

## DOCTORAL THESIS

### Enacting 'creativity' in a neoliberal policy context: a case study of English primary school teachers' experiences

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*Award date:*  
2019

*Awarding institution:*  
University of Roehampton

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# **Enacting ‘creativity’ in a neoliberal policy context: a case study of English primary school teachers’ experiences**

by

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A thesis submitted in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of PhD

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2019



## **ABSTRACT**

Creativity is very important. It is at the heart of transformative thinking processes, explaining why we have achieved so much as a species. The role of education in developing creativity has been debated for centuries, although this has been complicated by the varying definitions and applications in both academic literature and policy. The increasing dominance of neoliberal ideology across multiple social structures has caused further complications. Twin neoliberal policy emphases on managerialism and marketisation require schools to conform on the one hand and innovate on the other without clarifying how they can accommodate these contradictory demands in practice. Enactments of creativity in schools are therefore complex. This is an in-depth ethnographic case study of such enactments in a school in South East England, focusing on the experiences of the headteacher and three of the teachers over the 2012-13 academic year. Methods include observations, interviews and document analysis, employing a Bourdieusian analytic framework to conceptualise how values and practices are shaped by individual and personal experiences, as well as the system of interactive social, political and institutional 'fields' in which staff are situated.

Creativity was presented as a priority in this school's local policy but, in practice, staff had little time to develop shared understandings due to contextually-determined constraints and much depended on their individual interpretations. Enactments were shaped by several interlinked factors; firstly, personal beliefs about creativity and its value; secondly, the ways that creativity related to their pedagogical values; and, thirdly, the extent to which staff had assimilated neoliberal policy dispositions into their practice. This research demonstrates that education professionals need a supportive environment in which to develop and enact creative practice and the current political climate is far from it. Over the year, this school's attempts to comply with shifting neoliberal policy frameworks overshadowed their efforts to engage in creative teaching and creative learning.



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## **GLOSSARY OF TERMS AND ABBREVIATIONS**

BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
CACE	Central Advisory Council for Education (Plowden Report)
CCE	Creativity, Culture and Education
CGFS	Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage
CP	Creative Partnerships Programme
CVA	Contextual Value-added
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport
DCSF	Department for Children Schools and Families
DfE	Department for Education
DfEE	Department for Education and Employment
DfES	Department for Education and Skills
ESFA	Education and Skills Funding Agency
ERA	Education Reform Act
EYFS	Early Years Foundation Stage
GBBECC	Great Britain Board of Education Consultative Committee (Hadow Report)
HLTA	Higher Level Teaching Assistant
IELYS	International Early Learning and Child Wellbeing Study
IMF	International Monetary Fund
INSET	In-Service Education and Training
ITE	Initial Teacher Education
IPC	International Primary Curriculum
MAT	Multi-Academy Trust
NACCCE	National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education
NQT	Newly Qualified Teacher
NUT	National Union of Teachers
OECD	Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development
OFSTED	Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills
PGCE	Postgraduate Certificate in Education
PIRLS	Progress in International Reading Literacy Study
PISA	Programme for International Student Assessment
PPA	Planning, Preparation and Assessment (also called 'non-contact time')
QCA	Qualifications and Curriculum Authority
SATs	Statutory national curriculum assessments in England, the acronym refers to 'Statutory Assessment Test' but they are also called Standardised Assessment Tests or Tasks and other derivatives
STA	Standards and Testing Agency
TA	Teaching Assistant
TRA	Teaching Regulation Agency
UN	United Nations
UNESCO	United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
VA	Value-added
VAK	Visual, Auditory, Kinaesthetic – terms that are part of a 'learning styles' model discussed within
WTO	World Trade Organisation

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## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

I would like to thank my Director of Studies, Professor Gill Crozier, and co-supervisor, Professor Pat Mahony, for their enormous support and thought-provoking critique. They have both been incredibly generous with their time and I hope they already know how much I have appreciated this and their careful attention to detail. Thank you to Pat in particular for being a mentor and good friend throughout my academic career. Professor Geoff Troman supported the development of this research as my initial Director of Studies before his retirement and I thank him for his advice and insightful comments which have stayed with me throughout this rather long journey. My thanks also go to Dr. Elise Alexander and Professor Mathias Urban who both acted as Director of Studies at different points. I feel very fortunate to have had the perspectives of such a creative and inspirational group of people on my work.

I wish to acknowledge the support of the University of Roehampton in helping me to complete this study, particularly the Early Childhood Studies team within which I work. I feel privileged to be part of this vibrant and highly collaborative community of tutors and students. Special thanks must go to my colleagues, Sue Greenfield, Sigrid Brogaard Clausen and Deb Albon for always making themselves available to encourage and advise me.

Finally, I would not have been able to complete this without the love and support of my family and friends who have always willed me on and believed in me, even when I doubted myself. Again I must offer special thanks to some: my friend, Emma Rothwell, my sister, Chrissy, and, of course, my constants, Simon and Dave. But I would like to dedicate this thesis to my parents, Roy and Sheila Cottle, for their unceasing support and encouragement throughout my life.



# Chapter One: Introduction

## 1.1 Introduction to the research

Notions of creativity have fascinated people for centuries. Although definitions vary, it is viewed as valuable to contemporary society (Mason, 2003). Politically, it is seen as a means of supporting socio-cultural development and sustainable economies and there has been an increasingly global education policy imperative to develop creativity within and across societies (OECD, 2001; European Parliament and Council, 2008; UNESCO, 2006). This is based on an acknowledgement that creativity contributes both to individual and collective human development and fulfilment as well as to the development of ‘knowledge-based economies’.

This study began in response to my own interest in creativity and my experiences as a primary teacher towards the end of what Craft *et al.*, (2014: 16) have dubbed the ‘creative decade’ in England. The ‘creative decade’ began in 1999 with the publication of a government-commissioned report from the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE). The NACCCE report (1999) proved to be a landmark, together with the *Nurturing Creativity in Young People* Report (Roberts, 2006) that followed. Both sought to inform education policy on creativity, ‘predicated on a core belief – that all children and young people can be creative and should have access to creative experience’ (Roberts, 2006: 15). During this period until the change of government in 2010, there was an emphasis on creativity, ‘creative learning’ and ‘creative teaching’ in policy and guidance documents for schools (for example, QCA, 2004; Ofsted, 2003; 2010). These were largely based on the NACCCE (1999: 30) definition of creativity as ‘imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value’. Both reports and the subsequent policies and initiatives were developed from and generative of a new body of research focusing on creativity in school cultures and contexts



as well as a proliferation of initiatives from private companies and charities (Cochrane and Cockett, 2007; Davies *et al.*, 2013).

However, this focus on creativity has occurred within the context of neoliberal reforms introduced by four successive governments that have steadily changed the ways that English educational institutions operate (Exley and Ball, 2013). Since the 1980s, there has been a barrage of prescriptive, centralised policy initiatives based on models of individualism, implemented and maintained through managerialist strategies (Ball, 2012; Reay, 2012). The concurrent marketisation tactics have reconceptualised schools, colleges, universities and early years settings as businesses in competition with each other, repositioning children and students, teachers and parents (Crozier, 2019; Keddie, 2016). The neoliberalisation of education has resulted in performative cultures of conformity, surveillance, anxiety and blame within and across English education institutions (Jeffrey and Troman, 2012; Mahony and Hextall, 2001).

This situation presents problems for teachers, not least because there are immense tensions between policies that call for innovation and originality in teaching and learning and those that require teachers and children to conform and perform in specific, measured ways but also because the notion of creativity is more complex than presented in policy. Indeed, English education policy definitions of creativity are frequently narrowed by the market-driven focus of the dominant neoliberal ideology (Jones and Thomson, 2008; MacLaren, 2012). The policies do not clarify the ways in which teachers can accommodate the contradictory demands in their pedagogies resulting in complex responses (Craft and Jeffrey, 2008; Burnard and White, 2008). There are major implications for ways children and teachers make sense of creativity but also learning and teaching and their roles and identities as learners and teachers. This research concerns itself with these issues as part of

an in-depth exploration of the experiences of teachers and children within a single primary school with a stated interest in creativity.

### *1.1.1 Chapter overview*

This first chapter begins with a rationale and background for the study, section 1.2. Here I present the professional and personal motivations that shaped my research aims and methodological choices and locate these within the academic literature. As is discussed in this section, the study is very much connected to the policy landscape in England. There is an overview of the characteristics of the neoliberal education policy context and the ways that this impacts on teaching and learning, teachers and children before a brief explanation of the way that creativity fits into this picture. The significance and complexity of creativity is demonstrated here, as well as its contradictory positioning within education policy and practice. Section 1.3 then presents the research aims and scope with an overview of the methodological and theoretical framework, explaining the way that this study contributes to knowledge and research. The chapter concludes with an outline of the remaining chapters for this thesis in section 1.4.

## **1.2 Background and rationale**

During my ten year primary teaching career, I worked with children of various ages in schools in four different countries, including England where I was educated myself. I worked with different curriculum and assessment frameworks but performativity was in evidence to different degrees in each school. By ‘performativity’, I mean a set of material practices that derive from the neoliberal ‘logic of governing’ (Ong, 2007: 3), the managerialist strategies referenced above in particular. These have included prescriptive curricula, standardised testing and the publication of league tables, enforced through systems of performance management and rigorous school inspection (Mahony and Hextall,

2000). However, performativity is more than just a set of practices. It operates at a much deeper level, bringing focus to the ways that the narrative of performing a set of practices is internalised and operationalised by actors within a particular context; that is, the ways that a particular kind of performance comes to be deemed as necessary or desirable by those actors. In a neoliberal school system, the performance of a 'good teacher' or a 'good pupil' is defined by externally-imposed competence standards and learning outcomes, relating to the curriculum and performance management systems and these are frequently presented as objective. Performances are inspected and assessed in relation to these objectives and this type of accountability is attractive to policy-makers and perhaps also parents as a guarantor of minimum standards within educational organisations (Elliot, 2001). However, when the language of education is limited to a list of standardised, pre-determined indicators, the space for informal learning and provisional understandings shrinks and the emotional, relational dimensions of learning are concealed, as is the fact that learning is transient, dependent upon context and time and 'may manifest itself weeks, years, generations, after teaching...in forms that do not look like the original at all' (Strathern, 2000: 318). Performativity therefore changes conceptions of knowledge, learning and teaching, reducing the value of teachers and children and their roles to performances that evidence efficiency and particular 'displays of quality' (Ball, 2003: 216). This inevitably has an impact upon children, teachers and parents. It has the potential to shape identities with devastating effects (Ball, 2003). Reay and Wiliam (1999) provide a powerful example of this in an article which includes a quotation from a child in its title: 'I'll be a nothing' which documents the ways that standardised assessment practices can induce anxiety and a fear of failure in ten and eleven year old children. This article was published twenty years ago but the situation has only intensified since then and the negative effects of performativity on both children and teachers are now well-documented (Bradbury and Roberts-Holmes, 2018; Troman, 2008), as is discussed further in Chapter Three.

As a primary teacher, I struggled with the negative effects of the performative aspects of the system. Teachers, including myself, as well as children and parents tended to encode learning as levels of achievement related to standardised curriculum descriptors such as the English National Curriculum levels or test scores (Hamilton, 2002; Sadler, 2005). These were often linked to ability and perceived to be fixed (Black and Wiliam, 1998). The children judged themselves and their peers as ‘good’ or ‘bad’ at particular tasks, subjects or even school itself based on this. Teachers would often do the same things, sometimes homogenising whole groups or classes of children as ‘difficult’ when the children were not achieving expected goals. My reflection on my own dilemmas and my search for ‘creative’ solutions eventually led me to research where I discovered that there is plenty of evidence to corroborate my experiences, as summarised above and discussed further in Chapter Three. Indeed, this neoliberalisation process has not only affected the education context. Neoliberalism is a pervasive ideology which has reconstituted social policy and public services since the late 1980s and it now operates at a global level across many socio-economic and political contexts (Klenk and Pavolini, 2015; Plehwe *et al.*, 2007), providing multiple opportunities for neoliberal values and thinking to shape the way that the self is practised (Braedley and Luxton, 2010; Lynch *et al.*, 2015). Considering its negative effects, this has far-reaching consequences for both individuals and society (Giroux, 2004). Yet it is very difficult to recognise and resist its effects, not least because there can be punitive consequences for non-compliance but also because it has acquired an accepted ‘common sense’ status.

Through the literature, including my reading of Bourdieu as discussed in the next section, I began to make sense of my experiences. This enabled me to develop and articulate my pedagogical values with more clarity, starting with the idea that teaching is a creative, dynamic process and that autonomy and collaboration are key to both teaching and

learning. I found the work of Peter Woods, Bob Jeffrey and Anna Craft to be particularly illuminating in this regard. Throughout the 1990s and beyond, they and other colleagues carried out research to examine the growing momentum of an international discourse of creativity which some considered to be a challenge to the dominance of performativity, whilst acknowledging the tensions and dilemmas involved (Craft and Jeffrey, 2008). Through a myriad of often ethnographic research projects, they documented and characterised ‘creative teaching’ and ‘creative learning’ in primary schools and early years settings, highlighting the key importance of the affective, interpersonal elements of learning and of the ways that teachers can involve children in their learning, making it relevant to them and giving them ownership and control (Craft *et al.*, 2001; Woods and Jeffrey, 1996). It is this research that triggered my interest in undertaking an in-depth examination of the ways that teachers put their ideas about creativity into action. Proposed revisions to the primary national curriculum were an additional impetus. When this study began, the curriculum was under review (Rose, 2009) and the proposed revisions advocated for an increased emphasis on creativity across the different phases of the curriculum. However, the new coalition government rejected these proposals and commissioned their own curriculum review (DfE, 2011a). Creativity was still represented in the Coalition government proposals but the emphasis shifted and it has since become more firmly located within the neoliberalised framework (McCallum, 2016), as indicated in the comments made by Michael Gove below. Gove was the Secretary of State for Education for the Coalition (2010 – 2014), he retained tight control over the education reform process:

Creativity depends on mastering certain skills and acquiring a body of knowledge before being able to give expression to what's in you ... You cannot be creative unless you understand how sentences are constructed, what words mean and how to use grammar.

(Gove, 2013).

My data were collected in 2012-13 when the Coalition government was mid-way through its term of office and statutory changes to the National Curriculum had been drafted but

not put in place. Consequently, the teachers involved in my research were interpreting both Labour and Coalition policy constructions in their work.

It is important to note at this point that creativity is difficult to define. The research on ‘creativity’ is extensive, varied and has a long history, far longer than performativity in fact, as I discuss in Chapter Four. This is because creativity is a concept that crosses disciplinary boundaries. A relatively recent radio programme provides an example of the complexity of creativity debates and just some of the claims and counter-claims. The programme involved a debate between four experts (BBC Radio 4, 2015): a neuroscientist, who argued that we need to compartmentalise and organise our minds in order to allow space for creativity; a poet, for whom creativity is something that emerges from a ‘primordial soup’ of disorganisation; a cognitive scientist, arguing that computers and artificial intelligence are creative; and, a musical conductor discussing the ‘creative genius’ of Mozart. Turning to the scholarly literature, historically creativity has been associated with imagination, cognitive ability and intelligence; identity and wellbeing; aesthetic activity and social, scientific, technological and economic advances (Mason, 2003; Pope, 2005). More recently, there is a cross-disciplinary, international body of creativity research which encompasses various positions and approaches (Kaufman and Sternberg, 2006; Reuter, 2015). The situation is further complicated by the proliferation of popularised creativity ‘myths’ around the globe. Some hark back to the historical debates, others are based on more recent pseudo-scientific theories, facilitated by ‘sound bite’ politics and rapid and uncritical internet dissemination (Burton, 2007; MacLaren, 2012). This thesis is therefore based on the premise that creativity is a complex and multi-faceted concept which needs to be understood in context and that individual education professionals may have very different definitions depending on their beliefs and experiences. That said, two central concepts can be identified as forming a very broad ‘standard definition’ of creativity: these are originality and value (Runco and Jaeger,

2012). Originality encompasses notions of innovation and inspiration, while value is sometimes described as appropriateness, effectiveness, usefulness or 'fit'. Indeed, much debate has focused on the value of creativity in terms of its perceived benefits to both society and the individual (Cropley and Cropley, 2013). This is the reason that it is a focus for education which is viewed as key to its development.

There is a specific body of literature focusing on creativity in education policy and practice (Craft, 2011; Harris, 2016) and particularly the role of the teacher in developing creativity (Berezki and Kárpáti, 2018, 2018; Davies *et al.*, 2014). Again, this is discussed further in Chapter Four, but to give an overview here, creativity is frequently viewed as an inherent aspect of learning and human development (Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009; Vygotsky, 2004). However, a teacher's beliefs and implicit theories about creativity and its nurture are crucial, as is their sense of self-efficacy or competence in developing creativity in children (Andiliou and Murphy, 2010; Mullet *et al.*, 2016). These factors influence the ways that teachers enact creativity as does the context in which the enactments take place. Schools tend to be highly controlled institutional settings where creativity can be simultaneously desired and rejected as 'potentially disruptive and anti-social, politically challenging or problematic' (Banaji and Burn 2010: 25). This paradox is a philosophical problem that has roots in ancient classical debate, although it is reflected in contemporary neoliberal reconceptualisation of society. It illustrates the tension between balancing necessary change, precipitated by useful innovations and inventions, with social order and stability. Given these deep-rooted tensions, the complex nature of creativity and its many definitions, teachers' personal pedagogical beliefs and the role of contextual factors such as institutional rules and policy, enactments of creativity within a school are likely to be multifaceted. Indeed, even in a school where there are shared understandings of creativity, classroom practices will vary because 'various internal (e.g., knowledge, value) and external (e.g., classroom context, administrative expectations, policy demands) factors may

support or hinder the enactment of a belief' (Fives and Buehler, 2012: 481). This research seeks to explore these issues in-depth by focusing on the experiences and perspectives of the headteacher and three classroom teachers within a single primary school, exploring their beliefs about creativity and the factors that enable and constrain them or cause dilemmas as they put them into practice.

### **1.3 Aims and scope**

My intention was neither to discover fact nor to prove a hypothesis but rather to give a detailed account of the experiences and perspectives of this small group of teachers and the children they teach within the social world of their primary school. The case study therefore employs a qualitative interpretivist methodological approach, adopting an in-depth year-long ethnographic design in order to extract the desired level of detail. The teachers were situated in the Reception class (where the children are aged 4-5 years), Year 2 (aged 6-7 years) and Year 6 (aged 10-11 years). Although the focus is primarily on the teachers' perspectives and experiences, the children were also involved in the research. I documented their experiences and perspectives using the methods discussed below and engaged in regular informal discussions with both children and teachers. A small amount of the children's data are represented in the discussion of findings in this thesis, although this is primarily in relation to the teacher enactments; the other data generated will be presented in future publications.

The data were collected across the 2012-13 academic year between September and July. The fieldwork visits took place once a week, as far as possible, sampling different days of the week and times of day in order to examine different layers of school life. The following research questions were posed:

1. How do the staff define 'creativity', 'creative learning' and 'creative teaching'?



2. How do the staff enact 'creativity', creative learning' and 'creative teaching' within the neoliberal policy context of the school?
3. What are the enablers, constraints, tensions and ambiguities in this process?

The study utilised a range of methods and data collection techniques to answer these questions, drawing on a Bourdieusian theoretical framework to analyse the data. These included document analysis, general and targeted observations, semi-structured interviews, memos and field notes.

This thesis demonstrates the utility of Bourdieusian concepts in mapping connections between the 'lived experience' of teachers and children in schools and the broader policy context. Bourdieu's theoretical framework (1977) makes it possible to gain nuanced understandings of the way that ideas and practices are constituted and enacted at specific times and places. It is founded on the idea that our beliefs and practices are always embedded within richly detailed, interactive social contexts. Therefore, we are all constantly engaging in the individual and collective construction and adaptation of practices as we move through different social and symbolic structures and spaces ('fields'). 'Habitus' is the Bourdieusian concept that mediates between social structures and individual actions. It comprises sets of embodied dispositions (ways of talking, moving, thinking and doing) that a person internalises through their experience and which (pre)disposes them to act in certain ways within particular fields. Thus, an examination of habitus is an examination of enactment. There may be collective elements to habitus through which particular practices may be negotiated or reproduced but, because habitus is mediated by each individual's different life experiences and people are positioned in multiple fields simultaneously, there are always variations on dispositional themes and there is always the potential for transformation, particularly where there is mismatch between habitus and field, as this research will evidence.

Enduring dispositions may relate to early life experiences ('primary habitus') but a person is always adding layers to their habitus as they move through different social fields and over time. Therefore, as well as the individual and collective aspects, there are also past and present dimensions to the habitus. This research employs the concept of 'pedagogical habitus', an elaboration of Bourdieu's framework, to describe the enduring 'embodied cognitive, dispositional, and corporeal pedagogical practices that, over time, have become grafted on to...[a teacher's]...primary habitus' (Feldman, 2016: 71). It then explores the potential of the term 'creative dispositions' to explain any relatively durable sets of practices or ways of thinking about creativity that the staff in this research incorporated into their pedagogical habitus. This includes their own creative behaviours, strategies and engagements as well as the practices and habits of mind they wanted children to develop or augment as part of their classroom or school community.

Although the teachers' dispositions are located and discussed within the field of a single school, and their classrooms as sub-fields within that, the data also provide detailed insights into the ways that neoliberal education policy operates at the micro-level within schools. Bourdieu offers different ways to explain how particular rules and practices come to dominate in a field or even across fields in the way that neoliberalism has. Firstly, the rules and norms of a school field, or its 'logic of practice' (Bourdieu, 1990), shape and are collectively shaped by teachers' pedagogical habitus. But power, domination and struggle are at the heart of Bourdieu's thinking. Within any field, actors can be coerced into accepting rules by other more powerful actors due to the punitive consequences for non-compliance. They may also be coerced through 'symbolic violence'. This is a subtler form of domination which is more insidious than the actual coercion because it operates with the full, though usually hidden or 'misrecognised' complicity of the agents involved. This misrecognition is reliant on 'doxa' which describes sets of beliefs, values and assumptions that have become deeply entrenched to the point that they are accepted as

norms or ‘common sense’ without question. In this way, doxa obfuscates social inequalities and hierarchies, operating at such a subconscious level that agents often do not recognise their own domination nor the ways that they dominate others. The institutionalised practices and embedded power relationships within schools make their communities particularly susceptible to processes of symbolic violence. But symbolic violence happens across fields too.

Bourdieu conceived of the social world as consisting of multiple fields and sub-fields on a meta-field of power. Therefore, although schools are relatively autonomous, which is key to the definition of a field, they are dominated by the field of political power which exerts its influence through education policy. The actual encroachment of practices from one field to another can be conceptualised in terms of ‘cross-field effects’, another elaboration of Bourdieu’s work (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004; Rawolle, 2005). Neoliberalism can therefore be conceptualised as the ‘doxa’ that makes breaches and connections between other fields possible or thinkable (Bourdieu, 1998a), through the cross-field effect of education policy. Examples of neoliberal doxic narratives include the performative notions of effectiveness, efficiency, success and failure which operate across school fields, enabling symbolic violence to occur. However, having been embraced by the state, global economic organisations and the media, neoliberalism has become hegemonic, generating doxa as themes and variations on themes across a wider range of fields (Thomson, 2005; Lingard *et al.*, 2015). This is a truly frightening prospect because as the ‘common sense’ becomes more ingrained so does the damage inflicted by the symbolic violence. However, as already noted, Bourdieu’s notion of habitus always offers the potential for resistance, adaptation and transformation even in the face of such strongly structuring effects. Indeed, there are those who argue that neoliberalism is in crisis (Hall, 2011; Saad-Filho, 2019).

Bourdieuian theory therefore offers a useful, flexible set of ‘thinking tools’ (Bourdieu in Wacquant, 1989: 5) that can bridge gap between macro and micro-level. It can illuminate the hidden workings of power within and across interconnected system of fields (Vaughn, 2008) such as those in which a school is situated. This research brings focus to the ways that this enables or constrains staff in putting their definitions of creativity into practice as well as examining how the school and classroom norms themselves shape and are shaped by creative dispositions.

#### **1.4 Structure of the thesis**

This thesis is organised into ten chapters. The first five chapters discuss the theoretical, contextual and methodological underpinnings. The following four chapters provide descriptive and analytic accounts of the findings before the final concluding chapter draws these findings together.

In this first chapter, I have presented the background to the research and its aims and scope. I have provided an outline of Bourdieu’s theory of social fields, explaining how it has been applied to this research in order to conceptualise the teacher enactments within the context of their school and in relation to their past and present experiences.

Chapter Two provides more detailed discussion and definition of the key theoretical constructs that have informed the analysis. This includes my interpretation of Bourdieu’s social field theory (1977) and the key concepts that I use in this research. I acknowledge that there are ongoing debates about Bourdieu’s work. My interpretation adds to these, also drawing on other scholars’ theoretical elaborations of Bourdieu’s writings (Feldman, 2016; Lingard and Rawolle, 2004). This has provided an analytic framework that has enabled me to make sense of both my data and the policy context. The thesis explores how

my participants' enactments of creativity relate to policy, although policy analysis is not a central aim in itself. By this I mean that I do not attempt to seek solutions to policy problems as is the case with some policy analyses (Ozga, 2000), however, I do consider it essential to account for the ways that it can shape practice which involves consideration of what policy is. I discuss my interpretation of policy and the meaning of 'enactment' as it is applied within this study in conjunction with the Bourdieusian framework at the end of Chapter Two. The policy context itself is explored across several chapters, Chapters Three, Four and Six, as I discuss below.

Chapter Three presents the neoliberal policy context in more depth, employing a Bourdieusian analysis to account for the dominance of neoliberalism and examining the ways that it has shaped education policy and practice. Bourdieu himself critiqued neoliberalism extensively (Bourdieu, 1998a; Bourdieu, 2003) and other scholars have applied his framework to analyse neoliberalism (Chopra, 2003; Wacquant, 2010) and I have drawn on this work here.

Chapter Four examines the creativity literature, identifying key themes that have endured over time and giving an overview of the creativity research that has had an influence on English education policy and practice. I then discuss the comparatively recent research that has examined 'creative teaching' and 'creative learning' in schools and the ways this links to education policy and curriculum. This chapter includes consideration of the neoliberalised versions of creativity referenced in this introductory chapter.

Chapter Five describes the research methodology, design and methods of data analysis used in this study. There is a brief overview of the setting which introduces the participants, followed by a more detailed discussion of the key data collection techniques. The chapter includes reflections on my position as a researcher. This is a key ethnographic

tradition and particularly important for this research given my former role as a primary school teacher.

Chapter Six presents the situated context of the case study school, to which I have given the pseudonym 'Brightwater Primary School', including the intake, staffing, locale, buildings and physical spaces. The structural relations and positions of the staff and children in the school field are also presented. There is consideration of the relationship between the school and the external context, including its reputation within the community, drawing on data from my discussions with the staff participants and the way the school was represented in official documents, relationships with the local authority and the school's engagement with creative initiatives. As referenced in Section 1.2 above, the data collection took place at a time of transition politically. Significant changes were being introduced not just to the curriculum but also to the system of assessment and inspection, these changes are presented in more detail in this chapter.

Chapter Seven introduces the four key participants examining the ways that each of them defined creativity, creative learning and creative teaching and how these definitions related to their pedagogical habitus.

Chapter Eight presents the staff enactments of creativity, drawing on self-reported enactment stories from the interviews as well as extracts from my observations and field notes. In so doing, it delves more deeply into their definitions, reflecting on both the shared elements and individual variations. Although I have separated definition, enactment and the enablers and constraints analytically over Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine, the teachers interlinked 'creative teaching' and 'creative learning' in both definition and enactment, frequently discussing the ways that they felt enabled or constrained in putting their definitions into action as the same time as telling their stories. The discussion

in this chapter has therefore been organised thematically in order to facilitate comparisons between the different creative dispositions and to give a sense of the way that creativity was enacted into the school as a whole. The similarities and differences between the three teachers' practices are highlighted as well as the tensions and contradictions that emerged.

Chapter Nine considers the enablers, constraints, tensions and ambiguities involved. Again, the distinctions between enablers and constraints were never clear cut and often involved ambiguities and tensions due to the complexities of interpretation and enactment and its contextualised nature. Therefore, this chapter is again structured by theme. The first theme focuses on the strategies that the staff used to prioritise creative teaching and creative learning and reflects on the whole school approach. The second examines the rules and effects imposed on the field from the outside and as well as those developed internally in response to the performative demands of the national system, examining the ways that these interacted with the 'creative school' dimensions. The chapter concludes with consideration of the ways that the creative and performative practices shaped relationships, positions and perceptions, focusing on the ways the staff saw themselves, their fellow teachers, children and parents.

The final chapter draws together the findings of the study and their implications for both policy and practice. It discusses the ways that the study contributes to knowledge and research, as well as its limitations, and offers final concluding reflections with considerations for further research

## **Chapter Two: Key Theoretical Concepts**

### **2.1 Chapter Introduction**

This chapter presents my theoretical framework, which is largely based on my interpretation of the work of Pierre Bourdieu. It presents the rationale for a Bourdieusian approach (2.2), introducing the concepts of ‘field’, ‘capital’ and ‘habitus’ (2.3 to 2.5). Within these sections I consider theoretical elaborations of aspects of his work including ‘pedagogical habitus’ (Feldman, 2016), ‘temporary social fields’ and ‘cross-field effects’ (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004; Rawolle, 2005). Section 2.6 discusses concepts which are key to understanding the way that power and relationships of domination work in schools: ‘doxa’, ‘misrecognition’, ‘symbolic violence’ and ‘illusio’. The chapter ends with consideration of the meaning of ‘enactment’ and the ways this is conceptualised in this study (2.7) and a concluding section which draws together my argument (2.8).

### **2.2 Rationale**

As shall be evidenced in Chapter Three, the education system in England and other parts of the world are currently dominated by neoliberal thinking, managerialist and marketised practices, resulting in performative cultures (Ball, 2012). The research I discuss there resonates with my own experience as a primary teacher and my previous research which highlighted the interplay between practitioners’ individual histories, both personal and professional, their understandings of their institutional role and their interpretations of policy as they engage in their work (Cottle and Alexander, 2012). Thus, when I began this research, I was aware that the macro-context influences the actions, behaviours and attitudes of individuals, both teachers. However, I did not wish to take a purely deterministic standpoint, which would reduce both my participants and myself to passive objects whose actions are solely dictated by the external context. I therefore sought theoretical frameworks that would help me to conceptualise the relationship between the



minutiae of my participants' experiences and the broader socio-political context in ways that did not over- or under-estimate their agency. I turned to key sociological theoretical frameworks to try to explain this linkage.

As part of any attempt to understand practice in a particular context, it is important to consider how the human capacity to make independent choices ('agency') may be constrained or enabled and how this relates to understandings of any relatively enduring patterns of social arrangements ('structure') in a particular time and place. This requires consideration of the ways that people generate, reproduce and transform shared values and arrangements within and across social groups. Durkheim (2014: 63) termed these shared understandings the 'collective consciousness', arguing that 'the totality of beliefs and sentiments common to the average members of a society forms a determinate system with a life of its own'. For structuralists, it is the operation of social structures that determine human agency. Interactionists are at the other end of the continuum, in this approach individual agency drives social relations. Both extremes have been criticised for prioritising structure over agency or vice versa and the relationship between these dichotomies is a recurring problem around which sociologists circle in the course of their work. It is a major tension linked to religious and philosophical arguments about determinism and free will that go back hundreds of years. As a result, there is a huge body of literature on this theme in both philosophical and sociological disciplines and arguments continue. For example, Shilling (1992: 82) sees the dominant conceptions of 'structure' and 'agency' in themselves as an obstacle to the integration of macro- and micro-perspectives, while King's (2008) view is that without consideration of this relationship, it is impossible to explain the reproduction of social institutions and cultures. However it is perceived, it is necessary to acknowledge the debate and to demonstrate a position because the relationship between social structures and local actions is at the heart of my own research. The structure-agency debate is not only significant in and of itself but it also

provides a starting point for addressing other important ontological understandings, not only the macro-micro and society-individual links already discussed, but also understandings of social space, time and change (King, 2008). Bourdieu's accounts of social conduct offer layers of theoretical complexity together with a wealth of supporting empirical research that addresses these issues.

Bourdieu's framework consists of a range of theoretical resources but it is founded largely upon three interrelated key concepts: habitus, field and capital. Habitus and field represent the subjective and objective aspects of social experience respectively. Both are expressed in structural terms (Grenfell, 2010), therefore a field represents a social structure and habitus the mental structures of individuals and groups (Almquist *et al.*, 2010). Capital is the conceptualisation of the physical or symbolic resources that individuals draw upon within and across social fields which translate into power. Habitus is Bourdieu's attempt to overcome the structure-agency dichotomy 'by integrating into a single model the analysis of the experience of social agents and the analysis of the objective structures that make this experience possible' (Bourdieu, 1988b: 782). Although habitus has been criticised for being deterministic (Giroux, 1983), Bourdieu stresses that it shapes actions and decisions without determining them:

There is no rule... that can provide for all the possible conditions of its execution and which does not...leave some degree of play or scope for interpretation, which is handed over to the strategies of the habitus.

(Bourdieu, 2004: 80)

Habitus is therefore the device that mediates between structure and agency, representing a reciprocal, dialectical relationship between the two (Davey, 2009).

Bourdieu's work is frequently linked to the sociology of culture, he was particularly interested in power struggle and class domination through symbolic control (Nash, 2003).

Much of the sociological research employing a Bourdieusian analysis focuses on issues relating class, race or gender inequalities (Grenfell and James, 2004). However, he frequently argued that his contribution was methodological rather than theoretical and through the flexibility of the ‘thinking tools’ discussed above (Bourdieu in Wacquant, 1989: 5). These tools are very applicable to the analysis of practice within a specific educational context. Indeed, Bourdieu was interested in education throughout his career, particularly the school as the ‘major agency for socialisation and legitimation in modern society’ (Van Zanten, 2005: 672) and his work has had a substantial influence on educational research (Grenfell and James, 2004). My research is concerned with education policy as well as practice and, although Bourdieu did not write directly about this, he engaged in analysis of social policy (Bourdieu 1999a, 1999b), education and schooling (Bourdieu, 1976; Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990) and, in his later work, he focused on the role of the managerialist neoliberal state (Bourdieu, 1998a; 2003). These works and many others have provided useful frames of reference for my study. I now examine the concepts above and some of his other theories in more detail, discussing their application to my research.

### **2.3 Fields**

Bourdieu conceived of the social world as consisting of multiple fields and sub-fields (Rawolle and Lingard, 2015), defining these as social spaces that tend ‘to function as a symbolic space, a space of lifestyles and status groups’ (Bourdieu, 1989: 20). These are stratified, both horizontally, for example family, education, policy or media, and vertically, for example class, gender and race. In any field, neither horizontal nor hierarchical differentiations can be constituted without the other. In this way, Bourdieu offers an abstract yet also material conception of social spaces and institutions. His research focused on empirical fields such as schools (Bourdieu, 1998c) and the more abstract fields such as

the economy and the political field (Bourdieu, 2005a; 2005b) amongst others. In Bourdieu's view, endeavours should be made to understand fields as 'social microcosms' as well as the 'effects that the people engaged in this microcosm exert on one another' (Bourdieu, 2005a: 33). From this point, I confine my examples to the field of schooling and associated fields relevant to my research.

Fields are structurally homologous in that they operate in similar ways. Each forms a 'network...of objective relations between [social] positions' which can be occupied by agents (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 97). By 'objective', Bourdieu meant that these relations are recognised as such by actors within a field. The 'configuration of norms, stakes, patterns and logic' (Crossley, 2001: 101) are unique to that field are acted upon like the 'rules of a game', this was his preferred metaphor. Each field contains people who dominate and are dominated or are involved in struggle for these different positions (Bourdieu, 1998b). Bourdieu argued that the way that a field can be recognised is through attention to acts of construction or reproduction performed by its agents. He terms these acts 'field effects' and, taken together, the dominant or enduring field effects constitute the 'logic of practice' of that field (Bourdieu, 1990). However, this means that fields are dynamic and their limits always 'at stake' due to the struggles in which agents are engaged (Wacquant, 1989: 39). Therefore, in practice, locating a particular field and defining its effects is difficult, not least because people operate within multiple fields concurrently. Indeed, Bourdieu suggested that society itself could be thought of as an overarching meta-field of power, 'the product of the synthesis of the actions of all fields taken together' (Thomson, 2005: 748). Power should be seen viewed as a field in itself as well as working within fields. This implies a hierarchy of fields and a struggle for domination amongst fields. Each is relatively autonomous but one field can exert effects on another.

A more dominant field can alter the way that another field works in both temporary and more enduring ways, potentially permanently changing the way that the dominated field works. For example, the field of commerce is increasingly encroaching upon the field of education. This is exemplified by the increasing influence of education consultants and globally positioned edu-businesses, such as Pearson (Ball, 2012) and events such as the bi-annual Academies Show (Partnership and Media Group, 2019) which has been running since 2006; the list of sponsors, exhibitors and the services on offer at these events is always staggering. As another example, theorising fields at the school level, each school can be considered as an institutional field situated within a system of fields (Vaughan, 2008). Some of the particular interconnected fields and the patterns within the school field itself will be unique but all schools are sub-fields within the macro-level field of schooling. Consequently, each school has its own 'thisness' (Thomson, 2000) but can always be recognised as a school. As such, there will be similarities in terms of some of the field effects, positions, players and types of struggles within each, at least in terms of institutional roles and functions. Indeed, for Bourdieu, institutions are a particular type of field, one in which the rules and relationships are more distinctly structured and entrenched and are therefore taken for granted. This enables individuals operating within the institution to dispense with the need to pursue the usual strategies aimed at the domination of others. The power and status is built into the institution itself.

In summary, the relationships between fields should be imagined as dynamic and fluid, although the relationships between the macro-level fields such as the field of schooling or the field of policy will generally be more stable than those in the micro-context because it is the latter that takes the detail of individual actions and relationships into account.

Considering this in the context of my own research, while I consider Brightwater School to be the primary field in my research, I also see it as a sub-field of schooling which is itself a sub-field of education and so forth. Equally, the three classroom groups within which I

spent most of my time collecting data can be conceptualised as sub-fields of the Brightwater School field and its interconnected system of fields. Although this idea of a concentric series of sub-fields makes the process of conceptualising a single field and its effects a challenging process, in this way, Bourdieu's work can be used to provide convincing arguments for acknowledging the complexity of human actions and relations, which may take on different meanings simultaneously according to the positions that actors (or 'players') occupy within and across different fields. Bourdieu's conceptual framework therefore provides opportunities for multiple perspectives (Friedland, 2009), reflecting the ambiguities of the real world.

### *2.3.1 Cross-field effects*

Bourdieu tended to focus more on the internal characteristics of fields than their interconnections (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004). Therefore I draw on conceptions of 'cross-field effects' as an elaboration of his framework which conceptualises both enduring and temporary interconnections between fields (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004; Rawolle, 2005). Rawolle and Lingard have tested the applicability of this concept primarily on the journalistic field in their examination of the mediatisation of education policy in various publications, including those cited above. They categorise these effects as structural, event, systemic, temporal, hierarchical and vertical (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004: 368-9). I now briefly illustrate these, using examples relevant to my research and I demonstrate that examples can fit into more than one of these categories. 'Structural effects' relate to similarities or linkages between the logics of practice in the fields under investigation. In my research, this explains the role of education policy as an effect connecting the field of a school with government, therefore policy can be positioned 'as an attempt by one field to affect another' (Hardy and Lingard, 2008: 64). 'Systemic effects' are usually incremental and tend to relate to the broad values that underpin a system; for example I conceptualise

the shift towards neoliberal values in public services in this way in the next chapter. The remaining three effects can be exemplified by Ofsted, the Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills, which is responsible for inspecting a range of educational institutions including schools. 'Event effects' are specific occurrences which rupture the ordinary functioning of a field in a temporary or more enduring way, allowing effects to 'cascade between fields' (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004: 368); this describes an Ofsted inspection itself. The inspection is also an example of a 'temporal effect' (ibid: 368) because, when it occurs, a temporary social field (Rawolle, 2005) is created around this event in which the positions of the school players and the power relationships between them change for the duration of the visit at least, if not longer depending on the level of 'success' achieved. Temporal effects also allow for the sub-categorisation of other cross-field effects according to frequency or regularity. 'Hierarchical' and 'vertical effects' take the field of power into account, designating the direction of the effects, for example the power that Ofsted has over schools.

## **2.4 Capital**

The position of an agent in a field or system of fields and the effects they are able to produce are determined by the capital they possess. Broadly speaking, capital is conceptualised as either physical (i.e. objectified or embodied as economic or cultural artefacts and skills or social relationships) or symbolic. Symbolic capital refers to the way that physical capital is operationalised within a field or overlapping fields i.e. capital becomes symbolic when a person (or field) is perceived to be either advantaged or disadvantaged by it. For example, a person may be granted a socially recognised title which guarantees rank within a field (Bourdieu, 1986) such as 'teacher' or 'headteacher'. Physical capital comes in three main forms: economic (money, material goods and services), social (social relations and networks that provide access to various types of

resources) and cultural (cultural goods, knowledge and skills). Economic and social capital can be easier to identify because cultural capital is more multifaceted in itself, particularly as it can be objectified or embodied (as long-lasting dispositions of mind and body). Examples are wide-ranging, from clothing, tastes, accents or dialects, postures and mannerisms as well as material objects. Sharing the same cultural capital with others creates a form of collective identity and group position. All forms of capital are equally important and they are inextricably interlinked. However, comparatively, Bourdieu writes less about social capital and the ways that it is manifested through networks of relationships perhaps because it is largely reliant on the other forms of capital possessed by the different members of the network (Schuller *et al.*, 2000).

Capital gets its value from the specific context but it does not itself guarantee a position within the field because there is always a temporal or historical dimension. Its legitimacy can be granted or withdrawn. It is on the meta-field of power that 'struggles for the principles for determining the capitals most highly valued within societies are defined...these are not necessarily determined as economic capital or cultural capital or social capital, but are a contingent mixture at particular points in time' (Rawolle and Lingard, 2015: 19). Some capital is recognised across fields, it is 'good on all markets.... [therefore freeing] its holder from the symbolic struggle of all against all by imposing the universally approved perspective' (Bourdieu, 1989: 21). This type of recognition depends on different factors, namely the pervasiveness of a particular field and the power of the agent or institution that sanctions it (Bourdieu, 1988a). Teaching qualifications are an example of this. These are a form of institutionalised capital that symbolise authority or competence, although teachers are not all equally positioned because their position relies on the mix of other capitals they possess and on the success of the school field in which they are situated. Taking notions of capital alone, Bourdieu's work could be interpreted in



a deterministic way, with little possibility for progressive intervention. Bourdieu reconciles structure (field) and agency (practice) through the concept of 'habitus'.

## **2.5 Habitus**

Habitus is 'the modus operandi informing all thought and action' (Bourdieu, 1977: 18), it encapsulates dispositions or sets of dispositions that people have internalised. These dispositions epitomise practical, embodied knowledge, for example taking the form of beliefs, values, conduct, speech, dress and manners (Mills, 2008). Habitus both shapes and is shaped by a person's experiences in social groups (fields), thus the 'inner dispositions of habitus thus derive from the differentiated social positions that given agents inhabit over time and across social spaces' (Zipin and Brennan, 2003: 357-8). It operates in a largely subconscious and implicit way, 'implying habit' (Mills, 2008: 80) and 'without consciously obeying rules explicitly posed as such' (Bourdieu, 1990: 76). Therefore it instinctively produces a 'feel for the game' (Bourdieu, 1990b: 66) and certain dispositions are prioritised or acted upon more regularly based on what is considered possible in that time and place. In this way, habitus 'disposes actors to do certain things, orienting their actions and inclinations but without strictly determining them' (Mills, 2008: 80).

However, within a field at a particular time, some practices will be rejected as improbable, given the circumstances, whilst a particular range of practices is considered and applied in a vague or 'more or less' way (Reay, 1995: 355). For example, within a highly structured institutional field such as a school, the particular recurrences of 'rules' or field effects will dispose teachers and children to act in certain ways. But each individual will also draw on values and experiences from other fields, meaning that this will not result in specific uniform practices. There is space for individual agency as variations on a theme, adding layers to the habitus, including the potential for significant change or transformation, particularly where there is disjuncture between habitus and field (Nolan, 2012; Reay, 2004). This dissonance may be experienced as crisis, requiring agents to reconsider their

practices or even remove themselves from the field (Davey, 2009; Jones and Enriquez, 2009). Such crisis may be necessary in order to question the status quo and effect change to practice, however, there is also evidence that people live with ambivalence, finding coping mechanisms (Ingram, 2011). These may involve internalising or suppressing contradictions (Zipin and Brennan, 2003), perhaps even deactivating conflicting dispositions at a particular point in time and putting them on ‘standby’ (Lahire, 2003: 341).

The interaction between habitus and field, or disposition and position, can therefore be disjunctive or conjunctive and as such it can be source of change or reproduction, giving habitus the capacity to be ‘structuring’ as well as ‘structured’ (Bourdieu, 1977: 53).

Habitus countenances that which can be ‘achieved or negotiated through the exertion of agency; for example, in resources, emerging institutions, roles and practices that disrupt and may eventually replace the structured structures’ (Morrison, 2005: 314).

### *2.5.1 Pedagogical habitus*

I have referred to layers of dispositions within the habitus above. Some layers relate to an individual’s ‘earliest upbringing’ (Bourdieu, 1977: 81), therefore to family and socialisation experiences in early childhood; Bourdieu has referred to this as the ‘primary habitus’ (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990). But people are constantly adapting to the outside world and the social groups to which they belong, therefore different sets of dispositions can become grafted onto the primary habitus over time. In this research, I draw upon the notion of ‘pedagogical habitus’ that Feldman (2016: 71) conceptualises as ‘a layer of habitus formation, which includes the teachers’ embodied cognitive, dispositional, and corporeal pedagogical practices that, over time, have become grafted on to their primary habitus’. These dispositions can be ascribed to traditions and practices relating to teachers’ primary habitus and their own experiences of schooling, their training and subsequent

teaching experiences as well as to their policy work (Ball *et al.*, 2011a; Hardy and Lingard, 2008). Different teachers will have beliefs and practices in common, particularly if they work in the same school. However, because each teacher's pedagogical habitus is mediated by their different life experiences and enacted within the sub-field of their classroom community, there will also be variations on dispositional themes and there is always the potential for transformation. Indeed, as aspect or 'rule' that one teacher experiences as a barrier may provide transformative opportunities for others, particularly where there is mismatch between habitus and field, as this research will evidence.

Habitus is therefore a complex amalgam of past and present which is always in flux (Bourdieu, 1990). Although it defies rigid collective categorisations for the reasons already discussed, it has both individual and collective dimensions, and, at its most structured, particular dispositions or sets of dispositions may become doxic. This notion of 'doxa' is key to understanding the way that Bourdieu interprets power and relationships of domination in society.

## **2.6 Power and domination**

'Doxa' describes the way that some beliefs, values and assumptions have become entrenched and come to dominate as 'common sense', self-evident and universal within a particular field or even across fields. Doxa is implicit, unquestioned orthodoxy which operates as if it were objective truth. It operates hand-in-hand with 'misrecognition' which is 'a social practice of individual or collective misattribution' (James, 2015: 99). This is because it happens when groups of people 'forget the limits' that have produced unequal divisions in society, privileging the views of the dominant (Bourdieu, 1984: 471). Bourdieu suggests that doxa works at a deep level that transcends any conscious intent to manipulate one group by another through misrecognition: 'doxic narratives deliberately

obfuscate how the game (re)produces social inequality through the (re)production of the hierarchy of positions and capitals' (Thomson, 2005: 748). For example, a belief in the effectiveness of 'direct teaching' may be a form of doxa if children's performance within lessons and assessments is misrecognised as reliant on their 'ability' (Nolan, 2012: 209). In actuality, 'educational success... entails a range of cultural behaviours; privileged children have learned these as have their teachers. Unprivileged children have not' (Crozier *et al.*, 2008: 176). The language of 'ability' hides this, making success seem natural and innate rather than the product of learned behaviours. In this way, doxa tends to favour the dominant which, according to Bourdieu, sits comfortably with the broader purpose and function of education in society; that is the preservation of existing social class relations and the continued unequal distribution of cultural capital. It is possible to challenge dominant actors but the rules themselves are not questioned (Golsorkhi *et al.*, 2009).

This 'ability' example also demonstrates how 'symbolic violence' works. Symbolic violence is the act of imposing meanings 'as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force' (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1990: 4). Adherence to doxa creates the conditions for symbolic violence which works insidiously because it operates with the full, though usually misrecognised, complicity of the agents involved. In other words, if the children, teachers and parents believe 'ability' prevents a child from achieving performative success because it is "just the ways things are" then they legitimise the symbolic violence that is being exercised upon them. Accordingly 'ability' becomes a form of institutional capital to be employed in the struggle for domination.

Bourdieu offers different ways to explain how particular rules and practices come to dominate a field. Doxa means that agents do not recognise alternatives (Feldman, 2016). They can also be coerced into playing by particular rules by both symbolic and actual

violence. The latter may not be physical violence but indicates that there are punitive effects for non-compliance (Zipin and Brennan, 2003). These forms of coercion happen when agents are in a dominated position or operating in a field that is dominated by another through cross-field effects. ‘Illusio’ is another Bourdieusian concept that helps us understand ‘how dominant actors can regulate and control a field’ (Golsorkhi *et al.*, 2009: 783). This is when a player holds ‘a fundamental belief in the interest of the game and the value of the stakes which is inherent in that membership’ (Bourdieu, 2000: 11). It does not automatically follow that they agree with the rules of the game (Rowlands and Rawolle, 2013) but they are invested in the illusion of the game ‘by the mere fact of playing it’ (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 98). It is, however, distinct from ‘illusion’:

Habitus socialises people to feel their illusio simply as acting sensibly. As with the concept of practice, which Bourdieu argues is not largely intentional, utilitarian or a matter of choice but rather an instinctive sensibility, so also he views illusio as part of a deeply somatized feel for the game, although perhaps somewhat closer to awareness than our more unconscious immersion in the doxa of the field

(Colley, 2014: 670)

Colley argues that when we fail to invest our illusio in the dominant stakes, it enables both a clearer ‘perception of the game and its rules’ but also ‘offers some hope of collective resistance and struggle’ (Colley, 2014: 671). As I argue in this research, resistance can be precipitated by crisis related to cross-field effects. Indeed, Bourdieu saw crisis as a necessary condition for disrupting doxa and illusio, although not sufficient in itself for the production of a critical discourse, such discourse requires reflexive analysis (Bourdieu 1977).

## **2.7 Enactment**

The term ‘enactment’ can be used in policy analysis based on the view that policies are both written and unwritten but they are much more than this (Ball *et al.*, 2011a; Maguire *et al.*, 2011). Policies may be physical artefacts and documents, such as legislation or local

and national strategies, authored by actors who want to ‘create circumstances in which the range of options available in deciding what to do are narrowed or changed’ in some way (Ball, 1993: 12). But this is already a complex process because it generally involves multiple authors with multiple priorities, particularly in the case of national education policy which can become a panacea for all social ills. Meanings will then shift and change as policy texts are interpreted and translated into practice by different actors across various contexts. In addition, when you consider that not all texts are read first hand and are mediated by others, it further demonstrates the complexities of policy work (Ball, 1993). Positioning and power relationships must therefore be taken into account. Policy is not just about ‘what can be said and thought but also who can speak, when, where and with what authority’ (Ball, 1993: 14). The term ‘enactment’ accommodates all of these elements, demonstrating how policy work varies across context and involves creative decision-making as actors balance different options against one another according to local priorities (Ball, 2017).

Within this thesis, I argue that the ways that teachers put their beliefs about creativity into practice, or indeed any aspect of their work, can be conceptualised as ‘enactment’ for similar reasons to those discussed above. Teachers’ beliefs and practices relating to creativity will be bounded by the range of behaviours and practice that seem possible to them as part of their experience of being a teacher in that particular place at that particular time. Much will depend on how they define and position creativity in relation to their interpretations of their role and good practice. Their enactments of creativity will therefore be connected to their policy work as well as their personal values and their current and past experiences, including their own experiences of schooling, their training and teaching experience (Dwyer, 2015). The ‘pedagogical habitus’ concept encompasses all of these elements.

## 2.8 Chapter conclusion

This chapter has presented my interpretation of the key concepts from Bourdieu's social field theory that I employ in my analysis. My more specific rationale for the use of Bourdieusian theory is three-fold.

Firstly, the concepts of 'habitus' and 'field' provide ways to conceptualise definitions and enactments of creativity in relation to other elements of the 'pedagogical habitus' of each member of staff (Feldman, 2016). I explore the potential of the term 'creative dispositions' to explain any relatively durable sets of practices or ways of thinking about creativity that the teachers in this research may have incorporated into their pedagogical habitus. This includes their own creative dispositions, their aspirations for the children they teach and the ways that these translate into practice.

Secondly, Bourdieusian concepts can be used to explain how the rules and norms of a school field shape and are shaped by teachers' pedagogical habitus, as well as 'cross-field effects' flowing in from other fields (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004). In the next chapter, I discuss the ways that neoliberal education policy has transformed the way schools operate as fields over the past forty years, evidencing its strong structuring effect on practice.

Neoliberalism can be conceptualised as the doxa that makes breaches and connections between other fields possible or thinkable (Bourdieu, 1998a). This serves to illuminate the power relationships and positions within and across the interconnected system of fields in which a school operates and how this enables and constrains the staff in their enactment of creativity. This then links to the third strand of my rationale, the ways that a Bourdieusian framework allows consideration of the ways that individuals experience such cross-field effects, especially when they result in crisis as was the case in this research. As I shall discuss, dissonance between habitus and field may be incapacitating for some and generative for those who see opportunities for change or self-renewal (Mills, 2008). Lines

of division are also possible within the habitus which can be built upon ambivalence or instability (Bourdieu, 1999b; 2000).



## Chapter Three: The Neoliberal Policy Context

### 3.1 Chapter introduction

As discussed in Chapter One, policy analysis is not the central aim of this research but it is necessary to consider how policy shapes practice in both individual and collective ways because teachers engage regularly with policy as part of their everyday work lives (Ball *et al.*, 2011a; Naidu, 2011). National policy has become a powerful vehicle for educational reform in England since the late 1980s (Alexander, 2009) as part of a global neoliberal ‘policy epidemic’ (Levin, 1998). As I shall evidence in this chapter, this has had considerable impact on education and schooling, shaping practices, interactions and identities (Ball, 2017; Lynch, 2014). The research presented here informs my analysis in the later chapters of this thesis when I consider how policy and practice interact in the context of the staff definitions and enactments of creativity at the micro level of the Brightwater school field (Bourdieu, 1976; 1977).

Within a Bourdieusian framework, policy can be framed flexibly, both as a field in itself with specific rules and practices, but also as cross-field effects and the attempts of one field to exert influence on another (Hardy and Lingard, 2008). This chapter draws on these ideas to explain how neoliberal values have come to dominate various national and international policy domains, businesses and services, including education (section 1.2) restructuring organisations through its two primary modes of operation: managerialism and marketisation (Klenk and Pavolini, 2015). After briefly defining each of these strategies separately in the broader context of society in section 1.3, I examine the positions and dispositions they generate at the level of the individual in section 3.4. This is followed by discussion of the ways that neoliberalism has manifested in the English education context in section 1.5. Whilst acknowledging that schools do not operate in exactly the same ways, this section presents evidence that neoliberalism has changed the rules of the field of

schooling, reshaping conceptions of learning and teaching, and repositioning teachers, children and parents (Mahony and Hextall, 2001; Crozier, 2019). This chapter therefore establishes the broader political context and the system of fields considered most relevant to this research. The specifics of the education policies current during the data collection phase are presented in Chapter Four, in relation to creativity in policies, initiatives and curriculum, and Chapter Six, the recent changes to the curriculum, assessment and inspection framework

### **3.2 Neoliberalism and its dominance of the field of political power**

Neoliberalism began as a vision expressed by Austrian economist, Hayek in 1930s, a time of immense economic and socio-political upheaval across the world. It is a conceptual framework based upon a reworking of nineteenth century classical liberalism with two driving forces. The first is the principle of social liberty which entails the protection of individual rights, freedom from tyranny and private property (Mill, 2009). The second is the principle of economic liberalism which aims to institute ‘a self-regulating market, relying on the support of the trading classes, and using largely laissez-faire and free trade as its methods’ (Polanyi, 2001: 138). In classical liberalism, the state is conceptualised as non-interventionist in terms of product, labour and financial market (Polanyi-Levitt, 2012). However, by 1930s, this element had been largely discredited by the various crises of the era. Hayek used the term ‘neoliberalism’ to create distance, advocating liberal principles but with ‘a strong state authority that has the capacity to resist the will of the populace in implementing its precise recipe of pro-market policies’ (Seccareccia, 2012: 3). This formed the basis of the intellectual movement, although, in practice, the role of the state is contradictory, as are other elements of neoliberal theory, as I discuss below.

Theorising the conditions for change is difficult which is why it is important to think of neoliberalism as not only a theory or conceptual framework but also as a (successful) project where the goal is ‘the conquest of public opinion and power within the political realm’ (Thomasberger, (2012: 28). Harvey (2005: 19) argues that these political aims have dominated, justified by notions of neoliberalism as a ‘utopian project’. Although Polyani-Levitt (2012: 10) claims ‘the appeal of the idea of individual liberty and distrust of government has sustained political consent for policies that concentrate income, wealth, and power in a privileged elite.’ (Polyani-Levitt, 2012: 10). Indeed, neoliberal thinking could not have come to dominate the political field of power as it has, ‘without some form of agency for the fundamental neoliberal ideas that motivated the changes’ (Peters *et al.*, 2005: 1293), together with capital (resources that translate into power) and facilitative social, political and economic conditions that allow for flow of effects across fields (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004), as I now discuss.

As initiators and activists, Hayek and his patron Von Mises were both ‘remnants of old imperial Vienna’s privileged urban elites’ (Polyani-Levitt, 2012: 9) therefore they had considerable social, economic and cultural capital at their disposal. Their neoliberal vision was cultivated and proliferated over time through a network of different organisations involving ‘crony capitalism’ (Plehwe *et al.*, 2007). Harvey (2005) provides a history of the increasing influence of neoliberalism over the twentieth century, including the political experiments and the growing number of nation states that embraced it, not always willingly. As discussed in Chapter Two, the rules of one field may cross over into another and this situation may even generate new fields. Bourdieu (1988b) argued that crises can lead to synchronisation between fields and suspension of their autonomies. Lingard and Rawolle (2005) characterise this as a particularly kind of cross-field effect, an event effect (2.3.1, page 23). The Second World War provides an example of such a crisis event effect. Struggle was both physical and ideological, rupturing the functioning of multiple fields

simultaneously. The most notable being the field of political power. Until that point, austerity policies had been dominating in many countries, the war ‘punctuated the equilibrium’ (Baumgartner and Jones, 1993), facilitating a political move to the left in Britain and a commitment to social democracy and Keynesian economics (Giddens, 2013). This model operated within the field of political power on an international scale for some decades as institutions were set up with the intention of stabilising international relations, for example the United Nations (UN), the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), the World Trade Organisation (WTO), the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund (IMF). Facilitated by the establishment of these new institutional fields, neoliberalism came to dominate in an insidious way as a series of more incremental ‘systemic’ cross-field effects (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004), although it was also assisted by further ‘event’ effects. These took the form of fiscal crises in 1960s and 70s which led to increased unemployment and social expenditure, together with other socio-cultural movements and developments that were perceived as threats to the status quo (Hall, 2011). At the same time, the network of powerful advocates for neoliberalism were increasing their influence through the global organisations above and the establishment of others, for example media organisations, private corporations and think tanks, universities and other educational establishments, as well as key state institutions such as the Treasury and international institutions that regulate global trade and finance (Harvey, 2005; Plehwe *et al.*, 2007; Mirowski, 2013). The emergence of these networks, facilitated by rapid advances in technological capabilities and resources, expanded the field of economic power, colonising it with neoliberal principles. Together with the agency of these powerful agents, including political leaders such as Thatcher and Reagan in 1980s, these crisis events and systemic cross-field effects enabled the establishment of neoliberalism as a paradigm for governance within and across nation states. Thatcher and Reagan challenged the existing order and offered alternatives, playing a leading role in constructing a global economy drawing on existing neoliberal theory and associated

networks, indeed Thatcher sought advice from Hayek (Leys, 2003; Polyani-Levitt, 2012). Political debate became polarised between those with social democratic tendencies and those who wanted to unfetter the market and therefore give more power to private corporations (Harvey, 2005). Then the governments that followed maintained the neoliberal momentum through policy making and reform across a range of social, cultural and political contexts (Seymour, 2010).

Other countries were influenced by this due to the position of the UK and US on the global field of political power but also through processes of ‘globalisation, mediatisation, internationalisation, politicisation and economisation... [which point to]...the flow-on effects of social changes, often linked to struggles for social power and hegemony, which cascade into different fields’ (Rowlands and Rawolle, 2013: 260). Although Hall (2011: 728) contends that neoliberalism is currently in crisis in the aftermath of the banking crisis and the end of the debt-fuelled boom, it continues on because ‘in ambition, depth, degree of break with the past, variety of sites being colonized, impact on common sense and everyday behaviour, restructuring of the social architecture, neoliberalism does constitute a hegemonic project’. It has become ubiquitous, a doxa or a theory of being and doing that is so pervasive that it has become ‘common-sense’ to many (Giroux, 2015; Harvey, 2005).

### **3.3 Neoliberal strategies: managerialism and marketisation**

Neoliberalism operates at different levels and in different ways, both within and across organisations and services. Here it is important to note that, though it appears to rely on a belief in economic determinism and to narrow models of individual agency, it is not a purely deterministic structure (Giroux, 2015; Thomasberger, 2012; Gibson and Klocker, 2005). Ong (2007: 5) characterises it as ‘a migratory technology of governing that interacts with situated sets of elements and circumstances’; put simply, neoliberalism does

not look exactly the same everywhere. Projects, policies and practices are ‘often incoherent...unstable and sometimes chaotic’ (Shamir, 2008: 3) due to the contradictions inherent in neoliberalism, however, there are common trends. Both the trends and the contradictions become more evident when you consider its two key logics of practice: marketisation and managerialism. Both are sets of rules or practices that are applied within and across different fields as systemic cross-field effects (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004), exerting structural pressure and modifying relationships and the logic of practice within that field.

As discussed above, the notion of the self-regulating market is key to neoliberalism. Marketisation refers to the organisational strategies that import the rules of the market into an organisation, institution or service. An operational focus is adopted following the logic of supply and demand and commercial values become the norms (Lynch, 2006). The emphasis is on competing for economic survival in ‘the market place’ through a focus on diversity, innovation, and choice and the introduction of practices that focus on capital accumulation and profit making. Resources, which includes people, are reconceptualised as commodities to be ‘produced, distributed, exchanged, negotiated and ultimately consumed’ (Shamir, 2008: 7), while, service providers and users, such as teachers and parents or students, become vendors and consumers respectively. Indeed, the field of commerce and the ‘world of money’ is increasingly encroaching upon public services and the cultural domain (Bourdieu, 1996: 344) as marketisation strategies such as outsourcing are applied within the public sector. In some services, particularly education, the growth of for-profit services, consultancies and other businesses now provides lucrative opportunities on a global scale (Ball, 2012).

The second ‘organisational arm’ (Lynch, 2014: 11) of neoliberalism is managerialism, also called ‘new managerialism’ and other similar derivatives in the literature (Mahony and

Hextall, 2000; Gleeson and Husbands, 2001). It again operates on economic principles and structures of governance, this time based on a performance culture. Managerialist systems are frequently standardised, one size fits all, and again this requires the redefinition of the roles and practices within organisations. This is achieved through the implementation of measurable performance indicators, usually accompanied by surveillance mechanisms and performance management strategies as a means of discipline and control in order to embed and perpetuate the system. The focus is on measured and measurable outputs, accountability systems that are ‘transparent’ and centralised public regulation whilst simultaneously decentralising responsibilities at the local level (Mahony *et al.*, 2004; Lynch *et al.*, 2015). The system of national curriculum, assessment and inspection in England is a prime example of a managerialist system, as I discuss in more depth in section 3.5.

Neoliberal reforms, disguised as a purely technical activity, were initially ‘sold’ as a modernisation project (Lynch *et al.*, 2015) increasingly justified by austerity politics (Parguez, 2012). However, it is not only technical but also deeply political and ideological. Proponents ‘seek to establish organisational...and cultural changes through a regime of managerial discipline and control’ (Deem and Brehony, 2005: 220).

Managerialism and marketisation strategies work in combination to reconfigure organisations although clearly there are tensions between the emphasis on conformity and standardisation on the one hand and innovation and diversity on the other (Bourdieu, 1998a). These tensions are expressed in the experiences of the people involved, as I discuss in relation to the fields of education and schooling in the next section. Although these models have roots in the private sector, they have gained traction across both private and public sector institutions in the UK and beyond since the Thatcher government in the 1980s in line with the rise of neoliberal ideology in mainstream political thought. They now dominate (Triantafillou, 2017). As previously noted there are differences between the

models and services types but also similar trends, particularly in the growth of private for-profit company involvement, the shift to performance-based quality assurance and funding schemes and power shifts among different actors, discussed further below (Klenk and Pavolini, 2015). For the public sector, this marks a radical departure from previous models of governance and much has been written about their poor fit in education and early years institutions (Ball, 2017; Gleeson and Husbands, 2001; Lynch *et al.*, 2015).

In schools, the proponents of neoliberalism are not limited to governments and funding agencies but also the for-profit consultants and multi-national edu-businesses associated with the marketisation strategies. Investment in schools has become a commercial venture for many which is having profound implications as well as further embedding consumer culture (Ball, 2012). Thus, agents within the field of commerce appear to be acquiring the type and amount of capital to challenge or undermine the state and gain the monopolies of capital required to facilitate symbolic violence. This can be further explained, at least in part, by the development and dominance of dispositions relating specifically to neoliberalism in several fields simultaneously. Thomson refers to these as ‘neoliberal policy dispositions’ working across fields due to the strong homologies created by managerialism (Thomson, 2005: 753-4). Similarly, Lingard *et al.*, (2015) explore the notion of ‘policy habitus’ in relation to the dispositions of policymakers and technicians in the global education policy field. In my own research, I shall discuss sets of ‘performative dispositions’ as a subset of ‘neoliberal policy dispositions’, as I explain in this next section.

### **3.4 Neoliberalism and the individual**

As discussed in section 2.6, doxa relies on misrecognition and can therefore take firm hold rapidly in fields that contain entrenched power relationships, particularly institutional fields which already operate through well-established mechanisms and privileges which



are viewed as natural and ‘just the way things are’. This is one way to explain how neoliberalism starts to shape dispositions in both individual and collective ways. Having been embraced by the state, global economic organisations and social institutions including schools, neoliberalism has become hegemonic (Plehwe *et al.*, 2007). Neoliberal doxa therefore operates as themes and variations on themes across a number of fields meaning that there are multiple opportunities for neoliberalism to shape dispositions and the way that the self is practised (Lynch *et al.*, 2015). The values of the market and managerialism are shifted into both personal and professional activity. They operate in tandem but I separate them analytically in this section before considering their combined effects in the education context.

Neoliberal subject-as-consumer dispositions construct people as Hobbesian in character: rational, calculating and self-regulating (Gill, 2008). They are autonomous entrepreneurs, individually responsible for their own needs and ambitions (Brown, 2006). This ‘responsibilisation’ disposition which means that structural economic inequalities are misrecognised (Wacquant, 2010; Keddie, 2016). For example, poverty and unemployment are presented as faults of a person’s own making or dispositional flaws (Verdouw, 2017). The privatised, consumer-led citizenry of the neoliberal model is reared on a culture of insecurity that induces anxiety, competition, and indifference to those more vulnerable than themselves (Lynch, 2006). Lynch (2006: 4) argues that this position is highly problematic for the majority of citizens in any given society, particularly those who are not in a position to make ‘active consumer choices due to the poverty of their resources, time and/or capacities’, here she means anyone who is not a self-financing consumer, for example children, older people and unpaid carers. This forms part of her argument that neoliberalism inspires a ‘culture of carelessness’ where the competitive, ‘ruthless’ leaders seek:

The idealised worker [who] is one that is available 24/7 without ties or responsibilities that will hinder her or his productive capacities. She or he is unencumbered and on-call, even if not 'at work'. Much of the work, including answering emails, writing papers and books, is implicitly expected to be undertaken in 'free time', including at nights and weekends.

(Lynch, 2010: 57)

The expectation that professionals should become accountable primarily to the market can also be highly problematic for those working in public services, particularly where they are involved in people-related services such as education, health care, policing and social services, amongst others. This is not least in terms of the reduction of their professional autonomy but also their changing perception of 'self' and 'other' (particularly child and parent in education), through the reconfiguration of roles. It is equally problematic for the parents and children themselves who are positioned in contradictory ways by these dispositions. The simultaneous influence of managerialism tends to intensify these tensions (Ball, 2003; Lynch *et al.*, 2015).

