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**The**  
**Management and Decision-Making**  
**of**  
**Secondary Headteachers**

**Ian Robert Gilchrist**

**A dissertation submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements of the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the Faculty of Social Sciences.**

**March 2003**

# Contents

<b>Chapter 1 Introduction .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>The Context for this Study.....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>Relationship to Existing Scholarship .....</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>The Aims and Objectives of the Research .....</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Objectives.....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>Methodological Questions .....</b>	<b>11</b>
<b>Potential Outcomes .....</b>	<b>14</b>
<b>Chapter 2 Literature Review .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>The Management Context.....</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>The Decision-Making Context .....</b>	<b>61</b>
<b>Central Tenets - Headteachers' Management and Decision-Making .....</b>	<b>114</b>
<b>Chapter 3 Research Design.....</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>The Aims and Objectives of the Research .....</b>	<b>116</b>
<b>Objectives.....</b>	<b>117</b>
<b>Research Strategy.....</b>	<b>118</b>
<b>Phase One: The Initial Study.....</b>	<b>126</b>
<b>Phase Two: The Mapping of Headteachers' Management Practices.....</b>	<b>144</b>
<b>Phase Three: Detailed Sampling and Analysis of Management Activity ..</b>	<b>164</b>
<b>Phase Four: Hindsight Bias Investigation.....</b>	<b>168</b>
<b>Phase Five: Indicators of Management Excellence.....</b>	<b>177</b>
<b>The Research Approach – A Summary.....</b>	<b>183</b>
<b>Chapter 4 Findings.....</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>187</b>
<b>Phase One - Case Studies.....</b>	<b>188</b>
<b>Phase Two - Management Practices .....</b>	<b>216</b>
<b>Phase Three - Detailed Sampling .....</b>	<b>257</b>
<b>Phase Four Hindsight Bias Investigation.....</b>	<b>279</b>
<b>Phase Five Index of Management Excellence .....</b>	<b>288</b>
<b>Dimension A Management Culture .....</b>	<b>309</b>
<b>Dimension B. Management Policies.....</b>	<b>321</b>
<b>Dimension C Management Practices .....</b>	<b>337</b>
<b>Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusions .....</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>Introduction .....</b>	<b>359</b>
<b>Theoretical Issues .....</b>	<b>367</b>
<b>Methodological Issues.....</b>	<b>368</b>
<b>Recommendations .....</b>	<b>374</b>
<b>Improving Management.....</b>	<b>374</b>
<b>Headship and Headship Training .....</b>	<b>376</b>
<b>The Index of Management Excellence .....</b>	<b>379</b>
<b>The Interpersonal Dimension of Headship .....</b>	<b>381</b>
<b>The Challenges of the Study .....</b>	<b>382</b>

<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>388</b>
<b>Appendix A - Approach Letter.....</b>	<b>414</b>
<b>Appendix B - Transcripts Taped Interviews .....</b>	<b>415</b>
<b>Appendix C - Phase 2, Initial Questionnaire .....</b>	<b>525</b>
<b>Appendix D - Phase 2 Second Questionnaire .....</b>	<b>534</b>
<b>Appendix E - Sample Headteacher Log.....</b>	<b>541</b>
<b>Appendix F - Hindsight Bias Initial Questionnaire .....</b>	<b>542</b>
<b>Appendix G - Hindsight Bias Second Questionnaire (Anti Staff).....</b>	<b>545</b>
<b>Appendix H - Hindsight Bias Second Questionnaire (Anti Pupil) .....</b>	<b>548</b>
<b>Appendix I - Instruction Letter, Indicators of Management Excellence .....</b>	<b>551</b>
<b>Appendix J - Indicators of Management Excellence Questionnaire.....</b>	<b>553</b>
<b>Appendix K - The Indicators of Management Excellence .....</b>	<b>558</b>

## Table of Figures

<b>Figure 2.1 Bureau Professionalism, New Managerialism .....</b>	<b>37</b>
<b>Figure 2.2 The Collaborative Management Cycle .....</b>	<b>53</b>
<b>Figure 2.3 The Traditional Analytical Decision-Making Model .....</b>	<b>65</b>
<b>Figure 2.4 Developed Evaluative – Rational Decision-Making Model.....</b>	<b>70</b>
<b>Figure 2.5 The Brunswik Lens Model.....</b>	<b>73</b>
<b>Figure 2.6 Refined Lens Model – Decision Weights .....</b>	<b>74</b>
<b>Figure 2.7 Results, Hindsight Bias .....</b>	<b>99</b>
<b>Figure 3.1 The Quadrant Model.....</b>	<b>131</b>
<b>Figure 3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches .....</b>	<b>132</b>
<b>Figure 3.3 The Participating Headteachers (Phase One) .....</b>	<b>139</b>
<b>Figure 3.4 Structure in the Observational Setting .....</b>	<b>142</b>
<b>Figure 3.5 The Sample of Headteachers .....</b>	<b>148</b>
<b>Figure 3.6 Issues .....</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Figure 3.7 Management Fora .....</b>	<b>150</b>
<b>Figure 3.8 Decision-Making Locus.....</b>	<b>151</b>
<b>Figure 3.9 Case Study One Options .....</b>	<b>153</b>
<b>Figure 3.10 Case Study Two Options .....</b>	<b>155</b>
<b>Figure 3.11 Case Study Three Options.....</b>	<b>157</b>
<b>Figure 3.12 Recent Management Activity .....</b>	<b>158</b>
<b>Figure 3.13 The Management Matrix.....</b>	<b>160</b>
<b>Figure 3.14 Hindsight Bias Groupings .....</b>	<b>174</b>
<b>Figure 4.1 Quadrant D Activity .....</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>Figure 4.2 Summary of Quadrant Characteristics.....</b>	<b>214</b>
<b>Figure 4.3 Management Styles .....</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>Figure 4.4 Analysis of Management Approaches .....</b>	<b>218</b>
<b>Figure 4.5 Coding Frame Management Styles .....</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>Figure 4.6 Coding Frame Communal Democratic Dimensions.....</b>	<b>222</b>
<b>Figure 4.7 Influences on Management Approaches .....</b>	<b>224</b>



## Table of Figures (contd.)

Figure 4.8 Declared Management Influences .....	226
Figure 4.9 Link from Training to Management Style .....	227
Figure 4.10 Nominated Reading and Research.....	228
Figure 4.11 Headteachers' Recent Reading .....	229
Figure 4.12 Headteachers' Declared Philosophy.....	230
Figure 4.13 Issues and Quadrant Styles.....	234
Figure 4.14 Management Fora .....	234
Figure 4.15 Decision-Making Locus.....	235
Figure 4.16 Decision Areas.....	236
Figure 4.17 Decisions by Quadrant.....	238
Figure 4.18 Scenario One Options .....	244
Figure 4.19 Scenario Two Options.....	246
Figure 4.20 Scenario Three Options.....	247
Figure 4.21 Case Study Four Options.....	248
Figure 4.22 Management Styles – Situations 1 & 2 .....	251
Figure 4.23 Management Styles – Situations 3 & 4 .....	252
Figure 4.24 Coding Frame Headteacher Activity .....	259
Figure 4.25 People Codings .....	260
Figure 4.26 Quadrants and Headteachers.....	261
Figure 4.27 Time and Quadrants .....	262
Figure 4.28 Headteachers by Quadrant.....	263
Figure 4.29 Headteachers and People Interactions.....	265
Figure 4.30 Democratic Fora (Quadrant D) .....	267
Figure 4.31 Quadrant A and D Activity.....	270
Figure 4.32 Quadrant C - Time .....	274
Figure 4.33 Disengaged Time.....	276
Figure 4.34 Quadrant X .....	277
Figure 4.35 Grid for Outcomes .....	283
Figure 4.36 Hindsight Bias Groupings .....	284
Figure 4.37 Results - Hindsight Bias and Headteachers .....	286
Figure 4.38 Hindsight Bias - Detailed Results.....	287
Figure 4.39 Response Rates .....	302
Figure 4.40 Results Dimension A (Culture).....	308
Figure 4.41 Dimension A1 Building the School Community.....	314
Figure 4.42 Dimension A2 Building Ethos and Values.....	317
Figure 4.43 Dimension A2 Ethos and Values (Collaboration).....	321
Figure 4.44 Results Dimension B (Policy).....	322
Figure 4.45 Summary Devolution and Consultation .....	327
Figure 4.46 Dimension B2 Interpersonal Features .....	334
Figure 4.47 Dimension B3 Securing Participation.....	337
Figure 4.48 Results Dimension C (Practices) .....	339
Figure 4.49 Dimension C1 Managing Effective Learning.....	349
Figure 4.50 Dimension C2 Resolving Conflict.....	352
Figure 4.51 Dimension C3 Mobilising Resources .....	354

# **Chapter 1 Introduction**

## **The Context for this Study**

**This study has been written following the establishment in the United Kingdom of the National College for School Leadership (NCSL). It was the first institution of its kind in the world, described by the present Government in its Green Paper, (DfES, 2001: page 71) as 'a world class institution providing inspiration and support to all school leaders and potential leaders'.**

**As such it was a formal recognition of the importance of the role of Headteacher and an embodiment of a national strategy for improving the quality of school leaders.**

**Its birth was formally commissioned through the official remit letter from the Secretary of State for Education and Employment at the time, David Blunkett. The contents of this document captured, in a suitably inspiring register, the prevailing rhetoric and cultural attitude to Headship and school leadership.**

**"Leadership and vision are crucial to raising standards and aspirations across all our schools." Blunkett (2000: page 1)**

The focus on the qualities of Headteachers and the start of the impetus for this national imperative was marked in 1997 by the publication by the Teacher Training Agency, (TTA) (TTA, 1997) of national standards that Headteachers should display. This was an early strategy to improve the quality of Headteachers by defining the specific knowledge, skills, understandings and attributes which relate to effective Headship. It was a competence based approach which outlined the qualities and behaviours of those educators who might justly aspire to and could achieve the demands of the role. These national 'standards' have been used subsequently to form the basis of training programmes aimed at refining and validating the abilities of aspiring and serving Headteachers. These were the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) and the Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH) respectively. It has since been proposed that the NPQH will be a mandatory qualification for Headship. The NCSL has subsequently developed programmes which support the philosophy that "schools should be supported in developing leaders at all levels" (NCSL, 2002: [www.ncsl.org.uk](http://www.ncsl.org.uk) ) and established the concept of 'distributed leadership'. As such, therefore, the Headteacher's leadership role has been extended so that it includes recruiting and maximising the endeavours of other teachers and managers within a school.



**The urgency to improve the quality of Headteachers' leadership abilities has been underlined by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) who found consistently in their inspection of schools that:**

**"... effective leadership is of crucial importance to the quality of education and the standards of achievement in our schools. Inspection evidence shows the clear link between the quality of leadership, the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils."  
(OFSTED, 2000: page 2)**

**OFSTED also found, on the negative side, that:**

**"Monitoring of standards and the evaluation of the quality of teaching ... are the weakest aspects of school management. This is a weakness in over one in five schools." (OFSTED, 2000: page 2)**

**This inevitably stimulated the birth of the performance management agenda whereby Headteachers were placed at the centre of their schools in assessing the work of pupils and teachers. In the case of teachers, if performance criteria are satisfied they are able to cross a pay threshold. More importantly, Headteachers are required to organise performance targets for teachers covering pupil progress and professional development which is designed to enhance performance. Headteachers, therefore, are being forced into a central performance management role which sharpens the accountabilities they already bear for their school (DfEE, 1991).**



Headteachers themselves now receive annual performance scrutiny whereby:

**" Heads ... have an annual review of their performance, carried out by representatives of the governing body. ... a trained external adviser will advise the governing body representatives when setting objectives for the head at the start of the review cycle and when reviewing performance at the end of the cycle. Objectives for Headteachers must include those related to school leadership and management and pupil progress. The outcome of the performance review will inform governors' decisions regarding heads' pay."**

**(DfEE, 2000: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/teachingreforms/>)**

The current demands placed on Headteachers extend, naturally, to the learning performance of the school whereby standards of achievement for pupils are expected, through judicious management by the Headteacher and her/his influence over other managers in the school, to improve year on year. The "standards" agenda for which Headteachers have responsibility is a demanding one and articulated in the "Framework for Continuous Improvement" (Barber, 2000). It encompasses standards of teaching and learning, target setting for pupil attainment, accountability and, where these are found to be lacking by OFSTED, intervention strategies for weak or failing schools. This is in addition to the current administration's target that all secondary schools should achieve in excess of 15% grades A\* - C in GCSE or face risk of closure. (Times Educational Supplement, 2002).

**Standards for pupils, defined through GCSE results, the National Curriculum and through prescriptive teaching programmes such as the Literacy and Numeracy strategies are informed by a national testing and examination regime. Headteachers are subsequently provided with benchmark statistical information whose purpose is:**

**"to highlight these differences in performance of similar schools. This helps schools to compare their performance with similar schools and is an essential step for schools in examining their performance and identifying areas where they can profitably learn from others and bring about improvement"**

**(DfEE, 2000: <http://www.dfes.gov.uk/teachingreforms/>)**

**This process has been deliberately devised by the government to impose consistent pressure on Headteachers towards all-pervasive improvement. More importantly, the operation of schools becomes as public as possible. School performance data, for example, as well as day-to-day management efficiency are widely publicised in performance and 'league' tables and published OFSTED school inspection reports respectively. Recriminations, too, are highly visible whereby schools deemed to be under performing or failing, fall victim to detailed strategies for improvement including the imposition of 'Special Measures' whereby the school and its staff are subject to a rigorous programme of review by Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMIs). Should these measures fail the school stands the risk of closure.**

**This study comes at a time, therefore, when there is considerable focus on the effectiveness of Headteachers and their centrality in managing their staff, pupils and schools to maximum effect. Never before have Headteachers been given so many complex tasks to perform, so much responsibility and been held up to such accountability. They are required to undertake detailed planning and at the same time to make themselves open to public scrutiny and to pressures from all quarters, local and national, for their pupils, their teachers and their schools to succeed.**

**The overall description of their role and tasks have been outlined but the detail of their effective operation is currently ill-defined and poorly understood. Current research, as will be discussed later, has only just begun to sketch the broad outlines of the role and its effective operation. Our understanding of the complex operations of schools as institutions and the dynamics of the people within them is in its infancy. There is much rhetoric about effective schools with an ever-increasing list of descriptors (Reynolds, 2000; Stoll, 1995; Goldstein & Woodhouse, 2000) which carry assumptions and implications for the 'leadership qualities' and management strategies that are required for their operation. The problem remains, however, that there is an assumed but not a scrutinised relationship between these factors. This study aims to analyse the organisational environment of the school and to examine the operation of the Headteacher within it. Central to this study is the ability of Headteachers to make efficacious judgements and galvanise the endeavours of their staff so that they can manage their institutions effectively.**

The 'leadership' qualities of Headteachers have been associated with such activities as problem-solving (Leithwood and Steinbach, 1995) formulating and communicating a strategy based on a vision of a better future (Fidler et al, 1996). Variations on this theme have resulted in Headteachers being described in terms of their 'choreographing' of the work of the school (Hall, 1996) or in their management strategies which closely resemble those in business for optimising performance (Gowitz et al, 1995). This study will make a contribution to the understanding of these decision-making incidents and processes which combine the ability to make efficacious judgements as well as managing their successful outcomes. As such, therefore, the study will focus on individual management and decision-making characteristics together with an analysis of organisational issues and how these inter-relate.

On an individual basis the research will analyse, using a conceptual framework, the management strategies that Headteachers demonstrate with the aim of constructing a conceptualised model of Headteachers' management dimensions. The study will also analyse selected aspects of the total organisational context, addressing such issues as staff participation and collaboration (Grey, 1999) and how these conflict or correlate with the individual management strategies and styles of Headteachers.



**The aim of the study, therefore, is to make a contribution to the research fields of professional judgement, organisational development and management effectiveness by examining these within the context of secondary schools.**

**By so doing, important policy issues will be raised about the professional proficiencies of Headteachers, how they are prepared for their role and how their practice should be assessed and extended.**

### **Relationship to Existing Scholarship**

**Cognitive psychology and organisational theory provide the academic framework to the study where 'classical' conceptions of rationality and hypothetico-deductive reasoning (Smith, 1914; Brunswik, 1955; Simon, 1979) will be assessed for their usefulness in defining Headteachers' decision-making. This will be extended by considering the relevance of the literature on decision-making in other professional groups. In particular decision-making in medical (Elstein, Schulman & Sprafka, 1978; Moore, 1974; Barrows et al, 1977), legal (Hastie, 1993; Kerr, 1993) and commercial (Engel et al, 1995) contexts will be examined. The role of intuition will also be considered (Atkinson & Claxton, 2000).**

**The study will draw on organisational theory (Tollock, 1985 a & b; Fullan and Hargreaves, 1992) as a means of examining the management climate that is created by this group of professionals. The competing attractions of collaborative decision-making (Janis, 1982; Jackson, 2000) and singular decisiveness will be analysed.**

### **The Aims and Objectives of the Research**

**The research aims are:**

- To explore the parameters of Headteachers' managerial and decision-making activity ;**
- To conceptualise a model of Headteachers' management and decision-making activity and to explore its usefulness in analysing practice in secondary schools;**
- To examine contrasts between 'espoused' and 'actual' practice in relation to Headteachers' management and decision-making activity;**
- To contextualise management and decision-making theory by examining how Headteachers operate in situ;**
- To isolate effective management and decision-making characteristics and strategies.**

## **Objectives**

**The research objectives are:**

- To refine a theoretical model of management and decision-making activity, The Quadrant Model, with reference to Headteachers' espoused practice;**
- To describe management and decision-making processes through a series of case studies and self-reported strategies;**
- To determine if Headteachers display a classic paradigm of judgement and decision-making weakness, Hindsight Bias;**
- To examine Headteachers' management and decision-making activity and the correlation between their espoused principles and the actuality of their daily practice;**
- To determine if there is any correlation between different school settings and the managerial activity that has been identified through this study.**

**The research hypotheses are:**

- 1: That there are distinct management and decision-making styles that can be deduced from the practice of serving Headteachers;**
- 2: That such styles can readily be identified by Headteachers;**
- 3: That there are high levels of consistency on the operation of these styles across the occupational group;**

- 4: That all Headteachers will react in a similar way to given educational tasks and issues;**
- 5: That Headteachers can validate their chosen stance;**
- 6: That Headteachers decision-making is perfectly rational and not prone to paradigms of judgement weakness, in particular Hindsight Bias;**
- 7: That there will be no inconsistency between Headteachers' nominated styles and their actual activities as managers in their schools;**
- 8: That there are management indicators which distinguish highly successful schools from those that have been highlighted as failing.**

### **Methodological Questions**

**The research has been designed to be a wide-ranging and multi-faceted study so that a broad and comprehensive picture is presented of the topic under consideration. The research has been designed, therefore, so that a battery of instruments can be brigaded to address the totality of the research objectives and hypotheses.**



Data collection has been designed to be cumulative and complementary. The study starts with an open-ended research technique with the minimum of structure in terms of researcher participation and participant response requirements, (Cohen and Manion, 1982). In this phase Headteachers will be permitted, through the use of semi-structured interviews, to outline the philosophy and parameters of their management and decision-making activity. The aim will be to gain a broad and firm contextual grasp of the working environment in which Headteachers work in order to inform subsequent elements of the research.

Given the informality of the approach the data for this first section will be presented in an apposite manner; a case study. It is hoped by these means that a discursive account will be provided, in the style of which it was obtained, of management and decision-making activity. The case study material, however, will be analysed for the principles which underpin the participants' responses. A conceptual model, constructed from the literature, will be used to analyse the material from this initial data collection exercise.

Verification of the initial material will be secured through issuing questionnaires to a larger sample of Headteachers and quantitative data added to the qualitative material of the initial stages of the study. Generalisability, therefore, will be secured from the original material.

To extend the quantitative data a focused investigation will be undertaken on the minutiae of Headteachers' management and decision-making activity.

**This will take the form of detailed logs undertaken by a small sample of Headteachers over a protracted period of time. Data from those logs will be analysed and mapped against the conceptual model deduced earlier.**

**The various elements of judgement weakness identified in the early work will be explored by examining the operation in the target group of a classic paradigm of judgement weakness, Hindsight Bias. Data collection here will be rooted firmly in the methodology established by researchers in this field. A critical analysis of the adequacy of the research instruments that have been used, historically, in this specific area will lead to a developed and refined research methodology. It is hoped by these means to extend the findings related to this area of cognitive psychology with particular reference to the ways that it applies to this occupational group.**

**The final stage of the study will draw together the management and decision-making strands established previously and will determine whether these operate according to specific contextual conditions. Elements of management and decision-making activity, deduced from the previous work will be presented as 'indicators' of management activity. The working title for this phase of the work will be "Indicators of Management Excellence" as the intention is to highlight those indicators which apply to highly successful schools, and by contrast, those that do not apply to demonstrably weak schools.**

**This final phase will also extend the range of respondents used for data collection in that the questionnaire will be circulated to nominated members of staff within the school, in addition to the Headteacher and her/his leadership team. The intention, therefore, will be not only to determine the management and decision-making characteristics of successful schools but also to triangulate the data provided by Headteachers and Senior Management teams with that given by middle managers and teachers.**

**The phases of the study can be summarised as follows:**

- Phase 1: Pilot study, case studies of existing practice;**
- Phase 2: Headteachers' management and decision-making mapped against a theoretical model;**
- Phase 3: Detailed sampling and analysis of Headteachers' management and decision-making activity;**
- Phase 4: Investigation of Judgement Weakness: Hindsight Bias;**
- Phase 5: Cross sectional survey on management indicators present in successful and unsuccessful schools.**

### **Potential Outcomes**

**Given the focus on effective Headship which has been discussed in this chapter this study can potentially offer valuable insights for those who have been charged with designing training for potential and serving Headteachers. The instruments to be used in this study could form valuable self-evaluation**

**tools for Headteachers to assess their managerial and decision-making effectiveness and isolate the most effective strategies to be adopted in managing their staff and their institutions.**

**This study will also establish whether there is a gap between the rhetoric and the reality of Headteachers' approaches; between the high premium and valued approaches that are promulgated in the research literature and the reality of Headteachers' daily practices.**



## **Chapter 2 Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

**This Literature Review will be divided into two main sections, centring on the twin elements of this study: management and decision-making.**

**The management section will set this study in context by examining the social and political environment under which Headteachers operate together with an assessment of the impact of government imperatives and actions upon the management role of Headteacher. This will be followed by further contextualisation in terms of the current state of play with regards to research into Headteachers. This section will explore the definition of the term "leadership" and how this has been modified over time, together with the present-day currency of the term. An exploration of schools as organisations completes this section and explores the critical issues of participation and collegiality within a management context.**

**The decision-making section will examine the parameters of day-to-day individual decision-making. This will include an examination of decision-making in other situations and in other occupations.**

## **The Management Context**

### **Headteachers, Previous and Current Agendas**

During the 1990s there was a growing emphasis on school improvement by central government. The then Conservative government used a range of strategies to put pressure on schools to become both self-reliant and directly responsible for improving the standards of education for the pupils entrusted to their care.

At the end of the 1980s legislation was put in place, The Education Reform Act, (ERA)1988 for every school to become a self-managing institution with devolution of funds to every school. At the same time schools were encouraged to compete for pupils and either increase or lose funds because formula allocations for school budgets were based on pupil numbers.

The Government White Paper, Choice and Diversity (DfEE, 1992) added impetus to this initiative with a twin-pronged approach. This policy re-established the pre-eminence of parental choice in the selection of a school place for their child. Parents, so the policy ran, would select "thriving successful schools" (DfEE, 1992) whilst failing schools would wither on the vine. Schools, therefore, were firmly placed in the 'market place' where the consumers of their product, parents and their children, would actively assess the worth of the educational offerings of the school and determine its survival.

**This latter move was sharpened by schools having to provide information to inform parents' choices in the form of the results of National Curriculum tests and public examinations. In addition to the existing enrolment and connected budgetary pressures, the government introduced in 1993 a national programme of school inspections. Schools were to be inspected on a frequent basis by registered and accredited inspectors working to a published framework containing the criteria for judgement. The enterprise was designed and managed by the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) under the direction of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools (HMCI). The underpinning rationale for this process was inspection for improvement which publicly audited the strengths and weaknesses of the school. As such, therefore, schools were coming under increasing pressure to secure pupil achievement and satisfy the demands of the education market place.**

**The Labour Government when it took up office in 1997 did not dismantle any of these approaches but rather intensified the pressure and re-focused the strategies for reform by placing Headteachers fairly and squarely at the centre. The Government White Paper, Excellence in Schools (DfEE, 1997) articulated the reliance on Headteachers to manage reforms in their schools:**

**"The quality of the Headteacher is a crucial factor in the success of the school." (DfEE, 1997: page 29)**

The impetus towards the centrality of the Headteacher in managing school improvement was increased by the requirement for schools to set "challenging targets for improvement" (DfEE, 1997) based on a raft of benchmarked data on pupil performance. The intention was that Headteachers would organise improvement as well as using such "detailed comparisons" so that they could "monitor the performance of classroom teachers." (DfEE, 1997: page 29)

Headteachers were seen, therefore, as pivotal players. They were to be professionally developed and formally qualified for the role, through the NPQH. After appointment they were to receive focused managerial training through the Headteachers' Leadership and Management Programme (HEADLAMP), subsequently renamed (2002) Headteachers' Induction Programme. Serving Headteachers were encouraged to develop their skills through the Leadership programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH) and, as has already been mentioned, the National College for School Leadership was established to symbolise and actualise the pre-eminence of Headteachers' leadership.

Southworth (1999: page 54) captures this focus on the importance of Headship:

"Underscoring much of the search for enhanced school success is the move to more explicit and precise measures of institutional and individual performance. Explicit standards for the quality of schools (the OFSTED criteria) have been devised, while national standards for



Headship have also been formulated by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), a Government agency. The quality of schooling and Headship have never before been so clearly framed and defined."

The current policy agenda for Headteachers, therefore, includes criteria for individual performance, not least of which is their own (TTA, 1997). What these policies point to is a rationale which promulgates in favour of a pyramidal power structure in schools, a bureaucratic rationality with an individual exercising authority over others and the application of precise 'standards' in organisational positions and managerial effectiveness.

Barber (2000) euphemistically calls this a time of 'High Challenge and High Support' but what cannot be doubted is that considerable pressures are being placed on Headteachers as the figureheads and main instruments of exacting change and improvement. Headship can therefore be envisaged as being forced into the role of the lone leader being chiefly accountable for the school's performance, progress and effectiveness. (Southworth, 1995, Fiedler, 1967) The issue is, therefore, what effect the current climate has on the role and actions of Headteachers.

Reflecting on a previous sea change in the role of the Headteacher, Hall and Southworth (1997) chronicle changes in Primary and Secondary Headteachers pre- and post- the 1988 Education Reform Act. They note that pre-1988 Headteachers were key individual players in their schools, having a strong 'ego-identification' with 'their' school. They point out that at this time

Headteachers were teachers, not administrators and brought a strong personal control and moral authority to running the school, often being dictatorial in approach. They present a picture of Headteachers being threatened by reform; of losing 'his' (sic) educational beliefs with the arrival of a National Curriculum and of concerns about the tensions between head-as-teacher and head-as-manager (Mortimore, 1991).

Hall and Southworth (1997) note, post-1988, the increased intensity of a Head's work, the greater time spent on management and the need to engage in more politics and diplomacy in a more visible public role. In secondary schools particularly they chart a theme in Headteacher research which underpins the spirit of collegiality (Ribbins and Marland, 1994).

More importantly Hall and Southworth (1997) bemoan the absence of research based analysis of Headteachers. They note that our understanding of Headship is "still predominantly first level".

This study potentially marks a further sea change for Headteachers, after the Education reform Act 1988, where accountabilities have been sharpened by benchmarking, target setting and a more formal role for Headteachers in managing the performance of their staff. Secondary Headteachers have already had to adapt to the demands of the 'educational market', mastering the art of public relations (Reynolds, 1992) to present their schools effectively and garner finance and resources for its successful operation. Now they have to find ways of coping with constant and unremitting change

as well as transforming their staff, galvanising their endeavours and erecting strategies for improving the quality of teaching and learning for their pupils. It remains of paramount importance to understand exactly the mechanisms that come into play for this to take place.

As Hall and Southworth comment: (1997: page 164)

"School effectiveness studies and more recently school improvement commentaries have offered some broad ideas about the nature of effective leadership, but these are relatively generalised and superficial."

## **The Research Context**

Whilst the importance to understand Headteachers, their management strategies, their abilities, strengths and weaknesses is paramount, the research base for understanding this pivotal role is underdeveloped. Hall and Southworth (1997) comment that it remains unclear in what ways Heads actually influence and shape their schools.

The validity of this historical remark is verified by the fact that to date there have been no major funded research enquiries into Headship. Much of the work that has been done is descriptive or philosophical in nature, being based largely on the perceptions of practitioners themselves. Many studies deal with Headship but only at a tangent by looking into the characteristics of effective schools and attempting to extrapolate the qualities that are required in the school leader in order to bring about these worthy outcomes.

Similarly the school improvement research genre alludes to the conditions that are needed but their focus blurs the centrality of the Headship role and deals with areas such as generalised traits and organisational tasks (Reynolds, 2000).

Those studies that do broach the topic of Headship do so in a descriptive or narrative fashion, with the data collection coming from personal accounts by Headteachers themselves of their activity.

There are a number of these descriptive practitioner-based accounts of Headship. Coulson (1976), for example, drew on his experience as a primary deputy head. His description of the pre-ERA, 1988, Head is derived from a Victorian paternalistic perspective which was implicitly (male) gendered. Such Headteachers acknowledged, by implication reluctantly, the teachers 'zone of autonomy' in the classroom but exercised hegemony over matters of school policy. Such Headteachers tended to think of the school as 'theirs' and to feel a "deep sense of personal responsibility for everything and everyone in it." (page 285)

Lloyd (1985) continued in this tradition of describing the task of the Headteacher when he investigated the role perceptions of 50 Headteachers and concluded that his data showed a move away from a 'head-centred' approach. Whilst his study showed that primary Headteachers remained influential and powerful, over half of the Headteachers in the study indicated



that they saw this as no longer desirable. He also highlighted a central dilemma of Headship, which remains a topical theme, that Headteachers found it difficult to combine high levels of decision decentralisation with high levels of participation. Headteachers, therefore, appreciated that their dominance needed to be moderated but found it difficult to achieve in practice. Later studies (Menter et al, 1995) added the extra dimension of public accountability and 'carrying the can' in the era of OFSTED inspections.

Studies anticipating or based in the market-orientated educational world of the 1980s but still in the descriptive vein, outlined the role of the secondary Head as the 'Chief Executive' of the organisation (Hughes, 1976). Other commentators extended the business – education analogy, highly fashionable in the late 80s and early 90s when schools had to market themselves by describing the entrepreneurial spirit of the Head (Smyth, 1989; Grace, 1995).

Much of this highly descriptive research had a conspicuously instrumental purpose in defining the management competencies that were seen to characterise the leadership role (Mintzberg, 1973; Boyatzis, 1982; Lyons, 1976). This was the era when Handbooks for Heads (Lyons, 1976) became dominant and contributed towards legitimising the competency based approaches to Headship (Earley, 1992; Esp, 1993; Bennett, 2000). The official thrust was that competencies needed to be identified so that training

programmes could be devised to 'deliver' them. This trend continued well into the 90s (Jenkins, 1991).

Coulson (1986) extended this work, but still in descriptive mode, to present his views on the characteristics of successful Headteachers as being goal oriented; personally secure; proactive; sensitive to the dynamics of power inside and outside their schools; analytic, in charge of the job and tolerant of ambiguity. This study, as indeed was the case with all its predecessors, did not extend the awareness of the functioning of Headteachers beyond the ability to provide a tick list approach towards a definition of a supposedly effective Head.

A new theme started to be developed in the early 80s, that of sustained high levels of staff participation running concurrently with overall control (Whitaker, 1983; Dean, 1987; Bell, 1988; Nias et al, 1989; Southworth, 1995). Ainscow (2000) echoing this approach in current thought, charts the change away from "transactional" approaches which sustain traditional concepts of hierarchy and control. Sergiovanni, (1992) described "transformational" approaches which are intended to distribute and empower. This became a new competence to be added to the list and a new feature of the effective school.

These 'top down' studies were complemented in the 80s by 'bottom up' studies. They were still descriptive and attitude based but provide a 360° view of Headship.

Nias (1980), for example, conducted longitudinal research into a group of graduate teachers' views on teaching as a career and their attitudes to Headteachers. Many were frustrated or alienated by 'dictatorial leadership'. Nias found that her teacher respondents favoured a head who set high standards, was involved in the school to a large degree, was readily available for discussion, interested in teacher development and encouraged participation in goal setting and decision-making.

This approach gave rise to the school effectiveness thread of research which sought to identify those characteristics of successful schools across the world. This school of thought is reviewed separately below. It only remains to point out at this juncture that this genre of research served to extend the requirements placed on Headteachers to create these effective schools. Such studies, and those that preceded them did not delve into the fine grain detail that this study adopts as one of its methods of investigation.

Clerkin (1985), by contrast, initiated a strand of analytical studies which attempted an analysis of Headteachers at work. He discovered that Headteachers spent their time:

"tackling a high intensity of tasks with frequent interruptions rather than a systematic ordering of curricular or organisational programmes, based on agreed policies or clearly understood management structures." (page 298)

The conclusions did little to aid our understanding of the dynamic processes at work in a school but the study was at least an attempt to delve beyond recollection or practitioners' views in previous rudimentary descriptive role studies.

A number of studies, (Mortimore & Mortimore, 1991; Alexander et al, 1992; Bolam et al, 1993; Webb, 1994) focused on Headteacher activity and pointed to Headteachers spending more time on management.

Other analytic studies of Headteacher activity failed to reach any more profound conclusions about the ways that Headteachers impacted on their organisations and the staff and pupils. Harvey (1986), for example, repeated earlier findings and pinpointed the rudimentary need for effective time management and task completion in that he found that Headteachers' work days were characterised by brevity, variety and fragmentation with over a quarter of activities being interrupted.

A further form of Headship research, which appeared in the 1990s relied on a highly personal narrative approach (Ribbins and Marland, 1994; Hall, 1996) and is, therefore, a development of the early role description studies. Hall, for example, describes the traits of female Headteachers, their backgrounds and motivations. This genre of research extended into the job and personality profile description of Headteachers (Jirasinghe & Lyons, 1996). These studies additionally rekindled the leitmotif that had appeared previously in the tensions between teacher participation and the Headteacher's central



control. As such the importance of collegiality was placed on the agenda. As a new vein in research development, however, these studies were still based on Headteachers' narratives and personal perceptions: the research had shifted from characteristics to characters.

The NCSL has constructed a "framework" for research material to conceptualise the areas of research available on Headteachers. Its intention was undoubtedly utilitarian and clearly geared towards practical training and development concerns. Despite the liberal dusting of the term 'leadership' a useful structure was produced for examining the direction of contemporary research. The NCSL also stated that this framework will form the basis for future research on Headship and School Leadership. Such a high profile statement of intent will clearly guide future investigations.

The 'cells' in the NCSL framework relate to various elements of leadership:

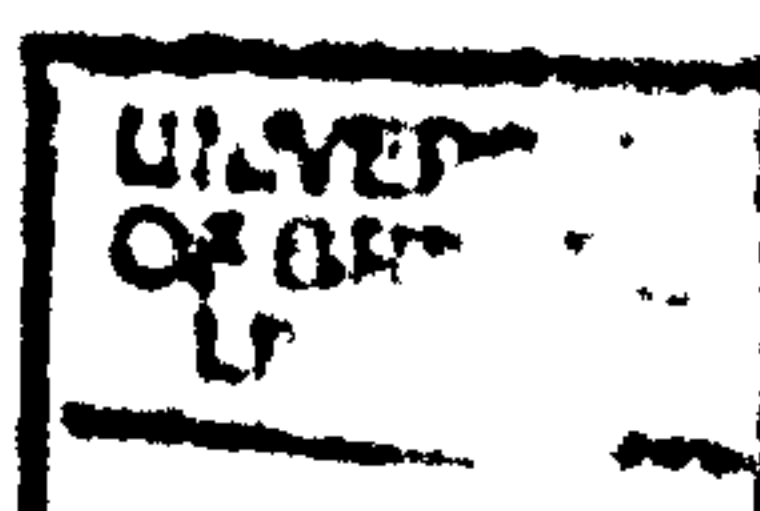
- Instructional leadership – impacting on teaching and learning;
- Personal and Interpersonal Leadership – personal qualities and dealing with others;
- Organisational and Strategic Leadership – management of organisations, "structures, systems and context" .

The element of the framework that deals with instructional leadership is highly performance orientated and geared around inspection criteria (OFSTED, 2000). It also echoes the Headteacher competence and standards approach initiated by the TTA (1997). The thrust of the research

here is, at best, descriptive. It offers 'best practice' (Gron, 2000) but no real analysis of process or understanding of the dynamics of organisations. It highlights performance obstacles and the need to vault them by profound systemic change but at a removed policy level (Hargreaves and Fink, 2000).

The NCSL cell that relates to Personal and Interpersonal Leadership continues the thread of 'characteristics' studies which outline traits and roles. West-Burnham (2000) and MacBeath (2000) outline the complexity of the Headship role whilst Green (2000) revives the tensions of earlier research, of acknowledging the expectations and perspectives of others and the need to engender collegial working.

When the NCSL framework turns to organisational matters the research is still rooted in the competence/ characteristics mould of study as it attempts to weld together the nature of the organisation and the personality of its leader (Southworth, 2000) and the philosophical integrity of this person in integrating a range of external initiatives to a core set of personal values (Leithwood, Janzi and Steinbach, 2000). Research here is still checklist based (Davies, 2000) and revisits the theme initiated much earlier: the need to empower others (Ainscow, 2000) without an analysis of how this is to be enacted.



Research to date, therefore, is restricted by being descriptive and insufficiently analytical. There is an excess of polemic at the expense of analysis. There is also an assumption that global inspiration can be implemented locally in the UK (Caldwell, 2000; Fullan, 2000; Hargreaves A, 2000; Istance, 2000; Leithwood et al, 2000) without a complete understanding of the organisational dynamics that operate at the micro level. There is similarly an assumption that 'core' personality traits, values and competencies are inherent across the occupational role which does not take into account individual differences or school contextual factors. Most importantly, the centrality of 'empowerment', engaging others, transforming through leading is taken as a philosophic credo but without any analysis about whether this exists at school level and how, if it does not, it can be nurtured. What is missing, therefore, in the research battery is a full organisational understanding of Headteachers in operation in their social context.

### **Headship, the Social and Organisational Context**

It would be foolish to imagine that Headteachers operate in a social void. A critical factor in decision-making that has received little research attention is the influence of others on the decision-maker and the context in which the decision has been made. This section, therefore will examine the evidence currently available on the social and organisational context.

Tollock (1985b) has argued that social factors play a pivotal role in judgement and decision-making. He states that decision-makers can be regarded as 'politicians' who are accountable to their 'constituents'. They are constantly concerned with questions such as "How will I react if I am challenged?" Various intriguing research studies have been conducted to demonstrate the effect of being watched and scrutinised. Michaels et al (1982) conducted an interesting experiment where pool players were observed by an audience. The players rated as above average in ability performed better when they were being observed and those classified as below average did worse. This demonstrates the phenomenon known as 'social facilitation' whereby well-learned responses are usually enhanced with the presence of onlookers. On the other hand complex unmastered skills tend to be impaired by the presence of spectators (Zajonc, 1965).

Of significance here is Festinger's (1954) notion of social comparison. People demonstrate a need to evaluate their ability levels. In the context of this study, they need to compare the quality, range and nature of their management actions and decisions, with others.

Festinger's central hypotheses were:

1. People have a natural tendency to evaluate their opinions and abilities;
2. To the extent that objective, non social information is unavailable, people evaluate their opinions and abilities by comparison with the opinions and abilities of others;



**3. Given a choice, people prefer to compare themselves with others who are close to them in opinions and abilities.**

**In the social arena of management and decision-making Headteachers deliberately manage the impressions they create of themselves and the reactions of their teaching colleagues. In a descriptive study Hall et al (1988) attempted to characterise the approaches of four different Headteachers to their jobs. The study is limited because of its lack of scope and its focus on what are essentially idiosyncratic ways of working which the authors imply should be generalised to all Headteachers. For the purpose of this study, however, it highlights salient features that illuminate particular supportive elements of management and decision-making in the societal context of a school.**

**The authors note that a distinctive feature of each Head's style was the way that they dealt with the interpersonal aspects of the job. Some would go out of their way to encourage interpersonal contact and shared decision-making; others would adopt strategies to achieve the opposite. They note, for example, how one Head under the appropriate pseudonym of 'Mr King' ensured that he was closely involved in the minutiae of all administration. This may have been to demonstrate his energy and activity but it is more than likely that it was a display of regal control and that he felt threatened if someone else interfered in his realm of control.**

Mr King characteristically, therefore, depended on the aura that the post created rather than receiving loyalty as a result of his interpersonal presence. Decisions, therefore, were taken as 'the Head's Choice' rather than standing up to the scrutiny of wisdom. The authors note with appropriate understatement that 'decision-making was centralised.' In order to demonstrate further the power of his 'office' he consistently presented himself as being better at doing the tasks that he expected them to accomplish.

Another Head deliberately displayed his ability to keep 'in touch' with the reality of the teaching world as perceived by his colleagues by deliberately giving himself a substantial teaching commitment. As such, therefore, this was a ploy to validate his curriculum decisions by demonstrating a practical and real involvement in teaching. The teaching Head is rare and the lead professional in a school, as a consequence, lays him/herself open to the charge of remoteness from the everyday realities of teaching.

Another Head in Hall's (Hall et al, 1988) sample shielded himself from the scrutiny of his decisions by being deliberately autocratic. 'Mr Mercer' deliberately kept himself remote from the staff by using his secretary as a gatekeeper. Any threatening approaches were repelled by this formidable ally and his attitude to staff participation in decision-making was met with distinct scepticism about their motivation. Characteristically, his deliberate obfuscatory approach to his management decisions was supported by having few regular meetings and never any full staff meetings. When the

situation demanded it he met with (as opposed to consulted) staff on ad hoc occasions. The approach, therefore, was to divide and rule, to work with the principle that many dictatorships adopt - never allow assemblies of more than a few people as this will stimulate insurrection.

Another Head, however, deliberately encouraged participatory forms of decision-making. 'Mr Dowe' deliberately created opportunities for staff to acquire the skills and knowledge to do their job effectively. He used his Senior Management Team to ensure and secure the staff's support for his decisions. His approach, therefore, was not entirely altruistic as there was an implied 'payback' for his confidence in his staff and his encouragement of their participation: their acquiescence in his decisions. This may, however, be an excessively cynical view but when it comes to examining the psycho-social activities of the Headteachers in this study, few of them displayed the obvious investment in staff support that Mr Dowe displayed.

Hall characterised her Headteachers as following distinct patterns:

- the teacher educator - - -

who placed a high premium on teaching and in curriculum matters;

- the lead professional - - -

the chief executive approach with priorities placed on procedures and meetings;

- and the pastoral missionary - - -

who used numerous personal interventions to affect policy and values.

**These classifications are useful in a heuristic sense for capturing rather narrow views of Headteachers' functioning and for casting limited light on some of the strategies they use in enhancing, supporting or deflecting attention from their management and decision-making activity.**

### **New Managerialism**

**The approach of 'Mr Dowe' characterises in many ways an idealised view of how Headteachers feel they ought to operate in managing their schools and their staff. Brian Sherratt, one of the Headteachers in Ribbins' and Marland's study (1994: page 169), voices this Utopian ethos. When he is asked about his 'task' he responds:**

**"To me its the ability to develop effective teamwork. To work as an ensemble rather than promote soloists. I do think that gone are the days of the really autocratic head."**

**This laudable negation of egocentricity and authoritarianism is echoed by another Head, Harry Tomlinson: (Ribbins and Marland, 1994: page 214)**

**"The ideal Head recognises and enables others to contribute to the best of their ability. If you are successful as a Head it is almost always mostly because of the work which others do."**



Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe (1995) place this rather sentimentalised view into a significant educational cultural context which is determined by the market-led ethos engendered by the Education Reform Act, 1988, where schools were asked to emulate the practices of businesses. Just like successful commercial concerns schools focused on the twin competitive aims of managing the school budget effectively and maintaining a competitive edge over competing, neighbouring schools.

They note, of the market-led, competitive climate engendered by the education reforms of the 1980s:

“Our evidence indicates that as income maximisation, the image and marketing of the school and good management of the budget become for Headteachers the prime and most pressing aspect of their role, so there is a tendency for Headteachers to become increasingly distanced from the world of teaching- and hence also from their staff.”

(page 91)

They make the point that the cultural shift towards the more business-oriented environment staked out two distinct management regimes: ‘Bureau Professionalism’ and ‘New Managerialism.’ Bureau professionalism is a regime which cements relationships within an organisation and which is characterised by collegiality, service, professionalism and fair dealing. In contrast the ‘New Manager’ is customer-focused and searching for efficiency rather than abstract ‘professional standards’.

<b>Bureau Professionalism</b>	<b>New Managerialism</b>
<b>Public Service Ethos</b>	<b>Customer-oriented ethos</b>
<b>Decisions given by commitment to 'professional standards' and values, e.g. equity, care, social justice</b>	<b>Decisions driven by efficiency, cost effectiveness and search for competitive edge</b>
<b>Emphasis on collective relations with employees through trade unions</b>	<b>Emphasis on individual relations, through marginalisation of trade unions and new management techniques e.g. Total Quality Management (TQM), Human Resource Management (HRM)</b>
<b>Consultative</b>	<b>Macho</b>
<b>Substantive reality</b>	<b>Technical rationality</b>
<b>Co-operation</b>	<b>Competition</b>
<b>Managers socialised within the field and values of specific welfare sector e.g. education, health, social work</b>	<b>Managers generically socialised i.e. with field and values of 'management.'</b>

**Figure 2.1 Bureau Professionalism, New Managerialism (adapted from Gewirtz, Ball and Bowe, 1995)**

Of significance to this study is the distinction between 'substantive reality' and 'technical rationality'. The emphasis on substantive rationality is upon the intrinsic qualities of the 'product - process' in this context, of teaching and learning, whereas technical rationality is the development of techniques, procedures and organisational practices which are intended to facilitate speed of decision-making, co-ordination, the setting and reviewing of objectives, good financial controls and information, cost improvement, responsiveness and consumer loyalty. The move, therefore, is away from purely educational values and philosophy towards a business-driven outlook.

Nowhere is this difference in attitude noticed more than in the contrast that Gewirtz et al (1995) draw between co-operation and competition. It is the marginalisation of collegiality, co-operative staff endeavour which was so much valued by Ribbins' and Marland's (1994) Headteachers earlier which is significant. Gewirtz (op cit: page 95) notes:

"We have also observed in our case study schools a tendency towards speedier and non-consultative or pseudo-consultative decision-making... Collaboration is used for the instrumental purposes of manufacturing consent for a set of pre-determined goals."

This observation fulfilled the prediction of the original report, commissioned by the government (Coopers and Lybrand, 1988) to explore the parameters of this new business-led approach. The report noted:

"... it will be important to ensure that any ... consultation (with staff) does not unduly slow down decision-making nor reduce management flexibility."

In one of Gewirtz's (op cit: page 113) case study schools, 'Trumpton,' one member of staff outlines one micropolitical strategy which creates the appearance of consultation but is designed to marginalise it:

"You're given restricted choice, a working paper is given with four models to choose from and .. the initial premise that you're going to move in a particular way has already been taken ..., there's a sort of paternalism .. there's no time to give people time to think and to work



on ideas. It moves very rapidly with restricted choices which to some extent people like because it means they don't have to be involved so much. It's quite a clever trick because it means that people have to put less time in .. and it provides them with a cost framework even though they don't have a lot of say in it."

## **Micropolitics**

Gewirtz et al's (1995) study touched on the tensions, psychological currents, conflicts and antagonisms that operated in the professional environment of a school. Frequently the decisions of Headteachers took place in a very public arena, against the scrutiny of colleagues or the attention of clients: parents and pupils.

On the surface the organisation of a school is, as has been demonstrated above, supposedly solidly democratic. Manifestations which support this view are formal committees and established 'consultative' procedures. Many Headteachers, as we have seen, (Ribbins and Marland, 1994) profess allegiance to a consultative, democratic and collegiate view of management and advocate that their decisions derive from, or are mediated by, formal collections of individuals such as Heads of subject departments, pastoral units or consultative groups of teachers.

As is discussed later, these structural components have a distinct bearing on the management and decision-making of Headteachers, largely because they make conscious decisions that use these structures in an opportunistic



way or to circumvent the gladiatorial contest that could be witnessed in such gatherings. Underpinning this apparently ordered and seemingly structured world, therefore, there is an educational underworld of antagonism, distrust, sabotage and competing factions.

Greenfield (1975 in Hoyle, 1986: page 11) has defined this nature of the micro-political world in a school:

“We may better understand organisations if we conceive of them as being an invented reality, an illusion that rests on a kind of social sleight of hand. It is true that organisations appear to be solid... yet the paradox is that the dynamic of organisation is made of nothing more substantial than people doing and thinking.... In their deepest-subjective reality, they are simply manifestations of mind and will”.

The ‘minds and wills’ of the school are those of teachers and those who have been appointed to manage them. Corwin (1970) characterises this dichotomy as that between the teacher, concerned with tasks and roles and who expect a large degree of autonomy in their professional lives, and the Head who is concerned with strategy and bureaucracy and is expected to impose his or her managerial will over the teachers in the school. They are expected not only to administer the school but to give it leadership and to have a direct influence in the activity of others.

Hanson (1976) in an American study re-emphasises this supposed dichotomy by conceiving of the idea of zones. The teacher's zone is concerned with 'instructional decisions' and the administrator's zone is concerned with resource allocation, policy and evaluation. However, the two areas overlap and it is in this area that negotiations and conflicts occur.

This is a rather over-simplified view of the micro-political tensions in a school but is accurate in the sense that the study highlighted the fact that each used direct and indirect strategies to manage the members of the other sphere and each used defensive strategies to protect their own sphere from outside intervention.

Hoyle (1982) discusses the parameters of Headteachers' power bases and the way that they demonstrate their pre-eminence. He divides the Machiavellian strategies into two components: the sources and bases of power.

Headteachers' power, he argues, is structural in the sense that it derives from the authority of their position per se and is emphasised through personality characteristics such as charisma and the regalia of professionalism such as their supposed pre-eminence of expertise. Power, therefore, formally resides in the officially conferred office of Headship and the personality of the holder of that office.

Headteachers, though, have more definite ways of controlling their power base and ensuring that their decisions are implemented. Hoyle, quoting Bacharach and Lawler (1981), cites their coercive ability by applying threat, persuasion from the standpoint of a high status individual or even disciplinary sanctions to ensure that their edicts are enacted. They also have a substantial control over the remunerative and financial and resource allocation structures of the school so that they control the promotional prospects and reward procedures that ensure that decisions are implemented. Typically, therefore, a decision, such as the initiation of a new course or curriculum emphasis, results in the appointment of a co-ordinator together with formal senior management support interpersonally and in the form of financial and other material resources.

There are other, more underhand, methods that Headteachers employ to ensure that their will is enforced. Hoyle highlights their control of information whereby opponents are deprived of the information they need to sabotage a decision. More common, perhaps, is the notion of exchange theory, in common parlance 'you scratch my back, I'll scratch yours' (Homans, 1961). In this exchange Headteachers have more goods at their disposal to exchange. Reference has already been made to promotion and resources but other 'exchange' factors that Headteachers have at their disposal are the granting of managerial autonomy, conferring esteem and the application or relaxation of rules and procedures.



Other micro-political strategies include dividing and ruling (Blaso, 1991) whereby there are no full staff meetings where decisions come under collective and cumulative scrutiny. The situation, however, is a little more complex than this. Headteachers do not simply avoid public scrutiny of their decisions but instead they tend to make decisions with individuals and forge allegiances with influential teachers so that their interpersonal influence supports and reinforces their decision.

Headteachers also have other strategies such as 'displacement' (Hoyle, 1982) where a real issue is replaced with a proxy issue. For example, the real issue about the status and working conditions of staff is replaced with a discussion about the best welfare of pupils which is really a mask for the empire-building and status-seeking of staff.

Headteachers can also adopt 'boardroom' strategies for formal meetings whereby they rig agendas, placing contentious items at the end, for example, when the staff members are tired. Another similar strategy is publishing enormously long agendas so that full discussion cannot take place of items that may be scrutinised by opponents. Minutes can also be 'massaged' to convince the body politic and even the members who were present that a decision was ratified and is enacted in a particular way. Such strategies are in addition to arranging interpersonal support from allies before the meeting so that opposing points of view can be collectively deflected. Indeed it was even suggested by one Head in this sample that an important consideration for the appointment of a Deputy would be their unquestioning support for his



decisions in open court. The metaphor that has been used to explain this is that of the roman military formation called the testudo, the tortoise. Roman soldiers besieging a town would gather together in formation and pull their shields over their heads and sides to protect themselves from enemy arrows, so resembling a tortoise. In times of staff antagonism, therefore, the senior management team would adopt the testudo strategy.

### **Collegiality**

Hoyle (1986: page 148) captured the 'legitimacy' tensions between the competing demands of autocratic or 'new managerial' approaches and 'bureau professional collegiality'. He places in relief the Head's personal responsibility for management and decision-making, and the attractions to the other professionals in the school of participating in decision choices:

".. the competing forms of legitimacy in decision-making, which arise because the formal legitimacy of the Head is challenged by alternative professional and democratic forums which are held to be particularly appropriate to schools. This leaves the Head with the problem of balancing their responsibility against the expectations of collegiality."

The irony of this situation, as we shall discover, is that the greater the value that Headteachers place on collegiality the greater is their need to resort to micropolitical strategies to overcome the opinions of their supposed partners in the decision-making process, their 'colleagues'.

As an ideal, however, the decentralisation of authority receives a great deal of advocacy in the research literature. It has called for new kinds of leadership such as transformational leadership, (Leithwood and Janzi, 1990; Bass, 1985) and shared governance (Glickman, 1990). In all of these conceptions the sharing of decision-making on collegial lines figures very prominently.

Jackson (2000) has even gone so far as to reject the centrality of the Headteacher as the transformational leader. In his description of a school improvement programme he outlines the leadership activities that staff throughout the school can play in the direction of 'enquiry partnerships' examining specified areas of teaching and learning in the quest for school improvement. Leithwood et al (1997: page 322) have similarly explored the parameters of effective team operation towards achieving effective working. They conclude that "team leadership can make a significant difference to a team's learning" but that this person does not have to be the nominal leader but simply someone who performs the role of pointing out the fallacies in members' thinking.

The process outlined by Jackson has been prominent in America since the 1980s. Lashway (1996) comments that shared decision-making (SDM) had become a significant part of the American school reform programme. His researches reveal that on an interpersonal level teachers generally report feelings of empowerment and are more likely to support decisions derived



from a collaborative forum. He notes, however, that Principals found problems in adapting their leadership roles, finding difficulty in 'letting go'.

SDM involving teachers increases job satisfaction, stimulates ownership and commitment (Liontos, 1994). Principals in this context need to recognise new forms of leadership, such as that outlined by Jackson, which is sometimes temporary and always shifting. They need to devise new strategies based on facilitation and trust rather than hierarchical authority (Blase et al, 1995). Frequently, however, Principals cling to their old micropolitical ways and deliberately plant ideas or put pressure on opponents and favour supporters so that they can get their own way whilst still appearing to give lip service to collaborative ways of working (Prestine, 1993).

In America it has yet to be demonstrated that SDM addresses the core issues of teaching and learning as groups involving teachers tackle school-wide issues such as curriculum frameworks but seldom analyse the detail of daily classroom practices (Miller, 1995). Moreover, collaborative and democratic decision fora tend to concentrate on 'trivial' issues such as 'parking, bus supervision and smoking on school premises' (Liontos, 1994). In America, Weiss (1995) adds ruefully that traditional school culture may overpower SDM and that the new fora are seen as time consuming and uncomfortable for teachers.

It can be seen, therefore, from the American example, that SDM is not a panacea or a beneficial factor per se but that such collaborative work needs focus with definite outputs (Lontos, 1994; Jackson, 2000) that will impact on the quality of teaching and learning. Teachers, moreover, need to be weaned away from the culture of isolation where they cherish the privacy of their own classrooms (Griffin, 1995).

Fullan and Hargreaves (1992) elaborate on this theme with a model of decision-making which is characterised by 'an open style of management' and incorporates the participation of teachers and a parallel commitment to change and improvement.

The model of management whereby decision-making is shared amongst some or all of the members of the organisation has been called by Bush (1986) the 'democratic' model of management.

This model brings collaboration to the fore. The theory runs that where decision-making is shared there is an authority of expertise (as opposed to the straightforward status authority of the Head) as professionals emit authority based on their knowledge and skill.

A variation on this theme is offered by the notion of the 'intelligent school' (Gardner, 1983; MacGilchrist, 2000). This construct derives from the notion of a 'Learning Organisation' (Argyris & Schön, 1978) which facilitates the



learning of all of its members and continuously transforms itself (Senge, 1990). MacGilchrist poses a view of a school as having nine intelligences which when used in combination enable it to have the capacity to achieve its goals. Significantly MacGilchrist instances 'collegial intelligence' or "the capacity of the staff to work together in particular to improve their practice in the classroom" (2000: page 3). Bukowitz and Williams (1999: page 2) note, similarly, that "knowledge management is the process by which the organisation generates wealth from its intellectual or knowledge based assets."

Most democratic models build on the assumption that staff have formal representation on the decision-making bodies. Noble and Pym (1970: page 442) highlight this right to share in the wider decision-making process:

".... the claim inherent in professionalism to self-determination in the exercise of professional functions was extended beyond the areas of strictly professional competence into the sphere of general organisational planning and its detailed execution. The extension of the dominant professional ethic to the administration of a large organisation implied that the right of status equalled the right to be respected and consulted."

There is a considerable amount of research evidence concerned with collaboration, drawn from educational settings and beyond it. Davies (1983), for example, in his survey of fifty one Heads of Department in secondary schools showed that they desired a higher level of involvement in

management and decision-making than they were actually granted. This highlights the unpopularity of the purely hierarchical approach. Davies' findings were confirmed and extended by Richardson (1981) who found that student teachers and starting teachers wanted to participate in management and decision-making. This evidence indicates that there is a real professional desire on the part of teachers to participate in the management of their work but is collaborative working a truly efficient way of decision-making?

Greenberg and Baron (1993), whilst making the point that in industry, group-working is a well-established fact of organisational life, point out that group decision-making has the disadvantage of taking longer and being prone to conflict.

The major advantage of working collaboratively is that group problem-solving has been demonstrated to be superior to the performance of individuals. Michaelsen, Watson and Black (1989) set problem-solving tasks to 222 groups of students. Their findings indicate that on complex tasks a benefit is derived from combining individuals into groups and that the performance of the group is superior to the performance of the best individual group member. When one considers the potentially restricted perceptions of high status decision-makers, following the hierarchical model, it follows that the much broader experience base as envisaged in the discussion of the collaborative approach, above, would generate both a greater number of and more effective solutions.



Greenberg and Baron (1993) also point out that for group decision-making to be superior then group members must have complementary skills so that various aspects of a problem can be led by an appropriate 'expert'. Conversely, of course, if the decision-making group consists of members who lack this breadth of expertise the quality and implementability of their decisions will be consequently poorer.

Collaboration, therefore, has considerable benefits but the approach is not a panacea as there are certain crucial requirements for this system to work effectively. An open and supportive group atmosphere is critical for groups to operate effectively. Bouchard et al (1974) have shown, for example, that some individuals feel inhibited by the presence of others and so the synergy that is generated in group working can be lost.

A further danger in the operation of groups is the phenomenon of 'groupthink.' This is when members of a group develop a very strong sense of group spirit or cohesiveness, so much so that they tend to isolate themselves from outside criticism. When groupthink is at its peak there is, according to Janis (1982), a greater concern to maintain a positive group spirit than about making the most realistic decisions. In such situations groups tend to create for themselves a feeling of invulnerability, to withhold dissenting ideas and counter arguments and share the false belief that everyone in the group agrees with its judgements.

Janis (1982) has documented occurrences where groups which have low levels of accountability and high levels of isolation could be prone to such phenomena. There is the real possibility of groupthink in hierarchical management structures, for example the Senior Management Team of a school. Where, however, the decisions of a policy group, made up of practitioners, are put through the acid test of classroom reality and the scrutiny of large numbers of colleagues then groupthink is a rare possibility.

Indeed it can be argued that in order to avoid the dangers of groupthink, policy-making should not be undertaken purely by senior managers but policy groups should have as wide a membership as possible so that a self-deluding coterie does not develop.

A similar danger in group decision-making is the polarisation of opinions. This phenomenon refers to the tendency of individuals, initially in favour of, or against a certain decision to become even more in favour of it or against it following group discussions (Lamm and Myers, 1978).

There are, therefore, distinct advantages in arriving at policy decisions via group participation, particularly so when the experience and expertise base is broadened to include perspectives of practitioners. If the full power of collaborative working is to be unleashed groups must have full and representative membership, drawn from across the school. By these means the dangers of groupthink and group polarisation are minimised as decisions

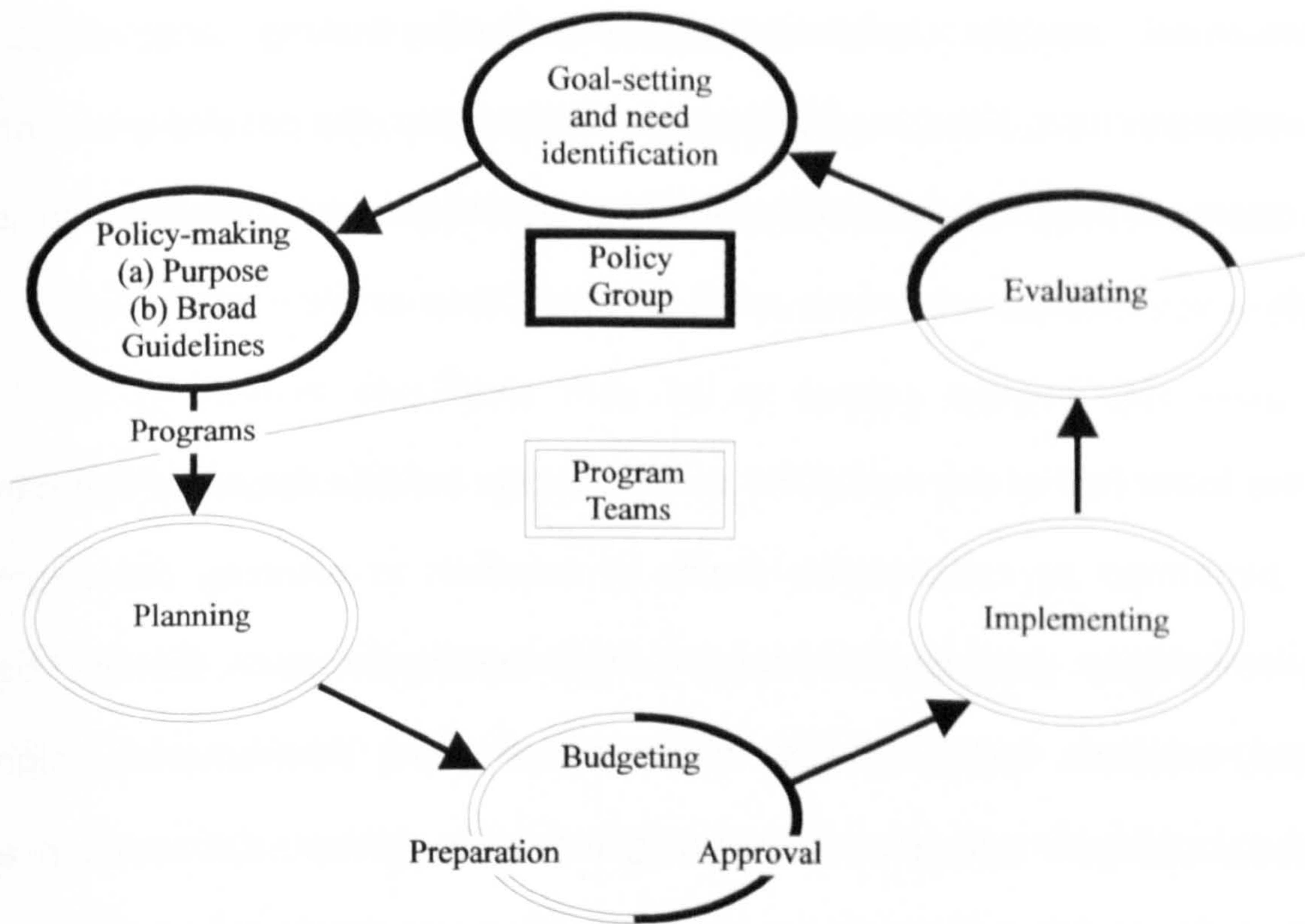


are fully exposed to the opinions of all members of the organisation and to real accountability.

In Australia, Caldwell and Spinks (1988) have pioneered an approach which capitalises on the collegiate approach and largely overcomes the weaknesses of rigid, hierarchical, almost feudal models of management. They have termed their approach the collaborative management cycle.

The model is financially based in that it is founded on the principles of programmed budgeting where the goals and objectives of an organisation (the programme) are firmly linked to the balance sheet or budget. The collaborative management cycle, however, promotes its own distinct management style which directly addresses the weaknesses of more hierarchical approaches. The cycle (Figure 2.2) conveys the process as arising from the goals, needs and priorities of the school which are identified by the policy group. This overarching group places all the educational needs of the school in order of priority. As envisaged by Caldwell and Spinks there are two phases in the cycle: policy setting, where the rings have been shaded, and implementation, indicated by unshaded rings.





**Figure 2.2 The Collaborative Management Cycle (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988)**

Caldwell and Spinks state that their policy group could be the governing body of an English School. In reality, however this 'policy group' in an English setting, would be the Senior Management Team and/ or the governing body. Once the objectives have been set by this group then it is the duty of the programme teams, the collaborative groups of teachers to formulate plans which are then approved or modified by the policy group. The plans are formulated in such a way that each one can be evaluated annually.

The system, therefore, differs in one highly significant feature from hierarchical models: collaboration. Once policy-making and needs-identification have been set by the main policy group, the possibility of staff involvement in subsequent policy-making, planning and implementation is high.

In the lower half of the model the unfilled circles indicate the tasks that can be performed by collaborative teams of teachers in planning curriculum implementation, preparing costings and implementing the plans. It should be noted, however, that the darker rings, indicating the involvement of high status individuals and groups, including the 'policy group', still maintain a critical role in the process and that collaboration, as conceived by Caldwell and Spinks, is still only skin deep and 'consultation', rather than collaboration or participation, characterises the approach.

Fullan (1982) has added his considerable weight to the case of supporting collegiality as he reminds us of the four 'basic features' that are required for effective school improvement:

- (1) a shared purpose;
- (2) norms of collegiality;
- (3) norms of continuous improvement;
- (4) structures that represent the organisational conditions necessary for significant improvement.



All four of these are indeed critical, but the fourth feature is particularly significant. The word 'represent' suggests simultaneously that the structures should both 'make visible or manifest' the conditions necessary for improvement, and 'stand for' or 'symbolise' them. Fullan defines structure to include 'organisational arrangements, roles, and formal policies that explicitly build in working conditions that, so to speak, support and press for movement'. (page 77)

It can be seen, therefore, that there is considerable support for the involvement of all professionals within an organisation in its successful functioning. It provides an alternative focus to those studies and accounts which place the importance of a single player, the Headteacher, centre stage in organisational development.

### **Leadership and School Improvement**

It is a commonplace tenet that one of the significant features of school improvement is the 'leadership' provided by the Headteacher. The term, however, needs to be elaborated as different studies focus on differing aspects of this construct. In the 'market forces' climate of the late 1980s, following the Education Reform Act 1988, where schools had to compete against each other in the educational market place, a changed nature of leadership and management was required. Market competition, Reynolds (1992) argues, changes what is necessary for an effective Headteacher because this environment requires new skills. He highlights, amongst other things, public relationship skills and the capacity to relate to parents as



customers, as well as the ability to find sources of support in local communities. More importantly, however, he highlights a by-product of this altered educational environment, the ability to manage rapid change instead of a 'steady state' and the capacity to motivate staff in times when instrumental rewards such as promotion or advancement are rare. It remains to be seen if this market-oriented dimension is still prevalent in the current educational climate with its associated 'new managerial' approaches (Gewirtz et al, 1995). What cannot be doubted, however, is that there are more obvious aspects of leadership required by Headteachers in driving forward school improvement. The most obvious feature is that they set the agenda and the improvement strategy.

Levine and Lezotte (1990: page 50) in extracting 'effective school correlates' in their review of studies of unusually effective US schools state:

"success... requires considerable direction and support from central leadership."

They also highlight "outstanding leadership" qualities which comprise:

- The vigorous selection and replacement of teachers;
- Maverick orientation (risk taking) and buffering (shielding their schools from critical comment from outside agencies, e.g. the press);
- Frequent personal monitoring of school activities and sense making (clarifying objectives for staff);
- High expenditure of time and energy for school improvement actions;
- The acquisition of resources.

