexts in which FE providers operate. There is evidence to suggest that employees in FE colleges have a preference for approaches that combine elements of traditional top-down models (of leadership) with models that emphasise a more collaborative and shared notion of power and authority.

Research on senior leadership provides very little insight into the extent to which the characteristics of effective senior leaders differ according to the type of institution that is being led and does not explain precisely why different approaches are most effective and under which conditions. In addition, the studies do not systematically examine how leadership quality is assessed, improved and rewarded in FE.

The literature indicates that middle leaders play an important role in implementing organisational change policies and programmes. It also suggests that effective leadership behaviours for middle leaders differ from those for senior leaders because they are primarily occupied with day-to-day people management rather than the leadership activities associated with Senior Management Teams (SMTs), such as strategic planning, legacy building and developing mission statements and visions.

Interviewees' views

Principals and senior leaders who are recruited from within the FE sector do not necessarily have the expertise to lead a large organisation, whilst those who are recruited from outside often do not understand curriculum issues. Leadership models in large FE institutions are moving away from a focus on individual leaders to teams, with a balance between education and non-educational expertise. Leaders of large FE colleges use a range of leadership approaches depending on the context.

Governance

Findings from the literature review

Several relatively small-scale studies suggest that while strong and effective governance is widely regarded as critical, there is an absence of both an articulated rationale and model for governing and a clear understanding of any connectivity between board and institutional performance.

The chair of governors relationship with FE principals is complex and nuanced, involving a range of different and often conflicting sub-roles, for example, 'adviser', 'sounding board', 'conduit of information' to and from the governing board and 'performance manager'. Some chairs do not regard detailed educational knowledge as a priority in their requisite skill-set and it has been suggested in the literature that this may result in a relatively high level of dependency on FE college principals for knowledge about educational matters and thereby reduce the level of scrutiny by the chair.

In strong FE colleges, the clerk's role is independent, high-status and based on the concept of the 'professional adviser' to the governing board. However, there is some evidence that their role is undervalued and misunderstood in some colleges.

Interviewees' views

Governors tend to be proficient when scrutinising financial matters, but less confident about challenging the quality of teaching and learning. Finding suitable people to act as governors is difficult because of the time commitments involved, especially for chairs of governing bodies.

Supply issues

Recent research evidence indicates that FE managers believe that: reforms of the FE sector will have a significant impact on the recruitment of teaching because they are reshaping skills that are required; there is likely to be a greater need to recruit in subject specialisms (English and maths - followed by science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects - than more generic teaching specialisms.

The age profile of senior FE leaders means that the sector needs to prepare to replace those soon to retire. The literature highlights the importance of identifying potential leaders in the sector as early as possible and developing clear career routes. Several studies also highlight the importance of recruiting from outside the FE sector not only to ensure that vacancies can be filled with suitably qualified leaders but also to introduce fresh perspectives and new ideas into the sector. The extent of recruitment from beyond (and within) the sector is unclear, however there is evidence to suggest that recruitment and selection panels are generally more likely to choose a 'safe' internal candidate over an 'unknown' external applicant.

Interviewees' views

Recruiting English and maths teachers is particularly difficult because pay in the FE sector does not compete with schools. Pay was also identified as a barrier to the recruitment of people from industry to teach the proposed technical qualification routes identified in the Government's Post-16 Skills Plan. It was noted that a pipeline of training to move potential leaders into senior positions has been lacking, although the FE sector is beginning to tackle this issue.

Chapter 1   Introduction

Background

A number of reforms to post-16 education and training are beginning to impact on the FE sector:

- Requirements for the continuing study of English and maths for those without good General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) grades at the end of Key Stage 4.

- Improvements to the quality of those vocational qualifications counting in performance tables with a greater emphasis on their basis as progression to employment or further study.

- Apprenticeship reforms including the introduction of the levy and new employer-led Apprenticeship Standards with an associated shift to employment based rather than programme-led apprenticeships, which has led to new types of training providers.

- Post-16 area reviews aimed at restructuring the FE sector to create strong and financially resilient colleges able to offer high-quality technical and vocational education with a focus on local skills demands leading to mergers in some cases.

- Devolution of the adult education budget in combined authorities.

The Post-16 Skills Plan sets out the Government's response to the Sainsbury Report and plans to create a common framework of 15 routes within technical education, with occupations grouped according to shared training requirements. These routes will extend to levels 4 and 5 where appropriate and be aligned with apprenticeships. For students not yet ready to access the new two-year college-based programmes, tailored support will be available for up to a year.

The Government acknowledges that realising these ambitions requires a strong network of colleges and training providers able to deliver high-quality vocational education. However, Ofsted recently reported a drop in the number of FE colleges rated good or outstanding, raising concerns about their ability to manage the required improvements.

The challenges facing the FE sector in responding to the reforms are considerable. The characteristics of learners and the nature of curriculum provision can be complex, and teaching in the sector can pose pedagogic challenges due to the varied motivations and nature of students. These issues have important implications for FE college leadership and teaching, not least because they mean that achieving consistently high outcomes for

learners can be difficult. It is therefore timely to review the evidence on these challenges and how they are or could be addressed.

Research objectives

The primary aims of the project are to:

- Bring together the evidence concerning the quality of leadership, governance and teaching in the FE sector in England and the programmes that are in place to enhance each of these interlocking domains.

- Gain insights into the issues and identify recent information not yet in the public domain by undertaking telephone interviews with representative bodies and key stakeholders.

- Identify relevant insights in the literature on leadership, governance and teaching quality in schools, HE and business.

- Consider international evidence, paying particular attention to countries that have initiated substantial reforms of post-16 education.

- Synthesise and critically assess the evidence to identify: (i) lessons learned that could be implemented in the FE sector in England and (ii) evidence gaps.

Scope of the review

The primary focus of the review is on FE Colleges, however other forms of FE provision are also considered, including independent and third-sector training providers and sixth form colleges.

Chapter 2   Methodology

Literature review

Search protocol

A clear understanding of the policy background and context for the Literature Review was developed. This included gathering information from policy leads at the DfE and published Government information that helped identify search terms and inclusion and exclusion criteria for the literature review.

The protocol for the literature review was developed in consultation with DfE. This detailed the procedures to be followed including: the search terms[5]; the locations/sources to be searched; the screens each study should pass through for inclusion in the review; and the processes for recording and storing references and summarising literature. This ensured consistency and transparency in the execution of the review.

Evidence was gathered through online searches and reference searches. Using the agreed protocol, we searched a wide range of online databases and websites such as the Education Research Abstracts Online and Education Resources Information Centre online digital library (ERIC), which offer electronic access to most published literature were searched[6].

A web search for research studies (qualitative and quantitative), relevant reports (for example from Ofsted, think-tanks and charities) and blogs and articles from authoritative sources was also undertaken.

The list of search terms and phrases was updated as the review progressed and additions were recorded and used by both reviewers. The searches were limited to studies published in the English language.

The search was supplemented through searching the reference section of particularly relevant pieces to identify other pertinent articles. Resources such as Google Scholar allowed a forward search to find relevant, cited articles.

[5] See Appendix 1 for the list of search terms used.
[6] See Appendix 2 for a full list of databases and journals searched.

Study selection

Once studies had been identified, they were assessed for eligibility against the following inclusion criteria (using a three-stage approach to reviewing the title and abstract and full text):

- Published in 2006 or later.

- Includes reference to the FE sector.

- Considers teaching quality, leadership, governance (with a focus on governors), CPD and supply/recruitment-retention.

Manuscripts were retrieved for those that met the inclusion criteria following review of the full text on screen. Details of articles not meeting the inclusion criteria were set aside and saved, but not deleted. For excluded studies, reasons were recorded for their non-consideration.

Once all potentially eligible articles had been collected, the next step was to examine the articles more closely to assess their quality. This was done to ensure that the best available evidence was used in the review. Particular attention was paid to information obtained from websites, which, while published on the web, have often not passed any sort of quality standards checks. (NB: Editorials, newspaper articles and other forms of popular media were excluded).

In total, 156 documents were included in the review (70 peer reviewed journal articles and 86 research reports and other data sources).

In addition, 15 Ofsted inspection reports dating between May 2016 and April 2017 were reviewed for examples of effective and less effective practice noted by inspectors that related to the key research questions. Inspection reports included 10 colleges of further education (four rated as 'good' and six requiring improvement), three 16 - 19 academies (one good, one requiring improvement and one inadequate) and two other further education and skills providers (two universities providing 16 - 18 learning; one requiring Improvement and the other outstanding).

Synthesis and analysis

The findings from the individual studies were summarised, synthesized and critically evaluated under the key headings and research questions agreed with DfE. The robustness of the studies was assessed on the basis of on methodological considerations and critiques by other researchers and authors.

Interviews

Semi-structured telephone interviews were conducted with 7 representatives of FE bodies and stakeholders and 6 academics who have undertaken relevant research in the FE sector.

The interviews focused on the research questions (and access to unpublished literature) with a view to understanding if and how things had changed in the sector since much of the research was conducted; perceptions of interviewees relating to areas not covered in research studies; and, the challenges that interviewees saw for the sector in the short to medium term. Each interview lasted approximately 30 minutes. Findings from these interviews are summarised in this report.

Chapter 3 The Quality of Teaching

Summary

- Qualifications for those teaching in FE have gone through a number of revisions in terms of content and regulatory status since 2003 (DfES, 2004; Lucas, N. et al., 2012; Lingfield, 2012; Crawley, 2012; BIS, 2012) reflecting the complex needs of FE teachers with a wide variety of professional backgrounds and working arrangements (Lingfield 2012a; Lucas, 2012; OECD, 2014).

- Most FE teachers have been teaching in the sector for a year or more before beginning 'initial' training (Lucas and Unwin, 2009; Orr and Simmons, 2010; Zaidi et al., 2017).

- Vocational teachers and lecturers have jobs that in many ways are more demanding than those of academic teachers (OECD, 2014). They need to have knowledge and experience of the range of skills and knowledge needed to work in the occupational sector in which they teach, they also need to know how to convey those skills to others.

- ITT courses are largely generic in nature and rely on trainees' ability to contextualise their learning for their own specialism with the support of subject mentors (Lucas, N. et al., 2012). The quality of subject mentoring available in colleges remains variable (Lucas and Unwin, 2009; Nasta, 2009; Tedder and Lawy, 2009; CAVTL, 2013).

- The monitoring of teaching quality has largely been through observations modelled on Ofsted practices (O'Leary, 2013; Lahiff, 2015; Burnell, 2017) but evidence of impact of this approach on learners has not been a research focus, nor how current practices work to improve quality (Lahiff, 2014).

- There is a consensus that good vocational education always involves a blend of methods, is often experiential in nature, and involves feedback, questioning, application and appropriate theoretical models and explanations (CAVTL, 2013; Lucas, Spencer and Claxton, 2012).There have been some recent attempts to define vocational pedagogy but this has been hampered by the huge diversity of the sector (Linfield, 2012b; Lucas, Spencer and Claxton, 2012). Evidence of the impact of different pedagogical approaches on learners is weak (Skills Commission, 2009; Lucas, Spencer and Claxton, 2012).

- English and maths provision remains an area of weakness in FE with a shortage of specialist teachers and vocational teachers who are not always equipped to embed English and maths skills across the curriculum (CAVTL, 2013; Research Base, 2014; Curee, 2014). Most research suggests that FE learners benefit from

integrated approaches that contextualise learning within vocational areas (Robey et al., 2014; Research Base, 2014).

Teaching qualifications

There has been much debate about whether teaching qualifications should be mandatory for those in the FE sector and, regardless of regulatory requirements, the structure and content of appropriate qualifications. An Ofsted report on the initial training of FE teachers (Ofsted, 2003) argued that the then system of FE teacher training did not provide a satisfactory foundation of professional development for FE teachers at the start of their careers. It found few opportunities for trainees to learn how to teach their specialist subjects, and a lack of systematic mentoring and support in the workplace, including insufficient observations and feedback on trainees' teaching practice. Furthermore, trainees often had little opportunity for teaching and assessing students of different types and at different levels in a way that reflected the diversity of provision in FE. Training at the time was based on standards developed by the Further Education National Training Organisation (FENTO) which Ofsted found, while useful in describing expectations of experienced teachers, were insufficient as a basis for defining what would be expected of new teachers and therefore in determining whether or not trainees should pass the qualification.

The response of the then Government was to publish a policy document, *Equipping Our Teachers for the Future* (DfES, 2004), committing to developing new regulations and standards by September 2007. This set out two stages leading to Qualified Teacher Learning and Skills status (QTLS), essentially a licence to practise which was envisaged as having 'parity of esteem' with the equivalent qualification for school teachers (QTS - Qualified Teacher Status). The first stage was an initial 'passport to teaching' module, assessed at level 3 or above and lasting about 30 guided learning hours (excluding teaching practice and observation), followed by full teacher training, which new teachers would have up to five years to complete. However, those whose role was limited to monitoring and assessing the progress of trainees in the workplace, or visiting speakers who made occasional contributions to programmes, were to be exempt from taking the passport award. Additionally, those whose teaching role was limited to the delivery and assessment of their specialist area could exit teacher training following successful completion of the passport award; this was an attempt to recognise the 'dual professional' nature of some working in FE. All other teachers, whether part-time, fractional or full-time, were expected to go on to the full QTLS award.

FENTO was abolished in 2005 and replaced by a new employer-led body, the sector skills council Lifelong Learning UK (LLUK) who were given lead responsibility for implementing the reforms. LLUK developed new national standards accompanied by a credit-based assessment approach that could build up to a qualification over time and

which could accommodate trainees changing institutions and responsibilities. The new qualifications structure consisted of three qualifications: an initial teaching qualification: Preparing to Teach in the Lifelong Learning Sector (PTLLS); the Certificate in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (CTLLS); and, the Diploma in Teaching in the Lifelong Learning Sector (DTLLS). The CTLLS qualification was intended for what was termed 'associate teachers' who were seen as having a more circumscribed instructional role than those with responsibilities for teaching, developing curricula and support materials, assessment and pastoral support. All higher education institutions (HEIs) had to have their ITT programmes endorsed by Standards Verification UK (SVUK), a subsidiary of LLUK, who also carried out an annual programme of monitoring.

The new QTLS status, unlike QTS (the equivalent qualification for school teachers), was not awarded on successful completion of training but, rather, following a post-qualification period in which teachers provided evidence of engaging in 30 hours of continuous professional development (CPD) per annum as well as demonstrating a minimum of a level 2 standard in literacy and numeracy. QTLS, which had to be completed within five years, was awarded by the Institute for Learning (IfL) and subject to annual renewal. Those with the CTLLS qualification who were associate teachers could apply for a lesser status: Associate Teacher Learning and Skills (ATLS).

In an exploration of the impact of the regulatory changes, Lucas et al., (2012) found wide variations in the credit structures amongst the programmes they reviewed, hence differing numbers of modules and assessment demands were required to achieve what was ostensibly the same qualification. They also found that the range of different titles caused confusion among teachers and managers, not least because qualifications with the same title were offered at different academic levels. These included the DTLLS at level 5, Certificate in Education (Cert Ed) offered at levels 4, 5 and 6, Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (ProfGCE) (at level 6), and Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE) (at level 7, but with variation in the number of Masters (M) level credits required: in one institution, 40 M level credits were required whereas in another the requirement was for 60 M level credits).

In an interim report to the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) on Professionalism in FE, Lingfield (2012a) found that only a small number of lecturers had become 'fully qualified' under the existing arrangements and that some 85 per cent of FE lecturers had not embarked on the final supervised practice phase, following the diploma. The review panel felt that so slight a result did not lend credibility to the claim of QTLS to be a licence to practise, especially as in other professions it would be normal for the relevant qualification to be achieved before starting work.

In contrast, an evaluation of the impact of ITT in the same year, Crawley (2012) found evidence that good progress had been made towards ensuring a qualified and expert teaching profession with approximately 80 per cent of all teaching staff within FE colleges

estimated to have or be working towards a recognised qualification. BIS (2012) found emerging evidence that the new qualifications had equipped staff with increased confidence, the ability to use different teaching methods to support learners with varying needs and learning preferences, and had increased reflective practice but it was too early to see evidence of the impact of the regulations on learner achievement.

Nonetheless Lingfield (2012a) expressed the firm view that "staff training, professional updating, competency and behaviour are essentially matters between employer and employee" (p.6). This followed evidence from the sector that the in-service teaching qualifications were over-complicated and that attempts to make a distinction between awards for a 'full teaching role' and an 'associate teaching role' were meaningless to learners who wanted access to equally effective teaching regardless of the employment status of the lecturer.

The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) (2014) note that, in some countries over-rigid qualification requirements make it difficult for those with occupational expertise to contribute to vocational training. In the Netherlands, instructors from industry can only teach in the presence of a pedagogically qualified teacher. In Germany, Fachschulen teachers have demanding qualification requirements which can be barriers for part-timers from industry. OECD (2014:15) recommended that "the workforce in professional training institutions [should] benefit from a strong blend of pedagogical skills, industry experience and academic knowledge."

OECD (2014) recommended allowing skilled workers to acquire their pedagogical competences in a flexible way (e.g. distance learning, recognition of prior learning) recognising that, while part-time teachers require pedagogical training, it is unrealistic and undesirable to impose the same demands on them as full-time teaching staff. Some pedagogical weakness may be compensated for by new recruits' ability to bring up-to-date industry experience into their teaching and to share this with their colleagues. However, the CTLLS qualification was designed to meet the needs of this group but, although not a primary aim of the research, Lucas et al (2012) found little evidence of the usefulness of the CTLLS qualification or widespread recognition of the role of associate teacher/lecturer in FE in England.

Following the interim report from Lord Lingfield (Lingfield 2012a), BIS launched a consultation on the workforce regulations and, in July 2012, asked LSIS[7] to lead a review of the teaching qualifications, to simplify and rename them, working closely with

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[7] LLUK ceased to operate as a Sector Skills Council on 31 March 2011. Many of LLUK's responsibilities transferred to the Learning and Skills Improvement Service (LSIS). LSIS was formed to accelerate quality improvement, increase participation and raise standards and achievement in the learning and skills sector in England. LSIS closed in 2013, following withdrawal of funding by BIS.

employers and stakeholders in the sector. In September 2012, amended workforce regulations were introduced that removed the requirement to join the IfL and acquire professional status but retained, for a further twelve months only, the requirement to work towards the achievement of the existing teaching qualifications. The intention was to give employers and individuals greater flexibility to choose the most appropriate qualifications from the new suite.

Following a further revision to the standards in 2013, the current 'core' qualifications are:

- The Award in Education and Training (AET). This provides a broad introduction to teaching in FE, including lesson planning and micro-teaching practice. Courses can be delivered at Level 3 or Level 4 and typically last for 1-2 weeks.

- The Certificate in Education and Training (CET). This is a longer course, lasting around six months, primarily targeted at people who deliver training, but do not design curricula.

- The Diploma in Education and Training (DET). This is the primary career entry route for teachers/tutors in the FE sector. These courses are delivered at Level 5 and typically last for one year, if undertaken on a full-time basis.

