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OU/R0145877

Linked independent junior schools: an investigation into what head teachers perceive to be the influence of autonomy on school effectiveness, in terms of shared leadership and management.

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (EdD)

January 2005

OPEN UNIVERSITY

This thesis is dedicated to my wife Sue, daughters Sarah and Ruth and son Mark, for their unfailing support and unreserved encouragement in believing it to be possible.

With thanks also to my supervisor, Dr Lesley Anderson, for her part in making it happen.

ABSTRACT

The provision of junior school education in the independent sector includes junior schools that are attached, or 'linked', to 'senior' schools (i.e. secondary schools). Within pairs of linked schools, a key issue to emerge is the degree of autonomy granted to the junior school head teacher and how this is thought to influence the effectiveness of his or her school.

Head teachers sometimes use different criteria in judging junior school effectiveness and have different understandings of the concept of autonomy. Therefore they may not share the same expectation of how much, or what kind of, autonomy should be given. However, pairs of head teachers have to develop ways of sharing power and leadership through their organisational structures, as they interpret their concepts of autonomy in a mutually dependent relationship, whilst seeking to understand and support each other's aims for improving the effectiveness of the junior school.

The research used a questionnaire survey and follow-up interviews to assess, from the perspective of a head teacher, how autonomy is thought to influence the effectiveness of the junior school. The main survey findings, partly validated using triangulation with interview data, showed that head teachers generally understood a high degree of autonomy to mean having decision-making power over appointing staff, setting budgets, allocating resources, selecting pupils and controlling capital development.

The findings from questionnaire and interview data showed that junior and senior school head teachers sometimes used different criteria when judging junior school effectiveness but there was a good mutual understanding between the two groups. Furthermore, there was general agreement that for a junior school to be considered effective it had to have professional leadership promoting a shared vision, with good inter-personal relations operating within a well-resourced learning community that sets high expectations.

In relation to these understandings of the terms autonomy and school effectiveness and within the context of this study, there was strong evidence to support the view that all head teachers surveyed generally thought that junior schools benefit from increased autonomy by becoming more effective.

No significant evidence directly linked autonomy or effectiveness with particular organisational structures, but the way in which heads operated within a given structure was seen as important. With regard to professional practice, in cases of a high degree of autonomy operating, there was evidence of pairs of head teachers having a shared approach to leadership, with a collaborative and participative approach to decision-making and management.

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CHAPTER 1: BACKGROUND AND INTRODUCTION

HMC SCHOOLS AND THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR

The purpose of HMC is to enable Heads¹ to meet together to discuss matters of common interest....concerned not only with issues affecting the independent sector but with the whole national educational provision.

(HMC Manual of Guidance, 7th January 1999: 7)

The Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC) was founded in 1869 and is one of eight independent schools' associations in membership of the Independent Schools Council (ISC). ISC endeavours to represent the collective view of constituent members to promote the interests of independent education, particularly, but not exclusively, in political and legislative matters. It represents over 1,300 schools with nearly half a million pupils, which is approximately 80 per cent of the children in independent schools nationally.

HMC represents the heads of some 243 independent schools in the United Kingdom. It has a further 78 overseas members, 20 additional members (heads of maintained schools in the UK) and 34 Honorary Associate Members (retired members) (HMC, 2002: 2). HMC schools are academically selective and membership is dependent on maintaining minimum standards at A level. Girls' schools and schools without Sixth Forms are not eligible for membership. HMC is therefore not representative of all independent education but it still consists of a wide variety of schools in terms of academic achievement, organisational structure and pupil catchment areas.

IAPS SCHOOLS AND LINKS WITH HMC

The Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools (IAPS) was founded in 1892 and currently has over 500 member schools with over 130,000

¹ The term 'head' is used throughout the thesis as an abbreviation for 'head teacher/headteacher/head master/ headmaster/head mistress/headmistress'

pupils. The Association is a constituent member of ISC and membership is open to heads and deputy heads of independent preparatory and junior schools (boys, girls and co-educational) with pupils up to age 13, inspected and accredited by ISC. Preparatory schools, which prepare pupils for senior, or secondary, schools are essentially the middle and primary schools of the independent sector. The term ‘junior school’ in this context usually refers to a school that is linked to a particular senior school with pupils transferring at age 11. IAPS schools are of all types and sizes, including wholly independent preparatory schools and junior schools linked to senior schools (IAPS, 2004).

HMC advises its governors that ‘ HMC Schools with a separate junior or preparatory School may wish to consider supporting an application from the Head for the membership of IAPS’ (HMC Manual of Guidance, Jan 1999: 49). Since ‘IAPS is a professional association for Headmasters and Headmistresses of independent preparatory schools’ (IAPS, 2004) it implies that to qualify for membership, the heads must have a sufficient degree of autonomy and independence to be regarded as heads.

HMC LINKED JUNIOR SCHOOLS

Within HMC the provision of education up to the age of 13 is at junior or preparatory schools, which are attached, or ‘linked’ to senior schools, with pupils usually transferring at ages 11 or 13 to the linked senior school. This thesis refers to them all as ‘linked junior schools’.

A national survey in 1999, commissioned by HMC, showed that over 70 per cent of its schools had a linked junior school with its own head. The survey, conducted by an HMC Junior Schools Working Party, chaired by the author, showed that over 42 per cent of the linked junior schools did not belong to IAPS.

Following the findings from this survey and a working party report submitted by the author to the Annual Conference of HMC in October 2000 (HMC, 2001: 69-71), HMC established a recognised group of ‘HMC Linked

Junior Schools' (HMCJ), with an organisational structure to monitor and support their needs and effectiveness. The current study builds on this earlier preliminary work, which suggested that autonomy and organisational structure between linked schools are likely to be key issues influencing the overall effectiveness of the junior school.

The development of linked junior schools in recent years has coincided with independent schools having to adapt to changing markets, political forces and social changes. The creation of a new linked junior school has usually been instigated and financed by the senior school, and often partly to secure its own future. For example, the abolition of government-assisted places in 1997 meant that independent schools either had to secure a wider intake of fee-payers or reduce pupil numbers. It is within this organisational context that pairs of heads at linked schools have to develop ways of sharing power and leadership, whilst seeking to improve the effectiveness of the linked junior school.

THE SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The study was restricted to those schools within HMC that had a linked junior school. Therefore it investigated a relatively small part of the independent sector. However, in considering all HMC linked junior schools, the study surveyed 330 heads and produced data from a wide variety of schools.

In assessing how autonomy is thought to influence school effectiveness, the study did not aim to measure effectiveness through the actual outcomes and value-added performance of students as in many studies. Instead it focussed on the processes and structures that may influence a school's effectiveness, from the perspective of leadership and management. Furthermore, the study centred on the importance of the head in school effectiveness studies and therefore focussed on the heads' perceptions of what makes a good school and their role in it.

CHAPTER 2: AIMS OF THE RESEARCH

RATIONALE AND BACKGROUND FOR THE RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The underlying aim of the study was to answer the general question, ‘Is autonomy thought to be beneficial to a linked junior school?’. It was thought likely that the degree of autonomy, granted by the senior school head and governors to the junior school head, will have an impact on the organisational structure both *within* the junior school and *between* the two linked schools. In considering the influence of these two factors, autonomy and organisational structure, on leading and managing a school, the study focussed on how they were perceived to relate to school effectiveness in the junior school, from the perspective of pairs of heads at linked schools.

A secondary factor to consider in assessing the nature of autonomy was the model of governance used in both schools, with particular emphasis on governance in a linked junior school as established by its senior school.

In summary, the research centred on the following primary and secondary areas for investigation:

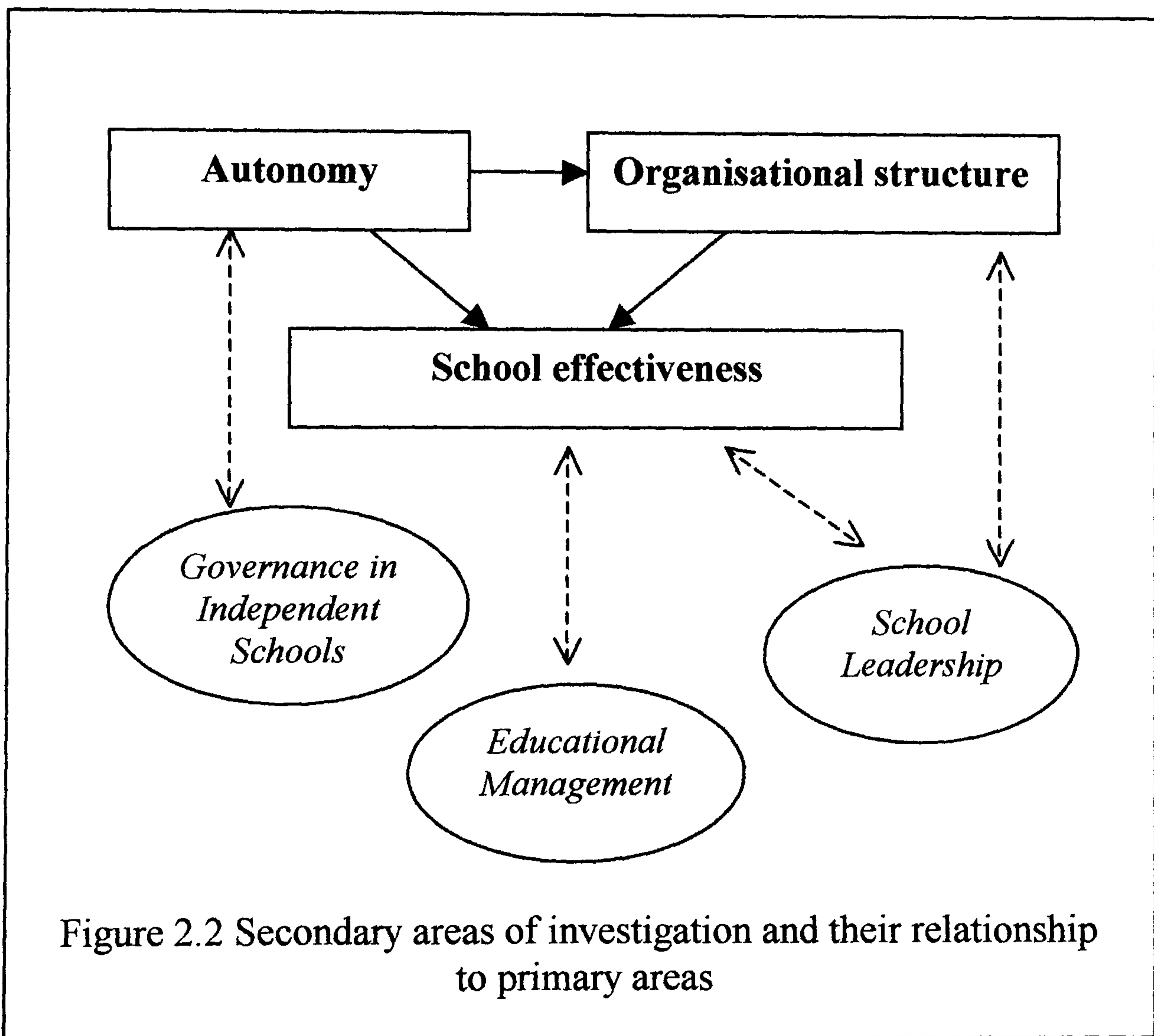
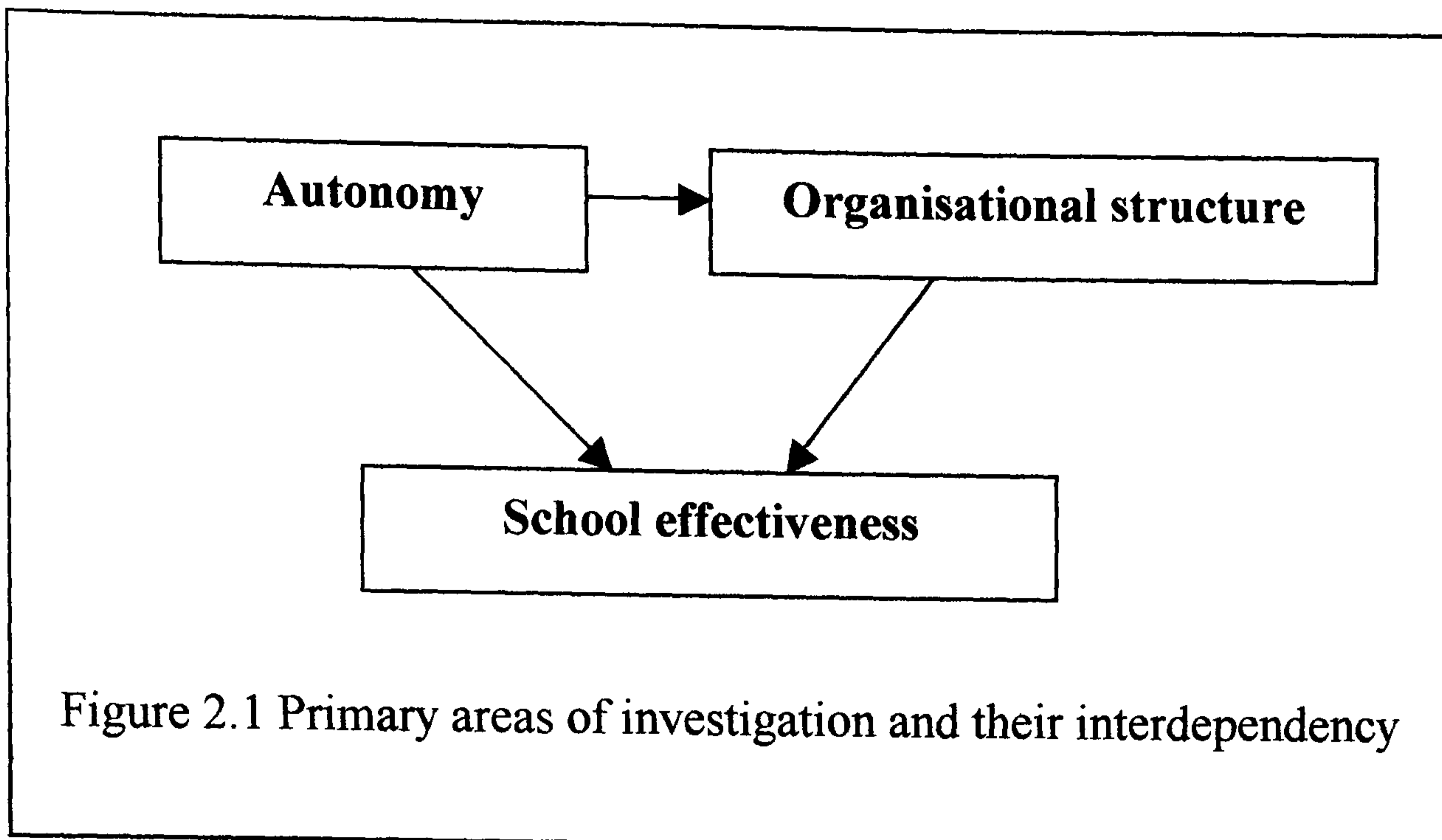
Primary

- **Autonomy**
- **Organisational structure**
- **School effectiveness**

Secondary

- *Governance in independent schools*
- *School leadership*
- *Educational management*

The research design was structured around these primary areas and directed by their interdependence as illustrated in Figure 2.1. All primary and secondary aspects overlapped to some extent since they are interdependent. However, the study started with the primary areas and looked for relationships within their overlapping. It then focussed in to consider the ways in which these areas influenced each other in practice, through the secondary areas of the investigation, namely: governance, leadership and management, as illustrated in Figure 2.2.



All aspects of the research, including the literature review, methodology and analysis addressed, and remained within, the above primary and secondary areas. This helped to keep the research focussed in seeking to answer five key research questions, which were at the centre of the investigation.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The initial study highlighted difficulties in answering the original research questions, concerned with measures of autonomy and effectiveness in assessing possible causal links. The original key research questions were therefore modified, in the light of the initial study, to make the intended focus on ‘perceived’ rather than ‘actual’ autonomy and effectiveness clearer. This did not reflect a change in the underlying aim of the research in looking at links between a head’s autonomy and school effectiveness. As a result, the main study was focussed on assessing how heads *perceive* autonomy to influence their leadership and use of shared power, in seeking to improve school effectiveness.

There was expected to be tension between a pair of heads in having to negotiate how to share power and balance autonomy in leading a pair of linked schools. However, reflecting on the feedback to the initial study a key issue to emerge was the ‘hidden’ tension caused by a pair of heads working, unknowingly, to different definitions and expectations. Different perceptions of autonomy (both its definition and value) and effectiveness, particularly in a junior school, appeared to undermine agreement on the optimum processes that could lead to improved effectiveness. The key research questions aimed to reflect the importance of understanding concepts from different perspectives and the effect on heads having to share leadership within a framework of assumed levels of autonomy.

There were five key research questions (KRQs), each covering a specific area of investigation, with the first four helping to address the final question, which is the key to the whole study. These questions are considered separately with an explanatory note.

Key Research Question 1 (KRQ1)

What do pairs of heads of linked schools understand by the concept of ‘autonomy’ in the context of a linked junior school and how can degrees of autonomy be described and categorised?

This key research question (KRQ) allowed for the fact that heads rarely use, or even think about, the concept of autonomy to the extent of being able to define it. However, it was implicit in their responses that they had an understanding of the concept in how it applies in practice with regard to the distribution of power and decision-making. Heads could rarely give their assumed definition of the concept but they were able to describe its attributes. This question also focused on the use of the term ‘autonomy’ in the particular context of running a *junior* school, which was the main organisational context of the study.

Key Research Question 2 (KRQ2)

For a pair of linked schools, what organisational factors, both within each school and between the schools, can be used to categorise linked junior schools in relation to their degrees of autonomy?

This question assumed that autonomy in a linked junior school is a factor of the organisational structures of both schools and especially of the structures operating between the paired schools. Such an assumption was supported by the initial study.

Key Research Question 3 (KRQ3)

What is the relationship between autonomy and organisational structure in a linked junior school?

The intention in this question was to focus more *within* the junior school in considering its own organisational structure in relation to its actual or perceived autonomy. However, since the junior school is ‘linked’ it was also be relevant to consider how *external* factors and organisational structures (eg from the senior school) influenced the junior school’s operational power and autonomy. The wording was intended to allow sufficient flexibility in interpreting relevant data but to maintain a focus on aspects within the junior school.

Key Research Question 4 (KRQ4)

What criteria are used, and by whom, to judge the effectiveness of linked junior schools with regard to their leadership and management?

This wording allowed for the views of different stakeholders to be taken account of and looked at how effectiveness is perceived, or judged, rather than attempt to measure it. Furthermore, this question made it clear that effectiveness was being considered only in relation to the aspects of leadership and management. This constraint was necessary to establish the boundaries of the research at the outset, since the primary areas under investigation, especially school effectiveness, are very wide and open-ended.

Key Research Question 5 (KRQ5)

To what extent is the effectiveness of a linked junior school thought to be related, in terms of the heads' leadership and management, to

- (a) the organisational structure both within the junior school and between the two linked schools?*
- (b) its degree of autonomy and relationship with its senior school?*

The intention was to make clear that the study looked at how heads of linked schools *perceived* autonomy to be influencing their ability to lead and manage in seeking to improve junior school effectiveness. It was beyond the scope of this study to test for empirical links or causal relationships between degrees of autonomy and levels of effectiveness.

In answering these five key questions it was, of course, necessary to investigate a number of subsidiary and specific questions, particularly in considering the secondary areas. For example,

- 1) Who governs the two schools?
- 2) Who is on the senior management teams and what is their role?
- 3) Who is thought to make, and who actually makes, strategic and day-to-day decisions in the junior school?
- 4) Who determines and controls the budget in the junior school?
- 5) How do the two schools share resources and how are they managed?
- 6) How is pupil transfer managed?

These examples of more detailed, specific questions are clearly not exhaustive but merely illustrate that the key questions could only be answered by asking more direct and focussed questions.

In summary, the thesis addresses five key research questions, as listed in Figure 2.3.

KRQ1

What do pairs of heads of linked schools understand by the concept of 'autonomy' in the context of a linked junior school and how can degrees of autonomy be described and categorised?

KRQ2

For a pair of linked schools, what organisational factors, both within each school and between the schools, can be used to categorise linked junior schools in relation to their degrees of autonomy?

KRQ3

What is the relationship between autonomy and organisational structure in a linked junior school?

KRQ4

What criteria are used, and by whom, to judge the effectiveness of linked junior schools with regard to their leadership and management?

KRQ5

To what extent is the effectiveness of a linked junior school thought to be related, in terms of the heads' leadership and management, to

- (a) the organisational structure both within the junior school and between the two linked schools?
- (b) its degree of autonomy and relationship with its senior school?

Figure 2.3 The five key research questions

The five key research questions underpinned the research design. Through addressing these the research focussed on the aim of the study, which can be summarised as follows:

‘Within a pair of linked schools, to gain insight into how autonomy is thought to influence the effectiveness of the junior school, through the heads’ leadership and management’.

CHAPTER 3: REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

The five key research questions and the primary areas for investigation (autonomy, organisational structure, school effectiveness) determine the major focus and main sections of the literature review.

The structure of the review considers two primary areas, autonomy and organisational structure, as main sections and one secondary area, governance, as a section. The other primary area, school effectiveness, is considered only in relation to the other primary areas and two of the secondary areas, leadership and management, as illustrated in Figure 2.2. This provides a focus and necessary boundaries relevant to this study in considering the very wide field of school effectiveness research.

The study is primarily concerned with the process of how autonomy and organisational structure might influence actual and perceived effectiveness, which is why effectiveness is considered in relation to these primary areas. Furthermore, this structure of the literature review then focuses attention on the relevant aspects of leadership and management that relate to this process and their role in improving school effectiveness.

The chapter concludes with a brief summary of key issues that emerged in researching the literature review.

AUTONOMY

Autonomy in schools – what does it mean?

For this study it was necessary to establish a working definition of ‘autonomy in schools’ as a baseline for introducing degrees of autonomy, comparing results and analysing perceptions. However, ‘autonomy is a complex notion’ (Bell and Bush, 2002: 12) which is used in different contexts in various ways. The literature on school autonomy uses a variety of terms to describe decentralised management and autonomy; ‘local management of schools’ (Levačić, 1995), ‘school based management (SBM)’ (Dimmock, 1993; Cheng, 1996), ‘self-managing schools’ (Fidler,

1997; Caldwell and Spinks, 1988, 1992, 1998; Caldwell, 2002), 'autonomous schools' (Bush *et al.*, 1993; Levačić, 2002) and 'self-governing schools' (Caldwell, 2002). These terms need careful interpretation with regard to what is meant in a given context.

For example, Caldwell (2002: 35) points out that a self-managing school is not necessarily an autonomous school. The term 'self-managing' implies a high degree of independence but a self-managing school is usually still working within a centrally determined framework or system of schools, such as a Local Education Authority, so it is not autonomous. Some researchers (Caldwell, 2002; Levačić, 2002) distinguish between self-managing and self-governing schools, with the former having devolution of decision-making over resources but operating within a framework of accountability, whereas the latter are independent of a wider framework though they are still held accountable to a governing body. Viewed in this way only self-governing, free standing and independent schools can be truly autonomous but this is a narrow interpretation of autonomy.

Control over the allocation of resources is a common measure of 'autonomy' but the term 'resources' is used to cover a broad range including materials, technology, finance, information, people, time and knowledge. Even self-governing schools will differ in their degree of independence with regard to individual resources and therefore a working definition of 'autonomy' needs careful qualification relevant to the case in question.

Levačić points out that 'the dictionary definition of autonomy, derived from the Greek, is 'self-governing' and hence 'functioning independently without the control of others'' (2002: 187). Applying this concept to schools, Chubb and Moe (1990) define autonomous schools as 'free to govern themselves as they want, specify their own goals, programmes and methods'. Using this definition, it is debatable whether any school can be totally autonomous. For example, Ball (1994: 78) argues that aspects of centralisation, such as the National Curriculum in England and Wales,

mean that there is no real self-governance or autonomy in schools. Even self-governing, independent, secondary schools, in being accountable to their parents and governors, must follow nationally prescribed public examination syllabi, so do not have total autonomy over curriculum choice.

Bell and Bush (2002: 11) support this view and point out that ultimately school autonomy is conditional and evaluating or measuring it is difficult because it takes on many forms. Essentially they argue that there is no absolute definition, since autonomy can vary along several dimensions with differing degrees of power or decision-making authority in the various domains or areas of school management and leadership.

The literature suggests therefore, that it is not easy to agree on an overall definition of autonomy for a school that can be applied to the wide variety of schools and situations. Nevertheless, applying the idea that to have autonomy over a particular aspect of school management means having decision-making power in allocating resources is a common approach to agreeing a working definition, which is relevant to this study. To derive a working definition, it is helpful to consider the reasons for many countries recently supporting a move towards greater autonomy in schools.

The political support for such a move was stated clearly in the White Paper 'Schools Achieving Success' (DfES, 2001) which declared that 'the best schools will earn greater autonomy'. Such support results from the expectation that greater autonomy will improve outcomes for students (Blair, 2001: 44) despite some research appearing to find few, if any, links between self-management and learning outcomes (Malen *et al.*, 1990; Bullock and Thomas, 1997).

However, more recent research from what Caldwell refers as the 'third generation of studies...in the late 1990s' (Caldwell, 2002: 39-41), suggests that school autonomy in terms of process and personnel decisions is causally linked to student performance (Woessmann, 2001). Hanson (1998) supports this view and applies the term autonomy in a school context as

being the result of decentralisation, which transfers decision-making authority in the educational process to the school personnel.

The key to Levačić's definition of school autonomy, in common with much of the literature, is in having control and decision-making power in relation to resources as input variables. Anderson (2002) assumes the significance of resources in being linked to learning outcomes and points out that the shift towards self-management in education has increased the emphasis on resource management.

Given the expectation that autonomy is linked to improving learning outcomes and the assumption that power over resource allocation is related to student performance, a relevant definition of autonomy should emphasise the centrality of decisions on resources. The key point is that a working definition should imply various degrees of autonomy rather than an absolute definition of autonomy, which is unlikely to exist given a school's position as an institution in society.

Despite Caldwell's (2002) reservations that self-managing schools are not necessarily autonomous, it is clear that they have a degree of autonomy so a working definition, for this study, of the concept of autonomy is best summarised by Caldwell and Spink's latest definition of self-management:

A self-managing school is a school in a system of education to which there has been decentralised a significant amount of authority and responsibility to make decisions about the allocation of resources within a centrally determined framework of goals, policies, standards and accountabilities. Resources are defined broadly to include knowledge, technology, power, material, people, time, assessment, information and finance. (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998: 4-5)

This definition has built in variables and measures to describe relative, if not absolute, degrees of autonomy. It is particularly relevant to the study of

a linked independent junior school which, because of its links, cannot be fully autonomous since it works within the overall framework usually set by the senior school, along the lines indicated in this definition.

However, applying this definition directly to this study still needs careful interpretation, since it refers to schools in the state sector in relation to overarching local education authorities (LEAs) and central government control. Indeed, much of the literature applies to the state sector and considers the autonomy of schools in relation to LEAs. Hentschke and Davies (1997) describe a paradigm of ‘whales and minnows’, warning that autonomy for schools (the minnows) may not actually be helpful since too much freedom from the larger bureaucratic LEAs (the whales) can result in the minnows swimming around in different directions. The autonomy of schools in relation to LEAs is a context different from the mutual dependency between a single pair of schools. This paradigm helps to illustrate why the generalisations in the literature on the benefits and pitfalls of autonomy may not be valid or reliable when applied to this study. Nevertheless it is likely that some of the particular findings on decision-making and the transfer of power will still be relevant to this study in looking at specific aspects of leadership and management in relation to school effectiveness.

In considering individual schools, Hentschke and Davies (1997) add support to the view that giving them greater autonomy decentralises the kind of decision-making that can lead to measurable improvements in outcomes. In other words it is thought that greater autonomy could lead to improved school effectiveness by giving the school more power to make important decisions.

Politicians and educators, using similar arguments about the benefits of decentralisation in all organisations, have enthusiastically endorsed recent developments in school autonomy. Early research has identified some benefits (Thomas, 1987; Bullock and Thomas, 1994; Levačić, 1995) but there is little evidence of how shifts in decision-making in schools have

improved school effectiveness. To appreciate this one needs to understand the nature of managerial decisions and decision-making in autonomous organisations. Davies and Hentschke (1994) use a taxonomy of managerial decisions as a variable for assessing schools on a continuum of organisational autonomy. Though they admit that the complexity of decision-making, with its numerous interdependencies, makes categorising into an appropriate taxonomy difficult, they propose that this approach can measure the degree of organisational autonomy and thus help to assess the effects of decentralised or autonomous management.

However, Simpkins (1997) challenges the concept of organisational autonomy as unhelpful in placing the organisation and its structure as being more important and influential than individuals. He regards terms such as 'self-managing or autonomous schools' as implying the 'redistribution of power within a school system in ways which enhance the importance of the individual school *vis-à-vis* the wider school systems' (Simpkins, 1997: 20). Instead of referring to school autonomy, which implies that the organisation is autonomous, Simpkins looks at the stakeholders and their degree of individual autonomy or empowerment.

The approach of Winstanley *et al.* (1995) in categorising power into 'criteria power', the ability of stakeholders to define aims and purposes, and 'operational power', the ability to provide the service, is particularly relevant to this study in investigating the kind of autonomy given to heads. Individuals are of course part of an organisational structure, which in itself will promote or inhibit individual autonomy, so Simpkins' challenge should be seen in terms of putting the emphasis on the power granted to individual stakeholders rather than a contrary stance to the concept of a school having autonomy. Both ideas are applicable to this study; the heads and the schools all have differing degrees of various kinds of autonomy.

Adapting the above ideas from the literature to arrive at a working definition of autonomy for this study, may be summarised as follows:

‘A school’s degree of autonomy is determined by, and reflects, its level of decision-making authority and type of power or control over the allocation of its resources to promote student outcomes’.

Degrees of autonomy – who is in control and of what?

In the state sector, heads have recently had their operational power increased, which has been interpreted by some observers to imply increased autonomy. However, their criteria power has been decreased by government centralising the aims and purposes of education through the National Curriculum and by inspecting schools through the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). This paradox of simultaneous centralising and decentralising tendencies is likely to be found in looking at pairs of linked schools. In determining degrees of autonomy it will be necessary to understand who is in control in terms of ‘*Who* has power to make decisions?’ and ‘*What* kind of decisions can they make?’

Macpherson (1996: 140) found that international case studies on restructuring aiming at increasing autonomy showed that ‘decentralisation of pedagogical, administrative and governance powers..., with simultaneous recentralisation of key curricular, assessment and budgetary (i.e. control) functions has led to ...low policy legitimacy among other stakeholders’. Russell’s (1997) analysis of the ‘key dimensions of freedom’ for autonomous schools and the work of other researchers (Ball, 1993, 1994; Watkins, 1993; Le Metais, 1995; Hentschke and Davies, 1997) affirm this view, warning that external constraints on budgets and policy reduces school decision-making to operational levels. This reduces an apparent increase in autonomy to merely a shift in decentralising administration and accountability, which falls short of decentralising sufficient power for successful reengineering to bring about improvement in student outcomes.

Fullan (1992) recognised that in any relationship there will be a sense of dependency in conflict with a desire for autonomy. He found that ‘real’ autonomy in schools, which brings improvement through empowered individuals, is linked to the decision-making powers of heads in particular,

which is a view supported by Simpkins (1997). Fullan also advises heads that they have to manage paradoxically simultaneous 'loose-tight' relationships between schools and school systems (LEAs and central government), though he supported the view that autonomy is the key to improvement, advising educators to 'err on the side of autonomy over dependency'. (Fullan, 1992: 54). His research stressed that for modern organisations to be effective they need to promote and reinforce loose-tight relationships for, 'it is not just a choice between a top-down system and isolated autonomy' (Fullan, 1992: 55).

The earlier work of Louis (1987) in a study of effective schools also demonstrated the need to balance the right kind of 'loose' and 'tight' aspects in a relationship. Her distinction between 'coupling' as a relationship which has shared goals and objectives and 'bureaucracy' which controls through rules and regulations is relevant in explaining that 'tight' coupling of values but 'loose' regulatory control is often linked to effectiveness.

Autonomy therefore does not imply being in isolation as a freestanding organisation with total control. Indeed schools, which have numerous interdependencies, cannot survive in total isolation. To be autonomous in a mutually dependent relationship, as in this study, suggests maintaining criteria power and control over deciding policy and some budgetary aspects of allocating resources. Relationships *between* effective autonomous organisations would seem to focus on the couplings which promote shared aims, values and objectives, yet still maintain this autonomy, which is an idea directly relevant to this study of mutually dependent pairs of schools.

Longitudinal studies conducted by Bryk and colleagues (Bryk, 1998; Bryl *et al.*, 1998) in the late 1990s produced strong evidence linking self-management and learning outcomes in school in Chicago, modelling both direct and indirect effects. Woessmann's (2001) more recent analysis of student achievements across 39 countries was the largest inter-national comparative study ever undertaken and also produced evidence of the

possible benefit of school autonomy in process and personnel decisions in helping to improve student performance. However, this research also suggested that although autonomy in some areas may be favourable to student performance, in other aspects such as examinations, curriculum and budgetary affairs, more centralisation might be more effective. In the case of budgets the study referred to a central funding mechanism to allocate funds, but confirmed that the school should then have the autonomy to deploy funds locally.

So the 'kind' of autonomy, with regard to questions such as 'autonomy for whom over what?' is possibly more relevant than 'how much' autonomy is granted overall. Indeed, it is not possible to quantify satisfactorily the complex concept of autonomy into a single measurable variable.

Hess (1999), commenting on Bryk's (1998) work in Chicago on links between self-management and student outcomes, supported this view that it is the manner of implementation at school level of policies, such as spending, which makes a difference. In other words it is the 'right' kind of autonomy, or capacity for self-management, that yields direct results.

Dennison (1998) assessed 25 years of policy changes leading to the emergence of what he called the 'independent' school (in the sense of having significant autonomy, not independence as in this study). He concluded that 'the independence of the school appears confirmed as the main route to improved effectiveness' (Dennison, 1998: 128) and in this context referred to the emergence of the autonomous school in the pursuit of improve performance. However, Dennison pointed out that crucial questions still need answering, such as 'How much autonomy is best?', 'What are the effects on performance?' and 'What are the issues related to equity?'. A greater degree of autonomy or independence exposes accountability, increases differences in inter-school equity and may become illusory unless choices made by the school can be resourced.

Levačić (2002) found that the kind and degree of autonomy is determined by the domains, or areas, of decision-making granted to the school. The main categories of decision-making are school organisation, curriculum,

staff, finance and external relations (Levačić, 1995; Karstanje, 1999). Schools will have different levels of decision-making authority within these categories leading to different levels of influence in student outcomes.

In summary, the literature suggests that it is appropriate in assessing the degree of a school's autonomy to consider first the kinds of autonomy granted and then evaluate how much is granted in a given domain. To describe the 'degree' of a school's autonomy is to comment on both the 'kind' and 'amount' of autonomy in different aspects of school management, in relation to power and decision-making. The differences in the domains of school management and their respective influence make it difficult to combine them into an overall measure of autonomy for a given school.

Lessons from experiments in autonomy

Though grant maintained (GM) schools were abolished in 1998, the literature on them still has a particular relevance for this study since they were granted charitable status and managed by their governing bodies in a similar way to many independent schools. GM schools were created under the Education Reform Act 1988 (GB. Statutes, 1988 c.40), which brought a shift towards educational autonomy in 'the belief that organisations are more effective if they are controlled and managed at the institutional level' (Bush *et al.*, 1993: 1). The political support for GM schools having considerable autonomy extended to providing devolved funding in other schools, with a move towards local management of schools (LMS), in the belief that such status would make them more effective and improve standards. This rationale for autonomy is a key area of investigation in this study.

Davies and Anderson (1992) pointed out that the new autonomy, under GM status, granted powers over resource and budget allocation giving heads the 'criteria power' referred to above. It was this shift of power away from the bureaucratic control of the LEA, with decentralised decision-making at all levels, which was thought to be responsible for bringing about improved standards.

The 1990-1991 Annual Report from the senior chief inspector of schools at Her Majesty's Inspectorate(HMI) (DES, 1992: 21) states that GM schools were more effective than others. However, this report was only based on the first two to three years of the GM schools' existence and provided no significant evidence of a causal relationship between autonomy and effectiveness. Indeed, Levacic (1999) found contrary evidence to such a relationship. Bush *et al.* (1993) pointed out that even if GM schools were more effective it may have been due to them having a higher proportion of selective schools and enhanced funding. Nevertheless, the evidence from their survey and case studies showed that the granting of autonomy was effective in raising staff and governors' morale through the freedom to determine their own policies (Bush *et al.*, 1993: 213).

Mulford *et al.* (2003), in studying the move to local school management (LSM) in Australia in the late 1980s and early 1990s, concluded that decentralisation and LSM was making a difference but not the right difference, in that it was not resulting in improvement in teaching and learning. Other researchers (Seashore Louis *et al.*, 1995; Leithwood and Menzies, 1998) concluded similarly that the devolution of responsibility and decision-making had minimal impact on schools with little evidence for the success of LMS or LSM.

However, the fault may not lie in the concept of LSM but in the kind of decisions or autonomy allowed in individual LSM schools. Thomas (1996) found that the decision-making was in areas of administration rather than professional outcomes. As Mulford *et al.* (2003: 67) pointed out, this moves decisions closer to the 'front line' but they are of little significance to those in the 'trenches'. This gives further support to the view that it is the kind of autonomy that is important if the aim is to improve student outcomes.

However, the right kind of autonomy may not necessarily be sufficient to bring about school improvement, for research shows that reforms, such as GM schools and LMS, can only be effective with the cultural support and

action from those in schools (Harris and Hopkins, 1999; Berends, 2000). Some researchers stress the role of middle managers (Dinham and Scott, 1996) and principals (Leithwood and Duke, 1999) as more important than the degree of autonomy for they are seen as effectively deciding the fate of what happens in a school regardless of its governing status. This supports the focus of this study is assessing heads' perceptions of autonomy impacting on effectiveness, since their influence on the school will be shaped partly by their understanding and acceptance of such ideas.

In studying teachers' perceptions of the impact of autonomy, Mulford *et al.* (2003) showed that primary school teachers were more positive than high school teachers about the effects of LSM on their schools for bringing about more effective management and improved decision-making. This is consistent with previous findings (Stoll and MacBeath, 1997; Reid, 1998) and may reflect that in senior schools the culture is more disparate, held within subject departments (Bennett and Harris, 1999) which are not well linked together.

The need for co-operation among GM schools and between LMS schools is particularly relevant to this study, which looks at how pairs of schools co-operate in order to be more effective. The decentralisation of autonomy to school level, as was the case in GM schools, means that schools rather than education authorities have to work closely together for mutual support and initiatives. However, it is difficult for autonomous schools to work collectively, since it conflicts with an aim to be independent (Hargreaves and Hopkins, 1991; Joyce *et al.*, 1999). This mirrors the need in this study to understand how heads balance the conflict or tension between 'a desire for autonomy' and 'a mutual dependency for improved effectiveness' in pairs of linked independent schools.

ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

Organisational structures in schools

For a school to be effective, each person must understand his/her own task or responsibility to fulfil within the school and that of others with whom

he/she interacts. Child (1984), in explaining organisational theory, describes how it is the basic structure of the organisation that allocates people and resources to such tasks, which collectively accomplish the organisation's mission. The organisational structure sets out the rules for interacting between tasks and the means by which the work is led, co-ordinated, managed and evaluated.

Fidler (1997) argues that no single organisational structure is most effective in a given situation, but there will always be competing structures. Structures need to balance the competing requirements in an organisation 'to control' and 'to coordinate'. Consequently there are various models of organisational structure in schools (Handy, 1976; Beare *et al.*, 1989) but they all incorporate aspects of two basic approaches to structure (Fidler, 1997), which can be summarised as:

1. Some form of bureaucratic hierarchy
 - *with authority based on positional power (to control)*
2. Elements of a collegial structure
 - *with shared power and decision-making (to coordinate)*

Within a hierarchy, each person is accountable to a superior and authority is often based on one's position in the hierarchy. Mintzberg's (1983) concept of a professional bureaucracy is particularly relevant to this study concerned with teaching. It describes a structure which is hierarchical but, since it employs professionals in positions of management, there is a much more participative mode of operation allowing for professional judgement rather than a prescriptive or directional mode. Furthermore, teachers often carry out management tasks in addition to their teaching, so a two-dimensional matrix with dual authority relationships best represents them.

Hughes (1985), like Mintzberg, also points out that an organisation staffed by professionals has special factors not always found in other hierarchical systems. So an organisation may have some form of hierarchical structure and elements of collegiality but this dualistic approach is too simplistic to

account for all the variations found in different situations. Hybrid structures, such as professional bureaucracies, are likely to be found in schools. Furthermore, as Fidler (1997: 66) points out, such structures should be expected to change as the needs of the schools change.

Collegiality – consensus or contrived?

Collegial models or collegial structures in schools imply that power and decision-making is shared among some, or all, members of the school community. The following definition illustrates that collegiality is normative in orientation in the sense that policy is influenced through moral persuasion with decisions being reached democratically. It is particularly relevant for a body of professionals who have authority of expertise, or normative power, in addition to positional authority.

Collegial models assume that organisations determine policy and make decisions through a process of discussion leading to consensus. Power is shared among some or all members of the organisation who are thought to have a mutual understanding about the objectives of the institution. (Bush, 1997: 68)

At the end of the 1980s, Wallace (1989) wrote, in connection with junior schools, that the notion of collegiality had become ‘the official model of good practice’ (Wallace, 1989: 182). Collegial models, according to Bush (1997), became recognised throughout the 1990s as the most appropriate way to run schools. Adding to the support for collegial structures, Campbell and Southworth (1993) associated the notion of collegiality with school effectiveness.

Indeed several researchers, in addressing junior schools, acknowledge that collegiality became established in the 1980s and 1990s as the most appropriate way, in terms of effectiveness, to manage them (Campbell, 1985; Little, 1990; Bush, 1997). This may simply be a factor of size, in that

they are generally small enough for whole school collegiality and too small for meaningful levels or strata of hierarchy. It may also be a factor of gender in management since women often form the majority of staff in junior schools, though there is no general agreement on this gender perspective. Al-Khalifa (1989) and Coleman (1994) both argued that women are more democratic, collaborative and collegial in management style but Nias *et al.* (1989) dismissed this idea as too simplistic, referring to equally good collaborative styles between men and women. A comparison of gender issues between paired schools may determine whether gender is a factor in developing a particular organisational structure and leadership style but a detailed analysis is outside the scope of this study.

Contrary to the apparent support for collegiality and its assumed benefits, especially in junior schools, Bush (1997: 75-77) outlined a number of serious limitations of collegiality as an effective structure. Members of an organisation do not always see it as a good thing and it may not actually be present even when claimed to be. Hargreaves (1994) warned that collegiality is sometimes contrived in order to gain approval. Hellowell (1991), Campbell (1985) and Wallace (1989) all cite examples in their research of teachers who do not support collegiality because they refuse to accept any authority which is intermediate between their own autonomy and the authority of the head. It is clear that staff attitudes are of paramount importance in determining the effectiveness of a particular organisational structure.

Loosely coupled systems applied to schools

Organisations and schools in particular are cultures in the sense that they are socially constructed realities (Bergman and Luckman, 1966) with patterns of meaning, values and behaviour that fit a variety of paradigms (Meyerson and Martin, 1987). They are not mechanistic, rational systems of interdependent sub-units with clear causal relationships. Bennett's (1997) analysis of cultures of schooling reinforces the importance of organisational culture in influencing change to improve effectiveness.

Much of the literature on culture also highlights the importance of subcultures within an organisation. Weick (1976) proposed the idea that such subcultures are loosely coupled to each other, in that elements within a school are somehow related and mutually dependent, but at the same time they are separate, seeking autonomy.

Coupled events are responsive, but each event also preserves its own identity and some evidence of its physical or logical separateness. (Weick, 1976: 3)

Scheerens' (1997a) summary of Weick's work points out that loose coupling has disadvantages in that it can be dysfunctional, but in terms of school effectiveness there are positive advantages to loose-coupling or a sense of structural looseness, for 'the road to increased effectiveness does not simply run via more integrated educational organizations' (Scheerens, 1997a: 83).

The concept of loose coupling applies within an individual school but it also applies to the mutually dependent, paired relationship of linked junior and senior schools, as an example of loose coupling between organisations (Provan, 1983). The interaction between a pair of heads is a key link to understanding the 'glue' (Weick, 1982) that holds loosely coupled schools together, ensuring that central visions become part of individual activity.

Loose coupling as a concept is not without its critics. Lutz (1982) and Rubin (1979) both argue that it is erroneous to categorise organisations as loosely coupled. They argue that when couplings are defined in terms of looseness the organisation is reduced to a form of organised anarchy. By definition, an organisation cannot be a form of anarchy so the concept of loose coupling is unhelpful.

Fusarelli (2001) develops this criticism and challenges the commonly accepted view over the past three decades that organisations are loosely

coupled systems. He points out that there must be patterns of loose and tight coupling in organisational analysis and it is more accurate to say that ‘organisations, particularly schools, are made up of multiple linkages – some tightly coupled and others less so’ (Fusarelli, 2001: 5).

As a counter to this, it is noted that Orton and Weick, writing 10 years before Fusarelli, both acknowledged that ‘to state that an organisation is loosely coupled is the beginning of a discussion, not the end. What elements are loosely coupled? What domains are they coupled on?’ (Orton and Weick, 1990: 219). However, this does not go far enough for Fusarelli who, with regard to school effectiveness and improvement concluded that the concept of loose coupling is now ‘misleading, simplistic and of little value to policymakers seeking to improve schooling’ (Fusarelli, 2001: 2).

Lowe Boyd *et al.* (2001) point out that schools actually combine elements of *both* loose and tight coupling. It is not a new idea that organisations need simultaneous loose-tight properties (Peters and Waterman, 1982) though Lowe Boyd *et al.* (2001) found that theory and practice seldom cope with this reality. Cuban (1979) summarised this polarity found in schools, which is apt in looking at paired schools that may be quite different to each other in terms of ‘loose’ and ‘tight’.

Schools as organisations are rational and irrational, bureaucratic and unbureaucratic, loosely structured and tightly structured, open to change and closed to change and vulnerable and invulnerable. These dualities often occur at the same time. (Cuban, 1979: 179)

More recent research (Lowe Boyd *et al.*, 2001) has called for a new focus upon both tight and loose couplings or linkages. Some elements in common will be ‘tightly connected’ and others will be ‘loosely coupled’, for the various kinds of links depend on the nature of the subcultures found.

Restructuring – a key to effective leadership and management?

Since the establishment of the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) in 1992, and the Independent Schools Inspectorate (ISI) in 1999, all independent schools have been assessed regularly on their capability to manage change and review their own targets, with a growing awareness of the importance of value-added performance. This has led to many reappraising how they can improve school effectiveness in terms of student outcomes through changes in organisational structure and management. Throughout the 1990s, a new way of looking at school structure and effectiveness developed, known as ‘restructuring’. Sashkin and Egermeier (1992) give a commonly agreed definition.

Restructuring involves changes in roles, rules and relationships between and among students and teachers, ..., all with the aim of improving student outcomes.
(Sashkin and Egermeier, 1992: 3)

Poster (1999) reported that schools were moving away from a focus on reform, which was common in the 1970s and 1980s, to one of restructuring. This may be because ‘restructuring acknowledges the inherent loose coupling of educational organisation and the necessity for counter balancing this natural lack of systemic unity of effort and purpose’ (Corbett, 1991: 22). So restructuring possibly provides a framework to deal with the inherent loose structure of a school.

The relevance of the literature on restructuring, to this study, is that the predominant component of restructuring referred to, is change in the organisational and governance structure, with teachers as leaders (Murphy, 1991). Poster (1999) calls for new systems of governance, new structures and strategies, which ‘visualise a holistic structure for continuous improvement’ (Poster, 1999: 52). With regard to researching pairs of linked schools, this means looking for aspects of restructuring that cross over into both schools.

Though some researchers regard restructuring as the key to effective school management, it is not without its critics. Watt (1989) and Elmore (1988a) claim that it could have negative consequences for some children due to loss of equity among schools. It has also been found that certain aspects of restructuring are not necessarily linked to improved effectiveness (Elmore, 1988b; Cohen, 1989; Murphy, 1991).

GOVERNANCE

The purpose of governance in schools

Douglas (2001) argues that the focus of governors generally should be to act as a lay body, representative of the local community, in contrast to those who, he says 'seek to professionalise governing bodies in pursuit of other supposed functions' (Douglas, 2001: 9). Though he stresses that the idea of acting on behalf of the community is just an underlying idea of the true purpose of governance, which includes responsibilities such as the finance, curriculum and staffing, it illustrates the key difference to governance in independent schools, which does not necessarily set out to be representative of any group of stakeholders.

However, governors' responsibilities listed in the School Governor's Manual (Croner, 1999: 1-103), on issues such as planning, pastoral care, staffing, premises, marketing and finance, apply to all schools regardless of status. The following quote, from a governors' guide to the law published by the Department for Education and Employment, supports the idea that this is also true of the role of governance in promoting school effectiveness.

The governing body have a general responsibility for seeing that the school is run effectively,...so that it provides the best possible education for its pupils.

(DfEE, 1997: 15)

Dean's (2001: 18-19) division of governors' roles into five categories (strategic, executive, monitoring, critical friend, accountability) is helpful in producing a set of generic responsibilities for all governing bodies, which

means that the research into governance in the state sector may still have relevant lessons for this study.

The School Standards and Framework Act 1998 (GB. Statutes, 1998 c.31) designed to promote school improvement, redefined the role of school governing bodies, with implications for all schools. Sallis (2001) argues that this approach removes the traditional boundary between ‘governance’ and ‘management’ in separating the role of governing bodies from that of the school. She proposed that governors should carry responsibility for the strategic management while heads have executive responsibility for smooth day-to-day running (Sallis, 2001: 32). This may seem a radical idea to many heads though it is more an appeal by Sallis for an improved vocabulary to help define relationships with respect to governors’ roles and boundaries. Nevertheless, it is unlikely to be an accepted interpretation in independent schools even though ISC Guidelines remind them that ‘the line between management and governance cannot... be rigidly defined’ (ISC, 2002: Section C18). Traditionally, governors of independent schools have rarely been involved in management, since they usually delegate significant strategic and day-to-day autonomy to the head.

Dean (2001) concluded that governors can really make a difference (Dean, 2001: 134), but an Audit Commission (1990) study had found that only 10 to 25 per cent of time was spent on performance review and policy making, the precise areas in which the Commission felt governors could make a difference. Holt and Hinds (1994) made the same point that governors need to spend more time contributing to the effectiveness of the school. This criticism may be applicable in independent schools with governors having other priorities as outlined in the next section.

The role and responsibilities of governors in independent schools

In their guidelines for governors, ISC points out that ‘there are significant differences in the powers and responsibilities of governors as between the independent and publicly funded – or maintained – sectors.’ (ISC 2002: Introduction). Independent schools owned by a proprietor operate as

businesses with governors, if there are any, operating according to the regulations that apply to the director of any business. However, governors of most independent schools, including all those in this study, are ‘charity trustees’ referred to in the Charities Act 1993 as ‘persons having the general control and management of the administration of a charity’ (GB. Statutes, 1993 c.10 Section 97 (1)).

