

PEDAGOGY, CLASS AND CULTURE:

A Study of Young Children's Learning at Home and School

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Abstract

This study investigates the home and school learning of a sample of sixteen four-year-old children who started school in a working-class neighbourhood in an English provincial town in September 1997.

The children, from English and Bangladeshi families, are viewed as embedded cases within a single case study of a Reception class. The study uses mixed qualitative and quantitative methods, within a broadly ethnographic approach, to describe the children's learning in their families, and to monitor their progress throughout the Reception year. The children's attainments were assessed at age 4, when they entered school, and again the following July.

The study constructs and analyses its data on the children's learning within a framework of concepts derived from the social theories of Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu. Bourdieu's concepts of *habitus* and the forms of capital are used to describe and analyse the ways in which children acquire their individual 'systems of dispositions' towards learning in their families. Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse is employed to compare the curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation practised in children's homes with that of their Reception classroom. Both theorists attribute the differential educational and social success of children from different backgrounds to the symbolic control which transmits broad macro power relations into socialising institutions such as families and schools.

The thesis focuses in turn on:

the habitus and capital of individual families within their social and ethnic groups; the curriculum and pedagogy of children's homes; the pedagogic discourse of the classroom; children's adaptation to school, and attainments on entry; and their Reception progress and outcomes.

Throughout the thesis a series of individual case studies illustrates the ways in which the regulative and instructional discourses of home and school influence children's social and cognitive development, and their school achievement.

Thanks

To the children and families who allowed me to explore their lives so that we could 'find out more about how children learn';

To the All Saints' staff who let me watch what happens when children go to school;

To Iram and Angela, a dream team from start to finish;

and to Pete, for everything.

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Summary of abbreviations used in the text

1. In common with most writings on Bernstein, this study employs the following short forms for his major works

<i>CCC1</i>	<i>Class, Codes and Control, volume 1: Theoretical Studies Towards a Sociology of Language (1971)</i>
<i>CCC2</i>	<i>Class, Codes and Control, volume 2: Applied Studies Towards a Sociology of Language (1973)</i>
<i>CCC3</i>	<i>Class, Codes and Control, volume 3: Towards a Theory of educational Transmissions (1975)</i>
<i>CCC4</i>	<i>Class, Codes and Control, volume 4: The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse (1990)</i>

2. Interviews and other data sources related to the case study school are abbreviated as follows:

<i>CT</i>	Class teacher interview
<i>NN</i>	Nursery nurse interview
<i>HT</i>	Head teacher interview
<i>BCA</i>	Bilingual classroom assistant interview
<i>SO</i>	Systematic Observation records
<i>ON</i>	Informal Observation notes
<i>SD1</i>	School document: teachers' standard job description
<i>SD2</i>	School reading curriculum policy
<i>SD3</i>	Ofsted report
<i>SD4</i>	Section 23 report
<i>SD5</i>	School behaviour policy

3. All other interviews and questionnaires cited are abbreviated as described in Appendix D1 (p.379)

Chapter 1 Introduction

This is the story of sixteen children, all 4 years old and from poor working-class families, who started school together in September 1997. All of them took with them vast 'funds of knowledge' acquired in their early years, but not all were equally fortunate in becoming well-regarded 'pupils', or successful 'learners'. Many of the differences in their attainments and progress, described in this report, have their origins in the culture of their homes and in the culture of their Reception class. Each child's home culture (despite commonalities of social class and ethnicity) is unique, and gives rise to its own family curriculum and pedagogy. But all sixteen children enter a classroom with a culture, curriculum and pedagogy of its own, shaped by its own history and by contemporary influences in the national culture. The study describes how each of the children fares, and investigates theoretical ways of understanding their experiences of school, and their outcomes at the end of their Reception year. Though the school (or the Reception classroom) is the main 'case' in the study, each of the sixteen children is an embedded case, nested in its own local contexts and in the national context, but in the process of extending the boundaries of his or her social world.

What follows therefore is a case study of 'learning cultures', in both the ways the phrase can be pronounced. Both the home and the school are '*learning* cultures' for the child, but each child is also '*learning cultures*', in his or her transition from home to school. The culture, or 'set of signifying systems', of each setting has to be learned (with varying degrees of difficulty) by each child, in order that he or she may access the knowledge (such as literacy or numeracy) which is valued in the setting.

It is well known that family and cultural background are significant variables in children's attainment on entry to school, and in their subsequent school progress. All these children are from a poor neighbourhood, and half are from minority ethnic families: in consequence, expectations of their educational achievements are low before they begin their school career. It is not always remembered, however, that it is 'school' which constructs these attainments, and structures children's progress:

children can not in general be said to ‘succeed’ or ‘fail’ educationally until they enter the field of education. Their first days and weeks and months at school (rather than their preschool years) can therefore be seen as determining their likely school career, and future life-chances. While this study gives equal weight to investigating the curriculum and pedagogies of homes, and of school, it concludes (with Bernstein, 1970) that it is the responsibility of *educators* to make it possible for all children to succeed.

For this reason the study, while investigating micro-processes in the daily experiences of individual children, looks to social theory at the macro-level for explanations of the underlying structures which shape these experiences. Key concepts from both Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu are used to provide this theoretical framework. Bourdieu’s concepts of habitus and the forms of capital are used to describe and analyse the ways in which children acquire their individual ‘system of dispositions towards learning’ in their families. Bernstein’s theory of pedagogic discourse is employed both to examine the curriculum and pedagogy of the homes and classroom, and to pinpoint the boundaries and barriers between the two cultures each child experiences. Both theorists have developed descriptions of the ways in which cultural (especially class-cultural) knowledge and beliefs permeate the practices of human subjects, distributing power and opportunities in accordance with prevailing ideologies and social structures. The validity and the limitations of their concepts are explored with reference to the children and families in the study.

This double theoretical framework helps situate the study’s key questions. They are:

1. In what ways does the culture, curriculum and pedagogy of children’s homes influence the child’s adaptation to school; the child’s attainments at the time of entry; and the child’s social and cognitive progress in Reception?
2. In what ways does the culture, curriculum and pedagogy of schools and educators advantage or disadvantage children from differing backgrounds?
3. In what ways does the family’s situation within the broader social formation influence the child’s educational outcomes?

The study is largely ethnographic, and presents naturalistic and systematic data collected during a year’s fieldwork in a Reception class. The sources, described more

fully in Chapter 4, include: field notes made in school or on home visits; interviews with family members, children and school staff; questionnaires; structured and unstructured observations; formal and informal assessments of children's social and cognitive development; and analysis of a range of written documents. In order to accommodate the wealth of data to the available space, the study offers its evidence on the research questions (rather than its 'answers' to them) in two ways: by attending to the 'child stories' (Filer, 1998: 70) which are produced when each case study is viewed individually (a series of vertical slices through the data), and by attending to the patterns produced when one aspect of children's lives is investigated across all 16 subjects (a horizontal slice through the data). In this way it attempts to portray both the complexity, and the simple patterns, which analysis of the data generates.

The report is in four parts. Part One (Background and Methods of the Study) situates the study within the sociology of education, and within the theoretical concepts provided by Bernstein and Bourdieu (chapter 2); reviews the research evidence on the differential achievement of children in the early years of school (chapter 3); and presents the methods and methodology of this study (chapter 4). Part Two examines the home context of children's learning: similarities and differences in the family habitus, and family capital, of children in the study (chapter 5); and the cultural origins of the curriculum and pedagogy of their homes (chapter 6). Part Three discusses the school context of the children's learning: an analysis of the culture of the school and classroom (chapter 7) and of the children's encounter with the curriculum and pedagogy of the official field of education (chapter 8). In Part Four, children's Reception outcomes, and the ways they are evaluated, are analysed and interpreted within the conceptual framework offered by Bernstein and Bourdieu (chapter 9); and some reflections on the uses and limitations of the theory, and its implications for practice, are offered (chapter 10).

All aspects of the report – theory, methods, data, analysis – are explicitly recognised as products of ideology, my own as well as that of the school and families. In the end, the children's Reception outcomes, and their probable life-chances, are viewed as associated with the distribution of power and control in society, and with the ways this is naturalised in common-sense beliefs and practices. In attempting to 'unmask'

such beliefs, including those of the researcher, the study pursues the project of Bernstein and Bourdieu, whose work is discussed in the next chapter.

PART ONE BACKGROUND AND METHODS

Chapter 2 Theorising the field

The research questions of this study, with their focus on pedagogy, class and culture, clearly evoke the debates in the 'new sociology of education' of the early 1970s. The study consciously situates itself in that tradition, arguing that the inequalities in educational outcomes which prompted that movement are still pervasive, and that the theoretical explanations which have developed within the tradition are relevant to current concerns. This chapter outlines the continuing evidence of the group differentials in achievement which underpinned the earlier debate, and describes some of its principal features. It then presents some aspects of the social theories of Bernstein and Bourdieu, which provide the conceptual framework for the interpretation of data in the present study.

2.1. Group differentials in educational achievement

The evidence... shows beyond doubt that pupils' and students' ability to achieve their full potential is affected in different ways by three major factors, from the moment they step inside the school system, and before. Those factors, the social class of the child, the sex of the child and the ethnic origin of the child, either singly or in combination affect the majority of children in our schools... (ILEA, 1983: 5).

The evidence on achievement in London schools presented in ILEA's *Race, Sex and Class* documents (1981-5) constitutes a microcosm of the findings of research into group differentials in achievement since the 1960s, and summarises a situation which recent research suggests has changed very little.

Early concerns over structural inequalities focused on the social class divide evidenced by primary reading scores and 11+ success rates (Douglas *et al*, 1968; Davie *et al*, 1972), which was found to persist and worsen as children moved into secondary and tertiary education and training, and became parents themselves (CHES, 1982; Rutter and Madge, 1976). School ethnographies (Lacey, 1970; Hargreaves, 1967; Keddie, 1971) described the practices whereby 'working-class pupils tend to percolate downwards in the processes of academic and behavioural differentiation' (Ball, 1981: 108). By the 1980s, as the ILEA research indicated,

evidence of the associations of ethnicity and sex with educational outcomes was complicating the picture of stratification by social class, and explanations were sought in the practices of both parents and teachers.

One of the largest investigations into school effects on group outcomes, Mortimore *et al*'s Junior School Project (1988), systematically documented the school experiences and attainments of 7-11-year-olds in 20 representative London schools. The study was able to control statistically for large numbers of variables, and established a strong relationship between social class (defined by parental occupation) and reading scores *even after* eliminating the effects of minority ethnic status, EAL, family size, birth order, free school meals, nursery education, sex and age within the year group. It found too that social-class differentials widened from age 7 to age 11: far from equalising children's chances, schooling appeared to be further disadvantaging children from already-disadvantaged groups (1988: 132).

While they found no evidence of disadvantage to girls, the authors claimed that 'evidence of underachievement by children of some ethnic minority backgrounds is a cause for serious concern'. Though differences in achievement were evident, 'the cause of these differences is seldom clear' (1988: 117). But the study also identified the less obvious differentials within outwardly homogeneous groups: among Asian children, Gujerati-speaking Indian pupils had reading scores well above native English speakers, while Punjabi speakers scored low, alongside Greeks, Turks and African-Caribbean groups. Overall, on the Verbal Reasoning Test which governed secondary transfer procedures, only 9% of Asian pupils, compared with 13% African-Caribbean and 24% 'ESWI', were placed in Band 1.

These findings, and Tizard *et al*'s (1988) study of London infant schools (which described race and sex, but not class, effects among children's background variables) reinforced the national concern aroused by the Rampton and Swann reports (1981, 1985), which had publicised the educational disadvantage experienced by black and Asian pupils. Nevertheless, despite legislation on race and sex discrimination and the equal-opportunities initiatives of many LEAs, at a national level affirmative action policies were rejected in favour of a National Curriculum, and associated reforms,

intended to raise the achievement of *all* children through equal entitlement to education (DES, 1988) and the promotion of a 'common culture' (Tate, 1995).

This shift in focus resulted in a decline in research and interventions targeted at 'underachieving' groups, which may only now be reversed as the Labour government's Sure Start programme is implemented. All three major variables were discussed in the nine-year follow-up to the Junior School Project (Sammons, 1995). But while two reviews of ethnic minority achievement have been commissioned (Gillborn and Gipps 1996; Modood, 1996), and national concern has been expressed about the relative underachievement of some groups of boys, concern over social class as a cause of school disadvantage appears partially subsumed into the school improvement and effectiveness movements.

Sammons' correlational analysis of the follow-up to the Junior School Project (1995) presents unambiguous evidence on socioeconomic disadvantage but mixed findings on gender and ethnicity. A variety of socioeconomic indicators (family income, free school meals, parental occupation, family size, housing) are associated with children's outcomes at age 16:

These findings indicate that socioeconomic effects become relatively greater, the gap in absolute achievement widening over time (476).

The longitudinal data enable not only attainment but also rate of progress in school to be described, showing that:

social class remains a very important predictor of later academic achievement, and that the gap in attainment between non-manual and other social class groups increased steadily throughout their school careers (1995:477).

It remains difficult to separate social class from ethnicity, and to distinguish different aspects of minority background, such as bilingualism, when researching children's achievement. Recent reports on ethnic minority family incomes (Berthoud, 1998) and on poverty and social exclusion (Howarth *et al*, 1998; Chahal, 2000) indicate that minority groups, particularly those concentrated in inner-urban areas, are 'easily the poorest groups in the country', and that as a result of larger family size in low-income groups, a third of children in the UK live in poverty. Those minority

communities whose children are making good progress in school tend to be from slightly higher socioeconomic groups (Mortimore, 1988; Modood, 1996).

In the hierarchy of ethnic minority achievement (Gillborn and Gipps 1996; Modood *et al* 1996) the large differences *between* groups are further complicated by the uneven achievements of boys and girls *within* groups. An overall improvement in attainment for all ethnic minority children masks the exceptionally high achievement of certain (numerically small) groups such as Chinese and Black Africans, and the continuing poor outcomes of larger groups such as pupils of Pakistani and Bangladeshi origin. As Gillborn and Gipps conclude, 'The gap is growing between the highest and lowest achieving ethnic groups in many LEAs' (1996:78).

In the late 1990s, the introduction of Baseline assessment, first by LEAs and then nationally, has provided large-scale data on group differentials in attainment among 4-year-olds (Tymms *et al*, 1997; Strand, 1997) which show the persistence of traditional inequalities. Follow-up studies to the end of Key Stage 1 (Sammons and Smees, 1996; Strand, 1999b) confirm that the disadvantage experienced by some groups at age 4 tends to widen by age 7. Most recently, a longitudinal study of children from age 3 to age 7 is reporting social class and ethnic group differences among children assessed in their early weeks at preschool (Melhuish *et al*, 2000).

While some of the disadvantage associated with gender and ethnicity seems amenable to school and LEA initiatives, there is little evidence that social class is any less monolithic as an obstacle to equality. Feinstein (1998) has revived the suggestion that parental 'interest' in their child's schooling is an effect of social class and a determinant of children's outcomes, thus implicating lower-class parents in their children's poor achievement. As Siraj-Blatchford (1998) points out, Feinstein 'fails to see the possibility that it is the social class of the school rather than the parents that might be the problem'. For governments, more concerned to measure the effectiveness of individual schools than the fairness of the education system for individuals, the 'problem' can be represented as a normal and naturally-occurring phenomenon, so that school outcomes are calculated to *include* 'disadvantage' factors such as free school meals and bilingualism, making it quite acceptable for

schools with working-class and ethnic-minority children in their populations to have below-average results and expectations.

Within this context, the school featured in this study, which serves a poor multiracial neighbourhood, is already subject to low expectations of its children.

2.2. Perspectives from the sociology of education.

The response of sociologists of education to evidence of inequalities was theorised in a cluster of publications around 1970. The near-simultaneous appearance of Bourdieu and Passeron's *Reproduction*, Bernstein's *Class, Codes and Control*, and Young's *Knowledge and Control*, made public a range of related social theories which have continued to inform research until the present. None of these volumes was actually an 'event' of the early 1970s, since all three collected or reported on work completed in the previous decade. They are therefore more appropriately read as manifestations of the 1960s, along with the War on Poverty, Head Start, the Educational Priority Programme, and other markers of social optimism. The conviction that education could be the means of redressing social injustice, common to all three volumes, was shared with the founders of these major public projects (who included Bronfenbrenner (1974, 1979a and b)).

The 'new sociology of education' (Reid, 1986; Sarup, 1978) shared with poststructuralism an overall scepticism towards absolutes. It rejected positivism and empiricism and the assumptions about the nature of truth, knowledge, reality and logic which went with them, and advocated qualitative approaches, including phenomenology and ethnography, as alternative means of accessing the plural 'truths', 'realities', 'knowledges' and 'logics' of the actors in educational settings. It also affirmed that the 'differences' which children brought to school, and which were known to influence their educational achievements, were not deficits but characteristics appropriate to the environments in which they had been acquired (the children's homes and communities), just as their language use was appropriate to their linguistic environment. Both aspects of children's competence were understood too as products of the distribution of power in society.

In relating the individual and group achievements of children in school to the effects of their positioning in society, most 'new' sociologists of education utilised some version of reproduction theory (May, 1994; Reid, 1986; Sarup, 1978). Most of these versions derived at some remove from Marx's description (notably in the Preface to the *Critique of Political Economy*) of the relation of base and superstructure: in other words, they saw the effects of schooling (and their differential outcomes) as having their origin in the economic and political structures of society, rather than in the 'cultures' or 'lifestyles' of groups. Once this nettle had been grasped, the belief in education and schooling as neutral or benevolent systems, which characterised earlier liberal-democratic and consensus approaches, was hard to sustain (CCCS, 1981).

Reproduction theory in its simplest form was represented by the correspondence theory of Bowles and Gintis (1976), who saw education in a closed and fully determined relationship with the economy. Correspondence implied that pupils of different social classes were taught, via the overt and hidden curriculum, the skills and the attitudes which would fit them for their future role in the economy, and would be virtually unable to escape the occupational role for which they were destined (and with which their parents' expectations concurred). Bowles and Gintis viewed the major function of education as the legitimation of the roles required by the economy, which were socialized into the pupil by the hierarchical relations of schooling. The continued maintenance of class and power relations, they argued, depended on 'a widely accepted ideology justifying the social order' and a set of social relationships which would 'validate the ideology through everyday experience' - in other words, the hidden curriculum.

Bowles and Gintis' reference to 'ideology' as the means whereby this manipulation of power was accomplished reflected the prominence of this concept in the 1970s. The convergences which brought the work of Bernstein, Bourdieu and Young simultaneously into public view, coincided also with the English publication of influential work by Althusser (1971) and Gramsci (1971), both of whom utilised ideology in their models of social and educational processes. Althusser's essay 'Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses' described the School as the dominant Ideological State Apparatus (ISA) in modern societies, 'coupled with the Family just

as the Church was once coupled with the Family', and 'playing a determinant part in the reproduction of the relations of production of a mode of production threatened in its existence by the world class struggle' (1971: 149). He contrasted ISAs, such as the Family, the Church, the media, with Repressive State Apparatuses (RSAs), such as the penal system, police and army: the former unify society through ideology, and reproduce an established regime through consent, while the latter are coercive and operate in the last resort through physical force. Thus in the ISA which is the school, he claimed, children acquire both 'know-how' which is 'directly useful' for their future jobs, and 'rules of good behaviour': 'submission' or 'subjection' to the ruling ideology and the social order, without which, he suggested, they might be unwilling to work for the wages offered (128).

Applied to lived experience, this description appears to resemble Bowles and Gintis's account of the workings of the hidden curriculum. But Althusser, like many reproduction theorists, also theorised the opening through which change might be introduced. This was his concept of the 'relative autonomy' of the superstructure from the economic base - of ISAs from the state. In allowing for the possibility of change effected by human agents, he deflected the potential criticisms of those who found a fully 'determined' structuralist model unacceptable. In practice, however, Althusser was pessimistic about the potential for change within the education system, citing the fact that 'no other ISA has the obligatory (and not least, free) audience of the totality of the children in the capitalist social formation, eight hours a day for five or six days out of seven'; that children, parents and teachers alike believe, naively, in the benevolence of the system in which they are contained; and that teachers' own 'devotion' to their vocation 'contributes to the maintenance and nourishment of this ideological representation of the School' (1971: 148).

Gramsci's formulation of the concept of hegemony (1971) had offered a related account of the ways in which ideology operates. Like Althusser, he had argued (from Marx) that for the most part control in modern societies was won and maintained by consent to 'ruling ideas' rather than by coercion.

The ideas of the ruling class are in every epoch the ruling ideas...

The class which has the means of *material* production at its disposal, has

control at the same time over the means of mental production.
(Marx [1845-6] 1969:47).

To this definition Gramsci added the notion of 'common sense', the knowledge which operates at the level of habitual and unexamined attitudes, turning 'ruling ideas' into practical consciousness. By these means ideology 'naturalises' the existing social order without needing to impose it. Hegemony, then, is the maintenance of the *status quo* by involuntary popular consent, and enlists the support of all the institutions of 'civil society' (the social realm which lies between the state and the economy), including the education system. In Raymond Williams's description, hegemony is a 'truly total' concept, which

saturates the society to such an extent, and which, as Gramsci put it even constitutes the substance and limit of common sense for most people under its sway, that it corresponds to the reality of social experience very much more clearly than any notions derived from the formula of base and superstructure (1980:37).

Nevertheless hegemony is not, according to Gramsci, irresistible, since there are times when a given consensus and hegemonic order are challenged by groups within society, and when certain terms have to be re-negotiated to form a revised version of 'common sense': the slow change in attitudes towards women, ethnic minorities and homosexuals in the UK might be examples of the (limited) success of such challenges. Within education, however, the consciousness of teachers as well as of parents tends to be 'saturated' with taken-for-granted assumptions which may not actually serve their real interests.

Recent critics have challenged the supposed determinism of reproduction theory (though Williams argues that translators of Marx have given 'determine' as the equivalent of a variety of German forms, and that the force of the term actually varies in different contexts; 1980:31; and see 1976). Bowles and Gintis (1981), in a reformulation of their thesis, described contradictions between three 'sites of social practice' (the state, the family and capitalist production) and suggested that education had the opportunity to undermine rather than reproduce capitalism. Other writers have increasingly emphasised the oppositional power of relative autonomy and resistance within the broadly reproductive system of education. Willis (1977) and Apple (1982) proposed models of pupil-cultures which resist the dominant culture

and mediate the curriculum offered by the system, while Giroux (1983) offered an idealistic view of the transforming power of the resistance offered by disadvantaged groups in education. Wexler (1983), who condemns most would-be Marxist ethnographic work as 'typical of bourgeois sociology', calls for the links between 'critical' educational theory and practice, and collective mass struggles such as the Civil Rights movement, to be acknowledged and built upon. Similarly in McCarthy's account, the effects of 'the plurality of non-class minority movements', particularly ethnic minority groups (1990: 63) deserve recognition: like Connell *et al* (1982) he calls for the development of a 'counter-hegemonic pedagogy' (113). This presupposes, however, that teachers are themselves able to recognise and escape the hegemonic pressures of the dominant discourse.

The active role which schools can take in re-writing hegemonic relations is argued by Apple and Weis (1983: 21), whose model describes spaces within the system for progressive action by teachers and parents, as well as students and pupils. In place of a mirror-like reflection or reproduction of the economy, they describe three 'spheres' (the economic, the cultural and the political) which intersect with three 'dynamics' (of gender, race and class) to create an infinite range of positions and identities within the system. McCarthy and Apple's (1988) 'nonsynchronous parallelism' expands this model and calls for 'middle-range' theories to bridge the gap between conceptual models and the lived experience of classrooms: few theorists, they claim, have demonstrated any real knowledge of the ways in which their concepts were mediated by actual practices, or experienced by actual children and families. The present study attempts to supply such knowledge.

Throughout this period, Apple's rhetorical question, 'Whose knowledge was in the school, and whose interests did such knowledge serve?' (1979) has retained its relevance for inquiries into educational inequalities, particularly those associated with social class and ethnicity. As Sadovnik writes, 'what constituted the common ground of the new sociology was the belief that knowledge is socially and ideologically constructed' (1995: 5). Two major figures behind the continuing debate over reproduction, resistance and relative autonomy, are Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu. Like others in the sociology of education, both have argued that definitions

of knowledge and culture are central to the perpetuation of inequality, and have sought to explain how these effects occur within specific spheres and practices. Both supply the framework for the present study, which investigates the sources of different families' knowledge, the ways they transmit it to their children, and what happens to this knowledge when the children go to school.

2.3. Bernstein

The social causes of educational inequality

Bernstein's long-term project has been the development of a comprehensive model of the ways in which the power and control of a society is distributed through pedagogic activities, beginning with children's earliest experiences in homes and schools, and continuing through their later encounters with training and employment. Like Bourdieu, he devised a conceptual framework for children's primary socialisation in their families, and their subsequent re-socialisation into successor institutions. But whereas Bourdieu offers no detailed description of the processes which take place in classrooms (or rather, in English Early Years classrooms, rather than French lycées), Bernstein has progressively refined and generalised his models to encompass all forms of pedagogic activity, and has used examples from the changing English education system as illustration.

The models that I develop here should be able to describe the organizational, discursive and transmission practices in all pedagogic agencies, and show the process whereby selective acquisition takes place. (1996: 17)

Though the formulations and language in which he presents his work have tended to become more abstract as well as more complex, Bernstein's argument has been consistent. In his latest volume, despite announcing a 'shift of focus' to 'more general issues of symbolic control', he affirms that 'the fundamental problematic has not changed' (1996:12). The concerns he outlines are precisely those of the earlier volumes of *Class Codes and Control* (1971, 1973, 1975, 1990): 'how power relations are transformed into discourse, and discourse into power relations'. He states that:

The process whereby this transformation takes place, formally and informally in families and education, is to my mind essentially a pedagogic process (1996:12).

While looking at the pedagogic processes of homes and classrooms through Bernstein's eyes, it is important to recall both the central concepts of his early work, and the concern for social justice which motivated them.

Early in 1970, Bernstein published in *New Society* an article, 'Education Cannot Compensate for Society', which announced his own intellectual project as well as that of his contemporaries. The article critiqued the then-fashionable liberal notion of compensatory education, and set out some of the ways in which schools and society (rather than families and communities) cause some children to fail. Bernstein's main ground for rejecting compensatory education was that it was aimed at 'children who in the first place have not, as yet, been offered an adequate educational environment', since poor material conditions and resources, high teacher turnover, low teacher expectations, streaming and labelling have condemned them to failure almost before they begin:

It would seem, then, that we have failed to provide, on the scale required, an initial satisfactory educational environment. (1970:31).

In consequence, children and families are 'looked at as deficit systems... And then, these labels do their own sad work'. Bernstein describes succinctly how the culture of homes is undervalued and rejected; how parents are excluded from their child's education; how 'school knowledge' is constructed on social assumptions; how restricted and elaborated codes operate in institutional contexts; how social class sensitises children differentially to symbolic orders; and how schools teach 'un-common-sense knowledge'. His aphorism - 'If the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must first be in the consciousness of the teacher' - is used to argue that children's early experience in their homes must be seen as valid and significant, and must also be 'reflected back to [them] as being valid and significant'.

In conclusion, he pinpoints the issue which underlies all these particular criticisms of schooling:

We need to examine the social assumptions underlying the organisation, distribution and evaluation of knowledge, for there is not one, and only one, answer. The power relationships created outside the school penetrate the organisation, distribution and evaluation of knowledge through the social

context. The definition of 'educability' is itself, at any one time, an attenuated consequence of these power relationships (1970:34).

In this short statement Bernstein defines the subject of all his subsequent work.

Structure

Bernstein's early essays, while developing their own descriptions of codes and rule-systems, attribute the underlying source and cause of such typologies to the structure of the division of labour. The typologies described in his early research on language are derived from Durkheim's dichotomy between mechanical solidarity and organic solidarity, the two basic forms of social organisation. Thus the description (1958) of the 'public' and 'formal' forms of language, the precursors of 'restricted' and 'elaborated' codes (1962), relates their acquisition to a class-based orientation towards the content (working-class) or the structure (middle-class) of objects. Both versions of the theory, however, attribute responsibility for the poor achievement of lower social groups to schools, which 'disvalue' the culture of working-class children and damage their self-esteem (CCC1: 56, 58). Children's class-related sensitivity to different codes, Bernstein argued, necessitated 'increased sensitivity on the part of teachers towards both the cultural and cognitive requirements of the formal educational relationship' (CCC1: 160). Linguistic determinism, operating at the level not of surface structures (such as accent or dialect) but of underlying conceptual frameworks, created a 'cultural discontinuity' for working-class children: 'Our schools are not made for these children; why should the children respond?' (CCC1: 209).

By 1971 Bernstein had created a comprehensive description of the ways in which social class, family structures, role systems, linguistic codes and actual speech utterances could be traced back to their origins in the division of labour, and was extending this analysis into the related areas of 'educational transmission'. His essay, 'On the classification and framing of educational knowledge' (1971) acknowledges the sources of Bernstein's concepts: both Durkheim and Marx, he claims, 'have shown us that the structure of society's classifications and frames reveals both the distribution of power and the principles of social control' (CCC1: 228). Without

Durkheim, he would not have discovered the importance of boundaries as classification devices:

Thus the division of labour influences the availability of class codes; the class system affects their distribution; the focusing of codes can be related to the boundary-maintaining procedures, ie. the value system. (CCC1: 213).

Bernstein recognises however that in adopting a 'Durkheimian framework', 'we are still left with the problem of change' (CCC1: 195), whereas Marxism can envisage change in both the social and the symbolic structures which derive from the productive economy:

It is not only capital, in the strict economic sense, which is subject to appropriation, manipulation and exploitation, but also cultural capital in the form of the symbolic systems through which man can extend and change the boundaries of his experience (CCC1: 196)

Though 'change', in these early essays, seems a pious hope in the face of a somewhat determined structure, the possibility is more convincingly explored in recent writings.

Codes and Rules

The concept of code is fundamental to Bernstein's theory. It is defined in the early essays on language as the regulative principle underlying the surface utterances of individuals, and as itself regulated by the social division of labour. It thus enables the links between social class and linguistic competence, and eventually between social class and educational achievement, to be theorised:

the social structure transforms language possibility into a specific code which elicits, generalizes and reinforces those relationships necessary for its continuance (CCC1: 92)

The role of culture is pivotal in this process:

According to this view... the social structure generates distinct linguistic forms or codes, and *these codes essentially transmit the culture and so constrain behaviour* (CCC1: 143; original emphasis)

As Bernstein turns his attention from family to school effects, he applies the basic code dichotomy not only to the role systems and family types characteristic of different social classes, but to the 'message systems' of schools: curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation:

Thus the code theory... draws attention to the relations between macro power relations and micro practices of transmission, acquisition and

evaluation and the positioning and oppositioning to which these practices give rise (CCC4: 119).

Thus codes regulate the choices individuals make, and the ways in which their social world and their knowledge are structured, by selecting and integrating the meanings which are legitimate and appropriate in any particular context. Though Bernstein later claims that they are 'sites of contradictions, challenge and change' (CCC4: 111), they are nevertheless presented as deterministic sets of rules, which generate other rule-systems. Within pedagogic practice, these are the 'instructional' and 'regulative' rules, which in the last analysis maintain the boundaries between the 'thinkable' and the 'unthinkable'.

Boundaries, Bernstein maintains, are the surface realizations of underlying rules, 'inferred by the socialized from a range of social relations' (CCC3: 10). Such rules result in a process of cultural reproduction: they

create ways of experiencing, of interpreting and telling about the world. I believe that the structure of socialization is not a set of roles, but classification and framing relationships, (CCC3: 11).

Behind these rules lie the power relations of the social structure, since 'educational transmissions embody class ideologies which are crucial to the cultural reproduction of class relations' (CCC3: 16). As these class ideologies represent the division of labour, changes in the division of labour (from goods to services, for instance) have produced new forms of pedagogy, which however *still* privilege middle-class children:

conflicting pedagogies have their origins within the fractions of the middle class and so an unreflecting institutionalising of *either* pedagogy will not be to the advantage of the lower working class (CCC3: 19).

The mechanisms by which changes in the message systems of schools tend to *enhance* rather than diminish the privileged position of middle-class children are classification and framing.

Power and Control: Classification and framing

Bernstein describes his 'theory of educational transmission' as 'an attempt to sketch the effect of class relationships upon the institutionalising of elaborated codes in the school' (CCC3: 9). Two important essays, 'On the Classification and Framing of Educational Knowledge' and 'Class and Pedagogies: Visible and Invisible', provide a framework for analysing school and classroom organisation, curriculum content and pedagogy, and the relations between 'home' and 'school' knowledge.

Central to Bernstein's understanding of *power* is its role in creating, legitimating and maintaining boundaries, 'between different categories of groups, [...] different categories of discourse, different categories of agents' (1996:19) - and of making such boundaries appear natural and inevitable. He acknowledges Bourdieu's concept of symbolic violence, and argues that its power derives from classification:

The arbitrary nature of these power relations is disguised, hidden by the principle of the classification, for the principle of the classification comes to have the force of the natural order and the identities that it constructs are taken as real, as authentic, as integral, as the source of integrity (1996: 21)

The role of *control*, on the other hand, is to create the forms of communication which socialise individuals into the relationships thus created; but also, on occasion, to provide the means of resisting and transforming existing power relations. Power and control, therefore, are transmitted through the concepts, respectively, of classification and framing. While classification creates the boundaries which insulate categories from each other, framing creates the forms of communication which are legitimate within and between these categories, by determining the principles of selection, sequencing, pacing and criteria from which the pedagogic relationship, and the pedagogic discourse, are constructed (1996:27).

Classification and framing are simultaneously the mechanisms by which schooling is regulated, and the means by which children and families from disadvantaged groups are excluded from educational success. Strong classification and framing (exemplified in the traditional grammar-school subject divisions; and in schools with strict internal hierarchies; and in the type of school which obliges parents to wait outside the gate) are the easily-recognised forms of the barriers which keep working-

class children out of middle-class schools. They carry all the trappings of the 'visible pedagogy' (VP): in an extreme instance, punitive discipline, school uniforms, subject specialisation, regular testing and an explicit assessment code, and an impersonal and hierarchical relation between teachers, pupils and parents.

Weak classification and framing, on the other hand, which may appear to offer a liberal alternative to such exclusive practices, Bernstein describes as operating equally effectively to privilege children from advantaged groups. While appearing to welcome all children in to school success through breaches in the traditional barriers, the invisible pedagogy (IP) they construct gives the illusion of equal access for lower social groups, while failing to provide them with the means of success. Where children and parents are offered friendly relationships with teachers, the opportunity to play and explore, the freedom to develop in their own way and at their own pace, a seamless blend of non-subject-specific topics, a self-regulatory behaviour code, praise and encouragement instead of criticism and punishment, they are being deluded into a false view of what society requires, and what society rewards. With the classification of curriculum content abandoned, and the framing of pedagogic practices weakened, the pace and sequence of learning slackens and socially-valued goals and targets are submerged in the indulgence of personalised development. The working-class children who appear to flourish in this environment (and their parents who are deceived into believing this is good for their children) discover their disadvantage later in their education, when they find themselves ill-adapted to the visible pedagogy required by public examinations and post-16 education, with their emphasis on subject specialization, advanced study skills, formal language use, middle-class social skills and extremely forced and regulated pace and sequencing.

Middle-class children, however (or children of that fraction of the middle class associated with symbolic production) can benefit doubly from the IP of weak-classification, weak-frame primary schooling, and the VP of the later secondary years. Their home background, which simultaneously fostered 'learning through play' and inculcated a 'culture of literacy', has socialized them to gain the maximum benefit from both forms of pedagogy. When the time comes for them to submit to long hours of homework and systematic exam-pressures, their family support and

training gives them a good chance of success. Unlike working-class children *and* those middle-class children who have only learned to work within strong classification and framing, they are well equipped for work in the new labour-market.

Pedagogic discourse

In *The Structuring of Pedagogic Discourse* (1990) Bernstein both refines his early formulations of code and its effects on lived social practices, and gives a more detailed description of the ways these effects are produced in schools. The definition of code is broadened and differentiated to the point where Bernstein acknowledges a relationship with Bourdieu's concept of habitus:

It is essentially a cultural grammar specialized by class position and fields of practice... Code may be regarded as an attempt to write what may perhaps be called pedagogic grammar of specialised habituses and the forms of their transmission which attempt to regulate their acquisition (CCC4: 3)

These 'forms' (the classification and framing rules) can 'create delicate descriptions of micro classroom interactions and ... relate these... to macro levels' (CCC4: 7) to show how dominant/dominated relationships within and between social groups are maintained, and how they position individuals. The delicacy of the descriptions depends on a number of refinements to the underlying codes, which govern the pedagogic device (a deep-structure equivalent to Saussure's *langue*), pedagogic discourse (equivalent to his *parole*), and the pedagogic practice which encompasses all 'transmitter/ acquirer' relations. Pedagogic practice, then, is the 'relay': the system by which 'school knowledge', or other culturally legitimated knowledge, is transmitted to the learner. It is, as Sadovnik puts it, the means whereby schools

reproduce what they are ideologically committed to eradicating - social-class advantages in schooling and society (Sadovnik, 1995:11).

It centres on a pedagogic relationship which is *always* hierarchical, although the hierarchy, which is explicit under a visible pedagogy, may be disguised under IP, in which 'power is masked or hidden by devices of communication' (CCC4: 67).

Pedagogic discourse is composed, in turn, of two sets of rules: the regulative rules which determine 'social order' and the instructional rules which determine 'discursive order', though in practice the two discourses are inextricable:

the instructional discourse is always embedded in the regulative discourse, and the regulative discourse is the dominant discourse (1996:28)

While the strength of the framing (that is, the level of control) contained in each of the two entwined discourses may vary, creating a range of possible modalities, their combined strength influences the 'visibility' of the pedagogy (CCC3, CCC4). In Bernstein's recent work, however, the VP/IP couplet is re-conceptualised, as a more complex range of modalities characterised as 'performance' and 'competence' models. These models and modalities exist at the deep-structural level of codes, rather than at the surface level of school organisation and practice, though it is through the latter, including forms of the earlier binary of VP/IP, that they are identified. The modalities, in turn, define what constitutes the 'legitimate text' of any pedagogic setting, and this text is 'any realization on the part of the acquirer which attracts evaluation' (1996:2). The degree of control, in other words, permeates all aspects of the 'relay', or message system: curriculum, pedagogy and evaluation.

For the child, the difference between VP and IP is marked at every level by the presence or absence of explicitness. In a VP the child will know what is to be taught, and when, and how, and what counts as successful learning. This enables her/him to achieve a sense of temporality. In an IP, however, the child 'lives in the present', and in ignorance of what count as acceptable goals and levels of achievement. The child, it can be argued, is thus hindered from taking control over her/his own learning. Children's ability to benefit from the schooling they are offered depends, finally, on their acquisition of a further pair of 'rules': *recognition rules* which enable them to decode or 'read' classroom practices, and *realisation rules* which enable them to 'act' appropriately.

All the rules of pedagogic discourse apply equally to homes, which also offer an explicit or implicit, visible or invisible, pedagogic environment (realised in forms of control, as well as in instructional methods). These environments tend also to be shaped by the codes of social class, and have 'orientations to meaning' which create their own classification and framing rules (CCC4: 108). For educational success, Bernstein believes, a 'second site of acquisition' in the home is essential - an asset which is readily available in typical middle-class homes but difficult to achieve for

many working-class families, for whom time and space are scarce commodities or unattainable luxuries.

One irony of pedagogic practice underlined by Bernstein is that *none* of its forms - visible or invisible, implicit or explicit - can be guaranteed to eradicate social class (or gender, or ethnic) inequalities in educational success. 'The fundamental proposition is that the same distribution of power may be reproduced by apparently opposing modalities of control' (CCC4: 73). Within classrooms (and *between* homes and schools) it is the complex combinations of strong and weak classification and framing, explicit and implicit practices, strict and relaxed sequencing (together with the family practices of the children concerned) which tend to perpetuate the dominant or dominated position of groups and individuals.

Nevertheless, Bernstein suggests, the potential exists - thanks to the relative autonomy he finds in all reproduction theories, as well as to Foucault's account of the power of discursive practices (CCC4 :134) - to transform pedagogic discourse, and the pedagogic device which generates it, from within schooling. Where this is achieved, Bernstein implies, the effects may be carried in the codes, and the classification and framing rules, into every part of the field of education. In 1971 he argued that 'the genes of social class may well be carried less through a genetic code but far more through a communicative code that social class itself promotes' (CCC1: 165). His recent reformulations of pedagogic discourse suggest that education may be the means of mutating these genes. Citing Smith and Tomlinson's work on school effectiveness (1989), Bernstein argues for a scrutiny of 'both the methods we are using and the culture and organisation of the school':

it is abundantly clear that the crucial lever of formal pedagogic change must be the school, and education will continue to fail to compensate for society to the extent that schools fail to meet the potential of their effectiveness. (CCC4: 23)

2.4. Bourdieu

Origins

The power of Bourdieu's social theory, like Bernstein's, lies in its comprehensiveness and "fit". His basic concepts - capital and habitus, field and

practice - can be applied in the investigation of the workings of society in every area and at every level. His theory is equally able to describe effects at the level of the state and of the family, of the school and of the university. It encompasses every aspect of human activity, from habits of nose-blowing and church-going to the choice of profession, or of pictures for the living-room. Like Bernstein's codes, it offers explanations for both the macro and the micro processes which are at work in the life of each individual subject.

Bourdieu's theoretical position evolved from his early anthropological research among the Berber tribesmen of Kabylia, where his investigation of kinship systems led him to abandon a structuralist reliance on *rules*, in favour of a theory based on *strategies*. His theory of cultural reproduction, therefore, which might otherwise be seen as determinist, offers a potentially variable model of institutional and individual processes. Like other social theorists, he views the education system as the most powerful medium of social and cultural reproduction, and hence the most important site of intervention or transformation.

Throughout his writings, Bourdieu uses the three 'founding fathers' (Marx, Durkheim and Weber) to define his methods, and to situate his own understanding of the social order. *In Other Words* (1990b) admits that he had been trying to do, for his own society, 'what Durkheim had done for primitive societies', though the 'disappearance of the effect of neutralization that goes with studying a distant, exotic society, had forced him to recognise the *political* nature of his project:

The fact of asking of our own societies traditional ethnological questions, and of destroying the traditional frontier between ethnology and sociology, was already a political act (1990b: 24).

The sociologist cannot claim neutrality while describing a system of dominance of which he is a part, and Bourdieu is continually aware of his own privileged position in the elite fraction of the dominant class.

By his own account, it was the intellectual climate he experienced as a student which prompted Bourdieu's determination to develop a theory and methodology able to synthesise the viewpoints of opposing tendencies. Retrospectively, he describes the

intellectual climate of the Sorbonne in the 1950s as a struggle between the rigid structuralism of Saussure and the voluntarism of Sartre: in social anthropology, a choice between the school of Levi-Strauss and the alternative faith of phenomenologists and ethnomethodologists (1990a). Neither approach appeared to him adequate (1990b: 3-6), and his own developing theory attempted to reconcile structure and agency, determinism and voluntarism. In doing so he was indebted, like Bernstein, to Gramsci's theory of hegemony and to Althusser's discussion of ideology and relative autonomy.

At the same time, Bourdieu was concerned to synthesise the opposing paradigms of 'objectivism' and 'subjectivism' in the methodology of social science. To resolve the dichotomy between the theoretical knowledge of 'outside observers' in the positivist tradition, and 'insiders' in the ethnographic, Bourdieu claimed, social scientists must be seen as a part and product of their social universe, as agents themselves structured by outside forces, in the same way as their research subjects. Jenkins summarises this position:

Only ... by subjecting the practice of the researcher to the same critical and sceptical eye as the practice of the researched is it possible to aspire to conduct properly objective and 'scientific' research. Only by doing this is it possible to hope to understand social reality properly. (Jenkins, 1992: 61)

On his return from participant observation among the Berbers, Bourdieu conjured the term 'participant objectivation' for his own methodology. This required a sequence of operations. First, the 'objective' exposure of the determining structures in the field (of which the agents might be oblivious); secondly, the presentation of the 'subjective' perceptions of agents; and thirdly an account of the interactions of the two perspectives, in the course of which the sociologist describes his or her own perspective, position in the field, and relationship to the inquiry. In this way, he or she could seek to escape the entrapment of their *own* illusions. As Calhoun *et al* point out, social scientists

analyse the contribution of agents' conceptions to the construction of social reality, while recognizing that those conceptions frequently misrecognize that social reality

in which case they must also acknowledge that 'scientists' constructions of their own reality... often misrecognize that reality' (Calhoun *et al*, 1993: 6). Bourdieu returns frequently to this argument.

Education as symbolic violence

The volume *Reproduction in Education, Society and Culture* (Bourdieu and Passeron, 1977), like *Class, Codes and Control* (1971) was a seminal text in the evolution of theories of reproduction. Like Bernstein's project, it both offered a theory and its associated concepts (in Book I), and demonstrated their application to the French class and educational system at a historical moment of challenge and reform (Book II).

Though the language of *Reproduction* is sometimes obscure, its overall thesis is clear, as are its origins in Marx and Gramsci: the ruling ideas, in any age, are the ideas of the ruling class, and these ideas perpetuate the rule of that class (and the whole stratified social structure) by establishing themselves as legitimate while simultaneously concealing their origins and effects. The role of education in this process is crucial, since it imposes, with 'symbolic violence', the 'cultural arbitrary' which embodies and disguises these ruling ideas. In the education system as elsewhere, symbolic violence takes the form of concealment of its own origins:

Proposition 0

Every power to exert symbolic violence, ie. every power which manages to impose meanings and to impose them as legitimate by concealing the power relations which are the basis of its force, adds its own specifically symbolic force to those power relations. (1977:4)

These 'meanings' (*Proposition 1*) are 'the imposition of a cultural arbitrary by an arbitrary power'; the means whereby they are imposed (pedagogic work / PW) establishes their legitimacy, inevitability and 'naturalness', while concealing their arbitrariness. Once the individual has accepted that this is 'the way things are', s/he colludes in her/his own exclusion from certain possibilities, by taking on the 'subjective expectation of objective probabilities'. The 'violence' is symbolic because it operates 'without resorting to external repression or, in particular, physical coercion' (*Proposition 3.1.3.1.*, 1977: 36). Thus the trick (as with Gramsci's concept of hegemony) is to win the consent of the oppressed to their own oppression, to

inculcate a belief that the social order is a natural order, and that individuals deserve their place in it. Bourdieu's term for this is 'misrecognition' (*meconnaissance*). Thus, in one instance of its operation, the attitudes and aspirations of lower-class families are dampened by their acceptance of their children's unpromising future chances as 'natural'.

Whereas Bernstein sees the perpetuation of the *status quo* as the product of codes, operating as deep structures and manifest in rules, Bourdieu suggests that the internalisation of social reality constrains practice at the more conscious level of individual expectations. This too seems a theory of considerable determinism. Within Bourdieu's Propositions however lies the crucial concept of the habitus, a mechanism with the potential to interrupt the reproductive cycle.

Habitus

The concept of habitus, Bourdieu claims, offers 'a way of escaping from the choice between a structuralism without subject and the philosophy of the subject' (1990b: 10). Nash (1993) points out that, whereas earlier users of the concept had referred to a 'state' or 'disposition' which allowed the individual a choice of moral actions, for Bourdieu habitus is constrained 'in accordance with the structural principles of the social and cultural world' (Nash, 1993: 319). Bourdieu admits that earlier theorists, including Durkheim, had 'used it in a more or less methodical way' (1990b:12), whereas his own definition of the concept is more creative:

In that respect I was very close to Chomsky, in whom I found the same concern to give to practice an active inventive intention...

I wanted to insist on the *generative capacities* of dispositions, it being understood that these are acquired, socially constituted dispositions (1990b: 13).

The habitus, though structured (by class, ethnicity, family biography, history and geography), generates a range of choices in the same way as Chomsky's deep structures generate utterance. Such a range is not infinite, since the 'embodied history' acquired during early socialization supplies its own built-in constraints, but it offers nevertheless an opportunity to deploy the skills learned in the home with some degree of freedom. This includes the freedom to 'invest' the capital bestowed by the family and community, or to leave it idle.

In its structured aspects, the habitus encompasses all the class-based, rule-based attributes of Bernstein's codes and role-systems. It incorporates the family's history of domination or oppression within the class system: its experience, for instance, of racism, migration, poverty, exclusion (or of affluence, superiority, privilege, power). The collective habitus of family, class or cultural group experienced by the child is the context within which her/his own individualized 'system of dispositions' is acquired. Since the deep structures, like Bernstein's codes, are held in common by certain groups, the *collective* trajectory of a social class or cultural group may be heavily determined. The surface forms experienced by any individual, however, are unique: 'I am talking about dispositions *acquired through experience*, thus variable from place to place and time to time' (1990b: 9).

Within the class, collective or family habitus, therefore, the unique habitus of each child is shaped by experience: a mixture of structure and contingency, including personality, birth order and gender. In the course of its early socialization, the child develops a 'practical mastery' of the skills and knowledge needed to move within and beyond the family circle, and the cultural capital (educational knowledge) to invest in the new setting of school. The child's unconscious mastery of the rules gives a 'feel for the game' which enables her/him to improvise successfully in new settings or situations. The application of the habitus is compared therefore to improvisation in jazz, which is only possible when formal expertise on the instrument has already been acquired.

The habitus thus has important characteristics which define its role in the transmission or modification of social structures:

i) though structured, it is also structuring: it enables strategies to be adopted which can change the individual's trajectory and determine the course of her/his future, and by extension that of her/his family, group or class;

ii) though durable, it can undergo change: once learned, its dispositions are never unlearned, but are transformed by the successive influence of subsequent socializing environments (school, university, work):

The habitus acquired in the family is at the basis of the structuring of school experiences... the habitus transformed by the action of the school, itself diversified, is in turn at the basis of all subsequent experiences... and so on from restructuring to restructuring (1992: 134n)

iii) though acquired in the family, it is transposable: the 'mastery' acquired in one field can be imaginatively exploited in another, throughout the individual's career.

iv) though the habitus derives from the history of individual agents, it need not trap them in it:

The habitus - embodied history, internalised as second nature and so forgotten as history - is the active presence of the whole past of which it is the product. As such, it is what gives practices their relative autonomy with respect to external determinations of the immediate present. (1990a:56)

In other words, the habitus *acquired* under the sociohistorical conditions of an individual's early childhood is subsequently *utilised* under changed sociohistorical conditions: it is this space which in Bourdieu's view fosters relative autonomy, and permits change.

Forms of capital

Bourdieu's most significant innovation is his appropriation and transformation of the Marxist theory of capital. Capital is power acquired through labour, and ultimately forms the basis of the class system and social structure, but in Bourdieu's formulation it is symbolic as well as economic. Though economic capital is the force which shapes the lives of individuals, groups and societies, symbolic capital - cultural, social, linguistic - meshes with it in complex ways to confirm or transform the life-chances of agents. While symbolic capital may often be associated with the ownership of economic capital, there is wide variation and fluctuation in this coupling. Within any class, or ethnic group, or even family, there may be individuals whose cultural capital is high while their economic capital is low (teachers and creative artists are Bourdieu's prime examples of this category). Like economic capital, symbolic capital is frequently inherited but may also be acquired: by choices made by individuals, by investments, creative moves or contingent events. Each form of capital can be converted into other forms, and is theoretically transposable across fields, though economic capital is the easiest to convert: it is simpler to buy an

'education' or cultural commodities for one's children (encyclopaedias, piano lessons, private tuition) than to convert educational qualifications into cash for them to inherit.

While 'cultural capital' is seen as Bourdieu's trademark, all his work from *Reproduction* emphasises the importance of 'social capital'. In 'The Forms of Capital', he attempts to operationalize the term:

The volume of the social capital possessed by a given agent ... depends on the size of the network of connections he can effectively mobilize and on the volume of the capital (economic, cultural or symbolic) possessed in his own right by each of those to whom he is connected . (1997:51)

Social capital does not independently produce profit for the individual, but 'exerts a multiplier effect on the capital he possesses in his own right'. It may be inherited, but requires an ongoing investment of time and energy, 'an unceasing effort of sociability' to maintain and maximize (52).

Bourdieu tends to envisage social capital as effective at the level of the town council or the golf club, but it can as easily be conceived of as operating within a parents' group or neighbourhood, where it combines with economic and cultural capital to produce significant effects.

Cultural capital and schooling.

In the field of education, cultural capital is the most potent form of capital, both in terms of its effectiveness (in producing good educational outcomes at the end of schooling) and of its legitimacy (it appears to have been earned rather than purchased). The concept evolved, Bourdieu says:

in the course of research, as a theoretical hypothesis which made it possible to explain the unequal scholastic achievement of children originating from the different social classes (1997:47).

By looking at 'the specific profits which children from the different classes and class fractions can obtain in the academic market' as a return on investment, he was able to break with 'the commonsense view, which sees academic success or failure as an effect of natural aptitudes' (47). While economists had explained this relationship in

monetary terms (costs of tuition, purchase of books, length of schooling as opposed to earning), Bourdieu's research (like Bernstein's) had revealed a more potent factor:

the best hidden and socially most determinant educational investment, namely, the domestic transmission of cultural capital (48).

What economics, and other 'commonsense' explanations have failed to recognise, he adds, is that 'ability or talent is itself the product of an investment of time and cultural capital' (48).

The argument at this point seems reproductive: those mothers (it is usually mothers) with sufficient economic capital to stay at home with their children, and possessed of sufficient cultural capital of their own, can endow their children with the knowledge, skills and attitudes which will give them an advantage when they start school. The education system, then, sanctions and legitimates the transmission of hereditary capital in the form of cultural capital (at the same time as other state agencies may try to *reduce* the transmission of other forms of hereditary capital, by means of inheritance taxes and death duties). The system allows this because cultural capital acquired in the home is always seen as *earned*, through the efforts of the individuals and the investment of time - 'Like the acquisition of a muscular physique or a sun tan, it cannot be done at second hand!' (48). It thereby 'manages to combine the prestige of innate property with the merits of acquisition' (49).

Cultural capital acquired in the home during the early years is in an 'embodied' state: the knowledge, skills and attitudes are internalised by the child, and taken with her/him to school, where they may be put into play. For the power of capital is only realised in use, and Bourdieu, who constantly deploys images from games and sport, points out that forms of capital 'are or can become efficient, like aces in a game of cards', depending on how they are played (1987:3-4). Such cultural capital may subsequently be 'objectified' (as books, musical instruments etc) and is eventually 'institutionalised' (as recognized qualifications, certificates, diplomas).

The most disturbing aspect of this account of cultural capital is the inference that some children are forever deprived of it. Unlike economic capital, which may arrive

to transform a life at any time (a windfall, a lottery win), cultural capital displays its own origins, and is valued accordingly:

It always remains marked by its earliest conditions of acquisition, which through the more or less visible marks they leave (such as the pronunciations characteristic of a class or region) help to determine its distinctive value (49).

If this is the case, children from homes low in cultural capital, and lacking in the 'cultural arbitrary' of the dominant group, are permanently disadvantaged. Not only will the 'visible marks' of the home culture be identifiable throughout their educational career, but Bourdieu suggests it is unlikely that they will ever catch up on the children who were given a head start at home. For the potency of cultural capital lies in its scarcity:

any given cultural competence (eg. being able to read in a world of illiterates) derives a scarcity value from its position in the distribution of cultural capital and yields profits of distinction for its owner. (49)

Children from dominant groups, on the whole, make an early start to becoming literate: early literacy is a rare and valued commodity. By the time that children from less advantaged groups become literate, the skill they have acquired is relatively commonplace, and valued less. Thus, as overall levels of educational attainment rise, the attainments of disadvantaged groups will almost always tend to be unimpressive, lacking in distinction.

The escape route from this reproductive cycle is *not* through the official education system (which transforms the primary habitus acquired in the home into a secondary habitus) but through the efforts of family members, from the child's earliest infancy. Middle-class children's acquisition of cultural capital, Bourdieu believes, derives its effect from 'the amount of time devoted to acquiring it', which in turn depends on the family's financial ability to contribute that time to the child's early education. Families from lower social groups, though not providing the same cultural environment as the dominant classes, can nevertheless give their child 'a gain in time, a head start' by transmitting what knowledge they have to the child in the years before school. Cultural capital, like Bernstein's invisible pedagogy, is characterised by its demand for the longest possible time of acquisition, and it is too late to catch up when the child begins statutory schooling.

Fields and practice

A field for Bourdieu is a network of relationships and a site of struggle, the context within which the individual invests her/his capital, and exercises her/his habitus. The struggle is always for dominance. Thus there is a 'field of power' at the level of national government, which acts as a blueprint for the structuring of lesser fields, and within which classes, groups and specific fields of activity compete for dominance. The field of education, for instance, contains within it all the jockeying for power of different interests, but is itself in conflict with other fields such as the field of commerce. But the number of fields is infinite, and it is possible to conceive of a school or classroom as a field, within which the habitus and capital of individuals and groups interact and compete. Any individual or group which achieves power, or accumulates capital, within a particular field, may try to transpose it into another - perhaps the political field.

Bourdieu's theory of practice gives an account of the interactions of habitus and capital within fields, and of the additional effects of the agent's awareness of time, which creates a sense of urgency and a spur to action. The pressure of time overlays the other forces in human practice, which combines the structured and determined aspects of the habitus with the creative freedom which it generates. Individual agents' practice derives from their taken-for-granted knowledge of 'how the world is',

that practical experience of the familiar universe which at the time excludes from that experience any inquiry as to its own conditions of possibility (1990a:28).

This does not *prevent* individuals from improvising, it merely sets limits to their range of improvisations.

Practice, then, consists in *strategies* - a term indicating Bourdieu's express rejection of a rule-bound structuralism. Strategies (as in ball-games, card-games and jazz improvisation) are the half-conscious moves made by an agent who already has 'practical mastery' of the 'rules of the game', and can operate without conscious recourse to them. 'Practice has a logic which is not that of the logician' (1990a:86): its logic is already internalised and embodied in the habitus, which acts 'logically' in

pursuit of its goals, 'the search (not necessarily perceived in this way) for maximum effectiveness of the effort expended' (91).

Thus strategies, which Bourdieu sees, not as expressions of free choice but rather as options chosen within a strongly structured context, are his means of reconciling the apparently irreconcilable claims of structure and agency, determinism and voluntarism. The concept offers the potential for change, though Bourdieu (like Bernstein) describes a system which is fundamentally reproductive. Within the present study, it helps to describe how small-scale differences between families appear to produce significant differences in their children's educational chances.

2.5. Using Bernstein and Bourdieu

Commonalities

As Harker and May comment, 'the intellectual projects of Basil Bernstein and Pierre Bourdieu have a great degree of similarity. Indeed, many commentators and analysts equate the two quite explicitly' (1993:169). Certainly many of their assumptions in the area of educational and cultural reproduction are held in common. For both, and deriving perhaps from their early indebtedness to Durkheim, the internalisation of the social order and social values is at the heart of human behaviour and its structural consequences. This also jointly informs their concern to integrate macro- and micro-level social theories: if society is immanent in the individual, and the individual constitutes society, any attempt to discuss one without the other is artificial and partial.

In trying to bridge the theoretical gulf between macro-level social theories and micro-level empirical evidence, both writers emphasise the interconnectedness and significance of small local choices in the larger scheme (and both are concerned to extend this understanding to the *methods* of social science). In Bernstein's view, for example, a split between macro and micro levels of analysis inhibits understanding of the relationship of individuals to society:

It is almost as if there is a self-defeating principle at the centre of sociological activity, which finds its expression in terms of distinctions like macro and micro, and substantively in terms of the polemics both within and

between these two levels (CCC3: 28)

Bernstein's response to this problem is to propose an integrated model, from the class structure of society (level 1) with its codes and 'preparing agencies', through transmission (level 2) with its classification and framing activities, to textual (level 3), in which codes are embodied in actual utterances.

Bourdieu is similarly concerned to interpret the minutiae of daily life in the light of theory constructed at a societal level. The classification in *Distinction* (1984) of household furnishings, popular music, family photos and nose-blowing habits according to social class (as defined by occupation and education) is a monumental version of Bernstein's musings on lavatories and life-styles (in 'Classifications, frames and modalities of control', CCC3).

Underpinning the fascinating detail of these studies, however, is the resolve of both writers to understand and challenge the inequalities perpetrated by the social structure: to show how the reproductive cycle can be, not merely interpreted (or 'interrupted') but set on a new course. Both view the lower educational achievements of children from lower social groups as the responsibility of schools and of society, rather than of the children's homes and communities. Bourdieu, as Nash claims, affirms the role of the family in the social-reproductive process without apportioning blame:

Through Bourdieu's work we have been able to reconstruct a theory of the family and recover the centrality of family resources to educational differentiation within a radical context which allays the fear of a retreat to cultural deficit theory (Nash, 1990: 446).

Bernstein, through his empirical studies of mothers and children, and his analysis of the long-term consequences of socialization, insisted from the start on the obligation on schools to provide appropriately for children of all backgrounds:

We must ensure that the material conditions of the schools we offer, their values, social organization, forms of control and pedagogy, the skills and sensitivities of the teachers are refracted through an understanding of the culture the children bring to the school. After all, we do no less for the middle-class child. (CCC1: 175)

In their empirical projects, however, neither Bernstein nor Bourdieu has studied the difference that ethnicity, gender and cultural background, and individual family practices, make *within* the broader working-class role system. Ethnic minority families for instance have been included parenthetically in statements about dominated groups, without any examination of the large- or small-scale empirical evidence of their parenting practices; nor has the impact of bilingualism on minority children's experience in the home or at school been seen as an issue.

As future chapters will further illustrate, neither Bernstein nor Bourdieu has provided a comprehensive explanation of the kinds of micro-processes experienced by the children and families in this study, and in some small respects the accounts they offer are actually contradicted by evidence discussed here. At the same time, their overall concepts and macro-theories have seemed to offer the best available tools for understanding and explaining the research findings. The precise categorisations of Bernstein in particular have proved invaluable in describing and interpreting the small-scale daily events of the home and school settings investigated, and explaining the long-term and cumulative impact such small events may have on children's lives.

Applications

While Bernstein's early work is associated with large-scale quantitative studies, his ideas have since been adopted in more qualitative projects. As Davies suggests,

Bernstein is enjoying a more significant resurgence among that group within the broad church of classroom interactionists and ethnographers converging on the need for a rapprochement between those who have hitherto specialized in different aspects of classroom teaching / learning transactions (1995: 139).

The 'Bernsteinian agenda', Davies says, permits an overdue synthesis of previously distinct approaches to classroom studies, which in his opinion have been inadequate and uninformative. He asks, rhetorically, 'The lights are going on in the 'black box'. What is the character of the Bernsteinian illumination?' (141). In answering, he cites the work of King (1969, 1978) on grammar schools and infant classrooms, Tyler (1988) on school organisation, and Domingos (1987, 1989) on science learning. Other studies have included SEN provision (Daniels, 1989), computer studies (Singh, 1993), and the effects of school ethos and organisation (Power, 1998; Power *et al*,

1998). Bernstein's concepts however have rarely been used to study the youngest children in UK schools, though Pollard and colleagues (1994) utilise them in describing changes in the classification and framing of teacher professionalism and classroom processes brought about by the Education Reform Act.

Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and cultural capital are more elastic than Bernstein's pedagogic theories, and have lent themselves more readily to qualitative classroom studies. Lareau (1987, 1989), Reay (1998) and Gewirtz *et al* (1994) use social and cultural capital to analyse the differential effectiveness of middle- and lower-class parents' participation in their children's education. While McLelland (1990) and Engler (1990) have used habitus to assess the choices and aspirations of college students, only Delamont (1989) and Reay (1991, 1995a, 1995b) have applied the concept to behaviour in classrooms. Most recently, Connolly (1998) uses Bourdieu's concepts to investigate the racialised and gendered identities of 5- and 6-year-olds in an inner-urban school. His study usefully positions the classroom and playground interactions he observes within the context of local and national discourses on race and gender, and establishes the links between the utterances and behaviours of the individual children, and their social and cultural situation. The present study attempts to draw similar links.

2.6. The theoretical framework of the study.

The research questions of this study place it in the tradition of the 'new' sociology of education, which has continued to investigate the contribution of schooling to the maintenance of social inequalities. Pioneering studies from the earlier period (Hargreaves, 1967; Lacey, 1970; Keddie, 1971), themselves drawing on the work of Floud *et al* (1956) and Douglas (1964), have produced a strong tradition of largely ethnographic work on educational inequality, and on the relative underachievement of children from certain groups (Sharp and Green, 1975; Ball, 1981; Lareau, 1987, 1989).

The present inquiry however investigates the pedagogic practices of homes as well as schools. The relevance of both Bernstein and Bourdieu is therefore clear. Both theorize the ways in which the home background of children shapes their experience

of school, and the ways in which schools, in turn and in consequence, shape children's futures. Bourdieu's account of the habitus, and of the interactive effects of economic, social and cultural capital, enable the shaping influences on groups or classes, and on individual families, to be described in sufficient detail for significant differences within outwardly homogeneous groups to be revealed. By these means his model achieves more than conventionally reproductive accounts, which adequately explain *group* differences (the lower achievements of children from poor and overcrowded homes, or from certain ethnic minority backgrounds, or from families with low educational attainments) but are unable to describe individual and intragroup differences: why some children, in some settings, succeed against the odds. Bourdieu's theory of practice thus combines the history of the child, family and group (expressed in the habitus) with the 'geography' of the field the child enters at 4, and the 'baggage' he or she brings along to school in the form of cultural capital to invest in learning.

Bernstein's work on family socialization meshes closely with Bourdieu's, and strengthens the sometimes amorphous concept of the habitus through its more structured lens. His descriptions of pedagogic practices enable comparisons to be made between different children's experience of learning in the home, as well as in the classroom. Once in the classroom, the rules generated by Bernstein's codes offer an understanding of the causes and effects of school practices. Classification and framing rules govern the content of school knowledge (within the constraints of statutory requirements) and the way this knowledge is conceptualised, organised and 'transmitted' to children. In addition to describing life in the classroom, they importantly define the relations between teachers and parents, and between home knowledge and school knowledge, official cultures and family cultures. Though Bernstein's early accounts (1971) describe a highly dichotomous visible and invisible pedagogy (with different outcomes for children from different social groups), the subsequent development of his theory has enabled all the permutations of weak and strong, internal and external, implicit and explicit rules to be generated.

The models have certain disadvantages in use: though precise and 'delicate', in Bernstein's view, they are at times abstract and jargonised. Nevertheless, they are

capable of pinpointing with great accuracy the processes taking place in classrooms, and their consequences for children's learning, and for this reason they are used here to describe the school practices (and their underlying rules) experienced by the sample children.

The value of both Bernstein's and Bourdieu's concepts is that they enable links to be made, not only between home and school pedagogic practices, but between these and the distribution of power at local and national levels, which shapes both family and school processes. Awareness of these links is essential to understanding the force of the pedagogy of the early years classroom, and recognising the invisible (and unintentional) ways in which it may differentiate between children.

In the chapters which follow, the concepts and arguments of Bernstein and Bourdieu are used both sequentially and simultaneously. Discussion of the sample families (chapter 5) relies on Bourdieu, while their pedagogic practices are understood through both Bourdieu and Bernstein (chapter 6). The analysis of the classroom (chapter 7) depends on Bernstein, but the interpretation of individual children's experience of school (chapter 8) and of their outcomes (chapter 9) links Bourdieu's forms of capital with Bernstein's recognition and realisation rules. Though neither of them might approve of the ways their concepts are utilised, the value of the interpretations I believe justifies any liberties taken.

Chapter 3

Investigating the field: research into children's school achievement

3.1. Introduction

This study of young children's learning investigates the pedagogies which derive from the class and cultural backgrounds of their homes and school. The questions it asks spring from the intersection of a range of related research areas, as well as from the social theories discussed in the previous chapter. They ask about the sources of family practices in homes, and teachers' practices in schools, and their effects on children's learning. The similarities and differences, and the relationship between, these two fields as the child moves from home to school constitute a third area for investigation. These three broad fields are crossed by findings on the macro-level associations of social class, ethnicity and gender with children's learning outcomes. The evidence of group differentials in outcomes prompts a consideration of the mediating practices which enable macro influences such as those described by Bernstein and Bourdieu to take effect.

This inquiry, however, investigates intra-group differences in educational experience, rather than broad social patterns of achievement. It calls on evidence of many aspects of home, school and home-school practices to explain how it is that children from within a small neighbourhood and of similar socio-economic background, entering a single school classroom, experience education so differently, and enjoy such different levels of success.

This chapter considers the principal explanations which have been offered for unequal school achievement. The effects of home practices (and 'deficits'), school practices (such as 'labelling'), and problems of discontinuity and dissonance between home and school cultures, have all been demonstrated in previous studies; here a more complex and differentiated explanation is sought, which takes account of all aspects of children's early experiences, including the macro-context.

Both quantitative and qualitative studies make important contributions to this discussion. Neither of the major paradigms - the positivist or the interpretive - is seen as having greater claims to truth or less risk of partiality. Most findings in this field complement, rather than contradict, each other in building a description of the effects of class and culture, and the pedagogic practices of homes and schools, on young children's learning.

3.2. Family cultures and pedagogies

From the 1960s at least, group differentials in children's achievement have been attributed, periodically, to parental practices (see critique in Bernstein and Davies, 1969). The explanations have covered a range of differences and deficits associated with families' class and cultural background: in language use and literacy practices, socialisation and training, self-esteem and self-efficacy, aspirations and 'interest'. Class-based differences in the perspectives of teachers and parents (few teachers, but many parents, are working-class) are compounded by cultural differences (few teachers, but many parents, belong to ethnic minorities). In Bernstein's terms, the codes by which teachers and parents are socialised are frequently different, and teachers carry the codes of the dominant group. Some of the evidence for these explanations is examined next.

Class and cultural sources of parenting practices

Empirical studies of the causes and effects of particular family practices, which were relatively rare at the time of Bernstein's early work in the field (1958, 1959, 1960) are now plentiful. The full-scale attempt to theorise parental beliefs, and their consequences for parental and child behaviours, has been a phenomenon largely of the 1980s (Goodnow and Collins, 1991; Harkness and Super 1996). But many aspects of this work (such as the sources of parents' beliefs in their class and community position; the relation of their beliefs to specific childrearing patterns; the consequences of such patterns for children's school behaviour) were prefigured by the Newsoms' longitudinal project (1963, 1968, 1976), which was both intensive and extensive in its methods and analysis.

The Newsoms drew some disturbing conclusions about the outcomes of social class-related practices from their data. Their analysis of hours of semi-structured interviews enabled literally hundreds of small but ultimately influential class differences in socialization to emerge, all of which favoured middle-class children on entry to formal schooling: play routines, problem-solving, the resolution of disputes; the tolerance of messiness and emergent sexuality and 'imaginary friends'; the emphasis on reciprocity and shared responsibilities, all carried a social-class component. The authors conclude that:

privileged parents, by using the methods that they prefer, produce children who expect as of right to be privileged and who are very well equipped to realize those expectations; while deprived parents, *also by using the methods that they prefer*, will probably produce children who expect nothing and are not equipped to do anything about it (1976: 445)

The methods in question are uncovered through the detailed probing of day-to-day parenting decisions - on bed-times, chores, discipline, punishment, praise.

Parental ethnotheories are described by Harkness and Super as

embedded in the experiences of daily life that parents have with their own children at particular ages, as well as being derived from the accumulated cultural experience of the community or reference group (1992: 374)

Recent research has sought to describe the causal relationships between such theories and children's educational outcomes (Sigel, 1992; Goodnow, 1992; Super and Harkness, 1986; McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1992). This body of work incorporates both positivist and interpretive paradigms, and a range of methods from ethnography to controlled experiment. While many studies are concerned with the relation of parental beliefs to infant care, others directly address the consequences for children's learning. At the same time, a *bidirectional* model of socialisation (in which children are seen as active in their own socialisation *and* that of their parents) has supplanted earlier transmission models (Maccoby, 1992).

Cultural context is now recognised as the major influence on individual, family and group ethnotheories. As interest in cross-cultural parenting practices has grown, so too has an awareness of the narrow ethnocentricity of most of the English-speaking world's beliefs about human development, including the semi-sacrosanct notions of

play, of intelligence, and of appropriate childcare. On the one hand, historically situated beliefs within Western cultures, particularly within the US, have been recognised as arbitrary, changing over time, in volatile fashion, from cast-iron discipline to the obligation to have 'fun' (Wolfenstein, 1955; Newson and Newson, 1974). On the other hand, more recent work in cross-cultural contexts has challenged 'common-sense' beliefs about developmentally appropriate behaviour in early childhood (and hence about developmentally appropriate provision: Bredekamp, 1987; Rogoff, 1990; Harkness and Super, 1992; Mallory and New, 1994; Woodhead, 1996; James, 1998).

While Western educators can readily comprehend the differing beliefs of distant cultures (such as the richly antithetical ideas of human intelligence held by New England WASPs and Kenyan Kipsigis: Harkness and Super, 1992), a more difficult accommodation is required to accept oppositional or minority beliefs within mainstream Western cultures. European, American and Antipodean research over the last decade (Delpit, 1990, 1995; Harry *et al*, 1996; Gregory and Biarnes, 1994; May, 1994; Lubeck, 1988) has compelled the recognition that ethnic minority parents within white majority societies have different and deeply-held beliefs as to the appropriate provision for their children.

Sigel *et al* (1992), discussing the design of research into parental cognition (or 'parental belief systems'), emphasise the importance of distinguishing parental beliefs from parental behaviours. They point to two kinds of study: those linking parental cognition directly to child outcomes (eg. parental belief in cognitive development as an interactive process > children's test scores) and those which look for mediating practices (eg. parental beliefs about cognition > parental behaviours with their children > children's test scores)(1992: xviii). Additionally, many studies take the process one step further back, to look at how social class influenced the beliefs which produced the behaviours which produced the children's outcomes. Regression analysis can then isolate each of these effects and describe its relation to any other variable - though not always satisfactorily:

For those of us who study parent beliefs as predictors of parent actions, the success rate for uncovering robust findings between stated beliefs and overt

actions has been disappointing. Although it seems reasonable to contend that what a person believes guides his or her action, the empirical data do not provide the kinds of information that support this conviction (Sigel, 1992: 433)

Harkness and Super argue that, however the relations between parental beliefs, parental behaviours, and child outcomes are theorised, in practice those qualities which are prized within a culture or subculture are those which most children acquire:

Children's competence in the culturally marked areas is accelerated, whereas development in other domains lags if indeed it is even recognised (1992: 389)

Their definition of the developmental niche (composed of the physical and social environment, culturally regulated childrearing practices, and the psychology of the individual caregivers) permits a comprehensive description of the developing child's unique environment (Super and Harkness, 1986). Their identification of similarities in the underlying structures within this environment suggests regulative principles similar to those which constitute codes for Bernstein, or the structures of habitus for Bourdieu, or provide the blueprints for Bronfenbrenner's (1979a) systems analysis:

Regularities in the subsystems... provide material from which the child abstracts the social, affective and cognitive rules of the culture, much as the rules of grammar are abstracted from the regularities of the speech environment (1986: 552).

