

**UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION**

Name of Award

Ed. D.

Title of Thesis

**Effective Governors – effective schools?
A study of governor effectiveness and its association with school effectiveness**

Name of Candidate

Robert John Dingle

Date of Submission

March 2000

NEWCASTLE UNIVERSITY LIBRARY

099 19752 1

Thesis V12

UNIVERSITY OF NEWCASTLE UPON TYNE

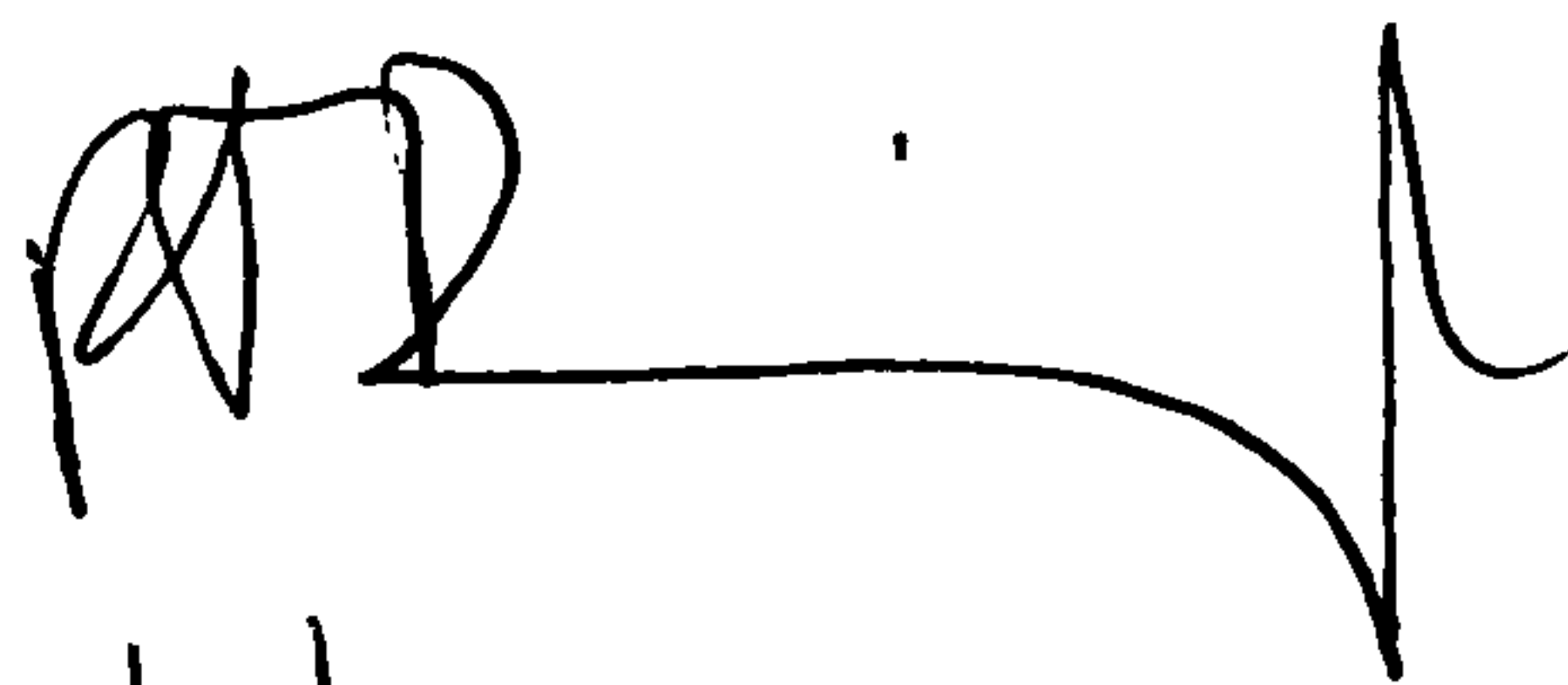
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

I certify that all material in this

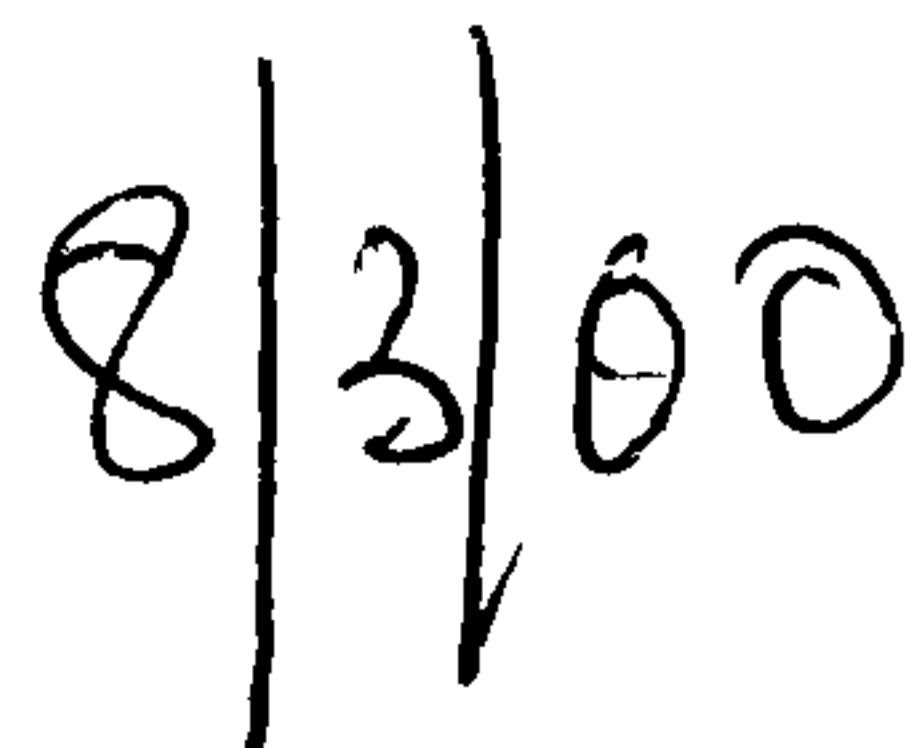
Thesis

**which is not my own work has been identified and that no material is included
which has been submitted for any other award or qualification.**

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of a stylized 'A' followed by a horizontal line that curves downwards at the end.

Date:

A handwritten date '8/3/00' in black ink, with a vertical line separating the day and month from the year.

ABSTRACT

This thesis examines the roles of governors within the contexts of the national framework for governance and the effect they have on schools. The field of research into the effects of school governors is an infant one. Little direct observation of governance has taken place and there is no true experimental research. In the absence of such work, the project developed a definition of effective governance through consideration of the descriptions of and prescriptions for governor activity. It used the definition to develop two research instruments. The first of these, a national questionnaire, produced some specific examples of a range of activities for governors and lead to the development of a second instrument. This, a schedule for semi-structured interviews, was applied to six case study schools. In these studies, governors and headteachers were interviewed concerning the characteristics of their governing bodies and the outcomes for the schools were set against these characteristics.

What emerges from these comparisons are some clear associations between effective outcomes and certain governor activities. These include training, monitoring, clear support for the school, the degree of trust gained with the staff, detailed knowledge of the school, and participation in school development planning. Overall, the conclusions point to connections between the manner in which governors conduct themselves and their business and the successes of the school that they govern.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I should like to thank the members of the Secondary Headteachers' Association for their help in the preparation and completion of the questionnaires. I should also thank the headteachers and governors of the six schools which were the focus of this study for their help and co-operation, especially during the interview process. I thank also the staff of the statistics section of OFSTED who provided sample data used in part of the research. I wish to thank also my supervisor, Dr Bill Dennison, for his help and positive criticisms. Finally, my thanks are due to my family for their continued patience and support over the past six years.

CONTENTS

Table of Appendices	page 6
List of tables	page 7
Chapter One Schools and Governors in Context	page 8
Chapter Two A Review of the Literature	page 30
Chapter Three Design of the Study	page 72
Chapter Four Presentation of the Findings	page 101
Chapter Five Analysis of the Findings and their relationships to the Literature	page 179
Chapter Six Conclusions and Opportunities for further research	page 194
Appendices	page 200
Bibliography	page 226

TABLE OF APPENDICES

Appendix A	Analysis of variance for OFSTED data	page 200
Appendix B	Data from the Local Education authority	page 211
Appendix C	Regression lines for sample schools' outcomes	page 215
Appendix D	Questionnaire administered to Secondary Headteachers Association members	page 218
Appendix E	Interview schedule	page 224

List of Tables

Table 1 Summary and categorisation of responses given by the Governors of School A
Page 116

Table 2 Summary and categorisation of responses given by the Governors of School B
Page 125

Table 3 Summary and categorisation of responses given by the Governors of School C
Page 133

Table 4 Summary and categorisation of responses given by the Governors of School D
Page 140

Table 5 Summary and categorisation of responses given by the Governors of School E
Page 149

Table 6 Summary and categorisation of responses given by the Governors of School F
Page 158

Table 7 Comparison of Schools C and E
Page 191

Chapter 1

Schools and Governors in Context

1. Overview

This chapter will set out an historical context for the study. It will illustrate the enormous changes that have occurred over the last three decades in education as they affect the leadership and management of secondary schools. It will give some insight into the ways in which changes to the legislative framework, coupled to changes in management practices outside education, have altered practices for governors and their partners in secondary education. It will describe briefly the recent historical development of school management and leadership with reference to central governments' actions and motives. The role of the four principal players will be examined. The manner in which the governance of schools has developed will be described. The rationale behind delegated responsibility will be developed and examples explored. Finally, some of the concerns expressed above will be set out and the present lack of a conceptual framework illustrated. This beginning will lead onto the more detailed examination of the literature base contained in the following chapter.

2. Introduction

During the years 1986 to the present day the pace of educational change has increased. The last Conservative Governments took up the process, which had begun with the Callaghan (1992) Ruskin speech. Industrial management practices, developed during the 1970s and 1980s, were based upon the notion that production is most effective if decision making is delegated to managers on production lines. This notion was adopted as

a mechanism for raising standards in schools. At the same time such tactics had the added effects of reducing the power of Local Education Authorities and were attractive to those who were dissatisfied with comprehensive schools. The present Labour Government has continued to address education issues and the pace of change continues to increase.

The outcomes of these moves continue to be felt by heads and governors, in the context of the management and leadership of secondary comprehensive schools. During the period from 1980 onwards, the researcher experienced these changes in schools, first as a deputy headteacher in Cambridgeshire experiencing local resource management, their primitive LRM scheme, and then from 1986 in Durham in two posts as headteacher. The experience prompts a study of the present paradigms concerning the leadership role for governors. This thesis will attempt to place the governance, management and leadership of schools in the context of national and local changes. It will attempt to clarify the roles of and relationships between senior staff and governors. It will also attempt, through national and local data collection and analysis, to determine what, if any, associations there are between the effectiveness of governors in enacting their role, and the outcomes of the schools they govern.

Headteachers and senior staff spend their working lives in schools. They are the only individuals with the skill, time, effort, training and vocation who are qualified and are in a position to manage schools daily. There are many in this group who question the capability of governors to take on more of the leadership role traditionally enacted by the headteacher. The author confesses that he approached this project sharing these concerns.

3. An historical and legislative perspective.

The legal foundation of the present education system in England and Wales can be considered to stem from the Education Act 1944. Whilst this act was passed at a time when the partnerships included the School, LEA and Central Government, the power base

at that time sat with the LEA. Since then, a series of other acts has greatly changed the power profile of the English school system.

The Acts which have greatest relevance for governors and governance are the Education (no.2) Act 1986, Education Reform Act (ERA) 1988, the Education (Schools) Act 1992, the Education Act 1993, the Education Act 1996, the School Inspections Act 1996, the Education Act 1997 and the School Standards and Framework Act 1998. The Education Act 1996 and the School Inspections Act 1996 restated much of the existing legislation in education by repealing and re-enacting nineteen earlier Education Acts. They did not contain any major changes but removed errors or ambiguities in the original drafting. The Acts, which they repealed, covered the period of time from 1946 to 1993.

These Acts changed the balance of the responsibilities and authority between central and local Governments, headteachers and governors. Through them, the Secretary of State for Education and Employment acquired greater influence over schools, and simultaneously, headteachers and Governing Bodies were delegated more responsibility.

The curriculum and arrangements for schools have changed dramatically over the last three decades too. These changes impacted upon school effectiveness and school governance. Circular 10/65 required LEAs to consider ending selection at 11 plus and implement a system of comprehensive schools nationally. This circular was finally realised in The Education Act 1975. After four years the provisions of the Act were modified further in the 1979 Act but the development of widespread comprehensive schooling took place from 1975. The Ruskin College speech, given by James Callaghan in October 1976, opened the 'Great Debate' on the quality and provision of education in England. Although at the time it was perceived to be a major political leap, the subsequent actions by the Labour Government had little impact upon education. The national and international problems brought about by the Arab Oil Crisis simultaneously

shifted the political focus away from education and reduced the funding available to it. In the 1980s and 1990s the structural organisation of schools changed from a mostly unified system of comprehensive schools, into a system containing technology schools, City Technology Colleges and Grant Maintained Schools. This variety of school types required a variety of central government support services tuned to the differing needs of differing schools. LEAs retained a degree of administration for their schools but other organisations such as the Funding Agency for Schools, established through the 1993 Act, came into existence.

Since the 1997 election of the present Labour government, the radical changes to the organisation of schools, have remained largely the same, although from September 1999, through the School Standards and Framework Act 1998, maintained schools have become more closely aligned to the LEA. The distinctions between grant maintained and other schools have been blurred into new categories of community and foundation schools, both with governors representing the LEA.

4. Changes to School Governance

Over the last three decades major changes have been made to the composition and role of governing bodies. The 1986 (no.2) Act defined the composition of the governing body. This act put further responsibilities on LEAs in relation to governors. It required them to consider motions passed at annual parents meetings and to publish arrangements for the training of governors.

The 1986 (no 2) Act prepared the ground for the Education Reform Act of 1988. This major piece of legislation delegated powers previously held by the LEA directly to school governors through a scheme of local management. The ERA provided for the

Secretary of State to regulate what the LEAs did in relation to the delegation. Schemes for delegation had to be drawn up by LEAs and guidance was given through Circular 7/88. The timetable for introducing this major alteration to the running of schools was tight. From the start of October 1989 schemes could be submitted for approval. From the start of April 1990 formula funding applied to all schools and budgets could be delegated. By April 1993 all schools had to have delegated budgets and any arrangements to protect the losing schools had to disappear by April 1994. At the same date special schools had to be formula funded too and this caused interesting problems for secondary schools working in partnership with local special schools.

Through the ERA, schools received budgets to run the majority of their day to day affairs. The formula used to calculate what a school receives required that funding to be based largely on pupil numbers. As different aged pupils have different curriculum requirements, the formula included age weighting. The remainder of the formula funding can take into account other factors such as small school allowances and energy costs in relation to geographical situation. Important, in the context of this study, was the responsibility placed upon governors to ensure the probity of large sums of money delegated to them to run the schools. This financial responsibility, along with ensuring that the school provided a quality education, coupled with a public inspection system of the school, placed governors very firmly in a key position in state schools.

The LEA meanwhile retained some responsibilities. Some of the retention was required, for example school transport, capital spending and, through circular 7/88, an advisory/monitoring role. LEAs could retain other responsibilities in addition to those that were not permitted for delegation. The retained functions commonly included major maintenance of buildings, the responsibility for pupils with statements of special needs, and library and museum services. The present Government has delegated further

responsibilities to governors. The two main thrusts of the delegation concern target setting and the determination of teachers' pay and promotion.

Following the move to delegate authority and responsibility to schools, central government provided mechanisms for controlling the power received by schools. These mechanisms had public accountability at their heart. The major elements included the annual airing of performance, through the publication of examination results and parent-governor meetings, and a four yearly cycle of summative inspection by the Office for Standards in Education replacing the previous infrequent, but formative, HMI inspection. This accountability goes much further and its effects on what a school publishes in writing in its prospectus, and what a school states about itself to members of the public, are now critically received and challenged.

5. The roles and motives of head teachers, governors, LEAs and Central Government.

a. Headteachers

The key role of headteachers can be considered in two parts - the requirements of the post as prescribed in law and the means by which these requirements can be implemented.

Firstly, the requirements of the post are set out formally through the Education (No.2) Act 1986. The Act requires headteachers to ensure the delivery of the statutory curriculum, allows for governors to delegate powers to the head and requires the head to be consulted in particular instances, for example the appointment of staff. The Act actually states that the head is responsible for the internal organisation, management and control of the school. The legislation therefore provides ample opportunity for headteachers to manage and lead schools. What the legislation fails to do is to define clear

boundaries to the authority of governors in relation to headteachers. This can give rise to tensions between governors and senior staff where one group assumes powers more properly assigned to the other group.

Secondly, the general statements allow for heads to set up a variety of systems to manage and control the school. It enables a wide variety of styles to be adopted by heads ranging from democrat to despot. Bossert *et al.* (1982) felt that no one style is appropriate for all schools and that the headteacher had to find a role that was most suited to the particular school. The style therefore adopted can be determined not only by the individual head's preferences, but also by the particular circumstance. A prime skill of leadership is determining which approach to use on what occasion and how to inform colleague of this choice. Reynolds and Cuttance (1992) however state that the leadership or management style of the headteacher is neglected in studies of school effectiveness. This lack of template is interesting when a declared thrust of Government has been to delegate powers to the people who run schools on a day to day basis. The legislative framework provides for this to happen. The scope of the day to day management has certainly increased since the early 1980s, even in local authorities that encouraged self-managing schools, such as Cambridgeshire.

Whilst the styles of headship are not easy to determine, the motivation of headteachers has been described by Hoyle (1988) as a mission. This prime directive translates into vision and goals centred on the need to provide a good education for at least part of the pupil cohort. A key motive of headteachers is therefore to enact their philosophy through the leadership of a school.

b. Roles for Governors

The position of governors is largely determined by the legislative framework substantially developed during the 1980s. The early 1980s saw a number of significant

acts and circulars that were to impact upon the role of governors by defining their duties, the responsibilities vested in them and the constitution of the governing body. During the decade 1980-1989 substantial and conflicting changes occurred regarding governors and governance. These changes effectively empowered people from a greater variety of the population to become governors. The powers given to governors to delegate to heads and monitor the head's actions also increased.

The widening of community involvement in schools was prompted by the Taylor Report in 1977 which reviewed the existing governance of schools in England and Wales. It identified a number of groups within the community that might have interests in schools and could therefore be included in any new constitution. The report influenced legislation in the 1980s. The 1980 Education Act allowed teachers onto the governing body. The 1981 Act increased the opportunity for members of the community to contribute to the running of schools by becoming governors..

The 1986 (No.2) Act further changed the composition of governing bodies. Parents and co-opted governors were included in governing bodies. Additional responsibilities to effect the governors' accountability to parents were imposed. Governors were required to hold an annual meeting with parents, to draw up a curriculum policy that avoided political bias, and to determine the sex education policy for the school. Crucially, in the light of school effectiveness literature, governors were involved in headteacher appointments. Section 16 of the 1986 (no 2) Act states that the conduct of the schools shall be under the direction of the governors.

Circular 7/87 clarified that the governor function concerns the whole ethos of the school. It can cover, for example, the school's general appearance, the employment of staff, the information published by the school, and the wearing of school uniform.

The 1988 Education Reform Act (ERA) recognised that in order to deliver these responsibilities, governors would need to spend an increased amount of time working on matters of policy and practice. It empowered Governing bodies to set up sub-committees with delegated powers. The 1988 ERA, as well as introducing financial management to schools, increased the responsibilities placed upon school governors. Not only did governors have to ensure that the school planned and managed its finances within the overall budget, it also placed governors in a difficult position regarding employment. Governors became further involved in staffing matters, for example staff appointments and discretionary pay awards for teachers and headteachers. Although Deem *et al.*(1995) state that the 1988 Act placed governors in the position of hiring and firing *de facto*, the reality was more confused. Governors took on some responsibility for teachers contracts but LEAs retained some functions relating to staff. Health and safety is perhaps the most vital of these areas alongside the administration of payments and issuing of contracts in most LEAs. In the area of discretionary pay awards tensions between LEAs' wishes to minimise increases in salary bills ran counter to governors and headteachers' wishes to reward good teachers or good headteachers. At times these shared responsibilities led to confusion and disagreements regarding ownership of problems.

The 1988 Act also developed further the requirements for governors to oversee curriculum policy whilst at the same time removing their freedoms to define what was taught. It was the oversight of teaching of the then new National Curriculum that was to be the responsibility of governors. In addition governors were charged with monitoring the school's operation of national assessment. Governors also had to ensure that schools followed requirements for collective worship and open enrolment.

The motivation for membership of governing bodies prior to 1986 and the 1988 Education Reform Act was often linked to local politics. This motive has gradually

reduced and discussions with headteachers nationally indicate that it surfaces as a factor in governing body decisions on limited occasions. Factors which have brought this change about include the diversifying of membership of governing bodies, the reduction in powers of the LEAs and the requirement to find increased numbers of LEA nominations for governing bodies. As will be made clear in the empirical section of this study, colleague headteachers suggest that the power base in governance has in reality shifted towards those sub-groups that have the highest stake in the school and time to give to governance. The difficulty faced by many governors is now getting time from the employer to meet at the school or expenses *in lieu* of attendance. Often the result of governors in full time employment being hard pressed, is a focus on parent governors or governors who are unemployed or whose employment has a large degree of flexible working. These governors, like heads above, will describe their interest in the school as a mission, usually linked to the future of their youngsters.

The contradiction between what the Taylor report envisaged and the effects of the 1988 Act are interesting. Whilst Taylor moved governance away from local political domination and envisaged autonomous schools being governed by groups of independent but interested parties, the 1988 Act introduced a central framework which defined the central activity of schools, i.e. their curriculum. This clearly places governors in a position of limited authority to respond to local interests through determining themselves what is taught in the classroom. They are there merely to ensure that the central prescription is followed. The pattern continues with requirements, amongst others, for governors to ensure sex education, collective worship, and that there is no political bias within the curriculum in addition to the revised National Curriculum.

The empowerment of adults outside the school to influence and control schools within a national curriculum framework took place alongside the introduction of Grant

Maintained Status and City Technology Colleges. These provided a means for some schools of reducing the influence of LEAs and allowing school governors to take on total responsibility for their schools without a middle tier of administration between the school and central government. These changes typify the political moves in the late 1980s away from education concerned with equality and opportunity towards its obsession with parents as consumers who have choice. This continues with the present government.

Within this context of change, the key question remains what are governors supposed to do and how does this relate to school effectiveness? Packwood (1984) describes four models of governance as:-

1. Accountable Governance
2. Advisory Governance
3. Supportive Governance
4. Mediating Governance

He also argues, like the proposition on headship style above, that the nature of governance will be determined by context. For example, it is the case that the exercise of governance is most testing in the area of employment. Circular 13/89 ensured that virtually all the responsibility covered by employment regulation has to be handled by the governors and not the LEA although they, the LEA, still retain the employer role. In this context the role of governors tends to the accountable rather than any of the other three as described above.

Governors are clearly charged with oversight and accountability for schools. They will effect this through some form of activity within the schools in partnership with the professionals. In this enterprise they can choose to take, or circumstances will dictate that they take, an active or passive role. In the latter extreme role, the successes or failures of the schools lie with the professionals. In the former it possible that governors' actions will

either add to the successes of the schools or increase failure. This four way model of governance is discussed further in the next chapter. It will be argued then that it is possible for governors to contribute positively to a school's effectiveness in only one of these four ways. This route has to be through being effective in their legal responsibilities and acting in a way that uses their power to benefit the school rather than the reverse. This study will attempt to identify instances where this happens, instances where governors are passive and do not contribute significantly to school effectiveness and, finally, instances where governors' actions detract from school effectiveness.

c. Role of the LEAs

The role of LEAs has been greatly modified during the last decade. The 1944 Act defined the primary duty required of LEAs as ensuring that its area had enough schools covering the appropriate age range that were sufficiently resourced and efficiently managed. From this requirement grew large infrastructures supporting schools. The role since the 1988 Act has now been greatly reduced and the infrastructures dismantled. The areas where LEAs have the greatest impact on schools and governors include:-

- the Education Welfare Service
- the provision of special needs
- school transport
- health and safety
- the employment of staff
- the admission of pupils
- policies on curriculum
- the preparation and management of LMS schemes

Whilst this reduction in LEA function was taking place it is interesting to note that section 296 of the 1993 Education Act allowed LEAs to disband their Education

Committee. Prior to 1986 LEAs controlled schools. The education committee determined policy and practice at school level. Through the determination of staffing levels, resourcing, buildings works etc, little local flexibility was available to schools. What little flexibility existed required governor involvement that was dominated by LEA members on governing bodies. It is a common assertion, supported by evidence in the interviews and questionnaires later, that the less important the decision the more governor interference there was. Often the attendance at an appointment of a caretaker was greater than that for the appointment of a middle manager. As this study demonstrates, such activity has now reduced for reasons described above.

d. The role of Central Government

During the period since 1980, central government has taken on the complementary roles of determining the direction of education and measuring its outputs. Through the 1986 and 1988 Acts and circulars throughout the period, it has set up the framework for directing the curriculum and schools. Through the creation of OFSTED, the disbanding of the old HMI structure and the establishment of the legislative framework requiring schools to publish a variety of data, Government has set up a monitoring structure. The role of Government can therefore be argued to be key in determining the parameters of education and monitoring the outcomes. The day to day enactment of policy remains with schools with some support from LEAs, but with a large and increasing responsibility placed upon lay governors to ensure quality.

The content and tone of its circulars and Acts evidence the key motives of central government. The marginalisation of activities of LEAs has been described. It is possible to take at least three stances in relation to the motives behind this, viz. the political dogma

of the competitive climate applied to education, the use of education as a vote winner and lastly the attempt to improve education.

Firstly, the adoption of the 'market place rationale' and the privatisation of public utilities were central features of the last Conservative government. Peters (1982) describes successful industrial management in terms of downward delegation. He describes poor management in terms of a failure of trust. He describes workers, whose private lives are creative and industrious, who are slipshod and lazy because of lack of trust in the work place. He argues that, by empowering the staff who are close to the work, motivation is increased through shared vision and the quality of the final product is better. Peters also describes the characteristics of any ten workers as eight normal, one lunatic and one dishonest. To ensure this minority does not hold sway, some form of check needs putting in place. In the present climate this can be either the 'discipline of the marketplace', that is to say if you get it wrong you are punished by falling receipts, or by legislation that limits the autonomy of the organisation. It can be asserted that the combination of line empowerment together with public accountability in the marketplace, were the twin thrusts of the previous government's policy on education.

Secondly, it is possible to identify a clear political agenda behind central government motives driving changes in education. Deem *et al.*(1995) are clear in their descriptions of the Conservative governments motives during the 1980s. They describe the 'policy borrowing' from other countries evident during the Thatcher period. They also describe the changes in the economic climate in this country which led to dramatic changes in the post-war welfare state. They argue though that the ideology of the New Right was only one of several agents that drove education policy during the 1980s. Improvements in education were a major issue in the present labour government's manifesto so schools and their governors continue to be driven by this second stance.

Thirdly, it could be that government has a genuine desire for schools to do better. Duncan Graham (1993) was struck by Kenneth Baker's motives when he met the then secretary of state for education. He found a man who was converted to the national curriculum. He was struck by his sense of purpose, by the fact that he was determined to achieve genuine curriculum changes, to drive up standards. He genuinely believed he could change British education for the better and that he had rescued it from the worst. Although only one key player during a period of unprecedented change, Baker can therefore be viewed as a member of a government keen to do its best for education and not driven solely by political expedient or industrial dogma.

6. The rationale of downward delegation applied to schools

Davies and Hentschke (1994) state that :-

"The proponents of the decentralisation of decision making argue that, by giving schools real autonomy, decision making at the school level will have a significant impact on the teaching and learning process, leading to measurable improvements in outcomes." (p102)

If this industrial model of school improvement is valid then there will be an increase in secondary school performance. Governors now have a major role in decentralised decision making. Improvements in GCSE results have occurred. It is the key issue for this project to associate the contribution made by governors to this success. A brief examination of two delegated areas illustrates the scope of activity.

Firstly, financial delegation opens up freedoms at the margins, which may not have been there before. In a typical secondary school this could amount to a few thousand pounds once the fixed costs have been managed. This is little different than the financial

freedom enjoyed by schools which, prior to LMS, had to manage small amounts of capitation.

Secondly, the requirement of governors to set targets, as required by the Education (School Performance Targets) (England) Regulations 1998 may have a great impact upon school effectiveness. The knowledge and skills which governors have to acquire to take part in this activity may be technical and complex. The process leads governors in to areas where they are able to question and challenge schools to become more effective. In these areas they, like headteachers, will need to exhibit Bottery's (1994) characteristics of the educational leader as the professional who is critical, transformative, visionary, educative, empowering, liberating, personally ethical, organisationally ethical, responsible. These qualities will be investigated in this project during the empirical research.

7. Example of the effects of local management

The effects of changes can be seen through the examination of a number of the day to day activities of heads and governors. Four examples illustrate the changes:-

a. The Head teacher's report to Governors

Reports since the changes in legislation have taken on a closely defined structure. The head is now required to report on standard items - the number of exclusions, attendance levels, arrangements for special needs, and examination performance are four examples.

b. The activities of Governors

The governing body prior to delegation was as a sub-committee of the education committee. It met once a term and in addition on special occasions to determine

appointments and discipline issues. Most governing bodies, according to Scanlon (1999) *et al*, have now delegated activities to their sub-committees. Each of these require servicing by the headteacher and senior management and occupy hours of time. Although limited in generalisability, a local illustration serves to highlight the increase in time given to governance in schools. The average amount of time spent by this researcher in 1986-87 as head servicing one governing body was approximately 20 hours including attendance at meetings. Over the course of the last twelve months from 1995-96, he has attended over forty meetings lasting, on average, two hours and taken a further forty hours preparing papers for those meetings. The nature of the meetings has not only increased in time, in the above case six-fold, but in difficulty. For example, the requirement for governors to balance funding against curriculum and staffing, can lead to compulsory redundancy situations that taxes their emotional and intellectual energy.

c. Construction of budget plans

The pre-LMS financial plans consisted entirely of determining the nature of spending within departments. All the other resource allocation was pre-determined by LEA policy and practice. As a consequence governors spent a large proportion of their time determining, for example, how much English should get at the expense of central stock. Indeed, as with staffing appointments, the more trivial the decision, the more time and importance these old governing bodies seemed to assign to it. Post - LMS, the drawing up of differing models of a £2,500,000 budget within the school, then discussing and determining which one to adopt, takes a considerable investment of time. The factors influencing the size of budget are complex. Long and medium term planning is made more difficult by uncertainties in central funding and changes in pupil roll.

d. Consideration of curriculum

Present legislation requires the curriculum to be set by the whole governing body. This function therefore cannot be delegated to a sub-committee. The result is a drastic change in control. Prior to governors being given delegated powers, because such little time was spent by them and heads considering resource allocation, more time and attention could be given by them to considering the nature and content of the curriculum. As the curriculum was not dictated centrally, this concentration on determining the crucial contribution the school makes to education of its pupils was essential but arguably led to a greater range of provision. Now, with so much of the time now taken up in sub-committees, the business of the main governing body meetings has tended to stereotype into reading and accepting minutes with little time then available to spend on consideration of curriculum. Curriculum discussion is an area where governors feel least at ease, as evidenced later in this thesis. The legal framework, which requires them to ensure that the National Curriculum is delivered, releases them from detailed discussion of curriculum design. Any policies they set to guide the school have to reflect the National Curriculum. The system therefore has the potential to be unstable as governors, operating in a technically difficult area, spend little time monitoring what is being delivered, and leave the whole process to the professionals. Target setting may apply some constraints in future.

8. A challenge to educational research

Local management of schools has changed the nature of the partnership between heads and governors. Simply, it has meant the working relationship between the governors and head has had to develop, whilst simultaneously schools have moved away from the LEA. In some cases this separation was total through Grant Maintained status.

The business of school management in all schools, including that part taken on by governors, has required a huge increase in the time, especially by governors. Their ability to respond well to the challenges of increased delegation may determine, at least in part, the success of the school. At best, all that can be currently asserted is that the changes in legislation that have powered the local management of schools, have made a difference in management practice. The challenge to educational research is to answer the question 'has this made a difference in overall outcomes?'

In the following chapter it will be seen that there is a set of activities that governors are expected to take part in. These are contained in legislation and in documents that reflect existing practice. There is little that clearly identifies good or best practice in the manner in which governors go about these tasks.

Two references highlight the need for more research into the associations, if any, between the activities of governors and the outcomes of the schools they govern.

Firstly, Creese and Bradley (1997) concluded:-

"While it was not always easy to quantify the long term effect on the pupils of decisions made by the governing body, few instances could be identified when those decisions appeared to have had direct and immediate impact upon pupil learning or behaviour. There appeared to be only a few instances of governors giving a positive lead to staff, rather than agreeing with the proposals put forward by the teachers.

These findings suggest that, in general, governors are content to follow the lead given by the teachers and are themselves having little direct impact upon standards of pupil performance."

This description of passive governors failing to impact upon the core purpose of schools is very much at odds with the visions contained in, for example, the recent Green Paper, Teachers – Meeting the Challenge of Change, (DfEE 1998).

Secondly Dingle (1998) obtained access to the OFSTED database of registered inspectors' grades for a sample of 100 11-16 comprehensive schools. It can be asserted that, given the large database held by OFSTED which contains the inspectors' scores for many aspects of school effectiveness including governance, an examination of the data will prove illuminating. Furthermore, given the statistical reliability associated with large samples, an examination of their data could support generalisable conclusions in line with central prescriptions. The information contained the original inspectors' grades on a 7-point scale contained in section 6 of the framework and related to the management and efficiency of the school, sections 6.1 and 6.3. It is this section that examines the governance of the school most closely. In addition Dingle(1998) obtained the extracts of the reports from the inspections, and a four-year rolling average of GCSE results. The results of the analysis, quoted in Appendix A, produced some very clear associations between outcomes for the schools and some of the judgements made during the inspection concerning activities that may involve governors. Specifically the three factors which indicated significant statistical correlation with outcomes were:-

6.1.3 Implementation of the schools aims, values and policies

6.1.5 The school's ethos

6.3.2 Use of teaching and support staff

The 5+A*-C measure also appeared to be significantly correlated with the factor:-

6.3.3 Use of learning resources and accommodation.

This second reference does indicate some association between possible governors' activity and outcomes. One challenge to this research is to clarify what appears to be the contradiction between Creese and Bradley's (1997) descriptions of passive governance not impacting upon outcomes for pupils, and the indicators from Dingle's (1998) study that governance may make a difference.

8. Summary - the origins and outcomes of this study

This introduction has traced and illustrated the increased levels of school self-government through the period covered by the various Education Acts since 1944. The developing roles and relationships of headteachers, governors, LEAs and central government have also been sketched. The stated ambitions of downward delegation are improved effectiveness for schools and better outcomes for pupils. The roles of headteacher and governors need to be clear, the methods that both employ should be effective, and the relationships between them well defined for this delegation to work well. As will be seen in the following chapter, existing research demonstrates that there is a limited understanding of what makes governors effective ensuring school effectiveness. A research project, building upon the researches on governance and school effectiveness is timely.

This study will therefore attempt to clarify firstly what are the actual roles for governors as defined in literature and found in practice. Secondly, it will attempt to identify good practice in executing these roles in effective ways. Thirdly, through case studies, it will identify some patterns of working with governors which associate with

outcomes that are better than might be expected when compared to schools serving similar areas.

As the research will evidence, some headteachers judge governors as people who are, at best, mostly harmless. This research will show that effective governors have an association with effective schools. The study does not identify any causal link between the two. The situation is such however that governors can only influence schools through their policies and contacts with schools. Headteachers are the gatekeepers to schools and it is through them that governors gain access to their schools and through them that they are able to provide leadership. The relationship between governors and headteachers is found to be a crucial component to any association between effective governance and effective outcomes.

