
European Educational Leadership: Contemporary Issues

Eds. R. Dorczak & R. Precey

LEARNING

INCLUSION

INDIVIDUAL HUMAN
DEVELOPMENT

COOPERATION

TRUST

RESPONSIBILITY

**European
Educational
Leadership:
Contemporary Issues**

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Leopold Sutton

- How can conditions for effective transformational leadership be created?
An examination of factors driving attitudes to organisational leadership 9

Emma Barnard

- A critical exploration of the role that Deputy Headteachers play in succession
planning and leadership development 25

Natalie Steel

- Selective or divisive? The impact of grammar schools on leaders and stu-
dents in a non-selective school 39

Mary Rose

- Flying the nest. Why do new teachers leave and how can we get them to stay
or come back? 49

Ellie Wall

- How do leadership approaches and styles affect the retention of teaching
staff in English primary schools? 61

Robin Precey

- Effective and Enlightening Transition of vulnerable children between
schools: an evaluation of a pilot project 77

Bryony Hackett-Evans

- The impact of standardisation on academic attainment 91

Anna Afolayan

- Peer tutoring and improved Learning for All. Implications for Leadership 105

Amy Austin

- Making it matter: Equitable service-learning in diverse communities 123

Sally Burtle

- Most effective and manageable methods of delivering feedback 137

Lucinda Balmer-Wellard

- Primary School Executive Leadership: an exploration of a new and changing
role in English education 153

Gabrielle Woor

- An exploration of the effectiveness of pupil premium strategies according to
teachers' perspectives in two comparative schools 163

Introduction

This book consists of eleven chapters written by young teachers who have completed their Masters studies in Leadership either at Canterbury Christ Church University or at Cambridge University and one by a tutor on the programme. They have identified, researched, formed well-crafted conclusions and, most important, recommendations on real, live issues in English education which we are sure resonate with all educators in whichever system they work. A range of research methods are used: on-line surveys, semi-structured interviews, prioritisation activities and critical incident analysis.

The voices of young, articulate, thoughtful challenging teachers are essential if our children's education is to developed and improved to prepare them for a complex, rapidly changing world in the rest of the twenty first century and quite possibly beyond. These are our future school leaders. These young teachers have lived through a dogma, standards, tests and inspection in English schools. They are themselves *products* of a school system that has been test results driven with high levels of accountability. It is to their credit that they are able to offer a balanced critique of a narrow standards agenda and offer positive alternatives. This is important in that they are potential senior leaders in our schools. There are signs that the English system is changing towards a more holistic, self-evaluative, nuanced approach. Their findings, thus, become even more relevant as schools seek to change direction to embrace children's achievements as well as their attainments. Following chapters deal with different issues, all giving interesting insights to current school leadership and management challenges in all educational systems.

Leopold Sutton examines the creation of conditions for effective transformational leadership to be created. He helpfully, for leaders and aspiring leaders, identifies factors driving attitudes to organisational leadership.

Emma Barnard has critically explored of the role that Deputy Headteachers in succession planning and leadership development.

Natalie Steel investigates the contentious issue in English education of selection (or division?) of children at the age of 10/11 to go to separate schools based on ability as measured by a test. There is learning here for others thinking of segregating children in an education system.

Mary Rose looks at the current crisis of teacher mobility and in particular the loss of teachers from schools in England. Why do new teachers leave and how can we get them to stay or come back? She offers practical advice as a result of her reading and research.

Ellie Wall probes this issue of retention more by focusing on how leadership approaches and styles affect the retention of teaching staff in English primary schools. Again there are lessons for leaders to learn whether in England or elsewhere.

Robin Precey explains the research methodology used to evaluate aspects of a pilot project focused on exclusions and transition. He unwinds the complexity of the English system of education and looks at an arts-based project designed to help vulnerable pupils transition more smoothly to another school as they get older. There is learning here for leaders in all school systems.

Bryony Hackett-Evans provides us with a clear and critical analysis of the impact of standardisation on academic attainment.

Anna Afolayan's study of peer tutoring and improved Learning for All has clear, practical implications for teachers and those who lead them.

Amy Austin's writing is an in-depth study of equitable service-learning in diverse communities based on her current role as a teacher in an international school in Nepal.

Sally Burtle analyses methods of delivering feedback and provides practical advice on what is manageable and effective.

Lucinda Balmer-Wellard examines a new and growing phenomena: the rise of Executive Leadership in primary schools in England.

Finally, **Gabrielle Woor** explores two headteachers' leadership styles as seen by their teachers in relation to the deployment of a specific central government grant to improve the education of disadvantaged children.

These practitioner research informed articles have used a range of different methods and gained a range of views from leaders, teachers, student and pupils. All have practical implications for schools whether they be in England or anywhere else in the world.

How can conditions for effective transformational leadership be created?

An examination of factors driving attitudes to organisational leadership

Leopold Sutton

Canterbury Christ Church University (United Kingdom)

1 Introduction

Transformational leadership is an approach which enables change to individuals and organisations by ensuring that the values of an organisation, its leaders and its staff are aligned (Bass 1999). This approach empowers those being led through intellectual stimulation, inspiration, idealised influence (the leader as a role-model for those being led) and individual consideration of those being led. These are known as the '4 Is' of transformational leadership (Bass and Avolio 1993). Transformational leaders use these tools to create sustainable, effective change to a greater extent than other approaches.

This is generally contrasted with a more traditional approach, termed transactional leadership, in which the leader motivates by having the ability to distribute material reward in exchange for service. In recent literature, this form of leadership is often seen as less sustainable or capable of creating effective change.

In my personal experience, transactional leadership was the primary paradigm of leadership in schools in the England, generally viewed as being effective by staff. Having understood that transformational leadership, both independently and as a complement to transactional leadership has the potential to improve productivity and job satisfaction in a range of environments (Bass and Riggio 2006), I struggled with why people were unwilling and unable to adopt it. In considering pre-requisites for the adoption of a more transformational paradigm, I realised the negative attitudes of those being led towards leaders of their organisation was a significant barrier. We must understand, therefore, how to create a more positive view of leadership within organisations.

The objective of this research is to determine how barriers to increasing the effectiveness of organisational leadership might be overcome. The aim is that this should be applicable to a wide range of organisations which will enable them to improve the quality of their leadership.

The views of the leadership of participants of two different graduate schemes, one providing Initial Teacher Training, the other providing graduate entry into a professional services firm are sought and examined. These contrasting groups will help to ensure that the effects of organisational context will be apparent in the survey, and

with and understanding of this context will come a greater ability to generalise of results. Through a survey their views relating to leadership in general and leaders within their own organisation along with background information were sought.

In this research two underlying assumptions are made. The first is that a more positive attitude to work will be driven by more transformational leadership behaviours and the second is that an organisations leadership has a significant impact on people's attitudes towards that leadership. This article therefore additionally assesses the extent to which these assumptions are valid.

2 Research Methodology

Data Gathering

An on-line survey was used. This was distributed to participants of the teacher training programme and the professional services graduate scheme for responses.

The survey is split into three sections. First, it looks at the backgrounds of respondents, including age, gender, previous career experience and how they view the attitude to work of their current workplace. These will help understanding which external factors have caused differences in attitude.

Second, the groups views on leadership in general are looked at, that is, outside their organisation. Questions are chosen that refer to leadership from several different approaches, focusing on styles and attributes which are deemed desirable and whether they are reflected in the leaders of that organisation. This enables the testing of a broad set of assumptions with questions designed to be general and applicable to a wide range of groups. When collecting data, the concept of leadership is left undefined, allowing respondents to interpret it as they choose. This will amplify the effect of the context of respondents including any cultural interpretations they might bring.

Third, the research looks at how those perceptions apply to senior leaders within the respondent's organisation. It refers explicitly to senior leaders to ensure participants are not answering questions in reference to their direct leaders or line managers. This section is placed after the questions on leadership in general to lessen the impact of considering leadership within respondents' own organisations when considering leadership in general, although it will be impossible to eliminate the influence altogether.

Survey construction

In order to gather responses to the questions above, a Likert Scale is used as the most effective and commonly used way to measure attitudes or behaviours (Survey-Monkey 2018).

Cultural backgrounds have been found to affect responses to Likert Scale questions (J. W. Lee *et al.* 2002), particularly when positive value judgements are required as will be necessary in the survey. As this survey is being conducted on participants who have joined graduate schemes in one country, this effect is expected to be small, but given the cultural differences in attitudes to leadership, this may compound that effect. It will be important to recognise this as data is analysed, but it was decided not to ask questions on cultural background of respondents due to the possibility of breaking anonymity.

3 Data analysis

A comparison of descriptive statistics between these two samples will provide the initial basis of the exploration. Because it was not possible to ensure that the samples are representative, it is not possible to draw statistically sound conclusions for the distribution of responses in the populations, instead, we can look solely at the distribution of responses in the sample.

4 Results

12 responses were received from the initial teacher training programme and 18 from the professional services graduate programme. Additional responses were received after the data was downloaded and so are not included in the analysis. 'N/A' responses were removed from the data before processing.

In some cases, it was decided to present category data from the Likert scales as continuous data. Where this has been done, the following mapping has been used:

- Strongly agree: 4
- Agree: 3
- Disagree: 2
- Strongly disagree: 1

Where box and whisker plots have been generated, the solid line in the centre of the box represents the median, the edges of the box represent the upper and lower quartiles, the edges of the whiskers represent the next smallest or largest observation equal to 50% or less variation than the boxes and any remaining observations are plotted as points.

In order to determine whether differences in distributions are significant, Welch's t-test is used to determine if sample means maybe considered the same while avoiding assuming variances of the populations are equal (Welch 1947). A two-sided test is used. In order to determine whether differences in sample means are statistically significant, it requires a significance level greater than 5% (< 0.05). This represents a chance of less than 5% of obtaining the same or more extreme result of the test, given that the population means were in fact the same.

Processed results are presented below. In Figure 3, in order to save space, the following key is used.

- A. Leaders in [an/my] organisation can generally be trusted to lead effectively.
- B. Leaders in [an/my] organisation are generally well respected by staff.
- C. Leaders in [an/my] organisation generally respect the views of staff.
- D. Staff in [an/my] organisation generally respect the decision of leaders.
- E. Leaders in [an/my] organisation can have a negative effect on its productivity.
- F. Leaders in [an/my] organisation generally have a positive effect on its culture.
- G. A leader's character is [generally/] an important aspect of their leadership [/in my organisation].
- H. A leader's relationships are [generally/] an important aspect of their leadership [/in my organisation].
- I. In [general/my organisation] those most able to lead become leaders.
- J. My views on [leadership in general/leaders in my organisation] are difficult to change.

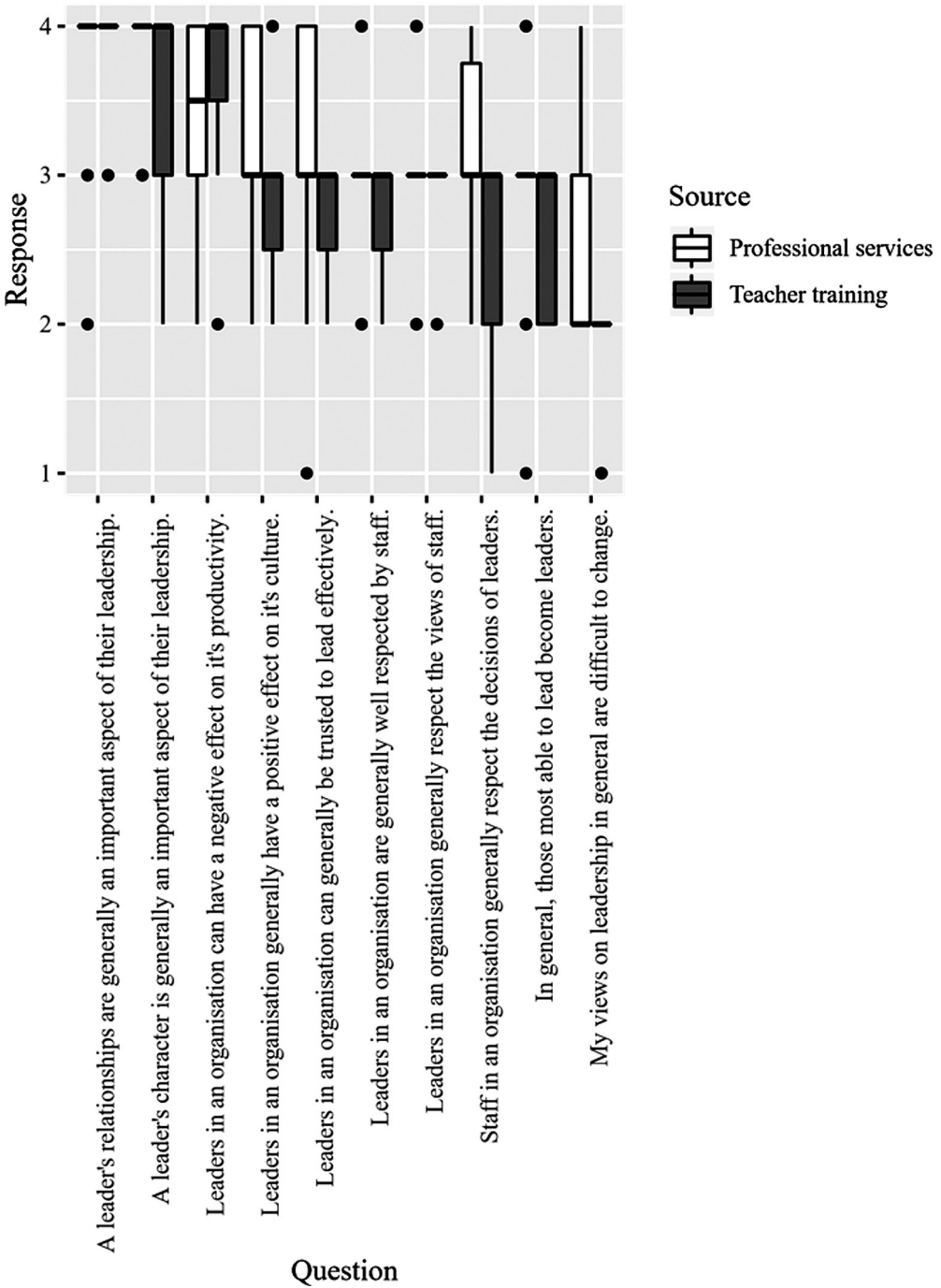


Figure 1: Graph showing differences in attitudes towards leadership in general between two different samples

Source: own work

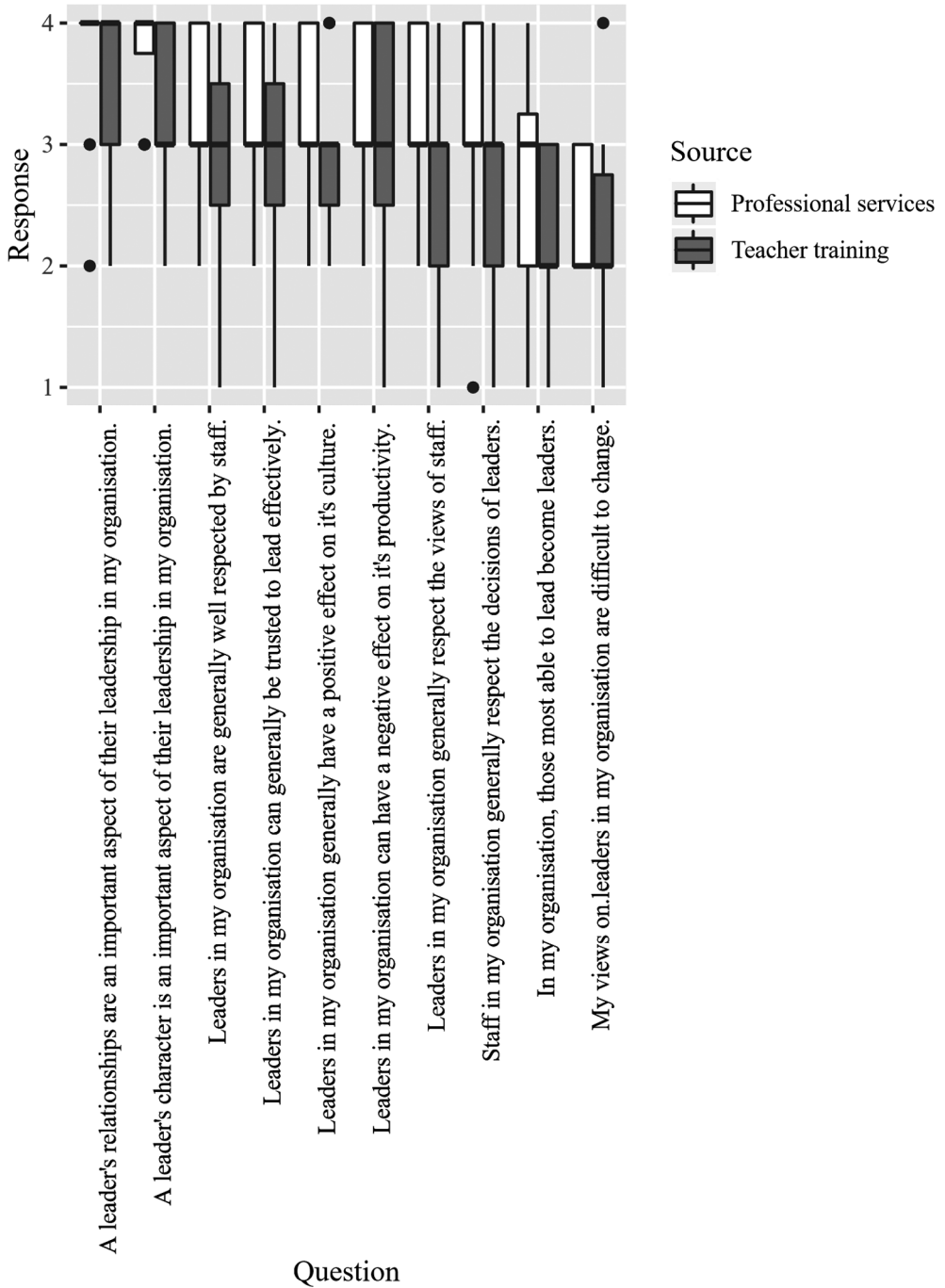


Figure 2: Graph showing difference in attitudes to leadership within specific organisations between two different samples.

Source: own work

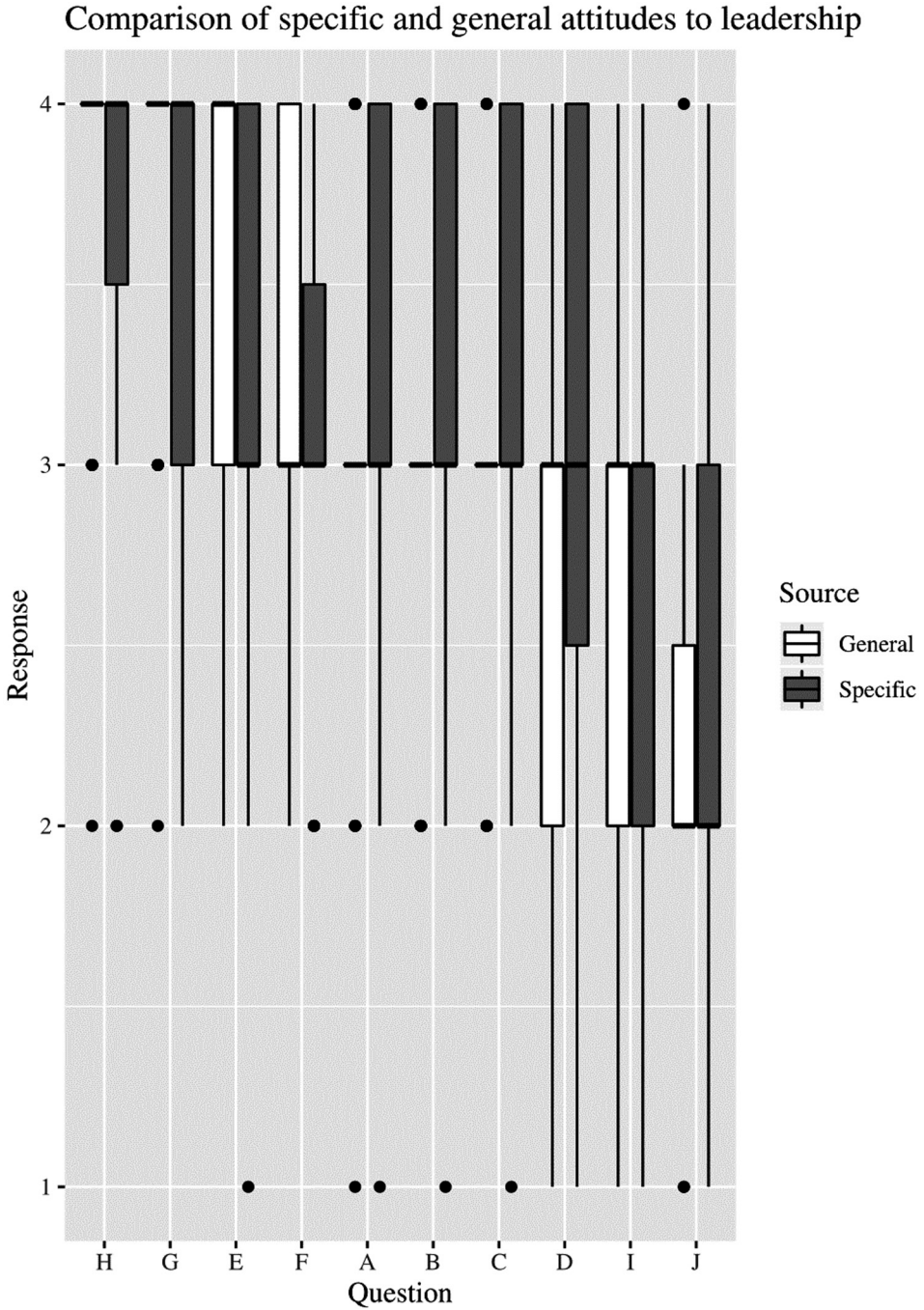


Figure 3: Graph showing difference in specific and general attitudes towards leadership
 Source: own work

5 Discussion

Data collection limitations

As we have asked questions about negative aspects of leadership, we may find respondents are affected by their social desirability bias (Grimm 2010). If respondents believe that their responses show counter-productive behaviour or inappropriate attitudes towards their leadership, they are less likely to respond honestly. To overcome this, it is important that participants feel able to be honest. Explicitly only collecting data which is anonymous and use of a trusted survey tool will help to alleviate this to some extent. However, because some people may be completing the survey in their office environment, they are likely to be reminded of the dangers of honesty. It is also possible that a significant number of participants did not read the information given to participants about data control, so this mitigation may have had a reduced effectiveness.

In the exploratory statistical analysis, there is a risk of producing spurious correlations. When looking at a p-value of less than 5%, naively, we would therefore expect one in twenty correlations generated to incorrectly appear significant. This risk can be reduced by ensuring conclusions make sense with interpretation, but results will require replication to be statistically sound.

Universal issues with leadership

The questions responded to most negatively are, both for leadership in general and within specific organisations: 'In general, those ablest to lead become leaders.'; 'Staff in an organisation generally respect the decisions of leaders.'; and 'Leaders in an organisation generally respect the views of staff.'

Regarding the questions concerning respect, these responses imply a reciprocal lack of respect between staff and leadership, but the extent to which this exists or is merely perceived isn't clear. When we are asking to ask staff to judge the opinions of others, it may be that they are mistaken when they believe their views aren't respected. Without data from the leaders themselves it is difficult to determine whether this is true. From my own experience, if I believe my views aren't going to be respected, I am both less likely to take leadership within a role myself, such as suggesting improvements to systems or processes and am less motivated to apply myself to my work in general.

If people believe that staff in general and within their own organisations do not respect their decisions, the impact leadership is having in an organisation is reduced. For leadership of any style to have impact, staff must be willing to respect their leader enough to implement their decisions. If the leaders are unable to have their decisions followed by staff, staff will not see any benefit from the leadership. This risks a cycle in which the leadership is viewed more and more negatively until it is replaced, or intervention ensures staff do as they've been asked.

One the one hand, we may have uncovered a more fundamental issue than trying to change attitudes in general as we look at improving organisational leadership: If leaders are not currently able to lead and have their decisions respected in a transactional environment, this needs to be rectified before anything else can follow. On the other hand, this lack of respect may arise from operating in this purely transactional environment. If we move to transformational leadership as opposed to transactional, it may be that this alone is enough to create the respect currently lacking. As leaders move away from the exchange of service for material reward to a culture of inspiration and empowerment, this will drive the necessary change in attitude.

The belief among staff that leaders do not trust their views is also concerning. If staff believe they are not respected, there is little chance for relationships to be built. Alongside this, it implies that staff consider there to be a significant divide between themselves and those leading their organisation. It is inevitable that in a large organisation, not everyone will be able to know their senior leaders, but this need not always be the case in smaller organisations, for example those that participants in initial teacher training are part of. Further, this shows that there are no strong professional relationships between these groups which would be able to go some way to reducing this problem, even if there were no personal relationships.

This is a contrast between teacher training and professional services. In the case of teacher training, while senior leaders were visible daily, generally few people who were under their leadership would seek personal relationships with them. This created a tension between the groups of leaders and staff with staff who did seek these relationships viewed as being purely self-interested. On the other hand, in the professional services firm, organisational leaders are remote and might only be heard from at long intervals. Yet, in this case, personal relationships with senior organisational leaders were highly valued, and their presence welcomed. And yet, despite the different cultures within these organisations, responses to the survey questions are similar. We can conclude then, that in both cases relationships are challenging to build for different reasons. This demonstrates, the importance of understanding organisational context in the interpretation of results.

It is interesting to note that the three factors at the beginning of this section are repeated both in the case of leadership in general and in the case of specific organisations. This may indicate that where people see issues in their own organisations, they believe that these issues are also occurring more widely. If this is the case, it is impossible to separate people's attitudes towards leadership in general and leadership in their own organisations, if experience of their own organisations is going to have such a strong effect on their attitudes in general.

Comparison of attitudes towards leadership between graduate programmes

When looking at specific impressions of leadership, we can see there were three instances in which there was a statistically significant difference between the graduate programmes: 'Leaders in an organisation can generally be trusted to lead effectively.' was more strongly agreed with by those from professional services; 'Staff in an organisation generally respect the decisions of leaders.' again agreed with more strongly by those in professional services; and 'My views on leadership in general are difficult to change,' once again agreed with more strongly by those in professional services.

Regarding the first two questions, intuitively, it seems people who believe leaders can be trusted to lead organisations are more likely to believe staff will respect that leadership. We can imagine this is a wider-reaching version of the false consensus effect (Mullen *et al.* 1985) whereby people overestimate the extent to which the general population shares their opinions. In this case we see as people trust others (leadership in this case), they believe they will in turn be respected. We might also assume the reverse is true, that those who are trusted come to trust others, implying a cyclical relationship.

While we would expect these two responses to be correlated, it is not clear why we would expect them to be more prevalent in a professional services organisation than initial teacher training. I believe though that this is explained by differences in organisational culture. In my experience, there are different ranges of acceptable attitudes towards leadership within the two samples. Within the teacher training organisation, it was acceptable to be open in disdain towards organisational leadership. Staff would often justify this defiance by arguing it would help students achieve the best outcomes. On the other hand, the

attitude in professional services organisations for junior staff is that there is no excuse for not following the directions of leaders, there being no recourse to any 'greater good.'

We also note that those in professional services said their views on leadership were more difficult to change. This is surprising. Other significant differences between the groups indicated a more positive attitude towards leadership for those in professional services. However, we would expect a positive attitude to be associated with finding it easier to change our mind about that given topic (Klein and O'Brien 2016). This may indicate that impressions of leadership are less influenced by the actions of individuals and instead rely to a greater extent on other factors such as organisational culture. This may also reflect a different approach to the implicit attitudes to leadership within these training programmes. In the initial teacher training programme, treatment of leadership was often in an academic context, as something which was important to challenge. The treatment in the professional services programme was entirely from the point of view of a tool to be used creating different expectations around the acceptability of and ability to change one's attitude.

When we consider attitudes to leadership in general, we see only one significant difference between teacher training and professional services participants. Professional services participants were more likely to agree with the statement 'Leaders in my organisation generally respect the views of staff.'

It may be more difficult to judge leadership within our own organisations than leadership in general because of a lack of understanding of other environments. 69% of survey respondents were currently in their first full time job, meaning they were unlikely to have had extensive, other experience of workplace leadership, a very different concept to leadership at university. A lack of understanding of other workplace environments may mean that a greater influence will be exerted by cultural factors. This would indicate then that there are different cultural factors driving differences in attitude between applicants to professional services and teacher training programmes. From personal experience, it seems likely that cultural factors are playing a significant role in this difference. It may be that those who are drawn to an initial teacher training programme are more likely to be open to the idea of challenging leadership in a non-traditional way as teacher training is both marketed as and seen as a different alternative to traditional graduate level programmes.

Examination of other influencers of attitudes to leadership

We can see that two questions relating to leadership in general were correlated significantly with other factors. First, 'Staff in an organisation generally respect the decision of leaders.' is positively correlated with having a positive attitude to work. Your own organisation is therefore likely to have a significant impact on how you think other people view leaders. Those who have a positive attitude to their work are intuitively likely not only to have a more positive attitude to leadership in their organisation, but leadership in general. It also reinforces a central premise of this work, that positive leadership behaviours drive organisational effectiveness. In this case, this means ensuring staff can respect the decisions of leaders.

Second, we see those who have held previous jobs are more likely to believe that a leader's relationships are generally important. It is not immediately clear why this might be the case, but this might reflect the experience of those who have changed role and found that building relationships in a new environment was more difficult than they had supposed at first. It may also be a reflection of the samples chosen: Teacher training and professional services may be two professions more reliant on relationships than professional work in general. Teaching is explicitly a profession of relationships given the importance of developing positive rapport quickly with students while professional services

is implicitly a profession of relationships with importance placed on positive relationships both with other clients and networks of professionals. In both cases, these are attitudes to relationships that are explicitly developed through the graduate training process. For those who have held previous jobs, it may be that these have less of an impact.

When we examine attitudes to leadership in specific organisations, those who said there was a positive attitude to work in their organisation were much more likely to say: that leaders in their organisation could be trusted; that leaders were well respected; that staff respect leaders' decisions; and that leaders have a positive effect on culture. As we have already seen, positive attitude to work is correlated to positive responses to questions about leadership. While this expected, the strength of correlation (p-values less than 2%) shows this to be an extremely strong relationship. This further reinforces our earlier supposition, that positive behaviours by leaders drive positive attitudes in organisations.

If we trust leaders in an organisation to be effective, this implies that the work we are doing is more effective because of them. If we believe the work we do is effective then this is likely to foster a positive attitude towards it, so this is a relationship that makes sense within the framework of this research.

We also find strong correlations between those who say a leader's character and relationships are important and whether they have held a previous job. This reflects what we have already seen in the general case and again may be attributed to experience they have gained from changing jobs. As no qualitative questions were asked related to previous jobs, it is difficult to assess why this might have been. Again though, it may be that our sample organisations emphasised the character of leaders above others other organisations which people might have worked in before. Certainly, there is pressure in both environments to take on a certain character. In initial teacher training we were asked to develop a 'teacher persona', a character for the classroom. In professional services, the distinction is less clear, but it may be that people similarly believe there is a character which they should take on in order to be effective. It has been recognised that professionals are likely to try to adopt the character of other, more senior individuals in order to achieve promotion (Ibarra 1999). If those in the sample, consciously or unconsciously, are attempting to copy the character of others, this suggests they do consider character to be an important aspect of leadership.

Finally, we see that those who are older are more likely to believe a leader can have a negative effect on productivity both when asking about people's own organisations, and in the general case. This may simply be a product of experience; as this is a question about possibility rather than what is generally expected, those who are older are more likely to have had the negative experience merely by their having spent more time in the workplace. This may also reflect a greater cynicism that has developed outside graduate programmes. While taking part in graduate schemes, I have found that I am constantly receiving positive messages about the organisation and its direction, if not leadership explicitly. People who have experienced work beyond graduate schemes have then had a greater exposure to 'business as usual', with fewer positive messages.

6 Conclusions

Recommendations

Practical steps are suggested below which could be taken in a range of organisations to improve staff perceptions of leadership. These are based on the analysis of results above.

1. Implement a formal mechanism for staff to give feedback to leaders

One of the key barriers to positive attitudes towards leadership, is a belief among staff in an organisation that they are not trusted by their leadership. If we assume this is because staff haven't had an opportunity to prove their potential there are undoubtedly benefits to be gained, as demonstrated by systems of employee empowerment such as Kaizen (Paul Brunet and New 2003) where employees have proved their contributions are invaluable in process improvement efforts.

Alternatively, it may be that employees do have the opportunity, but not the tools in order to contribute effectively. It may be that they have not received enough training in order to make appropriate suggestions, or that they do not have sufficiently board over-view of processes in order to contribute.

In order to address both issues, a formal mechanism for staff feedback is required. This process already exists in other contexts, including as part of University's student feedback mechanism in England, where surveys are distributed on all courses the university provides. Once the feedback has been collected, changes made to the academic programme are then shared back with students (Canterbury Christ Church University 2018). This shows that not only are the university willing to accept feedback, but that they trust their students to be genuine, open and honest by demonstrating that it is used to shape University policies.

This addresses the issue both of opportunity to contribute, by providing a defined way to contribute and demonstrating its impact, but it also overcomes the problem of an inability to contribute, as the survey provides a framework for feedback in a way structured to ensure it is useful as well as a chance to provide general commentary.

Alongside this, as leaders make themselves open to formal mechanisms of feedback, they should also ensure they are available to staff for informal discussions. Taking formal feedback may increase feeling of respect but complimenting this with informal meetings would further increase relationships based on that respect, ensuring that it is sustainable over the long term.

2. Increase process transparency for senior promotions

In general, respondents do not trust that those most able to lead are the leaders in their organisation. The implication is that either staff don't understand the rationale senior leader promotions or they don't believe the process is effective.

As we have been referring to organisational leaders, rather than direct leaders, it is unlikely that respondents will have personal relationships with those about whom they have been answering questions. This is a contrast with those of similar positions within an organisation, where respondents are much more likely to have a personal relationship. Because of this contrast it may be that promotions in senior leadership appear particularly opaque, in that they differ from the promotions which will affect those with whom respondents have a personal relationship.

It is important then that any process for senior leader promotions has the trust of all those who will be affected. First, transparency of the process should be improved with specific criteria used to judge candidates. These could be shared with and approved by those who will be under the leadership of those promoted. Second, an organisation could share, after a promotion process is completed, the reasons for the selection.

However, this would require a cultural shift, placing less emphasis on the right to privacy of candidates. It would also require that there was also some degree of trust that this process would be completed with honesty and not affected by the same factors driving the negative attitudes initially.

The effect of this would either be for staff to understand why the best candidate was being promoted in each case, or to force organisational change, improving the promotion process and making the promotion of more suitable candidates more likely.

3. Ensure that directions of leadership are followed effectively for staff

If respondents say staff in general do not respect the decisions of leaders in general, it is likely that this also occurs within specific organisations, but respondents are less willing to respond to negative questions about specific instances than they are in general. We can explain this as a generalised fundamental attribution error (Tetlock 1985), whereby respondents are able to recognise the negative behaviour in other organisations as deliberate, but not our own, which we explain merely as a product of the circumstances in which we found ourselves.

If we assume that people want to perform well in their work, they will not ignore the directions of leadership unless they believe they are either detrimental to their roles or have insufficient impact to overcome the cost of change. There are two reasons why this might be the case: First is that changes are made too frequently, causing members of an organisation to develop change fatigue (Bernerth, Walker, and Harris 2011). This is associated with lack of alignment to the vision of the organisation, which in turn makes new changes less likely to be implemented. The main result of this is an increase in organisational turnover. This is compounded by the inability of staff to realise benefits of one change before the next arrives.

The second possible cause is that changes are not viewed as being positive for job performance. This is likely to stem either from a lack of competence of the leaders, preventing them from making effective decisions, or from a disconnect between leaders and staff causing a lack of understanding of realities 'on the ground.'

The first change that is required to correct this is a steady, manageable pace of change in which those participating can understand the reasons for any changes they are asked to make. An initial step towards this will be to ensure that personal and professional relationships begin being built between senior leaders and staff. This could be approached in a similar way to the feedback mechanism suggested above.

Second, staff must be engaged early in any process of change. This will serve two purposes: It will enable staff to help regulate the pace, contributing to the first point, they will be able to feed back the level of change fatigue and capacity for further improvement. Also, it will allow staff to give feedback on the substance of the change itself, ensuring that it is sufficiently effective to be worth the effort to implement it.

Finally, the change itself and its rationale must be shared with staff in a useful and meaningful way. There are a range of ways this could be accomplished; in the medical field this is with change champions (Kaasalainen *et al.* 2015). These are staff members prepared to advocate for change among their peers, particularly during ad hoc meetings with their colleagues. In this way, they ensure not only that the burden of making change is reduced for staff, but they also provide upwards feedback regarding the changes much more immediately than waiting for another formal cycle of feedback.

Beyond this, if leaders that believe following a course of action is important and yet staff see their commitment isn't valued more than their colleagues lack of commitment, this may breed resentment and in turn, a negative impression towards leadership. In this way a small number of staff can undermine the wider effort to effect change. However, if compliance is to be measured, this must be done in a simple, unobtrusive way. From my experience, people expected senior leaders to have minimal intrusion into their practice and instead be trusted as professionals to make the right decisions, whether or not they were being effective. Misjudged attempts to measure compliance therefore in some cases generated further resentment.

4. Explicitly recognise good leadership in your organisation

Despite apparent issues, it appears most people believe that the leadership they are exposed to in a graduate scheme is better than that the leadership they could experience in other organisations. Given we have seen that these largely positive attitudes to leader-

ship exist, and indeed are reflected in my own experience, it is important to exploit these positive beginnings to drive organisational change.

Explicitly recognising good leadership behaviours within an organisation will serve two purposes. First to ensure other leaders emulate positive and popular leadership practices. If certain leaders within an organisation have good practice, it is for the benefit of everybody that this practice is spread wider. It is important then that as part of this celebration, everyone shares an understanding of both how recognition can be achieved in general, and why specific leaders are recognised.

Second, recognising these positive actions and attitudes will ensure that awareness of them is greater among staff. If information is easier to recall, we believe it to be more likely to be true (Schwarz *et al.* 1991), and information that is shared more often is likely to be easier to recall. In this case then, if examples of effective leadership behaviour were clearly made available to staff, they may be more likely to have a positive attitude towards their leadership.

5. Explicitly discuss leadership in an academic context

As well as taking steps to ensure a more positive attitude towards leadership, it is also important to ensure staff are effectively able to recognise when they experience positive and negative leadership behaviours and change their opinions appropriately. A key way this can be accomplished is through developing a critical, reflective attitude, encouraging openness to challenging leaders when negative behaviours are observed.

This is already seen in the initial teacher training programme where a critical approach to leadership is encouraged. In this way, participants will be encouraged to change their mind as leadership behaviours change. Alongside this a greater openness and criticality, will help staff in making better informed decisions over the leadership of an organisation.

Encouraging these attitudes in staff will mean it is no longer enough to have a reactive approach to staff who are unsatisfied with their leadership. Instead organisations need to pro-actively ensure that instances of negative leadership behaviours are eliminated, and that policies actively encourage positive leadership behaviours.

7 Research Questions

To what extent are more transformational leadership practices correlated with a more positive attitude to work?

We have seen that those who: believe their leaders lead effectively; believe they are well respected by leaders; have respect for the decisions of leaders; and believe that leaders have a positive effect on their organisation's culture all have a significantly more positive attitude to their work than those who did not.

We can term the above transformational leadership practices. We can say therefore that there is a strong correlation between increased perception of transformational leadership practices and a more positive attitude to work. However, it is difficult to determine if this connection is causal. It may be that attitude to work is driving the attitude to leadership.

To what extent are attitudes to leadership determined by factors beyond organisational leadership?

To what extent this is true depends on to what extent we can believe that our two sample organisations represent the wider population. If we believe that these two organisations

are representative, then it appears that views of leadership are almost entirely culturally determined with very little to do with actual effectiveness of organisational leadership.

However, perhaps it is more likely that these two graduate schemes are too similar to be representative of all organisations. In this way, it would be expected that views on organisational leadership may be similar between them. In this case, it is difficult to say to what extent organisational leadership affects attitudes to leaders.

Given that we have seen strong correlation between some background questions asked as a part of this survey, there is a significant extent to which external factors influence attitudes towards leadership. However, because of the limited background information asked in this survey, the wide range of background factors which might possibly cause influence and the difficulty in understanding the interplay between those factors, it is challenging to say to what extent we can answer this question as true.

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A critical exploration of the role that Deputy Headteachers play in succession planning and leadership development

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1 Introduction

Alongside their duty to educate, schools in England have an increasing accountability for the safeguarding and welfare of the students on their roll. Hamblin defines this part of teaching as the “[pastoral] element [...], which centres around the personality of the pupil and the forces of his environment which either facilitate or impede the development of intellectual and social skills and foster or retard emotional stability” (1978, p. 15). It is widely agreed that staff working in schools and other provisions for young people are well placed to identify children who are not being safeguarded and are at risk of neglect and abuse (Bandelet, 2009). In order to support teachers in fulfilling their safeguarding duties, a Government paper, released in 2015, requests all organisations that work with children demonstrate a “clear line of accountability” for the safeguarding of children, with the top of that ladder being the “designated safeguarding lead” (2015, p. 53). This role is specified in a school as a leader “who will provide support to staff members to carry out their safeguarding duties and who will liaise closely with other services such as children’s services” (Department of Education, 2016, p. 5).

At School X, the “clear line of accountability” centred around a House Team pastoral care system, consisting of five Houses responsible for the safeguarding of around 300 children each. Each House Team is led by a House Leader (HL), with a non-teaching Pastoral Manager (PM) and a Deputy House Leader (DHL), a role to which I was appointed in September 2017. The job description of the DHL at School X does not outline any clear areas of responsibility or accountability beyond “deputising for the House Leader when required”. The HL job description outlines a vast array of responsibilities including “lead the Deputy House Leader in ensuring quality succession management”. The curriculum teams at School X have a similar structure with each curriculum area consisting of a Curriculum Leader (CL) and at least one Deputy Curriculum Leader (DCL) beneath them. Similarly to the House Leader job description, the Curriculum Leader’s responsibilities include “lead the Deputy Curriculum Leader in ensuring quality succession management”.