The disadvantaging effects of these 'rules' when the child from a working-class or ethnic minority cultural background enters a middle-class / majority educational setting are suggested by a number of studies which describe mediating practices such as those referred to by Bernstein and the Newsoms. Baumrind's (1971, 1972) description of authoritative, authoritarian and permissive parenting styles is the basis of several studies which relate social class to parenting styles and children's school success. In general these support the finding that the (commonly working-class) effort to produce conformity, to discourage autonomy, to teach didactically, to accept innate gender differences, to give unconditional support to children, is almost always associated with low educational outcomes for children (Clark, 1983; Schaefer and Edgerton, 1985; Okagaki and Sternberg, 1993; Alexander and Entwistle, 1988; Stevenson, Chen and Uttal, 1990; McGillicuddy-DeLisi, 1992). Parents from higher

socioeconomic groups, in contrast, are more likely to foster autonomy, to encourage play and fantasy, and to regard the child as an active participant in its own education, all of which are independently associated with high learning outcomes in school (Miller, 1988; Rubin and Mills, 1992; Schaefer and Edgerton, 1985; Lightfoot and Valsiner, 1992).

The onus on educators, therefore, is to offer a pedagogy and curriculum which allows *all* children to succeed. Like working-class parents, ethnic minority parents in the UK (as in the US) are found to favour more didactic teaching methods, and to have more faith in rote learning at home and at school, than their white counterparts (Ghuman, 1980; Ghuman and Wong, 1989; Tizard *et al*, 1988; Tomlinson and Hutchison, 1990). In such cases, the 'culturally marked' and valued practices of the minority group may be in direct opposition to those of the majority culture within which power is acquired and exercised.

Family language and literacy practices.

It was Bernstein's misfortune to be associated with the deficit view of working-class family language which became a popular explanation for the poor achievement of children from lower social groups in the 1960s. Though he himself was careful to describe 'difference' rather than 'deficit' in lower-class families' use of language, his critics have not always acknowledged this distinction. Labov (1972), who selectively misinterpreted some of Bernstein's findings, recognised that, despite the logic and effectiveness of non-standard English for its users, children's use of such variants was misunderstood and denigrated by schools. Tough (1976) argued that some children's inability to use language for complex purposes meant that their well-developed linguistic competence in home settings was inadequate for school learning. Her views, together with the training programme which developed from them, were widely disseminated among teachers.

Longitudinal and systematic studies, however, have shown that this explanation underestimated both young children's language development in lower-class homes, and the debilitating effects upon it of school settings. The Oxford Preschool Research Project, the work of Davie and colleagues in Stoke, the Bristol Language

Development Research Programme, and Tizard's TCRU study, all reached very similar conclusions: that the language use of young children from all backgrounds is sophisticated, complex and suited to handling abstract concepts in favourable, familiar contexts, but that all children, and lower-class children in particular, display a far more limited linguistic competence in educational settings (Wood *et al*, 1980; Wood and Wood, 1983; Davie *et al*, 1984; Wells, 1981, 1985, 1986; Tizard and Hughes, 1984). This evidence is discussed further below (3.3).

An important aspect of family practice identified by the Newson study, and extensively researched since, is the social class dimension of family literacy practices: 'attitudes to literacy vary so much from one social group to another that a child's progress through school is significantly predetermined before he ever sets foot in the place' (Newsons, 1976: 445). This effect has been attributed both to the overall 'expectancy' of middle-class children, their 'air of entitlement' (Heath, 1983: 242), and to specific 'middle-class' practices which have been associated with school success in reading and writing: 'books in the home', bedtime stories, parents who model literacy habits by their own frequent reading and writing. Efforts to improve the literacy prospects of educationally 'disadvantaged' children, from the EPA projects of the 1960s to initiatives such as Birmingham Bookstart (Wade and Moore, 1993) in the 1990s, and many home-school reading schemes (Hewison and Tizard, 1980; Hannon, 1987; Topping, 1992), have focused on instructing parents to share books with their children, an emphasis supported by findings from the Bristol Reading Project (Wells, 1986). Conscientious parents, meanwhile, have continued to focus on teaching and testing the ABC to promote their children's learning (Newsons, 1976; Heath, 1983; Harste *et al*, 1984; Tizard *et al*, 1988). Specifically class-related differences in home literacy teaching are described by Stuart *et al*, (1998).

The dichotomy between literacy practices derived from middle-class cultural assumptions (that the child naturally acquires membership of a literate culture) and those derived from working-class or minority beliefs (that the child needs to be taught the 'basics' by rote in order to crack the literate codes of the school and society) mirrors the divide between research on literacy as a sociocultural practice,

and research into the technology of learning to read and write. Though the former perspective is widely seen as giving the fullest explanation of children's learning processes and outcomes, the latter focus presently dominates national education policy (phonics, 'word-level work' and 'sentence-level work' take precedence over unstructured literacy activities in the National Literacy Strategy, DfEE 1998). It remains to be seen whether this 'technological' approach enables children from homes *without* the cultural capital of a literate background to acquire 'cultural literacy' as well as to decode print.

Heath's account of the literacy practices of families from three distinct groups living in close geographical proximity suggests that it is social class which determines the family behaviours associated with school success, rather than the differential practices of cultural communities defined by race (1983:10). Both black and white children in the poor rural communities she describes are disadvantaged, in different ways, as they progress through the school system. The children of the urban middle-class, white and black, share assumptions and experiences which enable them to succeed in school. The preschool experiences which anticipate their success, however, do not consist in learning letter-names or decoding text, but in a more abstract familiarity with literacy as a social practice:

As the children of the townspeople learn the distinction between contextualized first hand experiences and decontextualized representations of experience, they come to act like literates before they can read (1983:256).

'Acting like a literate' is one way of acquiring an 'air of entitlement' (1983: 242): like their parents, these children regard the lifestyle of their home as 'natural', while the accomplishments of poorer children are 'learned'. The white working-class parents who assiduously *teach* their children pre-school, and the black families who believe their children must *learn* for themselves, both produce pupils whose knowledge and skills are poorly adapted to school.

Recent research into literacy as a sociocultural practice, learned during family socialization and shaped by ideological and political forces, has confirmed many of the early arguments of Bernstein and colleagues (1973, 1975). Though the methods are different, the findings confirm the class and cultural base of influential family

practices. Harste *et al*'s study of early writing (with 68 children aged 3 to 6) supports Heath's and the Newsoms' findings. Though oddly claiming that 'race, sex and class' did not influence the quality of literacy events in children's homes (1984:40), they proceed to confirm that middle-class and working-class homes differed significantly as 'literacy-rich environments', and that one was more favourable to subsequent school success than the other. Parental direct instruction was *not* of benefit to children (the 'worst disasters' they claim (43) are when parents set out to teach the ABC). But parents who 'perceive themselves to be middle-class, despite their residence in a lower socioeconomic neighbourhood...tend to provide middle-class kinds of literacy-related experiences for their children' (42) which stand them in good stead on entering school literacy programmes.

The redefinition of 'literacy' as a form of cultural discourse has largely displaced studies of literacy as a 'neutral technology'. Street's (1984) definition of two versions of literacy - the autonomous (neutral and conservative) and the ideological (cultural and politicised) - is a touchstone for many subsequent researchers. Literacy, Street insists 'is always embedded in some social form... and it is always learnt in relation to these uses in specific social conditions' (1984: 43). This view is debated by, among others, Scribner and Cole (1981), Harste and colleagues (1984), Hamilton *et al* (1994) and Coles (1998). One controversial contribution, Gee's (1989) essay on 'Discourses' as 'ways of being in the world', recalls the socialization theories of both Bernstein and Bourdieu. Gee defines 'primary Discourse' as family socialization (we could talk about the acquisition of the habitus or of codes), while 'secondary Discourses' are learned in other social institutions:

I define literacy as *the mastery of or fluent control over a secondary Discourse* (1989:9).

In Gee's view (contested by Delpit, 1993) dominant discourses are never fully, or comfortably, acquired by members of dominated groups.

Two ethnographies stand out among the many detailed studies of family and community literacy. Street's (1984) study of the maktab, or Koran school, in an Iranian village, argues against conventional wisdom that the rote-recitation of the Koran, 'often without reading in the sense of "cracking the phonemic code"' which is

practised there (1984:133) teaches children valuable concepts, and transferable skills, related to print, the alphabet, the coupling of oral and written forms, and the comparability of different texts, commentaries and applications. 'Religions of the book', Street believes, actually encourage flexibility and interpretation, and help the children with the new literacies which they go on to acquire at school. He emphasises the need for children to be apprenticed in their own culture's 'ways of taking meaning' from texts (1984:156; Rogoff, 1990), so that their literacy learning is integrated with their overall social and cultural learning.

A similar view is presented in Purcell-Gates' (1995) study of a white working-class family who remained illiterate despite the combined onslaught of educational agencies, environmental print, the mass media and the exigencies of city life. Purcell-Gates argues that the family's exclusion from mainstream cultural life results from their membership of what Ogbu (1987) would call a caste-like minority (the rural Appalachian poor), and explains their unique literacy, or substitute, practices by reference to the family's historical and geographical origins and the requirements of their current existence. Purcell-Gates' account of the cumulative effects of structural variables on one family can be compared with two earlier ethnographic studies which identify the family behaviours which permit the children of poor and dominated groups to achieve in school. Both Clark (1983) and Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines (1993) identify the family characteristics associated with the school success of children to whom education has not come 'naturally'.

These studies and others (Harste *et al*, 1984; Vernon-Feagans, 1996) reach some common conclusions. Typically, high-quality 'literacy events' (Heath, 1982,) 'literacy encounters' (Harste *et al*, 1984) or 'activity settings' (Volk, 1997) occur in households where children share in the family's spontaneous literacy practices (paying bills, writing rosters of household duties, making shopping lists or reading magazines), where appropriate forms of literacy are an integral part of family life, where children are included in family plans and projects, and where social meaning and value are given to children's early mark-making activities. Parental efforts to teach children to read and write according to their expectations of 'school learning', rather than in accordance with their naturally occurring family and cultural practices,

tend to be less likely to benefit the children; while the 'quantity of books' as opposed to the ways they are used, is no guide to the child's future success (Heath 1983, Harste *et al*, 1984).

Parental interest in education.

Differing levels of parental 'interest' in education have been offered as explanations for differential levels of achievement since the 1960s, when links were made between low social class, parental attitudes to education and children's achievements (Jackson and Marsden, 1962; Douglas, 1964). Evidence to both the Douglas and the Plowden committees indicated that the behaviour which teachers interpreted as 'lack of parental interest' (infrequent contacts with the school) was closely associated with low socioeconomic status and low educational outcomes, though Bernstein and Davies (1969) rejected the use of 'frequent contact' as a measure of parental attitude and interest. The inclination to attribute blame to parents was stemmed by the publication of evidence given to the Plowden committee by parents themselves, who were almost without exception intensely 'interested' in their children's education, but felt excluded from participating in it. The report established the terminology of 'partnership', 'participation' and 'involvement' which underlies subsequent home-school initiatives (discussed below, 3.5).

Parental interest continues to be underestimated, post-Plowden (Young and McGeeney, 1968; Cyster *et al*, 1979). Steedman argues that this illustrates teachers' (generally middle-class) view of working-class childhood as 'a kind of pathology' (1988: 82). The era of 'partnership' has been slow to change teachers' underlying attitudes, in the US as well as the UK. Lareau's American teachers judge parental interest by the frequency of the parent's appearance in the school (1989); Moles (1993) cites national teacher surveys claiming that parents 'lack interest in their children's learning', in contradiction to the expressed views of the parents surveyed; while Chavkin and Williams' survey of over 1000 ethnic minority parents shows that 95% expect to help their children regularly at home (1993:75), and *all* would like more information on how to teach their children at home. Similarly, Tizard and colleagues' (1988) study of London schools confirms that the parents (mostly working-class, 50% ethnic minority) in their sample had taught their children some

form of school-related knowledge since their early years, and continued to do so once the children were at school.

Ethnic minority parents are particularly likely to be judged 'uninterested' in their children's education by teachers, though all the evidence points in the other direction. One of the earliest surveys of minority parents' views on their children's education (Rex and Tomlinson, 1979) found that families who came to Britain in the post-war years had high educational and occupational aspirations for their children, wanted them to achieve more than they themselves had, and had faith in the British education system's ability to produce such outcomes. Though their 'interest' in their children's schooling was high, it relied on a colonial understanding of schools as places where teachers carried out their professional duties without parental interference, while the role of parents was to instil respect for teachers and disciplined habits, and encourage their children to work hard and obey. The gradual realization that ethnic minority children instead of making good progress, were stereotyped as low achievers and 'behaviour problems', prompted a wave of counter-argument (Coard, 1971; Stone, 1981; Reeves and Chevannes, 1988).

Teachers who are unaware of parents' actual views may cling to stereotypes which assume a lack of parental interest in education. Such 'interest' may take effect in two ways: by supporting the child's learning, and by influencing the behaviour of teachers towards the child. Arguably, if the teacher is unaware of the interest, it loses half its effectiveness. Teachers' beliefs and assumptions underlie the evidence discussed next.

3.3. School culture and pedagogy

There is no convincing evidence currently available for any substantial role on the part of schools in generating inequalities in educational outcomes between social classes, genders or ethnic groups. (Foster *et al*, 1996: 174).

The continuing debate between researchers, such as Foster, who believe school practices can *not* be blamed for the differential achievement of groups, and those who implicate classroom and organisational practices in these outcomes, raises both large issues of research methodology and detailed issues of interpretation (Pilkington,

1999). Within ethnographic studies of schools (which are acceptable to both 'camps' so long as they present convincing and triangulated evidence: Gillborn, 1998; Foster *et al*, 1996), some questions of interpretation are likely to remain contested. Nevertheless, the weight of evidence is with those studies which describe schools, in particular secondary schools, as perpetuating and institutionalising (if not 'generating', as Foster says) group differences in achievement and expectations. Ball's (1981) study, which concerns 'the playing out of social structural and cultural forces in the school', claims that

Social class emerges as a major discriminating factor in the distribution of success and failure within the school examined here (1981: xv).

Ball situates himself in the tradition of Lacey and Hargreaves, and draws on Bernstein's concepts of strong and weak framing in his analysis (197).

Research into 'school effects' in the Early Years demonstrates considerable consensus. Investigations of group differentials in achievement conclude that, like parents, teachers may believe themselves to be acting in the best interests of children while sometimes doing the reverse. A discrepancy is often found between teachers' beliefs and intentions, and their actual classroom practice (Sharp and Green, 1975; Biggs and Edwards, 1992; Bennett and Kell, 1989), and such practices may unintentionally disadvantage individuals or groups. In the Early Years, teachers' professional practices are closely entwined with their views of childhood, and their (culturally acquired) developmental expectations of young children (Bennett *et al*, 1997). These 'common-sense' assumptions are the basis both for classroom teachers' preferred pedagogic practices, and for their early typifications of children. This section discusses transition to school (particularly for children outside the middle-class mainstream) and evidence of classroom practices - many of them based on teacher typifications and expectations - which differentiate between groups and individuals, and influence achievement.

Transition to school.

As the age of entry to school drops (so that in the UK, by the 1990s, more 4-year-olds were in Reception than in Nursery settings: McCail, 1987; Joseph, 1993; Woodhead,

1989) a series of studies has investigated both the potential difficulties of transition, and the lasting effects these may have.

A comprehensive picture of the discontinuities children experience on starting school is presented by Cleave and colleagues (1982), who describe the restrictions on children's autonomy, opportunities, social interactions, and use of time and space. Parental expectations of schooling as a time when staff would 'get cracking with teaching them' (1982:92) conflict with the 'play' ideology of the teachers, yet in many cases neither expectation was communicated to the children. These findings are replicated by Barrett (1986), who presents evidence of emotional distress and poor social adaptation to school, and the resultant damage to children's confidence, competence and cognitive development. Like Cleave and her colleagues, Barrett found that parents and teachers understood the purposes of school differently, which added to children's confusion about why they were there and what they should be achieving. At the same time, the asymmetry of their new situation prevented them from asking questions or offering their own opinions, as they naturally would with their parents (1986:62; cf. Tizard and Hughes, 1984; Wells, 1986). A subsequent study (Barrett, 1989) highlights the meanings attached to 'work' and 'play' in the home and school, and suggests that children's discovery of the different values attached to these terms enables them to 'fail' from their earliest days in school.

Bennett and Kell however, in a study of 60 schools which compared the expressed views of practitioners with observations of their practice, found major discrepancies: a strict work/play divide, and a preponderance of directed tasks aimed at basic skills, compared with the teachers' 'belief' in experiential and child-centred learning, the development of autonomy and responsibility, and a concern for the whole child (1989:17-18).

These findings are supported by subsequent ethnographic work, which includes a consideration of the needs of children from minority backgrounds. Cousins (1990), in a study of 10 Reception classes for the Early Years Language Project, offers the case study of a traveller child as illustration of the gap between the 'real world' experienced outside school and the artificial world of the classroom. Ross (1996) and

Gregory and Biarnes (1994) describe the additional problems experienced by bilingual and bicultural children and their families, which may extend far beyond language difficulties to a range of unmet expectations and unproductive interactions with the educational establishment. Boyle and Woods show the subtle difficulties of adaptation experienced by Asian children, even in a welcoming school with 'sensitive and caring' staff (1998: 110).

As Pollard (with Filer, 1996) emphasises, individual children in one classroom can have highly differentiated experiences from the start of their school careers, even within a 'mainstream' group where cultural dissonance between the home and school is at a minimum. Pollard's report on the first stages of a longitudinal study of a small sample of white middle-class children illustrates the variability of the children's transition, although most share the mainstream, professional background of their teachers:

each child experiences the classroom in the light of their particular structural position, learning stance, interests, strategies, identity and cultural background. The ways in which each child interprets the classroom setting, acts and learns is bound to reflect this differential positioning and to lead, in consequence, to differential experiences and outcomes (1996: 281).

The present study investigates the variability of children's classroom experiences with a more heterogeneous group of children.

Teacher typifications and expectations.

School entry is the crucial point: the child's attitudes towards their own abilities and their commitment to school are formed by a very rapid 'reading' of the teacher's appraisal of their readiness to learn (Jowett and Sylva, 1986: 29-30)

The mediating practices whereby schools transform structural variables in children's home backgrounds into determinants of their learning can commence at transition. The majority of the differentiating and stratifying practices documented have their origins in the expectations, well- or ill-founded, of teachers (Cotton and Wikelund, 1998). There is evidence that the effects of teachers' early typifications of children (as individuals, as groups or as whole school populations) on their pupils' experience range across language and control styles, curriculum coverage, classroom

organisation, and home-school links: the whole catalogue of 'school effectiveness' criteria (Mortimore *et al*, 1988; Smith and Tomlinson, 1989; Reynolds and Cuttance, 1992; OFSTED, 1994). These dimensions of schooling form also the substantive content of Bernstein's description of pedagogic discourse (1971,1973, 1975, 1990).

While the early studies of expectation-effects on children's learning (Rosenthal and Jacobson, 1968; Rist, 1970) have not been replicated, similar processes have been described in subsequent classroom research. Studies by Brandis and Bernstein (1974), and Sharp and Green (1975) supported Rist's description of 'the process whereby expectations and social interactions give rise to the social organization of the class' (1970:412) as well as his diagnosis of the origins of this process in social class or status. Rist's teacher derived her initial assessments of her pupils from their speech, social behaviour, dress and skin colour (lightness was favoured although both teacher and class were African Americans), and teacher-talk about their siblings and families. Teachers observed and interviewed in related studies (Blatchford *et al*, 1989; Hughes, 1989; Vernon-Feagans, 1996; Connolly, 1998) similarly characterise their children in socioeconomic terms. Vernon-Feagans concludes,

the beginning of school has become an insidious way to segregate many among us who do not fit into the mainstream of the culture (1996: xiii)

The consequences of early assumptions made about each other by teachers and pupils, and the classroom hierarchies which evolve to position children within their new milieu, are discussed by Waterhouse (1991), who uses a symbolic interactionist approach to describe how the construction of pupil identities by teachers, which begins during the children's first week of school, becomes self-fulfilling over the 4-year period of his study. Waksler's (1991) study of the ways in which kindergarten children were categorised as 'normal' or 'deviant' supports these findings. The interactive process whereby children 'take on' and develop the behaviours and abilities expected of them is described in some detail by Rogers (1989), Waterhouse (1991), and Siraj-Blatchford (1998), though the teacher behaviours which trigger the process have proved elusive except to ethnographic researchers. Nevertheless Blatchford *et al*'s (1989) analysis of the outcomes of the process shows that teacher expectations had a significant influence on children's outcomes even after all other

variables, from home background to attainment at the start of the school year, had been excluded.

Strong evidence emerged in the Junior School Project of the links between teachers' subjective assessments of children and their social and cognitive outcomes: for academic achievement, teachers' ratings were influenced by social class over and above measurable differences in ability, and for behaviour a strong relationship was found between ratings of poor behaviour and low social class. The study concluded that in some schools and classrooms, teacher expectations were responsible for much of the variance in attainment: 'different pupils may be presented with quite different psychological environments by their teachers' (Mortimore *et al*, 1988: 163).

Ethnographies of schooling in the UK and US suggest that the effects of pupils' socioeconomic background on teachers' behaviour can be multiplied by teachers' stereotypical beliefs about ethnicity. In the UK, characterisations of African Caribbean and South Asian children from nursery onwards indicate the low expectations frequently held of minority pupils (Blatchford *et al*, 1989; Gillborn, 1990; McCann, 1990; Ogilvy *et al*, 1990; Biggs and Edwards, 1992; Wright, 1992a, 1992b). These accounts are mirrored in the US by teachers' views of African-American, Native American and Latino pupils (Michaels and Collins, 1984; Delgado-Gaitan, 1990; Moles, 1993; Bloch *et al*, 1994).

Teachers' own accounts of the differences in the educability of ethnic groups, even where sympathetic, may reveal a deficit view of minority communities. Wright's (1992b) ethnography of a primary school and Gillborn's (1990) of a secondary school depict particularly strong stereotypes of African Caribbean and Asian children as, respectively, over-disruptive and over-submissive. As Wright shows, Asian children's 'docile' image gives them no protection from the dislike and disapproval of many teachers, from a low-level curriculum and language experience, or from bullying. African Caribbean children are more openly reprimanded, more negatively controlled, and subjected to unsympathetic assumptions about their parents and home culture, freely expressed by teachers. Wright, like Gillborn (1990) argues that teachers' typifications of children are centred on an 'ideal-client' drawn from the

teacher's own lifestyle and culture, and necessitated by the stresses of the everyday classroom situation and the development of 'coping strategies' (Pollard, 1985). The result, Wright demonstrates, is that even in written documents like school reports and classroom logs a teacher may record intemperate comments about ethnic minority children, believing them justified by commonly-shared assumptions about minority communities. Both Wright's and Gillborn's classroom observations record the impact on different children, and different groups, of teachers' unconscious assumptions and discriminating behaviours.

Similar stereotyping of ethnic minority children, with demonstrably adverse effects on their educational experience, underlies the findings of Ogilvy *et al's* (1990) observation study in eight nursery schools, in which the majority of staff held negative views of Asian children's language and behaviour. Since few real interactions between staff and children occurred, the initial prejudices against the children persisted, unmodified by any actual knowledge of their abilities or attitudes, and all their behaviour was viewed as either over-active or over-passive. From the authors' account it seems unlikely that any of the Asian children in their study benefited from their preschool experience, whereas the Scottish children in their classes enjoyed positive, affectionate and individualised feedback from their carers.

In the US, Bloch and colleagues' (1994) two-year study of children from socially and educationally 'at risk' groups (Asian, African-American and Latino) shows the very similar effects of teachers' ignorance about children's backgrounds, and their assumptions about children's behaviour and abilities, on their interactions with them in the classroom. In particular teachers' assessments of individuals' cognitive skills and attitudes was strongly influenced by their language use.

The additional effects of gender expectations on teachers' behaviour and children's outcomes are illustrated in Tizard *et al's* (1988) large-scale study in London infant schools, which shows the two-way split in educational experience and outcomes which occurs when white and black boys and girls of similar social class and entry attainments enrol in the same classrooms and schools. Systematic observations of white/black boy/girl quartets in each class display the multiplier effects which after

three years of school make black boys more vulnerable to criticism and blame. Other writers describe the subtle prejudice whereby Asian children, regarded by many as individually 'a pleasure to teach' (Wright, 1992b: 46) still suffer the consequences of teacher disapproval of their *group* identity (language, religion, personal habits, social mores), and how this cultural disapproval affects girls in particular (Brah and Minhas, 1988; Bhatti, 1999).

The principal source of dissent in this field is the work of Foster and colleagues (Foster, 1990, 1991, 1992; Foster *et al*, 1996). Foster's own school ethnography, while acknowledging differential treatment of African-Caribbean pupils by teachers, argues that such practices were justified by the prior misbehaviour of pupils. On this basis, he would argue that 'Taken overall, this body of research fails to establish that discrimination against...black students occurs on any scale' (Foster *et al*, 1996). This is clearly an area in which partisan interpretations are likely: in Gillborn's view (1995) the source of the fundamental disagreement between Foster and colleagues, and other researchers, is that they derive their definitions of racism from within different communities – not just black or white groups, but teacher or pupil groups.

While 'self-fulfilling prophecies' (based on false or inaccurate information) may be rare, 'sustaining expectations' (based on well-founded assessments) may have equally damaging long-term consequences (Rogers, 1989; Siraj-Blatchford, 1998). If teachers' *expectations* are based on the evidence presented by children on entry, the same teachers' *practices* may maintain them at this level for the rest of their school career. The recent introduction of statutory baseline assessment may institutionalise this process: Cotton and Wikelund (1998) suggest that sustaining expectations have their strongest effect on the youngest children, and are always more effective in lowering than in raising achievement.

Curriculum access

One of the principal ways that 'low-expectation' individuals or groups are maintained as low-achievers is through unequal curriculum provision. As Klein (1993) states, 'How much pupils learn depends mainly on how much they are taught', and teachers may be unaware of the extent to which this is influenced by their own

'low-level prejudice' (1993: 128). Sharp and Green (1975) showed the differentiating effects of a theoretically child-centred but practically laissez-faire policy of judging children's 'readiness' to be taught, and teaching only on demand. Tizard *et al*'s study of over 30 London schools (1988) showed large variations in the curriculum coverage offered to different groups and individuals. Regression analysis reveals that 'the relationship between expectations and curriculum coverage was more than just the accurate matching by the teachers of curriculum to children's entry skills':

those children for whom teachers have higher expectations tend to be given a wider range of activities in mathematics and written language, and this is over and above those children's attainments at the beginning of the year (Blatchford *et al*, 1989:28)

In this study, both teacher expectation and curriculum coverage were independently related to children's progress in maths, reading and writing, while curriculum provision had a demonstrable effect which other teacher behaviours did not. As the authors point out, other variables in pupil achievement (individual children's dispositions, 'subtleties in teacher-child interactions', 'psychological processes within the child': 29) are far more difficult to identify and control, whereas the level of curriculum experience is amenable to deliberate manipulation.

Huss-Keeler's (1997) case study of a Year 1 classroom with a Pakistani majority group describes a chain of effects in which teachers' perceptions of parents' 'interest' in and support for their children's literacy learning (based on the parents' level of English fluency and their frequency of attendance at school, and bearing little relation to those parents' expressed views when interviewed) influenced their expectations for children's progress *and* the learning experiences and classroom resources they made available to the children.

On the whole, ethnographies of schooling (Wilcox, 1982) suggest that teachers' judgments of ability restrict the quantity as well as the quality of learning experiences offered to children, though often with benevolent intentions. As Tomlinson (1984) suggests, teachers who are particularly sympathetic to the needs of minority children tend to offer a caring social and pastoral environment for their pupils, to compensate for the perceived racism and hostility of the society outside the school, rather than the

academically challenging environment which many minority parents would prefer for their children.

It is widely understood, however, that, even supposing teachers were able to self-regulate and 'offer' an identical curriculum and pedagogy to all children, not all would benefit equally from it. Cultural differences arising from both social class and ethnic background result in children starting school with different learning styles as well as different forms of cultural capital. The need for culturally different *teaching* styles is discussed by Cazden (1995) and Ladson-Billings (1992), and examples of alternative pedagogies based on 'democratic' or interactive principles are described by Heath (1983) and Moll (1992). Siraj-Blatchford points out that

it does not matter how broad and balanced a curriculum is; if it holds no cultural relevance for the child then she is unlikely to perform to the best of her ability (1994: 145)

Organisation and Control

Another identified constraint on children's learning is the degree of control exercised by teachers over some groups and individuals, affecting their ability to become independent and confident learners. As Anning states, 'infant teachers cannot operate a pedagogy which is based on principles which encourage children to take responsibility for their own learning if they at the same time are discouraging children from taking responsibility for their own behaviour' (1991:63). Rogers (1989) reports on the demotivating effects of high levels of control on children, with the result that the experience of schooling actually reduces children's intrinsic motivation: 'Pupils for whom teachers have low expectations will be held for longer at the lower levels of control than will pupils for whom teachers have high expectations'.

High levels of teacher control, and controlling language, are reported by Rist (1970) for the so-called 'slow learners' in his study, and regularly reported in teachers' management of minority children (Ogilvy, 1990; Wright, 1992; Biggs and Edwards, 1992). Biggs and Edwards' study of five teachers of 5-6 year old children in multiracial classrooms reveals that even educators committed to multicultural and

antiracist practices discriminate significantly in their language interactions with white and Asian children. Both quantitative and qualitative evidence was collected of each teacher's talk with different ethnic groups, and of the views of adults and children connected with the school. The authors conclude that 'even those teachers we considered to be both more sensitive and aware were found to behave in subtly different ways towards ethnic minority children on the basis of the quantitative analysis' (1992:174), and that 'there can be no doubt of the urgent need to sensitise teachers.... to the implications of these patterns of behaviour for different educational outcomes' (175).

Systematic studies of classroom discourse show certain children as particularly subject to controlling behaviour by teachers. These groups include working-class children seen as linguistically deprived by their more middle-class teachers (Tizard and Hughes, 1984; Hughes, 1989; Wells, 1986), black monolingual children whose vernacular and discourse differs from white mainstream forms (Michaels, 1986; Michaels and Collins, 1984; Cook-Gumperz, 1986; Gillborn, 1990) and bilingual children whose language abilities are hidden from teachers (Cummins, 1989; Cummins and Swain, 1986). Edwards and Davis point out that even well-intentioned teachers find it difficult to communicate successfully with children whose home discourse is a 'marginalised or stigmatised variety of English' (1997:471). Though Asian children in particular experience patronising and directive behaviour from teachers (Ogilvy, 1990; McCann, 1990; Gillborn, 1990; Biggs and Edwards, 1992; Wright, 1992b) some of these authors show that the alternative English of some African Caribbean children also provokes an authoritarian or even hostile response in some teachers.

For bilingual children, such as those who participate in the present study, the barriers of literal comprehension precede those of cultural understanding. Cummins (1989; Cummins and Swain, 1986) demonstrates the extent to which bilingual children's needs are misunderstood, and underestimated, by teachers, who see children's acquisition of conversational fluency (frequently mere 'chunking' of pre-fabricated language) as an indication of their ability to access the academic curriculum.

Any of the initial disadvantaging factors in children's school experience may become institutionalised and self-perpetuating through forms of classroom organisation which keep children semi-permanently at their 'entry level'. Ability-grouping from children's earliest days in school is still common practice. In recent years as in Rist's (1970) study, where classrooms are streamed or ability-grouped, Cotton and Wikelund assert, 'students in low groups and tracks have been found to get less exciting instruction, less emphasis upon meaning and conceptualisation, and more rote drill and practice activities than those in high reading groups and trackings', ensuring that they are never likely to progress out of their initial group (1998). Similar findings emerge from recent UK studies of collaborative groupwork and mixed-ability organisation (Bennett, 1991; Bennett and Dunne, 1992; Galton and Williamson, 1992; Hallam, 1996).

3.4. Home-school connections

The importance of close links between parents and teachers in promoting children's school achievement has been recognised since the post-Plowden period. The EPA projects of the late 1960s (Halsey, 1972) largely focussed on pre-school intervention, using home visitors and liaison teachers, since 'it is the point at which, properly understood, the networks of family and formal education can most easily be linked' (Halsey, 1988: 254). On a much larger scale, the US Head Start programme, complemented by a variety of innovatory and experimental programmes such as High/Scope, (Schweinhart and Weikart, 1980) attempted to tackle the cycle of low achievement among poor families by involving mothers in their children's preschool settings, in order to bring about a sustainable change in the lives of the families (Lazar and Darlington, 1982). The crucial importance of maternal involvement in the programme is revealed by the drop in scores and outcomes for the one year in which restructuring prevented home visits and parent participation from occurring (Weikart and Radin, cited in Smith, 1984). Lazar and Darlington conclude that the long-term success of such programmes was due to the self-perpetuating feedback loop they set up between mothers and children, a 'mutual positive reinforcement process' in which each celebrated and confirmed the other's success (1982). Similar effects were observed from the more successful EPA projects (Halsey, 1972; Armstrong and Brown, 1979).

Pros and cons of 'parent involvement'

The benefits for parents, as well as children, of participating in their child's learning, are frequently cited. Empowering parents is seen as a means of changing the whole family's orientation towards education and social mobility, and many projects (as described in Smith, 1984) have succeeded by fostering parents' self-esteem and confidence in their own knowledge and expertise, rather than by appearing to teach them how to parent properly. Tizard and colleagues (1981), reporting on their two-year project with parents in Nursery and Infant schools, emphasise that parents only become involved when persuaded that they have a real contribution to make, while Wolfendale (1983) advocates regarding parents as co-educators. Interventions and studies reported in the 1980s embody the concept of parents as partners, rather than as problems, in the work of professional educators (Bastiani, 1988; Malek, 1996) while Plowden cites Bruner to applaud the pre-school movement's role in enhancing mothers' confidence:

One needs to ensure that parents keep confidence in their own skills as childrearsers. They must be encouraged to feel that they too can have a large and expert hand in raising their own children. (Plowden, 1988: 257)

A range of research supports this view. The early studies of home-school involvement in children's reading (Hewison and Tizard, 1980) suggest that partnership in this area can over-ride the expected effects of low social class, ethnic minority group membership, or poor parent educational levels. In Sallis's view (1988: 287), 'It was not about reading, but about messages received by people who had previously assumed that they had no educational function or value'. Though the findings of subsequent controlled interventions (Topping and Wolfendale, 1985; Hannon, 1987, 1989; Hewison, 1988; Topping, 1992) were more ambiguous, Hannon and Jackson (1987) demonstrated the positive impact of teachers' home visits to involve parents on children's progress in reading.

As 'partnership' between parents and teachers has become enshrined in public policy (DES, 1985, 1986, 1988) there is evidence that involving parents may enhance rather than eradicate educational inequality. Brown's (1993) study of the effects of IMPACT supports the arguments of Lareau (1987, 1989, 1994) that greater opportunities for parent involvement may allow those parents already in possession

of cultural capital to exploit it even more successfully, while those with little may be left further and further behind, widening the gap between the higher and lower status parents still more. According to Lareau (1994; also Chavkin, 1993; Vincent, 1996; Reay, 1998) teachers welcome parental involvement which is positive, supportive and deferential but are quick to reject the intervention of parents who are critical, so that only those parents whose personal biography has equipped them to manipulate their relationship with the school benefit from the access which is offered. Lareau's view is based on a small-scale and in-depth ethnographic study, and contrasts with Epstein and Dauber's (1991) proposition that

school programs and teacher practices to organize family and school connections are 'equalizers' to help families who would not become involved on their own (290).

Epstein's long-term survey research into the mechanisms whereby parent involvement programmes can benefit families from all social groups has produced a body of evidence unmatched by any other project (Epstein, 1987, 1994, 1995, 1996). Her findings from 15 years of controlled studies in inner-city schools indicate the type of home-school links which enhance equality and promote achievement. Epstein insists however that to be effective with all parents, such action must be initiated by schools and teachers, and must be founded on strong school policies and teacher convictions. The outcome of poorly implemented parent-involvement efforts is that parents and teachers have lower opinions of each other, and lower expectations for children (Epstein, 1995).

Obstacles to involvement

In the 1990s, parental involvement is officially recognised as an important factor in school improvement and effectiveness (Mortimore *et al*, 1988; Smith and Tomlinson, 1989; Reynolds and Cuttance, 1992) and is required as part of a school's development plan by OFSTED (1994). Hughes and colleagues (1994) however found that, despite the efforts of successive governments to publicise the National Curriculum, and to require schools to keep parents informed, most parents were still ignorant of what was taught in schools and wished both to know more, and to learn how they could help their children. Above all their study indicates that most parents and teachers do not share their views with each other, and are therefore basing their

expectations and practices on inappropriate information. This is all the more serious when the effects of such mutual ignorance on teacher expectations and behaviours, and through them children's educational experiences and outcomes, are considered.

The largest UK study (Jowett and Baginsky, 1991) of parent involvement reveals widespread misunderstanding between parents and teachers of their mutual roles, and concludes that parent involvement practices, to be equitable and effective, must be planned and resourced with care and with full consultation. Support for their findings comes from a study of multicultural schools in Inner London (Siraj-Blatchford and Brooker, 1998) which shows that most parents' work with their children in the home is unrecognised by teachers, who are still largely ignorant of parents' attitudes, despite much potential common ground on which effective partnerships could be based.

Vincent's (1996) case study of two inner-city schools suggests that consensual terms like 'partnership' and 'participation' conceal professional/parent divisions which are acutely experienced by both groups but never acknowledged at a school, or collective, level. Even those teachers most sympathetic to the stressful circumstances of parents held a paternalistic, deficit, view of their abilities to raise children appropriately.

In addition to social-class differences in home-school relations (described by Lareau, 1994; Vincent, 1996; Reay, 1998), ethnic minority families are found to encounter particular difficulties in working with their children's teachers (Tizard, Mortimore and Burchill, 1981; Tomlinson, 1987; Wright, 1992; Moles, 1993; Vincent, 1995, 1996; Harry *et al*, 1996). Early evidence of the relatively low achievement of some ethnic minority pupils, and the findings of the Plowden (1967), Rampton (1981) and Swann (1985) committees, have prompted a number of studies of the beliefs and attitudes of teachers and minority-group parents, most of which demonstrate that little progress has been made in this area of parent involvement.

Teacher perspectives

Many studies explore the clear distinctions made by teachers between 'white', African-Caribbean and Asian children and families. Tizard and colleagues (1988), who invited teachers to comment on African-Caribbean families, found that 70% of them offered negative stereotypes about home circumstances and parenting practices, views which are replicated in the schools studied by Wright (1992) and Gillborn (1990). Where African-Caribbean parents are not regarded as 'apathetic' (Vincent, 1995), they are regarded as troublesome, argumentative and hard to please. Their high prioritisation of education (as demonstrated by their commitment to direct teaching in the home and to supplementary schools) is not expressed in ways which teachers find congenial: several ethnographic studies (Mac an Ghail, 1988; Gillborn, 1990; Wright, 1992) describe serious conflict between teachers and parents from this group.

Asian parents, however (most South Asian families are seen by teachers as a homogeneous group, regardless of ethnic, religious or cultural background: Vincent, 1995) tend to be appreciated by teachers for encouraging docility, respectful attitudes and traditional 'family values' in their children (Wright, 1992). Their low level of participation in school is understood as being due to language difficulties. While this makes for more cordial relationships, as Vincent points out 'the attitudes of some of the teachers concerning Asian parents veered towards paternalism' (1995:182), assuming that the 'community' needed 'help' from the school, and combining ignorance of actual family and community practices with an implied superiority.

Minority parents' perspectives.

Research on minority parents' experience of their children's schooling shows both similarities and differences across ethnic groups. Rex and Tomlinson (1979) found that over two-thirds of their sample were satisfied with their children's schools, though parents of West Indian origin were more critical of teachers and their methods than were Asian parents, whose principal concern was their children's cultural and linguistic maintenance. Subsequent evidence of African-Caribbean children's (especially boys') low school attainment has prompted dissatisfaction, though the majority of parents are content during their children's early years in school (Holden

et al, 1996). Wright's informants 'revealed a disillusionment with almost all aspects of their child's schooling', feeling that 'the school was not adequately fulfilling the academic expectations which they had for their children' (1992b:80), while Pratt's (1994) small-scale study reports that African-Caribbean mothers (under 30, and born in the UK) 'firmly believed that education in their home countries was better than in England' (31). Parents interviewed by both Vincent (1996) and Reay (1998) disclose the extent to which they are silently supplementing the school's perceived deficiencies by a range of means which they can ill afford, such as private tutors and Saturday schools. The concerns all these parents voice - over strict discipline and hard work - mirror those of African-American parents (Harry, Allen, McLaughlin, 1996; Lubeck, 1988; and see Delpit, 1990, 1993), who want 'old-fashioned good teachers' whom their children will respect and slightly fear, and have no objection to corporal punishment if it will help their children to learn. Tomlinson argues that 'although most minority parents in Britain are, in crude socioeconomic terms, 'working-class', their positive views and high expectations of education have always approximated more to 'middle-class' views' (1987:220).

Asian parents, though generally more satisfied with their children's school experience (Holden *et al*, 1996), remain puzzled and sometimes dismayed by the evidence before them. Tizard and colleagues' research into parents' understanding of the purposes of preschool activities (1977) showed that, whereas West Indian mothers were unsure of the educational functions of play, Asian mothers were 'baffled' by preschool provision. Like most immigrants from former British colonies they had no understanding of 'learning through play', and no attempt was made to explain it to them (Tizard *et al*, 1981). Nevertheless, as their children move through the school system they express their gratitude for the education offered: most studies describe South Asian parents as pleased with their children's progress and trustful of the professional skills of English teachers, though middle-class parents have some anxiety about academic standards, and working-class parents about discipline and morals (Ghuman, 1980; Ghuman and Gallop, 1981; Dhasmana, 1994). Joly's Mirpuri informants (1986) similarly appreciate the efforts of English teachers, whom they believe to be fair, kind and non-racist, while Pratt (1994) finds Asian mothers convinced that British schooling is better than the education of their homelands. Only

Wright (1992) and Vincent (1995, 1996) report disaffection among Asian parents, though concerns about cultural maintenance are widespread.

The latter concerns are most strongly expressed by Muslim parents, a group perceived by many teachers as particularly difficult to access and involve (Macleod, 1985; Joly, 1986; Shaikh and Kelly, 1989; McCann, 1990; Vincent, 1995). Macleod argues that the strength of local community ties among Muslim populations, which is of enormous benefit to the families, impedes the formation of strong links between families and schools. Other studies (Carroll and Hollinshead, 1993; Haw, 1998; Grimes, 1995) focus on the particular requirements and demands of some Muslim parents - for prayer facilities, Islamic teaching, clothing and dietary restrictions, single-sex provision, or changes to PE practices. Shaikh and Kelly (1989) like Tomlinson (1987) point to the underlying conflict between the materialist and individualist values of most Western societies and the submission of the individual to the values of the faith, the culture and the community practised within Islam.

Bangladeshi children, who are included in the present study, start school within this complex network of traditions and expectations, and with their parents are subject to many of the obstacles to school success described above. Existing studies of Bangladeshi pupils in the UK indicate that their outcomes on school leaving are among the lowest of any group (Home Affairs Committee, 1986; Smith and Tomlinson, 1989; Gillborn and Gipps, 1996), while surveys of their school experience suggest that home-school relationships and mutual understanding remain very poor (Hutchison and Varlaam, 1985; Murshid, 1990; Tomlinson and Hutchison, 1990; Tomlinson, 1992; Bhatti, 1999). The parents interviewed by Vincent express extreme frustration and disaffection over their inability to support their children's learning, or influence the school curriculum and ethos, or prevent indiscipline and harassment (1995, 1996). More than any other group of comparable size, Bangladeshis seem to be effectively excluded from participating in their children's education.

3.5. Summary

Children's acquisition of the knowledge and skills required for school success depends on the pedagogic practices and curriculum of their homes and schools. This chapter has discussed evidence of some of the family and school practices which contribute to explaining their differential success.

The curriculum and pedagogy of children's homes, which is the subject of Part Two of this study, supplies not only the knowledge and skills on which children are formally and informally assessed on school entry, but also their dispositions towards learning, and expectations. All these aspects influence their chances of school success, and are theorised by both Bernstein and Bourdieu. Family practices deriving from different class and cultural experiences, outlined above, will be discussed in the analysis which follows.

School practices, and school knowledge, which are discussed in Part Three, are shown by research to be both differently offered to, *and* differently experienced by, children in accordance with teachers' views of their pupils, and pupils' ability to engage with school culture. Where children's class and cultural background bears little resemblance to that of their teachers, connections between home and school may be minimal and tenuous. Poor and minority children, such as those who are the subjects of this study, are at particular risk of experiencing dissonance between their home and school learning experiences.

Chapter 4

Research methodology and methods

4.1. Introduction: ethnography and theory

This study investigates the relationships between children's early experiences in their homes and their first experiences of school: between the curriculum and pedagogy of their families, and that of their first classroom. It is interested in the processes which make up children's early learning and also in the way that they, their families and their teachers understand and interpret these processes. Its intention is, by taking a magnifying lens to a small sample of children, to relate the minutiae of their daily lives both to their home and school learning, and to the broader social and cultural contexts of these experiences. The pedagogy and curriculum offered in each setting are viewed as deriving from the class and cultural background of the providers. The small-scale local 'findings' therefore are interpreted through concepts from large-scale social theory.

The methodology and methods of the study necessarily reflect this emphasis. Methodology, in Griffiths' down-to-earth definition, is the 'rationale for the way in which a researcher goes about getting knowledge' (1998: 35), and must suit the kinds of knowledge that are being sought – in the present case, detailed data on domestic and classroom processes, individual and family beliefs and biographies, and the participants' understanding of these. It must also serve the *purposes* for which this knowledge is obtained: in this case, the exploration and development of theoretical concepts which can help to explain the data and potentially inform educational policy and practice. Such theories, Power argues, are incapable of being 'tested' empirically, since they generate their own codes which when operationalised tend to be self-fulfilling (1998: 12). For this reason she and others (Ball, 1991; Connolly, 1998) argue that ethnographic methods are indicated. Some aspects of ethnographic methods are discussed below (4.2).

Of particular importance is the relationship between ethnography and theory. The data constructed during ethnographic work meet none of the conventional

requirements of social science data (reliability, validity and 'freedom from bias') and can therefore be used neither to test hypotheses nor to prove or falsify theories. Hammersley's 'minimum requirement for a theory' (1987: 285) is that it makes explanatory claims of the type, 'if A, then B'; since ethnography investigates a particular case, or culture, and does not claim generality, such an explanatory claim, based on a handful of individuals in one setting, would have little force.

Ball however proposes a quite different rationale and objective for ethnography. The method, he states, 'aims to capture part, at least, of a social totality', so that:

complexity and interrelatedness rather than simplicity are the end points. The law of parsimony – that that theory is best which explains in the simplest way – does not apply. *Concepts are the goal rather than law-like generalizations.* (1991: 189, my emphasis).

In working towards concepts, Ball believes, ethnographic researchers replicate the common human processes of 'knowing and making sense'; in the same spirit, Massey and Walford describe the ethnographic process as similar to the knowledge-building activity of children growing up and acquiring the rules of their society (1998: 10).

It is frequently claimed that theoretical concepts used in the analysis of ethnographic data must be 'grounded' in the investigation – emerging naturally from the data rather than from the prior theorising of the researcher. No such claim is made here. The theoretical frameworks offered by Bernstein and Bourdieu were considered relevant and persuasive before the fieldwork for this study began, though both the uses and the limitations of their concepts only became apparent during the analysis. Some aspects of their work therefore are used extensively in framing the presentation and interpretation of the data, while others are declared unhelpful in this particular setting. The helpfulness of integrating certain concepts to explain children's classroom progress – by fusing Bourdieu's social and cultural capital with Bernstein's recognition and realisation rules – emerged relatively late in the analysis and writing of the data. For this reason it is accurate to describe the study as *exploring and developing* theory, rather than creating or 'testing' it.

This chapter discusses the features of ethnography (conventional and critical) which inform the methods of this study; ethical and epistemological aspects of the research; the research design; and the ways in which the multiple forms of data were constructed and analysed.

4.2. Ethnographies of schooling

Ethnography shares many characteristics with non-ethnographic case study research. Both types of inquiry tend to study in depth the 'naturally occurring' behaviour of individuals or groups, in their 'natural' settings, in 'real time', with a mixture of methods including participant observation. Fetterman describes ethnography's distinguishing features as two essential tenets: that it will represent the *participants'* view of its case, and that its objectives include the investigation of *culture*. In his description, 'The ethnographer is interested in understanding and describing a social and cultural scene from the emic, or insider's perspective' (1989: 12).

The 'new sociology of education', which prompted the widespread use of ethnography in school and classroom studies, is associated with a common aspect of such studies: their tendency (unlike some other forms of educational research) to see schooling as reproductive rather than reforming work. Wilcox is one of those to make this argument most forcefully. Schools, she argues

are not set up to socialize children for membership in some ideal society, they are set up to socialize children for membership in their own society as it currently exists and as it is likely to exist in the near future. (1982: 271)

Anthropologists, regarding this process as inevitable, tend to see schools as *transmitters* while researchers from other disciplines, in common with many teachers, believe them to be in the business of reform and transformation. Wilcox's is a particularly strong version of a widely held reproductive view among ethnographers (and see Peshkin, 1982)

Ethnographies of schools inevitably offer a considerably diluted version of the full-scale ethnographic immersion of anthropological studies (both of exotic locations and of 'street-corner societies'). Pragmatically, Spindler's 'Criteria for a Good

Ethnography of Schooling' demand that observations should be prolonged, repetitive and contextualised; that an inquiry's principal questions and hypotheses should emerge from the study setting itself; that the sociocultural knowledge of participants should be sought and presented; and that 'cultural variation over time and space' should be assumed as a 'natural human condition' (1982: 6-7). In the classroom as in the remote village, the 'native view' must be inferred, the tacit 'native' knowledge must be made explicit, and the interactions between researcher and respondents must 'promote the unfolding of emic cultural knowledge in its most heuristic, "natural", form' (1982:7). Validity is achieved, Spindler believes, by 'prolonged and intimate contact with, observation of, and inquiry about, repetitive patterns of behaviour and interaction' (1982:17). Classroom studies, which offer the opportunity to observe repetitive patterns of behaviour, a clearly bounded culture, and high levels of interaction between participants, do not require *full-time* participation. Many school ethnographies gain their evidence of the regularities in school life through a part-time presence over an extended period (Reay, 1998; Pollard / Filer, 1996; Connolly, 1998).

Like many other ethnographers of advanced societies (see for instance Fetterman, 1989; Delgado-Gaitan, 1993; Delamont and Atkinson, 1995; Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994) Spindler is indebted to Geertz's explorations of the theory, ethics and methods of the approach. Particularly influential is Geertz's concept of 'thick description': an essentially theoretical description which makes 'intelligible' the conceptual world inhabited by its subjects, by 'sorting out the structures of signification' which underlie the surface flow of speech and action (1973:4). Thick description explains, interprets and theorises the culture it is presenting:

because the essential task of theory building here is not to codify abstract regularities but to make thick description possible, not to generalize across cases but to generalize within them (1973:26)

Where such theories within cases prove valid, they can be applied successively to other cases: not with a view to *replicate* the findings, but in order to increase the generality and power of the theory:

In ethnography, the office of theory is to provide a vocabulary in which what symbolic action has to say about itself - that is, about the role of culture in human life - can be expressed (1973:27).

As Wolcott argues, 'The ethnographer's task focuses not on recounting events but on rendering a *theory of cultural behaviour*' (1987: 41). Any school study which lacks this 'ethnographic intent' (the investigation of its culture) should not in his view be called an ethnography. Gregory and Williams make a similar claim, arguing that ethnography produces a 'cultural grammar' (1998: 23), the set of rules required for membership of a group.

Recent discussions of ethnography emphasise additionally the multicultural and multi-perspectived nature of ethnographic knowledge. The research setting is constituted of the contradictory voices of the different groups and individuals within it, including that of the researcher (Fetterman, 1989; Delamont and Atkinson, 1995; Atkinson and Hammersley, 1994; Haw, 1996). The ethnographic approach is congruent in this respect with the rejection of objective truths, single standpoints and grand narratives associated with poststructuralism and postmodernism (Clifford, 1986; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Griffiths, 1998). In Fetterman's account, 'good ethnography requires both emic and etic perspectives', and the emic perspective 'compels the recognition and acceptance of multiple realities' (1989: 31-2).

Ethnographic studies have made a major contribution to educational research in this country (Sharp and Green, 1975; Willis, 1977; King, 1978; Ball, 1981; Pollard, 1985, 1996; Gillborn, 1990; Wright, 1992; Epstein, 1993; Connolly, 1998; Reay, 1998) and particularly into research into educational equity or social justice (Griffiths, 1998). The sociological orientation of these studies, as well as presenting the emic (participants') view, also emphasises the etic perspective (defined by Fetterman as 'the external, social scientific perspective on reality', 1989:32). 'Local' findings, and the 'meanings' of research subjects are situated within the sociohistorical, and political, moment of the fieldwork

The status of both emic and etic knowledge, however, is problematic. Representing emic knowledge, which may once have seemed straightforward, is recognised as a dubious venture in the present self-questioning and self-conscious intellectual climate (Clifford, 1986; Rabinow, 1986). Verbatim quotations from interviews or

observations, like every other form of evidence, are by definition selective and biased (and may confirm 'damaging stereotypes' of dominated groups: Bhavani, cited by Griffiths, 1998: 125). Even if the utterances of respondents have not been 'elicited' too suggestively, the 'ethical ethnographer' is described as exercising her power in the process of selecting, manipulating and interpreting the data (Reay, 1996: 63). Etic or 'external' perspectives, equally evidently, are constructs derived from the observer/researcher's own perspective and values, and in the last analysis have no claim to reliability.

At the extreme, contemporary scepticism about the truth and validity of research findings (anticipated by Geertz, 1973) is articulated by contributors to Clifford and Marcus (1986). Geertz's characterisation of anthropological writings as 'fictions', crafted by authors with the rhetorical effects of literary style in mind, initiated what Atkinson and Hammersley describe as a 'rhetorical turn' in ethnography (1994: 254) which paralleled the challenges to concepts such as 'truth', 'reality', 'knowledge' and 'evidence' within feminism, poststructuralism, postmodernism and cultural studies (Griffiths, 1998). Hammersley in particular (1992) cautions against emphasising the literary and rhetorical status of the text at the expense of careful evaluation of the arguments and methods.

Direct challenges to the validity of research findings (including the findings of 'scientific' positivist research) are countered with a range of appeals to reason, 'logical validity' (Power, 1998) and to the reassurances offered by techniques of triangulation and other strategies for completeness and credibility. The untrustworthy nature of both data and its interpretation are consciously foregrounded by the reflexive stance, which acknowledges the influence of the researcher's own experience and values on both data and interpretation, and recognises the researcher's presence as a participant in the field.

These issues are discussed further below (4.4). But we should remember that they were anticipated in Bourdieu's early formulation of 'participant objectivation', the strategy whereby the would-be 'objective' description of structures, and the subjective views of agents, were to be set in dialogue with the structured and

structuring perspectives of the researcher in the setting. Bourdieu's principled shift from structuralist 'ethnology' to his own version of 'reflexive sociology' anticipated many current methodological and epistemological debates.

4.3. Critical ethnography

Critical ethnography, along with other forms of critical social research (Angus, 1986; Lather, 1986; Harvey, 1990) has evolved as part of what can be seen as a 'second-wave' challenge to the pre-eminence of positivist paradigms in social science. As such it has sought to go beyond the interpretive paradigm formerly seen as the sole alternative to positivism (Cohen and Manion, 1994), which offered phenomenology, ethnomethodology, symbolic interactionism and conventional ethnography as strategies for constructing meaning.

While positivist social science appeals to the 'truth' of tests for validity, reliability and replicability, interpretive studies have sought to establish the 'credibility' and 'trustworthiness' of their findings through the constant comparison and evaluation of qualitative data (Cohen and Manion, 1994; Denzin and Lincoln, 1994; Robson, 1993). Critical research, sometimes seen as a third paradigm, can be distinguished from both positivist and conventionally interpretive research by its epistemology, methods and purpose.

In response to challenges to the status of positivist social research, and to debates over the validity of interpretive research, critical research attempts to set multiple forms of evidence in dialogue (Harvey, 1990). Its epistemology and methodology are inclusive of multiple sources and versions of knowledge, and multiple types of evidence; its aim, in the view of Griffiths (who prefers the description, 'research for social justice') is the creation of 'uncertain knowledge' (1998: 80). But in addition its explicit purpose is to move beyond knowledge to praxis: to challenge, rather than merely explain, the oppressive systems and practices it discloses (Lather, 1986; Anderson, 1989; Harvey, 1990; Siraj-Blatchford, 1994).

In adopting an ideological agenda, critical research argues that objective or 'value-free' research is an undesirable as well as an unattainable goal. Namenwirth asserts:

Scientists firmly believe that as long as they are not *conscious* of any bias or political agenda, they are neutral and objective, when in fact they are only unconscious (cited in Lather, 1986: 257).

There is a good deal of consensus on this view. Dey argues that 'The danger lies not in having assumptions but in not being aware of them' (1993: 64), while Power believes that the greatest risk to the status of data comes from 'those personal values and commitments that lie beyond critical reflection' (1998: 21). In Delamont and Hamilton's view, a socio-political consciousness is essential in educational ethnography: they cite Walker's claim that:

any description of classroom activities that cannot be related to the social structure and culture of the society is a conservative description (Delamont and Hamilton, 1984:38)

One of Hammersley's criticisms of conventional ethnography is that, being ideologically 'innocent', it can serve as a 'vehicle for ideology'. In his view,

What is required is that the relevances and the factual and value assumptions that underlie ethnographic descriptions and explanations are made explicit and justified where necessary (Hammersley, 1992: 28)

Where conventional ethnography might aim for 'neutral' description of a social and cultural setting, viewed through the eyes of its participants, critical ethnography sets out its stall as a consciously ideological activity. As such, it argues that *all* description is 'theoretical' and *all* distinctions between data and theory are naive. A 'pure' version of grounded theory, for instance, which assumes that the researcher has an open mind until the data generate hypotheses, is as unattainable as a 'pure' ethnography.

May (1994) describes the characteristics of critical ethnography in the field of education: that it sees the 'commonsense' knowledge in school settings as a social and cultural construction which selectively advantages and disadvantages certain children and parents; that its perspectives combine the meanings of participants with meanings of which they are unaware; that it is explicitly informed by social and cultural theory (rather than 'waiting' for theory to 'emerge' from the data); that it challenges structuralist accounts which ignore human agency; and that it focuses on

questions of power. Like Anderson (1989), May claims that 'The overriding goal of critical ethnography is to free individuals from sources of domination and repression' (1994:52).

Angus (1986) similarly emphasises the need to 'unmask' the ideological content present in all research, and argues that ethnography must demonstrate the 'dialectic' between theory and data:

If the canons of critical research are to be taken seriously, there is no sensible distinction between theory and data - for the generation of data through observation and participation involves selection and interpretation that must reflect judgements that are theoretically based (1986:65).

Lather (1986) proposes that the relation of data to theory is one of reciprocity. Where this dialogue or dialectic is not achieved, she feels, there is a tendency towards 'conceptual overdeterminism': this she argues was evident in some work in the British 'new sociology of education', in which the 'nondialectical use of theory leads to a circle where theory is reinforced by experience conditioned by theory' (1986: 261). What is needed is a less dogmatic and more receptive approach:

open, flexible theory-building grounded in a body of empirical work that is ceaselessly confronted with, and respectful of, the experiences of people in their daily lives (261)

Without such flexibility, she argues, the researcher's theoretical framework may become 'the container into which the data must be poured' (267). Lather's discussion of the criteria for validity and reflexivity is taken up by Anderson (1989) in a systematic account of the requirements of 'critical reflexivity'. Anderson argues that, 'unless ethnography is viewed as mere naturalistic description, the issue of reflexivity is at the centre of any discussion of ethnographic method' (1989:254).

Critical ethnography, therefore, utilises the in-depth participant methods of conventional ethnography to elicit and represent the knowledge and understandings of actors in the setting, but situates them within a social, historical and ultimately political description of the structural forces which shape both setting and actors. The present study, in presenting the perspectives of children, parents and teachers on the schooling they jointly experience, attempts to relate these perspectives to the structural aspects of their situation, and to the explanations offered by social theory.

4.4. Ethics and research knowledge

The ethics of research relationships

Critical theorists from all perspectives agree that the research relationship is fraught with ethical difficulties, particularly when the subjects of the inquiry include members of dominated or disadvantaged groups (Lather, 1986; Harvey, 1990; Stanley, 1990; Siraj-Blatchford, 1994; Troyna, 1995; Griffiths, 1998). Qualitative researchers have tended to argue that their own face-to-face methods are more respectful of their subjects than the 'impersonal' methods of large-scale survey or experimental research. Yet the researcher-respondent relationship has an intrinsic asymmetry, inasmuch as it is the researcher who initiates the contact, regulates the interactions, and then leaves the scene in order to make her/his own uses of the respondent's data (in Reinhartz's (1979) term, 'the rape of the respondent'). Not only low-status or socially-excluded respondents are at risk of exploitation: Ball suggests that even experienced teachers can 'find themselves manipulated into saying more than they intended' when questioned (1991: 181), while Griffiths points to the infamous Milgram experiments as an example of the power of researchers to gain compliance from their subjects (1998: 88). Epstein (1998: 38), while acknowledging this, believes that some respondents ('fascists or powerful elites') deserve less consideration than vulnerable groups.

The need to improve the symmetry of research relationships was first cited by feminist researchers; most discussion of research methods in this connection has focused on research on women, where even the 'respondent-friendly' face-to-face interview has been critically scrutinised (Oakley, 1981; Finch, 1984). Arguing for reciprocity, Stanley emphasises that:

the known are also knowers, research objects are their own subjects; objectivity is a set of intellectual practices for separating people from knowledge of their own subjectivity. (1990:11).

Reay goes further: in order to avoid 'stealing the words out of women's mouths', as she puts it, the researcher must make herself a visible part of the research, 'subjecting the *position* of the observer to the same critical analysis as that of the constructed object at hand' (1996:60). The *process* of producing knowledge by

research therefore needs to be seen as an integral part of the product (the research report) and the researcher needs to be overt about her/his methods of both obtaining and interpreting such knowledge.

Simply improving one's face-to-face 'techniques' then does not answer the case; reflexivity on the part of the researcher must start with an awareness of her/his own values, and how these relate to those of the research subjects. (Researchers, it is argued, whatever their personal status, are members of a high-status group in society). This is an epistemological as well as an ethical issue: when *all* knowledge is recognised as partial and value-laden, the status of any data must be seen as dependent on 'who said what *to whom*' – the relationship of the respondent to the researcher – as well as on how the researcher interprets what is said.

Ethical and epistemological considerations are particularly pressing when both the subject of inquiry and the settings are personal - in studies of family values and domestic practices, and in the respondents' own homes and community spaces. In the present study the potential for unequal research relationships, and therefore for unreliable data, demanded that all relationships with respondents be subjected to scrutiny. The principal subjects, young working-class children and their families, include members of a particularly low-status minority ethnic group. The parents (in most cases, the mothers) were asked to discuss their family relationships, personal biographies and daily routines, as well as their beliefs and attitudes. Some have had an unsatisfactory experience of the education system, both in childhood and as parents. All were aware of the differences between their own lives and mine: the fact that I was, to their astonishment, 'working without pay' for a year, was a privilege they could never attain.

One important factor in these relationships was that they were instigated in the context of a shared concern for the children involved, and partook of the bond of trust which frequently exists between *Early Years* teachers and families. Seller (1994) argues that the power relations between researchers and respondents can be

dismantled through uncovering the 'commonalities' and common concerns which lie beneath their differences:

I learnt that it is a mistake to aim for a dialogue, which will generate agreement out of two systems of thought or cultures. I discovered that people, not belief systems, have dialogues, and that these dialogues occur... on the basis of common concerns. These concerns, a combination of belief and emotional response, can be over anything from children to architectural styles. (Seller, 1994: 246)

Relationships, such as those between Reception teachers and mothers, founded on a sense of mutual commitment to the young child's welfare and progress, regularly transcend the differences between the participants. In this study, my role as an additional, voluntary, class teacher allowed me to share in this halo effect, with the result that my requests for interviews and information were seen as natural and even welcome, rather than threatening or intrusive. Parents, recognising that my enthusiasm for their children, and expertise in the area of young children's learning, was genuine, used formal interviews to ask their own questions, and frequently made informal approaches to request advice or information, or to offer additional thoughts that had occurred to them since we met. These relationships were far more relaxed than those with school staff (discussed below, 4.6).

Insider and outsider knowledge: the problem of familiarity.

Reflexivity, rather than conventional criteria for reliability and validity, determines the status of the research knowledge offered by ethnographies. The hybrid researcher-role adopted in this study – part observer, part 'teacher' - was further complicated by the different degrees of familiarity generated with different respondents, and in different settings. Three related issues arise in this connection:

- i) the common ethnographic experience of close, informative relationships with some participants, which can result in their perspectives and views carrying greater weight than those of others less forthcoming;
- ii) the specific problem of school ethnographies (Wolcott, 1981; Spindler, 1987; Delamont and Atkinson, 1995) that the familiarity of the school setting masks its effects from researchers;

- iii) the question of the ability of 'outsiders' to produce reliable data on communities of which they can never have 'insider' knowledge.

These three constraints on the validity of a study are difficult to disentangle, either theoretically or during actual work in the field, but awareness of them is essential to critical scrutiny of the data and its interpretation.

The first of these is an unavoidable feature of the day-to-day interactions of ethnographers in the classroom, who form informal and therefore very variable relationships with respondents. Not only is this unavoidable, but it unintentionally replicates the differential relationships of class teachers with parents and children, thus tending simultaneously to mask the differential (from the researcher) and intensify its effects (for the parent or child). Relationships with informants in the present study, which were informal except during interviews, were extremely variable. Of the English-speaking parents, those who regularly chose to stop and talk included those who frequently spoke to staff; some others assumed that we would only speak at my request. Bengali parents invariably made contact, regarding me as a potential intermediary with the school, but the information we could exchange was rudimentary unless an interpreter was at hand. The inadequacies of this contact, despite efforts and goodwill on both sides, form an integral part of the data: school staff had an even more sparse relationship with these families.

The familiarity of the school environment compounds this effect, and illustrates the necessity of, in Delamont and Atkinson's (1995) term, 'fighting familiarity' through constantly challenging the data and testing alternative possibilities. The problem was identified by Becker:

It is first and foremost a matter of it all being so familiar that it becomes almost impossible to single out events that occur in the classroom as things that have occurred even when they happen right in front of you...

It takes a tremendous effort of will and imagination to stop seeing only the things that are conventionally 'there' to be seen...

(cited by Wax and Wax, 1971)

All of us who have experienced school, for instance, find it 'normal' and natural that some children in a class receive more attention than others, and that some parents are more influential than others; that 'top groups' are taught more than 'bottom groups'

(and know who they are). Haw (1996) describes the heightened awareness of her fieldwork in a Muslim school in comparison with her parallel study of a state comprehensive: many researchers are ex-teachers who are only a small mental step away from the behaviour they are scrutinising. My own perspective, as an Early Years teacher predisposed to approve the practices of the research school, was only gradually challenged over the course of the fieldwork year and during subsequent data analysis (see Introduction to Part Three).

Related to this familiarity is the 'insider-outsider' doctrine, discussed in Merton's classic essay (1972). Merton disparages the suggestion that only 'insiders' can know and represent the meanings of their group, in part on the grounds that every individual belongs, not to one group but to a status set of overlapping and intersecting groups. More recent discussion has focused on the ability of researchers from dominant groups to access the reality of dominated subjects (Troyna and Carrington, 1993), since they have themselves been socialized into dominant perspectives, and may be viewing their subjects through this lens. Weis, however, claims that 'It is our job as researchers to become an insider in these settings, much as we are insiders ... within our own class cultural locations' (1992: 52). With time and integrity, she claims, 'outsiders' are better able to represent a community than its members. While no 'proof' of researcher credentials is possible, Siraj-Blatchford argues that

what is important here is not whether one is *outside* or *inside* a particular group, but rather whether one is a party to, 'inside' or 'outside' a particular political discourse (1994: 33).

What is more, such discourses need not be essentialised but can be seen as 'a semi-autonomous social discourse that individuals and groups may enter or leave according to their understanding and inclination' (1994: 35). Griffiths, recognising the ambivalent status of researchers, claims that 'no one in educational research is a complete insider or outsider' (1998: 137).

In the present study, as suggested above, the essentialised race or class identity of the researcher was subsumed within the role and discourse of the Early Years teacher, whose credentials were taken on trust by both parents and staff. The fact that I was

rather more familiar with the family practices of the Anglo than the Bangladeshi parents proved no bar to viewing each as alternative but appropriate ways of parenting, or to submitting both to the same kinds of analysis.

4.5. Research design

The case study approach

The inquiry, though ethnographic, was designed as a 'single embedded case study' (Yin, 1994: 42). Case study is widely seen as an appropriate strategy for small-scale projects (Robson, 1993; Yin, 1994; Miles and Huberman, 1994), since its flexibility allows ongoing adjustments to be made in response to findings. There is broad agreement in defining the approach: in Robson's description:

Case study is a strategy for doing research which involves an empirical investigation of a particular contemporary phenomenon within its real life context using multiple sources of evidence (1993:5).

He adds, 'At the heart of it is the idea that the case is studied in its own right, not as a sample from a population'. Yin also emphasises the context of the study:

A case study is an empirical inquiry that

- investigates a contemporary phenomenon within its real-life context, especially when
- the boundaries between phenomenon and context are not clearly evident (1994:13).

Miles and Huberman (1994) suggest a 'permeable boundary', defined by 'settings, concepts, sampling etc' which marks the context of a case, but which can be crossed when necessary.

The case study model, therefore, allows naturally-occurring, contemporaneous 'cases' to be studied in context, using any combination of measures thought appropriate. It also assumes continuous, or frequent, ongoing analysis of the data during the fieldwork period, with subsequent modifications and revisions of the measures used, and the information sought. Though mixed methods are common in case studies, there is an expectation that a form of participant observation will predominate: Cohen and Manion claim that 'at the heart of every case study lies a method of observation' (1994: 107), and offer a 'typology of observation studies'.

All these authors agree that cases may have 'subcases' embedded within them (Miles and Huberman, 1994:26; Yin, 1994:42) so that the units of analysis can be selected from within differing levels of the study. In the present inquiry, the units of analysis are:

- i) the single Reception class which all the children are entering
- ii) the two main ethnic groups within the class, and
- iii) the individual children chosen from within these groups.

Each unit of analysis can therefore be discussed in relation to the others and in relation to the larger contexts they share - the local community (or the ethnic minority community within that) and the national setting.

The 16 children who form the 'subcases' were first encountered shortly before they started school; knowledge of their preschool experience, therefore, had to be reconstructed from interviews. Once the children started school, their 'entry attainments' were assessed, and their progress was monitored, by a variety of means, throughout the year. The study may appear, therefore, to create dichotomous fields of inquiry: the culture of the home / the culture of the school; the preschool phase / the school phase; the parent / the teacher; home knowledge / school knowledge. In reality, though each of these aspects was treated as independent for data-construction purposes, the analysis is concerned above all else with the relations between them. Participant observation in the classroom, which begins every day with the meetings and greetings of families and educators, and ends with their farewells, enables the child's membership of the mesosystem (Bronfenbrenner, 1979a) linking home and school to be described, and the degree of overlap between the two spheres, with their distinctive practices, to be evaluated.

In addition, however, each of the children is affected by other larger and less visible contexts: in Bronfenbrenner's terms, the exosystems which link the child, via its parents, to the spheres *they* inhabit - places of work or study, the benefits office or the mosque - which are invisible zones to most young children but which impact on the life of the family. Beyond the exosystems inhabited by members of the child's close circle are the more remote but pervasive systems of the state and society. These exert

their influence through the economy and the education system, the health service and the benefits agencies, the law and the mainstream culture, any of which may be perceived materially by the child and family through their experiences of poverty or affluence, employment or unemployment, sickness or health, racism and prejudice.

All the families in this study live in a poor and disadvantaged inner-urban neighbourhood, and attend a school which is itself shaped by its local community. Their day-by-day experiences at home and school can not be understood without a critical awareness of the larger contexts in which they are located. Other ethnographies of education have developed persuasive evidence from linking the immediate contexts of their subjects to a broader national context (Lubeck, 1985; Gillborn, 1990; Pollard, 1996; Connolly, 1998). With the exception of Pollard's, none has demonstrated such a detailed knowledge of its children and families.

The school

The school which forms both context and case in this inquiry is in many ways typical of inner-urban primary schools in the 1990s. It is situated in a shabby area close to the centre of a manufacturing town, and like most schools in such areas is affected by the poverty and overcrowding, family breakdown, drug and alcohol abuse, and racial harassment which characterise its neighbourhood. The children's parents, either unemployed or in manual jobs, are from white (including Irish), African-Caribbean and South Asian groups, though many children are of mixed parentage. The largest ethnic minority group in the area and the school is Bangladeshi.

Two aspects which may make the school *untypical* influenced its selection for this study. Firstly, unlike the majority of schools in the town, it has no attached nursery or playgroup (though an independent playgroup runs close by), with the result that many of its children start school at 4 without prior experience outside the home: though some individual families may have 'made their own arrangements' to get their children to a preschool, the move from home to school at 4 means just that for many children.

Secondly, 'All Saints C of E' (as it will be known) appeared to be an unusually successful school. It has acquired and retained a teaching staff explicitly committed to its multicultural, anti-racist and generally left-leaning policies, and has a confident ethos which has survived intact the onslaughts of the educational reforms which have demoralised other schools and staffs (Pollard *et al*, 1994). The school was well regarded by the LEA, and seemed unlikely to display the negative and racist characteristics uncovered in other ethnographic studies (Gillborn, 1990; Wright, 1992).