Currently ‘most independent schools are supervised by the Charity Commissioners ... to ensure that the ... trustees take no action which would damage the charity’ (Partington *et al.*, 1998: 23). As a charity, anyone with a financial interest may not be a governor, which in many independent schools normally rules out teachers and parents, two key stakeholder groups who, according to Wragg and Partington (1995: 64) play a part in making a governing body effective ‘to facilitate the successful running of the school’.

It follows that governing bodies of unincorporated independent schools or those with permanent endowments, as is the case for some in this study, are likely to view their role from a perspective different from those in a state school, since they are accountable to the Charity Commission. This may have implications for their role in granting autonomy to the school and in promoting school effectiveness. Furthermore, it also means that much of the literature on governance in the state sector does not directly apply to independent schools and needs careful interpretation.

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IN RELATION TO LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT

Key characteristics of effective schools

The unambiguous finding from three decades of studies across the world (Brookover *et al.*, 1979; Rutter *et al.*, 1979; Mortimore *et al.*, 1988; Scheerens, 1997b) is that schools do indeed make a difference.

(MacBeath and Mortimore, 2001: 6)

Rutter's publication *Fifteen Thousand Hours* in 1979 was among the first of numerous studies into school effectiveness, which have since confirmed, to varying degrees and in a variety of ways, that 'schools do indeed make a difference' (MacBeath and Mortimore, 2001: 6). Making a difference in this context refers to the effect schools have on student outcomes, relative to their ability and background.

Tizard's (1988) study about successful infant and nursery schools, the analysis by Mortimore *et al.* (1988) of successful junior schools and research by Smith and Tomlinson (1989) of inner-city secondary schools, all confirm Rutter's list of characteristics of effective schools, which affirm that 'ethos, leadership, staff attitudes and pupil involvement all make a difference' (Brighouse and Woods, 1999: 10).

However, school effectiveness studies are not without their critics (Preece, 1989; Firestone, 1991) who question the validity of an agreed list of characteristics of effective schools. Whilst some researchers assume that effective schools can be differentiated from ineffective ones, others are of the opinion that 'there is no consensus yet on just what constitutes an effective school' (Reid *et al.*, 1987: 22).

Nevertheless a detailed review by Scheerens and Bosker (1997) of school effectiveness research listed the many factors found in studies and Sammons *et al.* (1996) reduced these to 11 salient factors. A further review by Sammons *et al.* (1997) listed the same 11 factors, shown in Figure 3.1. Reid's criticism is supported by Myers (1996) who argues that it is not simply a matter of listing characteristics since it does not follow that ineffective schools are characterised by lacking these 11 features. However, this list is not intended to be exhaustive and the factors are not independent of each other but merely ' a summary of relevant research evidence... for those concerned with promoting school effectiveness...' (Sammons *et al.*, 1997: 89)

1. *Professional leadership*
2. *Shared vision and goals*
3. *A learning environment*
4. *Concentration on teaching and learning*
5. *Purposeful teaching*
6. *High expectations*
7. *Positive reinforcement*
8. *Monitoring progress*
9. *Pupil rights and responsibilities*
10. *Home-school partnership*
11. *A learning organisation*

Figure 3.1 Eleven factors for effective schools
(Source Salmons *et al.*, 1997: 92)

There are, of course, exceptions to the 'rule' and Sammons *et al.* (1998a) have recently found some contrary evidence. Nevertheless, given that the factors are common to numerous seminal studies and are only intended to be a non-exhaustive general summary, which should not be applied mechanistically without reference to a school's context, this list of key characteristics of effective schools is a sound basis for this study in analysing the effect of autonomy.

The wealth of literature on school effectiveness confirms that schools can and do make a difference, with effective schools often displaying the characteristics listed in Figure 3.1. However, there is less agreement on *how* to make a school more effective. A school effectiveness study by Sammons *et al.* (1998b) looking at case studies of schools found general support for the kind of factors listed in Figure 3.1, but reminded researchers of the need for more research into the *processes* related to school effectiveness. Indeed, this major study of 94 schools pointed out that educational research 'can clarify views, and elucidate further questions but seldom define precise relationships' (Sammons *et al.*, 1998b: 308).

Mortimore (1991) defined effective schools as those in which students progress further than might be expected, in relation to their intake. Researchers generally agree that the concept of producing 'value added' is the key to being effective (McPherson, 1992; Scheerens, 1992; Creemers, 1994). Therefore, to investigate the means by which governors, heads and teachers can improve the value added performance of pupils is to gain insight into improving school effectiveness. In considering the effect of organisational structure and autonomy on school effectiveness, the definition of an effective school as one which 'adds extra value to its students' outcomes in comparison with other schools serving similar intakes' (Sammons *et al.*, 1997: 82) is apposite.

Leadership – a key to effectiveness?

First of all leadership is not all down to the headteacher,
....The first rule about leadership is that it is shared.

(Brighouse and Woods, 1999: 45)

The literature confirms the strong link between leadership at all levels and effective, improving schools, but different styles of successful leadership can be associated with effectiveness. The styles of the various levels of leadership within the same school may also differ, though this study focussed on the leadership of the head. Studies have shown that even though leadership is shared, it is the head's leadership which is a key factor in ensuring effectiveness (Gray, 1990).

Differing styles of leadership show a consistent commitment to a few, important common principles (Holmes, 1993). Sammons *et al.* (1997) conclude that the literature reveals the following three main characteristics of effective leadership:

- 1) Strength of purpose,
- 2) Involving other staff in decision-making,
- 3) Professional authority in the processes of teaching and learning.

Cheng's (1996) analysis of perspectives and models of leadership proposes that there is no proper definition of leadership but nevertheless concludes that there are two basic characteristics of leadership to observe:

- 1) Leadership related to the process of influencing others' behaviour,
- 2) Leadership related to goal development and achievement.

The above five characteristics describe aspects of transformational leadership; a theory of leadership developed by Sergiovanni (1995) to meet the uncertain demands of schooling in the 20th century and to meet the loose structuring which characterises schools today. The 'promise of transformational leadership for its proponents is that it will assist organisational leaders to add value and to secure peak performance...' (Gronn, 1999: 119). However, though the importance of leadership is accepted, its actual influence on school effectiveness is far from clear.

Leithwood *et al.* (1999) concluded from 20 studies on the effects of transformational leadership that evidence was found relating to various categories of outcomes, but the effects on students remained unproven and 'there is no empirical evidence for this leadership model (or others) having a direct impact' (Gunter, 2001: 55). Hallinger and Heck (1999) in reviewing 42 studies on leadership, published during 1990-1995, reached the same conclusion that the impact of leadership on outcomes, or effectiveness, is not only inconclusive but, 'school leaders do not make effective schools' (Hallinger and Heck, 1999: 185).

Possibly as result of schools being smaller, research in the primary sector often stresses the value of shared decision-making, a sense of ownership and unity of purpose. Day *et al.* (1998) in looking at leadership in primary schools reflected that schools are becoming more decentralised, independent and autonomous, which calls for leadership through co-operation rather than dominance.

School effectiveness and leadership: the role of the head

Most studies on school effectiveness, at both primary and secondary level, show that leadership is a key factor to bring about value-added and hence improved effectiveness. Indeed, Gray (1990) points out that there is no evidence of effective schools with weak leadership and in Britain and America this invariably implies the importance of the head's role (Brookover *et al.*, 1979; Stringfield and Teddlie, 1987; Caul, 1994; Sammons *et al.*, 1994). Even though the literature stresses the need to share leadership, the importance of the head's leadership is a very significant finding in many research studies on the characteristics of effective schools (Gray, 1990).

A recent survey of successful schools carried out by the National Commission for Education also found that 'no evidence of effectiveness in a school with weak leadership has emerged from any of the reviews of research' (NCE 1995: 335). Therefore, in looking for the effect of autonomy on school effectiveness, it is relevant to consider how varying kinds and degrees of autonomy influence the effectiveness and style of the head's leadership.

Reynolds and Teddlie (2000) balance the rather negative conclusion of Hallinger and Heck (1999) and give further weight to the importance of the head, in concluding,

we do not know of a study that has not shown that leadership is important within effective schools, with that leadership nearly always being provide by the headteacher (Reynolds and Teddlie, 2000: 141).

This supports the aim in this study to focus on the leadership aspirations of, and interactions between, the heads of paired schools.

Doing things right – managing for effectiveness

Cheng (1996) regards school-based management, or autonomy, as a means to improving school effectiveness for it 'can provide the necessary condition for facilitating schools to achieve multiple goals and maximize

effectiveness...'(Cheng, 1996: 63). Leadership is a key factor for an effective school, but as indicated by Cheng it operates through, and seeks to influence, a particular management style. Contingency theory (Stacey, 1997) proposes that different styles of leadership can be equally effective depending on how they fit into, and adapt to, a given context. Similarly, management styles and practices need to fit the organisational context and culture of a school if effectiveness is to be maximised.

The measure of success in a school is often linked to its use of management structures in empowering others to be leaders at all levels. Good leadership is vital but so is good management, with emphasis on teams, which puts vision into practice, for 'leadership and team working are at the core of managing people, the most important resource in...educational management...central to effective performance within schools...' (Crawford, 1997: 1).

This emphasis on managing through teamwork, for increased effectiveness, is supported by Hopkins *et al.* (1994) who found evidence of two conditions for school improvement: involvement and co-ordination. Fullan (1993) and Whitaker (1993) also described the power of involvement and teamwork to develop a shared vision and implement strategies for effectiveness. However, Brundrett (1998) described the difficulties, practical and philosophical, in achieving collegiality in large schools and the need for consensus. Supporting this view, Fullan (1993) was more specific in his support for managing through teams, explaining that collaboration does not mean consensus and that it is high levels of interaction between managers, rather than collegiality, which bring results. This all supports emphasis on involvement and co-ordination (Hopkins *et al.*, 1994) in the day-to-day aspects of school management to improve school effectiveness.

Much of the literature refers to good leadership and management as empowering others. However, a counter to this readily accepted idea is given by Binney and Williams (1997) who propose that it is not possible to

empower people but it is very easy to disempower them by the normal everyday workings of the organisation.

Weak management can easily undermine the good work of strong leadership and in looking for evidence of school effectiveness one must look for leadership and management complementing each another. The literature confirms that it is necessary both 'to do the right things' (leadership) and 'to do things right' (management) (Bennis and Nanus, 1985) to be an effective school. How the right kind and degree of autonomy can influence this is the focus of this study.

SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS IN RELATION TO AUTONOMY AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE

School effectiveness – links with autonomy

The case for autonomy is frequently linked to school improvement and 'argued on the basis of findings from studies of school effectiveness' (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988: 8). Throughout the early 1990s the supporters of grant maintained (GM) schools, local management of schools (LMS) and greater school autonomy argued that the shift in decision-making together with devolved criteria power would result in improved school effectiveness. However, more recent research (Whitty *et al.*, 1998: 111) concludes that there is insufficient evidence to claim that autonomous schools enhance learning. Levačić (1995) also found little evidence that changes in autonomy through LMS had improved teaching and learning and Thomas and Martin (1996: 28) made the point that 'delegation is no guarantee of improvement'.

An international study by Bullock and Thomas (1997), into the effects on schools of decentralisation, interpreted autonomy in relation to the individual learner, the educator and the institution. This approach revealed evidence that decentralisation empowers heads to exert autonomy over resources, impacting on teachers and educators, but there was no evidence of its significance for learners in assessing overall school effectiveness. Contrary to earlier shifts towards ever increasing autonomy Bullock and

Thomas (1997) found that the majority of heads no longer want any greater autonomy, but they welcome their current responsibility and delegated authority over school services. In summary, their findings showed that autonomy is valued but they failed to establish a link between decentralisation and improved standards.

Perhaps this is not so surprising since two major school effectiveness studies in England (Rutter *et al.*, 1979; Mortimore *et al.*, 1988) demonstrated that schools can be very successful and highly effective without being autonomous. Of course, they may have been even more successful with autonomy.

Contrary to these findings, Beare *et al.* (1992) reported that there are causal links between autonomy and effectiveness that allow generalizations to be made about successful change in schools. They quoted as evidence the findings of Miles (1987) based on survey data from 170 schools and case studies of five schools; an approach similar to this study. School autonomy was one of the 16 recognised factors that can lead to improved effectiveness. Miles (1987) suggested that autonomy is specifically linked to effectiveness through causal relationships with 'control over staffing' and 'control over resources'. Furthermore, the resulting model for school management recommended by Beare *et al.*, the 'Collaborative School Management Cycle' (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988: 22), is only effective subject to 'a large measure of school autonomy, including some control over staffing and resources' (Beare *et al.*, 1992: 149).

More recent studies support the general idea of a link between autonomy and collaborative cultures (Jenkins, 1997), which in turn are thought by some to lead to improved effectiveness (Hargreaves, 1997: 248). However, despite this support for autonomy leading to effectiveness other recent research (Sackney and Dibsiki, 1995) argues that autonomy or school based management (SBM) has made little difference to the culture. Others (Caldwell, 1994) have found that 'increased effectiveness is not contingent on SBM' (Jenkins, 1997: 206). Whitty *et al.* (1998: 112) reached a similar

conclusion that the characteristics of effective schools are not found in self-managing schools more than others.

The link between SBM and effectiveness may depend on the competence of a particular head to make a collaborative culture work, assuming that autonomy or SBM leads towards collaborative management. This assumption is challenged by Levačić's (1995) analysis of autonomy in LMS and its influence on effective schooling. Recent research appears to confirm that autonomy can influence culture but to generalise this as leading to increased effectiveness is less certain.

Dimmock (1993) and Brown (1990) found evidence of SBM or autonomy fostering many of the features associated with school effectiveness. However, Dimmock is cautious in suggesting a causal relationship concluding from his research that 'simply allowing schools autonomy ...does not guarantee improvement in performance' (Dimmock, 1993: 4). Improved effectiveness is, he suggests, more related to how a school responds to the opportunities created by increased autonomy, which supports this study's emphasis on the influence of autonomy on the processes involved in leadership and management.

Responding effectively to greater autonomy would seem to imply allowing decisions to be taken by those nearest to the factors influencing student outcomes and therefore most competent to prioritise. Bell and Bush (2002) argue that the main assumption in support of autonomy is that national or centralised decision-makers can only prioritise on what they perceive to be local need, which must be less effective than leaving it to heads and governors implementing policy to improve what they know needs doing. This is a common argument in the literature supporting autonomy. Studies in several countries have concluded that a greater autonomy in schools can lead to improved effectiveness and therefore a better use of resources in relation to student outcomes (Thomas and Martin, 1996: 28). It is important though to balance this with studies referred to above which found no links, for as Bell and Bush (2002) pointed out, there are alternative views.

Ball (1994) and Smyth (1996) argue that some governments may promote decentralisation in the implementation of nationally set policies as a way of deflecting criticism away from government to the individual schools. Though there may be an element of truth in the view that the decentralisation of power is both illusory and not always intended primarily to be linked to increased effectiveness, it is a minority and somewhat sceptical stance. Contrary to this, there is increasing evidence that autonomy, when used appropriately, can improve effectiveness. Indeed, according to Caldwell the growing understanding of the links between autonomy or self-management and learning outcomes is such that 'we are very close to a theory of learning in the self-managing school' (Caldwell, 2002: 46).

It is also the case that literature on centralised, bureaucratic systems, as in South America, reveals many problems of ineffectiveness brought about by central control and a lack of autonomy (Newland, 1995). These problems, such as a discouragement of local innovation in teaching and learning and a lack of parental involvement in educational decisions, are to some extent avoided through self-management or localised autonomy (Bell and Bush, 2002).

Attempts to answer the question 'Is autonomy effective?' clearly involve making value judgements about schools (Levačić, 2002). Essentially this is the extent to which student outcomes exceed expectations relative to other schools and factors involved (Teddlie *et al.*, 2000). A school is effective if it achieves its objectives, without regard to the cost of the resources used. However, greater autonomy gives more control over resources and cost allocation so it is likely that in assessing the effectiveness of school autonomy one is indirectly commenting on its efficiency. Autonomy over finance introduces the dimension of value for money, which is only achieved if a school is both effective and efficient.

A detailed analysis of autonomy and efficiency is outside the scope of this study but some aspects of school efficiency are likely to form part of a

judgment on effectiveness. Levin's (1997) division of efficiency in schools into two elements, productive and allocative, is helpful. Productive efficiency measures educational output relative to the resources, whereas allocative efficiency refers to the degree of providing what parents want. A self-managed school using its autonomy effectively will aim to have a balance between productive and allocative efficiency.

Levačić (2002) argues that increased autonomy can raise productive efficiency and in the private sector could promote allocative efficiency. Other research supports the idea that SBM improves the efficiency with which schools use resources. (Audit Commission, 1993; Bullock and Thomas, 1994; Maychell, 1994; Levačić, 1995, 1998). Since it is often assumed that the efficient management of resources will achieve educational objectives, it follows that greater autonomy may be expected to lead to some increase in effectiveness.

Research in the United States and England by Davies and Hentschke (1998) looked at the degree of decentralisation and real autonomy in decision-making. Their analysis of categories of management decisions stressed the need for caution in assessing autonomy. The complexity of managerial decision-making may be disguising merely the decentralisation of administration as decentralised autonomous decision-making, which could lead to false conclusions in looking for links between autonomy and improved student outcomes.

In summary, researchers differ in their views on a causal relationship between degrees of autonomy and school effectiveness, with some supporting the notion and others more sceptical. However, the literature generally supports the idea that, even though these concepts may not be mutually dependent, in certain circumstances, with appropriate personnel and a receptive culture, greater autonomy of the right kind can indeed lead to improved effectiveness.

School effectiveness and organisational structure

Chubb and Moe (1990) measured school effectiveness in terms of student progress in standardised tests and also measured aspects of schools as organisations from survey data, as in this study. They found that after student ability, school organisation factors are the most important for determining a student's progress (Chubb and Moe, 1990). Levačić's (1995) summary of their work highlighted that the organisational variables associated with effectiveness were also linked explicitly to autonomous decision-making, supporting other claims that 'effectively organized schools have more decision-making autonomy compared with ineffectively organized ones' (Levačić, 1995: 54).

Butler (1991) defined organisational structure as the enduring set of decision rules provided by an organisation, explaining that organisational structure 'provides capacity for decision-making... :fuzzy structures lead to high decision-making...(and); crisp structures lead to low decision-making...' (Butler, 1991: 12). Levačić's claim that effective structures are likely to promote autonomous decision-making implies that fuzzy rather than crisp organisational structures may be more effective. If a school is regarded as an open systems model (Morgan, 1986), which depicts an organisation as a complex living organism interacting with its environment, then contingency theory supports these findings that 'fuzzy' is best. Contrary to this, Bennett (2001) points out that more recent literature on management in schools stresses that they are also rational systems, pursuing goals, targets and tasks through a mechanistic approach to change.

Cheng's (1996) approach supports the idea that schools are both rational and open systems, with fuzzy structures constantly responding to the external environment but also incorporating more formal, fixed structures fulfilling core tasks through routine procedures. Essentially 'structures ... should be seen as dynamic entities' (Bennett, 2001: 103) and Cheng's eight models of effectiveness reflect 'the different aspects of the dynamic process of a school struggling for survival and effectiveness' (Cheng, 1996: 38).

This study therefore expected to find organisational structure influencing school effectiveness through the kind of decision-making it allows. However, since all structures change and fuzzy structures, which are difficult to observe, are likely to be effective, the study did not expect to find a straightforward link between school effectiveness and school structure. Indeed, research by Chrispeels (1993) and Chubb and Moe (1990) suggests that structure may be more related to the environment, with its impact on effectiveness depending on the social context of the school.

Effective organisational structures in schools aim to support and improve the overall quality of the management and leadership and student outcomes. West-Burnham (1997) explored the idea of managing quality in a school as a means to improve effectiveness and considered generic factors likely to influence a quality management approach. One factor is the way in which responsibilities are shared, with delegation of decision-making through the logic of a school's hierarchy or organisational structure. He argues that it is the culture of the school, or its personality, which influences effectiveness since the 'central theme of a quality culture is continuous improvement' (West-Burnham, 1997: 98). A culture for learning is enhanced through structures that encourage delegation and provide the 'conditions for lots of freedom and lots of interconnection' (Pinchot and Pinchot, 1994: 64). This concept of a school needing to become an 'intelligent organisation' (West-Burnham, 1997: 107), one which distributes choice and decision-making to engage the talents of all its members, supports the view that structures need to be flexible and responsive.

Organisational structure can either inhibit or encourage power sharing, which leads to different levels of decentralised decision-making. Since the literature suggests that this is linked to increased effectiveness, understanding the underlying structure could give insight into factors for school effectiveness. However, this is difficult to establish. The more complex a structure, the greater the ambiguity in 'who decides what', described by Noble and Pym (1989: 33) as the 'receding locus of power', a feeling that decisions are taken 'elsewhere'. This is partly why researchers

often refer to organisational structure in schools as problematical when viewed from the perspective of ambiguity theory (Bush, 2002a), suggesting that it is difficult to establish identifiable links between structure and effectiveness.

Weick's (1976) theory of a loose coupling of subcultures within an organisation's structure also applies to decision-making in relation to resources at the departmental level (Anderson, 2002), which is relevant to understanding delegated autonomy. The budget setting in a school, despite usually following a rational approach, does not always consider how learning outcomes will be achieved (Levačić, 2000). However, decisions about obtaining resources at department level are usually based directly on student needs and outcomes. An organisational structure needs to be aware of, and support, such loose coupling as a means of devolving autonomy to improve effectiveness.

Barton and Foley (2001) restructured their community college around learning and stripped away layers of management to replace a rigid hierarchical model with groups of teams centred on teaching team leaders. This is an example of using organisational structure to re-focus the status and influence of decision-making, empowering teachers to improve school effectiveness. It is too early to assess critically their success, but even they conclude that the 'process is not fundamentally about structures... it is about ethos... Changing structures, in other words, is an important route to changing ethos' (Barton and Foley, 2001: 74). Nevertheless, though organisational culture and ethos are increasingly seen as factors in improving effectiveness regardless of the underlying structure, this supports the idea that a school's structure is still important in determining the culture to bring improvement. In other words, organisational structure and school effectiveness may be indirectly related.

The structure will also determine a school's leadership density, 'the extent to which leadership roles are shared and the extent to which leadership is broadly exercised' (Sergiovanni, 1987: 122), or its degree of a shared

leadership culture. Hallinger and Heck's (2003) research has shown that new variables are linking leadership to school effectiveness compared to findings in earlier research into effective schools. These include a shared mission and greater participation by teachers in decision-making, a view supported by Leithwood *et al.* (1998). Other factors are teamwork and collaborative patterns of working. This supports the view that organisational structure may be a factor in influencing effectiveness.

Smith's (2002a) analysis of primary schools revealed that 'primary schools have all kinds of structures in place' (Smith, 2002a: 76) supporting the idea of a school embracing several sub-structures each with their own culture. The whole school may aim to be structured as consensual and collegial but individual sub-structures may operate in a hierarchical or autocratic manner. Smith (2002a) agrees with earlier research findings (Chubb and Moe, 1990; Chrispeels, 1993) that the overall organisational structure will be influenced by external factors such as the kind of school (Church, Voluntary Aided, State, Linked to a senior school) and catchment area (small rural versus large urban).

Smith (2002a) concludes that organisational structure is dependent on the interrelationship between all the internal and external structures and the 'balance of the individual and the organisation' (Smith, 2002a: 77). Therefore, to improve school effectiveness through re-structuring needs an understanding of the parameters and factors determining structure and the ability to recognise having to work within a structure that may not be the ideal choice. Whichever structure is used, the evidence suggests that to be effective it must communicate clear aims, share power and be geared to making worthwhile decisions (HMI, 1977; Smith, 2002a).

In his earlier study on successful schools, Smith (1998) analysed the characteristics of effective schools and compared them with the characteristics of strong organisational cultures (Smith, 2002b: 15). The results add further weight to the evidence that for a school to be effective it has to have an organisational structure which embodies core values, reflects

widely shared beliefs, promotes teamwork in decision-making and balances autonomy and authority.

Not all educators and politicians agree on the importance of structure. The slogan 'standards not structures' emerged as one of New Labour's priorities along with 'education, education, and education' (Caldwell and Spinks, 1998: 109). In summary, this referred to new initiatives focusing on the achievement of high standards for all students. Building on Barber's (1996) research, New Labour set up the Standards and Effectiveness Unit in 1997. Effectiveness was to be seen in terms of standards but the slogan 'standards not structures' gave the impression that structures were somehow not linked to effectiveness. Individual learning outcomes were the driving force behind improving standards without reference to the organisational structure or its bureaucratic processes.

However, as Handy (1997) pointed out, organisations as well as individuals have to decide what they are, or how they are structured, before they decide what they have to do. This is behind the concept of the school as a learning organisation and the counterpart to learning outcomes for students is the question 'What and how should the school learn?'. Senge (1990) suggested that a learning school is one disciplined to use systems thinking, team learning and a shared vision. Johnston's (1997) research into Senge's characteristics of a learning school highlighted collaborative structures and inclusive professional development programmes as factors promoting a learning organisation. Telford's (1996) earlier work on collaborative structures found similar results.

Structure can therefore influence the learning capability or 'intelligence' of a school. MacGilchrist *et al.* (1997) adapted Gardner's (1983) idea of multiple intelligences to describe a school's intelligence. Collegial intelligence, or the capacity of staff and others to work together to improve practice is just one of the nine intelligences proposed and it is likely to be related to a collegial and collaborative structure.

In summary, perhaps a better slogan would be ‘structure and standards’ for the literature shows that clear organisational structure can promote a school as a learning community with multiple intelligences, which improves standards, learning outcomes and therefore overall, school effectiveness.

The influence of culture and leadership on effectiveness and structure

Recent research suggests that improvement is best achieved by developing individuals, delegating responsibility and dispersing authority within the school (Day *et al.*, 2000; Harris, 2003). Such findings support earlier research by Hopkins *et al.* (1996) who found that successful schools often have collaborative environments, which encourage involvement and professional development. Essentially organisational structure is not seen as control but rather a means of empowering others. A key factor in this is power sharing or leadership density. The concept of leadership density or the degree to which leadership is distributed (Gunter, 2001: 55) is particularly relevant to this study in which pairs of heads seek to share or negotiate autonomy.

If improved school effectiveness can result from the decisions of individuals, with localised autonomy at all levels of management, then their empowerment within the organisation becomes an important issue. Furthermore, it follows that the culture they embrace or promote will be influential and some research refers to effective delegated leadership as the generation of culture (Bush, 1998), focusing on beliefs and values, the informal aspects of an organisation. Structures as well as individuals have to operate within a culture, which influences the implementation of policies. Understanding the culture is a way to assess the structure but this is far from straightforward, for many beliefs are so deeply buried that the individuals may not even be conscious of them (Nias *et al.*, 1989). Such theories counter the rational and bureaucratic theories seeking to explain the influence of organisational structure.

All school structures in the UK, and nearly all worldwide, have one thing in common, a head or principal. Since schools that sustain effectiveness are

often led by heads who are 'transformative' rather than 'transactional' (Day, 2003) their style is likely to encourage a particular structure. The literature supports the idea that effective principals, in the sense of improving school effectiveness, tend not to be autocratic or controlling but share power or empower others, having engaged in reflection which is values-based (Blasé and Anderson, 1995; Stoll and Fink, 1996; Day *et al.*, 2000). Such styles of leadership are people centred rather than organisation orientated (Harris, 2003: 73), seeking to transform and promote a culture rather than impose and maintain a hierarchical structure. This supports the idea of needing to understand culture and cultural change in order to evaluate a structure's effectiveness.

Hopkins and Jackson (2003) point out that within any culture structures need to adapt and reshape for people to take responsibility. They argue for the development of internal networks to promote collaboration, linkages and multifunctional partnerships, thus challenging traditional hierarchical system structures. Gronn is another advocate of this, referring to distributed leadership as 'an idea whose time has come' (Gronn, 2000: 333). However, to distribute leadership either vertically or laterally is problematic due to power relationships and organisational barriers.

The call for internal networks to challenge vertical structures has also been proposed by Fullan (2000), who refers to them as cross-over structures. This is closely related to Weick's (1976) view of an organisation as a set of loosely coupled subcultures but calls for a certain co-ordination and tightening of the loose coupling. Such findings support that for schools to become more effective they need to have organisational structures that normalise collaborative learning and make leadership widely available, unrelated to role status. Harris refers to a new paradigm emerging, 'one that is premised upon leadership capability of the many, rather than the few' (Harris, 2003: 81).

In researching the contribution of leadership to school improvement, Hallinger and Heck (2003) highlighted the interplay between organisational

structure and social structures within the school. Social structures (Ogawa and Bossert, 1995) or relationships between individuals partly determine the underlying culture so it is not surprising that they can be used by principals to move the school forward. The role of the principal involves making organisational and social structures work on behalf of the students.

The literature supports the idea that, for improved effectiveness, such structures must create a common purpose amongst staff within a framework of collegiality and collaboration. Empirical studies in various countries have shown that a common characteristic of a high achieving school is having an organisational structure that facilitates collaboration among staff around a shared culture (Heck, 1993; Cheng, 1994; Leithwood, 1994).

Autonomy and structure – possible links

This study's working definition of autonomy in schools relates it to decision-making with regard to allocating resources. Since organisational structure is about 'roles and responsibilities... in short, who does what, when and how. ...taking decisions and organising who works with whom' (Smith, 2002b: 6), it is reasonable to expect that autonomy and structure are linked.

Degrees of autonomy will be found within a structure and external factors granting autonomy to a school indirectly determine aspects of the operating structure. Hanushek (1997) introduced into this dependency the concept of accountability, concluding that autonomy is not effective unless the structure has clear objectives and holds people accountable. Increased autonomy for improved effectiveness therefore brings with it the need for greater accountability (Wohlstetter and Sebring, 2000). Furthermore, since accountability is 'often the engine of policy: (and) what is held to account is what counts' (Cotter, 2000: 12), it is an important link between autonomy and structure. Describing degrees of autonomy explains 'who' is accountable for 'what' and analysing structure can help explain 'how' accountability is monitored and assessed.

Caldwell (2002) refers to an accountability framework emerging in what he calls the 'second generation' of studies which focus more on student performance and the effects of structural change and governance. Within this focus, the management of resources is recognised as a key factor in improving student outcomes (Levine and Lezotte, 1990; Thomas and Martin, 1996; Anderson, 2002). Resource management must operate within both a structural framework and also an ethos or culture supporting a particular degree of autonomy and be influenced by their interaction.

If accountability is to operate effectively then lines of accountability need to be clearly understood, which means that the management and organisational structure must be well defined and rational. Hierarchical structures operate easily understood lines of accountability but can inhibit localised autonomy and this tension may deny a school the benefits of local decision-making on student outcomes.

In addition to schools having internal organisational structures influenced by decentralisation, they are also inter-connected by a national overarching structure through centralisation. Glatter (1998) argues that such structures are crucial if the system as a whole is to improve. However, managing the balance between centralisation and decentralisation, or overarching structure and localised autonomy, is likely to be a key factor in improving overall effectiveness. Too much decentralisation, or autonomy, together with other pressures such as market forces and fragmented governance, 'can easily turn 'the self-governing school' into the 'self-centred' school' (Glatter, 1998: 211). This also raises issues of equity since independence can lead to inequality but this is beyond the scope of this study.

The organisational structure of a school must take account of, and involve, its stakeholders. However, increasing their influence can bring a pressure to reduce professional autonomy and power (Simpkins, 1997). In schools with increased autonomy the role of local stakeholders can become more clearly defined and necessary, so the increased autonomy of the school can paradoxically reduce the professional autonomy and power of the teachers.

Structures can empower individuals, formalise delegated decision-making and influence autonomy. Equally, according to Barton and Foley (2001), they can stifle a new teacher's passion for teaching. A school setting is invariably an environment of institutional rules, regulations, control and authority. The structure, particularly in a large secondary school, is likely to follow the traditional pyramidal hierarchy and the challenge is to 'give autonomy and accountability to small, tight-knit teaching teams' (Barton and Foley, 2001: 65).

An emphasis on autonomous teams within structures is highlighted by West-Burnham's (1997) research into effective strategies for school-based improvement through focussing on school improvement. It suggests that the value of autonomy within a structure is apparent in planning for a total quality management approach to structuring a school. Structures that facilitate the functioning of autonomous teams with real and effective delegation are characteristic of quality schools (West-Burnham, 1997: 100-03).

Whilst this may be easier to manage in small primary schools the trend is also developing in secondary schools. As secondary schools restructure and move away from hierarchical control to peer control it allows teacher leadership and autonomy to develop. Authority becomes dispersed amongst the teachers but around the core of a shared understanding and common purpose (Harris, 2003).

West *et al.* (2000) describe this view of delegated teacher leadership as federal. It is 'both tight and loose; tight on values, but loose on the freedom to act...' (West *et al.*, 2000: 39). The idea is that by balancing this loose-tight relationship, essentially between autonomy to act and structural control, schools can improve student outcomes and become more effective.

KEY ISSUES ARISING FROM THE LITERATURE

There is an overall shortage of literature and empirical research in the independent sector and particularly across its junior and senior divisions.

Furthermore, recent research in the independent sector tends to focus on assessment and value added performance in relation to public examinations and league tables.

Much of the literature on autonomy tends to be in the context of a school and its relation to a local education authority or central government, rather than, as in this study, one school in relation to another. Autonomy is related to governance and in addition to a shortage of literature on this in the independent sector, the structures of governing bodies in independent schools can be very different to the state sector, rarely including parents and staff.

In the areas of organisational structure and effectiveness, there is no shortage of recent literature based on the state sector and much of this is still relevant to this study due to common approaches and practices involved in leadership and management. The key issue has been to extract that which is *most* relevant with a focus on leadership and management, since much of the work on effectiveness is concerned with aspects of teaching and learning and processes within the classroom.

The literature review is rooted in studies in the state sector so differences between independent and maintained education mean that established theoretical frameworks cannot be assumed to apply directly to this study. However, though there is no theoretical framework to fit this study's model exactly, there is a close overlap with some established relevant frameworks. These include recognised models of organisational structure and power distribution, together with modes of operating within them through the use of hierarchies in a given culture and context.

Though such frameworks are helpful in directing this study in investigating the separate primary areas of autonomy, structure and effectiveness, the problem is in understanding the nature of how they are linked. The theoretical framework underlying research on loose coupling is particularly relevant in considering paired schools and mutual dependence.

All five key research questions are covered, to various degrees, by a range of recent and more established literature. Each key question is associated, to some degree, with a relevant theoretical framework based on recognised research and in some cases widely accepted seminal studies.

CHAPTER 4: METHODOLOGY

INTRODUCTION

This chapter considers research methods available for the study and discusses the rationale for the methodology. In deciding on the methodology, particular reference is given to issues of authenticity in educational research; namely reliability, validity and triangulation. The ethical issues relevant to this study are also outlined before giving details of the method. The research design is explained with careful reference to its links with the key research questions.

The main research tools, or instruments, used are interviews and questionnaires. General aspects of their design and relevant use in this study are considered briefly before reporting on the initial study, which tested the overall methodology and research instruments.

The initial study raised various implications for the questionnaire design, interview schedules and the main focus of the research. It also re-directed the focus of the key research questions and opened up further lines of investigation in the literature review. The development in the research design is explained in the sections on the initial study, the questionnaire survey and interviews.

RESEARCH METHODS IN EDUCATION

Nature of inquiry – summary of paradigms

This study, which is within the domain of educational leadership and management, focuses on heads' perceptions of autonomy, power sharing and effectiveness. It therefore comes under the broader category of social science research, which on a simplistic level has two basic approaches, as categorised by Burrell and Morgan (1979), namely subjective and objective. Human behaviour and perceptions are seen by some to be the product of their environments, with responses being mechanistic or determined by events. At the other extreme to this idea of determinism are the advocates of voluntarism, who argue that people create their environment, rather than

become shaped by it, with the focus on free will. The subjective-objective dimension reflects these positions, though in practice, as in this study, the underlying assumptions allow for both perspectives, since people both shape, and are shaped by, their environment and world assumptions.

An objectivist, positivist or normative approach views the world as external to the individual with natural phenomena to be discovered and measured, predominantly through a quantitative approach using traditional surveys and experiments. A subjective, or interpretive, approach acknowledges the relativistic nature of the natural world and the role of the individual in shaping it. The research then takes on a qualitative aspect, using techniques such as accounts, personal constructs and interview analysis.

It is important to recognise that there are many criticisms of the objective or normative approach, essentially arguing that the world is not mechanistic but a living organism (Cohen *et al.*, 2000). Equally there are many variants of qualitative or naturalistic methods (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995). A discussion of this spectrum of views and theories is beyond the scope of this study.

Positivist and interpretive paradigms are ‘essentially concerned with understanding phenomena through two different lenses’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 27). Positivism uses quantitative methods aiming for objectivity and measurability looking for patterns, laws and causality. Interpretive paradigms use qualitative approaches to understand and interpret phenomena. However, Cohen *et al.* (2000: 27-32) reporting on the work of Habermas (1984), Fay (1987), Gage (1989) and Morrison (1995) describe an emerging third paradigm of ‘critical educational research’. This is critical of the positivist and interpretive approaches regarding them as incomplete pictures through ignoring the political and ideological contexts of much of educational research. Critical theory and critical educational research argues that the positivist and interpretive paradigms are inadequate since they seek only to understand an existing situation rather than question or transform it. This third paradigm challenges much social research which

‘accepts rather than questions given agendas for research’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 28), whereas the purpose of critical theory ‘is not merely to understand situations and phenomena but to change them’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 28). However, the critical theory paradigm also has many critics and opposing views. Most relevant to this study is the objection that a researcher should not have a political agenda but be dispassionate, disinterested and objective (Morrison, 1995).

Authenticity of educational research: reliability, validity and triangulation

Concepts of validity and reliability as measures of authenticity were developed for use in positivist or quantitative research. Some researchers argue that it is inappropriate to apply such ideas in an interpretive or qualitative context (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1994). However, others (Hammersley, 1987; Brocke-Utne, 1996) contend that the general ideas of reliability and validity can be applied across the paradigms of research, as a guide to quality in design and results.

Though Hammersley (1987: 73) claims that there is no agreed definition of these concepts it is generally accepted that reliability is ‘essentially a synonym for consistency and replicability over time, over instruments and over groups of respondents’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 117). In other words, other researchers using similar methods in the same context would obtain the same results.

The concept of validity is used to assess whether the research ‘is a measure of what the researcher wishes to measure’ (Sapsford and Evans, 1984: 259) and like reliability has its origins in positivist research. Recent researchers (Denzin and Lincoln, 1998; Kincheloe and McClaren, 1998; Bassey, 1999) claim that it is inappropriate to apply it to qualitative research and they advocate an alternative concept of ‘trustworthiness’ as a more appropriate word. However, this is a fine distinction and even researchers who have reservations about applying such concepts of reliability and validity within the interpretive paradigm, accept that they are valuable ideas, which ‘can

provide a very useful discipline' (Easterby-Smith *et al.*, 1994: 89). This 'useful discipline' is used in this study to ensure authenticity and quality.

Triangulation is a method of crosschecking data to establish its validity. Bush (2002b: 68) distinguishes between methodological and respondent triangulation. In the former, two or more methods explore the same issue to compare findings, whereas in the latter, the same questions are given to many different participants. McFee (1992: 216) described these as 'triangulation *between* methods' and 'triangulation *within* methods' respectively and both approaches feature in this study. Though it is a useful check for validity it needs careful interpretation. Fielding and Fielding (1986) showed that different methods used in triangulation, drawn from different theories, do not necessarily lead to objective or verifiable truth. One method may be accurate and the other inaccurate and it may be inappropriate to think of one complementing or correcting the other.

Choosing a methodology

Silverman warns against distinguishing too much between qualitative and quantitative methods and points out that 'there is no reason why qualitative researchers should not, where appropriate, use quantitative measures' (Silverman, 2001: 37). Writing nearly a decade earlier, Hammersley also warned against making any ideological commitment to one methodological paradigm or another (Hammersley, 1992). In choosing a methodology one must be aware that the 'distinction between quantitative and qualitative methods is not entirely clear-cut...' (Mason, 2002: 8). Even within a single paradigm there is great variety. Indeed, Mason (2002: 3) argues that the strength of qualitative research is that it cannot be reduced to a simple set of rules or principles.

Within the field of educational research, the diversity of perspectives calls for combining methods and an understanding of how a dual approach involving both qualitative and quantitative techniques can be complementary (Brown and Dowling, 1998: 83). Combining methods and paradigms within a methodology is also likely to be used in order to check

the validity and reliability of the findings through techniques such as triangulation, which compares data from different contexts.

However, in combining approaches or in adopting multiple methods the purpose is not necessarily to aggregate data to arrive at the 'whole picture'. Silverman (2000) warns that many theoretical perspectives suggest that the different datasets cannot be aggregated. Hammersley and Atkinson (1983: 199) expressed similar caution in explaining that data from different sources cannot easily be combined to give a more complete picture.

Ethical issues

Though the ethics within educational research must to some extent be influenced by the researchers' own moral predilections and personal social moral frameworks, it is generally the case that ethical practice is agreed as absolute within codes of practice, which aim to respect the dignity and privacy of the subjects of the research (Busher, 2002). Cohen *et al.* (2000) stress the importance of maintaining privacy, anonymity and confidentiality, with participants protected from harm and deception. This research aimed to give such assurances though even participating in the study could involve some risk to individuals, for questionnaire surveys and interviews are inevitably intrusive. For example, the questionnaire (Appendix 6) required participants to confront potentially uncomfortable decisions, as in commenting on their work situation. Interviews may also put some individuals in an uncomfortable position if they are unwilling to share their true feelings.

Most ethical procedures or codes of practice stress the importance of 'informed consent' (Silverman, 2000: 201), which requires participants to be given information about the nature and purpose of the research and voluntary participation. The guarantee of confidentiality, though not anonymity, in this study aimed to reduce any anxiety or distress caused through giving written answers to questions in the survey. With recorded interviews further assurance was given about confidentiality and how the data would be used.

Ethical issues mainly occur in considering the participants involved, but there are other ethical dimensions to consider. For example, Mason (2002: 201-2) describes the need to consider the ethics of the whole research process, specifically in relation to the responsibility to produce good quality research and ethically sound analysis and generalisations.

RESEARCH DESIGN

Background – preliminary survey

This study builds on the findings of the national survey of HMC schools, conducted by the author in 1999, referred to in chapter 1. The key issues to emerge from that survey in need of further research were communication, collaboration, organisational structure, school effectiveness, shared vision and autonomy. HMC subsequently established, in 2001, the group of ‘HMC Linked Junior Schools’ (HMCJ). The founding of this group, giving national recognition to the junior school heads, facilitated direct communication with them and therefore enabled this study to investigate, for the first time, the views of HMC junior and senior school heads.

Two-phase approach and researcher role

The overall research strategy was based on the traditional model of a two-phase approach using a survey and follow-up interviews. The first phase was a large-scale survey of all HMC linked junior and senior schools. This produced both qualitative and quantitative data, but the analysis of the survey stage focussed mainly on the quantitative aspects of the primary areas of investigation. The second phase used interviews with heads at two pairs of schools, aiming to explore some possible links between the primary areas of investigation and to illustrate issues arising from the survey. This is a well-tested two-phase method. For example, it has similarities with Bird's (1992) approach in researching a case study in implementing open college policy linking quantitative and qualitative data using a dialectical process of interacting from one to the other. The approach was also used by Sammons *et al.* (1998b) in a study that ‘combined quantitative and qualitative approaches in a way which was intended to further the development of school effectiveness theory...’ (Sammons *et al.*, 1998b:

289). The two main phases covered a two-year research period, though as the research progressed it became less sequential with a more flexible approach to combining the quantitative and qualitative aspects in a cycle rather than sequence.

The researcher role for phase one was that of disinterested researcher, aiming to produce an objective, unbiased questionnaire primarily for statistical analysis. However, phase two interviews revealed aspects of personal interest as in the manner of an external consultant, listening and responding to clients' problems. The researcher role became one of interested researcher with professional knowledge of linked junior schools and interacting with colleagues in similar positions.

Phase I - survey

The first phase surveyed 165 pairs of HMC linked junior and senior schools identified from the 2002 HMCJ directory. This survey used a questionnaire to produce data on degrees of autonomy, factors to describe organisational structure, details of governance and aspects of effectiveness in relation to leadership and management. Unlike the 1999 HMC survey, referred to earlier, this study had direct access to the junior school heads. Therefore questionnaire responses from individual pairs of heads of linked schools provided comparative data to assess how heads aim to share leadership and vision.

The survey phase focussed on collecting and categorising quantitative data but the questionnaire also included sections that were open-ended to allow for qualitative responses. The overall aim of the survey was to identify different levels of autonomy, describe factors of organisational structure, assess the links between schools and collect views on school effectiveness and how it might be influenced by a head's autonomy.

Phase II - interviews

Phase two of the research consisted of interviews with the junior and senior school heads at two pairs of linked schools. The purpose was to investigate how they conceptualised their mutual autonomy in relation to junior school

effectiveness and how they thought this influenced their sharing of leadership and management. The four sets of interview data were cross-referenced and analysed in relation to the questionnaire. The aim was both to complement and triangulate some of the survey findings.

The method used to select the interview sample is explained later in the chapter. Information on the organisational contexts of the four selected schools was obtained from their prospectuses, websites and official entries in the independent schools yearbook (Mott, 2003). For example, one junior school was described as having considerable autonomy in relation to its senior school, with its head in membership of IAPS and apparently directly accountable to governors. The other junior school was advertised as being an integral part of a larger school that covered the whole age range.

In formulating interview questions and analysing responses consideration was given to the specific context of each school which included its published organisational structure, its relation to IAPS and HMCI, the geographical location, the layout of the campus and the resources which could be shared with its partner school. In-depth semi-structured interviews with each of the four heads collected data on the key research questions. The interviews also provided an insight into the recruitment of staff and selection of pupils in junior schools, issues regarding pupil transfer between schools and the possibilities for greater co-operation between a pair of schools.

The research design did not aim to produce a detailed case study of a school in the traditional sense of 'providing an in-depth account of events, relationships, experiences or processes occurring in that particular instance' (Denscombe, 1998: 32). This would have involved a protracted association with a school, requiring careful and lengthy observations of everyday practice to obtain detailed descriptions of events and procedures, interviews of various kinds with a wide range of stakeholders and systematic documentary analysis (Denscombe, 1998: 30-41; Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 181-185; Basse, 2002). Research at the initial study stage indicated that there

would have been a major difficulty in negotiating with heads of linked schools the degree and kind of access needed for such an approach to be valid. However, even if such access had been possible and the ethical implications overcome, the strategic decision in designing the research was to use a full survey of all schools, with follow-up interviews to explore general ideas, rather than in-depth case studies looking at particular instances.

The main reason for this decision was because there is no published research on HMCJ schools, which have not yet been classified into categories or types, so the generalising of findings on heads' perceptions of autonomy and effectiveness was thought more likely to be credible using the results of a large inclusive survey rather than a relatively few case studies. The methodology therefore focussed on using a survey to 'scan a wide field of issues... in order to measure or describe any generalised features' (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 171) with follow-up interviews to help validate and illustrate findings. To have used full case studies in the traditional sense *in addition* to this survey, particularly given its scale and depth, was thought to be not possible given the limitations on time and research resources for this study, but more importantly was not considered necessary. The survey of all 330 heads at HMC linked junior and senior schools, complemented by follow-up interviews, was sufficient to meet the study's research aims.

In summary, the data set for each of the four selected schools in phase two of the research consisted of prospectuses and website information, published administrative details and organisational structures and the transcript of the interview with the head. Phase two of the research consisted of interviews rather than in-depth case studies, but they still provided *limited* case studies in the sense of being set in a particular context, or boundary, with specific characteristics and clear participant roles (Hitchcock and Hughes, 1995: 319; Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 182).

RESEARCH INSTRUMENTS

Questionnaires

Since the size of the survey was reasonably large, involving 330 heads, most of the questionnaire was highly structured using quantifiable, scaled responses to reveal categories and patterns. Such an approach also allowed for reliable comparisons to be made across groups in the sample (Oppenheim, 1992: 115), which is a strong feature in this study. This meant using a range of closed questions (including dichotomous, multiple choice and rating scales) that prescribed the range of responses, which had the advantage of being quick to complete and relatively straightforward to code and reveal trends.

However, though the pre-set responses were rooted in the literature there was a risk of bias being introduced and also the categories may not have been exhaustive. Therefore the questionnaire included some semi-structured questions enabling respondents to add their own responses and to qualify their answers. Such responses are more difficult to code and classify but in a study comparing heads' perceptions of complex concepts such as autonomy and effectiveness it is not valid to restrict a questionnaire to pre-set ideas. It is a question of balance and in designing a questionnaire 'the issue for researchers is one of 'fitness for purpose'' (Cohen *et al.* 2000: 248). The purpose of the questionnaire was mainly, but not exclusively, to elicit quantifiable data to help answer the key research questions, with a specific focus on finding categories of autonomy and opinions to inform and help direct the second phase of the research using follow-up interviews.

Since the questionnaire aimed to produce comparative data for linked pairs of heads, it was necessary to number the questionnaires to analyse pairs of responses. Therefore in considering ethical issues it was not possible to guarantee anonymity (the researcher cannot tell which response came from which respondent), but confidentiality was promised in the instructions (the respondent would not be identified or identifiable) (Sapsford and Abbott 1996: 319). The numbering of the questionnaires was also designed to identify which heads did not reply in case their responses had to be chased

up if the sample for the survey results was not large enough to be representative.

Interviews

In order to compare interview responses both between the four interviewees and with the survey findings, the interview schedules were designed with a high degree of structure. There were slight differences in the interview schedules for the junior and senior schools but they covered the same issues and had several identical questions. Heads of either the two junior or two senior schools respectively were given the same questions with the exact wording and sequence of questions, all determined in advance and in the same basic order.

Nevertheless the interviews were not structured in the traditional sense of carefully worded questions requiring only short answers or the ticking of categories (Wragg, 2002: 148). The questions were open-ended allowing for a variety of personalised responses whilst encouraging the interviewee to elaborate on points of interest as in a semi-structured interview (Denscombe, 1998: 113). However, the interview analysis emphasised categorising and comparing the interview responses, which meant that the design of the interviews allowed little flexibility in terms of the order in which topics were considered. Furthermore, the four interviewees were not encouraged to digress too widely from the point in question though some digression did happen.

In summary, the method used was qualitative interviewing (Mason, 2002: 62-83) with semi-structured interview schedules that were pre-determined and fixed in terms of questions asked, but open-ended in how they could be answered. Such interviews have been categorised as 'standardised open-ended interviews' (Patton, 1980: 206), which are designed to be semi-structured but with sufficient structure to facilitate the organisation and analysis of the data. Furthermore, since the four interviews in this study aimed to develop and explore hypotheses, rather than collect facts and numbers, they were of an exploratory nature (Oppenheim, 1992: 65).

INITIAL STUDY

Piloting the first draft of the questionnaire

The initial study piloted a first draft of the questionnaire by sending it to six pairs of linked schools. Using results from the 1999 HMC survey, referred to in chapter 1, three initial categories, or types, of linked junior schools had been identified in relation to levels of autonomy: high (IAPS membership), medium (recognised as a separate junior school but not IAPS) and low (junior 'school' seen as a section of the whole school). Two pairs of schools from each category were selected. This was not random since some heads were known to the researcher and had offered to assist in the research by taking part in a pilot study and commenting on the questionnaire design.

The primary purpose of this first pilot was to check the wording and clarity of the questionnaire and to test the appropriateness of the data collected in terms of statistical analysis and relevance to the key research questions. However, the pre-determined different types of schools also gave a range of views to test the completeness of the prescribed categories and responses.