- Diplomas in Education and Training with a subject specialism in Numeracy, Literacy, and/or English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL). These qualifications were developed specifically for teachers delivering first steps literacy, numeracy and language courses. The courses cover the same content as the Diploma (DET), but include additional learning on literacy, numeracy or ESOL.

Alongside these qualifications, Higher Education (HE) institutions offer Cert Ed, ProfGCE and PGCE courses for trainee teachers wishing to enter the FE sector. De-regulation means that there may be other courses and qualifications that providers view as being suitable for qualifying people to teach in the sector.

The replacement suite of qualifications has been designed so that a trainee teacher can undertake one of the Level 5 diplomas without having previously achieved one of the qualifications at a lower level. Alternatively, an individual may choose to progress from the Level 3 Award in Education and Training to a Level 4 Certificate in Education and Training and then to a Level 5 qualification, or to progress from a Level 3 Award in Education and Training directly to a Level 5 qualification.

The Education and Training Foundation (ETF) was established in October 2013 and is the Government-backed, sector-owned national support body for the FE and Training sector. The Founding Members are the Association of Colleges (AoC), the Association of Employment and Learning Providers (AELP), and the Association of Adult Education and Training Organisations (AAETO). In 2014, ETF published revised professional standards

for the sector which were intended to be aspirational in nature, covering the values, attributes, skills, knowledge and understanding of teachers and to be used to support CPD.

In September 2016, ETF introduced a new QTLS following a comprehensive review. Underpinned by the revised professional standards, the new QTLS allows teachers and trainers to demonstrate the effective use of their skills and knowledge in their current practice, and its impact on learners.

Zaidi et al (2017) reports that just over 40,500 learners enrolled on a teacher training course in FE in 2014/15. Of those, 11,690 took a DET or PGCE. There has been a big drop in the number of learners enrolling on awards and certificates between 2013/14 and 2014/15. The number of enrolments on awards fell by 29 per cent while the number of enrolments on certificates fell by 66 per cent. The DET and PGCE/CertEd however have remained relatively stable in terms of take-up since 2012/13. An analysis of the FE workforce in England using the 2015-16 Staff Individualised Record (SIR) dataset found that most teachers (around three quarters) hold a teaching qualification. The most commonly held teaching qualifications are: PGCE covering 32 per cent of teachers, Cert Ed covering 23 per cent of teachers and Level 5 DET covering 11 per cent of teachers (Frontier Economics, 2017).

As yet there is little evidence of the impact of the recent changes to the regulatory framework and the range of teaching qualifications on teaching quality.

Dual professionalism

Vocational teachers and lecturers have jobs that in many ways are more demanding than those of academic teachers (OECD, 2014). They need to have knowledge and experience of the range of skills and knowledge needed to work in the occupational sector in which they teach and they also need to know how to convey those skills to others. They also need to update their knowledge continuously in response to changes in technology and working practices.

Concerns about how to ensure that vocational teachers combine industry expertise with pedagogical skills through teacher training are not confined to the UK. Keeping practical knowledge of the workplace up-to-date is also a major challenge in many countries (OECD, 2014), which can sometimes be solved by part-time working arrangements that allow teacher-practitioners to continue to work in their field. Doing this requires "a flexible framework of pedagogical preparation and strong leadership in professional training institutions to make the best use of a mixed teaching team" (OECD, 2014:15).

It is clear that trainee FE teachers often undergo ITT as part of a career change, or add a part-time teaching role to an existing technical profession and have a more diverse

background in terms of education and professional or vocational experience than is the case for those training to teach in schools (Spenceley, 2007). In contrast with entry into school teaching, around 90 per cent of FE teachers are employed untrained (Orr and Simmons, 2010) and complete their ITT on a part-time in-service basis at the average age of 37 (Zaidi et al., 2017). Traditionally, this route has been necessary to attract established vocational practitioners into FE and to enable them to continue earning whilst undertaking their teacher-training. Consequently, staff sustain the dual role of teacher and trainee teacher (Orr and Simmons, 2010). Around two-thirds of trainee teachers responding to a survey had between one and five years' experience of teaching in FE, with more than 10 per cent having more than six years' experience (Lucas and Unwin, 2009).

Despite this tendency to already be employed in the sector when beginning teacher training, Ofsted (2003) commented on the weakness of the link made by trainees between the content of initial training courses and practice in their workplace. Spenceley (2007), in qualitative research with part-time trainee teachers at a single institution, found that many trainee teachers struggle to make sense of the sector and of their role within it. Many of the learners described themselves as having fallen into teaching and, unlike those entering the sector through the full-time route, had not planned on a career in teaching. These trainees required more support to help them make the transition from their previous profession to the role of professional educator.

Subject specialisms and mentoring

Lucas et al (2012)[8] investigated the extent to which the revised ITT courses supported trainees' teaching in their area of specialism. The authors highlight the challenges faced by FE teacher-educators in this respect in comparison with secondary ITT because of the huge diversity of trainee teachers, the vast range of subject and occupational areas in which they are preparing to teach, and the mix of further, adult and work-based learning offered by providers. A quote from the course leader of a large HE–FE partnership describes the challenge:

> "The development of subject-specific teaching skills is over-dependent on trainees being able to apply generic issues to their own teaching and assessment, on specific support and observation by subject mentors and by the structuring of specific subject and action research projects into the course structure. There are

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[8] Research involved questionnaires to all Universities' Council for the Education of Teachers members in England delivering ITT for the FE sector (20 responses were received: response rate over 33 per cent). This was followed by three workshops with a group of teacher-educators to test out and extend the initial analysis.

not opportunities for trainees with common vocational/subject teaching to get together in sub-groups either at the college or at a wider partnership level" (Lucas et al., 2012: 688).

Only 2 of the twenty HEIs in a study by Lucas et al (2012) offered options that allowed trainees to develop skills related to their subject (e.g. construction or engineering) or their teaching context, (e.g. adult and community learning). Researchers were told that the subject specialist module consisted of 'individual trainees auditing their own subject knowledge'. Elsewhere, trainees were encouraged to explore generic questions within the context of their own specialism. With the exception of Skills for Life ITT courses, the survey found no specific options concerning subject specialism or areas such as 14-19 education and training, vocational learning, adult learning, specific learning difficulties and disabilities, or prison education.

Previous Governments (e.g. see DfES, 2004; Ofsted, 2003) have promoted mentoring as an effective method of advice and support for beginner teachers as well as a way to support subject pedagogy. The mentor is thus the subject specialist who supports the mentee (teacher trainee) in their workplace and who observes and gives feedback on their teaching practice (Elliahoo, 2011). Given the previous criticisms from Ofsted (2003), LLUK stressed the importance of providing subject mentors in the workplace to address the need for support for trainees' specialism, and required all trainees on DTLLS or equivalent courses to have eight observations of their teaching practice, of which at least four would be observed by their specialist mentors.

The quality of mentoring support is highly variable and those assigned the role of mentor often struggle to find sufficient time to be effective (Lucas and Unwin, 2009; Nasta, 2009). Tedder and Lawy (2009) found that, while mentoring had become established as a central feature of ITT programmes in FE, there remained a lack of clarity within the sector about what mentoring should mean. The Skills Commission (2009) recommended that mentor training and qualifications should become part of CPD in every college, following research submitted to them suggesting that mentoring is beneficial for both the mentor and the mentee, developing the professional and pedagogical skills of both. However, four years later it was reported to remain a challenge to provide sufficient good quality specialist mentors within colleges able to work with new teachers to help them apply generic teaching and planning techniques to a specific occupational area (CAVTL, 2013).

Elliahoo (2011) noted a gap in the literature around the impact that mentoring may have on mentees' learners (i.e. the impact on the trainees' own students). In an action research based study of five mentees and their mentors from different occupational areas, interviewees found different ways of evaluating the impact on learners although impact may not be immediately discernible. Eliahoo's (2011) findings illustrate the difficulty of attributing learner achievement to any one intervention given the range of

factors that could be making a difference (for example, other teachers, equipment and workshop facilities, trainee teachers developing their practice through means other than mentoring).

Monitoring teacher quality

As noted above, observations, including those by subject mentors, form part of ITT courses. Observations are also now used routinely in FE for all staff and for different purposes (O'Leary, 2013). As most trainee teachers are already in teaching, and often have been for some time, when they begin ITT (Lucas and Unwin, 2009; Orr and Simmons, 2010; Zaidi et al., 2017), this group will be observed as part of the providers' monitoring of quality as well as for initial training purposes.

Concerns were raised about the quality of teaching in FE in the early part of the century (DfES, 2004) and it was felt that it was time to introduce a new system of inspection, observation and feedback. *Equipping Our Teachers for the Future* (DfES, 2004) recommended more emphasis on the practical aspects of teaching and called for "more effective observation of teaching practice" (DfES, 2004:16). In the past, FE had used a variety of mentoring schemes, informal observation by peers and ITT lesson observations, but a formal system of observations with grading had not formed part of FE culture (Burnell, 2017).

One of the reforms instituted by the then Government in the early years of the century, as has been noted previously, was to introduce a system of inspection by Ofsted. This, along with the introduction of mandatory teaching qualifications underpinned by new professional standards, was intended to help raise standards in FE. Providers began introducing their own programmes of observations; these observations often mimicked those carried out by Ofsted – indeed were often called mock inspections – and enabled providers to prepare for the real thing (Burnell, 2017). O'Leary (2013), in research conducted across ten colleges, found that observations of teaching and learning (OTL) were perceived by staff to fulfil quality assurance or performance management purposes rather than to support teachers' professional development. Those colleges in which observations were viewed as developmental rather than as quality control, and therefore not graded in line with Ofsted's scale, were deemed by Ofsted to have less valid and reliable improvement processes (O'Leary, 2013).

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC), formed in 2001, directed all providers of post-compulsory education and training to implement systems and policies of observation of teaching and learning in order to feed data back to the LSC to enable it to measure and quantify the standards and quality of teaching in the classroom. Funding was one of the levers used by the LSC to encourage providers to adopt their own OTL policies (Burnell, 2017).

Lahiff (2015) sees observations as part of ITT as a crucial component of the process of the development of pedagogic expertise and found trainee teachers relished opportunities to discuss their observed teaching, despite anxieties in preparing for and undergoing the observation. Orr and Simmons (2010), in a study of trainee teachers, found that many interviewees distinguished between the quality assurance observations carried out by the college and those carried out for the ITT course. The difference between the two was that the latter involved feedback. Trainee teachers perceived the observations that form part of their ITT largely in developmental terms – both to reassure them and encourage them to develop their practice, but the emerging trend of grading lessons in line with Ofsted judgements began to threaten this emphasis (Lahiff, 2014). While the research evidence suggests that trainees value the feedback they receive following observations as part of ITE, Lahiff (2014: 94) notes that:

> "As has been seen, the body of research into FE ITT teaching observations is relatively small, and research into the impact on trainee's development is conspicuous by its absence. At the time of writing, there has not been any research that investigates the relationship between ITT teaching observations and vocational teachers' developing practice."

Burnell (2017) noted that, with the raising of the participation age, FE is no longer solely a post-compulsory sector and therefore deserves rigorous monitoring of classroom standards on a par with those operating in schools. However, "it is clear… that the current system of OTL needs to be overhauled and implemented in a more effective and developmental way" (Burnell, 2017: 236). This view is echoed by O'Leary (2013) who acknowledged the significant role played by OTL in improving the quality of teaching and learning while also arguing for a "fundamental reconceptualisation of its current use in the FE sector" (O'Leary, 2013:711). This, for O'Leary, means putting the professional needs of staff ahead of the requirements of performance management systems, with an immediate halt to graded observations.

From September 2015, Ofsted stopped graded lesson observations. On a government web page[9] to dispel Ofsted myths, number seven states:

> "Ofsted don't expect all teachers to be observed and graded by their colleges, to inform self-assessment and staff training. It's entirely up to college leaders what mechanisms they use to improve the quality of teaching."

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[9] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspection-handbook/ofsted-inspections-myths

While there is limited research on the effectiveness of OTL in teacher training, how it can be made an effective way of improving the teaching of other staff, perhaps through the sharing of good practice, is missing from the literature.

Vocational Pedagogy

The challenge to define the constituent parts that contribute to effective teaching in the sector may be in part because of the varying needs catered for by Further Education providers. Lingfield (2012b) suggested at least five main aims and associated segments of FE:

- Remedial FE (redressing the shortcomings of schooling).

- Community FE (offering lifelong learning opportunities to local people, with benefits to their health, longevity and wellbeing, as well as continuing education).

- Vocational FE (teaching occupational skills).

- Academic courses up to Level 3 taught in some colleges.

- Higher education studies.

An enquiry into teacher training in vocational education by the Skills Commission (2009) argued that the system remained biased towards academic education and its teachers, and failed to recognise the crucial role played by vocational education in 14-19 provision. Although there was some evidence that the regulatory requirements then in place had helped to achieve a more appropriate balance between specialist knowledge and pedagogical skills, the Commission acknowledged that little research existed on effective vocational pedagogies, recommending that this be a priority for the sector. While the background to the enquiry was the introduction of the now defunct 14-19 diplomas, the Commission proposed that a vocational pedagogy constructed from situated and experiential learning was needed and an exchange of skills and practices between teachers in schools and colleges would be beneficial.

The role and nature of vocational pedagogy was debated by the Commission on Adult Vocational Teaching and Learning (CAVTL) chaired by Frank McLoughlin in 2013. The Commission, while recognizing the important role of qualifications, argued that their place was to 'kitemark' a learning programme rather than to define the curriculum. The focus should be on the development and updating of occupational and pedagogical expertise (CAVTL, 2013). However, the understanding of the relative effectiveness of teaching and learning methods used in vocational education is weak (Lucas, Spencer and Claxton, 2012).

CAVTL (2013), based on evidence submitted to the Commission and a series of visits and seminars, concluded that excellent programmes of adult vocational teaching and learning depend on four characteristics:

1. A clear line of sight to work on all vocational programmes.

2. 'Dual professional' teachers and trainers who combine occupational and pedagogical expertise, who are trusted and given the time to develop partnerships and curricula with employers.

3. Access to industry-standard facilities and resources, reflecting the ways in which technology is transforming work.

4. Clear escalators to higher level vocational learning, developing and combining deep knowledge and skills.

Flowing from this, the Commission (CAVTL, 2013: 9) identified eight features of excellent vocational teaching and learning:

1. That through the combination of sustained practice and the understanding of theory, occupational expertise is developed.

2. That work-related attributes are central to the development of occupational expertise.

3. That practical problem solving and critical reflection on experience, including learning from mistakes in real and simulated settings, are central to effective vocational teaching and learning.

4. That vocational teaching and learning is most effective when it is collaborative and contextualised, taking place within communities of practice which involve different types of 'teacher' and capitalise on the experience and knowledge of all learners.

5. That technology plays a key role because keeping on top of technological advances is an essential part of the occupational expertise required in any workplace.

6. That it requires a range of assessment and feedback methods that involve both 'teachers' and learners, and which reflect the specific assessment cultures of different occupations and sectors.

7. That it often benefits from operating across more than one setting, including a real or simulated workplace, as well as the classroom and workshop, to develop the capacity to learn and apply that learning in different settings, just as at work.

8. That occupational standards are dynamic, evolving to reflect advances in work practices, and that through collective learning, transformation in quality and efficiency is achieved.

The Commission agreed with Lucas, Spencer and Claxton (2012) on the importance of codifying, recognising and valuing the sophisticated practice of vocational pedagogy. In offering a theoretical underpinning for vocational pedagogy, Lucas, Spencer and Claxton (2012) [10] argue that the overall goal of vocational education is the development of vocational competence and identify six desirable outcomes:

- Routine expertise: mastery of everyday working procedures in the domain.

- Resourcefulness: having the knowledge and aptitude to stop and think effectively when required.

- Functional literacies: adequate mastery of literacy, numeracy and digital literacy.

- Craftsmanship: an attitude of pride and thoughtfulness towards the job.

- Business-like attitudes: understanding the economic and social sides of work.

- Wider skills for growth: having an inquisitive and resilient attitude towards constant improvement – the 'independent learner'.

Kemmis and Green (2013) found, in two studies conducted in Australia[11], that the work of the vocational education and training (VET) teacher is complex, multi-faceted and much more than the narrow definitions of competency that are at the basis of many of the training reforms in Australia and internationally. Those coming into teaching following experience in industry were more inclined to import into their interactions with students the practices of their workplaces and to treat students as inexperienced co-workers rather than pupils. However, this approach created tensions for some when working in settings where secondary teachers were also employed and who had a very different teaching culture - although negotiating these helped some mature early career teachers understand what is distinctive about the pedagogy of VET.

Vocational education should be taught in the context of practical problem-solving and high-quality vocational education almost always involves a blend of methods (Lucas, Spencer and Claxton, 2012). As well as experiential in nature, good vocational education involves feedback, questioning, application and reflection and, when required, theoretical models and explanations. In vocational education 'knowing' and 'thinking' are harnessed

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[10] Based on a literature review and the views of expert practitioners.
[11] Research carried out with VET teachers in TAFE colleges and those working in secondary schools.

in the service of practical expertise, for example in the repair of a washing machine, and must be taught in a way that enables learners to readily identify the skills and knowledge needed to complete a practical task (Lucas, Spencer and Claxton, 2012). This distinguishes vocational pedagogy from the academic variety.

In 2011, the *Review of Vocational Education – The Wolf Report* made a number of recommendations for greater rigour in the vocational qualifications offered to 14 to 19 year-olds in schools and colleges. This has led to awarding organisations redesigning qualifications to ensure that they have a greater clarity of purpose, more robust assessment, a more visible theoretical underpinning and, through synoptic forms of assessment, a requirement that learners are able to synthesise knowledge and skills in response to tasks. These changes, together with a requirement that vocational qualifications are graded rather than offer a simple pass/fail assessment, place challenges on vocational teachers beyond the development of practical skills in their students. For those more used to teaching competency based qualifications, these new qualifications may make pedagogical demands that are more akin to those required to teach academic subjects. As yet, the impact of the introduction of the new qualifications on teaching in the FE sector has not been evaluated.

The Ofsted inspection framework provides the basis on which inspectors judge the performance of FE providers, including the quality of teaching. A review of a selection of Ofsted reports dating from May 2016, when 16-19 year olds were already following study programmes that included the reformed vocational qualifications, reveals strong similarities between providers rated good or outstanding and strikingly similar weaknesses in those Requiring Improvement or Inadequate. In many instances, of course, weak practice is simply an absence of significant effective practice.

Inspectors found that most providers (including those who had weaknesses elsewhere) were effective in preparing learners for the world of work through linking classroom-based learning to vocational skills and employability. Most teachers have good vocational experience and skills; teachers also have excellent links with industry and use these to ensure that learning is up-to-date and students are well-prepared for employment.

Generally, inspectors reported that FE providers catered well for learners with additional needs. In a number of colleges, inspectors commented on the good support, individualised programmes and well-planned tasks in place that helped learners with high needs to make progress and achieve their qualifications.

However, other aspects of teaching quality were more variable between providers.