Access was arranged informally, through relationships established while I was working as a supply teacher and in the Multicultural Service. I 'volunteered' in the school once a week for six months, periodically sharing my plans with the Head and Deputy and gaining their agreement to join the school for the following year. In the summer term I drew up a contract which was agreed by the staff and governors [Appendix A], and attended a staff meeting to explain that my primary focus was an investigation of individual children's learning. The staff were agreeable but too busy to express much interest. Like the parents, they showed little concern for my guarantees of confidentiality and anonymity.

It was agreed that I would be introduced to the children as a teacher who would sometimes be working with them, and sometimes 'doing her own work'. This formula was accepted without question (many Reception children had older siblings who had worked with me during the previous year) and was an honest account, since in return for my access to the school I was to offer the Reception team at least one day a week of professional help. This meant that the degree to which I was 'participant' and 'observer' ebbed and flowed (Bell, 1969).

The sample

A small sample of children was chosen as 'embedded' cases so that their experiences could be explored in some depth (cf. Filer, 1998). The sample size was a compromise of the ideal and the pragmatic: the larger the sample, the less well each child and its family could be 'known'; the smaller the sample, the less opportunity it gave for comparisons between cases and for theoretical interpretation. The possibility of

children leaving the school, and the study, in the course of the fieldwork year, had also to be considered.

The sampling was theoretical, although, since individual children were to be the primary focus, there was no actual need to 'balance' the group in terms of any particular factor. As Brannen points out, in case study research, 'issues about the representativeness of the sample and the generalizability of the findings are not salient; rather it is the issue of establishing a theoretical link within each case' (1992:9). Nevertheless a sample was selected which attempted to hold constant certain factors known to influence children's school progress.

Equal numbers of children (four boys and four girls) were selected from the two main ethnic groups in the classroom - monolinguals of UK origin and bilinguals of Bangladeshi origin. The eight Bengali children (the only members of their ethnic group in a class of 40 children) were roughly matched with children who are here designated 'culturally UK', or Anglo. The parents of this latter group were all born in the UK and spoke English as their first language. In addition, all the mothers (who are white, or possibly mixed-heritage) were educated in the town or region. Only four of the Anglo children live with their birth-father.

Three other factors strongly associated with early school attainment were taken into consideration in sampling: sex, age within the year group, and family position. Evidence from baseline studies (Sammons and Smees, 1996; Strand, 1997, 1999; Tymms *et al*, 1997) confirms that sex, and birth-month (ie. age within the year group) are important variables in children's early attainments, so a balanced sample, with an approximate match between the two ethnic groups, was attempted first on these two counts. Individual matching by age proved impossible: three of the four Bengali girls were 'July birthdays' and could not be matched with any of the girls remaining when other bilingual children were excluded. As a compromise therefore, the two *groups* were matched by birth month, so that equal numbers from each group were Autumn, Spring and Summer-born, and the average age in months of each group was the same (4 years 5 months on entry). Birth order too was matched across the groups. It was anticipated that this factor might prove significant, for two reasons. Firstly, large-

scale studies (Davie *et al*, 1972; CHES, 1982; Melhuish *et al*, 2000) suggest that the younger children of large families (4th or later-born) may be disadvantaged in their social or cognitive development; since many Bengali families in the area have eight or ten children, this single factor could in theory have outweighed a number of others. But secondly, a pilot study had suggested that being born 8th or 10th in a Bengali family could give a child advantages over its older siblings. In the absence of a clear determination on this, approximate matches were found.

By matching the sample in this way it was hoped to avoid the most obvious explanations for children's progress from disguising those less obvious. For this reason too, Bengali children were selected as a distinct and discrete 'group' because their own educational progress is still disadvantaged relative to most other ethnic groups, including other South Asian groups (Strand, 1999b; OfSTED, 1999). Within a local area which is relatively homogeneous in social class terms (judged by parental occupation and education), the effects of ethnicity and minority status might perhaps emerge more clearly than in larger studies which have difficulty separating the effects of ethnicity from those of social class.

A tentative sample of children was drawn from the class list during the summer term preceding the fieldwork. The Bengali families were visited with the classroom assistant, whose job description included home visiting. The explanation she gave was: that I was a teacher, and teachers are interested in finding out how children learn, and how we can help them; that I wanted to find out how families help their children to learn, and that I would need to know about their own experience of education and their ideas about learning, in order to understand this. After some searching questions (about my interest in *all* children, not just Bengali children, and about my qualifications, marital status and salary!) all the respondents gave consent for their child's participation.

No provision exists for home visits to Anglo families, who had instead to be approached when they delivered and collected their older children, or at the local playgroup, or by means of other parents. Word spread among these families, and my explanation of the project was not always needed. By September, all the families had

given their written consent to the inquiry, and agreed that I might observe, assess and report on their children (anonymously and confidentially) and that they themselves would talk to me about their own lives and family beliefs and practices.

Table 1. Sample of children from a Reception class (alphabetical pseudonyms)

Name	Sex	Age (1.1.97)	Ethnicity	Family position
Abu Bokkar	M	4.3.	Bengali	7 of 7
Abdul Rahman	M	4.10	Bengali	3 of 3
Amadur	M	4.9.	Bengali	1 of 3
Cameron	M	4.1.	Anglo	2 of 2
Jelika	F	4.10	Bengali	1 of 3
Jemma	F	4.4.	Anglo	4 of 4
Joni	F	4.11	Anglo	5 of 6
Joshua	M	4.1.	Anglo	3 of 3
Katy	F	4.3.	Anglo	2 of 3
Kelly	F	4.5.	Anglo	2 of 2
Khiernssa	F	4.2	Bengali	3 of 3
Mohammed	M	4.5	Bengali	3 of 4
Robbie	M	4.11	Anglo	6 of 6
Rufia	F	4.2.	Bengali	6 of 8
Troy	M	4.10	Anglo	1 of 3
Tuhura	F	4.2.	Bengali	3 of 4

4.6 Data construction

Mixing methods

Like most case studies, the present inquiry employs mixed methods. The advantages of mixing qualitative and quantitative methods within one study are discussed by Brannen, who argues that more fundamental issues than 'enhancing validity' are in question: such as resolving the 'duality of structure' identified by Giddens, in which macro explanations, oriented towards structural determinism, and micro explanations, oriented towards interaction, remain segregated (1992: 16). In Brannen's view, methods should be determined, not by prior allegiance to a particular methodology, but by 'the question of theory - ...and the methods most appropriate for addressing it' (1992: 23).

Though quantitative information on such a small sample (16 children, or a class of 40) is not generalizable, it is used as a source of comparison for the more qualitative findings, and tells its own story. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) suggest borrowing the term 'bricolage' from cultural studies for such a composite, patchwork approach to creating knowledge, defining it as 'a pieced-together, close-knit set of practices that provide solutions to a problem in a concrete situation' (1994:2). In their view, all qualitative research is 'inherently multimethod', with the result that 'Triangulation is not a tool or a strategy of validation, but an alternative to validation', offering 'rigor, breadth and depth'. In this inquiry a range of methods was employed to construct data which 'pieced together' might suggest answers to the research questions. These methods were embedded however in a more holistic ethnographic approach.

Parent interviews, parent questionnaires and child interviews were piloted in a school with a similar intake less than two miles from All Saints'. Though Robson argues that 'Case studies have sufficient flexibility to incorporate piloting within the study of the case itself' (1993:301), the critical time-frame of this study required the first set of interviews to be carried out within the first seven weeks of the school year, which gave no margin for revision. Modifications were made in the course of piloting to enable the interview questions to follow each other more naturally, and to probe for more detail. Analysis of the pilot material helped to refine the research questions,

and made possible ‘anticipatory analysis’ (Miles and Huberman, 1994: 10) of the main study data.

Since the inquiry was into children’s learning at home and at school, it was essential to build a full description of the curriculum and pedagogy of each setting, as well as of each child’s experience. The sources of the data in each context are described below. [All instruments, and the data-construction timetable, in Appendix A]

The home context

Data constructed on the families included both the ‘objective’ facts of their family and household membership, socioeconomic situation, education and employment histories, and the families’ own ‘subjective’ descriptions of their beliefs and parenting practices. The former information was needed to build a picture of the family’s class and cultural position in structural terms; the latter, to understand, in the broadest sense, the family’s knowledge and its pedagogic practices.

Interviews.

Mothers (and any other relatives present) of the 16 sample children were interviewed about their own experience of education, their child’s infancy, and the family’s practices during the child’s early years and up to the present. Bengali parents were interviewed using the classroom assistant as interpreter. The semi-structured taped interview with monolingual and bilingual parents was designed to combine collecting essential data about the child and family with establishing a friendly and respectful relationship with the respondents. For a number of reasons, the conduct of the interviews varied a great deal:

- half the sample parents had limited English, so that their interviews were conducted through an interpreter;

- parents were offered the choice of talking to me at school or at home: all the Bengali parents preferred home visits, while half the Anglo mothers arranged for us to meet at school;

- due to the informal conversational mode of the interview, some mothers responded at great length (offering anecdotes, asking advice, or foregrounding an older sibling who was a cause of concern); some wanted reciprocal information on

my own children, career and attitudes; others responded much more succinctly, assuming that I wanted simple factual information.

All the interviews but one were conducted in the first few weeks of term. One mother (Jemma's) repeatedly volunteered interview appointments which she invariably failed to keep. Our ongoing informal relationship flourished, however, and she suddenly offered herself, on the spot, for an 'interview' many months later. I saw no reason to regard the information offered in this interview as 'irregular', although it was not given at the same time as other families' data.

A second sequence of interviews was requested after two terms, to discuss the child's progress in school and the parent's theories about children's learning. All these were successfully carried out, but in an even more 'irregular' way. Interpreted interviews were conducted on weekends, or in the family's shop or business, or whenever the father or another English-speaking relative was available.

Daily diaries

All the parents interviewed constructed, with my help, a diary of their child's previous day, from waking to sleeping, including their interactions with friends and family, their occupations and their diet.

Surveys of all parents

The remainder of the 40 parents were approached during the first weeks of term and offered an explanation for my presence. All seemed comfortable with treating me as an additional teacher/helper to whom they could report concerns or make requests when the class teacher was busy. Late in the first term, all parents were asked to complete a questionnaire based on the interview schedule, and a behaviour inventory based on the ASBI (Hogan *et al*, 1992). Though 35 responded, not all questions were answered by all respondents. This information was analysed as a source of comparison for the sample children. All letters and forms were offered in English and Bengali to bilingual families.

Informal communication.

Ongoing 'ethnographic' information about the children and families was gathered from morning and after-school encounters, anecdotes told to me or overheard, observations of the children's relationships with their mothers, inquiries from parents as to "how you're getting on with your study", notes sent in by parents or comments in their reading records, and occasional requests to me to "put in a word" with the class teacher on their behalf. Each family established the level of informal communication it felt appropriate and some are more richly documented than others. This variability replicates to some extent the school's knowledge of the families.

The school context.

The school's contribution to the child's learning experience was documented at a number of levels. All observations of individual children (discussed below) were simultaneously observations of 'school effects', but additional measures focused more specifically on the school's culture, pedagogy and curriculum.

Staff interviews

A semi-structured interview with the head teacher probed her perspective on the school's population (children and families), the rationale for its policies and practices, and her own beliefs about early learning. The three principal Reception class workers (class teacher, nursery nurse and bilingual assistant) gave lengthy interviews about their biography and training, beliefs about children's learning, attitudes to the children and parents, and their daily practice.

Document analysis

School policies on curriculum and on relevant areas such as equal opportunities, parent involvement, antiracism and bullying were examined, together with the admission procedures and 'letters home'. At the level of the classroom, Early Years policies and planning were read, together with information given to parents. The school's OfSTED report offered additional information.

Observations

Informal observations and fieldnotes provide most of the data for descriptions of the regulative and instructional discourse of the classroom. Teaching input was monitored for each of the main curriculum areas by continuous observation over several non-consecutive days of an adult timetabled to 'share books', take writing or maths groups, or provide input into cooking, planting, blockbuilding or other activities which all the children in the class were required to attempt. In the summer term, the staff's verbal interactions with children were monitored systematically for their content, duration and affect.

Informal evidence

Incidental information on the school culture and ethos was gathered from staffroom and after-school conversations, on 'staff outings' and school trips, and from parents' anecdotes, but there were few opportunities for casual conversation: all the teaching staff were very focused on their own tasks during the lengthy working day.

A note on the research relationship

Relationships with the class teacher and nursery nurse became increasingly difficult as the year went on. To a large extent this seemed the unavoidable consequence of their being under my watchful scrutiny for such an extended period: I was made much more welcome on the days when I acted as an assistant working with the children, than on the days when I sat quietly to one side with my clipboard. Despite my constant effort to avoid the impression of being judgmental about the school or staff (in interviews or in casual talk), any experienced class teacher would be aware of ways in which her practice, or her inability to implement her expressed intentions, could be critiqued.

Two other factors appeared to influence the class teacher's intermittent distancing of herself. Firstly, a proprietorial attitude towards the class, which was threatened by my having closer relationships with some parents, and fuller information on some children, than school staff. My attempts to share some of this (non-confidential) information were rebuffed: she was 'too busy'. Secondly, my presence may have appeared to threaten the invisible but 'teacher-centred' pedagogic discourse

(discussed in chapters 7 and 8), which placed all authority and control in the person of the class teacher.

While it seems certain that I was prevented from accessing some aspects of school culture, and some evidence on the children and families, it is impossible to speculate on what this 'missing data' might contain, or what light it might shed on the interpretation. As Power argues (1998: 17), managing fieldwork is a sensitive business, and 'not getting data' is a part of the whole data set.

Individual cases

Most data on the children was collected by some form of observation. Discussion of classroom observation techniques has tended to polarise systematic and ethnographic methods as the business of mutually exclusive paradigms (Croll, 1986; Delamont and Hamilton, 1984; Hammersley, 1984, 1986; McIntyre and Macleod, 1986); systematic and naturalistic methods were combined in this study in order to create a picture of the children which was both sensitive and reliable.

Naturalistic observation and informal note-taking took place throughout the year on every day spent in school. Continuous notes were taken during 'non-contact' time (register and whole-class sessions, children's arrival and departure) and intermittent observations were added throughout the day or in breaks. Children of this age verbalise most of the time they are building, drawing, colouring, setting out small worlds, filling buckets and so on. During parallel play with other children, where they are frequently verbalising to themselves, they are gratified to have the attention of an interested adult. The children in the class are accustomed to adults using clipboards for observations, and appeared oblivious to my constant note-taking during their activities.

Assessment observations during this period formed a significant part of the entry measures (discussed below). Children were observed at self-chosen or directed tasks and matched against statutory descriptors (such as holding a book the right way up, turning the pages singly, responding to the pictures; or putting cows and horses into

separate fields). Additional notes were made of the way they tackled these tasks, their comments and explanations, their interest and attention.

Systematic scanning was used during the Spring term to monitor classroom activities, curriculum provision, and the children's take-up of this provision. The range of activities within a field (half a term's focus on language and literacy, half on maths and science) was surveyed and tabled before the day began, and the two Reception rooms were scanned every 15 minutes to see which of the children were involved in any of these activities, and with whom. This process provided skeletal 'daily diaries' for each target child on these days.

Systematic observation was used in two sequences: eight days spread over four weeks in November were used to monitor the target children's curriculum choices and social interactions on a previously-piloted schedule, which included a continuous narrative text. Observations, conducted in accordance with a pre-set schedule, consisted of 15 30-second intervals per child; six observations per child were made (1440 intervals in all). One day per week was used over five weeks in June and July to monitor adult interactions with children, again at 30-second intervals; 1000 intervals in all were recorded. During the sequences of non-participant systematic observation, children were informed that I was 'busy doing my own work' and could not be interrupted. My changing level of involvement did not appear to concern them.

In addition to these forms of observation, a range of specific instruments was used to construct data on the sample children.

Entry assessments made in the seven weeks of half-day schooling combined the LEA Baseline (then being piloted for statutory introduction the following year), the school's own Early Years Profile, a group of subscales from the British Ability Scales (Elliot, 1996), and a phonological awareness test. The BAS subscales (Blockbuilding, Pattern Construction, Picture Similarities), which are standardised for bilingual children, were used to provide an alternative perspective on the child's achievements and potential from that offered by the LEA and school baselines. Both

of the latter are strongly culture-loaded, assessing the types of early learning which underpin the Early Years curriculum. The BAS on the other hand attempts to measure spatial and conceptual understanding in some degree of isolation from cultural learning. Phoneme segmentation was tested because of the recent emphasis on phonic skills as predicting success in literacy.

Social behaviour inventories were completed by school staff on all children in the class during the first term. Statements from the ASBI inventory (Hogan, *et al*, 1992) were selected and modified to make two slightly different scales for completion by parents and teachers.

Children's interviews were used to elicit their views on the purposes of school, and their concepts of 'being a pupil', and of knowledge and 'learning'. The interview schedule, which was piloted with end-of-Reception children, was modified repeatedly to make the questions intelligible to the children, and a much simpler format resulted. Nevertheless, many of the main study children found the questions puzzling during their first months in school, and some parts of the interview were held over until the second term for all children.

Children's products were collected throughout the year. Samples of writing were photocopied at regular intervals, including on those occasions when the activity had been the subject of continuous observation and monitoring.

Children's records were photocopied as they were created. These include Early Years profiles (first term), end of year reports, ongoing speaking and listening, reading and maths records, and home-school reading comment sheets.

4.7. Analysis and theorising

The large quantities of very disparate data generated by the study were managed with frequent reference to the recommendations of Miles and Huberman (1994). Preliminary reading and the pilot study enabled 'anticipatory analysis' of many of the principal themes before the main study began, although the links (the mediating

practices) between family and school data, and large-scale theory were by no means evident at this point.

Interview data was transcribed almost immediately, and coded and displayed according to the 'anticipatory' themes and theorising which had informed the interview schedule itself. A series of interim working documents was created from the first reading and reduction of all data: a preliminary profile of each child amalgamated evidence of their preschool experience and transition, entry assessments, social and curriculum preferences, aptitudes and attitudes, and the child's use of time during the first term. A similar 'profile' of the school and classroom, incorporating all the sources of evidence, was compiled after two terms. All other data (from systematic and other observations, analysis of written documents, memos on home visits etc) was coded, reduced, displayed as matrices and organised into phases in each child's experience. This made it possible to 'read off' any one characteristic *across* all 16 children, or to read down through all the displayed data on one child. (Displays from parent and child interviews are included in Appendices)

The process of reduction and display prompted a return to both the theory and the original data, which was re-coded and interrogated using themes generated by the respondents. In successive sequences of interpretation, data from the children's interviews and from all forms of observation were combined with parent data, and suggested further qualifications or modifications to the emergent explanations. New 'themes', and new perspectives on the applicability of Bernstein's and Bourdieu's concepts to different aspects of the children's experiences, continued to emerge as each phase in the children's lives was reconsidered. While the first wave of interpretation focused on understanding the micro processes of each child's unique experience, subsequent analysis looked at the links within and across groups, and within and outside the immediate contexts of home and school. An adequate understanding of the effects of different types of knowledge, and different forms of control, on children from different backgrounds, could only be achieved many months after the school experience had receded, and with repeated 'cycling back and forth' (Miles and Huberman, 1994) from data to theory.

The analysis presented in the remaining chapters attempts therefore to explain how the children's Reception experience is perceived by all participants, and to show how the knowledge and beliefs of parents, children and teachers is structured by their history and place in society, and in part structures the children's educational outcomes.

PART TWO

THE HOME CONTEXT OF CHILDREN'S LEARNING

Introduction

This section focuses in particular on the children's lives before they start school. The home and family environment which shapes their preschool experience remains, of course, the 'background' to their subsequent school experience: the study does not take a sequential view of children's learning (first the home, then the school) but sees the 'school years' as embedded in the child's continuing home experience, just as the preschool years are overshadowed by the influence of the statutory schooling which they anticipate. Nevertheless the child's experience in the home before the start of school is seen here as a discrete phase, the period in which the child acquires the primary habitus, and forms of capital, which he or she will take to school.

The next two chapters describe the families of the 16 children in the study. Though they live only a few minutes' walk apart, and most have lived in the area for many years, their lives differ from each other in important ways. In fact, it is probably true to say that walking through the school gate in the morning is almost the only experience all the families share. In order to describe the effects of their very different lives on the educational prospects of their 4-year-olds, the families are first discussed within the theoretical framework offered by Bourdieu, particularly in terms of two concepts: a description of the family habitus, and a reckoning of each family's social and cultural capital. Chapter 5 discusses the ways in which the economic, social and cultural capital of families constrains their expectations and aspirations, and in consequence their strategies and practices. These practices are seen to belong to the particular signifying system each family inhabits – its place within the majority or minority culture, or subculture, of the neighbourhood – and therefore to be transposable in differing degrees to the culture of the school. Though it is not possible to present each family's culture and circumstances in detail at this point, tables of relevant information are introduced to situate the picture of family differences which is built up in this and subsequent chapters.

Chapter 6 discusses the effects of these cultural practices on the way each family prepares its children for school. The family habitus (the product of its embodied history and geography) itself generates a family pedagogy and curriculum – the ‘natural curriculum’ of the home. Bourdieu’s infinitely various ‘strategies’ and ‘practices’ are seen to inhabit what Bernstein calls a (rule-bound) pedagogic discourse. In describing the pedagogic discourse of individual families, and the relation of these to class and cultural beliefs and practices, the study anticipates the discussion of the pedagogic discourse of the school which is found in Part Three.

Chapter 5 Family values: investigating family habitus

5.1. Introduction: using habitus and capital

This chapter uses Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capital to sketch the family cultures of the 16 children in the study. Their similarities and differences are presented at both intergroup and intragroup level: though each family is unique, many commonalities of class and culture are found between them, within and across their ethnic groups.

The concept of habitus is used in accordance with Bourdieu's own definitions, as a system of dispositions, initially acquired during socialisation within the family, which is structured by the family's location within the social formation, and structures the child's own experiences of the world. The habitus is seen as a complex, multi-layered and multi-faceted embodiment of all the 'family' factors which impact on the child's early development. The child's primary habitus is a composite unique to that individual, though it partakes of aspects of the collective habituses of those groups to which the child belongs: the family, the local community, the neighbourhood network, the ethnic or gendered group. Unlike Connolly (1998), who describes individuals as possessing numerous 'different' habituses - a gendered habitus, an ethnic habitus, a class habitus, a pupil habitus, and so on - I have not found it helpful to subdivide the child's subjectivity in this way, as if an individual were not, for instance, in a single moment, a 'white working-class female pupil' rather than the sum of these aspects.

On the other hand, I have retained a distinction between the habitus of the family and the accumulated forms of capital it may possess, rather than treating them as synonymous and interchangeable. There are two reasons for this. One is that the habitus describes, not just what capital the family owns, but what it decides to do with it: how it chooses to 'play its cards', as Bourdieu describes the process of investment and accumulation (the New Testament parable of the talents comes to mind as an exemplary case of the range of strategies Bourdieu is suggesting!). The second reason is that equating habitus with capital seemed to disallow all the investments made by families in their children's lives and learning which are *not*

constitutive of cultural capital at the point of entry to school, but which nevertheless have a shaping influence on the child (and may eventually, if indirectly, enhance the child's life materially, as well as emotionally). So, in coldly picking over the data on the lives of children and their families, as if with a metal-detector, to separate the 'treasure' from the dross, I recognise that the 'official knowledge' of the school, which filters 'home knowledge', admitting it as cultural capital or not, excludes or fails to legitimate many important aspects of children's early experiences.

At this stage, however, my own sorting and classification of the legitimate capital held by each family is necessarily a pragmatic activity, performed in accordance with the existing, rather than the possible or desirable requirements of schools and society.

5.2. Forms of family capital

Economic capital.

Economic capital, theoretically the 'base' for the 'superstructural' characteristics discussed below, appears to have relatively little force in differentiating the sample families from each other. Although there is probably considerable variation between families with respect to their overall income, and its sources, this subject was not probed beyond eliciting the current occupations of adults in the household (see Table 2, overleaf).

Recent reports on ethnic minority family incomes (Berthoud, 1998; Chahal, 2000) confirm earlier survey evidence of high levels of poverty among Bangladeshi families, and report that 60% of Bengali households are 'poor' by the conventional criterion of having an income less than half that of the national average. Only 16% of white and 20% of Caribbean families fall into this category, but census data suggests that the Anglo families in the All Saints' area, and in this sample, are probably among them.

When individual families are studied 'in the flesh' rather than as 'cardboard cut-outs' (Gewirtz et al, 1994), it soon becomes clear that conventional indicators of family income and occupational status are problematic within this sample. 'Free School

Table 2 Father / male caregiver information

Child	Status of male	Birthplace, ethnicity	Occupation	Age (this child's birth)
Abu Bokkar	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bengali	[not working]	34
Abdul Rahman	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bengali	Restaurant chef, Partner in shop	26
Amadur	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bengali	Restaurant waiter	32
Cameron	Partner, father	Town, A-C UK	Council maintenance worker	28
Jelika	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bengali	Restaurant work	23
Jemma	Partner, father	Town, White UK	Wood machinist	36
Joni	[none present since infancy]	[birth father White UK]		
Joshua	Husband, father	UK town, White UK	Lorry driver	30
Katy	Husband, father	Town, White UK	Lab technician	36
Kelly	Partner [father absent since infancy]	? White UK	Warehouseman [subsequently unemployed]	28
Khiernssa	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bengali	[not working]	38
Mohammed	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bengali	Restaurant chef	33
Robbie	[none present since infancy]	[birth father White UK]		
Rufia	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bengali	[not working]	[not known]
Tuhura	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bengali	restaurant worker	26
Troy	Husband [birth father absent since age 2]	?, White UK [birth father A-C]	Carpenter/glazier [subsequently schoolkeeper]	26

Meals', the most common index of child poverty, is unreliable for two reasons. Firstly, because it relies on families receiving Income Support or Jobseeker's Allowance, which itself depends on a lengthy engagement with the DSS and a consistent period of unemployment or low-paid work: it therefore tends to exclude families who are frequently in and out of temporary, part-time or 'unofficial' jobs (as many of these families are). Secondly, because the Bengali families, all of whom like their children to return home for lunch, rarely request FSM, despite the school's pleas that they should do so.

Occupational status is similarly hard to interpret. Most Bengali fathers, for instance, defined themselves as 'not working', though they subsequently described long hours spent at work in shops and restaurants. At some point, many also claimed to own or co-own these businesses, only to retract when I showed an interest, and point out that they were actually in their father-in-law's, or cousin's mother's, name. Two things are clear: firstly that, despite working long and extremely unsocial hours, these fathers are in poor housing in a poor neighbourhood, with little to spend on their own or their families' clothes and other needs. Secondly, that most of the income that *is* acquired is either sent back to Sylhet, where it is needed by elderly relatives and extended families, or used to support other relatives in the UK. None of the Bengali mothers has worked outside the home.

Anglo mothers, in contrast, have all been economically active. Most have worked, or are working, in shops and factories, packing and despatching, or in office jobs requiring no educational qualifications. Most take up, and leave, temporary and part-time jobs, when the opportunity offers itself or when acute financial problems dictate. During the year this included bar work and poorly-paid piecework at home: as Jemma's mother explained one morning, 'I've got to get off, I've got a hundred and fifty 101 Dalmatians brush sets to put in their boxes, and he'll be round to get them at tea-time'. The partial exceptions to this pattern are two mothers (Joshua's and Katy's) who have taken some play-leadership courses.

Anglo heads of household have no consistent pattern of employment. The present partners (not necessarily the children's fathers) of the Anglo mothers include men

who are unemployed, a long-distance lorry-driver, a wood-machinist, a factory storesman, a glazier and a council maintenance-man. Only the last of these was felt by his partner to be in a secure and permanent post. Five of the eight Anglo children (Jemma, Joni, Kelly, Robbie, Troy) had a 'dad' who had been out of work during the last year.

Position in the housing market is also an unreliable guide to affluence in this sample. Home ownership, normally a marker of financial stability, is the norm in the Bangladeshi community in this town as elsewhere (cf. Bhatti, 1999). Rather than signifying social and financial success, it reflects the difficulty minority families experience in securing council housing, and their willingness to pool resources within the neighbourhood or wider network to provide accommodation for relatives, even distant ones. Most newly married couples live with their in-laws or other relatives, in crowded conditions, until the money is accumulated or loaned to buy another of the small run-down houses in the streets around the school. Money from restaurants and businesses is invested in buying up these houses so that families with several children can eventually move into their own homes close by. Five of the eight Bengali children who started the year (Amadur, Abdul Rahman, Jelika, Mohammed and Tuhura) had lived in houses shared with other families until very recently.

The Anglo families are housed in properties ranging from similar small (mortgaged) terrace houses close to the school, to council or private rented accommodation on nearby estates. The area has no high-rise housing, so all families have a small fenced yard behind, if not a garden. All front doors in the area give straight on to the pavement, which is where most children play.

Thus, while individual families' fluctuating financial fortunes sometimes form a part of the child's experience during the fieldwork year, their basic economic situation is taken as given, and as fairly uniform. Differences in their actual disposable incomes were not superficially evident. While a family might, in an emergency, find the money to leave at short notice for Bangladesh, none of the 16 children had a family holiday, or a trip to Alton Towers or Legoland, or even London, in the year I was observing them. Most never left the neighbourhood except to shop in the town centre,

or visit relatives. There is therefore a commonality in their economic experience which the study assumes but leaves unexamined, unless it intrudes into other data.

Social capital

Social capital is glossed by Bourdieu and Passeron (1977) as ‘capital of social connections and prestige’, and defined as a way in which an individual can vicariously exploit, through her/his relationship with others, all the economic and symbolic capital *they* possess. Bourdieu’s own examples are of dinner-parties with the mayor, or drinks with the president of the golf club, but it is not difficult to detect and describe an equivalent hierarchy of social connections within local communities, and within the social world of the school. In a social context in which *no one* dines with the mayor or drinks at the golf club, different but equally important indicators of distinction obtain.

Transcripts of parent interviews, and observation records of daily interactions, generate a range of ‘types’ of social capital. These types however vary in their effectiveness in enhancing the cultural capital of children in the field of education, and this variation is determined by their location with regard to two intersecting axes, or boundaries: one which separates the school from the out-of-school world; and one which divides the minority from the majority community. For despite Bourdieu’s argument that capital, once acquired, is transposable and transferable, across boundaries, into new fields, taking new forms, the evidence of this study suggests that this is only partly true, and that in the case of minority families especially, there are barriers to transposing and investing the capital they have worked to accumulate.

Social capital, then, both reflects and confirms the relationship between the family and the power structures of the wider social formation. It can become effective in a range of roles and relationships which are activated within the field of education, or within the broader social field of power; and in forms which embody the practices of the majority (Anglo) or the minority (Bengali) community. The boundaries between the four fields defined by these two dimensions are permeable to differing degrees: some admit the transfer of family capital into the school setting, and some do not. The range of options which can be generated is suggested by this model.

Figure 1: Locations of family practices constitutive of social and cultural capital, and their likely effectiveness in supporting children’s school learning.

	Field of Education [E]	Field of local community [S]
Anglo	[A/E] highly effective; family practices which create social and cultural capital for the child in school.	[A/S] probably effective; family practices which create social capital which can be converted to cultural capital in A/E.
Bicultural	[B/E] possibly effective; family practices create (minority) cultural capital which might be transposed to A/E.	[B/S] probably ineffective; family practices create (minority) social capital which will not be recognised in A/E.

The upper left segment of this model (A/E: activities in the field of education within the Anglo community) contains practices which carry social prestige within the majority community, and are invested in, or effective in, a child’s schooling, creating cultural capital for the child. Examples of such useful capital in this setting are the activities of Joshua’s mother, Maisie, whose occasional work in the local playgroup, and active support of school fundraising events, put her on first-name terms with the teaching staff, and give her easy access to the classrooms, as well as confident relationships with the mothers of past and present playgroup children. She, alone among the sample parents, would also feel able to pop her head round the staffroom door to discuss posters for school events, or sell raffle and disco tickets. Her sense of ease on school premises and with school personnel is communicated to Joshua and his sisters, who are similarly relaxed and confident in their relationship to the school. While Maisie (a child-minder married to a long-distance lorry-driver) would carry little social capital in the wider community, within the local field of education constituted by this particular school she is socially affluent.

The same is true of Katy's mother Maxine, who in the course of the year attended a nearby Under-Fives Centre to train as an after-school club organiser. Katy's family, as we shall see, *experience many difficulties over the year which characterise them as powerless in their dealings with the world outside the family.* Nevertheless, Maxine's initiative in entering the field of education on her own behalf brings her into regular contact and consultation with the staff at All Saints', and thereby raises the family's and Katy's profile in the school, and gives greater access to school knowledge of all kinds.

The upper-right segment (A/S) represents the intersection of the majority community with socially-valued activities *outside* the field of education. It would include the efforts of those parents whose work in local businesses enables them to donate goods to the school: three families in the class, for example, are market traders and make regular donations for school fund-raising events, while others working in factories can legitimately divert 'seconds' of paper and china to the school. Parents with connections in local residents' associations and community groups are similarly 'visible' to the staff, and are welcomed as partners in promoting the interests of school and community. The social capital this brings - first-name chats with teachers, and purposeful activity on school premises in school time - enhances their children's cultural capital.

Below the horizontal axis, parental activities though equally energetic and purposeful are less effective in securing social capital within the school, or cultural capital for children. In the lower left segment (B/E), minority families' investments in the field of education may include recruiting children for the local mosque school, or appointing a teacher for the Bengali Saturday school, roles taken on by Abu Bokkar's father. The lower right segment (B/S) represents other forms of social action which carry prestige within the minority community: Khiernssa's father is on the committee of the Islamic Association, and organises meetings and sends out minutes in Bengali and English. Both these fields of activity, however, are hidden from the mainstream educational arena (A/E). None of the All Saints' teachers is aware of the activities of minority parents within their own community, or of the esteem in which they are

held. Their children, therefore, gain no social or cultural enhancement in the field of education from the family's work in the community. To be effective in this way, Bengali parents' work would have to take place in the visible world of the majority community: becoming a classroom assistant in the school, or a local councillor, for instance. None of the parents in this group has made that step as yet.

A summary of the types of social capital available to working-class parents might include: an organising or leadership role in an educational or community facility; membership of a local group or informal network; ownership of a business (or prestige occupation); and friendly informal contacts with school staff. Those activities which fall within the majority community's orbit, both within and outside the field of education, are effective in securing cultural capital for children because they are recognised by the school. Those which are carried out in the minority community, *even* those directly related to educational ends, remain invisible and ineffective within the school setting. Within this particular community, a Bengali identity assigns a low social status to individuals and families *before they have even begun* to exercise their own agency. The 'othering' of the 'Indians' (as many Anglo families describe them) places them below a status 'floor' in the eyes of the ethnic majority.

Finally, it seems appropriate to mention what might be called 'negative social capital': the problems and misfortunes which may reduce families' effectiveness in supporting their children's learning, and reduce their standing in the eyes of teachers and other parents, as well as damaging the parents' sense of their own efficacy in managing their lives. During the fieldwork, some families experienced multiple difficulties. Serious medical problems affected, for instance, the families of Katy and Jemma, Mohammed, Tuhura, Abdul Rahman, Amadur, Rufia and Khiernssa (ill-health emerged as a major factor in most Bengali families' lives). Social/ relational problems were experienced by both Jemma's and Joni and Robbie's (the twins) families, and involved disputes with neighbours and police as well as family members. The social, educational and sometimes criminal behaviour of older siblings overshadowed several families, but particularly these two. Recurrent financial problems, sometimes involving the DSS or creditors, were commonly experienced,

and became critical for some families when the town was hit by the Good Friday floods which swept across the Midlands and wiped out the homes and possessions of many under-insured families (including Katy's and Joshua's). A few months later, the news of flooding in Bangladesh had similar emotional and financial consequences for Bengali families in the community.

Families' ability to deal with such problems when they arose, and to recognise and accommodate the effects on their young children, is discussed below as an aspect of the family habitus. It depended in part on the family's own stability and self-concept, and in part on the strength of their supportive network. The non-prestigious social capital of family, neighbourhood, and community support is not credited by Bourdieu, but it proves an important factor in the lives of these small children. For whereas Katy's mother reports, wearily,

She's a bit stressy at the moment... we've not been handling them well, given all this going on, we've not given them the time, [Kal]

Mohammed's family can only cope with unexpected problems by taking off, without warning, to their home village in Sylhet.

Cultural capital.

Family ownership of cultural capital, like the family habitus, is accumulated over time. It is the product of the life experiences of parents and grandparents, including the historical and geographical contexts which shaped them, but unlike other forms of 'inheritance' can not be simply passed on to the child as a gift, but must be earned in each generation by the investment of time and effort. This is why, Bourdieu claims, it 'manages to combine the prestige of innate property with the merits of acquisition' (1997: 49). But unlike other forms of capital it is immediately effective in the field of education, giving children 'a gain in time, a head start' when they commence the long and competitive process of acquiring school knowledge.

Three aspects of the cultural capital of the sample families are discussed here, though other aspects emerge throughout the study: maternal educational experiences, family communicative skills, and family literacy practices. Maternal education is a strong predictor of children's early attainments (Tizard *et al*, 1988; Melhuish *et al*, 2000) as

well as a major constituent in Bourdieu's definition. Mothers in this study were asked about their educational *experiences* as well as their eventual attainment, and in particular their recall of literacy learning. Where relevant or available, the experiences and input of fathers, older siblings, and other family members are also included, along with the influence of the geographical location of the family's schooling.

The ability of parents to communicate, whether orally or in writing, with their children's schools, depends not simply on their language use or educational 'level', but also on their confidence and self-efficacy, and their knowledge of the education system. Skills in this area enable parents to manipulate the education system to their child's advantage. Such skills, described by Lareau (1989) and Reay (1998) as associated with social class, are demonstrated by Gewirtz *et al* (1994) to be more complex in their acquisition, as this study also shows.

Family literacy practices are singled out here as one of the most significant, and educationally determining, aspects of family culture. The frequency, purpose and visibility of family members' reading and writing activities, as well as the actual presence of reading and writing materials, comprise the context for the child's acquisition of capital in this essential area of school knowledge. The wide variation between families, and within and across ethnic groups, described below reflects too the family's conscious or unconscious maintenance of its own culture.

Mothers' experiences of schooling.

The extent of mothers' schooling is shown in Table 3. Only one mother (Mohammed's) has never attended: there was no school in her village, and as the oldest girl in the family she stayed home learning to cook and sew, while her younger siblings went to school in the next village. Nevertheless she acquired enough Arabic to be able to decipher the Qur'an.

Other Bengali mothers have detailed (and happy) memories of school learning. Most grew up in villages, and typically attended a village Model School from Class 1 to class 5, though some spent additional years in the preparatory classes, or stayed on

for a year or two of high school or mosque school. The two mothers (sisters-in-law) who grew up in towns had an extended education: Tuhura's mother Jamila, some of whose relatives taught in schools and colleges, attended school from 4 to 16 and describes herself as an accomplished pupil. Bengali mothers' learning in the home, which continued until they married, focused on traditional embroidery, and studying the Qur'an. All of them enjoyed the schooling they had, and regarded themselves as reasonably able.

Table 3: Maternal education of 16 sample children

Child	Mother's place of birth	Mother's education	Mother's age (first child)	Mother's age (this child)
A Bokkar	Bangla village	Primary (5 yrs), village school	18	32
A Rahman	Bangla town	Primary and secondary (9yrs), town school	19	24
Amadur	Bangla village	Primary and secondary (7 yrs), village school and private tutor	19	19
Cameron	Town	Primary and secondary (12 yrs), Town schools and FE college	20	23
Jelika	Bangla village	Primary and secondary (10 yrs), village schools	22	22
Jemma	Town	Primary and secondary (9 yrs in Town schools then truanted)	18	31
Joni	Town	Primary and secondary (intermittent because of illness), left when pregnant at 15.	16	24
Joshua	UK town	Primary and secondary (11 yrs) in town schools, FE, YTS	24	28
Katy	Town	Primary and secondary (11 yrs), Town schools, YTS	23	27
Kelly	Town	Primary and secondary (10 yrs, then excluded), Town schools.	21	24
Khiernssa	Bangla village	Primary (6 yrs?), village school, mosque school	22	26
Mohammed	Bangla village	[no schooling]	16	28
Robbie	Town	Primary and secondary (intermittent because of illness), left when pregnant at 15.	16	24
Rufia	Bangla village	Primary (5 yrs), village school and mosque school	16	27
Tuhura	Bangla town	Primary and secondary (12 yrs) in large town school	17	19
Troy	UK town	Primary and secondary (11yrs), frequent moves (in care and in	19	19

		boarding school)		
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The Anglo mothers' superficially homogeneous experience of schooling conceals very disparate individual histories. The most 'successful' was Cameron's mother Alison, whose army family travelled abroad before settling in the town, and who enjoyed school, worked hard and began three 'A' level courses; she gave up after a year, she says, because 'when I talked about leaving, nobody said anything, no-one tried to stop me'. She alone among the mothers regrets not achieving more. At the other extreme are mothers whose educational failure began early: Kelly's mother Gaynor, who was 'in trouble for being naughty' throughout her school career and was eventually 'thrown out for messing about'; Troy's mother Charlotte, who was in care from an early age and attended numerous schools, including boarding schools, but remembers she was always unhappy; Joni and Robbie's mother Kath, who was in and out of hospital so often as a child that she never settled at school or made friends, and left when she became pregnant at 15; and Jemma's mother June, who 'got picked on' because they couldn't afford the uniform, and was in a day-centre for truants from the age of 14. Only four of the mothers (Cameron's, Joshua's, Katy's and Troy's) obtained any 16+ passes. After school, Maisie (Joshua) and Maxine (Katy) entered YTS schemes but received no actual training.

Literacy learning, which Bengali mothers recall as the main focus of schooling in Sylhet, is a somewhat hazy memory for mothers educated in the UK. The memories of reading and writing retained by these mothers are unfortunate ones: Maisie knows that she 'fell behind' and was 'put on Pirate books to catch up'; Maxine learned by 'that silly thing they were trying out at the time where we had to re-learn it, the proper way of doing it' (i.t.a.), so they 'couldn't read any ordinary books'. But on the whole Anglo mothers claim to 'only remember the playing, the wendy house' from Infant School (June).

The pedagogy in Sylheti village schools was evidently very visible and explicit by comparison, and the common experience of learning to read and write is recalled by all the mothers. Asima gives a typical account:

we learned the alphabet... from the first day we drew letters on the ground in the earth... then we wrote on slates, then when we were expert we were allowed to write on paper, and sometimes write on the blackboard... you wrote the letters over and over, and the teacher rubbed them out and you did them again until you got them right... then you learned to write the little words like *amma* and *abba* and so on... [Am1]

It took her less than a year to 'learn the alphabet and the signs on top to make all the sounds', and she learned the English alphabet at the same time. Most mothers learned to read basic English and Arabic, as well as Bengali, in their village school.

Though none of these mothers acquired spoken English, at school or later, their future husbands were undergoing a different school experience. All arrived in England (most in this town) during their school years (Amadur's father at 5, Abu Bokkar's at 10) and have learned some English at school or in the businesses they joined at 16. In this respect their cultural capital is higher than that of their wives, although in some ways they otherwise report a less 'successful' (and less enjoyable) experience of education. None of the Anglo fathers is reported as having any success, or interest, in their school years.

The relationship between parents' own educational success, and their ability to create cultural capital for their children, is not straightforward. Predictably, the educational capital acquired by women in Sylhet ('embodied' in the educated individual, rather than in paper credentials) is not visible or legitimated at All Saints'. Their capital, as Gewirtz *et al* put it, is in the wrong currency (1994), while their husbands' English school attainments (like those of the Anglo fathers) are of low quality. Within the liberal-progressive field of education their children are entering, the educational accomplishments of Sylheti village schoolgirls (rote-learning of alphabets, memorisation of the Qur'an) carry no credit. Anglo families however, gain credit from mothers' ability to demonstrate their literacy and other skills, communicate with teachers, and pass their own school knowledge on to their children.

Language and Communication.

Language is both a constituent and a medium of cultural capital. It may be the single factor which most disadvantages Bengali mothers and children, as well as a major

factor in disadvantaging working-class families from all groups in school (Bernstein, 1970). The ability to read and write in Bengali, and often in Arabic and English too, and to understand Hindi, does not guarantee access and legitimacy in the majority field of education. Some Bengali fathers' considerable fluency in spoken English still leaves them at a disadvantage in participating in their children's *mainstream* education: though many have knowledge and authority in the minority community's own educational arena, this capital is not transposable. Not surprisingly then, they are anxious when interviewed to boast of their linguistic skills and efforts: Abdul Rahman's father, for instance, still attends weekly English classes at the community college, and has learned Gujarati and Urdu from two friends.

For the majority community (including teachers), *minority-group* linguistic differences are impossible to discern. In the present sample, differences in accent, grammar and vocabulary, which assume enormous significance to the bilingual assistant who interpreted the parent interviews, and works with the children in the classroom, are imperceptible to non-Bengali speakers. The hierarchy within the group (which ranges from Amadur's and Tuhura's mothers who impress Mrs Khan with their 'beautiful Bengali' to Mohammed's and Abu Bokkar's - 'terrible Sylheti accent, absolutely terrible') is non-existent outside it.

Within the Anglo group the evident hierarchy of communicative skills is largely associated with mothers' own educational success or failure. This is reinforced by the experience of re-encountering school as parents, and being vulnerable to the judgements of teachers all over again (notwithstanding the reassuring welcome offered to parents at All Saints'). In particular, many monolingual parents are disadvantaged by their poor written language skills once their child enters school, a disadvantage which may become more acute as their child proceeds through the school system, and contacts between home and school become more formal. This becomes evident in Reception as soon as parents are asked to contribute to the home-school reading folder. Few parents wrote a 'reading comment' at any time in the school year, and their obligatory 'absence notes' demonstrated the difficulties many experienced with writing.

Family literacy practices.

Conventional indicators such as ‘number of books in the home’ give no hint of the rich variety of literacy environments experienced by the sample children in their first four years. The home with the most books (Troy’s) is the one in which the adults ‘hate reading’ though they have invested in ‘literally hundreds of books, complete sets, Beatrix Potter, Bible stories’ for their son’s benefit, which are ‘literally locked in a cupboard, till he’s older, so all his books are in excellent condition’ [Ty1]. Charlotte and her husband know intuitively that books and reading constitute cultural capital even as they admit they are ‘not into reading’, ‘don’t like books’, and ‘don’t buy newspapers’, and their unusually explicit view is confirmed by Troy:

Does your mum or dad have a favourite book?

they hate books, they both hate books, they do read with me but they do hate books [Tych]

Children’s responses to this question were important, not so much to verify their parents’ claims but in discovering whether the child was aware of its family’s habits. As Maisie advised me, she can only read the history books which she finds so enjoyable after the children are in bed, ‘so it’s not as if he sees me reading, except magazines’. As a supplement to the two parent interviews and the child interview, the Parent Questionnaire asked, *Is anyone in the home a keen reader? Who? What do they read?*. On the whole all these sources produced highly compatible information. Perhaps few four-year-olds can pronounce confidently on their parents’ tastes, but Joshua and Jemma both got it right: *Does your mum or dad have a favourite book?* ‘my dad’s got a Star Trek book’ (Joshua), ‘my dad’s got Playstation books’ (Jemma), just as their wives reported. Only Cameron unwittingly disagrees, assuring me ‘they don’t have books’, whereas Alison writes ‘I read light novels and magazines’.

Bengali children are generally aware that their parents read in Bengali and Arabic. Khiernssa’s response is typical:

My dad hasn’t got a book; my mum’s got a Bengali book.

What about the Qur’an?

Yeah, they both got that [Khch]

All the Bengali parents cite daily reading of the Qur'an and other religious texts or books of prayers, while some read extensively in addition. Four families buy Bengali newspapers locally, and read and discuss them in the family group, while regular use of the library is reported by Rufia's and Abdul Rahman's mothers: the latter borrows both English and Bengali 'love stories', and reads English newspapers and the Teletext bulletins. Several mums read their older children's school books with enjoyment and interest.

The literacy activities of older siblings, which are inseparable from their religious education and observance, are an important feature of Bengali households. Most families' evening routines are built around the comings and goings of children who attend mosque school, or have Arabic tuition at home, and the hour or so set aside for homework, as well as round family prayers and reading the Qur'an. Extracts from the children's daily diaries illustrate this:

(Abu Bokkar):

*4.30 p.m. two children get ready for mosque school; he has a nap;
6 p.m. he wakes and watches TV with the older children;
8 p.m. children return from mosque and the family eat together;
9 p.m. they all do some writing together, then play with cars and toys.*

(Khiernssa)

*5 p.m. dad takes older children to mosque school;
she stays home with mum; they watch TV together; mum cooks while she 'has some little sleeps on the sofa';
8 p.m. everyone returns home: they eat their meal together.*

(Tuhura)

*6.30. mum and the children eat and then pray together;
7 p.m. all study Arabic together;
8 p.m. all pray together again.*

Every household has at least one Qur'an, in Arabic, though a minority also own and use a Bengali version.

The reading habits of the Anglo family members are more spontaneous and opportunistic, as well as more infrequent. Most treat reading as an alternative form of entertainment or pastime, used to complement TV viewing or the occasional hobby. Jemma's mum June answers the question, *Does anyone in the family like reading?*,

'no, I don't read, but I like knitting when I've got time', while Gaynor enthuses about Catherine Cookson (but hasn't 'had much time lately'), Maisie recalls history and non-fiction she has enjoyed in the past, and Maxine is nostalgic about being introduced to Steinbeck at school. Other mothers (Charlotte, Kath, Alison) equate reading with the parental duty of 'hearing them read'. Nevertheless there is no family in which reading of some kind does not figure regularly, and in addition to environmental print.

Writing, though less frequent, has several common functions. All the households with older children describe homework sessions, and many families (including all the Bengali group) write and receive letters from time to time. Only Troy's parents, who 'hate books' are habitual writers:

I write and write, I'm always writing something, like a shopping list, or a letter [Ty1]

I suppose he sees me always writing, and Bob's always writing, letters for jobs, letters for this, letters for that, we do do a lot of writing in our house, the paper and the trees we get through is actually amazing [Ty2]

All the households had some form of paper and pens, though they were not always for children's use.

5.3. Family habitus.

Family habitus, according to Bourdieu, partakes to a large extent of the collective habituses of the family's class (and ethnic group) membership. Families who experience domination as a result of their poverty, low occupational classification and/or ethnic minority status may have many characteristics in common, including the prospect of relatively low educational achievement for their children. Yet, *within* dominated groups, the different strategies which individual families adopt in response to their disadvantages can create entirely different physical as well as psychological environments for the small children growing up within the family. These environments in turn generate different ranges of strategies for those children to adopt when they enter formal schooling, and make possible differing chances of success.

Accounts of family habitus, therefore, include both their response to their present circumstances, and their expectations for the future. Their response it is suggested may lie somewhere along a continuum from apathy, through acceptance, to active resistance, and their expectations may bear more or less resemblance to the 'objective probabilities' (Bourdieu, 1990a) of their situation.

Strategies for economic survival.

None of the families in this group experience extreme poverty. None are homeless or hungry, or without a TV and video, fridge and phone (though this may be disconnected for non-payment). Most had access to a car at some time in the year. Nevertheless for some families the shortage of money is such a central, energy-consuming issue in their lives that it constrains all their options. Jemma's family provides the clearest illustration of this.

Jemma's father (referred to by June as 'me chap') is an experienced wood-machinist who now works full-time after three years of unemployment. But with a backlog of debts to clear, the family teeters on the brink of financial disaster all year: June's response is to get a part-time job, but her attendance and work-rate are so poor that she is offered piecework at home instead, packing Christmas gift sets. After Christmas the family's finances worsen rapidly, and a great deal of June's week is spent appeasing or avoiding the housing department, the rent collector and various other debtors. By the middle of the summer term the family is fearful of eviction, and when their (uninsured) fridge-freezer breaks down during a brief hot spell, they are unable to retrieve their deteriorating food supply, and are obliged to shop for every meal in turn. Lacking both a supportive network, and the skills to handle their debts, June is reduced to devoting her spare energies to patching up one financial mishap after another. Even this task is not tackled energetically and efficiently, but apathetically and tardily: appointments, deadlines and final demands, it appears, are 'forgotten' or 'lost in the post' until each situation is almost beyond retrieval.

No other family's money problems reached this stage. Among Anglo families where the father was employed (such as Cameron's, Joshua's, Katy's), the mothers organised their lives so they could take part-time jobs, from child-minding to bar

work or telesales, to patch the gaps in the family's income. Other mothers living on benefit (Kath, Gaynor) were heavily reliant on their own parents to offer meals, clothes and childcare as well as emotional support, while Charlotte energetically and successfully committed herself to the task of helping her husband write off for jobs. Among Bengali families, where only the men worked, the response to difficulty was to work longer and longer hours as waiters, at the same time as learning to cook, which was better paid. Amadur's father sometimes worked lunchtimes and night-times seven days a week, so that the only time he was home with his family was from 3 to 5 in the afternoon; the family paid the price when Asima, who by then had four children under 5, became ill and unable to cope. But all these parents showed ingenuity and determination, as well as practical organising skills, in keeping their families out of serious financial trouble.

Strategies for social recognition

Families with pressing financial problems, even if they deal with them successfully, have little time to spare in cultivating social esteem: Jemma's family, not surprisingly, offered no resistance to their low social standing. Yet other families, including Joni and Robbie's did.

At the time of my second visit to Kath, two of her older sons had been excluded from school, for swearing, bullying and disruption, and the twelve-year-old, missing all weekend, had just been brought home by the police, who had found him with a teenage gang on empty industrial premises. Kath herself, though she did not tell me this, had recently been restrained by the police during a drunken attack on a neighbour. It is hard to imagine what opportunities remained to Kath to acquire respectability in the neighbourhood, and her embodied habitus - a nervous, round-shouldered, scuttling gait - suggested that she knew it.

Nevertheless, for Kath, as for many parents for whom few routes to social recognition are available, the chance to represent oneself as a good parent, and one's children as well-brought-up children, was an opportunity to be seized. The start of school for the four-year-olds is also the chance for parents to re-invent themselves. Some parents recognised that social esteem within the school setting was associated

with their child's abilities and progress, while others relied more on the power of appearances. Most Anglo, and many Bengali parents, consistently brought their child to school in the (very optional) 'school uniform' of white shirt, red sweatshirt and grey skirt or trousers. (The white shirts required constant boiling to remove paint and glue, as many mothers confessed, and the children changed out of these clothes as soon as they arrived home). The 'uniform' seemed to reinforce the view of All Saints' as a 'good school', though it led to many children being severely scolded for failing to keep clean.

Not all parents displayed their parenting in the same way. Tuhura's mother, unaware of mainstream expectations, sent her daughters to school in the gorgeous finery of satin-frilled party dresses, bright nail varnish and mendhi. Kath's method of giving the twins a good start in school was equally anomalous: rather than wearing school uniform, both were frequently dressed in new and 'fashionable' (quasi-adult) clothes from the market: fatigues, camouflage trousers and leather bomber jackets for Robbie, fake fur and impractical heeled sandals for Joni. They were the first to own Barbie lunchboxes, Sonic backpacks and all the other pre-teen paraphernalia of the majority culture. In their first term the twins were model pupils, punctual and quiet and polite, and never forgot their bookbags. Though the family fortunes subsequently worsened (see 5.4.), Kath's conscientious parenting at the start of school may have given the twins a broader range of strategies than their older siblings enjoyed. Charlotte, who offers the clearest example of a mother's active and creative resistance, on her children's behalf, to the low social status she has herself acquired, is also described below (5.4).

The Bengali community displayed an equally broad range of strategies. Amadur and Mohammed, both born in Bangladesh, belong to families whose recent arrival has assigned them to the lowest ranks of the Bengali community, and who are economically poor, and poorly housed. Their mothers would have very different standing in Sylhet (Shazna had no schooling while Asima had more than ten years), but both have been uprooted so recently from a culture in which they were socially competent and embedded, and are now so isolated and unsupported, that it is impossible for them to exercise any agency outside their own homes. Both mothers

respond to their situation with an apathy bordering on despair: Mohammed's case is detailed below.

Well-established Bengali families, despite their lack of recognition in the majority community whose streets and shops they share, inhabit a self-contained hierarchy of social esteem, and commit time and effort to exercising it. Abu Bokkar's and Khiernssa's fathers, because of their involvement with the mosque and Saturday school, are consulted by other families on community matters, while the ranking of Abdul Rahman's father is enhanced by his two sisters. The younger, Milou, who was educated locally and has native-like English, dispenses advice and opinions over the counter of the small food store they have jointly purchased; the older, Jamila, is Tuhura's mother, highly educated in Bangladesh, who shares some of the influence wielded by Milou. This was demonstrated on the occasion when they persuaded Bengali parents not to allow their children to go on a 3-day school trip: another child in the extended family had been homesick and unhappy on the previous year's trip, and Milou in particular mounted an effective campaign to have the next school journey boycotted by minority parents. This successful resistance to the authority of the majority community did not, however, enhance their children's interests or their own standing with the school, where Milou was seen as a 'troublemaker', and Jamila's habit of keeping her children home from school provoked annoyance rather than any attempt at understanding. The influence of this combative and active auntie on both Abdul Rahman's and Tuhura's lives is frequently visible, and suggests the relative importance of extended family members in shaping the habitus of Bengali families.

Earning cultural capital.

There is less evidence of a striving for cultural capital among the families studied. Most mothers accept their own level of educational achievement, and their intellectual competence, as natural and appropriate: only Alison wishes she had stayed on at school, while Charlotte's drive for recognition, discussed below, is quite exceptional. June and Kath both accept their early exit from school (because of truancy, and pregnancy) as all of a piece with their school careers, as does Gaynor, whose expulsion was the culmination of years of 'mucking about'. Maxine wanted to

be a pathologist when she was young, but ‘they told me it took till you’re about 40 to qualify!’ so she became a YTS trainee in a shoe shop instead; when I asked if she had any regrets she was astonished - ‘No, no, everything I’ve done, I’ve loved it, I wouldn’t change any of it’. She and Maisie both seem to regard their courses in playgroup management and play leadership as the natural extension of their mothering skills, rather than as educational qualifications. These two mothers, while accepting their limited school credentials, are actively investing their skills in a field which brings financial, social and cultural (‘school-related’) benefits for their families.

Some Bengali mothers *are* depressed, not by their educational experience, but by their feelings of inadequacy in supporting their children’s learning. Sabina is convinced that her lack of English prevents her from assisting Abdul Rahman and his brothers in any way, and feels she is letting them down badly: this is one reason why she defers to her sister-in-law Milou in all matters relating to the boys’ education. All the Bengali mothers apologised to me for their lack of English, and expressed their regrets at being unable to read with their children or teach them at home. None however would consider joining local English classes, and were glad that their husbands and older children could speak for them and act on their behalf. This resignation is combined with some sadness, as Abu Bokkar’s and Rufia’s mothers pointed out: everyone else in the family was speaking English in the evenings, and the mothers were becoming isolated within their own families.

Rufia’s father, however, expresses the pride felt by many parents in their faithful adherence to Islamic family practices, and in their stability and security as a family unit. During a discussion of Bengali children’s maintenance of their home culture in English schools, he proudly asserts that ‘some of them may change, but some of them - *we* look after them properly, *our* children don’t change’. He and his wife devote an hour every evening to teaching their children Arabic, as well as sending them all to Bengali school and mosque school. The respect of his own community may offset the majority community’s ignorance, or disapproval, of his family values. There is an active resistance, rather than a passive acceptance, in holding on to prized (minority)

capital when it is threatened by the dominant culture, and not all Bengali families have the strength and resources to maintain this struggle.

Expectations and aspirations

One belief that is shared by the otherwise disparate parents in this study is a faith in the importance of education in their children's lives and futures. It is true that the evidence for this is largely self-reported, but it is frequently supported by the evidence of parents' actions. Most parents believe that their own low level of education has determined their present situation, and Bangladeshi parents in particular associate educational success with the possibility of higher socioeconomic standing for their children.

without education there is nothing, not only in this country, everywhere

[*KhI*]

school is very important to me, that's why I moved to a house near the school, because it's important for children to be educated: if the children don't learn well, there is no future for them [*TuI*]

Abu Bokkar's father, who is very aware of the low educational achievement of many Bengali children, seeks an explanation for this in the school system, and is emphatic that his oldest son must enter post-16 training, because 'he will never get anywhere in life if he works in a restaurant' [*Abhv*]. All the Bengali parents consulted expressed high aspirations for their children's future occupations, such as 'a solicitor' (Abdul Rahman), 'go into the law or work in a hospital' (Amadur);

perhaps an engineering job, solicitor, lawyer, barrister... we would like to give them a chance to go to Higher Education, but we can't know the future [*KhI*]

While Rufia's father suggests that, so long as her older sister becomes a doctor, 'she can be a teacher, that will do', Tuhura's mother wants one of her girls to be a doctor and one a solicitor (though she would prefer it if they married at 16, and went to college as married women, if their husbands agreed).

Anglo parents, though equally keen for their children to enjoy educational success, more frequently justify this in terms of self-fulfilment and happiness, rather than occupational status (Allatt, 1993):

I'd want him to be happy in whatever he did... if you've got a good education

behind you, that's great, but I wouldn't want to force it on him... as long as they're happy it's not right to put too much pressure on them. [Cal]

Kath, who believes the twins must 'get a good education so they'll have opportunities' and 'know a lot of different things' would like them to 'find a job they enjoy', and will therefore 'give them a push if they get behind'. Maxine wants Katy 'to do well, to go on. I don't have any plans for her except for her to be happy'. Gaynor wants Kelly 'to get all the education she can and go to college; at the moment she wants to be a Spice Girl, but hopefully that will change'. Even Charlotte, the most ambitious parent in the 'present time' of her child's early years, insists that for the future, 'the main thing is happiness, you're not going to succeed if you're not happy'.

The view of the education system held by most Bengali parents is that of the optimistic outsider (though Abu Bokkar's father's optimism has been dented by his older sons' experience): it is that hard work will guarantee high exam achievement, which in turn will open the way to a high-status occupation. Their 'subjective expectation of objective probabilities', as Bourdieu defines it (Jenkins, 1992) has not adjusted to the likely reality, and they almost certainly over-estimate their children's chances of success (though it is possible that the accepted rhetoric of high hopes which they voice does not really reflect their expectations). Anglo parents, on the other hand, for all their individual differences, reveal the constraints of their class and collective habitus, the 'embodied history' of their own experiences. While wishing their children school success and a 'college education' (and in Charlotte's case, believing them to be 'way above the average'), none anticipates their child attaining professional status. Instead they are content to envisage them 'learning a trade' (Cameron), 'getting a job they enjoy' (the twins), becoming 'a hairdresser' (Joshua) or 'a chippy, or a milkman' (Troy).

The effect of these parental aspirations on children's early development, and the formation of the habitus, is impossible to measure. However, it seems that the messages the children receive are very mixed. For Bengali boys and girls 'expected' to become barristers or doctors, the only immediate role models are men who are unemployed or in the restaurant trade, and women who are full-time home-makers;

while Anglo girls and boys, though expected to aim at higher education, are still destined in their parents' eyes for non-graduate jobs similar to their own.

A fuller description of the habitus of some sample families follows.

5.4 . Case studies in family habitus.

Troy

Charlotte is the first to admit that she, and not Bob, is the force behind the family environment in which Troy is being socialized. She recognises too that her determination to create an 'ideal family' and rear 'perfect children' derives from the anger she feels over the destruction of her own family life when she was taken into care at the age of three. Though she 'threw away the results slip' for her GCSEs after leaving local authority care at 16, the birth of her first two children (Troy and Jason) and the subsequent split with their Jamaican father galvanised her into re-inventing herself. With her new husband Bob she pursues social and cultural capital by every means available with the intention of constructing a successful future for her children.

Now that Troy is at school, many of Charlotte's efforts are bearing fruit. She has acted purposefully to acquire conventional respectability and social esteem, which she associates with marriage and motherhood, religion and manners. She saw marrying Bob, in church, as a preliminary to applying for joint adoption of the boys, as was her decision to have them and their baby sister christened, and to take the whole family to church every Sunday. She has no interest in religion ('I tried to tell Troy about what God was but I got it wrong, what they told him at church contradicted me!') but sees churchgoing as both training in good behaviour, and an opportunity to display her children's good manners. One of her reasons for choosing All Saints', which is not her nearest school, is 'because if someone says it's a Christian church or a Christian school that's going to come across better to somebody'. Other reasons are that she learned from her Health Visitor that her local school was thought to be 'very rough'; and that All Saints' had 'lots of Indians and mixed kids', so that Troy and Jason would not be so conspicuous as in a mostly-white school. At the same time she symbolically denies the boys' Jamaican origin: when I referred to Troy's 'natural father' she disputed the term, claiming there was 'nothing natural about him, and he's never behaved like a father, not what I'd call a father'.

It is because Charlotte is aware of the status and importance of books, and early education, that she has bought Troy 'literally hundreds of books', which he is not allowed to touch, and 'every toy from the Early Learning Centre possible'. She is also very aware of the relative status of other families, and of the effects of parenting on children's outcomes:

If you've got a bad home life, or they're allowed to do things which I know kids are allowed to do which I wouldn't allow my kids to do... I know for a fact some children talk about 'my dad's in jail', I hear children say it, or 'the police were round my house last night'... And for instance if a child's swearing you know that's probably what they're allowed to get away with, and you gather from that what their home is, all the little clues... [Ty2]

Though she is inclined to disparage the 'Indians' ('they don't talk to anyone, I wonder if they ever talk to their children'), her greatest scorn is for white parents who fail to regulate their children's home environment.

The continual writing Charlotte refers to is instrumental rather than expressive: job applications, letters to the council and Social Services, and once Troy started school, a stream of letters to his teachers. Her written skills are matched by her oral communications. She has strong views on family life and education and is extremely forceful in presenting them. In the absence of a family supportive network (Charlotte considers herself an orphan and Bob's family are in Cornwall), she has established links with the professionals who can supply her need for information and access - the GP, the Health Visitor, the social worker, and latterly the school staff and governors.

Perhaps the most important aspect of Troy's family habitus is that it includes conscious planning and projection, and a calculation of effects and consequences, efforts and profits. The propensity to invest in the future will be seen in Troy's preparation for school and his classroom behaviour, as well as in the roles and relationships his parents develop with the school.

Joni

Joni's family inhabit a subcultural stratum which bestows low status, and little capital of any kind, within the mainstream community. Kath's brief school career was interrupted by serious illness, and cut short when she became pregnant at 15. She

married twice (the first time in jail), and had four children, before her brief co-habitation with the twins' father. Two of her former partners continue to disrupt Kath's attempts at family order by visits which invariably end in violence and damage to property. These events, and rows with neighbours and other relatives, have caused the family to move house repeatedly. They were obliged to leave home again during the twins' second term at school.

In economic terms, Kath's efforts to bring up the six children on benefit are supported by her own parents, who live in town and offer frequent gifts and hospitality. These grandparents also offer the sole social support the family can rely on: the 'normal' experiences they provide (gardening, taking the dog for walks, fixing the house) are a stark contrast to the stressful events within the twins' home (violent scenes and frequent police involvement). Their modest respectability is the ideal to which Kath seems to aspire, in her careful housekeeping and maintenance of appearances, and in the domestic routines she has established: all six children perform household chores, and the older children take responsibility for the younger ones. For all their difficulties, the family have aspirations for an orderly future.

Within the nuclear family, gender plays an important role in shaping each child's experience. Joni shares a room with her sister Nita (the only older sibling to have kept out of trouble so far), who reads and writes and plays schools with her; Robbie sleeps with his brothers, who stay up late and are in many ways disaffected and defiant. Kath's plan to set aside time for reading and homework in the evenings may not be equally welcomed by the two groups of children. But she is surprisingly determined: like Charlotte, she has constructed an image of successful family life, and puts all her energies into resisting the outcomes of her past misfortunes, and giving the twins a good start in school.

Mohammed

If we supposed a continuum, representing confidence and self-reliance, purposefulness and planning, Mohammed's mother Shazna would be at the opposite end from Charlotte. Though the family's motivation in coming to England in 1993 suggests a determination to improve their circumstances, the home environment in

which Mohammed spent his preschool hours lacks any sense of energy and efficacy. The effect on Shazna of being uprooted from her home village and family, and moved to an alien environment, is compounded by her husband's absence all week at a restaurant in the Eastern counties. In her new setting, Shazna lacks any appropriate knowledge or support in matters of health, childcare and education, and has no one to ask. Until our preschool visit, her only contact with the majority community in which she now finds herself was through her teenage daughters, whose secondary school experience has given them some information to feed back to their mother.

Shazna seems additionally demotivated by the change from a village lifestyle in which she worked hard and kept busy all day, to one in which she has little to occupy her. Though she expressed her contentment with her TV and video, washing machine and fridge-freezer, and her leisure to spend the day watching Hindi films, in consequence the family lacks any sense of routines, commitments or urgency. She and the two small children wake around noon (Naima and Onkita get themselves to school when they can), and spend the day watching television, except for Shazna's preparation of their meal. The little boys watch cartoons, play with cars, and fight - or 'do their own work', though she can't say what this is - until they fall asleep again. Shazna was unwilling to change these habits so that Mohammed could get to school in the mornings.

The family's lifestyle seems likely to dispose them to poor health, and they suffer frequent coughs, colds and respiratory infections. The children are poorly clothed, and until the start of school had little fresh air or exercise, and no access to advice on healthcare or child welfare. In consequence, Mohammed was discovered (at his 5+ medical) to be wearing disposable nappies day and night: no-one had explained the sequence of Western toilet-training to his mother. The family's already low esteem in the majority community of the school sunk still further with this news.

The family has little social or cultural capital, within the minority or the majority domain. Literacy has a very low profile in the household: Shazna says the girls 'go upstairs to do their schoolwork', but she has never seen them do it. Though she has learned enough Arabic to read the Qur'an, she 'forgets' or is 'too busy' to read it. She

is not literate in Bengali and has heard no English spoken until very recently, so she is unable to access the school, or any institution in the majority community, and has no contacts with the mosque or with other Bengali families. Mohammed's father is similarly cut off, by the geographical accident of his work, from the local Islamic network, as well as from the daily life of his family.

Given their circumstances, the family seems unable to plan for the future, and appears to live in the present. Shazna says her husband doesn't want the girls to return to Sylhet and marry at 16, but the family at home are expecting it, and may over-rule him. The constraints on this family's range of strategies derive from their home culture as well as from their lowly position in their new environment.

Khiernssa

Khiernssa's family, unlike Mohammed's, are autonomous and purposeful within their own sphere - the minority community within the neighbourhood - although their competence does not transfer smoothly to the mainstream world of the school. Khiernssa's mother Minara was 20 when she married an older 'cousin brother' who had both lived in their household in Bangladesh, and spent many years in England. The couple have deliberately limited their family to three children - 'how we supposed to look after any more?', as her father demands - and appear to live comfortably although Ali is 'not working' and the children qualify for FSM.

Ali's confidence and energy permeates the family habitus. He is active in the local Islamic association, is well known in the community, and is one of a group of fathers who meet to talk in the school playground or the Bismillah Stores. His wife is diffident about her five years of village schooling, but on one of my visits was encouraged by him to join in reciting the Bengali and Arabic alphabets, and in teaching me simple words from a children's ABC. Ali is proud of his command of four languages, of his wife's and children's accomplishments, and of the family's strength and stability. Their cultural capital has been acquired through a deliberate investment of time and effort: reading in Bengali and Arabic in the evenings, taking the children to mosque and Bengali school, studying the Qur'an in the home, buying the children English and Bengali books, and reading Bengali newspapers together.

The family's energy and active agency is visible in its daily routines. They all clean the house together - 'wash windows, clean carpets' - play chess and karrom together, eat an evening meal together and watch the news and 'nice films' on TV. On my first visit, Khiernssa (then aged under 4) was 'helping' her father to hang new wallpaper: pulling up the end of the roll, fetching and carrying. But the family's greatest project is growing vegetables on an allotment. Minara proudly displays the runner beans, spinach, tomatoes, cabbages, marrows and squash, coriander, onions, potatoes and plums they have harvested, and the family gives the surplus to relatives, friends and neighbours as well as supplying its own needs. Family discussion of the work on the allotment is evidence of their purposeful planning for the future, and of the inclusive, close-knit ethos of the home.

The family is hampered, however, by difficulties arising from its limited access to information on healthcare and education. Minara suffers from chronic tiredness and infections, and her frailty is reappearing in Khiernssa, whose asthma and eczema, poor appetite and lack of energy, are a constant worry to her parents. Since she 'never wants to eat' when at home, she drinks baby-bottles of milk and has 'lots of little sleeps' on the sofa, which appear to sap rather than conserve her strength. The family seems to have received no advice on her physical development.

The ways of the school system also seem hard to access, even for this purposeful and accomplished family. With three children in the school, Khiernssa's parents still claim to be mystified as to what is taught, and how their children are learning, though they are more than willing for their children to engage with English culture: 'you have to learn when you're living in this country, and going out, you have to learn, or you will have a problem' (Minara). In most respects the family, despite their esteem and competence within the Bengali community, occupy a very low position in the local hierarchy of the majority community in the neighbourhood.

5.5. Summary

This chapter has sketched the principal features of the lives of the sample families: the low income and low-status occupations they have in common, but also the inter-

group and intra-group differentials which make each child's home experience unique. Attention has been drawn in particular to the forms of social and cultural capital possessed by families, and to the obstacles they are likely to experience in transposing this capital across the boundaries of class and ethnicity into the 'official' field of education. Family habitus has been discussed as the degree of agency each family can muster in maximising its advantages and overcoming problems as they arise. For most families, the future success of their young children is a source of hope and expectation. It is with this in mind that they prepare their children for school, in ways described in the next chapter.

Chapter 6

Preparation for School: the curriculum and pedagogy of the home

6.1. Introduction

Intervening between the habitus of the family, and the practice of the school, is the unique habitus of the individual child, formed in the home and then exercised in the classroom. This chapter discusses the formation of children's primary habitus through the curriculum and pedagogy of the home. It looks at two aspects of the pedagogic discourse employed in families: the *implicit* preparing and socializing environment of the home, and the *explicit* preparation for school which each family considers appropriate. These two aspects have different characteristics and different consequences for the child, and they are therefore discussed separately. But they are understood here as *jointly* constituting the curriculum and pedagogy of the home, and are probably indistinguishable to the child.

While Bourdieu's concepts of habitus and capital, field and practice continue to underpin the discussion which follows, the description of family pedagogy adopts the terms of Bernstein's theory of pedagogic discourse (1990, 1996). Family practices (and in Part Three, those of the school) are understood as elements in a regulative or an instructional discourse, and as constituting a visible or invisible pedagogy. The relationship of 'home' to 'school' practices is then more easily comprehended.