Precey refers to leadership in schools to be a “climate of professional football [whereby] public results matter and failure means swift removal of managers and coaches from high profile jobs” (2015, p. 11). As such, the needs for schools to plan succession of roles is two-fold: on the one hand leadership development has become a “generic entitlement” for teachers in schools looking to progress (West-Burnham, 2004, p. 2), while on the other the current turnover of school leaders is high and therefore replacements need to be anticipated.

After my appointment as DHL in September 2017, it quickly became apparent that my HL would have to step aside from his position due to ill health. After the October half term, my HL was signed off work for the remainder of the term and I was asked to step into his shoes as Acting House Leader. This leadership succession became a critical moment in my understanding of deputy roles and led me to the key question of this article: how well do deputy positions prepare a colleague for succession into leadership? And is there a difference in the quality of succession between pastoral and curriculum deputies at School X?

2 Critical Literature Review

What does leadership mean in the context of a pastoral responsibility?

In the job description of a HL, much attention is paid to the “strategic direction and development” of the school through data interrogation and the “leadership and management of staff”. These duties are quite subjective and can be determined by the “head” and “heart” (Sergiovanni, 1992) of the House Leader. Unlike a Curriculum Leader who is accountable to the results of their department, a House Leader is difficult to hold to account based upon these measurements.

However, where the House Leader role struggles to meet the definitions of leadership is when it becomes tied up in legislation. Legal documentation, particularly where the safeguarding of children is concerned, is inflexible and requires the HL to ensure their legally binding processes involve “doing things right” as opposed to “doing the right thing” (Nannus and Bennis, 1997, p. 33). Pastoral systems in schools need to be tightly controlled and recorded, as demonstrated by the Department of Education requiring “all concerns, discussions and decisions made [regarding the safeguarding of children] and the reasons for those decisions should be recorded in writing” (2016, p. 8), as schools are held so highly accountable when child protection is not met. Where safeguarding and welfare is concerned, a House Leader is forced to adopt a “transactional” (Caroline Shields, 2010, p. 563) leadership style, assigning safeguarding responsibilities to teachers and ensuring any information that suggests a child’s welfare is being compromised gets passed up the ladder. In line with the guidelines set out by the Department of Education, transactional leadership “ensures smooth and efficient organisational operation” (Shields, 2010, p. 563), and therefore meets legislation.

How does a school plan for succession in the restraints of transactional circumstances?

In both the House Leader and Curriculum Leader job descriptions at School X, “quality succession management” is outlined as a key area of responsibility. In January 2017, the Department of Education released a document providing advice on how school leaders should review staff structures “[...] as part of their annual school improvement, curriculum and financial planning” (2017, p. 4). The document can be narrowed down to three core principles, each of which is underpinned by a strand of school leadership theory critical to succession planning.

a) “Always invest in the right mix of staff” (Department of Education, 2017, p. 4): Team structures as a means of preparing future leaders

At School X, team structures have become a pivotal means for the school leaders to ensure school cohesion and cooperation. Mike Wallace has noted that “principals (head teachers) are urged to promote transformation of the staff culture through articulating a vision of a desirable future state for the institution; garnering colleagues support for

it; and empowering them to realise this shared vision through developing management structures and procedures emphasizing professional dialogue, team working, and mutual support" (2001, p. 154). Much of the rhetoric used by Wallace echoes that of leadership theorists: "transformation", "vision", "empowering", and "shared" is similar to the language used by Geoff Southworth who advocates leadership which has an "indirect influence" on teaching colleagues (2003, p. 10).

Each separate house team at School X determines their own arrangement and frequency of meetings and the HL usually assigns the Deputy tasks to complete which should contribute towards their professional development. In his research into different primary school leadership structures, Mike Wallace observed that in leadership teams where roles are less prescribed and team members are fluid in choosing their focus, meetings took place more frequently; however, in teams where there was more prescription in responsibilities there was less frequency in team meetings. Wallace concluded "[...] that more restricted sharing of leadership required less coordination" (2001, p. 163).

To read Wallace's definitions of teamwork, one might think that teams offer an ideal means of developing a transformational school ethos and collaborative culture. However, Coleman and Bush warn, "[the potential benefits of teamwork] are ambitious claims and are not likely to be achieved without excellent leadership and a high level of commitment from all team members" (1994, p. 280). Additionally, in his collaborative work with Middlewood, Bush and Middlewood add, "The school or college climate has a significant impact on whether teams succeed" (2013, p. 137).

Johnson notes that some teachers in his study found that workload intensified as a result of teamwork because staff had to "[...] discuss and plan collaboratively [which] placed an added work burden on teachers" (2003, p. 346). This was the case within my House Team once my HL returned and began asking questions about the actions and systems I had put into place during his absence and the outcomes of these; there was a focus on "performance tests [and] performance tables" that I hadn't experienced in such an explicit form before (Watkins, 2010, p. 2). The relationship between my HL and I became "transactional" (Caroline Shields, 2012) because I provided information accrued from my time as leader and it was passed up the hierarchical chain. Within our team, "the sense of hierarchy was reinforced by the system of graded posts [...] where senior staff are entitled to oversee the work of junior colleagues for whose work they are responsible" (Wallace, 2001, p. 155). Therefore, the workload upon my shoulders intensified because my House Leader passed the pressure down the chain.

In Bruce Tuckman's exploration of team formation, he identifies four stages to a group's development: "forming", "storming", "norming", and "performing" (1965, p. 396). In the second stage of the process, "storming" Tuckman describes how "[...] conflict and polarization around interpersonal issues [...]" emerges (1965, p. 396). Once the group passes this turbulent stage, they move onto becoming a cohesive team. This would suggest that teams that experience a great deal of membership change are stuck in the "storming" phase of Tuckman's model. The conflicts within our team can be attributed partly to the structure of our team as well as the broken "storming" stage in our team development.

Similarly, Meredith Belbin has researched the way team structure, "input", can impact team results, "output" (1981, p. 3). Belbin's research is founded in the world of business and corporations, but her findings match some of my observations within my House Team. She describes the three-person team as "[...] too close to being a boss with two subordinates" (1981, p. 116). This links to the final criticism of teamwork, which is the tendency for "factionalism" to occur, particularly following a period of interpersonal conflict (Johnson, 2003, p. 347). Belbin says that in a three-person team, "decisions are inextricably linked with personalities [...] reducing [the] bigness [of a team] has the effect of magnifying the uncertainties that attach to particular personalities" (1981, p. 116).

b) “Deployment of staff [should be] as effective and efficient as possible” (Department of Education, 2017, p. 4): Distributed Leadership as a means of preparing future leaders

West-Burnham describes how leadership in schools is most efficient when recognised as a “shared potential” rather than a traditional hierarchical model “[...] with one person at the top and everybody else in descending levels of authority and responsibility” (2004, p. 2). He suggests that a benefit of a shared leadership culture is that presently there is, “[...] increasing difficulty in recruiting people to school leadership positions [...] there needs to be a systemic approach to building leadership capacity” (2004, p. 2).

Much of West-Burnham and Leithwood’s writing on leadership models aligns itself with that of distributed leadership. Daniel Goleman defines distributed leadership as “[...] characterised as a form of collective leadership in which teachers develop expertise by working together” (2002, p. 14). West-Burnham adds “there is an increasingly important debate around the idea of moving leadership from the view of leaders as the product of individual characteristics to seeing leadership as collective, shared potential in the organisation” (2004, p. 2). Touching upon Leithwood’s argument for nurturing early signs of leadership talent, Alma Harris suggests that distributed leadership is “[...] most likely to build internal capacity for development [and] capacity building” (2004, p. 13). At its most liberal form, distributed leadership takes a “subsidiarity model [in which] a wide range of powers are discharged at ‘local’ level without reference to the centre” (West-Burnham, 2004, p. 4).

At its most effective form, West-Burnham describes team structures as “[...] probably one of the most powerful ways of developing leadership potential and capacity. They can be seen as nurseries where there are abundant opportunities to develop and learn the artistry of leadership in a secure and supportive environment. The authentic team is both a powerful vehicle for effective leadership and one of the most effective and fertile contexts for learning” (2004, p. 5).

c) “Maximise the potential of existing staff to improve outcomes [through] high quality professional development [and] consideration of the skills and level of experience of existing staff” (Department of Education, 2017, p. 4): Andragogy as a means of preparing future leaders

Southworth describes andragogy as not dissimilar to that of pedagogy: “[...] learning is understood as social as well as individual [...] learning is [...] a process of ‘making meaning’, in which individuals construct and reconstruct their understanding [...] in light of new knowledge and existing understandings” (2003, p. 2).

O’Hara describes facilitation as a model for adult learning, when “[...] individuals are helped to enter a state of ‘flow’ in which the usual defences and inhibitions to creativity are transcended” (2003, p. 74). The question of how this facilitatory relationship is established comes back to how much trust and empathy is shared between the facilitator and the learner. David Hargreaves writes about “low social capital among teachers entails a lack of trust and networking among colleagues, who thus fail to share their pedagogical experience” (2001, p. 492). Precey adds “Trust [within a learning process] needs to be established quickly through skilful facilitation enabling the co-construction of knowledge through groups, the development of a community of learners and peer support and collaboration” (2015, p. 14). In a framework designed alongside Coleen Jackson, Precey and Jackson suggest that the conditions for transformational learning are “bespoke [...] enabling an emergent curriculum (content and processes) based on the needs of participants” (2009).

3 Methodology

Qualitative Research

As the research questions focused primarily on the participant’s self-perception of their role and place of work, it was felt that a qualitative methodology would be the

best means of accessing the depth and explanation required of participant responses. As defined by Ely, “[qualitative research] wants those who are studied to speak for themselves”. A semi-structured interviews was used as the main research method because, “[...] they seek the words of the people we are studying, the richer the better, so that we can understand their situations with increasing clarity” (Ely, 1991, p. 58).

In an interview in which the perspective of the participant is more important, it is important for the researcher to try and detach their own ideas and “[...] be neutral and permissive and should show that he accepts the [participant] as expert” (Flanagan, 1954, p. 342). As someone who has been in a deputy role at School X, it became important to consider how to avoid my biases from impacting participant responses.

Critical Incident Theory

Due to the research questions partly exploring staff roles, actions and behaviours within the school, Critical Incident Theory (CIT) was used. This theory was developed by J.C. Flanagan as a “[...] set of procedures for collecting direct observations of human behaviour in such a way as to facilitate their potential usefulness in solving practical problems and developing broad psychological procedures” (1954, p. 327). The basic premise of CIT is that the research observes and questions participants on their responsibilities, actions, and behaviours in the process of fulfilling a job.

Flanagan suggests that a researcher utilises an expert in the field of study to ensure “judgements [are] appropriate and well defined, and the procedures for observing and reporting such that incidents are reported accurately, the stated requirements can be expected to be comprehensive and detailed in this form” (1954, p. 330). This ensures that the results collected are credible as someone more knowledgeable in the field of study is checking the findings. In my research, the experts in the field were the House and Curriculum Leaders.

Research Plan

To begin with, three Deputy House Leaders were interviewed and four Deputy Curriculum Leaders at School X. The data that asks participants about their duties and development was categorised and judged by House Leaders and Curriculum Leaders, who shall be the “experts” as recommended by Flanagan (1954, p. 330). This took the form of a Diamond Nine in which the responsibilities DHLs and DCLs perceive as being most important to their development were put onto a diamond shape and the CLs or HLs then sorted from the most to least important in leadership role. From this data, I explored how accurately the deputies perceive the actual leadership role and the professional development necessary to achieve this, as well as compare the results of pastoral deputies versus curriculum deputies

4 Data and Commentary

Deputy Leader Interviews Data

Table 4.1 below summarises the feedback from the Deputy Leader interviews. As aforementioned in my methodology, I used the same question format for each deputy, which allows us to draw some links between his or her answers. For ease, I have colour coded the columns of the Deputy Curriculum Leaders and the Deputy House Leaders.

Table 1: Summarising Deputy Leader Interview Feedback

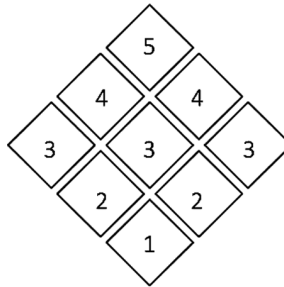
Question	Deputy Curriculum Leader 1	Deputy Curriculum Leader 2	Deputy Curriculum Leader 3	Deputy Curriculum Leader 4	Deputy House Leader 1	Deputy House Leader 2	Deputy House Leader 3
<i>What are you Responsible for?</i>	A key stage	A key stage	A key stage, transition	A key stage	Responding to daily incidents, Attendance, Reward systems, Tracking students, Intervention systems, Assemblies, Wellbeing of child	Align to House Leader, Behaviour systems, Wellbeing of child, Attendance, Peer mentoring programme	Deputise whenever needed, Attendance, Progress, Attainment, Year 8 and 9 specifically but usually Years 7, 10 and 11 as well
<i>Do you have preference for a Curricular or Pastoral future?</i>	Curriculum or pastoral	Curriculum	Curriculum or pastoral	Curriculum	Curriculum	Curriculum	Pastoral
<i>What are your routine duties?</i>	Dashboard tasks, Meeting with line manager, Book scrutiny, Lesson observations, Learning walks, Data trawling	Meeting with line manager, Meeting with SLT lead, Learning walks, Data trawling, Dashboard tasks, Book scrutiny, Lesson observations	Lesson observations, Dashboard tasks, Book scrutiny, Meeting with line manager, Meeting with SLT lead, Learning walks, Supporting Colleagues with challenging classes	Being reactionary to key stage leaders, Assessment writing, Writing schemes of work, Staying abreast of key stage changes	Nothing is set; you are reactionary to what happens in the day	Meeting with HT, Speaking to students about incidents, Calling parents, Data trawls, Peer mentoring, Assembly preparation	Nothing is set; you are reactionary to what happens in the day, Monitoring form tutors
<i>What duties do you think are most important in developing your leadership skills?</i>	Staff interactions	Lesson observations (in particular giving feedback)	Making the key stage teachers more accountable	None specifically, but would need to work on observing staff	Parental contact	Seeing the inner workings of the school	Working outside of comfort zone
<i>Do you have regular, formal meetings with leadership team?</i>	Yes, plus informal catch-ups	Yes, plus a meeting with SLT lead	Yes, plus a meeting with SLT lead, (DCL 3 also referenced CADT as a meeting which all DCLs have but did not list as a meeting)	Yes	Yes	Yes	No, informal catch-ups throughout the day

<i>If yes, is there a regular agenda/structure?</i>	Yes, agenda determined by Dashboard	Yes, but agenda not formally written down and adhered to	Yes, there is a regular structure	Yes, there is a regular structure	Yes, there is a list of priorities	No	No
<i>What do you benefit from by meeting as a team?</i>	Shows accountability; Creates a cohesive vision; Collaboration	Collaboration; Learning from the experience of other colleagues	Learning from the experience of other colleagues; Creates a cohesive vision; Collaboration	Reduced email traffic	Clarity of role	Clarity of role; Prioritisation	Clarity of role; Prioritisation
<i>What would you change about your team meetings?</i>	Nothing	Nothing	An agenda before the meeting; More developmental work in CADT meeting	Regular meeting with key stage team	More regular meetings; Better communications system	Weekly meeting rather than fortnightly; An agenda before the meeting	Formal meeting with other DHLs
<i>When was there a disagreement within your team and how was it overcome?</i>	Rarely disagreements; any issues discussed as a team and team solution reached	Disagreement over Year 9 assessments; overcome by participant compromising own preference	Rarely disagreements; any issues that arise deescalated by deputies	Rarely disagreements; any issues discussed as a team and team solution reached	None	Disagreement over sanctions; overcome by participant compromising own perspective	Disagreement over treatment of specific students; participant challenges HL until they 'meet in the middle'
<i>How does your Leader nurture you to become a leader in the future?</i>	None; already an experienced colleague who doesn't need further development	Modelling task; Collaborating on tasks; Providing advice whenever requested; Transition period into role	Entire ownership of key stage; Leader giving autonomy to deputy	Delegating jobs	Jobs passed on from Dashboard; Given ownership of specific year groups	Autonomy of own projects; Learning from faults of leader	Delegating jobs (mostly from Dashboard)
<i>How does the school nurture you to become a leader in the future?</i>	Leadership skill twilights; Becoming a Specialist Leader in Education; Experience valuable above training	Meetings with SLT and other subject key stage deputies; Being coached by another deputy; Leadership courses advertised in school bulletin	Currently being funded on two-year leadership course	None until advertisements in school bulletin	None; Self-referred to courses and Masters qualifications	Mentoring PGCE participants; Leadership courses advertised in school bulletin	Self-referred to courses; Leadership courses advertised in school bulletin
<i>Does your leadership team provide opportunities for teachers/tutors beneath leadership team to develop?</i>	Gained time tasks; Leading on trips; Respond to teacher requests to lead on projects; Appraisal targets	Mentoring PGCE and NQT teachers; Teachers becoming Specialist Leaders in Education	Leading in CADT and sharing practice; Other colleagues in department with TLRs	Leading in CADT and sharing practice; Appraisal targets; Mentoring PGCE and NQT teachers;	None	None	Providing data; Dealing with behaviour problems; First contact for teachers

Source: own work

Leader vs. Deputy: Leadership Role Perception

As aforementioned, a ‘Diamond Nine’ activity was used made up of the nine most frequently referenced roles that the curriculum and house deputies respectively listed as being part of their routine duties. The leaders then had to organise these into diamond structure with the duty most beneficial to a deputy’s leadership development at the top of the diamond, the next two most important beneath, et cetera, until a diamond shape is made. In order to quantitate my diamond nines, the following numerical system was deployed to calculate which roles were deemed the most valuable. I gave the position of each diamond tile a value:



Source: own work

Using this system, the roles leaders think are most valuable to a deputy’s progression could be identified: the larger the score, the more important the leaders collectively categorised it.

House Team Results:

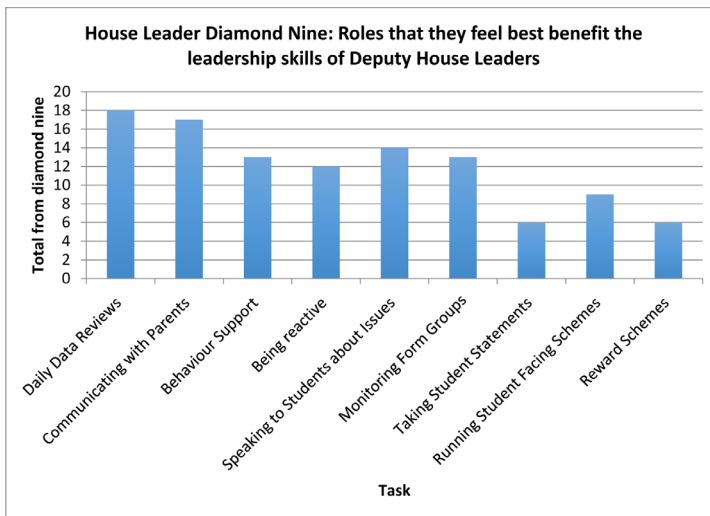


Figure 1: House Leader Diamond Nine: Roles that they feel best benefit the leadership skills of Deputy Curriculum Leaders

Source: own work

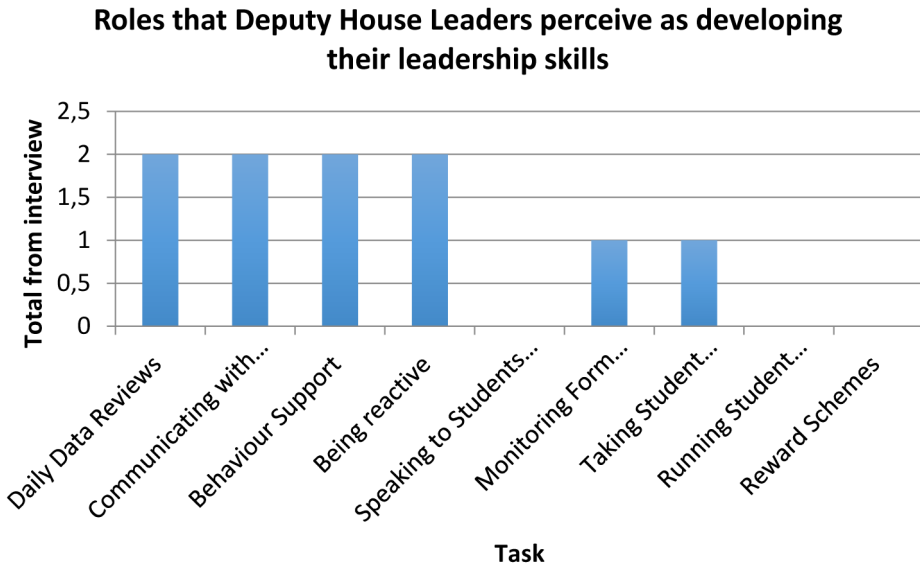


Figure 2: Roles that Deputy House Leaders perceive as developing their leadership skills
 Source: own work

Curriculum Team Results:

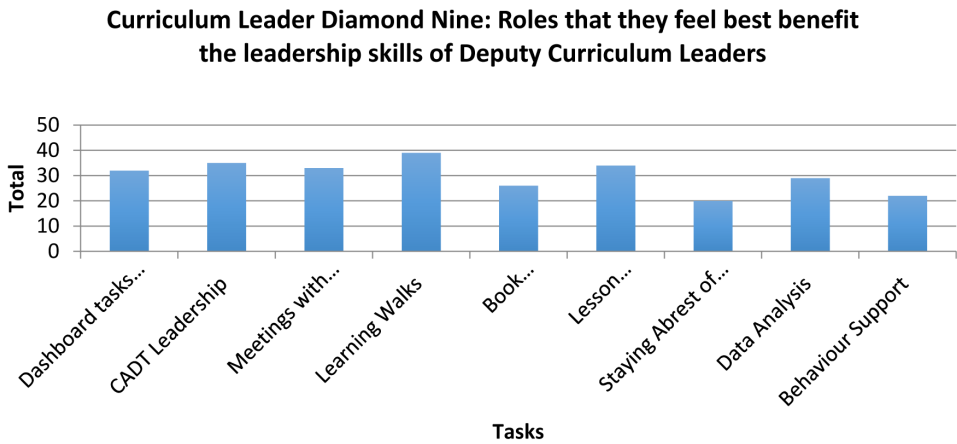


Figure 3: Curriculum Leader Diamond Nine: Roles that they feel best benefit the leadership skills of Deputy Curriculum Leaders
 Source: own work

Roles that Deputy Curriculum Leaders perceive as developing their leadership skills

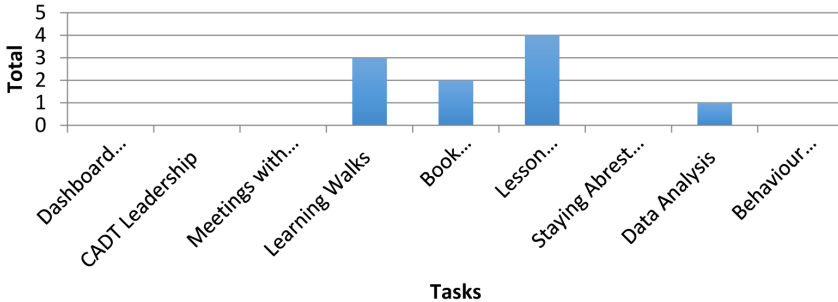


Figure 4: Roles that Deputy Curriculum Leaders perceive as developing their leadership skills
 Source: own work

5 Analysis

It was found in this research, that there were some stark differences in the experience of Curriculum Deputies compared to House Deputies as well as the attitude and approach towards their roles and leaders.

Deputies in the house system struggled to explain with clarity what their roles and responsibilities are within their team compared with the curriculum deputies. This is demonstrated in Table 1 in which every curriculum deputy was able to identify what key stage group or year groups they are accountable for, while the house deputies gave great variation in their answers and tended to talk more so about the accountability of the whole pastoral system than their specific role within it. For example, a lot of the deputies talked about “well-being of the child” but didn’t expand upon what this looks like or how they achieve this responsibility. Two out of the three DHLs also said that they have no set duties. It would be fair to draw the conclusion that DHLs have less prescription in responsibility than the DCLs; strangely however, the DHLs also said that they meet less consistently and with less preparation than their DCL counterparts. This does not match the model researched by Wallace who suggests that teams in which there is more prescription in responsibility meet less frequently (2001, p. 163) because the DCLs have more prescription in their role than the DHLs, yet the curriculum teams meet more regularly.

Between the curriculum deputies interviewed, there seemed to be an “empathetically attuned” culture (Johnson, 2003, p. 73), in which relationships and shared experience was valued. Both DCL1 and DCL2 talked about the experiences of other people within the team, particularly DCL2 who was relatively new to the role at the time of interview, and how this range of experienced enhances the team’s functioning. In particular, DCL2’s willingness to ask for advice demonstrates how within curriculum teams, “social relations among all members of staff [are] characterised by trust, security and openness” (Southworth, 2003, p. 12). This is also evidenced by the correlation between what duties DCL’s view as beneficial to their leadership development and what the lead-

ers themselves view as beneficial to a deputy's development (**Graphs 3 and 4**); it seems as though the guidance of the curriculum leader is valued by the deputy.

However, amongst the house deputies there was a less enthusiastic approach towards team meetings. There seems to be a twofold problem with the way in which DHLs view team meetings. The first relates to the pragmatics of the job role, as mentioned by DHL 1; the job description is vague, as such the accountability is vague, and therefore the leadership is vague. DHL1 refers to the amount of time allocated to her timetable for DHL responsibilities not matching those of other team members and not being used for a formal meeting; as such "[...] [discussing and planning] collaboratively [...] [places] an added work burden" on her shoulders because she is trying to make up for the time she is missing. A pragmatic problem surrounding the actual meeting not taking place leads onto the second problem: communication and trust. Hargreaves says that, "low social capital among teachers entails a lack of trust and networking among colleagues, who thus fail to share their pedagogical experience" (2001, p. 492). By not regularly meeting and talking, there is little trust being built between DHLs and HLs in the same way that it is built in the curriculum teams. Every deputy I spoken to expressed some level of distrust about the way their HL leads, no more so than DHL2 who says she is learning "how not to be a leader".

With regards to distributed leadership, both DCLs and DHLs made reference to tasks duties and tasks from their leaders, which could be described as examples of distributed leadership. Referring back to Table 1, all colleagues make reference to at least one of: tasks passed down from their curriculum or house leader; individually designed and implemented projects; responsibility for a year group or key stage. However, from both DCLs and DHLs, there were mixed feelings about the tasks that their leaders passed down to them, with both curriculum and pastoral deputies referring to their leaders as "delegating" responsibilities.

Harris warns that a danger of distributed leadership can be that the person subject to the distributed task could view it as "misguided delegation" (2004, p. 20), rather than a developmental opportunity. However, DHL3 does not reference the tasks passed down from the leader, but rather takes umbrage with the general distribution of workload between himself and his HL. These responses tackle two issues with distributed leadership: firstly, that it is not always recognised as a developmental tool by the deputy within the team; secondly, the gulf in role between the leader and deputy, especially within the house teams, creates some tensions surrounding the tasks that should be delegated and those that should be done by the leader.

This ties into the second problems DHLs expressed towards distributed leadership, which is that they perceived a tension surrounding the tasks that should and should not be distributed to them. While DHL3 perceived himself to be working harder than the HL, the other DHLs expressed frustration about the limited responsibilities passed down to them. As aforementioned, the lack of development taking place within some of the house teams correlates to "transactional leadership" (Shields, 2010, p. 563). By placing a cap on what roles deputies can and cannot fulfil, House Leaders are failing to "[...] [recognise the need] to develop leadership potential [of teachers] in anticipation of career development" (West-Burnham, 2004, p. 2).

The final contrast between DHLs and DCLs to consider is the awareness of accountability. While none of the questions used the phrase "accountability", it came up in discussion with two of the DCLs while not at all with the DHLs. The challenge faced by HLs and DHLs alike is the lack of clarity in the job description and as such the difficulty HLs have in making their DHLs accountable for something within their roles. Additionally, the house system doesn't automatically fall under the same scrutiny as the curriculum does by Senior Leadership because they aren't responsible for results. As such, house teams are exempt from the "performance tests for pupils, performance tables for

schools, performance management for staff” culture that Watkins found in many British secondary schools (2010, p. 2). However, while DHLs might not feel the pressure of accountability on their shoulders whereas the DCLs do, it is evident by comparing the two areas of the school that the curriculum areas in School X develop their deputies much better than the house teams do.

6 Conclusions and Evaluation

In former papers that I have written, I had built up an impression of accountability within teaching as a negative thing; a stick with which school leaders can beat their teachers, and a tool to measure whether a colleague should be allowed to progress through the pay scale. However, in the research for this article, I have learnt how valuable accountability can be to a teacher’s sense of development, as well as their impression of value within the school or team. Therefore, a leader needs to strike a complicated balance: on the one hand the leader needs to facilitate learning by giving their deputy autonomy and areas of individual enquiry; on the other, a deputy is better developed and feels more valued and invested within their role if they are made accountable for particular areas of enquiry. The suggestions made in the analysis are for School X to give the DHL job description more specific areas of responsibility or enforce HLs to identify what responsibilities they need their deputy to fulfil and how they will hold them to account. Within this paradigm, the andragogy of the deputy needs to remain central in order to guarantee succession within the middle leadership roles at School X. Particularly amongst the HLs, it is disappointing that they do not lead with a transformative outlook: given their role is to combat the external pressures and issues that students bring into the class and impinge upon their learning, a transformative leadership style would be best suited to these kinds of responsibility.

My hope is that this article can serve as an advisory document to School X and perhaps other schools who utilise deputy positions as a means of succession planning. While you can appoint an outstanding colleague into the role of deputy, only a transformational, or indeed transformative, leader can ensure that the deputy in question will achieve their full potential. Perhaps it should be that not only deputies are made accountable for their actions within the leadership team, but also the leader is made accountable for the development and learning of the deputy beneath them.

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Selective or divisive? The impact of grammar schools on leaders and students in a non-selective school

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1 Introduction

English educational context

Grammar schools have a long history in England but it was the 1944 Education Act which led formally to the system of grammars and secondary moderns that clearly distinguished different types of education for different students dependent on academic ability (Jesson, 2013). Grammar schools were designed for academically capable students and secondary moderns were meant for students who were not academically strong. The report from which the 1944 Education Act stemmed from insisted on a 'parity of status' between the differing secondary school options (The Spens Report, 1938, p. xvii). Despite this insistence, grammar schools very quickly became the 'destination of choice' and from the mid-40s to mid-60s grammar schools flourished (Jesson 2013, p. 5). In 1965 there were around 1300 grammar schools but the tides of educational opinion had changed within the previous 20 years of grammar school expansion and in the mid-60s all local authorities had been instructed to move towards a non-selective education system (Jesson, 2013). This led to a process of substantial decrease in the numbers of selective schools, ultimately resulting in the 163 grammar schools within the 3000+ secondary schools in England today (Department for Education, 2018).

From this brief history of grammar schools in England we can see that they were only prioritised as policy for two decades and that they currently make up only a very small number of all secondary schools on offer and yet they are somewhat over-represented in educational literature and public debate. We can therefore suppose – and it is confirmed in the specifics of the commentary surrounding them – that the interest and debate concerning grammar schools is ideological in nature (Atkinson *et al.*, 2006; De Waal, 2015). They make up a tiny proportion of England's educational system but it is what they *represent* that seems of critical significance. Established to provide a rigorous, academic education for 'bright' children regardless of background they consistently face accusations of hindering social mobility, widening the gap of disadvantage and encouraging segregation between children at an early age (Cribb, Sibieta & Vignoles, 2013; Burgess *et al.*, 2017; Gorard & Siddiqui, 2018).

There is particular prescience to this topic currently as the presiding government in England has confirmed an expansion in grammar school places for the first time in

recent years. This decision has been widely debated and provokes important questions surrounding the effectiveness, equality and opportunity offered through academically selective schools.

2 Research context

Personal perception of the grammar schools geographically close to the schools I have worked in lead to questions surrounding their impact. Do these grammar schools affect the culture of comprehensive schools, the self-perception of students and the leadership challenges of staff? This research sought to identify what staff and students in X Academy – a large non-selective school located in an area of academic selection - honestly think, feel and believe about any impact that they have experienced from the reality of selective education. Through qualitative research, through interview, strong understanding was built concerning school culture, effective leadership, student experience and the unique challenges facing comprehensive schools in areas of academic selection.

The study particularly found implications for the leadership of change and the morality of school leadership, as the stakeholders interviewed revealed and reflected on how the change of a school's culture has been managed and developed to respond better to the unique challenges of the context of selection (Fullan, 1996; 2003).

3 Critical literature review

In order to better understand the nature of the debate on grammar schools, certain aspects of their character, operation and cultural significance must be understood and explored.

Academic selection

Grammar schools select based on the 11-plus examinations which students sit in Year 6 (at the age of 10 or 11). Much of the reasoning behind the 11-plus came from Cyril Burt's work which advocated the use of IQ tests to determine a 'child's 'innate' intelligence at the age of eleven' (Chitty, 2009, p. 2). Much of Burt's insistence on this fixed view of intelligence, stemming from work on eugenics, has been largely challenged to arrive at a more fluid view of children's ability; it is 'education' and not 'heredity' that determines human development (Ibid., p. 127). Modern concerns surrounding the 11-plus examination are not purely limited to theory surrounding intelligence but are often inextricably and passionately linked to the social mobility debate that remains at the heart of grammar school discussion. Atkinson *et al.* (2006, p. 12) summarise the issue with the undeniable conclusion that 'the 11+ system appears to have design features which [...] systematically exclude bright children from poor backgrounds'. A final aspect of intelligence testing that must be considered is the long-term impact of such selection or, crucially for many, rejection. This has been picked up in popular culture through the BBC documentary 'Grammar Schools: Who Will Get In?', with pupils in Year 6 genuinely worried they will be a 'failure in life' after being rejected for a grammar school place (Benn, 2018). This feeling of failure often persists into later life, suggesting that academic selection can be negative for an individual's confidence and self-perception (Hodde, 2006; Paton, 2012). Despite many of the difficulties concerning intelligence testing, one

thing that seems categorically true of the 11-plus is that 'it is reasonably good at selecting those who will do well five years later' (Gorard & Siddiqui, 2018, p. 9).

Academic attainment

The vast majority of advocates for grammar schools focus on the academic excellence which such institutions offer. However, it is widely evidenced that students who achieve highly at Key Stage 4 in grammar schools were also high achievers as early as Key Stage 1 (Manning & Pishcke, 2006; Coe *et al.*, 2008; Gorard & Siddiqui, 2018). This fact has significant implications for the academic 'success' enjoyed and celebrated by grammar schools: 'success at Key stage 4 aged 16 must not be mistakenly attributed to having attended a grammar school' (Gorard and Siddiqui, 2018, p. 4). This somewhat 'illusory' grammar school effect encourages questions regarding the quality of education provided in such schools if the students they educate 'are already on a path to success' academically (Gorard & Siddiqui, 2018, p. 12, 4).

Coe *et al.*'s (2008) seminal research comprehensively analysed the academic effectiveness of grammar schools. The self-professed 'tentative conclusion' that Coe *et al.* (2008, p. 238) draw from their data analysis is that 'attending a grammar school may be associated with a small advantage in achievement, probably between zero and three-quarters of a GCSE grade per subject taken' once external influences have been accounted for. More contemporary research goes further to suggest even less of an academic advantage: Gorard & Siddiqui (2018, p. 11) argue that 'grammar schools appear to be no more or less effective than other schools, once their clear difference in intake has been taken into account'. This means, at the very least, the dominant view of grammar schools being an example of academic education to other schools should be challenged; on the whole they are doing no better or worse with their intake than any other school would do.

The social mobility debate

In a review of the literature surrounding selection the near overwhelming significance of the debate around the role grammar schools play in promoting, or hindering, social mobility cannot be neglected. Atkinson *et al.* (2006, p. 3) acknowledge the fact that grammar schools have 'historically been considered to offer a route for advancement by bright children from deprived backgrounds,' but the sad reality is that 'very few make the cut'. The percentage difference of pupils on Free School Meals (FSM) at grammars and non-grammars is stark; FSM classification has become a way of signifying economic disadvantage and, on average, around 15% of pupils in secondary schools in England are eligible for FSM compared with just 3% in grammar schools (Cullinane, 2016; Wespieser *et al.*, 2017). This means that grammar schools take a significantly lower proportion of students from low-income families than other schools: 'even if pupils achieve level 5 in English and Maths, those eligible for FSM are still less likely to attend a grammar school than pupils not eligible for FSM' (Cribb, Sibieta & Vignoles, 2013, p. 12). There is clearly, therefore, a socio-economic barrier affecting the likelihood of a disadvantaged child attending a grammar school.

The existence of 11-plus tutoring as a profitable business does not assist in making access for the disadvantaged fairer and accessible. Jerrim & Sims (2018, np.) recently identified tutoring as having a significant impact on students' chances of passing the 11-plus and gaining attendance to a grammar school: 'almost three-quarters of children [...] who were coached to pass the test gained entry, compared to only 14 percent of those who were not coached', clarifying that 'private tutoring is a key reason why academically able low and middle income pupils are less likely to attend a grammar school than their

high-income peers'. The social mobility debate is a complex one as multiple different elements combine to create a culturally important but difficult question: is the current grammar school system truly accessible to any child 'bright' enough? Evidence suggests socio-economic background continues to be a key indicator of grammar school attendance and ultimately, as Gorard & Siddiqui (2018, p. 9) suggest: 'however good grammar schools are (or not), this must be set against the real dangers from such a deliberate policy of socio-economic segregation between schools'.

4 Methodology

The literature provides a basis for the context-specific investigation into the impact of the grammar school system on a comprehensive school in the same locality. Many ideas were provoked from the existing research and certain questions were recurring and lead to the ultimate design of the research: What do students and staff in my school feel about the local grammar schools? Do staff feel as though the school is affected by being in a selective area? Are there any specific leadership challenges that arise from being a comprehensive school within a selective local authority? What is the experience of the school's capable students who did not attend the grammar schools? Interviews were used to gather the qualitative data needed to answer the questions that had emerged. Four members of staff and four students in the school's academic stream were selected to participate.

The methodology for this research relies on a social constructivist approach which acknowledges the reliability and usefulness of data drawn from deep understanding of specific cases and with a particular interest in how participants view themselves, their situation and how this can give valuable insight into the complexity of, in this case, the impact of selection on a local secondary school (Patton, 2002). The findings and discussion that follow therefore explore the depths and insights personal opinion can offer in understanding the impact of selection on a non-selective school.

This article focuses on the insights gathered from the staff interviews primarily as they offer the most tangible recommendations for practice with regards to non-selective school success in the realities of a grammar system.

5 Findings

School culture

One of the most common threads within the staff interviews was around the impact of the 11-plus on the students who attend Academy X. All staff interviewed indicated that the main impact this has is around school 'culture' *not* school achievement or results. This focus on culture suggests more than an academic impact on the school due to selection but rather one that affects the way students (and staff) view themselves and the school. Whilst less tangible than a school's results, culture is arguably the definitive indicator of how a school operates; culture pervades '*everything* in an organization' (Deal & Peterson, 2016, p. 9). The biggest impact of selection on Academy X culture is around 'aspiration' – a term used by all staff participants. There was an overall feeling that Academy X has battled low 'aspiration, drive [and] ambition' due to an intake of children who often already feel 'failures' due to either personally failing the 11-plus or merely due to

the very existence of an academically selective school (and therefore a very early consciousness of ability as an indicator of your direction in life):

'They're already coming to a non-selective school believing they've failed.'

Staff also acknowledged a frustration with the over-reliance and inaccuracy of intelligence testing, demonstrating a reflection of the contemporary educational view that such testing is largely outdated and flawed (Chitty, 2007; Dweck, 2012; Centre for Social Justice, 2016):

'I don't know why they've decided that at eleven a student should be labelled as being good enough for the grammar school or not.'

Staff showed a belief in all students to succeed regardless of 11-plus result, but they also expressed a desire to encourage a more fluid view of intelligence amongst students in the school:

'I want them to believe that intelligence is not fixed. I don't want children to believe that they can't become more intelligent.'

Whilst frustrated – and, in some cases, saddened – by the reality of acceptance or rejection by the 11-plus, there are some specific ways the school has actively worked to limit any negatives inflicted by the 'failure' culture and lack of aspiration historically seen. Many of the staff members commented on the idea of role-models and how students often mirror the behaviour of older students and how, in a non-selective school that is perhaps struggling with its intake, there may be no appropriate role-models to follow. Interestingly, one staff member outlined how *staff* have actually been a huge part of creating an aspirational, role-model culture:

'This school has got quite a young staff, deliberately so, because I believe that those children take their leads from [the teacher's] role.'

This highlights clear leadership implications for the school's intake within an 11-plus system; it has led to clear strategic decisions – such as deliberately employing young staff – in order to create a role-model culture that was otherwise lacking. Being in a selective area definitely seems to effect the leadership decisions in X Academy.

The morality of selection

The primary issue staff seem to take with the grammar schools both locally and nationally comes down to a sense of unfairness and injustice, confirming initial suggestions that selection is about more than just division by ability but there seems to be felt, by those involved in various ways, a dimension of morality and ethics to it. Issues of selection seem to run deeper than many other educational debates; it seems both political and personal.

The experiential evidence and opinions given disprove – at least for this study – any suggestion that selection is only about ability; the notion that some children are smart and some are not cannot seem to exist independently of issues of class, opportunity and the politics of segregation.

Participants indicated that their difficulty with grammar schools surrounded the social division it causes. There is a belief that they reinforce unhelpful class stereotypes and segregation:

'Parents still perceive the secondary modern option to be the poor option... 'They can't possibly go to school with those children there.'

These comments demonstrate concern over the class divides seemingly drawn by selection. This is a systemic issue, not just a concern of our school or our area but it is something staff participants were particularly aggrieved about. The problems participants had with this class divide gives insight into their wider views on the education system as a whole:

'I always feel like, in a very simple way, if you say we're going to have this elitist [...] school are we then saying it's okay then to have a second-best school?'

This question particularly was provocative for considering the impact of grammar schools. Not only, as we have seen, can students be led to believe they are second-best through academic selection, but arguably whole schools could potentially fall into the trap of viewing themselves as second-best. Furthermore, if taking the broad national picture seen in the literature review – that grammar schools do not intake anything near the national average of FSM children – then does the grammar system in some ways suggest acceptance and continuation of something second-best for more disadvantaged children?

