

An Exploration Of How
Teachers Make Sense Of Their
School's Environment

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Degree of Doctor of Education

by

Ken Brown

Department of Education, Brunel University

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ABSTRACT

This research explores the understanding teachers have of their local school environment. Using one primary and one secondary school, teachers understandings were explored via the collection and analysis of data predominantly of a qualitative nature. School documentation, teacher interviews and observation of meetings provided the main sources of data used to identify teacher attitudes and knowledge of their local environment.

The research concludes that the relationship schools have with their local environment is based upon a lack of any systematic approach to collecting information about the local community or systematic analysis and description of the local environment. Whilst the schools suggested that they worked in partnership with individuals and agencies within the local community, the operations of the schools reflected an unequal distribution of power, the majority of which was held by the schools.

Teachers tended to interpret their actions in terms of their own professional needs rather than as a product of a systematic consideration of objectives, needs and aspirations that have been agreed jointly with members of the local community and hold sceptical attitudes towards the members of the local community in terms of the potential contribution they can and do make to the professional work of teachers.

The schools demonstrated characteristics of a paternalistic monopoly in the operational style with which they interact with their local communities. The schools use their power to control their relationship with the local community of service users and attempt to control the lifestyles of members of the local community.

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction	7
2. Literature	12
3. Methodology	24
4. Results and Analysis	52
5. Discussion	66
6. Conclusions and Recommendations	75
8. Appendix	79
9. References	133

LIST OF TABLES		Page
Table 1	Age range of teacher respondents	36
Table 2	Posts of responsibility held by respondents to attitude test	36
Table 3	Initial discrimination index for items from the attitude test	37
Table 4	Attitude test – Items with highest discrimination index	38
Table 5	Revised discrimination index for items from attitude test	39
Table 6	Frequency and standard deviation for half A	41
Table 7	Frequency and standard deviation for half B	42
Table 8	Frequency and standard deviation for the whole test	43
Table 9	Items receiving both scores of 1 (strong agreement) and 5 (strong disagreement) (general market conditions)	46
Table 10	Items receiving both scores of 1 (strong agreement) and 5 (strong disagreement) (customer focus)	46
Table 11	Items receiving both scores of 1 (strong agreement) and 5 (strong disagreement) (regulation)	47
Table 12	Items receiving both scores of 1 (strong agreement) and 5 (strong disagreement) (personnel)	47
Table 13	Items receiving both scores of 1 (strong agreement) and 5 (strong disagreement) (finance)	47
Table 14	Source of documents received	100

LIST OF FIGURES		Page
Figure 1	Documentation received catalogue	79
Figure 2	Staff questionnaire	81
Figure 3	Teacher attitudes towards aspects of school activity	83
Figure 4	Teacher Attitudes Test Coding Frame	88
Figure 5	Examples of Data	92

1. INTRODUCTION

The idea that relationship with parents and other environmental agencies is important to both the achievements of individual students and to establishments as a whole is not new. There are arguments that suggest that such relationships still have a long way to go in order to reach optimum productivity. Indeed, Caldwell (1997) calls for a major restructuring of educational provision if the kinds of desired improvements are to be made. This implies that we need to go beyond minor adjustment. Caldwell suggests that re-engineering the school requires radical changes to school design and operations in order to achieve marked improvements in current measures of performance.

Tomlinson (1994) also suggested there was a necessity for schools to re-engineer themselves. For Tomlinson the reason was economic, to do so offered an opportunity to create an organisation that always focused on the customer. Tomlinson focused upon the economic relationship between customer and supplier and suggested that only through a process of re-engineering would the conditions arise for the needs of customers to be fully met.

The growth of research into the characteristics of effective schools over the last 10 years (Reynolds et al 1996) reflects widely held concerns about the variance between educational establishments in their effectiveness and the belief that educational establishments need to improve if the young people and society at large are to gain the skills to confidently meet the challenges that lie ahead. As this work has been reported critical factors appear to be emerging. As far back as 1985 Fullan was commenting that parental input and support were important factors for institutional change at local levels.

Tomlinson's language is different to that of Reynolds because in the case of the latter the focus of attention is towards the school's processes and members. Tomlinson, in contrast, looks towards the relationships between the school as a supplier of educational services to an environment that contains many different kinds of clients, customers and consequential relationships.

In commenting upon the "Schools for the Future" project in Australia, Caldwell (1997) points to factors that it is assumed will lead to improvement in learning. In this case Caldwell is less hesitant bringing the environmental forces directly into the picture. Three of the factors were firstly, the encouragement of parents to participate directly in decisions that affect their children's education, secondly, creating better communication between parents and school to help determine the direction of the school, its character and ethos and, thirdly, to be accountable to the community for the progress of the school and the achievements of students.

Educational establishments react both to conditions that exist internally and to those which are external to it. In the external environment are many players including Government, local authorities, funding bodies HEFC/FEFC, awarding bodies - BTEC, RSA, SEG etc - parents, companies, charities, the media etc. Indeed all of the multi-dimensional agents that express a view both direct and tangential to the business of the educational establishment.

Schools are professional establishments that rest upon expectations, codes of behaviour and cultural infrastructure that create a set of internal actions and behaviour for both individual teachers and institution. Schools are also economic units, that is to say they engage in economic activities similar to any commercial organisation. They employ staff to manage budgets, recruit clients or customers, market their services or products and offer a service to individuals and the wider community. It is not suggested that the terms are used in identical ways to a commercial organisation but we can ask questions such as what, for example, is the service or product offered by a school, or who are its customers?