Chapter 2

A Review of the Literature

1. Introduction

This chapter will review the literature on governance and some elements in the effective schools literature. It will be shown that the literature on governance falls broadly into two categories— rhetoric and research. The former category, of which there is a considerable amount, derives from both the pragmatism of practitioners and the wishes of politicians. Such literature typically emanates from governor training bodies and national bodies, which claim to represent governors, although there is no system for ensuring that these bodies truly represent governors. The latter category contains references to a small number of dated research projects, which are insubstantial and lack a coherent framework. However, some references are well informed and use a reliable and valid methodology. More recent research does begin to identify patterns of governance, which may prescribe effectiveness. Taken together these two categories provide descriptions of what governors do, what they can do and what they should do.

This literature base prompts the examination of three areas viz:-

- a. Descriptions from academic research of effective governance
- b. Prescriptions on governance, such as those from the DfEE
- c. Implications for governance from the effective schools literature base

The last section will set the small quantity of writing in the other two sections against some of the lessons on school effectiveness, including writings on ineffective and failing schools. It is not intended to be a definitive review of the effective schools literature base, as such a project would be a thesis in its own right. It does however serve the purpose of identifying patterns of governor involvement. These behaviours will be seen to be important when analysing the responses of the six schools who took part in the

semi-structured interviews. In particular, observations made in the least effective sample schools will identify patterns of behaviour in line with those described in the ineffective/failing schools literature.

From the two sets of literature a template for governance emerges which will be used to construct an instrument for the research element of the thesis to identify effective governance in differing school contexts.

1. Literature on Governance

2a. Literature based upon the findings of research projects focused upon governance.

Kogan *et al* (1984) and Packwood (1984) identified 4 modes in which governors operate. These are supporting, advising, accounting (for action), and mediating. This literature, drawn from the 'School Governing Bodies Project' was written prior to Local Management. Its limitation in the context of this research project is not only because the schools now have greater responsibility for a wider range of issues, but also because the framework of public accountability is now much more advanced and therefore focuses governor attention. For more useful frameworks we need to look to more recent research. However, later studies echoed the supportive and advisory role, as, for example, Levacic (1995).

Creese and Earley (1998), in a draft article for "Viewpoint", identified four substantial studies which have taken place recently. Firstly, Keys and Fernandes (1990) researched the make up of governing bodies. Their conclusions have major implications for schools in disadvantaged areas. They found that governors were largely drawn from the professions with manual workers poorly represented. In areas where professions are poorly represented, such as the ex-coal mining areas from which the six sample schools

used in this study are drawn, the recruitment of high calibre professionals to governing bodies is problematic. Secondly, Baginsky, Baker and Cleave (1991) identified continuing tensions between the role of the head and the roles of governors. Heads defended their territory although governors felt that they had a role in curriculum decision making. Systems for training governors were found to be limited. Thirdly, Earley (1994) studied governor recruitment. He identified the difficulties of recruitment of governors by schools in disadvantaged areas, echoing Keys and Fernandes (1990). Headteachers were found to be the single most important factor in ensuring governor effectiveness. Fourthly, Deem, Brehony and Heath (1995) investigated ten governing bodies in their research. They identified monitoring rather than allocating resource as the most common activity of governors. They identified limitations in governor knowledge and claimed that heads were able to circumvent monitoring systems through their professional knowledge.

Creese and Bradley (1997), quoted fully in the previous chapter, expressed scepticism concerning the alleged link between governors' activities and school effectiveness in their conclusions. Their description of the reality of governance, asserting that governors' leadership role is limited, is at issue with the prescriptive rhetoric as described later in this chapter. It is central to this project that patterns of governor activity are identified which do have positive effects upon the quality of education.

The most recent research project from Scanlon *et al.*(1999) was published after the data collection and analysis for this thesis had taken place. Its methodology differs from this project and is weakened by its use of statements made by governors themselves about their own effectiveness rather than setting such statements against an external framework, for example the literature on school effectiveness. Furthermore, it measures the effectiveness of the study schools through the use of OFSTED data. As will be seen in later chapters, such simplistic use of OFSTED data can be grossly misleading.

Nevertheless the project does build upon a large database of questionnaire responses as well as more detailed information on 44 schools and 9 case studies. Its claim to broad validity is far greater than this study, although the measures of schools and governor effectiveness are more open to challenge. Its main findings were:-

- there is clear correlation between effective governors and effective schools
- governors themselves are usually well qualified and well educated
- chairs of governors are the most experienced
- positive attitudes on the part of headteachers towards governing bodies are critical in ensuring effective governance
- teamwork and committee structures within the governing body are critical
- commitment of governors is critical
- training, particularly as a group is beneficial
- factors which limit governor effectiveness include time, skill, knowledge, volume and complexity of work, and lack of contact with the school in session
- a number of suggestions linked to the above for improving effectiveness

The project is however greatly strengthened by its technique of pairing similar schools to directly compare the effectiveness of their governors and their outcomes.

2b. Literature not based upon research into governance – the rhetoric.

Examination of DfEE publications, OFSTED literature and the transcripts of addresses at national governors' conferences illustrates the current demands on the role of governors. According to OFSTED/DES (1995) governors generally are seen to have three main roles viz.:-

- to provide a strategic view.
- to act as a critical friend
- to ensure accountability

(page 2)

This definition is further amplified by OFSTED (1995b) thus:-

‘The governing body has three main tasks: to provide a strategic view of where the school is heading: to act as a critical friend to the school: and to hold the school to account for the educational standards it achieves and the quality of education it provides.’

(page 107)

These two examples illustrate some of the tensions between the principal players in education - central government, governors and headteachers. Although two of the tasks, accountability and critical friendship, do not give heads cause for concern, as illustrated in the questionnaire results in chapter 4, the exhortation, ‘to provide strategic leadership’, is highly problematic. Governors attempting to operate to this template can easily stray into the grey area between the well-defined role of headship and the less well defined but distinct role for the external governor. In this area both Government and OFSTED have an expectation of governors, which is unrealistic as demonstrated later in this research.

The implementation of the three tasks of governance can be placed upon a continuum. At one end is passive governance, which has the appearance of ensuring direction and accountability, but in reality allows the professionals total freedom to act. At the other end is active governance, which takes upon an executive role.

An example of the more passive governor role finds amplification through the writings of those who have personal experience of governance. For example Meikle (1995) gave the governor’s perspective:

‘Effective governance means leaving the headteacher with enough room to manage the job he or she has to do. Often governors try to become too involved in the execution of policy rather than its formulation and approval. The former should be left to the headteacher and the school, and once systems and policies are in place the governing body should stand back and allow the headteacher to get on with the job.’

(page 19)

This contrasts markedly with some of the latest political rhetoric. More recently DfEE(1997a) stated that...

“We believe it would be helpful to clarify terms of reference for governing bodies.....

a. The main function of the governing body is to help raise standards at their school. To that end, they should draw up, implement and monitor an effective strategic plan, with targets, for the development and conduct of the school.

b. The governing body determines the character, mission and ethos of the school, in conjunction with any foundation and subject to any relevant trust deeds.

c. the governing body have (*sic*) a duty to comply with the responsibilities laid on them elsewhere in education and other legislation, and with the conditions set for the effective management of the school’s budget.

The headteacher is responsible for the internal organisation and management of the school and for supervising the staff; in carrying out

these functions he or she must comply with *any* direction given by the governing body.”

(page12)

Although the first part of the statement is in line with the general definitions given earlier, the latter makes clear the increasingly vital, perhaps interventionist, role for governors seen by some in ensuring raised achievements. Whilst the aim is worthy its expression marginalises the role of the professional. Headteachers expressed concerns particularly about the last sentence.

The middle ground, which defines a productive partnership between governors and heads, is articulated by OFSTED (1998a):-

‘ In well managed schools the governors provide consistent support for the work of the headteacher, keeping the school’s work under constant review, sometimes linking with subject departments and making planned visits. At best governing bodies are involved through their committee structure in all aspects of the strategic planning and individual governors often offer useful support based on their own professional expertise.’

(page 43)

Also from OFSTED (1998b):-

‘ The relationship between the headteacher and the governing body is a significant factor in the success of many schools. The governing bodies of effective secondary schools often give very positive support to their school’s professional staff and are heavily committed to the schools success’

(page 41)

This view is in line with Hainsworth’s (1995) view as a chief education officer:-

“Strategic planning should take place in a partnership of equals...so that all the partners can understand and have a voice.”

(page 5)

Unfortunately the consistency of advice to governors on what is good practice at times disappears. Translating these general statements into concrete examples has resulted in confused and simplistic advice to governors. For example OFSTED (1998b) cites an exemplar of ‘good development planning’ from King Edward VI Upper School, Bury St. Edmonds. The exemplar process involves drafting by senior staff, consultation and amendment by whole staff but ending in formal discussion with the Governing body and their agreement. It is questionable that what could apparently be ‘rubber stamping’ by governors would be effective. It is certainly not in line with other statements made from the same source above.

Most recently, the importance of target setting by schools has increased. DfEE (1997b) defines another role for governors, viz.:-

‘The governing body supervises and monitors the target-setting process. This may include asking questions about how the headteacher has conducted each stage in the cycle. The governing body should also agree the levels at which the targets are set.’(page 9).... ‘The final step is for the head teacher and governing body to check that targets are properly resourced and monitored.’ (page 23)

Du Quesnay (1997) too believes the governing body role in school improvement to include target setting. Governors’ role, she states is to challenge constructively, to support and to guide. She sees this in principally two contexts:-

- staffing matters, appointments and dismissals
- target setting and monitoring the quality of teaching.

OFSTED (1996) again offered the following exemplars of good practice to governors.

Firstly, they gave the following example of governor involvement in improving (primary) schools:

‘Governors visited the school regularly, attending in-service sessions with staff and working on a regular basis in school with staff and children, for example hearing readers and supporting pupils with special educational needs.’ (page 8)

Secondly, as an example of the target setting process, they highlighted one school where staff...

‘After forming clearer targets to raise standards, and working closely with governors, many of whom come in and work in the school, they have found, from an analysis of the National Curriculum tests scores, that 91% of children reached National Curriculum level 2 or above in 1994 and 87.5% in 1995.’ (page30)

This compared with a majority at level 1 prior to the intervention.

These two exemplars contrast markedly with the secondary one quoted earlier. If, as claimed, all these examples are effective, then the notion that there are singular activities and processes, which can be used to characterise effective governance, is flawed. We should look, in addition to the characteristics of governors themselves, not just what they do.

The National Governor’ Council (1998) described the distinct strategic role for governors in this way:-

“The governing body has a continuous role to play, in evaluating the quality and standard of what has been achieved. The governing body will receive reports on

the results or implementation and monitoring, both from the head and others. The governing body will then review the policies, plans, targets and procedures and agree the changes needed to secure further improvement. This distinction between the strategic role of the governing body and the role of the headteacher applies equally to all the particular legal responsibilities of governing bodies – for example the school budget, the curriculum, staff and a range of other areas of school activity.

Described in this way, the role of the governing body is a questioning, strategic role and thus it needs to work in a questioning, strategic way.” (pages 1,2)

Mortimore (1995) attempted to describe the ideal governor. He suggests that the ideal governor:-

- wants to put something into society
- is clear minded and hard working
- has excellent social skills
- cares deeply about the need for learning
- is not seeking personal power
- has no ambitions to be the headteacher
- is not fainthearted because there are some difficult things to be done and said
- is not too busy to give the school some time

This cameo contrasts with the headteacher description in chapter 4 of this thesis. It is not the points of agreement that are most interesting but the areas of dissent.

For OFSTED (1995c), governors' knowledge and how they obtain such knowledge were identified as crucial. Firstly, effective governors need to be well informed. They should not be too dependent upon the head for information since heads can interpret information in a manner that suits their purposes. Secondly, information

comes from diverse support structures and effective governors make use of a variety of support. Such systems are not uniform across the Country. Sources quoted by OFSTED (1995c) include:-

- the LEA through LEA clerks
- the headteacher, although governors should be aware that heads acts as filters
- voluntary organisations who ‘represent’ governors nationally
- professional advice
- community contact
- curriculum links
- governor development through training and their own governor development plans

OFSTED’s (1995c) trawling of their data collected through inspection of two hundred failing schools produced a number of ways in which governors have helped schools in such situations to improve. They listed:-

- developing their skills in monitoring performance
- better organisation of the Governing body through committees with defined roles
- supporting the head to implement change
- actively promoting the school in the community
- tackling difficult issues - financial, staffing or incompetence
- informing parents

OFSTED (1999) observed the activities of governors during the year. OFSTED asserted a number of points from the data collected, viz:-

‘Most governors make an important contribution to the development of schools.

Governors are influential in setting targets, identifying priorities and monitoring and evaluating progress in half the schools.

A large and growing number of governors take responsibility for particular areas.

In best practice governors monitor through reports and visits to lessons.

A large number of governing bodies do not ensure that all statutory responsibilities are fulfilled eg reporting progress on post OFSTED action plans.

One or more key issues in many schools are not tackled post OFSTED eg collective worship

20% of governing bodies have insufficient influence.

Five times as many governing bodies in disadvantaged areas are ineffective and these schools are most likely to lack the strategic support that they need.' (Para 125)

Finally, in this section OFSTED(1995c) stated five characteristics that identified, for them, effective governing bodies. In such bodies:-

- the roles of governing bodies and heads had been agreed
- the governing body worked together as a team and had a constructive, supportive but critical relationship with the head
- the governing body improved their (*sic*) knowledge through regular training
- the governing body developed their (*sic*) awareness of the community
- the governing body were (*sic*) informed about the standards of teaching and learning using comparisons with other schools. (page 3)

2. Lessons from school effective literature

This section examines some of the writing on effective schools. The legislative framework prescribing governance ensures that governors' activities do affect schools. Similar schools exhibit widely differing outcomes. Attempting to identify good or best

practice by governors which impacts upon these outcomes demands a conceptual framework, which currently is emerging. This section attempts to contribute to the construction of such a framework. The purpose of considering this literature is not, therefore, to present direct findings on the role of governors. Instead, the descriptions of effective schools will be examined to develop notions of how governors might become involved in certain ways in those schools. In addition, the writings on failing schools are useful in that they describe some of the interpersonal characteristics of their key players, which will be observed in the case studies later.

3a. Literature on effective schools

An examination of some of the research in this area can be used to describe effective schools. It will be seen that there is little reference to the activities of governors that will prove valuable in developing either a conceptual framework for governance or a research instrument that can identify governor effectiveness. This section does, however, provide a means of identifying the relative effectiveness of the sample schools.

The five factor theory of school effectiveness is commonly quoted in much of the literature. Typically Edmonds (1979) illustrates the effective school as one where there is:-

- an assertive principal whose focus is on education
- frequent evaluation of pupil progress and feedback,
- high expectations of pupil achievement
- order and safety in the school,
- a sense of agreed goals that are rooted in basic skills

These five factors are rooted firmly in the day to day practices and can be achieved with little strategic awareness on the part of schools and headteachers. Even when Lezotte (1980) added parental involvement to these five factors, the role of governors is no

clearer. Indeed most references in governors' literature state explicitly that governors should not be involved in the day to day management of schools.

More recently, post LMS, Mortimore, Sammons, Stoll , Lewis and Ecob (1998) produce twelve key factors that group into areas of classroom practice and school policy.

Within these there is room for governors to become involved. The twelve are:-

- Purposeful leadership
- Involvement of the deputy head
- Involvement of teachers
- Consistency amongst teachers
- Structured sessions
- Intellectually challenging teaching
- Work centred environment
- Limited focus within sessions
- Maximum communication between teachers and pupils
- Record keeping
- Parental involvement
- Positive climate

The first and last of these twelve areas can be indirectly influenced by governors. The manner in which they can provide leadership and ensure a positive climate is left to speculation. The remaining ten factors lie exclusively within the professional domain.

Unfortunately, the research that supports these factors is not rooted in the English secondary comprehensive system. In particular the work is based in primary schools. For example, the highlighting of the 'involvement of the deputy head' is not an issue in secondary schools. The nature of these larger, departmentally organised, schools demands

an involvement of deputy headteachers not only in the administration and management of the day to day running of the school, but also in the development of the curriculum.

Hopkins (1987) does have experience that is well informed by the English secondary system and this leads to a more valid application to comprehensive schools. He refines the factors into:-

- curriculum focused leadership,
- supportive climate,
- emphasis on curriculum and teaching,
- clear goals and high expectations for students
- systems for monitoring performance and achievement,
- ongoing staff development and INSET,
- parental involvement,
- LEA support.

It can be argued in the context of these factors that there is greater opportunity for the monitoring and mentoring role for governors. Certainly, governors are able to encourage a supportive climate in broad terms and are now being charged with setting targets and monitoring performance. These are very recent developments which began in December 1998 for outcomes in 2000. It will not be until after this date that proper evaluation of the success of such strategy can take place. Within this description of school effectiveness there is again no specific mention of a role for governors. Any activity they could be involved with could best lie in the establishing and maintenance of a supportive climate, encouraging a curriculum focus, and ensuring systems exist for training, goal setting and monitoring.

Barber, Stoll, Mortimore and Hillman in OFSTED (1995d) developed the descriptions of effective school characteristics further into eleven features. In some detail these are:-

a. professional leadership.

Prescriptions for governors from, amongst others, the DfEE, indicate an expectation that governors should in some way show leadership in the strategic development of schools. Until recently, this activity was seen to be a key role for the headteacher. What follows is a description of professional leadership from the effective schools literature. If the strategic leadership role of governors is to develop further, there are parallels, which can be drawn for them from the literature. Indeed, if a framework is to be constructed which identifies best practice for governors in their strategic role, what has already been described as best leadership practice for headteachers, will greatly inform the shape of such a framework.

The pairing of observed schools in Teddlie and Stringfield (1993) demonstrated a clear match between effective leaders and effective schools. They cite apparently ineffective, dysfunctional, or even destructive principals. In less effective schools the heads are perceived to be more interested in making sure the grass is cut than whether the children are learning. Later in this thesis, the same is argued for staff and governors in less effective schools. Conversely, Hoeben (1989) argued that there are no effective schools without effective teachers. It is possible, however, to hypothesise an effective school populated by effective teachers but ineffectively led. Pupils would achieve in such a school despite the dysfunctional headteacher. It is also possible to model a school with a highly skilled leader who is ineffective because of pathologically ineffective teachers backed by an under-resourced system that makes dismissal or improvement impossible. Indeed Scanlon *et al* (1999) suggest such a four way model for governors.

A professional school leader is described by Teddlie, Kirby & Stringfield, (1989) as the central figure who guards the integrity of the classroom. Such a headteacher shields the school from outside pressures that would get in the way of effective teaching.

Mortimore *et al* (1988) identified an emphasis by headteachers on a participative culture that involves by others through shared vision. Hargreaves and Hopkins (1991) describe the effective school leader as exhibiting concerns to place curriculum at the top of the agenda, to create a school that values all people in it and does not place staff wants ahead of pupil needs and who has the ability to use micro-politics to ensure that the school is effective.

The role of leader in the appointment of staff is crucial in the establishment and maintenance of an effective school. Sammons, Hillman and Mortimore (1995) identified this area in their OFSTED study.

Any definition of school leadership should go beyond what s/he does but how s/he goes about maintaining school effectiveness or making the school more effective. Smith's (1994) model of headship was based upon an intuitive approach to the management of people. The head was viewed as the captain of the cricket team. He, rarely she in secondary schools during the period he details, determined what order the team was to bat, usually through a simple curriculum structure determined on the back of a cigarette packet at lunch time. He did his share at the wicket, fought the battles with 'the Office' and generally possessed authority through the cult of the personality. Part of this feel for leadership still remains and is the most difficult to research. Heads are skilled at public relations and interviews with them will not necessarily produce objective knowledge. It is fine judgement to decide if a head's approach to staff in particular instances should be democratic, consultative or autocratic. All three styles are appropriate at some time. Ineffective heads can be defined as those that fail to find the match between their style and the requirements of the school and its situation. By random luck there will be a match from time to time. Conversely, the most effective headteacher does not always find the correct match.

The process of leadership includes a role in the appointment of staff. There is a body of knowledge from industry that enables heads to determine the personality profiles and skill levels of potential employees. Schools have not used widely such tools relying more on the fine judgement that heads and governors have for appointing the right staff through questioning at interview. Whilst such practice continues the 'feel for the process of leadership' is an important quality.

The process of leadership also includes an ability to delegate effectively. In effective schools delegation is a two way process with constant and if necessary frequent dialogue between the head and his/her staff. A headteacher with the feel for leadership manages to delegate sufficient responsibility, authority and freedom to others whilst requiring only sufficient monitoring. In less effective situations either too little is delegated or too much monitoring is required. This area is again an area of fine judgement.

Leadership in all these references is associated solely with the headteacher, governors are not mentioned. Clearly, the role governors must play in this factor is ensuring the appointment of a headteacher who will fulfil the expectations of the above description. That appointment cannot be delegated to the headteacher. Where s/he fails to perform to the level described the ability, opportunity, experience, training and motivation of governors to reform an under performing head is minimal. Governors in such a situation would need to consider replacement or the resignation of themselves or the head.

b. shared vision and goals.

Governors are now required to publish their targets for the school, their aims for the school and many policy documents. The effective literature base contains many references, illustrated below, arguing that shared vision and goals are associated with

effective schools. If governors are to lead schools in their development, they too will need to hold the paradigms as described in this part of the literature base.

Rutter *et al.* (1979) identified that schools are more effective if staff build a shared set of goals for the school. The power of this is twofold. Firstly, the ownership of such a goal set will ensure that all participants are committed to ensuring its enactment. Secondly, the fact of having a goal set, even if the process does not ensure common ownership, would in itself lend a degree of co-ordinated activity, which is more likely to produce corporate success. This process factor goes beyond the domain of high expectations of pupils. It encompasses the notions of the rights and responsibilities that teachers and pupils have in the school. It represents a 'blanket' system under which many of the statements made above about a shared sense of academic purpose, an effective pastoral system and a consensus of activity and direction can be found.

Shared vision and goals can only be implemented through collaboration and planning. Fullan (1985) uses this factor to include the schools relationship with the LEA in its planning. The assertion here is that quality is doubly assured through the contribution of both parties and the consensus and ownership that arises as a result. The same can be stated in relation to in-school planning and implementation. Heads of section in school can and do act as autocrats. Where departments are more effective, the heads take time and trouble to involve their departmental members and senior staff in consultation. This feel for good management characterised by flexibility and collaboration is cited again in Mortimore *et al.* (1988) and Stego (1987).

In these references too, it is the shared vision of the school within the professional domain that is discussed. No mention of governors is found. Nevertheless, the more pragmatic material described in the first section of this chapter does describe a role for governors in establishing a set of school aims and goals.

c. a learning environment.

This feature is best characterised by the notion that the school is a place for learning and work, not just a building in which pupils meet their friends. Governors are in a position to make decisions that will directly effect the physical environment.

d. concentration on teaching and learning.

This feature will be apparent in the way in which the school invests its development resource. In effective schools the discussion, decision making, planning and quality time is spent improving the core function i.e. the teaching and learning of its pupils. Although technical in nature, it would be expected that governors would be able to moderate such discussion from a lay perspective.

e. explicit high expectations.

Teacher expectations play a major role in influencing outcomes. In areas of high socio-economic deprivation, pupils can achieve despite the factors that militate against them. For some poor home backgrounds can be seen as an easy excuse by them and their teachers for under achievement. At the same time it is easy to state that youngsters have as much right and potential to achieve as their peers from more favoured areas. Recent projects in COMPACT schools which use mentoring as a means of establishing high but realistic expectations and monitoring individual pupils progress have shown links between expectations and outcomes. In these projects the pupils are encouraged to take ownership of their progress through negotiating with staff personal goals which are informed by high levels of teacher expectation. Clearly such activity is more than wish fulfilment – it is not possible just to ‘talk up’ results. Nevertheless, a governing body that insists that all in the school achieve the highest sets a tone necessary for improvement. The 1998 Act requires governors to set targets for improvement. The results of the consultation on the Green Paper (1998) show that government will expand governors’

role to include the mandatory determination of headteachers' pay linked to pupil performance targets. In both instances governors will be expected to place high expectations of pupil performance as key features of their strategic leadership.

f. positive reinforcement.

In effective schools every opportunity is taken to reinforce positive activity. Governors can play a major role in celebrating successes.

g. monitoring of progress.

Mortimore *et al.*(1988) noted the link between sound record keeping and achievement in their study. The OFSTED framework places emphasis on the inspection of a "...manageable and up-to-date record of pupil progress" within the working papers used by inspectors as they view lessons. The growth area of assessment, particularly in secondary schools, is bringing together good practice from the past and could ensure whole school effective monitoring systems that previously appeared only in 'good' departments or with excellent teachers. The National Curriculum and its associated levels of achievement provide a means of assessing pupils against criteria that are nationally established. Although the data produced has value in itself, it is neither fine grained enough to establish individual pupil/subject plans nor reliable enough to inform school management about the state of departmental teaching.

Monitoring of pupil progress is clearly an activity that teachers are involved in on a day to day basis and systems are becoming more sophisticated through the introduction of other mechanisms, such as CATS and MIDYAS. Governors' contribution in this technical area may be limited currently to ensuring that a system is in place, is reviewed and is developed further. However, the requirement for governors to set and monitor targets annually in secondary schools will develop their skills and knowledge.

h. Pupils' rights and responsibilities.

Effective schools not only give consideration to pupils' rights, they involve pupils in their planning and discussions. School Councils do exist in some secondary schools, but there is no evidence of linkage between such pupil bodies and the activities of governors at secondary level.

i. purposeful teaching.

This factor is perhaps the least contentious for practising teachers to accept. It includes notions of high quality teaching, knowledge of subject area, knowledge and skills in pedagogy. Rutter *et al.*(1979) and Mortimore (1988) both acknowledge the importance of curriculum and teaching. Rutter notes the value of advance lesson planning and Mortimore the positive effect of efficient organisation of teaching and learning. Governors' role in this enterprise can go further than just ensuring that the school has a system in place to ensure purposeful teaching. Governors of the sample schools described later in the study do no more than ensuring the system.

j. a learning organisation.

In a rapidly changing educational environment the need for staff to undergo INSET is vital if they are to keep up to date with their subject, assessment techniques, classroom management and development. Southworth (1994) identifies INSET and staff development as component parts of effective and improving schools. In schools that aspire to become more effective, staff critically examine their own practice and adopt and adapt others. INSET is a normal part of most teachers' professional lives. Mortimore *et al.* (1988) observed that over two thirds at some time asked to attend courses. The question arises about the willingness and capability of the remaining one third that did not ask. Whilst much good work is undertaken by schools during the five professional development days, longer periods spent studying in depth at in-service training courses

cannot be accomplished during those days. Given that the range of effectiveness between departments and hence between individual staff in a school exceeds the range of difference between schools, this large minority of the 'rump' of staff must give cause for concern.

Reynolds *et al* (1994) do not identify INSET as a factor linked to school effectiveness. This is not because the link does not exist but because the impact of INSET is not direct but is effective through the factors they identified. In Reynolds nine key factors, seven can be promoted through INSET. The HEADLAMP project, recently introduced by the DfEE for newly appointed headteachers, and the Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers, both have the issues and practices of professional leadership firmly at the core of their curriculum. Shared vision and goals which ensure consistency, quality learning environment, high quality teaching, high expectations, monitoring systems and purposeful teaching can be more easily assured if staff have a shared subject and pedagogical base. More recently, NPQH will attempt to ensure that all candidates for headship reach a basic minimum standard in the knowledge and skills of headship.

In addition to the number of staff apparently not undergoing high level INSET, schools are not always skilled at organising, targeting and delivering their own INSET. It follows that less effective schools are less effective at this part of their activities too. With much of the responsibility for determining expenditure of the Standards Fund now devolved to schools this situation of itself will not improve. At one time the LEA had a key role to play in determining access to INSET. Now not only has this role all but disappeared, the reduction in budget retained centrally threatens to remove what little power LEAs have to organise a quality infrastructure of INSET support.

Pearce (1986) identified advice and inspection as the two principal points of contact between schools and their LEAs. Major changes have occurred since 1986 and the advisory function is now largely prescribed by central government through the mechanism for GEST funding. Inspection has been moved to OFSTED away from 'cosy' local teams. Notwithstanding these changes LEAs can and do support schools. In recent times where flexibility of response has been reduced through the withdrawal of funds from LEAs and their delegation to schools, LEAs have focused activities on those that they and schools know to be important. Preparation for OFSTED inspection has the priority on most school and LEA agendas to secure acceptable OFSTED reports. The Framework for Inspection is generally held to be promoting a model of effectiveness. LEAs are therefore underwriting effective schools and helping others to improve, by supporting the framework's implementation in schools.

The learning organisation described above is entirely focused on professional development and makes no statements about the training and development of governors. It may be possible for a school staff to pursue development in the manner described above whilst still being governed by a governing body that was conservative, traditional, obstructive or inert. It is more likely that staff in such a situation would be unable to sustain professional growth. Governors, by supporting such activity give a clear message to schools. Indeed, through the variety of experiences they can bring to the school, they could be a rich source of learning material for the staff if time and the head permit. Their own training record will not only help them to develop skills and knowledge in governance, it is a clear indicator of a school's learning culture. It can be argued that a governing body that undertakes training as the norm will be more effective and lead to a more effective school. Such a pattern will be investigated in the practical research later in the project.

k. home-school partnership.

The 1998 Education Act will require school governors to ensure that home school agreements are in place. Early research by Harris and Russ (1995) is helpful in highlighting the importance of parents as partners and, by implication, the importance of the role played by parent governors.

In the primary sector, home-school contact is at its highest. Mortimore (1984) and Mortimore *et al* (1988) link parental contact with school effectiveness. Most contact was at parents' evenings although some was through working with the school on trips and in the classroom. At secondary level Smith and Tomlinson (1989) assert that parents have a central influence and that it is important that they should be committed to the school. Parents' commitment is more likely to be achieved if they feel they have chosen the school and have some opportunity to influence its policies.

Whilst this is a reasonable and reasoning approach it places less effective schools in a difficult position. There are undoubtedly strategies that less effective schools could adopt or learn that would encourage parents to choose that school. The 'public relations' camp of school improvement however does recognise that whatever the rhetoric pedalled by glossy brochures, the real 'selling point' of a school is its pupils. In less effective schools that are known by their pupils, mobile parents opt away from them because they do not want their youngsters education to be negatively influenced by what they perceive as bad pupils. It is this cohort of parents that would form the core of committed parents at the school if they could be recruited. The effect of market forces in this area too is apparent. Less effective schools recruit parents who are less committed and are less effective. The remaining parents at best have a neutral effect on pupils and at worst are actively hostile to the school. The possibility of recruiting supportive and active governors from the parent body in such circumstances is reduced.

3b. Literature on ineffective schools

Characteristics of ineffective and failing schools are illustrated in the literature. The purpose of quoting these characteristics at length in the following pages is twofold. Firstly, if the practical research is to be valid and reliable, secure judgements on the effectiveness of the sample schools need to be made. This includes, where appropriate, being able to identify aspects of the sample schools that are ineffective. Secondly, as stated elsewhere, there is no conceptual framework that describes governance and effective governors. Through examining the literature on ineffective and failing schools, it will be demonstrated that the characteristics exhibited by such schools can be linked, at least in part, to activities or inactivity by their governors. It is therefore possible to develop some understanding of how governors influence school ineffectiveness. This understanding will contribute to the construction of a framework that describes effective governance.

Whilst the literature base on school effectiveness fails to address governance directly, the research into ineffective schools may give further clues into the role of governors in less effective/ineffective schools. Admittedly, Reynolds (1990) describes school effectiveness research in Britain as a 'fledgling paradigm'. Although written nine years ago, there are areas in school effectiveness research that still require nurturing before they can reasonably claim to be hatched. The definition of the ineffective school demonstrates one immature part of the paradigm. Myers (1995), when considering ineffective schools, asserts that such schools have always existed and we have been negligent in failing to deal adequately with this issue. She also claims that it is likely that the number of schools that fit into this category has recently increased.

In this statement she sets out three areas that need close examination - the definition of ineffective, the support that has been available to these schools in the past,

and the supposed increase in ineffectiveness at a time when exam performance nationally is increasing.

Definitions of effectiveness have been expanded by Mortimore (1991) and Barber (1997). Mortimore describes the effective school as one whose pupils progress further than what might be expected, given their background. This definition is harsh as it could be used to condemn the average as well as the below average school to ineffective status. Sammons *et al* (1995) again use a norm reference definition of effective schools as those which produce results that are better than similar ones. The progress used in the above definitions is multi-faceted not just linked to exam results.

A simple bipolar description of effectiveness is given by Rozenholtz (1989). She defines two types of school - learning enriched, “moving”, or learning impoverished,”stuck”. The four factors she uses to predict ineffectiveness are:-

- a. lack of vision
- b. unfocused leadership
- c. dysfunctional relationships
- d. ineffective classroom practices

These descriptors will be useful in identifying which of the sample schools investigated later are ineffective. In addition, the first three of these characteristics may apply to governors themselves. If this were to be the case then the effectiveness of the governing body will be compromised.

Further expansion of the definition of effectiveness has better reflected the reality that schools are not equally ineffective or effective but lie somewhere on a continuum. Barber (1995) distinguishes 'struggling' from 'failing' schools. Characteristics of the struggling school are associated with staff perceptions and staff actions rather than outcomes. These actions will be both proactive and reactive, whereas the failing school

staff have attitudes and perceptions that are passive and hostile to change and criticism. As above, governors would find such attitudes difficult to influence. Barber does not use notions of extreme under performance to distinguish the two categories unlike OFSTED. Myers (1995) has three categories of ineffectiveness, all of which are determined largely by staff attitude rather than quantitative performance measure. These three categories are:-

striving - determined to improve and taking appropriate action

swaying - wishing to improve but whose actions are not effective

sliding - not taking action to improve

Stoll(1995) quoted in Stoll, Myers and Reynolds (1996) describes three forms of ineffective school:-

struggling - like striving schools, determined to do better

cruising - these are effective now but declining and smugly marking time

sinking - like sliding schools, there are schools that will become failing

Both of these sets of categories lend themselves to intervention by governors. As objective adults with a stake in the school, they are well placed to challenge the impoverished leadership within the schools.

At the extreme end of ineffectiveness the notion of failing has been embodied in the OFSTED framework. OFSTED's guidance from the Handbook, as displayed on its web site, states that :-

‘Consideration of whether a school is failing, or likely to fail, to give its pupils an acceptable standard of education and therefore requires special measures should be based on the extent to which some or all of the following characteristics relating to the different sections of the Schedule are evident in the school.

Educational standards achieved

- low attainment and poor progress in the subjects of the curriculum by the majority of pupils or consistently among particular groups of pupils. This will be evident in poor examination, National Curriculum assessment and other accredited results;
- regular disruptive behaviour, breakdown of discipline or high levels of exclusions;
- significant levels of racial tension or harassment; and
- poor attendance by a substantial proportion of pupils or by particular groups of pupils, or high levels of truancy.

Quality of education provided

- a high proportion of unsatisfactory teaching, including low expectations of pupils;
- failure to implement the National Curriculum;
- very poor provision for pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development;
- pupils at physical or emotional risk from other pupils or adults in the school; and
- abrasive and confrontational relationships between staff and pupils.

The management and efficiency of the school

- ineffectiveness of the headteacher, senior management or governors;
- significant loss of confidence in the headteacher by the staff, parents or governors;

- demoralisation and disenchantment amongst staff or high levels of staff turnover or absence;
- poor management and inefficient use made of the resources, including finance, available to the school; and
- poor value for money provided by the school.'

(www.OFSTED.gov.uk:22/8/99)

This definition requires careful interpretation of core criteria by the Registered Inspector along with judgements of additional evidence before the phrases associated with failing school can be included in the report. The trigger points do mention the leadership shown by the governors. They mostly centre, however, on school outputs for pupils, for example, examination performance, the number of exclusions, attendance figures or unauthorised absences. Targets to be set following the 1998 Act by LEAs identify a reduction in exclusion rates and increases in attendance to be achieved by schools.

Myer's (1995) assertion that ineffective schools have always existed is difficult to challenge. However, without being able to develop the criteria referred to above it is impossible to determine the validity of the statement. Similarly, her assertion that the number of ineffective schools has increased is impossible to challenge. Logically, the increasing pressures she describes, along with Stoll and Reynolds (1996), on schools since the Education Reform Act, must lead to increasing areas of ineffectiveness in schools. However, in the absence of research into the coupling of the many individual changes brought about by the ERA into school performance, such assertions cannot be substantiated.