Frustration from staff participants around the politics of grammar schools is due to strongly held convictions and beliefs in the provision of good education for all, regardless of background; if grammar schools serve the 'middle-class', staff view Academy X as serving a far broader demographic of the local community. It seems that all staff members interviewed believe quite passionately that schools should offer social mobility to the disadvantaged and they ultimately don't believe that the grammar schools offer this:

'[Expanding grammar schools is] not education for all. It's not excellence for all. It's excellence in the right places and [...] in the right postcode and I think that's what grammar schools create.'

This staff member touches on a reality felt quite strongly by our local community that, if your child is not 'bright' enough to get to grammar school, your postcode will dictate the quality of your child's education (with a premium being paid for houses that are in the right catchment area). This arguably furthers any class divides already created by the grammar school admission exam and creates a more polarised educational landscape. The belief of this staff member that we should ultimately be aiming for 'excellence for all' indicates that they believe educational opportunity should not be limited by a young person's ability or social background.

These strongly held personal convictions, regarding how education should be run, lead one staff member to assert a 'moral imperative' to the work done in schools like X Academy:

'There's this kind of moral imperative at schools like this because if you can be successful then the social mobility on offer is huge.'

This kind of moral drive to the work being done often creates a school in which staff are united behind a cause and work productively, positively and efficiently towards it; it fosters transformational leadership (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005).

The realities of school provision

Staff participants, throughout the interviews, seemed to feel a need to defend the work of X Academy and it largely seems due to (what they perceive as) a gulf existing between the perceptions and reality of educational provision in X Academy compared to the grammars. Firstly, there was a recurring viewpoint that grammar schools are successful academically due to the nature of the children taken in rather than any kind of excellent practice occurring at the school:

'Students at the grammar school do better because they are much brighter children and they should do much better.'

These views are largely evidence based and supported by the research indicating how grammar schools ultimately inherit capable children who are destined to achieve highly. In some ways, the insight this research gives beyond the statistical evidence of this is that it explores the personal dimension and effect of it. X Academy exists in a local authority where the natural assumption of the community is that grammar schools are brilliant because their results have consistently been the highest in the area. The fact that this 'should' be the case (because of the children attending) is often neglected and it leads to an unfavourable view of the non-selective schools which is only very recently beginning to be challenged. This has led, it seems, to staff who are particularly conscious of mistaken community perceptions and assumptions of the school and therefore a need to address them in their leadership.

Mistaken perceptions seem to have been one of the biggest challenges the school has faced, particularly surrounding the quality of teaching in Academy X and the grammar schools:

'The diet they're getting in terms of their curriculum and the teachers in front of them [isn't] any better [at grammar] than what the students are getting here.'

One staff member supported their comments on teaching quality with reference to experiential evidence of the continued need to defend the teaching quality at X Academy at events like open evenings where the frequent natural assumption of parents is that 'they get taught better at the grammar school'. Staff participants feel in something of a battle against public perceptions that they feel do not accurately capture the reality of the teaching provision in X Academy. The assumption that grammar school provision is the best option, and non-selective schools come second, is something that staff do not feel is a 'reality' but is 'so entrenched in people's thinking' that the school continues to have to actively promote within the local community.

The school is beginning to cross the bridge between perception and reality both through impressive results and development of a strong culture. One staff member makes clear the reason why the school has been able to see 'success' within the context of selection:

'Staff here work unbelievably hard. [...] My honest view is that the hard work of staff and the professional discretionary effort from staff has gone up so much that children have felt inclined and obliged to match it.'

Inaccurate perceptions of teaching quality and work ethic are therefore being challenged by the practice at X Academy. This staff member followed this comment with a declaration that the 'hard work' and 'discretionary effort' is just 'what we do around here. This is how we do things around here.' This near word-for-word echoing of Bower's (1966, p.

22) definition of culture as ‘the way we do things around here’ supports earlier notions that the impact of selection is felt most strongly in school *culture*; it therefore fits that the leaderships’ response to this impact is to create and foster a strong culture that aims to negate any negatives experienced due to grammar school proximity and to particularly challenge the unhelpful stereotype that grammar schools are good and other schools are less good. Another staff member seemed confident that the school is doing this, acknowledging that ‘we’re a real competitor and a real alternative for parents now’.

6 Recommendations for practice

The reality of operating a non-selective school in a grammar school area seems to create genuine and unique challenges for X Academy and it is clear to see some recommendations for schools seeking to negate and move beyond the negative impact selection can have:

- *Pursue values-driven leadership to unite stakeholders behind a clear and purposeful goal.*
In the case of Academy X this goal is the provision of high quality, academic education to all students regardless of background or 11-plus score.
- *Foster a school culture that builds student self-confidence, aspiration and limits negative associations of ‘failure’.*
Practical ways Academy X has done this is through careful staffing appointments, a clear and robust assessment structure that fosters a fluid view of intelligence and a celebratory school culture with high-profile awards for more than just academic success.
- *Engage with the local community to challenge, and gradually change, inaccurate perceptions of selective and non-selective schools.*
Academy X has done this largely through an almost open-door policy; open mornings, evenings and community events are frequent. In recent years the Academy has also effectively utilized social media to further its marketing and publicizing of the school’s success and engage with parents.

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Flying the nest. Why do new teachers leave and how can we get them to stay or come back? An English perspective

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1 Introduction

There has been considerable research into why teachers leave the profession, particularly those within their first five years of teaching (Heineke *et al.*, 2014; Bromley, 2018; Sims & Allen, 2018). Interest has been sparked for this topic due to many countries experiencing trends of high teacher turnover; England, America, Canada, Belgium and Norway are just a few examples where high numbers of teachers leaving the profession have been documented (Fantilli & McDougal, 2009; Roness, 2011; Heineke *et al.*, 2014; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014). This is a significant problem as there is a well-established link between teacher retention and increased student success (Jones & Watson, 2017). Teacher retention refers to keeping qualified teachers within the profession (Kelchtermans, 2017). It has long been believed that the difference between a highly capable teacher and a less capable teacher has a significant impact on student progress; literature has even suggested it can account for a grade level difference in every school year (Hanushek, 1992). Yet in the current educational climate in England schools are struggling to recruit and retain quality teaching staff leading to inadequate teaching expertise in some schools (Heineke *et al.*, 2014; Bromley, 2018; Sims & Allen, 2018).

The Public Accounts Committee (PAC) in England has accused the current Department for Education as failing to plan for this lack of educational professionals. Yet, teacher retention is a complex issue that relates themes such as; job motivation, professional development, career development, job motivation, self-understanding or identity, working conditions, social status, policy demands, institutional pressures and life choices (Kelchtermans, 2017). Teacher turnover can be high and not necessarily indicate a recruitment problem, if teachers are simply moving from one school to another. Yet within England there is high teacher attrition, meaning teachers are leaving schools and the teaching profession completely (Department for Education, 2017).

Within England, 20% of newly qualified teachers (NQTs) are leaving the profession within their first 2 years of teaching and a quarter of new entrants were found to have left the profession after 3 years (Migration Advisory Committee, 2017). In England, the Department for Education has shown between 2011–2015 the percentage of qualified teachers leaving the profession for reasons other than retirement increased from 64% to 80% (Department for Education, 2017). The question must be asked, why are so many newly qualified teachers leaving the profession and what can be done to reduce these

numbers? This is not an issue isolated to England, the United States of America (USA) has been suggested to lose 30% of new applicants within the first five years of teaching.

However, we must be careful when concluding general teacher shortages from retention data as this data often does not consider teachers that leave to work in the needed wider school sector (Foster, 2018; Migration Advisory Committee, 2017). Equally teachers that leave the profession but return to teaching later are often not considered (Migration Advisory Committee, 2017), and data in America suggests this figure could be as high as 25% of leavers returning at some time (DeAndelis *et al.*, 2013).

We know teachers are leaving the profession at higher rates; the question now is why are they leaving? Many English-based studies have aimed to identify causes for teacher attrition and identified causes such as policy interventions, student behaviour and workload (Migration Advisory Committee, 2017). Other factors that have also been identified in English schools as retention predictors include; career situation of teacher, years since gaining Qualified Teacher Status (QTS), age, type of contract, working pattern, personal circumstances, school performance and the region where the school is located (Cooper & Alvarado, 2006).

In the USA, a large national study exploring teacher attrition Ingersoll (2002), found the biggest factors to be teacher salaries, poor administrative support and student discipline problems. Other factors included poor student motivation, inadequate time, class size, intrusions on teaching and lack of advancement opportunity as well as community support (Ingersoll, 2002). To tackle ways to reduce teacher attrition first you must understand the causes for this problem, research in England is restricted in this area with most of these studies being USA based. Although, this does give insights into the retention problem here it is not always directly applicable to England.

To explore teacher attrition and retention, research was completed at an all-through (students aged 3-18 years old) Academy (Academy X...a school funded directly by central government) where I was employed as a teacher; this academy had high numbers of NQT and trainee teaching staff as well as a high teacher turnover rate. Academies are publicly funded schools which are not subject to national regulations such as curriculum and term dates (UK Government, 2017). With 22 members of staff completing their NQT year or teacher training years (in 2017-2018 academic year) this provided a moderate sample to study the possible stress factors leading to new teacher's attrition. As my teacher training was through Teach First this also allowed me to look into NQT teacher attrition from their teachers in similar schools to Academy X to explore and compare the reasons for leaving the profession.

Within this article two questions are addressed:

1. **What are the stress factors for NQT and trainee teachers in post?**
2. **What reasons do Teach First teachers give for leaving within their first 2 years in the profession?**

2 Context

Training teachers in England

The English government have tried to tackle teacher retention problems by increasing entry schemes into teaching through bursaries to train in particular subjects as well as alternative training routes such as School Direct and Teach First (Foster, 2018). Teach First is a salaried training route that allows graduates to take a two-year training programme into teaching and are placed in schools where most students are from low-income backgrounds.

School Direct offers in school training for graduates with some courses offering a salary. Similarly, in America the government response to issues in teacher retention is to increase the supply of teachers and the investment into training programmes has been high (Ingersoll, 2002). Indications from English data suggest that the problem does not lie in a lack of qualified teachers, but in that large proportions of these teachers are leaving the profession within 5 years (Department for Education, 2017; Migration Advisory Committee, 2017; Foster, 2018). Such the focus must be on why many of these teachers are leaving and what we can do to reduce teacher attrition instead of just training more teachers.

International perspectives

Within this study a group of Teach First teachers will be sampled. There is little research in England looking at teacher attrition from the Teach First programme but in America there is a similar programme called Teach for America. Literature has shown attrition rates for Teach for America to be between 60-80% after 3 years of teaching (Darling-Hammond, 2005; MacIver & Vaughn, 2007; Donaldson & Johnson, 2010). This shows a higher retention in the Teach for America programme than for NQTs generally which has been shown to be roughly 30% (Copper & Alvarado, 2006; Heineke *et al.*, 2014). Alternative routes such as Teach for America have been criticised for their retention rates yet within Finland teachers are all trained through the higher education model and there are no in-school training routes and there is still a call from educators to change culture in order to improve the problem of retention. Perhaps the overriding issue of conditions in schools and national educational cultures are being overlooked in causing this raised teacher attrition and this is not a product of the training routes themselves.

3 Methodology

To gain insight into the factors that caused stress to trainee teachers and identify reasons for Teach First teachers to have left the profession within two years of training online surveys were used. This required two separate samples and surveys which were designed with the interpretative epistemological approach to account for participants' experiences and aimed at understanding their perspectives. A mixed-methods approach was taken and quantitative and qualitative analysis was completed for both surveys results. Mixed methodology was chosen as it provides a design that limits bias and error due to the two different approaches (quantitative and qualitative) being combined (Firestone, 1986). A small amount of descriptive quantitative analysis was done; this provided some insights into demographics. However, the majority of analysis was complete qualitatively through a content analysis of survey responses. This qualitative data allowed for exploration of participants experiences and feelings.

Stress factors for trainee teachers

In the pursuit of identifying factors causing training teachers stress the research first identified the most cited factors from previous research for teacher attrition. Once identified these factors were used in the development of an online-survey completed by a sample of 15 trainee teachers at Academy X. These teachers were all either training through School Direct, Teach First or completing their NQT year. This survey used four lines of questioning based around factors for attrition identified when reviewing the literature these themes were; workload, management, student behaviour and school administration.

Already lost

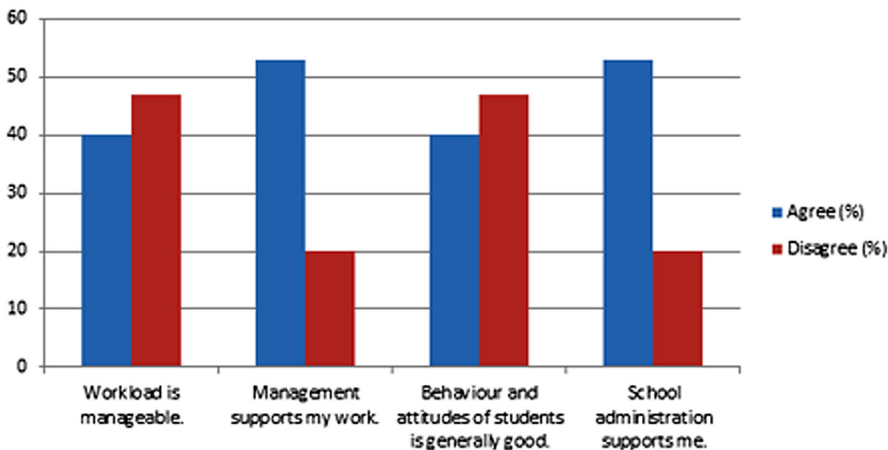
Reasons for attrition of Teach First teachers that have already been lost from the profession were identified through an online-survey. This sample consisted of participants who had all left teaching within the last two years and all trained through the Teach First route. This survey was completed by a moderate sample size of 44 participants. This survey used the same four lines of questioning as that in survey for trainee teachers to explore their reasons for leaving the profession but also included a Likert scale to indicate whether they intended to return to the profession in the future.

4 Analysis and Findings

Quantitative and qualitative analysis was completed to answer the questions; what causes trainee teachers stress? Why do newly qualified Teach First teachers leave within two years of training? The findings are being presented and analysed per research questions, as suggested by Hatch (2002).

Stress factors identified for trainee teachers

Within the survey each participant ranked each theme to how much they agreed with the statement. Participant's agreement or disagreement to each statement identified trends to factors they had negative feelings towards (see Figure 1). Some participants opted to neither agree nor disagree with some statements. For school management and administration just over half (53%) agreed with the positive statements, however for both themes 27% of participants' responses were neutral. With almost a third of responses on these two themes being neutral (neither agreeing nor disagreeing) it is hard to identify their impact on trainee teachers. This quantitative data suggests that workload and student's behaviour and attitudes are more significant factors in trainee stress than school management and administration within Academy X.



Source: own work.

As well as agreement to each statement participants commented on their feelings towards each factor, this qualitative data was analysed through content analysis. The first step in this content analysis was to identify categories within the qualitative survey answers (Cohen *et al.*, 2007). I identified categories for the comments following each theme (workload, management, behaviour and administration) separately as these are discrete categories, although some categories were identified across the themes.

The survey identified workload as a negative factor within the trainee's jobs (47%). When looking at the categories identified it must be noted that participants commented on all categories as having a negative impact on workload. No work life balance was commented on by a third of the sample within the workload question and was reflected upon very negatively. One NQT commented:

"It is impossible to complete the workload within work hours. Evenings and weekends are often spent working."

Some participants were more positive about the workload and admitted it is high but suggested job satisfaction made this acceptable:

"The workload is a lot compared with other jobs but I will make it work because I enjoy other elements of the job."

Although this participant is optimistic about the workload aspect of the profession these findings are concerning, especially considering the increase in burnout amongst new teachers (Smethem & Adey, 2005). Experiences of NQTs in Smethem & Adey's (2005) study led to increased anxiety and burnout due to the increased climate of accountability in the English education system. Accountability been seen to have an increased effect on workload which negatively effects work life balance (Borman & Dowling, 2008). Borman & Dowling (2008) results suggest that with proper administrative support the effects of workload can be reduced for new teachers. Within the theme of administration, the categories identified within my survey suggest Academy X has supportive administration.

The second most cited category participants commented on within workload was the demands of data input. This was not a stress factor or attrition reason identified within the literature I reviewed. However, this could be included within the category 'workload' within the literature. Many studies identified workload as a significant factor for new teacher attrition, yet these studies fail to identify what specifically teachers find stressful within their workload (Smethem, 2007; Darling & Hammond, 2008; Struyven & Vanthournout, 2014; Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018).

In the comments of the management question all categories were identified negatively except one which was positive, supportive middle management. The two most identified categories were lack of support and management lack of time, Heineke *et al.*, (2014) identified a lack of support from management to increase NQT attrition as well as reduce the length new teachers will spend in the profession. Lack of time in management was not a factor mentioned specifically within the literature I reviewed, however it seemed significant and matched some participants negative view of management within Academy X, one NQT commented:

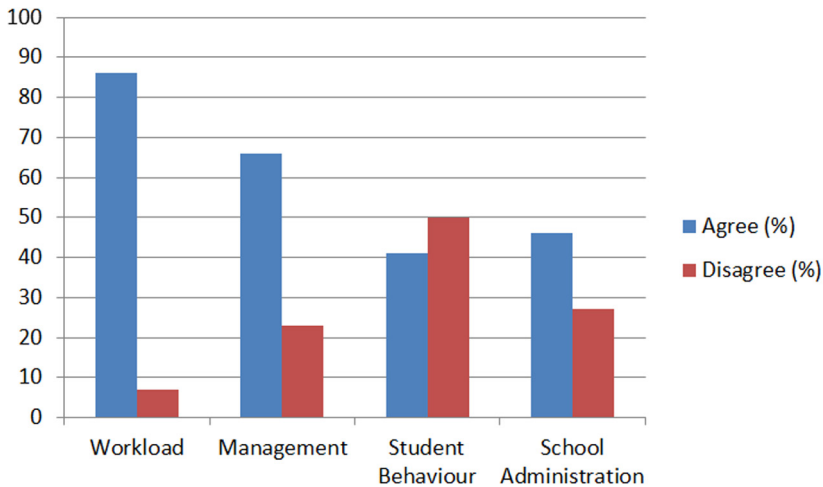
"Within this school, the management employ policies which directly increase workload for staff and are not effective..."

This participant suggests a link between what they feel is ineffective management and the workload and such perhaps the themes are more interlinked than they are treated within the literature. As I have done at times within this analysis, literature often separates themes for teacher attrition as separate entities that show little interaction, yet the reality is within the teaching role all of these identified aspects have an interacting impact on teacher’s stress level within their profession.

Finally, within this survey, participants were asked an open-ended question to identify their biggest cause of stress at work, this data was also categorised through content analysis and identified no work life balance as the biggest theme.

Why are they leaving?

Within the population of 1300 Teach First teachers using the online platform where the survey was placed 44 participants took part in the survey. This produced a response rate of only 3.4% which is much lower than the participation for the first survey. However, it must be considered that of the 1300 population the number that have left teaching and could participate are unknown. This is a significant amount of data however, and although it may not be generalisable to the whole population due to its relatively small size this sample provides insight into why Teach First teachers may leave the profession within 2 years of qualifying. The sample finished their NQT year in either 2016 or 2017 and had left the profession by April 2018. Within this survey the same four themes were



used in the Likert questioning but the participants were asked how much they agreed with statements identifying the theme as the reason for leaving teaching (see Figure 2).
Source: own work.

The quantitative data shows that 86% of Teach First teachers who attributed teaching within 2 years of completing their training agreed that workload impacted their decision to leave teaching. Within the sample 50% gave strongly agreed that workload impacted their attrition decision. This supports the literature that workload is the single biggest factor leading to new teacher attrition. When comparing this to the results for the first sample, it is considerably higher. This can potentially be explained by the fact that as a trainee or NQT

teacher a reduced timetable and such reduced workload is given; this could explain why workload becomes a larger factor in the early years post training. The second largest attrition factor was management with 43% out of the 66% that agreed saying it was a strong agreement to management affecting their decision to leave teaching.

Interestingly 46% of the Teach First leavers identified school administration as impacting their decision to leave teaching yet within the trainee and NQTs group at Academy X only 20% disagreed that administration supported them. Similar to the effect of workload increasing post training, potentially negative effects of school administration are felt later after qualification. Or possibly this is a difference seen within Academy X that is not generalisable across the Teach First group that come from different schools. Student behaviour and attitudes was only identified by 41% of the sample as impacting on their decision to leave and 50% disagreed that this was a reason for attrition. This again supports the finding of literature, which has found student behaviour to be a reason for teacher attrition (Smethem, 2007; Allen *et al.*, 2017) but this theme was identified less within the literature than other themes such as workload.

The final piece of quantitative analysis completed to explore research question 2 involved identifying if these participants are considering a return to teaching in the future, this involved a Likert scale question to identify likeliness to return again on a five-point scale. Of the 44 participants 39% responded they were likely to return to teaching at some point within the future, 29% were unsure and 32% responded they were unlikely to return to the classroom. This support the claim by the Migration Advisory Committee (2017) that teachers who do leave the profession do return in unknown numbers, this return to the classroom is often overlooked within the literature and not considered when looking at new teacher attrition. A study has been completed within America and suggested up to 25% of leavers returning at some time (DeAndelis *et al.*, 2013). This is a little lower than the 39% of this studies participants that responded they are likely to return but perhaps gives an indication of the real number that may return in the future.

Within the theme of workload, no work life balance was identified as being the biggest attrition factor for Teach First new teachers, with 50% of participants directly referring to a lack of work life balance within the open-ended comment question. This identifies the large problem associated with the workload of teachers. When comparing this data to that found in the survey of trainee and NQT teachers in-post both samples identified no work life balance as the highest for stress and wanting to attrition, both also considered marking within workload as being a significant factor. Again the literature breaking down the problem of workload is lacking and such these categories identified within workload give vital areas for future new teacher attrition or retention studies. This data does show 36% of the participants surveyed identifying workload as the primary reasons for their attrition from teaching it is clearly a significant issue for new Teach First teachers.

When looking at the theme of school management 16% of participants directly referred to school managers having a lack of ability, one ex-teacher commented on management saying:

"I was generally uninspired by what I viewed as bad communication, poor management and a lack of organisation by senior school leaders at my school."

However, not all of the participants felt negatively about their management, good management was categorised twice, excellent management once (see Appendix 4) and supportive management four times. This gives seven accounts of positive comments on management, equalling that of the number of lack of management ability category frequency. Yet management and particularly that of the Principal has been seen to be vital in staff retention (Jones & Watson, 2017). Although the qualitative data shows a mixed opinion on the role

of management in attrition decision amongst Teach First teachers, 66% of the 44 participants still agreed that school management affected their decision to leave teaching. Within the final question when participants were asked to present the primary reason for attrition management appeared within the top five most given reasons so clearly had an overall negative impact on new Teach First teacher attrition within this sample.

When looking at the impact of student behaviour and attitudes in new Teach First teacher attrition, like in the first survey many participants commented positively on the students providing increased job satisfaction. One participant commented:

"I taught in a tough school and I loved my students. They are the best part of the job".

Another participant describes how the young people themselves were not a factor but the systems in place to deal with behaviour were challenging:

"Although behaviour was difficult at times, the students were not the issue. An ineffective behavioural policy was the problem".

Such ineffective policies were also the top cited category given by participants and can overlap with the themes management and administration, as these are the groups within school's that set and oversee these policies. Although participants did comment that students' behaviour was not an issue, many participants still discussed the behaviour and attitudes of students to be negative and identified it as one reason that impacted their decision to leave. Participants also felt that the time spent dealing with behaviour directly decreased the amount of impact they were making within the classroom:

"I felt like I spend too much time dealing with poor behaviour to the detriment of time I should be spending teaching, which makes me feel that my time and effort is not being used well."

This was a feeling shared by participants in Allen's *et al.*, (2017) study that used questionnaires in a longitudinal study to follow new teachers through their NQT year. This theme appeared to split the participants almost 50:50 in those that feel it impacted their decision to leave and those that feel it did not. When looking at the primary reason for attrition, only 7% of participants gave student behaviour as a reason.

When looking at the theme school administration very few participants commented on the open-ended question, this could have been because some participants felt the question was unclear and did not have the same understanding of school administration. In future study the term school administration needs to be clearly defined to participants to allow them to answer the question appropriately. However, of those that did answer many commented on frustration with 'tick box exercises' and comments again focused primarily on the little impact participants felt these tasks had on student outcomes:

"Too much unnecessary data that didn't help the children to learn. These hours would have been better suited to planning lessons."

One participant commented on the change in head teacher of their school:

"My school had recently got a new head teacher, who was doing a great job, but many teachers disagreed with his approach and this left the school staff fractured and combative."

Although this participant identified the new head teacher's leadership quality to be good, fractured school staff leads to low morale and staff retention inevitably increases

(Simon & Johnson, 2015). Like within survey 1 the Teach First participants also identified workload to be increased by negative administration and adding to the stress felt within their roles.

When looking at the top primary reasons the participants gave for leaving the profession the other categories not discussed so far as; pay, under-appreciation and pressure. Pay was identified as a reason for attrition by a small number of participants however the literature has found salary to be a contributing factor to attrition, particularly amongst younger teachers that often start at the lower end of the pay scale (Loeb *et al.*, 2005; Borman & Dowling, 2008; Heineke *et al.*, 2014; Haberman, 2017). One participant commented:

“Money was certainly an issue, particularly as I was living in London. I now work at a job that requires two thirds of the workload and pays more in one year than I earned during the entire time at Teach First which I think is a real shame as teachers work so hard.”

When reviewing the literature salary as a reason for attrition has been identified for new teachers, however it has not really been explored in-depth. Teach First specifically hold a unique position as a teacher training provider as they allow all training teachers to earn a salary as well as cover the costs of their Post Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Whether salary has a bigger impact on attrition amongst Teach First teachers in different geographical areas would provide an interesting topic for future study. Is the negative impact of salary potentially higher in London where living wage and earning potential are higher?

Under-appreciation and pressure were also cited most frequently as primary reasons for new Teach First teacher attrition. These categories appeared less in the literature than workload for example but are also a product of the changing educational landscape within England. A new curriculum was introduced in England in September 2014 with the first examinations running in 2016 (UK Government, 2014). All of the participants within this study taught between the years 2015-2017 and bore the brunt and full force of these educational changes. Such the findings of this study must be considered within this context of a changing system as the impact of this change on the stress factors or attrition reasons for new teachers is currently unknown. This study may provide a first glimpse into the impact of this educational overhaul on the retention of English teachers.

5 Conclusions

This study aimed to address two research questions; the first being what are the stress factors for NQTs and trainees in post? The second question: what reasons do Teach First teachers give for leaving within their first 2 years in the profession? The first question aimed to inform the surveying of the second question, but also provided potential insight into stress factors that made lead to attrition of new teachers within Academy X. The stress factors identified from the first survey addressing research question 1 were; workload, school management, student behaviour/attitudes and school administration. These factors had already been identified within the literature and such this result was expected, however the participants from Academy X identified workload and student behaviour/attitudes to be the factors that caused them the highest stress within their job. This supports the findings from Borman & Dowling (2008) and Smethem (2007) who found workload particularly to be the biggest stress factor for NQTs. Increased stress increases the risk of burnout particularly amongst new teachers and this increases risk of attrition, as Smethem & Adey (2005) found when surveying the experiences of teachers over the course of their NQT year.

The largest factor of stress identified by the Academy X trainees and NQTs was a lack of work life balance. Which 50% of participants identified as their biggest source of stress. It is vital that changes are made to the workload of teachers through government and school level changes in order to reduce stress and affect attrition in new teachers. Schools could use some of the areas identified within this study to make changes to reduce stress on trainee and NQT teachers, this way newer teachers might be retained. Particularly the results highlighted unnecessary data input and processing and marking as negatively impacting on the work-life balance of new teachers.

The second research question explored the relatively unstudied attrition among Teach First teachers within their first 2 years in the classroom. American attrition studies have been completed on the similar scheme called Teach for America (Borman & Dowling, 2008; Donaldson, 2012) yet the literature on Teach First attrition is non-existent. I found that 86% of participants identified workload as a reason for their attrition from teaching. This supports the finding from my survey 1 and presents the question, how can schools improve workload for teachers and particularly new teachers to improve retention? With 20% of newly qualified teachers leaving the profession within their first 2 years of teaching and a quarter of new entrance leaving after 3 years (Migration Advisory Committee, 2017), schools and the government need to take action in improving working conditions to promote retention. This is particularly important for the schools served by Teach First as these are in low-income areas which see an inflated rate of teacher attrition and turnover (Dolton & Newson, 2003; Loeb *et al.*, 2005; Jones & Watson, 2017). Categories identified as increasing workload within this study were planning, marking, assessments and 'tick box exercises' all which were found to negatively impact work life balance, increase stress and effect mental health of participants. These are worrying findings and suggest a crisis in the working conditions of teachers which results in the high attrition and turnover we see within this country. School management was found to be identified as having a role in 66% participant's decision to leave teaching, school administration 46% and student behaviour and attitudes 41%.

Participants within the second survey identified the following primary reasons for their attrition; workload, under-appreciation, pay, management and pressure. As discussed within the literature review the English educational system has seen some big changes throughout the last four years and it must be considered that all of the participants within this study trained and completed their first few years teaching whilst these changes were taking place. The impact of these changes on teacher workload, stress, burnout and attrition is yet to be fully seen. However, these initial findings for new teachers joining the profession in this period of change are worrying for future attrition.

The final question of this study is when these teachers leave, do they come back? I completed some initial quantitative surveying of the Teach First participants to get an indication of whether they feel they are likely to return to the profession. Of the participant's 39% considered themselves likely to return to teaching in the future, 29% were undecided and 32% saw this as unlikely. Although this gives only an indication of number that do return it does provide some optimism that some of these new teachers will return to the classroom to teach again.

This study I hope provides a starting point for research into Teach First attrition, including reasons for attrition and attrition rates. This is an important issue with Teach First recruiting a large number of graduates yearly into the profession. I feel that in order to progress this research into improving the retention of new Teach First teachers the following recommendations could be taken.

- English schools need to address the impact of lack of work life balance of new teachers. Changes in data and marking policies are crucial.

- Further research is needed into quantifying Teach First attrition rates within the first 2 years of teaching.
- The government and schools within England need to actively start addressing the ever increasing workload of teachers.
- Policies and systems need to be considered by school leadership to improve work-life balance of teachers.

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How do leadership approaches and styles affect the retention of teaching staff in English primary schools?

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1 Introduction

'Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.'
(Tom Ford, cited in Bacon, 2012, p. 38)

The topic of teaching staff recruitment and retention is a growing concern for Primary Schools in England (McLean, 2016). As Smith (2010, p. 8) highlighted, 'recruitment is a problem in both the state and private sector.' Over the past two years, media allegations of a national "teacher recruitment and retention crisis" have been widespread. In 2016, the Guardian's article headline, "Teachers' unions unite to highlight 'national crisis' in profession" outlined the crisis surrounding recruitment and retention in schools, stating that 'schools report difficulties in attracting and retaining staff along with the squeeze on school budgets, which remain frozen in England despite being expected to fund pay increases'. In the same year, The Telegraph newspaper reported a 'crunch in teacher numbers'.

The subjects of *recruitment* and *retention* are tightly linked. However, as outlined by the Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) chief, Sir Michael Wilshaw, 'retention in many ways is more important than recruitment' (2016, p. 1). Not only are the financial costs of needing to recruit new members high, but arguably the organisational implications of losing a well-established member of staff could be highly detrimental to a school (2010). If this is the case, then we need to have a further insight into why teachers leave the profession.

A recent study carried out by the University of Nottingham on behalf of the Department for Education (2015) examines why teachers leave and return to the profession. The survey highlighted factors such as:

- intrinsic motivation to teach
- demographic characteristics and life stage of leavers and returners (e.g. age, gender, location, part-time/full-time, family commitments)
- their years of experience and subject in teaching
- pathways into the profession
- opportunities for career progression
- available alternatives to teaching

It also noted that ‘system-level factors’ such as ‘the perceived status of a teacher contributed’ to a teacher’s change in profession. If this is the case, then it would be the headteacher’s role to facilitate an organisational culture that is bespoke- tailored to individual staff’s needs. The question at hand, is to what extent a leader’s style or approach contributes to a culture and therefore retention.

Before delving into my research, I explored literature around leadership and management, leadership styles and approaches, and how these factors contribute to the school culture and climate, which could either retain staff or potentially push them away.

2 Methodology

Research Design

My research problem focused on the how leadership styles have a capacity to affect the retention of teaching staff in schools. To guarantee that my research design addressed the problem, I had to first identify which information I need to answer the question: ‘How do leadership styles and approaches affect the retention of teaching staff in Primary education?’ The question that I pose requires me to:

- identify the different styles and approaches of leadership in headteachers
- identify the culture of the school that they lead
- understand a headteacher’s knowledge and understanding of retention
- understand the strategies that are implemented to retain staff
- evaluate the success of those strategies

My research design

I wanted my research design to examine the human behaviour surrounding leadership styles. My reason for this approach was because I specifically aimed to gain an understanding of how leadership styles (human behaviour) and the experiences of that leader affected the retention strategies put in place. A qualitative approach that supports my research question is Grounded Theory. Grounded theory was:

developed as a reaction to the passive acceptance that all the “great” theories have been discovered and that the main task of research is to test these theories by using quantitative scientific procedures (Charmaz, 1983).

Grounded Theory’s primary focus of analysis is *behaviour* and its significances that occur during social contact (Wilson & Hutchinson, 1991). As I intend to determine the leadership qualities of individual Headteachers, social interaction will be a fundamental part of my data collection. One of the key data gathering processes within the Grounded Theory is ‘interviewing’

The questions that I would need to ask during the interview process were drawn out of my reading. Through these questions, I hoped to gain an observation of how leadership styles could affect quality of staff retention in schools:

1. What are your views on staff retention in schools?
2. What factors do you think affect staff retention?
3. What strategies do you have in place to assist the retention of staff?

4. How do you think the “Standards Agenda” could affect staff retention?
5. How would you describe your school culture?
6. As a leader, how do you impact the ethos and culture of your school?

My method consisted of both questions that had arisen during my literature review and prior observations during my three years working as a primary school teacher.

3 The Findings

The Headteachers

Four headteachers were interviewed:

- Headteacher W, the Executive Headteacher of a Church of England (state funded) Federation in East London, consisting of two schools – School WA and School WZ
- Headteacher X, Head of an independent, mixed preparatory-school in North London#
- Headteacher Y is head of a state funded infant school in North London
- Headteacher Z, Head of School for School WZ, which is part of the Church of England Federation lead by Headteacher W.

Interview Language

In order to extract the information from the interviews, the use of language - words, phrases and segments of the transcript were analysed.

Transformational or Transactional language?

Initial decoding began by highlighting words in the transcripts that could be associated with either *transformational (more democratic)* leaders or *transactional (more autocratic)* leaders. By using Shields’ *Distinctions among three theories of leadership* table specifically only looking at *two* theories of leadership and did not include transformative leadership., I began to highlight words that were associated with the two different approaches. Due to the varying length of each interview, to ensure that the data was fair, I found percentages of *transformational* language against the percentage of *transactional* language. Of course, this analysis is very subjective. I chose words based on my knowledge of *transformational* and *transactional* leadership that developed throughout my critical literature review.

Two out of the four headteachers showed quite similar results. Headteacher X seemed to use 85% transformational language, and Headteacher Y also seemed to use 84% transformational language. Headteacher W used 66% transformational language, and Headteacher Z used 75%. This outlines that all four headteachers lean towards a transformational approach. We can observe the fact that all four headteachers also used transactional language. Most literature that I read surrounding the disparity around transactional and transformational leadership suggested that the two approaches were in discourse with one another, drawing clear distinctions between the two (Shields, 2010., Bass and Steidlmeir, 1999., Southworth, 2003). The consensus amongst theorists is that *transactional* leadership serves lower order needs such as physiological needs and that *Transformational* leadership serves higher order needs such as self-esteem. Thus, *Trans-*

formational leadership is the more superior of the two (Southworth, 2003). However, an example of where transactional traits became the main topic of conversation was with Headteacher W, who used the most transactional language out of the four headteachers, such as talk of financial incentives. Transactional language could not be avoided in any of the interviews. When Headteacher X spoke of concepts such as financial incentives and staff promotion, he stated ‘that goes without saying’, implying that serving the member of staff’s lower order needs is something that should come naturally to an organisation. Although I agree with this approach, we must take into consideration that Headteacher X runs a private school, where, although he explained that “financial clout” is a problem, it is perhaps not as great a problem as for the headteachers who run state-funded schools. According to the National Union of Teachers, the Government budget cuts between now and 2021 will cause approximately 4 teachers to be lost from Schools WA and School WZ (schoolcuts.org, 2017). As a result, a transactional approach is perhaps intensified in an effort to meet the lower order needs of teaching staff whilst working with an ever-changing government budget.

Styles of Leadership and Strategies

Based on the answers provided by the headteachers, assuming that their answers correspond with their actual practice, I ascertained that all the participants are more *transformational* than *transactional* in their approach. I found that *three* styles (Goleman 2008) in particular were the most apparent in all four teacher’s behaviours: *affiliative*, *coaching* and *democratic*. The behaviours and strategies adopted by the participants were unpicked.

Affiliative Leadership

If the *affiliative* style is underpinned by ‘people come first’, then the language that references the needs of the people was sought. Headteacher W notes the importance of ‘trusting’ and ‘valuing’ his staff, whilst ensuring that team dynamics are affective. The theme of group coherency also occurred in the interviews with Headteacher X and Y. Headteacher X noted the negative downward spiral that one person can have on their organisation, whereas Headteacher Y strongly emphasised the “we’re all in this together” approach. Headteacher Z did not directly speak about group dynamics, but this could have been due to the circumstances of the interview. Rhodes and Beneicke (2002) explain that peer-networking is fundamental in order to achieve true collegiality.

Peer support is also highlighted in an OECD review on how to *attract, develop and retain effective teachers*. Although this document was published in 2005 to aid policy makers, from my experience, many of the outlined strategies are still in need of implementing. The report highlights the need for strong, time-rich mentors so as to retain new members of staff. Headteacher Y, in particular, emphasised how well-put-together groups of teaching staff have had a positive effect on staff retention, especially when well-established members of staff are placed with newer members of staff. It should be noted, however, that School Y and X are not one-form entry schools unlike school WA and Z, and so it is easier to create strong teams within year groups. With regard to the socialisation of staff, Headteacher X reflected upon leadership practice, noting that he felt that not enough time and support had been given to new members of staff. Hofstede (2010) outlined the need to provide support to new members of staff and allow them sufficient time to be fully integrated into an organisation, which Headteacher X believed would take 2–3 years. If the Headteachers prioritise social groups and collegiality, then it is perhaps fair to say that a member of staff is more likely to stay within that organisation.

A strategy that falls under the affiliative style, which did not occur during the literature review, is the concept of *staff wellbeing*. Headteacher X spoke at large about staff wellbeing. He explained that upon a staff survey, most teachers wanted small changes to their day-to-day routine such as ‘occasionally having lunch’ without the children. In fact, all four Headteachers made comments related to how their styles of leadership impact the wellbeing of teaching staff. Headteacher X and Y spoke more generally about team attitudes. In addition, Headteacher Z explained how Schools WA and Z were buying full time PPA staff who plans lessons so that classroom teachers use their time out of the classroom effectively, as opposed to planning for the PPA cover teacher. A survey taken in 2016 by the Education Support Partnership, based on 865 teacher responses, found that ‘44% of respondents said better workplace support for their personal wellbeing could help keep them in the profession’ (supporting you to feel your best, 2017). If leaders recognise the extent to which they can affect staff wellbeing, this could have a significant effect on the rate of staff retention.

On the other hand, it was fascinating to note that both Headteachers X and Z (Headteacher Z also spoke about this in a conversation separate to the interview) said that they believed, in some cases, that teachers may not be as resilient as they once were. Both of them made a point to recognise that societal demands may have changed; as Headteacher X notes – ‘maybe life is just more manic than it used to be’. Nonetheless, lack of resilience could be a very real problem. It is difficult to prove that teachers’ resilience has in fact broken down over the past few decades. A report in 2006, *Variations in Teachers’ Work, Lives and Effectiveness*, centred its findings of teacher effectiveness and sustainability around the topic of *resilience*: ‘Teachers’ capacities to be effective are influenced by variations in their work, lives and identities and their capacities to manage these.’ (Day *et al.*, 2006:vi). In other words, if a teacher cannot cope with the different facets of their life, it would probably affect their ability to manage a job for a sustained period of time.

Coaching Leadership

If diminishing resilience is the problem, then a ‘coaching’ style would be needed to support staff in managing the daily pressures of teaching life. Headteachers Z and Y spoke a great deal about the professional development of staff, presenting a more *coaching* style. For example, Headteacher Y explained how she hoped to facilitate an environment in which her middle leadership could develop their skill set to potentially enable them to move into Assistant or Deputy Head positions. It is interesting to note that, due to the fact that the School WA and School Z are a part of a federation, the professional development of members of staff is easier because staff can move freely between the two schools; if there isn’t room to “step-up” in one school, teaching staff can move to the other. Headteacher Z outlined how the federation had benefitted both his professional development and that of the Science coordinator. The OECD (2011) outlines how peer coaching, regular teacher evaluation and effective feedback are crucial in maintaining teaching staff. These strategies are highly indicative of *transformational* leadership because they contribute to the follower’s higher order needs. However, the same document, published in 2011 as a result of background reports from 25 countries including the UK, noted that *transactional* methods such as ‘rewarding teachers for exemplary performance with faster career progression, time allowances, sabbatical periods’ are equally as important in an attempt to retain teaching staff (p. 16).

Although promotion and professional incentives tend to fall under the *transactional approach*, the *coaching* style is grounded by staff feedback and works better with teaching staff who are aware of their weaknesses and want to develop (Goleman, 2007). But

as Headteacher W and Y explain, in order to ensure children are receiving the best possible education, teachers must be made aware of their areas for development if they cannot identify them themselves. In which case, the coaching style perhaps moves from being *transformational* to *transactional* due to the fact that leadership is in need of compliance, or the style changes completely, becoming more *pace-setting*.