Two principal sources of the family pedagogy are discussed first: parental ethnotheories, and parental knowledge. Both are strongly marked by the family's class and cultural experiences, and shape the specific parenting practices experienced by each child – within a single family, just as within a single classroom, for instance, boys may experience a different pedagogy and curriculum from girls. Some significant aspects of the implicit and explicit practices of families in the sample are then considered, as well as children's own perceptions of their home learning. Four individual case studies are presented to suggest the complex interrelationships of class and cultural background in the acquisition of each child's primary habitus.

6.2. Sources of parental practices.

Parental ethnotheories.

Parental ethnotheories, or cultural belief systems (Harkness and Super, 1996), both structure and are structured by the family habitus, and play a fundamental role in the way children are brought up. In this study, intragroup differences in parenting practice, though prominent when the cases of individual children are discussed, are sometimes swallowed up in intergroup differences in culturally regulated beliefs about children and childhood, and the roles and duties of parents. The 'developmental niche' of each child in the study, defined by Super and Harkness (1986) as a product of its physical and social environment, of culturally regulated childrearing practices, and of the psychology of individual caregivers, is marked by aspects of the collective habitus of the Anglo and Bengali groups respectively. In what they do, as well as what they say, parents reveal strongly culturally marked assumptions about good parenting.

Views of childhood.

It has been recognised for some years that 'childhood' is itself a cultural construction (Kessen, 1991; Nunes, 1994). Among Anglo parents in the study (despite their sometimes marginal relationship to the cultural mainstream), an identifiably 'western' and even middle-class conception of childhood prevails (Newsons, 1968). In general, mothers regard their child's preschool years as a sacrosanct time, to be kept apart from adult concerns. Their image of childhood has its origins in the progressive, child-centred view of education associated with the Romantic movement, and they believe that they have a responsibility to be involved in their child's play, and to show an appreciation of his or her enthusiasms and preferences. Family activities, similarly, tend to be planned to maximize children's interest and enjoyment. Those mothers who do not actually participate in their child's play tend to believe, slightly guiltily, that they ought to: both literally and intellectually they feel an obligation to get down to the child's level, and to acknowledge the child's point of view. While none of the mothers report receiving this kind of attention from their own parents, they have acquired these socially approved attitudes from professional and media sources, and the culture at large (Lightfoot and Valsiner, 1992). Thus, while children are awake, most Anglo parents feel they should be aware of, and

attentive to their experience. But accompanying this day-time obligation towards their children is their practice of putting them to bed, out of sight, early enough in the evening for the adults to enjoy a separate existence, invisible to their children.

The Bengali mothers would be very puzzled to learn of the Anglo parents' enthusiasm for their children's play. They communicate a quite different conception of their relationship to their children and their responsibilities as parents. Their responses indicate that childhood is for children, and that an interest in childish amusements would be inappropriate for adults. Parents have huge and appropriate responsibilities in other aspects of their child's care: mothers in the sample display a constant concern for their children's health, an emotional involvement in the child's future, and a strong sense of duty in their religious and social education. But most little children are expected to play and amuse themselves with their siblings or the children of relatives and neighbours; if these are not available (during school hours) the preschool child occupies itself around the house, and certainly does not expect its mother to abandon her own tasks and come and play. (Several of the mothers referred to the more open and sociable nature of village life in Bangladesh, where children could safely go in search of others to play with, contrasting it to their present environment, where they stress that their children are not allowed out because of 'bad people' and 'bad language' on the streets). Most of these 4-year-olds had therefore spent some time alone at home except for the company of their mother who was occupied with her own chores; though the larger family size, and more frequent births, in the Bengali homes more often resulted in under-5s having still younger siblings to play with.

Bengali mothers make it clear that the child's occupation is his or her own business, and make no apology for their ignorance of how the child spends its time. This uninvolved stance towards the 'childish' interests of the child, however, does not exclude children from being present, and participant, in all the family's daily activities, or from sharing the eating and sleeping routines, and sociable activities of older family members. Rather than inhabiting a separate, childhood, world, which is put away at bedtime, as the Anglo children do, the Bengali children co-habit the family world of relatives of all ages.

The age divide, then, is recognised in different ways in the two communities. Respect for childhood, and children's experience, requires Anglo mothers, in particular, to make the effort to enter their child's world (or apologise for their failure to do so), but is not reciprocated by children being made welcome in the after-dark, adult world. But a fairly conscious ignorance of children's interests on the part of Bengali parents allows them to welcome children into their own lives as incipient-adult, full family members. These very different attitudes to childhood, and to the roles of children and parents, have clear consequences for the way children are socialized, with further consequences for their successful transition to school, and school progress.

Views about play.

Despite large intragroup variations among the Anglo families in the study, it is clear that all the mothers, and some fathers, hold the view of childhood described above. Parents offer detailed accounts of their child's changing interests and play preferences in the years from birth to 4, though their own level of involvement varies enormously.

Most consciously child-centred in their approach (and demonstrating the effects of their playgroup training) are Maisie and Maxine. Maisie's account of Joshua runs, in part:

he liked his Lego, and anything to do with Thomas the Tank - and now of course it's Action Man... he can play on his own, but most of the time I'm there on the floor with him anyway; but he's got his own bedroom and he'll spend time up there on his own on the odd occasion [Jos1]

Maxine describes Katy's early enthusiasm for bricks and construction toys - 'she was never into dolls very much' - and her love of books, reporting precisely which were her favourite books as a toddler, and which she currently prefers. Both these mothers regard their children as pleasant companions when they are home together. Katy's 'daily diary' portrays a contented afternoon indoors for mother and daughter, which is the more remarkable since this was a particularly stressful time: Katy was

attending a hospital clinic for her painful congenital hip condition, and the new baby was less than three weeks old.

12.00: Katy and mum had sandwiches and a dessert;

12.30: they started watching a video of 101 Dalmatians; while it was on, they ate some toffees, took turns to sit in the reclining chair, and both talked to a relative on the phone;

2.30: they sorted the conkers they had collected on a family walk at the weekend;

3.00: they set off for the hospital [Ka1]

Other Anglo mothers give equally full descriptions of their child's interests and preferred activities. Cameron (see 6.5. below) was 'obsessive' about Postman Pat, 'then it was Buzz Lightyear, and now it's Teletubbies'. Jemma 'liked being pushed in a little plastic car', and preferred bricks and construction toys to dolls. Joni 'always liked dolls, changing them and feeding them', whereas Robbie 'liked cars and trains, right from the start, that's all he ever really played with'. Kelly's preference for getting muddy in the garden, 'on her bike, in all weathers' is graphically described (though Gaynor takes little part in her children's play, and lists Kelly's favourite toys as 'prams and dolls' on the questionnaire). All the Anglo parents have funds of anecdotes about incidents in their children's play. It is clear that their children have all, to some extent, shared their play and imaginative lives with their mothers, and that their 'childish' interests have been accorded value, and incorporated into the family habitus, or collective history.

Only Charlotte (who can give the fullest account of any mother of her child's preschool years) seems to have regarded Troy's early activities principally as a vehicle for learning: asked what she remembers about his babyhood, she can only describe the 'educational' toys, books and tapes she supplied for Troy, and not his actual interests.

Bengali mothers' accounts of their children's preschool years depict children as self-reliant, if occasionally bored. Abu Bokkar's mother gives the following (interpreted) information:

he plays football with his brother; copies his brothers and sisters when they write and draw; plays alone with computer games, an electronic 'robot' or small cars and planes; and watches television, for most of the day. When

they visit relatives with children, Bokkar plays with them. [AB1]

Abdul Rahman's mother paints a similar picture:

he 'plays nice quiet games with cars on his own, while his brothers are at school'; he always keeps a small car in his pocket (she demonstrates by asking him to produce the one he has!), and plays near his mum; when his brothers return, their play escalates into 'shouting and screaming and jumping on furniture, playing Superman'. [AR1]

Amadur, like his cousin Mohammed, is reported as mostly 'fighting with his little brother' or watching television, all day, though both boys have small cars and toddler-size bikes or cars to ride on. Neither of their mothers is sure how they pass their time in the long hours at home, though Mohammed's mother reports, 'he does his own work, on the sofa, I don't know what it is'.

The four Bengali girls are reported to have more companionship. Jelika 'never spent time on her own' because her schoolgirl aunties (whose own school attendance was very irregular) liked to draw and colour with her, or watch TV with her, while mum looked after the house and babies; Khiernssa intermittently chats with her mother in the course of lying on the sofa, playing with dolls and watching TV or Hindi films; Rufia, in addition to 'looking after the babies' and visiting next door to chat and play, goes upstairs to play with her older siblings' computers and electronic toys, or watches TV ('she would like to live inside the television, she loves it so much!'). Only Tuhura (discussed below, 6.5.) plays alone or 'likes to do nothing' until the older children return from school.

One factor which materially affects the amount of time their mothers can spend with the children is the burden of housework and infant care. Unlike the Anglo mothers, whose lunch preparations involve sandwiches and snacks, and evening meals are often based on convenience foods, most of the Bengali mothers spend some hours each day preparing quite large quantities of food from raw ingredients. With babies and small children to care for (and no recourse to nurseries or playgroups for them), they are fully occupied in the home in a way that none of the Anglo women are. The 'leisure society' which shapes the mainstream parents' cultural expectations, and frees them to play, has no relevance for these women's lives. Mohammed's mother,

who *is* conscious of being at leisure, is not in possession of any of the skills needed to use it. In consequence, it is clear, the Bengali children are unfamiliar with adults who involve themselves directly, as if with a child's perspective, in their play.

Theories about intelligence and ability.

Halfway through the children's Reception year, an attempt was made to probe parents' understanding of 'intelligence' - where it came from, what it looked like, and how it could be fostered. Most mothers responded that they found these questions very difficult to answer, and the descriptions they produced can be viewed as 'newly constructed beliefs', similar to Piaget's 'liberated convictions' (Miller, 1988). In describing, for instance, 'what an intelligent child is like', Abdul Rahman's mother suggested that of her three sons the cleverest was the one who came downstairs first when she called them all for dinner, or the one who finished his book first when all three were reading. Other descriptions showed equal originality and thought.

Though about half the respondents expressed a belief in innate intelligence, more emphasised the importance of parents' contribution to their children's success, and most felt that a combination of factors were involved (cf. Miller, 1988). Cameron's mother is confident that 'some of it is god-given, some children are more naturally bright and others aren't', while Amadur's and Rufia's refer to children having 'different brains'. Joshua's mother describes intelligence as 'a jigsaw':

I think you can have various points - their home life, their personality themselves, their preschool - I think to a point they're born with it, you can influence it but at the end of the day it will come out [Jos2]

Katy's mother agrees that 'they're actually born like it', while Kelly's argues, 'I think they're all roughly about the same'. Charlotte is likewise adamant that:

children aren't born thick or intelligent, it's how you bring them up: every child has the ability to be very intelligent, but the parents don't always exercise that [Ty2]

Almost all respondents affirmed the importance of parental input. Some Anglo mothers describe the need for parents to 'give children a push', while there is a view among Bengali mothers that parents can 'make children strong', and enhance their

school success, through praise and encouragement. (cf. Stevenson *et al*, 1990). Khiernssa's mother explains that parents must 'tell children they are clever, to make them strong-minded', and Rufia's believes that children who are told they are clever will reflect on their behaviour, and decide not to be naughty! Tuhura's mother describes the process:

we told a child that you are clever or intelligent because we give them some encouragement, and they will be thinking, 'oh yes, I'm clever', or 'I'm intelligent, I can do that', we give them this feeling [Tu2]

Some Anglo mothers (Alison, Gaynor, Maisie) are wary of letting children *think* they are clever, believing this makes them arrogant or boastful or 'pushy'.

One group difference which may have significance for children's outcomes, even within this small sample, is in parents' accounts of how you can *tell* a child is likely to succeed at school. While Bengali parents tend to describe a child who 'listens' and 'learns' and 'remembers' what s/he is told, Anglo parents look for a child who communicates and is active and 'shows you by what they do and say'. It seems possible that a more passive model of intelligence and educational success is being offered to the Bengali, than to the Anglo children, and that this model influences the ways parents consciously as well as unconsciously prepare their children for school.

Parental knowledge

There is a sense in which all of a child's 'school-related' learning in the home (and consequent cultural capital in school) is dependent on the level of familial knowledge he or she can access. For the majority of children, parents may be the main source of such knowledge, though there are children in this group (notably Abdul Rahman, Jemma, Joni and Rufia) who are indebted to older siblings for much of their information. One aspect of this information is academic knowledge. Parents' own educational attainments may set limits to children's early learning, and levels of academic knowledge among the families in this study, though variable, are quite low. But of at least equal importance may be parental knowledge of a different kind: information about the school and preschool system, and about the particular school their child is entering. Several studies have shown a link between such parental cultural capital, and pupil success (Allatt, 1993, Gewirtz *et al*, 1994; Lareau,

1987,1989; Reay, 1998). Within the present study, in addition to intragroup variations, some very predictable intergroup differences are found in relation to this aspect of parental knowledge.

Knowledge about the pedagogy of play.

Among Anglo mothers, all of whom recall 'playing' rather than 'learning' in their own early years at school, there is reasonable consensus that this is the tried and tested method for fostering young children's learning. Two assumptions follow from this: that 'play' is also the best means for children to acquire 'school-knowledge' at home, and that attendance at playgroup or nursery benefits early learning. The fact that the mothers (like many professionals: Bennett *et al*, 1997) might have difficulty explaining just how and why children learn through play does not lessen their attachment to this common-sense belief, which dovetails with their beliefs about childhood. Their interview responses however suggest that this belief is maintained somewhat counter-intuitively, and that they will be relieved to see some firm evidence of their children's academic learning. Even Maxine, with her playgroup training, asserts that 'children should be allowed to play a lot at first, and then learn more, bit by bit', rather than assuming, for instance, that they are learning *while* playing. Other Anglo mothers concur:

yeah, the school's fine: even if they play now, you know they're going to learn in the end [Kel]

I think the school's OK, they have to learn to play before they learn to work [Jon1]

Seven of the eight Anglo children have experienced one or more forms of preschool provision, very much in accordance with their family's effectiveness. Gemma's mother 'couldn't get the girls in, it was all full up, wasn't it?'. Kath's twins attended two nurseries in succession for two days a week, but reports 'they were never happy there so I kept them home a lot'. Of the remainder, both Katy and Joshua had five half-days at the nearby playgroup with which their mothers were associated, and Kelly, Cameron and Troy attended nursery schools slightly further afield.

Mothers' understanding of the purposes of preschool learning varies (cf. Tizard *et al*, 1981). Maxine volunteers that Katy 'gained a lot in her drawing and writing, and her

cutting and sticking, that came on a lot', as well as 'learning to mix'. Maisie describes playgroup as the place where Joshua extended his social network, while Gaynor and Kath have no view on what their children gained from nursery. Some express relief that their children were introduced to letters, numbers, nursery rhymes and 'writing their name' by preschool professionals, since they 'didn't want to know' or 'refused to sit down and do it' at home. Charlotte is unusual in expressing dissatisfaction with the Under-Fives' Centre Troy attended. He had previously attended a Social Services facility (from the age of 18 months), at which

they taught them, one shape, one colour, one letter one something else, every week he learnt far more there than he did at Charlesworth [Ty1]

Despite the systematic learning programme she and Bob implemented at home, she believes Troy 'forgot a lot of what he'd learned, in that year', from age 3 to 4. Like the Bengali parents, she is not persuaded that play has educational outcomes.

Within the Bengali community in the All Saints' neighbourhood, take-up of preschool provision is almost non-existent. Only Abdul Rahman and Tuhura (first cousins with 'town-dwelling' mothers and a proactive auntie) have tried the local playgroup or a Bengali drop-in session. In their mothers' view, neither was happy, and only Abdul Rahman persisted for a few months. Most parents offered reasons why their child had *not* attended, ranging from the cost (Rufia's father) to the inconvenience of taking and collecting little ones (Amadur's father) to the admission that the children are 'only playing there, sand, water, not learning' (Khiernssa's father). Recent efforts to persuade parents of the benefits of playgroup have met with little success. The only potential gain suggested to me by parents was that their children's English fluency would improve; since, however, most parents express surprise and delight at the children's English acquisition in Reception, they probably believe that this is quite soon enough.

Parents' belief, however poorly understood, in the relevance of play for children's learning in the early years, is reflected in their provision of toys and activities for their own under-5s. Once again, the continuum in this study stretches from the didactic extreme of Charlotte's provision for Troy, to the *ad hoc* and unplanned response of Amadur's and Mohammed's families. Troy, who has 'had every toy from

the Early Learning Centre possible', is reported as preferring Duplo to 'all his other toys' (though Troy himself reports his 'favourite thing to do' before he started school as 'watching telly'). Asima and Shazna (who are sisters-in-law) were both rather perplexed to be asked about their children's play. Shazna explained that in Bangladesh, Mohammed 'didn't have anything to play with, only the mud', but showed me his three 'favourite things' in his present home: a trundle-car to ride on, two toy cars with flashing lights, and the television. Amadur is similarly described as 'fighting with his little brother and sister', riding a little bike in the yard, playing with a remote control car, and watching TV.

Overall, *most* Anglo parents, who have themselves been socialised into a play pedagogy, have consciously or unconsciously selected some of the 'educational' toys which their children were to meet in playgroup, nursery or Reception. Unlike the Bengali families, all their households feature Lego or similar construction toys, train sets or other small-world toys, tape-stories and jigsaws, and the Anglo children evidently know what to do with these items in the classroom. Bengali children on the whole sidestep these 'educational' toys (cf. Drury, 1997) and move directly from ownership of a doll or car or bike to playing with computer games and electronic toys (tamagotchis were the current craze), as well as watching hours of satellite TV. As Troy's response reveals, there may be some disparity between parents' perceptions of their children's activities, and the children's own view. Nevertheless it is evident that all the Anglo children have acquired considerable expertise with the 'learning' tools they will be using when they start school, which the Bengali children's home experience has not provided.

Knowledge of primary school pedagogy.

The most striking source of intergroup variation among the sample families is school experience. None of the Bengali children's mothers has ever attended school in the UK, and those fathers who did, had an intermittent and unsuccessful experience, mostly at secondary level. All of the Anglo children's mothers were educated in the UK (most within the town, some at All Saints'), as were all of their present partners. These parents all recollect a vaguely informal, 1970s infant school culture, which superficially resembles the classroom their children are entering, while Bengali

parents have no direct experience of UK primary schooling. The two groups therefore begin their 'parenting' careers with quite different levels of knowledge, and there is evidence that members of the Bengali group are still poorly informed after many years of parenting.

With regard to primary schooling, intragroup differences among Bengali families are also significant. For even the most informed and experienced of parents however, their knowledge is constrained by an in-built trust in the system and the teachers. Abu Bokkar's mother has had seven children at All Saints', and expresses simultaneously the utmost confidence in the school and a complete ignorance as to what her children learn there, and why and how. Her trust is based on acquaintance with the staff rather than with the curriculum or pedagogy: Rahena can remember and recite all the teachers her seven children have had over the years, and speaks well of them all. She is sure they teach the children well - 'they are trained, they know what they are doing' - and assumes that the system works: now the children 'are doing a little bit of learning', later 'they will learn writing, letters, counting' and 'one day they will learn everything'. In her optimism she ignores her husband's disquiet over the children's poor achievements at secondary school, and continues to assert that 'if children don't learn, it's not the teacher's fault'.

Rufia's parents are of Rahena's opinion: with experience of six children at All Saints, they believe they can safely leave their children's education in the hands of the teachers:

Bangladeshi schools are all right for Bangladesh, but this country's system is right for here: she will learn well enough [Ru1]

Like other parents (and parents reported in other studies: Macleod, 1985; Joly, 1986; Bhatti, 1999), they emphasise how 'kind' English teachers are - they like the children, and never hit them; they look after them when they are unwell, come to visit when they are absent, and are always friendly towards parents. This gratitude for teachers' goodwill, and confidence in their professionalism, enables the Bengali parents to ignore or accept classroom practices which are quite unlike their own experiences. None of the parents complained specifically about the informal, play-based curriculum their children were offered on entry to Reception (though some

were clearly unhappy with some aspects of it, and told their children *not* to take part in these activities). Only Tuhura's mother admitted, 'I thought, how long will they be playing, when will they learn anything?', yet claims to be satisfied that her children will learn, in the long run.

The most disadvantaged families, in this as in other respects, are Amadur's, Mohammed's and Jelika's. Each of these families is sending a child to school in the UK for the first time, and is almost entirely unprepared for what awaits them.

6.3. Invisible pedagogy: the regulative discourse of the home.

In Bernstein's argument (1990, 1996), every 'socialising institution' has its own pedagogic discourse, and every pedagogic discourse is composed of two aspects: the regulative discourse (the rules of the social order) and, embedded within it, the instructional discourse (the rules of the discursive order). In most families, the regulative discourse may be largely unconscious on the part of parents, and invisible from the point of view of the children: it 'assumes the force of the natural order' within the family. Though most parents when interviewed could give examples of household 'rules' of which they and their children were aware, the children's early experience also included many family practices whose 'practical mastery' was acquired unconsciously in their early socialisation.

Two examples of such unconscious and invisible pedagogy are discussed in this section: children's acquisition of the rules governing the use of time and space in their family and home, and their introduction to ideas of responsibility and accountability. The former of these can be seen as an essential part of the 'social training' required for school, while the latter, it is suggested, plays an important role in the child's primary habitus. Both aspects of the pedagogy of the home bear the marks of class and ethnic culture; neither has any necessary correspondence to the regulative discourse of the classroom the children are about to enter.

Time and space

Important differences are found in the ways that time, and domestic space, are used in families [Appendix C3]. In addition to individual variations, there are large

intergroup differences in both, suggesting in the case of some Bengali families an unfinished transition from rural patterns to those of urban society, as well as a difficult accommodation of the highly unsocial male working hours to mainstream practices.

Anglo parents in the study (through their own childhood experiences, their family and social network, and the efforts of childcare professionals, including teachers) share a 'commonsense' belief that children require firm and regular routines from earliest infancy. These include being 'put down' to sleep in the day and at bedtime, and if necessary left to cry alone in the interest of acquiring regular habits. The 'social suggestion complexes' (Lightfoot and Valsiner, 1992) of western society ensure that such practices are taken for granted by the ethnic majority, and Cameron's mother actually complains that as a baby he failed to observe them: 'he could never work out where this hour between feeds came'.

Daily diaries for the Anglo children confirm that eating and sleeping are fixed points in most households. Typically, the family eats breakfast around 7.30, lunch soon after midday, a snack after school (3.30 to 4.00) and an evening meal at 5.30 (Cameron, Joshua) or 6.30 (Katy, Kelly). The Anglo children mostly survive the day without naps (though Joni and Robbie nap on the sofa after school), and begin their bedtime routine at a more or less fixed time: 6.30 (Joshua), 7.00 (Kelly), 7.30 (Katy and Cameron). Only Joni and Robbie, after their nap are able to stay up until 9 or 10 pm.

The eating and sleeping routines of the Bengali children bear little resemblance to these mainstream expectations. Unlike their Anglo counterparts, Bengali parents do not require their little children to vanish from sight at a certain hour of the evening, but expect and permit them both to be a part of family life at all hours, and to sleep and to some extent eat when they are sufficiently tired or hungry. For most families, the principal constraint on their routines is the unsocial hours required of restaurant workers (frequently 11.00-3.00, and 5pm – 2 am). Fathers and older brothers are therefore away or asleep for most of the normal waking hours of young schoolchildren, and may only see them for an hour after school. The women and children who remain at home find a common, convenient routine of their own: when

children are *not* at school (as is seen in the daily diaries of Abdul Rahman, Amadur, Khiernssa, Tuhura and especially Mohammed), they are left to wake naturally, and eat breakfast when they are hungry. In Mohammed's case (disastrously for his school attendance) his normal waking time is between 11 and noon.

The second constraint on family routines, therefore, is the school's expectation that children will be brought to the classroom before 9 am, and collected again at 3.15. This requires women and schoolchildren to adhere to a routine which directly conflicts with that of the male workforce. The 4-year-olds who rise early, but go to bed with the rest of the household (and co-sleep with mothers and teenage siblings) manage by napping after school (Abu Bokkar from 3.30 to 6 pm, Khiernssa between 5 and 8, Rufia at 3.30). This pattern enables them to share the main family meal around 8 or 9pm. For some children, the move from their preschool sleeping and waking routines to those required by school is an additional and unwelcome change brought by transition to school. The consequences for their understanding of time in school (cf. Heath, 1983; Lubeck, 1985) will depend on the school's awareness of time in the home, and the explicitness of its temporal expectations.

A similar disjuncture between the habits acquired in home socialization, and those assumed in the classroom, may arise in respect of spatial routines, and expectations of order. Individual families vary in their household and housekeeping arrangements, and at some points group differences also emerge. The principal of these is between the families whose maternal experience was in a Sylheti *village*, and all others. The two Bengali 'towndwelling' families, like the majority of the mainstream Anglo families, compartmentalise their domestic activities and locate them in different areas of their houses. Both Abdul Rahman and Tuhura have grown up with a 'tidy' and toy-free sitting-room (closely resembling that of the twins), a more lived-in back room or family kitchen, and bedrooms for sleeping. Like the Anglo children, they know there is a place for toys and children's mess, and a time for tidying them (*all* the Anglo mothers spoke of expecting, or requiring, children to tidy their own toys and their own room, and Troy has to 'take every single toy off his floor' before he goes to bed). All six of the 'village' families, by contrast, use their main living rooms flexibly for eating and sleeping, and juxtapose their children's bikes and their babies'

cots with large-scale food preparation, while male family members sleep on during the day under quilts on sofas. This easy and unselfconscious mingling of family activities, however, is poor preparation for the necessarily more rigid organization of school spaces. Like Heath's 'Trackton' children (1983), the 'village' children in this study have to adjust to a classroom where there is a time and a place for everything, where the sand and water may not be taken into the home corner, or indoor toys taken outside. The lack of explicitness on these matters, discussed in the next chapter, makes this negotiation more difficult.

Most privileged in this respect are children like Joshua (whose mother is a childminder), who enjoys an exemplary school-style home environment in which all the toys are stored, tidily but accessibly, in brightly coloured crates. Joshua understands that a proliferation of toys, and children's disordering activities, are welcome during the day but unacceptable at bedtime. Examples of opposed practices would be Charlotte and Rahena. The former boasted of her high standards of housekeeping ('there is not one single cobweb on my Lilliput Lane figures') and was unapologetic about taking away Troy's paints 'because they made a mess'. The latter confidently invites me to sit on sofas where plates of unfinished snacks and bottles of ketchup are precariously balanced. Each mother satisfies her own standards of home comfort, and socialises her children accordingly, but teachers in general remain unaware of these practices, or their potential effects.

Responsibilities.

An equally powerful aspect of the regulative discourse of the home, and one of which some parents are more aware, is the family view of children's household responsibilities (Newsons, 1968, 1976; Clark, 1983). Individual children in the study are subject to very different expectations as to their degree of involvement in family projects, as well as experiencing different levels of responsibility of their own. The process of eliciting this information from parents and children, however, involves the comparison of differing interpretations of terms such as 'helping', 'jobs' and 'chores'.

The questionnaire to all parents concluded with the item:

Helping at home: are there any household tasks your child takes part in (cooking / cleaning / tidying / other)?

Twenty-two parents ticked 'tidying' (many wrote in details: toys, bedrooms, lounge, books and games); eight ticked 'cleaning' (and wrote in Hoovering, dusting, washing up, polishing), and ten 'cooking'. Across the 35 households, only Amadur's father and one other claimed their child 'did not help'. [Appendix C5]

Interviews with parents and children [Appendix C4] complicate this homogeneous finding, and indicate what different expectations of children may be included in the responses. This explains some of the discrepancies between the evidence of questionnaires, parent and child interviews, and observations during home visits. In some families, children's involvement in purposeful joint activities is clearly taken for granted. Among the Bengali children, Khiernssa's participation in household projects, already described, is noteworthy: yet her mother responds when questioned, 'she's not expected to help, she's only a little girl'. Similarly Rufia looks after her two younger siblings 'in the afternoon, every day, my mum's too tired', and has the job of taking the family rubbish out, (as well as being an interested spectator at the killing and butchering of chickens in the back yard); but her mother reports 'no, she has no responsibilities, she will have those when she's married'. Abdul Rahman, whose mother reports that he 'doesn't have any jobs to do', helps the whole family to Hoover, clean and 'fix things', as well as joining in the family's food preparation (he effectively demonstrates the use of a cleaver). These three children all see their fathers active in childcare (Rufia), household tasks (Khiernssa, Abdul Rahman) or routine cooking and washing (Rufia and Abdul Rahman). In other Bengali families, a stricter division of labour is evident: father is absent from the home, mother is responsible for cooking and childcare, and some 4-year-olds, particularly boys, may be asked to do no more than fetch a nappy or tissues for the baby. Only Tuhura (discussed below, 6.5) simply refuses to help, and is supported in her idleness by her mother's view of her.

Within some Anglo families, 'helping' appears to be understood as another form of developmental play, an activity which parents grudgingly permit to please their children, or reluctantly encourage because they believe it is good for them. Kelly, for

instance, wants to help her mother, but 'she's such a nuisance really, she gets in the way', so she is banned from the kitchen (Gaynor); Jemma 'does like to wash up, if she gets the chance – I have to make sure I wash up all the knives first' (June); and Maxine says of Katy, 'yes, she's very helpful, a bit too helpful at times'. The clear inference is that the children's 'help' is encouraged for the child's pleasure rather than the parent's benefit. Only Joni and Robbie, along with their four older siblings, perform 'real' household work: in this family, at Kath's behest, the children have responsibility for washing and wiping dishes, and hoovering and mopping floors, every evening after their meal, and the twins join in as well as performing their own task of bringing the milk in and out.

Child interview questions (*Are you good at helping at home? What special jobs can you help with at home?*) add another dimension to this picture, and confirm that gender plays a considerable role in the extent to which most children 'help' or have responsibilities in the home. A majority of girls prefer to assist their mother in household tasks, including childcare, while a majority of boys prefer not to. Among the boys in particular, 'helping' may be a euphemism, used by parents but unrecognised by children. While Amadur confirms his father's questionnaire response: 'no, I'm not big enough; mummy works, I don't work', Troy bluntly contradicts Charlotte's claims that he tidies, shares in childcare, and lays the table: 'no, I don't like helping'.

What children actually *do* to help may be less important than their sense of involvement in, and responsibility for, the maintenance of the family. Children whose 'cooking' and 'washing-up' is seen as a nuisance are unlikely to acquire this sense, while children whose duties, however small, contribute in some way to the running of the family, may be learning to be accountable. A memo from a Saturday morning call at Khiernssa's house offers an example:

There was a knock at the door and mum murmured to the girls [Layla, 7; Khiernssa, 4], who rushed into the kitchen and returned bearing a cheque between them (holding one corner each), which they carefully carried to the front door. They chatted for several minutes, in English, to the milkman, and came back into the room beaming. [Khhv]

For some Bengali children, the responsibility for mediating between their mothers and the majority world is a genuine and essential contribution to the running of the household, and has nothing to do with play (cf. Moll *et al*, 1992). In a similar way, some children's participation in childcare, cleaning and food preparation forms part of a natural apprenticeship to the life of the family and community. While western-educated parents, like Early Years teachers, may encourage their children to *role-play* the occupations of adults in their culture, Bengali children seem more likely to be embarked on a real-world experience of adult roles. In consequence, the emphasis on explicitly child-related 'jobs' in the Reception class (tidying toys, hanging up coats) may appear confusing.

One example of such differential expectations can be given, though many were observed. Several Anglo mothers referred to the 'dangers' of children being in the kitchen, or near the stove; handling knives, or dropping plates ('they're not plastic, you know!'). Their homes were 'child-proofed' for children's safety, in accordance with western social expectations. In many Bengali households, however, a razor-sharp *dar* stood on the kitchen floor for slicing food, and children made their way past it. In Jelika's house, I came across her standing on a chair using a heavy knife to chop onions: as I moved towards her to intervene, her grandmother mildly stepped forward and tidied the chopped onions, leaving Jelika to continue chopping. On another occasion I found Abdul Rahman, under his father's instruction, using two hands to manipulate a large cleaver.

As Rogoff (1990) observes, *all* children are 'apprenticed', but to different things. The Anglo children in this study (with the possible exception of the twins) are principally apprenticed to childhood, and play; the Bengali children, however, seem to be apprenticed to the life of the family and community. This difference in the curriculum of the home clearly has implications for the ways the children adapt to the culture of the school.

6.4. Visible and invisible pedagogies: the instructional discourse and the home curriculum.

It is Bernstein’s view that the *structuring* of pedagogic discourse – the relay, or message system, rather than the content or curriculum – is the principal means by which control is exercised, and power distributed, by ‘preparing’ agencies like the home and school, as well as in the broader social formation. In this section, the instructional practices of groups and individuals within the study are compared, using Bernstein’s couplet of ‘visible’ (explicit) and ‘invisible’ (implicit) pedagogy. But both homes and schools, consciously or unconsciously, have a curriculum in mind: the ‘natural’ curriculum of the home, and in recent years the ‘national’ curriculum of statutory schooling. The content of this curriculum, as well as the way it is experienced or acquired, differs between homes and schools. The model below suggests how both the curriculum and the pedagogy can be conceptualised, so that the practices of different families can be compared.

Figure 2. The curriculum and pedagogy of the home.

	‘School’ knowledge	Family/Community knowledge
VP	Explicit instruction, ‘school’ curriculum. [eg. ABC books taught].	Explicit instruction, non-school curriculum [eg. mosque school]
IP	Implicit instruction, ‘school’ curriculum [eg. educational toys]	Implicit instruction, non-school curriculum [home responsibilities]

Along with their culturally differing views of childhood and play, the Anglo and Bengali parents in this study have rather contrasting attitudes to explicit instruction. For most Anglo families, their stated belief in the sacrosanct nature of young children’s play gives rise to considerable unease when it comes to instructing them. The majority of Bengali parents, on the other hand, are confident in their parental

duty to instruct their little children in a culturally appropriate curriculum at the appropriate time. While some Anglo mothers admit to a sense of guilt, and subterfuge, about their preschool instructional efforts, Bengali parents (fathers as well as mothers) are far more assured in this activity, and only express guilt if they are conscious of neglecting it. In this respect, despite the low socioeconomic status of the families in the study, the Anglo parents appear to have assimilated views resembling those earlier associated with middle-class parenting (Newsons, 1968, 1976; Bernstein and Young, 1973; and see Bronfenbrenner, 1961). The Bengali parents however, like other ethnic minority groups within western societies, remain committed to a more explicit pedagogy and a view of learning as transmission (Tizard *et al*, 1988; Stevenson *et al*, 1990; Harry *et al*, 1996; Volk, 1997).

Almost all families express the view that parents 'should' instruct their children in certain types of knowledge before they start school. Parent questionnaires issued to the whole class, and completed by 35 parents, asked,

Should parents try to teach their children any of these skills before they start school? Did you try?

and specified ABC letters and sounds, counting and adding, writing the child's name, and nursery rhymes [Appendix C1]. Fifteen parents from 35 answered 'yes' to both parts of all 6 items, a further eight answered 'yes' to 5 items, and five answered 'yes' to 4 items. Of the remainder, Mohammed's family ticked 3 items, and Amadur's father simply wrote in 'no'. Of those responding, almost all believed the ABC should be taught (names rather than sounds) and almost all claimed to teach counting. While these responses may not reflect parents' actual practices, they presumably give an accurate picture of what counts as good parenting in the group as a whole. Very few parents responded 'yes' to *Should parents?* and 'no' to *Did you?*, though a handful wrote in 'tried to' or similar comments.

Despite this consensus on parental instruction, only Charlotte of the Anglo mothers sampled is assertive and unapologetic about 'working constantly' with her child, as well as selecting preschool provision where systematic instruction takes place. The others imply that learning needs to be sneaked in through play, or without the child noticing. At some level, it seems, they recognise that if they 'believe in' learning

through play, they should not intervene in this process by direct teaching. Among this group, as in Lightfoot and Valsiner's study, 'The prevailing belief... is that the success of educational efforts lies in how well they are disguised as play' (1992:407).

Joshua's mother in particular seems to believe that young children's learning is 'caught' rather than taught. Like many Anglo parents, she distinguishes 'sitting down' teaching/learning from knowledge naturally acquired:

if I was to say to him, let's get the paper and pens out, here's a book, let's sit down, he'd say no! [Jos1]

whereas Joshua 'picked up shapes and colours, *just normally*' [my emphasis] and approaches school as '*just going with the flow*'. Maisie completed the questionnaire thoughtfully, writing in:

Sometimes it can be difficult for parents to 'teach' children as they don't always know how to - or the *normal* process doesn't apply to a child, ie. what worked with one child won't with another, so the parents don't know what they are doing, 'right or wrong'. [Josqu]

She has the confidence to describe the family's activities as 'all the things *normal* families do'. At the same time she expresses a view of children as individuals, with differing learning styles, which accords with the avowedly child-centred approach to education of which she is herself a product (and with which she is familiar at All Saints').

Other Anglo mothers who express ambivalence about direct teaching may have communicated this feeling to their children. Alison describes Cameron as 'suspicious' that she is 'trying to teach him something'; Maxine insists that she only taught Katy 'if she showed an interest'; while Gaynor describes Kelly as 'not a sit-down sort of person', which explains why she 'won't look at books if I'm in the room, she knows I'll be watching her'. None of this anxiety afflicts Troy's parents, who 'work with him constantly on letters and numbers' on the grounds that he 'just thrives on learning things'. But for Kath (as for many Bengali families) the issue is circumvented by the active and apparently spontaneous instructional role taken by the twins' older siblings (cf. Rashid and Gregory, 1997; Volk, 1998).

The majority of Bengali parents are not only confident of their instructional role, but also have an explicit curriculum in mind: inculcating religious knowledge, teaching the alphabets of English, Bengali and Arabic, and teaching children appropriate messages about school and study. They make no apology for utilising their children's evening and weekends in pursuit of this curriculum, which requires 'sit-down' tasks with a regular timetable as well as ongoing instruction. None of these parents would sympathise with the Anglo perspective of sneaking in learning without the child's noticing: like Charlotte, they are proud of fulfilling their duties. Unfortunately, their dedicated teaching may not provide the child with cultural capital which can be usefully invested in the Reception class.

It would be wrong to assume, however, that divergent pedagogies, with different levels of visibility and explicitness, have straightforward consequences for children's learning, or their metacognition. Children's perceptions of what they have 'learned' before coming to school, discussed below, present a more complicated picture .

'School knowledge'

Parent interviews and questionnaires [Appendix C1, C2] suggest a broad consensus on what counts as 'school knowledge'. Almost all parents report that they have tried to introduce their children to the basic elements of literacy and numeracy (learning the alphabet, and counting to 10, are the commonest skills), and many are also aware of the importance of books, rhymes and stories. The range of children's experiences and accomplishments in the home is nevertheless very wide.

Literacy learning.

Within the sample group, some Bengali children (Khiernssa, Tuhura) have been exposed to three alphabets (English, Bengali, Arabic) before starting school, while a few Anglo children have started to learn letter-sounds as well as letter-names. Others have not been told any letters, or shown their own name written down. Some (Cameron, Rufia) have used the local library since they were little, or have shared school reading books with older siblings (Joni and Robbie, Abu Bokkar and Abdul Rahman), while others have rarely seen a children's book before starting school. Some of the Anglo children, but none of the Bengali group, have a nightly bedtime-

story routine, with all that entails (Heath, 1982,1983). On the whole, however, few of the differences in children's experiences are attributable to cultural factors associated with ethnicity. Instead they reflect the complex combination of family circumstances, past and present, socioeconomic and cultural, which have formed each child's family habitus.

Recent research which treats family literacy as a sociocultural practice (Street, 1984; Gee, 1989; Taylor and Dorsey-Gaines, 1993; Heath, 1983; Teale, 1986; Gregory, 1997) emphasises the *uses* rather than the *mechanics* of literacy. All the sample children observed *some* reading and writing activities in their homes, but the more privileged inhabit households where literacy practices permeate every aspect of daily life (parents who write letters and lists, read magazines, fill in job applications, share children's homework, use knitting patterns and cookery books, take evening classes). These children may experience literacy events which are targeted at their age group, and foster literacy learning through play and pleasure. Others, meanwhile, have to scratch around for a piece of scrap paper to draw or write on.

For the more privileged (in differing degrees, Troy, Cameron, Katy, Joni, Robbie, Joshua), both the content *and* the methods of their preschool learning will be replicated in school: picture books and ABC books, tape-stories and nursery-rhyme videos, letter-matching games based on lotto, dominos or 'snap'. The school-related curriculum content of their home literacy (and of their preschool settings, for this group) has been conveyed by school-approved means. The beneficial outcomes of such methods are suggested by Stuart *et al* (1998), who found them predominantly in middle-class children.

Similar curriculum content is presented, according to their parents, to Abu Bokkar and Abdul Rahman, Khiernssa and Tuhura, but is taught by the didactic 'sit-down' method of the children reciting and copying at the dining table, which many Anglo parents would be nervous of attempting. This explicit teaching of alphabets and scripts, including Qur'anic recitation (and the subsequent memorising of school reading books) brings no guaranteed cultural capital for the child on entering school (Luke and Cale, 1997; Rashid and Gregory, 1997). Learning which is valued in the

community is only valued in school if it can be put to use in school literacy tasks. While some of the sample children acquire 'home knowledge' which does not match the official currency of the classroom, still others acquire very little literacy knowledge of any kind. The more privileged group, however, have literacy knowledge and skills which can be displayed to good effect during their first term: they can discuss, 'read' and interpret illustrations, invent and predict stories, and utilise story-book language in their own improvisations (Gregory, 1993).

Mathematical learning

Most children entering this Reception class have learned to recite the sequence of counting-numbers in their homes, even if they are unable to recognise or apply them (or tell them apart from ABC letters). All parents prize the feat of counting, and many Bengali parents have tried to teach their children to count in Bengali too. All the sample children except Amadur have practised counting at home, and some have counting books and videos. There is less of a gulf between the 'play' and 'instructional' methods used by parents in teaching this skill, though the more knowledgeable parents (Maisie, Maxine, Charlotte) are aware of the need for one-to-one matching while counting: Troy is encouraged to practise his skills all the time, counting front doors and milk bottles as he walks down the street, and playing board games at bedtime. None of the parents seems aware that in school, children are assessed mathematically on their sorting, classifying, ordering and patterning skills, rather than on their recitation and recognition of numbers (though Katy, as we saw, sorted her conkers). On the whole, the advantage in these areas which some Anglo children demonstrate on starting school is more an outcome of their use of 'educational' toys and games at home and in their preschools, than of any parental awareness.

The one culturally marked aspect of 'mathematical' knowledge in this age group is the learning of colour names, which emerges as a highly valued achievement for Anglo families (and some teachers) but an irrelevance for the Bengali group. Kath describes a common practice:

I taught them to say their colours, I always said, 'a blue car, a red bus', saying the colour first, so they learned it [Jon1]

Other children (Jemma, Kelly, Joshua) learned colours from older siblings. None of the Bengali children had learned colour names in their first language (a few could think of black, or white, or red), though Tuhura was expert in English. Their mothers, unaware of the value attached to this particular curriculum item when children enter school, did not regard it as an important aspect of children's early learning.

Oracy

The enormously important area of children's language socialisation in the home, and its consequences for their school progress, is beyond the scope of this study. There is already good evidence to suggest both that language use in families differs in ways which can disadvantage some children on entry to school, and that the language used in 'disadvantaged' families is adequate and appropriate, rather than deficient (Wood *et al*, 1980; Heath, 1983; Tizard and Hughes, 1984; Wells, 1985; Michaels, 1986; Vernon-Feagans, 1996). These findings are of relevance in Part Three, where the children's transition to school is considered.

No recordings of children's language were made for this study, and assessments of their skills and competence are based on Reception class instruments (Baseline descriptors, EAL records, classroom profile statements). Two aspects of the children's oracy, however, are relevant to the present discussion: the issue of bilingual children's acquisition of English, and the evidence of parents' cultural and individual expectations for children's speaking and listening skills.

The range in English development found among the Bengali children is as wide as every other aspect of their development, and similarly reflects both the family's history (of migration and education) and the child's position within the family. In this respect, children who are born 6th or 7th in their families are advantaged over first- or second-borns. The optimal environment for under-5s seems to be one in which teenage siblings, with native-like fluency in English, take on deliberate instructional responsibilities, while primary-age siblings provide play opportunities. Abu Bokkar and Rufia have both enjoyed this privileged situation in their early years, and a similar environment has been provided for Jelika by her teenage aunties. The mothers

of all 3 report them as having heard English, as well as Bengali, spoken from infancy: Jelika's mother reports that 'she follows the person she is speaking with'. However, none of their mothers speaks English, and none of the children has acquired full fluency in their second language before school.

Sample children with primary-age siblings (Abdul Rahman, Khiernssa, Tuhura) display much less fluency, though their listening and understanding skills give them some confidence in English-medium environments; while Amadur and Mohammed, whose main experience of English is their TV viewing, are at a very great disadvantage. All these children are described as fluent in Bengali by their mothers, but the interviews reveal that some have far fewer opportunities for conversation than others, and that parents expect and require different levels of Sylheti or Bengali correctness.

Anglo parents describe their children as learning to talk 'early' (Katy and Kelly), or 'at the normal time' (Cameron, Jemma), except for Joshua, who was 'slow to talk, he was probably two and a half by the time he talked properly', and the twins, who 'seemed to take turns' in learning, waiting for each other to catch up. Once they were speaking however, all these children are reported as 'talking constantly', 'always chatting', 'never stops', 'she's always talked'.

While some mothers find their children's 'constant talk' bothersome, Charlotte has made a point of talking to Troy 'all the time'. From Charlotte's perspective, her apparently insensitive question about the 'Indian mothers' - "they never talk to anyone, so I wonder, do they ever talk to their children?" - is pertinent. Whereas she, more explicitly than other Anglo mothers, regards 'talking to your child' as a parental duty, the Bengali mothers in the group take a far more relaxed view of their children's linguistic and social development. They appear to trust their children to develop appropriately within the family without undue pressure or direct attention, and indicate no competitive, age-related developmental norms.

Questionnaire items on children's social behaviour [Appendix C1], like the interview questions on children's intelligence, suggest that there is a culturally marked

emphasis on speaking, and communication, among the Anglo parents. Parents were asked to rate (as 1, 'not important', 2, 'quite important', and 3, 'very important') six social skills (dressing, eating, sharing, playing, talking, and tying laces). Though the numbers of respondents are small, the ratings show an interesting variation. While some items produce very similar average scores for 'All parents', 'Anglo sample' and 'Bengali sample', (dressing independently: 2.2, 2.3, 2.4; eating independently: 2.5, 2.8, 2.2; tying laces, 1.6, 1.5, 1.4), 'talking confidently' is scored at 2.2 (All parents), 2.5 (Anglo sample) and 1.4 (Bengali sample). Anglo parents appear to prize children's ability to communicate, and to recognise its value in school, while Bengali parents are less concerned about children's talk at home, and prefer them, once they start school, to *listen*. The cases of individual children, however, show that there is no simple causal link between such cultural attitudes rooted in the family background, and the children's evolving dispositions.

Expectations of school.

Parental knowledge and beliefs about childhood, and about school and learning, shape the explicit expectations of school which they communicate to their children. The most important differential in this respect, for both parents and children, is their prior relationship with the school. If parents are on good terms with school staff (Joshua, Katy, Cameron), *or* if older siblings have a successful experience of the school (Rufia, Joshua), the 4-year-old is eager and positive and needs no explicit coaching: Cameron 'couldn't wait to come', after regularly accompanying his brother; Joshua, Rufia and Katy 'always looked forward to coming'. These children could see for themselves what went on in their siblings' classrooms. Equally importantly, all their parents are positive and free of anxiety.

Other parents, despite having some experience of the school, felt more need to prepare and to reassure. Abu Bokkar, Abdul Rahman, and Khiernssa (all of whom had accompanied siblings to school), were 'told not to worry', and taught to 'say their name' or ask for the toilet. Jemma's mother 'sat them down and told them about school, what they'd be doing, just to let them know what it was going to be'. Gaynor told Kelly, 'if anyone starts, tell the teacher and let the teacher sort it out and not hurt or bite'. But Bengali parents emphasised both good behaviour and hard work in

instructing their children. While some were simply warned to behave, others were given specific instructions which may have made them feel less positive towards school. Mohammed was told he must 'study reading and writing, and not play'; Tuhura that 'you must listen to the teacher, watch what you say, don't talk too much, obey everything the teacher says'. The most fearful child, Jelika, was warned

you must go to school every day, behave properly, and stay there as long as you're told; if you cry, remember other children don't cry when their mothers leave them [Ja1]

It seems that already at 4 some children were expecting school to be fun, while others were preparing to submit to hard work and even unhappiness.

Children's perceptions of the home curriculum.

An additional perspective on children's early learning experiences is gained by asking the children themselves what they have learned, and how they learned it. The responses of the 4-year-olds, though they reveal only a small part of their experiences, indicate not only the significant cultural variation in early instruction described by parents, but also the child's accommodation of this variation on entering school.

It might be anticipated, for instance, that the Bengali children would be most aware of their academic or religious instruction (which occurs at a set time each evening), or that some Anglo children might be unaware of having 'learned' anything much at home. Among this group, almost the reverse is true. The questions were:

- i) *Can you remember anything you learned to do at home, before you were old enough to come to school?*
- ii) *How do you think you learned it? Did anyone help you?*

In responding, most Anglo children referred to some aspect of 'school' knowledge, and most Bengali children to non-academic matters. Anglo responses include:

I write my sister's name;
I don't know how. [Joni]

Doing letters on paper, I got a new pencil;
my mum showed me. [Katy]

Playing with books and reading books;
[no answer]. [Robbie]

Yes, drawing;
I did it loads of times every day. [Troy]

Drawing;
I just learned and learned from my mum. [Joshua].

Though Abu Bokkar offered 'drawing', and Khiernssa 'reading', other Bengali children responded:

I learned how to make ice cream: you put it in the fridge;
my mum and my dad and my two brothers. [Abdul Rahman].

Drink a cup of tea with a biscuit; all by myself: if the tea is too hot you dip the
biscuit in and eat the biscuit, then it's not too hot. [Amadur]

To play with dollies;
Salma helped me. [Rufia].

There may be a simple explanation for this apparent mismatch between parental instruction and children's learning (or metacognition). The interviews were conducted in early December. By then, children like Joni and Katy, Abu Bokkar and Khiernssa, may have discovered what was meant by 'learning' in the school context, so that they were able to reach back for matching information from their preschool memories. For other children, the learning agenda of the school may still be invisible, or may not match anything they experienced as learning at home. In this case, they have made creative responses which may also serve to illustrate their inability to detect the curriculum of the classroom.

6.5. Case studies of children's preparation for school.

Cameron.

Cameron is the second son of Alison, the best-educated of the Anglo mothers, and her African-Caribbean partner. Both parents work, and the family's life seems busy and well-organised, with regular contacts with relatives and friends.

The environment of Cameron's preschool years would appear to be a prescription for school success. The pedagogic discourse of his home is more 'middle-class' than most, and resembles that of Early Years classrooms in both content and methods.

With his mother he has shared picture books - 'he can tell the story from the pictures and predict what happens next', learned nursery rhymes, borrowed library books, and had daily bedtime stories ('I make sure, the evenings I work, that his dad reads to him'). Alison holds child-centred views of children's learning, and has tried to adapt her instructional methods to each child: Cameron learned the alphabet by jumping on the letters on an ABC rug as she called them out - 'that was more *him* than sitting down doing it'. His favourite possessions have been a succession of small-world toys and figures, which he played with imaginatively for long periods. Alison provides art and craft activities ('painting, glitter and glue pens - we make a mess!'), cooks with the children ('Cameron makes a terrible mess, but he loves it') and takes them swimming. In addition, Cameron attended a part-time nursery class at an under-5s centre.

Despite these auspicious conditions, Cameron and his learning seem a constant source of stress and frustration to his mother, who found him 'difficult' from early infancy. She believes him to be capable but stubborn, perversely refusing to learn: 'that's what makes me mad, he can do it but he doesn't want to'. In part she attributes this to his personality and individual learning style. Yet she also believes that he deliberately avoids learning and evades her efforts to teach him: though he 'sometimes counts things, going down the road', he refuses to look at counting books, 'he's suspicious I'm trying to teach him something', and therefore 'hasn't a clue about numbers' except 4 (his age):

he's so stubborn: in the morning he makes us late, he says "4 boys can't do their own shoes", "4 boys don't do their own trousers".

When Cameron refused to attempt drawing or writing, Alison tried to tempt him by leaving paper and pencils around so he could do it when she wasn't looking, 'but he never did'. She has persisted with teaching him his name: 'the writing side of it he can do, but he doesn't want to'. Cameron's response is to tell her, "I do my Cameron, 'c', 'm', 'n'".

Cameron's enjoyment of his preschool experience seems to have been overshadowed by the poorly-disguised pressure to acquire school knowledge before school. Underlying the 'play' pedagogy he has experienced are Alison's age-related

developmental expectations, which he has failed to meet. Though he has acquired a good deal of cultural capital, he lacks the confidence to put it to use. When asked what he has learned at home, however, he replies, beaming, 'I learned to do cartwheels!'

Jemma

Jemma's family experience recurrent social, emotional and financial crises, and find it hard to maintain orderly routines. Their health is poor (the younger girls have frequent diarrhoea and permanent head lice), and the older girls, like their mother before them, have unsatisfactory records of school attendance and punctuality. Nevertheless Jemma herself has experienced a thorough and enjoyable preparation for school.

Jemma was born prematurely and had a precarious early infancy, as a result of which June believes she has been spoiled and has serious temper problems ('but she's like her father, if he can't have his own way'). Her mother and sisters are wary of taking her out in case she has tantrums. But in many respects they are a closely bonded unit, and Jemma reaps the benefits of 3 older sisters. Mary and Tina (now 17 and 14) have played enthusiastically with Laura and Jemma (now 5 and 4): Jemma's favourite activities, they agree, were bricks and Lego, and playdough and painting. June reports, 'they all used to sit down and draw, so the bigger girls were learning them; she's got on really good with her drawing'. Jemma names 'building with bricks' (a valued school skill) as the thing she has learned at home before starting school.

Tina in particular also had a 'school' agenda in mind, and a very explicit instructional method. She attempted to teach Jemma letters and numbers by drawing dots for her to trace over, and writing 'whole pages for her to copy', as well as 'testing' her on colours, shapes and numbers, and marking the results with ticks and crosses. June adds proudly that Tina 'writes her own little stories when she's got nothing else to do at home'. Jemma also encounters a wide variety of print at home: June's magazines and knitting patterns, her father's Playstation magazine, Tina's Mills and Boon books, comics and the odd newspaper, and a stock of cheap children's books, mostly Disney stories. Both June and Tina enjoy reading to her.

In this very gendered household, Jemma identifies with her mother and sisters: 'she does like to wash up if she gets the chance – I have to make sure I wash up all the knives first'. Asked about helping, Jemma responds confidently, 'I can read a story to mum... I can help with cooking... tidy my toys... chase my cat'.

Many aspects of Jemma's preschool experience appear to be appropriate preparation for school, despite the constraints on the family's environment and expectations. The home curriculum has included the 'core skills' of early schooling, though the explicit pedagogy may not be that of the school. Jemma's ability to invest her preschool learning in the classroom depends, both on whether the capital she has acquired at home is of the approved kind, and on whether her habitus enables her to display and deploy it. As she starts school, her family's helpless and defeated stance towards outside agencies, and their unplanned and disorderly lifestyle, seem likely to impede her chances of success.

Abdul Rahman

Abdul Rahman has a more comfortable background than the other Bengali boys. Both his parents had an urban upbringing, and his mother had nine years of schooling. The extended family in the town has interests in two small shops and a restaurant, so his father finds employment easily, and is a well-known figure in the local community. Their three sons (aged 9, 7 and 4) are well-spaced and the family appears organised and purposeful, though I learned that Sabina had on one occasion fled to a women's refuge, but been persuaded to return home.

Rahman received extensive input from his mother before school, largely on the advice of his English-educated auntie, Milou. Sabina had 'tried to teach him from books', because she 'knew they had to learn writing and counting', but was concerned that Rahman was more interested in the pictures than the writing. She taught him to count in English and Bengali, and to recite the Bengali alphabet, and 'made sure he knew Bengali rhymes by sitting down and saying them with him'. On Milou's insistence too, Rahman was sent to play group for a time; although he was unhappy there and found it difficult to settle, his mother understood that it would

help him when he started school. At home, he had none of the 'educational' playthings or pastimes which featured in all the Anglo children's early experience.

Although his parents practised a very explicit pedagogy (which included regular religious instruction), Rahman was effectively inducted into mainstream ways by his older brothers. After spending the day quietly playing with a car, helping in the house or doing lessons with his mother (in Bengali), after school he would watch cartoons with his brothers and then 'go wild, Superman, Batman, shouting, jumping!' – in English. These activities continued after his father left for work, and during his mother's evening prayers, after which all three sat down again to read school books, write and draw – 'fighting over pens, it's like a competition, believe me!'. Sabina, though a little anxious about this behaviour, seemed relieved to think that her sons had found out about mainstream culture (football, cards and snooker, as well as superheroes) for themselves.

Like Khiernssa's, Rahman's family members 'all work together, Hoovering, cleaning the house', 'all try to help daddy fix things, like the television', and all assist in food preparation. The regulative discourse, however, which emphasises communal activity and participation in family and community life, may be in the process of erosion by the more westernised traits being brought into the household by Rahman's big brothers.

Tuhura

Tuhura, Abdul Rahman's cousin, is the third child of an educated 'town girl' from Sylhet, and a waiter in a family-owned restaurant. The family have a more orderly and aspirational life-style than many Bengali families in the neighbourhood. Their tiny front room is splendidly furnished in crimson velvet, but the children have free rein in the rest of the house, where they jump on sofas, climb on cupboards, and bounce on beds, tolerated by their mother, who shuts the door on them and retreats to the kitchen. In spatial though not in temporal matters, the children observe mainstream-like domestic arrangements.

Jamila sets a high store by both school education and religious instruction. She teaches the children the Bengali, English and Arabic alphabets, and reads the Qur'an and prays with them every evening. The children use textbooks sent by relatives in Bangladesh, and Jamila has taught the children Bengali songs and rhymes, but the family also pay the local imam to teach the children at home on Saturdays and Sundays, rather than send them to mosque and Bengali school. All the instruction is both explicit and formal.

Tuhura occupies a special place within this purposeful and well-organised family, possibly because it is suspected 'something [supernatural] happened to her' as an infant in Bangladesh. She is regarded as 'a little princess' and described, without apology, as lazy, spoilt, demanding, jealous and sometimes spiteful - as if these were natural characteristics which the family must accommodate. Jamila reports that she 'does no work', 'can't be bothered to help' and is waited on by her sister Tahmina, to the extent that 'she sits on the toilet just like a princess, sitting there nicely, and when she has finished she calls out to Tahmina to come and flush it'. When Tuhura was asked if she helped at home, she concurred: 'No, not me, Tahmina does it'. Asked what Tuhura enjoys, Jamila names 'having a bath', dressing up and wearing nail varnish; and 'she likes to sit down nicely, sometimes she doesn't bother to play with her brother and sister... if she feels bored, she just likes to sing by herself'. While 'sitting down nicely' she looks at books, draws, and watches cartoons and Hindi films on TV. Her only lively time is in the early evening, when the four children exchange visits with their cousins, and go wild together (but this is also when Tuhura is inclined to fight and push and slap).

Tuhura's parents believe she has a remarkable memory, and admire her ability to listen, learn and remember. This they feel has given her a talent for 'picking up English, just naturally', as well as for learning and practising the polite forms of Bengali (Jamila was the only Bengali mother to score 'talking' as 'very important' on the Parent Questionnaire). Both parents would like her to 'study hard and go to university', but preferably to 'get the right kind of husband' first. But Tuhura shows no sign of relating the explicit pedagogy of the home curriculum to the 'learning' she

receives on starting school. When asked if she remembers learning anything at home, she replies, 'Yes, I learn to eat ice cream'.

6.6. Summary.

As the case studies suggest, there is no simple formula for describing the ways children are prepared for school by their families, or the likely outcomes of such preparation. Any model of parenting practices which tried to assign a value to a particular pedagogy, or a specific curriculum, and thereby to impute a high or low value to permutations of the two ('school knowledge imparted through an implicit pedagogy' / 'community knowledge imparted by direct instruction') would rapidly encounter more exceptions than rules.

The model offered in this chapter, however, is a means of comparing home and school practices with respect to both curriculum and pedagogy. For some of the sample children, it has been suggested, both the regulative and the instructional discourses of the home are unlike those of 'western' parenting practices, and 'liberal-progressive' schooling. On the whole, there is a broad consensus among families in this study as to what constitutes 'school knowledge' (whether or not parents attempt to teach it), but a wide variation in ways of imparting it to young children before they start school. The actual 'value' of these methods, in terms of the cultural capital they make available to each child on starting school, can only be determined by observing what happens when the children go to school.

PART THREE

THE SCHOOL CONTEXT FOR CHILDREN'S LEARNING

INTRODUCTION

The researcher's perspective

In the next two chapters, my role as researcher requires particular scrutiny. For while my investigations of family life were those of a relative outsider (none of the families' lives resembled my own experiences, either as a child or as a parent, very closely), on entering the Reception classroom I was at once 'at home', and assumed a comfortable insider role. In selecting All Saints' for the study, I had selected a setting whose policies and pedagogy closely mirrored my own model of good practice. It was therefore easy for me to identify with the school's perspectives and practices, which seemed initially both 'natural' and benevolent.

In analysing the school data then, in the 12 months after completing the fieldwork, it has been essential to de-familiarise myself from assumptions acquired over decades of 'liberal-progressive' (Bernstein, 1996) teaching and parenting, in order to acknowledge the sometimes negative effects of the school's practices on the children and their families. When critiquing the school, therefore, my intention is not to point an accusing finger at the staff, individually or collectively. It is rather to challenge the ideology and pedagogy which had underpinned my own professional practice. The goodwill and good faith of the teachers in this account are not questioned, but the ideology within which they and I were socialised requires interrogation.

Starting school at All Saints': a naturalistic account

All Saints' is the epitome of the 'local' school: a small school in low buildings, in a distinctive neighbourhood of narrow streets and alleys, cut off from other areas by the main roads, river and railway lines. No one travels to this school from outside the area but it is well known to local families: parents of English children (and some fathers of the Bengali children) attended the school themselves. Its red-brick Victorian classrooms are linked with a large red-brick Victorian church, a local landmark, through a gate between the graveyard and the playground. The school

buildings are invisible from the surrounding streets, but the church tower and clock can be seen for some distance across the town.

The 16 children seen so far in their homes began their school careers in the first week of September 1997, as members of a large and poorly balanced Reception class: the final enrolment of 42 children consisted of 28 boys and 14 girls. They entered the care of a class teacher (Claire Goode) and a nursery nurse (Becky Emsley), and had additional part-time support from a Section 11 teacher, a bilingual assistant and a classroom assistant. For their first half term, they were to attend for half days only, unless 'invited to stay the whole day' by Mrs Goode, who carefully assessed each child's physical and social readiness for this step. Troy, Cameron and Katy were among those who 'stayed all day' for the first time in week 3, and were soon staying at least two days a week. Other children, including Amadur and Mohammed, did not have their first whole day until Wednesday of week 5.

The Reception area contained one large classroom used as a quiet room, and a still larger 'double' classroom, its folding doors permanently locked back, which housed more physically expansive and potentially noisy activities. The 'quiet room' offered extensive book and reading areas, writing, drawing and tracing areas, white boards and magnet boards, a phonics area, a computer, a listening area and space for games such as lotto or pairs to be played on low tables or units. The large room had computers at each end, sand and water and art areas arranged along one long side, and a maths and science area, as well as large spaces set up for floor play, puzzles, construction and small world toys, and a home corner. Within the classrooms a large stock of equipment - toys and games, maths and science apparatus, artefacts and posters, cooking and art utensils - was accessibly stored. The two classrooms therefore offered most of the facilities of a nursery class: the main deficiency in physical provision was the restriction on outdoor play and equipment, which was only available to a timetable, in a playground otherwise shared with the other KS1 classes.

The classrooms were inviting and interesting. When the doors opened each morning or afternoon, children arrived to find small-worlds and layouts half-built, puzzles

half-completed, and sand and water implements attractively arranged, presenting an irresistible invitation to participate. This invitation to play was fundamental to the organisation of the class. On entry in September children were encouraged to settle straight into self-chosen activities, supported by their parents or whichever school adults were available. When greeted, they were asked 'What would you like to do first?', and helped to choose an activity that interested them. Most of the mothers slipped away at this point, though they were apparently free to remain if they chose.

Both Mrs Goode and Becky spent most of each session playing actively, modelling behaviour with the sand and water, bricks and home-corner as well as with more structured games and activities. Reception children, who were exempted from the institutional requirements of the rest of the school (PE, playtimes, assemblies and 'church'), were allowed to follow a largely free-flowing and flexible timetable within their own sheltered and supervised environment. In the early days and weeks, the only restrictions on children's freely-chosen play were those occasioned by the need to control destructive or aggressive behaviour, to give others turns at activities, or to 'borrow' children briefly for assessment tasks. For both morning and afternoon groups, the timetable consisted of at least an hour's activities, mostly freely-chosen, followed by a half-hour of optional outdoor play (including wheeled and low climbing equipment, balls and hoops, and playground chalks), a snack and group story-time, a further session of free activities and then singing and rhymes before their departure.

The timetable did not change dramatically in the second half term, when all the children attended full-time, although storytime, singing and snack came round only once a day, and outdoor play in the morning was gradually reduced to a 15-minute run-around (in line with the seasonal weather as much as with timetable pressures). More time was now available for children to tidy, sort and clean up in the last part of the afternoon, and this became a major activity, serving multiple educational functions. Children still entered in the morning to a free choice of activities, but after the first 20 or 30 minutes were collected in the quiet room book corner for a registration session and other domestic business. From this session they were dismissed into groups, for adult-directed or self-directed activities, or simply invited

to 'choose'. Normally, fewer than 10 of the 40 present would have a free choice at this point, but since directed activities were sometimes of very short duration, most children were moving on, and effectively still 'choosing' for much of the day, even if they were selected for 3 or 4 adult-supervised tasks in the course of it.

More explicitly managed behaviour was required by the time the whole class of 40+ was in full-day attendance. Expectations for stillness and near-silence in register times or other whole-class sessions were rapidly established by the use of strongly-projected personal warmth or disapproval by the adults in control. Time-out for inappropriate behaviour was the most common sanction used with the class: children were dismissed for an indefinite period, and found a place to sit on their own until recalled. None argued with the dismissal, though some started pleading to be reinstated quite quickly.

During the second half-term, the children become more used to leaving their freely-chosen activities to work with an adult at a task. By Christmas all were going regularly to read or share books, to attempt writing or maths tasks, or to join in a discussion or experiment, as well as to have their turn at acquiring new art, craft, DT or IT skills. With large numbers of children, and the constant forming and re-forming of teaching groups of various sizes, they normally had to drop what they were doing and take up the adult activity at short notice: few children raised any objections to such requests.

Chapter 7

School Culture: the pedagogic discourse of All Saints' Primary

7.1. Introduction

The classroom as case study

From this point, the focus of the study shifts. Though the unique 'cases' of individual children continue to be observed and described, they are no longer viewed primarily as 'children' and family members, but rather as 'pupils' within an institutional setting (Boyle and Woods, 1998). That setting, the Reception classroom, now becomes the study's principal 'case', the unit of analysis within which all the individual subcases are subsumed. While the last two chapters have described the pedagogy resulting from the class and cultural aspects of the home, this chapter presents the culture and pedagogy of the school, and the contexts which structure them. School culture and pedagogy, like those of the home, are rooted in certain classed, gendered and cultural beliefs; and they assume, similarly, 'the force of a natural order' (Bernstein, 1996: 21) to those socialised within them.

School culture

The term, 'school culture', though it has a readily available 'common-sense' meaning, requires a brief discussion here. 'Culture' itself, as Williams announced, is 'one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language' (1976:76), with meanings which vary not only in accordance with their historical and geographical occurrence, but also in accordance with the discipline within which they are employed. Williams himself approves the 'contemporary convergence' of disparate perspectives which sees culture as 'the *signifying system* through which necessarily... social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored' (1981:13). It follows that such a 'signifying system' can be understood, like Bernstein's pedagogic discourse, to transmit and distribute the power and control of a society. It is then possible to see institutions such as schools as possessing their *own* culture or signifying system, though the precise definition of this (other than as Williams' 'a whole way of life') may be problematic.

The view that children learn most successfully in the context of a culture that is *shared* by child and teacher, and has continuity from home to school, has been argued throughout recent decades. Bernstein's aphorism – 'If the culture of the teacher is to become part of the consciousness of the child, then the culture of the child must first be in the consciousness of the teacher' stated the case of the 'new' sociology of education, and underpinned many of Bernstein's most cogent attacks on the exclusion of disadvantaged children from educational success. From a different (Vygotskian) perspective, Bruner offers a theory of instruction as a form of shared culture creation, in the sense of a mutuality of perspective between the child and adult who are co-constructing meanings together.

Most learning in most settings is a communal activity, a sharing of the culture. It is not just that the child must make his knowledge his own, but that he must make it his own in a community of those who share his sense of belonging to a culture. (1986:127)

For a four-year-old from outside the mainstream (white middle-class) culture, it is now recognised, cultural dissonance can make entry to school as unfamiliar as entry into a foreign land (including, for some, entry into an alien language community). As a result, the cultural capital acquired in the home may lose its value on the way to school.

Having discussed the home cultures of the sample children's early socialisation, within which their primary habitus was acquired, the study proceeds in this chapter to describe the school culture of All Saints', the environment which will shape their secondary habitus. The meanings contained in the 'whole way of life' of the school are visible in its ethos, pedagogy, overt and hidden curricula, and organisation (and form part of the habitus of its teachers as well as its pupils). They have their derivation both in the wider contexts in which the classroom exists (below, 7.2) and in the 'knowledge' and 'beliefs' of teachers (Bennett *et al*, 1997). Evidence discussed below is drawn from a range of sources: school policies and documents, aims and objectives; staff beliefs about teaching and learning (expressed in interviews); and staff practices as inscribed in curriculum planning or recorded in classroom observations. The processes which result are presented through the framing perspective of Bernstein's concepts of pedagogic discourse.

First however the classroom itself has to be situated in the nested contexts (Lubeck, 1988) within which it functions.

7.2. The nested contexts of the case study classroom

A distinctive feature of Bernstein's work is the development of concepts which explicitly link the rules governing the *micro* setting of the classroom with the distribution of power in the *macro* contexts of national policy, and the social class system through which its control is effected. Elements of such macro influences have been suggested earlier, in discussion of the social and economic circumstances of the families in this study. The effect of national educational policies and discourses on classroom practice and children's learning has been described in other recent studies (Pollard *et al*, 1994; Reay, 1998; Connolly, 1998; Vincent, 1996), and provides an important context for the classroom practices described in this chapter. Some relevant aspects are summarised here.

The national context

Fieldwork for this study began at the end of an 18-year period of Conservative government which had, apparently irreversibly, transformed educational discourse and practices. The reforms of the Thatcher and Major administrations (1979-97) had simultaneously centralised and dispersed the powers which had previously been distributed hierarchically through the system, from government departments down to class teachers. Detailed control of the curriculum, after acrimonious and public disputes between academics and politicians in subject working-parties, had ended up in government hands, and had crept downwards to include the curriculum for 3-to-5 year olds in preschool settings (SCAA, 1996). Control of finances, buildings, hiring and firing teachers, and recruiting children, on the other hand, had passed to headteachers and governing bodies, while a Parents' Charter encouraged parents to shop around for good schooling as they might shop for other goods and services, but with school performance tables ('League tables') in place of the *Which?* Report. The combined effects of external control of the curriculum, the more formal pedagogy adopted in anticipation of OfSTED inspections, and media criticism of teachers and their methods, had resulted in low morale and reduced job satisfaction among

teachers (Pollard *et al*, 1994), with no appreciable improvements for parents (Hughes *et al*, 1994). Children's attainments in core subjects, measured by standardised tests, were increasingly seen as the only worthwhile 'performance indicator' for schools and teachers.

In September 1997 as the sample children started school, a 'slimmed-down' National Curriculum for 5-16 year olds was in place, together with 'Desirable Outcomes' for under-5s; national tests at 7, 11 and 14 were compulsory, and the Baseline Assessment of Reception children was being piloted prior to statutory use in the following year; OfSTED inspections had become a regular if unwelcome feature of teachers' lives, and performance-related pay (a return to the 'Payment by Results' of the nineteenth-century, apparently) was back on the agenda.

At the same time, it was evident that the Education Reform Act (1988) had had the effect of down-playing, and de-emphasising the multicultural, anti-racist, anti-sexist and other 'equal opportunities' initiatives which had informed many of the educational practices of the 1970s and 80s. The threat to educational equity took two forms: firstly, the earlier commitment to provide additional resources and appropriate support for children from low-achieving groups, with the aim of fostering equality of group *outcomes*, had been replaced by a view that the National Curriculum ensured all children equal *access* (a meritocratic position). Secondly, the National Curriculum itself constituted a narrowly Anglocentric or Eurocentric body of knowledge which left very little room at any level for multicultural curriculum content.

Inner-urban schools serving poor multi-ethnic populations felt particularly threatened in this climate, in which the strong pastoral and multicultural ethos on which many prided themselves seemed to carry no official value, while the relatively low educational outcomes achieved by their pupils attracted public censure.

The local context.

The All Saints' district lies about a mile from the centre of a prosperous county town, the decline in whose original market role, and older craft industries, has been compensated by the recent influx of new international companies, and the rapid

spread of new out-of-town shopping and housing developments. As is the case in similar towns and cities, most of the ethnic minority population who arrived in the postwar years have settled into the dense terraces closest to the centre, while the majority population, with increasing prosperity, has gradually moved towards the outer suburbs. While African-Caribbean families are dispersed across the town, most Asian families (Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi) have remained in the poorer central areas, where the gurdwara and the two mosques are located.

All Saints' End, which has housed a Bangladeshi community since the 1950s, still has a majority English-speaking population, many of whom have been in the area for generations. Except among children of school age, there is no apparent contact between the two communities, on the streets, in the shops, or around the school. Bengali women pass silently but apparently unhindered through the streets, and frequent community shops (such as Abdul Rahman's father's Bismillah Stores), or call in at local cut-price supermarkets on their way home from school in the morning. In this neighbourhood community (unlike some others in town) none are employed outside the home. Anglo mothers can be seen talking in groups around the local shopping centre, but also often make weekly shopping trips by car to the larger stores on the edge of town. Many, even those with young babies, have part-time work in shops, factories, warehouses or pubs. Bengali men, both old and young, are employed entirely in community or family businesses, and sometimes travel to distant towns to work, while Anglo men, if employed, work in factories or warehouses within a short drive of their homes. On the whole, it is possible for members of both local groups to carry on their daily lives without ever speaking to each other.