The managerialist requirement for practice to be 'explicit and overtly based on evidence... [is another]...important element of the neoliberal doxa that falls within the orbit of 'performativity' (Harlow *et al.*, 2013: 543) and there is a significant body of research examining the ways that performativity shapes practice in schools (for example, Ball, 2017; Ball and Olmedo, 2013; Elliot, 2001; Jeffrey and Troman, 2014; Mahony and Hextall, 2001; Perryman, 2006). There are different layers to the meaning of 'performativity' as it is used in educational research. One layer operates at the level of the field and the other at the layer of individual. Field level performativity has been elaborated within organisations theory as well as economic and business disciplines. This is based on Lyotard's (1984) argument that performativity has come to dominate across various contexts as a criterion of legitimacy rather than just the economic domain from which it originated. He argues that this has happened because knowledge has been commercialised through technological developments and social transformations and this has become both

the principle force of production and an international commodity: ‘the question (overt or implied) now asked....is no longer, “Is it true?” but “What use is it?” [...] “Is it saleable?” [...] “Is it efficient?”’ (Lyotard, 1984: 51). This means that those who control resources can generate knowledge and therefore power. Performativity is legitimated by managerialist strategies. It indicates ‘that which is needed to orientate an organisation to its environment...[in order to create] functionally stable operations’ (Carter, 1998: 12) or ‘the best possible input/output equation’ (Lyotard, 1984: 46). Therefore, if education is redefined in terms of outputs that are measurable, pre-standardised outcomes that learners must achieve, as discussed above. Quality and success within this system is considered to be the best balance of inputs (teaching) to ensure these outputs, hence the ‘value-added’ analogy that has become common in discourses around school effectiveness and improvement. But one of the key aspects of performativity is that it also operates at the level of the individual. In order to produce and reproduce efficient operations according to the performativity input/output criterion, procedures need to be designed to ‘make individuals ‘want’ what the system needs in order to perform well’ (Lyotard, 1984: 62). These performative dispositions must become embedded. They can be shaped coercively by ‘punitive and regulatory social conventions’ (Butler, 1988: 527), especially when they are enforced through disciplinary technologies and non-compliance has serious repercussions. Below, Thomson (2005) describes how people adopt performative dispositions and a managerialist logic of practice through *illusio*. That is, they accept performativity as legitimate not because they agree with it but because they feel they have no choice, it becomes a matter of ‘acting sensibly’ (Colley, 2014: 670)

Contemporary public sector education officers have no option but to work for measurement, success and failure, ‘what works’ and targets, since their position depends on playing this policy game. While they might also harbour disquiet, or even attempt to interrupt the operations of the field, they could be described as having developed a neoliberal policy disposition. (Thomson, 2005: 754)

In these ways, the performativity becomes ‘naturalized, part of the taken-for granted, part of the language’ (Blackmore, 2004: 455) and starts to shape how the self is practised. People come to accept that ‘the professional’s account is no longer sufficient of itself and must be measured and inspected against external criteria or targets of performance... which purport to be ‘scientific’ and thus accurate and dispassionate, not open to question or doubt as models of ‘truth’ (Dent and Whitehead, 2002: 8). Lyotard describes this as the ‘terror’ of performativity because it shifts the focus from the pursuit of democratic aims and principled ideals to the pursuit of techniques that result in efficient, marketable outcomes. As such practices become more and more prevalent across different fields, they are more easily misrecognised as ‘just the way things are’ and therefore remain unchallenged.

### **3.5 The implications for English educational policy and practice**

In England, the politicisation of education began with the Education Reform Act (ERA) in 1988 which transferred control of curriculum and assessment matters to central government, thereby reducing the then dominant role of local authorities. This was a major neoliberal restructuring of the education field as part of a ‘three-pronged campaign’ (Grenfell, 2010: 90):

First, the undermining of operations by claiming their relative failure; second, by raising public concern for the safety and education of their children; third, by arguing for greater public involvement in the processes of education – the ‘stakeholder’ interest. These then became the rationale for new forms of capital.

(ibid)

This section examines these elements, providing examples relevant to this study and discussing the implications for school communities.

#### *3.5.1 Marketisation*

Market principles have been introduced into the system, seeking to increase the influence of stakeholders. Institutional functions and roles have been redefined as schools have

been reconceptualised as businesses with parents and children becoming consumers. This means that, in addition to wages and fees for resources and services, physical property and other assets, the neoliberal school must develop new forms of economic capital focusing on financial dimensions such as probity and value for money, often literally having to generate funds to make up for gaps between government funding and costs of resources and services (Ezzamel *et al.*, 2007). The focus on academisation by successive governments since 2000 has ostensibly given more autonomy and responsibility to individual schools or clusters of schools as Multi-Academy Trusts (MAT). However, this has in fact allowed for more incursions from other fields, again these come from the field of commerce, through corporate academy trusts who can brand and market their schools (Rayner *et al.*, 2018), but also charities, philanthropists and faith groups (Gunter and McGinity, 2014; Miller, 2011). Therefore, rather than providing autonomy, this has actually challenged the positions of educational professionals within and across schools, shifting control from government into the hands of private companies or other stakeholders, although this is still funded by the taxpayer. A system in which schools operate outside local authority control removes a layer of accountability for teachers, parents and children (Miller, 2011). It removes the right of redress, shifting the responsibility for problems and poor performance to the school or the parents; the school is responsible for the organisation and content of schooling and the parent is responsible because they chose that school (Miller, 2011). Indeed, parents are central to the operation of the education market as consumers who hold schools and teachers to account through school choice. However, policy positions parents and ‘parent partnership’ in contradictory ways (Cottle and Alexander, 2012). In reality parents have limited voice and agency (Wilkins, 2012) and are themselves susceptible to the neoliberal ‘responsibilisation’ doxa and the constructions of ‘good’ and ‘bad’ parenting which mask systemic inequalities (Crozier, 2019).

The roles of teachers and school leaders have been reconstructed to fit with the business model, emphasising hierarchical power dimensions (Lynch *et al.*, 2015). There has been a shift towards leader-follower models that set leaders apart as the ‘elite’ charged with promoting strategic change (Gunter, 2011). For example, headteachers may be viewed as charismatic, transformational or ‘super’ leaders (Lynch *et al.*, 2015), although there is consensus that heroic models are difficult to sustain (Coleman 2011; Gunter and Forrester 2010; Thomson and Sanders, 2010). As a distinct social group with higher status than their colleagues, leaders can become invested in maintaining relationships of power and domination (Deem and Brehony, 2005). They may also have different responses where strategies clash with their pedagogical leadership (Lynch, 2010; Sergiovanni, 1998), for example notions of ‘distributed leadership’ have become more popular recently (Harris *et al.*, 2006; Gronn, 2003). However, it can be difficult to achieve these and other democratic leadership models in a context where performance-based, individualised accountability regimes constrain organisational restructuring and network development (Currie and Lockett, 2011). Gunter (2010: 519) claims there is less and less resistance to the onslaught of neoliberal values as the production of knowledge about school leadership is increasingly colonised by ‘networks of policy entrepreneurs from government, together with preferred private consultants, practitioners and professors’ who determine ‘what is known and what is worth knowing about leadership as a form of pseudo-science made palatable through emotionally seductive language and images’. The same is true of teacher professional development in fact, including efforts to develop creative approaches. ‘Psycho-pedagogy’ has started to shape educational practice as part of calls for ‘evidenced-based practice’ from policy-makers (Burton, 2007; Pring and Thomas, 2004; Sherman, 2009), together with the influence of edu-businesses focusing on teacher professional development. There is seldom any critical examination of the underpinning research and all tend to oversimplify the concepts they draw upon, frequently individualising learning (Burton, 2007; Hammersley, 2004). This time, it is teachers and schools that are positioned as consumers

and ideas are disseminated through ‘edutainment’ which is where new pedagogies are ‘delivered’ by ‘charismatic, high profile education consultants’ (Burton, 2007: 7) or through the internet. Where ideas are taken up by the press, they can have powerful ‘mediatising’ (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004) effects on public debate which has the potential to influence educational practice. The media have also played a role in the repositioning of teaching and learning contributing to the culture of scepticism that is undermining professional ethics (Lynch *et al.*, 2015: 205). News reports perpetuate images of elite or ‘failing’ schools and teachers, invoking and perpetuating discourses of blame and individual responsibility (Wacquant, 2010). Issues are oversimplified in these stories to make them consumable and therefore profitable, whilst the voices of teachers, children and parents are rarely heard aside from general stories, for example focusing on examination results, student misbehaviour, poor parenting and individual awards or failures (Lynch *et al.*, 2015; Crozier, 2019). Indeed, both teachers and school leaders are also complicit because they are required to produce data to demonstrate that theirs is a ‘good’ or preferably ‘outstanding’ school, as I now discuss.

### *3.5.2 Managerialism*

Since the ERA (1988), a raft of managerialist curriculum and assessment initiatives have redefined teaching, learning and knowledge itself in terms of standards, targets and progress indicators, all focusing on observable, measurable facets of teaching and learning (Ball, 2003; Lynch *et al.*, 2012; Mahony *et al.*, 2004). Teachers are required to ‘deliver’ pre-determined curriculum content and their conformity is enforced through various performance management strategies. These include statutory teaching standards and codes of practice, which are linked to appraisals and performance-related pay, and all schools are required to administer standardised tests at the end of each ‘key stage’ of the curriculum and the results are published in league tables. These are overseen by various semi-autonomous government agencies or ‘quangos’ (Pifer, 1987) which have changed titles and

composition over the years but essentially serve the same functions. At the time of writing these include the Standards and Testing Agency (STA), responsible for statutory assessments; the Teaching Regulation Agency (TRA), responsible for the training of new and existing teachers; and the Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), responsible for the funding. However, Ofsted is the most well-known and the government's key mechanism for surveillance, enforcement and the regulation of this managerialist system and one of the ways that the state has set about regularly breaching the borders of the fields of education and schooling. Because of its prominent positioning in both the educational research on performative dispositions and my data, I discuss Ofsted in more depth. This also illustrates how capital is mobilised and performative dispositions become embedded.

Ofsted can be conceptualised in a number of ways, making it a good demonstration of the flexibility of the Bourdieusian analytical framework and the application of 'cross-field effects'. It can be considered an instrument of coercion and surveillance which legitimates state domination of the field of schooling through symbolic violence. All schools are inspected every few years, although some more frequently than others depending on their 'success', as interpreted by the inspectors who can reward settings or impose sanctions, even ultimately closing them down. Ofsted inspection outcomes are objectified as a type of performative capital. Good outcomes matter to schools because they give them more autonomy (or power) relative to those schools who are considered to be underperforming (in 'special measures'), therefore they are desirable. For some educational professionals and learners, this performative culture provides opportunities for success but for others it signifies conflict and struggle (Ball, 2003). Individuals deemed successful in Ofsted terms, particularly those who are showcased in reports, may use this capital to manoeuvre within their particular school field, for example some may introduce alternative curricular practices or change their positioning in some way. They may also manoeuvre around the field of schooling, moving between schools. Successful headteachers can be co-opted into



a position where they try to change the practice of those deemed less successful and embed a more performative approach as a strategy for school improvement (Coldron *et al.*, 2014). These staff are all complicit in the symbolic violence inherent in the process of inspection because they perceive it as a way of strengthening their field positioning. It therefore contributes to embodied performative dispositions and involves misrecognition of the ways that this further embeds the managerialist ethos, and indeed their own domination, into the system (Tomlinson *et al.*, 2013). Negative Ofsted outcomes will of course constrain agency at the level of school and individual, again making both more susceptible to this and other forms of domination.

Ofsted is also an enduring and powerful institutional field in its own right with its own players which can exert effects on both education policy and schools in multiple ways. Although it is reliant on the field of education and the fields of education policy for its power, as a non-ministerial department Ofsted retains an element of autonomy from the latter whilst remaining accountable to parliament. It is susceptible to incursions and power play from other fields, including the state and the field of media, but Ofsted inspectors (the Chief Inspector of Ofsted in particular) themselves hold powerful positions across several fields. As a field, Ofsted makes different kinds of incursions into the field of schooling to influence practices. There are relatively regular incremental cross-field effects intended to modify practice via publications, guidance and recommendations from reports focusing on evidence from groups of schools, and pronouncements of the Chief Inspector in various forums. Again, particular perspectives on teaching and learning and indeed on creativity, creative teaching and creative learning are legitimated through this guidance. At the level of the individual school, an Ofsted inspection is experienced as a cross-field event effect which ruptures the ordinary functioning of that school. A temporary field is created around the event in which the positions of the school players and the power relationships between them change, as do the types of capital that are most

valued, for the duration of the visit at least, if not longer depending on whether the inspection is viewed as a ‘success’ or ‘failure’. Indeed Perryman *et al.* (2018) and Courtney (2016) argue that the performances that schools put on during an Ofsted inspection in order to achieve a good outcome are actually becoming more enduring as success becomes more difficult to understand and achieve in the face of constant changes to the inspection regime. I have explored these ideas in relation to my data in Chapters Six and Nine.

### *3.5.3 Performative dispositions*

Managerialism, marketisation and performativity have a powerful structuring effect on perceptions of learning and teaching and on both the positions and dispositions of teachers, children and parents. Ball (1993: 16) writes about the cumulative effects of neoliberal education policy, both as ‘first order effects [which] are changes in practice or structure (...evident in particular sites and across the system as a whole); and second order effects [which] are the impact of these changes on patterns of social access and opportunity and social justice’. Examples of the more enduring changes in practice have included a narrowing effect on curriculum and teaching strategies themselves, concerns about ‘teaching to the test’ and so forth (Berliner, 2011; Leat, 2014). Then, as performativity demands to produce ‘appropriate’ data increasingly constrain teachers’ work, teaching can begin to revolve around the production of auditable performances (Bradbury and Roberts-Holmes, 2018; Perryman, 2009; Ozga, 2009). Ball (Ball, 2003: 216) refers to these as ‘displays of quality’ where school documentation is enhanced or fabricated for Ofsted inspections. This can mean that lessons are created and staged specifically for inspections and children who do not conform to the Ofsted model of a successful learner may temporarily disappear from lessons (Ball, 2003; Perryman, 2009). Then examples of the social justice effects, referenced above, relate to the pervasive doxic narratives that have

arisen around performative notions of effectiveness, efficiency, success and failure.

Within these narratives, structural relations and positions shift, some players dominate others. For example, parents tend to be positioned as either deficient or as consumers, active agents and drivers of excellence, oversimplifying highly complex relationships which are imbued with issues of class, race and culture (Bowe *et al.*, 2017, Crozier, 1998; Cottle and Alexander, 2014). The value of individuals within the institution, both staff and children, is reduced to performances that evidence productivity and, again, there are winners and losers (Ball, 2001; Elliot, 2001).

Children, especially younger children, are positioned passively as ‘investments for future economic productivity’ (Sims, 2017: 1) to be prepared via a pre-packaged curriculum for the next stage of schooling and ultimately the labour market. Despite politicians’ arguments to the contrary (Yorke, 2019), there is a significant amount of research evidence to suggest that performativity is internalised by children. In Chapter One, I discussed Reay and Wiliam’s (1999) article (‘I’ll be a nothing’) and the situation has only intensified since then as testing has become more embedded in the English education system (Stobart, 2008; Pratt, 2018). The negative effects of high stakes testing, particularly the Standardised Assessment Tests (SATs) and the associated constructions of ‘ability’ on children’s motivation, self-esteem and learner identity are well-documented (Bradbury, 2013; Keddie, 2016; Pratt, 2016). Accompanying ‘school readiness’ narratives permeate curriculum guidance (Bingham and Whitebread, 2018; Brogaard Clausen, 2015; Moss, 2012) and, one of the most worrying aspects relating to this is the increasingly downward direction of the pressure towards our youngest children as part of these school accountability measures. Hatch (2002) refers to this downward pressure as ‘accountability shovedown’ a phrase reflecting the symbolic violence involved. In England, this has meant an increase in test-based assessment in the Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) and Key Stage One (for example, DfE, 2012b; DfE, 2019) and the prioritisation of formal learning over play

(Ofsted, 2017) as structured ability groupings become more accepted practice in Reception classrooms where the children are aged 4 and 5 (Marks, 2016). Unfortunately, this is part of a global neoliberal trend in which national governments are embracing formal standardised assessment designed by international for-profit corporations (Moss and Urban, 2019; Nitecki and Wasmuth, 2017). The continual production of comparative educational performance indicators generated by the global education policy field over the past few decades has influenced education policy in various countries including England; these large scale testing programmes include the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) (IEA, 2019) and the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) (OECD, 2018). In addition, England is also one of only three countries to engage with the development of the International Early Learning and Child Wellbeing Study (OECD, 2019a). A number of other countries have expressed concern at this development and declined offers to take part in the IELYS because, despite its title, it has paid scant attention to wellbeing thus far (Moss *et al.*, 2016). Rather the intention seems to be to collect comparative, child-based data from 5 year olds, largely using tablets and questionnaires, in order to produce country rankings and league tables on a global scale (Urban, 2017). It has therefore been dubbed the ‘Baby Pisa’ (Pence, 2016) and our involvement demonstrates the current government’s continuing commitment to performativity.

One big concern is that younger children may be starting to experience the kind of stress and anxiety described in Reay and Wiliam’s research. A second concern is that, as children grow up and become more aware of their position as consumers this may give some a seductive sense of power, however it may well be at the expense of their understanding of democracy and citizenship and their engagement with rich learning experiences in which they can develop their critical thinking skills (Sims, 2017).

Therefore, while this research concerns itself with teacher perspectives and identities, it is

very important to maintain a focus on the implications of neoliberal policies for children and their learning, especially in the context of increasing concerns about children's wellbeing in the United Kingdom (Brogaard Clausen *et al.*, 2019; DoH/DfE, 2017; The Children's Society, 2018).

In addition to the concerns expressed about the children, there is a considerable body of literature focusing on the effects on teachers. Some relates to the intensification of teacher work load and the bureaucratisation of schools which can lead to stress and burnout (Mahony *et al.*, 2004; Troman and Woods, 2001; Worth and Van den Brande, 2019) but the effects on teachers' professional identities are also well-documented (Hextall *et al.*, 2007; Troman, 2008). Neoliberalism thrives on anxiety and 'manufactured uncertainty' (Giddens, 1994), generating public scepticism towards professional authority. The subsequent erosion of trust and the loss of control and autonomy can create dilemmas for teachers (Avis, 2003; Gewirtz *et al.*, 2009). They are susceptible to responsabilisation doxa, for example they may accept individual responsibility for the children's learning and assessment outcomes which then becomes a form of performative capital to be accumulated signifying the 'good' teacher contributing to their illusive, or commitment to the game (Pratt, 2018). Within these models, teacher professionalism becomes more instrumental and technicist and quasi-managerial roles are created (Garland and Garland, 2012; Hoyle and Wallace, 2014; Jeffrey and Troman, 2010). The situation creates tensions and dilemmas for teachers and education professionals due to tensions between these performative dispositions and their professional ethics or sense of vocation. This can lead to ontological insecurity, 'where an individual must deny what she/he really thinks and feels to such an extent that they no longer know what they think or feel' (Jones, 2007: 217). Indeed, there is evidence from 1990s onward of fragmentation, discontinuities, dilemmas and tensions all tracing back to the 'audit explosion' in education (Power, 2005; Borgnakke *et al.*, 2017). Perhaps of greater concern is that, if teachers' own experiences

of schooling are performative and their training and teaching experiences are performative, 'there may be an evolving transition in teacher professionalism towards the more instrumental and technical' (Day, 2002: 688). Goodson, writing in 2003, puts forward an argument about the loss of what he calls 'old professional vocationalism' in the face of the 'new professional' teacher. He explains this in terms of a community in which the 'elders' have become disenchanted after change is imposed upon them. This may lead them to detach themselves, either completely through early retirement or they may continue to participate but in a disengaged way, so that they are no longer passing on their professional knowledge through informal mentoring. This will in time lead to collective memory loss and a generation of teachers who are more accepting of the managerialist status quo (Goodson, 2003). Since he wrote this, performative dispositions appear to have become more embedded, or at least they have not shifted, and the latest teacher retention figures show that even early career teachers are leaving in increasing numbers with the risk of 'teacher supply challenges ahead' (Worth and Van Den Brande, 2019: 4).

### **3.6 Chapter conclusion**

The chapter has drawn on Bourdieusian concepts to account for the political dominance of neoliberalism. It has focused on its two primary logics of practice, managerialism and marketisation, and the ways these operate within in the global field of political power before considering the context of education policy and practice in England. Whilst acknowledging that schools do not operate in exactly the same ways, this chapter has considered the ways that neoliberalism has restructured the rules operating within and across schools to the point where conceptions of learning and teaching have been reshaped and teachers, children and parents repositioned. Doxa derived from neoliberal ideology is commonly misrecognised as 'just the way things are' or 'the way things should be' and teachers and children have incorporated sets of performative dispositions into their

pedagogical or learner habitus as well as other sets of dispositions derived from neoliberal values.

Bearing the discussions above in mind, neoliberalism has wide-ranging implications for educational institutions and ultimately society, especially if one takes the perspective that schooling is a mechanism to enable the acquisition and reproduction of dominant social values (Webb *et al.*, 2002). While I do not argue that schools are merely passive instruments of reproduction, I do argue that neoliberalism presents specific threats. In a neoliberal education system, educational aims move away from ideals of democracy and emancipation and from the furthering of different types of knowledge and cultural understanding towards the production of technically capable citizens (Brogaard Clausen, 2015). There are spaces for variation and transformation within a neoliberal policy context but these can be hard won because dominant social practices are deeply embedded within institutions (Bourdieu, 1988a). Currently, these dominant practices include a focus on competition and individualised models of accountability based on market-based notions of success and failure and performative criteria. This has impacted on teachers' autonomy and professionalism, increasing their vulnerability, and it has implications for the position of creativity in education. These implications are discussed in next chapter, presenting existing research in this regard, and then in the context of the findings of this study in the later chapters.

## **Chapter Four: A Review of the Creativity Literature**

### **4.1 Chapter introduction**

This chapter reviews the literature that focuses on creativity in education policy and practice and the educational research that focuses on creativity, particularly the comparatively recent research that has focused on ‘creative teaching’ and ‘creative learning’ in schools. Here, it is important to acknowledge that there is a well-documented interest in creativity itself which has influenced educational research, policy and practice. Although the term ‘creativity’ was not used widely until the nineteenth century, religious and philosophical theories about the source of new ideas and inspiration for innovative acts and man-made products abounded for thousands of years and can be traced back to the ancient world (Ryhammar and Brolin, 1999). This chapter is not intended to address the richness of this enquiry (see Mason, 2003; Pope, 2005) but I note that, although theorisations of creativity have changed over time, a range of associated themes have endured, particularly its links with originality, inspiration, innovation and autonomy. These themes have been debated and their value to society has been contested, indeed ‘value’ or usefulness has remained a closely related theme in itself. Much of the contemporary debate focuses on the perceived benefits of creativity (Cropley and Cropley, 2013). It has been associated with imagination and intelligence; identity and wellbeing, both individual and collective; aesthetic activity and social, scientific, technological and economic advances. However, it seems that creativity was and still can be simultaneously desired and rejected. This was exemplified in Greek and Roman myths where the portrayal of characters associated with creative acts was frequently ambivalent. They were represented as productive ‘smiths’ but also as cunning tricksters who opposed the gods and often suffered heinous punishment (Mason, 2003: 13). The myth of Prometheus is one of the most famous examples, the man who stole fire from the gods to benefit humankind and enable countless inventions but who was condemned to eternal suffering for his defiance.



These tensions speak to some of the enduring debates working across philosophical and sociological disciplines: the tension between determinism and free will, structure and agency, cultural reproduction and transformation (see 2.2). They are also reflected in contemporary neoliberal reconceptualisations of society with its emphasis on conformity and standardisation on the one hand and market innovation on the other (Bourdieu, 1998a).

As a single concept, creativity is difficult to define, debates have generated a considerable body of research and literature across academic disciplines and with wide-ranging applications. These have generated and attempted to answer several important questions (adapted from Becker, 1995): What is creativity? Is it a property of people, products, processes or places? Who should benefit from creativity? Can it be increased through conscious effort i.e. education? Is it social or personal? Is it common or rare? Is it qualitative or quantitative? Is it general or specific? The answers to these questions vary and sometimes conflict; they depend on perspective and context and this chapter is not an attempt to answer them. However, it does provide a brief overview of the creativity research, 4.2, which focuses on key areas that have influenced educational research, policy and practice. Section 4.3 then examines associations between creativity and education policy and practice on a global scale, before focusing in on the English context in section 4.4. Here I examine historical associations between creativity and education policy and practice, defining and discussing ‘creative teaching’ and ‘creative learning’, considering how research into these areas informed a more recent series of political initiatives in what Craft *et al.* (2014) have dubbed the ‘creative decade’ as this was the context in which my research aims were developed. Together with the international interest in creativity, the ‘creative decade’ led to a new wave of research focusing on the factors that enable and constrain creativity in schools and this is presented in section 4.5. Section 4.6 concludes the chapter by highlighting the relevance of the issues discussed for this study.

## 4.2 Overview of the creativity research

Rhodes' (1961) influential four P's model provides a useful way to negotiate through much of the research. The P's represent 'person', 'process', 'press' (or place) and 'product' but there is a blurring of the distinction between because of the lasting legacy of cognitive research and the interplay between different psychological traditions.

The word creativity is a noun naming the phenomenon in which a person communicates a new concept (which is the product). Mental activity (or mental process) is implicit in the definition, and of course no one could conceive of a person living or operating in a vacuum, so the term press [place] is also implicit.

(Rhodes, 1961: 305)

Rhodes (1961: 307) describes the person-based research as being about 'the person as a human being...[ focusing on] personality, intellect, temperament, traits, habits, attitudes, self-concept, value systems, defence mechanisms and behaviour'. It has various strands. One is the association between creativity and intelligence, for example the psychometric test-based research of Guilford (1967) and Torrance (1966) has been highly influential. More recently, the Torrance tests in particular have been widely criticised for their focus on intelligence-related factors rather than creativity and for being affected too easily by external circumstances (Craft, 2001), but the relationship between creativity and intelligence is still under investigation (Sternberg and Kaufman, 2011). Some research dissociates the two completely whilst they remain connected in different ways in many studies including theories of multiple intelligences (Gardner, 1983) and emotional intelligence (Goleman, 1996) which posit broad, multi-faceted models of intelligence and that individuals draw upon as appropriate to context in order to learn, develop and increase their creative capacities. There is a separate body of literature focusing on personality, attitudes and behaviours, trying to identify or develop creative characteristics and dispositions such as being inquisitive and curious, openness to change or taking risks and having the desire to learn new things (Plucker and Makel, 2010). Another 'person' strand

is the more value-based humanist research, examining links between creativity and psychological wellbeing, focusing on self-actualisation and emotional fulfilment, where creative endeavours contribute to a sense of competence, autonomy and belonging (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014; Winicott, 1971; Rogers, 1954).

Where Rhodes (1961: 308) discusses ‘process’ he refers to research exploring ‘motivation, perception, learning, thinking and communicating’. This can involve both cognitive and social processes so there is some crossover with ‘person’ and ‘place’ approaches. The cognitive research has explored various domain-transcending thought processes such as problem-solving and problem-posing, divergent, convergent (or critical) and imaginative thinking (Ryhammar and Brodin, 1999). Neuroscientific research has examined the operation of the brain when people are engaged in activities defined as creative (Heilman *et al.*, 2003: 369), though of course such definitions vary. Another key focus is on the importance of play in relation to creativity as part of the culture of childhood (Marsh, 2010), this has largely been examined from a socio-cultural Vygotskian perspective (Connery *et al.*, 2010; Vygotsky, 2004). There is work that considers the importance of ‘playfulness’ in adults as well as children and its role in affective, cognitive, and social functioning (Lieberman, 1977). Although, as with creativity, play itself is difficult to define and can be explored from various disciplinary perspectives (Saracho and Spodek, 1998).

The ‘products’ that embody creativity vary, ranging from verbal and non-verbal expressions of ideas to more concrete cultural artefacts; ‘an idea embodied in a tangible form...artefacts of thoughts’ (Rhodes, 1961: 309). Investigations therefore proceed backwards ‘from product to person and thence to process and to press’ (*ibid*) in order to trace the source of inspiration and creative processes followed. One of the hotly debated issues around creativity is whether it is domain-specific or domain-general, which remains

unresolved; questions about the type of creative product that people might create tends to be at the heart of these debates. For example, Amabile's (1982) 'consensual agreement technique' is not linked to any specific theory of creativity, definitions emerged from the process of evaluation of creative artefacts from various domains for example stories, poems, mathematical puzzles and drawings. Therefore, through a focus on product, her research sought to understand concepts of value and social acceptance or consensus as well as the role of social and environmental influences and domains, as discussed further below. Other research has explored links between creativity and dominant societal values associated with cultural identity and expression, through a focus on cultural activities and practices or cultural artefacts at both individual and collective levels (Lubart, 1999; Rudowicz, 2003).

Research focusing on 'place' (or 'press' in Rhodes' work) can again involve both domain-specific or domain-general definitions and there is plenty of applied research focusing on 'climates' for creativity, particularly in the workplace or educational institutions (Amabile *et al.*, 1996; Isaksen *et al.*, 2001). These combine elements from person, process and product approaches as 'confluence approaches' focusing on the 'multiple components [that] must converge in order for creativity to occur' (Sternberg *et al.*, 2010: 95). Key research has identified environmental factors that stimulate creativity, exploring what makes individuals feel encouraged and supported to take the initiative and put new ideas forward and the circumstances in which uncertainty is tolerated and risk-taking is encouraged (Amabile, 1983). Social interaction, collaboration and interaction have been key factors in such research. Csikszentmihalyi's (2014) systems perspective focuses on the convergence of 'domain' (system of cultural rules), the 'field' (groups or institutions that decides the value of the creativity produced by individuals) and the individual. In such models, creativity has included cognitive and affective factors as well as the physical, social and symbolic context.

Across the four P categories, there is consensus around the focus on originality and value works although the notion of social acceptance has remained problematic. Indeed, Rhodes' response to his own definition of creativity, above, is that it 'begs the questions as to how new the concept must be and to whom it must be new' (Rhodes, 1961: 305). This relates to the way that creative accomplishments are positioned. Across the literature, researchers have tended to view creativity or creative endeavours in one of two ways (Banaji and Burn, 2010; Craft, 2001). The first focuses on 'little c' creativity or 'democratic' creativity which involves domain-general processes inherent in everyday human behaviours and interactions, for example problem solving and creative expression. The second focuses on the extraordinary accomplishments of eminent individuals, called 'Big C' or 'high' creativity. Here creativity is usually domain-specific, relies on competence and is frequently associated with intelligence. Thus although creativity can be claimed as a property of a small elite group of creative geniuses who change our understanding of the world, it can equally be viewed as something commonplace and accessible to all, 'critical, dialogic, socially engaged and always alive to the dynamics of social power' (Banaji and Burn, 2010: 24). Kaufman and Beghetto (2009)'s 'four C' model of creativity is another potentially a useful way to look at this, particularly in a school or classroom context. They uphold the 'Big C' - 'little c' distinction but add 'mini c' ('transformative learning' involving 'novel and personally meaningful interpretations of experiences, actions, and insights'), and 'Pro C' (exhibited by people who are professionally or vocationally creative though not necessarily eminent) (Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009: 3). This model acknowledges and celebrates the value of the learning that may or may not be new to others, particularly relevant to the relationship between children and teachers, as well as the efforts a person takes to craft and develop their skills which often require them to explore new directions and actively experiment in order to gain a deeper level of understanding and experience in a particular area, teaching would be one example.

### 4.3 Creativity in education policy and practice

There has been debate about the associations between creativity and education since the nineteenth century (Becker, 1995). It is positioned variously within different education approaches according to the models of learning and development and theoretical constructions of children and childhood that underpin them (Thomson and Sefton-Green, 2011). In addition, creativity may be associated with particular strands or subjects in association with product- or performance-based conceptions of creativity, notably the arts (Thomson and Sefton-Green, 2010). I consider this in the context of the English education system in the next section. In a nationalised system like the English system these theoretical frames may be represented within policy and curriculum guidance explicitly or tacitly but individual teachers also draw on a variety of theories depending on their values, training and experiences. Such models and theories are linked to the perceived purposes of education and therefore socio-historical developments within a particular society. This is of course very complex and dynamic and different approaches are likely to exist within the same curriculum, as is the case in England.

The positioning of creativity within education systems is also a response to local, national and increasingly global policy imperatives (Harris, 2016; Wyse and Ferrari, 2015). The understandings of creativity within policy derives from some of the creativity research and the enduring debates discussed in 4.1 and 4.2, but two of the key drivers within the global field of political power currently appear to be cultural and economic (Andiliou and Murphy, 2010; Mullet *et al.*, 2016). Cultural policies draw on humanist perspectives on creativity, for example its benefits to individuals and society and the importance of cultural development, while the economic policies focus on the creative contributions that individuals and societies make to the 'knowledge based economy'. Applications vary

within these broad frames. For example, creativity has been positioned variously as a catalyst for innovation, collaboration and cross-cultural understanding (UNESCO, 2006), an essential tool for addressing global challenges such as climate change and sustainable growth (OECD, 2001), and as important for individual and collective wellbeing in relation to active engagement in learning and cultural experiences (European Parliament and Council, 2008; UNESCO, 2006). However, in recent decades, the economically framed versions of creativity have taken on a universal dimension which act on national policies as systemic cross-field effects. This is due to the focus on progress and efficiency that is central to free market economics and which has led to accelerated economic growth across the world over the past two centuries, with the ‘first world’ (capitalist) cultures at the top of the food chain (Harrison and Huntington, 2000). Continuous innovation has become not just ‘inescapably necessary...but also desirable’ (Mason, 2003: 5) driven by capitalism and the globalized marketplace (Craft, 2006). These are the notions at the heart of neoliberal thinking that currently dominates political thought. However, when creativity is conflated with innovation in this way, it shifts the balance to a focus on originality without an equal focus on value (Craft, 2006) so that the drive to innovate or to make ‘progress’ can become an end in itself as part of a ‘throw-away society’ (Craft, 2003b: 123). Competition is then prioritised over collaboration and ‘high value is placed on individuality...outside of social and other norms’ (Craft, 2006: 340). The situation has also led to market-based notions of ‘creative capital’ (McWilliam and Dawson, 2008: 633) which relates to an objectified ‘creative workforce’ or ‘an arsenal of creative thinkers whose ideas can be turned into valuable products and services’ sought by governments and businesses (Florida and Goodnight, 2005: 124). This is again relevant to the educational context because the more democratic and inclusive conceptions of creativity have become increasingly influenced by these neoliberalised versions (Gibson and Klocker, 2005), as well as the strong performative pull towards standardisation and instrumentalism at the global level derived from the international survey methods of global institutions such as the OECD, the World

Bank and influential multi-national edu-businesses such as Pearson. These surveys are considered ways to evidence productivity, efficiency and the development of the future workforce (Ball, 2012; Moss and Urban, 2019) and some directly influence national education policies and practices as event cross-field effects. A relevant example is an international assessment tool designed to monitor the ‘acquisition’ of students’ creativity and critical thinking skills in primary, secondary and higher education in order to ‘to help them succeed in modern, globalised economies based on knowledge and innovation’ (OECD, 2019b). At the time of writing, this is under development but may be included in the PISA assessments from 2021. To demonstrate its potential reach, over half a million 15-year-olds from 80 countries took the PISA test in 2018 (OECD, 2018).

The positioning of creativity within education systems and policies over the world has been influenced by different facets of the more recent creativity research, discussed in 4.2, but this has been complicated by the ‘preponderance of myths and stereotypes about creativity’ (Plucker *et al.*, 2004: 83). For example, diluted, commercialised versions of some of the psychological creativity research have been marketed and disseminated uncritically by edu-businesses part of the ‘psycho-pedagogy’ trend (MacLaren, 2012), discussed in 3.5.1 (page 47), adding a further layer to the neoliberalisation of creativity, discussed above. Studies focusing on brain functioning, emotional intelligence, multiple intelligences and learning styles have proved particularly popular (Burton, 2007). I now focus specifically on the development of creativity in the English education context.

#### **4.4 The English Context**

Creativity has long been a part of education policy and practice in England, albeit in tension with other elements. The field of schooling in England has been influenced by different educational traditions (or field rules) which have emerged from the socio-



historical context. Alexander's (1995: 16) overview of dominant ideologies in education is very useful for illustrating this (see Appendix 18 for an overview). This was originally published in 1988 as the national curriculum came into existence and Alexander argues that all these ideologies were present to 'varying and shifting' degrees in curriculum and pedagogy at the time. I argue that these still apply, although the performative models and marketisation strategies discussed in 3.5 have added new dimensions (I have represented these in relation to themes from the creativity literature in Appendix 19). Neither Appendix is intended as an exhaustive list and these are not exclusive to England but I discuss elements in this section in order to give a sense of the position of creativity in relation to the current English education context, focusing on the national curriculum in place at the time the data for this study were collected (DFEE and QCA, 1999; DfE, 2012a; 2013). Alexander's (1995: 16) 'behavioural' or 'mechanistic' approaches are evident in the language of the national curriculum, which is based on planned objectives and measurable outcomes. There is also evidence of 'developmental' conceptions of learning as linear and developed in stages over time (ibid). Within these approaches, children tend to be positioned quite passively and the assumption is that a version of creativity can be developed through direct teaching and stimulus reinforcement (rewards and deterrents), although it may not be a key priority (Craft, 2001). The performative dispositions discussed in 3.5.3 fit very neatly with these linked to Alexander's (ibid) 'social imperatives' model, in which education is design to meet the economic, technological and labour needs of society, although there are tensions between performativity and the associated neoliberal market-based focus on innovation, as has been discussed. To add to an already complex picture, progressive traditions also have deep roots in English education, particularly in relation to early years pedagogy. The Hadow Report (GBBECC, 1933) focused on provisions for the under 7s linking creativity to 'a particular, child-centred, discovery-based pedagogical approach' (Craft, 2003a: 144). The influential Plowden Report (1967) then reinforced this message, again advocating progressive values,

this time throughout a child's primary education. It is important to note here that progressivism tends to be more of an umbrella term for various ideas and approaches associated with anti-institutional movements (Sherman, 2009). It encompasses experiential, child-centred approaches, drawing on the work of educational pioneers such as Rousseau (1993), Dewey (1998) and Froebel (2005), although there are various differences between them (Eaude, 2011). Progressive traditions are also consistent with social constructivist positions (Sherman, 2009), which position the teacher as a facilitator and learning as co-constructed (Bruner, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978). All these models tend to position creativity as an inherent part of the learning and teaching process with the children taking an active role. They emphasise different aspects of creativity but it is viewed as 'a uniquely human trait that reflects our ability to adapt to changing circumstances and...to combine and improve upon ideas to which we are exposed' (Hondzel and Hansen, 2015: 177). These versions of creativity became less of a priority in the national curriculum developments from the end of the 1970s because politicians had come to view progressive principles as conceptually and practically problematic (Cox and Dyson, 1971; Thomson and Sefton-Green, 2011). However, despite their lack of coherence, these values and sense of moral purpose or vocation have retained a hold on contemporary teacher imaginations (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009), although they were and still are constrained by the 'teacher-proof' curriculum packages that followed the introduction of the national curriculum which prescribe both the content and 'pace' of learning (Sherman, 2009: 55).

The late 1990s saw a resurgence of political interest in creativity. This was in part due to influential psychological studies that focused on the benefits of creativity in relation to wellbeing and motivation and the key role of systems and organisational climate (see 4.2, page 61) as well as research examining the role of the teacher in fostering and supporting children's creativity (Craft, 1997; Fryer and Collings 1991; Woods, 1995). At this time, the focus on creativity was perceived to redress the balance in a sense after criticism of the

prescriptive and overloaded nature of the national curriculum (Jeffrey, 2003). My doctoral study began towards the end of the ‘creative decade’ (Craft *et al.*, 2014) that ensued. The report from the National Advisory Committee on Creative and Cultural Education (NACCCE, 1999) proved to be a landmark resulting in a number of government initiatives promoting ‘creativity’ across early years and school curriculum (for example DCMS, 2001; Ofsted, 2010; QCA, 2004). These were largely based on the NACCCE (1999: 30) definition of creativity as ‘imaginative activity fashioned so as to produce outcomes that are both original and of value’. NACCCE recommended the development of guidance on ‘creative teaching’ and ‘creative learning’ drawing on empirical research evidence, which I now discuss in the context of defining creative learning and creative teaching, before returning to consider NACCCE, its legacy and the ways that the direction of government policy changed over the course of this study.

#### *4.4.1 Creative teaching*

In their advice to English policy-makers, NACCCE (1999) drew on empirical research evidence to define ‘creative teaching’, discussing the twin aims of ‘teaching creatively’ and ‘teaching for creativity’ (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004). ‘Teaching creatively’ refers to imaginative or innovative approaches to teaching and planning lessons and assessments, although teaching can and perhaps should be considered a creative endeavour in itself (Woods, 1996). The ‘teaching for creativity’ concept brings the focus to the learners and the different ways that teachers try to foster their creativity (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2008). In a ‘teaching creatively’ approach, a teacher can plan a lesson with a specific outcome in mind. A ‘teaching for creativity’ approach involves more flexibility, on the part of both teacher and learner. A teacher can plan a ‘teaching for creativity’ approach to at least some extent but the aim is to facilitate creative learning by providing opportunities for learners to have choice and take control, building in time for social interaction and

experimentation or looking at things from different perspectives (Ranjan and Gabora, 2013). Therefore, the teacher needs to embrace the possibility of outcomes that she may not have predicted. For example, the teacher can set up activities, perhaps constructing 'critical events (Woods, 1993: 359) designed to 'builds on pupils' own needs and relevancies, and their existing cognitive and affective structures' in a holistic way, focusing on novelty and authenticity (Jeffrey, 2006). Or they may draw on real life events relevant to the classroom community, perhaps personal stories, based on the principle that life and learning becomes meaningful when one sees oneself as an actor within the context of a story (Friedman, 2013). 'Teaching for creativity' may also be completely unplanned, a 'teachable moment' (Woods and Jeffery, 1996) which Beghetto (2013: 134) also describes as a 'creative micromoment' or the 'meeting of planned versus lived curriculum'. For example, a learner may share an unexpected idea which will potentially disrupt the teacher's planned intentions, she then has only a moment to decide whether to explore any alternative courses of action the idea represents, working with the learner and perhaps adjusting their idea, if necessary, or even collaboratively exploring its relevance (appropriateness) for the context. Teachers may also engage with other types of 'storying', again improvised or partially planned, possibly involving pretend play or fantasy, when teachers and children 'make up' stories or parts of stories together. This kind of 'playful pedagogy' (Goouch, 2008) occurs more often when teachers are working with younger children but, whatever the age of the learner, the more intuitive 'teaching for creativity' approaches frequently involve playfulness or humour, which can break down learning and communication barriers or relieve stress whilst simultaneously fostering creative and critical thinking (Ranjan and Gabora, 2013). Another key approach is Craft's (2002: 111) conception of 'possibility thinking' where the teacher must stand back and let the children explore possibilities imaginatively, reflecting and engaging with them at appropriate moments, using 'formulated questions at one end of the spectrum...to a general sensitivity at the other'. Therefore, in a 'teaching for creativity' approach, the teacher's beliefs about

creativity are important because it requires both a positive attitude towards a more open-ended type of creativity and a willingness to take a risk (Cremin, 2009), particularly in the rule-bound context of a school which emphasises conformity. Ranjan and Gabora (2013: 120) call this a 'potentiality-driven perspective'. Much has been written about the ways that the performative policy context restricts such an environment with a specific body of literature that focuses on the role of the teacher as a mediator who enables creativity in a performative policy context (Burnard and White, 2008; Jeffrey and Troman, 2013). It is noted that 'teaching creatively' may be more achievable in the context of entrenched performativity because it can be used as a vehicle to deliver the established National Curriculum objectives. This means the 'creative learning' may be under-emphasised although 'teaching creatively' can sometimes be a form of resistance, a way to counter instrumental approaches and re-appropriate curriculum (Jeffrey, 2003).

There has been a useful debate around the distinction between 'teaching creatively' and 'teaching for creativity' although Jeffrey and Craft (2004) warn against institutionalising this as a dichotomy. Instead they advocate a focus on creative teaching in relation to creative learning perhaps similar to Simonton's (2013: 189) notion of 'teaching creatively for creativity'.

#### *4.4.2 Creative learning*

The discussion above refers to 'teaching for creativity' as opposed to 'teaching for creative learning'. This is perhaps because the definition of 'creative learning' has proved problematic. As a relatively new term, understandings of 'creative learning' are derived from the work of NACCCE (Craft, 2008) but it was under-conceptualised there, other than advocating a focus on 'imaginative activity' (NACCCE, 1999: 30) and 'a balance between learning knowledge and skills and having the freedom to innovate and experiment'

(NACCCE, 1999: 14). Subsequent understandings have emerged from an amalgamation of discourses which position creative learning variously positioned as a set of skills, attitudes, thought processes, physical or social processes, and as individual or collaborative (Craft *et al.*, 2001; Sefton-Green *et al.*, 2011). Focusing on its constituent terms brings clarity in some respects but not others. It is distinct from creativity itself because it focuses specifically on processes of learning (Craft, 2008; Jeffrey, 2006), but, as noted above, creativity is inherent in some theories of learning. However, Thomson *et al.*, (2014) argue that ‘creative learning’ has been distinguished from ‘learning’ more generally through its focus on flexibility, change, personal development and reflexivity, as well as the novelty dimension, meaning the capacity to have ideas and take imaginative approaches to problem solving, generating possibilities and taking risks.

A similarly amorphous mass of ideas about ‘creative learning’ were promoted in the guidance that followed NACCCE (1999). For example, QCA (2004) *Creativity: find it promote it!* focused on the development of creative learning attributes such as risk taking, independent judgement, commitment, resilience, intrinsic motivation and curiosity and suggested that the creative learning process should involve:

- asking questions,
- making connections,
- imagining what might be,
- exploring options,
- reflecting critically

This would perhaps be fine in itself but, as NACCCE (1999) identified the need for the outcomes of creative learning and teaching to be judged as original and of value, it raises questions about how to evaluate this kind of learning, how new and valuable the products or processes need to be and to whom, as discussed in 4.2. Attempts to assess creativity itself have a rich history (Plucker and Makel, 2010), there has been some focus on

assessing creativity in schools but there are no widely used tools or techniques (Cochrane and Cockett, 2007; Lucas *et al.*, 2013). The OECD (2019b) creativity assessment intervention may or may not change this. Craft *et al.*, (2006) argue that judgements could be made appropriately by teachers, other adults and the children themselves although little work thus far has focused on how progression in creative learning might be conceptualised, that is developmental change over time in terms of what children know, understand and can do. For example, the QCA (2004) guidance, cited above, tends to focus on process without context therefore purposes get lost and there is no consideration of how these concepts may change and develop as a child gets older (Craft *et al.*, 2007). The assessment of creative learning is necessarily a long term, contextualised process, complicated by the often non-linear connection between input and output. These mean that evaluations need to reflect on an accumulation of experience and knowledge before discernible patterns emerge, requiring a focus on both the process and outcome of creative learning (Cochrane and Cockett, 2007). Progression will depend on aspects such as depth, complexity, levels of autonomy and quality (in terms of the application of skill and knowledge). These are arguably the processes that should be followed when assessing other types of learning, perhaps following formative assessment (sometimes called ‘Assessment for Learning’) models. However, like creative learning and creative teaching themselves, formative assessment has been subordinated by current performative models of curriculum and assessment, formulaic models and the constant promise of ‘quick fix’ solutions. This contributes to the undervaluing of creative learning in schools (Lucas *et al.*, 2013)

Creative learning can be examined in terms of the effects of creative teaching on learners that is the ways that students experience, adapt, appropriate or reject ‘creative teaching’ and the kinds of creative agency that can be promoted and enabled in schools. But, as Jeffrey and Woods (2009) argue, it is important to emphasise the creativity the learners themselves bring to the context, although this will depend on the ways that creative

learning is conceptualised in that environment. As argued in the section above, ‘creative learning’ and ‘creative learning’ are connected. Woods and Jeffrey (1996) focus on four key characteristics that apply to both teachers and learners in this respect: relevance, control, ownership and innovation. Certainly, Jeffrey (2006) found that both ‘creative teaching’ and ‘creative learning’ were of immense relevance in developing, not just the autonomy of children and teachers, but a sense of social identity and belonging, because working collaboratively within a meaningful context brings the focus to relationships within a learning community. In this way, both creative teaching and creative learning are holistic processes including cognitive, affective and practical elements, (Banaji and Burn, 2010). This ‘creative teaching/creative learning’ approach, more recently conceived as ‘creative pedagogies’ (Craft *et al.* 2014; Sefton-Green *et al.*, 2011), is multi-layered, encompassing attitudes and skills, teachers relationships with children, their awareness of their needs and their approach to teaching and assessment.

#### *4.4.3 Creativity initiatives and national curriculum*

The NACCCE (1999) recommendations were welcomed by education researchers but not without critique. Although the report drew on recent creativity research and emphasised democratised ‘little c’ conceptions of creativity (Craft, 2001), these tended to be located in creative and expressive arts (Craft, 2003b) or conflated with culture (Roberts, 2006; Craft and Jeffrey, 2008). NACCCE (1999) recommended the development of guidance on creative teaching and learning, as was developed by the QCA (2004), discussed above, and Ofsted (2008; 2010) and the fostering of partnerships between schools and the ‘outside world’ including other agencies, museums, theatres, galleries, orchestras and others. The government’s flagship programme, Creative Partnerships (CP) (DCMS, 2001), followed. Although it had multiple agendas to address, it was the ‘most ambitious, biggest and longest running arts education intervention in the world...[working] with over 5,000



schools...90,000 teachers and over 1 million young people' between 2002 and 2011 (Thomson *et al.*, 2014: 3). There is a wealth of research exploring the impact of this initiative and identifying schools that have taken part through action research projects (CCE, 2019), demonstrating evidence of modest performative academic gains, a prime concern for politicians, but stronger evidence for the ways it encouraged engagement and the benefits to wellbeing, citizenship and teacher learning (Thomson *et al.*, 2014).

Following NACCCE (1999), work on national curricula in the UK from the 2000s onwards also began to pay more attention to creativity in the curriculum. However, there were contradictions, firstly, because the simultaneous focus on performative standards and testing remained (Jones and Wyse, 2004; Troman *et al.*, 2007), secondly, in relation to the different conceptions of creativity presented in early years and primary national curriculum (Nicholson, 2017). Constructions of creativity in early years and primary curriculum have been considerably different since the inception of both curricula which has always been problematic for children and teachers (Craft, 2003a). Creativity was a domain (or area of learning and development) as well as a process within the initial Curriculum Guidance for the Foundation Stage (DfEE and QCA, 2000), whereas the Primary National Curriculum (DFEE and QCA, 1999) tended to position it as a skill to be taught although there was potential for creative development in some areas (Craft, 2000). The statutory Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS) curriculum current at the time of the research highlighted the 'essential' role of play for areas of learning and development (DfE, 2012a: 6), although this version of the curriculum removed 'Creative Development' as one of these areas of learning. The focus on creativity was repositioned as part of the 'Expressive Arts and Design' area, together with an emphasis on creative thinking within the 'Characteristics of Effective Learning and Teaching'. The three 'Characteristics' are part of the statutory guidance and intended to be applied across children's different learning experiences. They are: playing and exploring, active learning and creating and thinking critically (DfE 2012a:

6) (here I cite the guidance current at the time of the data collection but these same Characteristics remain part of the EYFS curriculum at the time of writing). The ‘Characteristics’ are associated with some of the definitions given in the academic research and, in a Bourdieusian theoretical framework, these could be conceptualised as sets of ‘creative learning dispositions’, meaning ways of shaping and orienting children’s actions without strictly determining them. These ideas are discussed in relation to the definition and enactment of creative learning in this research in Chapter Seven. However, it is important to note that contradictions within the statutory guidance remain with regard to the priority given to developmental targets and performative aspects, particularly the various explicitly stated references to ‘readiness’ for the next stage of schooling where even children’s play is described as ‘planned and purposeful’ (DfE, 2012a: 6).

The above discussion gives a sense of the ways that creativity has been positioned and re-positioned in the curriculum guidance and definitions have again shifted within the current primary national curriculum (DfE, 2013) which was coming into force as the fieldwork ended therefore the teachers were familiarising themselves with it. This curriculum has widened the gulf between early years and primary curriculum, indeed creativity is under-represented compared to both secondary (DfE, 2013) and early years curricula (DfE, 2012a) (Wyse and Ferrari, 2015). One of the two overarching aims of the primary national curriculum is to ‘introduce pupils to the best that has been thought and said’; and to ‘help engender an appreciation of human creativity and achievement’ (DfE, 2013: 6), which emphasises Alexander’s (1995: 16) classical humanist ideology which is linked to initiating children into the cultural heritage of a society (see Appendix 18). The emphasis is therefore on learning about creativity and the achievement of ‘significant individuals’ (DfE, 2013: 189). There is scant mention of creativity in the ‘core subjects and where children are permitted to ‘experiment, invent and create their own works of art, craft and design’, this is disconnected from rigour which develops as they ‘progress’ and, again, there is

a focus is on ‘how art and design both reflect and shape our history, and contribute to the culture, creativity and wealth of our nation’ (DfE 2013: 176). On balance, it presents a hands-off view perhaps more aligned with conceptions of ‘Big C creativity’ as opposed to creative learning (Craft, 2000). Wyse and Ferrari (2015) present this as out-of-step with other European countries broadly speaking where there is evidence that creative thinking, learning and teaching are valued as key goals for education (European Commission, 2012).

#### **4.5 Creative schools and creative teachers**

The curriculum and policy initiatives during the ‘creative decade’ resulted in a new wave of research. This section focuses on recent studies and reviews examining the culture and development of ‘creative schools’. As key components of the pedagogical environment, the role of education professionals has been examined as part of these studies, both nationally and internationally, and there is a specific sub-group of literature focusing on teachers and their understandings of creativity which is also relevant to this study.

Enabling and constraining factors at the school-level have been related to time, funding, staffing, school leadership priorities, school culture, regional partnerships for example with local authorities or creative professionals and the role of policy and curriculum (Davies *et al.*, 2013; Downing *et al.*, 2007). There is evidence that environments where there is a focus on the flexible ‘teaching for creativity’ features discussed above can promote increases in learner confidence, motivation and engagement and the development of social, emotional and thinking skills (Davies *et al.*, 2013). This flexible approach includes pedagogical strategies as well as innovative use of space and resources. School ethos has been discussed as part of this. Cochrane and Cockett (2007: 148) highlight the importance of a common approach ‘which imbues all planning, communication and procedures in the [creative] school’ and which engenders a ‘climate of trust’ (ibid). A supportive

professional learning culture provides opportunities for teachers to take risks and share ideas as well as helping schools to demonstrate the value and impact of creative learning and teaching (Downing *et al.*, 2007). Partnerships beyond schools and connections to the community are also viewed as important whether facilitated by involvement in CP or not (Downing *et al.*, 2007). Some partnership events appear to be examples of ‘critical events, discussed as a form of creative teaching in 4.4.1, possibly involving ‘innovative personnel who provided a unique or unusual experience and specific expertise’ (Jeffrey, 2005: 15), although these may also be in-school events (projects, themed weeks). All tend to interrupt the usual patterns of time, space and physical environment, enabling innovative approaches and experiences, however, such events can marginalise creativity further if creative practices and partnerships are not absorbed into the everyday environment (Davies *et al.*, 2013). Indeed, evaluations of the CP suggest that some changes to practice were limited or tokenistic and may not have endured not least because of the tensions within CP itself, which had multiple agendas and was mired in market-driven notions of change (Jones and Thomson, 2008; Thomson *et al.*, 2014). The CP schools in which developments were teacher led were deemed the most successful (Downing *et al.*, 2007), demonstrating the importance of the features of creative teaching and creative learning discussed above (Woods, 1995; Jeffrey, 2006). However, in a study of 40 schools involved with the Creative Partnership programme, Thomson and Sanders (2010) concluded that only very few of those surveyed had facilitative structures which allowed staff and students to take ownership and effect whole school change and much depended on both the stance of the school leadership team and the situated context of a school, in terms of its performance and local positioning (Jones and Thomson, 2008; Thomson and Sanders, 2010).

Several systematic literature reviews have focused on the role of the teacher and teachers’ conceptualisations of creativity (Andiliou and Murphy, 2010; Fryer and Collings, 1991; Mullet *et al.*, 2016). It is a mixed picture. A number of different factors were highlighted

as enablers and constraints in relation to teachers themselves. Many studies report that teachers have found the standards and assessment agenda shapes or restricts their personal beliefs about the importance of creativity (Andiliou and Murphy, 2010). Teachers can affiliate themselves with particular perspectives derived from the creativity research or associated myths. For example, creativity may be marginalised if teachers believe that it is innate or that it belongs only in certain subjects (Bereczki and Kárpáti, 2018, 2018; Mullet *et al.*, 2016). Several studies have been reported that teachers need to believe in the value of creativity in itself (Rubenstein *et al.*, 2018) and have confidence in their own creativity ability in order to promote creativity in their classrooms (Mullet *et al.*, 2016), which is discussed in the literature as ‘creative self-efficacy and encompasses both teachers’ beliefs about their ability to be creative and to facilitate creativity’ (Rubenstein *et al.*, 2013: 102). Indeed negative self-efficacy appears to have more impact than positive self-efficacy (Bereczki and Kárpáti 2018), although this needs to be contextualised as does the research focusing teachers’ attitudes and dispositions which highlights the importance of teachers being comfortable to take risks in their professional and personal lives (Boden, 2001; Craft, 2001), or to exhibit curiosity and take a playful approach (Goouch, 2008), being open to expressing emotions and feelings and whether they have strong moral and political investment in their work (Woods and Jeffrey, 1996). Other research has focused on creative learner dispositions but again in relation to the teacher, for example teachers’ perceptions of creative learning behaviours and whether they perceive them to be desirable or undesirable (Kettler *et al.*, 2018; Myhill and Wilson, 2013). Again context is important, for example non-conformity is likely to be discouraged in rule-bound institutional settings but may be viewed as more acceptable in an early years environment. Further issues arise around the evaluation of other aspects of creativity, as has been noted in 4.5.2, for example where teachers may perceive creativity to comprise innovative ideas or problem-solving processes but struggle to recognise their value (Kettler *et al.*, 2018). Myhill and Wilson (2013) present this in the context of the challenging nature of evaluating any creative

endeavour, as noted in 4.2. There is acknowledgement in the literature that any perceived teacher deficits often relate to macro-contextual constraints such as policy and training (Rubenstein *et al.*, 2018), implicit assumptions about teaching and learning embedded in context and relationships (Kettler *et al.*, 2018) or to the complexity of creativity as a concept in itself (Myhill and Wilson, 2013). However, it seems that teachers frequently rely on implicit theories of creativity (Kampylis *et al.*, 2009; Kettler *et al.*, 2018; Myhill and Wilson 2013; Rubenstein *et al.*, 2018). This means ‘constellations of thoughts and ideas about a particular construct...[which]...may never be explicitly expressed or formalised [but] they are maintained and are either intentionally or unintentionally applied when making judgements’ (Runco and Johnson, 2002: 427). Such theories may present challenges for research that attempts to compare participant perspectives (Andilou and Murphy, 2010) but they reflect valuable tacit contextualised knowledge and information therefore they deserve careful examination.

To conclude this section, it is reported that a relatively small number of the studies reviewed in the recent systematic literature reviews have focused on the relationship between teachers’ beliefs and their practice, rather they seem to rely more on teachers self-reports of practice as a proxy for enactment (Andiliou and Murphy, 2010; Bereczki and Kárpáti, 2018). This present study aims to provide detail on such enactments in the context of teachers’ pedagogical habitus, therefore reflecting deeply on contextualised experiences as well as personal and professional histories. The focus of my research is teachers’ definitions, their practice and the connection between the two, acknowledging that both are influenced by the social and cultural contexts in which they are ‘displayed, internalised and enacted’, past and present (Mateiro and Westvall, 2013: 157).

## **4.6 Chapter conclusion**

This chapter demonstrated how creativity has become a social value and of interest to researchers and policy makers, although there are varied definitions and applications. Banaji and Burn (2010) describe it as a set of jostling rhetorics, all of which influence common parlance and therefore policy and classroom practice. The issues and questions raised by the research discussed in section 4.2 above are very relevant to creativity in educational contexts focusing on whether creativity is something located within a person, whether creative processes and skills can be taught and the kind of context that is most conducive to nurturance of creativity. They are also relevant because the tensions between different approaches are unresolved. Section 4.3 and 4.4 evidenced the complexities of the associations between education and creativity, focusing more specifically on the English context, with an analysis of the ways that creativity has been positioned in recent educational research, policy and within curriculum and other initiatives. These sections demonstrate that, although creativity is susceptible to neoliberalism, within education research, it has been perceived, at least in part, as a way of challenging discourses of performativity, promoting progressive and humanistic pedagogic values and the autonomy of children and teachers (Craft, 2006; Jeffrey, 2003). This notion of resistance and redress was one of the views represented in this study, as I shall discuss. This chapter ended with an examination of research that has focused on enactment of creativity in schools and the factors that enable and constrain both creative schools and creative teachers; these issues are considered in the context of data from this case study school in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine.

## Chapter Five: Methodology

### 5.1 Chapter introduction

This study is an in-depth, empirical investigation of the ways that ‘creativity’, ‘creative teaching’ and ‘creative learning’ were defined and enacted by three teachers and the headteacher within a primary school situated in South East England. The study drew on the traditions of ethnography in order to extract detailed data during weekly visits to the school over the course of the entire 2012-13 academic year utilising a range of methods to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the staff define ‘creativity’, ‘creative learning’ and ‘creative teaching’?
2. How do the staff enact ‘creativity’, ‘creative learning’ and ‘creative teaching’ within the neoliberal policy context of the school?
3. What are the enablers, constraints, tensions and ambiguities in this process?

These questions allow for an open-ended exploration of the ways that participants’ understandings of ‘creativity’ inform their thinking and actions. I selected ‘creative teaching’ and ‘creative learning’ as key research terms because I considered they would likely to be familiar to my participants due to their frequent use in contemporary school debate, based on research and policy context (see 4.4) and because they draw focus to teachers’ practice and their aspirations for children. These also direct the creativity focus towards educational values and each member of staff’s interpretation of the way that ‘creativity’ operates in education policy and school practice, whilst allowing space for them to articulate their more personal or individual differences. This is consistent with a Bourdieusian standpoint and the nature of habitus, in other words there may be comparable sets of institutional dispositions operating within a setting but there will also be variations within the pedagogical habitus of each member of staff, depending on their past histories and experiences (Feldman, 2016; Oliver and Kettley, 2010). The second question acknowledges the neoliberal policy context in which all schools in England are currently operating, as evidenced in Chapter Three, while the third question focuses more specifically on the factors that enable and constrain teachers in their effects. This



acknowledges the likely ambiguities, given that creativity is difficult to define, the contradictions inherent in the policy discourses, whilst again allowing the space to examine similarities and differences.

This chapter describes the methodological decisions taken in designing the study and the methods for data collection and analysis used throughout the investigation. It is divided into five sections. Section 5.2 discusses my ontological and epistemological assumptions and my qualitative methodological approach, which is informed by interpretivism and ethnography. I briefly consider how these methodological frameworks sit with the Bourdieusian theoretical framework I employed to analyse the data. Section 5.3 considers the principles underpinning the design of my case study, also discussing the steps I have taken to ensure the rigour and credibility of the research. Sections 5.4 and 5.5 present methods and data collection techniques, introducing the school setting and my participants and discussing the process of negotiating access and consent. More detailed information on the school context and participants is then presented in Chapters Six and Seven. Ethical considerations have been integrated into sections 5.3, 5.4 and 5.5 as part of my aim to work from a principled yet flexible position in negotiating my researcher role with participants. Section 5.6 provides an account of the analytic procedures followed. Finally, 5.7 reflects on my positionality and my relationships with the research participants, and how these factors shaped the research.

## **5.2 Methodological principles**

### *5.2.1 Epistemology and ontology*

My epistemological and ontological beliefs are largely influenced by social constructionism because I understand our social worlds to be constructed from different perspectives and understandings which are relative to our experiences and relationships.

Within this perspective, 'facts' are relative to theories. This is not to deny the existence of a material world independent of the mind but rather to uphold the view that knowledge of this world is interpreted by individuals. The way that the world operates therefore relies, at least to some extent, on social constructions which are provisional and contextualised. To assist in distinguishing between the material and the social, Sayer (2010: 32) invokes 'real objects' which are 'things or states of the world' and 'thought objects' which are theories and knowledge that is constructed about the real objects. If 'thought objects' are to endure, they must be shared in social situations, therefore they are necessarily dynamic, shifting as people act on their knowledge and understanding in different places, at different times and with different groups of people. They are created or re-created, shared, reproduced and maintained using 'semiotic resources' which are 'actions, materials and artefacts' used for meaning making and meaning signifying (Van Leeuwen, 2005: 285). Such resources are simultaneously material, cultural and social, they have 'a meaning potential, based on their past uses, a set of affordances based on their possible uses, and these will be actualized in concrete social contexts where their use is subject to some form of semiotic regime' (ibid) thus involving reference to social structures and institutions which are themselves constructed. This highlights one of the strengths of the constructionist approach, in that it 'exposes the contingency of those of our social practices which we had wrongly come to regard as naturally mandated' or 'common sense' and as such it is empowering (Boghossian, 2006: 129). However, criticisms can be levelled at constructionism which necessitate further examination of the nature of knowledge and 'fact' and I acknowledge that as a general theory of truth or knowledge, constructionism can be viewed as problematic (Boghossian, 2006; Elder-Vass, 2012).

In itself, social constructionism is a loose collection of theoretical perspectives which share a rejection of universalist and essentialist claims in favour of 'theoretical constructs that are capable of bridging the gap between individual experience and societal structure'

(Burr, 2003: 199). There are a variety of approaches that a researcher can take. I have selected a qualitative interpretivist approach, drawing on the particular traditions of ethnographic case study. I now present arguments for this approach in the remainder of this section, further demonstrating the relevance of my Bourdieusian theoretical framework, discussed in Chapter Two.

### 5.2.2 *Interpretivism*

My aim within this thesis is to explore the teachers' enactment of creative teaching and creative learning within an English primary school context in-depth. I acknowledge that there will be tensions between the different roles and practices that individual teachers adopt as part of their pedagogical habitus (Feldman, 2016) because they will draw on past experiences but also their school is located within a system of interconnected social fields and therefore 'a network of social practices which are infused with power relations' (Ball *et al.*, 2011b: 611). Presupposing that human beings inhabit shared forms of life and shared semiotic resources that reference the social structures and institutions in a particular context, as discussed above, it seems logical that understandings of social activity in a particular context such as a school can be generated through examining the way that these social worlds are interpreted by their inhabitants. This makes a qualitative approach particularly appropriate as it seeks to understand the worlds of research participants from 'the inside out' (Flick *et al.*, 2004: 3)

Qualitative research strategies have become increasingly influential since the 1970s and various different traditions have emerged, interpretivism in particular has a long intellectual history (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Within this approach, human activity can be seen as 'text' and meanings are interpreted both by the social actors themselves and the researcher (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Interpretivism therefore concerns itself with

‘empathic understanding of human action’ (Bryman, 2008: 15) and the researcher’s attempts to gain insight into the meanings that people construct within their particular socio-cultural contexts.

At a superficial level, interpretivism has been contrasted with positivism and these have commonly been cited as being opposite ends of a continuum of research paradigms (Bryman, 2008; Miles and Huberman, 1994). Interpretivism is frequently, though not solely, associated with qualitative research strategies and constructionist ontology whereas positivism tends to follow a natural science model incorporating the features of quantitative research. Positivism is frequently, though not always, associated with larger datasets and examining relationships between cases, identifying and measuring specific variables and developing causal laws based on directly observable experience whilst ‘invisible or theoretical entities are rejected’ (Robson and McCartan, 2016: 21). However, it is important to note that despite significant differences between these research approaches, each is more than the inverse of the other and there are also points of similarity (Bryman, 2008). Miles and Huberman (1994) argue that distinctions such as these are becoming increasingly blurred and that there are multiple overlaps, particularly as more pragmatic approaches are increasingly taken into account. The key point is to ensure that the research methodology and methods are appropriate to the research questions and world view.

My research questions require an approach that acknowledges complexity. I deem close observation and analysis of interactions and conversations to be key research strategies (Woods, 1996), as befits a qualitative interpretivist methodological approach. I expect that the meanings that research participants ascribe to different aspects of their experience will emerge from such strategies over time, however these do not spontaneously appear to those who are not looking for them, therefore the role of the researcher, her conduct and

interpretations, are crucial. As discussed in Chapter One, my personal and professional motivations have shaped my research aims and I will go on to discuss how they have shaped my methodological choices in this chapter. As such, I do not consider it possible to disengage the subjectivity of the researcher from the process itself. As a result of these considerations, I have been particularly drawn to approaches which involve close participant observation within a community over a significant period of time, employing and acknowledging the subjectivity of the researcher. I have therefore drawn on ethnographic traditions in my research design my research for these reasons which are discussed in more depth in the next section and, again, these are highly compatible with a Bourdieusian approach.