In providers rated by Ofsted as good or outstanding, pedagogical approaches often noted included:

- High expectations for students and demanding but realistic target grades based on a thorough analysis of students' starting points.

- Frequent one-to-one reviews with learners for target setting, helping define ambitions and encouragement to succeed.

- Well-planned, engaging lessons incorporating practical activities.

- Good use of questioning techniques to challenge, engage and check learning.

- Effective use of information and communication technology (ICT) - including social media - to record evidence of skills development, share feedback, post reminders and link to revision studies.

In weaker provision, areas for improvement were largely the reverse of the pedagogical strengths noted in stronger providers, with lessons and targets poorly differentiated, so too narrow for some and over-challenging for others. Some teachers were placing too much emphasis on completing qualifications to the minimum standards needed for a pass and not encouraging students to master theory, practise higher level thinking skills and develop professional attitudes to working life.

It can be seen, therefore, that Ofsted have identified teaching skills relating to planning, differentiation, questioning and feedback which are crucial to underpinning effective practice. Ofsted reached similar conclusions in a report based on visits to 20 outstanding providers to explore the barriers to providing excellent teaching and training and the actions providers had taken to overcome these (Ofsted 2014). The report found that 'rigorous performance management, closely aligned with high quality staff development, high levels of accountability for the quality of teaching for all and highly effective self-evaluation are all essential elements in ensuring sustained excellent practice'. The biggest barrier was often seen to be resistance in some teaching staff to change their approach.

While many agree that vocational pedagogy needs defining ((CAVTL, 2013; Skills Commission, 2009; Kemmis and Green, 2013; Lahiff, 2014; Lucas, B. et al., 2012; Lucas, Spencer and Claxton, 2012) there is, as yet, no clear agreement on what this should look like. Strikingly absent from the literature are studies involving learners and their responses to different pedagogical approaches. One explanation for the absence of pedagogy analysis and documentation in vocational education may be that "those involved in vocational education do not instinctively see a theoretical activity as a contributor to improving quality" (Lucas, B. et al., 2012). They may prefer trying things out in practice and sharing experiences with other practitioners via informal networks.

English and maths

The Wolf Review of 14-19 Vocational Education (2011) highlighted the importance of English and maths in enabling individuals' progression, but questioned the currency of functional skills and raised doubts about the effectiveness of embedding the teaching of these skills within vocational subjects. Reformed functional skills will be introduced in 2019 with the intention of improving the robustness and credibility of the qualifications.

CAVTL, in *It's about work – excellent adult vocational teaching and learning* (CAVTL, 2013), found that, while vocational teachers and trainers can play a major role in helping individuals see the relevance of English and maths and in building learners' confidence to enable them to improve, many do not have the skills they know are required to teach literacy and numeracy. Consequently, the Commission recommended the creation of specialist English and maths tutors[12] in every college to be available as a resource shared between all VET providers within a given locality. This lack of skilled teachers and trainers in vocational maths settings has been a key challenge (Curee, 2014; Research Base, 2014). Under half of English or maths teachers in FE have an English or maths qualification above level 3 (Curee, 2014).

Providers stress that their teaching staff, particularly functional skills and vocational tutors, will need further training to improve or build their confidence in their own subject knowledge. CPD opportunities should support vocational teachers to increase their subject knowledge, develop their pedagogic skills and embed and reflect on their practice (Robey et al., 2014). Observation of practice with feedback was highly valued by practitioners as a way of improving skills (Curee, 2014). For external CPD opportunities, ETF now offer over 20 different courses to support effective teaching of English and maths for teachers of GCSE, functional skills, apprenticeships and study programmes, but it is too early to understand the impact of this provision on teachers and learners.

The Research Base (2014), in a study for ETF to inform work to improve the teaching and delivery of maths for learners aged 16 to 19, looked at innovative approaches and international good practice in this area. It considered pedagogy as well as how to enhance learner motivation and engagement. Research methodology included a literature review, a call for evidence and qualitative interviews. Researchers noted a paucity of quantitative information for both the UK and internationally. In a subsequent literature review, also for the ETF, Maughan et al (2016:7) found that the evidence of effective interventions in English and maths was limited as interventions in adult, vocational and employer-led settings "seem to be universally under researched".

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[12] CAVTL describe tutors as supporting both learners and their teachers.

Robey et al. (2014), based on two written on-line calls for evidence with 127 responses and two seminars for DfE/BIS, sought views as to how the new GCSEs in English and maths could be successfully implemented into post-16 education. They reached the conclusion that no single pedagogical approach would meet the needs of all learners. Curee (2014) noted a deficit in CPD related to practitioners understanding the specific pedagogic approaches that underpin teaching methods and techniques in English and maths and in understanding how to meet the needs of all students.

Many young adults on vocational courses can be disengaged from, and have negative attitudes towards learning maths; this can be affected by multiple factors, including negative prior experiences with learning, peer pressure and lack of confidence (Research Base, 2014). This can be challenging for teachers who need to build the confidence of learners as well as teach. Research Base (2014) found that the reasons that learners disengage from maths are multiple and varied and the strategies and tools to re-engage them need to be equally so. No single approach will work with all learners and teachers require well thought-out CPD to support them to meet the needs of disengaged learners. Initial assessments are important in determining learners' needs and the range of approaches most likely to motivate and engage them (Robey et al., 2014; Research Base, 2014).

Applying mathematical skills to work contexts improves both confidence and engagement (Research Base, 2014). Wherever possible, the teaching and learning of English and maths should be contextualised through using materials and resources which are relevant to learners' contexts; linking the learning to specific vocations or employment sectors; and, working in partnership with employers and other organisations to emphasise the importance of English and maths in the world of work (Robey et al.,2014). Dalby and Noyes (2015), in an analysis of a series of case studies of vocational student groups in FE colleges in England, show how contrasting practices in 'functional mathematics' and vocational classes can reinforce perceptions that mathematics is an isolated and irrelevant subject. Their findings suggest that adopting mathematics classroom practices that reflect the surrounding vocational culture creates greater coherence for students and has positive effects on their engagement with mathematics learning. Contextualised learning of maths improves understanding and retention in learners but this needs to be well-planned and reinforced across all curriculum areas (Research Base, 2014). Case studies of a number of construction and hairdressing students in three FE colleges found that integrated approaches to teaching mathematics across the curriculum impact positively on student engagement and attitudes to learning mathematics (Dalby and Noyes 2016).

Understanding how to develop a deeper mathematical understanding through applied maths requires support from maths specialists. However, colleges have struggled to recruit specialist maths teachers and, even where they exist, they can lack an

understanding of the vocational context. CPD requirements therefore include support for maths specialists in methods for contextualisation (Research Base, 2014; Robey et al., 2014). Maths specialists could collaborate with vocational teachers but this tends to be most successful when supported by a whole organisation approach incorporating a strong numeracy strategy.

The Research Base (2014), while emphasising that no single approach would meet the needs of all learners, identified the following formal models and approaches:

- The Reality, Abstraction, Mathematics and Reflection (RAMR) Model used in Australia, particularly in vocational settings. The process uses learner generated symbols to enable learners to explore the underlying structure of maths.

- Discovery Math is a Canadian approach that encourages learners to apply problem solving skills to mathematical problems, rather than utilising traditional memorisation and rote learning techniques.

- Realistic Maths Education (RME) originally began in the Netherlands and is now used more widely, including in the UK. It emphasises the use of real-world examples, activities that encourage pupils to move from informal to formal representations, and 'making sense' rather than learning formal ideas in the early stages of maths.

- Dialogic Teaching tends to be focused on school-level rather than vocational maths and incorporates discussion to support the development of mathematical concepts. Practitioners need an in-depth knowledge and understanding of it in order to incorporate it successfully into maths teaching.

- Metacognition involves the development of thinking skills and learners' awareness of their own learning.

- Embedding Approaches in Vocational Contexts Learning by doing, or kinaesthetic learning (for example, by embedding maths into vocational and real-life contexts) has been found to be highly valuable. Methods can include giving students relevant problems to solve and relevant contexts that enable them to understand abstract maths or concepts.

In a literature review that encompassed studies and articles in the UK and internationally, Maughan et al. (2016) found robust evidence for the following types of intervention in classrooms in England:

- Peer-mediated support, for example, peer tutoring.
- Sustained support over time.

- Approaches incorporating mixed strategies such as whole language approaches, linguistics and phonics.

Maughan et al. (2016) caution that the kind of sustained approaches that might work over a 2-3 year programme, might be less effective for those students resitting GCSEs within a short space of time. Here it may be more important to focus on developing understanding in diagnosed areas of weakness rather than trying to cover all content and understanding. Van Effenterre (2017), in a literature review of post-16 remedial policies largely from the United States, found that the effects of intervention are very mixed: "remedial courses appear to help or hinder students differently by state, institution, background, and level of academic preparedness" (p. 1). The reasons for such differences is, suggests Van Effenterre (2017), an important area for additional research so that interventons and pedagogy can be tailored to individual students, especially as, for some students, the effects may be negative.

Other than a limited number of case studies (cited above), most research into English and maths teaching in FE relies on the views of practitioners. Ofsted reports provide a view of current classroom practice. An analysis of 15 recent Ofsted inspection reports of post-16 providers found that inspectors considered English and maths were well-taught in some providers, enabling students to make good progress, including those who had struggled in previous settings. Where English and maths provision was good, the following approaches were noted to be effective:

- Teachers successfully integrate aspects of both English and mathematics into their course teaching. Students are aware of how these subjects are important in their vocational area.

- Academic and vocational teachers work well and collaboratively with specialist English and mathematics teachers to improve learners' skills and vocabulary.

- Teachers have high expectations of the quality of students' written work in all subjects and correct errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar.

However, even in provision rated as good overall, inspectors sometimes found that English and maths provision was improving but weak in comparison with other areas; in under-performing colleges, English and maths were invariably highlighted as areas of concern. Common weaknesses included:

- Functional skills not sufficiently promoted in vocational lessons and teachers not integrating English and mathematics throughout the curriculum.

- Teachers not feeding back sufficiently on spelling, punctuation and grammar across the curriculum so limiting learners' ability to progress to higher level study.

- Teachers themselves using resources or providing feedback containing spelling or grammatical errors.

- Teachers not identifying students' starting points in English and maths precisely enough.

Chapter 4   Continuing Professional Development

Summary

- Between 2008 and 2012, teachers in FE were required to undertake 30 hours of CPD each year as a condition of maintaining QTLS status. One consequence of the mandatory requirement for CPD was that the onus was placed firmly on the individual to meet the CPD requirements rather than on the employing organisations to develop their workforce (Broad, 2015).

- The effect of mandatory CPD on the quality of teaching and learning is unknown. No research studies were found that explored its impact while the requirement was in force.

- Analysis of FE workforce data from 2015-2016 shows that on average, teachers spend 15 hours on CPD per year although over 60 per cent of teachers report spending no time at all on CPD (Frontier Economics, 2017).

- Mentoring and coaching are widely seen as an effective way of supporting teachers' professional development, particularly within their subject specialism, but the quality and availability of mentoring remains variable (Faraday et al., 2011; Hobson et al., 2015).

- Research findings show that observations are frequently used for both quality assurance purposes and for identifying practitioners who need support to improve their teaching although the impact remains under-researched (O'Leary and Brooks, 2014). This dual purpose can have negative effects on the openness with which teachers are prepared to discuss their learning needs. However, sustained and supportive observations can be helpful in developing practice (Broad, 2015; Edgington, 2013; Lawson, 2011).

- There is some limited evidence that external CPD that brings together professionals from different workplaces can help teachers to make sense of their own practice and develop new teaching strategies (Broad, 2015; Finlay, 2008; Hobson et al. 2015; LSIS, 2011).

- Professional development can be more effective and lead to a more profound change in beliefs and practice when teachers are encouraged to analyse, test and refine classroom activities (Swan and Swain, 2010).

Background

Teachers in the FE sector often undertake 'initial training' after already being employed and working as a teacher (Orr and Simmons, 2010; Lucas and Unwin, 2009).

Consequently, teacher training is in itself a form of CPD that helps vocational experts make the transition to the dual professional role of a teacher. This chapter explores CPD as it relates to teachers who are not in training (or CPD that is in addition to any concurrent initial training).

The Professional Standards for Teachers and Trainers in Education and Training in England, which were revised in 2014 (and which are produced and owned by the ETF), emphasise that teachers and trainers in the sector are reflective practitioners. Threaded through the 20 standards are references to maintaining and updating knowledge and skills, evaluating practice and drawing on research evidence to inform practice. These standards underpin the revised QTLS status but are not statutory, unlike those for school teachers. Between 2008 and 2012, teachers in the Further Education (FE) sector were required by legislation to engage with 30 hours (pro rata) of CPD in order to maintain their qualified teacher status. This was monitored by the IfL until the Lingfield Report (2012) recommended that CPD – along with mandatory teaching qualifications – should be a matter for individuals and their employers. Analysis of FE workforce data from 2015-2016 shows that, on average, teachers spend 15 hours per year on CPD although a majority of teachers (over 60 per cent) report spending no time at all on CPD (Frontier Economics, 2017).

One consequence of the mandatory requirement for CPD was that the onus was placed firmly on the individual to meet the CPD requirements rather than on the employing organisations to develop their workforce (Broad, 2015). However, some nationally funded initiatives were put in place to support workforce development including the establishment of Centres for Excellence in Teacher Training (CETTs); these were regionally-based partnerships that were expected to define and encourage effective practice. The CETTS were allocated £30 million for three years after which time they were expected to become self-financing. In addition, funding was made available to improve subject-specific teaching through a Subject Coach programme.

Effective Continuing Professional Development

The IfL's 2009 list of possible CPD activities to meet the then requirement included:

- Peer coaching.

- Subject Learning Coach training.

- Accredited courses or programmes related to teacher development.

- Mentoring new colleagues.

- Peer review.

- Peer observation.

- Work-shadowing.

- Team-teaching.

- Team/department self-assessment.

- Carrying out and disseminating action research.

- Evaluation of feedback (learners and peers).

- Significant input at team meetings.

- Engagement in structured professional dialogue/learning conversations.

- Preparation for and evaluation of appraisal.

- Membership of committees, boards, steering groups related to teaching and/or your subject area.

- Partnership activities (schools, employers, other providers).

- Visits to community organisations.

- Curriculum design/development/validation.

- E-learning activities.

- Accredited CPD courses or programmes.

- Reading journal articles.

- Reviewing books or articles.

- Updating knowledge through the internet/TV.

However, the wide range of activities that counted as CPD, including in-house and external, informal and formal, opportunistic and carefully planned led to CPD that was uneven in its provision and quality and its effectiveness unknown (Swan and Swain, 2010).

Much of the literature relates to the period in time when there was a mandatory requirement for CPD and includes guidance on what makes for effective CPD as well as limited research into teachers' perceptions of CPD and barriers to accessing it.

Villeneuve-Smith et al. (2009), in a publication for the Learning and Skills Network entitled *Eight things you already know about CPD*, argued that:

1 A strategic approach to CPD is essential for the core business of FE which is creating better outcomes for learners, communities and employers. Teacher quality is the single biggest influence on student achievement and the best way to improve teacher quality is through supporting the development of individuals.

2 One-off short courses or whole college INSET (IN-Service Training day) sessions/days are less effective than individual CPD programmes linked to wider action plans within the provider. Short courses are useful for absorbing information and updating knowledge but are not likely to lead to skills development.

3 Good CPD echoes good teaching and learning in that it utilises a range of techniques to develop knowledge, skills and reflective practice. In particular, it involves critical reflection on different learning experiences and resulting action-planning, which represent development as a teacher.

4 As professionals, teachers have a fundamental personal responsibility to plan and engage in CPD.

5 Institutions should include organisation-wide workforce development planning as part of the provider development plan.

6 A distributed model of CPD leadership is the most effective in which a SMT member is responsible for the strategic planning of CPD in consultation with middle managers; middle managers have responsibility for identifying needs with individual teachers and setting these in the strategic context; individual teachers have responsibility as professionals for self-improvement.

7 CPD can help equip staff to thrive in a challenging and changing policy environment.

8 Practitioners should think of the 30 hour CPD requirement as an opportunity to make CPD purposeful.

The current standards for FE teachers set out expectations that teachers will be reflective practitioners; this expectation informed the content of the predecessor standards from FENTO and LLUK too. The concept of teachers being reflective practitioners and this acting as the conduit to improving practice through reviewing learner responses, discussion with colleagues and evaluating learner responses is well embedded:

> "There was considerable evidence from the observations and interviews that good teachers are always learning, building their own skills and teaching themselves. They undertake lots of research to inform their planning and delivery. They are

self-critical, recognising when things do not go well, trying to understand why and formulating ideas about how to improve" (Faraday et al., 2011: 48).

Mentoring and coaching has also been a feature of the CPD landscape in FE for some years, with the Subject Learning Coach initiative intended to support developing teachers to contextualise their generic teacher training within their specialist area. Faraday et al. (2011) found that support from mentoring, Advanced Practitioners and Subject Learning Coaches were recognised as important by teachers in supporting their professional development. Coaching was identified as one of the most effective and widely used means of delivering professional development. Hobson et al (2015) found that while the quality of institution-based mentoring has improved to some extent across the FE and Skills Sector in the last decade or so, it remains extremely variable.

A survey of teachers (Hobson et al., 2015) found that around a third of teachers reported currently (or within the last two years) having a mentor. The majority of respondents pursuing an ITT qualification had a mentor, while between 25 per cent and 30 per cent of other teachers reported having one, predominantly as a result of identified weaknesses following observation of their teaching.

Barriers to effective mentoring and coaching include issues with the selection and training of mentors and coaches and the limited time available to mentors/coaches to meet with and provide support for their mentees/coaches. Despite these possible impediments, Hobson et al. (2015) report that effective mentoring and coaching can enable teachers to talk about various difficulties that they experience; help them develop general pedagogical techniques; and, support the development of their subject pedagogy.

A number of factors were found to enhance the effectiveness and impact of institution-based mentoring and coaching, including:

- Having mentors/coaches who share the subject/vocational specialism of the teachers they are supporting.

- The mentor not being the line manager of the mentee.

- Having a rigorous process for the selection of mentors/coaches and for pairing them with specific teachers.

- Having regular and sustained contact between mentors/coaches and the teachers being supported.

Hobson et al. (2015) made a number of recommendations including the establishment of a national framework for mentoring and providing access to trained mentors in their subject area for all teachers in FE.

The most effective CPD is based on learning from others – from shared resources, from peer support and working together and through formal and informal networks (LSIS, 2010). A significant barrier to engagement with meaningful CPD is where teachers operate in limited teacher/CPD networks without the opportunity to forge links with similar subject-specialist teachers, leaving them to develop subject and occupational expertise in isolation (Broad, 2015).

OTL are frequently used as part of institutions' quality assurance processes and, where teaching is weak, inform interventions designed to improve practice such as coaching and mentoring (Broad, 2015; Edgington, 2013; Lawson, 2011).

An analysis of fifteen recent (2016/2017) Ofsted reports shows that inspectors found observations to be frequently used in the context of both performance management and in identifying the need for targeted support. Inspectors' comments include:

- "Teachers and assessors … are set challenging targets to improve their practice that are monitored regularly. Teachers whose performance is not at the expected standard either improve their performance or leave the college."