**Their conclusion is compatible with those researchers who have studied innovation in general and found that it is most likely to be successful when it combines elements of 'bottom-up' planning and decision-making with 'top-down' stimuli and support in setting directions and guiding the change process. Collaboration amongst professionals, therefore, is still a critical ingredient in the process where a 'supportive environment' is created for teachers and the Head is able to motivate her/his staff 'to perform at a high level'.**

**Hall (1996) in her account of female Headteachers crystallises the approach which contains these key ingredients of direction and involvement. Her comments are gender-related but they apply equally to male Headteachers (Stoll, 1995). The picture that emerges is of Headteachers seeing themselves as key players co-ordinating, developing and using others' efforts to the benefit of the school's purposes.**

**Hall, explaining the metaphor in her title and underlining the above role, states:**

**"I suggest they were the choreographers of the school's performance. Their actions for achieving these purposes were collaborative rather than directive but within a conception of the Headship role that included clarifying the direction and ensuring people were reminded of where they were going." (page 190)**

**Stoll (1995) elaborates on the theme and identifies three kinds of school, each of which requires an appropriate action from the Headteacher:**

- **the cruising school which is characterised by complacency and is comfortable with its current level of performance, the staff being resistant to change;**
- **the struggling school which lacks direction and planning;**
- **the sinking school where standards and motivation for staff and pupils are on the decline.**

**The Headship qualities that are required for each kind of school:**

- **Sinking schools require the strongest intervention where even the most dynamic Headteacher will need significant help and external support;**
- **For the cruising school this requires a 'wake up call.' Here the Head needs to confront unprofessional behaviour or poor teaching practices, arranging outside support to push forward change strategies;**
- **For struggling schools the Headteacher needs to start with small solvable problems.**

**Stoll, echoing the points made above about collegiality, emphasises the point that the staff need to be involved by creating small problem-solving teams to build a more collaborative culture.**

**Interventionist traits are, therefore a characteristic of leadership. Scheerens (1992) refines this notion with his concept of 'educational leadership.' His definition of this Headship trait contains a strong focus on teaching and**



learning and will, for example, be characterised by the Head focusing on gaining resources for learning and in persuading parents on the most effective conditions for learning in the home. Scheerens' definition of this 'Pedagogic Head' is very similar to Hall's 'teacher educator' (Hall et al, 1988) Pedagogic Headteachers, according to Scheerens assess what their teachers are doing, talking with them about their teaching, observing lessons and being actively involved in the debate over and ultimate choice of teaching methods and resources. Adding an extra dimension, such a Head is fully rational and steers a course for the school with a 'compass of information' about pupil performance. In other words, in true rational decision-making fashion the Head uses performance data to guide the school.

Such a Head, also, according to Scheerens: (1992: page 88)

"encourages organisational and structural conditions that make consensus possible ... and puts every personal effort into making sure this consensus is achieved."

This person also personifies the characteristics of the effective school by her/his:

- Emphasis on basic skills;
- High expectations and frequent use of assessment;
- Order and maintenance of a secure setting.



Scheerens associates these characteristics with school leadership as opposed to being features of the school because 'one is referring to a concrete actor who has certain opportunities to achieve one thing or another'.

This complementary list of laudable traits is too all-inclusive to be totally credible. Scheerens' summary of characteristics is useful, however, in its featuring of the pedagogic component of school leadership.

The personality of the Head, as perceived by the staff, has been associated with improving schools. In asking what characteristics exemplary schools in America possessed, the Principal's display of high expectations for him/herself and their active participation or 'high task orientation' in school improvement programmes have been highlighted (Slater and Tedlie, 1992) .

It is clear that much school improvement research has adopted the rather arid 'checklist' approach whereby features of schools which have been identified as being successful are extracted. As such they add little to our understanding of the management processes that are involved in driving forward and 'leading' school improvement.

What emerges, however, are the two contradictory themes of authoritarianism and democracy together with the mix, on the one hand, of the prerogatives of the 'management hierarchy' and, on the other, the high

predisposition of today's Headteachers towards more egalitarian beliefs and values about management (Wallace and Hall, 1994).

### **The Decision-Making Context**

There is no body of research evidence which concerns itself exclusively with the decision-making skills that are required by Headteachers. Previous research has concerned itself with either decision-making in general (Brunswik, 1955; Simon, 1979) or focuses on professional judgement processes in other contexts (Elstein, Schulman & Sprafka, 1978; Hastie, 1993; Atkinson and Claxton, 2000). As such, therefore, the existing literature provides insights which are de-contextualised. Furthermore, there is a central underpinning to all work on professional management and decision-making that such decisions are inherently rational and optimal. In considering the professional judgement of Headteachers this assumption needs to be examined. The appreciation that Headteachers hardly ever reach their management decisions in lofty isolation needs also to be considered and so the social and institutional variables that affect their decision-making abilities and style need to be assessed.

This section, therefore, will concern itself with the cognitive, social, institutional and bureaucratic dimensions of management and decision-making. Where relevant and available, reference will be made to decision-making that has been examined in other professional groups.



## **Professional Rationality: True or False?**

Hoyle and John (1995) debate at length an adequate definition of the teacher as professional. Their concern focuses, to a large degree, on the classroom practitioner but in debating whether teaching is a profession they capture a critical assumption for this work, that 'professionalism' requires a considerable degree of intellectual skill and the ability to draw on a body of systematic knowledge. Hoyle and John note that this knowledge is not so well grounded as, for example, that of the medical professional but comment, significantly for the context of this study, that teachers as professionals are expected to exercise interpretative knowledge or 'wisdom and judgement' so that they can make 'efficacious decisions'.

There are assumptions, therefore, about Headteachers' management decision-making and judgement that have, hitherto, remained unchallenged. There is an assumption that the judgements of these professionals are based on a body of sound operational knowledge, gained either through experience or expertise and that decisions will be logical and rational. The image of the Headteacher's professional management and exercising of judgement is that of a calculated decision-making process whereby reliable and objective information is assessed and a choice made as a consequence.

The prototype for this rationality is to be found in the concept of Economic Person, the archetypal rational decision-maker envisaged by economists and featured in the classical economic theory of Adam Smith and his *Wealth of Nations* (Smith, 1914).

**Economic Person, as envisaged by Smith, was a truly rational being who based decisions on deliberate and reasoned consideration of all the possible results of intended courses of action for the greatest good.**

**As Greenberg and Baron (1993: page 543) comment, referring to this form of decision-making in a profit-making context:**

**"An economically rational decision-maker will attempt to maximise his or her profits by systematically searching for the best solution to a problem. For this to occur the decision-maker must have complete and perfect information and be able to process all this information in an accurate and unbiased fashion."**

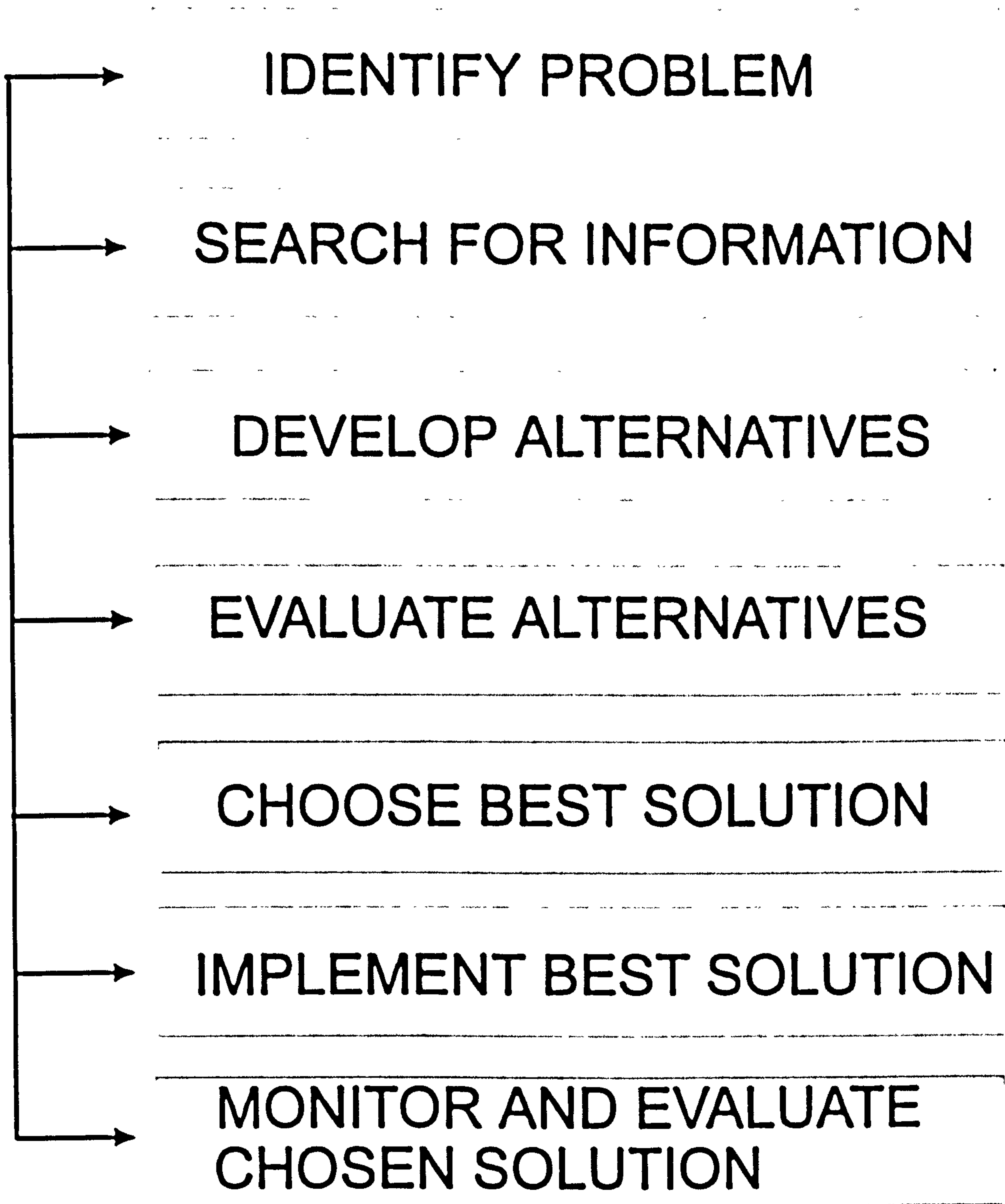
**The model favoured in senior management settings is the traditional analytical model of decision-making (Harrison, 1987) where judgement is seen as a continuous series of rational and analytical information processing steps to arrive at a decision.**

**This view is an idealised one but serves to illustrate the predominant view of rational decision-making, epitomised in the notion of the rational economic model. This assumes that decisions are logical in every way. For this to occur the decision-maker must have complete and perfect information and be able to process the information in an accurate and unbiased fashion (Simon, 1979).**



There are definite and predictable steps in this model. The first step is problem identification where the problem is recognised. In an educational context this may, for example, be an appreciation that the staying on rates of post-16 pupils is unsatisfactory. After the problem has been identified the next step is to define the objectives to be met in solving the problem. In the case of the example above this would be to increase post-16 recruitment. After this stage alternatives are generated. Should increased publicity be used, for example at the end of Year 11, or is the school to offer extra courses that would be more attractive to the target audience? Each of these options is assessed using objective data available to the decision-maker (the experiences of similar schools, for example) who then assesses the consequences and costs of each course of action. After this assessment of alternatives a decision is reached which is implemented. After a period of implementation the decision is monitored and evaluated. If new alternatives are needed then the cycle of decision-making starts again.

The traditional analytical decision-making model is shown below (Figure 2.3).



**Figure 2.3 The Traditional Analytical Decision-Making Model (Johns, 1991)**

This model has currency in many professional domains, not only those found in schools. It is used by Greenberg and Baron (1993) for example to explore the decision-making processes of those involved in industrial manufacture.

It could also be applied to those involved in other professional activities such as doctors where a clinical diagnosis is arrived at through rational means where alternatives are weighed often supplemented with clinical tests and supported by medical knowledge until the appropriate diagnosis, (the decision) is reached. As such, therefore, doctors' judgements are supported by decision support systems. Such supports may be formal curative procedures and optimal routines. These will be discussed later when considering decision-making in the medical context.

When the actual decision is made the following axioms apply as influencing variables:

### **Ordering of alternatives**

First of all rational decision-makers should be able to compare any two alternatives. Indeed more capable decision-makers should be able to rank order the importance of alternatives.

### **Dominance**

Rational actors should never adopt strategies that are dominated by other alternative decisions. In other words perfect rational decision-makers should automatically select the 'strong alternatives' that have demonstrably preferable outcomes to other options.



## **Cancellation**

If two outcomes are the same they should cancel each other out; a choice between two alternatives should depend only on the demonstrable difference of one outcome over the other. In other words, if the alternatives offer the same outcome they should cancel each other out.

## **Transitivity**

If a rational decision-maker prefers outcome A to outcome B and outcome B to outcome C then that person should prefer outcome A to C. This is an essential syllogistic principle that underlies all rational decision-making strategies.

## **Continuity**

For any set of outcomes a decision-maker should always prefer a gamble between the best and worst outcome, not favouring a half way house where the outcome is indeterminate. The example often quoted here which illustrates the point is that a person should prefer a gamble of a sure gain of £10 to a potential win of £100 which is coupled with the risk of complete financial ruin. In other words, people will often opt for the 'sure bet' (Tversky & Kahnemann, 1981).

These axioms define one classical model of rational decision-making, termed utility theory. Following this model, how we value potential outcomes influences our decisions: the more highly valued an outcome is, the more favourably disposed we are towards alternatives that promise to deliver that



outcome. A further variation is the effect of uncertainty. Utility theory claims that our opinions of the likelihood of various outcomes affect our decisions; good chances of attractive outcomes move us towards an opinion, similarly, unappealing outcomes have the opposite effect.

As a variation on a theme Kahnemann and Tversky (1979) proposed their Prospect Theory. Following these principles a decision-maker examines each prospect and translates the outcomes and probabilities into subjective values and decision weights. After this is done the values and weights are combined or synthesised into a subjective value that the subject evaluates before arriving at a choice. As we shall see later, the weighting of inputs has an effect on decision-making.

It can be seen, therefore, that classical rational decision-making models place a high premium on weighing and assessing outcomes, risks and preferences. Studies have proposed mathematical principles for calculating optimal decisions. It is possible, therefore, for the mathematician to work out which way people will decide.

Undoubtedly some of the decisions that Headteachers are called upon to make will fit easily into the rational / analytical frame. Following this model Headteachers will assess alternatives, evaluate the outcomes that have the most favourable effects on the running of the school. Often they are helped by decision support systems (often termed in the literature DSS) such as

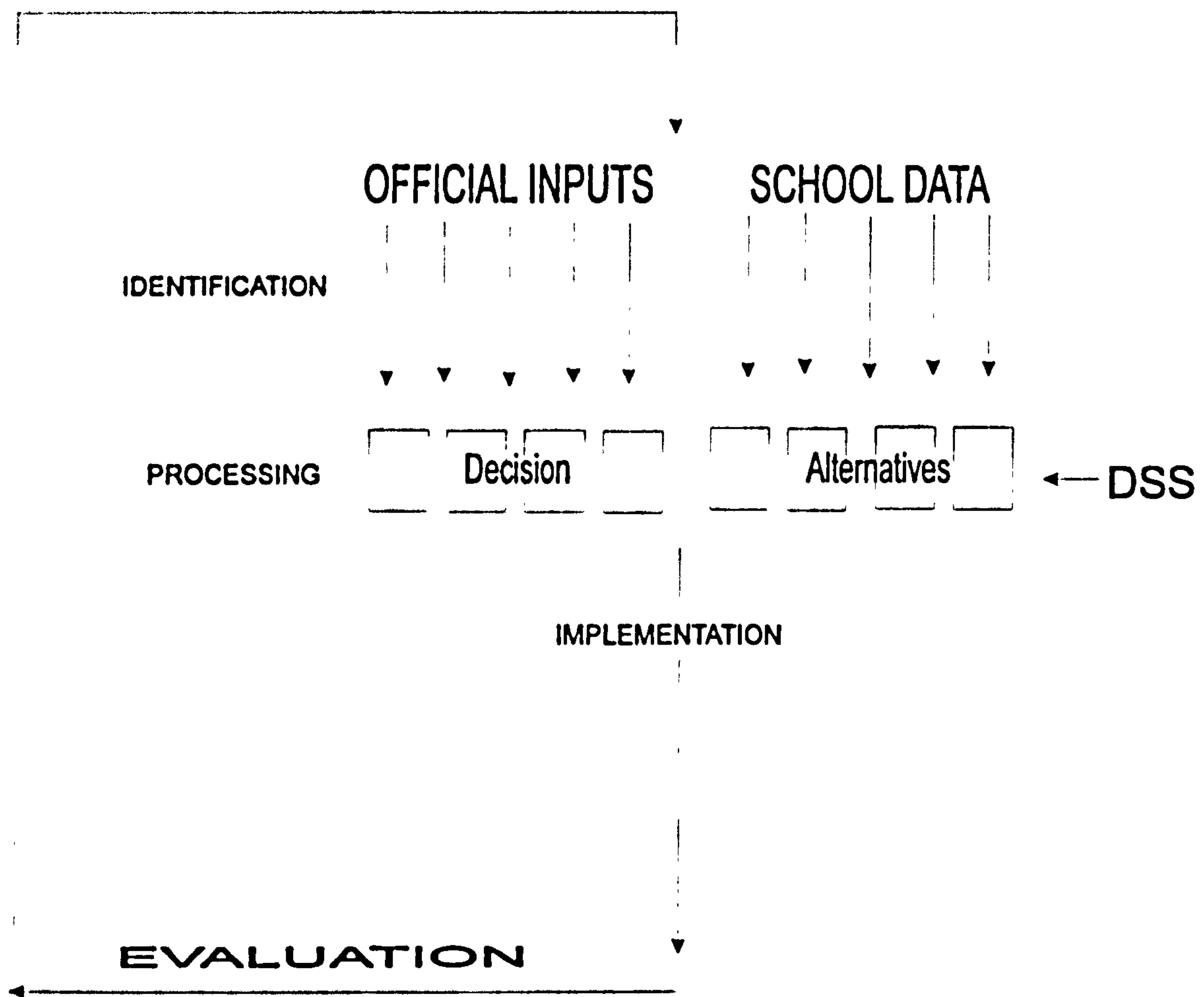
official guidelines or agreed policies. The decision, therefore, is an easy one and can best be conceptualised in the following model. (Figure 2.4)

Rationality, combining the evidence thus far considered, can be conceived in three phases:

- problem identification
- problem processing
- implementation

At the problem identification phase the decision-maker has identified the problem using various forms of information. In a school context these could be official data such as public examination results or those of standard assessment tests. Schools are, for example, being increasingly required to use pupil performance data and skills inventories to guide their policies.

Following the 'input' phase the problem is processed and options considered. To support the decision-making unit, evaluative and rational principles are mustered and outcomes considered against options. At this decision-making phase the educational decision-maker may have available decision support procedures to assist. These could be formal procedures, successful practices adopted by others in the same situation or an accepted way of dealing with the problem.



**Figure 2.4 Developed Evaluative – Rational Decision-Making Model**

Such a model is useful in outlining the routine decisions that Headteachers have to take, such as an assessment as to whether to provide extra support staff to reinforce special needs provision. In this circumstance pupil data, in the form of the numbers of pupils requiring extra help, stimulates the issues at the problem identification phase and generates particular options such as:

- withdraw SEN pupils;
- create special needs class(es);
- employ extra in-class teacher assistance.



The Head at the next phase of the model may draw on decision support mechanisms such as official practices or the opinions of the school expert on the matter, the Special Needs Co-ordinator (SENCO). In assessing the options the predicted outcomes will be considered as to which option is perceived as providing the greatest benefit. The decision is implemented and evaluated via the school input data that it generates, in this case the changed performance of the pupils in question. This in turn either confirms the original option or raises other alternatives to be processed in similar rational fashion.

This kind of decision is fundamental in the running of the school but such a straightforward, even facile, model is inadequate to explain anything other than routine or pre-programmed decision-making.

In extending the model to reflect the true nature of Headteachers' decision processes we need to draw on expertise in other fields; particularly from work conducted in examining how other professionals, in this case doctors, make decisions.

### **Flaws in rationality - The lessons from Clinical Decision-making**

There are vocational areas where decision-making is a highly critical (indeed life or death) issue and where logic and deductive reason are held in high regard and perceived to be the accepted modus operandi. Such an area of professional expertise is the medical profession.

Typically a doctor is presented with a patient who displays a variety of symptoms. The doctor, using his or her clinical expertise and judgement assesses, collates and weighs the evidence against his medical knowledge to arrive at a diagnosis. As such, therefore, this professional satisfies the criteria outlined above for the rational or 'economic' decision-maker.

Research into clinical decision-making, however, casts doubt on this idealised conception.

The problem highlighted in the literature is twofold. Doctors, despite their training, are imperfect information processors (Elstein, Shulman & Sprafka, 1978). To compound the issue medical practitioners are frequently not presented with perfect information and, therefore, have to 'make do' with imperfect data. Diagnostic information, for example, may be presented from the perspective of the patient and so the doctor has to assess the reliability of this. The clinician may also receive data from clinical tests which have to be weighed against other measured and reported information on the patient's state of health.

Even taking these difficulties into account the clinical judgement of the physician can be assessed and measured. Often this is expressed in the form of a mathematical equation where the 'inputs' (cues or indicants) are weighed against the 'outputs' (judgements or decisions). This 'clinical judgement analysis' does not, however, take into account what happens inside the clinician's head.

Typical of this approach is research using Egon Brunswik's (1955) lens model. Here the supposed intuitive judgements of physicians can be successfully reproduced by simple linear equations. Following this method the clinician is presented with a series of input cues and then creates an 'output' diagnosis.

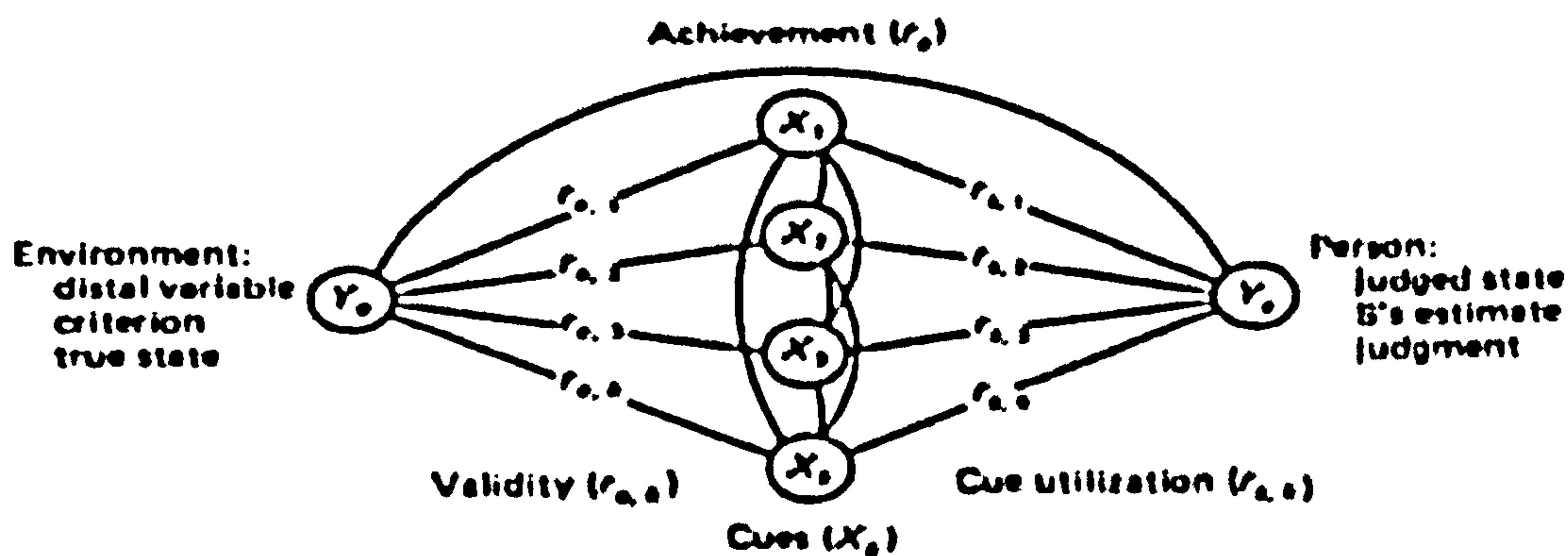


Figure 2.5 The Brunswik Lens Model

The model (Figure 2.5) is conceptualised as a convex lens to illustrate the relationship between a judge's perception of an estimate,  $Y_p$ , and the object of perception,  $Y_e$ , as mediated by a set of cues,  $X$ . Thus the judgement concerns making inferences  $Y_p$  about  $Y_e$  on the basis of data  $X$ . The arc linking  $Y_e$  and  $Y_p$ ,  $r_p$ , indicates the degree to which the person's judgement ( $Y_p$ ) was accurate. The model can be used to depict a clinician examining a patient with a certain number of clinical findings  $X_k$  such as a headache, high blood pressure and making a judgement  $Y_p$  concerning the patient's



complaint,  $Y_0$  such as hypertension. The correlation between the two  $Y$ s or 'the hit rate' will indicate diagnostic accuracy.

As a model of rational decision-making it forms a useful concept as it encapsulates the essence of decisions which are hypothetico-deductive in origin. It is of limited use, however, in the context of Headteachers' management and decision-making as it ignores the vital term 'judgement.' In the present context Headteachers are not rated on their ability to produce the 'right' answer like a correct diagnosis. Seldom, if ever, are they required to filter out irrelevancies to produce a single acceptable course of action. In seeking the most optimal decision, however, the model in refined form can have a bearing on Headteachers' judgement. Transferring the model to a Headteacher we can refine it by indicating that certain of the options will have greater 'weight' than others. The educational decision-maker would, therefore, weigh the evidence presented to him, synthesise the data and reach a decision.

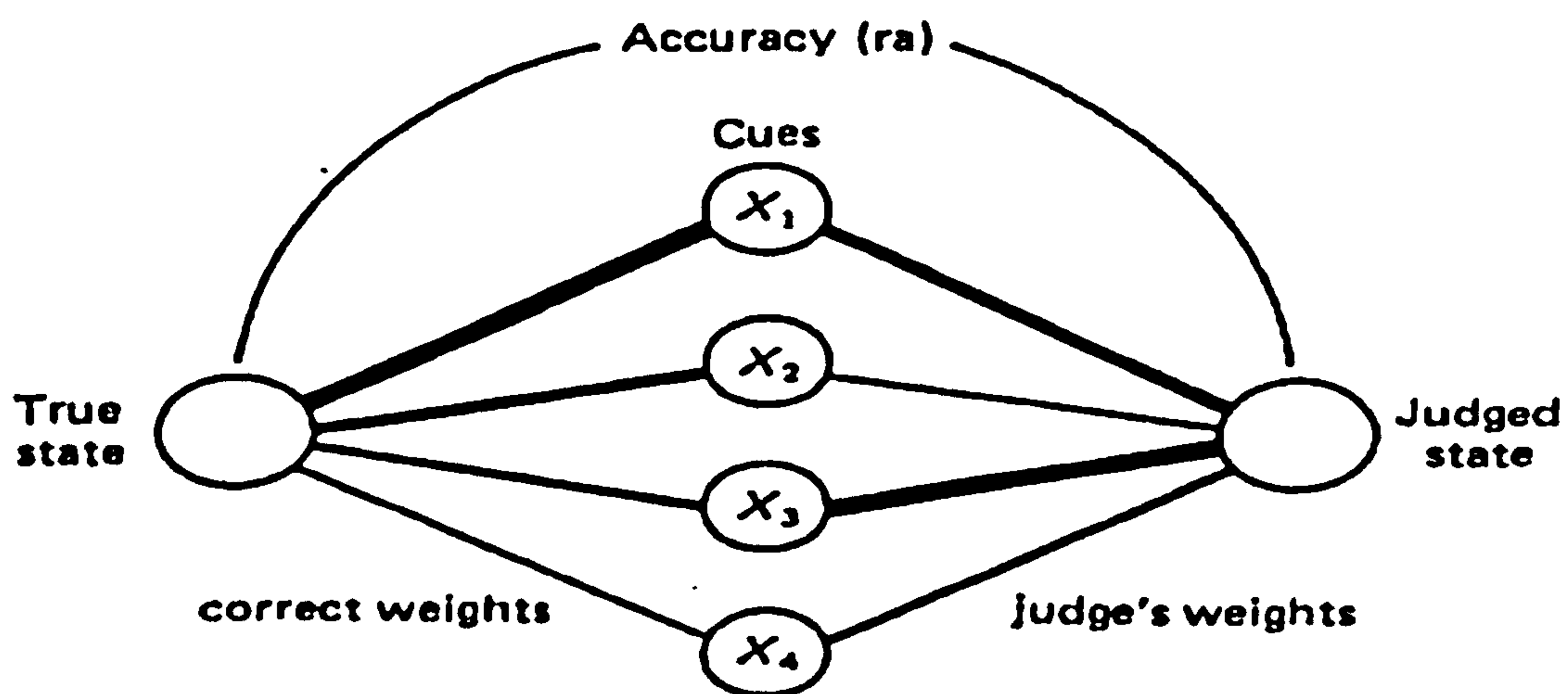


Figure 2.6 Refined Lens Model – Decision Weights

The model, however, looks beyond mere synthesis and has further ramifications for Head's management and decision-making. The work of Moore et al (1974) in the medical field is pertinent in this respect. Endocrinologists were asked to choose one of three treatments for an overactive thyroid on the basis of five pieces of clinical information. The medical nature of the information need not concern us here but the results do. Typically, the doctors used fewer than the five items in making their judgements and tended to ignore laboratory data and concentrated on medical history. Thus they were selective. The study pointed the way towards medical economy in eliminating tests that clinicians did not use. In the context of this study, however, and the current assessment of rationality, the work of Moore et al (1974) indicates that decision-makers do not simply synthesise all of the information available to them along the lines of the 'lens' model. They rely instead on previously acquired information and ignore new data that is presented to them.

The situation with Headteachers is obviously not exactly analogous but Moore's work seems to point to the fact that decision-makers, when presented with a volume of information, undergo a process of gatekeeping. Of even greater importance in Moore's work is that the cues were given 'weights' by the judges. In other words, the information was not treated equally.

This implies, therefore, a process of selective perception. In the case of doctors this would seem to run counter to expectations and the phenomenon



of medical 'facts' having equal weight, accumulating and leading to a diagnosis. Such is not the case, as Wigton, Hoellerich and Patil (1988) discovered when examining the diagnosis of simulated cases of pulmonary embolism. Different doctors attached different significance or 'weights' to the different pieces of evidence. In other words, supposedly objective data was treated in a distinctly subjective manner.

It has been argued that clinical decision-making can overcome such biases by collating the judgements of accomplished clinicians and creating an infallible decision support system (DSS). The model envisaged is that of an 'expert system' computer program where a multitude of inputs are weighed, assessed and processed to form a perfect output or decision. Research conducted in the medical sphere has indicated that even this notion of perfect rationality is limited (de Dombal, 1988).

It can be seen, therefore, that statistical or even electronic methods attempt to point the way to perfect reasoning. The approach may try and make expert connections between input data and output decisions as a method of assessing perfect rationality, but it is flawed in two respects for the purpose of this study. Primarily, Headteachers' decision-making, unlike clinical diagnosis rarely depends on the 'right' answer. Secondly, the statistical utilitarian approach ignores the psychological and human components. The process that is going on inside the clinician's or Headteacher's head is of more interest to this study.



The principle that is critical in understanding the 'information processing' approach is that of 'bounded' or limited rationality. Its starting point, therefore, is that there are limits to the human capacity for rational thought. Because of our limited information processing capacity we often resort to strategies to overcome our limitations. The most significant psychological failing that we attempt to overcome is the relatively small capacity of our working memory compared to the potentially infinite size of long-term memory. The result of this is that we cannot work with all that we know about a problem or even manipulate all of the data available to us.

Elstein, Shulman and Sprafka (1978) attacked this problem from a clinical perspective by undertaking a descriptive analysis of the reasoning of a group of experienced doctors as they performed a series of medical and non-medical tasks.

They found that the way that physicians reasoned was to generate a small set of hypotheses early in the encounter based on very limited data obtained in the first few minutes with the patient.

Thus the totally open-ended question, 'What is wrong with the patient?' is restructured into a trial hypothesis which is then tested. This makes the reasoning process more manageable. By starting at the end point, the diagnosis, the search for data is simplified because only relevant clinical data will be addressed.

The concept of Cognitive Dissonance is relevant in this context (Festinger, 1957). The theory runs that people do not actively seek objective information as the source of their decisions but rather seek justification for the decision that they have already made.

In other words when people commit themselves to a course of action people seek to avoid 'dissonance' by selectively seeking information that confirms their original choice.

In organisational decision-making there is a more marked example of this 'face saving' factor, the phenomenon of 'escalation of commitment.' When a poor decision has been made managers often continue to support it even in the face of catastrophe (Brockner, 1992).

Outlining a similar process, Staw (1981) has noticed that people veer towards self-justification in order to protect their beliefs about themselves as rational, competent decision-makers.

Clinical decision-making also provides us with evidence for this effect. Barrows et al (1977) reported that experienced physicians actively search for data to confirm hypotheses rather than modifying those hypotheses so that negative findings tend to be de-emphasised. Indeed, Einhorn (1988: page 182) presents a more cynical view that:

"it is often the case that the power of post hoc explanation is masked by the paucity of predictive ability."



A variation on the theme is the 'overconfidence' phenomenon reported by Oskamp (1965) whereby redundant data are used to bolster confidence in the judgement or decision although the data themselves in objective terms add little to the decision.

A further piece of clinical work is relevant to the decision-making of Headteachers. Barrows and Bennett (1972) in their studies of neurologists found that hypotheses tended to 'pop' into the head of the doctor. Gregory (2000: page 187) notes a similar effect in managers where a solution "may come out of the blue from an intuitive insight." From the psychological point of view the explanation seems to be that there are hypotheses stored in memory that are activated by salient cues. If one transfers this activity to education one can explain sudden decisions when observing facets of a school as a *déjà vu* experience where a situation suddenly appears familiar and the effective routines or decisions operated in the past are revived for the new occasion.

It can be seen, therefore, that these studies add to our understanding by questioning the pre-eminence of rational decision-making by examining the heuristic devices that professionals use to counter, bolster and replace their ability to be purely rational. As such they provide a valuable insight into the cognitive compromises that are taken in other professional settings.



## **The lessons from consumer behaviour**

The world of marketing and consumer behaviour is one where further insights can be gained on the decision-making process. In this world, buying activity is analysed in detail so that marketers can manipulate the decision-making process towards a successful purchase of the manufacturer's product. The consumer in this cognitive world is presented with a dazzling array of similar products and a decision-making dilemma over which one to choose is created (Atkinson et al, 1990). As such, therefore, analysis of the parameters that determine such decisions and conceptualisations of the processes that apply cast an additional light on models of rational decision-making.

The model proposed in the outline description of consumer decision-making is similar to the conventional rational decision-making model proposed by Greenberg and Baron (1993) where the decision-maker has to evaluate the alternatives in order to implement the best solution, in this case purchase the product that satisfies the consumer's needs.

The model of consumer choice that is often proposed (Engel et al, 1995) supports the rational decision-making process in that it is thoughtful, considered and logical:

"consumer problem-solving involves careful weighing and evaluation of utilitarian (or functional) product attributes". (page 40)

On other occasions, Engel et al concede, however, the consumer is concerned for 'hedonic' or emotional satisfaction. The process continues to be, though, rationally based and follows the following stages:

Need recognition - the state of arousal, a perceived difference between the desired state of affairs and the current state of affairs which activates the decision-making process.

Search for information (about the available alternatives to satisfy the need) - Engel et al classify these as either 'internal search' from memory, i.e. previously satisfied needs or, should this prove inadequate 'external search' or 'collecting information from the marketplace' (page 512).

Alternative evaluation - where the options from the search are evaluated in terms of their expected benefits and narrowing the choice to the preferred alternative.

Purchase - where the preferred alternative (or an acceptable substitute) is acquired.

Outcomes - the evaluation of whether or not the alternative meets needs and expectations.

Engel also proposes that consumers sometimes undertake complex decision processing which he terms Extended Problem-solving (EPS). On other

occasions simplistic processing is undertaken where little time and effort are devoted to the decision. He terms this latter situation Limited Problem-solving (LPS). In the majority of decision-making situations consumers do not have either the time or the motivation to engage in EPS and so purchasing is guided by a cognitive shortcut, such as buying the cheapest brand (Lutz, 1986).

Research into consumers undertaking purchases reveals that many consumers engage in very little 'external search' (i.e. reading consumer reports, visiting different stores, referring to friends and valued others) before making a purchase (Dickson & Sawyer, 1990). Such studies have found that significant numbers of consumers make major purchases after shopping at a single retailer and/ or considering only one brand. Apart from signalling laziness this could argue for a greater confidence in the consumer that her/ his decision is appropriate without the need to refer to external confirmation. It is the case, therefore, that in a given rational decision-making context different deciders will undertake different evaluative activity to arrive at a conclusion. It is unsafe, therefore, to assume that rational decision-makers, in this case consumers, undertake a significant amount of evaluation in every context.

This is highlighted in consumer research by an analysis of the amount of 'search' conducted by purchasers, for example, of new cars. The areas of search that were highlighted are:

- Number of brands/ makes considered;



- **Numbers of outlets/ stores considered;**
- **Number of attributes;**
- **Number of external information sources consulted;**
- **Amount of time spent on search.**

**(Engel et al, 1995: page 516)**

**A study of new car purchasers found the following groupings of consumers:**

- **A low search group (26%) with below average activity on all search dimensions;**
- **A 'purchase pal' assisted group (ask a friend) (19%);**
- **A high search group (5%) characterised by high search activity;**
- **A high self search group (12%) who engaged in evaluations out of the store and in visiting a higher number of different car dealers;**
- **A retail shopper group (5%) who simply went to one dealer;**
- **A moderate search group (32%) who engaged in moderate search activity.**

**Such research indicates, therefore, that not all decision-makers are the same. The amount of analysis they undertake with a given purchase problem will vary. It has been discovered, for example, that older people 'search' less because they rely on their more extensive 'purchasing experience' and that higher income consumers search less than lower income consumers (Beatty and Smith, 1987). The rationale for this is that higher income purchasers value their time more highly and that searching more extensively increases this cost. More highly educated purchasers have also been shown to have**

more confidence in their ability to search and to undertake more of this activity (Duncan and Olshavsky, 1986).

Consumer research also indicates that certain buyers pay varying attention to specific elements of marketing information. Television advertising, for example, has been shown to be particularly influential concerning purchases requiring judgements over style and design (Houston, 1979) and which especially stimulates buying in young, male, single and employed sections of the community (Blackwell et al, 1985). Labelling (Mueller, 1991) has been shown to be more influential with women rather than men and for older people in general. Consumer modelling has also been applied to issues such as parental selection of schools (Webster et al, 1993).

It can be seen, therefore, that decision-makers are not the same in their level of analysis or in the weighting (Brunswik, 1955) that they place on certain cues leading towards purchase. The rational decision-making model, therefore, has to be seriously qualified.

In common with other decision-making contexts that have been explored in this chapter the overtly rational course towards a decision can often be deflected by significant others (Webster et al, 1993). In the consumer context decisions are affected by others such as friends and social contacts (Bloch et al, 1986). Other human elements too, outside the rational decision-making frame can have an influence. Wilkie and Dickenson (1985) in their model of appliance shopping behaviour indicate how a customer's original purchasing



specifications (for example price) can be modified by the intervention of a salesperson. The consumer's established decision-making routine, therefore, is disrupted by a key influence at a key point in the decision-making algorithm and is similar to the effect noticed in jury decision-making (Karr, 1993).

Other research in this area has called into doubt the ability of consumers to make perfectly rational choices. It has been shown, for example, that a given alternative's attractiveness is increased when an inferior alternative is added to the set of choice alternatives (Huber et al, 1982). Similarly, preconceptions and prejudicial judgements can skew the rational process. Several studies have discovered that price is a signal of quality (Erickson et al, 1985). Similarly with specific products, such as headache and cold remedies, the average consumer cannot judge purity and quality and so brand name becomes a surrogate indicator of quality. This is so powerful a force that consumers are willing to pay extra for aspirin, for example, when it carries a well known brand name even though the product, by regulation, carries the same basic therapeutic formulation (Engel et al, 1966). Aaker (1991) has also reinforced the concept that brand association forms a powerful tool, positioning a set of associations organised in a meaningful way, in the mind of the consumer.

It can be seen, therefore, that rationality is questionable in a consumer choice context.



## **The Analytical/ Intuitive Debate**

The argument thus far has focused on the features of analysis, where individuals weigh the options, as best as they are able, and decide on the grounds of pure rationality. If one turns to the field of clinical research, other facets of decision-making come to the fore.

It has been proposed by Schön (1988), for example, that judgement is not in the least rational and derives from a form of intuitive reasoning, accrued through experience. He terms this 'knowledge in action', where effective judgement expertise is revealed through the person's action. The clinician, for example, Schön argues, cannot be expected to articulate an analysis of his or her medical judgmental processes nor can outsiders capture it and make it into knowledge for action by others. In other words decision-making facility is based purely on the accrued body of expertise gained through experience. It only exists, therefore, in the individual's professional actions.

For Schön (1988: page 75) when the decision-maker comes across an uncertainty or a new problem it is resolved by experimentation, using existing knowledge as a base:

“The practitioner allows himself to experience surprise, puzzlement, or confusion in a situation which he finds uncertain or unique. He reflects on the phenomena before him, and on the prior understandings which have been implicit in his behaviour. He carries out an experiment

which serves to generate both a new understanding of the phenomena and a change in the situation.

When someone reflects in action he becomes a researcher in the practice context. He is not dependent on the categories of established theory and technique, but constructs a new theory of the unique case."

So the doctor, in this example, applies existing knowledge to new cases and formulates an added component to his/ her theory in use. Judgements, therefore, are intuitive and defy definition. The weakness of Schön's approach is that it deliberately deflects analysis. Whilst it cannot be doubted that professionals respond intuitively to decision problems, his explanation is insufficient to analyse the processes at work. Simply dismissing such judgement work as intuitive does not advance our understanding of the decision-making process.

Wilson and Schooler (1991) further extol the virtue of intuition from their study which required students to taste and rate a number of different makes of strawberry jam which had been the result of a recent consumer survey. Those given to the students had been ranked 1<sup>st</sup>, 11<sup>th</sup>, 32<sup>nd</sup> and 44<sup>th</sup> by the 'experts'. Some of the students were told that they would be asked to explain the reasons for their preferences and to think hard about their reactions. The results showed that the students who had been left to their own devices and who evaluated the jams intuitively showed much higher agreement with the experts' choices whilst those who were forced to defend their judgements

were more idiosyncratic. Interestingly, in a follow-up study, Schooler tested to see whether despite this divergence from 'received wisdom', students were happy with their choices over a period of time. Far from being content with their choices those students who had thought most carefully about their choices were less satisfied with their judgements. Thus, forcing sensory or subtle decisions into a form that demands explicit articulate reasoning, the authors argue, is counterproductive.

Parikh et al (1994) argue similarly that in an increasingly rapidly changing world, managers operating in an uncertain and unstable climate have to make faster decisions. Nowadays there is an overload of information in, for example, the choice of a personal computer for a school and the differentiating factors are limited. Managers, therefore, are forced to be innovative and creative, not relying on previous skills and techniques to solve the problem, in this instance relying on their intuition as well as their logic (Isenberg, 1984).

The role of intuition is an important one. Some Headteachers will be able to reach decisions quicker, more effectively and more confidently than others. It is clearly evident that as the expertise level of a Head rises his/ her reflection in action becomes more extensive. Schön's (1988) rejection, however, of 'technical rationality' of 'rigorous problem-solving by the application of scientific technique', deliberately obfuscates a thorough view of decision-making.



Again, in the arena of clinical decision-making Hammond (1981) adds a valuable perspective. He argues that doctors select a mode of judgement-making appropriate to the task in hand. Such judgement modes vary along a continuum from intuitive (à la Schön) to analytical. Broadly speaking the nature of the doctor's task induces him or her to select a corresponding mode of cognition. Thus some cases will induce a physician to think about them analytically, others will elicit intuitive cognition. The cases where intuition will come to the fore is where there is an abundance of cues on which the doctor can base a diagnosis. The more information that is available or the shorter the time available for a diagnosis, the more likely the doctor will respond intuitively. On the other hand, the more complex the task, the more likely the doctor is to adopt an analytical approach. Hammond (1981) argues that if the wrong mode of cognition is chosen this will lead to errors in judgement.

This theory is elaborated by the Dreyfus' (1986) who pose the fact that there is a fundamental dichotomy between decision-making styles, either intuitive or analytical. They argue that the choice of judgmental mode has nothing to do with task or the way that it is presented to the doctor, it is simply a case of the doctor's level of experience. Put simply, a novice, because of his lack of experience will adopt a rigorously analytical mode, whereas an experienced practitioner will tackle all tasks intuitively. They characterise five levels of expertise from novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient to expert. The characteristic mode of operation for lesser experienced doctors is that they rely on analytical modes of thought, thinking things through in a

structured and logical way, often relying on the evidence, following rules that they have been taught or guiding principles from medical texts. At strategic intervals in the diagnostic process novices and advanced beginners ask for assistance from their peers. It can be seen, therefore, that the less experienced a decision-maker is the more that he or she will rely on guiding principles, peer support and on a careful logical and analytical approach. The expert, on the other hand, will be able to indulge in 'rapid, unconscious data processing' (Hammond, 1981). The Dreyfus' (1986) approach clearly echoes Schön's (1988) postulation that better thinking is done intuitively, because experts who think better think intuitively.

The researchers in this section have concentrated on two modes of thinking, analytical and intuitive determined by two variables: the task and the level of expertise. This is too simple a division for explaining when and why these two modes of thinking occur. The principal omission is the social context within which the decision-making takes place. It could be argued that postulants listening to a teacher/ doctor outlining a plan of action/ diagnosis will accept intuitive thinking if it derives from an experienced practitioner. If on the other hand intuitive 'diagnoses' derive from a novice then this mode of thinking and its results are less likely to be acceptable. A further variable, therefore, is the level of perceived expertise and effectiveness of the decision-maker within his or her social context which can be a vital determining factor. Hamm Clark and Bursztajn (1984) have highlighted this phenomenon in a medical setting but the kudos and prestige of an educational decision-maker will be seen to be a deciding factor.



It is not only in the medical profession where doubts have been raised about the role of rationality and operating on a fixed body of knowledge. Brown and McIntyre (1993: page 53) in looking at the teaching profession have doubted whether teachers base their actions in the classroom on a bank of theoretical or procedural knowledge that they evaluate with each new classroom incident:

“teachers have no time to wring their hands, reflect on complex theories of learning and motivation and make sophisticated choices between alternative courses of action. They have to act quickly, spontaneously and more or less automatically, immediacy is the essential characteristic of the situation and any implicit theory the teacher may use must be such that it can swiftly produce the appropriate course of action.”

Atkinson and Claxton (2000) argue that what is in operation here is an intuitive response where the educational practitioner cannot articulate her/his decisions or actions. S/he displays 'knowledge in action' in which the knowledge and thought of a practitioner is evident most fully in the actions of the practitioner as opposed to performing on the basis of rational propositions drawn from relevant disciplines such as sociology or pedagogy (Schön, 1983).



## **Errors In Decision Analysis**

As we have seen, decision-makers will take short cuts or adopt devices to bolster their confidence in their decisions. A further area, however, needs to be examined, not simply reaching a decision by a circuitous route but making errors of judgement.

One such common error is termed the primacy effect. This form of cognitive error is distinguished by the fact that information presented early in the decision-making process has a greater effect than information presented later (Yates and Curley, 1986).

The order in which impressions assail decision-makers often have an effect on their judgement. In a classic experiment Asch (1946) asked his subjects for an overall impression of a character who was described with a series of adjectives in a list. Asch found that the adjectives appearing early in the list affected their overall impression. As far as influencing rationality goes his work would suggest that 'first impressions' would determine a decision-maker's opinions. A decision-maker presented with a series of impressions and/ or opinions, following the primacy effect is likely to fix on the first opinion in the series. Anderson (1965) has refined this theory by demonstrating that it is not necessarily the first impressions only that fix perceptions but second and third (i.e. early impressions) which also have a primacy effect. The explanation given for this effect is that this is a further strategy for coping with large amounts of data but with a pronounced effect where first is most important.

A contrasting phenomenon is the recency effect where the final presentation of a piece of information has more influence than the first. It would appear, therefore, that these two effects contradict each other. The relevance of this to decision-making lies in the fact that under certain conditions the first piece of information handed to the decision-maker will take precedence and in others the later piece will assume prominence. Miller and Campbell (1959) experimented on the order that information was presented to judges (in this case it was evidence for and against a manufacturer of a defective vaporiser) and assessed which piece of information attained primacy. They discovered that if there was a short delay between the two pieces of information the first would be remembered. On the other hand if the two pieces of information were separated by a longer period of time the opposite would happen and the second piece would be remembered. This may be an oversimplification of a readily observed phenomenon. The reasons for which piece of information is selected may be more than the timing of the data. In looking for a more satisfactory reason one needs to consider personal preferences and prejudices along the lines of the 'gatekeeping' approach that has been outlined above.

Of greater importance to this study however, are common errors in judgement. Often human beings are prone to decisions that are not 'the best' but 'good enough.' In a pressurised environment, and a school would come into this category, where a decision has to be reached quickly the judgement maker would adopt a decision strategy known as 'the administrative model'

(March and Simon, 1958). This concept recognises that decision-makers may have a limited view of the problem facing them. The number of decision choices are limited by the capability of the decision-maker and the information available. Following this model decision-makers consider solutions as they become available. They then decide on the first alternative that meets their criteria for acceptability. Such decisions are referred to as 'satisficing decisions' (March and Simon, 1958).

In addition to errors of judgement there are several systematic biases in decision-making. One established decision-making bias is to make different decisions based on how the problem is presented, i.e. how the issue is 'framed.' For example Tversky and Kahnemann (1981) have noted that problems framed in a manner that emphasises the positive gains to be received tend to encourage conservative decisions, i.e. decision-makers tend to be 'risk averse' and adopt the safe bet, whereas problems that are framed in a manner that emphasises the potential losses to be suffered lead to 'risk seeking' decisions. So, for example, in their scenario they outlined a series of treatment programs to combat a disease that would claim 600 lives.

They 'framed' Program A as having the prospect of saving 200 lives whereas Program B had a one third chance of saving all 600 people but a two thirds chance of saving no-one.



Framed in this manner Tversky and Kahnemann found that 72 per cent of the subjects preferred Program A, in other words they preferred the 'sure thing' of saving 200 people over the one third chance of saving them all.

When the same situation was described in a negative way, however, the decision choices changed. For example Program C was described as allowing 400 people to die (the same as Program A) and Program D was described as allowing a one third probability that no one would die and two thirds probability that all 600 would die (the same as Program B). When the problem was framed this way 78 per cent preferred Program D, i.e. people avoided risk in the 'lives saved' version but sought risk in the 'lives lost' version.

Following the findings of Tversky and Kahnemann (1981) Headteachers could present 'risky' strategies in a positive light so that they could steer opinion towards the 'safe' route. Conversely, of course, they could present situations in a negative way to encourage a risk taking approach.

It can be seen, therefore, that there are deficits and weaknesses in the purely rational approach to decision-making which make it a flawed cognitive model. A further perspective argues that it is not simply weaknesses in rationality that cause it to be an ineffective way of conceptualising decision-making, but rather that assumptions about the logic of rationality is in itself an erroneous view of decision-making.

## **Stochastic Elements**

An alternative view is provided through stochastic process models. These models differ from rational models in that they assume that a significant component of the decision-making process behaves in random fashion. The metaphor most often used to describe the processes at work is that of the roulette wheel, the pack of cards or the dice.

This view of decision-making has been applied to the judgements of a group of individuals in a specific setting, that of the jury box where judicial decisions have been modelled (Hastie, 1993).

Kerr (1993) has demonstrated in an analysis of jury decisions that the analytical reasoning process gets 'frozen' at a critical point with a particular perception or piece of evidence and that this then gets carried forward, to the exclusion of new evidence, towards the final verdict.

This poses the question of whether Headteachers' decision-making is explained adequately by rational decision-making models.

In order to address this issue this study will focus on a specific area of cognitive functioning, Hindsight Bias. This feature encompasses many of the characteristics of cognitive weakness: illogicality and the reaching of 'false' conclusions through inadequate processing. As such, therefore, it encapsulates many of the elements previously described in terms of

judgement error and can furthermore be demonstrated through tackling a school-based, Headteacher specific problem through which it can be analysed.

### **Hindsight Bias**

Hindsight Bias is often termed the “knew it all along effect” (Wood, 1978) where people with outcome knowledge believe, falsely, that they would have predicted the reported outcome of an event. In the classic experiment subjects are provided with data and asked to predict the probability of various outcomes. Some subjects were asked to rate the probability of each of the outcomes without any outcome knowledge, others were told the ‘true’ outcome and then asked to rate the likelihood of each of the possible outcomes. It has been demonstrated that when groups are provided with an outcome it increases its perceived probability of occurrence.

The classic experiment by Fischhoff (1975) clarifies the procedure. All subjects are provided with a passage, based on a clinical or historical event. In Fischhoff’s case the passages were concerned with an historical event in India, an account of a ‘near riot’ in Atlanta, Georgia and clinical cases with various possible outcomes. The rationale for choosing such passages was that the event should be sufficiently familiar to permit intelligent responses and, at the same time, sufficiently unfamiliar to rule out the possibility of subjects knowing what really happened. Providing a range of passages was intended to provide greater generality for the results obtained.



Fischhoff (1975) divided his subjects into one 'before' group and four 'after' groups. The British Gurka passage exemplifies the procedure. The passage, from Woodward's (1938) "The Age of Reform" described the British Gurka struggle with sufficient balance to provide credence to victory on either side, British or Gurka winning the conflict. The 'before' group simply received the passage with no outcome data and were asked to rate the probability of four outcomes, with all probabilities adding to 100.

The outcomes were:

- A. British victory
- B. Gurka victory
- C. Military stalemate with no peace settlement
- D. Military stalemate with a peace settlement

For the 'after' groups an appropriate outcome was appended to the passage in the form of an additional sentence such as, "The two sides reached a military stalemate, but were unable to come to a peace settlement." The 'after' groups were similarly asked to rate the probability of each of the outcomes, as above. It should be noted that even though Fischhoff has used the terms 'before' and 'after' the groups received their passages at the same time.

The hypothesis being tested was that subjects, being informed of the outcome of an event are more likely to rate that outcome as being relatively inevitable and will assign it a higher probability than will 'before' subjects.

The results were as follows for the passage concerned with the British – Gurka struggle.

		Outcome provided				
	Number of subjects		A	B	C	D
Before	20	NONE	33.8	21.3	32.3	12.3
After	20	A	57.2	14.3	15.3	13.4
	20	B	30.3	38.4	20.4	10.5
	20	C	25.7	17.0	48.0	9.9
	20	D	33.0	15.8	24.3	27.0

**Figure 2.7 Results, Hindsight Bias – (Fischhoff, 1975)**

The table (Figure 2.7) represents the mean probability assigned to each outcome. As can be seen subjects provided with particular outcome information increased their rating of the probability in the direction of that outcome when compared to subjects who had not been presented with any outcome knowledge. Fischhoff repeated this basic experimental design with the three other passages. The same Hindsight Bias effects were noted with all four passages.

## **Beyond Hindsight Bias – Subjects' Awareness of Hindsight Bias**

In a subsequent experiment (Fischhoff, 1975) there was an attempt to discover subjects' awareness of their Hindsight Bias. The same subjects who underwent the experience, above, were issued with the instruction to respond "as they would have had they not known the outcome." The design was intended to test whether, if subjects were aware that they were re-evaluating outcomes, this would have an effect on their allocation of probabilities.

If subjects *were* aware of the effect of outcome knowledge on their judgements then the responses of the 'after' groups should resemble those of the 'before' group in the original experiment. In other words knowledge of the outcome information would be nullified and they would respond as if they had not been told the outcome information. On the other hand if subjects were unaware of the effect of outcome knowledge or were unable to ignore the outcome knowledge then their responses should resemble the data for the 'after' groups in the table above.

Fischhoff discovered that subjects were either unaware of outcome knowledge having an effect on their perceptions or, if aware, they are unable to ignore or rescind that effect as their responses, when told to ignore the outcome information resembled those of the 'after' groups in the initial experiments. He concluded that subjects are "anchored" in the "hindsightful state of mind created by the receipt of outcome knowledge."



There is a fundamental weakness in Fischhoff's design. Wood (1978) has pointed out that subjects might wonder "If the investigator wanted them to ignore the outcome information why did he bother to provide it?"

There is, therefore, a sub textual message given to the subject that, even if instructed to ignore outcome knowledge, that it is important in some way and should not be ignored.

Fischhoff has attempted to experiment with instructions to determine whether this had any effect on Hindsight Bias. In a further experiment which duplicated the original one, subjects were instructed to respond "as did other students who did not know what happened." This was an attempt to permit the subjects to 'save face' and to disable memory of the original prediction. The results indicate that this instruction, similarly, did not disable the Hindsight Bias effect.

### **Hindsight Bias – Pre and Post Outcome Knowledge**

Wood (1978) has pointed out that there are two strands of Hindsight Bias research:

- i. pre outcome judgements which are based on the outcomes of future events, for example the predicted outcome of a sporting event and
- ii. post outcome judgements of historical events of which the subjects are ignorant.

He has posed, therefore, the question as to whether the effect is the same in both conditions.

Fischhoff and Beyth (1975) have already addressed this issue when they asked subjects to judge the probabilities of many possible outcomes of President Nixon's trip to Peking and Moscow in 1972 (e.g. Nixon's meeting chairman Mao, visiting Lenin's tomb, or announcing that the trip was successful). After the trip's completion the subjects were asked to remember their earlier predictions for each event and to indicate whether they thought that the event they predicted had actually occurred. Subjects exhibited a significant Hindsight Bias effect by rating events that they thought had occurred as more likely in hindsight than they had done in 'foresight' i.e. when they were first asked before the trip occurred.

The weakness in this research design was that the subjects may have interpreted the task as a simple general knowledge exercise to re-state the news events of Nixon's trip. The researchers, however, ruled out this hypothesis by specifically instructing the subjects to "fill out once again the same questionnaire which you completed two weeks ago giving the same probabilities which you gave then."

Pennington (1981), however, has replicated Fischhoff and Beyth's (1975) experiment and ratified that real events, in the form of current news events, stimulated the Hindsight Bias effect.

In this work subjects were presented with various outcomes of the 1977 - 1978 Fireman's strike (defined in terms of the duration of the strike and the settlement terms) and elicited probability estimates in 'foresight' i.e. during the strike and in 'hindsight' when the strike was over.

The estimates revealed the typical hindsight pattern of greater probabilities associated with the actual outcome in hindsight as compared to foresight. Pennington's research, therefore, reinforces what has already been proposed that the hindsight effect does not only operate with distant historical data. As such this research is important for this study as the material to be used will be 'real' or 'live' data relevant to the target group. There is a further significance of Pennington's research in that he discovered that the hindsight effect was stronger when more detailed descriptions (several hundred words long) were issued to subjects as opposed to the 'normal' length (Fischhoff, 1975) of 150 words.

### **Factors which may influence the hindsight effect – chance outcomes**

Wasserman, Lempert and Hastie (1991) added to our understanding of the effect by differentiating causal and chance factors. They reasoned that when an outcome occurred because of causal factors i.e. the outcome was plausible/ likely when viewing the pre outcome material than the hindsight effect would be stronger than if perceived by the subjects as the result of unforeseeable chance factors.



In their experiment the same Fischhoff (1975) material was used, based on the British Gurka struggle, but the 'outcomes' offered were characterised by adding either 'deterministic' information with plausible reasons (such as superior British discipline) or 'chance' information (such as the victory was the result of a sudden rainstorm). The authors found that the magnitude of the Hindsight Bias effect was greatest under conditions where a 'deterministic' explanation was provided for the outcome. Indeed no hindsight effect was noted at all when the reported outcome was attributed to chance factors. This is important for the design of the current research in that the options offered to subjects must be clearly perceived as credible and attributable in the subjects' eyes to 'deterministic' causes.

### **Factors which may influence the hindsight effect – The wording of requests**

A word of caution in Hindsight Bias research design is introduced by Verplanken and Pieters (1988) who asked subjects to estimate the probability of a nuclear accident before and after the Chernobyl disaster. As a ratification of 'real' events this study would appear to support the work of Fischhoff and Beyth (1975) and Pennington (1981). In keeping with earlier work when subjects were asked after the Chernobyl disaster "how large you thought the probability was before the calamity" the authors reported a *reverse* hindsight effect in that after Chernobyl respondents *lowered* the estimates of their earlier probabilities.

The authors' results, however, are highly questionable because the question put to subjects asked about the probability of an accident leading to "large numbers of casualties" (more than one thousand within ten years). As the Chernobyl accident killed 'only' a few dozen workers immediately the lowered estimates might be interpreted as being in the direction of the actual outcome and therefore an example of hindsight (i.e. judgements being adjusted in the direction of what actually happened) rather than the claimed reverse hindsight effect.

This raises an important methodological point to be borne in mind when shaping research instruments in this area that events to be judged have to be worded in explicit and unambiguous fashion.

### **Factors which may influence the hindsight effect – Instructions given to subjects**

In addition to obfuscations introduced by clumsy wording of questions (Verplanken and Pieters, 1988) the effects of instructions given to subjects to ignore the hindsight effect have already been discussed (Fischhoff 1975).

Wood (1978) made alterations to the basic hindsight design (Fischhoff, 1975) to determine whether this had any effect on the outcome. In a pair of experiments using almanac trivia questions subjects had to rate the plausibility of a number of statements on a scale of 1 (definitely false) to 7

(definitely true). When subjects were provided with the true answers and asked to re-rate their estimates they were instructed to

- (i) rate the items as you did previously (the memory condition) and;
- (ii) rate the items as you feel your peers would (the peer condition).

The thinking behind this research design was to determine what effect 'the demand characteristic' would have on the Hindsight Bias effect. The 'memory' condition allays any demand characteristic as the subject simply attempts to remember the data and the 'peer' condition obviates any need to please the researcher or give her/him the result they feel s/he really wanted despite experimental instructions given to the contrary.

Wood concluded that the Hindsight Bias effect is a robust phenomenon that does not arise from demand characteristics embedded in the research design. This conclusion is comforting for the present research. Headteachers are inevitably involved in impression management and they may, in responding to an experiment which analyses their professional abilities, manipulate their reactions in such a way as to present themselves in a favourable light (being open minded or even-handed, for example). This would inevitably skew any attempt to verify the Hindsight Bias effect in the educational context. Even though Wood has argued that the Hindsight Bias effect is independent of demand characteristics inherent in questioning subjects this study took cognisance of the potential dangers in this area.



## **Factors which may influence the hindsight effect - Reminding subjects of their thoughts in foresight**

Davies (1987) explored the effects of reminding subjects of their thoughts in foresight during subsequent hindsight judgements. Subjects read descriptions of psychology experiments and were asked to rate the probabilities of several outcomes. After a two week delay outcomes of the experiments were reported and the same subjects rated the outcomes again. The hindsight effect was noted but variations in the conditions at the time of the hindsight judgement moderated the effect. By presenting subjects with their own lists of thoughts from their foresight judgement the hindsight effect was reduced to minimal proportions. This reduction was comparable in magnitude to Slovic and Fischhoff's experiment (1977) where subjects were forced to list reasons for the occurrence of reported outcomes.

## **Other factors which may influence the hindsight effect - The personality of the subjects**

Thus far the Hindsight Bias effect has been assumed to operate independently of the subject's personality. Various studies have been conducted which claim to correlate personality characteristics with the Hindsight Bias effect. Campbell and Tesser (1983) have demonstrated that the magnitude of the Hindsight Bias effect is correlated with two salient personality characteristics: a person's desire to control their environment and see it as just and predictable (i.e. people who will be predisposed to

reconstruct the past and make it appear orderly) and a person's need to maintain high levels of public esteem.

Their results were obtained by correlating personality tests with indices of Hindsight Bias severity. The two measures of individual differences, according to the researchers, were significantly correlated with Hindsight Bias indices.

The problem with this research, in common with many hindsight investigations, is that almanac material was used as the basis of determining the level of Hindsight Bias. In such studies it is typical for subjects to be asked to choose from a number of responses to trivial questions. In the hindsight stage subjects are given the correct answer and then asked to recall their original responses which creep positively, in hindsight manner, towards the correct, outcome, responses.

Contrary to the Campbell and Tesser's findings Synodinos (1986) found that there was no correlation between ratings of the Hindsight Bias effect and individual differences in self esteem. The research here was based on foresight and hindsight measures either side of the 1982 Hawaiian gubernatorial election with a cohort of undergraduates.

## **The Hindsight Bias Effect and its robustness - The nature of stimulus material**

Hitherto research on Hindsight Bias has divided itself unnaturally between studies designed to reveal the basic effect and those that have centred on the robustness of the bias and its resistance to being reduced by feedback instructions.

Research on the basic effect has almost always asked subjects to react to naturally occurring “caused” historical events whereas research on the robustness of the bias has usually used almanac questions. The two very different forms of material may have an impact on the Hindsight Bias effect. Hawkins and Hastie (1990: page 322) have argued, for example, that “the integration of feedback about a caused outcome into a knowledge structure representing a sequence of historical events may be different from the integration of feedback about one’s own performance in a test of general knowledge.”

It has also been claimed (Scott, Hawkins and Hastie, 1990) that different cognitive processes are at work in basic ‘effect’ and ‘robustness’ studies. In the former ‘creeping determinism’, the “tendency to perceive reported outcomes as having been relatively inevitable” (Fischhoff, 1975) is often held to be occurring whereas in the latter direct recall mechanisms and strategic



self presentation are at work. In designing the Headteacher Hindsight Bias experiment both of these processes needed to be borne in mind.

### **Hindsight Bias in 'Real' Contexts**

Thus far the Hindsight Bias effect has been examined in experimental, 'laboratory' conditions. The object of the current research is to examine the bias effect in 'live' contexts.

This section, therefore, will examine the operation of Hindsight Bias in other professional settings and start to explore the consequences of this form of judgement weakness.

### **Medicine**

One of the serious practical implications of the existence of the Hindsight Bias effect is the possibility that it influences retrospective and prospective medical diagnoses. Doctors, when they receive post-diagnosis feedback believe that they 'knew it all along' and consequently do not learn from the experience. Similarly, if 'second opinions' were offered their value is diluted or, even, nullified if the doctor was stuck in prior diagnoses cemented through Hindsight Bias.

Arkes, Saville, Wortmann and Harkness (1981) compared the diagnoses of doctors who read an unlabelled case history (the foresight group) with those who were told they were reading a case history of a specified medical

condition (the hindsight group). The foresight group was presented with the actual case history with four possible diagnoses, since no symptom excluded, or was limited to, any one diagnosis. There were four hindsight groups each receiving the same information as the foresight group with the exception of a different first sentence which suggested the medical diagnosis. It should be noted that each hindsight subject was asked for an "individual, independent assessment" of the patient. The results demonstrated that even with an 'expert' group of subjects the hindsight effect still occurred. The authors also found (in common with Fischhoff (1977) and Wood (1978)) that the least plausible options generated the most significant hindsight effect. The significance of this study to the present one is that the material used in the experiment was 'live' data such as the subjects would be expected to react to in their everyday professional lives. As such, therefore, it marks a significant departure from almanac or historical data use in Hindsight Bias research discussed previously.

## **The Law**

The law is one domain where the contexts of the hindsight effect are frequently presented to subjects. Witnesses, for example, are required to relate their evidence against the backdrop of the outcome (the crime) (Casper, Benedict and Kelly, 1989). In addition there are certain conventions in legal proceedings that require witnesses and jurors to 'ignore' certain kinds of evidence. This may be in the form of newspaper reports of the trial or evidence that the judge has directed the jury to discount (Dellarosa and Boume, 1984; Hawkins and Hastie, 1990). As has been discussed (Fischhoff,

1975) asking subjects to ignore elements of their judgement making has little effect on the outcome and this effect is replicated in studies set in legal contexts.

### **Legal Implications - The effect of hindsight on recall**

An example of hindsight in a witness giving evidence has been related in Neisser (1981) where he provides a case study of John Dean's testimony during the Watergate hearings. The event provided the opportunity to examine the influence of hindsight on recall because Dean's testimony could be compared with the recordings of conversations that were released later in the 'Presidential Transcripts.'

Dean's testimony often reflected events he thought should have occurred because of his knowledge of outcomes that had not. For example, he claimed that he had warned Nixon of the danger of the cover-up (although the tapes indicated that he had not) because in hindsight he knew the cover-up had been exposed.

In line with the findings of Fischhoff (1975), Smith and Caldwell (1973) demonstrated that simply being told to ignore incriminating outcome evidence has little effect. These researchers presented a case in which an incriminating telephone conversation was either allowed as evidence or stricken from consideration as inadmissible. Jurors exposed to the evidence



(whether asked to ignore it or not) were more likely to rate the defendant as guilty compared to control 'jurors' who never heard the conversation.

Perhaps the study that has the greatest significance for the current research is that by Casper, Benedict and Kelly (1988). The authors based their work on a facet of American legal legislation that allows a citizen who has been subjected to a police search to bring a civil action against the police who are alleged to have acted illegally when conducting the search. Mock jurors heard arguments from a civil case in which a citizen who had been arrested charged the police with acting illegally by searching his apartment without just cause. The conditions of the search were manipulated in order to elicit the appropriate response from the 'jury.' In some conditions jurors were told that the search had unearthed evidence of illegal activity (i.e. drugs were found). In other conditions no incriminating evidence had been found. Casper et al (1988) found that information about the results of the search had an effect on jurors' interpretations and memory of the evidence and on the level of damages awarded to the victim. For example, subjects who heard that the search uncovered evidence of illegal activity interpreted and mis-remembered evidence consistent with that outcome. Similarly, subjects who heard that no evidence of wrongdoing was found (and that another person was responsible for the wrongdoing) remembered evidence consistent with that conclusion.

The manipulation of results will be duplicated in this study to determine whether Headteachers display the Hindsight Bias effect.

## **Summary**

### **Central Tenets - Headteachers' Management and Decision-Making**

The central tenets about Headteachers' management and decision-making are that they are enabling and empowering leaders, making optimal management decisions based on the logical and highly-structured analysis of objective data gathered through a 'systematic programme of monitoring and evaluation' (OFSTED, 2000).

It is critically important to extend a purely cognitive examination of the justness and effectiveness of Headteachers' decision-making to consider the intra personal and organisational dimensions that operate in their specific context. The participation of teachers has been placed high on the agenda for this study and, potentially counterpointing this, the strategies and attitudes of Headteachers to control their power base to ensure that they get their own way. The move towards SDM and collaborative organisational arrangements have clearly entered the school effectiveness agenda (Janis, 1982; Lashway, 1996; Grey, 1999; Jackson, 2000). This has generated a premium management aspiration (Hay McBer, 2000) for Headteachers.