### *5.2.3 Ethnographic traditions*

There is no standard definition of ethnography. Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) refer to this as one of its virtues in that it remains flexible and responsive to localised contexts. However, it is associated with particular traditions and practices which have made it a particularly appropriate approach to draw upon in my research; these generally involve careful observation of and participation in the lives of research participants over an extended period of time together with reflexive analysis (Pollard, 1985; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Ethnographers commonly seek the perspectives of several groups of actors within a context, in recognising that there will be multiple perspectives on the particular phenomena they seek to research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). There is also recognition that there will be some level of conflict between these different perspectives, including the perspective of the researcher, but that this conflict will provide insights. In taking note of any such conflicts, ethnographers seek to locate what their participants are doing in a wider socio-historical context. This aspect of the investigation is driven by the overarching purpose of the research which ultimately seeks to contribute to

academic understanding of the social world as well as furthering the enterprises in which the participants are involved. This may result in tensions between participant perspectives and analytic perspectives therefore, in my own research, I have combined my ethnographical approach with a Bourdieusian (1977) framework. The two are eminently compatible because, although Bourdieu is sometimes viewed as a more of a ‘macro-sociologist’, much of his work is ethnographically grounded (Blommaert, 2005) and, importantly, there is scope to acknowledge the role of the researcher. Indeed, Bourdieu argued that researchers must ‘objectivate’ themselves and articulate their position in order to deconstruct their assumptions and ‘value stances, their problem choice, and their theoretical and methodological frames’ (Rizvi and Lingard, 2010: 48-9). Pollard (1985) argues that such frameworks may be particularly useful within educational institutions as a way of enabling educationalists to articulate their tacit understandings and, certainly, I have found Bourdieu very useful for clarifying my own thinking about education policy and practice, as a teacher who has worked in both primary and higher education (see 10.6.2). Therefore, Bourdieu’s ‘thinking tools’ (Bourdieu in Wacquant, 1989: 5) have helped me to maintain my research commitment to ‘making the familiar strange’ (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007) in framing an analytic understanding of what is being studied, rather than simply reproducing participant understandings.

In both ethnographic and Bourdieusian analysis, recognising interactions between the researcher and the researched in the field or fields under examination is an integral part of the empirical study as opposed to claiming to examine context in an objective way (Ladwig, 1994). This is another much-discussed ethnographic tradition, the consideration of the relationship between the researcher’s sense of ‘self’ and their research participants. While ethnographers are concerned with describing perspectives and points of view within particular social contexts as accurately as possible, placing emphasis on the ‘natural’ setting, their accounts are not expected to be accurate or neutral in themselves (Ball, 1990;

Pollard, 1985). The social process of research is therefore intertwined with the process of data collection and the decisions that the researcher makes in what Ball (1990: 159) describes as a 'self-conscious engagement with the world'. In this research, I have endeavoured to make my role explicit by reflecting on my sense of 'self' and my relationships with participants prior to and during the data collection, discussed at the end of this chapter, and again as my doctoral experience came to a close in Chapter Ten. I also kept a field journal which included both empirical observations and analytic memos in which I developed ideas gradually, iterative and reflexively, scrutinising of the processes, problems, choices and errors involved, and drawing on these reflections in my analysis, as is discussed below. These tools and techniques have enabled an interplay between the personal and emotional and the intellectual which is key to ethnographic research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007).

#### *5.2.4 Case study*

Knowledge about school and classroom processes based on ethnographic approaches tends to develop mainly through the accumulation of case studies (Pollard, 1985). The case study approach links to the ethnographic ethos of interpretive study, the idea of seeking out meanings held by people through close observation of interactions with the aim of telling the story of particular people in a particular place. Therefore, I considered ethnographic case study to be a tried and tested approach in some senses and based my approach, at least in part, on methods used by Pollard and Filer (1996) in their longitudinal studies of teacher and pupil perspectives and classroom interactions in school settings. However, case studies are not solely located within the qualitative paradigm and the term itself is not used in a clear and fixed sense in research (Hammersley and Gromm, 2000). Therefore it is important to define what I mean by 'case study'.

Van Wynsberhe and Khan (2008) argue that case study is not a coherent methodological approach in itself because it does not offer an action plan for analysing and interpreting data and can be situated within different paradigms. It is sometimes cited as a method, perhaps after its use in professional contexts for example medical cases, social work and so on, although Van Wynsberhe and Khan (2008) argue that it cannot be considered a method either because this implies a technique or procedure for collecting data. Therefore I have aligned my case study with the qualitative ethnographic traditions described above and I discuss the particular methods employed in this study later in the chapter. The view that a case is a 'bounded system' that exists independently of the enquiry has been useful (Stake, 2000: 23). Stake (2000) argues that it is important to keep the boundaries of the particular case in mind throughout the enquiry, keeping a focus on what is and what is not part of the case be it a person, group or institution; I have contained my research to a single school as the case under investigation. Each teacher and their classroom has been considered a case within that, similar to the idea of sub-fields discussed in 2.3 (page 22), although this becomes more complex when conceptualising enactments in the context of interrelated social fields that are both physical and symbolic (Bourdieu, 1989) as they are not bounded in the same way and need to be contextualised in order to be interpreted. Yin's (2009: 18) perspective is useful here, he considers case study 'an empirical enquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the 'case') within its real-life context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident'. Therefore, although some case studies follow a more quantitative methodology, for example in testing hypotheses or they may be highly statistical, it is possible to think of a case as a system that is more difficult to define, which is complex and holistic involving narratives, allusions and metaphors (Stake, 2000; Yin, 2009), this is the perspective I have drawn on.

Ethnographic case studies may be criticised for their dependence on subjective and qualitative sources of data including the 'self' of the researcher. However, Pollard (1985)



argues that they have a strong claim to the internal validity that comes from detailed holistic study of particular social situations and there is the capacity to generate well-grounded theoretical models that are stimulating in their own right. Indeed, Ball (1990: 168) argues that rather than editing the researcher out or casting the researcher as ‘as a soulless and socialess data-gathering and analysing machine’, ethnographic research is acknowledged as a creative process of interpretation and this does not mean it is without rigour. The rigour comes from the design principles and inclusion of a demonstrable set of procedures, as with any research, as I discuss in the next section, but also the reflexive account of the conduct of the research, referenced above. The strength of such an in-depth approach is that it can lead to new understandings of social processes because it involves the holistic examination of complexities and different aspects of the particular case in question, stressing relationships and processes (Denscombe, 2003) and exploring the co-existence of interrelated events, issues and contexts. This ‘thick description’ (Geertz, 1973) is essential to understanding cultural situations and experiences.

### **5.3 Design principles**

Once the decision to use a case study approach has been taken, the case study researcher must then make strategic choices as to how much of the case needs to be studied and for how long (Stake, 1998). The selection of a single school seemed the most appropriate and manageable way to extract the richness of detail I required. I elected to spend time in three classes in order to represent each different phase of statutory early years and primary national curricula, as I discuss further in 5.4. As schools and educational settings operate in cycles, it seemed appropriate to spend an entire academic year within the school which would allow me to observe classes of children and their teacher throughout the course of their usual academic relationship. I was onsite for half to one day a week, which might be criticised from the standpoint that ethnography is about immersing yourself in a context.

However, Jeffrey and Troman (2004) argue that there are different forms of ethnographic time and the selection of the appropriate form depends on the particular circumstances and aims of the research. For example, they discuss ‘Blitzkrieg’ or ‘compressed time mode’ ethnography where the researcher may be intensively engaged with a context or theme over a very short period of time (2004: 538) such as a week or two. They also present what they term ‘selective intermittent time mode’ ethnography (Jeffrey and Troman, 2004: 540) where the researcher specifies the area for investigation, but is continually selective about the place and the people with whom they spend time, sampling different temporal phases in order to examine different layers of reality. This is probably the closest to my approach where I decided to sample the perspectives of particular participants in relation to my creativity focus, negotiating different days and times of day for my fieldwork visits with my participants, as discussed in more detail in the next section, before I present my data collection techniques. As I note there, some of my methods and procedures were intentionally loosely designed prior to the data collection phase so that they could be negotiated in collaboration with the participants as part of negotiating access and my aim to develop a respectful, trusting relationships. Before coming to these details, I present arguments for the rigour and quality of my design and, in so doing, I acknowledge and address some of the enduring criticisms of case study approaches.

### *5.3.1 Ethics: trust and ‘trustworthiness’*

Ethnographic case studies are a powerful tool to give us access to places we may not otherwise go and perspectives or narratives that we may not otherwise hear. Here it is important to note that such enquiry is always a political and moral act:

...It should present a well plotted, compelling, but minimalist narrative.... based on realistic, natural conversation, with a focus on memorable recognisable characters. These characters will be located in well-described, ‘unforgettable scenes’...the work should present clearly identifiable cultural and political issues, including injustices.

(Denzin, 2004: 86)

Denzin (2004) claims that the power of such research is not to mirror the world ‘as it really is’ because, as argued above, the world is already constructed through narrative texts. He cites cultural narratives produced by mass media as evidence of this, narratives designed to make audiences believe that they are not commodities and give the illusion of structural freedom and free will; this is an example of the ‘doxic narratives’ discussed in Chapters Two and Three. Instead he argues that the value of the research is to generate exchanges of experience and empathy which draws us back to the role of the researcher, their ethical responsibilities and the trustworthiness of the research.

The integrity of social research is dependent upon the cumulative behaviour of individual researchers and the consequences of their actions in society at large (Social Research Association, 2003). Being mindful of this, the researcher must demonstrate an ethical approach to the collection, analysis and discussion of data, remaining mindful of limitations and potential prejudices. I would argue that ethnographic research offers more scope than other approaches in this regard as it acknowledges the researcher as an instrument of the research (Ball, 1990). This research has also been approved by the University of Roehampton Ethics Committee (Appendix 3) and adheres to the University of Roehampton Ethics Guidelines (2014). This means that all data will remain confidential and the anonymity of the respondents will be preserved, although there can be no absolute safeguards against breaches of confidentiality. All identifying features have been removed and pseudonyms have been used. Raw and digitised data have been stored systematically in password-protected folders and personal identity data is in a secure folder separate from the linked data. Hard copies of any papers containing personal information, for example consent forms, have been filed and stored securely (see Appendix 4 for blank copies). This data will be retained intact for at least ten years.

### 5.3.2 *Rigour and credibility*

The rigour and credibility of qualitative research requires the redefinition of terms such as ‘reliability’, ‘validity’, ‘generalisability’ and ‘replicability’ that have traditionally been associated with quantitative research in order to ensure that there is no quantitative bias (Davis and Dodd, 2002; Golafshani, 2003). For example, the ability to generalise findings to wider groups and circumstances may be one of the most widely accepted tests of validity but this is commonly associated with statistical significance and random selection which is not compatible with an interpretivist focus (Donmoyer, 2000). However, there are applications and versions of these terms that are applicable to both qualitative and quantitative research.

As already noted, case studies have a strong claim to the internal validity that comes from the detailed holistic study of a particular social situation and the capacity to generate well-grounded theoretical models (Pollard, 1985). However, given the structural homogeneity of schools as sub-fields of the field of schooling (see 2.3), it is likely that there will be some ‘transferability’, which Lincoln and Guba (1990: 57) define as the ‘transference [that] can take place between contexts A and B if B is sufficiently like A on those elements or factors or circumstances that the A enquiry found to be significant (and those salient factors will vary from enquiry to enquiry)’. I accept that part of my rationale for a case study approach is to see the general in the particular (Berger, 1963) whilst recognising it would be impossible to produce verified accounts or claim replicability as one might in larger scale research. But the notion of ‘transferability’ may not go far enough. Although it accommodates complexity, it seems to assume that findings are only transferable where contexts are similar (Donmoyer, 2000). Whereas, the neoliberal doxa, discussed in Chapter Three, works across a diverse range of social fields and I intend to explore the potential of notions of ‘performative dispositions’ and ‘creative dispositions’ to draw comparisons, making connections between fields where possible, whilst retaining my key

focus on the interpretations of my participants and their specific experience. Case studies may be generalisable to theoretic proposal ('analytic generalisation') rather than the 'statistical generalisation' which applies to population and depends mostly on size, frequency or internal variations within a carefully controlled sample (Yin, 2009: 15). This is similar to the notion of 'conceptual replication' which Aguinis and Solarino (2019: 1305) connect to qualitative research, which means that the same theoretical propositions may be applied in a different context. They link this to 'robustness', although they note that the application of this idea requires careful description of the research setting. I have borne these ideas in mind in the design of my research. I am aware that empirical results may be considered 'more potent' or robust if two or more cases support the same theory, and presumably this applies to cases within the case, as I have discussed. Yin (2009: 39) also argues for rigorous examination of 'equally plausible rival theories', while Stake (1998) reminds the researcher to remain attentive to the primary aim of the research, which is the understanding the case itself, because the commitment to generalise or create theory can sometimes be so strong that it detracts from this. He therefore goes on to argue for a more careful definition of the term 'generalisation', attesting that ethnographic case studies in particular feed into 'the most fundamental processes of awareness and understanding' (Stake, 1998: 94). He refers to this as 'naturalistic generalisation' where the reader may relate aspects of a case to previous encounters, consolidating upon and enriching their understandings. This frequently occurs as part of a social process, thus involving other people's understandings as 'vicarious experience' (Stake, 2000:19). In this way, case studies can assist readers in the construction and co-construction of their own knowledge and generalisation becomes unconscious or intuitive. Thus they become metaphors providing 'the information and sophistication needed to challenge the reader's current construction and enable its reconstruction' or 'idea catalogues' from which the reader may pick and choose in ways relevant to his or her own situation' (Lincoln and Guba, 1990: 54). I have striven to design an approach to allow for theory-building and 'idea

catalogues’, through the use of coding for patterns supported by analytic memoing and reflexive notes, as discussed above.

As Aguinis and Solarino (2019: 1293) point out, qualitative researchers may or may not see the necessity for empirical or conceptual replicability, depending on their ontological perspective, but there is always an interest in transparency and in remaining alert to possible errors and the ‘falsifiability’ of the knowledge produced. While, this kind of credibility depends on the construction and application of the research instruments in quantitative research, in qualitative research, it depends on the researcher as the instrument. Therefore, particular principles can and should be emphasised in the design of a qualitative case study in order to ensure its rigour. These include the triangulation of multiple sources of data, theory and method; opportunities for ‘peer debriefing’ and ‘member checking’ as internal and external checks on the enquiry process and data analysis; and the careful organisation and documentation of data (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), ideally through a computer database (Yin, 2009). I integrated all of these principles and procedures into my design and I took the decision to organise and document my data systematically using Atlas.ti qualitative data analysis software before the data analysis began to ensure a transparent audit trail of decisions made throughout the data analysis. As I discuss further below, it facilitated my analysis in multiple other ways.

I was careful to schedule specific opportunities for triangulation, collecting data from different participants, sources and methods which focused on the same phenomena and collecting data from different points in the temporal cycle of the setting (Cohen *et al.*, 2007; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007), as I shall discuss in the next two sections. I followed Carspecken’s (1996: 141) process of ‘peer debriefing’ by inviting comments from my supervisors on interview schedules, observations and extracts from my data. My research participants were also invited to contribute to elements of the research design and

to the initial analysis as a form of ‘member checking’ (Lincoln and Guba, 1985), although. I would build opportunities for reflection and collaborative analysis more deliberately and carefully into the design if I were to do this research again (see 10.5). Even so, all participants were given the opportunity to revisit and discuss their interview responses and transcripts, although none chose to make any adjustments, tending to confirm responses. In the second interview, I summarised their first interview discussions verbally at the start of the interview which provided a more flexible opportunity for discussion. In addition, in both interviews, some questions were based on observations or derived from brief classroom-based discussions. In these ways we examined their thinking, my interpretations and the ways that their views had changed over time together. This also provided me with the opportunity to seek clarification and, more importantly, it gave them the opportunity to see how they are being ‘viewed’ and subsequently to alter the content, withdraw statements or provide further information (British Sociological Association, 2002). I saw this process as a way to establish clarity and to establish and maintain trusting relationships.

I have presented extracts from my data in my findings chapters, frequently quoting participants as well as using excerpts from my observations. I had multiple reasons for my selections and have drawn on a study of the use of quotations by Corden and Sainsbury (2006) to explain these. Firstly, extracts are intended to be illustrative of the themes and concepts identified in section 5.6. They have been selected to demonstrate and explain the complexity of the processes by which people make sense of their lives, how they position themselves, as well as any underlying assumptions and ambivalences. I have attempted to maintain a balance between the voices of my participants and my own voice, quoting my participants verbatim and using their words wherever possible in order to provide evidence for my interpretation and to offer the reader a greater depth of understanding of the context in combination with the observational data. However, I have balanced this against issues

of readability, confidentiality and ethical practice. For example, I have edited, re-punctuated or removed repetitions, false starts and common phrases as necessary, for example ‘ums’ and ‘ers’, ‘you know’ and similar. This is to enhance readability, in acknowledgment of the differences between spoken and written text, and to better reflect the participant’s meaning. Where I have removed words I have used a series of three or four dots to demonstrate this. I have replaced identifiers with an explanatory term or pseudonym within square brackets for confidentiality reasons. I have also used square brackets to explain a term referenced outside of the data extract presented and italics indicates the participant’s emphasis unless otherwise noted.

In following these procedures, I acknowledge that the choice and the power lies with the researcher who selects content and storylines in order to ‘shed light on the research issue and engage the reader’ and this process inevitably involves compromises (Smyth and McInerney, 2013: 13). However, they are intended to be inclusive and a way of empowering participants by involving them and giving them voice. Reporting the observational data is more complex in some ways because it has involved my interpretations of the practices observed. I have continually reflected on the ways that I have positioned others or that they have positioned me throughout the data collection, analysis and write up. The final aspect that demonstrates the rigour and value of the research is a clearly presented set of methods, procedures and analytic strategy is essential to demonstrate the rigour and value of the research, drawing on the principles discussed here (Yin, 2009), as I now discuss after introducing the case study setting and participants.

#### **5.4 The research site and participants**

The selection of the case study school and the sample of participants within was a complex process intertwined with the process of negotiating access and gaining informed consent.



I began approaching schools from April 2012, in order to allow time for negotiations, selecting schools based on the high profile they gave to ‘creativity’. I approached ‘Brightwater Primary School’ because some of the staff and children had been involved in the Creative Partnerships Programme in 2009-10 and the website presented their views on ‘creativity’ explicitly at the time, including claims to offer a ‘creative curriculum’.

Brightwater is a two-form entry primary school situated in South East England in a residential area. It comprises two separate sites within walking distance of each other following the federation of a separate Infant and Junior school in 2007. Following an initial indication of interest from Liz Fleming, the executive headteacher, face-to-face negotiations were delayed for several weeks due to an Ofsted inspection in the Junior School, followed almost immediately by a Statutory Inspection of Anglican Schools. This meant there was no time to carry out a pilot study as I had hoped and as part of the process of negotiating access, consent and rapport-building. However, I knew I would need to be guided by school policy and the existing relationships, practices and power relations in the school. Liz and I agreed that she would approach teachers to ask if they would like to take part in the research, then I would meet with those who agreed very briefly at the end of the Summer term then data collection would begin mid-September, a few weeks after term had started to allow them to ‘settle in’ to the new year. I provide more detail on the school context in Chapter Six, which forms the starting point for my analysis.

I collected data within three classrooms in the school over the 2012-13 academic year: Reception (children aged 4-5 years), Year 2 (aged 6-7 years) and Year 6 (aged 10-11 years). My rationale for the asking Liz to approach the teachers of these year groups within the school was based partly upon feasibility, as I could not expect to include all the children and teachers in the school and maintain an in-depth perspective. However, it was also purposive in that classes represented a sample from each ‘stage’ of the school in terms of the national early years and primary school curricula. As schools are required to report

on the children's performance in national assessments in these year groups, I surmised that the connections with the field of education policy would be strongly represented in these particular year groups, giving me insight into the ways that the neoliberal doxa can shape practice. I also considered that this would give me insights into the fields that were interconnected with the school, including the physical aspects (so the Infant and Junior school and the teachers' separate classrooms) and the symbolic (such as the field of early years practice, discussed in Chapter Six) and fields external to the school with which would be constructed through the accounts of my participants (for example the local authority and the field of secondary schooling).

The teachers who took part were Jennifer (the Reception teacher), Peter (the Year 2 teacher), Claire (the Year 6 teacher) and, of course, Liz herself. I introduce each of these key participants in more detail in Chapter 7, presenting a 'narrative portrait' of each (Smyth and McInerney, 2013), as is explained in 5.6.3. In addition, Appendix 7 provides a table of biographical information on each of them for at-a-glance comparison. These were informed by data gathered in our interviews and informal discussions as well as from the analysis of school documents and artefacts.

#### *5.4.1 Schedule of fieldwork visits*

In our initial meetings, the teachers requested that I come in on Fridays only, indicating a certain amount of wariness perhaps as part and parcel of the context of the surveillance practices that are a common feature in contemporary schools (Troman, 2000). However, I was able to justify the importance of sampling different temporal phases and different aspects of classroom and school life and we drew up a schedule of visits together which allowed me to go into the school on different days of the week over the year. I began with several weeks of Friday visits in order to try to ensure that they felt comfortable with my

presence and demonstrate that I was open to their suggestions. After this, I varied days and times as much as possible, although I needed to balance my role as a part-time research student with my own full-time employment. I was also asked not to visit particular classes or even the whole school some weeks, for example when the children were taking their SATs in May or if a member of staff was absent and was covered by a supply teacher. Each visit was the minimum of half a day but, wherever possible, I attended special events including projects which involved collaboration with parents and the wider community or those that made connections across traditional subject boundaries or age and ability ranges, particularly where they appeared to be linked to conceptions of creativity, creative learning, creative teaching and creative curriculum. I visited all three classrooms in every visit, unless circumstances prevented it. The school day was structured as below.

<b>Infants</b>		<b>Junior</b>	
08.45	Arrive at School	08.40	Arrive at School
08.55	Registration	08.50	Registration
09.00 - 10.15	Session 1	09.00 - 10.15	Session 1
10.15 - 10.30	Assembly	10.15 - 10.30	Assembly
10.30 - 10.45	Playtime	10.45 - 11.00	Playtime
10.45 - 12.00	Session 2	11.00 - 12.00	Session 2
12.00 - 1.00	Lunch	12.00 - 1.00	Lunch
1.00 - 3.05	Session 3	1.00 - 3.15	Session 3

Figure 1 the structure of the school day

I generally aimed to move between school sites during playtimes and lunch wherever possible but sometimes needed to leave mid-session. This was always necessary in the afternoons as I had to split the longer Session 3 on Figure 3 above into at least two parts. My research visits are documented in Appendix 6 with notes on methods, special events and any adjustments that needed to be made over the year; these notes attest to the challenges of organising and carrying out the research (Troman, 1996).

## **5.5 Data collection techniques**

The overall design of my methods and scheduled visits were intended to enable me to draw comparison between different types of data, between the perspectives of my participants and between perspectives and experiences at different points during the academic year (Carspecken, 1996; Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). I employed a range of data collection techniques to do this, including document analysis and different kinds of observations, which were documented as part of my field journal and included informal discussions with all participants, as well as two rounds of more formal semi-structured interviews. Below I present a rationale for each method and an account of the ways these developed over the data collection phase. First I note that, although the focus is primarily on the teachers' perspectives and experiences, the children were very much involved in the research. It was originally my intention to document their experiences and perspectives too, but, due to the ambitious scope of the design and the volume of data gathered coupled with the word limit constraints of the thesis, compromises had to be made in relation to the information included in the final thesis. For this reason, only a small amount of the children's data are represented in the discussion of findings in this thesis, primarily to highlight points relevant to the staff perspectives and experiences, therefore the methods employed to collect the children's data are discussed only briefly below. The findings generated from the children's data will be presented in future publications with a fuller description of the methods, one such methodological chapter has already been published (Cottle, 2017). An overview of all the participants, both direct and indirect, with pseudonyms and their role in the school and the research (i.e. observations and interviews) is presented in overview in Appendix 5. The indirect participants were mainly TAs and I sought their consent (Appendix 4) to include data in which they were involved.

### *5.5.1 Field notes and observations*

Field notes are the traditional means for recording observational and interview data in ethnography (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). My field notes comprised a record of each of the three classroom contexts through general observations focusing on routines and episodes. I also periodically recorded information about the environment or displays. I recorded observations of the special events, discussed above; these were a mixture of whole school and class events, for example some involved visiting specialists and tended to be interactive (author, a company providing mini-beast workshops, a circus performer, a music company) and others were events they put on for parents (the Year 6 play, Reception parents' tea party, sports' day). I also joined the Reception class on one of their school trips (to a local museum), attended a few traditional assemblies in each school and took part when both schools joined together in the Junior school playground for a charity cake sale during an extended morning break at the beginning of the year.

I aspired towards the role of involved 'participant-as-observer' in these general observations, meaning that I wanted all adults and children in the school to be aware of my status as researcher and I wanted to interact with them and participate in their classroom communities (Bryman, 2008: 410). As anticipated, this proved challenging both in terms of ascertaining how I was perceived by participants and in maintaining the participant observer position due to the rule-bound, institutionalised context of the field. I needed to be willing to adopt different roles in exchange for access, for example, supporting the teachers during some of the special events discussed above. However, I tried to refrain from taking on a support role regularly because this meant I was viewed as a teacher, teaching assistant (TA) or supervisor by the children at least part of the time and perhaps by adults not directly involved in the research too. In addition, the 'hidden curriculum'

(Kelly, 1988: 8) sometimes decreed that I had to maintain a more detached observer role within the classroom. By this I mean that the organisation of the learning environment and my interpretation of the teacher's behaviours and routines suggested to me that I should step back from an activity or the teachers requested this. For example, the children in the Year 2 frequently engaged in formal learning activities in which they were expected to complete particular tasks individually in silence or near silence with only specific types of assistance from the adults in the room, such as assistance with spelling. As I wanted to detach myself from the teacher and teacher assistant role, I did not feel it appropriate to offer my services to the teacher at these times. Instead I would position myself, usually rather self-consciously, somewhere at the edge of the classroom to observe. That meant that observations and my position as observer varied by classroom and by event; I discuss this in more depth as part of my reflection on positionality in section 5.7. Therefore, I engaged in informal discussions with both children and staff during classroom or playground events as much as I could, but I also planned a cluster of more traditional semi-structured interviews with participants twice over the year to allow time for extended discussion and therefore further insight into their perspectives and the ways that these may change over time.

The structure of my general observations was quite loose but I always recorded the day and time of the observation, significant events that were happening in the school or classroom at the time, the activities in which children were engaged, key teaching strategies employed and the interactions between teachers and children. Generally, when I was enacting the 'participant-as-observer' role, it was difficult to take notes during the observation so I would record notes and observations in as much detail as possible at the end of each classroom visit or day, quoting exchanges verbatim where possible but paraphrasing where it was not.

I periodically took more structured ‘target child observations’ of individual children in each class (Sylva *et al.*, 1980). This was primarily to focus in on the children’s perspectives and experiences in more detail as part of the original aims for the study discussed above, however it also enabled a more in-depth focus on interactions between teacher and individual children and the possibility of quoting these verbatim. This is because, in these observations, the activities of each ‘target child’, including their interactions with other children, adults and events happening around them, are recorded every few minutes for periods of 30-45 minutes, meaning that I was taking notes during the observation itself. The intention was to do this a maximum of once per month focusing on four children in each class, however, in reality, it was difficult to fit these in more than once or twice per child, as is documented on the schedule of visits (Appendix 6).

### *5.5.2 Interviews*

In addition to the numerous informal conversations that I documented in my field notes and observations, more formal interviews with participants took place at the end of the first and last term. These took the form of participatory photographic interviews with my child participants in groups, based on photographs taken by children, and more traditional semi-structured interviews with the adult participants. I do not include any of the children’s visual data in this thesis; see Cottle (2017) for more detailed discussion of this method.

I interviewed each of the three teachers twice; Interview 1 took place in November-December and Interview 2 in June-July. I had intended to do the same with Liz, the headteacher, but this was difficult to arrange. Her first interview eventually took place in March, and I made a number of efforts to set up the second interview in the summer term however ultimately these were unsuccessful; I reflect on the potential reasons for this in 5.7.

Each adult interview was around 45-60 minutes in duration. As already noted, these were semi-structured, meaning that I had a developed set of questions based on my research questions and ideas derived from my field notes and reading of the research literature but the interview process itself was flexible. I put similar questions to each interviewee in order to enable 'cross-case comparability' (Bryman, 2008: 440) but the interviews did not all follow the same order because I followed up on issues of interest to either the participant or myself whilst retaining an overall focus on similar topics and keeping to broadly to the interview schedule. This flexibility and the in-depth nature of our discussions and my efforts to ensure that I did not take too much longer than the 45 minute duration initially agreed, meant that I was unable to complete my entire list of questions in Interview 1. But I was able to follow up on in our informal discussions and ask the remaining questions in Interview 2 in the summer. I have therefore included all the interviews asked on one schedule (Appendix 8; the bold questions from number 15 onwards tended to be the ones asked in the Interview 2). This second interview was originally intended as an opportunity to follow up on issues arising from the initial interview data as well as my further observations in order to gain a deeper understanding of the definitions and enactments of each participant, as well as examining changes over time and it also served this purpose. Overall, although there was some variance between interviews based on individual classroom practices and roles, all focused on the same themes. These were definitions of creativity, focusing mainly on creative teaching and creative learning, individual motivations and backgrounds, professional roles and pedagogical values and interpretations of national and school policy. All interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed for analysis, barring the impromptu conversations which were documented in my field notes.



### *5.5.3 Gathering documents and artefacts*

I collected a range of data to contextualise the study, as discussed in Chapter Six. It included demographic information about pupil intake and performance; background and changes in the school over time; budgets; buildings and material resources and staffing. Much of this information was collated from inspection reports as well as data available on the Department for Education website. I also collected examples of local policy texts and artefacts current at the time of data collection, including school policy statements and documents, newsletters and handbooks for parents, in order to examine the way that creativity was presented as well as the dominant features of school policies, making notes or taking photographs where it was not possible to take copies. This included documents and screen-shots from the school website. The school used a commercial package called the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), referring to this as their ‘creative curriculum’ (Fieldwork Education, 2004) and I examined the IPC curriculum guidance that was provided to the school and the IPC website (Fieldwork Education, 2019). I also requested samples of lesson planning documents from the teachers and photographed or kept field notes on posters, signs in classrooms and any other artefacts that the school used to exemplify desired behaviour and procedures. Other national policy documents and publicly available outputs from local authorities were also collected including local school confederation meeting minutes.

## **5.6 Analysis**

Analysis is not a distinct stage in ethnographic research and is expected to be an ongoing, sometimes informal and messy interaction between theory and data. Ideas and theories are used to make sense of the data and data are used to change ideas (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Therefore, although I was guided by my theoretical framework and other relevant literature, there were also inductive, open-ended elements to my analysis,

particularly in the initial stages, and I drew on a range of theoretical resources and perspectives to interpret my data set. My approach was iterative and it involved several overlapping stages. I adopted a constant comparative strategy throughout (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and maintained a close relationship between the data and concepts that generated from them, facilitated by Atlas.ti qualitative data analysis software which helped me to manage my data systematically. Above all, I tried to prioritise an attention to idiosyncratic detail as my primary aims were to gain insight into the lived experiences, expressions and understandings of my research participants, to build a system of themes representing the actual experience of the participants as it was experienced by them and to make these accessible to my readers. This was facilitated by several practical strategies.

Initially, my approach was inductive. I experimented with Miles and Huberman's (1994) summary-aided approach, whilst simultaneously coding all my data using a coding scheme based on Bogdan and Biklen (2007: 174-5) to look for patterns and themes, recording the development of emergent analytic understandings in analytic memos. In later stages of the analysis, I drew on Bourdieu's field theory (1977), together with a post-Bourdieuian framework of temporary social fields and cross-field effects developed by Lingard and Rawolle (2004) to develop codes and analytic models. Developing these later strategies was a painstaking process involving close and sometimes experimental analysis which was very time-consuming considering the amount of data. I found that participants demonstrated their enactments through anecdotes and story fragments in discussion, observations and photographs. In order to analyse these, I experimented with adaptations of discourse analysis (Gee, 2014) and I-poem analysis (Gilligan *et al.*, 2003). These strategies provide ways to examine the different ways that participants talk about themselves by paying attention to the story that an interviewee is relating as if it is a plot, considering both their relationships with others and their relationship with the context. These strategies were not applied systematically but rather I used them as lenses to help me

to identify sets of dispositions, particularly creative dispositions as well as other pedagogical dispositions, in which I compared then across different datasets, particularly examining the links between what the teachers said and what they did. This enabled me to conceptualise each participant's pedagogical habitus (Feldman, 2016), considering the 'rules' of the field of Brightwater School and its interconnected fields and the positioning of staff, children and other actors within and across those fields, by comparing different data sets.

### *5.6.1 Analytic memos*

Ethnographic researchers include their personal feelings and involvement as part of the data collection process which can generate some criticism. However, both Ball (1990) and Hammersley and Atkinson (2007) argue that such introspection should not be viewed as gratuitous but that it is important to acknowledge that feelings and emotions colour research relationships and inevitably influence the researcher's choices and selections. It is therefore important to explicate and acknowledge these feelings. I did so through analytic and reflective notes appended to the daily field notes and observations. I recorded my emotional responses, my hunches, my reflections and any questions and comments as I wrote my field notes. These took the form of handwritten notes which I typed up after each visit, providing further opportunities for reflection. I tended to record my analytic and reflective notes in a different coloured font to the descriptive detail of my observations and recorded discussions to distinguish between the two. I then reflected further upon these as I started to analyse the data, starting to develop separate analytic memos within Atlas.ti from the earliest stages of data collection, as I discuss further below. This process also informed further rounds of data collection, by feeding into the questions I asked in my formal interviews.

The analytic notes and memos do not form part of the thesis in an explicit sense but they facilitate the development of the analysis, providing a space to develop ideas and concepts. This enabled me to make connections within and across the data sets and the different layers of analysis described below. In essence, analytic memos constitute private conversations with the self, exploring, conjecturing and elaborating material which may otherwise be subsumed by the coding process (Charmaz and Mitchell, 2001). Thus they provide a way of transforming private responses into potential public knowledge. Through this memoing process, I began to develop inferences and search for patterns and themes. Atlas.ti allowed me to attach memos to the data in various ways, as I discuss below, which allowed me to record a reflexive audit trail of decisions made throughout the analysis.

### *5.6.2 Initial analyses*

I drew on aspects of Miles and Huberman's (1994) summary-aided approach to develop my analytic memos in the early stages of the analysis alongside the coding strategies discussed in this section. This involved grouping together different types of data as 'cases' and pulling together what I knew about them to create an outline summary where I noted down who was involved, the main themes and my impressions, potential explanations and hypotheses. For example, I treated each interview as a case (see Appendix 9 for an example). As I developed these outline summaries, I focused largely on what seemed to be key points linked to the research questions, aspects that were puzzling or equally where something matched my expectations. I considered the implications for the data analysis and my next steps within the summary, considering alternative interpretations. I started this off in a formal manner, but it was a time-consuming process and it changed as I started to move beyond the initial analysis stage and as I became more familiar with participants and contexts and I developed more short-hand ways. However, Miles and Huberman's (1994) reflective questions were very useful.

As discussed above, I decided to use Atlas.ti software prior to starting my research partly because I was already familiar with this programme but mainly because of its versatility and flexibility. It supports a wide range of qualitative data types, including various types of image, audio and video file (Lewis, 2004). It does not dictate any particular analytic approach and there is no particular sequence of features to use (Paulus and Lester, 2016). This means the software supports code-based approaches, which can be organised in hierarchical and non-hierarchical ways, but it also non-linear and non-thematic associations which enables different types of analysis (Silver and Lewins, 2014). I engaged with coding and other approaches as discussed in the next section. The combined features of Atlas.ti facilitate a close reading of the data and the exploration of different patterns and relationships without losing the context of the data, as well as opportunities to document analytic decisions (through its memo-writing tool) in ways that support a reflexive and systematic approach. The terms in italics within this section and the next are those used within the Atlas.ti programme.

I transcribed field notes, observations and individual interviews, importing these into Atlas.ti, as Word documents, together with photographs, PDFs of national and school policy documents and audio files of all the interviews. Atlas.ti enabled me to organise this data chronologically as complete units collected at a specific time (*primary documents - PDs*) but also as *families* according to various characteristics which I could use as filters as required. For example, families could be particular types of data (e.g. all interview transcript, all observations, all audio file), individual participant or classroom context, institutional role, time period and more as well as combinations of these and the families themselves could also be combined (*superfamilies*).

My initial coding scheme was primarily descriptive and inductive and was based on the following categories: context, event, activities, definitions, strategies, relationships and methods (after Bogdan and Biklen, 2007: 174-5). Appendix 10 is a list of the codes initially generated. This initial layer was intended as a way of organising, processing and condensing the rather considerable amount of data collected for later retrieval and further analysis. At this stage, I did not include any theoretical concepts from my reading of the literature in the coding because the ‘inside’ nature of ethnographic research means that there is an emphasis on allowing critical categories and meanings to emerge from the ethnographic encounter rather than imposing these from existing models, although I introduced these elements later in the process when I was starting to conceptualise the participants’ dispositions, as is discussed below. As this is quite a generic etic level coding scheme, it allowed for the categorisation of both micro and macro level phenomena based on general domains and I noted definitions of codes as I developed them within Atlas.ti. It was also flexible enough to allow more emic level categories to be developed and nested within or compared with these codes as my analysis progressed i.e. the codes and categories that were more context-dependent and related to the way that the people within that context think (Miles and Huberman, 1994). Once I had completed this initial coding, I started to search for patterns across datasets, generating theories and explanations as well as examining data in relation to existing theory.

### *5.6.3 Focusing on disposition, position and field effects*

The staff definitions of creativity, creative learning and creative teaching offered in formal interviews or informal discussion were sometimes implicit, partial or they found it difficult to articulate themselves (Myhill and Wilson, 2013; Rubenstein *et al.*, 2018). At these times, they tended to exemplify their understandings as anecdotes, metaphors or story fragments which illustrated either creative learning or creative teaching or more frequently

a combination of the two within the context of the school or their prior experience. In analytic terms, stories and anecdotes can provide a way of examining the juncture between structure and agency. They contain action and characters brought together in a plot which explains our understanding of ourselves and others in a particular time and place (Lawler, 2014), helping us to make sense of our own and others' lives within a shared social space. I therefore examined these carefully in order to categorise different components of their definitions and enactments, using these as the basis for my conceptualisation of the pedagogical habitus of each member of staff and coming back to these as I examined the observational data. In this way definition and enactment were linked, as were the three key research terms: creativity, creative teaching and creative learning. I experimented with different ways to do this.

Initially, I drew on Gee's (2014) discourse analysis 'toolkit' to make sense of the story fragments and what they demonstrated about the logic of practice of the school field. To explain why I thought this would be useful, Gee (2014: 80) argues that people frequently organise information into groups of ideas about an important event or set of circumstances. These may focus on a topic, theme, character, image or perspective; he refers to these as 'stanzas'. Stanzas are often grouped into larger blocks that may become a narrative but could also be a description, explanation or exposition. This kind of story-telling helps us to get on with day-to-day life without the need to reflect explicitly on everything before acting. As such both narratives and stanzas can provide 'simplified models of how things work when they are 'normal' and 'natural' in a particular context and from the perspective of a particular social and cultural group' (Gee, 2014: 156). Therefore, I considered that a focus on narratives and stanzas (or the story fragments I had already identified) would provide ways to analyse the interaction between disposition and position within a particular context, or even between different dispositions, in a person's 'trajectory' (Gee, 2000: 111) which I interpret as being similar to 'habitus'. Cross-referencing stanzas and narratives

with other codes and categories helped me to identify repeated themes and commonalities as well as the contradictions and differences, which I discuss below. Several key narratives emerged across my participants' accounts which I present as 'rules' of the school field because they shaped its logic of practice, although they manifested differently within the experiences of each member of staff. I discuss what these look like in the context of the school in Chapter Six but give an overview here. The first I have termed the 'two schools' narrative which relates to ways that geographical space and the deployment of the staff within and across the school shaped relationships and practices. This related to both the history and locale of Brightwater School as well as the traditions of primary schooling and separations between 'key stages'; I also include consideration of the overlap between the fields of early years practice and schooling here. These were distinct features in staff discussions of positions and struggles within the school. The second was 'the visitors' narrative, a phrase coined by one of the participants, Peter, as he and other staff discussed the 'mock Ofsted' inspection carried out by the local school confederation which took place in the Spring term (described in 6.3.3). Again this related to power and domination, particularly performative surveillance strategies imposed on the school as cross-field effects from the external context as well as those developed within the school and its localised system of fields in order to self-govern their performance (Perryman, 2006). The third is the 'curriculum coverage' narrative which I shorten to 'coverage' as the term used most frequently by participants. This shaped perceptions of knowledge, learning and curriculum as well as their notions of 'progress' and 'readiness', all are framed in terms of getting children 'ready' for the next stage of their education as well as being 'ready' for inspection (Perryman *et al.*, 2018). These performative constructions are interconnected. The fourth narrative is the 'creative school'. This relates to the school's efforts to embed creative practice and their engagement with creativity policies and initiatives, both locally developed and those derived from both the externally-authored sources.



These narratives were key to contextualising the definitions and enactments presented in Chapters Seven and Eight and the factors that enabled and constrained the staff in their efforts. These narratives and the power relationships they represent, shaped and were shaped by the pedagogical habitus of the staff individually and collectively as well as their creative dispositions (or enactments) within that frame, therefore they represent ‘rules’ of the field of the school. The same applies to the headteacher and I discuss some of her leadership dispositions in the findings, meaning her ways of thinking and acting as a leader (Lingard et al., 2003) focusing on those specific to their efforts to become a ‘creative school’. It is also important to note that dispositions were dynamic, developing and shifting over the year.

In conceptualising their pedagogical habitus, I compared the teachers’ spoken definitions, perceptions and interpretations from both interviews and informal discussions, with practices observed, identifying sets of creative (and other) dispositions that were embedded within the system of fields in which they operated. These fields included their individual classrooms in the first instance, although these were linked these to the network of practices within the school as a field (Nolan, 2012), but I also considered cross-field effects from the fields that dominated the school.

In order to pay closer attention to the ways that the teachers saw themselves and the ways they talked about the school to hone in on the individual and collective dimensions of their pedagogical habitus, I experimented with I-poem analysis (Gilligan *et al.*, 2003). This is a qualitative analytic approach that foregrounds I-statements in an interview, reducing an interview script or extracts from a script to these statements. I found this process of stripping back the text a very useful strategy for several reasons. It was a way of checking my interpretations and ensuring that there was a space between my perception of the

participant and their own self-perceptions (Edwards and Weller, 2012). It also, again, drew the focus to the aspects that they found difficult to articulate and helped me to ‘read between the lines’, helping me to track changes and continuities or discontinuities in the teachers’ subjectivities both within an interview and over the two interviews which occurred approximately six months apart. Then, when I examined what Gilligan *et al.* (2003: 164) call the ‘contrapuntal’ voices, this highlighted their relationships with others, therefore their positioning within the school field and the power relationships, struggles and contradictions. One of the ways I did this was to focus on the other pronouns, experimenting with ‘we poems’, ‘you poems’ and ‘they poems’, which helped me to focus on the ways that they talked about the school and how they changed their practice to fit the context (or not), for example through messages about ‘who we are’ and ‘how we do things here’. Not only did these highlight the rules of the field and how these shaped or were shaped by staff dispositions, they also helped me to identify examples of dissonance or mismatch between habitus and field and any tensions and ambiguities. In addition, this was a useful strategy for identifying incursions from other fields and mapping and conceptualising how the staff experienced these, for example cross-field event effects like the ‘mock Ofsted’, and how these impacted on their positions and dispositions and shaped the enactment of creativity. Appendix 14 is an example of an I-poem that evidences the way that I drew out themes in order to frame each teacher’s pedagogical habitus and draw comparisons between them.

As discussed above, Atlas.ti allows the researcher to organise data in different ways, supporting both code-based approaches and other non-linear associations; I used both. As I started to identify potential dispositions and field rules in the ways described above, I coded for these (Appendices 11 and 12 are extracts from the coded interviews as they look in Atlas.ti). However, data can also be organised as independent data segments called *quotations* and both codes and quotations can be *hyperlinked* to each other within and

across data types in order to track a narrative or a process. Therefore, I also hyperlinked quotations within and across the data types for a single participant linked to the analytic strategies I have described above when building up a picture of their pedagogical habitus. The memo-writing and networking tools in Atlas.ti also make it possible to read, annotate, interpret and visualise the different types of data as well as electronically available academic literature within a single space (Paulus and Lester, 2016). These helped me to develop arguments that eventually formed part of the discussion of findings in the thesis. I used the *network* tool to map connections and create visual models of different elements of the teachers' pedagogical habitus at different stages of the analysis. For example, Appendix 13 is a visual network model I created as I was starting to conceptualise Jennifer's creative dispositions by comparing her interview and observational data. Here the data was filtered to interview and observational data collected in the Reception classroom only; I could also filter it to particular time periods to examine change.

As I experimented with these models and developed ideas using memos and in drafts, I became more confident that I was identifying key dispositions, due to the connections between what the staff said and what they did, as well as other markers of their significance, for example repetitions within a teacher's repertoire and other patterns across the data gathered across the different classrooms. The dispositions will be discussed in the chapters that follow and are also represented in table format in Appendix 15 which includes working definitions of the disposition itself, identifying whether it was self-reported, observed or both, whether it was teacher, learner or leader disposition or a combination of these, and identifying the staff participant to which the definition or enactment applies. The term 'creative disposition' is used to explain any relatively durable sets of practices or ways of thinking about creativity that the teachers incorporated into their practice, including their own creative behaviours, strategies and engagements, as well as the practices and habits of mind they wanted children to develop or augment as part of their

classroom or school community. The latter tended to encapsulate their views of creativity learning and their efforts to teach for creativity. I cross-referenced sets of creative dispositions against each other, also comparing them against other codes and forms of data and over different temporal phases, looking for patterns and contradictions and identifying aspects that enabled and constrained them. I identified the ways that each teacher's creativity dispositions sat with their broader pedagogical habitus by identifying other sets of dispositions in similar ways, focusing on the values they expressed in the interviews, examining personal backgrounds, training, what they said about the school itself and so on as well as the practices and strategies that they most frequently drew upon in their classrooms.

To present the findings in this thesis, I created a 'narrative portrait' of each member of staff (Smyth and McInerney, 2013), these are presented Chapter Seven. The portraits are intended to introduce the participant, illustrating key features of their pedagogical habitus, positioning their interpretations of creativity within that frame. They are drawn largely from our interviews and discussions, therefore the ways that the participants talked about themselves, but I have also integrated data from my observations and field notes where it seems appropriate to illustrate a point. I have tried to represent each participant's voice fairly in these portraits and to provide a space for their ideas and discussion of their values, intentions and experiences. However, I do not claim that the participants are the authors of the portraits and they do not tell the reader everything a participant had to say (Smyth and McInerney, 2013). In Chapter Eight, I discuss the more detailed observational examples and anecdotes, strategies and practices that evidence their creative dispositions (i.e. their enactments of creativity, creative teaching and creative learning), followed by a discussion of the factors that enabled and constrained them in their efforts, together with consideration of any tensions and ambiguities involved in Chapter Nine.

## 5.7 Positionality

As I have discussed throughout the chapter, consideration of the researcher's sense of 'self' and the relationship between researcher and research participants is a key ethnographic tradition which shapes the quality of the data collected because the researcher is the primary research tool with which to identify and collect data. I have continually reflected on my position, and the ways that I have positioned others or that they have positioned me, throughout the data collection, analysis and write up. Before I started, I anticipated that the nuances of my role would shift over the course of the fieldwork phase as it was co-constructed with my participants (Jordan, 2006) and in relation to the choices I made. However, I did not anticipate the levels of discomfort I felt upon occasion, as I discuss below. Challenge and anxiety are to be welcomed in giving the ethnographic researcher a critical edge (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Coffey (1999: 6) argues that the emotional aspects of fieldwork can be epistemologically productive rather than simply issues to be acknowledged; she also focuses on the under-acknowledged 'joys' of ethnographic research and I have noted these too. Through this process of reflection, I questioned the extent to which I was ascribing my own subjective interpretations, using the strategies described in section 5.3 to distinguish between participant judgements and my own and to look for corroboration, asking questions of the data and the analytic process itself.

Levels and types of research participation vary. Commonly the ethnographic researcher's aim is to maintain a marginal role 'poised between stranger and friend' (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007: 89). Crozier (2005) uses the metaphor of walking a tightrope in this context because this simultaneous insider-outsider position is not easy to maintain, particularly for me given my former identity as a primary teacher. As I have discussed, I aspired towards a 'participant-as-observer' role (Bryman, 2008) but I was aware that 'over-rapport' or failing to treat participant perspectives as problematic is a prevalent theme

within ethnographic research (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). However, Coffey (1999: 36) believes that the 'choices between involvement and immersion, rapport and over-rapport, familiarity and loss of self are often too starkly drawn to accurately reflect the full range of chosen and imposed identities assumed during and beyond the field'. She provides a detailed examination of the ethnographic self or selves by exploring roles and concepts of self which have been adopted within different research projects. Her view is that the subtle interaction of these roles that can be extremely productive and that even over-familiarity can be a legitimate stance provided the researcher engages in critical examination of their role. This is not to say that warnings about over-identification with participants are not valid but she suggests that this is just one end of a continuum of experiences and identities that can be both methodologically and personally significant to the researcher. Woods (1996: 1) also highlights the importance of researcher biography:

One often does research in part to discover more about oneself. This is not to say that it is self-indulgent, but that it is chiefly through the self that one comes to understand the world. In turn, the discoveries one makes reflect back upon the self, which then feed back into the research, and so on.

(Woods, 1996: 1)

This was an important part of my rationale and I have found Coffey's (1999) conceptualisation of multiple selves extremely useful in helping me to make sense of both the development of my own sense of self, including my emotional responses to the way I was positioned by participants' apparent perceptions of me, and my own reflections on their dispositions:

Selves and identities are fragmented and connected; open to shifts and negotiations. They are ambiguous, the outcome of culturally available and defined interactions, actions, meanings and values. The self is not so much complete and rounded, as partial and multiple.

(Coffey, 1999: 35-6)

Ball's (1990: 158) notion of balancing the 'ideal self-as-researcher' with 'an acceptable and possible self in the field setting' has also been useful. He describes this as a deliberate process full of risk, uncertainty and self-doubt and ultimately 'a compromise'. Indeed, the

way that I was perceived by my participants was generally quite difficult to gauge as this is usually unacknowledged requiring intuitive interpretation, often reliant on tacit knowledge and always dynamic. I reflected most frequently on three particular ‘fragments’ of my role in my field notes, as I now discuss. I have termed these, my ‘ideal self-as-researcher’ (Ball, 1990) and my ‘unusual type of adult’ self (Christensen, 2004), both of which encompass principles and practices which I strove to observe, maintain and develop, and my ‘teacher self’ which relates to my prior experiences in schools. All were complex, presenting both opportunities and constraints. In this way, I have identified some of my different ‘selves’ below, considering how these and other fragments continued to emerge and shift throughout the fieldwork phase.

### *5.7.1 My ‘ideal self-as-researcher’*

Before the data collection began, I had given a lot of thought to the importance of establishing rapport within a performative culture because, as I suspected would be the case, I was initially viewed with a certain amount of suspicion. Troman (2000) argues that the broader performative context may have resulted in the erosion of trust in modern society but that it is possible to cultivate meaningful, collaborative relationships at the micro-level if trust is treated as a ‘project’. This seems similar to Giddens’ (1994: 14) conception of ‘active trust’ which ‘has to be won... it is contingent not guaranteed’ which can be particularly difficult in the current political context of ‘manufactured uncertainty’. As such, my primary aim was to build meaningful research relationships characterised by openness, trust and respect through carefully considered daily ethical practices. These are necessarily developed at the micro-level as part of everyday interactions, for example through a consistent approach and ‘demonstrable warmth and openness’ on my part (Giddens, 1990: 121), built on the premise that there is a ‘reciprocal relationship between ethics and practice’ (Robson, 2009: 2). I was aware that reconciling any general principles

with the particular considerations that may arise during my research would inevitably be problematic as disparities of power are inevitable and issues that I had not yet considered were likely to arise. I reflected on my own practices after each fieldwork visit and engaged in regular dialogue with participants to ensure that I was taking their perspectives into account. As discussed in 5.3, I have also consulted ‘critical friends’ in the research community, to enable me to maintain a sense of distance when needed whilst respecting the confidences promised to participants.

### 5.7.2 My ‘teacher self’

I expected people I met in the school to be familiar to me, in terms of my understandings of their role and pedagogical values, and I thought about how my former identity as a primary teacher might influence my research. I considered how I might slip into evaluating or identifying with practice, initially aiming to avoid this. However, Coffey (1999) takes a different position, discussing some extraordinary examples of ‘insider research’ based on what could be argued to be over-identification with participants. She argues that these can be methodologically and personally significant in their own right and that those who engage in fieldwork from an assumed position of ‘knowing’ due to past biography, as was the case for me, possess some of the tacit knowledge and an empathic self which can help the researcher to gain acceptance even if it is not a comfortable experience in terms of the researcher’s own sense of identity. In her view, ‘the weakness is not total immersion but failure to acknowledge and critically (though not necessarily negatively) engage with the range of possibilities of position, place and identity’ (Coffey 1999: 36). Certainly, I have based some of my intuitive interpretations on my identification with the teachers and memories of my own experiences as a teacher and this identity helped me to gain acceptance in the field, from the perspectives of my adult participants at least. However, the performative culture proved problematic at points and it



became important to make deliberate attempts to set my 'teacher self' aside at times and to consider ways to retain a focus on my participants' perspectives. I discuss this in relation to my rapport with participants below and I return to it in Chapter Ten

### 5.7.3 *My 'unusual type of adult' self*

Although I have not included all the data generated with the children for the reasons discussed at the beginning of section 5.4, my reflections on the role I aspired towards in my interactions with children is relevant because this shaped my participant observer role and my classroom interactions with both children and teacher. I anticipated that the children would recognise that their domains are structured by adults and that this power relationship would influence their interpretation of my role and therefore my relationship with them. This can be all too easily forgotten by adults 'who cannot move from their own version of an experience or, in the urgency of their research, find it difficult to see the alternative interpretation' (Cook and Hess, 2007: 44). This formed part of my rationale for the photographic interviews (Cottle, 2017), and, in my daily interactions with children, I aspired towards the role of 'least adult' (Mandell, 1988). This involved putting my views about the competency of the child into practice and demonstrating to them that I take their views seriously through my words and actions as an involved participant observer. My thinking was that, as an adult, I may not share children's perspectives on social phenomena but if I aimed to pursue their interests and interact with them, on their terms wherever possible, then it may be possible to achieve a mutual understanding through joint action (Mandell, 1988).

As Corsaro (1981) discusses, it is not possible to overcome all obstacles when engaging with children. He cites physical size differences between adults and children as one such example when engaging in with young children in their play as part of participant

observations. Nor is it possible to completely resolve the imbalance in the power dynamic between adults and children. However, that these differences can become less difficult with time, patience and determination, again linking back to the idea of the ‘trust project’ (Corsaro, 1981; Troman, 2000). On balance, I believe I was perceived as ‘an unusual type of adult’ by my child participants (Christensen, 2004: 174). This involves continually trying to balance being recognised as an adult whilst avoiding pre-conceived ideas they may have about ‘adulthood’. As part of this, I explained why I was there and what I was doing regularly until they were used to my presence and I always responded to any questions they had about this. After the first few weeks these were infrequent and, overall, the children seemed to accept my presence, not that they had the power to change it, albeit with apparent puzzlement at times. We had some conversations that were very productive from my point of view and that seemed to be enjoyed by us all.

#### *5.7.4 Rapport with staff and children*

I was constantly aware of how busy the staff were. Liz referred explicitly to the intensification of teachers’ work in our initial interview before the data collection began and she seemed very protective of their time. At that time, she cited the recent Ofsted inspections as the main reason for this; the Ofsted reports are discussed in detail in Chapter Six. Some of the teachers’ comments also appeared to indicate a fear of surveillance and, despite my assurances to the contrary, a perception that my research may have some kind of evaluative purpose. This wariness is most likely linked to misconceptions of my role related to the surveillance practices that are a common feature in contemporary schools, perhaps putting me into an external ‘expert’ category, or to the broader performative macro-context which has resulted in the disintegration of trust in modern society (Troman, 2000). Below, I provide some brief reflections on my relationships with participants.

#### *5.7.4.1 Liz the head teacher*

Liz and I met only a handful of times which made it difficult to develop a rapport and she seemed to become more wary of my role as researcher as the year progressed. I had one initial meeting with her in June before the fieldwork phase began, an hour-long interview in March and she was part of two observations. These latter were an assembly that she led and a parent event, although as both were general observations I did not observe her specifically or in depth in either case. In our initial meeting, unsurprisingly, we shared a common interest in creativity and briefly discussed the IPC with Liz mentioning that it was ‘not a favourite’ with the local authority and Ofsted. Perhaps for this reason, she appeared to feel the need to legitimate either my presence or the school focus on ‘creativity’ or perhaps both by linking my research to the school strategic plan and performance management processes. Initially I was quite alarmed as I felt this presented dilemmas in relation to my other aims, i.e. that it would have a clear impact upon the teachers’ perceptions of my role, at least the first instance, and that this is likely to filter down to the children, making my ‘trust project’ with both groups of participants all the more challenging. However, I had accepted that I would need to adopt different roles in exchange for access to carry out my research and, as it turned out, this did not transpire. I did not often see her when I was at the school, likely due to her busy schedule compared with my weekly schedule of visits and the need for both of us to move between the two school buildings (she had an office in each building). She also seemed to become less visible in the school as the year went on, particularly after the results of the ‘mock Ofsted’ in May, as I discuss in the next chapter. Indeed, I was unsuccessful in my efforts to set up our second interview. By this stage, I had begun to feel that I was an unwelcome presence in her eyes particularly as her leadership position itself had seemed to grow more tenuous over the year, as the teachers indicated in their second interview. The chapters that follow evidence some of the struggles she was facing and, during the summer term, she announced her intention to retire in December 2013.

Overall, it was harder to conceptualise Liz's pedagogical and leadership dispositions compared to the other teachers because I did not observe her practice and interact with her regularly as I did with the teachers. I have therefore been more reliant on her interview data, insights gleaned from my discussions with the teachers and documentary data.

#### ***5.7.4.2 Jennifer and the Reception class***

Jennifer's Reception class consisted of 30 children aged 4-5 and one full-time TA, Mrs Smith, although sometimes Mrs Smith was required to work with different classes if there were staff absences for example. All classes in the Infant School had names, I re-named hers 'Bluebells'. Jennifer appeared to be comfortable with my presence in the classroom from early into the fieldwork phase. Over the year, we developed a sense of camaraderie which paved the way for some candid interviews in which she felt comfortable to express any frustrations she was feeling, indeed the latter turned out to be a major theme. She often invited me to extra events, which I attended when I could, including the parents' tea party, sports day and a school trip, and even invited me to become a part of the class photograph. I acted as an extra helper where it was not in tension with my researcher role. This did not generally cause any difficulties because the Reception class routines involved a mixture of adult- and child-led activities. Therefore, I generally adopted the role of 'participant-as-observer' when child-led activities were underway and a more detached, non-participant observer role during whole-class, teacher-directed activities, although Jennifer would often talk directly to me or she or the children would invite me to contribute to the discussion. I would also talk to the children as they engaged in activities where they were happy for me to do so and I joined in their play if invited. I ensured that Jennifer was happy for me to interact with the children in this flexible way, which she was, although she was initially nervous when I observed the children during their child-initiated 'choosing time' activities because she was used to being evaluated based on interpretations

of ‘planned, purposeful play’ (DfE, 2012a: 6); see 4.4.3, page 75. I discuss this further in Chapter Eight.

#### ***5.7.4.3 Peter and the Year 2 class***

Peter’s Year 2 class (the ‘Snowdrops’) consisted of 30 children and there were various teaching and learning support assistants who were there at different points to support individual children or small groups. I was unsure if Peter, the Year 2 teacher, was comfortable with my presence in the classroom and it took time for me to figure out my role. This was related to the formal pedagogic style that he adopted and possibly to his interpretation of my role and research. He rarely deviated from a carefully planned approach and even prepared notes for our first interview, though not the second where he appeared to feel more comfortable. Some of the issues that he brought up, indicated that he perhaps saw my research as a mouthpiece or vehicle for change in a similar way to Liz. He also mentioned how he felt ‘othered’ by his gender at times, being one of the few males on staff, and this is likely to have been a factor our relationship.

The Year 2 children frequently engaged in structured learning activities which they were expected to complete individually in silence or near silence therefore I took the role of non-participant observer in the majority of my observations in this classroom. However, it was also useful to take this position because I needed to work hard at remaining impassive or neutral in his classroom as I sometimes found the relationships rather too formal, particularly as this clashed with my ‘ideal self’ and ‘teacher self’ roles discussed above. I would position myself somewhere at the edge of the classroom to observe and take notes, although I felt self-conscious at times, particularly when the children started up a conversation with me. At these times, I gauged my responses carefully, trying to maintain a distance when they had been asked to work silently because I did not want to encourage them in the ‘wrong’ behaviour, particularly as Peter used a system of rewards and

sanctions in which they received points for the ‘correct’ behaviour. That said, I took a more active role on rare occasions. For example, when Peter invited me to introduce myself to the whole class for a few minutes during my first classroom observation, I discussed my research and my role and they asked lots of questions and made links with their own experiences, for example one boy had a brother who had just left to go to university. However, throughout the year, the children largely ignored me during classroom observations except for occasional discussions with individual children or small groups depending on the task in which they were engaged.

#### ***5.7.4.4 Claire and the Year 6 class***

Year 6 consisted of 25 children with occasional support for specific children based on their statement of special educational needs. I quickly developed a rapport with Claire who, like Jennifer, was comfortable with my presence in the classroom from early into the research. She seemed generally confident, especially considering that she had not yet completed her first full year of teaching; her colleagues noted that she was ‘never afraid to speak her mind’. Again, Claire and the children largely ignored my presence in the classroom but this was generally because the children were very engaged in activities and I felt welcome but did not want to interrupt. Therefore my observations were frequently non-participant but without the same level of discomfort that I felt in Year 2 as the relationships between adults and children were much warmer. As I discuss in Chapter Seven onwards, Claire believed in a flexible environment and aspired towards creating a ‘safe’ space and encouraging respectful relationships, therefore our values were similar in this respect. However, I also adopted the detached observer role for pragmatic reasons because it was physically easier to remain in one space as there was little room to manoeuvre in the classroom and I tended to remain at the back of the room on the sofa in the library area taking notes. I did have a number of informal conversations with individual children and

Claire, during some of the group work activities, towards the end of lessons or at playtimes.

## **5.8 Chapter conclusion**

This chapter has also presented the specifics of my own design, including my methodological stance, the steps I have taken to ensure the rigour and credibility of the research and the methods and analytic strategies employed. Designing the research within ethnographic traditions has enabled an interrelated, iterative process of data construction, analysis and theorising (Hammersley and Atkinson, 2007). Whilst, combining ethnography with Bourdieusian analysis has provided ways to contextualise the data ‘in relation to larger conditions of possibility’ (Sallaz, 2018: 490), as well as ensuring that the research design is systematic and reflexive which is part of both traditions. My findings were based on the research design, methods and data analysis as discussed in this chapter. Chapter Six presents the context of the case study school. This and the discussion of findings that follow in Chapters Seven, Eight and Nine utilise Bourdieu theoretical constructs in order to conceptualise the creative dispositions of the staff and the ways that these interacted with other dispositions within their pedagogical habitus, considering how these shaped and were shaped by fields in which they were situated.

## **Chapter Six: The Context of Brightwater School**

### **6.1 Chapter introduction**

This chapter presents the context of Brightwater School. Context can be underemphasised in educational research except as a background to set the scene, but it should be taken seriously in a study of enactment (Braun *et al.*, 2011). This is because the enactment of ideals and interpretations of policy is shaped by the field(s) in which a person is situated and there is an interaction between practice and structural contextual factors which shape each other through habitus (Wainwright, 2006). I have taken a model developed by Braun *et al.* (2011) as a guide for a systematic examination that takes into account both the local and national context at the time the research was carried out. I have drawn on data gathered from observations and interviews but also policy documents, the school website and Ofsted reports, as discussed in Chapter Five. Section 6.2 provides a brief overview of the school and its material context, introducing some of the issues that will be explored in more depth in the rest of the chapter. It includes information on intake, staff numbers and roles and the school's reputation within the local community. Section 6.3 then considers the fields that intersect with the school field and their effects, including 'pressures and expectations from broader policy context' (Braun *et al.*, 2011: 588), the school's relationship with local authority and engagement with creative initiatives. This includes an analysis of the way that the school defined creativity publicly through its website and the policy documents that staff were following during the data collection phase. Section 6.4 then considers structural relations and positions in the school field focusing on the staff positions, drawing on elements from the material and external context and the ways these were interpreted by staff.

This chapter draws on four key narratives (or 'field rules') that emerged from my participants' accounts to which I will return in my discussion of teachers' creative



dispositions in Chapters Seven and Eight and the factors that enabled and constrained their enactments of creativity in Chapter Nine. These narratives were explained in section 5.6.3 (page 113), but I summarise the definitions again here, also noting that they manifested differently within the experiences of each member of staff as will be evidenced in the chapters that follow. The ‘two schools’ narrative relates to the particular situated context of the school and the ways that geographical space and the deployment of staff within and across the school shaped relationships and practices as well as the traditions of primary schooling and dissonances between ‘key stages’. I also include consideration of the overlap between the fields of early years practice and schooling here. The ‘visitors’ narrative relates to ways that surveillance practices were imposed upon the school and the ways that these were internalised by the staff within their own practice, for example the ‘mock Ofsted’ is discussed in 6.3.3 and I discuss its impact in Chapter Nine. ‘Coverage’ is the third narrative which shaped participants’ perceptions of curriculum as well as their notions of ‘progress’ and ‘readiness’, with the latter referencing both getting children ready for the next stage of their education and being ‘ready’ for inspection (Perryman *et al.*, 2018). Finally, the ‘creative school’ narrative describes Liz’s vision for the school as headteacher and the collective efforts of the staff to put their definitions of creativity into practice as a school; this refers to their engagement with creative policies and initiatives, both locally developed and externally authored. The visitors and coverage narratives and aspects of the two schools narrative are not specific to the field of Brightwater School, relating to cross-field effects derived from the more dominant field of political power, transmitted through education policy and filtered through the local authority and school leadership team. These narratives in particular are externally and coercively imposed largely by Ofsted, or rather the ‘threat’ of Ofsted which causes staff to self-censor their performance on both an individual and collective basis. The language of ‘coverage’ and ‘readiness’ was also enshrined within the statutory curriculum documentation for both primary and early years that the school was required to use at that time (DfEE and QCA,

1999; DfE, 2012a; DfE, 2013). Indeed, the revised national curriculum (discussed in 6.3.1) explicitly states that the ‘legal requirement is to cover the content of the programmes of study for Years 3 to 6 by the end of Key Stage 2’ (DfE 2013: 6). These narratives and the power relationships they represented developed and changed over the year, demonstrating that context is specific as well as dynamic and shifting, both within and outside of schools (Braun *et al.*, 2011).

## **6.2 Brief overview of the school**

Brightwater Primary School is a two-form entry primary school situated in South East England in a residential area. At the time the data were collected (2012-13), it was a state-funded voluntary controlled faith school comprising two different school sites following the ‘hard’ federation of an Infant and Junior school five years earlier. A ‘hard’ federation means that constituent schools have separate Ofsted inspections and separate budget allocations but the federation budget itself is overseen by a single senior leadership team and there is a single governing body (Chapman, 2015). Liz Fleming, one of my research participants, had been the headteacher of the Infant school for four years when the schools federated and became executive headteacher of the federation.

The two schools were both linked to the same church and came together for special events, for example religious assemblies and ‘Enrichment weeks’ and the two staff groups attended professional development days together. However, it seemed that they had operated quite separately on a daily basis until the beginning of the fieldwork year at least; hence the ‘two schools’ narrative. In terms of physical space, the two school sites were within a five minute walk of each other. Each consisted of a main school building which housed the majority of the classrooms, offices for senior and administrative staff, a library, a school hall where children had assemblies or performances, PE (Physical Education)

lessons and meals; the Junior school also had a computer suite. The Nursery and the Year 2 and Year 6 classrooms were in outbuildings set away from each main school building. The Junior School had much more land including large playing fields which were shared with the Infant School, although the younger children had limited access to these.

The school was facing several challenges in the year in which the fieldwork was carried out. These largely related to the 'two schools narrative' and the external policy context. In terms of policy, it was a critically sensitive period due to several rapid and significant changes to the curriculum, assessment and inspection systems (Ansell and Nicholson, 2014; Courtney, 2016; Perryman *et al.*, 2018) and the staff were coming to terms with these recent changes. In addition, the Junior School had been downgraded from 'good' (2006) to 'satisfactory' (2008) shortly after the federation and had again been rated 'satisfactory' in an inspection that took place in May 2012, a few months before the fieldwork commenced. The Infant school had retained its 'good' judgement in an interim assessment (March, 2012) but the Ofsted document provided little detail, suggesting that a full Ofsted inspection would follow in a year or so. According to Liz, the rationale for the federation was to cut costs and Ofsted had pronounced its 'value for money' as 'effective' or 'satisfactory' until the recent inspection. By 2013, in inspections shortly after the fieldwork phase, Ofsted was questioning this and recommending it as an area for improvement.