The dynamic nature of the definitions of ineffectiveness and failure indicates that further research is needed to develop a set of fair, consistent and coherent criteria that can be applied to determine the position of a school on the spectrum of effectiveness. These

criteria fall into the quantitative and qualitative domains. The former at present focuses on pupil performance in examinations, financial management and other measures. The latter focuses on staff attitudes and actions and the role of governors.

The quantitative criteria have been explored by many researchers. For example, Fitzgibbon, Tymms and Hazelwood (1990), Cuttance (1988) and Sammons (1988) all describe quantitative measures taken during their projects which can be used to identify levels of effectiveness at the school level. Fitzgibbon's work introduces notions of how to use quantitative data for school improvement through feedback to the institution that illuminates and guides its progress. None of this data can be used to measure governor effectiveness. It can however provide information that governors can use to determine progress towards outcomes provided they are sufficiently well trained and confident in using the data.

The area of school performance indicators has been the subject of much professional and academic debate. Reynolds (1995) quoted in his inaugural lecture by Brown, Duffield and Riddell (1995) criticises the Conservative government for wilfully using exam results as accurate measures of school effectiveness. Even if educational research is to argue against the simplistic misinterpretation of such data, we must accept that the requirement to publish will not be reversed. The quantitative measures that the OFSTED framework details are therefore the commonly used benchmarks. These are:-

- a. % pupils with 5+ A-C grades at GCSE
- b. % pupils with 5+ A-G grades at GCSE
- c. % pupils with unauthorised absence
- d. % of lessons judged less than sound
- e. number of exclusions

However flawed it is to determine the effectiveness of a school using just these performance indicators, schools have learned to live within the regime that considers them to be valid and reliable. However, setting these quantitative outcomes against measures of deprivation can provide a more robust comparison between schools. Plotting outcomes against, say, measures of free school meal entitlement, provides a normative measure. Residuals against this regression may be more informative than raw scores.

Several sources identify characteristics associated with staff behaviour in the ineffective school though it is not always clear how the level of ineffectiveness has been gauged. Myers (1995) details the spiral of poor results, low morale, increasingly poor pupil behaviour that further substantiate the myth of lack of self improvement. Such myths are described as dis-empowering and drag ineffective schools into further difficulty and result in a lack of readiness to improve. It is also noticeable that Fullan, Miles and Taylor (1980) have described that the formal processes associated with operational development cannot be applied as successfully in the context of ineffective schools compared to effective ones. Hoy *et al.* (1991) developed an organisational health inventory, paralleling Sammon's criteria for effectiveness, which assesses the 'mental health' of a school. This inventory highlights the role that head teachers have in establishing and maintaining functional relationships in a school. It however begs the question as to the role of governors in such circumstances. They may be in a position to effect change under such circumstances, although Hoy *et al.* (1991) suggest that the staff may hide the problems. It is equally possible, as seen in one of the sample schools later, that the governors may themselves contribute to the difficulties experienced by staff.

Hoy *et al* (1991) describes the characteristics of ineffective schools - the lack of quality leadership from the head (not the governors), the low morale of staff, their suspicious and defensive behaviours, and the way that aspiring members of the school are

derided by the majority. Bradshaw (1988) described the 'rules' of staff behaviour in such establishments:-

- a. a desire to control everything
- b. perfectionism
- c. a blame culture
- d. a denial of the freedom of thought, feelings, perceptions, wants and imaginings
- e. a failure to talk about negative feelings
- f. a myth of brightness hiding the grim realities
- g. a lack of ability to complete projects
- h. a lack of trust by all parties in each other and outsiders

All of these characteristics collect to form Reynold's 'dark side' of ineffective schools.

Obholtzer *et al* (1994) attribute much of this dark side of poor relationships to envy between staff and between staff and the headteacher.

It can be argued that these interpersonal characteristics are coping strategies adopted to make uncomfortable realities manageable. However, such poor relationships stall the very processes that might increase effectiveness. Their effect on process is evidenced in the OFSTED reports of schools with serious weaknesses or which are ineffective. In these there are many references to poor planning, a lack of co-operation between staff, an inability to tackle the real issues, a lack of direction from the management team particularly the headteacher. It seems that the pathology of ineffective schools produces a paralysis of process. The possibility of self-improvement generated from inside for such schools has to be slim. Government rhetoric appears to be casting governors in the major role as change agents in such schools.

Gray and Wilcox (1995) reiterate that school improvement is operating in a domain of high stakes. They state that little research has been done in the area of turning ineffective schools around although research has been undertaken on the role of the charismatic leadership. Results are at times ambivalent. For example the autocratic head might produce short-term gains through focusing on basics, but in the process polarises his staff. More research is needed on what failed to produce improvement. At times existing research has a rosy glow and stories (myths) of the one-year turn around are not well researched although rated highly in the public domain. Nowhere, however, are there reliable descriptions of governors taking the lead in school recovery.

Research in ineffectiveness has until recently concentrated on whole school effects. However, Fitzgibbon (1991) showed that greater variance are accounted for at classroom level than at school level, as the greatest time at school is classroom based and hence the greatest effect a school can have has its foundations in the classroom. More work is needed on understanding the nature of school and classroom processes in the ineffective school. Is the school effect just an amalgamation of all the separate classroom experiences or are there more subtle interactions between the differing experience pupils have in different classrooms? Will these internal differences be magnified by whole school improvement leaving the least effective staff further behind? Should we therefore concentrate only on the poorest staff in order to reduce range and increase means? How governors could be informed about these variations and then act in such a way to influence the situation remains in the future.

If the effect of poor professional and personal relationships in ineffective schools is to paralyse the spirit and pace of process then further research needs also to be undertaken to ensure that such stagnation is unique to ineffective schools. It is equally

possible that effective schools, because of their success, can also become complacent and paralysed.

Some ineffective schools have apparently made large gains in very short time scales. Newall Green High School is one such cited in Gray and Wilcox (1995). The success needs questioning. Was it really such an improvement to go from 6% 5+A-C to 18% in 2 years or was the improvement already in hand. The OFSTED and HMI reports Gray and Wilcox refer to prior to the improvement and after it had taken place only differ in their outcomes. The process detail after improvement is the same as before. Certainly, OFSTED as described by Gray and Wilcox does not identify a differential in the role and operation of governors before and after the improvement.

Willms (1992) argues that the locus of control of research and practice should be in the school. Such practice would allow schools to monitor better their practices and outcomes. This view reflects the notion that schools operate in two worlds. One world, the public domain, requires summative published results. The internal domain however is more formative and places an emphasis on reflective, analytical and developmental practices. The self-starting and self monitoring school is a theme of many of Secondary Headteachers Association's publications. Both Willms and the Secondary Headteachers Association avoid the question of where governors fit into such schemes.

Myers' (1995) health model predicts that failing schools, where relationships and systems are dysfunctional, cannot of themselves improve. She suggests that the approach should be to 'mend' the maintenance systems and then to put in place developmental ones. Therapeutic techniques with a large group of staff are problematic. Future practice needs to develop techniques that will better take such groups of staff forward. Governors could commission such development, but it is most unlikely that they would have an active role in delivery.

It is certain that simply labelling schools simply effective/ineffective is not helpful. Its effect is demotivating not only to staff but also to governors. The literature points out the importance of external support for swaying and sliding schools. The present climate of competition and inspection militates against the co-operative approach between schools that could do much to improve effectiveness. The dismantling of LEA advisory teams also drives against a quality system of school support. Although it can be asserted that the quality of support given by advisory staff in LEAs prior to the ERA left much to be desired, this is more an argument for improving the quality of advice rather than dismantling the whole system without replacing it. If it is true that government uses school effectiveness research to criticise schools and then suggest methods of improvement, another real danger comes from the growing numbers of consultants using questionable methods to improve schools. The external moderation of movement through the threshold is also fraught with difficulties.

Gray and Wilcox(1995) highlight the importance of the motivation of staff in turning a school around. They suggest that ownership of the problem by a small group of staff initially is essential. However, in any search for solutions it is essential to note that schools differ. Some ineffective schools will need to focus on maintenance issues first then teaching and learning. Future practice will need to build up a paradigm that points to best courses of action in differing circumstances - solutions that are context specific. The rational/empirical model of dealing with problem solving is difficult in the context of pathologically disturbed environments. The challenges in ineffective schools that are disturbed centre on changing the school's culture and enabling it to become a problem solving school. This challenge is coupled with the difficulties of welding together the antagonistic cliques so that they work co-operatively on externally identified problems.

and managing staff that have retired but are still coming to school. This latter at least is within the power of governors to require improvement or dismissal.

Many authors, for example Hopkins and Ainscow (1993), cite the positive effects congruent with the arrival of a new headteacher. This effect may be due to the disappearance of dampers in what was a closed and over controlled system. The nature of such a highly controlled and inert system is that it rules out innovation. The release of raw but uncontrolled energy from staff who had been previously held back, may account for the move towards effectiveness in schools with new heads. Certainly, the effect of old poor relationships is greatly reduced by the new headteacher as old alliances fragment in efforts to win approval. The implication for practice of this effect is to change headteachers and possibly senior teams in ineffective schools. The exact changes would depend upon the exact foci of ineffective management in ineffective schools. The practice of moving senior staff around in banking, the police and the Methodist church, may be worth adopting but would require major changes to legislation. There is no research that measures the effect of new governors.

Hopkins and Ainscow (1993) produced some prescriptions for what to do with the most ineffective schools. They describe the top down/quick fix including the importing of charismatic leadership. They point out that starting from the negative premise that something is wrong with ineffective schools does harm to the whole system. Hopkins (1987) calls for collaboration with teachers not imposition. He calls for researchers to involve themselves in helping schools help themselves. Each school will therefore have its own approach to improvement. Hopkins (1987) recognises that the de-stabilisation effect of such work requires commitment, support by and for teachers, possibly in the form of ad hoc task groups. He recognises the need to have more qualitative information to sit next to quantitative information. The importance of high quality INSET, particularly

classroom based, is asserted. Hopkins, Ainscow and West (1994) recognise the need of working with ineffective schools rather than working on them. The extension and take up of INSET by governors is a logical step and one that may be used as one measure of governor effectiveness.

Many such projects are already taking place. Myers and Stoll(1993) described projects in Knowsley, Birmingham, Sheffield, Staffordshire, Lewisham and Fulham. All include the practices developed in COMPACTs, for example mentoring. The current climate of short term funding and hence changes in personnel make these projects problematic. Dingle (1996) described one LEA project focusing on school improvement. The Government's establishment of Education Action Zones not only builds on practice which has been developed in COMPACTs, but proposes radical changes in schools' working practices. It remains to be seen if these zones do improve at rates which Government hopes for.

It is certain that any school improvement strategy needs to be contextual. There is clearly no one method nor will it be possible to distil out a simple set of actions/factors/processes that will effect universal improvement. Gray and Wilcox (1995) assert that the characteristics of effective schools may be different from those required to become effective. It is possible that the socio/economic status of a school catchment may help to determine the best methods to adopt to improve the school. As stated above, the difficulty of recruiting well-qualified governors to schools in deprived areas makes support for ineffective schools in such circumstances difficult to obtain.

In the present climate of public punishment for ineffective school, a counsel of despair can exist at times. The implication for practice from the research at times fuels this as it might appear that the most important thing is for staff in ineffective schools is to do something, almost anything, rather than continue to deny or wallow. Fullan (1991)

stated that it is so easy to underestimate the complexities of the change process. In an ineffective school, the complexities of change management will not be well managed or understood and are a further bar to progress. He calls too for diversity and context specificity in dealing with change focused at the school. He envisages using an integrated problem solving approach, which is more than just a collection of single initiatives. Such a call reflects the characteristics of schools where leadership is overarching and has 'vision'. He further calls for collaboration and alliance formation. Such a description lends itself to the involvement of governors in their role as a mentor and partner.

Examining failure produces evidence, which supports this partnership approach. OFSTED (1998b) when reviewing failing schools which failed to improve sufficiently rapidly found that:-

‘initially, the governing bodies of these schools are usually well intentioned but lack sufficient knowledge and expertise to assist with strategic planning and evaluation.’ (p37-38)

and that:-

‘The appointment of additional governors *with specific expertise* helped the school.....’ (p38)

This latter begs questions of suitable governor supply for schools in deprived areas particularly when:-

‘Many of the duties which governors undertake are complex and require time, managerial skill and specialised knowledge, altogether amounting to a great deal of pressure on a group of volunteers’ (p41)

Evidence from DfEE/University of London Institute of Education (1997) report supports the need for governors to take a skilled and active role in the partnership.

Governors in one school stated that they.....

‘... tended to concentrate on buildings, painting the corridors, looking after the money and fending off all the LEA’s documents. We had very little to do with the quality of learning.’ (p21)

4. Summary - Lessons from the literature

The examination of the literature has raised a number of questions, which the practical research will take forward. These are:-

a. What does the academic research on governance describe about effective governors?

The characteristics of governors which have been highlighted in the academic research section of this chapter as influencing governor effectiveness are:-

- their own education
- the experience they bring to the role
- the attitude of head towards governors
- their ability to work as a team
- their commitment
- their training

b. What do writings prescribing governance, such as those from the DfEE tell us?

The writings from such sources described in this chapter suggest the following activities for effective governors:-

- governors should provide the strategic leadership which will raise standards
- governors should ensure the accountability of the school for its outcomes through, for example, setting targets and monitoring outcomes
- governors should act as the critical friend of the school
- governors should ensure legal compliance and probity
- governors should set the character and ethos of the school

d. What does the writing on effective schools imply for governors?

Examination of the effective schools literature base suggests the following roles for governors:-

- governors can have a role in establishing and maintaining leadership over and above appointing the headteacher
- governors can have a role in ensuring a positive climate exists in the school which encourages growth and improvement
- governors, through their actions, can encourage a curriculum focus to the activities of themselves and senior staff
- governors do set aims for schools
- governors should set goals and monitor the work of schools
- governors can ensure that the school does have a focus upon teaching and learning
- the use of quantitative measures, particularly key stage 4 outcomes set in the context of pupil intake, is valid when judging school effectiveness

e. What does the writing on ineffective schools tell us?

From the literature the following characteristics are indicative of ineffective/failing schools:-

- the above positive factors are not seen in failing schools
- relationships between staff are dysfunctional – there may therefore be parallels between staff and governors and within the governing body
- there is a tendency to blame others
- there is little readiness to improve
- there is a concentration on environment rather than learning

Having clarified the possible roles for and characteristics of effective governors in the contexts of effective and ineffective schools, the following chapter builds upon these answers and constructs a research instrument, which is then applied nationally and locally.

Chapter 3

The Design of the Study

1. Introduction

This chapter will examine some general methodological issues within the context of the research area of governor effectiveness. It will describe the aim of the project and the expectation that through illuminating governor activity in a systematic light, against a background of prescription and professional expectation, a definition of good governance could emerge. The outline of the project, which is in two parts, an initial national data collection, followed by a more detailed examination of a sample of six schools through semi-structured interviews with governors and headteachers, is described. Aspects of the project's feasibility, which were considered prior to implementation, are also described. The outline design is then expanded upon in some detail. The mechanism employed to explore a national sample is laid out. The six sample schools are then examined in some detail with particular reference to the OFSTED reports they each received most recently.

2. The research questions

The two fundamental questions this project sets out to answer are what do governors do and how do the ways they operate impact upon their schools.

One insufficient definition of effective governors is that they meet the legal requirements or government prescription. Such 'good' governors may make decisions that are successful or unsuccessful in leading the school forward and gain more for its pupils or not. Whilst they impact upon the school, their leadership can be in both directions. 'Poor' governors who fail to make use of the legal framework may not impact on schools at all and therefore can be deemed ineffective. Nevertheless, the schools may succeed despite their lack of leadership.

The research should illustrate Scanlon's *et al.*(1999) four patterns of governance
i.e.

Poor governance – good outcomes

Good governance – poor outcomes

Poor governance – poor outcomes

Good governance – good outcomes

The responses from governors of the six sample schools will fit within this simple framework. They may also demonstrate patterns of governance that positively impact on schools and may contribute to better outcomes from those schools.

3. General Methodology

This project, like much educational research, is *ex post facto*.

Although such a research methodology is asserted to be valuable, as Cohen and Manion (1994) (pages 152 and 153) say, its major limitation will always be an inability to link cause to effect. However, in the field of effective governance, merely to show an association between one factor and another will be a valuable starting point for further research.

The comparatively small amount of research concerning governance and its impact upon schools has been highlighted in the previous literature chapter. The absence of a conceptual framework together with so little research leads to the notion that any study in the field should have at least two components. Firstly, there should be some attempt to clarify general ideas concerning governors and governance, other than just the legally prescribed. Although the prescription is a national one, it is likely that individual governors and governing bodies will interpret the prescription in their own way. To take a limited view from a limited sample of such interpretations, however valid in context,

would be unreliable in general. A general view should be sought through a nationally based survey. Furthermore, descriptions from governors of what they do will not lead to the identification of what is most effective, rather what is most common. The results of this investigation should be explored further in depth in a number of schools in order to illuminate what in the common activity has most impact upon schools. Hence, these in-depth studies should do more than just replicate the conclusions of the survey. Ideally, they should support general conclusions concerning the role of governors in promoting or otherwise effective schools.

The reality is that governance, along with other school based activity, is a mixture of effective and ineffective and will impinge upon school effectiveness to some degree and in various directions. The study will attempt to identify the characteristics of governance that may have some impact on school effectiveness and school outcomes some of the time.

The design must identify firstly a description of governance that plots the range and norms of governance in secondary schools. This is the purpose behind the questionnaire described later. Mortimore (1995), as described in the last chapter, has suggested a functional typology of governor and governance. OFSTED and DfEE documentation, as detailed and referenced in the last chapter, prescribe the activities governors have to undertake in order to operate within the legal context described in chapter 1. These taken together describe what governors might do and how they might apply themselves to the tasks and suggest that OFSTED observations support such prescriptions. Although it was shown in chapter one that examination of a sample of the OFSTED data is interesting, there is still a need for an independent description of what governors actually do, prior to determining how much of an impact their activities have upon schools. Ideally, such descriptions should be arrived at through independent

observation of governors at work. Such methods are problematic. Not only would the scale of investigation go beyond this study, identifying suitably independent researchers to observe closely the work of governors is difficult, as is negotiating access to governors meetings. As a compromise, professionals in schools could be asked to describe governance and what they feel is valuable. This was effected through the use of a questionnaire completed by members of the Secondary Headteachers Association Council. This first part of the investigation will lead to a description of the norms and range of governance. If the sample is representative of a normal range of schools, then it follows that the definition of governance will represent a normal range of effective governance.

Once a range for governor activity has been collated from the first part of the research it can be built into a set of questions to be posed to governors in sample schools. Their responses will identify where they depart from the range, if at all, and how their activity impacts upon their schools. The six sample schools will be local to the researcher. They will represent the range of schools within the local LEA in terms of intake, outcomes, and performance, as judged by OFSTED and on residuals of GCSE outcomes. The school effectiveness literature is well developed and several conceptual frameworks exist that can identify levels of effectiveness. The effective school descriptors will also be used to determine the sample schools' effectiveness. These, together with the interpersonal domain descriptors of, particularly, failing schools, will be used to place the sample schools on the continuum of relative effectiveness – effective, coasting, ineffective, failing schools. OFSTED reports, along with the dependant variables of GCSE results within the context of the school's intake, will be sources of data. These will provide descriptions of the relative and absolute effectiveness of the six sample schools. The descriptions of governance obtained from the interviews will then provide a means to

compare the six schools' relative performance against the activities and nature of their governors.

Scanlon *et al.*(1999) was published after the practical elements of this study had been completed. Their attempts at achieving the same aim of this study used a similar methodology - questionnaires followed by case studies. The strength of their study was the size of sample. Its weakness was the use of governors' own opinions concerning their effectiveness rather than setting governor activity against the framework of school effectiveness literature. This study, whilst on a smaller scale, parallels their study. It attempts to triangulate professional views and governor statements against the school effectiveness framework and objective measures of performance. Its results, therefore, should be more valid although less reliable.

4. The Research Design

The general process of this study, therefore, followed the stages: -

- The development, from the literature, of a series of issues to be explored concerning definitions of governance
- Discussions with representative senior staff to further explore these issues
- The development of a questionnaire to be used to explore the issues with a representative national sample of senior staff
- Piloting and rewriting of this questionnaire
- Administration of the questionnaire
- Analysis of the findings of this questionnaire
- The generation, from the analysis and previous work, of a set of questions to form the content of a semi-structured interview with governors in six sample schools in one local authority.

- Analysis of the responses to the interviews

5. Feasibility of the Design

Silverman (2000) rehearses the difficulties of sampling and points out that generalisability troubles both quantitative and qualitative research. For him, the crucial issue in determining the samples used by researchers is that the theoretical priorities must be clearly thought through and these priorities must be seen to drive the design. For this project the priorities are for the questionnaire to determine how governors act in order to generate a script for the semi-structured interviews to follow. A broad sample of schools returning the questionnaire was therefore required in order to capture a broad picture of governor activity. Although the use of the Secondary Heads Association Council was convenient and as such may be described as an opportunity sample, its choice was purposeful in Silverman's terms. There are a limited number of ways in which a broad base of senior staff can be sampled. Random sampling is the obvious choice here but would not necessarily ensure that responses from all types of school in all geographic situations could be depended upon. Secondary Headteachers Association Council does have this base. It also claims to be representative, although the political reality behind such claims are questionable. This sample was anonymous and hence no ethical difficulties were encountered in administering the questionnaire.

The final six schools were made fully aware of the research project and their position in it. They needed clear and unequivocal undertakings of confidentiality. The researcher envisaged some difficulty in obtaining more than six case study schools meeting the characteristics described. Heads may be protective of their schools particularly if another head is the researcher and this role conflict will need to be resolved in the minds of the host heads. This will inevitably mean that the schools chosen will not

be neighbouring ones. The researcher had no doubt that the LEA would support the proposal and possibly may have been prepared to meet some of the costs of the project. Indeed, the statistics department, through the support of the Director of Education, granted the researcher access to more detailed data than that which is in the public domain. This data appears in the appendix, as do the regression lines generated from the data. Again, in Silverman's terms, this sample of six was more than opportunistic. Their choice covered the full range of effectiveness within the LEA and full range of socio-economic contexts.

6. Issues concerning definitions of governance and governor effectiveness

Definitions of governance must include, but go beyond a shopping list of legal responsibilities. For example, the processes the governors adopt to effect their responsibilities will be determined by and, in its turn, will determine the quality of the relationships between, and within, the governing body and the school. In broad terms the two areas that should be investigated are firstly what governors must do, how they gain understanding of their responsibilities and how they then enact these responsibilities. The secondly area, given the intentions and understandings above, is how effective governors are in their role.

The review of the literature in the previous chapter leads to a set of queries, matched to the two areas above, upon which the research instruments can be built. These queries include firstly governors': -

understanding of the law; involvement in governor training; application of training in the school context;

Secondly governors':-

frequency of attendance at meetings; frequency of visits to school and classrooms; attendance at 'special' occasions; contributions to meetings; relationships with school and each other; qualifications; motives; approachability to parents; common understanding of purpose; decision making processes; problem solving approaches; donations to school, fund raising powers; links to the community; quality of chairmanship; quality of debate.

These queries drove the construction of the questionnaire as described next.

7. Designing and piloting of the questionnaire

Discussions took place with senior staff at local headteachers' meetings and in two committees of the Secondary Headteachers Association concerning the above issues and descriptors and how they might be explored further in the context of individual schools. These notions led to the design of a draft questionnaire, described below, which was used to clarify the issues and determine valid and reliable criteria that can be used to assess the norms and ranges governing body activity, both preferred and actual.

The major benefit of using a questionnaire is the great breadth that results will cover. Equal treatment of all samples is easy to achieve with such an instrument and results can therefore be controlled for bias in collection. The questionnaire design included factual and opinion elements. The factual data, such as how often governors meet, the number and nature of sub-committees, the attendance at meetings and the amount of training undertaken, can be gathered using binary questions, checklists and band selections by the respondent. More difficult qualitative questions concerning the effectiveness of governor activity can take the following forms: -

a. Lists of statements from which the respondents chose the most appropriate. For example "Chose from the following the statements those that best describe the governors of this school: -

committed to the school

committed to education

loyal to the school

loyal to the pupils

loyal to the LEA"

b. Partial agreement/disagreement statements. For example, "How much do you agree with the following statement:-

The governors always have the best interests of the school at heart 1. very much – 2.a lot - 3. not much agreement - 4. totally disagree "

c. Semantic differentials. For example, placing a governor's position on a continuum "Governors' commitment to this school is very high..... very low"

d. Rating the quality of activities. For example, "How important is it for governors to give money to the school -

Very important Low importance"

1 2 3 4 5

e. Ranking the quality of activities. For example, "Put the following items describing governors activities in order of importance:-

attend every meeting, visit classrooms often, contribute to meetings, good academic qualifications, approachable by parents

It is important that the content should include rating and ranking scales, such as those described above, to enable the measurement of inferential variables as well as factual data. The format also provided room for further expansion of issues that headteachers and senior staff feel are important. To that end several sections were provided with open ended space. These provided a rich vein of comments, as will be seen in chapters 4 & 5.

The quantitative analysis of replies to questions in forms (ii), (iii), and (iv) above can take the form of simple statistics, i.e. means and modes. They can lead to the straightforward conclusion that "the most common response was.....".

8. The Questionnaire

A description of the questionnaire follows, which relates its content to the aim of this study and the literature. The content of the questionnaire was developed initially through consideration of the literature. Specific links to this are highlighted in the following description. The draft questionnaire was piloted in September 1997 with members of one of the Secondary Headteachers Association Council committees, who made a number of suggestions, particularly in relation to the contact between members of the headship team, other than the head, and governors. This was of particular interest to members and, as can be seen from the final conclusions, was found to be a component in effective governance. Following alterations, which led to the final draft which appears in Appendix D, the questionnaire was presented to the whole of the Secondary Headteachers Association Council at their December meeting in 1997. The analysis took place during the following three months and its findings were published in the Secondary Headteachers Association magazine, 'Headlines'.(Dingle. 1998).

The questionnaire was divided into five sections.

Section A

This section collected data on the respondents and their schools.

Section B

This section was designed to collect data concerning the respondents' ideas of the role of governors as they would wish them to be rather than as they are. The categorisation of roles used – moderate, lead, manage, represent - was suggested from the four roles as described by Packwood (1984) and DfEE documents described in the previous chapter with the addition of manage. This latter was suggested during discussions during the pilot stage. Members of Secondary Headteachers Association Council felt strongly that the definitions of governance remain unclear and in some instances governors do become involved in 'day to day' areas of management when they should more properly leave these matters to professionals. The inclusion therefore of the fourth category was to determine the priority of such activity in senior staffs' opinions.

The term, 'critical friend', was intended to be implicit to the description 'moderate'. Its exclusion from the descriptors was therefore not found to be a difficulty during the pilot stage although, as will be seen in the analysis chapter, a number of respondents included the description of critical friend in addition and separate to a moderator.

Space for open-ended statements concerning the reasons behind the rank ordering were placed in this second section to provide respondents with the opportunity to be more expansive about their own ideas.

Section C

This section asked the respondents to comment on the roles that governors actually enact. It is important in attempting to define governor effectiveness to collect

data that describes what they should and should not attempt and how they succeed and fail when they do act. This section therefore probed for examples of governor activity in the four possible combinations:-

Preferred governor activity leading to success

Preferred governor activity leading to failure

Governors acting in areas that senior staff felt they should not with a degree of success

Governors acting in areas that senior staff felt they should not with a degree of failure

The results of this section were intended to tease out the common elements that may describe effective governance.

Section D

This section was designed to examine governor activity in some depth. It aimed to collect data on governor commitment expressed in terms of the time given to the role by governors. Information concerning governors' prior experience was collected. The amount of training was examined. The methods governors chose to employ in carrying out their role was explored in some depth with some measure of how the differing methods of delegation to committee or to the professionals was felt to be effective. The amount of knowledge of the school was collected and how governors set about finding out or monitoring the school was explored. Finally, in this section, the degree to which governors used their position to represent the views of their constituents was explored.

Section E

This last section was included at the request of the pilot group and examines the degree of involvement of the wider staff with the governors. Although initially aimed at describing governors' relationships with deputy heads and senior staff, it was also felt

important to explore how much contact governors have with other staff. In particular, this section explores the influence that the staff has over governors and how aware governors are concerning the hidden agendas staff members bring with them in their dealings with governors.

The questionnaire was designed to collect senior staff views on what governors should and should not do, what they do well and what they fail at.

9. Administering the questionnaire

The redrafted and piloted questionnaire was administered at the 1997 December Council meeting of the Secondary Headteachers Association and completed, either at the Council or returned to the researcher.

A return rate that provides at least 90 (i.e. the size of the Secondary Headteachers Association Council) school samples was the aim. If the questionnaire is well designed and does not need the respondent to research his/her answers before replying, a return rate of at least 75% could be expected. Heads have a great interest in ensuring that they work well with governors and so can be expected to return the questionnaire. The preamble to the questionnaire attempted to make it clear to Council members that the results will bring benefit to the job they chose to do, so a high return rate was expected.

In the event the anticipated sample return of approximately 70 did not arise, with 40 being the actual return. Although smaller than hoped for, the quality of responses and their large and varied content still provided a wealth of information.

10. Analysis of the questionnaire

Generally the questionnaire consisted of rank ordering and open-ended questions. It led itself to analysis either through simple statistics – means, modes and ranges, or

through categorisation of responses into gross categories with the addition of interesting minority views. As the sample size was not large, the use of a sophisticated statistical analysis is unreliable. The aim of the questionnaire is to enhance the descriptions of governance seen in the literature by setting these descriptions against some independent measure of their value. Simple analysis for a small sample is fit for this purpose. If the project were to be replicated on a large scale the use of a more rigorous technique would be possible.

Section A.

This section was analysed using simple statistics to illustrate the means and ranges of respondents' roles, school sizes and types.

Section B.

This section was divided into two parts. The first part required respondents to rank order preferred roles for governors. As the question attempted to produce a mode for the most common preference the responses were numerically coded and a rank order sorted by the sum of the scores for each response. In detail, the roles were scored by their position in the individual response with 1 being given to the highest preference and four for the lowest preference. This led to four columns of scores, one for each of the four descriptors. The columns were totalled and the highest total score represented the descriptor that was placed in the lowest preference and vice versa. This scaled response is described in Tuckman (1972) and again in Cohen and Manion (1994) p 278. The second part generated expansive writing justifying the responses. This writing was categorised, to identify the most common form of responses and then other interesting minority views were presented too.

Section C

This section attempted to collect data on the actual role of governors and how they were seen to be most and least effective. As in the second part of section B above, the analysis of this data was completed by categorisation of responses and presenting the most common responses along with interesting less common ones.

Section D

This section describing the benefits of governors was the most complex to analyse. It contains in questions 2,3,4,5,6,8,11 expansive writing that is analysed as in section C above. Question 1 asked respondents to show how many governors fell within certain ranges of attendance. The analysis of this data was straightforward through simple statistical means. Questions 7, and 9 asked respondents identify through a single tick the most common range of activities. This data was analysed simply through counting the ticks to generate the mode and ranges. The criticism was made by respondents at this stage that the similar presentation of questions 7 and 9 with question 1, although the responses were intended to be different was confusing. Piloting the questionnaire did not, however, pick this up as a problem. The researcher was surprised that senior staff in schools did appear to find this confusing.

Section E

This section was largely comprised of rank order questions analysed as others above. In addition there were two opportunities to further expand upon answers and these were analysed as described in other instances of open-ended replies above.

Finally, once the individual sections had been analysed it became apparent that a picture for typical governance and typical governors had emerged. This picture is described in the chapters. As the sample of schools covered by the survey is national and democratically representative, it is not unreasonable to suggest that this picture is

associated with typical and normal schools. None of the schools has been determined to be failing by OFSTED and it is not unreasonable to assert that the descriptions supplied by senior staff cover a normal range of governors in a normal range of effective schools. This data was then employed to produce part of the interview schedule that follows.

11. Generation of the semi-structured interview schedule

The semi-structured interview schedule took the form of a set of predetermined items and prompts that the interviewees responded to in their own words. Field-notes were made during the interview by the interviewer within the structure. The interviewer employed tape recording, controlled by the interviewee, which was later transcribed and analysed. Problems of bias in this technique include:-

- Status of the interviewer – this was a major difficulty for two reasons. All the interviewees were briefed by their own headteachers about the research and the researcher. Although the researcher wrote a briefing sheet for the headteacher and governors, it was impossible for the individual headteachers' opinions to be controlled during any informal contact they might have with their governors concerning the research. Clearly, some headteachers had said little to the governors about the researcher whilst others had expressed opinions and ideas to governors prior to interview. These opinions affected governors' opinions about the status of the researcher and the research.
- Socially desired responses on the part of the interviewee. Although the researcher anticipated this difficulty, the responses given by all governors were candid and frank. For example, the areas that were identified in the OFSTED reports, as needing further development, were not hidden by governors from the researcher. Indeed, some of their

statements concerning the schools were embarrassingly open despite their critical nature. This openness is very much in line with Kitwood's (1977) statements that people are more likely to be open about their thoughts and values in an interview than they would be in a more formal and less human setting.

- The influence of age, gender and culture of the interviewer. Although these factors exist and lead to bias, careful formulation of the interview schedule and rigorously following that schedule were employed in an effort to reduce their effects. The researcher found it difficult, but not impossible, to limit his conversation with the interviewees to just those areas without reference to preconceived notions.
- Cueing through body language. Although a source of bias, unlike the previous source it is difficult if not impossible to control. It is possible for the researcher to be aware that s/he is cueing responses from the interviewee through inappropriate body language. Attempts to control the body in this context leads to unnatural and confusing posture, which may have an even greater effect on responses than a natural stance.
- Lying by the interviewee. This final source of bias can be controlled for to a degree through use of checks in the interview schedule. Such checks were used to a degree although it is still possible that governors, and heads could have set out to be deliberately misleading. Comment made above, however, concerning the openness of governors does not support this notion.

12. The semi-structured interview schedule

The interview schedule was divided into three parts – the individual governor profile, the ways governors become involved in the school, and the governor's knowledge

of how the school is developing its effectiveness. These two latter parts built upon the responses to and analysis of the Secondary Headteachers Association questionnaire.

The first part simply probed for individual governor background, qualification and history.

The second part examined the role of the governors in their school, as they perceived it.

The detail being examined was intended to provide a vehicle for governors to be expansive about the way they understand:-

- their role
- their support for the school
- boundaries to their work
- strategic overviews that they should have, including monitoring and target setting
- their training and experience
- their knowledge of the school, its curriculum, ethos and mission
- how they ensure involvement of parents
- how they provide leadership

These categories and the questions associated with them have been prompted by the literature and the results of the questionnaire described above. The third area examined governors' knowledge of factors that make the school effective viz:-

- the quality of professional leadership
- the involvement of seniors staff at strategic levels
- how staff ensure consistency of teaching
- how the school ensures structured learning
- how staff ensure the teaching is intellectually challenging

- to what degree the ethos is work centred
- how each lesson should have limited focus of activity
- the quality of dialogue between pupils and staff
- the quality of record keeping
- the degree of parental involvement in learning

13. Analysis of the interviews

The analysis did not depend upon field-notes alone. The shortcomings have been pointed out by Miles and Huberman (1984). The researcher did find that the interview was in itself so engaging with governors offering so much colour to their activities that there was indeed little time to think and the field-notes, whilst accurate and reliable, were superficial.

The tape recordings of the interviews were transcribed. Once the transcripts were made they were read and re-read to fully understand their meaning. The responses were then categorised in line with the structure of the interview. Some further categorisation or amendments to categorisation did occur which was not in the schedule and this was included in the analysis. In this way attempts were made to include all the responses by the governors and avoid the dangers of prejudging the categories and omitting responses that would shed light upon governors' activity.

The strengths of using taped interviews as described by Sacks (1984) was evident to the researcher through this method. Experiences of the twenty four key players recorded in these interviews produced the central meanings of the research, as in Walford (1994). The notes made during the interviews and the categorisations from the transcripts were read and re-read in attempts to formulate and test hypotheses, as in Ball's (1990)

account. The categorisation, presentation in tabular form and the interpretation were checked by an independent worker.

