

International School Leadership

RESEARCH 2018



The latest research exploring the priorities, approaches, experiences and successes of international school leaders in finding leadership roles globally

**“Research is formalized curiosity.
It is poking and prying with a purpose.”**

Z. Neale Hurston

So, what was our purpose? At LSC Education, we are committed to helping leaders transition successfully into new leadership roles in schools globally, and we are exceptionally proud of our long track record in helping to make this happen. Unsuccessful placements have wide reaching implications for school communities, as well as for individual school leaders and their families.

Our continued commitment to making successful appointments was the motivation for our research. As Educationalists ourselves, we know just how critical it is for schools to appoint and retain the right leader for the appropriate stage in their school's development.

We hope that leaders will use our findings as a tool to critically evaluate their own motivations and actions when job hunting. We believe that Boards and Governors will also benefit from using our findings to enhance their recruitment and assessment processes.

Our thanks go to all those Leaders who generously made time to participate and share with us their experiences, knowledge and ambitions. It is only by amassing and analysing their responses that we have been able to find fascinating key themes and patterns emerging. This shared experience will prove invaluable as a guide for future leaders, Governors and School Boards, for the common purpose of creating and sustaining outstanding schools.

My personal thanks to members of the LSC Team who have worked on the project: Claudia Clark, Dr Helen Wright and Sophie Hunter.

If you would like to see any new areas of research explored in the future, please do contact us at info@lsceducation.com

Best wishes

Edward Clark

Director | LSC Education

Terminology and categories of respondents

When the term **Leader** is used this refers to all types of respondents.

When the term **Head** is used this refers to top level leadership and includes Head, Principal, Master, CEO, Founding Head, COO and Director of Education.

When the term **Senior Leader** is used this refers to Deputy Head, Vice Principal, Assistant Head, Assistant Principal, Head of Section, Director of Section. Project Manager, Bursar, Marketing Director and HR Director.

When the term **International School** is used this refers to schools teaching international, British, American or a combined curriculum to both expatriate and/or local pupils.

When the term **Governors** is used this refers to Governors, School Boards and other owners of schools.

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An International Leader's reflection on the rewards of working in the sector



“Education is valued by every country and culture, each with a vision of their future communities. The similarities provide affirmation of one's purpose, the differences provide endless inspiration.”

Dual purpose research | A critical reflection tool for International School Leaders and valuable insights for School Governors and Boards

Research aims and ambitions

Our aim was to encourage Leaders to reflect, explore and analyse their personal motivations when they chose roles, locations, cultures and settings to work in. We hoped that by unlocking these key motivations and finding emerging themes, we could assist leaders in making well informed and successful decisions about their future roles. From this overarching aim grew a second significant objective: to gain greater insight into how these leaders could or could not evaluate the likelihood of a role being a 'good fit' and a successful appointment. For governors and boards, being able to access these insights and to gain greater understanding of prospective leaders' needs and expectations, should prove extremely useful in making successful leadership appointments.

Research Methodology

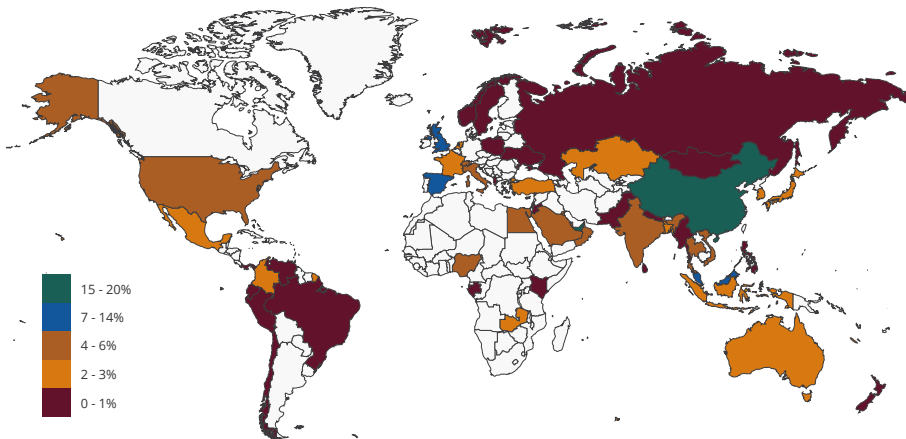
In 2017, the LSC marketing team contacted international school leaders from across the globe, inviting them to participate in this research. They were asked to complete a survey which focused on their personal motivations for selecting roles and locations, their priorities with regards to the job package, reflections on finding a 'good fit' and the rewards and challenges of working in the international education sector. LSC received 204 responses from leaders who have worked across the regions shown below in the leadership roles listed. For analysis purposes respondents have also been classified into the two groups, to enable analysis specific to those who fall under a **Head/Principal** type role and those in other Senior Leadership roles such as **Deputy/Vice** including non-academic leadership roles such as **Bursar/HR**.

Respondents

204 leaders | 62 countries

- Our research is based on responses from 204 International School Leaders, working in 62 different countries; our sample covers every continent.
- 635 roles have been held by these Leaders in different locations world-wide.
- This breadth of background means our report provides a fascinating and valuable insight into the experiences and attitudes of International School Leaders world-wide.

Current School Location of 204 Leaders



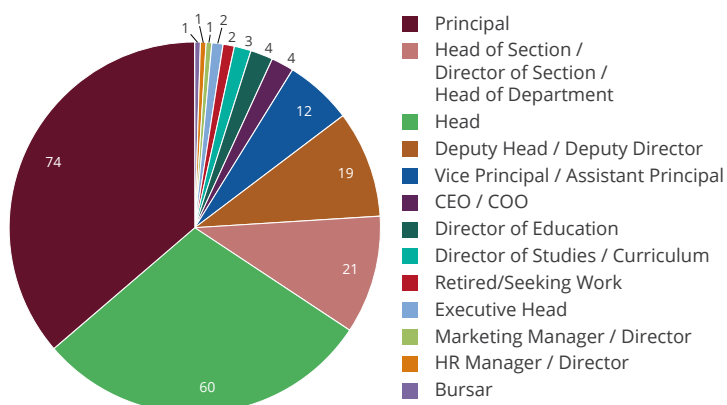
HEADS (144)

Principal | Executive Head | Head | Director of Education | Master | CEO | COO

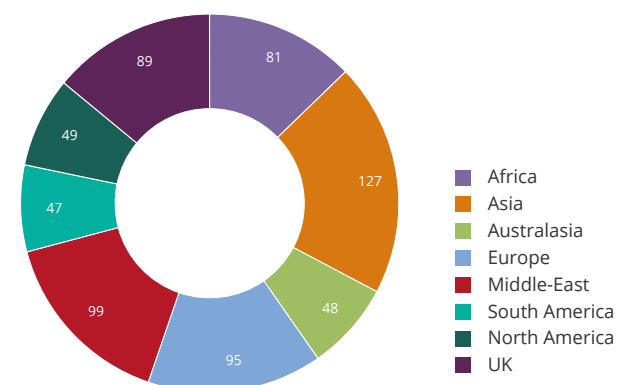
OTHER SENIOR LEADERS (60)

Head of Section | Director of Section | Head of Department | Deputy Head | Deputy Director | Vice Principal | Assistant Principal | Director of Studies | Director of Curriculum | Bursar | Finance Manager | HR Manager | Marketing Manager

Current roles of 204 Leaders



Location of 635 roles held by 204 Leaders surveyed



Exploring Priorities

Identifying and applying for a new international leadership post overseas is a complex and multifaceted process. Many professional, practical and family issues become significant and as such, we were keen to explore this decision-making process with Leaders. To do so, we asked Leaders to review 12 key priorities that they would consider when looking at new leadership opportunities. Their priorities were ranked from most important to least important.