When the fieldwork began, the staff were also adjusting to a number of changes to staffing. The majority of the teaching staff were quite young and had limited teaching experience. Six out of seventeen were completely new to the school, three in each school, and, at least two of those were newly qualified (NQTs). In addition, both the school leadership team and school governing body had been restructured in response to the Junior Ofsted report recommendations. A new layer of middle leaders had been created and there was a new

deputy, Lucy, working across both schools. Prior to that, there had been a separate deputy in each school until the Junior School deputy left in the spring term of the previous academic year. Lucy had previously acted as deputy in the Infant School but had no experience of working in the Junior School.

Over the course of the year, it became clear that many of the school's local policies and practices were driven by neoliberal policy concerns, particularly the threat of Ofsted and the pressure on primary schools to academise; these limited or interrupted the agency of the staff within the school and shaped their interactions with the local authority (Perryman *et al.*, 2018). I discuss these elements in more depth below as well as focusing on the insights that both the configuration of staff teams and the physical environment gave into the relationships between children and adults, between staff and indeed between the two schools. This consideration of the rules, practices and boundaries in operation with the school informs my discussion of enablers and constraints in Chapter Nine. I begin by briefly sketching out the school intake and staffing.

### *6.2.1 Intake*

According to DfE (2018) statistics, there were 397 pupils on roll across the two schools during the fieldwork phase. The Ofsted reports that were current at the time describe each separate school as average or smaller than average. As can be seen in Appendix 16, the school had low numbers of children speaking English as an additional language (EAL); 11.6% in the Infant School and 7.3% in the Junior School. The large majority of families at the time of the research were from a White British heritage, with a few from other White or Pakistani heritages according to these Ofsted reports, although I observed a handful of children from other ethnic groups. The proportion of children known to be eligible for free school meals was also low (4.1% Infant and 6.8% Junior; this is described as 'average' by

Ofsted) and the situation was similar with regard to children with SEN. 4.2% (Infant) and 10.2% (Junior) of the children required support through ‘school action’ (where support is provided for children’s additional needs from within the school) and 5.7% (Infant) and 11.7% (Junior) were termed ‘school action plus’ or had a ‘statement of special educational needs’ (where support is required from external agencies for example a psychologist or therapist). The learning needs related mainly to speech, language and communication difficulties according to the current Ofsted Reports (Infant Report, 2008; Junior Report, 2012). The prior Ofsted reports (2006) and the ones that followed (2013, 2016), did not indicate any major changes to intake although Liz, the headteacher, felt it had briefly become more culturally and socio-economically diverse around the time of the federation with an ‘array of families ranging from EAL, refugees, travellers, Afro-Caribbean community’ but noted that they were ‘back to the middle class families now....we’re still getting some of those families but not as many.’ (Liz, interview).

### *6.2.2 Staffing*

There was a staff team of fifty-four at the time of the research (Appendix 17 provides an at-a-glance overview of the school staff). This of course included the three teacher participants: Jennifer Rosco, the Reception teacher, and Peter Gregg, the Year 2 teacher, therefore both located in the Infant school, and Claire Jones, the Year 6 teacher, in the Junior school. These key participants including Liz, the executive headteacher, are introduced in more detail in Chapter Seven and Appendix 7 provides a table of more detailed biographical information. The staff was predominantly white British and female. Peter was one of four male members of staff in the school, only two were teachers. There were nineteen school governors on the body that governed both schools. This included the vicar, three out of four members of the school senior leadership team and the nursery teacher. Nine were parents of children who attended the school in the past or currently and

it was not clear how the other governors were connected to the school. There were various sub-committees dealing with Standards and Pupil Welfare, Finance and Personnel and Premises and one governor had been assigned to focus on assessment data and monitoring following their most recent Ofsted (Junior School Ofsted Report, 2012). It seemed that the governing body had reshuffled and changed its internal structure following the pronouncement that their 'monitoring and evaluation of the school's work is not yet rigorous enough to hold the school to account for its performance' in the latest Ofsted and the prior Infant School Ofsted report too (2008).

### *6.2.3 Reputation*

The Junior school seemed to have had a good reputation in the local community, at least until the federation when the situation started to shift with the downgrading of the school's academic performance in Ofsted inspections. Ofsted (2000) reported that it was 'popular' in the local area, that parents 'actively supported children's learning at home' and the parent teacher association was 'thriving'. Claire, the Year 6 teacher, who was local to the area, also remarked on its 'fantastic' reputation as she was growing up. According to various Ofsted reports (2000; 2006; 2008), some parents wanted greater consultation and more extra-curricular activities but the majority were happy with their children's personal and academic development and progress and this continued in subsequent reports although, parents and Ofsted inspectors were not in agreement over the school's performance by May 2012, as discussed below. The Infant school had a more variable reputation prior to the fieldwork phase with a number of changes to the leadership and the governing body between 1998 and 2004 and it seemed that relationships with parents had been problematic. The 2004 report, published shortly after Liz had taken the role of headteacher, referred to 'recent troubled times' but stated that parents no longer felt 'kept at arm's length' since Liz had become headteacher. Parents and Ofsted were very happy

with her leadership at that point with various positive comments about her experience and knowledge, her 'clear vision' and the way that she had quickly 'created good sense of team spirit [and] a common sense of purpose to create a positive climate for learning' with effective communication 'at every level'. The 2008 report also described the 'strong, very effective leadership' quoting a parent who talked about Liz's 'infectious' enthusiasm for the school. However, over the course of the fieldwork year, Liz' reputation began to wane in the eyes of staff and local confederation. As I did not collect any data from parents, I cannot ascertain their views but all the Ofsted reports until 2016, reported positive views from parents. However, the 2016 reports refer to a 'legacy of weak progress' and one Junior school parent was quoted discussing 'the vast improvement since the headteacher took over', referring to Liz's successor, a view apparently shared by other parents and inspectors according to these reports.

### **6.3 The external context**

As discussed in section 3.5, English schools are situated within a neoliberal national system which directs their efforts in several important areas and which has re-defined capital within the field of schooling. The externally imposed system of Ofsted inspection and the publication of league tables of assessment data together engender a focus on comparison and competition across various categories, based largely on measurements of children's 'levels of attainment' (test scores). Positive Ofsted inspection judgements are therefore key symbolic capital in the field of schooling where schools are pitted against each other. Each school must therefore get involved in the production of particular kinds of performative data to evidence 'good' or 'outstanding' achievement and therefore 'good' or 'outstanding' teaching. This leads schools to adopt performance-driven approaches, Brightwater was no exception. As this research demonstrates, the autonomy of an

individual school and the staff within depends very much on how successful the school is in playing this game within their local community and on a national scale.

### *6.3.1 Changes to curriculum and assessment and the system of inspection*

This section summarises the changes to the system of curriculum, assessment and inspection that had recently taken place when the fieldwork began, although the sheer number of changes makes this a challenge. Liz admitted they were finding it difficult to keep up with the policy documents:

It's large documents! If it was summarised...you could keep up...I get to the point now where I actually hone in on the title and then say, "Yes that would be relevant to us" or the senior management team split the documents along with the governing body and we then feedback to each governor's committee. It's just an impossible situation. And then you hear about something else coming on board!

(Liz, interview)

In terms of curriculum, all schools were preparing to implement the revised national curriculum (DfE, 2013) which has been described as an 'enacted curriculum of basic skills, rule recognition and compliance' (Luke, 2010: 180). The EYFS had also been revised and the Foundation Stage Profile Assessment slimmed down from 69 to 17 outcomes (DfE, 2012c). This included 'a much sharper focus upon literacy and maths, with substantially raised thresholds, making them harder to achieve' and a shift from a number scoring system to 'best fit' judgements ('emerging', 'expected', 'exceeding') (Roberts-Holmes, 2015: 304). The same year, the controversial Year 1 Phonics Check (DfE, 2012b) had been introduced into all schools and the use of synthetic phonics was prominent having been enshrined in the Teaching Standards (DfE, 2011b), despite the concerns expressed by professionals (Ansell and Nicholson, 2014).

In addition, between December 2011 and September 2012 three revised Ofsted (2012a; 2012b; 2012c) inspection frameworks were introduced in rapid succession. This was a



significant departure from the usual approach. Since its inception in 1992, Ofsted had ordinarily published revised frameworks every three years or so and there was little change between 2005 and 2011 bar some minor revisions in 2009 (Perryman *et al.*, 2018). The 2012 frameworks introduced several significant changes, two were published in January and the other in September.

The January 2012 frameworks narrowed the focus of Ofsted inspections from 27 to 5 areas. These were: children's achievement (attainment in standardised tests and their progress within the school); quality of teaching; children's behaviour and safety; leadership and management; and overall effectiveness. Many of the former 27 areas were still to be inspected in order to contribute to these 5 judgements but others were removed entirely, for example school efforts to promote community cohesion, the focus on healthy eating, discussion of the care, guidance and support staff offered to children and the development of workplace skills (Courtney, 2016). Secondly, the scope of stakeholder surveillance was increased through new 'Parent View' area on the Ofsted website, to which parents were encouraged to submit their experiences of the school at any point in addition to the usual consultations between Ofsted inspectors and parents during inspections. Thirdly, there were changes to the frequency of inspections based on the rating assigned to a school; for example full inspections of 'outstanding' schools were no longer to be routine. The final change was that children's progress (and therefore school performance) was no longer to be evaluated using contextual value-added (CVA) statistical modelling but to return to value-added (VA) models (Ofsted 2012a; 2012b). VA, first used in published school performance data between 2002 and 2006, describes how much 'value' the school has added to a child by comparing children's actual outcomes with expected outcomes, which are based on prior attainment plus the national median for that level. CVA, used between 2006 and 2012, was intended to 'level the playing field...by controlling for non-school influences' (Perry, 2016: 1060). It was a complex multi-level

model that attempted to capture effects of a range of different factors. In addition to prior attainment, these included gender, age within year, English as an additional language status, ethnic group, entitlement to ‘free school meals’ (which is a common indicator for socio-economic deprivation), interactions between ethnicity and deprivation, special educational needs, mobility (recent school movers) and school-level average (Evans, 2008). The Department for Education (2010: 68) rationale for the move to disregard these characteristics was that it was ‘morally wrong to have an attainment measure which entrenches low aspirations for children because of their background.’ Both VA and CVA models have their flaws, however, bearing in mind the way that this data is used, accounting only for prior attainment is likely to further disadvantage schools in areas of socio-economic deprivation because the CVA data would previously have accounted for the fact that children in these schools may make less progress due to non-school factors; (Courtney, 2016: 631) argues that this revision has therefore ‘decoupled failure from effort’. This was one of the most significant changes in the view of my participants. The intake and locale of Brightwater School potentially positioned it positively in the field of schooling despite the requirement to disregard CVA variables, however these changes did affect the ways that they perceived parents and children. For example, some families were viewed as ‘needy’ (Liz, interview). They were sometimes positioned as the bearers of negative capital (Wacquant, 1998) in terms of the impact that this could have on school performance. Below, Jennifer, the Reception teacher, is expressing the view that it was unfair that intake characteristics were no longer taken into account when children’s progress would soon be related to her individual performance management goals and her pay. She was not alone in her concerns:

...in that class last year there were travellers, there were a few EAL and there were a couple of children who had special educational needs and things. So there would have been children in that class that would have dragged down an overview of the class.

(Jennifer, interview 2)

Whilst other parents were seen as more of a threat, positioned as consumers focusing on performative quality or as surveillance, particularly considering the expanded scope of the 'Parent View' tool (Crozier 1998; Cottle and Alexander, 2014). These were labelled 'pushy' and needed to be kept 'on side'.

In September 2012, there were another three key revisions to the framework. Inspection notice was reduced from 1 to 2 days to one afternoon (Ofsted, 2012c). The 'satisfactory' rating was replaced with 'requires improvement', an example of the 'linguistic reinforcement of power relations' (Courtney, 2016: 633). Also, two such ratings awarded consecutively, would result in a categorisation of 'special measures', which is the first of two sub-ratings within 'inadequate' and the risk of closure. This latter point signified the return of 'limiting judgements' which are judgements used to pre-determine inspection ratings in another area. Another important limiting judgment was that schools could not achieve an overall 'outstanding' judgement unless teaching was 'outstanding'.

Aside from pace and rate of change, these reforms were both 'product and producer' of a restructured relationship between schools and the state and a shift from a panoptic to a post-panoptic regime of inspection (Courtney, 2016: 624). 'Panoptic performativity' (Perryman, 2006) means that inspection is not just about surveillance but also the fear of surveillance. It is this fear that causes schools to self-govern their performance in order to produce 'displays of quality' (Ball, 2003: 216). Post-panopticism arises from the idea that playing the game of panoptic performativity leads to permanent artifice because the goal posts are constantly shifting and the norms are 'fuzzy' (Courtney, 2016). For Courtney (2016) the purpose of this is to expose the inevitable failures to comply and thus preserve the status quo and the power of the political ruling class, generally at the expense of the vulnerable or socio-economically disadvantaged. Taking the limiting judgments point

discussed above as an example of fuzzy norms, these had been removed in January 2012 only to be replaced in September 2012 which can only have added to teachers' uncertainty about the changes and their permanence. This, together with the reduced notice for inspection and the looming threat of performance-related pay (introduced just after the fieldwork phase in September 2013), meant that the 'veneers of success' were more likely to be present all the time as teachers become 'rehearsed, trained and inculcated in Ofsted-friendly 'effectiveness' in a permanent way' (Perryman *et al.*, 2018: 161). Although there is evidence that even the supposed arbiters of the system, the Ofsted inspectors, have been struggling with their shifting role in this unstable system at the time (Baxter and Clarke, 2013). Certainly, the constantly shifting definitions of success and progress caused uncertainty and anxiety to the staff in my study. It also caused tensions in their relationships with the local authority and there were casualties, as I discuss below.

### *6.3.2 Ofsted judgments on the performance of Brightwater School*

The rationale for the recent 'satisfactory' outcome was that the children's progress was 'not better than satisfactory' which was attributed to perceived gaps and failures in some of the teaching (Junior School Ofsted Report, May 2012). This was despite the children's achievements in national assessments being in line with national averages with a 'rising trend...clearly evidenced in school data and by standards seen by inspectors in lessons and in pupils' books'. The report highlighted that much of the teaching enthused and motivated children, extended children's thinking through questioning and opportunities for reflection but these were not the kinds of pedagogical interactions that were specifically linked with progress. A typical example of the latter involved '[planning] for pupils' different ability levels and the learning...[that is].. introduced in a carefully thought out, step-by-step way' (Junior Ofsted Report, 2012). There were many references to 'pace' and 'pitch' and ensuring that children understand the 'next steps' which some of the Junior

school teachers were apparently not getting right. The report also specifically designated reading and writing as areas requiring improvement. These had been areas for improvement historically in the Infant School Ofsted Reports, in 2008 the EYFS had been viewed as weaker than Key Stage 1 when ‘progress accelerates...because of rigorous tracking and high expectations’ but there was no detail on this in the 2012 interim assessment. Whereas, the 2012 Junior School report contained multiple references to the monitoring and evaluation of teaching, describing it as ‘adequate’ but then recommending that senior staff were trained in monitoring techniques so that they can devise plans for addressing ‘weaknesses’. The report also pronounced that the headteacher had a ‘clear vision’ but took on too much responsibility, noting that there was no deputy in post in the Junior school at the time of the inspection and that the team of senior leaders were inexperienced.

The school was given deadlines for improving both reading and writing (by July 2013) and the quality of teaching (by December 2012) and my data provide clear evidence that the school leadership team were attempting to prioritise these areas. It was an uncertain and challenging process, not least because they did not agree with all the judgments. They were in agreement with Ofsted on the staffing aspects and were making efforts to develop of leadership capacity, although they were hindered by an inexperienced staff body. However, they did not agree with the verdict on the children’s progress. Liz described the efforts of one of the governors to champion the school because he ‘felt very strongly that we had been given the wrong Ofsted judgement...and he did fight our corner really hard but it didn’t change’. He had then taken on a ‘statistical analysis’ role following the Ofsted to ‘work alongside us because he said he wasn’t going to have us...upset again’ (Liz interview). The parents and children also disagreed with Ofsted it seemed, the 2012 report flatly contradicted their positive views:

Almost all parents and carers think the school does a good job in developing their children's skills in reading, writing and mathematics, and pupils agree with their views. However, inspection evidence found progress to be satisfactory overall. For example, pupils working independently in a Year 3 class did not make good progress during a guided reading lesson because they did not receive sufficient guidance during their work about how to improve.

(Junior School Ofsted Report, May 2012).

This was again likely to induce some uncertainty although I have little data on this as my focus was the staff.

With regard to improving the teaching, the school leadership team appeared to be relying local authority 'audits' for support in this area, as discussed in the next section. However, in their second interviews, all three teachers said they were unsure how to improve and all commented that they had not been observed by senior leadership much at all over the year as they had been expecting. Rather it seemed to them that the leadership had been increasingly relying on the data teachers produced in response to the pressure 'coming in from the outside' (Peter, interview 2). There was a strong focus on data production across the school led by Lucy, the new deputy, which constrained enactments of creativity, as I discuss in Chapter Nine, although the teachers were not always clear on who was exerting the pressure. Peter referred to the almost spectral 'absent presence' (Troman 1997: 349) of 'the visitors', his descriptions of having to have books and systems ready at all times and the constant pressure to perform demonstrated the panoptic effect of the inspection regime (Perryman, 2006). He and the other teachers felt that ultimately this pressure came from official sources, the government, filtered through the school leadership, although in their second interview, all described feeling that the pressure had increased over the year and they were speaking of conflicting messages from Liz and Lucy as well as from local authority and they began to distrust advice from any of these sources. Then, despite their efforts, they were unsuccessful in Ofsted terms. Both schools received a 'requires improvement' rating in October 2013, which was a downgrade for the Infant school,

although of course this would have been ‘satisfactory’ in the previous inspection framework. This was foreshadowed in a ‘mock Ofsted’ inspection carried out by the local authority in May 2012. I present the ‘mock Ofsted’ below because it was experienced as a cross-field ‘event’ effect which had both sudden and lasting changes, providing evidence of the ways that externally imposed pressures marginalise creative dispositions. The 2013 inspections are also relevant to some extent because, although these took place after data collection, they were early into the new academic year and would likely have drawn on data produced in the 2012-13 school year. I therefore draw some comparisons between some of the 2013 Ofsted pronouncements and the staff perspectives before coming to the ‘mock Ofsted’.

Both inspections were carried out over the same two days, possibly by the same team although this is difficult to ascertain because Ofsted stopped naming inspectors on reports around this time. Either way, there were common themes between the two reports. Both pronounced that the federation had ‘not proved beneficial in improving pupil progress’ because responsibilities were ‘not shared effectively’ between the two schools. This was attributed to the high turnover of staff. As noted above, six teachers were new to the school in September 2012 and six (different) teachers left at the end of that year. This time leadership was criticised for lack of rigour as well as for taking on too much responsibility. Progress was described as ‘inconsistent’ in both schools, despite attainment again being above average. The focus on ‘pace’ and ‘pitch’ remained and there was criticism of the ‘lack of purpose’ in independent activities in the Nursery and Reception classrooms where ‘children are unclear about what they are supposed to be learning’, which was unsurprising given the emphasis on more formal content in the new curriculum framework (DfE, 2013). These same children, who would have been aged between three and five, were also deemed to be making ‘slower progress in writing than in other aspects of language development because teachers do not give writing a high enough focus in day-to-day activities’.

However, over the fieldwork phase, Jennifer's feeling was that there was great emphasis on reading and writing in the school; this was borne out in my observations. This focus on 'purposeful' activities and progress in writing is concerning considering the age of the children, not to mention that the majority would have only been in school for four weeks. The further comment that 'the outdoor area is not always used sufficiently to promote writing' might seem to contradict other government guidance for early years practice, albeit non-statutory, that recommends flexible use of both indoor and outdoor spaces to enable children to 'explore, build, move and role play' (Early Education and DfE, 2012).

### *6.3.3 Relationships with the local authority and the 'Mock Ofsted'*

The school's relations with local government (pseudonym, 'Apley') seemed somewhat ambiguous from the outset. This is likely related to the changing role of local authorities at that time in the face of academisation policies and the general political uncertainty around what constituted success and failure for both schools and local authorities, discussed above. Liz referred more to the local confederation than the local authority. This was a sub-group of eleven local schools within a network of children's centres, schools and other partners, including key figures from the local authority. The confederation met at least a couple of times a term and Liz described it as a supportive forum. However, the minutes evidenced a pressure to perform and produce evidence of 'value for money' emanating from local authority interpretations of government policy as well as two of the immense contradictions in academisation policies. The first contradiction is that forced conversion is perceived as a threat and voluntary conversion an opportunity and the second relates to the rhetoric around autonomy which does not acknowledge that membership of a MAT entails new controls and accountabilities (Rayner *et al.*, 2018). In the confederation at that time, academisation was a key focus for the primary education phase because there were no primary academies in Apley at all at that point. Standards had apparently 'dipped'; out



of the 35 inspections that had taken place in Apley schools that term, 19 were ‘likely to be asked to become academies or join an academy chain’ according to the Confederation Minutes (December, 2012) which stated that ‘under these circumstances schools are unlikely to have any choice over which schools they are partnered with’. This evidences the ways that reforms were starting to decoupling schools from local authorities through enforced academisation (Courtney, 2016) and explains why Liz saw academisation both as a threat to their autonomy and a judgement on their performance. Her views were possibly also coloured by her experiences of the challenges of federating just two schools and, at that time, academisation represented a leap into the unknown for primary schools because academisation had mainly involved secondary schools until that point (DfE, 2018). The minutes also evidence the complex and shifting power relationships between government, local authority and schools. The new ‘Head of School Effectiveness’ for Apley was introduced in the December 2012 meeting and seemed to be a powerful figure who represented the central government perspective, as anecdote below demonstrates. It also illustrates some of the other effects of the policies discussed in sections above, the ways that the return to VA models were causing headteachers to position children, their general sense of disempowerment and the emotional toll of the pressure:

One head was pointing out...“I’ve been ‘satisfactory’ three times. I have high mobility of children. I have service children. I have travelling children. I have a high turnover of staff because [of] the children’s behaviour... I cannot work any more hours. I cannot get any more progress out of those children when they’re not in school long enough...” and this Head of School Effectiveness turned around and said, “It doesn’t matter. If you can’t do it, get out” and *that* was the attitude! You could feel the tension in the room. And you’ve got reputable heads there that have been doing the job for many years!...Well, she just burst into tears!

(Liz, interview)

These enactments of policy are fraught with risk and anxiety in the context of these radical changes which rupture and redesign the system causing ‘relentless strategizing in localised manifestations of change that bring challenges to survival as schools seek advantage in the local market-place’ (Rayner *et al.*, 2018: 158). This anecdote evidences the symbolic

violence of these processes but it is difficult to recognise. Liz and her teachers considered power to be in the hands of the local authority for most of the year, accepting their monitoring role as ‘trying to show you what sort of data you *should* present’ (Liz, headteacher) and welcoming local authority support where they felt uncertain. However, by the end of the year, they were to feel more uncertain about the local authority as an arbiter of quality, particularly as they had followed the local authority moderating processes but still been found wanting in the ‘mock Ofsted’. The teachers also started to question Liz’s leadership at this point.

The ‘mock Ofsted’ was carried out by the confederation linked to one of its apparent purposes, to help settings prepare for inspection. The minutes evidenced that they shared strategies to respond to performative pressures as discussed above. At least one headteacher was training as an Ofsted inspector in order to gain inside knowledge as she developed her school’s performance, therefore deliberately breaching the field of Ofsted itself. Others, including Liz, were engaging with an ‘HMI data analysis programme’ which could be interpreted as learning to speak the language of Ofsted. However, the ‘mock Ofsted’ strategy seemed counter-productive, at least in the way it was enacted at Brightwater where it caused stress and further confusion. The mock inspections, presented as ‘audits’ in the meeting minutes, were visits to the confederation schools organised around the Ofsted judgements and carried out by the head of the confederation (who was not the Head of School Effectiveness above). The Brightwater audit took place in May, during SATs week, which was a period of time in which I was asked not to observe. It was Peter who dubbed it the ‘mock Ofsted’ and it was not a supportive experience by all accounts. Indeed, the teachers were only informed about the inspection a couple of weeks in advance and, in their discussions with me, they did not seem clear on who was carrying out the visit or its purpose. The ‘visitors’ themselves may not have fully considered their purpose as there appeared to have been very little feedback that was useful to the teachers,

rather it seemed to constitute another layer of surveillance and self-governance based on local authority interpretations of Ofsted. However it caused considerable upset within Brightwater and positions and dispositions within the school shifted considerably seemingly as a result, as is discussed in Chapter Nine.

#### *6.3.4 Engagement with creativity initiatives*

Thus far, the discussion of context has largely focused on factors that constrained the autonomy of the school. This section considers their efforts to enable creativity. There was no single policy focusing on creativity in Brightwater School at the time the fieldwork took place. However, there was a focus on the website and it was referenced in various policy documents and artefacts posted there, for example newsletters and planning documents. In addition, the school had engaged with at least two initiatives intended to facilitate and develop creativity, although both the initiatives themselves and their application within the school were legitimated, at least in part, by neoliberal doxa. One initiative took place before my fieldwork started and seemingly made little impact on practice, this was their involvement in the government's Creative Partnerships Programme (CP) (DCMS, 2001) which was discussed in 4.4.3 (page 73). The second initiative was more prominent, this was the International Primary Curriculum (IPC), was introduced in 2008, which was perceived to be a 'creative curriculum'.

##### *6.3.4.1 Creativity in local school policy*

The statement quoted below was the closest I found to a coherent vision statement or school definition of creativity. It featured prominently on the website home page when I initially contacted the school, although it had been removed by the time my fieldwork began and I was unable to ascertain the reason for this.

We believe that creativity should be at the heart of everything we do, because it is in essence the thing that makes us human. Creativity is not just

about art, dance or music but a part of all subjects and is at the core of all our teaching. Our children learn to develop their creativity so that it inhabits their way of working, thinking and being.

(Brightwater School website, May 2012)

This reads as a mission statement declaring the centrality of creativity to both teaching and learning in the school, underpinned by a humanist sense of purpose (Sherman, 2009; Woods and Jeffrey, 2002). Aspects of the staff definitions connected to this, Liz's pedagogical values and definitions in particular as is discussed in Chapters Seven and Nine. Although it does not give a precise definition of creativity, describing as a 'thing' or 'essence' which is indicative of the various definitions in the creativity literature as discussed in Chapter Four, the statement suggests a multi-dimensional perspective based on a democratic 'little c' viewpoint (Craft, 2001). Creativity is presented as something meaningful, relevant and accessible to everyone, although the teachers are positioned as the creative experts and the children their apprentices. It is portrayed as cross-disciplinary and part of all teaching and learning, whilst acknowledging the particular associations between creativity and the arts, and it appears to locate creativity primarily both in the person and in processes, although the school environment is clearly key to nurturing children's creative development. Creativity is described as being located within the children themselves. The School Literacy policy referred to children's 'innate' creativity but here it is something to be developed and shaped as part of their school experience until it 'inhabits' the way that they act and think. This seems to refer to particular sets of creative dispositions which can become part of children's learner habitus. Other school policies referenced the kind of climate to which the school was aspiring which would appear to be conducive to developing these creative dispositions, using words such as 'trusting', 'caring', 'happy', 'secure' and 'stimulating'. Linked to this, there was an explicit focus on increasing children's self-esteem and sense of responsibility, with references to lifelong learning, encouraging children to take pride in the school and wider community. Although these elements were not directly linked to creativity on the site,

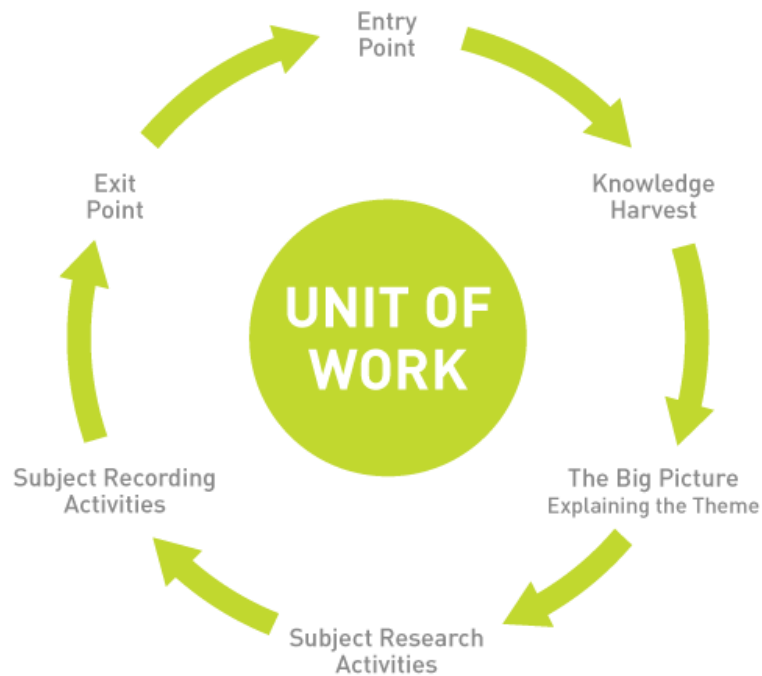
indeed they are common to many schools, they did connect with the staff definitions of creativity and the creative dispositions they hoped children would develop in their classrooms. Indeed, these elements of the pedagogical environment have been reported to enable creative teaching and learning, leading to increased confidence, motivation and engagement (Davies *et al.*, 2013; Jeffrey, 2006).

Other than this, there were multiple, quite diverse references to creativity in local policy documents and class newsletters on the website which were again linked to the teacher definitions. In the context of creative writing and mathematics, creativity was described as a set of cognitive skills or techniques. For example, ‘answering puzzling questions’ problem-solving and problem-posing, with the latter being linked to particular attributes such as perseverance and resilience (Carr and Claxton, 2002). It was also linked to specific contexts and activities, especially ‘hands-on’ activities such as cooking and to ‘creative drama sessions’ intended to increase empathy. This appears to demonstrate the points made in the literature about the ways that ‘creative learning’ has emerged from an amalgamation of different learning theories (Craft *et al.*, 2001; Sefton-Green *et al.*, 2011). Other references to ‘creative curriculum’ were explicitly linked to the IPC.

#### **6.3.4.2 *The International Primary Curriculum (IPC)***

The IPC is defined as a ‘thematic, creative curriculum’ by its designers (Fieldwork Education, 2019). *Fieldwork Education* is a company set up by ex-teachers who were contracted by the oil company, Shell, to develop guidance for their privately-owned international schools in the 1980s (Hayden and Thompson, 2012). This provides clear evidence of the commercial interest in engaging with and acquiring educational institutions and services as financial assets, although of course Shell needed to attract expatriate staff and specialist expertise and would also have had a vested interest in developing curriculum that would apply for children over the age of 9, who until that time were sent to boarding

school funded by Shell. The IPC is currently used by over 730 schools in 92 worldwide countries (Fieldwork Education, 2019). It is offered at a fee (£14, 500 in 2007 according to Liz) and member schools receive a programme pack of materials and join a network of services and professional development events. The programme pack consists of over 130 thematic, cross-curricular ‘units of work’ for three age ranges: five to seven year olds, seven to nine year olds, and nine to twelve year olds (Fieldwork Education, 2019). As a number of the IPC schools are in England, *Fieldwork Education* have also produced materials designed to help teachers cross reference between the ‘units of work’ and the national curriculum and the EYFS for a further fee, ‘make sure that we’ve got the proper national curriculum coverage’, as Liz described it. There is also an Assessment for Learning framework and a pack of IPC goals. Both articulate outcomes relating to subject knowledge, cross-curricular skills and learning dispositions which are deemed ‘essential in 21<sup>st</sup> century’, for example, the promotion of cultural awareness and ‘international-mindedness’, confidence, adaptability and risk. The units are all structured similarly, as represented by the figure below, and are intended to allow teachers and children to focus the enquiry to their needs and interests.



*Figure 2 Structure and terminology of an IPC thematic unit of work*

A unit starts with an ‘entry point’, an event or activity introducing the children to the new topic, this is decided by teachers. The ‘Knowledge Harvest’ then brings the focus to the children and their enquiry, as described in the extract below. The ‘Big Picture’ is when they decide how they will do this and what they will be learning in the ‘Research’ and ‘Recording’ activities. Then the unit ends with the ‘exit point’ which is a celebration of what they have learned, often an opportunity to involve parents in some kind of event or it could be a school trip or a specialist visitor to the school; I discuss examples in 8.2.3. The extract below evidences the Brightwater interpretation of the IPC.

Our exciting creative curriculum is based on the International Primary Curriculum which supports independent learning, a world-wide perspective and opportunities for all children to make cross-curricular links in their learning. By teaching all subjects through the medium of the topic, children are able to learn skills in a holistic way. We...start each topic with a ‘Knowledge Harvest’ - What do we know already? What do we want to know? How can we find out? This ensures the learning is really focused and the children feel they have ownership of their learning which supports active learning and engagement before we even get to our entry point!

(Brightwater School website, May 2012)

The teachers associated this enquiry-based structure and the autonomy and ‘fun’ that the IPC gave them in planning and incorporating children’s ideas with creative teaching and creative learning, as is evidenced in the chapters that follow.

### Creative Partnerships

In 2008, the school applied and were selected to be involved in the CP (DCMS, 2001) as an ‘enquiry school’, which was one of three types of involvement the programme offered. The role of enquiry schools was to develop a year-long action research project on an issue specific to their context in collaboration with creative experts ‘from architects to scientists, multi-media developers to artists’ (Jones, 2009). In Brightwater, they chose to develop a project around the question, ‘How can engaging outdoor activities promote the raising of standards in science?’ Over the 2009-10 school year, they worked with a visual artist to design an outdoor learning environment, involving ‘a target group of the school’s gifted and talented children’ across key stages who acted as researchers and presented their findings to the school, according to the CP literature online. The dominance of the neoliberal logic of practice was clearly evident within their research question with its focus on ‘standards’. This is unsurprising given that the standards agenda was high of the list of Creative Partnership Programme objectives (Hall and Thomson, 2007). Brightwater was one of the few schools in the Apley cluster of twenty that explicitly focused on national curriculum goals. The majority elected to develop creative behaviours, for example strategies and practices intended to develop children’s curiosity and confidence, with many highlighting the importance of imagination, inspiration, emotion, collaboration and cultural identity which would have seemed more in keeping with Brightwater’s creative vision, above, but this indicates how the creative and the performative can be intertwined. Policy logic was also hidden in the selection of their target group. Although the project included children across key stages, the exclusive focus on ‘gifted and talented’ children endorses performative cultural capital as well as notions of linear, measurable progress because this



group of children were defined in policy documents at the time as ‘those who have one or more abilities developed to a level significantly ahead of their year group (or with the potential to develop these abilities)’ (DCSF, 2008: 1). These performative notions of ‘ability’ and the ways that they contradicted the teachers’ constructions of ‘creative learners’ are discussed further in Chapter Nine.

## **6.4 Structural relations and positions**

This section discusses the ways that relationships and positions within the school were shaped by enduring traditions and power relationships relating to the field of schooling, the history and physical context of the school, particularly ‘two schools narrative’, and the external policy context.

### *6.4.1 Staff positions*

There were different kinds of power relationships within the staff team. The website visually demonstrated the institutional capital that particular qualifications and roles afforded staff. There were photographs of all staff with their job titles and a hierarchy of positions was immediately evident, starting with senior leadership team at the top, then qualified teachers, listing staff in order of age group taught chronologically up to Year 6. Below this staff were grouped into ‘Support Staff’ and ‘Admin team and Other School Staff’.

The senior leadership team comprised executive headteacher, deputy head, inclusion manager and school business manager, this composition demonstrating the business model that neoliberal schools are required to adopt, through the inclusion of the ‘Business Manager’ and Liz’s ‘executive head’ moniker. Seventeen teachers were employed across both schools, seven in the Infant school and ten in the Junior school (see Appendix 17).

There were two classes per year group with one teacher per class, one nursery teacher and two ‘floating’ support teachers in the Junior school. The support teachers tended to work with children who had special educational needs, they took classes when teachers had their designated PPA (planning, preparation and assessment) time and different ‘ability’ groups when children were streamed according to attainment. In the Infant school, TAs covered PPA time which was just one of the indications of the different status afforded to teaching younger children that are discussed further below. The majority of the teachers were quite young with limited teaching experience. Six out of the seventeen were completely new to the school, three in each school, but this had more impact in the Infant school because that was nearly half the staff and two of those were NQTs. This situation impacted on staff positioning in different ways. Firstly, there was a limited pool of experience to draw upon for the coordinator and middle leadership roles that were required by Ofsted, as already mentioned. Secondly, the more experienced staff were positioned as unofficial mentors to less experienced colleagues (Lunenberg *et al.*, 2007), helping them to learn the rules of the game, and this put extra pressures on their time. This was the case for both Jennifer and Peter and both found this challenging. It appeared that neither had much choice because they were the two most experienced teachers in the Infant School.

That’s been a challenge...because...you assume that things are known and obviously they’re not. So it takes a lot of time to sort of sit down with them and make sure that they know what they’re doing... there are not enough hours in the day sometimes. You find yourself flying here, there and everywhere and trying cover the goalposts.

(Peter, interview 1)

The turnover of teaching staff was high across both sites as already observed. This appears to have been a historical issue in the Infant school but the increasing staff turnover in the Junior school around the time of the research appeared to be linked to the declining performative fortunes of the school. Virtually all the current teaching staff had been appointed in the intervening years and all bar three of the governors had taken up their post. At the end of the year, those leaving the school included two of my three teacher

participants, Jennifer and Claire; and Liz who announced her intention to retire (unexpectedly) in the spring term and left in December 2013.

Returning to the website, the ‘Support Staff’, which included the nursery nurse and all TAs bar the ‘floating’ teacher, were positioned below the qualified teachers. There was a hierarchy within this sub-group of staff but also some blurring between teaching and teacher assistant roles and status in practice and across different sites. For example, there was another qualified teacher working in the Infant School but she had elected to take the role of TA according to my participants; I observed her undertaking similar tasks to the ‘floating teachers’ in the Junior school but there may have been a pay differential as their titles were different. The other divisions were within the body of TAs. For example, one of the TAs with whom I had the most contact, Mrs. Cassidy, was qualified as a Higher Level Teaching Assistant (HLTA) and tended to cover teachers’ designated PPA time in the Infant school which worked out as approximately one afternoon per week for each teacher. But so did the other TAs and this was a cause of some consternation to Mrs. Cassidy herself. She was uncertain about the direction of government policy and was not sure what kind of currency her HLTA qualification would provide her in the future. The ‘Admin team and other school staff’ were visually the lowest echelon on the website, although there was perhaps hierarchy within this. Staff in the school office, administrative and finance assistants and two members of staff with responsibility for pupil welfare were included in this group, followed by the site managers (also known as ‘caretakers’ in other school documents), lunchtime supervisors and the school catering team.

#### *6.4.2 Two schools: leadership and collaboration*

Liz drew on the ‘value for money’ doxic narrative to justify both the federation and her executive role, seeming to misrecognise this as common sense, even luck, whereas her

comments demonstrated how schools are increasingly required to generate funds to make up for inadequate government funding (Ezzamel *et al.*, 2007); see 3.5.1.

We were fortunate that when the governing body decided to federate. This [Junior] school was very close to the Infants, so it lent itself. A lot of rural communities were finding federation was the way to go because they couldn't afford the salaries of the headteachers...so by having just one head over one or two schools...they could actually reduce the costs and then put that money back into the school itself and the children's education.

(Liz, interview)

In fact, this strategy made her life very difficult, not least because there is a lack of clarity about the role of 'executive head' in many schools (Fellows, 2016). It may even be viewed as a form of 'bigamy' by staff, engendering stress and mistrust and meaning that the head has to prove herself to both schools (Harris *et al.*, 2006). There was evidence that this was the case and suggestions of a difficult relationship with the Junior deputy head who had left midway through the previous academic year.

Leadership and collaboration across the two schools appeared to have been a challenge historically and they had operated on quite a separate basis until the beginning of the fieldwork year at least. The logistical challenges of managing space and time across two sites is always likely to impinge on opportunities for communication. Peter confirmed this, describing how this impacted on Liz when 'flying from one building to the next' but also noting that 'the different schools have different challenges and different needs as well' (Peter, interview 1). One of the challenges in the Infant school was the high staff turnover, described in the section above, which included the leadership team. Liz described how she had been approached by the local authority to take the headship with the goal of providing more stability: 'they'd had three heads and three deputies in six years....Staff were coming and going so Apley sort of directed me to that' (Liz, interview). The Junior school was a different story: 'my predecessor here had been here twenty-six years. The staff had been here nearly as long. So they were very embedded and entrenched if you like in the

curriculum and hadn't really moved with the educational changes that were really required' (Liz, interview). In addition, relationships on the Junior site were fragmented and competitive according to Peter and Jennifer.

All the staff get on very well with each other...perhaps not so much up *there* [the Junior school]. But down here, it's a good team, I think everyone is quite happy and friendly and that comes across with the parents.

(Jennifer, interview 2)

Peter suggested that this was linked to the leadership structures: 'I think it's got a lot better over time. But...[the Junior and Infant School]...were traditionally very, very separate... there were separate heads, separate deputies at one stage' (Peter, interview 1). He also felt that performative priorities contributed to the breakdown of cross-year group teams in the Junior school and the previous deputy seemed to have played some kind of role in this:

The [Junior School] deputy, who's no longer with us, decided...[that].. Year 6 was more SATs-orientated...[so] they felt that they couldn't work alongside Year 5..and went off on their own... 3 and 4 stayed together and... then for whatever reason, Year 4 went off on their own...So the Juniors then became very stagnated and almost went back to how it used to be where...they all had their own topics.

(Peter, interview 1)

The deputy's role is not entirely clear in the above extract but Claire also noted that this deputy did not seem to prioritise collaboration: 'our old deputy head wasn't very happy with us sharing. He didn't want us to share levels with the pupil or the parents' (Claire, interview 1). In some ways, this is not an unusual situation in English schools where such divisions and separations are part of the tradition of teachers operating within the silo of their own classroom: 'a historically determined context that encourages individualism, isolation, a belief in one's own autonomy and the investment of personal resources' (Nias, 1989: 13). However, Claire's comments also linked the fragmentation to the performative 'rules' of the field of schooling and, as has been discussed in Chapter Three, neoliberal doxa prioritises individualism and competition over collaboration.

### 6.4.3 *Space and status*

The configuration and management of space and the physical environment gave important insights into the relationships between children and adults, between staff and, indeed, between the two schools. On both sites, as is the case in most schools, there was evidence of tightly controlled rules to regulate space and conduct and which therefore shaped interactions and relationships. Both constraints and status were therefore inscribed upon the space. The divisions between different educational phases (Infant and Junior) were physical as well as symbolic, shaping the dispositions of both children and teachers. In many ways, the space was used similarly on both sites with little interaction observed between staff and children across the two sites during the fieldwork phase, therefore they tended to operate as separate social fields. However, where they did operate together, there was a sense that the Junior school had higher status than the Infant school, which reflects the external context of schooling where generally the younger the children taught, the lower the status of the teacher (Coldron *et al.*, 2014; Thornton and Bricheno, 2000). As a physical space, the Infant School was dominated by Junior school; the buildings were smaller and it had less outdoor space. The playing fields that connected the two schools had originally belonged solely to the Junior school but only the Junior school children had regular supervised access during play time and Physical Education (P.E) lessons. The Infant school children had some access but their school was fenced off from the playing fields and the gate was kept locked. It was used for some Infant PE lessons in the spring and summer terms and special events such as Sports Day but usually tended to require forward planning. This seemed partly related to security, although the fields themselves were fenced and could only be accessed through the Junior school which had secure entrances, so it was perhaps also partly due to supervision issues or perceptions of children's competence.

The use of space also seemed to indicate special status for particular year groups. For example, the nursery, Year 2 and Year 6 were situated in separate buildings away from the main school building. The nursery was a single nursery classroom situated in another small building that was fenced off from the rest of the Infant school and the nursery children did not mix with the other children. This is likely because of the age of the children, although Liz noted its strategic importance for parents ‘we always fill up 40 of our places from our nursery because parents like that thought that once they’re in we have them from 3 – 11’ (Liz, headteacher). Its status was also linked to particular nursery teachers as past Ofsted reports had highlighted practice in the nursery in exemplary terms and one nursery teacher’s lesson had exemplified in the report as an example of ‘outstanding’ practice. Year 2 and Year 6 may have been given special space status as the ‘end of Key Stage’ classrooms. The Year 2 classrooms were situated in a separate pre-fabricated outbuilding on the other side of the playground and were air-conditioned, which Peter saw as a perk. Similarly, the Year 6 classrooms were in separate block and Claire saw being ‘left alone’ as a perk. As each had their own toilets, they did not need to interact with the other children at all until playground and lunchtime.

The Infant school may have had lower status than Junior but early years had a different type of status within the Infant school. Here, it could be helpful to think of early years practice as a partly symbolic, partly physical social field which overlaps with the field of schooling (Bourdieu, 2005a). It is symbolic because it has its own logic of practice which tends to revolve around constructivist pedagogical traditions. These include opportunities for exploratory play and child-centred learning, meaning a range of practices which have a process-orientation focused on conceptions of ‘the playing learning’ child where the goal is to pick up learning themes from the child rather than imposing them (Samuelsson and Carlsson, 2008). Such traditions are acknowledged in the EYFS guidance (DfE, 2012a), albeit in tension with the ‘school readiness’ agenda, as demonstrated by the three

‘Characteristics of Effective Learning and Teaching’ (discussed in section 4.4.3, page 74). These are processes that practitioners ‘must reflect on’ when ‘planning and guiding children’s activities ...focusing on ‘the different ways that children learn’ (DfE 2012: 6). However, the field of early years practice could also be conceptualised as a physical field because, as was the case in Brightwater, the two Reception classes used space differently to the rest of the school based on early years curriculum and traditions, including outdoor space. They did have tables and chairs and the children carried out formal written tasks but there was also space for the children to engage in play and make their own choices. There was a big carpet area and a shared room between the two classes which was used to store and stage art, cooking and other experiential activities which would involve groups of children across both classes. They also shared a dedicated outdoor area which was fenced off from the main playground. This was used mainly for child-initiated play based around resources that were usually set up by teachers and TAs jointly. I discuss more detailed examples of the children’s experiences in Chapter Eight, demonstrating the constraints because early years classrooms are increasingly dominated by the traditions of the field of schooling, particularly in a neoliberalised system. This is often very evident in a Reception class, sandwiched as it is between the nursery, where early years practice is acceptable, and Key Stage One (Adams *at al.*, 2004) especially when children need to be ‘ready’ for their phonics check. But, in Brightwater, the different curriculum and the different ways that they used the space in the Reception classroom enabled a version of early years practice.

## **6.5 Chapter conclusion**

This chapter has presented the context of the school including its situated context, which includes information about the locale, history and reputation, intake and staffing; the material context, which includes buildings, physical spaces and any budgetary issues; and the external context, which includes its relationship with the local authority and



‘performance’ in relation to the external policy context through examination of the Ofsted reports relevant to the time the data were collected. Although this chapter is intended to ‘set the scene’, the discussion here has presented some of the contextual factors that enabled or constrained staff in their daily lives and therefore the enactment of creativity. It has demonstrated that the school faced significant challenges. One set of challenges related to the coordination and management of two schools on separate sites with different histories and a high number of inexperienced staff or staff new to roles across the two. Another set of challenges were derived from the external policy context because fieldwork took place in the context of a series of rapid and significant changes to the national system curriculum and assessment and shortly after the Junior school had received a second ‘satisfactory’ rating from Ofsted. This impacted on all the staff involved in this research in different ways. However, they were also making efforts to enable creative practice. As leader, Liz expressed a creative vision for the school which was published on the website, they had engaged with CP a couple of years before the data collection phase and had implemented a ‘creative curriculum’ structure, the IPC, a commercial package (Fieldwork Education, 2004). The detail of their definitions and enactments of creativity and the enablers and constraints involved in this process is presented in the following chapters, drawing on and further developing some of the themes presented here. The next chapter introduces the staff and presents their individual definitions of creativity, creative learning and creative teaching in order to contextualise the enactments that follow in Chapter Eight and the discussion of the enablers, constraints, tensions and ambiguities in Chapter Nine.

## **Chapter Seven: Staff Definitions of Creativity**

### **7.1 Introduction**

The four key participants were briefly introduced in section 5.4. This chapter presents more detailed ‘narrative portraits’ of each (Smyth and McInerney, 2013) in order to illustrate key features of their pedagogical habitus and position their interpretations of creativity within that frame. It is intended to orient the reader before I present more detailed observational examples and anecdotes, strategies and practices that comprise their creative dispositions (i.e. their enactments of creativity, creative teaching and creative learning) in Chapter Eight. Section 7.2 introduces Liz, the headteacher; section 7.3 introduces Jennifer, the Reception teacher; section 7.4 introduces Peter, the Year 2 teacher and section 7.5 introduces Claire, the Year 6 teacher. Each section gives an overview of their route into teaching, their position in the school and any other professional experiences and discusses how their interpretation of creativity, creative learning and creative teaching sits with their dominant pedagogical values. Section 7.6 then draws together key dispositions and features from their perspectives before I go on to explore the enactment of their definitions in Chapter Eight, where I discuss links between what the teachers said and what they did as part of my continuing interpretation of their pedagogical habitus.

All four participants were white British and had been brought up and educated in England, as was the case for the majority of the staff in the school. Jennifer and Claire were both from the local area, whilst Peter came from the North of England and Liz the East. In terms of experience, training and qualifications, the three teachers had qualified via a one year Postgraduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). Liz did not discuss her qualifications or training but had many more years of experience compared to the other teachers and is likely to have trained prior to the implementation of the national curriculum, and therefore in a very different policy context. None of the teachers except Liz had worked in any other

school. Peter had worked in the school the longest (twelve years) and had experience across both school sites, having worked in Year 4 and Year 6 although this was prior to the federation of the two schools and therefore under a different headteacher. Liz had joined the Infant school as headteacher in 2003, becoming executive headteacher of both schools when they federated in 2007. While Jennifer took the role of Reception teacher in 2010 and Claire joined as an NQT in January 2012, she was therefore still in her probationary year for the first term of the research. This information is represented on a table in Appendix 7 for at-a-glance comparison as needed.

All four participants demonstrated a sense that their particular institutional role was distinct from others in the school and felt that this had a bearing on the ways that creativity should be taught and experienced by the children in their class. Struggle and contradiction were key features for each of them although these manifested in different ways. Each gave different priority to creativity, creative learning or creative teaching in both definition and enactment, depending on the ways these connected to their pedagogical values, which included their interpretations of good practice and their engagement with policy, both local and national. The staff articulated the different aspects of their definitions in our formal interviews and informal discussions. However, as is consistent with the literature discussed Chapter Four, their beliefs and values were sometimes implicit, partial or difficult to articulate (Kampylis *et al.*, 2009; Myhill and Wilson, 2013; Rubenstein *et al.*, 2018): as Liz, the headteacher, put it at one point, ‘I don’t think you can describe it [creative learning] until you can see it’. Therefore, all exemplified their definitions as anecdotes or story fragments at least part of the time to illustrate either creative learning or creative teaching or more frequently a combination of the two within the context of the school or their prior experience. In this way definition and enactment were linked, as were the three key research terms: creativity, creative teaching and creative learning. Jeffrey and Craft’s (2004) ‘teaching for creativity’ (pedagogies aimed at enhancing the creativity

of learners) and ‘teaching creatively’ (innovative or imaginative ways of teaching) distinction has also been a useful analytic tool (see 4.4.1, from page 68 for discussion of these). There was a sometimes a tacit distinction between the two within staff definitions because ‘teaching creatively’ was viewed as more achievable in the context of performative curriculum coverage goals, as noted by Jeffery and Craft (2004) but staff drew on both.

## **7.2 Liz the headteacher**

Liz had worked as a headteacher and deputy head in other schools before taking the headship of the Infant school and described herself as ‘experienced’ although we did not discuss these experiences in-depth. Her interview suggested that she felt a strong personal commitment towards her work and a sense of teaching as a moral and ethical vocation which closely matched the values stated in the school mission statement (see 6.3.4.1, page 149). She described herself as an advocate for children, parents and staff and elements, linking to long-standing traditions of teacher as ‘crusader’ or ‘missionary’ (Nias, 1989: 32) and notions of social justice and children’s rights (Boylan and Dalrymple, 2009). She drew on her prior experience as a social worker and constructions of the vulnerability of children, teachers and parents. For example, she described trying to shield staff from the intensification of workload and said she gained ‘satisfaction’ from supporting families with less agency and capital. Here she drew on classed constructions of ‘needy’ families, derived from her social work experiences when she worked with inner city families in London as well as her own upbringing. She had found social work too ‘harrowing’ and decided teaching would be a better fit, seeing this as a way of maintaining her vocational disposition. Liz said she had been ‘inspired’ to change careers by the teachers with whom she worked at that time and felt that she could maintain her advocacy disposition in a teacher role, because teachers deal with child protection and ‘unstable’ families. She also

felt that the field of schooling was better resourced, noting the inadequate support systems in her own social work experience, although she also observed that the ‘supposedly leafy’ local area of Brightwater school was a very different context. Colley *et al.*, (2003: 488) describe vocational dispositions as being both ‘idealised and realised’; for Liz, realising some of her aspirations was a challenge and there were contradictions within her perspectives on children, teachers and families derived from neoliberal policy constructions she had adopted. Her conceptualisations of parents were contradictory and classed, as are constructions of parents and ‘parent partnership’ in policy (Cottle and Alexander, 2014; Crozier, 2019). She described some as ‘needy’ and others as more competent ‘middle class’ consumers who held the school to account. Her positioning of the children also shifted depending on whether she was talking about her creative vision for the school or performative policy priorities, although the two were sometimes intertwined. This is demonstrated in the extract below where she is discussing what inspires her about her work.

I think it’s the innocence of the children...above all. When you see a child come into school and they say, “I did my homework last night” or “I’ve taken this work home because I know you didn’t like it so look what I’ve done to improve it” or...the polar bear the nursery made me [indicating a clay model on desk], that’s my inspiration. Whatever policies come across the table, you get something like that [indicating the model], *that’s* what inspires you to work and provide them with the curriculum that they deserve. And until somebody listens, I feel education is going in the wrong way.

(Liz, interview)

Here she positions children as innocent and in need of protection from the policy makers because ‘since Mr. Gove has come in, things have changed and they [the government] are not listening’. But this rather docile, conformist image of a child sits in tension with the skilled, capable learners she described when discussing creative learning in section 7.2.1 below. Sometimes she recognised tensions in the positioning of children, performative constructions in particular caused her dilemmas.

I agree with statistics but a child is not a statistic. It's not taking into account their background, their families, their parenting you know whether they have been a refugee where they've come over. It's expecting children to achieve something that...some can't and never will.

(Liz, interview)

Liz made several comments like the one above indicating her disagreement with practices that she felt required to adopt. This demonstrated how she was forced suppress her ethical dispositions in order to position both children and teachers as factors which affected school performance outcomes at least part of the time because she knew that her data would be scrutinised (Thomson, 2005; Zipin and Brennan, 2003). She found these contradictions unsettling, expressing concern about the effects on children and staff, whilst simultaneously recognising that her position was expendable: 'we lost five heads last summer in this area'. She also described a general sense of disempowerment amongst the headteachers in the local school confederation and a sense that you cannot win, as already discussed (see 6.3.3, page 146).

'Inspiration' was another key thread in her discussions, drawing together her definitions of creativity and her understanding of the reciprocal relationships between teacher, leader and learner as part of her pedagogical habitus. The children inspired her, as had the teachers which whom she worked in her past, giving her work as both teacher and leader meaning and value. As leader, she saw it as her role to inspire staff so that they could then inspire the children. She felt that this, in turn, encourages children to be inspired by the process of learning, wanting to learn more about the world around them. These elements were part of a role model disposition which was linked to her broader pedagogic philosophy which might be described as progressive or humanist (Sherman, 2009). In this perspective, learners are positioned as 'unique individuals who are encouraged to learn through problem solving, collaborative work and extensions of their own experiences and interests' and the teacher facilitates this (Thomson and Sanders, 2010: 68). These were elements that she explicitly linked to creativity, as I discuss in the next section.

However, Liz's leadership dispositions were contradictory, here I am referring to her ways of thinking and acting as a leader (Lingard *et al.*, 2003). This seemed to be based on her past and current experiences, again these were shaped by the positions she was required to adopt as part of her policy work. She portrayed herself as a 'strong leader': determined, principled and a 'driver of change' (Thomson and Sanders, 2010: 73). The change she introduced was derived from her creative vision for the school and Chapter Nine presents a detailed discussion of the strategies she employed. However, Thomson and Sanders (2010: 73) argue that a 'driver of change' disposition has a 'limited life and must move further' as it can mutate into a 'fixer' disposition where the focus shifts from 'longer term capacity building' to generating change quickly in search of good publicity as more of a short-term strategy. Liz's comments suggested she that had seen herself as a 'fixer' in the past if not the present. She was positioned as such by the local authority when they invited to apply for the headship at the Infant School which had high staff turnover and her initial successes were supported by glowing public accounts of her leadership in her early Ofsted reports (see 6.2.3, from page 135). She perhaps had the same disposition when she became executive headteacher after the federation, although her role became more challenging due to the very different histories of the schools. The Junior school's downgraded Ofsted rating in 2008, which was retained in 2012, may have further reinforced a 'fixer' disposition.

There were therefore tensions between her ideals and some of the practices she was required to adopt in order to 'play the game' of schooling. For Liz, the game involved maintaining her position as headteacher within the school as well as her position within the interrelated system of fields in which Brightwater School operated. Within the field of her school as a community, she aspired towards supportive, emotionally engaging day-to-day relationships with children, staff and parents in association with her humanist ideals and

sense of advocacy. But she also represented the school within the local authority, as well as the local confederation, as a sub-field of the local authority, and the field of schooling on a national scale. All of these intersecting fields contain deeply embedded, hierarchical institutional roles and functions derived from the traditions of the field of schooling as well as the new business models that neoliberal policies have required schools adopt. The performance of the school was a key concern across all of the fields. During the fieldwork phase, the school, and therefore her leadership, was under increasing levels of scrutiny, due to the Junior school ‘satisfactory’ rating (May 2012) and pressure to ‘speed up the rate of academisation...in the primary phase’ (local school confederation minutes, October 2012). ‘Underperforming’ schools particularly at risk and Liz had been told that another inspection was imminent. This led her to prioritise performativity demands to produce particular kinds of data; evidencing ‘progress’ became the number one school-wide goal.

Liz’s position became increasingly tenuous over the year, particularly after the ‘mock Ofsted’ which disrupted the rules and relationships. Her leadership was openly criticised by both Claire and Jennifer in their second interviews, as is discussed in more detail in 9.3.3, and she announced her retirement unexpectedly in the summer term.

### *7.2.1 Liz’s definitions of creativity*

Liz associated creativity with her humanistic pedagogical values, tending to present her definitions implicitly through her discussion of creative teaching and creative learning. She saw creativity as multi-faceted and as something that enables and equips children with particular dispositions that would support them in their lives beyond school as lifelong learners, giving them a ‘broader outlook and a broader perception on life’. The extract below exemplifies this:

I think it’s enabling children to use their own imaginations...and research skills, [to gain] autonomy of their learning and it’s collaborative. It’s a



whole umbrella of... opportunities and strategies that they can apply to their learning. It encourages them to look further than the immediate. And that's what it's about...being inspired by the world in which they live. It's not just the four walls of the classroom, there's a world out there that can inspire...that will make them the adults of the future. You're not going to get that if it's regimented learning, day after day. You know very didactic teaching, that's not what creativity is about.

(Liz, interview)

Here and in her other conceptualisation of the children as creative learners, they have a very different role to the more passive roles she described for them when discussing the school's performative endeavours, as above. The emphasis is on creative processes which are physical (enquiry, exploration), cognitive (imagination, critical reflection) and social (collaboration). When discussing knowledge as part of creative learning, she contrasted it with national curriculum models, describing the latter as pre-designated content and 'didactic teaching'. The children in the extract above are actively and collaboratively engaged in knowledge production. It is something for them to discover, something that inspires and motivates them to want to learn more, linking her conception of creativity to the development of lifelong learning dispositions as part of a 'person-making' pedagogical disposition (Brehony, 1992). In this way, she saw a focus on creative learning and teaching as a way to redress the shortcomings of the current national curriculum, through a broader focus on how to equip children to be 'adults of future'. However, these creative orientations do not sit comfortably with the performative and behaviourist approaches that dominate the field of schooling, it therefore represents a risk for the teacher, and indeed for the headteacher of a 'creative school'; it was not clear if Liz recognised this. She was trying to resist some performative field effects where they clashed with her ideals, describing her experience as an advantage, as 'a more mature head who has been doing it for quite some time and who recognises the need to actually keep the holistic child in perspective'. However, she felt obliged to accept other practices, as already discussed, and also appeared to have internalised some aspects which became more evident as she

discussed creative teaching as well as how and when she expected teachers to facilitate creative learning in the school.

As headteacher, Liz was only willing to risk allowing teachers and children to engage in creative learning and more flexible conceptions of creative teaching after they had met performative demands. This meant that creativity was relegated to particular times, usually the afternoons once the ‘core’ numeracy and literacy work was out of the way because those areas had to be their ‘prime focus’. In addition, as the extract below indicates, she tended to locate the responsibility for ensuring that the creative learning happens within individual teachers:

You can see a *real* difference in...those teachers who actually encompass creativity and those who don't....There's a flair in what they're planning...if you don't have a creative teacher you can't get the creative learning. That can be quite apparent in classes if you're going round and when you look at the planning...It can be something really *wow*, as we say the wow factor...you can tell whether the teacher is a really ‘wow’ creative person or not. And it isn't just the art side or the DT [Design and Technology] it's the way it's delivered...and the way it's facilitated in the class as well. That's what's important.

(Liz, interview)

Although she notes here that it is the way it is ‘facilitated’ and that it is not just the arts, she also references a ‘delivery disposition’ which is more associated with performativity (Gunter and Forrester, 2010: 58). The idea that creativity is something that can be pre-planned and ‘delivered’ presents challenges on different levels. It suggests that ‘teaching creatively’ is a strategy that can be used to further performative goals (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2008), which may be the case but it sits in tension with creative learning where the end result is unpredictable and the process non-linear. In addition, Liz appeared to locate this conception of ‘teaching creatively’ within the individual teacher here and at other points, seeing some as more willing to invest in creative teaching than others. She acknowledges their effort, here and below, but not the risk involved. This second extract makes this even

clearer as she talks about how they actively tried to recruit staff based on ‘how creative that person is’:

We actually look very closely at their creativity as part of the process... They come in and they have to do 4 different activities as well as their interview..... One will be with children, in the classroom, so we actually see how creative they can be in a half an hour slot... One of our questions of late has been “Sunflowers. Present” and people will come with variations on that, depending on the age group. We... give them some paper and a word and they then have to be creative... [based on] that word. They have to do a 15 minute presentation on that word and why they chose it. Obviously there’s the interview and then our school council have created questions to see just how creative that person is. And they do fall down a lot on the relationship question with “What sort of relationships have you got outside of school?” because our curriculum area takes a lot of planning and excitement and if you are busy at home...? So that came up as one of the questions, they added that one in [she laughs] but that’s their direction. And then they will say “What sort of creative music do you like? Are you a creative sort of theatrical person?” and then *they* then actually present to the interview panel what they think.

(Liz, interview)

Imagination was characteristic to both creative learning and creative teaching in her conceptions and she references cognitive processes such as divergent thinking and problem-solving above (Mullet *et al.*, 2016). But, for Liz, a lot depended on the way that each teacher performs this imaginative ‘creative teacher’, it should not interfere with the school’s performative goals and it is the individual teacher’s responsibility to ‘enable’, ‘inspire’ and ‘encourage’ investing personal resources, including time, making this a form of responsabilisation (Keddie, 2016), another of the neoliberal dispositions discussed in Chapter Three.

Liz largely located creativity in persons and processes but she discussed examples of creative products at points usually to illustrate this. As an example of the latter, she discussed children’s products from cross-curricular thematic work as the embodiment of an experiential enquiry-based holistic learning process. She also discussed products to highlight a creative person’s domain-specific talents or abilities, for example one member of staff was a skilled potter. In this latter respect, she made some associations between

creativity and the arts, also evidenced by the brief references to ‘theatrical’ people above and the ‘art side’ in the extracts above, which can again position creativity at the margins of the mainstream academic curriculum (Hall and Thomson, 2007). However, this also demonstrates a ‘Pro-C’ dimension which focuses on the creativity exhibited by people who are professionally or vocationally creative (Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009). She was keen for children to have the opportunity to learn new extra-curricular skills from creative experts where possible, linked to IPC topics and visits.

In summary, Liz’s broad, idealised orientation towards creative teaching and creative learning highlighted relevance, autonomy, innovation and novelty (Jeffrey and Woods, 2003) and was based on constructivist characteristics associated with everyday ‘little c’ creativity discourses above (Craft, 2001). However, this was bounded and there were tensions within her constructions of linked to performative dispositions and the curriculum coverage narrative.

### **7.3 Jennifer the Reception teacher**

Like Liz, Jennifer’s habitus incorporated vocational dispositions. Teaching had been a career goal from an early age, although she had initially managed a pub after university and she felt that this had given her good transferable ‘life skills’. Jennifer felt that the position of Reception teacher was a good fit for her experiences and interests, although initially she had wanted to work with Year 1 children because she had more experience with that age group and it therefore felt safer. However, she identified strongly with early years traditions and the constructivist pedagogy which can be described part of the logic of the field of early years practice (discussed in 6.4.3, page 160). These ideas were very much intertwined with her views on creativity, as I discuss below, but in broad terms, she strongly related to the emotional aspects of her role and the kind of learning experiences

that she felt were most appropriate for young children, as a humanistic disposition (Woods and Jeffrey, 1996). Similarly to Liz again, there were conflicts between the idealised and realised aspects of her habitus. When she could not enact her ideal role, she demonstrated a sense of regret, wistfulness and even guilt, which became a theme in her discussions, demonstrating the ways that emotional commitments can become harder and harder to sustain in a neoliberal policy context that has increasingly marginalised caring (Lynch 2010). They are unacknowledged, becoming located in the individual without due regard for the emotionally challenging contexts in which practitioners work, which can make teaching emotionally risky (Hargreaves, 1998). For Jennifer, this was embodied in anxiety and she was ill several times over the year and took time off work, attributing this to stress. As she discussed her idealised values, she often recounted anecdotes which described how she came to terms with her institutional role and ‘the way things are done here’ and how she had learned from her past experiences. Some illustrated the institutional dispositions she was required to adopt, how these fitted with her personal views and experiences and her attempts to maintain her commitment to the emotional dimensions of the role (Hargreaves, 1998; Zembylas, 2007):

...in my first year I took the children out for play-time on one of my playground duties and it was raining and I got really told off. And I just thought, “Why?!” And I think I’m changing now because I’m getting settled into the way that things are done here. The way I’d like to do things and the way that is feasible within the setting are different and...obviously I’m not going to just say, “Right! We’re doing it my way. And we’re not doing any literacy today and we’re just going to all roll around in the mud outside.” But that would be fun!

(Jennifer, interview 1)

She accepted that some adjustment was necessary, seeing these as rules that applied across schools and therefore as part of learning to be a teacher and finding her professional place within the culture of the school (Wilkins *et al.*, 2012). But, as the example above demonstrates, she found it difficult to reconcile other practices with her personal views and experiences and her pedagogical values. Her comments indicate a somewhat reluctant acceptance of what is ‘feasible’ and, by the end of the year, she became less convinced by

some of the rules, particularly where they clashed with her views about what was ‘right’ for children which she linked to her definitions of creativity. Indeed, she attributed her decision to leave the school at the end of the year, at least in part, to this dissonance.

The process of socialisation or acculturation into a school field can be anxiety-ridden and many early career teachers find it difficult to balance pedagogical values and knowledge developed during their training with the pressure to conform to the culture and practices of the school (McCormack and Gore, 2008). For Jennifer, these feelings were further complicated by her shifting position within the school. The staffing situation, described in section 6.4, meant that she became Foundation Stage leader with only two years of teaching experience during the fieldwork phase, in addition to taking on a new PE coordinator role. These official coordinator roles involved logistical challenges, mainly balancing time-consuming administrative tasks with her teaching, and she felt there was generally a lack of time to get to understand these new roles. She was also working with a newly qualified colleague in Reception and two inexperienced Year 1 colleagues. Taking on an unofficial mentoring role to her new colleagues impacted on her confidence as well as her time. This was because she still saw herself as a novice and had herself lost both a mentor and experienced colleague because Lucy, the new deputy head, was formerly her fellow Reception teacher and Foundation Stage leader and they had worked closely together.

I’ve always been with another person who knows what’s going on. This has been the first year where it’s me that needs to be the one that knows what’s going on and having to be on top of everything and that’s quite tricky sometimes because I realise now how much I didn’t have to do before because Lucy did it. And now how much is expected of me and how difficult it is for an NQT to sort of read minds. You think, “Ooh, I knew that!” but then you think, “I’ve got to actually say it rather than just doing it.”