There are other concepts that a school might take from a commercial enterprise and use in its attempt to understand and respond to its environment. Such concepts include market segmentation, consumer profile, consumer/service led activity and relationship marketing. Many of these concepts involve ideas about the relationship between an organisation and its economic environment which influence the consequential types of behaviour and interaction with the environment.

Schools have not traditionally used the language of the commercial sector to describe their activities. Prior to the era of devolved budgets, much of the management of schools was based around the curriculum, its implementation and other professional matters given that financial and personnel responsibilities were largely managed from the LEA and the use of catchment areas limited the market in which school managers operated.

This situation has now changed. Schools have considerable control over their affairs being responsible for their budgets and recruitment and operating within a market in which parents have the right to shop around for a school and for schools themselves to go beyond their traditional catchment areas to find pupils. Further, the introduction during the early 1990s of Grant Maintained Status offered nearly 1000 secondary schools an opportunity to largely manage their affairs on their own outside LEA control.

These changes have altered the position of the school and its capability to respond to the local community. Having control of its resources provides school managers with opportunities for actions that were denied to them previously. We might thus argue that the school head teacher now has available almost the full range of potential actions as does the managing director of a medium sized business.

How do teachers individually and collectively construct a meaning to this new world? Fullan (1992) suggests from work with teachers that they progressively focused their work and their energies at the classroom level and disengaged from participating in collaborative classroom activity or systematic change at institutional or community level. Further, that older teachers turned their backs on life outside their classroom building protective barriers facing the outside environment. If such a disengagement occurs at community level - in other words beyond the walls of the school - how then does the remnant understanding of that world influence and determine the teacher's behaviour towards it? In what ways do implicit assumptions and dispositions to that environment lead to inefficient, or dysfunctional behaviour towards the environment? How might such a situation be changed so that a redefined understanding of the environment is developed which will lead to a more effective response to conditions in which the school is located?

Robinson and Timperley (1996) point towards the conditions that need to exist for a school to be considered responsive and one criterion identified is a willingness to learn about issues from those outside the school. How do teachers do this? How do they and their schools go about their learning processes. What is their epistemological stance in this respect and how is this reflected in their actions? Habermas (1984) suggests that perhaps teachers do not actually do this, rather they rest upon an assumed shared consensus about what is appropriate and normal where teachers presume that actions would attract parental support rather than check to see if this was actually the case. This investigation will attempt to disentangle some of these differing views about how teachers experience and make sense of their environment.

The research thus seeks to:

- establish teachers' understanding of the elements of their world that assist or hinder the school;
- to find whether such understandings are created through a systematic process of interaction with the local community;
- to reveal their associated behavioural patterns;
- to consider the potential consequences to the school of an interactive experience with the world in which it is located.

This study does not assume that a market exists. Indeed, my personal view like that of Bottery (1999) is that whilst some movement has taken place towards a market for education, particularly since 1988, a full market in education has never been achieved.

The importance of this research derives from its attempt to uncover what understandings teachers have of their community and how such understandings impact upon their function and actions. I want to explore whether schools can benefit from the use of some concepts of the market place to improve performance. The term market place is used to describe the general range of concepts that describe the economic relationship between those who use educational services and those who provide them – these might include the notion of customer and customer service, service supplier, competition, the regulation of providers of services,

compensation to service users when service provided does not meet expectations, market research, customer orientation and supplier orientated, investment and return. By improving and refining the definition of the environment in which the school is located, teacher and organisational behaviour can be modified which might lead to an improvement in effectiveness for both.

2. LITERATURE

The literature on schools and their community may be separated into a number of types. There is considerable literature on schools and their parents, particularly on how parents may help pupil achievement (Bastiani & Wolfendale 2000), home school agreements and mutual support arrangements (Ouston 2000, Hallgarten 2000)), impacting upon attendance (Howard 2000) and improving learning (Whalley 2001, Bloom 2000, McNaughton 2001, Collins 2000), particular elements of the school population (Lee 2001, Swain 2000). These studies tend to focus upon the internal relationship between schools and parents often looking at strategies for 'helping' parents contribute better to their children's education (Ball 1998). There is also literature focusing upon the economic relationships within education but usually at system level (Tooley 1993, Bottery 1999, Hughes,1995, Ball 1993) but there is very little literature that looks at how individual schools and teachers conceive of their local community through their practices and utterances and particularly with an economic backcloth to the investigation.

The idea that parents should be seen as consumers of education emerged in the late 1970s and 1980s in the writings of various right-wing educationists including Cox and Boyson (1977) and Few (1987). Their view was that education had become too producer-dominated and that the route to reverse this position was to open education to market forces, The Hillgate Group (1986) suggested that the survival of schools depended upon their capability to satisfy their customers. The group viewed parents as the principal customers and believed they should be free to choose a school as they wished. The consequence of a reformed market would be that schools and the educational service would be shaped by parental demand. Schools attractive to parents would flourish whilst those rejected would go the wall.

The idea of seeing education as an economic commodity that could be delivered through some form of market framework was not confined to the UK. Carter & O'Neill (1995) summarise the evidence on the state of education policy making in their review of international perspectives on educational reform by identifying a new orthodoxy - 'a shift is taking place' they say 'in the relationship between politics, government and education in complex westernised post-industrialised countries.' (p9).

They cite five main elements to this new orthodoxy.