Numerous studies have concerned themselves with school leadership traits and strategies and with characteristics of effective schools but little attention has been paid to the fine grain of management behaviour that is needed to activate these characteristics. Impacting on management behaviour is the social and political context under which Headteachers work. The current

social, political and educational context places great emphasis on exacting 'standards' and it will be important to consider what impact this has on the collegial and collaborative debate and on Headteachers' management strategies and behaviours.

The focus of this study, therefore, will be based on a broad view of Headteachers' management and decision-making. It will examine not only their management activities and abilities but will also assess their cognitive abilities. This will be undertaken against the organisational context of their schools and the attitudes of their colleagues.



## **Chapter 3 Research Design**

This chapter will outline and provide a rationale for the research methodology to be adopted in the study as a whole. To recapitulate on the aims, objectives and research hypotheses which were established previously.

### **The Aims and Objectives of the Research**

The research aims are:

- To explore the parameters of Headteachers' managerial and decision-making activity ;
- To conceptualise a model of Headteachers' management and decision-making activity and to explore its usefulness in analysing practice in secondary schools;
- To examine contrasts between 'espoused' and 'actual' practice in relation to Headteachers' management and decision-making activity;
- To contextualise management and decision-making theory by examining how Headteachers operate in situ;
- To isolate effective management and decision-making characteristics and strategies.

## **Objectives**

The research objectives are:

- To refine a theoretical model of management and decision-making activity, The Quadrant Model, with reference to Headteachers' espoused practice;
- To describe management and decision-making processes through a series of case studies and self-reported strategies;
- To determine if Headteachers display a classic paradigm of judgement and decision-making weakness, Hindsight Bias;
- To examine Headteachers' management and decision-making activity and the correlation between their espoused principles and the actuality of their daily practice;
- To determine if there is any correlation between different school settings and the managerial activity that has been identified through this study.

The research hypotheses are:

- 1: That there are distinct management and decision-making styles that can be deduced from the practice of serving Headteachers;
- 2: That such styles can readily be identified by Headteachers;
- 3: That there are high levels of consistency on the operation of these styles across the occupational group;

- 4: That all Headteachers will react in a similar way to given educational tasks and issues;
- 5: That Headteachers can validate their chosen stance;
- 6: That Headteachers decision-making is perfectly rational and not prone to paradigms of judgement weakness, in particular Hindsight Bias;
- 7: That there will be no inconsistency between Headteachers' nominated styles and their actual activities as managers in their schools;
- 8: That there are management indicators which distinguish highly successful schools from those that have been highlighted as failing.

## **Research Strategy**

Sapsford and Jupp (1996) in outlining the various types of research enquiry very wisely point to the fact that approaches frequently do not conveniently fit into pre-determined categories or schools of thought. Given the wide ranging nature of the research hypotheses in this study a varied and cumulative selection of research approaches was constructed. The overall plan was to gain a wide-angle view using methodology which would establish broad principles and characteristics with a suitable breadth of data and then to confirm, refine and extend the findings of this first phase using appropriate



research methods which would explore in greater depth and detail the findings of the initial stage of the study.

The avenues open to researchers to do this are effectively two-fold: qualitative and quantitative. Quantitative research produces data that can easily be put into clear categories and summarised by numbers, which can then be subject to statistical manipulation (Arksey, 1999; Verma et al, 1999) whereas qualitative data is frequently in the form of complex stories, images, personal accounts and descriptions.

Quantitative research espouses a 'positivist' approach which proposes that there are "objective facts out there" (Arksey, 1999: page 10) which in turn lead to laws and generalisations and statistical exploration. The data permit social scientists to "pin down contemporary facts" (Cronbach, 1975: page126).

Qualitative research, however, appreciates that people, often researched in small sample sizes, derided by the positivist school, make value led choices and that the researcher, in order to understand the motivations of such people, needs to become an active participant in the research situation.

Bogdan et al (1992: page 40) have created a useful taxonomy of these differing schools of research which characterise each approach. Quantitative data, they propose, is experimental, based on hard data, positivist in approach adopting a statistical stance and dealing with "social facts".

Qualitative approaches, on the other hand, can be ethnographic or 'naturalistic' where the researcher can become part of the world of the subject. Researchers, in this context, "become participants in the social setting, abandoning the detached observer status of the natural scientist" (Arksey, 1999: page 10).

This approach lends itself to much less structured forms of observation and has been pioneered by the Chicago School of Sociology (Burgess, 1982) where the emphasis is on studying the perspectives of social actors, their ideas attitudes and motives and intentions in the way they interpret the social world. This is sometimes termed symbolic interaction (Blumer, 1969).

The distinctions, thus drawn, however, can sometimes be artificial as studies frequently cross the boundaries and frequently encompass both sorts of data.

Sapsford and Jupp (1996: page 290) highlight this key distinguishing, iterative and expanding, feature of qualitative research:

"One of the implications of the exploratory character of qualitative research is that the focus of the enquiry is clarified over the course of data collection and analysis".

## **Positivist versus Constructivist approaches.**

The competing attractions of these two different research paradigms were considered for this study. Positivism, based on the rationalistic, empiricist philosophy which originated from Aristotle, Bacon and Kant proposed the belief that there is a method of studying the world that is value free and explanation of a causal nature can be provided. Reichardt and Rallis (1994) note that this type of logical positivism was discredited shortly before World War 11 and was replaced by postpositivism. Researchers who follow the positivist paradigm, in whatever form, propose that one reality exists and that it is the researcher's job to discover that reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1994). Postpositivists concede that a reality does exist but that it can only be known imperfectly because of the researcher's human limitations. They cannot, therefore, prove a theory but can make a stronger case by eliminating alternative explanations (Reichardt & Rallis, 1994). Epistemologically postpositivists recognise that objectivity is the standard to aim for and so the researcher should be neutral to prevent values or biases from influencing the work (Doren et al, 1996).

A series of quasi-experimental strategies were developed to satisfy the tenets of this research paradigm (Campbell & Stanley, 1966; Cook and Campbell, 1979). Many of the researchers from this school acknowledge that their methodology does not include qualitative, contextual information (Cook and Campbell, 1979; Doren et al, 1996).



By contrast the interpretive/ constructivist paradigm recognises that reality is socially constructed and that hermeneutics (Eichelberger, 1989) or the study of interpretive understanding or meaning is required to extract meaning from the research data. Following this paradigm researchers should attempt to understand the “complex world of lived experience from the point of view of those who live it” (Schwandt, 1994: page 118).

In devising the research strategy for this study it was obvious from the outset that there was not one objective reality (Mertens, 1997) and so the quantitative, positivist approach was one which would be unproductive. The approach to be adopted would be a more personal, interactive mode of data collection so that the contextual settings and personal agendas of Headteachers could be investigated. In this constructivist mode of research the objectivity of the positivist is replaced by qualitative confirmability whereby “data, interpretations and outcomes are rooted in contexts and persons apart from the researcher and are not figments of the imagination” (Mertens, 1997: page 13).

This study recognised that its focus was based on a socially constructed reality (Guba & Lincoln, 1989) held by its subjects, Headteachers, and that, at least initially, there would be an interactive link between the researcher and his subjects. The methodology to be adopted would be qualitative and socio-constructivist in nature where the researcher explores the socially constructed world of the subject. Meaning would be extracted in hermeneutic fashion from the data that had been collected. Such a strategy would not be

adequate for the entire research but would be appropriate for the initial stage where central concepts needed to be determined for further examination and extension.

Following this constructivist paradigm every instance is viewed as both an exemplar of a general class of phenomena and potentially unique in its own way (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994). The researchers task is to provide sufficiently detailed or “thick description” (Mertens, 1997) about the case so that the readers can understand the contextual variables operating in that setting.

According to Mertens this approach supports an acceptable form of generalisability (1997, page 255):

“the burden of generalisability then lies with the readers who are assumed to generalise subjectively from the case in question to their own personal experiences. This type of generalisability is labelled transferability.”

Following the tenets of this research paradigm there is no requirement to provide large sample sizes. Mertens, (op cit, page 271) points out:

“The sample size is a bit more dynamic in qualitative research than in quantitative research in that the number of observations is not determined in the former type of research prior to the data collection. Rather the researcher makes a decision as to the adequacy of the observations on the basis of having identified salient issues and finding that the themes and examples are repeating rather than

extending. Thus sample size is integrally related to length of time in the field”.

The methodology that has been adopted in this study is to secure a sample in the above manner and to investigate it until salient issues have arisen and are being repeated through the investigations being undertaken. In the first phase of the study such ‘transferability’ was achieved with a cohort of three Headteachers. The conceptual model that was adopted for analysis indicated that common threads in management and decision making activity were being deduced. To confirm this transferability and to triangulate and confirm the data the issues and characteristics that had been determined of Headteachers’ management and decision making styles were investigated with a larger group (34) of Headteachers. This larger mapping exercise was intended to confirm the general principles of the first phase of the study. The approach was still qualitative as it followed the socio-constructive paradigm of the first phase but included elements of quantitative research as it attempted to triangulate and correlate the original findings with calculations on Headteacher activity. Mertens (1997) recommends a ‘rule of thumb’ for such correlational work as “about 30 observations”. The philosophy that was being followed was the iterative approach highlighted by Sapsford and Jupp (1996) whereby original concepts would be verified and extended.

Having established the essential principles by a mixture of small scale case study investigation, concepts being ratified by subsequent larger correlational sampling, the concepts were further verified and explored in greater detail



through the mapping exercise on the activity of six Headteachers over six months. The high levels of consistency and transferability found in this phase of the research validated the small sample size but, more importantly, the 'thick description' that it enabled proved an adequate vehicle for extending the essential concepts that had been established in the initial phases of the research. The intention was also to triangulate the data already gathered. The process is described by Mertens (1997: page 183):

“Triangulation involves checking information that has been collected from different sources for consistency of evidence across sources of data.”

The approach, thus outlined, has indicated the cumulative methodology adopted in this research whereby concepts are established in qualitative, socio-constructivist fashion and extended and validated via triangulated data. This was the intention in constructing the final stages of the research which examined hindsight bias and the indicators of management excellence.

Hindsight bias research has historically (Fischhoff, 1975; Arkes et al,1981) been based around small groups of subjects of between 15 to 20. This sample size was replicated (18) for this study. Similarly the precedent had been set for sample size in the 'indicators' phase by Booth et al, (2000) whereby the group studied small groups of schools in two phases, 6 and 12 respectively. The nine schools studied in the 'indicators' phase of the research followed this precedent, therefore, and further validated the core principles of the research which were to remain firmly constructivist and

qualitative in nature in order to extract the social settings of the subjects and to confirm, in cumulative and expanding fashion, the findings of the study which had been established as the research progressed. The extra dimension which was added by the 'indicators' phase was an examination of management and decision making activity in specific school contexts. Focussed qualitative methods would not have permitted this approach as the social variables and school settings under investigation were not fixed and so such an approach would potentially have excluded valuable data. The socio-constructivist approach which was adopted was designed to be sufficiently flexible at one and the same time to accumulate related material and triangulate data that had previously been analysed.

### **Phase One: The Initial Study**

The aim of the initial phase of the research was to illuminate Headteacher's management and decision-making and to characterise its nature. It addressed research hypothesis 1. A specific intention, therefore, was to examine if there were universal qualities and commonalties attached to the role, irrespective of gender, the level of experience and expertise and the specific professional context in which particular Headteachers find themselves.

A key consideration concerned the nature of the interpersonal and intrapersonal elements in the management environment. Of significance to this section of the research was the influence of the organisational context, the school and its potentially chaotic and conflict-ridden micropolitical

climate. This was considered as well as the effect this had on Headteachers' management strategies in addition to their decision-making confidence and approaches.

The intention of this phase of the study, therefore, was to establish the parameters of Headteachers' management and decision-making. As such there would be no 'hard data' (Bogdan et al, 1992) which needed to be verified, quantified or tested. The approach, as outlined above, follows the qualitative, socio-constructivist school of research (Mertens, 1997).

A method needed to be found which illuminated the management and decision-making context and was able to conceptualise the data that would be produced in this first phase of the research. The literature review had established several themes most notably the continuum in Headteachers' management activity that stretched from paternalism (Southworth, 1997; Coulson, 1976) and solitary activity (Southworth, 1995; Fiedler, 1967) to decision-making that allowed the real participation and involvement of other professionals in the school (Jackson, 2000). This continuum symbolised the tension between high levels of decision centralisation and high levels of participation (Whitaker, 1983; Dean, 1987; Bell, 1988; Nias et al, 1989; Southworth, 1995).

The theme of collegiality which ran parallel to the variable participative thread found its voice in terms of the principles of distributed leadership and the



desire, revealed in the literature, of teachers to have a say in the running of their schools (Nias, 1980). The concept of transformational leadership (Ainscow, 2000; Sergiovanni, 1992) which held as its prime objective the need to distribute and empower teachers ran counter to the Headteacher personal power continuum. The method of analysis, therefore, had to be able to chart the nature and quality of such participation and correlate it against the Headteacher continuum.

The literature had also thrown light on the role of teachers in terms of their attitudes to specific Headteacher traits (Jirasinghe & Lyons, 1996) and the 'zones' (Hanson, 1976) over which it was felt that they had influence. The teacher's zone is concerned with teaching and learning or 'instructional decisions' whilst the Headteacher's zone was concerned with resource allocation, policy and evaluation. However, the two areas overlap and it is in this area that negotiations and conflicts occur (Hansen, 1976). There could, therefore, be management and decision-making events where Headteachers and teachers held sway, either alternately, simultaneously (Jackson, 2000) or in contradiction (Hall and Southworth, 1997). The model had to be able to conceptualise the range of these management events.

It would have been possible to isolate static events and to use the data to create cameo portraits of isolated management and decision-making events where, for example, the Headteacher held sway and when s/he did not. This, however, would be at the expense of analysing the full range of organisational and interpersonal dynamics that were in operation.

The continuum of Headteacher influence suggested a similar scale for teacher power and participation and it was proposed to analyse this diagrammatically. It would have been possible, for example, to locate management events ranging from high Headteacher control/ low teacher influence to the opposite, high teacher control and low Headteacher influence. Two opposed sliding scales, however, would be inadequate to describe the potential shifting dynamics that were inherent in the literature.

It was decided, therefore, to produce a conceptual model which had these two continua intersecting each other. By so doing comparative levels of power and influence could be located from the data provided by Headteachers. The proposed model has been termed The Quadrant Model. This revised conceptual model allowed for key themes, isolated in the literature, to be analysed.

One sector could be used to indicate high levels of Headteacher control (Hall and Southworth, 1997) and low teacher influence (Coulson, 1976). A further two sectors could be used to locate democratic and participative ways of working with varying levels of influence for teachers offered by the Headteacher. The final sector would permit a description of any management areas where neither power partner held sway.

By using The Quadrant Model the initial research hypotheses could be examined and a deliberately broad perspective gained over key

management dynamics highlighted in the literature. These could be refined and verified in later sections of the research.

### **The Quadrant Model**

The model works on two main axes:

- Teacher participation and
- Headteacher Control

In each case the relative influence, power position and interpersonal force of each participant is indicated as high, running to low.

This provides four Quadrants:

Quadrant A is where Headteachers are in control and others (in this case, teachers) have little influence. This is the high control sector for the Headteacher and typifies a 'top-down' model of management and interpersonal relationship;

Quadrant B describes a procedure-driven situation where neither party takes the lead. Activity described by this segment of The Quadrant is non participatory;

Quadrant C is the antithesis of Quadrant A, where teachers are in control. This proposes a 'bottom-up' approach;



Quadrant D, on the other hand, indicates Headteacher and teacher on a par. In this context relationships between the two are of a democratic and participatory nature. Both parties are engaged and there is no evidence of power dominance from either side.

The Quadrants can be viewed in the following diagram:

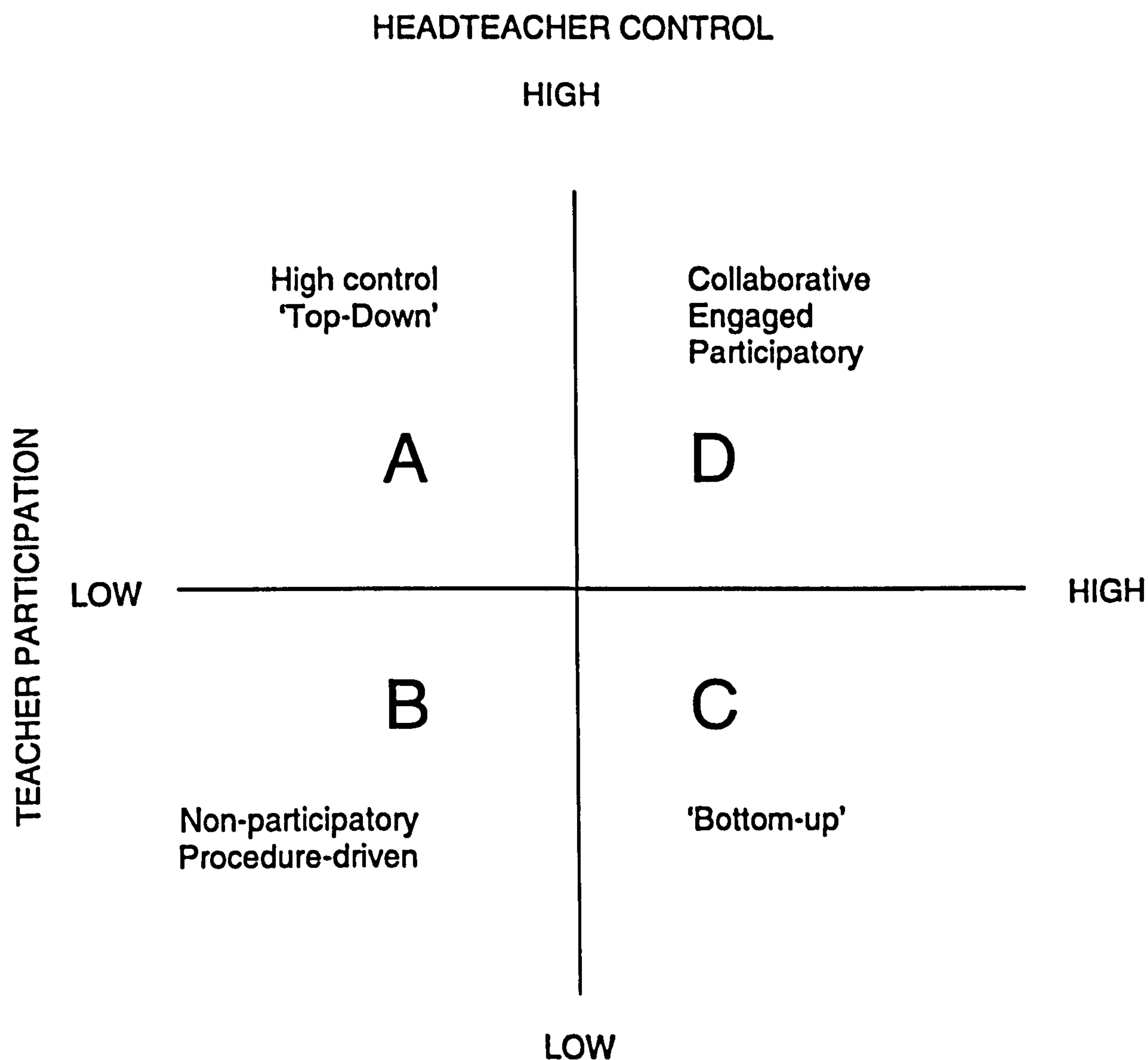


Figure 3.1 The Quadrant Model

It was decided after the construction of this initial conceptual framework to test it by employing suitable data collection methods so that the data could be mapped against the framework.

### **Data Collection Methods**

The initial approach, now determined, presented various methods of data collection. The comparison between the approaches offered are compared in the following table (Figure 3.2). The distinction between qualitative/constructivist and quantitative/positivist has been retained.

Qualitative/ Constructivist	Quantitative/ Positivist
Techniques or Methods	
Observation	Experiments
Participant Observation	Survey Research
Open-ended Interviewing	Structured Interviewing
First Person Accounts	Quasi Experiments

**Figure 3.2 Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches (Bogdan et al, 1992)**

The quantitative approach, as has been discussed above, was rejected as this phase of the study, particularly, was designed to be deliberately exploratory in nature. There were, therefore, no firm facts, to be quantified or analysed. The decision was taken also, to make the study as ethnographically realistic as possible. To this end Headteachers would not be subjected to experiments or simulations which would remove or distance

them from their everyday working context. Rather the approach would be to gather, in a non threatening manner, data which related to their everyday practice, exploring the perspectives of these social actors – their ideas, attitudes, motives and intentions and the way they interpret their social world (Burgess, 1982). The data would be collected in their own schools.

Even though the qualitative approach was adopted, certain research methods which could be employed under this paradigm were rejected as being impractical or impossible in this specific context. They would also run counter to the socio-constructivist intentions outlined above in that they would appear artificial to the subjects, arouse their suspicions and/ or encourage them to provide the researcher with data that they felt they ought to provide (Wood, 1978; Arksey and Knight, 1999).

Into this category of rejected methods from Figure 3.2 came observation and participant observation. The landscape of a Headteacher's day is expansive, covering, potentially, such diverse activities as private reflection, meetings with individuals and groups together with public activities (assemblies, pupils' parents' and governors' evenings). A method of capturing all of this data needed to be found. It was considered impractical to pursue a Headteacher throughout their working day. Certain aspects of their activity, moreover, are highly confidential and, therefore, private and not available for observation. Receiving reports of such activity through interview questions or Headteacher reports would be acceptable but observing such events at first hand with the researcher being present would not be possible. In addition to



these practical difficulties first hand observation of these social actors might, given the national imperatives and edicts that create expectations of their role, outlined in the introduction and chapter 2, turn them into actual actors providing the researcher with a stage-managed performance.

## **Methodology**

The intention was to subject Headteachers to as little threat as possible. Concerns that this might be the case, should more intrusive methods of enquiry be adopted, were borne out in the negative reaction of some Headteachers to being asked to volunteer for this phase of the study.

First person accounts were considered as a possibility in this phase but unmoderated, unguided narratives would not allow the researcher to map perceptions against the conceptual model proposed above. The chosen method in order to achieve effective data collection was interviews. This would allow (depending on the perceived attitude by the subject to the researcher) a more natural, socio-constructivist approach. The approach letter, (Appendix A), inviting Headteachers to participate, was specifically worded so as not to intimidate the subject and the verbal register of the follow-up phone call was deliberately colloquial so as not to raise the spectre of interrogation or assessment of their capabilities.

The interview was chosen as a flexible method of data collection. The structure of this method will be discussed later but this method is not without its flaws.

### **Strengths and Weaknesses of the Phase One Methodology**

The progress of the interviews and the skill of the interviewer in putting the participant at ease is of significance with this method. It is important not to stimulate the 'demand characteristic' (Wood, 1978; Arksey and Knight, 1999) using this method i.e. Headteachers providing the information they felt they ought to provide instead of the 'real' information. This is a particular danger when the study is introduced to them as being of significant academic importance.

For this reason the introductory letters were kept short and non specific and the questions in the interviews themselves were deliberately open so as not to elicit a specific and 'closed' response (Arksey and Knight, 1999).

A further danger is the perception of the interviewer's characteristics by the respondent i.e. the way the respondent will ascribe beliefs and opinions to the interviewer on the basis of visible characteristics such as occupation, accent, dress (perceived social class), gender and ethnic origin. To counter this the interviewer dressed according to the conventions of daily attire for Headteachers. The questions were also kept deliberately short to allow the subjects to interpret these in their own way.

Arksey and Knight (1999) outline the parameters of interviews. They propose three interview structures:

- **Structured** – where the questions are agreed in advance and the interviewer sticks rigidly to a script;
- **Semi-Structured** – where the questions and script are fixed but the interviewer is able to improvise follow up questions and explore meanings and areas of interest that emerge;
- **Unstructured** – where the interviewer only has a broad list of topics and where the direction is largely set by the informant.

It is clear that following the declared research intention of this phase of the study that the semi-structured or unstructured approach was the favoured option. The unstructured approach was viewed as preferable in order to establish rapport. The sessions could then be geared to be conversational in nature. This would not, however, have totally satisfied the intention of this phase of the research which was to map responses against the sectors of the conceptual model.

The approach adopted, therefore, was a semi-structured approach. Questions were prepared (in suitably non threatening register) which would elicit responses to illuminate behaviour against The Quadrant sectors. Questions were prepared which would locate responses in each segment of The Quadrant together with other general questions about management and decision-making.



Such questions (see Appendix B) were designed to be open-ended, for example:

**“Can you tell me about a decision that was particularly difficult?”**

Others were designed to steer the respondent towards giving information that would relate to a specific segment of The Quadrant Model, for example:

**“Obviously the climate that the decision was taken in is critical. Perhaps I can pin you down to something specific?”**

Once the Headteachers volunteered information they were asked to elucidate, for example:

**So who was involved in that decision - where did it originate?**

It should be noted that questions were deliberately not phrased to lead the respondent into fixed, finite or predictable responses. For this reason leading questions such as “How do you deal with people who object to your ideas?” were avoided as they would stimulate, in varying degrees, a defensive strategy as Headteachers could feel that their authority and ability were being put under scrutiny.

In general the flow of the interview started from short, open-ended, questions towards clarifications and further probing. The intention was to put Headteachers at their ease, to minimise evaluative questioning and to permit them to move into areas that they felt important.

The Headteachers, once they were at ease, and a rapport had been established began to 'ramble'. These 'ramblings' (Measor, 1988) become a signpost for digressions significant to them. At such points the broad question areas were suspended to explore their intellectual detour.

It is accepted that the interview with a key participant, isolated from the management decision itself and the factors that contribute to it i.e. the people involved, is not an ideal research tool. This study, potentially, put Headteachers' professional capability up for scrutiny. Their reputation and the image of their school was under investigation. It is not surprising, therefore, that impression management and obfuscation, deliberate or unintentional might form part of the process. The skill, therefore, was to spot these incidents and to minimise projected images of their schools or themselves.

In practice this problem became a non-issue. As Measor (1988) has attested once the subject feels at ease their inhibitions drop and their public facade begins to crumble. If left to 'ramble' Headteachers will contradict themselves and the truth will emerge so that the 'official' picture, often presented in the preliminary stages of the interview, will be illuminated by revelations under the protection of confidentiality, once rapport has been established.

## The Sample of Headteachers

The aim of this phase of the study, therefore, was to provide an initial and 'wide angle view' of the research topic. A small but representative sample of Headteachers was selected in a limited geographical area which included gender representation as well as various educational contexts: inner city, urban and suburban schools. Crossing this warp was the weft of experience from the newly appointed Headteacher to one who had been in post for some considerable time. In reality this sample was opportunistic (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996) but was valid, given the nature of this stage of the enquiry which was exploratory in nature.

Salient characteristics of the final sample have been shown in the following table.

Head	Type of School	Gender	Experience	School location	Senior Management Team
Head One	11 - 16 LEA Maintained	Male	Experienced	Inner City	Newly Appointed
Head Two	11 - 18 LEA Maintained	Female	Experienced	Urban	Existing
Head Three	11 - 18 LEA Maintained	Male	Newly appointed	Suburban	Existing

**Figure 3.3 The Participating Headteachers (Phase One)**



Once identified the Headteachers were contacted by letter, outlining the scope of the study. (Appendix A)

Six Headteachers were approached in this way. When, as indicated in the letter, they were telephoned three declined. One gave as an excuse the fact that they were "always being used for research". A further argued lack of time. The other 'refuser' asked to be excused as he was due to retire and "hadn't made any decisions for some time" !

As will be discovered in later phases of this study, apart from the final response, these are standard and frequently used reasons for non participation.

Significantly one of the Headteachers who ultimately agreed to participate contacted a mutual colleague (a Headteacher) to discuss the credentials of the researcher and to discover the 'seriousness' of the study. Clearly issues of status were significant in this instance.

The Headteachers were then visited in their own schools at a time convenient to them and were interviewed by the researcher. These interviews took place with no-one else present. Tape recordings of the interviews were made using a small and unobtrusive machine and these were later transcribed. These have been included as Appendix B.

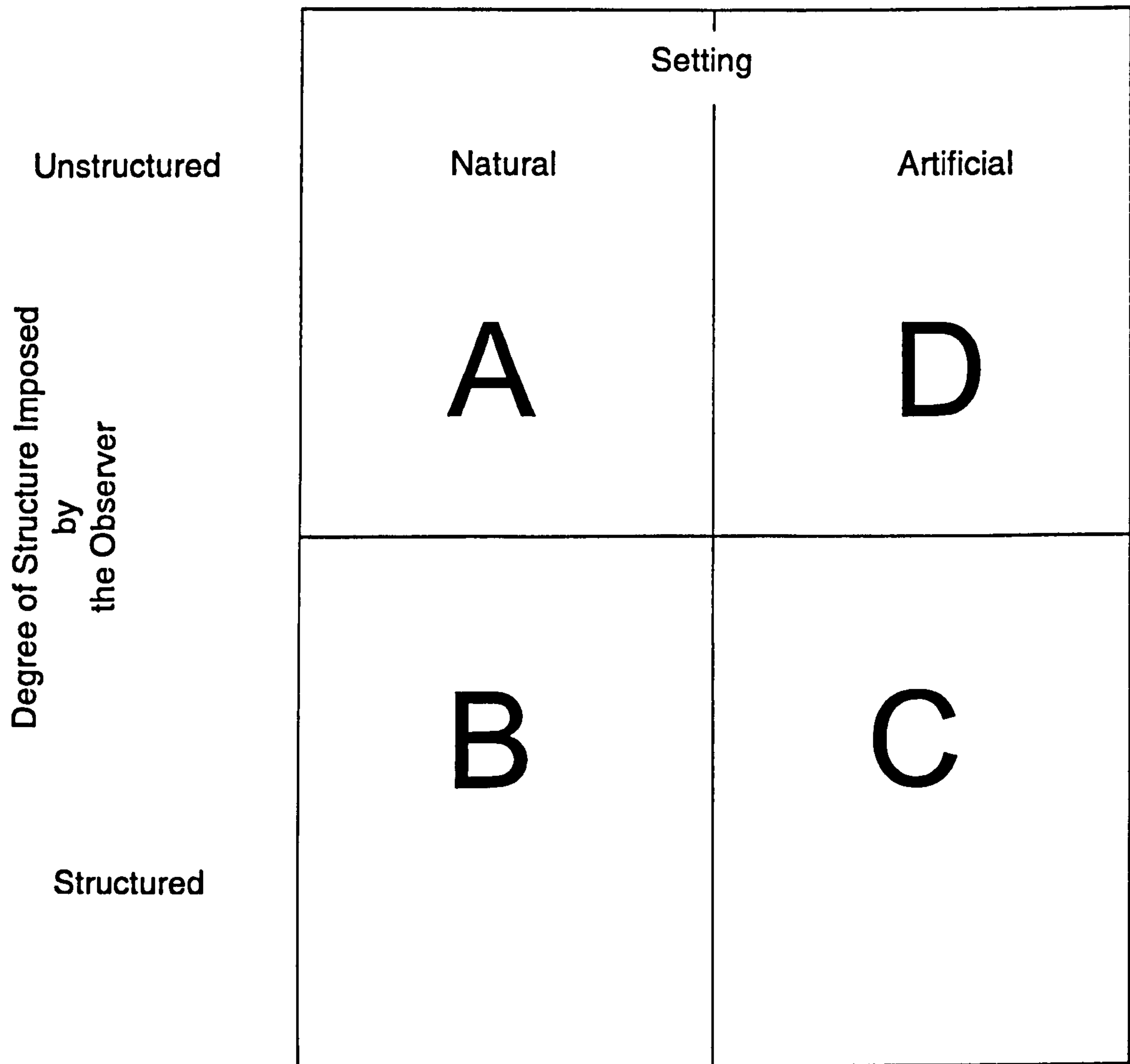
The transcripts were then analysed and data extracted. Particular attention was paid to internal consistency and contradictions. When the subjects requested confidentiality this was assured, hence the Headteachers are referred to throughout by numbers. No actual school names have been used.

### **Data Presentation Case Study**

Nisbet and Watt, (1984) highlight the power of the case study to illustrate underpinning principles by providing accessible examples. It was for this reason that the case study approach was adopted at this stage of the study to provide a “sense of reality” (Nisbet and Watt, 1984) to the data which would lead into the findings established during later phases of the work.

Cohen and Manion (1982) have outlined a typology of observational studies founded on two parameters: the degree of structure in the observational setting and the degree of structure imposed by the observer. They outline two essential styles of observation, participant observation where the observer engages in the activities he or she sets out to observe and non participant observation, the opposite case.

They illustrate this typology by mapping examples of case studies against the following matrix.



**Figure 3.4 Structure In the Observational Setting**

As previously discussed there would be a limited degree of structure and the role of the observer would be essentially artificial. The method, therefore, fell into sector D in the above diagram. This form of case study has all the appearances of being artificial and unrealistic but its description in the above diagram indicates the freedom of the subject from constraints by the observer and the setting that has been constructed.

The intention was to adopt a discursive approach, to establish whether The Quadrant Model was a useable tool to analyse Headteacher activity and to give a wide-angle view of Headteachers' management activity. A further



parameter was to determine whether The Quadrant would reveal other areas of Headteacher functioning, in particular their management and decision-making characteristics.

The Case Study approach would satisfy all of these requirements. What was proposed was multiple case studies with a defined unit of analysis (Bickman et al, 1998) with a view to establishing commonalities across the cases. In other words generalisability would be established through replication. The research design would take a single 'case' at a time and endeavour to establish the validity of findings through duplication.

As Bickman has indicated (Bickman et al, 1998: page 239):

“Generalising from case studies is not a matter of statistical generalisation but a matter of analytical generalisation, using a single or multiple cases to illustrate a theory.”

This methodology is not without its shortcomings. Indeed the literature (Bickman, 1998; Yin, 1993; Yin, 1994) recommend that multiple sources of evidence are applied. This study exhibited limited scope in this method of data collection. It should be pointed out, however, that this was only one element of the data collection battery and that these initial findings would be verified, as above, using complementary data collection methods.

## **Extending Phase One**

The extension phase of the initial stage of the study was designed to address research hypotheses 2 to 5 and determine whether the management and decision-making characteristics identified in the first phase were universal. This phase would explore if the parameters established could be readily identified by Headteachers and whether they could validate and justify these and if there were high levels of consistency on the operation of such styles. Moreover this phase needed to determine whether all Headteachers would react in a similar way to given educational tasks and issues to provide a view on the organisational parameters of the study.

The weakness of the first phase was that its generalisability was limited as it only applied to a small sample size. The intention in this next phase was to add substance to the first batch of data by questioning a much larger sample. The sample would also be constructed so as to be representative of the occupational group (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996). A self reporting exercise was designed so that Headteachers could elaborate upon the management approaches as established in phase one.

## **Phase Two: The Mapping of Headteachers' Management Practices**

The intention in this phase was to survey as large a cohort of Headteachers as possible, ensuring that the sample was 'representative' (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996) of dependent variables; i.e. gender, experience of Headship, school setting and age range of school. The Headteachers would be asked

to respond to material which would exemplify their management and decision-making styles to verify that the styles thus identified could be recognised by them.

The requirement for a large sample dictated that a paper based approach needed to be adopted. One possible approach would be simply to present Headteachers with case study/ exemplar material with multiple potential outcomes with which they would be asked to agree or disagree and so define their management approach. The limitation of this approach if used exclusively is that it restricts investigation and is open to manipulation by the researcher, by the latter only offering limited options. The case study approach would certainly recruit the attention of Headteachers by presenting them with 'real life' decision events but to gain a wider sweep in addition to the case study section there needed to be a complementary open-ended section where Headteachers were not hindered by pre-defined options and were free to chronicle their management approaches and from which classifications could be drawn (Cohen and Manion, 1982).

The results of the first phase of the research, which will be fully discussed later, indicated that Headteachers possess the ability to dissemble. They declared their approach and then supplied evidence which was different and even the opposite of this. For example, they declared their allegiance to a democratic and collegiate approach but then acted in an autocratic and Machiavellian manner to neutralise opposition to their personal preferences.



If Headteachers were presented, therefore, with a management inventory with which they could identify they could elect for a particular approach which would then skew their responses in the ensuing options.

It was decided therefore to survey them, initially, for basic and neutral background information so as not to entrench any presuppositions or prejudices which would taint the ensuing work.

They would be asked in an initial survey to outline their reactions to 'real life' situations which would elicit their management approaches. They were asked to grade their responses. No mention or inferences were made at this point to specific styles but the responses could be coded to map against approaches identified in the first phase of the study and mapped to segments of The Quadrant. The reactions listed in the survey were taken from the interview material with the phase one Headteachers.

After a considerable time interval (one year) the same Headteachers were then asked to outline their declared management approaches, linked to a definite style and then to validate their choices. By these means it was hoped to compare their actual activity as revealed in the first part of this phase with their declared approaches. Of particular interest was whether the high premium characteristics of involvement, empowerment and collaboration would come to the fore and whether these would be revealed in their responses detailing their everyday management and decision-making activity.

## **The Sample**

One of the principal Headteacher Professional Associations was approached for assistance in providing the names of their members, Secondary Headteachers, in a named geographical area. The sample would need to be assessed for representativeness, as above.

The Professional Association provided 106 named contacts. The potential sample underwent initial verification for gender mix. Duplication of post codes were noted to see if Headteachers had volunteered in the same locality and potentially the same socio-economic setting. There was no clustering of post codes.

As the research design would require a time commitment from the Headteachers they were asked in an initial letter to state their willingness to take part, with an outline of the commitment that would be required of them: completing a questionnaire and responding to some case study material. They were assured that confidentiality would be guaranteed.

Of this original sample some thirty four came forward. It is perhaps significant that a large proportion (68%) of the potential sample felt unable to volunteer their expertise. The majority of decliners claimed to be under extreme pressure, about to retire or ignorant of management practices. As noted above these are common reasons for non participation. The remaining

sample was verified for representativeness in terms of setting (for the Comprehensive Schools). In the case of the latter the returns were analysed to ensure that urban, (50%) suburban, (24%) and rural schools (26%) were represented. Details of Headteacher gender and experience were as follows:

	Number	Comprehensive	Selective	Experience <10 yrs	Experience >10 yrs
Male	18	13	5	9	9
Female	16	11	5	13	3

**Figure 3.5 The Sample of Headteachers**

As can be seen the sample is satisfactorily balanced as far as gender, type of school and experience of Headteacher. The size of schools that the Headteachers presided over were broadly similar apart from the fact that small schools (under 450) were led by female Headteachers (2) and large schools (over 1100) were led by males(3) (450 was the smallest school led by a male and 1100 the largest led by a female).

### **The First questionnaire**

The first questionnaire was designed to be socio-constructivist in approach and completely open-ended in design by asking for basic school and career details. The objective behind this section was to verify that the sample was balanced in terms of gender, type and size of school, location of school in terms of socio-economic area and experience of Headship. Headteachers



were also provided with an opportunity to “characterise their school in a few sentences”. The objective behind this question was to highlight their agendas.

The second section asked for an account of their last five decisions. This was an attempt to assess the nature of the management and decision-making activity in which Headteachers were involved. They were also asked to describe their decisions and to indicate how the issue arose, where it was discussed and who took the eventual decision.

Great care was taken at this stage not to predispose any responses and so the options offered were those that had been shown to operate in a school context. These options are commonplace in schools and were verified as real options from the interviews with the phase one Headteachers. Each option was designed to relate to a particular style and some options were deliberately similar or overlapped with other styles to disguise any perceived preference on the researcher’s part.

As ‘autocracy’ has been demonstrated by the pilot study not to be favoured by Headteachers the wording of these sections was undertaken with great care. The term “personal concern”, for example, was used to connote an involvement in the issue but not to the extent of egocentricity/ dictatorship. Other ‘autocratic’ sections were worded factually to minimise any detection of a value judgement on the part of the researcher.

The following coding frame was devised to determine the appropriate management styles:

<b>How the issue arose</b>	<b>Decision Type</b>
The issue was a personal concern	A – Autocrat
Referred to me by member of staff	C – Consensual/ Communal
Referred to me by Deputy Head	B – Bureaucratic
Referred to me by a group of staff	D – Democratic
as the result of a working party	C or D Consensual/ Communal or Democratic

**Figure 3.6 Issues**

They were then asked for details of where this issue was discussed:

<b>Discussion Forum</b>	<b>Decision Type</b>
SMT Meeting	B – Bureaucratic
Head of Department Meeting	D – Democratic
No Discussion	A – Autocratic
Interested Group of Staff	C or D Consensual/ Communal or Democratic
Delegated	D – Democratic

**Figure 3.7 Management Fora**

Finally they were asked about the locus of decision-making at the end of the management process. The following coding frame was used:

<b>Ultimate Decision</b>	<b>Decision Type</b>
I took the decision entirely on my own	A – Autocrat
I listened to opinions then decided	D – Democratic
Taken by SMT collectively	B – Bureaucratic
Taken by group of staff and myself	C – Consensual/ Communal
Delegated to another	D – Democratic

**Figure 3.8 Decision-Making Locus**

In the next phase of the experiment Headteachers were asked to respond to particular school-based situations. The incidents themselves centred on 'people' issues and derived from the material that was raised by Headteachers in phase one of the study. Each option was mapped against a specific section of The Quadrant.

The incidents were designed to elicit:

- Their reactions to staff opposition to a policy that they supported;
- Their actions in supervising the work of the school;
- How they would approach staff performance;
- General management activity in the recent past.



In each case they were asked how likely they were to respond to specified options using the following scale:

- 1 I would never react this way
- 2 I would react this way, but it would be rare
- 3 I would occasionally react like this
- 4 I would frequently react like this
- 5 I would always react this way

Each option was mapped against a section of The Quadrant. The scores were totalled, and by these means it was possible to obtain a score for the Headteacher against each section of The Quadrant. The highest numerical score determined their dominant style.

### **Dealing with Staff Opposition**

In the staff opposition scenario Headteachers were presented with the situation whereby the Head had formulated a policy which was personally very important to her/him and seen to be central to the effectiveness of the school but the staff were strongly opposed to the policy. They were asked to respond to the specific options. Each one corresponded to the four management styles as shown below. These styles have been included for illustration purposes only here. The 'quadrant' column was not included in the questionnaire sent to Headteachers.

## The Situation

You have formulated a policy which is important to you and to the effectiveness of your school but certain members of your staff are strongly opposed to it. How would you react to this?

	Option	(Quadrant)
1	Set up a working group to examine the issues and ensure that the dissenting staff are not invited to join this group	(A)
2	Adopt other strategies to marginalise opposition from the dissenting staff	(A)
3	Call the dissenting staff in and explain your situation	(D)
4	Use your Deputy/ies or other senior staff as intermediaries to quell opposition	(B)
5	Inform the dissenting staff that the issue is official school policy and that they must conform	(B)
6	Gather together a group who support your views and use them to sway staff opinion	(C)
7	Set up a working group to examine the issues and ensure that the dissenting staff are members of the group	(C)
8	Listen to their complaints and accommodate some of their opinions into a new policy	(D)
9	Some other strategy	

**Figure 3.9 Case Study One Options**

The first option of bogus democracy/ covert autocracy in Quadrant A fashion was the micropolitical strategy of Head One where he could appear to be open but at the same time ensured that the 'King's Court' would carry the day. Similarly an open-ended option was proffered allowing Headteachers to display their authoritarianism in option 2.

Openness to consultation and a Quadrant D response was offered at two levels in options 3 and 8. 3 was a demonstration of openness and a recognition that staff had as much right to determine policy as the Headteacher (i.e. they were equal in decision-making) and 8 which went further and accepted that their views were as important as the Headteachers and would be accommodated in the revised policy.

Quadrant B, people resistant and non confrontational responses, relied heavily on the use of the senior management hierarchy to quell opposition (option 4) or falling back on the claim that the issue had been enshrined in policy (option 5) and that opposition was not acceptable.

Quadrant C responses offered two options: 6 which recognised that consensual working was acceptable and that consensual opinions will determine strategy and 7 which used a totally representative group of the staff and, therefore, demonstrated a fuller commitment to the consensual approach.



## Supervising the work of the school

In this case study Headteachers were asked for their actual as opposed to intended behaviour. It should be possible, using these means, to gain an accurate picture of Headteacher activity as the request was to record real occurrences of The Quadrant in question. As before the 'quadrant' column is for illustration purposes only.

In supervising the work of the school how frequently have you actually done the following?

	Option	Quadrant
1	Observed lessons personally to check on the standard of teaching	(A)
2	Called in members of staff on a regular basis to check how they are performing	(A)
3	Used the appraisal process as the main method of supervising the work of staff	(D)
4	Asked Deputy/ies or other senior staff to investigate or review departmental effectiveness	(B)
5	Relied on post holders, for example Heads of Faculty or Department, to keep you informed about the effectiveness of their teams	(B)
6	Initiated mutual observation exercises of classroom teaching	(C)
7	Discussed school effectiveness approaches in staff meetings	(D)
8	Set up working teams of teachers to examine teaching and learning issues	(C)

Please note that this section applies to your actual reactions.

**Figure 3.10 Case Study Two Options**

Options 1 and 2 indicated the authoritarian approach (Quadrant A) to supervising the operation of the school whereas options 4 and 5 relied on procedural solutions (Quadrant B). Collegiate working was captured on both Quadrant C Options (6 & 8) whilst options 3 and 7 relied on the democratically formulated appraisal process and the representational forum of staff meetings (Quadrant D)

### **Staff Performance**

Headteachers were asked how often in the last year they had done the following:

	<b>Option</b>	<b>Quadrant</b>
1	Delegated the problem but supervised closely how this person dealt with it and intervened if I didn't think the matter was being dealt with effectively	(A)
2	I intervened personally where there were problems with teachers/ departments	(A)
3	Delegated the problem but gave the person specific guidance about how to resolve the issue	(B)
4	Raised the issue at a whole school staff meeting.	(D)
5	Asked the immediate line manager to deal with the problem	(B)
6	Delegated the problem and expected the person to whom delegated the issue to deal with it totally	(C)
7	Raised the matter with the whole department/ team and expected them to come up with a solution	(C)
8	Raise the issue at a middle management meeting (eg Heads of Faculty or Department) and take a consensual view	(D)

**Figure 3.11 Case Study Three Options**

Quadrant A options in this case study indicated a firmly 'hands on' approach where the Head assumed personal control. Quadrant B options again were related to routine policy. The Quadrant C options reflected the ability of Headteachers to cede power to a colleague or team. Quadrant D options related again to the influence of democratic fora.



## Management Activity During the Last Term

This survey, similarly, asked for actual actions, this time within a more immediate time frame, the past term. This provided a sharper focus on actual activity. All options had a supervisory intent but were tailored towards situations that reflected the varying influences of teacher(s) and the Headteacher as indicated in The Quadrant.

During the past term please indicate how frequently you have done the following.

	Item	Quadrant
1	Had to call in a member of staff to complain about their work	A
2	Asked your Deputy about the work or performance of a colleague	A
3	Had one to one meetings with staff to check how they are completing specific tasks	B
4	Observed lessons to ensure that teaching and learning policies are being observed	B
5	Asked individuals informally about their work	C
6	Asked groups of colleagues informally about the progress of projects or policies in hand	C
7	Joined in with departmental meetings or colleagues' extra curricular activities	D
8	Observed lessons and given feedback to improve morale	D

**Figure 3.12 Recent Management Activity**

As previously, Quadrant A activity (1&2) puts the Headteacher in the position of power whilst Quadrant C options (5&6) do the opposite. The word “informally” in these options indicates that the Headteacher is not adopting a power position and that the opinions of colleagues are valuable, indeed take precedence. Similarly passive activities, without any follow on, indicated Quadrant B options (3&4). Options 7&8 again highlighted the democratic fora apparent in Quadrant D Activity.

After one year the same sample of Headteachers was contacted and informed that the research data had identified specific management styles. This next element of phase 2 was designed to elicit declared management approaches which could be correlated against the initial description of their activity. Headteachers were then provided with the opportunity of validating their preferences through providing examples, nominating role models who had influenced their styles, outlining professional development which had influenced them and personal research which had been influential in determining their approaches.

Descriptors and adjectives were provided which characterised each style. Headteachers were asked to nominate which was their preferred style (Figure 3.13).

<b>Management Area</b>	<b><u>Approach:</u></b>			
	<b><u>Authoritarian</u></b>	<b><u>Bureaucratic</u></b>	<b><u>Communal</u></b>	<b><u>Democratic</u></b>
<b>People Management is</b>	<b>Directive</b>	<b>Procedural</b>	<b>Enabling</b>	<b>Collaborative</b>
<b>Delegation is seen as</b>	<b>Unnecessary</b>	<b>Risky</b>	<b>Essential</b>	<b>Desirable</b>
<b>Decisions are made</b>	<b>Personally, by the Head</b>	<b>By Committee</b>	<b>With and through colleagues</b>	<b>Through representative fora</b>
<b>The main purpose of SMT meetings is</b>	<b>To pass on information and outline strategy</b>	<b>To validate previously decided policies</b>	<b>To debate ideas generated from staff</b>	<b>To reach corporate decisions</b>
<b>Whole staff meetings are</b>	<b>Rare</b>	<b>Rare and carefully orchestrated</b>	<b>Frequent and open in approach</b>	<b>Frequent and integral in school communication</b>
<b>Conflict is resolved</b>	<b>By the Head</b>	<b>By the appropriate post holder</b>	<b>By the most suitable person</b>	<b>By the Head or the appropriate post holder</b>
<b>This Head is</b>	<b>Remote</b>	<b>Available by appointment</b>	<b>Freely Available</b>	<b>Accessible</b>
<b>The School Vision derives from</b>	<b>The Head's personal beliefs</b>	<b>An array of validated policies</b>	<b>The ideas of all staff</b>	<b>Established principles and practices</b>
<b>Policy is made</b>	<b>As a result of the Head's personal beliefs</b>	<b>Through valued others or established and trusted groups</b>	<b>Through joining in with working groups/ improvement teams of staff</b>	<b>Through supporting working groups/ improvement teams</b>

**Figure 3.13 The Management Matrix**



Headteachers were then asked to nominate their 'best fit' style; authoritarian, bureaucratic, communal or democratic. They were then asked to validate their declared style by giving examples from their daily practice which would illustrate their approach.

The coding frame was designed to accommodate nil responses and irrelevant justification as well as a valid responses which validated their example.

In order to probe the communal/ democratic – people centred dimension their responses to this section would need to be analysed further to break the responses into the kind of participation staff had in decision-making. The coding frame, in order to determine the nature of staff involvement, would need to determine both formal and informal staff involvement as well a mixture of the two.

To add further substance to their declared position Headteachers were asked who had been influential in influencing their management approach and how they had been influenced. The coding frame would need to include occupational role models as well as other high status individuals in the education sector.

In terms of the professional development that Headteachers had undertaken which had influenced them into acting in their declared fashion the following coding frame would need to contain the alternatives that were available to

Headteachers. This would include formal academic qualifications in addition to national bespoke professional development programmes offered through the NCSL: NPQH, LPSH and Headteachers' Induction Programme. To this would need to be added other forms of Headteacher professional development such as short courses and conferences and industrial placement or mentoring schemes, offered by Local Education Authorities and other leadership providers.

Headteachers were then asked specifically, to outline "how this (training and professional development) had shaped the approach you have adopted". Their responses would need to be trawled to find definite connections with the styles they had nominated. The coding frame would distinguish relevant or unrelated responses.

To extend the findings from the previous question Headteachers were asked about Educational Literature that they had read which supported their position. The types of material that would be nominated here should correlate with the professional development opportunities outlined in the previous section and would potentially include academic or more general management material.

Headteachers were then asked to nominate recent reading which had influenced their style. This question was designed to evaluate the level of less formal reading and research that Headteachers undertook as opposed to the material they had supplied in the previous question which would be

connected to formal professional development and “further study and research”.

### **Headteachers' Philosophy**

The final section of the questionnaire asked the Headteachers to summarise their key principles and to outline their approach to Headship. They were thus being asked to summarise the thoughts and evidence they had previously supplied.

The coding frame that was proposed was “hypothesis guided” (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996) to correlate with the original nomination of management style. The coding frame would need to isolate the level of staff involvement and empowerment and the pursuit of democratic and collaborative principles. It would also need to isolate the level of autocracy and isolation revealed in their responses.

This phase (2) was designed, therefore, to extend the narrative findings of the first phase of the research and to address specifically research questions 2 to 5 which explored the currency and consistency of particular management styles and the ability of the Headteachers to support their opinions with validating evidence.

The advantage of this research instrument was that whilst the approach was still socio-constructivist in approach it added quantitative data to the original



qualitative case studies. Its weakness was that it relied on the recollections of the target audience and was prone to impression management, despite attempts to overcome this flaw as far as possible through the design and timing of the research. The result was a more objective measure which looked longitudinally at a group of Headteachers. It was constructed to be devoid of any value-laden instructions and would reflect, as far as possible, the ethnography of Headteachers' working environment.

### **Phase Three: Detailed Sampling and Analysis of Management Activity**

The main purpose behind this section of the research was to illuminate Headteachers' daily activity with a fine level of granularity and to triangulate the data against previous findings. There were several recording options open at this stage, including visits and random sampling, discursive logs completed by the Headteachers and check lists against which Headteachers recorded their activity (Cohen and Manion, 1982). It was decided to pilot this phase of the research in order to determine the most advantageous approach.

The Headteacher who volunteered for the pilot phase of this section of the study had already taken part in other similar exercises. In preliminary discussions with him he made it obvious that completing complicated documents or matrices would be too onerous a task. This would have obvious implications for the instrument that would be sent to subsequent Headteachers taking part in the investigation.

Additionally, the notion of asking the Headteachers to complete an analysis of what they had completed at the end of their working day would have demonstrated a flawed approach. If Headteachers were granted the opportunity to reflect they would use selective perception. Moreover if any clues were given as to the requirements or focus of the researcher they operate under the demand characteristic (Wood, 1978; Arksey and Knight, 1999) whereby they provide the information that they think is required rather than the actuality of their practice. It is also possible that other heuristic devices would operate, in particular Hindsight Bias as they reorganised their perceptions in hindsight (Fischhoff, 1975).

What was required, therefore, was a minimalist method of recording which required the least amount of effort but would be sufficiently detailed to enable effective analysis. Supporting documentation would also need to be neutral (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996) and not refer to any particular management and decision-making detail. Recording activity, for example, against criteria or types of action would inevitably lead to selective perception and flawed data.

The original pilot logging sheet had columns which indicated 'activity' and 'comment.' This encouraged a tendency to over elaborate reported actions which not only opened the door to obfuscations and impression management but also when launched on a larger sample would create resistance from the participants as the exercise would be too time consuming.

The final format consisted of columns requiring the date, start and end times and a narrow column for activity. The instruction was given to record a new event when the activity changed. Preliminary analysis of the data produced in the early stages of the pilot overcame a potential concern that the data would be so minimal as to be meaningless. In practice the data was easy to code. Through the pilot exercise it became possible to locate Headteacher Activity against The Quadrant, indicating varying levels of Headteacher activity and that involving other colleagues.

A feature of the pilot study, however, indicated that 'participant' axis of The Quadrant model needed to be refined. The original model was composed of Headteacher and teacher participation but it soon became clear that the pilot Headteacher spent only a small amount of time with his teaching colleagues. This surprising result meant not only that The Quadrant descriptors needed to be reviewed but that a coding frame would need to be established to indicate the people with whom Headteachers interacted.

Such people fell into two groups. It was decided, in preparation for receiving the actual data, to divide the 'people' coding into two distinct groups: 'internal' people, teachers and administrative and support staff and 'external' people or people who did not actually work at the school.



## **The Extended Sample**

After the pilot phase a further cohort of Headteachers was sought to complete logs of their activities. The same problem, as noted before, occurred in their reluctance to volunteer. Two sources were used: selected Headteachers who were taking part in the LPSH programme with a national training provider and those who had actively participated in the earlier stages of this research. Headteachers who had taken part in the earlier research and had subsequently retired were excluded which meant that 31 practising Headteachers were contacted. Of these 31 25 (80%) Headteachers declined to take part. The ultimate active sample, therefore, for this phase of detailed sampling was 6. This opportunistic sample included male and female Headteachers from a variety of school settings. In view of the depth and 'thick description' (Mertens, 1997) intended for this phase of the research the small sample was adequate and in practice provided a high levels of consistency and extended in focused fashion the concepts already established. The sample was of equal magnitude to other observational studies of Headteachers (Hall et al, 1988).

These Headteachers were provided with instructions about how to complete their logs. Those without access to a computer were supplied with a paper log to complete. Those with ICT facilities were sent (via email if they possessed an account) a blank copy of a spreadsheet with the appropriate headings. These were 'date', 'start', 'end', 'activity'.

When these were returned formulae (end minus start) were used on the electronic logs to calculate the time spent per activity. Manual logs were transcribed onto a spreadsheet for analysis and the formula used, as above.

Headteachers were asked to submit a preliminary log for checking and error correction. All managed to complete satisfactory logs. Details were sufficiently clear to log them against the coding frame. This was possible because Headteachers were instructed to log any change in their activity. Often this resulted in recording extremely short bursts of activity. This meant that over generalised entries were minimal. Where there were ambiguous entries, eg "interview with x" Headteachers were telephoned and asked to elaborate on the unclear records.

Headteachers completed logs for three months, submitted monthly. When they were submitted they were coded using the frames established during the pilot phase. The logs encompassed in total 3,312 hours and 5,229 events.

#### **Phase Four: Hindsight Bias Investigation**

This section of the study marks the convergence of management and decision-making. The case study material had pointed to the fact that management practices and decision-making abilities did not operate in isolation; decisions were taken in a organisational and interpersonal context. The analysis of Headteachers' management practices has been shown to

involve judgements which centre on their attitudes to their colleagues. The detailed sampling exercise also pointed to management and decision-making activity that relied on interpersonal judgements where Headteachers were in one to one supervisory exchanges with colleagues.

It was decided, therefore, to focus on one distinctive cognitive error, Hindsight Bias, and to contextualise the research into the school domain to discover whether Headteachers, in addition to other research subjects, possessed this flaw. Hindsight Bias is a particularly relevant area for this study as its operation is significant when it is applied to hindsight judgements that subjects make on people. The effect has also been shown to operate in more marked fashion when subjects are in highly profile positions and are open to public or organisational scrutiny (Campbell and Tesser, 1983).

Hindsight Bias has a considerable research heritage and so it was impossible simply to create a 'new' Hindsight Bias research instrument. The research methods adopted for this section of the study, therefore, were rooted firmly in the traditions of previous research into this area. The intention of this phase was not only to establish whether this phenomenon existed in the school context but to add to this school of research by extrapolating the classical research methods and tools. By so doing it was hoped to extend the research methodology and findings of this area of study.



## **Hindsight Bias and Headteachers**

Headteachers are often required to pass judgements on people, frequently pupils or members of staff, and to do this in a fair and objective manner, based on the evidence available to them. If, however, the Hindsight Bias effect operates then this rationality and objectivity comes into question. Such attitudes, created in foresight and confirmed in hindsight, if the effect is proven, will also prevail and relate to their colleagues if they are given the option of including other teachers in school management and decision-making activity.

It has been noted, for example, in the interviews with Headteachers that they form opinions of members of staff. Head One, in phase one, for example, refers to the “little tidal pool which has been left while the tide went out” to describe a group of senior staff who, he felt were de-motivated, and formed a vociferous faction, resistant to his ideas. The image captures his attitude to this ‘washed up’ group of staff. If he has further outcome ‘evidence’ of their lack of co-operation then, in hindsight he will ‘know all along’ that they are not worth bothering with. The Hindsight Bias effect washes away other possible alternatives for their attitude and further learning about solving the problem ceases. Similarly, Head Two had entrenched mistrustful attitudes about her SMT so that she adopted strategies to ensure that they ‘toed the line’. Naturally, any perceived lack of compliance would confirm the original perception in hindsight.

## **The Hindsight Bias Research Tradition**

The hindsight effect has been tested using historical data (Fischhoff, 1975) news events (Fischhoff and Beyth, 1975; Pennington, 1981; Synodinos, 1986; Verplanken and Pieters, 1988) or almanac trivia (Wood, 1978; Campbell and Tesser, 1983). Research has focused on the existence of the effect using deliberately non contextualised materials and the robustness of the effect. The consequence is that these studies are divorced from any 'real' context. One of the principle factors underpinning the current research is that it should use 'live' data, relevant to the subjects' daily life or work such as that used in medical (Arkes et al, 1981) and legal (Casper et al, 1988) contexts, noted in Chapter 2.

In extending the research base the first amendment that was made, therefore, was in the subject matter presented to Headteachers. Research data would need to be gathered by post and there would not be an opportunity to gather the Headteachers together in a laboratory setting. The need, therefore, to persuade them about the validity of the research, without inter-personal intervention on the part of the researcher, was uppermost. It was considered that using historical or trivial data would not recruit their involvement in the study, indeed it could have the opposite effect in that responding to material which they considered irrelevant to their professional practice could be perceived as a waste of their time. Material had to be found, therefore, that was relevant to their professional context and

sufficiently open-ended to allow for the operation of their professional judgement.

Suitable case study material presented itself through an interview with Head Three in phase one. He recounted an incident over which he experienced real management and decision difficulty. A member of staff and a pupil had been involved in an altercation and it was unclear as to who was to blame: pupil or teacher. Head Three had taken a considerable amount of time to decide on the outcome and consulted several professionals, friends and even members of his family before he reached his final decision. The incident was high profile (Campbell and Tesser, 1983) as colleagues would expect a reaction and also allowed several outcomes concerning the pupil and the member of staff. Each outcome, similar to those offered by Fischhoff (1975) could be separated and partitioned. The example proved most apposite, therefore.

A feature of hindsight research (Fischhoff, 1975) is to subdivide the groups of subjects. In Fischhoff's case there was a foresight group, with no outcome knowledge and four hindsight groups who were each provided with different outcome information. Given the fact that the hindsight effect needed little verification per se it was decided to alter the research design so that all Headteachers were given the passage with no outcome information and then, at a later stage they would be provided with a 'new' version of events with an additional piece of outcome information to see what effect it had on their original estimates of the outcome.



The rationale behind this approach was that the research design needed to emulate as far as possible a 'real' professional situation. Headteachers, if they were asked to decide on a matter such as that included in the case study, would take an initial decision based on the evidence available and then modify (or not) their verdict based on supplementary information. The research material allowed two essential outcomes: the pupil's or the members of staff situation deteriorated.

The outcomes were similar in concept to Fischhoff's alternatives of the British or the Gurkas winning their struggle. Instead of the stalemate options, which would simply have reinforced the difficulty of resolving the issues contained in the passage, greater degrees of severity were chosen for each option (i.e. either the pupil's or member of staff's attitude deteriorated with appropriate outcomes).

### **Research Proposition**

A research proposition, therefore, was that after the first round of questioning (foresight) Headteachers would support either the pupil or the member of staff.

These results should indicate varying strengths of support for either of the two parties and the research interest would be to discover what differences would occur, if at all, when the subjects were presented with outcome information (hindsight) that would either confirm or deny their original

estimate. If their original estimates altered in the direction of the new information then the hindsight effect would be proven.

### **Advances In Understanding of the Hindsight Effect**

The Headteachers, after the first phase, would be divided according to their predictions of outcomes into “Anti Staff” and “Anti Pupil” groups. Each group would be further subdivided and each provided with an outcome that either confirmed their original estimate or contradicted it. The groups, then were:

Original Prediction	New Outcome Provided
Anti - Pupil	Anti – Pupil
Anti - Pupil	Anti – Staff
Anti - Staff	Anti – Pupil
Anti - Staff	Anti – Staff

**Figure 3.14 Hindsight Bias Groupings**

A weakness of previous research into Hindsight Bias, in particular studies that are designed to establish the existence of the effect, is that outcomes are presented as conclusive and final. It is not surprising, in these circumstances, that subjects will adjust their perceptions in the direction of the outcome they have been informed is ‘true’. This will particularly be the case in those studies, for example Arkes et al, (1981) which are based on

professional knowledge. Professionals will, inevitably attempt to 'save face' by adjusting their views in the direction of the declared outcome.

The purpose of the present study was to examine if the effect would still operate in conditions of uncertainty i.e. would there be a discernible hindsight effect if the outcomes were not presented as fixed and immutable?

It was hoped, also, to test the strength of the hindsight effect, should it reveal itself by offering contradictory or confirmatory outcomes to those already expressed. It should be noted here that the research design used the same subjects in both phases of the experiment so the effect would be assessed against real stated preferences rather than hypothesised control groups or samples who had not been exposed to the same information.

The research questions were, therefore, concerned with:

- The existence of a hindsight effect on a single cohort of subjects
- The existence of the effect when outcome information was presented as incomplete, uncertain and requiring further judgement
- A measure of the strength/ robustness of Hindsight Bias when presented with confirmatory or contradictory information.

It should be noted that this research is, in fact, a combination of 'effect' (Fischhoff, 1975) and 'robustness' (Hawkins and Hastie, 1990) Hindsight Bias research.



Several other features were included in the design based on the heritage of previous researches in the field. The passage chosen was kept as short as possible (270 words) as it has been demonstrated (Pennington, 1981) that the hindsight effect is magnified with longer passages. Given that one of the principal hypotheses was to establish the effect with a different sort of outcome information it was felt unwise to pre-dispose the subjects with extra influences.

In line with the classic research paradigm four actual outcomes were offered (Fischhoff, 1975; Wood, 1978; Arkes et al, 1981) but altered to effectively two outcomes with differing degrees of severity. This was done to measure the magnitude of the effect in phase two, the hindsight condition, and to ensure that the situation offered to the subjects followed as realistic an outline as possible.

Wasserman et al (1991) highlighted the need to provide 'real' not chance outcomes. The outcomes were determined by rooting the experimental material in the everyday life of a school, based on genuine experience. The wording of the instructions was also similarly unequivocal and the 'demand characteristic' (Wood, 1978; Arksey and Knight, 1999) was eliminated as far as possible. This was achieved by de-emphasising the fact that the exercise could be seen as a test of Headteachers' professional competence and using bland instructions i.e. "predict the probability of each of the following outcomes".

In this exercise, as above, Headteachers were presented with a situation that was revealed in phase one of the study where an incident with an inconclusive outcome was presented to the Headteacher. This was replicated in a short passage with care taken not to include any information which could predispose the outcome. Headteachers were asked to “use their judgement” to predict the percentage probability of each outcome. They could choose any number of percentage options but their results must add up to 100.

After the results of this first phase had been produced the Headteachers were broken into four groups (Figure 3.14). Two groups had expressed an outcome which predicted problems with the pupil and two groups who expressed an outcome against the teacher. Each group, in the hindsight phase, were provided with additional outcomes, one where the situation with the pupil deteriorated and one where the situation with the member of staff deteriorated. Various in the groups the extra information either confirmed the original perception or contradicted the original probability. It would thus be possible to measure the shift, if any, from the original position and whether the outcome information had caused the hindsight effect by moving the subject's perceptions in favour of the new outcome.

### **Phase Five: Indicators of Management Excellence**

The research instruments, thus far, have been designed to examine cumulatively the management and decision-making characteristics of

Headteachers. Contextualisation has been attempted at each stage to provide sufficient ethnographic and socio-constructivist grounding to ensure that the results relate to the actual working context of the subjects. This has taken the form of relating or reacting to 'real' situations and the logging of actual events. The data has concerned itself with management and decision-making issues, including the operation of Hindsight Bias. Also examined have been attitudes to people within the school context, the involvement of others within and beyond the school and the collaborative features of the organisation. What had not yet been considered was a classification of these management and decision-making characteristics when measured against specific school settings. This study started with the emphasis on school performance and the centrality of the Headteacher in achieving this. The correlation between management and decision-making activity and school type forms the basis of this final stage of the study. The approach was similar to that adopted by Booth et al, (2000) in defining the parameters of inclusive teaching and learning policies and practices in schools. The ultimate sample size was also similar to that adopted by this group of researchers.

A cross sectional sample of schools was constructed with regard to performance and specific levels of achievement. This was correlated with an array of characteristics, drawn from this research and the literature on effective management and decision-making.



The school types were:

- those who had achieved notable examination success, (termed 'Top' schools);
- those who had been identified as having achieved management excellence (Beacon Schools);
- and schools who had failed their OFSTED inspection and had been placed under Special Measures.

It was hoped, by so doing, that the elements that had been identified, or 'indicators', would be proven to exist in discrete school types and by so doing the 'indicators' of a successful school could be isolated.

In order to assess whether an 'indicator' existed in a school the Headteacher, one of her/his leadership group and selected members of staff were asked to verify via questionnaires, that it could be demonstrated to exist in their establishment. Previous research instruments had noted the ability of Headteachers to impression-manage and it could safely be assumed that this effect would operate in other senior managers within the school. Similarly the 'kings court' of tried and trusted colleagues, friendly to the Headteacher, could not be trusted to provide objective information. Means had to be found, therefore, of gaining a fair, balanced and interference-free picture of the indicators that apply in schools.

For this reason it was decided not to have a scale against which respondents could, for example, tick that they would strongly agree, disagree or strongly disagree (Booth et al, 2000) as this would allow idealised and inaccurate responses. Instead respondents were asked to provide actual evidence for a particular indicator. This was processed as either being adequate evidence for the existence of the indicator or not.

If the respondent indicated the existence of current policies and practices then this was counted as substantive data. For example indicator A.1.3 asked how staff supported each other. Responses which instanced teacher induction programmes or the existence of peer mentoring and support strategies would be accepted. Declarations of intent without substantive evidence would not. An example of insubstantial evidence was that senior staff show respect “through relationships”.

The questionnaire was piloted in two schools. The questionnaires were distributed by the Headteacher to another member of the Senior Management Team and two teachers. The willingness of staff to complete the questionnaire was established. It was found that respondents needed prompts for certain questions and that certain phrases in the documentation were problematic and needed to be replaced.

There was an additional difficulty with this form of questionnaire that was discovered through piloting in that open-ended questions are perceived as time consuming (Cohen and Manion, 1982) and de-motivating to the respondent. For this reason prompts were offered.

Certain indicators were problematic, however, and teachers had difficulty identifying with them. Some were too narrow, for example indicator B.2.4 was changed from:

Staff feel that they can voice objections to Senior Staff without fear of hostility or reprisal.

To:

Staff feel that they can voice objections without fear of hostility or reprisal.

By these means respondents were not restricted in their responses to their attitudes to Senior Staff alone and could refer to other contexts.

Duplicate or overlapping indicators which were originally included as triangulation checks were removed as a result of the pilot because teachers complained that they had already answered a particular question.