(Jennifer, interview 1)

From my observations, the two Reception class teachers worked closely together but the new Reception teacher would defer to Jennifer when she felt overwhelmed, particularly

when it came to shared events involving parents, and the school leadership team expected Jennifer to take the lead. This positioning shaped the way Jennifer saw her herself. She was not always comfortable with the role of helping others to learn the rules of the field, perhaps exacerbated by her own misgivings, and she described herself variously as a ‘nag’ and a ‘PA’ to school leadership, Lucy in particular:

I feel like a bit of a...not a secretary, that’s not the right word, like a PA now she’s not here. I see what’s going on with them and if it’s not the way that she would have done it I have to kind of say...well I feel I *have* to say it, because no-one else is here to say that kind of thing.

(Jennifer, interview 1)

She also expressed a sense of isolation at times, as one of only two experienced teachers in the Infant school. Here the physical environment played a part because Peter, the other experienced teacher, had a classroom in the Year 2 block which was across the playground: ‘he’s over *there* and he doesn’t come over here *as* much. He doesn’t see as much of what’s going on’ (Jennifer, interview 1).

As discussed above, by the end of the year, Jennifer’s attitudes towards the school were changing. During her second interview, she was more resistant to the ways that the performative pressures were crowding out her principles, distrust was creeping in. She was cautiously blaming the leadership for the uncertainty around EYFS moderation procedures. In addition, the mock Ofsted had shaken her confidence precipitating an individual crisis, feelings also expressed by Peter. By that stage, all the teachers felt that there was limited guidance from the school leadership in how to improve their practice. These issues are all discussed in Chapter Nine.

### *7.3.1 Jennifer’s definitions of creativity*

Jennifer’s definitions of creativity were largely derived from anecdotes and stories she told about creative learning and creative teaching. Her vision of creativity had more coherence

in comparison with the other staff due to the associations she made between creative learning, constructivist and experiential theorisations of learning and early years pedagogy, all enabled by rules from field of early years practice which guided her classroom routines at least part of the time. She made links to early years traditions and curriculum guidance (DfE, 2012a) when describing her vision of creative learning:

[Creative learning is] just hands-on. Being able to *do* things and not just sit and learn about them. I suppose that's the essence of Reception or it should be the essence of Reception and I know there's a big push towards being creative and being more independent and child-initiated learning and the teacher takes a back seat and...guides rather than teaches them.

(Jennifer, interview 1)

Here and at other times, she talked about giving children autonomy, planning child-initiated activities as part of a 'teaching for creativity' focus, and she built in opportunities for dialogue and enquiry and for children to find out about topics and activities that were interesting and meaningful to them through enquiry and co-participatory problem solving, problem posing and 'possibility thinking' (Craft, 2000; Cremin *et al.*, 2006). Some examples were spontaneous 'teachable moments' (Jeffrey and Woods, 1996) where she 'dropped everything and went with it'. Others were planned opportunities that could be quite elaborate at times. These were usually related to cross-curricular thematic learning based on IPC topics, drawing on a 'teaching creatively' combined with 'teaching for creativity' approach. At these times, she engaged her own imagination, often in collaboration with her colleagues as they planned and staged events in which adults and children engaged in pretend play and 'storying'; this is where teachers and learners co-construct stories or story fragments together (Goouch, 2008: 93). Fun, humour and imaginative thinking were key elements in her examples and it was clear that she and her colleagues enjoyed these events as much as much as the children.

Some of Jennifer's creative dispositions were more personal, derived from her 'views on life'. She described an emphasis on creativity in her teacher training as 'right up my alley'



and was approving of recent calls for creativity in education policy. These personal dimensions were again linked to her early years teacher habitus, revolving around her affinity for ‘the outdoors’ which she associated with her own creative learning dispositions.

I like being outdoors. I like doing things with my hands, I like being hands-on. I’m not afraid to get messy, I don’t mind being cold...and being wet...most of the time...If you’ve got the right kit, you’re fine for anything.

(Jennifer, interview 1).

She was keen for the children to have ‘hands-on’, outdoor opportunities and physical experiences which embodied the habits of mind she hoped to help them to develop, using terms like ‘confident’, ‘capable’ and ‘involved’ as a ‘a kinaesthetic hands-on/minds-on way of attaining knowledge’ (Smith and Knapp, 2011: 5). This meant giving them opportunities to immerse themselves in a learning experience, to explore, try things out and discover, developing their autonomy and learning to manage their own risks at the same time (Tovey, 2007). She associated creative learning experiences with ‘person making’ (Brehony, 1992; Edwards, 2010) in a similar way to Liz: ‘I think that the more you can guide them in that direction, the better, so that they can be more independent and explorers of the future.’ (Jennifer, interview 1).

Jennifer therefore tended to locate creative learning in everyday, democratic processes and the autonomy of both teacher and child were linked. For her, the creativity was in the freedom that both adult and child had to discuss and follow up on children’s interests and experiences and for the child to operate with relative independence under the guidance of the constructivist teacher (Vygotsky, 1978). She emphasised the importance of relevance, control, ownership and innovation on the part of both learners and teacher (Woods, 1995). However, despite feeling enabled by the field of early years practice, she accepted that it is dominated by the field of schooling which did not always value the experiential, hands-on

experiences that were part of her creative learning vision, particularly as the children got older.

I think I've got a...not naïve but...a Reception-age kind of view on what creativity is...take it back to basics and not try to over-think things or try to be too clever with everything. I think that that it's a problem when some people think, "Well they're in Year 6. We can't possibly all just push the tables to the side and do arm-painting or something because they're too big for that!" But I think they can do anything like that whatever age they are.

(Jennifer, interview 1)

Jennifer felt she taught in a creative way as much as she could, seeing creative teaching as flexible and responsive and as something that enables creative learning (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004) but she did not always feel able to do this. Her creative learning anecdotes, which featured both idealised and actual examples, often incorporated constraints too and these seemed to take an emotional toll, as indicated above and discussed further in Chapters Eight and Nine.

## **7.4 Introducing Peter**

Like Liz and Jennifer, Peter did not go into teaching immediately but, in his case, the decision seemed more pragmatic rather than being derived from a sense of vocation. He had moved to the South East from his home in the North of England when he married his wife after they met at university. Having been unsuccessful in finding a job in environmental management, which he described as his 'passion', he had tried the police. However, that was not his 'cup of tea' and he was then encouraged to try teaching by his mother who was a teacher.

I never really pictured myself as being a teacher. But I knew I wanted to do something that wasn't just behind a desk. Something that was more about getting up and about and doing different things each day. And...of course teaching is definitely that!

(Peter, interview 1)

Teaching suited his family life because he had young children and his wife was also a teacher: 'the term times are hard but of course the reward is the half-terms and the

holidays' (interview 2). There was a strong focus on the challenges of teaching throughout both interviews, particularly in relation to the ways that teacher workload had intensified over his career, however he stressed that he still enjoyed it.

Working at Brightwater was Peter's only experience of teaching, as was the case for all the participants except Liz. He had moved to his current position in Year 2 just after the federation of the Infant and Junior school in 2007 and therefore had insights into the workings and histories of both schools. However, despite giving the rationale for his move from Year 6 as 'needing' a change from the SATs, he had taken a position in Year 2. Both Year 6 and Year 2 are, in many ways, defined by this high stakes assessment. Across the country, class teachers in these year groups are required to administer the SATs in May and the results are scrutinised and published. Therefore, these year groups could be described as pressure points where the external pressures may have a more powerful influence on pedagogical dispositions than some other year groups due the extra layer of surveillance and the punitive effects when schools, and therefore individual teachers, are not deemed successful in performative terms. The potential for public naming, blaming and shaming lead teachers to self-govern their practice, shaping it to match these performative notions of success (Ball, 2003; Perryman, 2009; Rea and Weiner, 1998), as has been discussed in section 3.5. For Peter, seven out of his twelve years of teaching had been in SATs year groups and there was strong evidence of the shaping effects of this experience in his discussion and observed practice. All the staff prioritised curriculum coverage and the production of performative data, as will be discussed further in Chapter Nine, but managerialist practices were more overt and embedded in Peter's classroom. His lessons rarely deviated from a tightly controlled structure involving teacher-led input followed by individual desk-bound activities in which the children practised the skills they had been taught; the children occasionally engaged in exploratory collaborative dialogue with 'talk partners', although this too tended to be very structured and time-bound. During

lesson time, his relationships with both adults and children were formal and hierarchical, reflecting the dominance of performative and behaviourist dispositions in his pedagogical habitus. He rewarded conformity and penalised non-compliance, using a points system to reinforce the behaviours and goals that he saw as appropriate, awarding a class trophy periodically. His pedagogical values therefore appeared to be based on ‘individualistic and competitive notions of motivation, achievement, performance and progression’ which have been described as masculinist (Mahony *et al.*, 2004: 138). Peter did not always seem to recognise the impact of these practices and relationships on children and their dispositions towards learning but their responses to the classroom rules and their lack of autonomy was starkly represented in our photographic interviews. Here, they attempted to reclaim ownership of school spaces by exploring taboos and boundaries and expressed strong dislike of literacy or numeracy linked to their perceptions of these systems. However, during our more in-depth discussions, Peter expressed a sense of conflict and dissonance relating to the marginalising of care, as has been discussed in relation to Jennifer above. For example, although he said that he did not feel it was appropriate to demonstrate emotion in his work, he also felt it was inappropriate to exclude care and consideration of children’s home lives from the system. The latter was partially related to the responsibility he assumed for the children’s learning and ‘progress’ and all the staff were susceptible to this form of responsabilisation (Pratt, 2018). But Peter’s way of managing these tensions was similar to Liz’s in some ways because he suppressed his emotions, performing his version of ‘the teacher’ quite literally. His demeanour completely changed when he was in the classroom interacting with the children, his gestures and speech were more exaggerated and formal and he rarely smiled.

Our discussions suggested that his move to Year 2 may not have been his choice and was potentially related to his years of experience and his gender, which had both advantages and disadvantages. He positioned his gender as a form of capital, tapping into popular, yet

contradictory discourses around males in primary schools (Martino, 2008; Skelton, 1991), interlinked with the notion that teaching older children has more prestige (Coldron *et al.*, 2014). His dispositions appeared to be informed by ‘entrenched stereotypical attitudes’ and social expectations and reflected the tensions within these debates (Skelton, 1991: 283). On the one hand, he referenced the sense of moral panic around being a male in a traditionally female space (Martino, 2008): ‘there’s this sort of idea that.... “It’s good to have men in a primary school but I’m not sure they should be teaching the infants”...actually, I doubted myself for a little while’. However, he connected this self-doubt more to the ‘big jump’ from Year 6 to Year 2 than the gender dimension which may also have related to a perceived reduction in his status as a teacher of younger children (Coldron *et al.*, 2014). His views would therefore seem to reflect that ‘higher status (and subsequent authority and power) goes with the teaching of older pupils *and* maleness’ within and across English schools (Thornton and Bricheno, 2000, my emphasis). It is quite possible that he was positioned in the SATs years due both to his general teaching experience in a school with high turnover and his gender, although I have no corroboratory evidence of this. He also drew on a gendered role model disposition, aspiring towards being a ‘stable influence’ or ‘replacement father’ for some of the children in his class, drawing on conventional hegemonic forms of masculinity, for example the idea that male teachers can manage ‘difficult’ behaviour better than female teachers (Connell, 2005), as well as positioning particular parents in deficit in a similar way to Liz (Wood and Brownhill, 2018).

Peter raised similar issues to Jennifer in relation to the extra pressures of acting as an unofficial mentor due to the high numbers of inexperienced staff in the school. But he seemed more comfortable with this mentoring disposition than Jennifer, perhaps due to his years of experience. His particular challenges related to the new middle leader role he had taken on just before the data collection began. He was finding it difficult to work as part of

this new team across the two sites, largely due to the logistical constraints although there was some confusion about what the role actually entailed and, in his second interview, he told me that it had been almost impossible to develop the new middle management role over the year, as is discussed in Chapter Nine.

#### *7.4.1 Peter's definitions of creativity*

There were different strands to Peter's definitions of creativity. The quote below illustrates all of these.

I think some creativity is natural, some children are naturally very creative and it's interesting when you look at certain children because certain children will surprise you. They won't necessarily be very good at number or reading but if you put a DT project in front of them or a paintbrush, they really will thoroughly enjoy it and produce some really good quality work. And it's nice to see that, in that you know you've got some really disinterested children when it comes to the core subjects or even when it comes to the foundation subjects, but give them something to build or something to create and they're in their element and they really do excel. So...making it creative I think is really, really important because that kind of makes the links in their learning I feel.

(Peter, interview 1)

On the one hand, he positioned creativity outside the core curriculum in association with artistic processes and products (Hall and Thomson, 2007), but he also saw these creative abilities or talents as 'natural' and located within the child. As will be discussed in Chapter Nine, Peter was not alone in basing aspects of his practice on a doxa of 'ability'; this is another doxa that justifies performative models of teaching and learning. This works hand-in-hand with the responsabilisation of progress doxa, described above, only here, any successes or failures are attributed to the learner rather than the teacher; both conceal the inequities of the system (Nolan, 2012; Pratt, 2018). Peter also seemed to position this creative ability in opposition to academic ability; the children who have this innate creativity are 'not very good at number'. These practical activities are presented as an opportunity for children to take some control and 'surprise' him but, in my observations of practice in Peter's classroom at least, the children were rarely given much opportunity to

demonstrate this. Also, his description of the potential to demonstrate ‘good quality work’ indicates that he also retained control over the value attributed to such learning. This is all that he said about this kind of artistic creativity but the above extract also encompasses another strand to his definition which was more prominent in the rest of his discussion. This was a focus on inspiration, motivation and enjoyment which related to ‘teaching creatively’ (Craft and Jeffrey, 2004)

Similarly to Liz, his comments suggested that he saw ‘teaching creatively’ as a way to compensate for the shortcomings of the national curriculum. For example, the extract above acknowledges that the ‘core subjects’ do not motivate all children. The main strand of his definition of creative teaching therefore focused on coming up with ‘wowie’ lessons to enthuse the children whilst also covering the curriculum. In his view, the IPC supported planning and this kind of creative teaching. He also described the collaborative planning process as stimulating, linked to an increased sense of professional autonomy: ‘I’ve certainly been inspired by the IPC and it’s given us that freedom I think. We were kind of stuck in a rut as it were’ (Peter, interview 1) He focused on innovation and novelty for the teachers but his goals for the children was to help them to learn new things and to make connections and relationships. However, there appeared to be little room for flexibility or for the children’s autonomy, even in relation to IPC topics and activities. These were selected by teachers and everything was pre-planned, albeit creatively with the aim of making learning interesting and meaningful. His focus on ‘making connections’ between different areas of the curriculum and to their own experiences was another key strand in his definition, one that seemed to feature in both his definition of learning more generally as well as his definition of creative learning. There seemed to be some blurring between the two, especially in his references to teaching children to learn based on popularised ‘psycho-pedagogy’ (Burton 2007: 5). He associated particular cognitive processes with both, for example reflection, problem-solving and meta-learning. But, again this was about

teaching children how to conform to the rules of the field of schooling and play this game well, helping them ‘understand what makes a good learning environment and how they learn best’ (Peter, interview 2). Therefore, in his view, creative learning was dependent on the teacher, indeed he said this explicitly: ‘in order to get ‘creative learning’ you need to be taught creatively’ (interview 1).

## **7.5 Introducing Claire**

Claire had been working in Year 6 for just over half a year prior to the data collection phase, having joined Brightwater midway through the previous academic year. This was her first teaching job, therefore she was still in her probationary year for the first term of the research and was also the youngest of the participants, although she and Jennifer were probably close in age. Again, she had not gone into teaching immediately and she demonstrated similar vocational dispositions to Liz and Jennifer based on notions of person-making as she states explicitly below:

...at the end of the day, you’re not just teaching them to recite stuff. They have to have these strategies for life....You’re training people how to be people in a way, especially in a primary school these are the building blocks for who they are going to be for the rest of their lives.

(Claire, interview 1)

She said that becoming a teacher had ‘always been a question of ‘when’ rather than ‘if’ and she had a strong sense of the importance of education: ‘you need a good basis in your education to go anywhere’ (interview 1).

She discussed several influences on both her pedagogical values and her decision to go into teaching in the first place. One was her mother, who had worked with young children though not as a teacher and Claire drew on early years values, discussing the need for relevance, keeping the focus on the child and ‘what’s important’ to them, attributing this to her mother’s influence. She briefly mentioned that there were other teachers in the family



but talked more about how she had been inspired to go into teaching by her own teachers. Like Jennifer there was a close connection between her personal thinking about creativity and her pedagogical ideals although she located creativity in different experiences to Jennifer, as I discuss in more depth below. However, her ideas about the ‘realities’ of teaching were strongly influenced by her sense that the role of the teacher is to get the children ‘ready’ for what is ahead and, for a Year 6 teacher, this was the field of secondary school. On the one hand, she accepted this because ‘there is no-one else to [help the children] catch up’ therefore the buck stopped with the Year 6 teacher, but, on the other, she noted the negative effect that policy was having on children’s learning dispositions and that getting them ready for secondary school was not the same as getting them ready for life which is what primary school ‘should’ be about. Her ideas about what it meant to be a teacher were also at least partially derived from her own experiences as a pupil in secondary school ‘which...wasn’t yesterday but wasn’t that long ago’. She drew on these to understand and explain her role in relation to both creativity and performativity, perhaps due to her age and limited teaching experience. Therefore, Claire’s conception of what it meant to be a teacher had conflicting elements. On the one hand, she saw teaching as a principled vocation and worked hard at creating caring, trusting relationships (Edwards, 2010). She used emotional language to describe both her relationships with the children and the kinds of relationships she hoped they would develop with each other, talking of partnership and teamwork. She frequently used inclusive, collaborative strategies in her classroom, encouraging children to debate and discuss their experiences and test out ideas, seeing herself as a mediator in these situations, striving to make the classroom a safe, caring environment for them to take risks: ‘if someone’s feeling safe then they will be more open to thinking differently’ (Claire, interview 1). These pedagogical values were derived from a sense of teaching and learning as emotionally engaged practice, which was linked to her views on creativity, and she described how working as a teacher in this way gave her a sense of fulfilment (Hargreaves, 1998). Yet on the other hand she was

susceptible to performative pressures, particularly the 'readiness' doxa, as were all the staff. In Claire's case, this involved getting the children ready for a secondary school field that was 'much more "sit down and listen"'. These factors made her feel that she needed to wield power over children 'because if you give them too much freedom they go mental...they can't cope and all hell breaks loose and you have to pull it back together and that's harder than saying, "No, all we're doing is this and then next time we'll do this and this and this' (interview 1). She recognised this as a rule governing the field of schooling and adhered to it whilst simultaneously maintaining her more humanist dispositions.

Unlike, Peter and Jennifer, Claire did not discuss her position within the school at length, perhaps because she was early into her career and still finding her way (McCormack and Gore, 2008) although she was more confident in demeanour than Jennifer. She seemed to feel on the periphery of the school field in her role as Year 6 teacher, related to the 'readiness' doxa discussed above. At the end of the year, she said she felt that Year 6 had been 'left alone' to a great extent which suited her non-conformist dispositions on the one hand because 'I haven't got anyone knocking at my door telling me to do stuff...I have a bit of a problem with being told to do stuff...that I think is a waste of my time'. Physical space may again have played a role because, as with the Year 2 classrooms on the Infant school site, the Year 6 classrooms had their own dedicated block at the Junior School separate from the main building which housed all the other classrooms and shared spaces. However, she also described feeling unsupported by the leadership by the end of the year, particularly after the school's performance had apparently dipped, according to the mock Ofsted, potentially affecting its reputation in the local area.

### 7.5.1 *Claire's definitions of creativity*

Like Jennifer, Claire saw herself as creative and positioned creativity as inherent to learning, associating creative learning with active experiential learning (Smith and Knapp, 2011):

I like being creative...I like getting up doing stuff. I'm very visual, I'm terrible at listening...not that I don't like listening but I don't retain information very easily. I have to be shown something or do something.

(Claire, interview 2)

In the definition above, she is drawing on VAK (Visual, Auditory, and Kinaesthetic), an individualised learning styles model (Riding and Rayner, 2012) to define creativity, as did Peter, although her conception was multi-faceted. Her views were partly informed by her family background which encompassed a range of different types of 'creative' professions: 'a few teachers, lots of music...more entrepreneurship...Like self-made business men and women' (interview 2). In considering where her ideas about creative teaching and creative learning had come from, as noted above, her mother was an influence, but Claire also cited 'inspirational teachers' from her own school experiences as key influences, as well as the focus on creativity in her university training. She wanted to augment children's creative learning dispositions, encouraging them to be 'explorative and curious about stuff', and tried to create the conditions for this in her classroom, valuing a combination of 'teaching creatively' and 'teaching for creativity' strategies. She located creative learning in cognitive and social processes, for example, divergent thinking, problem-solving, imaginative thinking and collaborative dialogic enquiry. Authenticity was important to her so she tried to locate the processes above within children's experiences whenever she could. Even when she was working towards performative curriculum coverage goals she incorporated space for the children to take some ownership and connect with their own interests, experiences or prior learning and to explore ideas together. She discussed the importance of both planned and spontaneous events in this regard ('drama', role play or story-telling) and her own role as mediator or facilitator in both, linking her creative

teaching to constructivist principles in similar ways to Jennifer and Liz. This was part of her everyday teaching approach, like Jennifer this generally involved playful humour and she was alert for ‘teachable moments’ (Jeffrey and Woods, 1996) or ‘creative micromoments’ (Beghetto, 2013), discussed in 4.4.1 (page 69). The relationship between creative teaching and creative learning was reciprocal in her vision. Both were linked to flexibility, innovation and autonomy so she was open to the idea of the teacher learning something new from the children and her key goal was for them to explore new possibilities and perspectives collaboratively. Her views were in tune with Thomas’s (2009: 73) creative transactions that involve ‘group solidarity, trusting relations and dialectical collaborations’ and her ideas about the role of creativity in the classroom supported her humanist dispositions based on a conception of the emotional, relational nature of learning and teaching, associated with little c discourses (Craft, 2001), notions of relevance, autonomy and control (Woods, 1995).

In these ways, Claire positioned creativity pedagogy positively and as central to her pedagogical habitus. However, she also held contradictory views about the value of creativity itself linked to some of her own creative dispositions and experiences. She had gravitated towards what she described as creative subjects in her education (Media Studies) which, together with her extra-curricular experiences at university, provided her with relevant experience and capital for her first job in the ‘creative industry’ (Garnham, 2005) at a publishing company:

I got it because I was the books editor for the university magazine and they used to send books to the students. The Media Communications team were looking for a part-time, admin person to come in.... and they got *me*! I remember I had purple hair, turned up late because I couldn’t find the place and I was in such a panic! But my old, old boss, Beryl...she said, “The moment you turned up with that purple hair, I was like ‘Yes, we’ve got to have you!’”

(Claire, interview 1)

However, when she was discussing her experiences, she started to set up creative capital in opposition to academic capital in a similar way to Peter, using a derogatory term to describe perceptions of her degree in Media Studies and later associating ‘hands-on and practical people’ with non-academic pursuits: ‘they’re not *thick*...just not very academic’ (interview 2). Her comments suggested about secondary school suggested that, like Peter again, she saw teaching older children as having a higher status than primary teaching (Coldron *et al.*, 2014). She had originally wanted to be a secondary teacher in fact but this is where her creative degree did not give her the capital she needed, thus denying her higher status: ‘realised that the degree I did and the interests that I had were much more general, I was much more of a ‘jack of all trades, master of none’ (Claire, interview 1). Therefore, she seemed to see creativity both as an important part of learning and as secondary to ‘academic’ concerns simultaneously. In addition, the extract also demonstrates how her non-conformist dispositions, referenced above, were embodied in her own appearance at the time through her purple hair. These were traits that she associated with creativity but did not want the children in her class to develop. So, although, she valued non-conformity and the potentially more disruptive elements of creativity and aspired towards these herself to some degree, she found it difficult to reconcile these aspects with her perception of her institutional role and her feeling that the teacher had to retain the overall control: ‘you’ve got to reign it [the children’s creativity] in and kind of only let out certain points’ (interview 2). This meant that she was conflicted when it came to children’s autonomy and control, although she did not seem to recognise the contradictions:

As adults...we know what the limits are...and when to push it...because...we do need to push boundaries and...move forward on certain things...but children don’t necessarily know how to do that. So you can’t just go, “Yes, have free reign!” because you get some that will do that themselves and push themselves but some that won’t. They’ll just sit back and do nothing ...And children *like* boundaries. Children *like* to know...their limit. They need to *learn* that and they need to know to push that.

(Claire, interview 2)

These comments were all made in apparent jest but the number of references and the links with her ideas about creative learning suggest that this view was a significant disposition within her pedagogical habitus, evidencing doxic narratives about children, drawing on another form of responsabilisation that is often associated with the 'ability doxa, the idea that children are not achieving what the teacher intends because they are not trying. Therefore, although she saw creativity as an ideal related to autonomy and freedom of expression, something that should be part of children's learning experiences provided the conditions were right; in her view, the conditions were not always right, particularly if children did not have the requisite dispositions and skills needed for Year 6 and secondary school.

## **7.6 Conclusion**

This chapter has provided a 'narrative portrait' (Smyth and McInerney, 2013) of each of the four key participants, presenting key elements of their pedagogical habitus in terms of their ideals and values, their roles and specialisms in the school and their route into teaching together with any major influences on their thinking about teaching and creativity. Each portrait demonstrated the participant's general orientation towards creativity, creative learning and creative teaching, giving a sense of the particular struggles and challenges each faced and any contradictions within their habitus. This concluding section draws these discussions together, highlighting some of the broad similarities and differences between the staff participants' pedagogical values and definitions of creativity. Both the teacher and learner dispositions discussed here and in Chapters Eight and Nine are represented in table format in Appendix 15; I have discussed how these were derived from the data in section 5.6.3 (page 111 onwards).

While conceptualisations of creative teaching were complex and constrained by the performative elements of education policy and the traditions of the field of schooling, their definitions of creative learning were closely allied with their pedagogical values and ideals. Each discussed particular attitudes, habits of mind and creative practices that they hoped to teach children as part of their learning experience in their classroom or school; I have grouped these into sets of ‘creative learning dispositions’ which relate to the creativity research (discussed in 4.2, from page 59) and the traditions of the field of schooling in England (discussed in 4.4, from page 65). One set were ‘curious learner’ dispositions which relate to the ‘person as a human being’ creativity research (Rhodes, 1961: 307). These are the traits, the staff hoped to inspire or augment in children such as inquisitiveness, willingness to change and look for different solutions, openness to the new, inclination to seek novelty, desire to develop new skills and desire to understand things (Tan and McWilliam, 2008). A second set were ‘active, hands-on learning’ dispositions which are associated with the creativity research that focuses on person, process and place (Rhodes, 1961). The staff all discussed practical ‘hands-on’ activities in which children could become immersed and sometimes take control. Here, Liz, Jennifer and Claire drew on progressive education traditions (Sherman, 2009) and child-centred, experiential approaches that position learning itself an inherently creative and social process (Dewey, 1998). A third set of dispositions applied to ‘cognitive creative learning’, these were again linked to person and process research, but this time the emphasis was on cognitive processes and skills, these could be taught directly or the children engaged with them as they interacted with their environment in combination with the other sets of dispositions, such as those above. Between them, the staff discussed the importance of problem-solving, problem-posing, imaginative thinking and critical reflection (Ryhammar and Brolin, 1999). Claire and Peter also drew on some of the psychological and neuroscientific research on learning styles and brain functioning, although these seemed to be surface-level, popularised versions as these were referenced in discussion quite briefly

and I did not observe much evidence of these approaches in practice (Burton, 2007). The teachers discussed other learner dispositions but these were the key ‘creative learning’ dispositions that all valued. Innovation was a key to them all, linked to children’s motivation and engagement and the teacher’s role in helping them to learn ‘new things’, as part of a ‘mini c’ conception of creativity (Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009). They had different perspectives on how these aspects should be taught linked to sets of interacting dispositions that they enacted or aspired towards as part of their pedagogical habitus. Some have associations with the creativity research and could perhaps be described as inherently creative, whilst others were associated with creativity indirectly through their interplay with other dispositions within the member of staff’s particular pedagogical habitus. All the staff demonstrated ‘person-making’ dispositions which Troman and Jeffrey (2011: 79) describe as an emphasis on ‘teaching people to be people’ (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009: 9), these were almost exactly the words that Claire used (page 185), and Jennifer and Claire in particular related this disposition to ‘communicating, relating, mutual respect, working together, emotional wellbeing, knowing oneself and knowing others’ (ibid). However, ‘person-making’ can be co-opted by the shifts in education policy involving the perceived requirements of the labour market, therefore the disposition itself can shift from a more progressive, child-centred perspective to a neoliberal, society-centred perspective (Brehony, 2005). This was also reflected in the teachers’ pedagogical habitus, for example in their perceptions of their responsibility to prepare children for the next stage of their education as opposed to life more generally, justified by neoliberal doxic narratives for example ‘readiness’ (Perryman *et al.*, 2018). This was perceived as important both for the sake of the children, they saw it as their responsibility to give children the tools to succeed in a performative education system as is, perhaps indicated by Claire’s use of the word ‘training’ in her person-making definition (page 185), but also for themselves, evidencing that they were complying with the rules of the game and enacting the performative ‘good’ teacher or leader.



Other key dispositions related to the sense of vocation that Jennifer, Liz and Claire all described as part of their rationale for becoming a teacher, their sense of being ‘the right person for the job’ because it was a match for their values (Colley *et al.*, 2003: 488). This involved idealised and realised dimensions that were sometimes in tension with each other but, in terms of their principles, they related their vocational dispositions to humanist values, emotional engagement and sense of fulfilment drawing on the progressive version of person-making (Brehony, 1992; Edwards, 2010). This is associated with research which has examined links between creativity and psychological wellbeing (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014) linked to sense of competence, autonomy and belonging (Craft, 2001). They also positioned creativity within every processes, drawing on democratic ‘little c’ conceptions (Craft, 2001), implicitly drawing on the notion that teaching as well as learning is a creative process (Woods, 1996). The pedagogical approach they associated with their humanist disposition was largely constructivist, for example definitions of the creative teacher as a facilitator and learning as a social process of co-construction involving an imaginative reworking of experience (Bruner, 1977; Vygotsky, 1978), involving the experiential, child-centred approaches that were part of their interpretation of the ‘active, hands-on learning’ disposition above.

All four staff had dispositions specific to the position they held in the school which shaped their vision of creative possibilities. Jennifer’s were situated within the field of early years practice, although it seemed that traditions from the field of schooling were encroaching upon and shaping her dispositions. Claire and Peter both demonstrated SATs-teacher dispositions which were shaped by performative priorities as will be discussed further over the next two chapters. Claire’s had an extra ‘Year 6’ dimension which revolved around ensuring that children were ‘ready’ for secondary school, drawn at least in part from her own relatively recent schooling experiences, while Peter’s were potentially largely derived

from seven consecutive years of teaching the SATs. Liz's leadership dispositions interacted with her progressive pedagogical ideals but she was under tremendous pressure to adopt performative dispositions due to her positioning in the fields that dominated the school, particularly the field of political power in which she represented the school itself, filtered through the local authority and local school confederation. As a result, her creative dispositions were constrained and, when she reflected on how creative teaching should be enacted in the school as a whole, she largely relied on conceptions of 'teaching creatively' which located the responsibility for creative teaching and learning in the teacher, although her ideals incorporated 'teaching for creativity' strategies (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004).

Peter's definitions also relied on a 'teaching creatively' definition and he put less emphasis on children's autonomy than Jennifer and Claire because, while all the staff evidenced performative dispositions and susceptibility to neoliberal doxa, a managerialist logic of practice was more embedded in his classroom. Whereas, Jennifer and Claire saw teaching itself as more flexible and they blended 'teaching for creativity' with 'teaching creatively' elements, seeing both as feasible and aspiring towards providing space for children to take ownership and engage their creative learner dispositions in both planned and unplanned ways. However, both also described constraints and there was evidence of tensions, lines of division and ambivalence within their pedagogical habituses, as was the case for all four. Each had different coping mechanisms (Ingram, 2011) as is discussed within the context of their enactments in the next chapter which examines the definitions presented here in more depth, looking at how these were translated into practice.

## **Chapter Eight: Staff Enactments of Creativity**

### **8.1 Introduction**

This chapter demonstrates how the staff enacted their definitions of creativity in the school. It again draws on self-reported stories of enactment from the staff interviews, including the various anecdotes and metaphors that all staff used to illustrate their definitions, but there is more emphasis on practices and strategies used in the classroom, drawing on extracts from my observations and field notes. It is important to note that, although I have separated definition and enactment and sometimes the conceptions of teaching and learning analytically in these findings chapters, the teachers frequently interlinked ‘creative teaching’ and ‘creative learning’ in both definition and enactment, discussing the ways that they felt enabled or constrained in putting their definitions into action as the same time as telling the stories themselves. Therefore I briefly highlight some of the specific enablers, constraints, dilemmas and tensions within the context of these enactments, as I have done in the context of their definitions in the previous chapter, before exploring these in more depth, in Chapter Nine. As was the case in Chapter Seven, the ‘teaching creatively’ and ‘teaching for creativity’ concepts (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004) have been useful analytic tools, although, again, these were often blended in enactments.

In this chapter, I summarise the features and characteristics of the enactments of creative teaching and creative learning thematically, reflecting on both shared elements and individual variations. This is intended to facilitate comparison of the teaching and learning dispositions and to draw out factors that enabled or constrained the enactment of creativity in the different classrooms and the school as a whole. As discussed in the previous chapter, the teachers identified particular sets of creative learning dispositions that they wanted children to develop as part of their experience in their classrooms or the school. Some were enacted as they engaged the children in experiences and contexts that they

deemed to be creative which I associate with the creativity research that focuses on environmental factors that stimulate creativity and the interaction between human beings and their environment (Amabile, 1983; Csikszentmihalyi, 2014) well as the more recent research that examines pedagogical environment features that are conducive to creative teaching and learning (Cochrane and Cockett, 2007; Davies *et al.*, 2013). These are presented in 8.2. The teachers drew upon particular pedagogical strategies, skills and approaches within these creative contexts as well as in other aspects of their teaching more generally and they sometimes taught ‘creative skills’ directly; these are discussed section 8.3. The concluding section, 8.4, summarises the key issues arising from this chapter. As noted in the Methodology chapter, it has been harder to conceptualise Liz’s creative pedagogical dispositions compared to the other teachers because I did not observe her practice regularly in the same way that I did the other teachers and only had one in-depth interview. Her pedagogical enactment stories tended to relate to her ideals and to practice she observed in the teachers’ classrooms, therefore representing other teachers’ dispositions rather than her own, although she spoke of these because they matched or contradicted her definitions. Her other enactment stories related to her leadership and her strategic efforts to enable creativity in the school which are discussed in Chapter Nine. This chapter focuses more on pedagogy and what creative teaching and creative learning looked like in the classroom.

## **8.2 Creative contexts and experiences**

This section discusses the environmental factors that enabled the children to develop the particular dispositions that staff associated with creativity. They sometimes discussed physical environments but the social and emotional aspects of teaching and learning and notions of the classroom as a community were key. All of them wanted children to feel safe and comfortable: ‘I think if they feel...happy where they are and they don’t feel afraid

to have a try and they're encouraged to do their best...then I think that sets yourself up for a good learning environment' (Peter, interview 1). Claire made more specific links between a 'safe' environment and the development of children's curious learner and risk-taker dispositions: 'if someone's feeling safe then they will be more open to thinking differently' (interview 1). Jennifer discussed similar ideas and she was keen for the children to experience embody these dispositions as physical explorations of the environment, outdoors where possible. The focus on risk-taking was stronger in Claire and Jennifer's conceptualisations of creative learning environments and required them to engage their own risk-taker dispositions as teachers; this was in terms of their own levels of comfort with ambiguity because the outcomes of such exploratory processes are unknown or at least uncertain. It is important to acknowledge the constraining effects of the fields of schooling and policy increase the level of risk (Adams, 2010). Supporting children's sense of agency and competence and encouraging them to 'think differently' in a highly controlled environment in which curriculum coverage has to be prioritised can be difficult to justify. These creative dispositions were enacted through several different types of experience: those that were active and 'hands-on' learning experiences, those that built on children's prior and current understandings and those that connected the school or classroom with the world outside the school.

### *8.2.1 Active, 'hands-on' learning experiences*

All the staff discussed 'hands-on' learning as part of their definitions of creative learning and creative teaching, although with different emphases, seeing it as a way to engage children in their learning. Liz's example below demonstrates how she associated children's enjoyment and motivation with practically creative tasks, such endeavours can be very positive experiences for learners when they achieve in a state of 'flow' which involves their complete absorption in the task (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). I examine this

notion in more depth drawing on more detailed observational evidence later in the chapter, but Liz's own enthusiasm below seems to be related to the children's and their involvement in the task, demonstrating the interaction between creative teaching and creative learning dispositions. Here she is describing a Year 6 lesson about Ancient Egypt that she observed as she showed a visitor around. The children appear to feel some level of control and ownership over the task and she highlights their competence:

They were making canopic jars where they put all the brains etcetera in. And they could tell that person right from the very start exactly what they were doing, *why* they were doing it and it had that gruesome element... That's what it is!..I don't think you can really describe it until you see it. And that's what creativity is about.

(Liz, interview)

All of the staff gave examples located within the context of the IPC topics like this one in their interviews. From both my observations and discussions, these often involved experiential elements involving physical movement or mind-body coordination (Smith and Knapp, 2011), for example a production, performance or community visit, and were usually engaging for both children and teachers, as is discussed in 8.2.3. All the staff mentioned practical 'hands-on' activities specifically in relation to creative learning and creative teaching although there were variations in the ways that this was defined and enacted in the three classrooms, particularly in terms of the balance between structure and freedom and the perceived purpose and value of the activity. These variations related to pedagogical habitus, largely the ways that their individual teaching philosophies interacted with their interpretation of the rules of the fields in which they were situated, particularly the field of schooling, which included their notions of age-appropriate activities and strategies and their interpretations of policy. For example, Liz's enactment story above illustrates the way that she felt her notion of 'teaching creatively' to inspire the children could fit within a framework of national curriculum coverage, which was key to her leadership vision, although there is also a focus on the more humanist dispositions of the learners themselves. Peter and Claire also associated practical activities more with a

‘teaching creatively’ approach in definition, although, again other aspects of their pedagogical habitus shaped their enactments. Whereas, for Jennifer, who linked creative learning with early years pedagogy and curriculum and situated both within a social constructivist framework, the enactment of active, hands-on learning as inherently creative and the ‘essence’ of Reception, as discussed in 7.3.1 (page 177). This type of learning was therefore more common in her classroom and she drew on more of a ‘teaching for creativity’ approach. I now present enactments of this type of hands-on creative learning in each classroom context.

One of Jennifer’s explicitly stated pedagogical goals was to enable children to have more autonomy over their learning and planning practical ‘hands-on’ learning activities was one of her key strategies in achieving this. For example, she made sure that the children had regular opportunities for what she called ‘choosing time’. This involved a mixture of open-ended activities and directed tasks that children engaged with independently, usually for a period of up to an hour at least twice daily, sometimes more. However, there were always constraints related to the requirement to ‘cover’ specific aspects of the curriculum, particularly with the increased focus on phonics due to the implementation of the Year 1 Phonics Check (DfE, 2012b). The children enacted various aspects of Jennifer’s definitions of creative learning during these ‘choosing time’ sessions; the extract from the general classroom observation below provides a typical example. This observation took place after an adult-led ‘core curriculum’ lesson, in this instance numeracy, in which the whole class had been sat on the carpet for 20 minutes, as was the usual pattern. This ‘choosing time’ episode took place between 11:05 and 11:50am:

The children are given choice of activities: a phonics colouring activity in their exercise books, where Jennifer instructs them to only colour up to the letter they have done in class together ‘even if you know more’. A worksheet measuring activity; small groups are called up to do this with Mrs. Smith (TA). They can go outdoors but Jennifer reminds them outdoor learning is once per day so they can only go if they haven’t already been

out that morning and that then means they can't go this afternoon. She also puts number cards 1 to 100 on the carpet and tells the children they could sort them consulting the 100 chart on the wall. There is play-doh on one table and in the shared area between the two Reception classes there is an art and craft area set up for leaf rubbings or they can make a skeleton out of straws. One boy reminds Jennifer that he needs to make a card for his Mum's birthday and she gets him card.

The children go to different activities – no-one chooses the phonics activity all session, four or five boys go straight to get out the toy cars and toy road mat (not mentioned by Jennifer but she is happy for them to do this, just telling them not to mix it up with the number activity on the carpet). Two or three children go to the interactive whiteboard and start playing a game on it. Two children go to the leaf rubbing area. I stay on the carpet and have a conversation with the boys about cars.

Scarlett comes over and engages me in the number activity with Marta, "Can you help us find the 1, Michelle?" (She clearly knows which card is the '1' but I accept this invitation to play). Marta counts the cards although her counting does not correspond to the number written on the cards (I do not correct her). Scarlett wants to show me her 'baby photos' – the number cards are the 'baby photos' (this seems to be based on an activity that they have been doing in the classroom that morning, where they brought in baby photos and were trying to recognise each other). I engage in pretend play with her and we talk about what is happening in the 'photos'. Marta joins in.

(Reception, general observation, Day 3, Friday 12 October, 10:45 – 12:00)

This extract exemplifies how 'choosing time' generally worked. All the independent activities offered children the opportunity to become engrossed in an experience of their own choosing, including activities that had not been set out by teaching staff, and several of them always had a practical, 'hands-on' element. The children had a significant amount of autonomy in that they were free to interact with each other spontaneously, immersing themselves in a task or moving between them as they preferred, watching or engaging, and using these opportunities to make sense of their experiences, as Scarlett demonstrates. However, constraints are also evident in the example above. The children could only engage in free-flow play (Moyle, 2010) in this way during these 'choosing time' periods and there was the chance that the adults would pull them away to do an adult-led task. Some of the adult-led activities were also 'hands-on', providing opportunities for children to take an element of control under adult supervision, for example cooking, but, more often than not, they related to the 'coverage' of formal curriculum goals and the adults were keen



to ensure that all the children experienced the same activity, as Mrs Smith is doing in the extract above. The children could move between indoors and outdoors during choosing time but only once a day and they had to take turns, as illustrated above, and this depended on adult supervision. Many of the tasks set up by the adults had a predetermined focus that related to formal curriculum. However, the adults were generally happy for children to subvert their original planned purpose to make it their own (Anning, 2010), as Scarlett does above, and the imaginative, pretend play in which she engaged in was another form of creative learning that was regularly observed in the classroom, as will be discussed in 8.3.1.

Apart from facilitating the children's requests for unplanned activities, as illustrated above, the adults sometimes engaged with the children in exploratory, open-ended dialogue and questioning during hands-on or other choosing time activities, especially when supervising children outside. But large portions of Jennifer's day were devoted to direct instruction or assessment and recording related to reading, writing and mathematics, through either whole class activities or in small groups as above, which was a source of frustration to her because she was rarely able to enact her constructivist ideals. This limited the opportunity for guided critical reflection and questioning to provoke children's thinking (Craft *et al.*, 2013) and Jennifer told me that she felt that she missed opportunities to transform some events into more meaningful experiences. She internalised the conflict between her idealised and realised dispositions as anxiety or guilt, assuming responsibility for this perceived deficit in her teaching although she felt she had no choice. For example, she was initially wary of my response when children subverted the planned purpose of 'choosing time' activities in my early observations, as Scarlett does above. I found this unsurprising considering the policy focus on 'planned purposeful play' (DfE, 2012a: 6) enforced by Ofsted. Indeed, Reception practice was criticised in the Ofsted report (2013) shortly after the fieldwork phase for the 'lack of purpose' in independent activities (6.3.2,

page 144). However, we discussed such episodes early into the fieldwork visit which relieved her anxieties and she told me she was glad they had the opportunity for these type of interaction with someone and wished she had more time to engage with them in this way herself.

Jennifer was also very specific about the value of outdoor learning experiences in particular as part of her definitions of experiential creative learning, seeing the outdoors as an important context for the development of young children's confidence and a sense of competence. As indicated in the extract below, she saw outdoor explorations as offering all children a chance to develop their learning in new ways at their own rate, potentially involving completely new experiences for some but she focused on their capabilities and the role of the teacher as a guide. In her view, this open-ended exploratory outdoor play helped them to make their own decisions, adopt trial and error strategies with guidance and learn the value of risk taking and curiosity. Outdoor-oriented dispositions that have been associated with both creativity (Jeffrey, 2006; Mullet *et al.*, 2016) and early years practice and research (Tovey, 2007), emphasising connections between intellectual and physical engagement as part of interaction with the environment and, again, providing a bridge between creative learning and early years pedagogical traditions.

Obviously you wouldn't take 30 children to climb trees but yes, lots of having a go at stuff and because I think up until they come to school some of them have led quite sheltered lives where they haven't had a go at things like that. And even when you just do large apparatus and things you realise that some of them have *never* climbed without holding onto a hand or...you know, without railings either side and they are very capable of doing things like that.

(Jennifer, interview 1)

As she notes, there was little opportunity for the children to engage in tree climbing, but the outdoors was important as an authentic context for experiential learning and she planned different outdoor opportunities for them. The children had access to a designated outdoor area shared with the other Reception class where there were some small trees

including a den which was well-used and featured prominently in the children's photographs. Jennifer also emphasised the study of nature itself: 'we went on a nature walk around the field and they loved it!...we only went round the field with plastic bags to pick up leaves.. and they had an amazing time. One child said it was the best day ever! [she laughs]' (Jennifer, interview 1). Although clearly a planned activity, there was space for new discoveries as well as 'personal feeling, spontaneity and intuitive responses' (Salmon, 1995: 25). Importantly for Jennifer, although her focus was on the children's creative learning dispositions, taking the learning outside the classroom meant that, she herself could become immersed in the activity too, enabling her to enact a version of her idealised creative teacher self by engaging in the enquiry with the children and structuring the learning as a community experience.

The practical activities and the focus on child-initiated learning and outdoor learning were a good fit in Jennifer's classroom because they are typical of the field of early years practice (Whitebread and Coltman, 2015) and enshrined in the EYFS (DfE, 2012a). Both acted as enablers, although the very different positioning of creativity in the early years compared to the national curriculum (Craft, 2000) may also contribute to the perspective that 'hands-on' learning is more appropriate for younger children. As I have discussed in 4.4.3, the entrenched rules of the field of schooling, inscribed in curriculum, encourage the view that learning and teaching should become more formalised as children move through the school justified by the doxa of 'readiness' (Bingham and Whitebread, 2018). This perspective was reflected in the approaches taken by Claire and Peter. In fact Claire explicitly stated that the practical things should happen lower down the school as part of 'play and exploring and looking at the breadth of stuff' (interview 2) because she wanted the children to arrive in Year 6 with particular skills, even describing a 'hands-on' approach as remedial in one instance. This was when the children did not know their lines of symmetry, which she felt they should have learned lower down the school, so she

planned a practical lesson making triangles out of straws. Despite positioning it in relation to deficit, in so doing, she recognised that an experiential approach motivates children and supports them in developing new understandings, as did Peter, though both gave examples of practical activities that tended to be adult-led in the service of predetermined goals or specific skills and knowledge. Therefore, in contrast with Jennifer's focus on enabling children's agency, planned hands-on activities seemed more a strategy for 'teaching creatively' to 'cover' national curriculum objectives related to the performative rules of the field of schooling (Jeffrey *et al.*, 2008) in the Year 2 and Year 6 classrooms. However, while both Peter and Claire valued teacher designated purpose in relation to these practical activities, Peter seemed to position the creativity as inherent in the activity whilst Claire highlighted the role of critical reflection. For Claire, the learning needed to be guided by the teacher drawing on her notion that children's creativity should be 'reigned in' (7.5.1, page 190) otherwise 'the children remember the activity and not the learning...if you *are* doing something creative, the learning has to be paramount. What are they getting out of it? It's not a craft thing' (interview 1). Although it is perhaps implicit in this comment and it was blended with a performative purpose, here Claire is recognising the value of an experimental, experiential approach as one that helps children to make sense of their learning through reflection as well as the connection between doing and thinking (Hondzel and Hansen, 2015). The example above is a mathematics activity but, more often than not, she and Peter tended to locate hands-on learning within traditionally creative subjects such as art and design, as evidenced in the extracts below. Both therefore situated this kind of creativity at the margins, unsurprisingly given the emphasis on core subjects in the field of schooling (Hall and Thomson, 2007), and both the observations below took place on a Friday afternoon. As Liz told me in her interview, 'the afternoons are the creative sessions' and, although she encouraged a cross-curricular focus on numeracy and literacy within topics, she expected teachers to focus on these 'core' aspects separately with direct teaching as necessary, especially given the increased focus on Spelling, Grammar and

Punctuation which was to be tested in the SATs (DfE, 2013). However, there were differences between Claire and Peter's conception of practically creative experiences, as is demonstrated in the extracts below, illustrating some of the different facets of their pedagogical habitus.

This Year 6 observation took place in the classroom after lunch on a Friday afternoon. The children had been engaged in silent reading and were about to start working on an ongoing DT project, making a toy car in pairs. This project took place over a number of weeks.

This extract is part of a target child observation (explained on 5.5.1, page 104) focusing on a boy called Danny:

Claire counts down to silence and explains the tasks for the afternoon. The children have been making a wooden frame, some have finished and need to make their prototype body out of card and others are sawing wood for the frame under Claire's direct supervision. Before they start, Claire reminds them about the prototype that a boy from the other Year 6 class shared with them last week, going through the process step-by-step....Claire records the stage that each child is at on the whiteboard. Danny starts designing the prototype on his mini-whiteboard, showing it to his partner, Mike, regularly. They point to parts and discuss them. Mike draws lines on the card using a ruler....[a few minutes later] they continue to discuss their design, sometimes making jokes but remaining focused on the task. The children are asking lots of questions about the task, some to Claire but also to each other. Claire asks children who are at a different stage to explain what they have done to others in answer to most of the questions directed to her because she is working with a group...Danny and Mike are discussing the design ("Shall we put eyes on it?...Shall we put this thing inside?")...Danny has a chat with a boy from another pair briefly, they laugh, then he turns his attention back to the task, watching what Mike is doing closely and making comments. Mike says to him, "Do you want to draw any of this?" Danny says, "No, you do it." But a minute later he adds something to the drawing. They stand up and take the drawing to Claire who is sawing wood with a hacksaw....They go back to sit down, Danny scores the card with scissors, as Claire has shown them, and starts to cut it out chatting with the children around him as he works. They remain 'on task' as they chat. Mike watches Danny as he cuts. They discuss the task quietly and share the task, swapping and taking turns to fold and then cut then fold again. The 3-D design starts to take shape and they both work on it simultaneously folding different parts. Both are fully absorbed in what they are doing now and all their discussion is about the task. They argue about how to do it (good naturedly). Danny demonstrates his idea which Mike accepts as the best way. Then Mike realises they have made a mistake and says, "We should have made the first one like this. Let's start

again.” Danny can’t see what’s wrong at first but then slumps back in his chair as he realises Mike is right while Mike goes to get some more card. When he gets back, Mike says, “Now it’s your turn to draw.” Danny sets to work and is concentrating so hard that he doesn’t notice when the girl sitting next to him puts something in his hair. He squints up but does not engage with her, indicating non-verbally that he is not going to stop what he is doing.

(Year 6, target child observation: Danny, Day 4, Friday 19 October, 13:00 – 14:15)

Although this example is adult-led and all the children are following the same steps and working to the same national curriculum objectives, there are opportunities for flexibility, autonomy and innovation as well as collaboration and dialogue, therefore a range of creative learning and creative teaching dispositions which interact. It also demonstrates the sense of community that was evident in the classroom, interactions between children and between Claire and the children were almost always warm, positive and often playful. This extract is also interesting because it provides observational evidence to support the notion of ‘flow’ discussed earlier. Flow represents an optimal state of intrinsic motivation where a person becomes immersed in an activity that they perceive as meaningful and enjoyable, resulting in a feeling of energised focus to the point where they may lose sense of space and time (Csikszentmihalyi, 2014). It is associated with creative activities, when people are acquiring new information and combining it with their current understandings, and has been described as a manifestation of wellbeing because of its associations with positive emotions (McLellan *et al.*, 2012). Throughout most of the observation above, Danny and Mike are engaged in the creation of their model and keen to see their finished product, seeming to move in and out of a state of flow, sometimes losing a sense of what is going on around them individually or as a team. They are very engaged, working collaboratively, sometimes communicating without speaking, sometimes posing questions, debating and discussing their ideas, testing out theories and identifying problems and solutions together, demonstrating skill in the ways they use materials as well as persistence when they make errors (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004). It is a rich learning experience and

would seem to demonstrate an enactment of the humanist, person-making ideals that Claire aspired towards. As teacher, she takes on the role of facilitator, providing the frame for the activity and stepping in as needed but she also leaves the children to take the lead.

Peter's approach to practical art and craft activities was very different. The activity described below again took place on a Friday afternoon but this time only 45 minutes before the end of the day. Here, the Year 2 children are making Mother's Day cards with three-dimensional daffodils on the front; they had started them earlier in the week:

Peter gives out the cards. One child has written "Mother's Day" on the front and Peter asks "Why have you done this as I didn't ask you to do that?" He calls them to the carpet where he demonstrates how to draw and cut out stems from green paper. He tells them they need no more than two or three otherwise it "would start to look a bit silly." He rolls one stem a bit to make it look three dimensional. The children like this and they clap. Joshua says "Do we have to?" Peter replies, "You can do what you like, it's your card." He assigns two children to get glue sticks and put them on the tables. The children start to talk as the resources are given out and after a few minutes, Peter claps a rhythm that they repeat which quiets them. He holds up a piece of paper with a photocopied design that will be an insert in their cards (flowers have been drawn on the left side and there are lines for the children's message on the other side). He demonstrates how they should fold their paper. One of the boys, Terry, has already stuck his onto his card. Peter says, "Have I said to stick it in?" Terry, "No". Peter, "So how did you know to do this?" Terry, "I didn't". Terry has used glue all over the paper but Peter wants to them to only glue the spine of the paper so that it flaps. Peter then writes "To Mummy. Happy Mother's Day love from" on the whiteboard for them to copy. Terry is writing in his card, as is the girl next to him but the majority are not writing yet. Karl and Joshua are dancing when Peter is not looking. Daniel shouts out "Why can't you do 'Dear Mum'?" Peter says, "Pardon." Daniel says, "Can you do 'Dear Mum'?" Peter says "Yes. You can do what you like it's your card. Just make sure that you spell it correctly"

(Year 2, general observation, Day 14, Friday 8 March, 14:15 – 15:00)

All the teachers tended to use behaviourist strategies at times linked to the rules of the field of schooling (Alexander, 1995; Appendix 18) for example clapping to quiet children and using rewards and penalties to reinforce particular behaviours, illustrated in this extract and in the Year 6 extract above when Claire counted down to silence. However, Peter's dominant approach was more formal and highly structured than the other teachers and this

extract exemplifies the ways that a closely observed behaviourist approach can restrict children's creative learning. Although the children are involved in a hands-on activity which will result in a creative product, which was something Peter discussed as part of his definitions, it is difficult to conceive of it as an example of creative learning because innovation is deterred and the children have very little autonomy over either process or product. They are reprimanded when they attempt to take ownership and, although Peter tells them that they 'can do what they like' his actions and managerial comments do not support this. This is likely due to the purpose of the activity, which appears to be based on Peter's perception of a quality creative product and linked to a neoliberal conception of parents as consumers (Crozier, 1998; Cottle and Alexander, 2014) or the importance of keeping parents 'on side' as he and the other staff put it (see 6.3.1, page 140). Therefore, rather than focusing on developing the children's creative skills and capacities, he seems to feel he should maintain control. He linked activities like this one and 'any opportunities that involve making something or *performing* something for Mums and Dads' (interview 1) to his definition of creative learning but it seems to be strongly shaped by performative concerns and the need to demonstrate evidence of 'good' teaching. This highlights that a 'hands-on' learning activity may not be inherently creative in itself and that the opportunities for creative learning are linked to 'emphasis and intention' (Cremin, 2009: 43) as well as how relevant and meaningful the activities are for the children involved.

### *8.2.2 Locating learning within children's experiences*

Both Jennifer and Claire tried to prioritise relevance and authenticity in relation to creative learning which meant that flexibility was a key aspect of their creative teaching approach. They based enquiries and investigations based on what was happening in the children's lives linked to their attempts to engage children's 'curious learner' dispositions.

I think we'll probably do quite a bit of stuff on Australia next week because one of the children's gone to Australia and they'll probably start asking...



they usually do when someone's away for a while. We get the maps out and we look at the animals and they were asking why it is hot here and cold there?

(Jennifer, interview 1).

Claire valued a similar approach, making time for answering questions and generating further questions and possibilities through 'a really good debate' located in the children's experiences. She highlighted the emotional dimensions and valued and carefully cultivated the relationships between teacher and child and between the children themselves.

Although she is maintaining sight of her planned intentions in the extract below, the episode is rooted in the experience of one child and their contribution to a planned lesson:

Maria was telling us about her grandma. She was looking through some of her grandma's stuff and she found some plane tickets and so she said "Where did you go Nan?" and she said "Oh I didn't actually go..." I think she was a child, had the tickets but they wouldn't...let her on the aeroplane because of her colour. And because it was all linked in [to their topic], it *really* made it real and we discussed how people would have felt and how amazing or actually how awful that someone *we* know...that it happened to them directly...[It's about]... having that freedom to...express those opinions. And having those opinions but actually other people being allowed to say, "Look, that's not an opinion that's acceptable" or challenging those opinions.

(Claire, interview 1)

So while Jennifer's flexibility related to 'throwing the planning out of the window' entirely at times, Claire tended to keep her predetermined aims in sight, allowing for the flexibility for the children to take discussion in directions she may not have planned for as a 'teachable moment', which involved creative and collaborative exploration of both real and imaginary possibilities (Pacifi and Garrison, 2004). The extract above can also be conceptualised as an example of possibility thinking (Craft, 2002: 111), using 'imagination, with intention, to find a way around a problem' by posing and solving problems together and collectively 'wondering about the world which surrounds us'. In this way, the discussion about Maria's grandma becomes relevant to them all as a classroom community and beyond because it is 'real' and important. Here, they reflect on the meaning of this particular event, exploring its relevance to their own lives, as well as connecting with broader social concerns, within the safe environment of the classroom

(Edwards, 2010). Claire frequently engaged in such an approach, her definitions and enactments emphasised the importance role of empathy, respect and trust as well as flexibility and openness to the new on the part of both teachers and learners (McWilliam *et al.*, 2011):

Creative learning is.... being flexible...and ....having trust in your teacher and your peers and having a good relationship...[being]...open...to [the possibility that] in *this* classroom anything can happen. You know there could be a murder and we could investigate it, which we did at the beginning of the year or we could write a fantastic poem that makes you really sad. Or we can share our innermost secrets and fears about stuff. Or have a really good debate about....we were doing about Floella Benjamin and racism in our literacy at the moment and we touched on that this afternoon [in the discussion about Maria's grandma]. And being outraged and sharing some stories ... I want children to be able to share those experiences.

(Claire, interview 1)

Here, the creative teacher becomes the skilled mediator or facilitator of the debate: 'you can talk it out and go "Well...think about it this way" and play devil's advocate...so they come up with the answers. I think you have to be very good... to really push them and go... "Ah but what if I do that!" (Claire, interview 1). The creative teacher's role to therefore to provoke a deeper level of critical reflection, posing questions and alternatives that encourages them to engage with possibilities on a deeper level (Craft *et al.*, 2013). Her aim is to encourage the children to engage emotionally and intellectually with issues, to look for different solutions and reflect on issues, here thinking about what is 'acceptable' and what is not. In this way, possibility thinking is a pedagogical strategy that engages a range of interacting creative learning and teaching dispositions.

### 8.2.3 *Making connections to the outside world*

To Liz, the focus on creativity in the school and the role of her creative teachers was to inspire children to explore the world around them. All the teachers shared this vision as part of the 'curious learner' dispositions they aspired towards or exhibited themselves.

Liz's own examples of enactments that involved 'making connections' were brief but the

constituent elements were clear. She wanted to present children with a variety of opportunities in which they could engage in real and imaginary exploration of the world outside the school, often involving temporary changes to the usual organisation of space or time. This could sometimes involve forward planning and most of events and activities drew on the IPC framework, tending to be themed, involving cross-curricular topic-based learning. Although it seemed to be in tension with her core curriculum coverage requirements that relegated creative teaching and learning to the afternoons, Liz also emphasised the value of giving children time to immerse themselves in such experiences: ‘it’s six weeks of really good literacy, numeracy, science and it’s blocked. It’s not like an hour here or an hour there. You can really get to grips with what you’re learning.’ (Liz, interview).

Whether it took place in the school or as a school trip, all the different classes or year groups engaged in topic-based events, performances and engaged with professionals from the local community. Some were ‘Pro C’ creative experts related to the arts, where ‘Pro C’ creativity is the creativity exhibited by people considered to be professionally or vocationally creative (Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009); I include any of these visitors in this category where the visit was linked to the staff definitions of creative learning and creative teaching. As Jennifer noted, events, visits and school trips are a typical feature of most children’s schooling experience, therefore the rules of the field of schooling did not act as constraints, and she, Liz and Peter all felt that the IPC curriculum framework supported them in turning these events into opportunities for the enactment of creative teaching and creative learning, through its enquiry-based structure. I discuss the staff perspectives on the ways that the IPC enabled and constrained their efforts further in Chapter Nine, in the rest of this section I present some of the IPC enactments themselves.

The IPC entry and exit points, which introduced or concluded a topic, would involve real experiences, visits and sometimes ‘pretend’ events. Both teachers and children would have fun with these, as Jennifer demonstrates here in her example of an elaborately staged exit event:

We have the whole day. Last year we...did ‘Travel’ and we focused on China. We turned this whole classroom into a Chinese restaurant...They cooked the food...well the children made the food and we cooked it in there. We took over this whole room, there were 60 of them all sitting eating with chopsticks; it was hilarious! We had Chinese music on, lanterns hanging from the ceiling. They loved it! And they flew to China... So they had to come in here. They queued up in lines and we had desks at the front with laptops and we were sitting there and we had our little pretend ground crew clothes on, smashing away at the laptops. “Yes please!” And they’d made tickets, so they handed in their tickets and they had to check their passports. They went through a clothes rail, which was a metal detector [we both laugh]...and they got stamps in their passports. Then they went through to the Daffodils class and Lucy was in there and she had the chairs all lined up and they had numbers on them. So they had to find the number that was written on their ticket, sit down and then we showed a video of an aeroplane windscreen taking off and landing. She went down with a trolley and gave them all a biscuit and squash and then when they came back they were in China! [We both laugh]. It was lovely! They really did enjoy it so...yes, we’re quite creative...with the topic.

(Jennifer, interview 1)

This extract is a clear example of ‘playful pedagogy’ and ‘storying’ in particular which is defined as ‘occasions when teachers and children together ‘make up’ stories or parts of stories, develop roles or co-construct fantasies’ (Goouch, 2008: 93). It evidences ‘teaching creatively’ through the collaborative planning of imaginative events which transformed the classroom in terms of both time and physical space. This transformation made it an event in which both children and adults could become immersed for an entire day. It also demonstrates ‘teaching for creativity’ elements because, although the teachers have planned the grand narrative and its sequencing, there is scope for the children to take ownership and shape the action, enact their own stories within it individually or together with peers or teachers. It is more difficult to ascertain how the children may have done this in this instance because it is a self-report and an overview as Jennifer did not refer to any specific enactments instigated by the children but the scope is there nonetheless. She

describes how the ‘pretend’ aspects connect to ‘real life’ experiences within the central travelling narrative, giving children opportunities to recall, revisit and refine their experiences both relating to the topic and their lives outside of school. The outcomes are flexible and open-ended, each child will learn something different. In addition, and very importantly for Jennifer’s definition of the creative teacher and her own sense of fulfilment, this kind of transformation provides the teacher with the opportunities to follow the children into their play, to co-construct action, narratives and resources imaginatively, something she was keen to do whenever she had the opportunity.

From my observations, experiential learning was again at the heart of these entry and exit points and the links to community and ‘real life’ provided authenticity, even with a ‘pretend’ event like the one above. Others engaged directly with the ‘real’ community and bringing in ‘pro c’ experts added an extra layer of authenticity or novelty for the children. These visits involved the whole school, generally the whole Infant or Junior school rather than the two together, or just a class or year group. Examples of class specialist visitors included a circus workshop led by a circus performer (Year 2) and a minibeast workshop where the visiting company brought African snails, hissing cockroaches, tarantulas, crabs and snakes (Reception). Examples of whole school events included an author visit to each school as a whole school assembly, this focused on imaginative story-telling and creative writing techniques but was also intended to raise the profile of reading according to newsletters, and a local music company came in to the Junior school, here the purpose seemed to be to expose the children to music as well as to see if there was a market for offering children extra-curricular musical experiences through the company. Both the school newsletters and inspection reports presented these as events intended to inspire children through offering insight into creative skills or techniques, although ‘academic’ or content-oriented national curriculum objectives were sometimes prioritised over the ‘creative school’ goals. I observed all of these examples to be engaging, interactive and

inclusive with links to many of the creative learning dispositions the teachers valued, although the smaller class visits gave children more opportunity to experiment and experience, for example through handling the animals or practising various circus skills. The children were encouraged to make different kinds of contribution in all, to take risks and develop new understandings within a different context. Sometimes they co-constructed the experience with the visitors and, although these events had clearly been planned, there was always an emphasis on novelty and spontaneity.

All of these activities and visits could be described as examples of 'critical events' (Woods, 1993: 359) designed to 'builds on pupils' own needs and relevancies, and their existing cognitive and affective structures' in a holistic way. The 'pro c' experts provided a unique or unusual dimension (Jeffrey, 2005) and Peter also spoke at length about involving parents in a similar way so that they could share their expertise and experiences with the children, for example one parent visitor was a nurse, another an ex-Olympian and another was an actor. He felt that, not only did the children of the visiting parents 'love seeing their Mum up in lights', making the experience relevant to these children in particular, but any connections with the 'outside world' engaged the curiosity of all the children and made learning more memorable. The research evidence suggests that such 'real and critical events' are examples of creative practice that can enhance children's confidence and positive attitudes to learning, their skills in listening to others but also their self-discovery and realisation of their own interests and abilities, challenging them but also giving them a sense of their own competence, particularly when their ideas and contributions are taken seriously (Woods, 1993; Jeffrey, 2006). They can shift learning and teaching out of the usual patterns in terms of time, space and physical environment where teachers and children can take on different roles and look at issues in different or new ways (Davies *et al.*, 2014) and therefore can be conceptualised as cross-field effects that create temporary fields or sub-fields (Rawolle and Lingard, 2005). However, it seems that, at Brightwater,

there were missed opportunities to sustain and develop what has been described as a ‘strategic partnership’ or a dynamic ‘triangular relationship’ between specialists, teachers and learners through these events (Jeffrey, 2005: 21). Collaborative critical reflection and co-construction of the experience would facilitate this but I did not observe much interaction between teachers and experts and such relationships were not discussed by the staff either. The teachers seemed happy to relinquish control of the class to the specialist and to observe from the sidelines, stepping in only when invited or to focus on managing children’s behaviour. I myself found it difficult to resist joining in sometimes, as the events were engaging on an affective level, although I felt I should gauge my response to match the behaviour of the other adults as a silent observer. Peter discussed visits and events the most and, in his view, the experts were largely there to add ‘creative flair’ (interview 1) and therefore to take pressure off of the teacher, which is a perspective that can marginalise them (Davies *et al.*, 2013).

### **8.3 Creative processes and skills**

This section discusses the particular cognitive, social and practical processes that staff associated with creativity within the experiences above or perhaps taught more directly. These relate both to the types of creative learning that they were trying to facilitate as well as their teaching strategies and pedagogic practices. Again, they all relate to the teacher’s particular perspectives on creativity, the value they ascribed to creative practices and what they saw as feasible within the context of the field.

#### *8.3.1 Being imaginative and playful*

That staff associated imagination with creative learning is evident in many of the examples of creative contexts and experiences, discussed above. This section goes into more depth on the processes involved. Liz saw imagination as key to creative learning because it

enables children in order to ‘look further than the immediate’ (Liz, interview). This is akin to a Vygotskian vision of the central importance of imagination to creativity as well as to living and learning (Vygotsky, 2004). It connects ‘little c’ (Craft *et al.*, 2001) conceptions of creativity in the everyday to children’s ‘mini c’ creativity (Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009) which references personally meaningful and novel experiences, actions and insights which may or may not be new to the teacher too. All the staff discussed or drew on examples of imaginative thinking when they were asked to think about what creative learning and creative teaching looked like, usually in relation to role play or pretend play. Jennifer and Claire drew on imaginative approaches more than Peter, he engaged in pretend play where it fitted with particular topics on space travel and holidays but tended to only make passing references to it, while the children in the Reception class had the most opportunities to engage in autonomous imaginative play as creative learners due to their regular ‘choosing time’ sessions. The children were able to start up their own original, imaginative play using resources in the classroom or to use their imagination to adapt activities planned by the teachers in order to explore different understandings or enable different types of participation and my field notes contain many examples similar to the interaction between Scarlett and I in the ‘choosing time’ extract. Indeed Scarlett and I built up a good rapport and she often invited me to join in with her pretend play which was always highly enjoyable as well as interesting from a research perspective. These were the kinds of interaction Jennifer aspired towards in association with her constructivist teacher disposition but was unable to interact as regularly as she would like due to the performative constraints on her time.