Democratic Leadership

The *Democratic* style of leadership allows greater room for teacher innovation (Goleman, 1997). It recognises staff's individual contributions. Characteristics from this style were not as prominent as the other styles when interviewing the four different Heads. Headteacher X recognised that members of staff could feel 'disenfranchised', but this comment related more to staff feeling a lack of support or mentoring. However, Headteachers W and Z did focus on the topic of specifically *valuing* their members of staff. Headteacher Y, in particular, noted that her EYFS teacher was extremely ambitious with her ideas, to the extent that on some occasions, the Head has to 'hold her back'. Goleman (1997) recognises that although *democratic* leadership can be slow in achieving results, by doing so the 'backlash' of inevitable outcomes will be limited (p. 10). Further to this Chrispeels (2004) explains that where the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) make decisions from the 'bottom up', the 'micro-politics' of the school can be positively affected. An example of this is where Headteacher X surveyed staff to discover whether they felt supported and to what extent they wanted their daily structure to change. The House of Commons Education Committee (2017) 'received 55 written submissions of evidence from a wide range of sources, including subject associations, universities, unions and individual schools' (p. 3). They reported in February 2017 that 'overall job satisfaction comes out as the biggest driver [for intention to leave], and also things related to whether they feel supported and valued by management'.

Although collaborative efforts seem to be important in creating harmony in the workplace, as Hargreaves (1994) disputes that, what may appear to be 'true collaboration' can often be instead 'contrived collegiality' where collaboration becomes fixed, compulsory and predictable. Even though the Hargreaves text was published thirteen years ago, the argument that true collegiality is difficult to establish is still relevant today. In spite of this, perhaps the sheer perception that staff's views are being considered is enough to create a culture of contentment, where staff feel they are contributing to decisions outside of the classroom. Rhodes (*et al.* 2004) found, during a survey of teaching staff throughout the UK, that '*feeling valued*' contributed to teacher satisfaction and then perhaps retention. The word 'feeling' implies that true collegiality is not necessary in maintaining staff satisfaction. Be that as it may, Sergiovanni enforces that staff contribution and true collegiality is necessary in creating culture driven by morals which will in turn lead to staff satisfaction, although he recognises that such collegiality in schools is rare.

Other styles

Through analysing the language used by the four Heads, an informed decision was made that all of the leaders presented a greater number of *transformational* qualities as opposed to *transactional*. That is not to say that each Head was completely devoid of *transactional* attributes.

As aforementioned, Headteacher W outlined the need to ensure that teachers are 'outstanding' and work to the required standard. Although this is something that can be achieved by continuing professional development (CPD), where pupil attainment expectations have to be met, at times, it may be necessary for a head to morph into a *pace-*

setter. Headteacher X and Y also referred to exam result pressures. For Headteacher X, this was the main factor that contributed to heightening pressure. Due to the fact that his school is in the private sector, the pressures are not as a result of policy changes and inspections, but rather 'getting children into schools'. Precey (2008, p. 236) highlights that 'this is a leadership world where risk-taking is encouraged yet accountability is harsh and there is much to gain and lose'. The external pressure of incessant policy changes driven by a national desire to raise school standards (or at least verifiable standards) is ever present (2017). As Headteacher W notes, 'it would be silly to ignore the standards set out by the government. It shouldn't be the focus of what we do at school, but it is necessary'. According to the House of Commons, 'a key driver for teachers considering leaving the profession is unmanageable workload' (2017, p. 2), which Headteacher W explains is as a result of external pressure. If this is the case, then how can Headteachers avoid falling into a *pace-setting* style while maintaining standards; it seems like an almost impossible task.

Culture and Values

It is difficult enough to define a school culture, even if it is your own (1999). As an outsider, even having interviewed the Headteachers, it is virtually an impossible task. Perhaps the definition of the culture holds little importance, but rather the emotional intelligence and the strength of the person behind the culture (2015).

We know, from the literature that leadership is one of the biggest factors in determining a school culture. All Headteachers acknowledged that they had some level of impact on their organisational culture. Headteacher Z described School WZ as being 'friendly, happy and relaxed', which he recognised as being directly impacted by his nature as a leader, and in turn, the happiness of staff. The culture of school WZ seemed to come across as a *person* culture (1986). He explained that culture is focussed around doing 'what's best for the children'. It would make sense that Headteacher W (Executive Headteacher of schools WA and WZ) had a similar understanding of his impact on school culture. He explained that being a role-model and presenting himself positively, even when in a bad mood, would ultimately impact school culture. Headteacher W also referenced the *emotionally intelligent* leader, implying that he understands the need to adapt his leadership according to the need of the member of staff (1995). Although, Headteacher Y showed emotional intelligence and described her school as 'a really nice school to work in', she found it slightly harder to define how she directly impacted the culture of the school. Headteacher X also showed high levels of emotional intelligence; following the interview he explained that he had enjoyed the opportunity to reflect upon his practice.

Furthermore, Headteacher X commented on a matter related to culture that I had not previously considered. He explained that 'traditionally, as a headteacher, I should be "children first", but maybe my priority should be the staff'. In the same way that a major corporation's purpose is to make money, a school's purpose is to teach children. But some of the most successful businesses build their culture around their employees, not their clients. Companies such as Virgin pride themselves in looking after their own: 'it's our people that drive our success' (Virgin, 2017). On the other hand, it is perhaps fair to suggest that large companies have the funds to invest in staff well-being strategies such as working remotely, which is not an available luxury in the state sector.

Previously, I posed the question, 'do we [teaching staff] affect organisational culture, or does it affect us?' Headteacher X believes that it takes two to three years for a member of staff to integrate into a school. I believed that the leader has the biggest impact on the school culture; I had not considered the fact that older or more established members of teaching-staff could also have a large impact on the culture of the organisation. Head-

teacher Y referred to this idea when stating 'we really needed refreshing': having lost some members of staff who had been at the school for 'donkey's years', she felt this was possible. This does not necessarily prove that one member of the teaching staff can affect school culture, but it does support Schein's (1990) notion that if a *set* of people with enough common history leave around the same time, it would inevitably cause a great shift in the culture. Headteacher X recognised that by 'wrapping a blanket' around new members of staff in the early days, it could have had a profound effect on whether that member of staff stays. A way of doing this could be through, not just mentoring in a CPD sense, but insisting that more established members of staff are given the responsibility to nurture newer members of staff. In doing so, this could ensure new teachers are "socialised" whilst more experienced teachers are professionally developed by being given further responsibility. As long as schools are also willing to learn from new teachers, then school culture would develop organically and slowly, avoiding large-scale, unmanaged change and promoting forward thinking staff retention.

Data: 2

'The retention of teachers represents a complex issue driven by factors such as personal circumstances, job commitment, satisfaction, morale and self-conception' (2004, p. 68). Although it is apparent that leadership approaches and styles affect the staff retention, other factors arose during the series of interviews. To look at this in more detail the headteachers were asked about how many members of teaching staff had left and for what reasons.

Emails

All headteachers acknowledged that staff retention was a very real problem. Out of the four participants, Headteacher Y had retained all staff this academic year, but this was partly due to the number of staff that had left the previous year. Headteacher W saw five members of staff leave. However, due to Schools WA and WZ being a part of the same federation, one of the teachers was simply moving to School WZ. Headteacher Z lost one Reception teacher, and had gained a Year 6 teacher from School WA. Headteacher X stated that 11% of staff had left at the end of the academic year; Headteacher X had mentioned the issue of 'money' with regard to retention.

It is difficult to determine whether or not these teachers left as a direct result of their leadership; it is unlikely that the teachers concerned would have shared this information with their heads. It became clear throughout the interviewing process that the problems that the headteachers face, with regard to retention, are often external factors or factors that are out of their control. Below are listed some of the key areas from the data collection.

Money

School WA lost one of their members of staff due to the fact that she could not afford to buy a house in London. Headteacher X also noted that one of the biggest problems he has with regard to retention is a lack of 'financial clout'. Although the problem of money was a factor highlighted during the literature review, the issue of teaching in London specifically is a concept that I had not considered. In 2016, the BBC highlighted that 'a survey of 1,200 NUT members in London aged under 35 found 60% were planning to leave the city within five years' (Burns, 2016). Although inner city wages pay more than greater London and the rest of England and Wales, it is not enough to combat the ever-increasing cost of rent and house prices. In the academic year 2016–17, the minimum

wage for Teachers in England and Wales (exc. London) was £22,467. In comparison, the minimum wage in inner London was £28,098; which is a difference of £5,631 a year (National Union of Teachers, 2016). The average price of rent a one-bedroom property in the capital in 2016 was £1,133 per month compared to the average price to rent a one-bedroom property in Plymouth which was £495 pm, which is a difference of £638 pm or £7,656 annually (Osbourne, 2017., Home.co.uk, 2017). The Key Worker Scheme is still present in boroughs such as Tower Hamlets. Even though the scheme states that 'If [...] you do not live within a reasonable distance of your workplace, the council may give you additional housing priority', the words 'may' and 'reasonable distance' does not guarantee housing assistance (Towerhamlets.gov.uk. 2017). If a teacher is unable to buy or rent housing within close proximity from the school, then it is fair to suggest that more convenient options may be available.

Retirement

There is, of course, the inevitable issue of retirement. For Headteacher Y, this was the main reason for losing staff in 2015–16. In 2015, the Education Support Partnership found that a survey conducted by YouGove from a sample of 796 teachers, '34% of all teachers plan to leave the profession in 1–5 years' time, 54% of whom will do so to retire' (Education Support Partnership – supporting you to feel your best, 2017). If this data is correct then heads should be preparing for such a wave by socialising new members of staff, whilst allowing older members to leave slowly, so as to manage the change. An example of this is when Headteacher Y explained that her Deputy Head was 'going down to three days a week as a part of a phase retirement': phase retirement could be an option for classroom teachers who plan on retiring, so as to extend their time and contribution to the school.

Maternity leave

As well as permanent leave, there is the subject of maternity leave. Although maternity or paternity leave is, in most cases, only temporary leave, 'paying to cover absent employees presents a very real risk of budget overspend, but the true cost is more than just financial' (Lucas Fettes & Partners Limited, 2015, p. 1). Even more concerning, is how 'the absence of a valued member of staff can have a significant impact on the school' (2015, p. 3). Headteacher W and Y have both had a member of staff leave on maternity over the last two years. Although, the financial and cultural cost may be great, the overall cost of maternity leave can't be compared to the benefits that it brings to the school as an organisation. Providing quality maternity cover is essential in instilling a sense of trust in employees. By communicating support for the individual and expressing a genuine concern for their wellbeing, a Headteacher can acquire that employee's loyalty for years after the leave was taken; 'you can go some way to minimising absence through investing in the welfare of your staff'.

4 Conclusion

I realise that throughout this article I have spent a great deal of time discussing culture and values, but my reason for doing so was to highlight how these are directly or indirectly impacted by leadership approaches and styles. I believed that leadership values and the development of an appropriate culture were necessary in retaining staff. In ac-

tual fact, I have found that the relationship between leadership approaches and styles is not as simple as I had first thought.

It was necessary to outline the characteristics of different leadership *approaches*. Although we discovered that all of the headteachers involved in the data collection process used mostly transformational language such as ‘culture’, ‘wellbeing’, ‘ethos’ and ‘identity’, transactional themes and language were also referenced, such as *financial incentives* and *meeting standards* on a day-to-day basis. The use of transformational language highlighted that the headteachers had *moral foundations*, as they all focussed on manifesting a positive school culture and investing in staff development (1999). On the other hand, I have found, from both experience and this research process, that transactional behaviours are sometimes necessary.

Surely, the day-to-day transactions and *lower order* needs must be fully served before *higher order* needs can be met. I recognise that a transformational leader should also serve individual’s needs, such as self-esteem and professional development. However, transactional leadership focuses on daily transactions, which although may seem insignificant, could actually instil trust and respect in teaching staff. As Keeley (1995) highlights, transactional leaders are not necessarily void of moral standards. Certainly, by honouring ‘responsibility’, ‘fairness’ and ‘commitments’, the transactional approach can prove a leader’s integrity (2010). An example of this is when a member of staff first joins the school, or even when a headteacher first joins a school, the transactional approach would be necessary so as to build a foundation of trust between members of staff. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991, cited in Bass, 1997) found ‘that although leader-member exchange may begin with a simple transactional relationship, for effectiveness, it needs to become transformational’. I disagree with this comment. Graen and Uhl-Bien (1991) imply that the relationship between transactional and transformation leadership is that one style will eventually merge into the other. As human beings, I do not believe that we can be in a permanent state of ‘motivation’ and ‘engagement’ (Bass, 1997, p. 130). At times, one may require their leader to recognise their lower order needs. This is not to say that individual social or physiological wants should take precedence over the needs of the organisation. However, I believe that the different approaches should be adopted accordingly in an on-going manner. It seems that it is possible to create a vision for the organisation and the people within it, whilst attending to the lower order needs of members of staff.

Adopting both *approaches* ties in with the need to adopt various *styles* of leadership. We found that all headteachers showed behaviours that were indicative of a number of “transformational” *styles*, including ‘affiliative’, ‘coaching’ and ‘democratic’. All three styles promoted a positive school culture, whether as a result of allowing staff contributions or nurturing professional development. At times, each leader showed signs of “transactional *styles*”, particularly with regard to performance management: occasionally, a *pace-setting* or even *coercive* style was needed. Their ability to move between styles represented a level of emotional intelligence from each headteacher. Emotional intelligence is a key factor in choosing the appropriate leadership behaviours (Goleman, 1995). Goleman (1995) speaks of emotional intelligence with regard to adapting to the need of the organisation. As previously mentioned, with regard to staff retention, I believed that it is more significant that the behaviours of the leaders are valued by the followers. In which case, the leader would not only have to adjust their style to the need of the organisation, but also to the individual needs of the member of staff. In other words, the Headteacher should identify which driving factors contribute to the retention of different teachers. Some of them are listed below (2016, p. 5):

- working conditions
- parental leave

- pension plans
- easier or less costly renewal of certification
- quality of school leadership
- professional learning opportunities
- instructional leadership
- time for collaboration and planning
- collegial relationships
- decision making input

We have identified that out of these ten factors, nine of them are relevant to the England. Out of the nine, seven of them are influenced by the type of leadership in place, including working conditions, quality of leadership, learning opportunities, instructional leadership, collaboration, collegial relationships and decision making input. These areas seem to be affected positively by a *transformational* leader, who can embrace constructive leadership styles such as *affiliative*, *democratic* and *coaching*.

Two of the factors, parental leave and pension plans, are not necessarily in the hands of the headteacher. In addition, as identified during the second part of the data collection, further reasons contribute a teacher leaving. Examples include, 'demographic characteristics and life stage of leavers and returners' and pay (2015). As well as this, the critical literature review identified that students might find an attractive alternative to teaching; for example, Teach First participants may be drawn to other careers once they have completed the two-year Leadership Development Programme. In all of the above circumstances, we should acknowledge that the headteacher can have little impact; or perhaps not.

I was a newly qualified teacher who, due to demographic characteristics and "attractive alternatives", had almost left the teaching profession altogether; I did not. Further to this, during my first year in London, working in a private school, I experienced micro-management. I chose to stay in the teaching profession, joining the teaching team in School WA. This was for a number of reasons, which comprised of the following:

1. inspired by leaders within the teaching profession whose values I shared
2. provided with the opportunity for further professional development
3. supported in continuing further education
4. provided with the opportunity to work in a positive, forward thinking school culture
5. provided with an annual income that would allow my staying in London.

Most of these factors are related to leadership. Nevertheless, I do not doubt that the government could do more to encourage teaching-staff to stay in schools. Examples of the factors that government policy affects are: workload, the attractiveness of the role, lack of affordable housing and income.

The question is: how can we, as teachers, insure that government's attempt to retain teachers is amplified? I wonder if headteachers could play a role beyond their role in school. Perhaps a new *style* and, even *approach*, of leadership would encourage leaders to look beyond their own school so as to stand-up to policy makers? Shields (2010, p. 563) speaks of a *transformative* leader who dissects the 'disparities outside of the organisation'. What we need to solve is how a headteacher could put the transformative approach into practice with regard to staff retention. Could a leader create a school culture that has a powerful external as well as internal influence, creating a "think-tank" culture and dictating government policy? Because, if such a school existed it would:

- Make teaching a more attractive role
- Provide alternative routes for professional development within the school (i.e. policy)
- Hold the government to account
- Possibly even demand a higher income for staff

Maybe staff retention is not simply about working together within positive school cultures. Perhaps it is about working together on a much bigger scale, where schools and policy makers are emotionally intelligent organisations, which serve the teacher, the pupil and each other.

'Coming together is a beginning. Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.' (Tom Ford, cited in Bacon, 2012, p. 38)

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Effective and Enlightening Transition of vulnerable children between schools: an evaluation of a pilot project

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1 Introduction

“School transition is a life changing event for children – they are rarely faced with such a powerful set of personal and social changes. These underpin the immediate and longer term wellbeing of children, peer groups, teachers and schools”

Jennifer Symonds

A national education systems reflect the history, politics and culture of that country. In Estonia, for example, there is a large Russian-speaking minority and, for a variety of reasons, there are separate Estonian and Russian-speaking schools. In Norway, a relatively classless society, most children attend their local school. A federal system in the USA riddled with inequality reflects this through its very schools in different states.

England, it may be argued, has an education system based on elitism, choice and competition. It has one of the most complex education systems that humans have devised. See if you can follow this explanation:

Most children in England start school at 4 years old (but not all). Most children staying in their first (“Primary”) school until the age of 11 (but not always. In some areas it is 12 or 13). They then move to their next (“Secondary”) school until they are 16 (but not always. Some secondary schools have Sixth Forms for pupils up the age of 18). If they do not stay on in their secondary school Sixth Form, they complete their state compulsory education in a variety of other institutions. To probe deeper, in many parts of England pupils may sit an IQ test (called the 11+) at the age of 10/11 in their primary school and then move to a range of secondary schools based on their performance. These secondary schools may be:

- a grammar school – which is for those deemed to be successful in the 11+ test (see article in this journal by Natalie Steel)
- a secondary modern school – for those deemed to have not succeeded – or failed.

Simple? No– further layers of complexity are added as there are primary and secondary:

- co-educational or single sex schools,
- faith e.g. Roman Catholic, Church of England or Muslim or non-faith schools,

- schools under the influence of local authorities (maintained schools) and those free from local control and reporting directly to central government (academies – sometimes standing alone and sometimes part of a chain of schools within an academy) or free schools (interest groups e.g. parents, are allowed to set to their own school funded by central government).

So far, so good? Oh, and as well as these state schools, there are “public” schools (private ones for which that parents pay). Another layer to add to this mosaic of myriad is parental choice. Or at least the illusion of choice that parents are told that they have. But that depends on where you live and how much money you wish to invest in your child’ education. This relatively straightforward state system created in 1944 has become a servant of the free market in recent years.

All of this makes it difficult to understand and makes the education journey of a single child individualistic. One particularly challenging issue is the transition of pupils from primary to secondary school. One class of 30 pupils in Year 6 (aged 11) may end up separated in many different secondary schools:

- one may end up in a girls’, catholic, grammar school
- another may be in a boys’, non-faith based, secondary modern schools
- another may be in a coeducational secondary, church of England secondary school.

The transition process is difficult for teachers, parents and most importantly for children. For teachers in primary schools do you coach pupils for the 11+ test, how do you prepare a class for a multiplicity of different secondary destinations? For secondary teachers, how do you help students settle in from many different primary schools each with their own cultures. For parents, what do you do? Which school do you “choose”? How do you decide? How do you handle your child through the 11+ test and their results? For children, how do you just cope so that your learning is continuous and uninterrupted?

One of the many consequences of transition from primary to secondary schools in such a system is exclusion. Pupils are excluded from both primary and secondary schools on an alarming scale. Exclusions may be permanent or fixed term exclusions from a school.

The overall rate of fixed period exclusions has increased, from 4.29 per cent of pupil enrolments in 2015/16 to 4.76 per cent in 2016/17. The number of exclusions has also increased, from 339,360 to 381,865 (DfE 2018).

Definitions

Permanent Exclusions

The permanent exclusion rate is calculated as follows: A permanent exclusion refers to a pupil who is excluded and who will not come back to that school (unless the exclusion is overturned by appeal by a parent).

Number of permanent exclusions recorded across the academic year

Number of sole and dual registered pupils on roll as at January census day × 100

In England the overall rate of permanent exclusions has increased from 0.08 per cent of pupil enrolments in 2015/16 to 0.10 per cent in 2016/17 which is equivalent to around 10 pupils per 10,000. The number of exclusions has also increased, from 6,685 to 7,720. This corresponds to around 40.6 permanent exclusions per day¹ in 2016/17, up from an average of 35.2 per day in 2015/16. Most (83 per cent) permanent exclusions occurred in secondary schools. The rate of permanent exclusions in secondary schools increased from 0.17 per cent in 2015/16 to 0.20 per cent in 2016/17, which is equivalent to around 20 pupils per 10,000. The rate of permanent exclusions also rose in primary schools, at 0.03 per cent, but decreased in special schools from 0.08 per cent in 2015/16 to 0.07 per cent in 2016/17. Looking at longer-term trends, the rate of permanent exclusions across all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools followed a generally downward trend from 2006/07 when the rate was 0.12 per cent until 2012/13, and has been rising again since then, although rates are still lower now than in 2006/07.

Fixed period exclusions

Fixed period exclusion refers to a pupil who is excluded from a school for a set period of time. A fixed period exclusion can involve a part of the school day and it does not have to be for a continuous period. A pupil may be excluded for one or more fixed periods up to a maximum of 45 school days in a single academic year. This total includes exclusions from previous schools covered by the exclusion legislation.

Number of fixed period exclusions recorded across the academic year

$$\frac{\text{Number of fixed period exclusions recorded across the academic year}}{\text{Number of sole and dual registered pupils on roll as at January census day}} \times 100$$

A pupil may receive more than one fixed period exclusion, so pupils with repeat exclusions and this can inflate fixed period exclusion rates. The number of fixed period exclusions across all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools has increased from 339,360 in 2015/16 to 381,865 in 2016/17. This corresponds to around 2,010 fixed period exclusions per day¹ in 2016/17, up from an average of 1,786 per day in 2015/16. The rate of fixed period exclusions across all state-funded primary, secondary and special schools has also increased from 4.29 per cent to per cent of pupil enrolments in 2015/16 to 4.76 per cent in 2016/17, which is equivalent to around 476 pupils per 10,000. There were increases in the number and rate of fixed period exclusions for state-funded primary and secondary schools and special schools.

So both fixed term and permanent exclusions are a problem especially for those who believe in inclusion. This article is a pilot with a view to learn lessons and disseminate these to other schools in the area. It focuses on some pupils' and some staff's views on the preparation for transition for moving to Revell Academy and St Johns Church of England School (both for pupils aged 11-18) in September 2018 from a sample of primary schools. It examines pupils' and expectations before moving (in July 2018) and their subsequent opinions having moved to their secondary school (October 2018). Middlemarch (not its real name) is the local authority (administrative area) in which these 2 schools and the primary schools are located (another layer of complexity is that it is possible for parents to choose a school outside the administrative area where they live).

2 The Project

The Strategic Vision

The Arts-based intervention programme that is the focus of this article sits within the overall strategic vision of Middlemarch:

- to align with your Middlemarch's strategic objectives
- to align strategically with the formation of a Cultural Education Partnership
- that the ENGLISH THEATRE Bridge investment will add value to this vision.

Background

Middlemarch is a complex school system in relation to transition from Year 6 to Year 7. There are primary faith schools, maintained schools and academies. There are secondary selective, faith, single gender, coeducational maintained schools and academies. School choice and selection and the relative proximity of schools means that the flow of children across the Middlemarch area is multifarious. A child leaves a relatively small school where they have formed close relationships with a small number of adults to go to a much larger institution with many adults and sometimes with very few friends accompanying them on their particular, crucial pathway for their whole future lives.

Such complexity is true in most parts of England as has been described in the Introduction but it is amplified in Middlemarch. A consequence of this at present is, perhaps, high and rising exclusion rates in Secondary Schools (see Appendices 1, 2). The Project sought to find better ways for transition in the 2 pilot secondary schools and their partner primaries that enable children to feel they belong and are able to learn successfully through transition and as a result greatly lower exclusion rates in the two schools.

But exclusion is a tip of an iceberg of pupil experience. The moral purpose and vision of the Project was much greater. It was that all children participating in the Programme will have the very best start to their secondary education. This vision had equity at its heart, supporting pupils, families and schools so that all pupils experience a positive transition, enabling them to be confident and successful in the next steps of young learners in their lifelong learning journey. The Programme is entirely aligned with both Middlemarch Council's strategic vision that all children in Middlemarch realise their potential throughout their school career and directly supports the development of the Middlemarch Learning Cultural Education partnership and its vision that cultural learning and cultural opportunities in Middlemarch should be a means by which all children and young people are able to thrive and aspire.

This initial pilot Programme focused additional resources on those pupils at most risk of exclusion, with a group of pilot schools before, during and immediately after their transition from Year 6 to year 7. It tested the impact of a creative transitions programme and the potential for roll out across the authority.

At its core, the vision holds the inherent value of the arts to build social cohesion within individuals and amongst communities, delivering an experience which is rich in interaction with people, culture and personal growth. This bold ambition and laudable mission of the Middlemarch LCEP is driven through this strategic plan. Funding for the Project came from The ENGLISH THEATRE Bridge Investment and enabled the pilot Arts-based programmes to be undertaken with larger cohorts and more schools with greater impact delivering more reliable evidence and evaluation.

Programme Aims and Objectives

The **aims** of the Programme were to:

1. provide the very best start to secondary school for all pupils
2. establish a model for positive, productive cross-sector partnerships
3. build a strong, locally relevant evidence base of the value of cultural learning to achieve better outcomes for children and young people.

Through the establishment of a long term strategy for the Middlemarch Cultural Education Partnership, this investment aimed to ensure that eventually all children in Middlemarch experience quality arts and cultural experiences as part of an effective and enlightening transition to secondary school. This Programme approached the need to reduce secondary school exclusion rates in an innovative and joined up way, bringing schools, local authority departments and cultural organisations together to address identified need.

The objectives of the entire Programme are:

1. Infuse the lives of young people with arts and culture activities.
2. Promote a duty of care, towards every child, shared across school boundaries.
3. Plan a dynamic curriculum experience that responds to individual pupil needs – ensuring full inclusion.
4. Deliver activities that promote imagination, curiosity, self-expression and resilience.
5. Share pertinent and transparent, school-to-school individual pupil intelligence and performance data.
6. Gain support from schools beyond the Pilot for Phase 2 delivery
7. Short term impacts on behaviour and attendance captured, analysed & shared amongst partners
8. ‘Effective and enlightening’ transition is adopted as a key strategy to reduce school exclusions
9. Schools recognize the benefit of integrating cultural learning into whole school improvement strategy
10. A sustainable transitions model is developed

3 The Evaluation

This article is based on the evaluative report which was commissioned to look at objectives 1 and 7. Other evaluators are looking at the other 8 objectives. The target group of young people are all year six pupils who transferred to Revell Academy and St Johns CoE Comprehensive. All pupils took part in ‘mixer’ activities, followed by a tailored arts programme for pupils who had been identified as being vulnerable at transition. These pupils were identified by primary headteachers and early help services. Those pupils identified as being at risk of exclusion were the priority for this additional support. Researching the thoughts and ideas of young people was one of the key objectives of the programme.

Participation

450 pupils in total were due to transfer from the primary schools to the 2 secondary schools involved. The participants and thus subjects for this study was selected from the whole cohort.

The Intervention Activity Plan

The pilot activity provided took place in the summer term 2018. For those Year 6 pupils identified as being at risk of exclusion in 10 primary schools, a targeted support programme of arts and cultural activities was organised by experienced facilitator's from arts organisations outside of the schools. The activities were carefully planned so that they sought to build confidence, resilience and established a strong connection with the secondary school to which the pupils would transfer a few months later. Importantly, they worked in mixed groups allowing children to interact between schools.

Two aspects of the programme did not happen:

- It was intended that Young Arts Advocates would be recruited from the two secondary schools, to develop their own arts leadership and act as mentors for the target support pupils.
- Activity and artforms were to be determined in consultation with the pupils themselves, based on their interests and needs, and were to include a mixture of activities in school and off-site, working with local artists and cultural venues

The Timescales for Delivery

The funded Project itself started in March 2018 with the pilot and is due to end with dissemination to all schools in Middlemarch in December 2019.

3.1 The Interim Evaluation Report; Research Pilot Phase 1 (October 2018)

As mentioned, this Evaluation report is focused on 2 of the 10 Strategic Objectives Others will evaluate other aspects of the Project. Base-line data was collected for Phase I from the Primary schools and the two Secondary schools in July (Pilot Research Stage 1) 2018.

Data was then collected from as many of the same students as possible when they joined Year 7 in the 2 pilot Secondary schools in October 2018 (Pilot Research Stage 2). This focused around the impact of the Transition Bridge Project which encompassed work with the Brook Theatre and Chatham Historic Dockyard Museum.

Research Aims Stage 1 (July 2018)

The aims of this part of the research into the pilot were:

1. 3.1: to find out what pupils in Year 6 were looking forward to in their new secondary school
2. to find out what they were worried about
3. to gain their views on what was helping them including The Bridge Project
4. to find out from staff in primaries involved in the transition process what currently exists and what works and what improvements they could see
5. to find out from senior staff in the 2 secondary schools what they feel is working and what could be improved.

Methodology

Pupils focus groups were formed by the primary schools and after introductions pupils were asked to individually to write their responses to Research Aims 1,2 and 3. A brief general discussion followed. This method was used so as to enable pupils to feel com-

fortable but also to give time for thought before responding. Primary staff were interviewed individually in each school to gain their responses to Research Aim 4. Secondary senior staff met with me as a group to share and compare ideas on Research Aim 5. This was followed up by another meeting on 30th August. Staff in both schools knew that I was coming and had clearly given some thought to the issue that all were keen to address and improve upon. I also went to the Historic Dockyard on 16th July to see the pupils engaged in those activities and to talk to the organizing staff.

Sampling

Pupils were selected by the school according to who was in school at the time and who might represent the participants in the Programme - pupils at risk of exclusion. Across the 10 research primary schools 67 pupils (34 girls and 33 boys) were invited onto the Programme. This was 15% of the total number of pupils (450). The pupils interviewed were selected by the primary staff. The staff interviewed were those most involved in the transition process – sometimes the Year 6 teachers, sometimes the special education needs (SEN) coordinator. 10 staff in all were interviewed - 1 from each of the research primary schools. In Phase 1 of the research the secondary staff interviewed were senior staff I who had a strategic leadership responsibility for transition and were key decision-makers in terms of any changes for improvement.

Research weaknesses

Research in schools is never straight forward. The main challenges for this research involved

- Sampling – without clear criteria it was difficult for primary schools to identify pupils at risk of exclusion. As a result the 67 pupils involved may or may not have been the most suitable participants
- Due to the pragmatics of commissioning, the research started late so a good deal had to be done in a short space of time
- Stage 1 was in July – was a busy time of year but when is not?

Findings from Research Phase 1

Pupils in Year 6

1. were looking forward to in their new secondary school

- making new friends
- meeting new teachers
- studying new subjects and having better facilities
- meeting students who had been in their primary school
- school finishing early in Wednesday (practice in one of the secondary schools involved)

2. were worried about

- getting used to the new environment
- getting lost
- not making friends
- bullying
- harder work
- homework

- failing
 - the teachers
- 3. what was helping them including The Bridge Project**
 - The Brook Theatre Project was mentioned by most pupils as a positive experience; the Historic Dockyard experience less so.
 - Transition Days when pupils visited their new school
 - 4. how might transition be improved?**
 - a “buddy” system with a pupil from the secondary school to show us around
 - more information for parents/carers
 - visit the secondary school with our primary teachers
 - form a “Whatsapp” group

Staff in primaries involved in the transition process

- 1. what currently exists**
 - Transition day
 - The Brook Project
 - Transition forms
 - Personal, Health and Social Education teaching in Year 6
- 2. what improvements could they see**
 - higher priority given to transition.
 - Start process earlier and plan ahead more
 - more consistency,
 - All secondary transition teams meet in primaries (currently not all participate)
 - Pupils show piece/portfolio of work they are proud of (currently only some secondaries)
 - meeting with secondary SENCOs (currently inconsistent),
 - Y6 and Y7 teachers more liaison/Year 6 and Year 7 teacher exchange to understand organisational and cultural issues
 - contact list for secondaries,
 - Transition week but recognized there may be problems fitting it in
 - More Year 6 activities in secondary school during the year,
 - Transition booklet – what do secondary schools want
 - continuity of support after transition,
 - Key Stage 3 (pupils in Years 7–9 the youngest in the secondary schools) could be more like a middle school with fewer teachers.

Senior staff in the 2 secondary schools

- 1. what they feel is working**
 - Transition day
 - Brook Theatre Project
- 2. what could be improved**
 - Brook theatre is a good idea but need more information, who is the project aimed at (targeted more based on data and primary teacher perceptions), more clarity on aims, who is doing what

- Need more links to understand and appreciate differing primary and secondary cultures
- Need to explore other local authority models for transition

Initial Impact of the Arts Project

Comments from teachers and secondary leaders at the end of Phase 1 of the pilot (July) indicate that:

Brook theatre

Brook theatre – need clearer aims and objectives. Was it for all pupils or those most vulnerable? If the latter, then labelling becomes an issue. Attendance was poor with some children

Dockyard Day

Again, there were attendance issues in terms of the intended participants and the feeling was that the specialist facilities not used better.

3.2 The Final Report: Research Phase 2 (October 2018) building on Phase 1

Research Aims

The Transition Project aims investigated at this stage (Research Phase 2 of the pilot in October 2018 after transition had taken place)

1. to explore the impact of the Transition project on the sample pupils' attitude to school
 - academic progress
 - sense of belonging
2. to consider the place of such a Project in the whole Transition process
3. to suggest ways to move forward to improve transition

Methodology

Pupils

Arrangements were made to interview as many of the original sample of pupils involved in Research Phase 1 as possible on October 11th and this had the advantage that they had been in their schools for 7 weeks so any “transition shell shock” would be revealed. 24 of the original 30 were seen in St Johns (80% response rate) and 24 out of 37 at Revell (65% response rate). The missing pupils may have been absent or had not actually moved to their initial allocated secondary school. 3 showed up who did not participate in the summer programme. Their views were not included. 48 from an original 67 is a relatively small sample but a reasonable response rate (71.6%)

Secondary staff (leaders, Year 7 leaders and teachers and Teacher Assistants)

Interviews took place with the lead transition staff in each of the two secondary schools

Parents/carers were not included in the research.

Findings

Pupils' Perspectives

a) What do the pupils enjoy at their new secondary school? (numbers of pupil)

- making new friends (22)
- Physical Education (16)
- new teachers (10)
- Science (10)
- Design and Technology lessons (7)
- Canteen (7)
- Art lessons (6)
- Break/playtime (4)
- History lessons (3)
- Mathematics lessons (2)
- English lessons (2)
- Religious Education lessons (10)
- Music lessons (1)

Quotes from pupils include:

I have enjoyed every lesson. I came for that reason.

I have grown up and learned more.

Getting smarter

I have been more in charge of myself.

b) Any problems experienced at their new secondary school

- none (26)
- bullying (6)
- homework (4)
- teachers (3)
- timetable (2)
- getting strangled (2)
- worried about tests (2)
- getting lost (2)
- long queues for food (1)
- losing stuff (1)
- Miss my old schools (1)

c) How useful was the Bridge Project?

- ✓ meet new people coming to our school (21)
- ✓ make new friends (17)
- ✓ Games, acting, news report activity (7)
- ✓ reassurance, confidence (5)
- ✓ helped a lot (2)

Quotes from pupils include:

I was able to meet new friends so I was not lonely when I came to Revell

Stopped me worrying

I am already settled in

Transition Leaders' Perspectives

These leaders identified a wide range of practices to aid the transition process. Both agreed that the transition project was a good idea and had some criticism of the way it worked. Both agreed that sharing of information and communication could be improved

4 General Emerging Issues for those vulnerable children involved in this evaluation

Having analysed the data collected there are some issues emerging from the Pilot that will be important to bear in mind as the Transition Project grows to affect other schools. These are:

1. Overall the fears about transition that pupils had in July 2018 were not born out by their experience at the secondary school for the vast majority of pupils
2. For a minority pupils fear about bullying (6/48 or 12.5%), coping with homework (4/48 or 8%), getting lost (2/48 or 4%) and forming relationships with some teachers (3/48 or % 6) were born out in their views. It can be argued that 1 child is too many and these are pupils' real perceptions. It is not known if the same children expressed more than one or indeed all of the fears.
3. The two schools have a number of measures in place to ease transition in addition to the Project enrichment programme
4. The Brook Theatre Project played a significant part in reducing fears, increasing confidence of these pupils in enabling them to meet their peers and in many cases form new friendships that are still in existence.
5. The Dockyard Project was less effective due to a number of factors such as attendance and activities chosen that did not take full advantage of the facilities

Suggestions for Consideration to improve practice of leading and managing transition are:

1. Develop a common understanding of what is meant by vulnerable children
This would entail a more intelligent forensic approach to identifying children who may struggle with transition and monitoring their attendance, behaviour, attitude, trust and sense of belonging. Make use of data from Middlemarch and primary schools to identify those most at risk by age/gender/ethnicity/Pupil Premium funding (an additional amount of money give to schools to help children from poorer families/Special Education Needs pupils/family situation/ Looked after Children (those cared for by adults other than their parents).
2. Develop the Project core idea of working with vulnerable children through the Arts from across primary schools to form good relationships with other pupils going to the same school, boost confidence and awareness about their new school
3. Improve the organisation of a Transition Project particularly the weaknesses already mentioned regarding the identification of those pupils who are vulnerable and developing a curriculum that builds on the good practices of the pilot making best use of the differing learning environments and thus harnessing the potential benefits for transition even more.
4. Involve pupils and students more in the design of the programme e.g. those involved in previous year. Activity and artforms should be determined in consulta-

tion with the pupils themselves, based on their interests and needs to include a mixture of activities in school and off-site, working with local artists and cultural venues. Also this means developing Young Arts Advocates recruited from the two secondary schools, to develop their own arts leadership and act as mentors for the target support pupils. Arts Award (a national recognition scheme) is an important tool for both the peer mentors and their Year 6 mentees – to develop their relationships and develop their skills.

5. Enable the 2 secondary schools rather than a third party as in the pilot to manage the programme since they have a vested interest in making it work as the receiving schools of the pupils.
6. Review and targeted intervention strategies to prevent exclusion (e.g. adapted curriculum, learning mentors, case workers)
7. Carefully evaluate the existing transition measures initiated by each school to see if they are worth continuing and developing or not
8. Simplify communication between the primary and secondary schools about these children e.g. a day when all Middlemarch SENCOs and other transition staff meet in one place to exchange information.
9. Ensure communication systems within schools about each pupil's progress and wellbeing are as effective as possible e.g. team meetings
10. Improving cross phase mutual understandings e.g. teacher exchanges primary to secondary and vice versa, joint working, scrutiny by Y6 and Y7 teachers

Alter the timing of the Project. Continue with the pilot schools with a secondary lead with further evaluation for September 2019. Roll out and dissemination from October 2019.

5 Conclusions

This article has told the story of the evaluation of one part of a larger inclusion Project that is focused on the transition of pupils from 10 primary schools to 2 secondary schools in one local authority who are vulnerable to exclusion. There are successes and also areas in need of more attention in order to ensure that all children are included and none excluded. It will take time to see if the real impact is that these 48 children finish their secondary education successfully. However, if answers can be found from this project and disseminated then, with good leadership, the national epidemic of rising exclusion rates both permanent and fixed-term may be tackled. Underpinning the specifics of the project there are some broader and deep rooted strategic considerations in relation to transition. These include:

- Ethical – there are real issues of targeting and tracking individual pupils and concerns over labelling that need constant discussion e.g. balancing the care of one child with the needs of a whole class.
- Two cultures –stereotypically primary schools are seen as caring, close-knit communities and secondary schools as large, performance oriented bureaucracies. We are both burdened and enriched by our structures and systems in English education as a result of history, politics and economics. It is important that the child is put at the centre of the education process so the schools should continue to work towards greater mutual understanding and breaking down barriers.

- Political and moral pressures on school – exclusion/inclusion is rightly becoming a far more prominent issue in terms of the evaluation schools. The tide may be turning away from a tightly focussed test results driven agenda towards a more holistic view of children:

“The Government should introduce an inclusion measure or criteria that sits within schools to incentivize schools to be more inclusive” House of Commons Committee (2018) p. 40

Amanda Spielman (the newly appointed Head of the Office for Standards in Education and responsible for the inspection of schools) said the new Inspection framework will make it easier to recognise and reward the good work done by schools in areas of high disadvantage. By shifting the focus away from outcomes, Ofsted hopes to reverse the incentive for schools to put overall results ahead of individual children’s needs.

Amanda Spielman’s speech at the Festival of Education (delivered on: 23 June 2017)

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Appendices

Appendix 1: Fixed Term Exclusions

Female Male All

*Incomplete

	2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016	2016–2017	2017–2018*
St Johns CoE School	65 90 155	63 89 152	26 156 212	17 56 73	46 84 130
Revell Academy	65 182 247	49 100 149	204 258 462	79 113 192	55 113 168
Middlemarch	n/a	n/a	990 2305 3259	842 2131 2973	n/a
National	n/a	n/a	89920 249445 339,365	99380 282485 382,965	n/a

Appendix 2: Permanent Exclusions

Female Male All

*Incomplete

	2013–2014	2014–2015	2015–2016		2016–2017		2017–2018
Precey RC School	9 (7)	6 (5)	15 (13)		2 (1)		1 (1)
Revell Academy	17 (14)	6 (4)	9 (8)		7 (6)		3 (2)
Middlmarch secondary	91 (71)	84 (61)	28	53	26	37	84 (48)
	59	55	78*		60*		n/a
National secondary	4000	4790	1460	5225	1685	6035	n/a
			5445		6385		

Source: own work

The impact of standardisation on academic attainment

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Introduction – Standardisation of education

In the context of this article, standardisation is defined as *'The process of making something conform to a standard'*. In the educational context discussed standard means *'A required or agreed level of quality or attainment'* (Oxford Dictionaries, 2017).

Standardisation within education is increasing throughout England and across the world. Sahlberg (2004) suggests that globalisation is a significant contributing factor, with tests such as PISA (Program for International Student Assessment, 2017) making it easier to compare performance internationally. Global trends have relevance for English teachers because they influence national policy, with senior politicians (2010) stating *'what really matters is how we're doing compared with our international competitors'*. Hargreaves (2003) argues that politicians have introduced high stakes accountability measures such as the national curriculum, national assessments and performance targets because of their popularity with voters.