- "Findings from lesson observations are used well by managers to develop appropriate mandatory staff training opportunities throughout the year. Where staff underperformance is identified, interventions and training by managers to support their improvement are implemented swiftly. Where performance does not improve sufficiently, capability processes are implemented in a timely manner."

- "Managers observe teachers and assessors annually and produce an overarching analysis of the results which, in turn, informs training activity. However, this analysis is insufficient to target training appropriately and improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment. Managers do not link the results of lesson observations to key information such as students" attendance at lessons, the proportions who achieve their qualifications or who leave their course early."

- "Innovation and improvement practitioners support teachers very well to improve, following formal observations of their teaching practice. Consequently, the majority of teachers who receive this support improve."

- "Advanced practitioners provide targeted support to teachers where lessons observed are less than good, and many improve their practice as a result. Where teachers or subcontractors are not able to demonstrate sufficiently rapid or sustained improvement, contracts are terminated."

- "Quality assurance processes for observations of teaching and learning and work scrutiny are insufficiently rigorous. Feedback is often vague and does not set clear

targets for improvement. Consequently, staff do not always know how to improve their practice."

- "Teachers utilise the professional feedback they receive from accurate observations of their performance, to reflect on their teaching practice and improve their performance. They value the broad range of professional development opportunities provided for them, including the informal help available from experienced learning coaches to refine specific teaching skills."

Despite the importance of observation as a tool for monitoring and improving teacher performance, the impact on individual teachers and on improving the quality of teaching and learning remain under-researched areas (O'Leary and Brooks, 2014). The dual purpose of lesson observations as a quality control measure and as support for professional development inevitably results in tensions; individuals perceive them as stressful and this reduces the extent to which they support reflective practice (Edgington, 2013). Lawson (2011: 319) describes the tensions as follows:

"Classroom observation has a long, but not necessarily welcome, history in teacher education and appraisal. Traditionally, it was first associated with preservice training, then with initial training in a first job, then with competency procedures, and only more latterly with inspection and quality assurance measures. Given this unfolding history, classroom observation has also been a 'site of struggle' between teachers, anxious to preserve professional autonomy and fearful of a mechanism that is mainly associated with immaturity in teaching or with incompetence and the more managerialist approaches that see observation as a key element in teacher accountability – as a guarantee that the job is being done 'properly'."

Hobson et al. (2015) found that many providers allocated mentors to teachers in response to observations in which their teaching was judged as inadequate or requiring improvement (either by Ofsted or the institution's own quality assurance processes). This use of mentoring and (in particular) coaching as a remedial strategy to address the perceived under-performance of teachers acted as an impediment to constructing the safe, trusting environment needed to encourage teachers to be open about their limitations and accept that making mistakes is part of the learning process. For some, a negative observation can result in a loss of motivation and even lead to individuals leaving teaching (Edgington, 2013).

In a study involving three 16-19 institutions and an HEI, Lawson (2011) found that some elements of teaching could be changed for the better through a sustained and supportive programme of classroom observation, whereas other aspects of teaching were resistant to this form of CPD. The two areas in which observations, feedback and discussions could improve practice were planning and assessment for learning. Many teachers know

what works in these areas but have not previously articulated it; by doing so and reflecting on why they have chosen particular strategies, they go on to develop their practice further. However, in other aspects of teaching, such as where practice is complex and nuanced or requires a deeper theoretical understanding (for example, the use of questioning techniques), it is difficult for teachers to improve other than through more focused development programmes.

Other studies looked at the effectiveness of external forms of CPD. Finlay (2008) reported on a research project which sought to gain a deeper understanding of the contribution that universities make to the professional learning of teachers. This involved a case study of participants engaged in an in-service teacher education course whilst also working as lecturers in FE colleges in Scotland. The analysis suggested that bringing together professionals from different workplaces provides a community of teachers and fellow students from whom they can learn, and a set of rules and procedures conducive to development. Participants acquired new strategies for teaching and found resources that enabled them to make sense of both their practice and their workplace, and for helping them to develop self-esteem.

Swan and Swain (2010) described the outcomes of a six-day CPD course spread over nine months in the professional development of 24 numeracy teachers in FE. Researchers used questionnaires, interviews and classroom observations. Contrary to the belief that, in order to change a teacher's practice, one has to first change his or her beliefs and assumptions, the report's authors argue that professional development is made more effective by involving teachers in collaborative design-based research. When teachers are encouraged to analyse, test and refine classroom activities this, as well as being enjoyable, can bring about more profound changes in their beliefs and practices than other forms of development.

Chapter 5   Leadership

Summary

- Leadership in the FE sector has become increasingly complex, with multiple and, at times, competing pressures (Collinson, 2009).

- The role of principals has evolved significantly from that of chief academic officer to one that combines responsibility for academic matters with that of being the chief executive of a multimillion-pound business. This has required new skills and a different way of looking at the activities and functions college principals carry out (e.g. Hannaghan, 2006; Collinson, 2009; KPMG, 2009; Lambert, 2013).

- The role of middle leaders has changed and grown in importance, particularly in implementing organisational change policies and programmes (Collinson, 2007b). However, understanding among middle leaders of each other's professional role within their institutions is limited, and their roles have differential power and perceived worth (Briggs, 2007).

- Effective leadership behaviours for middle leaders differ from those for senior leaders (Evans, 2008). This is because middle leaders are primarily occupied with day-to-day people management rather than the leadership activities associated with SMT, such as strategic planning, legacy building and developing mission statements and visions (Evans, 2008).

- A multiplicity of possible leadership approaches is used by providers in the FE sector and it appears that their effectiveness is often contingent on context (Borrett, 2007; Jowitt and Westerman, 2007; Muijs et al., 2006; Vasse, 2007) There is evidence to suggest that employees have a preference for 'blended leadership' – an approach that combines specific elements of 'top-down', hierarchical leadership with aspects of 'distributed' leadership (Collinson and Collinson, 2005, 2006, 2009).

- Sensing the complex and changing context in which FE providers operate and responding to it are vital leadership skills that have been shown to be critical across a range of sectors (Hughes et al., 2014), including FE (Hannagan, 2006).

- Individual staff have complex and multiple social, organisational and ethnic identities, which they may highlight, adjust or suppress to gain access to and to survive or thrive in leadership (Lumby et al. 2007; Morrison and Lumby, 2009; Maringe, 2012).

Leadership in the FE sector

Leaders in the FE sector operate in an environment characterised by changes in policy and funding as well as wider economic and societal shifts (Greany et al., 2014; Hughes et al., 2014). Leadership has become increasingly complex, with multiple and, at times, competing pressures (Collinson, 2009).

Several studies have documented how the role of FE college principals has evolved and responded to the challenges faced in this changing operating environment since colleges were incorporated in 1993 (e.g. Hannaghan, 2006; Collinson, 2009; Lambert, 2013). In 2009, a survey of college principals on the changes in their role revealed that it had evolved significantly from that of chief academic officer to one that combines responsibility for academic matters with that of being the chief executive of a multimillion pound business, with some colleges operating a series of subsidiary companies too (KPMG, 2009). As Lambert (2013: 41) observes:

> "This has required new skills and a different way of looking at the activities and functions that are carried out by the post-holder."

In a qualitative study with the principals of six colleges in the south of England, Lambert (2013) suggests that there are three dimensions to the role of the principal in FE colleges[13]: an external-public, an internal-public and an internal-private. The outward facing, public role of the principal has become increasingly prominent as a result of institutional autonomy created through incorporation, combined with the development of a market-led environment in which colleges now operate. This involves principals representing the interests of their colleges within the local community, to businesses and, in some cases, regionally and nationally (Lambert, 2013: 40). The internal-public role of the principal involves those aspects of their internal leadership of administrative, academic and business-related issues that are visible to and, in some cases, involve engagement with, staff and students. The internal-private role of the principal comprises internal leadership activities that are hidden from the view of all but a few staff and governors. These activities include strategic planning and the development of the vision and mission of the college. Lambert (2013) suggests that a key challenge for principals is ensuring that there is a balance between these three elements of principalship:

> "(I)f the balance is skewed in favour of the external aspects of the role, there is potential for principals to become disconnected from the college. If the balance is

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[13] Lambert (2013:40) reports that the "colleges (were) categorized as either medium or large, using Payne's (2008) classification by income" (Lambert 40): Payne, L (2008) The Evidence Base on College Size and Mergers in the Further Education Sector. DIUS Research Report 08 19. London: Department for Innovation, Universities & Skills.

focused exclusively on the internal work of the college, the risk is that principals are perceived by external stakeholders as not engaging in the local community or being out of touch with the stakeholder demands, such as local authorities. However, (…) the elements are not equal and there will be periods of time when there is an imbalance as a result of changing environmental factors" (Lambert, 2013: 41).

Despite the clear indications of the changing role of principals and the development of senior management posts to lead on estates, finance and other functions, there is relatively little recent research on the nature of the roles undertaken by the executive in FE Colleges and other providers in the FE sector.

Alongside these developments, the role of middle leaders has also changed and grown in importance, particularly in implementing organisational change policies and programmes (Collinson, 2007b). Collinson (2007b) noted that by the mid-2000s the increasing impact of management information systems and delegated budgets had intensified the role of middle managers and also resulted in first line and more junior staff (such as programme managers) being drawn into middle managerial responsibilities. Middle managers are often responsible for the accurate input of extensive performance and achievement data (e.g. enrolment, attendance, punctuality, retention and achievement) and delegated budget systems give responsibility for income and expenditure not only to heads of department, but also to programme managers. These first line managers are increasingly expected to incorporate strategic objectives and decision-making into their job responsibilities (Collinson, 2007b).

The comparatively small amount of research on middle managers in the FE sector reports that middle managers often experience multiple leadership pressures and demands that can arise from above, below and from other (horizontal) functions, departments and peers (Briggs, 2005a). Research conducted in the 2000s suggests that middle managers inhabit two different, sometimes dichotomous and conflicting worlds, one in relation to those in senior positions and the other regarding their own staff and students (e.g. Gleeson and Shain, 2003 and Leader, 2004). In this "go-between role", they frequently experience high degrees of ambiguity and ambivalence when, for example, engaged in organisational change programmes. According to Collinson (2007b: 6):

> "(M)iddle managers' respond to these changes through 'willing compliance' (those who are wholeheartedly committed to the change process), 'unwilling compliance' (those who are sceptical and disenchanted, but only develop a range of defensive coping strategies), and 'strategic compliance' (those who are able to reconstruct the change process in ways that maintain their core values)".

The role of middle managers in FE is demanding and complex. There is a seemingly infinite number of variables which may affect what middle managers do and their success

in fulfilling their role (Briggs, 2005a; Barker, 2007). Briggs (2005a) describes the roles of middle managers in FE (Corporate agent, Implementer, Staff manager, Liaiser, Leader) and shows the range of functions they fulfil. Leader (2004) underlines the significance of the role of middle managers in FE not just as providing the interface between senior managers and teachers, but also as potentially instrumental in determining the strategy itself.

A study by Briggs (2007) found that, because FE college middle leaders are located across a wide range of academic and vocational subjects, management functions and specialist services, they differed in the ways in which they understood and enacted their roles and this had implications for effective middle leadership. Barker's (2007) study of the perceptions of the role of middle management held by teaching staff and their managers in a large FE college reached the same conclusion:

> "The culture and values of a construction faculty are determined not just by those of the further education sector, but also by those of the construction sector; and similarly with, for example, hairdressing, catering, or transport. Hence middle managers may do different tasks and have different styles within a college that reflect their different contexts. And they may all be effective in senior management terms" (Barker, 2007: 97).

Briggs' (2007: 480-81) noted that understanding among middle leaders of each others' professional role was limited, and that their roles had differential power and perceived worth.

Individual and collective models of leadership

Traditional views of leadership tend to assume a tough, charismatic and 'heroic' leader, who utilises a dictatorial approach and operates within a single organisation (Collinson, 2008c). Examples of leadership models that place a strong emphasis on the qualities, capabilities and attitude in individual leaders to ensure success include Command-and-Control or Transactional Leadership and Transformational Leadership. The Command-and-Control or Transactional Model operates through setting targets and then offering rewards or penalties to the staff of organisations for achieving or failing to achieve them. It focuses on the exchange of employee skill and effort for tangible and intangible rewards. In contrast, the Transformational Model is intended to alter the motives, values and goals of staff. Consequently, whereas the Transactional Model emphasises the importance of individuals supervising, organising and assessing the performance of groups, the Transformational Model places heavy emphasis on leaders' possessing charismatic qualities in being able to inspire staff about the bigger picture of an organisation's vision, values and direction, but does not specify the means by which such staff engagement is achieved (LSIS, 2010).

However, since the turn of the century there has been a growing emphasis on collaborative approaches, where leadership may be distributed within an organisation, or even across multiple organisations. These so-called 'post-heroic' ideas stress the value of more collaborative and less hierarchical practices, enacted through fluid, multi-directional interactions, networks and partnerships (Collinson, 2008c). Since the mid–1990s, the notion of 'distributed leadership' has become increasingly influential (Evans, 2008), although, as Collinson (2008c) notes, it is an essentially contested concept, and remains a matter of ongoing debate:

> "It overlaps and is sometimes used interchangeably with other leadership concepts, such as 'shared leadership', 'collective leadership', 'collaborative leadership' and 'co-leadership'. While these ideas about "shared", "distributed", "collaborative" and "networked" leadership are not necessarily interchangeable, they all imply a more collaborative and shared notion of power and authority" (Collinson, 2008c: 2).

Many policy-makers, practitioners and academic researchers have identified 'distributed', 'shared' and 'collaborative' leadership as important means for enhancing quality and ensuring continuous improvement in UK education (Collinson, 2008c).

Several studies have investigated the use of different approaches to leadership in the FE sector. For example, Muijs et al. (2006) explore the use and development of transactional, transformational and distributed approaches to leadership in ten providers (including general FE colleges, sixth form colleges, specialist colleges, adult and community services and work-based learning organisations), which were selected from providers showing the highest levels of improvement over the previous three years and with high leadership grades on statutory inspections.[14]

Muijs et al. (2006) found that respondents considered transformational forms of leadership the most effective and desirable approach. However, they found that no one leadership style characterised the ten cases and all were identified as being effective. Moreover, they identified tensions between transactional, transformational and distributed leadership across the cases. Distributed leadership was readily associated with the distribution of responsibilities rather than power. It was viewed largely as a mechanism for delivering organisational imperatives. The tension between distributed and directive leadership was particularly acute in relation to leadership development. The need to

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[14] Muijs et al. attempted to ensure both geographical and provider size diversity in the sample. In each case study site, focus group interviews were conducted with panels of, respectively, senior managers, middle managers and first line managers in the organisation. In total, 42 focus groups with between 6 and 10 participants were conducted. In addition, they interviewed 3-4 leaders in each organisation and sent out a survey to all members of staff in the organisations (a total of over 1511 surveys were returned out of a total of 5000 sent out, a response rate of 30.22per cent).

deliver organisational outcomes whilst also being inclusive about aspects of organisational operation was felt to be a particular challenge.

Jowitt and Westerman (2007) also found leaders using a range of different approaches. Their study aimed to identify common factors in 7 'outstanding' FE colleges. They point to: a clear and simple mission to which all subscribe: a clear commitment to improving quality with the learner at the centre of the process; having 'the right people on the bus'; a strong sense of values in personal and corporate behaviour; a clear understanding of the roles of governors, senior managers and managers; and, the critical importance of data to improve performance. However, each college displayed differences in how these factors were applied, particularly in terms of leadership styles. The styles identified by the researchers were:

College A – Distributed Leadership

College B – Reputational Leadership

College C – Performance Leadership

College D – Transformational Leadership

College E – Centralising Leadership

College F – Singular Hands on Leadership

College G – Situational Leadership

Nonetheless, although these leadership styles were seen as a key feature of each principal's leadership, Jowitt and Westerman (2007) found that approaches to leadership and management were much more multi-faceted in each of the institutions. This chimes with the findings of Borrett (2007) who explored how leaders within a large FE college harness and integrate e-learning during a period of transformational change.[15] His research found that, at a pedagogical level, the leadership styles driving change were a mixture of facilitative, distributed and empowered leadership. At executive level, command and control styles of leadership were deployed with respect to questions of e-learning infrastructure, policy and resources. Borrett concludes that a complex mix of leadership styles exists in the case study college, ranging from managerialist, to facilitative, distributed and empowered.

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[15] Borrett's (2007) research methods were both quantitative and qualitative and included online surveys, interviews, analysis of key documents and reports, and participant observation.

In examining whether six FE colleges judged as "'outstanding' by Ofsted meet the criteria of a 'learning organisation', Vasse (2007) found that while some organisations demonstrated a greater commitment to employee involvement than is evident in 'satisfactory' colleges, not all 'outstanding' colleges are learning organisations, even though they are high performing. In some cases, leaders did not proactively create learning opportunities for staff. Although the views of people were valued, the power to make decisions resided predominantly with the principal and the SMT, and this could restrict innovation, experimentation, learning and risk-taking. Vasse highlighted a dilemma for leaders between empowerment and control, between a positive approach to learning and 'letting go' of decision-making.

These studies indicate that a multiplicity of possible leadership approaches are used by providers in the FE sector and suggest that their effectiveness is often contingent on context. The findings link closely with research by Collinson and Collinson (2005, 2006, 2009) on 'blended leadership' in FE colleges and staff views about what constitutes effective leadership. Collinson and Collinson (2009) examined how leadership was enacted, distributed and experienced at various hierarchical levels within seven FE colleges over a 2.5-year period.[16] Their study revealed employees' preference for 'blended leadership' – an approach that combines specific elements of 'top-down', hierarchical leadership with aspects of 'distributed' leadership.[17] According to their research, many staff in FE view effective leadership as combining distribution of leadership with direction, and delegation with decisive decision-making:

> "They preferred leadership practices that combine a paradoxical blend of seemingly irreconcilable qualities. Although employees across all seven colleges valued distributed and shared leadership, they also expressed a preference for aspects of more directive and 'firm' leadership, valuing leaders who were detached enough to appreciate the big picture, but also close enough to be approachable and 'down to earth'" (Collinson and Collinson, 2009: 376).

Collinson and Collinson (2009) did not go on to suggest that blended leadership was invariably enacted in all FE colleges or that it constituted 'a one best way' to lead. They also recognised that maintaining this kind of flexible approach is especially challenging in FE, particularly because of the multiple, shifting and sometimes contradictory pressures in which colleges operate.

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[16] Interviews were conducted with 140 employees (from principal to lecturer) within these general FE colleges, which included two sixth forms. While we explored leader–led relations in seven main colleges, they also researched in another four specialist sub-divisions of these colleges.
[17] The literature does not indicate how this compares with other sectors.

In a study conducted in a large FE college, Allen (2015) found that members of staff expressed similar preferences to those identified in Collinson and Collinson's study (although she does not make use of the concept of blended leadership). Allen (2015) reported that staff members felt:

> "a leader must harness many qualities and do not expect a leader to be of one style; they expect a leader able to authentically adapt (maintaining trust whilst potentially changing strategy) in order to maintain and drive the organisation forward" (Allen, 2015: 10).