This sequence of analysis matches the funnelling as described by Silverman (2000). Its strength lies in that, although the interview schedule is based upon descriptors of governance trawled from the questionnaire, it is not constrained by a powerful conceptual grid that would result from coding and tabular presentation.

Finally, the data for the two schools whose performances at GCSE identified them as outliers was compared. Coincidentally, these two schools had broadly similar intakes as measured through free school meal entitlement. The contrast between the activities, vision and involvement of the governors in these two schools was great.

It can be argued that these last two schools are deviant cases. The researcher cannot refute or support such an assertion from this limited data. Nevertheless, the value of the deviant case has been described by Silverman (2000) thus:-

“the identification and further analysis of deviant cases can strengthen the validity of research.” (p184)

14. Descriptions of the samples

a. the sample used for the questionnaire

In order to be both valid and reliable, a large sample of senior staff should be used. The sample should represent differing types of secondary school which are geographically separated and socially diverse in intake. Ideally, the senior staff should be representative of senior staff nationally. The decision to administer the questionnaire at the Secondary Headteachers Association Council has been described above in terms which demonstrate it to be more than opportunistic.

Through involvement at an executive level with the Secondary Headteachers Association the researcher gained the approval of its members to develop, pilot and apply the national questionnaire to members of the Secondary Headteachers Association national council. This body, some 90 strong, is elected from the 9,000 members of the Secondary Headteachers Association and meets four times per year to determine policy and action for members. The areas of concern for the Secondary Headteachers Association Council are wide reaching and range from employment issues, through educational policy to curriculum development. The issues of working with governors is always a topic of concern for members of the Secondary Headteachers Association and Council members were keen to explore the area in depth. Their agreement to take part in the study was furthered by a particular concern of deputy headteacher members to explore how members of senior staff, other than headteachers, work with governors. Not only is this a staff development issue for senior staff, the headship team is a particular notion supported widely by Secondary Headteachers Association members. It is the Secondary Headteachers Association's belief therefore that governors should be involved with all members of the team, not just the headteacher. The questionnaire, as well as the main focus of this research, also includes some reference to the involvement of the headship team.

Whilst the strength of the Secondary Headteachers Association sample is its national geographical spread, its members cannot be assumed to be representative in all but the democratic sense. Members of Council are elected from areas and the constitution ensures a geographic spread. Nevertheless, it is the case, as with many teachers' associations, that places on Council are not contested. Headteachers and deputies undertake full and difficult roles. It is exceptional for senior staff to be able to take the time needed to serve on Secondary Headteachers Association Council. Such staff require

the backing of colleagues in school. Council members are concerned about the conflicts of loyalty caused by the demands of running a secondary school and the time needed to serve Council properly. The views, therefore, of Council members, whilst representative in a geographical and democratic sense, are as broad a sample as can be achieved by the researcher in the time and resources available. Scanlon *et al.*(1999) took the more secure route of sampling over 600 schools. The Secondary Headteachers Association sample was much smaller with a return of questionnaires of 40 out of a possible 90 i.e. less than 50%. Although in line with return rates from postal questionnaires, this was a disappointing return rate since the questionnaires were distributed by hand with a request to return them to the researcher at the end of the Council meeting on the following day. The lower than anticipated return rate was due mainly to the very full agenda and time was not adequate for some members to complete them. A number of replies did follow from members by post to the researcher within two weeks following Council. What is most interesting is in line with the Secondary Headteachers Association's own description that it represents a broad church. The replies to the questionnaire do indeed demonstrate this assertion once again with a wide cross section of schools and post holders.

b. the sample used for the six in depth study schools.

Six schools were chosen for the follow up in depth study, employing semi-structured interviews with their headteachers and three representative governors including the chair. The six schools all operate in the LEA of the researcher's school. There are considerable advantages in this approach. Firstly, access to schools for researchers of any background is often problematic. Not only do issues of time and resource limit schools' willingness to be part of a study, the public accountability framework introduced by the last government ensures that headteachers are highly sensitive to the possibility of adverse publicity caused by insensitive reporting. Whilst undertakings of confidentiality go a long

way to overcoming this rational concern, most heads do realise that, even if names are not used, local knowledge will enable staff to work out the identity of participants if conclusions and data are available. These concerns are further compounded if the researcher is an anonymous individual whose loyalties are unknown. Secondly, the researcher was in the trusted position of having worked with the six headteachers through various LEA initiatives, including the introduction of LMS ten years ago. None of the schools is in competition with the researcher's own school. No headteachers approached by the researcher refused to take part in the research. Access was therefore granted by colleague heads, on a personal level, to their time and also the time of three of their governors. The headteachers did make a considered judgement before recommending which of the school's governors would be 'best' for the researcher to speak with. It became clear early in the interviews that the head's assertions that their definitions of best was guided solely by which governor would be able to speak at length to the researcher rather than which ones would be best at selling the school, was in fact the case. In almost all interviews, the governors made the general point that no governor could remain as a governor if they did not support the head and the school.

The six schools, whilst existing within the same local authority differ in many respects and were chosen, not because of the willingness of the headteachers, but because they did represent the full range of intake, outcomes and performance based upon residuals. The graphs in appendix C identify the schools labelled A-F in the sample.

An advantage obtained, by careful choice of the LEA in which these case studies can take place, was the existence of substantial data of school performance held by the LEA. In addition information on governance held by the Governor Support Unit managed by the LEA was available to the researcher. Access to this information was approved by the LEA and, as anticipated, issues of confidentiality arise from this project. If finally

accepted by the University, this thesis should therefore remain confidential for a period of time.

A weakness of the sample is that it covers a limited range of performance, 50%+ 5+A-C down to 20% 5+ A-C and a limited range of free school meal quotient, 10% - 35%. Whilst these ranges do not represent the full variation nationally, nevertheless they are sufficiently large to substantiate claims that the schools can be differentiated according to inputs and outcomes.

Although the free school meal figure was referred to prior to the choice of schools, it is not proposed, in this limited study, to analyse the data against this variable, merely to ensure breadth to the sample. The sample is too small to ensure external validity. However, there may be clear pointers from the semi-structured interview data that could point to further detailed research on a larger scale. For example, as suggested in the literature, schools in low SES bands find recruiting and retaining effective governors more difficult than elsewhere and this may be supported by the limited data.

A brief description based upon the OFSTED reports on the schools follows. It should be noted that the descriptions are historical and refer to the period immediately prior to the schools' last inspections.

School A

School A was created in 1979 as an 11-18 mixed comprehensive through the amalgamation of a grammar school and two secondary moderns. This has resulted in a split site campus within a city. In 1983, with the closure of another comprehensive school, its pupils were incorporated into School A's catchment area with a high proportion of pupils who are bussed. A wide geographical area provides the school with the full range of socio-economic groups and the intake is gradually changing with a higher proportion of pupils being received from poorer parts of the area. This results from a LEA

admissions policy which gives a higher priority to bussed pupils. The lower site has been destined for closure since 1979 and LEA plans are for a single site school at some point in the future. School A is oversubscribed with every year group being full. At present there are 1397 pupils on roll with 262 of these being in Year 12/13. There are 19 pupils with statements of special educational need. In 1992/3 5.9% of pupils were eligible for a free school meal. This compares with 16.3% of all pupils in maintained schools in the LEA.

School B

School B is a mixed 11-18 comprehensive situated in a city. The school draws its pupils and students from a wide area and is oversubscribed. 75% come from 4 primary schools, which serve areas near the school where unemployment rates are below the national average. Half of these come from areas where the proportion of high social class households is well above national and local education authority (LEA) averages. 25% come from farther afield and the school takes small numbers from 19 primary schools serving a variety of areas. Overall, the proportion of pupils entitled to free school meals is 6.7%, which is well below the national and LEA averages.

School B covers the full ability range with large numbers at each level. The local education authority has made statements of special educational needs (SEN) for 21 pupils. The staying-on rate in full time education after 16 is 75%, which is well above the rate for the LEA.

The percentage of pupils from minority ethnic groups is 0.72%, slightly above the LEA average of 0.2%, and well below the national average of 10.1%.

School C

School C is a mixed 11-16 comprehensive school and is situated on the edge of a new town. More pupils are drawn from socially disadvantaged areas within this town than from the more affluent areas. The proportion of adults with higher educational

qualifications and of high social class households is below the national average. 27% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above the national average.

Pupils represent the full ability range but the distribution is skewed downwards. The local education authority has made statements of special educational needs (SEN) for 23 pupils. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups compared with a national average of 10%.

School D

School D is an 11-18 mixed comprehensive school and serves part of a small town and its outlying villages. The great majority of pupils and students come from areas where the proportions of higher social class households and of adults with higher educational qualifications are below the national average, and where unemployment is above the national average. 22% of the pupils are eligible for free school meals, which is above average.

On the evidence of tests administered shortly after entry for the last 8 years pupils represent the full range of attainment, but the distribution is skewed downwards. The local education authority has made statements of special educational needs (SEN) for 3% of the pupils. 23% of the pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. Very few pupils are from minority ethnic groups, compared with a national average of 10%.

School E

School E is an 11-16 mixed comprehensive situated in a small town. It has recently moved from split site buildings some mile or so apart to a single site. This building programme has extended over two and a half years and has understandably caused some considerable disruption to teaching and organisation. The disruption has had

an adverse effect on staff absence and on pupils' attendance and behaviour. The location of classrooms has been under constant change; storage and transportation of teaching resources has been difficult. The number of pupils on roll is steady at just over 1000.

Now that the school has been established on a single site the ethos has improved considerably. The school has a clear perception of the need to address important issues of low attainment and attendance and there are well-constructed plans to tackle these areas of school development. The governors, head teacher and staff are working well together and there are signs of improvement. The school has several good features but there are still some important weaknesses to be addressed.

The catchment area of the school has very low socio-economic features. A number of the wards have qualified for extra funding to counteract the neediness of the area through the European Single Regeneration Fund. This grant is specifically to support the education and personal development of young people.

Approximately 26% of pupils are eligible for free school meals. This is a high level and a further indication of the deprivation in the surrounding wards. There is reasonably strong community spirit in the area with extra care provided for the young and the elderly.

Only one in five pupils have reading ages which are at least equivalent of their chronological age and a very high proportion have major reading problems. In an attempt to overcome this problem the school runs a major reading recovery programme in Key Stage 3.

The proportion of pupils identified as having special educational needs is very high compared to national figures and has risen steeply over the past three years. The

percentage of pupils with statements of special needs has almost trebled in the past four years.

School F

School F is an average sized 11-16 mixed comprehensive school situated in a small town. It has 881 pupils, but numbers are growing, and the present Year 7 has 40 more pupils than Year 11. There are roughly equal numbers of boys and girls overall, though the proportion varies in each age group. Very few pupils come from ethnic minorities.

The school serves a number of small towns and villages, and over half the pupils travel to school on special buses.

A quarter of the pupils is entitled to free school meals, which is higher than the national average. A lower than average number of parents living in the area have had a higher education, or work in professional or managerial occupations. There is some serious long-term unemployment in the area.

Growing proportions of pupils choose to continue their education in sixth forms or colleges after leaving the school. At the time of the last report in 1993, 35 per cent did so, and in 1997 this had risen to 55 per cent. A further 20 per cent embarked on a course of training.

Attainment on entry is below national average, and well below the average for the county. The school has some very able pupils, but it also receives a large number of pupils, especially boys, with poor reading skills.

A hundred pupils are on the school's register of special educational needs. Thirty-nine pupils have very serious needs, which are recognised by official statements, and for whom specific additional help is provided.

15. Summary

This chapter has examined some general methodological issues within the context of the infant research area of governor effectiveness. It has described the aim of the project and the expectation that through illuminating governor activity in a systematic light against a background of prescription and professional expectation, a clear notion of good governance could emerge. The skeleton outline of the project is in two parts, an initial national data collection, followed by a more detailed examination of a sample of six schools through semi-structured interviews with governors and headteachers. The detailed design of the project was described in eight stages. Aspects of the project's feasibility, which were considered prior to implementation, are also described. The outline design was then described in some detail. The mechanism employed to explore a national sample was described. The six sample schools were then described in some detail with particular reference to the OFSTED reports they each received most recently.

Chapter 4

Presentations of the Findings

The findings of the research are in four sets viz: -

1. Results from the Secondary Headteachers Association questionnaire. These are analysed for significance. They identify modes of operation for governors nationally under various headings and a range from these modes. All six of the sample schools headteachers completed this questionnaire during the interviews.

2. Results from the semi-structured interviews were placed into gross categories and further sub categories also tabulated. The data contained in this section shows some similarity with the data from the headteacher survey above but there were important differences. These latter are detailed under the data. Many illuminating statements were made by governors and heads during the interviews.

3. The published performance data on the six sample schools are examined alongside results for all schools in the LEA placed within their socio-economic context over three years. This data takes the form of a pair of regression lines for each of the three years. Both the mean points score and %5+A*-C measure has been used. This data allows relative performance to be deduced for the schools and a rank order of performance obtained.

4. Finally, the OFSTED reports on the sample schools were examined for references to the activities of governors and headteacher. This source of information provides indirect evidence of the three prescribed roles of governance in the sample schools i.e. governor's effectiveness to lead, to monitor and to mentor. The reports also provide statements on the relative performance of the schools against national figures. They also are a source of judgements on the absolute performance of the schools as determined by OFSTED.

1. Analysis of the questionnaire to the Secondary Headteacher's Association Council.

The questionnaire was piloted on a sub-group of Secondary Headteachers Association members who suggested a number of refinements to questions. The final version was presented to Secondary Headteachers Association Council at its November 1997 meeting in Gloucester and collected at Council. Some members also posted their completed questionnaires.

The results are as follows: -

a. Basic sample statistics

40 returns were received representing just under 50% of those issued. Three quarters of respondents were headteachers. Maintained schools provided 24 replies, 4 came from independent schools, 5 from Grant Maintained schools, 2 from voluntary controlled/aided schools, and 1 from a sixth form college. 4 returns were from schools of unknown type.

The mean size of school was 1015 NOR. 2 schools were 11-16, 25 were 11-18, 2 were 14-18, 1 was 16-19, 1 was 12-18 and 9 catered for an undeclared range.

In the summary below numbers in brackets signify the number of responses given in that category. The closer the number is to 40, the more significant it becomes.

Roles that heads/deputy heads believed governors should undertake were ranked.

The rank order of roles was that governors should be there: -

to moderate

to represent

to lead

to manage

Reasons given for the top scoring roles, in order of frequency, were that
governors-

are in touch with the community (4)

recognised the managing and leading role of teachers (3)

had their role determined by available time (3)

Some replies (7) recognised explicitly the partnership of governors with the school and the independence of their influence and authority.

The placement of managing lowest was reasoned by (24) respondents as day to day responsibilities being in the professional domain. This assertion, enshrined in legislation was a common theme throughout the responses. Other reasons given included a lack of time and competence for management functions. Later in the replies there was evidence that when governors become involved in areas that are clearly day to day management, the result have compromised relationships with the school and led to poor decisions being taken.

17 respondents identified the role of sounding board or critical friend as being distinct from the four set roles. 10 respondents identified general support or promotion of the school as distinct from the four above.

The roles that governors actually performed in schools produced the following set of responses.

Governors were valued by (19) replies for their role in support or enhancement of school policy. Some of these identified the post-OFSTED period in this respect. There were references to various methods that governors adopt in enacting their role viz.: -

longitudinal monitoring,

supporting the head and staff,
linking with departments,
marketing the school,
use of sub-committees,
joint work particularly in curriculum planning.

Governors' actions, which were criticised in order of response, included: -

pursuing individual pet causes (5)
interfering in day to day management (5)
procrastination or indecision (5)
difficulties dealing with exclusions (3)
failing to attend events (2)

Other difficulties cited included: -

decisions regarding staffing
evidence of superficial knowledge
making detrimental public comments
target setting dealt with poorly
pay review dealt with poorly
poor attendance at meetings
lack of enthusiasm about their role
over delegation
rubber stamping
allowing the head to get away with things

Governors were cited in a variety of contexts as making valuable contributions to the school in areas that heads valued less than the major roles. Examples included: -

financial leadership

advising SMT on their role
support of SMT in conflict situations
discussing the professional Vs governance roles
availability
involvement with faculty
identifying issues for governors and SMT
staff counselling
not interfering in day-to-day issues
exclusions
appointments/dismissals of staff
departmental links
discipline issues
school development advice
careful consideration of policy

There is clearly some overlap in this set of statements to other responses made above. It should be realised that what is perceived as a core or major role in some schools and listed as such, in other schools is seen to be less important therefore finding a place under this heading.

Respondents gave examples of other roles undertaken by governors. Patterns emerged in these replies in line with the previous section describing the other role. The critical friend/support role was described by (10) replies. (4) examples were given of support under difficult circumstances, particularly exclusion issues were cited

Respondents identified the following roles adopted or given to governors as areas for conflict. (11) replies identified the day to day interference in this section. A further (4) identified the curriculum as an area in which governors should not be involved. (3) replies

focused directly on the governor/head interface particularly in matters concerning salary, appraisal and the ability to direct the head. Individual mention was made of public comments being made by governors and governors acting on advice from other staff.

b. Governor attendance

The size of governing body is determined by school size to a degree. The figure of 20 for the size of governing body is a guide in this section. The median of figures entered in this table indicated that 12 governors attended at the highest level, 4 above half the time and one each attending in the two bands at the lower end. There was no conclusive evidence that LEA governors are the poorest attendees with (12) agreeing and (8) disagreeing. There were statements made that indicated that the proposal may have been true some time ago but more recently it was not the case.

c. Contributions Governors make to Schools

Governors were valued by (31) respondents for their industrial/commercial experience. A further (6) identified legal experience. (10) replies mentioned parenting as good prior experience. (6) welcomed some form of prior educational experience. (6) identified community knowledge and (3) experience in local government. The variety of backgrounds was valued by (6) replies. Experience of committee work was valued by (2) and common sense by (2). One reply from the VA sector valued governors' abilities to raise funds. Only one reply identified the holding of ideals as a valued prerequisite for governors.

d. Forms of decision management

The following methods were cited as being adopted by governors in their decision making processes: -

1. Delegation to sub-committees

Most common of these delegated to committee were budget decisions (9), plant maintenance and enhancement (9) and staffing appointment (6). A few replies indicated involvement in areas that could be defined as management - dealing with lettings and departmental budgeting. Pay policy was a committee responsibility in two responses, as was admissions policy. Only two replies identified curriculum areas as delegated to committee. In one instance the governors did not delegate to committee and were deliberately kept 'in the dark'.

2. Professional delegation

In the last case cited above every decision had been delegated to the professionals. This was unique. There was great commonality in these replies. (18) responses replied that the professionals had been delegated responsibility for curriculum implementation or development. This delegation was followed by (8) replies that cited some staff appointments that had been delegated. (5) identified financial management.

e. Examples of poorly managed issues

All of the examples given were unique. They are quoted here for interest rather than being used to develop any notion of systematic failure on governors' parts: -

safety policy

production of their own report to parents

letting school grounds to a golf club

prestige projects

non-teaching structuring

awarding an honorarium

strategic level decisions to committees

heads/deputies salary review

post OFSTED action planning

response to LEA documents

appointment of staff

consulting re admissions/transport

reinstatement of excluded pupils

f. Governor training

The most common value for this was 25-50% of governors taking part in training. Although clearly illustrating that all governors do not undertake training, there was a rich response highlighting its value. The responses can be categorised under the headings: -

personnel issues (8)

legal issues (3)

procedure training (4)

general awareness raising (14)

The wide variety of responses to training activities included health and safety; seeing how other governors/governing bodies work; seeing the whole picture; enabling female governor to participate effectively; training on use of exclusions; equal opportunity issues; employment law; redundancy procedures; staffing issues; finance issues; SEN issues; confidence boost; reducing hysteria; training based on heads experience; induction training for new governors; recruiting the trainer as a governor; training in the context, operation and functions of college/school; general awareness; knowledge of the relationship between an individual governor's role and that of the whole governing body; coming with a policy checklist to a meeting; recruitment; pay review procedures.

The implication from above is that governor training before the event is useful in general, but most learning takes place during the real event. By implication the main trainer in developing governor knowledge and expertise is therefore the headteacher.

g. governor representation

The most common response indicated that between 51-75% of governors accurately represent those they claim to. The expectation for the most effective governor is that they do know what the feelings and needs of their constituents really are. The fact that a significant minority of governors are felt, by senior staff, to misrepresent their constituents, suggests that governor effectiveness is compromised in this area by a minority of governors.

h. governors' knowledge of the school.

The order of the ways that governors stayed in touch with school issues was: -

1. receiving reports at meetings
2. informal contact with the headship team
3. formal visits to the school
4. informal visits to the school
5. staff contact
6. rumour.

Items 3,4 &5 were very closely scored. Rumour was however very much a back marker.

i. governor involvement

a. appointments. The two most common ways of involving governors in appointments were

- in committee (16)
- on call governors (10)

A number of other methods were quoted viz.: -

departmental link governors; through briefing governors to ensure correct processes e.g. equal opportunities; by limiting the number of governors involved and giving a careful

briefing; by using governors as observers in appointments; by limiting governors involvement only to promoted/senior posts; though using governors prior experience elsewhere to import good features

b. pupil discipline

Three most common methods were: -

governors committee (12)

governors discussion of general policy (7)

governors involvement with pupils prior to exclusion (11)

Other involvement of governors cited included: -

a nominated governor; presentations to governors by pastoral staff; keeping the chair informed; regular meetings with governors concerning pupil discipline

One response suggested involving governors in the final appeal as long as the heads judgement is supported!

c. curriculum

The most common methods were:-

governor sub-committee (9)

presentations to governors (5)

governors debating innovations (6)

governors working with headship teams (5)

governors links with departments (3)

Other methods included-

nominated governor to oversee curriculum issues; involvement of the whole governing body; using a whole day governor INSET on SDP; by governors producing policy guidelines; by governors meeting regularly with appropriate staff; by governors

reviewing present curriculum; through governors' involvement in writing development plan; focus visits by governors; by governors developing a shared vision; by involving governors in option (in KS4) package design.

d. finance

There were two typical responses here viz.:-

finance committee (18)

close working with headship team meetings (4)

Other responses included:-

governor chairs school committee; expert governor chairs finance; briefing by an 'expert'; one governor nominated to oversee; full governor involvement; governors involved in generating options; governors involved in guiding through cost benefit analysis; flatter governors by seeding documents with obvious queries for them to find(!); governors set draft budget; use of governors expertise from industry; involve governors in directing the strategy

e. Health and safety decisions

A number of varied responses were returned under this heading.

(9) respondents mentioned use of a sub-committee,

(5) used nominated governors,

(7) made use of site visits and risk assessments.

(2) were happy to delegate to the professionals.

(3) developed policy guidelines.

j. governor involvement outside of meetings

This section produced some interesting and varied replies. The most popular activity was visiting the school on other occasions (36). (19) identified making

representations to others. (8) produced drafts of papers themselves. In (13) cases governors did no further work than reading the papers, sometimes.

k. The involvement of the whole headship team

There is much commonality in the replies to this section. Members of the headship team, other than the headteacher, undertake the following functions with governors

(19) service committees

(36) attend and advise governors.

(5) had only informal contact with governors.

(1) had no contact

(1) organised meetings but did not attend.

There was little evidence that governors are resistant to the views of other professionals. One respondent stated that this was the case with one head of department but that the governors had good reason to resist. Other staff are **sometimes** asked to meet governors. Governors are quite aware of what the headship team does and the role and position of teacher governors on the governing body.

l. Other governor activities

The list of other activities produced a rich variety of activities in addition to that already described viz.: -

Helping with drama productions; helping with learning support; helping with young enterprise; involvement with the link governor scheme; involvement in INSET; conducting a behaviour review; involvement in Awards Evening; holding parents question and answer sessions; promoting image of the school in the community; attending functions; involvement in the PTA; walking around the building; monitoring the head;

writing letters to support the school; fund raising for the school; pressurising the LEA with senior management

m. Other comments on governance

Respondents made many interesting comments in the final open-ended question.

They are quoted below: -

..... governors can be resistant to other professionals with good reason

..... difficult for schools in deprived areas to attract appropriate governors particularly from industry

..... give professionals back their responsibility

.....a good supportive governing body may not meet the demands of OFSTED or central government

.....governors should be paid and training compulsory. Good will is exploited currently.

.....conflict of interests arise when governors sit on neighbouring schools governing body.

..... governors can be obsessive and anxious about Health and Safety and other responsibilities. Given the time they have available, the conflict will drive them away.

.....governors have no sub-committees- everything is responsibility of the whole governing body

.....the role of clerk to governors has grown/is growing and is enormous for little pay

.....it is vital that party politics is kept clear of governance

.....a great deal more is expected of unpaid voluntary governors

.....it is becoming harder to find able people with time and energy to commit to the role

.....Voluntary Aided governors have extra authority which is useful when dealing with

LEA

.....regular meetings between the head and chair take place

.....governors should be the critical friend

.....the power, skills and influence of governors is often in inverse proportion to the needs of the school

.....some governors by-pass the headship team to forward their own ends

.....some governors have a naiveté about the challenge of managing a large school

.....governors produce principles, school then develops policy

.....I always feel we could survive quite well without them

Summary of the results from the questionnaire

The small sample from a variety of sources makes generalisation risky. However the sample is an elected cross section and is geographically spread. There are some clear patterns that can be drawn out and used to identify what we as professionals most value from our governors. Secondary Headteachers Association describes its membership as “a broad church” and the statements made left room for every school to develop their own effective working relationship with their governors.

A template for the effective governor emerges from this data which gained general support when published to Secondary Headteachers Association members. Typically, effective governors see themselves as principally moderators and critical friends of the school. They support the staff and head and help to enrich policy, which the professionals draft. They are aware, probably through explicit discussion, of the boundaries of professional day to day management and what governance can bring to enhance the school development. They do not use the governing body to forward their own pet schemes but take a clear overview. They are able to contribute to the work of the school through their own experience in industry, commerce, community involvement and/or as a parent.

Effective governors have probably made use of initial governor training to develop an overview of their role. They have developed further understanding on the job as and when needed. Effective governors avoid misrepresenting the views of others and are aware of the danger of speaking without having found out what views are. Effective governors gain most knowledge of the school through reports, formal visits to the school and regular informal contact with the headship team. Throughout, effective governors act as critical friends of the school and of the staff they are in contact with.

Effective governors are involved in sub-committees that consider most activities of the school. In addition they can be involved with pupils directly, staff planning groups by invitation and school INSET. They visit the school on formal occasions, sometimes produce drafts of papers themselves and make representations to others. Effective governors are not resistant to representation of other staff but are able to determine the value of such representations. Finally, as the last list shows, the effective governor can be seen in many contexts.

2. Results of the semi-structured interviews

For all six schools the headteachers and three governors were invited to comment about the role of governors and the work of the school. These two general areas were explored through a semi-structured interview. The interviewer used the prompt sheet in appendix E to ensure that the interviewee covered a set of core areas. The interview was recorded with the interviewee in control of the tape. Notes were taken during the interview and analysed afterwards.

In addition, during the interview the questionnaire completed by members of the Secondary Headteachers Association Council, was completed by the headteacher. These answers demonstrated that the governors in the six schools exhibited patterns typical of the Secondary Headteachers Association sample. There were no examples of practice that

had not already been identified within the larger sample. The range of activities undertaken by governors of the six schools was, however, limited. There were very few instances of governors taking the lead in policy construction. The pattern for all six schools was for the professionals to prompt the governors to consider policy drafts that had been constructed within the school with little or no input by governors. There had been little or no explicit discussion of the role that governors can play in enhancing the schools. Knowledge of the school development was almost entirely through receiving the headteacher's report although several replies indicated that governors did visit the school informally.

The summary and analysis of these interviews follows: -

TABLE 1

Summary and categorisation of responses given by the governors of School A

Category	Responses made by governors
Role of governors as described by the sample governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To be responsible for school To be advisory To receive the head's agenda and moderate it To sharpen up the head's ideas and thinking To assist in policy and monitor school against policy To probe To moderate the headteacher's ideas and actions To have expectations for the school To encourage parental complaints as a spur to school improvement To have a clear understanding of their role and to have

<p>TABLE 1 SCHOOL A</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Role of governors as described by the sample governors (cont.)</p>	<p>discussed it</p> <p>The role of governors is strategic not operational or tactical</p> <p>The role is impossible to summarise because it is complex</p> <p>There is a similarity between the role of governors and that of the trustees of a charity</p> <p>The role is like that of a community council</p>
<p>Means of effecting the role</p>	<p>The governing body rarely instigates an issue and</p> <p>Governors feel this is right</p> <p>Governors with particular experience make a useful contribution</p> <p>Governors are attached to departments</p> <p>Governors query the head when they have concerns</p> <p>Governors attend departmental meetings, meet heads of departments, read departmental documents</p> <p>The governing body supports school through sub-committees and attending functions</p> <p>Governors visit the school to raise awareness – but this is not seen as the mechanism for gathering information</p> <p>Governors need to be well informed</p> <p>Governors are linked with departments in order to be better informed, but this is useful only up to a point</p> <p>Governors fine tune the school development plan</p> <p>Governors contribute to the integration of different aspects of planning eg finance with development</p> <p>Governors take part in working groups that are issue based</p>

<p>TABLE 1 SCHOOL A</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Means of effecting the role (cont.)</p>	<p>Joint working takes place between governors and staff and plans from these joint groups then go to governors for approval</p>
<p>Monitoring undertaken by governors</p>	<p>Informal contact with headteacher and governors is useful</p> <p>Links with departments and further involvement with school is limited by time and staff suspicion/resistance</p> <p>School is systematically monitored by governors through their links</p>
<p>Training of governors</p>	<p>Little training has been undertaken because governors are already well qualified by their backgrounds</p> <p>Some governors have attended courses</p> <p>Basic training was undertaken by governors and was seen as a useful starting point as it provided useful background information</p> <p>There is scepticism about the value of training and motives of trainers</p> <p>Generally governor training is not valued or taken up in the LEA</p> <p>There is one governor who does go to a lot of the training</p> <p>Governors have no detailed knowledge of who has attended what training.</p>
<p>Other factors influencing governors' impact</p>	<p>LEA governors have their agendas</p> <p>Parent governors come with agendas</p> <p>Different governors have different agendas</p>

<p>TABLE 1 SCHOOL A</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Other factors influencing governors' impact cont.</p>	<p>Staff governors only represent their views.</p> <p>Governors here are not like non-executive directors because they represent factions</p> <p>Different interest groups within the governing body produces a confusion in role</p> <p>Different governors contribute in different ways</p> <p>The governing body is a balance of a variety of interests</p> <p>Parent governors are major players in the governing body as they have greater background understanding than other governors</p> <p>The Parent governors role is seen as more of a monitoring role as they have concerns that other governors do not share</p> <p>Some governors more active than others</p> <p>The academic/experiential qualifications of governing body are important factors in ensuring governors are able to have an impact</p>
<p>Boundaries to governor involvement</p>	<p>Governors don't have experience in education and this sets boundaries to what they get involved in</p> <p>There are no boundaries set here</p> <p>Governors' involvement varies</p> <p>Too much linkage can make governors a nuisance as they can only contribute a limited amount</p> <p>Governors are not there to lead</p> <p>Curriculum plans are rubber stamped as governors have little expertise to contribute in this area</p>

<p>TABLE 1 SCHOOL A</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Boundaries to governor involvement cont.</p>	<p>Teacher governors are involved in a limited number of sub-committees</p> <p>The relationship between the school and governors is broad based</p> <p>Governors do get involved in classrooms as mentors and assistants</p> <p>Governors do not a great deal of input to the planning process</p> <p>There needs to be trust between governors and the headteacher in order to avoid ugly scenes in front of parents</p>
<p>Leadership of governors</p>	<p>Governors should give a broad thrust from the top but</p> <p>Governors should not be involved in detail</p> <p>Governance of schools is greatly influenced by the media</p> <p>Leadership is not the business of amateurs</p> <p>Governors are unhappy to substitute raw amateurs for professional leaders – governors should not lead more</p> <p>Governors do have a vision for the school</p> <p>Governors do not get involved in the leadership</p> <p>Leadership is seen here as an activity not purely holding a vision</p>
<p>Expanding the role of governors</p>	<p>It is unrealistic to expect governors to take on more</p> <p>Even well qualified governors do not understand education</p> <p>Further expansion of the role will lead to governance of schools by the media</p> <p>The headteacher or staff governors could work the agenda</p>

<p>TABLE 1 SCHOOL A</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Expanding the role of governors (cont.)</p>	<p>more with more delegation</p> <p>Governors feel that there is great scope to develop financial techniques that are not yet used in schools</p> <p>Financial discussions are poor here – just like most academic institutions!</p> <p>Governors are unhappy to provide leadership therefore more delegation will produce patchy results between schools</p> <p>Further delegation not welcomed generally, however further financial delegation could work</p> <p>Target setting by governors begs questions of knowledge needed and training required</p>
<p>Planning processes adopted by the school</p>	<p>Staff are involved in planning through school development planning group</p> <p>Membership of planning groups is not transparent to staff</p> <p>Governors have knowledge of monitoring and planning system within the school</p> <p>School financial modelling is crude – historically based with no real analysis of need</p> <p>Further training needed by staff to make the monitoring more effective</p>
<p>Professional input</p>	<p>The agenda should be defined by head</p> <p>Governors have enormous respect for the headteacher</p> <p>The headteacher should move on after 8-10 years in a school</p>

<p>TABLE 1 SCHOOL A</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Professional input (cont.)</p>	<p>The definition of competent head is they set the agenda</p> <p>Teacher governors can be involved easier than others</p> <p>The relationship between senior management team and sub-committees is most important</p> <p>Governors cannot be a substitute for the clear vision a head should have</p> <p>The head's role is to have the vision and pull people along</p> <p>The school development plan is a product from senior management team.</p> <p>Staff other than senior management and teacher governors are involved in governor committees</p>
<p>School ethos</p>	<p>The ethos is confused because of change of head</p> <p>There is a vacuum at the top during the departure of previous head</p> <p>Members of the senior management team are fighting amongst themselves for power</p> <p>Pupils are affected by lack of head</p> <p>The poor timetable causes low morale</p> <p>The school was complacent</p> <p>There is a concern that other schools are now doing better</p> <p>There has been little improvement in GCSEs</p> <p>The school's PANDA is only average</p> <p>The intake quality is decreasing</p> <p>The School is enormously successful in some areas</p> <p>The School has crested in recent years</p>

<p>TABLE 1 SCHOOL A</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>School ethos (cont.)</p>	<p>There is a concern that pupils of average ability are not catered for particularly at GCSE</p> <p>The School's ethos seen as particularly academic post 16</p> <p>There is low morale – currently there is no headteacher in post and tensions exist in Senior management team as a result</p> <p>Staff are unhappy that promotion route is through administrative rather than teaching skills</p> <p>There are areas that would be better done by clerical staff rather than teaching staff</p>
<p>Monitoring undertaken by the school</p>	<p>There is no formal appraisal or performance management</p> <p>The senior management team do not observe lessons</p> <p>Some heads of departments observe lessons</p> <p>The monitoring of teaching by staff is known to be variable in quality and quantity</p> <p>The monitoring of teaching needs to be developed to cover all staff</p> <p>The staff monitoring of the school is increasing and seen to be an important part of middle management role.</p>

Interpretation of the responses for school A

Governors of School A articulated a variety of roles for themselves. They clearly feel that their main responsibility is to assist the school, particularly the headteacher, to develop its processes and thinking. The single aim for this was expressed in terms of expectations. There was some confusion on a simple definition. One reference was made

to a rogue governor that used parental complaint to move the school onwards.

They effect their role mainly through discussion with the head and some staff in planning groups. They identified a distinct impact through the integration of differing aspects of school planning. This activity of ensuring that the professionals see detail and the overall picture is most valuable. There is some activity which involves governors directly with the departmental structure, although the degree to which this takes place depends upon individual governors' interests. Governors recognise the need to be well informed and some take time to make themselves aware of detailed departmental situations. Whilst some of the governors are highly qualified academically and many have high level professional responsibilities, their contributions are light touch and they defer to the professionals. Their monitoring of the school is limited by time and staff suspicion, nevertheless they do have a clear idea of what goes on in the school.