In response to rapid changes to the English education system, school leaders have increasingly adopted standardised schemes. Read Write Inc (RWI) phonics is taught in around 5,000 mainly UK Primary Schools (Ruth Miskin, 2017). On a smaller scale, Mathematics Mastery (MM) is taught in 367 schools (Mathematics Mastery, 2017). My experience at School X indicates that teachers typically implement changes introduced by school leaders without a clear understanding of the political context behind specific school policy changes.

Sahlberg (2004) identified four types of educational reforms which respond to the challenges of globalisation: *i)* standardisation-reforming, *ii)* equity-reforming, *iii)* restructuring-reforming, *iv)* financing-reforming.

There are parallels between these and strategies used by individual schools to meet the required standard. The standardisation-oriented reforms that Sahlberg describes are particularly evident at School X where the focus has been *'on education reforms that are based on greater standardization and related micro-management of teaching and learning'* (Sahlberg, 2004, p. 72).

As a teacher my priority is improving student outcomes. In the context of this article this means understanding the impact of standardisation in my classroom. I do this by exploring the extent to which standardisation is a contributing factor in the rapid improvement of School X which went from 'Special measures' (the lowest category) in October 2013 when inspected by the Office for Standards in Education- a national government agency (OFSTED, 2013) – to 'Outstanding' (the highest category) in October 2016 (OFSTED, 2016). It was one of only 11 schools in the country to achieve this. Gaining a deeper understanding

of the role of standardisation at School X will support my own professional development because the norms at School X have greatly influenced my classroom practice.

The remainder of this article is structured as follows; section 2 presents a methodology for understanding the role of standardisation in school X using reflective practice and group Hierarchical Process Modelling (HPM) with key stakeholders at School X, Section 3 discusses HPM findings, Section 4 identifies and analyses specific examples (RWI & MM) using further group model building to construct causal loop diagrams, Section 5 compares RWI and MM, Section 6 addresses arguments against standardisation and suggests implications for my future practice, Section 7 outlines my conclusions.

Methodology

Reflective practice

My time at School X has enabled me to reflect upon the purpose and impact of standardisation. Macbeath (p4, 2004) attributes a lack of reflection amongst teachers to workload, he suggests that it is common to see 'Implementation before inquiry, acceptance rather than critical appraisal.' Macbeath's opinion reflects the situation at School X, workload is a challenge which has increased in the three years since joining Academy Network X. Therefore, I implemented Tripp's (2012) 'critical incident' approach, a time effective methodology an important ethical consideration because of the difficulty justifying time spent on reflection instead of teaching without reasonable expectation of positive impact on student outcomes.

The critical incident

As a Newly Qualified Teacher I regularly meet my mentor, the deputy head at School X. Our discussions are an opportunity to view my experiences from the perspective of a colleague with significant teaching experience (Brookfield, 1995). My interest in exploring the impact of a standardised curriculum was provoked during one such discussion. I interpret this as a 'critical incident' because the event raised my awareness of the trend towards standardisation at School X (Tripp, 2012. P8). The reflective process involved in analysing a single 'critical incident' (Tripp, 2012) developed my professional judgement by identifying underlying causes and highlighting recurring trends at School X.

A summary of the discussion between my mentor and I; I raised concerns about teaching the same lessons as both my partner teachers. My issue was that we failed to reflect the specific interests of the children in each class and that the level of challenge wasn't differentiated to reflect variations in the prior attainment of each class. Tidd's argument that consistency ensures that things stay the same which is a barrier to improvement in schools (TES, 2017) reflects how I felt about teaching standardised lessons rather than having the freedom to adapt and improve lessons.

I was pleasantly surprised and relieved that my mentor encouraged me to teach modified lessons as I was aware that in other year groups greater standardisation through effective teamwork and shared planning was being encouraged.

The initial question – 'why'

Following our discussion, I reflected upon why I had believed that it was mandatory to follow lesson plans precisely. I realised that I needed to explore the purpose of stan-

standardisation to make an informed decision about the extent to which I modify lesson plans.

Tripp (2012, p. 46) advocates analysing a critical incident by repeatedly asking 'why' to identify key questions. I used 'why' to ask:

Why is Standardisation so highly valued by the leadership team at School X?

Using this question to understand the purpose of standardisation at School X enabled me to ensure that school policies achieve the intended impact in my classroom.

This question has relevance beyond the context of School X. Lord Nash (Challenge Partnership national conference, 2017) praised the example of multi-academy trusts offering standardised curriculum content and lesson plans arguing that 'in the past too often teachers have confused their individuality with their professionalism' and that standardisation will reduce workload and enable teachers to focus on delivery and differentiation, this demonstrates the pressure for schools to adopt standardisation between, as well as within, schools.

Hierarchical process modelling

HPM (Yearworth, 2014) is a highly adaptable modelling methodology which has been effectively employed within industries as diverse as oil exploration, flood defence systems, asset management and performance management (Davis and Hall, 2003; Hall, Blockley and Davis, 1998; Davis, MacDonald and Marashi, 2007; Marashi and Davis, 2007). In this study constructing a HPM via group model building is an appropriate methodology to explore *why* standardisation is valued because it organises complex systems into the set of sub processes which enable an organisation to reach a particular goal (the *why* of each process). These sub processes are identified by repeatedly asking *how* each process can be achieved. Developing an HPM identifies a transformational process, a key change which occurs in the system. In figure 1 HPM demonstrates why standardisation is an effective solution to the following transformational process; 'Introducing innovations to teaching which are consistent with school-wide goals and value...', was necessary to lift school X out of special measures.

Input from key stakeholders, the deputy head and the subject leads for RWI and MM, using group model building developed the HPM. Their input enabled me to see my ideas through the 'lens' of my colleagues' experiences (Brookfield, 1995) and offered new insights and identified factors that I had previously overlooked (Fig. 1).

Using HPM to explore my key question (*Why is Standardisation so highly valued by the leadership team at School X?*) shows that the purpose of standardisation is to become an 'Outstanding' school by: a) raising student outcomes as measured by academic attainment and b) improving teaching quality.

Introducing the measures outlined in the model, to achieve the 'Outstanding' judgement has contributed to increasing standardisation. This shows that standardisation can be seen as a means of enabling improvement rather than the end goal in itself.

Discussion of HPM Findings

The impact of leadership on standardisation at School X

Having identified *why* standardisation was introduced so extensively at School X I now discuss the leadership style implemented at the time School X was declared in Special

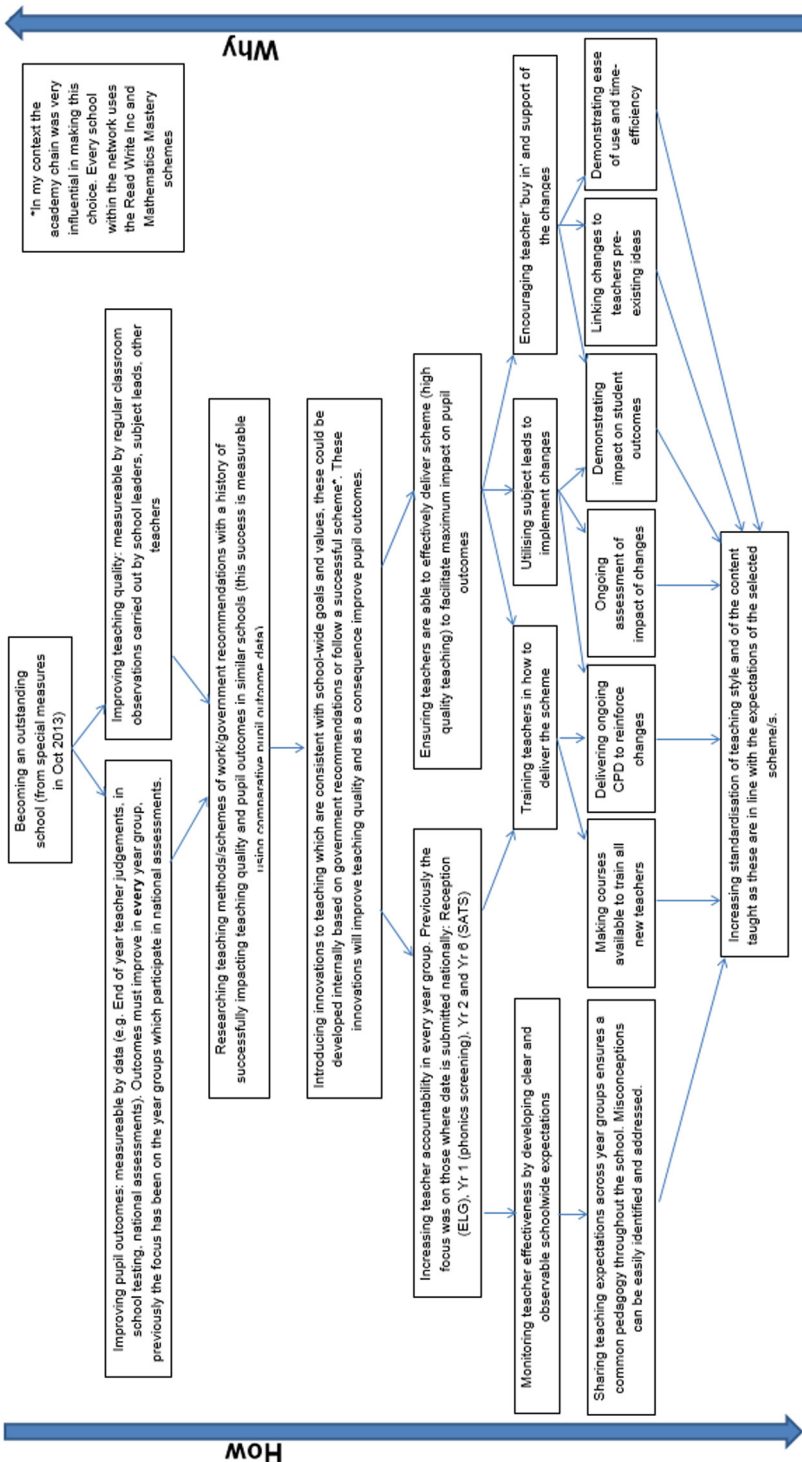


Figure 1: Hierarchical Process Model: demonstrates why standardisation is desirable (reading up the diagram) stemming from the transformational process 'Introducing innovations to teaching which are consistent with school-wide goals and values' and how the organisational goal 'Becoming an Outstanding school' (reading down the diagram) could be achieved. HPM clarifies why the transformational process was introduced and shows why the introduction of standardisation enabled School X to achieve an 'Outstanding' judgement from Ofsted.

Source: own work

Measures the lowest category by national school inspectors (OFSTED, 2013). This developed my understanding of the extent to which school success is correlated with strong leadership (Leithwood et al, 2006).

The Special Measures judgement prompted rapid change including increasing standardisation introduced by both school leaders and Academy Network X (which School X joined in September 2014). Even opponents of standardisation usually agree that in a failing school it is appropriate to set minimum expectations (Tidd, 2017).

I focused on the leadership of Ms C, Head Teacher when School X went into Special Measures, now Executive Head of School X and two further primary schools, considering her leadership and whether her short-term success has built a school which will continue to flourish in the long-term (Cook, 2016).

Indicators of Transformational Leadership

The following foundations for Transformational Leadership as identified by Shields (2009) are observable in Ms C's Leadership at School X; *i*) Clear vision and shared organisational goals, *ii*) Developing staff through individualised support and by modelling best practice, *iii*) High expectations, *iv*) Distributed leadership. All four foundations contributed to School X's transition to 'Outstanding'. As each element is discussed I also consider to what extent it has increased standardisation at School X. I argue that Ms C's success in these areas would have been limited had she limited standardisation.

Vision: School X's stated vision is that every child will go on to university or a career of their choice. Ms C extends this vision identifying eight 'habits of success' every child needs to develop to become successful (School X, 2016). Ms C explicitly shares this aspirational vision with staff so that it has become an organisational goal rather than her personal target. As well as being transformational this vision contains elements of Transformative Leadership as 'it critiques inequitable practices and ... inextricably links education and educational leadership with the wider social context within which it is embedded' (Shields, 2010, p. 559).

Having a shared organisational goal necessitates standardisation because every member of staff shares a common understanding of organisational targets. The HPM outlines exactly *how* each process has contributed to achieving the goal of an, 'Outstanding' Ofsted rating, and demonstrates *why* standardisation has been necessary.

Staff development: Standardisation might cause difficulties when teachers who trust leaders because of their shared vision follow an initiative without understanding its purpose or insisting on robust evidence to support claims and policy changes. Macbeath (2004) warns that 'History and current events remind us of what happens when people place their unconditional trust in others who exercise power over them'.

At School X, exceptional training is delivered by lead teachers employed by Academy Network X who share research informed practice addresses the problem of unconditional trust. In addition, experts from external agencies such as RWI and MM deliver training. This equips teachers with the expertise to make informed decisions when using new pedagogical initiatives. Offering similar training to all staff means that everyone develops similar strategies and the high percentage of staff who apply newly learnt strategies in their classroom does contribute to increasing standardisation.

High expectations: In the first year of joining Academy Network X regular observations were used as a means of checking standards. The network leadership team conducted six monitoring visits and school leaders conducted additional formal observations and informal 'learning walks'. The rapid improvement at School X can partially be attributed to this intense monitoring as 'Ofsted has found that there is a strong link between very good monitoring and good or better teaching' (Ofsted, 2003, p. 20 cited in Southworth, 2004).

An outcome of regular monitoring is that problems are picked up early and responsive measures introduced. At School X a new whole school behaviour policy was introduced soon after the School was placed into 'Special Measures' in response to some challenging behaviour which was noticed during observations. This policy drew extensively from 'Teach like a Champion' (Lemov, 2015) and was non-negotiable across the whole school, as a result all teachers use standardised behaviour management strategies. Ofsted (2016) noted that 'The schools' behaviour policy and systems for rewarding pupils are in place and implemented consistently by all staff. Pupils are so well behaved, however, that these strategies are almost imperceptible; they subtly underpin the high expectations that staff have regarding pupils' behaviour.'

Distributed leadership: It is noticeable that as outcomes at School X improved Ms C moved towards an increasingly distributed model of leadership through appointing confident subject lead teachers who have enabled the move towards standardisation as their role involves monitoring standards and coaching teachers who are struggling to meet expectations. Increased input from additional stakeholder (teachers, parents, pupils, local community) would continue to develop a distributed model of leadership and change the perception of leadership at School X as being hierarchical.

Analysis of standardisation in Read Write Inc and Mathematics Mastery

This section uses further group model building to analyse the schemes used at School X to teach maths and phonics. A pair of causal loop diagrams compare how standardisation is used in each scheme. The HPM (section 2) demonstrated that a school leader must decide which government recommendations or commercial scheme informs their curriculum design. Across Academy Network X RWI is used to teach phonics (Ruth Miskin, 2017) and 'MM is used to teach maths (Mathematics Mastery, 2017). The Causal Loop Diagrams below (Yearworth, 2014) show the iterative development of both schemes once implemented, by identifying instances where innovation occurs. Greater opportunities for teacher innovation indicate a less standardised approach (Fig. 2; 3).

Discussion of specific examples

I compare RWI and MM by discussing key differences, similarities and impact on pupil outcomes.

Occurrence of innovation – the key difference

A major difference between RWI and MM is the attitude towards innovation at the classroom level. RWI advocate fidelity to the scheme as the only means of ensuring that all children make maximum progress, limiting innovation so that it only occurs among RWI employees. In contrast MM encourage teachers to adapt every lesson which means that each MM lesson will differ from the provided lesson plan. In reality some MM teachers find the workload associated with heavily adapting each lesson challenging, preferring to follow the plan closely instead. At RWI and MM training the expectations of standardisation versus innovation are clearly communicated.

There are three factors which contribute to MM's lower expectations of standardisation compared to RWI. Firstly, it is a comparatively new scheme having launched in 2011 whereas RWI has developed over 12 years. Secondly, recent national curriculum changes have had a significant impact on the teaching of maths and MM has needed to adapt

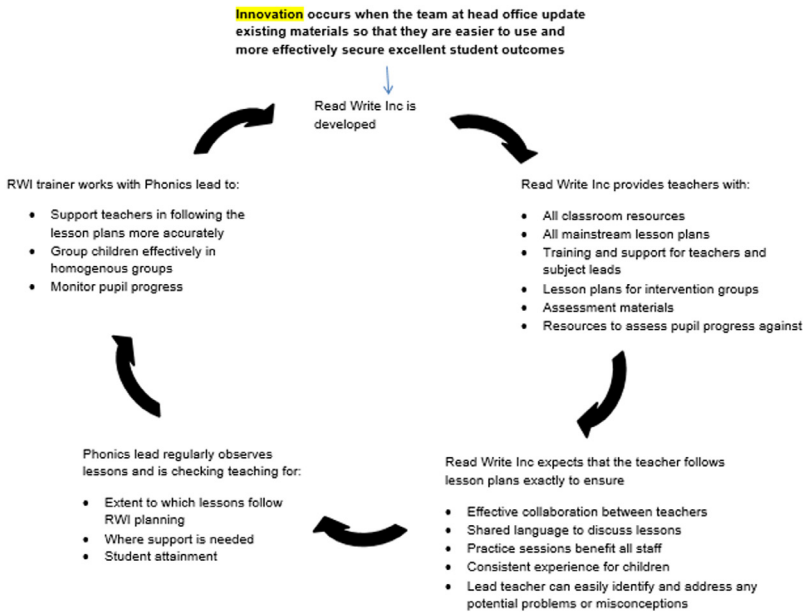


Figure 2: Causal loop diagram showing that in RWI innovation only occurs amongst the head office team. This indicates a high degree of standardisation in the way that RWI is taught in schools.

Source: own work

in response whereas the primary method of assessing phonics outcomes is through the end of Year One phonics screening, which has remained constant since its introduction in 2012. Thirdly, as a phonics program RWI focuses primarily on decoding words which is only one element of teaching reading whereas MM must successfully teach every aspect of maths.

Similarities

I limited this discussion to three similarities which maintain a consistent level of standardisation in both RWI and MM. These similarities contain elements of the foundations of transformational leadership (Shields, 2009) discussed previously (section 3.2).

Staff training: Every new Teacher or Teacher Assistant (TA) who will be teaching phonics attends RWI training at the start of the academic year. Similarly, every new Teacher attends MM training. TA's don't teach maths classes so they do not attend.

Strong subject lead: Ms C appointed subject leads in both Maths and Phonics, they monitor standards and deliver training to address areas of weakness.

Relationship with providers of RWI and MM: Both subject leads are supported by experts employed at RWI and MM who regularly visit School X to deliver updated training.

These areas of similarity show that despite the differing occurrences of innovation in RWI and MM both schemes have processes which ensure that the level of standardisation between schools using their scheme is maintained.

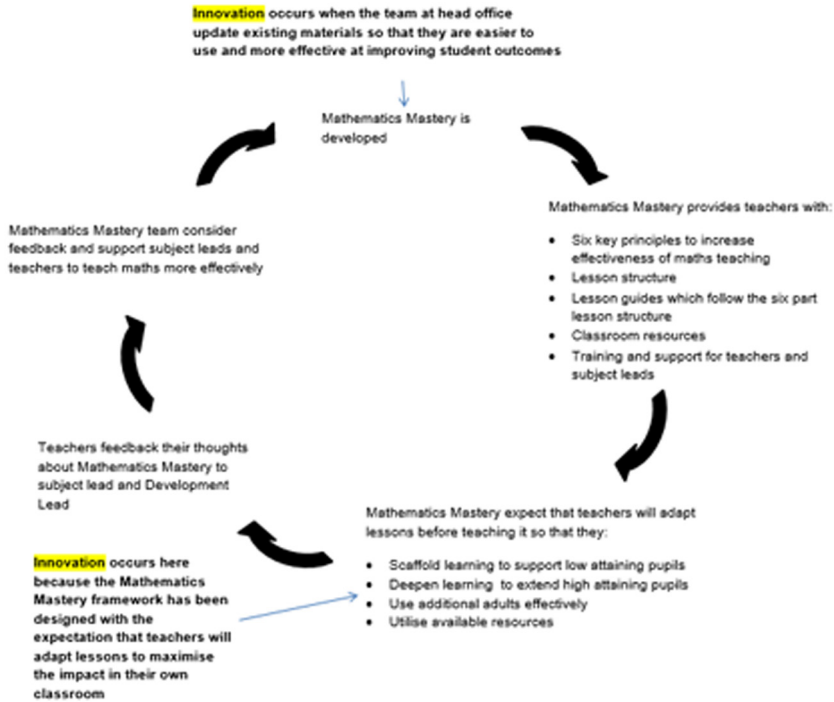


Figure 3: Causal loop diagram showing that innovation happens at MM head office and by classroom teachers. This indicates variation in the way that MM is taught and a low level of standardisation compared to RWI

Source: own work

Outcomes

Comparing attainment in maths and phonics at the end of Year One is an appropriate means of evaluating pupil outcomes in RWI and MM as both sets of data assess the same cohort.

In 2016 93% of Year One children at School X passed the National Phonics Screening Check compared to 81% nationally. This check assesses the primary skill taught using RWI so it is a strong indicator that RWI has a positive impact at School X. RWI reports similarly high attainment at every ‘model school’ which follows the scheme with a high degree of fidelity. In 2016 the average phonics screening test pass rate at ‘model schools’ was 91%.

At the end of Year One, maths attainment is decided using a combination of PUMA test results (Rising Stars, 2016) and teacher judgement. 89% of children leaving Year 1 were at or above the expected level. As there is no national data to compare this with I use the 2016 Year Two SATS results in maths because School X predicts that all children who achieve the expected level in Year One will pass the Year Two SATS. In 2016 73% of children nationally reached the expected level, this indicates that children are significantly more likely to attain the expected level in maths when they are taught using MM. Interestingly a study assessing the impact of MM on pupils in Year 1 (EEF, 2016) found

only a small improvement in outcomes which wasn't statistically significant. However, when the results are combined with a study of Year 7 pupils (EEF, 2016) there is a stronger indication that pupils using MM achieve better outcomes than their peers who do not. Both studies were of schools in the first year using MM, School X has been using the scheme for 3 years so the approach is more embedded and likely to be taught more accurately. This difference might explain the high attainment seen at School X.

It is unsurprising that there is some variation in the attainment seen in MM and RWI as maths and phonics are different subjects and complete consistency in results is unrealistic (Tidd, 2017).

Implications for future practice

In this section I discuss some arguments against standardisation and identify their implications for future practice at School X. At School X standardisation has had a largely positive impact on pupil's academic outcomes. However, I recognise that there are challenges associated with the over-standardisation of teaching and learning (Hargreaves, 2003) and that in many schools standardisation has not successfully raised outcomes (Sahlberg, 2004). The challenges which I address are: the de-professionalisation of teaching, high-stakes testing, capping attainment and limiting innovation.

De-professionalisation of teaching: Standardisation limits teacher autonomy as every teacher is required to focus on the same narrowing curriculum, often using centrally produced resources (Sahlberg, 2004, p. 76). In addition to diminished autonomy teachers are subject to comparison with peers both within their school and between schools consequently low morale is common (Perie *et al.* 1997). This is worrying because teachers with low morale are likely to leave the profession. The current teacher recruitment crisis is a particular problem in isolated coastal communities such as the town where School X is located.

Studies have suggested that autonomy may not be linked to improved pupil outcomes (Hannaway and Carnoy 1993 cited in Sahlberg, 2004), however School X should take steps to address the impact of the de-professionalisation of teaching on staff wellbeing. As Goleman and Boyatzis (2008, p. 4) point out, talented staff will gravitate towards warm working environments, the four foundations for transformational leadership which contributed to School X becoming an 'Outstanding' school are very goal-oriented and unfriendly. It may be beneficial for leaders to move towards a warmer more 'socially intelligent' style now that School X has achieved such rapid improvement.

High-stakes testing: Within School X teaching standards are partially measured by regular classroom observations. On a national scale the most obvious way to measure teaching standards is through student attainment on standardised national tests. Consequently, teachers and students increasingly focus on this single measure of success or failure (Sahlberg, 2004, p. 76). In Academy Network X testing is more extensive than that required by government policy. Each term children take the PIRA and PUMA standardised tests (Rising Stars, 2017), the results heavily inform teacher judgements about each child's attainment. My colleagues openly discuss their concerns that their future pay is related to children's performance in these test, the implication is that subjects which are rigorously tested will be focused on while subjects like music and art are abandoned.

Teachers will only prioritise non-core subjects if Academy Network X demonstrate that it is possible to teach a broad curriculum while maintaining high test results. I would suggest that this will require extensive research into successful approaches and high quality CPD to communicate strategies to teachers.

Capping attainment: Ms C's goal that every child should be able to go onto university or a career of their choice centres on raising the minimum level of attainment and ensuring that no children 'fail'. This aspirational vision addressed the culture of underachievement at School X and prevented the gap between high and low attaining children from growing.

This vision was created in the context of a failing school where the percentage of children achieving age related expectations was significantly below national average. Now that a high percentage of children achieve age expected standards OFSTED identified a need to 'Continue to raise the proportion of pupils reaching the highest levels of attainment' (OFSTED, 2016).

Tidd (2017) points out that 'if your ethos rests on making everyone do the same, then there is every likelihood that for every improvement you make, you'll hamper someone who could be doing so much more'. This suggests that it may be challenging for School X to maintain a high level of standardisation and also enable high attaining children to work at greater depth. The deputy head identified the following questions which might help School X to increase the percentage of children exceeding age expectations; *i)* Are there sufficient opportunities for the most able to access independent work? *ii)* Are high attaining children bored? *iii)* Does limited choice stifle creativity?

To begin enabling the highest attaining children to work increasingly independently I have worked alongside the deputy head to introduce strategies which all teachers can use to develop critical thinking skills amongst the children.

Limiting innovation: At School X standardisation has improved the quality of teaching, learning and assessment to such an extent that Ofsted judged it to be 'Outstanding'. My perception when I joined School X was that because standardisation was so successful, innovation wasn't encouraged, this concerned me because it is logical that continued improvement is synonymous with ongoing innovation.

School X needs to create a reasonable culture of accountability which accepts risk taking and allows staff to try new things in order to achieve even greater pupil outcomes. There are parallels between global trends and future practice that might be successful at School X 'In Singapore, reform ...focused on quality through a highly centrally-directed process. By the mid-1990s...the challenge was to make an effective system even better at meeting the needs of individual pupils. This led to a new approach of giving schools and teacher greater professional autonomy in order to promote greater innovation.' (The importance of Teaching, 2010, p. 4). By encouraging innovation leaders at School X are capable of having an even greater impact on pupil outcomes and should aim for an increasing number of children to meet or exceed age expected outcomes.

Conclusion

This article explores the impact of standardisation on pupil's academic outcomes at School X, it illustrated a correlation between the increasing standardisation of behaviour management, teaching strategies and the curriculum with improved outcomes.

Reflecting on the observable impact of standardisation within School X revealed my own assumptions about standardisation and increased my awareness of confirmation bias. Prior to this research I had a very negative view of standardisation and I expected to find that it had a largely negative impact on teachers and pupils, my changed opinion demonstrates that 'Reflecting on what we do is essential to the development of professional judgement, but unless our reflection involves some form of challenge to and critique of ourselves and our professional values, we tend to simply reinforce existing patterns and tendencies.' (Tripp, 2012, p. 12).

This study focused on phonics and maths in one year group so it is unclear whether there has been a positive impact on attainment in other subjects and whether the impact will endure in the long term. To address this concern I would need to track the future progress of the Year One cohort discussed in Section 5.3.

The article only discusses academic attainment so it would be interesting for a future study to compare the impact of standardisation in other areas such as attitude towards school, wellbeing or character attributes. These are less quantifiable with no national or international test to easily compare attainment in different schools, however they would provide a very interesting topic for further research.

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Peer Tutoring and improved Learning for All. Implications for Leadership

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Introduction

In 2013 Michael Gove, the then Secretary of State for Education, announced that General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) exams will become linear as opposed to modular. These are the public examinations in subjects taken by most 16 year olds in England. Consequently, students will be sitting final exams at the end of Year 11 (pupils aged 15–16), not sizeable chunks across Year 10 (ages 14–15) and Year 11 as before when doing modular exams. In response different interventions have been put in place to support the students. in schools This, however, seems to result in a heavy workload being placed on the teacher as opposed to the students.

It is inevitable teachers will become challenged by the academic and behavioural diversity of a class (Hughes & Fredrick, 2006; Vaughn, Klingner, & Bryant, 2001). So a teacher's time is of value, and they may feel conflicted in relation to the amount of time to spend with each student. Hence, having a peer tutor potentially allows the teachers to share the responsibility for the students' learning, so that the teacher's role changes from the primary deliverer of the intervention to the facilitator (Maheedy, Harper, & Mallette, 2001). Some research says that teachers are in favour of peer-tutoring; as they recognize that students need more time than is offered in class to consolidate the material taught (Mastropieri, Scruggs, Norland, Berkeley, McDuffie, Tornquist, & Connors, 2006). This study examines how peer-tutoring can support the learning and motivation of Year 10 students in the school in England.

Critical Literature Review

Factors that affect motivation

Motivation helps one to comprehend why people make certain choices, and persevere in those activities and not others, leading to adopting/ preferring a particular behavior (Wlodkowski, 1984). Thus, motivation can exist in two possible forms: intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic motivation derives from character and is described as the inherent tendency to explore learning, improve one's ability, and to seek novel situations (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Antithetical to this is extrinsic motivation, which

refers to the tendency to do something because it leads to a desired outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

What is Peer-tutoring?

The term 'peer' can be defined as one who is of a similar social standing as another, for example through age or educational level. A definition of peer-tutoring would be peers working together to teach and learn. This description encompasses the idea that both the tutor and tutee benefit from peer-tutoring.

The effect of peer-tutoring on the tutee

The benefits

The effect of peer-tutoring can be at least threefold. First, successful peer-tutoring may help bridge the gap between the higher-attaining students and the lower attainers, as it can contribute to the academic growth of the tutee (Cohen, Kulik & Kulik, 1982).

Second, peer-tutoring can aid learning. For example, Yiu (1996: 78 as cited in Bray 2000) reveals the positive impact teachers reported: tutors help the tutees to consolidate what was learnt in class, and tutors also help by answering any questions that may have been overlooked in the classroom when the teacher was too busy. Additionally, a study done in the United Kingdom and the United States also found that peer-tutoring promotes 'active enquiry', where tutors' questions promote higher-order thinking in tutees (Galbraith & Winterbottom, 2011; Grubbs & Boes, 2009)). Peer-tutoring may also help the tutees feel more at ease and concentrate better; as they receive more teaching through individualized instruction, they may respond better to their peers through working in smaller groups (Annis, 1983). Third, there may be social benefits of peer-tutoring. It is claimed that it increases the motivation of the tutees, as it may build the confidence of those being tutored (Bray, 2000), particularly if the cognitive level, socioeconomic status and gender of the tutor and tutee are matched (Galbraith & Winterbottom, 2011, Grubbs & Boes, 2009; Leung, 2014). Peer-tutoring encourages independent learning, and motivates the students to learn (Ching & Chang-Chen, 2011). In studies looking at the students' attitude, they were found to be more positive in the classrooms with tutoring sessions (Cohen *et al*, 1982).

The effects of peer-tutoring for the tutor

As outlined above, peer-tutoring is not just a linear transmission of knowledge from the tutor to the tutee (Topping, 1996), but rather a dyadic interaction from which both the tutee and the tutor benefit (Slavin, 1995).

The benefits

The benefits to tutors are similar to those listed above for tutees: namely, the academic outcomes and study skills acquired, and the social benefits. First tutors tend to perform better in their own examinations than those who do not act as tutors (Cohen *et al*, 1982). Tutors also commonly have a positive attitude to tutoring (Cohen *et al*, 1982). A study done by Ching & Chang-Chen (2011) found that those who prepared and delivered lessons to teach others did better in their tests than those who only prepared the lessons but never taught, thus demonstrating the significance of the teaching process on learning. Indeed, this study was supported by Galbraith & Winterbottom (2011), who

also found that tutors benefited from tutoring, as when they help scaffold the learning of their tutees, they indirectly re-organize and clarify concepts in their own minds. Additionally, the discourse between the tutor and the tutee helps the tutor to reflect on the content, and 'work through' and rehearse ideas.

Second, the tutors greatly benefited socially from the learning process. They developed their communication skills, and built friendships with their tutees (Falchikov, 2001). As well as the teaching experience gained, tutors also had the opportunity to gain increased responsibility within the school (Falchikov, 2001), and felt their contribution to their community led to a sense of self-worth (Beasley, 1997). Furthermore, the benefits of peer-tutoring are still evident as Annis (1983) reports: peer-tutoring provides the tutors with the opportunity to build upon their own leadership skills, and it may well be a tool to help develop the tutors' confidence as they take on the responsibility of their tutee's learning.

Conclusions and Research questions

The majority of research suggests that peer-tutoring does have a positive impact upon both the tutee and the tutor (Kalkowski, 1995; Tymms, Merrell, Thurston, Andor, Topping, & Miller, 2011; Mastropieri *et al.*, 2006). This study will examine how an intervention with Year 11 students as tutors benefits the learning and motivation of under-achieving Year 10 students in Sociology. This study examines two questions:

- (1) *Do learning and motivation of tutees change over the course of the intervention?*
- (2) *How does the intervention affect the learning and motivation of tutees?*

The study was of two classes with a total of fourteen participants.

These consisted of seven students (six girls and one boy) from a Year 11 class (15–16-year-olds) studying Sociology GCSE (national public examination for 16 year olds). The students' target grades (those they hoped to achieve based on their abilities and attitudes) ranged from B-A*, they were all chosen as they are students that are hard-working. These were the tutors.

The other seven were tutees (two boys and five girls) chosen from a sociology class of 14–15-year-old Year 10 GCSE students. All the tutees were chosen as they had underachieved in two or more class assessments. The method used was semi-structured interviews.

Details of the Interventions

Cross-level tutoring was undertaken, as the tutor and the tutee were from the same institution, but were from different year groups (Falchikov, 2001). There were certain standardised instructions that the tutors had to adhere to, which were as follows:

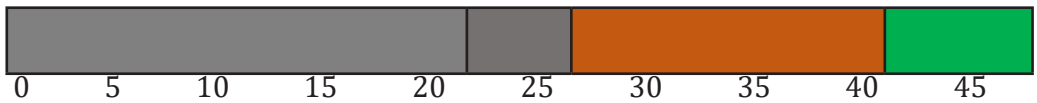
1. Go over the previous lesson of their tutee
2. Using the textbook, do a test on the keywords at the bottom of the relevant pages
3. Do an exam question, recapping knowledge needed to answer the exam question and exam technique.
4. Always set and review previous targets at the end, which the tutee must record, in their booklet.

	Recap tutees' previous lesson
	Keyword test
	Exam questions
	Review and make new targets

Figure 1. below illustrates what happens in a typical peer-tutoring session

Figure 1. (a): A key showing the various activities in sequential order of what happened in the peer-tutoring sessions.

Source: own work



Time in minutes

Figure 1. (b): A generic indicator of the peer-tutoring sessions in intervals of five minutes

Source: own work

Alias names were given to the students: Tutee 1 (T1) Adele was paired with tutor 1 (Tr1) Alisha, T2 Bella was paired with Tr2 Braide, T3 Courtney with Tr3 Ceyda, T4 Dani with Tr4 Debra, T5 Eoin with Tr5 Emmanuel, T6 Freddy with Tr6 Foshan and T7 Gordan was paired with Tr7 Gabrielle. Where possible, tutors were assigned tutees of the same gender as themselves. This was to overcome any barriers that the students may face by teaching or being taught by the opposite gender (Topping, Thurston, McGavock, & Colin, 2012; Falchikov, 2001; Leung, 2014). The peer-tutoring sessions went on for a total of six weeks.

Data collection methods

The different data sources are shown in Table 1 and Figure 2, alongside the research question to which they apply.

Table 1. Data source for each research question

	Data source: Pre- and post- assessment tests	Data source: Discussion analysis from audio-recordings	Data source: Questionnaires	Data source: Semi-structured Interviews
Research Question: (1) Do learning and motivation change over the course of time?	✓	✓	✓	
Research Question: (2) How does the intervention affect the learning and motivation?		✓	✓	✓

Source: own work

RQ1: Does learning change over the course of the intervention?

Table 1: Change of the attainment levels of the Year 10 tutees

Tutee (T)	Attainment grade before peer-tutoring	Attainment grade after peer-tutoring	Change in grades by sublevels (+3 sublevels equivalents one grade higher)
Adele	D-	C-	+3
Bella	D-	D+	+2
Courtney	D-	C-	+3
Dani	E+	C+	+6
Eoin	E-	D-	+3
Freddy	E+	D-	+2
Gordan	D+	B-	+4

Source: own work

From Table 1, one can infer that all seven of the tutees have improved in their educational achievement (assessed by grades), after having peer-tutoring sessions. Most have improved by one grade or more (+3/ >+3 sublevels) except for two students: Bella and Freddy, who although they haven't increased by a grade, have managed to increase by two sublevels.

A questionnaire was used to see whether the students felt that their grades had improved, despite them not knowing their post-assessment grades.

Table 2: A summary of the changes in the tutees' grades alongside the tutees' opinions

Tutee (T)	Change in grades by sublevels (+3 sublevels means one grade higher).	Do the tutees feel their grades have improved?	Do the tutees feel they have learnt more?
Adele	+3	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
Bella	+2	Disagree	Don't know
Courtney	+3	Agree	Strongly agree
Dani	+6	Strongly agree	Agree
Eoin	+3	Agree	Agree
Freddy	+2	Agree	Agree
Gordan	+4	Agree	Agree

Source: own work

Table 2 suggests that in summary all of the tutees (7/7) improved in grades after the intervention, and the majority of students (6/7) feel like they have improved in their academic attainment in Sociology. Bella was the exception who stated that she doesn't feel that her grades have improved and that she is not sure whether she has learnt more since having a tutor. Interestingly, Bella was one of the students who made the least gains (+2 sublevels) in her attainment levels in comparison to her peers. On the other hand

Dani made the most attainment level gains (+6 sublevels) - three times more than Bella. Dani felt that she had learnt more in Sociology and thus strongly agreed that she felt that her grades had improved despite not seeing them. This may suggest that both Bella and Dani are able to track their own progress by assessing how well they are improving.

RQ1 continued: Does **motivation** change over the course of intervention?

Table 3: Tutees' responses to the questionnaire, examining change in motivation

Tutee (T)	Change in grades by sub-levels (+3 sublevels means one grade higher)	Are the tutees more motivated?	Do the tutees like Sociology more?
Adele	+3	Strongly agree	Strongly agree
Bella	+2	Agree	Agree
Courtney	+3	Agree	Agree
Dani	+6	No change	Agree
Eoin	+3	Agree	No change
Freddy	+2	Agree	No change
Gordan	+4	Agree	Disagree

Source: own work

Table 3 suggest that motivation does change over the course of intervention, as six out of seven tutees were more motivated after the intervention, with Dani being the only exception citing a 'no change'.

Four out of seven students like Sociology more now since having a tutor. Two out of seven report no change in their liking for Sociology, and one disagrees, suggesting that he does not like Sociology more since having a tutor. It is worth noting that the three that do not feel they have enjoyed Sociology more are all of the male tutees that took part in the study: this suggests that gender may be a mediating factor.

RQ2: How does the intervention affect the tutees' learning?

This section will explain the process used in the intervention session that affected the tutee's learning outlined above in RQ1. The benefits the intervention had on both the tutees and the tutors will be described first and then the obstacles the students faced will be explored.

The benefits:

a) Understanding key terms:

The tutees were helped with learning the key terms, which they can now incorporate in lessons. Some of their comments are:

Before tutoring I was struggling with key terms (Dani).

Peer-tutoring was helpful as I learnt key terms (Bella).

When the tutors were asked what they did to help the tutees learn, their responses mirror the points above:

I taught key terms which she [tutee] goes home and memorizes. (Braide).

I think I have contributed to his grades, I have taught key terms and if he act upon it he should benefit (Emmanuel).

Exam awareness:

The nature and the structure of the exam and how to gain marks were taught by the tutors:

It helped going through the structure [of the exam] and explaining how to gain the marks (Bella).

It helped me by going through exam questions and the structure that is needed to improve (Adele).

We go through assessments with the tutees, and how the marks are awarded. We also helped with exam structure and exam technique (Gabrielle and Debra).

Reflect and recap:

Peer-tutoring is very beneficial in helping the students reflect and recap what has already been learnt in the lessons. Bray (2000) said that tutors can help the tutees to consolidate what was learnt in class. Indeed, tutees and the tutors reported that peer-tutoring helped the tutees amalgamate what was learnt in class:

Peer-tutoring gave me someone after the lesson to recap as we don't have sociology every day (Adele).....I could recap mid- week so stays in for longer (Freddy)..... I am more knowledgeable as I went over material so it was fresh in my mind (Eoin).

I could recap what I have done in class (Gordan).....Peer-tutoring allows reflection on what I have learnt (Courtney).....This is done through repetition (Ceyda).

Peer-tutoring encompasses the idea that both the tutor and tutee benefit from peer tutoring. Tutors learn by teaching, and the value of the qualitative interaction between the tutor and tutee is now widely appreciated (Falchikov, 2001; Mastropieri *et al.*, 2006). In this study, the peer-tutoring sessions were evidently beneficial to the tutors also; supporting the depiction of the definition of peer-tutoring above:

It pushed me to fully understand Year 10 material, in order to teach it perfectly to my tutee (Alisha).....I agree, as it helped me not only to understand the material, but also with organization skill as I had to plan and set targets ahead (Ceyda).

You have to know your stuff (Gabrielle).....They ask questions that I may not know, so know I will have to go home and revise(Debra).

Peer-tutoring helps me to re-cap Year 10 material that I may not do otherwise, it keeps me on the ball (Foshan)

Clarity through questioning:

Additionally, the intervention assists learning as tutors help answer any questions that may have been overlooked in the classroom (Galbraith & Winterbottom, 2011). Tutors make things clearer for the tutees:

Peer-tutoring makes things clearer [by the tutor] asking questions (Debra and Gabrielle).

Feedback:

To facilitate *extrinsic* motivation, it is recommended that students are provided with regular feedback on their performance (McCombs and Pope, 1994). Both the tutors and the tutees also recognized that feedback from the tutors is crucial in helping to move the tutees on:

My tutor helped me by spotting mistakes and marking for improvement (Dani).

I was able to pinpoint the areas in which I felt that she needed help the most (Braide). This was acknowledged by her tutee: My tutor gave me useful feedback after going over an exam question (Bella).

My tutor tests my knowledge through weekly tests and gives feedback on targets (Eoin and Gordan).

My tutor gives feedback on what I should include in my essays (Courtney).