The pilot questionnaire exercise indicated that members of staff were able to provide varied and valid evidence and respond to every indicator. Responses indicated also there were distinct, verified areas of disagreement between



the classes of respondent. In order to get a wider spread of opinion the final questionnaire was distributed to the Leadership Group, two middle managers and two teachers with different levels of experience in the profession i.e. a Newly Qualified Teacher and a colleague with substantial experience.

The instructions sent to Headteachers were refined through piloting and the opinions of teachers and Headteachers accepted as to how best to approach each class of school, in particular schools under Special Measures. The approach letter is included at Appendix I. The phrasing in the <reason> bracket was:

- Your school has been selected because it is recognised as being one of the top schools in the country (for Top and Beacon Schools);
- Your schools has been selected because it has demonstrated its management ability in challenging circumstances (for Special Measures Schools).

The approach letter also outlined the techniques for ensuring that answers could be completed anonymously and the respondents protected from pressure to respond in particular ways dictated by others in the school. Envelopes were provided for private and confidential responses.

Questionnaires were sent to 75 schools as follows:

- 25 from the Top 250 schools by GCSE examination results;
- 25 to Beacon Schools;
- 25 to schools under OFSTED's Special Measures.

In order to secure a balanced sample Headteachers were asked to distribute copies to the following:

- Leadership group - Headteacher and one Deputy Headteacher;
- Middle Management Group - one Subject Leader and one Pastoral Leader;
- Teachers - one NQT or teacher with less than five years experience and one experienced teacher with ten or more years experience.

### **The Research Approach – A Summary**

The research approaches adopted in this study have been cumulative and complementary with the intention of triangulating and extending findings progressively. The approach has been socio-constructivist throughout with the intention of unpicking the social climate that operates as far as Headteachers' management and decision-making are concerned.

A complementary thrust has been to 'ground' the data as it was collected through the phases of the research, following Sapsford and Jupp (1996). Grounded theorizing, they propose, is a commonly used set of procedures to extract meaning from the data. This involves preparing the data for analysis, coding and categorising them, further exploring and extending categories and recurrent patterns in an iterative and comparative fashion. As they indicate (op cit: page 289), grounded theorizing is a process which involves the "mutual fitting between data and categories":

**“The analytical categories used to make sense of the data have to be developed in the process of data analysis. Indeed developing such categories is the central task in grounded theorizing.” (page 290)**

**Hence, in the case of this study, the initial ‘grounding’ of the basic data from the interview and case study material from the first phase of the study and the mapping of this against the segments of the Quadrant were further refined and developed as the work progressed. The second questionnaire phase presented management situations to the subjects. These were extracted or extrapolated from the data already collected in order to verify the existence of these categories and to further refine and extend the definitions already established. This phase of the research permitted the original grounding of the data to be extended into more defined management areas including personal beliefs and influences. The detailed sampling activity of phase three, in similar fashion, enabled the hypotheses already established to be compared and contrasted to a detailed set of data covering the minutiae of Headteacher activity.**

**The management approaches, their consistency and reality in the working environment of Headteachers, together with underpinning attitudes were elaborated in the final ‘Index’ phase into unpicking the organisational parameters of the data that had focused, previously, on categories concerning personal management parameters. This grounded approach, whilst allowing even greater refinement of concepts and theories as the work**



progressed, also enabled confirmation of central concepts. One such was participation and the role of the teacher in decision-making contexts. Sapsford and Jupp (op cit: page 290) outline this process as “the gathering together of segments of data from different parts of the data record that are relevant to the same category.”

The study, therefore, produced a cumulative and ever-refined view of Headteachers’ management and decision-making. Running parallel to providing increasing opportunities to ground the data the research design also exhibited growing sophistication and detail. Phase one, for example, was centred on a small investigative sample with the aim of establishing core principles and investigative areas which would be extended into a larger, representative sample looking, in phase two, in detail at specific areas of management and decision-making performance. The data here supported the existence of the effects under consideration but were too tightly specific to make definite conclusions. This section also lacked the fine granularity and variety of Headteachers’ daily activity.

To counteract this the research battery was extended into a detailed logging activity, in phase three, to verify and add significant detail to the earlier findings. This section also aimed to examine the universality of Headteacher activity over a protracted period of time. In order to address the cognitive elements that had been discovered through the study a discrete investigation was undertaken into an activity which epitomised Headteacher’s management and judgement capability, Hindsight Bias. The research

extended the school of thought and the research methods that had been used in this specific area of cognitive psychology and placed them in the context of a school and explored the cognitive features of its leader. The final phase of the work was designed to contextualise the findings of the research by correlating the management and decision-making activity that had been revealed with particular kinds of schools.

The research approaches adopted indicated a variety of data collection methods: interview and case study, respondent survey, detailed logging and analysis, developed Hindsight Bias research and a correlational cross sectional survey. By these means an ever increasingly sophisticated and detailed view of Headteachers' management and decision-making activity would be gained. The findings of this research strategy are discussed in the following chapter.

## **Chapter 4 Findings**

### **Introduction**

This chapter presents the findings of the five phases of the research and addresses the research aims and hypotheses. The research has been designed to be wide ranging and cumulative so that an ever-refined view of Headteachers' management and decision-making is presented which responds to the eight research hypotheses.

The initial phase of the research adopts a case study approach to provide a broad contextual backdrop to the study and establishes the parameters of Headteachers' management and decision-making. These are presented through mapping the data to a conceptual model, The Quadrant Model. The model is further explored by surveying Headteachers and examining their reactions to several management and decision-making scenarios. The evidence is further refined through a detailed sampling exercise where Headteachers' management and decision-making activity is analysed. This phase of the research provides a more tightly focused view of the organisational and interpersonal dimensions that operate with this occupational group and the management and decision-making parameters which apply.



To complement this view of their management activity the effectiveness of Headteachers' decision-making is viewed through an examination as to whether they display a classic paradigm of judgement weakness, Hindsight Bias.

The concluding phase of the work draws on the findings of the earlier work which established the dimensions of management and decision-making by analysing which of the parameters that have been isolated apply to demonstrably successful schools.

### **Phase One - Case Studies**

This phase of the research was designed to address research hypothesis 1, that there are distinct management and decision-making styles that can be deduced from the practice of serving Headteachers. This section will isolate key management and organisational parameters, and will make use of a conceptual model, deduced from the literature on management and decision-making, called The Quadrant Model. (Figure 3.1)

### **Case Study - Head One**

#### **Background**

Head One was an experienced Headteacher. He had risen through the ranks in the locality to become Head of a small comprehensive LEA Maintained Boys' School. Falling rolls had necessitated a merger between this school

and the neighbouring Girls' School. This situation had created extraordinary micropolitical problems between the two cohorts of teachers who had to be combined with a limited number of future appointments. The level of anxiety that this generated had been grafted onto the school's existing problems.

Head One's school was in an inner city area with many indicators of social disadvantage: poverty, deprivation and fragmented social backgrounds. Indeed he claimed that the area was amongst the most deprived 10% in the country. The school, at the time of the interview, had the lowest examination results at GCSE in the authority and was systematically sniped at in the press for low examination performance.

The pupils were characterised by the Headteacher as lacking in motivation and displaying pronounced discipline problems. In fact when it came to discipline the Headteacher indicated that, "We do it for England here".

The educational environment, therefore, is what could euphemistically be called challenging, made more so by the uncertainties created by the amalgamation of the Girls' and Boys' Schools. This and subsequent interviews cast considerable light on the social/ micropolitical aspects of decision-making but an analysis of this Headteacher's account of his decisions cast interesting light on the rational decision-making process.

## **Micropolitical Context Head One**

In referring to the decisions he had to make he termed them 'realistic' decisions. He was aware that the decisions he made had to be implemented against the background of considerable apathy and lack of awareness from the parent body. He had, therefore, established for himself a clear distinction between realistic and unrealistic decisions following his notion of 'the art of the possible':

"... there is not much point in making a decision which while in theory is excellent you know in practice it is impossible to implement, so I am constantly aware and have been for the last five years of the art of the possible, and the art of the possible is sometimes modest in an area like this..."

As an example he cited discussion about the potential for introducing new courses. When considering parents' views, he pointed out

"if we want GNVQ's in schools, you've lost them, forget it. So the area of the school tends to colour your responses."

## **Head One Participation**

This Head highlighted his SMB (School Management Board) as his 'think tank' and major decision-making block. This group consisted of the major team leaders in the school. The declared intention of this body was, therefore to be a filter for the Head's ideas and a formal discussion forum whereby the various



elements of the school could be debated. This block formed two functions: one as decision support but also as a visible propaganda declaration that decision-making is collegiate, collective, representative and, in an institutional sense, rational. Whether this is appearance or a contrived political reality will be discussed later. What cannot be doubted, however, was that this Headteacher, despite his micropolitical requirements, needed interpersonal support for his decision-making.

He indicated that his Senior Management Team were idea providers. Decision-making has consequently been shifted from being purely the preserve of the lead professional to an alternative decision-making pattern. In terms of leadership, therefore, a principle has been established that there is a supportive role deriving from other professionals in the organisation.

A further insight into decision support was provided when asked if he had any touchstones to guide him in his decision-making. The hostile environment of the school has already been noted. Head One noted that there were those who were actively involved in the progress of the school and others who were settled in their ways. In seeking to shape his decisions this Head would seek out 'valued others' to elaborate his decisions. These were not selected haphazardly, however:

"I found myself always wanting to talk to the ones who were more likely to change to bounce ideas off."

He was well aware that this provided a dangerous clique of the “king’s friends” in a form of a “court” but the realities of needing decision support still impelled him to seek out receptive colleagues and to avoid those who have turned down endless invitations to be part of the process.

A revealing section of the interview brought out further variations on this theme. Head One was given to speaking metaphorically. This Head wanted to use his Deputies on his SMT as ‘battering rams’ to change things.

As far as decision-making was concerned, however, he now regarded himself as the ‘granddad figure’.

He commented:

“Instead of now feeling that these two Deputies are battering rams I now feel as though they were chariot horses pulling the chariot which is rather less aggressive... with me tweaking the reins. That would be a nice feeling but I am not sure whether I am tweaking the reins or whether I am holding on for dear life.”

This argues that, at times, management and decision-making can be abdicated either permanently or temporarily and becomes yet another indication that the perfect rationality of the single decision-maker is an inaccurate representation of what happens in a school.

## **Collegiality and Micropolitics**

Hoyle (1982) has spoken of the continuum between normal management of others and the machinations involved in the micropolitical climate of a school. The results of these initial interviews indicate that the situation is more subtle than that. This element will be extrapolated from the other interviews but, because of Head One's peculiar situation, the micropolitical elements are more pronounced and make a suitable introduction to this key element of Headteachers' management and decision-making strategies and styles.

Head One expressed the 'party line' on the benefits of collegiality and participation, themes that will be elaborated later in following phases of this research:

"I would like to think that my principle is, and this again is set up in the new school as a concept, at the outset is one of collaboration, open collaborative, democratic ways forward. I would be reluctant to make decisions which had any significant import on my own or even with simply the SMT."

In this context the work of Argyris and Schön (1989) is useful in focusing perceptions when analysing declared and actual beliefs. They isolate two components: espoused theories and theories in use. Human beings deliberately shape their behaviour in their interactions with others and hold theories for doing so. These theories of action contain values, strategies and assumptions that inform the behaviour of the participant at two levels,



espoused theories that are used to explain behaviour and are often vocalised as a *modus vivendi*. On the other hand theories in use which are embedded and observable by others in the behaviour of individuals but rarely at the subject's conscious operational level.

In the case of Head One, and as we shall discover later in many other Headteachers, there is an espoused theory of action, his declared philosophical support of collegiality and participatory decision-making. This declared philosophy contradicts what is revealed at other parts of the interview and reveals his true theory in use, i.e. his real *modus operandi*.

The background to his contradictory state of affairs lies in the social environment of the school. Head One explained the situation of the 'tidal pool'.

"The analogy I have always had in my mind about this (the sort of staff in the school) is rather like a little tidal pool which has been left while the tide went out, which means what you have ended up with is a group of staff ... inevitably ...the most senior staff .. who have ..come to the end of their decision-making life some ten years prior to that and they felt that the only decision they wanted was more of the same so that we didn't upset the applecart too much."

In other words Head One is describing a residue of inactive staff who are hostile to change.

There was, therefore, a senior caucus opposed to any move that Head One suggested which militated against his espoused desire for a collegiate approach. One tactic of dealing with this situation has already been mentioned in that when he did consult he did so with people who were unlikely to disagree with him.

A further strategy was to divide and rule. Micropolitically he had capitalised on their inertia and their lack of involvement by initiating working parties with at least a token amount of decision-making power, confident in the knowledge that his opponents would not be willing to contribute their time and effort. He was therefore able at one and the same time to extol the benefits of collegiality and to neutralise opposition. By these means he was able to say to those who questioned his decisions that they could not say that they were not involved because there were ample opportunities to have their say.

In contrast, therefore, to the declared theory of democratic participation there was a contradictory desire to be autocratic. From the interview it was clear that the Local Education Authority had expressed the opinion that he should order the staff to do the things that he wanted them to do. Similarly he instanced specific times when a quick decision was called for and a quick burst of 'fascism' was required "to get things moving". Similarly he drew the analogy between a school and the Roman Empire which in times of crisis dropped the "republic nonsense" and appointed a dictator. Underpinning his espoused democratic principles, therefore, was the opinion that staff really want the Headteacher to tell them what to do and they would do it.

It was also clear that the judicious use of autocracy was not the only contradiction to the espoused participatory theory. Even the involvement of the consultative body set up specifically to embody his democratic principles was subject to a critical stipulation:

“I would be swayed by a majority vote, consensus of opinion, but I would always reserve the right to have a veto and ultimately even if I veto something, even if the rest of the staff were for it, I would have to exercise my veto.”

A further method was what he termed the Phil Bennett side step. (This is a reference to a footballer's concealing manoeuvre to confuse the opposing team).

“One of the expressions of that concern has been in SMB repeatedly, the desire to have a particularly elaborate school detention system. I have had a lot of experience with school detention systems and I believe that they are largely symbolic and they do serve for a feeling of relief of the feeling of vengeance on the part of the staff, but that is all. So I have always managed to do a Phil Bennett side step on this every time it has come up and if push came to shove, I honestly think I would exercise my veto. I am not going to go down the path of a useless Byzantine form of revenge which does not get us anywhere other than to satisfy a small minority of staff's wish to be revenged upon the same pupils on a daily basis.”



Applying the data, thus presented, using the sectors of The Quadrant Model (Figure 3.1) it can be seen that Head One's declared position was in Quadrant D whereby his level of control was equal to that of the participating teacher or teachers. This section describes his declared democratic principles where there is participatory decision-making with the high involvement of both parties. Such bodies as Head One's School Management Board (SMB) would operate in this section if it were allowed full executive powers. As has been noted, however, the veto could be applied which would characterise the real nature of decision-making in Quadrant A, the autocratic section, where the Head's control is high, teacher involvement and influence low.

It can be seen, therefore, that the 'side-step' of this Head can be indicated, using The Quadrant Model as a conceptual guide, as a move from Quadrant D to A. Similarly his occasional burst of fascism places him in Quadrant A as it indicates an autocratic mode of operation.

A further strategy outlined above was to set up token consultative bodies, ostensibly in Quadrant D whereas the real method of decision-making was back in Quadrant A. As will be outlined later a common feature of Headteachers' management and decision-making is to espouse a Quadrant D approach, describing themselves as a participatory manager, whilst the reality was Quadrant A autocracy.

The two remaining Quadrants, however need to be outlined. Perhaps the most difficult to conceptualise is Quadrant C where there is low Headteacher control and high teacher participation.

Ironically, given his autocratic tendencies, Head One, when asked to describe an excellent Headteacher, characterised the decision-making regime that pinpoints Quadrant C activity.

“I worked for another Head who I admired immensely and who I thought was one of the best ... politicians or manipulators, but I don't mean either of those words pejoratively, ... user of people that I have ever met. He was rather like the queen bee at the back of the hive laying the eggs .... just keeping other people working. I remember seeing an advert in a school magazine about what makes a good head teacher .... underneath the picture it just said - appoint the right people and keep your door open.”

Quadrant C has been conceptualised as communal because decision-making here is by the 'workers' as they carry out their tasks. The input from the 'queen bee' is minimal as decisions here are teacher driven by the 'right people'.

Quadrant B, by contrast, could apply to total inertia, the locus of Head One's 'tidal pool' but in terms of decision-making it has a more appropriate description. This is where no-one has control over a decision as the outcome has already been established by an agreed policy or routine. This section of

The Quadrant is, therefore, (established) routine driven. This sector of The Quadrant can be seen to operate with the greatest degree of consistency with Head Two.

### **Case Study - Head Two**

In examining the management and decision-making performance of Head Two the focus will be on elaborating the model and defining and refining specific Quadrants.

### **Background**

Headteacher Two was extremely experienced female Head in an urban comprehensive. She had previously taken part in a research project concerning women Headteachers and was, therefore, quite used to being investigated.

“I have been one of the Heads researched at the University of Bristol ... she (the researcher) interviewed me over a period of two years and watched my practice ... looking at the styles of women Heads. They are characterised in their decision-making by being much more likely to go for a collegiate team approach. ... I would much sooner that decisions were made that people are party to and had ownership of because one of the things that is very important ... is that if people have been party to a decision they are more likely stand by it ... and I think that would be knowledge that is common to men and women.”



Similar to Head One, therefore, there was the professed allegiance to collegiate (Quadrant D) management and decision-making. In her case this may additionally be because she had been researched before and appreciated which decision-making style was high on the official agenda as outlined earlier.

Head Two's motivations, styles and practices were very clear. She admitted that her insecurity was a determining factor in her management approaches so much so that she chose very carefully the forum in which they (her decisions) were discussed.

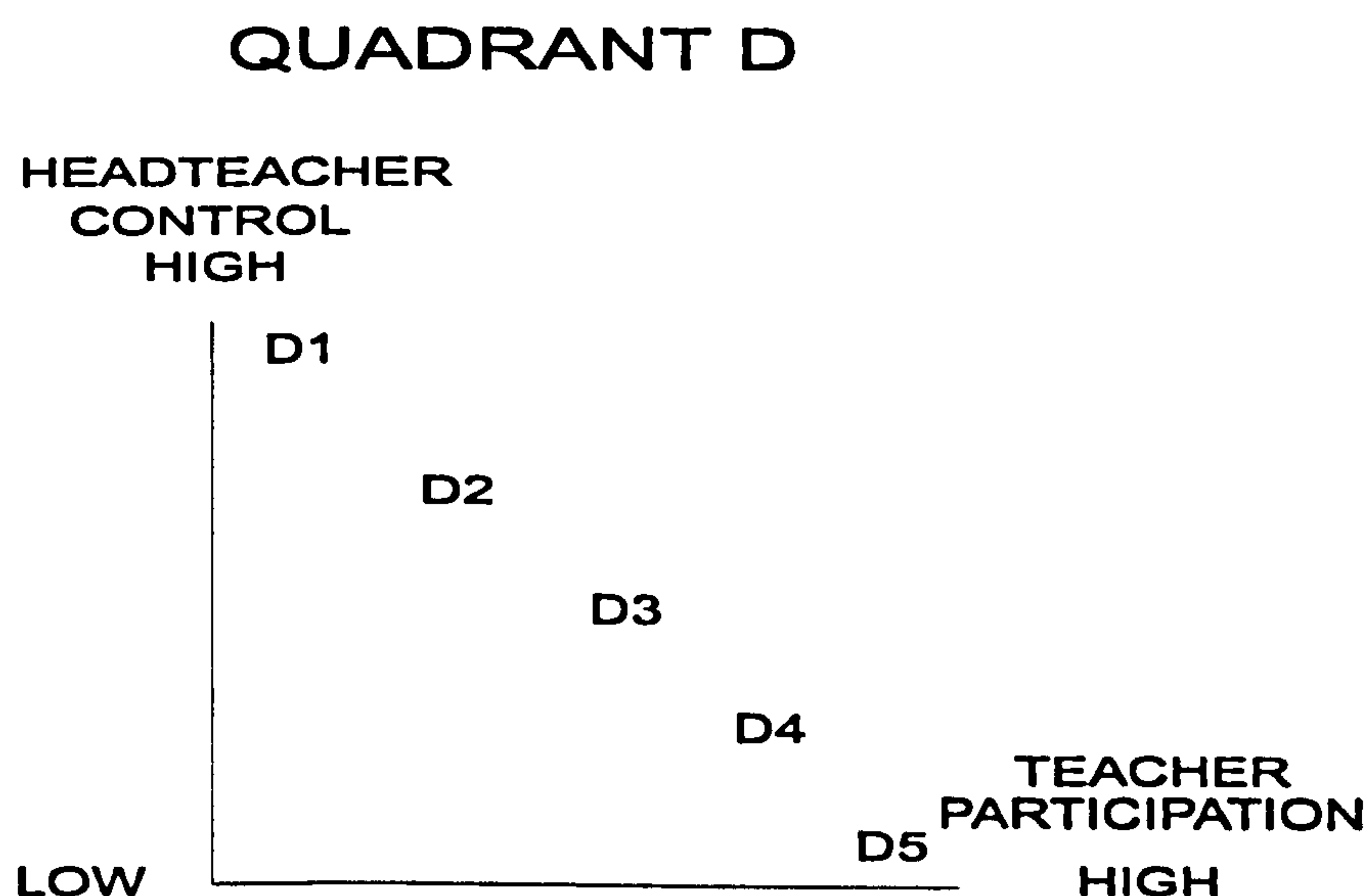
It can be seen, therefore that the outward protestation of collegiality was tempered by insecurity to become deliberately limited Quadrant D decision-making. By limiting discussion she has extended Head One's power of veto to become a calculated micropolitical strategy for eliminating opposition.

Her first stratagem was deliberately to limit the freedom of decision-making that her senior staff enjoyed. She dictated the parameters within which they worked. Thereafter she met with each member of her senior management team individually so that she could be sure that they had 'toed the line'.

To eliminate uncertainties here she was asked if she let her team make decisions. The answer was a quite definite 'no'.

The reason for this was that she exerted quite a lot of control by giving them their 'framework' within which they had to operate. She also pointed out that she made certain that they are absolutely sure what they had both agreed so they did not go out and do something so that she had to reverse the decision.

With her SMT therefore, her decision-making appeared outwardly Quadrant D but was quite unashamedly Quadrant A in nature, following some quite definite and deliberate micropolitical strategies to marginalise any opposition. Whereas Head One was prepared to veto and deny participation, Head Two's style could be more accurately described if Quadrant D was amplified.



**Figure 4.1 Quadrant D Activity**

As Figure 4.1 shows there are degrees of participation within The Quadrant. The natural dialogue between Head and teacher at various times would range along the continuum D1 - D5 as each took a turn in decision-making. Indeed truly participative decision-making would involve turn-taking where

each side would cede ground to the other, bowing to superior ideas and courses of action.

The model has not been drawn, however, to exemplify this state of affairs, but rather to indicate the struggles for dominance that occur within a supposedly equal and participative management and decision-making relationship.

The points on the continuum can be used to identify accurately the level of control each participant has, D3 indicating the mid-point where decision power is equal.

Head Two had adopted a decision-making style which was designed to give the appearance of D3 decision-making. In reality, however, the amount of teacher participation was strictly rationed and controlled.

Her decisions were often characterised by being opened up i.e. staff were asked for their ideas but they were always clear about what the limits were before they were “closed down”. Her dread was that decision-making would veer away from her control into D4 or even D5. She would, therefore, declare suitable intentions that decision-making would be pulled back to D2, or preferably D1.



Her Heads of Faculty, for example, had complete autonomy to make their own decisions (D4-5) but only within a 'framework of things' (D1-2).

In keeping with the dichotomy thus outlined her staff were allowed 'representation', as every member of staff was on the management group. They were, however, given their brief to make certain decisions but other things concerning the real grist of school operations: resources, deployment of staff and resources had to be simply recommendations. (D5 back to D1)

Staff were occasionally allowed Quadrant C autonomy but only over minor issues, such as the continental day timing of INSET day. Far more characteristic, however, was for her to receive information about a school issue and pass it down to the person whose responsibility it was to oversee this area of the school. Attitudes would be passed back and a decision would be reached by the Headteacher, supposedly in Quadrant D, but actually in Quadrant A.

Somewhat revealingly, she recalled that the management metaphor she had remembered that ones' subordinates could often be seen as a crate of bad apples. Her management training had taught her that not every one is bad so that you had enough "to make an apple pie". She therefore declared a philosophy which indicated an openness to staff opinion but more significantly an inherent lack of trust in her staff, the 'bad apples', and her desire to pull the decision back to D1 or 2.

Quite clearly, therefore, this Head was highly sensitive to her decisions not being carried out and demonstrated an acute awareness of where these difficulties could lie and how to overcome them.

### **Head Two and Quadrant B**

As a method minimising opposition in addition to those outlined above, Head Two preferred to place her 'decisions' in Quadrant B, the policy and procedure driven sector. This 'non participatory' section of The Quadrant is ideal for Head Two's purposes as it does not require any activity on her part at all. Once policies and procedures are established, by whatever means, normally a variation of Quadrant D, as above, then staff simply have to obey the established edict. Conflict is eradicated, staff simply have to 'toe the line'.

Staff development was one such Quadrant B area. There was a clear policy, an extension of her clearly defined 'frameworks', for the approval of a particular request for a teacher to attend a course. In the context of The Quadrant she does not participate in the decision at all. The decision is almost automatic as it is set against a set of criteria where there is no argument. Where there is no argument there is no dissent and where there is no dissent there is complete authority. She calls this a management decision when in fact it is simply a comply/ not comply response.

"Where I am making a decision on a regular basis like who goes on a course, then those are against criteria ... and the staff are supposed to know about them, they forget what they are and therefore they cannot

apply the criteria and still ask for things that are not acceptable any way.”

There is no doubt about where the ultimate decision lay if the staff were in any doubt!

At other times she preferred the ‘queen bee’ approach of Quadrant C where, “the art of being a Head is to know ... there are times when you plant your seeds and you sit back and you just go and water (them) occasionally”

In Head Two the rational and micropolitical elements of Headship combine to explain her high control approach. She considered herself ‘not a great thinker’ and she did not place herself in positions where her intellect was put to the test.

This led her to research any topic that was to be discussed extremely thoroughly by doing her “homework”.

“But to go back to a point you asked me some time ago is this (asking for limited discussion from staff) because of my insecurity and I take that in the nicest possible way. In the nicest possible way, the answer is yes. I mean it is difficult to be making public decisions day in and day out to feel that you have not done your homework.”



Similarly she avoided the gladiatorial arena of decision-making, the full staff meeting.

“One of the things I do most religiously is my homework and it goes back to the question you asked me again before that, why don't we have these massive staff meetings is because ... I have been given impossible questions for which I have not had time to research properly or dare to say it, even have not got a view.”

Her Quadrant D strategies, therefore, were a prestige limitation exercise. We have seen, therefore, moves to protect her image, her sensitivity to criticism which has generated a self protective decision-making style. The rationality of her 'homework' provided a protective shield against interpersonal attack and the machinations of staff who wanted to sabotage her plans. Her espoused theory was, as a scientist, that she was “very much evidence based with a .. great suspicion of opinion.. I feel more confident about making decisions on good sound information”.

She did, however, rely on her staff to initiate her thinking as “there are times when I desperately do need people to give me the clues”. Head Two here has raised a management strategy with staff which will be exemplified in the final stage of the research where teachers have a real input into the development of the school. Head Two, however, does not see this as devolution or participation but simply a strategy for staff to support her role as the supreme

manager and decision maker. Staff provide the clues; she provides the answers.

This case study has further explored the usefulness of The Quadrant Model in analysing the management and decision-making characteristics of a Headteacher. The findings discovered through a mapping of Head One's activities have been extended into a refinement of quadrant D activity and additional perspectives on the operations of the other segments of the model, particularly quadrant B.

### **Case Study- Head Three**

Hall's (1988) 'teacher educator' characterises this Head most appropriately. On the day of the interview he had to excuse himself because there was a party of primary school children at his school and he wanted to involve himself in their activities. He also made a point of wandering round the school and observing lessons that he called 'walking the corridors'.

Head Three was an inexperienced Head, in post only for two terms at the time of the research interview, and as such some of his management decisions were characteristic of a professional who needed to establish his reputation amongst the staff, placing his style firmly in Quadrant A.

On his appointment he made some immediate strategic decisions, such as those concerning grouping the children by ability, mainly because they had been 'done at my previous school'. As he commented he didn't have a great

deal of background thinking to do. As such, therefore, these stochastic decisions had become 'stuck' from his previous experience, and were permanently lodged in his personal agenda. He simply replicated them without further analysis of the new situation or his new school.

Other decisions could not be so securely located but indicated a similar lack of background data or adequate processing. Soon after his arrival he made a rapid decision about primary liaison to raise the profile of the school.

"I just took it on my own back and did it. I told staff what I was going to do and did it, involved some staff in the preparation of the links with primary school but it was all up and running within half a term, because it had to be in order to catch the children to opt for September. It has proved very successful ..."

It can be seen, therefore, that status considerations had determined his position in The Quadrant. When it came to implementing his decisions he would adopt a high control (Quadrant A) approach, with no staff input at all. He had a reputation to establish and an image to project in a school that needed to be told that someone strong and decisive was at the helm.



## **Collegiality and Participation**

In common with the other Headteachers this newly-appointed Head declared his allegiance to the collegiate approach:

“To me the worst process of decision-making ... is the autocratic approach because that takes away the ownership in the decision by the people who you actually want to get on your side”.

His description of the process of writing a vision for the school is an admirable example of participation and consultation whereby the modus operandi of the school is placed in the open arena of public debate for consideration by the staff. He describes how the staff progressively formulate and negotiate amongst themselves the objectives for the school, by looking at critical areas of the school's functioning.

His description highlights the staff filling in the detail but he had written the original version before he even started at the school. It would be excessively hypocritical to condemn this overtly collegial exercise in team building and focusing the perceptions of teaching colleagues as a cynical exercise by Head Three in pushing forward pre-determined ideas. His account shows an elaborate attempt to gather together and synthesise the views of his colleagues so that they can have a genuine consensual way forward. The vision building exercise is a worthy example of Quadrant D activity, given the caveat above. Indeed even though Head Three had initial ideas he was prepared to accept elaboration and amendment from his colleagues.

One has to ask, however, whether this was an event staged for particular micro-political purposes. The school before his appointment was generally considered to be 'going downhill'. The school's examination league table position was markedly inferior to that of neighbouring and competing schools. A major re-focusing exercise was needed in this climate and it was obvious that Head Three had sufficient micro-political awareness to use the mission-creating exercise as a stratagem for both motivating his staff, publicising his philosophy and establishing his reputation. Whether or not this was a deliberate ploy or a salient and permanent characteristic of Head Three's management and decision-making style can only be determined by other data from the interview.

One particularly revealing section of the interview probed this Head's professed allegiance to collegiality, indicating that it was mere contrived collegiality (Hoyle, 1982) rather than actual participation by staff.

Head Three had instituted a staff consultative committee for the declared purpose of involving staff in decision-making. The name itself, however, reveals its true purpose as a method of consulting and informing rather than involving staff in a participative way. This strategy has, therefore, the appearance of being a Quadrant D approach, politically and publicly, but privately and actually a Quadrant A strategy.

As Head Three noted, once the decision had been broached:

“I would be interested in anyone who would want to argue against the strategy and they could see me individually and to do so. Unless I heard from them I felt this was the way forward for the school.”

He is counting on inertia, like Head One, to carry him through. As the declared approach is collegial he deflects any criticism of non consultation or autocracy. In reality he will either get no opposition because of inertia or will be able to minimise pockets of resistance because they can be dealt with in privacy and secrecy. This was in fact the case:

“Two people did come to see me and put forward a case; I countered it with my arguments.”

This contrived collegiality is also shown in his tactic of consulting initially in true Quadrant D fashion but taking the decision away from the ‘participants’ by ratifying it privately with a small and selected coterie of trusted allies. The ‘consultation’ on the shape of the school day exemplified such a manoeuvre:

“When I first came I was interested in the structure of the school day and I set up a working party of volunteers and suggested that every faculty should have representation if they want to get a reasonable shape. That was at half term of the summer term and they ought to report to me by the end of the half term, the autumn term. By the beginning of November I had their report...”



Collegiality is in evidence but the ultimate decision will be taken elsewhere, by senior managers in private conference.

It can be seen, therefore, that in this Head's specific circumstances there needs to be a deliberate attempt to provide the appearance of collegiality for propaganda purposes amongst the staff but it is tempered by contrivance to wrest the decision away from the participants. His position as a newly appointed Head provides him with a 'honeymoon period', a degree of latitude, viewed from the staff perspective, to take decisions unilaterally. This would be accepted as his (temporary) prerogative in a new post. The Head, however, has to prepare for the future antagonisms of the micro-political climate of the school and so he quickly learns the art of boardroom diplomacy, of getting the governors on your side when, in governing body meetings, he is likely to encounter staff governor opposition.

He outlines, for example, the stratagem in outwitting the teacher governor who will object to his revised staffing structure:

"I would try to circumvent it (opposition to his decision) ... So certainly I would have briefed the Chair ... and told her what the problem was going to be and why and we talked about how we were going to cope with that problem and indeed it came up (teacher governor opposition) even stronger than I thought it was going to come up ... a number of Governors rallied to my side very quickly ... a number of them just wanted to defend me regardless of the outcome. The outcome was that she (the teacher governor) didn't get what she wanted in the end

and she would have benefited from keeping quiet if she would have known.”

This is a political variation on the theme, a particular variant of Quadrant A where the cards have been stacked against any opposition. It is apparent, therefore, that this fledgling Head is learning the art of political strategy. The Quadrant sections of the management and decision-making model allow us to characterise his approach.

## **Summary**

This phase of the research was designed to address research hypothesis 1:

That there are distinct management and decision-making styles that can be deduced from the practice of serving Headteachers.

From the interview evidence presented by the sample of Headteachers distinct decision-making styles have been deduced which map against the sectors of The Quadrant model. Headteachers appear to move in and out of these quadrants to suit particular purposes such as image management, micropolitical manoeuvres and strategic decision-making stances.

These can be summarised as follows:

<b>Quadrant</b>	<b>Management and Decision-Making Style</b>	<b>Characteristics</b>
A	Autocratic	Headteacher driven
B	Non Participatory	Procedure and policy driven
C	Communal	Teacher driven
D	Participatory	Collegiality driven

**Figure 4.2 Summary of Quadrant Characteristics**

It can be seen, therefore, that The Quadrant Model, and the interview evidence that has been mapped against it, has been useful in substantiating this research hypothesis that there are distinct management and decision-making styles that can be deduced from the practices of serving Headteachers. What is more important, however, is that extra light has been cast on these overall approaches highlighting, through a consideration of organisational and interpersonal issues, why Headteachers devise specific Quadrant strategies and act in deliberate ways to steer their decisions through the micropolitical scenarios in schools.

It is noteworthy that true communal working is rare. There is little reference in the interviews to the opinions of staff being canvassed in a systematic way. Similarly working parties only gain scant mention.



Of significance, also, in this respect is the fact that Headteachers espouse one way of working, namely openly supporting collegial, consultative and participatory forms of management but frequently adopting the opposite strategies in order to get their own way. They declare openness but take decisions in camera, they invite comment but marginalise it and set up representative fora which have little actual power to shape the running of the school. The picture is, therefore, one of disenfranchisement and not the declared participatory ways of working.

There is, therefore, a gap between the rhetoric and the reality of Headteachers' management and decision-making. Such rhetoric is clearly in line with the predominant beliefs about Headship as outlined in Chapter Two concerning the efficacy of setting visions for others, recruiting their energies and securing their involvement in school improvement. The reality of management, however, as revealed in these case studies, is some considerable distance from this ideal. It indicates sole decision-making or working only with a tiny number of trusted individuals.

This first phase of the research has highlighted key issues but the small and opportunistic sampling means that the generalisability of the findings is evident but limited. What is needed, therefore, is a more focused research phase with a larger sample of Headteachers and a tighter analytical framework. The aim in the ensuing phase of the work is to take forward the findings of this phase of the research and to address the related research hypotheses.

## **Phase Two - Management Practices**

This phase of the research used the responses from thirty four Headteachers from Comprehensive and Selective Schools, displaying a range of experience. The sample was more or less equally divided between Male and Female Headteachers with the latter being less experienced in that greater numbers of them has less than ten years experience as a Headteacher. The research technique required Headteachers to react to different management and decision-making scenarios by providing them with examples of management and decision-making activity characterised by and mapped to areas of The Quadrant.

They were subsequently, after a considerable time delay, asked to declare their overall management and decision-making styles and approaches. The sequence was deliberately reversed so that the actuality of management and decision practice could be analysed separately before Headteachers had the opportunity to declare their preferred approaches. By so doing it was hoped to address research hypotheses 2 to 5 that Headteachers can readily identify the management styles identified through the phase one research (hypothesis 2), that there will be high levels of consistency in the operation of such styles (hypothesis 3). In posing management and decision-making scenarios the intention was to address hypothesis 4 that all Headteachers will react in a similar way to given educational tasks and issues and that (hypothesis 5) that they could validate their stance. In presenting the results

the findings of the second questionnaire (Appendix D) will be analysed first as it allows Headteachers to outline their declared and supported positions. Subsequently the results of the initial questionnaire in this phase (Appendix C) will be presented to compare their declared approaches with their reactions to school based situations.

Headteachers were asked to nominate their preferred style. They responded as follows:

<b>Style</b>	<b>% of Headteachers (n= 34)</b>
Authoritarian	0.0
Bureaucratic	0.0
Communal	58.8
Democratic	41.2

**Figure 4.3 Management Styles**

### **Headteachers' Management Styles**

Headteachers in this phase of the research could clearly identify management styles (hypothesis 2) and replicated the attitudes of the phase one Headteachers in that they clearly value management styles which are characterised by democracy, collaboration and collegiality. This approach is transparently consultative and people centred. Their overall impression of themselves is as an enabling and consultative leader. This headline result, however, was refined by a more detailed analysis where, when given specific management areas to consider they nominated different approaches, whilst still paying testament to the values of Quadrant C and D approaches.



Headteachers were asked to indicate the description that most closely described their approach to key areas of management activity. The results of this exercise are as follows:

<b>Management Area n= 34</b>	<b>Authoritarian %</b>	<b>Bureaucratic %</b>	<b>Communal %</b>	<b>Democratic %</b>
People Management	6	0	76	18
Delegation	0	0	65	35
Decisions	6	6	82	6
SMT meetings	0	7	29	64
Whole Staff Meetings	6	5	42	47
Conflict Resolution	0	0	58	42
Head's Character	0	0	35	65
School Vision	6	0	70	24
Policy	12	6	53	29

**Figure 4.4 Analysis of Management Approaches**

There are high levels of consistency (hypothesis 3) in the reactions of Headteachers to areas of management functioning and the table indicates (hypothesis 4) that they react in similar ways to areas of management activity. The notion of empowerment is high on Headteachers' agenda which is indicated by their preference for an enabling style in dealing with their staff. The term 'collaborative' (democratic) does not find so much favour with them as this implies a weakening of management control. The concept of 'enabling' teachers to perform their roles is high on their agenda. The

preference for authoritarian people management came exclusively from independent single sex schools. (Although they are also represented in the communal sections).

The preference for involving people is supported by the preference for delegation. Here the 'communal' column provides the strongest reaction in that it is seen as 'essential.' This is seen as far superior to the more tentative 'desirable.' Handing over power to others is obviously a key area as the unnecessary and risky options receive no favour at all.

In similar vein decisions, they declare, are made with the full co-operation of staff and bureaucratic and democratic fora (which connotes a lack of direction from the leader) are not as strongly favoured. Their preference argues a strong sense of staff involvement and an aversion to autocratic or procedural decision-making. The preference for an authoritarian approach in 6% of the sample again lies with the selective sector whereas the preferences for bureaucratic and democratic styles (both 6%) lay with comprehensives.

The spirit of communality changes, however, when it comes to Senior Management Team (SMT) meetings. There is a significant reflection that ideas for the direction of the school come from below and that the purpose of SMT meetings is to debate ideas generated by teachers. The strongest reaction, however, is that 'corporate' decisions are achieved through these gatherings. The difference between communal and democratic/ corporate

would appear to be that SMT meetings have a specific function in formally ratifying school policy. This runs alongside and, potentially, contradicts the communal and democratic principles that have been outlined so far.

There is, therefore, an area for further investigation, which will be addressed in phase three of the study, where Headteachers clearly profess democratic and empowering principles but retain, as with Head One in the pilot study, the right of veto and reject corporate decisions in preference to those taken in camera.

In somewhat contradictory vein staff meetings appear to be integral to the decision-making process but they are suspected by a small number in the sample (all comprehensives) which suggests that local micropolitical elements are in operation. The evidence that this is so is that these schools share two common elements: they are inner city schools and there is more than one disciplinary/ supervisory procedure for staff in operation at the time of completing the questionnaire. As such, therefore, local circumstances operate against the prevailing opinion which constitutes inclusion and consultation.

Headteachers do not see themselves as the final arbiters in cases of school discipline and pupil conflict and, unlike their positions with decision-making at SMT level, are quite prepared to let decisions be taken lower down the line. In line with this thinking they are accessible to their staff but are less willing to be 'freely' available. Those who do keep their study doors open might



reasonably be expected, according to popular belief and to Hall (1996), to be people centred and female. In fact this segment of the sample divides itself almost equally between male and female comprehensive Headteachers.

Where real staff empowerment breaks out is in the final section on the School's vision and policy. Here there is a strong preference for staff involvement, with the heaviest preferences lying in total emancipation with the ideas of all staff creating the school's vision and policy-making being a partnership with thinking professionals, joined in collaborative fashion by the Headteacher. Authoritative policy-making still remains the preserve of the selective school Head.

The picture that Headteachers have of themselves, therefore, is of open and approachable people who enable their staff to set the direction of the school. Teachers are freely, frequently and openly consulted and take a real role in the running of the school.

### **Supportive Details for Management Styles**

Headteachers were asked to validate their declared style by giving examples from their daily practice which would illustrate their approach. Headteachers were given no guidance as to the quality or nature of the decision but simply to provide support. A coding frame was used to analyse the responses with answers classified as follows:

<b>Response</b>	<b>%</b>
No response	16
Validating Example Provided	84
Example Provided which did not support nominated style	0

**Figure 4.5 Coding Frame Management Styles**

A group within the cohort clearly had problems recalling their decisions as 16% of the sample left this section completely blank. It is clear, however, that the vast majority of Headteachers are able to select from their recent experience examples that validate their position.

In order to probe the communal/ democratic – people centred dimension their responses to this section were analysed further to break the responses into the kind of participation staff had in decision-making. The coding frame used for this was as follows:

<b>Response</b>	<b>%</b>
No response	16
Formal Staff Involvement	<b>58</b>
Informal Staff Involvement	11
Both Formal and Informal Staff Involvement	16

**Figure 4.6 Coding Frame Communal Democratic Dimensions**

As before, 16% of the sample made no response but it is clear that over half the Headteachers mentioned formal consultative and participative fora such as working groups, whole staff meetings and meetings of post holders in the school such as those involving subject leaders. 58% of respondents only mentioned these formal consultative methods whereas 11% of Headteachers only specified informal connection with staff which included ad hoc consultation with individuals. The approach which was common amongst this section of the sample was a declared credo that their door 'was always open'. It is significant that even though this section of the sample declared this intent they did not cite any definite examples of formal consultation but simply the occurrence of consultation when it was required. 16% of the sample, however, adopted both formal and informal methods of involvement.

Taking these results as a whole it can be seen that Headteachers believe that they involve their staff. A small minority of Headteachers (11%) would appear to minimise this involvement to 'one off' or 'when required' and informal contact but the vast majority (74%) use either formal or formal and informal staff involvement strategies. Trawling these responses even further they were coded to determine the role that staff possessed in decision-making. 69% of the responses made reference to staff being consulted before a decision was taken with 11% of Headteachers volunteering the fact that staff were active in decision-making in the school. It should be borne in mind that these were volunteered responses and the Headteachers were not specifically canvassed on this issue. It is significant, however, that well over



two thirds of them felt that staff involvement was of sufficient importance that they included this feature in their response.

### **Influences on Management and Decision-Making Style**

The Headteacher sample was asked about the people who had influenced their nominated style. 89% of the sample stated that they were influenced in some way by Headteachers they had worked with, the greatest influence being these Headteachers acting as positive and practical role models and examples of how to do the job. A small but significant number of these Headteachers, however (16%) made the point that such Headteachers were negative role models in the sense that they demonstrated unacceptable management characteristics.

Cumulatively the influences of Headteachers' approaches were as follows:

<b>Influences on Management Approach</b>	<b>% (n=34)</b>
Headteachers – positive role models	73
Headteachers – negative role models	16
Other Colleagues	63
High Status Educator	47
Family	11

**Figure 4.7 Influences on Management Approaches**

Other colleagues featured prominently as professional exemplars in influencing Headteachers' management approaches, as did High Status Educators. Into this category came Her Majesty's Inspectors of Schools (HMIs), OFSTED Inspectors, Academics and Teacher Educators. For a small

number of the sample Headship was clearly a 'family business' and parents and relatives who had been Headteachers were nominated as people who had been influential in influencing their style.

## **Management Training**

In further support of their management style Headteachers were asked if they had received specific training for their particular management approach. Formal further professional qualifications offered by Higher Education Institutes were the most frequently cited examples of continuing professional development. Headteachers cited Certificate, Diploma and Masters Degree courses. Next in popularity were short management courses, frequently offered by the Local Education Authority. A number of Headteachers had been attached to colleagues who had acted as mentors and this, they claimed had shaped their management styles.

The NCSL oversees specific training for Headteachers through NPQH, LPSH, Headteachers' Induction Programme and other training courses. Ultimately all aspiring Headteachers will have to demonstrate their capabilities and gain the NPQH. At the time of writing, however, only a minority of the sample had received specific Headteacher Training with an even smaller percentage having received management input from work placements in industry and commerce. Management input from professional Headteacher associations accounted for the same number in the sample.

<b>Form of Training/ Focused Development</b>	<b>% (n=34)</b>
Academic Qualifications/ Higher Degrees	47
Short Courses	32
Mentoring	32
Specific Headship Training NPQH, LPSH, Headteachers' Induction Programme	26
Industrial / Business Placements	5
Conferences / Professional Association Seminars	5
Unable to nominate Training/ Development	0

(Headteachers were able to select more than one option)

#### **Figure 4.8 Declared Management Influences**

Headteachers, therefore, found it quite easy to identify the professional development opportunities that had shaped their thinking. As Headteachers would be reluctant to admit that they had received no professional development in their careers the list above is meaningless unless a connection could be made between the development or training activity instanced above and the Headteacher's declared management style.



Headteachers were asked specifically, therefore, to outline “how this has shaped the approach you have adopted.” Their responses were assessed to find definite connections with the styles they had nominated.

Training and Management Style	% (n=34)
No Reference to Nominated Style	21
Specific Reference to Nominated Style	79

**Figure 4.9 Link from Training to Management Style**

The majority of Headteachers could make the connection between training input and management style, although 21% had difficulty. In the case of the latter group Headteachers left the section blank or made inconclusive remarks about incorporating what they had learnt into their philosophy and daily practice.

To extend the findings from the previous question Headteachers were asked about Educational Literature that they had read which supported their position. Only 21% of Headteachers declared that they were “too busy” for such reading or did not supply a response to this question. The rest (79%) were able to supply a list which covered either academic or management titles, including those by such authors as Handy, Belbin and Barber. The remainder (21%) quoted self help or practical guides such as those produced by Headteacher professional associations. Thus we have the re-appearance of the handbook approach noted previously (Lyons, 1976).

<b>Literature Nominated</b>	<b>% (n=34)</b>
None	21
Academic Titles	26
Management Literature	32
Self Help/ Practical Guides/ Handbooks	21

**Figure 4.10 Nominated Reading and Research**

To check whether Headteachers could validate their position by even further reading they were asked about any recent reading they had undertaken from journals and articles which had been influential in confirming their management philosophy.

This response was less robust with only 38% being able to nominate recent reading which had confirmed their views. This broke down almost equally into a small amount of management related reading, self help practical guides produced by Headteacher professional associations and official government reports, guidance and consultations produced by the Department for Education and Employment (now the DfES) and School Inspection Reports from the Office for Standards in Education.

These figures are rather ambiguous as they could be interpreted that Headteachers needed no further reinforcement for their management approaches or, as is more likely, that they do not have the time or the disposition to read articles and journals. The figures have been assembled to

show cumulative figures for 'readers' and 'non readers' with the latter being in the majority.

<b>Recent Reading</b>	<b>% (n=34)</b>	<b>% (n=34)</b>
None	63	63
Management Texts	11	38
Self Help/ Practical Guides	16	
Official Publications (DfEE, OFSTED)	11	

**Figure 4.11 Headteachers' Recent Reading**

### **Headteachers' Philosophy**

The final section of the questionnaire asked the Headteachers to summarise their key principles and to outline their approach to Headship. They were thus being asked to summarise the thoughts and evidence they had previously supplied.

The coding frame that was used was "hypothesis guided" (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996) to correlate with the original nomination of management style. The Headteachers had opted in substantial numbers for the democratic and consultative styles. Involving people is common to both of these styles. The differences are that the democratic style allows equal influence to Headteacher and staff and so formal democratic principles such as planned or scheduled consultation would be indicators of this approach. The Communal approach, on the other hand, allows for the active involvement of



staff and permits them a significant amount of say in determining policy and direction for the school. Characteristic of this approach would be, for example, a stated desire to involve all staff in formulating decisions. Comments indicative of this latter approach would be:

“I see myself as an enabler, a planter of ideas”

“I believe in my staff and in their professional judgement.”

In the first example the idea may originate from the Headteacher but evolves and develops through the endeavours of the staff.

Headteachers echoed the TTA's National Standards for Headteachers in that they clearly saw it as their role to set the vision for the school (TTA, 1998) and securing the potential of all children was mentioned by 26% of the sample. Of greater significance, however, were remarks that related to management in general and to The Quadrant styles that they had selected originally.

<b>Philosophy</b>	<b>% (n=34)</b>
Involving staff	84
Consulting Staff/ Democratic Principles	68
Retaining Ultimate responsibility	26

**Figure 4.12 Headteachers' Declared Philosophy**

Responses indicated that Quadrant C and D styles had dominated their philosophies. There was a definite declaration of intent to involve their staff either through democratic processes and formal consultation or through devolving and sharing power, enabling their teachers. There was only one reservation held by the Headteachers and this was a statement of the Headteacher's ultimate accountability, that they reserved the right to "overrule" staff if necessary or to decide personally what is right for the pupils in the catchment area. A Headteacher crystallised opinion here by stating that they were the "public face in front of the clients".

A recognition that democratic and communal principles may have to be ignored at short notice was reflected by one Head in this category, "Often decisions have to be made quickly and I am sure the staff understand".

### **Conclusions - Management Questionnaire**

Despite obfuscatory attempts by Headteachers at validation and exemplification the tension remains between Quadrant C and D intentions and Quadrant A reality.

What this section of the research has demonstrated is that research hypothesis 2 has been proven: that Headteachers can readily identify a high premium management style. This is characterised by their declared involvement of staff in management and decision-making. They can identify and relate to this style and support this assertion by selective examples from their daily practice as well as quoting personal influences, reading and

research to validate their claims (hypothesis 5). They cite training and development experiences that have cemented their approach and have outlined their educational philosophy where this management style figures prominently.

### **Decision Recall – Last Five Decisions Questionnaire**

Against these stated principles and philosophies in the second questionnaire one has to set the realities. The initial questionnaire was sent out without any mention of management styles or decision-making characteristics. The intention was to gather key data on the Headteachers and their schools without any preconceptions about preferred styles or approaches and then to compare these results about the actuality of their practice with the declared philosophy that has just been outlined from the second questionnaire.

The first questionnaire (Appendix C) started by asking for basic school details. The objective behind this section was to verify that the sample was balanced in terms of gender, type and size of school, location of school in terms of socio-economic area and experience of Headship. Headteachers were also provided with an opportunity to “characterise their school in a few sentences”. The objective behind this question was to reveal their agendas. Not surprisingly their comments clustered around remarks made about the success of their schools in terms of academic achievement, the atmosphere, which was inevitably ‘friendly’ or the nature of their pupil intake. The Headteachers of urban schools made reference to social disadvantage or



their inner city setting. As will be discovered later, by more systematic analysis, these comments correlate closely with the main activities in which Headteachers were involved.

The second section asked for an account of their last five decisions. This was an attempt to assess the nature of the management activity in which Headteachers were involved. They were also asked to describe their decisions and to indicate how the issue arose, where it was discussed and who took the eventual decision. This was an attempt to discover the levels of participation and collaboration involved in their everyday activity. Great care was taken not to predispose any responses and so the options offered were those that would operate in a school context and would be immediately identifiable by Headteachers. These options are commonplace in schools and were verified as real options from the interviews with the phase one Headteachers. Each option was designed to relate to a particular style (Figure 4.13) and some options were deliberately similar or overlapped to disguise any perceived preference on the researcher's part. As 'autocracy' has been demonstrated in phase one of the research not to be favoured by Headteachers the wording of these sections were undertaken with great care. So the term "personal concern" for example was used to connote an involvement in the issue but not to the extent of egocentricity/ dictatorship. Other 'autocratic' sections were worded factually to minimise any detection of a value judgement on behalf of the researcher. The options and their associated styles were as follows:

<b>How the Issue arose</b>	<b>Decision Type</b>
The issue was a personal concern	A – Autocratic
Referred to me by member of staff	C – Consensual/ Communal
Referred to me by Deputy	B – Bureaucratic
Referred to me by a group of staff	D – Democratic
As the result of a working party	C or D Consensual/ Communal or Democratic

**Figure 4.13 Issues and Quadrant Styles**

Headteachers were then asked for details of where this issue was discussed.

The fora were coded according to the styles identified through The Quadrant.

<b>Discussion Forum</b>	<b>Decision Type</b>
SMT Meeting	B – Bureaucratic
Head of Department Meeting	D – Democratic
No Discussion	A – Autocratic
Interested Group of Staff	C or D Consensual/ Communal or Democratic
Delegated	D – Democratic

**Figure 4.14 Management Fora**

Finally they were asked about the locus of decision-making at the end of the process.

<b>Ultimate Decision</b>	<b>Decision Type</b>
I took the decision entirely on my own	A – Autocratic
I listened to opinions then decided	D – Democratic
Taken by SMT collectively	B – Bureaucratic
Taken by group of staff and myself	C – Consensual/ Communal
Delegated to another	D – Democratic

**Figure 4.15 Decision-Making Locus**

#### **Findings – Recall of Decision Made**

The 'last five' decisions provided some interesting data. The question was deliberately unstructured to gain a snapshot, without any pre-conceptions, of the activity of Headteachers.

All bar two of the sample were able to provide five examples. One Head in the 'deficit' category stated that he had problems recalling his last five decisions and anyway "Heads have no business involving themselves in trivial decisions"! Undoubtedly decisions should have been spelt with a capital D to attract this Headteacher's attention! The other Head simply did not complete the full form. The rest of the sample, however, provided a full selection of decisions which were grouped under the following categories.



<b>Decision Area</b>	<b>%</b>
	n=34
<b>Staff</b>	<b>31.6</b>
<b>Pupils</b>	<b>15.2</b>
<b>Finance</b>	<b>12.0</b>
<b>Pupil Performance</b>	<b>12.0</b>
<b>Curriculum</b>	<b>8.2</b>
<b>Premises</b>	<b>6.3</b>
<b>Strategy</b>	<b>5.7</b>
<b>Publicity/ Marketing</b>	<b>4.4</b>
<b>Routine Administration</b>	<b>4.4</b>

**Figure 4.16 Decision Areas**

It would appear that there is a correlation between the Headteachers' declared intention of being people centred and their actual activity which places staff and pupils at the top of their management agenda.

Little of this activity in the 'staff' section was, however, to do with consultation with the staff as a group or in involving them in decision-making. In fact 12% of staffing matters (3.7% of total decisions) had to do with under-performing staff or teachers who were under disciplinary procedures. Activity in this section involved staff reporting progress to the Headteacher.

Financial matters were next in prominence and it is interesting to see that this area of Headteacher functioning is of equal frequency to matters of school performance. Local financial management (LFM), therefore, is still taking a considerable amount of Headteachers' time and attention but the performance of pupils has become a prominent feature on their agenda at a time when Local Authorities and their schools have to negotiate pupil performance targets. (DfEE, 1997; DfES, 2001)

It is interesting to note that activity concerning the curriculum is fairly modest. Decisions here were largely focused on the introduction of Information and Communications Technology at a time when the government has labelled this as a priority (DfEE, 1998) This is undoubtedly a precursor to the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) training programme which has contributed £230m toward training teachers in the effective use of ICT in teaching and learning. Other agenda items in this section were concerned with reviewing specific and localised curriculum issues.

Premises based decisions which, arguably, occupied a prominent place in Headteachers' minds when LFM was at its height are still being raised as Headteachers modify the physical learning environment. A similar pointer to the changing tide in education is the fact that the publicity thinking of Headteachers which used to be uppermost in their minds in the competitive 80s and early 90s (Webster et al, 1993) is in decline, now ranking with

routine administrative tasks such as organising tutor groups, the timetable and the school's calendar of events.

### **Decision Profiles**

The content of decisions provides interesting insights into the climate of educational decision-making but of greater significance to the focus of this study is how the reality of Headteachers' decisions reflect their stated management preferences.

<b>Decision Type (n=34)</b>	<b>How the Decision Arose %</b>	<b>Discussion Forum %</b>	<b>The Decision %</b>
<b>A</b>	<b>36.9</b>	<b>9.4</b>	<b>15.0</b>
<b>B</b>	<b>8.8</b>	<b>43.8</b>	<b>29.4</b>
<b>C</b>	<b>21.3</b>	<b>25.4</b>	<b>18.1</b>
<b>D</b>	<b>18.8</b>	<b>5.6</b>	<b>24.4</b>
<b>Outside the framework</b>	<b>External 14.2</b>	<b>Individuals 15.8</b>	<b>Governors 13.1</b>

**Figure 4.17 Decisions by Quadrant**

The data that was presented by the Headteachers fell largely into the predetermined categories but a significant number of decisions fell outside the framework.



When analysing how decisions arose a number of these entered the agenda with effectively no activity on the Headteacher's or anybody else's part in the school. Examples in this category (External) were dealing with the results of OFSTED inspections, budgetary crises being uncovered, activity following a member of staff leaving. As such, therefore, these items either arose through externally initiated sources or were the result of routine events in the school. They were different, therefore, in nature to those items which required active scrutiny or reporting on the part of someone in the school. Headteachers' declared collegiality is severely brought into doubt when one considers the figures for discussion fora for the items that arose.

It is significant that 53.2% of all decisions were taken at Senior Management level. In such cases either there was no discussion and the Head decided (9.4% of cases) or decisions were taken at SMT level or only with one Deputy involved (43.8%).

Collegiality appears to be apparent as Headteachers reported that they discussed matters with interested groups of staff in 27.5% of cases. It should be noted, however, that they released the reins of power and permitted others to take control in only 5.6% of cases. As such, therefore, at least nominally, Headteachers were consultative in 33.1% of cases.

Collegiality is, however, called into serious doubt on further analysis of the data which reveals that the issues that generated such 'consultation' were localised events such as curriculum reviews for specific subject departments,

staff appointments for specific subject areas where post holders were consulted. Also included in this section were 'fire-fighting' decisions such as consulting groups on budgetary problems. Issues with significant impact were not discussed in open forum.

Only very occasionally were the items they listed referred to democratic committees such as Heads of Department meetings (4.3% of cases). Headteachers specifically mentioned whole staff meetings as part of the process in only 2.5% of issues.

As in the previous section on how matters arose a new category had to be created for 'discussion'. This was where joint discussions with particular 'individuals' was highlighted. The individuals in question were parents and fellow Headteachers. Governors figured prominently in this category (as well as, naturally, being the forum where the majority of school issues would be considered formally). This category did not cover formal Governors meetings but covered individual discussion between the Head and a Governor, frequently the Chair of Governors. As such, therefore, this category needed to be included in the 'solitary/ exclusive' discussion arena along with SMT discussions and autocratic/ no discussion issues.

Considering the issue of collegiality it can be seen, therefore that 67% of school issues effectively take place in conclave or select groups.

The resting place of the ultimate decision revealed findings in line with the above. Decisions were taken by the Headteacher alone in a total of 44.4% of cases. The B option allowed them a modicum of consultation (“I listened to opinions....”) but the wording of the option made it clear that they made the ultimate decision (... then decided). In similar vein SMT figured prominently in decision-making in 24.4% of cases. Taking these two figures together decisions rested at Head/ SMT level in 68.8% of cases which is in line with the previous finding.

Only in 18.1% of cases were staff allowed any say in decisions. As has been noted previously the specific mention of democratic committees (such as Heads of Department meetings) and whole staff meetings is very low and so it is fair to interpret this response as meaning that isolated individuals or groups are permitted an opinion which may contribute to the final decision. In only two cases were staff allowed an opinion in a ‘strategy’ discussion.

### **Where staff have influence**

A reasonably consistent picture emerges of staff influence, or the lack of it, within the management and decision-making context of the school. They are allowed greatest say in matters of staffing and issues concerning pupils. It should be borne in mind that in the case of ‘staffing’, limited groups were consulted on a ‘need to be consulted’ basis, largely on job descriptions for new appointments/ replacements for leaving staff. This is the similar pattern with consultation over pupils in that consultation is on a ‘needs only’ basis.



As far as the strategic direction of the school is concerned they have very little influence. The area of largest sway concerns premises.

In conclusion, although Headteachers lay great store by consultation and collegiality when they are asked to recount their actual decision-making there is a large discrepancy between their stated position and the actuality as it reveals itself in the management life of the school.

### **School Based Situations**

In the next phase of the survey Headteachers were asked to respond to particular school-based situations. The incidents themselves centred on 'people' issues and derived from the material that was raised by Headteachers in the pilot study (phase one). Each option was mapped against a specific section of The Quadrant. The incidents were designed to elicit:

- Their reactions to staff opposition to a policy that they supported;
- Their actions in supervising the work of the school;
- How they would approach staff performance;
- General management activity in the recent past.

In each case Headteachers were asked how likely they were to respond to specified options using the following scale:

- 1 I would never react this way
- 2 I would react this way, but it would be rare
- 3 I would occasionally react like this
- 4 I would frequently react like this
- 5 I would always react this way

For scenarios 2,3 and 4 the wording was changed to Never (1), Rarely (2), Occasionally (3), Frequently (4) and Always (5).

Each option in the scenario was mapped against a section of The Quadrant . The scores were totalled, and by these means it was possible to obtain a score for the Headteacher against each section of The Quadrant. The highest numerical score determined their dominant style.

### **Dealing with Staff Opposition**

In the staff opposition scenario Headteachers were presented with the situation whereby the Head had formulated a policy which was personally very important to her/ him and seen to be central to the effectiveness of the school but the staff were strongly opposed to the policy. They were asked to respond to the following options. Each one corresponded to the four management styles as shown below.

**The Situation**

You have formulated a policy which is important to you and to the effectiveness of your school but certain members of your staff are strongly opposed to it. How would you react to this?

	<b>Option</b>	<b>Quadrant</b>
1	Set up a working group to examine the issues and ensure that the dissenting staff are not invited to join this group	A
2	Adopt other strategies to marginalise opposition from the dissenting staff	A
3	Call the dissenting staff in and explain your situation	D
4	Use your Deputy/ies or other senior staff as intermediaries to quell opposition	B
5	Inform the dissenting staff that the issue is official school policy and that they must conform	B
6	Gather together a group who support your views and used them to sway staff opinion	C
7	Set up a working group to examine the issues and ensure that the dissenting staff are members of the group	C
8	Listen to their complaints and accommodate some of their opinions into a new policy	D
9	Some other strategy	

**Figure 4.18 Scenario One Options**

The first option offered Quadrant A autocracy like the micropolitical strategy of Head One where he could appear to be open but at the same time ensured that the 'King's Court' would carry the day. Similarly an authoritarian option was proffered as option 2.

Openness to consultation and a Quadrant D response was offered at two levels in options 3 and 8. 3 was a demonstration of openness and indicated that staff were equal in decision-making to the Head and 8 which went further and accepted that their views were as important as the Headteacher's and would be accommodated in policy.



Quadrant B options relied heavily on the use of the senior management hierarchy to quell opposition (option 4) or falling back on the claim that the issue had been enshrined in policy (option 5) and that opposition was not acceptable.

Quadrant C responses offered two options: 6 which recognised that consensual working was acceptable and that consensual opinions would determine strategy and 7 which used a totally representative group of the staff. This latter option demonstrated a fuller commitment to the consensual approach.

### **Supervising the Work of the School**

In this scenario Headteachers were asked for their actual as opposed to intended behaviour. It should be possible, using these means, to gain an accurate picture of Headteacher activity as the request was to record real occurrences.

In supervising the work of the school how frequently have you actually done the following?  
 Here the scale was amended to:

	<b>Option</b>	<b>Quadrant</b>
1	Observed lessons personally to check on the standard of teaching	A
2	Called in members of staff on a regular basis to check how they are performing	A
3	Used the appraisal process as the main method of supervising the work of staff	D
4	Asked Deputy/ies or other senior staff to investigate or review departmental effectiveness	B
5	Relied on post holders, for example Heads of Faculty or Department, to keep you informed about the effectiveness of their teams	B
6	Initiated mutual observation exercises of classroom teaching	C
7	Discussed school effectiveness approaches in staff meetings	D
8	Set up working teams of teachers to examine teaching and learning issues	C

Please note that this section applies to your actual reactions.

#### **Figure 4.19 Scenario Two Options**

Options 1 and 2 indicated the authoritarian (Quadrant A) approach. Options 4 and 5 relied on procedural solutions (Quadrant B). Collegiate working was captured on both Quadrant C Options (6 & 8) whilst options 3 and 7 relied on the democratically formulated appraisal process and the representational forum of staff meetings (Quadrant D)

## Staff Performance

The next scenario concerned staff performance. Headteachers were asked, again using the five point scale how often in the last term they had done the following

**Staff performance**  
Over the past year how frequently have you reacted in the following ways to occasions where you have not been happy with the performance of teachers?

	Option	Quadrant
1	Delegated the problem but supervised closely how this person dealt with it and intervened if I didn't think the matter was being dealt with effectively	A
2	I intervened personally where there were problems with teachers/ departments	A
3	Delegated the problem but gave the person specific guidance about how to resolve the issue	B
4	Raised the issue at a whole school staff meeting.	D
5	Asked the immediate line manager to deal with the problem	B
6	Delegated the problem and expected the person to whom delegated the issue to deal with it totally	C
7	Raised the matter with the whole department/ team and expected them to come up with a solution	C
8	Raise the issue at a middle management meeting (eg Heads of Faculty or Department) and take a consensual view	D

**Figure 4.20 Scenario Three Options**

Quadrant A options here indicated a firmly 'hands on' approach where the Head assumed personal control. Quadrant B options again were related to routine policy. The Quadrant C options reflected the ability of Headteachers



to cede power to a colleague or a team. Quadrant D options related again to the influence of democratic fora.

### Management Activity During the Last Term

This case study, similarly, asked for actual actions, this time within a more immediate time frame, the past term. This should provide a sharper focus on actual activity. All options had a supervisory intent but were tailored towards situations that reflected the varying influences of teacher(s) and Headteacher as indicated in The Quadrant.

Please note that this section applies to your actual reactions. During the past term please indicate how frequently you have done the following.

	Item	Quadrant
1	Had to call in a member of staff to complain about their work	A
2	Asked your Deputy about the work or performance of a colleague	A
3	Had one to one meetings with staff to check how they are completing specific tasks	B
4	Observed lessons to ensure that teaching and learning policies are being observed	B
5	Asked individuals informally about their work	C
6	Asked groups of colleagues informally about the progress of projects or policies in hand	C
7	Joined in with departmental meetings or colleagues' extra curricular activities	D
8	Observed lessons and given feedback to improve morale	D

**Figure 4.21 Case Study Four Options**

Quadrant A activity (1&2) puts the Headteacher in the position of power whilst Quadrant C options (5&6) do the opposite. The word “informally” in these options indicates that the Headteacher is not adopting a power position and that the opinions of colleagues are valuable, indeed take precedence. Similarly, passive activities without any follow on indicated were chosen as Quadrant B options (3&4) Options 7&8 again highlighted the democratic for a apparent in Quadrant D Activity.

### **Findings from school-based situations**

One would expect from the results of the self reported survey that there would be a high level of consistency in the ways that Headteachers react to given situations (hypothesis 3). It might also be assumed that there will be significant agreement within the cohort of Headteachers concerning their preferred ways of working.

The results indicate that there are, indeed, preferred ways of dealing with the issues raised but that agreement is not universal. In some cases there are gender differences in reactions to the problem.

The first scenario that Headteachers were presented with was that the staff had opposed a decision. They were asked for their actions. The most popular action was to gather the staff together, to explain the decision to them and then to accommodate the dissenting views. This is entirely in keeping with the democratic principles that they subsequently espoused. In reality Headteachers have demonstrated that decisions are often taken in

camera or with small numbers of trusted individuals. It is noteworthy that female Headteachers, whilst supporting this democratic approach, declined from personal autocratic intervention altogether and were more likely than their male counterparts to throw the issue open for public debate and the examination of a working party (Figure 4.22).

Scenario 2 covered the supervisory role of the Headteacher. The preferred option was for nominated post holders to perform this duty with, again female Headteachers being more reluctant to intervene personally. Despite their avowed allegiance to democracy all Headteachers abandoned this when it came to supervising the work of the school. They rejected the option whereby staff were encouraged to examine the issues and produce solutions.

In similar fashion scenario 3 which involved supervising staff revealed an autocratic (as opposed to a democratic or consensual) approach. Headteachers nominated a hands-on approach with little delegation and even less espousal to more staff centred methods.

Somewhat characteristically, when Headteachers were asked if they had performed very similar supervisory activity during the last term, the contradictions came to the fore. They declared, in contrast to the above, that in such supervisory situations they opted for the consensual approach of asking staff informally (in groups and individually) how their work was progressing as opposed to more formal requests for staff performance data.



It is clear that when the wording of the question was 'keeping in touch' rather than being responsible for the performance of the school they felt sufficiently comfortable to resort to more democratic and consensual methods. There was no evidence of this kind of activity on their accounts of recent decisions they had reached.