TOP PRIORITIES – The role takes centre stage

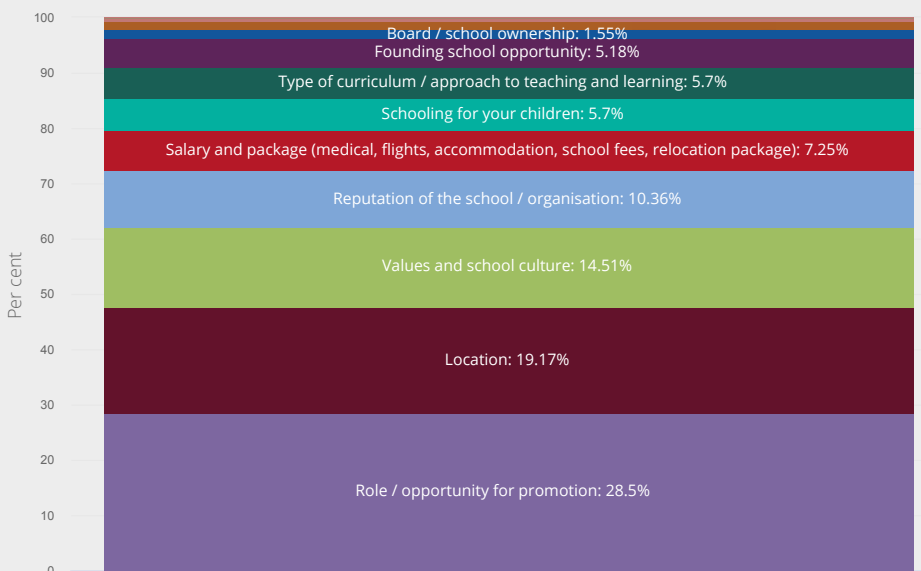
The largest group of Leaders (28.5%) placed the **role/opportunity for promotion** as their top priority when looking at new opportunities. Many Leaders expressed a desire to find roles with autonomy and the freedom to innovate.

Just under a fifth (19.2%) placed **location** as their top priority. The appetite for exposure to different cultures and locations is high amongst these Leaders, with many looking for locations culturally diverse from their home. 14.5% of Leaders placed the **values / culture of the school** as their top priority. This recognition of the importance of compatible values and culture is noted by many Leaders, with 77.5% referring to school values as an indicator of likely success in finding a school that 'fits' them.

10% of Leaders considered their main priority to be the **reputation of the school / organisation**. It is interesting to note that **salary and package** was ranked fifth in Leaders' 1st priority choices, with only 7.3% of Leaders citing this as their top priority when looking at new opportunities.

- School size
- Salary and package (medical, flights, accommodation, school fees, relocation package)
- CPD and training
- Reputation of the school / organisation
- Work opportunities for your spouse/partner
- Board / school ownership
- Values and school culture
- Founding school opportunity
- Location
- Type of curriculum / approach to teaching and learning
- Role / opportunity for promotion
- Schooling for your children

First Priorities for Leaders when looking at new international leadership roles



HEADLINES:

The top priorities for Leaders globally when looking at new opportunities:

First Priority - Role and Opportunity for promotion | Location | Values and Culture

Second Priority - Location | Salary | Role and Opportunity for Promotion

Third Priority - Salary | Values and Culture | Type of Curriculum/Approach



EXPLORING PRIORITIES

ASPECTS FOR LEADERS AND FAMILIES TO CONSIDER

Salary and Job Package



Values and School Culture



Location



CPD and training opportunities



Founding School Opportunity



Work opportunities for Spouse



Reputation of the School or Organisation



Role and Opportunity for Promotion



School Size



Schooling for your children



Type of Curriculum and approach



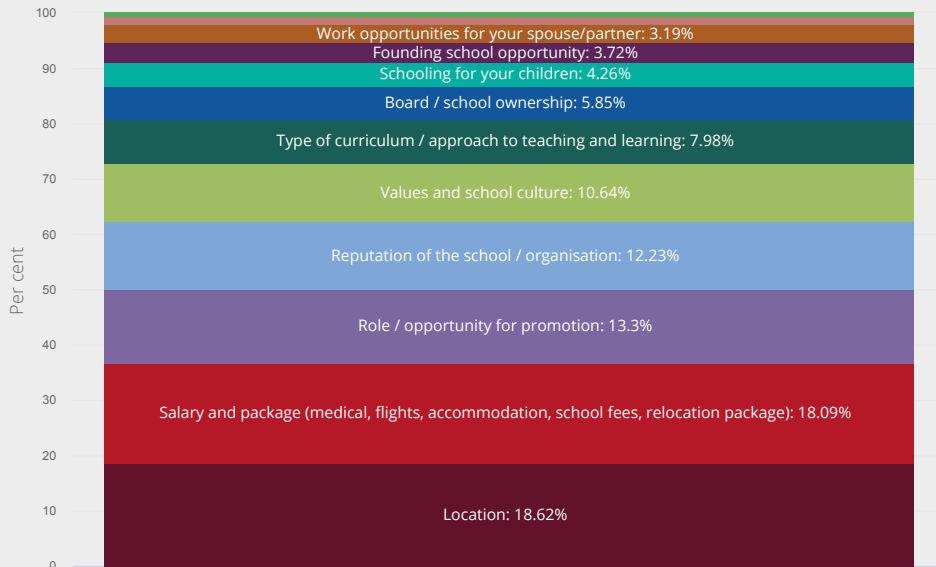
Structure of Board, Governance and Ownership



SECOND PRIORITIES - The rising significance of Salary

To gain a deep understanding of what matters to these Leaders, we also reviewed how second, and third priorities ranked. **Location** was ranked as the largest (18.6%) second priority followed by **salary and package** (18%) and the **role / opportunity for promotion** (13%).

Second priority for Leaders when looking at new international leadership roles

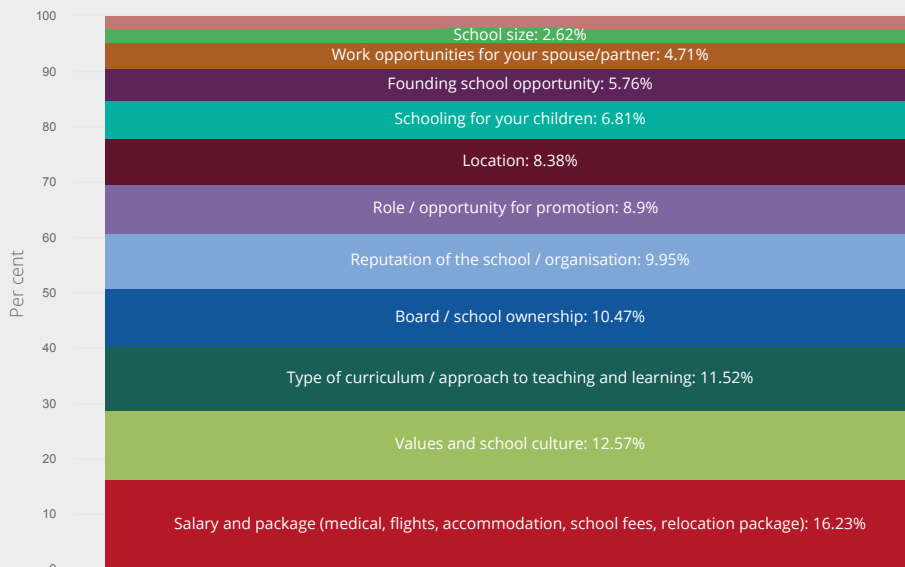


THIRD PRIORITIES – Curriculum and approach gains importance

Salary was ranked as the top (16%) third priority followed by **school culture and values**, (12.6%) the **type of curriculum / approach to teaching** (11.5%). **Board/ownership** increased in significance as fourth (10.5%), closely followed by **the reputation of the school** (10%).

Out of the 12 priorities, **role, location, salary** and **school values** consistently ranked as important for Leaders at this early stage of their job search.

Third priorities for Leaders when looking at new international leadership roles



KEY FINDINGS:

Leaders are attracted primarily by the role itself and the professional challenge of the new opportunity. Country choice is important to leaders and so are school values and salary, but not as important as the role itself.

School size, CPD, training and work opportunities for spouses all ranked consistently low as priorities. This does not mean that they are not important – and to some individuals they are much more important than others – but other elements were more significant to Leaders in the decision-making process when job hunting.



Leaders' reflections on the rewards of International School Leadership



"The opportunity to work with a range of educational systems and professionals from a variety of backgrounds and experiences. In my current position, I enjoy an incredible amount of autonomy providing for me the opportunity to shape the educational and strategic direction of the school."



"Truly being part of a global minded community in terms of language, culture and service in a global context, being able to make a positive contribution oneself and through the climate of the school and its community members."



"The diversity of student body combined with the entrepreneurial nature of leadership posts is extremely rewarding."