The importance of context to leadership

The importance of context to leadership highlighted in a ETF study which reviews leadership models and concepts used outside the FE sector and discusses their relevance for the sector (Hughes et al., 2014).[18] Having highlighted the importance of collaborative approaches to leadership, including distributed leadership and shared leadership, the authors suggest that understanding the context within which an organisation and its leaders are operating, as well as the internal context of the organisation, is key (Hughes et al., 2014: 24):

> "Understanding and responding to context is crucial to leadership and leaders in all sectors need to be aware of the context of their organisation, its operating environment and objectives in order to inform their approaches. In the modern business world, public sector, and in the Education and Skills sector, increasing complexity is leading to an increasing need for leaders to consciously detect, reflect on, and act on, their contexts" (Hughes et al., 2014: 1).

Together with the ability to facilitate collaborative leadership, context-sensing skills are a key attribute of effective leadership in all sectors, including FE (Hughes et al., 2014):

> "Clearly, both sensing context and responding to it are vital for organisations in the Education and Skills sector. The organisations themselves and the operating context is complex and changing. Trends in society, pedagogy, technology and the economy, combine with policy and funding, and organisations' competitive position in the Education and Skills landscape to produce key challenges for leaders in setting the strategic and practical direction for their organisations. Many organisations in the sector have teams that monitor and respond to key trends that affect their business, and building reliable systems for this can be an important tool

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[18] This study involved a literature review and consultations with leadership experts with experience of a range of sectors.

in responding to complexity. How then to respond to these changing and challenging contexts is an altogether more difficult and subtle task, and arguably the primary challenge for leaders in the sector" (Hughes et al., 2014: 29).

The importance of context sensing skills in FE is illustrated by Hannagan's (2006) study of management responses to changes in the operating environment of FE colleges. Hannagan found that the ability of chief executives and principals to assess, understand and develop a strategic response to changes to the environment in which FE providers operate is a major influence on the performance FE colleges. Hannagan's study involved a national survey of the principals and chief executives of 281 FE colleges in England in 1999, case studies of 4 FE colleges to investigate critical success factors in greater detail, and a subsequent review of the case study colleges' Ofsted inspection reports between 2002 and 2006.[19] The national survey revealed that:

- All respondents agreed that changes in the external environment were the most important reasons for strategic change, with an emphasis on changes in the funding mechanism as more important than the change to incorporated status.

- All the colleges felt that the change in funding was an extremely important cause of change because financial pressures were felt to be the most important reason for colleges changing their organisational structure and was a strong element in decisions about the content of strategic change. This emphasis on finance arose because colleges felt that it was on the basis of finance that the success of the college would be measured.

- The third key variable in the external context was the introduction of elements of the market. Most colleges felt that competition was important in strategic change. Competition was important because of the close link between student enrolments and funding, and this had an influence on both the content and process of change by raising the profile of marketing and environmental assessment.

Hannagan (2016) investigated the most important critical success factors in more depth by completing case studies based on four colleges in different parts of the country, in different locations, of different sizes and with different average levels of funding.[20] The

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[19] Nearly one-third of colleges responded (to the national survey) and these colleges were compared with those who did not respond in terms of region, geographical location, size and funding. It was found that the respondents included colleges of all size, with a wide range of budgets and that they were located in all the regions of the country in a variety of urban and relatively rural locations and provided a good representation of colleges in general.
[20] It was considered that these four colleges provided a sufficient number of cases to illustrate different approaches to the same external changes. Between 10 and 12 interviews were carried out in each college with a wide range of people, including the principal, governors, senior managers, junior managers, lecturers and union representatives.

case studies supported the proposition that in order to be successful organisations needed to develop strategies which enabled them to cope with the environment in which they operated and changes to this environment. In order to do this, they needed to develop an understanding of this environment, the markets they served and the competition they were up against. They had to introduce policies, processes and structures within the organisation to enable them to compete successfully. All of this depended on strategic leadership and the case studies clearly revealed that the relative success of these four FE colleges relied on their principals' abilities to sense and respond to key features of the context in which their colleges operated. These conclusions were confirmed in follow-up studies of the cases through their Ofsted inspection reports between 2002 and 2006, which revealed that, although the leadership of the colleges had changed, the essential elements in successful strategic change had not (Hannagan, 2006).

Diversity and leadership

The main empirical evidence on diversity and leadership in the FE sector is provided by the research of Lumby and her colleagues, which was funded by the then Learning and Skills Development Agency (LSDA) (in 2004-2005) and the Centre for Excellence in Leadership (in 2006-2007). The first of these studies (Lumby et al., 2005) concluded that the sector's strategic commitment to equality and diversity presented challenges, not least of which were findings that, whatever the rhetoric, cast doubts about whether there was widespread support for a more diverse and inclusive leadership; indeed, if it existed, whether diverse leadership would be effective (Morrison and Lumby 2009). The second study (Lumby et al., 2007) examined the mechanisms by which those identified as potential and actual leaders in FE were included or excluded from working with others in ways which maximised or reduced their influence upon the organisation. A specific focus was upon the integration of diversity in leadership (Lumby et al., 2007). The research constructed five cases using interviews with individual leaders in numerous roles; interviews with further staff who are in a minority within their leadership groups in terms of their gender, age, disability, religion, ethnicity, function, educational/professional background; and, observation of leadership groups at differing levels of seniority at work in meetings.[21] The research found that there was a gap between the publicly stated commitment to equality and inclusion and the experience of individual leaders. There is

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[21] The research approach was based on selecting purposively five cases. The final selection of case organisations included four further education and one sixth form college. They were located in the Greater London, North West, Yorkshire and Humberside and West Midlands regions, in metropolitan and urban areas. They ranged in size from under to considerably over the median size of student numbers for college type. The colleges were in areas of average, high and very high deprivation.

also a gulf between the progress which senior leaders hope has been made and how others assess it. Lumby et al. (2007) conclude that:

> "Despite the emphasis on celebrating difference, often difference was deleted or minimised in order to incorporate out groupers into leadership. It is indicated that colleges generally have yet to find ways of valuing difference while encouraging involvement in leadership" (Lumby et al. 2007: 23).

Using data collected by Lumby et al. (2007), Maringe (2012) investigated opportunities for women to contribute to decision making in FE colleges. Maringe found that a pre-existing male-dominated culture and manner in which decisions were made by the senior team prevented full participation and involvement of female employees. Graeny et al., (2014) suggest that this points to a risk to diversity in educational organisations that train, develop and promote their teachers and leaders internally, through 'grow your own' strategies.

Leader behaviours required in the FE sector

There is no definitive list of skills associated with the varied models of leadership described above and little systematic evidence on the relative effectiveness of each model in practice. However, based on the general trends in management skills needs and an evidence review, the Institute of Employment Studies et al. (2010) formulated a list of skills, knowledge and behaviours that managers and leaders may require within the learning and skills sector. This was developed as part of a study that explored leadership in times of recession. The research identified a set of key leadership skills required in the FE sector at that time:

Major skills needs identified as being important for leaders in the Education and Skills sector through research in 2010

Strategic thinking and planning – involving the adoption of a values-based mindset with a commitment to a transformative and distributive leadership model, where appropriate.

Partnership working with other learning providers, including those which may be competitors, and especially local authorities – involving negotiation and influencing skills.

Change management skills including both effective project management and staff engagement skills covering empathy, persuasion and resilience to 'take the organisation with you'.

Performance management to support talent management of teams and individuals as well as manage poor performance, relying on communication and motivation skills.

General commercial awareness and entrepreneurial skills to ensure organisational viability in a time of reduced funding – this involves the ability to spot opportunities to develop new provision or deliver existing learning and innovation differently, using skills in creativity and innovation.

Financial management skills – employing different sources of funding creatively to deliver provision using a mixture of co - investment from individual learners and employers as well as managing budgets and resources effectively at all organisational levels.

Procurement/commissioning skills requiring capacities in negotiation, understanding of how to get the best value out of contracts through legal knowledge and how to use partnerships effectively for commissioning.

Fostering equality and diversity of achievement for learners and staff – requiring tenacity to remain committed to the agenda in the face of possibly contradictory pressures.

Personal effectiveness and self-awareness – including the ability to recognise the impact of behaviour on others, modifying it where needed and working under pressure.

Adapted from Institute for Employment Studies, the Learning and Skills Network and The Work Foundation, 2010, pp. 5-6.

Source: Greany et al., 2014: 16-17

Greany et al. (2014) suggest that the leadership skills and qualities required in 2014 were not fundamentally different from those required in 2010:

> "Where there are differences they may be more in the weight of emphasis: for example, the need for partnership working and system leadership to develop innovative, sometimes collective, solutions appears to have grown, while the weight of evidence in terms of why and how leaders should prioritise learning-centred leadership focussed on recruiting and developing talented staff and a learning culture has also developed" (Greany et al., 2014:10).

It should be noted, however, that several studies suggest that effective leadership behaviours for middle leaders differ from those for senior leaders. For example, Evans (2008) reported that, while the literature on distributed leadership typically assumes that

leadership is enacted in the same way, whatever the level of participant, his research challenged this view, suggesting that particular leadership behaviours are more relevant to middle managers than they are to senior managers or principals.[22] Middle leaders involved in his study focused on the current issues of people management on a day-to-day basis (trust sharing info, dealing with poor performance etc.) with little or no mention of transformational leadership activities associated with the SMT - being visionary, legacy building, etc.:

> "There is no time for 'legacy building', for 'planning', for 'making time for people', and for being a 'visionary' when the most important aspects of the job or role are dealing with the day-to-day issues of people care and management. The scores across all four groups indicate that the priority is to ensure that the team is working well, that the focus is on the current project, and that all are able to function effectively. This all suggests that the priorities of so-called 'leadership' can change significantly according to the level at which it needs to be applied. The high scores are about integrity, trust, sharing information and dealing with poor performance – many of which are attributes associated with good management as much as leadership" (Evans, 2008: 23).

Insights from beyond the sector

Two recent studies commissioned by the ETF have explored insights from beyond the FE sector (Hughes et al., 2014; Greany et al., 2014). Hughes et al. (2014), who undertook a review of evidence, using a high-level review of relevant literature supported by 15 expert and practitioner interviews, concluded that collaborative approaches to leadership, and the importance of understanding and interpreting context, have become increasingly important to the world of business and public sector delivery. They suggest that the FE sector has a particular need for collaborative and context specific approaches to leadership because it is by its nature one of multiple actors, interest groups and stakeholders. While the FE sector has a good record of pioneering collaborative approaches to leadership, Hughes et al. (2014) suggest that some practice in the sector could benefit from a renewed focus encouraging greater moves towards collaborative approaches, and away from more traditional top-down, command and control approaches.

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[22] This study was based on a questionnaire developed by the then Department of Trade and Industry (2004/5) and consultations with middle managers - 30 middle managers at 2 FE colleges and a sixth form college and 10 middle managers on a high-ranking MBA programme.

Drawing on evidence from the literature and interviews with leaders and key thinkers from other sectors to identify practical learning and implications for ETS leaders, Greany et al. (2014) conclude that leaders across all sectors appear to be facing increasingly volatile environments, which require new skills and abilities from leaders - for example in relation to partnership working and system leadership - alongside the perennial need for sound organisational leadership and management. Greany et al. (2014: 63) argue that the overarching messages for FE sector leaders from their study include:

> "know yourself, your values and what you'd resign for; know your team and the organisational culture; know your business and your distinctive position in a globalised and changing world; engage staff in the change process and invite contrasting perspectives; focus on the core business and embedding change, but remain outward facing and in touch with the needs of your clients; invest time in modelling and creating an inclusive, aspirational learning culture; be bold and rethink how you work when necessary, including by forming new partnerships, recognising that you and others will make mistakes if you are to innovate; distribute and grow leadership at every level, particularly middle leadership".

Chapter 6   Governance

Summary

- There is considerable variation across FE colleges in relation to the operation of governing bodies (Gleeson et al., 2010; Masunga, 2013; Schofield, 2009).

- Governing bodies have to undertake demanding work and are facing a number of significant challenges (Hill and James, 2017; James et al., 2016). Hill et al. note there is evidence to suggest that this may have distanced some governors from their core activities, including strategy, planning, monitoring, scrutiny and evaluation (Hill et al., 2016).

- The chair of governors' role and responsibilities reflect those of chairs in non-FE/sixth-form colleges (Hill and James, 2017). Some chairs do not regard educational knowledge as a priority in the requisite skill-set (Hill and James, 2007). This may result in a relatively high level of dependency on FE college principals for knowledge about educational matters (Hill and James, 2017; see also James et al., 2010).

- A recent qualitative study of the role of chairs of governors in 16 colleges found that they wished for any training to be directly relevant to their context (Hill and James, 2017).

- According to Hill and James (2017), the significance of the chair's responsibility raises three issues. The first is the sustainability of the role being unremunerated given the cost and the opportunity cost of taking on the responsibility. The second is whether the chair's responsibility for the conduct of the governing board should be specified more explicitly in regulatory guidance. The third issue is whether the selection and appointment process of the chair should be solely in the hands of the governing board members (Hill and James (2017).

- The chair–principal relationship is complex and nuanced, involving a range of different and often conflicting sub-roles, for example, 'adviser', 'sounding board', 'conduit of information' to and from the governing board and 'performance manager' (Hill and James, 2017).

- Recently completed research into the FE college and sixth-form college clerk's role and responsibilities, which included a national survey and regional meetings with clerks, indicates that increasingly the role of the clerk to the governors is not simply one of advising those responsible for effective college governance as set out in the regulatory guidance but more overseeing governing practice and ensuring and enabling the legitimacy of that governing practice (James et al., 2015).

- In colleges rated outstanding by Ofsted, the clerk's role is independent, high-status and based on the concept of the 'professional adviser' to the governing board (FE Commissioner, 2014; Forrest et al., 2017). However, many clerks feel undervalued and do not regard their status to be senior (Brumwell, 2015).

- Senior staff are positive and supportive towards college governance, but some are uncertain whether their time commitment and effort servicing governing is proportionate to its value (Hill and James, 2016).

- There is no clarity or consensus on the most effective methodologies for self-assessment of governing board performance (Hill and James (2013).

The governing bodies of FE colleges

Governing bodies are responsible for the overall conduct of FE colleges. As with governing boards in many settings, the work of FE governors generally encompasses a mixture of long-term strategic planning and the short-term monitoring of more operational matters. As trustees of a charitable board, governors are required to act in the college's best interests in relation to operating appropriate financial controls, managing risks and acting with reasonable care and skill (Hill et al. 2016).

The purpose of FE college governance in England is ambiguous (Masunga, 2013). As Schofield (2009) and Gleeson et al. (2010) indicate, the purpose of FE college governance is not pre-defined by the Articles and Instruments of Government, but is left for each college governing board to decide for themselves. This may explain the variations from both governors and principals on what purpose they think governance serves in their colleges. This lack of clarity on the purpose of FE governance can cause confusion and raise questions of what governance should be (Masunga, 2013).

Moreover, governing boards have to undertake challenging work and deal with significant challenges (Hill and James, 2017). From their analysis of policy papers (for example, BIS, 2015; BIS/DfE, 2015; and Ofsted, 2015) and their own research (for example, James, Forrest, Goodall and Hill, 2015; and Hill and James, 2015), James et al. (2016) identified ten challenges that faced governing boards in 2015 and suggested these had elements of three central issues: (1) the need to improve outcomes for learners; (2) the provision of resources for learners and learning; (3) the challenging nature of the wider political economy of learners and learning and the FE sector generally (Hill et al., 2016: 80). Hill et al. (2016: 83) suggested that these challenges may have undermined the ability of governors to govern effectively:

> "Secure institution governing is centrally concerned with strategy, planning, monitoring, scrutiny and evaluation. The challenges facing FE governors may well have distanced governors from those core activities and other essential matters."

Composition of governing boards

In March 2015, the *Composition of English Further Education College Boards and College Governance Frameworks* survey was completed by FE college clerks including sixth form colleges (Godbold, 2015). In a report on the survey, Godbold (2016) provides estimates that there are approximately 5,900 governors serving on the boards of 332 FE Colleges. FE Colleges are supported by 4,200 independent governors, 630 students and 630 staff governors with approximately 130 parent governors, mainly in sixth form colleges, with approximately 335 ex-officio governors. The average size of a typical general FE College board is 17 governors, whereas for sixth form colleges the average is 18 governors. The smallest board was made up of 12 governors and the largest consisted of 22 governors. 5 per cent of survey respondents (nine colleges) had used the flexibilities provided under the Education Act 2011 to increase their board size. On average, boards consist of 12 independent/external governors, the remainder being made up of staff, students and ex-officio governors.

Godbold (2015) distils the following key messages from the survey:

- Skills, expertise and backgrounds – the survey shows that education (25 per cent) and finance (17 per cent) remain the most (sought-after) skills profile of independent/external governors. The survey also highlighted (24 per cent of respondents) that governors with either a financial background or financial skills were the most difficult to recruit. The importance of having governors with finance experience and expertise was highlighted by the FE Commissioner in his reports on visits to failing colleges.

- Colleges use a number of methods by which to identify new governors, including personal contact, targeted recruitment, Government funded Governor Recruitment (SGOSS) and advertising.

- Governor training and development – induction training for new governors appears to be one of the most popular forms of governor training and development with 92 per cent of colleges participating in governor induction, followed by networking and subject specific training.

- There was no reference made to training for equipping boards in making decisions for the future; such as how to carry out a Structure and Prospects[23] appraisal,

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[23] Any FE college contemplating a major structural change is required by the government to undertake a Structure and Prospects Appraisal, which involves: assessing options; consulting thoroughly both internally with staff and externally with the communities they serve (students, prospective students, parents and employers) and local stakeholders; identifying a lead option and drawing this up into a more detailed proposal, including plans for implementation; and, making a decision on what structural change, if any, it should make.

challenging a deficit budget, mergers and acquisitions, working with other boards and developing local partnerships - all of which are referred to by the FE Commissioner.

- 79 per cent of colleges have made changes to their Instruments and Articles of Government. The most popular changes are: to provide electronic notice of meetings (56 per cent); to permit written resolutions (46 per cent); the permission of telephone participation in board meetings (41 per cent); introducing wider powers to remove the chair or vice-chair (7 per cent). The majority of respondents felt that the changes to the Instruments and Articles of Government were minor.

The role of chairs of governors

The role and responsibilities of chairs of governors are locally determined by governing bodies (Hill and James 2017). A wide-ranging review of governing in the FE sector (AoC, 2013) asserted that chairs have 'considerable authority in determining how a governing board influences the head of the institution' and 'a crucial role in governance' (AoC, 2013: Section 2.35). The review also asserts that 'the style and skills of the chair' are crucial in 'creating an appropriate atmosphere within Boards'; 'the ability to chair meetings is vitally important' and that 'the skills of a chair . . . are important for fostering team working between governors, both within and outside the meetings' (AoC, 2013: Section 2.36).