Once again therefore, there is a disparity between the declared approaches indicated through these exercises and the reality of day to day school management as revealed in the initial questionnaire. Figures 4.22 and 4.23 indicate majority agreement but examples of different approaches to the same management issue.

	Staff Opposition (n=34)			Supervising Work of School		
	Total %	M %	F %	Total %	M %	F %
A	2.9	2.9	0.0	23.6	17.6	5.8
B	14.7	8.8	5.8	58.8	26.4	32.3
C	23.5	8.8	14.7	17.6	8.8	8.8
D	58.8	32.3	26.4	0	0	0

**Figure 4.22 Management Styles – Situations 1 & 2**

	Staff Performance			Decision in Past Term		
	Total %	M %	F %	Total %	M %	F %
A	50.0	23.5	26.4	17.6	8.8	8.8
B	38.3	23.5	14.7	5.9	2.9	2.9
C	2.9	0.0	2.9	70.6	38.2	32.3
D	8.8	5.8	2.9	5.9	2.9	2.9

**Figure 4.23 Management Styles – Situations 3 & 4**

### **Headteachers' Espoused Beliefs**

The evidence thus far has indicated that many of the research hypotheses can be supported. The four identifiable styles (hypothesis 1) from the phase one research can readily be identified by Headteachers and there is substantial agreement about how to react to certain management scenarios (Hypotheses 3 and 4). When asked to describe their management approaches they declare themselves to be democratic and collegiate, taking every opportunity to involve their staff in decision-making and determining the vision for the school. Similarly, they eschew autocratic and bureaucratic approaches. Delegation, they declare, is essential. Decisions are made only with the full co-operation of staff and decisions affecting the running of the school are conducted in the full democratic forum of the staff meeting.

Empowerment and the norms of collegiality (Fullan,1982) are high on their agenda.

They reinforce the messages of empowerment by declaring that the role of Senior Management Teams is not to take decisions in conclave but to debate ideas that have been presented to them by teachers. The connection between decision-making and grass roots involvement is obvious to the Headteachers surveyed.

Setting the vision for the school (Levine and Lezotte, 1990) is a function for the staff and not the exclusive preserve of Headteachers and a small handful of high status individuals.

Conflict resolution is resolved, particularly where pupils are concerned, within the school community. Staff lower down the hierarchy are trusted to resolve issues, they declare.

When invited to validate these declarations of intent Headteachers are able to cite examples where staff have been involved in decisions affecting the school, both formally and informally (hypothesis 5). They are also able to nominate people who have influenced and determined their particular style. In addition they can cite specific training and reading for their declared approach. They are, however, less robust when it comes to quoting texts they have read to substantiate their ways of operating which indicates that



Headteachers have, perhaps, too many time-consuming priorities which take precedence over keeping up to date with the literature.

When asked to declare their philosophy Headteachers re-affirm their democratic and collegiate principles. They claim consistency of approach but the evidence indicates variation rather than uniformity.

If Headteachers are asked to exemplify their decisions, however, some disparities and contradictions start to appear (Hypothesis 7).

In this stage of the investigation, far from demonstrating democracy and collegiality, Headteachers indicated in the accounts of their activity that 53.2% of decisions were taken at SMT level, 9.4% by the Head alone and 43.8% by the Head and Deputy (ies).

As far as discussion fora are concerned Headteachers declared that they had discussed school issues with staff in 27.5% of cases but these were not centred on pervasive issues, centring simply on curriculum reviews and specific and immediate issues. Decisions were rarely made in Middle Management meetings (3.4%) and even less so in whole staff meetings (2.5%). 67% of school issues are resolved in conclave or selected groups of teachers. This runs contrary to the collegiate and democratic principles they declared earlier.

The scenario based material pinpointed further potential tensions and contradictions.

When staff opposed their positions, for example, Headteachers stated that they would draw the staff together and resolve the conflicts, but staff meetings, as have been discovered, were rare or used only to announce decisions.

By contrast, when asked about supervising staff they revealed an autocratic (as opposed to a democratic or consensual) attitude. Headteachers nominated a 'hands on' approach with little delegation and even less espousal to more staff-centred approaches.

Somewhat characteristically, when Headteachers were asked if they had performed very similar supervisory activity during the last term the contradictions and obfuscations, already noted, came to the fore.

They declared that in such supervisory situations they opted for the consensual approach of asking staff informally (in groups and individually) how their work was progressing as opposed to more formal requests for staff performance data.

Significantly, when the wording of the question was centred on 'keeping in touch' rather than being responsible for the performance of the school they felt sufficiently comfortable to report the use of more democratic and

consensual methods. There was no correlating evidence, however, of this kind of activity on their accounts of recent decisions they had reached.

We have, once again therefore, the apparent disparity between declared approaches and the reality of day to day school management as well as different approaches to the same management issue.

There are issues, therefore, to be resolved that the research thus far has highlighted but not addressed.

### **Weaknesses of Research Methods Used**

The research instruments used so far have suffered from Headteachers' ability to impression-manage the data that they have been asked to provide. They are able to select from their experience to justify an approach or a highly valued management strategy when the reality of their daily work is potentially completely different. There are, therefore, flaws in the research design thus far.

What was required was a method of sampling the reality of day to day activity on a longitudinal basis to overcome the bias of hindsight and selective perception. Observing Headteachers would be the ideal but even so this would be prone to error (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996)



## **Phase Three - Detailed Sampling**

### **Piloting**

It has been noted thus far that Headteachers tend to be reluctant to take part in research exercises that they consider to be too time consuming. There may also be a reluctance to subject themselves to exacting and potentially critical scrutiny.

What was required was a detailed log of Headteacher activity. Two Headteachers in London were asked to pilot this final phase of the research by keeping a log of their daily activities.

Unfortunately one failed to produce any material at all and took early retirement after a highly public incident involving pupil violence. The other Headteacher came from a school that had recently emerged from Special Measures and was credited by OFSTED (July 1999) as making sound progress. It was likely, therefore, that this Headteacher would provide examples of effective leadership and Headship. At the same time it would be important to highlight foibles of style that could have resulted from the schools' current situation. It would be important, therefore, to compare the leadership profile as displayed by this Headteacher with other participant Headteachers. As indicated in Chapter 3 piloting provided an effective logging methodology which provided high levels of granularity on the daily management practices of a Headteacher.

As outlined in Chapter 3 after the pilot phase a further cohort of Headteachers was sought to complete logs of their activities. Eventually six Headteachers took part in this element of the research.

This opportunistic sample included male and female Headteachers from a variety of school settings. The Headteachers completed logs which isolated discrete management activity with details of when this took place and how long the activity lasted.

After submitting a preliminary log for checking and error correction all managed to complete satisfactory logs. Details were sufficiently clear to log them against the coding frame. Headteachers completed logs for three months. As indicated previously the logs encompassed 3,312 hours and 5,229 events. When they were submitted they were coded using the frames established during the pilot phase. The following coding frame (Figure 4.24) was used to map Headteacher activity against the main sections of The Quadrant.

<b>Quadrant</b>	<b>Distinguishing Characteristics</b>
<b>A</b>	Headteacher briefs others Headteacher sets agenda Supervisory meeting with Headteacher in the chair
<b>B</b>	Administration Planning and thinking Information gathering Social occasion
<b>C</b>	Headteacher receives reports from others Headteacher receiving briefing e.g. from LEA Headteacher receives advice e.g. from external consultants Working party briefs Headteacher
<b>D</b>	Democratic meeting e.g. full staff meeting Round table discussion
<b>X</b>	No interaction between subjects in the model or private break Teaching

**Figure 4.24 Coding Frame Headteacher Activity**

As noted in the account of the pilot phase in Chapter 3 the pilot teacher spent very little time with teaching staff. Through an analysis of his responses the following coding frame (Figure 4.25) was used to categorise the people with whom the Headteacher interacted.



The 'people' codings were:

<b>Code</b>	<b>Person</b>
1	Deputy Headteacher Senior Teacher Senior Administrative Officer
2	Subject Leader Section Head
3	One teacher
3a	Teachers
4	Teaching Assistant
5	Pupils
6	All teaching staff
7	Mixed gathering e.g. on duty
8	Alone
E1	Governor Trustee
E2	LEA Officer
E3	Consultant External contractor
E4	Other Headteacher
E5	Parents

**Figure 4.25 People Codings**

The system followed a rough hierarchical order to highlight and initiate further analysis to determine if Headteachers spent more time with higher status individuals.

In the case of teachers it became necessary to construct three categories: teachers seen singly, in groups or as members of working parties. A special notation was reserved for the whole staff to indicate such events as whole staff meetings.

Data were collected to examine, principally, research hypothesis 7: that there will be no inconsistency between Headteachers nominated styles and their actual activities as managers in their schools.

It will be remembered that Headteachers espoused, in phase 2 of the study, the different styles were as follows:

<b>Style</b>	<b>Quadrant</b>	<b>% of Headteachers (n=34)</b>
Authoritarian	A	0.0
Bureaucratic	B	0.0
Communal	C	58.8
Democratic	D	41.2

**Figure 4.26 Quadrants and Headteachers**

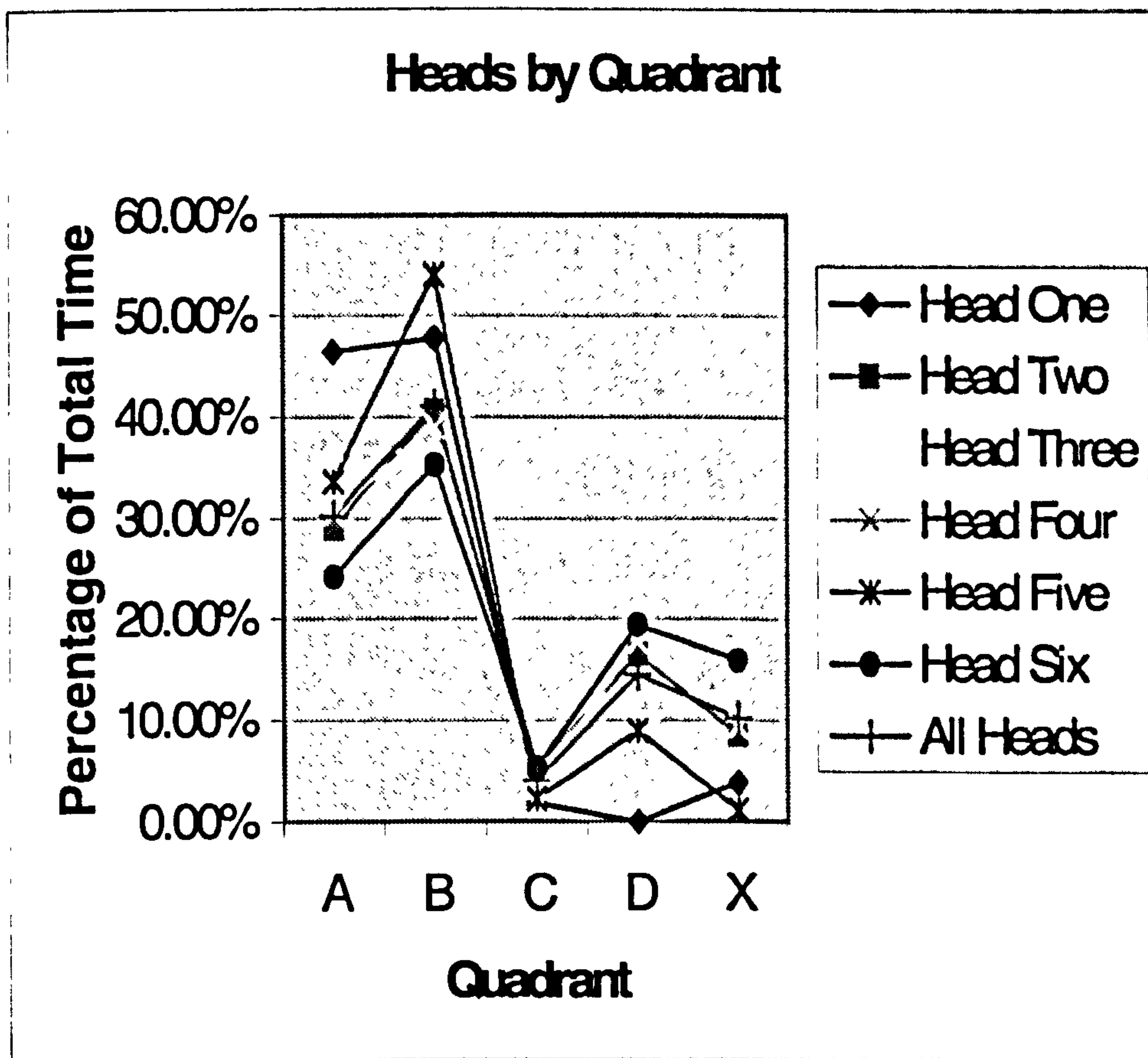
When the results were collated across the entire sample (Figure 4.27) the allocation of total time to each Quadrant was as follows:

<b>Style</b>	<b>Quadrant</b>	<b>% of Headteacher Time Expended (total = 3312 hours)</b>
Authoritarian	A	30.19
Bureaucratic	B	41.05
Communal	C	4.09
Democratic	D	14.53
	X	10.14

**Figure 4.27 Time and Quadrants**

A clear dichotomy appeared, therefore, between what Headteachers stated was their approach and what was revealed in the reality of their logs.





**Figure 4.28 Headteachers by Quadrant**

It was also necessary to refer to research hypothesis 3 at this stage of processing the results to verify whether there were high levels of consistency of the Quadrant styles in the group of Headteachers.

As can be seen from Figure 4.28 there is a common pattern to the activity of the Headteachers in the sample. They operate largely in Quadrant B with Quadrant A also being dominant. This contradicts their assertions in earlier stages of the study that they rejected these styles (research hypothesis 7).

As discussed earlier, Quadrant B, whilst reflecting the elements of the earlier questionnaire, had to be extended to cover activities where no one party in

the interaction took the lead. Activities that now came within the range of this Quadrant were informal contacts between Headteacher and pupils, being on duty and talking to teachers informally in the staff room.

Communal activities which were high on Headteachers' original agendas revealed the lowest incidence from their logs. There were very few occasions when Headteachers let others take the lead. As will be discussed later this was not with whom they declared it originally to be, teachers. Indeed, Headteachers accepting ideas from teachers in joint discussions were extremely rare.

A further dichotomy between Headteachers' declared intent and their actual work is in decision-making, which they claim, is completed in the democratic forum of the staff meeting. Only 50% of the Headteachers in the sample recorded the incidence of whole staff meetings and as a proportion of total time expended by (all) Headteachers whole staff meetings represented a tiny proportion of the total time logged (0.46%).

As discussed earlier a new category (X) had to be introduced which indicated 'disengagement'. The disengagement pattern, too, was common across the group of Headteachers.

### **People Important to Headteachers**

This level of 'disengagement' raises the issue about with whom Headteachers spent most of their time. The data here will substantiate and

inform other comments about Headteachers' interpersonal priorities as expressed in who they see and in what circumstance.

<b>People</b>	<b>% of Time</b> (total =3312 hours)
Alone	27
Mixed Company	16
Deputies/ SMT	13
Pupils	9
Subject Leaders	7
Other Headteachers	5
Governors	5
Parents	5
Consultants	4
All staff	3
LEA Officers	2
Single teacher	1
Groups of teachers	1
Teaching Assistants	1

*(To nearest whole number)*

**Figure 4.29 Headteachers and People Interactions**



Rather surprisingly (Figure 4.29) Headteachers spend the majority of their time on their own. This is very different to the official picture they present of themselves as being at the hub of activity. Time here is spent in routine administration, dealing with their secretaries and planning for lessons or meetings.

By contrast Headteachers spend a tiny proportion of their time with teachers who are not subject leaders or members of their Senior Management Teams (SMT). In the case of subject leaders this is not in a consultative environment but rather supervisory sessions where targets are set. There is, therefore, little justification for Headteachers' previously declared democratic principles. Significantly, in line with the approach adopted with subject leaders, they spend the next largest tranche of time with their Senior Colleagues planning strategy for the school, in camera.

A similarly inordinate amount of time is spent in mixed company, largely on duty, supervising pupils and staff as they enter or leave the school. Assemblies fall into this category as does dropping into the staff room.

Pupils come encouragingly high on the list. Their parents are seen either in promotional contexts where they are being seen by the Head as prospective parents or as a result of disciplinary and exclusion matters.

Somewhat characteristically at a time when the roles of Local Education Authorities are in question Headteachers spent a significant amount of their

time with external consultants. Indeed this was twice the time that they spent with LEA officers. Headteachers also spend a significant amount of their time with Governors and in meetings with other Headteachers. Headteachers, therefore, spend the majority of their time with high status individuals and the least amount of time with teaching colleagues and teaching assistants.

### **Participation and Engaging Others**

There is a contradiction between the fora they nominate and those revealed in their logs as follows:

<b>People</b>	<b>Percentage of Time Expended</b>
	<b>%</b>
Other Headteachers	32
Governors	23
Deputies/ SMT	12
Parents	10
Subject Leaders	6
LEA Officers	5
Consultants	4
Individual Teachers	2
Groups of Teachers	3
All staff	3
Teaching Assistants	0
Pupils	0

**Figure 4.30 Democratic Fora (Quadrant D)**

From the analysis of Headteachers' time logs (Figure 4.30) they spent the majority of their time in meetings with other Headteachers, either organised by the LEA or through an external organisation such as a professional association.

The next most frequent democratic forum is that of Governors meetings representing 23% of their time. The hierarchical nature of this activity is extended through the next group of people they interact with, their Senior Management Team. From their logs Headteachers interact with these people in two distinct ways. They 'brief' them for a significant amount of the time (38% of their time) and request feedback about tasks that have been delegated but also they operate in equal fashion through leadership group meetings (12% of activity). Similarly they consult with post holders at subject leader level but this is not, as would be expected, through regular and formal meetings. Headteachers' logs revealed that these related to discrete projects (for example, the visual arts and ICT) or discussions with individual Subject Leaders/ Heads of Department. It is worthy of note that these democratic fora only operated with two out of the six Headteachers.

It would appear that Headteachers are next prepared to operate in democratic fashion with parents. The majority of these occasions (10% of activity in this Quadrant) are when parents are considering enrolling their child for the school. Undoubtedly in these contexts both Head and parent have equal input and it is the interests of the Head and the school that this is the way it should be. Parent Teacher meetings also fall into this category.



This is in stark contrast to their other dealings with parents when, in Quadrant A mode, they are involved in disciplinary situations (11% of Quadrant A Time).

The group that stands out as having the least amount of Headteacher time is teachers, either singly or in groups. As has already been pointed out whole staff meetings are extremely rare and, in parallel, individual teachers or small groups of teachers receive little time from their Headteacher. Again it is worthy of note that this level of democracy was not shown by the entire sample. Headteachers Two and Six again figure exclusively in these democratic exchanges between themselves and their staff. Learning Support Assistants and pupils do not benefit from democratic approaches in the schools sampled.

## Democracy and Autocracy

People	Percentage of Time Expended Quadrant D %	Time Expended as % of total time	Percentage of Time Expended Quadrant A %	Time Expended as % of total time
<b>Total time = 3312 hours</b>				
Other Headteachers	32	5	>1	>1
Governors	23	3	6	2
Deputies/ SMT	12	2	38	11
Parents	10	1	11	3
Subject Leaders	6	1	19	6
LEA Officers	5	1	3	1
Consultants	4	1	3	1
Individual Teachers	2	>1	3	1
Groups of Teachers	3	>1	1	>1
All staff	3	>1	3	1
Learning Support Assistants	>1	>1	2	>1
Pupils	>1	>1	11	3
Mixed	>1	>1	1	>1

**Figure 4.31 Quadrant A and D Activity**

An interesting picture emerges in comparing Quadrant D and A activity (Figure 4.31). Particular classes of people attract particular forms of interaction. Meetings between Headteachers and Governors and other Headteachers, for example, are characterised by democratic principles whereas SMT and subject leaders attract a more authoritative approach.

A recent study has reinforced the findings of this research that Headteachers can act in an excessively autocratic way. In comparing business leaders and Headteachers the management consultants Hay McBer (Times Educational Supplement 8<sup>th</sup> December 2000) noted that Headteachers were too prone to an “authoritarian style”.

It can be seen from Figure 4.31 that this is an oversimplification of the case as Headteachers are authoritarian with specific people. In some cases this was to brief people, such as consultants or governors. Occasionally it was to provide feedback to LEA personnel about the progress of their school or staff under scrutiny. The 3% of time devoted to “all staff” was to brief them on the weeks activities as “staff briefings” were a common activity for all Headteachers. Pupils and parents figure largely on this list because Headteachers were involved in equal measure with promotional activity as well as disciplinary and exclusion procedures which involved pupils and their parents.

Surprisingly, Headteachers are willing to be democratic with their senior staff but act in the entirely opposite way with these same people for the majority of the time. Acting in a controlling manner with their senior colleagues, for example, occupies 38% of their time in this Quadrant. It would appear that they are prepared to listen and debate for a small amount of time but spend the rest of the time with these professionals briefing them, taking the lead in allocating tasks and supervising what they do. It became clear in the logs that Headteachers firmly took control with another group of colleagues in



middle management, their subject leaders. Nearly all of the meetings that were referred to here were supervisory in nature. Headteachers requested information about an incident or a project or met with the colleague to determine ways forward and future strategy. A significant number of occurrences under this heading involved the reviewing and setting of targets for these people and their teams.

It is clear from the extensive nature of the activity recorded here that performance management is extremely high on Headteachers' agendas and that they deal with it in Quadrant A fashion. Similarly, they devote a proportionately high period of time to individual teachers. In these cases teachers were under disciplinary measures for poor performance or were being monitored because they were suspected of the latter.

What we have, therefore, is a peculiar dichotomy, particularly where dealing with teaching colleagues is concerned. Headteachers are not uniform when they deal with their SMT and middle managers. The preference is not, as they declared in phase 2 of the research towards consultation and democracy but rather towards supervision. Quadrant C provides a further insight on this dimension.

## **Quadrant C Consultative Fora**

The definition of Quadrant C is that these are the activities where Headteachers cede control and are able to let others take the lead. It will be recalled that Headteachers imagined that this was the high premium style that the majority of them placed at the top of their management agenda.

The theme throughout this section has been antithetical. What Headteachers imagine is actually the opposite of the reality they present in the logs of their activity. Quadrant C activity represents the deepest trough on the graph of Headteacher activity (Figure 4.28). It should be borne in mind that because activity here is so low the comparisons with other Quadrants may be difficult to interpret.

Activity here, however, indicates that Headteachers are not prepared to devolve power to anyone who works in their school. It should be explained at this point that the 7% of time recorded against teachers here relates to observing group activity on In Service Training days (which, obviously came in whole day tranches, hence the generous allocation of time in this Quadrant) or listening to staff presentations in the presence of other colleagues. As indicated in the last column (Figure 4.32) the true percentage of activity here is tiny.

<b>People</b>	<b>Time Expended in Quadrant C %</b>	<b>Time Expended as % of total time (total = 3312 hours)</b>
Consultants	55	2
LEA Officers	12	<1
Subject Leaders	10	<1
Deputies/ SMT	10	<1
Teachers	7	<1
Other Headteachers	3	<1
Teaching Assistants	<1	<1
Pupils	<1	<1
Parents	<1	<1
Other Groups	<1	<1
Groups of Teachers	0	0
All Staff	0	0

**Figure 4.32 Quadrant C - Time**

Headteachers are prepared, however, to let others take the lead when it poses no threat to their authority. This is evident, for example, when external consultants are operating in their schools. In all cases consultants reported directly to the Headteacher. This is the only activity of significant importance in this Quadrant.



When it comes to others taking control the situations are safe and not threatening. They include being briefed by the LEA on initiatives and consulting with subject leaders on small projects or discrete and separate activities. Examples of interchanges here are collecting opinions about a new appointment or asking for views about, for example, an artist in residence. They are occasions when a Headteacher can accept that the other person can bring superior expertise. Such occurrences, though, are extremely rare. The groups listed at the bottom of the table: teaching assistants, pupils, parents and groups of teachers, have marginal influence through consultative fora.

### **Disengagement – Quadrants B and X**

A study quoted in the Times Educational Supplement (TES December 1<sup>st</sup>, 2000) indicated that primary Headteachers were “in danger of becoming remote figures, shut away in their offices ..”

It is clear from this study that the same can be said of secondary Headteachers where they spend over a quarter of their time in their offices undertaking routine administration, making phone calls, thinking and preparing. This is necessary work but what is surprising is that this contrasts unfavourably with the times that Headteachers allocate to spending with people and groups. Time expended here in Quadrant B is at the expense of democratic or consensual working.

Also surprising is the amount of time devoted to 'walking about' which is represented by the mixed company figure. Here Headteachers are on gate duty or lunch duty. One purpose of this activity is to counteract impressions of solitariness: that they are seen to exist and make their presence felt, at least passively.

Undertaking routine supervisory duties with pupils can create credibility with teaching colleagues as it is a demonstrable way of releasing teachers for other duties. Similarly it is a display by the Headteacher that they still retain teacherly qualities (Hall, 1996) in that they are able to control pupils, moreover in large numbers. As such therefore, it becomes a power display in a public arena.

People	Time Expended in Quadrant B %	Time Expended as % of total time (total = 3312 hours)
Alone	64	26
Mixed Company	34	14

**Figure 4.33 Disengaged Time**

To the figures quoted above (Figure 4.33) need to be added the Quadrant X figures. The distinction that has been made between Quadrant B and X is that the former offers the potential for interaction with people in the decision-making Quadrant i.e. the partners are present. No interaction, though, occurs.

In the case of Quadrant X (Figure 4.34) no interaction of a management or decision-making nature can take place. Teaching, for example, which takes, across the sample 6% of Headteachers' time does not involve this activity. Similarly the incidences here with teachers are purely of a social nature, for example taking tea in the staffroom. In 28% of time in this Quadrant, 3% of total time, Heads are totally alone, eating lunch, driving their cars, shopping, ill or arriving late.

People	Time Expended in this Quadrant %	Time Expended as % of total time (total = 3312 hours)
Pupils (Teaching)	56	6
Teachers (in the staffroom)	11	1
Alone	28	3

**Figure 4.34 Quadrant X**

### **Summary of Quadrant Activity**

This section has addressed research hypotheses three and four; that there are high levels of consistency in the operation of Headteachers' management styles and that they react in similar ways to specific educational tasks and issues. Whilst this analysis has demonstrated that they do indeed



adopt similar management approaches these are diametrically opposed to the styles that they imagine they display. Headteachers appreciate the importance of consultation, empowerment and involvement, as instanced in the previous phase, but do not embody it in their day to day activity, indeed a significant proportion of their time is spent in isolation.

When Headteachers do consult, which is the smallest proportion of their time, it is largely (contrary to the claims made in phase 2) with people who do not work at their school. Teachers generally, apart from trusted individuals in SMTs, are marginalised. Headteachers' interactions with teachers, moreover, are dominated by supervisory or disciplinary overtones. The importance of performance management has been signalled through this study and it is clear that these Phase 3 results have been coloured by this initiative. Headteachers spent an enormous amount of time on this issue: one Headteacher spent eighteen hours on performance threshold applications alone.

Headteachers have clearly adopted a Quadrant A, Autocratic, approach to this initiative and the preferred style is to call in teachers for review and target setting meetings.

### **The Quadrant Model and Subsequent Approaches**

The Quadrant model has proved its worth in providing the preliminary and subsequent analysis for this research. It has been possible, using this

conceptual framework, to identify, plot and analyse the real as well as imagined management and decision-making activity of Headteachers. The quadrant has also enabled an analysis of typical management and decision-making scenarios and to make secure the conclusions of the previous phases of this study through the replication of findings.

This analytical model, however, is flawed. In phase two of the research, for example, it could be argued that the management activity that it sought to analyse was dictated by the quadrant sectors rather than management activity per se. The flaws in the model become amplified when considering its limited usefulness in analysing the organisational features of the whole institution. Moreover the quadrant approach is of limited value in exploring the remaining research hypotheses which focus on cognitive functioning and the operation of successful and unsuccessful schools.

#### **Phase Four Hindsight Bias Investigation**

Several examples have been discovered through the various phases of this study of Headteachers being prone to errors of judgement. They have been found, for example, to restrict their data search (Johns, 1991) to opinions provided by favoured colleagues. Their very solitariness and egocentric management activity similarly predisposes them to the weighting of information about their schools in terms of their personal prejudices and predispositions (Brunswik, 1955; Moore et al, 1974)

In order to analyse an aspect of Headteacher's cognitive problem-solving it was decided to test their judgement against a classic paradigm of judgement weakness, Hindsight Bias (Fischhoff, 1975). As has been discussed in Chapter 3 the research was designed to extend the parameters and research tradition of this highly specific area at the same time as contextualising the research material so that it related specifically to a school-based situation. By these means it was hoped that the interests and involvement of Headteachers would be recruited and the results inform the findings of other areas of this study.

As discussed previously the approach to be adopted was to provide the subjects with material where they had to declare their preferences towards nominated outcomes. At a later stage they would be provided with additional material, a 'new' version of events, with an additional piece of outcome information to see what effect it had on their original estimates. The passage to be used derived from the initial stages of the study and involved an inconclusive incident concerning a member of staff and a pupil.

### **The Research Material**

Twenty three Headteachers were informed in a pre-amble, following the stated research aim concerning 'real' material, that the passage was based on an actual incident. The wording was designed to recruit their involvement and to create the atmosphere of reality that other hindsight experiments lacked. The passage used (Appendix E) was as follows:



## **Case Study Material Used**

A pupil has been referred to you by Charles Green, a member of staff, for a breach of discipline. He is demanding that you take action. The pupil concerned is in year 10. Academically he is above average but your records show that his level of application to work is variable and he is, therefore, not achieving his potential. Several of your younger members of staff have sympathy with this pupil because of his disadvantaged background.

The member of staff has been teaching in the school for a number of years. This is not his first post. He holds no post of responsibility. His version of events is that in his lesson the pupil started a disturbance and head-butted him. This, according to Green, was in response to his reasoned appeal to be quiet and get on with his work. The pupil's version is that the teacher lost control and the whole class was misbehaving. He claims that he was in a group of pupils around the teacher, he was pushed towards the teacher and their heads collided.

You have asked your Head of Year 10 to investigate. He has conducted an extensive investigation but the results are inconclusive. Some of the pupils side with the teacher and say that the pupil reacted aggressively and head butted the member of staff. An equal number of pupils say that the teacher could not control the lesson and that when he went over to a group of pupils the pupil was pushed and their heads collided. No other member of staff

witnessed the incident and no other information is available on this matter. You have to reach a decision.

There is a contrived balance of sympathies in the passage between a bright, socially disadvantaged, underachieving pupil and a long-serving member of staff who is, at the same time lacking in ambition. There is no evidence in the passage of previous indiscipline by the pupil or aggressive behaviour by the member of staff but clearly there is scope for unsupported, stereotypical or heuristic judgements on either side. The onus, therefore, is to decide only on the facts provided. The case is deliberately inconclusive as investigations within the school have revealed no further information. Indeed to seek out further information would inevitably lead the Headteachers into the hindsight phase by, in effect, providing information that would indicate a potential outcome and permit them to say they 'knew all along' that the pupil/ teacher was to blame.

Headteachers were instructed as follows:

In the light of the information could you use your judgement to predict the probability of each of the following outcomes.

You can choose one or a number of possibilities. All probabilities should, however, add up to 100%. The outcomes were as indicated in Figure 4.35.

OUTCOME	PROBABILITY
The pupil's behaviour continued to deteriorate and preliminary disciplinary procedures were initiated against the pupil	
The member of staff's classroom management continued to deteriorate and preliminary disciplinary procedures were initiated against the member of staff	
The member of staff's classroom management deteriorated markedly so that he was suspended	
The pupil's behaviour deteriorated markedly so that the pupil was suspended	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>

**Figure 4.35 Grid for Outcomes**

The research proposition, therefore, was that after the first round of questioning Headteachers would support either the pupil or the member of staff.

These results should indicate varying strengths of support for either of the two parties and the research interest would be to discover what differences would occur, if at all, when the subjects were presented with outcome information that would either confirm or deny their original estimate. If their original estimates altered then the hindsight effect would be supported.

The Headteachers, after the first phase, were, therefore, divided according to their predictions of outcomes into "Anti Staff" and "Anti Pupil" groups. Each



group was further subdivided and each provided with an outcome that either confirmed their original estimate or contradicted it (Figure 4.36).

The groups were as follows:

Group	Original Prediction	New Outcome Provided
A	Anti – Staff	Anti – Staff
B	Anti – Pupil	Anti – Staff
C	Anti – Staff	Anti – Pupil
D	Anti - Pupil	Anti – Pupil

**Figure 4.36 Hindsight Bias Groupings**

Groups A and C were labelled “Anti Staff” as had they indicated a higher probability that the expected outcome would be disciplinary action or suspension against the member of staff. Groups B and D were, in similar fashion, labelled “Anti Pupil” as they indicated the same outcomes, but for the pupil.

New outcomes were provided to these groups. It should be noted that both outcomes allowed the operation of professional judgement in that there was no firm and final connection between the ‘new’ outcome and the outcomes that the Headteachers had originally rated. (i.e. further disciplinary action or suspension).

The 'new' outcomes were in the form of an additional sentence indicating the sentiments below:

**The Anti Staff outcome:**

The teacher's attitude deteriorated and there were an increasing number of similar incidents.

**The Anti Pupil outcome:**

The pupil's attitude deteriorated and there were an increasing number of similar incidents.

The only determining factor as to which group received which outcome was that certain subjects had indicated a 100% outcome for one alternative. They were presented, therefore, with a contradictory outcome. Five Headteachers did not return their phase two, hindsight, responses and so they were excluded from the study, making the final sample 18. The results indicated that there was, indeed, a Hindsight Bias effect to be noted amongst Headteachers.

Group			Outcome (% Change from original) n =18	
	Original Outcome	New Outcome	A Anti Pupil	B Anti Staff
A	Anti Staff	Anti Staff	-19.6	<b>+19.6</b>
B	Anti Pupil	Anti Staff	-6.7	<b>+6.7</b>
C	Anti Staff	Anti Pupil	<b>+5.0</b>	-5.0
D	Anti Pupil	Anti Pupil	<b>+7.6</b>	-7.6

**Figure 4.37 Results - Hindsight Bias and Headteachers**

As can be noted (Figure 4.37) there is a distinct shift in all groups in favour of the new outcome. Whilst groups B C and D show significant shifts the Hindsight Bias effect is strongest in Group A.

A more detailed analysis of the data (Figure 4.38) indicates that Group A's (anti staff) responses have hardened against the member of staff and softened toward the pupil. In the case of the teacher they clearly favour outcomes that indicate further work with the teacher rather than predicting s/he will be suspended.



Group				Outcome			
	Original Outcome	New Outcome	Condition	A Pupil Discipline	B Staff Discipline	C Staff Suspension	D Pupil Suspension
A	Anti Staff	Anti Staff	Original	36.9	42.5	8.8	11.9
	Anti Staff	Anti Staff	Hindsight	21.2	64.4	6.5	7.9
B	Anti Pupil	Anti Staff	Original	65.0	6.7	3.7	24.7
	Anti Pupil	Anti Staff	Hindsight	50.0	12.5	4.5	33.0
C	Anti Staff	Anti Pupil	Original	19.9	50.0	19.4	10.7
	Anti Staff	Anti Pupil	Hindsight	22.3	47.5	16.8	13.3
D	Anti Pupil	Anti Pupil	Original	52.2	22.8	4.8	20.2
	Anti Pupil	Anti Pupil	Hindsight	50.5	14.7	5.3	29.5

**Figure 4.38 Hindsight Bias - Detailed Results**

Similarly Group B, (anti pupil) provided with the same outcome, has favoured the teacher disciplinary route rather than the suspension alternative. Interestingly, this group has increased its probability of the pupil being suspended when there is no additional material to suggest this outcome. This emulates the original disposition of Headteachers which is to blame the pupil. It would appear that this reaction is favoured despite information to the contrary.

Group C has followed the Hindsight Bias effect in expecting pupil deterioration in line with the new outcome material and decreasing their expectation of a teacher deterioration.

Group D has emulated the harder line with pupils by moving strongly toward suspension of the pupil, in line with the new outcome.

It would appear that the Hindsight Bias effect is strongest when the new outcome confirms rather than contradicts the original outcome.

This phase of the research has thrown new light, therefore, on the decision-making characteristics of Headteachers and examined the 'live' decisions they have to make in their working environment. The final phase of the study will extend this perspective by looking at the organisation and the decision-making context in which they have to operate in more detail. Specific management and decision-making features will be examined in the cross sectional survey, The Index of Management Excellence.

### **Phase Five Index of Management Excellence**

The findings of this study have revealed conflicting and contradictory elements in the managerial activity of Headteachers. On the one hand there is their declared allegiance to collegiality and the involvement of their staff (Jackson, 2000) and on the other the reality which indicates that Headteachers act in a solitary, even isolated fashion putting distance between themselves and their colleagues (Gewirtz and Ball, 1995). Their stated intention is to share beliefs in a harmonious and engaging setting (Ribbins and Marland, 1995) which is in contrast with the tense micropolitical world of Head's subversive strategies to get their own way (Hoyle, 1982).

Additionally the appeal of shared decision-making (Lashway, 1996; Lontos, 1994) and the collegial intelligence of the school (MacGilchrist, 2000) contrasts sharply with these findings that reveal the autocratic style and interpersonal isolation of Headship. To these findings must now be added the additional caution that Headteachers are prone to Hindsight Bias which has been shown to affect their perceptions of their pupils and their colleagues.

This research has also indicated that there are consistent management dimensions, verifying the findings of previous sections of this research, in the activity of a group of six Headteachers tracked for six months. What remains to be determined, however, is whether this behaviour is related to a specific school context. This section of the study, therefore, will examine if there is any correlation between different school settings and the managerial activity that has been exhibited in previous phases of this study.

It was decided, therefore, to explore these parameters by contextualising them and determining if there were demonstrable management characteristics of 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' schools. This phase of the research was given the title 'Indicators of Management Excellence' with the intention of determining those management characteristics which described highly successful schools.

As indicated previously two definitions were adopted for successful schools: a school that had performed well in the examination league tables at GCSE



(in the Top 250 of such results) and one which had demonstrated its expertise to the extent that it had been nominated as a 'Beacon School'. The Beacon Schools initiative is a government strategy designed to highlight schools who have excelled in a specified area of performance. Such schools are nominated by the Department for Education and Skills (DfES) and attract extra funding so that they can allocate resources to disseminate their good practice. Unsuccessful schools were defined as those who had failed an inspection by OFSTED and were placed under Special Measures.

The sample consisted of:

- Schools placed in the Top 250 schools in the country by examination results at GCSE level in the 2001 examination league tables. These are referred to as Top Schools;
- Beacon Schools who had been singled out by the Government because they had demonstrated that School Management and 'Managing and Leading a School' was an area of expertise;
- Schools on the OFSTED 'Special Measures' list. These were schools who had been placed under Special Measures or had recently emerged from them. These schools are referred to as Special Measures Schools.

The Indicators were grouped under conceptual headings, following the example of Booth et al, (2000). These became the main dimensions of The Index.

- **Culture and Ethos**

The values of the school;

- **Policies**

How the culture and ethos are revealed in guidance either published or comprehensively understood by the school staff;

- **Practices**

How all of the above is translated in action and revealed in the daily activity of the school.

### **How the Indicators were constructed and the connections with previous research**

The Indicators of Management Excellence were derived directly from the findings of the previous research. They were, therefore, designed to triangulate and verify previous data and to extend preliminary or tentative findings with more robust information. The connections between the Indicators and previous research is as described below.

### **Dimension A – Management Culture and Ethos**

#### **Element 1 Building the whole school community**

This element relates to the inclusiveness of the school as an organisation where senior staff, teaching staff and pupils treat each other with respect and support each other. The case study Headteachers indicated that this was an

ideal but that they frequently marginalised difficult or resistant staff (Hoyle, 1982). Similarly the detailed sampling exercise had indicated the tendency for Headteachers to act in a solitary and exclusive fashion. This element, therefore, was designed to audit the completeness of the school community (as opposed to Headteachers and SMT as sampled previously) and whether there were groups or individuals who were excluded or marginalised. This section also related to the elements of the research (the case studies and detailed sampling section) which had indicated micropolitical tensions between sectors in the school and whether this operated with any force in elements of the school community. This element also went beyond the school and requested data on the involvement of the wider community in the operation of the school. The involvement of Headteachers in the wider community had been found to be restricted in the sampling exercise.

## **Element 2 Building appropriate ethos and values**

Questions in this section of the audit were designed to extend and triangulate the findings in the section above concerning the valuing of different personnel in the school: staff, pupils and support assistants. This section was designed to assess the transparency of management practices where all stakeholders were informed and involved. It attempted, therefore, to cast light on the findings of the responses to the management questionnaire in phase 2 and the sampling exercise that suggested that decision-making was centralised with school SMTs. Several questions were directed at teaching staff to assess their involvement in policy formation and



to illuminate further the locus of decision-making that had been identified through the quadrant exercise, in particular the robustness of quadrant C and D activity. The extent of collaboration which is prominent in the literature (Fullan, 1982; Lontos, 1994; Grey, 1999; Jackson, 2000) was explored here also.

## **Dimension B – Management Policies**

### **Element 1 Developing and implementing clear practices and procedures**

Questions in this section of the audit directly addressed the collaborative and participative elements that had been raised previously. The intention, therefore, was to triangulate data with Dimension A and to assess the level of shared decision making and dispersed leadership, (Lashway, 1996; Lontos, 1994; MacGilchrist, 1994), that operated in the school. The case study and management questionnaire section had allowed Headteachers to state their allegiance to such principles but the detailed sampling exercise had revealed that there was little evidence of this in operation. This element was designed to assess the transparency of the management practices that were operating in the school and whether devolution, if it existed, was real and/ or effective. Again previous evidence had suggested that there was a statement of intent from Headteachers in this respect but that it was not evident in practice.

## **Element 2 Organising a school for all**

Questions under this element were designed to investigate the interpersonal and micropolitical elements in a school that had been raised in the case study material and recorded in the detailed sampling exercise. The accessibility and approachability of senior staff was audited here in addition to the attitudes that prevailed between senior staff and other colleagues. Previous research had indicated that full staff meetings were a rarity and this democratic forum was simply used to inform rather than provide an opportunity for debate. The questionnaire, therefore, probed attitudes to this significant school event.

## **Element 3 Securing participation and involvement**

This element extended element 1 of this dimension and examined opportunities for staff to participate in the running of the school. This was designed to investigate devolved decision-making. This element also probed the behaviour of Headteachers in ensuring that all staff participated in the running of the school. Again this motive had been raised in the case study and questionnaire material but was not supported by the detailed sampling exercise.

## **Dimension C – Management Practices**

### **Element 1 Orchestrating effective learning**

This element was designed to address features which had been implied in the previous research but not examined, how the effectiveness of teaching and learning was managed in the school. This element was an extrapolation of Dimension A Element 1 and Dimension A Element 2 whereby the attitudes and activities of senior staff and their colleagues were analysed in this important area of managing learning for pupils. This element related to such activities as the observation of lessons by senior staff and whether teachers discussed teaching effectiveness in formal or informal groups and whether this professional dialogue was required by management or grew out of normal and unforced professional activity. This element, therefore, looked in more detail at the community of educators in a school and how it operated. As the questionnaire was also distributed to Headteachers and senior staff the correlation or clash of attitudes and opinions here, between SMT members, would add extra an extra dimension to the interpersonal elements of the research findings.

### **Element 2 Resolving conflict**

The research findings had indicated that there was considerable potential for conflict within a school. This was apparent in the case study material where Headteachers openly talked about resistant colleagues, in the management



scenario section on supervising staff and in the detailed sampling exercise where Headteachers monitored and supervised the work of teachers. The Index Questionnaire was also going to be sent to Special Measures Schools and so the assumption that such schools operated under stressful interpersonal conditions needed to be explored. This element, therefore, addressed directly disciplinary and supervisory procedures. This section also added to the previous findings in exploring whether formal support processes operated at school level. Previous research had focussed on the 'top down' processes but this needed to be complemented by investigating whether mutual support practices existed between teachers. The performance management processes had been revealed in the detailed sampling exercise to be of considerable importance to Headteachers and the opportunity was taken here to assess whether teachers found these practices intrusive or threatening. As such this was both an extension of the audit of senior management attitudes to teachers in addition to an exploration of the interpersonal dimensions that had been previously explored.

### **Element 3 Mobilising resources**

This final element was included to support previous questions on management transparency and the involvement of teachers. Respondents were asked to indicate whether the human resources of the school were fully utilised and whether the allocation of physical resources (Hoyle, 1982) and plans for the progress of the schools were openly explained.

As outlined above the indicators were grouped together under the conceptual headings of management culture, policies and practices. These became the Dimensions of the indicators which are described below. The Indicators Questionnaire is included at Appendix J and the full Indicators of Management Excellence have been included at Appendix K.

## **DIMENSION A**

### **Excellence in Management Culture and Ethos**

This dimension is about the management effectiveness of the school, whereby inclusive values and shared beliefs permeate its operation. There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect where all partners in the operation of the school are valued. There are high expectations for pupils and staff. The ethos and values of the school, which operates as a thriving community, are readily apparent to all staff, pupils, parents, governors and other partners. Staff and senior management treat each other with respect. The principles and values established here inform other dimensions, particularly management policies. There is a lack of micropolitical tension and resentful undercurrents. Parents feel welcome and able to contribute their views. Governance is open and consultative. There is widespread collaboration with the local community.

## **DIMENSION B**

### **Excellence in Management Policies**

This dimension is about creating coherent and transparent school policies which secure the participation and involvement of every person in the school.

A critical element of this dimension is the concept of collegiality and participation, a 'school for all' whereby there are no barriers to participation for teachers, governors, parents or pupils. It is clear who holds responsibility but that all decisions affecting the school are open to clarification and consultation. In the case of pupils every attempt is made to include them. Senior staff at the school make themselves available for consultation as a matter of established routine. Democratic fora are the norm and all information concerning the operation of the school is public and open to debate.

## **DIMENSION C**

### **Excellence in Management Practices**

This dimension is the physical manifestation of the management culture and policies identified in Dimensions A and B. Management of the school is characterised by participation and collaboration. Policies and practices are obvious to all and their operation is transparent. Consultation and inclusion are the norm and there is no attempt to operate in secrecy or in camera. Plans for the future direction of the school are communicated effectively and completely to the staff. There are democratic fora for the interchange of ideas as well as established consultation processes. All decisions and policy matters are aired publicly and the views of all are actively canvassed. Teaching effectiveness is openly discussed and observation of colleagues is the norm. Peer observation of professional practice is undertaken routinely with the expectation that it will be supportive and informative. Senior staff, in particular, support their colleagues and deal with difficulties in a fair and



professional manner. The allocation of resources is seen to be just and equitable. It is obvious to all that their opinions are valued and that their expertise is being fully utilised. Tensions are resolved through open discussion. Each Dimension has been broken down, as above, into elements for finer analysis.

## **A Management Culture**

**Element 1 - Building the whole school community**

**Element 2 - Building appropriate ethos and values**

**(SMT, Staff, Students, Governors, Parents, Other Partners)**

## **B Management Policies**

**Element 1 - Developing and implementing clear practices and procedures**

**Element 2 - Organising a school for all – Interpersonal Features**

**Element 3 - Securing inclusion, participation and involvement**

**(SMT, (All) Staff, Students, Governors, Parents, Other Partners)**

## **C Management Practices**

**Element 1 - Orchestrating effective teaching and learning**

**Element 2 - Resolving conflict**

**Element 3 - Mobilising resources**

## **Summary of Research Methodology**

As has been discussed previously the quadrant approach was found to be inappropriate for this phase of the study as it was incapable of addressing the organisational issues contained in the indicators.

Within each target group of schools Headteachers were asked to distribute copies of the questionnaire to a nominated sample of teachers which would secure a representative sample.

The sample consisted of:

- Leadership group - Headteacher and one Deputy Headteacher;
- Middle Management Group - one Subject Leader and one Pastoral Leader;
- Teachers - one NQT or teacher with less than five years experience and one experienced teacher with ten or more years experience;

To eliminate contamination of the evidence and to secure confidentiality (Burgess, 1985) Headteachers were asked to allow staff to complete the questionnaires in private. Individual envelopes were provided for each questionnaire so that replies could be kept confidential. There was evidence of reply envelopes being double sealed with sellotape by subject leaders and teachers to ensure privacy. A pre paid envelope was sent to each school for the return of the batch of questionnaires.

## **Data Analysis Methodology**

Responses were scored for unambiguous evidence, defined as tangible evidence that could be inspected if required, for example a published procedure or compliance with an established quality standard such as Investors in People. Insubstantial evidence such as, "Senior staff are available if required" did not score. Blanks were noted and taken as inability to provide evidence. An indicator was deemed to exist in a school if all staff in the sample agreed about its existence.

The data was initially analysed to determine if there were indicators that applied to all schools. Thereafter the Indicators were reviewed by school type to see if there were identifiable characteristics of the various classes of school in the sample. The percentage agreement with a category of school will be discussed. Subsequently each Dimension was analysed by individual indicator so that similarities and comparisons could be made between school types. Similarly each Indicator was analysed by class of respondents so that agreements, disagreements, gaps and inconsistencies could be assessed. A summary after the analysis of each dimension would conceptualise the similarities and differences between schools and classes of respondents.

## **Findings**

### **Response Rates**

There was a small but consistent number of positive returns across the three types of school, nine in total. As indicated previously the research precedent



has been set (Booth et al, 2000) for small sample sizes in this type of research. Additionally, given the cumulative nature of this study, the intention was not to establish and validate initial principles but rather to extend concepts which had been previously established and triangulated through the previous phases of the study.

The reasons for schools declining to participate are analysed below (Figure 4.39). Additionally 4% of both the Beacon and Special Measures Schools failed to provide a full complement of questionnaires and so these schools were eliminated from the analysis.

		%	%	%	%	%
	N	Returned	Incomplete	Analysed	Declined	Not Returned
Top Schools	25	12	0	12	32	56
Beacon Schools	25	16	4	12	20	60
Special Measures	25	16	4	12	24	56

**Figure 4.39 Response Rates**

### **Reasons for Non Participation**

Reasons supplied by schools who declined to take part were predominantly to do with workload and pressures on teachers' time (63%). Other reasons were that the questionnaire was not compulsory (5%) or that the school was

in Special Measures (16%). 16% gave no reason at all and simply returned the questionnaires not completed.

Support and administrative staff were included in the sample. Returns from this segment of the school staff were problematic, however. Of the returns received 30% of schools failed to distribute questionnaires to any of these staff. A further 55% only included a single representative of this group. The returns (15%) that were received were characterised by large sections of the questionnaire not being completed by this section of the school staff. It became impossible, therefore, to include Learning Support Assistants (LSAs) and Administrative staff responses in the final results and so they were excluded from the analysis.

This deliberate reduction in the survey sample was acceptable in research terms as the focus of the study had centred previously on Headteachers and their teaching colleagues. The addition of LSAs in this final section would have been interesting but not critical as the focus of the study is on Headteachers, their management teams and teaching colleagues.

### **The Indicators**

An indicator was only accepted as a distinguishing factor for a particular school if it was evidenced by all staff. The rationale was that if the indicator was a guiding principle it would be universally appreciated and embedded in the policies and practices of all of the individuals concerned.

## **The Indicators of Management Excellence**

A minimalist definition of management excellence can be deduced from the results which is common to all school types. This can be described as follows:

In terms of culture and ethos:

- Established policies and practices to make all members of the school feel welcome;
- Demonstrable peer support in evidence between members of staff;
- High expectations for students who were all valued equally;
- Senior staff ensuring that all staff are adequately informed about the progress of the school.

In terms of policies:

- Everyone in the school is clear about its aims;
- Policies are regularly reviewed;
- The Headteacher has a policy of making her/himself available and does not have any colleagues who are favoured above others.

In terms of practices:

- Teachers expect senior staff to observe and comment on their teaching;
- There are established strategies for supporting teachers experiencing classroom problems;



- Teachers feel supported by senior members of staff;
- Senior members of staff observe teachers as part of the performance management process.

### **Top and Beacon Schools**

Various indicators were shown to be characteristic of both Top and Beacon Schools. These were all 'top down' indicators and focus on the role of senior managers and the ways that they treated teachers.

In particular:

- The Headteacher ensures that all staff participate in the functioning of the school;
- Teachers experiencing problems with pupils feel that they will be adequately supported by senior staff;
- Staff expertise is fully utilised by the management team;
- Policies for change are explained by SMT to everyone.

In similar vein in Beacon Schools the Headteacher was perceived as being accessible and staff felt they could voice objections without recriminations. Somewhat ironically this facility had limited power in such schools as there was a pervasive view from teachers that policy formation was the exclusive preserve of senior members of staff. A further irony, of course, is that these schools had been singled out because of their management excellence.

## **Special Measures Schools**

Throughout the analysis of the questionnaires it will be demonstrated that Special Measures Schools were distinctive in critical areas and made maximum use of the management opportunities presented by their unique position. In common with Beacon Schools staff felt the security of being able to voice their opinions and shared the practice of observing colleagues' teaching.

Certain indicators, however, distinguished Special Measures Schools from the rest and showed them to be collaborative, inclusive and open establishments. Their management environment was often characterised by a 'bottom up' approach.

Working together was a key feature of such schools in that their established practices of teachers planning their work together was more pervasive than in the other classes of school. All staff also discussed teaching effectiveness openly and frequently. Of even greater significance was the definite devolution of power and teachers' firm role in policy formation and in creating the direction for the school. In Special Measures Schools decisions were only made after full consultation with the staff. Teachers in these schools also felt that disciplinary matters were handled fairly and that resources were distributed equitably.

## **The School Community, the Views of Senior Staff**

Figures 4.40, 4.41 and 4.45 indicate that there is marked agreement across senior members of staff generally, irrespective of school type, about those indicators which characterised their schools. An analysis by school type indicates the most robust agreement is shown in Top and Beacon Schools (average: 83% Top Schools, 88% Beacon Schools, 72% Special Measures).

This is in contrast to the significantly lower levels of agreement for other teachers (average: 41% Top Schools, 43% Beacon Schools, 54% Special Measures).

An analysis of the questionnaires indicates that whilst Top and Beacon Schools have distinct procedures and policies in place to secure collaboration, participation and the involvement of all staff, teachers see their participation in the running of their schools as limited. There is a deference to senior colleagues and an acceptance that their role is inferior which contrasts sharply with the highly participative and collaborative culture that will be outlined in Special Measures Schools. It is of note also that Special Measures Schools, in addition to Beacon Schools, demonstrate a high level of agreement between senior staff and teachers about the indicators of their schools (average 47%, 48% respectively ) compared to Top Schools (40%).



## The Indicators

Indicator	Item	Top 250 Schools		Beacon Schools		Special Measures	
		SMT	Staff	SMT	Staff	SMT	Staff
A 1 1	<b>Welcoming school</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100
A 1 2	Student peer help	100	100	100	33	100	67
A 1 3	<b>Staff peer help</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100
A 1 4	Senior staff treat teachers with respect	100	67	100	67	100	67
A 1 5	Staff and student mutual respect	100	33	100	33	100	33
A 1 6	Partnership staff and parents	100	67	100	67	33	33
A 1 7	Staff and governors	100	0	100	0	100	0
A 1 8	Local communities and the school	100	67	100	100	100	100
A 2 1	<b>High expectations for students</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100
A 2 2	<b>Students valued equally</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100
A 2 3	Staff valued equally	100	67	100	100	100	0
A 2 4	LSA and Admin staff valued	100	33	100	100	100	67
A 2 5	<b>Information from Senior staff</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100
A 2 6	Staff involved in formulating policy	100	67	100	33	67	100
A 2 7	Teachers have opinion canvassed	100	33	100	33	67	100
A 2 8	Collaborative working	100	67	100	33	67	100
A 2 9	Parental Involvement	67	0	67	0	33	0
	% total agreement over indicators in this dimension	94%	23%	94%	29%	70%	47%

**Figure 4.40 Results Dimension A (Culture)**

## **Dimension A Management Culture**

### **Element 1 Building the School Community**

#### **The Interpersonal Dimensions of the School, Senior Staff**

Figure 4.40 shows that School Leaders share a common rubric about their schools which shows a substantial level of agreement about the indicators that distinguish them both within and across school types. (94%, 94%, 70% respectively).

The SMT view was that their schools were welcoming. Staff, including Learning Support Assistants, and pupils worked in a supportive environment where mutual respect was the keynote. Partnerships flourished, in SMT's opinions, between staff, parents, governors and the local community. High expectations for pupils were the norm and staff were adequately informed by senior staff and had their views canvassed before any policy decision became operational.

Teachers agreed that their schools were welcoming. (A.1.1) The evidence produced here was that there were physical displays in school entrances and that there were established procedures for the induction of new pupils and staff.

## **Students and Peer Support (A.1.2)**

Teachers in Top Schools were enthusiastic about the peer help that was offered by students. Staff here made reference to mentoring and peer mediation schemes which were common across this group of schools. Other instances in this group of schools were the school council, made up of pupils, which had “real teeth”. Such arrangements were less common in Beacon Schools.

In the case of Special Measures Schools staff made reference to confrontational pupils so that their view of peer support was not as encouraging as their SMT colleagues. They did, however, pay tribute to some “good buddies” and “good friendship groups”. Peer support here, therefore, was not as well established as in the other schools but relied on interpersonal support.

## **Staff Support**

Support and peer support for staff (A.1.3) was universally credited, with all schools mentioning established procedures such as those for supporting Newly Qualified Teachers (NQTs). From answers given by staff in Special Measures Schools it became obvious that teachers had a clear perception of those colleagues who were capable and confident and, by contrast, those teachers who were “struggling”. Special Measures procedures which include



regular observation and feedback from HMI on teaching effectiveness had clearly thrown these differences into relief. When it came to the responses to A.2.3 on the extent that staff were valued equally this contrast was reinforced with one teacher commenting (Special Measures School):

“I don’t believe that teachers are valued equally, but often due to their own incompetence or negative attitudes. I think supporting their lessons should re-motivate some.”

There were blanks from Special Measures Schools in response to this question which may be indicative of the fact that mutual respect amongst the staff is not universal in that they could not supply evidence of this indicator.

Respect from Senior Members of staff (A.1.4) was clearly in evidence from SMT’s point of view but this view was not shared by teachers. Many paid testament to ‘open door’ policies and SMT’s approachability. In 33% of all schools, however, staff pointed out that some SMT did treat teachers with respect, others did not. One teacher commented that some senior colleagues perceive teachers “to be a problem”. The pattern, therefore, of general acceptance of the approachability and interpersonal concern of SMT tempered with distinct distance, even hostility to various staff members was common across all school types.

## **Parents, Governors and the Wider Community**

Partnership with parents (A.1.6, A.1.8) provided a starker contrast between the schools. Top and Beacon Schools were able to cite well attended parents' evenings and groups and committees of parents who supported the school, many with staff representatives. Special Measures Schools, however, were unable to quote such examples. One teacher commented, "very little (evidence that there is a real partnership between staff and parents) very difficult, only about 50% of parents are willing to talk and trust staff individually."

Other Special Measures School staff commented, "This is an extremely difficult area to crack." Others simply commented starkly, "No".

Special Measures Schools instanced creative methods of trying to involve parents such as coffee mornings to meet the Head and Staff. One subject leader commented, however, "The PTA has been struggling for some time to become an effective group."

Indicator A.2.9 was designed to highlight definite parental activity in the school above and beyond formal committees. SMT in Top and Beacon Schools quoted extensive involvement of parents in key functional areas of the schools such as 'Citizenship, Literacy and Numeracy'. Staff in these schools, however, showed either ignorance or indifference to this activity and noted that parental involvement was "limited and restricted to fund raising".

In line with comments elsewhere on parental involvement in Special Measures Schools their involvement was minimal. One teacher commented, "... not enough, the majority don't wish to be involved."

In terms of partnership with Governors (A.1.7) there was a stark contrast in the perceptions of SMT and others in the school, irrespective of school type. Many of the examples from staff were insubstantial such as "each department has a link Governor" but no evidence of effective partnership was offered other than the existence of the role. Other teachers instanced staff Governor social occasions. Other teachers admitted, "I don't think we do very well on this", "not a strong point".

Senior staff were able to quote support from Governors for specific tasks, for example, supporting the school in disputes with the LEA. The majority of the teachers' comments highlighted their lack of understanding of the operation of Governors within the school. One teacher commented (Top School – Subject Leader), "There are apparently governors with an interest in each subject, although I am not sure if this works well in practice."

Another commented (Special Measures – Teacher) "There are Board of Governors Meetings. I know nothing about this."

Most schools were able to quote examples of community involvement with more extensive examples coming from Top and Beacon Schools. Special



Measures Schools particularly quoted extensive examples of involvement and sponsorship. The only gap in involvement came from Top Schools where staff were unable to quote examples or left this section blank.

A summary of the findings concerning building the school community is outlined below (Figure 4.41).

<b>Area</b>	<b>Top Schools</b>	<b>Beacon Schools</b>	<b>Special Measures Schools</b>
Student Involvement	Strong and established	Evolutionary	Problematic
Mutual staff support	Established	Established	Established
Respect for staff from SMT	Variable	Variable	Variable
Partnership with parents	Extensive	Extensive	Problematic and low
Involvement of parents	Extensive	Extensive	Weak and problematic
Awareness of governor involvement	Low	Low	Low
Community Involvement	Established	Established	Extensive

**Figure 4.41 Dimension A1 Building the School Community**

## **Dimension A2 Staff and Student Values**

### **Building Ethos and Values**

Element 2 of this dimension is about building ethos and values. Indicator A.2.1 is at the heart of this and, indeed, of the entire purpose of a school and concerns building high expectations for students. Chapter 2 made ample reference to the school and pupil performance agenda and this is reflected in all of the educators' comments across all types of school. All schools paid testament to scrupulous targeting of pupil achievement and about procedures for academic monitoring. As far as attitudes amongst students were concerned, codes of conduct were amply evidenced to show that behaviour management was high on all schools' agendas.

In similar vein indicator A.2.2 which concerns valuing students equally and securing the inclusion of all students was volubly witnessed. SMT, subject leaders and teachers all evidenced equal opportunities policies and other key strategies, particularly about bullying.

In response to the issue of students being valued equally, teachers in all schools commented favourably and positively; such comments, evident across all types of school were in evidence, "This is the ethos of the school" and "This school has a clear inclusion policy".

All staff mentioned structures, such as school councils, being in place in schools across categories to ensure that students had a say in the running of

their schools. Staff also verified that these organisations were effective by listing the issues which had been raised and resolved in this forum.

Curricular inclusion was also high on the agenda across all school types so that all areas of the curriculum were accessible to all children. In particular, gender issues were raised so that equality of access was assured for both boys and girls. Differentiation in terms of learning opportunities was widely in evidence and a common comment was, "our provision is wide and varied".

Valuing staff equally in these same schools demonstrated a different picture as has already been discussed with indicator A.2.3. Beacon Schools were the most robust here with information being provided about subject leaders managing their teams (from subject leaders) and how effective they (SMT and staff) felt counselling and line management were to motivate demotivated colleagues. In these schools professional development was seen as a motivating force. All in all there was universal approval in these schools that the indicator applied.

The picture was similar in Top Schools but the comments centred around procedures, once again, particularly performance management. There was only one dissenting voice in the whole sample here where a teacher stated that "some staff feel that they are not valued".

As has been noted already with Special Measures Schools, staff appreciate that some of their colleagues are not valued because of their incompetence



or their negative attitude. The zero figure in Figure 4.40 is indicative both of the negative comments but also because in every Special Measures School teachers left this section blank so that it could not count as an indicator.

The findings concerning building ethos and values in a school are summarised below (Figure 4.42).

<b>Area</b>	<b>Top Schools</b>	<b>Beacon Schools</b>	<b>Special Measures Schools</b>
High Expectations for students	Established	Established	Established
Students valued equally	Established	Established	Established
Staff Valued Equally	Established	Procedural	Polarised

**Figure 4.42 Dimension A2 Building Ethos and Values**

### **Involvement and Participation**

The remaining element concerning Dimension A2, Building Ethos and Values concerns the issues of involvement and participation.

The starkest contrast between the schools involved those indicators concerning the involvement of staff in formulating policy and in being consulted by SMT when considering dimension A2.

Consultation (A.2.6) was well established in two thirds of the Top Schools with the remainder of staff in the other Top Schools expressing reservations about the effectiveness of consultation. They made the point that this was just a token exercise with the decision already having been made by SMT. In these schools there was frequent mention of one way information, as opposed to consultation, such as the occurrence of briefing meetings. In these schools the School Development Plan was displayed in public places with the inference rather than the expectation that staff could comment upon it.

The position was similar in Beacons Schools but markedly fewer teachers were able to instance consultation groups or activities.

A common comment from Top and Beacon Schools was, "Many staff would say that they are not (adequately informed). The perception is that decisions are a fait accompli. We are told about the progress of initiatives at the early morning meetings."

Others commented ruefully with relation to A.2.6, "Not all staff are involved in all policy decisions" and "This could be improved on - some work of this kind is done in working parties but in other instances staff are informed of decisions."

## **The contrast In Special Measures Schools**

It was in the Special Measures Schools, however, that the contrast was most marked with indicator A.2.6. The reason why SMT failed to score 100% here was that they succumbed to humility and commented that this was not fully established but a development area. Their staff, however, paid testament to the robust consultation policies that were in force in such schools. Responses to A.2.6 highlighted that there was an expectation that policies would not be implemented unless and until staff had had the opportunity to comment on them.

A Special Measures teacher commented and others echoed the sentiment, "Almost all policies are formulated by the aid of all staff. Opinions are listened to and often effect the final policies."

Such comment was substantiated by, "Consultation is well established and effective."

The process was outlined with definite clarity by this Special Measures teacher in responding to A.2.8 "At present policies are developed by SMT/ Working Groups and given out for development by staff".



Another teacher commented, "We have a process for reviewing existing policies and consulting on new. Staff teams are asked to give views and individuals can respond in addition if they wish to."

It would appear that the requirement to be absolutely clear about the direction of the school as a result of the Special Measures procedures brought in its train the need to recruit staff involvement and secure their agreement in and participation in any new policy. Where this was often tentative in Top and Beacon Schools the robustness of consultation and collaboration was consistent in Special Measures Schools.

### **Collaboration**

In terms of collaboration (A.2.8) much of the activity referred to here in Top Schools was confined to working in departments to develop resources and teaching schemes. This was in evidence, similarly, in Beacon Schools but to a lesser extent (Figure 4.40). A teacher from a Top School captured, with unintentional irony, the uncertainty with regard to whole-school collaboration with the comment, "Collaborative working, yes but I don't know how many or on what topics". As above, it was only in Special Measures Schools that collaborative working was a reality and integrated in a meaningful way into school development planning.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Top Schools</b>	<b>Beacon Schools</b>	<b>Special Measures Schools</b>
Collaborative working amongst staff	Limited	Limited	Extensive
Staff Involvement in policy formation	Limited	Limited	Integral
Canvassing of opinion	Passive	Passive	Active

**Figure 4.43 Dimension A2 Ethos and Values (Collaboration)**

### **Dimension B. Management Policies**

This dimension concerns the creation of transparent and ubiquitous policies. It is through this element that the critical areas of collegiality, participation and involvement are examined. Open management is also key in this dimension.

Indicator	Item	Top 250		Beacon		Special Measures	
		SMT	Staff	SMT	Staff	SMT	Staff
B 1 1	<b>Clarity of aims</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
B 1 2	Policy the preserve of senior staff	67	100	100	100	0	0
B 1 3	Decision-making devolved	33	0	33	0	67	67
B 1 4	Policy regularly reviewed	<b>100</b>	67*	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
B 1 5	Decisions only made after consultation	67	100	100	0	100	100
B 2 1	Headteacher accessibility	<b>100</b>	33	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	67
B 2 2	<b>Headteacher has no preferred group</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
B 2 3	Staff criticisms dealt with fairly and openly	<b>100</b>	0	<b>100</b>	67	<b>100</b>	67
B 2 4	Staff can voice objections	<b>100</b>	67	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
B 2 5	Staff meetings an open forum	33	0	33	0	0	0
B 2 6	Teaching performance dealt with honestly	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	0	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>
B 3 1	Headteacher ensures that all staff participate in the functioning of the school	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>100</b>	67	<b>100</b>
B 3 2	Barriers to participation are removed	33	0	100	0	67	0
	% total agreement over indicators in this dimension	62%	46%	85%	54%	62%	54%

**Bold** – agreed indicator common to all schools

**Figure 4.44 Results Dimension B (Policy)**



## **School Aims, Devolution of Decision-making and Consultation**

**Element 1 Clear practices and Procedures**

**Element 2 - Organising a school for all Interpersonal Features**

**Element 3 - Securing, participation and involvement**

Figure 4.44 indicates that all staff are in agreement across all school types about aims and objectives (B.1.1) and that all policies are regularly reviewed. (B.1.4) The 67% figure in indicator B.1.4 is significant in that a number of NQTs offered no evidence and indicated that they 'did not know' about the element under consideration. Ironically this contrasts with indicator A.2.5 which highlights the effective communication mechanisms between senior staff and their colleagues across all schools. It would appear that headline activity is communicated to staff but that pockets of ignorance and disengagement go undetected by SMTs.

Lack of awareness both with NQTs and those with more experience, concerning the existence of indicators, compared with the perceptions of school leaders, is a common theme across this dimension which concerns itself with the operation of policies within a school and argues that communication strategies are seriously flawed despite both SMT and staff testifying to their adequacy (A.2.5).

The results in phases 1 to 3 of this study indicated that decision-making tended to be centralised (despite protestations to the contrary). School Leaders in Top Schools, in this phase of the research, similarly uttered

statements of intent that formulating policy (B.1.3) was 'to a certain extent' devolved to others and instanced middle managers and teachers. Staff responses, however, refuted this finding and ratified the earlier conclusion that decision-making rested firmly with the Head and the SMT.

There was consistent agreement amongst SMTs of Beacon Schools that creating policy was their preserve. They added the caveat that this is only after policies had been 'referred' to staff and that they were prepared to listen and "take feedback into account" to ensure that "everyone's views are considered". There was a clear acceptance, however, by SMTs that this was their role.

Teachers across the board in Top and Beacon Schools endorsed the finding that decision-making was the preserve of SMT. There were no examples in indicator B.1.2 (staff in Top and Beacon Schools) of decisions not taken by SMT.