Selecting Locations

A critical question for our Leaders when considering their future career moves was how to identify the best location 'fit' as well as the best role 'fit'. To enable our Leaders to reflect on this aspect, we asked them to consider what were the most important factors in selecting a country / location for work. Leaders reviewed whether 13 factors were most important, important or not important.

Leaders overwhelmingly considered **security and safety** to be the most significant factor with 95.6% regarding this as *most important* or *important*. **Opportunities for personal and family fulfilment** ranked highly, with 93% regarding this as *most important* or *important*. Environmental factors ranked highly, with **cost of living** (89.6%), **air pollution** (84.2%) and **climate** (79.3%) regarded as *most important* or *important*. The **opportunity to travel** from the location was a *most important* or *important* factor for 80.1% of the Leaders who responded.

Leaders were least likely to seek a location with **a culture similar to their own** (8%) or to select a location on **religious grounds** (20%). While Leaders readily speak of the desire to embrace and learn from new environments and cultures, **language and cuisine** were considered *most important* or *important* by less than 40% of Leaders.

HEADLINES:

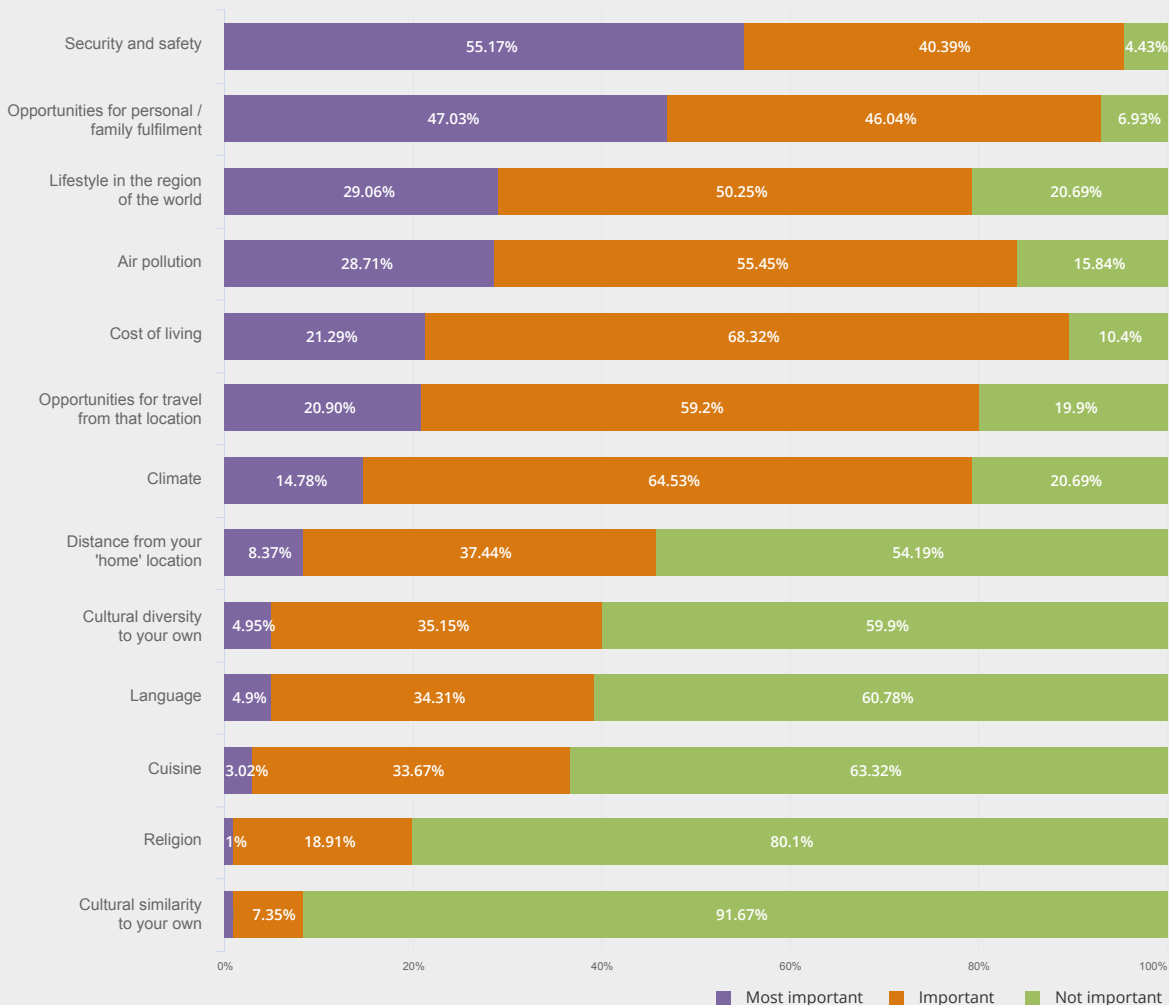
From the 13 areas reviewed by Leaders there emerges a strong sense of the main factors that they consider when looking at locations globally:

Most Important - Security and safety | Personal and family fulfilment | Life-style in region of world

Important – Cost of Living | Climate | Travel from location

Not Important – Cultural similarity | Religion | Cuisine

The most important factors for Leaders in selecting a country/location





KEY FINDINGS:

For Leaders considering a new location for a role internationally, a key factor is their wellbeing and the wellbeing of their family. This is strongly reflected in the prioritising of safety and security, opportunities for the family, lifestyle, cost of living and environmental factors.

Language barriers, new cuisines, religion and cultural similarities are not as significant to most Leaders when selecting new locations.

Leaders' reflections on the rewards of International School Leadership



"Cultural diversity, challenging to your own beliefs and norms, new staff with different experiences and new locations to discover."



"Cultural and language diversity creates a multicultural environment and one where we can learn a great deal from each other."

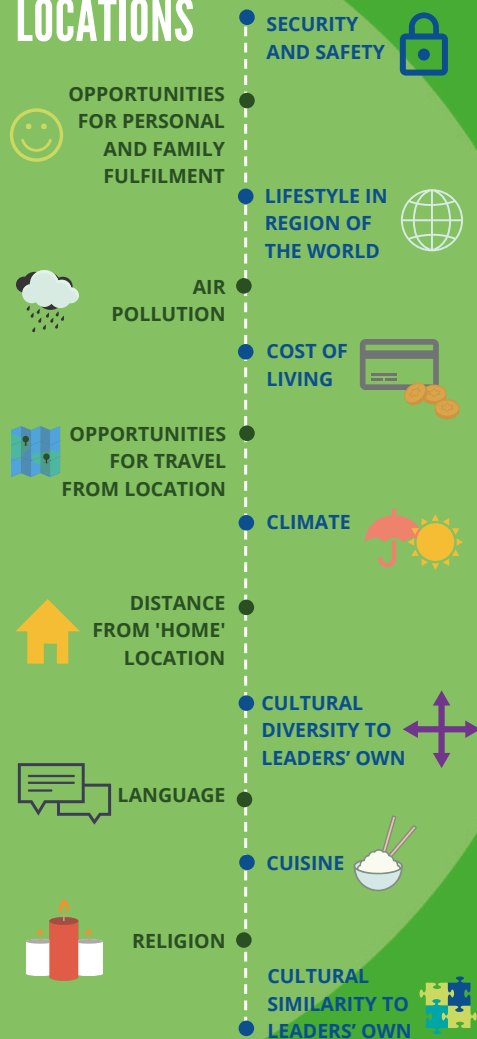


"The chance to meet people with so many diverse cultural backgrounds, the ability to see new places, the challenge of being able to take what you know and apply it in a variety of school settings."