Challenge:

In order to increase *intrinsic* motivation, students should be placed in situations that allow a challenge (Bray, 2000). This was echoed by the students in this study, suggesting that it is important that the students go over what they find challenging for the sessions to be beneficial:

Peer-tutoring is helpful when you go over not what you find easy but what you find hard [challenge] (Freddy)....going over weak points help (Adele).

Delving closer at the literature alongside the findings, it may be that feedback promotes *extrinsic* motivation, as they are relying on a reward outside their own selves. Whilst a challenge helps to promote *intrinsic* motivation, as the students are less disengaged (Topping, 2005), together, feedback and challenge are two processes that can heighten students' motivation, but in different ways to complement one another.

The Obstacles:

However, peer-tutoring is not without its difficulties. Obstacles to effective peer tutoring are outlined below:

Subject knowledge:

Tutors found it difficult to break down the material for the tutees to make the content comprehensible for them, especially if the tutors found the material 'easy':

It is difficult trying to understand why my tutee was finding certain topics hard. I found it hard trying to explain to her that it wasn't as difficult as she thought (Braide)

It was difficult trying to break the material down so that the tutee could understand (Braide, Alisha and Ceyda).

In some cases the tutor did not make the material clearer, particularly if the tutor had forgotten the material that they had studied when they were in Year 10:

The tutor had to sometimes re-cap the material then and there as they had forgotten it; they [tutor] need to know their stuff (Dani).

It required me to rely on my Year 10 knowledge, and at times this was difficult for me to do (Braide).

Linking it back to 'providing a challenge', which has been seen to be a beneficial process used to secure a successful session; if the tutor is too similar to the tutee they may not feel challenged enough, hence why the gains would be small (Topping, 2005), as they may be lacking intrinsic motivation. Therefore, care needs to be taken so that inexperienced tutors that have not undergone training do not add to any misconceptions students may already have (Bray, 2000).

Lack of progress tracking:

As mentioned above, feedback was shown to be associated with the increase of extrinsic motivation, thus beneficial. However, feedback is only possible when progress is tracked, and this was not always the case for all pairs:

Not sure if we have contributed to their grades as although we were setting targets, e.g. define key terms, we were not monitoring progress or tracking their grades (Gabrielle, Debra and Foshan).

Nevertheless, it may be that the tutors did want to track the progress of their tutees, but they did not know how to assess learning, especially if the tutees were not being truthful about how much they had learnt:

My tutee was quiet and shy; boys don't like to admit when they don't know something.... It is so difficult to gauge learning (Gabrielle). When probed for an example to provide evidence for her claim, she responded: For example, I would ask him if he understood, he would say yes, when tested he would not know the answer (Gabrielle).

It is then recommended that progress tracking is continually being done, as without doing so it becomes difficult for the appropriate goals and objectives of the sessions to be established from the outset (Grubbs & Boes, 2009).

Lack of effort:

Tutors felt that they were putting in more effort than the tutees were. This led to the tutors feeling exasperated and needing to constantly think of different ways to stimulate their tutee. For example:

Sometimes I feel that I am putting in all the effort and the tutee is not, e.g. I will ask a question and the tutee will not respond (Emmanuel).

When interviewed separately, Alisha said about her tutee Adele: *My tutee is not putting in as much effort to get the most out of the sessions..... I am struggling to think how I am going to teach her, and engage with her (Alisha).*

RQ2: How does the intervention affect the tutees' motivation?

The benefits:

Building confidence: If students feel they are failures then they will act accordingly; any poor grade will reinforce their negative view of themselves (Ogbonnia, 2009), and this may create a lack of confidence. Year 10 students' motivation and confidence in themselves increased after the intervention:

I am more confident in the sessions as I have more attention, and one to one support (Bella).....Peer-tutoring is one to one, so focuses on me directly which I don't get in class (Gordan).

In class I am scared to ask questions, with tutor I feel more confident.....My confidence has increased as I know more information (Courtney).

I feel more confident, before in class I didn't put my hand up. The tutor said I should as it doesn't matter if you get the answer right or wrong. I am braver [as] I more knowledgeable (Dani).

This confidence had a number of causes, which are outlined below.

Providing encouragement and recognition of the tutees' own talent:

To facilitate intrinsic motivation, the appropriate level of social and emotional support is required (McCombs and Pope, 1994).

My tutor encourages me. She says things such as "you can do it". She tells me don't worry; if I study hard I can remember all of this in the exam (Adele).

Her tutor reinforced this stating that:

I use motivational phrases to help her e.g. you can do it. My tutee first said she couldn't do anything, but now she tries. I explained to her the importance of revision, by giving her an example from my personal experience of when I had not revised so did not do well (Alisha).

I kept pushing her to go the extra mile, not to give up.....I gave her my background story (Ceyda).

Ceyda did not do as well in Year 10 (Grade E) as she is currently doing in Year 11 (Grade A), as she is working a lot harder.

Making learning fun:

The tutors also made the sessions fun and relevant for the tutees; this may make the content more memorable:

My tutor explained what sociology is about which I didn't know before, he explained the fun topics I should look forward to studying in Year 11. He shared jokes that related to the

topic, if it is enjoyable it will make it more unforgettable and the content will stick in your brain (Eoin).

A good tutor makes learning fun (Adele).

The Obstacles:

Others still felt demotivated, even though they recognized the value of peer tutoring to their learning (Cohen *et al.*, 1982). Therefore, such improvements in motivation did not apply to every student:

My motivation has not changed (Gordan).

This attitude was noticed by his tutor: *I have not changed my tutee's motivation as it's up to the tutee (Gabrielle).*

Interestingly, Gordan was one of the two that had made the biggest grade improvements, additionally he reported feeling that he has learnt since having a tutor. However, he was also the only tutee to report liking Sociology less since having a tutor, indicating that his motivation has stagnated or even so much as decreased. A suggestion for this could be gender matters in peer-tutoring. For instance, males may experience peer-tutoring differently from females (Topping *et al.*, 2012) as they may feel less motivated to take part (Falchikov, 2001). Moreover they may find it difficult to play the subordinate role of the tutee if the tutor is a female (Leung, 2014), and in this case the tutee was a male and the tutor a female. Owing to this pair being the only mixed gender pair in my study, although very insightful, care needs to be taken in suggesting that males are less motivated when they are paired with a female tutor than a male tutor. Emmanuel found a similar problem with his partner and both the tutor and tutee in this case are males:

I did contribute to his motivation, but it's quite difficult when he doesn't push himself (Emmanuel).

Furthermore, some did not recognize any improvements in their motivation for a number of reasons:

I didn't change my tutee's motivation as we needed more sessions (Debra).

I was already motivated so peer-tutoring didn't contribute anything extra (Bella).

How were the positive outcomes of peer-tutoring secured?

In response to the item on the questionnaire asking the students what makes a good tutor, and what makes a good tutoring session, the tutees responded by listing strengths and weaknesses.

The strengths:

a) Personalisation of work:

Each tutee is unique and will require different levels of support during the sessions. Therefore, the tutors must understand their tutees' needs in order to cater to their requirements:

A good tutor is someone with a good teaching style....who understands your problem and finds a solution to it (Bella).

A good tutor understands your ability and what you need to do to improve (Freddy).

The tutors reaffirmed this stating:

As each session went on I adapted my teaching as I knew how she learnt (Alisha).

I asked her what she already knows, and then build upon that, via repetition (Ceyda).

Personalisation of work helps to ensure successful peer-tutoring sessions as it may increase intrinsic motivation by: having tasks that cater to the students' needs (Bray, 2000; McCombs and Pope, 1994). Teachers may find it difficult to adapt to each students' preferred style of teaching and requirements, which Alisha had to do with her one tutee.

b) Personalisation of relationship:

Personalization of relationship may build the confidence of those being tutored (Bray, 2000). Many of the students referred to building relationships between the tutors and tutees as essential:

A good tutor is like a friend, someone you can trust if there is no trust then I would feel awkward to ask questions (Adele).

A tutor is being kind i.e. getting along so it is comfortable (Bella).

A good tutor can relate to you. For example, my tutor said got the same grades when he was in Year 10 (Freddy)..... He shared his own experience with me (Eoin).

Having a good relationship, at first I didn't know her, by the end I became really close to her.....She understood me, so I wasn't shy (Courtney).

The tutors too acknowledged building relationships with their tutees as an essential quality to peer-tutoring:

Peer-tutoring was good as I was able to build a good rapport with her [my tutee] (Braide).

Peer-tutoring is successful when you build a rapport with the tutee, which helps them to respond to you. If they didn't, neither the tutee nor the tutor would benefit from the peer-tutoring sessions (Debra and Gabrielle).

A number of studies have now recognized the social benefits of peer-tutoring, such as allowing meaningful relationships and friendships to develop between the tutor and the tutee (Beasley, 1997; Okilwa & Shelby, 2010; Falchikov, 2001).

It is important to correctly pair the tutor and the tutee:

The tutee's personality needs to be outgoing....I would not tutor again unless I had a different partner. It is better to do a trial run with your partner, or the tutor gets to choose their tutee (Gabrielle).

Good relationships between the tutor and the tutee may also build the confidence of those being tutored (Bray, 2000), particularly if the cognitive level of the tutor and tutee are matched (Galbraith & Winterbottom, 2011):

My tutee gets similar levels and grades to me when I was in Year 10, so we complement each other. This encourages me to push my mentee further (Foshan).

We speak in a similar way.....not speaking too sophisticated.....someone I can relate to (Dani)

c) Motivated tutors:

Motivated tutors were also important to securing positive outcomes for tutees. The tutors reported their positive feelings about being involved in peer-tutoring:

It feels good especially if your tutee does well (Debra and Gabrielle).

I was upset when peer-assessing my tutee's exam, as it wasn't as good as I had hoped (Ceyda).

Unsurprisingly all the tutors stated that they would tutor again, showing that tutors have a positive attitude to tutoring (Cohen *et al.*, 1982; Beasley, 1997). They felt that the main reason for this is that it helped them to recap previous material learnt.

The limitations:

Behaviour management:

On the other hand, if students are to act as tutors, training needs to be invested so as they feel competent to deliver the sessions well (Cohen *et al.*, 1982; Beasley, 1997; Okilwa & Shelby, 2010; Galbraith and Winterbottom, 2011). Students faced challenges such as not knowing how to deal with behaviour management:

My tutee kept turning around to talk to another tutee which was quite disruptive. I didn't know how to discipline her (Debra).

Behaviour management was a challenge as I am of similar age to my tutee I wasn't sure if or how I was allowed to discipline her (Ceyda).

Although a handbook and general tips on how to handle poor behavior was given to the students, it seems evident that these were not sufficient enough to equip the tutors. Therefore training needs to be invested so that tutors can teach well.

Summary

Table 4 below summarizes the potential benefits and barriers peer-tutoring has. Additionally, some seminal ingredients to make peer-tutoring successful are also offered.

Table 4: The benefits of peer-tutoring, how to do good peer-tutoring, and potential barriers to overcome

Benefits of peer-tutoring	What works well	Potential barriers
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding key terms • Exam awareness • Reflect and recap • Clarity of concepts • Provides feedback and challenge • Building the tutees' confidence 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Good relationship between the tutor and the tutee • Encouraging the tutees • Making learning fun • Personalization of work • Motivated tutors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tutors having poor subject knowledge • Lack of progress tracking • Lack of effort from the tutees • Timing of the peer-tutoring sessions • Tutors not knowing how to handle poor behavior from the tutees

Source: own work

Conclusions and Implications

Conclusions

RQ(1) Do learning and motivation change over the course of intervention?

Learning does change over the course of the intervention, as the attainment levels of all the Year 10 tutees who received peer-tutoring increased. The majority of the students felt like they had learned and had improved since having a Sociology tutor. These findings are consistent with other research (Cohen *et al.*,1982; Okilwa & Shelby, 2010; Kalkowski,; Tymms *et al.*, 2011; Mastropieri *et al.*, 2006).

Motivation has also changed over the course of the intervention, as the majority of the tutees reported that their motivation had increased since having been peer-tutored. All the girls reported that their enjoyment of Sociology increased as a result of the intervention.

RQ(2) How does the intervention affect learning and motivation?

There are a number of ways peer-tutoring affects the learning and motivation of the students. Yiu (1996: 78 as cited in Bray 2000) suggests that tutors help **answer any questions** that may have been overlooked in the classroom when the teacher was too busy. The tutors were there to help **clarify any concepts** that were not understood during class-time.

The intervention allowed the students to be taught these metacognitions of how to learn, as the students were **provided with feedback** in some cases, and a **challenge to help stretch** their learning and move them on. Moreover, the students **consolidated what was learnt** in the classroom by going over the material after the lesson. The students had the opportunity to **practice exam techniques, and recap key terms** with the tutors and this individual one to one attention allowed the tutor to **cater to the individual needs** of the tutee, which can be difficult to do in mainstream classrooms.

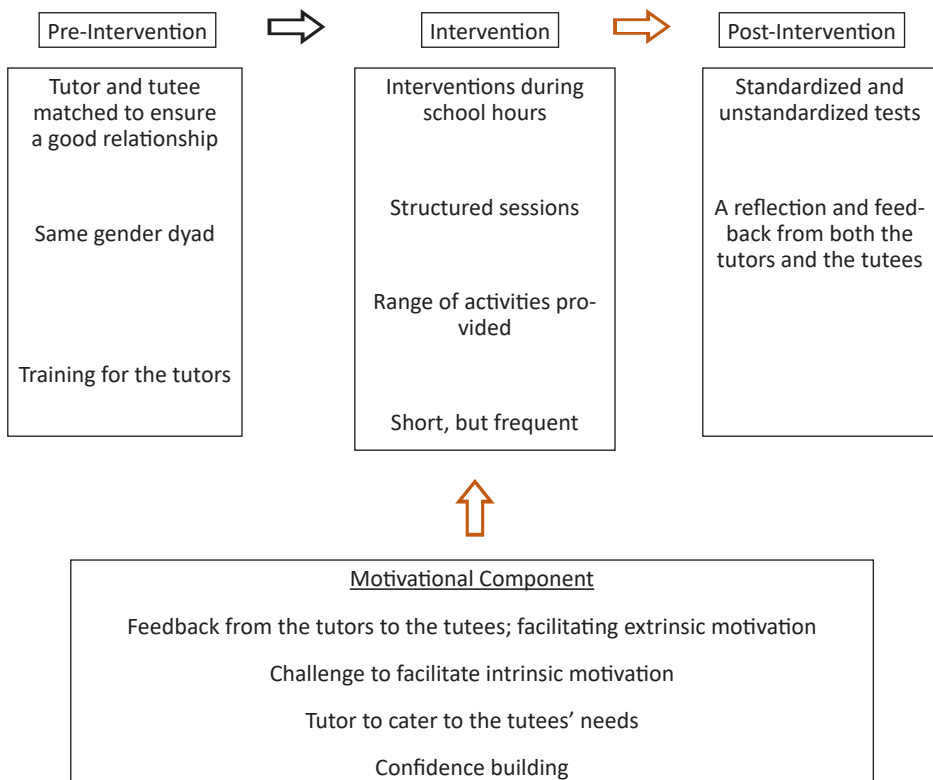
The tutors also made the sessions **fun and relevant**. This, in conjunction with the processes described above, predominately **affected the confidence** of the students, thus affecting their motivation. This addresses Rogers' (as cited in Ogbonnia, 2009) second reason as to why students underachieve: as they are not motivated to learn. In this action research the students felt they were learning in the peer-tutoring sessions, as the tutors were very supportive and **encouraging**. This meant that the Year10 students' confidence was built up and it motivated them to do well.

For peer-tutoring sessions to be effective, the tutors need to have a **good rapport** with their tutees. They need to have **excellent subject knowledge** to avoid any misconceptions, and to gain the trust of their tutees. Additionally, they need to **have training** so that they know how to handle students who are demotivated, and/or poorly behaved.

Implications for Leadership and Management

Figure 2 offers some determinants of best practice for peer-tutoring found from this study that can be widely used.

Figure 2: Showing a model of determinants of best practice for peer-tutoring, adapted from Leung (2014)



Source: own work

The marked effect size which peer-tutoring has (Topping, 2005), demonstrates that peer-tutoring may be one of the most valuable yet overlooked resources schools can invest in. It would be of great benefit if the Leadership and Management teams in schools were to start looking 'closer to home', and to utilize the cost-effective resources they have, as peer-tutoring is a low-cost method in addressing underachievement in students (Heron, Welsch, & Goddard, 2003; Grubbs & Boes, 2009). Peer-tutoring is dyadic and benefits both the tutor and the tutee (Topping, 1996); as the exams are now linear it may benefit the tutor as well as the tutee to participate in peer-tutoring.

As the quality, and cost effectiveness of teaching comes under scrutiny (Topping, 1996), peer-tutoring has been shown to be an economically and educationally effective intervention (Ching & Chang-Chen, 2011), regardless of subject areas (Okilwa & Shelby, 2010).

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Making it matter: Equitable service-learning in diverse communities

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What is the value of service learning?

Schools and their local communities are inextricably intertwined. Neither can be viewed in total isolation; they share a symbiotic and interconnected relationship that can drive positive social change if nurtured effectively. Although British government recognises that young people are ‘major stakeholders in society, with important contributions to make to their community’ (Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) 2008, p. 8), there appears an absence of collective student volunteering that could drive such community improvement forward.

However, an international school in Kathmandu places citizenship at the heart of its curriculum, with compulsory volunteering opportunities for students aged 6-18. This fulfilment of the National Citizenship Curriculum (Department for Education (DfE), 2013) alongside the English National Curriculum (2014) is bolstered by the uniqueness of its context. Nepal; one of the world’s ‘poorest and least developed countries (...) one-quarter of its population live below the poverty line’ (Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) 2017, p. 1); is still recovering from a ‘brutal conflict between the security forces and Communist Party of Nepal’ (Amnesty International 2005, p. 4), and although this civil war ended in 2006 there remains a stark absence of democracy, stable political leadership and government-led investment. Furthermore, the April 2015 Nepal earthquake has contributed to a more recent stagnation in public services development and an inclusive access to education.

Since independent schools are often a sphere of private wealth near a milieu of poverty, there is a need for transformative leaders to negotiate this complex socio-political context and advocate opportunities for young people ‘to mix with, and learn from and about, those from different backgrounds and generations’ (DCSF 2008, p.10). Although the DfE’s National Citizenship Curriculum for Key Stages 3 and 4 (2013) notes that learners should ‘participate actively in community volunteering’ (p. 2), crucially, it fails to provide an explanation of how this community social action should be facilitated by schools.

How should school leaders develop and maintain a mutually beneficial service-learning programme?

As government policy encourages teachers to ‘facilitate growth and development outside the formal curriculum’ (DCSF 2008, p. 9), then clear service-learning structures

and strategies should be identified. Through ascertaining the conditions required for effective service-learning and its compatibility with transformative leadership, school leaders can deduce the best practice required in order to implement service-learning programmes effectively.

However, research on leading effective service-learning partnerships, specifically between students, principals and community partners, remains uncommon in the literature. In comparison to research generalising possible advantages and drawbacks (Moss, 2009; Melchior and Bailis, 2002; Furco, 1996), there is a research gap relating to how service-learning should be implemented and then continually led. So how should schools cultivate, and then maintain, meaningful relationships with their local community?

What is service-learning anyway?

There is a consensus in the literature that service-learning characterises experiential education (Furco, 1996), whereby 'students engage in activities that address human and community needs, together with structured opportunities to promote student learning and development' (Jacoby 2003, p. 5). Here, the term 'service-learning' expresses voluntary community action that is planned and prepared by students, and delivered alongside continuous reflection and explicit learning goals. The 'learning' in service-learning should be two-way, equally beneficial, and apparent in the connections made between volunteering experiences and the curriculum; reflected in Sigmon's (1979) claim that 'service-learning only occurs when both providers and recipients benefit from the activities' (p. 10).

What role does service-learning play in transformational learning?

Service-learning can construct transformative experiences. Transformational learning, as a 'deeply challenging, truly educational, intensely liberating process' (Precey and Jackson 2009, p. 2) occurs when students try to understand the meanings within their volunteer experiences, realising 'fundamental changes in what they know about themselves, others and the world' (Mezirow 2000, p. 318). Transformational learning cultivates a sense of agency, whereby pupils fulfil a teaching role that leads to a change within oneself. Arguably, this is atypical of the transactional learning that most commonly occurs in classrooms (Freire, 1970). Service-learning, through its dimensions of peer collaboration, innovation and bespoke programme design, can evoke 'increasing political and social awareness and networking beyond previous experiences' (Precey and Jackson 2009, p. 4), which can transform pupils' and communities' sense of self, agency and identity. Evidently, transformational learning and high-quality service-learning share many similarities.

What are the benefits of service-learning?

The beneficial reconnection of schools and community institutions (Butin, 2003) is common theme amongst writers. Heuser (1999) claims it is a catalyst for multicultural development; Fielding (2004) states that through community volunteering 'we express

our shared humanity' (p. 210). There is no doubt that, when implemented effectively, reciprocal service-learning 'brings students and community members together in a mutually educational relationship' (Heuser 1999, p. 56), with reciprocity, defined as 'behaviour in which two people or groups of people give each other help and advantages' (Cambridge Dictionary, 2018), ensuring that all parties assume the roles of learners and teachers (Jacoby, 2003; Kendall, 1991).

In summary, service-learning can improve students' cognitive skills (Jones and Abes, 2004; Vogelgesang et al, 2000), perpetuate personal and professional growth (Anderson, 2003; Kraft and Kielsmeier, 1995), enhance an appreciation of social problems (Garman, 1995; Warren, 1998) and heighten civic engagement (Ward and Wolf-Wendel, 2000). Although a plethora of research conveys service-learning as a powerful educational tool, it is not without drawbacks.

What are the drawbacks?

Dewey (1915) warned that 'not all experiential situations are educative by default, and can, in fact, be harmful' (Klein 2012, p. 19). Service-learning does not automatically result in learning. Critics primarily question whether service-learning is part of the solution, or part of the problem itself, as well as the value of service-learning for its service-users (Klein, 2012). Service-learning, when interaction is limited and project length short, can 'reinforce, rather than question, existing stereotypes and preconceptions' (Heuser 1999, p. 65). Service-learning must be undertaken 'in a manner that is not patronising or disrespectful (...) and promote cross-culturalism' (Heuser 1999, p. 68) to ensure that stereotypes concerning affluence and poverty are not reinforced.

Wilson (2000) concluded that volunteering can accentuate social divides; particularly if volunteers hold high socio-economic status, therefore benefiting from more social capital, resources and opportunities. Haski-Leventhal (2009) highlights that service-learners are 'rarely trained to work with people with complex disadvantage' (p. 6), which can result in volunteers bringing prejudices into their volunteering environment. If schools maintain a 'hierarchical relationship between server and served' (Heuser 1999, p. 68), they fortify stereotypes and discrimination; victimising service-users as pupils fortuitously 'do for', rather than 'do with', which hampers positive social change and community cohesion. Radest (1993) coined the pertinent phrase 'mutuality' as a reminder that service-learning relationships should be based upon 'equality and collaboration' (Rhoads 1997, p. 8).

Are service-users manipulated?

Sadly, service-learning can be a tool for manipulation; a source of soft power, meeting social responsibility targets and as a means for improving students' work experience and university applications (Stoecker, 2016; Strom, 2009; Butin, 2006). Service-learning should benefit both parties, namely as an exchange and transfer of skills and personal development. However, there is a risk that service-users receive 'no measurable outcomes, and are drained in time, energy, and resources needed to accommodate and acclimatise a volunteer' (Devereux 2008, p. 362). Students should genuinely trust and connect with their service-users, and vice-versa, in order to feel motivated to ameliorate social injustices.

What are elements of successful service-learning?

- *Clear goals*

According to Honnet and Poulson (1989), student volunteers 'must have a clear sense of what is to be accomplished and learned' (p. 5); Moss (2009) recommends that high-quality service-learning contains 'students engaged in cognitively challenging tasks that meet a genuine community need' (p. 8). Furthermore, Honnet and Poulson (1989), outline effective service-learning as 'structured opportunities to reflect critically (...) articulating clear service and learning goals (...) clarifying each person's responsibilities (...) include training, supervision, support, recognition and evaluation' (p. 3). A clear similarity is the pertinence of a structured programme, clear goals and opportunities to reflect.

- *An integration of curriculums*

Furco (1996) states that an element of effective service-learning is its integration with the academic curriculum, specifically carrying 'some academic context and designed that the service enhances the learning, and the learning enhances the service' (p. 4). The notion that community service should be entwined with academic learning goals is consistent amongst writers (Chapin, 1998; Lewis and Niesenbaum, 2005). A direct connection to the course curriculum can help students make sense of their community service (Heuser, 1999).

- *Reflection, reflection, reflection*

Reflection opportunities complete the service-learning process (Klein, 2012). Reflection can 'provide the contextual grounding' (Heuser 1999, p. 58) for students to make sense of their experiences (Beckman, 1997). Honnet and Poulson (1989) state that individual and group reflection 'develops a better sense of social responsibility, advocacy, and active citizenship' (p. 4), providing the reflection is intentional, continuous, fosters critical thinking and offers opportunities for feedback.

Reflection should not be applied merely as a panacea for completing the service-learning process. Activities should be carefully curated by teachers to provide an outlet for sharing thoughts, worries, feelings or desires for the future. Opportunities to reflect is an expression of student voice and pupil autonomy. Fielding's (2004) research champions the engagement of young people in critical reflection and dialogue, claiming that a sustained development of student voice in schools 'primarily concerns students, but also, by implication, school staff and the communities they serve' (p. 199).

- *Communication and collaboration*

Diambra *et al* (2009) state that schools and their communities should maintain 'constant communication, compromise and renegotiation' (p. 11). Continual coordination and regular communication between parties cultivates close relationships, which develops an understanding of 'each other's strengths and weaknesses in making contributions to community development' (Moss 2009, p. 21).

When divergent cultures meet to collaborate, both parties tend to have 'false or exaggerated stereotypes about the other side' (Javidan *et al* 2006, p. 84). To ameliorate this, both cultures should share about their own culture, and learn about the other, in order to reduce shortcomings and prevent prejudice. If leadership is tied to its geographical and cultural context, transformative leaders should be able to compare their own culture with that of others, in order to remain open-minded and understanding. Transformative leaders need to set aside notions of status, power, language competencies, cultural stereotypes and perceptions of self and the other. How should we navigate these cultural

differences successfully, whereby multi-culturalism is embraced rather than viewed as a drawback?

Schools offering service-learning should aim for an 'open' culture between itself and its community partnerships, sharing with ease 'people, money and ideas (...) championing outside involvement in their affairs and maximum interchange with their environment' (Dimmock and Walker 2000, p. 157). Global characteristics of effective leadership were unearthed by Javidan et al (2006) as honesty, decisiveness and motivation. If these can be applied outside of the business domain, and within an educational milieu, then school leaders could utilise these attributes to enhance service-learning potential.

- *Transformative leadership*

Having a strong vision and ethos is crucial for effective leadership. A vision provides conceptual clarity 'and a clear sense of moral purpose (...) to see and shape the future' (Sutcliffe 2013, p. 1). In terms of a vision for service-learning itself, Sheffield (2003) highlights the cruciality of leaders understanding 'the "why" of service-learning in order to successfully undertake the "how" (...) without this basis, uninformed and potentially harmful decisions may result' (p. 9). A golden thread connecting successful leaders is the 'belief that underlying everything they do is with a deep sense of purpose and moral integrity, an inner belief that what they are attempting is right for their school and pupils' (Sutcliffe 2013, p. 12) and ultimately; society. Shields (2011) asserts that school leadership should be about radical change; social, economic and political change, which addresses power, gender, class and ethnicity issues through the emphasis on values such as democracy and liberation.

What does the literature reveal?

Schools with an effective approach to service-learning are likely to have the following features:

- Grounded in the premise of social justice
- Student autonomy
- An integration of academic and citizenship curriculums
- Opportunities for reflection
- Mutuality
- Multi-party trust and sensitive communication
- An absence of stereotyping and prejudice

The review reveals that the main issues with service-learning are:

1. Benefits are not equal for all parties, particularly for service-users
2. Stereotypes across communities become reinforced
3. Service is patronising and facilitates cultural elitism

Service-learning in Kathmandu, Nepal

This research operated under the time constraints and schedule complexities of a 10-month school year. A combination of semi-structured interviews, questionnaires and focus groups were used in order to triangulate the data. Through collecting second-

ary school students' opinions of service-learning and its leadership, primary school students' in-depth insights via a focus group, and the school principal's personal perspectives, emerging key themes could be identified across a very broad data set.

1. What are the required values and vision for leading service-learning?

The research revealed that transformative leadership traits are vital for effective service-learning initiatives; the lifeblood for steering community partnerships. A transparent ethos, succinct service-learning vision and clear ties with social justice should be shared with pupils and colleagues as a means of motivation (Smith and Bell, 2014; Kurland et al, 2010).

A succinct vision creates a shared moral purpose amongst pupils, staff and communities; this 'courage and activism' (Shields 2011, p. 562) is the catalyst for social action. Overall, a service-learning vision should aim to 'make it almost natural that students see the point of social justice, community work, those kinds of values' (Principal X, 2017).

2. What are the conditions for effective service-learning?

- *Long-term partnerships*

Based upon this research, a long-term partnership is crucial; specifically, years or even decades. Principal X states that schools wishing to implement service-learning should:

'develop with the project, at least three years, the Dhading project was a 5-to-7-year project, and it took 5 years to really be gaining the trust of the people in those communities (...) have buy-in from that community' (2017).

School leaders should be long-term in their timescales and patient in their approach; it may take several years before advantages for schools and communities become visible.

- *Skilful activity*

Varied skilled and challenging activities should be undertaken. This may be a combination of peer teaching, staff training and physical labour or provision:

'a high level of activity and varied skill sets required (...) an aspect of children teaching children; staff training; some kind of physical infrastructure work, and it's all been based on the need and genuine sense of long term planning' (Principal X, 2017)

The above account serves as a useful reminder of the importance of continually reinstating the moral purpose of volunteering and the cruciality of the activities undertaken.

- *Integration of curriculums*

School leaders should integrate service-learning with the academic curriculum as fully as possible (Asler, 1993). A fully integrated service-learning and academic curriculum appears the final frontier; a personal target for School X and all service-learning schools, due to the planning and organisational complexities required as well as project availabilities.

- *The cruciality of reciprocity*

Volunteering that creates a mutual exchange, via an equal sharing of skills and resources, helps students to recognise how fortunate they are and understand that learning is a two-way process. Drawing on the data the focus groups presented, personal highlights

included the pupils at local schools becoming their teachers: 'they come and teach us how to make our own food'; 'learn from them'; 'learn how they live'. Likewise, pupils enjoyed assuming the teaching role; multiple students explained the joy of teaching their peers; 'they learn something – and we get to learn how to explain!'.

This presence of reciprocity facilitates a sense of wanting to 'give something back' as a result of realising your own privilege; focus group participants commented that their service-learning has motivated them to 'help others more with their studies' and 'give them more of an education'. Although the literature tends to emphasise a benefit of service-learning as the acquisition of new skills, career opportunities and an awareness of social injustice (Garman, 1995; Jones and Abes, 2004; Haski-Leventhal, 2009), I argue that the most important benefit is in fact the cultivating of reciprocity, peer-teaching and equal exchanges. Maintaining the idea that learning is a two-way process is a crucial component of successful service-learning.

3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of service-learning on attitudes, knowledge and skills?

Permeating the focus groups was the notion that service-learning develops teamwork, communication skills and personal growth, whilst delivering life lessons to shape behaviour. In summary, children realise their privilege through reciprocity within an unfamiliar environment.

Older secondary students can gain skills in budgeting and domestic support, through choosing to work directly with managing the project's finances or by washing up and preparing food 'they find their own challenges in it, by adjusting the tasks' (Principal X, 2017). For younger children, developing socialisation skills appears more commonplace; 'getting along with the children in the lower years, just being socially welcoming, is challenging' (Principal X, 2017). Clearly, service-learning can be a tool to build on the qualities of resilience, emotional intelligence, sociality and leadership.

However, findings from the focus groups and semi-structured interview imply that negative outcomes of service-learning include the stereotyping of poor communities, cultural clashes, ulterior gains and blame of the other. A major drawback of service-learning, particularly within an international context, is the possible inability to overcome cultural differences. Cultural, social and economic divides between parties is a common theme.

This leads into another key finding from the research, which is that language barriers play a significant role in preventing effective service-learning within multicultural settings. Therefore, schools must ensure that a range of communication strategies are in place to facilitate dialogue, mutual sharing and non-verbal interactions. This could take the form non-verbal communication training and basic language classes prior to volunteering, with a range of staff available at the community projects to help navigate communication when needed.

A major concern of service-learning is the stereotyping of poor communities, which can unfortunately metamorphose into judgements on professional and cognitive capabilities. When 'bringing students into social and cultural settings that they might not otherwise confront' (Hondagneu-Sotelo and Raskoff 1994, p. 248), teachers should role-model equity, non-judgement and empathy to all. Staff must refrain from articulating any elitist overtones, as this can have a detrimental impact on how service-users are portrayed, which will only serve to exacerbate communal disparities and perpetuate stereotypes.

It is recommended that pupils purposefully become more aware and accepting of culture, whilst school leaders resolutely prevent 'better than thou attitudes (...) or chari-

table orientations that mute needs for social change' (Boyle-Baise 1998, p. 52). Here, the aforementioned reflection time seems vital for addressing stereotypes as they arise.

4. How should we sensitively manage diverse community relationships?

- *Patience*

Cross-cultural community relationships take a great deal of time to develop. A key part of successful service-learning is the essence of patience in progress, as evidently the timescale for developing trust, forging authentic relationships, equipping students with necessary project knowledge and understanding a community's needs is lengthy. Trust is fundamental to the longevity and development of a school-community partnership:

'it has to be a relationship where that trust is built up, it has to be over time, because they don't trust what you say, they trust what you do (...) that's the most important thing that I've seen. You can say what you like, but until you go in and deliver (...) that's when things are built up and there is that equality. But it takes ages, and people go at different speeds' (Principal X, 2017)

Breaking relationships forged by students and service-users can be 'traumatic and can add to the fragmentation already typical of poor communities' (Eby 1998, p. 5), so it is vital that leaders embark on community partnerships with several years, or decades, in mind.

- *Trust*

Trust, as the 'social glue that binds human relationships' (Kouzes and Posner 2006, p. 4) can be cultivated through reliability, authenticity and interpersonal regard (Precey, 2012). Precey's (2015) writing reflects the cruciality of integrity in educational leadership, whereby 'leaders do what they say and say what they think' (p. 9). In line with Covey's (2006) thinking that fulfilling commitments builds trust, and increases the speed at which trust is shared, Principal X's insights indicate that trust takes time to develop and is embedded through keeping promises. If communities are mistrustful, progress lag behinds, projects take time to embed and benefits for all parties reduce.

We need to develop trust consciously, along with criticality (Precey and Jackson, 2009), in order to perpetuate the 'effective transformational leadership for learning' (p. 331) that service-learning is capable of generating. Openness and transparency is vital for community partnerships, which links closely to setting long-term timescales for developing relationships and implementing projects.

- *Self-awareness*

The research outlined three key consideration factors when setting up a community partnership: you are a resource; reject a solely financial relationship; recognise your privilege. Principal X affirms that:

'right from the age of three, our advantages have been greater (...) all you can do is be extremely sensitive (...) work with people with the attitude that you are sharing resources, and part of those resources is yourself' (2017).

As Shield's (2010) writing states, transformative leaders 'acknowledge power and privilege (...) equity and justice' (p. 562), and Principal X is evidently highly self-aware of a school's potential to redistribute wealth in all its guises.

Here, moral courage and activism prevails (Shields, 2010) through the unwillingness to compromise a programme's vision and ethos for short-term monetary fixes. Finally, as an implementer of service-learning, leaders should recognise the financial,

cultural and educational privileges they have often been afforded. A self-awareness of this can minimise any misunderstandings and aforementioned cultural stereotyping.

Pragmatically, in line with Eby's (1998) thinking that schools should coordinate a 'careful matching of providers and needs, sustained organisational commitment and in-depth training provision' (p. 7), schools should firstly consider the fundamental logistics of prospective projects, such as transport issues, budgeting, anticipated need and available resources, and view these as the foundation from which to create meaningful service-learning.

What new recommendations do I have for practice and policy?

Revised recommendations
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leaders should adopt a long-term outlook towards planning and implementation, for instance at least 5–10 years; in order to foster authentic connections and cultivate trust
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mutuality (Radest, 1993), that is, the sharing of actions, feelings and relationships, is a fundamental component of effective service-learning alongside reciprocity• Reciprocity (Sigmon, 1979), that is, exchanges that confer mutual benefit and advantages, can embed transformative learning (Precey and Jackson, 2009) to positively impact the self, others and organisations• Language barriers must be ameliorated through appropriate training and staff support
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Leaders must carefully investigate the effect of service-learning on communities and ensure it is not a tool for manipulating student prospects; the perspectives of all parties should be considered
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Students and leaders should be provided with in-depth knowledge of their project and partners• Leaders should reject a solely financial service-learning relationship• Cultivating trust is paramount to the success of the relationship between school and community (Moss, 2009); and takes a great deal of time to develop

Source: own work

These revisions are subtle but significant. There remains the need for student voice, structured reflection, trust and an absence of cultural stereotyping. Evidently, moral service-learning leadership should be rooted in aims of social justice and community cohesion.

Furthermore, the data concurred that goals and visions must be clear, specific and continually reflected upon. School leaders should remain explicit about 'the goals to be achieved and the processes required to attain them' (Shields 2011, p. 9), in order to effectuate positive social change. This ties in closely with transformative leadership traits.

As Keith-Lucas (1972) states, 'to help another human being may sound like a very simple process (...) actually, it is one of the hardest things that anyone can do' (p. 119). Therefore, below are recommendations for school leaders, which tentatively suggest how they may improve their school's service-learning opportunities:

Recommendations for implementing & maintaining an effective service-learning programme
• A vision that addresses equity, inclusion and social justice
• Repeat clear service-learning aims and goals
• Plan for partnerships to last several years or decades
• A variety of challenging skilled activities on offer
• Integrate with academic curriculum where possible
• Provide multi-format opportunities for students to reflect
• Ensure service-learning promotes reciprocity, mutuality and autonomy
• Address language barriers through non-verbal training and basic language competencies
• Cultivate trust through long-term timescales and commitments
• Reject solely financial relationships
• Recognise your own privilege
• Coordinate with all stakeholders
• Seek first to understand then embrace cultural differences

Source: own work

All service-users must have opportunities to teach and share with students; recognising that they have resources, help or connection to offer back to pupils, as opposed to service-learning facilitating learning in only one direction.

Reciprocity, the two-way distribution of benefits and gains, is a fundamental component to ensuring service-learning is fair, sustainable and a spearhead of positive change. This finding is significant as it urges service-learning leaders to carefully consider the complexities and logistics of each community partnership before and during provision, to ensure that benefits are fair for all parties and communities are not being used for ulterior gains or subject to manipulation. Clearly, successful implementation requires a leader that is moral, sensitive, self-aware, culturally astute, patient and driven by social justice; some may argue this is a demanding order, but if present, the opportunities to improve a community and its students are boundless.

How should service-learning be led and implemented?

This small-scale research offers a glimpse into the concept of service-learning and its application within an international school situated in a developing country. Although I will not make absolute claims based on this unique study in Nepal, I present these findings as tentative recommendations for other service-learning leaders. This transfer of professional knowledge may be small yet powerful; helping to shape leadership strategies that aim to understand, build and work together in communities to share mutual benefits for all stakeholders.

Through questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, focus groups and engaging with relevant literature, it can be elucidated that service-learning leaders must be trans-

formative in their approach. Cultural stereotyping belonging to all parties should be diminished, coordination must be collaborative, and mutuality and reciprocity should be central tenets of any partnerships.

When implemented effectively, service-learning can enhance students' self-efficacy, sense of achievement and contribution to school life. According to Arnold (1869), a fitting education should inspire a 'love of our neighbour, a desire for clearing human confusion and for diminishing human misery' (p. 7); service-learning is capable of delivering all of these. Service-learning can be a tool for engendering nothing less than the 'noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it'; (Arnold 1869, p. 7), engaging students in democracy, social justice and meaningful change; sculpting citizens for the future. In addition, and perhaps most importantly, service-learning can provide a platform for community members to share their own knowledge, expertise and openness, whilst feeling connected to, and valued by, distinctly different social groups.

In conclusion, leaders require a transparent service-learning ethos and a succinct and frequently repeated vision, with social justice at its core. Effective service-learning stems from long-term partnerships with extensive timescales, opportunities to reflect, varied activities and an integration of citizenship and academic curriculums. Service-learning should promote empathy and foster reciprocity; an equal sharing of skills and resources that exemplifies learning as a two-way process. If implemented effectively, communication and teamwork skills, alongside personal growth and a recognition of personal privilege prevail; although social and economic divides could be heightened through language barriers and cultural stereotyping. Cross-cultural community relationships, as well as trust, take a long time to cultivate, and patience, due diligence and tolerance are crucial.

If it is true that many educators are 'experts in their disciplines but not in community service or cross-cultural relationships' (Eby 1998, p. 5), we must remain aware of the need to never reflect any harmful ethnocentrism or stereotyping that could alienate schools and their milieu. It is vital that service-learning is not solely those with greater social capital unilaterally giving to those with less; to remain ethical and transformative, service-learning must be two-way, mutual and egalitarian in aspiration. Service-learning is only, truly, learning for all, when it is reciprocal.

Shared student and community empowerment is imperative. Coupling pupil voice with service-learning ensures that pupils are engaged in schools using more democratic processes, enabling them to see the importance of democracy and social change. Service-learning, delivered within an equitable and sustainable citizenship curriculum that champions community cohesion, pupil efficacy and social justice, should be the aim of every transformative leader.

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The most effective and manageable methods of delivering feedback

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Introduction

What are the most effective forms of feedback to promote pupil progress? How can feedback be delivered in a timely, purposeful but sustainable way? How does feedback link to a school's overall culture and ethos?

Developmental feedback is 'a professionally managed, reflective dialogue [between two or more people] that is centred on improving performance' (Education Leadership Programme, 2012, p. 1). When utilised effectively, feedback is one of the most significant influences on pupil achievement (Hattie, 2011) and should therefore be of paramount importance to practitioners and educational leaders. Thomas (2009) notes that your thinking, interests and purposes should translate into research questions; as an English teacher, the time spent on marking and preparing feedback is one of the most time-consuming and unsustainable elements of the workload. It is imperative that the success of current feedback policies implemented in schools are assessed and evaluated to increase individual and whole school productivity. In this research, I explore why written feedback is the method frequently expected from school leaders when there is a lack of robust research supporting the idea that this is most effective. It raises wider questions about the trust in teachers as professionals and the wider culture created by school leaders within an educational system where forms part of an accountability system. It draws on the experiences and perceptions of teachers and pupils alike.