There was little enthusiasm for governor training apart from the very basic introductory courses. This is possibly because they limit their involvement to areas that they feel already qualified to cope with from their previous backgrounds.

There is a political dynamic at work within this governing body as a whole. They recognise that different governors bring different agendas and may be representing external groups. Parent governors in particular appear to be powerful. There are no formal boundaries to what governors get involved and little evidence of informal ones. Governors' feelings about their own lack of qualifications in curriculum areas stops them contributing and plans in this area are largely rubber stamped.

Governors here do not attempt to provide leadership. They expect this to come from the headteacher with detailed planning support from other staff. Their reticence in curriculum matters was most evident. The notion that their leadership role should be expanded was greeted with mixed comments. Governors would not welcome it for largely

practical reasons that would limit its impact. They did feel that they would be able to cope with such challenges and areas could be further explored that would benefit the school. Governors did have some detailed knowledge of internal systems, although their general approach to governance did not require it. They are aware that the school undertakes some monitoring of classrooms and that this should be further improved.

The governors were very expansive when describing the ethos of the school. It is most surprising that School A, a highly effective school as can be seen from the OFSTED descriptions in this work and the comparative examination results, has such an apparently poor ethos. The factor cited as the major cause is the departure of the headteacher in the immediate past. These feelings further indicate the dependence this school has upon the professional leader who can initiate change but who is then supported by well qualified and articulate governors to fine-tune the vision and aim. It is this last contribution that the school benefits most from the impact of these governors.

TABLE 2

Summary and categorisation of responses given by the governors of School B

Category	Responses made by governors
Role of governors as described by the sample governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To fine tune To check on Senior Management Team To back up Senior Management Team To take an oversight of day to day running To assist in decision making on important issues other than day to day To give advice To support school To do what head says

<p>TABLE 2 SCHOOL B</p> <p>(cont.)</p> <p>Role of governors as described by the sample governors (cont.)</p>	<p>To support senior management team</p> <p>To support the head</p> <p>To act as the critical friend</p> <p>Governors are not here to lead teaching</p> <p>Governors are not here to interfere</p> <p>Governors not here to frighten teachers or pupils</p> <p>Governors do not and should not lead the school</p> <p>Governors should not be seen as important</p>
<p>Means of effecting the role</p>	<p>Governors get involved in everything</p> <p>Governors are involved in broad curriculum issues</p> <p>Governors are linked with departments but not all links are acted upon</p> <p>Only three governors are really forthcoming</p> <p>Other staff have been involved in governors meetings at times by request</p> <p>Governors attend social functions</p> <p>Governors accept what the head says</p> <p>Governors act on the head's advice</p> <p>Governors act on staff governors' advice</p> <p>Governors seek advice</p> <p>Some governors contribute to lessons, those governors have a better knowledge of the school</p> <p>Governors were involved in the process of agreement of a school vision last of all</p> <p>Governors have been manipulative behind the chair</p>

<p>TABLE 2 SCHOOL B</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Means of effecting the role (cont.)</p>	<p>Working behind the chair puts huge power in the hands of a few governors</p> <p>Governors only rubber stamp or slightly modify plans</p> <p>Governors have a range of commitment and involvement</p> <p>Governors have trust in the head</p> <p>Governors take part in meetings</p> <p>Governors act differentially</p> <p>Governors take some part in planning</p> <p>Governors bring personal experience into the classroom as a resource</p> <p>Governors can be awkward if they are not convinced by Senior Management Team</p>
<p>Monitoring undertaken by governors</p>	<p>Monitor through progress reports</p> <p>Monitor through development planning</p> <p>Monitor through viewing plans</p> <p>Informal monitoring between head and some governors</p> <p>No knowledge of governors seeing teaching</p> <p>Governors can monitor teaching if the need or direction arose</p> <p>Governors fear that monitoring teaching would frighten staff and be seen as spying</p> <p>Governors use statistics to monitor</p> <p>Governors use the head's reports to monitor</p> <p>Governors take part in informal work with senior management team and head in order to monitor the school</p>

<p>TABLE 2 SCHOOL B</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Monitoring undertaken by governors (cont.)</p>	<p>Information from parents and informal contact with parents is used to monitor the school</p>
<p>Training of governors</p>	<p>Some training has taken place but there is no great enthusiasm</p> <p>Governors contribute more according to who they are not through training</p> <p>Governors have made use of some printed training materials</p> <p>Governors are guilty that they have not taken part in training</p> <p>There is conflict between work demands and training demands</p> <p>Good training is available</p> <p>Governors are selective in the uptake of training</p>
<p>Other factors influencing governors' impact</p>	<p>Parent governors seem to be more involved than other governors</p> <p>There is poor attendance by governors and by parents at the annual parent governor Meeting</p> <p>Parents do complain to governors when things go wrong</p> <p>New governors have confidence in their effectiveness</p> <p>Governors are accountable for their actions</p> <p>Governors do not receive praise</p>

<p>TABLE 2 SCHOOL B</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Boundaries to governor involvement</p>	<p>Older governors are constrained by social traditions</p> <p>Governors personality sets limits on involvement</p> <p>Governors are not involved in classroom</p> <p>Governors are not involved in curriculum</p>
<p>Leadership of governors</p>	<p>The vision is schools and the Senior Management Team</p> <p>The school's Senior Management Team leads not the governors</p> <p>There is a general perception that governors do not and should not lead</p> <p>The directions for change are set by others not by governors</p> <p>Governors have taken the initiative only if it's a particular personal concern</p> <p>Governors do not know what opinion staff have regarding governors leading</p>
<p>Expanding the role of governors</p>	<p>Governors are frightened of more taking on more responsibility</p> <p>There will be a danger of placing power in the hands of the few</p> <p>Teacher governors support the notion of increasing responsibility</p> <p>Lay governors would find it harder</p> <p>Further delegation would be difficult because of increased time commitments</p> <p>Governors leadership of schools is variable</p> <p>Grouping of governors in a school is variable, hence further</p>

<p>TABLE 2 SCHOOL B</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Expanding the role of governors (cont.)</p>	<p>delegation will produce variable benefits</p> <p>Governors change over time and this affects the capability of governing bodies over time</p> <p>Governors leading would buffer effects of senior staff turnover</p> <p>Other effects will swamp the positive effects of further delegation eg pupil backgrounds</p> <p>Additional parent governors on governing bodies will not produce pupils who are best prepared for the wider community as parent governors have a limited perspective.</p>
<p>Planning processes adopted by the school</p>	<p>The planning process for school is bottom up and top down</p> <p>Parents have been involved in planning when the headteacher was newly appointed</p> <p>Plans are reviewed annually</p> <p>The School vision came from staff</p> <p>Staff get involved in planning</p> <p>There are lots of planning committees in school</p> <p>There is an established practice of staff and governors joint involvement in planning</p>
<p>Professional input</p>	<p>Plans come from school</p> <p>There is communication between head and staff governors</p> <p>The head is there to run school</p> <p>The head and staff are here all the time hence they know what is best</p> <p>The Senior Management Team are sometimes involved in</p>

<p>TABLE 2 SCHOOL B</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Professional input (cont.)</p>	<p>monitoring</p> <p>The Senior Management Team have to have the confidence of governors</p> <p>The head has instigated informal discussions which led to governors taking up issues</p> <p>The head is a key figure</p> <p>The School is the stronger partner</p>
<p>School ethos</p>	<p>There is little support by parents for governors</p> <p>There is little support by parents for PTA</p> <p>There is high criticism by parents of governors when they do things wrong</p> <p>There is little support from parents generally</p> <p>The school reputation is based upon pastoral care</p> <p>The school keeps pupils rejected by other schools</p> <p>There is a positive ethos at the school</p> <p>The Community accepts the school</p> <p>There is a range of involvement by parents</p> <p>It's a good school</p> <p>The school has lots of potential</p> <p>The shortage of money is big issue</p> <p>The head is involved in many things outside of school</p> <p>This is not a stale school</p> <p>The teachers are trying new things</p> <p>Governors being able to compare schools is good</p> <p>The pupils' attitudes determine the school ethos</p>

<p>TABLE 2 SCHOOL B</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>School ethos (cont.)</p>	<p>This is a school for all</p> <p>The academic results are good but not perceived to be so by community</p>
<p>Monitoring undertaken by the school</p>	<p>Classroom monitoring is an issue</p> <p>Classroom monitoring. was an issue last year</p> <p>The reluctance to monitor based upon not enough time</p>

Interpretation of the responses for school B

Governors of school B are less expansive in their definition of governance than school A. They identify support and fine tuning as two important functions. They have reservations about the legal position they hold. They are unable to function without some interference in the school and they have yet to come to terms with the awe in which some staff will hold them. They believe that the head should be able to direct them rather than vice versa. Governors effect this more limited role in a number of ways. They have no doubt that they get involved in everything but largely rubber stamp suggestions from the professionals. There is evidence of manipulation behind the chair by some governors in the past and possibly the professionals. Governors monitor the school almost entirely through the documentation and plans brought to them. They do appear to have made some limited use of objective measures of school performance. They are reticent to become more involved in areas that they feel will threaten staff. Within the school there is a reluctance to undertake classroom monitoring as it is seen to be too threatening. This again is evidence that they defer to the professionals at the expense of their legal position. There is little evidence of training being undertaken to a large degree or having an impact upon their thinking or practices. There has been little discussion about their involvement and boundaries to that involvement if any.

The vision for the school is clearly from the professionals and there are several statements expressing fears about increasing governors' responsibilities in the area of leadership

Generally the school exists with little explicit support from its community although it appears to be valued for its inclusivity. The performance of pupils in examinations is not a weakness but the community does not appear to value these outputs particularly. The ethos is however positive and the governors feel that the school has potential and a lot to offer its pupils.

Governors appear timid but supportive. They may be aware of their legal position but subsume the requirements of governance and are happy to be led by the professionals. Despite this passive stance they clearly indicated in the manner and content of their answers that the involvement they had with the school was vital and respected. Their monitoring of the plans and implementation of those plans they felt had an impact upon the school which was positive and contributed to the positive ethos of the school.

TABLE 3

Summary and categorisation of responses given by the governors of School C

Category	Responses made by governors
Role of governors as described by the sample governors	<p>To monitor the school</p> <p>To focus on curriculum</p> <p>To bring years of eternal experience in whatever field to help the school</p> <p>To take an overview of the school development</p> <p>To be challenging – to play devil's advocate, thereby sharpening up the plans and schemes being generated</p> <p>To support the head</p>

<p>TABLE 3 SCHOOL C</p> <p>(cont.)</p> <p>Role of governors as described by the sample governors (cont.)</p>	<p>To combine knowledge and discuss and amend policy</p> <p>To support the school</p> <p>To support the staff</p> <p>To assist the headteacher in achieving <u>his aims</u></p> <p>To ensure that the curriculum can be implemented – ensuring staffing, finance, rooms etc</p> <p>To be supportive but not directional</p> <p>Governors may come into their own if there are difficulties inside the school</p> <p>To make a cohesive effort to support and advise the headteacher regarding general directions</p>
<p>Means of effecting the role</p>	<p>There is an open relationship between governors and the head</p> <p>Governors are involved in target setting and planning early in the cycle</p> <p>Governors have a curriculum working party</p> <p>Governors are heavily involved in constructing policies – e.g. equal opportunities, school dress etc.</p> <p>Each governor brings particular areas of experience e.g. finance, to help the school</p> <p>Governors make their own interpretation of the heads reports</p> <p>Governors use natural intelligence</p> <p>To read carefully together and analyse documents and in the same groups to write documents</p>

<p>TABLE 3 SCHOOL C</p> <p>(cont.)</p> <p>Means of effecting the role</p> <p>(cont.)</p>	<p>Wide variety of involvement in the school by this governor</p> <p>– ad hoc visits, attending exhibitions, sub committees,</p> <p>visiting HT informally, taking ICT training course to better understand what the discussions are about</p> <p>Mechanism is through ensuring the right curriculum – note again the only school to mention this</p> <p>Statement that governors bring experience from outside in professional roles which are essential in their dealings with the school</p>
<p>Monitoring undertaken by governors</p>	<p>Governors monitor by attachment to departments</p> <p>Governors monitor levels of staffing – to ensure match between curriculum need and teacher supply</p> <p>Governors also monitor the curriculum to ensure it meets with school development plans</p> <p>Governors monitor by receiving reports and calling for revamps – different from others in that they ask for changes as a result of the reporting procedures</p> <p>Monitoring is done in a spirit of trust and collegiality</p> <p>OFSTED inspection is a spur to monitoring</p> <p>Monitoring is systematic through sub-committees</p> <p>Finance is easily monitored</p> <p>Curriculum is monitored by governors by examining test results and quantitative data systematically – again little reference elsewhere to such detailed involvement</p>

<p>TABLE 3 SCHOOL C (cont.)</p> <p>Monitoring undertaken by governors (cont.)</p>	<p>Governors do not directly observe lessons having made the judgement that staff would be suspicious</p>
<p>Training of governors</p>	<p>Training undertaken including as cited above training relating to curriculum understanding</p> <p>Governors have mostly been trained – certainly to basic level</p> <p>Governor training did not help governors much</p>
<p>Other factors influencing governors' impact</p>	<p>Parents take little part in the school</p> <p>Big spur to collegiality was the threat of closure</p> <p>Parents don't get involved much because all they want from the school is to baby sit</p> <p>Parents are involved in limited ways, Friends of the School, parents evenings, open access, receiving reports</p>
<p>Boundaries to governor involvement</p>	<p>Limit to governor involvement is the time they can give not their lack of support or limits imposed by school</p> <p>Governors have no boundaries to their involvement</p>
<p>Leadership of governors</p>	<p>Reference to HT trusting the chair to show leadership</p> <p>Governors know where the school is going</p> <p>Governors do not show leadership</p> <p>Mechanism for leading is for governors to agree aims for the school with school staff, let them get on with it and then monitor the result</p>

<p>TABLE 3 SCHOOL C</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Expanding the role of governors</p>	<p>Further delegation may distract governors from school improvement not help them focus upon it</p> <p>Further delegation not wanted</p> <p>Governors haven't time to get further involved</p> <p>Conflict between the demands placed upon governors' time and their working lives</p> <p>Further delegation would create full time governors</p> <p>Further delegation would put unrealistic pressure on governors and would not be practical</p> <p>Further leadership by governors not particularly welcome</p> <p>It is wrong for volunteers to take on more</p> <p>Being a governor costs the individual financially therefore only certain people can afford to be a governor</p> <p>Opening up governing Bodies to payment would attract people who may see it as a career move rather than as a means of community service. The quality of governance would therefore reduce</p>
<p>Planning processes adopted by the school</p>	<p>The school has task groups and are involved in them</p> <p>Planning involves staff in producing the school development plan along with governors</p> <p>The staff are involved in systematic planning in school</p>
<p>Professional input</p>	<p>The teachers are the experts</p> <p>There is a lot of respect for the headteacher</p> <p>The headteacher is a leader not a manager</p> <p>Sub-committees involve other staff</p>

<p>TABLE 3 SCHOOL C</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>School ethos</p>	<p>The school has few if any internal difficulties The school ethos is to move further into academic success</p> <p>The school is caring and challenging to pupils</p> <p>The school is a pretty good one</p>
<p>Monitoring undertaken by the school</p>	<p>Monitoring of teachers work takes place by taking in books and observing lessons</p> <p>Governor have knowledge of the schools monitoring system and that it is operational</p> <p>Knowledge that staff monitor teaching including lesson observation</p> <p>The age and experience of middle management creates respect in their departments</p>

Interpretation of the responses for school C

Governors' descriptions of their role were significantly different in school C than in the other schools. Although there is evidence that governors rely heavily upon the headteacher to instigate they did refer to a role relating to curriculum. They identified the integration of their own knowledge and experiences externally with school developments in order to take an overview of the school. Most significantly they spoke of challenging the school. This is very different from the timid, but supportive approach in school B for example, or the hostility evidenced in school E. The governors gave a clear impression that their work produced a cohesive effort which coupled with the collegiality within the school. Like other schools there are joint working parties. These governors, however, not only read the documents but they contribute to the authorship. There is a wider range of activity undertaken by governors not matched in the other schools.

The monitoring of the school is undertaken with a sense of purpose. They not only have contact with departments but these governors examine such things as staffing levels in the context of the curriculum plans. They systematically examine quantitative data including finance and exam results.

Governors have undertaken basic training but their focus has been in relation to understanding the curriculum.

These governors articulated the difficulties of increased delegation. Although such an increase in their work would not be welcome they are intellectually capable of taking on an increased and more challenging role since their current involvement is at such a high level.

Some common themes emerged from school C. The aims of the school, although contributed to by governors were seen by them as being largely those of the professionals, particularly the senior management team. They were clear that they left the day to day management entirely to the school and had trust in the headteacher to get on with the job.

These governors felt that intelligence is needed to make a contribution as governors. If schools cannot recruit or fail to recruit such individuals will they bring other qualities and other agendas.

These descriptors of how these governors act are far more explicit, rational and clear headed than those in the other five sample schools. All the responses made by these governors demonstrated an awareness of the school's situation and the means whereby individually and collectively they could contribute to its development.

Parents here have some involvement with the work of the school and there was an indication from the sample governors that, despite the general lack of interest seen in all the schools, parents get involved in slightly more activity.

Conflicts were again noted between the demands governance and of further

delegation and the work demands on governors. These governors felt that paying governors would be a mistake as previous experience indicates that governors may only attend to get the allowances, hence the nature of governors and governing bodies would change.

The sample governors spoke several times about collegiate activity within the school staff and between themselves and school staff.

There was evidence of governors having detailed knowledge of monitoring employed by the school to ensure excellent teaching. Such statements were not in evidence in the other schools.

Finally, these governors draw a very detailed, self aware, picture of the role they undertake and the way they set about working within the school. Their comments are rational at a higher level of abstraction than the other schools' governors and are linked to a framework of activity that has clearly been developed jointly with the school. They left no doubt that they contribute consistently and significantly to the work of school C and have a major impact upon its continuing development.

TABLE 4

Summary and categorisation of responses given by the governors of School D

Category	Responses made by governors
Role of governors as described by the sample governors	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="787 2101 1533 2162">To take an active role in decision making <li data-bbox="787 2192 1522 2252">To help to make school work in any way <li data-bbox="787 2298 1263 2358">To discuss things in depth <li data-bbox="787 2404 1253 2464">To ensure good education <li data-bbox="787 2509 1181 2570">To support the school <li data-bbox="787 2615 1688 2676">To make representations to agencies like the LEA

<p>TABLE 4 SCHOOL D</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Role of governors as described by the sample governors (cont.)</p>	<p>To add value to pupils</p> <p>To maintain standards</p> <p>To improve standards</p> <p>To ask questions not rubber stamp</p> <p>To keep teachers happy</p>
<p>Means of effecting the role</p>	<p>Governors take part in joint working parties</p> <p>Some governors are involved directly with lessons</p> <p>Involvement in lessons is very valuable as it allows a clear viewpoint of day to day working</p> <p>Governors have a variety of individual skills which enable them to contribute to the school's development - buildings and finance are two examples</p> <p>Governors have been involved with pupils as a mentors</p> <p>LMS requires governors to have skills and experience in business and finance</p> <p>Governors need to have faith in Senior management team</p> <p>Governors should trust headteacher</p> <p>Governors should question headteacher if they are concerned</p> <p>The governing body works by consensus</p> <p>Governors work with staff in combined task groups</p> <p>Governors have made use of industrial techniques in assisting the school building programme</p> <p>Governors try to get involved in anything</p>

<p>TABLE 4 SCHOOL D</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Means of effecting the role (cont.)</p>	<p>One governor has by choice attended parents evenings at his request</p> <p>One governor attends other open evenings too</p> <p>Meeting staff informally is the mechanism for monitoring the school</p> <p>Governors are involved in staff appointments</p> <p>Governors come into school for formal events</p> <p>Governors do not meet many staff</p> <p>Not all governors are involved in task groups</p> <p>Governors meet in sub-committees and have major inputs into finance, buildings, staff selection,</p> <p>Governors' involvement in school development plan is to receive, approve and maybe add bits</p> <p>Some governors are involved in joint task groups</p> <p>Governors have a limited input to offer in buildings and finance as well as education</p>
<p>Monitoring undertaken by governors</p>	<p>There is no clear idea how governors could monitor the school</p> <p>Some governors are uncertain how governors monitor</p> <p>Three ways are used to monitor the school –GCSE results, headteacher reports to governors and staff governors report to governors on the feelings of staff</p> <p>Monitoring by governors is through being involved in planning and then monitoring outcomes</p> <p>The concept of how governors could monitor educational</p>

<p>TABLE 4 SCHOOL D</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Monitoring undertaken by governors (cont.)</p>	<p>development by comparing intake scores with outcomes is known by governors but not yet happened</p> <p>Governors do not monitor the teaching</p> <p>The homework system was not working but now is following governors intervention</p> <p>Governors listen to staff needs</p> <p>The monitoring is limited to receiving reports from the head and, therefore, knowledge of the school is limited by what headteacher chooses to tell</p>
<p>Training of governors</p>	<p>Some training has been undertaken</p> <p>A forthcoming OFSTED inspection was a spur to training</p> <p>The threat of an OFSTED inspection was a spur to governors to attend training</p> <p>There is conflict between training needs and needs of employment – particularly shift work</p> <p>More training would be useful</p>
<p>Other factors influencing governors' impact</p>	<p>One governor feels that schools do not teach what they should for the wider community</p> <p>The role of governors has changed over 25 years</p> <p>LMS is the reason for change</p> <p>Governors prior to LMS attended for reasons other than school business</p> <p>Governors conduct themselves in a more business like way post-LMS</p> <p>Parents are involved through information to parents,</p>

<p>TABLE 4 SCHOOL D</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Other factors influencing governors' impact (cont.)</p>	<p>newsletters, open evenings school fairs and annual parents evening.</p> <p>Only a small number of interested parents become involved</p> <p>Governors are frustrated that the LEA does not provide suitable provision for some pupils</p> <p>Governors find letting the head know that governors are unhappy is difficult</p> <p>Staff turnover is a regular reason for the governing body to meet</p> <p>Governors attended annual parent governors meeting but no parents did</p> <p>The governing body contains community representatives like the vicar and the solicitor</p> <p>New value added approaches may let down least able</p> <p>The first term of governance is difficult and but during second term things get easier</p>
<p>Boundaries to governor involvement</p>	<p>There are no areas where governors are excluded from involvement or interest</p> <p>Governors should not be in school every day</p> <p>Governors should not try and solve problems individually– it should be done through collective decisions</p> <p>Governors know they should refer parental complaints to school rather than attempt to solve them individually</p> <p>Not all governors are involved in task groups</p>

<p>TABLE 4 SCHOOL D</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Leadership of governors</p>	<p>Governors criticised the school for not holding back from excluding pupils</p> <p>Governors have their vision of where school is going</p> <p>Governors should be passive and react to concerns not show initiative in leading school</p> <p>Leadership comes from chair, head and senior management</p> <p>Governors' approval of the school development plan is the single method of governors showing leadership</p> <p>Governors contribute to leadership as amateurs assisting then professionals</p>
<p>Expanding the role of governors</p>	<p>Governors would be happy to take on more leadership or delegation</p> <p>Further delegation might result in further under-funding by thin slicing of the cake</p> <p>Some governors are sceptical about further leadership</p> <p>Governance is already working and it does not need to be changed</p> <p>Governors have to run to stay where they are without further delegation</p> <p>Further delegation could go too far</p>
<p>Planning processes adopted by the school</p>	<p>Only some staff involved in planning</p> <p>Staff get involved if interested</p> <p>Staff are known to be involved in planning as evidenced in governors' reports.</p>

<p>TABLE 4 SCHOOL D</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Professional input</p>	<p>Professionals are there to lead</p> <p>The headteacher is open</p> <p>The headteacher is respected as innovative and a good manager</p> <p>The headteacher chooses to bring things to governors</p> <p>Staff should have the final decision in all things</p> <p>The headteacher should be left to run school and not be interfered with by governors</p> <p>The headteacher is trusted here</p> <p>The headteacher has done a good job</p> <p>The headteacher has common sense</p> <p>The headteacher contacts chair when he needs help</p> <p>The headteacher brought a concern about homework to the governors with a plan for action that they approved</p> <p>The professionals should be left to get on with it as they have their fingers on the pulse</p> <p>The headteacher is too articulate in presentations</p> <p>Governors are sometimes bored with headteacher – “he doesn’t know when to shut up!”</p> <p>The Senior management team are hard working and have respect of governors</p>
<p>School ethos</p>	<p>The School communicates with home well</p> <p>The School ethos is close to community</p> <p>There are good links with KS2</p> <p>The pupils are happy to transfer to this school</p>

<p>TABLE 4 SCHOOL D</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>School ethos (cont.)</p>	<p>The school has an ethos which is friendly and comfortable</p> <p>The ethos of the school is pretty comfortable</p> <p>The school is under difficulties caused by buildings works</p> <p>Some staff do not pull their weight</p> <p>This is a stable school</p>
<p>Monitoring undertaken by the school</p>	<p>OFSTED was critical of the school's lack of monitoring and a system was set up post OFSTED</p> <p>The School monitoring system is known by governors to have been set up,</p> <p>Evidence that there is some monitoring of teaching is in some of the planning presented to governors</p>

Interpretation of the responses for school D

Governors in school D articulated their role in limited ways. Although they referred to ensuring pupil achievement as one part of the role, they also explained the role in functional ways such as making representations and keeping staff happy. They are aware though that they are charged with an active role in ensuring quality education and are not there just to rubber stamp the ideas of the headteacher or the school.

These governors take part in joint working parties as in the other schools and there are a number who contribute to the formal curriculum as mentors and as a resource for the professionals to draw upon. Their qualifications outside of the school contribute to the development, particularly in the circumstance of this school. School D is currently experiencing a major upheaval as it moves to one site. The building programme is not going smoothly and governors clearly have had a major role in fighting battles with

several external agencies. Their view of the headteacher and senior management is based upon trust and they rarely question the judgements of the headteacher who is judged to be too articulate and at times boring. They did state that they would find it difficult to disagree with the headteacher even if they felt he was wrong. As in other schools there are a variety of contributions made by governors and a range of involvement. In this school one recently recruited governor takes a strong interest in parents' evenings and makes a point of being present with the prior permission of the headteacher.

Governors here are aware that they should monitor the work of the school but this activity is limited to receiving reports from the headteacher and acting upon his suggestions. Their skills in developing more objective measures are developing and they are aware that more quantitative comparative measures will be available for them to apply.

Training has been undertaken by some on a very limited basis. Here OFSTED spurred training as in other sample schools.

Four areas were cited as influencing impact. Governors who experienced governance pre and post LMS cited the changes as having a great influence on their work. They are particularly aware of their accountability to parents and others. They have frustrations developing suitable provision for more difficult pupils and find that the LEA has severe limitations on what can be offered. One governor pointed out the difficulties experienced as a new governor and the steep learning curve. There was some doubt that the quantitative measures being adopted to determine pupil progress would best serve the needs of the less able pupils.

Governors felt that there were no formal boundaries to their involvement other than individual meddling.

The description of leadership by these governors was very mixed. At most they

felt they held a vision in trust although the vision was developed by the school. They felt their role was mostly passive and reactive and as amateurs their single most important contribution was to approve the development plan. Despite this limited view of their leadership there was a clear indication that they would take on an expanded leadership role in future.

Governors' knowledge of the internal workings of this school was sketchy. In line with the above descriptions they depend heavily on major inputs from the headteacher and feel that they should defer to staff in the final analysis.

They describe the school as stable and comfortable with few difficulties apart from the building. They feel that they serve the community. They are aware though that the school should be further developing its self-review skills.

Overall the school is lead positively by the headteacher and governors contribute as dedicated but passive partners. The impact of governors is felt most strongly in the support they give to the school's representations to external agencies.

Table 5

Summary and categorisation of responses given by the governors of School E

Category	Responses made by governors
Role of governors as described by the sample	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To have sympathy with staff To attend meetings To reassure parents To check on the school management To scrutinise -justifying helps management to clarify school direction To flavour and fine tune management ideas

<p>TABLE 5 SCHOOL E</p> <p>(cont.)</p> <p>Role of governors as described by the sample</p> <p>(cont.)</p>	<p>To oversee the school</p> <p>To keep checks and tabs on professionals</p> <p>Description of role in terms of structures</p> <p>Indication that structures are satisfactory</p>
<p>Means of effecting the role</p>	<p>Attended main meetings and subs</p> <p>Governors rarely contradict management</p> <p>Governors' decision making is informed by knowledge of the community</p> <p>Governors attend functions</p> <p>Governors do debate at meetings</p> <p>Acknowledgement that governors have to compromise</p> <p>Role of sub-committees to deal with limited problems</p> <p>Role of sub-committees to approve before or after the event – rubber stamping</p> <p>Staffing is normally rubber stamping</p> <p>Governors have no input to vision/direction except at the end</p> <p>Chair is chair of all sub-committees</p> <p>Regular contact between chair and headteacher on behalf of the governors</p> <p>The influence of chair permeates throughout</p> <p>The chair works the headteacher</p> <p>The chair fixes things with headteacher outside of meetings</p> <p>The chair feels he is intellectually limited</p>

<p>TABLE 5 SCHOOL E</p> <p>(cont.)</p> <p>Means of effecting the role (cont.)</p>	<p>There is a need for information to flow between the professionals and governors</p> <p>The chair has informal contact with headteacher several times a week</p> <p>Co-opted governors are an opportunity to import expertise</p> <p>Governors come by invitation into school</p>
<p>Monitoring undertaken by governors</p>	<p>Monitoring is limited to reports being received</p> <p>Monitoring is done through sub committees</p>
<p>Training of governors</p>	<p>Guilt about not being trained</p> <p>Recognition that training is important</p> <p>Industrial experience seen as a qualification for governors and chair</p> <p>Conflict of interest between family, further study and need to have governor training</p>
<p>Other factors influencing governors' impact</p>	<p>Evidence that parent governors have particular contributions to make when considering pupil matters</p> <p>Annual parent governor meeting poorly attended – parents are either happy or disinterested</p> <p>Acknowledgement that parents do make representations to Governors when things are not to their liking</p> <p>Blame for pupil underachievement on intake</p> <p>Citing of poor relationships with primary schools</p> <p>Recognition that public statements to this effect caused concern with partners</p>

<p>TABLE 5 SCHOOL E</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Other factors influencing governors' impact (cont.)</p>	<p>Condemnation of primary schools</p> <p>Appalling record for education in the area for 30 years</p> <p>Recognition that the role of governors can lead to criticisms that will put people off being governors</p> <p>The role of the chair is different than the role of governors</p> <p>The chair/head relationship is important</p> <p>The chair has more influence than all others put together</p> <p>The chair has close relationship with the head and senior management team</p> <p>Chair fixes things before formal meetings behind the chair</p> <p>Governors who do not agree with the chair seen as a 'danger'</p> <p>Role of chair is distinct from role as a governor</p> <p>Chair needs support of governors</p> <p>Sees chair as non-executive</p> <p>Roles of chair and headteacher to propel or lead the school</p> <p>Motives of some governors questioned</p> <p>Recognition that time commitments limit</p> <p>Indication that previous governors and head were failing and new chair was recruited as saviour</p>
<p>Boundaries to governor involvement</p>	<p>Reservation about being involved in areas outside prior experience</p> <p>Indication that prior knowledge could but should not get in the way</p> <p>Concern about drawing lines which define the limit to</p>

TABLE 5 SCHOOL E	governors work
cont.	Teacher governors have no go areas involving staffing issues
Boundaries to governor	
involvement (cont.)	Teacher governors state that their position is different in this school than in others that they know
	Teacher governors are second class governors here
	Tension within the governing Body
	Disagreement with system
	No formal statement of teacher governor second class status
	Role of Teacher governors determined without consultation
	The sub-committees that should involve teacher governors rarely meet
	The sub-committees that influence the school most do not have teacher governors serving on them
	Teacher governors are disappointed and frustrated at lack of opportunity to make a contribution in, for example, exclusions
	Lay people should not have a role in professional management of school
	There are conflicts between governors and their working commitments
	For three years the chair spent twenty four hours a week in the school

<p>TABLE 5 SCHOOL E</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Leadership of governors</p>	<p>Governors do not show leadership</p> <p>There is a limitation to governors' abilities to lead due to limited budgets</p> <p>Red tape gets in the way of leadership</p> <p>Governors have participated in standard setting for pupils and staff</p> <p>A force for change came from staff and governors during target setting</p> <p>A common vision can only be carried through by one person ie the chair</p> <p>Policies and expectations need to be laid out</p> <p>The route for improvement is from the head to the chair who then establishes how the problem is to be solved</p>
<p>Expanding the role of governors</p>	<p>There is a concern about doing more</p> <p>It would take more time</p> <p>The present situation works and cannot be improved</p> <p>Further delegation will bring more problems than solves – particularly in parents perceptions</p> <p>The success of further delegation depends on who makes final decisions</p> <p>The Senior Management Team should make final decisions</p> <p>Governors are amateurs and should not be involved</p> <p>If further delegation takes place the increased responsibilities should be given to the chair</p>

<p>TABLE 5 SCHOOL E</p> <p>(cont.)</p> <p>Planning processes adopted by the school</p>	<p>There are teams within school used in planning</p> <p>The school has systematic staff involvement in planning</p> <p>There is variance in the degree of input by staff to this system</p> <p>The vision comes from senior management team and is then put into the Investors in People system</p> <p>Staff do contribute to planning</p> <p>Staff do get slapped down</p> <p>Benefits come from staff involvement in formal systems</p>
<p>Professional input</p>	<p>There is trust in headteacher</p> <p>The ideas come from management not governors</p> <p>The curriculum is the domain of professionals</p> <p>There is confidence in the headteacher</p> <p>The headteacher is appointed to manage</p> <p>The headteacher should have access to chair</p> <p>The headteacher's role is man management</p>
<p>School ethos</p>	<p>The ethos has improved recently</p> <p>The rebuilding and all its problems contribute to ethos</p> <p>Staff are able to work better under better conditions</p> <p>The ethos could improve</p> <p>The poor morale was present prior to the move to a single site</p> <p>There have been harsh words from management at that time</p>

<p>TABLE 5 SCHOOL E</p> <p>(cont.)</p> <p>School ethos (cont.)</p>	<p>There has been strong direction from head</p> <p>Prior to move onto a single site there was much inter-personnel support</p> <p>The ethos is improving</p> <p>Prior to the move to a single site the situation was poor</p> <p>Major changes were needed</p> <p>The school is unique</p> <p>The School started the national literacy campaign and it was then taken up across the country</p>
<p>Monitoring undertaken by the school</p>	<p>No evidence or comments made</p>

Interpretation of the responses for school E

The responses given by governors in School E are highly individual and indicate a great difference between their role and impact and that of governors in other sample schools.

Governors here describe the role in similar terms to other schools with a greater emphasis on scrutiny and keeping staff and parents happy. They describe the typical structures of sub committees and approval of school generated suggestions. The role of the chair of governors is pervasive however. The chair claims to be the arbiter of vision and through his role in chairing all committees ensures continuity of aims. This continuity is backed up by machinations behind the chair, exclusion of staff viewpoints from crucial decisions, an awareness of intellectual limitations on his part, and a very close monitoring and directing of the headteacher. This heavy hand, referenced in the OFSTED report, could be positive or negative. The chair himself cited with some pride the public

criticisms he makes of the primary partner schools and the negative effects that resulted. He also states that he was recruited to save the school from failing and that the school has led the way in the field of literacy. These exaggerated claims do not bear examination. It is clear that there is a major impact from the chair which appears to swamp the work of other governors. Those governors who disagree with his viewpoint, particularly teacher governors, are described by the chair as a threat and are managed out of the discussions. Governors as a whole made little comment on mechanisms for monitoring the school and have had little relevant training. The leadership offered is limited to that from the chair. There was no straight answer to the question concerning additional delegation with concern being expressed about the need for change and the need to delegate further functions to the staff and chair in order to make it work.