CRITICAL QUESTIONS

SELECTING LOCATIONS

Identifying the best location for a role by Leaders and their families reflecting on their key priorities



The Job Package

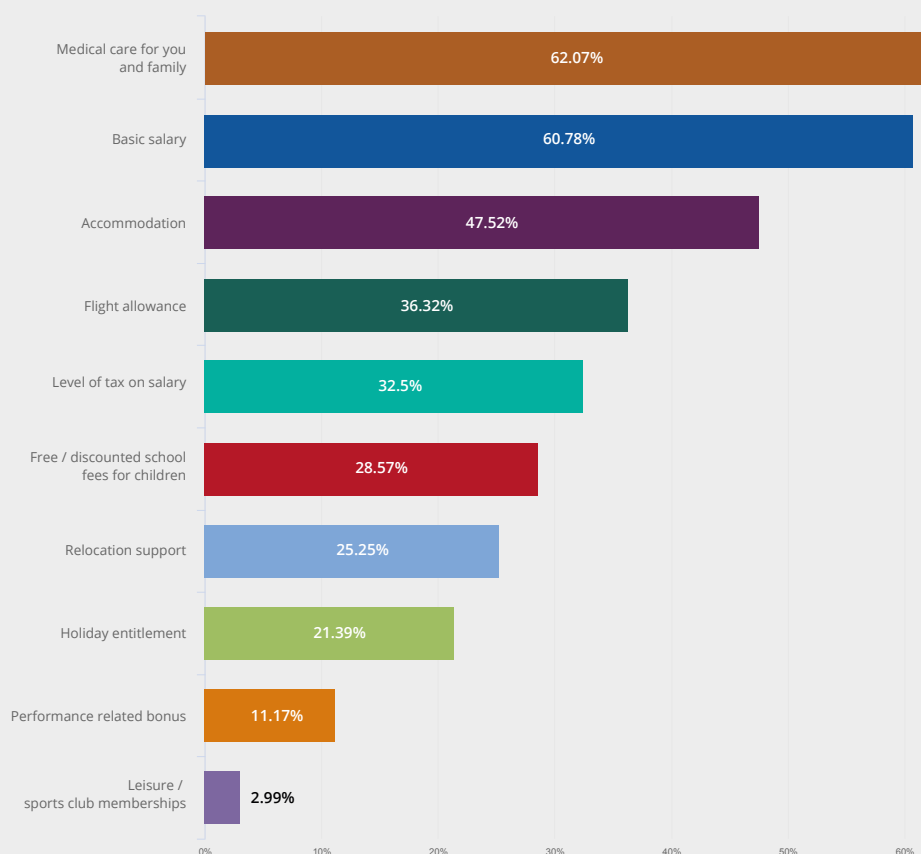
We asked Leaders to consider the most important elements of the job package. Within the context of the overall findings of the key priorities for Leaders, salary was placed in the top 5 in terms of significance. It is useful therefore to explore the package in greater detail and interesting to note that Leaders had many expectations around the salary and benefits package.

A strong finding emerged from the survey: that 62% of Leaders selected **medical care for themselves and their family** as the most important aspect of the package. The remaining (35%) selected fairly important and only (3%) selected this as unimportant. This is in line with research across other sectors, where healthcare plan is the most valued benefit. However, this percentage is higher and may well be attributed to the fact that Leaders and families are abroad and without the medical support from their home country.

As expected, **basic salary** featured highly, with over 61% selecting this as the most important element of the package, with the remaining 39% selecting it as fairly important. Almost half (48%) of Leaders selected **accommodation** as a most important element of the package and the remaining (45%) selecting it as fairly important and only a small number (7%) selected this as unimportant. In countries where the cost of living is high, it is cost effective for Leaders to have accommodation within their package. If not, this may restrict their actual choice of home and location.

Flight Allowances were ranked relatively highly, with 36% of Leaders selecting this as the most important element of the package. Just under a third of Leaders (32.3%) selected level of **taxation on salary** as a most important element of the package. The impact on disposable income between tax-free countries and those with high income tax levels can be very significant.

Priorities within the Job-Package for Leaders



HEADLINES:

Within the Job Package, Leaders regard Medical care for themselves and their families and their Basic Salary as the most significant elements.

Accommodation and Flight allowance also rank highly.



Leaders' reflections on the rewards of International School Leadership



"I have worked for 17 years in international schools and it has been an amazing experience! I have learned new languages and new skills beyond my wildest dreams. The experience for me, has made my life worth living."



"The freedom to focus on what's best for students - i.e. much less top down adherence to a national curriculum. International staff are adventurous, vibrant, interesting people open to change and innovation, richness of diversity..... much more."



"Working with diverse teams, students and parents who all are wishing for the same thing - holistic, educational excellence."

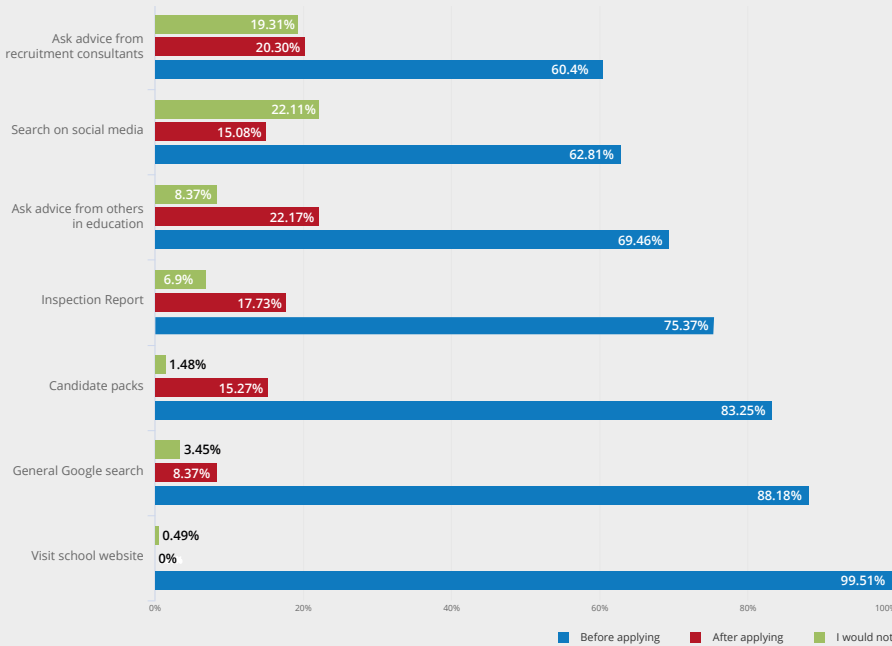


"Pretty much everything - great, switched-on kids, staff who appreciate input and support, exciting lifestyle, travel, crafting something new, not so entangled in UK red tape, etc.."

Research undertaken by Leaders into the role and school

To enable leaders and schools to find a good 'fit', we explored with Leaders their personal approach to researching the schools to which they were applying. Our aim was to understand when Leaders conducted their research and to see if and how their research could impact on the success of a placement.

What kind of research Leaders undertake before and after applying for a role



Our findings suggest that Leaders are highly skilled in their research into prospective schools. Their approach to research is holistic, ranging from the formal documentation supplied by the school or consultancy and impartial Inspection reports, to face-to-face discussions with educationalists and social media exploration.

As expected, the majority of Leaders (99.5%) visited the **school website**, 88.2% undertook research on **search engines** and 83.3% read a candidate application pack before applying. Three quarters of Leaders read the school **inspection report**. **Seeking advice** from others in education also featured highly, with 69.5% doing so before applying and 22.2% after applying. It is interesting to note that 62.8% of Leaders undertook research on **social media** about the school before applying. **Social media** also had the highest 'I would not use' response with only 20% engaging with social media at any stage in their research. 60.4% of Leaders sought advice from a **recruitment consultant** before applying and 20.3% did so afterwards.

HEADLINES:

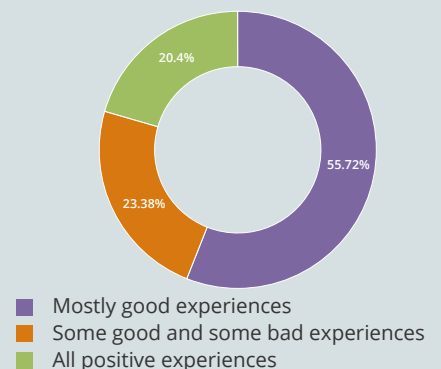
Generally, Leaders are diligent in their research and material available **online** is a significant part of this process from **internet searches** to downloaded **inspection reports, candidate packs** and **social media**. Leaders who conducted thorough research at an early stage had more successful roles during their career.

Reflections on the Recruitment Processes

In order to help schools to improve their recruitment processes, we invited Leaders to tell us about their experiences. 76% described their experiences as *all positive* or *mostly good* and 24% as *some good* and *some bad*. Professionally run recruitment processes are important for everyone involved. Poorly run or unethically conducted processes can be negative experiences for candidates, damaging for schools and can impact on future recruitment for both individual schools and the sector.