Returns from just one head in any pair would be regarded as still useful in collecting data for the each group of either junior or senior school heads or for all heads in general. Nine of the twelve heads returned the draft questionnaire, some with additional comments, all four heads in the 'high' autonomy group, three of the 'medium' group (one pair and one junior head) and two from the 'low' group (one pair).

Piloting interview schedules

The timing of the draft questionnaire returns delayed some of the planned interviews, but a draft interview schedule based on early returns was piloted with the head of a 'high' autonomy junior school, who had returned his questionnaire earlier.

This initial interview schedule (Appendix 1) consisted of straightforward questions covering the subsidiary questions referred to in chapter 2, but then invited further comments. For example, questions were asked about the

number of governors and whether the pair of schools had governors in common, but then views were sought on the effectiveness of the system of governance and how it influenced the school. In this semi-structured approach, the schedule first aimed to produce quantitative data, to be triangulated with the questionnaire data, but it then opened up into qualitative data of subjective views on all the primary and secondary areas under investigation. This interview lasted approximately forty minutes and was not tape-recorded but notes of responses were written down for later analysis.

A second pilot interview was carried out three months later with another head of a 'high' autonomy junior school. This used an amended interview schedule (Appendix 2) that took account of further analysis of the draft questionnaire returns and the findings from a more complete literature review. For example, questions focussed more on modes of power (criteria and operational), aspects of decision-making and the allocation of resources, all confirmed by the literature to be key issues in autonomy and effectiveness. Prior information given to the head avoided digression into curricular issues and a longer interview session of one hour was negotiated. Finally, by recording this second interview using a micro-cassette tape recorder, the response data was far more reliable than the notes recorded during the first pilot interview.

The pilot interviews aimed to understand what the various stakeholders in a school might mean by the term 'effectiveness' and how people interpret *other* people's understanding of the term. For example, in analysing the first pilot interview, a comparison with the senior school head's responses to the questionnaire showed that both heads were using different definitions for effectiveness and the junior school head's assumptions about the senior head's understanding were inaccurate.

Implications of the initial study for the main study

The initial study revealed that the focus of the key research questions should have been on the head teachers' *perception* and understanding of the influence of autonomy on school effectiveness, rather than attempt to

measure such factors or account for any possible causal relationships. This clearer focus had implications for revising the questionnaire in terms of the aim of the survey, the sections used and wording of individual questions.

The literature review, completed mainly during the initial study, proved useful in re-wording the questionnaire to collect more appropriate data. For example, the literature suggests that there are no absolute definitions of terms such as autonomy and effectiveness, which are better understood relative to a given context. This meant that questions had to explore heads' implicit use of these terms and associated concepts such as power, leadership, governance and loose coupling in the leadership and management of their schools.

The initial study also showed that some of the original questionnaire questions were not providing discriminatory data. In some cases the questions were thought to be too complicated to answer and others were not answered at all. In summary, the revision of the first questionnaire piloted in the initial study had to address the following issues:

- a. To emphasise the importance of investigating the heads' understanding of autonomy. A new section was written to explore what they meant by this concept.
- b. To develop a new overall structure of the questionnaire, designed with sections linked clearly to the new KRQs.
- c. To collect more appropriate and clearer organisational data, to be used in the description and understanding of autonomy and power sharing.
- d. To carefully re-word questions in the light of feedback from the initial study.

Interviews for the initial study revealed that junior and senior school heads were likely to have different assumptions and perceptions on all the key issues according to how they understand their particular role. This suggested that the interview questions would be best written from the perspective of the particular leadership position of a given head within a paired linking. Identical interview schedules, in having to be acceptable

and accessible to both groups of heads, would have missed opportunities to explore perceptions on issues relative to the distinctly different roles of the heads. Therefore two interview schedules were developed for the main study, to use in phase two when interviewing the two junior school and two senior school heads respectively.

The two interview schedules (Appendices 3 and 4 respectively) were designed to produce data that could be used both to triangulate the survey findings and to explore further some of the issues arising from them. The design of the final two schedules therefore linked them to the key research questions and questionnaire sections.

The initial study showed that it would be impractical and misleading to focus any significant attention on the third category of 'low' autonomy schools. It was impractical because one could not be sure to reach the 'heads' of such junior sections if they are not sufficiently recognised as heads and may not have been registered on the HMCJ database. It could have been misleading since the initial study confirmed that such section heads sometimes do not regard themselves as heads with a perceived need for autonomy running a school, but on a par with a head of department or section of a senior school. Furthermore, it would have been unethical and unsettling to ask questions about junior school autonomy if the senior school does want to recognise the status of its junior section in this way.

Therefore, for ethical and practical reasons and to be more confident about validity and reliability, the main study considered only the first two categories of linked junior schools used in the initial study. This consisted of all those registered on the HMCJ database as junior schools, which divided naturally into two groups, IAPS members ('high' autonomy) and non-members ('medium' autonomy).

QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY

Further re-designing, revision and piloting of the questionnaire

The initial study revealed that some heads give far less thought than expected to the concept of autonomy, even though they may have an assumed understanding of what it means within their context of sharing power. The understandings varied considerably, with some recognising that autonomy can have various degrees but others interpreting it to mean total control. In the light of piloting the draft questionnaire, a new section on ‘autonomy’ was written in seeking to answer questions on heads’ understanding of ‘autonomy and its classification into categories’.

The term ‘autonomy’ is often used in a rhetorical sense and the literature confirmed that it is a relative concept in relation to variables and domains within a school (Sharpe, 1994; Maden, 2000; Glatter, 2002). In summary, ‘two key questions are: autonomy for whom and over what?’ (Glatter, 2002: 231). In designing questions to collect data to answer these questions, bearing in mind the relation of autonomy to power, it was important to consider both ‘criteria’ power, concerned with determining policy, purpose and frameworks, and ‘operational’ power concerned with service delivery and procedures (Winstanley *et al.*, 1995).

The final questionnaire was designed to be sent to all heads of pairs of HMC linked junior and senior schools. It was divided into seven sections, each directly linked to specific KRQs. The design of the questionnaire in linking sections to KRQs, as shown in Figure 4.1, ensured that the data was necessary and prevented too much, or irrelevant, data being collected. To check that the questionnaire would collect sufficient data, the KRQs were listed and related to questionnaire sections, as shown in Figure 4.2.

Section	Area of investigation	<u>Main</u> KRQ links
A	<i>Organisational Data for the <u>Junior</u> School</i>	2
B	<i>Organisational Data for the <u>Senior</u> School</i>	2
C	<i>Governance of <u>both</u> Schools</i>	2,3
D	<i>Organisational Links between junior and senior schools</i>	2,3,5a
E	<i>Autonomy – concept and classification</i>	1,3,5b
F	<i>Autonomy, Leadership and Management in the <u>Junior</u> School</i>	1,3,4, 5a,5b
G	<i><u>Junior</u> school effectiveness</i>	4,5a, 5b

Figure 4.1 The questionnaire sections and how they are linked to the key research questions

KRQ	Primary area of investigation	<u>Main</u> section(s) of questionnaire
KRQ1	<i>Autonomy - as a concept and degrees of</i>	E, F
KRQ2	<i>Organisational structure</i>	A, B, C, D
KRQ3	<i>Autonomy and structure – links between</i>	C, D, E, F
KRQ4	<i>School effectiveness</i>	F, G
KRQ5a	<i>Effectiveness and structure – links between</i>	D, F, G
KRQ5b	<i>Effectiveness and autonomy – links between</i>	E, F, G

Figure 4.2 The key research questions and how they are linked to the questionnaire sections

The links detailed in Figures 4.1 and 4.2 are combined in Figure 4.3, which illustrates the main direct links between the key research questions and the seven sections of the questionnaire.

		Key Research Question (KRQ)					
		1	2	3	4	5a	5b
Questionnaire Section	A		✓				
	B		✓				
	C		✓	✓			
	D		✓	✓		✓	
	E	✓		✓			✓
	F	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	G				✓	✓	✓

Figure 4.3 Connecting links between the key research questions and the questionnaire sections

This approach double-checked that the research tool would produce both necessary and sufficient data to help answer the key research questions. A tick indicates that the section is collecting data primarily to answer the KRQ(s) referred to. Figure 4.3 was also referred to in designing individual questions to ensure the relevance and sufficiency of the data they would produce.

The underlying aim of the research project is centred on KRQ5, concerning perceived links between autonomy and school effectiveness. The distribution of ticks in Figure 4.3 illustrates how the questionnaire was designed to focus in gradually on KRQ5a and KRQ5b. Initial sections collected data for categorisation to answer initial KRQs and the later sections were more closely linked with the fundamental aim of the research as covered in KRQ4 and KRQ5.

Figures 4.1, 4.2 and 4.3 imply a strict one-to-one relationship between the KRQs and questionnaire sections, but this is misleading. The columns in both tables indicate the general areas being investigated, but they are not mutually exclusive and there is a deliberate overlap, with varying degrees of relevance to allow for triangulation of responses and unexpected links. For example, questions about senior management teams and IAPS membership in Section A are also relevant to categorising degrees of autonomy which is mainly covered in Sections E and F. Designing and revising the questionnaire in this way ensured that the KRQs were covered fully.

After re-designing and revising the draft questionnaire as described above, based on feedback from the initial feedback, it was piloted a second time. It was sent to four heads, at two pairs of linked schools, who had agreed to check the design and accuracy of the final questionnaire, one pair with IAPS membership for the junior school and the other pair without such membership. The main points to emerge from this second pilot were concerned with wording and no changes were made to the links given in Figure 4.3. The final version of the questionnaire is given in Appendix 6.

Administering the questionnaire survey and analysing the data

The survey was based on *all* HMC linked junior and senior schools so no sampling was involved at this stage. The questionnaire was posted first class, with an enclosed stamped addressed envelope for the reply, to all heads of junior and senior linked schools as listed in the HMCJ database. Some researchers have reported a poor return for postal questionnaires, even when stamped addressed envelopes are provided, (Denscombe, 1998: 107; Bell, 2002: 168), which was of some concern in aiming to collect sufficient data. However, some research challenges this, arguing that response rates to postal surveys are ‘not invariably less than those obtained by interview procedures’ (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 262) and furthermore it suggests that questionnaires do not necessarily have to be short to ensure satisfactory levels of return. This gave confidence to proceed with a postal survey using a relatively long questionnaire.

To encourage a good response rate, a covering letter empathised with heads receiving 'yet another questionnaire', which then explained that this research had the full support of the heads' professional organisations, naming the Chairman of HMCJ and the Secretary and Membership Secretary of HMC. The letter reminded heads that HMCJ was set up in response to earlier research findings following an earlier national survey of HMC. Guarantees were given over confidentiality and respondents reassured that the questionnaire had been piloted twice and was relatively easy to fill in. Other factors for securing a good response rate, as identified by Hoinville and Jowell (1978), included the use of good quality envelopes that were typed and addressed to named individuals wherever possible. In the few cases when the heads' name was unknown, a hand written note apologised for not having personal details.

The questionnaire was designed primarily to collect data which was measurable and in pre-coded categories. Analysis of this kind of data used descriptive statistics presented in tabular or pictorial form to illustrate general trends and patterns. There was a limited use of hypothesis testing, analysing the 'goodness of fit' of data by comparing observed and expected frequencies using the chi-squared distribution (Upton and Cook, 1996: 479-505). Given that the underlying statistical distributions for the data responses were unknown, the chi-squared test was appropriate since it is a distribution-free test, which has no modelling assumptions associated with it (Eccles *et al.*, 2000: 132).

INTERVIEWS

Further design of the interview schedules

The use of two interview schedules for the two junior and two senior school heads respectively, though they overlapped considerably, was consistent with collecting and analysing data of three types from the questionnaire responses. These were data from junior school heads, data from senior school heads and data combined from all heads. Collecting interview data from these two interview schedules also made comparison easier with the two sets of questionnaire data, from the junior and senior schools respectively, thus helping with the triangulation between the two methods.

The two interview schedules, one for the junior school heads and one for the senior school heads, are referred to as IS-J (Interview Schedule–Junior) and IS-S (Interview Schedule–Senior) respectively. As in the design of the questionnaire, the interview schedules were written in sections, using sets of questions with each referred to as a ‘question set’.

The design of IS-J (Appendix 3) was based on the perspective of the junior school head, who would be best placed to have direct knowledge of the junior school’s organisational factors. It was also designed to ask questions about the junior school head’s perception of how the senior school judged junior school effectiveness. With regard to autonomy and links with effectiveness, IS-J included questions for a junior head on how the senior school worked with the junior school and the value of such links.

IS-J was designed with seven question sets, some in several parts but each overall question set covering a key aspect of the main study, as shown in Figure 4.4.

IS-J Question Set	Aspect of main study covered
Q1	SMT structure in junior school
Q2	Role of senior school head in the junior school
Q3	Sharing of leadership
Q4	Main links between schools – in relation to effectiveness
Q5	Decision-making and resource allocation
Q6	Autonomy
Q7	Junior School Effectiveness and Autonomy

Figure 4.4 The question sets in the interview schedule for junior school heads (IS-J)

The design of IS-S (Appendix 4) focused on a senior head’s views on the linked junior school and his/her role in promoting its effectiveness and the role of delegated autonomy in this respect. In interviews with senior heads it was not necessary to ask about junior school organisational factors.

Instead the questions were concerned with exploring the links between the schools and how they were related to degrees of autonomy, particularly with regard to delegated decision-making in the junior school. IS-S was designed with six question sets, each covering a key aspect of the main study, as shown in Figure 4.5.

IS-S Question Set	Aspect of study
Q1	Role of senior school head in the junior school
Q2	Main links between schools – in relation to effectiveness
Q3	Decision-making and resource allocation
Q4	Autonomy
Q5	Junior School Effectiveness and Autonomy
Q6	School Effectiveness and Autonomy

Figure 4.5 The question sets in the interview schedule for senior school heads (IS-S)

Most of the question sets each had two or three parts, giving approximately fifteen actual questions in total in each schedule, ranging in style, from closed to open-ended, making this a semi-structured interview schedule. Though not always worded identically, 11 questions were common to both schedules in covering the same issues within the aspects of study. This overlap enabled direct comparisons to be made between heads of senior and junior schools on a particular point.

The question sets were crosschecked, using a simple grid, with the key research questions (KRQs) to ensure that the questions were both necessary and sufficient. Figure 4.6 shows for each question set the KRQs most likely to be part answered by it.

		Key Research Question (KRQ)					
		1	2	3	4	5a	5b
IS-J Interview Question Set	Q1		✓	✓			
	Q2		✓				
	Q3		✓			✓	
	Q4		✓		✓	✓	✓
	Q5	✓					
	Q6	✓					✓
	Q7			✓	✓		✓
IS-S Interview Question Set	Q1		✓	✓			
	Q2		✓			✓	
	Q3	✓	✓				✓
	Q4	✓					
	Q5				✓	✓	✓
	Q6					✓	✓

Figure 4.6 Connecting links between the question sets in the interview schedules and the key research questions

Figure 4.6 shows the expected links at the design stage for IS-J, though it was also anticipated that the open ended nature of parts of the interview would produce other useful data crossing over several KRQs. Furthermore, much of the interview data would be of a qualitative nature which is less easy to categorise in a simple grid such as this.

A second grid cross-referenced the interview schedule sections with the questionnaire sections to ensure that necessary and sufficient data was collected for triangulation. Figure 4.7 shows the possible links between the question sets for the interview schedules and the questionnaire sections. As in Figure 4.6, this is not intended to be an exhaustive or exclusive set of links but merely a check at the design stage that necessary and sufficient links were being covered for triangulating the data sets.

		Questionnaire Section						
		A	B	C	D	E	F	G
IS-J Interview Question Set	Q1	✓	✓					
	Q2				✓			
	Q3			✓	✓	✓	✓	
	Q4				✓		✓	✓
	Q5					✓	✓	
	Q6			✓		✓	✓	
	Q7					✓	✓	✓
IS-S Interview Question Set	Q1		✓					
	Q2			✓	✓			✓
	Q3						✓	
	Q4					✓	✓	
	Q5							✓
	Q6						✓	✓

Figure 4.7 Connecting links between the question sets in the interview schedules and the questionnaire sections

In summary, the designs of IS-J and IS-S were each checked using two grids, Figure 4.6 checking for KRQ coverage and Figure 4.7 checking links with the questionnaire sections.

Selecting the sample for interviews

The research study was designed to focus on a large survey of all 330 heads at HMCJ linked schools complemented by a small number of in-depth interviews. The latter were used to explore and illustrate issues arising from the survey.

To qualify for IAPS membership a head must have a sufficient degree of autonomy and independence from any linked senior school. Therefore, in selecting the sample of interviewees it was assumed that junior schools with

heads in membership of IAPS would probably be regarded as having a relatively high degree of autonomy and those not in membership were more likely to be considered part of a larger school and have more limited autonomy. Consequently, to be representative, the sample for interviews had to consist of heads both from IAPS and non-IAPS schools. Furthermore, since the study was concerned with how heads share leadership in response to their degrees of mutual autonomy and manage shared resources, usually on the same site, it was important to compare and contrast the responses from individual pairs of heads. In considering all these factors, four heads at two pairs of schools were selected such that one junior school head was a member of IAPS and the other not in membership.

It was also decided that interviewees should have completed and returned a questionnaire. This was based on the assumption that such heads would be willing to participate and it meant that their questionnaire responses would also be available to use, if appropriate, when comparing and contrasting views on various issues.

Both heads completed and returned questionnaires at a majority of pairs of linked schools, 91 out of a total of 165, or 55 per cent. This included four pairs of overseas schools that were not used due to practical considerations and the cost involved in visiting them. A further two pairs were excluded because their junior school heads had been interviewed as part of the initial study to pilot the interview schedules. The sample was therefore selected from the remaining 85 pairs of schools, of which 58 junior school heads were members of IAPS and 27 not in membership.

In selecting the two pairs of four schools, consideration was also given to their geographical location. In order to assess the reliability of generalising findings independent of local considerations it was thought desirable to avoid both pairs of schools being in the same town or city region. For similar reasons the pupil catchment areas for the four schools had to be non-overlapping. A school prospectus or website generally gave details for prospective pupils and parents on how to travel to the school from various

areas, thus describing its expected pupil catchment area. Such information could also be gained by contacting the admissions secretary. In some areas with extensive school coach services, wide rail networks and long range underground or tram travel available this became a major factor in the overall selection process. For example, in certain parts of the country, such as Greater Manchester, Greater London and the South East this meant that the choice of one particular pair of schools could possibly eliminate the use of up to 20 other pairs of schools.

It was also decided, for reasons of efficiency, that a pair of schools would only be used if the interviews with both heads could be carried out on the same day. Finally to fit in with the research schedule all interviews had to be completed during a two-month period in the same half term.

In considering all the above factors and criteria for selection the following process for choosing the sample was adopted. Since the selection of the first pair of schools could potentially eliminate many other schools from being selected as the second pair and there were only 27 non-IAPS pairs compared to 58 IAPS pairs, it was decided to select the non-IAPS pair first. Each pair of schools had been allocated a code number, from 1 to 165, on their questionnaire returns. The 27 non-IAPS pairs were re-numbered from 1 to 27, in the order of their code numbers. A random number from 1 to 27 was chosen using a table of random numbers (Upton and Cook, 1996: 628) and the corresponding pair of schools selected. Both heads at this pair of schools were telephoned, asked if they were willing to be interviewed and transcripts of the recorded interview used for analysis. Diaries were compared to see if mutually convenient times could be arranged allowing both heads to be seen on the same day within the specified period. If one of the heads was either unwilling to be interviewed, or unwilling to be recorded, or if convenient times could not be arranged, then this pair was rejected and the process repeated, randomly selecting a further pair of non-IAPS from those remaining.

Once a non-IAPS pair of interviews had been arranged, all IAPS schools in the same town or city region or with an overlapping pupil catchment area, as described earlier, were removed from the group of 58 pairs of IAPS schools. Then, as in the case of choosing the first pair of schools, the ordered code numbers for the remaining pairs of IAPS schools were re-numbered, one was selected at random using a table of random numbers and telephone contact made to check availability. This was repeated until a pair of heads was identified, with the junior school head a member of IAPS, who were willing to be interviewed, recorded and were available at a mutually convenient time.

In carrying out the above process, the fourth pair of non-IAPS schools considered agreed to the conditions and interviews were arranged. This selected pair of schools was in the same pupil catchment areas of 14 other pairs of HMCJ linked schools, of which nine had returned questionnaires from both heads. Eight of these nine pairs were in IAPS, which therefore left 50 pairs of IAPS schools to choose from.

The second pair considered from this group of 50 pairs matched the relevant criteria and visits were arranged. However, this pair of IAPS schools that had agreed to participate withdrew at very short notice when their Chairman of Governors objected. The reasons for the objection were not made clear. Therefore, after repeating the selection process as described above, a further pair of IAPS schools was selected from the 48 remaining, and following telephone contact with both heads, interviews were arranged.

In summary, having excluded overseas schools and those used in the initial study from the population, the process involved aspects of stratified sampling, using groups of IAPS and non-IAPS schools. A process of simple random selection was first used to select a pair of non-IAPS schools from the group of pairs of non-IAPS schools. Then factors of geographical location and pupil catchment areas, for reasons given above, were taken

into account before identifying the relevant population of pairs of IAPS schools from which a pair was selected using simple random sampling.

Conducting the interviews and analysing the data

The two interviews at the pair of schools with the junior school head in membership of IAPS were each conducted in the head's own study on the same morning at times chosen by the heads. On a different date, the two interviews with the heads not associated with IAPS, each took place in the same private meeting room in the senior school, on the same morning at times decided by the heads. All four interviews were conducted in privacy and each head had agreed beforehand to the interview being taped using a micro-cassette recorder so that transcripts could be analysed later.

Before starting each interview there was a general discussion with the head about the aims of the research and the rationale behind it. This was also an opportunity to understand more about the schools in general, giving the heads a chance to elaborate on their development plans and ambitions for their pair of schools. However, notes or recordings were not taken at this stage since the purpose was mainly to make the heads feel at ease talking about their school so that they would not be inhibited once the interview started.

The interviews were conducted across the corner of a table or next to a desk with the interviewer and head seated close together and the micro-cassette placed nearby on table or desk. Coffee and refreshments were available throughout each interview. The aim was to create a purposeful but friendly and relatively informal setting, in surroundings familiar to the head. The meetings lasted up to an hour and in one case up to two hours including a private lunch, with each recorded part of the interview lasting for just under approximately thirty minutes. Each interview started with an explanation that neither the head nor the school would be identified and it was stressed that their responses would be treated in strict confidence, particularly with regard to the linked head in the paired school. Before concluding an interview and switching off the tape recorder the head was asked to confirm

that he/she had been happy with all aspects of it and would be content for the transcript to be used for analysis.

The interview transcripts were copied onto page templates assigning line numbers to the text and providing columns for coding the responses and adding notes, as illustrated in Appendix 5. The relevant question numbers from the interview schedules were added in the notes columns and, by referring to Figure 4.6, the responses to these questions were linked to the associated KRQs, which were listed in the coding column. Then by comparing the interview responses for each KRQ it was possible to compare the findings with the survey and either provide validation through triangulation or produce new, independent findings for a KRQ. This systematic approach to analysing the transcripts was designed primarily to link interview responses to the survey findings on KRQs, but it also made it possible to cross reference responses in all four interviews.

CHAPTER 5:QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY – RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSE RATES AND SETS OF DATA TO ANALYSE

Questionnaires were sent to all 165 heads of HMC junior schools as listed in the HMCJ database and to the head of each respective linked HMC senior school, a total of 330 questionnaires to 165 pairs of linked schools.

The response rates to the questionnaires are shown in Table 5.1. The percentages, given in brackets, refer to the number of junior, senior and ‘all’ schools in each of the categories ‘Replied’ and ‘No reply’.

	Junior Schools	Senior Schools	All Schools
Replied	113 (68%)	125 (76%)	238 (72%)
No reply	52 (32%)	40 (24%)	92 (28%)
Total	165	165	330

Table 5.1 Questionnaire response rates: numbers of replies from junior school heads and senior school heads

The overall response rate of 72 per cent was reached approximately three months after the deadline for returns, without any follow-up reminders. The response rates from heads of senior and junior schools, 76 per cent and 68 per cent respectively, were similar and both high enough to be representative. Given that the study looks at junior schools it was slightly surprising that more senior heads replied than junior heads. However, the percentage returns are of the same degree of magnitude so this difference is unlikely to be significant.

Further analysis of the reply rates revealed that there was a return from a least one school from 89 per cent of the pairs of schools written to, shown in Table 5.2. Therefore there was sufficient questionnaire data for it to be a very large representative sample, without the need for follow-up letters chasing further responses.

	Number of pairs of schools	Percentage of pairs of schools
Reply from both schools in the pair	91	55%
Reply from only the junior school in the pair	22	13%
Reply from only the senior school in the pair	34	21%
Reply from <i>at least</i> one school in the pair	147	89%
No reply from either school in the pair	18	11%
Total	165	100%

Table 5.2 Questionnaire response rates from *pairs* of schools

Results in Table 5.2 show that only 55 per cent of pairs of schools returned both sets of questionnaires. However, it is significant that only 18 pairs of schools out of 165 did not return a questionnaire, which is further support that the data collected was sufficiently representative to reach valid conclusions.

The questionnaire returns and these preliminary results indicated that the key research questions would be best answered by considering and analysing three basic sets of questionnaire data, as follows:

- Views of the heads of junior schools as a group,
- Views of the heads of senior schools as a group,
- Views from all heads, looking for agreement and conflict between pairs of heads as appropriate, perhaps considering specific examples.

Results from these three sets of data were compared, contrasted and then triangulation used with the four sets of interview data to test for validity.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS: SECTION A (ORGANISATIONAL DATA FOR THE JUNIOR SCHOOL)

Section A of the questionnaire collected organisational data on the junior school aiming to help answer KRQ2, which can be summarised as, 'What organisational factors can be used to categorise linked junior schools in relation to degrees of autonomy?' The data was therefore presented and

analysed from the point of view of categorising junior schools using factors that may, or may not, be related to degrees of autonomy, either perceived or actual. There was no suggestion at this stage that any links may be causally related. The aim was to find a basic rationale for categorising and grouping schools before looking further into the data for possible links between autonomy, organisational structure and effectiveness.

Analysis in this section aimed to define terms to categorise schools into distinctive groups. The analysis looked for patterns in the distribution of data from the survey and aimed to define terms such as ‘small’ or ‘large’ in relation to school size, staff numbers and senior management team structure. Such categories of schools and defined terms could then be referred to and used in considering differences in views on autonomy and effectiveness.

When pairs of heads gave different answers to factual questions on organisational structure in the junior school, such as age of entry, it was assumed that the junior school head was correct. The following organisational factors were analysed, in this order:

- ❑ The main age of transfer to the senior school
- ❑ The age of entry into the junior school
- ❑ The size of the junior school in terms of numbers of teaching staff and pupils
- ❑ Co-educational status
- ❑ Senior management team (SMT) structure – size and membership
- ❑ IAPS membership

Age of transfer to senior school

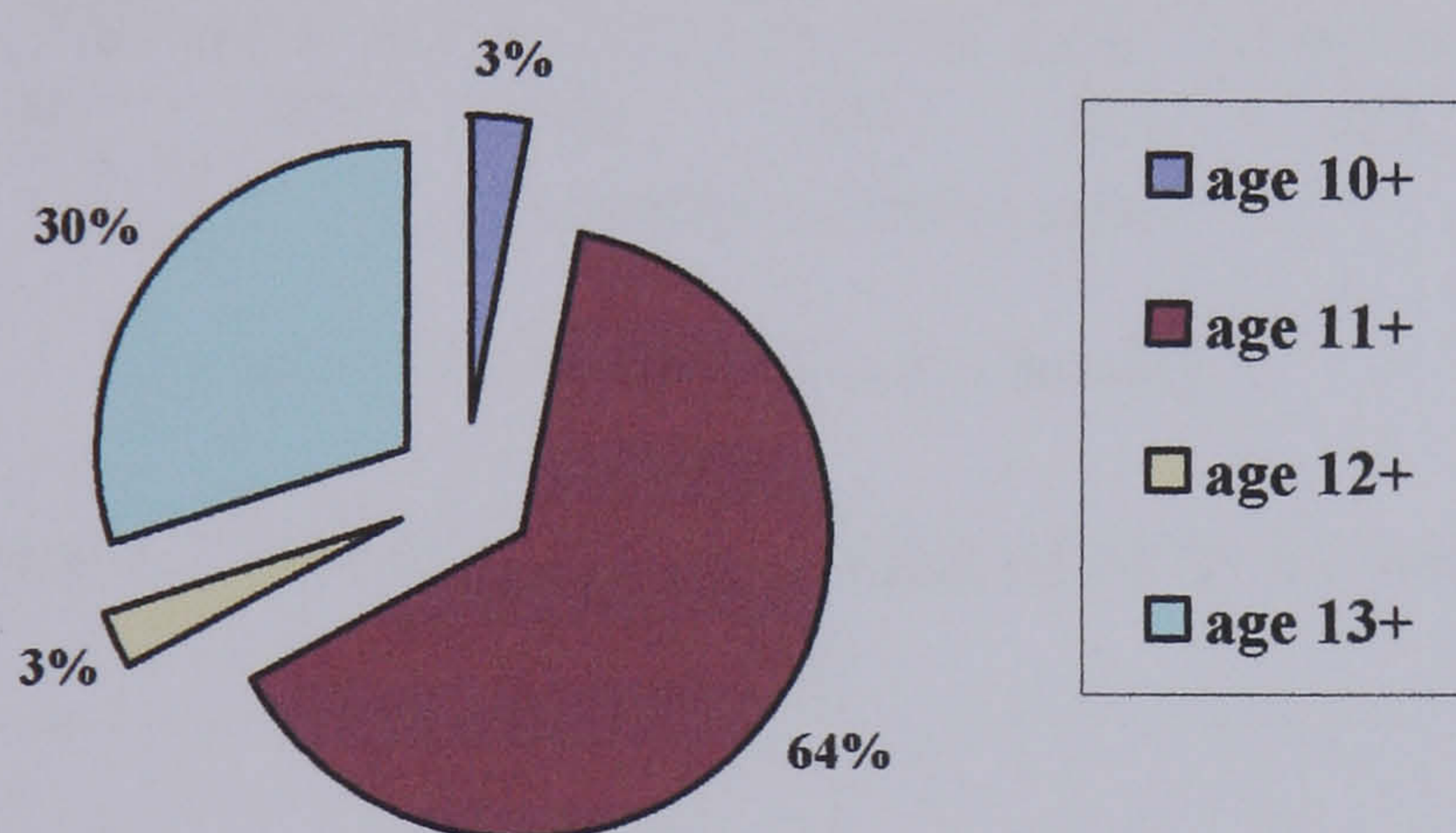
Table 5.3 summarises the responses from junior and senior school heads giving data on ages of transfer to the senior school at 146 of the 165 junior schools, 88 per cent of the HMCJ database. This data is illustrated in the exploded pie-chart in Figure 5.1, which shows that there were two basic categories of junior schools, those operating as a traditional junior school

transferring at age 11+ and those organised along the lines of a preparatory school model transferring at age 13+.

Age of transfer	Number of junior schools	Percentage of schools
10+	5	3%
11+	93	64%
12+	4	3%
13+	44	30%
other	0	0%
Total	146	

[n = 146, 88% of junior schools]

Table 5.3 Frequency distribution for the age of transfer to senior school. for iunior schools



[n = 146, 88% of junior schools]

Figure 5.1 The proportion of junior schools for each age of transfer to senior school

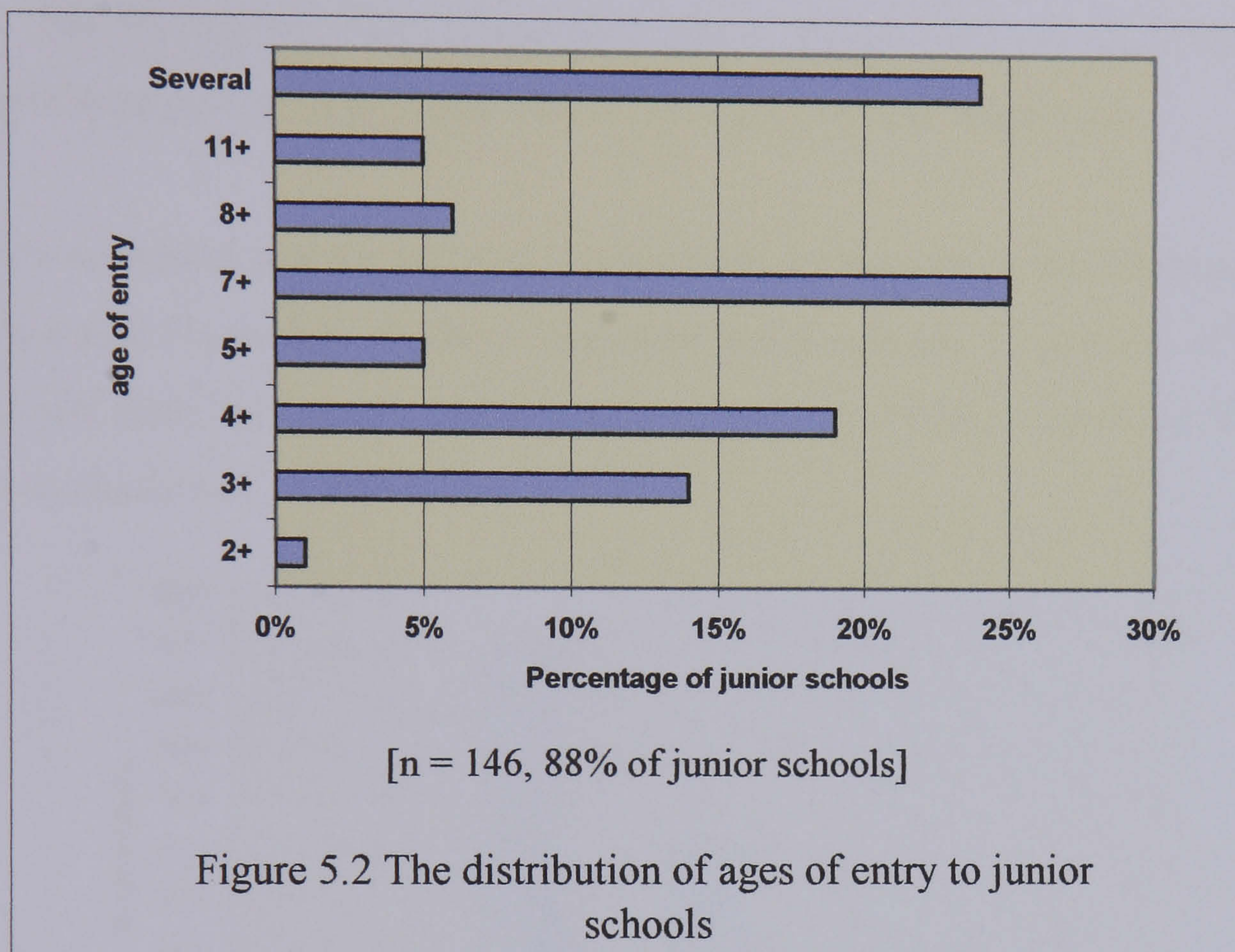
In assessing the views on autonomy and management within these two distinctive groups, it is relevant to note that they are in a ratio of approximately 2:1.

Age of entry to junior school:

The data collected on ages of entry to junior schools, illustrated in Figure 5.2, shows that there was a wide spread of ages of entry in use, with nearly one in four schools not having a main, or specific, entry point. Grouping

ages 2+, 3+ and 4+ into a 'nursery' entry shows that there were three general categories of entry, as follows:

- 'nursery' entry (in 34 per cent of junior schools),
- 7+ entry (in 25 per cent of junior schools),
- no specific or main entry point (in 24 per cent of junior schools).



Since a large number do not have a specific age of entry and the 17 per cent not in these three categories are spread across several ages it is not relevant to this study to use age of entry as an organisational factor for categorising schools.

Size of the school in terms of numbers of teaching staff and pupils

In designing the questionnaire, the size of a junior school in relation to its senior school was thought to be a possible factor influencing its views on autonomy, with larger junior schools possibly expecting to be treated with more independence and held more accountable for their own effectiveness. The size of a school usually refers to the number of pupils, but for this study, focussing on leadership and management, the number of full-time equivalent teaching staff involved is an equally important factor. Indeed, in terms of autonomy and management the size of the school may be best

described in terms of numbers of teachers to manage, rather than the number of pupils to educate.

Though one can normally expect pupil and staff numbers in schools to be closely correlated, this is less likely to be the case in the independent junior sector, which markets its low staff-pupil ratio as a good reason for choosing it. For this reason some independent junior schools, but not all, invest a significant part of their budget into achieving a low staff-pupil ratio.

Data on school size for 147 junior schools, or 89 per cent of the database, is illustrated Figure 5.3. It shows that most junior schools, 71 per cent of the sample, have between 10 and 30 teachers, with the modal group being 10 to 20 in nearly half of the schools.

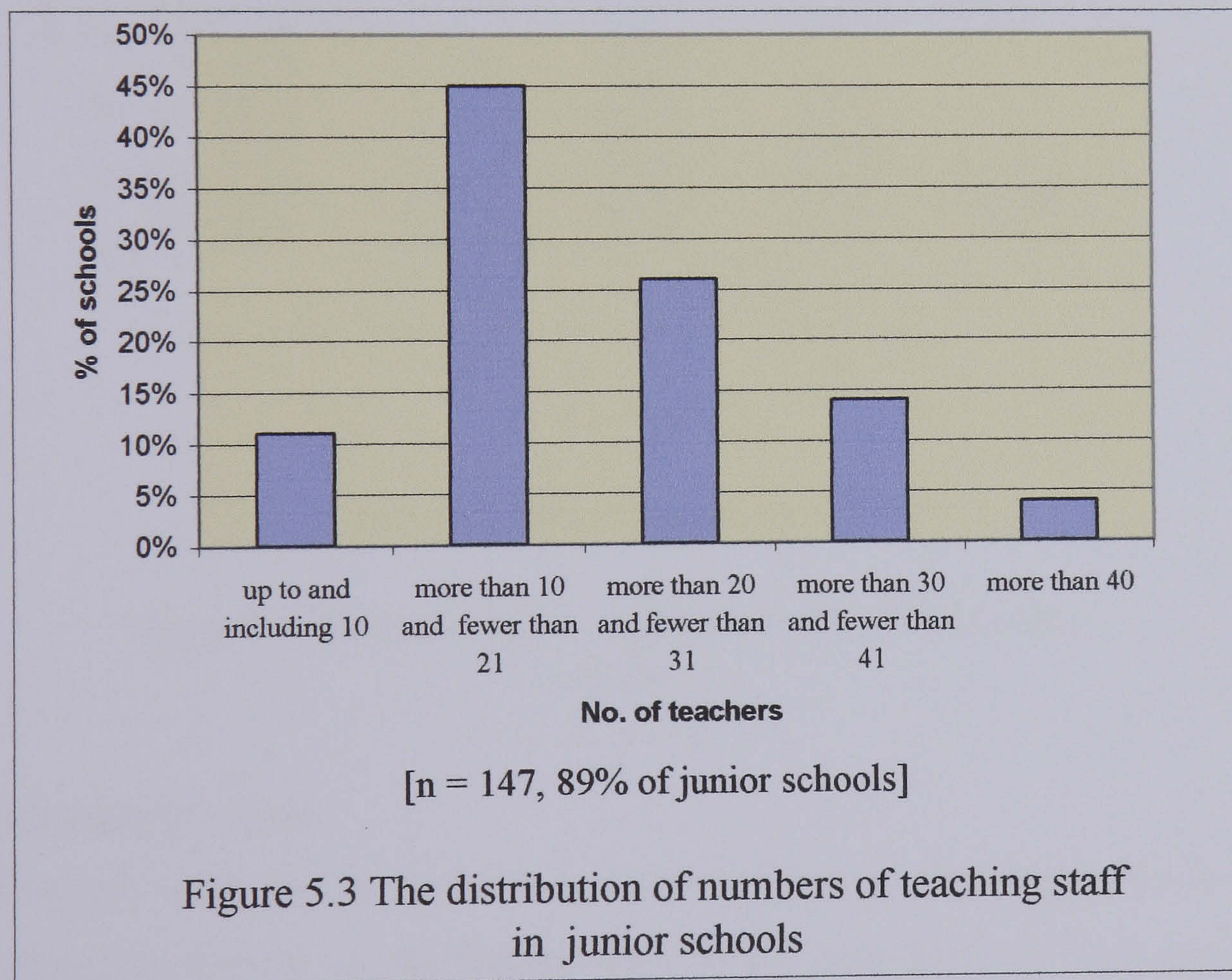
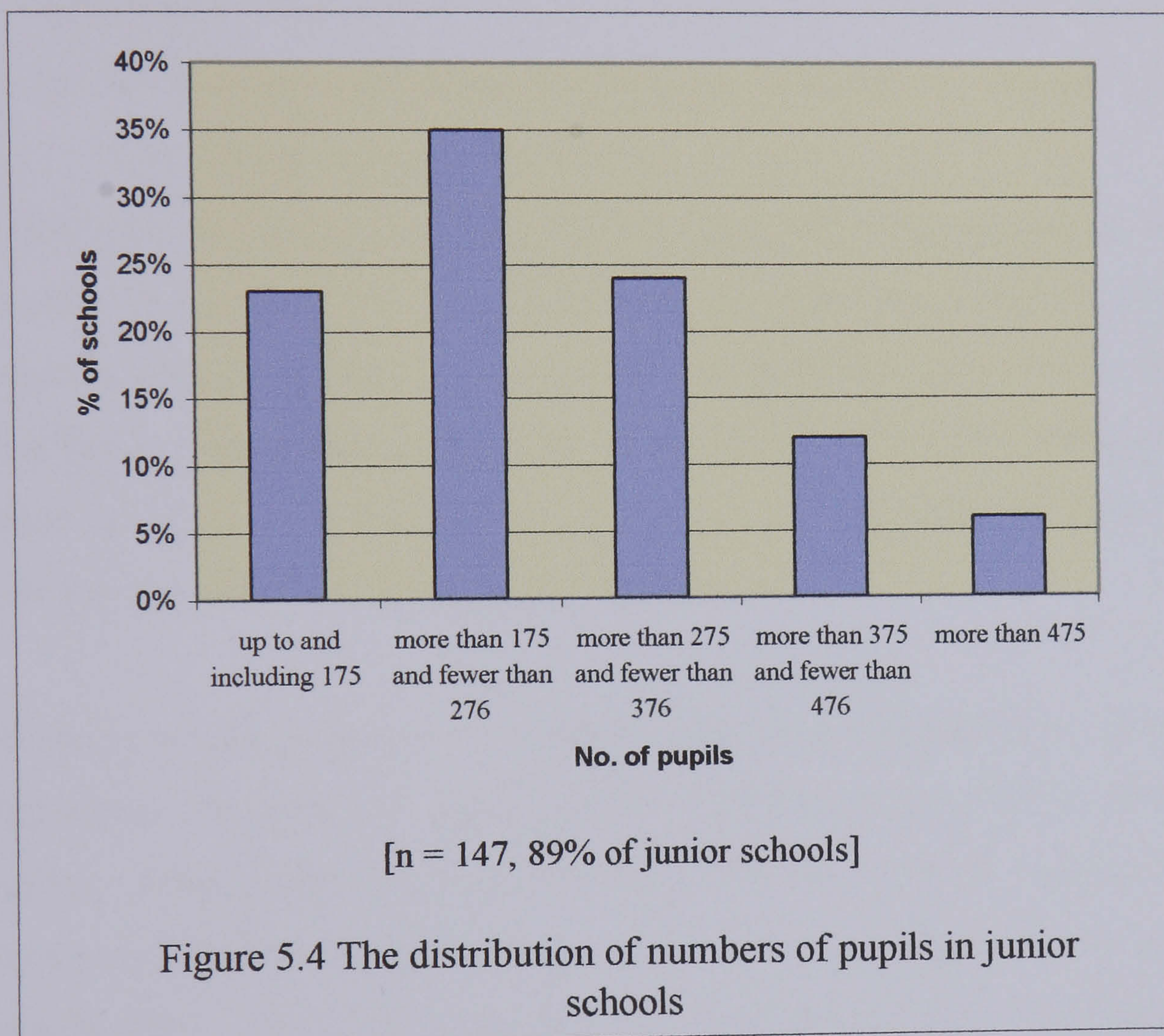


Figure 5.3 shows clear guidelines for defining the size of a linked junior school, based on full time equivalent teaching staff numbers, in categories of small, medium, large and very large, as follows:

- Small - up to and including 10
- Medium - more than 10 and fewer than 31
- Large - more than 30 and fewer than 41
- Very large - more than 40

The distribution of schools in relation to the number of pupils, based on data from 147 of the 165 junior schools is given in Figure 5.4. Grouping the data to reveal a pattern leads to defining categories of size of school, based on pupil numbers, as follows:

- Small – up to and including 175 pupils
- Medium – more than 175 and fewer than 276 pupils
- Large – more than 275 and fewer than 376 pupils
- Very large – more than 375 pupils



Co-educational status

Preliminary work for the initial study indicated that single sex schools were a distinctive feature of the independent sector compared to state junior schools and therefore co-education was possibly a relevant factor to consider in assessing effectiveness. However, 112 of the 146 junior schools surveyed, 78 per cent of the total, were co-educational and 76 per cent of these had between 40 and 60 per cent girls.

This means that a large majority of linked junior schools, nearly four out of five, are fully co-educational with a girl-boy ratio of approximately 50:50. Therefore, contrary to the preliminary findings, this aspect of organisational

structure is not a distinctive factor and was not thought to be relevant in categorising junior schools for the purpose of this study.

Senior management team (SMT) structure – size and membership

An overview of the data responses for question A6, regarding membership of the junior school's SMT, suggested possible organisational factors to consider. In broad terms these included the following:

- Is there an SMT?
- Do any senior school colleagues belong to the junior SMT? Who?
- What is the size of the SMT and is it affected by the head of the senior school being a member?

These aspects of organisational structure factors are considered in order. Replies to question A6 (a) showed that at least 146 of the 165 junior schools, over 83 per cent, had a senior management team in place. Given that this is such a large proportion, the fact of having a senior management team in place is not likely to be a relevant organisational factor for categorising schools in relation to autonomy.

Analysis of the responses to question A6 (b) on membership, revealed significant disagreement and possible confusion, which was an area for further investigation in the interviews. Nineteen junior schools were reported to include the head of the senior school as a member of the junior school SMT. In one of these cases the junior school head said that there was no SMT, but the respective senior school head stated that there was and listed him/herself as a member.

Of these 19 junior schools, six of the replies were from senior heads of paired schools whose junior heads did not return the questionnaire and at 10 of the other 13 pairs of schools the senior and junior heads gave different answers. Five senior heads claimed to be in the junior SMT but their respective junior heads denied this and five junior heads reported that their senior partners were in the SMT but the senior heads reported that they were not. Some of this may have been due to carelessness in filling in the questionnaire, but it is unlikely to account for this level of disagreement. It

is significant that in only three pairs of schools were both questionnaires returned in which there was agreement that the junior SMT included the senior school head as a member.

Thirty-three junior schools, approximately 23 per cent of the 146 responses, had members of the senior school on their SMT. Of these, eight included only the head of the senior school, 10 included the head and at least one other senior school colleague and 15 had only senior school colleagues other than the head, usually the bursar (in 13 of the 15 cases).

The distribution of sizes of junior school SMTs is given in Table 5.4. This shows that the modal size is four and nearly two thirds of all SMTs are no bigger than four. In looking for SMT size as a relevant organisational factor, since the average size is 4.2 one can consider four as 'normal', less than four as 'small', five as 'large' and six or more as 'very large'. It is interesting to note that in junior school SMTs that included the senior head, the average size was 4.6 suggesting that his/her presence does not necessarily lead to a smaller group as one might have expected.

Size of SMT	Total number of junior schools	Number of junior schools which include the head of senior school on the SMT
2	12	1
3	27	3
4	40	6
5	22	3
6	12	3
7	4	1
8	3	1
9	2	0
Total	122	18

[n = 122, 74% of junior school heads]

Table 5.4 Frequency distributions of the size of a junior school SMT, for junior schools in general and those that include the senior school head as an SMT member

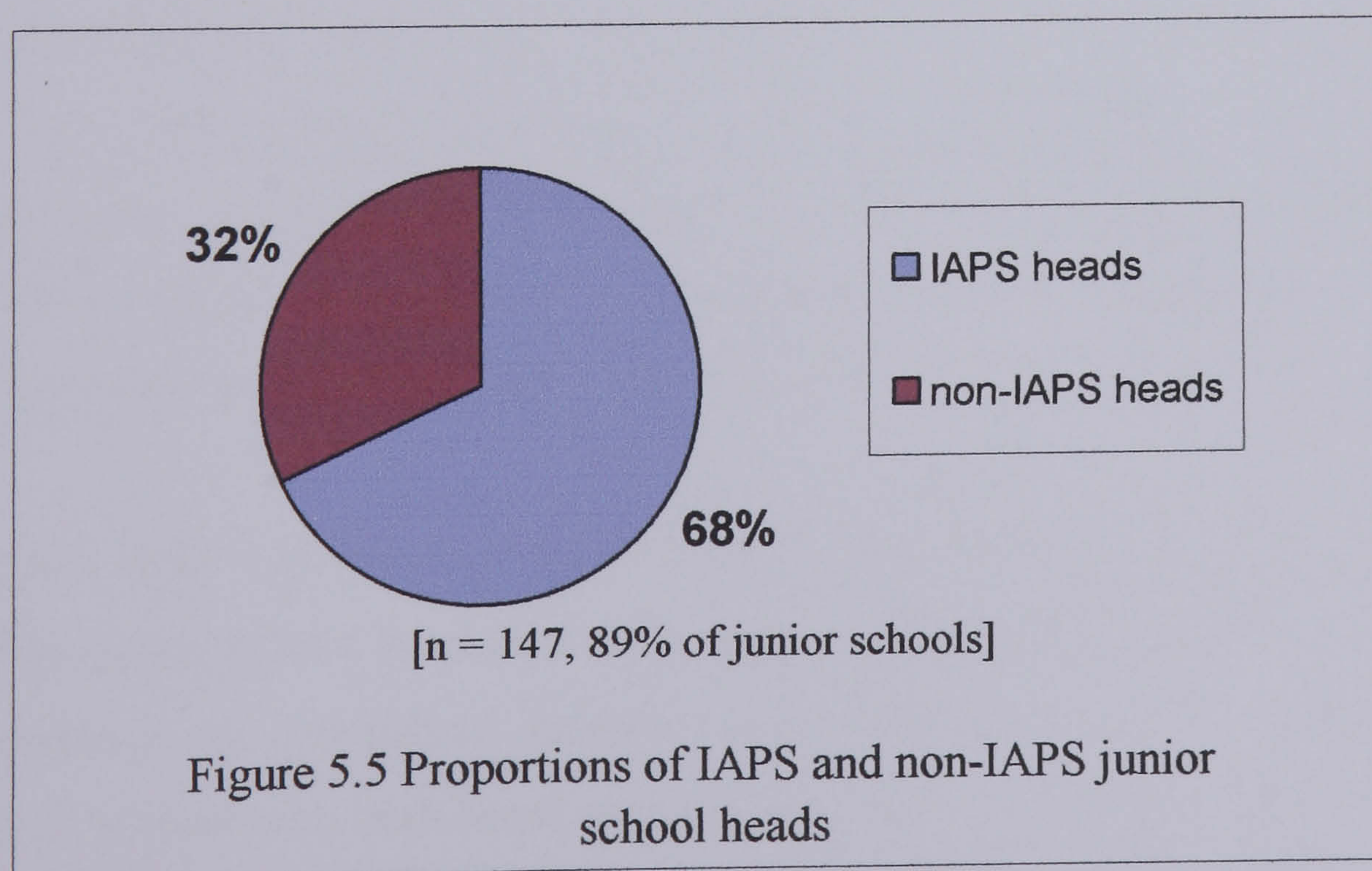
In summary, approximately one in four junior schools included a senior school colleague as a member of its SMT and over half of these included the head of the senior school. This means, of course, that the majority of SMTs in junior schools, 77 per cent, did not involve the senior school and when they did, more often than not it included the senior head.