Hill and James (2007) report research into the role and responsibilities of the chairs of governing bodies of FE colleges and sixth-form colleges in England. Sixteen chairs from general FE colleges and sixth-form colleges in England were interviewed.[24] Their research indicates that the chair's role and responsibilities reflect those of chairs in non-FE/sixth-form college settings. Importantly, it also reveals that while the chairs believed a range of expertise is required, detailed educational knowledge is not seen as a priority in the requisite skill-set. This apparently low priority given to detailed knowledge of education in an FE context parallels a broadly similar finding in other settings (James and Sheppard, 2014) and has implications for the chairs' work in leading the governance of the educational aspects of the college. The chairs' commitment to the role, the institution and their espoused values, awareness and insight resembled those reported in the

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https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/145452/11-1380-furthereducation-skills-system-reform-plan.pdf

[24] The chairs of the governing bodies of 16 colleges (11 GFE, 4 sixth-form and 1 land-based) were interviewed using a semi-structured schedule. Respondents varied in their time in post as chairs and their colleges were distributed throughout England and were diverse in: whether they were a single college or a group of colleges; income; the number of full-time equivalent students (in 2012/13); the Ofsted leadership and management grade (Ofsted, 2014) at the last inspection; and, whether they had adopted the Foundation Code of Governance (AoC, 2013). The respondents comprised 5 female and 11 male chairs.

literature, especially in the voluntary sector (Cornforth et al., 2010). However, these aspects appeared to be particularly significant in the chairs in the study (Hill and James, 2017: 70).

Chairs undertaking role-specific training was not a dominant theme in the interviews. Chairs reported drawing on their experience as governors and roles beyond their college governing responsibilities to inform their practice. They also clearly learned in the role and from role models, for example other chairs, had informed their practice significantly. Chairs expressed a wish for any training to be directly relevant to their context.

Chairs highlighted their role's complexity, its demanding nature and the very wide range of activities the role encompasses. These notions raise particular issues for chairs of FE and sixth-form college governing bodies, a role which is voluntary and unremunerated and carries substantial responsibility.

The significance of the chair's responsibility raises three issues:

> "The first is the appropriateness of the role being unremunerated given the cost and the opportunity cost of taking on the responsibility. The second is whether the chair's responsibility for the conduct of the board should be specified more explicitly in regulatory guidance. The third issue is whether the selection and appointment process of the chair should be solely in the hands of the governing body members" (Hill and James 2017: 71).

Hill and James (2017) suggest that the chair's role in enabling an appropriate relationship with the principal is crucial, and they draw attention to two aspects of the chair-principal relationship that emerged in their research. The first related to the lack of priority given to knowledge of the college's core educational work (noted above). The low priority may configure the level of dependency on the principal for knowledge about educational matters in the context of the college. It also complicates the governance model and the accountability relationship as reported by James and Sheppard (2014) in their study of English-medium international schools worldwide. Thus, for 'non-educational matters', such as finance/resources, the chair may be well-placed for exercising a high level of accountability through, for example, their expertise in finance and the relationship may be configured as a principal-agent model (James et al., 2010). For 'educational matters' such as curriculum provision, however, the extent of the scrutiny by the chair may be reduced if chairs rely on principals for educational knowledge and a lower level of accountability may be exercised (Hill and James, 2017; see also James et al., 2010).

The chair-principal relationship is complex and sophisticated involving a range of different and often conflicting sub-roles, for example, 'adviser', 'sounding board', 'conduit of information' to and from the governing board and 'performance manager'. Hill and James

(2017) suggest that the complex but crucial nature of this feature of the role arguably points to the need for joint and specific training of chairs and principals.

Role and responsibilities of clerks

In England, FE college and sixth form college governing bodies are required to appoint a clerk to administer and advise on governing procedure and practice.[25] The role of the clerk is increasingly recognised as significant in the governance of colleges in the FE sector. The role and the responsibility is set out in statute and guidance and in practice the role is increasing in importance and gaining enhanced status in college governance.[26]

Recently completed research into the FE college and sixth-form college clerk's role and responsibilities, which included a national survey and regional meetings with clerks, highlighted the significance of the clerk's role (James et al., 2015). The role and responsibilities are important in supporting and facilitating high quality college governance, in particular in relation to the clerk's working relationship with the chair of the college corporation and governing board. According to James et al. (2015), this finding added to a growing sense generally in the FE community in England that the role of the clerk is not simply one of advising those responsible for effective college governance as set out in the regulatory guidance, but more overseeing governing practice and ensuring and enabling the legitimacy of that practice.

Set against this positive image, a recent FE Commissioner's Report (BIS, 2014) indicated that in FE colleges identified at high risk of an inadequate rating from Ofsted, the clerk had a very restricted role, limited only to administrative matters related to governance. In contrast, the clerk's role in colleges rated as outstanding by Ofsted is "independent, high-status and based on the concept of the 'professional adviser' to the governing board; effective clerking is an essential component of good governance; clerks are vital to the success of colleges and should be independent, supported and have the skills and experiences necessary to fulfil their role" (Brumwell, 2015; FE Commissioner 2014). At the same time, there are areas of concern about the ability of some clerks to fulfill their role optimally. The 2015 Clerks survey, for example, showed a marked decrease since 2013 in the number of clerks who felt valued and who felt their status to be senior. Concerns were raised that the role of the clerk was often undervalued and

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[25] Clerks are required to effectively balance the personalities, opinions and actions of 18 governors, plus the executive team at the same time have detailed legislative and procedural knowledge whilst being able to think strategically and communicate effectively.

[26] The LSIS report '*Clerking in the New Era*' (LSIS, 2013), together with a follow-up survey conducted by the Education and Training Foundation (Brumwell 2015), provide a comprehensive overview of FE college clerks and their work.

misunderstood. Moreover, a large number of clerks commented that there needs to be more work carried out on developing their profile as well as more training and development for existing clerks.

In a parallel study for the ETF, James et al. (2015) examined the responsibility and the role of the clerk to the FE corporation and governing board in relation to ensuring high quality college governance.[27] The findings indicated that there is potential for changing the way the role is conceptualised and configured in practice, which could improve the quality of FE governance. From this, and other research into the role of the clerk in FE settings (Brumwell, 2015), a picture emerges of a potentially changeable role that is embedded in practice in an array of very complex and sensitive accountability relationships and undertaken in very diverse institutions, some of which are large, have substantial incomes, and have numerous associated private and public sector organisations. Together with the apparent lack of resources allocated to the role and the relatively low status currently accorded to it, there is a strong argument for revising the accepted and defined role of the clerk to the corporation to raise its standing in the governance of FE institutions, re-thinking its significance; and shaping the role into one of being the guardian of good FE institutional governance.

In a follow up paper, Forrest et al. (2017), using the same data as James et al. (2015), focus in detail on the role of clerks in both promoting/ensuring legitimate governance and 'doing governance work'. Once again they note that the college contexts for the clerk's role in FE and sixth form colleges are very diverse, especially in FE college settings. The diversity of college context is not so evident in sixth-form college settings. The context for the role at the college governance level appears to be potentially dynamic and malleable. Clerks in FE and sixth-form college settings are heavily involved in board-related matters, where the central feature of their role is the promotion of legitimate governing board practice.

At the same time, clerks may also have within-college legal/regulatory responsibilities of a governance nature. Here they are performing first-order governance activities (Kooiman, 2003) and actually 'doing governance work' as opposed to 'promoting legitimate governance work'. Clerks may also have within-college teaching/organisational responsibilities. These within-college responsibilities may result in role conflict, but may also bring benefits to the clerk's board work. Clerks report not feeling fully authorised to promote legitimate governance. Forrest et al (2016) argue that, if the role is not fully

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[27] The questionnaire was sent to clerks of all the FE and SF colleges in England, which numbered 231 and 93 respectively at the time of the survey, and 130 completed useable questionnaires were received (105 FE and 25 SF), an overall response rate of 35 per cent. A total of 74 clerks attended focus group meetings in seven regions in England: Southern England, the West Midlands, North West England, Yorkshire and Humberside, Eastern England, London and South West England.

taken up and enacted, undesirable consequences for college governance, and ultimately the college itself, are likely.

Forrest et al. (2016:14) conclude by pointing out that:

> "The promotion of legitimate governance is an important role and responsibility. In the everyday, time-pressured and complex 'nuts and bolts' of governing, that role may not be enacted and the governing of the school or college will be the worse for it. Arguably, the promotion of legitimate governance is an essential role in the governance of all educational institutions. All those responsible for ensuring high quality educational governance must make sure that the role is fully enacted, in their own interests, and in the interests of staff, students and all those who have a stake in the institution's proper conduct".

The role of senior managers

Hill and James (2016) study the ways in which senior staff contribute to FE college governance and their perceptions of their role and performance in relation to college governance. 102 senior staff responded to a questionnaire circulated electronically to all 'senior staff' on the LSIS mailing list, and three case study examples of FE colleges in England. This study confirms that senior staff are directly involved in the governance of colleges through formally reporting to and engaging with governors in meetings and other governing-related events such as governor development. The study shows that senior staff were positive and supportive towards college governance, with 80 per cent of respondents describing their governing board as 'good' or 'excellent'. 93 per cent of respondents to the questionnaire placed a high degree of value on senior staff contribution to governing of colleges. However, in interviews, some members of senior staff were uncertain whether their time commitment and effort servicing governing was proportionate to its value. The study also suggests that the full potential of the contribution of senior staff to college governance is not being realized and that the contribution of senior staff to governance could benefit from senior staff role clarification, defining senior staff performance expectation in relation to governing and providing senior staff professional development in relation to governance.

Self-assessment of performance

There is a widely expressed view that all governing bodies, whether comprising directors, trustees or governors and ranging from corporate boards to school or college governing bodies, should practise self-assessment periodically (Hill and James, 2016). This view is based on the assumption that self- and group-reflection is beneficial and can lead to continuing improvement. Hill and James (2016), focusing particularly on the governing bodies of schools and colleges in England, expose a considerable gap between the

rhetoric and the practical difficulties associated with self-assessing the contribution of governing to the leadership of educational institutions. Furthermore, the study suggests that, in the light of the practical difficulties identified, there is a shortage of evidence that self-assessment by governing bodies is an effective tool for improving the contribution of governing to the leadership of schools and colleges.

This study is based on nine semi-structured interviews with highly experienced commentators who, in all cases, had experience of acting as a governor and/or trustee and/or non-executive director including self-assessing board/trust/governing board performance. In reflecting on self-assessing boards/governing boards, the interviewees provided examples from their governing experience of self-assessment practice. No clarity or consensus emerged from this study on the most effective methodologies for self-assessment of governing board performance. Hill and James (2013) suggest that a possible explanation for this position is the absence of an articulated rationale and model for governing. They caution that, as things stand, the assumed and emphasised benefits of school or college governing board self-assessment are unlikely to be achieved because, inter alia, there is no clear understanding of any connectivity between board and institutional performance and no defined, articulated governing model to review.

Chapter 7   Supply issues

Summary

Teaching staff

An online survey conducted by the ETF in 2014, which gathered the views of over 170 managers with responsibility for the recruitment and development of teaching and training staff in FE institutions, found that:

- Requirements to embed and deliver English and maths at GCSE level and the push to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment create a need to strike a balance between ambitious entry requirements and attractive terms and conditions, such as competitive salaries, requirement for qualified teachers and contract arrangements (ETF, 2014a).

- The introduction of compulsory English and maths presents another challenge for institutions, in that they have to be more explicit about the English and maths requirements they place on their own teaching and training staff, as well as new teachers that they recruit. In work-based learning settings, these reforms, with the additional requirements necessary for staff training with reducing government income, will particularly impact on smaller and more specialist training organisations (ETF, 2014a).

- More than 80 per cent of FE managers who responded to the ETF survey envisaged a greater need for specialist teachers of English and maths respectively. A higher proportion of FE managers forecast a greater need to recruit in subject specialisms than more generic teaching specialisms. The greatest proportion in terms of subject specialism was for English and maths followed by STEM subjects (ETF, 2014a).

- Future teaching and training practitioners in FE may be required to have more experience in varying delivery methods for teaching and training. The attributes FE managers said they might be looking for when recruiting teachers and trainers in the future included: designing and delivering distance and blended learning programmes; innovative and contextualised teaching and learning; holding teaching qualifications; post-graduate level subject qualification; and, ability to teach on higher level programmes (ETF, 2014a).

- FE managers report high levels of awareness for the more established teacher recruitment and development initiatives (ETF, 2014a).

- There was inadequate, incoherent and often out-of-date information on careers in FE teaching, which makes it much harder for careers advisors to advise students

than in other teaching and professional careers. In addition to a strong online presence, this research found that graduate recruitment initiatives that have a presence on campus, offer rotational work experience opportunities, add value through higher level credits and professional qualifications, and those which offer sustained and secure employment are most attractive and appealing to graduates (ETF, 2014a).

Leaders

- The age profile of senior roles in FE means that the sector needs to prepare to replace those soon to retire with individuals with the experience to take on these roles (Lambert, 2011, 2012; AoC, 2014b). The issue of building leadership and management skills in the 'pipeline' needs to be tackled actively and systematically (AoC 2014b).

- AoC's (2014b) Leadership Pipeline studies examines the issues that need to be addressed to build a strong leadership pipeline for the post-16 education and training sector. They included in-depth conversations with a stratified sample of FE leaders and managers and two focus groups - one with middle managers from a private training provider and the other with student services managers – which highlighted the following key themes:

  - The sector does not have sufficient visibility to those outside it and is often regarded as low status. More applicants from outside the sector should be encouraged to apply for leadership roles in order to introduce fresh talent, provide challenge, and bring new thinking.

  - There is no established and well-understood career route. This does not help people see how they could advance their career, or to understand the skills and qualities required for success.

  - The skills required by outstanding teachers are not always the same as those required by outstanding leaders, yet the sector has focused very much on leadership candidates with a teaching background.

  - The processes used to recruit potential leaders are too long, require too much personal investment and do not currently measure many of the right things. There is also a poor match between the skills needed by potential sector leaders and the processes used to select them.

  - Recruitment and selection panels are more likely to choose a 'safe' internal candidate over an 'unknown' external applicant.

  - Early identification of those who have the potential to take on future leadership roles and provision of high quality leadership training, follow-on mentor support and practical experiences will build confidence within FE

staff to apply for senior posts. Coaching and mentoring is highly valued as a way of building ambition and confidence to apply for a post and growing a pipeline of future leaders.

- A subsequent study led by AELP (AELP et al., 2016) focused on the recruitment of leaders from outside the FE sector, which several studies have suggested should be a priority not only to ensure that vacancies can be filled with suitably qualified leaders, but also to introduce fresh perspectives and new ideas into the sector (e.g. see LSIS, 2013; AoC, 2014b; AELP et al., 2016). This research (which involved interviews, round table events and case studies with both new and established leaders in the FE sector) concluded that organisations recruiting new leaders from outside the sector should:

   o Ensure pre-interview advice and information presents a complete picture of the leadership roles the challenges FE organisations face to non-sector applicants.

   o Communicate the rationale behind non-sector recruitment clearly to staff; consider an extended, bespoke induction period of up to 12 months to enable recruits to build up broader sector knowledge alongside their specific introduction to their own organisation (AELP et al., 2016).

Teaching staff

Strategic challenges

In 2014 the ETF published the findings of an online survey which gathered the views of over 170 managers with responsibility for the recruitment and development of teaching and training staff in FE institutions. The survey was designed to establish the ways in which the strategic challenges facing the FE sector were having an impact on the types of roles, skills and qualities the managers would need from the teachers and trainers of the future. Around 80 per cent of the managers reported that reductions in government funding, the introduction of compulsory English and maths and the drive to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment were the three main factors influencing the recruitment of teaching staff (ETF, 2014a).

According to respondents, requirements to embed and deliver English and maths at GCSE level and the need to improve the quality of teaching, learning and assessment create a need to balance between ambitious entry requirements (e.g. requiring qualified teachers) and attractive terms and conditions (e.g. competitive salaries) (ETF, 2014a). The introduction of compulsory English and maths also means that institutions will now have to be more explicit about the English and maths requirements they place on the teachers that they recruit, as well as their existing teaching and training staff. In work-

based learning settings, there was strong feedback that the reforms, with the additional requirements necessary for staff training with reducing government income, will particularly impact on smaller and more specialist training organisations (ETF, 2014a).

More than 80 per cent of the FE managers who responded to the ETF (2014a) survey envisaged a greater demand for specialists of English and maths. This could compound recruitment difficulties that providers in the FE sector are currently experiencing in these subject areas. The ETF's workforce reports for 2014-15, which provide data about approximately a third of the FE workforce, found that that 75 per cent of responding local authority (LA) providers, 40 per cent of private training providers and almost 60 per cent of third sector providers who responded to their workforce surveys were finding it either very or quite difficult to recruit teaching staff for mathematics/numeracy; whilst 70 per cent of LA providers, 38 per cent of private training providers and almost 60 per cent of third sector providers were experiencing difficulties recruiting staff for English/literacy (Frontier Economics 2016c, 2016d, 2016e)[28]. The ETF workforce report on FE colleges for 2014-15 (Frontier Economics 2016b) does not cover recruitment issues as it relies on Staff Individual Record (SIR) submissions rather than surveys of FE providers. However, a survey conducted by the AoC in 2014, which focussed on maths and English provision for 16-19 year olds in FE colleges, suggests that some colleges are experiencing similar difficulties, as staffing for maths and English were identified as the biggest logistical challenges they faced by 30 per cent and 9 per cent of responding FE colleges respectively[29]. The AoC (2014) survey also found that responding FE colleges were using a range of strategies to ensure that they had sufficient staff to deliver maths and English: 88 per cent of responding colleges were employing qualified maths and English teachers; 78 per cent were updating their own staff; 32 per cent were accessing workforce support from ETF; 19 per cent were employing new teachers who received bursaries; 18 per cent were promoting Golden Hellos; 8 per cent were offering salary incentives; and 7 per cent were working with other schools and colleges to recruit specialists (AoC 2014a).

In the ETF survey on the impact of the strategic challenges faced by FE institutions, the managers highlighted the following forecasted areas for growth in terms of the teaching and training staff they would need in the future. In descending order of anticipated need, the managers reported that they would need teachers and trainers with: a STEM background; extensive industry/vocational experience in their field; experience working

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[28] The data describing the FE workforce in private, LA and third sector providers was generated by surveys. Responses were received from 63 private training providers, 47 local authority providers and 37 third sector providers spread across all nine regions of the country. The majority of the respondents are small to medium size (annual budget under £5m) in the case of LA providers and private training providers and small (annual budget up to £1m) in the case of third sector providers.
[29] 125 providers responded to this survey. Of these, 118 were from FE and Sixth Form colleges (35 per cent of all colleges in England); five were from Natspec Specialist Colleges; and, two were from HEIs.

with young people; and, expertise in learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities. Further, there was a forecasted need for: part-time teachers and trainers; full-time teachers and trainers; graduates; teachers with adult teaching/training experience; and agency/contracted teachers and trainers (ETF, 2014). A high proportion of FE managers forecast a greater need to recruit in subject specialisms (English and maths followed by STEM subjects) than more generic teaching specialisms. The managers also suggested that teaching and training practitioners in FE would be required to have more experience in varying delivery methods for teaching and training. The attributes that they said they would be looking for when recruiting teachers and trainers in the future included: designing and delivering distance and blended learning programmes; innovative and contextualised teaching and learning; holding teaching qualifications; post-graduate level subject qualification; and, an ability to teach on higher level programmes.