A quarter of Leaders commented on a need for greater transparency and openness during the recruitment process: from understanding the role, to the current challenges and the expectations of the Board about the future development of the school.

Reflections by Leaders on recruitment processes by past or current employers

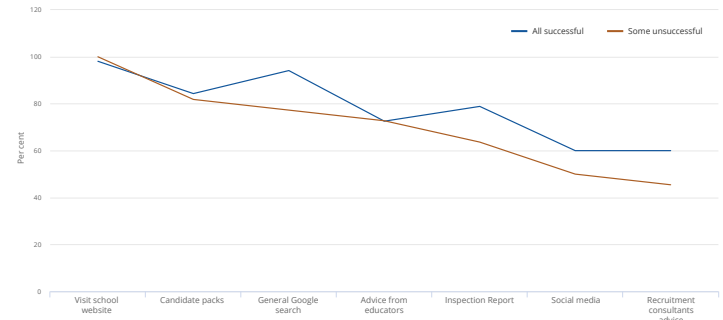


KEY FINDINGS: Research = Success

When comparing early research approaches of those Leaders who believe that all their roles have been successful, with Leaders who believe some roles have been unsuccessful, a pattern emerges that suggests those who do less research have worse outcomes than those who do more.

The 3 most striking areas of research difference are **Google search, inspection reports** and **advice from recruitment consultants**. All these areas are considerably higher with most successful Leaders.

Comparing research approaches of Leaders who believe all their roles have been successful with those who believe some roles were successful and some unsuccessful



Culture | The Fit

As Leaders progress through the recruitment process, their decision making evolves, through new influences, information and exposure to school life. We asked our Leaders how they judged, after the interview process and school visit, whether an opportunity appeared to be the right 'fit' for them.

Within this topic we invited Leaders to consider elements relating to: job fit, organisational fit and culture fit.

Organisational fit | Referring to values and norms of the school and the way that people interact that contribute to the environment of the setting.

Culture fit | Whether Leaders would fit within the organisational culture of the school, gauged by the potential relationship with stakeholders, their behaviour, perceived beliefs and motivations.

Job fit | Referring to the qualifications, experience, skills and competencies of the Leader where the role's activities and responsibilities were satisfying for them.

HEADLINES:

Leaders were invited to reflect on their ability to judge a good 'fit', post interview and assessment process. At this stage their assessment of the fit is balanced between elements of *job fit* (skills and experience), *culture fit* (shared values with the school) and *organisational fit* (potential relationships with stakeholders). We see how exposure to school life enables Leaders to judge these 3 types of fit and how both heart and mind affect decision making.

However, only **39%** of Leaders believe they have had sufficient exposure to school life to judge the likelihood of a good fit.

Identifying a good fit

159 (77.9%) of Leaders regard the **relationship with the Governors and Board** as highly significant to a successful outcome. The relationships with these senior stakeholders has a huge impact on their organisational fit.

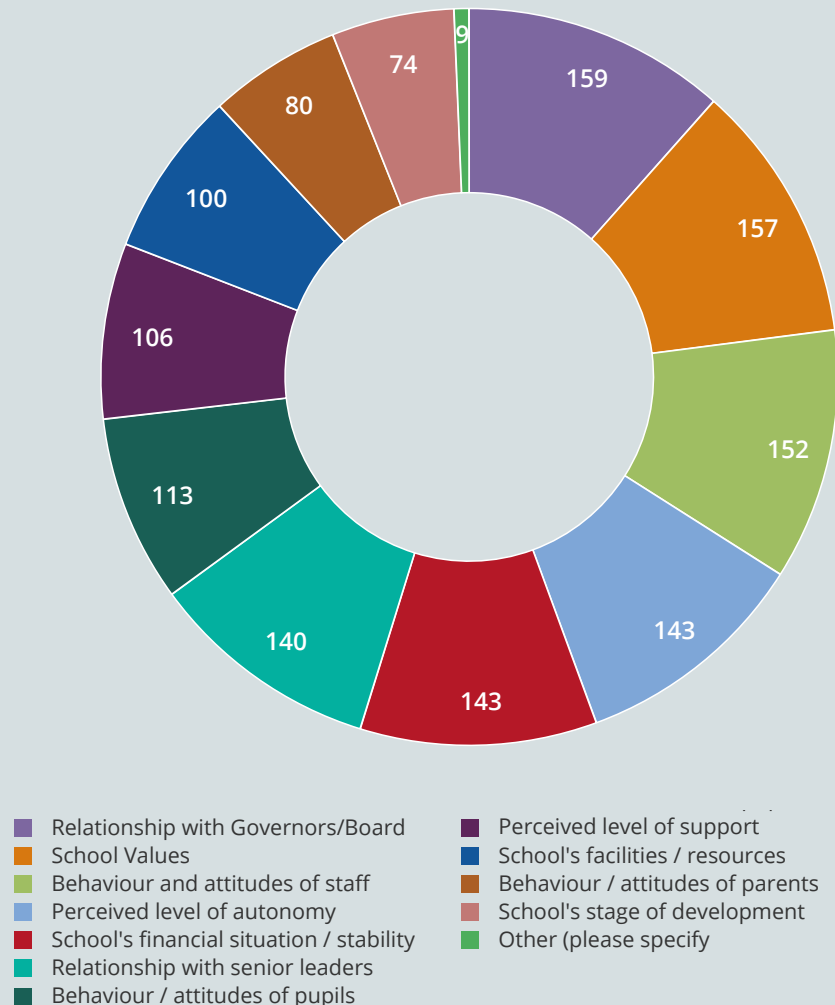
Many Leaders also identify the need to find a good fit with the organisational culture; the school's values and philosophy, with 157 (77.5%) regarding the **values promoted by the school** as important for a good match.

152 (74.5%) believed that the **behaviours and attitudes of the staff** that they met, were an indicator of future success. This finding also shows that the relationships with the school community that Leaders interact with and collaborate with daily, are highly significant to finding a good organisation fit.

Indicative of potential job fit, 143 (70.1%) of Leaders believe the **perceived level of autonomy in the role** to be significant.

Also rated as highly significant, for 143 (70.1%) of Leaders, was the **security and financial stability of the school**. This was the only highly featured aspect that was not connected with 'fit' or 'culture'.

How Leaders judged whether an opportunity presented a good 'fit'



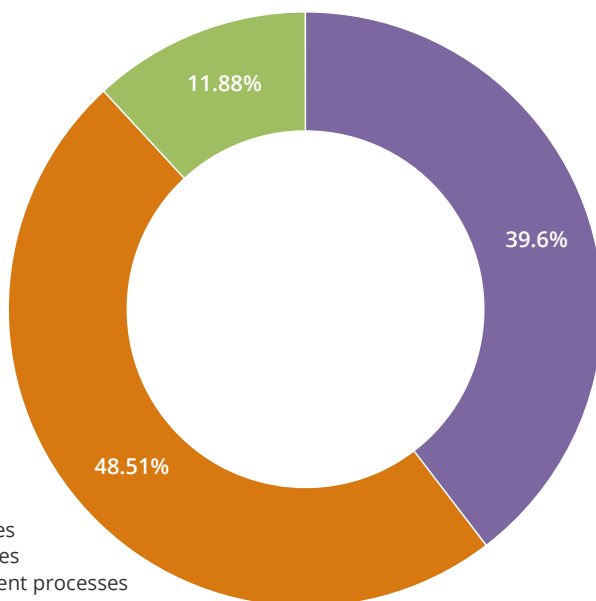


Exposure to school life | Judging the potential fit

We asked our Leaders whether they were given enough information, time and exposure to schools to judge if an opportunity was likely to be the right role for them.

Only 39.6% believed that they had sufficient information in most recruitment processes. From the response we can see that there is an opportunity for schools to increase this type of access to school culture and information, to ensure a better outcome.

Was sufficient information / time / exposure to the school possible during recruitment processes?