IAPS membership

IAPS generally assumes that heads in membership have considerable autonomy. Therefore it was thought likely that IAPS membership, or interest in applying for it, would be a very relevant factor to use in categorising junior schools.

Of the 147 responses on junior schools, 68 per cent of the heads were in membership of IAPS and only seven schools of the 47 not in membership were interested in it. More than three quarters of the non-IAPS junior schools, 77 per cent, belonged to regional or area groups and only six per cent of junior schools were not in IAPS and not in a regional group.

In summary, there was a clear division of junior schools heads into two groups of heads, IAPS and non-IAPS in a ratio of approximately 2:1, as illustrated in Figure 5.5.



QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS: SECTION B (ORGANISATIONAL DATA FOR THE SENIOR SCHOOL)

Introduction

Since the analysis of section B was concerned with senior school organisational structure, in cases when both heads in a pair of linked schools replied but gave different answers it was appropriate to use the replies to factual questions of the heads of senior schools.

The data from question B1, about ages of entry into the senior school, was not used because the ages of entry to the senior school included cohorts of children independent to the junior school. Similarly, the data from questions B2, B3 and B4 about the senior school, on numbers of teachers, numbers of pupils and the degree of co-education respectively, was not used. Analysis of similar data for the junior schools did not show them to be particularly significant factors in relation to the associated key research question, KRQ2, and since the focus of this research is on the junior schools, such senior school data was assessed as being not relevant.

Significance of senior school senior management structure

Analysis of question B5 looked at the membership of senior schools' SMTs and focussed on the key issue of whether the head of the junior school was a member. Of the 165 pairs of schools written to, there were 145 with at least one head responding to question B5, giving a significant 88 per cent response rate. Of these replies, 78 pairs had both heads responding, 45 just the senior head and 22 just the junior head, giving responses from 123 senior school heads and 22 junior heads to analyse.

Analysis of the 145 responses showed that 72 senior schools, or 50 per cent, had the junior school head as a member of its SMT, so this factor divides the database into two halves. However, it is of interest to note that of the 78 pairs of schools with both heads replying, nine pairs, or 12 per cent of them, gave different answers, with eight junior heads claiming to be in the senior school SMT, but the respective senior school heads reporting otherwise and one junior head reporting contrary to his senior school head that he was not

in membership. This proportion of 12 per cent is unlikely to be entirely the result of carelessness in answering the question and there was probably some confusion over the use of terms such as SMT.

The possible significance of a junior school head's membership of the senior school SMT, in helping to categorise schools in relation to degrees of autonomy, was assessed by comparing section B results with results from section E that were used to help classify the concept of autonomy. The essential question being investigated was 'If the junior school head is a member of the senior school SMT, then does he/she feel more autonomous in running his/her own school?'

The analysis of section E is shown later in this chapter. It showed that in the context of this study a perceived very high degree of autonomy meant having control over aspects of autonomy coded F, I and J (selects pupils, allocates resources and sets budget respectively). Since this study is concerned with perceptions of autonomy and effectiveness, it was not always necessary or relevant to consider whether the aspect of autonomy actually happened in the junior school. All junior schools whose heads had rated each of these aspects as 'vital' or 'having a lot of importance' (scales 1 or 2 in question E1) were considered and the responses to question B5 analysed.

Ninety-eight of the 145 pairs responding to question B5 had junior school heads who had rated aspects of autonomy F, I and J as being necessary for having a high degree of autonomy. Of these 98 pairs, 51 (or 52 per cent) had the junior head in membership of the senior school SMT. A chi-squared test of statistical significance confirmed that this proportion is not significantly different from what one might have expected. This suggests that the senior school SMT structure with regard to the junior school head sharing its leadership and management is not significant in relation to perceptions of autonomy.

It is possible that some junior school heads with a very high degree of autonomy may think it appropriate to have little or nothing to do with another school, whereas others may think it right to represent directly their school by being on the senior school SMT. Both attitudes to membership are consistent with varying degrees of autonomy. It was thought that membership of the senior school head on the junior school SMT would be a more significant factor and this was found to be the case in comparing results from sections A and E, which is shown later in the analysis of section E.

Senior school SMTs and links with junior schools

Questions B6, B7, B8 and B9 explored the role of a senior school's SMT in relation to links with its junior school.

Question B6 collected data, from the perspective of senior school organisation, on how the transfer of pupils and progression into the senior school was managed. Of the 145 responses analysed, 106 pairs of schools (73 per cent) reported having someone in the senior school, other than the head, with specific responsibility for liaising with the junior school. In collating the data for question B6 (b), on who was responsible for liaising over pupil progression, the responses were coded and classified as shown in Table 5.5.

Code used	Senior school role
D	Deputy Head status or similar, including Senior Master, Senior House Master and Assistant Head
H	Head of a particular Year group(s), including a Head of 'Lower School'
O	Other category not listed (used for positions when the status was not clear)
R	Registrar or Director of Administration
S	Director of Studies role

Table 5.5 Classification and coding of the senior school roles, excluding the head, for those with responsibility for liaising with the junior school on pupil progression

Table 5.6 shows the distribution of these senior school roles, other than the head, with responsibility for liaising with the junior school. The numbers refer to the responses analysed from junior and senior school heads. This shows that in 75, or 52 per cent, of the 145 pairs analysed, the organisational link between schools, other than at head's level, is through the Deputy Head or Head of Year role. In 31 cases, or 21 per cent, it is through a less senior position and in 39 cases, or 27 per cent, no one was specified as being responsible.

		Role responsible for link with junior school					Total
		D	H	O	R	S	
School Head	Junior	4	7	1	0	4	16
	Senior	34	30	7	4	15	90
	Total	38	37	8	4	19	106

[n = 145, 88% of senior schools, using replies from 122 senior school heads and 23 junior school heads]

Table 5.6 Frequency distribution of the roles responsible for liaising with junior school on pupil progression

In trying to answer KRQ2 it was most relevant to look at these responses in relation to those junior schools that, in section E, had rated the very high autonomy aspects as 'vital' or 'having a lot of importance'. In summary, the question to consider was 'Are high autonomy junior schools less likely to have someone in the senior school formally responsible for liaison?'

Table 5.7 summarises the responses to question B5 (b) for those with junior schools that had rated the 'very high' autonomy aspects as 'vital' or 'having a lot of importance'. It is relevant to note that the ratio of 'Yes/No' responses for these 98 pairs of schools is almost the same as for all 145 responses. This suggests that having a senior school colleague as a link is of no particular significance to perceived degrees of autonomy in the junior school.

		Names a role		Role responsible for link with junior school				
		Yes	No	D	H	O	R	S
School Head	Junior	13	7	3	5	1	0	4
	Senior	59	19	22	21	5	2	9
Total		72	26	25	26	6	2	13

[n = 98, 59% of senior schools, using replies from 78 senior school heads and 20 junior school heads]

Table 5.7 Frequency distribution of the roles responsible for liaising with junior schools on pupil progression, for 'high' autonomy junior schools

Table 5.8 is similar to Table 5.7 but refers only to those with junior schools that had rated the top three aspects of autonomy as 'vital' (i.e. scaled all three aspects F, J, I as 1 in section E).

		Names a role		Role responsible for link with junior school				
		Yes	No	D	H	O	R	S
School Head	Junior	9	3	2	4	1	0	2
	Senior	40	10	12	17	3	1	7
Total		49	13	14	21	4	1	9

[n = 62, 38% of senior schools, using replies from 50 senior school heads and 12 junior school heads]

Table 5.8 Frequency distribution of the roles responsible for liaising with junior schools on pupil progression, for 'very high' autonomy junior schools

Table 5.8 shows that in such schools, which perceived a 'very high' degree of autonomy as important, the senior school is more likely to have a Head of Lower School or Head of Year as the link person rather than a Deputy compared to all schools (21 out of 49 cases, or 43 per cent, compared to 37 out of 106 cases, or 35 per cent). However, comparing the observed 'Yes' responses in Table 5.8 (79 per cent) with the expected figure (73 per cent)

based on all 145 responses, using a chi-squared test shows no significant difference at the five per cent level.

In summary, having a specific senior school colleague as part of the organisational structure linking the two schools is unlikely to be of any significance in influencing a junior school head's view on autonomy. There is some indication, though not of statistical significance, that it is more likely to be a Head of Year or Head of Lower School rather than a Deputy when 'very high' autonomy is perceived as important. If autonomy is thought to be beneficial, it may be relevant to consider the role of the link person if one is allocated. However, the lack of statistically significant links for roles other than the head implies that the significant factor may simply be the interaction between pairs of linked heads, which is of course central to this study.

Role of the senior school SMT in relation to the junior school

In response to question B7, concerned with the continuum of education across the whole age range, there were 145 replies from at least one of the schools in each of the 165 pairs. Of these, 63 per cent stated that the senior school SMT discussed junior school education. However, in 21 pairs of schools the replies from the pairs of heads were different. In 14 cases the senior school heads denied discussing junior school issues, contrary to the respective junior school heads' replies and in the other seven cases the senior school heads stated that their SMTs did discuss junior issues contrary to what their junior heads thought. Given that 80 pairs of schools had replies from both heads, this means that in 26 per cent of cases with both heads replying there was a contradiction.

This indicates that there was a potential misunderstanding of the role of the senior school SMT in relation to the junior school and a lack of clarity over how the continuum of education was managed between pairs of schools. Furthermore, of the 39 pairs of schools that did have the senior school SMT looking at the continuum of education from the junior to the senior school, only two stated who is responsible for this link. This combination of

contradictory responses and no responses indicates that generally the continuum of education, a major feature of linked schools, is not clearly managed through organisational structures.

Further analysis of question B7 focused on the junior schools whose heads rated the 'very high' autonomy aspects F, I and J as 'vital' or 'having a lot of importance' in question E1. Analysis of the 97 pairs of such schools replying showed that 74 per cent of them listed the senior SMT as discussing junior school education and continuity compared to an expected figure of 63 per cent based on all responses. A chi-squared test of statistical significance comparing these figures gives $\chi^2 = 4.73$ which is significant at the five per cent level with one degree of freedom (critical value of χ^2 is 3.84).

This means that more of these pairs of schools involve the senior school SMT in junior school education than expected. It could imply that in such cases, when the senior school SMT discusses junior school continuity, the junior school heads have, or develop, a clearer understanding of what high level autonomy should involve. It could also mean that because such the heads have such views on autonomy the SMT links are 'allowed' to operate. However, establishing a causal link between these issues is beyond this study.

Not surprisingly, responses to the open-ended question B9, asking for a description of the role of the senior school SMT in relation to the junior school, covered the full range of the spectrum from 'non-existent' to 'totally integrated'. However, the comments tended to be in one of three general categories, 'very little involvement and no discernable role', 'effectively just one SMT of the whole school that includes the junior school' and 'nothing specific but closely interested in a supportive way'. Most responses were in the first and third categories, either 'not involved' or 'supportive in a non-specific undefined manner'. There was no evidence in the responses of a formal or definite inter-connecting structure.

Further analysis of question B9 was carried out on the responses from the junior school heads who had all rated the high autonomy aspects F, J and I in question E1 as ‘vital’ or ‘having a lot of importance’. Of this group, 40 per cent reported little or no role for the senior school SMT, 53 per cent stated that it was generally supportive and interested and the other seven per cent were in junior schools which were managed as part of one school by the senior school SMT. The fairly even split between ‘no role’ and ‘supportive’, for this group of heads, further suggests that there is no specific inter-connecting structure linked to a sense of autonomy.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS: SECTION C (GOVERNANCE OF BOTH SCHOOLS)

Introduction – questions used for analysis of governance

Section C, which is linked to KRQ2 and KRQ3, was designed to collect quantitative and qualitative data on governance at linked schools. The aim was to analyse the role of governance within the school’s organisational structures and to assess its relationship to autonomy. Though a wide range of data was collected on junior and senior schools, the analysis focussed on the junior school heads’ responses and how they perceived the role and responsibilities of their governors, using questions C3, C6 and C7.

Analysis of the four interview transcripts and the other questionnaire sections confirmed that data on senior school governance and the relative importance of general aspects of governance was outside the focus of the relevant research questions and the study, so questions C1, C2, C4 and C5 were not used.

Autonomy of junior school governance

Question C3 asked specifically about governance of the junior school in order to assess its degree of autonomy in relation to the senior school’s governing body. Of the 165 pairs of schools, responses were obtained from at least one school in 144 pairs, 87 per cent of the total surveyed. In six pairs of schools, the respective pairs of heads gave contradictory answers. Four senior school heads claimed that their junior schools did not have a

separate governing body but the respective junior heads stated that they did. Two senior school heads, contrary to their junior school heads, claimed that the junior school was governed separately. Though this is only four per cent of the total responses and could be the result of careless respondents it may reveal some degree of uncertainty about the nature of governance at a linked school. When pairs of heads gave different answers to question C3 (a), the responses of the junior school heads were used since it was assumed that they would know more clearly to whom they were accountable for governance and their perception of what should happen was most relevant.

Of the 144 pairs of schools, 90 per cent of the junior schools did not have a separate governing body. Since this is such a large proportion, attention focussed on whether the heads thought that the junior schools *should* have a separate governing body. Of the pairs of schools without a separate junior school governing body, 15 junior school heads and no senior school heads thought that there should be one, which is 13 per cent of the responses to this question. However, it is particularly relevant to note that over 70 per cent of the junior school heads without a separate governing body stated that they should not have one.

Analysis of the junior and senior school heads' reasons for wanting, or not wanting, separate junior school governance, in response to question C3(c), partly explained this relatively large proportion not wanting this aspect of autonomy. Reasons given for wanting separate governance included, '(for) more recognition – more focus', 'to be more in touch' and '(for) particular oversight'. Reasons stated for not wanting or needing it included, '(the) head of junior school attends all meetings', 'equal time is given to both schools by (an) education committee', 'specific governors (are) allocated' and '(the) governing body is supportive'. This all suggested that the key issues were 'recognition as a separate school' and 'access by the junior head to governors', which are not necessarily regarded as structural issues in terms of wanting separate boards of governors. Clearly both aspects of 'recognition' and 'access' can be present, and often are, with one overseeing governing body.

It may not necessarily be the organisational structure in terms of governance that is important, but rather the manner in which a governing body recognises and communicates with the junior school and its head. Indeed, the evidence suggests that junior and senior school heads would generally prefer one governing body but operating in an appropriate way rather than two separate governing bodies.

Nature of autonomy in relation to governance

Question C6 asked heads to describe the nature of their autonomy in leading and managing their school, in relation to their governing body. The four categories used were adapted from Glatter's models of governance for schools (Glatter, 2002: 229). The perceived nature of the head's autonomy implies a particular role for the governors as outlined in table in Figure 5.6.

Nature of autonomy	Brief outline of governors' role
Substantial	Governors have minimal involvement – head left to get on with decisions
Devolved	Governors involved but in an advisory role
Consultative	Governors actively involved, consulting and co-ordinating strategy
Guided	Governors control and supervise direction

Figure 5.6 Four kinds of autonomy in relation to governors
(Source Adapted from Glatter, 2002: 229).

Figure 5.7 shows the overall proportions of responses from the 231 junior and senior school heads who replied to this question. Approximately half the heads perceived their autonomy as being 'devolved', with governors involved in an advisory role and the other half were divided into two significant groups with 'substantial' and 'consultative' autonomy, comprising about a quarter and a fifth of the total respectively.

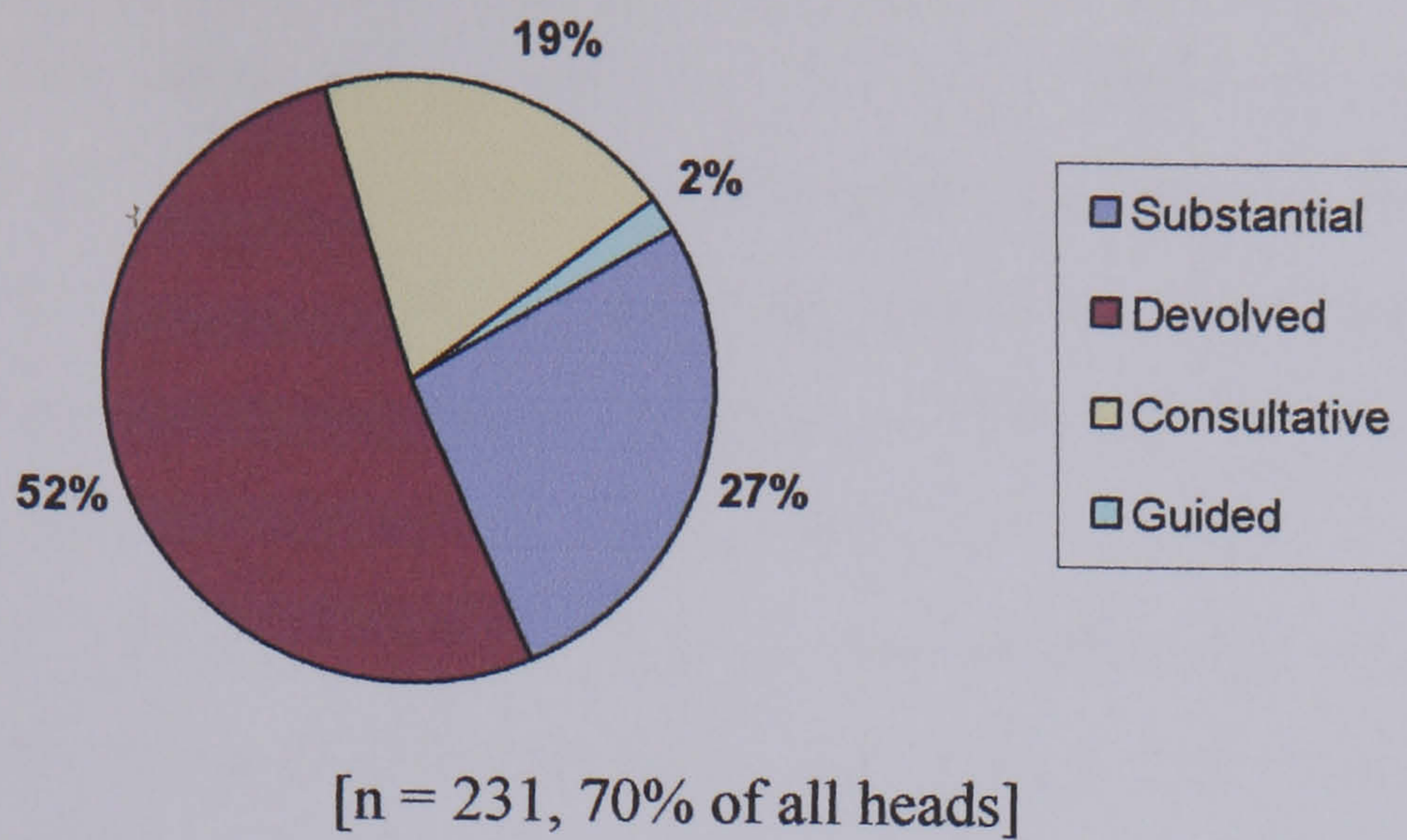


Figure 5.7 The proportion of heads for each of the four kinds of autonomy in relation to governors

However, further insight into the significance of these results is gained by comparing the views of junior and senior school heads, as illustrated in Figure 5.8. This shows the percentage of responses in each group of junior and senior school heads respectively, for each of the four categories of the nature of autonomy as listed in Figure 5.6.

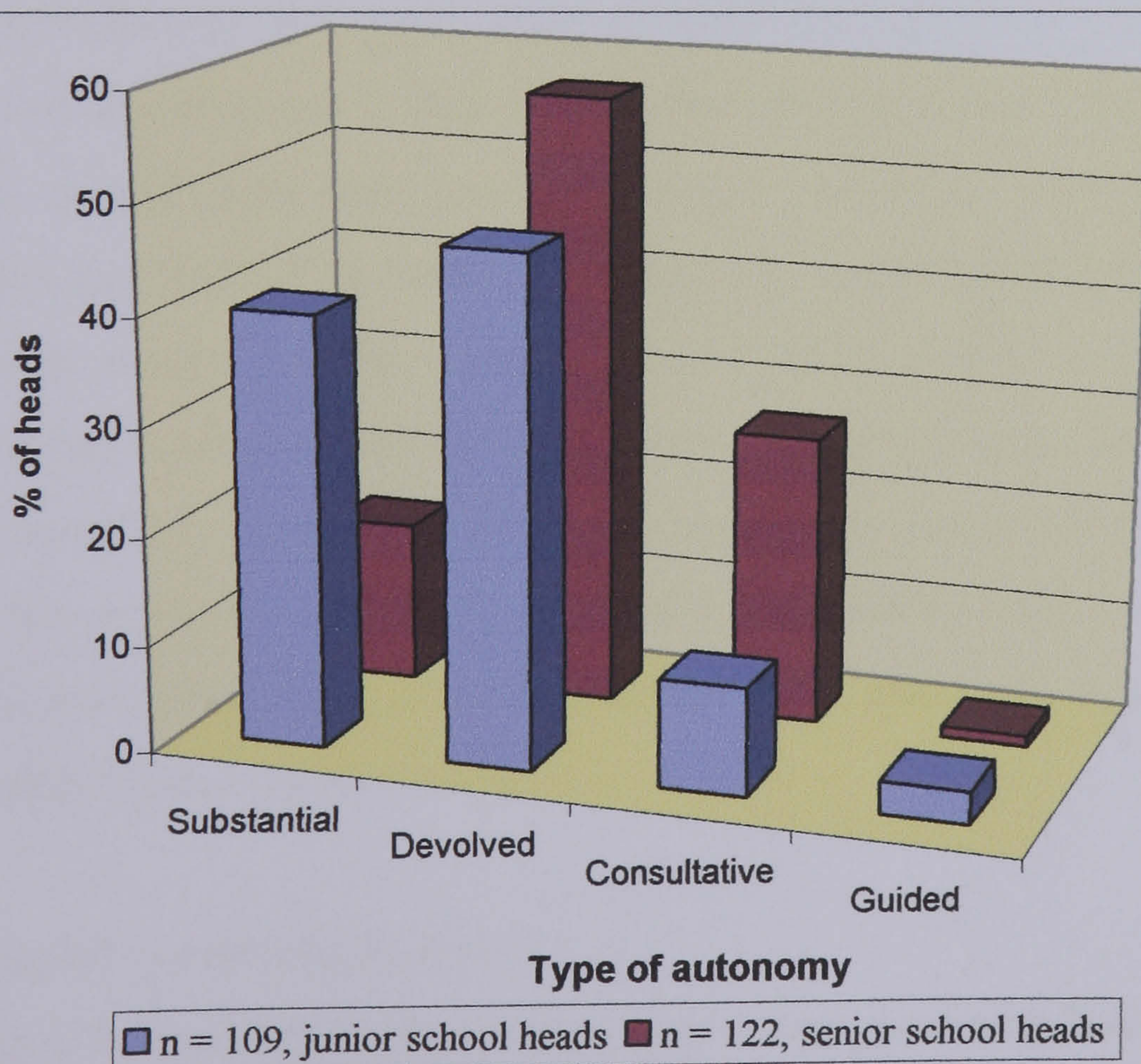


Figure 5.8 The distributions of types of autonomy, in relation to governors, for junior and senior school heads

Figure 5.8 shows that most senior school heads (84 per cent of replies) perceived their nature of autonomy to be either 'devolved' (governors involved in an advisory capacity) or 'consultative' (governors actively involved). In contrast to this, most junior school heads (84 per cent of replies) regarded their autonomy as either 'substantial' (governors have minimal involvement) or 'devolved', with only 10 per cent in the 'consultative' category. A chi-squared test of statistical significance comparing the results illustrated in Figure 5.8, gives $\chi^2 = 66.9$ which is very highly significant at the one per cent level with three degrees of freedom (critical value of χ^2 is 11.34). This confirms that there is a significant difference in the views of junior and senior school heads on the nature of their autonomy in relation to governors. Of the 77 pairs of schools in which both heads responded to this question, in 51 cases the junior and senior school heads gave different answers, which further supports this finding.

It should be stressed that in answering question C6, junior school heads reported having 'substantial' autonomy only in relation to their governors and not in reference to their senior school head. It suggests that heads of linked schools may have quite different views on their sense of autonomy because of the influence of their relationship with governors. For example, a junior school head may have 'substantial' autonomy with regard to governors, but 'guided' or 'little' autonomy with regard to the senior school head, who in turn may have rather less autonomy relative to governors. Furthermore, a junior school head may state a desire for more autonomy in general terms but would actually like to work more closely with governors even if this means less autonomy. A head's degree of autonomy, within his or her domain of decision-making, therefore needs qualifying in relation to other stakeholders or third parties.

How helpful is a governing body?

Question C7 asked heads to summarise how their governing body is most helpful. The most frequent descriptor used in the responses overall was that of offering or providing 'support'. Heads of junior and senior schools were agreed that a prominent role for the governing body is simply that of being

‘supportive’. However, further analysis comparing pairs of responses from heads of linked schools revealed a possible subtle difference between what the heads of respective junior and senior schools understand by ‘support’. The heads of junior schools seemed to imply that the governors were passive in ‘being there’ to offer support when asked for or needed in the sense of being ‘wise senators – for advice’, ‘critical friends to consult’, ‘acting as a sounding board’ or giving encouragement.

Many of the responses from heads of senior schools also included these aspects but in addition recognised a more active, or engaged, role sharing in the leadership of the school. Senior school heads reported governors as being useful for ‘giving specialist advice’, ‘vision and understanding’, ‘matters of staff discipline and legal advice’, ‘(to) monitor finance and give moral support’ and ‘understanding’ the problems. These responses reflect generally the closer working relationship with governors enjoyed by senior school heads compared to their junior school partners and may partly confirm why the latter thought that they had greater autonomy relative to governors.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS: SECTION D (LINKS BETWEEN JUNIOR AND SENIOR SCHOOLS)

The relative importance of organisational links between pairs of schools

Section D was designed to investigate the links operating between pairs of senior and junior schools. Interview responses in the initial study had indicated some of the common links and in question D1 heads were asked to rate the importance of each link on a scale of 1 to 4, ranging from ‘very important’ to ‘not important at all’. The links selected were primarily chosen as features of organisational structures in order to focus on this aspect of the relevant KRQs, as opposed to informal, or sub-cultural, links referred to in loose-coupling theory (Weick, 1976). However, the open ended question D5 and the interviews aimed to investigate aspects of loose coupling.

Each response in question D1 was given a weighted score. The responses 1, 2, 3, 4, ranging from 'very important' to 'not important at all', were scored 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. However, in analysing the responses it became clear that in having to evaluate so many links on 14 adjacent rows, some heads had missed out an occasional response, failing to ring a number on a particular row. Among the 110 junior school head replies there were 17 such examples (15 per cent) and a further 20 among the 103 senior school head replies (19 per cent).

Rather than omit all 37 replies to this question because of these relatively few missing responses, a scoring system was applied which made use of all the completed questionnaires. For each link, with regard to its perceived importance, a response could be rated a minimum score of 1 equivalent to 'not important at all', up to a maximum score of 4 meaning 'very important'. Therefore, occasional blank responses were scored 2.5, which was equivalent to a neutral response with no view expressed either way. Such a score had to be allocated to the blank cell rather than just omit it from the calculations because to leave it out would have been equivalent to scoring it at zero. However, since a low score of 1 meant 'not important at all' a score of zero would have distorted the final score towards an extreme measure of importance rather than have a neutral effect equivalent to ignoring it. To be consistent, this approach was also used in analysing question E1, which required heads to evaluate 13 aspects of autonomy on adjacent rows. Question E1 was the only question similar to question D1 for which it was appropriate to use this method of analysis.

In just four cases in answering question D1 the heads (two junior school and two senior school) had ringed the two middle numbers, two and three, for one of their responses, possibly because a middle value had not been given as an option in rating the importance of a link. On the assumption that they did not want to rate that particular link with any particular degree of importance the weighted score of 2.5 was used.

For each link, a total score was calculated for each group of senior and junior school heads. Over 70 per cent of heads replied to this question, 110 junior school heads and 123 senior school heads, giving a representative set of data. A scale factor of importance was then calculated for each link, for each group of heads, by dividing the total score by the number of heads. The scale factor range is therefore from 1 (not important at all) to 4 (very important), with a score of 2.5 representing no particular view either way.

Table 5.9 lists the scale factors of importance for each group of heads, for each link coded A to M, ranked according to the views of junior school heads.

Link Code	Link between junior and senior schools	Heads' scale of importance	
		Junior	Senior
F	<i>The schools share and publish some common aims</i>	3.6	3.8
D	<i>Pupil files from the junior school are handed on to the senior school at transfer</i>	3.6	3.7
J	<i>The heads of both schools have a formal meeting at least weekly</i>	3.4	3.6
A	<i>Respective subject co-ordinators (or heads of depts.) in both schools meet at least annually</i>	3.4	3.3
G	<i>The junior school features in the senior school prospectus</i>	3.4	3.3
B	<i>Syllabuses for respective subjects in both schools are written to provide continuity</i>	3.2	3.2
I	<i>The senior management teams (or equivalent) of both schools meet at least termly</i>	3.0	2.9
E	<i>Both schools have joint INSET days involving junior and senior staff combined</i>	2.8	3.0
L	<i>Changes in policy in the junior school must first be approved by senior school head</i>	2.7	3.2
C	<i>The head of the senior school regularly addresses the junior school in assembly</i>	2.3	2.4
K	<i>The head of the junior school attends senior school staff meetings</i>	2.2	2.6
H	<i>The head of the junior school regularly addresses some section(s) of the senior school</i>	2.0	1.8
M	<i>Parents with a complaint in the junior school must first appeal to the senior school head</i>	1.5	1.8

[n = 110 junior school heads, n = 123 senior school heads]

Table 5.9 The relative importance of links between pairs of schools, ranked according to the views of junior school heads

Figure 5.9 illustrates the data in Table 5.9 using two line graphs to compare the views of senior and junior school heads. The graphs are virtually identical in shape and position. This means that generally the two groups of heads had very similar views on which structural links are important and also agreed on their relative degree of importance. The senior school heads generally rated the links more importantly than the junior school heads, but the differences were not particularly significant as shown by the graphs.

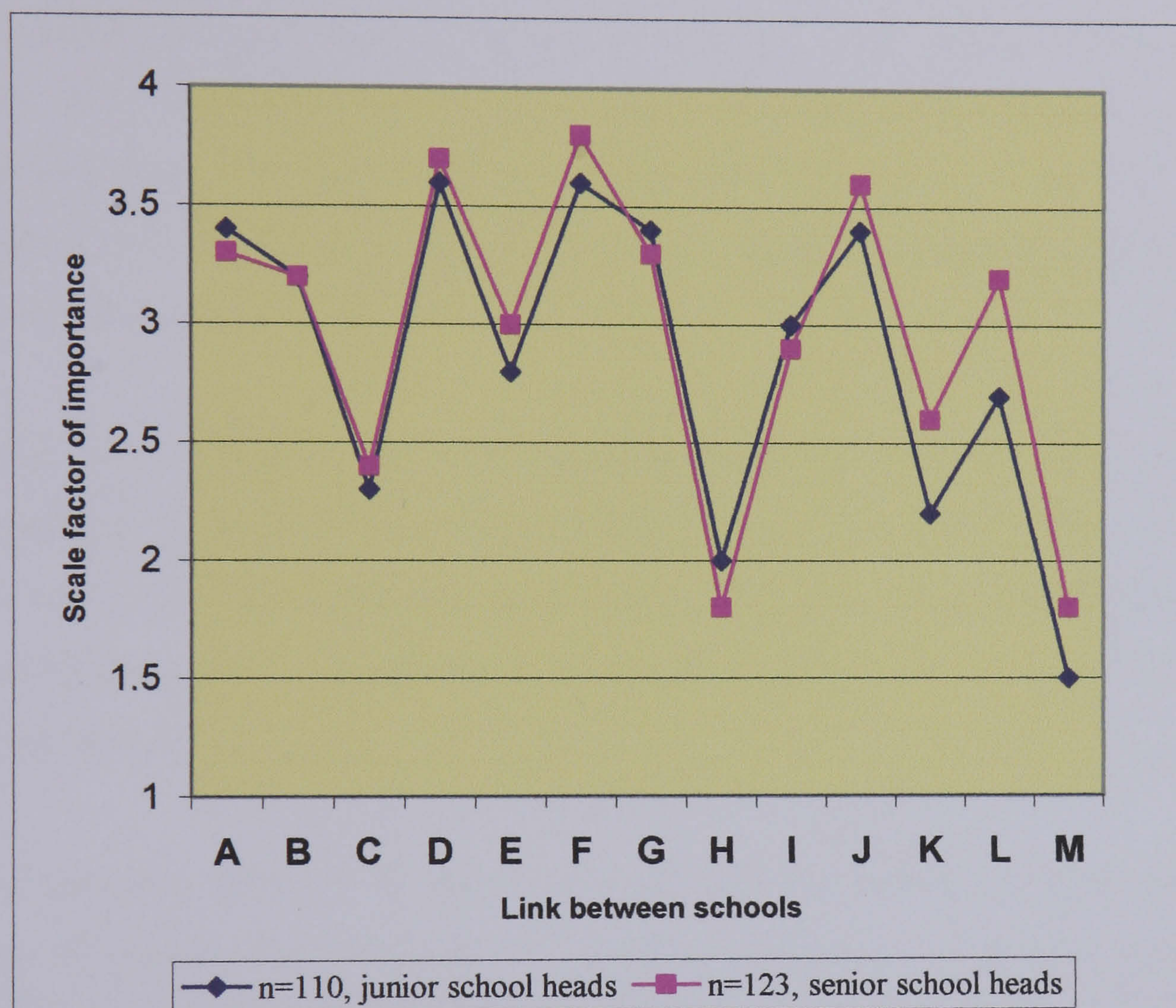


Figure 5.9 The relative importance of the links between schools, rated by junior and senior school heads

Key to links between schools in Figure 5.9

- | | |
|---|--|
| A Subject co-ordinators meet annually | H Junior head addresses senior school |
| B Syllabuses provide continuity | I SMT of both schools meet termly |
| C Senior head addresses junior assembly | J Heads of schools meet weekly |
| D Junior school pupil files transferred | K Junior head attends senior staff meeting |
| E Joint INSET days for staff | L Junior policies approved by senior head |
| F Schools publish common aims | M Parental complaints in junior school appeal to senior head |
| G Junior school in senior prospectus | |

Using these scale factors, it is appropriate to assume that a score of more than 3.5 implies that a link is thought of as 'very important' and 'important' if more than 3. Both groups of heads agreed that the most important links were F and D, 'the sharing of common aims' and 'continuity of pupil files', respectively. A 'formal weekly meeting of heads', link J, was also seen as very important by senior school heads and important by junior school heads, perhaps suggesting that both groups see their role as one of shared leadership, though the motive for valuing such meetings is not clear from this data. The valuing of 'continuity of teaching and learning' is reflected in the other important links A and B, concerning curricular management and progression. The importance of valuing 'one school vision' is seen in the scores for link G, with both sets of heads rating the importance of both schools featuring in one prospectus.

The only significant area of discrepancy was in the scores for link L, 'the approval of junior school policy by the senior school head'. The senior school heads regarded this as important but the junior school heads had no particular overall view, though it is relevant that the latter did not rate it as 'unimportant'.

In summary, both sets of senior and junior school heads had similar views on the relative importance of links between their schools and were agreed that the most important organisational links are concerned with continuity of education and the promotion and implementation of a common set of aims (links A, B, D, F, G, J).

Pupil transfer and continuity of education

With regard to continuity of education, question D2 collected data on pupil transfer from a junior school to its linked senior school. Responses were obtained from 147 pairs of schools, nearly 90 per cent of those surveyed, including 90 pairs with both heads replying. It is relevant to note that in 20 per cent of the cases in which both heads responded, they gave contradictory answers as to whether junior school pupils had a guaranteed transfer to the senior school. In such cases, the view of the junior school head was used in

the analysis on the assumption that they were responsible for the pupils in question and their transfer. Overall, 67 per cent of linked schools did not guarantee transfer and 33 per cent did, so approximately two in three pupils had to face open competition for places in senior schools. This was higher than expected assuming shared leadership in continuity of education. However, analysis of question D2 (b) showed that in practice the policy of transfer made no significant difference.

Table 5.10 compares the distributions of pairs of schools that guarantee transfer with others. It shows very similar proportions of schools for each group of percentages of pupils transferring. For example, three quarters or more of all schools have a transfer rate of at least 90 per cent, regardless of it being guaranteed or not.

Percentage of pupils transferring to senior school	90-100	80-89	70-79	60-69	50-59	<50
Proportion of schools not guaranteeing transfer	75%	10%	10%	3%	1%	1%
Proportion of schools guaranteeing transfer	83%	6%	8%	0%	0%	2%

Note: Rounding errors account for a total of less than 100% in the third row of the table.

[n = 147 pairs of schools, using replies from 112 junior school heads and 35 senior school heads]

Table 5.10 Frequency distributions of the percentages of pupils transferring to senior schools, for pairs of schools guaranteeing transfer and those not guaranteeing transfer

A chi-squared test on the data in Table 5.10, with two degrees of freedom to allow for grouping together low expected frequencies, confirmed that there is no significant difference at the five per cent level in the pattern of actual pupil transfer regardless of policy. This further confirms the importance that heads attach to pupil transfer and their success in ensuring such continuity.

The most important and weakest links – open-ended responses

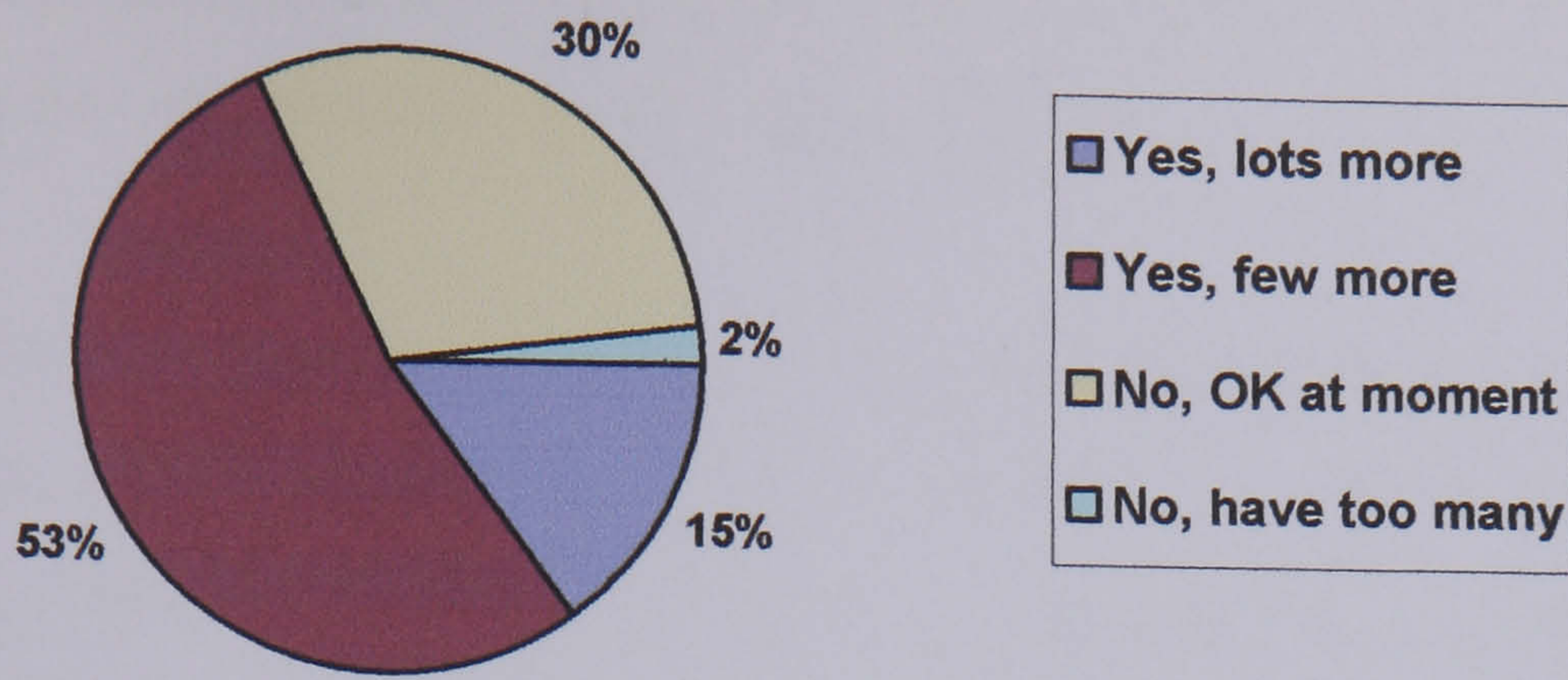
Question D5 gave heads the opportunity to describe what they thought were the most important and weakest links operating between their pair of schools. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there was strong agreement between the two groups of heads and also between pairs of heads that the most important link centred on the relationship between, and regular meetings of, the pairs of heads at linked schools. This was sometimes qualified as being important in order to maintain a common purpose or vision, with emphasis given to aspects of communication and co-ordination.

There was the same degree of agreement that the weakest link was often a lack of liaison between teachers in both schools responsible for subject areas, with a resulting loss of continuity in terms of the curriculum and learning. Insufficient interaction between teaching staff in pairs of schools was commonly quoted as a weak organisational link implying that in general all heads thought it to be important.

There was no significant difference in the kinds of responses from heads with different views on the meaning of high autonomy or those with differing judgments on the effectiveness of their organisational links. This suggests that degrees of perceived autonomy may be independent of views on the importance of pairs of heads meeting regularly, though the reasons for wanting such meetings were not always made clear. Similarly, in general all heads, independent of their views on autonomy, valued liaison between subject teachers in pairs of schools, with some responses explaining its importance for curriculum continuity.

Would heads like to see more links developed?

Responses to question D4 from 233 heads, over 70 per cent of those surveyed, gave a general picture of their level of satisfaction with links between schools. Figure 5.10 illustrates this data, showing that only 15 per cent wanted lots more links, two per cent wanted fewer and in general 83 per cent of all heads were reasonably content, either having about the right links or just wanting a few more.



[n = 233, 71% of all heads]

Figure 5.10 The proportion of heads for each degree of wanting more links between pairs of schools

The results for the two groups of junior and senior school heads gave a similar pattern to this, indicating a general agreement on inter-school links. However, an analysis of pairs of responses comparing levels of agreement between pairs of linked heads in each category of response suggested otherwise. Table 5.11 shows the results for the 87 pairs of schools that produced responses to question D4 from both heads.

	Are more links desirable?				Total no. of heads
	Yes, need for lots more	Yes, just a few more needed	No, about right at moment	No, too many at moment	
Junior school heads	10	46	29	2	87
Senior school heads	11	53	21	2	87
No. of pairs of heads in agreement	2	27	5	0	68

[n = 174 (87 pairs of heads), 53% of all pairs of heads]

Table 5.11 Frequency distributions of the desirability of more links between schools, for pairs of schools with both heads replying

For example, of the 87 pairs of schools with both heads responding, 29 of the junior school heads and 21 of the senior school heads replied that they did not want more links because their current situation was satisfactory. However, of these 50 heads only 10, or five pairs, were in agreement with

their respective linked school head. Overall, only 34 pairs of heads out of the 87 gave the same answer, which means that 61 per cent of pairs of heads disagreed on the effectiveness of their organisational links.

A similar pairs analysis was applied to those pairs of schools at which the junior school head had listed the 'high autonomy' aspects as important (aspects F, I, J rated as 1 or 2 in question E1). The responses from these 79 pairs of schools produced similar results with 32 pairs of heads out of 79 in agreement, or in other words 59 per cent disagreeing. This suggests that the junior school heads' perception of high autonomy is likely to be independent of their valuing organisational links. This may imply that a head's desire for stronger organisational links does not necessarily reflect a desire for more or less autonomy.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS: SECTION E (AUTONOMY – CONCEPT AND CLASSIFICATION)

Aspects of autonomy and their importance

Section E, which collected data on the importance of 13 aspects of autonomy, was designed to help answer the key research questions on degrees of autonomy and possible links with organisational structure and effectiveness (KR1, KR3 and KR5b) as outlined earlier in Figure 4.3.

A total of 233 heads responded, 111 heads of junior schools and 122 heads of senior schools, giving a large and representative sample of the database, over 70 per cent of all heads. The total score for each aspect of autonomy was calculated for each of the three distinct groups, namely: all the heads, junior school heads and senior school heads. The full descriptions of the aspects investigated are listed in the questionnaire (Appendix 6, section E), but they are shown summarised in Table 5.12.

Aspect of autonomy (for the <i>junior</i> school head)	Code used
<i>IAPS member</i>	A
<i>Local group member</i>	B
<i>Trade union for heads allowed</i>	C
<i>HMC Junior Heads Group</i>	D
<i>Appoints staff</i>	E
<i>Selects pupils</i>	F
<i>Controls curriculum</i>	G
<i>Not appraised by senior head</i>	H
<i>Allocates resources</i>	I
<i>Sets junior budget</i>	J
<i>Sets both schools' budgets</i>	K
<i>Reports to governors termly</i>	L
<i>Reports to governors on junior policies</i>	M

Table 5.12 Codes used for the aspects of autonomy

However, in answering question E1 some heads had missed out occasional responses. This was very similar to the omissions made by some heads in answering question D1, which was of the same style with an equivalent page layout. Some responses had possibly been overlooked in error because 13 aspects of autonomy had to be graded on adjacent rows, so a quick or careless approach in filling it in could easily miss a row. Such omissions occurred in 36 of the 233 questionnaires (15 per cent), a similar proportion to that found in analysing question D1.

In these cases, the method of analysis applied to the responses for question E1 was consistent with that used for D1, which was described earlier. In order to use all the completed questionnaires but also to avoid distortion, blank responses were scored as a 3, in the middle of the range ('vital' scored 1 and 'not important' scored 5), since a zero or blank would effectively add to an aspect's score of importance. Since this section aimed primarily to discover

'vital' or 'not important at all' aspects at the ends of the spectrum of importance, a score of 3 did not distort such findings.

In six replies to question E1, the heads (five junior school and one senior school) had recorded more than one measure of importance for one or two of the 13 aspects of autonomy. Rather than omit these six heads from the data for this question, the multiple responses were treated as if they had been left blank and scored as a 3, on the assumption that it was not possible to be sure what they had intended.

For the combined results of all 233 heads, each aspect of autonomy had a minimum possible score of 233 (with everyone claiming it to be vital, each head scoring it 1) and a maximum possible score of 1165 (everyone considering it not important at all, scoring 5 each). Using a scale of 0-10, with 233 equivalent to 10 (vital) and 1165 equivalent to 0 (not important) the formula $10(1165 - x)/932$, with x the aspect's total score, gave a basic scale factor, assuming linear interpolation, which was rounded to one decimal place.

Similarly the formulae $10(555 - x)/444$ and $10(610 - x)/488$ gave scale factors for the 111 junior heads and 122 senior heads respectively. These scale factors, shown in Table 5.13, give a measure of perceived importance of different aspects of autonomy and reveal general trends, enabling comparisons to be made between the two groups of junior and senior school heads.

Code	ALL heads total	ALL heads scale factor	Junior heads total	Junior heads scale factor	Senior heads total	Senior heads scale factor
A	576	6.3	253	6.8	323	5.9
B	482	7.3	214	7.7	268	7.0
C	523	6.9	235	7.2	288	6.6
D	511	7.0	249	6.9	262	7.1
E	487	7.3	192	8.2	295	6.5
F	319	9.1	139	9.4	180	8.8
G	422	8.0	178	8.5	244	7.5
H	651	5.5	273	6.4	378	4.8
I	341	8.8	153	9.1	188	8.6
J	340	8.9	154	9.0	186	8.7
K	719	4.8	322	5.2	397	4.4
L	405	8.2	178	8.5	227	7.8
M	422	8.0	182	8.4	240	7.6
Total	6198	96.1	2722	101.3	3476	91.3
Average		7.4		7.8		7.0

[n = 111 junior school heads, n = 122 senior school heads]

Table 5.13 Scale factors of importance for each aspect of autonomy, for all heads, junior school heads and senior school heads

Degrees of autonomy

Figure 5.11 shows the distribution of the perceived importance of aspects of autonomy for a junior school head, based on all the heads' replies. It illustrates four possible categories of relative importance, with aspects F, I, J at a 'very high' level, G,L,M 'high', B,C,D,E 'medium' and A,H,K 'low'.

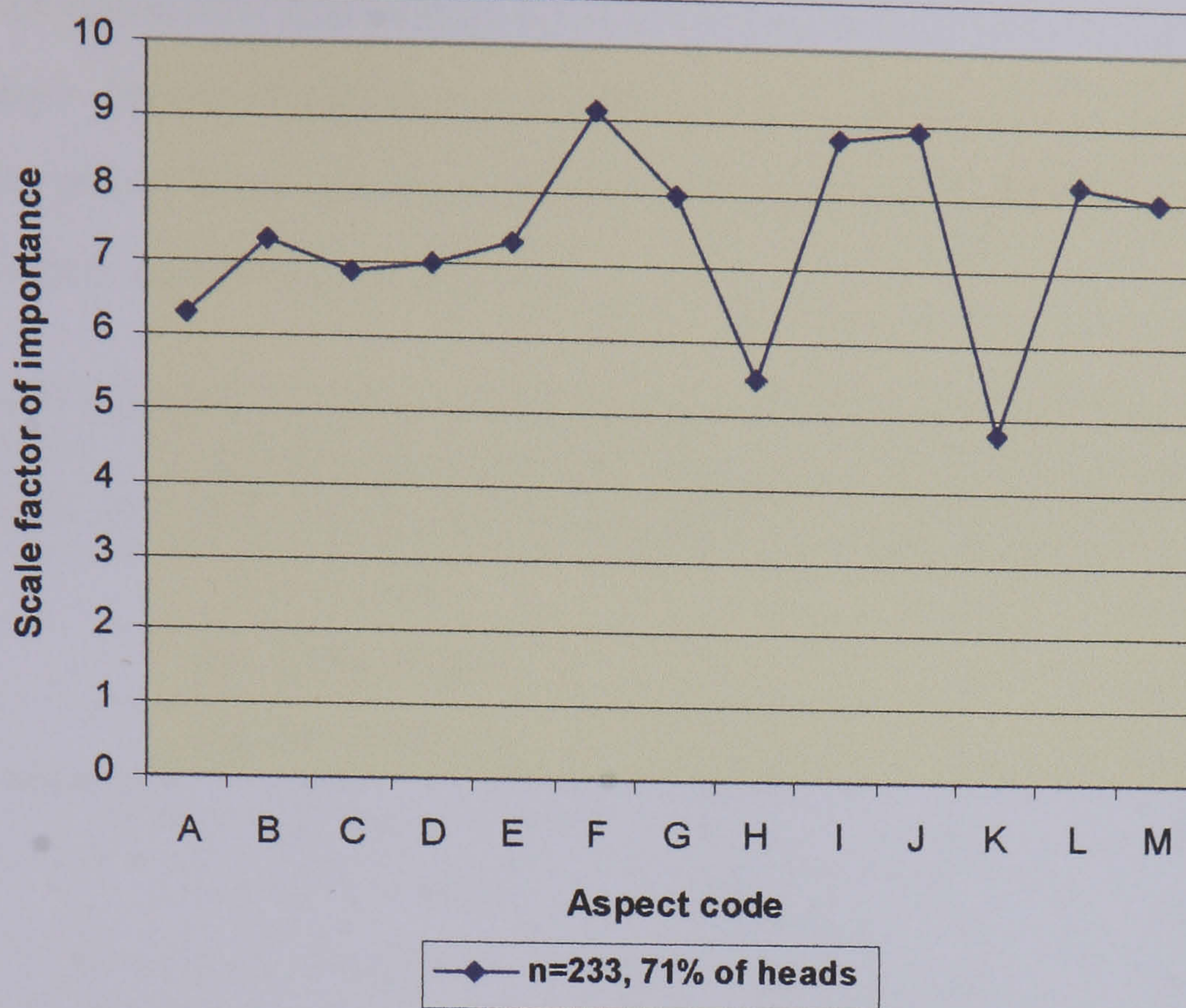


Figure 5.11 The relative importance of aspects of autonomy, rated by all heads

Key to aspects of autonomy in Figure 5.11

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| A IAPS member | H Not appraised by senior head |
| B Local group member | I Allocates resources |
| C Trade union for heads allowed | J Sets junior school budget |
| D HMC junior heads group | K Sets both schools' budgets |
| E Appoints staff | L Reports to governors termly |
| F Selects pupils | M Reports to governors on junior policies |
| G Controls curriculum | |

It was surprising that membership of IAPS should rank so low (11th out of 13 aspects) since its membership implies having sufficient autonomy. It is also significant that involvement in setting the senior budget was ranked in the lowest position. Despite the importance of financial decision-making in the junior school it was not regarded as important for the junior head to be involved in such matters for both schools. This may be relevant in considering power sharing and lack of equity within the paired relationship in terms of overall leadership and management.