Critical Literature Review

A global and national context

Ofsted's (the Office for Standards in Education) approach to feedback appears to be ambiguous. Their leader, Amanda Spielman, notes that at a time of 'scarce pupil funding and high workloads' educational leaders and managers are responsible for making sure teachers' time is 'spent on what matters most... not preparing your pupils [or staff] to jump through a series of accountability hoops' (Edison Learning, 2017). Whilst this appears to make logical sense, it is a leader's view of 'what matters most' that is highly subjective and variable. At the centre of all educational leaders' visions should be the notion that pupils in their care make significant progress and develop

as well-rounded, independent learners. It is of paramount importance that feedback underpins and feeds into this vision. It is also essential that effective leaders identify but also monitor the value and impact of their feedback strategies, alongside the impact on staff workload in order to justify 'what matters most', particularly when there is 'remarkably little high quality, relevant research evidence to suggest that detailed or extensive marking has any significant impact on pupils' learning. Until such evidence is available [inspectors should] report only on whether [feedback] follows the school's assessment policy' (Edison Learning, 2017). What constitutes as 'extensive marking' and why then do educational leaders create unmanageable 'assessment policies' to hold teachers to account if there is 'remarkably little' evidence to support this approach? 43,832 teachers surveyed in the UK reported that the burden of their workload was created by perceived pressures of Ofsted (Department for Education, 2015). Certainly, these 'expectations' and pressures may be changing, with the UK's monitoring body overtly criticising the exam-factory culture that is 'betraying a generation' of learners; the fixation on accountability measures, exam results and leagues tables being the means of measuring a school's success [is seen as needing to] change' (Griffiths, 2018).

These pressures transcend internationally too. International league tables place educational institutions under further undue pressure to perform and score highly on a global platform. Whilst international comparisons such as the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) tables can be reductionist and limited, it is of interest that the 'highest performing' schools are commonly those that have changed their approach towards education. Sahlberg (2007, p. 147) focuses on the success of Finland's education system based on: equity, flexibility, creativity, teacher professionalism and trust. 'Teacher professionalism' and 'trust' are of significance here and have been progressively overlooked and perhaps forgotten in the UK educational system. Precey (2016, p. 2) states that although governments strive to improve their performances in international league tables, it is the behaviours and attitudes of the school leaders that are a 'key element' in the success of raising this. They drive every aspect of the school's culture and policies in place. Most desirable is a leader with a transformational approach in which their policies, actions and ideas are underpinned entirely by a clear and collectively shared vision.

Implications for leadership and the school's culture

Leadership is a complex and variable concept; although there are distinctions between transformational, transactional and transformative leadership styles, a leader's vision and moral compass should underpin all. Despite these terms often being elusive, there appears to be some consensus that transformational leadership comprises of 'building a vision of a better future, establishing shared organisational goals... modelling values and best practice' and I believe most significantly 'creating a productive culture' through fostering participation in decision making (Precey, 2013). A school's approach to feedback should similarly be rooted in collaborative participation and decision making rather than 'shallow initiatives' as coined by Reed and Learmouth (1999) which many leaders adopt as short term goals, linked only to performance outcomes rather than more long term visionary ideas. Such initiatives often perpetuate the perception that some leaders do not value teachers as professional and instead introduce policies to control teachers and make them 'consistent and predictable' (Giroux, 1985, p. 377). This explicitly links to a school's culture.

The most relevant definition of a school's culture is 'the way we do things around here' (Hargreaves, 1993) and is cultivated through the leaders' vision and decision making. This is not to suggest that a school's 'culture' is sustainable without the participation of staff and pupils alike; it should be a shared and collaborative goal which

all 'values and ideals' of the school create (Kent, 2006, p. 24). It is governed and built through effective leadership; the school's common values which 'constitute its culture' should be modelled and shared by all in order to be successful (Hofstede, 2005, p. 10). Specifically, an ideal culture is one that supports the overall achievements of pupils rather than just academic results. With such pressure on schools to perform positively, external pressures are impossible to ignore and there is much discussion to suggest that leaders are losing autonomy and integrity and are instead 'managers', dictated to by policy (Precey, 2016). Does the feedback provided in the UK's educational system, which is often graded and written, tie into society's pressure to grade and record all progress in order for it to be measurable? Can leaders navigate their way through these perceived accountability hoops and maintain integrity and trust in their team?

Methodology: An Action Research Approach

The design and purpose of this research is guided by Gunter's (2005, p. 168) approaches to identifying a research focus. It encompasses the effect of leadership decisions and feedback on four of Gunter's suggested starting points: 'learners' and their experiences, 'staff' and their perceptions of their work, the 'culture' of the school, and finally the impact of 'connections' to a national and international context (Gunter, 2005). Data collection was three-fold and through:

- the traditional methods of questionnaires,
- semi-structured interviews,
- data routinely collected by the school that already existed.

A qualitative approach to collating and analysing data was favoured, to interpret and identify patterns in responses given by teachers and Year 10 pupils (aged 14-15). Data was collected through semi-structured interviews and questionnaires. Numerical data was also used to contribute towards the overall validity of findings and results and a comparison of pupil and teacher perceptions was embedded throughout analysis of the data; this article will focus exclusively on the perceived drawbacks and positives of different feedback methods.

Analysis and Findings

The most and least effective methods of feedback in promoting progress

77% of participating teachers identified verbal feedback as the most effective method in promoting pupil progress. Significantly, only 7% identified written feedback as most effective. This may be due to the workload attributed with different methods with the effectiveness of immediate, timely verbal feedback cited by the majority of teachers as a key factor. Pupil led reflection and feedback, through peer and self-assessment methods, were not deemed most effective by any teachers. Research highlights how powerful these methods can be, if used effectively, in fostering the collaborative learning schools should strive to achieve. It may be that these methods are not effectively embedded within the school to utilise their benefits. Teacher perceptions differed significantly to the pupils' view of the feedback they received (Figure 1).

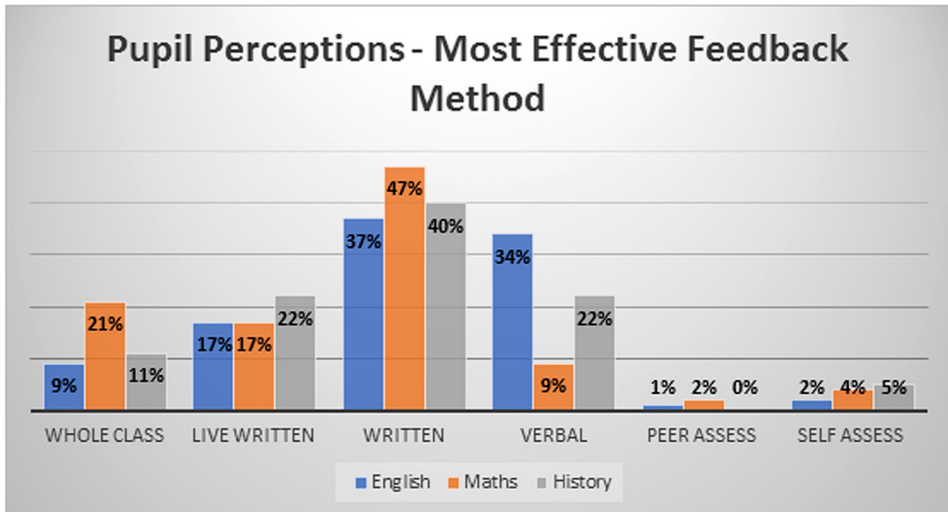


Figure 1: The most effective feedback methods identified by Year 10 pupils
 Source: own work

Interestingly, pupils deemed written feedback as being most effective across all three subjects; there were no patterns in the number of these pupils who were male, female, higher or lower attaining responding in this way. 37% of the ‘most able’ pupils in English and Maths sets thought written marking was most effective and 33% of pupils in ‘lower’ sets considered this the case. Pupils frequently commented on it being the feedback they ‘most often receive!’ This preference could be due to receiving written feedback most often, as per the school’s marking policy, and therefore pupils may be conditioned to see it as most useful. Furthermore, verbal feedback was the second most preferred method in English which corresponded with the majority of English teacher’s perceptions. Pupils favoured the use of whole-class feedback in Maths, perhaps because of the objective nature of the subject, as this preference did not transcend across to English and History. This corroborates the argument that a one-size approach to feedback may be limiting.

Collectively, 67% of the participating teachers identified pupil led assessment as the least effective methods. Again, this could perhaps be due to ineffective training, of both teachers and pupils, on how best to use this method. Wiggins (2012) stresses that feedback does not always have to be delivered by the teacher; he views peer based feedback as an effective tool for managing teacher workload if pupils are trained effectively which appears to be the missing ingredient in this instance. Verbal feedback was the only feedback strategy not to be identified as ineffective by any teacher which corresponds with teachers’ perceptions of the most effective methods. Written feedback, which is the method stipulated in the school’s marking policy, was recorded as least effective by five teachers. Although these figures are too small to draw any conclusions from, it again raises interesting questions about how varying perceptions of feedback are. Pupils were similarly asked to identify the least effective method of feedback across the three subject choices.

Whilst perceptions of the most effective methods varied amongst pupils, there was more consistency in those seen as ineffective. Like teachers, pupils also perceived peer and self-assessment as the least effective methods across all three subjects, with a smaller proportion of both teachers and pupils viewing whole class and live written marking as least effective. Although there are flaws in basing findings on individual’s perceptions,

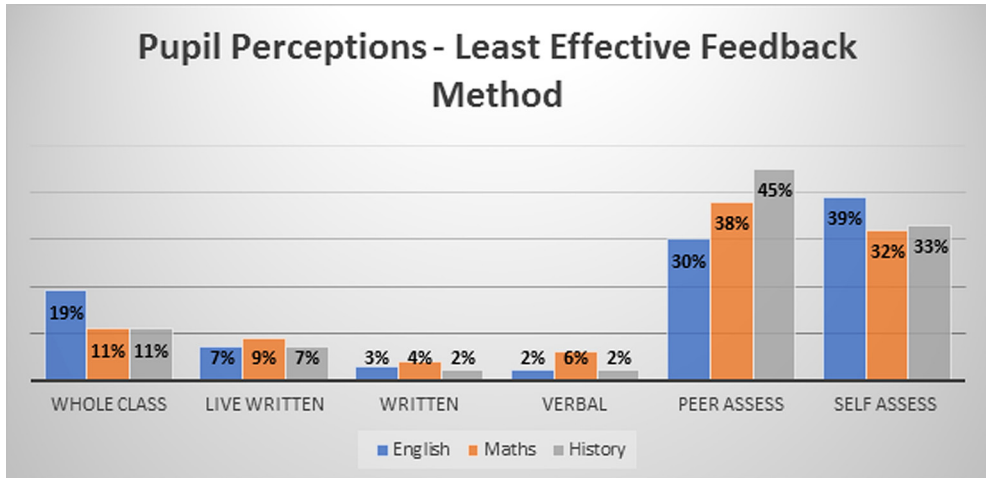


Figure 2: Least effective feedback methods identified by Year 10 pupils

Source: own work

there appears to be some consistency between the subject teachers' views of the least effective methods and pupils' in the subject. Of seven English teachers, five considered peer assessment as least effective and two thought self-assessment was which correlated with the pupils in their classes responses. Specifically, one History teacher said peer assessment was least effective; all of the pupils within such class also viewed peer assessment as least effective. It raises questions regarding the extent to which we are conditioned to view, often the most commonly used methods, as most effective. Interesting comments from pupils focused on the idea that peer assessment was only useful 'when your partner is the same ability' otherwise 'it is a waste of time.' Pupil C noted that the class 'never try as hard when it is being peer assessed because we want expert advice and feedback.' Pupil D, a much weaker learner, shared this dislike for self-assessment because he felt 'stupid' as he could 'never find [his] own mistakes.' This raises further interesting questions about how one's ability influences their effectiveness at reflecting and 'grading' their own work and in fact, as Dweck (2006) notes, the process of grading may be detrimental to one's mind-set and overall approach to learning.

Participants were asked to identify all of the feedback methods they most commonly used or received. The majority of teachers identified two methods most commonly used in their classroom. It is naïve to see these methods as separate entities as they are often used to complement one another. Despite no teacher identifying self or peer assessment as the most effective methods these were identified by three teachers as being the most commonly used methods. Self-assessment was flagged up as being most commonly used alongside live written marking in Art. Peer assessment was most commonly used alongside verbal feedback in more practical subjects such as Physical Education. These are not significant enough number of responses to draw any definitive conclusions. However, it again raises interesting questions about why feedback methods may be used if their benefit is not valued. The majority of teachers identified verbal feedback as being the most frequently used, followed by live written marking; this corresponds to responses previously given. This also corresponded with the methods teachers identified as being rarely used in their classrooms (Figure 3). The lowest percentage, 4% of teachers' responses, identified verbal feedback as being rarely used whilst the highest proportion

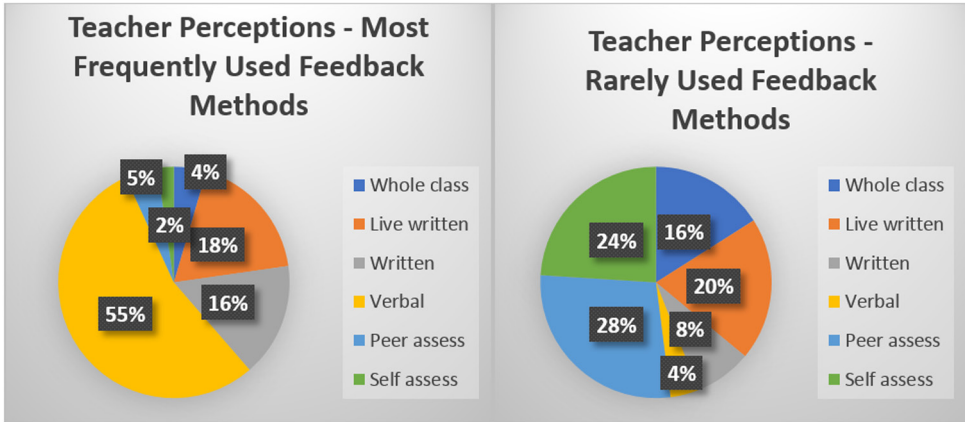


Figure 3: The most and least frequently used feedback methods identified by teachers at School X
 Source: own work

of references were made to peer and self-assessment being rarely used (52% of the total references made). Three teachers said they regularly used all feedback methods.

It is interesting to note that whilst the majority of teachers identified verbal feedback as being most commonly used, pupil perceptions did not match. Pupils identified written marking as being most commonly received across all three subjects. In contrast, all English, Maths and History teachers participating identified verbal and live written marking as the most effective and commonly used methods. However, when comparing subject teacher responses with the pupils in their classes there was more consistency. In History, teachers highlighted written feedback as most commonly used due to the school policy and peer assessment as least commonly used. All pupils in the classes agreed with this. Five of the English teachers' responses to the most frequently used methods also corresponded with the pupils in their classes. Very interestingly though, within one class all pupils identified only written marking as being the most frequently received. The class teacher identified only verbal feedback as frequently used and written marking as least frequently used in a conscious attempt to 'use [it] less as per Ofsted guidance.' There was less consensus in the responses given by Maths teachers and pupils, perhaps due to a greater proportion of split classes and teacher turnover experienced. The least used methods identified by all participants were similar: peer, self-assessment and live marking. One English class all identified live marking as being rarely used and the relevant teacher further agreed with this, adding an element of validity to the findings.

Significantly, there does appear to be some correlation between the feedback methods pupils perceive as being most effective and those they most commonly receive. Across all three subjects, pupils identified written feedback as being most effective. Similarly, they also identified this as being the method they most commonly received. This is not surprisingly; within an educational context that has long favoured written feedback as the most commonly accepted form of feedback, pupils are likely to be conditioned to think the same. The Education Endowment Foundation (2016) conducted a review of written marking and 'found a striking disparity between the enormous amount of effort invested in marking books' and evidence of its effectiveness. Perhaps teachers are consciously distancing themselves from this notion and instead have highlighted alternative, less time-consuming methods such as verbal feedback, as most frequently used and most beneficial as they similarly question written feedback and proof of its effectiveness. This is a clear limitation of looking at just the data collected and instead a qualitative

approach to looking at the ‘words’ is needed to develop analysis and findings further (Briggs, Coleman and Morrison, 2012, p. 24).

Qualitative, Content Analysis – Questionnaires and Interviews:

Despite measures taken to trial, and prevent misunderstanding in the phrasing of the questions, interpretations were variable. As such, a few responses stated that they never received ‘verbal’ feedback for example which seems unlikely. Moreover, two pupils said they never received ‘any feedback’ which again seems impossible.

To develop the quality of responses further, participants were asked to acknowledge the benefits and drawbacks of each feedback methods. The second strand of analysis explores and systematically evaluates participants’ responses and perceptions of the six feedback methods through content analysis. Analysis allowed for key words and themes to be analysed and discussed; all key words and responses were included to offer an honest account of teachers’ responses. Key words were codified to identify common semantic fields and themes; pupils’ responses across all three subjects were correlated together and analysed in the same way. Numbers have been included next to some words to denote the number of times it was mentioned, for example: ‘independence (5)’ shows that this was mentioned in five different responses.

With reference to the immediateness of the initial two feedback strategies, it was interesting to note that ‘time to process’ and fully reflect on pupils’ work was seen as a benefit of written marking. It allowed feedback to be ‘considered’ and for pupils to be given adequate time to also reflect and respond. Unsurprisingly, written feedback methods were also favoured as they ‘recorded’ progress and there was evidence to re-

Written marking	Live written marking	Whole class	Verbal	Self-assessment	Peer-assessment
Specific (5), individualised (6), considered, focused, clear (4), recorded, response from pupils show progress, focused DIRT time (3), teacher and pupil have thinking time to process feedback, opportunities to improve, convenient to refer back to and track progress.	Easy to see progress, immediate, individualised, practical, specific, promotes immediate progress, visual and recorded progress, discuss difficulties, excellent in practical subjects, reduces marking workload (2), quick improvements made straight away.	Builds confidence, immediate reflection, correct common errors, quick, addresses general misconceptions, sharing good practice, learn from other’s mistakes, supports weaker pupils with reinforcing learning, keeps pace across lessons, easier for teacher, time-wise, great for learning exam techniques, highlight great examples of work (2), evidenced.	Immediate (4), individualised, manageable ‘in the moment’, direct one-to-one, targeted, pupils to respond and evidence learning immediately, allows teacher time with weaker pupils, targeted, most effective in practical subjects, immediate encouragement, focused, prevents repeated errors, meaningful (2), encourages pupils to speak to teacher, spontaneous, less impact on teacher wellbeing, easy.	Encourages evaluation and improvement, effective at KS5, pupils understand success criteria, build pupils’ confidence, encourages criticality, encourages pupils to consider their work more, can be immediate, encourages engagement, reduces workload (2).	Good to reflect, encourages deeper understanding of success criteria, sharing good practice, sharing knowledge, can be constructive, reflective, develops coaching role, saves time, helping one another to improve, effective if pupils are of a similar ability, often taken more seriously than self-assessment, good for tackling workload (3).

Figure 4: Content analysis of teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of different feedback methods

Source: own work

fer back to (colour coded in pink). With reference to contextual and societal influences, it is impossible to tell whether these perceptions are influenced by cultural norms and educational pressures. Perhaps, it is advantageous to see the benefits of each feedback strategy in accordance with one another; a combination of the spontaneous nature of verbal feedback and the considered yet personalised written feedback was flagged up by teachers as preferable. Although pupil led feedback was deemed ineffective, it was seen to sometimes encourage independent evaluation, confidence and criticality. With reference to peer assessment, positives identified by teachers also focused on collaboration as highlighted in grey. Encouraging pupils to drive their learning and work alongside others develops more active learners (Watkins, 2010) which should be a priority. Some teachers viewed peer assessment as developing this independent, 'coach' like role where pupils could share knowledge and good practice. However, there appears to be something missing between these acknowledged benefits and its usefulness in practice.

Five of the above feedback methods were related to the impact on teacher workload (as coded in red). Verbal feedback was noted as being 'manageable' for the teacher and as having less 'impact on teacher well-being.' This reduction in marking workload was also attributed to live marking, as it occurs in lesson time and is not an additional expectation outside of working hours. The benefits of self and peer assessment were also attributed to decreasing teacher workload; the only feedback method where this theme was not seen as a benefit was in written feedback (Fig. 5).

This reference to additional workload featured within the three written feedback methods used by teachers: written marking, live written marking and whole class written feedback (coded in red). Written marking was noted as being 'time consuming', 'not effective enough to justify the time it takes' and 'onerous' on the teacher. Alongside the impact on workload was the lengthy time taken to complete and deliver it; its benefit and impact was not 'immediate' and often given 'too late after the work has been completed' to be truly beneficial. When there appears to be no robust evidence to support the benefit of written marking, or dialogic and triple marking strategies, this is a frustrating situation for teachers (EEF, 2016). These perceptions are not unique to teachers at School X; an independent teacher workload review group found that written marking had become unnecessarily burdensome and that strategies should be put in place to use different methods (EEF, 2016, p. 4). Live written marking was also considered time consuming by some teachers, as it is often needed in accordance with verbal feedback, and cannot be delivered to all pupils within a lesson. This was in addition to the use of dialogic written marking; whole-class feedback sheets as a strategy was also perceived as adding to teacher workload. This raises questions about how best to utilise feedback methods to avoid duplication and additional work. Moreover, despite teachers acknowledging self assessment helped to maintain their workload one comment directly attributed this to being a 'doss for the teacher.' This highlights the pressures felt by some teachers to utilise specific feedback methods and perhaps the lack of training in implementing a range of feedback strategies.

Furthermore, themes relating to verbal feedback not being evidenced adequately dominated responses (highlighted in pink). This evidently fuels the idea that the most highly regarded forms have to be written and evidenced, to prove that feedback has occurred. As Giroux (1985) notes, if teachers feel that they have to 'evidence' and 'record' everything in relation to an overemphasis on 'targets' this is another disempowerment of teachers as 'intellectuals'. Developing further, the majority of criticism, as highlighted in dark green, related to pupils not being adequately trained to respond to feedback. When a specific method is laborious for the teacher, such as written marking, and the pupil responses are not sufficient this may be a particular source of stress.

Written marking	Live written marking	Whole class	Verbal	Self-assessment	Peer-assessment
Time consuming, not immediate, teacher often needed to explain written feedback, a pain, takes far too much time (2), often ignored, weaker pupils respond less effectively, responses not effective enough to justify the time it takes, rarely read properly, given too late after work has been completed, pupils only focused on grades rather than feedback, onerous, loses impact as not immediate.	Cannot see all pupils in the lesson, missed pupils, less detailed and considered, takes a lot of time in the lesson, needed in conjunction with verbal feedback, time consuming, have to go back and check it after anyway, a luxury in big classes, stressful in the lesson, ignore other pupils whilst doing it in lesson time.	Not differentiated (2), pupils may choose to ignore it, missed opportunity to target specific pupils, not always specific enough, pupils will only take notice of some points, 'one size fits all' approach, not all engage, depends on the quality of the teacher's feedback, additional work on top of marking policy (2).	No evidence in books (3), some pupils missed out, lack of written evidence for targets, can be forgotten or misinterpreted, not recorded, depends on what you say and how you say it, ideally pupils should write it down or it can be forgotten, hard to evidence (2).	Pupils not trained enough, difficulty understanding success criteria, high level of knowledge needed, pupils not honest or effective enough, often inaccurate, not effective with weaker pupils, impossible for pupils to be objective, dependent on pupils' maturity, can be a 'doss' for the teacher (2).	Not confident enough, inaccurate, pupils feel uncomfortable, not always taken seriously, easily forgettable, always wrong and doesn't help with progress of individuals, pupils will try to be positive rather than think about the content, no ownership or reflection of own work, variable quality, very generous or very harsh.

Figure 5: Content analysis of teachers' perceptions of the drawbacks of different feedback methods

Source: own work

Verbal feedback, which is spontaneous and far less time consuming, may not result in the same frustrations. Teachers believed that written feedback often needed supporting teacher led feedback as pupils did not read or respond sufficiently and interestingly one drawback was that pupils 'focused on grades rather than the feedback.' This directly relates to Dweck's (2006) notion of growth mind-set; by 'spoon feeding' perhaps due to a fixation on making 'evidenced' progress towards targets, are we minimalizing pupils' development? Moreover, pupil led feedback strategies were seen as ineffective as pupils were not skilled enough to 'understand', be 'effective', 'honest' about their performance or reflective enough. This is another interesting concept; if pupils are unable to reflect accurately on their own performance and identify steps to improve is this a flaw in the school's approach to feedback? In order for pupils to become independent learners, they must have a desire to continually improve. Training pupils to become reflective and helpful in their feedback, without 'immature criticisms or unhelpful praise' is certainly possible through relevant training (Wiggins, 2012). Perhaps it is changing the culture and placing the emphasis on pupils as guiders to their education, as countries such as Estonia and Finland appear to, that will develop the usefulness of this further.

Pupils identified written feedback as the most effective strategy in promoting progress. Pupils noted that because it is written it was much easier to see, and in turn rectify, mistakes. All five pupils who were interviewed shared this idea. Moreover, pupils noted it was the 'specific' and more detailed nature of written feedback that benefited them most. Pupil D and E, who were much weaker and less confident pupils, did acknowledge that often this feedback needed to be explained in order for them to fully

Written marking	Live written marking	Whole class	Verbal	Self-assessment	Peer-assessment
Clearly know what is good and the next step target, teacher gives expert advice, specific (3), individual (2), shows your strengths, easy to see how to improve, really helpful, explained and specific, permanent record to look back on, clearly shows your grade (2), time to reflect, can see improvements, things to focus on next time, accurate, chance to improve, can go back and check on my work, can fix mistakes, really helps me, feel proud of my book and improvements, can read back and check work, good for seeing targets, expert marker, quick and direct, detailed, gives me time to practise, always shows attainment.	Don't waste time making the same mistakes, can correct mistakes during the lesson, don't leave the lesson misunderstanding, immediate, told what to do while you're in the 'writing frame of mind', improve straight away, during the lesson, 'fresh in your mind' so it's clearer, can act quicker, motivational, less likely to forget feedback, can learn in the moment, stops us working but gives us immediate feedback.	Clear to see how to improve, can learn from each other, can steal good ideas, see different points of view, most useful to see examples of top grade work, teacher can identify similar targets and mistakes, helps to see my friends' work, understand as a whole class, can all help out and join in, can compare, love doing this because I can steal ideas from others, everyone participates, useful when names are anonymised otherwise it's embarrassing, can discuss mistakes, useful overview.	Easy to understand, can't misinterpret written comments, instant (2), can make immediate corrections, more personal, precise, one-to-one is more helpful, easier to ask questions, clearer explanation than written feedback, dynamic, understand it more than when it's written, like talking to the teacher and asking questions, easy to improve after, individual, face to face, best method as easy to understand, easiest as someone is showing you what you're doing wrong, understand straight away, more personal.	Can be critical of own work and effort, makes you independent (2), effective as you're improving yourself, shows me how to improve next time, can see what I've missed and how to fix it on my own, improve myself, increases your own skills and knowledge, comfortable, can be good if I have lots of guidance, can see what I've achieved.	Can see what classmates think of your work, can learn how to improve from a peer, can voice my opinion on other people's work, can gain inspiration from peers, can see what peers are achieving, can compare, more confident, students can get a lot out of it, can see what others have done and add extra to my work, allows for a 'new set of eyes' to see your work, interesting, can compete with others.

Figure 6: Content analysis of pupils' perceptions of the effectiveness of different feedback methods

Source: own work

understand. Pupils specifically noted that as it was delivered by an 'expert marker' the feedback was 'accurate' in showing their strengths and areas to improve. This appears logical. Most interestingly however were references, by both pupils and teachers, to it being a permanent record. Both groups noted that it allowed them to see targets and progress in relation to this; however, pupils also liked the opportunity it gave them to 'look back' on work. Pupil A specifically said he liked 'having a record of how much I have improved' within his book. Another pupil noted that having written evidence enabled them to 'feel proud of my book and improvements' that had been made. Interestingly reference was also consistently made to the 'attainment' and 'grades' that were always included in written marking; this was also a particular focus of this research, understanding how this may benefit or hinder progress that is made. The written and permanent nature of feedback was also highlighted in live written marking. Predominantly, pupils preferred the immediate and direct nature of this feedback, allowing them to correct mistakes 'in the moment' which teachers also acknowledged as a clear benefit. The use of targets to make marking as specific and actionable as

possible is likely to increase pupil progress (EEF, 2016). Similar themes were evident within verbal feedback with pupils acknowledging the 'dynamic', individualised and immediate nature of it which corresponded with teacher perceptions too. None of this was particularly surprising.

Reference to collaboration and supporting other learners dominated pupils' perceptions of whole class feedback, peer and self-assessment (as codified in grey). Whole class feedback was preferred by 21% of participants in Maths. It is the 'participation' offered through whole class feedback that pupils noted as helping them to 'learn from each other', 'see different points of view' and all 'participate' to help one another. When interviewed, pupil E said this helped her to develop 'in confidence by seeing what other people in the class are good at and struggling with.' This continued with pupils noting the independence offered through self-assessment if there is enough teacher 'guidance.' Too often, teachers fall into the trap of using this as a time saving strategy rather than an effective tool. Although a clear majority of pupils thought peer assessment was least effective across all three subjects, they still acknowledged the potential benefits. Coded in grey, and related to the theme of collaboration, are phrases such as: 'gain inspiration', 'learn how to improve', 'can see what others have done' and that it allows for a 'new set of eyes to see your work.' Hattie (2011) emphasises the power of peers in supporting learning and therefore, as pupils acknowledge the positives of peer assessment, it is impossible to determine whether overall negative views are based on how the feedback is introduced and used by the teacher. Finally, it was the competitive element of peer assessment that was significant. This was not mentioned by teachers but some pupils identified the power of comparing work with others in order to 'compete' and develop further. This healthy competition should be encouraged and helps to foster collaborative learning further and detract from the idea that feedback always has to be delivered by the teacher (Fig. 7).

Identical drawbacks of written feedback were identified by pupils too. The time consuming nature of the current feedback method were acknowledged and that due to the 'big breaks' between lessons the effectiveness was sometimes lost. Pupils also noted that they sometimes misunderstood the comments, perhaps due to pupil ability and the timely nature of delivery, and this in turn diminished the effectiveness further. Wiggins (2012) states that this is one of the greatest problems in education; vital feedback often comes 'days, weeks, or even months' afterwards. Although this should be 'timely' and not always 'immediate', it is accepted practice, for example, that tests are completed and results are delivered months afterwards. This surely diminishes the impact of the learning. He notes that as educators we should ensure 'students get more timely feedback' by utilising a range of feedback methods offered through technology and the power of peers. Moreover, two pupils noted that 'nobody' likes responding to feedback and re-drafting. This lack of self-motivation is interesting and raises questions about encouraging intrinsic motivation. Research suggests that unless specific time is 'set aside' for pupils to digest and respond to marking, it is ineffective (EEF, 2016). Reference to mind-set and pupil motivation will be explored in further detail.

Pupils' perceptions of live written marking and verbal feedback were also identical to teachers'; they noted the time limitations of seeing each pupil in a lesson as well as the need for other feedback methods to assist in understanding it. However, when considering the use of whole class feedback perceptions differed. Although both pupils and teachers acknowledged that it is not always adequately differentiated, pupils focused on the emotional impact. Pupils stated they often found it 'embarrassing', 'shameful', 'humiliating' and made them feel 'anxious.' This was surprising; if delivered in an appropriate way, it should build pupils confidence and harbour the peer collaboration pupils noted. This suggests a lack of confidence, or unfamiliarity, with sharing work amongst some pupils. Only when

Written marking	Live written marking	Whole class	Verbal	Self-assessment	Peer-assessment
<p>Takes a long time to respond to and understand sometimes, takes the teacher a long time, can't correct work straightaway, can misunderstand comments, not helpful at all, boring, nobody likes green pen work, hard to understand sometimes even though this is the common way of feedback, I don't really benefit from it, doesn't help me to understand how to improve, big break between lessons, should be more frequent.</p>	<p>Takes teacher a long time, you may have made the wrong corrections if the teacher doesn't check again, teacher can't see everyone in the lesson, time consuming, sometimes rushed, breaks up your train of thought and makes you forget.</p>	<p>Don't want peers to see my work, not specific to a person, can be embarrassing for pupils, not personal, shameful if you're the only one to make a mistake, not necessary, lose interest, people have different mistakes, not specific enough, don't want others to see my work, easier to understand when feedback is one-on-one, brief, makes me anxious, humiliating, don't like it, don't know if it's aimed at you, I don't like being compared to others.</p>	<p>Teacher can't speak to everyone in the lesson, takes teacher a long time to speak to all pupils, prefer visual feedback, can sometimes forget, don't like other people hearing, doesn't always have a long term impact, I may not remember after the lesson, can be stressful.</p>	<p>Don't know how to improve my work, only see your own writing, not sure if I'm accurate, too harsh or lenient on yourself, unreliable, difficult, not marked professionally, if you don't understand then you can't improve, can change your answer while marking, pointless, can't always see where I've made mistakes, want feedback from a teacher (3), I still might not be right, want the teacher to show me how to fix it, can't find my own mistakes, never do it right, prefer the teacher to help me improve, don't get any inspiration from others and never improve, based on trust, don't like criticising myself.</p>	<p>Sometimes classmates don't mark harshly enough, scared to displease peers, can be embarrassing, unreliable, sometimes unclear, not by a professional, will miss things out, peers at a lower level, done half-heartedly, nobody takes it seriously, too many ability levels, friends joke around, peers aren't qualified to teach English, not in-depth, don't like people looking at my work, unhelpful, pointless, we are untrained, limited, biased, not qualified, overlooked, I don't know how to do it well.</p>

Figure 7: Content analysis of pupils' perceptions of the drawbacks of different feedback methods

Source: own work

we transform schools into supportive environments, where there is 'no fear of humiliation' or 'judgement' will pupils feel 'free to acknowledge their mistakes' and improve (Kohn, 1994). This seems particularly pertinent and may be another missed opportunity to combat the problem of untimely feedback that Wiggins (2012) identifies.

Finally, similar patterns and themes arose in pupils' perceptions of self-assessment; reference to pupils not being confident enough in their accuracy and 'never [doing] it right' (highlighted in green). Whilst teachers did identify self-assessment methods as being a 'doss for the teacher' five pupils explicitly referenced a drawback of it not being teacher led (coded in blue). Comments such as 'want the teacher to show me how to fix it' and 'prefer the teacher to help me improve' detracts from any form of pupil and teacher collaboration. In fact, comments such as these reflect the 'passive' behaviour that teachers at School X are highly critical of. Perhaps, through teachers routinely using and promoting mostly teacher led feedback this mind-set has evolved. The two weaker pupils interviewed both said that self-assessment made them feel 'silly' and 'stupid' which poses another question about how to effectively build pupil confidence across different ability groups using feedback.

Although it is too limiting to suggest the view that teacher led feedback is most effective can change overnight, it does raise interesting questions about how feedback links to the wider context. If pupils are encouraged to be more independent, and the teacher develops more of a coaching role from a young age, pupils may reflect on their work more effectively. 'Coaching' has become a buzz word in education with many Head-teachers and teachers participating in it; if this was transferred to pupils, who were also encouraged to 'reflect on their [work] and set their own goals for improvement,' there may be a generation of more confident and independent learners (Jones, 2014). Literature suggests that there should be 'shift in responsibility... from the teacher to the pupil; with pupils 'understanding their learning, being motivated to learn and collaborating with teachers' (Meyer, 2010). It is limited to suggest this is an easy feat but this change to a teacher becoming more coach-like is certainly preferable in promoting an active engagement in learning. This should be a whole-school approach if it is to be effective (Meyer, 2010). One pupil said they did not 'like criticising myself' which makes an interesting link to research into mind-set. Criticisms or failures should not be seen as negatives (Dweck, 2006). The analysis of comments relating to peer assessment resulted in similar and expected themes: pupils did not feel trained enough, did not see themselves as 'expert' enough and did not always feel confident in others looking at their work. These are mind-sets which perhaps need changing before pupil led feedback can be effectively utilised within feedback policies.

Conclusions

1. Teachers and pupils' perceptions of the most effective feedback methods are disparate. Pupils' perception that written feedback is most effective is culturally bound and could be cemented by the frequency they receive it. It is impossible to separate the two.
2. The majority of teachers favoured verbal feedback as most effective. There must be more clarity as to what constitutes 'verbal feedback' to raise its profile overall. Teachers are unsure that feedback is tangibly linked to progress. There must be far more robust research into this; it is difficult to spend a considerable amount of time completing written marking that has no 'proven' benefit. This raises questions about why school leaders often favour this approach to feedback; who are they really benefiting or trying to evidence 'proof' for?
3. In turn, the majority of teachers considered the most time effective methods of feedback to combine methods. No one method should take priority over another. Pupil led feedback needs to be integrated and promoted, as a whole school, far more effectively for it to be seen as a credible feedback method (Hattie, 2011). This would impact positively on the collaboration between teacher and pupils as well as ensuring feedback could be delivered in a timely and varying way.
4. Changes must be in line with the school's overall vision and culture. Changes cannot be introduced, and positively received, by members of the organisation when no consultation or involvement has occurred. My vision as a future leader is that education and a curriculum should not be dictated by a lack of trust in teachers as professionals and making everything part of an accountability system. We must encourage professional judgement and autonomy and adopt the mind-set that success should be measured in the progress individuals make as a whole. Only by developing this mind-set will the mind-sets of pupils' change; they cannot expect to be resilient, confident and receptive to criticism when the

stakes are so high and judged by the progress they make in graded assessments. In order to change society's view of education, educational organisations must have the confidence not to be fully dictated by policy and cultural pressures.

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Primary School Executive Leadership: an exploration of a new and changing role in English education

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Introduction

Executive leaders (EL) sometimes called Executive Headteachers (EH) have recently become a significant part of the school leadership landscape in England. The exact figures are currently somewhat unclear but what is known is that numbers are increasing year on year and have risen by 240% since 2010. It is estimated that there could be demand for at least 3200 more EHTs by 2022 (Lord *et al.*, 2016; House of Commons Educational Committee (HCEC), 2017). Furthermore, there is a wide variety in terms of the responsibilities of individuals working as EHTs such as with the number of schools they work with, the corresponding school structures and whether they have headship in any of those schools.

The emergence of EHTs coincides with the declining role of local education authorities (LEAs) in English schools and the greater autonomy of school leaders (West & Bailey, 2013). EHTs are able to fill the gaps left by the diminished LEA as part of their administered roles in many multi academy trusts and federations. An academy is a school free from local authority control and funded directly by central government.

What is an EHT?

The term ‘executive head/headteacher’ is not one that is currently defined in English education law and existing definitions are sparse. The School Workforce Census (DfE, 2015) considers that the “post of executive headteacher should be used for a headteacher who directly leads two or more schools in a federation or other partnership arrangement” (p. 39). EHTs have often been defined in the literature as either substantive or strategic headteachers of more than one school (Chapman *et al.*, 2008; Harris *et al.*, 2006; NCSL, 2010; Hummerstone, 2012). Despite this, there are many cases where headteachers of one school work under the title of EHT.

On the other hand, there have also been examples of leaders of two or more schools going by the title of headteacher or chief executive officer (Hummerstone, 2012; Fellows, 2016; NCSL, 2010). Therefore, it is no wonder that the current figures surrounding the number of EHTs are difficult to accurately define.

The purpose of EHTs

Not only is there confusion of how to define an EL and EHT, the role itself appears to be causing some debate. It could well be argued, that it *should* be down to specific schools to decide what an EL position looks like to them, for them and that there is little wrong with being driven by local circumstances. Being flexible and adapted to their context should be seen as a positive.

How do they spend their time in the role?

The priorities of EHTs depend somewhat on the expertise of the individual and the context of their portfolio of schools. Nevertheless, the NCSL (2016) found that executive heads, among other things, act at a more strategic level, developing and developing interpersonal skills. However, there may be some disparity between what EHTs 'should' do and what they actually achieve in their role. The NCSL (Earley, 2012) found that only 53% of senior leaders surveyed reported they spent the right amount of time on leadership generally.

Types of leadership that executives employ

There are many different types of leadership including strategic, transformational, transformative and system leadership. I feel that there is considerable overlap between these styles and that the overlap exists in practical application too. Goleman (2000) emphasized that leaders cannot rely on just one or two leadership styles, but must become proficient in as many as they can. The most effective leaders switch flexibly among the leadership styles.

Is any of this leadership effective?

Evidence of the ability of academies (which are often under the direction of ELs) to raise pupil performance is limited and varied. The picture across England is very mixed with academies in trusts at both the top and bottom of recent league tables (HCEC, 2017). There are so many methods to measure school success because school success is so multi-faceted. I have not yet found a method that reliably takes into account all of these aspects to provide a reliable and true ranking of schools. Furthermore, hard evidence that supports claims about the impact of school leadership on pupil performance has been slow to emerge and is not wholly conclusive. This can be seen in more than one way - that evidence simply is not there or that this model of school leadership has not yet had time to prove its efficiency in the way that other areas have. In addition, the rise of EHTs in England is so recent that it barely allows time for robust evidence of this structural model to be gathered, let alone the best ways for EHTs to conduct themselves in the role. So should we really be advocating the rapid rise in executive leadership if the long-term effectiveness has not been proven? A review of relevant literature made clear that the emergence of EHT positions is by no means straight forward. Nevertheless, the role of

EHT seems to be here to stay, at least for the foreseeable future therefore it is important we do our best to attempt to make sense of it for the benefit of our schools and all those involved.

Consequently, I investigated the following main research questions:

- **PERCEPTION:** How do EHTs see their own role and how do EHTs perceive the issues around the ambiguity of the position?
- **DEFINITION:** What is the role of EHT? What should an EHT do?
- **CHALLENGES:** What do EHTs feel are their biggest challenges and focuses?
- **LEADERSHIP:** What leadership styles/models do these EHTs display?

These questions are highly interlinked and certainly overlap but guided my research. I compared my findings to that of the limited prior research in these areas.