- In most recruitment processes
- In some recruitment processes
- Infrequently during recruitment processes

CULTURE - THE FIT



PREDICTORS OF A SUCCESSFUL FIT

- Organisation**
 - School Values, Beliefs and Identity
 - School's facilities and resources
 - School's financial situation and stability
- Culture**
 - Potential relationships with Board, Governors or Owners
 - Potential relationships with Senior Leadership Team
 - Behaviour and attitudes of school staff
 - Behaviour and attitudes of school pupils
 - Behaviour and attitudes of parents
- Job**
 - School's stage of development
 - Perceived level of autonomy
 - Perceived level of support
 - Good match with experience, knowledge and training

Exposure to School Life = greater chance of a good fit

Successful outcomes are influenced by Leaders' access to culture; school life, people and information during the recruitment process.

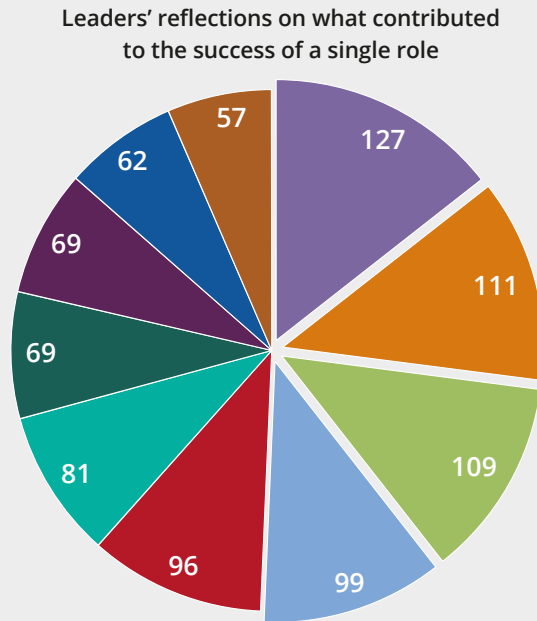
Exploring 'the good fit'

To further examine this topic, we invited our Leaders to reflect on a single role that has been, in their view, a good fit. Leaders were invited to identify the top 4 reasons that they felt contributed to the success of that single role. Their reflections continue to show how significant the job fit, organisational fit and culture fit are for successful outcomes.

127 leaders (63.8%), attributed their success to a **strong working relationship with key staff**. 111 leaders (55.8%) believed that success was due to a **good match with their experience, knowledge and training**.

109 Leaders (54.8%) considered the reason for their good fit was a **good match between their leadership style and the school's stage of development**.

99 Leaders (49.8%) felt that a **strong match of values between themselves and organisation / school** was significant and (48.2%) believed that a good match was rooted in a **supportive working relationship with Board / Governors / Owners**.



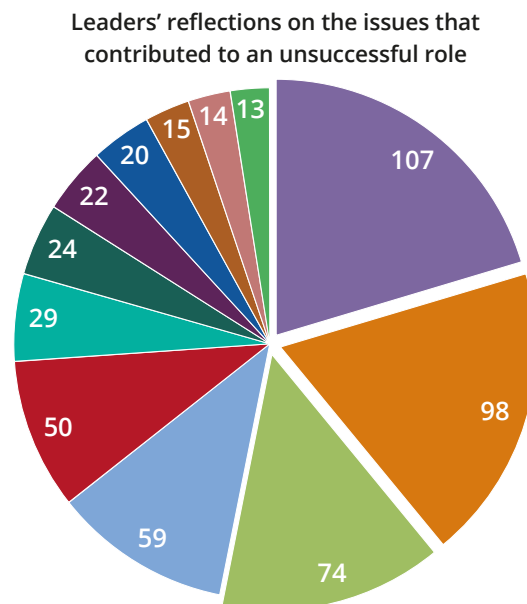
KEY FINDINGS:

Leaders who believed that they had had a good fit attributed this to successful working relationships with all stakeholders and a match with their experience, knowledge and training, as well as a good match between their leadership style and the school's stage of development. This suggests that organisational, culture and job fit are critical for a good match.

- Strong working relationships with key staff
- Good match with your experience, knowledge and training
- Good match between leadership style / school's stage
- Strong match of values between you and organisation / school
- Strong and effective relationship with Board / Governors / Owners
- Your personal resilience, outlook, state of mind
- Supportive working relationship with Board / Governors / Owners
- Clear and realistic aims set by Board / Governors / Owners
- Embracing cultural complexity of school community
- Transparency from Board / Governors / Owners

Exploring 'the poor fit'

We invited our Leaders to reflect on a role that has been, in their view, a poor fit. Leaders were invited to identify the top 4 reasons that they felt contributed to the lack of success of that single role. The top 3 issues concerned their relationship with the **Board/ Governors/Owners**. 107 Leaders (60%) believed that **micro-management by the Board/Governors/Owners** was an issue, 98 (55%) attributed a **lack of clarity by the Board/ Governors/Owners** as an issue and 74 (41.5%) felt that a **poor relationship with the Board/ Governors/Owners** was an issue.



- Micro-management by Board / Governors / Owners
- Lack of clarity from Board / Governors / Owners
- Lack of relationship with Board / Governors / Owners
- Mismatch of values between you and organisation / school
- Lack of resources and funding
- Mismatch between your leadership style
- Challenging targets
- Staffing issues
- Personality clashes
- Feeling of isolation
- Cultural complexity / school community
- Your experience, training, knowledge

Exposure to school life = greater chances of good fit

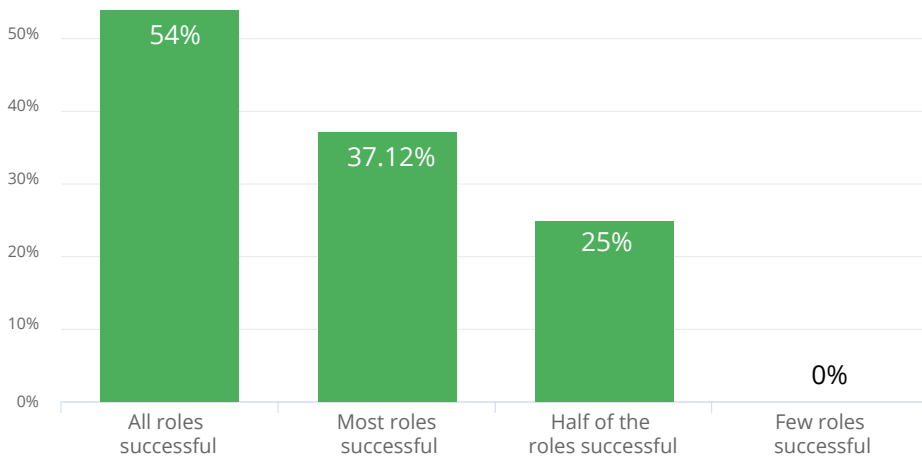
The Leaders who believed **all roles** had been a good fit were the group who had benefitted from the highest exposure to school culture in most recruitment processes (54%).

In contrast, those who have had **half successful roles**, felt they had benefited from sufficient exposure to the school life in only 25% of recruitment processes.

Of those leaders who believed **few roles** had been successful, none believed they had benefited from good exposure to school life in any recruitment processes.

There is a clear trend towards a successful fit being influenced by exposure to school life and culture during the recruitment process.

Comparison between Leaders' success in finding roles that fit and their exposure to school life during recruitment processes



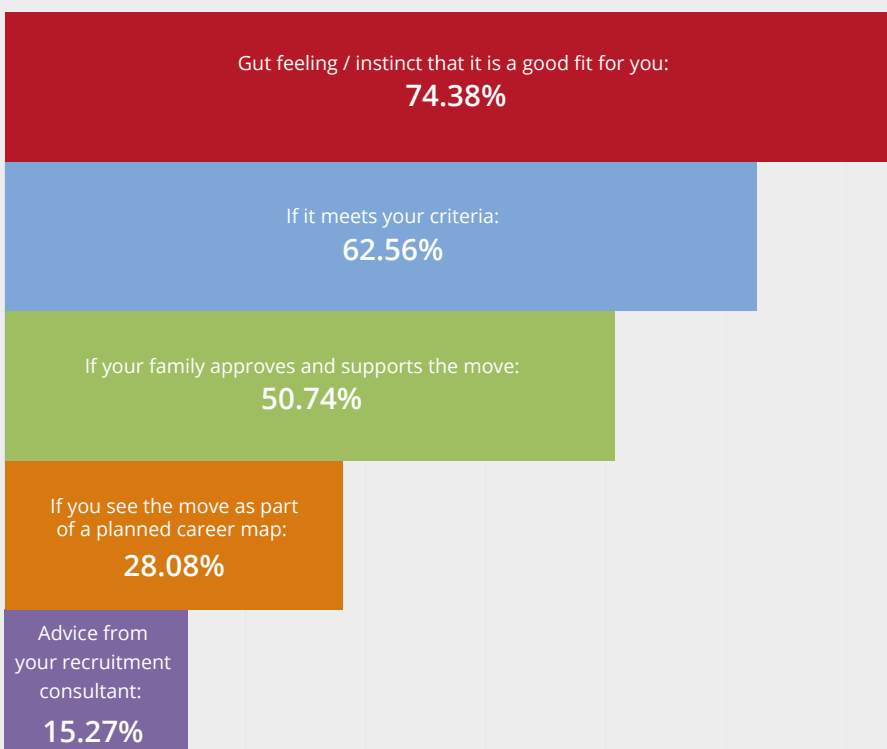
KEY FINDINGS: Moving between the Head and Heart

In the early stage of job hunting Leaders are being analytical and facts driven i.e. using 'the head'. The 'head' decisions are made with the left brain, the rational side, where information is analysed and objective reasoning is used.