These descriptions of importance, listed in Table 5.14, can be used to describe autonomy and categorise it according to its degree. For example, a very high degree of autonomy is understood by all heads generally to mean that the junior head has the authority and responsibility to select pupils, set the budgets and allocate resources.

Aspects of autonomy (ranked in importance based on all heads)	Code	Scale factor of importance	Perceived Importance
<i>Selects pupils</i>	F	9.1	Very High
<i>Sets junior budget</i>	J	8.9	Very High
<i>Allocates resources</i>	I	8.8	Very High
<i>Reports to governors termly</i>	L	8.2	High
<i>Controls curriculum</i>	G	8.0	High
<i>Junior policies – reports to governors</i>	M	8.0	High
<i>Local group member</i>	B	7.3	Medium
<i>Appoints staff</i>	E	7.3	Medium
<i>HMC Junior Heads Group</i>	D	7.0	Medium
<i>Trade union for heads allowed</i>	C	6.9	Medium
<i>IAPS member</i>	A	6.3	Low
<i>Not appraised by senior head</i>	H	5.5	Low
<i>Sets both schools' budgets</i>	K	4.8	Low

[n = 233, 71% of heads]

Table 5.14 Categories of importance for aspects of autonomy, ranked using scale factors based on results from all heads

Autonomy – junior and senior school heads compared

Figure 5.12 compares the views of heads of junior and senior schools in their understanding of autonomy. An overview of the comparative data shows that for 12 of the 13 aspects the junior school heads rated the aspects of autonomy more importantly than the senior school heads. Though it is not surprising that junior heads may rate the importance of their autonomy slightly higher than the senior heads rate it, this may also suggest that the two groups have different perceptions of the importance of autonomy. However it is significant that the graphs in Figure 5.12 follow the same

trend showing that the two groups agree overall on the relative or ranked importance of the aspects.

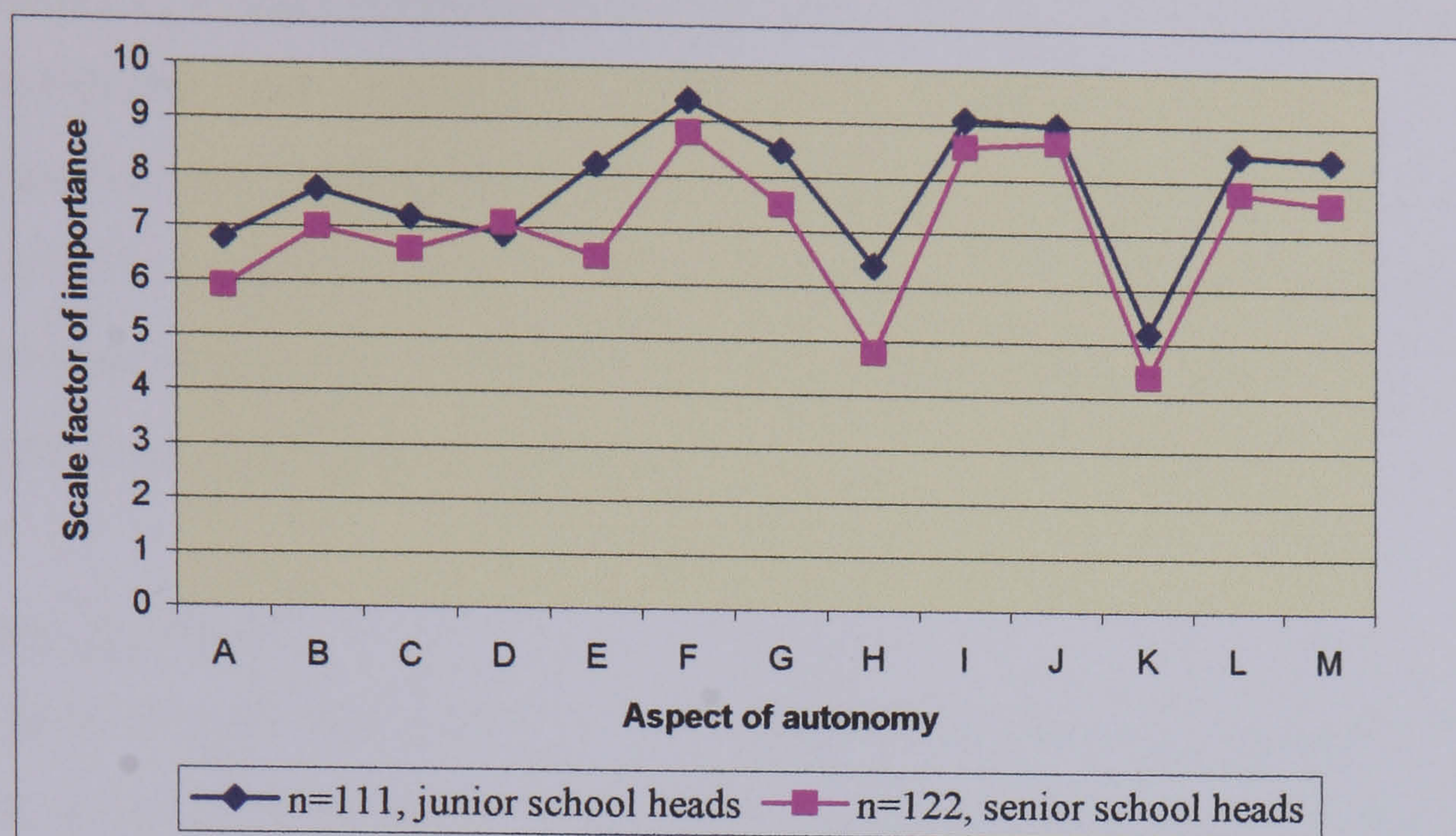


Figure 5.12 The relative importance of aspects of autonomy, rated by junior and senior school heads

Key to aspects of autonomy in Figure 5.12

- | | |
|---------------------------------|---|
| A IAPS member | H Not appraised by senior head |
| B Local group member | I Allocates resources |
| C Trade union for heads allowed | J Sets junior school budget |
| D HMC junior heads group | K Sets both schools' budgets |
| E Appoints staff | L Reports to governors termly |
| F Selects pupils | M Reports to governors on junior policies |
| G Controls curriculum | |

The most significant differences in terms of importance are in aspects E and H, 'appointing staff' and 'junior head's appraisal', respectively. The heads of junior schools regarded appointing staff as far more important to their sense of autonomy than was recognised by the senior school heads (scale factor 8.2 compared to 6.5).

A similar degree of difference was found in the appraisal aspect with the junior school heads thinking that external appraisal independent of the senior school head is more closely linked to a sense of autonomy than senior school heads realise (scale factor of 6.4 compared to 4.8). If autonomy is considered to be beneficial then these are two areas for senior school heads to re-consider in terms of granting more autonomy.

Views on autonomy and organisational structure

The responses from heads who rated each of the 'very high' autonomy aspects F, J and I either at importance level 1 (vital) or level 2 (lot) were considered and analysed. They were grouped according to the organisational factors identified from Section A as potentially relevant for categorising junior schools and possible links investigated. A chi-squared analysis comparing observed and expected outcomes tested for any significant differences in each case.

Age of transfer

Age of transfer was thought to be a possible link with degrees of perceived autonomy, with perhaps a greater than expected proportion of 13+ transfer schools in the category valuing a perceived 'very high' degree of autonomy. The expected number in each category was calculated using the overall proportions found in Section A. Applying a chi-squared test on the results in Table 5.15, which is based on responses from junior school heads, gives $\chi^2 = 0.43$ which is not significant at the five per cent level with one degree of freedom (critical value of χ^2 is 3.84). Therefore there is not enough evidence to suggest that a perception of high autonomy is linked to age of transfer.

Junior Schools	Observed no.	Expected no.
'Very High' autonomy and 11+	69	66
'Very High' autonomy and 13+	28	31
Total	97	97

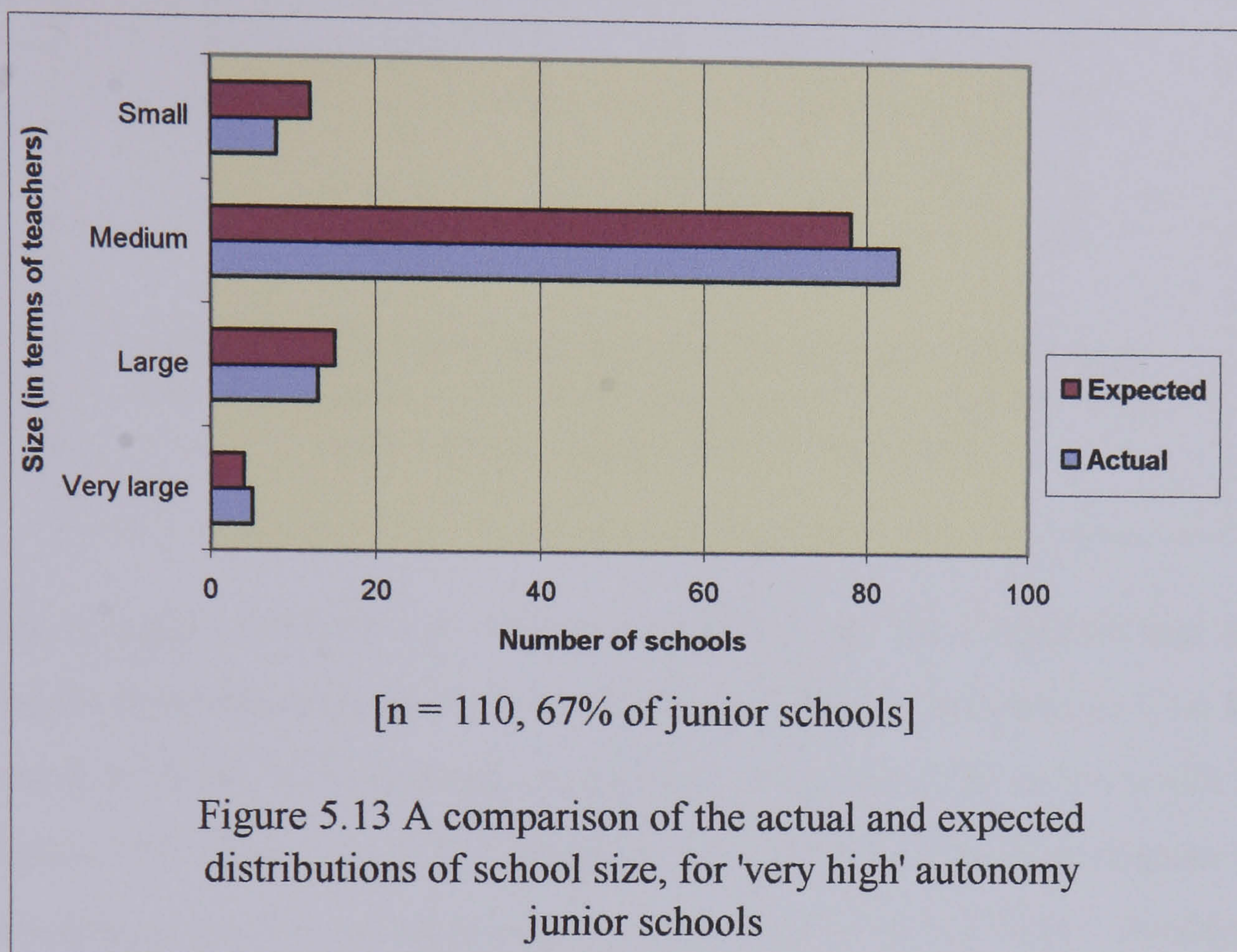
[n = 97, 59% of junior school heads]

Table 5.15 The observed and expected frequencies of schools with ages of transfer 11+ and 13+ respectively, for junior schools rating the 'very high' aspects of autonomy as important

School size

In the case of school size, 110 junior schools that were reported to value autonomy aspects F, J and I highly, in other words those perceiving a 'very high' autonomy as important, were looked at according to their size in terms of number of teachers.

Figure 5.13 compares the actual distribution of school sizes for these junior schools with the expected distribution if there is no direct link, based on the overall distribution of school sizes (teacher based) shown in Figure 5.3. The actual distribution is very similar to the expected, suggesting that there is no significance in school size.



Applying a chi-squared test on the results in Figure 5.13, gives $\chi^2 = 2.35$ which is not significant at the five per cent level with three degrees of freedom (critical value of χ^2 is 7.815). Therefore, there is not enough evidence to suggest that a perception of high autonomy is linked to actual school size in terms of numbers of teachers. Of course, this does not mean that school size is necessarily irrelevant, for it may be the case that it is the *relative* size of the schools within a paired relationship that is important.

Size and structure of junior school SMTs

The size of a junior school's SMT was thought possibly to influence, or be related to, its views on autonomy. Table 5.16 shows the frequency distributions of observed and expected SMT sizes at junior schools whose heads rated the aspects for 'very high' autonomy as important. The expected numbers are based on the assumption that there is no link with perceived autonomy using the figures in Table 5.4 for all junior schools.

Size of Junior School SMT	Observed no.	Expected no.
2	8	7.7
3	20	17.3
4	26	25.6
5	20	14.1
6 or more	4	13.4
Total	78	78 (rounded)
Average	3.9	4.2

[n = 78, 47% of junior school heads]

Table 5.16 The observed and expected frequencies of junior schools for each size of SMT, for those which rated the 'very high' aspects of autonomy as important

The average observed size of SMT is slightly less than expected and the results show that there were fewer very large SMTs (4 compared to 13.4 for size 6 or more) than expected. Applying a chi-squared test on the results in Table 5.16 gives $\chi^2 = 9.502$ which is just significant for four degrees of freedom at the five per cent level (critical value of χ^2 is 9.488). Therefore there is some evidence of size of SMT being a factor involved. It may suggest that school autonomy is less of an issue for those with very large SMTs.

Of course the main issue may be over who is in membership of the junior school SMT. Thirty-three junior schools included senior school staff as members of their SMT. Nineteen of these replies, or just over half, also reported aspects F, J and I at level 1 or 2, viewing them as important for a very high degree of autonomy.

However, of the eight junior schools which had only the head from the senior school as an 'external' SMT member, only two of them rated these aspects as important. This sample size is too small for further reliable statistical analysis but nevertheless supports the expected finding that the presence of just the senior head may influence the perception of junior school autonomy.

In summary, the size and structure of the junior school SMT is likely to be related to perceptions of autonomy. Junior schools with not very large SMTs and without the senior head in membership are more likely to value control over pupil selection, budget setting and resource allocation as important aspects of autonomy.

IAPS membership

Since membership of IAPS requires a degree, or at least an understanding, of autonomy it was a likely link to investigate. Table 5.17 shows, for junior schools that were reported to perceive a very high degree of autonomy as important, the number of IAPS and non-IAPS members and the expected numbers based on the assumption that there is no link with perceived autonomy using the results from section A.

Junior Schools	Observed no.	Expected no.
'Very High' autonomy and 'in IAPS'	30	69
'Very High' autonomy and 'not in IAPS'	71	32
Total	101	101

[n = 101, 61% of junior schools]

Table 5.17 The observed and expected frequencies of junior schools 'in IAPS' and 'not in IAPS' respectively, for those which rated the 'very high' aspects of autonomy as important

Applying a chi-squared test on the results in Table 5.17 gives $\chi^2 = 69.6$ which is *very* highly significant at the five per cent level with one degree of freedom (critical value of χ^2 is 3.84). This means that *far* more non-members of IAPS than expected were found in the group rating the very important aspects highly. Conversely, fewer members of IAPS than expected rated these aspects highly which could imply that they take them more for granted.

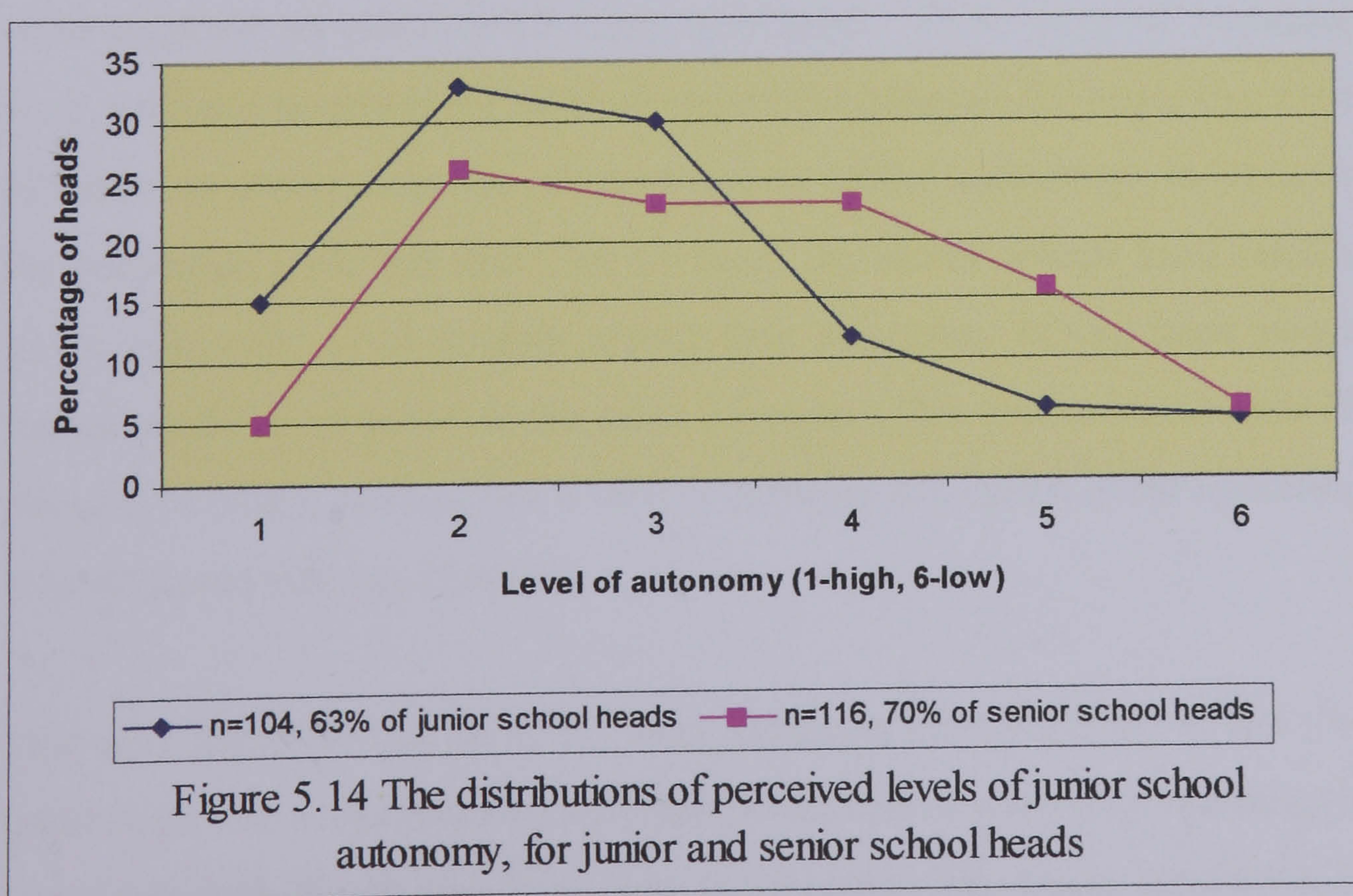
It is clear from this evidence that membership of IAPS is linked to views on autonomy, with non-members valuing more than members the aspects of autonomy associated with 'very high' importance.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS: SECTION F (AUTONOMY,
LEADERSHIP AND MANAGEMENT IN THE JUNIOR SCHOOL)

Levels of autonomy - granted and desired

Section F was designed to collect data on autonomy, within the context of leadership and management, focussing on aspects of control and decision-making. Question F3 asked heads to assess their perception of the level of autonomy that had been granted, or delegated, to the junior school using a scale ranging from 1 (run separately, with complete autonomy) to 6 (integral part of school). The question then asked heads to record the level of autonomy that they would like the junior school to have.

Figure 5.14 shows the distributions of responses from the two groups of junior and senior school heads. By comparing the percentage of heads replying, for each level of autonomy, it is clear that on average the group of junior school heads think that they have more autonomy than the senior school heads regard them as having. Of course, this may simply reflect the two groups using different meanings of autonomy though the results in section E suggested that the two groups broadly agreed on what they meant by this concept.



Analysis of the responses to both parts of question F3 then compared assessed levels of actual autonomy with the level thought to be appropriate. Of the 104 junior school heads replying, 35 per cent wanted more autonomy and three per cent would have liked less. In contrast to this, of the 116 senior school heads, seven per cent wanted their junior school heads to have more autonomy and 17 per cent would have liked them to have less. These significantly different figures imply a conflict between groups of senior and junior school heads over what they regard to be an appropriate level of autonomy for a junior school.

It is relevant to senior school heads that more than one in three junior school heads wanted more autonomy. In the context of this study, if autonomy is thought to be related to school effectiveness then the understanding of these differing assessments of actual and desirable levels of autonomy is relevant to informing and improving professional practice. However, comparing just the two groups of junior and senior school heads could be misleading because it is the level of agreement between individual pairs of heads that is most relevant in terms of how they share leadership and management.

Of the questionnaire replies, there were 83 pairs of linked schools with a valid response to question F3 from each head. These pairs of responses were analysed to assess the level of agreement between the respective pairs of heads on their perception of actual junior school autonomy. In 24 cases the responses were the same, in 43 cases the senior school head rated a lower autonomy level (higher score) than the junior school head and a higher level (lower score) in the other 16 cases. This means that in over 70 per cent of cases, pairs of heads have a different perception of the operating level of junior school autonomy.

This may partly be due to heads using different interpretations of the six-point scale, but a significantly different perception of autonomy operating is consistent with the finding that many more junior than senior school heads wanted a greater junior school autonomy. Furthermore, since the groups of heads tended to have similar understandings of what is meant by autonomy

this suggests a lack of a common agreement on the appropriate level of autonomy rather than a different interpretation of what is being implied by more autonomy. The appropriateness of granting more autonomy is a central issue in this study looking at how it might be linked to school effectiveness.

Decision-making in junior schools – links with autonomy

Question F4 asked heads to assess their level of involvement in decision-making in the junior school across a range of aspects of school leadership and management. The aspects used (coded and listed in Table 5.18), were examples taken from each of the main four functional areas of educational management; strategic management, managing teaching and learning, managing resources and managing people. The aim was to investigate possible relationships between these areas of decision-making and a junior school’s sense of autonomy.

Code used in the analysis	A	B	C	D	E	F
Aspect ,or area, for decision-making	Disciplining staff	Publishing policies to parents	Prioritising Capital Projects	Daily running procedures	Allocating departmental resources	Writing the Junior School Development Plan
Related functional area of educational management	Managing people	Strategic management	Strategic management Managing resources	Managing teaching and learning	Managing resources	Strategic management

Table 5.18 Aspects of decision-making in a junior school: codes used and links to functional areas of educational management

Heads were asked to indicate, for each aspect, their level of involvement and for this analysis a weighted scale factor of 1 (no involvement in the decision, not even informed about it) to 5 (plays a major role) was applied to the responses. A scale factor 4 was used for cases of both heads equally sharing the decision, scale 3 implied some involvement but nothing major and scale 2 meant that the head was not involved at all but was informed of the decision.

For each aspect, the average weighted scale factor for each group of senior and junior school heads responding was calculated. Figure 5.15 shows the line graphs of the scale factors of involvement for each area of decision-making and compares the two groups of senior and junior school heads.

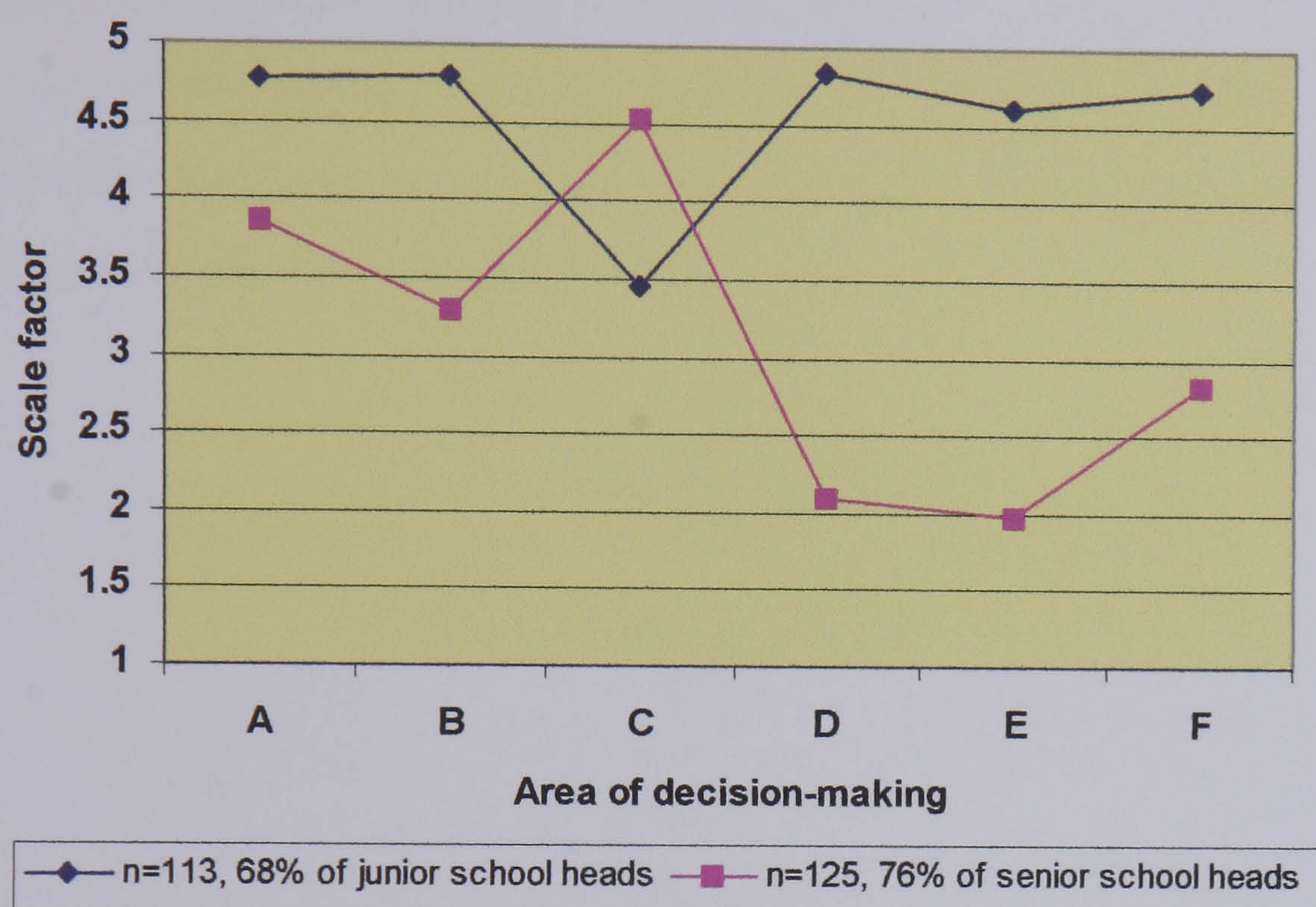


Figure 5.15 The heads' levels of involvement in decision-making in junior schools, for junior and senior school heads

Key to areas of decision-making in Figure 5.15

- A Disciplining staff
- B Publishing policies to parents
- C Prioritising capital projects
- D Daily running procedures
- E Allocating departmental resources
- F Writing the junior school development plan

The significant feature of these graphs is that junior school heads generally had a high level of involvement in all areas except for determining junior school capital projects, which were decided primarily by senior school heads and generally not seen to be shared decisions.

Question F3 was used to determine which junior schools could be reliably considered as actually having 'high autonomy'. Using responses to the six-point scale measuring autonomy in question F3 (a), pairs of schools were identified at which *both* heads rated the junior school as having a degree of autonomy scaled 1 or 2. It was assumed that since *both* heads rated the junior school's actual autonomy as 1 or 2, with 1 representing 'run

separately, with complete autonomy', it was reasonable to assume such junior schools as being 'high autonomy'.

Using this definition, there were 18 such 'high autonomy' schools amongst the 87 pairs of schools from which both heads responded. The responses to question F4 from pairs of heads at these high autonomy junior schools were analysed and the graphs plotted. Figure 5.16 shows the results for pairs of heads at the 'high autonomy' junior schools compared to the general results for all schools shown in Figure 5.15.

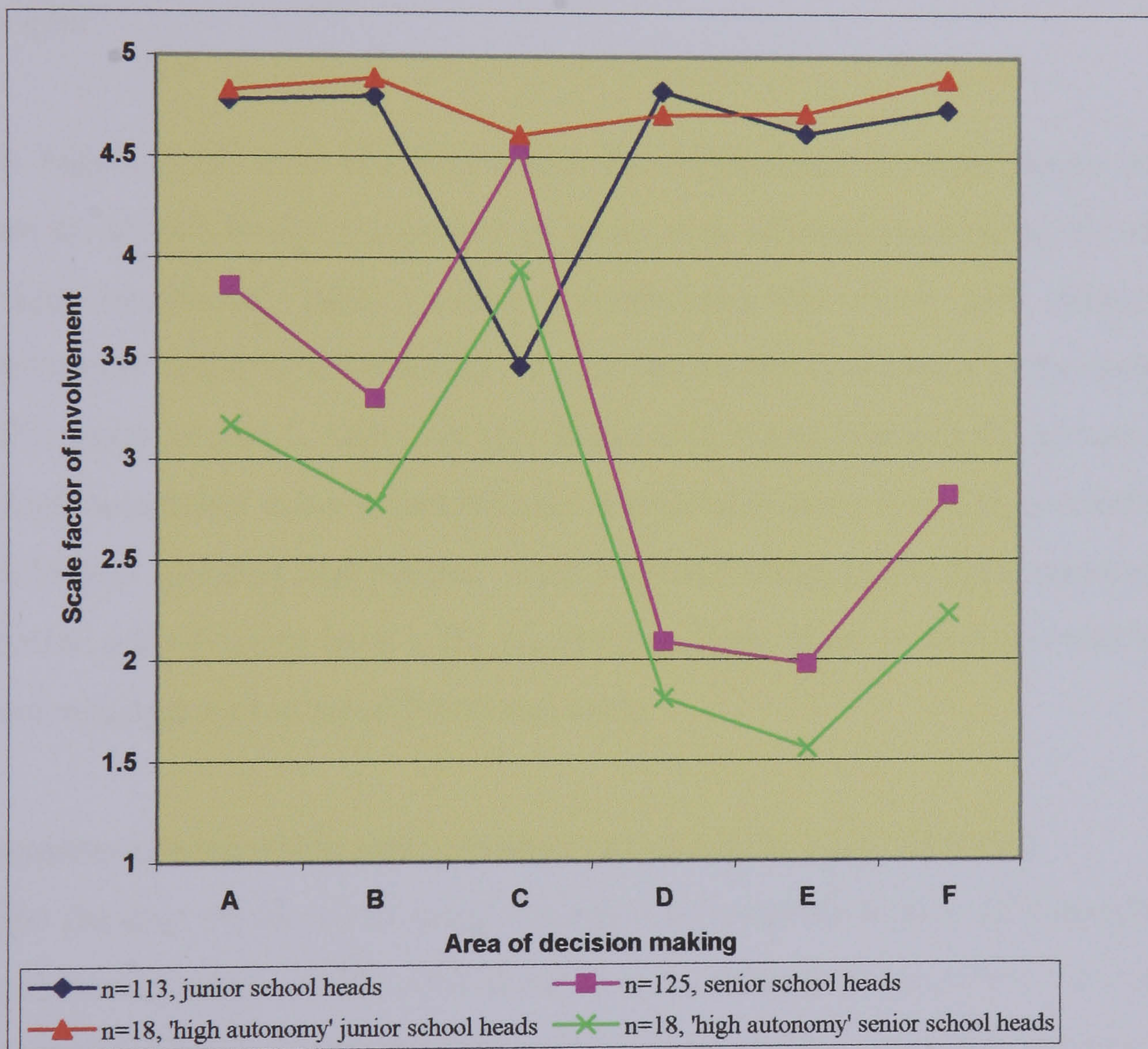


Figure 5.16 The heads' levels of involvement in decision-making in junior schools, for junior and senior school heads at all schools and those with 'high autonomy' junior schools

Key to areas of decision-making in Figure 5.16

- A Disciplining staff
- B Publishing policies to parents
- C Prioritising capital projects
- D Daily running procedures
- E Allocating departmental resources
- F Writing the junior school development plan

This shows that one significant feature of junior school heads with high autonomy was their major role in prioritising capital projects. It is also interesting to note that the 'high autonomy' junior school heads had a slightly higher scale factor of involvement in general for each area, except D (daily running). Furthermore, it is not just the actual scale factors for each area that are important, but also the relative differences, or differentials, between the graphs for senior and junior school heads at each point. These differences reflect the level of the senior school heads' involvement relative to that of the junior heads and therefore give an indication of the degree of delegated or granted autonomy to the junior school.

In Figure 5.16, it is significant that the differentials between junior and senior school heads are greater in every area of decision-making for the 'high autonomy' junior schools, confirming the close link between autonomy and decision-making. It also shows that in addition to the major difference in area C, there are significant differences between the groups of 'high autonomy' schools and schools in general in areas A and B, concerned with staff, policies and parents. This evidence suggests that high autonomy junior school heads have a far greater role than others in decision-making and management in these functional areas.

Aspects of leadership and management and links with autonomy

The findings of the initial study identified six possible aspects of leadership and management which were thought to be related to autonomy, namely: pupil admissions, staff appointments, budget setting, curricular decisions, allocation of teaching resources and policy setting. Question F5 asked heads to indicate which of these it was *not* necessary for the junior school head to 'have control' over in the junior school in order to have sufficient autonomy to run the school effectively. 'Having control' implied a responsibility for leading and managing all areas of the item in question rather than just an input into the decision-making process which was the focus of question F4, even though some of the areas and aspects overlap. By indicating which aspects were *not* necessary, heads were of course

indirectly giving an indication of how they valued the relative importance of having control in the six aspects.

The percentages of junior and senior school heads who thought that control of each particular aspect was not necessary were calculated. The same analysis was applied to the 18 pairs of heads identified as being at, or associated with, 'high autonomy' junior schools, as described above using data from question F3. However, it should be noted that comparing percentages could be misleading since it compares groups of 18 'high autonomy' senior and junior school heads with groups of 113 junior and 124 senior school heads. Nevertheless, the pattern of such results still contributes to the overall evidence in looking for links between autonomy, decision-making and leadership and management.

The results for all these groups of heads are illustrated in Figure 5.17. In comparing the two groups of *all* senior and junior school heads, Figure 5.17 identifies significant differences in how they judged the importance of junior school heads having control of appointing staff, setting budgets and determining policy. In each case, junior school heads regarded control over such aspects as very important in order to have sufficient autonomy to run their schools effectively, in contrast to the general view of senior school heads.

In relation to junior school autonomy, it is important to compare the views of senior school heads linked to 'high autonomy' junior schools with senior school heads in general. Comparing the relevant rows in Figure 5.17 confirms that 'high autonomy' seems to be associated with having control over appointing staff, setting budgets and determining policy, with budget setting emerging as the most significant difference. It also shows that autonomy is closely related to allocating teaching resources.

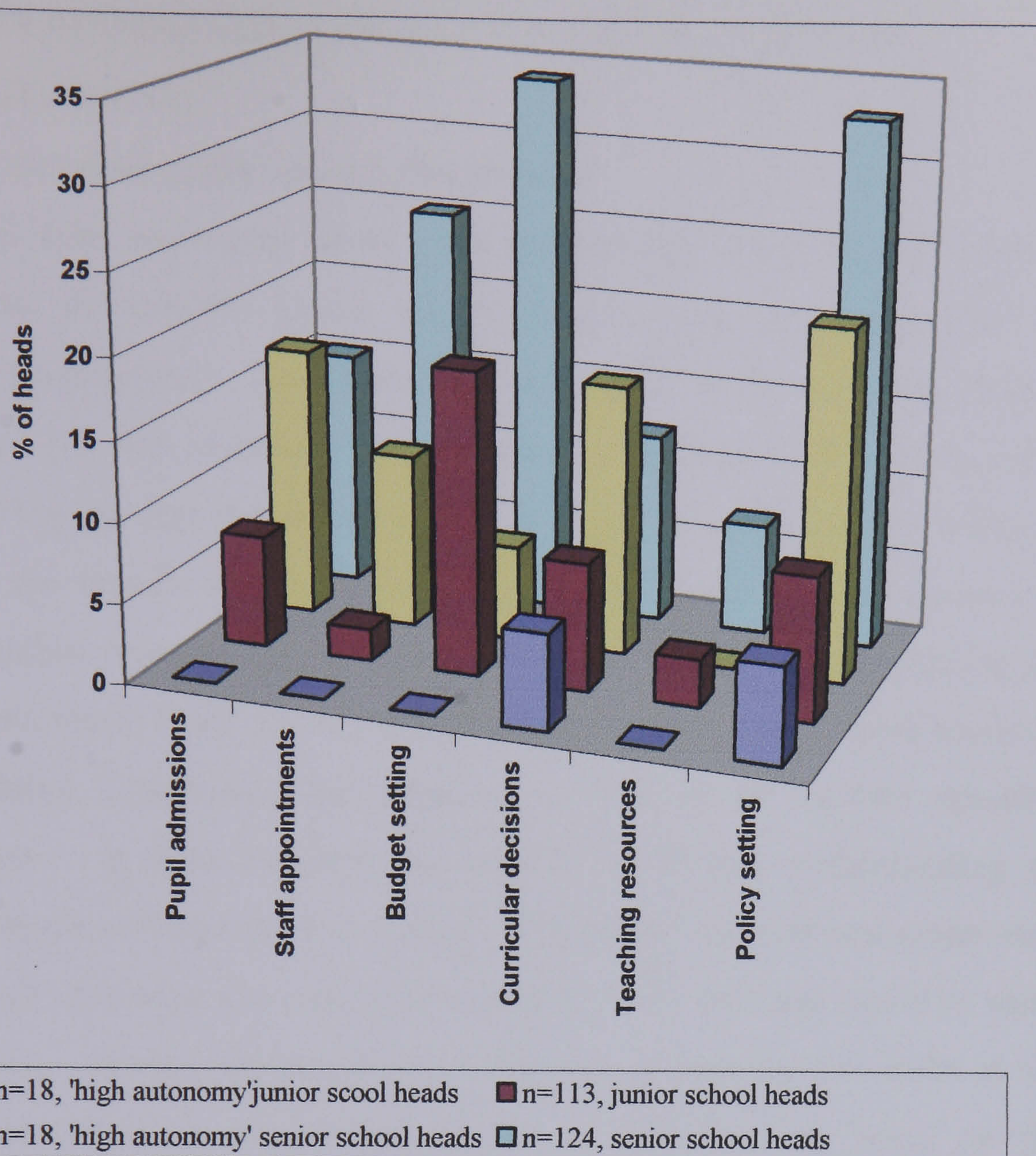


Figure 5.17 The distributions of aspects of leadership and management considered NOT necessary for sufficient junior school autonomy, for junior and senior school heads at all schools and those with 'high autonomy' junior schools

The row of results for 'high autonomy' junior school heads compared to all junior school heads is further confirmation of the close link between sufficient autonomy for effectiveness and control over selecting pupils, appointing staff, setting budgets and allocating resources.

QUESTIONNAIRE RESULTS: SECTION G (JUNIOR SCHOOL EFFECTIVENESS)

Heads' views on junior school effectiveness

Findings from the initial study indicated possible common performance indicators to measure junior school effectiveness, within the specific context of this study. For example, though most of the indicators used in question G1 are common to all schools, indicators A (the number transferring to senior school) and B (results in senior school entrance exams) are specific to linked independent schools and were not covered in other studies referred to in the literature review. Analysis of question G1 compared views from the two groups of senior and junior school heads on the relative importance they attached to this set of 'context specific' indicators. It also analysed the degree of mutual understanding on effectiveness between the two groups. The actual views of one group were compared with what the other group assumed their partners would be using as criteria. Having determined this, analysis of question G2 looks at the views of heads on established criteria on effectiveness based on the literature.

In answering question G1, heads were asked to indicate which three performance indicators they regarded to be the most important for assessing junior school effectiveness. In order to make fair comparisons, only questionnaires from heads who had ticked exactly three indicators were analysed. Since several heads ticked fewer or more than three, there were *relatively* low correct response rates for both groups of heads surveyed, 57 per cent and 67 per cent of the junior and senior school heads respectively. However, based on a survey of 330 heads the samples used were still regarded as being representative in looking for general trends.

Figure 5.18 shows the distributions of the percentage of senior and junior school heads who chose each indicator. For example, 60 per cent of the 94 junior school heads replying chose E (full and balanced curriculum) and 47 per cent of the 110 senior school heads chose A (number transferring to seniors). Full details of the indicators are given in Appendix 6, question G1.

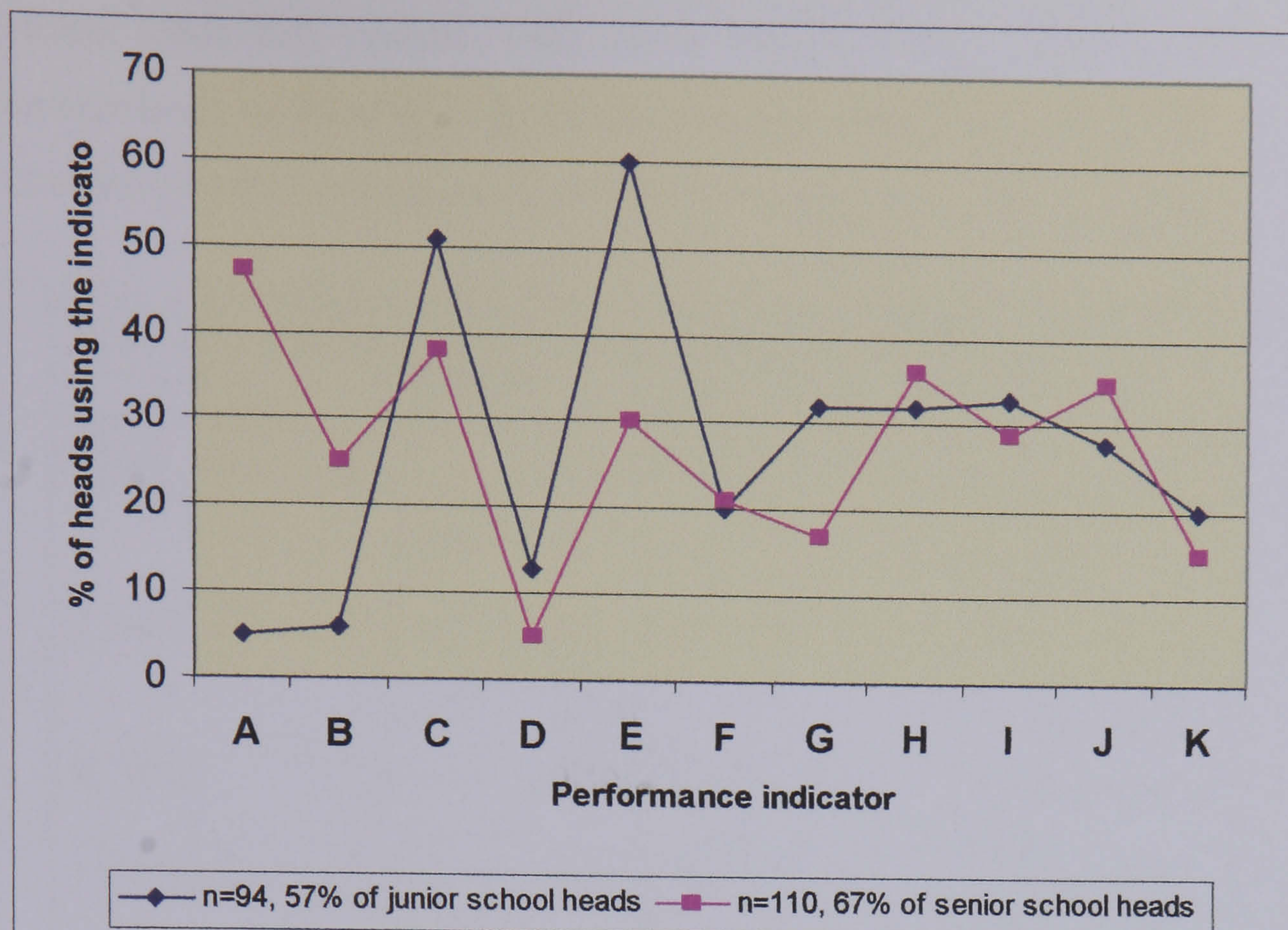


Figure 5.18 The distributions of the use of 'context specific' performance indicators, for junior and senior school heads

Key to 'context specific' performance indicators in Figure 5.18

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A Number transferring to seniors | G Polite & well-behaved pupils |
| B Results in entrance exams | H High academic expectations |
| C Number applying to junior school | I Strong leadership evident |
| D Extra-curricular programme | J Good day-to-day management |
| E Full & balanced curriculum | K Value-added academic performance |
| F Orderly & disciplined atmosphere | |

Figure 5.18 illustrates three significant differences between the two groups, on indicators A, B and E, and some considerable agreement on the others. The most striking difference is in indicator A (the number transferring to senior school), which is used by nearly half of the senior school heads as a measure of school effectiveness, but by only five per cent of junior school heads. Indicator B (results in senior school entrance exams) is, of course, closely related to A, which may partly account for a similar difference in the graphs at this point. The graphs also show that indicator E (a full and balanced curriculum) was rated as the most important by the junior school heads but of far less importance to the senior school heads.

Table 5.19 lists, for each group of senior and junior school heads, the four most highly rated 'context specific' performance indicators for assessing school effectiveness. Indicators J (good day-to-day management) and I

(strong leadership evident) both cover related aspects of leadership and management, so there is a significant overlap between the two groups in the 'context specific' criteria used, with the exception of indicators A and E.

Senior School Heads		Junior School Heads	
Code and proportion that chose it	Performance Indicator	Code and proportion that chose it	Performance Indicator
A (47%)	Number transferring to seniors	E (60%)	Full and balanced curriculum
C (38%)	Number applying for admission to the junior school	C (51%)	Number applying for admission to the junior school
H (36%)	High academic expectations	I (33%)	Strong leadership evident
J (35%)	Good day-to-day management	G (32%) H (32%)	Polite and well behaved pupils High academic expectations

[n = 110, senior school heads] [n = 94, junior school heads]

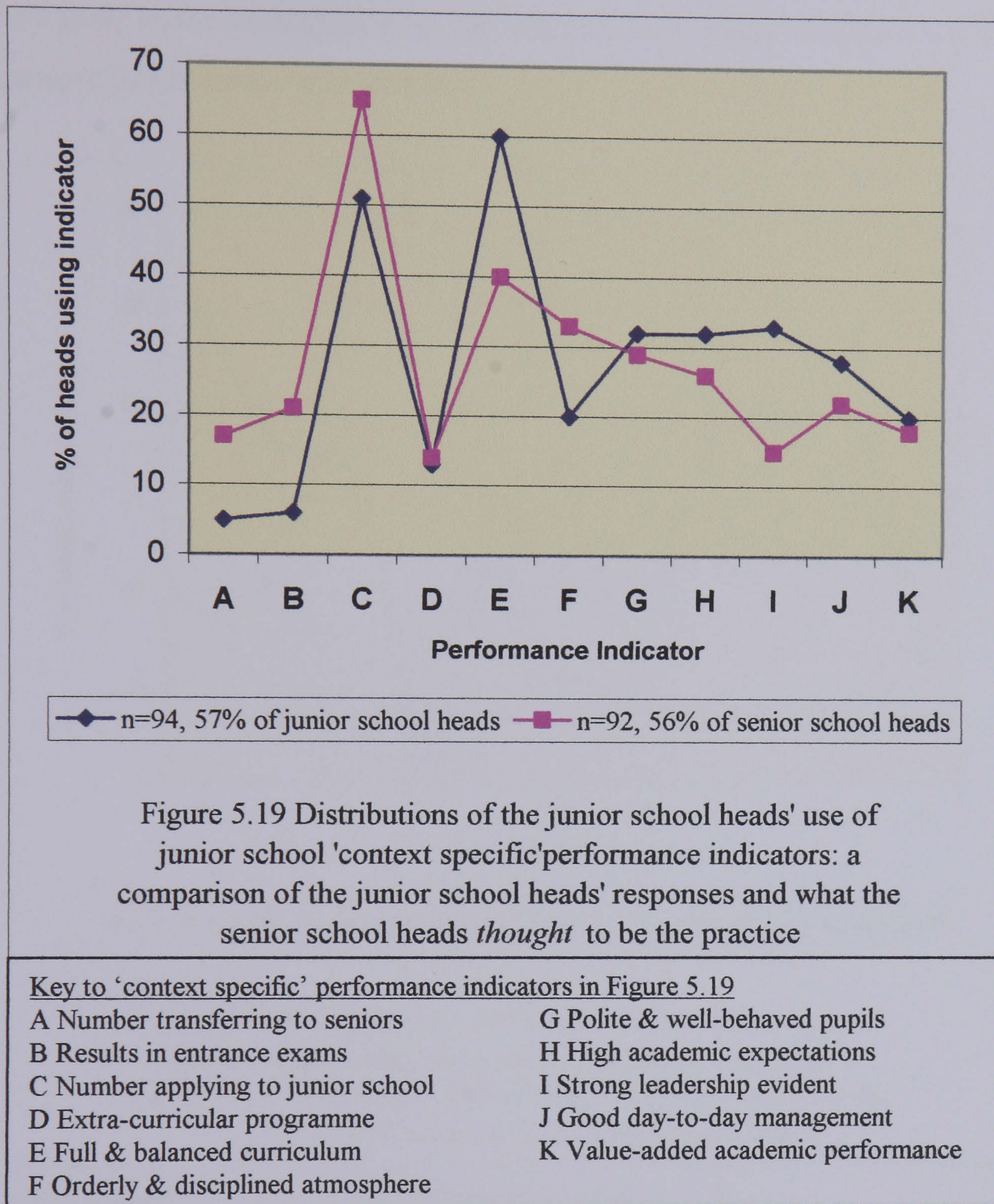
Table 5.19 The most highly rated 'context specific' performance indicators for junior school effectiveness, for junior and senior school

However, in addition to confirming a significant degree of overlap in criteria used, this evidence also suggests that senior school heads mainly used performance indicators related to transfer of pupils, measured in terms of 'output' from the linked junior school, whereas junior school heads were more concerned with the continuous process of education by maintaining a full and balanced curriculum and good order within the school.