Responses from teachers in Top and Beacon Schools varied from tacit acceptance of this situation, "SMT take all policy decisions" through comments that highlighted limited consultation: "senior managers take decisions after management groups have had their input" and "SMT make major decisions, but HODS (Heads of Department) and Year Coordinators can take minor decisions" to the resentful, "Yes decisions are taken by a group of five men".

## **Devolution and Special Measures Schools**

It is significant with the Special Measures Schools that devolution was more pronounced and correlated with indicator A.2.6 where staff were closely involved in formulating policy. One Special Measures School Deputy captured the essence of the comments:

**“We prefer to collaborate with a wide section of staff to ‘create’ ideas.”**

Special Measures teachers substantiated this view that policy decisions are only ratified “when everyone is happy” and “when everyone has had their say.”

Unsurprisingly there is a strong connection between the findings related to this indicator concerning the locus of decision-making resting with SMT and comments concerning devolution of decision-making from Senior to other staff, indicator B.1.3.

A third of SMT in Top and Beacons Schools indicated there was the possibility that decision-making could pass to the staff and particular task groups but staff in these schools indicated the reality that they had a limited role in decision-making. Such involvement was “only to a limited extent” or “where appropriate” as “major decisions are made by SMT”.



One teacher commented that,

“In theory HODs (Heads of Department) and YCs (Year Coordinators) disseminate into their teams with opportunities to report their views back. In practice it doesn't always work.”

Special Measures Schools, however, showed a firmer pattern of devolution. Where doubts were expressed about decision-making being devolved to staff the reason was not that because it was deemed to be inappropriate but more to do with ‘coaching’ the staff into being able to participate. SMTs in the Special Measures Schools made reference to staff being “taught to be confident” and formulate policy after the trauma of a negative OFSTED inspection.

## **Consultation**

SMTs in all schools set great store by consultation (B.1.5). The 67% figure for Top Schools' SMTs in B.1.5 in Figure 4.44 does not negate the willingness of SMT to consult, simply it records their opinion that frequently there is no time to do so.

Staff in Top Schools were often consulted using formal procedures, such as the committee structure of the school. It has already been noted that staff in Special Measures Schools are intimately involved in policy discussions and so the 100% consultation figure supports previous findings. The zero % figure for Beacon Schools should not be interpreted as a total lack of staff

consultation, but simply that there was a lack of total agreement across any school in this class that consultation was an established process. Teachers commented that there were “very few opportunities to discuss issues” and that it was obvious that “general staff opinion had little influence.” This is clearly an ironic flaw in the management arrangements in Beacon Schools.

Taking indicators B.1.3 and B.1.5 together it would appear that of the schools surveyed in this research in the Top and Beacon Schools categories consultation and involvement are not always fully established. This contrasts sharply with Special Measures Schools where consultation and policy formation are inextricably linked (Figure 4.45).

**Dimension B1 Developing clear practices and procedures**

<b>Area</b>	<b>Top Schools</b>	<b>Beacon Schools</b>	<b>Special Measures Schools</b>
Policy Created by	SMT	SMT	All staff
Devolution of decision-making	Partial	Partial	Total and established
Consultation	Restricted by time pressures	Not established	Total and established

**Figure 4.45 Summary Devolution and Consutation**

## **The Interpersonal Climate, a School for All**

### **Headteachers and their Staff**

Headteachers in all schools saw themselves as universally accessible (B.2.1). They, and their staff, paid testament to the fact that there was no 'King's Court' in operation where favoured colleagues gained the ear of the Headteacher in preference to others. The only reservations to the 'open door' policy that all Headteachers nominated was that staff declared that Heads were often 'too busy' to see teachers (two thirds of Top Schools and one third of Special Measures Schools).

This openness was further explored in indicators B.2.3 (criticisms concerning staff) and B.2.4 (the freedom with which staff could voice objections).

### **Staff Criticism**

SMTs displayed wholehearted agreement that criticisms concerning staff (B.2.3) were dealt with openly and fairly. They highlighted formal procedures like meeting regularly with union representatives and formally reporting to staff any criticism that had been made. The lack of correlation in terms of the staff of Top Schools does not imply criticism or negation of this remark but simply that the situation was a non issue. One subject leader commented, "There are no moves afoot to demand that they (criticisms of staff) should be (treated fairly). Some teachers said in non committal fashion that feedback



was given but the vast majority stated that they 'did not know' about the operation of this indicator. It would appear that in Top Schools criticisms of staff are so low that the issue does not merit consideration.

In Beacon and Special Measures Schools, however, more definite procedures were cited. Beacon School teachers acknowledged the confidential nature of this issue and that matters were "fairly handled". Teachers commented also that to complement formal procedures there were open discussions in the staff room and that teachers were very supportive of each other against criticism from outside.

The situation with Special Measures Schools, however was very different. Such schools and their staffs would obviously be open to criticism after a negative OFSTED report. Robust procedures were in force to deal fairly, equitably and completely with any critical comment. Teachers commented that a formal written report was written after every criticism and that if any meetings were held as a result that these were minuted.

### **Staff voicing criticism and the ability to debate school issues**

SMT and teachers agree in all classes of school that facilities exist for staff to voice criticisms (B.2.3). There were distinct differences, however, in the approaches that were adopted for this to take place. Top and Beacon Schools were highly procedural in approach. They conducted formal staff

surveys, issued questionnaires and analysed minutes of meetings in order to unearth criticism.

Staff voicing criticism incurred no recriminations in Top and Beacon Schools as witnessed by one teacher who noted that a member of staff had publicly objected to an issue and had subsequently been promoted! Other teachers in such schools paid testament to fair treatment and that staff felt secure. 33% of Top Schools could not provide evidence to support the fact that staff could voice objections openly. This was simply because such situations did not arise in such schools. Teachers reported “a lack of complaints” and “no evidence of this” or left this indicator blank.

The situation in Special Measures Schools, however, was different and depended less on procedures and more on interpersonal contact and one to one consultation of SMT with staff. One Headteacher encouraged the staff to email him and, even though his technique argued lack of face to face contact, the communication was at least direct from teacher to Headteacher.

The climate in Special Measures Schools was highlighted as one of “fear”.

“I think a number of staff will not voice objections because of fear. This leaves the minority to do so. It is fear not the reality.”

The sentiment is convoluted but indicates that in a threatening environment, such as that after a critical OFTSED report, only the vocal minority will voice their critical concerns. The final epithet indicates that in reality the fear is

illusory and that there are no real impediments to expressing one's opinions. Such a sentiment is corroborated by the previous findings that staff consultation and involvement is real in these circumstances and that SMT will "listen and respond".

### **Staff Meetings**

It has been noted previously, in phases 2 and 3, that staff meetings (B.2.5) in the schools studied are a rarity. SMT in Top and Beacon Schools indicated the logistical problems of engineering discussions with large numbers of teachers. A Beacon Headteacher noted the difficulties in implementing democracy in a staff meeting, others noted the fact that such a forum was not best suited to airing ideas, others declared that they were only "for information".

An interesting dichotomy revealed itself in relation to teachers' opinions of staff meetings. The majority across all school types clearly valued them as a means of being kept in touch and involved. They also appreciated that they were limited in their opportunities to air opinions and debate issues. Teachers commented "we rarely discuss things in staff meetings" and "staff meetings are not for discussion"

The situation was exacerbated by the micropolitical ploy noted by Hoyle (1982) that such meetings are often held at the end of the day when staff are exhausted with little spirit for fight and debate. One teacher echoed this



sentiment, "There is some discussion but not a lot after a busy and exhausting day."

Teachers also recorded psychological fatigue which had the same effect, "too many meetings on top of everything else is an issue."

The net effect of this indicator is that opportunity for debate across the school is severely curtailed and manoeuvred into smaller gatherings where SMT are either not present or so exposed. It has been noted already that the communication of opinion from such smaller gatherings is highly procedural, in the form of analysis of minutes, for example, and feedback is constrained to written reports.

A Beacon teacher paid testament to this restriction,

"Staff meetings usually have an agenda item or two whilst discussion may ensue. AOB is rarely available."

Another teacher indicated the in-built debilitating effect of a supposed democratic forum,

"People often lose focus on the principle behind meetings because they're seen to use up our preparation time!"

## **The Management of Teaching Performance**

In terms of teaching performance (B.2.6) it became clear that schools were adhering here to the formal government strategy on performance management, including applying the procedures to determine whether teachers had satisfied the criteria to pass beyond the performance threshold in order to acquire an enhanced salary. SMTs quoted the formal procedures as evidence of this indicator together with supplementary practices that operated in their schools, for example classroom monitoring sheets in Top Schools and lesson observation forms in Special Measures Schools. Special Measures Schools were also subject to formal evaluation of teaching performance from HMI with formal feedback and implementation measures to SMT and Middle Managers. Teachers in Special Measures Schools echoed these procedures and paid testament to the “frequent monitoring” to which they were subjected as well as the supportive teacher mentoring schemes that had been initiated to support staff.

What was surprising in this section was the apparent confusion of Beacon School staff over the issue of performance. Almost 70% of teachers in these schools stated that they either did not understand the question or simply recorded “don’t know”. This indicates ignorance of formal performance management procedures or the fact that, like Top Schools and the issue of staff criticisms, the issue was of no pressing concern. For the purposes of this study and the management effectiveness of communication and



involvement it would appear that policies and procedures are at best tenuous in this area and points to the fact that deliberate management strategies need to be implemented to overcome the confusion. The interpersonal climate in schools has been summarised in Figure 4.46.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Top Schools</b>	<b>Beacon Schools</b>	<b>Special Measures Schools</b>
Headteacher availability	Accessible but limited by time constraints	Accessible	Accessible but limited by time constraints
Dealing with criticisms of staff	Procedural Low occurrence	Procedural Low occurrence	Highly structured
Staff voicing objections	Procedural	Procedural	Interpersonal
Staff Meetings	For Information Low discussion	For Information Low discussion	For Information Low discussion
Teaching Performance	Not of pressing concern	Lack of clarity and cohesion	Highly structured approach

**Figure 4.46 Dimension B2 Interpersonal Features**

### **Headteachers and Participation**

The final indicators in this Management Policies section concern the activities of Headteachers in ensuring that staff participate in the running of the school (B.3.1) and investigating how any barriers to participation were removed (B.3.2).



Headteachers in all classes of school frequently declined to comment here, possibly through modesty. Their Leadership Team, however, were able to supply supporting information and pay testament to the high expectations that Headteachers had of their staff. The comments differed in nature depending on the type of school. Top Schools based their comments on the personal commitment of the Headteachers. Staff in these schools highlighted the opportunities that were offered to them to participate. Beacon Schools, on the other hand, placed greater emphasis on the formal processes that were in place, such as job descriptions and line management structures that secured participation. Staff being compelled to attend calendared meetings was highlighted here as a method of ensuring that participation was a contractual obligation.

In Special Measures Schools the comments were tempered by the reality of their situation. On the one hand the school was compelled to respond to formal requirements as dictated by HMI and so Headteachers pointed out that participation was compulsory. On the other hand 33% of Headteachers in these schools made the point that their staff were busy, even "overstretched", and so the reality was that many had reached their threshold of participation beyond which it would be unreasonable to demand any more. One teacher commented, "The Head encourages participation but some can't manage."

When specific detail was requested about how barriers to participation were removed the Headteachers in Top Schools declined to comment. Only a



third picked up the request to provide details about how reluctant staff were to be handled. One Headteacher captured the mood when he said he would “pick them out to help and support me.”

SMT in Beacon Schools, once again, relied on procedures to overcome barriers with a “logical and rational programme of meetings” and “if they don’t like the issues then this will be referred to their line manager.” Robustness, again, was also demonstrated here as the view of reluctant colleagues would be ‘targeted’ so that they could be encouraged to be involved. The patterns of staff responses to this indicator were consistent. The most common answer was “don’t know” and so there was no agreement in Top and Beacon Schools on this issue. A finer analysis of Beacon Schools, however, indicated that whilst at teacher level there was considerable uncertainty, there was substantial agreement (in all schools) amongst middle managers (subject leaders) about consultation processes and tactics to involve staff. Viewing the results overall it would appear that implementing the participation of staff is a middle management concern. Special Measures Schools exhibited the same uncertainty from staff but 33% of schools indicated that the personal interests of staff were used to encourage them to participate and that they were given every chance to air their opinions. This finding is in keeping with other data on Special Measures Schools where the involvement of and consultation with staff characterise such schools. A summary of the methods of securing participation is indicated below (Figure 4.47).

<b>Area</b>	<b>Top Schools</b>	<b>Beacon Schools</b>	<b>Special Measures Schools</b>
Securing participation	Through personal actions of Headteacher	Through formal processes	Compulsory (Special Measures procedures)
Overcoming barriers to participation	Not an issue	Through formal processes (Middle Management concern)	Through interpersonal means, encouragement and involvement

**Figure 4.47 Dimension B3 Securing Participation**

### **Dimension C Management Practices**

This section of the questionnaire was designed to look at the management culture and its policies as they actually operated in schools. The pattern of Senior Management Team agreement across the sample of schools was repeated here, as was the lower level of agreement as far as teachers were concerned.



The elements here were conceptualised into groups concerning managing effective learning (Element 1), resolving conflict (Element 2) and mobilising resources (Element 3).

Indicators (Figure 4.48) looked at:

- collaborative work practices and how they integrated with formal monitoring of teaching performance C.1.1, C.1.2, C.1.3, C.1.4, C.2.3, C.2.4;
- the level of support teachers felt as a complement to the formal supervisory and disciplinary procedures C.2.1, C.2.2, C.2.5;
- views on disciplinary procedures when the teaching performance was found to be unsatisfactory C.2.6.

This section also looked at motivational matters in terms of staff feeling that their expertise was fully utilised (C.3.1) and that the environment in which they worked was fairly organised in that the resources that they had been allocated to do their jobs were equitably distributed (C.3.2). As an overarching indicator of professional inclusion all were asked if changes in the working environment were openly discussed and explained to all stakeholders at the school.

Indicator	Item	Top 250		Beacon		Special Measures	
		SMT	Staff	SMT	Staff	SMT	Staff
C 1 1	Teachers observing other teachers	100	100	100	67	100	100
C 1 2	<b>Senior staff observing teachers</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100
C 1 3	Teachers plan in groups	100	67	100	67	100	100
C 1 4	LSA involvement in student progress	100	67	100	67	33	33
C 2 1	<b>Support for teachers facing problems</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100
C 2 2	<b>Support for teachers from senior staff</b>	100	100	100	100	100	100
C 2 3	Do staff feel they are being watched	100	0	67	0	0	0
C 2 4	Teaching effectiveness openly discussed	67	67	67	67	100	100
C 2 5	Teachers feel supported	100	100	100	100	100	33
C 2 6	Disciplinary policy fair and handled well	100	67	100	67	100	100
C 3 1	Staff expertise fully utilised	100	100	100	100	100	33
C 3 2	School resources distributed fairly	100	67	100	67	100	100
C 3 3	Policies for change explained to everyone	100	100	100	100	100	67
	% total agreement over indicators in this dimension	92	54	85	46	85	61

**Bold – agreed indicator common to all schools**

**Figure 4.48 Results Dimension C (Practices)**

## **Collaboration and monitoring of teaching performance**

The central indicator here (C.1.3) was that which focused on teachers planning, reviewing and organising their teaching in groups. SMT in all schools paid testament to teams of teachers planning and collaborating together. Some had slight reservations, such as the 67% of Top School Headteachers, who admitted that the practice was variable across their schools and that some groups were better at doing this than others. On the whole, however, SMTs highlighted departments working together both in directed time for departmental meetings and on In Service Training (INSET) sessions.

Teachers, however, were less positive about this practice and teachers in 33% of Top and Beacon Schools expressed reservations, either by declaring that they did not know or by saying that this happened “to some extent”. Others could provide evidence of their own departments carrying out these practices but were uncertain whether this happened in other subject areas. In terms of a consistent indicator, with a management practice universally accepted and evidenced across the school, therefore, this aspect was flawed.

The situation was different, however, in Special Measures Schools. The difference was highlighted by one teacher who said, “Due to close monitoring all teachers are expected to do this.” The authoritarian supervisory thrust, however, was not so apparent in the 100% agreement with the indicator and contained in comments which recorded that this was done “on a regular



basis”, “weekly in departmental meetings”, “all the time” and on a “regular basis”.

One element was isolated as a telling indicator of collaboration and openness, that of teachers expecting other teachers to comment on their teaching (C.1.1). This was designed to assess whether the activity of planning schemes of work and classroom activities together was taken a step further into peer observation of classroom and lesson effectiveness.

The SMTs in Top and Beacon Schools in response to this element made reference to performance management procedures. It was clear from their responses that this indicator was seen in supervisory terms. Here reference was made to “line management observations” and the need for “all HODS to observe and comment” on their department’s teaching effectiveness. All SMTs in Beacon Schools simply referred to the performance management requirement.

The comments in Special Measures Schools were different in nature. Undoubtedly, the performance management undertones were present in their comments but SMTs here focused on peer mentoring and mutual support. Comments here were not based around formal performance monitoring but on the “policy of sharing good practice” and the benefits of “two way observation”. One teacher commented, “Here we undertake regular observation and feedback”.

A similar pattern was noted when the question was asked about how openly teaching effectiveness was discussed (C.2.4). SMT in Top Schools again made reference to performance management procedures and in one case a formal review by Governors of teaching within a department. 33% of schools here admitted that teaching effectiveness was not discussed “as much as I’d like” and that “it has started and is getting better”. Beacon Schools in similar vein made reference to procedural occurrences of this indicator in the performance management procedures and “on the last INSET day.”

Staff in Top and Beacon Schools could confirm the perceptions of their senior colleagues in that this (teaching effectiveness) was discussed “as part of performance management”. They also, however, provided a caveat that this did not occur in a systematic way as this was “not on a formal basis”. They added that teaching successes were discussed in “small groups in the staffroom”. A third were more definite and confirmed that this educational debate did not occur.

Teachers in Special Measures Schools were more enthusiastic about this indicator, noting that it occurred “very much so in the department” “at all levels” and “regularly”. This should be seen as a corollary of the commitment to regular classroom observation and feedback. Procedures were clearly established, therefore, in these schools in contrast to the other schools where evidence was inconsistent.

The theme of performance monitoring has been present in the above analysis. Indicators C1.1, C.1.3, and C.2.4, however, have focused on collaboration between teachers and their willingness to work together and share. There is an extension of this activity which involves SMT in their formal observation of classroom activity. This indicator was introduced to assess the comparative weights of teacher to teacher collaboration when viewed against formal performance observation with staff in positions of authority.

The results indicated that SMTs in all schools expect to observe teachers. Beacon Schools also added that NQTs and Heads of Department were specifically assessed. Special Measures Schools indicated that such activity was “part of the QA process”.

Staff in all schools confirmed that they expected to be observed by senior colleagues. There was, however, a difference in perceptions between the groups of schools. The majority of Top and Beacon school staff mentioned that they only expected to be observed as part of the performance management process. The expectation was present, also, that this would be done “only” by the teacher’s line manager. There was, to contrast with this, specific comment by a minority of teachers that this should be part of their professional growth and that this “should be our expectation” but that this only occurred informally on SMT and Headteacher “walkabouts”.



This expectation was a reality in Special Measures Schools where there was a “calendar” of lesson observations that happened “regularly”. Staff in these schools universally stated that they “expected” to be observed, but not simply as a monitoring exercise in that they expected the subsequent feedback to be constructive.

One subject leader commented,

“Teachers expect observations and feedback. It is promoted as a positive thing.”

A companion indicator was included to determine if this formal monitoring was seen by staff as a hostile and intrusive element to their professional practice. Indicator C.2.3. asked if staff felt they were being watched? The question gave rise to differing interpretations of “being watched.” SMT across all schools interpreted the term as a supervisory imperative and made no apologies for the need to keep an eye on staff. Teachers and subject leaders, however, interpreted the term as it was originally intended, as an indication of critical and pervasive supervision where SMT were keeping an eye on them.

Top Schools indicated that there was no equivocation here that “yes” they would be watched and supervised. This was not entirely to unearth poor performance but to be “supportive” and to make staff “aware that they are doing a good job”. Other indicators for Top Schools (C.2.6) indicated that poor teaching performance was not an issue in such schools. Responses

here simply indicated that SMTs needed to provide themselves with reassurance that effective teaching was taking place and that they were undertaking their supervisory managerial role seriously and effectively. Staff in Top Schools confirmed that being watched and 'spied on' because of poor performance was not an issue and that SMT "kept a low profile".

The situation was less robust in Beacon Schools. 67% of SMTs were able to quote systems being in place, including the observation requirements of Investors in People (IIP). 33% stated, however, that there was "no formal classroom observation strategy". This would appear to contradict the earlier finding (C.1.2) that there was an expectation (amongst SMTs of Beacon Schools) that senior staff were expected to observe teachers.

The contradiction can be explained in the nature of the observation being undertaken. Beacon Schools were able to verify that time specific and purpose specific observations by SMT took place (performance reviews, as part of induction processes for NQTs) but that pervasive and omnipresent non time-bounded observation did not occur. Staff here were able to confirm that there was "no feeling of secrecy" and that observation was seen as a "professional process".

SMTs in Special Measures Schools made no response whatsoever to this question. Paradoxically they, too, confirmed that staff were supervised in their response to a previous indicator (C.1.2). In response to this indicator, however, there was either a blank response or the terse "ask them" was

offered. It would appear that SMT in these schools objected to the notion of “watching” staff in a hostile way. Staff in Special Measures Schools accepted the reality of their situation by saying “yes, we should be”. This was not consistent, however, across the whole of the teaching force and could not, therefore, be counted as an indicator. In isolated cases there were hints of hostility where the response “we are being watched constantly” indicated hostile supervision. In common with their senior colleagues, however, many refused to respond to this question.

### **Learning Support Assistants**

As discussed previously the replies from LSAs were excluded from this analysis. Opinions about LSAs, however, were available in the response to indicator C.1.4 where respondents were asked if these colleagues were actively involved in securing student progress.

SMTs in Top and Beacon Schools paid testament to the fact that LSAs were “fully” involved. This included formulating and implementing Individual Education Plans (IEPs) for Special Needs pupils and being attached to specific subject areas.

It would appear, however, that LSAs had not been integrated fully into the workings of Special Measures Schools. There was distinct disagreement amongst the Leadership Group on this issue with 100% of Special Measures Headteachers stating that LSAs were fully involved but the majority of



Deputies doubting their involvement which depressed the percentage of SMT able to indicate consistently that this was an indicator of their school.

Opinion amongst teachers was similarly divided. There were isolated examples where teachers could pay testament to LSAs' involvement. One teacher from a Top school commented,

“critically (LSAs' involvement in securing pupil progress occurs) when it comes to the less able/ targeted under achievers and those with specific learning difficulties.”

Taken as a whole, however, teachers in 33% of Top Schools could not provide evidence of LSA involvement in pupil progress. They reported that they “didn't know” or left the response blank.

Similarly only 67% of Beacon Schools were able to provide substantive evidence of close LSA involvement in securing pupil progress. The remainder of schools in this class simply recorded that their use was increasing or that they “have a role in helping out.”

Somewhat surprisingly, given the level of support for teachers that has been noted elsewhere, Special Measures teachers were highly tentative about the role of LSAs. They pointed out that the effectiveness of such personnel depended on the willingness of a specific teacher in order that their role could become effective. Others pointed to the fact that an already “stretched department” found it difficult to support LSAs. Only in 33% of the sample did

they indicate that LSAs played a “full and coherent” role in securing pupil progress.

Undoubtedly such comments echo the pressures that staff in Special Measures Schools have to endure but it is ironic and of concern that the full potential of these support personnel has not been realised so that pressures on teachers can actually be reduced and learning effectiveness increased.

It would appear, generally, that the potential of LSAs is far from being realised. Their integration into the teaching and learning process is uncertain. Teachers need to be persuaded of their usefulness and management strategies introduced so that they can be effectively deployed without teachers seeing this as an extra burden.

A summary of the findings of Dimension C 1 are appended, below (Figure 4.49):

<b>Area</b>	<b>Top Schools</b>	<b>Beacon Schools</b>	<b>Special Measures Schools</b>
Teachers' Collaborative Planning	Variable	Variable	Extensive Expected Frequent
Teachers observing teachers	Annually - Performance Management Process	Annually - Performance Management Process	Timetabled and frequent as part of strategy of peer mentoring
Discussions of teaching effectiveness	As part of Performance Management Process Infrequent	As part of Performance Management Process Infrequent	At all levels Frequently
LSA Involvement	Full and integrated	Full and integrated	Tentative

**Figure 4.49 Dimension C1 Managing Effective Learning**

**Support for Teachers and Teachers facing problems**

Indicator C.2.6 will examine the perceptions of teachers and SMTs to formal disciplinary procedures but, in order to place these perceptions into perspective respondents were asked about strategies and practices to support teachers, including those facing problems.

There was universal accord from senior managers for indicator C.2.1 concerning mutual support from colleagues for teachers facing classroom



problems. Teachers, similarly, concurred that considerable support structures existed for teachers facing problems. Responses to this indicator overlapped with responses to C.2.2 concerning support from senior staff as both sets of answers included examples of mutual support structures such as formal mentoring schemes in addition to leadership group strategies like removing troublesome children, operating 'time out' and 'removal rooms'.

There were two diametrically opposed caveats to these indicators. Top Schools indicated that staff would be supported but that teachers facing problems was such a rare occurrence that the indicator did not really apply. SMT from Special Measures Schools, on the other hand, noted the dilemma that in such schools support and interest from SMT can often be misinterpreted as "pressure rather than support".

A separate indicator was included (C.2.5) so that respondents could indicate the adequacy of the support they received.

Staff in Top and Beacon Schools at both teacher and SMT level recorded that support structures and practices were more than adequate. The pressures on Special Measures Schools, however, were apparent in their responses.

SMT noted the fact that support for teachers takes a "huge amount of SMT time". Staff in 33% of Special Measures Schools testified to their satisfaction on the adequacy of support. Other Special Measures Schools, however,

noted failings in both the adequacy of the support and in the ability of the personnel who had to deliver it. Teachers commented that "some feel more supported than others" and that "some need support and are not getting it". Other teachers noted that "some members of SMT are more effective than others".

### **Disciplinary Procedures**

Indicator C.2.6 asked if the staff disciplinary policy was handled fairly by the leadership group. This item was designed to elicit further information concerning the activity of SMTs and complemented those indicators centering around supervision, monitoring and support for teachers from this group. Not surprisingly there was universal agreement amongst SMT from all groups of schools that the policy was fair and handled effectively. In line with other responses on the performance of teachers from Top Schools Headteachers in these establishments commented that there was "little disciplinary activity" or that the policy was "not needed". Teachers, similarly, in 33% of Top Schools failed to respond to this indicator and provide evidence. Other comments from schools in this group indicated that this was not because the policy was seen to be unfair or ineffective but simply because they had no knowledge or experience of this in operation in their schools.

Staff in Beacon Schools were able to provide more substantial comment in that they at least demonstrated a knowledge of the existence of such a policy

and that it seemed to work well, even if others commented that they didn't "know much about it".

Special Measures staff indicated a sharp awareness of such a policy and testified that it was effective "to a large extent". Some teachers here noted that, undoubtedly in the pursuit of dealing with poor teaching, the policy was applied too rigorously (Figure 4.50).

<b>Area</b>	<b>Top Schools</b>	<b>Beacon Schools</b>	<b>Special Measures Schools</b>
Support for teachers facing problems	Too rare to be a concern	Too rare to be a concern	Established procedures
Disciplinary Procedures	Little application	Little application	Rigorously applied

**Figure 4.50 Dimension C2 Resolving Conflict**

### **Inclusion and other Motivational Factors**

In this final section of the questionnaire staff were asked if they felt included and informed about plans for the future direction of the school (C.3.3) as well as being fully informed on a key piece of management data, the amounts of money allocated to specific activities in the school. (C.3.2) Additionally they were asked if, from a management and personal perspective, professional expertise was being fully utilised (C.3.1).



SMT across the board said that any changes in the school's situation were communicated to staff. This was in line with indicator A.2.5 which centred on information passing from SMT to staff. Teachers in Top and Beacon Schools concurred with their senior colleagues that all was explained to them. Staff in Special Measures Schools, however, highlighted the volatility of their situation and pointed out that despite the robust consultation procedures being in force in such schools (A.2.6, A.2.7) rumours often circulated long before things were explained.

More mundane facts about the school, however, were public knowledge. SMT stated in all schools that budgetary information was widely distributed. Staff in 67% of Top and Beacon Schools agreed with their senior colleagues. The level of disagreement here was due simply to the fact that teachers were unaware of school capitation allocations. Subject leaders in such schools, however, were 100% aware of this data, as indeed they should be as it is their role to manage such funds. In Special Measures Schools, by contrast, all teachers and subject leaders were aware of capitation information (Figure 4.51). This points to the fact that in such schools there is real distributed involvement for the running of the school and so everyone has a working knowledge of financial information. Teachers in Special Measures Schools were able to quote the formula behind the distribution of funds and the reasons for changes of financial allocations from one year to the next. It became clear that Special Measures staff had been included as a matter of policy in debates about the allocation of funds.

It was significant, similarly, that in section C.3.1 staff in Special Measures Schools were able to make informed comment about the deployment of staff expertise and how it was being impeded by budgetary constraints. Teachers in other schools simply recorded that there were ample opportunities for teachers to participate in the running of the school and to find an outlet for their expertise in running out-of-school clubs.

SMTs in all schools expressed confidence that the expertise of their colleagues was being fully utilised and that appointments to posts of responsibility were handled fairly and carefully. SMT also pointed to effective professional development policies to extend teachers' competencies.

<b>Area</b>	<b>Top Schools</b>	<b>Beacon Schools</b>	<b>Special Measures Schools</b>
<b>Policies for change</b>	Fully explained	Fully explained	Prone to rumour
<b>Awareness of school resources</b>	Restricted to Senior and Middle Managers	Restricted to Senior and Middle Managers	All staff aware

**Figure 4.51 Dimension C3 Mobilising Resources**

### **Conclusions, Index of Management Excellence**

The Indicators of Management Excellence were designed to isolate those management and decision-making features of schools which marked them

out as being highly successful. The Indicators themselves were derived directly from the findings of the previous phases of the research. The intention was to verify and/ or extend the initial data by looking at the operation of the parameters which had been isolated in different classes of school.

The expectation was that Top and Beacon Schools would 'indicate' distinct areas of high management effectiveness which had been highlighted in the literature and in the descriptions of management ideals that had been supplied by Headteachers in the previous stages of the research. The inclusion of Special Measures Schools was originally intended to show the opposite: highlighting those indicators which characterised poorly managed or weak and failing schools. The expectation was that the definition of the three dimensions (culture, policy and practice) which started this section of the research would correlate closely with the management activities of Top and Beacon Schools. The results of the questionnaires indicated that this was far from the case.

All schools concurred that high expectations for pupils were the norm and that pupils were valued equally even though Special Measures Schools highlighted the fact that they had to deal with confrontational pupils and so this ideal was tempered with the reality of motivating their charges under difficult circumstances.



The indicators derived from Top and Beacon Schools turned out to be a minimalist description which could apply to any school. Moreover there were signs that management and decision-making in these schools displayed features which may be considered to be the opposite of management excellence. SMTs in all schools agreed amongst themselves that a high number of indicators applied but staff did not necessarily agree with them.

The situation was most marked in Top and Beacon Schools in key areas of management and decision-making functions. There was an acceptance in Top and Beacon Schools amongst the staff that consultation would be token and that the consultative measures available to them frequently did not allow their opinions to be heard or be instrumental in formulating policy. SMT in these schools clearly saw policy formation as their exclusive preserve.

Collaboration and participation were more limited in the Top and Beacon Schools surveyed and the systems of canvassing opinions were mostly passive. Teachers here deferred to their SMTs and accepted the less strategic role that they had to play. The contrast between this management description and that apparent in Special Measures Schools was extremely sharp.

Undoubtedly because of their unique circumstances, collaboration appeared to be the norm in Special Measures Schools sampled. There was a firmly held creed in these schools that policies would not become operational unless and until the staff had had their say and ratified them. This was a

clear and practical method of securing staff involvement and assent to new policy directions. In many cases staff members had worked on the detail of policy to be ratified by SMT and the rest of the staff. This differed from working parties in the other schools which were seen only as gestures. In harmony with the collaborative spirit in Special Measures Schools teachers here routinely and at all levels discussed teaching performance. They expected to be observed teaching and to receive feedback on their effectiveness. Top and Beacon School teachers had lower expectations in this respect, only experiencing the formal performance management lesson observations and not discussing teaching and learning as extensively amongst themselves.

There were negative aspects to Special Measures Schools which reflected their peculiar situation, such as the polarisation of views about teacher effectiveness between the competent and the incompetent and the uncertainty, at times, about what would really happen to the school. In such schools there is always the threat of closure and even though there were strenuous measures to inform and involve staff.

In over-arching terms, however, the description contained in the Dimensions of The Index of Management Excellence applied more convincingly to Special Measures Schools than it did to Top and Beacon Schools.

Policies in these schools were clear and transparent. Collegiality and participation were the norm and there were no barriers to participation. All decisions were open to consultation and comment.

These principles were carried out in practice and ratified by teachers and subject leaders alike. There was an atmosphere of joint effort (even though opinions amongst the staff had isolated a group of colleagues who were seen as weak and incompetent). Open debate was the norm with no recriminations. Disciplinary matters were dealt with in what teachers perceived to be a fair and honest manner.

Teaching effectiveness was openly discussed and observation of colleagues was the accepted norm. Peer observation was undertaken routinely with the expectation that feedback would be supportive and informative. The allocation of resources was openly explained and understood by all staff and it was obvious that their expertise will be fully utilised. Special Measures Schools could be considered as “a school for all” where inclusion and involvement were the two immutable principles.

This last phase of the research has contributed important findings and issues to be addressed about the management and decision-making characteristics of schools, adding contextual data about management and decision-making and including the opinions of teachers in the analysis. This issue, in addition to the results of the previous phases of the research, will be discussed in the following chapter.



## **Chapter 5 Discussion and Conclusions**

### **Introduction**

This study has responded to the government imperative which concerns itself with the quality of leadership and direction in our schools by exploring a critical area of performance: the management and decision-making characteristics of secondary school Headteachers as they run their establishments. The study addresses the personal and interpersonal dimensions of management and examines the judgement capabilities of Headteachers through a study of Hindsight Bias. This is in addition to analysing the underpinning organisational climate that operates in secondary schools with a particular focus on participation, collaboration and the involvement of teachers. An analysis of organisational and management characteristics has been undertaken from the parameters established during the course of this study with a view to establishing indicators which single out those schools that display management excellence.

This research has attempted to build a multi-faceted and cumulative view of Headteachers' management strategies and decision-making characteristics through a number of research instruments in order to view this complex domain from a range of perspectives.

## **The Conceptual Model**

The first phase of the research drew on a series of semi-structured interviews with Headteachers in order to explore the broad parameters of their managerial and decision-making activity. The results of these interviews were presented in case study form to provide an approachable method of data presentation that would be extended and refined as the study progressed.

Extracting key themes from the literature (Coulson, 1976; Nias, 1980; Lloyd, 1985; Hall and Southworth, 1997) enabled the construction of a conceptual model, the Quadrant Model, which was used successfully in this first phase to map the broad parameters of Headteachers' management and decision-making. It was possible, using this approach, to demonstrate that there are distinct management and decision-making styles that can be deduced from the practice of serving Headteachers.

This first phase, therefore, addressed the initial research aims of determining the parameters of Headteachers' managerial and decision-making activity and constructing an analytical model to explore such practice in schools. This initial phase also satisfied the research objective which described managerial and decision-making activity through a series of case studies and addressed the research hypothesis concerning the existence of distinct management and decision-making styles.

## **Extending the Initial Findings**

The ensuing phase of the research extended the findings of this initial phase by using the Quadrant Model as a basis to explore further the management and decision-making activity of Headteachers. It was possible, through the use of self-reported data and responses to management scenarios, to map Headteachers' management and decision-making activity against the model. During this phase it was possible to demonstrate that the styles identified in the initial phase of the research and contained in the Quadrant could be readily identified by Headteachers. They could also nominate preferred styles and then validate these by isolating specific influences that encouraged them to act in the ways they described. The data produced at this point extended the early findings by indicating that there were high levels of consistency in the management approaches of Headteachers which revealed itself, in this phase of the research, as common reactions to the specific issues that were presented to them in the self-reporting exercise.

This second phase revisited and extended the research aims and objectives of the first phase and added an analysis of the contrasts between 'espoused' and 'actual' practice as outlined in the research objectives. This phase addressed additional research hypotheses by assessing whether Headteachers could identify the styles described, if there were high levels of consistency in their actions, if they would react similarly to given tasks and whether they could validate their stances.



In order to illuminate further the apparent discrepancy between Headteachers' declared approaches and the actuality of their daily practice a detailed sampling exercise was undertaken with a small group of Headteachers who kept detailed logs of their management and decision-making events.

### **Detailed Sampling and Analysis**

The detailed sampling and analysis phase reinforced the earlier findings that there were distinct management and decision-making styles that can be deduced from the practice of Headteachers and that there are high levels of consistency in the operation of these styles. Similarly this phase of the research verified that Headteachers reacted in similar ways to specific educational tasks and issues. The discrepancy which was noted earlier between declared and actual approaches was reinforced by findings in this stage of the research.

This phase also looked in more detail at the interpersonal and organisational elements operating in a school and examined the levels of participation and collaboration that others were allowed. This extended the earlier findings which had provided, in outline detail, the operation of these facets of managerial activity. A more sophisticated mapping of the segments of The Quadrant in this phase permitted a more detailed look at the managerial and interpersonal interchanges between the stakeholders in a school.

This phase, therefore, added substantial data to the original findings and addressed specifically the research objective and research hypotheses which outlined the need to examine how Headteachers operated in situ.

This phase of the research also centred on the claims of Headteachers who declared specific management practices which place great emphasis on collaboration, involvement and the empowerment of their colleagues (Fullan, 1982; Lontos, 1994; Grey, 1999; Jackson, 2000). Through this detailed sampling phase (and subsequently in canvassing the views of other professionals through the 'Indicators' survey in a variety of schools) this has been found not to be the case. There appeared to be a distinct difference between the rhetoric of highly acceptable and recommended management and decision-making approaches and the reality of Headteachers' daily activity.

It would appear that the principles which they declare to be deeply held and to be operating are sacrificed to the realities of running a school where the pressures of accountability, the need to act quickly and work almost exclusively with individuals who wield the real power force Headteachers to reject their principles and act in a 'new managerial' (Gewirtz et al, 1995) and somewhat insular fashion.

### **Hindsight Bias Investigation**

Examples were discovered in the initial phases of the study of Headteachers demonstrating susceptibility to prejudicial opinions and being prone to errors

of judgement. In order to assess Headteachers' cognitive abilities they were subjected in the next stage of the research to a focused investigation of classic judgement weakness, Hindsight Bias, to determine whether this decision-making flaw operated within a school context. This element of the research was based closely on investigative work that had been previously undertaken into this specific area of cognitive functioning with a view to establishing effective analytical tools and extending the understanding of the operation of Hindsight Bias in the specific context of a school.

The research was based on 'live' data, based on an actual school management dilemma. The findings here extended not only understandings concerning cognitive capability but also the management and decision-making findings of the earlier phases of the study that Headteachers can harbour negative perceptions about colleagues. Such attitudes have been shown to be susceptible, through the specific context of the school-based research material, to the Hindsight Bias effect.

The data indicated that there is a tendency for Headteachers to be more sceptical of their pupils as opposed to their staff. In practice, therefore, the Hindsight Bias effect is more likely to occur in judgements concerning pupils. The scope is still there, however, for errors of judgement concerning teachers. Given Headteachers' lack of contact with and reluctance to encourage participative forms of working with teachers, as discovered elsewhere in this study, there is some cause for concern. The results confirm that if Headteachers have received anti staff messages that these will, if they



receive additional information to confirm their original beliefs (Barrows et al, 1977; Einhorn, 1988), be consolidated and extended through the Hindsight Bias effect (Fischhoff, 1975).

In looking for an explanation as to why Headteachers, in particular, are prone to this cognitive feature one needs to examine their decision-making context and refer to the literature, previously reviewed. The fact that Headteachers are not sure-footed about their decision-making ability points to a number of potential cognitive weaknesses. They frequently have to make decisions in conditions of uncertainty (Fischhoff, 1975) or make judgements in haste where they are forced to 'satisfice', or accept the first minimally acceptable alternative as it becomes available (March and Simon, 1958). In situations where they have to deal with uncertainty they may rely on intuition or experiment with the knowledge base they already possess about a situation (Schön, 1988). Their highly public position, however, makes them particularly prone to the Hindsight Bias effect.

Campbell and Tesser (1983), for example, have found that there was a correlation between the magnitude of the Hindsight Bias effect and the personality of the subjects. Headteachers, in their working context, are required, just like Campbell and Tesser's subjects, to demonstrate high levels of control and to maintain high levels of public esteem. Headteachers, similarly, operate in the contexts described by Scott, Hawkins and Hastie (1990) who found that the effect was more pronounced where strategic self presentation was at work. Headteachers are similarly 'experts' (Arkes,

Saville, Wortmann and Harkness, 1981), whose expertise does not shelter them from the Hindsight Bias effect.

### **The Indicators Phase**

The final phase of the research attempted to isolate effective management and decision-making characteristics and strategies. The Indicators of Management Excellence that were used to survey a sample of schools were derived directly from the literature on effective management (Lashway, 1996; Lontos, 1994; MacGilchrist, 2000; Jackson, 2000) and elements that had been isolated from the findings of the previous research. They were, therefore, designed to triangulate and verify previous data and to extend preliminary or tentative findings with more robust information and, moreover, to locate these in specific school settings. This section addressed the research aims, objectives and hypotheses which referred specifically to effective management and its locus in particular types of school.

By surveying Top, Beacon and Special Measures Schools it was hoped to establish which management and decision-making parameters applied to highly successful schools. The overall finding here was that schools normally assumed to be the weakest, managerially, apparently had the most robust management and decision-making characteristics. A cross sectional survey of successful ('Top' and 'Beacon') and unsuccessful (Special Measures) schools indicated that there are general and minimalist characteristics which define all schools. There are significant differences, however, between the indicators of 'management excellence' nominated by school Headteachers



and their senior management teams and those identified by their teaching colleagues. As such, therefore, the rhetoric and reality divide which had been identified earlier was found to be operating within senior management teams. Paradoxically more robust and effective management approaches were indicated in schools which were under, or had just emerged from, Special Measures after failing their OFSTED inspection. The potential reasons for this surprising finding are discussed, below, in considering the implications of this research.

### **Theoretical Issues**

The theoretical framework which guided this study and embodied in the research aims, objectives and research hypotheses proved to be effective in addressing the central issues concerning the topic. There was considerable complementarity between the research hypotheses which focused variously on overarching characteristics and fine grained detail exhibited by the subjects. The conceptual model used for analysis proved to be effective in isolating key elements for investigation. This Quadrant Model which permeated the initial phases of the research served, therefore, as a useful reference framework, rather than a precise instrument, to account for some, but not all, management strategies and behaviour. It proved inappropriate for addressing inter-organisational characteristics and was superseded by other, more sophisticated, research instruments.

The study of the Hindsight Bias effect on occupational group was a valuable addition to this school of thought. The findings not only added range and



detail to Hindsight Bias research per se but provided an extra dimension to the view of management and decision-making in schools. This research also provided empirical evidence that Headteachers' cognitive ability was flawed with implications which are discussed below.

### **Methodological Issues**

The research design for this study was centred on a cumulative model of data collection. Phase one of the study was designed to provide a broad contextual view of Headteachers' management and decision-making. The method adopted was semi structured interviews with the data being presented in Case Study form. The approach offered a rich vein of data and the informal structure allowed Headteachers to extemporise and contribute information according to their personal agendas which were unlikely to appear in a more structured setting.

The strategy proved to be valuable in providing essential contextual features and traits and styles which were repeated across the sample. The quadrant model, as above, proved a valuable analytical tool against which the unstructured data of the interviews could be mapped.

As such, therefore, the essential themes and initial research hypotheses of the study were established and addressed which would be extended and refined through further, more focused, data collection methods.

The second phase validated the styles and approaches that had been predicted and analysed through the quadrant model and raised the issue of declared and actual approaches. Headteachers espoused one approach, which they could amply validate, but the data they supplied indicated the opposite, that collaborative and participative approaches were eschewed in favour of more autocratic and exclusive modes of management and decision-making behaviour.

The weaknesses in survey design were apparent in this phase of the research and it was the least successful in terms of hard data on the topic. The limitations of this phase of the research will be examined later.

Phase three, on the other hand was most successful in addressing a number of research hypotheses (1,3,4 and 7). The validity of the data proved, in this detailed sampling phase, to be the least problematic as Headteachers were provided with no opportunity to elaborate or impression-manage and so obfuscations were kept to a minimum. The data provided was extensive and mapping this against the conceptual model presented little difficulty. This phase of the work extended the perceptions established in the early phases and provided a measure of quantitative support for the qualitative approaches adopted earlier. It was at this point that the quadrant model demonstrated its limits as it was incapable of being used to analyse organisational matters.

The fourth phase was tightly constructed as a priority was to ensure that this section of the study fitted into the heritage of Hindsight Bias research. A review of the research methods that had been used in this area of cognitive psychology provided invaluable guidance about how to amend and extend such research and apply it to an occupational context. This element, therefore, both embodied and extended good research practice and the results have amplified the understanding of this phenomenon in a specific setting.

The final phase of the work was the most ambitious in terms of data collection and significantly broadened the approach to include not only data collected from Headteachers but also their senior management teams and teaching colleagues within the school. The intention to include Learning Support Assistants and administrative staff was undertaken so that a complete picture of management and decision-making could be achieved. The inability of schools to represent such personnel in the survey necessitated an adjustment of the research ambitions. Conclusions as to why Headteachers failed to include such personnel in the survey can only be tentative. Further research needs to be undertaken on the status of such employees and their role in the full functioning of schools to unearth any potential prejudices.

In compiling the data related to The Index of Management Excellence a straightforward algorithm was applied i.e. 100% agreement on a school indicator across the management spectrum. This was a rationale that was



easy to support in the context of the study and enabled results to be collated without difficulty. The disparities of opinion displayed through these means were easy to identify and valuable data to extend the earlier findings of the study were achieved.

### **Limitations and Drawbacks**

Despite valuable data being gained there were flaws in specific areas of the research. Phase one provided effective discursive accounts but suffered from a small sample which meant that the generalisability whilst exhibiting transferability (Mertens, 1997) was limited and needed the additional phases of the work to validate the findings. The sample construction was entirely opportunistic (Sapsford and Jupp, 1996) and the inclusion of a female Headteacher could be interpreted as tokenism. Gender proved not to be an issue and was also not a focus of this study. This phase stands the risk of being criticised as being narrative and anecdotal with no method of triangulating the data to secure its validity. Applying the conceptual construct of the Quadrant, however, created structure for data interpretation and effectively provided a coding frame for data interpretation across phases of the research. As such pertinent data was sifted from the narrative of Headteachers which provided valuable foundations for further study. Findings here were replicated and triangulated in other phases of the research.

The phase two sample was the most substantial but the research instruments were open to criticism. Having established the validity of the Quadrant model the design of the phase two questionnaires was dictated by the parameters of this construct. The effect was that the coding frame to interpret the data was over contrived which limited the data analysis in that subjects were not allowed to disagree, extend or offer alternative responses. The responses that were supplied were assumed to be valid and typical of the target group but no validation was undertaken to ensure that this was the case. With this limitation in mind phase three of the work was designed to overcome the problems instanced here of closed responses and predisposition about the situations that would apply to a group of Headteachers.

Phase three, like phase one, was conducted on a modest sample but the high level of consistency in the results supported generalisability. As with other elements of the research this phase was not designed to stand alone and replicated and triangulated previous findings. Interpretation, potentially, was an issue, raised in piloting, which turned out not to be the case and this phase of the study extended considerably the organisational and interpersonal dimensions of Headteachers' management and decision-making. Headteachers' responses were easy to code with only minor clarifications required in order to map the data accurately.

The Hindsight Bias research was the most tightly controlled of all the phases, largely because it had to comply with existing research tenets in this area of

study. The size of the sample, the passage used, its construction and wording and the questioning methodology were all based on the cumulative heritage of Hindsight Bias research. The hindsight effect was engineered in a simple fashion so that shifts in Headteachers' perceptions could be easily measured. The method chosen of segmenting the sample was straightforward and obviated the need for more elaborate groupings such as the inclusion of control groups or groups only provided with partial information. Hindsight group sizes replicated those found in such research. Avoiding this level of complexity proved to be an effective method of discovering the hindsight effect.

The sample size in the final 'indicators' phase was in line with other research in this area (Booth et al, 2000) and enabled the triangulation of data from a variety of sources. As discussed, above, the exclusion of personnel other than teachers did not enable a pan-organisational view. The level of agreement, however, from specific segments of the rest of the sample secured generalisability. This phase of the research proved to be the most robust after piloting and was the most revealing with consistent support being offered for the superiority of Special Measures Schools in terms of management excellence.



## **Recommendations**

### **Improving Management**

This study opened by quoting a statement of official intent concerning the formal recognition of the importance of the role of Headteacher and the embodiment of a national strategy, through the NCSL, for improving the quality of school leadership and management. This study has emphasised the centrality of that role and the widespread impact that it has on the efficacy of management and decision-making.

The national strategy, above, is based on literature and research which espouses a particular style of management: one that values the involvement and participation of professional colleagues in an organisation which can demonstrate 'dispersed' and 'distributed' leadership. This research has found, ironically, that supposedly well-managed schools contradict such well-established beliefs about good management.

Beacon Schools, for example, nominated by the Department for Education and Skills for areas of excellence have revealed practices that marginalise the tenets of supposedly sound management as outlined above. The resolution may lie in the fact that the selection process for Beacon Schools derives from highly specific areas of expertise. The evidence that such

**schools have demonstrated excellence in Leadership and Management, for example, derives from highly discrete management areas such as equal opportunities, mixed age teaching, tackling disaffection and behaviour management. It could be the case, therefore, that the Beacon accolade applies to a nominated area of excellence whereas others, such as those covered by this study, have been left undeveloped. A further resolution to this dilemma may be that Beacon and 'Top' schools, who have both demonstrated high standards through examination results, have developed ways of working which secure their success and which do not require the management principles that have been highlighted in The Index.**

**It could be the case, for example, that quality teaching and learning is highly localised within a subject department or departments and that robust middle management leadership precludes the need for senior management involvement or pan-school initiatives to disseminate good practice, improve teaching performance or encourage the participation of teachers in management and decision-making. The responses from teachers and subject leaders in such schools would seem to support this view as the answers to teaching and learning issues frequently made references to activities taking place 'within the department'. It could also be the case that perceived excellence has already been achieved in the minds of senior managers and so the need to initiate new strategies to build the capacity of staff to further the achievements of the school are not considered necessary. Such a view is supported by SMT responses to the Indicators questionnaire**

concerning performance issues with staff: that they are irrelevant because the steady state of sound teaching has already been achieved.

The opposite is frequently the case in Special Measures Schools which have a pressing need to drive forward teaching and learning strategies and the achievements of the school and to do so through structures which involve the whole of the teaching staff. This polarisation between the 'Top' and Special Measures Schools would seem to support the view that Headteachers and senior managers in the former schools are supposedly content with the status quo and do not feel there is a pressing need to extend staff participation or capacity building. SMTs lay claim to such principles through their responses to The Index but staff in these same schools disagree at the same time as expressing a desire to be involved. This argues a paradox that merits exploration.

### **Headship and Headship Training**

There is a similar perceptual flaw that has been discovered in this study in that Headteachers can nominate relevant external training which, paradoxically, has not enabled them to see the internal reality of their schools. What the lessons of The Index prove is that an external course may not be the best way of focusing Headteachers' perceptions. On the other hand a school-based training model which encourages a focused and rational inward analysis and stimulates collaborative and participative activity involving all the professionals in a school could expand perceptions and



move the organisation forward. The lessons of Special Measures Schools provide an inspiration for this *modus operandi*.

Headteacher training also needs to address the issues highlighted in this study of the effectiveness of different management and decision-making styles related to the issue in hand and the engagement of others within the school.

The Quadrant Model proved to be an effective, if rudimentary, tool to analyse management approaches. It could potentially be used by those charged with training Headteachers to analyse essential management and decision-making principles. As an audit tool it can allow Headteachers, working collaboratively with their colleagues to analyse their management and decision-making events, their inputs and outputs and the variations in power and influence that underpin this activity. Personal management approaches and the fitness for purpose of the style that is adopted can be analysed in this way.

### **Micropolitics**

The micropolitical climate of a school has been identified in this study and defined in some detail by Headteachers who have to co-exist with it. This potentially hostile environment frequently compels Headteachers to retreat and recoil so that their decision-making supremacy is retained. The lessons, however, from schools who have to deal with challenging circumstances, and where the micropolitical tensions and the imperative to improve are likely to

be at their most acute, have demonstrated that management and decision-making strategies can be adopted to recruit the involvement and sustain the motivation of teachers. Teachers in Special Measures Schools have an acute and polarised view of the competencies of their colleagues but this does not prevent such schools from initiating structures geared towards involving and supporting staff.

In this respect the work centring around The Index of Management Excellence proved to be the most revealing in this study. Given the strictures required by Special Measures procedures it was anticipated that such schools would demonstrate highly autocratic styles of management where the (often) newly drafted in senior management team had to prove themselves and meet stringent improvement targets. This turned out, in the case of management activity, to be the opposite of the reality in such schools.

The Special Measures regime per se requires the observation of teaching performance and official feedback from HMI. This imposed imperative, paradoxically, stimulated self-reflection and a willingness to explore teaching effectiveness. Constantly under scrutiny, these schools had adopted an openness to discussing teaching efficiency.

Contrary to expectations management autocracy was found to be significantly absent in these schools. Headteachers had declared that all decisions should be shared with and often made by staff. It was an

established credo that no decision would be implemented unless it had been aired, fully debated and agreed by the staff. Frequently policy direction was determined by staff groups. It was obvious from these teachers' comments that such a modus operandi was accepted as the norm and what characterised their responses to The Index of Management Excellence Survey was a lack of cynicism about the decision-making and management stances of the senior management teams. This cynicism was, however, present with Top and Beacon school staff. The findings of the Hindsight Bias section of the research are also valid here. It has been demonstrated that Headteachers who are frequently placed in high profile decision-making contexts and frequently have to save face are prone to errors of judgement. Headteachers need to be made aware of the tendency in such contexts that they 'knew it all along' and to examine the management context and their attitudes with extreme care. This is even more relevant to school situations where the micropolitical climate is more acute as it is likely that in these circumstances the Hindsight Bias effect will be more pronounced (Campbell and Tesser, 1983; Scott, Hawkins and Hastie, 1990).

### **The Index of Management Excellence**

The Index of Management Excellence questionnaire proved to be an effective instrument in discovering management approaches. In common with the earlier Quadrant Model The Index could be used in schools as a method of auditing the effectiveness of its management and decision-making.



The 'elements' of The Index provided a framework for analysing key areas of a school's management culture, policies and practices. If such an in-school survey replicates the findings of this study it will bring home to Headteachers and their SMTs the differences in perceptions about the school between themselves and their colleagues. An examination of the 'evidence' that each party brings to support their views points the way to what might be done to resolve the differences. From a senior management perspective The Index highlights areas of uncertainty, ignorance, opposition and dissent amongst the staff. Differences in response from the various categories of respondents should then stimulate further analysis of this state of affairs and what 'indicators' should be present for a more healthy organisational climate.

Specific issues were raised through the results of The Index which indicate that distinct management dilemmas and issues are operating at school level. The most marked is the agreement amongst SMT about indicators of their school, the lack of agreement amongst staff and the absence of substantive correlation between the two positions. This at least argues a communication problem but also may point to inconsistency of approach across the school with pockets of resistance that have gone undetected by SMT.

Similarly, differences in perception about the role and effectiveness of SMT have been brought to light through The Index survey. In management terms, also, serious levels of disagreement have been discovered about the running of schools: the role of governors, the level of staff collaboration and involvement, the openness of debate about teaching effectiveness and the

existence of genuine open fora for debating policy issues. The state of play of such elements in Top and Beacon Schools, particularly, should be addressed. Using The Index in such schools could provide valuable foci for management reviews where capacity building for colleagues can be evaluated.

### **The Interpersonal Dimension of Headship**

Headteachers have been shown, in certain school contexts, to act in a remote fashion, distancing themselves from teachers and only dealing with others in a supervisory capacity. They also withdraw and spend a significant amount of their time with their SMTs or valued others. The irony of this situation is that some SMTs have been shown to be not fully aware of the realities of their schools and so the use by Headteachers of this group as touchstones or decision-support is inherently flawed.

It is plain from staff responses that they value being kept informed and resent not being consulted or involved in policy formation. The lessons from Special Measures Schools are highly pertinent in that there are few restrictions on the policy areas devolved to staff. The 'bottom up' model is common here and the deference to the Headteacher's and SMT's management and decision-making superiority is less apparent. Headteachers' decision-making has been shown to be vulnerable and the cognitive flaw of Hindsight Bias highlights the danger of entrenched prejudicial opinions. The interpersonal isolation that they exhibit can only

worsen this situation. A central tenet about leadership has been stated by Collarbone (2002):

“the one ingredient which all leaders share in common is explained by a simple natural law. Leaders require followers. Leadership does not exist without followership - stakeholders prepared to buy into a vision, create a shared vision and deliver.”

([http://www.ncsl.org.uk/index.cfm?pageid=ev\\_auth\\_collarbone](http://www.ncsl.org.uk/index.cfm?pageid=ev_auth_collarbone) )

This study has shown, however, that a ‘simple law’ cannot be applied in that Headteachers’ management and decision-making is multi-faceted and complex. Moreover schools deemed to be effective do not always pursue what has been assumed in the literature to be the distilled wisdom about management procedures.

### **The Challenges of the Study**

This study has raised important issues which embody challenges in terms of new perspectives and principles for Headteachers, their teaching and Leadership Teams, educational researchers and the National College for School Leadership. This final section explicitly identifies the key challenges.

Headteachers have demonstrated their allegiance to the prevailing, high premium principles of distributed leadership and related behaviours which empower and enfranchise professional colleagues to further the progress of their schools. The data indicate, however, that these perspectives do not



correlate with current management and decision-making activity. One challenge, therefore, is to achieve greater congruence between Headteachers' professed and actual decision-making and leadership practices.

A second challenge related to this concerns the forms of management training and personal professional development which might best support the achievement of a greater correlation between professed and actual practices. The study has suggested that greater emphasis is needed on institutionally based approaches to this, that involve all staff, benefiting the individual as well as creating a direct impact on the school.

The findings of the study which have highlighted differing, even contradictory, perceptions and expectations between school leadership teams and other colleagues highlights an important agenda for professional debate and investigation within a school. Establishing key indicators of a school's performance and the management and decision-making issues which follow in their train creates the potential to further the achievements of schools. A third challenge, therefore, is for those who are responsible for school improvement within and beyond a school to stimulate, nourish and focus that professional debate.

Related to this is the need for analytical tools and perspectives which clearly illuminate the grounds for that debate and inform developmental strategies. Here the study has demonstrated the potential of the Quadrant Model and

the Index of Management Excellence. The challenge is to refine and extend these together with other tools and perspectives which serve these purposes.

The most revealing finding of this study centres on the achievements of Special Measures schools. Such settings have illustrated how empowering philosophies can be brought into existence in the most challenging of circumstances. A fuller investigation into the organisational dynamics at work in these settings is a natural next step for researchers and a further key challenge.

This study has shown that hitherto many critical research issues were still 'first level' (Hall and Southworth, 1997). It has sought to integrate perspectives from diverse fields such as cognitive psychology, organisational behaviour and personal and school effectiveness, and has contributed to moving the research base on from studies which are largely narrative and descriptive in nature. This highlights a particular challenge for further analytical research in this area: to draw on and integrate diverse perspectives and methods in order to illuminate the complex personal, interpersonal and organisational issues involved.

The introduction to this work started with an acknowledgement of the pre-eminence of the National College for School Leadership in stimulating and developing achievements in the areas covered by this study. The NCSL, as mentioned in the literature review, has created a 'knowledge pool' to

augment the evidence base on matters of leadership, management and school effectiveness. The challenge for the NCSL is for it to extend the lead that it has established here and promote rigorous and robust research activity which enhances knowledge and understanding of the issues raised in this study.

It is hoped that the analysis contained in this study will enable Headteachers and all school leaders to develop their schools, and the pupils and teachers within them, as well as their own management and decision-making abilities.



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## **APPENDICES**

### **Appendix A - Approach Letter**

**Approach letter for Phase One Headteachers**

**Dear <Headteacher name>**

**I am currently studying for my doctorate at Bristol University. The subject of my research is, "The Professional Judgement of Headteachers" and I would like to ask for your assistance in providing me with some data for my thesis.**

**What I would like to do is to conduct a short interview with you where I would ask you about how you approach the role of Headteacher and the decisions that you make.**

**To this end I will give you a brief and courteous phone call in the next few days to see if you are able to help me with my researches.**

**Yours sincerely**

**Ian R Gilchrist**

## **Appendix B - Transcripts Taped Interviews**

### **Transcriptions of Taped Interviews with Phase One Headteachers**

#### **Taped Interview Head One**

**IG -** Basically what I am doing is a Thesis on Head's professional judgement. So what I am doing is going across the county looking at Heads in different kinds of schools, male/female, different catchment areas, different problems, different approaches, different styles and trying to draw out the threads. Obviously you are interesting because I know a bit of your background and the school has been through a particularly interesting time. So that might give me a bit of an edge on your judgement making.

**HEAD ONE -** I might be a sort of a dot that's way off the edge of the graph, that's the point.

**IG -** Basically everything you tell me is confidential, but really what I would like to do is do this for my MEd and take it on to my Doctorate, because I think it is an area that is not researched terribly well and we can get professional judgements of bookmakers and engineers but very little about Headteachers. So, that is basically what I am about. What I would like to start off with is a bit of orientation from your direction. Tell me a bit about yourself, bit of biography, a bit about the school and then we will pin it down to some particular areas about decision-making.



**HEAD ONE** - I entered teaching late, I was some 25-26 years old when I started teaching as an English teacher. All my professional life in Avon started, trained in PGCE in Bristol then went to school A for teaching practice but my first job was Z school in P and stayed there for six odd years by that time I was head of English department. I left there and went to Y School in T, became Head of Sixth form, came back from there to Z which was an unusual move to become Head of Upper School while I was there was a chance which I took to become Deputy Head, Curriculum at Z and from there I moved to X Boys School in K which was a Headship, my first Headship and that led to me applying for the new amalgamated school which at the moment we are calling X. I took up post on September 4th but I have been seconded for the previous six weeks because I did point out to the LEA that it was very difficult to run one school and set up two others at the same time. In many ways it was a curious limbo existence those six weeks.

**IG** - What about the reconstituted X School, what characterises it?

**HEAD ONE** - Well the area I ought to highlight, you would know that you would need to make reference to this, it has all the indicators of deprivation that people are familiar with, single parent families, number of people per home, number of families on income support and so on. The catchment area is one of the most deprived areas of Bristol and amongst the most deprived 10% in the country, so that you have here a school at the moment with about 600 on the role, 60 of whom are statemented, 10% statementing in South Bristol,

where it is quite difficult to get children statemented is extraordinary and on top of that on the matrix code of practice, we have 50% of our students, I think it is up to Level 2 on the code of practice, and we only stop there because we run out of staff time to keep going. So many of our students enter the school below their chronological reading age. So a characteristic here is that rather than have a comprehensive school that you could imagine is a tubular shape with ability of all sorts, ours is a very short and sharp pyramid with an enormous base and there are very few pupils who I would have been expecting at Z, T or B or somewhere like that. So that leads us straight into the two contributing schools being periodically sniped up in the press for low examination results in the league tables. The vast bulk of the parents in the area wish the same for their children as all parents do, they want the best education available, but quite a few of those parents have not had very good experiences themselves in education, take the view quite often that the school is best left alone because they are paid to do it anyway and so one characteristic which we would hope to turn around at X is the paucity of parental response. When we have a parent's evening we would be very surprised if we ever had more than 30% turn out of parents. When we have events for which we would like parental support for instance sports day or drama productions it is very difficult to get that level of support. On the other hand when they were balloting the area about whether they would like an amalgamated school or not, they had 1500 responses go back down to the county. There is that much, not enthusiasm, more interest there, I think parents need to be convinced that their own interest is directly being addressed. So if there is something which they can see affects them, they will



respond, something generic, like let's talk about if we want GNVQs in schools, you've lost them forget it. So the area of the school tends to colour your responses when it shouldn't. So there's the dilemma.

**IG** - So are you aware that any of your decisions are made particularly in this context that you have made differently when you were at T for example.

**HEAD ONE** - Well they are in the sense that they have to be realistic decisions, there is not much point in making a decision which while in theory is excellent you know in practice it is impossible to implement, so I am constantly aware and have been for the last 5 years of the art of the possible, and the art of the possible is sometimes modest in area like this, so curriculum development tends to be very slow and tortuous, because, well there are a number of practical reasons. One being for example that both X Boys and Girls were suffering falling roles for so long that to try and expand your curriculum at the same time as your role is falling is a contradiction in terms. So there is, yes, I would say that...

**IG**- Can you pin it down to a definite decision you have made and just talk me through it?

**HEAD ONE** - One of the principle planks I am convinced the school needs to be founded on is that of community education, I know that means different things to different people, but I have started in a very bland way to define it, two aspects to the definition, one is that we provide a diet of decent lessons



that wins support from the community so they think that your son or daughter gets a good deal if he goes to that school, no school I think would challenge that and I think that is a basic assumption for all schools. The second side is to do with being a contributor to the resources which will possibly help the lives of the people in this geographical community and by that I mean that young people in this area virtually have no resources at all, we have one swimming pool and that is it, there is nothing else for them at all, although this is not exactly shangri la, we have at least something of a resource, we have sports hall, buildings, computers, art materials and so on. That has led directly to me being increasingly convinced that the way in which the school will improve its provision for its students is to take the view that parents should be as involved as possible, the children should feel an ownership of the school and be involved at all levels of the school in decision-making and that we should really put great emphasis on welcoming parents and all other adults on to this site. Now I would not have taken such a sharp view of that if I had been working at B.

**IG** - Taking you back, where did that decision originate from, was it from your own personal conviction, or was it data gathered from elsewhere?

**HEAD ONE** - It came originally from the coagulated opinion of a number of staff, all of which have been working here for a number of years and so it was based on local experience by a number of staff who felt committed to the idea that the school should thrive and prosper rather than survive.

**IG - Was it then suggesting something to you or was it a genuine collaborative decision?**

**HEAD ONE - It was a genuine collaborative decision.**

**IG - What happened after that, how did you start to put this in place?**

**HEAD ONE - Well we started in small practical ways, I suppose in things like starting what we grandly called at the time a summer school for example, we were founder members of K Community Concern which set itself targets to offer diversionary events for young people so that we tried to improve the appalling rates of criminality in the area and try to impact on the drug taking in the area for example. That then led into becoming a founder member of KWADS - K West Against Drugs and the school found itself more and more meeting other agencies, I have frequent meetings with housing departments and the probation service and we found that we were pushing against an open door as far as other agencies were concerned and that gradually evolved into realising that we must now take it and try to institutionalise it into seeking community school status.**

**IG - Were the staff convinced? How in fact did you implement it using the kind of decision-making structures in the school, or how did you put the original idea into practicalities through people who would have to support it?**



**HEAD ONE** - It is difficult to remain objective about that because the staff, again another fact of life, especially for the Boys school which I know much more about than the ex-girls school, a) there is a falling role situation which always means that you have got very few people coming into a school in a way. The analogy I have always had in my mind about this, it is rather like a little tidal pool which has been left while the tide went out, which means what you have ended up with is a group of staff who almost inevitably are the most senior staff, and the reason for that is, that where a school needs to shed staff, the staff that are shed or shed themselves are those who can move, they are the younger, less committed in terms of family commitments who can move more easily, are the most employable and the more ambitious. Your senior teacher level are the one's who have needed their roots in the area, risen possibly to the level of seniority they are likely to have in teaching and do not feel very committed to the concept of up and moving. So what X exhibited was the classic symptoms of having a small number of staff, but very highly paid, many of whom have taught for 20-25 years in the school. Now to go back to your original question, the idea of spreading decision-making was rather difficult because many people had come to the end of their decision-making life some 10 years prior to that and they felt that the only decision they wanted was more of the same so that we didn't upset the applecart too much. There you have a problem, so what you need to do is you not only need to spread the idea, you actually have an evangelical job on your hands, and some staff the harder you push the more they resist, and so it never was going to be easy and what tended to happen was that the staff showed itself in groups, one group of which was quite active in opposing this approach and in



helping and some groups ignored it completely, now how that would have resolved itself ultimately I do not know, that all got swept into the avalanche of amalgamation.

**IG** - So community school, community education is still very much on the agenda.

**HEAD ONE** - Absolutely. The difference there you see was that the school was founded on that, instead of me coming to an established school which still hankered and exhibited the classic symptoms of having to sets of staff. X Boys school was founded in 1972 by amalgamating two other schools, one was a grammar school and one was a secondary modern. What happened was that the pastoral staff were from the old secondary modern and all the Heads of Department were ex-grammar school and they were all still here. So you have the grammar school approach in the departments of I come to teach and once I have taught I go home and the secondary modern staff who saw themselves able to cope with these very difficult, demanding pupils but had very vague ideas as to what they themselves and certainly others should be teaching. A very disparate set of people. When you come to the new school which we set up this year, we were able to say this is the school which we intend to have and one of the basic planks of that was the community school approach. So then you say to staff who are interested in applying, fine, if you want a piece of the action, that is what it is. That is a totally different approach to I've got this wizard idea.

**IG -** Going back to the idea of trying to push through something you think is a good idea no matter where it has come from, can you give me a feel for the kind of micro-political climate in this school. In a sense you have talked about a group of senior staff who are paraphrasing loosely "set in their ways" and may not be seen as being supportive, I guess it has something to do with how supportive your Senior Management Team is. For example I was speaking to a Head the other day and this person said that my SMT are not as helpful as I would expect, which is a very euphemistic way of saying I don't get on with them, they are no use at all and what this person did was she adopted a very particular strategy for getting through and getting decisions made. I don't want to slant what you say, but all I'm saying is that given that kind of a certain climate, set up people adopt different strategies of getting the job done, I just wondered what your way of doing it was.