Governors did describe the school as functioning well in planning terms. It has Investors in People status and on paper has a working system that involves all staff in a system of self review. The strengths of such a system are in staff development but need to be carefully coupled to a whole school vision in order to ensure develop in line with whole school need. Curiously, although governors know about the IIP process they were unable to articulate any knowledge of monitoring of teaching and learning being undertaken by staff.

Overall, school E presents a very different picture from any of the other schools. The impact that governors have is very limited by what the chair and the headteacher, who takes instruction from the chair, allow. It is clear that the chair holds a vision of what the school should do and this, coupled with his limited intellectual ability, have huge impacts upon the development of the school and its achievements.

TABLE 6

Summary and categorisation of responses given by the governors of School F

Category	Responses made by governors
<p>Role of governors as described by the sample governors</p>	<p>To support the staff</p> <p>To support the headteacher</p> <p>To act as a sounding board for ideas</p> <p>To give opinions if necessary</p> <p>To discuss plans</p> <p>To 'look' at the school</p> <p>To improve the school's reputation</p> <p>To ensure the school delivers a good education</p> <p>To aim for a better education for pupils</p> <p>To bring ideas although its usually the staff who do this</p> <p>The role is partly determined by the style of the headteacher</p> <p>The exact role of governors in school C is uncertain</p> <p>No explicit guidance has been given about their role</p> <p>The role is limited</p>
<p>Means of effecting the role</p>	<p>Through being involved in anything by request</p> <p>Through reading the papers before the meeting</p> <p>Through taking part in small groups of governors – action planning</p> <p>Through taking part in task groups with staff</p> <p>Governors are involved in the PTA</p>

<p>TABLE 6 SCHOOL F</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Means of effecting the role (cont.)</p>	<p>Governors are involved in some SEN provision</p> <p>Governors need a big commitment to the school to be effective</p> <p>Through 'sitting and thinking'</p> <p>The chair is more involved than other governors</p>
<p>Monitoring undertaken by governors</p>	<p>Governors monitor the school through the reports, examining them for signs of progress and future directions</p> <p>Governors would not undertake direct observation unless invited, although they feel that they could go into classrooms</p> <p>Governors who are involved in classrooms state that this informs them about the school</p> <p>Governors would find direct observation difficult</p> <p>The only systematic monitoring is through the termly report of the headteacher</p> <p>Parent governors monitor the school by listening to their childrens' descriptions of staff</p> <p>Governors are informed about the school by rumour and are aware that this source presents a limited viewpoint</p>
<p>Training of governors</p>	<p>Training takes place largely through learning as you go along</p> <p>Governors are aware that training exists</p> <p>There is dissatisfaction with training because it is inappropriate</p>

<p>TABLE 6 SCHOOL F</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Training of governors (cont.)</p>	<p>The headteacher should do more to encourage governors to take part in training</p> <p>Some governors undertake no external training</p> <p>The forthcoming OFSTED inspection was a spur to internal training sessions being organised by the headteacher and well attended</p> <p>Governors expressed individual guilt that, although courses are available, they do not attend: conflicts between the need to train and the needs of home and professional lives cited as the reason</p>
<p>External influences on governor effectiveness</p>	<p>Parental governors are in a special position to take an overview although they are not necessarily a voice for other parents</p> <p>Parent governors here are able to speak their mind because they are not answerable to any outside power group, other governors have to 'tow the line'</p> <p>Membership of certain committees provides a better opportunity for some governors to monitor the school</p> <p>The Local Authority have a big hold on governors – they nominate a significant number of governors to this governing body</p> <p>The lack of leadership shown by some governors is explained by them being LEA nominated governors who are just put on the governing body for the sake of filling the place.</p>

<p>TABLE 6 SCHOOL F</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Boundaries to governor involvement</p>	<p>Governors identified boundaries as imposed externally to the school</p> <p>No explicit boundaries have been discussed or set but boundaries to involvement are seen as being set by either the LEA or the school itself</p> <p>Some governors feel that they can say and do what they wish without boundaries and that the setting of boundaries would 'knock them back'</p>
<p>Leadership of governors</p>	<p>Governors here do not show leadership but they should</p> <p>Leadership means having a voice rather than being in law all powerful</p> <p>The headteacher is the leader</p>
<p>Expanding the role of governors</p>	<p>More training will be needed for this</p> <p>Governors should be paid if the role is increased</p> <p>Governors need to take their role more seriously</p> <p>Paying governors would be negative as it would attract people for the wrong reasons</p> <p>Governors as a whole will be more important</p> <p>Leadership by governors will be a daunting prospect</p> <p>Further responsibilities with greater delegation is a means for obtaining better value for money by reducing overheads and bureaucracy</p> <p>Generally further responsibility would be welcomed</p>
<p>Planning processes adopted by the school</p>	<p>Governors are uncertain how the school plans and involves staff in planning</p>

<p>TABLE 6 SCHOOL F</p> <p>cont.</p> <p>Planning processes adopted by the school (cont.)</p>	<p>Governors have some general awareness of the internal mechanisms for planning acquired incidentally</p>
<p>Professional input</p>	<p>Suggestions are put by the head or to the head who approves them or not</p> <p>Senior staff know more than the governors therefore their opinions are more important</p> <p>The headteacher determines the role of the governing body</p>
<p>School ethos</p>	<p>Improved over time</p> <p>Child centred – evidenced by easy transfer from primary and good SEN procedures</p> <p>A positive ethos – the school is ‘can do’</p> <p>The school still has weaknesses however</p> <p>A good climate linked to improvement over a period of time</p> <p>Positive improvements are down to the head and senior staff not governors</p>
<p>Monitoring undertaken by the school</p>	<p>Governors have little awareness about how the school monitors the work of teachers in the classroom</p> <p>Governors glimpse some evidence of the school planning processes through other involvement</p>

Interpretation of the responses for school F

Governors in this school are clearly operating passively. They take the lead from the headteacher and have not considered their role carefully. There is a fundamental misunderstanding of how the law should be interpreted to guide their actions. Their knowledge of the school is limited to what they are told by senior staff and what they glean from informal contact. Great trust is placed in the head, which is not misplaced as there have been improvements during the last few years, and the chair is seen to have greater influence than the rest of the governors. Governors defer to the head's direction and guidance and are being managed by the head. No explicit boundaries have been discussed and at no time have governors had to be instructed not to be involved. Governors do not undertake direct observation of the school and are not aware of systems, which are used internally to monitor teaching. The lack of training undertaken by the governing body, except when OFSTED loomed, may influence their capability to act in any leading role other than examining reports and rubber stamping suggestions. External agendas and influences are part of the political dynamic of this governing body. Successes achieved by the school as evidenced by the OFSTED report and external examinations appear to be largely the work of the professionals rather than through a significant impact from the governing body. Despite reservations about the capability the governors feel they have to respond to greater challenges, there is an indication that further delegation would be seen as an opportunity. Whilst raising achievement was seen as a major theme for governors, the mechanisms for this are viewed by them as monitoring the work of the school as filtered through the head.

3. The published performance data on the six sample schools

The examination data is available in the public domain for all schools for the last five years. In addition, the LEA in which these schools are situated has published the percentage of pupils entitled to free school meals in the examination year. The LEA's secondary schools GCSE results for the last three years against each school's free school meals percentage were obtained and appear in appendix B. A regression line for each plot was generated enabling residuals for the six sample schools to be calculated illustrating how far from the regression line the results lay. These regression lines for all schools in the LEA are contained in Appendix C for the last three years. Schools A and B have between 5 and 10% of pupils entitled to free school meals and are both above the line for mean points score and %5+A*-C for all three years. School C has between 25 and 30% of pupils entitled to free school meals but in all three years lies very significantly above the line. School D has a variation between the three years from around 10% FSM to around 20% FSM. For two of the three years School D's scores were close to the regression line and for one year significantly above the line. School E has between 20 and 25% FSM for the three years and in all three years in both measures lies below the line. School F has between 15 and 20% FSM and in all three years and in both measures lies close to the regression line.

One measure of effectiveness is the residual against the regression. On this basis, in line with Mortimore's statements that effective schools produce results for students that are better than might be expected given the context, the rank order of effectiveness for the six sample schools is:-

C with its large positive residual followed by A,B,D, F and then E with a large negative residual.

The most important difference in the above is that school C serves as needy an area as school E, as measured by free school meal entitlement, and yet performs at or near the same level as schools A and B. Moreover, school E serves a similar area to school C and yet trails all schools in the sample. Comparisons of governor activity in these two extreme cases will prove illuminating later.

4. Data contained within the OFSTED reports for the six schools

The reports available contain judgements of the overall efficiency and effectiveness of the schools. In addition there are specific references to the activities of governors. Two of the schools were inspected under the New Framework for Inspection and the remaining schools were inspected under the original framework. It was not therefore possible to obtain a complete set of scores for those items under section 6 for all six schools.

None of the sample schools were identified as failing or giving cause for serious concern. One school, School E, had major weaknesses that are yet to be addressed.

School A

Paragraph 5 The report states that this school *is* a very successful school, despite constraints imposed by a split site and it is highly valued by parents and the community. Standards of achievement were identified as predominantly above average and often very good. GCSE and A-level results are consistently much higher than county and national averages.

Paragraph 6 The quality of the education provided at all stages was described as overwhelmingly

sound and often good or very good. Pupils were well taught within an ethos that is conducive to effective learning. The report identified a need in some areas of the curriculum to introduce greater variation in the teaching approaches used.

Paragraph 7 The report states that relationships, both within the classroom and elsewhere are excellent, as are the standards of behaviour. These factors help to promote the established values within the school that reflects its clearly stated aims.

Paragraph 9 The report states that the school benefits from sound leadership from the senior staff and governors. Although there is no further explanation of how the school benefits from governors leadership the report goes on immediately to state that finances are managed effectively and monitored rigorously. It is simplistic, but perhaps accurate to suggest that financial leadership is the only form of governor leadership that the OFSTED framework can identify.

Paragraph 28 The report goes on again to link financial management with governor leadership. It states that the governing body and its finance committee work well within the constraints of the existing development plan. A close watch is kept on expenditure. In this respect the financial staff keep the governors well informed of short-term and medium-term options. OFSTED then goes on to acknowledge that the governing body should be more involved in planning the school's long-term strategy and in requesting costed options when examining the school's longer-term development on such issues as the split site. This compares unfavourably with the results of the semi-structured interviews where these governors believe that they are involved with planning.

Paragraph 45 states that there is a recent school policy on behaviour agreed by the school governors. The description is in line with the statements governors made in describing their role in moderating draft policy rather than generating their own drafts. The code of conduct is brief and sensible and is satisfactorily conveyed to pupils.

Paragraph 161 The governors discharge their responsibilities well with regard to the legal requirements of the National Curriculum, though the teaching of religious education does not meet legal demands. Inspectors noted that the governors could play a greater role in oversight of curriculum planning, building on the positive links that have been made with subject departments.

Paragraph 171 The governing body discharges its legal obligations effectively. There is an appropriate range of committees, which report to the full governing body. Governors are linked with subject departments, attend meetings on a twice termly basis and are well informed about the life of the school. It is worth noting that whilst these links exist, there is no rigorous use of these links by governors to monitor the work of the school.

Paragraph 176 The overall management of the school is sound, though governors should ensure that the opportunities afforded by the recent restructuring of the senior management team are not lost by the overloading of objectives and the administration load attached to some senior posts.

Key issues for action

To raise further the standards of work and the quality of learning and provision the governors and senior management should:

- strengthen the relationship between the school development plan and costing implications;
- pay due regard to those Health and Safety issues highlighted in the report;
Paragraphs: 76, 121, 181, 182, 183, 185 and 188;
- review the management of information technology resources to improve provision across the curriculum and accompany this with appropriate in-service training for staff;

- review the curriculum and the timetable to make more effective use of resources and provide for the needs of all pupils especially those with special educational needs;
- ensure that the provision for collective worship meets legal requirements and religious education at Key Stage 4 and post-16 meets recommended minimum time to deliver the Agreed Syllabus;
- improve the assessment, recording and reporting and the Record of Achievement systems throughout the school to ensure uniformity and effectiveness;
- review the present management and communication structure of the school to facilitate the effective implementation of new and identified initiatives.

Summary School A

This report suggests an effective school producing good outcomes. Governors' activities are reported largely in terms of legal and financial responsibilities. The opportunities for governors to be more involved through departmental links with the school are highlighted.

School B

Paragraph 5. School B provides a very good education for its pupils and students.

Standards in the school are good overall. By the end of Key Stage 3 most 14 year-old pupils achieve in line with or above the standards set by the National Curriculum.

Paragraph 9. OFSTED states that the management and administration of the school are good. However, it goes on to state that there is a lack of shared understanding of the role of head of faculty that reduces the effectiveness of this level of management. The head teacher and senior management team provides positive leadership for the school. It is worth noting that this inspection omits governors from this section.

Paragraph 42. As in school A the report states that governors are provided with regular information concerning financial planning and this enables them to develop strategies for expenditure which fully reflect the curriculum, staffing and environmental needs of the school. Whilst this sentence again casts governors in a legal and financial role it does go on to couple the activities with educational and curriculum decisions.

Paragraph 43. Staff and governors are fully consulted throughout this planning process which results in the production of a comprehensive school development plan with clearly established priorities for expenditure.

Paragraph 56. There is a comprehensive policy on behaviour formulated by staff, pupils, parents and governors that is implemented and monitored through the house system.

Paragraph 162. The school's aims are clearly set out in the prospectus for parents and pupils. They were the outcome of the staff and governors working together to produce a clear sense of direction for the school. These combines a drive for high educational standards with an intention to develop well balanced, caring individuals. The ethos of the school, with its industrious atmosphere, good relationships and behaviour is a positive indication of the success achieved by governors and staff in meeting these aims.

Key issues for action

To raise further the standard of work and the quality of provision the governors and senior managers should:

- improve the match of work to pupils' abilities at Key Stage 3, particularly in aspects of
- English, mathematics, modern foreign languages and IT; and the arrangements for design and technology at Key Stage 4;
- pursue the school's targets of improving the provision for IT and the quality and use of the library to support independent learning;

- improve the school's provision for pupils' spiritual development;
- review and clarify the role of head of faculty;
- pursue the school's target of further strengthening pastoral care through consistency of approach across the family units;
- ensure that the school complies with statutory requirements for collective worship and RE.

Summary School B

This report illuminates an effective school that produces acceptable outcomes. The leadership for the school is seen to rest with senior staff and governors have a role to play as consultants and moderators.

School C

Paragraph 1. The report states that school C provides a good education for its pupils with some very good features. The management team has shown a willingness to pursue strategies for school improvement and these have been increasingly effective.

Paragraph 5. The report goes on to state that the management planning process is very effective but does not amplify this statement. The governing body fulfils its legal responsibilities and gives a clear sense of direction. The head teacher and senior staff provide a clear vision and purposeful and positive leadership. Financial management is very good. The school

gives good value for money. Unlike the two previous reports, this is the first report to identify leadership as a joint activity of senior staff and governors.

Paragraph 44. The staff, head teacher and governors work well together as a team to provide a caring and industrious ethos. The success of this effort is readily evident in the behaviour and relationships seen in lessons and throughout the school generally.

Paragraph 49. As in Paragraph 5 the report acknowledges that the head teacher and governors

work closely together to ensure an effective deployment of financial resources to support the development of the school.

Key Issues for action

The school should:

- refine and develop further the practice by which special educational needs are identified and provision made, in order to ensure that all pupils make the progress of which they are capable;
- review the allocation of resources and support for learning in the light of the school's priorities;
- consolidate the now well-established and effective strategies for raising pupils' achievement with a focus on high expectations in all lessons;
- ensure that the provision for collective worship meets statutory requirements.

Summary School C

This school too is reported as effective. The report differs from the previous two in that it identifies the leadership shown by senior staff and governors is jointly owned and goes beyond the financial and legal.

School D

Paragraph 1. The report states that overall school D provides a good education for its pupils and students. It has had a period of falling numbers in the main school and of staffing reductions. Recent results have shown steady improvement. The school has recognised the issues identified in this report and is fully capable of tackling them.

Paragraph 25. The governing body, head teacher and senior managers have a clear vision and a strong sense of direction, which they have been largely successful in communicating to staff, students and pupils. They have expressed their determination to raise standards and to have monitoring arrangements in place to ensure that policies are implemented.

Paragraph 32. The provision for SEN has some unsatisfactory features. The SEN co-ordinator and SEN governor are both new in post. The SEN policy has not been updated and progress on SEN is not reported to parents in the governors' annual report. Some Statements have not been subject to the required annual review.

Paragraph 33. The governing body fulfils its statutory obligations except for some aspects of SEN provision, for the requirements for a daily act of collective worship and for the provision of RE in sixth form.

Paragraph 88. The governing body, head teacher and senior managers have a clear vision and a strong sense of direction, which they have been largely successful in communicating to staff, students and pupils. The governors are clear that the school's 3-year development plan and annual management plan prepared for them by the senior management group are their responsibility. The plans are monitored through updating in the head teacher's termly reports. The governors work closely with the senior management group, the finance officer, and the co-ordinator for special educational needs.

Key issues for action

- improve the attainment of lower-attaining pupils, of whom a high proportion is boys, particularly in literacy, numeracy and the skills of information technology;
- improve the procedures for identifying, assessing and supporting pupils with special educational needs;

- ensure that all teachers plan their lessons so as to match work to the needs of all the pupils and to focus on progress in knowledge, understanding and skills;
- improve procedures for identifying and meeting teachers' training needs, with particular emphasis on the subjects they are expected to teach and manage;
- clarify and reinforce the roles of managers at all levels in planning and implementing developments and in monitoring the quality of teaching and learning;
- meet the statutory requirements for SEN provision, collective worship and for RE in the sixth form.

Summary School D

This report is critical of one aspect of governors' responsibilities in particular, SEN. It shows a school where the plans are again developed internally and adopted by governors rather than through governors' planning processes. The outcomes are stated as improving and are therefore not as satisfactory as the previous three schools.

School E

Paragraph 2. The report acknowledges that the school has been established on a single site and the ethos has improved considerably. The school has a clear perception of the need to address important issues of low attainment and attendance and there are well constructed plans to tackle these areas of school development. The governors, head teacher and staff are working well together and there are signs of improvement. The school has several good features but there are still some significant weaknesses to be addressed.

Paragraph 22 The report identifies problems associated with long-term absence of staff, which are also being addressed by the governors and senior management. It directs that there should be further close monitoring of this situation.

Paragraph 48. The head teacher and chair of governors provide the school with positive leadership. They have a shared vision for the school and, with strong support from the two deputies and members of the senior management team, provide a clear framework for taking the school forward.

Paragraph 134. Following Paragraph 48 the report states that the head teacher and chair of governors provide the school with positive leadership. This aspect of the school is further evidenced from the semi-structured interviews. They have a shared vision for the school and, together with strong support from the two deputies and members of the senior management team, provide a clear framework for taking the school forward.

Paragraph 135 The chair of governors takes an active role in all aspects of the work of the school and ably provides chairmanship of all the main sub-committees. The governing body meets all its statutory requirements.

Key issues for action

In order to sustain progress being made to improve the school, the governing body, head teacher and staff should:

- raise standards of attainment in all subjects;
- improve the quality of teaching in art, IT and modern foreign languages;
- improve the co-ordination of the delivery of IT in Key Stage 3 to ensure there is progression and continuity in the development of skills and knowledge;
- improve pupils' attendance and punctuality;
- pursue the school's target of developing the role of form tutors in monitoring and supporting pupils' academic progress, attendance and behaviour;
- establish an effective monitoring system to ensure that provision identified in Individual Education Plans is fully met;

- broaden the curriculum at Key Stage 4 to provide alternative accredited courses in particular for those for whom GCSE is not appropriate.

Summary School E

This school has difficulties associated with its previously poor buildings and staffing absence problems. Its outcomes are not satisfactory in the ways that the previous four reports demonstrate and the significant weaknesses stated give cause for concern. The report does not describe the school as effective. In addition, there is a very strong working relationship between the head and the chair of governors. Together they provide very strong leadership in ways that are not present in any of the previous four reports.

School F

Paragraph 1 This is a 'good school' which is continuing to improve the quality of education and the standards reached by all its pupils. Its headteacher and staff are dedicated to improving the lives and opportunities of the pupils, by creating a positive environment for achievement and social development. It is a happy school with good relationships between pupils and staff.

Paragraph 30 The school is strongly led by the headteacher, and has a clear positive ethos based on mutual respect, a concern to create a secure and reliable learning environment, and on celebrating achievement. This ethos has the support of staff and governors, and has earned the trust of pupils and parents. There has been a clear sense of direction for the school that has resulted in considerable development of staff, pupil numbers and levels of attainment over the last few years. The lack of a coherent strategic plan, however, limits the capacity of governors to monitor developments or lead the school forward over the next few years.

Paragraph 32 Leadership by the headteacher and his senior managers is committed and responsive. It has created and maintained a culture that is achieving considerable success. The governors, who are actively involved in the school and have created appropriate working groups and committees, are very supportive of the school.

Paragraph 109 Attendance is carefully monitored each day by the educational welfare officer, who also offers support to pupils and parents. There are a variety of good award schemes for work and attendance culminating in a governors' award.

Paragraph 118 The school is strongly led by the headteacher and senior management team. There is a positive ethos based on mutual respect, a concern to create a secure and reliable learning environment, and a celebration of achievement. This ethos has the support of staff and governors, and has earned the trust of pupils and parents. There has been a clear sense of direction for the school that has resulted in considerable development of staff, pupil numbers and levels of attainment over the last few years.

Paragraph 119 While there are many continuing developments and changes underway clearly expressed in the current development plan, and there are some longer term targets for raising achievement, the school does not have a well articulated strategic plan to take it forward over the next few years. This makes it difficult for the governors to maintain a clear overview of school development in the longer term. The one-year plan does not show how the three-year targets are to be achieved.

Paragraph 121 The current school development plan has within it plans for specific subjects. While many of these plans are costed, the criteria for measuring their success in terms of their impact on the quality of education and on pupils' attainment and progress are often too general. For example, criteria such as 'the establishment of a modern information technology learning experience' do not tell us what this will consist of, or what impact it will have on attainment and progress if successful. This lack of consistency

and precision will make it difficult for staff and governors to accurately monitor progress and the impact of decisions they have taken.

Paragraph 123 The governors have made many good appointments and support the professional development of all staff.

Paragraph 124 Leadership by the headteacher and the senior managers is committed and responsive. It has created and maintained a culture that is achieving considerable success. The senior management team knows the school's strengths and are analysing and reviewing where improvement is needed. The governors, who are actively involved in the school and who have created appropriate working groups and committees, are very supportive of the school.

Paragraph 141 The governors, for the most part, fulfil their statutory responsibilities and work closely and supportively with the headteacher and senior staff. The main recommendations in the 1996 audit report have been implemented. The last annual report to parents did not show how the grant for special educational needs is used.

Key issues for action

In order to raise standards of attainment and improve the quality of education even further, the headteacher and governors should take the following actions:

- further develop the curriculum for lower attaining pupils, and find a means for it to lead to recognised qualifications.
- improve reading and writing by an increased emphasis in a range of subjects, particularly for younger pupils whose literacy skills are not well developed.
- improve opportunities for the use of information technology by providing more computer equipment and increasing the time for pupils to learn and apply skills.
- improve strategic planning, supported by clearer targets and success criteria and more thorough staff development linked to major priorities.

- enrich the curriculum in the creative arts, including more opportunities for dance and drama in lessons and through extra-curricular activities and special events.
- seek an improvement in funding in order to improve resource levels, including information technology, and non-teaching staff.

Summary School F

This school is effective. It has a caring and productive atmosphere. The report, whilst highlighting the excellent leadership shown by the head and the senior team, relegates the governors into a supportive, passive role. The shortfall of the developments is their lack of detailed objectives and the inability of governors therefore to plan, spend and monitor the implementation of the plans.

6. Conclusion

This chapter presented what a sample of professionals describes as effective governance. The range of activities that governors take part in across the country is large. However, the questionnaire results produce a description of governor activity that can claim to be a template of governance. Setting the descriptions of the six sample school governors of their activities against this template produces contrasts, which will be described in the next chapter. It has examined in detail the knowledge of governance of governors and headteachers within the context of their own schools. It has summarised the OFSTED data for these six schools and their performance, as published in league tables, over three recent years when those governors were in post. The final, following chapters will attempt to identify areas where governors in those schools may be affecting the school's performance in the light of this database and previously described literature.

Chapter 5

1. Analysis of the findings and their relationships to the literature base

This chapter will explore the evidence from the research that supports the concepts contained in the literature base. It will identify areas too that do not support the assertions in the literature. The data will also be analysed in the light of the effective schools literature in an attempt to differentiate the relative effectiveness of the six sample schools. From these three areas the six sample schools will be compared in an attempt to differentiate their governors' activities, styles and modes of operating. Finally, through examination of the particular data of the two outlier schools, patterns that differentiate governor effectiveness will be obtained. In the final chapter this will lead to conclusions, directions for further research and questions to be posed.

2. Support for the literature base on governance from the research data

The views of Kogan *et al.*(1984) are supported both by the data contained in the questionnaire and the semi structured interviews. Despite the fact that this research predated LMS by several years, the majority of governors in the six sample schools expressed their feelings that the principal roles were advising and supporting the school. The SHA survey produced many comments to illustrate the supportive nature of governors and their value as advisers to the professionals. It is interesting that both the non-professionals and the professionals were comfortable with this light touch, almost passive governance. Two quotes from the interviews illustrate this directly: -

“We should be there supporting.”

and....

“Governors should not be taking over from staff.”

Levacic (1995) is also supported from the data particularly with her descriptions of the governance role as supportive and advisory. There are many statements made from the interviews that identify a major contribution from governors relating to their particular expertise and professional experience. Several statements were made during interviews that illustrated that governors felt their value lay in bringing this outside experience to the table and, by implication, that they were less happy advising on areas outside their direct prior experience. For example: -

“I can advise on business matters.”

This too supports the notion that schools in deprived areas find recruiting suitably qualified governors difficult. The work undertaken by such governing bodies therefore may be of lesser quality. Keys and Fernandes (1990) and Earley (1994) are supported in the semi structured interview data. The schools with the lowest percentage of free school meals had governors drawn from professions. One governor in one of the schools with the highest free school meal percentage added a further complication to this by stating that: -

“The LEA governors are put in to make the school toe the line.”

If independent and creative thinking is required from governing bodies in their strategic development, then the contribution made by governors, whose sole purpose is to control in this fashion, may not be the best way of ensuring school improvement.

Throughout the semi-structured interview data there is a clear pattern that governor training is limited. This echoes the findings of Baginsky, Baker and Cleave (1991). The training in the sample schools, where it took place, was almost entirely at the induction level. Only one governor mentioned that another governor on their governing body undertook more advanced training. The questionnaire, however, did produce some statements from headteachers that supports the notion that it is context specific training

produced by the headteacher that may be the most valuable to governors and the school. An interesting statement from a governor might indicate why the take up of training is so limited: -

“It is wonderful how creative (LEA governor training) people can be when their job is threatened.”

This governor clearly felt that the courses produced by the LEA were invented for purposes other than governor training. Another governor indicated guilt that she knew how to access training but through pressure of time and lack of immediate necessity she was not trained: -

“The training manuals are around and I should go on some of them (sic).”

Deem, Brehony and Heath's (1995) findings are supported in the six sample schools as evidenced by the OFSTED reports. All six reports state that the governors are involved in monitoring to an extent. The reports, however, identify in almost all cases a lack of detailed costings for projects which blocks governors and professionals from properly evaluating their plans once implemented. For example one report (OFSTED Ref. No. 114296 April 1998) states that:-

“While many of these plans are costed, the criteria for measuring their success in terms of their impact on the quality of education and on pupils' attainment and progress are often too general. For example, criteria such as ‘the establishment of a modern information technology learning experience’ do not tell us what this will consist of, or what impact it will have on attainment and progress if successful. This lack of consistency and precision will make it difficult for staff and governors to accurately monitor progress and the impact of decisions they have taken.” (p23)

OFSTED (1995d) makes reference to the role of governors as the school's 'critical friend'. This viewpoint of governance was brought out strongly in the SHA questionnaire. Several respondents identified this as a role quite distinct from the four the questionnaire prompted. This viewpoint of governance gives some concerns, however. If the term is applied to a collective then such a notion may be viable. The reality is that governing bodies rarely operate with a single mind. The notion that a group of twenty or so may be 'a' critical friend is flawed and at times does cause heads difficulty. Individual or even cliques of governors, albeit well meaning, approaching the head with a shared concern are difficult to deal with if their views are not known to be representative. At best such confusion leads to extra work, at worst a source of friction. However, the SHA survey does identify the 'critical friend' with the role of chair of governors. There is however a fine line between such an individual whose partnership with the school is valued for the independence of their authority and influence, and one who is seen to be very much in league with the head. As will be seen this may be important when defining effective and ineffective governance later. Certainly, OFSTED (1998b) describes the relationship between governors and the head as a vital factor in school effectiveness and is supported throughout the research findings.

Deem *et al.* (1995) cited the differential activity commented upon by several governors in the interviews. Their description: _

“..governing bodies typically consist of a core of activists surrounded by a periphery of governors in varying states of inactivity.” (page 56)

was illustrated by the governor in school F who stated that:-

“..I'm still learning as I go along so most of the time (in meetings) I sit and think.”

Meikle's (1995) description of the space between headteacher and governor domains is echoed throughout both the Secondary Headteachers' Association survey and the semi-

structured interview. This might be expected of headteachers, who could be expected to take exception to governor activity in what might be seen to be their professional domain. It may be surprising for governors too to take such a view that their power, influence, expertise and legitimate involvement has boundaries drawn quite as tightly as the interviews indicate. Certainly the few instances in the survey that identified governors drafting school policy alongside the professionals are not typical of the activity undertaken by the governors in the sample schools.

OFSTED (1998a) is almost totally supported by the results of the semi-structured interviews and the questionnaire. Several senior staff in the SHA survey echoed, as typical of what governors do now, the definition of the middle ground productive partnership contained in this 1998 annual report. The sample schools' governors also identified with much of what he states. The only exception to this latter is the notion of departmental visits which, although talked about in some schools, has not actually been undertaken systematically in any of the six schools. It could be argued that this might be one methodology that some of the schools in the county sample could try to bring their outcomes in line with national averages. Furthermore, all of the observations made by OFSTED (1999) concerning governors are supported in the observations of senior staff in the survey or governors in the interviews, in particular the statements that most governors do make an important contribution to the development of schools. They are influential in setting targets, identifying priorities and monitoring and evaluating progress. Some do take responsibility for particular areas as seen in the survey and to a lesser extent in the interviews. Most monitor through reports. In all the sample schools the governing bodies do not ensure that all statutory responsibilities are fulfilled and one or more key issues in many schools are not tackled post OFSTED. The best example of this is collective worship.

Creese and Bradley's (1997) statements concerning the limited instances where governors' activities have direct and immediate effect upon pupils is also supported from the research. The research evidence is limited, however, to examples in the OFSTED reports for the six schools. In all instances this is limited to the development and adoption of behaviour policies by the governors of the six schools. Although this undoubtedly will have some immediate effect on the pupils, it begs questions about the role of governors in developing and monitoring such policies. The fact that all six have determined to focus on such policies at the time they did was due to prompting from local and central government. In this sense the governors acted tactically rather than strategically, responding to central prompting.

The evidence base within the Secondary Headteachers' Association sample and the interviews shows much evidence that governors take the role of accountability very seriously. The OFSTED reports particularly identify the financial and legal domains where governors operate in this mode. For example: -

"The governing body fulfils its legal responsibilities and gives a clear sense of direction." (OFSTED Ref. No.114305 Sept 1996 paragraph 5 page 6)

And also: -

"The governing body discharges its legal obligations effectively" (OFSTED Ref.No. 001107 Nov 1994 paragraph 171 page 24)

It is however notable that the issue of the daily collective act of worship is not applied in any of the schools and that there are statutory requirements within SEN, that are not being fulfilled despite the governors' accountability in this matter.

Earley's (1994) study identifying difficulties in governor recruitment are identified in the survey but less so in the interviews. Two Secondary Headteachers' Association respondents commented that: -

“ (it is) ...difficult for schools in deprived areas to attract appropriate governors particularly from industry.”

And that...

“the power and influence of governors is often in inverse proportion to the needs of the school.”

match Earley's findings. Projections for the future are also highlighted within the survey with one respondent envisioning that: -

“It is becoming harder to find able people with time and energy to commit to the role.”

Both the national questionnaire and the six study schools in almost all respects support the findings of Scanlon *et al.*(1999). Certainly, their major conclusion that there is a clear association between effective schools and effective governing bodies is supported. Their observation that the teamwork of governors is a crucial factor in ensuring effective governance is supported by the observations. Indeed, this study takes this observation one stage further and indicates that it is teamwork both within the governing body and between the governors and staff that are associated with school effectiveness.

3. Data that fails to support the paradigms contained in the governance literature base

The major area where the research fails to support either the research literature base or the prescriptive literature from government is the notion that governors can and are responsible for leading schools in their development of higher standards. Indeed, both

heads and governors surveyed produced a strong counter culture to the notion that governors as lay people should lead schools. Many quotes from the interviews illustrate this point: -

“How happy would the parents be if governors were more involved?”

“Governors should not be taking over from staff.”

“It’s not our job. We should be there supporting them (the staff). They’re here every day – they know.”

“It’s important that the staff who work here get the final say.”

“You could go too far – we are only part time.”

“It’s not the business of amateurs.”

“I don’t think governors show leadership.”

Similar feelings were expressed strongly by the respondents to the SHA questionnaire: -

“a great deal more is expected of unpaid voluntary governors”

“some governors have a naivete about the challenge of managing a large school”

Although the abstract question on leadership posed to governors and senior staff produced negative responses from almost all, the six OFSTED reports for the sample schools show a variety of leadership patterns were observed from the six schools including some involvement from the governing bodies. For example: -

School A The report states that the school benefits from sound leadership from the senior staff and governors

School B The head teacher and senior management team provide positive leadership for the school.

School C . The head teacher and senior staff provide a clear vision and purposeful and positive leadership

School D . The governing body, head teacher and senior managers have a clear vision and a strong sense of direction

School E. The head teacher and chair of governors provide the school with positive leadership

School F The school is strongly led by the headteacher

There is little support for the tensions highlighted by Baginsky, Baker and Cleave (1991). Indeed, an unexpected pattern from all governors in all schools, bar one was generated in the interviews. With the one exception, although not prompted directly by the questions, all governors expressed their total support for the heads of the schools. One stated that: -

“Of course, if I didn’t feel that way about him, I would not be able to remain a governor.”

In the one school where such direct comment were not made the headteacher had been on secondment to a national association for some time. It was clear however, from the comments made that the governors feelings about the head were similar prior to his secondment but that at the time his absence was sadly missed and a temporary headteacher could not stand in for him. There were certainly no tensions between the governors and the head observed.

None of the governors in the sample schools cited any experience of governors being involved in mediating between the school and other individuals or groups outside of the school. Although the role was identified within the SHA sample it is evident that occasions when such activity is necessary are rare in the sample.

There is very little evidence to support the OFSTED (1998a) assertion that governors rubber stamp the proposals put before them by professionals. There was one extreme comment made in the Secondary Headteachers' Association survey viz: -

“I keep them in the dark and they do what I tell them.”

All other evidence is that governors take very seriously their roles, as they perceive them. Indeed from the sample schools one governor felt very strongly that: -

“The partnership here is already effective – we do not rubber stamp things.”

OFSTED's(1996) survey of good practice identified various activities undertaken by governors including link visits, joint INSET and working with children. There were limited examples in the national survey that joint INSET took place on a limited basis. There were also references made to links drawn up in theory but not working in practice in one of the sample schools. However, in general such activities are not seen as the norm or usual in secondary schools. The specialist nature of the curriculum makes adult other than teacher support problematic. Experience in the recruitment of special needs support assistants highlight the fears adults have in supporting secondary aged pupils with basic skills. Even to adults used to dealing with younger children in this context are daunted by the thought of supporting teenage children with the development of basic skills. The comments made by OFSTED in such a context are more appropriate perhaps to primary governors than a useful guide for secondary governors.