Initiatives to support the recruitment and development of teachers

There are a variety of programmes, funding schemes and other initiatives to support the recruitment and development of teachers. FE managers who responded to the ETF (2014) survey reported high levels of awareness for the more established teacher recruitment and development initiatives. The initiative with the highest level of awareness was QTLS status and the lowest level of awareness was the very new Education and Training Foundation practitioner-led action research programme.

The survey indicated that there was inadequate, incoherent and often out-of-date information on careers in FE teaching, which makes it much harder for careers advisors to advise students than in other teaching and professional careers. In addition to a strong online presence, this survey found that graduate recruitment initiatives that have a presence on campus, offer rotational work experience opportunities, add value through higher level credits and professional qualifications, and those which offer sustained and secure employment are most attractive and appealing to graduates.

The ETF (2014) report concluded that:

> "The sector must not appear as a 'second best' option to teaching in schools or to any other profession. This means that further education teaching and training must become competitive in terms of the opportunities and experiences available, the types of employment contacts available, salaries and added value through additional training, professional qualifications and professional recognition. Given scarce resources available, this should, at least in the short-term, be focussed on the subject areas where there is most need, such as the development of a scheme targeted at English, maths and STEM graduates." (ETF, 2014:32)

Leaders

The age profile of senior roles in FE means that the sector needs to prepare to replace those soon to retire with individuals with the experience to take on these roles (Lambert, 2011, 2012; AoC, 2014b). AoC's Phase 1 and Phase 2 (AoC, 2014b) Leadership Pipeline studies examine the issues that need to be addressed to build a strong leadership pipeline for the post-16 education and training sector. Phase 1 included a literature search that identified wider sources of good practice and the strengths and weaknesses of actions and activities which are currently in place in the sector. The key findings of the literature review in Phase 1 comprised the following seven key messages (AoC, 2014b):

1. A number of sectors have identified issues with their leadership pipeline, in particular the need to replace an ageing workforce with a new generation of high-calibre leaders. The age profile of senior roles in FE supports this with a gap appearing between those soon to retire and the availability of the next generation with the experience to take their places.

2. The issue of building leadership and management skills in the 'pipeline' needs to be tackled actively and systematically. It cannot just be left to evolve. The research from Phase 1 indicates that there is little credence given to the existence of a pipeline of future leaders.

3. There is little evidence that other sectors recruit leaders and managers who have built their skills and capabilities from within other sectors. The 'internal' candidates have a pool of 'insider' knowledge, but this ignores the benefits of different perspectives and skills sets. Cross-sector partnerships and short-term exchanges may help address this issue. The discussion output from Phase 1 supports the view that recruitment and selection panels are more likely to choose a 'safe' internal candidate over an 'unknown' external applicant.

4. The sector needs clarity in its goals, its ambitions and its leadership needs. Globalisation and evolving technology will affect these needs – and old skills and responses will be inadequate to fulfil future leadership roles effectively. 'Cloning' current leadership practices and behaviours will not be sufficient.

5. Building the 'pipeline' successfully involves more senior managers – as role models and coaches – and these two skills should be valued more highly. Job roles for more junior staff need to provide the right blend of skills development to support progression. In both cases the research highlights the importance of spotting talent early, nurturing and supporting this talent along a clear progression path.

6. Early identification of those who have the potential to take on future leadership roles improves chances of success. Identification should not be based on personality or an arbitrary set of standards which excludes a wider potential pool of talent. The discussions during Phase 1 indicate a strength of feeling that the sector is not taking a holistic approach to development of future leaders. Rather, it is selecting candidates who have a track record of meeting the key performance metrics of gradings, financial health and success rates.

7. Many specific programmes designed to support and develop under-represented and new styles of leaders have clear evidence of success.

Phase 2 of the project was designed to take this work to a greater depth. This phase focused on in-depth conversations with a stratified sample of individuals and two focus groups, one with middle managers from a private training provider and the other with student services managers.[30] Nine themes emerged from the study:

1. Poor visibility and external reputation of the sector. The sector does not have sufficient visibility to those outside it and is often regarded as low status.

2. A focus on candidates with a 'traditional' profile. The skills required by outstanding teachers were not always the same as those required by outstanding leaders, yet the sector had focused very much on leadership candidates with a teaching background.

3. The lack of an established and well-understood career route (see also Dixon 2016a). There is no established career route in FE (unlike for instance the police or the health service). This does not help people see how they could advance their career, or to understand the skills and qualities required for success.

4. The processes used to recruit leaders. The processes used to recruit potential leaders are too long, require too much personal investment and do not currently measure many of the right things.

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[30] The interviewees included: 10 FE/sixth form college principals nominated because of their non-traditional career route through to a principal role; 6 FE/sixth form college senior managers who had followed a non-traditional career route to their current role, who are keen for advancement, but are not yet principals/FE leaders; 5 managers from within the sector who did not have curriculum/quality experience (i.e., professional corporate services, student services, marketing, enterprise or other); 6 principals and managers who had worked across different sub-sectors (FE, sixth form colleges, adult education, HE, voluntary sector, Ofsted, Skills Funding Agency); 4 leaders who had entered FE as their second formal career following a successful career in another sector; 5 private providers; 6 adult education, community and voluntary sector providers; and, 2 managers who had moved outside the FE sector to work in other sectors. The two focus groups included one with middle managers from a private training provider and another with student services managers.

5. The skills needed by future leaders. Many considered that there is a poor match between the skills needed by potential sector leaders and the processes used to select them. The FE landscape is changing rapidly, with reduced public funding, greater competition, and a much greater role for employers and their representative bodies in decisions about funding. College leaders need a wider range of skills than ever before.

6. Improving feedback. Feedback to unsuccessful candidates following selection processes was frequently regarded as weak. In the case of an unsuccessful selection, the purpose of feedback should be to help the unsuccessful candidate understand where they scored well and where they did not – but in the wider interests of the Pipeline, also to encourage candidates put themselves forward for the next relevant opportunity.

7. Perpetuating the standard model. The perceptions were that governors who had completed their careers were sometimes out of touch with what was needed. Governing bodies were thought to often err on the side of caution and may appoint an internal candidate almost regardless of how they perform in the process.

8. The importance of coaching and mentoring. Coaching and mentoring is highly valued as a way of building ambition and confidence to apply for a post. The most consistent agreement from across all the discussions with providers, was the attraction of coaching and mentoring as a means to grow a pipeline of future leaders.

9. Spotting talent early. Good teachers do not necessarily always make good leaders. Spotting talent early and giving people the wide range of training, practical experiences, and skills needed early in their career, together with high quality leadership training with follow-on mentor support, will build confidence within more people to apply for senior posts.

A subsequent study led by AELP (AELP et al., 2016) focused on the recruitment of leaders from outside the FE sector, which several studies have suggested should be a priority not only to ensure that vacancies can be filled with suitably qualified leaders but also to introduce fresh perspectives and new ideas into the sector (e.g. see LSIS, 2013; AoC, 2014b; AELP et al., 2016). This research - which involved interviews, round table events and case studies with both new and established leaders in the FE sector[31] - concluded that:

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[31] The research involved telephone interviews (conducted between April and June 2015) with 21 new leaders who had either previously worked in a different industry, worked in organisations that had recently expanded their scope of operations to include the delivery of government funded training, or worked in

- More applicants from outside the sector should be encouraged to apply for leadership roles to introduce fresh talent, provide challenge, and bring new thinking. A coordinated approach to sharing the experience of recruiting and supporting new leaders should be developed (AELP et al., 2016:10)

- Organisations should rethink the pre-interview advice and information that they provide so as to present a more complete picture of the role and their organisation to non-sector applicants. The extent of the challenges that the organisation faces should be articulated as clearly as possible. (AELP et al., 2016:10)

- Organisations need to communicate the rationale behind non-sector recruitment clearly to staff. The type of role that an individual is expected to play needs to be explained carefully, especially where a significant proportion of thinking time is needed and significant change is expected. (AELP et al., 2016:11)

- Organisations recruiting new leaders from outside the sector should consider an extended, bespoke induction period of up to 12 months to enable recruits to build up broader sector knowledge alongside their specific introduction to their own organisation. There is a similar type of arrangement for senior staff joining the NHS from outside the health sector. (AELP et al., 2016: 11)

- It is important that those leaders recruited from outside the sector retain their more independent perspective for as long as possible. They should be encouraged to continue to ask searching questions and to challenge the status quo. (AELP et al., 2016: 11)

In a study that focused specifically on the recruitment of leaders in general FE colleges, Lambert (2011, 2012) explored the possibility of using 'sustainable leadership' to ensure that robust succession plans are in place and that the cultures of colleges, if appropriate, continue after the principal or other key post-holders have left. According to Lambert (2011: 142-143) the purpose of using a sustainable leadership model for general FE colleges would be to:

> "provide a solid foundation from which institutions can build a sustainable culture in a climate where there is a shortage of suitably qualified and experienced individuals available to take up principalship posts. The advantage of creating a sustainable

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newly established training providers. Subsequent phases of the research involved: two facilitated round table events (in October 2015) which brought together some of the sample of new leaders with established leaders; follow-up interviews with 12 leaders who participated in the round table events; an additional interview with an individual from the original sample of 21 new leader participants who had subsequently changed their job; and finally, 5 detailed case studies.

culture is that, should a principal leave or the governing corporation fail to appoint a replacement principal, the organisation will not be left drifting during an unsettling time."

Having concluded that existing models of sustainable leadership are unsuitable for general FE colleges, Lambert (2011: 143) proposed the following framework of sustainable leadership for FE colleges:

Principle 1 - Builds capacity of staff. Develops opportunities for staff to develop their capacity and best practice in leadership and management.

Principle 2 - Strategic distribution. It empowers individuals at all levels of the organisation to engage in leadership activities which bring about sustainable improvement.

Principle 3 – Consolidates. It seeks to work collaboratively to ensure that the learning available meets the needs of the locality.

Principle 4 - Builds long-term objectives from short-term goals. Creates synergy between the long-term objectives of the organisation and the short-term targets imposed by funding agencies.

Principle 5 - Diversity. Learn from diversity, creating social inclusion and cohesion.

Principle 6 - Conserves. Honour and learn from the past to create a better future.

Lambert suggests that this model will go some way towards addressing the shortage of individuals seeking principalship by developing a culture of leadership from deep within the organisation. So those individuals in the early stages of their management careers can develop skills which are used every day in situations and that have a positive impact on the culture and work of the organisation. At the same time, if an organisation implements the ideas of sustainable leadership, there is a positive benefit to the individuals involved, as they develop the skills necessary to progress on to more senior roles within the organisation.

Analysis of the 2013-2014 Staff Individualised Record (SIR) Data (Frontier Economics, September 2014) indicated that: 91% of senior managers in the FE sector are of "white British" ethnic background, compared with 84% of all FE staff . It also found that whilst 4.5% of staff across the FE sector are of Asian descent and 3.5% are of African/Caribbean descent, only 2.4% or 1.7% respectively are represented at senior management level. Dixon (2016a:3) notes that "this contrasts with 8.2% and 6.4% of learners nationally and highlights continuing inequalities within the sector."

The most recent SIRs data for 2014-2015 shows that the ethnic composition of FE staff in 2014-15 is consistent with 2013-14 (Frontier Economics, June 2016b:19):

> "91% of managers in the FE sector were white British compared with 85% of all staff. It also reveals that there were some differences in the ethnic background of all staff and managers across different FE college types. Namely, there are fewer White British staff at Sixth form colleges (82.6%), where instead the share of Asian staff is higher (8.7%). This is reflected in a higher share of managers with an Asian ethic background. At land-based colleges a higher proportion of all staff are White British (87%)."

On the basis of a "small-scale literature review and interviews with a range of key stakeholders, Dixon (2016a, 2016b) suggests that recruitment and selection practices across the sector play a key role in the unequal outcomes experienced by Black, Asian, and minority ethnic (BAME) staff. Having reviewed new initiatives developed by the National Health Service and Criminal Justice Service, Dixon (2016a) suggests that the following practices could be trialled in the FE sector to address this issue: nameless application forms; positive action/discrimination; BAME staff on all interview selection panels; and, bespoke training for HR and senior staff.

Chapter 8   Interviews

Summary of the views expressed by the interviewees

Teaching quality

- The quality of teaching in FE is variable, but nonetheless includes examples of outstanding teaching, with pockets of good teaching and learning even in the weakest colleges.

- It is important to have teachers with both industry and teaching expertise but people with industry expertise do not necessarily require teaching qualifications, as they can contribute in a range of ways, ranging from those who teach one or two days a week to others teaching the occasional master class.

CPD

- Principals and other senior leaders often have an insufficient focus on teaching and learning and this can lead to a lack of CPD to enable FE teachers to improve.

- Compared with the school sector, CPD opportunities in FE are few and access is made difficult by lack of funding, the sessional nature of the work, and there being less of a tradition of inter-institutional collaborative networks to share good practice than there is in schools.

Leadership

- Principals and senior leaders who progress into FE leadership from FE teaching do not necessarily have the expertise to lead a large organisation, whilst those who are recruited from outside the sector require support to understand curriculum issues.

- Leadership models in large FE institutions are moving away from a focus on individual leaders to teams, with an appropriate balance between education and non-educational expertise.

- Leaders of large FE colleges use a range of leadership approaches depending on the context.

Governance

- Governors tend to be proficient when scrutinising financial matters but less confident about challenging the quality of teaching and learning.

- Finding suitable people to act as governors is difficult because of the time commitments involved, especially for chairs of governing bodies. There was

general agreement that serious consideration should be given to paying governors where that was necessary to assist with recruitment.

Supply recruitment

- Recruiting maths and English teachers is particularly difficult because pay in the FE sector does not compete with schools. Pay was also identified as a key barrier to the recruitment of people from industry to teach the new technical qualifications called T-levels, which will be developed and phased in between 2018 and 2022.

- Pipeline of training to move potential leaders into senior positions has been lacking, although the FE sector is beginning now to tackle this issue.

Future challenges

- The sector stakeholders and academics were agreed that the Sainsbury review and T-levels will present significant challenges over the next few years. FE providers will need to:
    - Understand the local employment market needs and how they are going to meet that in terms of Tech levels, as well as how they can support apprenticeship provision.

    - Develop excellent links with employers both to organise work placements and to understand the skills employers are looking for.

    - Address the challenge of dual professionalism and decide whether all teachers should be qualified.

    - Take on board that bigger and higher level (4 and 5) qualifications are going to require more staff and staff capable of teaching more demanding courses.

    - Prepare for changes in apprenticeships that will require more people teaching rather than just assessing apprenticeships and new relationships with employers.

Introduction

Semi-structure interviews were conducted with 7 sector stakeholders and 7 academics with experience of research in FE. The interviews confirmed that the evidence review was comprehensive and identified a small number of unpublished reports, which were subsequently added to the review. This chapter presents the views expressed by the interviewees in relation to teaching quality, CPD, leadership, governance and supply/recruitment in the FE sector.

Quality of teaching

Sector stakeholders

The sector stakeholders were agreed that the quality of teaching in FE is variable but nonetheless includes examples of outstanding teaching, with pockets of good teaching and learning even in weakest colleges. With one exception, the interviewees felt that teaching qualifications are an important element of improving the quality of teaching in FE, as well as enhancing the status of the FE teaching profession. It was noted, however, that there are many different types of providers in the sector and their approach to teaching and learning is equally as varied. One interviewee suggested that Ofsted inspection should note the extent to which FE teachers are qualified.

There was also agreement that there is a need for a more sustained focus on teaching and learning by those responsible for leadership and governance in the FE sector. This was seen as critical in terms of providing staff with the opportunity/time to become qualified and creating a culture that encourages and celebrates good teaching. Drawing on Ofsted evidence, one interviewee noted that in FE colleges judged as inadequate or requiring improvement there is often a neglect of the teaching and learning dimension by senior leaders and governors. The interviewee cited one reason for this as being senior leadership teams that do not have sufficient representation from those with a teaching and learning background and, as a result, do not sufficiently focus on the core business of teaching and learning. This interviewee also suggested that middle leaders need to be held accountable for the quality of teaching in their area and supported to instil that culture.

The interviewees agreed that it is important to have teachers with both industrial and teaching expertise; however, it was suggested that people with industry expertise do not necessarily need to achieve teaching qualifications, as they can contribute in a variety of ways - ranging from those who teach one or two days a week to others teaching the occasional master class. One interviewee believed that some specialists would be unwilling to deliver master classes if they were told they had to be qualified, whilst another felt that on balance industry experience is more important than teaching qualifications.

It was suggested that teaching qualifications are essential in Adult Community Learning (ACL) because ACL providers do not have the infrastructure to support unqualified teachers both initially when they enter teaching or through teacher training, and so they will insist on qualified teachers when recruiting. Most ACL teachers also have a subject degree. An interviewee with experience of ACL suggested that the quality of teaching in

ACL provision is generally good or outstanding, with Ofsted finding far fewer examples of providers inadequate or requiring improvement than in FE colleges.[32]

Academics

The academics agreed that the quality of teaching in FE is variable. However, an academic with extensive experience of teaching and learning in the FE sector believed that:

- Overall the quality of teaching and learning across FE has improved considerably over the last two decades.

- FE providers have well-established systems in place to continuously monitor and contribute to the on-going improvement of teaching and learning.

It was also noted that the uptake for ITT qualifications remains quite buoyant and it was suggested that this indicates that there is a widespread buy-in to the significance and importance of teacher development and teacher education across the sector.

It was suggested that requirements around maths and English presents significant challenges concerning availability of suitably qualified staff to teach these subjects. It was also noted that FE teachers are having to deal with on-going issues of student motivation and application to those subject areas.

Continuing Professional Development

Sector stakeholders

The interviewees identified a range of activities that they thought, on the basis of their experience, were useful. These included:

- INSET days – with some whole college activities, such as motivational speakers, and some targeted work at departmental level. Some of those days should have a strong focus on teaching and learning.

- Peer observations and ungraded observations.

- Learning walks by Heads of Department (HoDs) and others.

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[32] This is consistent with Ofsted statistics. See for example: gov.uk/government/publications/further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-28-february-2017/further-education-and-skills-inspections-and-outcomes-as-at-28-february-2017

- Open door teaching.

- In-house activities, which can be more effective than enrolling people on expensive courses.

- Those on teaching courses doing their practice under the supervision of existing staff.

- A mix of face-to-face and on-line training – webinars and on-line toolkits, podcasts, and case studies.

- Sharing practice through collaborative networks and sharing good practice.[33]

An interviewee with experience of CPD in both the FE and school sectors noted that, compared with the school sector, CPD opportunities in FE are few and access is made difficult by lack of funding, the sessional nature of the work, the lack of a commercial market for CPD, and there being less of a tradition of inter-institutional collaborative networks to share good practice than there is in schools.