**HEAD ONE -** I think it was, well first of all you need to know that when I arrived at X Boys I had been appointed after a long period when the school had suffered uncertainty and a Deputy Head had been Acting Head for three years and that was an unusual length of time and even more unusually he had, prior to the previous Head, been Acting Head before that and so in many ways the long serving members of staff felt that that particular Head was the natural Head because he had been on two occasions, up to 5 years in total, the acting head. Therefore I came to a senior staff, an SMT which had worked together as a team for a long time and had already agreed more or less the way to do things and could not see why this outsider had been appointed in the first place. So there were very curious political goings on here, leading to such



things like my first governors meeting them asking who I was and things like that, who appointed him, it really was very nasty. The way I thought we could really get things started was to identify on the staff those people who were still quite able to cope with different ideas and through discussions with them to try and group together a group of people who shared a common ideal and were willing and able to put energy behind it, so it was leading by example and to continuously drip feed the reason why you felt that this was a good thing on those other members of staff so that the open debate was always on offer and if people did not want to take it up, the offer of debate, then that was their loss, I felt, because I wasn't going to be able to direct this any other way than by example and that would have been very partially successful. The way in which I saw it was there was a critical mass of inertia and my main aim in life was to get the critical mass on the side of movement, now how long that would have taken by people's resignation and natural movement of staff is open for debate, the whole thing suddenly went into overdrive when Gillian Shepherd took over.

**IG -** On a day to day basis how many decisions do you make on your own, how many do you need to consult about, try to pin down for me what your approach and style is.

**HEAD ONE -** What do you mean by decisions though?

**IG -** Perhaps we ought to back track a bit and say what type of decisions do you make.



**HEAD ONE** - I would like to think that my principle is, and this again is set up in the new school as a concept in, at the outset is one of collaboration, open collaborative, democratic ways forward. I would be reluctant to make decisions which had any significant import on my own or even with simply the SMT. This is an interesting idea for us because we were amalgamated so quickly that we started this term with pupils not having timetables, with me not knowing all the staff I did or did not have with half the staff not knowing the other half, with half the staff not knowing the buildings, we are on a split site, the building work promised in the summer had not happened and so the whole thing was desperately confused. I was still ready for the idea that any major decision should be made collaboratively. I'll give you an example, we had to have a pastoral system, we had 600 pupils, I worked out on my own, this is significant, I had 5 days to work out a staff structure and a budget on my own, that was totally on my own. I didn't have any Deputies, any governors, I had no help from the LEA, I had a big thick pencil and that was it. That was totally against the way I wanted to do things, I wanted to bounce ideas off of people, I wanted to be able to talk, it wasn't available so I had to do it on my own, so now I have the staff structure. I had decided that we would employ 3 house heads i.e. each house head would have approx. 200 children. I needed to know whether we were going to have vertical tutor groupings or horizontal tutor groupings, I needed to know that decision, because I was working on a timetable of decision-making unlike any that I had experienced in schools, normally you work on a termly or half termly or monthly or weekly, I was working on an hour by hour basis. So I knew I had to make a decision by 4.00

that day so that 9.00 the next morning I could make another decision. I held a meeting of my three house heads, my two Deputies and my bursar which constituted my SMT and said we need to make this decision by 4.00. The two newly appointed Deputies quite rightly and quite understandably said, what do you mean we have got 2 hours to make a fundamental decision about...I said yes, that's it that is the deal. So we did, we actually talked about whether it should be horizontal or vertical tutor groupings, we made the decision with much reservation on people who felt bounced into a decision. We made the decision, we made vertical tutor groupings which we recognise is unusual, and on Monday coming, we are reversing it, because what has happened is that we have made that decision because we had to but we have found that it has become unwieldy and it needs to be addressed and either I can plough on with it till the end of the summer or I can do it straight away, and I have decided to do it straight away. What this proves to me is that quick decisions like that are often cause for regret but interesting since then both my Deputies have said to me on separate occasions, we must make a decision about...and I have said we must talk about it, or we must get that group together and it has been suggested that what people are really asking for is a quick burst of fascism to get some basic decisions in place, because unlike other schools that you may be sampling we have no background at all, for example the report system, what reports? We have no background of reports, who is in charge of reports? We haven't decided yet, when do the reports go out? I don't know because we haven't got a school calendar yet. It's like being instantly born with no background, just 600 kids and a group of staff, you have no assumptions at all.



**IG - So if you are wedded to the idea of collaboration and participation, it sounds like you regret that decision because it was in isolation without the full process behind it, so what structures do you intend putting in place to activate your principles of collaboration?**

**HEAD ONE - Well first of all the actual structure of the school is SMT, I act as Head, I have two Deputies and a Bursar, then I have something I call the school management board, there is where I always thought would be my major decision-making block, that group constitutes the four house heads, my three faculty heads, SMT plus three other individuals, there is also the student counsellor and the community liaison officer, now that group I have seen as my think tank. I have thought that the SMT would do the day to day minutiae of decision-making, overseeing and monitoring and would feed ideas to SMB but it would be the SMB group because those represent the major team leaders, the faculty heads, the heads of house, they group others together and so we have tried to do that we have and numerous meetings and have tried to have discussions, albeit hasty and with constant deadlines but using that to generate ideas which that at least people could say they were part of. We have also because we have undertaken a collaboration with HMI, we have started to produce working parties dedicated to specifics so we need to raise student attainment in the class room, well that is gathered together by a working party, now once you do that then at least I have a fall back to the position where I am able to say, you cannot say you were not involved, because there were all these opportunities to have your say.**



**IG** - Just on that side of things, was that a problem? I mean, staff not feeling they were consulted?

**HEAD ONE** - I think at the moment because it is so unusual there is the fear of trying to keep up with events so for example last Tuesday I had a site meeting of the architects, and the builders representatives etc. on phase 2 of the building renovations well to get that information back to staff with all the implications it is going to have is quite difficult because, I will give you a specific example there, on a split site we still own and are responsible for what was the Girls school site which is at Downton Road, half a mile away. We are paying £1000 per week security fees, or fees to a security firm to keep that place from being demolished, so therefore it would be logical for me to want to abandon it quickly because at the moment is just a warehouse but it potentially is a very expensive warehouse so there is a pressure on me to abandon it but at the same time I have to balance it against a political decision of Avon disappearing in April and the local politicians being very anxious that I don't declare that surplus to requirements so that it gets what they call remaindered and that B puts in a claim to say it's worth £3 million, we'll have a bit of that because we are a school too. We are saying, hang on it belongs to the community of K, so I have to hold it until Bristol can take it over. So I have to balance £1,000 a week, against that political desire, plus the fact that I also need to be able to get all my goods and chattels out of there before they are all stolen or all burnt. Therefore how do I, all of those things are a mixture of political and economic decisions, you cannot really take 70 staff with you down all those roads of trying to go through the ifs and buts. There has to be a time

when you say to people, I have considered this to the best of my ability and this is the best decision to make. That is partly to do with speed, because if it wasn't so urgent to make these decisions ...

**IG** - Are there any other decisions of that nature that you would take solely on your own?

**HEAD ONE** - I would not see a block of decisions like that uniquely mine, no, I am very worried about me making a decision which affects other people which does not consult them, I am very pushed to think of a decision which I have made like that, I can only think of very minor ones, like one at lunchtime where because we are changing the pastoral system over on Monday it is going to take a bit of co-ordinating to do this all in one go so that children aren't more confused than they are already. So I have laid out how it seems logical to do it, in consultation with the house heads on Monday. Somebody came to me at lunchtime and said, why didn't I, this afternoon, over the tangy system explain to children where they should be on Monday morning and I said that won't work, forget it, because I am experienced enough to know that if I tell them on Friday afternoon, it is not even a faint memory come Monday morning so what is the point. Now that is not exactly a major, earth shattering decision but it is only at that level that I would do it on my own and that is a problem for me because while all of this democracy and consultation sits very easily with most people, the time they don't want it is when they are under pressure of time. If anybody is ever living under pressure of time it is us, and sometimes it worries me that I am too concerned with democracy when I have got a feeling that



some of the staff want to say, well you tell me what to do and I will do it but if you are going down the road of the school which is built on democracy, how you get there is quite important.

**IG** - Let's get down to actual practice, your senior management board, that is an interesting term, board because in real terms the board of a school would be the governors and you, so you have had a meeting of the SMB, where do the decisions actually take place. Is that a consultative body, or is it real decision-making body, or is it a think tank or what?

**HEAD ONE** - Well if I was absolutely pushed I would reserve the right not to define where ultimately decisions are ever made. The reason for that is quite a pragmatic one, I think barring me being completely against it, I would be swayed by a majority vote, consensus of opinion but I would always reserve the right to have a veto and ultimately even if I veto something, even if the rest of the staff were for it, I would have to exercise my veto. The reason for that is quite simple, I am responsible for my school and I am not about to be responsible for something I don't agree with but I am prepared to be responsible for something I do. Now if I can go back to the example I gave you of vertical and horizontal tutor groups, my own feeling on that was that we should have gone horizontal from the beginning but three of the house heads voted for vertical so I thought they, were the ones that were going to operate it and that despite my misgivings, which proved to be right, give them a go. So I really would have to be quite convinced that I am right to feel sufficiently justified to exercise my veto but having said all of that, which is dodging the



question to a certain extent and I always would dodge the question because I wouldn't have it written down that I make all the decisions. What I am saying therefore that the school management board at a meeting, as long as they were not saying something I vehemently disagreed with I would always respect their views and take their views as the decision.

**IG** - How would the decision become put on the statute book? Would you then discuss it with your SMT, obviously would have to discuss it with governors, but what I am saying is, that perhaps the decision is half formed there and it is actually taken in the SMT.

**HEAD ONE** - No it would be taken at the School Management Board unless I could see from the discussions that the SMT were against it as a separate group and that would confuse and worry me. If the consensus of the school management board was that we did this, that is the decision.

**IG** - Two things, one you said you more or less supported anything to which you were not vehemently opposed, what is not for sale?

**HEAD ONE** - Community education for example, or progressing children's ability to make decisions in the school. I have this particular theory, its not mine I am sure, but experience suggests that children at Z or B often experience powers of decision-making in their everyday life, they are lucky. Quite rightly very deprived children have very little experience of making decisions, they do not have it outside. Therefore part of their education should

be to take decisions. Therefore this school has at its foundation, the school council which is not a little toy machine which is a group of people who themselves make decisions. They have their own budget, they are designing their own school uniform, they make the school rules, again with my veto lurking behind, but they literally wrote the school rules. So if somebody said something or a group or a corpus came out in a way that went against that principle I would be very concerned. I can give you an example here, of as you would expect in a really tough area like this, discipline, whatever that means, I will just use it as a short hand for you is of great concern and is an art form, honed to perfection and polished in K in a way that other schools do not need to, we do it for England here. So one of the things that has been particularly upsetting to very experienced staff is to go through this jumble the amalgamation has produced and they want to get back to clear guidelines which they were used to in their two ancestral schools. There is nothing quite so upsetting as disempowering. You know when you walk into a classroom you have never met before, that feeling of anxiety until you get to know their names, well you do that times 600 and you have got that horrible feeling of disempowerment. There is one thing a teacher cannot handle and that is disempowerment, so they have this particular concern about discipline. One of the expressions of that concern has been in SMB repeatedly, the desire to have a particularly elaborate school detention system. I have had a lot of experience with school detention systems and I believe that they are largely symbolic and they do serve for a feeling of relief of the feeling of vengeance on the part of the staff, but that is all. So I have always managed to do a Phil Bennett side step on this every time it has come up and if push came to shove,



I honestly think I would exercise my veto, I am not going to go down the path of a useless Byzantine form of revenge which does not get us anywhere other than to satisfy a small minority of staff's wish to be revenged upon the same pupils on a daily basis.

**IG -** Tell me about your SMT, given the fact that you have made the case for decision being lower down as it were, how do you relate to, how do use, what is the role, what are your feelings about your SMT?

**HEAD ONE -** I would start by pointing out that I am in an unusual position here, because most heads when they go to a school inherit an SMT or the SMT changes gradually, one leaves, one joins. Of course I have a peculiar situation here that the four of us, the three others are all strangers to me. We have employed two deputy heads and that is their first deputy Headship and they have both come into this extraordinarily demanding situation, and the fourth person, the Bursar is going to be replaced in a weeks time as well, so that is difficult, so we have these inexperienced Deputies, that is not a value judgement that is a fact, coming into a situation which is a maelstrom of decision needs. The question is how do I relate to them?

**IG -** How do you use them? Do you use them as touchstones, what?

**HEAD ONE -** I use them I think really as idea providers and as clear critics of what needs to be done. The reason for that is I explained earlier how easy it is in two schools that have not changed very much to become somewhat, your



phrase, set in your ways, fossilised springs to mind as well. These two people have come in from the outside with no assumptions and are the latest model to show that there are alternative ways to doing things, than that which has been done in K since Noah was a lad so I am using them as, look what do we need to do next and they are very good at picking up, why are we doing it this way?

The example I used in the beginning was that when the Mongols invaded China the Chinese basically didn't get too concerned about it because over about 100 years the Mongols had become Chinese and that is what happens, I believe to teachers who join schools which have been well established. I was very critical of what went before and I am sure I am lot less critical than I was then. You gradually become accustomed to customer practice and one of my concerns here is that how you take what you could call tiny backward steps of accommodation on an hourly/daily basis until suddenly you are doing it exactly like Mr So and So who has been here 35 years and these two people are the only two who can drag us out of that. So they are idea-providers, priority-setters and motivators.

**IG** - They seem to be your sounding boards is that right?

**HEAD ONE** - I don't set out a series of ideas and bounce the ideas off them. They have only the generic things like community school and child-centred and those are pretty vague anyway. They have a completely open invitation to set the agenda for change and I don't bounce ideas off them so much as they say

look this is the next block of things we should put in front of the SMB. It is interesting that of the three of us, as you would expect in three individuals we have different personalities and my female deputy is in fact more the sort of person who would say, look there is so much to be done, democracy is all very well in its place but let's make a few decisions, get the buses running on time and then we will do it later and I can see there is a value to that. Periodically I feel almost as if I am dragging my feet and that would be ironic for me who for the last five years has watched people dragging their feet with gusto.

**IG** - That was the next question basically, democracy is fine but if you read any of the literature on leadership it comes time and time again to the vision and leadership and if you set up these collaborative structures you are actually setting up obstacles to what I want done, seeing my view that is very much becoming our view. I agree totally with your philosophy, I just wondered if you had thought about your own public decision-making as such and whether there were strategies you employed to establish your own control over the situation?

**HEAD ONE** - I am worried and I have become more worried this term than ever in my professional life before that maybe democracy in schools, while it is extremely important, it is almost like the Roman Republic, in times of crisis they dropped all the republic nonsense and appointed a dictator. Maybe there comes a stage when they have to do that, when I talked to on one of my few meetings with LEA people, if someone comes in from the LEA and asks how are things going and I list all the problems, they will say, you should tell them to do blah, blah, blah and I say what do you mean tell them to do it? Tell them to



do it. From an outsiders perception that is exactly what needs to be done but I am not sure of the balance of getting the buses to run on time is the end product but if you have a load of very unhappy bus drivers is the bus being on time a worthwhile object and getting that right I don't know. Because my Deputies, understandably and quite rightly so are younger than me I also worry whether I have for the last 5 years I have seen myself as the proactive person and suddenly I am the granddad figure and I have take the role change a bit hard, I feel left behind, hang on I used to be the leader now I'm back here and that is a peculiar feeling. When I was made Head of X Boys I was in the unusual situation of being able to appoint a deputy and I remember saying to that person when he was appointed I would like to use you as a battering ram to change things. Instead of me now feeling that these two Deputies are battering rams I feel as though they are more like chariot horses pulling the chariot which is rather less aggressive, quite rightly probably, with me tweaking the reins. That would be a nice feeling but I am not sure whether I am tweaking the reins or whether I am just hanging on for dear life. You have a very different situation, as I tell everyone who has talked about X for the last year, you name it, we have got it peculiar here.

**IG** - Thinking about the people you work with, perhaps even yourself, can you tell me about a really bad decision that either you have made or heads you have been associated with have made?

**HEAD ONE** - I am lucky I think that I have worked with very good heads in my time. Yes, a corker, when I was working at Y School, that was a split site



school and it evolved that it was year 7 to 10 on one side and 11, 12 and 13 on the other and it had grown up that way for quite some time. So all the resources, everything had been put that way round. A head was appointed and after about 3 months he put that situation up for review of whether that was actually the best grouping of students on those two sites and so we had a period of people able to respond to that thought and overwhelmingly, because we all knew and had been discussing it came back with the idea that yes, it had been done that way because it made logical sense and the head then wrote back to us all saying fine, thank you very much for the consultation and we are going to change and we are going to put the upper school where the lower school was and change it all around. There was consternation on an intense level, there was one gentleman who was in charge of what we would call the library or resource centre who had dedicated his life to getting these two little libraries set up and he was now being told that he would have to swap them. The man literally slit his throat, the man suffered an instant collapse, other staff were totally mystified. Gradually despite our consternation and our great alarm nothing ever changed. Somehow the whole thing was quietly forgotten, nobody moved a library book and to my knowledge because I still have friends who work there it is still as it was when that consultation took place.

**IG - Has that had any effect on the way you run things?**

**HEAD ONE -** Yes it showed me a couple of things, it showed me how, that particular head highlighted for me many things which I think are dangers for

head teachers and are those things which infuriate staff the most. For example I was on the upper school site for most of my time there and he came up to have lunch on the upper school site and he was behind me in the queue going past the ladies dishing up the beans, the lady who dished up the dollop of beans on my plate then turned to me after doing the head's behind me said "would I be paying for my visitor?" I said sorry this is the head of the school, she did not honestly recognise him, and I thought that said quite a bit, it was a relatively big school but.. There was things like the stiffness of the man, I always thought that no matter what type of school it was that you should at least be a presence which the pupils knew. I worked for another head who I admired immensely and who I thought was one of the best I was going to say politicians or manipulators, but I don't mean either of those words pejoratively, user of people that I have ever met, but that man to my knowledge, and I worked with him for 6 years, I don't ever remember seeing a pupil in his room. I don't remember ever having anything to do directly with parents other than the once every 5 years they expelled a pupil from that school, he was a pure, rather like the queen bee at the back of the hive laying the eggs, a few points, a few ideas but more importantly just keeping other people working. I remember seeing an advert in a school magazine about what makes a good teacher, there was this archetypal teacher, picture of a head teacher in a gown and so on, very stern looking gentleman, underneath the picture it just said - appoint the right people and keep your door open. Not a bad definition in many ways, as long as you can appoint the right people, that is where it falls down. I think I learnt a lot from that man, and I learnt a lot from the other man about how not to do it. If you are distant you have a problem with your staff,



you see this politician which was so good in my opinion was just as distant as the guy who was going to pay for his beans, the difference was that the politician had won his admiration and support of his SMT, and there was a big team there, about 9 of us. So that man could spend most of his time in London where he did spend most of his time and the rest of us would run the school for him without murmur. Whereas if the other guy, who was once caught reading Gardening magazines with his feet upon his desk when a bloke went into his room, we all took that as a personal affront. So I don't think there is a style of management that is good or bad, it really comes down to whether other people go along with it because they can see the value in it.

**IG** - You talked a lot about the amalgamation of the school which has obviously been very difficult but has there been a decision that sticks in your mind as being the most difficult you have had to take. I am thinking particularly about staffing issues, with the amalgamation may fall into that category.

**HEAD ONE** - It was based around staffing. The most difficult decision was to do with staffing and was to do with the expectations of long serving staff on the jobs which they would or would not get under the new system. I was concerned because I had been some three years ago within quite literally within an hour of making three staff redundant in the days when it still was pretty much unheard of so I was still pretty fresh to Headship then and it did seem unfortunate that I was going to be the first school to go down that route. So I had had a taste of what it was going to be like and I had had a taste of the tactics of the teachers unions, of the human unhappiness, I had had



husbands and wives crying, oh dear, so when we started the proposed interviews for the jobs I had in theory some 70 people applying for 30 jobs so I was faced with the prospect of making 30 people redundant. Let alone a whole block of cleaners, canteen workers, caretakers, a whole ancillary staff associated with at least one site. That was the most difficult set of circumstances and there was one particular day when a member of long term serving and enthusiastic and still committed teacher who had put his entire professional life towards wanting a particular job did not get it. I had to come back over here and say to him, look you have not got that job, living with that, being part of it whether I liked it or not of that decision with governors was absolutely awful. It was a human gut wrenching experience. It was not something that goes away when the passion goes because you live with the results of that for a long time.

**IG - Did you take that decision on your own?**

**HEAD ONE - No that was a governors decision with me there.**

**IG - Was that genuinely consensual?**

**HEAD ONE - It was within the framework of that meeting, yes it was, but I was aware throughout all of this, I was given a shadow governing body at that time, an interim governing body call it what you will, it was a pretty high powered group because the LEA knew they had to get all this up and running within 6 weeks so I was given some very proactive governors, the like of which you**

would not normally find in a school this size. So they were pulling and pushing like mad to get this done which was what their job was but I am not sure, there was the tension between them having to do that which was their job and me knowing that I was going to have to live with it for the next 5 years which was my job. So it was all very well for them to say he is not really the best man for the job and then walk off site and go home and me to say he may not be the best man in the interview but I know he is the amongst the best on the ground and I am going to have to pick those pieces up, so the most difficult single decision, I must stop rambling and say it, I think was to try and work to unit two sets of staff who historically had nothing to do with each other for 20 years despite being half a mile apart and over the last three years had daggers drawn because one staff said they didn't wish to amalgamate and the other said they did. So to build a team out of fighting dogs was a difficult concept. We then met when we had this brand new set of staff on the 4 September and it was very odd to be sitting along side somebody who quite literally, and I am not exaggerating, called you a bastard in a public meeting, the last time you saw her and was now your head of faculty, difficult.

**IG -** When you take difficult decisions, do you just sit in the bath, do you go for country walks, do you ask people what they think?

**HEAD ONE -** No I took a very difficult, difficult for me, let me give you an example. On Friday, a week ago today I had three interviews because we needed to appoint a timetabler for the school. It had to be internal, there was no problem with that and as it turned out I thought I would find it difficult to



have somebody applying, I didn't think anybody would want it because we have so many protected salaries here that I cannot offer any inducements because everyone is bumped up against the ceiling anyway but amazingly I had three applicants, all three very good, all three very good potentially timetablers, all three I could make a nice short list for all three being appointed so how the hell do I make a decision? So I did not do anything, I told them they would not know until Monday and I didn't think about it. I have a peculiar feeling. The way I work in actually making a decision is that I do not think about and come Monday I have made the decision. It sort of surfaces a bit like clotted cream bubbling to the top. I find myself thinking about those three guys maybe a little bit as I was driving down to Devon and then I would think I don't want to think about that I've got all weekend and then during Saturday watching the rugby I would think, well he was good but he is...and that would fade away and by Monday driving into school I would know I am going to give it to him. I don't sit down with a piece of paper and write it all down, it somehow just bubbles away and comes to the front when it is needed. It does happen, and I don't worry about it. I think what happens is that somehow as the Americans say "it gets put on a back burner" but it is on a burner and when it reaches the right temperature I know. That is the only way I know how to operate because I have to make some many decisions so quickly.

**IG** - Is it you feel, almost intuitive or has there been some kind of background, hypothetical process going on? Thinking about the decision you actually made was it made on purely objective grounds were there more qualities for the candidates who were successful? Can you analyse it for me?



**HEAD ONE** - You have got three candidates, otherwise I would be most unprofessional, was to be satisfied that all three could practically do the job, now that is part of the front of the brain objective decision. All three convinced me in the interview that they could do an adequate job. There was not one clear super-timetabler amongst them which would have knocked the others out of the frame. All three were equal, they could all do the job, they knew the implications, they wanted to do the job and they had the good of the school at their heart. So they were all three equal, they had all won. That was the first objective decision, the second objective decision was to check whether it made any difference in terms of budget, were there overwhelming requirements about whether candidate A had to have it, no they were equal there as well. Then you get into the other things where I start to put them into the back of my mind, what affect would it have on other staff, what were their other responsibilities, how would their other responsibilities be affected if they had any, would there be any other hidden messages to staff, what would be the likelihood if Mr B didn't get it that Mr B would now seek for promotion and leave and would that leave me in a mess come Easter. All of those other what if's, now all of that took place down in Devon whilst I was doing other things, didn't think about it all. That was all sifting through the weekend. So there are two parts to the decision, there is the up-front check that you are not going to make a racing mistake here of the objective and then sling it to your subconscious and let that sort it out for you.

**IG** - Thinking about the result that eventually came out of it, why did you appoint that person?

**HEAD ONE** - Firstly because I was convinced that he was as good as the others, practically and objectively and then the second bit was the other two who didn't get it both have large responsibilities which they are very good at and starting to take over because they are new to that as well and had plenty to be getting on with and I thought and this is where the Machiavelli of all heads should start is to thinking that they have enough to be getting on with, the school is going to need those doing just that and I don't want them to be knocked off track with that, if I gave either of them a timetabling job as well would that diminish or enhance their efforts and I think it would have diminished their other efforts. One was head of faculty, the other was head of a large department. The third one was a victim of the amalgamation because this was such a bizarre thing that some people had come out quite wounded. This is going to be too much of a digression but if you can imagine that you are offering a staff structure, let us say you are offering exams officer. I said to all the staff who were thinking of applying, you can apply for as many jobs as you wanted, so you could apply for head of science, school timetabler, exams officer, SENCO, you could have done whatever, but I will only give you one interview and I also reserved the right to then not give any response to the interview until I had done everybody's interview. So I had 70 interviews to do in two weeks in order to get an overall picture of everybody and then, and the union supported me on this, they had to, otherwise I would not have been able to do it, I don't think, to then make a complete picture of the jigsaw. If I had



had to say to candidate A, well you haven't got head of science but I am going to give you the exams officer one and I came to a candidate two days later who had also put in for the exams officer, can you see the practical impossibilities of interviewing at the right time. Unless you interviewed one person maybe 7 or 8 times. So they did that, out of that came one or two victims, because there were one or two who had put in for something they thought was a sure fire winner and nothing else and they didn't get that and they dropped right through and ended up as an MPG. That guy was one victim, not because of his own ability but because he had put all his eggs in one basket. He came back to the newly amalgamated school desperately hurt by how he had allowed himself to be from middle manager to be nothing in particular and he clawed himself back in one term, he is now in charge of all our students from university and he is now the timetabler and he now has more whole school responsibility than he started out with. I think the ultimate decision was based on my vision of just how dedicated and unceasingly hard working that man and that ultimately was I think what swung it.

**IG - Was it the same favourite when you finished the interviewing process?**

**HEAD ONE -** No I had no idea and I went down to visit some friends in Devon and I mentioned to them what I was thinking about in terms that I had these three people to consider and they asked me on Friday who is favourite and I said there isn't one, they are completely equal. Then they asked me on Saturday, had I made up my mind I said no and they asked me on Sunday



when I drove back had I made up my mind and I said no I haven't really thought about it.

**IG** - That is interesting, that is the complete opposite of what the research says. People arrive at decisions fairly quickly and then....

**HEAD ONE** - I remember my ex-brother-in-law whenever he had to make a decision, out would come the foolscap, for and against and the bigger the problem the bigger the sheet of paper.

**IG** - Like a balance sheet, whatever is the longest is the one.

**HEAD ONE** - I have always found that if you allow your brain to mull it and can ignore the process it will tell you the right thing.

**IG** - It could be the subject that has something to do with it. A couple more questions. The big thing about training heads, if you had to design a module of a course which sharpened up head's decision-making, what kind of things would you put? If you had to sort the wheat out from the chaff, give them a push in the right direction? Give them a taste of what it was like, what would you choose?

**HEAD ONE** - I don't know if this is coming from the wrong end completely, I think one of the things I have learned from painful experience is to try and foresee the results of your decisions, try to guess where the fall out is going to

come. That is something no one ever really talks about. People are quite keen to talk about how to make decisions, how to gather your evidence, how to consult with people and once you have made your decision that is it, you have underlined the QED. I have found on a number of occasions that I have made a decision or a decision has been made through the collaborative process and I written to all people concerned then I have not realised how that decision would effect a person or group of individuals and I have extremely naïve a week or so later when I was told did you know that when you made that decision Mr So and So cried for three days or so and so was absolutely furious. Why? didn't you know that because you said that, him over there ...no it is that sort of problem, trying to consider the effects on individuals or groups of a decision, whether it was made by you or by collaboration.

**IG** - On a personal level, if that is an issue have you made moves to make sure that now you know what the influences are?

**HEAD ONE** - A great weakness that I am aware of in my own, one of the many, is to do with me picking up something and running with it, playing around with it and so on and then forgetting to involve those people who need to know because I have forgotten about them by them. You know the common thing that I find and I am sure it is common to many senior managers in schools. Somebody writes you a note and wants you to do something and you do it but you forget to tell them that you have, I find myself doing that all the time and I will do things because I have been asked or it has been suggested and I am very happy to do it and blow me, because I haven't told

the people I have done it, they assume you have not done it, you've got the worst of both worlds, you have knackered yourself through effort and you have not got any praise because you forgot to tell them that you did it. It is picking up those little threads of human connection which are not obvious at first glance and saying, what will be the effect on that person way over in the corner of the staff room and following through the ripples of effect which can be quite unpleasant if you are overlook them. That is something in any training module that I would ask to be considered. What is the effect on cancelling a rugby fixture on the head of RE, you wouldn't think that would connect at all but it is amazing what happens. You make a decision on, I have just had this one on the major changeover in the pastoral system and it does seem as if the Head of Art has come out worse. Who would have foreseen that? It is following through the dominoes.

**IG - Do you ever use any of your staff for touchstones for that?**

**HEAD ONE -** Now there is a problem that I have , because I am working in a school which has had such established teachers and because as I explained to you there were those, your phrase again, are settled in their ways, great phrase, and those that were more likely to change I found myself always wanting to talk to the one's that were more likely to change to bounce ideas off and what happens there is that you get a little court and that is a disaster. That is something I hope not to do again at X because if you are the King's friend it is very dodgy for you when the King leaves for start off and also it



doesn't make for collaborative management if four or five favourites are always the ones who are privy to the discussions.

**IG - Do you do anything to break down that kings court?**

**HEAD ONE -** I am not sure whether I have done anything active enough to say I have broken down that court. Making sure that everyone knows what is going on, clear communication and constantly reinforcing the idea that these ideas are for everyone to comment on but ultimately if your staff divide between those who wish to be involved and those who don't, I find it quite hard to keep approaching people who have turned down endless invitations to be part of the process. I am also in the position which might be partly connected with that question of having staff who are on protected salaries and going to them and saying, you are on £6,000 per year more than you should be according to the staff structure so it is my understanding that I can now ask you to do £6,000 of extra work. What would you like to provide for this, that does jolt a few settled staff. I am just starting that process because I only finished the appointment of the last member of staff who if you think back to end of April, beginning of May, I finished last Thursday. It has taken that long to get everything underway. Now I am in the position of being able to say, you have £2,000 of protected salary, what particular whole school responsibility would you like. That might break through the court of favourites, it might help a bit but I am very conscious of the Head's friends syndrome. In a small school, in a very closed community.... Are you talking to other Heads?

**IG** - I'm taking a cross section of schools and male and female Heads, of course.

**HEAD ONE** - Have you come across an example yet and this would interest me of a collaborative head with a deputy, one or more, who said isn't it about time you said this that or the other, get your act together, stop spinning on the spot matey, make your mind up.

**IG** - I have only spoken to Heads not Deputies because what I am also aware of is there is a degree of impression management, very much, not so much in your case, but other Heads I have spoken to I get the impression they are giving answers to interview questions. What they do privately and what people think of them privately is something that needs further investigation. The relationship between Heads and Deputies has come up a couple of times, one where you get the description, the Deputy does his job very well which really means I hate the xxxxx and I can't get on with the xxx but I have to say something diplomatic, so you don't think there is a completely chaotic thing going on in the school. Interestingly that person did particular things to marginalise the power base of the Deputy. I think that ultimately if there is a problem, a conflict, you will adopt strategies, yours are young, they are moulded, they will take the elder statesman...

**HEAD ONE** - This interests me as well, I don't know if this comes into your research or not is the self knowledge or lack of it, you are asking me and you have asked other heads how do you do this or that well what you are getting is



their view of how they do it. It was interesting from my two Deputies that we are going to talk about it when we get 20 minutes together about our own strengths and weaknesses because I always thought of myself as someone who was quite irascible at times and rather overbearing possibly in meetings if ideas were challenged that I really did think were really silly, that I could show my irritability and I thought that this as a very clear trait that I had. I was amazed to find that apparently I never show this at all and that I remain completely calm to the point of looking comatose. That level of ignorance about myself is blindingly worrying because I would not have recognised that.

**IG** - The ones who know themselves best are female heads. I have got the feeling, it is on the back burner there somewhere, is that because they feel inherently vulnerable they need to know exactly what they are good and not good at so the pressure has actually forced that upon them. They are very certain of themselves and know their strengths and weaknesses.

**HEAD ONE** - Is there something to do with the fact as well that female heads as well as other positions, there are fewer females than males, that you have got greater quality control with females than males. I remember a head, a number of years ago, I don't remember what it was for, I think it was to do with SHA, he went around flying all over the place, I don't know what he was interviewing them about but the stories he came back with were extraordinary. One head had an interview with him in the afternoon and the secretary wouldn't let him in, kept putting him off, in the end he said I want to see this guy, where is he? she said if you must know he is in there, he went in and he



was completely blotto over the desk and apparently got paralytically drunk every lunch time and the secretary used to know this and stop all afternoon visitors. There was another guy he got to interview and this head and he were sitting in the corridor and after a while my friend said to him, can we go to your office now because it is a bit public and he said I don't have an office, what do you mean you don't have an office? My deputy does all the work so I gave him my office and he didn't have an office he just wandered about.

I think OFSTED may have winkled some of these out but the old days was such an invitation to indulge your eccentricities.

**IG - Have you been OFSTEDed?**

**HEAD ONE -** No not yet, I've got a couple of good stories on that as well, very briefly when X Boys...last November we assumed that Gillian Shepherd would have made up her mind because everyone had been consulted but we also knew it was make or break time. In November OFSTED contacted me and said we are coming to OFSTED X in February but I said that is very interesting but by February we will probably either be shut or amalgamated and by the time you have done your process you won't even know which governing body to report to because they will have changed. They said we have heard this before, you head teachers are good at this, we are coming. Anyway we got five MPs to write to them and that did not put them off. I thought this is beyond belief, in the end I contacted the BBC and I phoned back to OFSTED and said are you happy that BBC2 are running a documentary on this because it is very

interesting expenditure of public funds to OFSTED a place that is going to close. They phoned back to say they were going to postpone the visit. Finally Ian, just to put a tin hat on it, we came back in September and I got a phone call from X Girls school who said OFSTED had said they were coming to do you in January, we said heaven to Betsy we have only been open for two weeks, I said come on. Then because I had this project going with HMI I said call Chris Woodhead he knows all about it I have a deal going with him and I will see you in January if that is what you want to do, they phoned back...They are always with us OFSTED. I can understand the process of self-examination but I really do think there are better ways of doing things and also because I have been in the school that I am when the exam league tables came out and I was number one flavour of the month because I was the bottom of the Avon league tables, I don't regard it as very helpful just to be as it happens at the time, for a reporter to come to you and say what is it like to head of the worst school in the county? I think hang on there are a number of assumptions in that.

**IG** - I think the only redeeming thing is that parents don't take any notice of league tables. Thank you xxx, thank you for your time.

## **Taped Interview Head Two**

**IG** - Perhaps if we can just do a bit of orientation first about what I am doing and why I am doing it. It is an MEd thesis which I am hoping take on further about the professional judgement of head teachers.

**HEAD TWO** - Yes.

**IG** - There is a lot of material written about how bookies make decisions, how engineers make decisions but nothing yet about, you know, the person whose head is on the block in a school. So really all I am doing at stage one of my investigation is to just do the trawl of selected Heads in Avon, talk to them about decision-making and about the decisions they have made just in a kind of informal way just to get a feel for what characterises your decision-making or that of the post itself. So perhaps we could start by telling me a bit about yourself and the school.

**HEAD TWO** - I have been here this is my seventh year, and I have actually been a head teacher for thirteen years. I was Head at P girls school before, a county staff head and a couple of terms as Head at B school and then was sent here and it was decided that the county staff Head post would cease in 18 months time so I applied for a permanent Headship here. It had been my ambition to be Head of mixed school but I must say that it has been reasonably difficult as a woman to do that despite a county which has got a very good equal opportunities policy at its central level but when you get down



to individual governing bodies as you know life is very different. My background is a chemistry degree and I have been I think, I have taught in seven different schools, so I have got a very wide background and I have worked for a wide range of Heads who have quite different styles and particularly different styles of decision-making.

**IG - Right.**

**HEAD TWO -** And I would say to you that I could probably best be described as a magpie type of person, perhaps I have never had any original thoughts, I do not know but I do watch other peoples practice, and I have learnt my rack by watching other Heads and I still do so now. So I have had a very wide background - I have worked in grammar school, I have worked in single sex schools, I have worked in a 2000 co-ed comprehensive as well as smaller ones.

**IG -** You said you were a magpie, you seem to have picked tricks of the trade from different Heads. Can you analyse what it is that you have retained and what you have rejected?

**HEAD TWO -** That is probably more difficult to do because I am I suppose always on the look out for new and better ways of doing things. Also I have no fear about admitting that I cannot do something and I don't know something and I have enormous respect for many of my colleagues and certainly when I came into Avon, both as a deputy and subsequently as a Head, I have

watched and listened to some of the all time great orators . The interesting thing to me as I go on in Headship is that many of those people seemed to have the ideas and the attitudes when you get down to it didn't actually run very good schools. What I think that I have tried in my magpie life to do is to listen to how other people do things with the context and then take the practice that works for me and that practice is by no means fixed because if I find out tomorrow there is a better or more effective way to do something then I will have a jolly good job and an attempt at doing it. So although I think I can probably talk to you about the ways in which I decision make and how that has evolved I would hope that I am not a fixed terminated learner in that sense and I think that one of the things that Heads have to do is to be brave enough to learn continuously and in particular learn about how to make decisions because that is what you are paid to do. I will also say to you something which I think is important and that is that even in my time as a Head, the powers and responsibilities have actually been reduced in real terms through the legislation involving governors within the decision-making process and whereas perhaps I made decisions as a Head when I was first appointed I certainly could not do that in the climate of current expectations of the way in which schools are organised so I had to change and adapt not only through learning and watching and practice but in terms of external influences on the way in which I have had to operate and I am probably less autonomous now than I was to begin with.

**IG** - Obviously the climate that the decision is taken in is critical. Perhaps I can pin you down to something specific.

**HEAD TWO** - OK you ask me what you want to know and what sequences - it is a big subject.

**IG** - Now perhaps if we deal with a specific decision. Could you think of a decision you have made today for example?

**HEAD TWO** - One decision I made today, yes it would not be a very good example though.

**IG** - It does not matter, a decision is the important one.

**HEAD TWO** - Well today I have actually been involved in two regular sessions. I see I have got 5 other members of the senior management team. I see each of them for an hour/and hour and a half each per week. It occupies an enormous amount of my working time, but during that time we actually talk over all the issues associated with their part of the job an they bring to me many things that cover the decision-making that either we have got to make collectively or that they have got to make in their delegated roles. Today I saw my curriculum deputy and we made a decision that we will actually use some data that we have had through the project that David Reynolds has here to look at the ways in which we group pupils in the future based on the test scores that we have. What we decided today was the strategy through which we are going to introduce this to, I suppose you may have faculty Heads at B, we have curriculum team leaders, how we are going to introduce that and so



we have been working through a position of having to do something about something, having an initial discussion between the two of us which will then go to the wider SMT and then down to the management level where it needs to be discussed and sorted out because until we get some idea of how we want to group the youngsters next year there are some other decisions that we will find difficult.

**IG** - Is that typical of a decision of that nature, a curriculum decision which involves the teaching organisation of the school. The way you have described it sounds like you have had a conversation with another senior member of staff and then the decision goes downwards. How participative are you?

**HEAD TWO** - The reason why we were discussing it was that my curriculum deputy had had his Friday lunch time meeting with the curriculum team leaders of whom he is the line manager and they had been discussing the area of setting mixed ability, How we are going to group children and in fact this is something that is a current area of concern. It is not as though I have just plucked it out of the air, it was something that he had intimated to me that they had started to discuss. Linked in with a discussion I had had yesterday with the Head of lower school about how we group how do the tutor groups next year, and it was pertinent because we had this afternoon coming which is what we were discussing as well in terms of having a day form on year 7 which we want to use creatively and constructively in terms of whether we leave them as they are or whether we start to do some more interesting things with the way in which we group them. So all things are part of a bigger pattern. The other

things that we decided today and it was apropos of no one else this is an isolated decision is that we decided today how we were going to follow up the OSTED report, and we actually decided today that in doing that we would prepare for the next school development plan. That we would actually only give colleagues one task to do and that is a decision that will not be discussed, well if act he is going back to discuss it but it is a pointless discussion because it is one that I know they will all agree to but it will still be aired with them and we were talking today, Harry and I about both OSTED and Investors in People and how OSTED had been obsessed, the registered inspector, had been obsessed working out what my management style and decision-making processes were, obviously in order to be able to comment on the management of the school and this was all tied up with our discussions about, and how we will follow it up, what OSTED decided what that I was a strong and elective Head but that there was a lot of top down but also bottom up and that when they actually spoke to the curriculum team leaders they had complete autonomy to make their own decisions within a framework of things i.e. their budgets, their curriculum and in fact what I do at the moment is all curriculum teams are able to make their own decisions about grouping children because a whole team is blocked against a whole team of teachers so it does not affect anybody else but as a team we want to see if there is anything that we can make as a school policy or to retain school.

**IG** - So how much is not for sale in that decision-making? I mean the way you have described the autonomy there, people could do totally random things,



they could be different faculty to faculty which could cause problems misunderstandings with parents and so on.

**HEAD TWO** - That is right, well there are some base line things I will not allow, one thing that I will not allow and that is not negotiable is a "sink" group of children who are identified from year 7 who work together only for five years and who are perhaps not given access to the curriculum. What is not negotiable in this school is that concept and the other thing that is not negotiable in this school is any violation of equal access. To me the greatest gift that I can offer every child here is equal access and equal opportunity and in fact this is one of the things that was discussed today, that when we re-discuss the curriculum and how we group children and whether we do alternative courses for the less able and whether we do GNVQs and whether we do youth award and whatever that the principle about equal access, not having children off or honing them down too early on are negotiable. So each set of managers in the school know that there are certain things which are my values and I cannot be budged from them but it would take proper evidence from people whom I respect and are professionals and have got lots of experience of teaching in schools and then you can convince me but they are values that I hold and I do think that all children are entitled to equal access, whether they can take that up is another matter. But there are things that if you ask my staff what I believe in they will be able to give you a list of the things that are not negotiable.



**IG** - Right you talked about a fairly complex decision there, are there any things that you can take very rapid decisions about, that do not take you any time at all to think about.

**HEAD TWO** - Yes when I meet with my senior teacher whose responsibility is staff development she will come in with a list of course requests, people want to go on courses and we make those decisions together very quickly because they are against a set of criteria. There are simple decisions for example today my senior deputy came in and he had had a request for somebody to be in a meeting where a member of staff was going to be disciplined and we discussed whether the person suggested should be appropriate and we decided no and we went back to the Head of Department who put a slightly different case and we decided that we would go along but have somebody in reserve to help. So those were fairly quick decisions that were on a one off situation and often we have to make fairly quick decisions on one off things. Where I am making decision on a regular basis like who goes on a course, then those are against criteria which we have discussed and agreed and the staff are supposed to know about them, they forget what they are and therefore they cannot apply the criteria and still ask for things that are not acceptable any way. But then that is probably par for the course in most schools. Where more far reaching decisions are made I have to say to you quite confidentially that I do not have the easiest of senior management teams to manage therefore I cycle my decision-making around where I need to so it depends entirely what the subject is. If I want a decision made where I want to harden things up in terms of behaviour and discipline I will do it round the table

with senior management team because I have got the "beat 'em and learn 'em brigade" if I want to make curriculum decisions to take the school on then I will go through my middle managers who are the one who have got to effect it and who are up to date and who are experienced and who at the end are directly accountable. So one of the things about my decision-making is that it is very rare that I make decisions on my own. Except those which you know is this child sent home because they are ill - yes or no.

**IG - The maintenance decisions?**

**HEAD TWO -** Yes the kind of things that most people can make. In terms of other decisions I choose very carefully in which forum they are discussed and to what extent and the final decisions are made again I judge who and where and against at the end of the day I still put an enormous amount of the governors and the governors sub-committees to discuss and be ratified. So I have not ever made any decision in isolation within this school, however having said that if I extend the way in which my decision-making goes if I have got conflicting views, if those views are based on evidence and I cannot see my way out of it then I will use my school advisor or I will use one of my ex-school advisors who is one of my governors to help clarify my thoughts.

**IG -** So what you are talking about here if you sense a difficult decision you can route it to the way that you think it will gain acceptance?



**HEAD TWO** - Yes I am manipulative in that way because otherwise I would just come up against the same blocks all the time.

**IG** - Take this in the spirit in which it is intended. Is that because that is a woman's way of doing things?

**HEAD TWO** - I do not know, it is interesting because I have been one of the Heads researched by the Leverhulme Trust through Valerie at the University of Bristol and she came here and interviewed me over a period of 2 years and watched my practice and her book is coming out fairly soon and she was looking at the styles of women Heads. They are characterised in their decision-making by women being much more likely to go for a collegiate team approach. Now I think I have got quite a lot of that left in me and I would much sooner that decisions were made that people are party to and had ownership of because one of the things that is very important I am sure you will find out from all the Heads you engage, is that if people have been party to a decision they are more likely stand by it and so on and I think that would be knowledge that is common to me and women. I think that Valerie certainly found that that was so with the women, but I think it is more the style with the new Head, you know the one that does regard the team not only as support because I can say to you that after all these years of Heads up that the decision-making does not get any easier, in fact I would say it gets worse because I know more and more of what the outcomes are likely to be I know where all the hiccups are going to occur, I sense what reactions are going to be and that makes you more cautious over some kinds of decisions, but only of the interesting things



from both the registered inspector for OSTED and the Investors in People assessor was that my staff do not regard me as a female Head.

**IG** - Is that a complement or not?

**HEAD TWO** - Personally I take it as a great complement because I am not a highly emotional person I am fairly logical, very practically minded. I am not a great thinker but everything I do has got to be doable as it were, and I think that it is that pragmatic base to decision-making that is one of the guiding things and I think that many women are perhaps sometimes more able to do that than men, and I am also able to say when I have made a mistake and I have made a wrong decision.

**IG** - Is that anything to do with experience, though rather than gender?

**HEAD TWO** - I do not know how you would divide the two. I mean I find that I am becoming more complex to myself the more skilled I become. Some things become dearer, other things are less so. I would not like to say whether that was a function of experience or gender. I think what Valerie found was that the difference with the women was in many cases the route and the background by which we had got there in terms of almost invariably we would almost all have been to single sex schools, mostly selective and so forth. So I think a lot of what I am has been shaped by that on the early days. I think what shapes me now is the sheer survival side of decision-making. I think another factor that is very important is the accountability. It has always been

there but it is so horrendous now that it puts a different break on decision-making and in many ways I welcome the fact that the governing body and another group of people share the burden of accountability. I think if you had it totally, you would be crucified and you know how many Heads go under and how many go off early and how many are stressed and it is not a very pleasant or pretty site. And I think when you are making decisions day in, day out, that you have to be very careful about the context and the way you handle yourself in doing that. I have made wrong decisions, I have made a popular decision, but I try to seek one that goes with all my management training and I will give you the analogy that struck home with me - the crate of bad apples where every single one is bad to some extent you can still make a soup or apple pie and I try to not necessarily compromise but one of my main jobs in decision-making is to bring together all the good bits of the relative arguments and ideas into something that takes us forward because one of the ways you can destroy is to analyse down so much and then not be able to synthesise and I think one of my great challenges as a Head of decision-making is the synthesis of ideas that make people jeep on coming up with ideas. So that even if their idea does not go through as a whole they can see the elements of it and that one actively refers to them in the decision announcing process, you know, having picked p the point from X or the French department said or I took on bard what maths pointed out, or whatever, feedback also about how you make decision-making is another part of the style of a Head. I think possibly I do not do enough of that because you do not have the time. We have had a very rare occurrence tonight which is a full staff meeting - they just don't happen.



**IG - For any reason?**

**HEAD TWO -** I think they are unproductive when you get 70 people together. They are not decision-making, you cannot make decisions with 70 people. So what do you use it for? You use it for giving information and I think that there are sometimes better ways in which you can do that. Tonight was just a lead inset thing of highly reliable schools which we could not do in any other way but we have within the school many structures and teams and frameworks within which everybody has a say in the management of the school. Again every member of the staff is on the management group - they all have to, except the NQT, they all have to be on the management group and those groups are given a brief and they can make certain decisions other things have to be recommendations, things that involve finance, deployment of staff and resources but there are many things that we are happy for staff to make decisions. They may seem minor but they are not really, timings of inset days because we have developed a style that is a little bit more continental so people can be off the premises at half past one, the price of that is you start at quarter past eight and do not have much break. These are the things that I think are important to people and they are happy to be part of the process and if people want to influence decisions but they do not always want to take the final responsibility and after all that is what I am paid for, and it is part of the role of Head. Although as I say the amount of decisions that I make off my own bat alone are really quite small.



**IG** - Thinking about colleagues you have worked with in the past and Heads that you have worked for can you tell me about a bad decision that a Head has made, and why it was bad?

**HEAD TWO** - One's that I have worked with - Would you like to first switch that off?....

...I think something I disapprove of intensely was I worked for in fact the best Head I have ever worked for because if he told me to put my Head in a gas oven I would have done so without question. He had a particular way of disciplining pupils that I found, as he as a professed and committed Christian I found totally untenable. He stood a black girl facing the wall outside his office and he stuck on the wall "I am a liar" and she had to stand there the whole day and I thought well may be I want to work, I do want to work in a well disciplined environment but at the end of the day one has still got a human being in one's care and I would imagine that that girl has taken into her next general a natural fear and reticence to be involved in secondary education and I thought, well if ever I become a Head I want the kind of discipline that this school has got but I do not want to be running Colditz because that particular school was like Colditz.

**IG** - For any reason was it?

**HEAD TWO** - Well the Head was born on the same day as Hitler! and was always very proud to day so. I mean he was a wonderful Head, he became

general secretary for the professional association of teachers and he was absolutely wonderful because he was so secure in his decision. Again you might not always have approved of them but his framework was consistent that I absolutely worshipped him. But I found that difficult in as much as my values about human beings took a bit of a beating and I found that very difficult to reconcile his decisions to do that against the fact that he was a practising Methodist lay preacher. He never had the opportunity to explain that decision to me and may be one of the things I still need to work on as a Head is explaining why you do certain things. I have just written a memo to staff about what happens when they hand a problem on that they have to abide by the decision of the person to whom they have handed it on. Otherwise why do you hand it on? We have had a few incidents recently where people have handed things on somebody's behalf, made a decision and then they have stormed in and said well this is not what I wanted to happen and I am really upset with all this etc. etc. I think this is part of understanding the communication that surrounds this decision-making and I think that this is a key issue for Heads and there are times when I will say to you quite frankly that where I have made a decision that has not gone down well even though it might be the right decision it is because I have not had the time or I have not made the time to explain the context in which I have it to seek or give people the opportunity to comment on it. At the end of the day, the decision probably still had to, I cannot think of an example at the moment. The other thing that I think is absolutely key in decision-making for Heads is to make sure that the people it affects or involves are actually told before you do it. Again I am not always on the mark with that in terms of sometimes I make assumptions which are wrong and again I think



a key for decision-making is that no Head should ever make any assumption about anything but it is involving the key players and sometimes it is very difficult because staff do not understand the complexity that underpins some decision-making and that you can always tell them what they need to know at the time when it means most to them in terms of involvement in that decision-making and that again has become more of a difficulty and with the involvement of governors and having to particularly in financial terms of having go to governors as I did last night and say can we have some extra money for RE whereas 10 years ago I would have first said OK here some money have it. So there is a lot of underlying difficulty I think the most important thing I would say to you is that even now as a Head one of the things I do is I still think about how decision are made the source the origin the consultation may be I do not always get it right. I am sure I do not but I still do I can say to you quite frankly I still do think about it because the way in which you do it is crucial to the moral and the confidence that people will have in you as a Head. Does that make sense?

**IG** - Yeah that was one of the issues I wanted to pick up with you. Making a decision that is very public and you have talked about some of the strategies you have used to ensure that that decision is activated.

**HEAD TWO** - Those are processes.

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**IG** - Yes processes I mean is there anything else you know being at the top of the organisation that you feel I must make sure that when I make a decision



that X must happen. I mean you have talked a little bit about consultation taking on board the perception of the other.

**HEAD TWO** - At a personal level I am very much evidence based.

**IG** - Is that because you are a scientist?

**HEAD TWO** - No it is because I work with people whose experience produces prejudice in them. The greatest thing I ever learnt on a management course I did with Imperial Tobacco was the industrial psychologist said to us that some people are prejudiced by their experience. What I found is that those people are normally right but for the wrong reasons, and what I have come to have great suspicion of is opinion. Opinions nearly always right because people do not get the correct opinions and feelings as professionals then that is hard cheese but they should be able to but I feel more confident about making decisions on good sound information and we do a lot of quite serious evaluation work here where this goes to my own training because for my Masters I did a year on education evaluation and that is the most valuable year I have ever spent in terms of the professional approach to understanding how you really do evaluate because evaluation is about collecting evidence to inform policy and decision-making and if you understand what evaluation is you do not ever use the word loosely when you mean either monitoring or review. So each year we do some proper major evaluations which are presented to staff in a hypothesis way e.g. we are just about to embark on an evaluation of the initiative we have had on spelling and we will start with the

initiative was designed to .... what evidence can you give us that this has or has not taken place and so what I am trying to do as part of the back up to decision-making is to make sure that things are not first done in motion or what worked for me 20 years ago because although many of those things are still right and the body of knowledge and the way that management and organisations function is still largely there what I have to do my responsibility to my staff as a Head is to make sure that what changes at the edges are put into the decision-making that we always take a fresh look at the same problem, not reinvent the wheel. That is why before I make decisions or recommend decisions or whatever we are doing I do like to have done the homework first. That is on major policy decisions, the development of the school that is not true on as you say, the kind of maintenance decisions where quite frankly you just have to let experience and a rough estimate of the context at that time come. The other thing that I try to do in decision-making is to look at what I really want the outcomes to be and why because I think sometimes you can couch the terms of the decision in a way that actually helps you to achieve the outcome so when we decided that we wanted to do something about spelling there was an outcome because we wanted to do something else and I think it is having the chain of where the decision are going to lead you and thinking ahead beyond the immediate decision which is something I think only comes with experience and practice. that is something that I am still working on, the implications and how you use that for future planning so I find it is sometimes a chain reaction.



**IG** - You talked about very public decisions, major policy changes and how you base it as far as possible on factual data.

**HEAD TWO** - And needs analysis I mean you have got to do it from the need. I do not just sit here and think well I would like to change the curriculum, what we were talking about today was knowing what the abilities and trying to project the needs of the children and how we can best service those and take those beyond where they are.

**IG** - That process is very deductive, it is very rational, now I have spoken to other Heads and they have said to me things like, well I wanted X to happen in the school and when I probed them I cannot find any kind of rational basis to it at all apart from it is either from their own experience or out of philosophy or whatever. There is not that kind of rational basis to it so therefore I have spotted something different with you. is that because of the kind of person you obviously .. I am leading you to answer this in the way I think you ought to answer it. Is there any insecurity in the sense that it is a public decision. You are up there making the decision if you are questioned on it you have got facts and figures to fall back on. You see the difference would be that if you are making a public decision with facts and figures you have got some back up as a posse to other Heads who say we want this to happen because I want it to happen and you just do as you are told.

**HEAD TWO** - I cannot work that way, one of the things I have been so lucky with is ever since I have been a Head is always having something external that



is given the catalyst and impetus for change. The skill of a Head is to take whatever comes along via the higher library schools/skills and milk it and change it to do what you want it to do to suit whatever the next development phase of the school is and I think that that is the creative side of my work. I mean I am not sometimes, I do make probably irrational and emotional decisions but usually not the other, the thing I would say to you is I will go for high risk stuff as well because high risk is high quality.

**IG** - Can you give me an example of that?

**HEAD TWO** - Well I think that it was high risk in going for Investors in People within the time span that are planned to do it. I do not know I do not think that is a particularly good idea. No I think the high risk was going for a completely different kind of curriculum and structure of the school day. Our lessons are around 45 minutes not that is high risk. But what I believe is that if you had rational and state quite clearly what you want to happen within that time you provide people with the opportunity to discuss that plan and work within it. You train it then they have no excuses. The other things I would say to you that my way of functioning as a Head is I do everything to eliminate excuses. So if somebody says we cannot do that because ...then I will eliminate the because.

**IG** - Can you predict those?

**HEAD TWO** - I can predict who will say I cannot do that yes, but it is a natural reaction of teachers to be defensive about their practice and I do not think that

I, making ... I don't do it enough, challenge them in a way that is uncomfortable. They know that I want high standards and they know that I lead that from the front. There is not anything again that I would not do myself that I ask them to do. I have lost the thread that I was trying to get for you, go back to your original question.

**IG - High risk.**

**HEAD TWO -** The high risk, yes, so in terms of the high risk of going for the longer session I had got everybody to agree on what the problems were about the shorter sessions, the length of the school, the changeover in time, the disruption, the behaviour that resulted from those things. So I pounded them with those rational things then said to them, presented as a challenge to them, do you think you could cope with this to go back to discuss and all but two areas of the curriculum thought they could do it. It was Maths and Modern language that could not linear learning and all that jazz. So we found a solution and that is that they actually change with each other half way through a session but it was a very high risk. It is now a very big feature of the school when we sell it to staff coming in for interview. Associated with that was the high risk of making all our children do a 10 GCSE programme. That was very high risk.

**IG -** So who was involved in that decision - where did it originate?

**HEAD TWO** - It was started off by trying to do the National Curriculum of trying to start from 20% science which seemed to be the base line for a lot of curriculum discussion and we tried to ... we wanted to produce a system that was, we all agreed we wanted something that was robust that we would not have to change every year and whatever we did we would have the flexibility. The bits and pieces just evolved from that first point, you see one of the things in decision-making I find is that sometimes it is difficult to start to make a decision which is part of a cyclic decision-making process but once you have made the first decision all the others follow. So we take time over the first one and then in this case we took time over the fact that science would have 20% of the time.

**IG** - You say we, who is we?

**HEAD TWO** - That was me with the senior management team but with the curriculum team leaders as they were evolving there and then. The staff because the curriculum team leaders have 1 hour each week of directed time when they work with their teams and that is the hour we took today with a bit of add on. Every week I give them an hour of curriculum development time and the rules of that is that it is used for discussing information, passing ideas on, they give me minutes on what happens so they have a constant. They know that I constantly am in touch with what is happening every week in every department and they know that they can approach me either through that or walk through the door or go through Harry whose line manager or whatever but we always take things back through the curriculum teams that are about



the organisation of the curriculum. We also do that for the pupils support and guidance because they also have some discrete and directed time for meetings and they have a briefing meeting once a week before school only for quarter of an hour but again its time that is allocated to the business of the year group. So really it is quite difficult to explain I find it difficult to explain to OFSTED and IIP but we do have a very intricate network which is there as a safety net for every part of the system and every person they have an opportunity to make their views known through individual evaluation that we do individual revisions, we do subject reviews, topic reviews. Like when we have had activities days they are asked for comment as the group they work in and so we have got a constant feed back from all kinds of groupings of staff. We are very good at working across groups and that is an enormous strength in the decision-making and decision sounding out things because we will often say to the year Heads, can you take it back to your tutors, let us know what they think. We say to the curriculum team leaders, can you take it back to your lot, see what they think, let us know. We see the following pit falls, anybody got any ideas. But to go back to a point you asked me some time ago is this because of my insecurity and I take that in the nicest possible way. In the nicest possible way, the answer is yes. I mean it is difficult to be making public decisions day in and day out to feel that you have not done your homework. One of the things I do most religiously is my homework and it goes back to the question you asked me again before that, why don't we have these massive staff meetings is because I would say to you that I have gone through that it does not worry me now whatever I am thrown at but when I have worked in schools with difficult unions, with people who have got axes to grind and I

have been given impossible questions for which I have not have time to research properly or dare to say it, even have not got a view.

**IG** - So you do not put yourself publicly at risk?

**HEAD TWO** - I never do that but I can say to you that I can do that now without being caught out on very much.

**IG** - You have described the climate in this school, it seems to me that the decision-making is quite complicated. What are the actual formal structures. There is obviously SMT ....

**HEAD TWO** - SMT what we did was the staff worked out all the areas of our work as a school that we needed to support and deliver that vision statement. I then talked with the senior management team and got them to off load all their present points and go for the mission headings so I mean I knew they were going to be more or less the same. It was quite a good exercise and so the SMT between us have responsibility for all the areas of work that support the delivery of our vision statements so my part of that is that I am in charge of parental partnership. My female deputy is the pupil support and guidance and PR and does both extremely well. My curriculum deputy does curriculum assessment, one of my senior teachers does staff development, another senior teacher does process management and extra curricular activities and so that is why in the last...this is only my second year of doing this I meeting them with those hats on individually. Now together once a week we will discuss



main school issues, what did we discuss last week about the time issues, we actually discussed academic monitoring which is something that goes across all our responsibilities. The week before that we discussed year 10 who are giving us heel and so I use those meetings to discuss things and air views and in fact when I present my SMT with a task which is value free and there are some they are unbeatable, they are excellent if they have a task and so I do that in terms of working that out. So I meet with the SMT once a week and we tend to do main school issues like preparation for OFSTED things that cut across all our jobs. I meet once a week with the 3 Deputies and we do the basic administration of the school. The calendar if we are having staff interviews, who is going to do the tour, who is going to do what and so on and our agenda is the same. It is the calendar staff issues, pupil issues and anything other which is very urgent. So those at those two meetings as I said in addition I meet every week with the 5 of them separately to discuss their management area so that they keep me in touch. They discuss over problems we talk about what is on the agenda and cue work to our school development plan.

**IG - Do you let them take decisions?**

**HEAD TWO -** No the reason, the purpose we have defined is that we talk about the issues that they are dealing with so they a) do not have to jeep running to me every 5 minutes and they are absolutely sure what we have both agreed so they do not go out and do something and I have to reverse the decision or whatever. I mean it is apart of our monitoring of each other as it



were and our support of each other and that is where I invest all my time because it has helped decision-making in that there are fewer times when they do not fully know what the decision should be and I do not mean they are first making it in terms of the decision I would make but they are making it within an agreed framework for whatever that thing is because I do hold quite a .... I do exert quite a lot of control over what happens but that is only to give them the framework with which to operate comfortably. Sometimes I will say to them, well it is just up to you, I do not really mind but they rely on me to contextualise their decisions in terms of other peoples work. So often Harry will say to me, do you think we should talk to the year Heads about that and then when I see Paul I say, look you know Harry's raised this can you talk about whatever it is and so on. So I act as it were as a kind of link between the different areas of the work, so that is that. Harry is line manager to the curriculum team leaders, we meet them once a month, we have scheduled meetings less frequent than that but they have asked to have more meetings. He also meets them every Friday informally, and I chair that meeting. Paula meets once a fortnight with her year heads informally and again we have scheduled meetings, we have scheduled management meetings because we actually, where a management group relates to our mission heading we will head that up and last year I had a group working on parental partnership. We finished all our tasks, so this year we do not meet. Paula last year, I do not think she had a management group but this year, yes she did she had the PR group last year. It has changed slightly to communications because that fits in with what we were trying to do. So again they talk to me about those things and I say let your group make the decision. What is clear from these meetings is where the decisions will be

made which again I think people want to know and how if they need to they can make an input and there is nobody on the staff who does not know how they can have their voice in anything. So those are all the formal structures and then the informal structures are like most Heads, I take a briefing, 4 mornings out of 5. I stand around and people come up to me and say do you remember I said to your....is that OK and it does not worry me if decisions are made in that way because they very rarely spring anything on me.

**IG** - Are there any situations where you are genuinely open to any suggestions that you have not got a firm view on. One of the Heads that I have spoken to, a very strange example on special needs, he went to the governors and said, paraphrasing loosely, I have not got a clue what to do. that is probably over stating the case but are there any situations like that where you can be .. do not express any view at all where you can take a consensus on your just....

**HEAD TWO** - I have to say Ian, that is happening more and more. I mean, I think I would recognise a computer if I saw one but as you will see, my room has got a very old chemical balance which indicates which era I am living in. I have no experience or understanding of computers, what I have got is a shrewd appreciation of how to manage any kind of curriculum implementation changes or resource issues but I am always open on anything like that.

**IG** - Do your staff sense when you have not got a view?

**HEAD TWO** - Yes.



**IG** - Do you make it public for example?

**HEAD TWO** - Yes, I am the first to say to them I have not got a clue, which way we need to go on this or I think I am beginning to see which way to go but give me some clues.

**IG** - Would they expect you to take the final decision?

**HEAD TWO** - Yes I think so. I think what they I think they know now that the principles upon which I operate that they do know how to answer many of the questions and the issues that keep coming up, are different and are presented in different ways. So yes the answer to your question s that there are times when I desperately do need people to give me the clues and then you start processing that with your experience with the knowledge of resources, what has to be done and how that will affect other people. For example we want to become a school that is very well known for sport, now I have got a few views on that but I have oft nothing that would go against any principles I am first waiting for the working group on that to lead us on. I have no intention of interfering on that. I think one of the things that I have to hold on to which again is one of the anchors in decision-making is a sense of perspective and often I feel my task is about giving a sense of proportion and perspective that enables good decision-making to be made. Because teachers can get quite hysterical and neurotic when they are tired, when they are depressed, when they have had a bad day, we have got to have more exclusions in this school,



deja vu, so what we have heard it, we have seen the film but my major task is to maintain sanity and a sense of professional reason. Reasonableness of all the staff and the bigger the staff has got the more exacting, that is I would present that to you as part of an experienced Heads decision-making process.

**IG** - Would you say the climate in this school is political, hostile to you, your views?

**HEAD TWO** - I do not think the staff in this school are hostile to me and my views and that is the feedback I have had from the registered inspector. I think that there are some things that they would not agree with me on but then I would expect that. At the end of the day they know we are a successful school and they know that a lot of that success is due to me and I do not say that arrogantly, I say it based on evidence. I have made a difference to the school, as I would expect any Head to do. I am not saying I do it better than anybody else but I have made a difference. They know that a lot of the culture and the ethos is my creation. They are hostile to other members of the senior management team who they find negative and unsupportive, what they are unable to see is the purposes to which those people are working but it does not go down very well. They are hostile to that, they are also hostile to incompetence which makes the job ever more demanding in that sense, but on the whole I always feel in the crunch, supported by my SMT and I would say to you that having said that I have enormous amount of respect and love for all my SMT members who contribute to the school in a variety of ways, all of which I need and are valued but what I have not been able to do is to make

all of them extend their skills to incorporate new situations. What they do, they do remarkably well and I would not be without them but their mode is maintenance and in a school that needed to develop, that was very difficult for them and I do accept that and I do not think any the less of them but I have a lot of ambitious staff and a lot of staff who are very talented and some less so and they perhaps are critical of or see that it is hard work to do things and to move forward on the other hand in other moods, they will be really quite pleased that there is someone else putting the break on. So staff opinion fluctuates according to what is in it for them and so on and so forth. All I can say to you is that when ever people come here and work with the staff they get very positive feelings about life in general. David Reynolds said to me they do not seem very tired to me, he said they were very perky and responsive and professionally sharp and we had the same kind of feedback from OFSTED and Investors in People. For a secondary school with the kind of pupils we have, I think our morale is one the whole, high. They do not realise that until they go and visit other schools and hear other teachers but it is partly connected with the fact that a lot of the decision-making is opened up, it may be opened up and then closed down but I do not think there is anybody who if you interviewed them would say that they did not have the chance to say what they thought and to questions discussions may be rightly or wrongly.

**IG** - OK I have taken enough of your time, just one more question, teacher training agency amongst other people are thinking about training for the professional, the expert teacher and the expert Head and so on. If you had to design a training course for Heads and one of the topics you were dealing with



was decision-making, what would you want to put in that section of the course?

**HEAD TWO** - I would want to put all the different types of decisions you have to make, all the different accountabilities, I would put the massively different types of ways that you can approach the same problem, look at the pros and cons of those and I would like to put on the agenda that there is no right or proper way to make a decision. You make the best you can and that the basis upon which you collect your evidence that decisions have to be made on things you can substantiate because as a Head you, as you have correctly identified, they are very public and you cannot afford to keep falling down. I have made mistakes and I have said to staff I was wrong on that but you cannot keep on doing that and I think you have to see decision-making within the whole network of how you want to manage the school, what ethos you want and therefore I think you have got to have some idea of the systems you will use. I think it is a little difficult to say to Heads what do you want your management style to be because you are shaped by what you have got and I think you have to realise the limitations of decision-making and I think you have to realise and I would put on the agenda that the art of being a Head is to know when to make the decision that there are times when you plant your seeds and you sit back and you just go and water occasionally. In decision-making you have to be awfully patient but at times you have to tell them and your professional job is how to get the balance between the how and the when and the who and the why. At the end of the day nobody can teach you how to do that but I would also have on the agenda - make sure that you always have



somebody whom you respect professionally who you can seek as a mentor and guide as a Head because it is a demanding job and it is me that can kill you very quickly if you have not got some idea of how you are going to do it and who can help you if you are in a fix.

**IG** - On that fall back position you mention the advisers, is there anybody you use as a touch stone or a bolt hole or whatever?

**HEAD TWO** - Well I have got several Heads that help, I do not like to say this in your company but I use Trevor at Nailsea quite a lot. Trevor is a great personal friend and I use people like Harvey Black whom I work with in terms of union and Harvey again is a personal friend but the people there are very few that now are in touch with all the problems that you have to deal with.