OFSTED(1995c) suggests that governors access a variety of sources for information. Statements made during the interviews indicate that the almost unconditional trust placed in the heads by their governors is largely based upon the heads' seemingly unbounded knowledge base. The reality is that most governors do not undertake more

than basic training and information they glean beyond that comes from eclectic sources and most from the head.

In the same document the five characteristics of effective governance were rehearsed. The sample schools individually do not support the variety contained in the five statements. The roles of governing bodies and heads had not been agreed through discussion. A variety of roles and activities were reported. Indeed in one sample school E, the interviews indicated that most of the governing body was involved in a limited way with the school, whilst the chair and head undertook leadership and management between them. Teamwork was however evident in the governing bodies of schools B and D. As stated above the governing bodies did not undertake regular training. All governors interviewed demonstrated an awareness of the community but there was no evidence of activity to further develop the knowledge of the community that governors brought with them.

There was little or no evidence from governors that governing bodies were informed about the standards of teaching and learning using comparisons with other schools. It cannot be the case that such information is not presented to governors. Indeed, the OFSTED reports on all the schools present such comparisons. The heads of the schools each reported presenting comparisons to their governors. Governors however were unable or unwilling to claim such knowledge or had forgotten that they had used such information as part of their monitoring of the school.

Lastly in this section, as none of the schools are failing schools in OFSTED terms, the characteristics of failing schools as described in the literature were not evident in the sample schools to the degree listed in literature. Nevertheless, unfocussed leadership was identified by governors in school A, a school appearing in the top 10 ranked nationally on A level outcomes. Dysfunctional relationships were evident in school E where the

OFSTED report also confirms areas of serious weakness. For example governors interviewed blamed the results of Key Stage 2 for any under performance at later key stages and a number of the governors displayed a lack of trust between themselves and other governors.

4. Evidence from the research set against the Effective Schools literature base.

Two findings illustrate characteristics that sample schools share with effective schools. Firstly, in all OFSTED reports the schools were described as showing purposeful leadership. In most instances this resides with the professionals with some input from governors. School E is unusual in that the leadership is vested in the Head with the Chair of Governors acting as a duo. Secondly, all six schools deem themselves as aspiring or improving, although school A does have concern about its general direction.

Other findings however do not produce such clear congruence with the effective schools literature base. Four points in particular are lacking. Firstly, there is a distinct lack of evidence from governors that the schools systematically monitor pupil performance. Secondly, mechanisms that the schools may employ to ensure consistency between teachers and teaching are very much taken on trust by governors. For example: -

“Governors should not be taking over from staff”

and

“It’s not the business of amateurs”

were two comments on the monitoring of teaching. Thirdly, although school C demonstrated greatest detail of parental involvement as well as concern that it was not great enough, the other schools’ views on parental involvement was largely despondent illustrated by the comment: -

“(if)the food’s OK and they’re not getting bullied, parents don’t want to know.”

Fourthly, there was little evidence that any of the governors involved in the sample had spent time developing a shared aim or set of goals. Such abstract concepts appeared implicit and, where illustrated, arrived at through good will and individual knowledge of the school and community rather than debate.

5. Conclusions

Limiting the presentation to those areas in which the results from the sample schools and the SHA questionnaire are in line with the published literature on governance and effective schools, produces a stark comparison between schools in the sample. The areas highlighted above distil down to how governors, support, train, monitor, know and lead their schools. The following comparison of responses between the most effective and least effective schools in the sample identifies two different types of governance. The final chapter argues that the differences described below are both generalisable and causal.

Table 7 Comparison of Schools C and E

Area of comparison	Most effective school (C)	Least effective school (E)
% free school meals averaged over 3 years	23.46	24.53
Residuals points scores on regression line of KS4 performance against FSM averaged over 3 years	+10.3	-9.65
Governors' perception of role	Challenging, supporting, cohesive	Checking, overseeing, scrutinising

Table 7 Comparison of Schools C and E (cont.)

Area of comparison	Most effective school (C)	Least effective school (E)
Governor perception of useful activity	Curriculum planning, use of personal skills and knowledge, joint authorship of policy, monitoring	Attending meetings, some debating, being directed in many ways by the Chair
Governors perception of their support for the school	Explicit statements made of support for the school	No explicit reference made to supporting the school
Governors perception of the limits of their role	No boundaries to their involvement other than time	Boundaries to their involvement drawn up which disenfranchise some governors
Governors perceptions of how they provide leadership	By agreeing aims and monitoring outcomes	By the head identifying issues and the chair then determining how these should be dealt with
Governors perception of their involvement in planning	Clearly involved alongside the staff in producing plans	Receiving the development plan and rubber stamping after the event
Degree of governor training	A variety undertaken	None or none identified
Governor knowledge of how parents are involved	Many examples forthcoming	One example given

6. Completing the circle

This study set out to clarify the roles of governors and attempt to identify possible connections between the roles and outcomes for pupils. Whilst the researcher declared scepticism that such connections exist and could be measured, the results of this lengthy project have identified several domains in which governors can be seen to act differently in similar schools. This may be no surprise. What is interesting is that the outcomes of those sample schools where governors are more involved, are themselves better than might be expected given the context. Conversely, in sample schools where governors are shown to be operating in limited or even hostile ways, outcomes for pupils are lower than might be expected. In the extreme case of school E, governors may even contribute to the schools' difficulties.

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Opportunities for further research

1. Conclusions

This study attempts to illuminate differences in styles and methods of governance as perceived by senior staff and governors. It sets these observations against a background of government changes and the well-documented research on school effectiveness. The field of effective governance linked to effective schools is not as well researched as that of effective schools. The study attempts to build a conceptual framework within which further research can take place.

The observations made during the empirical research stages do identify associations between governance and school effectiveness. The research undertaken with members of the Secondary Headteachers' Association indicate that senior staff are greatly influenced both in their day to day operation and in their thinking by governors. The wide range of preferences for the manner and timing of governors' intervention, as expressed by headteachers, do not indicate a pattern of best practice. The responses show that a range of interventions works in different school circumstances. This first part of the research identifies common patterns of preferred activity for governors. Although the sample of senior staff was opportunist it is representative of many different school types in many different areas. It can be asserted then that this part of the research is generalisable.

The results from the in depth studies of six secondary school's governors mirror many of the statements made by headteachers nationally. More important is the matching of differing styles of intervention with the effectiveness of the six schools, in particular the two outliers in performance whose pupil intakes are broadly similar.

The simple argument that governors are effective in effective schools is not supported here. The situation is more complex. The legal framework that defines governance ensures that governors can have an impact upon the schools that they govern. This project shows that governors can have a significant impact or not. In the case of some of the sample schools, governors were unable by circumstance or qualification, to impact upon the professionals' activities and thinking and therefore had little impact upon the direction of the school. In these schools there is no clear evidence that supports the notion that a lack of impact from governors is associated with less effective schools. Such schools can succeed or fail on the strengths and weaknesses of the professionals.

In other schools the direction of the governors' impact was shown to be dependent upon how they operated. In the best performing school, governors contributed at many stages in many ways to the development of the school. Their impact was purposeful, significant and positive. In the worst performing school, the governors' impact was again significant but they were in turmoil as a group and were led by the nose by the combined skill of the headteacher and the chair.

The findings indicate strongly that there is an association between governors' methods and efforts and the effectiveness of the schools in which they serve. The study does not prove a causal relationship. In addition questions remain about the generalisability of this limited work.

The research firmly demonstrates that, in the case of six secondary schools in one local authority, the most effective school had governors who know that their support for the school should be explicit. They invest their meeting time monitoring the work of the school. They have no boundaries to their activity and are trusted to become involved in any aspect of the school's life and development. They lead the school development through guiding the professionals rather than taking the reins themselves. In these schools

governors are clearly involved in planning. They have undertaken a variety of training. They have detailed knowledge of, for example, how parents are involved in the school.

In the least effective school, governors are not explicit in their support for the school. They spend their time meeting and clear boundaries are drawn limiting their involvement and causing friction between governors. Their leadership mode is to identify faults in the system – governance by fault finding. Their involvement in planning is not clear. They have undertaken little if any training. Their knowledge of the school is patchy and they do not have detailed knowledge of, for example, how parents are involved in the school.

2. Possible causal links between governors and effectiveness

Research on school effectiveness clearly demonstrates the complexity of factors influencing school outcomes. It has been shown by this study that governors can influence schools and hence the effectiveness of schools. The degree to which their impact and control makes a difference has not been determined. What this study has shown is that there is an association between governor style, behaviour, and school outcomes. Throughout this research observations indicate the common sense notion that governors influence headteachers. As the law, time constraints, knowledge and resistance of staff prevent day to day involvement of governors, it is that case that heads and staff activity directly determine some variance in outcomes. In situations where governors are not influential the professionals alone determine some variance. Where governors are influential, this can add or detract from professional influence and hence affect outcomes. In short, governors through and with the staff influence school effectiveness.

3. Recommendations for policy

During the period of this research two major publications have appeared - the Government's 1998 Green Paper, "Teachers meeting the challenge of change", and the 1999 DfEE report "Improving the effectiveness of school governing bodies".

At the time of writing the Green Paper consultation has led to a response from Government that they intend to implement performance related pay for some volunteer staff. They do state, however, that the rewards for headteachers will be related to school effectiveness. This intention will have far reaching effects on the roles of governors. It is interesting to note though, whilst greater involvement is being prescribed by Government for governors in relation to headteacher pay, some of the crucial decisions on the management of staff promotion, in particular staff movement across the threshold, are to be determined by external consultants and not directly by governors. This represents a major shift away from governor empowerment, which has been central to many of the changes since 1986.

Scanlon *et al.* (1999) have provided more information about the profile of governing bodies, how they operate and the important contribution they make to raising the standards in their schools. The report, as did this research project, identified that effective governing bodies operate as teams and develop positive working relationships with their school and its staff. The report goes on to identify the need for proper induction, training and support for governors to enable them to carry out their roles properly. It has influenced government's action and more of the School Improvement Grant is to be devolved to schools of which £10 million is expected to be spent upon governor training. The responses gathered in this local study indicate that such policy may not greatly influence the take up of training by governors, given the limited time they

have available for involvement. A change in policy to reflect the huge commitment required of governors should be considered. As with magistrates, school governors should be recompensed for lost time and earnings. Such payments would enable a mandatory system for training to be introduced.

4. Opportunities for further research

The weakness of such research as this study is its limited geographic nature, its snap shot of governors' activity and the rhetorical method of interview. A number of possibilities for research follow from these limitations.

Firstly, further in depth studies need to be undertaken across the country to determine how much the role of governors, as described by governors in this one county, is typical. The wider responses from secondary headteachers suggest that there will be a greater variation in governor activity if the semi-structured interviews were replicated nationally. Clearly, the opportunity to test the conclusions against a wider sample of schools should be undertaken.

Secondly, no research has taken place in this study based upon direct observation of governors at work. Whilst the claims made by governors during interview were their perceptions of what they did and how they did it, the reality may be different or differently perceived by other governors and professionals.

Thirdly, longitudinal studies should be undertaken to follow through statements and claims made by governors. The length of service of governors, the order of a few years, is sufficient for their work to have a bearing upon outcomes. The delay before decisions made by governors being associated with school performance outcomes is likely to be of the order of the length of governors' term of office.

Fourthly, this study did not attempt to identify factors that may impinge upon governors' individual abilities to impact upon schools. It is nevertheless clear from the

interviews that there is a difference in governors' involvement and knowledge of schools and education. This knowledge must provide the real power and authority, over and above the legal framework, that governors draw upon to influence the professionals and impact upon ordinary schools. Obtaining that knowledge, as Deem *et al* (1995) assert, will come from various sources including the media, governor training, religious organisations, paid and unpaid work, community and political associations, membership of the LEA and experience from elsewhere in the field of education. Access to these sources will be determined in part at least by class, gender and ethnicity. The mixed and varied responses obtained from all governors in the sample schools challenges the idea that the present state of knowledge and hence power and authority in governing bodies is adequate to cope with increased responsibilities being proposed by government. Further research should take place as these changes are brought in to identify how the challenges facing governors now can be best dealt with.

APPENDICES

Appendix A. Analysis of variance for OFSTED data

Details of the OFSTED data supplied for 100 randomly selected 11-16 secondary schools taken from Minitab analysis of variance prints follow. The independent variables are keyed to the OFSTED inspection framework sections 6 as detailed in the text and follow the conventions 6.1.1, 6.1.2 etc:-

1. Analysis of Variance on 5+A/C

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.1.1	5	1154	231	0.96	0.446
Error	94	22576	240		
Total	99	23730			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	-----+-----+-----+-----
1	4	36.00	26.29	(-----*-----)
2	36	35.39	16.63	(---*---)
3	35	36.37	14.49	(---*---)
4	13	32.69	13.55	(-----*-----)
5	8	23.75	11.96	(-----*-----)
6	4	31.75	12.61	(-----*-----)

-----+-----+-----+-----

Pooled StDev = 15.50 24 36 48

2. Analysis of Variance on 5+A/C

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.1.2	4	1194	299	1.26	0.292
Error	95	22536	237		

Total 99 23730

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	-----+-----+-----+-----+--
2	4	48.75	14.59	(-----*-----)
3	28	35.57	16.84	(---*---)
4	28	34.89	16.04	(---*---)
5	35	31.37	13.81	(---*---)
6	5	33.40	14.15	(-----*-----)

Pooled StDev = 15.40 24 36 48 60

3. Analysis of Variance on 5+A/C

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.1.3	5	3973	795	3.78	0.004
Error	94	19757	210		
Total	99	23730			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	-+-----+-----+-----+-----
1	2	41.00	29.70	(-----*-----)
2	20	44.90	14.57	(---*---)
3	33	34.09	15.07	(---*--)
4	31	31.55	14.35	(--*--)
5	12	23.50	10.96	(-----*-----)
6	2	34.00	8.49	(-----*-----)

Pooled StDev = 14.50 15 30 45 60

4. Analysis of Variance on 5+A C

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
--------	----	----	----	---	---

6.1.4	4	582	145	0.60	0.666
Error	94	22931	244		
Total	98	23513			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	
2	7	41.29	17.45	(-----*-----)
3	20	35.65	18.06	(-----*-----)
4	31	34.13	15.11	(-----*-----)
5	34	32.74	14.85	(-----*-----)
6	7	30.14	11.44	(-----*-----)

-----+-----+-----+-----

Pooled StDev = 15.62 20 30 40 50

5. Analysis of Variance on 5+A/C

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.1.5	5	4131	826	3.96	0.003
Error	94	19599	209		
Total	99	23730			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	
1	11	47.27	16.43	(-----*-----)
2	28	38.07	14.87	(--*---)
3	36	30.78	14.48	(---*--)
4	18	32.72	13.35	(-----*-----)
5	5	17.80	9.63	(-----*-----)
6	2	30.50	13.44	(-----*-----)

-----+-----+-----+-----

Pooled StDev = 14.44 15 30 45

6. Analysis of Variance on 5+A/C

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.3.1	6	1677	279	1.18	0.325
Error	93	22054	237		
Total	99	23730			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	-----+-----+-----+-----
1	1	17.00	0.00	(-----*-----)
2	14	38.07	18.69	(--*--)
3	42	35.79	15.52	(-*--)
4	23	31.61	14.03	(--*--)
5	17	32.59	14.25	(--*--)
6	2	45.00	7.07	(-----*-----)
7	1	9.00	0.00	(-----*-----)

Pooled StDev = 15.40 0 25 50

7. Analysis of Variance on 5+A/C

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.3.2	3	6311	2104	11.59	0.000
Error	96	17419	181		
Total	99	23730			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	--+-----+-----+-----+-----
2	12	51.83	10.44	(-----*-----)
3	41	36.61	15.29	(---*--)
4	37	26.24	11.63	(---*---)
5	10	33.90	14.92	(-----*-----)

Pooled StDev = 13.47 24 36 48 60

8. Analysis of Variance on 5+A/C

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.3.3	4	3503	876	4.11	0.004
Error	95	20228	213		
Total	99	23730			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	-+-----+-----+-----+-----
1	1	62.00	0.00	(-----*-----)
2	8	50.50	10.49	(----*----)
3	48	34.52	16.11	(-*-)
4	35	30.54	13.13	(-*-)
5	8	30.12	14.15	(----*----)

-+-----+-----+-----+-----

Pooled StDev = 14.59 20 40 60 80

9. Analysis of Variance on 5+A/C

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.3.4	5	1223	245	1.02	0.410
Error	94	22508	239		
Total	99	23730			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	-----+-----+-----+-----+-----
1	9	41.67	17.20	(----*----)
2	33	36.33	16.56	(--*--)
3	40	32.03	13.59	(-*-)
4	13	34.54	17.16	(---*---)
5	4	27.00	14.35	(-----*-----)

7 1 21.00 0.00 (-----*-----)
 -----+-----+-----+-----+
 Pooled StDev = 15.47 0 20 40 60

10. Analysis of Variance on AV Pnts

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.1.1	5	296.9	59.4	1.04	0.401
Error	94	5386.8	57.3		
Total	99	5683.7			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	-----+-----+-----+-----+
1	4	31.917	13.533	(-----*-----)
2	36	31.057	8.006	(---*---)
3	35	32.457	7.086	(---*---)
4	13	30.201	6.729	(-----*-----)
5	8	25.941	6.153	(-----*-----)
6	4	29.760	5.113	(-----*-----)
				-----+-----+-----+-----+
Pooled StDev = 7.570 24.0 30.0 36.0 42.0				

11. Analysis of Variance on AV Pnts

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.1.2	4	329.8	82.5	1.46	0.220
Error	95	5353.9	56.4		
Total	99	5683.7			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	-----+-----+-----+-----
2	4	39.198	6.000	(-----*-----)
3	28	31.648	8.348	(---*---)

4	28	30.775	7.401	(---*---)
5	35	29.918	7.092	(---*--)
6	5	29.826	6.618	(-----*-----)

-----+-----+-----+-----

Pooled StDev = 7.507 28.0 35.0 42.0

12. Analysis of Variance on AV Pnts

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.1.3	5	893.7	178.7	3.51	0.006
Error	94	4790.0	51.0		
Total	99	5683.7			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	-----+-----+-----+-----
1	2	31.650	16.546	(-----*-----)
2	20	36.079	6.937	(---*---)
3	33	30.991	7.052	(---*---)
4	31	29.810	7.584	(---*---)
5	12	25.744	4.888	(-----*-----)
6	2	30.130	4.723	(-----*-----)

-----+-----+-----+-----

Pooled StDev = 7.138 24.0 30.0 36.0

13. Analysis of Variance on AV Pnts

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.1.4	4	142.4	35.6	0.61	0.655
Error	94	5467.3	58.2		
Total	98	5609.7			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	-----+-----+-----+-----
-------	---	------	-------	-------------------------

2	7	33.686	8.351	(-----*-----)
3	20	32.032	9.404	(-----*-----)
4	31	30.914	7.682	(-----*-----)
5	34	30.255	6.594	(-----*-----)
6	7	28.271	5.217	(-----*-----)

-----+-----+-----+-----+

Pooled StDev = 7.626 25.0 30.0 35.0 40.0

14. Analysis of Variance on AV Pnts

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.1.5	5	891.9	178.4	3.50	0.006
Error	94	4791.8	51.0		
Total	99	5683.7			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	-----+-----+-----+-----
1	11	36.840	8.085	(-----*-----)
2	28	32.665	7.318	(---*--)
3	36	29.310	6.894	(---*--)
4	18	30.687	7.399	(-----*-----)
5	5	22.870	4.128	(-----*-----)
6	2	29.580	5.501	(-----*-----)

-----+-----+-----+-----

Pooled StDev = 7.140 21.0 28.0 35.0

15. Analysis of Variance on AV Pnts

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.3.1	6	372.1	62.0	1.09	0.377
Error	93	5311.6	57.1		

Total 99 5683.7

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	
1	1	21.800	0.000	(-----*-----)
2	14	32.364	8.886	(--*--)
3	42	31.867	7.905	(-*)
4	23	29.715	6.547	(--*-)
5	17	29.875	6.845	(--*--)
6	2	37.360	5.501	(-----*-----)
7	1	21.540	0.000	(-----*-----)

-----+-----+-----+-----+

Pooled StDev = 7.557 12 24 36 48

16. Analysis of Variance on AV Pnts

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.3.2	3	1457.3	485.8	11.03	0.000
Error	96	4226.4	44.0		
Total	99	5683.7			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	
2	12	39.673	4.069	(-----*-----)
3	41	31.922	7.450	(---*---)
4	37	27.254	6.287	(----*----)
5	10	30.761	6.679	(-----*-----)

-----+-----+-----+-----

Pooled StDev = 6.635 30.0 35.0 40.0

17. Analysis of Variance on AV Pnts

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.3.3	4	686.2	171.6	3.26	0.015
Error	95	4997.5	52.6		
Total	99	5683.7			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	
1	1	43.350	0.000	(-----*-----)
2	8	38.429	5.331	(----*----)
3	48	30.824	8.074	(-*-)
4	35	29.536	6.295	(--*-)
5	8	29.596	7.442	(----*----)

-----+-----+-----+-----+

Pooled StDev = 7.253 30 40 50 60

18. Analysis of Variance on AV Pnts

Source	DF	SS	MS	F	p
6.3.4	5	284.0	56.8	0.99	0.429
Error	94	5399.7	57.4		
Total	99	5683.7			

Individual 95% CIs For Mean

Based on Pooled StDev

Level	N	Mean	StDev	
1	9	34.663	8.662	(----*----)
2	33	32.085	7.991	(--*-)
3	40	29.997	6.408	(-*-)
4	13	30.258	9.136	(---*---)
5	4	28.138	7.139	(-----*-----)
7	1	24.350	0.000	(-----*-----)

-+-----+-----+-----+-----

Pooled StDev = 7.579 10 20 30 40

Summary of significant results:-

6.1.3 0.004 on 5+A-C

6.1.5 0.003 on 5+A-C

6.3.2. 0.000 on 5+A-C

6.3.3 0.004 on 5+A-C

6.1.3. 0.006 on Av Pnts

6.1.5. 0.006 on Av Pnts

6.3.2. 0.000 on Av Pnts

Appendix B.

GCSE data provided by the LEA statistics section for the years 1995-1997

These three pages are copied as supplied by the Local Education Authority in which the six sample schools are placed.

All school names have been removed but the six sample schools are identified by the letters used in the text, i.e. A-F.

Columns labelled 'AC5' contain the percentage of pupils in the year obtaining five or more GCSE passes at grade C or above.

Columns labelled 'Points' contain the average points score per pupil, grade A counting for 7 points and grade G for 1 point. No A* grading existed for the three years.

Columns labelled 'Y11_FS' contain the percentage of pupils in the year 11 entitled to free school meals. It is used as a proxy variable for deprivation.

The two 'EST' columns contain the estimated percentages for five or more grades A-C and the estimated points score both calculated from the regression analysis.

(i) Data for 1995

	AC5	POINTS	Y11_FS	EST 5AC	EST PTS	%5 + A*-C
	18.7	27.1	21.58	29.97	29.08	
	27.3	30.2	15.70	35.14	32.06	
	47.1	40.3	9.50	40.60	35.19	
	21.5	26.4	13.85	36.77	32.99	
	47.4	37.4	9.74	40.38	35.07	
	18.2	23.6	25.97	26.10	26.88	
	37.9	33.8	19.54	31.76	30.11	
	26.0	31.0	12.00	38.40	33.93	
	29.5	27.1	22.73	28.95	28.50	
	32.7	31.9	17.58	33.49	31.10	
	41.8	33.4	10.30	39.89	34.79	
	22.0	28.6	9.15	40.90	35.37	
D →	41.4	34.8	13.53	37.05	33.15	
	19.2	21.3	38.46	15.11	20.54	
	38.8	33.7	13.59	37.00	33.12	
	46.2	36.0	7.69	42.19	36.11	
	46.5	38.9	9.62	40.49	35.13	
C →	37.9	35.8	26.61	25.54	26.54	
	35.0	29.4	23.32	28.43	28.20	
	22.3	23.9	25.90	26.16	26.90	
	44.2	34.1	8.17	41.77	35.86	
B →	53.8	40.3	5.04	44.52	37.45	
	19.4	21.2	30.56	22.06	24.54	
A →	57.8	42.4	5.38	44.22	37.28	
E →	25.2	25.6	20.09	31.28	29.84	
	28.4	29.9	14.93	35.82	32.45	
	28.8	29.9	10.43	39.78	34.72	
	57.2	45.1	2.58	46.69	38.69	
	22.9	23.8	19.29	31.98	30.24	
	42.9	36.2	11.41	38.92	34.23	
	23.3	27.4	31.11	21.58	24.26	
	24.7	27.2	16.88	34.10	31.46	
	27.6	27.6	28.64	23.75	25.51	
F →	28.6	28.3	21.71	29.85	29.02	
	36.5	31.9	15.47	35.34	32.17	
	39.7	31.7	30.15	22.42	24.75	

Regression Output:
 Constant 48.95593
 Std Err of Y Est 8.648372
 R Squared 0.442104
 No. of Observations 36
 Degrees of Freedom 34
 X Coefficient(s) -0.88
 Std Err of Coef. 0.169534

Mean Points
 Regression Output:
 Constant 39.9966
 Std Err of Y Est 3.998359
 R Squared 0.550513
 No. of Observations 36
 Degrees of Freedom 34
 X Coefficient(s) -0.50579
 Std Err of Coef. 0.07838

(ii) Data for 1996

	AC5	POINTS	Y11_FS	EST 5AC	EST PTS	%5+A*-C	
	27.6	27.8	20.33	31.74	30.05		
	30.3	27.6	5.41	45.50	36.44		
	53.7	41.4	7.34	43.72	35.61		
	29.7	29.6	13.51	38.03	32.97		
	42.1	35.1	3.97	46.83	37.06		
	22.7	25.5	19.33	32.66	30.48		
	34.2	31.9	18.12	33.78	31.00		
	34.1	33.2	8.89	42.29	34.85		
	23.7	26.5	24.73	27.68	28.17		
	32.6	31.5	19.25	32.73	30.51		
	38.7	31.6	8.39	42.75	35.16		
	30.9	33.7	14.61	37.01	32.50		
D →	42.3	38.1	17.89	33.99	31.10		
	25.9	23.4	34.26	18.89	24.09		
	40.7	34.7	10.17	41.11	34.40		
	54.7	38.1	8.63	42.53	35.06		
	45.2	37.1	16.96	34.85	31.49		
C →	29.8	32.7	28.24	24.44	26.66		
	25.8	25.2	16.84	34.96	31.55		
	26.3	26.1	13.16	38.35	33.12		
	36.6	31.9	8.76	42.41	35.00		
B →	57	40.1	3.86	46.93	37.10		
	34.1	27.1	20	32.04	30.19		
A →	55.3	40.6	5.53	45.39	36.39		
E →	18	24.6	22.32	29.90	29.20		
	34.8	34	16.67	35.11	31.62		
	52.9	38.7	11.76	39.64	33.72		
	52.5	42.5	3.43	47.33	37.29		
	40.3	33.2	11.51	39.87	33.83		
	43.3	35.6	12.38	39.07	33.45		
	19.7	24.4	35.53	17.72	23.54		
	30.3	27.3	20.59	31.50	29.94		
	23.8	28.6	26.91	25.67	27.23		
F →	39.8	32.5	15.34	36.34	32.19		
	34.2	31.2	15.19	36.48	32.25		
	32.5	30	25.63	26.85	27.78		

		Regression Output:	
	Constant		50.4903
	Std Err of Y Est		7.602312
	R Squared		0.503442
	No. of Observations		36
	Degrees of Freedom		34
	X Coefficient(s)	-0.92238	
	Std Err of Coef.	0.157102	

		Mean Points	
	Constant		38.75516
	Std Err of Y Est		3.985717
	R Squared		0.442803
	No. of Observations		36
	Degrees of Freedom		34
	X Coefficient(s)	-0.42814	
	Std Err of Coef.	0.082365	

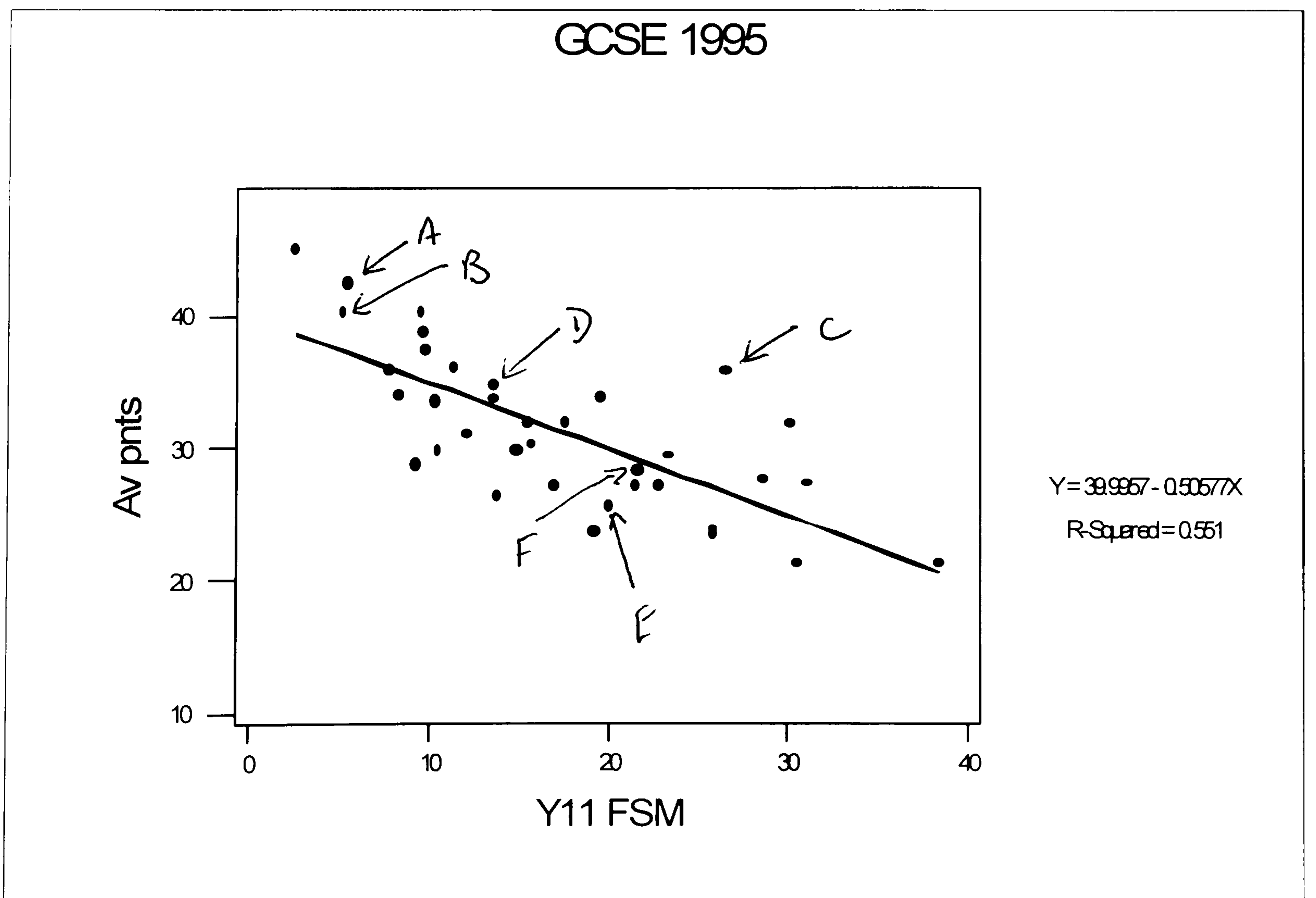
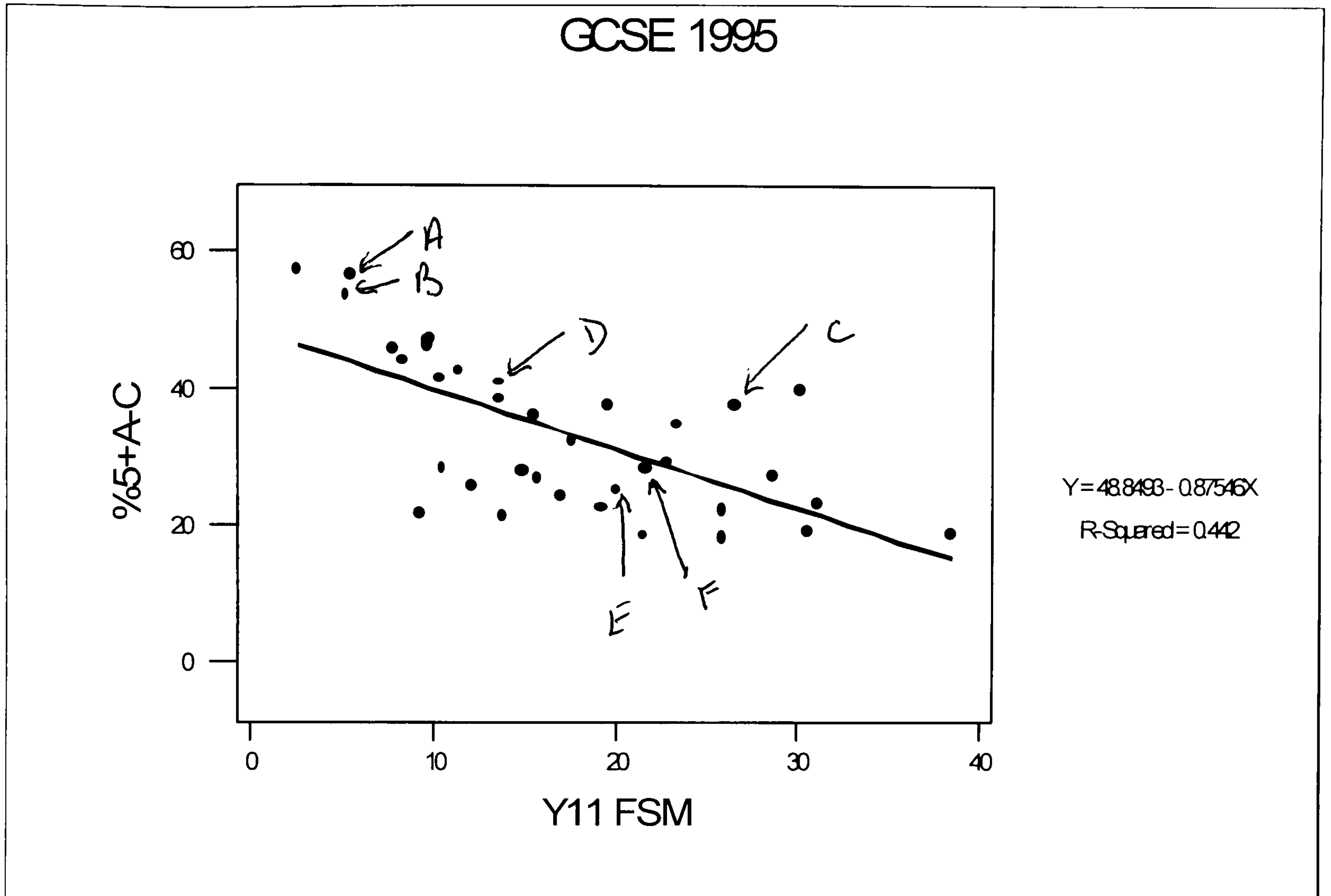
(iii) Data for 1997

	AC5	POINTS	Y11_FS	EST 5AC	EST PTS		
	30.3	29.1	23.39	28.76	28.89365		
	33.7	30	16.58	36.19	32.23447		
	44.4	38.1	7.48	46.13	36.6987		
	25.9	28.5	20.54	31.87	30.29179		
	44.7	38	9.76	43.64	35.58018		
	19	21.1	15.08	37.83	32.97033		
	37.5	32.6	15.91	36.92	32.56315		
	32.3	31.5	13.39	39.88	33.7994	X Coefficient(s)	-1.09185
	29.4	29	30.59	20.90	25.36151	Std Err of Coef.	0.189805
	34.7	31.9	24.00	28.09	28.5944		
	42.9	34.3	6.86	46.81	37.00285		
	22.3	29.8	23.57	28.56	28.80535		
D	43.7	37.7	5.88	47.88	37.48361		
	27.2	27.4	24.27	27.80	28.46195		
	41.4	37	13.79	39.24	33.60317	Constant	40.36819
	51.4	37.7	11.11	42.17	34.91791	Std Err of Y Est	4.351123
	42.2	37.7	17.30	35.41	31.88125	R Squared	0.425111
C	43.3	37.5	22.05	30.22	29.55102	No. of Observations	36
	27	23.9	16.98	35.76	32.03824	Degrees of Freedom	34
	30.1	26.8	23.89	28.21	28.64836		
	39.3	32.8	4.71	49.15	38.05759	X Coefficient(s)	-0.49057
B	58	40.3	5.31	48.50	37.76324	Std Err of Coef.	0.097838
	24.5	27.1	23.40	28.75	28.88875		
A	62.6	42.8	6.17	47.58	37.34135		
E	16.4	24.7	24.66	27.37	28.27062		
	32.8	32.4	16.42	36.37	32.31296		
	48.5	37.2	10.31	43.04	35.31037		
	65.5	45.8	6.00	47.75	37.42475		
	24.7	26	20.59	31.81	30.26726		
	46.6	37.6	14.08	38.92	33.4609		
	26.6	27.2	31.01	20.44	25.15547		
	26.9	27.4	11.01	42.27	34.96697		
	27.7	27.4	26.79	25.05	27.2257		
F	38.6	31.3	16.48	36.30	32.28352		
	32.4	31.5	12.14	41.04	34.41262		
	29.7	29.9	24.24	27.83	28.47666		

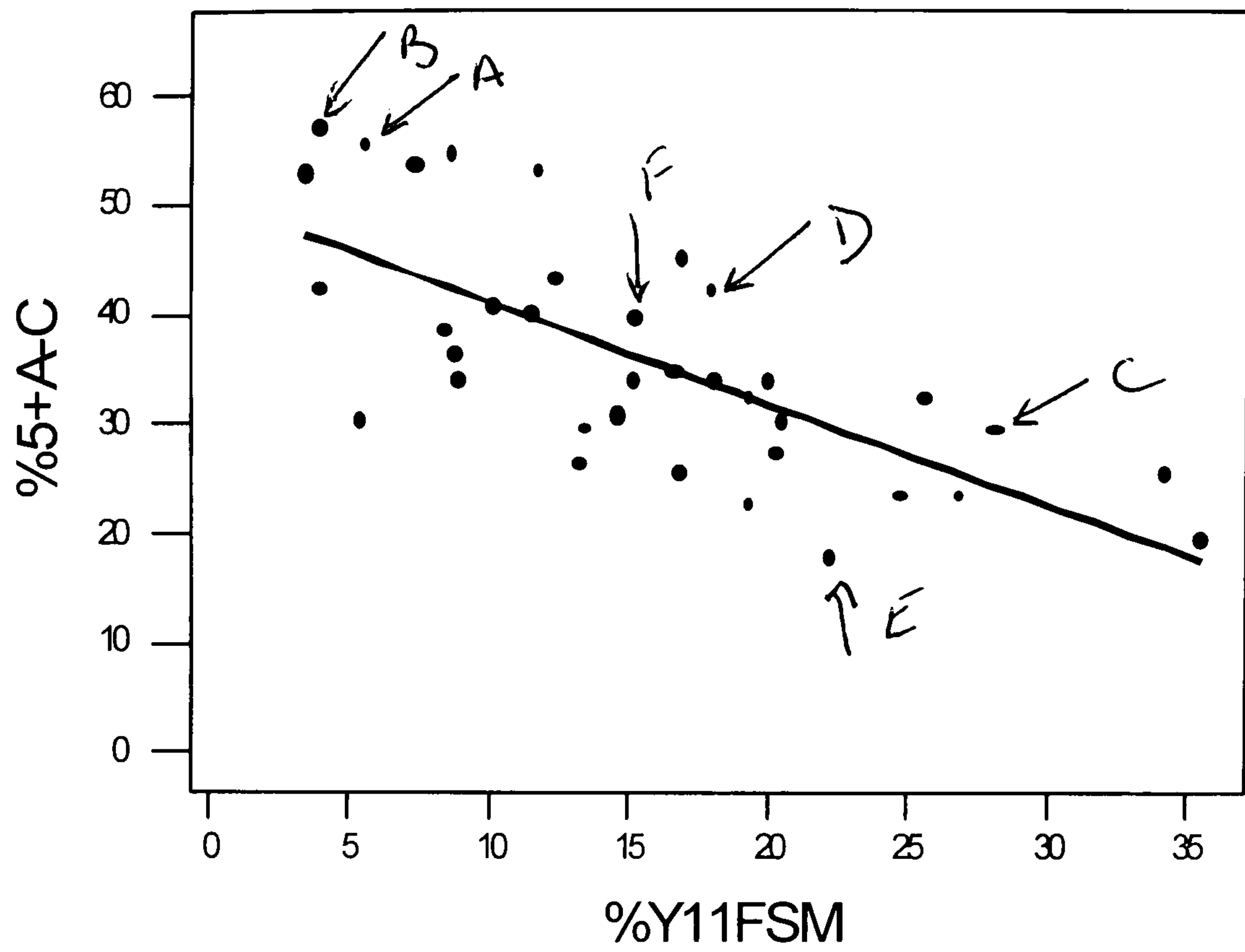
Appendix C

Regression Lines showing GCSE results against free school meals data based upon the data in Appendix B.