The separateness of the two communities is social rather than physical: neighbours from minority and majority groups appear to be oblivious to each other's proximity, and mothers from the two groups squeeze past each other without acknowledgment on the narrow pavement in front of the school gate. There are no indications that either group is conscious of erecting or maintaining the barriers between them, which (as Bernstein would say) appear to have 'the force of the natural order'.

The 1991 census indicates that both groups share a common low socioeconomic status, and poor 'quality of life' indicators: the neighbourhood suffers from poor housing, overcrowding, low levels of employment and little open space. A local park maintained by the council has hazardous access to a river and an intercity railway line, and is frequented by rough-sleepers, drug or alcohol abusers and dogs.

The school context

While the county ranks well in national educational performance tables, and the main towns are at least middling, a handful of schools (some inner-urban and multi-ethnic, others on outlying white estates) have significantly poor results at every level, including at the Baseline entry level. All Saints' Primary is one of these. Far from being, in OfSTED terminology, a 'failing' school, however, it is in ethos and in practice a confident and purposeful institution which has deliberately used its Christian (voluntary-aided) status as a basis for welcoming children from all social, ethnic and religious backgrounds, and for expressing a particular commitment to children from poor families, and to the Muslim community. The 1997 OfSTED report acknowledges the impact of the school's 'developing, positive ethos', and its attention to pastoral matters, concluding that 'The school provides a caring and supportive environment and it is apparent that all staff are committed, loyal and work well together...The staff know the pupils well' [SD3]. Results from the survey of parental attitudes are also cited. Responses to the statement, 'The school's values and attitudes have a positive effect on my child(ren)' are given as: Strongly Agree, 38.5%, Agree 50.00%, Neither, 11.5%, Disagree / Strongly Disagree, 0%. Overall, the report concludes, 'The school makes good provision for social development'. [SD3]

Like the registered inspector, the Section 23 (Church of England) inspector commends the school's work on relationships, and on social and moral development, recognises that All Saints' 'is not an easy school to work in' and praises the commitment of staff to their children. Though the school's daily 'gatherings' do not meet the statutory requirements for Christian worship, the inspector 'became convinced that the school's policy of *inclusiveness* for all children is correct' [SD4].

All the school's official documents bear the stamp of this positive ethos. The standard job description for teachers is unusual in including 'mission statements', rather than simply the teaching, preparation, marking and administrative duties of the teacher. It states that 'Our definition of a good school is one in which all those present are seen as learners and mistakes are seen as an opportunity for improvement and not failure' [SD1]. The class teacher's responsibilities towards her pupils include 'encouraging positive attitudes in the pupils to school, to their lives and to themselves'; having 'adequate knowledge of his/her home background, medical concerns, ethnic origin, home language and religion'; creating 'a safe, relaxed yet disciplined atmosphere in which a whole range of learning styles are employed'; and creating an 'environment which gives the children independence and reinforces the joy and importance of being literate'. The responsibility towards parents (discussed below, 7.3) is equally explicit.

The staff's concern to 'emphasise the positive' in children's behaviour and learning is exemplified in many policy documents and organisational practices. All policies, including those on Bullying and Anti-Racism, are founded in a commitment to raising self-esteem among pupils *and* staff, and advocate a supportive and 'no-blame' response to infringements. The behaviour policy, for instance, is a set of 'principles' rather than rules or sanctions, and emphasises the collective responsibility for behaviour of all members of the community, rather than the misdeeds of individuals:

The way in which teachers behave has the greatest effect on the way the children behave in school. They will model themselves on us.

Children whose behaviour is unacceptable need to be shown our greatest love through the quality of our care. This has the effect of:

enabling us to introduce the concept of justice and the complex issues around the idea that equality does not mean identical treatment;

building the child's self-esteem which itself is the greatest inducement to socially acceptable behaviour... [SD5]

Many of the school's organisational practices derive from these principles.

While the school's pastoral arrangements are praised by outside inspectors, its academic achievements give cause for concern. Children's attainments in core subjects, described as 'very low' on entry, are still 'below or well below the National Average' when they leave, despite 'satisfactory or good' progress. Some teaching is declared unsatisfactory, though the work of the Reception team is generally approved.

The Reception teacher in the case study classroom, Mrs Goode, has played a large part, as Deputy Head, in determining the culture of the school. Its influence on the pastoral and academic expectations, and the modality, of the Reception class are discussed next.

7.3. Starting school: the teachers' perspective.

The All Saints' model teacher

As the job description cited above indicates, 'being a teacher' at All Saints' does not, first and foremost, concern *teaching*, a term which does not appear in the document. Rather it concerns being a certain kind of person: a caring individual who is sensitive to the well-being of the 'whole child' in her care, but primarily to that child's social, emotional and spiritual needs. While not explicitly required to 'teach', a teacher must 'attempt to meet the educational and social needs' of pupils, and plan activities which 'take into account these needs'. Teachers are also required to take account of the curriculum, which is defined here as 'all of the experiences the children encounter during their career with us'. [SD1]

While this definition implies a high standard of pastoral care, and a holistic view of the child, a more detailed description of the academic curriculum is provided for each age phase. For the Reception class, the curriculum (written before the introduction of the *Desirable Outcomes*) is defined as Social Development (Identity, Independence and Relationships); Physical Development (Fine and Gross Motor Skills); and Intellectual development (Language, and Logical and Spatial .

The pedagogy of the reception class: freedom and independence, play and fun.

Claire Goode and her colleagues present an exemplary version of the competence model described by Bernstein as characteristic of 'liberal-progressive' educators, particularly those trained in the 1960s and 70s (Pollard *et al*, 1994). Both Mrs Goode and her headteacher, Joan Mason, have worked for twenty years as Nursery and Infant teachers, and remain committed to the explicitly child-centred beliefs acquired in their initial training and early school experience (the 'ideological tradition', Bennett *et al*, 1997: 14). Mrs Goode's original training-college qualification was subsequently enhanced by a university diploma in Early Years education, and during the 1980s she was seconded by the LEA to set up an Early Childhood Centre in the town. Unlike many Early Years educators she is highly articulate and confident in explaining her beliefs and practices, which dovetail closely with the pastoral ethos of All Saints' whole-school policies.

Mrs Goode not only advocates such 'liberal-progressive' tenets as 'learning through play', 'discovery', 'freedom to choose' and 'autonomy', she can also explain *how* and *why* provision based on them fosters children's learning. In her view, the Reception year needs to offer an Early Years environment and a curriculum built around the *Desirable Outcomes*, rather than a 'level-zero' National Curriculum. At the same time, however, she is conscious of the requirement to prepare children for the full-fledged National Curriculum experience of Year 1. She therefore attempts to combine two rather contradictory purposes: to supply, belatedly, a child-centred, exploratory experience for children whose early lives have been restricted to the cramped or overcrowded surroundings of their family home, giving them the time and space and opportunities to progress at their own pace; but at the same time to telescope this experience into a limited span of months in order to move the children on, forcibly, to a state of preparedness for the National Curriculum. The conflict between these purposes, and the potential damage to some children's development, is well understood by Mrs Goode, and is epitomised by her remark that,

I don't have any problem with *Desirable Outcomes*, as long as I don't take any notice in terms of, 'By the age of 5, a child should be able to'... the basic curriculum is absolutely fine... I have a problem with when they put expectations... [CT]

Her attempt to accommodate such expectations without abandoning her convictions about appropriate learning for this age group is visible in the tensions and compromises of her classroom practice.

One of Mrs Goode's strongest convictions is that children learn by pursuing (self-chosen) activities which interest and motivate them. As she explained to the handful of parents who attended an induction evening in September, she and the other staff would be observing the children closely to discover what motivated them, and would use this information to keep the children interested and active in extending their knowledge. She invited parents to keep her informed on what their child's favourite activities were, as this would enable the school to support their learning. Unfortunately the pressures of the over-large class resulted in her cancelling her usual parent interviews that year, and few parents took up this invitation. Most parents' interview responses, in any case, suggested that they were expecting teachers to *teach* their children, rather than encourage the children's individual interests.

The Reception classroom offered a wide choice of activities and opportunities, to enable children to demonstrate their motivating interests. In addition, Mrs Goode believed, the setting must foster 'independence', 'social development', 'informality of learning', 'relationships' and 'communication skills'.

it has to first of all allow them to have independence, so they can actually direct their own time.... they've got to be able to choose, they've got to make choices, and they've got to be able to maintain things independently, things that interest *them*, the sort of things that *they* will then learn from; and you have to have enough opportunity for them to develop their social skills, because that's one of the most important things; and they have to have a *wide* range of activities that they've actually experienced and explored, different experiences, different sensory things..

they also *must* have space, and they must have freedom to move about within it... and they must also have fun, things must be of interest to them, there must be that kind of informality of learning [CT]

'Learning', in other words, is viewed as the outcome of children's self-directed, self-motivated explorations, rather than the product of 'teaching': a Piagetian rather than Vygotskian emphasis, and one which dissociates itself from direct instruction. Granting children independence is an essential aspect of the Reception ethos, and

Mrs Goode frequently refers to 'letting the children just be, and letting them explore'; 'allowing them to have independence'; 'the power to make choices'; 'you look for independence, how independent they can be, and again it goes back to maintaining their own activity'.

The teacher's role, therefore, is to make provision that is truly child-centred, personalised to individual children rather than generalised to the age-group. Ideally, Mrs Goode would fine-tune her provision through the observation of children's schemas:

again, in an ideal world you could take a child and if they'd got a specific schema you could actually educate them in the way of that, from their own interest: that's the way for children to learn [CT]

Mrs Mason shares Mrs Goode's belief in working from 'where the individual child is at', and describes the implications for the school's curriculum and pedagogy of the All Saints' intake:

the children come with very low baselines, very poor use of language, so obviously that has an effect on what is provided in the classroom ... the baseline is very low, for instance, in Reception, we're going to have to look at the needs of those children coming in and make sure that what we provide is relevant for them; so we will have to have flexibility and adapt the curriculum to suit the needs of the children – and if you don't they're not going to learn anyway [HT]

In addition, Mrs Mason emphasises the pastoral aspect of the school's role as a prerequisite for the academic. Her awareness of the stress experienced by children in their homes leads her to the view that children's emotional needs must be attended to before their learning can be considered:

We can't actually teach a child if things from outside interfere: if you have a very angry child coming into school because of something that happened the night before, or through the night, or that morning, then you have to take that child to one side, and give them time, and listen, and calm them, or provide whatever their need, before you can expect... you can't just say, 'Come on, it's Literacy Hour, sit down, you've got work to do', because they won't learn anything, they're not thinking... [HT].

The pedagogic discourse of All Saints', as whole-school policies indicate, prioritises pastoral (emotional/expressive) over academic (intellectual/instrumental) objectives (Power, 1998).

A version of Mrs Goode's and Mrs Mason's beliefs and practices is reproduced in Becky, who did her Nursery Nurse training at All Saints' 6 years earlier, and has been schooled to reproduce the Reception discourse employed by Mrs Goode. Becky is given near-equal responsibilities with Mrs Goode in the day-to-day organisation of the Reception rooms, and operates in a near-identical manner. All the same, her more limited educational background constrains both her understanding and the way she performs her duties. Becky grew up in the town (though not in the poorer central areas), and gained her NNEB at the local FE College (for which 'I think you had to have one GCSE, I think it had to be English'). Though a skilled technician in the classroom, she lacks Mrs Goode's understanding of the issues in cognitive and social development which underlie their joint pedagogic practice. She explains their provision for children's learning as a combination of play and practical activities, rather than instruction:

practical I think is very important to learning, it's "hands-on", they learn by doing it, rather than being told, going in one ear and out the other...It's actually, the major aspect of learning for this age group is actually play, it is actually how they learn, the younger ones... to a certain degree [NN]

Becky, though unable to elaborate on these 'common-sense' views, expertly sets up intriguing and inviting play environments for the children to discover, and communicates a genuine interest in playing and experimenting to which most children respond with pleasure.

Becky's enthusiasm for play is not shared by the class's third regular adult, Mrs Khan, a bilingual assistant funded through the EAL service. Mrs Khan, herself the beneficiary of a middle-class colonial education in pre-Bangladesh Bengal, expresses very mixed views and divided loyalties on the pedagogy of All Saints':

I was feeling this kind of system was better when I came first, because nothing was hard work, child was playing - but now I'm beginning to feel that my system is not bad either, because generation after generation we're learning... and the standard we're learning is not terrible either because many people come in this country, for jobs, and students coming to study at Oxford, Cambridge.. so if our standard is low that means they wouldn't get a place there... so, half and half: our system is bad because we don't do anything practical by hand, but we do more reading and writing.. [BCA]

Mrs Khan loyally defends the Reception practice to the Bengali families:

often they're learning something because they're mixing freely with different children and they copy, without help, especially jigsaws, Lego, cutting, making something, playing different games...

Privately however she admits her own doubts and her sympathy with the parents' view that their children ought to 'sit down and study':

I think half-day reading and writing, half-day playing and doing some other activities... because they are so young... [BCA]

Unlike Becky, Mrs Khan has had no prior personal experience of liberal-progressive methods, and little professional training. She is however subject to a high degree of control from Mrs Goode, who instructs her in exactly how to carry out her duties: which concepts to explore in a discussion group, which children to target, what to record about each child's contribution. She therefore attempts to suppress her own preferred pedagogic style, which is direct and didactic, and sometimes involves correcting the children quite sharply. When her instinctive discourse surfaces through the official pedagogic discourse of the classroom, Mrs Khan is made painfully aware of Mrs Goode's disapproval.

Home-school relations

In Bernstein's analysis the symbolic control which distributes the power held in a society is exercised by means of boundaries between categories. Such boundaries, which appear (apparently involuntarily) between minority and majority ethnic groups in the neighbourhood, also regulate pedagogic practice. At the most literal level, school walls insulate the world of the school, with its specialised culture, discourse and knowledge, from the social world which lies outside.

At All Saints', written policies explicitly recognise the importance both of parents and of home cultures in children's learning, and aim to be inclusive of both. The job description for class teachers includes the statement:

Parents are our partners in the education of their children. It is therefore the responsibility of each teacher to ensure that parents are fully informed of their child's rate of progress, achievements and special needs. To achieve this, the teacher needs to ensure that the school's 'Open Door' policy is fully implemented, that parents are made to feel important and welcome visitors, and that they are listened to and their views receive a positive response. [SD1]

Mrs Mason spontaneously raises this issue when asked to describe the type of educational environment the school offers. In her view the key to the school's ethos is:

the openness: teachers being available to parents at the beginning and end of the day, on a parent level... able to communicate on a social level and be *friends* to the parents... the whole ethos of the school is of warmth and caring and understanding for the position that these parents are in... [HT].

In other words, home-school relations are important for primarily pastoral, rather than academic, purposes. Mrs Goode, however, is more conscious of the need to bridge the gap in instructional styles of which she is aware. She expresses a positive attitude towards parents, and claims that her main interest in assessing parents' contribution towards their child's learning is in knowing 'what the parents' expectations of school and their learning are - and also, what input they expect to have':

I need to know, for instance, if a very structured approach to reading is happening at home, in terms of learning words, there is no point in me, here, not giving him any words - I wouldn't do that to a child and there is no point, I would try and work with the parents, and work together so we can have a balanced approach [CT]

This ideal is inevitably compromised in practice. Mrs Goode is only able to 'work with' parents whose home pedagogy she is aware of, and in this busy class, with parent interviews abandoned due to pressure of time, this means only those parents with the social and cultural capital to initiate a dialogue with her. As we have seen, many parents are not in this position.

Becky is less sympathetic in her assessment of parents. She feels able to discriminate between children whose parents have 'done a bit at home' and the others: 'some don't know anything because they're not taught it at home'. In the case of the Bengali children, she has some sympathy for their parents ('some of it must be support at home - if the parents have no English, like the reading, something like that, they can't, it's difficult'). But in justifiably attributing some of these children's problems to their very poor attendance, she interprets this as a consequence of parents' unacceptable attitudes:

just shove your kids in when you feel like it, some of them! 'Oh, I'm busy

today, I don't want them at home, let's go shopping... I don't want to get up today, I want to watch Teletubbies all day... I'm not going to school today, ooh, it's raining!' – that's the classic - I'm actually surprised they're here today, if it's really bad rain they're not here. [NN].

Becky in fact has little contact with the Bengali parents. This responsibility is largely delegated to Mrs Khan, who is more sympathetic:

I don't blame them because they first came from Bangladesh, and not mixing up with anything, so I specially help the Bengali parents, a couple of mothers, every day something comes new and I need to tell them what's going on, even the holiday: 'Is it tomorrow holiday?', 'no, it's the day after!' [BCA].

Though her own background is privileged in comparison with that of the All Saints' families, Mrs Khan recognises the dislocation experienced by newly-arrived women, saying of Amadur's mother, for instance:

she can't suddenly jump - it takes a couple of years to settle down in this system, it's a difficulty coping: I can't blame her... it took me a long time to settle down in this situation. [BCA]

In practice, as Mrs Goode also recognises, *all* children may experience discontinuities between home and school, which are difficult to resolve. In terms of parents' actual presence in the school, 'in September, in the first few weeks, I always say to parents that they're very welcome to stay if they want to - not many do...'. Otherwise,

we greet them in the morning, and talk to them in the evening, so the informal part of that is probably the best bit, if you like, so if they've got anything to say... [CT].

In curriculum terms, Mrs Goode believes that the rich child-centred environment offered in Reception is in principle inclusive of, and good for, all children, and that catering for individual backgrounds would be problematic: 'the range of experiences that they've had, before school, is so huge: you have to give them the best environment'. She recognises too that the 'homely' activities such as shopping, cooking and going for local walks which feature frequently in Reception 'may only be continuity if you're a more middle-class type of child'. Nevertheless, the Reception curriculum offers just such an experience, and purports to provide an environment in which *all* children can flourish. It could be argued however that the

pedagogy can only achieve these objectives by turning *all* children into mainstream, majority children.

7.4. The Reception classroom

The modality of All Saints' Reception

The unique modality of each classroom is defined by Bernstein (1996) as a function of the strength and weakness of the classification and framing principles of its pedagogic discourse, which vary independently of each other to create an almost infinite range of possible modalities. These modalities however have two principal forms: the 'performance' and the 'competence' model. The performance model (referred to by Pollard *et al* (1994: 10) as the elementary tradition), which was typified by the visible pedagogy of strong classification and framing, and by strict and standardised evaluation of performance (or *product*), was based in Bernstein's view on 'economic' principles. In contrast, the competence model (in Pollard *et al*'s account, the developmental tradition), rested on weak classification and framing, a subjective evaluation of the whole child (and of *process*), and on 'therapeutic' principles (for the good of the child rather than of the economy). In Bernstein's view, 'It is now very clear that performance modes dominate both primary and secondary levels' (1996: 74): that the introduction of the National Curriculum, of standardised testing and age-related norms, and of a competitive market between schools, have re-introduced strict and explicit sequencing, pacing and evaluation for the over-5s, and that they are infiltrating the provision for under-5s. Hence Mrs Goode, in describing her own pedagogy, is conscious of resisting a trend.

Though the competence model is recognisable as the *general type* of organisation in the case study classroom, its precise operations (the processes experienced on a daily basis by children and their parents) result from a complex mix of strong and weak classification (of home/school, adult/child, work/play, learning/fun, for instance) and framing (freedom/compulsion, autonomy/direction). In every aspect of the classroom operations too, the strength of classification and framing varies according to whether the power and control are exercised internally or externally, and according to the individuals or groups who are on the receiving end. The boundaries which underpin the pedagogic discourse, in other words, are more permeable for some children, and

some parents, than for others. A model of the pedagogic discourse offered by Mrs Goode can not describe the way that discourse is actually *experienced* by different groups and individuals, because it is a model which (unwittingly) treats children and families differently.

Nevertheless, the general characteristics of the competence model are in place, allowing the new entrants to display, and develop, the learning dispositions and cultural capital they have brought to school. These include:

a *curriculum and organisation* characterised by weakly classified space, time and discourse; a *pedagogy* which emphasises learning rather than teaching; an *evaluation* derived from the presence rather than absence of knowledge and skills; *forms of control* which are personalised (in the person of Mrs Goode) and individualised (to each child); and a *text for evaluation* which includes the process of acquisition rather than the acquired product.

The sections which follow discuss some of these characteristics, while attempting to describe the advantages and disadvantages for different children of this model, as well as the constraints and tensions which tend to make it, in practice, unattainable. Though Bernstein argues that the instructional discourse (ID) of the classroom is always embedded in the regulative discourse (RD), each aspect has its own characteristics. The next section focuses on the RD, or discourse of social order, which carries the broad culture of the school; more detailed discussion of the ID, the relay of school knowledge, is found in the following section.

Pedagogic discourse: the social order

Mrs Goode, as described above, grounds her practice in an explicit school discourse premised on concepts of self esteem and pastoral care, and offers a curriculum led by 'Social development'. In the first weeks of school, she uses whole-group sessions to induct children into particular aspects of the social order of the school: ways of speaking and listening to others, sitting, sharing, taking turns and putting your hand up; specifics like washing your hands, hanging up coats, and answering the dinner register. Most children's pride in these new accomplishments provided the motive to

adapt to the culture of the school. Mrs Goode was asked what 'learning to be a pupil' meant, and how she set about it:

Learning to be part of a social group within the school structure.. so it's learning the social codes and etiquettes and whatnot... it's listening, it's respect, it's activities, it's turn-taking... the ways to do it are, going over things, different aspects of the situation; you're also explaining when things are acceptable, like, you've hurt somebody, now imagine how that feels'... and it's learning to be part of a group – and you have to have consistent expectations; it's all part of a society, and it's a structured society because it's a formal school .[CT]

Asked whether some *groups* adapted more easily to school behaviour, she speculated that

some of the bilingual children learn it quicker.. whether it's because they're keen to please, or they're more reliant.. they haven't got the confidence, they want to be structured; but some of them do learn it quickly, and when you consider that they might not be understanding an awful lot of what happens to them... [CT]

Though she resisted the temptation to conclude that *girls* were better adapted to the process (both resisting the stereotype, and citing Kelly, who had *not* been amenable), she believed they might, on the whole 'understand more of what a teacher tells them'.

Mrs Goode aims to avoid imposing her will on children, though she knows she has the skills and authority to do so. By the third term she expects 'most children in the room' to be both independent and compliant in undertaking adult-directed tasks:

some will wait to be asked but they're quite happy to go if they're asked – well, it depends who's doing the asking [CT, my emphasis].

This last aside gives a hint of the invisibility of the regulative discourse. There is, as Mrs Goode admits, an element of compulsion by the third term in Reception - but it is disguised as 'asking'; *most* children will respond to being 'asked' - but only by certain adults, those vested with the authority that comes with control of the discourse; and some 'challenging' children require more explicit control, and sanctions.

Some children had difficulty acquiring the 'recognition rules' of the invisible regulation which constitutes the 'natural order' of the classroom. The friendly and informal relationship normally displayed between adults and children in the class

required an expectation (by staff) of instant compliance by children to any of their requests, and an assumption (by children) that such compliance was reasonable because any requests made by adults would be reasonable. Such assumptions are consistent with the style of 'reciprocal', negotiated control identified by the Newsoms (1968, 1976) as well as in early Bernsteinian research, as a middle-class characteristic. The 'cultural lag' of the intervening decades (Bronfenbrenner, 1961), has seen many working-class families gradually adopting more 'middle-class' practices: among All Saints' families, as the Newsoms put it, many parents 'wish to be friends with their children'. A minority of children, however, failed to recognise these weakly-framed regulative rules, and challenged the adult exercise of power. Inevitably the regulative discourse of children's homes influences their expectations about the reasonableness and trustworthiness of adults in general, as well as about the respect due to teachers. A weak-frame adult 'request' such as 'Would you like to leave the sand, and come and do your writing now?' required a negotiated response which some found hard to understand. Kelly, whose home experience of conflict has proved more enduring than her nursery training, was among the children described by Mrs Goode as 'very challenging' (the others were boys). But some compliant children (including some of the bilingual children) were visibly confused and wary under this 'soft' form of control. As Bernstein has argued (CCC3), the superficially weak framing of the regulative discourse found in an IP or competence model frequently conceals strong staff expectations about appropriate behaviour.

The same tension is evident in the expectations (ideal and actual) for children's activity choices. On the one hand children are offered freedom:

so they can actually direct their own time: they've got to be able to *choose*, they've got to make choices and they've got to be able to maintain things independently, things that interest *them*, the sorts of things that *they* will then learn from [CT].

This freedom extends, initially at least, to the weak framing of children's time and space: they may, in principle, use the two classrooms and their contents as they please, for as long as they please. On the other hand, the staff believe the children *must* be exposed to the full array of learning experiences, which are therefore compulsory, and from the children's point of view arbitrary. The independent time-

management which is fostered in their early weeks in school is rapidly eroded by the frequent summons, without warning, to an adult-directed group activity, so that it becomes progressively more difficult for a child to spend more than 15 minutes at a self-chosen activity without interruption. By the second term, management of the day, though 'unstructured', was actually complex. With long lists of planned experiences and targets to achieve, there were days when Mrs Goode and Becky, classroom or bilingual assistants, and parent volunteers, would be checking their clipboard lists and competing good-naturedly for the same children - 'Can I have him first? I've only got one more group to do', 'I need her now because she'll be doing cooking after play'. Though most children complied readily with such summonses, they were effectively prevented from planning or implementing any projects of their own. A minority of children resented and resisted this constraint.

Thus the informality of the broad curriculum offered actually impeded children's ability to maintain autonomy. The weak framing of the organisation denied children the opportunity to plan, as all 'requests' to abandon their task were, or were made to seem, spontaneous. According to Becky, most groupings were opportunistic, 'it's just, "I'll have you, quick!" - it's just as it comes'. In consequence, children had no idea, when they settled down to a self-directed activity, how soon they would be snatched up by an adult bent on exposing them to yet another learning experience. In practice, classroom observations and diaries [Appendix D2] showed that those children most likely to sustain an independent project (such as Joshua or Katy) were those most likely to be 'picked', and picked again in a hectic curriculum roundabout. Those least able to undertake tasks independently (such as Amadur and Mohammed) were more frequently left to 'choose' until late in the day. A strongly framed organisation, with clear directions to children about when they would be required for adult-directed tasks, might in practice have afforded many children a far greater degree of autonomy.

Bernstein is particularly critical of this aspect of IP/competence discourses because it condemns children, in his words, to 'live only in the present' (CCC4: 62), whereas a VP discourse is more likely to allow them, and their parents, to acquire a longer temporal perspective. Clearly there is no need for the VP discourse to be tied to a

performance model: the High/Scope curriculum (Schweinhart and Weikart, 1980), which deliberately inculcates children's planning for the near-future, and reviewing of the just-past, avoids an emphasis on performance or product.

At All Saints', the regulative discourse, for all its elusiveness and intangibility, permeates every aspect of every activity. It is present from the start in the individualised invitation to play ("what would you like to choose?") or to stay all day ("would you like him to do the whole day next Tuesday?"); in the adult modelling of fun and excitement and interest ("let's go and see what Becky's put in the water tray for us today!"); and in the warm and personalised overture that is made to each child even in whole-class routines such as the register group (7.5, below). Mrs Goode is a supremely skilled practitioner of this discourse: systematic observations [Appendix D3] suggest that over 90% of her utterances can be characterised as warm, positive and approving, and all the parents report their children's liking for her and for Becky. Cameron, however, seems to have made a good assessment of the discourse: as Alison reports,

I think he's a bit... not *wary* of Mrs Goode, but when he was slow getting dressed in the morning, and I said 'Are you like this at school?', he said, 'Don't tell Mrs Goode, don't tell Mrs Goode': he knows she's in charge, kind of thing! [Ca2]

As Cameron has detected, Mrs Goode (or Becky, as her proxy) *is* the regulative discourse, and the regulative discourse resides in Mrs Goode.

Instructional discourse: the discursive order

'With an invisible pedagogy, the RD becomes the ID' (Bernstein, 1999).

Mrs Goode is well aware that the *regulative* discourse of the classroom - in her terms, its informality - has implications for the children's *instructional* experience and outcomes. She acknowledges that some of her pupils' progress may appear slow in Reception, but feels she has good experiential evidence that her methods pay off in the longer term. In a more formal classroom, she argues

they wouldn't have learned how to learn for themselves, which is the main thing you've got to teach children.. so they wouldn't have such a rich experience - and they learn to read, on the whole, by year 2, *despite* what we do to them! [CT]

In Bernstein's terms, Mrs Goode employs a weak-framed instructional discourse consistent with the competence model of pedagogic practice. Under her instructional rules, the sequencing and pacing of children's learning is slowed or slackened to suit the needs of individual children - or of an assumed 'type' of child. For like Mrs Mason she works with an impression of the overall characteristics of the school's intake: she believes that children's communication skills are a guide to their potential, but states that 'I think generally the communication skills of children in the school are low... children's listening skills are very very poor'.

Inevitably, the instructional discourse of the classroom, which is carried in the RD, displays similar internal tensions between freedom and compulsion, exploration and regulation. The *regulative* ideal is a weakly-framed order of purposeful play with personalised support from adults, though in actuality the strength of the frame rapidly increases over the year. Even this increase in frame strength is viewed as, ideally, child-driven:

it's a natural thing, the children are almost asking for it, you know when they're ready for it: they require more structure to their day [CT].

In this 'ideal' liberal/progressive scenario, the pedagogic discourse derives from the children themselves, rather than being imposed upon them. Thus the increasing formality of the Reception class organisation over the year comes in response to children's 'readiness': a kind of liberal 'demand learning' like the 'demand feeding' of infancy, which is not however understood as a demand for *teaching*.

Mrs Goode is too much of a realist to pretend that this 'natural' process can unfold for all children, because of the tension between this model and the assessment-driven model which lies ahead:

sometimes by the third term you do have to insist on it, because they do have to move into Year 1... again, because of the constraints of the National Curriculum, and because of the constraints of schooling, you have to, by the end of the Reception year, in terms of preparing them for Key Stage 1, have made it clear that there are certain things that they have to do, in order that they learn and in order that they can acquire skills - and again, in an ideal world that wouldn't happen until Year 1; but again, the nature of education has changed, and the pressure that is put on...it's not fair to the children if they're going to have to go through it. [CT]

For most of the year however, the *instructional* purpose of the provision (ie. teaching and learning) remains weakly framed, invisible to the children and to most of their parents. In Mrs Goode's discourse, children are told 'we're going to be *really* busy today', 'we've got lots of jobs to do', or 'lots to choose from', but the 'jobs' may be dressing up or painting: children are never instructed that they have work to do, or learning goals to achieve. Not until June and July are they told they are 'learners', who have worked hard in Reception and will do their 'best work', and learn even more, in their next class.

Curriculum provision for learning, which is always grounded in play activities, is carefully planned. Weekly plans (monitored over the Spring term) include:

Unstructured play:	<i>free choice of eg. sand, water, role play, construction, small-worlds .</i>
Structured play:	<i>building a castle, setting up a 'birthday party', completing repeat patterns</i>
Adult-directed group tasks:	<i>cooking, printing, experimenting, testing, observing, building</i>
Adult-directed group discussion:	<i>sharing non-fiction books, pictures, artefacts</i>
Adult group teaching:	<i>phonics or maths input</i>
Adult individual teaching:	<i>instruction on letter-formation, number recognition; book-sharing / reading</i>
Adult-directed or self-directed worksheets.	<i>handwriting, topic, maths, phonics etc.</i>

The constant checking of class-lists is intended to ensure that all children have equal access to the full range of learning experiences, even if they cannot all derive the same benefit from them. Groups of children, ad hoc and pre-planned, are rotated through activities supervised by teachers, assistants and parent volunteers to maximise their exposure to the curriculum. The rationale for the discursive order is that *all* children must experience *everything* in the curriculum offer: not only activities in the Core Skills, or in the areas of the Desirable Learning Outcomes, but the emotion and excitement of fantasy role-play, and the uninhibited wildness of

outings (see 7.5). When the classroom role play area is periodically transformed (whether to a supermarket, a clinic or a ‘monster pit’), participation is obligatory. Mrs Goode explains:

There are certain directed activities that we do expect all the children to work with... so after half-term we’ll have a ‘jungle’, and we do expect all of them to come - just to have a look, they don’t have to do anything - just make a noise if they want to, or give the animals a cuddle! - just to have a go! [CT]

The very weakly classified content of the curriculum, in other words (playing, growling, cuddling furry animals) is strongly framed: having fun is compulsory (even if the compulsion is expressed as an ‘expectation’), and is part of the ‘text’ on which children are evaluated (discussed more fully in chapter 9)

The pedagogic discourse of the classroom seems then to offer a range of possible underlying texts, depending on the variable strength of the framing of both the RD and the ID. Cuddling the animals (strong RD, weak ID), falls into one of four principal categories: the bottom right zone in this diagram.

Figure 3. Pedagogic discourse: 4 varieties

[ID axis: +F: ‘learning’, ‘work’]	
<p>text “you can choose to work / learn”</p> <p>[RD axis: -F: freedom]</p>	<p>text “you must work” “you must learn”</p> <p>[RD axis: +F: regulation]</p>
<p>text “you can choose to play / have fun”</p>	<p>text “you must play” “you must have fun”</p>
[ID axis: -F: ‘play’, ‘fun’]	

While all children are ‘expected’ to experience all activities, explicit (but largely invisible) differentiation is progressively built into the instructional discourse associated with the core skills of literacy and numeracy. By January the class is ability-grouped for maths and writing activities, and by Easter for phonics. In the Summer Term the class is visibly split, once a week, for the whole afternoon: the

high achievers, in the quiet room, have a strongly-framed literacy session, while the remainder of the class continue to 'choose', or sing nursery rhymes, with me and Becky. As Becky explains, 'all the top group work together so you can stretch them', but it is not clear whether the children who remain behind are also 'working'.

Mrs Goode has a clear rationale for each grouping: 'if they had an understanding of numbers 1-10', 'because they were assessed as being confident with their pencil skills', and so on; but, she points out, 'the differentiation, in terms of communication, is far more, because you differentiate by how you respond, and how you question, so that's individual'. This being so, the built-in disadvantage of the bilingual children (whose communication skills, in comparison with monolingual pupils, are scantily assessed) is unavoidable.

While the social expectations of the classroom were carefully explained to the children, what they were *not* told by teachers was that certain learning styles and behaviours were approved, while others were regarded as inappropriate. 'Making choices' and 'acting independently', which rank high in Mrs Goode's learning goals, were not among the attributes prioritised by any of the children's parents, and some had certainly given their children clear indications to the contrary ('sit down, study hard'; 'just do what the teacher tells you'). Children with prior nursery or playgroup experience were again at an advantage, since their preschool setting would have fostered autonomy, but some of those who had spent their early years in the family home were now entering a setting with a radically different belief system. The latter group included Jemma, as well as all the Bengali children except Abdul Rahman, and possibly Tuhura (who had briefly attended a local 'mums and tots'). In the first few weeks of school (discussed in chapter 8), some children's ability to 'make choices' was relatively circumscribed, while others experimented widely.

The instructional discourse of school literacy

While Mrs Goode and Becky are concerned to provide a 'rich experience' of language and literacy for the class, they are aware that for most parents the overwhelming priority is for their child to learn to read. This single skill is prized by parents as the key to future success in school, and probably in life, and is rather

fearfully viewed as a mystery whose unlocking requires the expertise of a professional. Even parents like Charlotte, who are confident in their own ability as educators, appear vulnerable when discussing their child's acquisition of literacy skills. There is great relief when children are seen to have penetrated the mystery, and begun to read for themselves.

The tensions between freedom and regulation, and between ideal and actuality, which permeate other aspects of the curriculum, give a distinct shape to the teaching of reading. Initially children are observed for their interest in books, and motivation to read (*ideally*, they would all be keen, and 'ask' to learn, or 'demand' to be taught). In this scenario, once their intrinsic and independent motivation is in place, they will choose to read alone or with friends, or request the support of school adults, thus apprenticing themselves to more experienced readers and acquiring the necessary skills through the cumulative effects of listening, sharing, observing, repeating, emulating and *enjoying* literacy events. In support of this process all children, once identified as 'interested', are given a 'bookbag' to take books home to share and enjoy with family members, so that their opportunities for acquiring the skills are multiplied and reinforced (see 7.5). Meanwhile their reading progress is supported and extended by the wide range of language and literacy activities on offer in the classroom, as well as by the weekly individual reading input they receive from Mrs Goode or Becky.

The terminology associated with the teaching of reading exemplifies this liberal/progressive view of the experience. Children are assessed on entry for their 'book-handling' skills (finding the front of the book, turning pages from front to back, scanning from left to right) and for their interest in discussing the pictures or predicting the story. There is no assessment of the ability to decode print, and if there were, all the children would fail, whereas many score well on the existing criteria. Subsequent input from adults takes the form not of 'reading' but of 'book-sharing': implicitly, no hand-over of knowledge is implied to occur (from transmitter to acquirer, in a Bernsteinian 'relay'), since teacher and child are constructed as equal partners in this process. Book-sharing is a relaxed, friendly session in which the participants sit on floor-cushions and join in selecting books from small arrays,

choosing the pictures which make them laugh, predicting the story's outcome, and relating it to their own lives and experiences. All the children were seen to enjoy these sessions, and many come to sit alongside and listen in to each other's book-sharing times. Both Mrs Goode and Becky are skilful in eliciting enthusiastic participation from the children they are sharing with, and it is unusual for a child to try to avoid or postpone their turn when it comes.

In a weak-framed pedagogy, however, this apprenticeship into literacy may take a very long time, as Mrs Goode recognised. Some children are being introduced for the first time to practices which children in other families may have met in infancy, and may take some time to adjust to them: if these late-starters are allowed to progress at their own 'natural' rate, the pacing of the pedagogy may slacken to a standstill. Other potential problems loom. The 'demand' from the child may not be met by the supply of adult hours for relaxed book-sharing (a lengthy and uneconomic process). The demand, spoken or unspoken, from parents may not be met by the pacing offered by the school. The demands of the Year 1 curriculum may be frustrated by the stage of literacy children have reached at the end of Reception. Above all, the criterion of individual interest, motivation or 'readiness' may justify low levels of expectation, and input, into children who do not appear to meet it. The instructional discourse does not permit a strong-framed text such as "you *must* learn to read" (with its dependents, "otherwise you won't do well at school / get a good job"). Only the weaker variants are allowed: "you are sure to enjoy looking at books (reading is fun!)", "you may choose to share books", "we will do some reading when you have shown you want to", and so on.

Some of the potential problems are revealed in observations of the twice-weekly book-sharing, and examination of the year's reading records [Appendix D6]. Because of the very large class, Mrs Goode and Becky each allocated a whole day a week to individual book-sharing, and Mrs Khan spent some additional time with the bilingual children. Nevertheless, weekly relaxed book-sharing for 40 children required more hours than were available. In consequence, priority was given, unintentionally, to children whose bookbags had been returned to school, or whose parents asked 'when they were going to be changing their books'. In practice, this meant that the more

advantaged children (those whose parents were assisting with reading at home, monitoring their child's progress, and matching the school's input) had far greater access to school support, and to the greatest expertise. For when Charlotte proved demanding and insistent on Troy's behalf, Becky opted out of her turns to read with him, and Mrs Goode took sole charge of his input; while those children whose bookbag never appeared in school tended to be passed on to Mrs Khan (especially if they were Bengali) or to me.

Individual book-sharing, however, was only one aspect of the broad classroom provision for language and literacy learning, which was systematically audited on days selected at random during the Spring term. The class topic, 'Air', was built around picture books such as Inkpen's *Blue Balloon*, so that all the curriculum activities had some association with literacy. The activities were ranked at 3 levels:

- i) adult teaching of language or literacy skills
- ii) adult-led activities with a language / literacy element
- iii) children's self-chosen activities with an emphasis on language or literacy.

Every activity identified was scanned every 15 minutes to discover which children were involved. The audit for one, typical, day showed the following activities:

i) CT and B.Ed student (whom she is inducting into the class's booksharing and reading practices): sharing books with one or two children at a time all day; discuss the books they have brought back from home, re-read the one they like best, select new ones, read them together: 15 children each had 15-20 minutes session.

ii) a. NN has 'science' groups to look at still and fizzy drinks, observing bubbles, listening to them in a beaker, tasting, mixing, describing, explaining: all 40 children.

ii) b. parent volunteers help groups to make streamers of crepe paper on sticks and 'test' them outdoors to see effects of wind; children asked individually to predict and describe: all 40.

iii) a. ABC matching game (children observed discussing it)

b. 'shopping' board game (ditto)

c. home-corner: lively role play

d. tape-story

e. computer (children discussing program in 2s and 3s)

f. drawing and writing table (discussion, collaboration, copying)

The activity ranked (i) is relatively strongly classified, and has some strength of framing: all the children understand, by now, that they are expected, in their parents' terminology, to 'read with a teacher'. Those in (ii) are weakly classified (no-one

knows what they are learning) but quite strongly framed (everyone does as instructed once summoned to a group). Most of those in (iii) have weak classification *and* framing: children may come and go, and make what use of the activities they see fit.

On this particular day, observations confirm that all the target children were busily occupied, and all had a range of learning experiences. Some, however, received far more active input into their learning than others. Diaries and observations suggest that the level of input is strongly associated with each child's possession of social and cultural capital.

7.5 Case studies in pedagogic discourse.

Registration

In Reception, as throughout the school, children enter the classroom informally, over a 20 or 30 minute period, and 'go into activities', enabling staff to chat to parents or children socially. At an undefined moment, Mrs Goode summons the children to the carpet in the book corner to start the day formally by calling the attendance and dinner registers. There is thus a rapid transition from the weakly framed situation of children mixing freely (and loudly) in and out of the two rooms, to the strongly framed one of children sitting together in stillness and near-silence waiting to respond to their teacher. Explicit training about this transition is given in the first term, though most of the on-going regulation is implicit: 'Joni! look how beautifully you're sitting - and you didn't take any notice of Brian's fussing, did you? *Good girl!*' This individualised praise produces, naturally, a whole class 'sitting beautifully' for a few moments at least.

Registration itself, though formally an initiation into 'pupil' status (Boyle and Woods, 1998), is used to reinforce the personalised rhetoric of the classroom, and the 'fun' aspect of its pedagogy. From the first, children are told that it is fun to choose 'different kinds of register': starting from the bottom, singing, whispering, smiling ('Where's your lovely smile, Kelly? thank you very much!'). The range of verbal responses is permissive: 'yes', 'hello', 'good morning Mrs Goode' are all rewarded with a warm smile and thanks. So are appropriate responses for the next part of the session: 'home dinners', 'packed lunch' and so on. Most of the children respond to

Mrs Goode's lively, friendly discourse by giving her their full attention throughout the lengthy process of registering 42 children twice over. Those children who have to be 'spoken to' repeatedly are asked to leave the group.

The session continues with routines which combine social and instructional purposes: counting and estimating numbers, checking the calendar, and reporting the weather. Two children go outside for a 'weather-watch', and return to announce their findings and make predictions for morning and afternoon playtimes. These reports are formulaic and strongly-framed, as the children respond to identical teacher-prompts every day: 'What colour was the sky?...and did you see any clouds?... and were the trees moving?... and that means it's....and will we need our coats on?' By the end of Reception a few children could report independently (ie. reproduce the formula without prompts) but the majority still needed support. In July, Amadur and Mohammed could still only nod, shake their heads or repeat phrases loudly whispered to them by Mrs Khan: 'blue sky... nice day', and did not appear to enjoy being the focus of the class's attention in this way, as some children did.

The last part of the session is used to give the children some indication of the day's activities (as opposed to an indication of what was to be learned), and to allow adults to select their first groups before the remaining children are allocated to play activities. These latter are directed through a weakly-framed discourse ('You four may play in the water') which is actually non-negotiable, though children abandon their allocated activities once the adult who has directed them is otherwise occupied.

One other regulative aspect of the session remains apparently arbitrary and impenetrable. *Certain* children, *most* mornings, are allowed to continue with their activities (computer games, board games, drawing) when the class gathers on the carpet. The rule for which children, and which activities, were given this dispensation, never became clear: the rule was, in practice, 'what Mrs Goode decides', although Becky was similarly empowered if she so chose. Like Mrs Khan, I more than once made the mistake of shooing children to the carpet, only to be told that they could return to their activity; hence I understood the puzzlement which caused some children to hover anxiously between their tables and the assembled class

group. A very strong frame underlying all such moments was the text: Mrs Goode (or her proxy, Becky) *is* the regulative discourse.

Outings

The conduct of school outings reveals the All Saints' culture and pedagogy particularly clearly. The school's whole 'offer' to its children and families is founded in a concept of childhood, and of adult-child relations, which coincides with the ethnotheories of some but by no means all parents. This concept not only affirms *play*, and associated ideas such as freedom, fun, discovery, as the natural characteristic of childhood experience, it also requires adults caring for children to assume children's interests as their own. In consequence, *all* the children, because they have been to some extent socialised into the school discourse, are able to participate in outings with some enjoyment, while only a small proportion of parents meet the requirements for inclusion.

The inclusion / exclusion of parents is most noticeable on the two traditional summer trips taken by the class: a whole-school Ascension Day outing to a forest park, and an end-of-year trip to Memorial Park, a large landscaped area in the town. Both trips are eagerly anticipated by staff, for whom they offer a rare chance to practice a 'pure' form of their preferred pedagogy, without the normal restrictions. Certain rules of engagement are common to both outings:

1. The principal objective is fun, and play: the text, one could say is (-C,-F) ID embedded in (+C,+F) RD, or "you *must* have fun and play". The covert instructional discourse includes learning to explore, fantasise and role-play (we run screaming from imaginary lions and tigers, jump out on each other from bushes, wade fearlessly through swamps and jungles - shallow streams and small copses); learning about the natural world ("which tree do you think is older? who could have built that nest?"); and learning to be a child (children like Rufia and Khiernssa who have never been on a swing or roundabout are coached in playground skills; timid children are encouraged to run, yell and tumble down hills).

2. A child-like perspective governs the social order: groups are expected to observe frequent 'sweetie-breaks' every time a 'sweetie-bench', or convenient fallen tree is spotted; adults must play on playground equipment, join in hide-and-seek, offer crisps and biscuits, provide ice-creams, for maximum child enjoyment.

3. The discursive order explicitly requires 'constant input, constant stimulation', in Mrs Goode's words, from accompanying adults. Therefore the only adults suited to the responsibility are those who have themselves been socialised into the pedagogic discourse. Mothers who prefer *not* to fantasise and enthuse, question and instruct, recite and sing and chat, all the time they are with children, are excluded (and exclude themselves).

The staffing arrangements for Memorial Park therefore were: Mrs Goode, Becky and a Section 11 teacher; four parents who volunteer in the classroom and are school employees; and Troy's father Bob, recently appointed school premises manager. Not only were no Bengali parents involved in any outings, but even Mrs Khan was not invited to accompany the class to Memorial. In many ways the discourse of the school, and especially of Reception, excludes her too.

Home-school reading

The 'Reading Curriculum Policy' at All Saints' does not refer to the role of parents and other family members in children's literacy learning. Nevertheless the school, like most primary schools, sends books home in a 'bookbag', and offers advice to parents on a sheet entitled 'Helping Your Child to read' [Appendix D4]. This advice, however, deals exclusively with the social and pastoral *context* for reading at home ('Find a quiet part of your home', 'Give regular praise and encouragement', 'Don't be anxious or worried or angry') and offers no suggestions as to the *content* of the session, or the recommended pedagogy. For parents who are anxious about their child's acquisition of this key skill, no light is shed on the process.

A rationale for the absence of instructional advice can be implied from the school's policy statement that

The approach used to teach reading at All Saints' is very much an

individual, child-centred one... Therefore no one approach will suit all children [SD2]

The ideal course, therefore, would be for Mrs Goode to speak to families individually about their child's needs and learning style. Since this is impractical, she writes to them in a friendly and individualised way via the home-school reading record, a photocopied sheet which travels to and from school in the bookbag. Her messages skilfully combine encouragement and specific advice:

3.12.97 *Time for Dinner*

Rufia is making good progress with her book skills. Please help Rufia to point to all 'the' words in the book, so she begins to focus on words.

15.12.97 *Huggles Breakfast*

I am trying to encourage Kelly to slow down and begin to follow individual words with her finger.

Little Rabbit FooFoo

A story to read to Kelly: she is very good at joining in with the repetition.

The subtle differentiation of this child-centred and child-friendly approach, however, has an additional dimension. Not only is it personalised with respect to children, but with respect to parents. Thus Troy's mother, predictably, is offered particularly detailed information and guidance:

4.11.97 *The Storm*

Troy quickly recognised the pattern of text, and after we had shared the story together he was able to follow each word as we read. This book introduces new vocabulary: 'look', 'at'. Troy is also becoming confident at using the pictures to help him with unfamiliar words - this is important and should be encouraged.

In Troy's case, this aspect of 'demand learning' is largely at the behest of Charlotte, whose own written comments are so long that she soon supplies an exercise book to accommodate the dialogue. The only other sample parent to write on the home-school record was Alison [Cameron]. The majority of parents, therefore, gave no sign that they were reading or responding to Mrs Goode's thoughtful comments, though most assured me they 'did try to find the time' to read their children's books at home.

Parental 'demand' (which reflects their social and cultural competence in the school context) also regulates their child's access to book-sharing / reading in the classroom, since a child whose bookbag is not returned regularly receives a smaller share of Mrs Goode's and Becky's time. Class reading records for the year [Appendix D6] show that the mean number of individual sessions for the sample children was 16. Troy's

total however was 25, while Mohammed's was 6: in addition to having very poor attendance, Mohammed lost his bookbag early on, and so dropped to the lowest level of provision, except for Mrs Khan's input.

Worksheets

The use of worksheets in All Saints' Reception illustrates well the tension expressed in the classroom's regulative and instructional discourses. An experienced practitioner such as Mrs Goode acknowledges that 'a worksheet cannot be something that actually teaches them'; nor does she rely on them to keep children occupied, since she is convinced that there are abundant opportunities in the classroom's play provision for this. Most worksheets therefore exist simply to record a child's performance on a particular day, providing low-level evidence of quite low-level skills such as tracing, counting or colouring.

Systematic observations of the children's involvement in classroom activities suggest also a particularly low level of interest and commitment while children are occupied with worksheets, either independently or in an adult-led group. Most children treat the completion of such sheets as a self-standing task unconnected to any learning activity with which it may be associated in a teacher's mind. Rather, the sequence of actions which constitutes the task 'doing a worksheet' appears to be one of the more mysterious aspects of learning to be a pupil. It typically includes:

sitting down, taking a sheet; going to your drawer to fetch a name card;
copying your name; returning the card to its drawer; observing other
children's efforts at drawing, writing, colouring; choosing colouring pencils;
discussing, comparing and swapping pencils, rubbers, crayons; doing a little
mark-making; checking other children's progress; checking for any visible
adult response; doing lots more colouring (often until the whole sheet is
obliterated); handing the sheet to an adult or depositing it in a tray.

Few observations describe children showing signs of involvement or interest in the task except as a piece of colouring. But not all children enjoy colouring (though only Kelly responds to the question, 'Is there anything at school you *don't* like' with 'I don't like worksheets').

Overall, the regular use of worksheets suggests a partial, reluctant surrender to the modality of the performance model, with its emphasis on product, economy and accountability. The activity is at once strongly framed as a regulative discourse (children are required to sit at a table and complete the task when summoned) and weakly framed as an instructional discourse (children could not communicate the knowledge or skills with which they are nominally involved). One could conclude that such activities represent the worst of both worlds, incurring the disadvantages of the performance model without realising any of its possible advantages.

7.6. Summary

This chapter, which has taken as its subject the case study *classroom*, offers no conclusions about the effects of the school culture of All Saints', and the regulative and instructional discourse of the Reception class, on individual pupils. It has indicated, however, that the apparently weak classification and framing of the school's curriculum and pedagogy (and, implicitly, its child-centred and family-friendly practices) conceal a strongly-framed set of rules which are not equally easy for all children, or all parents, to access. In particular, they emphasise children's learning, rather than teachers' duty to instruct. They also conceal, as the next chapter further illustrates, practices which differentiate and stratify children from their early weeks in school, in ways which may have lasting effects on their learning. As Bernstein argues, the effect of power is to specialise knowledge to different groups; that process is seen to occur before the sample children reach the age of five.

What Bernstein has not described are the detailed mechanisms and mediating practices within the liberal-progressive classroom which 'sort' individual children, within and across their ethnic, gender and social class groups, according to the social and cultural capital they bring to school, and the habitus which enables them to display and invest it. The next chapter, which returns to follow the experiences of the children as they become 'pupils', tries to offer such a description.

Chapter 8

Becoming a pupil: the experiences of children and parents

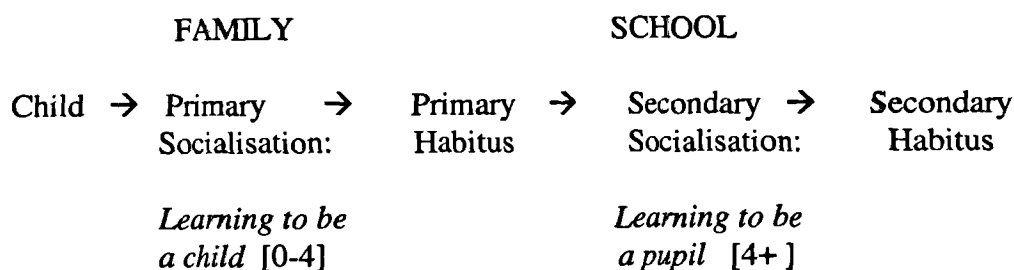
8.1. Introduction: the school and secondary socialisation

This chapter focuses once again on the case study children, individually and in the many subgroupings they form in the classroom. After describing (chapter 6) the pedagogy and curriculum of the children's homes and communities, and (chapter 7) that of the Reception classroom, the study now describes what happens when the primary habitus, and funds of capital, acquired in the preschool years are transposed into the 'official' field of education. Like the children's parents, the Reception staff were seen to have their own ideological constructs (of children and pupils, teaching and learning, work and play). The interaction of each child's primary habitus, and 'home knowledge' with these constructs, and with 'school knowledge' produces over time a transformed secondary habitus. This process, described here as 'becoming a pupil', is achieved with varying degrees of ease and success by the sixteen sample children.

Children's preschool learning was discussed as a composite of socialisation (usually implicitly and 'invisibly' learned) and curriculum knowledge (in some homes, explicitly and 'visibly' taught). In the Reception classroom the child again encounters these two forms of knowledge, and experiences these two modes of learning. 'Becoming a pupil' involves mastery of both aspects: socialisation into the behaviour of the larger group, and acquisition of school-approved curriculum knowledge. But whereas the children's *primary* socialisation, and the development of their primary habitus, has occurred through a lengthy and gradual apprenticeship into family behaviours, beliefs and attitudes, their *secondary* socialisation into membership of the class group is necessarily accomplished quite rapidly, often through direct instruction. On the other hand, whereas some children's early cognitive learning may have been accomplished through *explicit* teaching, in the Reception classroom this may be the type of learning which is *implicitly* acquired. Part of the child's secondary socialisation, therefore, consists in learning which *ways of learning* are used (and

approved) in school. Some children's 'systems of dispositions' (Bourdieu, 1990a: 53) have to be radically revised and reconstructed in the process.

The development of the primary and secondary habitus, as described by Bourdieu, can be viewed diagrammatically:



The same process is envisaged by Bernstein as a process of adaptation involving the child's acquisition of the *recognition and realisation rules* of the school's pedagogic discourse, which may differ substantially from the discourse into which s/he was first socialised (Bernstein, 1996:32). These rules (compared by Bernstein to learning to *understand*, and then learning to *speak*, a new foreign language) enable the child first to detect, passively, what is going on in the classroom, and then actively to produce the appropriate behaviour. It will be suggested that the acquisition of these rules is an essential part of the social and cultural capital of a pupil.

This chapter examines phases in the process of becoming a pupil: the critical period of the child's first ten days of school; the 'settling-in' period in which early assessments are made, and teacher typifications formed; and the social and learning behaviours children exhibit as the school year progresses. The children's own awareness of themselves as pupils, and their parents' performance as 'All Saints' parents' are considered separately. Individual case studies describe the adaptation of four pupils.

8.2. Transition: children's adaptation to their new setting.

Children's experience of the first days at school was visibly influenced by factors in their home environment and preschool experience. All had been invited to two 'play sessions' the previous June (though some had only attended one), and consequently had some idea of the scene that would greet them on arrival in September. But some

children were additionally advantaged by the existing links between the school and their family. This continuity was partly due to the presence of older siblings in the school. All except Amadur and Mohammed, Jelika and Troy, had accompanied brothers and sisters to school in previous years. But of these four, the 3 Bengali children were entering a strange setting in which they were totally disconnected and unsupported, while Troy was entering one which was both familiar and receptive: not only had his home and preschool contained many of the same toys and activities, but his parents had used the 'play sessions' to engage the staff in long conversations, ask a lot of searching questions, and require them to read Troy's nursery records so that they knew his capabilities.

The other children fell into two distinct groups: those who were slightly known to the staff, and those who were well known. The latter group consisted of Cameron, Joshua, Katy and Kelly, all of whose mothers were on easy terms with the Reception staff, and had brought them to 'visit' on numerous occasions. Mrs Goode and Becky displayed a good knowledge of these families' lives, and could show a friendly interest in the children by their inquiries after their brothers and sisters. The less-favoured group included Jemma (whose mother, Becky told me, 'never came up to school'), Joni and Robbie (whose mother was shy and nervous, and whose older brothers were 'in a lot of trouble') and the remaining Bengali children, who were vaguely familiar, rather than known as individuals, to the staff.

The children therefore had differing social as well as cultural capital available to them in their first sessions at school, and adopted different strategies for coping with the experience. Troy's entry was managed efficiently by his parents, and especially by Charlotte, who brought him in early every morning and interrogated or instructed Mrs Goode and Becky: 'you're not to do dots for him to write his name, he has to do it without', 'he says they counted up to 10, well he can already count to 20, we don't want him being held back'. Troy, as Charlotte reported, enjoys the company and conversation of adults, and quickly established a friendly relationship with his teachers on his own account. As the first in the classroom each day, he would chat to them, tell them his news, and then take up a position at a drawing or writing activity, or a computer, with a view of the door, where he combined intermittent but

purposeful activity with observing children and parents as they entered and exchanged greetings.

The four children already familiar with the Reception staff and setting managed different, but not difficult, adaptations to school. Both Cameron and Joshua were very young 4-year-olds, with August birthdays, and were given to silently observing the other children in their early sessions, though they responded readily to friendly overtures from adults. Though both Maisie and Alison hovered a little anxiously and helped them to settle, both boys had handled this separation since they were little, and coped stoically enough. Joshua was particularly chatty with Becky, whom he 'adored', according to Maisie; and Cameron, after a few days of watchful silence, identified other slightly bashful and immature children (including Jemma and her cousin Jimmy) and took refuge in their undemanding company. Katy had overcome an initial shyness by day three, and was mixing cheerfully with anyone and everyone; while Kelly, not noted for her shyness, had thrown herself into her new setting with energy and confidence. The struggles and screams she produced when Gaynor dropped her off turned to cheeky grins as soon as her mother was out of sight, and she confidently sought the company of anyone, adult or child, who looked interesting, including the rowdiest boys. In her first 10 sessions Kelly is observed both making mayhem (and sabotaging other children's activities) and interacting supportively and sensitively.

The children who had a weaker acquaintance with the school acclimatised more slowly. Abu Bokkar and Abdul Rahman, after initial tears and timidity, began to seek out other Bengali children, but neither made any contact with school adults. Rufia was sensibly 'settled' by her father, and formed a close friendship with Khiernssa, based on their joint enthusiasm for home-corner play. Both responded cautiously at first to adult overtures in English, but did gain in confidence. Joni and Robbie clung to each other and their mother for support: Kath had to sit and play alongside them until they allowed her to leave each day, and they spoke only to each other apart from whispered responses to adults. Both Tuhura and Jemma, meanwhile, coped with transition by isolating themselves from the busy world of the classroom. Each was absorbed in her own play and initiated few contacts. Tuhura stayed for long periods

at a single occupation (feeding a doll with a plastic teaspoon from a plastic cup; dreamily stirring an imaginary meal in a plastic saucepan), while Jemma flitted rapidly from sand to water, drawing to writing, pegboards to playpeople, alone but content unless joined by her cousin Jimmy. Neither Jemma nor Tuhura reacted to their mother's departure.

The most difficult adaptation was that of the three 'new' Bengali children. Amadur and Mohammed, who were daily ushered through the door by an anxious-looking mother or father, adopted a strategy of total mutual involvement: they worked alongside each other, mostly with sand and water, in silence or incessant chat, apparently oblivious to the presence of others (when addressed they avoided eye contact). Jelika's transition is discussed below (8.7).

Children's activity preferences as well as their social adaptation were noted in informal observations, and the fourteen main areas of 'choice' identified in this period formed the basis for subsequent systematic observation. If these activities are set alongside the 'Core Skills' of Baseline Assessments, few children are seen to select specifically 'language and literacy' or 'mathematical' activities, although it may be assumed that the whole of the Early Years curriculum should be language-enhancing, and that much of it can foster mathematical ideas. Of the 16, only Troy was seen to browse in the book corner, and only Kelly demonstrated an enthusiasm for mathematical activities and cognitively-testing matching and memory games. Although Amadur and Mohammed listened with enormous excitement to a story-tape, they otherwise spent most of each session either at the sand and water trays or at a computer, unless they were outdoors with balls and bikes. Joni and Robbie divided their time inside between drawing, tracing and colouring, and small-world or construction play such as train-tracks and Duplo. Cameron and Katy were most frequently observed in the home corner, as were (but at different times) Rufia and Khiernssa. Jemma and Tuhura both continued to play alone, solitary or parallel, in the home corner, but were also drawn to art and craft activities: Tuhura visibly enjoyed painting, drawing, printing, collage and clay in the space of a few days. No activity areas were selected by all the children in this phase, but the most popular

were drawing, role play, and sand and water, each of which attracted 10 of the 16. [Appendix E1]

Most children's 'choices' seemed haphazard, contingent on their evolving social relationships, and the impromptu suggestions of staff and parents, rather than on developed preferences or prior experience. A few had pre-existing play partners: Joni and Robbie were inseparable and conferred to choose their activities, and Amadur and Mohammed (who were cousins) gravitated towards each other, and towards the sand tray, as if pulled by an invisible string. Jemma, however, only occasionally spoke to her cousin Jimmy, and appeared to proceed by picking the activity nearest to her; while Tuhura rarely acknowledged her cousin Abdul Rahman, but was 'adopted' by Jelika, who led her from task to task, put her apron on and put a paintbrush in her hand.

Other children relied more on classroom adults. Troy and Joshua, who related well to Mrs Goode and Becky, could normally have recourse to them as conversants and companions, whereas Cameron was much less comfortable in this relation. The sample child who experienced the most noticeable difficulty in getting acquainted, and getting involved, was Abu Bokkar, who wandered the classrooms almost silently, apparently unable to infiltrate other children's activities or their relationships.

The disadvantage experienced by some children was matched by the apparent discomfort of their mothers, some of whom seemed both unclear and uneasy about the rules and expectations operated by the school: the place of parents in the classroom; the 'invitations' to stay for the day; the availability of staff to discuss the children, or simply to chat; the school's awareness of children's friendships; the teaching and learning that was being offered to their children. Nevertheless, a Reception parents' evening held in week 3 to answer questions such as these was attended by more staff than parents, and Charlotte and Bob, together with Troy, Jason and baby Lauren, were the only representatives of the sample group. While many parents, understandably, felt they already had sufficient experience of the school, and of Mrs Goode's methods, those most in need of information may not have understood the invitation, or wanted to respond. Few Bengali mothers would venture

out in the evening while their male relatives were working, and no daytime alternative was offered: these mothers in particular hovered in the doorway for some time each day, waiting to discover if their presence was required, before backing out.

In practice, however, mothers interviewed around this time were not especially anxious to know more about the school. Their immediate priority was their child's happiness, and they openly expressed their relief that the milestone of transition had been safely passed. Majida's view - 'if Rufia is happy then I am happy' - is echoed by most respondents, who cite their child's anticipation of school from the moment they wake up, the way they wave goodbye without looking back, and their accounts of the fun they have had. For the time being, even those mothers with reservations about the school's methods are reluctant to complain: Kath believes that the twins 'may not learn as much' as children did when she went to school, but that 'the school does its best, and they evidently enjoy it'; Minara somewhat wistfully hopes that 'Khiernssa will be good at reading and writing, and not do too much playing'.

Unfortunately, there were already indications that the relative advantage of some children at the time of transition would persist as the term progressed, and would influence the speed, and scale, of their progress in their new setting. Bronfenbrenner's (1979a) discussion of the enabling variables in developmental change, which locates the school setting (the new 'ecological environment' for the developing child) in the mesosystem of settings inhabited by the child since birth, explains both the acceleration and the variation. Bronfenbrenner's analysis emphasises the primary dyad (in most cases, mother and child), subsequent dyadic relationships (such as those possible between child and teacher), and the importance of supportive links between developmental settings. An exemplary instance of his systems theory is the child's move from home to school, and a number of his hypotheses are relevant in this situation.

Bronfenbrenner argues, for instance, that:

The developmental potential of a setting in a mesosystem is enhanced if the person's initial transition into that setting is not made alone. (*Hypothesis 27*) (1979a: 211)

While the optimal case might be one where the child is accompanied for some time in the classroom setting by her or his mother (Cameron, Joshua, Troy, the twins), the recourse of some children in the study to other supportive adults could also help in the process of transition. But the children's subsequent development, Bronfenbrenner suggests, may require another form of support:

Upon entering a new setting, the person's development is enhanced to the extent that valid information, advice and experience relevant to one setting are made available, on a continuing basis, to the other. (*Hypothesis 42*) (1979a: 217).

In other words,

A child's ability to learn to read in the primary grades may depend less on how he [*sic*] is taught than on the existence and nature of ties between the school and the home (1979a:3).

It is in this context that the dual advantage of some children in the study is particularly plain, for the optimum developmental context described by Bronfenbrenner is one in which two-way communication takes place. Just as 'information, advice and experience' about the home setting needs to be made available to the school, so does information about the school need to be present in the home. Where this exchange occurs (meeting Bronfenbrenner's ideal case), the result (cf. Bourdieu, 1987) is an accumulation of capital. The *social* capital enjoyed by children like Katy and Joshua, and actively created by Charlotte for Troy, legitimates and multiplies the *cultural* capital created by the child's preschool learning. There is therefore a predictable continuum from those children whose development is enhanced by the possession of both social and cultural capital, and who experience a connection and continuity between their home and school learning (Troy, Joshua, Katy, Cameron), to those whose school experience is totally disconnected from their home (Amadur, Mohammed, Jelika).

The less predictable areas of this continuum however are occupied by children such as Jemma and Tuhura, and Abu Bokkar, whose families' sterling instructional efforts, and beliefs and attitudes, are not part of any information-exchange between home and school, and are therefore not successfully 'invested' in the field of education. The failure of some children's 'home knowledge' to transpose to school

even where it resembles 'school knowledge', is explained in part by Bernstein's analysis of pedagogic discourse, and his discussion of boundary-maintaining principles.

8.3. Assessments

School assessments of the children as pupils

As soon as the children were settled, the Reception staff began to observe them, and to make a range of assessments of their curriculum knowledge and social skills.

Mrs Goode, who neither required nor expected parents to have made any explicit educational input during their children's early socialisation, regarded children's communicative and social skills as the strongest evidence of good parenting. Her assessment of children's *potential* relied less on their itemised skills than on their *approach* to learning - in Bourdieu's terms, the 'system of dispositions' which characterises the child's primary habitus:

you'd look for communication skills really, and that covers nonverbal, gestures, and verbal communication... you'd look for confidence in different situations; you look for the ability to tackle things; you look for independence... and of course you look for how they relate socially.... [CT]

The Reception setting was designed to allow children to display such qualities through both self-chosen and adult directed activities. Children with a narrow initial range of choices had all expanded their repertoire considerably by half-term, but observation records suggest that some were accessing the curriculum selectively. If adult-directed activities are excluded, some patterns of self-exclusion emerge:

Abu Bokkar, Khiernssa, Rufia and Tuhura are not recorded as attempting any construction activity (but nor is Troy, who had plentiful preschool experience);

Amadur and Mohammed, and Robbie and Joni, were not seen in the home corner;

Abdul Rahman, Khiernssa and Tuhura had not selected jigsaws or any other table-top games requiring visual discrimination or memory;

Abdul Rahman, Jelika, Jemma, Khiernssa and Rufia had not attempted to use the computers.

Just as 'Social development' headed the Reception curriculum, so most of the early observations concerned the children's social adaptation as well as their curriculum knowledge and skills. By half-term, Mrs Goode and Becky had jointly completed the LEA Baseline scales in Personal and Social Development for each child, as well as (at my request) a Social Behaviour Inventory similar to the one issued to parents. The LEA scale covered six areas, each scored from 1 (negative) to 5 (positive): Initiative, Relationships, Co-operation, Involvement, Independence, Behaviour [Appendix E2]. Some of the ratings given to children differed from my own judgments, and are an index of both the child's behaviour, and the adults' view of it. Like all such scores they are subjective, and their ranking in relation to each other indicates the degree to which individual children's behaviour approximated to Mrs Goode's expectations at this point in the term.

The ratings are as follows:

Table 4. LEA Baseline: Children's Personal and Social Development

Name	Initiative	Rel'ships	Co-op'n	Involvement	Independ	Behaviour
ABokkar	2	2	2	1	4	2
ARahman	3	4	4	3	4	4
Amadur	1	2	3	3	3	4
Cameron	1	5	4	3	4	5
Jelika	1	2	1	2	3	2
Jemma	3	4	3	3	4	3
Joni	1	4	2	5	4	3
Joshua	5	4	3	5	5	4
Katy	1	3	3	3	2	3
Kelly	4	3	4	3	4	3
Khiernssa	3	3	3	4	3	3
Moh'd	1	3	2	2	3	2
Robbie	2	3	2	5	4	3
Rufia	2	3	2	1	2	3
Tuhura	2	2	2	3	3	3
Troy	4	4	4	4	5	4

When the scores are analysed [Appendix E3] they show a predictable ethnic advantage (favouring Anglo children), and an unpredictable advantage for boys: no

Bengali child scores 5 on any item, and only one girl has a 5 (Joni, for 'involvement'). The expected influence of 'age in the year group' is outweighed in this small sample by the individual home advantages which give the highest ratings to two of the oldest (Troy, Abdul Rahman) *and* the two youngest boys in the group (Joshua, Cameron). The most current large-scale findings on variables associated with social development (Melhuish *et al*, 2000) suggests that disadvantage generally lies with boys, ethnic minority children and younger children in a year group.

The extent of the Bengali children's disadvantage *as a group* varies for different items: for 'Relationships', for instance, all except Abdul Rahman are rated at or below the midpoint, while all the Anglo children are at or above this point. For 'Behaviour', their scores range from 2 to 4, while Anglo children rate from 3 to 5 (despite Mrs Goode's supposition that bilingual children, on the whole, adopt approved school behaviours more quickly). As the tables also show, the qualities most prized in Mrs Goode's pedagogy and learning theories - Initiative and Independence - place the Bengali children in a particularly unfavourable position.

The significance of this is that the classroom pedagogy requires children to learn *through* such attributes. This has dual consequences. Individual children's learning in this particular classroom demands the possession of such qualities; and the staff's expectations of the children are influenced by their assessment of these attributes in individuals. Since the Bengali children, however, have been explicitly instructed by their parents to subordinate their own inclinations to the wishes and directions of teachers (to sit still, do as the teacher says, and keep quiet), their low scores are predictable. Children's durable primary habitus is not transformed overnight.

An equally important group disadvantage however is in 'Involvement', illustrated below. In this study, 'Involvement' in activities and in social interactions emerges as a significant indicator and predictor for children's classroom learning (see below, 8.4, 9.2; and cf. Sylva *et al*, 1980; Laevers, 1995). By this measure, the Bengali group seem disadvantaged from the start of their school career, and the *individuals* who are likely to succeed are already starting to emerge. The scores suggest, not only that certain individuals and groups are likely to benefit less from the Reception

curriculum offer, but that Mrs Goode and Becky have already identified their disadvantage.

Table 5. ‘Involvement’: Children’s PSD ratings (from 1, ‘flits’ to 5, ‘concentrates’)

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Abu Bokkar Rufia</i>	<i>Jelika Mohammed</i>	<i>A.Rahman Amadur Tuhura Cameron Jemma Katy Kelly</i>	<i>Khiernssa Troy</i>	<i>Joni Joshua Robbie</i>

Overall, the staff’s reluctance to label children socially at this early stage can be judged from the difficulty they found in completing the Social Behaviour Inventory I had requested. After some discussion, they declined to complete the scales for Abu Bokkar, Amadur, Tuhura, Jelika and Mohammed, on the grounds that they felt unable to interpret the children’s behaviour, or judge how much they understood. This was an honest response. Nevertheless it implied that some children were already seen as hard to ‘know’, as pupils.

School culture: the early years profile

The children’s first half term in school was also the critical period in which their ‘school knowledge’, or cultural capital, was formally and informally, consciously and unconsciously, assessed. As a participant observer, I was involved in the assessment process (on the school’s behalf as well as for the purposes of the study) at the same time as assessing the process itself. Meanwhile the children themselves were developing at a rate too rapid for measurement, making the validity of ‘baseline’ assessment even more dubious than might have been anticipated. If a child (like Abdul Rahman) *appeared* to have no knowledge of colour names in week 2, but a good knowledge by week 4, which was the baseline score to be, given the 7-week period allowed for ‘baselining’, and the good-faith attempt to ‘allow children to show what they are capable of’? Similarly, it would be surprising if some of the children who appeared unable to count to 3, or to classify objects as relatively ‘big’ or ‘little’,

in Week One, had not acquired these skills (or the ability to 'demonstrate' them) by Week Seven.

The major curriculum 'theme' for the first half term, into which all the LEA and school assessments were integrated, was 'Stories'. Each week's planning focused on a traditional story and a text from the *Storychest* scheme (*Jack and the Beanstalk* with *The Hungry Giant*, *The Three Bears* with *Hairy Bear*). Though the school session remained weakly classified and framed from the child's point of view, it was tightly planned and strongly framed as far as the staff were concerned. Children's activities were designed to provide a continually changing choice of experiences, at the same time as allowing them to display the knowledge, skills and attitudes on which they were being assessed.