**IG** - I spoke to a new Head and he said exactly the same thing that you have said about the net works and having talked about a difficult problem, having phoned all the people up, do you do that very often? One assumes that as you become more experienced obviously you are very experienced, you do that less and less?

**HEAD TWO** - I do not phone many people, the person I would phone would be Harvey and that would be something to do with conditions of service discipline, disciplinary action and so on.

**IG** - You would go to him rather than the authority?

**HEAD TWO** - Yes, he often says to me you should talk it over with Ron Bull or whatever it might be but Harvey runs a school which is very similar to mine and I feel that he is somebody who can give me a contextual answer and he is very able intellectually, far more able than I am and I find that a great comfort. I do respect people in authority, I respect the personnel people that Avon have got, I worked with some excellent advisers and in fact Sue Plant is my ex-adviser who is now a governor and she is somebody whose judgement I trust or she will ask me the questions I ought to be asking. I phone people less, what I will do is for example, I meet Dave McGregor from B who again in a great personal friend, I was deputy with him at C, we were at a professional dinner and I said to him what the hell do you do with IT and he gave me some information that been extremely valuable. So I know who to contact for what, I know where to pitch it. I am not helpless but I am still not all that competent but I know whose judgement I respect and again that has come over a long period of time working within the county for 18 years and up until fairly recently there are not many Heads who I did not know quite well. I regret the passing of Avon because it has a network of 58-50 Heads with tremendous experience. We are now in the republic of South Gloucestershire. There are things like the curriculum which are very difficult to make decisions about and may be you just need to hear, going back to my magpie, you see you just need to take one thing from somewhere else. That again precipitates a whole number of things which you translate into one thing that I have not said to you which I must say is that one of the things that we now accept in this school is the role of every manager, whether it is me or people in the classroom is that

part of our role is the interpretation of things and if you actually bear that in mind as a manager that you are always there to interpret one set of things for those people whom you manage and lead then that again is another useful peripheral part of decision-making with confidence and the managerial post.



## **Taped Interview - Head Three**

**IG** - What I am doing is I am looking at Headteacher's professional judgement, how they make decisions, in the context of decision-making. I have chosen a selection of Heads across the county, both male and female. You are interesting because you are a new Head and I am going to ask you how you make decisions and what you make decisions about, generally trying to get a handle on what it is that characterises decision-making in Heads. A lot of work has been done on how bookmakers make decisions or engineers and surgeons but nothing as yet on teachers.

Could you just categorise for me the type of decisions you have to make?

**HEAD THREE** - They come in various degrees of difficulty. There is the day to day decision-making which is fairly low level decision-making, which is whether to let the kids out onto the playing fields when it is cold weather, something like that, which is fairly simple and not difficult to make. Ranging through the strategic decision-making which is where you have considered time to think about it. It doesn't make the decision any easier to make sometimes but at least you have time to make it. Then you have the very difficult decision-making which is to do with man management I suppose, whether to discipline a member of staff, whether to permanently exclude someone, those sort of unpleasant decisions you have to make which possibly are the most difficult ones, unless it is very clear cut. I suppose those are the main categories, most of my work is strategic decision-making.

**IG** - You mentioned a difficult decision, you know, disciplining a pupil or disciplining a member of staff. Of course this is confidential, whatever you tell me but could you perhaps talk me through a difficult decision of your own choosing.

**HEAD THREE** - This is completely confidential?

**IG** - Yes, obviously don't mention any names.

**HEAD THREE** - There are two that come to mind immediately, on the understanding that it is confidential. The first one was a pupil that I permanently excluded last week. The incident happened on the Thursday before that where he, I wouldn't say assaulted a member of staff but he pressed his forehead against the member of staff's forehead and pushed his weight against the situation. It wasn't a physical attack, but I had to make the decision whether to permanently exclude him or not and it was a very borderline decision based on the fact that he did not actually assault the member of staff, it was actually bodily harm I believe would be the technical term. I took a long time to make that decision, normally I am a very decisive person, I know exactly what I want and how I am going to do it. On this occasion it took me till the following Monday to make that decision that I was going to permanently exclude him. The factors I had to take into consideration, one was the support by staff required for me where I drew the borderline, the other was the responsibility I had for the child and as it was one

of only two instances that had happened with that boy this term, it was a one-off, blow off in a sense, but the other question is the impact it had on the pupils if I was to let him stay in the school. What was I saying to the rest of the pupils about what they could do, weighing all those up I talked to a number of people about that before I came to that decision.

**IG** - That is the next question, who would those people be?

**HEAD THREE** - I spoke to the person, obviously who was assaulted. I spoke to the Head of Year who was the person who wished to have the boy permanently excluded straight away. I might have if the boy had come to us in September from another school having been permanently excluded, so he hadn't been with us for very long. I then spoke to my senior management team and got views from them, particularly the Pastoral Deputy. I then rang the Education Authority which was something which I do not normally do on this occasion, but I found it was such a borderline case that I did not know where, and I talked it through with an education officer. On the Saturday evening I went out for a meal with a Head Teacher from Bristol and I talked it through with them and asked them what they would have done in that situation and even so I was not sure. I laid in the bath Sunday night and thought about it, I spoke to my mother who said that is the sort of standards from people in this school you should expect. I came back to school on Monday morning and I still wasn't sure, this is very unlike me, normally I make decisions just like that, I am very clear about it. I did feel this was a borderline case. I spoke to the WO, she tried to steer me away from permanent exclusion but the more



she did it, the more I thought I wanted to permanently exclude him. At the end she said I am glad you did that, that is what you should have done, which made me feel a lot better after that.

**IG** - What was it about that decision that made you take so long. I mean, as you say there were the permutations and the knock-on effects. Was it anything to do with the fact that it was a very public decision, in other words the recriminations would be very obvious and stop at your doorstep?

**HEAD THREE** - It was two-fold really, that was obviously the most important thing, that I set standards for the school. Being a new Head they don't know where my standards are as yet, so that was the first thing. Secondly, was the position of the other pupils that witnessed it, as to what I was saying to them about the standards in the school. Thirdly there was a question of what did this boy deserve and was his action of a serious enough nature to warrant permanent exclusion or what I would call the step before that, which is with the Governors involvement but not permanent exclusion. That was my big dilemma, if he had hit the teacher I would have had an easy decision and it wouldn't have taken more than 10 seconds to make it. He didn't hit the teacher, he pushed himself against the teacher and pushed past him. That was my dilemma, that it wasn't a physical attack but it was an assault of some form.

**IG** - What about the staff? You said the Head of Year was very firmly to exclude, how important was it that you sensed the feeling of the staff?

**HEAD THREE** - It is important that I sense the feeling of the staff but it is not important that misleads me. I still have a responsibility to make the decisions for the child as well as the staff and I have to get that balance right. I think you would find traditionally most staff on many occasions would want a child permanently excluded when in fact there is not the justification for it. Especially in the case of stackability where lots and lots of events have been happening but none of them have been very serious. They will just say I have had enough, I cannot cope any more, well that is not a case for permanent exclusion. If you let staff decide in these sort of issues then you would have half a school, there are always kids in that position. So there was the public image in front of the staff but there was my balancing act and trying to resign myself to the fact that I was making the right decision all the time.

**IG** - How much of it was a dilemma, that as a teacher, I detect you are very supportive of your pupils, despite the fact that some of them do things of which you do not approve and I sense there is a dilemma between the institutional questions and the actual outcomes for the child themselves. From what you have said you are prepared to stand up to staff pressures to say, this child stays or this will happen to this child. How much of it is pupil-based and how much of it is institutional-based?

**HEAD THREE** - I don't know, I couldn't proportion that to you.

**IG** - I just wondered if you had established a pattern in your own mind.

**HEAD THREE** - I think it depends upon the nature of the event, that is all I can say really, and whatever the child does determines how I react. To some extent the past history of the child might help, there was one pupil who had 58 instances against him since last January, although stackability does not wash with the authorities there comes a point where he does something really serious, there may be a case where you say, right this is what I will go for, you have been waiting for the right issue because he is getting beyond the control of the school. We are here to look after children and as a profession, as teachers, that is our job to try and support those children, and some of them will have greater needs than others, my job is to make sure that we do not over react because the needs of the child are not actually being met but we actually turn round and say we make the right decisions for the right thing at the right time, we don't react just because of this one instance. It is easy for staff under pressure in the classroom, day in, day out with an awkward cuss to deal with to just say "get rid of him, get him out of my hair". My job is to try to get that balanced point of trying to say we have to got to look after, support and help that child. It is no good just kicking him out so he can go somewhere else.

**IG** - How much of that decision was based around your own feelings of inexperience as it were? You were new to the establishment, you felt, possibly, I don't want to put words in your mouth but you had an image to portray. You said that the pupils needed to get a feel for order in the school, how much was that a bearing on the case?



**HEAD THREE** - I would like to say very much so but in this particular case I really think that this was a borderline, it was at the point where one Head teacher would go one way and one Head teacher would go the other. Having said that, my previous job was curriculum, although I did deal with upper school discipline problems, but I never made the decisions, I recommended it to the Head and therefore it was his decision and very rarely did we discuss his decisions, he just made it. I was never put in the position where I had to make that decision, although I have had to make it a lot of times recently. My inexperience, of course, the more experienced you are at doing something, the easier it is to come to a decision. Although I do think on that particular occasion most Heads would have had to think twice. They wouldn't have taken as long as I did by any means, because they would have had experience behind them, and being new in the school I do have to set the standards for the school, that was my dilemma, what is my point at which I will not accept. That is the reason I was taking my time, to get that definition, that line right because I would have to stick to that line in the future to make a good system, so I needed to know where my line was and I felt that this was right on the borderline.

**IG** - Being a new Head in a new school, you get a feel for what needs doing. Certain decisions need to be taken, what was your feeling when you walked into the school and what decisions did you have to take?

**HEAD THREE** - The first thing was that they hadn't had a Head Teacher for effectively 5 years and therefore a lot of decision-making had been taken lower

down the line and I had to address that problem by not offending those people who had been taking the decisions before, by not actually saying "well I'm sorry that's my decision now" and exclusion is a good example of that. I had to re-define the exclusion procedure in the school because previously the curriculum deputy decided to permanently exclude and therefore it had a knock on effect to the Heads of Year who were involved a lot more. So that's one example of a decision where I had to re-define the rule, and it took time and was resented at first because they didn't know where they stood. They didn't know whether the child was now to be permanently excluded, excluded or just put into a quiet room for an afternoon. They did not know the parameters, they found it hard to judge me because they hadn't actually come to talk to me at that point, they didn't know what I was going to say.

**IG** - How did you deal with that? I mean did you include others in your decisions, or did you feel that you had to say that this is now the standard that you have to enforce?

**HEAD THREE** - If you asked them they would probably give a different answer than me, because their perception was from a different direction from mine. I would claim that in nearly every case I involved them in the decisions. I think if they, without thinking about it in too much depth, would probably say that I made decisions on my own without consulting them. I am sure they would say that, and in the end I got a meeting together with all of us and said "come on, lets talk about it, what are we saying here? What are you saying that I am not doing, what am I doing?" and we talked it through and came to an agreement



about how we would proceed. I still believe on every occasion I excluded a pupil, I contacted them, but that wasn't their perception.

**IG - Why was that? Why was there this error in perception? Did they resent, for example the decision-making taken away from them?**

**HEAD THREE - Well they didn't actually take the decision, they went to the Deputy Head Pastoral who made the decision but they had worked together for a very large number of years and therefore tended to support everything he said and in my case, I didn't always and therefore I think they didn't know where the line was so there was a tension there. You know, what is going on? I don't know where the line is now. The number of exclusions in the school was significantly high, something about 4 times the authority recommended maximum and I just said that was unacceptable. This kids in this school are not that bad. We need to have standards and need to set standards but we do not kick them out every five minutes and get the parents in, we have other strategies and that is where the disappointment came from the Heads of Year. They were so used to kicking them out for three days and then getting the parents in and then coming back to school. I can think of one boy who was kicked out 8 times in the course of a year. My attitude was what effect is the ninth one going to have? So I brought in a staged approach, levels 2, 3, 4, 5. Level 1 they could kick a child out of school provided the parents were in the next day to see us. Otherwise the child would have to return to school and go into a quiet room. Anything above level 1 I would instigate and no one else**



could do it. Therefore they had to come to me to justify it and it would involve parents meeting me and having more than a day at school.

**IG** - Was that strategy designed to be fair for the kid, but was it also a strategy to put yourself in the driving seat as far as decision-making was concerned?

**HEAD THREE** - Well that is the role of the Head, the Head has to decide on exclusions and they had to get used to it and it was unfortunate but that was the way it was going to be. It took time and although it has mellowed down now, and that is two terms it has taken to get to that stage, I still now try to bring them into every exclusion meeting I hold so they are there at the time. I also go and see them and consult them before I make the decision. Which has smoothed it over a bit, but they now know I am making the decision.

**IG** - Thinking about the decisions you have made since you were appointed, like you said certain things are getting easier, you were a Deputy before at Weston, what have you found easy? What have you found difficult? What do you feel now that you are more experienced is a lot easier?

**HEAD THREE** - Easy for me was the strategic part, looking at the school and deciding what the school had to do to go forward, that wasn't difficult. A lot of things I had done at my previous school needed doing here. So it was easy because I had already thought it through, I didn't have a great deal of background thinking to do. So a number of things that we have implemented already are things that I was confident needed implementing and I think that in

your first term, if you think about it I came in Easter and if we were to make structural changes they had to be made by July for a September start, so decisions had to be made quickly and I made a number of quick decisions, having spoken to staff and explaining why I made them. For instance, the re-grouping of pupils, there was more mixed ability teaching in the school than I felt necessary and I therefore re-grouped from Year 8 onwards, introducing setting for every subject which had not happened in the past and that was brought in for this September. That was made quite quickly, I felt it was the right decision for the school, to raise academic standards and although I consulted the staff it was more of an informative consultation than it was a discussion. That caused a few people to disagree with the decision but at the end of the day that was the decision that was made. That was an easy one to make, because I believed that I was right. Other decisions about primary liaison which I felt was paramount to the school, to raise the profile of the school in the community, I just took on my own back and did. I told staff what I was going to do and did it, involved some staff in the preparation of the links with primary school but it was all up and running within half a term, because it had to be in order to catch the children to opt for September. It has proved very successful, so that was another easy decision.

In terms of harder decisions, the hardest decision I have had to make has been to discipline a member of staff, formally and that person has been getting away with a lot over the last 5 years because they have had no one to actually do it and it got nasty and we had to write very long letters, having to involve county secretaries in the evenings, formal interviews and the person going off



with stress. Which caused me a lot of personal heartache because I know I was the one who made him do it; he is still off with stress now. That is not a nice part of my job, no one who does this job, as regards the human beings would actually like that, but that person was not contributing in a number of ways and needed to be pulled up. That was probably the hardest decision I have had to make.

**IG** - That was a purely solo decision isn't it at that at end of the scale?

**HEAD THREE** - Absolutely, there were a lot of staff who gave me their opinions, particularly on the senior management team, but at the end of the day I was the one who had to sit there in front of the Governors and justify all the things I was going to be accusing him of. That was a very unpleasant thing to do. That is why I am in this position, though, those decisions have to be made for the good of the kids and the staff, the staff morale, because they knew that this person was being seen, obviously had a big impact. I would have liked to resolve it in a nicer way that it finished up but that did not work out that why.

**IG** - You talked about the setting decision, obviously, whenever you go to a school you "ah this needs doing", the way you described it, it seemed like it was your decision and it was going to be put in place no matter what, because it needed to be done. What was behind that, is it because this was the way, you felt, the school ought to be run no matter what the staff said, this was how it was going to be. or was it, a philosophical thing.



**HEAD THREE** - It is a philosophical thing, I had been in a school which over the 11 years I had worked at it I had taken the A-C pass rate from 4% to 40% and a number of strategies had been involved in that. One of which was to grouping of children and the moving of children on a regular basis to challenge them. I still believe that was a major influence on the standards rising. Secondly was to do with appointing quality teachers into middle management positions and you cannot do that until the opportunity arises. You certainly can do something about the way pupils are grouped. I looked at the exam results, I looked over the previous years of this school and compared them with subjects that were set and subjects that did not set and there was a clear pattern as far as I was concerned. Therefore the subjects that did not want to set were not getting very good exam results anyway and were therefore not in a strong argumentative position. I did talk to them why I wanted to do it, I did explain why I wanted to do it.

**IG** - How did you actually approach that? Did you have a whole staff meeting or a Heads of Department meeting?

**HEAD THREE** - No we have thing called a staff consultative meeting which is all the middle managers, about 22 people and I broached it there and said I would be interested in anyone who would want to argue against the strategy and they could see me individually and to do so. Unless I heard from them I felt this was the way forward for the school and it was a decision that had to be made quickly so I needed to see them.

Two people did come to see me and put forward a case, I countered it with my arguments and believed that their arguments were not as strong as mine. They accepted I was here to make changes and if that was what they wanted to happen they would support it and they would try and work within it. So yes, there was group discussion and individual discussion but at the end of the day I still believed it was the way forward.

**IG** - Talk me through the kind of decision-making structures in the school, management team and committee meetings and so on. Generally there is you and your senior management team of.....

**HEAD THREE** - Well first of all there are the Governors who are the policy making group so they would be the, I don't know where they would go on a hierarchical list, but they would certainly be up there at the top with the senior management team, I suppose. The senior management team consists of two Deputies, myself and a bursar, or finance officer who is a senior teacher in the school, teaches 50%. So a small senior management team, after that there are Heads of Year meetings, Heads of Faculty meetings and then the two meet together for what we call staff consultative meetings, which is quite a large group to manage, 22 people in a room, it is quite difficult to come to a consensus on that basis. Something I have never had before, something I have inherited here and carried on with, but it is very difficult to get consensus from that large number of people. From then on down there are Faculty meetings, year meetings and then the whole staff meeting. They basically

work on a half term rota, so every half term you have one of these meetings. Obviously SMT we have once or twice a week but the rest of them maybe one every 6 or 7 weeks.

**IG** - Just thinking about your last SMT meeting can you tell me what you discussed and what decisions you reached?

**HEAD THREE** - We actually cancelled it because one of them had to go to hospital so we did not make many decisions. There are two meetings in which we do diaries and details of and the one after school on a Monday evening we normally get down into a more localised school decision-making issues which may be, what is the school end of term assembly going to be like, that sort of issue. We are finding it hard to get into the strategic management side, therefore tomorrow and Wednesday we are having two days out where the senior management team are going off-site. We are going to have two days at Redwood Lodge, we are putting two senior teachers in charge of the school, but we are only 10 minutes away and can get down if we need it, that is why we chose it. There we are going to be looking at the structure of the school day for next year, how many subject periods each subject will get, Key stage 4 curriculum, key stage 3 curriculum. We are going to be looking at the mission statement which we have been pulling together over the last two in-service days. With a view to producing the school development plan from that vision mission statement.



**IG** - Thinking about a decision like, the shape of the school day, the way you just described it is, you are going away to think about it, what would have been fed into that?

**HEAD THREE** - When I first came I was interested in the structure of the school day and I set up a working party of volunteers and suggested that every faculty should have representation if they want to get a reasonable shape. That was at half term of the summer term and they ought to report to me by the end of the half term, the autumn term. By the beginning of November I had their report, that has gone to senior managers and that is what we are having our conference on now, to look at their recommendations. There was a cross section of staff and a cross section of faculties and their recommendations have been creative in some senses, as expected in others and we need to think about what this school is going to look like in three or four years time when that feeds through.

**IG** - It is difficult to predict how that discussion is going to go but is it going to be a genuinely collaborative effort or do you have a preferred option?

**HEAD THREE** - We have all been given copies of the document and I hope we have all read it. I have actually done my answer to it. There is still nothing to put up on the screen saying, we will do this. We will discuss the contents of that, we have a long time, we have two days to talk it through. So it won't be a case of just putting someone to work on it. So I don't know what will come out

of it, I know what I want to come out of it and I'm willing to give or take a bit on certain peripheries but it depends where they start pushing me.

**IG - What is not for sale?**

**HEAD THREE** - I suppose the proportion of time any one given subject does or doesn't have. If they suggested, for example cutting Technology down to below 10% for the sake of argument, then I would want to know the reason why because the National Curriculum requires 10% and there would have to be a good argument why. One of the things we are looking at is the amount of English in the first three years because of the amount of literacy coming through from primary schools. I can see a lot of argument there, but then I would need convincing if they weren't going to push it up, why they weren't going to push it up and how they were going to compensate the literacy problems we face at the moment. I am sure a lot of schools are facing it at the moment, it's not just us, but the question is, what are we going to do to get the kids up to right level. That has staffing implications, and therefore we are going to have to follow all the decisions through in terms of the number of teachers we are going to need to staff that timetable. That is one of the training aspects of the period we are going to have. Where the curriculum deputy and myself, I don't know how we are going to work because we haven't discussed it, we are going to have to talk about it tonight at the SMT as to how we are going to organise those two days. Somehow we have to show the other staff and senior managers how to work out how many teachers you need

from a curriculum structure and that is a time consuming experience, again good staff training.

**IG** - So once a decision is made, how do you actually put in to the staff.

**HEAD THREE** - To the staff from the SMT do you mean? We have got a staff meeting coming up on the first day back in the next term we can come to an agreement, (the whole SMT) in this meeting, then it would seem an obvious place to put that forward and then it would go to the governors. From there, hopefully, it would go very quickly to advertising for the post because we are a growing school and therefore we need to know exactly what areas we are growing in. So already I am talking theory to Governors about how many additional teachers we may need but we are not saying in which area, because we do not know ourselves yet, we haven't thought it through.

**IG** - That is a decision in the process of being made, can you take me back a bit to one that you made and definitely finished and is done but finalised itself in an SMT?

**HEAD THREE** - I am trying to think how far to go back, there are lots of things that we decide at SMT, we decide policies for instance, let's take an example. We would have a drugs education policy which started off with one member of staff writing it who was head of PSSS, who then brought it to me, I looked at it and sent it back to him to have it corrected in terms of things added which I wanted out or things like, what would happen if, I wanted my input in , he left



gaps for me to say, if a child was found with cannabis on him, what would happen. Then I gave it to him for re-write, it came through to SMT to read and look at, SMT then changed and amended it again on odd points and then it went back to that person who came to the SMT meeting, he adjusted it into a final draft, it then went to Governors for Governors at sub-committee to look at. From Governors sub-committee, then it would be looked at and often just nodded through. If there is an issue on which someone thinks they are an expert and wants to pull it apart then that may well be the case and you may get other opinions pushed through. Finally when it is all agreed it goes through to full Governors for ratification. It is a long process, it is not as easy as it sounds.

**IG** - How much is that the pattern of the way that decisions are made at this place. You described two things to me, one, individual member of staff starts the process, the other is a working party, coming to the top, gets chewed over, goes backwards and forwards, ratified and became enshrined in stone. How much of that happens?

**HEAD THREE** - From my perspective it may be different than a colleague's perspective, you need to bear that in mind, I would hope that staff are consulted on things that affect them quite a lot. Things like a drugs education policy which affects a very small proportion of the staff in terms of actually implementing, apart from what happens if they catch a kid, which can be dealt with at a staff meeting. The actual writing of the policy, if we sent it to every member of staff to re-write we would never finish it. Let us take an example of

when we wanted to do the vision and the mission for the school which I think is probably the single most important thing the school has done since I have been there, because it is setting the tone for the whole school.

The first thing I did was I wrote my vision and mission for the school in a particular style, I then had two in-service days around half term of the autumn term. No let's go back, I had a meeting with the Governors first to present it in draft form before I even started with this school. I then presented it to the staff on the first staff meeting, two days after I started at this school, as a way forward to show them what I was thinking about that sort of issue, that I had ideas and I wasn't just going to sit back in the chair and do nothing. Having done that I then said to the staff that we would have an in-service day when we have had chance to get on with other things, this is something that we can hold for a while.

So then we came to the two in-service days in the autumn term and again I presented to them a way in which the vision mission should look but not the detail. I then set them into six groups on the in-service day and each were given a theme to look at because they could not deal with everything. So one looked at pupils, another looked at staff, another looked at community, another looked at curriculum, etc. and resources. Those six groups answered specific questions that they were given and then came back and fed into the whole staff.

Then we went off again and did the next step, so the step went something like, vision, mission, mission into objectives, then how will these objectives be met, and what are the items we need to attack next year, the year after and the year after that. All of that was done for the six things. At the end of it we ended up with 8 themes because people did not like the 6 themes I had picked, I was more than happy to say we will put in some more themes, that is fine, it did mean some more work behind the scenes because no one had done any work on those extra themes but that was done. I then compiled all their flip charts, an enormous amount of flipcharts, it took me about 4 days in the half term to pull it all together, put it onto a piece of paper and wrote it all out and then sent it out to every member of staff at the staff meeting, the week after we had the in-set group. They then got into faculty groups and pulled it apart, because that was the first time they had seen everyone else's work together and what it looked like and the aim was they spent a whole staff meeting pulling it apart. It was not long enough so it was agreed that they have that and also the next faculty meeting. So I gave them two months in which to finalise it all and it came back to me. After that I then put down all the comments people had to criticise it on the right hand side of the page and the original on the left hand side of the page and therefore we could see people's comments about the original draft.

All of that is now going to the Governors tonight because they want to get involved at the drafting stage, they don't want to get involved at the final ratifying stage, they want more input. It is also going to SMT tomorrow and Wednesday to their conference and when it has got through that level then we



will go back to the staff on the first day of next term for them to see that discussion taking place as well, for them to feed into it so I shall then take SMT, the Governors and the final version from the staff's criticism and I will pull it together to come up with a final draft, hopefully before Easter. Because we have to write our SDP before Easter, and you cannot do your SDP if you have not got a vision and mission. So that is a very consultative process and everyone has had ample time to criticise and there have been a lot of criticisms. Questions arising include, do we want a sixth form? Do we want a community school? Very big questions. Whilst I believe in consulting staff and hearing their views, at the end of the day that has to be decided at Governors, that is a policy decision that the Governors must decide on but the Governors must be informed of staff feeling. So there is massive consultation.

**IG** - Thinking about governors, as you said before about things being nodded through, how do you broach the problem of decision-making at Governor level. Do you accept that they will take your word for things? That they will follow your guidance, is it a genuinely participative thing or do you anticipate problems?

**HEAD THREE** - I think the answer is that it depends who the Governor is. There are some Governors who will nod at everything, because they do not have the knowledge or the experience to know how to do otherwise. There are other Governors who think they know more than they actually do and there are some Governors who do know a lot and I value their support immensely. The vision and mission is a good example, my chair of Governors is the lady in

charge of human resources at the Bristol & West, so she actually deals with the personnel side of it and actually help write their vision and mission statement. That was a great asset to me, to have someone like that I could draw upon and say what do you think of this? and she could correct it before I got to the staff, in her view what would be a better way of phrasing things. So that was immensely valuable. There is another gentleman who is very into community education and runs the S Centre, so very useful from that perspective. Another one is excellent on disciplinary hearings, very experienced and very knowledgeable. There is one lady who is extremely well up on educational law and gives talks all round the country on GM status and therefore when it came to our policy on exclusions, really went against my view and stood up against me, and really refused to give and caused a very interesting Governors meeting, we haven't resolved it yet because she was meant to come to the sub-committee meeting where we were going to discuss it in more detail. So yes, there are people that will stand up to me and argue, so I have to be sure of my facts, but they are a small minority.

**IG** - What strategies do you adopt when you are put in that kind of arena? Obviously your judgement is on the line and you have a war on words, as it were, how do you cope with that?

**HEAD THREE** - It is uncomfortable, anyone who says it wasn't uncomfortable is either very strange or not my style. My argument would be, there is obviously a difference of opinion here, I think it is better that we sit down, not in front of the whole Governing body and have an argument, we sit down and



rationally think it through and try to find out where we are both coming from and where we are trying to get to so we can come up with a compromise.

**IG** - Would you do that publicly or in private? Would you suggest another sub-committee?

**HEAD THREE** - I would try to circumvent it at the beginning because I would hope I would know who to go to talk about these issues. So certainly I would have briefed the Chair, we had an instance at the last Governing body meeting where I was looking at re-structuring the school staffing allowances and I knew there was going to be a problem coming up from a teacher-Governor and I broached the Chair of Governors and told her what the problem was going to be and why and we talked about how we were going to cope with that problem and indeed it came up even stronger than I thought it was going to come up. Having said that, a number of Governors rallied to my side very quickly, in fact too quickly and actually the decision-making process was affected because a number of them just wanted to defend me regardless of the outcome. The outcome was that she didn't get what she wanted in the end and she would have benefited from keeping quiet if she would have known.

I will address that this time on tonight's Governing body meeting, go back to that decision and say I think we need to look at it. It was all caused through people seemingly attacking my proposal and other Governors whipping in quickly without really knowing about it and defending me. It was quite pleasant in that sense but they were over-protecting me and didn't give me the chance



to really do what I was hoping to do and it got carried through on a vote very quickly, before I could do anything about it. Which is a method of shutting the teacher-governor up, which was OK but did cause a lot of resentment in the teacher-governor which was not the best way of handling it. I have had to see that person afterwards go round the circle and say that was not where I was coming from, that was not stage managed, that was someone else jumping in and now if you would give me the chance I will readjust the situation and I think you will get what you wanted, I think you would have got it last time if you haven't acted in this way. So yes, there are support from Governors sometimes, over and above what you did. So you have to be very careful, some of them are quite strong thinking people, you need see them before the meeting to give them the right lead as to what support you are looking for.

**IG** - Thinking about decision-making in this particular school, having a feel for the place, are there decisions made here that are different in nature than your previous establishment?

**HEAD THREE** - Yes, because I had a very autocratic Head in my previous one, the Head decided exactly what was going to happen, he didn't even consult SMT at times.

**IG** - Is your participative style that you have talked about a reaction against that?

**HEAD THREE** - No it is a personal thing, it is my nature. Having said that I do make decisions which I am not willing to compromise on, like the setting arrangements. There was not much consultation there to be quite honest, because there was no point in consulting, because if you are going to consult you have to be willing to give a little bit and I don't think you can on a setting decision, you either set or don't set, you can't half set really. There are times when I am quite clear as to what I want and I hope to persuade people by my argument about what I am doing. There are other times when I think it is important to have a discussion.

I'll give you an example, we were discussing whether we should have a special needs class for year 7 because it is mixed ability in year 7, where all the children are taken off and given special support throughout their curriculum and we were then discussing the possibility of having mixed ability classes and the benefit they would accrue from more able pupils supporting them. We had this big debate at school and we couldn't come to a decision so I said we would take it to Governors and I went to the Governors and I said I am going to give you and I am philosophy not opposed to either way, I have no philosophy that says one way is better than the other. There are good things about one and there are bad things about one, one is more costly than the other, that may not be the reason you want to make the decision but you should be aware of it and I gave a list of all the pros and cons of one and all the pros and cons of the other. I said do you have any strong views of this, because I don't and if you do have strong views then that might sway the way we go. There was a complete reaction, some very much in favour of one, some very much in

favour of the other, but the majority not really having any strong view either but I opened it up to a completely free choice, there was no discussion about this is what I want, because I didn't feel I had a strong view on what I wanted. I was concerned that those kids got the best education they could. In the end we came to resolve that some subjects will be grouped for those children to be withdrawn and to be given special help and other subjects they are actually mixed in with the others. For example, in drama, they could perhaps go in with everyone and PE and arts, whereas in Technology they may be taken off and put into smaller groups, provided the class size is able because they need that extra support because they cannot use a ruler, let alone anything else. So that was opened up for a free for all. I had no idea at the beginning or even half way through where we were going.

**IG** - Some people would say that is an unusual way of arriving at a decision, is that uncharacteristic or is it an extension of the way you like to run things?

**HEAD THREE** - If I don't have a firm view on something and I am trying to get the best for the children, and I cannot see a necessary obvious route through, someone else might. Therefore I am quite open to saying, let's have a chat about it and talk it through. We are not going to make a decision tonight, let us just talk through what are the pros and cons. Some people may have philosophical or even political views which say you should never pull off the bottom end of the ability range and isolate them, because by isolating them you are stopping them going in to the other aspects of the learning. Others may say that by doing that you are giving them such one to one tuition that



they are going to improve and get back into mainstream. So you can counter the argument both ways and I wanted to know what my Governors views were, what my staff views were and we had this discussion with the staff before it went to the Governors. Again there were mixed views as I expected.

**IG** - I am finding it hard to reconcile what you have just said with the setting argument that you raised earlier because in many ways I wonder if what you are doing is the reputation of the school and how the kids are treated and how the school is treated beyond. Where as you are very firm about the setting because you wanted to improve standards but when it comes to special needs you are.....

**HEAD THREE** - I was saying that year 8 onwards they are set by ability right through the ability range, but in year 7 they are mixed ability and therefore it would mean creaming the children out of their tutor groups, 2 or 3 from each group and putting them in to a special needs class, when all the rest of the year are mixed ability groups and therefore it would make a special case of them and them only. Whereas with the setting of the rest of the school, you are not making a special case of them, that is the difference. Therefore I am saying how important is it that we give these children the 15:1 ratio and give the rest 30:1 or whatever it is, is it that important or can we get round it by in-class support? What are we going to do? That was what I was really getting at.

**IG** - Thinking about where you get your information from, you obviously have a feeling about how the school must go, school improvements, school effectiveness is very much on the agenda. How do you assess what needs doing? You talked about things that were obvious when you moved in but now the whole thing is up and running, where do you get your facts from, or do you get facts at all, or is it just a gut feeling or what?

**HEAD THREE** - I do not know what other Heads do, I have never watched other Heads in action, I am very much one that is out of my office a lot, I am not in my office much. I work after school in my office doing my paperwork, I spent more time than I normally would going to primary schools over the last two terms because it was important that I set up that relationship with them but I have been in to very class room and seen every teacher teaching, some teachers three or four times. I have done appraisal of teachers so I have seen them, I have walked the corridors many breaks, at least two breaks a day, every lunch hour I do lunch duty so I am in with the children every lunch time so I get a feeling about the place as to what the children think, I see the teachers in action, and believe me it doesn't take more than 5 minutes in a class room to get a feeling about a lesson. It may not be a totally representative of that teachers ability but I think you get a pretty clear view within 5 minutes. From that you can then go forward to what needs doing. So if you go into a teachers lesson who is sat behind a desk marking books while the kids are working and copying from books in silence, the chances are that that will be happening more often than just the one occasion when you went in. On the other hand if you go into a lesson and kids are doing experiments in

science and there is a lot of involvement, a lot of interaction, you get a different view of it. I think just by being around, by walking the corridors, you don't even have to go into a class room you can actually feel the atmosphere of the school. You can pick a lot up by that.

**IG - How much would you rely on objective data to form a judgement?**

**HEAD THREE -** In terms of statistical data? We do a lot of value-added assessment, it is something that I have been involved in Avon for a number of years and we are actually linked in with Woodspring with their value-added using the Somerset approach. Yes, I have done a talk to Heads of Faculty about value-added and talked to them about the way I am assessing individual teacher performance using value-added, individual Faculty performance using value-added and some of the things how I measure it, because it is no good taking raw data, you actually have to take consideration for entry rate to the subject, pass rate at GCSE for any given subject has got to be taken into account to eliminate all the fluctuations in the that data because at the end of the day you can actually do a fairly accurate analysis of teacher performance using value-added but you mustn't do it on one year group only, you have got to do it over a number of years but as you build up that data it makes you ask a lot of questions. Comparisons with other schools using the same syllabus with a similar VR range of children, that's interesting as well, so there are a lot of things like that we do.



**IG** - Where do you stand on the continuum between being analytical and the intuitive side of things? You talked about the feel, walking round, gathering subjective information and there is the statistical, analytical bit. Which pole do you tend to favour?

**HEAD THREE** - I wouldn't have a clue. I like to get as much information as I can and then come to some kind of mental picture.

**IG** - Are you a mathematician?

**HEAD THREE** - Yes, I love the statistical side and I spend hours doing it but I don't let it dominate me. I love walking around the school and talking to kids, I love teaching and therefore I like watching children in their lessons, I like watching how they are learning. Quite often, I am not claiming to be a brilliant teacher myself but quite often I can see some techniques which work for some subjects that would not work in other subjects and I would not want to prescribe the didactic approach is the best approach in years, and everyone would be didactic because it just depends on how that teacher works with that child. I have got a really didactic teacher in one faculty but gets brilliant results. I've got a really open and investigative teacher in another one who gets similar results. I would not want to prescribe what is the best way but what I want are good results.

**IG** - Have you ever made any mistakes in the perception of a teachers performance?

**HEAD THREE** - I suppose we all do, I don't know how to answer that really, the answer is yes of course, to what degree would be a better question to ask. I don't think it takes long to know whether you are in the class room with an effective teacher, I don't think it takes long to know an ineffective teacher, it is the middle ground I find hard to judge, where some of us, myself included, have some good lessons one day, some bad another, it depends which one I go in to see and you have to be careful that what you witness is typical because if you go into an appraisal the chances are it has been prepared thoroughly. Popping in on the off chance is a much better indicator, if you do it enough times to make sure you are randomising it. I suppose the answer is yes of course, but I have never formed a firm opinions of a person apart from when I have to discipline them and then I have already done a lot of work on before I get to that stage, obviously. Yes of course I am going to make mistakes.

**IG** - What is the worst decision you have ever made? Is there one that stands out? Perhaps not make it quite so personal, thinking about colleagues you have worked with in the past, Head of Faculty etc. If you were organising a training course for Head Teachers if that was on the agenda and you were doing something about decision-making and you wanted to use an example of a very bad decision or a bad decision-making process which you have come across in your teaching career, what kind of thing or actual example would you use?

**HEAD THREE** - I am sorry I am being vague, it is very difficult to think of one area. To me the worst process of decision-making, but that is in my nature, is the autocratic approach because that takes away the ownership of the people who you actually want to get on your side. Whilst you will still get those people doing a reasonable job, they will never give it 100% because they won't feel involved in it. I can think of my previous Head who made a number of autocratic decisions which really irritated me, I can think of one decision where he actually paid for a new Home Economics suite to be put in when I was cutting it out of the curriculum as a timetabling. That was because he liked the Home Economics teacher and wanted to get her some nice equipment and she deserved it for some time but had not bothered to follow through the full ramifications of it. I just think that the more consultation, the better. That is an example of bad decision-making. The other sort are the people who won't make a decision, they really irritate me. You see an ineffective teacher who is playing the system that will not give at all and they are allowed to carry on. It causes bad morale in the staff room and hard as it is and unpleasant as it is it has to be done, so no decision-making is bad decision-making.

**IG** - You would describe your style as highly participative, collaborative, consultative?

**HEAD THREE** - To a point, there has to be a point where I say I am in charge here, this is the way it has to be. With the vision and mission we are never going to get forty odd people to sit round and agree on every point, some are going to be annoyed about something going in, others are not going to give



two hoots what is going in. At the end of the day I have got to make the decision of the what the final thing is going to be and how to present it to the Governors. It doesn't mean to say that I haven't involved participation in the process.

**IG** - What kind of decisions would you have to fly solo, it is your total preserve, no consultation, nothing?

**HEAD THREE** - I suppose without consulting anyone it would have to be the disciplining of a deputy I suppose and even then I think I would still involve other people, not from within the institution, I would probably involve my union, LEA officers, someone on the governing body who was not going to be on the disciplinary hearing which would probably be the Chair because I make sure she is not on any of them. I would still involve other people, because it is always good to get other people's opinions, I am not perfect, I make mistakes and the more people I can talk to, I mean other Heads as well, that is certainly something I would do.

**IG** - Is there an informal network of Heads who ring each other and assess decisions?

**HEAD THREE** - I have a mentor being the first year in. I have a very good friend who is a Head in Bristol who I have known for twenty odd years so I mean in that sense I can go and chat to him, he is the one I talked to about the exclusion of that boy, we had a pizza together and talked about it, because he

has not been a Head long either and he has been through the same problems as I have so he knows what I am going through, so that is extremely useful. There are other Heads who I might consider going to, but not many because I don't know them well enough and I am not sure what they are at, there is that suspicion there.

**IG** - There is of course the competitive bit as well.

**HEAD THREE** - Certainly locally I wouldn't go locally. Which makes it difficult because Harvey Black is the SHA County Secretary and is my next door neighbour Head so that does make it difficult.

**IG** - What is your history, where have you come from?

**HEAD THREE** – W School as a Deputy and also Head of Faculty of the same school, from there I was in Kent, Second in the Faculty there and then in Oxfordshire as a PG, internally promoted there as well. This is my fourth school, the variety of Heads changes. Quite a cross section, I have done an all-girls school, a secondary modern school and comprehensives.

**IG** - What characterises this school, if you had to paint a thumbnail portrait of it, what would it be?

**HEAD THREE** - I would say it was friendly, cosy almost, nice relationships, lacking in academics, desire to improve. Because of the catchment area firstly

and secondly the long standing staff have not been challenged. I suppose that is my biggest challenge in a sense to get the expectations of the children higher, particularly the girls. We have a roughly boy/girl split about the same A-C pass rate which as you know nationally is not true. That is because the girls are not looking towards and improving themselves, they are looking for low paid work, that is something we do need to address because potentially they must be higher than they are recorded at.

**IG** - We have the opposite.

**HEAD THREE** - You must read my book I did for SHA on boys and girls under-achievement, it is coming out in about a year's time.

**IG** - You have been doing some research on it have you?

**HEAD THREE** - There are three of us doing it for the Secondary Heads Association, we are all on the national council. We are writing books on it at the moment, we are just doing case studies all around the country, one came in today from Gloucestershire, I have another coming in from Taunton after Christmas we are just going to compile a little booklet. So I am doing that and also giving talks, I have been offered the chance of going to Wiltshire and do a talk on it at half term, so its all part of getting to grips with it. Ours is the opposite which is really frustrating because I'm doing all this research and it doesn't apply to my school. A fascinating area.



**IG** - That sounds fascinating well thank you very much for your time, it has been most useful. I will go and tease out all the threads now .....

## Appendix C - Phase 2, Initial Questionnaire

Please tick/ complete the appropriate boxes

How many years have you been a Headteacher?	years
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### SCHOOL DETAILS

<b><u>Age Range</u></b>	
11 - 16	
11 - 18	
Sixth Form College	
<b><u>Pupils</u></b>	
Number of pupils on roll	
Boys/ Girls/ Mixed	
<b><u>Type of School</u></b>	
Comprehensive	
Selective	
LEA Maintained	
Grant Maintained	
Independent	
Denominational (Please specify)	

<b>Catchment Area</b>	
(Largely) Urban/ Inner City	
(Largely) Suburban	
(Largely) Rural	
Other (Please describe)	

Please characterise your school in a few sentences.

## YOUR DECISION-MAKING

Please tell me about the last five decisions that you have taken.

I am interested in the nature of the decision, how the issues that generated them arose, where they were discussed and how the ultimate decision was formed. Could you use the following numbers in the appropriate columns



<u>How the issue arose</u>	
1	the issue was a personal concern
2	referred to me by member of staff
3	referred to me by Deputy
4	referred to me by a group of staff
5	as the result of a working party

<u>Discussion Forum</u>	
1	SMT meeting
2	Head of Department Meeting
3	No discussion
4	Interested group of staff
5	Delegated

<u>Ultimate Decision</u>	
1	I took the decision entirely on my own
2	I listened to opinions, then decided
3	Taken by SMT collectively
4	Taken by group of staff and myself
5	Delegated to another

Brief description of decision	Arose?	Forum?	Decision?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			

## YOUR EXPERIENCE AND JUDGEMENT AS A HEADTEACHER

In this next section I want you to outline how you would react. It is important that you respond honestly. These situations have been derived from interviews with serving Headteachers.

**How likely is it that you would react in the following ways?**

**Please use this scale:**

<b>1</b>	<b>I would never react this way</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>I would react this way, but it would be rare</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>I would occasionally react like this</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>I would frequently react like this</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>I would always react this way</b>



**The Situation**

You have formulated a policy which is important to you and to the effectiveness of your school but certain members of your staff are strongly opposed to it. How would you react to this?

Set up a working group to examine the issues and ensure that the dissenting staff are not invited to join this group	1 2 3 4 5
Adopt other strategies to marginalise opposition from the dissenting staff	1 2 3 4 5
Call the dissenting staff in and explain your situation	1 2 3 4 5
Use your Deputy/ies or other senior staff as intermediaries to quell opposition	1 2 3 4 5
Inform the dissenting staff that the issue is official school policy and that they must conform	1 2 3 4 5
Gather together a group who support your views and used them to sway staff opinion	1 2 3 4 5
Set up a working group to examine the issues and ensure that the dissenting staff are members of the group	1 2 3 4 5
Listen to their complaints and accommodate some of their opinions into a new policy	1 2 3 4 5
Some other strategy	

Supervising the work of the school

In supervising the work of the school how frequently have you actually done the following?

Observed lessons personally to check on the standard of teaching	1 2 3 4 5
Called in members of staff on a regular basis to check how they are performing	1 2 3 4 5
Used the appraisal process as the main method of supervising the work of staff	1 2 3 4 5
Asked Deputy/ies or other senior staff to investigate or review departmental effectiveness	1 2 3 4 5
Relied on post holders, for example Heads of Faculty or Department, to keep you informed about the effectiveness of their teams	1 2 3 4 5
Initiated mutual observation exercises of classroom teaching	1 2 3 4 5
Discussed school effectiveness approaches in staff meetings	1 2 3 4 5
Set up working teams of teachers to examine teaching and learning issues	1 2 3 4 5

Staff performance

Over the past year how frequently have you reacted in the following ways to occasions where you have not been happy with the performance of teachers?

Delegated the problem but supervised closely how this person dealt with it and intervened if I didn't think the matter was being dealt with effectively	1 2 3 4 5
I intervened personally where there were problems with teachers/ departments	1 2 3 4 5
Delegated the problem but gave the person specific guidance about how to resolve the issue	1 2 3 4 5
Raised the issue at a whole school staff meeting.	1 2 3 4 5
Asked the immediate line manager to deal with the problem	1 2 3 4 5
Delegated the problem and expected the person to whom delegated the issue to deal with it totally	1 2 3 4 5
Raised the matter with the whole department/ team and expected them to come up with a solution	1 2 3 4 5
Raise the issue at a middle management meeting (e.g. Heads of Faculty or Department) and take a consensual view	1 2 3 4 5



Please note that this section applies to your actual reactions.

During the past term please indicate how frequently you have done the following.

<b>1</b>	<b>Never</b>
<b>2</b>	<b>Rarely</b>
<b>3</b>	<b>Occasionally</b>
<b>4</b>	<b>Frequently</b>
<b>5</b>	<b>Always</b>

Had to call in a member of staff to complain about their work	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
Asked your Deputy about the work or performance of a colleague	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
Had one to one meetings with staff to check how they are completing specific tasks	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
Asked groups of colleagues formally (e.g. in specific meetings) about the progress of projects or policies in progress	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
Observed lessons to ensure that teaching and learning policies are being observed	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
Asked individuals informally about their work	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
Asked groups of colleagues informally about the progress of projects or policies in hand	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
Joined in with departmental meetings or colleagues' extra curricular activities	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>
Observed lessons and given feedback to improve morale	<b>1 2 3 4 5</b>

## Appendix D - Phase 2 Second Questionnaire

My research indicates that approaches to Heads' decision-making can be divided into four broad but distinct categories, as follows:

	<u>Approach:</u> <b>Authoritarian</b>	<b>Bureaucratic</b>	<b>Communal</b>	<b>Democratic</b>
People Management is	Directive	Procedural	Enabling	Collaborative
Delegation is seen as	Unnecessary	Risky	Essential	Desirable
Decisions are made	Personally, by the Head	By Committee	With and through colleagues	Through representative for a
The main purpose of SMT meetings is	to pass on information and outline strategy	to validate previously decided policies	to debate ideas generated from staff	to reach corporate decisions
Whole staff meetings are	Rare	Rare and carefully orchestrated	Frequent and open in approach	Frequent and integral in school communication
Conflict is resolved	By the Head	By the appropriate post holder	By the most suitable person	By the Head or the appropriate post holder
This Head is	Remote	Available by appointment	Freely Available	Accessible
The School Vision derives from	The Head's personal beliefs	An array of validated policies	The ideas of all staff	Established principles and practices
Policy is made	As a result of the Head's personal beliefs	through valued others or established and trusted groups	through joining in with working groups/ improvement teams of staff	through supporting working groups/ improvement teams

Mark in each row the box that describes your approach.

Summary

Now tick the box below that is your *'best fit'* description

<b>Authoritarian</b>	<b>Bureaucratic</b>	<b>Communal</b>	<b>Democratic</b>
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On the following pages I will ask you more about your approach. Spaces are provided for your answers. There is no compulsion to fill all of the space but if you would like to expand on any of your ideas please attach a separate sheet.







**B) Specific Training / Focused Development**

Please outline any management training / mentoring that you have received and how this has shaped the approach you have adopted.

*Title of course, course provider and the key messages you took from it.*

*The mentor's role, if applicable, and the guidance given*

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**C) Personal Reading and Research**

What educational literature has been influential in shaping the approach you have described above? If you have undertaken any further study and/ or research please make reference to it here.

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## Appendix E - Sample Headteacher Log

### HEADTEACHER LOG

Date	From	To	Time	Item
01/12/99	08:15	08:45	00:30	Administration, Phone Calls Invigilation
01/12/99	08:45	09:15	00:30	Confirmed exclusions with yy re incident xxxx
01/12/99	09:30	12:00	02:30	Maths post interviews with HOD and Ch of Gov
01/12/99	12:15	12:45	00:30	Briefing Bursar re F and GP committee meeting
01/12/99	13:00	13:45	00:45	Lunch duty
01/12/99	14:30	15:30	01:00	Year 6 Interviews (New Intake)
01/12/99	15:30	17:30	02:00	Administration, Preparation
02/12/99	08:15	08:30	00:15	Administration, Phone Calls Preparation
02/12/99	08:30	09:00	00:30	Advice and discussion with three teachers from a school in Special Measures
02/12/99	09:15	11:45	02:30	Finance and General Purposes Committee
02/12/99	12:00	12:30	00:30	Updating Clerk to governing body
02/12/99	12:45	13:30	00:45	Lunch duty
02/12/99	13:45	15:45	02:00	Meeting with three teachers strategies for improvement
02/12/99	16:00	17:00	01:00	Meeting with xx and yy re Policy development in ICT and Equal Opps
02/12/99	17:00	17:20	00:20	Administration, Preparation
03/12/99	08:15	08:30	00:15	Administration, Preparation
03/12/99	08:30	08:45	00:15	SMT Briefing
03/12/99	09:15	11:00	01:45	Year 7 & 8 teaching
03/12/99	11:15	11:45	00:30	Preparation and letter writing
03/12/99	11:50	12:50	01:00	Meeting with pupil xxx re incident of 30/11/99
03/12/99	13:00	13:45	00:45	Lunch Dinner Duty
03/12/99	14:15	15:15	01:00	Meeting with Education Psychologist re xxx
03/12/99	15:20	16:00	00:40	Meeting with Head of Science re targets
03/12/99	16:00	16:20	00:20	Meeting with Deputy Head, Preparation and review of week for staff briefing
03/12/99	16:20	16:45	00:25	Admin and tasks for weekend



## **Appendix F - Hindsight Bias Initial Questionnaire**

This case study is based on an actual school incident. At the end of the details you will be asked to outline a course of action.

I would like you to record your decision based purely on the information given.

### **CASE STUDY (1)**

A pupil has been referred to you by Charles Green, a member of staff, for a breach of discipline. He is demanding that you take action. The pupil concerned is in year 10. Academically he is above average but your records show that his level of application to work is variable and he is, therefore, not achieving his potential. Several of your younger members of staff have sympathy with this pupil because of his disadvantaged background.

The member of staff has been teaching in the school for a number of years. This is not his first post. He holds no post of responsibility. His version of events is that in his lesson the pupil started a disturbance and head-butted

him. This, according to Green, was in response to his reasoned appeal to be quiet and get on with his work. The pupil's version is that the teacher lost control and the whole class was misbehaving. He claims that he was in a group of pupils around the teacher, he was pushed towards the teacher and their heads collided.

You have asked your Head of Year 10 to investigate. He has conducted an extensive investigation but the results are inconclusive. Some of the pupils side with the teacher and say that the pupil reacted aggressively and head butted the member of staff. An equal number of pupils say that the teacher could not control the lesson and that when he went over to a group of pupils the pupil was pushed and their heads collided. No other member of staff witnessed the incident and no other information is available on this matter. You have to reach a decision.

## OUTCOMES

In the light of the information could you use your judgement to predict the probability of each of the following outcomes.

You can choose one or a number of possibilities. All probabilities should, however, add up to 100%

OUTCOME	PROBABILITY
The pupil's behaviour continued to deteriorate and preliminary disciplinary procedures were initiated against the pupil	
The member of staff's classroom management continued to deteriorate and preliminary disciplinary procedures were initiated against the member of staff	
The member of staff's classroom management deteriorated markedly so that he was suspended	
The pupil's behaviour deteriorated markedly so that the pupil was suspended	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>



## **Appendix G - Hindsight Bias Second Questionnaire (Anti Staff)**

You were previously asked to respond to this case study which is based on an actual school incident. This version contains information on what happened subsequently. I am interested in how Headteachers would react to this situation.

### **CASE STUDY**

A pupil has been referred to you by Charles Green, a member of staff, for a breach of discipline. He is demanding that you take action. The pupil concerned is in year 10. Academically he is above average but your records show that his level of application to work is variable and he is, therefore, not achieving his potential. Several of your younger members of staff have sympathy with this pupil because of his disadvantaged background.

The member of staff has been teaching in the school for a number of years. This is not his first post. He holds no post of responsibility. His version of events is that in his lesson the pupil started a disturbance and head-butted

him. This, according to Green, was in response to his reasoned appeal to be quiet and get on with his work. The pupil's version is that the teacher lost control and the whole class was misbehaving. He claims that he was in a group of pupils around the teacher, he was pushed towards the teacher and their heads collided.

You have asked your Head of Year 10 to investigate. He has conducted an extensive investigation but the results are inconclusive. Some of the pupils side with the teacher and say that the pupil reacted aggressively and head butted the member of staff. An equal number of pupils say that the teacher could not control the lesson and that when he went over to a group of pupils the pupil was pushed and their heads collided. No other member of staff witnessed the incident and no other information is available on this matter. You have to reach a decision.

Over the following months it became clear that Green's attitude was deteriorating. He was frequently late for his lessons and acquired a reputation in the staff room for his negative attitude to the job and the derogatory remarks he would make about the pupils. In this period there were a number of minor disagreements between Green and other members of staff.

## OUTCOMES

I would like you predict the probability of each of the following outcomes as you feel other Headteachers would in this situation..

You can choose one or a number of possibilities. All probabilities should, however, add up to 100%

OUTCOME	PROBABILITY
The pupil's behaviour continued to deteriorate and preliminary disciplinary procedures were initiated against the pupil	
The member of staff's classroom management continued to deteriorate and preliminary disciplinary procedures were initiated against the member of staff	
The member of staff's classroom management deteriorated markedly so that he was suspended	
The pupil's behaviour deteriorated markedly so that the pupil was suspended	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>



## **Appendix H - Hindsight Bias Second Questionnaire (Anti Pupil)**

You were previously asked to respond to this case study which is based on an actual school incident. This version contains information on what happened subsequently. I am interested in how Headteachers would react to this situation.

### **CASE STUDY**

A pupil has been referred to you by Charles Green, a member of staff, for a breach of discipline. He is demanding that you take action. The pupil concerned is in year 10. Academically he is above average but your records show that his level of application to work is variable and he is, therefore, not achieving his potential. Several of your younger members of staff have sympathy with this pupil because of his disadvantaged background.

The member of staff has been teaching in the school for a number of years. This is not his first post. He holds no post of responsibility. His version of events is that in his lesson the pupil started a disturbance and head-butted him. This, according to Green, was in response to his reasoned appeal to be quiet and get on with his work. The pupil's version is that the teacher lost

control and the whole class was misbehaving. He claims that he was in a group of pupils around the teacher, he was pushed towards the teacher and their heads collided.

You have asked your Head of Year 10 to investigate. He has conducted an extensive investigation but the results are inconclusive. Some of the pupils side with the teacher and say that the pupil reacted aggressively and head butted the member of staff. An equal number of pupils say that the teacher could not control the lesson and that when he went over to a group of pupils the pupil was pushed and their heads collided. No other member of staff witnessed the incident and no other information is available on this matter. You have to reach a decision.

Over the following months it became clear that the pupil's attitude was deteriorating. He was frequently late for his lessons and members of staff commented that he was becoming increasingly aggressive. In this period there were a number of minor arguments between the pupil and his peers.

### OUTCOMES

I would like you predict the probability of each of the following outcomes as you feel other Headteachers would.

You can choose one or a number of possibilities. All probabilities should, however, add up to 100%

OUTCOME	PROBABILITY
The pupil's behaviour continued to deteriorate and preliminary disciplinary procedures were initiated against the pupil	
The member of staff's classroom management continued to deteriorate and preliminary disciplinary procedures were initiated against the member of staff	
The member of staff's classroom management deteriorated markedly so that he was suspended	
The pupil's behaviour deteriorated markedly so that the pupil was suspended	
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>100%</b>



# **Appendix I - Instruction Letter, Indicators of Management Excellence**

Dear <Headteacher's Name>,

## **Index of Management Excellence**

I would like to invite your school to join a National Research Programme being jointly undertaken by the University of Bristol Graduate School of Education and The International Curriculum and Assessment Agency Ltd. (ICAA). The topic of the investigation is Management and Decision-Making in Schools which has been highlighted as a national priority.

Bristol University is a leading research institution, with a history of research into management issues. The University has been assessed for the quality of its work and has been granted the highest grade in the Research Assessment Exercise. ICAA is a leading provider of Management and Professional Development for education both in the UK and overseas. The two organisations have joined forces to investigate this vital element in the operation of schools. The aim of the project is to produce an organisational toolkit based on indicators of management effectiveness.

Your school has been selected <reason>. <Name of School> 's contribution will be invaluable to this study.

Please find enclosed questionnaires for a focussed sample of your staff. I would be grateful if you could distribute copies to the following:

- Leadership group - Headteacher and one Deputy Headteacher;
- Middle Management Group - one Subject Leader and one Pastoral Leader;

- **Teachers - one NQT or teacher with less than 5 years experience and one experienced teacher with ten or more years experience;**
- **Support Staff - one Learning Support Assistant and one member of your administrative staff.**

**I am sure you will appreciate that for a reliable study it is important that <Name of School> is represented. The research method has been piloted to be as minimally intrusive as possible for schools. I would be grateful if you could distribute and collect the questionnaires, allowing your staff to complete them in private. Envelopes are provided for confidential replies.**

**Could you please return all documents to me in the enclosed pre paid envelope by the end of term. I can guarantee that all information supplied will be treated confidentially. One of the outcomes of the research is to produce an in-service professional development toolkit. You will be sent a FREE copy for your participation in this project.**

**Yours sincerely**

**Ian R Gilchrist**

# Appendix J - Indicators of Management Excellence Questionnaire

Ref:	
B1	

## SCHOOL INDICATORS QUESTIONNAIRE

Please put a tick by any of the groups below which indicate your relationship to the school. Please tick all which apply.

- Teacher       Subject Leader       Leadership Group  
 Headteacher       Learning Support       Administrative Staff

My Job Title \_\_\_\_\_

Please provide evidence for each of the following. If you do not comment it will be assumed that this area does not apply to your school. If you need to comment use the final page in this questionnaire, noting your comments against the reference number of the question.

Indicator	What is the evidence?
<b>A.1.1</b> What evidence is there that members of the school are made to feel welcome? <i>Eg Are there established procedures for the induction of new pupils?</i> <i>How does the school show that parents are welcome?</i>	
<b>A.1.2</b> How can it be demonstrated that students help and support each other?	
<b>A.1.3</b> To what extent do staff support each other? <i>Eg are there established procedures for supporting NQTs or staff within a department?</i>	
<b>A.1.4</b> Do senior staff treat teachers with respect? How is this demonstrated?	
<b>A.1.5</b> How can the school demonstrate that staff and students treat each other with respect?	
<b>A.1.6</b> What is the evidence that there is a real partnership between staff and parents? <i>Eg are there identifiable groups which have staff and parent members with equal responsibilities?</i>	
<b>A.1.7</b> How can the school demonstrate that staff and governors work well together?	
<b>A.1.8</b> Are local communities involved in the school in any way?	



Indicator	What is the evidence?
<p><b>A.2.1</b>            How can the school demonstrate that there are high expectations for all students?  <i>Note this indicator applies to all students in the school.</i></p>	
<p><b>A.2.2</b>            To what extent are students valued equally?  <i>Eg Are there ways that the school ensures that students feel respected and that no group(s) of pupils are excluded or treated unfairly?</i></p>	
<p><b>A.2.3</b>            To what extent are teaching staff valued equally in the school            Eg Are there ways of involving demotivated colleagues?            What are they?</p>	
<p><b>A.2.4</b>            How can it be demonstrated that Learning Support Assistants and Administrative staff are valued in the school?  <i>Eg support staff are included in all staff events and can attend teaching staff meetings</i></p>	
<p><b>A.2.5</b>            To what extent do senior staff ensure that staff are adequately informed about the progress of the school?</p>	
<p><b>A.2.6</b>            To what extent are staff actively involved in formulating school policy?            Eg are there established consultative mechanisms in place where all staff are expected to contribute their opinions?            Does this extend to support and administrative staff?</p>	
<p><b>A.2.7</b>            Is it the case that teaching staff have the expectation that their opinions will be canvassed before a school policy decision is made? How is this demonstrated?</p>	
<p><b>A.2.8</b>            How far is school development explored through collaborative working at all levels within the school            Eg Are there working groups of staff? How many? On what topics?</p>	
<p><b>A.2.9</b>            What role do parents play in the operation of the school?</p>	
<p><b>A.2.10</b>            How can it be shown that collaborative effort is the norm?</p>	

Indicator	What is the evidence?
<b>B.1.1</b> How does the school ensure that everyone is clear about the aims and objectives of the school?	
<b>B.1.2</b> To what extent are school policy decisions the preserve of senior members of staff? If so which group(s) of senior staff?	
<b>B.1.3</b> Is there any evidence that decision making is devolved from the senior staff to teachers?	
<b>B.1.4</b> How can it be demonstrated that policies are not permanent and that they will be regularly reviewed?	
<b>B.1.5</b> To what extent are decisions about the progress of the school only taken after full consultation? <i>Eg Is it obvious that staff's opinions have weight and credibility? How is this shown?</i>	
<b>B.2.1</b> To what extent is the Headteacher accessible and approachable	
<b>B.2.2</b> Is there any evidence that the Headteacher deliberately avoids seeking the opinion of favoured colleagues in preference to others?	
<b>B.2.3</b> How can it be demonstrated that criticisms concerning staff are dealt with in a fair and open manner?	
<b>B.2.4</b> What evidence is there that staff feel confident that they can voice objections without fear of hostility or reprisal?	
<b>B.2.5</b> To what extent are staff meetings welcomed as an opportunity to air ideas and discuss issues in a totally democratic forum?	
<b>B.2.6</b> What proof is there that teaching performance is dealt with in an honest manner?	
<b>B.3.1</b> To what extent does the Headteacher ensure that all staff participate fully in the functioning of the school?	
<b>B.3.2</b> What evidence is there that barriers to participation by staff are systematically removed? <i>Eg are reluctant staff canvassed about their opinions?</i>	
<b>C.1.1</b> To what extent do teachers expect other teachers to comment on their teaching?	
<b>C.1.2</b> To what extent do teachers expect senior staff to observe and comment on their teaching	



<b>Indicator</b>	<b>What is the evidence?</b>
<b>C.1.3</b> To what extent do teachers plan, review and organise their teaching in groups as part of their normal professional activity?	
<b>C.1.4</b> To what extent are Learning Support Assistants actively involved in securing student progress	
<b>C.2.1</b> Do procedures exist for mutual support from colleagues for teachers experiencing classroom problems?	
<b>C.2.2</b> Is there definite proof that teachers will feel they are supported by senior staff?	
<b>C.2.3</b> Staff do not feel they are being watched?	
<b>C.2.4</b> How openly is teaching effectiveness discussed?	
<b>C.2.5</b> To what extent do teachers who are experiencing problems with pupil(s) know that they will be adequately supported?	
<b>C.2.6</b> Do you feel that the staff disciplinary policy is fair and handled effectively by the leadership group?	
<b>C.3.1</b> Do staff feel that their expertise is fully utilised?	
<b>C.3.2</b> To what extent are school resources distributed fairly? Eg are capitation amounts published?	
<b>C.3.3</b> To what extent are policies for expansion or contraction explained to everyone?	

Thank you for completing this questionnaire. Please return it to your Headteacher. If you would prefer your responses to remain private please seal the questionnaire in the envelope provided.



Please use this sheet for extra comments.

Question Reference	Evidence or comment

## **Appendix K - The Indicators of Management Excellence**

### **DIMENSION A**

#### **Excellence in Management Culture**

This dimension is about the management effectiveness of the school, whereby inclusive values and shared beliefs permeate its operation. There is an atmosphere of trust and mutual respect where all partners in the operation of the school are valued. The ethos and values of the school, which operates as a thriving community, are readily apparent to all; staff, pupils, parents, governors and other partners. The principles and values established here inform other dimensions, particularly management policies. There is a lack of micropolitical tension and resentful undercurrents. Parents feel welcome and able to contribute their views. Governance is open and consultative. There is widespread collaboration with the local community.

Element 1 - Building the school community

Element 2 - Building appropriate ethos and values

(SMT, (All) Staff, Students, Governors, Parents, Other Partners)

### **DIMENSION B**

#### **Excellence in Management Policies**

This dimension is all about creating coherent and transparent school policies which secure the participation and involvement of every person in the school. A critical element of this dimension is the concept of a 'school for all' whereby there are no barriers to participation for teachers, governors, parents or pupils. It is clear who holds responsibility but that all decisions affecting the school are open to clarification and consultation. In the case of pupils every attempt is made to include them. Senior staff at the school make themselves available for consultation as a matter of established routine. Democratic forums are the norm and all information concerning the operation of the school is public and open to debate.

Element 1 - Developing and implementing clear practices and procedures

Element 2 - Organising a school for all

Element 3 - Securing inclusion, participation and involvement

(SMT, (All) Staff, Students, Governors, Parents, Other Partners)

## **DIMENSION C**

### **Excellence in Management Practices**

This dimension is the physical manifestation of the management culture identified in Dimension A. Management of the school is characterised by participation and collaboration. Policies and practices are obvious to all and their operation is transparent. Consultation is the norm and there is no attempt to operate in secrecy or in camera. There are democratic fora for the interchange of ideas as well as established consultation processes. All decisions and policy matters are aired publicly. The views of staff, pupils, parents and governors are actively canvassed. It is obvious to all that their opinions are valued. Tensions are resolved through open discussion.

Element 1 - Orchestrating effective teaching and learning

Element 2 - Resolving conflict

Element 3 - Mobilising resources

## **DIMENSION A**

### **Excellence in Management Culture**

Element 1 - Building the school community

Indicator 1 Everyone is made to feel welcome

Indicator 2 Students help each other

Indicator 3 Staff support each other

Indicator 4 Senior staff treat teachers with respect

Indicator 5 Staff and students treat each other with respect

Indicator 6 There is a partnership between staff and parents

Indicator 7 Staff and governors work well together

Indicator 8 All local communities are involved with the school

Element 2 - Building appropriate ethos and values

Indicator 1 There are high expectations for all students

Indicator 2 Students are valued equally

Indicator 3 Teaching staff are valued equally in the school

Indicator 4 Learning Support Assistants and Administrative staff are valued in the school

Indicator 5 Senior staff ensure that staff are adequately informed about the progress of the school

Indicator 6 Staff are actively involved in formulating school policy

Indicator 7 Teaching staff have the expectation that their opinions will be canvassed before a decision is made

Indicator 8 School development is explored through collaborative working at all levels within the school

Indicator 9 Parents are actively involved in the running of the school

Indicator 10 Staff, Governors, students, parents share a philosophy of collaborative effort



## **DIMENSION B**

### **Excellence in Management Policies**

#### **Element 1 Developing and implementing clear practices and procedures**

Indicator 1 Everyone is clear about the aims and objectives of the school

Indicator 2 Decision making is often devolved from the Headteacher to Senior staff and never the preserve of senior members of staff in isolation

Indicator 3 Decision making is often devolved from the Senior staff to teachers

Indicator 4 School policy is regularly reviewed

Indicator 5 Decisions about the progress of the school are only taken in public after full consultation

#### **Element 2 - Organising a school for all**

Indicator 1 The Headteacher is always accessible and approachable

Indicator 2 Staff never feel that favoured colleagues are consulted by the Headteacher in preference to themselves

Indicator 3 All school disputes concerning staff are dealt with in a fair and open manner

Indicator 4 Staff feel that they can voice objections without fear of hostility or reprisal

Indicator 5 Staff meetings are welcomed as an opportunity to air ideas and discuss issues

Indicator 6 Teaching performance is dealt with in an open and honest manner

#### **Element 3 - Securing, participation and involvement**

Indicator 1 The Headteacher ensures that all staff participate fully in the functioning of the school

Indicator 2 Barriers to participation by staff are systematically removed

## **DIMENSION C**

### **Excellence in Management Practices**

#### **Element 1 - Orchestrating effective learning**

Indicator 1 Teachers expect other teachers to observe and comment on their teaching

Indicator 2 Teachers expect Senior staff to observe and comment on their teaching

Indicator 3 Teachers plan, review and organise their teaching in groups as a normal part of their professional activity

Indicator 4 Learning support assistants are actively involved in securing student progress

## **Element 2 - Resolving conflict**

**Indicator 1 - There are procedures in place for mutual support from colleagues for teachers experiencing classroom problems**

**Indicator 2 - There are procedures in place for support for teachers from senior staff**

**Indicator 3 - Staff do not feel they are being watched**

**Indicator 4 - Teaching effectiveness is openly discussed**

**Indicator 5 - Teachers feel that when they have problems with pupil(s) that they are adequately supported**

**Indicator 6 - Disciplinary procedures against staff are seen as a last resort after supportive measures have taken place**

## **Element 3 - Mobilising resources**

**Indicator 1 Staff feel that their expertise is fully utilised**

**Indicator 2 School resources are distributed fairly**

**Indicator 3 Policies for expansion or contraction are always explained to everyone**