- improving national economies by tightening a connection between schooling, employment, productivity and trade
- enhancing student outcomes in employment related skills and competencies
- attaining more direct control over curriculum content and assessment
- reducing the costs to government of education
- increasing community input to education by more direct involvement in school decision-making and pressure of market place

“.....this convergence in education policy, indeed in social policy more generally, involves the replacement of bureaucratic-professional regimes of organisation and provision with managerial-entrepreneurial regimes or, in other words the marketisation of education and the insertion of business methods into the organisation and the management of schools - and colleges and universities.education is becoming commodified” (p9)

The arguments for the introduction of a market for education along with reforms that have sought to move education towards this objective have received their criticism, for example Ball (1993), and Bowe (1994). However, Ball (1999) uses Michael Foucault's (1979) notion of a teacher having a soul to suggest the introduction of reforms that include marketisation and performance measures impact upon the practice of teaching and teachers. Bell suggests that such reforms challenge the soul of the teacher causing teachers and their practice to be changed in response to the reforms. Classroom practice is increasingly made up out of responses to changing external demands. Teachers are thought of and characterised in new ways, increasingly they are thought of as pedagogic technicians. As a result, what it means to be a teacher is fundamentally reconstituted.

Ball suggests that the teacher's soul does not lie in the values of the changing external circumstances that confront teachers in the UK as well as other westernised countries. Nevertheless, changes have taken place and do not merely surround schools but also permeate their daily activities. How do teachers see such changes and what sense do they make of the

economic community outside the school that may be making new expectations of the school resulting from such policy reforms?

That tension has arisen within the teaching profession as they have come to interpret the consequences of reform have been very public. A tension exists between a view that locates the source of underachievement within the individual child or family, housing estate or community against one that locates the source of underachievement within the individual school and school system.

Ainscow (1988) suggests that the notion of a deficit model has been subject to massive criticism and that this has helped to redirect attention away from a concentration on the characteristics of individual children and their families, towards a consideration of the processes of schooling. Ainscow believes that despite the shift in thinking, deficit thinking is still deeply rooted resulting in a belief that some pupils require alternative treatment. Such ingrained thinking can generate a view of certain pupils and families as 'them' who have particular and negative characteristics that are not like 'us'. Such a stance can distract attention from the possibilities of pedagogic development arising from the positive challenge to teachers of meeting the learning needs of this group of pupils. Perceived differences between pupils and families could be seen as opportunities for learning rather than as problems to be fixed.

Ainscow agrees that teaching methods are neither devised nor implemented in a vacuum. He suggests that the design, selection and use of particular teaching approaches and strategies arise from perceptions about learning and learners. Thus teacher belief systems become important in the way that teachers conceive of their location both in respect of the teaching and learning relationship with pupils and with their relationship with the local community. Such belief systems become important if teachers see some pupils as having problems that need fixing, problems that can't be fixed, pupils coming from families that are deficient in skills, or see themselves within a profession that is under attack from the press or government or has the right to carry on its activities with little or no challenge from those to whom the educational service is provided.

It can be argued that the culture within a school has an impact upon how teachers see their role and work, and how they see pupils, parents, governors, local business and so on. Hargreaves (1995) argues that school cultures can be seen as having a reality-defining function, enabling those within an institution to make sense of themselves, their actions and their environment. A current reality defining function of culture, he suggests is often a problem-solving function inherited from the past. In this way today's cultural form created to solve an emergent problem often becomes tomorrow's taken-for-granted recipe for dealing with matters stripped of their novelty.

How then do teachers make sense of conditions within the local community if their construction of reality is determined by a school culture itself affected by issues of the past? Fullan (1991) suggests that by and large schools find it difficult to cope with change. There is a tension between schools needing to respond to new challenges but at the same time they also need to maintain some continuity between their present and their previous practices. There is, therefore a potential conflict between development and maintenance. The problem is that schools tend to generate organisational structures that predispose them toward one or the other. Schools (or parts of schools) at the development extreme may be so over-confident of their innovative capacities that they take on too much too quickly, thus damaging the quality of what already exists. On the other hand, schools at the maintenance extreme may either see little purpose in change or have a poor history of managing innovation. Moving practice forward, therefore, necessitates a careful balance of maintenance and development.

However, how is such a balance to be achieved? How do schools judge the needs for change? Indeed, do they do so or is their disposition to change determined by the latest Act or Circular from government? Perhaps it is a response to their latest report from Ofsted. Do teachers engage in a dialogue with the local community to develop a shared understanding of future needs or is this debate seen as one located within the profession? Is the dialogue outward looking to those social and economic conditions that surround a school or inward looking to the professional concerns and responses to educational issues and reforms originating from within the profession itself or from a government's dialogue with the profession?

Ainscow (1998) suggests a typology of 6 'conditions' to be a feature of moving schools:

- Effective leadership, not only by the head teacher but spread throughout the school.
- Involvement of staff, students and community in school policies and practice.
- A commitment to collaborative planning.
- Co-ordination strategies, particularly in relation to the use of time.
- Attention to the potential benefits of enquiry and reflection
- A policy for staff development that focuses upon classroom practice.

The involvement of the community in school policy and practices is one of the conditions and reflects a similar view of Easen (1998) who suggests ten key themes needed to support educational achievement. Of these themes two are parental involvement in children's learning and community facilities in schools. However, how do teachers see the 'community', what are its boundaries and make-up? What attempts do they make to understand and engage with the community? This study will attempt to shed some light on these questions within specific school locations and with the backdrop of the economic circumstances that surrounds the school.