In assessing possible links between autonomy and effectiveness it was important to establish whether the two groups of heads were using the terms to imply similar concepts. In terms of describing, or measuring, junior school effectiveness an initial analysis of this data implied that there were important differences in meaning to take account of. However, closer analysis of the responses to question G1 revealed a remarkable degree of mutual understanding.

Each group of junior and senior school heads was asked to rate which performance indicators they regarded as important and also what they

thought their linked partner head would be using. Figure 5.19 shows the distribution of views of junior school heads, as shown in Figure 5.18, compared to what the group of senior school heads thought they would be using.



The two graphs in Figure 5.19 follow a generally similar pattern with no significant differences, though junior school heads rated leadership (indicator I) far more importantly than their senior school heads thought they would. In general, this shows that the senior school heads had a good understanding of what the junior school heads might be looking for in an effective junior school. In particular, though senior school heads rated A as very important (47 per cent chose it) they realised that the junior school heads would not rate it as highly.

Figure 5.20 shows the relative views of senior school heads on criteria used to measure junior school effectiveness, compared to what the group of junior school heads thought they would use. Similarly the two graphs follow a very similar pattern indicating that the junior school heads had a very good understanding of what the senior school heads would be using to measure junior school effectiveness.

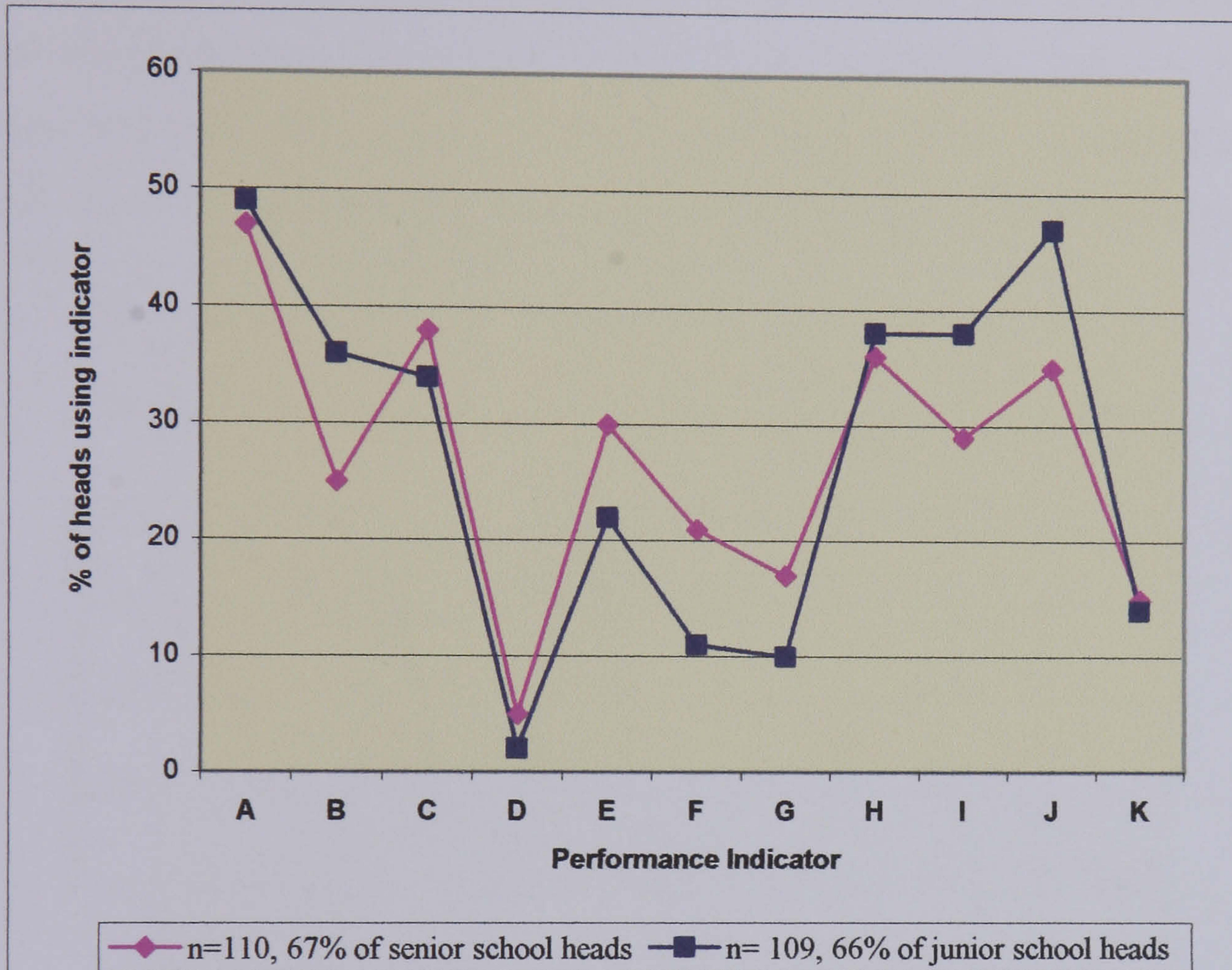


Figure 5.20 Distributions of the senior school heads' use of junior school 'context specific' performance indicators: a comparison of the senior school heads' responses and what the junior school heads *thought* to be the practice

Key to 'context specific' performance indicators in Figure 5.20

- | | |
|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| A Number transferring to seniors | G Polite & well-behaved pupils |
| B Results in entrance exams | H High academic expectations |
| C Number applying to junior school | I Strong leadership evident |
| D Extra-curricular programme | J Good day-to-day management |
| E Full & balanced curriculum | K Value-added academic performance |
| F Orderly & disciplined atmosphere | |

The different shapes for the graphs in Figure 5.19 and 5.20 respectively indicate that whilst each group understands which criteria the other group might be using, they recognise that it is different from their own set of criteria. This shows a good mutual understanding between the two groups of heads over how they each judge the effectiveness of the junior school.

'High autonomy' junior schools and performance indicators for effectiveness

The data from question F3 (a) highlighted 18 pairs of schools at which both heads rated the junior school autonomy as 1 or 2 on a six-point scale with 1 high. Figure 5.21 compares the valid responses to question G1 from these pairs of schools (the dotted lines) with the results for all junior and senior school heads. Direct comparisons of percentages may be misleading since the sample sizes vary a lot, from 110 senior heads in total to just 15 valid responses from 'high autonomy' junior school heads. However, the picture still reveals some interesting features to consider along with other findings.

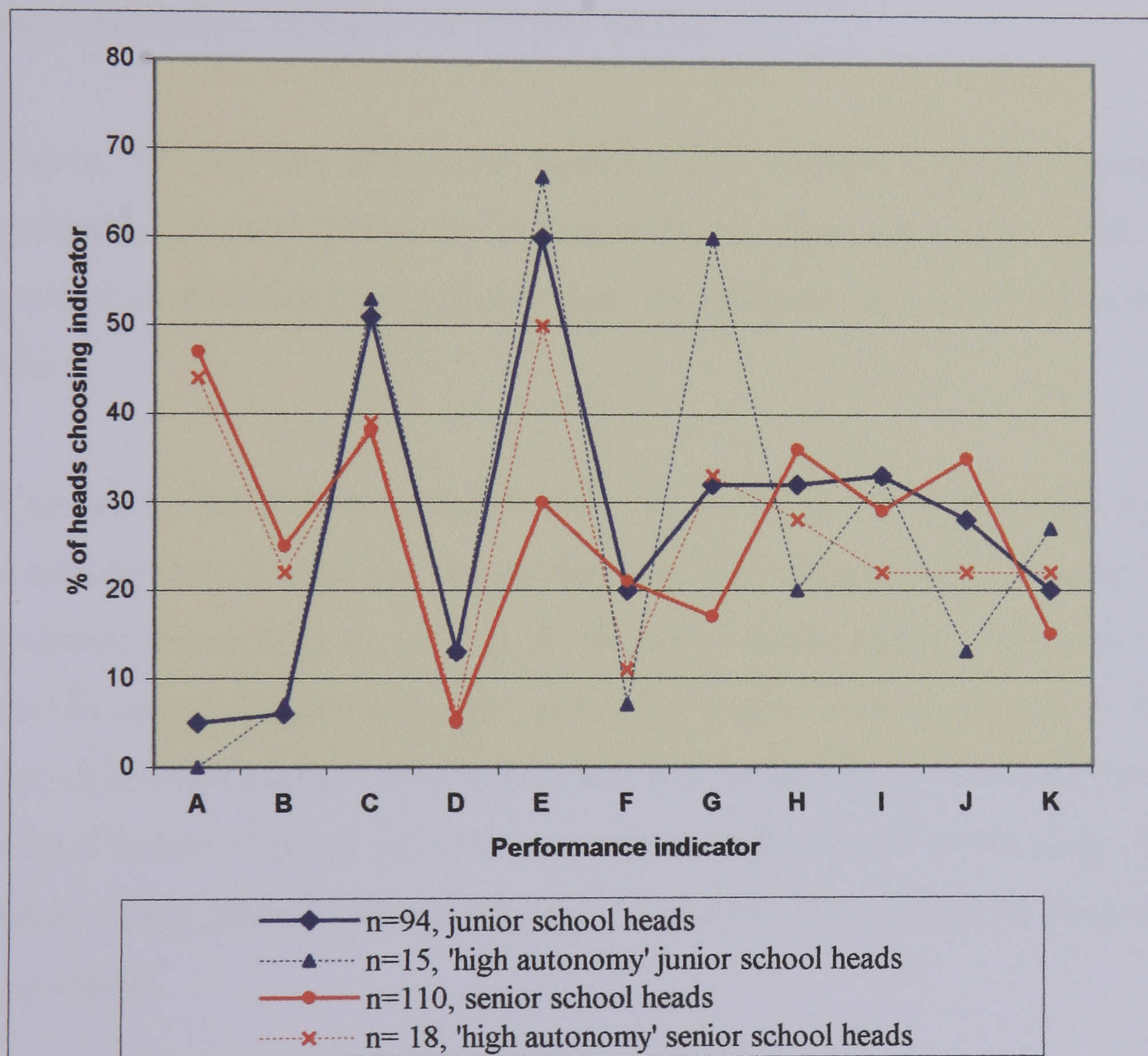


Figure 5.21 Distributions of the use of junior school 'context specific' performance indicators, for junior and senior school heads at all schools and those with 'high autonomy' junior schools

Key to 'context specific' performance indicators in Figure 5.21

A Number transferring to seniors	G Polite & well-behaved pupils
B Results in entrance exams	H High academic expectations
C Number applying to junior school	I Strong leadership evident
D Extra-curricular programme	J Good day-to-day management
E Full & balanced curriculum	K Value-added academic performance
F Orderly & disciplined atmosphere	

For the senior school heads, Figure 5.21 shows that those associated with high autonomy junior schools were much more interested in its curriculum content (indicator E) and slightly more interested in the behaviour of its pupils (indicator G). It was surprising to find such senior school heads more interested in the day-to-day matters of curriculum and behaviour in their linked junior school given its high degree of autonomy. This may be an insignificant finding due to a small sample or it may reflect a more active and detailed interest by the senior heads for various reasons. It could be them wanting to know more of what is happening due to a lack of control, or a genuine interest, as an outside observer, in the internal 'workings' of the organisation, though these are just speculation.

Figure 5.21 implies that junior school heads at high autonomy schools tended to use pupil behaviour (indicator G) more than most junior heads in general as an indicator of effectiveness, though there is no clear reason for this.

Comparing the graphs in Figure 5.21 for all heads associated with high autonomy junior schools, shows that with the exception of indicators A (number transferring to seniors), B (results in senior school exams) and G (polite and well behaved pupils) there was a very close agreement on the use of criteria to judge effectiveness between the groups of senior and junior school heads. It is not possible to comment with any confidence using this limited data whether they agree in general more than groups of all heads surveyed.

Common factors found in effective schools

Question G2 collected data on the heads' ranking of importance of the common factors listed in the literature as being associated with effective schools. The question asked heads to rank the top four factors in order of importance and relevance.

Fourteen heads (five junior school, nine senior school) answered the question incorrectly, such as ranking each factor, and were deleted from the analysis.

A total of 219 accurate responses (103 junior school heads, 116 senior school heads) or 66 per cent of the database for all senior and junior school heads was analysed.

Of the 165 pairs of schools surveyed, 94 pairs of heads answered question G2 accurately and there were replies from at least one of the pair of heads in 123 cases, since seven junior and 22 senior school heads replied without the respective paired head replying. This means that the analysis is based on data from approximately 75 per cent of all pairs of schools, which is large enough to be considered representative.

For each coded 'factor for an effective school' listed in question G2, the ranks were totalled for junior school, senior school and all heads respectively. Since rank 1 was 'high' and rank 4 was 'low', weighting factors were applied allocating ranks 1, 2, 3, 4 the scores 4, 3, 2, 1 respectively. For example, for effectiveness factor B, 30 junior schools heads ranked it number 1, 27 ranked it number 2, 9 ranked it number 3 and 8 ranked it number 4. Therefore applying the weighting factors its junior heads' weighted total is, $(4 \times 30) + (3 \times 27) + (2 \times 9) + (1 \times 8) = 227$.

However, in order to compare the weighted totals of ranks of importance between the different groups of heads it was necessary to take account of the numbers of respective heads replying. Since responses from 103 junior school heads and 116 senior school heads (219 in total) were analysed and totalled, dividing the weighted totals by these figures gave scale factors of importance which were then used to compare results. These scale factors have a maximum possible value of 4 and a minimum of zero.

Table 5.20 illustrates the results and calculation of scale factors of importance for school effectiveness factor B, 'shared vision and goals' (Appendix 6, question G2).

	Factor for Effectiveness: B, Shared Vision and Goals						
	<i>Ranked Importance (1 high)</i>				<i>Weighted Score</i>	<i>Weighted and Scaled</i>	<i>Scale factor of importance</i>
	1	2	3	4			
Junior Heads Total	30	27	9	8	227	227/103	2.2
Senior Heads Total	17	27	15	10	189	189/116	1.6
All Heads Total	47	54	24	18	416	416/219	1.9

[n = 219, 66% of all heads, replies from 103 junior school heads and 116 senior school heads]

Table 5.20 Scale factors of importance for school effectiveness factor B, for junior school heads, senior school heads and all heads

Repeating these calculations for each aspect of school effectiveness gave scale factors of importance for the three groups of heads' data (junior school, senior school and all combined), as listed in Table 5.21.

Code	Eleven common factors for effective schools (related factors given in brackets) Ranked according to the views of all Heads	Heads' scale of importance		
		Junior	Senior	All
A	<i>Professional leadership (firm and purposeful, participative approach)</i>	2.3	2.6	2.6
B	<i>Shared vision and goals (unity of purpose, collegiality and collaboration)</i>	2.2	1.6	1.9
C	<i>A learning environment (an orderly atmosphere, attractive environment)</i>	1.3	1.5	1.4
D	<i>Concentration on teaching and learning (academic emphasis)</i>	0.5	0.7	0.6
E	<i>Purposeful teaching (efficient organisation, structured lessons)</i>	0.7	0.6	0.6
F	<i>High expectations (communicating expectations, providing challenge)</i>	1.6	1.9	1.8
G	<i>Positive reinforcement (clear and fair discipline, feedback)</i>	0.4	0.2	0.3
H	<i>Monitoring progress (pupil and school performance)</i>	0.2	0.1	0.2
I	<i>Pupil rights and responsibilities (raising self-esteem)</i>	0.2	0.1	0.1
J	<i>Home-school partnership (parental involvement in learning)</i>	0.2	0.3	0.3
K	<i>A learning organisation (school-based staff development)</i>	0.2	0.1	0.1

[n = 219, 66% of all heads, replies from 103 junior school heads and 116 senior school heads]

Table 5.21 Scale factors of importance for school effectiveness factors, for junior school heads, senior school heads and all heads

Table 5.22 illustrates the ranking of factors for school effectiveness, based on scale factors of importance for all heads, which revealed four clear factors perceived to be the most important, namely: professional leadership (the most important), shared vision and goals, high expectations and a learning environment (A, B, F, C respectively).

Code	Eleven common factors for effective schools (related factors given in brackets) <i>Ranked according to the views of all Heads</i>	Heads' scale factor of importance		
		Junior	Senior	All
A	<i>Professional leadership (firm and purposeful, participative approach)</i>	2.3	2.6	2.6
B	<i>Shared vision and goals (unity of purpose, collegiality and collaboration)</i>	2.2	1.6	1.9
F	<i>High expectations (communicating expectations, providing challenge)</i>	1.6	1.9	1.8
C	<i>A learning environment (an orderly atmosphere, attractive environment)</i>	1.3	1.5	1.4
D	<i>Concentration on teaching and learning (academic emphasis)</i>	0.5	0.7	0.6
E	<i>Purposeful teaching (efficient organisation, structured lessons)</i>	0.7	0.6	0.6
G	<i>Positive reinforcement (clear and fair discipline, feedback)</i>	0.4	0.2	0.3
J	<i>Home-school partnership (parental involvement in learning)</i>	0.2	0.3	0.3
H	<i>Monitoring progress (pupil and school performance)</i>	0.2	0.1	0.2
I	<i>Pupil rights and responsibilities (raising self-esteem)</i>	0.2	0.1	0.1
K	<i>A learning organisation (school-based staff development)</i>	0.2	0.1	0.1

[n = 219, 66% of all heads, replies from 103 junior school heads and 116 senior school heads]

Table 5.22 Scale factors of importance for school effectiveness factors, ranked according to the results for all heads

This tabular data is illustrated by the line graphs in Figure 5.22. They show the general agreement between the two groups of heads (junior and senior schools) in identifying the four most important factors, which are far higher than the others.

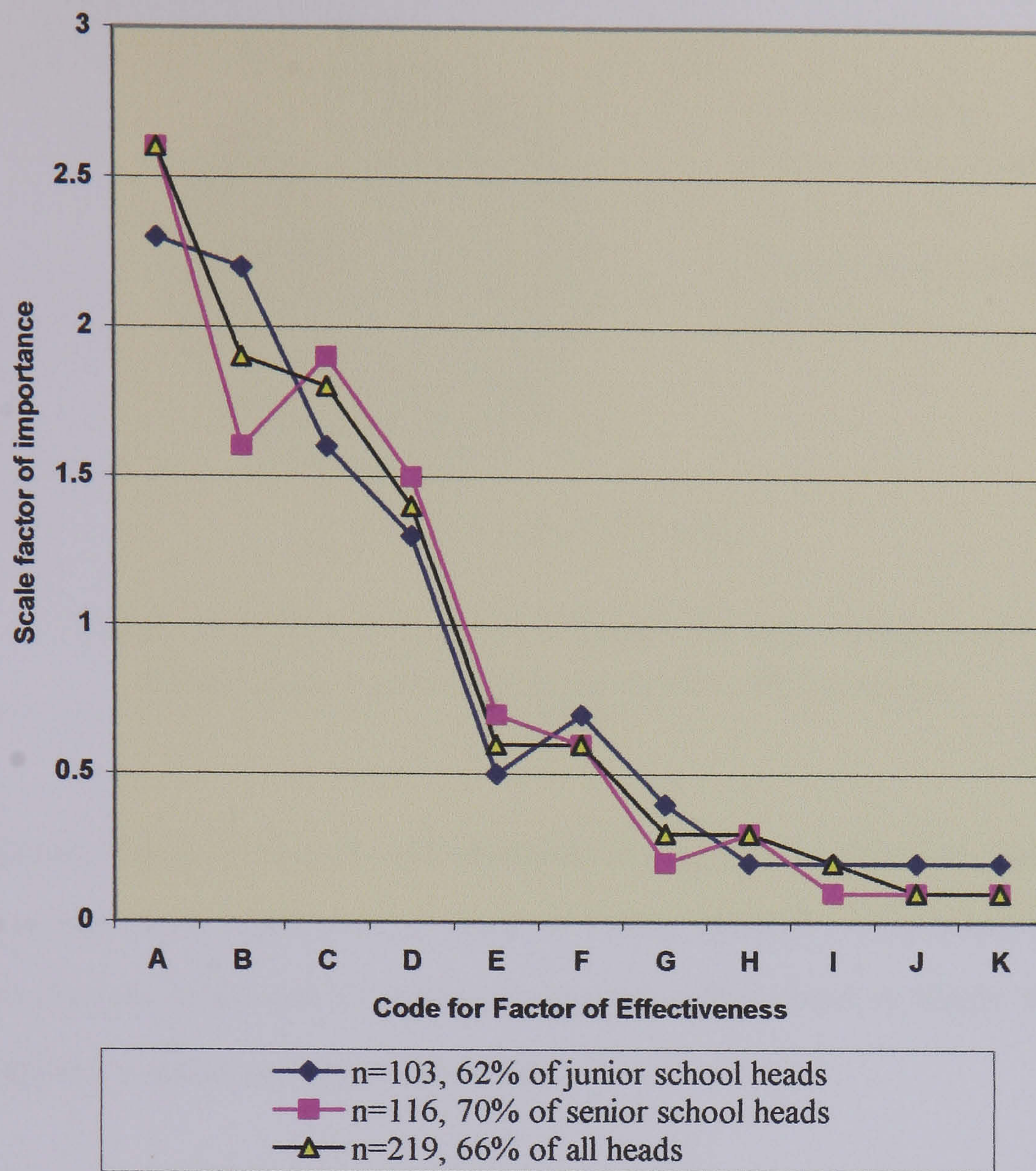


Figure 5.22 The relative importance of factors for effective schools: a comparison of results for all heads, junior school heads and senior school heads

Key to factors of effectiveness for Figure 5.22

- | | |
|--|--------------------------------------|
| A Professional leadership | G Positive reinforcement |
| B Shared vision and goals | H Monitoring progress |
| C A learning environment | I Pupils rights and responsibilities |
| D Concentration on teaching and learning | J Home-school partnership |
| E Purposeful teaching | K A learning organisation |
| F High expectations | |

Is a head's autonomy thought to influence school effectiveness?

Question G4 asked heads to indicate the extent to which they thought that the degree of autonomy granted to the head of the junior school was related to his/her ability to improve junior school effectiveness. Of the 330 heads surveyed, 227 gave valid responses, approximately a 70 per cent response rate. In answering the question 'Is autonomy related to effectiveness?' heads had to choose from five responses and the percentage of heads replying to each response is illustrated in Figure 5.23.

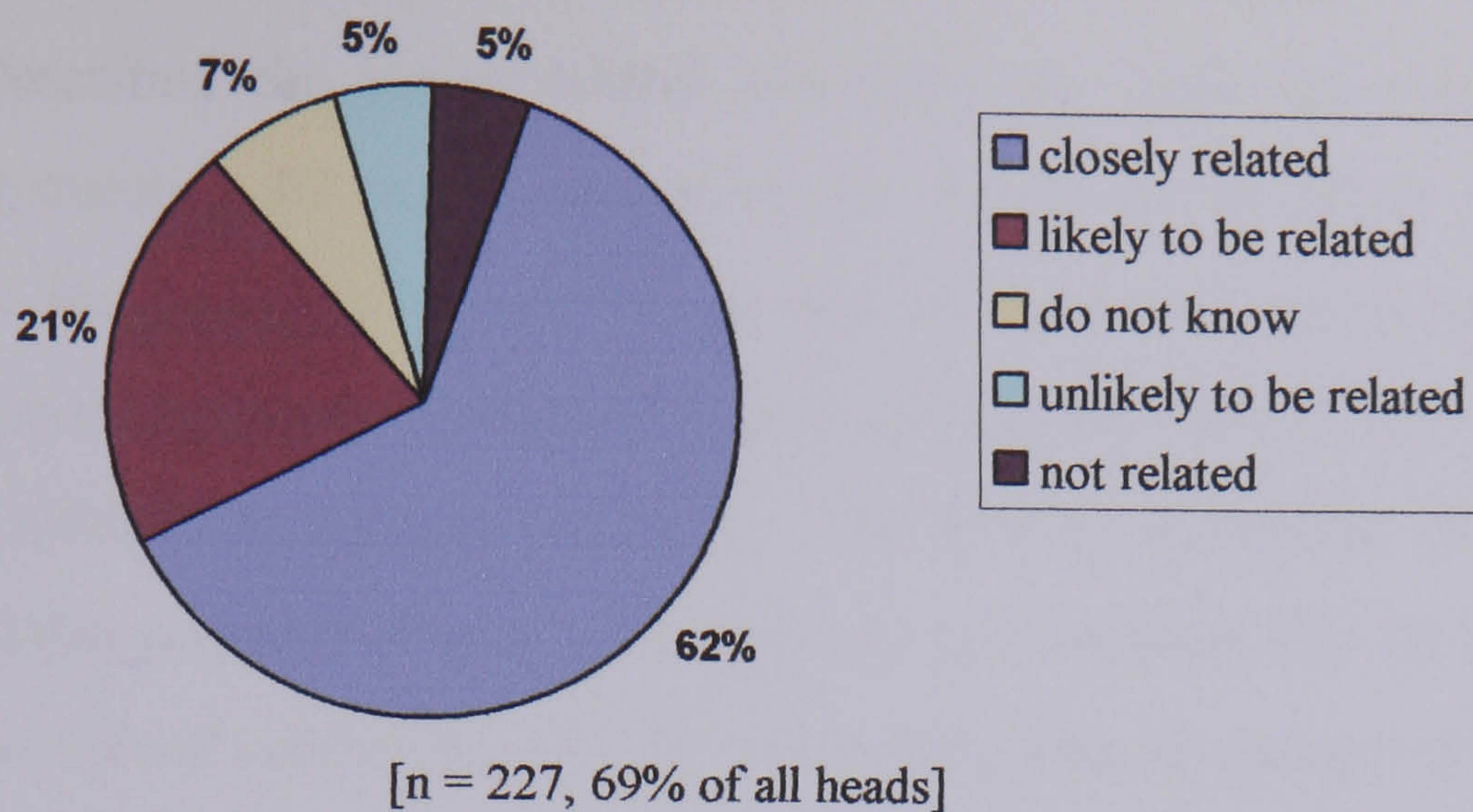


Figure 5.23 The proportion of heads for each category of relationship between autonomy and effectiveness

This shows that only 10 per cent of heads thought that autonomy and school effectiveness were either not, or unlikely to be, related. Only seven per cent did not have a view and 73 per cent assumed that there is likely to be, or definitely is, a direct causal relationship.

Figure 5.24 compares the responses to question G4 for the two groups of junior and senior school heads. It shows a very good agreement overall between the two groups, though a far greater proportion of the junior school heads believed that their degree of autonomy is closely related to junior school effectiveness.

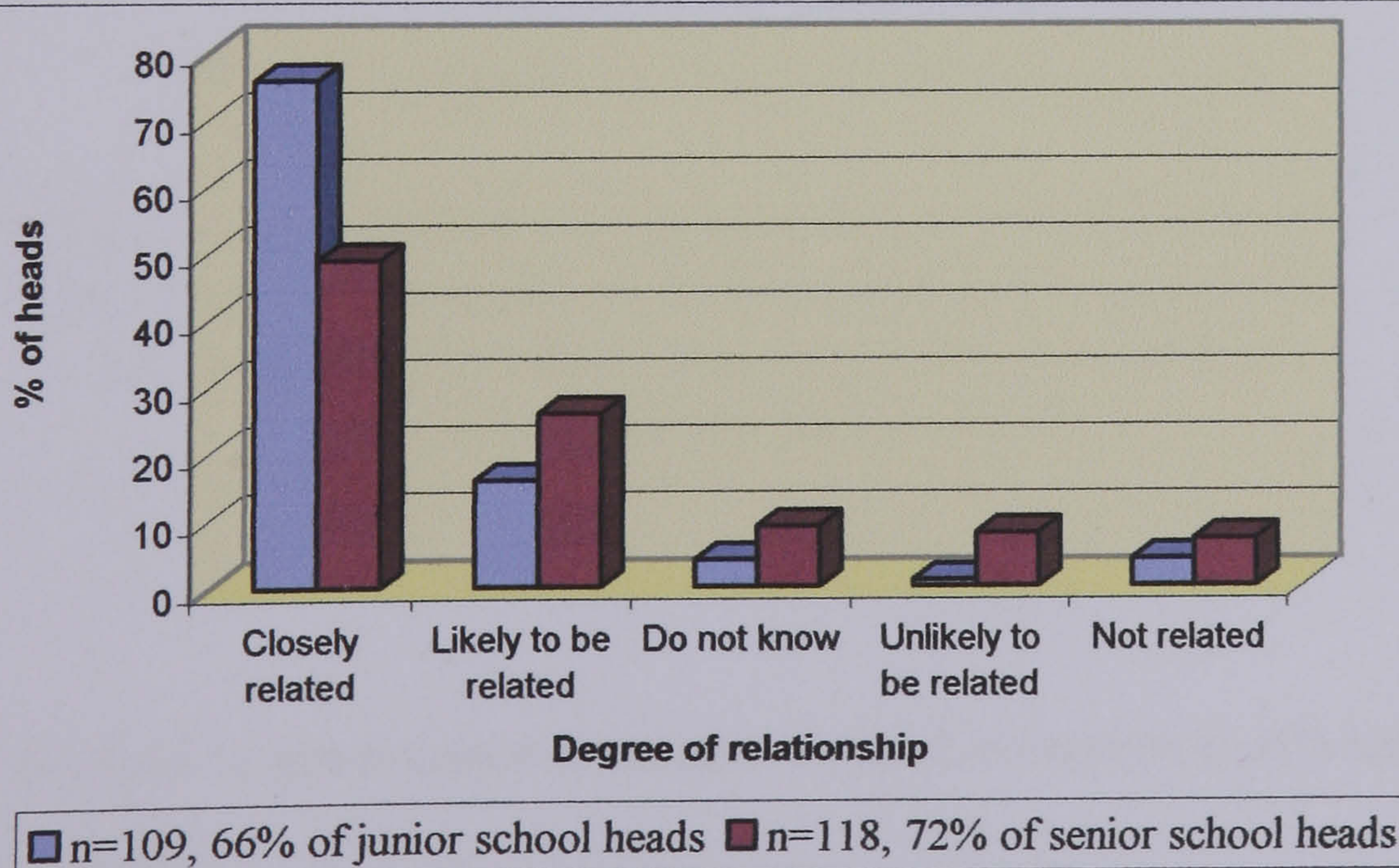
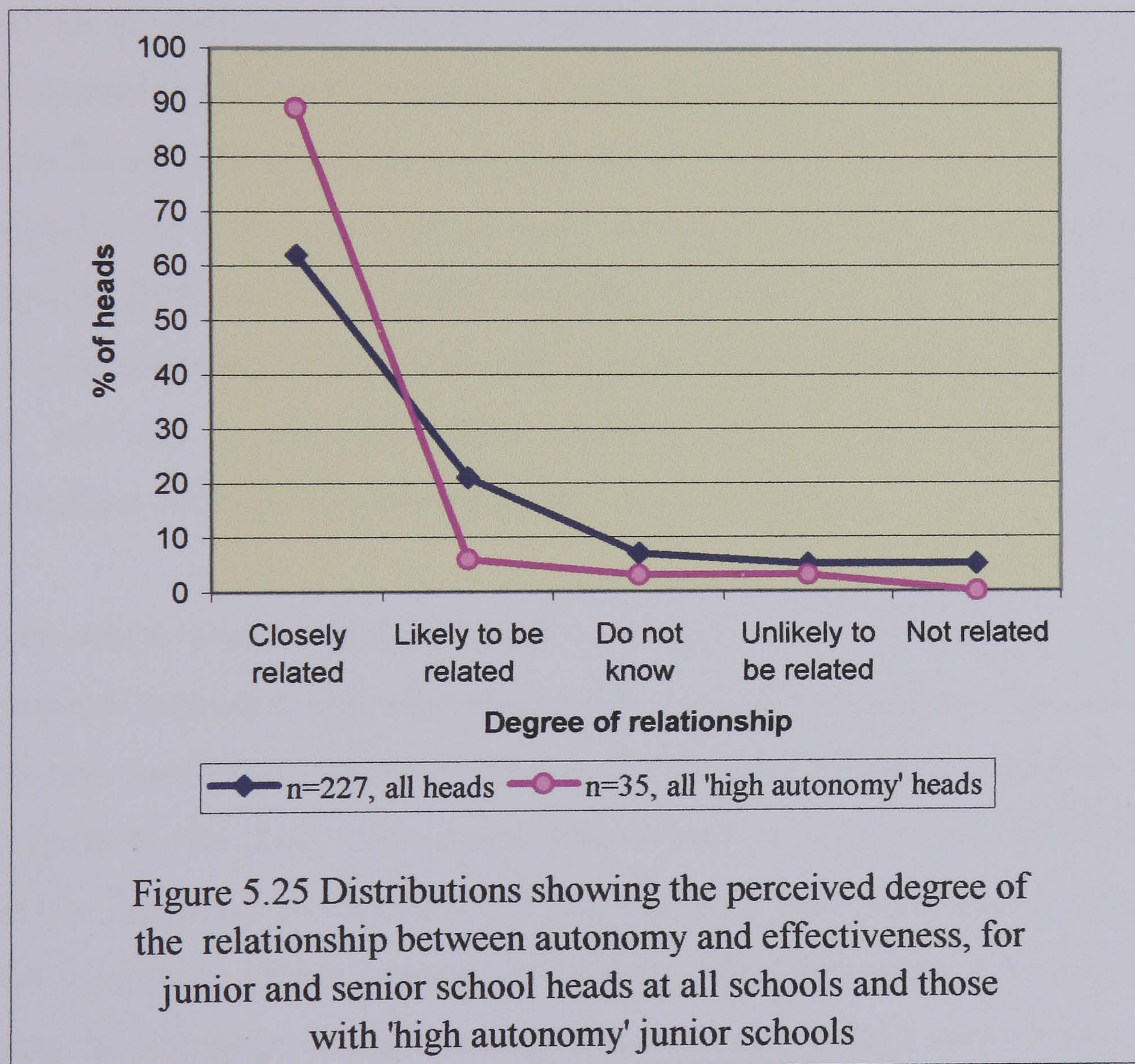


Figure 5.24 Distributions showing the perceived degree of the relationship between autonomy and effectiveness, for junior and senior school heads

Figure 5.25 shows the responses to question G4 for the 18 pairs of heads who each described the junior school autonomy as 'high', as analysed earlier using question F3 (a), compared to the figures for all heads. The responses to this question for the two groups of junior and senior school heads associated with 'high autonomy' junior schools are virtually the same overall and identical in 14 pairs out of 18. This level of agreement and the difference in the graphs in Figure 5.25 is further confirmation that all heads valued junior school autonomy with the underlying aim to improve school effectiveness. In other words, when there was a high degree of autonomy, it was assumed to be even more associated with improving effectiveness.



What changes to governance or organisational structure could improve effectiveness?

The open ended question G3 asked heads to name one aspect of either governance or organisational structure that they would change to help improve the effectiveness of the junior school. In order to look for patterns

or trends in the responses the heads were grouped into three categories using data from questions G4 and F3 (a), namely: heads who thought that autonomy and effectiveness were likely to be related, those who thought they were not related and those who had high autonomy junior schools.

No particularly clear or consistent patterns emerged but some very general trends were evident. For example, the junior school heads who thought that autonomy was linked to effectiveness tended to give specific answers relating to aspects of autonomy and management. Some wanted more budgetary control over capital items to give a 'greater incentive to excel' and control of budget allocation to overcome restrictions from the senior school in prioritising projects. Others referred to issues of managing maintenance and curricular links. The responses from junior school heads who did not link autonomy and effectiveness were similar but also included aspects of governance, wanting more recognition by, and involvement of, specific governors. In contrast to both these groups, the junior school heads at high autonomy schools were either 'quite happy' mentioning no changes or referring to relatively minor changes, such as the entrance exam procedure and the induction programme for colleagues.

The senior school heads with high autonomy junior schools gave a wide range of responses with most referring to increasing autonomy even further by recommending specific governors for the junior school to give direct support to the head. One senior school head in this category wanted to reduce autonomy but stressed that this was not a case of 'empire building' but in order to improve shared leadership. The other senior school heads were far less forthcoming in stating what they might change with several not responding at all.

Some of the senior school heads who linked autonomy and effectiveness wanted to develop the decision-making powers of their junior school heads through more joint meetings in order to raise their status and to enhance a shared purpose. Amongst those who did not link autonomy and effectiveness, some thought that the junior school was excluding the senior

school from important issues such as recruitment and they did not know generally what was happening, so less autonomy was recommended.

Is autonomy thought to be beneficial to a junior school?

G5, the final question in the questionnaire, was open-ended and effectively summarised the focus of this study in asking heads, 'Is autonomy beneficial to a junior school? Why?' The same groupings of heads were used as in the above analysis of question G3.

The junior school heads generally felt very strongly that autonomy is beneficial for a variety of reasons. The following quotes are from junior school heads who believed that autonomy is likely to be related to school effectiveness:

'(autonomy) allows those people who specialise ... to make the most important decisions',

'Yes. The in word is 'empowerment'...a junior school is not a department – it is a separate entity – the education of 7-11 is very different to 11-18',

'Those trained ...in this age range are ipso facto better placed to take responsibility'.

These responses illustrate that such heads tend to link autonomy with decision-making, responsibility and having appropriate criteria and operational power, all aspects that are thought to help improve effectiveness.

The junior school heads who did not link autonomy and effectiveness also strongly believed autonomy to be beneficial but were generally more qualified in their responses as illustrated by the following quotes:

'It depends on the skill of the Junior Head',

'Depends critically on size of school; also affected by age range...critical issue is integrated (Junior School) where autonomy isn't necessarily helpful',

‘beneficial in the right situation...if *both heads* follow a common ethos and aim both schools will work in harmony’.

One head in this group referred to independence bringing increased interdependence, which also assumes an underlying sense of working together in harmony.

Heads in the group of high autonomy junior schools believed very strongly in the benefits of autonomy. They stressed its importance for developing trust, delivering policies effectively, making decisions in co-operation and also linked it to attracting suitable candidates to the post of junior school. The following quotes illustrate such responses:

‘Yes. (Autonomy) enables policy and practice decisions to be made: speedily, by those who know about Primary education and by those who can best monitor results’,

‘Yes. I have been appointed to ‘run’ the Junior School. It is my area of professional experience’,

‘The nature of primary and secondary education is different. Junior schools need to be run by those with experience in the primary sector ... in order (to) attract the highest calibre of candidates for headship...’,

‘Essential – to attract quality leadership in the (Junior School) autonomy is a prerequisite’.

These quotes suggest that strong leaders will require a high degree of autonomy and conversely if a junior school is to have the right kind of leadership for school improvement then ‘autonomy is a prerequisite’.

The senior school heads were generally of the view that autonomy is beneficial but they were more divided in their opinions than junior school heads. The senior school heads who linked autonomy and effectiveness were most positive in stating the benefits of autonomy. Such benefits can be summarised as giving decision-making power, ownership and responsibility to the appropriate specialists in primary education, the

management of which requires a different approach and particular skills. One of this group of heads stated,

‘Autonomy encourages strong leadership ...but there is a real need to share aims, ethos and strategic development’.

Senior school heads were generally more aware in their responses of the need to balance the benefits of autonomy with the need to maintain a shared leadership and some joint decision-making. Clearly some thought that junior school heads could have too much autonomy and develop a ‘drawbridge’ mentality as in the following quote,

‘...it must not become so independent that it detaches itself almost completely from the Senior School and pulls up the drawbridge’.

Though such a view indicates a possible confusion over the terms ‘independence’ and ‘autonomy’ it illustrates how easily heads can operate with different assumptions of what autonomy implies. Clearly even with a high degree of autonomy, the shared leadership and partnership are still essential in linked schools, as summarised by another senior school head,

‘Autonomy does matter but of more importance are effective relationships...autonomy which is insular, divisive, jealous, competitive is a severe handicap. Partnership works’.

This idea of effective relationships being the most important aspect for junior school effectiveness was also evident in the response from one of the senior school heads who did not think autonomy to be beneficial and stated,

‘No – it’s teamwork that we should be after’.

The senior school heads with high autonomy junior schools were generally the most clear and consistent in their responses stating why autonomy is beneficial, though one head criticised the question as being ‘too loaded to merit a brief answer (despite the attempt to make the question open ended)’. However, the same head in answering question G4 indicated a definite close link between autonomy and effectiveness, which suggests that the head may have been implying the need to qualify in more detail, than space allowed

for in the questionnaire, how autonomy might be beneficial to a degree under certain circumstances. This group of heads valued autonomy for similar reasons to those already given above, but in general for the sense of directed leadership and ownership that it can give. Such heads had a clearer sense of autonomy not meaning independence and of operating within a larger framework through shared leadership. Their responses were qualified in explaining how it must be a particular degree of autonomy with limitations, within overall unity, as illustrated by the following quotes:

‘genuine professional ‘autonomy’ is rooted in a shared professional partnership...’,

‘...(autonomy) is a matter of degree, however. Too much and goals are not shared necessarily with the senior school. Too little and children are subjected to 14 years of the same culture (too long)’.

One senior school head in this group explained why too much junior school autonomy was not beneficial stating that,

‘The lack of synergy between the two schools is a constant source of problems when trying to ensure the correct throughput of pupils (in terms of numbers, % boarders, academic calibre etc)’.

This supports the need for a joint understanding between heads on the nature of autonomy, its purpose and the importance of managing a degree of autonomy within an overall framework with a shared approach to leadership and management.

CHAPTER 6: INTERVIEWS

INTRODUCTION

The interview sample

The focus of the research design, as explained in chapter four which described the methodology, centred on a large inclusive survey of all 330 heads at 165 pairs of HMCJ linked schools. Very few heads were interviewed relative to the number surveyed; four heads interviewed at two pairs of schools compared to 238 heads returning questionnaires from 147 pairs of schools. The design strategy was to use follow-up interviews to explore and illustrate various aspects of the survey and its findings.

As described earlier in chapter four, each pair of schools for the interview sample was selected using a process of applying simple random sampling to a pre-determined sub-group of the population, which was identified by taking account of various factors such as IAPS membership and geographical location. The size and nature of the interview sample, relative to the survey, meant that it was limited in terms of producing generalised findings and in checking the validity of the survey results using triangulation. However, the interview sample, though small, did produce relevant schools in separate parts of the country for the two main categories of junior schools, IAPS and non-IAPS, and interviews with the heads were appropriate research tools to follow up on the questionnaire. Furthermore, the interview schedules were designed to cover all the key research questions and they were closely linked to the questionnaire sections. Therefore, despite the limitations of the interview sample, a degree of triangulation, albeit limited, was possible in assessing the validity and reliability of some of the survey's findings.

For example, the survey found statistically relevant findings on the size of a junior school SMT. However, interviews with the four heads revealed that the actual team carrying out the senior management tasks was sometimes a large informal group of colleagues rather than the published SMT. In this way the interviews were able to investigate some findings from the survey

and in some cases question their validity. Similarly, the four interviews also provided limited support for the validity of some of the survey's findings.

In addition, the four interviews produced findings independent to the survey, which were of no, or little, use for triangulation, but still of value in helping to answer the research aims. For example, discussions about organisational factors and links between schools revealed the simultaneous use of loose and tight coupling both within a school and between a pair of schools. One area of this was in the management of developing links between schools, in which arrangements, such as sharing resources, were sometimes negotiated informally between individuals or groups. Indeed, the interviews revealed that informal, or loose, linkages could sometimes be more effective, even though formalised, or tight, structures were being encouraged. It was not appropriate to triangulate the interview findings on organisational factors such as simultaneous loose-tight multiple linkages (Fusarelli, 2001: 5) with the specific, quantifiable survey findings on links between schools. However, such findings provided insight into how heads sometimes shared leadership and management in practice and they illustrated the concept of balancing loose and tight coupling within the context of this study (Cuban, 1979: 179; Peters and Waterman, 1982; Lowe Boyd *et al.*, 2001).

Though the interviews did produce some findings that triangulated with the survey, particularly in specific areas such as confirming a link between a head's autonomy and school effectiveness, a primary aim of the interviews was to shed further light on issues arising from the literature and the survey. For example, in addition to exploring the relevance of concepts covered in the literature review, such as loose coupling (Weick, 1976), it was also possible to explore further some areas of professional practice, for instance how heads make joint decisions. The survey had collected data on the kinds of decisions heads make and categorised their levels of involvement of senior school heads in junior school issues. However, the interviews were

able to explore more fully the practice of how heads shared power and leadership when making joint decisions.

In summary, the interview sample was limited but provided valuable insight into issues arising from the survey and the interviews explored the professional practice of heads in interpreting their views on autonomy and effectiveness.

Links between the interview schedules, questionnaire sections and KRQs

Figure 6.1 illustrates how methodological triangulation (Cohen *et al.*, 2000: 112-115) was applied to crosscheck the findings on each key research question comparing two methods or research tools, questionnaires and interviews.

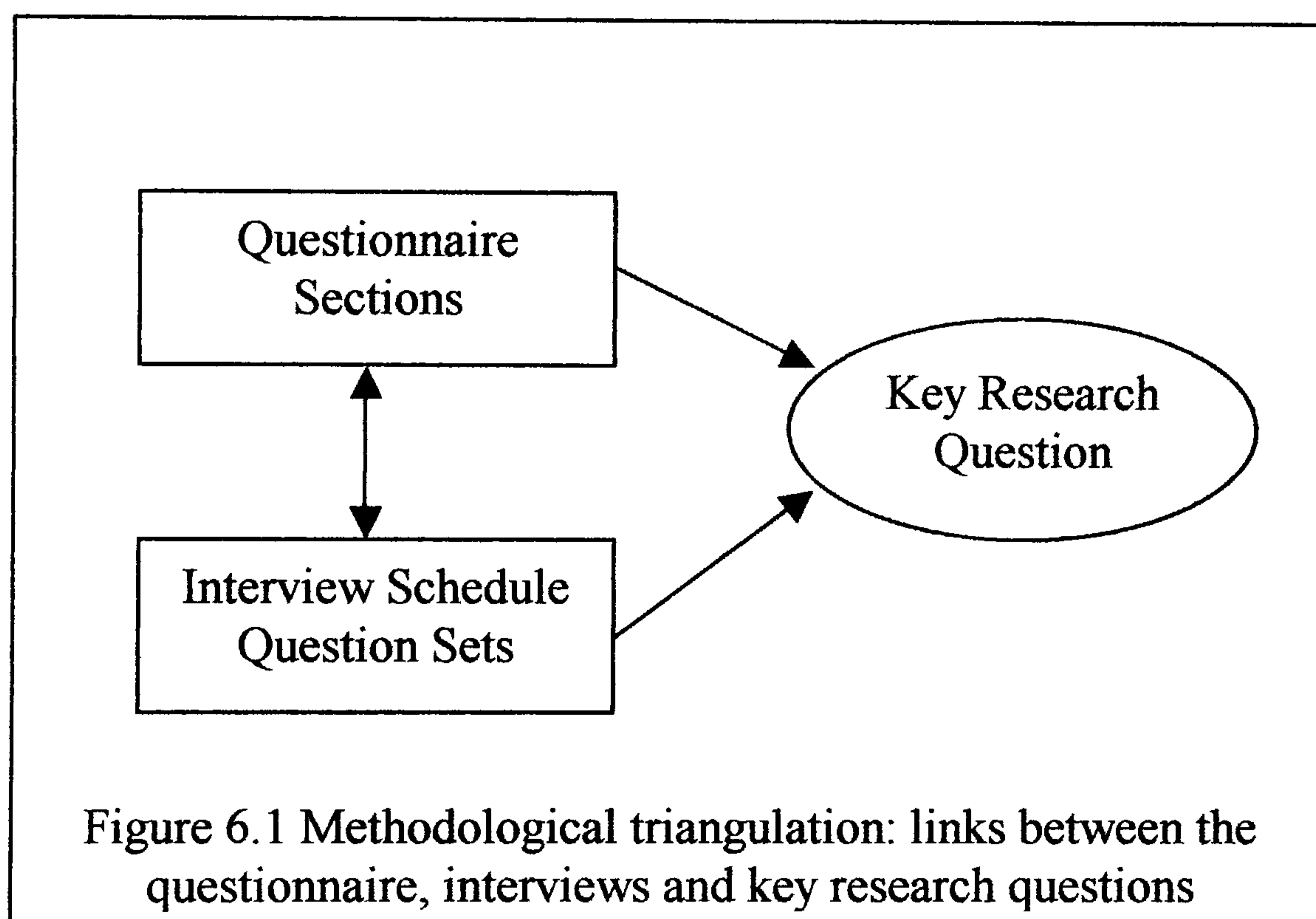


Figure 6.1 Methodological triangulation: links between the questionnaire, interviews and key research questions

Interview responses to the sets of questions in each interview schedule (Appendices 3 and 4) were analysed in relation to each research question and the relevant findings summarised. Chapter 5 summarised the results and analysis of responses to the questionnaire sections in relating each section to its relevant research questions. Therefore, the two methods gave independent findings on each research question, which were compared to assess their validity. As stated earlier in the methodology chapter, this does not in itself ensure the authenticity of the findings but it can nevertheless provide support for them.

Figure 6.1 illustrates how the two methods could produce findings on the research questions independently, as indicated by the angled arrows. A direct comparison on the same issue using the two methods was also possible since the interview schedules consist of question sets that are directly related to particular questionnaire sections. For example, question 4 on the senior interview schedule (IS-S) relates directly to sections E and F on the questionnaire and they are all linked to KRQ1. Figure 6.2 shows the direct links (indicated by the ticks) connecting the interview schedules, questionnaire and KRQs.

		Key Research Question					
		1	2	3	4	5a	5b
IS-J Interview Question Set	Q1		✓	✓			
	Q2		✓				
	Q3		✓			✓	
	Q4		✓		✓	✓	✓
	Q5	✓					
	Q6	✓					✓
	Q7			✓	✓		✓
IS-S Interview Question Set	Q1		✓	✓			
	Q2		✓			✓	
	Q3	✓	✓				✓
	Q4	✓					
	Q5				✓	✓	✓
	Q6					✓	✓
Questionnaire Section	A		✓				
	B		✓				
	C		✓	✓			
	D		✓	✓		✓	
	E	✓		✓			✓
	F	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓
	G				✓	✓	✓

Figure 6.2 Connecting links between the key research questions, the question sets in the interview schedules and the questionnaire sections

Figures 6.1 and 6.2 need careful interpretation in using them to compare and triangulate the data. They can easily give the impression that straightforward linear relationships, or links, between issues are assumed to exist using a positivist approach, looking for convergence on a single point of truth on an issue. In contrast to this, a constructivist point of view would dispute such a single reality existing and argue that 'it all depends on the angle you are coming from, what perspective you have' (Denscombe, 1998: 86).