Research Methodology, Methods and Management

Research Strategy

As this article is mainly focussed on how executive leadership is experienced by those in the role, the focus of this study is not to investigate the effectiveness of the role of the EHT. This study focuses on a small number of participants in a specific context thus it would be foolish of me to generalise this to all ELs, academies and trusts. Nevertheless, the perceptions of how effective the EHTs feel they are is relevant. What I do aimed to do, is to help fill the void in the literature as described by Chapman et al (2008). It is important to share the experiences of EHTs to build upon the current, limited body of research into executive leadership. This in turn can act as a basis for future more wide scale research into the role.

The Study

The study involved semi-structured interviews with five Executive Headteachers. The principal aim here was to provide information about the headteachers' vision, values and leadership. All of the participants were working within a position titled as "Executive Headteacher", were a leader of more than one school and were working within a primary academy. Thematic analysis was used to analyse the data. The conceptual framework of the thematic analysis built upon research produced by Braun and Clarke (2006).

Findings and Analysis

Finances

Financial constraints were very frequently mentioned in the interviews despite there being no questions asked specifically about it. Finance was mentioned in all five of the interviews whether this was in terms of rationale for their plans for expansion or financial pressures. These financial pressures were discussed as a distraction from how the EHTs would like to spend their time in their role as in comments on the "pressures of finance", or as in "my ideal world [would be] not getting bogged down in trying to find

money and writing six different budgets every year". The financial pressures required additional work:

"We know in schools we're all screwed, therefore, it's important that we're looking at finances. And I know that the next 12 months there are tough decisions on staffing I need to make, and we all do in the trust, because of finances".

As academies have more control over their own finances due to the diminished role of the LEA (West & Bailey, 2013). It comes down to schools 'pick up the slack' in terms of areas such as finance which adds to schools' workloads.

Responsibility and Accountability

Featured in four of the interviews, was that of the role being about ultimate accountability in various forms.

The nature of schools as organisations means that they are designed to create good academic outcomes from children.

"So it's walking around knowing that even though you're not there and there's nothing you can do about it, if somebody does something wrong it's you."

Despite this, academic success/progress was not this principal focus of any of the interviews. Perhaps because it is teachers that should be directly involved in academic progress for children (DfE, 2011) whilst EHTs provide the necessary foundations to enable teachers to create academic success for the pupils and ultimately lead to improvement within the system (Hummerstone, 2012; Chapman *et al.*, 2011; NCSL, 2010).

Staffing

All participants mentioned supporting other staff and their head teachers/heads of school in particular.

One participant (1) discussed how they believe part of their role is to support the SLT by:

"providing professional support and professional development to the two heads of schools because I work very closely with those heads of schools. So partly I'm line managing them, and I'm responsible for continually developing and improving their effectiveness but also supporting their roles in the day to day management of the school"... "It's more supportive really and more opportunities to work together and just you know share thoughts and ideas and talk things through. That's often what's missing when you've got a single headteacher in a school."

However, the EHTs not only said they supported Heads of School but also other members of staff. This was another main theme, mentioned in all of the interviews.

"The way that I look at it is that it's my job to grow the team and give them the skills and the knowledge that they need in order for them to then cascade that

down to the classrooms. But it very much depends on where the school's at and the capacity of the team. So there are times when you have to be more operational and get more involved whilst you're growing somebody into that role."

Recruitment/Retention

These are two sides of the same coin. The EHTs talked about the challenge of recruitment of teaching staff which is a national issue (House of Commons, 2018).

Another participant (2) talked positively about the benefits that they were now able to offer:

"And I've been able to offer teachers - often teachers who are at early stages in their career - formal leadership opportunities. For example, last week I was interviewing for TLRs and the successful candidates were people within the first four years of their teaching career. And normally, in the small school those people would have moved on to perhaps larger schools or whatever but actually, they've been given the opportunity to operate in a larger organisation."

Linked to this, EHT also focussed upon succession planning. A participant (5) talked in detail about how it is a part of her role to think strategically, planning for the future by considering the staffing of the school in the future:

"Even though they might not be in those positions yet, I know in my mind, when that one goes and has a baby, you're going to be doing that SENCO (Special Education Neds Coordinator) role. And when this one leaves because she wants to be a head, I know I've got this one who can step in"... "So always, always in succession planning."

Leadership Styles

This leads rightly on to a chief focus of all of the interviews - that of leadership styles. Distributed leadership was mentioned in all the interviews either as a main leadership style, or as part of a multitude of styles. In addition, transformative leadership was mentioned once but only in conjunction with transformational leadership. Strategic leadership was the most frequently mentioned leadership style in all five interviews. Strategic leadership was heavily mentioned in every single interview. Interestingly despite Participant 5 saying that the EHT role looks different in every school, the way the EHTs describe their role in each case was very similar. Nevertheless, I hasten to add that simply the frequent mentions of strategic leadership is not firm evidence of the existence of strategic leadership in their role. Participants mentioned how, many of the day-to-day tasks (particularly managing staff and finances) take them away from being able to be as strategic.

"I've had eight changes of head of school. They're all now heads of their own schools, which is great. But it has meant that I'm constantly developing staff who then grow confident and fly away"... "Which then means that I'm again operational because I'm growing somebody else which means that I'm not being strategic and

it is a balancing act whilst ever you're being operational that's fine, but whilst you're doing that you have to be aware of why you're doing that, how long you're spending doing that, is that becoming a barrier to other people's growth."

System leadership was rarely mentioned explicitly in terms of which leadership styles the EHTs used. Nevertheless, the components of system leadership were referred to frequently. For example, there was a lot of discussion surrounding the development of systems, restructuring and centralisation. In terms of partnerships the EHTs discussed collaboration within schools, across various other schools within the trust and generally sharing good practice.

Ideal vs reality

All of the headteachers said that there was a disparity between the amount of time they would like to spend on strategic and system leadership and the amount of time they actually did. This supports previous findings (NCSL, 2010). Participant 1 states:

"I still get dragged-- as it would, dragged into the detailed day to day leadership stuff because of my role of kind of supporting and working with the heads of school. And that's fine. That's not a problem, but it still means that there's never quite enough time for the strategy big vision stuff that you hope that there might be."

This is reiterated by Participant 5 who expressed the desire to do research and integrate good practice from other schools into their own. However, this is not always possible:

"It's about "having the freedom to look at what could it look like and how do we get there, which you can't do if you're bogged down in cleaning the toilets or picking up half a dead rabbit from the playground various things I've done over the last couple of days. It's stopped that. But if you're in a position where you are acting as an executive and you are strategic in that role, you have the ability to think about something and then go and visit that school where they do that really well and bring back notes to share with the leadership team"

Summary of the Findings

In order to summarise the findings, I first link back to the initial research questions and discuss each in turn.

PERCEPTION: The research questions of perception and definition overlap considerably as it is hard to answer one without the other. In summary, whilst the role appears unclear - the EHTs feel that they know what they are doing. However, there is an awareness that the role is not clearly defined.

"I think it's very different in every school because each of the schools has very, very, very different needs. And also, as the school goes on its journey, my role evolves and changes all the time. We did try to create an executive head job de-

scription and head of school job descriptions, and it was just so different for each of the schools, we found it really, really difficult to do."

There was agreement in the broadness and variation of the role.

"The role of executive head itself doesn't have one meaning as I'm sure you're aware anyway, different schools, different governing bodies, different trusts approach that role in different way. There is no definitive what that means."

None of the EHTs were unsure of their role. The role has become clearer as time as gone on:

"I think when I started, I don't think anybody knew what executive head meant, nobody could give me a template. I didn't at the time know anybody else who was an executive head"

Nevertheless, Participant 3 contributed that in their trust an executive head to them means: *"we interpret it as leading more than one school, as simple as that"*

DEFINITION: The rise in the commonness of EHTs has potentially made it easier. EHTs do whatever their school needs them to. They should be helping their schools to succeed. In real terms, in the context of the schools within this study, this meant a strong focus on:

- retention and recruitment
- supporting senior leaders
- coaching and staff development
- expansion and collaboration
- accountability

The EHT role appears to be a very flexible role as in one day they could be looking at finance, staffing, cleaning and admin – all manner of things!

This study found evidence to suggest that improvement, expansion and partnerships were aspects of the role thus the findings link closely to that of Lord *et al.* (2016) and Hummerstone (2012). However, for these particular schools, developing staff and senior leaders was perhaps the biggest focus. The data also heavily focussed on finance too. However, yet again, a solid grasp of finances is particularly important when considering expansion. The findings here also link to the research by Hummerstone, (2012), Chapman *et al.*, (2011) and NCSL (2010) that EHTs increase strategic and collaborative capacity. It is clear that the EHTs felt that their role (and being part of a trust) was helping to enable this.

The EHTs in this study seemed to be clear on their role and that the role is flexible due to the needs of the school.

CHALLENGES: The biggest challenges that arose from the data set were with finance, recruitment and retention. All of these areas also detract the EHTs from being able to be strategic and can 'drag' them into the operational which they aim not to. If teaching wasn't such a challenging role, with such a high workload (Foster, 2018) then there would potentially be much less of an issue with recruitment and retention for EHTs to deal with. This also has a knock on effect on finance another pressure as recruitment costs not only time but precious funding. Now once again, this is an entire debate of its own right but I feel that it is worth noting that simply the current challenges of an EL needn't be accepted as the norm - but could in fact be challenged. If EHTs were able to

spend more time on doing what they feel the need to rather than being 'dragged' into other areas then perhaps schools would see much more of an impact from an EL being able to think and lead – showing more leadership, as opposed to management and administration.

LEADERSHIP: This leads onto leadership. As discussed, there was considerable overlap between the leadership styles as described using the executive leadership model. All of the EHTs commented on the range of leadership styles used just as Goleman (2000) suggested was beneficial. As the role of EHT is so variable, it is really no surprise that the types and styles of leadership used would need to be adapted to suit each school and its particular circumstances.

Conclusion

Prior to the study, I was unaware of what an EL did in the primary setting. I found myself contemplating if they were even necessary - 'if schools survived for so long without them, why are they needed?' However, after the study my thoughts turn to how schools functioned before the existence of the EHT role and how so many schools, particularly those in academies, still do. If EHTs mentioned the pressures of finance and not having time to plan strategically - then who do these responsibilities fall to in those schools where head teachers are dealing with day-to-day management as well? The existence of an EL does not equate to success or to the presence of strategic and system leadership which have been shown to be important. Schools school consider the structure of their schools to allow EHTs to be able to carry out their intended duties. Certainly, the process of academisation has changed the educational landscape. Whilst ELs are not limited to academies within trusts, or even to academies, the changes of how schools are run with regards to the diminished role of LEA have certainly had an impact. Schools are using this as an opportunity to make what could be described as brave decisions in deciding how best to distribute limited funds such as the sharing of staff over multiple schools and restructuring leadership teams.

The findings explained in this article also build on previous research into the skills that EHTs require (Fellows, 2016), by highlighting the distinct skill areas that EHTs need to emphasise compared with HTs – namely: strategic thinking, coaching and staff development, school-to-school consistency and collaboration. Nevertheless, the EHTs are still spending much of their time on non-leadership aspects of the schools. The prominence of staff development and retention as a focus of EHT's time and energy is perhaps a reflection of the teacher 'crisis' that has heightened in recent years (Foster, 2018). So EHTs can help to address this. Nevertheless, as primary teacher retention rates have continued to drop since the increase in the number of EHTs, could it be that they are not being effective in that endeavour? Have they not had time yet or would it be much worse without them? Should it be the responsibility of ELs to try to attract and prevent staff from leaving the profession or does it fall to Ofsted and the government to reduce workload? These issues merit further investigation.

This study has confirmed that there is inconsistency in the role and deployment of EHTs in England. Even in a small sample it was possible to find several examples of EHTs operating in different manners. Nevertheless, there was also considerable overlap between the roles of the EHTs for example with regards to supporting staff and finance. But again I argue - is this a bad thing? The job title "teacher" is very broad and usually defines someone that supports the learning of their pupils yet the role can look very

different in different settings and that is a good thing. Just as teachers should be responsible yet responsive to their individual needs of their pupils, ELs should be responsible and also responsive to the individual needs of their schools.

Perhaps more guidance could be useful for ELs as they step into their roles but I did not come to the conclusion that the participants in this study were at all confused or unclear about their roles. In fact, the five individuals in this study knew exactly where they wanted to go with the futures for their academies and would make sure this happened whether this meant getting their hands dirty (both metaphorically and literally in some cases) and working hard to ensure they tried their best to get good outcomes for their schools.

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An exploration of the effectiveness of pupil premium strategies according to Teachers' perspectives in two comparative schools

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Introduction

One of the biggest problems facing British schools is the gap between rich and poor, and the enormous disparity in children's home backgrounds and the social and cultural capital they bring to the educational table.

(Benn & Miller, 2015, p. 2)

After three year of training on the *Teach First* programme, I was given the responsibility of supporting the Assistant Head Teacher in monitoring the success of disadvantaged pupils. During my third year I took the decision to move schools because I wanted to ensure I became a rounded practitioner, rather than an outstanding practitioner in one context. In January 2018, I began my new role in a school in a contrasting area. Although both schools have a similar percentage of pupils that are eligible for the pupil premium grant, the contexts of these schools are very different and despite School B having notably better test results than School A, the progress of their students eligible for pupil premium was similar. I therefore thought this would be an excellent opportunity to explore and compare the strategies each school has taken to meet the needs of these disadvantaged pupils and the impact that these had on their overall attainment. It is argued that strong, visionary leadership has a pivotal role in changing the outcomes for disadvantaged pupils (Jonathan Sharples, 2011). The leadership style adopted at each school is in many ways very different so I was particularly interested in the impact of this on the disadvantaged pupils in each context. Furthermore, the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG) was only introduced in 2011, so is a relatively new initiative in education in England and is a topic of controversy among educational academics, practitioners and politicians. I therefore thought it would be interesting to think about the value or limitations of the PPG and compare the success and impact of the strategies chosen by each school.

It is evident from literature that there has long been interest in socio-economic inequalities in educational achievement both nationally and internationally. In 2009, The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) research division provided explanations as to why deprivation leads to lower educational attainment and identified features such as:

- Income and material deprivation
- Health

- Family stress
 - Parental education
 - Parental involvement in their children's education
 - Cultural and social capital, and experience of schooling
 - Low aspirations
 - Exposure to multiple risk factors
 - Literacy
- (DCSF, 2009)

With the introduction of pupil premium funding, schools in England are now required to closely track the achievement of their disadvantaged pupils in comparison to their more affluent pupils more wisely than previously (Jerrim, 2017). The Pupil Premium Grant is additional funding for publicly funded schools in England to raise the attainment of disadvantaged pupils of all abilities and to close the gaps between them and their peers. (Department for Education, 2014). The OECD reported in 2012 that one of every five students across OECD countries does not reach a basic minimum level of skills to function in today's societies (OECD, 2012). Globally, students from low socio-economic backgrounds are twice as likely to be low performers at school (ibid). What is more, the current gap between pupils from more and less advantaged backgrounds in England is one of the largest among OECD countries and it is reported by institutions such as 'The Independent Newspaper' that children from poorer backgrounds in England will already be eight months behind their more privileged peers before starting school. (Pells, 2016) (OECD, 2014). The Pupil Premium Grant was introduced by the coalition government in 2011 to increase social mobility and reduce the gap in performance between pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers. Schools receive funding for each disadvantaged pupil and can use the funding flexibly, in the best interests of eligible pupils. For the purpose of this study, disadvantaged pupils are identified in the national school datasets based on their eligibility for pupil premium, this includes pupils eligible for free school meals at any point within the past six years and pupils looked after by the local authority. Since being introduced in 2011, the Pupil Premium Grant has been subject to critical evaluation with a variety of stances arguing both for and against. For example, the Education Endowment Fund (also called the Sutton Trust) reported from a survey of 1,163 teachers conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research (NFER) in 2014 that 'nearly 1 in 4 teachers think pupil premium funds may not be targeted at the poorest students', suggesting that the grant is not achieving what it is there to do. (The Sutton Trust, 2014)

In order to understand the comparisons being made between School A and B it is important to understand the context of each school and the community and the challenges both face. School A is much larger than the average-sized primary school with an intake of 603 students aged 3–11. The school recently changed Headship (January 2017) and achieved an Ofsted (England's national school inspection service) rating of 'Requires Improvement' in its most recent inspection in 2017 with an area of focus for improvement on pupils' results at the end of Key Stage 1 & 2 (School A Ofsted Report 2017 p. 3). Its surrounding community can be described as a deprived area with a large majority of pupils from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Tibbs, 2013). Pinter (2013) conveyed on behalf of the town council in their report that according to 'the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2010)' 26% of the location of School A's population lives within the most deprived areas of England, with School A's community categorised as being in the poorest 20% of households in the Country. Consequently, the proportion of pupils eligible for the Pupil-Premium Grant is much higher than the national average at 32%. This does however, mean their grant is sizeable, giving School

A the resources to challenge the socio-economic gap in education in a way suitable to their specific context.

School B on the other hand is located in a social housing estate in a much more affluent area. It is an average size school, with an intake of approximately 400 pupils and has a unique mix of very disadvantaged pupils alongside ones from very affluent families. Compared to other schools in this town, its proportion of pupils entitled to the pupil premium is larger than expected at 27%. Its unique make up of pupils is particularly interesting when analysing the socio-economic gap between its less and more affluent pupils alongside the educational gap between these pupils. Another contextual element which is of interest to this research is that the Head Teacher of School B has been there for 17 years. It will therefore be interesting to see if her leadership longevity and style have an effect on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

This research for this article is a comparative study between two schools to evaluate teacher perceptions of the impact of their pupil premium spending. As noted already "It is for schools to decide how the Pupil Premium, allocated to schools per FSM pupil is spent, since they are best placed to assess what additional provision should be made for the individual pupils within their responsibility" (Department for Education, 2014, p. 4). Clearly leaders in schools play a critical part in deploying these additional resources to maximum effect to narrow the achievement gap.

The three research questions underpinning this article are **teachers' perceptions** in terms of:

1. **To what extent are the leadership styles in School A and School B transformational or transactional?**
2. **What impact might the leadership style of a school be on the strategies used to help disadvantaged pupils through PPG.**
3. **What are the most effective strategies to ensure success for disadvantaged pupils for School A and School B?**

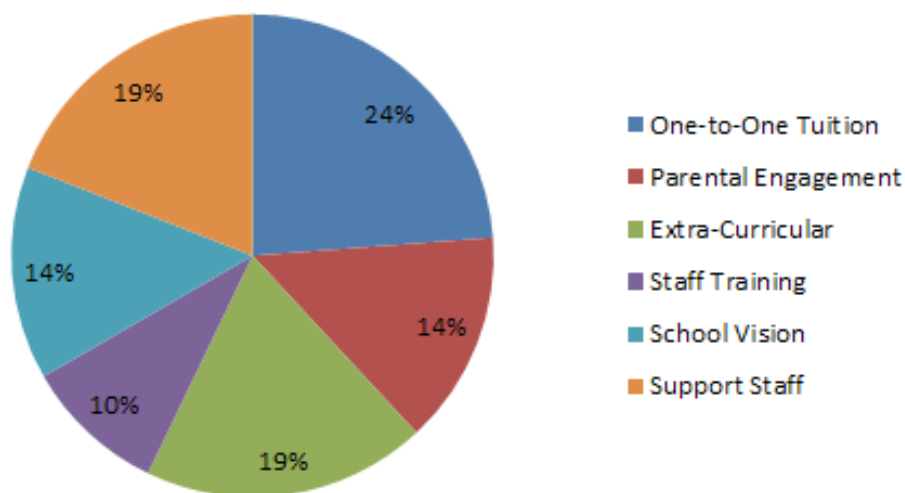
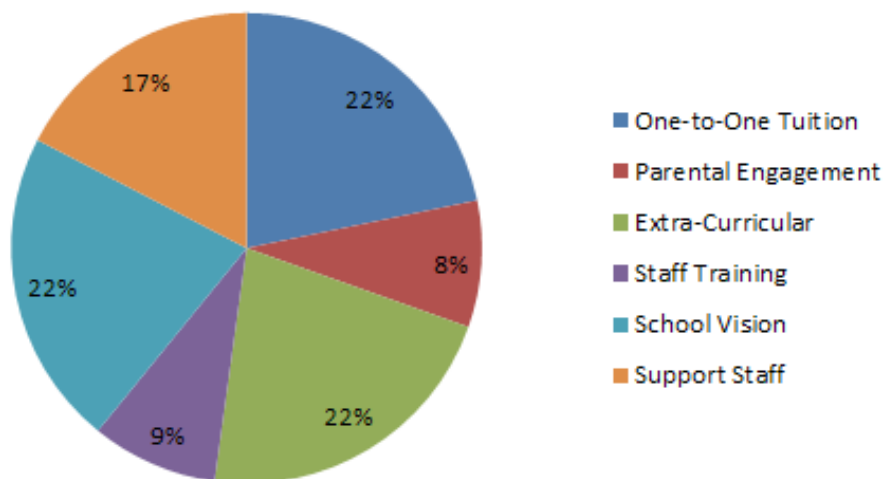
Methodology

In order to investigate these questions, I designed a mixed method, action research project. This is because I was conducting research in an environment that I would be working in with the aim of improving strategies.

I used a range of both qualitative and quantitative data. These firstly consisted of questionnaires to classroom teachers. The response rate was 100% in both schools. Secondly, semi-structured interviews (with 3 teachers and 1 leader from each schools) were conducted to discover the meanings that participants attach to their behaviour, how they interpret situations, and what their perspectives are on particular issues (Bloor, Wood, & p105, 2006). The research adhered to the guidelines for the ethical conduct of research of the British Educational Research Association (ibid).

Analysis and Findings

Responses from the questionnaires to look into what teachers thought the most effective strategies were in their school. were then analysed. Below are the results from School A and School B.



Source: own work

It is imperative to recognise that it is impossible to identify the impact of each of these interventions or strategies individually as they are not completely separate or independent entities. This research therefore takes into account the perspectives of Staff in School A and School B as to the effectiveness of each strategy and uses literature to support arguments for the strengths and weaknesses for each strategy.

Leadership

Due to the nature of the research the most prominent theme that occurred in the analysis was 'Leadership'.

- 1. To what extent are the leadership styles in School A and School B perceived by teachers to be transformational or transactional?**
- 2. What impact might the leadership style of a school be on the strategies used to help disadvantaged pupils through PPG.**

Naturally, both schools have a very different style of leadership. Collaboration is a key factor in transformational leadership. In order for schools to be successful, they must usually, unless in dire circumstances, take a collaborative approach within a progressive environment where leadership traits are enhanced and passed on to others (PWC, 2007). Marsh (2000) claims that solitary leadership blocks the development of the collaborative working necessary for success. This collaborative approach would enhance school culture as staff would feel part of the visions and this could result in the leadership gaining a 'followership'. It would appear from this study's results that teachers from School A, do not feel decisions made have been made are done so 'collaboratively'. Participant C said "*as class teachers we haven't really had a say towards anything, we have lost quite a lot of autonomy this year*". Participants from School B on the other hand mostly said that they felt part of the process, they were given lots of autonomy and all of the participants said how they felt "*trusted*" by the leadership at School B. This 'collaborative, non-solitary approach to leadership' is labelled by many, such as Precey as 'Transformational' (Precey 2015). Rowland (2018) argues "*the answers to cracking the code for disadvantaged learners doesn't necessarily lie in the Headteacher's office. Get teachers to input into provision. Middle leaders should be championing the cause of disadvantaged learners every day*"(p1). From this perspective, one could argue that School B was seen by teachers to be more transformational than School A. Furthermore, it was clear from responses from School B in particular that teachers felt their leadership teams' 'strong and no excuse' culture led to high expectations of all pupils in their school regardless of their socio-economic background.

It is argued that a strong culture is essential in ever changing schools as individual goals are more likely to be converted to a shared goal in schools where there is participation and a strong culture. This is due to the collective consciousness in strong organisational culture. Thus the coherence of an individually developed vision within an organizational culture is more important than the individual who created the vision. Responses from School B showed that teachers viewed this as an essential in their school and felt this could explain why their disadvantaged pupils make good progress in their attainment. Responses from School A on the other hand were less positive and teachers felt that their leadership team took a more 'transactional approach to leadership'. Teachers' felt that they were like "*robots just being told what to do how to do it and when to do it*" (Participant A). When asked how they felt this affected the progress of their disadvantaged pupils one participant said "*it's difficult to measure the impact of each strategy we put in place when everything changes constantly*". It could therefore be argued that School

A's participants had less trust in their leadership to make an impact on the progress of their students.

The context of the schools must be considered here as the head teacher of School A has been head at the school for just 18 months compared with the headship of 17 years for the head at School B. The head at school B has therefore had the opportunity to build relationships with staff, to gain a followership and build trust with colleagues. When analysing the data and referring to literature it is clear that School A is attempting to build solidarity within the school staff however you could also argue that they need to also build on the 'sociability' as by 'not listening' to staff members views could lead to staff feeling mistrusted or untrusting of the leadership and if this is neglected could lead to a high turnover of staff or may lead to a lack of 'followership' among staff and the leadership team, creating a 'them and us' atmosphere. This is referred to by Macbeath in who argues the ability of a leader to listen with intent to understand was considered to be an important aspect of 'followership' (2004). The recurring feeling from each of my interviews in School A were that teachers were not on board on the 'vision' as they didn't feel a part of it. It could therefore be argued that due to this 'transactional approach' staff did not necessarily 'buy in' to the head teacher's vision. This highlights the need for staff to have confidence in and a sense of shared values with immediate leaders in the workplace. Therefore, the challenge for the leader is to achieve their vision without 'alienating' staff. As a result, the overall perception was that they felt like they weren't doing their jobs properly which led to staff members feeling 'on edge' and like they 'weren't trusted' (Participant A, School A, 2018). Precey (2012) argues that 'trust' is the 'magic glue' that has been missing in education and is a necessary condition for effective transformational leadership for learning and can stimulate 'successful management of change'. Precey argues that both transformational and transformative leaders build 'openness and trust' (Precey, 2015). It could therefore be argued that leadership in School A is more 'transactional'. This lack of trust in School A has had an impact on the effectiveness of strategies put in place to improve PPG attainment in school A as mis(dis) trust leads to lack of confidence, lack of self-esteem, disloyalty, selfishness, playing safe, individualism, instability and perhaps most importantly in this context, fragmentation (Precey, 2012).

Sharples (2012) argues leadership style has the most impact on the success of a school and within this, disadvantaged pupils. Thus work also looked into how the leadership style of each school might have an effect on the progress of disadvantaged students. There is a wide range of research that links the improvement of disadvantaged pupils' outcomes with effective leadership. (Robinson, 2007, Hattie, 2009; Bush and Glover 2013; Fullan 2014). 'Transformational leadership' can be defined as focusing on end-values, which in this case is good progress in the attainment of pupil premium students and is described by Precey (2015) as the most effective leadership strategy, particularly in environments, like schools, where the pace of change is fast. 'Transactional leadership' on the other hand is described by Burns (1978) as reciprocal transactions based on exchanging one thing for another (Shield, 2010, p. 564). According to many academics, transformational leadership provides a better way of leading for today's organizations, where followers seek both an inspirational leader to help guide them through an uncertain environment and where followers also want to be challenged and to feel empowered (Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, it is also important to note Celikten's (2003) argument that the main task of the principle in creating a positive atmosphere is to contribute to the creation of a strong school culture. As a result, the school's formal and informal dimensions integrate with each other. It could be argued all members of the school community take pride in their school (Celikten 2003). This shared feeling provides cohesion and convergence among all members involved. Leaders must therefore

aim to strengthen this positive culture within the school. This is often done by celebrating success in meetings and ceremonies, looking for opportunities to tell stories about success and cooperation, and using a clear and shared language to strengthen the commitment of staff and students. Celikten also argues that effective school leaders reinforce the standards and values of the school through their statements and discourse with others in their daily activities (Çelikten, 2003) Bass' model of transformational leadership proposes four key elements of transformational leadership: charismatic, inspirational, stimulating and considerate. Furthermore, Bass finds that a central feature is trust in the leader (Bass, 1985). Rowland (2017) also argues leaders must 'trust staff and make them feel trusted'. According to Bass, transformational leadership is different to transactional leadership as the social exchange between leaders and followers, underpinned by core values goes beyond material exchange (Bass, 1985).

What are the most effective strategies, from the teachers' perspectives, to ensure success for disadvantaged pupils for School A and School B?

One-to-One Tuition

The second key theme arising from the findings was the impact of one-to-one tuition targeted on each pupils' specific areas of weaknesses. From interviews with teachers from School A and B, each school seemed to take a different approach however participants from both schools argued that this was the most 'valuable tool' for ensuring the success of all their pupils not just their disadvantaged pupils. School A, used the pupil premium grant to fund extra teaching assistant hours in afternoons which were referred to by teachers in School A as 'afternoon surgery'. Participant C said *'We live mark and give feedback to students during lessons and then use our AFL (assessment for learning) to see which students need to have any misconceptions corrected or any areas retaught, we pass this on to our teaching assistants and they cover these in the afternoon so that they've caught up for the next lesson'*. Comparatively, School B also provided one-to-one tuition but through a different approach. Instead of using teaching assistants they employed a full-time teacher that covered one key stage who took children out to target specific areas of weaknesses. These weaknesses are *'initially identified by us (class teachers) but the teacher is qualified so that means she can make judgements about how to progress with the pupil to the next step'* When speaking to the head teacher of School B she was confident that this one-to-one time was 'individualized' to the needs of each student and that this meant *'gaps are being filled at every opportunity'*. When asked how they ensured it was the pupil premium eligible children that got this tuition the phase leader of School B said *'We were told when she first started that our pupil premium eligible students had to be prioritised, even those working within the national standards had to have sessions, we can use her for other children as well if time but only if our pupil premium children have had their time'*. When looking at questionnaire responses participants from both school rated this as having the highest impact for their disadvantaged pupils. This evidence therefore suggests that from a teacher's perspective at School A and School B, one-to-one tuition is really valuable to ensure the progress of their disadvantaged pupils. Furthermore, when comparing interview responses participants from both schools spoke favourably about this strategy in particular and was described as 'valuable' by more than 3 of the participants.

Similar findings were reported by Abbott *et al.* (2013), who found that more successful head teachers placed a strong emphasis on identifying individual pupils' needs for

targeted interventions, with a significant emphasis on literacy and other basic skills and mentoring and tutoring were identified as the key strategies for this. Furthermore, the Education Endowment Foundation (EFF) found that removing individual pupils from their class for intensive, short and regular sessions has a high impact on education attainment and can mean that pupils make up to 4 or 5 months' progress in reading and mathematics. When comparing the data from both schools there is evidence to show that this is correct. However, when comparing both strategies it was interesting to consider the impact of teaching assistants (School A) versus qualified teachers. Quantitative evidence suggests that pupils who received tuition from the qualified school teacher in School B made a more significant amount of progress in their reading and mathematics ages than those in School A who received support from teaching assistants.

The EFF suggests that a qualified teacher is likely to achieve greater success than support staff or volunteers and argues that evidence shows teachers can have nearly twice the effect on average. This is interesting as there is wide debate among educationalists about the impact teaching assistants have on the progress of disadvantaged pupils. Sharples *et al.* wrote in their report about the largest and most detailed study investigating the deployment and impact of Teacher Assistants (TA) in schools to date is the Deployment and Impact of Support Staff (DISS) project, conducted between 2003 and 2008 in UK schools. The analysis studied the effects of the amount of TA support – based on teacher estimates of TA support and systematic observations – on 8,200 pupils' academic progress in English, mathematics and science. Two cohorts of pupils in seven age groups in mainstream schools were tracked over one year each. Other factors known to affect progress (and the allocation of TA support) were taken into account in the analysis, including pupils' SEN status, prior attainment, eligibility for Free School Meals, English as an Additional Language and deprivation. The results showed that 16 of the 21 results were in a negative direction and there were no positive effects of TA support for any subject or for any year group. Those pupils receiving the most support from TAs made less progress than similar pupils who received little or no support from TAs. There was also evidence that the negative impact was most marked for pupils with the highest levels of Special Educational Needs (SEN), who, as discussed, typically receive the most TA support. (Sharples) It is therefore argued that Teaching Assistants can have a positive impact if the correct training is provided. Furthermore, a limitation that must be taken into account is that the costs are high and could costs around £800 per pupil, per year. In the UK, four recent evaluations of one to one tuition interventions (see Catch Up Numeracy, Catch Up Literacy, REACH, and Switch-on Reading) found average impacts of between three and six months' additional progress, suggesting that positive impacts can be successfully replicated in English schools. One-to-one tuition has a positive impact if the correct training is put in place.

Parental Engagement

A large proportion of School A's pupil premium budget is spent on raising parental engagement in their pupils' academic attainment. When analysing interviews of teachers from School A, this was something that was mentioned in each interview. Participant B said *'Our disadvantaged students generally don't complete their homework at home with parents or even read their levelled reading book and so getting teachers to take responsibility for their children's attainment is one of our main goals'*. Having conducted interviews with various members of staff it was clear that staff, leadership and the governing body are all aware that very limited engagement takes place with parents and their

child's academic progress and that this is an area that needs to be addressed by School A. It is therefore clear why the initiatives that School A implement using the Pupil Premium Fund therefore have to be sensitive to 'the schools' community in particular but need to encourage parents to engage with their children's learning e.g. reading with them at home, making sure they complete homework. In order to overcome this challenge, the Head of School A appointed a Family Learning Officer (FLO) in 2013, funded by the Pupil Premium Grant (PPG), who works with parents in Key Stage 1 in an attempt to close the attainment gap in the early stages of disadvantaged students' education. The role of the FLO is to run workshops for Key Stage 1 pupil premium parents and EAL parents to give them resources which can help them support their child's learning. However, EAL pupil's parents make up just 15% of School A (Family Learning Officer, 2018). Although work must be done to support EAL parents, given the local communities demographics, improvements must be aimed at recruiting the larger majority of the pupils' parents e.g. White British parents from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Appendix A). According to the Governing Body however, 9 of which live in the community, these parents have disillusioned views of education from their own past experiences that make them 'hard to reach' (Chair of Governing Body, 2018). Furthermore, although School A faces an immediate disadvantage from the level their pupils enter school at and the FLO is put in place to diminish this, there is no initiative or role that focuses on the KS2 parents, at which level parents may feel even more alienated by the standard of work they are faced with. When speaking with teachers from School A therefore was a regular theme that this was only having an impact on the progress of a very limited number of pupils for example Participant B said *"One or two of their parents will turn up and ask for help or maybe even take on suggestions from parents evening but unfortunately that isn't common here"*.

Parental engagement is a topic discussed and debated by many researchers and educators. Some evidence shows that where schools have made concerted efforts to engage the 'hard to reach' parents' the effect on pupil's learning and behaviour is positive. Furthermore, research shows a consistent relationship between increasing parental engagement and improved attendance, behaviour and student achievement, with particularly hard to reach parents. It is also important to note that parents who are viewed as 'hard to reach' often see the school as 'hard to reach' (Harris and Goodall 2007). When taking in this perspective alongside the perspective of the Governing body (parents have disillusioned about school), School A adopt strategies that are planned and integrated into a whole school approach with the improvement of their pupils learning as a clear and consistent goal, 'the school' could improve their engagement with these 'hard to reach' parents and thus raise their achievement. Both National and Local Bodies have conducted vigorous research into ways in which schools can effectively engage with parents which focus particularly on similarly 'deprived areas' that the Head and FLO at School A could implement to ensure progress (Department of Education 2010, Raising the Bar 2015). Comparatively, School B spends very little, if any of its Pupil Premium Budget on parental engagement and instead encourages parents to come in to watch Class Assemblies twice a year, and take part in Open School Mornings where they get the chance to complete problem solving tasks with their children. What was interesting was that during interviews with teachers from School B, parental engagement was not brought up by participants as an issue or priority. This highlights the view

One could argue that 'Parental engagement' umbrellas many of these themes and is arguably a dominant lever for raising achievement as evidence proves that parental involvement is one of the key factors in securing higher student achievement and sustained school performance (Harris and Chrispeels 2006). When putting this information into the context of both School A and School B, both highlight the significant differences between parents in their level of engagement that are clearly related with social

class and deprivation. Parental engagement is heavily linked to socio-economic status, thus it can be argued that when looking at the socio-economic backgrounds of 'School A and B's' pupils, their parents are less likely to engage in their academic learning. It is evident from School A's assessment statistics and 2013 Ofsted Inspection that many of their pupils start their education at School A with knowledge and skills that are low for their age (Appendix D). For example, *'significant numbers of children have markedly less well-developed language and communication skills than what is expected for their age'* (School A Ofsted Report 2013 p. 2). It could be argued when analysing the schools key stage 1 results that School A is facing challenges as a result of this as they fail to meet the national average results in Reading, Writing, Maths and Science of which is highlighted as an area of improvement in Ofsted's most recent inspection (Ofsted 2013, Appendix C).

The Education Endowment Fund (EEF) have provided a toolkit for schools based on a variety of evidence to show the level of impact each intervention can have. It found that investing the pupil premium fund into parental involvement. They defined this as actively involving parents in supporting their children's learning at school. The EEF argue that although parental involvement is consistently associated with pupils' success at school, the evidence about how to increase involvement to improve attainment is much less conclusive, particularly for disadvantage families. Two recent, meta-analyses based on studies in the USA show that actively increasing parental involvement in students' attainment has an average 2-3 months' impact. It is also clear from their research that although there is a long history of research into parental involvement that show an association between parental involvement and a child's academic success is well established, there is surprisingly little robust evidence of the impact of the programmes and more rigorous evaluation of approaches to improve learning through parental involvement is needed in order to find more full-bodied conclusions.

Extra-Curricular Learning

After analysing both schools' pupil premium strategies and participant interviews and questionnaires it was clear that both schools saw an importance of funding extra-curricular activities. School B spent a considerable amount of its pupil premium budget on funding music tuition, contributions to school trips and PE specialist for pupil premium students. School A on the other hand meet extra-curricular needs by funding specialist teaching in sport. When discussing this with School B's participants they spoke of *'giving their pupils experiences and opportunities that they would never get if it wasn't provided by the school'* (Participant D) and another participant described it as *'one of the best things we do for our children'*. (Participant E). School B participants rated this strategy highly in their questionnaires and so it would be fair to argue that from their perspective this was highly valuable. Participants from School A on the other hand said that they think *'it's good for them to be active and they love taking part in these clubs but I couldn't say if it helps to progress their learning and close their gap in attainment'*. From school A's teacher perspective this therefore had less impact on their attainment progress. It was clear from working in and speaking with participants in both schools that leadership had a large impact on this perspective. All of the participants from School A said that leadership in their school was *'data focused'* (participant B) and it was clear from their responses they felt pressure to improve data in core subjects. Participant A said *"All leadership seem to care about is data and it makes me sad that these children miss out on foundation subjects because the English and maths have such a huge priority I can under-*

stand why it is just a shame” However, when I asked participants at School B about data they all argued that *‘Our head teacher really cares about giving our pupils a rich education and she’s never prioritised any subject over another they all just as important I think that’s why she has specialist French and PE and Music teachers’*. Of course it is important to note here that the context of each school was very different, School A had results consistently below national and was recently rated ‘Requires Improvement’ by OFSTED, School B on the other hand has results that usually meet national standards and is currently rated ‘Good’ by OFSTED so pressures on staff at each school could be a reason for these perspectives. Amanda Spielman (the Chief Inspector of Ofsted) recently spoke at the festival of education about the substance of education and speaks of the disservice we offer our pupils by focusing only on test objectives, questioning “how often leaders really asked, “What is the body of knowledge that we want to give to young people?” (Ofsted & Spielman, 2017) Spielman argues that rigorous test practice ‘is not what will set our children up for great futures’ (4, n.d.) It would appear that this is something that the leaders of School B think is valuable in the educational lives of their disadvantaged pupils. Whilst it is difficult to tell by the quantitative data whether this has an impact on the core academic subjects, English and maths although it is important to recognize that these activities have educational value in themselves. The CEO of EFF, an organisation that aims to close the socio-economic attainment gap, wrote in recent report “The best argument – one I fully subscribe to – is one of “arts for arts’ sake”. All children, including those from disadvantaged backgrounds, deserve a well-rounded, culturally rich, education.” Teachers at School B said that *‘It helps to build their confidence too and makes them realise they can achieve things its great to see how proud they are when they perform in assemblies or receive medals for taking part in things’*. It is also important to note here that School B take part in ‘The Daily Mile’ although this is not part of their pupil premium strategy, the leadership team feel it has a great impact on the social and emotional learning of their children and improves concentration.

As an educator it is also important to question whether ‘good data’ is the aim of education. Are good results the primary aim of schools? Should we be taking a more holistic approach by aiming to inspire and grow the ‘whole child’? OFSTED’s leader, Spielman argues that the substance of education and the disservice we offer our pupils by focusing only on test objectives, questioning “how often leaders really asked, “What is the body of knowledge that we want to give to young people?” (Ofsted & Spielman, 2017) Spielman argues that rigorous test practice ‘is not what will set our children up for great futures’ (4, n.d.) This therefore suggests that as leaders we need to rethink the importance of curriculum within our school. When thinking about this in relation to the value of the head teachers’ vision as ‘transformational’ leader in both schools, one could argue this reaffirms the importance of having a shared vision with your staff body. Teachers’ perspectives in this study showed that teachers from School A believed their school was exam and results focused with a ‘priority put on maths and English’. Teachers from School B on the other hand spoke of ‘no subject being more important than another’. They spoke of qualified French and PE teachers being an example of how their head teacher wants to provide a wide curriculum and that also spoke of ‘theme days’ such as ‘build a kite day’, ‘paper capers day’ and ‘big art day’ which take place throughout the year to offer a ‘rich curriculum and exciting opportunities’. All participants said that they valued leadership that incorporates testing into its curriculum but is aimed at developing children’s progress beyond what can be assessed simply through tests. When comparing these strategies put in place, one could argue that both schools have similar interventions put in place to ensure progress for their pupil premium eligible pupils. It could therefore be argued that the ‘vision’ and ‘style’ of the leadership is what has the most impact on the progress of disadvantaged pupils.

Conclusion

Overall, this research shows that leadership style can have a wide impact on the progress of pupil premium pupils. Leaders should consider collaborative, long term approaches which get all members of staff involved in the cause of disadvantaged learners every day. Furthermore, although the results of this research cannot be generalised, the pupil premium fund was given to schools with the freedom to spend it on whatever they felt their students need. Each school therefore needs to be considered on an individual basis. This research was therefore particularly useful at determining what is working in the contexts of School A and School B separately.

At the end of the day, effective leadership that is context intelligent and deploys resources appropriately is paramount to close the achievement gap.

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