For some, the development of an economic climate surrounding a school seems to conflict with the central being of what a school and teachers are about. Cochlin and Davis (1996) suggest that on the one hand, there are other claims for autonomy and flexibility, for creating an educational system responsive to the local context, where equality and quality are promoted whilst on the other, education is to become more business-like, more managerial, all efficient, defined in terms of market responsiveness and market forces. For Cochlin and Davis, responding to a local context appears to conflict with the language of economics or business. Perhaps they see such language as a reinforcement of the notion that education is, or should be, a commodity for consumption and that this is a notion to be rejected.

Snook (1992) suggests that good schools are those in which principals are leaders not managers, and in which teachers form a community of professionals who talk a lot among themselves about school and related matters. Good schools spend more on education, pay more to teachers, have lower teacher pupil ratios and have more resources. For Snook there

seems to be a suggestion that the notion of managers, and perhaps all that goes with the business-like model of education, is to be rejected and that a community of teaching professionals has an inward looking process of self-discourse. However, as Mortimore (1997) suggests schools are part of a wider society and subject to its norms, rules and influences and with limited independent impact upon pupil output. Reynolds & Packer (1992) suggest there is an argument to be made that schools and teachers need to have a focus towards those forces outside the school that seem to impact so greatly upon pupil performance. Rather than have a lot of discussion amongst themselves it might be useful for teachers to have discussions with those who directly use the service or those in the community who have an indirect interest in the outcomes of the service.

Within the context of the economic climate that surrounds a school, whatever that might be, one starting point might be the way, and on what basis, teachers interact with those who have direct and indirect interest in the outcomes of the educational process. The word 'parent' offers us nothing about the relationship between such an adult and a school at which the adult's child attends. The word parent informs us of something about a relationship between an adult and at least one child. Within an economic context would it be helpful to use terms such as 'customer' or 'client'? Such terms imply a little more about a relationship between supplier and user of a service. To use such terms opens the door to a discussion about the form of relationship that should be present, about obligations and responsibilities. Importantly, in modern commercial life, these terms have attached to them assumptions about the need of the supplier to have clear strategies to meet the needs of the individual using the service or acquiring the product.

This study does not attempt to assert that schools should use such terms nor that parents should be seen as customers or clients. Rather, it is whether teachers have any economic view as they look upon their community and, if so, what it might be. Teachers talking to parents as customers is not necessarily in conflict with teachers talking to parents without the attachment. As Collins (1997) suggests that giving pupils and their parents a voice in the classroom is important in the genuine pursuit of shared understanding between pupils and parents. Perhaps what is at stake is whether the discussion, if couched in terms of customer, places a greater

emphasis on the teacher to listen and adapt practice in light of ‘customer’ comment than the teacher would prefer. The teacher-parent dialogue may support and reinforce the teacher’s authority to control the learning situation from a teacher as professional point of view rather than place an obligation on the teacher to respond to the ‘customer’ when operating from a quasi-business approach.

Edwards and Aldred (1999) suggest that teachers see children and parents within their family roles, a process of ‘familialisation’. Under the process of familialisation, located as sons, daughters, brothers, sisters and so on in their home, children are increasingly conceptualised in terms of their familial dependency status. This has been reinforced by prolongation of the education aspect of institutionalisation in young people’s lives particularly with the shrinking of youth labour markets and benefits for young people, and an emphasis on, and growth of, further education and training. Familialisation involves an emphasis on children’s home environment and on their being the financial and social responsibility of their parents.

If teachers see children and their parents in this way, it may reduce their capability to see them as economic actors – customers or clients. Indeed, if the economic relationship and responsibility is seen solely as that of parents it may preclude the possibility of teachers seeing themselves, or the school, as having any part to play in the economic development of the child and parent or having any economic relationship with them. Thus if a builder or a photocopier repair mechanic arrives and works on a school site, the individual is seen as conducting an economic role rather than as a mother, step-parent, grandparent whereas when parents are engaged by a school they may be seen within their familial roles rather than within any form of economic relationship.

Edwards and Aldred also suggest that the introduction of the home-school agreement has reinforced the teacher’s focus upon familial roles rather than the parent as an economic actor or the school’s interface with an economic world. Indeed, Edwards and Aldred suggest a process of colonisation of the family through institutional interventions that encourage family homes to become more like educational settings.

Parents are encouraged to be involved in their children's education to the extent that the encouragement becomes a taken for granted wisdom, the common sense thing to do. This common sense position is supported by newspapers such as the Guardian which often carries a parents page alongside its weekly education section, while the Independent newspaper has carried a series for parents on dealing with homework.

It might be argued that though this process, attention is deflected from the relationship between the provider and consumer of an economic service to a rather different relationship in which the educational institution controls the educational process and the family is perhaps seen as having a very junior part in the process and one in which they are instructed in how to perform rather than be part of a dialogue between participants each having legitimate interests to pursue.

This study intends to explore something of the value system held by teachers by trying to see what sense they make of their economic environment. One reason for this is to see how far the value system held can account for the interaction style taken by teachers and schools. Babiae (1998) suggests a teacher's behaviour is defined by the characteristics of the value system held. Babie suggests that the inner mental representation is gradually incorporated into the individual's personality structure and then influences the individual teacher's response to teaching. Babiae also suggests that the development of the implicit pedagogy is a combination of individual development and the result of collective wisdom that forms a culturally conditioned set of 'conceptions, schemes and screenplays'. In this way the school as an institution may play a role in developing the mindset of teachers in their conceptual and attitudinal framework brought to play at the boundary between school and its community. Teachers may bring a range of developed concepts and mental dispositions to parents, local industry, relationships with the local authority, central government as well as concepts such as personnel management, marketing and finance. What then becomes interesting is not just what the mindset of teachers is but also the processes that come to develop and influence it.

