

Making Sense of Problems in Primary Headship

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Dunning

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BY

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AND

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

This book is dedicated with affection to the memory of our friend and colleague, Professor Ray Bolam, who exemplified all the very best qualities of leadership and management.

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About the Authors

In writing this book, the authors draw not only on empirical research but also on personal experience. Both are former primary headteachers who, in subsequent university careers, led post-graduate and in-service school leadership development programmes in the UK and overseas. Gerald Dunning taught at Swansea University and, subsequently, the University of Glamorgan (now South Wales) where he was Head of the Department of Education and Deputy Head of the School of Psychology. Tony Elliott taught at Bangor University where he was Senior Lecturer in the School of Education and Dean of the Faculty of Education. Both were members of the consortium that delivered the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) for the Welsh Government for more than a decade (Tony Elliott as a former Chair) and worked on secondment to Ofsted (Gerald Dunning) and Estyn (Tony Elliott) as Lead Inspectors of primary schools. Gerald Dunning is a previous Chair of ENIRDELM.¹ These diverse roles have made the problems of headship part of their professional DNA and enable them to apply almost 60 years of combined experience and knowledge to the study presented in this book.

¹ENIRDELM (European Network for Improvement, Research and Development in Educational Leadership and Management) was originally formed as ENIRDEM in 1991 to draw together researchers, trainers, developers and practitioners in school leadership from western Europe and countries in the former communist bloc. It continues to thrive as a collaborative network bringing together a range of professional interests related to educational leadership and management, initiating collaborative research projects and organising an annual conference [<http://www.enirdelm.org>].

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You suddenly realise you don't have enough knowledge, you don't have the skills, but you often have to act very carefully and very quickly. You can make a lot of mistakes as a head by accidentally wandering into a minefield.

Val: primary head

Leading this school has been like walking through a minefield at times. You tread carefully but all the time, at the back of your mind, you wonder whether the next step is going to set off the big bang.

Lou: primary head

The legal framework that affects headship is all a real minefield at the moment.

Lloyd: primary head

I think a large part of the head's role is being the chief problem solver in the school.

Judith: primary head