Essentially this means that each method may draw out different but equally valid findings. Agreement between the findings from each method may imply support for validity. However, disagreement, or even contradiction, does not imply that one or both must be wrong. Furthermore, it was not always possible to categorise the interview responses into neat sections or KRQs and some overlap and digression was necessary in extracting findings for the sections that follow.

Analysis of the four interviews

Transcripts of the interviews were copied onto a grid with numbered lines and question sets highlighted, with digression from the planned questions indicated (an example is shown in appendix 5). Questions and responses were then coded according to key research questions, thus ensuring that the qualitative analysis of the transcript remained focussed on the main issues. Handwritten notes were added in making comparisons across the four transcripts and with the corresponding questionnaire sections.

As stated earlier, two pairs of heads were interviewed, one pair with the junior head in IAPS membership and the other not in membership, which are numbered as pairs 1 and 2 respectively for this study. Table 6.1 lists the codes used in this chapter to refer to the interview schedules and heads interviewed.

Code	Interview Schedule <i>or</i> Head
IS-S	Interview Schedule – for the Senior School Head
IS-J	Interview Schedule – for the Junior School Head
SH1	The senior school head with the junior school in IAPS
JH1	The junior school head in IAPS membership
SH2	The senior school head with the junior school <i>not in IAPS</i>
JH2	The junior school head <i>not in IAPS</i> membership

Table 6.1 Codes used to refer to the two interview schedules and the junior and senior school heads respectively

For each KRQ, the transcripts were analysed, section-by-section, looking for relevant points and significant extracts were highlighted. At this stage the views of all four heads on each KRQ were compared and contrasted. Close consideration was given to any strong agreement or discrepancy between the senior school heads (SH1, SH2) and the junior school heads (JH1, JH2). Similar analysis was applied in comparing the IAPS pair (JH1, SH1) and the non-IAPS pair (JH2, SH2). The interview findings for each KRQ were then compared to the findings from the relevant questionnaire sections for that particular KRQ, using Figure 6.2, and triangulation used to test for validity.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION 1 (KRQ1) (CONCEPT AND DEGREES OF AUTONOMY)

Findings from interviews

The literature makes it clear that ‘autonomy is a complex notion’ (Bell and Bush, 2002: 12) and JH2 confirmed this. In attempting to define areas of autonomy the immediate response was that ‘(it is) very difficult to pin that down’. However, with prompts using examples from the literature JH2 expressed a clear understanding that important aspects of autonomy are ‘admissions’, ‘advising on transfer to senior school’, ‘appointing staff’ and ‘staff development’. The last aspect emerged to be of prime importance, supporting Woessmann’s (2001) finding that autonomy in personnel decisions is an important factor in school improvement. JH2 stressed the importance of ‘day-to-day running of the school’, ‘appointment and deployment of staff’ and ‘the budget’. When asked about decision-making

in general, JH2 agreed that it was important to have control over 'admissions' and desired more control over deployment of shared staff and whole school decision-making, 'particularly at governor level'.

JH2's desire to have more decision-making power, particularly in the areas of finance and allocating salaries, revealed aspects of autonomy which were perceived to be important. Frustrations emerged from suspicions that junior school income exceeded its resource allocation, with the senior school benefiting more from the 'very cash generative area' of the junior school. JH2 referred several times to an anxiety over the distribution of revenue in the linked schools from the perspective of fairness to the junior school parents. Similar frustrations were expressed over capital resource planning.

A lack of autonomy over deciding junior staff salaries, even within an agreed budget, prevented JH2 from rewarding good staff, which was perceived to be in conflict with having delegated autonomy over staff development. Though junior school staff appointments were shared, JH2 made it clear that SH2 decided all monetary aspects, stating that 'SH2 will be part of the interview process, in the sense that obviously he will talk money.'

SH2 regarded having autonomy to mean having decision-making power over pupil admissions, staff appointments and financial control. It is interesting to note that appointment of staff was stressed by SH2 as being clearly understood to be important, stating, 'that's certainly where I have autonomy' and 'we are one teaching staff, (with) one contract of employment'. SH2 also made the final decision and determined salaries in junior school appointments. This suggested that SH2 did not feel that JH2 should have this level of autonomy, which was judged by JH2 to be so important.

SH2's view of JH2's autonomy was partly revealed by his apparent assumption that as head of the senior school he was 'over' the junior school in areas such as major personnel issues including staff appraisal, staff

appointments, pupil selection and parental disputes. SH2 also had control over major financial decisions in the junior school, though not in the day-to-day implementation of an agreed budget.

JH2 had day-to-day operational autonomy in implementing agreed policies and budgets in contrast to SH2's overall strategic control. For SH2, 'financial decisions in the (junior) school in many ways are really no different than they are for the rest of the school'. Other quotes confirmed this perspective that the junior school was part of the whole school, which partly accounted for SH2 and JH2 having distinctly different kinds and degrees of autonomy. This may be a likely feature of non-IAPS schools and could possibly account for them not being in IAPS membership, which would imply status as a separate school.

This is not to say that SH2 and JH2 had different views on the *meaning* of autonomy. On the contrary, JH2's desire for more financial control and more flexibility in making staff appointments confirmed an agreed understanding of the concept of autonomy in these areas.

JH1's frustrations over autonomy were more concerned with governance and the interview responses illustrated how too much autonomy from governors can be counter-productive. Indeed JH1 wanted 'more governor participation...perhaps even overseeing the running of the (junior) school'. For JH1, working more directly with governors implied a greater sense of autonomy in relation to SH1.

SH1 confirmed the importance of having 'the final say over allocation of resources and projects' and 'the appointment of staff' to having an appropriate degree of autonomy. Furthermore, SH1's strong emphasis on shared leadership was evident in these aspects being delegated to JH1. SH1 referred constantly to working closely with the head of junior school, yet allowed him to set priorities, appoint staff, select pupils and present his own strategic plans and goals. This approach reflected SH1's view that 'autonomy is a double-edged sword and it has to be exercised wisely in

running 98 per cent of it with consultation and reflection'. In general, SH1 and JH1 operated with more individual autonomy, perhaps a feature of IAPS membership, yet they stressed more than the other pair of heads how closely they worked in partnership.

Triangulation with survey results

The inference from Table 5.14, showing the ranked importance of aspects of autonomy, is that heads generally regard 'having sufficient autonomy' to mean being able to select pupils, set budgets, allocate resources, control the curriculum, appoint staff, have peer group status and have a policy input working with governors. The interviews with all four heads reached a similar general conclusion with considerable overlap. Both methodologies confirmed that autonomy implies having decision-making power and control over major personnel issues, budget setting and financial control in resource allocation.

Differences in the findings from the interview and questionnaire data included the relative importance of these aspects of autonomy and the fact that none of the four heads interviewed referred to being in control of the curriculum. This latter point may be due to several factors such as a shared assumption that it was taken for granted to be part of a head's autonomy. Alternatively, it may have been a shortcoming in the design of the interview schedule, which did not mention curricular matters, or teaching and learning, whereas the question prompts during the interviews mentioned personnel and capital development issues.

In summary, triangulating the four sets of interview data with some of the survey's findings shows that there is valid evidence confirming that a head's perception of a high degree of autonomy usually means having criteria power (Winstanley, 1995) in setting budgets, allocating resources and meeting with governors. There was also confirmation that the selection of pupils and the appointment of staff are generally regarded as important aspects of autonomy.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION 2 (KRQ2) (ORGANISATIONAL FACTORS AND DEGREES OF AUTONOMY)

Findings from interviews

In describing the junior school SMT structure, JH2 referred to relatively junior colleagues who 'do it out of the love of the job' in addition to the few senior colleagues, such as the Deputy and KS1 Co-ordinator, who were the official SMT. In other words, JH2 described an inclusive, relatively informal and non-hierarchical view of management, which means that it may be difficult generally to quantify SMT structures and tasks. This informal approach to structures extended to links between schools, which were through informal contacts and loose couplings. Earlier attempts to formalise links at JH2's school had resulted in 'more pushing paper and ...had no beneficial effect'.

In contrast, JH1 was more specific in describing a clearly defined and recognised small senior management team, which may reflect the IAPS status of having sufficient autonomy to be regarded as a school in its own right. At JH1's school links were developing with the senior school with formal meetings between the Directors of Studies to manage the impact of senior school decisions on the junior school. JH1 employed a lot of senior school teaching staff though no junior school staff taught in the senior school, so there was a need to balance junior school needs with senior school demands. Formalised structures between the schools were being encouraged to co-ordinate and manage this, but also to maintain a sense of autonomy.

JH1's and JH2's perceptions of the role of the senior school head in junior school matters clearly influenced their understanding of shared leadership, a crucial factor in assessing the potential influence of autonomy. For example, JH2 regarded SH2 as being the head of the whole school and this caused anxiety over lack of equal status, illustrated by the following quote:

‘I suppose the only anxiety I ever have is that I would like to think that the head of the junior school could be promoted into head of the whole school....one would like to think there was equal parity ...’ (JH2)

A similar understanding was expressed by JH1, who stated, ‘Well, (SH1’s) in charge of the whole school as I see it... in practice the important decisions I’ll obviously run by him’.

When asked about leadership, though JH2 felt that he ‘definitely’ shared it with SH2, his response continued, ‘I mean, I run everything past SH2’. Similarly, JH1 was effectively in charge provided important things were put to SH1. Therefore the junior school heads’ understanding of how they shared leadership with their respective senior school heads implied that they had to seek approval on major issues rather than work together to reach joint decisions.

Both junior school heads thought that the main organisational links between schools were in using shared facilities and having some teachers in common. The former brought some advantages, including for example the use of a large theatre at one junior school, but also difficulties such as being denied access when busy. At the non-IAPS pair of schools there was no organisational structure to facilitate negotiation over the sharing of facilities. The sharing of teachers was considered successful by JH2 who thought it could also have a pastoral dimension, in easing transfer to the senior school, since the junior school pupils already know some senior school staff. JH1 was more conscious of problems involved in sharing staff.

In summary, the main organisational factors in relation to defining degrees of autonomy, based on the two interviews with JH1 and JH2, were the degree of informality within and between the two schools, which is very difficult to quantify, and the decision-making power and role of the senior school head in junior school matters. The organisational structure within

the IAPS junior school and with its senior school seemed to be more formalised than at the non-IAPS school.

SH2 viewed the junior school as a part of the whole school with links between the schools seen as practical features of the delegated day-to-day routines, with the main aspects being shared teaching and resources. Organisational factors within the junior school did not feature. This interview gained little insight into organisational factors within and between the two schools, particularly in relation to degrees of autonomy, since relevant responses tended to refer mainly to the overarching structure.

In contrast, SH1 referred to relatively independent structures working closely together, perhaps another feature of JH1's IAPS membership. SH1 explained how he and JH1 worked hard to have a common philosophy within a framework of mutual autonomy using formal and informal structures, as illustrated in the following extracts from a single quote:

'we work quite hard here to a common philosophy...we speak the same language but we have different dialects...(and are) very keen to work closely...But there is a considerable degree of autonomy and independence of action...We meet formally once a week; we probably speak almost every day ' (SH1)

In summary, it appeared that there was a greater use of both loose and tight coupling structures operating between the pair of heads with greater mutual autonomy (JH1 and SH1, recognising IAPS membership) than those with less (JH2 and SH2). In this case, a greater degree of autonomy seemed to be linked to a closer working relationship through an active encouragement of linking structures.

Triangulation with survey results

The interview data on junior school organisational factors was very limited and links described between schools were of a non-specific, qualitative nature. Using triangulation to compare its findings with the survey data was

inconclusive. The survey investigated specific and measurable factors, such as 'age of transfer', 'size of school' and 'size of SMT', whereas the interview responses were generally more descriptive, with factors not described explicitly. The four interviews were more useful in producing complementary data for this section rather than tangible evidence for triangulation with the survey data.

Analysis of the interviews with the four heads did not invalidate the survey findings but it does mean that caution is needed in drawing conclusions. For example, when interpreting statistical survey data on junior school SMT size, one must be careful. The interviews revealed that the 'official' size of the SMT is not necessarily the size of the team carrying out SMT tasks in practice

Furthermore, some effective links between schools can be informal, unstructured and not easily quantified, so one must be cautious in assuming the validity of the questionnaire results on, for example, senior school membership of a junior school SMT, or on other links between the pairs of schools.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION 3 (KRQ3) (AUTONOMY AND ORGANISATIONAL STRUCTURE)

Findings from interviews

The informal structures of the SMTs at both junior schools did not include the senior heads as members and in fact no senior colleagues at the two senior schools were referred to as members, though there was some informal involvement as required. Furthermore, the two junior school SMTs were very loosely coupled with the senior schools, with no prescribed structure for consultation, delegation of authority or joint decisions other than at the heads' level.

SH2, in contrast to SH1, appointed all staff in both schools and, according to JH2, was seen by junior pupils as the head of the whole school, though JH2 was firmly of the view that his staff effectively looked to him as the

head of their school. JH1 seemed to have more autonomy than JH2 and the organisational structure in the junior school reflected this in the way JH1 operated, by involving and being involved with senior school SMT members.

SH2 referred to a 'federal structure' with 'effectively three schools, all on one site' with the junior school part of the whole, though he was 'head of the whole thing'. Indeed, SH2 saw his role in relation to JH2's school as one of 'giving direction' and then 'letting them get on with it'. This structure of separate schools, rather than sections, also referred to heads of the individual schools, and JH2 clearly regarded himself as the head of a school and had aspirations for appropriate autonomy.

SH2 saw this as a 'very clear-cut structure' between the schools, with 'actually a pretty clear divide really, ...but very much the (junior) school organises itself, its own routines'. This is probably why SH2 did not refer to the organisational structure within the junior school and SH2's interview data is exclusively on the structures connecting the schools, particular at heads' level. Similarly, SH1 did not refer to structure in the junior school, and by referring to JH1's ownership of strategic development, plans, goals and day-to-day management, implied that such organisational structure was a matter for JH1.

Triangulation with survey results

JH2, who was not a member of IAPS or an equivalent body that grants peer approved status as a head, clearly valued the high importance aspects of autonomy, in particular having more authority over finance. Furthermore, JH2's SMT, without SH2 in membership, operated autonomously as a unit within a 'federal structure', though this may have been due to it being larger and more inclusive than its official membership, which was relatively small. It is relevant to note that JH1 also enjoyed considerable autonomy and operated with a small well-defined SMT, without SH1 in membership.

The survey found some evidence that junior schools with not very large SMTs, without the senior school head in membership and its own head not in IAPS were more likely to value highly the important aspects of autonomy. There was some limited evidence in the four interviews to support the validity of the IAPS factor in this finding.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION 4 (KRQ4) (CRITERIA FOR EFFECTIVENESS)

Findings from interviews

JH1 and JH2 judged certain links between the schools, particularly ‘access to superb facilities’, as being helpful to promoting junior school effectiveness, even though they were limited in JH2’s case. JH2 also stressed the importance of sharing senior school staff to help improve junior school effectiveness.

JH2’s main criteria for judging junior school effectiveness were the quality of pastoral care, the control and monitoring of pupil progress and the provision of enjoyable extra-curricular activities to build confidence. This was essentially a pupil-centred view in judging school effectiveness, summarised by an approach aimed at ‘making sure that the children are happy, that they are being challenged, that you’ve got the support and the help where needed’. Leadership was seen by JH2 to be important in promoting effectiveness, provided it was used to make staff valued and supported.

JH1 thought that effectiveness was ultimately about standards of teaching and learning and pupils’ progress but, in common with JH2 stressed that it was not just about academic attainment but across the whole broad curriculum and making use of a value-added approach.

According to JH2, it was difficult to know how the senior school judged junior school effectiveness. The only clear criterion thought to be used was one ‘based on entrance results’. Indeed following a recent policy change, all junior school pupils were required, in common with all external

candidates, to take the senior school entrance examination, confirming the importance of this measure. JH1 was critical of how the senior school might judge junior school effectiveness, stating that it was not done carefully but 'more at an informal level, probably through parental satisfaction or lack of it'. JH1 thought that a lack of proper time for SH1 was an obstacle and hence the desire for direct governor input and assessment, as illustrated in the quote:

'I think we still have a system where, let us say, if (SH1) doesn't hear much, (junior school effectiveness) must be going well, which I can understand, but it's not an effective management system, which is why I go back to the governor situation, perhaps. I don't think (SH1)'s got the time' (JH1)

It is not surprising perhaps that JH1 and JH2 judged effectiveness from an 'internal', pupil-centred perspective because that is their position. Equally it is understandable that the junior heads thought that the senior heads might be using external factors such as examination results applied at the point of transfer for Year 6 pupils or parental comments. Actually SH2 did not mention pupil achievement or entrance examination scores, so JH2 may have been working under a false assumption of how the junior school's effectiveness was judged by the senior school. However, it is possible that SH2 did not use these criteria but other senior teachers did, for JH1 was of the view that senior school staff used results in entrance examinations and national Standard Assessment Tests (SATs).

SH2 had little hesitation in stating 'ability to hit financial targets' as 'an absolutely crucial' criterion for effectiveness. In contrast to this, SH1 stressed the importance of the quality of human relationships in terms of a shared focus and the careful balance of managing operational routines and improving 'things' by developing people, namely parents, pupils, staff and governors. This was summarised in SH1's response that 'people improve schools rather than policies'.

When asked specifically about judging a linked junior school's effectiveness, SH2 singled out the importance of the person in charge and how he/she operates. SH2 used criteria based on the junior school head's leadership to judge junior school effectiveness, but expressed in personnel terms with reference to quality of life and ethos, rather than in terms of implementing development plans and meeting financial targets. Similarly SH1 focussed on the crucial importance of the staff and in particular their ability to enthuse pupils, not only in results but also in self-discipline to improve generally.

SH2's role in promoting junior school effectiveness was unclear, seen by him to be no more than checking that the junior school was 'doing fine'. Specific prompts by the interviewer, such as suggesting aspects involving the relationship between heads, failed to produce any meaningful responses. This implied that SH2 judged junior school effectiveness from a relatively detached position, as an outsider looking in on it.

SH1 was clear that his role was to 'encourage and support (JH1) in encouraging and supporting his staff, and encouraging and supporting the children'. This was consistent with SH1's emphasis on the quality of human interactions and relationships as the key to measuring and maintaining a school's effectiveness.

In summary, the two junior school heads tended to judge junior school effectiveness in terms of quality of life and progress for pupils and staff, but felt that the senior school used more objective criteria and external measures, specifically final examination results and parental views. In fact the two senior school heads generally applied leadership criteria focussing on personnel management and the quality of human relationships. Therefore there was considerable overlap in the criteria used by the heads, at each of the two pairs of schools, though this was not necessarily mutually understood to be the case.

Triangulation with survey results

Factors for junior school effectiveness that emerged from the survey analysis were of a more tangible and quantifiable nature than those described in the four interviews. For example, the survey identified it to be important for heads to have decision-making power over factors such as the allocation of teaching resources, curriculum management, policy and budget setting, the appointing of staff and selection of pupils in order to improve school effectiveness. The four heads interviewed stressed more the quality of human relationships, good personnel management and the ability to encourage and enthuse. The survey showed that junior school heads wanted more autonomy over staff and pupil issues in order to improve effectiveness, which is entirely consistent with the interviews stressing the need for good personnel management. Therefore the two data sets do not necessarily triangulate on all issues but rather they each give independent and potentially equally valid insight into complementary criteria used to judge junior school effectiveness made.

However, triangulating findings from the four interviews with section G of the questionnaire does give some validation for the importance of leadership or good inter-personal relationships, shared vision or focus and a learning environment with good use of facilities.

There is a slight mismatch in comparing findings on the degree of mutual understanding between pairs of heads on criteria for effectiveness used by each other. Section G showed that the two groups of senior and junior school heads used different criteria overall but each group was generally very aware of what the other used. This degree of mutual understanding was not evident in the two pairs of interviews. It may have been the case that the two pairs of heads interviewed did not understand how each other judged the junior school. There is insufficient evidence to invalidate the survey findings on this point, particularly since they were based on groups of heads and therefore some discrepancies are likely to occur in individual cases.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION 5a (KRQ5a) (LINKS BETWEEN EFFECTIVENESS AND STRUCTURE)

Findings from interviews

The two junior school heads' interview responses implied that the most relevant aspect of organisational structure influencing junior school effectiveness was how it linked a pair of schools. For example, JH2 found it reassuring to be able to consult SH2 on strategic matters, to benefit from a more objective viewpoint from someone 'one step removed, not in the thick of things'. JH2, perhaps through not having IAPS membership, was conscious of a senior management team of the 'whole school', whereas IAPS member JH1, talked about the need for 'partnership' and 'whole school co-ordination' stressing that important liaisons were at the senior manager and subject co-ordinator levels. The views of JH1 and JH2 illustrated the benefits of working within a larger structure and not being in complete isolation, though such advantages were expressed by JH2 only in terms of being able to consult and by JH1 in terms of liaison.

The other main structural links to benefit the junior schools were those enabling the sharing of teachers and facilities. JH1 acknowledged the advantages to a junior school in sharing specialist staff, in subjects such as design technology, French and physical education, but also thought this aspect to be the school's greatest weakness, since it allowed the senior school's timetabling of classes and events to have an adverse impact on junior school effectiveness. JH1 also saw advantages in the two organisations sharing facilities, which would be better than they could provide separately, though this created a 'big need' for careful liaison due to the impact of senior school decisions.

JH1 expressed concern over the organisational structures not making the lines of accountability clear for the junior school head and argued that clear junior school governance should be an explicit part of the structure. SH2 referred to 'clear-cut' structures between the schools producing clear lines of accountability, with the implication that this improved effectiveness.

The relative size of the junior and senior schools was thought by SH2 to be a possible factor influencing effectiveness and even a source of tension between the schools. For example, a logical plan for the junior school's development may be inhibited or even denied due to plans for the senior school taking priority because it is larger.

At SH2's school the structure for educating boys and girls separately but within an overall co-educational environment was imposed on the junior school. The rationale for this was because 'it's been a natural thing to push it back down into the prep school' (SH2) though it was thought that the logical thing in the future might be to continue the co-education of the pre-Prep through into a co-educational junior school. Effectiveness may, of course, be totally independent of being either a co-educational or a single-sex school. However, this illustrates how structure in a larger and more powerful senior school can influence directly the structure in a junior school, without necessarily considering its impact on effectiveness.

SH1 pointed out that structures allowed for a sharing of facilities, particularly in sport, and in referring to non-teaching links stated that 'obviously the bursary and the office administration is (under) a common umbrella'. However, this was not seen to be linked to effectiveness for later in the interview SH1 made the point that 'if you go down the Institute of Education's list of what makes an effective school, you can have a highly centralised administration but I don't think that improves a school'. It is relevant to note that SH1 distinguished between running an 'effective' school and running an 'improving' school, a point referred to in relation to autonomy in the next section.

In summary, SH2 stressed the importance of a clear division between a pair of schools, allowing a sense of independence in routine matters. On the same issue, JH1 was also concerned about clarity between structures claiming that without it the lines of accountability for the junior school head can become blurred. JH2 emphasised personnel links benefiting pupil progress. SH1 acknowledged practical links such as facilities and

administration but felt that the quality of human relationships was of overall importance. JH1 agreed with SH1 that practical links could help improve school effectiveness but was more aware of how they could have an adverse effect on junior school effectiveness. All heads acknowledged that the organisational structure between schools could influence junior school effectiveness though they had different, but not necessarily contradictory, understandings of which structures or links between structures are helpful and the degree to which they are important. However, it was the quality of human relationships operating within the structures, regardless of the structural system and links between schools, which was seen to be most important.

Triangulation with survey results

The survey found that the role of organisational structure in influencing effectiveness is not clear or specific, with different structures perceived to be operating successfully. This was strongly supported by the four interviews that found little direct relationship between organisational structure and effectiveness. The interview analysis also provided some evidence to help validate the survey findings, which stressed the importance of structures that facilitate joint meetings of pairs of heads with shared decision-making.

The questionnaire findings on organisational structure generally linked it to junior school effectiveness through the idea of balancing loose-tight couplings, centring on the quality of human relationships within and between the schools' structures. It also showed that the most significant factors for a school to be effective are: a participative approach to leadership, a shared vision and a common purpose. This is entirely consistent with the findings of the interviews with the four heads, which placed much importance on the quality of human interaction within whatever structure happens to be operating.

KEY RESEARCH QUESTION 5b (KRQ5b) (LINKS BETWEEN EFFECTIVENESS AND AUTONOMY)

Findings from interviews

JH2 indicated that greater autonomy would bring better access to buildings and facilities and this was thought to be desirable, possibly even at the expense of having less to choose from. It was acknowledged that by sharing resources, which inevitably brought less autonomy or independence, the junior school had the use of far better facilities than it could hope for if operating alone.

JH1 believed that effectiveness was ‘ultimately...about standards in teaching and learning’ and linked sufficient autonomy with being able to work closely with one’s own staff and to make decisions on ‘the day-to-day running of the school, the budget and the appointment of staff’. In practice, JH1 did not have complete autonomy over appointing staff but he had control over their deployment. He also saw it as his role to act as line manager, in the sense of offering support and guidance, for senior school staff teaching in the junior school. Therefore JH1 clearly thought that autonomy over personnel issues was both desirable and necessary for maintaining school effectiveness.

JH2 was also of the opinion that a junior school head’s autonomy is ‘very important’ for improving school effectiveness, but he was somewhat ambivalent as to the optimum degree of autonomy. Throughout the interview with JH2 there was sense of him wanting more decision-making power, particularly in financial matters, yet content to be sharing many of the major decisions.

In replying to questions concerning the importance of autonomy in making a junior school effective, JH2 included the following responses:

‘To be fair I don’t think I want more autonomy, in the sense that I see the way I work with SH2 as very much a partnership. I like being able to refer things to him, I like talking things through.’

‘I think (it) very important. Yes, I mean I think if I felt I wanted to make a decision which was then taken away from me, I would then find that very difficult.’

The first response illustrates JH2’s desire for consultation and a partnership as opposed to full autonomy. However, the second response also reveals a desire for sufficient autonomy, in terms of positional and operational power, indicated by a wish to be involved in reaching joint decisions for the junior school and not ever to be over-ruled.

JH1 was more firmly of the opinion that a clear sense of autonomy was important for effectiveness, even if this was just a perceived autonomy rather than actual, as indicated in the following extract:

‘If you can make somebody feel autonomous I think they’ll do a better job. And I think it’s probably the trick of the trade, being a senior school head...making the junior school head feel autonomous, even (though) you’re keeping a closer eye on (them) than they think you are’

JH1 was clear and decisive in stating that autonomy for the junior school head was ‘hugely important’ to make a school effective, believing that this concept was ‘right (at) the heart of people’s job satisfaction’.

In summary, both junior school heads stressed the importance of their autonomy linking it to improving junior school effectiveness. They gave different but complementary accounts on the desired kind and degree of autonomy. JH1 believed that the key to success was an autonomy that accepted a shared leadership, with a good working relationship based on trust. JH2 stressed the need for a strong perception of one’s autonomy particularly in aspects of personnel management.

With regard to managing parents, SH2 pointed out an important diplomatic angle in JH2 being seen to be answerable to SH2 since ‘a significant number of parents will have a child in the junior and senior schools’. Though effectiveness was not specifically mentioned, the management of a

parent body is a closely related aspect and a degree of *lack* of autonomy for JH2 was thought by SH2 to be helpful in this respect.

The key to the junior school being particularly effective, according to SH2, was the person in charge being seen as 'right for the job'. The emphasis here was on 'the person' rather than the degree of being in charge or autonomy. This does not mean that 'being in charge' or 'autonomy' are not as important, but they did not feature prominently in SH2's assessment. Similarly, SH1 stressed the importance of human relationships and the need to work closely together, but was more direct in stating that the junior school head needed to have autonomy in areas of spending, leading staff and in formulating and implementing strategic plans. SH1 also delegated autonomy to JH1 over appointing teaching staff and expected to be involved only if invited.

In response to questions on the importance of autonomy in relation to effectiveness, SH2 believed that it was 'absolutely crucial' and very clearly linked. This seems to some extent to contradict SH2's other responses stressing the need to have overall authority or autonomy, with the junior school just a part within a larger federal structure. Indeed, it seems slightly at odds with JH2's view on only wanting limited autonomy, despite desiring greater power in certain areas. However, SH2 went on to qualify this strong assertion of a link stating, 'I mean, here if I had to involve myself in much of the minutiae it would be a recipe for disaster'. This suggests that the term 'autonomy' was being interpreted in different ways according to the context. For example, when applied in the context of the junior school, a strong autonomy was supported by SH2 as 'crucial' but probably meant from the point of view of having control over day-to-day routine matters.

SH1 did not think that a head's autonomy was a necessary factor in a school's effectiveness and when asked about these aspects are linked, replied, 'you can have an effective school without a high degree of autonomy. Arguably it's sometimes easier to have an effective school (without)'. However, as in SH2's case, this reflected the assumed use of the

term ‘effectiveness’, for SH1 explained that ‘what heads are in the business of, I think, is not running effective schools but running improving schools...I’d draw the difference between effective schools and improving schools’.

With regard to improving a school, SH1 was very clear that autonomy has an important role to play, pointing out that ‘you only realise how important it is when it doesn’t happen’, implying that it is an underlying quality or aspect of a head’s leadership and not easily described or categorised. SH1 referred to granting autonomy as ‘liberating potential and liberating energy’ and stressed the importance of giving people space and encouragement to develop autonomy if they are to help a school to improve.

Interviews with the four heads confirmed the importance to junior school heads of having a strong sense of autonomy if they are to improve junior school effectiveness. Perhaps without realising it, they had a similar understanding of what they meant by the terms ‘autonomy’ and ‘effectiveness’ and only slightly different views on the appropriate degree for optimum autonomy, though SH1 preferred to use the term ‘improving’ rather than ‘effective’.

Triangulation with survey results

Though SH1 pointed out that a school could be effective without the head being autonomous, he was of the view that for a school to improve, an implied aim of being effective, autonomy was indeed very important. The other three heads interviewed stated a clear link between autonomy and effectiveness. Not surprisingly their responses differed with regard to the appropriate degree or kind of autonomy in relation to their assumed meaning of effectiveness, but the views expressed were not contradictory.

There was, therefore, evidence from all four interviews to support the survey’s finding that junior and senior school heads generally perceive autonomy (as defined from the survey, shown in Table 5.14) to be very important in improving junior school effectiveness. Analysis of the four

interviews showed that the heads valued autonomy in determining personnel issues, which was found in the survey to be a factor in categorising 'medium autonomy' junior school heads, in terms of appointing teaching staff.

Comparing the two pairs of interviews as IAPS schools (JH1, SH1) and non-IAPS (JH2, SH2) revealed some differences in the degrees of actual and assumed levels of autonomy for the two junior school heads, which probably reflected IAPS status. There was not enough evidence to test adequately the validity of the survey result that non-IAPS junior school heads valued more highly than IAPS members aspects of high autonomy, though it should be noted that contrary to this finding JH2 did not want more autonomy. This may have been because JH2 focussed more on the need to share leadership in a partnership. This idea of working closely together was common to both pairs who generally understood and valued each other's viewpoint on autonomy and its role in improving effectiveness. The good mutual understanding between heads at each of the two pairs of schools reflected the survey's general findings.

CHAPTER 7: MAIN FINDINGS - OVERVIEW AND EVALUATION

FINDINGS ON THE KEY RESEARCH QUESTIONS IN RELATION TO THE LITERATURE

KRQ1

What do pairs of heads of linked schools understand by the concept of 'autonomy' in the context of a linked junior school and how can degrees of autonomy be described and categorised?

Analysis of the findings from questionnaire sections E and F and the four interviews showed that the concept of autonomy is generally understood by junior and senior school heads surveyed to mean having control, or aspects of criteria and operational power, over decision-making in the specific areas of budget setting, resource allocation and dealing with personnel issues. Relating a head's autonomy to the type of power he/she has in making decisions over resource allocation is consistent with the conceptual framework for autonomy in this context, as described earlier in the literature review. Other recent studies have also shown that a head's degree of 'criteria power' (Winstanley, 1995), which is needed to determine the aims and direction of a school, and the authority to allocate resources for learning are common factors in describing the kind of decision-making important to the concept of autonomy (Anderson, 2002; Glatter, 2002; Levačić, 2002).

With regard to autonomy and personnel management, the four interviews highlighted the perceived importance of appointing and rewarding staff and selecting pupils. The interview findings supported the need to have authority in terms of both criteria and operational power over personnel issues, particularly when considering pupil and staff performance. This is consistent with findings from the so called 'third generation of (autonomy) studies' (Caldwell, 2002: 39-41) which support the importance of decision-making in personnel issues, especially if autonomy is to be linked to school effectiveness in terms of pupil performance (Hanson, 1998; Woessmann, 2001).

In addition, according to the survey, heads of junior and senior schools broadly agreed that to have autonomy implied having decision-making power in the areas of capital development, policy formulation, the curriculum, communication with parents and selecting pupils. The finding that these areas of decision-making are particularly relevant to determining degrees of autonomy is supported by the literature (Levačić, 1995, 2002; Karstanje, 1999). With regard to the actual significance of these areas of decision-making, Woessmann's (2001) recent analysis found that in the areas of capital development and the curriculum, a more centralised system with less school autonomy might be more effective for student performance. However, in interpreting this study's findings it is important to recognise that HMCJ linked schools, unlike the studies referred to in the literature, are independent of the government and not accountable to a local educational authority or equivalent body, so the concept of more centralised control is not appropriate.

In general, the study confirmed that if the junior school heads were to have sufficient autonomy then they would be invited to report directly to governors each term. Furthermore, they expected to be able to discuss, and help formulate, school policies with governors, in addition to reporting on general matters. This is another example of a head's autonomy being understood to mean having sufficient, appropriate criteria power in defining the school's aims and purposes.

Analysis of the questionnaire data in section E suggested four degrees of autonomy ranging from very high to low, using 13 descriptors, listed in Table 5.14. A very high degree of autonomy was associated with the decision-making power to select pupils, set budgets and allocate resources. Further analysis of this aspect using responses to section F in the questionnaire showed that a very significant area of decision-making, related to a high degree of autonomy, is in determining and controlling capital development.

The classification of autonomy into various degrees within different areas, or domains, of decision-making is also consistent with the literature's conceptual framework for autonomy, which describes it as conditional, difficult to measure, taking on different forms and essentially 'a complex notion' (Bell and Bush, 2002: 12).

Despite the lack of a universally agreed and absolute definition of autonomy, the findings generally support the study's working definition of autonomy based on the literature, namely, 'A school's degree of autonomy is determined by, and reflects, its level of decision-making authority and type of power or control over the allocation of its resources to promote student outcomes'. However, the study also shows that a school, or its head, often has varying kinds of autonomy, of different degrees, across the wide range of functional areas of educational management, so an overall measure of autonomy for an organisation or individual is of very limited use.

KRQ2

For a pair of linked schools, what organisational factors, both within each school and between the schools, can be used to categorise linked junior schools in relation to their degrees of autonomy?

Four factors of organisational structure were found to be relevant for categorising HMCJ linked junior schools in assessing possible links with autonomy, namely: the age of transfer between the linked schools, the size of the junior school as determined by numbers of pupils and teachers, the size and membership of the junior school SMT and whether the junior school head was a member of IAPS.

Figure 7.1 lists details of these factors and gives appropriate descriptors. It should be noted at this stage, that in answering KRQ2, the listing of a possible factor does not imply that it is linked to autonomy. This is considered in assessing the evidence for KRQ3.

Factor 1: Age of Transfer: two main categories

- 11+ transfer (at approximately 2 in 3 cases)
- 13+ transfer

Factor 2: Size of school:

In terms of numbers of teachers and pupils:

	No. of teachers	No. of pupils
Small	1 – 10	1 – 175
Medium	11 – 30	176 – 275
Large	31 – 40	276 – 375
Very large	>40	>375

Factor 3: SMT: size and structure (membership)

- Size: three categories,
 - 4 is 'normal'
 - less than 4 is 'small'
 - 5 is 'large'
 - 6 or more is 'very large'
- Membership: two categories,
 - 'has at least one senior school member'
(at approximately 1 in 4 cases)
 - 'only has Junior School staff'

Factor 4: IAPS membership

Approximately two thirds of all junior school heads were members.

Figure 7.1 Relevant organisational factors for categorising linked junior schools

Interview responses from the four heads supported the relevance of IAPS membership, which implied a recognised high degree of autonomy for the junior school head. In the case of greater mutual autonomy between the pair of IAPS heads there was more emphasis on, and use of, the organisational structures that linked the schools. In contrast to this, the organisational structures at the non-IAPS pair of schools were less apparent and seemed to be regarded as less relevant, reflecting perhaps a 'whole school' perspective, with the senior school head in authority 'over' both schools.

However, the four interviews also demonstrated the need for caution in using the summary in Figure 7.1, which describes factors in precise terms with clearly defined categories. In practice, the organisational structure in a junior school appeared to have less relevance and was more difficult to quantify than in a senior school. This may reflect the findings of some researchers that since the early 1980s many junior schools have adopted a collegial approach to management (Campbell, 1985; Wallace, 1989: 182; Little, 1990; Bush, 1997; Day *et al.*, 1998) in which power is shared and decision-making ideally based on reaching a consensus. This may also partly result from the junior schools normally being far smaller than their senior schools, with a more collaborative style of management involving overlapping and imprecise roles and less clearly defined hierarchies (Smith, 2002).

The four sets of interview responses suggested that effective links or structures between schools were sometimes informal, or unstructured loose couplings, which did not fall neatly into the categories used to describe the questionnaire data. However, the heads interviewed generally supported the idea that a high degree of autonomy may be related to structures linking a pair of schools, particularly those that supported a shared approach to leadership. It was therefore relevant to try to describe or categorise structures, in terms of how they might combine loose and tight coupling (Orton and Weick, 1990) and facilitate the management of multiple linkages, some tightly coupled and others less so (Fusarelli, 2001).

Analysis of the responses to questionnaire section B focussed on the membership and role of the senior school's SMT in relation to managing the junior school. Comparing individual pairs of results from linked schools revealed a number of contradictions implying that the pairs of heads were possibly using different interpretations of the term SMT. This suggested that in some cases there was no formal defined structure operating. Whilst membership of the senior school head on the junior school SMT was thought likely to be a significant factor in relation to degrees of autonomy, no significant evidence was found relating membership structure of the

senior school SMT to perceptions of autonomy. Though the findings were not statistically significant on this issue they still supported the view, common in the literature, that the head's leadership plays a key part in whatever structure operates (Gray, 1990; Sammons *et al.*, 1994; Reynolds and Teddlie, 2000: 141).

There was no significant evidence of a particular senior school colleague being the link for educational continuity with the junior school having any relation to perceived degrees of autonomy. There was also no significant evidence of clearly structured inter-connecting links between pairs of schools, other than at the heads' level, being related to aspects or degrees of autonomy. The significance of heads interacting and leading with a common vision is an example of the concept of 'glue' in holding loosely coupled schools together (Weick, 1982) and further confirmation of the finding from the literature that the head's leadership role is of paramount importance in improving a school's effectiveness.

Although there was some evidence that the role of the senior school SMT in relation to its involvement in junior school continuity was a factor in the junior schools heads' perception of 'high' autonomy, the nature and cause of such a link was not clear.

Analysis of the responses to questionnaire section C showed that the degree of perceived autonomy was closely related to the *kind* of autonomy in relation to a particular domain of decision-making. The findings further supported the concept of there being various kinds of autonomy, of differing degrees, in relation to aspects of educational management (Bell and Bush, 2002). For example, on issues involving governors and school policy a junior school head may have 'little' or 'guided' autonomy but on day to day implementation of policy the same head may have 'substantial' or 'devolved' autonomy (Glatter, 2002).

The findings from section D of the questionnaire indicated that, despite some pairs of heads disagreeing over the adequacy of their schools' links,

there was general agreement that structural links which encouraged meetings between heads and promoted continuity of education for pupils, in particular in terms of curricular progression, were important organisational factors, regardless of the heads' perceived level of autonomy. This is further support for other research findings on school leadership and loose coupling between organisations, which show that the head's role is crucial both to provide a vision for a school and to maintain clear links with associated schools.

KRQ3

What is the relationship between autonomy and organisational structure in a linked junior school?

The survey findings from questionnaire section E suggested two possible links between basic organisational factors of a junior school, as follows:

- The structure of the junior school's SMT, in terms of size and membership.
- The junior school head's membership of IAPS.

The survey showed that a not very large junior school SMT is more likely to attach importance to those aspects of autonomy associated with a very high degree of autonomy. Junior SMTs *without* the senior school head in membership are also more likely to value highly the important aspects of autonomy than those that include him/her.

A junior head's membership of IAPS is an important organisational factor in that it implies a degree of independence and autonomy. The survey data confirmed its links with perceived autonomy in that non-members of IAPS are very much more likely to value aspects of very high autonomy than members. If such aspects are linked to effectiveness then senior heads paired with non-IAPS junior heads should be more aware of this difference.

Triangulation with the four sets of interview responses supported the finding that IAPS membership is a relevant factor, but showed that SMT structures may differ in practice from how they were described in questionnaire responses, so the survey findings on this aspect may not be valid.

Though there was no direct evidence on the relevance of organisational structures from responses to questionnaire section F, they implied that a perception of a high degree of autonomy in the junior school would be related to any structure that facilitates the sharing of decisions, particularly in the area of capital development. This is consistent with Fidler's (1997) idea that no particular organisational structure is most effective in a given situation, for even 'fuzzy' structures (Butler, 1991: 12) can lead to good decision-making.

Good decision-making can, of course, operate within both tight and loose couplings between schools. However, the findings suggest that it is most likely to be associated with structures that are sufficiently formal to enable and encourage heads to meet regularly and share ideas. Similar to Cheng's (1996) model of schools being both open and rational, the organisational structures operating in this study may sometimes be ill-defined, or loose, but they can still incorporate fixed routines such as formal meetings between heads and SMT meetings.

At over 70 per cent of pairs of schools the two heads had different perceptions of the actual level of junior school autonomy. This is consistent with the concept of autonomy being conditional on the context (Bell and Bush, 2002: 11). More than a third of the junior school heads wanted more autonomy, which implied having a greater role in decision-making, to be more effective. Therefore, any organisational structure that promotes the junior school head's decision-making power and the senior school head's knowledge of junior school issues, should promote an agreed sense of autonomy. However, this does not necessarily imply that one structure or factor is better than another, because the influence of a particular structure on the distribution and use of power within an organisation also depends on

the organisational context, the leadership styles of those in authority and working relationships. Different leadership styles have been shown to be equally effective (Stacey, 1997) yet often have the same core characteristics (Cheng, 1996; Sammons *et al.*, 1997). Similarly the findings in this study suggest that different structures could be equally effective in facilitating a sense of autonomy.

Summarising the findings from questionnaire section C showed that a junior school head's perception of autonomy in relation to governance might be contrary to his/her perception of autonomy in relation to the head of the linked senior school. Governance is clearly part of a school's overall organisational structure but the study shows that it is the governors' mode of operating, rather than how they are constituted within the school's structure, that is most relevant to their influence on perceived autonomy.

The junior school heads would generally welcome more recognition by governors that they are heads of separate schools and have access to them to discuss policies and issues. Interpreting such requests as a desire for more autonomy and criteria power in decision-making is consistent with Dean's (2001) concept of governance, which describes the governors' roles as 'strategic' and 'being a critical friend to the head'. This concept is not dependent on a particular organisational structure. However, structures that enhance a junior school head's 'recognition' and grant 'access' to governors would be seen to be more effective if junior school autonomy is thought to be desirable.

Section D of the questionnaire asked heads for their views on organisational factors or links between the schools. Evidence from the two groups of junior and senior school heads suggests that the importance they attach to such organisational links is generally independent to their views on autonomy. Though the survey found limited support linking some basic organisational structures (a not very large SMT without the senior school head in membership and the junior school head not in IAPS) to valuing

aspects of high autonomy, there was no evidence overall of a strong, clear link between organisational structure and perceived autonomy.

A significant factor to emerge is *how* people operate and share leadership within whatever structure happens to be in place. This is similar to West-Burnham's (1997) finding that the quality of a school is determined primarily by how autonomous teams operate and interact within a given structure. West *et al.* (2000: 39) refer to this in terms of the importance of having the autonomy to act within whatever structural control is in place.

KRQ4

What criteria are used, and by whom, to judge the effectiveness of linked junior schools with regard to their leadership and

There is some evidence from the responses to questionnaire section F that, according to the senior school heads, a junior school's effectiveness is more related to how its head manages the allocation of teaching resources and makes curricular decisions, rather than how he/she is involved in policy decisions, budgetary control and appointing staff. Therefore, the senior school heads viewed their junior school partners in terms of having operational power, managing their schools to improve effectiveness using budgets and policies prescribed by the senior school. However, in contrast to this, the junior school heads regarded their role in making staff appointments, formulating policies and setting budgets as very important in promoting junior school effectiveness.

The junior school heads also rated more highly than senior school heads the importance of having control over selecting pupils in their aim to run effective schools. Their desire for autonomy in aspects of personnel and strategic management was in common with many research studies into school effectiveness, which affirm the importance of a head's leadership in determining ethos, managing staff attitudes and encouraging pupil

involvement. (Rutter *et al.*, 1979; Tizard, 1988; Mortimore *et al.*, 1988; Smith and Tomlinson, 1989; Brighouse and Woods, 1999).

The stakeholders analysed in questionnaire section G were the respective groups of heads of junior and senior schools. The heads generally used a variety of criteria to assess junior school effectiveness, which were either of a specific nature, relevant to the context of this study, listed in question G1, or of a general type found in major studies on school effectiveness, used in question G2 (Sammons *et al.*, 1997). All heads surveyed agreed on the importance of 'the number applying for admission to the junior school', 'high academic expectations' and 'good day-to-day management' evident through 'strong leadership' and 'well behaved pupils'. This finding was supported by the four heads interviewed who linked effectiveness to the quality of human relationships and the school's ethos, both factors related to good personnel management and pupil behaviour. Such findings in relation to pupils, staff and personnel issues are entirely consistent with common features of effective schools found in the literature (Scheerens and Bosker, 1997; Sammons *et al.*, 1997).

Senior school heads in this study often judged the effectiveness of the junior school by using 'the number transferring to the senior school', whereas the junior school heads relied more on judging the quality of the curriculum. This reflects the different assumptions and perspectives of the two groups of heads. The senior school heads took an external viewpoint and used a quantifiable, context specific measure for junior school effectiveness, whereas the junior school heads considered more the quality of teaching and learning through the curriculum. In the literature, aspects of quality in the curriculum, teaching and learning are common features of effective schools. Therefore the junior school heads tended to use more of the recognised general criteria for judging junior school effectiveness than their senior school partners. This may reflect their desire for more autonomy in judging themselves to be more independent as heads than is recognised by their partners. However, even when different criteria were operating it is relevant

to note the strong evidence of a good mutual understanding between the two groups of heads of the criteria they used.

Of the main factors for effective schools listed in the literature, the two groups of heads were agreed on what they regarded the most important, namely: professional leadership, shared vision and goals, high expectations and a learning environment. These four criteria, commonly used by both groups of heads in this study to judge junior school effectiveness, are central to all the research studies in the literature review that recognise the validity of lists of characteristics of effective schools. Analysing the responses to question G1 that included the context specific indicators added further support to this finding. Triangulating with findings from the four interviews also confirmed that generally effectiveness is seen to be closely linked to good inter-personal relations, a common vision and a learning community with good facilities.

KRQ5

To what extent is the effectiveness of a linked junior school thought to be related, in terms of the heads' leadership and management, to

- (a) the organisational structure both within the junior school and between the two linked schools?
- (b) its degree of autonomy and relationship with its senior school?

Analysis of the responses to questionnaire section G showed that significant factors for a school to be effective were 'a participative approach to leadership', 'unity of purpose and shared vision with a collaborative approach' and 'communicating expectations'. Findings from the results of questionnaire section D showed that the main organisational links between schools were 'a sharing of common aims', 'regular meetings of heads', 'continuity of education in pupil transfer and curricular matters' and 'promoting one school vision with an overall prospectus'. Such factors for effectiveness and related organisational links between schools are entirely

consistent with the features commonly associated with effective schools listed in the literature (Sammons *et al.*, 1997).

Analysis of the survey's specific findings on organisational links between paired schools showed some evidence of a relationship between formal structures which link, or couple, schools together specifically to promote a set of common aims with continuity of education, and the subsequent perceived effectiveness of the linked junior school. Structures between pairs of schools which facilitate a sharing of decisions over capital projects and setting budgets were thought most likely to promote a high degree of autonomy, which in turn is likely to be related to a means of improving school effectiveness. However, an overall analysis of the questionnaire data and four sets of interview responses suggested that organisational structure generally has no direct or specific role in influencing school effectiveness. Nevertheless, structure is likely to be indirectly related to effectiveness in terms of how it might influence working relationships and the heads' perceived autonomy and shared leadership, which according to this study are both thought to be linked to improving school effectiveness.

The organisational structures of the schools in the study had features of bureaucratic hierarchies and collegial models (Fidler, 1997). They were also, to some extent, professional bureaucracies (Mintzberg, 1983) in that they allowed professional judgements to influence practice. Therefore they were hybrid structures capable of adapting in response to the needs of a school and changing in relation to its environment and social context (Chrispeels, 1993). Given the changing nature of structure and the effectiveness of some 'fuzzy structures' as described earlier (Butler, 1991: 12) it was not unexpected that it is 'how' people operate within a particular structure that emerged as the important factor, rather than a tangible aspect of organisational structure.

This was further illustrated in the finding that, in relation to how effective senior management teams should operate, the heads stressed the importance of structures which facilitate joint meetings and empower colleagues to

reach shared decisions. The key to this was the nature of how heads shared power and how junior school heads in particular were empowered in the process of decision-making. Structures which supported the sharing of strategic management and curricular progression were seen to be of paramount importance if there was to be the right degree and type of autonomy, mutually understood and respected by both paired heads.

It was evident from the survey data and four follow-up interviews that different organisational structures could have attributes that operate successfully in balancing the apparently contradictory concepts of autonomous and shared leadership. For example, a need to balance independence with interdependence was emphasised but it was understood that this could be achieved in a variety of ways. Regardless of organisational structure, the four heads interviewed placed great value on promoting partnership and the quality of relationships through a shared leadership and inclusive style of management. They also supported the finding that junior school heads need to have a strong sense of autonomy, particularly in personnel management, if they are to run effective or improving schools. None of this exists independent to organisational structure but operates through balancing the loose-tight couplings between pairs of schools within whatever kinds of structures are in place. Such findings are most relevant when interpreted in relation to the conceptual framework of loose coupling (Weick, 1976, 1982; Orton and Weick, 1990) and the concept of balancing of loose-tight linkages between groups and organisations (Fusarelli, 2001; Lowe Boyd *et al.*, 2001).

The responses to questionnaire section E were used to categorise degrees of autonomy on the assumption that the ranked importance of each aspect of autonomy was in relation to 'trying to improve the effectiveness of the junior school' (question E1, part (a)). Therefore, since many of the responses rated some aspects as of 'vital' importance, there was evidence that heads of junior and senior schools regarded the degree of autonomy as closely related to effectiveness. This finding supports other research in which autonomy is frequently linked to school improvement on the basis of

school effectiveness studies (Caldwell and Spinks, 1988). Junior school heads generally regarded autonomy as slightly more important than their senior partners in this respect, with the degree of autonomy possibly linked to various organisational factors.

Analysis of questionnaire section G showed that over 70 per cent of all heads surveyed thought that autonomy and effectiveness either were, or were likely to be, related. Furthermore, there was strong agreement between the two groups of junior and senior school heads on the perceived degree of the relationship, with the former group believing more firmly that autonomy improves school effectiveness.