This point is continued by Butroyd (1999). His research placed teachers into two main classifications – 'simplex' and 'duplex'. Teachers whom he described as 'reassured simplex'

had characteristics in which the concerns of most teachers were restricted to the nature of pedagogy. Very few of the broader questions were raised. The bounded nature of these teachers' values was accompanied by a reassurance that derived from some combination of status, experience, and subject knowledge. The focused nature of their values did not suggest a negative perception of their role, or schooling, but rather an avoidance of the wider issues. Sometimes avoidance was on an intentional strategy, or simply it was because broader issues were not something discussed that much. They rarely had the opportunity to engage in professional dialogue of educational philosophy with colleagues or other teachers. The simplex group had a profound love of their subject

A second group of simplex was identified called the 'disappointed simplex'. For this group self-reliance turned to disappointment, and for some, isolation, conservatism, or even disengagement from the school as a cultural body. They were generally concerned with issues of pupil behaviour, and social control, as their perspective failed to find resonance in the school community. They worried about the lack of authority, and were also reluctant to enter into dialogue about the broader moral and political issues of schooling. However, they expressed the same preoccupation with the love of subject as the other simplex group.

The second main classification was that of 'duplex values'. These teachers were likely to be in the older age range (over 39 years old), and had broader experience than their own subject classroom. Strongly held values which had been reassured in experience, and possibly recognised by the school, either through promotion or professional dialogue, encouraged continued engagement with a number of issues. Although some teachers recognised the influence of their outside experiences, most maintained that their biggest influences were internal to the school. Most teachers welcomed the changes of the 1998 ERA, although there were some exceptions. A major reason for this positive perspective was that they felt they were in control of the pedagogic aspects of teaching and that some of their responsibility had been removed reducing a feeling of vulnerability. The overwhelming concern of this group was with the processes of education rather than the subject content.

Whilst Butroyd's research was not concerned with teacher's attitudes towards their economic

environment, it does suggest how a teacher's collection of attitudes may predispose the teacher to particular responses both within the classroom and in those engagements with the school's external environment. Both groups, simplex and duplex, had a rather inward looking focus and even when the duplex group members had wider experiences that could be brought to their professional life, they seemed to put these aside and find attachment to internal influences. Both groups had a love of their subject and although the duplex group were able to focus upon wider educational issues, this was done within a professional setting internal to the school.

This evidence seems to be supported by Huberman's (1993) analysis of forces needing stability to provide career satisfaction. In his study a number of areas were identified. These were:

- an enduring commitment to the profession;
- manageable classes where one can maintain good relationships with pupils;
- good relationships with colleagues;
- a balance between school and home life.

Again, the importance of relationships with colleagues and the wider profession are seen as critical to providing career satisfaction. With such a collegiate orientation, how far will teachers look to the wider relationships beyond the school gate and how far will such issues command any importance?

Huberman's speculative model of the sequence of the professional life: of a secondary school teacher does not fit neatly into Butroyd's categorisations

0-3 yrs	beginnings, feeling one's way
4-6 yrs	stabilisation, consolidation of a pedagogical repertoire
7-25 yrs	diversification, activism, reassessment
26-33 yrs	serenity, affective distance, conservatism
34-40 yrs	disengagement (serene or bitter)

Huberman's model does not provide an indication of a maturing of attitudes as suggested by

Butroyd. Indeed, it is possible to detect a process by which teachers, in Huberman's model, appear to withdraw from the educational process rather than become more actively engaged within a debate about educational issues.

Hood and Ouston (2000) also point to conflicting models of parents roles in schooling and education. They point to more recent models of parents as 'consumers' and 'partners', along with the more longstanding models of 'supporters' and 'problems'. In their research looking at the impact of the home-school agreement, and which focused upon mothers, the models of parents as supporters or as problems were more prominent than models of parents as consumers or partners.

Their study, which concluded that it did not support the government's view that home-school agreements would improve home school relations, seems to suggest that at the heart of the rhetoric of home-school agreements is a model of 'problem' parents who do not comply with a school's desires. The study reports a convergence of teacher and governor views that home-school agreements were unlikely to make any difference to those 'supportive' parents and students who already 'comply' and were unlikely to make any difference to those 'unsupportive' parents and students who will not 'comply'.

This work again supports the contention that much of teachers' position is concerned with control of the parent rather than seeing them as having an economic relationship with consequential forms of engagement.

The study by Gill Crozier (1999) also seems to confirm the teacher view of parent as familial player who needs to be controlled. Amongst 15 teachers interviewed a range of views about, and attitudes towards parents, was expressed. Notions of the 'good' parent, the 'ideal' type of parent were found. Teachers tended to have a particular set of expectations of parents' role and behaviour and thus when the parent fails to match this model, teachers were critical and accuse them of lack of support. Some teachers divided the parent group into three: a minority of supportive parents who are supportive of the school, interested in education but critical as well; a larger minority who will attend parents' evenings or will only go and see the English

and Maths teachers, and will support the school where they feel it is in their child's interests; and the majority who don't want to have any contact with the school and included those regarded as indifferent or were not able to cope with their children themselves, or even in a very few cases were hostile to the school. There was an overall view amongst the teachers that parents were not involved in the school or were not giving them the support they desired.