I’d love to just sit and play with the trains with them and find out where they... You do hear them saying “This train’s going to Lapland!” “Ooh, what’s it taking to Lapland?” “Oh it’s taking coal” apparently today to Lapland [she laughs]...but it’s being able to sit down with them and sort of say...extend that and question them and “Why is it going to Lapland? Why do they need coal?” But I’m not there doing that because I’ve got to listen to so-and-so read.

(Jennifer, interview 1)



This was why the IPC entry and exit points were so important to her because she was able to timetable opportunities where she could join in with children's imaginative play, such as the trip to China discussed above. That example was a grand production but playful pedagogy can also operate on a smaller scale 'in collaboration with individual children or small groups in play contexts, driven and led by children' (Goouch, 2008: 95), as evidenced in the extract above and some of her other examples. She regularly employed an intuitively playful and imaginative pedagogical approach (Goouch, 2008), drawing on her sense of humour combined with a sensitivity and respect for the children's competence, as well as linking her own 'curious learner' dispositions to the children's through 'teachable moments' (Pacifici and Garrison, 2004).

Claire also engaged in forms of playful pedagogy which had similar elements to Jennifer's but also differences. For Claire, using imagination and engaging children in imaginative activities was an important way of enabling children to develop their understandings of themselves, their relationships and their surroundings (Connery *et al.*, 2010). Like Jennifer, she drew on 'storying' approaches (Goouch, 2008) and was particularly fond of role-play as part of this. She tended to refer to imaginative role play as 'drama' because, like the 'hands-on' learning (8.2.1), she perceived it as something that is judged as more appropriate for younger children according to the traditions and rules of school, although she simultaneously disagreed with this perspective: '*they* [other teachers] call it 'drama' whereas I say it's just part of every lesson ...creativity is not just in art' (Claire, interview 2). In fact, even positioning it as 'drama' may not increase its status within the field that much, due to the priority given to 'core' and 'academic' subjects, but she did build it into various lessons and, in our discussions, she drew on her own experiences as a pupil in secondary school to evidence the impact of using imaginative role play as a pedagogical approach that sets up rich, memorable creative learning experiences.

...if I think back to when I was at school...a lot of the things that I found fun were...really creative and did make us think quite deeply about stuff. I remember doing GCSE history. We did a Nazi rally....we were learning about...Nazi Germany *before* the Second World War and how...*normal* people could fall into Hitler's trap. And [my teacher] said I want *you* to get into that mind-set because we need to *learn* from what happened and, if you're all "What! No-one would let people be like that now..." So we had to work on a speech. I was Hitler and... I had a really rousing speech and...well, it probably sounds really strange out of context. I hope people don't think that my history teacher was some kind of Fascist. He was all about the experiential learning.

(Claire, July interview)

In this example, imaginative thinking is key to understanding and analysing the emotional, experiential dimensions and, combined with critical reflection, it enables the learners to engage intellectually with the problem. In this way, Claire is making similar point to the one she made in relation to her hands-on triangle-making activity, the creativity is not inherent in the acting or the activity but in the reflection upon its relevance to 'us'. She highlights the importance of first immersing yourself in an experience, perhaps by playing with a scenario, but then asking questions and making connections to other experiences in order to explore alternative perspectives and possibilities. It is similar to the process she described in her anecdote about Maria's grandmother because this is again linked to 'possibility thinking' (Craft, 2002) but she gives the example of a planned 'teaching for creativity' opportunity that blends imaginative thinking and teaching with cognitive and affective elements.

It's...trying to get into that character and then...*using* those feelings and using those ideas in your work and hopefully understanding....because obviously you can't go back in time and experience it yourself and there's only so much you can get from video....but doing it yourself...well, other things come up when you do things like that

(Claire, interview 2).

In their discussions with me, the staff all explicitly discussed planned opportunities for imaginative thinking or play in relation to creative learning and creative teaching.

However I recorded numerous examples of playful encounters in Jennifer and Claire's classrooms, some planned or partially planned, others completely spontaneous and

momentary. Both seemed tuned in to the ‘creative micromoments’ (Beghetto, 2013) much of the time, they might find the relevance of a child’s idea in an activity themselves or explore its relevance collaboratively with the children which sometimes involved completely changing the direction of the activity if they felt a new idea worked better than their original intention. Imaginative processes were embedded in all kinds of everyday interactions, in lessons that focused on core subject areas and ‘delivering’ curriculum as well as those that were designated creative by the teacher. As already discussed, humour also seemed to be key. Both Claire and Jennifer used humour regularly in their interactions with both children and adults, myself included. Imaginative, playful and humorous exchanges often enabled children to take control and ownership, even if only for brief periods in a lesson focused on covering core curriculum. The extract below exemplifies this during a Year 6 literacy lesson:

11.00

Claire, “Today we’re going to focus on story endings because I’ve noticed that although your beginnings are brilliant the endings of your stories tail off sometimes.” They start by practising sentences using subordinate clauses, involving the words ‘although’ (Claire’s suggestion) and ‘handbag’ (the children’s). They practice on their whiteboards first. Claire tells them to hold them to their chests when they’re finished (regular practice).

11.03

One boy’s example, “Although the lady loved the dress, but she went for the handbag” Claire suggests that he doesn’t need the ‘but’ and Danny suggests that he use ‘preferred’. The children share other sentences: “Although Miss Jones’s handbag was ugly, it held a lot of stuff”. Claire and the children exchange several jokes about the handbag for a minute ending with “Although the handbag was ugly, it was very expensive”.

11.05

The children are writing a second sentence using ‘chocolate’ and ‘because’ (both the children’s suggestions). They share answers by putting their hands up, Dennis says, “Because I like chocolate a lot, I got fat from eating it.” Claire and some of the children laugh and Claire says “Dennis that’s cause and effect, very good”. She congratulates children who make their sentences more complex.

(Year 6, general observation, Day 5, Tuesday 23 October, 11:00 – 12:00)

This activity lasted around 15 minutes, the children often built on each other's ideas, referencing their relationships with each other and Claire. They often involved what Claire termed 'clever' jokes, for example playing with words and their meanings and making links to current events, demonstrating intellectual as well as emotional engagement. Here, as was demonstrated in other extracts, the use of playful humour seemed to elevate the status of the children and equalise their standing with the teacher (Woods, 1983), even if only briefly because it was clear from my discussions with the children that they were very aware of the power relationships which dictated the rules of the field. In relation to this it is important to say that, although the relationships between teacher and children were warm and responsive in Jennifer and Claire's classrooms, both retained an authoritative demeanour and engaged in managerial interactions. However, the playful moments were frequent and enabled the children and teachers to position themselves and others as co-constructors of meanings (Marjanovic-Shane, 2010).

### *8.3.2 Making connections*

Apart from the connections to the outside world, discussed in 8.2.3, teachers located creative learning in cognitive processes that enabled children to make connections and to understand their own learning. Peter in particular discussed the importance of providing opportunities for children to 'make links' between different aspects of their learning, perhaps influenced by the government mandated guidance which associates creative learning with 'making connections' and cross-curricular learning (Ofsted, 2003; 2010; QCA 2004). He located the responsibility for helping children to make these links with the teacher, the children had a more passive role: 'it's kind of how you...blend together all these different aspects of learning...you're kind of helping their brains make these links...and obviously the more links they make...the more they learn really' (interview 1). This was part of his initial definition of creative teaching but this 'linking' idea seemed key

to the way Peter saw learning generally, indicating a blurred distinction between creative learning and ‘effective’ learning (Craft, 2008) as well as the idea that ‘teaching creatively’ is a vehicle to motivate learners to engage with performative lesson objectives. He did not explain these links in more depth than this but, in both interviews, he drew on popularised cognitive psychological theories or ‘psycho-pedagogy’ (Burton, 2007: 5) to explain learning generally, linked to his version of the ‘curious learner’ disposition:

I mean what we’re trying to do is encourage a range of activities so you’re catering for your visual learners. And you’ve got your auditory and your kinaesthetic as well. There are some activities that we don’t do very often, so when we do do them they’re awe-inspiring, “Wow! We’re doing this today! Isn’t this amazing?” You know. “What’s the reason why we’re doing this?” “Oh yeah because we’re learning about...” We want them to be really motivated and to want to find out things and to want to learn new things.

(Peter, interview 1)

Here he directly references the VAK (Visual, Auditory, and Kinaesthetic) learning styles model which, although it is contested and problematised in the psychological research, has proved extremely popular with teachers and schools (Riding and Rayner, 2012). This is likely because it is ‘easy to understand and internalise, easy to assess, useful as a labelling device to justify treating pupils in particular ways or having certain expectations of them’ (Burton, 2007: 8). Therefore, although ostensibly linked to creativity, oversimplified, versions of learning theories like this actually fit well with the neoliberal doxa already discussed, misrecognising children’s performative successes and failures as being located in within the individual, in their particular behaviours and inherent abilities (Nolan, 2012). Indeed, Claire drew on VAK constructs in describing herself as a very ‘visual’ creative learner to explain her own perceived deficits: ‘I don’t retain information very easily’ (page 188). A great deal of money has been made from the commercial application of instruments relating to these and similar metacognitive learning theories in schools, endorsed by government (Burton, 2007), demonstrating the flow of effects from the interconnected fields that dominate schooling, discussed in relation to the marketisation of education on page 47. Their influence on the teachers in this study was unsurprising given

that there was a whole-school focus on ‘brain learning’ for a fortnight at the beginning of the new academic year in Brightwater:

Before we start our first topic we do what we call ‘brain learning’. The children learn about how their brain works, how to look after their brain so water, a good breakfast, all of that sort of thing. They learn about different styles of learning and they start to analyse their own learning, so what makes a good learner, how do we learn best. Ok, so we need to be quiet and we need to be focused and the rest of it...we’re going to look at things like pictures that you can look at and see different things within them. Is the glass half full or half empty and all of that sort of thing.

(Peter, interview 2)

This emphasis on ‘learning how to learn’ was also mentioned on the school website, however, it only took place at the beginning of the school year. Together with Peter’s comments above, this suggests a tokenistic approach to meta-learning with short-term gains at the goal (Burton, 2007). Peter clearly links this to individual learning and conformity above, which sits better with performative rather than creative learning dispositions.

Whether referencing learning or creative learning in discussions about cognitive connections or other types of connection, Peter positioned the teacher as the arbiter of what was considered meaningful, assigning learners a more compliant role than in Claire and Jennifer’s conceptions. They both described ‘making connection’ scenarios but related these to a more intuitive approach, involving imaginative thinking, intellectual engagement, risk taking and trial and error on the part of both teacher and children, as already discussed. Both were willing to deviate from lesson plans in order to follow the connections that the children made and this can present new risks in a context that prioritises curriculum coverage, as Jennifer discusses here:

I just decided one day that I wasn’t going to do what I was supposed to be doing and I was going to throw the planning out the window. I was going to just go with them because that’s what they were really enthusiastic about...so I just dropped everything and went with it and obviously it’s fine. You just write in the planning, “Didn’t do that because we were talking about volcanos all day and tectonic plates” [she laughs] and it’s

amazing what they'll remember as well because they will talk about it. One of the girls next door wanted to talk about the solar system so she did. And then someone else had a book, so the next day, they brought that book in and we all sat down and discussed the solar system. We weren't meant to be learning about that.

(Jennifer, interview 1)

Peter seemed less prepared to take these kinds of risks. His 'making links' conception hinged on careful forward planning linked to curriculum coverage, in order to make the best use of lesson time. This has a different set of challenges to the complexities of managing 'creative micromoments' (Beghetto, 2013) and taking the creative risks that Jennifer and Claire discussed. He spoke of the challenge of finding the links which would seem to relate to the nature of the national curriculum and the 'delivery disposition' (Gunter and Forrester, 2010: 58) that is expected:

Sometimes it's easy to find links, sometimes there just isn't one and you have to teach it separately. But the more links you can make, the better because it saves time [he laughs]...it's whether you've got the resources and the...willpower, if you like I suppose, to implement it all.... it's a case of sort of looking ahead and thinking, "What do I need in order to make this lesson more interesting? How am I going to get this point across?"

(Peter, interview 1)

Both he and Jennifer discussed moments when individual children discovered a new meaning using visual metaphors linking to notions of creative inspiration. For Peter, they were 'light bulb moments' whilst Jennifer discussed 'little moments of genius when you think "Yes! The penny's dropped. They *do* know that!"'. Both these particular examples were linked to planned content, for example when children made the links Peter hoped they would. Jennifer emphasised how she felt she could take a step back at these moments whilst Peter focused on figuring out why some children 'get it' and others do not. But both also felt these moments evidenced that they were doing their job well, indicating the pressures to evidence their performance as a 'good' teacher in terms of the children's outcomes.

### *8.3.3 Collaboration, dialogue and enquiry*

Many of the examples of creative learning and creative teaching in the sections above involved collaboration although some of the cognitive processes have both individual and collaborative applications, for example imaginative thinking, problem solving and critical reflection. But collaboration was most certainly part of the enactment of both creative learning and creative teaching. The examples in the sections above have evidenced collaborations between children, staff, parents and external professionals in various permutations and combinations. All discussed collaboration in relation to their broader pedagogical goals, for example related to notions of socialisation and people-making, with Liz, Jennifer and Claire linking it specifically to creative teaching and creative learning, but performative concerns again encroached on each.

One type of collaboration related to the experiential elements discussed above, so the importance of doing and experiencing things together as a community discussing and learning from each other in various contexts. To Peter and Jennifer, this was key to children's motivation and enjoyment, however, both felt compelled to structure collaborations formally for at least part of the day. Below Peter is discussing this in relation to the elements of a successful lesson rather than a creative one, although he did see this as an example of 'teaching creatively':

The best lessons are ...where they've had a chance to talk to one another, exchange ideas, whether it's just with a partner on the carpet or whether they've worked as a table. Ones that they've been able to...tell me what they've learned. "What have you learned today? How did you learn that? What do you know now that you didn't know before?" And if they're able to verbalise that and to recognise that they've learned something new then they can see the benefit in what they've just done.

(Peter, interview 1)

Again this is about what the children communicate to Peter about planned learning goals but, from my observations, the children in Year 2 actually had limited opportunity to work



collaboratively anyway and dialogue would often be quite structured, involving cued elicitation and modelling (Burns and Myhill, 2004). Claire and Jennifer both integrated more flexibility and variety into their approaches than Peter, as already discussed, although both also planned structured lessons around specific curriculum goals where they exercised tighter control over collaboration and the directed the dialogue. In the Reception classroom, collaborative dialogue occurred in both adult-guided group tasks and spontaneously led by children during ‘choosing time’. The opportunities for children to interact and collaborate freely sat alongside more structured interactions involving adult-directed tasks, sitting at desks, worksheets and exercise books and direct teaching, with a strong emphasis on formulaic phonics teaching throughout the year using the Jolly Phonics scheme (Jolly Learning, 2018). As already discussed, Jennifer’s approach was playful and this was reflected in the collaboration and dialogue in the classroom, even during more formal interactions, it was blended with the modelling and question and answer strategies that focused on the ‘right’ answer according to curriculum content-driven structures as well as turn-taking and other socialisation strategies. She and all the teachers, also valued questions that encouraged collaborative reflection and problem-solving, making time and space for children to ask and answer their own questions together and to build on each other’s contributions, though for Peter this tended to be mainly in association with IPC topics whereas Jennifer and Claire tried to prioritise this approach more regularly.

Claire endeavoured to make space for different kinds of exchanges: ‘I try to have a mixture of that discussion-based stuff, of working in pairs, working in groups...working on your own and actually working as a whole class together where we discuss’ (Claire, interview 1). She would often start a lesson with adult-input to the whole class and question and answer activities, following the same broad format as Peter and Jennifer, but she valued divergent thinking and possibility thinking, as discussed, often asking children to find other ways to solve the same problem, individually and collaboratively and I

observed a lot of collaborative work in pairs or small groups that would follow on from these introductory sessions. There was generally a buzz of discussion going on in the Year 6 classroom. When the noise levels got too high, Claire would address this and she sometimes expressed concerns about whether they were ‘on task’ linked to the coverage rule; these ideas will be discussed further in Chapter Nine in relation to the ways that neoliberal doxa shapes perspectives. But, from my observations, she generally encouraged collaborative dialogue. Certainly it seemed that the Year 6 children were used to working collaboratively. The discussion below demonstrates some of their creative learning dispositions in response to my question about the value of collaborative work in their experience. It is interesting because they are evidencing a generative, dialectical collaborative process at the same time as they discuss such a process:

- Freddy: I find it easier [to work with other people] because then you can let your ideas out
- Danny: Yes, because if someone has one idea and someone else has another idea you could put them together and it could make a *really* good idea.
- Freddy: Yes, you might have one idea that’s alright and another one that’s alright but then you put them together and it’s like *brilliant!* And you just keep on doing that to make the best clip or play or whatever.
- Amanda: Yes, if you like have a...bad idea and then another person has quite a good idea then they could like mix their idea with yours and even though your idea isn’t that good it would make it better.
- Freddy: Yes, because if you’re in groups, if you have a bad idea you can speak to people and say “How can we make this better?” So you could keep the baseline but then say change the characters or the setting...
- Danny: Or adjectives...punctuation...?
- Freddy: Yes, then it would be better than it was through the other people. You’ve just got to sort of like let yourself go...
- MC: So almost like taking a risk?
- Freddy: Yes, take a risk. It *is* bad, and you *know* it’s bad but....
- Mel: Yes, because you’re working with people that you know
- Freddy: Yes, and you know that once in a while you will have a bad idea, *everyone’s* had a bad idea before!

(Year 6 children, interview 2, Friday June 21, 14:00 – 14:35)

This demonstrates some of the reciprocal connections between creative learning and creative teaching. The children's views are very similar to some of the teachers' views here, drawing on humanist and constructivist values. By this I mean that they express a sense of the importance of relationships and the belonging that they feel within their learning community (Jeffrey, 2006) which makes them feel safe to take a risk, to try different approaches, they may make a mistake or have a 'bad idea' because that is part of the process. As discussed at the beginning of this chapter, the teachers wanted to create a 'safe' environment for the children so that they would feel open to thinking differently, here the children demonstrate that they value such an environment. Indeed, the staff discussed similar themes in relation to their own collaborations. For Claire, professional collaboration was important for her professional creative learning dispositions, gathering new ideas and reflecting on practice: 'when you talk to teachers after school or you plan together and you think "Oh I did it this way?" or "I've tried *this* before and *this* really worked" or... And you're pooling ideas and sharing stuff. And you can take from it what you want but it just...you just feel like you're learning things, you're improving and you're widening your bank of ideas' (Claire, interview 2). The staff engaged in collaborative planning within year groups and all the staff in this study both valued this and their colleagues and found the process supportive and useful but found it difficult to prioritise the time for collaborative, generative professional dialogue about creativity, as I discuss in the next chapter.

## **8.4 Conclusion**

Although there were variations within the creative experiences and processes the staff discussed and the roles of teachers and learners therein, they mostly focused on the importance of helping the children to develop the particular creative learning dispositions they identified in definition, as discussed in Chapter 7 (see also Appendix 15). The

discussion of the creative contexts and experiences in this chapter demonstrates how sets of creative teaching and creative learning dispositions were often interactive. For example, the ‘active hands-on learner’ dispositions were exploratory and experiential, encompassing physical exploration but also other forms of enquiry and engagement, often involving immersion in an experience. They therefore interacted with ‘curious learner’ and ‘risk taker’ dispositions and, where these were key pedagogical objectives, teachers left the children to take the learning in whatever direction they preferred, enabling their autonomy and ownership, although these opportunities tended to be limited by time. Jennifer’s ‘choosing time’ activities are an example of this. However, she and Claire also drew on their humanist and constructivist pedagogical dispositions. They engaged in guided explorations with the children where they acted as skilled guide or mediator, drawing on intuitive, emotionally engaged approaches and strategies such as ‘possibility thinking’, where teachers and learners use ‘imagination with intention’ to pose questions, find and solve problems ‘whether or not these are actually conscious, formulated or voiced’ (Craft, 2002: 111). At these times the learning was rooted in authentic contexts and their aim was to help children interpret and build on their experiences, combining intellectual and affective dimensions, as was the case in the example of Maria’s grandmother (page 210). Therefore some creative teaching dispositions enabled the children’s creative learning dispositions and others were dispositions that teachers shared with the children. For example, teachers’ own ‘curious learner’ dispositions interacted with the children’s when they engaged with them as co-learners. There could be direct similarities like this or variations on a theme. There were also many examples of playful teaching and learning, these sometimes occurred spontaneously within a lesson focused on formal ‘coverage’ objectives but they could also be grand affairs and planned opportunities, as demonstrated by the Reception children’s trip to China (page 213). Although these encounters often involved play, imaginative storying and humour, they were intellectually and emotionally engaging, where the playfulness seemed to offer ways to circumvent barriers and interrupt

power dimensions, encouraging both children and teachers to think and behave in different ways. However, it was not always possible to engage in these creative risk-taking dispositions as a large part of the day was devoted to ‘core’ curriculum coverage which often involved direct teaching and adult-led activities and, more often than not, planned creative activities were relegated to the afternoon.

All the teachers had particular strategies, skills and approaches that they would draw upon, or ideally like to draw upon, within the creative contexts they described as well as in other aspects of their teaching. These involved both ‘teaching creatively’ and ‘teaching for creativity’ strategies. Sometimes the staff actively tried to engage the children in particular processes or teach them particular skills that they associated with creativity. These could be a creative means to a performative end as Peter’s brain learning example (page 223) demonstrated and, although the other staff did not discuss it, this was a strategy applied across the school at the start of the academic year. It was clear that the teacher’s own creative dispositions and the positioning of these within their individual pedagogical habitus were particularly important in terms of the amount of autonomy, control and ownership that teachers gave to the children during the teaching of these processes and skills. Some allowed flexibility and unpredictability, particularly where these involved breaking out of the usual patterns in terms of time, space and physical environment, encouraging children to look at issues in different ways (Davies *et al.*, 2014). The Year 2 children generally tended to experience this through the IPC entry and exit points rather than in their regular classroom activities. Jennifer and Claire were more open to unplanned ‘creative micro-moments’ (Beghetto, 2013) in their everyday teaching, suggesting that a flexible, responsive creative teaching approach was a more enduring part of their pedagogical habitus, although there were differences between them. As discussed in Chapter Seven, both Jennifer and Claire saw their versions of creativity as integral to who they were as people, both inside and outside of the field of the school. It had also been a

focus in their initial teacher training experiences and in Claire's own experiences as a pupil. These seem important factors to take into consideration. Another important point to highlight is that the constructions of both teacher and learner within their definitions of creative learning and creative teaching sat in tension with the positioning they were required to adopt as part of their interpretation of imperatives from the neoliberal education policy field and traditions from the field of schooling. This was evidenced in the enactments that have been discussed in this chapter. However, as leader, Liz made efforts to maintain a focus on creative approaches in the school. This and her efforts to bring the two schools together are discussed in more detail in Chapter Nine as part of the discussion of the elements that enabled and constrained the staff in enacting their definitions.

## **Chapter Nine: Enablers, Constraints, Tensions and**

### **Ambiguities**

#### **9.1 Chapter introduction**

The staff definitions, anecdotes and observed practices, highlighted a number of field-related factors that enabled and constrained them in their enactment of their creative dispositions. This chapter therefore considers common practices within Brightwater School at the time the data were collected, acknowledging that complex interactions are enacted through pedagogical habitus which has individual and collective elements (Feldman, 2016). This means there are inevitable differences and dissonances due to the ‘myriad adaptations, responses, reactions and resistances to the way the world is’ as well as the way individuals want it to be (Reay, 2004: 437). Consequently, distinctions between enablers and constraints is never clear cut and often involves ambiguities and tensions. That said, it was possible to identify categories and this chapter is therefore again structured thematically. It begins with the staff efforts to embed creativity practice within the field. As headteacher, Liz was the driving force behind the school’s initial efforts, Section 9.2 therefore reflects on the ways that she and her staff introduced a creative curriculum structure into the school to support creative teaching and creative learning together with their other efforts and the ways these progressed over time. However, a significant proportion of the constraints related to performative rules derived from the neoliberal policy context, filtered through the field of the school as part of the complexities of policy enactment. As already discussed (2.7), policy enactment involves complex and creative processes of interpretation and translation and therefore does not look the same in every school or classroom (Ball *et al.*, 2011a) or pedagogical habitus but there were distinct similarities, particularly because many of the effects were enforced through coercive processes. Both the effects and the coercive processes are discussed in section 9.3. Then Section 9.4 considers how these different practices and field effects interacted to

shape relationships, positions and perceptions of the staff, focusing mainly on the ways they saw themselves, their fellow teachers and children as the key protagonists within this study.

## **9.2 The Creative School**

Cochrane and Cockett (2007: 148) argue that a ‘creative school’ requires a ‘climate of trust’ and a consistent approach that ‘imbues all planning, communication and procedures’ from leadership to all staff across different teams, offering support and development which empowers staff. The success of such an approach clearly relies very much on the leadership and staff but also the context and history of the school. This section discusses these factors and the ways that they enabled or constrained attempts to make Brightwater a ‘creative school’, starting with the external policy context.

### *9.2.1 Enabling policy effects*

This research began during an enabling policy context in many respects. There was an emphasis on creativity in policy, school support structures and guidance (Craft *et al.*, 2014), see section 4.4. Liz had introduced the IPC, a commercial creative curriculum framework, in 2007 to support her vision of creativity within the school and they also took part in one of the most significant government-funded creative initiatives, the CP programme, two years before the data collection; see 6.3.4 for an overview of both these initiatives together with a discussion of the way that the school represented its views on creativity publically through its website. It seemed that Liz used the IPC as capital to negotiate her position on creativity with the local authority, Ofsted and the governing body, possibly their CP involvement too. There are reports that schools offering the IPC have been positively received by Ofsted (Bunell, 2010; Ofsted, 2008). This appeared to be the case at Brightwater because the Ofsted reports for both schools immediately after its



introduction included positive comments on its effects in terms of the ways that IPC structures and priorities enlivened lessons, making them ‘more fun, purposeful and relevant to pupils' lives’ (Infant School Ofsted Report, 2008). There were comments on the value of visits and activities which ‘enrich’ children’s experiences, whilst parents reportedly liked it because it was ‘making a difference’ to children’s learning and enjoyment (Junior Ofsted Report, 2008). However, this was all viewed through the lens of adding academic value and Ofsted were cautious in their judgements here: ‘one of the reasons for introducing the IPC was to widen the opportunities for pupils to write at length, though the impact of this is not yet evident so early in the term’ (Junior School Ofsted Report, 2008). This was not mentioned in any other Ofsted reports and Liz did not present the IPC as a way to focus efforts on writing in her discussions with me. Instead, she linked it to sets of creative dispositions within her pedagogical habitus (7.2), saw it as a useful tool in several ways. It seemed to give the a school an ‘edge’ in the market as evidenced by the way it was represented on the website and Liz’s discussion of the parents’ enthusiasm. It also offered a structure that could help to embedded creative practices within the school. Therefore, on the face of it, the IPC would seem a useful tool for a school that proclaims an interest in creativity, although it simultaneously demonstrates one of the ways that the field of commerce is encroaching on schools. Liz seemed keen to search for additional ways to bolster her creative efforts, even seeing my research as capital in our initial meeting. At this point, she told me she that would like to incorporate aspects of my research into the school strategic plan by asking the staff who participated to reflect on their involvement as part of their development and performance management, with the aim of presenting any relevant findings to the governors. However, this did not transpire, possibly due to her changing priorities and fortunes over the course of the year and I will admit that I was relieved as this would have impacted upon the teachers’ perceptions of my role, making the ‘trust project’ (Troman, 2000) that I describe on page 120 more challenging. But the key point here is that, in Brightwater, the focus on

creativity always had to be justified externally and their goals and practices relating to creativity appear to have been intertwined with neoliberal policy concerns from the outset. This is unsurprising, because the national policies and creativity initiatives contained tensions and contradictions (4.4.3), but, as I argue in this chapter, during the data collection year the balance tipped towards performative concerns in this school. This was in the context of a series of rapid and significant changes to the national system curriculum and assessment and their recent Ofsted inspection in which they ‘failed’ to improve their Ofsted rating (6.3). These policy effects, filtered and concentrated through the field of the local authority, particularly the local school confederation of which the school was a member, tended to constrain efforts to develop common creative practices as a school. In addition, creativity was being redefined to better fit the narrower performative goals within the new national curriculum documents and there was far less emphasis on creative learning and more focus on the appreciation of human creativity and achievement (Craft *et al.*, 2014; Elliot, 2018). This meant that much depended on individual schools and their staff, in terms of the vision of the school leaders, the ways that creativity is integrated into school practices and supported by local structures and networks and the value that individual teachers attach to creativity in their pedagogy. It is to these matters that I now turn.

### *9.2.2 Putting the leadership vision into practice*

The aspirations in the vision statement on the school website (6.3.4.1, page 149) were closely related to Liz’s humanist values, evidencing a ‘little c’ vision of creativity as part of children’s ‘working, thinking and being’ at Brightwater. As she discusses below, upon taking up her executive head role, she directed a search for creative curriculum in the school as part of her ‘driver of change’ leadership disposition (Thomson and Sanders, 2010: 73). Here she is discussing her strategies for generating enthusiasm and framing the

focus and scope of the desired change. As noted in Chapter Seven, her leadership dispositions were complex and shifting but at this stage, she was perceived as a ‘strong, very effective’ leader (Infant School Ofsted Report, 2008) and appeared to see herself as such.

When I took over...I didn’t like the entrenched teaching that was going on here... it prompted me to say, “well we’ve got to do something to inspire the children but also inspire the staff” because *I* didn’t want to be doing the same things for the next ten to fifteen years... So I tasked my two deputies at that time to find a curriculum that would suit all ages, all staff, all support staff as well because they had to come on board with it. And the IPC was one that they came up with... We then sent *all* of the staff out to the schools as well, so that they had a flavour of it. Then we gave a presentation to the governing body and everybody who would be involved in the school to show them what it would be. We got the IPC people to come in and do a presentation too and it just inspired and took them with us, which was what we wanted to do.

(Liz, interview)

Liz therefore seemed to see the IPC as a validation of her pedagogical values and as a way to enable her vision of the ‘creative school’ upon taking up her role as executive head of the federated schools. In addition, she saw it as a way to redress the shortcomings of the current national curriculum and the performative dispositions that derived from it: ‘we took on the IPC to enable the children to have a broader outlook and a broader perception on life than this very regimented national curriculum’. But as they had no option but to follow the national curriculum, her conception of ‘teaching creatively’ to facilitate curriculum coverage was also a key strategy and this was more problematic, as I shall discuss.

Liz’s efforts to shift institutional processes and practices began, as the extract above describes, by exploring what other schools were doing, then using IPC resources, including their staff, to bring everyone in the school ‘on board’. She also later described the resources as ‘scaffolding’ for the creative teaching through the focus on enquiry-based learning itself as well as practically, through the materials provided (6.3.4.2). However, neoliberal policy imperatives and constructions were blended into this process from outset.

The presentation given by the IPC that Liz references above, which was a sales pitch to persuade stakeholders linked to the need to evidence ‘value for money’ and would have supported her negotiations with the local authority and governors, as discussed above, but also the commercial for-profit organization which developed IPC (Fieldwork Education, 2019). Liz and Peter both described the advisory role the IPC offered in the initial stages of implementation, again defining the IPC in relation to national curriculum priorities as opposed to an attempt to gain deeper understanding of creative curriculum as a school: ‘we sent off the topics that we wanted to do on a two yearly cycle...one of the services that they offered was to check it for you to make sure it gave sufficient coverage’ (Peter, interview 1). My data collection took place four years after the implementation of the IPC and it appeared to have enabled a focus on creative teaching and creative learning to an extent but, by this stage, the school was not engaging the IPC in the same way. This was possibly related to cost, but, whatever the reason, they were taking away some of the IPC ‘scaffolding’, as Liz put it. She also used an ‘ivy’ metaphor to explain how she felt creative approaches were becoming more embedded in the school: ‘its roots are beginning to make their way through every year group’. She recognised that ‘some staff need more support than others’ and this was where she put the IPC ‘scaffolding’ back but only for the year groups that need it. As a leadership strategy, this is in keeping with the ‘fixer’ disposition, discussed earlier (Thomson and Sanders, 2010), again signalling contradictions. Her ivy metaphor appears to signify that she saw change as an organic process that takes time, however, her reliance on the IPC curriculum structures as well as the teachers who ‘encompass creativity’ and have ‘flair in their planning’ appears to have more in common with a ‘rational machine’ model of organisational change (Thomson, 2007: 15). This would be unsurprising because the notion of a school as a ‘rationale machine’ with discrete sections (or ‘levers’) is popular in contemporary policy and evaluations of programmes designed to implement whole school change (Thomson, 2007). In the case of Brightwater, the staff are the ‘levers’ as implementers of the IPC but this

type of approach fits better with the managerialist strategies and technicist models of curriculum that have been imposed on schools than conceptions of creativity. Indeed, the model tends to underestimate the complexity of policy enactment and the process of change and undervalue the professional judgement of teachers (Thomson, 2007), in this case supporting more performative conceptions of ‘teaching creatively’ (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004). Professional development and opportunities for staff to generate professional knowledge appear to have been tightly framed by mandated policy priorities over the year and, although Liz acknowledged the tensions between the national curriculum and the creative curriculum in discussion with me, she did not appear to recognise that this would be an issue for her staff. In addition, the physical context and history of the school provided challenges when it came to staff collaboration generally as I now discuss.

#### *9.2.2.1 Collaboration and professional development*

Jennifer described a focus on creativity in the initial In-Service Education and Training day (INSET) at the beginning of the school year:

We had to make...creative curriculum or it was something like “what does ‘creative curriculum’ mean to us?”...I don’t remember fully. It was a group thing...and we had to make a 3D model...So our group had a pyramid, a scaffold...linking to scaffolded learning...and a spiral ...for the spiral curriculum and then the ladder going up the side for progression... It was very good ...there was a hook on the ceiling and we hung it from the ceiling so it would turn. The scaffold was turning, the spiral was underneath. Claire was in my group actually, Peter wasn’t... I don’t think we won. Someone else just wrote ‘creativity’ and cut it out and held that up, each letter out of paper. It wasn’t anywhere near as creative as ours! [We both laugh] But perhaps we didn’t get the right idea, I’m not sure. It was good though.

(Jennifer, interview 1)

Here, she and colleagues link creativity with constructivist notions of spiral curriculum and scaffolding (Bruner, 1977; Vygotsky, 1977). Although she seems uncertain, this appears to have been a collaborative process of definition which emphasised the importance of creativity and it would have provided a useful talking point for staff. However, beyond

this quite broadly focused activity it seemed there was little support for developing shared understandings about creative teaching or creative curriculum at any point in the school year, although teachers did value collaborative planning within year group teams focusing on specific IPC topics. Jennifer's references to the INSET, above and below, give this activity a tokenistic feel: a 'box that needs ticking'. Indeed, both Liz and Peter discussed the same INSET event without mentioning creativity at all but rather they described a focus on 'team building and sort of things that we needed to have in place and the new roles that people were going to have and the subject leaders for the school' (Peter, interview 1) and, of course these aspects are very important when it comes to developing shared vision (Cochrane and Cockett, 2007). One reason that could explain why Jennifer found the INSET personally significant was because it linked to her own personal views on the importance of creativity and her teacher training experiences. Her comments below also suggest that there may have been more of a focus on creativity in staff meetings and professional development opportunities in the past and that perhaps these efforts had just stalled in this particular year because of the 'other things' which took priority, namely requirements to push up their Ofsted rating.

*Here [Brightwater school] we've done these massive things about creativity...I've said before...about the INSET day where we were asked to make 'creativity' out of some resources. So it's there, they [the school leadership team] do understand it...I think they *know* that it's a box that needs ticking but it's not filtering down because other things take priority.... Maybe they just think we're creative enough and they don't need to worry about checking that we're being creative with the curriculum and planning and things.*

(Jennifer, interview 2)

Other than the INSET, there did not appear to be any sustained efforts to focus on creativity as part of staff professional development nor a focus on developing space for professional learning to expand teachers' repertoires and develop critical reflexivity about their pedagogy in general over the year, nor was there opportunity for the staff to discuss the tensions between performative and creative approaches. These dialogic spaces have proved vital to schools that want to make substantial changes to organisational culture

(Gordon and Patterson, 2008), particularly in efforts to become ‘creative schools’ (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009). But, according to all of the teachers, professional development for both teachers and TAs and support within the school was related to performative goals for the majority of the time and they developed their own creative pedagogical approaches individually or in their year group teams.

There were also other challenges largely related to the two schools narrative which has been discussed throughout Chapter Six. The logistical challenges of managing space and time across two sites impinged on opportunities for communication generally, particularly the informal communications that can be key to developing shared understandings when implementing change, but the relationships were also historically fragmented and, in many ways, they were still coming to terms with the federation of the two schools. The introduction of the middle leader roles was part of their attempt to build leadership capacity in response to the most recent Ofsted reports. Liz and Peter both described the potential of this middle management structure for perhaps more formal collaborations as well as staff development in relation to creativity. However, their conceptualisations of the way that the role related to the school’s efforts to develop creative practice differed and this seemed to be a source of confusion. According to Liz, the middle leaders were considering the position of creativity and the IPC within Brightwater school curriculum although they were also tasked with preparing for the introduction of the revised national curriculum (DfE, 2013). She felt that the two would fit together with a ‘tweak’, although ‘proper national curriculum coverage’ had to be the priority. While, Peter’s comments below suggest that he saw the middle leader role as ‘fixer’, this time fixing the IPC which he described as ‘disjointed’:

There are some elements that maybe we’re not covering and some elements we’re covering *too* much. So my sort of role is to bring it all back and to divvy it all out again, if you like, so that we can make sure that nobody is repeating or missing anything..... I’m working alongside two teachers at

the Juniors as well. So they're monitoring the Junior aspect of it and I'm looking at the Infant side. And hopefully, as we look through the paperwork, we can sort of...get some progression going and make sure that things don't get missed really.

(Peter, interview 1)

The tensions between the focus on creativity and the national curriculum goals are clear in the focus that both Liz and Peter put on 'coverage' and managerialist practices such as 'monitoring' as part of their leadership roles; this is discussed further in section 9.3. For both, the performative priorities outweighed the creative. The middle management role was also an attempt to integrate the staff across the two schools and redistribute the leadership to share it across both schools. The multiple functions it was intended to serve perhaps contributed to the lack of clarity in how the role was understood. This was made more challenging by the high staff turnover and the significant number of inexperienced staff on the team, particularly in the Infant school. This meant that, aside from the fact that the majority of the staff and governors were new to at least some aspect of their role, most of the middle leaders were based in the Junior school and the Infant school teachers appeared to feel quite distanced from this work. Jennifer said she did not know much about what they were doing while Peter found it difficult to find time to meet with his counterparts especially because both he and Jennifer were juggling too many coordinator roles as well as their unofficial mentoring roles. Ultimately, in Peter's view at least, none of plans for the middle management structure came to fruition. They just could not find the time to meet.

Despite these largely contextually-determined constraints, there were pockets of collaboration within year groups and, although definitions of creativity differed, each of the teachers discussed the ways that they collaborated with both colleagues and children, largely enabled by the IPC as I now discuss. However, there were also huge, unresolved tensions between the focus on curriculum coverage and evidencing performative 'progress' and the focus on creative practice in the school. As leader, Liz had not found a way to



resolve these tensions. Rather, the elements that enabled creativity from her perspective as leader essentially fell into two areas: the IPC as a ‘creative curriculum’ framework and the creativity of her individual staff.

#### ***9.2.2.2 Creative curriculum and creative teachers***

Some of the research analysing IPC curriculum has found that its social constructivist underpinnings and ‘innovative’ design facilitates both teacher and learner autonomy (Muschamp, 2012). There was evidence that this was the case in Brightwater. The IPC philosophy supported a number of creative learning and creative teaching dispositions the teachers identified in their definitions and aspirations, including the constructivist and humanist elements of Liz, Jennifer and Claire’s pedagogical habitus. In addition, all the staff emphasised the importance of ‘making connections’ to the children’s experiences and the world outside the school as part of their definitions of creative learning and learning more generally. The IPC enabled this through its cross-curricular units of enquiry and teachers could set up the creative contexts and experiences they valued (8.2) during the ‘exit points’, involving both ‘teaching for creativity’ and ‘teaching creatively’ approaches. Therefore, although Jennifer and Peter agreed that a topic-based approach is common in schools, both saw the enquiry-based processes recommended by the IPC and the exit points themselves as more unique, linking these strongly to their conceptions of both creative teaching and creative learning. Jennifer described the entry points as a ‘hook’ to get children interested and Peter discussed the ways that both the entry and exit points ‘enthuse’ and ‘motivate’. But there was more to them than just encouraging the children to engage with teacher-planned content. The exit points and the units themselves brought the focus to authentic, real-life experiences (Muschamp, 2012), as well as imaginative events and ‘possibility thinking’ (Craft *et al.*, 2013), often involving active and child-centred, experiential learning (Smith and Knapp, 2011). As discussed in section 8.2.3 (page 215), such events can create temporary fields that interrupt the usual patterns in terms of time,

space and physical environment (Davies *et al.*, 2014), promoting innovative approaches and alternatives to the performative model of teaching and learning that was regularly enacted in all classrooms to differing degrees. In addition, they often enabled children to interact with professionally ('pro c') creative people (Jeffrey, 2005; Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009). However, there was also evidence that these events marginalised creativity in some ways by positioning it outside normal curriculum and there were missed opportunities for a deeper level of co-construction of the creative experiences, particularly between teachers and experts.

The IPC has been described as 'a complementary vehicle for ensuring the National Curriculum is relevant to a multicultural society' (Bunnell, 2010: 474) and this was key to Peter and Liz's definitions of 'teaching creatively' in particular. Although she limited 'creative sessions' to particular times of day, Liz hoped that the creative curriculum structures would help teachers to resist or adapt the performative constructions, associating the national curriculum with deficit and contrasting this with the IPC focus on children's competence and active engagement in their learning:

It starts the children with "What do you know?"...it's different to the national curriculum, you start off at that and that's where you go...because children are telling us that they know far more. And also they can take their learning,...still related to that topic, in a different direction and you can cover it in greater depth. Well I suppose you *can* cover it in-depth with the national curriculum but...it's bland.

(Liz, interview)

Taking the teachers' perspectives, Jennifer and Peter discussed the enabling potential of the IPC openly. Claire discussed it less but I observed IPC-related practices in her classroom. For example, IPC 'working walls' were in evidence in all the classrooms; these are a way of documenting the collaborative enquiry. Claire used sticky notes on display boards and windows under headings 'What I know' and 'What I want to know', Jennifer and Peter used mind maps and topic webs again based around enquiry. In addition, some of the exit points were elaborate productions, involving imaginative planning and

collaboration between staff and children. Jennifer and Claire relished these opportunities, as evidenced by Jennifer's travelling to China example (8.2.3, page 213). These structures and events therefore did create spaces for teachers and children to take on different roles in contrast to their usual classroom positioning at least some of the time and the children sometimes had significant amounts of ownership. Almost all such examples were enabled by the IPC curriculum structures.

The curriculum structure and philosophy seemed to enable the staff in their creative pedagogical endeavours and was shaping the ways that staff taught to an extent, emphasising more of a focus on children's questions and their leading role in learning. It offered the teachers both structure and flexibility, therefore autonomy, 'topic names are in the IPC and we kind of work around that, building up our own ideas' (Jennifer, interview 1). Peter described the collaborative planning process as 'inspiring' and enjoyable. For him, it was a form of creative teaching that presented less of a risk because the IPC presented ways to cross-reference their topics against the national curriculum so they could still ensure that they covered statutory goals. However, he admitted that he found it difficult to deviate from planned objectives, even within the IPC framework, and I saw more examples of collaborative enquiry in Reception and Year 6 than Year 2. As discussed in Chapters Seven and Eight, Peter did not associate creativity with his pedagogical values in the same ways as Jennifer and Claire. Performative and behaviourist dispositions were more dominant within his pedagogical habitus which meant that his lessons generally followed a similar structure, regardless of the subject or topic, and there was not usually much space for children's autonomy or ownership. He tended to see creative teaching as an extra pressure, secondary to the requirement to cover curriculum and produce performative data, and this pressure intensified over the year, as is discussed in 9.3 below. This meant that he struggled with some of the entry points and found it difficult to justify the time spent on children's enquiries.

You do a mind map at the beginning. You talk about: “What do you know about food already?” And we sort of exchange all of our ideas. And then the other aspect of it is...the questions that... [the children] want to find out when we’re studying this topic. They come out with lots of very unusual questions... So I’m writing these questions down thinking, “There’s no way that we’re going to be able to find the answers to these.” And I do find it very difficult to actually set aside learning time to specifically go and try and find the answers out to those questions. The questions don’t necessarily fit in with the learning that we have to do... I can see the reason behind it and I love the idea that they’re trying to answer their own questions and it’s very much led by them but I think in reality I think it’s quite a hard thing to implement.

(Peter, interview 1)

It can be difficult to facilitate creative learning within the current accountability culture, not least because it is difficult to assess and plan for creativity if you do not have a shared understanding of it as a school (Cochrane and Cockett, 2007). Creativity is open-ended, non-linear and rarely efficient and this does not sit comfortably with the performative elements of education policy, despite the somewhat contradictory focus on narrowed, marketised notions of innovation and productivity (MacLaren, 2012; Sawyer, 2004). Claire in particular described concerns about the progression of skills within IPC topics describing the ways that the topic worked in the school as a whole as ‘mixed up .... too much stuff is lost in the cross-curricular...You know, “This is our topic....*ah*, but the children need to know how to add.” (Claire, interview 1). The staff were not alone in struggling with how to assess and evidence progression in creativity. There is a body of research that focuses on this although of course there is variety linked to definition and context (Blamires and Peterson, 2014). There is evidence of different strategies and approaches towards the assessment of creativity that are being or may be used in schools but little that focuses on whole school planned programmes (Cochrane and Cockett, 2007; Craft *et al.*, 2007). These struggles meant that, as a whole school, Brightwater found it difficult to prioritise creative learning. The message coming from school leadership was to prioritise performative goals leave creativity until the afternoon, as already discussed, but even that was a struggle for Peter:

You've still got your core things to do in your afternoons really. So to be perfectly honest, when you think in terms of the IPC, realistically you're probably looking at no more than two or three hours a week by the time you've fitted in all your other things.

(Peter, interview 2)

This demonstrates two points. Firstly, that the teacher's own creative dispositions and their sense of self-efficacy as a 'creative teacher' is important. Secondly, that giving teachers a 'creative curriculum' structure and material resources is helpful but not enough in itself to change practice in enduring ways. I now illustrate and evidence these points.

Jennifer and Claire were susceptible to the same key performative 'rules' of the field as Peter, as is discussed further in 9.3, but each found space to enact their particular definitions of creativity. Both saw themselves as creative people, although they conceptualised this differently, and saw this as an important part of who they were within and outside of the field of the school. Like Peter, they employed a 'teaching creatively' approach but they did not rely on this as heavily as he did nor upon the structures of the IPC. They tended to use this approach in combination with a less predictable 'teaching for creativity' approach which is more closely connected to creative learning (Ranjan and Gabora, 2013). They relished the unplanned moments and the opportunity to respond to the children's contributions which could then take things in different directions. So, although all the staff associated creative teaching with planning exciting lessons to inspire the children, Jennifer and Claire also associated it with responsive, inclusive pedagogy and reflective practice where they adapted strategies to context and individual. There was a rich, multi-faceted conception of creative teaching involving teachers engaging their imaginations, individually or in collaboration with colleagues and children, planning and staging lessons and events but also engaging in interactions that extended children's thinking, for example pretend play or debate, often involving fun and humour. In this way, they viewed creative teaching involved was viewed as a way to shape and embody creative dispositions in the children as confident, capable, involved learners.

Although the IPC promotes an alternative vision, in Brightwater, the development of a focus on creative learning and teaching for creativity approaches also relied on whether the teachers valued creative approaches and saw them as feasible. All wanted to encourage children to try out new ideas and experiences within a ‘safe’ environment. But, in a performative context with prioritises ‘coverage’, ‘progress’ and being ‘on task’, a focus on flexibility and pedagogical strategies with uncertain outcomes can represent a risk to teachers and perhaps learners too. Risk-taking has been highlighted as key disposition associated with creative teachers in other research (Cremin *et al.*, 2009) and, although both Jennifer and Claire did demonstrate more of a sense of ease with taking a risk than Peter, it is important not to individualise or de-contextualise risk-taker dispositions and to look at ways to make the environment safe for the teachers as well as the children. This is where a curriculum structure such as the IPC can act as a support, although Jennifer and Claire did also draw on their experiences in other fields. But both Peter and Liz tended to locate the responsibility for creative teaching within the individual, by associating it with ‘flair’ or ‘wow factor’ or as something that that can be pre-planned and ‘delivered’, and this presents challenges on different levels. The suggestion that creative teaching is a straightforward strategy that can be applied does not enable some aspects of Jennifer and Claire’s multi-faceted definitions, particularly the value both placed on flexibility, spontaneity and emotionally engaged interactions. As Claire said, ‘you have to be a performer...[but] you can’t be just a performing monkey’ (interview 2). ‘Teaching creatively’ can also be quite a test for teachers in a performative climate, as was illustrated in Liz’s description of the ways that the school leadership team actively tried to recruit ‘creative’ staff (7.2.1, page 171). In that example, not only was the onus on the individual to teach in a creative and exciting way, to perform and to inspire, but there was the expectation that this may take time outside of the usual working day. This makes creative teaching more of a pressure, as Peter recognised, and it then becomes another form of

‘responsibilisation’ (Keddie, 2016), meaning that some teachers are perceived as more willing to invest in this approach than others and it can become another way of positioning teachers as ‘failing’ (Ball, 2008). I now discuss the ways that the performative rules that all the staff felt obliged to prioritise played out in the experiences and positioning of the teachers and children, highlighting some of the huge and, in my view, unresolvable tensions between performativity and creativity.

### **9.3 The coercive effects of neoliberal policy**

As I have discussed in Chapter Four, education policy is dominated by the field of political power which relies on neoliberal doxa to provide legitimation for managerialist and marketised rules of operation in schools and other public institutions. The accounts and experiences of the staff at Brightwater evidence ‘cross-field effects’ (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004) flowing from the field of political power into the school through education policy. Some were systemic, structural effects which appeared to have affected change over time in a gradual and incremental way, linked to the regularity of particular performative events and local interpretations of national policy. Others were event effects which ruptured the ordinary functioning of the field in both temporary and enduring ways, causing dissonance between habitus and the field. In this section I discuss examples of both.

I start with the two key overlapping and seemingly inviolable ‘rules’ that tended to dominate the pedagogical choices made by my participants over the course of the year, shaping and largely constraining their enactments of creativity on a regular basis. The first was the rule that curriculum must be ‘covered’ within a particular period of time so that children are ‘ready’ for the next stage of their education. The second requires staff to produce particular kinds of performative data regularly to evidence children’s progress and

therefore effective teaching and learning. They work together because the coverage rule packages learning as pre-specified content, this is then converted into the ‘objective, tractable language of numbers’ (Jasanoff, 2004: 27) which can be sorted statistically, compared or ranked to be used to demonstrate progress over time (Lingard, 2011). This data production rule has been described as a process of ‘datafication’ (Roberts-Holmes, 2015) or ‘quantification’ (Stevenson and Wood, 2013). As discussed in Chapter Three, these rules are not specific to the field of Brightwater School, they are externally authored and coercively imposed on the field of schooling through policy, enforced by managerialist surveillance technologies including Ofsted and the requirement to publish the results of the Foundation Stage Profile and standardised assessments at the end of national curriculum key stages. They are also internally monitored using systems developed by the school itself or those bought in from private sector developers and local authorities also develop surveillance mechanisms (Braun *et al.*, 2011); I discuss how Brightwater did this and focus on staff responses to the local school confederation ‘mock Ofsted’ (described on page 147) below. Together, these rules reinforce the logic that the ultimate goal for teaching is to prepare children for the next stage of their education (Ball and Bowe, 1992; Barber, 2007). This results in an increasing downward pressure to formalise children’s learning from their earliest years (Brogaard Clausen, 2015; Moss, 2012). My data provide evidence of this.

### *9.3.1 The curriculum coverage rule*

References to ‘curriculum coverage’ were threaded throughout all the staff discussions, shaping their perceptions of their role in general, leading to the marginalisation of at least some aspects of their definitions of creativity where they saw these as incompatible with this core objective (Beghetto and Plucker, 2006; Beghetto, 2009). As a concept, it sits uncomfortably with the more open-ended and unpredictable aspects of creative learning and teaching, as has been noted in other research (Cochrane and Cockett, 2007). The sense



of not having enough time was a common theme across the data linked to their efforts to 'cover' the necessary information. Other themes that derived from this coverage rule also dominated practice, particularly the requirement to structure lessons in order to focus on 'pace' and 'pitch', which sometimes involved streaming and 'levelling' the children.

This rule tended to result in highly structured, teacher-centric practices which all three teachers used at least part of the time to 'cover' the necessary elements of the curriculum, particularly those associated with the SATs. These types of lessons were generally in the mornings but sometimes at other times, usually starting with a whole class introduction to an aspect curriculum content, before breaking out into smaller groups, which could involve more of the same under teacher supervision, or individual activities that children were expected to complete with limited support. Teaching strategies during these more structured sessions included telling children facts and ideas, giving directions and asking closed or factual questions, all of which have been associated with the heavily accountable teaching culture of the national curriculum and its assessment (Burns and Myhill, 2004; Wyse and Torrance, 2009). However, these more structured teaching strategies were mediated by the individual teacher's pedagogical values and their different priorities, meaning that there was space for flexibility and more creative teaching approaches, as has been exemplified in other research (Dann, 2002; Jeffrey, 2003). This tended to be in Jennifer and Claire's classrooms more than Peter's in association with the value they attached to children's agency as part of their definitions of creative learning.

Although the staff all expressed ambivalence towards the curriculum coverage rule and its associated practices, particularly streaming and giving 'pacey' lessons as Claire put it, but they felt compelled the fear that Ofsted may come in and judge them or that they would be blamed for not preparing children adequately by various other parties, including parents and other teachers. Below Claire demonstrates the interconnection of the doxic narrative

of curriculum coverage with the associated narrative of ‘school readiness’ and the ways this pushes play and experiential learning to the side. Here she describes the pressures coming from her perceptions of the field of secondary schooling here, drawing on her own experiences and relationships as both a teacher and pupil. The shaping effects are demonstrated by the terms she uses: ‘have to’, ‘got to’, ‘must’.

It’s important that children are kind of pushed but...it’s difficult because... you can’t have both. ...Without the right balance of play and exploring and looking at the breadth of stuff and being practical with things lower down the school, you end up making the upper part of primary school very quota, very tick sheet, very we *must* do this, you *have to* do this, we’ve got all this coverage to do because...you *have to* cover it. They *have to* be able to learn how to divide. I can’t let children go to secondary school....there is no-one else to catch up.

(Claire, interview 2)

Peter’s discussion below also demonstrates how he feels that there is no choice for the teacher.

We’re told by management here that this is what Ofsted are expecting to see now, that they want pace and they want you to keep moving on quickly to the next thing and keeping the children on their toes. And I’m thinking, “Yeah that’s good for the more able. I can see where that’s going” and maybe for the core, keep them interested, but your lower children would struggle with that I think. And it’s finding that balance and making sure that... everybody’s catered for and, inevitably I think, you miss one of the extremes at least within your lesson, whether it’s the least able or the more able.

(Peter, interview 1)

In Peter’s example, it is an Ofsted imperative mediated through the school leadership team, as is discussed further in 9.3.3, but both extracts demonstrate the way that the coverage rule limits the teachers’ professional autonomy, indeed they limit themselves. Claire notes the tensions between creative learning approaches and what they ‘*have to cover*’, misrecognising the doxa and seeing no alternative. While Peter expresses both recognition and misrecognition. He recognises that this way of teaching does not work for all children but feels it is necessary due to the symbolic violence of Ofsted. The misrecognition is in his thinking about ‘ability’, he accepts this construction without seeing the way that

positioning children as ‘more able’ and ‘less able’ contributes and perpetuates inequality and exclusion (Anyon, 1980; Thomson *et al.*, 2010). Constructions of ‘ability’ will be discussed further below (9.4.2) but the point to note here is that Peter is suppressing the contradictions (Zipin and Brennan, 2003), convincing himself that that careful planning and not going ‘too fast’ will be enough to support the children. Like Claire, he feels that the coverage rule cannot be challenged. He sees the answer to the problems he has raised as being within his control, invoking a neoliberal sense of individual responsibility (Wacquant, 2010). So he felt he had to go along with the situation, partly because of the ‘pressure’ and coercion but it is also a form of *illusio* because he hints at alternatives: ‘you don’t have time to look at what’s happening in the world, do you? You just kind of go along with... I think if you did have more time to assess what’s going on then maybe...?’ (Peter, interview 2).

The coverage rule and its derivatives acted as a barrier to the kind of reflective, collaborative discussion that would enable a coherent vision of creative teaching and creative learning within the school (Cochrane and Cockett, 2007). Like Peter, Liz felt there was ‘no time for reflective practice’, nor for a focus on teaching and learning as a creative, collaborative process involving idea-generation and problem-solving. The situation was exacerbated over the year as the whole school prepared to transition to the revised national curriculum which was to be implemented the following academic year (DfE, 2013), particularly taking into account the increased focus on content, ‘real subjects’ and ‘facts’ to quote Michael Gove, the then Education Secretary (Ball, 2017). All the teachers considered the new curriculum frameworks to be much harder and this intensified their concern at how much more there was to ‘cover’.

### 9.3.2 *Data production*

There was considerable focus on data production and data management as part of Liz's priority to 'raise the profile' and individual performance of the school in the imminent Ofsted inspection in order to demonstrate that the Junior school outcome was a 'blip'. As discussed in 6.3, one of the governors was focusing on performative data as was the deputy, Lucy, Liz herself was engaging with an 'HMI data analysis programme' and it was also a priority in staff professional development. The TAs had been undergoing training in the teaching of phonics which also had a specific focus on 'record-keeping' and Jennifer discussed the focus on 'data and progress' in staff meetings which, in her view, narrowed the pedagogical focus within the school and detracted from creative teaching and learning. There were also surveillance processes associated with data and all staff were required to engage with these. The first was the focus on gathering evidence of progress on a half termly basis through a school wide 'assessment week', a practice that had been developed internally and had been in place for at least three years if not longer. Liz describes the processes below.

We do assessment every half term. Then my senior management team...monitor the levels ...Then we ask the teachers to come and explain those results to us. So if we feel results are...giving us a fair reflection of what's happening in the class and we can see there's progress going on, then...a limited number of children are reviewed. In other classes where we have concerns, you look at the books from every child in that class. We'll see literacy and numeracy and we'll usually do a moderation of 6 books. If they all come out at the same level and the senior management team feels it is right, we will then say, "That's fine..." But if not, then we actually either lower or raise the levels. It's all registered in our files here. We have a moderation slip to say that it's been done and this is the result... And if it's gone lower then there are the reasons. Then that is then fed back to the class teacher and there is an expectation that at the next assessment time, there is an improvement in all the work in the class.

(Liz, interview)

It is clear from Liz's extract above that this 'progress' data was used for performance management and that all the teachers were expected to demonstrate a 'good' performance.

There was a particular focus on this in the SATs years, Peter described how the pressure to

produce ‘Level 3’ learners, i.e. learners that are above the average for the year group, began at the start of the year. Equally Liz was evidencing her own leadership and management, trying to demonstrate effective monitoring and evaluation in order to perform the ‘effective leader’ for Ofsted.

In the classrooms, there was a strong emphasis on recording and evidence production all the time but particularly during assessment week. The latter usually involved giving the children individual tasks to do, where possible based on past SATs papers under test conditions and there was a focus on teaching the children to understand the language of the curriculum and the format of a test across the school. In Reception there was less emphasis on test papers, although they did give papers to individual ‘high ability’ children towards the end of the year in order to ‘level’ them and they did have the occasional timed test as a class, for example recognising letter sounds. The children tended to do their data production tasks in small groups with Jennifer or her TA to provide evidence for assessment week or the EYFS Profile (DfE, 2012c). Tasks included handwriting, writing sentences, going through mathematics worksheets and ‘levelling’ their reading. Much has been written about such ‘displays of quality’ (Ball, 2003: 216) and the ways that these start to shape practice (Pratt, 2016; Stevenson and Wood, 2013). Teachers start to internalise these processes, particularly where they happen frequently and are justified by the doxa of progress or raising standards. For example, Peter said he was, ‘used to it [because] I’ve been in Year 2 and Year 6’. Both he and Claire described the data-driven nature of the assessment processes as time-consuming and not particularly useful for their daily work or for the children themselves but as a necessary part of the game of schooling: ‘we’re quite good at data analysis because we have to be’ (Claire, interview 1) and ‘it’s a competition at the end of the day’ (Peter, interview 2). Claire seemed to feel a degree of ownership over this datafication process because she liked statistical analysis despite it not being useful: ‘I can also sit and look around and I know which children aren’t making progress and why’

(interview 1). Whereas, Peter described feeling distanced from the data, not just because of its quantified format but also because it was mediated through the school leadership team and he was not always sure what it was for.

Lucy [the deputy head] does most of the figures and there are different things that you have to analyse and compare...they look at free school meals and how they perform and boys and girls and...there are so many different things that need a figure or a box or a table to show. She spends all her time looking at these lovely graphs and they're very colourful and beautiful to look at...but really?...It's all well and good but what are we doing with that data?

(Peter, interview 2)

Jennifer had initially resisted the data production rule when she came to Brightwater saying there was 'too much writing and focused activities' which she had felt was inappropriate for Reception children 'and I know that the other Reception teacher felt the same...[when she] started this year' (Jennifer, interview 1). However, despite this and her constructivist aspirations, she was beginning to adapt her practice and her notions of effective learning and teaching to fit these more structured, adult-led and data-led practices: 'they're doing much better than any of the other classes I've taught because I've changed the way I've done it and also there's been a big push on phonics recently' (Jennifer, interview 1). These evidence-producing tasks were more time-consuming in Reception because they completed them with adults and small groups whereas the other teachers tended to administer whole class tests and tasks, therefore due to the frequency of 'assessment week', therefore I observed Jennifer engaging in data production tasks more often than Peter and Claire and definitely more frequently than her more flexible creative teaching ideals where she might 'throw the planning out the window' (page 223) to follow the children's interests. This demonstrates how *illusio* can shape *habitus* when a teacher is immersed in performative practice, Jennifer started to adapt to the rules of the game, although she still had misgivings from time to time and she acknowledged alternatives in her discussions with me.

Some aspects of the data production rule were shaped by relationships with the local authority. Jennifer and Claire discussed local authority moderation process but here there was more evidence of the uncertainty generated by the series of recent changes to the system of inspection in conjunction with curriculum reform (6.3.1). Their discussion evidenced the ‘fuzzy norms’ that are a deliberate part of a post-panoptic inspection regime which is designed to ‘wrong-foot’ and expose the ‘inevitable failure to comply’ (Courtney, 2016: 629). For example, both Reception teachers attended several moderation meetings throughout the year, trying to come to terms with the significant changes to the EYFS profile assessment processes (DfE, 2012c). Jennifer reported that ‘they all said different things. And then we followed what we thought was the best one and then we were moderated and they said that we’d done it all wrong anyway’ (Jennifer, interview 2). This demonstrates Bradbury’s (2013) point that the EYFS profile at that time simultaneously professionalised and de-professionalised teachers by trusting them to make ‘best fit’ judgements whilst using the local authority system of moderation to decide whether teachers are correct. In addition, the new thresholds were harder to achieve (Roberts-Holmes, 2015) and Jennifer described an increasing gulf between the EYFS and the national curriculum which added to the anxiety and confusion. Claire was more fortunate with her moderation processes because the local authority confirmed that they were ‘spot on’ with their marking in Year 6. However, she described it as ‘a big sigh of relief that we’d been doing it right the whole year’ so there had clearly been a degree of insecurity in this for her too.

The teachers’ comments above and below demonstrate that, even though they did not always feel ownership of the data produced or did not have much confidence in it, they saw the production of performative data to evidence children’s progress as a requirement or even a personal responsibility due to both external and internal surveillance processes. Their discussions and experiences also demonstrate how the children’s performative

progress in itself becomes capital for both school and individual teacher, generating competition and struggle as well as anxiety and uncertainty (Pratt, 2016). The stakes are high because of the potential for failure and blame which works against the collaborative elements of the teacher definitions of creativity.

### *9.3.3 The Ofsted effect*

There was plenty of evidence to demonstrate that Ofsted was the key driver of the performative rules within Brightwater School, as well as within the local school network and the local authority. Liz justified the school focus on both coverage and data production with reference to the need to be ‘Ofsted ready’. This was corroborated in the 2012 Ofsted Junior report which stated that they were graded according to their ‘delivery of outcomes’, how well they have ‘prepared’ children as evidenced by their attainment and progress and there were specific comments on the school’s monitoring of progress. Liz saw the Infant school interim inspection as a ‘reprieve’ and felt that an inspection was imminent in both schools and Jennifer and Peter made a number of references to Ofsted driven management strategies. Although Peter questioned the effectiveness of these approaches in catering to the needs of all children, as already discussed, he felt compelled, listing the requirements explicitly while his practice demonstrated their shaping effects:

It’s an endless list really... it’s things like pace, keeping it lively, keeping it interesting, keeping the children motivated...every single child needs to be focused... They need to know what they’re being taught in that lesson and what’s expected of them. Differentiation within the classroom is really important. You know so that your more able children have got challenging tasks...the children know exactly what they’re doing and if they’re finished that they know exactly what to move on to... Things like peer assessment, giving children an opportunity to work together so paired talking on the carpet, group work....different opportunities for children to engage in different ways really...It’s a bit like a juggling act as we were talking about before, all these things that have to be going on within the lesson.

(Peter, interview 1)

The local confederation also engaged in preparing schools for Ofsted inspection through the ‘audits’ which were organised as a ‘mock Ofsted inspection’, as Peter described it (see



6.3.3). The mock Ofsted was a cross-field event effect that ruptured the ordinary functioning of the field. It was experienced as a violation by staff and seemed to create dissonance between habitus and field in an extremely sudden way. The emotionally jarring nature of the experience is expressed in the extracts below.

You know...it felt like an Ofsted. It was very much treated as an Ofsted and...they went wherever they wanted.... We were doing our Year 2 SATs...they literally just walked in and opened books and sifted through, just like Ofsted probably would. And there was...not even a comment sometimes, it was just [he makes a nondescript 'mm-mm' noise] and then off they went and that was it!.... There wasn't even a 'Good morning'. You know, when they first came in I said, "Good morning, how are you?" and...[he laughs] I just think "Really?" you know. If you've got to do your job then fine but have a bit of humanity....It doesn't have to be done that way, not at all. So it felt very awkward ...I'm sort of not used to it at all but I knew kind of how it would be. I think it was a bit of a shock for some of the younger ones who hadn't experienced that before as to quite how severe it was.

(Peter, interview 2)

It was led by the head of the local school confederation and it seemed that her focus on being authentic and 'Ofsted-like' involved generating fear and anxiety (Hopkins *et al.*, 2016) which came at the expense of actually supporting the staff to feel prepared for inspection. Indeed Peter said it was worse than his experience of a real Ofsted inspection: 'I think it just made matters worse because then you're fearing.... even worse things are going to happen' (Peter, interview 2). Both he and Jennifer experienced this mock inspection as a mismatch between habitus and field (Jones and Enriquez, 2009), as evidenced in Peter's contradictory statement above: 'I'm sort of not used to it at all but I knew kind of how it would be'. He also says, 'it doesn't have to be done that way' which contrasted with all the other statements he made about being 'used' to particular performative practices. Here he also demonstrates how mismatches can be experienced as crisis and that these may be felt particularly keenly by inexperienced teachers (Nolan, 2012). Jennifer corroborated this.

MC: So did that person come in and observe lessons?

JR: Five minutes. She dropped in. There was no feedback given. We weren't told what we were doing well or badly or given any targets

or anything. We were just all told that we were all terrible teachers....which is motivating!

MC: Yes, it can't have done much for morale.

JR: Well yes, that's when everyone started handing in their notice.

MC: Was that in a meeting....did she come in across both schools?

JR: She wasn't in the meeting. We had a meeting across both schools, all the teachers were brought in and... Lucy and Liz told us. And there were lots tears...and tantrums, lots of storming out. It was the *worst* day of my career....it was awful, everybody cried and....it was terrible. And people who had jobs to go to, who'd already decided to leave, were quite smug at that point [she laughs].

MC: Is that when you decided?

JR: That was the nail in the coffin.

(Jennifer, interview 2)

In criticising practice without offering any alternatives, the mock inspection exposed the uncertainties of the staff. The rippling effects started with 'shock' before moving into confusion and later distrust and blame:

PG: I think *some* of us are still a little bit confused as to.... "What do you want? This is what we've been told to do, this is how....we've been asked to do our marking and that's what we've done. So what's wrong with it?" ...A lot of us are still waiting for the feedback from that and to know exactly what it *is* that we need to do. I think that's the frustrating thing for a lot of us ....I mean it's fine having the observation, it's fine having books checked by our visitors but then we never get to hear the... "Ok, well what do we need to do then? What *is* the next step? How are we going to move this on?" And of course if we don't know that then we're never going to move it on.