The school's Early Years Profile [Appendix E5] exemplified Mrs Goode's ideological values, and assessed the knowledge and skills which constituted social and cultural capital in the classroom. Some of its content, though 'taken for granted' as developmentally appropriate within the Early Years tradition, was in practice very differentially distributed among the sample children, and displayed both a class and a cultural bias. While all these items would soon be essential in order for children to make speedy and satisfactory progress through the school curriculum, some children's lack of certain attributes revealed their different early learning (rather than a lack of parental care or teaching in the preschool years). For instance:

book skills; knowledge of traditional stories school methods of 'sharing books', creating stories from illustrations, learning from tape-stories etc were not practised by Bengali parents or by Anglo parents outside the mainstream group; no non-English stories were included;

knowledge of nursery rhymes; ability to hear rhyme most Anglo children (not Jemma) had heard these at playgroup or nursery; most Anglo mothers, aware of their value as 'school knowledge', had provided audio or videotapes of rhymes and songs; only one Bengali child (Abdul Rahman) was taught the family's traditional rhymes by his mother;

name-writing; prioritised by all Anglo families, if not always successfully taught; older siblings made input in some instances (Rufia, Jemma); no input for others

<i>ABC letters</i>	learned through recognition at nursery / playgroup, and through videotapes and books, by many Anglo children; taught by rote recitation, if at all, by Bengali parents (more school-like input from siblings)
<i>colours</i>	a valued skill in the classroom, and recognised as such by Anglo parents, who had all instructed their children with reasonable success; not valued by Bengali families, who saw no rationale for teaching colour names (which children would learn, by apprenticeship, as needed); the maximum number of colours known in Bengali was three (white, black, red), but Tuhura had been taught all English colour-names by her mother, and astonished the staff by shouting 'navy blue! light green!' as she mixed the paints
<i>shapes</i>	all Anglo children except Jemma could name one or more; only Jelika and Rufia of Bengali group could name one; Cameron, Kelly and Tyrone named three
<i>jigsaw skills</i>	closely reflected children's preschool experience: Joshua and Troy had learned to do 35-piece puzzles at home; other children had 'done that one at my playgroup', and could mostly work independently; Bengali children as their records noted 'lacked experience' (Tuhura refused to attempt them and was coerced)
<i>communication skills</i>	children's assessments on detailed speaking and listening scales directly reflected their confidence / social capital as well as their preschool environment and English competence.

Within the Reception classroom too, certain more subtle markers of social and cultural capital could be identified. On the part of the child:

knowledge of age and date of birth: a prized skill among Anglo families, but such a low priority among Bengali families that most mothers were unsure of their own and their husbands' ages and dates

ages and names of siblings and other relatives: Anglo children all had vague or detailed knowledge about other children in the family; Bengali family practices meant that names / nicknames, ages and relationships were often blurred or unimportant.

On the part of the staff:

knowledge about a child's family members; first-name friendships with parents; shared interests (school and non-school) with parents; frequent sharing of information on the Reception child.

Some children in the group had acquired such capital 'naturally' (Katy, Joshua, Cameron) while Troy's parents had very deliberately constructed it from scratch. Other children possessed greater or lesser quantities. What is important about the staff's assessments is that children's social and cultural capital seemed inextricably entwined. Not only were children's 'funds of knowledge' (Moll *et al*, 1992) without value if they failed to match 'school' knowledge, but even 'school-like' knowledge could remain inaccessible if no information exchange took place, and the child lacked the social capital to demonstrate its knowledge within the context of formal entry assessments or informal teacher typifications. Inevitably, the staff's evaluations of children reflected on their families. Where children were unable to respond, for instance, to teacher questions about culturally marked areas such as colours, birthdays and family names, their families could be seen as deficient in their duties of preparation. But since this type of knowledge occurs 'naturally' in mainstream families, it was unlikely that staff could either indicate its importance to parents, or understand why it would *not* be natural in some families and communities.

Official knowledge: the LEA Baseline

The LEA Core Skills baseline [Appendix E6] covered the statutory minimum areas of Speaking and Listening, Reading, Writing and Maths. Because of the size of the class, the assessments were shared between Mrs Goode and Becky, Mrs Khan, the Section 11 teacher and myself. However, all decisions on the form of the assessments (observing children play with animals on a model farm, for instance) were taken by Mrs Goode, with the intention of intruding as little as possible into children's freely chosen play. Care was taken too not to 'mark children down' on entry in order to increase the value-added scores when they were assessed again in Year 2: it was agreed that we must 'give children a chance to show what they are capable of', as Mrs Goode put it.

In spite of this, an LEA statistical analysis of the school's outcomes in relation to other town and county scores shows All Saints' children achieving at quite a low level [Appendix E7]: 34% of the Reception intake were rated zero for Speaking and Listening (compared to 9% county-wide), 12% for Reading (10% overall), 20% for Writing (11% overall). In the school and county, as in other piloted schemes, however (Brighouse, 1996; Strand, 1997, 1999; Tymms, *et al*, 1997) the *majority* of children achieved Stage One in all 4 assessed areas. The table of aggregated scores for Core Subjects (the sum of all descriptors achieved) is as follows:

Table 6. LEA baselines: Core Subjects, and age when assessed

Anglo group	Total Score	Bengali group
Troy [4.11]	26	
	25	
	24	
	23	
	22	
	21	
	20	
Kelly [4.8]	19	
Joshua [4.2]	18	
	17	
	16	
	15	
Robbie [5.1]	14	
Joni [5.1]	13	
	12	
Jemma [4.5]	11	Jelika [4.11] A Rahman [4.11]
Katy [4.4]	10	Khiernssa [4.3]
	9	Rufia [4.3] Tuhura [4.3]
Cameron [4.2]	8	Abu Bokkar [4.4]
	7	
	6	
	5	
	4	Mohammed [4.8]
	3	Amadur [4.10]

[Anglo group mean: 14.9; Bengali group mean: 8.1; Class mean: 12.7]

The disadvantage shown by the Bengali children as a group, which is immediately clear, becomes a more complicated and individual matter when the four Core Skills are separated. Though the overall pattern of relatively low achievement is maintained (at a group and intragroup level), it is not easily explained in terms of knowledge and skills acquired in the home or preschool setting. One obvious factor is the *English*

speaking and listening skills of children, which accounted for the largest differences between children and groups.

Table 7. Baseline Speaking and listening scores (from a possible 11 items)

Troy	10	
	9	
Kelly	8	
	7	
	6	
Joshua, Robbie	5	
Jemma, Katy	4	
Cameron	3	A Rahman, Jelika, Khiernssa
	2	A Bokkar, Tuhura
	1	Amadur, Mohammed

Other skills, while replicating the overall shape of these results, are less dramatic:

Table 8. Baseline Reading scores (from a possible 11 items)

Troy, Joshua	5	
	4	
Joni, Kelly	3	A Rahman, Jelika, Tuhura
Katy, Cameron, Jemma	2	A Bokkar, Khiernssa
Robbie	1	
	0	Amadur, Mohammed, Rufia

Table 9. Baseline Writing scores (from a possible 9 items)

Troy, Joni	4	
Robbie, Joshua, Jemma	3	Khiernssa, Rufia
Kelly, Katy	2	A Bokkar, A Rahman, Jelika, Mohammed
Cameron	1	Amadur

Table 10. Baseline Maths scores (from a possible 10 items)

Troy	7	
Kelly	6	
Joshua	5	
Robbie, Joni	4	
	3	A Rahman, Jelika, Rufia, Tuhura
Katy, Jemma, Cameron	2	A Bokkar, Khiernssa
	1	Amadur, Mohammed

If Amadur's and Mohammed's scores were to be discounted, on the grounds of their particular difficulties in adjusting to school, there is some evidence of the expected effect of age in the year group, in addition to the cultural / linguistic background effect. Although Joshua scores much higher than his age would predict, mainstream, experienced Katy sometimes achieves lower scores than minority, inexperienced

Jelika and Abdul Rahman, while Cameron's results frequently resemble those of the Bengali group. Only Troy, Kelly and Joshua consistently display their preschool preparation.

Non-school assessment

The sample children were assessed in the same period on three subscales of the BAS II Early Childhood Core Assessments (Elliot, 1996), which have less cultural bias in their content than the Core Skills baseline. The BAS offers four non-linguistic subscales recommended for use with bilingual learners, of which one measure of spatial awareness (Block-building), one of logical and conceptual skills (Picture Similarities) and one combining both areas (Pattern Construction) were used.

Table 11. Age-equivalent BAS scores (October 1997) [in months]

Child	age [1.10.97]	Blockbuilding	Picture Similarities	Pattern Construction
Abu B	4.4	3.10 [46]	4.7 [55]	2.10 [34]
Abdul R	4.11	5.10 [70]	4.10 [58]	5.1 [61]
Amadur	4.10	8.0 [96]	6.4 [76]	4.1 [49]
Cameron	4.2	3.4 [40]	4.4 [52]	3.4 [40]
Jelika	4.11	4.1 [49]	3.7 [43]	4.4 [52]
Jemma	4.5	3.4 [40]	4.7 [55]	3.10 [46]
Joni	5.1	5.10 [70]	7.1 [85]	5.4 [64]
Joshua	4.2	4.7 [55]	5.4 [64]	5.10 [70]
Katy	4.4	4.7 [55]	4.4 [52]	4.1 [49]
Kelly	4.8	4.7 [55]	5.10 [70]	5.7 [67]
Khiernssa	4.3	3.4 [40]	5.4 [64]	3.7 [43]
Mohammed	4.8	4.7 [55]	3.10 [46]	3.10 [46]
Robbie	5.1	5.1 [61]	7.1 [85]	4.10 [58]
Rufia	4.3	3.4 [40]	4.4 [52]	3.10 [46]
Tuhura	4.3	4.7 [55]	4.1 [49]	3.7 [43]
Troy	4.11	4.7 [55]	8.0 [96]	4.11 [59]

Outcomes for these scales, though still mixed, offer some very sharp discrepancies from the LEA scores. Amadur (one of the older children), despite the background disadvantages already identified, achieves the highest score for Block-building, while the younger children (Cameron, Rufia, Khiernssa, Jemma) cluster below the median. Though Troy has the highest score on Picture Similarities, Amadur and Khiernssa, Joni and Joshua, Kelly and Robbie all achieve above the median. The highest score for Pattern Construction is Joshua's, but otherwise the older group (including Abdul Rahman and Jelika) score above the median, and the younger group below. Despite

individual anomalies, group medians for all subscales show the Bengali children at a disadvantage, which may be explained by their unfamiliarity with test items and test situations, even of an informal kind [Appendix E8].

The BAS results indicate that the statutory school baselines offer an incomplete picture of individual children's ability and potential, within as well as between groups. The danger then is that teacher typifications of children, based on early assessments of both a formal and informal kind, may restrict the curriculum offer made to children with low scores, and set up systems of 'sustaining' expectations (Siraj-Blatchford, 1998).

Predicting Literacy: phonological awareness scores

Finally in this period, a simple phoneme-segmentation test was administered to the sample children. Recent research on phonological awareness (Bradley and Bryant, 1983; Bryant *et al*, 1989; Byrne and Fielding-Barnsley, 1995; Stuart and Masterson, 1992), in common with the National Literacy Strategy (DfEE, 1997) suggests that children's early phonological skills are the most reliable predictor of their subsequent success in learning to read. While the national and international debate over the relative merits of 'whole-language' and phonic approaches to literacy continues (Coles, 1998), this assessment of the sample children was felt to offer further evidence of their home and preschool learning, and the extent to which this 'paid off' in Reception. As Coles argues,

phonological awareness is a marker of social and literacy experiences that promote a whole array of written language abilities - of which phonological awareness is but one - and availability of these experiences to children is strongly determined by political-economic inequities in class, race and gender (1998:7)

The range of results on the 't-for-tiger' test, which had been used with bilingual children in Tower Hamlets (Stuart, 1995), is shown overleaf.

Children's scores fall into three groups which can be partially explained by their home preparation and maturity (age in year group). Of the four high achievers, Khiernssa's outstanding score (despite her age) may reflect her family's conscientious work on three alphabets. The middle group, able to hear fewer than

eight sounds, represent a mixture of age and experience. The six children who, even after generous teaching examples and group games, were unable to isolate any sounds, are all summer-born except for Amadur and Mohammed. The scores show little relation to those of the LEA Reading baseline.

Table 12. Children's phonological awareness [age in Oct 1997]

	23	Khiernssa [4.3]
Troy [4.11]	18	
Kelly [4.8]	17	Abdul Rahman [4.11]
Joshua [4.2]	8	
Robbie [5.1]	7	
	4	Jelika [4.10]
	3	Tuhura [4.3]
Katy [4.4]	2	
Joni [5.1]	1	
Cameron [4.2] Jemma [4.5]	0	A Bokkar [4.6] Amadur [4.10] Mohammed [4.8] Rufia [4.3]

Interpreting the assessments

Though it is hard to draw conclusions or make predictions from the array of results reported above, it is clear that they reveal a powerful hierarchy of achievement which is in place as the children start school; or more accurately, is created *in the process of* the children becoming pupils. Anomalous outcomes such as Khiernssa's phoneme segmentation, and Amadur's blockbuilding skills, are mere blips in a prevailing classroom profile which by and large favours the 'older', the more socially endowed, the nursery graduates and the Anglo children; and disfavors the younger, the low-status, the non-nursery and the Bengali children.

One observation which should be made is that the *form* of the school assessments (both the Baseline and the Early Years Profile) can actually create, or exaggerate, the differentials between the children. The 'child-friendly' assessment modes adopted by Mrs Goode, such as observing children sorting farm animals into fields, are quite *unfriendly* to those children who have never visited an English farm, played with farm animals or encountered small-world toys of any description. Jemma's decision

to assemble in one field a cat, a farmer, a chicken and some sheep was one of many examples which I was required to adjudicate:

LB: Is that how you want them to go? Great. Why did you choose those ones for that field?

Je: Because they friends [ON, 10/9]

Though Jemma was awarded the descriptor, 'sorts objects using one criterion' on the basis of her conscious and reasonable choice, her maths record card records that (like Amadur and Mohammed) she is 'unable to sort'.

At least three aspects of the wider debate about assessing children's play (Hurst, 1991, 1994) are relevant to this discussion: the cultural and subcultural contexts which define different kinds of playing (James, 1998); the explicitness (here the lack of explicitness) of the tasks designed, and the outcomes desired, by the assessors; and the difference in likely outcomes of ludic and epistemic play (Hutt *et al*, 1989). The fairness of child-friendly measures based in an ideological tradition and pedagogic discourse which are not those of the child's home is dubious, as these results appear to demonstrate.

8.4. Getting involved in learning.

The seven school weeks of November and December, when the children attended full-time, were used for observations, both systematic and naturalistic, of the ways the sample children were experiencing the curriculum, and acquiring school knowledge. Findings from the systematic observations were compared, contrasted and integrated with informal fieldnotes from the same period to produce a picture of individual children's curriculum activities and social interactions as they became full-time pupils. Impressionistic accounts of children's common behaviours complement the time-sampled records and may correct sampling biases and omissions. Most importantly, the narrative text and the naturalistic observations describe, in a way the pre-coded frequencies do not, the level of interest, involvement and commitment shown by children to the activity at which they were observed.

All the observation data were analysed for evidence of:

i) children's own curriculum choices; ii) their use of time and space; iii) their broad curriculum experience (self- and adult-directed); iv) the quantity and quality of their interactions with peers and adults; v) the quality of their involvement in activities.

Account was taken, in interpreting the data, of the evidence of the optimal conditions for children's learning from freely-chosen play activities (Sylva *et al*, 1980, Hutt *et al*, 1989), and of the role of adults and peers in facilitating such learning (Hutt *et al*, 1989; Smith, 1994; Wood and Attfield, 1996; Pascal and Bertram, 1997; Laevers, 1994, 1995). These studies indicate that the children in Mrs Goode's class, aged from 4.3 to 5.2 at the time of these observations, could be expected to learn both through 'solitary' explorations and experiences, and through socially interactive tasks, so long as they were actively involved in and committed to what they were doing. The interpretation, therefore, focused on

- the level of children's involvement in activities
- the relation of involvement to the duration of activities
- the relation of involvement to adult or peer interactions
- the factors influencing levels of social interaction.

[Summaries, and a table of frequencies, are in Appendices E9 & 10]

Overall, only four of the target children show consistently high levels of involvement in their activities: Robbie, Joshua, Kelly and Khiernssa are described throughout the observation narrative as 'absorbed', 'thoughtful', 'eager', 'enthusiastic', 'concentrating', 'animated'. Though these four appear to be always purposeful and committed, their style of commitment varies from the introspective (Robbie) to the extrovert (Kelly). All but one of the remaining children have mixed responses, sometimes 'vague, undecided, uninvolved' and at other times 'excited, eager, vigorous'. Only Abu Bokkar shows consistently low levels of involvement, and is frequently recorded in observations as 'passive', 'uninterested', 'idle', 'desultory', 'wandering'. There are few observations when he seems to be acquiring knowledge or skills from his classroom experiences, and some of the effort and ingenuity he does show seems directed at evading the curriculum.

One possible index of children's engagement with their tasks might be the length of time they are recorded as sustaining them (cf. Sylva *et al*, 1980; Hutt *et al*, 1989). Some children (Abdul Rahman, Cameron, Kelly, Khiernssa, Troy) habitually spend 15+ intervals in one activity, while others (such as Tuhura and Abu Bokkar) rarely achieve more than three or four minutes at an activity unless under adult direction. While there is sometimes a relationship between long duration and high involvement, however, the narrative shows that this is not necessarily true. Joni, for instance, is often coded for a long period at a table-top structured task while actually watching children in other parts of the room, examining her new socks and shoes, or playing at poking her tongue out with Robbie. Troy similarly obtains high scores for 'drawing' or 'computers' when he is watching other children organise themselves and their games (and waiting for an opportunity to join in) at the same time as colouring or idly moving a mouse about a mouse-mat.

Children's strategies for joining an activity or a social group show huge variations, as do the effects of social settings on different individuals. Some children are deeply committed to their chosen activity while coded as 'solitary' or engaged in parallel play: as Rubin (1977) argues, 'with age, solitary play becomes cognitively more mature. I contend that solitary play has been much maligned during the past fifty years' (20). For Abdul Rahman and Tuhura for instance, the company of other children sometimes results in a loss of focus and intensity in their curriculum interactions. For Troy, however, a solitary session can amount to a suspended state, waiting for the action and interest to begin: in common with some others, he appears to require the stimulus of adult or child interactions to maximise his engagement.

An important variable in the observations then is the frequency and type of adult interaction experienced by individual children, and the effect this appears to have on their learning. The variation in frequency shown by the systematic records is largely consistent with the variation noted informally. At one extreme are the frequencies of the Bengali boys: Mohammed, 1; Amadur, 2; Abdul Rahman, 4; Abu Bokkar, 6. At the other are those of three children already identifiable as motivated, and self-motivating, learners: Joshua, 27; Khiernssa, 26; Troy, 22.

Not all interactions carried the same learning potential. The text for Mohammed's single adult encounter in 90 observation intervals reads, 'Mrs G praises him for tidying, sends him to get his coat on'. Several other children experienced only 'management', or non-individualised, verbal exchanges with staff. Children who have acquired the recognition and realisation rules of the pedagogic discourse, however, are able to take the initiative, to enjoy high-quality as well as high-quantity interactions, and to turn these opportunities into learning gains. The narrative of some observations illustrates this process.

Troy, for instance, who has acquired considerable competence and confidence in relating to adults in his home and preschool settings, is able to gain the maximum benefit from the following group discussion (with a part-time assistant, Cathy) in which other children remain silent.

1. asks C why she has been absent; she responds, he loses interest
2. listens to C's explanation (using book) of where milk comes from
3. listening; rocking chair; looking at cover of book
4. responds to questions about book, turns pages carefully, examines pictures
5. answers questions about milk and bones; turns pages again; shuts book
6. turns all pages from front to back *again*
7. stands, talks eagerly and vigorously to C (other 3 children passive)
8. puts hand up eagerly to answer question although sitting next to C
9. stands up again while talking, very involved
10. looking, listening, pointing; hand up again; very keen
11. examines library date-flap in front of book, asks about it
12. C instructing them in task: draw then write in book
13. sits and looks at clean page expectantly; starts to draw
14. talks to C about his drawing
15. waves arms, talks, pencil in hand, reaches for book to refer to picture

Khiernssa, from a family where the children are fully involved in family activities (housekeeping, gardening and instructional sessions), and where learning is explicitly discussed with the children, is the only Bengali pupil to 'demand' adult input into her learning. She is observed determinedly enlisting Becky's help with her writing, and also demonstrates her ability to profit from adult interaction during a dialogue with Donna, a visiting 'work-experience student' who actually has learning difficulties herself. Finding Donna unable to answer her questions, or help her with her activity (making leaf-rubbings), Khiernssa works it out for herself and then reverses the roles and inducts Donna into the task:

9. prompts D: asks her to look under paper; gets new leaf and crayon
10. working on her own now, self-motivated; D very passive
11. takes initiative: 'Shall I do another one?'; examines leaves and crayons
12. gets busy, crayonning hard, very absorbed
13. picks up leaves and talks to D about them; helps D to join in activity
14. crayonning again, telling D what she is doing.

Joshua, high in social capital, is able to approach any adult in the classroom and initiate a conversation, enjoying a wide range of relationships and support, and receiving positive individual feedback. In the course of six observations, he engages Becky in conversation at the water-tray; chats to a parent-helper about a computer program; shares a book with Mrs Goode; makes social chat with the Section 11 teacher as she passes; and makes overtures to Mrs Goode over construction toys, and while she is helping Robbie at a computer.

There can be no doubt that these three children's primary habitus, and their social capital within the classroom, creates learning opportunities which Mohammed, for instance, could not hope to match. Mohammed's father is largely absent, and his mother lacks the means to manage her own life, or to make a helpful input into her children's instruction. In consequence Mohammed, like the majority of the Bengali group, makes no demands of school adults. Overall, the Bengali children display lower frequencies of activities and settings which could be termed 'conducive to learning' than the Anglo group, for all its internal variety: they are for instance 'in transit / unoccupied' for a mean of 11.5 intervals, compared with the Anglo group mean of 4.6 intervals.

Although some children appear to learn through high levels of interaction with their peers (Kelly and Rufia), or through solitary investigations (Robbie and Abdul Rahman), those with good access to adults appear multiply advantaged. It is unfortunate that the 'demand teaching' model which underlies the Early Years ethos of the school, combined this year with an inappropriate class size, offers different children such variable levels of adult support, and such discrepant access to knowledge and skills. Those already in possession of social and cultural capital, and the recognition and realisation rules of the discourse, are rewarded with regular and productive interactions with skilled adults. The 'have-nots', for much of the time in

the classroom, make their way unaided through the range of experiences on offer, making what sense of them they can. What they seem to be learning, in the process, is that it doesn't matter if the activity doesn't make sense: all that is required of a pupil is a token encounter with the task (be it water-play or worksheet), and a tick on an adult's list to confirm it.

8.5. Being a pupil: children's perceptions of the pedagogic process

Children's individual interviews (conducted at the end of their first and second terms in school) help to disclose their differential acquisition of the recognition and realisation rules of the classroom. The interview schedule [Appendix A15] was designed to discover to what extent each child had adapted to the pedagogic discourse of the school. The responses were analysed in the context of the pedagogic discourse of children's homes (revealed in parent interviews) and alongside the observation evidence from the classroom.

Children's responses [Appendix E11] indicate that most of them have acquired two strong messages about Mrs Goode's pedagogy: that school exists for children to 'play', and that the two most important things you 'learn' there are playing, and the specialised social rules of the classroom. To this extent, most children have successfully identified both the instructional and the regulative discourses of the classroom, and have become the kind of pupils required by the (overt) discourse. Their adaptation to school, their learning-to-be-a-pupil, and their acquisition of a secondary, school-inflected habitus seem to have been achieved in a few short months by the strong socialising efforts of Mrs Goode and Becky. When this process is unpicked for individual children, however, it is clear that the transformation has been achieved at some cost.

Responses (in December and April) to the first question, *Why do children go to school?* reveal the interaction between home and school beliefs. By December, most children claimed that they went to school *either* (on their own account) in order to play, *or* (on their parents' account) because of an obligation inherent in the social order. The latter form of response can be viewed as a version of the kind of persuasion offered by mothers, and suggests a negative rather than a positive

rationale (if you're not ill, you have to go; if your mum has to go to the post office, you have to go). Interestingly, only Rufia of the Bengali children offered such a rationale (because her parents 'have two babies to look after and need to sleep'). Most of the Bengali mothers had made clear to me that they would prefer to have their 4-year-olds at home with them: as suggested above, they regard their little children as family and community members, rather than as a separate category of family member for whom a separate, age-related, time and place are appropriate. Most Anglo mothers on the other hand had communicated to their children that they had tasks of their own to get on with, and that it was appropriate for their children to be out of the way once they reached school age. Although these children enjoyed school for itself, they knew that the social order required them to be segregated from their families. (Two children, Robbie and Abdul Rahman, cited domestic violence or threats of violence as a reason for going to school).

In December, it was interesting to note that only Abu Bokkar, Amadur and Mohammed (the three children *least* involved in the learning curriculum of the classroom) named curriculum skills (reading and writing) as reasons for going to school. These three, at this point in the year, retained traces of their parents' beliefs about the reasons children go to school (to study and learn). By April all three offered 'play' as their rationale: they had eventually unlearned their parents' lessons, and acquired the beliefs of the Reception classroom. Unfortunately however it is only the overt Reception message that has been acquired, rather than its hidden agenda: the obligation to play, rather than an expectation of learning through play. While the children whose mothers are aware of this underlying subtext (such as Joshua, Katy, Troy) may receive some reinforcement and scaffolding for their play accomplishments at home, those whose parents are ignorant or suspicious of the subtext appear to have no inkling that they are 'learning' from their play in school. In April, consequently, Joshua knows that you go to school to 'learn things', and Joni and Katy that you 'work', while most children still offer 'play' or the obligations of the social order. Khiernssa alone seems to have independently (with her family's strong support) developed her own understanding, which flies in the face of her daily school experience:

[children go to school] because they want to be busy doing work, because

their teacher is going to say, Good boy, and Good girl; I know that because I know everything because I am a good girl! [Khch]

In case the concept of 'learning' should prompt any revised reflections on the purposes of school, it was introduced when the whole class (37 children present) was surveyed just before Christmas with a one-off question: *Now that you've been at school for a long time, can you think of something that you have learned in Mrs Goode's class?*(Table 13). The six children who named a curriculum skill included Mohammed ("I learned to read, all by myself"); the four children who cited social learning include Katy, Khiernssa and Tuhura. While only five children used the word 'play', 27 in all offered play activities such as singing, toys and jigsaws.

Table 13. Whole-class response to question on 'learning'

Child	Response
ABokkar	Play toys and read books
ARahmn	painting...cooking
Amadur	Playing
Boy	writing a letter to Father Christmas
Boy	play in the sand
Boy	sewing and working and hammering
Boy	to make Christmas cards
Boy	to do puzzles...only quite easy ones
Cameron	riding a bike... sewing
Girl	singing Twinkle Twinkle Chocolate bar
Boy	to do jigsaws, hard ones
Boy	toys, them over there [Sticklebricks]
Boy	I've learned writing my name
Boy	letters for animals, like t for tiger
Girl	to do the teddy bear game on the computer
Boy	don't hang your coats up by Mrs Goode's door
Boy	to do my name and do jigsaws
Jemma	to do jigsaws
Joni	play with toys, ride the bikes
Joshua	sing Twinkle twinkle Chocolate bar; I couldn't hammer and I couldn't get the screwdriver in
Boy	I do writing with Mrs Goode; I do jigsaws

Katy	some people don't be quiet and you've got to be quiet in the book corner
Kelly	painting and cutting my painting out; working, like hammering and glueing
Khiernsa	To answer my name in the register
Boy	lots of toys
Moh'd	The names of the people; I learned to read all by myself
Boy	To build things in Santa's workshop
Boy	some toys
Boy	doing jigsaws
Robbie	don't know
Rufia	about Father Christmas and about Santa
Girl	I learned to sing Christmas songs
Tuhura	home dinner [ie. answer the dinner register]
Boy	Do jigsaws
Boy	I do jigsaws
Troy	To do different things on the computer
Boy	playing in the sand

In interviews the following April, nine of the sample children offered 'play' as the most important thing you do at school', while seven included 'work' (Khiernssa and Abdul Rahman), 'worksheet' (Joshua), 'read' (Jemma and Kelly), 'write' (Mohammed) or 'count' (Tuhura) in their response. Asked what they were 'really good at', however, many still cited aspects of the social order: 'the register, answering the register' (Cameron); 'washing my hands at dinner time' (Tuhura); 'not playing with the doors because it's dangerous' (Troy); 'sitting down properly while I'm eating my lunch' (Kelly); 'wearing your coat' (Rufia); 'tidying up' (Joni).

Children's own voices, though they can illuminate the relationship between the pedagogic discourse of their home and that of the school, and the form of the child's adaptation to the latter, do *not*, as we have seen, indicate the level of their actual learning. By Easter, Troy was continuing to race ahead of the class in most curriculum areas: without consciously identifying Mrs Goode's implicit agenda, he was profiting from the almost seamless continuity between his home and school activities. Khiernssa, despite being a 'good girl' and 'busy doing work' was failing to establish herself academically in the classroom; while Mohammed, who thought he had 'learned to read, all by myself', is revealed in fieldnotes and diaries to have

almost dropped out of the classroom curriculum altogether. Most of the children had acquired a more or less accurate version of the recognition rules of the pedagogy: they had identified Mrs Goode's overt, if not her covert, agenda. But not all had acquired the realisation rules which might enable them to enact that agenda successfully, and thereby learn from their play. It was not clear that any child had consciously or unconsciously reconciled the aims of their parents in sending them to school, and their teachers in planning the curriculum and the classroom environment. Troy perhaps came closest to summarising Mrs Goode's formula: asked to explain *why* children have, in his words, 'got to go to school', he replied, 'they've got to do busy things and choosing and eating all your dinner up'.

8.6. Becoming a parent

Parents, like children, have to be socialised over time into the pedagogy of their child's school and classroom; if they are not they may never be, in the school's eyes, good parents. More importantly, they may be unable to give appropriate support to their children's school learning. Becoming a parent, like becoming a pupil, involved acquiring the recognition and realisation rules of the instructional and the regulative discourse of the classroom. This task (not always easy for me, with a biography and training similar to Mrs Goode's) was achievable for some parents but impossible for others. Like their children, the parents were rarely offered any explicit instruction in the assumptions underlying the pedagogic discourse. Those who acquired them most successfully shared three or four advantages: some personal experience of liberal-progressive schooling; a good face-to-face relationship with the school staff; the confidence to feel at ease on the school premises; and for the favoured minority (Katy's and Joshua's mothers) some training in play provision.

Underlying the different instructional practices of the school, and individual families, were the broader cultural and familial ethnotheories discussed above: constructs about childhood (and play), about intelligence (and learning) and about goals for children's eventual role in their family, community and society. As Rogoff argues,

Each community's valued skills constitute the local goals of development. Societal practices that support children's development are tied to the values and skills considered important. (1990: 12)

The extreme poles of these multiple perspectives could be represented in various ways: ideals of individualism or collectivism; theories of intelligence as active or passive; an understanding of education as construction or instruction; approval of 'play' or 'work'; rigid or fluid conceptions of the use of time and space, and of intergenerational relations. Each family stands in a slightly different relation to each of these binaries, but some cluster more closely to the collectivity of 'school' theories than others. To be a successful All Saints' parent is to share enough of the school's views to supply a school-like curriculum and pedagogy in the home, *and* to participate on school premises, thus creating continuity of a material as well as an intellectual kind for your child. The less successful are those whose ideas of childhood, intelligence, learning, individualism and so on display no overlap with the school view of such topics; and who are unable for a range of reasons to cohabit the physical space of the classroom. It is clear which are the 'successful' families in this scenario.

As Bernstein argues, it is a paradoxical aspect of the invisible pedagogy that a school ethos which seeks to reduce the barriers between home and school can be instrumental in maintaining them. At All Saints', the external classification, which is *intended* to be weak (in Bernstein's formula, -C[e]) is only weak for parents already destined to be 'successful'. For the others, in consequence, its strength is actually increased by the visible differential between themselves and others: parents' differential access to the home-school reading scheme, and to school outings (7.5, above) exemplify this process.

The school's 'Open Door' policy is another unintended means of stratifying, and excluding, parents. In Mrs Mason's words, it implies 'we're a very open school', where teachers are available to talk at the beginning and end of the day, 'so that parents can see the teacher, every single time they come, and that parents can approach the teacher'. The onus is on parents, in other words, to initiate the contact with teachers, and to form relationships with staff. In Reception, the invitation is eagerly seized by certain parents (including Troy's, Joshua's and Katy's), who are regularly observed singly or in groups engaging Mrs Goode's attention in the 20 or 30 minute period before the register session. The friendly informality of these

'included' parents contrasts sharply some mornings with the stiff embarrassment of some of those who are in consequence *excluded*. Bengali mothers in particular frequently stood with their backs to the wall inside the classroom door during this period, watching their children and waiting to catch someone's eye; if neither Mrs Khan nor I approached them, they would back out of the room, having failed to make contact. Less 'included' Anglo mothers developed individual strategies: Jemma's (and cousin Jimmy's) tended to make swift forays into the room to deposit and collect their children; Kelly's mother took to waiting in the playground with her friends until someone reported that she was there, and Kelly was allowed to depart; and Kath sent the twins' older brother in to fetch them. All these parents, nominally, were free to choose whether or not to include themselves, but in practice the high level of inclusion of some reinforces the exclusion of others. It was noticeable that the mothers who had themselves been unsuccessful as *pupils* tended to avoid contact with the Reception staff. The warm and friendly contacts other parents were able to enjoy further stratified the families.

The Reception pedagogy, in particular its instructional discourse, acts in a similar way to filter parental access and esteem in the classroom. According to Mrs Mason, 'parents are encouraged to come and be in classrooms, to come and help, and join in or hear readers as well, but that's up to individual class teachers, they do that'. In Reception, the invisible pedagogy ensures that very few parents are actually suited for this role: as Bernstein succinctly observes, 'if the mother is to be helpful, she must be resocialised or kept out of the way' (*CCC3*: 128). In the course of the year, only four mothers helped in the classroom. All four held high social capital within the school, and participated in other roles, both as 'Friends' of All Saints', and as part-time employees (meals supervisors, cleaners, literacy assistants). Only one of these (the school cleaner) was included in my systematic observations of adult-child interactions, but she was seen to have modelled herself on Mrs Goode's example, giving continuous positive and personalised feedback to children. For a large number of other parents (certainly the Bengali mothers, and Kath [Robbie and Joni], June [Jemma], Gaynor [Kelly]) this implicit socialisation into the regulative and instructional modes of the classroom would be out of the question. Even Mrs Khan

(whose systematic observation records show only 29% warm, positive responses, and 71% neutral) had failed to meet the requirements.

The consequences of parents' differential access to the classroom and teachers permeate their children's daily school experience. A telling example of the variation in staff knowledge of children's families concerns mothers' pregnancies. For *included* parents (Maxine [Katy], Alison [Cameron] among others), these are a source of regular interest, which is communicated to the class ("not long till Katy gets a new brother or sister!", "Cameron's brought in a photo of his new baby in his mum's tummy! [a scan]"). The child's esteem is boosted as the whole class is invited to take an interest in her/his family. For *excluded* parents (Tuhura's, Amadur's and Abdul Rahman's) staff are quite unaware that mothers are pregnant or have given birth. Though they react with enthusiasm if told that a pupil has a new sibling, no further interest is taken, whereas the children of included parents, and their friends, are given the materials to make cards for the new baby. Both Mrs Goode and Becky were clearly unconscious of the distinction they were making.

8.7. Case studies: becoming a pupil

Amadur

Amadur was born in Bangladesh, and his early experiences there and in his new home contained few of the conditions which facilitate transition to school. At 4+ he had no English, no older siblings, no supportive family or community network, and little experience of play, instruction, regulative routines or literacy. His parents however had told him he must 'be good at school, sit down and study, don't do anything naughty', and his father had impressed upon him that he must obey his teacher. The family were therefore surprised to discover that Amadur was expected to play at school, but speculated that 'maybe they are playing now but after they have settled down they will learn, when the time comes' (*Am1*).

Despite his poor entry assessments (a total score of 3 for Core Skills), Amadur demonstrated high levels of motivation in all classroom activities and curriculum areas. His BAS assessments, which included an age-equivalent score of 8.0 for Blockbuilding, suggested a potential which was confirmed by observation records.

Amadur is described as constantly listening, observing, copying and experimenting. He takes his cue from other children and from adults, and takes the initiative in joining activities to which he has not been 'invited'. In November he inserts himself into the book-sharing discourse by observing Mrs Goode at work, and then sitting next to her, picking up books and gesturing to her to indicate that he was ready to have a go [ON]. (He was rewarded with a bookbag but subsequently lost it). He frequently joined in writing groups without invitation, and showed great application in using such sessions to the full, despite the limited input the school could make available to him:

14.1.99 joins group writing about Blue Balloon, listens and participates after a few minutes: writes several letter-strings, draws pictures, points and names 'balloon', 'moon', 'banana'; wants to copy under my writing, in fact is passionately keen to write, starts with his name and carries on indefinitely. At clearing-up time tried to take my clipboard and pen from me so I got him another one and he started writing again. [ON]

Episodes like this are recorded throughout the year: Amadur works out how to mix colours, how to use magnets, how to identify male and female lions, how to use a stapler, how to solve a number game on the computer. In most instances he initiates the activity himself, and having succeeded comes to demonstrate his new skill, usually to me or to Mohammed. Unlike most children, he even tries to make sense of worksheets:

3.3.98 joins Claire G who is working with Afeera, opts to do worksheet, listens to instructions and works very carefully, counting aloud and colouring; studies Claire's face for approval/disapproval, makes a perfect job of it [ON]

In spite of all this evidence of his motivation and curiosity, Amadur gradually receives less and less direct instruction and by the end of the year is visibly disaffected. The regulative discourse allows him to wander and 'choose' for large parts of the day, and the differentiation within the instructional discourse has somehow placed him among those who are not yet ready to be 'stretched'. One particularly bad day in June records:

15.6.98 left to choose after register: he and Mo wander aimlessly for 20 minutes, try Duplo and traintrack, then roll and bundle on floor; after play they are 'chosen' for the water by Claire; after lunch they are 'chosen' for the water by Becky. Sits silent and unfocussed during Becky's nursery rhyme session: Becky admits she finds him unco-operative....[ON]

Amadur, despite innumerable strategies of his own, lacks the rules to make them effective in the classroom.

Joshua.

Apart from his age (4.1 on entry), Joshua starts school with all the advantages Amadur lacks. The third child of a playgroup leader with high social capital locally, he has been prepared for school in ways wholly consistent with school practices. Maisie supports the child-centred pedagogy of Reception, saying 'it's easy to say it's just like nursery, but then they're learning there too' [*Jos1*]. There are minimal boundaries between Joshua's family and his teachers, and between his preschool and school experience.

Joshua is a confident conversationalist and already has an affectionate relationship with Mrs Goode and Becky, so he has easy access to the school's regulative and instructional practices. From his earliest days in the classroom, it is clear that he has a practical mastery of all the main curriculum activities: he excels at puzzles and pattern-making, construction toys and computer programs, and all kinds of imaginative play; he loves writing, reading and drawing, and is familiar with sorting, matching and counting tasks. Joshua therefore makes a smooth transition from the curriculum *and* pedagogy of his home and playgroup to those of the school.

Joshua's apparent immaturity in social behaviour (relative to his more street-wise male peers) masks a more adult-oriented maturity. He characteristically stands apart to observe other children's work and play, but then approaches an adult when he is ready to join in, and negotiates his turn. He is relaxed and chatty with adults but walks away from the arguments and disputes that arise between children. Despite his age, he receives high ratings (5,4,3,5,5,4) on the PSD baseline.

Joshua's core skills baseline of 18 is high (class mean 12.7), and his BAS scores are above both the class mean and the relevant age-related scores. Systematic observations describe him as consistently highly involved and committed to tasks, high in adult interactions (27, mean 11.8) but low in child interactions (28, mean 42.2). He is readily identified as a potential high-achiever, and is allocated to 'top'

maths and writing groups, and to the summer-term literacy group. He enjoys 21 reading sessions with Mrs Goode and Becky, and Maisie gets detailed feedback on his home-school reading record.

One observation note gives an indication of his 'special relationship':

8.5.99 sits at Claire's feet throughout register, acting as her little pet and helper, either holding out the right colour pens for her, or hiding them to tease her; maintains an affectionate 1:1 relationship with her, within the group of 40: she responds, accepting the intimacy.

These strategies are only productive because Joshua has acquired the rules of appropriate classroom behaviour. His interview responses show the degree to which he has acquired the *underlying* messages of the weak-framed regulative and instructional discourse of the classroom: by his second interview, he knows that children go to school 'because they need to learn things', and names the most important thing he has to do as 'stay with the lines on the work sheet'.

Katy

Katy, like Joshua, benefits from playgroup experience, an older sibling, and a mother with playgroup training and high social capital in school. Her mother Maxine is confident, practical and well-versed in school instructional methods. But Katy does not have a very smooth transition to school: a series of family upsets, and her own illness, make her moody and unco-operative in her early weeks. In the absence of strong family-school links she could easily have been labelled difficult and anti-social, but fortunately, through daily home-school exchanges, the reasons for her moods are understood, and Katy is supported in becoming, gradually, a well-adapted member of the class.

Katy's PSD ratings are low (1,3,3,3,2,3: lower than Amadur's) and her core skills rate only 10 (below the class mean of 12.2). But her BAS scores are at or above the mean although she is young for the year-group, and her home and playgroup experience enable her to engage confidently with all the classroom activities and curriculum areas. Systematic observations show her to be (with Kelly) the busiest of the sample children, with only three intervals from 90 coded as 'Other' or 'In

Transit'. Though her involvement is 'mixed', her combined adult and child interactions (11+58) are high.

Katy's interview responses show her acquisition of the discourse of the classroom. In December she explains that children go to school 'just because they do', but that she has learned that 'some people don't be quiet and you've got to be quiet in the book corner'. By April however she has learned that 'school is where you do working and play and do puzzles', and can explain *how* children learn: 'you make letters, cut them out - read library books, like the caterpillar book - read with teachers'. Though she does not crave intimacy with adults as Joshua does, Katy is perfectly at ease with the staff, whom she has known since she was a baby, and is able to discuss 'home' topics with them freely (her brother, her dog, her baby, her earrings, her Spice Girls birthday cake). Her early experience makes her fully independent in the classroom, planning her own projects, assembling the materials to carry them out, and reporting her achievements to adults.

- 20.11.97 *very mature, organised behaviour with Barry: tackled self-directed activities (cutting and sticking) in a thorough and systematic manner and later cleared up in an efficient and business-like way: sorting papers, scrubbing and drying tables, cleaning the scissors etc.*
- 15.12.97 *extremely busy, active, occupied: likes to make contact with adults to tell them what she's doing but gets all her sustenance from interactions with peers, especially Barry; never at a loss for ideas or materials [ON]*

Katy is undoubtedly a successful pupil. Like Joshua she is 'picked', early and frequently, for adult-directed group activities, and uses her home and playgroup experience to access the regulative and instructional discourses of the classroom with ease. At this point in her school career she and Maxine are apparently experiencing no boundaries or exclusions.

Jelika

Jelika, though a short-lived participant in the study, had already become a fascinating subject before leaving All Saints' (when her family were re-housed) in December 1997. More than any other child she was isolated and frightened on starting school, but used the dispositions acquired in her preschool years to develop useful classroom strategies.

Jelika's prospects seemed poor when we first encountered her. She had not been registered for school, and was discovered by chance when Mrs Khan and I took a tour of neighbourhood families in July. Jelika was living with her parents and two young siblings in her grandparents' house, surrounded by transient relatives of all ages. Her mother warned us that Jelika was very frightened of going to school because she had never seen so many children together, and had never met any English people.

In September she failed to appear, and Mrs Khan and I again went in search. The family had made themselves 'homeless' (for re-housing purposes) by moving in with other relatives in an overcrowded two-bedroom terrace, where all five were living and sleeping in a downstairs room. Jelika's mother conscientiously brought her to school, where she made a remarkable adaptation over 10 days, recorded in her observation notes. On her first day she:

stood rigid and unsmiling all afternoon, refusing to touch or play with anything, or to listen to the Bengali story; didn't actually cry; other Bengali children totally ignored her'. ON, 9/97

On days 2 and 3 she is silent but

not actually frightened or distressed; I asked Tuhura, Rufia and Khiemssa if they would talk to her but they all said no.

The speed of Jelika's subsequent transformation was unexpected:

Day 4: began to smile and laugh... sat down on the floor...

Day 5: breakthrough into speech and some English... helped me put out toys in the playground

Day 7: happy laughing session with big ball... jumped off the climbing plank into my arms, unexpectedly... talking to Amadur and Mohammed

By day 10 she was bold enough to misbehave, throwing sand in a teacher's face. Her determination over this period reflected the stoical independence which her mother had demanded of her.

In Baseline assessments, Jelika received the lowest PSD ratings of any child in the class, but was among the highest scorers in the Bengali group on Core Skills. Over the remainder of the term her determination and goal-oriented behaviour was evident in a number of successful strategies:

she enlisted me as an individual tutor, leading me to activities and requesting demonstrations, and assistance, then requiring feedback on her own efforts;
she practised unfamiliar skills over and over to gain mastery;
she looked, listened and carefully imitated the monolingual children;
she began to interpret for Amadur and Mohammed, showing great tact and intuition in eliciting their needs and representing their views;
she adopted Tuhura, and became her mentor, guide and mother-substitute in the classroom.

None of these was a mainstream, 'school-like' strategy, but all seemed consciously and intelligently conceived as means of adapting to the classroom culture and acquiring school knowledge. Although the school had no strategies for reaching out to her or her family, Jelika's own efforts and the social maturity and dispositions she had acquired at home appeared to be overturning much of her initial disadvantage.

Her progress was not monitored when she moved to another part of town, and a new school.

8.8. Summary

The children's interviews offered important information on the ways they were adapting to the pedagogic discourse of the school, and acquiring the recognition and realisation rules which would make them successful pupils (and learners). Most children's conception of the school as a learning environment, and themselves as learners, displayed little overlap with their parents' or teachers' intentions. This need not perhaps, in itself, be a cause for concern (though metacognition is widely regarded as an important aid to learning, as well as one which is 'unevenly distributed' and 'varies according to cultural background', Bruner (1986: 67). The real concern is that a failure to adapt to the discourse of the classroom reduces children's chances of successful involvement in learning activities, and their access to social interactions, particularly with adults. It was clear from children's earliest days in the classroom that those with mainstream preschool experiences could access many of the toys and games, books and tasks on offer far more easily than children from ethnic minority or 'marginal' backgrounds; that the exchange of information between the two settings of home and school was full and friendly for some

children's mothers (Katy, Cameron), awkward for others (Joni and Robbie, Jemma) and all but impossible for Bengali mothers; and that the early social and cognitive assessments of children were biased against children outside the mainstream. Structural aspects of the school organisation prevented these early differentials in children's access from being overcome or eroded *except* in the area of social behaviour, where all children received some training.

When children's social and cultural capital was deployed in the classroom, the preparation some had received at home bore little resemblance to the curriculum or pedagogy of the school. For some children, the 'practical mastery' of their primary habitus, and the 'funds of knowledge' they had acquired in their communities, were of little relevance in the classroom. In these cases, 'learning to be a pupil' meant learning to be someone different altogether.

The many forms of discontinuity and differentiation experienced by some children inevitably impacted on their progress in learning and their end-of-year achievements. Power, in Bernstein's account, specialises knowledge to different groups: children who are slow to display their motivation and skills may find themselves excluded early in their school lives from the specialised discourse available to the 'top group', as Becky innocently described them.

The next chapter examines the different ways in which children's outcomes are evaluated, and attempts to interpret their outcomes in terms of the micro and macro influences on the lives of the children.

PART FOUR: UNDERSTANDING CHILDREN'S OUTCOMES

Chapter 9 Evaluations and explanations of children's learning

9.1. Introduction

Children's outcomes at the end of Reception are not easy to describe. They are constructed from the child's 'actual' (objective) learning, from the attributes which are valued and evaluated in the school and classroom culture, and from the methods of evaluation.

Evaluation is integral to the pedagogic practices of both homes and schools, and evaluative practices vary as much as any other aspect of the pedagogic process. Within the statutory school system, the assessment of pupils (from their baseline skills, end-of-year and end-of-Key-Stage accomplishments, to their post-16 achievements) is a continuing focus of dissent and debate (cf. Gipps, 1990). Parents (Hughes *et al*, 1994) are the more or less bemused spectators of this process. They also, as respondents in this study confirm, practise their own forms of continuous common-sense assessment, individually and as members of class and cultural groups, from their children's early infancy.

For these reasons, this chapter considers, in turn:

- the forms of evaluation practised by parents, by teachers, and by the researcher
- the social and cognitive progress which individual children are seen to make when the school's criteria are employed
- a range of explanations (home and school, individual and structural) for children's observed achievements.

It argues that children's progress is shaped *in general* by the interaction between all these variables, and *in particular* by their possession of the recognition and realisation rules of the pedagogic discourse of the classroom. Children's social capital, and their ability to invest it successfully, is related to their acquisition of the regulative rules, and is visible in certain desired pupil attributes. Cultural capital, and the ability to invest it profitably, is related to their understanding of the rules of the instructional discourse, and is similarly displayed in culturally valued attributes. Children who acquire the rules develop a school-like habitus and are seen to flourish

and make rapid gains, as 'pupils' and as learners, while those who do not, are less successfully involved in the classroom and curriculum.

Children's end of year reports describe their achievements *within the terms of* the pedagogic discourse of the school, and thus pave the way for the next phase of their school career (the encounter with the National Curriculum). In analysing the reports, the study demonstrates the links between children's acquisition of certain valued attributes, and their ability to make good progress within the regulative and instructional rules of the Reception classroom.

The chapter concludes by describing the school progress of four children.

9.2 Evaluations of children's learning.

Parents

Formal interviews and informal contacts with parents throughout the year confirm that all of them, like their children's teachers, are making evaluations of their child's achievements and potential. This does not imply, however, that they are employing similar criteria or methods, or have access to a similar knowledge base, for their evaluations. In Bernstein's view, 'Evaluation condenses in itself the whole story of pedagogic discourse' (1999): the wide variety of pedagogic practices adopted by families and teachers therefore generates an equally wide range of evaluative practices. Whereas Mrs Goode implements a 'liberal-progressive' competence model in her Reception class, the children's families employ criteria from the whole continuum of modalities, from competence to performance. This range contains ethnic group and social class, as well as individual differences.

The criteria on which children are assessed by their parents include some common items. The 'core skills' of literacy and numeracy are universally recognised, and knowledge of letter and number names is assumed to be a prerequisite for success: mothers of fifteen of the 16 children said (unprompted) that the children had learned some letters before starting school, and seven mothers volunteered that they had attempted to teach children to write their name. Eleven mothers spontaneously named numbers: all the parents regard 'counting' - a rapid recitation of the counting

numbers - as a marker for mathematical understanding, whereas Mrs Goode emphasises the children's *understanding* of numbers.

Beyond these 'core skills' there was little consensus among the families. Many Anglo parents took considerable interest in their children's drawing, at home and at school, as well as the other 'creative' products they brought home: Charlotte had 'kept every drawing [Troy's] done since he was a baby'; Maisie reports Joshua doing '20 drawings a day' after school; Kath describes Robbie spending a whole Sunday reproducing a drawing he had seen of a country church.

Bengali parents showed less appreciation of such evidence of 'creativity' (Charlotte reported with disbelief seeing an 'Indian' mother throw her child's pictures in the bin). This group was unanimous in referring to their child's second-language acquisition; as Ulich and Oberhuemer suggest (1997), bilingual parents are more concerned that their children acquire English, than that they 'learn through play'. Mothers with little English themselves took pride in their child's progress:

he's improved a lot, when the doctor was checking him, he gave all the answers in English [AB2]

he speaks English to his mum, she is glad he speaks English even though she doesn't understand, they laugh about it together [Mo2]

Tuhura's mother was particularly impressed with her:

she learned to speak English with a full sentence, clearly... every new word she learns, she comes home and tells me, 'we learned that new word' ... long, long words: 'happy-mother's-day' [Tu2]

In language as in other curriculum areas, Bengali parents are obliged to rely on an approximate knowledge of their child's achievements. When asked (after two terms) if they are satisfied with their child's progress they are unable to comment in detail. Not only are they kept in ignorance of the school's evaluations of their children, but they seem resigned to their excluded status with regard to their child's mainstream learning, and do not attempt to monitor their incremental skills. This could be interpreted as indicating a trustful and respectful view of teachers as professionals, and a faith in the child's ability to succeed, but could equally be seen as an

acceptance of the family's powerlessness in this matter. Rufia's father is explicit about his non-involved stance:

(Your child has been at school for nearly two terms now. Do you feel she has changed much since starting?) I couldn't see any change.

(Are you pleased with the progress she has made?) She learned some English; and I don't know whatever you are teaching her, but anything you are teaching her she learns; we don't notice what she is learning [Ru2]

The possibility of a pedagogy in which children are not regularly 'taught' is not one he can entertain.

Anglo parents, in varying degrees, display some understanding of the school's evaluative criteria, and some confidence in their own evaluative methods (an integral aspect of the ID of the home). All of them allude to aspects of the evaluative discourse of the school; in reading:

(concepts about print)

before he didn't point to words at all, he was trying to say what the story was but he didn't realise it was the words that said it. [Ca2]

(word-matching)

he's doing pretty well with his reading, you can't get him to follow the words though, at the moment [Rob2]

(initial phonemes)

sometimes he guesses, he does look at the pictures a lot... I always have to say, what letter does that begin with? [Ty2]

in writing:

(phonics)

she's mostly doing letters and seeing what words begin with that letter; we have to write them all down and she copies [Jon2]

(letter orientation)

she'll try and copy things down but she gets some letters back to front [Ke2]

(letter formation)

he does his 'y's curly now, where he used to do them straight simply because they were a lot easier [Ty2].

In matters of literacy, most Anglo parents are also better informed than Bengali families as to their child's current skills. All were asked to sort and rank a sample of

drawings and writing by Reception children from another school, and to show me: i) which were 'good for a child this age', ii) which were 'not so good', and iii) which most closely resembled their own child's work. Their responses [Appendix F1] suggest that Anglo parents are more confident both in evaluating the anonymous drawing and writing samples, and in comparing them with their own children's product. For all parents, however, the criterion for 'good' writing appears to be neatness and correct letter formation, rather than originality or 'ideas'. Most mothers (with the possible exception of Maxine and Maisie) evaluate learning *products* rather than processes.

Related to this is all the parents' belief that children learn by *copying*: every parent refers to their child as 'copying under' their mother's writing, 'copying out' reading books, or learning through copying at school. The word is not one used by Mrs Goode to describe how children learn, and suggests an underlying difference in expectations and evaluative criteria. While Mrs Goode looks for originality and creativity, and values divergent, individual 'products', the majority of parents appear to value conformity and 'normality' in their children's work. As a result, they may encourage at home efforts which would be deplored by the school (copying pages of writing or spellings, copying or tracing pictures from comics).

Two aspects of the parents' backgrounds influence this preference: for most Anglo parents, there is a social-class inheritance of beliefs and practices (explored for instance by the Newsons, 1968, 1976) emphasising conformity. Some parents in this group, like Katy's mother, are relinquishing these 'old' class values in bringing up their own children. For Bengali parents, there are much broader cultural assumptions, embodied in the parents' own early learning experiences (Dwivedi, 1996; Bhatti, 1999): these may include valuing conformity and common/community interests over divergence and egocentric/individual interests. Mrs Khan, whose efforts at didactic instruction include teaching the children to 'draw properly', values a product which all the sample parents aspire to for their children, although it prompts disapproval in the classroom. In this respect, the home and school may be working towards goals which are inherently opposed.

School

Whereas most parents in the study evaluate their children's progress using criteria derived from a performance model (Bernstein 1996: 57), the All Saints' Reception classroom clings to the competence model preferred by Early Years educators (Blenkin and Kelly, 1992; Hurst, 1994, Drummond and Nutbrown, 1996). This mode of evaluation is characterised, in Bernstein's terms, by 'what is *present* in the acquirer's product' (1996:59), in that it gives credit for the child's accomplishments rather than indicating those which are lacking; it focuses on processes rather than products; and it employs criteria which are 'multiple, diffuse, and not easily subject to apparent precise measurement' (CCC3: 130), and thereby not transparent to the majority of parents. Such evaluations, which describe 'the *whole* child: in its total doing and "not doing"', give great power to the professional, who alone possesses the theories and the evidence with which to make the assessment.

During the year school assessments took multiple forms: brief notes on book-sharing sessions constituted a reading record; occasional notes on maths concepts updated the maths records; children's worksheets and tracings were filed and collated; individual outcomes for group activities were monitored; and some deliberate observations were made, principally of children with specific social or educational needs. The written records of all these evaluations indicate high levels of expertise on both Mrs Goode's and Becky's parts: they are both supportive and personal, providing information which is specialised to the child, rather than norm- or criterion-referenced. Neither Mrs Goode nor Becky was critical of children's cognitive difficulties, though Becky was less neutral than Mrs Goode in describing their social and behavioural dispositions. Many observations combine social and cognitive aspects, and describe children's *enjoyment* of the activity as well as their acquisition of skills.

The school's evaluations assessed the children on a range of skills far broader than those prioritised by parents, or included in statutory baselines. Mrs Goode adheres to the principles of her nursery training, and her records give as much weight to such items as cutting in a straight line / round a shape; throwing a ball at a target; catching a ball with two hands; balancing along a low beam; exploring properties of sand - as they do to recognising letters, words, or numbers. The end-of-year reports to parents

give a broad picture of the 'whole child' which on occasion masks that child's low level of achievement in the core skills prioritised by parents. Information on maths attainment provides an illustration: by July,

Abu Bokkar has made some progress with his understanding of numbers and is able to count to 5 independently - he does need practical reinforcement activities to consolidate his counting.

Under a performance model, this could have read:

Abu Bokkar is still, after 10 months of school, at Stage 1 on the LEA Maths baseline, as he is unable to count to 10

(despite 'learning to count' at home). Similar descriptors are offered for Cameron, who 'finds some aspects of mathematics difficult to grasp, but has made some progress' and 'can verbally count to 6'; Jemma, who 'is able to make sets of objects to 7'; and Katy who can 'recognise numerals to 4'. It would have been interesting (but unethical, undermining the parents' relationship with the school) to ask these children's mothers how they felt about the 'progress' which culminated in such low outcomes. But on the whole cognitive outcomes receive less emphasis than social attributes: the reports praise children as 'happy and cheerful... rarely seen without a smile on his face' (Abu Bokkar), as having 'a sense of fun', 'a mischievous sense of humour' (Cameron), as 'gentle and friendly' (Jemma) and as sympathetic, confident, co-operative, caring and independent (Katy). None of the children is depicted as failing academically.

Though such positive assessments of children are well-meant, it could be argued that this emphasis misleads parents as to their children's actual, or predictive, school success. In particular, parents such as Tuhura's and Abu Bokkar's, who have high expectations for their children, may be unaware of their child's relatively low performance until it is made 'official' (at end of Key Stage). In this group, only Troy's mother brought the report back to school to contest its findings, on the basis of his 'performance' at home, and the teaching she herself had provided.

Most parents accepted the professional judgment of their children's teachers without question, and expressed themselves pleased with the report (Joshua's mother was tearful with pride). Parents with limited English however could only access the

school's information, spoken or written, through an interpreter, and several ignored or mislaid the reports as soon as they received them. Nevertheless, Abu Bokkar's father, as indicated earlier, had monitored the evaluations of his children sufficiently carefully to be disillusioned with the system. Abdul Ali politely requested that I scan the school reports of his six older children (then aged 8 to 18), to try to explain why all six were regarded as hardworking and successful pupils by the primary teachers, but were assigned to the lowest stream at secondary school. His children were, he said, 'just passing their time' at school, and would never 'be something': in his view, primary teachers' affection and enthusiasm for his children as individuals, while welcome, had not ensured the academic success he had hoped for (cf. Bhatti, 1999)

At the same time, despite Mrs Goode's de-emphasis of core curriculum skills, ongoing assessments made in the classroom had resulted in some children being assigned to more cognitively demanding activities (phonics, written maths) which were postponed for others until they appeared to be ready. The 'specialisation of knowledge to different groups' (Bernstein, 1999), on the basis of early observations, became the means of perpetuating differential rates of learning: a child was less likely to make progress in phonics if s/he was not in the phonics group.

Research evaluations

The evaluative mode of this study is evident throughout my discussions of the children. It attempts to include but also interpret the evaluative practices of both home and school, of both 'official' and 'local' knowledge: both the would-be 'objective' evidence of children's knowledge and skills, and the openly subjective evidence of their social and emotional development. It further identifies the 'dispositions towards learning' which children display in their interaction with the curriculum of both settings.

At the end of the school year, when reports to parents were issued, the children were not formally assessed by the school. For this reason, to provide some data on children's 'gains' over the year, the sample children were re-assessed using the Baseline descriptors and the Social Behaviour Inventory. In the next section these outcomes, in combination with the evidence of children's reports, are used to present

a picture of each child's progress in Reception: of their knowledge and skills (their classroom cultural capital), their social behaviour (their school social capital) and their dispositions towards learning (the habitus, transformed from primary to secondary as the months passed).

In the latter part of the school year, interviews and observations (formal and informal) were again used to assess children's acquisition of the recognition and realisation rules of the discourse – the degree to which they could identify, and reproduce, the social and learning behaviours valued in the classroom.

9.3. Outcomes

Cultural capital: children's cognitive gains

Observation of the children throughout their Reception year indicates that, as suggested above, cultural capital in the field of mainstream education requires not only 'school knowledge' but also the recognition and realisation rules of the instructional discourse – the knowledge of how learning is *done* in this setting. Without this knowledge, the child cannot participate fully in the offered curriculum, or display the attributes which result in further school success. Reports to parents in July gave few detailed indications of children's cognitive gains.

When the Baseline 'core skills' were re-assessed in July, the bilingual children as a group (in common with other baseline follow-ups: Strand, 1999; Tymms *et al*, 1997) had made greater measurable progress over the year, from their lower base-point, than the monolingual group. As suggested in Chapter 8, some Bengali children in particular were under-assessed on entry, as the Baseline did not allow them to demonstrate their skills and understandings. Their rapid gain in measurable scores by July (which has a large 'Speaking and Listening' component) may therefore exaggerate their overall progress.

Table 14. Group means for Sept / July baseline scores, and progress.

Group	September mean	July mean	Mean progress
Anglo children	14.9	26.5	11.6
Bengali children	7.7	22.8	15.1
Whole sample	11.5	24.8	13.3

The sample showed very little variation in outcomes for boys and girls: the two groups had similar means on entry, but girls made slightly more progress:

Table 15. Group means and relative progress, boys and girls.

Group	September mean	July mean	Mean progress
Boys	11.5	24	12.5
Girls	11.6	25.7	14.1
Whole sample	11.5	24.8	13.3

Individual children's gains show the shift within and across groups:

Table 16. Children's individual scores in July, with 'value added'

Troy [+9]	35	
	34	
	33	
	32	
Joshua [+13]	31	
	30	
	29	
Kelly [+9]	28	Khiemssa [+18]
	27	
Joni [+13]	26	Abdul Rahman [+15]
Katy [+16]		Rufia [+17]
	25	
Jemma [+13]	24	
Robbie [+10]		
	23	
	22	Tuhura [+13]
	21	Abu Bokkar [+13]
	20	
Cameron [+11]	19	Mohammed [+15]
	18	Amadur [+15]

[full details in Appendix F2]

The two 'highest scorers' in September (Troy and Kelly) appeared to have made the smallest gains. This is partly due to a ceiling effect, but also reflects the leap in difficulty from Stage 2 to Stage 3 items in the baseline. In Writing, for instance, Stage 2 asks 'Distinguishes between marks and letters', while Stage 3 requires 'Forms letters with correct orientation and shape independently', and 'Writes simple phrases or sentences independently'. For Reading, similarly, most children attained the Stage 2 'concepts about print' descriptors, but very few could (as their parents would say) actually 'read' common words, or supply letter-names and sounds.

Though each individual has developed in a different way, some common trajectories are discernible:

- The three (Anglo) 'high-scorers' maintain their lead, but are joined by Khiernssa, who has made the greatest overall gain
- The four children who share the July median score (26) have all made good progress, and Rufia and Katy have 'caught up' particularly rapidly
- The four children just below the median have made reasonable progress but seem unlikely to catch up with the median group
- The three boys with scores below 20 are making insufficient progress to lift themselves from their low ranking (Amadur and Mohammed's gains were on an extremely low baseline).

By the end of Reception, the scores of the two cultural groups, though still divergent, show a greater overlap and integration than in September, while there is still no clear advantage to be detected in gender or age. Although the Bengali children have made more progress *as a group*, their initial disadvantage in such assessments seems to have evolved into a two-tier condition, in which some children are 'competing' successfully with monolingual children while others are falling further behind. Despite the tendency of scores to close up over the year, in July Troy was still achieving twice as many items as Amadur.

Social development: becoming a successful pupil.

Just as children's cognitive gains must be measured in the terms of the school curriculum (the official cultural capital), so assessments of their social development are inextricably tied to the regulative discourse of the school. Possession of social capital for the 4 year old in Reception means being a successful pupil, a well-adapted member of the class. In other words, it includes possession of the recognition and realisation rules of the regulative discourse – identifying what is required, and acting to meet those requirements, in classroom social behaviour. The school's view of children's social development, which was measured on entry through the PSD

Baseline [Appendix E3] and the Social Behaviour Inventory, [Appendix F3] again emerges strongly in their end-of-year reports.

When evidence from all three sources is combined, three clusters of behavioural attributes emerge which recur in all the evaluations and seem to describe a successful pupil. These three closely resemble the three scales identified by Hogan and colleagues (1992) in a factor analysis of the ASBI, and those produced in the analysis of the EPPE project (Melhuish *et al*, 2000) The three clusters can be described as 'compliant', 'prosocial' and 'independent' behaviour. Together with the final Baseline scale – Involvement – they also describe the 'dispositions towards learning' displayed by children in the course of the year.

Table 17. Children's social attributes identified in school evaluations

<i>Data source</i>	<i>'Compliant'</i>	<i>Prosocial'</i>	<i>'Independent'</i>
<i>Baseline scales</i>	Behaviour	Relationships Co-operation	Initiative Independence
<i>SBI items</i>	Compliance Conformity	Sociability Empathy	Confidence Independence
<i>School reports (examples of terms and phrases)</i>	Eager to please Helpful Responsible Responsive	Relates confidently Co-operative Collaborative Sensitive Caring	Confident Independent

Since the regulative discourse of the classroom was personalised in Mrs Goode, it is above all her view of children's social development which defines their success as pupils. Analysis of her reports [Appendix F4] shows that, as with cognitive progress, the 'high-scorers' on entry continued to perform well by these criteria, while some lower-scorers dramatically gained ground, and the truly disadvantaged minority continued to lag behind in some or all respects. But as Waksler(1991) has shown, and my own classroom observations indicated, some children's 'deviant' or inappropriate behaviour is more easily forgiven than others.

Each child's case shows a different pattern of variation (on the three clustered criteria, on different measures, at different points in time), making comparisons difficult, but some children's status is consistent and unambiguous. In October, Troy,

for instance, achieved high ratings on the Baseline, and the highest on the SBI (*compliance/conformity* 18, *prosocial* 23, *confidence / independence* 13). His end of year report reaffirms these behavioural traits: he is 'co-operative' with adults, 'confident', 'independent and can direct and maintain his own activity'; he can 'negotiate with his peers... co-operate... work collaboratively', and is 'sensitive towards the feelings and moods of others and can be very caring and understanding towards them'. There is no hint of the wariness and watchfulness, or spiteful and sneering behaviour towards other children, which is sometimes recorded in Troy's observation notes. His 'deviance' (Waksler, 1991) is overlooked or unremarked because he is in the main a highly regarded child. Troy's report contains more praise than any other (though it must be remembered that perhaps even more than others it was written with his mother in mind).

Children who are seen to have made large gains from a low Baseline include Abu Bokkar, Rufia and Katy. All three are praised in their reports on all 3 behaviour clusters. Phrases used include:

Abu Bokkar: *always eager to please*
independently directs and maintains his own activity
relates confidently to others ...has close friendships
popular...independent and assertive
[and see 9.6].

Katy: *her confidence has grown... more independence...*
co-operative... understanding of the needs of others
helpful, and responds to responsibility.

Rufia: *co-operative and helpful... friendly and sociable...*
more independent
her confidence and social skills have developed.
[and see 9.6]

All three had also improved their group ranking in cognitive skills. Most conspicuous for their failure to meet classroom requirements are Amadur Mohammed and Tuhura. By the end of Reception, Amadur is viewed as neither compliant nor prosocial; Mohammed as neither compliant nor confident; while Tuhura is not prosocial, and her 'compliance' is viewed negatively. None of these descriptions matched my own observations or interpretations. In contrast, Kelly's lack of

compliance, and Robbie's lack of sociability, seem partly 'forgiven', or mitigated by other aspects of their behaviour. As they leave Reception, the sample children have markedly unequal chances of starting Year 1 as successful pupils.

Dispositions towards learning

Since symbolic capital, in Bourdieu's account, needs to be deployed and invested in an appropriate field in order to achieve returns, the evolving habitus which influences what the children *do* with their assets contributes significantly to their outcomes. Classroom observations, like the end of year reports, suggest that some children are disposed to make effective use of their capital, while others seem unable to deploy it usefully. Both the school (with its hard-to-access pedagogic discourse) and the home (with its capacity to motivate or demotivate children) are implicated in this variation.

The primary habitus acquired in the home is revealed in innumerable small details of the child's home experience (such as Khiernssa's responsibility for paying the milkman, or Tuhura's indulged indolence; Joshua's 'mothering' by his sisters, or the influence on Robbie of his brothers). Despite holding in common certain aspects of class or collective habitus derived from their families (Bourdieu, 1990a), the children at four have distinctly different dispositions. Though these may *include* factors such as the 'mastery' and 'helpless' dispositions identified in earlier studies (Elliot and Dweck, 1987) they extend to cover a much wider range of children's experiences and influences.

Once they are in the classroom, children's changing habitus can be described in terms of the 'system of dispositions towards learning' revealed in their social and curricular interactions. For the purpose of discussing and comparing these characteristics across the group of children, it was necessary to select from the data a small number of attributes positively associated with learning. These are, as suggested above, the three attributes associated with 'being a pupil' [Appendix F4], and the characteristic most commonly associated with 'learning' Involvement [Appendix F5].

These four attributes, as well as fitting the data, have a logical appeal on two grounds: they sit well both with the pedagogy of the classroom, and (which is not

necessarily the same thing) with aspects of Piagetian and Vygotskian theories of learning. In this particular classroom, learning is seen to depend on children's independence (or confidence), their social relationships ('the lynchpin', as Mrs Goode says), their willingness to do as they are 'asked', and their ability to sustain or maintain an activity that they have chosen. In order to learn, the child, to put it simply, must choose activities, sustain them, interact with others, *and* conform to the implicit regulative discourse of the setting. Mrs Goode's theory may be Piagetian rather than Vygotskian – her references to children learning independently imply a solitary constructivist, rather than a sociocultural, experience – but the environment she provides offers the possibility of peer and adult scaffolding (if not for all children). These four attributes therefore seem appropriate indices for comparing children's individual learning dispositions in school. Their logical relationship with 'learning' is suggested by describing how such behaviour *looks*, and what might be its prerequisites.

<i>Compliance</i>	child is settled, adapted and self-regulating; takes responsibility for self and environment; responds to adult regulation
<i>[Prerequisite]</i>	<i>Child feels 'at home' and accepted in classroom, and understands the requirements</i>
<i>Prosociality</i>	Child interacts with peers and adults, cooperates and collaborates, integrates self into activities and relationships, initiates and sustains conversations
<i>[Prerequisite]</i>	<i>Child feels secure in relations with adults and peers</i>
<i>Independence</i>	Child selects and sustains a range of activities without adult direction, manages own learning, is purposeful and committed
<i>[Prerequisite]</i>	<i>Child feels secure and knowledgeable about her/his own abilities and about classroom activities and expectations</i>
<i>Involvement</i>	Child is absorbed and focused on activities for lengthy periods, is committed and curious, is not easily distracted
<i>[Prerequisite]</i>	<i>Child has been motivated to participate and is secure in own abilities or supported by more experienced others</i>

These descriptions indicate three critical factors: the high level of interdependence between the conditions necessary for their attainment; the crucial underlying importance of the child's confidence and self-esteem; and the adult's role in fostering

such feelings. Together they suggest individual children's strengths and weaknesses in developing a habitus conducive to *school*, rather than *home*, learning.

When children who demonstrate such attributes at home appear to lack them in the classroom, it is likely that there are major discontinuities between the home and school environments: in these cases it seems clear that strong support from school staff is called for. As the systematic observation frequencies revealed, however, some children seen by the school as *lacking* some attributes conducive to learning (Amadur, Mohammed, Tuhura, Robbie) enjoyed very little support from adults in the form of verbal or instructional interactions. Children who received high levels of support (Troy, Katy, Joshua) were among those least in need. Some children who exhibited, in different ways, high levels of resilience and self-direction acquired from home (Kelly, Khiemssa, Jelika, Rufia) were able to raise their level of involvement without strong adult support. Others, such as Abu Bokkar and Jemma, became dependent on 'best friends'. But some of the undemanding and unobtrusive children who would have benefited from more support (the twins, Abdul Rahman, and Cameron) seemed easily overlooked.

Over the year, then, all the children were observed to display the characteristics associated with learning, but the frequency of such observations varied dramatically from child to child and from month to month. Some children whose family practices bore no resemblance to classroom expectations were noticeably handicapped in the early months of school: children whose home concepts of time and space were fluid (Abu Bokkar, Amadur, Mohammed) spent many weeks lost and unfocused, unable to detect the implicit instructional discourse within the weak-framed regulative discourse. Some children (Tuhura, Robbie, Amadur), in the course of following up the activities which motivated them, became *less* involved in the instructional activities of the official curriculum as the year proceeded. The continuing influence of the family's pedagogic practices could be detected in each child's behaviour.