Crozier comments that although the school in the study wanted parents to attend the various events that were organised for them and would have preferred the PTA to be still functioning, when asked if they had any expectations of parents, in relation to the school and their children's education, three responses predominated. These were: to be more supportive of the teachers; to oversee their children's homework, that is to see that it is completed; and that they have the necessary equipment to undertake their school work – pens, protractors etc..

These latter arguments have focused upon how teachers see parents and although there is little evidence on how teachers see parents within an economic role, there is considerable evidence that suggests teachers view parents within a familial role and that as such parents are not seen as customers or clients, rather as individuals who should support schools in their work and are subject to controlling measures when they do not or are believed not to do so.

The evidence collected in this study will be viewed in relation to the positions set out above and whether more can be said about how schools view their local communities.

3. METHODOLOGY

In trying to find out what understandings, if any, teachers had of their community, the research was concerned with some of the practices undertaken within secondary and primary schools along with a number of teachers' experiences and their interpretations. Qualitative and quantitative approaches to data collection were used and a grounded approach was taken to locate meanings both within elements of data and when taken as a whole. The research was concerned with the sense or understandings that teachers brought to their external community and whether such understandings were the product of a process of development within the school. Consequently, the methodology not only sought to capture how teachers spoke of their surroundings, but also attempted to view and understand the teachers' stance through their written materials and actions within the schools. Data was thus collected from questionnaires, interviews with teachers, observation of meetings, and an analysis of a range of documentation used within the schools.

It was not expected that teachers would naturally speak and write in technical terms. (Hughes 1995) If they did make explicit references, such as the use of economic terminology, to their external community then it was acknowledged that this would aid developing an understanding of the way they experience their external environment. However, what was more likely was that a combination of explicit and implicit beliefs and understandings would be used by teachers in addition to a range of explicit information and experience to make sense of their world. For this latter reason both the spoken and written language used by teachers along with their practices were examined for their implicit representation of ideas about their external community.

The research was, in effect, a snapshot in time. The teachers, meetings and documentation that provided the evidence were that found within a defined time limit - September 1999 to July 2000 - and the researcher himself brought a volume of cultural capital to the process. Whilst the process of research seeks to separate the researcher's own personal thoughts and feelings about the subject from the evidence obtained, the fact that the researcher must, in some way, experience the phenomena or social action and think about it suggests that this

process can only be completed through some sort of personal cultural set brought to it. Whilst this limitation and potential danger to the methodology is acknowledged, it is also hoped that the methodology used and considerable volume of evidence collected has provided a firm base for reasonable judgments to be made about it.

The research was based upon two case studies, one secondary and one primary school. This was done in order to allow a close study of each school that would offer an intimacy in relationship allowing access to informal and open dialogue with teachers. The researcher was going to be involved with each school for 6-9 months as data collection proceeded and it was desired that a relaxed relationship was developed in order that discussion would move on from 'official' or formal rhetoric to the personal beliefs and understandings of individual teachers.

The two schools selected came from different local education authorities, one a city primary school and the other a large rural secondary school. The schools were both large for their type and had a range of staff in age and experience along with stable management. There were no known issues relating to staff, buildings or finance which would unduly cause a short term skew in teacher attitudes and which would dominate the responses. The aim was not to find "typical" or "normal" schools since the case study approach being used will not be trying to make generalisations about all schools. However, what was sought were schools which, in general terms, would present the kinds of operational conditions that would be found in the large bulk of similar schools.

The researcher was conscious that the relationship between researcher and participants was important and needed to have some methodological basis. Elliott (1988) sets out a number of categories of outsider-insider relationships that might underpin a research process. The notion of researcher acting as participant observer had some merits in that one desire of the research was to gain closeness to the participants in order to share something of their lived experience through close observation and in addition there was an expectation that participants would take part in the process of knowledge generation through some aspects of the methodology.

Elliott points out some of the limitations to the participant observation method, including the

assumption of reliable informers and the failure to foster self-criticism due to researchers not rendering problematic the values and beliefs which underpin the participants' practices. These issues were included in the researcher's original thinking for this research. A methodology was to be constructed that would use a variety of data sources to cross-check for validity and one outcome of the research was to create some self reflection on the part of participants through feedback and discussion with the schools at the conclusion of the research.

The research methodology would take some aspects of participant observation along with elements of the 'outsider' acting as a 'natural broker' (Elliott 1988 pp 159). From this stance the researcher would be considered by participants as 'a detached individual who would collect and process data in a manner free from subjective bias.' (Elliot pp 159). The researcher would be neutral in so far as judgements would not be made about the social practices observed but process the interpretations and judgements of the participants. The researcher would elicit and classify perceptions and judgements amongst insider participants and map out the issues for educational policy and practice. To achieve the necessary relationship a strong level of trust needs to be constructed between researcher and the inside participants and this was the subject of action by the researcher. That the researcher wanted to foster improved communication and more informed debate about education within society was an objective also supported by the neutral broker role.