As the recruitment process progresses, Leaders gain greater exposure to people and school culture, 'the heart' starts to play a part in decision making. The 'heart' decisions are made with the right brain which is holistic, subjective and intuitive.



How Leaders decide whether to take a job?



Decision Making | The Job offer

We went on to ask Leaders how they decided whether to accept a job offer. We were keen to understand who and what would influence their final decision.

For Leaders, the 'gut instinct' features highly at this later stage in the process (74.4%), suggesting that many Leaders know instinctively whether the role and school would be right for them. This intuitive belief is likely to be influenced by elements of cultural fit; values and assumptions, beliefs, behaviour and motivations experienced through exposure to school life. Fewer Leaders (62.56%) made their final decision based on a more calculated criteria check list such as that detailed in Top Priorities (page 4). As few as 28% of Leaders believed that accepting a role would be part of a wider planned career map.

Comparison between Heads and other Senior Leaders

We were interested to explore how priorities, expectations and the experiences of the recruitment process differs between Heads and other Senior Leaders. To enable us to draw a distinction between those Leaders in the top roles and those in senior roles, we segmented the respondents into two groups to draw comparisons: **Heads and Senior Leaders**.

First Priorities differ for Heads and Senior Leaders; relationships and values feature highly.

Both groups place their highest priority on the potential relationships with whom they will have the most significant working contact. School values are equally important to both groups.

Heads' first priorities were the **relationship with the Governors/Board/ Owners of the school** (86%), followed by the **values of the school** (78%) and third, the perceived **autonomy in the role** (74%).

Senior Leaders, by contrast, placed the **behaviours and attitudes of the staff** (83%) as their first priority, their **potential relationship with current senior staff** (81%) as second and the **values of the school** (79%) as third priority.

The School's financial stability was equally important to both groups, ranking 4th in their priorities.

HEADLINES:

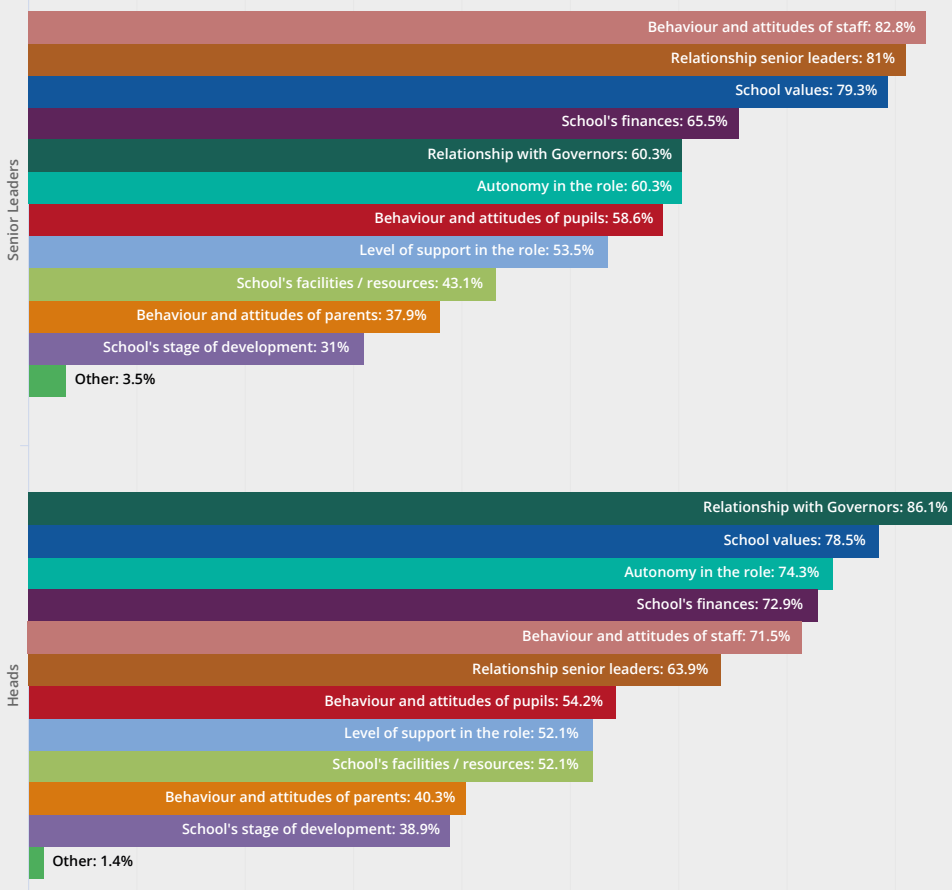
The top priorities for Heads and Senior Leaders rank differently when looking at new opportunities. However, school values and school financial stability are important to both.

Heads – Relationships with Governors | school values | autonomy in the role | financial stability of school

Senior Leaders – Attitudes of staff | relationships with senior leadership team | school values | financial stability of school



Key Priorities: comparing Heads and Senior Leaders



KEY FINDINGS:

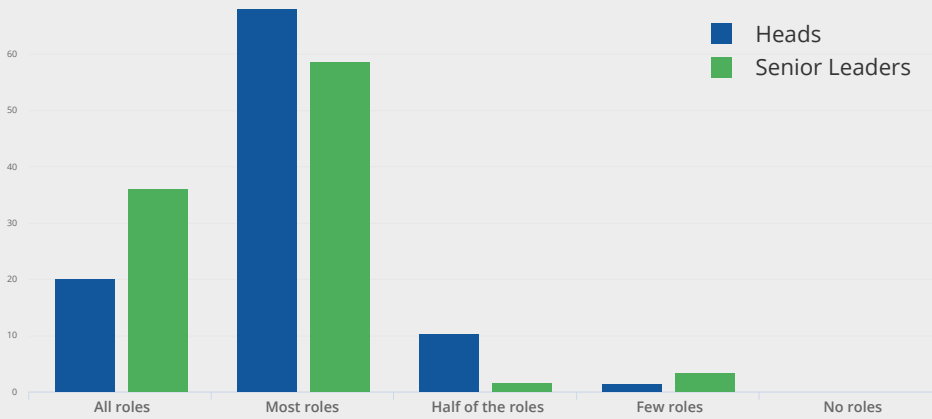
All Leaders regard potential relationships with stakeholders as significant for work-place success. The relationships that are considered most significant are those that have the greatest impact; for Leaders this is the relationship with Governors, for other Senior Leaders this is with all staff and the senior leadership team. This supports our finding on the impact of culture and organisational fit. Enabling candidates to judge their potential future relationships with stakeholders helps them to understand whether they will fit with the organisation.

During the recruitment process Heads gain greater exposure to school culture than Senior Leaders

We were keen to explore the potential difference in the access to school culture during the recruitment process, afforded to Heads and Senior Leaders. Leaders were asked if they had enough exposure to school life in *most, some or infrequently* during processes.

Heads (45%) were almost twice as likely to have enough exposure to school life during the recruitment process, when compared with those in other senior leadership (26%) roles. This suggests that more opportunities to engage with school culture during recruitment processes are created for those in the highest-level roles. It can also be attributed to the fact that recruitment processes for the role of Head are likely to be longer, more complex and multifaceted. It is clear both these groups identify a good values match as important.