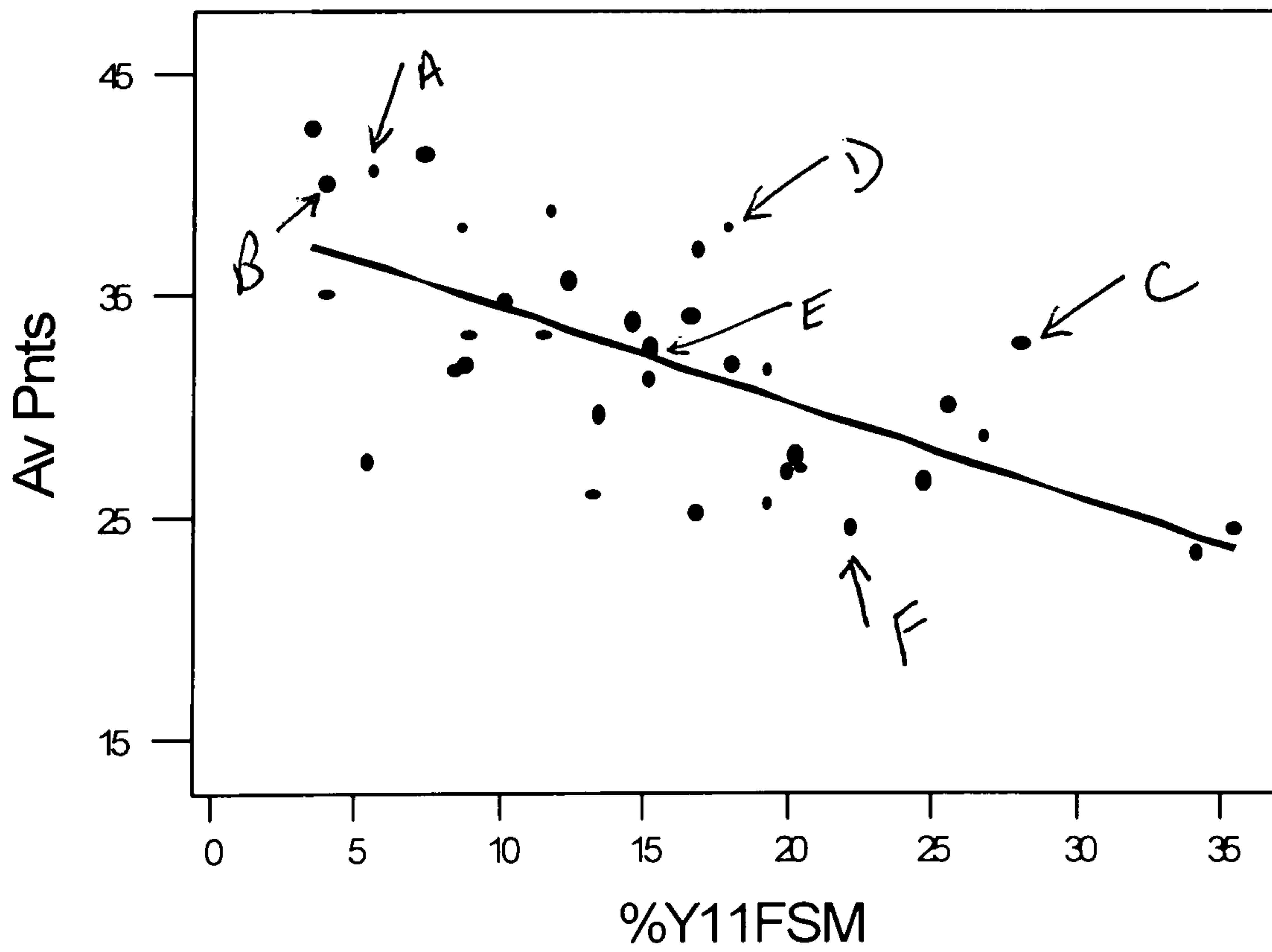
All names have been removed but the sample schools are identified A-F



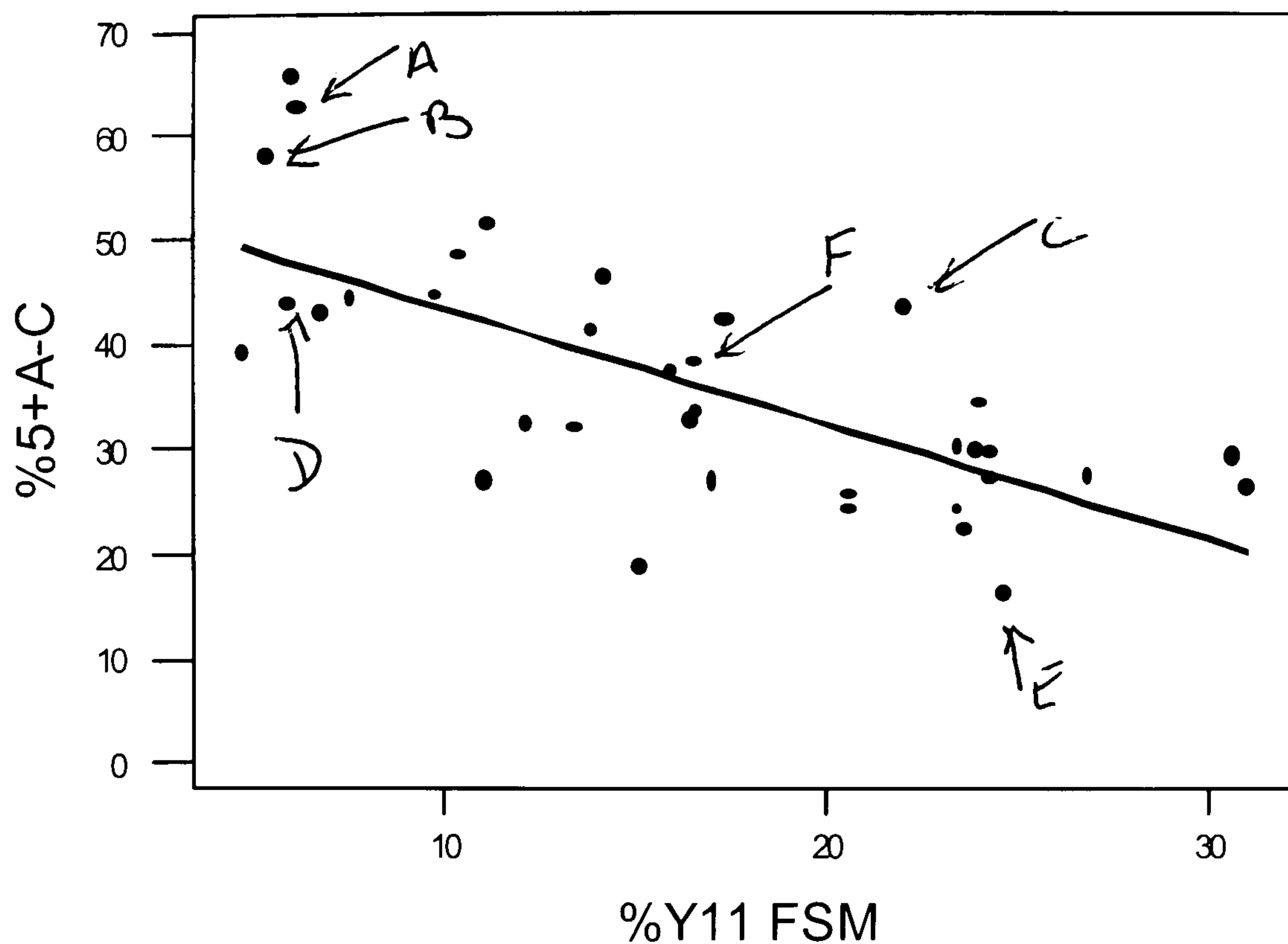
GCSE 1996



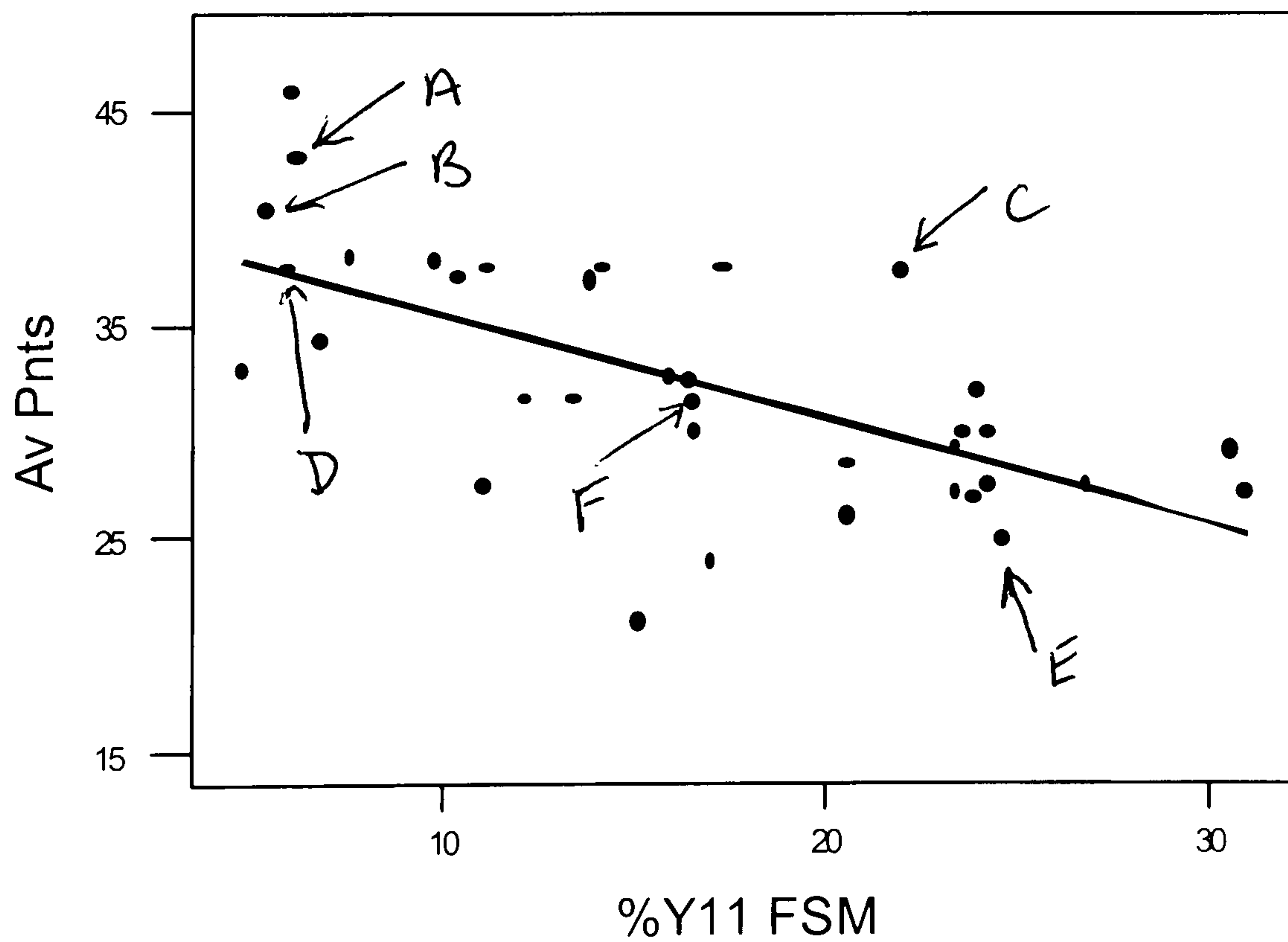
GCSE 1996



GCSE 1997



GCSE 1997



Appendix D.

The questionnaire administered to SHA Council Members

SCHOOL GOVERNANCE

Questionnaire for Members of SHA Council

Excellence in Schools has several statements concerning expanding the representation of parents on governing bodies. Nationally the Campaign for State Education (CASE) is pushing for increasing the influence of governors. Recent research, however, points to only a marginal influence that governors have on the achievement of pupils. It seems that in the sphere of governance, education is being driven by politics rather than well established research based upon the knowledge of senior professionals. Council members will be aware that both P&P and the Deputies' committee have a continuing interest in the above topic. I am sure that managing governors and governance is a subject that all headship teams revisit regularly. It is therefore important that we influence thinking in this vital area.

This questionnaire attempts to clarify three areas - what we as professionals mean by governance, how the reality differs from the ideal and how headship teams are involved in governance. The replies to the questionnaire will be totally anonymous and confidential. Its analysis will be made available to Council members and will play a major role in determining the Associations stance on the developing role of governors. Along with information provided by OFSTED it is the basis for further educational research I am undertaking with the support of other SHA members and the University of Newcastle.

Thank you in advance for taking the time to complete this anonymous questionnaire. Its results will guide SHA's actions in future and it will make a contribution to the development of good governance.

Bob Dingle

Section A

Some brief confidential details:-

1. Are you a.....
(e.g.Principal Warden)
 - Headteacher or equivalent
 - Deputy headteacher or equivalent
2. Is your school.....
 - Maintained
 - GM
 - Independent
 - 11-16
 - 11-18
 - 14-18
 - Other(please state)

3. How large is your school (please state NOR)

Section B

The Perceived Roles of Governors

In this section you will be asked what you believe the roles of governors should be.

It is stated that Governors can act in four main roles:-

- a. as **moderators** - encouraging the professionals to develop in directions that governors approve or by discouraging development in areas they disapprove of
- b. as **leaders** - determining the direction for development for the school which the professionals then act upon
- c. as **managers** - taking action , sometimes on a daily basis, to make sure the school runs smoothly
- d. as **representatives** - speaking for their constituencies at meetings.

2. In your opinion in what rank order should these roles appear:- (please mark 1- 4 with 1 the most important and 4 the least important)

moderators _____ leaders _____ managers _____ representatives _____

3. what reason did you have for the role placed highest in you order of importance?

4. what reason did you have for the role placed lowest in you order of importance?

5. What other roles for governors that have not been covered in the above statements if any?

Section C

The Actual Roles of Governors

In this section you will be invited to comment on the roles that governors actually enact

1. Give one short example that illustrates how your governors have enacted well what you considered to be their most important role:-

2. If possible give one short example that illustrates how your governors have enacted poorly what you considered to be their most important role:-

3. Give one short example that illustrates how your governors have enacted well what you considered to be their least important role:-

4. Please give an example of another role enacted effectively by your governors if not included in the four stated:-

5. Please state any of the main roles that Governors are charged with or choose to adopt that should not be within their remit and your reasons why:-

Section D The Benefits of Governors

In this section you will be invited to comment on what tools and skills governors bring to or develop in their role as governors

1. Governors' attendance at meetings

Please complete the table below to show approximately how many governors attended meetings within a given range in the last 12 months

Range of attendance	Number of Governors
76% - 100%	
51% - 75%	
25% - 50	
0 - 24%	

2. - for maintained schools - it has been commented that LEA governors are poor attenders at all meetings where governors are expected to attend. In your opinion how true is this?

Governors' Prior Experience

3. What types of prior experience do you value from governors:-

Forms of decision management.

4. Please give an example of a decision that has been properly delegated to a committee:-

5. Please give an example of a decision that has been properly delegated to the professionals:-

6. Please give an example of a decision that governors did not delegate properly and was not taken effectively:-

Governor training

7. In the table below put a tick next to the percentage of your governors who have taken part at some time in governor training:-

Percentage of governors taking part in training
76% - 100%
51% - 75%
25% - 50
0 - 24%

8. Give a short example illustrating how governor training has increased your governors' individual effectiveness

Governor representation

9. In the table below put a tick next to the percentage of your governors who accurately represent the views of those they claim to represent:-

Percentage of governors accurately representing the views of those they claim to represent:-
76% - 100%
51% - 75%
25% - 50
0 - 24%

Governors' knowledge of the school

10. How do your governors monitor the work of the school? Please rank order the following with 1 the most common way for governors to monitor the work of the school and 6 the least common way.

Through receiving reports at meetings
Through formal visits to the school
Through informal visits to the school
Through regular informal contact with the headship team
Through contact with other staff
Through rumour

Governor involvement

11. Please state briefly one effective way of involving governors in the following activities:-

a. Appointment of teaching staff:-

b. Pupil discipline:-

c. Curriculum decisions:-

d. Financial decisions:-

e. Health and safety decisions

Section E

The involvement of the whole headship team

In this section you will be invited to comment on what parts are taken by all members of the senior team in dealing with governors

1. How do members of the headship team, other than the head, become involved with the governing body

(Please ring to select those most appropriate)

Not at all
Only informally
Through organising meetings but not attending
Attending meetings in a servicing role
Attending meetings and advising governors

2. What work do the governors undertake outside of meetings

(Please ring to select those most appropriate)

None other than reading papers(sometimes)
Visiting the school on other occasions

Producing drafts of papers themselves
Making representations to others

Please state any other examples of practice that your governors undertake outside of meetings:-

3. How often are some members of your governing body resistant to professionals other than the Head (please ring the most appropriate answer)

- Not at all
- Sometimes
- Often

4. How often are other staff invited to governing body meetings (please ring the most appropriate answer)

- Not at all
- Sometimes
- Often

5. How aware are your governors of what the headship team does- (please ring the most appropriate answer)

- Not aware at all
- Some awareness
- Quite aware
- Totally aware

6. How aware is the governing body of the role and position on teacher governors? For example, governors may not know how much staff governors are representing their own views or those views of a majority of staff - (please ring the most appropriate answer)

- Not aware at all
- Some awareness
- Quite aware
- Totally aware

Finally, are there any aspects of Governance that you wish to highlight that has not been covered in this questionnaire?

Thank you for your time and consideration

Appendix E.

Interview Schedule used for governor interviews in the six sample schools

1) The first area concerns your involvement

1a. How long have you been a governor at the school?

1b. How long have you known the school altogether?

2) The second area concerns the ways that Governors here get involved with the school

2a. What do you see as the role of governors here?

2b. How do they support the school?

2c. Are there boundaries to the work of governors?

2d. How do governors monitor the school or have an overview of it?

2e. What training do governors have?

2f. How do governors show leadership

2g. How are governors involved in planning? (for example the use of staff, curriculum, finance, buildings)

2h. Are there any other ways that governors get involved with the school?

3) The third area concerns the work of the School

3a. How would you show that the school is purposefully led?

3b. How does the school involve teachers in its development?

3c. How does the school ensure that there is quality teaching taking place? (monitor for consistency, well structured sessions, intellectually challenging, work centred environment, limited focus, maximum communication between teachers and pupils, record keeping is of high quality)

3d. How are parents involved with the school?

3e. How would you describe the school climate?

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Atkins, M. J., [1984], 'Practitioner as researcher: some techniques for analysing semi-structured data in small-scale research', British Journal of Educational Studies, 32, 3, 251-61

Baginsky, M., Baker, L., and Cleave, S., [1991], Towards Effective Partnerships in School Governance, Slough: NFER.

Ball, S.J., [1990], Politics and Policy Making in Education: Explorations in Policy Sociology, London: Routledge

Barber, M., [1997], 'The Dark Side of the Moon: Imagining an End to Failure in Urban Education', in Stoll, L. and Myers, K., [eds.], No Quick Fixes: Perspectives on Schools in Difficulty, London: The Falmer Press

Bossert, S., Dwyer, D., Rowan, B., and Lee, G., [1982], 'The Instructional Management Role of the Principal', Educational Administration Quarterly, 2, 34-64

Bottery, M., [1994], 'Education and the convergence of Management Codes', Educational Studies, 20, 3, 329-343

Bradshaw, J., [1988], Bradshaw on The Family: a Revolutionary Way of Self-Discovery, Florida, Health Communications Inc..

Brown, S., Duffield, J., and Riddell, S., [1995], 'School Effectiveness Research: The Policy Makers' Tool for School Improvement?', EERA Bulletin, 1995, 6-14

Callaghan, J., [1992], The Education Debate, 1, in ed., Williams, M., et al., Continuing the Education Debate, London: Cassell

Cohen, L., and Manion, L., [1994], Research Methods in Education, London: Routledge

Creemers, B., Peters T. and Reynolds D., [eds], [1989], School Effectiveness and School Improvement, Groningen : RION

Creese, M., and Bradley, H., [1997], 'Ways in which Governing Bodies contribute to School Improvement: findings from a pilot project', School Leadership and Management, 17, 1, 105-115

Creese, M., and Earley, P., [1998], 'School Governing Bodies: Rationale, Roles and Research', Viewpoint, third draft.

Cuttance, P., [1988], 'The Effectiveness of Scottish Schooling', in Reynolds, D., Creemers, B.P.M., and Peters, T., [eds], [1988], School Effectiveness and Improvement, Cardiff: RION

Davies, B., and Hentschke, G.C., [1994], 'School Autonomy: Myth or Reality', Educational Management and Administration, 22, 2, 102

- Deem R., Brehony, K., and Heath, S., [1995], Active Citizenship and the Governing of Schools, Buckingham:Open University Press.
- DES, [1965], Circular 10/65: The Organisation of Secondary Education , London:DES
- DES, [1987], Circular 7/87: Education (No. 2) Act 1986: Further Guidance, London:DES
- DES, [1988], Circular 7/88: The Education Reform Act: Local Management of Schools. London:DES
- DES, [1989], Circular 13/89: The Local Management of Schools, Further and Higher Education: Order Under Section 222 of the Education Reform Act 1988, London: DES
- DfEE, [1997a], Framework for the Organisation of Schools – Technical Consultation Paper, DfEE:London
- DfEE, [1997b], From Targets to Action - Guidance to Support Effective Target-Setting in Schools, DfEE:London
- DfEE, [1997c], Raising Standards for All, DfEE:London
- DfEE,[1998], The Green Paper, teachers – meeting the challenge of change, DfEE:London
- DfEE,[1999], Improving the effectiveness of school governing bodies, DfEE:London
- DfEE/University of London Institute of Education, [1997], The Road To Success:Four Case Studies Of Schools Which No Longer Require Special Measures, London:DfEE
- Dingle, A., [1996], 'Supportive project', Education, 5/1/96, p.17
- Dingle, R.J.,[1998], 'Governors, do they lead or follow?', Headlines. June 1998, p.26
- Du Quesnay, H., [1997], Striking the Balance: On Target for School Improvement –A Report of the DfEE/OFSTED Governors' Conference' Feb 1997, London:DfEE
- Earley, P., [1994], School Governing Bodies: Making Progress?, Slough:NFER
- Edmonds, R., [1979], 'Effective Schools for the urban poor', Educational Leadership, 37, 10, 15-27
- Fitzgibbon, C., [1991], 'Multilevel Modelling in an Indicator System', in Raudenbush,S.W. and Willms,J.D., [eds], [1991]. Schools, Classrooms and Pupils:International Studies of Schooling from a Multilevel Perspective, San Diego:Academic Press
- Fitzgibbon, C., Tymms, P., and Hazelwood, R.,[1990]. 'Performance Indicators and Information Systems', in Reynolds,D., Creemers, B.P.M., and Peters.T., [eds], [1990], School Effectiveness and Improvement, Groningen:RION

- Fullan, M., Miles, M., and Taylor, G., [1980], 'Organisational Development In Schools: the State of the Art.', Review of Educational Research, 50,1
- Fullan, M.G., [1991], The New Meaning of Educational Change, London: Cassell
- Fullan, M.G., [1985], 'Change process and strategies at the local level', The Elementary School Journal, 84, 3, 391-420
- Graham, D., [1993], A Lesson for Us All: The Making of the National Curriculum, London: Routledge
- Gray, J., and Wilcox, B., [1995], 'The Challenge of Turning Round Ineffective Schools. Unpublished paper presented at the ESRC Seminar Series at Newcastle University, October 1994
- Hainsworth, G., [1995], 'Strategic Planning: Introduction to Conference Theme', in A Report of the DfEE/OFSTED Governors' Conference, York 1995, London: DfEE
- Hargreaves, D., and Hopkins D., [1991], The Empowered School: The Management and Practice of Development Planning, London: Cassell
- Harris, A., and Russ, J., [1995], Pathways to School Improvement, Identifying principles and practices, Report of a Department of Employment funded research project conducted in 1994, London: Department of Employment
- Hoeben, W.Th.J.G., [1989], 'Educational innovation or school effectiveness: a dilemma?', in Creemers, B., Peters, T. and Reynolds, D. (eds) School Effectiveness and School Improvement: Proceedings of the Second International Congress Rotterdam 1989, Amsterdam/Lisse: Swets & Zeitlinger
- Hopkins, D., and Ainscow, M., [1993], 'No room for hit squads', Education, 16/7/93
- Hopkins, D., Ainscow, M., and West, M., [1994], School Improvement in an Era of Change, London: Cassell
- Hopkins, D., [ed], [1987], Improving the Quality of Schooling: Lessons from the OECD International School Improvement Project, London: The Falmer Press
- Hoy, W., Tarter, C.J., and Kottkamp, R.B., [1991], Open Schools/Healthy Schools. Measuring Organizational Climate, London: Sage Publications
- Hoyle, E., [1988], Leadership and Mission: Understanding School Management, Buckingham: Open University Press
- Keys, W., and Fernandes C., [1990], A Survey of School Governing Bodies, Slough: NFER.
- Kitwood, T. M., [1977], 'Values in adolescent life: towards a critical description', unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Bradford

- Kogan, M., Johnson, D., Whitaker, T., and Packwood, T., [1984], School Governing Bodies, London: Heinemann.
- Levacic. R., [1995], Local Management of Schools: Analysis and Practice, Buckingham: Open University Press
- Lezotte, L., Hathaway, D., Miller, S., Passalacqua J., Brookover, W., [1980], School Learning Climate and Student Achievement, East Lansing: Michigan State University, Center for Urban Affairs
- Meikle, D., [1995], 'Managing the Business: a governor's perspective', Report of the DfEE/OFSTED Governors' Conference, York 1995, London: DfEE
- Miles, M., and Huberman, A., [1984], Qualitative Data Analysis, London:Sage
- Mortimore, P., [1991], 'The Nature and Findings of Research on School Effectiveness in the Primary Sector', in Riddell, S., and Brown, R.,[eds], School Effectiveness Research:Its Messages for School Improvement, Edinburgh:HMSO
- Mortimore, P., [1995], 'Research into effective Schools', Report of the DfEE/OFSTED Governors' Conference, York 1995, London: DfEE
- Mortimore, P., Sammons, P., Stoll, L., Lewis, D., and Ecob, R., [1988], School Matters, The Junior Years ,Salisbury:Open Books
- Myers, K., [1995], 'Intensive care for the chronically sick', Draft paper to the European Conference on Educational Research, University of Bath
- Myers, K., and Stoll, L., [1993], 'Mapping the Movement', Education, 16/7/93
- National Governors Council, [1998], Briefing No.3: Stategic Governance, Crediton: Devon
- Obholtzer, A., and Roberts, V.Z., [1994], The Unconscious at Work; Individual and Organizational Stress in the Human Services, London and New York:Routledge
- OFSTED, [1994], Improving Schools, London: HMSO
- OFSTED, [1995a], Chief Inspector's Annual Report, London: HMSO
- OFSTED, [1995b], The OFSTED Handbook: Guidance on the Inspection of Secondary Schools, London: HMSO
- OFSTED, [1995c], Lessons In Teamwork: How School Governing Bodies Can Become More Effective, London:HMSO
- OFSTED, [1995d], Governing Bodies and Effective Schools, London:HMSO
- OFSTED, [1996], Setting Targets to Raise Standards: A Survey of Good Practice, London:HMSO

OFSTED, [1998a], Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, 1996/97, London: HMSO

OFSTED, [1998b], Secondary Education 1993-97: A Review Of Secondary Schools In England, London: HMSO

OFSTED, [1999], Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, 1997/98, London: HMSO

OFSTED/DES, [1995], Governing Bodies and Effective Schools, London, HMSO

Packwood, T., [1984], 'Models of governing bodies' in Glatter, R., [ed], [1984], Understanding School Management, Buckingham: Open University Press

Pearce, J., [1986], Standards and the LEA, London: NFER-Nelson

Peters, T., [1982], In Search of Excellence, New York: HarperCollins

Reynolds, D., [1990], in Moon, B., Issac, J., and Powney, J., [eds], [1990], Judging Standards and Effectiveness in Education, Buckingham: Open University Press,

Reynolds, D., [1995], 'The Effective School: An Inaugural Lecture', Evaluation and Research in Education, 9, 2, 57-73

Reynolds, D., Creemers, B., Nesselrodt, P.S., Schaffer, E.C., Stringfield, S., and Teddlie, C., [1994], Advances in School Effectiveness Research and Practice, Oxford: Pergamon

Reynolds, D. R., and Cuttance, P., [1992], School Effectiveness, Research, Policy and Practice, London: Cassell

Rozenholtz, S., [1989], Teachers' Workplace: The Social Organization of Schools, New York: The Teachers College Press

Rutter, M., Maughan B., Mortimore P. and Ouston J., [1979], Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and their Effects on Children, London: Open Books

Sacks, H., [1984], 'On doing "being ordinary"', in Atkinson, J., and Heritage, J., [eds], Structures of Social Action: Studies in Conversation Analysis, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

Sammons, P., [1988], 'Measuring School Effectiveness' in Reynolds, D., Creemers, B.P.M., and Peters, T., [eds], School Effectiveness and Improvement, Cardiff: RION

Sammons, P., Hillman, J., Mortimore, P., [1995], Key Characteristics of Effective Schools, A review of the school effectiveness research, A report by the Institute of Education for the Office for Standards in Education, London: Institute of Education

Scanlon, M., Earley, P., and Evans, J., [1999], Improving the Effectiveness of Governing Bodies, Research Report RR111, London: DfEE

- Silverman, D., [2000], Doing Qualitative Research, London: Sage Publications
- Smith, A., [1994], Uphill All the Way, St Austell: Camomile Press
- Smith, D., and Tomlinson, S., [1989], The School Effect: A Study of Multi-Racial Comprehensives, London :The Policy Studies Institute
- Southworth, G., [1994], 'The Learning School', in Ribbens, P., and Burrige, E., [eds], [1994], Improving Education: Promoting Quality in Schools, London: Cassell
- Stego, R., [1987], 'Perspectives on School Leader Development', in Hopkins, D., [ed], [1987], Improving the Quality of Schooling: Lessons from the OECD International School Improvement Project, London: The Falmer Press
- Stoll, L., [1995], The Complexity and Challenge of Ineffective Schools, London: International School Effectiveness and Improvement Centre, University of London
- Stoll, L., Myers, K., and Reynolds, D., [1996], 'Understanding Ineffectiveness', Paper presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Educational Research Association, New York, April 1996
- Teddlie, C., and Stringfield, S., [1993], Schools make a difference: Lessons learned from a 10-year study of school effects, New York: Teachers College Press
- Teddlie, C., Kirby, P., and Stringfield, S., [1989], 'Effective vs ineffective schools: Observable differences in the classroom', American Journal of Education, 97, 3, 221-236
- Tuckman, B. W., [1972], Conducting Educational Research, New York: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich
- Walford, G., [1994], Researching the Powerful in Education, London: University College London Press
- Willms, J.D., [1992], Monitoring School Performance, London: Falmer Press
- Wijn and Hoeben '(1989