There was a need to include ethical considerations in the research methodology particularly to support the neutral-broker stance where the process of access to participants and the use of data collected would be important to the creation of the appropriate relationship. Given that teachers' involvement would be central to the data collection process, the researcher acknowledged that their understanding of the purpose of the research, its process and what would be done with the outcomes could impact upon their desire to take part and the form of participation that they may offer. Given also that the research methodology was seeking to capture informal discourse as well as formal it was acknowledged that confidence between the researcher and the teachers was important if openness was to be achieved. Consequently, the researcher made the decision that teachers should be fully informed of the nature of the research and that individual teachers need not take part if they did not wish to. It was also

decided that the two schools would not be identified nor any of the staff. Discussions took part with both head teachers where a set of practical protocols were agreed. It was also agreed that each head teacher would introduce the research to their staff and give it full support and that they would introduce elements of the methodology to staff. It was believed that this process would allow the heads to place the research in context of each school's current position and would be the most likely way in which staff would participate. Never the less, each element of the methodology contained written guidance to staff on participation. Both schools reported an element of 'questionnaire fatigue' amongst staff that might impact upon the response and that the involvement of head teachers in the introductory phase might help to overcome any hesitancy to participate. Informal relationships were created with staff, perhaps over lunch or coffee breaks, as part of the confidence raising process. Feedback from staff appeared to suggest that they welcomed an opportunity to talk with someone about the issues concerned rather than merely complete a questionnaire from an unseen researcher. Teachers also did not appear to mind that all comments were recorded and would be transcribed later. The reassurances on confidentiality and an understanding of what the research was attempting to achieve appeared to provide a basis upon which teachers were happy to participate.

The general approach to data collection was one of a funnelling process begun with a review and analysis of documentation from each school followed by observation of meetings and individual interviews with a sample of staff and finally the use of a staff attitude test.

A funneling process for data collection was used in order to collect background data that could begin to illuminate issues and aspects of understandings which could be progressively investigated in greater depth. A review and analysis of documentation was used as part of the process in which background information was collected. The initial data collection attempted to explore what each school set out in its written documentation as a reference point against which issues could be explored with teachers through interviews, actions in meeting and via an attitude test.

Both schools provided a range of documentation for analysis. Documents included:

- Prospectus

- Annual Report of Governors
- Policy documents
- Newsletters to parents

These documents were used as a funnelling agent to identify general trends and issues that could be followed up in the discussions with individual members of staff.

Texts and transcriptions of meetings and individual interviews were examined as a whole first to see if there were any general meanings attached to the statement as a whole (Bowden 1994) before seeking to identify elements of text or comment that could be regarded as pertinent to the study and classified in some way. There were two general forms of comment sought. Firstly were those comments that used language having some clear identifiable link with an aspect of the external school community. Secondly, there might also be comments that whilst not specifically focusing upon the external community, offer additional evidence of the teacher's view of their school's environment.

One consequence of the approach used is that some extracts used to exemplify results are of some length. This is because in some instances the exemplification arises from taking the whole of a piece of dialogue or text from which a meaning is derived. In these instances it is taking the example as a whole that leads to its meaning rather than discrete key words or phrases.

It has already been mentioned that a case study approach is being used as the prime methodological approach. Cohen & Manion (1994) describe this as a "complex phenomena" for investigation and as a consequence some of the boundaries within the methodological process will be "fuzzy" (Tesch 1990). Validity will not be reliant upon one measure. Alderman et al (1980) suggests that the advantages of a particular technique for collecting witnesses accounts of an event - triangulation – were considerable. This is at the heart of the intention of the case study worker to respond to the multiplicity of perspectives present in a social situation. Consequently methodological triangulation, via the use of a variety of data collection and analysis techniques, will be used as a foundation for developing valid outcomes.

At the early stage in data collection, a sample of teachers were asked to complete a document catalogue that would record all documents received over a period of one month. The log asked teachers to record the nature of the document, its source and what the teacher did with it. (Figure 1) The reason for this source of data was to see whether there was any systematic approach to the collection and use of information about the local community or wider aspects of the school's environment. Although it was acknowledged that potential information about a school's environment could arrive at various times during a year, it was hoped that a period of one month would offer a reasonable view of the type of documentation received by teachers during the year and what teachers would do with it.

After the initial data collection afforded by the literature analysis and documentation log, attempts were made to observe meetings and make arrangements to hold individual interviews with a sample of staff. The purpose of these two activities was to hear 'teacher talk' and see if this opportunity offered further evidence of teacher views of their world and insights to how such views are generated. In the case of the meetings, the aim was to hear both the formal discussion and any informal remarks, the 'off the record' comments that might also shed light on the issues. The individual meetings would revolve around a semi-structured interview (Figure 2) and allow for targeted discussion on issues that would arise following a consideration of the initial evidence from school literature and document log.

An attempt was made to visit a number of different types of meetings that would offer access to different staff and different discussions. Actual meetings were determined by availability but meetings included:

- Governor's sub-committee
- Senior management team
- Year co-ordinators planning meeting
- Annual parents meeting

The approach used in the meetings was one of the form found in non-participant observation and, with the agreement of the participants, all meetings were recorded for later

transcription. It is acknowledged that because the meeting observations came relatively early in the data collection process, the researcher's presence might have an impact upon what takes place. Comments might be more guarded than otherwise and at risk was the availability of the informal comment if participants felt uncomfortable that comments were being recorded. This issue had been subject to discussion between the researcher and head teachers and it had been agreed to make the meetings as informal as possible and to explain to participants at the start of each meeting what the research was about and let staff ask questions as they felt appropriate. Staff were told that the focus of the research was about how schools worked with their local communities and that the aim of the particular exercise was to gain information from the school's point of view. Given that in each school the research unfolded over a period of time it became clear that, by the time the process had arrived at the meetings and interviews stage, staff were already aware of the research and seemed to have passed the point (if one ever existed) of having major concerns about it. Consequently, the researcher was made to feel very much welcome by all staff and there did not seem to be any hesitancy about making informal remarks within recorded sessions. Additionally, the researcher's experience may have been seen by staff as a sound basis for the trust upon which the neutral broker role would be undertaken and they appeared happy to collaborate with the methodology.