Jemma, as we know, came to school with a home experience of financial distress, poor health, social exclusion and multiple family problems. Her mother's and sisters' efforts at pre-school preparation (letters, numbers, colours, stories, writing her name)

bore no fruit in the classroom: in her first term, Jemma is recorded as mute or monosyllabic; vague and unfocused; solitary and flitting. She engaged in only the simplest forms of repetitive play. Jemma's integration into the classroom took several months to achieve: it was only in the summer term, when she acquired a special friend (Afeera), that she became purposeful and involved. In her last months in Reception, Jemma's engagement with activities is prolonged and lively, and her progress in the 'core skills' is dramatic.

Troy, from a background apparently 'advantaged' in terms of the quantity and quality of pre-school learning he received in home and nursery settings, appeared able to demonstrate his curriculum knowledge to the full in the classroom. But this superiority masked another kind of difficulty: Troy's anxiety and insecurity, visible in his watchful isolation for much of his first term, was only slowly overcome. Mrs Goode's skilful nurturing, and high levels of attentiveness towards him, allowed him gradually to relax his guard. In November, observations record him as 'watchful' and 'uninvolved', as well as 'committed' and 'animated'; but in the Spring term he is more often relaxed and unselfconscious, and in the summer, has begun to pursue his own interests (manufacturing complicated artefacts from card and sellotape) with pleasure, *at the same time* as acquiring, with speed and confidence, the literacy skills which he had resisted in his early months at school.

Children's dispositions towards learning can only be understood in the light of what they perceive learning to be: their access to the recognition rules of the instructional discourse, which allows them to develop their own strategies for classroom learning. One important element of the primary habitus is an understanding of what is to be learned at school, and how. Children who have to *unlearn* their home concept in order to acquire the learning behaviours approved in school (Amadur, Tuhura, Mohammed) require support during the period of re-adjustment to their primary habitus, while more favoured children (such as Katy and Joshua) may experience a smooth transformation. There were times when the children who had the largest adjustment to make (to become compliant, prosocial, independent, and involved) appeared to have given up trying to understand what was expected of them, and turned to other ways of passing the time at school.

9.4 Explanations

Explanation must be the purpose of this study: understanding *how* certain factors in children's early experience are transformed by school into such enduring and seemingly disproportionate influences on their long-term progress should provide a first step towards modifying school practices, and preventing such inequalities from becoming entrenched. Large-scale studies, which confirm that factors such as low social class, low levels of parental education, family poverty and bilingualism tend to predict low levels of school achievement, have suggested some of the mediating variables which produce these outcomes. The present study's examination of the details of children's daily experiences tries to give a fuller account of the workings of some of these variables. Though all have been discussed in the preceding accounts, in this section they are summarised for greater clarity.

Home variables

- *Family habitus and capital*

Differences between families in terms of material, emotional, social, educational and cultural resources have equipped the children very differently for the start of school. Families' experience of poverty, (and poor health and poor nutrition), low status and social exclusion (including that associated with racism) shape parental expectations and behaviours, and in consequence the family habitus. Some parents, despite their present low status and powerlessness, maintain a sense of self-efficacy which enables them to maximise their resources and invest them purposefully in their children's future, while others are more defeatist. Supportive networks in the extended family and community, pride in a religious or cultural heritage, trust in the effectiveness of hard work, and a belief in the power of education to transform individual fortunes, all help to create an optimistic and positive family ethos. These qualities however, because of their differing histories, are unevenly distributed among the families.

- *Parental education and expectation.*

The effects of parental (specifically maternal) educational experience seem more complex than large-scale studies have suggested. Many Bengali mothers express positive views of the teaching they received and of their own success as pupils, and

have correspondingly high expectations for their children's school success. None of the Anglo mothers reports a successful school experience, and all are considerably more cautious in anticipating success for their children.

Children's dispositions towards learning bear the imprint of their parents' experiences and expectations, and the Bangladeshi children seem potentially advantaged by their families' strong orientation towards learning. This advantage is outweighed however by the inappropriate information they are given by their parents prior to starting school. Whereas Anglo parents have acquired some mainstream cultural assumptions about 'learning through play', Bengali parents' beliefs about learning, and instructions to their children before school, do not conform to the culture of the school.

- *Parental ethnotheories: childhood, intelligence, learning.*

Beliefs about play are a major aspect of cultural difference in the parents' views of childhood. Among Anglo families, 'play' is at some level supported by the majority of parents. Bengali families expect their children rather to apprentice themselves to adults by observing and participating in family and community activities; they therefore regard children's play as a passing phenomenon which they indulge (for the sake of their child's happiness) but do not encourage.

When Bengali parents consciously prepare their children for school they do not expect the children to be motivated by fun or pleasure, but by an awareness of their duty to work hard and learn (Dwivedi, 1996; Bhatti, 1999). Anglo parents, with less conviction in their recently acquired beliefs about children's learning, attempt to sneak in learning without their children noticing. The groups' preferred pedagogies are informed by their concept of what constitutes an 'intelligent child': the Sylheti families' image is of a child who 'listens', passively, whereas Anglo parents perceive intelligence more actively as 'how they do things', 'the way they talk to you'. The similarity, or dissimilarity, between their home/pre-school and their Reception experience is an issue for all the children.

- *Family language and literacy*

All the mothers described their children as fluent and talkative at home, and the fact that both monolingual and bilingual children were sometimes silent or monosyllabic in the classroom gives no reason to doubt their accounts (cf. Tizard and Hughes, 1984; Wells, 1985). Marked differences in Anglo mothers' use of language were registered impressionistically, but not analysed. Some families were clearly better able to access a dominant code than others, and some mothers found it far easier to represent their thoughts, to develop ideas out loud, and to reflect and generalise while we talked. Their children's modes of understanding will have been shaped by their parents' orientation towards different codes (Bernstein, *CCCI*).

The level of the bilingual children's disadvantage in starting school through the medium of an additional language was varied. Children with siblings in their teens had heard both English and Sylheti from an early age, and were able to acquire conversational fluency in English (as opposed to an academic curriculum usage) quite rapidly. Those who had not were in differing degrees denied access to a large part of the pedagogic discourse, both regulative and instructional. The consequences for their security and self-esteem, as well as their cognitive learning, must be assumed to be severe.

All the families in the study engaged in some regular 'literacy events' (Harste *et al* 1994), but the frequency of these, and their relationship to the official literacy practices of the dominant culture and the school, showed huge variation. The range of family *uses of literacy* includes the following:

<i>religion</i>	Q'uranic reading, Sunday school, mosque school;
<i>employment</i>	filling in applications, forms, course-work;
<i>leisure</i>	fiction, magazines, cooking and knitting instructions;
<i>education</i>	children's schoolbooks, letters, newsletters;
<i>communication</i>	letters to distant relatives, notes to family members;
<i>information</i>	local authority matters; advertising and brochures;
<i>health & welfare</i>	DHSS, doctors, clinics, social workers etc.

The children whose homes contained the least print, and the fewest mark-making materials, also had the least access to environmental print in the shops and streets, and may have received their largest 'print' input from their constant TV viewing.

- *Family cultural capital.*

Cultural capital derives its characteristics from the family's history of education, employment, and membership of cultural and subcultural groups, each with a specific relationship to the cultural mainstream. Inter-group differences are the most salient for the families in this study. Though the Bengali families range from very rich to very poor in the cultural capital of their own community, they can rarely transpose this capital into the currency of the majority community. Anglo families, despite their intra-group differences and their generally low socioeconomic status, all have *some* mainstream capital to pass on to their children during early socialisation.

- *Attendance*

Children's attendance and punctuality in their first year at school is strongly associated with their progress, and is seen by the school as a principal indicator of parental responsibility. The fact that some children in the study experienced almost twice as much schooling as others influences their ability to acquire the recognition and realisation rules of the school's pedagogic discourse, and consequently affects their achievement. Explanations for the variation are discussed below (9.5.)

School effects

For the majority of children in the class, as parents recognised, the overall 'school effects' of the Reception year were positive: children made good gains in knowledge and skills, and many developed positive and enthusiastic attitudes towards school and learning.

As discussed in Part Three, however, the Reception experience was not equally successful for all the children. The symbolic control transmitted through the school ethos and the pedagogic discourse of the classroom served to differentiate and stratify children in ways which reinforced the unequal chances they displayed on entry. It is not in itself surprising to find that the classroom discourse produced these outcomes

against the wishes and intentions of the staff, and without their knowledge. (cf. Sharp and Green, 1975; Wilcox 1982; Biggs and Edwards, 1992; Mortimore *et al*, 1988; Reay, 1998). This study confirms that the effect of their own pedagogic discourse is masked even from expert practitioners.

From the children's point of view (the acquirers, in Bernstein's terms), the relation of their ownership of capital to their school progress can be understood through the following formulations: once the children start school,

social capital, to be effective, requires possession of the recognition and realisation rules of the *regulative* discourse;

cultural capital, to be effective, requires possession of the recognition and realisation rules of the *instructional* discourse.

The social and cultural capital of children's family and community environments, rich and relevant as it may be within these settings, has little transfer value *unless the above conditions are met*. The language and literacy practices of the home; the child's preparation for school learning; local cultural knowledge acquired in the community; knowledge of the mainstream mass culture which holds sway outside the school walls - none of these are 'useful knowledge' for a child unless s/he can negotiate their incorporation into the curriculum of the classroom. Some children managed this effectively, and their home practices and home news - Troy's 'flash-cards', Kelly's performance of Spice Girls numbers, Cameron's new baby - became a part of *all* the children's school knowledge and experience. For many children however their home lives and home learning were invisible to school staff, and remained excluded from the classroom.

This was not, however, because the staff were unaware of questions of social disadvantage, of racial and cultural discrimination, of discontinuities between school and home, of differences between families in the ways they socialised their children. It was rather because they genuinely believed that the solution to these inequalities lay in creating 'a good Early Years environment', which would allow every child to follow her/his own interests and discover her/his own motivation and learning style. This environment, though theoretically 'inclusive', is founded in an *exclusive* western liberal-progressive view of childhood, and a constructivist view of learning, which

for some children creates a barrier between school and home learning. It operates a strong though invisible pedagogic discourse whose rules are not taught, but must be learned by children and their families before they can begin to make progress. Like their children, parents are expected to 'discover' these rules for themselves.

The child who lacks the appropriate rules is prevented from transferring capital from home to school, and from smoothly transforming the habitus acquired in the home into a secondary habitus fitted to the practices of the school. In consequence s/he may be assigned during the Reception year to a specialised and stratified curriculum, and to a restricted range of relationships with school adults. Once such differentiation has occurred, the child's chances of accelerated progress and a steep learning curve may be progressively diminished.

Boundary effects

The implications for children's learning of boundaries between home and school have been discussed above (7.2, 8.5). The boundaries take many forms, and their effect tends to be cumulative: children who are disadvantaged through *one* form of boundary maintenance (such as transfer of information about the child from home to school) tend to be disadvantaged in other respects (frequency of home-school reading activity etc). Early evidence of the validity of Bronfenbrenner's propositions on the child's transition into new ecological environments (see 8.2) is reinforced rather than eroded as the children progress through the school. Children whose parents and siblings, home culture and history accompany them (physically or symbolically) to school, build up a secure and reciprocal relationship with school adults which is the basis for rapid development and progress, and for the multiplication of home-school connections. Children who are cut off from their home and family background when they start school have little chance of creating all the links necessary for such relationships, or of fully assimilating the school ethos.

The effect of the school ethos in excluding some parents through including others is to deprive certain children of the constant attention and access which other children regard as a right. Included parents (those with social and cultural capital in the school) demand that their children are regularly read to, included in new activities,

and given help with academic and social difficulties as they arise (cf. Lareau, 1989; Brown, 1993; Reay, 1998). The children of these parents are themselves demanding, and get to be chosen and included first in new groups and activities. Excluded parents make few or no demands of teachers, and their children follow suit: most Bengali children, like their parents, were never seen to demand attention, help or inclusion. At group times they sat quietly listening, or whiled away the time in covert communication with each other. Jemma, similarly, whose mother avoided communication with staff and made no requests or demands on Jemma's behalf, remained for many months a passive recipient of whatever attention was available to her after other children's more vocal needs had been met.

In the absence of any well-maintained and regular channels of communication between staff and *all* parents, some parents' home teaching vanished from sight. In the summer term I was asked to read regularly with children who 'ought to be reading, but they don't get any support at home'. Surprisingly, the list included Khiernssa, Abdul Rahman and Joni, of whom this was certainly not true, as well as Kelly, of whom it probably was. The parents of the former would have been upset and insulted to learn that they were characterised in this way. Though 'home' and 'school' were both working for the children, the boundaries between them made their efforts ineffective.

9.5. Explanations from structural factors.

Evidence from large-scale and longitudinal studies, described in Chapter 2, is strong and largely consistent. The academic achievement of children from lower or working-class backgrounds, and from some ethnic minority groups, is in general lower than that of children from middle-class and mainstream homes, on entry and throughout their school careers. The achievement of girls, which in some areas and in some age-phases differs from that of boys, has a less clear overall pattern, but interacts with class and culture (Sammons, 1995; Gillborn and Gipps, 1996). This study has suggested how the relations of home and school contribute to these large-scale differentials.

Low social class is common to all the sample children, and to the All Saints' intake as a whole. Despite considerable within-class differences, the children's parents, if employed, are in manual occupations and are poorly paid. None has post-16 academic qualifications, and few achieved more than one or two passes at 16. The school itself has only a handful of parents whose education and occupation might define them as middle-class, and who have selected the school for its ethos. In keeping with this profile, its performance in SATs, and now at Baseline, is below the town, county and national averages. This general picture of low achievement among the intake, however, conceals a wide range of attainment, on entry and at the end of Reception, which is demonstrated by the sample children. The influences and interactions of class and culture, gender and family structure, contribute to the explanations for this variation.

Class and capital

Economic, social and cultural differences within the sample families (see 5.2) are strongly associated with the children's knowledge and skills on entry (their school cultural capital), and their ability to adapt and deploy this knowledge (aspects of the habitus). The families experiencing greatest financial hardship (Jemma's and Amadur's) are also the most stressed in their day-to-day lives, and the most marginalised in their communities. The mothers (June and Asima) are the least confident and most 'defeated' in their outlook, and would need persuading that their children have any chance of escaping from the cycle of problems they themselves experience. Poverty and stress are associated with frequent ill-health, poor attendance and poor punctuality in both families; both mothers express feelings of guilt over their perceived failure as parents, and avoid contact with the school, though for the duration of the study both treated me as an intermediary.

Other mothers (Shazna [Mohammed] and Kath [Joni and Robbie]) were in a fairly similar situation, and *all* the families worried about job security, serious health problems and/or financial difficulties at some point during their child's first year in school. There is a close match between stress of this kind (itself a feature of within-class differentials) and levels of attendance and lateness in the sample children. The families with fewer problems got their children to school more often:

Table 18. Percentage of possible attendance, 1.9.97 - 1.7.98

(* denotes absence of 5-10 days due to chickenpox)

Anglo children	%	Bengali children
Troy	99	
Kelly	97	
* Katy	96	
Cameron	93	
	92	Abu Bokkar
	92	Khiernssa
* Joshua	91	
	91	* Rufia
* Joni	89	
* Robbie	88	
Jemma	84	
	80	Tuhura
	71	* Abdul Rahman
	69	Amadur
	56	Mohammed

Table 19. Punctuality, compared with percentage attendance (number of late marks, 1.9.97 - 1.7.98; 'late' = arriving 20-30 minutes after normal start of day).

Anglo children	no.	Bengali children
Troy [99]	0	
	0	Khiernssa [92]
Joshua [91]	0	Rufia [91]
Katy [96]	1	
Cameron [93]	1	
	1	Abu Bokkar [92]
Joni [89]	3	
Robbie [88]	3	
	3	Tuhura [80]
	6	Abdul Rahman [71]
Kelly [97]	17	
	27	Mohammed [56]
Jemma [84]	35	
	42	Amadur [69]

While poor attendance (commonest among the Bengali children) has a direct effect on the amount of education a child can receive, lateness (which is much more evenly spread across the groups) has the effect rather of disorienting the child, making it difficult for her/him to settle into an already busy classroom, and less likely that s/he would be 'picked' for adult-directed activities.

The relatively more 'middle-class' of the sample children (Katy, Joshua, Troy, Cameron) were also physically taller, stronger and apparently better-nourished than the children of families under severe stress, and did not suffer from coughs and colds. Like Kelly, who had similarly robust health, all had attended pre-school provision, where they may have acquired some immunity to minor infections, and all lived in relatively uncrowded conditions. Overcrowded housing (revealed in the 1991 census) and the absence of safe outdoor play spaces may have contributed to other children's lack of robustness, and low energy levels.

Race and ethnicity

Three children from the Anglo sample (Troy, Cameron and Kelly) were of dual English / African-Caribbean heritage. At the age of four, none of them was observed to be self-conscious about their skin colour, and their mothers, who were alert to potential problems, were not aware of them having any anxieties or experiences of racism to date. All Saints' has a substantial number of mixed-parentage families, and these three children seemed wholly assimilated within the classroom.

Bangladeshi children have a very different experience of school. Though explicitly welcomed by the official ethos and policies, they are in fact frequently isolated and marginalised *unless* they can behave and perform in ways similar to majority ethnic children. For some children, on some days, the warm greeting with which they are welcomed into the classroom is almost the only interaction with school adults they are offered. The 'good Early Years environment' supplies the rationale for allowing Amadur and Mohammed to 'choose' in the sand and water all day, or Tuhura to sit in solitary state feeding a doll in the home corner, or Abu Bokkar to wander listlessly for long periods. Because these children's non-involvement is passive rather than disruptive, it rarely prompts adult intervention. Both formal and informal observations describe the unequal share of adult attention and input such children receive. The situation is compounded by the children's low Baseline scores, and their uncertain adaptation to the classroom, which together encourage a view that they are not yet 'ready' for more challenging activities. The children's failure to 'demand' inclusion and attention meant that they had no chance of obtaining a fair share of the very limited opportunities for adult interaction available in such a large class.

The unintentional exclusion of Bengali parents is a form of institutional racism – a disadvantage built in to the school’s policies and practices – of which teachers are apparently unaware. In their ignorance of the beliefs and behaviours of minority families, they have devised ways of working which erect powerful though invisible barriers between the Bengali community and the school. These boundaries are further masked from the staff by the presence in the school of a handful of academically and economically successful Pakistani families, second or third generation parents who have reached an accommodation with many aspects of Western culture. In the case of Bengali parents, however, genuine problems of communication, and inadequate levels of bilingual support (not of the school’s making) have multiplied the effects of other forms of ‘difference’. Mrs Goode unconsciously excludes bilingual mothers by failing to ‘see’ them in the busy morning drop-off time, and by allowing the clamorous demands of ‘included’ parents to occupy her until it is time to usher parents out and start the register session. Bengali mothers’ *and* fathers’ effusive gratitude for my attempts to greet them and inquire after their families threw into relief the embarrassment and insecurity they were experiencing at being invisible to school staff.

The gesture of giving Mrs Khan responsibility for the needs of Bengali parents, which helped to justify the inattention of mainstream staff, was a limited and double-edged benefit. Mrs Khan too was marginalised in the school community. She was unable to answer parents’ queries except of the most trivial kind, unable to represent the aims and methods of the school, and unqualified to give advice on children’s learning or other difficulties: the advice she gave was often at odds with that of the school, as when she informed me that she had told Amadur’s mother to ‘beat him and threaten him with a policeman if he was naughty’. Though she was valued by parents (and by the staff for her efforts to resolve home-school misunderstandings), she lacked power and authority. Having little professional training in western educational ideologies, she encouraged conformity (teaching children to draw ‘correct’ figures, unpicking their sewing and doing it herself). As a result, she was frequently assigned to ‘cooking’ - in practice, producing mass batches of cookies or pakoras while groups of children watched - which confirmed her non-professional status and conferred little benefit on the bilingual children. The help that she *could* have given the

children in their early months in school – both language and emotional support – was impeded by Mrs Goode’s practice of allocating her to the whole class in rotation (a practice which contravened school and LEA policy) rather than directing her towards Bengali children in particular.

Parents’ ignorance of the pedagogic discourse of the school was matched by the school’s ignorance of the home practices of Bengali families. Assumptions that most parents were not able to support their children’s learning, or did not ‘bother’ to send their children to school regularly, or did not allow or encourage them to participate in certain ways, became taken-for-granted knowledge which located the blame for children’s poor progress or attendance or participation within the families and within Islamic culture. Only Becky was incautious enough to express such views to me, but more experienced members of staff aired similar frustrations over family and community practices while apologising if they ‘sounded racist’.

Interactions of gender with class and culture.

Sex and gender influences were not evident in the children’s overall attainments on entry, but the girls in this group made more progress than the boys over the year. There were signs however that the interactions of gender with class and ethnic cultures had the potential to constrain children’s progress as they grew older.

All parents of girls, when asked if they felt boys and girls should receive the same educational opportunities, emphatically agreed:

it is not true that girls are more clever or boys are more clever, but they are sometimes different with their cleverness; we want our girls to learn like boys, same education - Layla can tell Sayfur things that he doesn’t know [Kh2]

girls are cleverer than boys, but I think my little boy will be a bit clever - we’ve got the same priorities [Tu2].

Nevertheless, there were indications that the upbringing and expectations of Bengali girls had shaped their attitudes as well as their entry attainments. Baseline and BAS assessments suggested a lack of experience of spatial and logical activities (bricks, construction, puzzles) as well as of exploratory and messy activities. Khiernssa, who

scored very low in these areas, announced emphatically, 'I don't like to play water - they boys! - and sand - they boys!', while Tuhura explained to Mrs Khan that if she touched the water she would get a high temperature, 'mummy said'. All the Bengali girls preferred to avoid traditional boys' activities, and activities where boys were the majority, whereas the Anglo girls (especially Kelly) mixed with boys and girls fairly equally, and enjoyed construction and logical and mathematical tasks.

Boys in the sample were as likely as girls to be found drawing, writing, reading, threading beads, and 'cooking' or dressing up in the home corner, though the playground behaviour of both sexes was much more gendered. When playground toys such as bikes were available, children played in similar ways. When they were not, some boys (even the gentle Cameron) played violent fantasy games, while the girls mostly held hands and chatted. By the end of the year, there were signs that the boys' enthusiasm for football was creating a significant gulf between the sexes, in the playground and in social interactions.

Family structure and composition.

As suggested earlier, there is evidence from this study that the *disadvantage* found in large-scale studies (Davie *et al*, 1972; Melhuish *et al*, 2000) when children are born into large families is instead either neutral or advantageous in some of the sample families. Among Bengali families this was undoubtedly the case: children with teenage siblings had benefited from their fluency in English, as well as from their attentiveness in playing with them, reading to them, and passing on what they had learned at school. The children who were *least* well prepared for school were those without this input from siblings (Jelika, Amadur, and Mohammed, whose sisters had arrived in England in their teens), while those in large families appeared to receive plentiful attention and affection from their parents.

The largest Anglo family (Joni and Robbie's) was also one in which the older children supplied regular companionship and teaching. In well-organised, coping families, the sample children appeared to thrive on the additional care of siblings; only when the family was in difficulties, or the older children were themselves causing concern, did the four-year-olds appear to lose out (as with Jemma's teenage

sisters, who both became pregnant, and the twins' older brothers, who were in trouble with the police). Several parents not only described their four-year-olds 'picking up' knowledge and skills from older children, but reported their under-fours learning from the Reception children.

The other significant aspect of family structure, alluded to above, is the level of extended-family support, which sometimes plays a decisive role in enabling parents to cope in times of difficulty. Most socially disadvantaged families are likely to require outside support from time to time, and there was a real difference between those (like Amadur, Jemma and Mohammed's families) who were isolated and helpless at times of crisis, and those (like Katy's, Joshua's and Kelly's) who could call on the support of grandparents and other relatives. The assurance of family or community support is a form of social capital which strengthens the family habitus, and consequently the child's.

9.6. Case studies in children's outcomes.

Robbie.

The twins had a September birthday, and were almost the oldest children in the class. Nevertheless their entry assessments were a little below the mean, and Robbie made less observable progress in the course of the year than any child except those at the ceiling of the baseline measure.

Date	Sp / List	Reading	Writing	Maths	Total
Oct 97	4	2	3	4	14
July 98	8	5	5	6	24

Robbie's social behaviour was not that of a successful pupil: although almost always involved in an activity of his own choosing, he was frequently withdrawn and silent .

His end of year report includes the following phrases:

[Compliance] *...is able to listen to and follow simple instructions and directions but on occasions may choose not to*

[Prosociality] *...a reserved, self-contained boy.... ...can be wary and guarded... does not readily initiate conversation, and on occasions may refuse to talk*

[Involvement] ...*tends to stand back and observe... a very definite and quite small range of activities...*

Despite the forgiving tone of Mrs Goode's discourse, it is clear that Robbie is not seen as participating in learning activities in a manner which will ensure success within this particular pedagogy. In systematic observations, his interactions with adults were among the lowest (5 in 90 intervals), and his curriculum range was narrow.

In the twins' first term, their family was relatively stable. When family problems recurred, however, their attendance and punctuality became erratic, their book bags were lost, and Robbie became obsessed with tales of broken windows, broken bottles and blood. His response to many interview questions was a recitation of domestic violence, and unlike any other child he answered 'don't know' to questions about his learning. Joni, meanwhile, seemed to derive protection and support from her friendship group, from her school routines - staying in, tidying the classroom and chatting to Becky - and from the continuing care of her 11-year-old sister Nita. Robbie, who shared a room with his anti-social older brothers, showed signs of losing touch with school culture and school learning.

By now the influence of gender in the twins' lives was becoming increasingly clear. Although they shared a home habitus (one which was at best precariously related to the culture of the school) their acquisition of a secondary habitus set them on divergent paths. Gender was directly influencing their ability to overcome their home 'disadvantage' and engage with the pedagogic discourse of the classroom, on which their subsequent school progress depended. The school seemed to offer no particular support for Robbie's increasingly unsatisfactory situation.

Kelly

Like Robbie, Kelly displayed high levels of involvement in her chosen activities throughout the school year; like him too she made only moderate gains in cognitive skills, and never became a successful pupil.

Kelly's Baseline scores gave her a good start in Reception, and she made sufficient gains to remain above the median:

Date	Sp / List	Reading	Writing	Maths	Total
Oct 97	8	3	2	6	19
July 98	10	6	5	7	28

Her social behaviour, which was relatively acceptable on entry, deteriorated as the year went on: by July it was clear that her lack of compliance and low level of prosocial behaviour contributed to a negative view of her (despite her good levels of involvement). Her report comments:

[Compliance] *...is not always prepared to co-operate...determined and on occasions defiant... able to listen to instructions when she chooses to...*

[Prosociality] *...finds it hard to listen to the contributions of others ... does need to learn to compromise...*

[Independence] *...finds it difficult to direct and maintain her activities independently*

Kelly was sent for time out, mostly for interrupting during register sessions, more than any other child except for a boy with serious behaviour problems; the experience did not seem to result in any modifications in her behaviour. Though noisy and boisterous, she generally appeared to have some purposeful project in mind (as when, in her very first week, she persuaded a boy to trash the home corner with her so that they could set about sorting and rearranging it from scratch). Despite enlisting other mature girls as her nominal friends ("We're the Spice Girls!"), she preferred the activities of boys to her girlfriends' choices of drawing and colouring, tidying up, and wiping down tables.

In systematic observations, Kelly was continually active and engaged. She sustained her chosen activities for long periods, and had high levels of interaction with other children (72 intervals from 90). This contrasted with a low level of adult interaction: Kelly approached classroom adults for assistance or information rather than for social purposes. In this large class, the staff found her high-octane egoism disruptive and

annoying, and her informal observations describe her experiencing 'difficult' days, interspersed with periods of successful and prosocial behaviour.

18.11.97: a difficult day for Kelly - not helped by being cooped up indoors because of heavy rain - she was wild and wilful; sent out of the room at register time for rudeness and interruptions; later insinuated herself into a group of 4 at the community blocks and managed to take over, risking everyone else's life and limb as she created stunts, pulled away supporting planks, etc; hurt by a falling brick, she howled piteously then recovered fast and manipulated Fatima and Toni into competing for her friendship...

Kelly's most challenging behaviour occurred on days which began with scenes between her and her mother: her home experience had taught her to anticipate conflict rather than negotiation with adults, and so 'learning to be a pupil' meant learning to recognise the very different regulative discourse of the school. In interview, she suggested that children go to school 'because their mum's had enough of them staying at home'; and in her self-assessment, she completed the sentence 'I want to learn to' with 'be good in this class and in year 1'. She was clearly aware, for all her confidence and outgoing behaviour, that she had failed to form the good relationships with staff which would ensure her success at school. Though able to access the instructional discourse, she was increasingly impeded by her battle with the regulative discourse.

Abu Bokkar

Abu Bokkar's end of year report provided another example of the warm commendation of which his father had learned to be sceptical through his experience with Bokkar's older siblings. It very explicitly describes a pupil who possesses all the attributes of future school success; who has been socialised into the school's pedagogic discourse; and who is motivated to demand and discover new knowledge and skills for himself. Mrs Goode finds him:

[Compliant / Prosocial] *A happy cheerful boy who is always eager to please... although initially some aspects of the routine did confuse him, he is now secure in all aspects of daily life in the classroom.*

[Independence / Involvement]...*his motivation to succeed and learn has played a large part in his acquisition of skills...he always takes a keen interest in the world*

around him...he is able to focus and concentrate on tasks and his determination to learn has increased his knowledge and understanding of his world.

There are many more such statements, though very little 'hard' curriculum information. At this point in Bokkar's school career, it is impossible to tell whether the very desirable dispositions he is seen to possess will actually lead to measurable school achievement. However, the expectations created about his learning can be expected to give him a very positive start in his Year 1 class.

Abu Bokkar made good curriculum gains over the year, as his assessments show, and his progress unfolds visibly in his observation records.

Date	Sp / List	Reading	Writing	Maths	Total
Oct 97	2	2	2	2	8
July 98	8	5	4	4	21

At the start of the year he was immature socially and achieved some of the lowest scores in Baseline and BAS measures. He was unable to discern the instructional discourse concealed in the apparently laissez-faire regulative rules, and in consequence wandered the classroom without interest or purpose, and joined the curriculum-avoidant group of Bengali boys known to staff as the Three (sometimes Four) Musketeers. During systematic observations he spends frequent intervals 'in transit' or 'other' (long periods in the toilets or looking through children's lunchboxes), disturbs or sabotages other children's activities, and has only three interactions with an adult.

Two episodes seemed to turn Bokkar's behaviour around dramatically: one was the intervention of his mother, who approached me to ask Mrs Goode if he could be given a bookbag (in Mrs Goode's view he showed no sign of being 'interested', but she acceded to the request). As if awakened to the purposes of school, Bokkar became almost overnight an enthusiastic 'reader' who was frequently in the book corner or asking to share books with adults or children. The other event was the arrival of a new boy, Neil, who adopted Bokkar as his friend and inducted him into the pedagogic discourse of the classroom, and into the social world of the Anglo boys. From this time, Bokkar became enthusiastically involved in curriculum activities, with the results described in his report. His increased interactions with

children and adults, and his improving spoken English, began to allow him to use the knowledge and motivation instilled in him at home.

By July, Abu Bokkar had acquired few 'core skills', but he was possessed of the school-like habitus, and the knowledge of school rules, which might enable him to acquire them rapidly in the future.

Rufia

Rufia, the sixth of eight children, was described by her mother as, literally, an 'outgoing girl' who never wanted to stay indoors but demanded to play on the pavement or in the yard, or to visit the shops or the neighbours. In this respect she had experienced more freedom and independence than her Bengali classmates. Though her parents professed ignorance of school practices, her siblings had played schools with her, supplying her with basic English skills and useful knowledge about the school's culture and expectations.

Rufia was young on entry (4.2) and for various reasons achieved low Baseline scores, so that her gains over the year are impressive.

Date	Sp / List	Reading	Writing	Maths	Total
Oct 97	3	0	3	3	9
July 98	10	6	5	5	26

One element in the low October rating is a zero score - 'insufficient or no observable evidence' - for Reading. This was based on her unsuccessful book-sharing session with Mrs Khan, who recorded that Rufia 'held the book upside down, said she's not interested, she doesn't like books'. The decision to use Mrs Khan for many of the bilingual children's assessments, though intended in their best interests, was not always advantageous. Observations showed Rufia's interest in books and stories from the earliest weeks:

very attentive in story group, looked and listened and answered questions ('why did he go to the barber?': 'because his hair got in his eyes, it was big' [demonstrating!]) ON, 17.11.97

silent reading time...particularly likes returning to Ladybird 'Magic Porridge Pot' although she doesn't turn pages consecutively; brings me Elmer to read regularly because I once said I liked it. ON, 26.11.97

In her December interview, Rufia includes 'reading' in the 'most important things you do at school', and 'books' in the things she likes best. Meanwhile her friendship with Khiernssa had ensured her active engagement in a broad range of activities: both girls referred frequently to knowledge imparted by their older sisters, and were encouraged by their highly motivated fathers.

By July Rufia is a well-regarded pupil. Her report describes her as

[Compliance] *...always co-operative and helpful for adults*

[Prosociality] *...will confidently initiate conversation and contribute her own thoughts and ideas...*

[Independence /Involvement] *...motivated to do well...always interested and keen to participate.*

By the end of Reception, Rufia has successfully converted her home knowledge and habitus into the capital and dispositions associated with school success.

9.7. Summary

This chapter has described children's outcomes at the end of Reception, and discussed, more systematically than earlier chapters, the variables in children's daily experiences at home and school which have influenced their progress. In comparing the expectations and evaluations of parents and teachers, it has suggested that these shape children's chances of success as a pupil and as a learner in the school culture. Children's early socialisation into the pedagogic discourse of their families enables them to achieve a more or less smooth transition into the official field of education, where their acquisition of the recognition and realisation rules of the school's discourse (both regulative and instructional) is essential for their involvement in classroom learning. Without the knowledge of such rules, children's own strategies tend to be unproductive.

In describing the 'home', 'school' and 'boundary' aspects of children's differential progress, the study has argued that most participating parents have done everything

that is in their power to promote their children's learning. Some of them, however, have little or no power, and their economic, social and cultural capital is inadequate or inappropriate to the task. All Saints' staff on the whole recognise parents' situations, and aim to accommodate the very different kinds of knowledge and skills which children bring with them to school. Mrs Goode, in particular, believes that the environment the school has created offers the best, and the most equal, opportunities for children of different backgrounds to develop.

The analysis of children's experiences however suggests otherwise. The symbolic control which the school transmits, through its largely invisible regulative and instructional discourses, distributes knowledge unequally to children from different backgrounds; it tends to offer its scarce resources to those who demand them most vociferously (children and parents), rather than to those in greatest need. The inequalities in the distribution of knowledge derive, though not straightforwardly, from the familiar triumvirate of social class, ethnicity and gender, or rather from interactions within and between these influences. Individual children's ability to acquire the recognition and realisation rules of the pedagogic discourse, and thereby to have the means to access new knowledge and skills, depends on the small processes which have constituted their early cultural learning at home, which serve to make each child's experience of the classroom different.

Chapter 10 Reflections on the research

Answering questions

While no attempt has been made to give straightforward answers to the research questions cited in chapter 1, the previous chapter has made clear what such answers would include. Differences in the sample children's early socialisation, and preparation for school, have evidently made them more or less able to access the culture, curriculum and pedagogy of their first classroom. Some children's knowledge and skills, when constructed through school entry measures, show little evidence of preschool learning, while others appear to be well on the way in acquiring school knowledge. On the whole, children who enter school with good levels of school knowledge make rapid gains over their Reception year, but children with little recognisable school knowledge have unpredictable outcomes: some 'catch up' at a startling rate, while others sink slowly but surely to the bottom of any class ranking. What makes the difference, I have suggested, is whether a child learns, or is taught, the rules of the culture, such that she or he is able to *recognise* and *realise* the requirements of the pedagogic discourse, and thus to become a well-regarded pupil and competent learner within the bounds of the offered curriculum and pedagogy. Possession of these rules is an essential constituent of social and cultural capital in the classroom.

In this respect it must be argued that responsibility for children's progress once they are in school lies with the school, its policies and its pedagogy. In the case of All Saints', a school explicitly committed to social equality, a culture has evolved which defeats its own purposes: one which aims to offer the optimum environment for all children while failing to induct all children (or families) into its ways of being. In believing that children from different backgrounds can benefit equally from its rich exploratory-play pedagogy, the school is paradoxically falling victim to a version of the 'colour-blind' attitude once prevalent among primary teachers. No one at All Saints' would pretend to be colour-blind, yet the pedagogy, which 'treats them all the same', is in practice *culture-blind*, assuming that all children can benefit from a learning style, and set of expectations (about knowledge, about childhood, about intelligence, about

learning) which are characteristic of the mainstream western family. Children whose preschool experience has equipped them with the recognition and realisation rules for the pedagogy are able to learn *and* have fun; other children can learn to have fun, but may not be able to learn how to learn; and if they do not find out for themselves, no one is going to tell them.

In its way, All Saints' offers a painful and paradoxical example of the 'cultural arbitrary' described by Bourdieu: the watchwords of its pedagogy are freedom and autonomy, but these attributes are not part of many children's preparation for school. Such children are unable to demonstrate them, and thereby unable to benefit fully from the learning opportunities offered. By treating *all* children as if they will, sooner or later, acquire these attributes and learn through them, the school enforces a delay to some children's acquisition of knowledge.

Within the school's pedagogy, such a delay is not a serious matter: as Mrs Goode says, by Year Two most of the children have started to read, 'despite what we do to them!'. But as both Bernstein and Bourdieu discerned, acquiring skills later than the norm is a mark of social and educational failure. In Bernstein's scheme, pace and sequencing are of the essence; they are emphasised and made explicit in a visible/performance pedagogy, but slackened and neglected in an invisible/competence model. As Bourdieu demonstrates, learning to read is only a marker of cultural capital if it is accomplished *early* (before the cohort) and counts for nothing if its accomplishment is delayed. Among teachers, as Ball points out (1981: 197), the shorthand definition of children's ability is to describe them as 'fast' or 'slow'.

Exploring theory

Looking back on children's experiences prompts a re-evaluation of some theoretical concepts which were seen as influential from the start of the project. Both Bourdieu and Bernstein were found to offer analytic tools which, in describing home and school beliefs and practices, helped to suggest causal relationships between them. None of these relationships however is straightforward, and some specific variations to their analysis can now be suggested. In this study:

1. The transfer of forms of capital across fields, which is fundamental to Bourdieu's description of individual strategies and trajectories, is partially or wholly impeded by barriers of class and culture. Literate practices within one subculture or signifying system (the traditional working class, or the Bengali community, for instance) can only 'convert' to other currencies in a diminished form. Social status within one field does not transpose to another unless it has aspects of the dominant culture (if a Bengali parent were to become a local councillor, for instance).
2. The 'subjective expectation of objective probabilities' which Bourdieu describes as constraining parents' and children's expectations is far from clearly realised. The Anglo parents of successful pupils express no desire or expectation to see their children move into professional or middle-class occupations, whereas the majority of Bengali parents have retained the hopes of upward mobility which were associated with their decision to migrate, but which have until now been contradicted by events. From the children's point of view, their futures are far from predictable.
3. Within-class and within-group differences between families suggest far more particular influences at work than those loosely classified by Bernstein as the beliefs of lower-class or middle-class fractions: they can not, in other words, be traced to a Durkheimian division of labour. Family practices, and the deep-structural codes and ethnotheories from which they derive, are the product of innumerable aspects of each family's history, geography and social network; within families, each child's age, sex and birth order accounts for further variations during socialisation.
4. Within a particular, self-contained community such as the All Saints' neighbourhood, *relative* power and control are as influential as power and control experienced at the macro level. At the age of 4, in a community of this kind, the son of a long-distance lorry-driver and a childminder can acquire social and cultural capital, and the recognition and realisation rules of the official field of education; in the longer term, that child, by re-investing his early assets, may follow an upward trajectory in the world outside the neighbourhood. Thus (as Bernstein acknowledges in recent references to Foucault), power exercised at the margins can be a

source of change, at the same time as power exercised centrally, and distributed by ideology, can tend to inhibit change.

Recent writing by Bernstein, moreover, indicates a greater openness to the possibilities for change. The relative autonomy of individual school practices with regard to pedagogy, as this study indicates, has the power to lessen, or to strengthen, social stratification. As Bernstein now infers, school effectiveness studies demonstrate the possibility, at least, of changing the methods and organisation of education so as to avoid the reproduction of inequality. He warns, however, that 'education will continue to fail to compensate for society to the extent that schools fail to meet the potential of their effectiveness' (CCC4: 123).

Policies, practices and play

Changing school practices begins with knowing school practices and their effects. At All Saints', staff are unaware of the barriers they erect between the culture of the school and the cultures of children's homes. In consequence, they believe it is possible for all parents, if they are interested, to participate in their children's schooling: mothers like June, Kath and Gaynor who are uncomfortable on school premises, are deemed to have opted out. Families like Khiernssa's who do not communicate via the 'bookbag' are deemed to give no support. Yet, as Tizard and colleagues discovered, 'an "open" policy is probably an excellent way, whether intentional or not, to forestall parental criticisms' (1981: 69). Meanwhile, the organisational processes described by Ball, which result in low-status children *becoming different* in the course of the school year (1981: 52), can occur equally in the invisibly-organised environment of the Early Years classroom.

What is needed therefore is a strategy of explicitness. This needs to start with the school's scrutiny of its own effects and effectiveness, and to continue with a systematic effort to inform both parents and children of the school's intentions and methods. If play is to be the medium of instruction, such explicitness (and scrutiny) must extend to the pedagogy of play. If freedom

and independence are the school's markers for a 'learner', these concepts too must be made explicit, and subjected to critique: as Bennett and colleagues argue,

There is an assumption that when children make their own choices, learning becomes a much more powerful activity. But in reality this is dependent on the range of choices available, the amount of interaction with more knowledgeable others (including peers and adults), the provision of supportive resources and the potential for activity to be connected with worthwhile learning (1997: 13).

A liberal-progressive pedagogy, more than any other, needs to consider these criteria, and their consequences for children from different backgrounds. The western middle-class 'ideological inheritance' described by Bennett, which assumes that it is natural for children to choose, play and display intrinsic motivation to explore, pathologises children whose early socialisation has taught them to stand back, observe, and join with adults in their activities. The 'demand-learning' model, which waits for the child to display motivation, rests on a belief that motivation must precede learning. In other pedagogies, including those of many non-western cultures, such a belief would be seen as irresponsible, an abnegation of the teacher's duty to *instruct*. A more Vygotskian model, which sees learning as co-constructed by the participants of an activity, is unafraid to name the 'more experienced other' an *instructor*, and to suggest that learning naturally precedes, and produces, motivation.

The true 'Open Door', then, is one through which genuine two-way communication takes place. Children who, in Bronfenbrenner's model, are accompanied into their new setting by an existing dyadic partner are not particularly advantaged if their companion, like the Bengali mothers, has as little knowledge of the new setting as they do themselves. Schools will only succeed in creating such an exchange and continuity of experience and information by being more creative in working with parents, siblings and other community members; and above all by opening their own minds to a broader range of learning cultures.

The future

The Reception year may be the most important year in children's school careers, but it would be wrong to assume that the case study children are now set on upward or downward paths which in any sense determine their eventual outcomes. As Bourdieu would argue (1990b: 26) a number of contingencies can be imagined which might dramatically alter the trajectories of any or all of them. The chance good fortune of a new friend, a particularly effective class teacher, or an improvement in the family's social and economic situation, may offer new possibilities for individuals. Continuing changes in statutory requirements for instruction, greater public awareness of institutional racism, and the slow erosion of individual racism (*Guardian*, 21.2.2000) may lessen the differences in group outcomes in the near future.

At present however, the children as Year Two pupils are approaching their first end-of-Key-Stage assessment. These results, as well as confirming or challenging the assessments made of them in their first days at school, will show to what extent they have so far negotiated the transition between home and school cultures. The outcome is as important for educators and researchers as for the parents and the children themselves.

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APPENDICES A-F

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Appendix A [chapter 4]

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A1: Research contract

Research Contract

Liz Brooker, University of London Institute of Education

and

All Saints' **School**

This study aims to investigate the influence of children's home background on the learning they bring with them to school, their experience of starting school, and the progress they make during their Reception year.

It will try to discern, for individual children from differing cultural and linguistic backgrounds entering the same school setting, the ways in which the family's childrearing practices have prepared their child for school, and the difference this makes both to their adjustment to school and to their progress during Reception. It will then investigate how the culture and curriculum of the school interact with the expectations and culture of the home to determine children's school success.

Research Questions

1. In what ways can children's cultural and linguistic background be seen to influence:
 - i) their experience of transition from home to school;
 - ii) their school-related cognitive attainment at the time of entry;
 - iii) their subsequent school progress in the Reception year?
2. How do parents' own experiences and expectations of schooling, and their attitudes towards learning, influence the ways they prepare their child for starting school?
3. If 'entry-level attainment' is a significant predictor of children's school progress and subsequent attainment, in what ways can school practices alleviate the process by which some groups of children are relatively 'disadvantaged' from the point of entry?

The researcher's role: in the school:

The researcher is a qualified and experienced Early Years teacher, and will work alongside other Reception class staff to support and monitor children's learning for 2-3 days a week throughout the school year 1997-8.

All research activities in the classroom will be undertaken in consultation with the class teacher, and will be unobtrusive to both children and their parents. outside the classroom:

The researcher will conduct interviews with parents of Reception class children, and with school staff involved with the class, at a time and place convenient to the interviewee.

Data sources: the children:

classroom observations, interviews, assessments, samples of work;

the families:

parent questionnaires (all families), parent interviews (sample of 12-16 families)

the school:

policies and documents; communications with parents; staff interviews.

Researcher's responsibilities:

- 1. To ensure the anonymity and confidentiality of all information she receives, both within the school setting and in reporting the study's findings.**
- 2. To inform families of the purposes of the study and obtain their consent for their child's participation.**
- 3. To consult with the class teacher regularly, and plan all research activities to fit in with the normal running of the classroom.**
- 4. To report on the study's findings to the school staff and governors at their request.**

School responsibilities:

- 1. To allow the researcher access to all information normally available to school staff on the school, the children and their families.**
- 2. To respect the confidentiality of information gained by the researcher in the course of interviews.**

A2: Communications with parents

Child Development and Learning
Head Professor Terezinha Nunes



20 BEDFORD WAY
LONDON WC1H 0AL
Telephone 0171-612 6588
Fax 0171-612 6230
Director Professor Peter Mortimore OBE

Research Agreement

Liz Brooker, University of London Institute of Education
and
Reception class parents, 1997-8, *All Saints' School*

I understand the nature of this research study, and am willing
আমি এই গবেষণার বিষয় বুঝিয়াছি, আমি আমার
for my child..... to be included
বাচ্চার নামে এখানে দিলাম।

..... (mother father) আমায়/আমাকে/আমার।

..... (date) তারিখ

A3: Sample of children by sex and ethnicity

Bengali boys		
Abu Bokkar	4.3	7 of 7
Abdul Rahman	4.10	3 of 3
Amadur	4.9	1 of 3
Mohammed	4.5	3 of 4
Anglo boys		
Cameron	4.1	2 of 2
Joshua	4.1	3 of 3
Robbie	4.11	6 of 6 (twin)
Troy	4.10	1 of 3
Bengali girls		
Jelika	4.10	1 of 3
Khiernssa	4.2	3 of 3
Rufia	4.2	6 of 8
Tuhura	4.2	3 of 4
Anglo girls		
Jemma	4.4	4 of 4
Joni	4.11	5 of 6 (twin)
Katy	4.3	2 of 3
Kelly	4.5	2 of 2

A4: Research timetable

1997 January-June	access to school
June-July	access to families: home visits
Sept-October	Baseline assessment British Ability Scales Phonological awareness Social behaviour inventory parent interviews
November	systematic observation (children)
December	child interviews
1998 January	document analysis classroom curriculum audits
February	systematic observation (curriculum) classroom curriculum audits
March-April	parent interviews child interviews staff interviews
May	informal observation
June	systematic observation (adults)
July	re-assessments on entry measures
August	home visits

A5: First Parent interview (Schedule)

1. Factual information:

Family and household membership

2. Parent biography:

Place of birth; subsequent mobility; [language history]; education/training; employment

3. Child biography:

How was s/he as a baby; learning to walk/ talk/ eat; how was s/he as a toddler; what sort of things did s/he like to do, age 1 – 2 - 3 – 4?

4. Child's preparation for school:

What must be learned in home (dressing / eating / hygiene etc); teaching academic skills; language development; reading; favourite books / TV / games / activities / rhymes; chores and obligations; use of time and space; companions; expectations of school;

What is the most important thing for parents to teach their children?

5. Child's preschool education:

Nursery / playgroup / childminder?

How did s/he settle / benefit?

6. Family routines:

Languages spoken in the home; activities shared by family; decision-making and discipline; reading habits; TV; hobbies / cultural / religious practices; chores, obligations, routines; involvement in community / neighbourhood / family network

7. The child and the school:

Child's strengths and weaknesses; how much is known about school? What is expected in Reception? What is wanted? Views on work and play; views on parental involvement in school / in child's learning outside school; parents' relationship with school; parents' views about cultural diversity in school; does child talk about school?

8. Parent attitudes to education:

How important is education? Views on school, teachers, curriculum; views on how children learn best; on how parents can help children to achieve; expectations for child's school experience and success.

9. Typical day:

Complete diary sheet

A6: Second Parent interview (Schedule)

Progress so far, and access

1. Your child has been at school for nearly two terms now. Do you feel s/he has changed much since starting school? (*If so, how?*)
2. Are you pleased with the progress s/he has made, in general?
How about in reading (do they know? Are they satisfied?)
What about writing? (*ditto*)
What about maths? (*ditto*)
Do you feel s/he has made progress in her/his language skills?

[Bangla only: what do you feel about your child's progress in speaking English?]

3. Are you happy with the way your child has settled and made friends?
4. Does your child get on well with teachers and other adults too?
[Anglo only:
Do you think the school respects and supports different children's family backgrounds?]
[Bangla only:
How do you think your child has coped with adapting to an English culture?
Do you think your child's own culture has been respected ?]
5. If you felt your child was having any kind of problem, who would you ask for advice? About their health? About their learning? About their social development, or happiness?
6. Is it easy for you to talk to your child's teacher about anything that's troubling you? Or to anyone else at the school?

Expectations of pupils

7. Do you think you can tell if a child is going to get on well at school, and be successful there?
If so, how?
8. What is it, do you think, that makes some children better at learning than others?
9. What does it mean to you when a child is described as 'clever', or 'intelligent'?
what is such a child like?

[Parents of girls only: Is it just as important for girls, as for boys, to be educated and do well at school?]

Home-school learning and links

10. Does your child tell you much about what s/he does at school?
11. Does s/he ask for help in doing 'school' work at home (reading, writing, drawing, numbers etc?) Are you able to help, and do you have the time?
12. Does your child enjoy bringing books home from school?
Do you enjoy having the books home?
Is s/he keen to read them?
Who usually reads with her/him?
13. Has your child's attitude to books and reading changed since s/he started school?
If so, in what way?
Does s/he ask you about what *you* read?

[Bangla parents only: when you read the Quran at home, which language do you read in? do the children listen? do they understand what they are listening to? who does the reading? are the children allowed to handle it? and do they discuss it?]

14. Does your child still have time to play, now s/he is at school? do you think s/he has learned how to play better, since starting school?
have the things s/he plays with changed?
who does s/he play with at home?
15. Is your child happy at school?
and are you happy with the school?

A7: Family and household membership form

Research into Reception Children 1997-8

name.....

Family and Household members:

name, age and occupation :

mother

father

children

other adults in household

other children

A8: Parent Questionnaire (English)

Research into Reception Children:

Parent / Carer Questionnaire: Please could the adult who has cared for the child most of the time complete these questions.

1. Child's name: _____ **Date of birth** _____

2. Your name, and relation to child: _____
your place of birth _____ year of birth _____

3. Your education:

3.1 Primary schooling:

dates _____ places _____

Did you enjoy primary school? _____

What did you enjoy most? _____

Did you really dislike anything? _____

3.2. Secondary schooling:

dates _____ places _____

Did you enjoy secondary school? _____

What did you enjoy most? _____

Did you really dislike anything? _____

3.3. Further education, training or employment:

details of training _____

details of any jobs _____

4. Your child as a baby:

4.1: early development:

when did your child begin to walk? _____ talk? _____

what language(s) does your child use? _____

4.2: early interests: was your child interested in:

stories _____	from what age?	1	2	3	4 yrs
rhymes or songs _____	age	1	2	3	4 yrs
picture-books _____	age	1	2	3	4 yrs
drawing _____	age	1	2	3	4 yrs
ABC letters _____	age	1	2	3	4 yrs
numbers _____	age	1	2	3	4 yrs
colours/shapes _____	age	1	2	3	4 yrs

4.3: social behaviour:

how important is it for children to learn before they start school?

(1: not important; 2: quite important; 3: very important)

dressing independently	1 2 3	eating independently	1 2 3
sharing sociably	1 2 3	playing sociably	1 2 3
talking confidently	1 2 3	tying shoelaces	1 2 3

4.4: learning at home:

should parents try to teach their children any of these skills before they start school? did you? (yes, or no)

ABC: names of letters _____	did you try?	Y	N
ABC: sounds of letters _____	did you try?	Y	N
numbers: counting _____	did you try?	Y	N
numbers : adding _____	did you try?	Y	N
writing their name _____	did you try?	Y	N
nursery rhymes _____	did you try?	Y	N

4.5 favourite activities:

does your child like TV? _____ favourite programme _____

favourite toys / games _____

who does your child play with? _____

5. Your child in the home:

5.1: brothers and sisters:

do you have older children at school? Y N ages _____

5.2: ready for school:

did your child look forward to starting school? Y N

do you know why? _____

5.3: readers:

is anyone in the home a keen reader? Y N who? _____

what do they read? _____

5.4: activities:

are there any family activities your child takes part in? (TV viewing religion / outings / mealtimes / shopping cinema other)

5.5: helping at home:

are there any household tasks your child takes part in? (cooking cleaning tidying other) _____

A8: Parent questionnaire (Bengali)

রিসেপশান ক্লাসের শিশুদের বিষয়ে এক টি গবেষণা :

পিতামাতা/দেখাশুনাকারীদের জন্য এক টি প্রশ্নমালা : বয়স্ক যে ব্যক্তি বেশীর ভাগ সময় শিশুটির দেখাশুনা করে থাকেন দয়া করে তিনি যেন এই সকল প্রশ্নের জবাব দেন।

1. শিশুর নাম----- জন্ম তারিখ-----

2. আপনার নাম এবং শিশুর সাথে আপনার কি সম্পর্ক রয়েছে :-----

আপনার জন্মস্থান -----যে সনে জন্ম গ্রহন করেছেন-----

3. আপনার শিক্ষাগত যোগ্যতা :

3.1 প্রাথমিক স্কুলের শিক্ষার বিষয়াদি :

তারিখ-----স্থানসমূহ-----

আপনি কি প্রাথমিক শিক্ষাকে উপভোগ করেন?-----

সবচেয়ে বেশী কোন বিষয়টি আপনার কাছে ভাল লাগে ?

সতীকার ভাবে আপনি কি এর কোন কিছু অগ্রহণ করেন?-----

3.2 মাধ্যমিক স্কুলের শিক্ষার বিষয়াদি:

তারিখ-----স্থানসমূহ-----

আপনি কি মাধ্যমিক শিক্ষাকে উপভোগ করেন?-----

সবচেয়ে বেশী কোন বিষয়টি আপনার কাছে ভাল লাগে ?

সতীকার ভাবে আপনি কি এর কোন কিছু অগ্রহণ করেন?-----

3.3 স্কুলকলেজ ছাড়ার পরের শিক্ষা, প্রশিক্ষণ (ট্রেনিং) এবং চাকুরী :

প্রশিক্ষণের বিস্তারিত বিবরণ-----

কোন কাজেরবিস্তারিত বিবরণ -----

4. ছোট্ট বাচ্চা হিসাবে আপনার শিশু :

4.1 পৃথক করে কয় বছরে বিভিন্ন বিষয়ে উন্নতি :

কখন আপনার শিশু হাটতে----- কথা বলতে শুরু করেছে?-----

আপনার শিশু কোন কোন ভাষা ব্যবহার করে?-----

4.2 পৃথক করে কয় বছরের আগ্রহের বিষয়সমূহ : আপনার শিশু কি নীচের বিষয়গুলোতে উৎসাহী ছিল :

গল্প-----কোন বয়স হতে ?	1	2	3	4 বছরে
শ্লোক অথবা গান -----বয়স	1	2	3	4 বছরে
ছবির বইয়ে -----বয়স	1	2	3	4 বছরে
অংকনে-----বয়স	1	2	3	4 বছরে
এ বি সি অক্ষরে -----বয়স	1	2	3	4 বছরে
সংখ্যায় -----বয়স	1	2	3	4 বছরে
রং/বিভিন্ন আকৃতিতে -----বয়স	1	2	3	4 বছরে

4.3 সামাজিক আচার ব্যবহার :

স্কুলের শিক্ষা শুরু করার পূর্বেই শিশুদের শিক্ষা গ্রহণ করা কতটুকু গুরুত্বপূর্ণ ?
(1 : জরুরী নয়, 2 : জরুরী, 3 : অত্যন্ত জরুরী)

নিজে নিজে কাপড় পড়া	1	2	3	নিজে নিজে খাওয়া	1	2	3
অন্যদের সাথে মিশা	1	2	3	সবার সাথে খেলাধুলা করা	1	2	3
আত্ম বিশ্বাসের সাথে কথা বলা	1	2	3	জুতার ফিতা বাধা	1	2	3

4.4 ঘরে শিক্ষাদান করা :

শিশুরা স্কুল শুরু করার পূর্বেই পিতামাতারা নীচের কোন কিছুর কৌশল শিক্ষা দেয়ার চেষ্টা করা উচিত কিনা ? (হ্যাঁ অথবা না)

A B C: অক্ষরের নাম শেখানো-----	আপনি কি চেষ্টা করেন ?	হ্যাঁ	না
A B C: অক্ষরের শব্দ শেখানো-----	আপনি কি চেষ্টা করেন ?	হ্যাঁ	না
সংখ্যা গণনা -----	আপনি কি চেষ্টা করেন ?	হ্যাঁ	না
সংখ্যা যোগ করতে -----	আপনি কি চেষ্টা করেন ?	হ্যাঁ	না
তাদের নাম লিখতে-----	আপনি কি চেষ্টা করেন ?	হ্যাঁ	না
নার্সারী হড়া -----	আপনি কি চেষ্টা করেন ?	হ্যাঁ	না

4.5 প্রিয় ক্রীড়াকলাপ :

আপনার শিশু কি টি ভি দেখতে ভালবাসে ?----- প্রিয় অনুষ্ঠান -----
প্রিয় খেলা/খেলাধুলা -----
আপনার শিশু কার সাথে খেলা করে ?-----

5. আপনার শিশুর পরিবারে :

5.1 ভাই এবং বোনেরা :

আপনার কি বয়স্ক কোন শিশু স্কুলে যায় ? হ্যাঁ না বয়স কত-----

5.2 স্কুলে যাবার প্রস্তুতি :

আপনার শিশু কি স্কুলে যাবার জন্য আগ্রহী ? হ্যাঁ না
আপনি জানেন কি কেন ?-----

5.3 বই পড়া

ঘরে কি এমন কোন ব্যক্তি রয়েছে যে বই পড়তে খুবই আগ্রহী ? হ্যাঁ না কে ?-----

5.4 বিভিন্ন ক্রীড়াকলাপ :

পরিবারের বিভিন্ন ক্রীড়াকলাপে কি শিশুরা অংশ নেয় ? (টি ভি দেখা/ধর্মীয় অনুষ্ঠান/বাইরে বেড়াতে
যাওয়া/ একত্রে বসে খাওয়া/সপিংয়ে যাওয়া / সিনেমা/ অন্যান্য)

5.5 ঘরের কাজে সাহায্য করা :

ঘরের কোন কাজ কর্মে কি আপনার শিশু অংশ নেয় ? (রান্নাবান্নায়/পরিষ্কার পরিচ্ছন্ন করাতে/ ঘরদোর
গোছানোতে/অন্যান্য)-----

A9: Social behaviour inventory (parent version, English/Bengali)

**Research into Reception Children:
Children's Social Behaviour at Home.**

Child's name.....

Please circle to show whether this statement applies to your child
1: rarely or never; 2: sometimes; 3: often or always

- | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1. Understands when others are happy or sad. | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 2. Is obedient and compliant | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3. Gets upset if you don't pay her/him enough attention | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4. Co-operates with your requests | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 5. Says nice or friendly things to other people | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 6. Follows household or family rules | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 7. Says 'please' and 'thankyou' when reminded | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 8. Is keen to play with other children | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 9. Is calm and easy-going | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 10. Is able to share toys and other possessions | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 11. Is confident with familiar adults | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 12. Tends to be proud of things he or she does | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 13. Accepts changes without resisting or getting upset | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 14. Is interested in many and different things | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 15. Is bossy and likes to have her/his own way | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 16. Enjoys talking to you and other adults | 1 | 2 | 3 |

Thank you for your help!

রিসেপশান ক্লাসের শিশুদের উপর এক টি গবেষণা :
যে শিশুর সামাজিক আচার ব্যবহার।

শিশুর নাম-----

আপনার শিশুর জন্য যেটি প্রয়োজ্য তাতে গোলাকার চিহ্ন দিন
1 : খুব কম অথবা কখনোই না, 2 : মাঝে মাঝে, 3 : প্রায়ই অথবা সব সময়

1.	বুঝতে পারে কখন অন্যরা আনন্দিত অথবা দুঃখিত	1	2	3
2.	বাধ্য এবং অনুগত	1	2	3
3.	বিত্রত বোধ করে যখন তার প্রতি যথেষ্ট মনযোগ দেয়া হয়না	1	2	3
4.	আপনার অনুরোধ মোতাবেক সহযোগিতা করতে চেষ্টা করে	1	2	3
5.	অন্য লোকজনদের সাথে বহুসুলভ এবং সুন্দর কথা বলে	1	2	3
6.	ঘরের রীতিনীতি ও পারিবারিক নিয়মকানুন মেনে চলে	1	2	3
7.	মনে করিয়ে দিলে 'প্রিন্স (দয়া করে)' এবং 'থিং কিউ (ধন্যবাদ)' বলে	1	2	3
8.	অন্য শিশুদের সাথে খেলাধুলা করতে আগ্রহী	1	2	3
9.	শান্ত এবং তন্দ্রনম্র স্বভাবের এবং সহজেই মেশা যায়	1	2	3
10.	অন্যদের সাথে খেলনা এবং জিনিষপত্র মিলে মিলে ব্যবহার করে	1	2	3
11.	পরিচিত বয়স্ক ব্যক্তিদের সাথে আত্ম বিশ্বাসের সাথে আচার ব্যবহার করে	1	2	3
12.	সে যে সকল কাজ কর্তব্য করে সেগুলো নিয়ে গর্ব বোধ করে	1	2	3
13.	যে কোন বাধাবিঘ্ন সৃষ্টি না করেই পরিবর্তন মেনে নেয়	1	2	3
14.	অনেক এবং বিভিন্ন জিনিষে আগ্রহী	1	2	3
15.	সরদারের মত ব্যবহার এবং নিজের পছন্দ মত সব কিছু হোক তাই চায়	1	2	3
16.	আপনার সাথে এবং অন্যদের সাথে কথা বলতে আনন্দ পায়	1	2	3

আপনার সাহায্যের জন্য আপনাকে ধন্যবাদ !

A10: Class Teacher Interview: General Questions

Early years training and philosophy

1. As well as being the Reception class teacher, as Deputy Head you are involved in every aspect of provision for 4-9 year-olds. So is your own training and experience specifically with Early Years or with the whole primary range?
2. In which ways do you think an early years, or 'early reception' class has to be different from other KS1 classes?
3. Your class is Reception, but I know you were conscious of how very young, and immature, many of the children were when they started in September. How would you describe, in general terms, the kind of environment you tried to provide for them then?
4. To what extent is your classroom planning and provision, especially in the first term, influenced by guidelines external to the school (Desirable Outcomes, the curriculum designs of Early Years groups, etc)?

And what do you think are the other main influences on your practice?

Children's preschool experience and transition to school

5. When you take a child into your class at 4+, how conscious are you of the family's / parent's influence on the child's learning, or learning patterns?
*Do you try to find out about this influence, formally or informally?
Are you able to use this information in your planning or provision for the class as a whole, or for individual children?*
6. How do you try to give the children continuity from home to school, especially in their first weeks in the class?
7. What factors are you most alert to, in assessing children's developmental stage, and potential for progress, in their first weeks in school?
8. For children starting school at just 4, or nearly 5, the age differential of a few months can make a difference in their functioning. How do you try to provide for children with such a wide developmental variation?
9. Much of the literature about young children's transition to school refers to the process of 'learning to be a pupil'. What do you think 'learning to be a pupil' entails, and do you have any specific strategies to assist children with this process?.

Are there some groups of children who learn this more quickly than other groups? [Ethnicity? Gender?] If so, what are the reasons?

10. a. What proportion of the class have normally attended nursery or playgroup before starting Reception?
- b. And do you notice a difference in these children at the time of transition – could you guess which they are?
- c. If so, how do you cater for that difference between groups in the intake?

Bangladeshi children's experiences and achievement

11. This class, and the school as a whole, has a substantial ethnic minority group (Sylheti Muslims) in addition to the African-Caribbean or mixed-parentage children among the monolingual group. Does their presence have any particular impact on the curriculum of the school, or the Reception class, do you think? Do you adopt any particular strategies to meet their needs?
12. Nationally, as you know, Bangladeshi children *as a group* give cause for concern because of their low achievement relative to other South Asian groups, for instance.
 - a. Do you think this pattern of achievement is visible at All Saints'?
 - b. Does your experience with the community, and the children, enable you to offer any explanations for this?

[follow-up; query for instance language effects / class and status effects / employment patterns / parental education / family literacy / faith effects / teacher-expectation effects / community esteem / personal esteem / family size.....]

13. What strategies can Reception teachers employ towards countering this unequal achievement pattern (in an ideal world!)?
14. And what are the most important ways the school, or individual teachers, can foster these children's success at present?

Curriculum:

Oracy:

15. It has become commonplace to blame the poor achievement of working-class children on their lack of language skills.
 - a. How would you describe the average levels of spoken language in the class on entry?
 - b. Can you describe how you support children's language development in Reception?
 - c. Are there long-term consequences for the bilingual children's progress of becoming fluent in English after starting school?

Literacy: reading

- 16a. In the course of the first term in school, all the children were gradually invited to take home the books they had shared at school, and were given a book bag. How did you assess a child as ready for a book bag ?
- b. Do you think parents' work with their children before they start school – either deliberate teaching or 'natural' family behaviour – played a part in this readiness?

Writing

- 17.a. The children come into school with enormous variation in their knowledge about writing: how can you assess their existing knowledge and build on it?
- b. Could you describe the range of writing experiences children encounter in Reception?

Maths

- 18 a. Although all the children engage in all kinds of mathematical activities, only a minority of them so far have 'formal' maths books. Again, are there criteria for this stage?
- b. And do you think that parents' practices in the home have made some children more ready for this stage?

Social relationships

19. Children's friendships and peer relationships appear to have a considerable influence on their take-up of the curriculum. Do you ever attempt to influence, or manipulate, or exploit those relationships (for the child's own good, obviously)?
20. To what extent do you think a child's relationship with classroom adults influences their learning, and the progress they make?

Does the difference in cultural background between teachers and children have any impact on these relationships?

Classroom organisation / pedagogy

21. When you think of the class, and plan for them, do you think of them as a 'class' in any sense, or as individuals, or do you mentally group them in any way according to the teaching strategies you'll use with them?
If so, what kind of groupings?
22. Until now, perhaps because of the class size, you have avoided introducing much whole-class teaching. Do you think that any of the curriculum could be introduced to the whole class (instead of to groups) at any point in this year?
23. What forms of assessment do you use, in the course of the year? and how do your assessments influence your planning (for the class / for individuals?)
24. A visitor to the classroom, with an untrained eye, might describe the children as 'just playing': what do you think the children gain from play?
25. Could you try to describe how, in your view, children learn?

A11: Nursery Nurse Interview:

Early Years training / philosophy

1. Can you tell me how you chose to work with this age group, and how you were trained?
2. Do you feel that the school experience we offer 4-year-olds needs to be very different from the kind of experience offered to older children?
If so, in what ways?

Effects of children's preschool experience on transition

3. In Reception you get to know the families as well as the children. To what extent do you think you can see the influence of children's families on the way they are when they start school?
Could you give some examples?
4. How do you form an impression of how well children are going to get on at school, when you first meet them?

Language

5. Can you describe some of the ways you encourage children's language development in the classroom - for both English-speaking and bilingual children?

Bangladeshi children's achievement

6. Bengali children, as you know, have tended to be less successful at school than children from other ethnic minority groups. Can you think of any reasons why this should be, from your own experience?
Could you give some examples from the present group?
Can you suggest any particular problems they have in this classroom?

Classroom pedagogy and play

7. A great deal of the curriculum you provide comes from practical activities, rather than from direct teaching. Do you think children learn as much by this method?
8. The children spend a lot of their time working in groups, when they aren't choosing freely. Do you have any particular reasons for choosing children for groups?
9. Parents who visit may sometimes feel as if 'all the children do is play all day'. What do you think the children gain from the different kinds of play they experience in Reception?

Social relationships

10. How much do you think children's social relationships - with adults, and with other children - affect their progress in school?
Is there anything you can do to help children who don't have very good social relationships?

A12: Head Teacher Interview Schedule

- 1.a. How would you describe the social class, and ethnic, characteristics of the families in this catchment area?
 - 1.b. And is the present Reception intake roughly similar to that, as far as you can judge?
2. Do these 'background characteristics' affect the type of education, and the type of environment, that you try to provide for the children at All Saints' ?
If so, in what ways?
3. The basic curriculum content you work with is largely determined by legislation; but do you feel there's any room for flexibility in the curriculum you offer?
 - 3.a. *And is there any flexibility in the way you organise and teach the curriculum?*
 - 3.b. *If so, can you suggest which ways you would prefer, or prioritise?*
4. The OFSTED report suggests that the ethos of the school makes a very positive contribution to children's development. Can you describe any particular ways in which the school ethos fosters children's social or cognitive development?
5. How do you respond to the multiracial and multifaith character of the school intake: does it present any strengths and/or difficulties?
6. Your own background is in Early Years teaching, and your Reception team here has a very committed Early Years philosophy. Are there any aspects of the Reception curriculum or organisation which (as a relatively 'new' head) you might like to change?
 - 6.a. *If so / which/ why?*
 - 6.b. *If not / what is it about the present Reception environment you find particularly appropriate?*
7. In what ways, if any, have the curriculum, pedagogy and organisation of the school (and especially the Reception class) been influenced by the presence of a Sylheti Muslim minority group?
 - 7.a. *How would you compare the Bangladeshi children, as a group, with the school's monolingual children, in terms of attainment on entry and at age 9?*
 - 7.b. *If there are large group differences, how would you account for them?*
8. Are you aware of any differences in learning styles between the different ethnic groups (indigenous white, African-Caribbean / mixed parentage, Asian) at St James?
 - 8.a. *If so / is there any way you can cater for them?*
9. Would you say there is a difference in the level of parent involvement in the school, for different cultural groups?
 - 9.a. *If so, can the school do anything to lessen the differences?*
10. Can you describe what the school's 'Open Door' policy means (to a parent)?
11. This is the 'magic wish' question: can you think of one input in to the school - financial, social, educational, spiritual - which would improve the quality of children's learning in the school, and their eventual attainment?

A13: Bilingual Classroom Assistant Interview Schedule

Training and beliefs

1. You were educated in a very different school system from the one you are working in. Which system do you think is better, on the whole?
So if you had a little child, or grandchild, now, would you be happy for it to come to this school?
2. What do you think of the training you have been given for your present job, by the Multicultural Service?
3. What do you think is the most important aspect of your job?
[follow up: parent support; translation; social relationships; advocacy; cultural input]

Effects of children's preschool experience on transition and progress

4. You work with all the Reception children, not only bilingual children. Can you tell, when they first come to school, which children are going to get on well, and make good progress, and which are going to find school more difficult?
How can you tell?
5. What factors in children's home background do you think have the biggest influence on how they get on at school?
Does the different way boys and girls are treated ever make a difference?

Bangladeshi children's expectations and achievement

6. What are the main differences between your own background and upbringing, and the background of the Bangladeshi families in school?
7. Which factors do you think contribute most to the children's rather low achievement, on the whole?
8. Do you think the parents could do any more to help their children?
9. Do you think the school could do any more to help Bengali children?

Classroom pedagogy and play

10. The Reception class is a very busy, active environment. Are you in agreement with the type of learning activities you are asked to provide, or would you prefer to be doing some direct teaching ?
Can you give some examples of what this might be like?
11. The children also spend a large part of their day in free play activities. What do you think they learn from their play?
12. Do you think the experience the school offers is the most appropriate for the Bengali children?

Social relationships

13. To what extent do you think the children's friendships influence their learning in school?
14. To what extent do you think their relationships with adults influence what they learn?
15. How can we help children with poor social relationships?

The 'wish' question:

16. Can you think of one thing that could be done, that would make a big difference to the success of the Bengali children in the school?

A14: A Note on the format of the observation (November 1997)

The format of the observation is designed to sample children's activities over different sessions of the school day and over a four-week period. Each child will be sampled on 7 occasions, totalling 60 minutes, spread over 4 weeks of the half-term. Six of the observations will be seven and a half minute periods in the classroom (2 each in the first part of the morning, the second part of the morning, and the first session in the afternoon) and the seventh is a 15-minute sample of playground behaviour. Each observation records the child's behaviour at 30-second intervals (ie. 15 intervals per classroom observation). The interval was chosen to allow for a more reflective, and less automatic, form of coding than is required in Flanders-type schedules: on each signal a few seconds can be used to identify three aspects of the child's activity - a 'curriculum' variable, a type of social interaction, and how the activity was initiated (by child or adult). In addition to recording these 3 items, time remains for a brief descriptive note to be made of the child's actual behaviour: possibly a 'continuity link' with previous or subsequent actions, or a divergent use of the selected curriculum provision (such as books in the book corner being used for building towers or tunnels, instead of for reading!). These additional comments enable the construction of a short narrative which can be written up later in the day, whereas the predetermined codes supply a measure of frequency, or variety of activity choice.