MC: Yes, I can see that that's really hard. Why do you think it is that you haven't heard?

PG: I don't honestly know...they've had lots of meetings but ....Maybe it's because...there are so many issues that they're sort of tackling the bigger ones before they then focus down on the classrooms? ...I know that quite a lot was said about...the management style so maybe that's their focus for the time-being? But lots of things were said...from the feedback that we got about the classrooms and about our marking that...I would have expected to have lots of people coming into the classroom if that was the case you know, people doing observations. If it was the lessons that were the problem or the marking that was the problem, I would have thought they'd be swarming in on the classrooms and coming in to see what's going on.

(Peter, interview 2)

Peter highlights the perceived failures of the school leadership team here. Although he does not blame them, seeming more confused, both Claire and Jennifer did discuss their lack of confidence in the school leadership in their second interview for similar reasons as those he describes here. Both had also understood that there would be more lesson observations after the mock inspection but this had not happened and they had become increasingly unsure about to how they could improve their practice. Unlike Peter and Jennifer, Claire did not mention the mock Ofsted specifically in our discussions but she demonstrated a similar sense of misalignment between her subjective expectations and her experiences in the field which appeared to have precipitated her decision to leave the school. As Jennifer demonstrates below, the misalignment between habitus and field, can generate change, particularly when they are experienced as crisis events (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004; Jones and Enriquez, 2009; Nolan, 2012). This can lead to the questioning of doxa, although this may not be sufficient in itself for the production of a critical discourse (Bourdieu, 1977). Indeed, in the absence of other feedback, Jennifer is questioning below but then she reverts back to the notion of children's performative progress as capital for the individual teacher (Pratt, 2016)

Since this Ofsted thing happened... we were told we would be observed twice a week after that...or once every two weeks. But we haven't so, we can't get better without being told how to and we can't improve things. But...*my* parents are happy, *my* children are happy. And *my* children have made progress so I'm quite happy with that. So as long as *I* know that I'm doing an alright job then I suppose it doesn't matter but it would be nice to be told.

(Jennifer, interview 2)

To further evidence this point, while Claire said she wanted to 'stop feeling quite so lost all the time', she resorted to the discourse of failure and blame, even derision (Ball, 1990), blaming the 'lack of leadership and support for the staff' rather than recognising the inadequacies of the system:

I grew up round here so I know that...this was a fantastic school. Lots of things have been let slip and unfortunately I think we're being led by someone who...has just had enough, doesn't care anymore and who is

supported by someone who hasn't got a clue about what it's like being up at this end of the school, who doesn't teach and...you know, I could do her job. I could probably do her job *and* teach so... She's not taken any of our classes, she's not come in...she's not observed me once so... She's not helped me once at all... it's kind of like we've been left alone.

(Claire, interview 2)

The 'blame' theme is discussed further in the next section but, at this point, both Jennifer and Claire had secured positions in new schools and were idealising their new schools and distancing themselves from Brightwater, comparing and contrasting their current experiences with their renewed sense of hope, although both did feel 'emotional' about leaving. Positions were shifting within the school, although some staff had decided to leave before this, several changes were precipitated by the mock inspection. As Rawolle and Lingard (2005) argue a temporary field can be created around such event effects. The positions of the players and power relationships between them change during this time, as can the types of capital most valued (see 3.5.2, page 50). This lasts for the duration of the event at least, if not longer, as was the case at Brightwater where the inspection was deemed to have exposed the 'failures' of both the teaching and the leadership and interventions were considered necessary. Although the teaching interventions (observations) did not come to pass, the effects of the event itself cascaded into each teacher's individual domain, evidenced by their changing dispositions from that point as well as changes in their positioning across social space too. Six teachers had decided to leave the school and Jennifer attributed their decision and her own directly to this mock Ofsted event and the lasting effects it generated, it was the 'the nail in the coffin' as she says above, although there were fissures prior to this as her metaphor indicates. For both Jennifer and Claire, their new schools were seen to offer an escape or new beginning (Davey, 2009). Even Peter, the only participant who was not leaving Brightwater School, discussed 'a fresh start' as part of his motivation to move from the Infant to the Junior school. He also discussed the likelihood of pedagogical adaptations and change within the school (Feldman, 2016), particularly as Liz had resigned from her executive headteacher

role, although she was remaining on until the end of the autumn term of the following year. As discussed in 5.7.4.1, I was unable to gain her perspective on this as she did not make herself available to me. Indeed, after this point, her visibility within the school seemed to decrease.

## **9.4 Constructions of self and others**

The sections above demonstrate how the staff worked with creative curriculum structures and the ways that the performative rules around with data production and curriculum coverage and the ‘Ofsted effect’ shaped practice. This section considers how these practices shaped the staff perceptions of self and others and their relationships and the interaction between the performative and creative dispositions.

### *9.4.1 Failure and blame as product and producer of performative rules*

The staff were very much motivated to engage with the performative rules described above by the fear of being blamed or named and shamed. But the blame was always shifting. Claire said she would ‘*hate* for secondary school teachers to think of me and go “Bloody primary school teachers. What do they teach them?!”’ She was convinced that they did do this because she had friends who were secondary teachers, also drawing on her own experiences of schooling. The extract below demonstrates this, again describing how she felt compelled to get children ‘ready’ based on her conceptions of the rules of the secondary school field but this time the blame shifts from self to colleagues, to the children who can’t stay ‘on task’ and even the focus on creativity in ‘this school’. :

It’s tough because there’s so much pressure on Year 6 and they’re going to secondary school. So you have to almost finish up your primary and all the getting the basics and the fun and the creativity and being explorative and curious about stuff and hold that. ...Most secondary schools are trying to be creative now but there’s so much to learn... I think through *this* school, they’ve been allowed a little bit more....well, they are...very free and want to just get up and do stuff and that’s okay...but they need to be on task.

Unfortunately this class can't do both. They can't talk and discuss in groups *and* stay on task. They'll end up talking about God knows what and the work still needs to be done!

(Claire, interview 1)

Claire's call for a simultaneous focus on both play and preparation in the 'lower' parts of the school, above, demonstrates tensions between a conception of primary school as 'first and foremost the place for the development of functional knowledge, skills and understanding in preparation for secondary schooling' and the more democratic notions of enquiry and problem-solving that underpin creative learning and teaching (Wyse and Ferrari, 2015: 14). There were contradictions within her pedagogical habitus based on this. On the one hand, she noted the negative effect that policy was having and that getting children ready for secondary school was not the same as getting them ready for life and 'learning how to be an active member of society' and she bemoaned the fact that she had 'to get children *through* things, through tests and they have to be spoon-fed stuff that they don't actually know how to find out anything for themselves'. But she also felt that this was the way it had to be, recognising the pressures on the teachers but appearing not to recognise her complicity in the ways that the system positions children: 'I don't know, maybe it's just this year group. They're just a bit lazy some of them. It's how it comes across sometimes. It's... "Oh, what's next?" and I say, "Have you looked at the sheet that I printed off for you?" "Oh!"' Either way, these extracts demonstrate the way that the performative rules of the field of schooling were constraining her in putting her creative ideals into action, not only in terms of time 'the pace is huge in Year 6 and further up the school' but also in the way they shaped her thinking about the children and her colleagues.

The other two teachers were also susceptible to the discourses of blame and responsabilisation (Pratt, 2016), both blaming their classes en masse or blaming particular groups or individuals within the class at different points in relation to the pressures of curriculum coverage or children's quantified performance. When Jennifer discussed her

'awful' first year, she blamed both the children ('that first class was difficult') and herself ('I hadn't got anywhere near the right knowledge of strategies and things in place to deal with them'). They all seemed to at least partially recognise that the issues relate to the system, citing particular policies or policy actors, however they felt compelled 'to get children through things' as Claire says above, seeing it as their individual responsibility, positioning children as difficult or incapable at least some of the time. For Jennifer, Claire and Liz this contradicted the ways that both teachers and children were positioned within their conceptions of creative teaching and learning. Here they demonstrate how such ambivalences can be absorbed into the habitus (Bourdieu, 1999b; 2000), where they seem to suppress some of their creative teaching dispositions and the accompanying conceptions of children as competent, active learners, putting them on 'standby' (Lahire, 2003: 341).

#### *9.4.2 Competition, ability and responsibility*

All the staff recognised the field of schooling as a space of competition and struggle, demonstrating a 'sense of investment in the game and the outcome..[and].. commitment to the presuppositions' (Bourdieu, 1992: 66). However, this was to differing degrees depending on their level of recognition of the ethical conflicts and the ways that these sat with their creative dispositions. Above, I have discussed how teachers objectified children and their 'progress' or 'levels' as a form of institutional capital, frequently misrecognising performative success or failure as 'ability' making it seem natural or innate. This 'ability' narrative was unquestioned, as is the case in most schools (James, 2015); it is the doxa that justifies practices like 'streaming', disguising the symbolic violence which constructs and maintains inequity (Nolan, 2012). The children also recognise this as capital, 'more able' children will not willingly relinquish it where they see that it provides them with better positioning (Pratt, 2016). The Year 2 children in particular made this clear in their interviews with me as well as demonstrating how the tightly structured teaching designed

to cover the curriculum shaped their attitudes towards learning. As Karl told me, the table groups were arranged from ‘cleverest to baddest’, pointing out that ‘I’m on the cleverest table because I’m so clever even at literacy when I don’t like it’. This exemplifies that, as is the case for teachers deemed successful within a performative system, the children become complicit in having symbolic violence exercised on them (Keddie, 2016; Pratt, 2016). In this way, both teachers and children internalise performative dispositions as part of their understanding of success and failure:

I think in order for a lesson to go well, it has to be very well thought out and very well planned and...differentiated appropriately. But rather than just doing a three-way differentiation, you’ve got...even more different activities going on because the ability range within the classroom is quite vast. And a lot of these children are quite needy. They will very rarely put pencil to paper unless they’re confident in what they’re doing. So it’s making sure that whatever task they’re asked to do, it’s manageable..... I think a lesson that’s too easy is just as much of a waste of time as one that’s too hard. There’s no benefit in them just regurgitating things...well there is in some respects but... I feel that a good lesson needs to be one that builds on what they know already but then sort of moves them on and gets them thinking about the next step. I always think about it as a staircase and they’re moving up the steps.

(Peter, interview 1)

Here Peter’s definition incorporates notions of differentiated levels of delivery, linear progress and a structured approach in which the successful children are described as self-reliant but passive individuals who can get on with the task he has prepared for them whilst the unsuccessful are ‘needy’ and reluctant.

All the teachers acknowledged the pressure to demonstrate progress, accepting this as inevitable as part of their compliance with the coverage and data production rules. They acknowledged the pressures on themselves as teachers but they were more conflicted when it came to recognising the pressure on the children and their own role in this. For example, Peter wanted children to understand ‘levels’ and ‘next steps’ on the one hand, but, on the other, he did not want them to fully comprehend the competitive purposes that he had accepted to be the rules of the larger game of schooling because he recognised that some



children are ill-equipped to succeed in the current system, largely due structural inequalities and disadvantages. Therefore, although he recognised that they were problematic, he rationalised his practices as exemplified in the extract below. By substituting the word ‘quizzes’ for ‘SATs’ and holding back their scores, he argues that he can protect the children. Whereas, it is evident from Karl’s comments above that at least some of the children in his class understood and engaged with the competitive system and it is shaping their attitudes.

What really grates on me is that every child has to have a number and the number is all that matters.....It’s just a way of comparing one child with another....Children are deemed to be....well robots if you like. And it’s just a case of well if they start there then they should end up there.....it doesn’t matter if they’ve lost a parent or they come from a really poor background or they’ve got social problems or they’re SEN or EAL. They start there, that’s where they have to be regardless you know.

(Peter, interview 2)

This is an example of the way that ‘illusio’ differs from ‘doxa’. ‘Illusio’ demonstrates a more conscious acceptance of the rules of the game as ‘acting sensibly’ (Colley, 2014: 670). This is because, as already discussed in relation to Jennifer’s sense of guilt and her illness over the year, performative dispositions have been naturalised making emotional commitments harder to sustain and more risky (Hargreaves, 1998; Lynch, 2010). Rather, they become located in the individual practitioner without due regard for the emotionally challenging contexts in which they work, making teaching emotionally risky (Hargreaves, 1998). Liz’s resignation seems to be another example. Both demonstrate how a caring orientation can be turned against teachers, causing them to sacrifice themselves emotionally (Hargreaves, 1998). Peter recognises that this is problematic, using a ‘robot’ metaphor to make his point, indeed he applied the same metaphor to the teacher’s role later in the interview. However, his *illusio* may be necessary to survive in this climate and he demonstrates here how humanist dispositions can be suppressed or deactivated when there are contradictions (Lahire, 2003; Zipin and Brennan, 2003).

Claire did not underestimate children's capacity to understand how the structures of the classroom and school operate and she felt it was important to be 'open' with children about their performative progress. She also linked this to the doxa of ability ('the children *know* if they're smart or not' – her emphasis). Like Peter, she questioned the effectiveness of the system, highlighting potentially damaging effects of streaming and 'ability' groups on children's motivation and morale for example and, again, she saw it as being within the control of the individual teacher to deflect these potentially negative effects.

I'm not against streaming...as long as you make the groups flexible...because there's the whole argument of child morale, being in the bottom set... But actually if the work is set properly for them, they'll be challenged and they'll be able to enjoy it, because the difficulty you've got in a mixed ability class is you get more behaviour issues because you've got some children who don't understand, some children who are bored, you've got the middle...and... further up the school when you've got some children that are level 2 and some that are level 6...so that's primary and secondary level stuff that you're supposed to teach in one lesson and keep them all entertained, all at the same pace, all working really hard... Trying to do that *every* day is quite tiring for the teacher and you end up not being able to teach to the best of your ability because you can.... work on one group but the rest are kind of baby-sat.... So I don't disagree with streaming at all.

(Claire, interview 2)

Here she acknowledges the pressures on the teacher but not the child. Where strategies do not work, the fault is assigned to the children and their 'behaviour issues' or 'ability', as discussed in the section above. There is no recognition of the flaws in the inequitable system nor the contradictions between this vision of learning and the more emotionally engaged creative learning experiences towards which she aspired, she maintains both dispositions within her pedagogical habitus despite the contradictions. Jennifer seemed to feel the most alienated from the competitive logic due to her concern for young children's wellbeing, which was connected to her creative teaching dispositions as well as her early years teacher habitus. She acknowledged that the rules of the field of schooling were dominant. Indeed, she had been starting to adapt her practice to the logic of the field, becoming more convinced by the 'progress' the children were making based on her teaching of phonics for example as discussed above. She appeared to have been absorbing

the fissures and insecurities into her pedagogic habitus until the mock Ofsted event and its effects caused ruptures. This, and her conviction that she had found a new school that would be more of a match for her principles, gave her the confidence to reinvest in her principles, although she recognised threats coming from the general direction of education policy, for example performance-related pay and the increasing incoherence between early years curriculum and national curriculum. Like Claire, she was less convinced by the practices within the school by the end of the year, although Claire accepted the focus on data and progress had to remain and Jennifer did not. These practices put pressure on some of their creative dispositions but where creativity was a more enduring part of their habitus, teachers did find opportunities to enact their creative dispositions.

#### *9.4.3 Independent or autonomous learners?*

Concepts of autonomy, independence and freedom underpinned much of the discussion of both creative learning and creative teaching, although these were rarely mentioned without reference to various constraints and were sometimes presented as aspirations rather than reality. This was because all the teachers found it difficult to conceptualise or maintain conceptualisations of children as competent learners or co-learners and to give them control over their learning for more than short periods at particular times of the day or week. Teacher-child collaborations are always complex due to the inherent imbalance of power between adults and children, particularly in the rule-bound context of the field of schooling (Mayall, 2008). This is further complicated by neoliberal policy doxa.

Constructions of children's independence and autonomy were shaped to differing degrees by teachers' interpretations of the datafication and curriculum coverage rules and their own autonomy. For example, as already discussed, there was a focus on teaching test-taking skills, particularly during assessment week. At this time, independence was associated with doing a task meant individually without help from the teacher. I observed this

definition of 'independence' in all three classrooms. I observed a similar lesson structure when it came to core curriculum subjects taught in the mornings and sometimes at other times. However, the approach to these more structured activities were mediated by the individual teacher's pedagogical values and their different priorities, particularly the value they placed on children's autonomy and flexible, inclusive approaches as part of their creative dispositions. This explains some of the differences between the practice and relationships I observed in Jennifer and Claire's classrooms compared to Peter's, Jennifer and Claire tried to enable children's autonomy whereas Peter did not. Comparing Peter and Claire's approaches to teaching test taking skills provides an example of this. Both tended to use past SATs papers during assessment week with Claire arguing that tests can provide valuable learning opportunities, a contentious viewpoint in the light of evidence that demonstrates the negative effects of the testing culture (Hursh, 2008; Minarechová, 2012; West, 2010) but one that is supported in some of the literature (Dann, 2002). During assessment week, the Year 6 children completed the SATs papers in silence, which was different to their usual practice as there tended to be a hum of conversation in most of my observations, even where lessons were more structured. However, Claire also developed more collaborative lessons and activities from the test papers, incorporating the more flexible creative approaches she valued into this process. At these times, she would inform the children that the lesson was to help them with the SATS, therefore maintaining the power relationships and systemic inequities, but she also would encourage imaginative responses and dialogue, using examples relevant to them, or she would ask them to solve problems in multiple ways, working collaboratively and incorporating role-play and debate. In contrast, Peter's approach was more formal, in keeping with his usual style, using question and answer and step-by-step approaches, asking individual children to contribute, although there was an added layer of formality during assessment week. The children's desks would be rearranged, spacing them out in pairs or small groups instead of the usual group tables with some hard-back books standing up between children so that

they could not see each other's papers unless they peered over or around the books. This appeared to be a school-wide practice during assessment week, except in Reception as already discussed, but Peter's approach involved a step-by-step standardised approach with no sign of the 'differentiation' he mentions in relation to successful lessons (9.4.2, page 265).

## **9.5 Chapter conclusion**

As I have discussed in Chapter Four, education policy is in itself dominated by the field of political power which relies on neoliberal doxa, to provide legitimation for managerialist and marketised rules of operation in schools and other public institutions. It is possible to map out the shift towards this logic of practice in relation to a series of political, social and economic events and their effects over time. Each can be related to specific, sometimes temporary, social fields and effects that flow across fields (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004). It is also possible to do this at the school level. The accounts and experiences of the staff at Brightwater evidence such effects flowing from the field of political power into the school through education policy. The curriculum coverage and data production rules appeared to have affected structural changes in a gradual and incremental way, linked to the regularity of particular performative events such as 'assessment week' and local interpretations of national policy. But the 'mock Ofsted' appeared to rupture the ordinary functioning of the field, causing habitus-field mismatch and a sense of crisis which generated change. It is important to note that creativity events can also interrupt the ordinary functioning of a field. I have discussed 'critical events' that took place within the school and the ways that these changed the usual patterns in terms of time, space and relationships between children and adults (8.2.3). These can therefore also be positioned as cross-field event effects that can create temporary fields or sub-fields (Rawolle and Lingard, 2005). However, in Brightwater, these changes remained temporary. It has been argued that such critical

events can actually marginalise creativity further if creative practices and partnerships are not developed and absorbed into the everyday environment (Davies *et al.*, 2013; Jones and Thomson, 2008; Thomson and Sanders, 2010). Inviting visiting artists and specialists to stage events or taking part in these outside the school as a kind of book-end approach may have positioned some of these creative events further outside of the teachers' and children's ordinary experience, particularly as creative topic-based teaching and learning was already positioned as an afternoon activity. Therefore, although this chapter began with a focus on the staff efforts to enact 'the creative school', it has focused largely on the performative elements because it was those that dominated the Brightwater logic of practice. It was the neoliberal policy effects that had more opportunity to take hold in terms of both the logic of practice of the field and the pedagogic habitus of the teachers due to their regularity, the sense of coherence bestowed upon them by doxic narratives and the coercive pressures to conform. In this chapter, I have presented examples of these effects and pressures. Contradictory elements were reflected in the pedagogical habitus of each teacher as well as the children's attitudes and experiences and both teachers and children put limits on their own autonomy at least some of the time in order to play the game of schooling successfully. But, on balance, there did seem to be more opportunities for innovation and autonomy in Claire and Jennifer's classrooms than Peter's because creative dispositions formed a more enduring part of their pedagogical habitus. Both aspired towards following the children's interests or drawing on their experiences when they could, with or without the 'scaffolding' of the IPC and even if the goals related to the national curriculum or SATs. They would incorporate degrees of flexibility, making space for children to take some control and ownership and helping them to interpret and build on their experiences on a regular basis. Indeed, at one extreme, this could mean 'throwing the planning out of the window' as Jennifer put it, although this should be construed as taking a risk in the closely surveilled environment of a school where 'coverage', 'progress' and being 'on task' are the rules of the game.

## **Chapter Ten: Conclusion**

### **10.1 Introduction**

The previous three chapters presented the findings of the study, addressing each of my research questions separately. In this chapter, I re-connect these aspects in my final discussion, providing a reminder of the key aims and objectives of the study (10.2) and an overview of the findings (10.3). In 10.4, I consider the ways that this research contributes to knowledge and, in 10.5, I reflect on the scope and limitations of the research and my role as researcher. I then discuss the implications of the findings, suggesting ways in which they may be utilised to make a difference to policy and practice (10.6). Here I draw on my own personal learning together with ideas and discuss possibilities for future practice-based research because I see these aspects as interconnected. 10.7 presents some final concluding remarks.

### **10.2 Summary of the study**

This study is an empirical, in-depth investigation of the ways that ‘creativity’, ‘creative teaching’ and ‘creative learning’ were defined and enacted by a small group of teachers within a primary school situated in South East England over the course of an entire academic year. Detailed data were generated through an in-depth ethnographic case study approach which involved weekly visits to three classrooms within the school between September 2012 and July 2013. A range of methods were employed within a Bourdieusian theoretical framework in order to answer the following research questions:

1. How do the staff define ‘creativity’, ‘creative learning’ and ‘creative teaching’?
2. How do the staff enact ‘creativity’, ‘creative learning’ and ‘creative teaching’ within the neoliberal policy context of the school?
3. What are the enablers, constraints, tensions and ambiguities in this process?

I drew on my own experiences as a primary teacher, as well as corroborating academic evidence to develop these questions. Within this thesis, I have demonstrated the enduring

public interest in the perceived social benefits of creativity and the role of education in developing it. I have considered some of the research that has focused on enabling creativity in schools and the ways that this is complicated by the varied definitions and applications in the creativity research, as well as the contradictions inherent in and occasioned by the dominance of neoliberal ideology within education policy. Indeed, although there remains a political interest in promoting creativity in schools, during the course of this research creativity has been redefined in policy terms; it has been side-lined and sometimes even completely ousted by a renewed focus on narrower performative goals (Craft *et al.*, 2014; Elliot, 2018). This was because the data collection occurred in the context of considerable and rapid reform to the system of curriculum, assessment and inspection which began after a change of government in 2010, as discussed in Chapter Six. Bourdieu's social field theory has enabled me to gain deep insights into enactments of creativity in a school, taking into account the contextual factors that enabled or constrained staff as well as the tensions and contradictions involved.

### **10.3 Findings**

The teachers who took part in the study were Jennifer (the Reception teacher), Peter (the Year 2 teacher), Claire (the Year 6 teacher) and, Liz (the executive headteacher). Chapter Seven provided a 'narrative portrait' of each (Smyth and McInerney, 2013), sketching key elements of their pedagogical habitus and their general orientation towards creativity, creative teaching and creative learning.

In definition, all four tended to see 'creative teaching' and 'creative learning' as interlinked, although their definitions varied as did the priority they gave to creativity in their daily practice. Although there were different elements to their creative learning definitions, all discussed similar dispositions which they hoped to inspire in the children



through their creative teaching which had associations with the creativity research. I grouped these as sets of 'creative learning dispositions' because the staff described them as habits of mind, behaviours, strategies or skills that would facilitate children in their future endeavours in association with some of the definitions and enactments of creative teaching and other elements of their pedagogical habitus; these are presented in table format in Appendix 15. The aspirational creative learning dispositions included the curious learner disposition (which focuses on inquisitiveness, openness to new experiences, willingness to look for different solutions inclination to seek novelty, desire to develop new skills and desire to understand things); cognitive creative learning (which focuses on cognitive skills and processes that staff associated with creativity, for example problem-solving, imaginative thinking and critical reflection) and active, hands-on learning (which focused on experiential, practical approaches and activities in which children could become immersed). When it came to their attempts to enable children in developing or augmenting their creative learning dispositions, the staff drew on different teaching dispositions which were enabled or constrained in various ways by contextual factors relating to the particular system of fields in which the school was located, mediated through each member of staff's habitus. I have categorised some of these as 'creative teaching dispositions' due to the links between the staff definitions of creativity, creative teaching and creative learning and their practice and clear associations with the creativity research. However, some of the creative teaching was in the ways that different pedagogical dispositions were combined during enactment and these interactions were dynamic.

Liz, Jennifer and Claire tended to associate creative teaching with progressive, humanist ideals relating to engagement, wellbeing and fulfilment (Woods and Jeffrey, 1996) and constructivist learning theory in which the teacher facilitates and co-constructs learning with children (Vygotsky, 1978). Jennifer and Claire enacted versions of these, although they, had to balance their aspirations with challenges relating to their position in the field,

as did all the staff, particularly the encroachment of performative dispositions derived from the neoliberal logic of practice. There were tacit distinctions between ‘teaching creatively’, which refers to innovative or imaginative ways of teaching, and ‘teaching for creativity’ which refers to pedagogies and activities aimed at enhancing the creativity of learners (Gregerson *et al.*, 2013). Although the teachers often enacted combinations of these strategies, the ‘teaching creatively’ strategies sometimes seemed more achievable than the less predictable ‘teaching for creativity’ approach due to performative constraints (Jeffrey and Craft, 2004), particularly to Peter and Liz who seemed to feel more constrained by their positioning within the field. Jennifer and Claire also faced challenges but both appeared to have incorporated creative dispositions into their habitus in more enduring ways, linked to their vocational and person-making pedagogical dispositions. This meant that, to them, part of the joy of teaching was connecting their own creativity to that of the children with sometimes unpredictable but emotionally and intellectually fulfilling results.

The study’s findings concur with existing research which has found that definitions of ‘creative learning’, in particular, have emerged from an amalgamation of discourses (Craft *et al.*, 2001; Sefton-Green *et al.*, 2011). Collectively, the staff drew on a diverse range of theoretical constructs to explain their understandings of creative learning and indeed learning more generally, therefore also demonstrating the blurred line between ‘creative learning’ and ‘effective learning’ (Craft, 2008). These included more individual, cognitive psychological approaches and processes, as well as popularised theories about brain functioning, emotional intelligence, multiple intelligences and learning styles. However, they were also very keen to provide a ‘safe’ environment and particular experiences as part of their definitions and enactments. As, Thomson and Sefton-Green (2011) argue, the definition of creative learning is important but it does not have to be clear cut because it meshes the changing attitudes towards children and childhood and the blend of progressive

pedagogy with practices that focus on increasing children's autonomy and opportunities for self-expression. Therefore 'creative learning' itself can represent 'the learner, a mode of pedagogy, a form of institutional organization, an ideological rallying cry or simply...an attempt to be different' in a learning and teaching context that emphasises conformity and standardisation (Thomson and Sefton-Green, 2011: 7). They suggest that the process of researching creative learning itself can play a part in co-constructing this as part of opening up 'a range of new media and genres through which youthful voice(s) can be expressed and new audiences to whom they can speak' (ibid). I argue that the same can be said of researching 'creative teaching', which acknowledges and explores the complexities of both teaching and learning. Overall, despite the ambiguities, this study found that 'creative learning' in particular remains a useful concept for retaining an emphasis on the learners themselves, on strategies and approaches that motivate, stimulate and engage children in their learning and on the development of generative and transformative dispositions (Sefton-Green, 2008).

When it came to their collective enactment as a school, despite the publicly-stated focus on 'creative curriculum' which drew me to the school in the first place, it seemed there was limited emphasis on developing or maintaining a collaborative approach. This was a major constraint because developing and reflecting upon shared understandings is a vital component in developing a whole school approach (Cochrane and Cockett, 2007). Where schools do not have robust systems of support, it can be difficult to sustain a focus on creativity, even more so when a school is judged as being under-performing, as was the case at Brightwater. Several contextual factors impeded their efforts to develop such an approach. One set of challenges related to the particular history and circumstance of the school, namely the coordination of practice across two school sites with high staff turnover and a significant number of inexperienced staff. A second substantial set of challenges related to the school's declining performative fortunes. As a 'satisfactory' school (an

Ofsted rating category that was to become 'requires improvement' soon after the data collection phase), the school was deemed to be struggling, or at the very least 'coasting' (Baxter and Clarke, 2013) as it had been since their 2008 post-federation inspection. Liz therefore deemed it sensible to prioritise performative goals over efforts to engage in creative teaching and creative learning. This was her 'illusio' which impacted on all the staff due to her more powerful positioning in the field. For these reasons, although there was a focus on creative curriculum as part of the 'who we are' and 'how we do things here' at Brightwater school (Reay *et al.*, 2001), competing performative dispositions tended to dominate the logic of practice and when it came to creative teaching and creative learning much depended on the individual staff definitions and enactments. These were shaped by three interlinked factors. Firstly, each participant's personal definitions of creativity were significant, both in terms of their perceptions of its value generally and their beliefs with regard to their own creativity. Secondly, the ways that staff positioned creativity in relation to their pedagogical values impacted on the frequency and type of creative practice in which they engaged. Thirdly, the extent to which staff had assimilated neoliberal policy dispositions into their pedagogical habitus appeared to influence their capacity to visualise and enact creative pedagogy. Therefore, although all the staff were enabled to an extent by the creative curriculum structure that the school adopted despite the limitations above, the enactments of creative teaching and creative learning occurred more frequently in Claire and Jennifer's classrooms. This was because both tended to associate creative teaching with a responsive, inclusive pedagogic style in their daily practice, adapting their strategies to the context, based on their knowledge of the children and their interests and their belief in the importance of developing and enabling children's creative dispositions. Both were facilitated by a personal sense of creativity but also the focus on creativity in their teacher training. In addition, Jennifer drew on rules from the field of early years practice and Claire her own experiences, including her creative secondary teachers and her background in creative subjects and the 'creative industry' (Garnham, 2005). Peter's creative

dispositions seemed to be more marginal to his pedagogical habitus which appeared to have been shaped significantly by his seven consecutive years in Year 6 and Year 2, year groups which are, in many ways, defined by high stakes assessments. I have described these year groups as pressure points because the teachers and children are exposed to extra layers of surveillance in preparation for the SATs assessments (7.4). These assessment results are published and scrutinised and there can be punitive effects when schools, and therefore individual teachers, are not deemed successful in these performative terms. This is likely to have a strong structuring effect on pedagogical dispositions (Webb *et al.*, 2004) and I have evidenced how SATs-teacher dispositions shaped both Claire and Peter's practice. Peter was the only one of the three teachers to experience an actual Ofsted inspection. He described it as 'an awful experience' and therefore strived to assimilate the language of Ofsted, although he simultaneously questioned the effectiveness of the approach. As a result, he tended to position 'creative teaching' as a technique to enhance delivery of the national curriculum which fitted with the more technicist perspective on teaching and learning that he had adopted. He did not recognise a place for children's autonomy in teaching and learning, tending to follow a linear, step-by-step process and was perhaps more aware of the risks involved in 'teaching for creativity' approaches and their uncertain outcomes than Jennifer and Claire who were less experienced. He expressed frustration at his own lack of professional autonomy but also seemed to accept it; this was his *illusio*. However, at least part of his enjoyment of the collaborative and creative process of planning IPC topics appeared to be linked to his increased sense of autonomy. The creative curriculum structure therefore was supporting and developing his thinking about creativity and providing him with some space in which to enact creative teaching, as it did for all the staff.

It is interesting that Claire was also in a 'pressure point' year group and concerns about 'coverage' and 'readiness' most certainly impacted on her thinking and practice, as they

did on Jennifer's. Both were able to enact a version of their idealised creative teacher selves but both also experienced struggles. Jennifer expressed frustration that she was only able to enact her ideals in a partial way. Claire, on the other hand, seemed to internalise the tensions and engaging in a form of intuitive creative teaching throughout the year. She saw learning as an emotionally engaged and creative process involving a respectful 'partnership' with the children, whilst simultaneously holding the view that it related to the progressive coverage of the national curriculum which led her to position children as lazy or passive at times. She did not appear to see any incompatibility between these contradictory conceptions, which seemed to be shaped at least in part by her own educational experiences. She had absorbed the contradictions into her pedagogical habitus, enacting both at different points (Lahire, 2003). So, although she reserved the right to be 'draconian', I generally observed warm, respectful interactions between Claire and the children with opportunities for them to innovate and take ownership of learning activities.

Although their interpretations were all very different, the enactments represented in this research demonstrate that there is space for creative practice, creative mediation of performative priorities and other pedagogical negotiations in the current neoliberal climate. Teachers and children can exercise some autonomy in the face of the structuring effect of regulatory pressures and it seems that creative curriculum structures like the IPC may promote an alternative constructivist discourse (Muschamp, 2012), although it is important that teachers value creative approaches and see them as feasible (Mullet *et al.*, 2016). However, the performative 'rules' and pressures did dominate and the rapid policy changes generated a great deal of uncertainty which intensified over the year as the staff realised that they did not know how to improve in a performative sense. Their 'failures' were exposed by the local school confederation audit (or 'Mock Ofsted') in May, a temporary cross-field policy effect with lasting repercussions (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004). It was experienced as a crisis event. The emotional language that staff used to describe it and its

immediate aftermath demonstrated wrenching cross-field effects which created disjuncture between habitus and field, giving the teachers a different perspective on the school field and its rules. I did not get the opportunity to discuss this with Liz, but the mock Ofsted appeared to have been incapacitating for her as leader. She had already expressed an increasing sense of disillusion and insecurity in our interview discussions and her stories of 'losing heads' in the area may well have been a premonition of her own fate. For the three teachers, the dissonance seemed to provide opportunities for resistance, change and self-renewal (Mills, 2008). In their final interviews, Jennifer and Claire were both aligning themselves with the potentially idealised field of their new schools. Jennifer in particular was re-investing in her commitment to her creative dispositions and her sense of self-efficacy seemed to be increasing. Peter was the only participant to remain at Brightwater but even he was conceptualising the new academic year as 'a fresh start' and had decided to move between the two school sites.

The mock Ofsted was intended to prepare and support schools but it was predicated on 'careless doxa' (Lynch, 2010: 60). But, whether or not it is framed in the emotional language that I have used above, which is similar to the language that the staff used, the mock Ofsted did have considerable emotional impact causing anxiety, stress and upset. This, together with need for permanent 'Ofsted-friendly' effectiveness' in an ever-changing policy context (Perryman *et al.*, 2018: 161), affected Liz's capacity to support her staff as well as the capacity of all staff to support the children with whom they worked. As Jennifer put it in her final interview in July, 'I've felt recently that the children are just getting in the way of all the paperwork I've got to do'. To add insult to injury, quite literally in this case, Liz's unexpected resignation suggests that she was ultimately forced to accept the blame for the school's 'poor' performance. The official Ofsted reports following her departure seem to indicate this, signifying her fall from grace (6.2.3, page 136) and demonstrating how the personal capital and professional fate of the headteacher

are tied to the success of the school (Coldron *et al.*, 2014). The leader literally embodies the success or failure of their school. An embodiment of failure must be a terrible burden, especially after a long career in education based around humanist dispositions.

#### **10.4 Contribution to knowledge**

PhD candidates can find it difficult to balance a claim for originality with ‘intellectual modesty’ (Murray, 2003: 29). I am no exception. In fact, it is common to experience situational shyness or ‘imposter syndrome’ as a doctoral student (Scott *et al.*, 2012) and I discuss how I felt this impacted on the research in my reflections below. Since discovering the notion of ‘mini-c’ creativity defined by Kaufman and Beghetto (2009: 3) as ‘transformative learning’ which is personally meaningful and novel, I became concerned that my doctoral research would be an example of this, something that is only new and meaningful to me. However, Bourdieu notes that critically reflexive research that is personally revolutionary can contribute to a cumulative effect when large numbers of individuals within a particular field attempt to form a collective avant-garde in order to effect change (Grenfell and James, 2004) and I hope that I can make a small contribution to such a movement with this study. Certainly, my research adds to the significant body of research into creativity in schools and the effects of neoliberalism on education, as well as research that employs a Bourdieusian theoretical framework. It is perhaps in the combination of these factors and my methodological approach that my research can make an original contribution. As an ethnographic case study, the scope of this research is necessarily limited in some ways, I have focused on a single school and the experience of a small number of teachers, but the design is in fact very ambitious and it has been a challenging endeavour on both a personal and professional level. This means that the study may contribute to existing academic work and perhaps also practice in a range of ways.



I have drawn on elaborations of aspects of Bourdieu's framework, using the notion of 'pedagogical habitus' (Feldman, 2016: 71) to describe how sets of enduring 'embodied cognitive, dispositional, and corporeal pedagogical practices' are added to a teacher's primary habitus over time. My contribution has been to demonstrate the value and nature of 'creative dispositions' within that habitus, thus making a tentative theoretical contribution of my own. In addition, it is combined with consideration of 'cross-field effects' (Lingard and Rawolle, 2004; Rawolle, 2005) to explain how dominant intersecting political and social fields intrude on the field of a school, disseminating neoliberal doxa and influencing dispositions in both temporary and enduring ways. This is one way to explain how performativity can come to dominate a school, sitting in tension with the more vocational and creative elements of the pedagogical habitus. Both creative and performative dispositions shape teachers' actions but neoliberal cross-field effects, particularly the physical intrusion of an Ofsted inspection (or indeed a 'mock' inspection) can have a powerful coercive influence and the capacity to alter the ordinary functioning of the school field. Such cross-field effects can generate different responses or actions, perhaps causing dissonance between habitus and field, as was the case in my research, potentially causing an agent to disconnect from the field which would appear to be happening on a wider scale if teacher attrition rates can be taken as an indicator (Foster, 2018; Worth and Van den Brande, 2019), as discussed further below. Thus this study also makes a contribution to the relatively limited research that exists on inter-field relations and their effects, providing a process that can potentially be followed in future research that seeks to establish the specific processes by which such dissonance occurs in schools or similar institutions and public services. To my knowledge there is no other research that has applied a Bourdieusian framework in this particular way.

In contextualising the teachers' accounts and experiences in this way, the research adds to the body of educational research examining the effects of neoliberalism. This is not new but it is important because the education community must continue to evidence the long term damage that managerialism and performativity is doing to teachers, as well as children and parents, referring back to the conception of an educational research 'avant-garde' above (Grenfell and James, 2004). As discussed in Chapters Three and Four, there have been a number of small scale, qualitative, often ethnographic, studies into creativity in performative school contexts (for example, Craft and Jeffrey, 2008; Troman *et al.*, 2007). This study therefore complements these as well as providing detail to inform policy studies at the macro level (Ball, 2012; Klenk and Pavolini, 2015). However, the combination of an ethnographic approach with a Bourdieusian theoretical framework is less common, particularly as I have not employed Bourdieu to analyse class, race or gender inequalities as is the case with much of the sociological research (Grenfell and James, 2004). There is consideration of power, domination and struggle, concepts that are central to Bourdieu's social field theory, but I have examined these in a very specific educational context. It has helped me to avoid the structure and agency dichotomy, as I evidence how pedagogical practice is not only shaped by teachers' individual values and beliefs but also by the social institutions or fields in which they operate.

## **10.5 Reflections on the research**

One of my key intentions for this research, relating to my own humanist dispositions, was to strive towards empowering the staff, promoting their views and acknowledging the complexity of the work that they do. I believe I have managed that within this thesis. As part of this aim, I endeavoured to develop research relationships characterised by openness, trust and respect. I believed that I have achieved this to an extent. But, at times, my researcher role felt like a contrived performance and I faced various challenges and

dilemmas. The key challenge was that, ironically perhaps, the performative culture that I was investigating meant that I was viewed with suspicion at least part of the time. Occasionally, the projected suspicion of my participants combined with my feelings of self-consciousness and sometimes fraudulence contributed to an uncomfortable atmosphere, as I sought to negotiate my own role and personal presence in the research process (Coryell *et al.*, 2013) and I needed to work harder to develop rapport with some participants compared to others as discussed in 5.7. This was the case in my relationships with Peter and Liz, the limited time for informal interaction was a significant barrier in this respect. Peter was far more comfortable in his second interview, however it took longer to achieve this level of acceptance with him and the children and adults in his classroom community because the highly structured classroom culture required me to take on a more detached observer role so our informal interactions were less frequent than in the other two classes. This also meant that I experienced a clash with my ‘ideal self’ (5.7.1) and my ‘teacher self’ (5.7.2) and I have tried to be alert to the times when I may have criticised Peter’s pedagogy rather than being critically reflective as my intention is not to present a ‘morality tale’ nor to shame any of my participants as they perform ‘the teacher’ within the constraints of a context that required them to suppress their values and ethical dispositions at times (Zipin and Brennan, 2003: 351). I had even less opportunity to interact with Liz who did not appear to be at all comfortable with my presence after the ‘mock Ofsted’. This is completely understandable considering its impact on the staff and the judgments on her leadership (9.3.3). At the time, I did not realise the reasons for her lower profile in the school and her reluctance to take part in the final interview because I had to piece together what had happened from the teacher accounts in July. Overall, my limited contact with her has meant that I have had to be tentative and careful about any conclusions I have drawn about her pedagogical or leadership dispositions because I had less opportunity to see her ‘in action’ compared to the other three participants. I therefore had to rely on their perspectives and her self-reported enactments.

I endeavoured to provide a space for staff to reflect upon the nature of their work and their professional values through this research. However, if I were to undertake the research again, I would build opportunities for reflection and collaborative analysis more deliberately and carefully into the design. The interviews were a reflective space and the ethnographic design was helpful in many respects because there were opportunities to discuss my initial analyses with them. There also were opportunities missed, particularly as I only started to gain a deeper understanding of Bourdieusian theory when I was able to immerse myself in the data analysis which was long after the fieldwork was complete and the majority of the staff had left the school; I discuss how this has informed my ideas for future research below. This was largely due to the ambitious scope of my design and the time-consuming nature of my data collection strategies. I found it difficult to balance the weekly visits, data management and analysis with full-time employment during the data collection phase when I had regular access to the school and the teachers.

#### *10.5.1 Scope and limitations*

The applicability of this study is necessarily limited because it is based on a single case study school and the findings relate to the specific circumstances of that school, therefore its historical and geographical context during the 2012-13 academic year. While an analysis that examined pedagogical habitus as gendered, classed or raced could have added analytic depth and complexity, due to my status as a novice researcher, I concentrated on gaining a deeper theoretical understanding of it as a concept in itself. This focus on the ways that pedagogical habitus operates in a dominated space allowed me to compare staff conceptualisations of creativity, performativity and their enactment. Although neoliberal policy dispositions apply to all schools, they manifest differently according to the particularities of each school field and the system of fields in which the school is situated,

as well as the pedagogical habitus of the teachers within, as I have argued within this thesis. Therefore, these findings may not be replicated in other schools, as discussed in 5.3.2 exact replication is not possible in qualitative research, but the methods and detailed descriptions used in this research are empirically replicable, which means that another researcher could repeat the procedures used in this study involving a different population, as is the analytic significance of the theoretical propositions, meaning the study could be replicated using different procedures to explore the same analytic concepts (Aguinis and Solarino, 2019). I have borne this last point in mind whilst conceptualising pedagogical habitus, particularly the collective categorisations of creative and performative dispositions, whilst retaining my focus on the interpretations of my participants and the details of their specific experience. My approach may be criticised in that I could have collected more detailed data about the backgrounds and creative experiences of the staff outside the school to inform my conceptualisations of their pedagogical habitus. However, all the staff discussed their route into teaching and their pedagogical values in the interviews which provided useful insights and more enduring creative dispositions were clearly identifiable in their discussions and observed practice.

As mine was an interpretive approach, other researchers may apply these same methods with different results, using similar or even very different analytic frameworks. This is to be welcomed because it would be useful to compare analyses, in this event, in order to gain more understanding of and give more weight to the perspectives and experiences of teachers and their views on creative teaching and creative learning. Equally, a reader may find that the narrative of this research useful because it links to their experience on a symbolic level, challenging or confirming their current theories and constructions as a 'vicarious experience' (Stake, 2000:19). Therefore although I cannot make recommendations for all schools because I have only examined beliefs and practice in a single school, I can perhaps draw on detailed indicative examples that report on aspects

that may help other schools to develop and protect a focus on creativity in the context of contextual constraints as I now discuss.

## **10.6 Implications and recommendations**

Building a strong evidence base to inform policy and practice about the importance of creative pedagogy is vital and there have been calls for qualitative studies to explore teachers' in-depth beliefs in relation to their classroom practices and the theoretical framing of creativity in these contexts (Berezki and Kárpáti, 2018). This study addresses such calls. It has produced valuable insights into the ways that teachers conceptualise creativity as well as its significance to pedagogical habitus. Other research has evidenced the value of creativity in education in this country and beyond (Craft, 2011; Wyse and Ferrari, 2015). This study provides detailed examples of the gains for children and teachers as they draw upon and nurture creative dispositions within their habitus as well as the challenges involved. Creative dispositions will vary but they tend to be generative, providing opportunities for teachers to engage with their own sense of transformational possibility and to develop this in learners (Sefton-Green, 2008); the late Anna Craft conceptualised this as 'possibility thinking' which can become an enduring disposition that 'drives the capacity of individuals to find their way through the life experience they meet with a creative attitude and approach, enabling them to make the most of situations, even those which appear difficult' (Craft, 2002: 113). This is important because, while habitus enables us to recognise possibilities for action whilst simultaneously preventing us from recognising other possibilities, those with a more transformative habitus may be better equipped to recognise opportunities for improvisation and act in ways to enact change (Mills, 2008) and there is plenty of research to evidence that this kind of creative thinking supports human growth and wellbeing (McLellan *et al.*, 2012). The creative pedagogical dispositions conceptualised in this research position teaching as a moral, principled

vocation and both learning and teaching as engaging, fulfilling and complex. They acknowledge the emotional, social and interpersonal dimensions involved and the importance of authenticity, care and respect. Combining a transformative habitus with pedagogy that connects learning to the experiences and histories of learners can ‘[engage] the space of schooling as a site of contestation, resistance and possibility’ (Giroux, 2003: 6) which may encourage learners to reflect critically on their experiences, potentially leading them to tackle social injustice or instigate social change, although this requires the teachers themselves to recognise the tensions and inequities within the system rather than absorbing blame themselves or projecting it onto others (9.4).

This research demonstrates that it is possible to enact creative dispositions within a constrained context and that it is important to nurture and develop creativity in both teachers and learners but it should not be the sole responsibility of individual teachers or even individual schools. This is because the current context of neoliberal ‘responsibilisation’ (Keddie, 2016; Wacquant, 2010) may position some teachers or schools as more willing to invest in creative approaches than others without recognition of the risk that it poses to them nor the resources that are needed. My participants all placed value on an enabling context for creative learning in particular. This is consistent with the findings of other research which has found that a supportive pedagogical environment facilitates both creative teaching and creative learning through the flexible and innovative use of space and resources (Davies *et al.*, 2013). But this requires investment and support within the dominant fields of schooling and education policy. The Creative Partnerships Programme (CP) is evidence of the potential that large scale political investment can realise (4.4.3) and there is evidence of gains in multiple areas in government-commissioned research focusing on CP (Thomson *et al.*, 2014). These include wellbeing and engagement in schools, citizenship and work-related skills and habits, modest academic gains as measured by tests and increased professional development opportunities

for teachers. Although there was no longitudinal study to track its impact over time, which would be a recommendation for any future creativity programme (Thomson *et al.*, 2014), the CP research literature, together with the growing international body of research into the importance of creativity in education (Wyse and Ferrari, 2015), warrants a return of the political interest and investment in creativity in education. As this study has evidenced, creative curriculum structures like the IPC may provide validation and help teachers to prioritise creative pedagogical strategies to an extent, but without a more consistent and concerted policy focus, there is the danger that these become ‘islands of innovation, clearly discernible in the surrounding sea of traditional practices’ (Tubin *et al.*, 2003: 140). Policy needs to enable teachers to engage in dialogue about creativity, focusing on its impact and importance and the development of shared understandings as well as a shared space to discuss challenges (Cochrane and Cockett, 2007). Currently, although there may be opportunities in schools for those who can embrace their entrepreneurial spirit and play the performative game whilst hanging on to their educational values and principles, there are punitive repercussions for those that fail to measure up. This research has provided detailed examples of the ways that performative dispositions can alter habitus in enduring ways demonstrating that the current political climate is not supportive of this kind of creative risk-taking disposition and, although the staff did employ some of their creative dispositions to counter or mediate the negative policy effects for both children and teachers, it was clear that they were enmeshed in this policy universe and did not always recognise their role in dominating or being dominated within the field. I now discuss the importance of making this policy universe visible.

### *10.6.1 Recognising the dangers of neoliberalism*

Although some argue that the neoliberal narrative is stuttering (Hall, 2011; Saad-Filho, 2019), it has already significantly restructured education considerably and there are no



signs at the moment of any political change. Both the findings of this study and the literature examined in Chapter Three demonstrate that cultures of failure, blame and shame (Rea and Weiner, 1998) remain embedded and that the consequences of failing (or being perceived to fail) can be profoundly negative for both the individuals involved and the school itself. The cost to individual teachers ranges from the impact on their time, energy and wellbeing to financial cost related to performance-related pay policies (Mahony *et al.*, 2004; Troman and Woods 2001). This then translates to a broader societal cost in terms of teacher and headteacher attrition, retention and recruitment (Foster, 2018; Lynch, 2017; Worth and Van den Brande, 2019) not to mention the impact on future generations. In section 3.5.3, I presented evidence of the negative consequences for both teachers and children in the context of increasing concerns about children's mental health (Brogaard Clausen *et al.*, 2019; DoH/DfE, 2017; The Children's Society, 2018). Aside from the importance of wellbeing, critics argue that as neoliberal doxa becomes more embedded, perceptions of knowledge are narrowing from schooling onwards which also impacts on society more widely (Chomsky, 1999). They describe newer trends such as 'nonthinking' (Giroux, 2014), 'functional stupidity' (Alvesson and Spicer, 2016), even describing graduates as job-ready 'neoliberal zombies' (Hil, 2015: 1843). When teachers and learners are positioned as 'robots', to use Peter's term (page 266), and they do not have the opportunity to engage with and practice critical reflection as part of their educational experiences, propagandists are in a better position to be able to distort ideas and influence public perceptions for political or commercial gain, for example, rebranding ideas as 'fake news' or 'alternative facts' (Mason *et al.*, 2018). Although these ideas are not new in themselves, aided by technological developments, they have facilitated the rise of populist anti-establishment, politics and a climate where people will more 'readily accept the 'post-truths' offered to them because the objective facts mean less to them than claims rooted in emotion and personal belief', potentially disadvantaging themselves (van der Walt, 2017: 25).

The House of Commons Select Committee for Education acknowledges that our ‘high-stakes system does not improve teaching and learning at primary school’ (1 May, 2017, HC 682, para 66, page 19), yet our politicians refuse to consider alternatives and or acknowledge the impact of performative practices. Indeed, the education minister’s answer to helping children cope with exam-related mental health problems is to have them sit more exams at a younger age (Yorke, 2018), while the Chief of Ofsted recommends that children should not be told that they are taking SATs exams (Busby, 2019). These are facile solutions, especially considering the resources at their disposal. As Liz said in her interview, our children deserve better (page 166), at the least a government that listens to qualified professionals. However, symbolic violence is inherent in our education system and, as this study has demonstrated, those engaged in the process of the symbolic violence often do not recognise it and are even complicit in either their own domination or maintaining the inequities of the system or both. Therefore teachers and children are perceived as ‘failing’ by those outside the field of the school and they also perceive themselves as failing. The misrecognition is ‘the failure to see not only that the game is historically rigged, but also how the struggle to do better actually reproduces and keeps intact the capital that are being struggled over’ (Thomson, 2010: 16). Bourdieusian theory makes these processes visible and may be useful as an explanatory device with practitioners and students. In the next section, I draw on what I have personally learned from this research, before focusing on the ways that Bourdieu’s framework may support the development of creative pedagogies through collaborations between researchers, practitioners and students.

### *10.6.2 My personal learning*

As explained in Chapter One, this thesis began in response to my own experiences as a primary teacher. It therefore seemed appropriate to include a personal reflection focusing on what I have learned whilst carrying out this research here in the conclusion chapter.

Although, as I have discussed, I felt there were missed opportunities to discuss and conceptualise and explore the creative dispositions and notions of pedagogical habitus with the staff involved in this study, Bourdieu's theoretical framework has provided me with a useful frame for reflecting on my own learning, connected to my recommendations for practice and my ideas for future research.

To begin with my own learning, I have argued in Chapter Five that Bourdieu's conceptual framework is compatible with an ethnographic approach (Blommaert, 2005) and I found this to be the case. However, the ambitious scope of my design and my lack of familiarity with Bourdieu's work at the start of this process both presented challenges. When I started this study, I was unfamiliar with sociological methodology generally. I knew that I wanted to try to make sense of the ways that teachers' understood and enacted creativity and that this would be connected to the context of their school. This necessarily involves examination of the ways that teachers adopt, resist or re-appropriate policy rules that are imposed coercively upon them, together with any other responses of which I had not conceived. I started with a symbolic interactionist approach (Woods, 1996) but found it difficult to conceptualise the policy effects within this framework and Bourdieu provided me with a flexible solution. He intended his tools to be used in innovative ways as I hope I have demonstrated in this research. However, identifying dispositions was a long and pain-staking process involving close and sometimes experimental analysis of a considerable amount of data (see 5.6). Then, over the course of this analysis and my attempts to become more familiar with Bourdieu's sometimes very dense writing and the varied responses to his work, I found that he was in fact critical of ethnography (Sallaz,

2018). His own research career began with ethnographic work and he considered immersion within the social world of one's research participants as essential for operationalising habitus in his early work (Bourdieu, 1977). However, in this later work he proposed a synthesis of objectivism and subjectivism: 'a research program that explains structural regularities in the social world but also remains faithful to actors' folk understandings of their worlds' (Sallaz, 2018: 489). At this point, he questioned whether it is possible to 'know' the body of another and whether the kind of empathy and suspension of judgment that are central principles within ethnographic research are illusions (Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992, cited in Sallaz, 2018: 489). I have wrangled over these same issues, not just my fears that I was judging my participants and, even worse, only recognising when I have done so in discussion with my supervisors, but also in reflecting on the 'narratives' and 'rules' I identified. In consideration of the compatibility of Bourdieu's work with ethnography, Sallaz (2018: 490) argues that it possible to combine the two, provided the researcher contextualises the data 'in relation to larger conditions of possibility' and ensures that the research design is systematic and reflexive. This is the approach that I have taken, including reflections on my role in 5.7 and again here.

The Bourdieusian analysis employed in this study has given me more understanding of the ways that the neoliberal education reforms over the past few decades have shaped my habitus, both when I was learner at school and during my career in education, as well as potentially offering ways to disrupt and resist it. I have always been committed to 'making a difference' in similar ways to some of my participants and I would argue that we have vocational and humanist dispositions in common. The difference for me is that, my experiences in the different fields I have moved through, described above, made me begin to distrust the 'common sense' of performative constructions of teaching and learning. My experience of living and working in different countries showed me that there are different ways to 'do' education. This was part of my past and continues to be part of my present as

part of a highly collaborative, multi-cultural community of Early Childhood Studies tutors and students at the University of Roehampton. Working with colleagues, students and children from different cultural backgrounds and professional heritages has required me to articulate and continually reflect upon my values and pedagogical principles and I have worked with alternative pedagogies that are far more compatible with my pedagogical habitus than the approach represented in the English national curriculum. It has been an invaluable but challenging experience and one that I feel every teacher should experience though not necessarily in the same way that I have. By this I mean that a focus on using ‘different lenses’ to make the tacit explicit should be part of teacher training and professional development. Working with different curricula frameworks, as I have, is one way to do this, although it is the critical reflection that is key (Maynard and Chicken, 2010; Schön, 1987), in the next section I argue that practitioner research which encourages engagement with different analytical frameworks could be another. I make these recommendations because, in my own experience, designing and carrying out this research has significantly deepened my understanding of social interaction generally but particularly within schools and, having completed this research, I can now use Bourdieu’s thinking tools to understand embodied experiences, including my own, in a manner previously unimagined. I feel these would be useful tools for any practitioner, not least because neoliberal doxa is currently embedded in educational institutions as I have argued above.

I have been developing this thesis over nine years whilst working in higher education and neoliberalism has steadily encroached on my positioning in that field too, bringing pressures to conform and perform with the reconstruction of the university as a quasi-business (Mahony and Weiner, 2019). This has been a depressing and overwhelming experience at times as I have experienced once again how difficult it can be to resist the internalisation of performativity. Because this was also the subject of my research, I have sometimes felt completely immersed in its negative effects. However, my reading of

Bourdieu has made me feel better equipped to recognise and resist the pressures. Bourdieu offers a language to expose and challenge doxic ‘common sense’ narratives and therefore the mechanisms by which symbolic and material violence is done to dominated groups such as teachers and children. It has also given me ideas about how I would like to expand upon my learning and extend my research in order to work with others to maintain and develop my own creative dispositions in educational contexts. I acknowledge this will be challenging, not least because my research choices may be limited by the neoliberal research ‘impact’ imperative and I must engage my *illusio* in order to play by these rules and those others that construct the ‘performative university’ (Colley, 2014) because I am enmeshed in this world. Bourdieu offers a useful perspective on this too:

To be autonomous requires a permanent and difficult struggle and demands a vigilance to which intellectuals are hardly accustomed. They are so used either to being treated as a negligible quantity, or to being activists (by signing petitions, drawing up programs etc., i.e. placing themselves at the service of the dominated), that they have to relearn how to be of use without being used. To succeed in establishing an intellectual authority which is at once autonomous and effective, that is, capable of taking prompt action regarding very complex issues without any concession to the imperatives of politicians, will be a long-term process.

(Bourdieu in Wacquant, 1993: 38)

I would argue that in today’s context, academics are becoming accustomed to struggle as the fields of both state and commercial enterprise increasingly encroach upon the academic field. In fact, those, such as myself, with a background in education practice may have even more experience with struggle as a result of the ongoing education reforms discussed in Chapter Three. Equally, both educational research and ethnography occupy ‘dominated’ positions within the academic field in relation to more ‘accepted’ (and therefore more ‘fundable’) research in the current climate (Berliner, 2002). Again, this is depressing, but, as a result of my research, I feel better equipped to contribute to the struggle against these processes and the inequalities they maintain. Further to the extract above, Bourdieu ends on a more optimistic note: ‘I do believe that sociology can contribute to undermining this symbolic efficacy’ (Bourdieu in Wacquant, 1993: 38). I agree and I am confident that my

own learning will continue to progress even in, or perhaps in spite of, this climate and that I can make at least a modest contribution to the struggle through this study and my future research.

### *10.6.3 Directions for future research*

As discussed in 5.4, I was unable to include much of the data generated by the children, other than to highlight points relevant to the staff perspectives and experiences in this thesis. This was because compromises had to be made in relation to the information included in the final thesis due to the ambitious scope of the design and the volume of data gathered coupled with the word limit constraints. Therefore, in terms of my immediate research goals, it is my intention to explore the children's perspectives in publications; one chapter has already been published (Cottle, 2017). In the longer term, I want to develop more applications for my understandings of pedagogical habitus and creative dispositions.

In this study, Jennifer and Claire in particular seemed to appreciate the opportunity to articulate their views about creativity and enjoyed telling their enactment stories, perhaps because creativity was such an enduring aspect of both their personal and professional habitus. Jennifer also seemed to find the research useful for validating her own ideals and resisting the performative dispositions she had felt required to adopt, potentially because she had a stronger sense of an alternative pedagogy derived from the field of early years practice and integrated her creative dispositions with this. This is one idea I would like to explore further in future research. In addition, as I have argued above, exploring notions of pedagogical habitus and creative dispositions with teachers could give them resources to draw upon in order in order to resist performativity and develop their pedagogical philosophies. This study therefore highlights the need for sensitivity towards individual dispositions and experiences within teacher education pedagogy, in order to support and

further develop their creative dispositions. I would be interested in exploring possible research collaborations with practitioners and students focusing on this area, focusing on developing shared understandings of the importance of creativity in education and sharing good practice based around meaningful and relevant creative learning experiences both within Initial Teacher Education (ITE) and as part of ongoing professional development (INSET). However, this will be challenging because neoliberal reforms have fragmented the teacher education system too and models of teacher training and professional development are now based more around local market conditions rather than educational principles. School-led training is in ascendance and relationship between universities and schools is being reconfigured (Maguire and George, 2017). There is an emphasis on performative constructions of knowledge, teaching and learning within the teaching standards and increasing numbers of teachers that are being trained within the context of a single school, this considerably narrows the range of pedagogical practices to which student teachers are exposed as well as the opportunities for critical reflection (George and Maguire, 2019). Brown *et al.* (2016: 27) therefore recommend the development of research collaborations between researchers and practitioners so that universities become 'a platform from where both tutors and trainees can critically analyse the issues arising in school practice' supporting teachers to reconceptualise and reclaim 'intellectual space'. Bourdieu's work may be useful in this respect and there is a precedent for using it both in initial teacher education and ongoing professional development. For example, Door (2014: 24) uses conceptions of 'field' and 'habitus' with student teachers in order to deepen their awareness of the 'web of influences in which we both embed ourselves and find ourselves embedded by chance of birth', using these concepts to develop reflexivity and examine the possibilities for change. In addition, Feldman (2016), whose notion of pedagogical habitus was useful in the analysis of the data in this study, offers the notion of 'habitus engagement' as a way of enabling teachers to recognise and, where necessary, confront their existing pedagogical structures and doxa in order to restructure their dispositions and



orientations. Her research, which is based within the context of teaching in post-apartheid South Africa, focuses on this process within ‘professional learning communities’ which are essentially spaces for teachers from different school contexts to get involved in critically reflexive discussions about pedagogy based on a social-justice orientation. There could be some scope for developing such professional learning communities and habitus engagements in this country as part of an active partnership between universities and schools (Brown *et al.*, 2016). Archer *et al.*, (2018) provide an example of what this could look like. They have used Bourdieusian theory to help a group of science teachers in London develop a deeper understanding of the reproduction of inequality within the field of their classrooms as fields (Archer *et al.*, 2018). This involved collaborations between teachers and researchers focused on changing the rules of the field to make it a better fit for the habitus of students from non-dominant communities. Drawing on these approaches, I argue that a Bourdieusian framework is a practically useful structure for collaborations between researchers, teachers and children or students, to recognise, challenge and counter performative dispositions and doxa and explore the enabling potential of the creative dispositions articulated in this study.

## **10.7 Concluding remarks**

This thesis provides a richly detailed account that evidences the complexity and importance of the work that teachers do, the value of creativity in education and the negative impact of neoliberalism on identities and relationships. It is ambitious in scope but demonstrates the utility of Bourdieusian concepts in mapping connections between the ‘lived experience’ of teachers in schools and the broader neoliberal shifts in policy. The complexities of both learning and teaching and their interrelated nature go way beyond the currently dominant performative constructs and their linear input-output models. There are

a number of influences on teaching processes including the way teachers see themselves, their prior experiences and the value they attach to creativity in their pedagogical approach. I have drawn on elaborations of aspects of Bourdieu's framework, developing these and making a modest contribution to the ongoing debate about the value of Bourdieu's work

# APPENDICES

## Appendix 1. Initial contact email

Dear *(head teacher name)*,

I am a part-time PhD student in the Department of Education at the University of Roehampton where I also work full-time as Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies. I am writing to ask if your school would be interested in taking part in my PhD research.

In brief, I am carrying out an in-depth investigation into the ways that current education policies operate within a single primary school, focusing particularly on policies that relate to performance-oriented conceptions of learning and teaching and those that relate to creative learning and teaching. I have contacted you because I've been researching schools based on their involvement in creative initiatives and the emphasis given to creativity on school webpages *(provide comments on their particular website)*.

I have attached an information leaflet which provides more detail on my aims, how I propose to carry out the research and what it might involve for you all. All of this is open to negotiation. I've also outlined the potential benefits of taking part as I see them.

As you will see from the leaflet, I hope to begin my main fieldwork phase in September 2012 but I would like carry out a pilot study in one classroom over this summer term, preferably in the Foundation Stage or Key Stage 1. The purpose of this pilot study is to start building relationships with staff, parents and children in the school and to try out some of my proposed methods in collaboration with the children and teachers. If possible, I would like to come in a couple of days per week until the end of term. You could even consider this a trial period if you prefer?

I would be most grateful for your support with my research and I hope that you find the concept interesting. I will telephone next week to enquire as to whether you would like to take part or hear more. If so, we can arrange a time to discuss my research further then. If you wish to contact me in the meantime my details are below.

Yours sincerely,

Michelle Cottle

*Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies*  
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[m.cottle@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:m.cottle@roehampton.ac.uk)

## Appendix 2. Project Information Leaflet for Participants



### Project Information Leaflet:

#### Michelle Cottle

##### Who am I?

My name is Michelle Cottle and I am a part-time PhD student in the Department of Education at the University of Roehampton where I also work full-time as Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies. With your permission, I would like to carry out my PhD research at your school. I have previously conducted research in various early years settings and schools, focusing on the experiences and perspectives of children, teachers and other practitioners. I am also a qualified primary teacher with ten years of experience working with a variety of different age groups and I have full CRB clearance.

##### What do I want to do?

I would like to explore children's and teachers' perspectives on learning and teaching, observing and documenting experiences within a Reception, Year Two and Year Six classroom over the course of a whole academic year. The working title of my project is *Policy enactment within an English Primary School: exploring discourses of 'creativity' and 'performativity'*.

##### Why am I researching this area?

There is currently a strong emphasis on target-setting, performance-management, tests and standardised learning outcomes in primary schools arising from educational policies over the past thirty years or more. These policies frequently require teachers and children to 'perform' in specific ways. More recently, other policies have called for 'creativity' in teaching and learning, frequently in terms of calls for innovation and originality. I would like to explore the ways that teachers and children accommodate these often contradictory demands through the in-depth study of a single primary school. This research and the methods I describe below are based on the premise that, in order to analyse which policies are appropriate for teachers and children, it is important to seek their perspectives and represent their views and experiences.

##### If you choose to take part, what will it involve?

Here follows a brief overview of the roles I anticipate for different participants, should they choose to take part. I would like to emphasise that these are negotiable and I will seek consent from each. The methods (interviews and observations) to which I refer are described in further detail below.

- As *Head teacher*, I would negotiate access to staff, parents and children with you in the initial stages, seeking advice on school policy and all pertinent issues. The minimum level of involvement from this point would be through the two individual interviews described below but I would welcome your continuing input into my research throughout the year.
- As a *class teacher in one of the selected classrooms*, you would be involved in all of the methods described below to varying degrees. I would hope to have many informal discussions with you to seek your views and your advice at times convenient to you.

- As a *teaching assistant, class teacher in another room* or other adult in the school you may be involved in the methods below in indirect ways, for example if I was observing a child and they were interacting with you or we may have an informal discussion at some point. I would seek your consent to take part in my research on an individual basis as these situations arise.
- As a *parent/guardian*, you can decide if or how your child(ren) might be involved, specifying this on a consent form. You are free to change your mind at any point. I would welcome your views if you would like to be involved further, for example through informal discussions.
- I would seek the consent of the *children*, once I have written consent from parents and teachers. I view this as an ongoing process. By this I mean that I plan to ask individual children if they are happy to take part in observations and discussions at regular intervals. If any of them show any sign of not wishing to be involved at any point, verbally or otherwise, I will stop immediately.

•  
**What will the general classroom observations involve?**

I would like to carry out ‘fly-on-the-wall’ observations in each classroom for at least a few hours every week; timing to be negotiated. I would focus on events and routines, noting the activities that children engage in, teaching strategies employed and observing general classroom life. I also anticipate informal discussions with children, teachers and other adults in the classroom as part of these observations at appropriate times. I will avoid disrupting teaching and learning intentions and professional tasks at all times and will respect children and teachers’ space and free time.

**What will the individual child observations involve?**

I would like to carry out individual observations of approximately four children in each class over the year. I would observe each child for an extended period of 30- 45 minutes once per month with the aim of providing a series of ‘snapshots’ of their individual experiences and interactions in the classroom.

**What will the group interviews with children involve?**

This would involve a group of children in each class, ideally including some of the children involved in the individual observations described above. The children will be invited to take photographs around the school in answer to the question, ‘*What does it mean to be a learner in my school?*’ or a similar question. Discussion will revolve around this activity and I would like to audio-record this for reflection and analysis. I anticipate this activity taking place twice over the year, once in the autumn term and once towards the end of the summer term. The way that this activity is carried out, the numbers of children involved and the amount of time spent taking and discussing photographs will vary in each class as it will be negotiated with each group of teachers, parents and children. I will follow the advice of the head teacher and teachers as well as school policy on the use of cameras and photographs.