Comparison between Heads' and Senior Leaders' reflections on how many roles have been a good 'fit'



Job package priorities are different for Heads and other Senior Leaders

When responses on the question of the job package are divided into Heads and Senior Leaders, we see a difference in the expectations around salary and benefits.

For Senior Leaders, **salary** takes 1st priority and **school fees** subsidy is 4th. This can be compared with Heads who rank **medical care** as their 1st priority and **flight allowance** as more significant than **school fees** subsidy.

These contrasts may broadly reflect the age bracket of Heads compared with Senior Leaders and the lower salary band of Senior Leaders who are aspiring to greater salaries.

HEADLINES:

Heads were given twice as much exposure to school life and culture during the recruitment process than other Senior Leaders.

Heads – Relationships with Governors | school values | autonomy in the role | financial stability of school

Senior Leaders – Attitudes of staff | relationships with senior leadership team | school values | financial stability of school

Job Package Comparing Priorities



Leaders' reflections on the rewards of International School Leadership



"There is great satisfaction in helping to build a good school with people who are committed to creating one or establishing one."



"The rewards are the variety and ability to make a positive change, exposure to other ways of thinking and living, weather, and less bureaucracy."





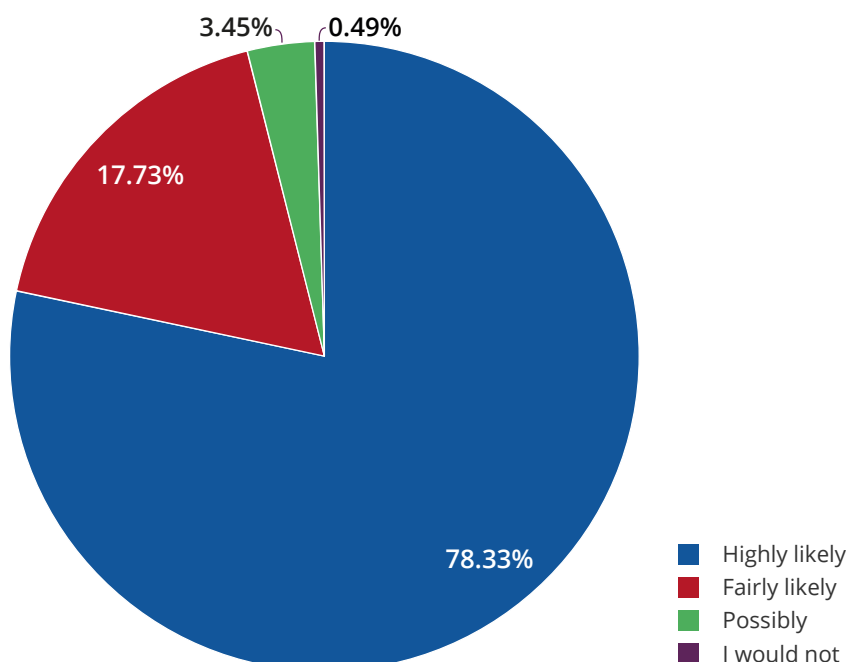
Reflections by Leaders - Rewards

The Rewards and Challenges of International Leadership

Almost 80% of the 204 Leaders surveyed, said that they are Highly Likely to recommend working in international school leadership to an aspiring colleague.

This finding demonstrates that even with the challenges presented by working in different cultures, countries and communities, the overarching feeling of International School Leaders is one of great positivity. The freedom to innovate, the enthusiasm of pupils to learn and teachers to develop, the richness of cultures, the excitement and energy are all themes that emerge strongly from our leaders' reflections.

Whether Leaders would recommend working in the sector



"Education is valued by every country and culture, each with a vision of their future communities. The similarities provide affirmation of one's purpose, the differences provide endless inspiration."



"The true multicultural community created. New cultural experiences shared and celebrated. Curriculum opportunities for global awareness. The ambition of schools to become the best, with teachers who enthusiastically take part in CPD to ensure their teaching is outstanding."



"The wealth of experience and knowledge from interactions with staff from all over the world. Experiencing different curricula leadership. Experiencing different school model leadership i.e. for profit, not for profit. Always learning the business side of education, start-ups, improvement projects, technology, all in different cultural settings which adds to the complexity and the excitement and challenge. In light of this survey I really enjoy the international recruitment process and seeing the teachers arrive in a new country and school and really enjoying their new lives."

Challenges of working in International School Leadership

Our Leaders' reflections on the challenges of the sector fall broadly into four areas:

- Staff and students
- Isolation and support networks
- Boards and Governance
- Local environmental factors.

1. A concern raised by many Leaders was the recruitment and retention of quality staff which is also compounded by the transient nature of students from expat families. This constant state of flux presents ongoing demands on both leadership and school culture.
2. Poor relationships with Boards and Governors is another theme that emerges. A key issue stems around the lack of transparency given by the Board over strategic aims and is rooted in ineffective communication between the Board and the Leader. Many Leaders also talked about micromanagement causing frustrations, as well as clashes between profit and education.
3. Establishing themselves in a new role and a new location is referred to by some Leaders as being an isolating and challenging experience. Leaders refer to the need for professional support networks as well as personal and family ones.
4. A smaller number of Leaders refer to issues around local bureaucracy, local regulations and the challenges of poor support services at local level.

CHALLENGES DESCRIBED BY LEADERS WORKING IN THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SECTOR



Reflections by Leaders - Challenges



"It is a challenge because you can be very exposed and perhaps lack the support networks you would have elsewhere. That said, I do think you build up stronger networks over time."



"The challenge of settling into a new climate, culture and context. It's more complex than you can anticipate."



"Relationships with Boards. The idea of governance, rather than management, is a very difficult, subtle concept to grasp. Many Board members simply don't get it and can't help themselves from interfering, when parents or staff ask them to. The consequence of this for the school head is very dispiriting."



"Transient nature of staff is challenging - losing key staff regularly."



"Getting used to the culture of the country and of the school. Impatience of school owners and school board. Lack of transparency."



"Visa processes. Recruitment and retention of quality teachers. Quickly getting up to speed with authorities policy."



"You are very much alone especially if the board is the other side of the world. You do not necessarily have people you can talk to and share problems with."



"The different cultural expectations and interactions with leadership can be a challenge until you appreciate cultural norms and expectations and adjust your interactions accordingly."



"Meeting the expectations of such diverse groups of stakeholders."

Rewards of working in International School Leadership

Our Leaders' reflections on the rewards of the sector fall broadly into five areas:

- Freedom - entrepreneurship, space and exploration
 - People Power – pupils, staff and parents
 - Embracing, valuing and learning from diversity
 - Energy and excitement
 - Making a difference to others
1. For many Leaders, the freedom to facilitate change and to shape the educational and strategic direction of the school is hugely empowering. The autonomy to make positive change without the restrictions on curriculum and approach is rewarding and motivating for Leaders.
 2. The positive and enthusiastic learners and staff are a key reward for many Leaders. They speak of the determined and talented children who value their education highly and dedicated teachers who work towards common goals.
 3. The reward of meeting and living with people from different cultures and backgrounds is talked about consistently by Leaders, who embrace the variety and complexity of their stakeholders, where shared learning and values create a dynamic setting.
 4. Many Leaders refer to the energy and excitement of working in an international setting. They enjoy the newness, the demands and the challenges of striving for excellence.
 5. The term, 'making a difference to children' is one that is echoed by many Leaders, who are motivated by their desire to have a genuine impact on the lives of children in their care. They feel rewarded by the freedom to create and successfully deliver new educational experience to their pupils.



BENEFITS DESCRIBED BY LEADERS WORKING IN THE INTERNATIONAL SCHOOL SECTOR



Reflections by Leaders - Rewards



"The freedom to focus on what's best for students - i.e. much less top down adherence to a national curriculum. International staff are adventurous, vibrant, interesting people open to change and innovation, richness of diversity..... much more."



"Fantastic students, fascinating trying to understand totally different culture, growth in responsibility for ALL areas of school business."



"I love the high energy and constant newness to it all. International people are very eclectic and so no two days are the same. I enjoy working in an environment where we constantly strive for excellence and taking a team on that journey."



"Empowering staff and imbuing students with confidence and seeing their successes in personal and academic spheres."



"Truly being part of a global minded community in terms of language, culture and service in a global context, being able to make a positive contribution oneself and through the climate of the school and its community members."



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