The interviewees were not aware of any examples of systematic evaluation of CPD in the FE sector.[34]

All agreed that FE teachers make little, if any, use of evidence to inform their practice but the interviewees offered different reasons for this, including:

   o Research may be out of the sphere of experience of some FE teachers, especially those who are not graduates.

   o The limited number of university researchers studying teaching and learning in FE means that there are relatively few studies for FE teachers to draw on.

   o FE Teachers are isolated and often sessional so there is little in the way of networks for sharing practice.

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[33] One of the interviewees noted that historically there has been a minimal offer of CPD for ACL teachers. CPD can be difficult with a part-time workforce who have other commitments on days/times when they are not teaching, but network events, conferences and observations can all work well in terms of CPD.
[34] However, it was noted that the ETF have set up an evaluation framework that begins with what people hope to get out of the programme going on to how they have altered their practice and shared learning with colleagues. The ETF is also looking at learner achievements and Ofsted reports in providers where ETF have provided significant support.

- FE Teachers are stretched very thinly and so do not have time to engage in CPD.

- Where FE teachers have come from a professional teaching background, they will have been trained in pedagogy and to explore evidence of what works; those from a vocational background will not necessarily have had that training.

- Organisations that commission and conduct research in the sector have little reach with FE teachers.

It was suggested that the application of evidence is greater in schools and that this could be replicated in FE.

Academics

The academics were aware that FE colleges are often reluctant to release staff for CPD activities offered by their institutions. One academic noted that an association of which he is a member used to organise day seminars on issues in FE, but found that FE colleges were reluctant to fund CPD unless it was absolutely critical to an issue of the day. As a result, the association moved to a more academic model of organising occasional weekend conferences which do not require staff to be released from their day jobs and which have relatively low costs per head. Another academic contended that FE staff are not given sufficient time for CPD for either management or teaching. His university has established partnerships with local colleges for a Teaching and Learning Masters and an educational leadership programme. However, the university has experienced difficulties arranging times when they can visit colleges to conduct sessions and finds that staff who attend their sessions often leave early to attend other meetings.

Leadership

Sector stakeholders

It was suggested that principals and senior leaders who progress into FE leadership from FE teaching do not necessarily have the expertise to lead a large organisation, whilst those who are recruited from outside the sector require support to understand curriculum issues. Following on from this, an interviewee argued that it is important to ensure that leadership models in FE colleges are centred on teams rather than individual leaders, with an appropriate balance between education and non-educational expertise. According to this interviewee, leadership teams in FE colleges require three core members: one for business, one for curriculum and the overarching leader from either background. Another interviewee noted that the latest SIRs data (Frontier Economics

2017) indicates that providers are reducing more staff proportionally from the leadership tier than teaching staff and that this suggests they are in the process of adopting new models of leadership, although it is not yet clear what these models involve.

It was noted that the situation is somewhat different in the case of independent providers in the FE sector. This was said to be because there is such a diversity of businesses - charities, private equity, not for profit - and that leadership teams reflect the fact that these businesses often deliver commercial training with apprenticeships comprising only a small part of what they do.

Academics

It was noted that it is becoming increasingly common for leaders at very senior levels in FE to be imported in from other sectors. This was said to present a challenge for the leaders concerned because, not having come through the FE teaching route, they will be relatively unfamiliar with the core business of FE colleges. One interviewee also suggested that, as a result, they might find it difficult to command the support of FE staff. Another academic stated that when recruiting from outside the FE sector, it is vital that leaders understand the expertise of FE and take a collaborative approach.

With regard to FE college principals who have followed a traditional route from FE teaching into FE leadership, it was broadly agreed that they generally do not have the expertise required to run a multi-million pound organisation. One academic noted that we are staring to see a splitting out of the role of principal (responsible for academic standards) and chief executive (responsible for the business function and balancing the books) in the very large groups of colleges.

With regard to leadership models, it was suggested that leaders of large FE colleges use a range of leadership approaches depending on the context. One of the academics believed that a failing of the education management literature is that it has largely worked on importing classic business management models and adapting them to education rather than developing models that more naturally sit in an educational environment including FE. This interviewee suggested that more consideration should be given to how universities can support FE, especially in terms of drawing on educational leadership and Business School leadership expertise.

The academics highlighted the importance of middle managers at the interface of senior management and lecturers. The role of middle managers was seen as difficult because they are often the mediators between institutional and sectorial policy and practitioners. One interviewee also drew attention to the fact that departments and faculties that middle managers oversee are equivalent in size to a primary school, but it is unclear whether the individuals are equipped to manage effectively on that level.

Governors

Sector stakeholders

It was agreed that strong colleges are characterised by strong governing bodies. However, the interviewees suggested that:

- Some governors/governing bodies in FE colleges do not subject principals and SMT to sufficient challenge.

- It can be difficult for governors to determine which measures they should concentrate on in their organisations.

- Governors tend to be better at monitoring financial matters, but less confident about challenging the quality of teaching and learning.

Finding suitable people to act as governors was also said to be difficult because of the time commitments involved, especially for chairs of governing bodies. Two interviewees suggested that one way of addressing this issue would be to pay governors and/or chairs.

Recruiting governors with a variety of life experiences and work backgrounds was seen as important given the diversity of students in FE. However, it was noted that there is a lack of data on who governors are and understanding this and researching ways of improving governor recruitment is needed.

Two academics highlighted that clerks need to be increasingly developed and recognised, as, despite playing an important role, they can be isolated from the rest of the SMT.

Academics

An academic who has undertaken a series of projects on governance in the educational sector argued that governance in FE is fundamentally the same as in schools and universities: there are a variety of models - stewardship, principal agent, etc. - but basically a governing board oversees the general conduct of an institution, ensures that it is financially and educationally sound, and checks that the way that it is going about its business and future pathway is secure.

It was agreed that a strong governing board is crucial to a college's success and that the skill of a governing board and a principal or senior leadership team working together is crucial and should be at heart of leadership development. The interviewees also agreed that the governing bodies of FE colleges currently face significant challenges, which derive from the sector undergoing major change and reorganisation. Two of the

academics were of the opinion that governing the curriculum presents a particular challenge because, whereas in the school sector the curriculum is relatively fixed and uniform, this is not the case in FE. This means that governing bodies have to address the question of what courses should their institutions put on and why, whilst taking into account funding, recruitment, and availability of teachers.

There was agreement that relatively few independent governors have the necessary knowledge to effectively scrutinise educational provision. This was said to shift a burden on to staff governors and to reduce the level of independent scrutiny to which educational provision is subjected.

There was general agreement that serious consideration should be given to paying governors where necessary in order to assist with recruitment. One of the academics also highlighted the role of the clerk in ensuring that the governing actions are appropriate.

Supply/recruitment

Sector stakeholders

Teaching

Recruiting well-qualified maths and English teachers was said to be difficult, in part because salaries in FE do not compete favourably with schools. There are also pay differentials by subject which can interact with gender - e.g. construction teachers are paid more than those teaching hairdressing. Pay was also identified as a key barrier to the recruitment of people from industry to teach the new T-level qualifications.

It was noted that that the recruitment problem is not on the same scale in ACL, although there is an aging workforce. This is partly because ACL providers are often able to provide teachers with more autonomy and flexibility in terms of the hours that they teach and the kinds of client group they work with. Another interviewee also suggested that independent providers have a lot more flexibility in what they can pay and can reduce staffing levels more easily than colleges if funding changes and/or something isn't working or profitable.

Leadership

The interviewees suggested that sometimes there is an issue around the quality of applicants for senior leadership positions and the ability of governing bodies to make the right choice, especially those that do not use external advice to support the recruitment process. It was also noted that a pipeline of training to move potential leaders into senior positions has been lacking, although the FE sector is beginning now to tackle this issue.

Academics

Teaching

The academics were aware of the problems concerning the recruitment of teaching specialists, especially in maths and English. One argued that there is a need for research to increase understanding of why people decide not go into the FE teaching profession, particularly in these subject areas. In his opinion, there is no shortage of ideas and initiatives that aim to resolve the recruitment problem; it is a systemic problem.

Leadership

There was agreement that further work is required to establish how it is possible from very early on to ensure that the FE sector has sufficient individuals who want to become leaders in FE and to provide them with the necessary skills and knowledge.

Future challenges

The sector stakeholders and academics were agreed that the Sainsbury review and T-levels will present significant challenges over the next few years. They were also agreed that it is a large job of work to prepare the sector and that FE providers will need to:

- Understand the local employment market needs and how they are going to meet that in terms of T-levels, as well as how they can support apprenticeship provision.

- Develop excellent links with employers both to organise work placements and to understand the skills employers are looking for.

- Address the challenge of dual professionalism and decide whether all teachers should be qualified.

- Take on board that bigger and higher level (4 and 5) qualifications are going to require more staff and staff capable of teaching more demanding courses.

- Prepare for changes in apprenticeships that will require more people teaching rather than just assessing apprenticeships and new relationships with employers.

Other challenges that were mentioned include:

- Blurring between FE and HE – who's going to be doing what and the balance between classroom and work-based provision.

- Increasing demands for maths and English.

- Keeping pace with technology and using it effectively.

- Changes in funding and inspection regimes and dealing with the attendant bureaucracy.

- Constraints in funding.

- Possible skills shortages in some sectors, such as Construction, when the UK leaves the EU.

Chapter 9   Conclusions and evidence gaps

Conclusions

The quality of teaching

A succession of reforms has been intended to improve the quality of teaching in FE with the main levers being changes to the content and regulation of professional standards, revised teaching qualifications and the introduction of Ofsted inspections. However, the extent to which these changes have improved teaching quality is unclear from the available evidence.

There are emerging attempts to define what pedagogy means in the vocational context, both in the teaching of vocational subjects and in English and maths provision, and some evidence of the importance of integration and contextualisation. There is evidence that successful provision has been hampered by a lack of specialist maths and English teachers on the one hand, and a lack of maths and English expertise in vocational teachers on the other. There is also some evidence that the different traditions of academic and conceptual approaches to teaching maths and the vocational 'learning by doing' lead to learners becoming confused and that an integrated approach is more successful.

The tensions between lecturers in FE being both occupational professionals passing on their expertise to 'less experienced new recruits' and teachers with access to pedagogical theories and techniques (dual professionalism) remains a challenge in the UK and internationally. New qualifications and the use of subject mentors appear, from the limited evidence available, to have had a mixed success in resolving this.

Continuing professional development

Analysis of available FE workforce data from 2015-16 indicates that less than half of teachers report spending time on CPD. The literature suggests that, for those teachers that do participate in CPD, it can take many forms, from the formal to the informal. The limited research evidence suggests that collaborative forms of CPD are most valued by teachers, which can include peer observations, formal and informal networks, coaching and mentoring and action research. It also indicates that opportunities for teachers to critically reflect on their own practice in a safe and supportive environment can bring about positive improvements, but there remains a place for more focused developmental programmes in areas where issues are complex and a deep theoretical understanding is required.

The research base also includes evidence that professional development centred on teachers' subject specialism is important - including through coaching and mentoring - but that some teachers operate in limited teacher/CPD networks without the opportunity to forge links with similar subject-specialist teachers and are therefore left to develop subject and occupational expertise in isolation. It has been argued that external mentors/coaches from within their subject specialism may help address this gap.

Leadership

Several largely qualitative studies have explored the link between approaches to leadership and organisational performance as measured by Ofsted inspections and, in some case, attainment/performance data. These studies suggest that in high performing colleges principals and chief executives use a variety of approaches to leadership, often in combination with each other, depending on the context. These approaches include traditional top-down models - such as transactional leadership and transformational leadership - and models which emphasise a more collaborative and shared notion of power and authority - such as "distributed leadership', 'collective leadership', 'collaborative leadership' and 'shared leadership'. Senior leaders in high performing colleges are said to be highly skilled in using flexible forms of leadership and sensing and responding to the complex and changing contexts in which FE providers operate. This involves them applying leadership skills that have been shown to be effective across a range of sectors.

There is evidence to suggest that the characteristics of effective leadership for middle leaders differ markedly from those for senior leaders due to middle leaders focusing more on day-to-day operational matters and being less concerned with strategic planning and the vision and mission of their institutions. However, their leadership qualities are viewed as key not least because they are at the interface between senior management and FE teachers and play an important role in implementing organisational change policies and programmes.

Governance

The governing of colleges in the FE sector has been the subject of a number of recent studies using a range of methodologies including surveys, qualitative interviews, focus groups and small-scale case studies. This body of research reveals that there is a lack of clarity about the purpose of FE college governance in England. Thus, across FE colleges in England there are variations in: the views of governors and principals on what purpose they think governance serves in their colleges; the role and the responsibilities of chairs of governors; and, the role of the clerk. While strong and effective governance is regarded as critical, there is an absence of both an articulated rationale and model for

governing and a clear understanding of any connectivity between board and institutional performance.

There is evidence that some chairs do not regard educational knowledge as a priority in their requisite skill-set and it has been suggested in the literature that this may result in a relatively high level of dependency on FE college principals for knowledge about educational matters and thereby reduce the level of scrutiny by the chair.

Studies of governance suggest that the role of the clerk is increasingly recognised as significant in facilitating high quality governance of FE colleges. In strong FE colleges, the clerk's role is independent, high-status and based on the concept of the 'professional adviser' to the governing board. However, it appears that their role is undervalued and misunderstood in some colleges and that more training and development of clerks is needed.

Supply issues

Research into the recruitment of FE teachers indicates that FE managers believe that the reforms of the sector will have a significant impact on the recruitment of teaching staff because they are reshaping skills that are required. The research suggests that institutions will have to be more explicit about the English and maths requirements they place on the new teachers that they recruit in the future and may also need to ensure staff have more experience in varying delivery methods for teaching and training. The limited research evidence suggests that, in order to make teaching in the sector more attractive to highly qualified individuals and graduates, as well as a natural career progression route for individuals experienced in industry, it will be necessary to improve the visibility and perceived status of the sector.

The age profile of senior FE leaders means that the sector needs to prepare to replace those soon to retire. The literature highlights the importance of building leadership and management skills in the 'pipeline' by identifying potential leaders in the sector as early as possible and developing clear career routes. Several studies also suggest recruiting from outside the FE sector not only to ensure that vacancies can be filled with suitably qualified leaders but also to introduce fresh perspectives and new ideas into the sector. The extent of recruitment from beyond the sector and levels of cross-sector movement in leadership roles is unclear, however there is evidence to suggest that recruitment and selection panels are generally more likely to choose a 'safe' internal candidate over an 'unknown' external applicant. There is evidence to suggest that some programmes designed to support and develop under-represented and new styles of leaders have been successful.

Evidence gaps

The quality of teaching

Much of the research in the literature relating to ITT explores the perceptions of teachers while the learner perspective, and any evidence of the impact of various regulatory changes and pedagogical approaches on the retention, engagement and achievement of learners, is largely absent. While Ofsted inspections make reference to 'well-qualified staff' in provision that is good or outstanding, 'well-qualified' is not defined and there is no systematic evidence that links particular teacher qualifications with learner outcomes. A large-scale research study incorporating both quantitative and qualitative methodologies to explore learner outcomes where their teachers have differing levels of teaching qualifications (or none) would help to clarify the impact of ITT in the sector.

There has been slightly more research activity on maths in vocational settings than on English, but evidence is still relatively weak on the approaches that improve learner engagement and outcomes. For English, research evidence is almost entirely missing. Research studies would be helpful to gain evidence on:

- the effect that teachers' qualification levels (including in English or maths) have on teacher confidence and effectiveness;

- the impact of access to specialist teachers and targeted CPD;

- the extent to which different approaches are effective within FE settings and how these might differ from school-based approaches; for example, contextualising English and maths within vocational studies, reinforcement across the curriculum, and differing teaching styles.

Evidence from Ofsted is positive on teachers engaging with industry to create relevant opportunities for students to enhance their learning, but this has not been a focus for research. Research into the extent to which this is happening and its impact on the progression of learners into employment or higher-level study would be useful.

Continuing Professional Development

The research base consists largely of teachers' perceptions of different forms of CPD, fairly small-scale studies of particular interventions and a growing body of research into the benefits or otherwise of lesson observations as a tool for professional development.

During the four years (2008-12) in which a certain amount[35] of CPD was mandatory for those seeking to maintain their qualified status, there was little or no research on its effectiveness in raising the quality of teaching and learning. Nor is it clear, since the requirement was removed, how far the nature of the professional development on offer is determined by teachers' own priorities and/or informed by an organisation-wide workforce development strategy. The impact of different forms of CPD on teaching quality and, ultimately, on learners also remains unknown. Although it would not be possible now to determine the impact of previous regulatory requirements, research studies would be helpful to determine:

- the extent to which teachers in FE are engaging in CPD;

- the nature of CPD activities available;

- any gaps in CPD provision;

- how priorities for CPD are identified;

- what barriers exist to effective CPD and how these could be overcome;

- how the impact of CPD on learners is assessed; and,

- which forms of teacher CPD have had the biggest effect on the quality of teaching.

Leadership

The research on senior leadership in FE provides very little insight into the extent to which the characteristics of effective senior leaders differ according to the type of college that is being led and does not explain precisely why different approaches are most effective and under which conditions. In addition, the studies do not systematically examine how leadership quality is assessed, improved and rewarded in FE. Research on these issues would be very useful.

Most of the evidence on leadership derives from research that was conducted between 2000 and 2010. Recent evidence is sparse, although two significant studies funded by the ETF (Hughes et al., 2014; Greany et al., 2014) explore the potential implications of insights drawn from leadership beyond the sector. There is therefore a need for more research on leadership in FE to gain a better understanding of:

- how the requirements of effective leadership are changing over time in response to FE sector reforms and the need for closer collaboration with employers;

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[35] Full-time FE teachers were required to undertake at least 30 hours of CPD per year, for the purposes of updating their knowledge of the subjects they taught and further developing their teaching skills; part-time teachers were required to undertake pro-rata amounts of CPD, with a minimum of 6 hours per year.

- how different models of leadership are being used in the FE sector and which approaches are most effective in different situations;

- the nature of context-sensing skills and how they can be developed; and,

- how diversity can be integrated in leadership.

Governance

Recent research on governing bodies highlights a number of issues that require further investigation, including:

- the extent and implications of inconsistency of approach by colleges regarding the roles of chairs and the clerk;

- the relationship between effective governance and institutional performance; and,

- the context specific training and development requirements for governors, chairs and clerks.

Supply Issues

Whilst there is evidence that entering teaching in FE can be a natural career progression route for individuals experienced in industry, more work is needed to investigate the perceptions, opportunities and barriers experienced by professionals in industry when considering teaching in FE as a career option.

The recruitment of leaders has been the subject of relatively little systematic research. In view of this, research on barriers and facilitators to developing leadership pipelines and recruiting and supporting leaders from beyond the FE sector would be helpful.

A national survey would establish the extent of recruitment from beyond the FE sector and levels and patterns of recruitment from within the FE sector.

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