**What will the individual head teacher/teacher interviews involve?**

I would like to carry out two audio-recorded interviews of approximately 45 minutes in duration with the Head teacher and each of the class teachers involved. These would take place at a time convenient to the interviewees towards the beginning and end of the school year. Questions would revolve around professional values and roles, interpretations of national and school policy, views on teaching and learning, particularly ‘creative teaching’ and ‘creative learning’, as well as any themes that may arise from my observations.

**What are the potential benefits of taking part in my research?**

Children and teachers are often relatively powerless on matters of educational policy. It is my aim to give voice to both whilst extending knowledge and understanding of educational activity through an in-depth study. I value children's involvement in the research process highly and believe it is important to promote their capacity for judgement and communicating their views in the wider political arena if we wish to continue to improve their experiences. My aim is to contribute to academic debate in this respect, presenting my research at conferences and in academic and professional journal articles. Equally, I intend to promote teacher views and their empowerment, acknowledging the complexity and value of their work. I always endeavour to develop research relationships that are characterised by openness, trust and respect and I hope to provide a useful space in which teachers can reflect upon the nature of their work and their professional values. Although there will be no financial benefits for the school, I would be more than willing to assist the teachers and children in different ways in exchange for access to carry out this research.

**Are there any risks involved?**

I consider the risks to my participants to be no more than those encountered in their usual everyday life. I will comply with the school Health and Safety Guidelines and related school policies at all times, as well as national legislative requirements, for example the Data Protection Act (1998).

**How will the information be used?**

As stated above, I plan to publish a number of academic and professional journal articles and conference papers based on this research. My thesis will be publicly available via the University of Roehampton Research Repository online once completed and this is likely to be in 2016. The photographs that the children take will be used only for the purposes of the project. This may include presentations to academic audiences with the permission of all direct and indirect participants. None of the images will be placed on internet sites.

**Will what you say in this research be kept confidential and anonymous?**

Yes. All notes and information gathered will only be used for the purposes described above and will be confidential and anonymous. I will assign pseudonyms in my notes and will ensure that neither individuals nor the school is identifiable in any publications or presentations. I will not share information that might identify a participant to other project participants, nor will I share this information with any other person, without the permission of the participants involved.

**How and where will the information be stored?**

My notes will be stored in password-protected folders on my work PC at the University of Roehampton which is situated in a locked office. Hard copies of any papers containing personal information (e.g. consent forms) will be filed separately and securely at the University of Roehampton. All of this information will be retained intact for at least ten years, as required by the University of Roehampton Ethics Guidelines (2011).

**Who has reviewed this study?**

This research has been reviewed by University of Roehampton Research Degrees Board and Ethics Committee. I also consult regularly with my Director of Studies, Professor Geoff Troman, and co-supervisor, Dr. Elise Alexander, in order to ensure that the highest standards are maintained.

**Contact details**

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University of Roehampton | Froebel College | Department of Education |

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Tel: +44 (0) 20 8392 3717 |

Director of studies: Professor Geoff Troman [g.troman@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:g.troman@roehampton.ac.uk)  
Co-supervisor: Dr. Elise Alexander [e.alexander@roehampton.ac.uk](mailto:e.alexander@roehampton.ac.uk)

### **Appendix 3. Ethical approval**

The research for this project was submitted for ethics consideration under the reference EDU 12/ 041 in the Research & Business Development Office and was approved under the procedures of the University of Roehampton's Ethics Committee on 23.07.12 with a minor amendment approved 21.03.13

## Appendix 4. Consent Forms



### HEAD TEACHER CONSENT FORM

**Title of Research Project:**

Policy enactment within an English Primary School: exploring discourses of 'creativity' and 'performativity'

**Brief Description of Research Project:**

This research aims to examine how current education policies operate within a primary school from the perspectives of the Head teacher, children and teachers. I would like to document the views and experiences of the children and teachers in Reception, Year Two and Year Six over the course of a whole academic year (2012-13). Methods will include:

- Documentary analysis of national and school policy documents, focusing particularly on policies that relate to performance-oriented conceptions of learning and teaching and those that relate to creative learning and teaching;
- Discussions and interviews with Head teacher, children and teachers in the classes above;
- Regular observations of individual children and classroom events.

Please see the accompanying project information leaflet for further details. If you have any questions please contact the investigator (contact details overleaf).

**Consent Statement:**

- I agree to take part in the above research study.
- I confirm that I have read the project information leaflet.
- I confirm that I have had the opportunity to consider this information and to ask questions and that these have been answered satisfactorily.
- I understand that any information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity and the identity of the school, children and other teachers and adults connected to the school will be protected in the publication of any findings.
- I am aware that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw from the research at any point without giving any reason.
- In the event that I do withdraw my participation from the research, I understand that I will have 28 days with which to serve notice if I wish the investigator to remove any of the data I have provided up the point of my decision to withdraw. After this point, the investigator reserves the right to use this data. (*'Data' includes photographs, audio-recordings, notes and computer documents*).



- I understand that all data will be stored securely for at least ten years as required by the University of Roehampton Ethics Guidelines (2011) and will be destroyed after publications are complete.

Signature ..... Date

.....

Print name .....

*Please note: if you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise these with the investigator or one of her supervisors. If you would like to contact an independent party, please contact the Head of Department.*

**Investigator Contact Details:**

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**TEACHER CONSENT FORM**

**Title of Research Project:**

Policy enactment within an English Primary School: exploring discourses of ‘creativity’ and ‘performativity’

**Brief Description of Research Project:**

This research aims to examine how current education policies operate within a primary school from the perspective of the Head teacher, teachers and children. I would like to document the views and experiences of the children and teachers in Reception, Year Two and Year Six over the course of a whole academic year (2012-13). Methods will include:

- Documentary analysis of national and school policy documents, focusing particularly on policies that relate to performance-oriented conceptions of learning and teaching and those that relate to creative learning and teaching;
- Discussions and interviews with Head teacher, children and teachers in the classes above;
- Regular observations of individual children and classroom events.

Please see the accompanying project information leaflet for further details. If you have any questions please contact the investigator (contact details overleaf).

**Consent Statement:**

- I agree to take part in the above research study.
- I confirm that I have read the project information leaflet.
- I confirm that I have had the opportunity to consider this information and to ask questions and that these have been answered satisfactorily.
- I understand that any information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity and the identity of the school, children and other teachers and adults connected to the school will be protected in the publication of any findings.
- I am aware that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw from the research at any point without giving any reason.
- In the event that I do withdraw my participation from the research, I understand that I will have 28 days with which to serve notice if I wish the investigator to remove any of the data I have provided up the point of my decision to withdraw. After this point, the investigator reserves the right to use this data. (*‘Data’ includes photographs, audio-recordings, notes and computer documents*).
- I understand that all data will be stored securely for at least ten years as required by the University of Roehampton Ethics Guidelines (2011) and will be destroyed after publications are complete.

Signature ..... Date .....

Print name .....

*Please note: if you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise these with the investigator or one of her supervisors. If you would like to contact an independent party, please contact the Head of Department.*

**Investigator Contact Details:**

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*Date*

Dear Parents,

My name is Michelle and I am a part-time PhD student in the Department of Education at the University of Roehampton where I also work full-time as Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies. Following on from the letter I sent out to you on *(date)*, I am now writing to ask your written permission for your child to take part in my PhD research.

There is a brief description of the research on the form and the project information leaflet I provided last week has further details. *(Class teacher name)* has extra copies of the leaflet or I can email it to you upon request. Again if you have any questions, concerns or other contributions, please do contact me.

I would be very grateful if you could choose the level of involvement you would prefer for your child by filling in the consent form enclosed. I have provided an extra copy for your own records.

I would be most grateful if you could complete the form and return it to *(class teacher name)* by *(date)*.

Thank you for your support and involvement.

Yours Sincerely,

Michelle Cottle

*Senior Lecturer in Early Childhood Studies*  
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## **PARENT CONSENT FORM**

### **Title of Research Project:**

Policy enactment within an English Primary School: exploring discourses of ‘creativity’ and ‘performativity’

### **Brief Description of Research Project:**

This research aims to examine how current education policies operate within a primary school from the perspective of the Head teacher, children and teachers. I would like to document the views and experiences of the children and teachers in Reception, Year Two and Year Six over the course of a whole academic year (2012-13). Methods will include:

- Documentary analysis of national and school policy documents, focusing particularly on policies that relate to performance-oriented conceptions of learning and teaching and those that relate to creative learning and teaching;
- Discussions and interviews with Head teacher, children and teachers in the classes above;
- Regular observations of individual children and classroom events.

Please see the project information leaflet for further details. If you have any questions please contact the investigator (see details overleaf).

### **Consent Statement:**

Please read the following and indicate your agreement by signing overleaf.

- I agree to my child taking part in the above research study
- I confirm that I have read the project information leaflet
- I understand that all information collected in the course of the research will be treated in confidence by the investigator, Michelle Cottle. My child’s name will not be used in any notes and her/his identity and the identity of the school and all children, teachers and other adults connected to the school will be protected in the publication of any findings.
- I understand that these photographs and all other information relating the research will be stored securely for at least ten years as required by the University of Roehampton Ethics Guidelines (2011) and will be destroyed after publications are complete.
- I understand that I will have the opportunity to see these photographs and that none of them will be available on any websites.
- I am aware that I am free to withdraw my child from any or all aspects of the research at any point without giving any reason.
- In the event that I do withdraw my child from the research, I understand that I will have 28 days with which to serve notice if I wish the investigator to remove any of the information my child has already provided. After this point, the investigator reserves the right to use this information.

I give consent for my child to take part in the activities indicated below. **(Please read each statement and tick the box to indicate whether you give your consent for your child to take part in the proposed activity).**

- general classroom observations over the school year
- informal conversations with the researcher as they arise over the school year
- individual observations approximately monthly
- small group interviews which will involve the children taking photographs around the school twice over the year
- I agree to my child being photographed for purposes of this project only

Parent/guardian signature ..... Date .....

Child's name and class .....

*Please note: if you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise these with the investigator or one of her supervisors. If you would like to contact an independent party, please contact the Head of Department.*

**Investigator Contact Details:**

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## SCHOOL STAFF CONSENT FORM

(For indirect participants)

### Title of Research Project:

Policy enactment within an English Primary School: exploring discourses of ‘creativity’ and ‘performativity’

### Brief Description of Research Project:

This research aims to examine how current education policies operate within a primary school from the perspective of the Head teacher, teachers and children. I would like to document the views and experiences of the children and teachers in Reception, Year Two and Year Six over the course of a whole academic year (2012-13). Methods will include:

- Documentary analysis of national and school policy documents, focusing particularly on policies that relate to performance-oriented conceptions of learning and teaching and those that relate to creative learning and teaching;
- Discussions and interviews with Head teacher, children and teachers in the classes above;
- Regular observations of individual children and classroom events.

Please see the accompanying project information leaflet for further details. If you have any questions please contact the investigator (contact details overleaf).

### Consent Statement:

- I agree to take part in the above research study.
- I confirm that I have read the project information leaflet.
- I confirm that I have had the opportunity to consider this information and to ask questions and that these have been answered satisfactorily.
- I understand that any information I provide will be treated in confidence by the investigator and that my identity and the identity of the school, children and other teachers and adults connected to the school will be protected in the publication of any findings.
- I am aware that my participation is voluntary and I am free to withdraw from the research at any point without giving any reason.
- In the event that I do withdraw my participation from the research, I understand that I will have 28 days with which to serve notice if I wish the investigator to remove any of the data I have provided up the point of my decision to withdraw. After this point, the investigator reserves the right to use this data. (*‘Data’ includes photographs, audio-recordings, notes and computer documents*).
- I understand that all data will be stored securely for at least ten years as required by the University of Roehampton Ethics Guidelines (2011) and will be destroyed after publications are complete.

Signature ..... Date .....

Print name .....

*Please note: if you have any questions or concerns about any aspect of your participation or any other queries please raise these with the investigator or one of her supervisors. If you would like to contact an independent party, please contact the Head of Department.*

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## Appendix 5. Participant information and roles

Participant pseudonym	Male or female	Ethnicity	Institutional role	Involvement in research (methods)			
				Interview	General observations	Individual child observations	
Liz Fleming	F	White British	Head teacher	Phase 1 only	X		
Jennifer Rosco	F	White British	Reception teacher	X	X		
Mrs. Smith	F	White British	Reception teaching assistant		X		
Charlie	F	White British	Reception pupils	X	X	X	
Scarlett	F	White British		X	X	X	
Alan	M	White British		Phase 2 only	X	X	
Christy	F	Black Caribbean			X	X	
Charles	M	White British			X	X	
Peter Gregg	M	White British		Year 2 teacher	X	X	
Mrs. Cassidy	F	White British		Infant school higher level teaching assistant		X	
Karl	M	White British	Year 2 pupils	X	X	X	
Tasha	F	White British		X	X	X	
Warren	M	White British		X	X	X	
Lisa	F	White British		X	X		
Tobias	M	Mixed White/Black Caribbean			X	X	
Tallulah	F	Black Caribbean			X	X	
Claire Jones	F	White British		Year 6 teacher	X	X	
Danny	M	White British	Year 6 pupils	X	X	X	
Amanda	F	White British		X	X	X	
Mel	F	White British		X	X		
Stephen	M	White British		X	X		
Arthur	M	White British		Phase 1 only	X	X	
Rosie	F	White British			X	X	

## Appendix 6. Schedule of fieldwork visits with notes

Fieldwork days			Reception - Bluebells				Y2 - Snowdrops				Y6				Notes and information on interviews/special events
			Am (S1)	Am (S2)	Pm1	Pm2	Am (S1)	Am (S2)	Pm1	Pm2	Am (S1)	Am (S2)	Pm1	Pm2	
1	28-Sep	Fri		1			1					1	1		
2	05-Oct	Fri	1					1				1	1		
3	12-Oct	Fri		1					1		1				
4	19-Oct	Fri	1					1				1			
5	23-Oct	Tues			1		1				1				
	Half term														
6	08-Nov	Thurs	1					1						Had to skip Y6 (supply teacher)	
7	13-Nov	Tues	1					1		1					
	23-Nov	Fri												Cancelled due to illness	
8	28-Nov	Wed												Photo-walks group - Reception/Y2 and Y2 teacher interview	
9	04-Dec													No obs - Y6 teacher interview	
10	07-Dec	Tues												Photographic interview Y2/Y6 and Reception teacher interview	
	17-Dec	Wed												Cancelled by teachers - nativity etc. rehearsals	
	Christmas hol														
11	11-Jan	Fri							1			1			
12	17-Jan	Thurs	1				1				1			Photographic interview Reception Charlie	
13	21-Jan	Mon								1				Photographic interview Reception Scarlett	
14	31-Jan	Thurs		1			1			1					
15	04-Feb	Mon	1												
	12-Feb	Wed												Cancelled - my teaching workload	
	Half term														
16	08-Mar	Fri		1						1		1		Head teacher interview	

17	14-Mar	Thurs										1			
18	18-Mar	Mon						1				1			Extra visit Y6 author visit (special event) took longer so no time for Reception obs and Y2
19	25-Mar	Mon											1	1	Special event: exit point Y6 (performance) took entire fieldwork slot
20	26-Mar	Tues			1				1						Y6 observed Monday so no Y6
	Easter hol														
21	19-Apr	Thurs	1	1	1										On a fieldtrip with Reception all day
22	22-Apr	Mon						1			1				Reception teacher absent so no obs
23	29-Apr	Mon				1			1			1			
24	08-May	Wed					1					1			Reception teacher out of class so no obs
25	17-May	Fri				1			1						No Y6 today (supply teacher)
26	20-May	Mon	1					1			1				Special event: music workshop Y6
	Half term														
27	05-Jun	Wed			1				1					1	Late afternoon slots brief
28	11-Jun	Tues		1					1		1				Special event: circus performer Y2
29	18-Jun	Tues	1												Special event: Minibeast workshops Reception
30	20-Jun	Thurs			1				1						Extra day because photo discussions taking up obs time
31	21-Jun	Fri											1		Photo interview Y6
32	24-Jun	Mon	1						1		1				Photo-walks individual Reception
33	02-Jul	Tues													SCAT Assemblies (School Christian Action Team)
34	04-Jul	Thurs													Y6 teacher interview
35	10-Jul	Wed										1			Junior production and Photowalks Y2
36	12-Jul	Fri		1			1								Extra day because of Junior production and Photo interview Y2
37	16-Jul	Tues													Photo interviews Reception and Reception teacher interview

38	17-Jul	Wed														Y2 teacher interview
38	18-Jul	Thurs					1									Year 6 on residential week. Year 2 leavers' assembly am
40	21-Jul	Fri				1			1							Year 6 on residential week
41	23-Jul	Tues			1			1			1					Year 6 leavers' assembly am and last day
			Am (S1)	Am (S2)	Pm1	Pm2	Am (S1)	Am (S2)	Pm1	Pm2	Am (S1)	Am (S2)	Pm1	Pm2		
	Totals		10	7	6	4	7	7	8	4	9	8	6	4		

**Appendix 7. Table of staff participant professional and biographical information**

<b>Biographical information</b>	<b>Liz Fleming</b>	<b>Jennifer Rosco</b>	<b>Peter Gregg</b>	<b>Claire Jones</b>
<b>Main professional role within Brightwater School</b>	Head teacher	Reception teacher	Year 2 teacher	Year 6 teacher
<b>Gender</b>	Female	Female	Male	Female
<b>Estimated age</b>	50s/60s	Late-20s	Mid/late-30s	Mid-20s
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White British	White British	White British	White British
<b>Place of origin</b>	East England	South East England (local to the school)	North England	South East England (local to the school)
<b>Career/experience prior to becoming a teacher</b>	Social work	Publican	Police force; Environmental management background	Media and public relations
<b>Teaching qualification and year of graduation</b>	None specifically mentioned	PGCE (graduated 2009)	PGCE (graduated 2000)	PGCE (graduated 2010)
<b>Years of teaching experience prior to fieldwork phase</b>	30 + (estimate)	2 years	12 years	Just under 1 year
<b>Prior teaching/school experience before working in the school</b>	Primary teacher	No teaching experience (joined as NQT)	No teaching experience (joined as NQT)	No teaching experience (joined as NQT)
	Deputy Head Teacher of a Junior School	Learning support assistant (Year One)		Teaching assistant (Reception)
	Head Teacher of an Infant School			
<b>Time working in the school</b>	9 years	2 years	12 years	Just under 1 year (joined in January of the previous academic

				year)
<b>Prior roles within the school</b>	Head Teacher of the Infant School 2003-2007 (prior to federation)	None	Year 4 (for 5 years) NB: top to bottom is the order he gives although he gives slightly different accounts of the time span; he has worked on both sites prior to and since the federation	None
			Year 6 (for 4 years)	
			Year 2 (for 3 years)	
<b>Other roles within the school (current)</b>	Officially an 'Executive Head Teacher' (Brightwater is a "hard" federation of one infant and one junior school. Therefore, Liz was the head of each school, divided her time between the two and had an office on each site)	PE Coordinator (new to this role); informal mentor to NQTs	Middle Leader (new to this role; no specific title given but agreed it was a "curriculum coordinator" role when asked, Head to refers to this as part of the role); school football coach; informal mentor to NQTs	None
<b>Role planned for the academic year following the research</b>	Retired at the end of the Autumn term the following year (not mentioned in discussions or interviews)	Moving to a new school (to be Reception Teacher)	Moving within the school (Year 4); a move from Infant to Junior school site	Moving to a new school (to be Year 6 Teacher)

## Appendix 8. Teacher interview schedule

*These were questions asked across the two interviews with slight variations between teachers.*

**Title**

**Date**

**Time of interview**

**Duration**

**Notes**

**Transcribing key:**

- **Respondent = R**
- **Interviewer = I.**
- *Short pauses/change in direction of sentence/subject denoted by three dots ...*
- *Inaudible (.....) or unclear (word)*
- *Interruptions / speaking simultaneously demonstrated by position of text.*
- *Emphasis indicated by underlining*
- *Names of people and places that will/may need anonymising are highlighted*
- *Some incidental comments have been omitted e.g. interviewer agreeing, encouraging 'okay', 'right' etc. or respondent's 'you know' type comments*
- *The initial and final discussions about purpose or related to the process of the interview have been omitted*

1. What led you to become a teacher?
2. Is it how you expected it would be?
3. Which roles have you held within this school and others?
4. What most inspires you about your work?
5. What would your ideal classroom look like?
6. Talk me through the children's learning experiences within this room.
7. What role would you, the teacher, play in all this?
8. What are the constraints to creating the ideal situation you describe above?
9. When I say 'creative teaching', what does it mean to you?
10. Is it something you aspire towards? Why/why not?
11. Equally, when I say 'creative learning', what are your views on this?
12. How would you encourage this in your classroom?
13. Where do you feel your ideas about creative teaching and learning have come from?
14. The school follows the IPC which defines itself as a 'creative curriculum', what makes it 'creative' would you say?
- 15. Can you give me an example of a lesson that has gone really well recently?**
- 16. When do you feel that a lesson hasn't gone well?**
- 17. What do you think school management are looking for when they are observing a lesson?**
- 18. Can you describe the moderation process followed by the SMT where they look through the children's work? What are your views on this process?**
- 19. What are your views on the local authority role in policy development, particularly with regard to assessment?**

20. Tell me about the main aims/goals of the school in relation to learning and teaching
21. In terms of reaching these aims/goals, how well do you think it is going?
22. What makes it all work here?
23. What gets in the way?
24. What changes would you like to see?
25. Do you have any concerns for children or teachers relating to any of the current national policies?
26. Is there anything else you would like to add?

**Question asked before second interview (emailed responses sought after second interview)**

**Looking at your interview, we can discuss whether there is there anything you want to change on your transcript at the end but before we begin – what struck you as you read it?** *(Don't worry if you haven't had a chance to read it, you can always email me with any changes or give me a copy that you've marked later. Highlighted words are usually names which I will anonymise in my data)*

**Have you changed your mind on anything or do you want to make any changes to the transcript?**



## **Appendix 9. Example of the summary-aided approach (based on Miles and Huberman 1994)**

### **Interim Case Summary of Jennifer Rosco Interview 2 (16-7-13)**

#### **What people/events were involved?**

Jennifer Rosco and researcher, interview in Reception classroom, end of year, after school. Very hot day/week. At one point we felt we may have been overheard by deputy head and other practitioners in adjacent classroom.

#### **1. What were the main themes or issues involved in the contact?**

Performance focus outweighing creative teaching and learning.

Negative impact of performativity on self-esteem, teacher identity ('terrible teachers') – guilt/fear of surveillance (almost whispered conversation) and resultant need to reiterate ethics of the research (also trusting relationship with researcher)

Trust (of researcher) and distrust (of school management) – blame/displaced blame.

Policy and authority – using local authority to justify school policy when it isn't necessarily a directive from local authority.

Policy being lost in translation – misunderstood, channels of communication (not attending meetings but when do attend then expecting to be told what to do and not responding positively to using own ideas as they are then criticised later)

Implicit criticism of leadership within school, avoidance, reliance on external evaluation.

Accountability – not sure of how to improve based on limited, non-constructive feedback but feels accountability to parents and children (they are happy)

Tension – self-evaluation of effectiveness as a teacher based on children's progress (presumably according to the data which she does not quite trust) and happiness of children and parents (mentions happiness first)

Performance related pay concerns.

Power relationships and children's perspectives on (pointless?) jargon – Charlie's arguments with the teacher about number sentences/number bonds.

Competitiveness – negative impact of performative focus on social skills, parental influence.

#### **2. Which RQ (and variables) in the initial framework did the contact bear on most centrally?**

All

#### **3. Which new hypotheses, speculations or hunches about the field situations were suggested by the contact?**

Key event – HMI visit (invited by SLT) – JR feels this had an impact on staff morale and led directly to resignations (although she also says that some people had already decided to leave by that point)

JR romanticises her next school and tends to criticise old school (some criticisms may be unfair as she briefly acknowledges in her discussion of the trip to the post office – line 220) – literature on this (Ivor Goodson??)

Implication that team is more divided in Junior than Infant.

Issues around early years ratios - policy? Or is there confusion around national/local authority or frequent changes over last few years?

JR doesn't necessarily feel part of the school – part of Infant school staff but unsure of what goes on in other years due to differences between curricula/practices.

Do a word crawler search for “they say” or “they said” and similar to see where policies might be lost in translation. Who is they?

**4. Where should the fieldworker place the most energy during the next contact? What kinds of information should be sought?**

Need to validate interview with JR before proceeding with (second level?) coding. Can I ask her a few questions about her new school?? Check with supervisors

Who invited in the HMI? I had assumed it was the head but if this event led to resignations, it may also have led to her own resignation? Or was she asked to leave? Speculation as I have been unable to secure a final interview with her.

JR felt that the head gave a year's notice in which case she would have known that she was retiring during our first interview.

Look for metaphors/identities within teacher interview??

Word crawler or number crunch search for ?????

**5. Other**

Direct quote: “I've felt recently that the children are just getting in the way of all the paperwork I've got to do.”

“It's not about the children anymore. So all of these things aren't really about the children and about them being happy and enjoying being at school. It's about what they can do and how much they've achieved and I know that's important but it doesn't....they are only children.”

## Appendix 10. Initial

## codes

ACTIVITIES Subjects	Activities: authentic real first hand	ATT lack of engagement
Activities_subjects: art		ATT motivated
Activities_subjects: DT	Activities: cross curricular connections	ATT negative
Activities_subjects: Foundation subjects	Activities: drama role play pretending	ATT positive
Activities_subjects: French	Activities: extra-curricular	ATT resilience, have another go
Activities_subjects: geography	Activities: hands-on practical active experiential	ATT resistance nonconformity
Activities_subjects: history	Activities: moderation	ATT response to error
Activities_subjects: ICT technology	Activities: music dance song	ATT Stress pressure
Activities_subjects: literacy	Activities: outdoor learning	ATT trust
Activities_subjects: numeracy maths	Activities: play	ATT trying to be positive
Activities_subjects: PE	Activities: problem-solving	ATT uncertainty
Activities_subjects: PSHE	Activities: toilet	
Activities_subjects: RE		CONTEXT
Activities_subjects: science	ATTITUDES	CONT Funding
	ATT anxiety worry nervousness	CONT Local authority
ACTIVITIES Lesson structure	ATT blame displaced blame	CONT Marketisation
Activities: adult-led	ATT caring building relationships	CONT School context
Activities: autonomy children's choice ownership	ATT competitive	CONT School governors
Activities: carpet or circle time	ATT concern	
Activities: hands-on practical active experiential	ATT confidence	DEFINITIONS
Activities: highly structured formal	ATT conformity	DEF Creative curriculum
Activities: individual	ATT confusion	DEF Creative learning
Activities: playtime	ATT deficit 'fixing'	DEF Creative teaching
Activities: routine	ATT desire to escape	DEF Creativity
Activities: small group or pair	ATT discomfort unsettled	DEF learning
Activities: staff meetings staff room	ATT distracted	DEF school policy
Activities: tests and quizzes	ATT engagement interest	DEF teaching
Activities: whole class	ATT enjoyment fun	EVENTS
Activities: worksheets	ATT enthusiasm	EVENT assessment week
ACTIVITIES Content	ATT expectations	EVENT special events
	ATT feeling overwhelmed	EVENT: lesson observations
	ATT feeling undervalued	EVENT: school performances assemblies
	ATT frustration	EVENT: school trip
	ATT guilt	
	ATT helplessness	METHODS
	ATT hope	METH reflective note
	ATT lack of confidence	METH researcher role
		METH sample
		METH target child other
		METH to anonymise
		NARRATIVES

NARR attitudes towards children and childhood  
 NARR attitudes towards school  
 NARR emotional discourses  
 NARR HMI Ofsted stories - 'mock Ofsted'  
 NARR metaphors  
 NARR my new school  
 NARR readiness discourse  
 NARR teacher biography trajectory  
 NARR teaching  
 NARR the 'friendly warning' discourse  
 NARR the visitors  
 NARR two schools

PERPECTIVES

Creativity  
 Activities: authentic real first hand  
 Activities: autonomy children's choice ownership  
 Activities: cross curricular connections  
 Activities: extra-curricular  
 Activities: hands-on practical active experiential  
 DED\_RELEVANCE  
 DEF Creative curriculum  
 DEF Creative learning  
 DEF Creative teaching  
 DEF Creativity  
 PERSP imagination  
 PERSP independence  
 PERSP IPC

PERPECTIVES

Curriculum/policy  
 DEF Creative curriculum  
 DEF school policy  
 PERSP curriculum coverage and progression  
 PERSP curriculum planning and organisation

PERSP IPC  
 PERSP Knowledge economy  
 PERSP national curriculum PERSP national policy  
 PERSP on health and safety  
 PERSP school rules  
 PERSP on cultural issues  
 topical refs

PERPECTIVES Learning  
 DEF Creative learning  
 DEF learning  
 PERSP children on their learner identity  
 PERSP imagination  
 PERSP independence  
 PERSP on ability and intelligence  
 PERSP people making  
 PSED PERSP successful lessons and activities  
 PERSP unsuccessful lessons and activities

PERPECTIVES People  
 ATT deficit 'fixing'  
 PERSP challenges  
 PERSP children on their learner identity  
 PERSP gender issues  
 PERSP on cultural issues  
 topical refs  
 PERSP on EAL and SEN  
 PERSP on early years  
 PERSP on parents and families  
 PERSP on school leadership and management  
 PERSP people making  
 PSED PERSP prof dev and training  
 PERSP tacit unarticulated understandings  
 PERSP theory theoretical influences

PERPECTIVES

Performativity  
 PERSP PERF accountability  
 PERSP PERF Assessment  
 PERSP PERF Assessment\_  
 PERSP PERF Assessment\_SATs  
 PERSP PERF evidence data paperwork  
 PERSP PERF Ofsted  
 PERSP PERF on achievement  
 PERSP PERF targets objectives levels PERSP standardisation

PERPECTIVES Teaching and professional identity  
 DEF Creative teaching  
 DEF learning  
 DEF teaching  
 PERSP on teachers  
 PERSP prof id  
 PERSP prof id teacher as authority  
 PERSP prof id teacher as facilitator  
 PERSP prof id teacher as mentor  
 PERSP prof id teacher as performer  
 PERSP prof id teacher as role model  
 PERSP prof id teacher qualities skills  
 PERSP successful lessons and activities  
 PERSP unsuccessful lessons and activities

PROCESS

PROCESS changes over time  
 PROCESS Lack of time  
 PROCESS: continuity and development

RELATIONSHIPS

REL adult-child interaction	STRAT variety range	STRAT talking social talk
REL child-child interaction	STRAT waiting watching bystander	STRAT talking teacher questions
REL child-school formal	STRAT: subversion of teacher purpose	STRAT use of the environment resources
REL children-family		STRAT variety range
REL NQT teachers	STRATEGIES Teaching	STRATEGIES School
REL researcher-participant	STRAT assessment formative feedback	STRAT assessment misc
REL school – local authority	STRAT assessment misc	STRAT avoidance tactics
REL school - Ofsted	STRAT assessment peer mark	STRAT behaviourist
REL teacher-parent	STRAT behaviour management	STRAT Induction and recruitment
REL teacher-teacher interaction relationships	STRAT behaviourist	STRAT jargon
REL teacher role (to be categorised)	STRAT collaborative	STRAT managing class size
REL teacher role within the classroom	STRAT coping	STRAT managing time and space
REL teacher role within the school	STRAT divergent thinking	STRAT networking collaboration community
REL teaching assistants	STRAT eliciting children's ideas	STRAT ref to objectives targets
	STRAT eliciting prior knowledge	STRAT seeking approval
RES strong theoretical links	STRAT encouragement	STRAT staffing organisation of team
	STRAT flexibility	STRAT use of the environment resources
STRATEGIES Children	STRAT humour joking playfulness	
ATT response to error	STRAT Inquiry and children's questions	
ATT uncertainty	STRAT jargon	
REL researcher-participant	STRAT managing class size	
STRAT avoidance tactics	STRAT managing time and space	
STRAT collaborative	STRAT Modelling	
STRAT coping	STRAT pace	
STRAT divergent thinking	STRAT ref to objectives targets	
STRAT encouragement	STRAT reflection	
STRAT humour joking playfulness	STRAT reflective practice	
STRAT Inquiry and children's questions	STRAT scaffolding	
STRAT Modelling	STRAT seeking approval	
STRAT ref to objectives targets	STRAT spontaneity	
STRAT scaffolding	STRAT staffing organisation of team	
STRAT seeking approval	STRAT talking discussion ('dialogic teaching')	
STRAT talking on task	STRAT talking instruction	
STRAT talking social talk	STRAT talking on task	
STRAT use of the environment resources		

## Appendix 11. Coded extract from Claire's second interview

024 CF: Yes, because I think... because as adults we have these ideas that... "Oh yes it would be great!" but we know what the limits are and we know what's an acceptable limit and when to push it... because you know we need to push boundaries and we need to move forward on certain things. But you need to know what's acceptable and children... to kind of put those adult parameters, those adult ideas about pushing the boundary... is that as adults we can pull ourselves back but children don't necessarily know how to do that. So you can just go... "Yes, have free reign!" because you get some that will do that themselves and push themselves but some that won't. They'll just sit back and do nothing. So you kind of need to... And children like boundaries. Children like to know that they... what's their limit. They need to learn that and they need to know to push that. And you're teaching it in a small way and then you can get bigger and bigger and bigger.

025 MC: I suppose it's all part of getting ready to work in society?

026 CF: Yes I think that's what primary school is all about really. It's learning how to be... an active member of society and obviously learn reading and writing and stuff like that. But it's more about... if Cove has his way it won't be more about... but it should be more about social interaction and understanding how to be an independent learner. And I'm kind of finding less and less of that. The children that I interact with now are less and less independent because we have to get them through things, through tests and they have to be spoon-fed stuff that they don't actually know how to find out anything for themselves. Or... I don't know, maybe it's just this year group. They're just a bit lazy some of them. It's how it comes across sometimes. It's... "Oh, what's next?" and I say, "Have you looked at the sheet that I printed off for you?" "Oh!" So it's difficult because they're kind of post-SATS and they're ready to go to secondary school. So they're a difficult bunch to look at. In Year 6 this is a funny time of year because they've been to their secondary school now.

027 MC: Yes that was Tuesday this week wasn't it?

028 CF: And Wednesday.

029 MC: Oh and Wednesday yes.

030 CF: So they had a taster. So... luckily it's not too long and then they can go.

031 MC: Yes, that was interesting because I was talking to a girl... she's not involved in the research actually but one of the children who was in the room, she was saying it was really weird going to a really big school and then coming back to the smaller school. And I said, "Well how do you feel?" Which do you feel you prefer?" And she said... well she didn't say it in so many words but it was almost as if she feels she's outgrown here and she's looking to the future.

032 CF: Yes, absolutely. And that's what you want them to... that's kind of... you want them to be bored of primary school. You want them, by this point in the year, to be itching to leave because if they're not... then... how will they cope? They need to be ready to go. That's kind of half the battle is that you need to kind of push them to be ready to go. You know it's the next step and I think that's a good thing. You can't take it personally as a Year 6 teacher, "Oh, they don't want to stay!" because they'll miss it. They'll miss us and they'll miss certain things. And they see the snapshot and obviously those two days are an amazing snapshot because it's not really like that every day. And they'll be a bit shocked by some of the work that they'll have to do. But you know, we all remember going to... the first bit of secondary school...

033 MC: Hmm, quite traumatic.

034 CF: (*Speaking at the same time*)... How exciting it was! (MC laughs) Yes traumatic after a while because you suddenly think, "I can't go back. I'm not going back. I have to stay here!" And this teacher who was nice on the first day isn't actually that nice and it's a bit scary because the Year 11s are here and...

Code: THEME HABITUS SHAPED BY PAST EXPERIENCES not created anew

Size: 100% Rich Text Default

## Appendix 12. Coded extract from Jennifer's first interview

Here the codes have been filtered the codes to show 'creative dispositions' codes only this is linked to Appendix 13.

Project Edit Documents Quotations Codes Memos Networks Analysis Tools Views Windows Help

P-0003 P24-Jennifer Rosco\_7\_12\_12.docx [6] Quotes P24-526 when I say creative learnin... Codes

156 MC: So thinking about...if I say 'creative teaching' then, what does it mean to you?

157 JR: That... things like that. Lots of big... Those are the things that stick in the children's brains as well, they remember those. What they remember about thing to China and how that links to their topic 'Travel' I'm not sure but... yes. We have to do things on a large scale and get the children really involved at this age because they love that. They're not so keen to sit and do writing at the moment. I mean they do it.... That's good as well though, getting them to do it now because then they get into the routine of doing it so it's difficult to say....

158 MC: It's kind of a balance is it?

159 JR: Yes... what's the best thing to do. But yes definitely I think I do quite a lot of creative teaching. I make up... I don't make it up but I kind of do go off on tangents and I think we'll probably do quite a bit of stuff on Australia next week just because one of the children's gone to Australia and they'll probably start asking... because they usually do when someone's away for a while. We get the maps out and we look at the animals and they were asking why was it hot there and cold here. So that was obviously at home-time today so I haven't had time to really go into it with them but....

160 MC: So it's sort of taking it from the children's interests (JR agrees) and answering questions together and things like that.

161 JR: Yes and doing things as a group, yes nice activities like walking up to the post office and we went on a nature walk around the field and they loved it! And we only went round the field with plastic bags to pick up leaves! (Laughs) And they had an amazing time, one child said it was the best day ever (both laugh). You know, little things. Just thinking outside the box a little bit and not being so much... I mean... in the summer... I don't do it now but I try to get outside quite a lot for numeracy and literacy as well. Especially numeracy, there's loads you can do outside for numeracy and have lessons outside and... we do go out under the willow tree and sit and read in the summer. Take a story out there.

162 MC: Yes, it's nice that area. I hadn't noticed it before until the Year 2 children took me over there and I hadn't seen it before and I thought "Oh, yes, this is quite nice" and I can see why they want to go there.

163 JR: It's lovely. It's really calm. When it's really, really hot, I just take them out there and sit under the trees, listen to a story, they kind of nuzzle a bit. And there's a woodpecker that usually nests in there every year as well. Not that that's got anything to do with creative teaching but... (Laughs)

164 MC: Oh I don't know, it seems to me that you're talking about them having first-hand experiences and bringing in nature and all of those kinds of things (JR agrees). Being able to follow their interests a bit. Because that was my next question, it was going to be about creative learning. But do you feel that that's sort of covered it there or do you want to add anything?

165 10. Is it something you aspire towards? Why/why not?  
(Stepped as covered above)

166 11. Equally, when I say 'creative learning', what are your views on this?

167 JR: Yes, just hands on. Being able to do things and not just sit and learn about them. I suppose that's the essence of Reception or it should be the essence of Reception and I know there's a big push towards being creative and being more independent and child-initiated learning and the teacher takes a back seat and... guides

Code: THEME-HABITUS-DISPOSITION-CREATIVE-TEACHING-WE-SHOULD-TEACH-CREATIVELY-TO-MOTIVATE-CHILDREN-not-created-anew

1 How does atlas work\_ and things to learn from (0-2 Analytic strategy) - Super

2482- <continued by>

These habitus disposition creative learning is retrievable

These habitus disposition creativity is linked to learner enjoyment

82174- <support>

JR Enablers

24540- <justifies>

These habitus disposition creative teaching creative learning involves flexibility-

These habitus disposition creativity as part of my personal habitus I am a creative person-

These habitus disposition creative learning involves collaboration

These habitus disposition creative learning is hands on experiential-

These habitus disposition creative teaching creative learning involves motivating children-

These habitus disposition creative teaching and learning involves being outdoors-

These habitus disposition creative teaching creative learning involves flexibility-

These habitus disposition creative teaching and learning involves being outdoors-

24485- <continued by>

These habitus creative teaching-

These habitus disposition creative learning is about autonomy

These habitus disposition creative learning is hands on experiential-

These habitus disposition creative teaching enables creative learning

These habitus disposition creative teaching is scaffolding guiding facilitating

These habitus disposition creativity is associated with early years pedagogy and practice

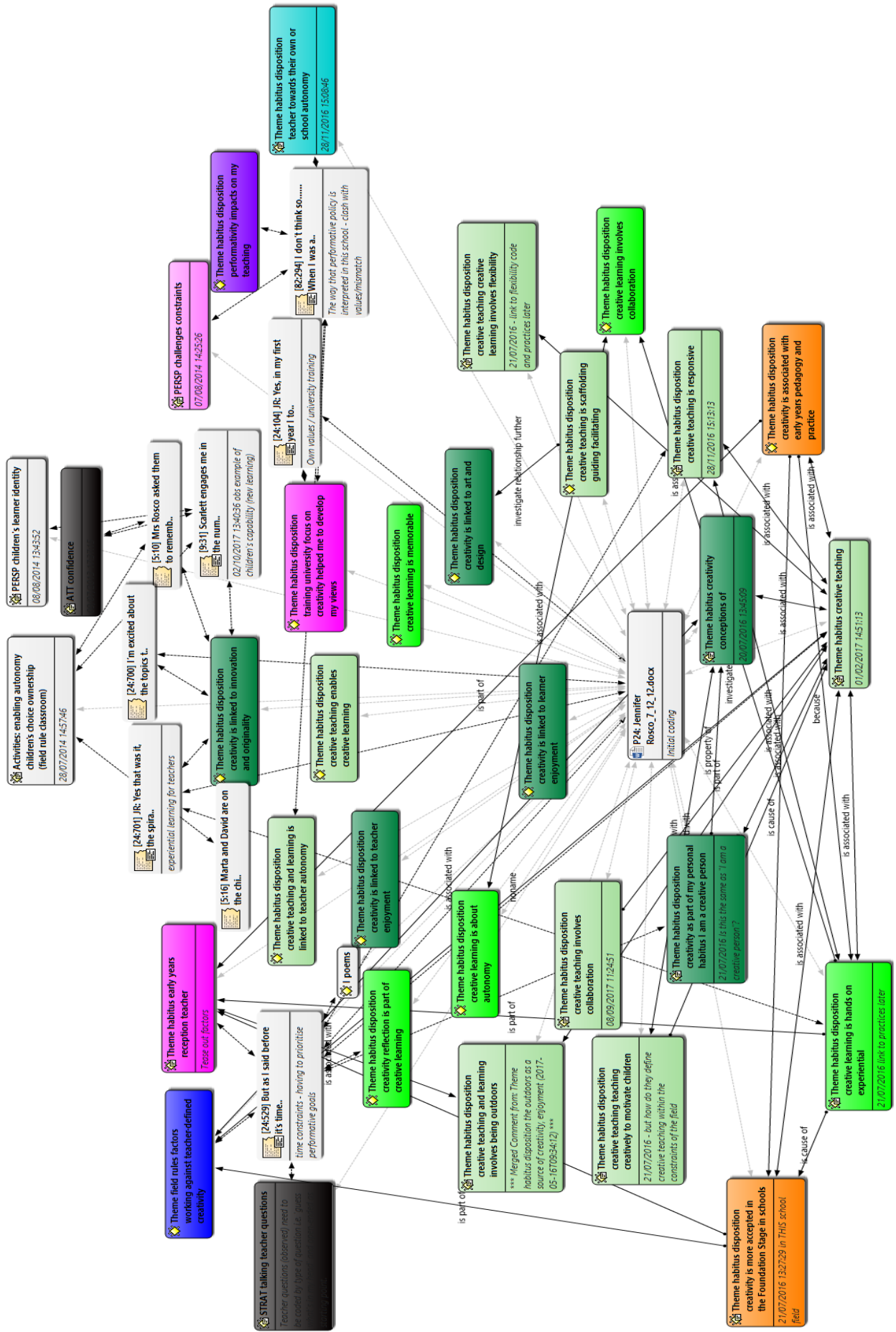
JR Enablers

See 100% Rich Text Default

## **Appendix 13. Atlas.ti network model to show Jennifer's creative dispositions**

On the next page is a network model which shows how I started to group the potential disposition codes derived from the interviews, looking for connections between them and examining how they were enacted. The codes are colour coded. The other boxes are extracts from the data (quotes from the interview or observations). I have only included a couple of data extracts in this diagram because it can get very complicated visually but the connections that you set up in a visual diagram is then recorded in the database. You can open up new network models if you want to focus in on just one code, for example, or you can change the filters if you want to look at codes and data extracts across the classrooms. In this case the creative dispositions are from Jennifer's interview in Appendix 12 and I have filtered the codes and data to include only Jennifer's interviews and observational data from the Reception classroom.





## Appendix 14. Analytic strategy: I-poems

This is a distilled version of Jennifer's interview (I exported the I-poem codes from Atlas.ti then stripped everything back to sentence fragments and reordered them to compare against my Bourdieusian codes.

Personal habitus – sporty/outdoor (code for personal habitus – make sure links are to outdoors)

I like being outdoors

I like outdoor learning

I'd like to work outdoors in a school

I know that they do exist.

I went on the camping trip with Year 5 last year and I loved it.

Fish out of water - what makes her feel this way e.g. relationship to NQTs, inexperience?

I feel like a bit of a PA now as she's not here

I see what's going on with them

I feel I have to say, because no-one else is here to say that kind of thing.

I don't like it because I feel like I'm a bit of a nag

I feel a bit of a nag going, "Oh do this, do that!" but no-one else is going to do it

I'm not really a nagging person.

Before when I only had a few bits to do, I'd take it home

I don't now because I know I need to offer my support as well to the other Reception teacher

Playing the game - how she learned to play the game - transition into teaching –early experiences (fish out of water) compared to now

I haven't been teaching that long.

I always wanted to be a teacher but I just thought I'd do it at some point later on.

I wanted to be a teacher when I was younger and then I went off it.

I needed to do other things first

I couldn't have just come straight out of uni and done it then....

I wouldn't be ready

I wouldn't have the life skills for it

I went into pub work,

Then I went off that

I'm glad I did it. I was ready at that stage.

I only did a PGCE so you can't really be prepared for what it's really going to be like

I did a year as a learning support assistant

I was never as tired as I am now.

It's not anything like I expected it would be

My NQT year was awful

I struggled with the children and the behaviour

I hadn't got anywhere near the right knowledge of strategies and things in place to deal with them.

I was on my own a lot of the time.

I didn't know.

I was observed the other day

They knew exactly what they were doing and I took a step back almost (this is how she knows she is successful at the game – it depends on external sources)

I taught them that  
I didn't even know I said that over and over again  
I've done enough now.  
Now I'm fine on my own

What enables her to feel she knows the rules of the game/shapes her habitus? (look at what she feels she did not have above)

I think I'm changing now because I'm getting settled into the way that things are done here (shaping effect)

I had to go on quite a lot of courses.

Now that things are in place it's much easier

I've got the sun, white cloud, grey cloud, black cloud thing.

That was something I saw at one of the schools I was at when I was working before I did my PGCE

I'm more experienced, I can use my time better and I've got the resources ready.

Experience

Life skills

Energy/tiredness

Strategies to manage group behaviour

What she wants (but cannot have?) to play the game

I've always been with another person who knows what's going on.

Last year I worked alongside Lucy, the deputy (powerful figure)

I've worked with her now very closely for a year and a half

I realise now how much I didn't have to do before because Lucy did it.

I've got to actually say it rather than just doing it.

I think I know more or less how she wants things done

I know now she wanted things down here but now she's deputy across both and she's not always here.

I'd like to think I know how she wants things done.

She wants collaboration preferably with more experienced colleague ('old timer' (Goodson) - uncertainty

Impact on personal life – intrusion of one field into another (and impact)

I have been working a lot harder this year

I feel like I'm doing a lot more

I'm here a bit earlier and I stay a bit later

I'm spending more time at school

I've got work to take home after on top of that

I never used to.

I decided that I wouldn't work on week day evenings.

I wouldn't take anything home.

I do tend to stick to that

I still have one day of the weekends

I feel like I'm staying at school a bit later, pushing it as far as I can until we get chucked out

I'm not doing what they're doing which is working until midnight every night.

I can't do that, I have to go to bed at 9 or 10.

I go to bed very early and I'm tired.

That's something I've never done before

It's not because I'm just lazy

I'm just exhausted but it's a different type of tiredness.

### Image of a Reception teacher

I thought I'd never come into Reception because they're far too small.

I did a placement in Year 1

I was working with a child in Year 1.

I enjoyed that age group.

I know it's not that far from Reception

I got offered a job here

Now I don't think I could do anything else at the moment.

I mean they *do* do it (Reception and IPC feels different to rest of school but admits does not know below)

I *know* it's Reception and if you wanted to do that you've have to get one adult for every two children and it's just not realistic outdoors

I mean they're very capable

I think that's really valuable for Reception (outdoors)

I'd love all of that to be gone and to be able to just follow them around and just guide them and go with them wherever their little minds take them

I had a challenging class in my first year plus it was Reception so it was their first year of school,

### Image of the child – individual/group

I think that the more you can guide them in that direction, the better, so that they can be more independent and explorers of the future!

I had a challenging class

I feel sorry for any NQT that might have them again blaming the children

I didn't need to use that last year though (discussing behavioural strategy/behaviourism)

I didn't need to use anything.

I didn't have any real behaviour problems in my class last year.

I tried a lot with them - individual sticker charts as well for a few of the children which I don't need for this class.

If I'd had last year's class that year then I'd have been fine. (The class becomes capital??)

I was worried that the children were going to miss me.

I hoped they would

I was missing them! I spend more time with them than I do at home

I didn't have a lovely relationship with any of them today

I think they were a bit mad.

I've been ill

I think I probably didn't cope with them as well as I would do normally because I'm quite tired

I won't stop them from doing that if they ask me a question on the carpet, I'll put it up on the board and we'll talk about it.

I had two boys who would ask questions about everything.

I just decided one day that I wasn't going to do what I was supposed to be doing

I was going to throw the planning out the window

I was going to just go with them because that's what they were really enthusiastic about.

I just dropped everything and went with it and obviously it's fine.

Most of the time I just leave them to it choosing activities during time-tabled child-initiated play

I'm glad that they feel they can help themselves and they are using their initiative and it's child-initiated learning

I've not met anyone like her (individual child)

### Creativity tease out different strands – shaped by personal views, training, school, early years field

I guess when I was at uni there was a big push on creative learning.  
A lot of it comes from me and my views on life  
I like being outdoors.  
I like being hands-on.  
I'm not afraid to get messy, I don't mind being cold...and being wet  
Partly it comes from me and then partly I guess when I was uni there was definitely a big thing about creativity and creative learning.  
I think I do quite a lot of creative teaching.  
I kind of do go off on tangents (following children's experiences/interests)  
I try to get outside quite a lot for numeracy and literacy  
I just take them out there and sit under the trees, listen to a story, they kind of rustle a bit.  
The way I'd like to do things and the way that is feasible within the setting are different  
My first year I got really told off (intrusion - taking children out in rain)

I don't remember being asked much here about creativity in job interview...Oh maybe I did get asked it here.  
I know that the NQTs had a lot  
I know that the school is trying hard to promote  
I know that we had...on our INSET we had to make...creative curriculum  
I don't remember fully.  
It was so good I can't remember it!

I'm sure there are very creative ways of doing it but this was my first year is she talking about a topic here?  
I'd probably approach it very differently if I did it again.

I'm excited about the topics this year  
They're all topics I've never done before  
I think, "Oh they're going to love this!" Especially Scarlett, she just loves everything  
I don't know much about what they're doing. Rest of school  
I know everyone does entry points and exit points  
We do make a big deal out of the topics and I think that helps them as well.  
I'm not sure how much writing is in those? Talking about IPC topics (check) - intrusion of education policy field?

I think I've got a...not naïve but...a Reception-age kind of view on what creativity is...  
I think they can do anything like that whatever age they are.  
I suppose that's the essence of Reception or it should be the essence of Reception  
I know there's a big push towards being creative and being more independent and child-initiated learning and the teacher takes a back seat and...guides rather than teaches them.  
I remember thinking, creativity is right up my alley. I know what I can do!"

#### Education policy field shaping practice

I don't disagree with that at all. (forgotten what this is - phonics I think – check as Y6 teacher uses same type of double negative phrase – check for similar)  
I quite like phonics  
I know when I started it was a bit of a shock to me that they were doing so much in Reception.  
I know that the other Reception teacher felt the same.  
I'm very happy obviously to go along with that.  
I think the phonics plays a huge part in making that possible from the start.  
I've changed slightly so this year I think that they've really got it.

I haven't done their most recent assessments  
I think that they're doing much better than any of the other classes that I've taught because  
I've changed the way I've done it  
I don't know anywhere that does writing assessments for Reception children.  
When I first started I thought why would you do that to them.  
Most schools I think from what I've heard and from places I've been, in Reception they  
don't really write much until they go into Year 1  
Next week I don't have to worry about doing writing.  
I know health and safety gets involved these days where there are certain things you can  
and can't do with a 4 year old  
I'd love to just sit and play  
I'm not there doing that because I've got to listen to so-and-so read and things  
I'm hoping that with years of experience, one day I'll be so good at my time management  
that I'll have time  
I've always time-tabled observation time  
I do say, "Not those today."  
I don't know what I would do if I were prime minister. I would suggest...not going to  
school until 7 like they do in Scandinavia. They do alright don't they?

#### School – home

I know that, parents have issues with their child coming to school and "Their friend's in  
the other class and they never see them."  
I know a lot of the stuff that we do at school does go home.

#### Physical environment

If my class are out there (Reception outdoor area) I don't really see them.  
That's what I'd like, loads of space.  
Can it be as big as I like because this is too small? Am I allowed to have anything?  
I'm the only one (experienced teacher) actually, apart from Peter, but obviously he's over  
there and he doesn't come over here as much and doesn't see as much of what's going on.

#### Other roles within the school - future

I do netball club up the road.  
I haven't had to do much with the PE coordinator things  
I know when summer comes round when they have quite a lot of big tournaments then  
there'll be more to be involved  
I haven't really got my teeth into what my role is.  
I haven't had an official handover  
I think it's quite a big role  
I've been inundated with emails  
I have to liaise with other schools and then liaise with whoever is running the club.  
I keep taking my thing home with my folder to go through everything and try to really  
figure out what I'm doing and it just comes back again  
I just don't have time.

**Appendix 15. Teaching and learning dispositions associated with staff pedagogical habitus**

Disposition name (alphabetical order)	Participant				Data source	Descriptor - (sets of) behaviours, attitudes and strategies, perspectives (from codes) = embodiment/enactment	Teacher, learner or leader disposition	Associated with creativity?
	LF	JR	PG	CM				
Active hands-on learning	1	1	1	1	Self-report, observed	Active learning involves learners 'in doing things and thinking about the things they are doing' (Bonwell and Eison, 1991: 19) but the hands-on dimension links to experiential, child-centred approaches (Dewey, 1998); 'a kinaesthetic hands-on/minds-on way of attaining knowledge' (Smith and Knapp, 2011: 3); associated with democratic 'little c' (Craft, 2001) and 'mini c' (Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009) versions of creativity and view that learning is inherently creative therefore linked to other creative learning dispositions	Teacher; learner	Yes - experiential, child-centred, immersion (e.g. Dewey) but in tension with performative constructions of purpose/value of learning
Advocate	1	1			Self-report	Viewing oneself as a protector of others (children and/or parents and/or staff), recognising their rights, promoting social inclusion and social justice (Boylan and Dalrymple, 2009); may involve mediating external influences	Teacher; leader	It depends on other aspects of pedagogical habitus
Authoritarian	1	1	1	1	Self-report,	Behaviours based on the notions of power and hierarchy where the teacher or leader	Teacher;	No

					observed	has authority	leader	
Behaviourist		1	1	1	Self-report, observed	Set of dispositions based on the different strands of behaviourist and social learning theories but essentially the belief that behaviour is determined by observation, imitation and consequences using positive and negative reinforcers (Alexander, 1995)	Teacher; learner	Ambiguous - teacher may hold the perspective that creativity involves skills that can be taught e.g. problem-solving, divergent thinking but is there scope for originality?
Cognitive creative learning			1	1	Self-report, observed	A focus on cognitive skills and processes that a person associates with creativity, for example, problem-solving, imaginative thinking and critical reflection (Ryhammar and Brolin, 1999); also compassing neuroscientific 'brain-based' interpretations of learning and approaches derived from cognitive psychology focusing on learning styles, multiple intelligences (Sternberg and Kaufman, 2011). This are located the individual but may also be associated with contexts and collaborations usually in association with other dispositions.	Teacher; learner	Yes - linked to creative person/process research (cognitive, neuroscientific) but can be linked to teaching creatively to achieve performative goals
Collaborative learner	1	1		1	Self-report, observed	Valuing collaboration, seeking out or creating opportunities for interaction, dialogue and collaboration with others (adults or children)	Teacher; learner	Not inherently but is associated with creative process/place research
Constructivist	1	1		1	Self-report, observed	A range of dispositions based on the different strands of constructivist learning theory (Vygotsky, 1978) for both teacher and learner i.e. teacher as facilitator, co-construction of learning, imaginative reworking of experience, possibility	Teacher and learner (reciprocal)	Yes. View that creativity is inherent in the learning process (encompasses little c/mini c/pro c conceptions)



					thinking (Craft, 2002); associated with democratic 'little c' (Craft, 2001) and 'mini c' (Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009) versions of creativity and view that learning is inherently creative.		
Curious learner				1	Self-report, observed A range of dispositions promoting positive, inquisitive attitudes towards learning; being interested in learning new things, seeking out novelty or new skills, having a desire to understand things (Tan and McWilliam, 2008); a 'discovery-based pedagogical approach' (Craft, 2003: 144); associated with lifelong learning and autonomy and other sets of creative teaching and creative learning dispositions	Teacher; learner	Yes - linked to creative person research (personality, attitude, behaviours) but can be linked to teaching creatively to achieve performative goals
Driver of change	1				Self-report Usually a leadership disposition, a person seeing their leading as being to generate enthusiasm for the proposed change, perhaps to name and frame the focus, scope and scale of the change and identify roles for others (based on Thomson and Sanders, 2010)	Teacher; leader	Ambiguous, associated with innovation BUT it depends on other aspects of pedagogical (or leadership) habitus
Entrepreneur	1			1	Self-report A version of the risk-taker disposition below but framed in neoliberal terms, focusing on market-based notions of innovation for example value for money, competition and self-interest; possibly commercial gain	Teacher; leader	Ambiguous, a neoliberalised form of creativity

Fixer	1		1		Self-report, observed	Usually a leadership disposition, a person seeing themselves as a leader based on a perceived deficit, generally encompassing short-term solutions and 'fixing' strategies that do not address the causes of perceived deficits at a deeper level, often involves authoritative approaches and maintaining a sense of control (based on Thomson and Sanders, 2010)	Teacher; leader	No
Gendered dispositions			1		Self-report, observed	Behaviours, attitudes and strategies that are linked to social constructions of masculinity or femininity	Teacher	No
Humanist	1	1		1	Self-report, observed	Values and practices underpinned by a humanist sense of purpose (Sherman, 2009), centring around holism, person-centredness, the importance of human interaction and warm, caring relationships (Woods and Jeffrey, 2002); linked to humanist psychological approaches which position creativity as important for self-actualisation, gaining a sense of your own competence, therefore wellbeing (e.g. Csikszentmihalyi, 2014).	Teacher and learner (reciprocal)	Yes. Linked to creative person, humanistic research (autonomy, emotional fulfilment, self-actualisation, wellbeing)
Independent learner		1	1	1	Self-report, observed	Involving a learner in activities that will increase their sense of competence, sometimes but not always working on their own in physical sense but it can also encompass independent thought within a group	Teacher; learner	Not inherently unless associated with autonomy and other creative dispositions, can be a performative version of conforming (i.e. being 'on task' without interrupting the teacher) which is the reason I have used the teachers'

								term i.e. 'independent'
Mentor		1	1		Self-report	A focus on helping others (teachers, children etc) to learn the rules of the game, flexible guidance based in practice, may involve role model dispositions (Lunenberg et al., 2007)	Teacher; learner	No
Non-conformist				1	Self-report, observed	Behaviours, attitudes and strategies denoting resistance, rejection of authority or dominant narratives and practices	Teacher; learner	Potentially but in tension with performative dispositions, difficult to enact in a school (Claire's view of 'reigned in' creativity), needs to be valued, can be destructive
Novice		1		1	SR	Perceptions and experiences relating to being new to a field, being unfamiliar with its logic of practice (a 'fish out of water' as opposed to the 'fish in water' Bourdieu and Wacquant, 1992: 127)) and relying on others perhaps as an apprentice to a more experienced colleague (Goodson, 2003)	Teacher; learner	No
Outdoor-oriented dispositions		1			Self-report	Enjoying and actively engaging with the outdoors/natural environment, embodied dispositions relating to 'doing' learning outside; associated with traditions of the field of early years practice (Tovey, 2007) and linked to other creative learning dispositions, particularly active, hands on learning and the curious learner.	Teacher; learner	For Jennifer yes, linked to other aspects of her pedagogical (and personal) habitus

Performative dispositions	1	1	1	1	Self-report, observed	Set of dispositions based on the different strands of performative definitions of learning and teaching e.g. learning and teaching as a technical or practical activity (Jeffrey and Troman, 2010, a 'delivery disposition' (Gunter and Forrester, 2010: 58) based on notions of learning as linear, measurable outcomes, teaching as performing, a focus on curriculum coverage and data production (Roberts-Holmes, 2014), justified by neoliberal doxa such as 'readiness' (Bingham and Whitebread, 2018) and 'responsibilisation' (Pratt, 2018)	Teacher; learner; leader	No - antithesis
Playful dispositions		1		1	Self-report, observed	Enjoying and engaging in play or playful encounters, always involving flexibility, spontaneity and imaginative thinking (Tan and McWilliam, 2008); drawing on humour but with sensitivity, intuitive understanding and emotional engagement (Hargreaves, 1998; Wood, 1993); it may involve storying where teachers and learners co-construct stories or story fragments, engaging their imagination (Goouch, 2008); largely an attitude of mind (Lierberman, 1977) but can involve physical play/acting out stories; all variations draw on the competence of children and teachers	Teacher; learner	Yes - creative person approaches (imaginative thinking, possibility thinking)
Pragmatist/realist		1	1	1	Self-report	Viewing oneself as a 'practical' person, making choices and actions based on what is perceived to be feasible given the circumstances rather than a clearly articulated philosophy or principle	Teacher	No

						therefore can be shaped by other dispositions (possibly involving doxic 'common sense' narratives or illusio)		
Risk taker	1	1		1	Self-report, observed	Demonstrating willingness to engage with uncertainty and ambiguity; experimenting with ideas, strategies and imagined solutions where outcomes are uncertain (Jeffrey, 2006); linked to flexibility, spontaneity and autonomy in teaching and learning; and again linked to possibility thinking (Craft, 2002); linked to other creative learning and teaching dispositions	Teacher; learner; leader	Yes but tension with performative dispositions which rely on conformity, needs to be valued
Role model	1	1	1	1	Self-report, observed	A more structured version on the mentor disposition involving self-aware notions about the particular messages (about teaching and learning) that a person wants to communicate to others through their own actions, behaviours and words; they may model these implicitly and explicitly (Lunenberg et al., 2007). This is usually combined with other dispositions (or philosophies) e.g. humanist, authoritarian, behaviourist	Teacher	No
Role-specific teaching dispositions	1	1	1	1	Self-report, observed	Set of dispositions based on interaction with a classroom or professional domain as a field; relates to institutional traditions that operate across the field of schooling as well as a professional's individual 'rules' i.e. ways of thinking and acting based on their individual experiences. Examples in this research include the 'Y6 teacher', the 'early years teacher', The 'SATs-year	Teacher	Jennifer's early years teacher habitus was associated with constructivist dispositions (enabled by rules of the field of early years practice, constrained by performative rules of field of schooling)

						teacher', the school leader		
Teacher as person-maker	1	1		1	Self-report, observed	Actions and decisions based on notions of preparing children for 'life"; 'teaching people to be people' (Jeffrey and Woods, 2009: 9), usually but not always linked to vocational or humanist dispositions therefore ideas that learning and teaching involves emotional, social, interpersonal and intellectual dimensions, that it should be rooted in contexts and episodes that are meaningful and authentic, helping children to build on their experiences and engage with broader social values (Brehony, 1992; Edwards, 2010).	Teacher	It depends on other aspects of pedagogical habitus - very close to humanistic but this is distinctly a teacher disposition
Teacher as surrogate parent			1	1	Self-report	Positioning the teacher in the role of parent or carer, involving notions of care and love; usually combined with other dispositions e.g. advocacy, role model	Teacher	No
Vocational	1	1		1	Self-report, observed	Actions and decisions based on sense of being 'the right person for the job' (Colley et al., 2003: 488) or a job being right for a person because it is a match for their personal values. It involves idealised and realised elements including aspects of 'sensitivity' (ibid: 492) i.e. feeling and emotion in this context based on the view that teaching is a moral, principled vocation as well as a practical sense of	Teacher	It depends on other aspects of pedagogical habitus; potential links with pro c creativity (Kaufman and Beghetto, 2009: 3)

						what it takes to be a teacher. Demonstrating passion and enthusiasm in relation to these elements		
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## Appendix 16. DfE School Intake Statistics (DfE 2018)

<b>11 DfE Statistics August 2013 (DfE 2018)</b>	<b>Infant</b>	<b>Junior</b>
Total number of pupils on roll (all ages)	212	205
Number of girls on roll	112	112
Number of boys on roll	100	93
Percentage of girls on roll	52.8%	54.6%
Percentage of boys on roll	47.2%	45.4%
Number of pupils SEN statement or on School Action Plus	12	24
Number of pupils on roll with SEN on School Action	9	21
Percentage of pupils with SEN statement or on School Action Plus	5.7%	11.7%
Percentage of pupils on roll with SEN on School Action	4.2%	10.2%
Number of pupils of compulsory school age and above	212	205
Number of pupils with English not as first language	13	15
Number of pupils where first language is unclassified	0	0
Percentage of pupils with English not as first language	11.6%	7.3%
% pupils where first language is unclassified	0.0%	0.0%
Number of pupils used in FSM calculation	172	205
Total pupils eligible for free school meals	7	14
Percentage of pupils eligible for free school meals	4.1%	6.8%
Number of pupils eligible for FSM at any time during the past 6 years	10.0	24.0
Percentage of pupils eligible for FSM at any time during the past 6 years	5.8%	11.7%

## Appendix 17. Representation of the number of school staff and roles across the two sites

<b>Role</b>	<b>Infant school</b>	<b>Junior school</b>	<b>Across both schools</b>	<b>TOTALS</b>
Executive head teacher			1	1
Deputy head teacher			1	1
Inclusion manager			1	1
Business manager			1	1
Teachers	7	10		17
Teaching or learning support assistants (estimates)	8	9		17
Home school link worker			1	1
Pupil welfare	1	1		2
Administrative assistant	1	2		3
Finance assistant			1	1
Site manager	1	1		2
Lunchtime supervisors			4	4
Catering staff			3	3
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>18</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>54</b>



## Appendix 18. Dominant Ideologies in Education

(Adapted from Alexander, 1995: 16)

### Classical humanist model

This model originates from classical Greek study. Curriculum is...

- based on the 'joy' of learning;
- designed to initiate the child into the 'best' of cultural heritage;
- defined chiefly in terms of disciplines or forms of understanding: the arts, sciences and humanities.

### Elementary model

This model originates from the ideas of education around the time of the Industrial Revolution where education was viewed as preparation for working life. Curriculum is...

- designed to preserve the existing order;
- designed to meet society's economic and labour needs
- preparation for working life.

### Progressive model

This model was a reaction to the elementary model. Childhood is viewed as a unique phase of development. Within this model, curriculum is...

- designed to enable child to realise full potential as an autonomous individual;
- open and negotiable.

### Developmental model

Ideas of development were linked to psychology in the 20th century when science was in ascendancy and would become the dominant paradigm. This model emerged around the same time as the progressive model and they have an uneasy alliance. Curriculum is:

- structured and sequenced in accordance with the child's psychological and physiological development and learning processes (ages and stages)

### Behavioural/mechanistic model

This is based upon economic models. Objectives are identified, a plan is drawn up and applied; outcomes (products) are measured. Within this model, curriculum is...

- defined and structured in terms of hierarchies of observable and testable learning outcomes

### Social imperatives (utilitarian) model

This model is an updated version of the elementary model and Alexander aligned this with Conservative policy under Margaret Thatcher. Curriculum is:

- designed to meet society's economic, technological and labour needs;
- designed to enable the child to adapt to changes in these;
- designed to preserve the existing social order.

### Social imperatives (reformist) model

This is a hybrid of earlier models. Societal progress is defined in terms of plurality, democracy and social justice, as well as the economy. The purpose of curriculum is to enable the child both to fulfil individual potential and to contribute to societal progress.

## Appendix 19. Comparison of indicative trends and contradictions

### *Neoliberal education policy compared with creativity*

<b>Creativity</b>	<b>Performativity</b>	<b>Marketisation</b>
Original thinking and innovation	Pre-determined learning goals	Innovation as an end in itself
It has purpose or value ( <i>but for whom and who decides?</i> )	Efficiency	Value for money
Flexibility and imaginative thinking	Conformity and standardisation	Flexibility but in service of the market
Person- or child-centred, holistic	Society-centred	Economy-centred
Freedom and autonomy	Public accountability and surveillance	Responsibilisation
Open-ended, can be focused on person, product, process or place (or a combination of these)	Outcome-focused	Vendor- or consumer-focused
Not always measurable, complex, non-linear, unpredictable	Measurable targets, linear process	Potentially complex, always in service of the market
Individual or collaborative	Individual, competitive	Individual or collaborative, competitive

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