Scoring the observations

Scoring the adult interactions involved some ad hoc and subjective decisions during observations (discussed with a co-rater during reliability testing). Technically a child could be described as 'interacting with an adult' if s/he was present in a group being instructed or supervised by that adult. In practice however the target child might be physically present in the group while whispering to another child, poking or pinching, making faces, turned towards an adjacent group, or simply staring into the distance. In the event, a child was only coded as interactive if s/he gave any indication of attending or responding to the adult who was demonstrating or managing the activity in question (cf. criteria for child involvement of Laevers, 1994; Pascal and Bertram, 1997).

Systematic observation of classroom interactions, Summer 1998:

Rationale for the observations and instrument

The present observation sequence is intended to monitor, within different classroom activity contexts, the amount and type of adult attention received by individual children. In an ostensibly egalitarian classroom (in the sense that, on the whole, *all* children experience *all* curriculum activities) the child's experience *within* the activity may still be one of exclusion or inclusion, success or failure, understanding or incomprehension, an encouraging or a laissez-faire approach. The child's view of her/himself as a learner, as well as her/his acquisition of curriculum content and skills, will inevitably be influenced by such factors, which are partly determined by the input of adults.

The intentions are:

- to observe the class teacher and nursery nurse, and also the Section 11 teacher and BCA who are in the classroom once a week, recording the type, and distribution, of their communications with children
- to sample for 10-minute periods at half-minute intervals (ie. 20 observations per sheet), several times a day, 2 days a week, over a 4-week period;
- to record, for each observation period: the context in which the target adult is working (eg. making phonics input to a group of 8 children clustered round a whiteboard); for each half-minute interval:

<i>Text</i>	the target adult's first utterance (or nonverbal communication)
<i>Addressee</i>	coded for 15 sample children or their parents, otherwise as boy/ girl/ staff/ parent;
<i>Initiates / Responds</i>	does the target adult initiate the move;
<i>Content</i>	coded as Curriculum, Management, Personal or Social;
<i>Affect</i>	from v. positive (++) through neutral (0) to v.negative (--)
<i>Follow-up</i>	child responds or not.

The format aims to be simple to administer (with only 5 categories to check) but to indicate who is spoken to, why, how and with what consequences. The verbatim text will provide evidence for further analysis, and the briefness of the interval should enable the constantly changing flow of talk that comes from classroom adults to be registered. The record of the actual utterance may serve to distinguish more subtle differences in modes of address, levels of control, etc, used for different children.

A16: Child interview schedule

Name.....Date.....

1. Why do children go to school?

2. What's the most important thing you do at school?

3. What do you like most at school? anything you don't like?

4. What are you really good at, at school? or not so good at?

5. How do you think you learn things (like reading, writing,.....)?

6. Can you remember anything you learned to do at home, before you were old enough to come to school?

How do you think you learned it? (did anyone help?)

7. What was your favourite thing to do at home, before you started school?
And your favourite thing to do at home now?
What's the best thing you do with your family?

8. Did you ever have a favourite book or a favourite story, before you came to school?
And have you got a favourite one now?
Does your mum or dad have a favourite book?

9. Have you got a favourite TV programme, or video?
Has mum or dad got a favourite they like to watch?

10. Are you good at helping at home?
What special jobs can you help with at home?

A16: A Note on interviewing children

Interviews with the 4 year old subjects of this study were regarded as an integral part of the data construction from its inception, since children's own perceptions of their learning experiences were seen as significant. The problematic nature of this method must however be acknowledged. The use of such young children as informants has been seen as unreliable and unwise until quite recently (cf. King, 1978, 1985, discussed in Connolly, 1997), and the recent admissibility of such evidence seems as much the product of the changed status of children in society as of changes in research paradigms. Discussion of the ethics and practicalities of interviewing very young children has been a particular focus of the 1990s, and many commentators now affirm the ethical as well as epistemological necessity of 'listening to children' (cf. Davie *et al* (eds), 1996; Walford and Massey (eds) 1998).

In this project as in an earlier one (Brooker, 1996) it was decided to interview children directly and explicitly, rather than using the indirect means of props and prompts, games or role-play employed by some researchers. Children were given the role of expert, and asked if they could help to answer some questions that teachers were not sure about. They were therefore able to give a form of consent to offering their views, and invited to reflect on these views. The sample children, despite their outward similarity to the group with whom the interviews were successfully piloted, were sometimes confused by the questions and gave what appeared to be bizarre answers (see 6.4, 8.5 for discussion). The quality of these answers was however seen as another form of data on the children, which in combination with information from other sources suggested some of the difficulties they were experiencing in transition from one culture to another.

Filer points out that

one of the reasons why the voices of children in their early years of schooling do not feature to any great extent in educational research is because we often question their conceptual and linguistic competencies in addressing our research concerns (1998: 59).

This study concludes that young children *can* address our research concerns, but should only be expected to do so from their own perspective; and that this is precisely why their views are of value.

A17: Social Behaviour Inventory (Teacher)

Reception Assessments: Personal and Social Development

Name of Child.....Date of birth.....
Dates of assessment.....

Please circle to show whether this statement applies to the child

1: rarely or never; 2: sometimes; 3: often or always

1. Understands others' feelings, like when they are happy or sad	1	2	3
2. Is helpful to other children	1	2	3
3. Is obedient and compliant	1	2	3
4. Follows rules in games	1	2	3
5. Tries to comfort other children if they are upset	1	2	3
6. Waits her/his turn in games and activities	1	2	3
7. Co-operates with adults' requests	1	2	3
8. Says nice or friendly things to others	1	2	3
9. Will join in with a group of children playing	1	2	3
10. In social activities, tends just to watch other children	1	2	3
11. Says 'please', 'thankyou', 'sorry' when reminded	1	2	3
12. Keen to play with other children	1	2	3
13. Is calm and easy-going	1	2	3
14. Plays and talks with other children	1	2	3
15. Shares toys and possessions	1	2	3
16. Teases other children or calls them names	1	2	3
17. Is confident with other people	1	2	3
18. Is proud of the things s/he does	1	2	3
19. Accepts changes without resisting or getting upset	1	2	3
20. Taunts, bullies or threatens other children	1	2	3
21. Is interested in many and different things	1	2	3
22. Is bossy and likes to have his/her own way	1	2	3
23. Enjoys talking to teachers and other school staff	1	2	3
24. Understands and obeys classroom rules	1	2	3

Appendix B [chapter 5]

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B1: Family /household membership on 1.9. 97; all sample children aged 4

Child	Adults	Siblings
Abu Bokkar	Rahena Father	A.Shahid 18, A.Motin 15, Rubina 13, Shabana 12, A.Rakib 11, A.Hasan 8
Abdul Rahman	Sabina Father	A.Motin 9, A.Rasul 7
Amadur	Asima Father	Bokkar 2, Hasina 1
Cameron	Alison Father	Joseph 7
Jelika	Reba Father, Grandparents	Rasul 3, Rubel 1.
Jemma	June Father	Mary 16, Tina 13, Laura 5
Joni	Kath	Liam 12, Nita 11, Gary 10, Terry 8, Robbie
Joshua	Maisie Father	Jenny 8, Kirsty 6
Katy	Maxine Father	Conor 8, Alice 1 mo.
Kelly	Gaynor Partner	Adam 7
Khiernssa	Minara Father	Sayfur 8, Layla7
Mohammed	Shazna Father (absent all week)	Naima 16, Onkita 14 , Burhan 2
Robbie	Kath	Liam 12, Nita 11, Gary 10, Terry 8, Joni 4
Rufia	Majida Father	Lipa 15, A.Hasan 13, Meera 10, Salma 9, A.Asim 7, Halima 1, A.Naseem 3 mo
Tuhura	Jamila Father	A.Rakib 6, Tahmina 5, Asim 1
Troy	Charlotte Partner	Jason 3, Lauren 5 mo.

B2: Father / male caregiver information

Child	Status of male	Birthplace, ethnicity	Occupation	Age (this child's birth)
Abu Bokkar	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bangla	[not working]	34
Abdul Rahman	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bangla	Restaurant chef, Partner in shop	26
Amadur	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bangla	Restaurant waiter	32
Cameron	Partner, father	Town, A-C UK	Council maintenance worker	28
Jelika	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bangla	Restaurant work	23
Jemma	Partner, father	Town, White UK	Wood machinist	36
Joni	[none present since infancy]	[birth father White UK]		
Joshua	Husband, father	UK town, White UK	Lorry driver	30
Katy	Husband, father	Town, White UK	Lab technician	36
Kelly	Partner [father absent since infancy]	? White UK	Warehouseman [subsequently unemployed]	28
Khiernssa	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bangla	[not working]	38
Mohammed	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bangla	Restaurant chef	33
Robbie	[none present since infancy]	[birth father White UK]		
Rufia	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bangla	[not working]	[not known]
Tuhura	Husband, father	Sylhet, Bangla	restaurant worker	26
Troy	Husband [birth father absent since age 2]	?, White UK [birth father A-C]	Carpenter/glazier [subsequently schoolkeeper]	26

B3: Maternal education information

Child	Mother's place of birth	Mother's education	Mother's age (first child)	Mother's age (this child)
A Bokkar	Bangla village	Primary (5 yrs), village sch	18	32
A Rahman	Bangla town	Primary and secondary (9yrs), town school	19	24
Amadur	Bangla village	Primary and secondary (7 yrs), village sch and private tutor	19	19
Cameron	Town	Primary and secondary (12 yrs), Town schools and FE college	20	23
Jelika	Bangla village	Primary and secondary (10 yrs), village schools	22	22
Jemma	Town	Primary and secondary (9 yrs in Town schools then truanted)	18	31
Joni	Town	Primary and secondary (intermittent because of illness), left when pregnant at 15.	16	24
Joshua	UK town	Primary and secondary (11 yrs) in town schools, FE, YTS	24	28
Katy	Town	Primary and secondary (11 yrs) Town schools, YTS	23	27
Kelly	Town	Primary and secondary (10 yrs, then excluded), Town schs.	21	24
Khiernssa	Bangla village	Primary (6 yrs?), village school, mosque school	22	26
Mohammed	Bangla village	[no schooling]	16	28
Robbie	Town	Primary and secondary (intermittent because of illness), left when pregnant at 15.	16	24
Rufia	Bangla village	Primary (5 yrs), village school and mosque school	16	27
Tuhura	Bangla town	Primary and secondary (12 yrs) in large town school	17	19
Troy	UK town	Primary and secondary (11yrs), frequent moves (in care and in boarding school)	19	19

B4: Family literacy practices: examples from interviews

Abu Bokkar: mosque school for 5-10 year-olds; mum reads Qur'an in evening, also Bengali books or children's school books; parents enjoy Bengali newspapers; older children do homework

Abdul Rahman: read Qur'an and pray together; mum gets Bengali and English books from library; reads English newspapers and Teletext; buys Bengali newspapers; enjoys reading anything especially love stories!

Amadur: mum has no time to read except books of prayers or occasionally a novel; dad sometimes gets a book about a TV programme; no newspapers

Cameron: reading with children in evenings

Jemma: mum doesn't read (she's usually getting the dinner, but if she has any time prefers to knit); dad sometimes gets a Playstation magazine; Tina reads love stories (Mills & Boon) and a pregnancy magazine, and pop fanzines; they sometimes read a newspaper;

Joni: mum doesn't read except for Sunday paper; children read their school books (mum takes turns to read with them);

Joshua: dad reads science fiction, mum likes history and non-fiction; girls read their school books;

Katy: dad reads model railway books, mum enjoys Steinbeck if she has time, all enjoy reading newspapers and comics;

Kelly: mum likes Catherine Cookson and now has about 15 books of her own (reads while children are out playing or in bed), dad reads newspapers

Khiernssa: parents read Bengali and Arabic books; all read Qur'an together in evening; mum reads religious texts and Bengali newspapers

Mohammed: mother and 4 children watch TV all evening; mum doesn't bother much about prayers; may read Qur'an occasionally (girls can read it and mum knows a little Arabic); mum knows the girls and her husband can read but doesn't know if they read English or Bengali, books or newspapers.

Robbie: mum doesn't read except for Sunday paper; children read their school books (mum takes turns to read with them);

Rufia: prayers and reading Qur'an every evening; parents teach children Arabic in evening; older children have study time every evening; parents read Bengali books, religious books, library books and Bengali newspapers from local shop; older children go to library and take Rufia; they all bring books home from school, and read together;

Tuhura: all read Qur'an and say prayers in evening; mosque teacher comes to home on weekends to teach children Qur'an, and eat with them; mum and children read Qur'an a bit together; children have Bengali and Arabic books sent by relatives; mum reads quite a lot of Bengali books;

Troy: no one reads - she doesn't like books, dad doesn't read; she likes magazines; they don't read newspapers

B5: Parental expectations for children

Abu Bokkar: regarded as 'clever', 'very bright', 'like a little prince' from infancy; father has strong views on underachievement of Bangla children including AB's older siblings: had high hopes of them 'becoming something' but now believes they will have unskilled jobs and have just been 'passing their time' at school.

Abdul Rahman: mum would be happy for him to 'get good results and go to college' and perhaps be a solicitor 'because he's good at talking'.

Amadur: parents would be happy for him to stay on at school and study if he wants to; otherwise he can work in a restaurant; if he does well he can go into the law or work in a hospital.

Cameron: 'I'd want him to be happy in whatever he did... if you've got a good education behind you, that's great, but I wouldn't want to force it on him: it's better to learn a trade than leave with nothing: I'd back them up in whatever they want to do'; education is important, 'but it's their attitude that counts in the end, and as long as they're happy it's not right to put too much pressure on them, because it's not the be-all and end-all'.

Jemma: no information offered

Joni: mum would like them to find a job they enjoy and will 'give them a push if they get behind'; she would like them to take exams, so they can decide what they want to do later; they have to get a good education so they'll have opportunities: they need to know a lot of things about different subjects, 'so they don't have to stick to one thing'.

Joshua: 'I'll be surprised if he doesn't do well at school... I think it will just kind of flow that way'; thinks he will be a hairdresser because he loves playing hairdressers; would like him to go to college and choose whatever interests him.

Katy: mum just wants her to 'do well, to go on, I don't have any plans for her except for her to be happy'

Kelly: mum wants her 'to get all the education she can and go to college; at the moment she wants to be a Spice Girl but hopefully that will change'; mum expects her to do well.

Khiernssa: 'you have to teach Khiernssa nicely, she has to be better than my other 2 children'; parents have great hopes for her - perhaps an engineering job, solicitor, lawyer, barrister: 'we would like to give them a chance to go to Higher Education, even the girls, but we can't know the future'; Khiernssa could be a teacher; mum will let dad decide when the girls should get married, and dad definitely wants them to be educated.

Mohammed: mum and dad want all the children to have a chance to improve themselves, and go on to study; Naima wants to go to college and her dad believes that's better than going to Bangladesh to get married, but may be overruled by family there; mum has no expectations for Mohammed, no idea of what opportunities will be open to him.

Robbie: mum would like them to find a job they enjoy and will 'give them a push if they get behind'; she would like them to take exams, so they can decide what they want to do later.

Rufia: mum and dad would like their oldest daughter to be a doctor (although she doesn't want to); perhaps Rufia could be a teacher, 'that's good enough, that will do'.

Tuhura: 'I want to be sure that until 16 they will study hard and after that I want to send them to Higher education and university; but at 16 I would prefer the girls to get married, so long as their husband doesn't mind, because if he does they won't study after 16, but if they get the right kind of husband they will be all right'; 'if they have a good brain and if they go on well, I would like one of the girls to be a doctor and one to be a solicitor'

Troy: the main thing is happiness, 'you're not going to succeed if you're not happy'; mum wants him to do well and stay on at school or college, but after that 'he might be a chippy - he'll put a pencil behind his ear, to be like Bob - or a milkman - when he walks past people's houses he'll count the milk bottles'; or a policeman, because he loves The Bill...

Appendix C [chapter 6]

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C1: Parental teaching (outcomes from questionnaires)

1. Respondents (35 from 40)

Mother (32) Father (1) Sister (1) Grandma (1)

2. Child's early interests

	Yes	No	Blank
Stories	31	1	4
Rhymes/Songs	33	0	2
Picture books	32	1	2
Drawing	33	1	1
ABC letters	32	1	2
Numbers	33	0	2
Colours/shapes	32	1	2

3. Social behaviour

Item	Not important	Quite important	Very important
Dressing independently	3	16	12
Sharing sociably	1	8	22
Talking confidently	3	12	15
Eating independently	2	10	19
Playing sociably	1	4	26
Tying shoelaces	14	11	5

4. Parental teaching: did you try to teach this item?

Item	Yes	No	Blank
ABC names	30	3	2
ABC sounds	25	7	3
Counting	31	2	2
Adding	22	10	3
Write name	28	5	2
Nursery rhymes	28	4	3

C2: Parental teaching (outcomes from interviews)

	literacy	numeracy
AB	always copied brothers and sisters, reading and writing, doing homework, looked at Bengali books and children's school books; parents 'helped him to know about reading and writing'; dad taught him ABC; never learned rhymes but will learn poems from Quran.	dad taught him to count from 1-10 in English
AR	had no books of his own but looked at brothers' books from school; mum 'tried to teach him from books' and taught him Bengali rhymes and alphabet; drawing and writing.	mum tried to teach him how to count in English and Bengali
Am	saw mum writing letters and asked for paper and pens; has never had books or heard stories or rhymes.	[no evidence]
Ca	first obsession: Postman Pat books; now Ttubbies books: he can tell story from pictures, predict what happens next; looked at books by himself from very young age; went to library and had bedtime stories; mum taught him nursery rhymes; tried to teach him sounds (with difficulty: fridge letters didn't work so they made it a jumping activity) and to write his name.	'hasn't got a clue' about numbers or counting; when asked 'how many times have I told you not to...', answers 'Um... four?', his answer to everything; may count things as they go along the road but refuses to look at counting books, suspicious of mum's intentions.
Jem	they always had books at home, 'she was always picking them up and looking at the pictures - and sometimes she liked drawing on them!'; her big sisters 'used to sit down and draw, so the bigger girls were learning them'; Tina taught her to write her name, taught her letters and numbers (drew dots for her to write over, and made her copy whole pages); mum has bought them books and read them stories: Jemma likes pop-ups.	Tina did colours, shapes and numbers with her, testing her with pages of circles and numbers to colour and copy.

Parental teaching (outcomes from interviews)

	literacy	numeracy
Joni	listened to nursery rhyme tapes over and over but didn't join in; added 'writing' to her drawings from about 4; looked at books at bedtime with mum, different story every night; enjoyed comics especially if read with mum or siblings; taught her name, and the ABC from a video; mum tried to look at letters in dictionaries with her.	mum taught them to count up to 10 and say their colours, 'I always said "a blue car, a red bus", saying the colour first so they learned it'.
Jos	never interested in reading and writing; chose books at playgroup, and learned nursery rhymes there (mum found it embarrassing to sing them); she tried to teach him letters but he wasn't interested; bedtime stories when she could cope; otherwise he heard her read school books with his sisters.	encouraged to do jigsaws; picked up shapes and colours 'just normally, but the trouble was with him, if he said "red triangle" and it was a yellow circle, the girls just said, "isn't he sweet, he's really trying"'.
Katy	always loved books and had lots; had favourites when she was little; liked drawing, and asked to write her name so mum drew dots; did writing and reading with mum whenever she was willing: mum believes most important things are writing your name, looking at books and hearing stories read; learned all nursery rhymes from a video.	mum taught her numbers and colours 'when she was willing'.
Kel	never liked writing or drawing; refused to sit and look at books with mum: had Disney books 'all over the floor' but would only look at them by herself; mum tried to teach writing her name: she refused, but learned it at nursery; learned to recite ABC from speaking doll, but could only recognise letters from her and Ashley's names; learned Nursery rhymes at nursery, at home only listens to Spice Girls.	learned 'things like colours' from Ashley; 'learned to count from 1 to 20 at nursery' but misses out 18!
Khi	looked at books and 'pretended to read in her own language' with Layla and Sayfur; read with them and dad; had paper and pens always for writing and drawing; dad, L and S taught her some English, some ABC letters, and about reading and writing; dad taught her Bengali letters; she has English children's books of her own.	dad taught her to count from 1-10 and recognise the numbers.

Parental teaching (outcomes from interviews)

literacy

numeracy

	literacy	numeracy
Moh	has always liked drawing, asks for paper and pens to copy sisters; Naima sometimes showed him letters; no books except sisters' schoolbooks; 'he does a kind of writing on his drawing' which mum calls his 'work'; mum told him he would 'study reading and writing' at school; mum illiterate, sisters literate in Bengali, some English and Arabic.	Naima told him how to count in Bengali, and a little bit in English.
Rob	listened to nursery rhyme tapes over and over; sat with mum to look at books and hear stories read; likes Thomas the TE and other train books best; enjoys comics with older children; mum taught them names and ABC; sister played schools with them, reading aloud and telling them to copy sentence.	mum taught them to count to 10 and say colours.
Ruf	liked to draw, write and look at books with older children; dad and siblings encouraged her reading and writing; no rhymes or songs (she will learn some at Bengali school); older children take her to library: no books of her own but looks at theirs.	[no evidence]
Tuh	loved looking at books and was cross that siblings brought books home but none was for her; learned Bengali rhymes and songs from mum; parents started teaching them alphabets because there is a lot to learn (Bengali, English, Arabic); children have Arabic and Bengali books sent to them by relatives.	[no evidence]
Troy	mum 'always spent a lot of time teaching him - I wasn't working so I had all my time for him'; had 100s of books (complete sets of everything...) but mum put them away because he ripped them and drew on them, she dislikes books and bought tapes in preference (stories and rhymes); he heard them daily / nightly; parents write a lot, he drew and wrote a lot.	at nursery, learned 'one shape, one letter, one colour, one something else' every week; 'I work constantly with him on letters and numbers'; plays board games regularly.

C3: Eating and sleeping routines

Ch	Breakfast	Lunch	Snack	Evening	Sleeping
AB <i>Ban</i>	7.30 all	12.30 all		8.00 all	Naps, 3.30-6.00; Bed, 9.30-7.00 am sleeps with mum
AR <i>Ban</i>	9.30 alone	12.30 all	3.30 all	8.00 all	9.30 pm – 9.30 am. sleeps with mum
Am <i>Ban</i>	10.00 all [dad asleep]	12.00 all	3.30 all		5.30 on, naps; bed, 9.00 - 9.30 am; sleeps with mum
Ca <i>Ang</i>	7.30 all [dad at work]	12.00 with mum		5.30 all	7.30: bath, story, bed; sleeps to 6.30 am shares with brother
Jem <i>Ang</i>					
Joni <i>Ang</i>	7.30 all	12.30 with mum	4.00 all	5.00 all	3.30 naps; 7.30 bath; 9.00 bed, to 7 am shares with sister
Josh <i>Ang</i>	7.30 all [dad at work]	12.00 with mum	4.00 all	5.30 all	6.30 bath; 7.00 stories; 7.30 bed, to 7 am. own room
Katy <i>Ang</i>	7.30 all [dad at work]	12.00 with mum		6.30 all	7.30 bath; 8.00 bed, to 7 am; shares with brother
Kel <i>Ang</i>	7.30 all	12.30 with mum and mates	3.30 all	6.30 all	7.00 bath; 7.30 books and bed, to 6.30 own room
Khi <i>Ban</i>	9.30 (milk) alone	12.30 all	3.30 all	8.00 all	9.30-noon, naps; 5.00-8.00, naps; 9pm-8am, sleeps with sibs
Moh <i>Ban</i>	11.30 alone	2.00 all		8.30 all	9pm- 11am/12 noon
Rob <i>Ang</i>	7.30 all	12.30 with mum	4.00 all	5.00 all	3.30 naps; 7.30 bath, 9 pm bed, with brothers, to 6 am.
Rufia <i>Ban</i>	7.30 all	12.00 all		8.00 all	3.30 nap; 9.30 bed, or watching TV upstairs, to 7 am; sleeps with sisters.
Tuh <i>Ban</i>	9.30 alone [dad asleep]	12.00 all	3.30 all (rice)	6.30 all dad at work	9.00 in bedroom, sleeps 10 pm to 9.30 am.(with sibs)
Troy <i>Ang</i>	7.30 with brother	12.00 with brother	3.30 all	4.30 with brother	7.00 bedtime, with tapes shares with brother

'all' = everyone in household eats together; 'shares' = room, 'sleeps with' =shares bed

C4: Helping at home: Parent interview responses

Abu Bokkar: he is not expected to help in the home except perhaps fetch things for mum; the older children are too busy with schoolwork: they 'have more duties than mum'.

Abdul Rahman: he likes helping his mum to tidy and dust; he has no jobs of his own, but the whole family helps to Hoover, clean and fix things!

Amadur: he helps mum by fetching things to look after his brother and sister; 'he likes to put his hand with mummy's hand' when she cooks and cleans, but not often.

Cameron: he likes to help with washing up, and putting clothes in washer and drier, etc; is expected to tidy his room but Joseph does most of it, while Cameron makes most mess!

Jelika: she plays with her little brothers and helps to look after them, but prefers to 'sit down in the sitting room' rather than help mum, though she pretends to help; she knows how to make a cup of tea; she likes things to be clean and tidy, and always tidies up her toys and clothes; she doesn't like anyone to make a mess, and always stays clean herself

Jemma: 'she does like to wash up if she gets the chance - I have to make sure I wash up all the knives first'; makes her own toast (in toaster) and butters it; helps mum cook; tidies toys.

Joni: their special job is to take the milk bottles out ; each had own little cloth, dustpan and brush etc since they were little, and always helped to clean and polish; 4 older children do 4 jobs in rotation, daily: (wash/dry/hoover/mop) and she joins in

Joshua: he makes his bed and keeps his own room tidy (without being asked) since age 2, because he is very proud of his bedroom; all the children help a bit in the kitchen, clearing table etc

Katy: likes to help mum, 'she's very helpful, a bit too helpful at times'; hoovers, dusts and washes up; should tidy her bedroom but isn't keen.

Kelly: she wants to help mum wash and dry up, Hoover etc but 'she's such a nuisance really, she gets in the way', and is not allowed in the kitchen because of the hot fat on the cooker; she is expected to make her bed and tidy her room, and she does try.

Khiernssa: she is not expected to help: 'she's only a little girl'; the older children have mosque school etc and have no time to help (homework takes up their evenings); she does 'help a little bit' and says she will 'cook for mummy when she's grown up'.

Mohammed: he has never helped or joined in anything with mum; he never goes in kitchen; he sits on the sofa and 'does his own work' (drawing?); mum occasionally asks him to tidy his toys and he does.

Robbie: the twins' job is to take the milk bottles out ; each had own little cloth, dustpan and brush etc since they were little, and always helped to clean and polish; 4 older children do 4 jobs in rotation, daily: (wash/dry/hoover/mop) and he joins in.

Rufia: she helps with cooking, washing, fetching for mum and seeing to the babies; the older children don't help because schoolwork is more important; she has no responsibilities because 'she will have those when she's married'.

Tuhura: she is very lazy, does no work and refuses to help mum; she expects to be waited on by Tahmina or will accept bribes of sweets for small tasks; she sits down 'like a princess' much of the time: 'the baby will look after Tuhura before she looks after him'.

Troy: mum has always involved him in the care of the babies (to avoid jealousy) and he is very affectionate; he has to tidy his room at bedtime (to clear floor in case there's a fire in the night) and puts away all his toys

**C4: Helping at home: children's responses to question,
*Are you good at helping at home? What special jobs can you help with at home?***

Abdul Rahman: yes, cooking: I cut meat, chop meat; and tidy up toys

Amadur: no, I'm not big enough: mummy works, I don't work

Cameron: my brother needs help to pull my quilt up; and I help my mum make star cookies

Jemma: I can read a story to mum; I can help with cooking... tidy up my toys... chase my cat

Joni: tidying up

Joshua: getting the lunch boxes ready; sometimes I make the bed with Jenny and Kirsty

Khiernssa: no; what my mum says, I have to do; sometimes I help Layla with the washing up – not Sayfur, he goes outside

Robbie: I do washing up; me and Joni did; I can Hoover as well

Rufia: pretend cooking [demonstrates!]; tidy up with the rubbish

Tuhura: no; Tahmina does it

Troy: no, I don't like helping

C5: Helping at home: responses from 35 Parent Questionnaires

Closed responses

Item	Frequency
Cooking	10
Cleaning	8
Tidying	22

Open responses

Item	Frequency
Hoovering	8
Washing up	6
Making beds	4
Dusting/polishing	4
Gardening /Sweep garden	3
Set or clear table	3
DIY / strip wallpaper	2
Sort washing/load machine	2
'Try to help', 'most chores'	2
<i>Child does not help</i>	2

Appendix D [chapter 7]

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D1: Sources cited

**Sources of cited information on families and children.
All interviews tape recorded and transcribed.**

Abu Bokkar

AB1 Interview with mother and father, interpreted, 24 9.97
AB2 Interview with mother, interpreted, 21 3. 98
ABqu Parent questionnaire completed in English
ABch Interviews with child interpreted 10 12 97, English 6 4 98
ABhv Notes on additional home visits

Abdul Rahman

AR1 Interview with mother, interpreted, 10 9 97
AR2 Interview with mother and aunt (aunt interpreted) 6 4 98
ARqu Questionnaire completed in Bengali
ARch Interviews with child, interpreted 9 12.97, English 6.4 98
ARhv Notes on additional home visits.

Amadur

Am1 Interview with mother, interpreted, 3 10. 97
Am2 Interview with mother, interpreted, 23.3 98 and 5.5 98
Amqu Questionnaire completed in English by father
Amch Interviews with child, interpreted 10 12 98, English 6 4.98
Amhv Additional home visits.

Cameron

Ca1 Interview with mother 13 10 97
Ca2 Interview with mother, 3 4 98
Caqu Completed by mother
Cach Child interviewed 10 12 97 and 6 4 98

Jelika

Ja1 Interview with mother, interpreted, 24 9 97 and 26.9 97
[Jaqu not completed]
Jahv Notes on additional home visits (mother, father, grandmother)

Jemma

Je1 Interview with mother and 14-yr-old sister 15 5 98
[Jequ not completed]
Jech Child interviewed 12 12 97 and 7 4 98

Joni

Jon1 interview with mother 15 9 97
Jon2 Interview with mother 31 3 98
Jonqu Completed by mother
Jonch Child interviewed 5 12 97 and 7 4 98

Joshua

Jos1 Interview with mother 9 9 97
Jos2 Interview with mother 23 3 98
Josqu Completed by mother
Josch Child interviewed 5 12 97 and 6 4 98

Katy

- Ka1* Mother interviewed 25 9 97
- Ka2* Mother interviewed 26 3 98
- Kaqu* Completed by mother
- Kach* Child interviewed 9 12 97 and 6 4 98

Kelly

- Ke1* Mother interviewed 22.9 97
- Ke2* Mother interviewed 2 4 98
- Kequ* Completed by mother
- Kech* Child interviews, 5 12 97 and 7.4 98

Khiemssa

- Kh1* Interview with mother (interpreted) 17 9 97
- Kh2* Interview with mother (interpreted) 21.3.98
- Khqu* Completed on mother's behalf
- Khch* Child interviewed (Bangla) 9.12.97, (English) 29.4.98
- Khv* Notes on additional home visits (father present).

Mohammed

- Mo1* Interview with mother and grandfather (interpreted) 8 10 97
- Mo2* Interview with mother and teenage sisters (interpreted) 4 4 98
- Moqu* Completed by sister on mother's behalf
- Moch* Interviews with child, interpreted, 12.12 97 and 9 7.98
- Mohv* Visits to mum and teenage sisters

Robbie

- Ro1* Interview with mother, 15 9 97
- Ro2* Interview with mother, 31 3 98
- Roqu* Completed by mother
- Roch* Child interviewed 9 12 97 and 7.4 98

Rufia

- Ru1* Interview with mother (interpreted) 17 9 97
- Ru2* Interview with mother and father (interpreted) 4 4 98
- Ruqu* Completed on mother's behalf
- Ruch* Interviewed 17 12 97 and 6 4 98, in English
- Ruhv* Additional visits (mother father, older siblings)

Tuhura

- Tu1* Interview with mother interpreted 10 9 97
- Tu2* Interview with mother interpreted 21 3 98
- Tuqu* Completed by mother in Bengali
- Tuch* Child interviewed (Bang a) 12 12 97 (English) 6 4 98
- Tuhv* Additional home visits

Troy

- Ty1* Interview with mother 10 10 97
- Ty2* Interview with mother 2 4 98
- Tyqu* Completed by mother
- Tych* Child interviewed 5 12 97 and 7 4 98

D2: Daily diaries of children at school (examples)

Abu Bokkar: Spring Term: Wednesday

- 8.55 arrives with Khiernssa and their mums
- 9.0 register, dinner-register, weather-watch, calendar (he is not involved)
- 9.15 directed to sand with Amadur & Mohammed
- 9.30 in cooking group with Becky; beating air into batter for Yorkshire puddings; wanders away to play with sticklebricks and popoids;
- 10.15 called to discussion group by Mrs G: looking at information books, experiencing air from fans etc; goes off to puzzles and dominoes; ends up at computer with Am & Mo;
- 10.45 outdoor play;
- 11.15 at sand tray but not really playing: inattentive; moves off to computer; 'quiet reading' until lunch.
- 1.0 register;
- 1.15 goes to sand with new friend Neil;
- 1.45.1 they move to computers; move to do jigsaws together; new friendship, and Neil's enthusiasm, produces spate of lively talk, energy, motivation; Neil starts to talk like AB, intending to be helpful: 'where buddafly?' etc
- 2.0 outdoor play
- 2.30 playing alone with jigsaws and Clix;
- 2.50 class goes to watch Words & Pictures

[comment on day: 'making more commitment to school activities than last term, but still seems very short-termist, lacking in planning or intrinsic motivation']

Kelly: Spring Term: Tuesday

Arrives early and demands adult attention: 'see my hair – this is my hairband – come to the computer – come and play this game – see if I can beat you – see if you get it wrong' – incessant; fetches new inset puzzles, brings them to me in the book corner, demands 'see if you can do it, see if I can do it, see who's first, see who gets it right'.

- 9.0 register session: Kelly is 'spoken to' several times;
- 9.15 directed to parent helpers to make streamers; after that they test them by running in the playground; on her return, wanders to where Mrs G is reading with Troy; watches; asks if she can read, told to wait till later;
- 9.45 goes to painting table; joined by Katy and Barry with clipboards;
- 10.0 moves on to Duplo, leaving Katy to mop up spilled mess on painting table; starts work on model (to which she will return all day); involves other children; discusses model; plans, extends, repairs, rebuilds;
- 10.45 snack & outdoor play;
- 11.15 in Becky's science group, tasting and comparing fizzy drinks;
- 11.30 returns to Duplo, stays till lunch-time, co-operating with Danny, Benton, Fatima on large model (she has lead role: they sit back);

- 1.00 register
- 1.15 works on ABC puzzles with Joni and Fatima
- 1.30 called to share books with Mrs G
- 1.45 concentrating on board games with Joni and Fatima
- 2.0 outdoor play: Kelly chooses to stay in; works on Duplo for another half hour;
- 2.30 home corner with Cameron: dressing up, flouncing, organising

[comment on day: 'admirable absorption in task; co-operated with wide range of children; tolerates children like Benton who just muck about']

D3: Systematic observations of adult-to-child utterances, June 1998

Affect : percentage of utterances rated from 'very warm and positive' (++) through 'neutral' (0) to 'very cool and negative' (--).

Adult	++	+	0	-	--
CT	7	84	8	1	0
NN	8	77	13	2	0
BCA	0	29	71	0	0
S 11	10	87	3	0	0
Parent	0	100	0	0	0

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D5: Book bags: when/ why/ how issued.

Child	Date	CT comment on school [RR] or home-school [HS] reading record
A.Bokkar	19.11	RR: 'mum requested BB: very keen and enthusiastic' HS: 'A.Bokkar loves sharing books and is very pleased to have a bookbag'
A.Rahman	18.11	RR: 'BB home: very proud' HS: 'A.Rahman loves looking at books and is very pleased to have a book bag'
Amadur	9.12	RR: 'obviously proud at having BB'
Cameron	6.11	HS: 'Cameron had an enormous smile on his face when he got a book-bag'
Jelika	18.11	[no comment]
Jemma	9.12	RR: 'confident and happy'
Joni	30.10	RR: 'very proud to have a book to take home and readily initiated conversation about her books at home' HS: 'Joni was very pleased to have a book bag and some some books to bring home'
Joshua	30.10	RR: 'very keen to have a book-bag'
Katy	30.10	RR: 'very keen initially to have a BB but during the actual session frequently requested to leave'
Kelly	12.11	RR: 'very keen to have a BB' HS: 'Kelly has been "desperate" to have a book bag!'
Khiemssa	6.11	RR: 'BB: very motivated and eager to learn'
Mohammed	9.12	RR: 'gave BB as very interested in A Bokkar's'
Robbie	6.11	[no comment]
Rufia	26.11	HS: 'Rufia was very keen to have a book bag and loves sharing books'
Tuhura	?	[record obscure or missing]
Troy	27.10	HS: 'Troy loves books and stories and is keen to be an independent reader'

D6: Children's book-sharing sessions recorded (reading records).

Ch	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Total
AB*	3	2	5	2	4	1	2	2		21*
AR*	3	4	3	1	5	1	2	3		22*
Am*	1	2	3		3	1	3	1		14*
Ca	2	2	4	3	2	2	2	2		19
Ja	1	1								left, 12.97
Je		2	2		4	1	1	2		12
Jon	1	1	3	3	3		2	1		14
Jos	4	1	3	3	5	1	1	3		21
Ka	3	0	2	1	2	1	2	2		13
Ke	2	2	2		2	1	1	3		13
Kh*	2	3	3	2	3	1	1	4		19*
Mo*	1	2	1					2		6*
Rob	1	1	3	2	3		2	1		13
Ru*	1	1	4		4	3	1	2		16*
Tu*	1	2			4	1	1	3		12*
Ty	7	2	4	4	4	1	2	1	1	25

*** most sessions are with BCA rather than CT**

Appendix E [chapter 8]

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E1: Children's choices in the first 10 days of school

Abu Bokkar	painting. home corner. water. car track. computer. dolls house and playpeople. tracing / writing.
Abdul Rahman	painting. water. home corner. drawing. writing. colouring. [outdoor: bikes]
Amadur	sand. water. Spot books. sorting shapes. sticklebricks. storytape. [outdoor: balls, bikes]
Cameron	home corner. computer. [outside: bikes]
Jelika	construction. patternmaking. drawing, writing, colouring. Pairs game. sand. [outdoors: climbing, balls]
Jemma	art. water. sand. puzzles. clay. tracing. drawing. colouring. painting. pegboards. small world [outdoor: climbing]
Joni	draw, trace. home corner. small world. construction.
Joshua	water. small world. painting. sand. puzzles. [outdoor: tunnels]
Katy	home corner. puzzles. painting. small world. [outdoors: bikes]
Kelly	pairs game. water. home corner. number activities. Patterns (pegs and tiles).
Khiernssa	home corner. Spot books. painting. drawing. balls, bikes. writing. trace/draw. singing. [outdoors: climbing]
Mohammed	sand. water. computer. sticklebricks. storytape. [outdoors: footballs, trikes]
Robbie	train track (small world). drawing, colouring, tracing. construction.
Rufia	home corner. painting. writing, drawing. singing. nursery rhymes. [outdoors: climbing, bikes]
Tuhura	painting. sand. water. home corner. computer. tracing, drawing, colouring. printing. collage. clay.
Troy	books. drawing. writing. tracing. computer. home corner. water.

E1: First 10 sessions: children's activities sorted by curriculum.

- 1. Reading** books, story-tapes, nursery rhymes
- 2. Writing** writing name, letters, letter-strings
- 3. Drawing** drawing, tracing pictures, colouring
- 4. Number** counting, playing with number equipment or games
- 5. Pattern** pattern-making with pegs, tiles, shapes, apparatus
- 6. Memory/Discrim** puzzles, pairs games, matching games, dominoes
- 7. Computer** operating, collaborating or spectating programme
- 8. Construction** bricks, Lego, Duplo and other construction kits
- 9. Small world** train and road tracks, dolls houses, playpeople
- 10. Role play** participating or spectating in home corner
- 11. Art and craft** painting, printing, clay, collage
- 12. Singing** participates in or initiates singing
- 13. Sand/water** plays or spectates at sand or water trays
- 14. Outdoors** bikes, balls, climbing, crawling, running and racing; own self-initiated games.

Assessing and Recording Personal and Social Education

PERSONAL AND SOCIAL EDUCATION						SCORE
CODE	BASELINE CRITERIA					1-5
A	INITIATIVE					
	1	2	3	4	5	
	Timid waits for others to lead					
	Takes the initiative, curious problem solver					
B	RELATIONSHIPS					
	1	2	3	4	5	
	No respect shown for others feelings and property					
	Shows respect for others feelings and property					
C	CO-OPERATION					
	1	2	3	4	5	
	Plays alone, solitary, uncooperative					
	Gets on well with others. Plays in group, wants to please					
D	INVOLVEMENT					
	1	2	3	4	5	
	Unable to settle, fitts from activity to activity					
	Concentrates for extended periods					
E	INDEPENDENCE					
	1	2	3	4	5	
	Depends on others to service their needs (eg toileting)					
	Independent, looks after own needs					
F	BEHAVIOUR					
	1	2	3	4	5	
	Aggressive, doesn't share and take turns, withdrawn					
	Well adjusted, shares, knows right from wrong					

E3: Group ratings on PSD subscales (LEA baseline, Oct 97): by ethnicity**1. Initiative**

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Anglo	3	1	1	2	1	8
Bengali	3	3	2	0	0	8
Total	6	4	3	2	1	16

2. Relationships

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Anglo	0	0	3	4	1	8
Bengali	0	4	3	1	0	8
Total	0	4	6	5	1	16

3. Co-operation

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Anglo	0	2	3	3	0	8
Bengali	1	4	2	1	0	8
Total	1	6	5	4	0	16

4. Involvement

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Anglo	0	0	4	1	3	8
Bengali	2	2	3	1	0	8
Total	2	2	7	2	3	16

5. Independence

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Anglo	0	1	0	5	2	8
Bengali	0	1	5	2	0	8
Total	0	2	5	7	2	16

6. Behaviour

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Anglo	0	0	5	2	1	8
Bengali	0	3	3	2	0	8
Total	0	3	8	4	1	16

E3: Group ratings on PSD subscales (LEA Baseline, October 97): by gender**1. Initiative**

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Boys	3	2	1	1	1	8
Girls	3	2	2	1	0	8
Total	6	4	3	2	1	16

2. Relationships

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Boys	0	2	2	3	1	8
Girls	0	2	4	2	0	8
Total	0	4	6	5	1	16

3. Co-operation

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Boys	0	3	2	3	0	8
Girls	1	3	3	1	0	8
Total	1	6	5	4	0	16

4. Involvement

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Boys	1	1	3	1	2	8
Girls	1	1	4	1	1	8
Total	2	2	7	2	3	16

5. Independence

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Boys	0	0	2	4	2	8
Girls	0	2	3	3	0	8
Total	0	2	5	7	2	16

6. Behaviour

Score	1	2	3	4	5	Total
Boys	0	2	1	4	1	8
Girls	0	1	7	0	0	8
Total	0	3	8	4	1	16

E3: Individual scores on PSD items, October 97, grouped by ethnicity

1. Initiative (from 1, 'timid' to 5, 'curious problem-solver')

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Amadur</i> <i>Mohammed</i> <i>Jelika</i> Cameron Joni Katy	<i>Abu Bokkar</i> <i>Rufia</i> <i>Tuhura</i> Robbie	<i>A. Rahman</i> <i>Khiernssa</i> Jemma	 Kelly Troy	Joshua

2. Relationships (from 1, 'no respect' to 5, 'shows respect' for others)

1	2	3	4	5
	<i>Abu Bokkar</i> <i>Amadur</i> <i>Jelika</i> <i>Tuhura</i>	<i>Khiernssa</i> <i>Mohammed</i> <i>Rufia</i> Katy Kelly Robbie	<i>A. Rahman</i> Jemma Joni Joshua Troy	Cameron

3. Co-operation (from 1, 'plays alone' to 5, 'gets on well with others')

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Jelika</i>	<i>Abu Bokkar</i> <i>Mohammed</i> <i>Rufia</i> <i>Tuhura</i> Joni Robbie	<i>Amadur</i> <i>Khiernssa</i> Jemma Joshua Katy	<i>A. Rahman</i> Cameron Kelly Troy	

4. Involvement (from 1, 'flits' to 5, 'concentrates')

1	2	3	4	5
<i>Abu Bokkar Rufia</i>	<i>Jelika Mohammed</i>	<i>A.Rahman Amadur Tuhura Cameron Jemma Katy Kelly</i>	<i>Khiernssa Troy</i>	<i>Joni Joshua Robbie</i>

5. Independence (from 1, 'dependent' to 5, 'independent')

1	2	3	4	5
	<i>Rufia Katy</i>	<i>Amadur Jelika Khiernssa Mohammed Tuhura</i>	<i>Abu Bokkar A. Rahman Cameron Jemma Joni Kelly Robbie</i>	<i>Joshua Troy</i>

6. Behaviour (from 1, 'aggressive/withdrawn' to 5, 'well adjusted')

1	2	3	4	5
	<i>Abu Bokkar Jelika Mohammed</i>	<i>Khiernssa Rufia Tuhura Katy Kelly Jemma Joni Robbie</i>	<i>A. Rahman Amadur Joshua Troy</i>	<i>Cameron</i>

E4: whole class PSD ratings (Oct 97): 41 children

Score	1	2	3	4	5
Initiative	9	10	8	8	6
Relationships	1	7	16	15	2
Co-operation	2	10	19	8	2
Involvement	3	9	17	7	5
Independence	0	3	9	17	12
Behaviour	1	8	17	14	1

E5: All Saints' Early Years Profile

Photograph of child

Record of parent discussion

1. Speaking and Listening
2. Book sharing
3. Colours
4. Sorting and matching
5. Shape
6. Pattern recognition
7. Number knowledge
8. Jigsaw skills
9. Fine motor skills (scissors, pencil, manipulation)
10. Gross motor skills
11. Favourite activity (home and school)
12. Social adaptation

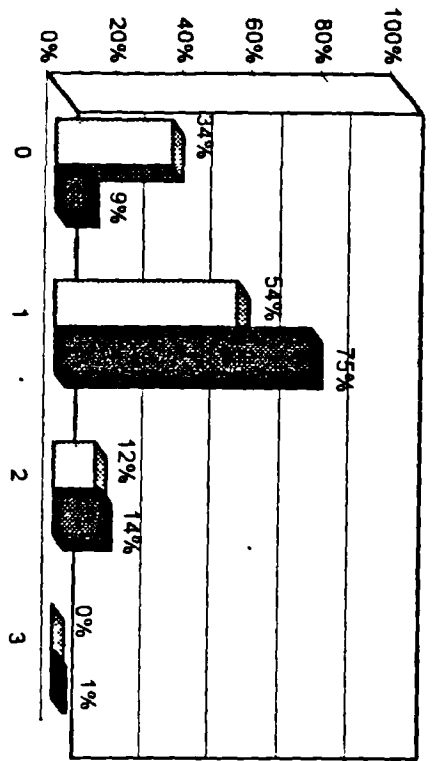
Sample outcomes from assessments

Child	Colours (from 11)	Shapes (from 4)	Pattern (3 criteria)
Abu Bokkar	0	0	2
Abdul Rahman	8	0	2
Amadur	0	0	0
Cameron	11	3	0
Jelika	0 [3 Bengali]	1	0
Jemma	9	0	0
Joni	9	1	3
Joshua	10	2	3
Katy	8	1	1
Kelly	11	3	3
Khiernssa	6 [1 Bengali]	0	1
Mohammed	0 [2 Bengali]	0	0
Robbie	10	1	2
Rufia	10	1	2
Tuhura	10	0	3
Troy	11	3	3

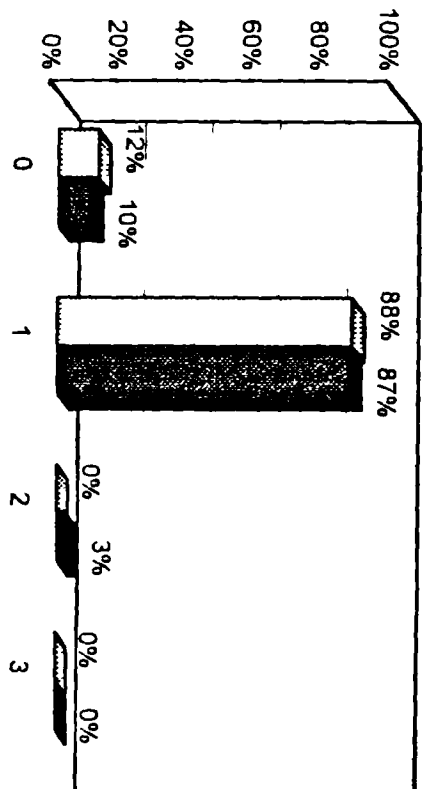
THE LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR LANGUAGE AND LITERACY AND MATHEMATICS

Stage	LANGUAGE AND LITERACY			MATHEMATICS
	SPEAKING AND LISTENING	READING	WRITING	
0	←Insufficient or no observable evidence→			
1	<i>Interacts and communicates with a familiar person (child/adult)</i>	<i>Responds to pictures when sharing a book with an adult</i>	<i>Makes marks using a variety of media</i>	<i>Matches objects in 1 : 1 relationship</i>
	<i>Listens and responds to a simple request or instruction</i>	<i>Handles books appropriately</i>	<i>Uses marks to communicate meaning</i>	<i>Sorts objects using 1 criterion</i>
	<i>Uses language to express needs</i>			
2	<i>Recounts events or experiences</i>	<i>Knows that pictures and the written word convey meaning</i>	<i>Distinguishes between marks and letters</i>	<i>Counts objects accurately</i>
	<i>Asks questions to find out and listens to the answer</i>	<i>Recognises his or her own name</i>	<i>Writes letter shapes</i>	<i>Shows awareness of using addition</i>
	<i>Initiates and takes part in role play/ imaginative play with confidence</i>	<i>Able to predict words and phrases</i>	<i>Writes own name correctly and independently</i>	<i>Can describe size</i>
	<i>Makes up own story and tells it</i>	<i>Hears rhyming sounds</i>	<i>Uses some simple familiar letters to represent words</i>	<i>Can describe position</i>
	<i>Speaks clearly and can be understood</i>	<i>Recognises familiar written words and knows print goes from left to right, top to bottom</i>		<i>Recognises and writes numbers to 10</i>
3	<i>Expresses ideas and accounts logically within conversations</i>	<i>Reads books with simple text</i>	<i>Forms letters with correct orientation and shape independently</i>	<i>Solves numerical problems using addition and subtraction</i>
	<i>Makes up and tells a story with detail to a small group</i>	<i>Can name all letters of alphabet by name and sound</i>	<i>Writes simple phrases or sentences independently</i>	<i>Selects resources and uses appropriately to solve mathematical problems</i>
	<i>Gives simple instructions to others</i>	<i>Recognises sound sequences in words</i>	<i>Begins to show an awareness of the use of full stops in his/her writing</i>	<i>Can explain the process of an addition sum</i>

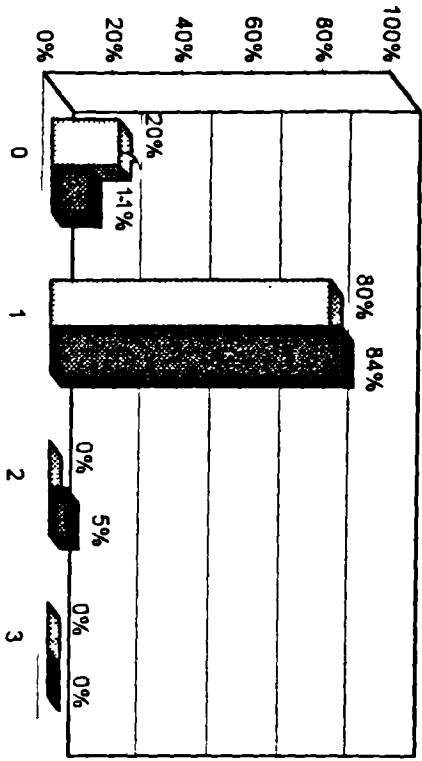
Speaking & Listening



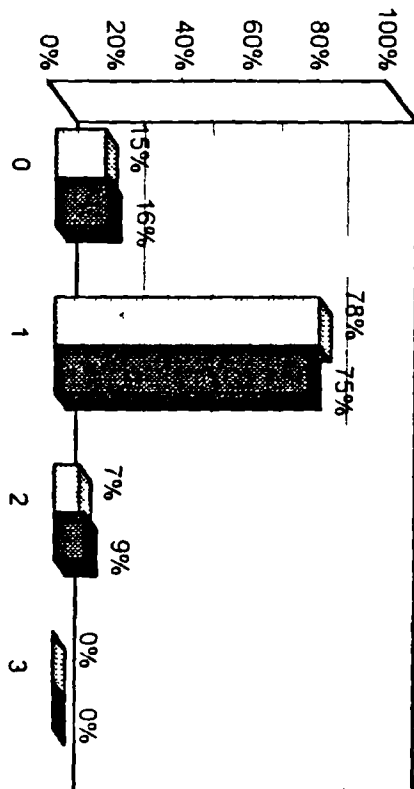
Reading



Writing



Mathematics



E7

The left hand bar of each pair represents the school percentage, the right hand bar all schools in the scheme.

E8: Age-equivalent BAS scores on 3 subscales (October 1997) [in months]

Child	age [1.10.97]	Blockbuilding	Picture Similarities	Pattern Construction
Abu B	4.4	3.10 [46]	4.7 [55]	2.10 [34]
Abdul R	4.11	5.10 [70]	4.10 [58]	5.1 [61]
Amadur	4.10	8.0 [96]	6.4 [76]	4.1 [49]
Cameron	4.2	3.4 [40]	4.4 [52]	3.4 [40]
Jelika	4.11	4.1 [49]	3.7 [43]	4.4 [52]
Jemma	4.5	3.4 [40]	4.7 [55]	3.10 [46]
Joni	5.1	5.10 [70]	7.1 [85]	5.4 [64]
Joshua	4.2	4.7 [55]	5.4 [64]	5.10 [70]
Katy	4.4	4.7 [55]	4.4 [52]	4.1 [49]
Kelly	4.8	4.7 [55]	5.10 [70]	5.7 [67]
Khiemssa	4.3	3.4 [40]	5.4 [64]	3.7 [43]
Mohammed	4.8	4.7 [55]	3.10 [46]	3.10 [46]
Robbie	5.1	5.1 [61]	7.1 [85]	4.10 [58]
Rufia	4.3	3.4 [40]	4.4 [52]	3.10 [46]
Tuhura	4.3	4.7 [55]	4.1 [49]	3.7 [43]
Troy	4.11	4.7 [55]	8.0 [96]	4.11 [59]

NB. Significant correlations are found between Age and Blockbuilding, Age and Picture Similarities.

		AGE	BLOCKS	PICTURE	PATTERN
AGE	Pearson Correlation	1.000	.601*	.566*	.491
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.	.014	.022	.053
	N	16	16	16	16
BLOCKS	Pearson Correlation	.601*	1.000	.452	.391
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.014	.	.078	.135
	N	16	16	16	16
PICTURE	Pearson Correlation	.566*	.452	1.000	.536*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.022	.078	.	.032
	N	16	16	16	16
PATTERN	Pearson Correlation	.491	.391	.536*	1.000
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.053	.135	.032	.
	N	16	16	16	16

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

No significant relationships between Ethnicity or Sex and any subscale, though Pattern Construction approaches significance (favouring Anglo children)

E9: systematic observation frequencies

	Abu Hokka	A Rahman	Amadiur	Jelika	Khems'a	Mohamme	Rufia	Tuhora	Cameron	Jemma	Joni	Joshua	Katy	Kelly	Robbie	Troy	Sum	Mean
Sand	0	7	7	0	15	31	0	5	0	0	0	6	15	26	15	15	142	8.88
Water	15	14	15	0	0	0	0	0	15	5	0	28	0	1	0	0	93	5.81
Computer	1	8	0	0	2	0	0	4	8	0	4	3	13	0	0	0	43	2.69
Art area	0	0	13	0	15	0	16	7	2	4	0	0	28	0	0	0	85	5.31
Draw/trace	0	15	2	0	0	12	12	15	0	10	0	9	0	0	11	13	99	6.19
Write	0	0	0	0	10	7	0	0	0	4	15	0	0	0	1	0	37	2.31
Literacy	1	0	0	0	5	0	11	0	0	1	0	9	0	0	0	0	27	1.69
Smallworld	13	2	2	1	0	9	0	5	0	0	13	0	0	15	0	0	60	3.75
Role play	1	21	0	34	0	2	0	0	21	10	0	0	15	1	0	0	105	6.56
Construction	5	1	0	9	0	1	0	4	0	26	0	18	15	29	27	25	160	10.00
Vis memory	14	8	8	0	13	11	14	5	5	6	24	0	1	1	0	0	110	6.88
Maths	5	0	0	5	4	0	20	9	15	16	30	10	0	0	15	14	143	8.94
Science	17	0	15	15	0	0	6	20	15	0	0	0	0	14	15	15	132	8.25
Other	6	1	11	0	15	12	1	7	5	0	0	0	0	0	0	7	65	4.06
In transit	12	13	20	12	11	5	9	10	4	8	4	8	3	3	6	1	129	8.06
Solitary	15	11	16	3	19	4	2	6	2	20	24	18	8	3	7	11	169	10.56
Parallel/ch	29	28	20	17	8	32	26	24	13	25	25	8	16	8	39	26	344	21.50
Parallel/ad	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0.00
Interact/ch	42	47	47	34	37	52	49	37	59	25	19	28	58	72	39	30	675	42.19
Interact/ad	3	4	2	9	26	1	8	23	16	14	9	27	11	7	3	22	185	11.56
Spectate	0	0	0	13	0	0	2	1	0	6	13	11	0	0	0	2	48	3.00
Selfdirect	54	75	73	56	75	75	59	52	60	71	60	64	75	76	63	72	1060	66.25
Adultdirect	36	15	17	19	15	15	31	38	30	19	30	26	15	14	27	18	365	22.81

E10: Outcomes from systematic observations of children

Name	Curriculum: highest frequencies of self-directed activities	Involvement: Most common descriptions	Adult interact: frequency and type	Child interact: frequency of relationships
AB	water 15 small-world 13 vis/mem 14 [other + transit 18]	Low: 'passive' 'uninterested' 'idle' 'uninvolved'	6 (responds when spoken to or instructed)	Solitary 15 Parallel 29 Interact 42
AR	water 14 draw/trace 15 roleplay 21 [o + t: 14]	Mixed: 'absorbed' 'concentrating' 'thoughtful' enthusiastic'	4 (minimal management contacts)	Solitary 11 Parallel 28 Interact 47
Amadur	water 15 art 13 [o + t: 31]	Mixed: 'wandering' 'concentrating' 'interested'	2 (management)	Solitary 16 Parallel 20 Interact 47
Cameron	water 15 roleplay 21 [o + t: 9]	Mixed: 'interested' 'vague' 'undecided' 'wandering'	16 (7 under instruction)	Solitary 2 Parallel 13 Interact 59
Jelika	roleplay 34 [o + t: 12]	Mixed: 'not interested' 'impassive' 'bored' 'thoughtful'	9	Solitary 3 Parallel 17 Interact 34 Spectate 13
Jemma	draw/trace 10 roleplay 10 construction 26 [o + t: 8]	Mixed: 'concentrates' 'determined' 'passive' 'forlorn'	14 (12 under instruction)	Solitary 20 Parallel 25 Interact 25 Spectate 6
Joni	smallworld 13 vis/mem 24 maths 15 [o + t: 4]	'thoughtful' 'careful' 'absorbed' 'shows initiative' 'absorbed'	9 (responds minimally to instruction and questioning)	Solitary 24 Parallel 25 Interact 19 Spectate 13
Joshua	water 28 construction 18 maths 10 [o + t: 8]	High: 'eager' 'enthusiastic' 'absorbed' 'thoughtful'	27 (10 in reading session, remainder are spontaneous and genuine conversation)	Solitary 18 Parallel 8 Interact 28 Spectate 11

Katy	sand 15 computer 13 art 28 roleplay 15 construction 15 [o + t: 3]	Mixed: 'not interested' 'busy, vigorous'	11 (relaxed but brief exchanges)	Solitary 8 Parallel 16 Interact 58
Kelly	sand 26 smallworld 15 construction 29 [o + t: 3]	Busy, 'concentrates', 'industrious' 'interested' 'enthusiastic'	15 (mostly observing demonstration or being told off)	Solitary 3 Parallel 8 Interact 72
Khiernssa	sand: 15 art 15 vis/mem 13 [o + t: 26, includes own project *]	'studious' 'careful' 'concentrating' 'animated' 'absorbed'	26 (initiates and maintains conversations about activity, asks for help)	Solitary 19 * Parallel 8 Interact 37 * own project
Moh'd	sand 31 draw/trace 12 vis/mem 11 [O + t: 17]	Mixed: 'occupied' 'wandering' 'absorbed' 'motivated' 'lost interest'	1 (told to put coat on)	Solitary 4 parallel 32 Interact 52
Robbie	sand 15 draw/trace 11 construction 27 maths 15 [o + t: 6]	'thoughtful' 'careful' 'happy, involved' 'concentration' 'eager, satisfied'	5 (initiates conversation about his activity)	Solitary 7 Parallel 39 Interact 39
Rufia	art 16 draw/trace 12 literacy 11 vis/mem 14 maths 20 [o + t: 10]	Mixed: 'vague, fidgety' 'concentrating' vigorous' 'thoughtful' 'focused' 'passive, yawns'	8 (mostly passive listening to instruction)	Solitary 2 parallel 26 Interact 49 Spectate 2
Tuhura	sand 5 art 7 vis/mem 5 maths 9 [o + t: 17]	Mixed: highly involved in drawing, colouring etc; totally uninvolved in adult instructional activities; dreamy, passive.	14 (mostly passive listening to instruction)	Solitary 6 Parallel 24 Interact 37 Spectate 1
Troy	sand 15 draw/trace 13 construction 25 maths 14 [o + t: 8]	Mixed: often watchful and uninvolved, then very committed, animated, planning, discussing.	22 (very active in instructional session, and initiates chats)	Solitary 11 Parallel 26 Interact 30 Spectate 2

**E11: Child interviews: outcomes of questions about school
(December 1997 - April 1998)**

1. 'Why do children go to school?'

	<i>First interview</i>	<i>Second interview</i>
AB	to play; to do reading; to do painting	because they like to play
AR	cause my dad says, Go to Middle school, then go last to All Saints, and my dad hits your brothers and he speaks, Go to school	if you don't go the police will get you, if you miss school you got to go another day
Amadur	to play; to write; to play with the water and the sand	to play with the sand and the water
Cameron	because you have to, just because you do, I just know	because they're home dinners, a lot of them are
Jemma	just to play toys and sit on a seat and do drawing; because I'm being late for school	to play with water and play with sand and play with playdough
Joni	because I ain't 4 no more I'm 5, I had a birthday, I got earrings	because you have to, you have to do your work, you have to draw, you have to play
Joshua	because they have to get ready for school, and they have to get dressed and they have to wash their face and do their teeth and they have to go to the toilet	because they need to learn things
Katy	because they do; but some people don't because they're poorly; because their mums have got to get their money	that's where you do working and play and do puzzles

Kelly	because their mummy says they have to - I told my mum I don't want to go to school and she said, you have to; because you want your packed lunch or your home dinner	because their mum's had enough of them staying at home
Khiernssa	because they want to play	because they want to be busy doing work; because their teacher's going to say, Good boy, and good girl; I know that because I know everything because I am a good girl!
Moh'd	to play and to write	to play, to ride a bike
Robbie	because they want to; my mum's crying and Gary's gone away and Terry's run away and I was crying and my mum smacked me	Gary whacked me on the face. I'm playing with Joni and Gary started to hit me. I kicked him over
Rufia	because they're not ill; because their mum and dad says, if you're not ill you can go to school, so they can go to sleep; mummy looking after 2 babies, she tired	because their mum lets them; because Khiernssa may be going
Tuhura	mummy stays home and the children go to school; to play and to eat apples; I'm going to school to help at school	my mum gives me lolly for my birthday for a new packed lunch
Troy	because they want to go to school because they've got to. But when they're sick they have the day off; because they've got to do busy things and choosing and eating all your dinner up.	because you might be early, because they might be hungry, because you need to get busy at drawing

Child Interviews: December 1997 - April 1998
2. What's the most important thing you do at school?

	<i>First interview</i>	<i>Second interview</i>
AB	playing	play with the bricks, make a house
AR	Abdul Razzak said No and the policeman came	you have to work and be good, do your picture and writing, do your worksheet - or else you have to do it another time - shall I tell you how I know everything? my brother told me!
Amadur	Christmas work [ie.making cards etc]	colouring
Cameron	read a book, play outside	marbling
Jemma	go home and then go to school and get your book bag - because my book's a bit ripped because my dog done it	look at stories
Joni	read books; listen for your name	play with toni, copy her skipping; me and Toni are good at packed lunch
Joshua	put your coat, AND your scarf, AND your hat, and if you've got gloves you've got to wear them too, and if you've got a hood...	stay with the lines on the work sheet
Katy	mums go and get their money; tidy up and play	play: the children have to choose something

Kelly	you have to put your coat on and do it up or if it's raining you've got to have a raincoat and your zip, and if you've got a scarf you put it round like this	you play in the water; I read books
Khiernssa	play with Christmas things and work with Mrs Brooker	work, like, do a jigsaw, eat some snacks and sweets and lollies, because it was Jimmy's birthday tomorrow and we had sweets
Moh'd	Writing	writing
Robbie	Toys, Thomas the Tank trains	to play with Joni at school, and Ben with the computer, and Toni, and Danny
Rufia	play, reading, painting colouring; play with the bikes	play jigsaws
Tuhura	playing and painting; playing with the water	counting, 12345678
Troy	drawing and the computer because it's good; hang your coats up and don't stand on them	Sticking

Appendix F [to chapter 9]

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**F1: Parents' assessments of children's drawing and writing samples
(anonymously graded from 1 to 10 according to approximate skill level)**

Child	'good' drawing	'poor' drawing	drawing resembles own child's	'good' writing	'poor' writing	writing resembles own child's
A.Bokkar	3,10	none	no view[c]	3,10	None	no view
A.Rahman	4,9	3	7,9	7	3	10
Amadur	10,7	none	10	7,9	None	9
Cameron	10,9	none	none	8	3	2
Jemma	[a]					
Joni	7,10	1,2	none	7,10	1,2	none
Joshua	10,4,8,7,5	none	7	10,4,8,7,5	no view	7
Katy	1,10	none	5	10,7,9	None	2
Kelly	7	2	9	9,7	3	9
Khiemssa	8,9	2	No view	8,9	2	no view
Moham'd	[b]					
Robbie	7,10	1,2	none	7,10	1,2	9
Rufia	10	no view	No view	9	no view	no view
Tuhura	7,4	none	No view	7,4	None	no view
Troy	10,7,9,8	1	none	8,9,10	5	none

[a] insufficient time to conduct task

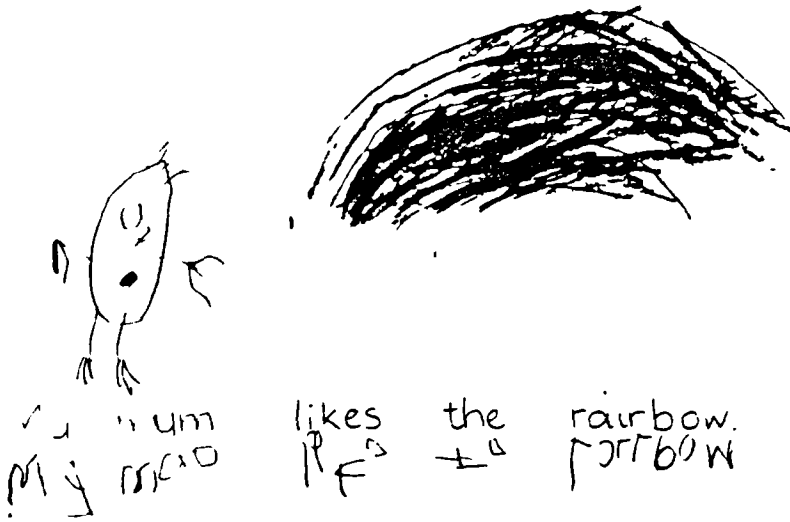
[b] mother said she didn't want to look.

[c] all 'no view' statements indicate that mother said she did not know what her child's work was like.

Samples of children's drawing / writing overleaf.

F1: Examples of children's work sampled by parents

Saheedur



My mum likes the rainbow.



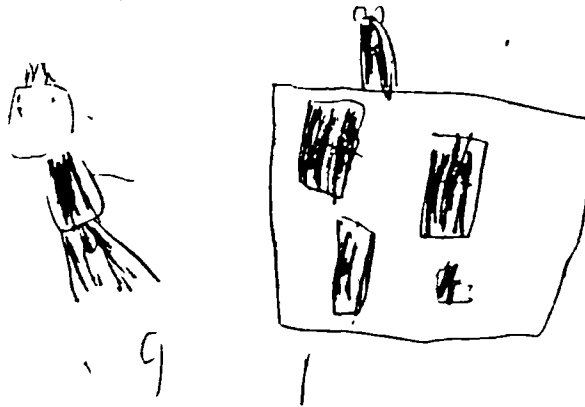
Laura
16.5.98



Lovely work Laura ✓

we went to Dohhcs house.
mum dad wanted to see Dohhcs.

Tarek



dad is in the garden
dad is in the garden

F2: Baseline assessments: children's gains, Oct 97-July 98:
maximum possible score 41

Child	Sept. 97 total	July: Sp/List	July: Reading	July: Writing	July: Maths	July 98 Total	Progress
A.Bokkar	8	8 [2]	5 [2]	4 [2]	4 [2]	21	+13
A.Rahman	11	10 [3]	5 [3]	5 [2]	6 [3]	26	+15
Amadur	3	5 [1]	4 [0]	5 [1]	4 [1]	18	+15
Cameron	8	8 [3]	4 [2]	3 [1]	4 [2]	19	+11
Jemma	11	9 [4]	5 [2]	5 [3]	5 [2]	24	+13
Joni	13	10 [2]	5 [3]	5 [4]	6 [4]	26	+13
Joshua	18	10 [5]	7 [5]	6 [3]	8 [5]	31	+13
Katy	10	10 [4]	6 [2]	5 [2]	5 [2]	26	+16
Kelly	19	10 [8]	6 [3]	5 [2]	7 [6]	28	+9
Khiernssa	10	10 [3]	6 [2]	5 [3]	7 [2]	28	+18
Moham'd	4	6 [1]	5 [0]	5 [2]	3 [1]	19	+15
Robbie	14	8 [4]	5 [2]	5 [3]	6 [4]	24	+10
Rufia	9	10 [3]	6 [0]	5 [3]	5 [3]	26	+17
Tuhura	9	8 [2]	4 [2]	5 [2]	5 [3]	22	+13
Troy	26	10 [10]	11 [5]	6 [4]	8 [7]	35	+9

F3: SBI ratings, October 97: three clusters

Child	Compliance	Prosociality	Independence/ Confidence
Abu Bokkar	[not scored]	---	---
A. Rahman	17	17	10
Amadur	[not scored]	---	---
Cameron	15	20	9
Jelika	[not scored]	---	---
Jemma	15	16	10
Joni	12	13	8
Joshua	16	19	13
Katy	12	15	9
Kelly	11	19	12
Khiernssa	15	18	9
Mohammed	[not scored]	---	---
Robbie	12	16	9
Rufia	14	20	11
Tuhura	[not scored]	---	---
Troy	18	23	13

F4: Children's social behaviour on 3 attributes (end of year reports)

The school's view of children's possession of each attribute is indicated here as below average (*), average (**) or above average (***). Negative attributions receive (0).

Children's dispositions (the school view)

Child	Compliance	Prosocial	Independent/ Confident
Abu Bokkar	**	**	**
A. Rahman	***	**	**
Amadur	0	*	*
Cameron	**	**	**
Jemma	**	**	*
Joni	*	**	*
Joshua	***	**	**
Katy	***	***	**
Kelly	0	*	***
Khiernssa	***	**	***
Mohammed	0	*	*
Robbie	*	0	**
Rufia	***	**	**
Tuhura	*	0	*
Troy	***	***	***

F5: Children's involvement: end of year reports

Child	School report descriptions
Abu Bokkar	Is now able to become engrossed in an activity of his choice... is able to focus and concentrate on tasks
Abdul Rahman	Has a good concentration span for chosen tasks... he shows perseverance and determination in all that he tackles... is motivated to learn
Amadur	Becomes interested in activities when he is able to explore and play freely rather than being directed...his motivation and interest fluctuate greatly... often observes and considers from a distance
Cameron	Does find it difficult to direct and maintain his activity... does not independently engage in a range of activities or learning situations...
Jemma	Able to become absorbed and engrossed.. needs encouragement to investigate and explore for herself... can appear to show little interest in [activities]
Joni	She can be very determined not to participate in a task... may require a friend alongside to become fully involved and contribute
Joshua	Easily becomes engrossed and absorbed... thoroughly focused and concentrated... wants to learn new skills and knowledge.. works with perseverance and determination
Katy	Able to concentrate well... will persevere... thoroughly absorbed... will explore and experiment... shows sheer determination
Kelly	Does sometimes find it difficult to direct and maintain her activity independently...but when motivated and interested is keen to learn...
Khiernssa	Will concentrate and persevere at a task... can independently direct and maintain her own activity... is focused and determined and will persevere at length...
Mohammed	Becomes absorbed in small world toys... concentrates well [on jigsaws]
Robbie	Tends to stand back and observe... has an excellent concentration span for those activities he chooses
Rufia	Is learning to become more independent...works systematically [at jigsaws] with complete concentration and focus..
Tuhura	Finds it hard to become involved... walks about without any real participation... is not always willing to become engaged
Troy	Readily involves himself in tasks and is able to concentrate and focus at length on an activity that interests him

F6: Children's self-assessments (examples for chapter 9 case studies)

Item	Robbie	Kelly	Abu Bokkar	Rufia
At home I like to.....	Play trains	Play with my toys	Play on my bike	Play with my Barbie dolls
At school I like to....	Play cars	Write	Play with the toys	Play in the home corner
I want to learn to....	Work on the computer	Be good in this class and year 1	Do writing	Write
I am happy when....	I am digging in the mud	I play with my friend Jessica	I am being friends	I am with my friends
I am sad when....	I have a headache	The ice cream van doesn't come round	I have got no friends	Somebody shouts at me