Analysis of the questionnaires from linked schools with a high degree of autonomy, as defined by results in questionnaire section F, also showed a very close agreement between the individual pairs of heads on the link between degrees of autonomy and school effectiveness. Such agreement was also apparent between the heads interviewed at each of the two pairs of schools, particularly in the case of the pair with junior school IAPS membership, which implied recognising a high degree of autonomy. In addition, the pairs of heads with high autonomy junior schools generally had a greater certainty than all heads surveyed that autonomy is closely related to improving effectiveness. Though some relatively recent research did not link autonomy and effectiveness (Bullock and Thomas, 1997; Whitty *et al.*, 1998), these findings support the conclusions of other studies that autonomy is a significant factor that can sometimes lead to improved effectiveness (Miles, 1987; Caldwell and Spinks, 1988: 22; Beare *et al.*, 1992: 149).

Analysis of questionnaire section F showed general agreement amongst heads of junior and senior schools that junior school effectiveness is closely related to leadership and management of the curriculum and resource allocation. Furthermore, in high autonomy junior schools resource allocation was thought, by both heads at pairs of such linked schools, to be the most important factor for the junior school heads to have control over for promoting school effectiveness (Figure 5.17). Since having decision-

making power in allocating resources was found to be a factor in determining a very high degree of autonomy (Table 5.14), this is further evidence that a junior school's effectiveness is related to the junior school head's perception of autonomy, as judged by both groups of junior and senior school heads.

As described earlier, the literature commonly defines autonomy in terms of decision-making power. It also describes the sharing and use of power as an aspect of leadership, which is commonly recognised as a factor in improving school effectiveness. Therefore the study gives further confirmation that autonomy is perceived to lead to improved effectiveness through an optimum allocation and use of resources relative to student needs and outcomes (Thomas and Martin, 1996; Bell and Bush, 2002).

FURTHER SIGNIFICANCE OF THE FINDINGS IN RELATION TO THE LITERATURE

As stated in chapter two, the underlying aim of the study was to answer the general question, 'Is autonomy thought to be beneficial to a linked junior school?' This was considered by investigating five key research questions. There are two main aspects to the significance of the findings, in relation to the literature, in answering the overall aim of the study: the extent to which they support the literature and what they add to the body of knowledge. Much of the former has been covered in the previous section, which summarised the main findings on each key research question and interpreted them in relation to the conceptual frameworks discussed in the literature review.

In the literature there is a general shortage of research in the independent sector and the organisational context of this study does not feature. In particular the concept of autonomy in the literature is often within the framework of state schools in relation to LEAs or national government (Hentschke and Davies, 1997; Caldwell and Spinks, 1998). Therefore, it is significant that the findings in this new context, of a head's autonomy within a pair of linked independent schools, strongly agree with the

literature that though there is no absolute definition of autonomy (Bell and Bush, 2002) the concept implies having criteria power over the allocation of resources. In particular, the study confirmed the importance to a sense of autonomy of decision-making power over resource variables that are linked to learning outcomes (Anderson, 2002; Levačić, 2002).

The common idea that the concept of autonomy can take many forms, of varying degrees, was also strongly supported by the findings in this study. The findings support the use of descriptors for each of four degrees of autonomy. For example, the study confirmed the importance of aspects such as decision-making power over allocating teaching resources to a high degree of autonomy.

The particular context of this study also revealed important aspects of autonomy that feature rarely in the literature. For example, the findings showed that it was considered important for the junior school heads to be able to select their pupils according to their own criteria. They also found that a high degree of autonomy was related to having control over setting budgets, rather than just managing them, and also to having the power to determine and control capital developments. Such aspects probably featured less in the literature because heads in most other studies were operating in different contexts, often managing schools not linked to others and with accountability to an LEA.

The study's context of linked independent schools also revealed the perceived importance of heads having autonomy in managing the continuity of education as pupils transfer from junior to senior schools. The national curriculum can provide continuity in the curriculum for all pupils, in the state and independent sectors, progressing from a junior to a senior school. However, for the heads surveyed, this study showed that junior schools were thought to be even more effective when heads have autonomy over the whole process of pupil transfer and continuity. In other words, pairs of heads have autonomy from external factors and also the right degree of mutual autonomy as they interact and manage pupil progression.

In relation to governance, the study showed the importance of heads having the appropriate kind of autonomy if they are to be most effective. The junior school heads noted that having sufficient autonomy should imply reporting directly to governors and having access to them. However, it also showed that in relation to governors some of the junior school heads regarded their working relationship with them as even more important than feeling autonomous.

The findings of this study strongly support the literature on aspects or characteristics of effective schools. To some extent this might have been expected given that the questionnaire design used the general findings of the literature to devise the response options. However, responses to the open-ended questions in the questionnaire and triangulation with the four sets of interview responses helped to validate the survey findings that support the literature.

In summary, the heads surveyed often judged school effectiveness in terms of inter-personal relations, professional leadership, a shared vision and a good learning environment. In addition to this, the study revealed the use, by some heads, of context specific performance indicators when judging junior school effectiveness, namely: 'the number applying for admission', 'the number transferring to senior school' and to a lesser extent 'results in entrance exams'.

Though the two groups of junior and senior school generally used different performance indicators to judge effectiveness, it is very significant that each group showed an excellent mutual understanding of what the other group rated as important. This suggests that in interpreting the views of stakeholders on concepts such as effectiveness, it is important not to underestimate their understanding of what others may think. This is particularly relevant to understanding their mode of operating, or professional practice, which is likely to be influenced by their total understanding of what others think and not just their own views.

It is significant that the study found no clear direct link between overall organisational structure and effectiveness, which supports the findings of other researchers (Chubb and Moe, 1990; Chrispeels, 1993; Cheng, 1996). Since pairs of heads at linked HMCJ schools are mutually dependent yet each in need of sufficient autonomy, there is a constant negotiation of power through linkages, within whatever structure happens to be in place. Though structures can create a common purpose (Heck, 1993; Cheng, 1994; Hallinger and Heck, 2003) and either inhibit or encourage power sharing, which is linked to autonomy, this study agreed with the literature in not directly linking autonomy or effectiveness with a particular overarching structure.

The junior schools in the study tended to operate a more collegial form of collaborative management compared to the hierarchical structures found in the larger senior schools. This may account for the linkages between a particular pair of schools being rather ill defined or loose, which is why the concept of loose coupling is apposite in this context of two schools interacting (Weick, 1976; Weick, 1982; Orton and Weick, 1990). However, the study also produced data to categorise HMCJ junior schools using organisational factors, which may be useful in planning future research. For example, it will be possible to compare and contrast generalisations on various issues at different categories of schools.

Though the study found no significant evidence linking organisational structure to perceived autonomy, other than a link with the factor of IAPS membership, it stressed that the important aspect is how leadership and decision-making are shared through a balance of loose-tight linkages within whatever structure or culture is in place. The significance of IAPS membership to having a sense of autonomy highlights the importance of peer group support and recognition. Indeed, it is the aspect of recognition that was seen as important by junior school heads in relation to their governors.

Researchers are divided on how a head's autonomy might be linked to the school's effectiveness and evidence of a causal relationship is not universally accepted. However, there is some support in the literature for the idea that a greater sense of autonomy operating within a collaborative culture which promotes shared leadership may well lead to improved effectiveness (West-Burnham, 1997; Barton and Foley, 2001; Caldwell, 2002). Heads in this study were also generally of the view that a high degree of perceived autonomy, regardless of the organisational structure in place, is related to, and necessary for, the leadership and management of a highly effective school.

In summary, the research findings give significant support to the variety of views in the literature on autonomy, organisational structure and school effectiveness and the degrees to which they are mutually dependent. They also show how such views still apply generally in this particular context of pairs of heads sharing leadership within an overarching structure independent of local education authorities and national government. In addition, because of the context of the study, new context specific variables feature in the results, such as: selecting pupils, autonomy in matters of pupil transfer and progression, sole autonomy to appoint all staff, responsibility for generating income for expenditure and a different role for governors. Consequently new aspects of the concepts covered have emerged from the data in relation to the context of the study, particularly with regard to autonomy, thus adding a new dimension to the literature findings.

CHAPTER 8: CONCLUSION

SUMMARY OF MAIN FINDINGS

The five key research questions were designed to help answer the underlying main question of this study, namely, 'Within a pair of linked schools, how is autonomy thought to influence the effectiveness of the junior school, through the heads' leadership and management'. It was necessary first, to establish the heads' working definitions for the key concepts of 'autonomy' and 'effectiveness' relative to their organisational context, in terms of leadership and management, before considering how heads' perceived them to be related. Furthermore, since pairs of heads lead and manage organisations within an overarching framework, the study also considered the possible role of organisational structure in linking or influencing these key concepts.

Summarising the detailed findings on each key research question and interpreting them using the conceptual frameworks discussed in the literature review, leads to the conclusion that the junior and senior school heads in this study generally believe that a linked junior school benefits from autonomy. In reaching this conclusion it is important to qualify the meaning of autonomy and to describe how the junior school might benefit.

A high degree of autonomy was understood by the junior and senior school heads to mean having control, or decision-making power, to select pupils, appoint and manage staff, set budgets, allocate resources and control capital development. In other words, autonomy meant having the final authority, or criteria power, over strategic, policy and personnel issues and aspects that were judged to make a real difference in the long term plans for the school, in addition to being charge of day-to-day matters with limited operational power. The degree or level of perceived autonomy was seen to be related to the degree of power or level of authority in such decision-making. It was also evident that heads in this study perceived different forms of autonomy, related to domains or areas of decision-making. A junior school head could have a mixture of forms and levels of autonomy relative to the functional

areas of educational management. For example, a junior school head may have a low degree of guided autonomy relative to working with governors, some degree of substantial autonomy in appointing staff and a high degree of devolved autonomy in curricular matters. Therefore it can be misleading, or simplistic, to describe a heads' overall level of autonomy.

In general, high degrees of autonomy, in this context of paired schools, seemed to be associated with a shared approach to leadership and inter-connecting structures that encourage a participative and collaborative approach to decision-making. The quality of human relationships, the schools' ethos and *how* heads operated were thought, by those surveyed, to be far more important than the structures in place. Though the organisational factor of IAPS membership is likely to be related to a junior school head's perception of autonomy, no significant evidence linked a particular organisational structure to effectiveness or autonomy.

The idea of a school benefiting from autonomy implied that its effectiveness would improve. Senior school heads in this study often used 'numbers transferring to the senior school' and 'academic achievement in entrance examinations' to judge junior school effectiveness, whereas the junior school heads looked more closely at the junior school curriculum and range of activities. Though such differences were evident, it is significant that there was a good mutual understanding of the criteria being used. Furthermore, overall there was good general agreement amongst the junior and senior school heads on the criteria used to judge junior school effectiveness, with the main ones being professional leadership, good interpersonal relations, a shared vision, a learning community with good resources and high expectations.

In summary, within the context of sharing leadership and management at linked pairs of HMC junior and senior independent schools, most heads surveyed had similar understandings of the concepts of autonomy and school effectiveness as described above. In general, they had a good mutual understanding of the significant differences in criteria they sometimes used

to judge junior school effectiveness. With reference to the heads' assumed definitions of these concepts, there was strong evidence to support the hypothesis that HMCJ junior schools are thought to benefit from an increased sense of autonomy.

However, caution is needed in applying such a general conclusion for, as stated, there are different kinds and levels of autonomy and various possible meanings being applied to school effectiveness. Furthermore, it was outside the scope of this study to investigate any possible causal links between autonomy and effectiveness. It should also be noted that the study considered heads' *perceived* levels, or degrees, of autonomy and did not attempt to measure actual levels of autonomy, though the evidence suggested that autonomy, as a concept, is probably not measurable. Nevertheless, subject to these qualifying comments, the study showed that, in general, the heads believed that a junior school head's degree of perceived autonomy is directly related to improving junior school effectiveness.

RESEARCH FINDINGS AND PROFESSIONAL PRACTICE

In considering how the main findings might inform and improve practice, it is significant to note that a large majority of heads believed that an increase in a junior school head's autonomy is closely related to empowering the head to improve junior school effectiveness. However, the study also showed that much depends on the quality of human relationships between a pair of heads, so it may be the case that the general findings do not apply in a particular case or situation.

Nevertheless, the study affirmed the heads' general belief that a junior school head's perceived autonomy influences the school's effectiveness, and such a belief is likely to influence how a pair of heads negotiate and share power in the decision-making processes that affect their linked schools. As a result, pairs of heads may possibly develop their styles of shared leadership and management to improve school effectiveness, according to how they value and encourage their individual autonomy

balanced with a mutually dependent relationship. In other words, since the heads generally thought that autonomy and school effectiveness are linked, professional practices that encourage and develop a junior school head's sense of autonomy may foster styles of leadership and management that are believed to lead to improved junior school effectiveness. This study suggests how a junior school head's autonomy might be enhanced in practice, which in turn is thought to lead to improved school effectiveness.

In general terms, for a junior school head to have sufficient autonomy, the study suggests that organisational structures, policies and procedures should promote the junior school head's decision-making powers with specific regard to appointing staff, selecting pupils, managing personnel issues, setting budgets and allocating resources. For a high degree of autonomy, junior school heads need the authority to prioritise capital development, manage staff and promote policies. In addition to authorising the junior school head to make such decisions, the systems in place should also aim to increase the senior school head's knowledge of, and interest in, junior school matters to enhance the idea of sharing a common vision. A regular meeting between heads was seen to be important in promoting this.

Granting junior school heads more access to governors, reporting directly and regularly on junior school matters, would possibly increase their sense of greater autonomy. This may also result from governing bodies giving more recognition to junior schools as separate organisations, with their own aims and criteria for measuring performance, even though they might still regard them as one section in a whole school.

The study revealed a degree of possible confusion over what was meant by the term 'senior management team', or SMT, in a junior school and uncertainty as to who was in membership. Pairs of heads would therefore probably benefit from discussing how their management structures operate and interact. In addition to improving any mutual lack of knowledge, consideration could then be given to the results suggesting that SMTs in junior schools that do not involve the senior school head tend to be

associated with valuing autonomy. The results also suggested that when a senior school SMT is involved in considering continuity of education and transfer issues, the junior school head is more likely to be aware of and value a high degree of autonomy.

With regard to how the two SMTs at a pair of linked schools can best work together, the results suggest that schools with a senior school colleague *other than* the head or deputy, as the recognised link person with the junior school SMT, are possibly more likely to be those where the junior school head values the aspects of high autonomy. However, this inter-connecting link is not proposed to be instead of the two heads meeting regularly, which is the only linking structure found in this study to be of any real significance.

Though the senior school heads in this study recognised the importance of the junior school heads appointing their own staff, they may not have been aware of how much more importance the junior school heads attached to this. The four follow-up interviews confirmed this point and also stressed the importance to promoting autonomy of not just appointing staff but also allocating their teaching, managing personnel issues and deciding teachers' remuneration and rewards.

The survey evidence suggested that when appraising junior school heads, using an external appraiser, independent of the senior school head, would enhance their sense of autonomy. It also showed that if a junior school head is not a member of IAPS then the aspects of management associated with high degrees of autonomy are more likely to be perceived by the junior head as important, which both heads would benefit from recognising as they work out how to share leadership and management.

The main findings in this study show that, in practice, the nature of the organisational structures within and between a pair of linked schools is unlikely to have much direct influence on the effectiveness of the junior school. Whilst structures should be monitored to check that they encourage

joint decision-making and foster a balance between loose and tight couplings, heads should give more attention to how they promote a shared vision in partnership within whatever structure is in place.

Overall, the findings generally support the need for heads to develop a participative approach to leadership in order to improve junior school effectiveness. Furthermore, the evidence suggests that the professional practice of heads of linked schools should be based on sharing power in managing major decisions, recognising degrees of sufficient kinds of autonomy for junior school heads. The study also implies that improvement is thought most likely to occur when heads focus on promoting a culture that puts the quality of human relationships at the centre of their schools' organisational structures.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE MAIN STUDY FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has focussed on three central features of schools, namely: autonomy, organisational structure and school effectiveness. Furthermore, in relation to the important roles of leadership and management, it has looked at these from the perspectives of junior and senior schools. Given this wide range of areas investigated, there are many aspects that could be developed for future research. For example, given the finding that pairs of heads need to consider how they share power and decision-making one could look at how different styles of leadership might influence the impact of autonomy on effectiveness. Another possible extension of this study would be to explore further the influence of structures that link pairs of schools. Though there was little evidence of organisational structures influencing junior school effectiveness, their effect on linked schools in enabling groups and individuals from different organisational cultures to interact effectively needs further research. These examples illustrate how research could explore further the specific findings in this study or aspects associated with the main findings.

The findings are clearly restricted to the context of the study, which is that of pairs of linked independent schools. Nevertheless, it would be relevant

to test the findings in other contexts in an attempt to generalise. In particular, ‘links between autonomy and effectiveness’ and ‘the issue of continuity of education or pupil transfer arrangements’ are both issues that would be of relevance in all sectors of education.

For example, recent studies in the maintained sector have highlighted the loss of learning through poor transfer arrangements and lack of consultation between primary and paired secondary schools. OFSTED recently reported that ‘continuity in the curriculum and progression in learning as pupils move from the primary to secondary schools are longstanding weaknesses of the education system’ (OFSTED, 2002: 2), and urged partner schools to improve in this specific area. Promoting continuity and progression by strengthening the transition from primary schools was one of four key principles behind the government’s national Strategy for Key Stage 3. Reporting on the Strategy’s success in relation to pupil transfer, OFSTED stated that ‘overall, curriculum continuity remains a key weakness... There is still much to do to enable more pupils to make appropriate progress from the start of their secondary education’ (OFSTED, 2004: 7).

There are many parallels with this study, which highlighted the importance of schools working closely in partnership to ensure successful continuity of academic and pastoral care in progressing from a junior school to a partner senior school. For example, there are issues of progression from a nursery to an infant school or from a pre-preparatory to preparatory school. Though ‘continuity will always be difficult for secondary schools where 11-year old entrants come from as many as 40 different primary schools’ (Dunford, 2004), there are still likely to be some useful ideas from this study to explore further, such as how heads in partnership judge their mutual autonomy and share leadership and management in relation to pupil transfer.

This study investigated how heads perceived autonomy and school effectiveness to be related and did not attempt to establish or quantify any causal links. A natural extension of the work, but introducing a significant

new dimension to it, would be to attempt to measure degrees of particular kinds of autonomy and levels of effectiveness to look for real, as opposed to perceived, links. However, even a statistically quantifiable relationship or measurable link would not necessarily establish causality, aspects of which would need further verification.

Other research that could develop from this study concerns the implementation of change in professional practice, a case of looking at evidence informed practice. Working in collaboration with heads, researchers could monitor the implementation of some of the changes suggested by this study and evaluate their impact, specifically with regard to perceived, or actual, school effectiveness. This would probably involve heads acting as reflective practitioners and interested researchers, which in itself is another area of research, investigating how heads could improve their own professional practice through evidence informed research.

Interview Schedule – Draft 1 – piloted in the Initial Study

This schedule was used before the questionnaire results had all been received and analysed. Furthermore, the autonomy section of the literature review had not been completed so this was just an initial attempt to test a few ideas, focussing primarily on the process of the interview.

The interview was with a 'high autonomy' junior head and notes were taken.

Q1.

- (a) So.... (after introduction, setting scene) could you start by telling me a bit about your school, such as how big is it, what age range, ages of transfer and ...
- (b) How does transfer operate? - are you happy with this?

Q2.

- (a) Could you describe the your senior management structure in the junior school?
- (b) If you had a magic wand, would you change anything about it?
- (c) How does this team work with the senior school?

Q3.

Looking at links (... having described a bit about links) what is the role of the Head of senior school for the junior school?

Q4.

Could you tell me how the junior school is governed?

Q5.

- (a) What is the most important role for governors, from your point of view?
- (b) What do you think they see as their role?

Q6.

- (a) What do you think are the main links with the senior school?
- (b) How do they help/hinder in terms of management?

Q7.

Do you share leadership of the junior school? If so, how and with whom?

Q8.

Preamble to chat about autonomy... .., then

(a) What aspects do you have autonomy over?

(eg as prompts if needed-admissions, appointments, finance, building projects)

(b) Are there any you should have but don't?

(c) Name 2 aspects you feel are crucial to have autonomy over – to be a good Head

Q9.

How is the senior school most helpful to you – or which aspects of it?

Q10.

(a) What makes your school effective? (2 or 3 things)

(b) What makes an effective leader/manager?

(c) How do you think the senior school judges effectiveness of the junior school? (Same as you??)

Thank you for your help

Interview Schedule – Draft 2 – piloted in the Initial Study

This schedule was based on Draft 1, after the questionnaire results had all been received and analysed. It also took account of the literature review.

This interview was recorded using a micro-cassette tape recorder on a conference setting. The intention for the main study is to work with written transcripts of the interviews.

Transcripts were not used in the initial study, which focussed more on questionnaire design.

SMT Structure in junior

Q1.

- (a) Could you describe the your senior management structure in the junior school?
 - (b) If you had a magic wand, would you change anything about it?
 - (c) How does this team work with the senior school?
-

Role of senior head in junior school

Q2.

- (a) How would you describe the role of the head of the senior from your point of view?
-

Sharing of leadership

Q3.

Do you fee that you share leadership of the junior school? What do you share?

Main links - couplings

Q4.

- (a) What do you think are the main links with the senior school?
 - (b) How do they help/hinder in terms of management?
-

Autonomy

Q5.

- (a) Could you name 3 things associated with autonomy in leading and managing a school?

... *then allow a short discussion to share ideas/findings on autonomy*... ..

- (b) What aspects do you have autonomy over?

(eg as prompts if needed – admissions, appointments, finance, building projects)

- (c) Are there any you should have but don't?
-

Decision-making

Q6.

- (a) What kinds of decisions do you have control over?

- (b) What would you like to be able to decide but can't at present?

- (c) Which resources are you able to allocate? Not allowed to allocate?
-

Development Plans

Q7.

- (a) Do you have a shared development plan with the senior school?

- (b) What do you think about this idea?
-

School Effectiveness – your views

Q8.

- (a) What makes your school effective? (2 or 3 things)

- (b) What makes an effective leader/manager?
-

School Effectiveness – the other school's views

Q9.

How do you think the senior school judges effectiveness of the junior school? (Same as you??)

Thank you for your help

Interview Schedule for Junior School Heads (IS-J)

Introduction

Thank you for seeing me and for agreeing to this interview being recorded on tape.

This interview will help to validate the findings from a recent major survey of all HMC linked junior and senior schools. The survey and this interview form part of a doctoral research programme looking into how autonomy is perceived to influence school effectiveness.

Your identity and your school's identity will remain strictly private and confidential. You will not be identified in the results or final report. Any quotes used will be accredited to pseudonyms.

SMT Structure in the junior school

Q1.

- (a) Could you please describe the senior management structure in your school?
 - (b) If you had a magic wand, would you change anything about it?
 - (c) How does this team work/interact with the senior school?
-

Role of senior school head in the junior school

Q2.

How would you describe the role of the head of the senior school in terms of the junior school?

Sharing of leadership

Q3.

Do you feel that you share the leadership of the junior school in terms of improving its effectiveness?

If so, what aspects do you share?

Main links between the schools, in relation to effectiveness

Q4.

- (a) What do you think are the main links with the senior school?
 - (b) How do they help/hinder in terms of improving the effectiveness of the junior school?
-

Decision-making and resource allocation

Q5.

- (a) What kinds of major decisions do you have control over?
 - (b) Is there anything you would like to be able to decide or control but can't at present?
 - (c) Which resources are you able to allocate? Not allowed to allocate?
-

Autonomy

Q6.

- (a) Could you name 3 things associated with your autonomy in leading and managing your school?
 - (b) To make your school even better, what aspects of autonomy are most important to you?
(e.g. as prompts if needed – admissions, appointments, finance, building projects)
-

Junior School Effectiveness and Autonomy

Q7.

- (a) What do you think makes your school most effective? (2 or 3 things)
- (b) How do think the senior school judges effectiveness of the junior school? (Same as you?)
- (c) How important is your own autonomy if you are to make your school more effective?
Do you think the head of the senior school would agree?

Thank you for your help

Interview Schedule for Senior School Heads (IS-S)

Introduction

Thank you for seeing me and for agreeing to this interview being recorded on tape.

This interview will help to validate the findings from a recent major survey of all HMC linked junior and senior schools. The survey and this interview form part of a doctoral research programme looking into how autonomy is perceived to influence school effectiveness.

Your identity and your school's identity will remain strictly private and confidential. You will not be identified in the results or final report. Any quotes used will be accredited to pseudonyms.

Role of senior school head in the junior school

Q1.

- How would you describe *your* role in terms of leading and managing the junior school?
-

Main links between the schools, in relation to effectiveness

Q2.

- (a) Apart from yourself what do you think are the main links between the senior and junior schools?
 - (b) How do you think they help/hinder in terms of improving the effectiveness of the junior school?
-

Decision-making and resource allocation

Q3.

- (a) What kinds of major decisions in the junior school are you involved in?
 - (b) Is there anything you would like to see the junior school head having more control over?
 - (c) Do you allocate any of the resources in the junior school or does the junior school head allocate them all?
-

Autonomy

Q4.

- (a) Could you name 3 things associated with your autonomy in leading and managing your school?
 - (b) To make your school even better, what aspects of autonomy are most important to you?

(e.g. as prompts if needed – admissions, appointments, finance, building projects)
 - (c) What degree of autonomy is delegated to the junior school head in the running of his/her school? Could you give some examples?
-

Junior School Effectiveness and Autonomy

Q5.

- (a) What do you think makes your school most effective? (2 or 3 things)
 - (b) What do you think makes the junior school most effective? (the same?)
 - (c) What is your main role in promoting the effectiveness of the junior school?
 - (d) How important is the autonomy of the junior school head in seeking to improve the effectiveness of his/her school?
-

School Effectiveness and Autonomy

Q6.

- (a) Is autonomy a good thing? Why?
- (b) Do you think a head's degree of autonomy is linked to his/her school's effectiveness?

Thank you for your help

Interview Transcript – example of a page for analysisNote:

This illustrates the general format used for analysis, but the actual line numbers were different because a larger scale was used to facilitate adding handwritten notes to the text.

JH2

Non-IAPS Junior
Interview Transcript

Page	Non-IAPS – Junior School Head Monday 24 th November 2003	Code	Notes
3			
1	HM		
2			
3	I think to some extent I'm invited to.		Digress
4	I don't feel inclined to unless I feel it		
5	has a direct impact upon the prep		
6	school. I don't feel I want to		
7	intervene in issues that I have no		
8	impact upon.		
9			
10	CD		
11			
12	What do you think are the main links		
13	with the senior school, of any kind?		
14	You know, thinking of the two		
15	schools on the same site, they must		Q4(a)
16	link in some way, what are the main		
17	links in your mind?		
18			
19	HM		
20			
21	I think the strongest link is that we		
22	have teachers from both areas coming		
23	down and teaching in the (junior)	2/4	
24	school. The odd teacher from the		
25	(junior) school goes and teaches in	5a	
26	the senior school. The vast majority		
27	is teachers, for example from modern	5b	
28	languages, games, PE, drama, music.		
29	There's a wide range of staff who are		
30	attached to the senior school who		
31	teach pupils in the prep school as		
32	well. And that means that, obviously,		
33	when children go through they		
34	already are very familiar with the		
35	majority of staff they are going to		
36	come across.		

Questionnaire - Main Study

A QUESTIONNAIRE FOR:

HEADS OF HMC LINKED INDEPENDENT JUNIOR AND SENIOR SCHOOLS

- Please try to answer all sections without consultation, **even if a section is not about your own school**. Simply cross out any questions, or part questions, that you do not know the answer to.
- Any information you provide on the questionnaire will remain **strictly confidential**, which means that neither you nor your school will be identified.
- A central aim of this research is to look for perceived links between organisational structures, levels of autonomy and junior school effectiveness.
- The findings will give heads of junior and senior independent schools more information on the influence of autonomy on school effectiveness, in relation to leadership and management.
- This survey aims to build on the earlier work of the HMC Junior Schools Committee and is supported by HMC. The results will be presented to HMC and the HMC Junior Schools Group.
- The findings from this survey will also form part of a doctoral thesis on independent junior schools, which are linked in some way to particular senior schools. The Faculty of Education and Language Studies at the Open University is supervising and monitoring the research.

Thank you for helping with this research.

Please tick this box if you would like a summary of the results

Section A: Organisational data for the Junior School

A1. What is the main age of transfer *from* the junior school *to* the senior school?

(please tick)

i) Transfer at age 10+	
ii) Transfer at age 11+	
iii) Transfer at age 12+	
iv) Transfer at age 13+	
v) Other (please specify.....)	

A2. At what age do most pupils enter the junior school?

(Include your 'pre-prep' as part of the junior school if you do not regard it as separate)

Please circle the starting age

3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 - years old

A3. How many full-time equivalent *teaching* staff are employed in the junior school?

(Add together the part-time contributions and round up, but do not count classroom assistants)

_____ teachers

A4. How many pupils are in the junior school?

(Please give an approximate number, to the nearest 50)

_____ pupils

A5. (a) Is the junior school co-educational? *(please tick)*

YES	
NO	

(b) If YES, then what is the approximate percentage of girls in the junior school?

Please circle, to the nearest 10%, the percentage of girls:

less than 5%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, more than 95%

Section A continues on the next page

A6. (a) Does the junior school have a senior management team?

(please tick)

YES	
NO	

(b) If YES, then who is a member?

(please tick all that apply)

<i>Head of junior school</i>	
<i>Deputy Head of junior school</i>	
<i>Head of senior school</i>	
<i>Deputy Head of senior school</i>	
<i>Bursar of both schools</i>	
<i>Junior school's own Bursar (or equivalent)</i>	
<i>Director of Studies of junior school (or equivalent)</i>	
<i>Director of Studies of senior school</i>	
<i>Other, please specify:</i>	
<i>Other, please specify:</i>	
<i>Other, please specify:</i>	
<i>Other, please specify:</i>	

A7. (a) Is the Junior School a member of IAPS (Incorporated Association of Preparatory Schools)?

(please tick)

YES	
NO	

(b) If you have answered NO to part (a),

(i) is membership being applied for, or considered?

(please tick)

YES	
NO	

(ii) does the Head of the Junior School belong to any Area or Regional Groups?

(please tick)

YES	
NO	

Please see the next page for Section B

Section B: Organisational data for the Senior School

B1. What are the *main* ages of entry for all pupils joining the senior school?

- Please tick as appropriate
- Please rank the entry points according to the size of each intake. Use ranks 1, 2, 3, etc. with 1 for the largest entry point.

	(Please tick)	(Rank)
B2. i) Entry at age 10+		
ii) Entry at age 11+		
iii) Entry at age 12+		
iv) Entry at age 13+		
v) Entry at age 16+		
vi) Other, please specify:		

How many full-time equivalent *teaching* staff are employed in the senior school?

(Add together the part-time contributions and round up, but do not count peripatetic music teachers, sports coaches or language assistants)

_____ teachers

B3. How many pupils are in the senior school?

(Please give an approximate number, to the nearest 50)

_____ pupils

B4. (a) Is the senior school co-educational at all its main ages of entry?

(please tick)

YES	
NO	

(b) If YES, then what is the approximate percentage of girls in the senior school?

Please circle, to the nearest 10%, the percentage of girls:

Less than 5%, 10%, 20%, 30%, 40%, 50%, 60%, 70%, 80%, 90%, more than 95%

Section B continues on the next page

B5. (a) Does the senior school have a senior management team?

(please tick)

YES	
NO	

(b) If YES, then who is a member?

(please tick all that apply)

<i>Head of senior school</i>	
<i>First (or Senior) Deputy Head of senior school</i>	
<i>Second Deputy Head (or equivalent) of senior school</i>	
<i>Head of junior school</i>	
<i>Bursar of both schools</i>	
<i>Senior school's own Bursar (or equivalent)</i>	
<i>Director of Studies of senior school</i>	
<i>Other, please specify:</i>	
<i>Other, please specify:</i>	
<i>Other, please specify:</i>	
<i>Other, please specify:</i>	
<i>Other, please specify:</i>	

B6. (a) Does anyone in the senior school, other than the Head, have specific responsibility for liaising with the junior school on the transfer of pupils and progression into the senior school?

(please tick)

YES	
NO	

(b) If YES, then what is his/her post in the senior school?

.....

PLEASE NOTE:

Questions B7, B8 and B9, on the next page, refer to the senior management team of the senior school.

If the senior school does not have a recognised senior management team then ignore the next page and turn to Section C.

Section B continues on the next page

B7. (a) Does the senior management team in the *senior* school meet at least annually to consider the continuum of education from the start of the junior school through to the end of the senior school?

(please tick)

YES	
NO	

(b) If NO, then which colleagues are responsible for regularly monitoring and assessing the continuum of education from the start of the junior school through to the end of the senior school?

.....

.....

B8. How often does the senior management team in the *senior* school discuss junior school issues?

(please tick)

<i>Never</i>	
<i>Occasionally</i>	
<i>Yearly</i>	
<i>Termly</i>	
<i>Other, please specify:</i>	

B9. How would you describe the *role* of the senior school's senior management team or members of it, in relation to the junior school?

.....

.....

.....

.....

.....

Please turn over for Section C

Section C: Governance of both Schools

C1. How large is the governing body of the senior school?

(please tick)

Number of governors	
<i>Less than 10</i>	
<i>10 or more, but less than 15</i>	
<i>15 or more, but less than 20</i>	
<i>20 or more</i>	

C2. Does the governing body of the senior school also govern directly the junior school?

(please tick)

YES	
NO	

C3. (a) Does the junior school have its own *separate* governing body?

(please tick)

YES	
NO	

(b) If NO, then do you think it should have its own board? _____

Please give a brief reason for your answer:

.....
.....

(c) If your answer to part (a) is YES, then

(please tick)

	YES	NO
<i>Are all the junior school governors also senior school governors?</i>		
<i>Is its Chairman also the Chairman of the senior school?</i>		
<i>Does it report to the senior school governing body</i>		
<i>Does the head of the senior school generally attend its meetings</i>		

Section C continues on the next page

C4. (a) From the list below please rank (1, 2, 3, 4 with 1 the most important) the 4 aspects of governance that you regard to be most important, in fulfilling the role of a governing body for the junior school.

<p align="center">Common aspects of governance (this list is not intended to be exhaustive)</p>	<p align="center"><i>Please rank the top four 1, 2, 3,4 (1=high)</i></p>
<i>Responsibility for setting and monitoring the school's budget</i>	
<i>To approve all school policies</i>	
<i>Acting as an appeal panel in handling complaints</i>	
<i>Appraising the work of the Head</i>	
<i>Liasing with the Head and all Senior Management on major policy decisions</i>	
<i>Ensuring the delivery of a whole school development plan</i>	
<i>Responsibility for buildings and site</i>	
<i>Target setting in terms of academic standards and curriculum matters</i>	
<i>Handling legal matters</i>	
<i>Maintaining the wishes of the Founder(s)</i>	
<i>Monitoring and maintaining the school's ethos and values</i>	
<i>Attending a variety of school functions</i>	
<i>To spend time in the school meeting pupils and staff</i>	
<i>To act as non-executives with the Head as Chief Executive</i>	
<i>To work as a team with the Head and senior staff to lead the school forward</i>	

(b) Please describe briefly, if appropriate, any other aspect of governing the junior school, which you regard as important, but it is not given in the above list.

.....

.....

Section C continues on the next page

C5. Please indicate on the scale below:

(a) the degree to which you think the governing body of the senior school **should** play a strategic leadership role in the junior school.

(b) the extent to which you feel this **actually** happens in the junior school.

	Major role	Moderate	Minor	None at all	
(a) 'should'	1	2	3	4	} (please circle)
(b) 'actual'	1	2	3	4	

C6. How would you describe the nature of your autonomy in leading and managing your school, in relation to your governing body?

Note No Head is expected to be in just one of the following categories for all aspects of leadership and management. However, please tick the one description that is nearest to how you would describe your autonomy overall in relation to governors.

Nature of autonomy	Brief outline of Governors' role	(please tick one box)
Substantial	Governors have minimal involvement – Head left to get on with decisions	
Devolved	Governors involved but in an advisory role	
Consultative	Governors actively involved, consulting and co-ordinating strategy	
Guided	Governors control and supervise direction	

C7. In summary, in what way is your governing body most helpful to you?

.....

.....

Please see the next page for Section D

Section D: Links between the junior and senior schools

D1. The following table lists ways in which junior and senior schools may be linked.

For each entry:

- (a) Please indicate the importance of having this link, and
 (b) circle 'Yes' or 'No' as it applies to your school.

(... ..please circle... ..)

	'Link' between junior and senior schools	Measure of importance	Does it exist or happen?
		Very....Not at all 1 2 3 4	YES / NO
A	Respective <i>subject co-ordinators (or heads of depts.) in both schools meet at least annually</i>	1 2 3 4	YES / NO
B	<i>Syllabuses for respective subjects in both schools are written to provide continuity</i>	1 2 3 4	YES / NO
C	<i>The head of the senior school regularly addresses the junior school in assembly</i>	1 2 3 4	YES / NO
D	<i>Pupil files from the junior school are handed on to the senior school at transfer</i>	1 2 3 4	YES / NO
E	<i>Both schools have joint INSET days involving junior and senior staff combined</i>	1 2 3 4	YES / NO
F	<i>The schools share and publish some common aims</i>	1 2 3 4	YES / NO
G	<i>The junior school features in the senior school prospectus</i>	1 2 3 4	YES / NO
H	<i>The head of the junior school regularly addresses some section(s) of the senior school</i>	1 2 3 4	YES / NO
I	<i>The senior management teams (or equivalent) of both schools meet at least termly</i>	1 2 3 4	YES / NO
J	<i>The heads of both schools have a formal meeting at least weekly</i>	1 2 3 4	YES / NO
K	<i>The head of the junior school attends senior school staff meetings</i>	1 2 3 4	YES / NO
L	<i>Changes in policy in the junior school must first be approved by senior school head</i>	1 2 3 4	YES / NO
M	<i>Parents with a complaint in the junior school must first appeal to the senior school head</i>	1 2 3 4	YES / NO

Section D continues on the next page

D2. (a) Do junior school pupils have a guaranteed transfer to the senior school?

(please tick)

YES	
NO	

(b) Approximately, on average, what percentage transfers from the junior to the senior school? _____ %

D3. Do any colleagues, *other than peripatetic music teachers*, teach in both the junior and senior schools?

(please tick)

YES	
NO	

D4. Would you like to see more links developed between the junior and senior schools?

(please tick)

<i>Yes, there is a need for significant development</i>	
<i>Yes, but just a few areas need developing</i>	
<i>No, we have it about right at the moment</i>	
<i>No, we have too many links at the moment</i>	

D5. In relation to the leadership and management tasks *in the junior school*:

(a) What do you consider to be the most important link that *currently exists* between your junior and senior schools?

.....

.....

(b) What do you consider to be the weakest link between your junior and senior schools?

.....

.....

Please see the next page for Section E

Section E: Autonomy – concept and classification

E1. The following table lists various aspects of ‘autonomy’, which *may* have an influence on a head’s leadership in seeking to improve school effectiveness.

For each aspect:

(a) Please indicate on the scale of 1 to 5, your measure of its importance to the JUNIOR school Head, in trying to improve the effectiveness of the junior school.

(b) Please circle ‘Yes’ or ‘No’, as it applies to your linked schools.
(... .. please circle... ..)

	Aspect of ‘autonomy’ (granted to the <u>junior</u> school head)	Measure of importance					Does it exist or happen?
		Vital	Lot	Little	Very little	Not at all	
A	Membership of IAPS	1	2	3	4	5	Yes / No
B	Encouraged to join local heads groups	1	2	3	4	5	Yes / No
C	Contract allows membership of a recognised Trade Union for heads	1	2	3	4	5	Yes / No
D	Encouraged to join and attend the HMC Junior Heads Group	1	2	3	4	5	Yes / No
E	Has authority to select and appoint teaching staff, independent of the senior school	1	2	3	4	5	Yes / No
F	Has authority to select pupils for the junior school	1	2	3	4	5	Yes / No
G	Has independent control over the curriculum content	1	2	3	4	5	Yes / No
H	Is only appraised by external assessors and/or governors (ie not by the head of senior school)	1	2	3	4	5	Yes / No
I	Has authority to prioritise and allocate resources within an agreed overall budget allocation	1	2	3	4	5	Yes / No
J	Is involved in setting the junior school budget	1	2	3	4	5	Yes / No
K	Is involved in negotiating the yearly budget for both schools	1	2	3	4	5	Yes / No
L	Reports termly to the Governing Body	1	2	3	4	5	Yes / No
M	Responsibility for proposing to governors any change in junior school policies	1	2	3	4	5	Yes / No

Please turn over for Section F

Section F: Autonomy, Leadership and Management in the junior school

F1. (a) Does the head of the junior school independently meet *prospective* parents for the junior school?

(please tick)

YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

(b) Does the head of the senior school address, or meet, *prospective* parents interested in the junior school?

(please tick)

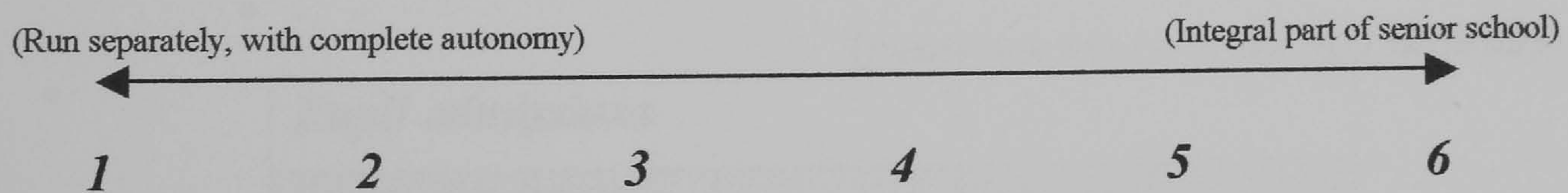
YES	<input type="checkbox"/>
NO	<input type="checkbox"/>

F2. Senior Staff Appointments in the JUNIOR school.

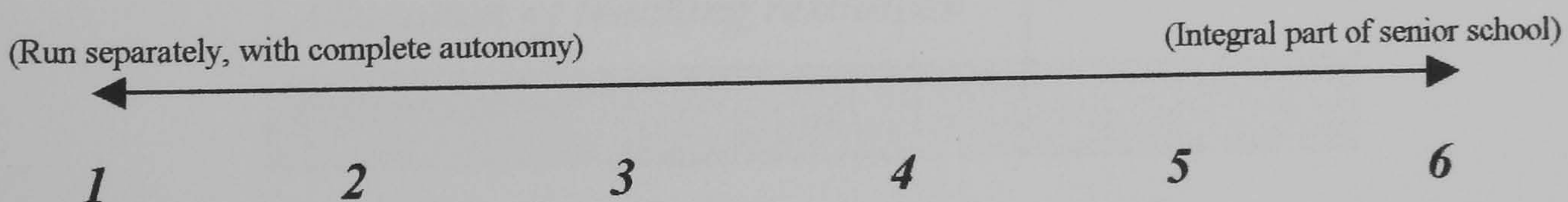
Please indicate, by *ticking the boxes in the table below*, which colleagues are involved in interviewing for posts in the junior school.

		Post to be appointed in the <u>Junior</u> School		
		<i>Deputy Head</i>	<i>Head of Department, or equivalent</i>	<i>Subject or class teacher</i>
Interviewer	<i>Head of Junior School</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Head of Senior School</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<i>Other colleague from senior school</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

F3. (a) On the following scale, circle the number to indicate how you would assess *the level of autonomy granted to the junior school*, in relation to its links and relationship with its senior school.



(b) On the following scale, circle the number to indicate *the level of autonomy you would like the junior school to have*, in relation to its links and relationship with its senior school.



Section F continues on the next page

F4. Decision-making in the JUNIOR school.

Please indicate, by ticking the most appropriate box in each row, the extent to which you are involved in the various kinds of decisions, which have to be made in the junior school.

		Level of involvement in ' <u>Junior</u> School issues'				
		<i>Very closely involved – play major role</i>	<i>Involved but not central – equally shared decision</i>	<i>Some involvement but not a major role</i>	<i>No involvement but informed of decision(s)</i>	<i>No involvement and not informed of decision(s)</i>
Area for decision-making	<i>Disciplining Staff</i>					
	<i>Publishing policies to parents</i>					
	<i>Prioritising Capital projects</i>					
	<i>Daily Running procedures</i>					
	<i>Allocating departmental resources</i>					
	<i>Writing the Junior School Development Plan</i>					

F5. Which of the following aspects of leadership and management, do you think the head of the junior school does NOT NECESSARILY have to control directly, in order to still have *sufficient* autonomy to run the junior school most effectively?

(please tick whichever are NOT necessary)

<i>Pupil admissions</i>	
<i>Staff appointments</i>	
<i>Budget setting</i>	
<i>Curricular decisions</i>	
<i>Allocation of teaching resources</i>	
<i>Policy setting</i>	

Please turn over for Section G

Section G: *Junior* School effectiveness

G1. Different groups of 'stakeholders' for the junior school *may* use different criteria for judging the effectiveness of the junior school.

Please indicate in the table below, for each group or person the top three performance indicators, you think that *they* are likely to regard as the most important in assessing junior school effectiveness.

(Please tick 3 boxes in each column)

		Head of Junior School	Junior School Parents	Head of Senior School	Senior School Governors
Performance Indicator	A	Number transferring to seniors			
	I	Results in senior school entrance exams			
	C	Number applying for admission to junior school			
	I	Extra-curricular programme			
	E	Full and balanced curriculum			
	I	Orderly and disciplined atmosphere			
	G	Polite and well behaved pupils			
	I	High academic expectations			
	I	Strong leadership evident			
	J	Good day-to-day management			
	K	Value-added academic performance			

Section G continues on the next page

G2. Listed below are eleven of the commonly published factors for effective schools, as found in various research studies.

From this list please rank (1, 2, 3, 4 with 1 the most important) the four that you regard to be most important and relevant, in leading and managing the junior school effectively.

	Eleven common factors for effective schools (related factors given in brackets)	Please rank the top four 1, 2, 3, 4
A	Professional leadership (firm and purposeful, participative approach)	
B	Shared vision and goals (unity of purpose, collegiality and collaboration)	
C	A learning environment (an orderly atmosphere, attractive environment)	
D	Concentration on teaching and learning (academic emphasis)	
E	Purposeful teaching (efficient organisation, structured lessons)	
F	High expectations (communicating expectations, providing challenge)	
G	Positive reinforcement (clear and fair discipline, feedback)	
H	Monitoring progress (pupil and school performance)	
I	Pupil rights and responsibilities (raising self-esteem)	
J	Home-school partnership (parental involvement in learning)	
K	A learning organisation (school-based staff development)	

Section G continues on the next page

G3. If you could change *one* aspect of governance or organisational structure to help improve the effectiveness of the junior school, *what* would it be *and why*?

<p><u>What I would change:</u></p> <p>.....</p>
<p><u>Why:</u></p> <p>.....</p> <p>.....</p>

G4. To what extent do you think that the degree of autonomy granted to the head of the junior school, influences his or her ability to improve its effectiveness?

	<i>(please tick)</i>
<i>Directly related factors, autonomy is linked to effectiveness</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Indirectly related factors, but yet to be demonstrated</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Do not know and have no view on it</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>Probably to be related factors, but not impossible</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<i>They are not related factors, independent of each other</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>

G5. Please give a brief answer to the following;

'Is autonomy beneficial to a junior school? Why?'

.....

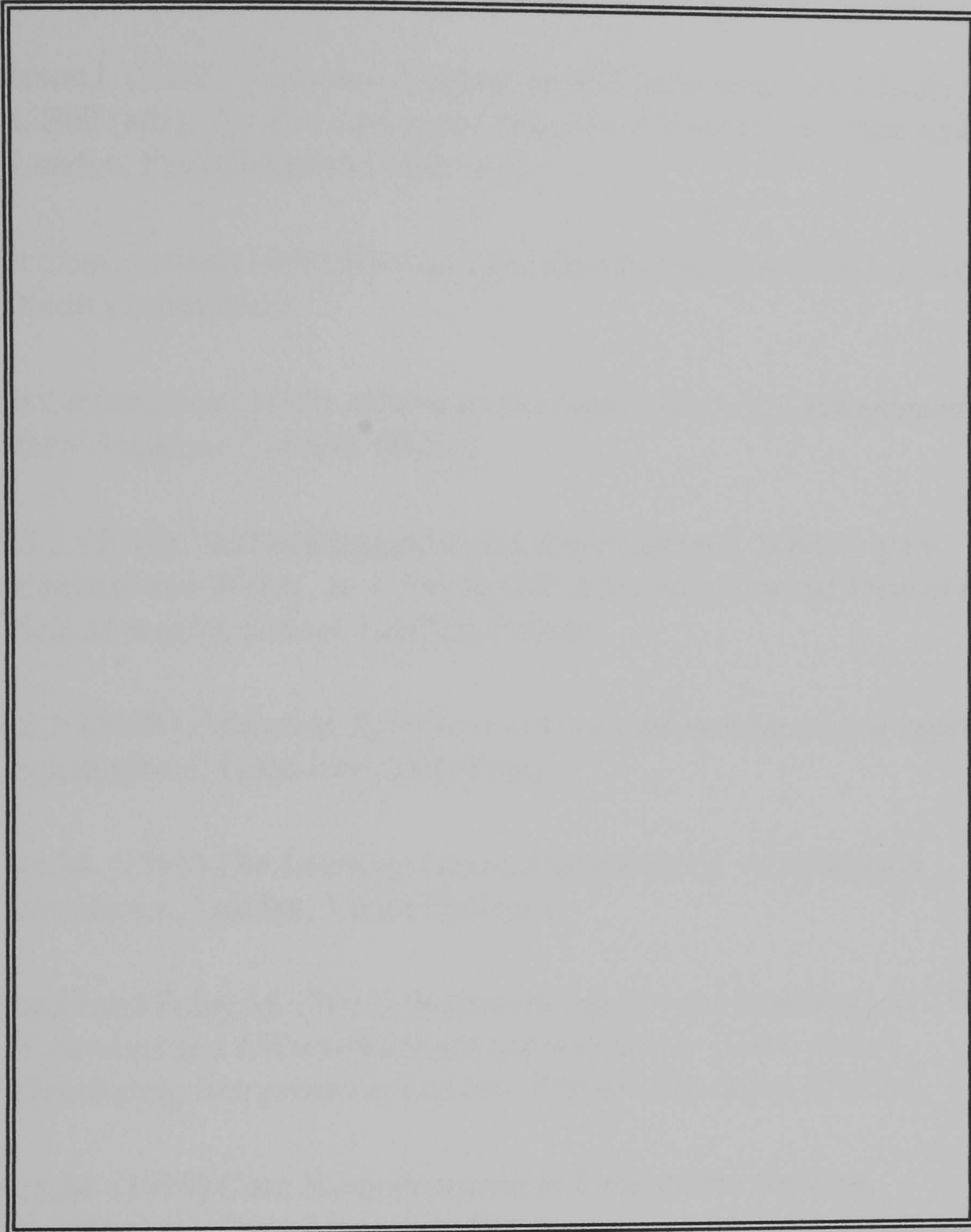
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.....

**Thank you. Your contribution is much appreciated.
This is the end of the questionnaire,
but please look at the next page.**

That completes the questionnaire, but if you wish to add any further comments please write them in the box below:

A large, empty rectangular box with a double-line border, intended for the respondent to write any further comments.

Thank you very much for completing this questionnaire.

**Please return it in the prepaid self-addressed envelope
by Friday 14th February 2003**

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