The individual discussions with staff took place at the end of the data collection process. The discussions were based upon a semi-structured interview lasting 30 minutes and were seeking to further probe understandings and judgments. Again, the interviews were recorded for later transcription. The sample for the individual interviews and document log were the same. In both schools 6 members of staff were identified by the head teacher who either met the following criteria or were a best fit:

- Head teacher
- Staff with academic responsibility – eg numeracy co-ordinator
- Staff with pastoral responsibility
- Staff without any additional responsibility
- Oldest serving member of staff
- Youngest member of staff

In addition it was hoped to have a balance between males and females in the sample.

The structured interviews had the same schedule of questions. These included:

- What is the most important information you use in the course of your job?
(Subsidiary: Where does it come from, how do you use it?)
- What other information do you use in your work that you find useful?
(Subsidiary: Where does it come from, what do you think of the information provided by Ofsted?)
- Do you use many of the government documents?
(Subsidiary: How do you use them, why do you not use them, have there been particular ones that have been useful?)
- What do you think of government reforms of recent years?
(Subsidiary: Can you think of any that you have particularly welcomed or disliked?)
- Can you please describe your parent body as best you can.
- Most schools are seen as part of a community. What do you see as the boundaries of the community of which (school name) is a part?
(Subsidiary: Do think the boundaries have changed over recent years, do you think they might change in the future?)
- Do you think schools are funded adequately?
(Subsidiary: If no, where do you think additional finance should come from)
- Do you think that teachers are paid adequately?
(Subsidiary: What do you think an ordinary teacher should be paid, what other workers do you think are comparable to teachers?)
- As we look ahead, what changes do you see, if any, to the way schools or teachers work?

Head teachers had one additional question. This was ‘Do you bring disparate staff views together to form a school view? If so, how do you do this?’ This question arose from the desire to see if there was a process in place that constructed understandings of the school environment or whether the school was a collection of individual understandings and interpretations.

As before, comments within the meetings and responses to the structured interviews were considered in their whole before examining them discretely. The comments were considered to see if aspects of teachers' understandings of their environment could be identified through a grounded process of data consideration and reiteration. Additionally, consideration was given to whether categories of response could be found and, if so, what they might be.

Construction of the Attitude Test

Arising out of the documentation and discussions with staff was evidence of strong statements and indications that attitudes were held relating to the economic relationship of the school to its environment. This led to a view by the researcher that it might be helpful if the data collection process was extended to include the exploration of the production and use of an attitude test to assess attitudes of staff towards their external environment. It was felt that such a test might offer opportunities to begin to focus teacher attitudes around identifiable values and attitudes. The test itself might also be a useful outcome to the research.

Initial considerations were of the structure and type of test that would meet the needs of a particular element of the data collection exercise. These needs were:

- That completion of the test by respondents could be executed in a short period of time.
- A test which would be relatively inexpensive to construct and execute.
- A use of language in the test which would enable respondents to respond in a valid way.
- A structure and presentation that would enable the test to have a reliability in the production of data.

It was also felt that a term such as "economic environment" would not have a common meaning to teachers and would probably not be a useful term to use without condition. It was felt, however, that from the documentation and interviews there were a number of areas that would be a useful starting point for testing teacher attitudes. These were:

- general market conditions
- the concept of customer
- regulation of (aspects of the market) schools
- funding issues

- personnel issues

Given the desire to have a test that was easy to complete and would not take much time to do so, the researcher was led towards a style of test in which respondents would be offered a range of statements to which they would have to respond indicating whether they agreed or not. The researcher had a desire to see if there was a range of strength of feelings towards particular issues and, as a consequence, a Likert style five point scale was devised from a score of 1 indicating strong agreement, to 5 indicating strong disagreement. A score of 3 would indicate a neutral stance.

It was acknowledged that the use of a Likert style approach had its limitations. Respondents selecting the same numerical score for an item may not have the same motivations for doing so or have the same depth of feeling about it. Additionally, whilst statements should indicate an easily understood attitude, the meaning that each statement has for each respondent may differ depending upon their individual process and context for interpretation. The use of an attitude test is dependent, in part, upon the current context in which the test is used. It is possible that events impacting upon all of the individuals, or some of them, may influence their responses on the day. Thus the test is snapshot of teacher attitudes at one moment in time and thus cannot provide assurance that outcomes will not change over time.

It was clear that statements would need to be relatively brief and yet be sufficiently clear for respondents to be able to express attitudes. The language used in the questions needed to reflect "everyday" language of teachers so that the statements had a meaning located within their working lives given that it is their working environment that is being investigated. Thus economic language was kept to a minimum although the economic concepts and ideas were clear.

Initially a total of 74 statements were constructed across five categories (See Figure 3). These consisted of 23 items under the heading of "general market conditions", 18 items under the term "customer focus", 16 items for "regulation", 10 items under the heading of "personnel" and 6 items for "finance". Examples of each category include:

Category A: general market conditions - *Competition between schools damages education provision*

Category B: customer focus - *Parents are customers of schools*

Category C: personnel - *Schools have good personnel functions*

Category D: finance - *State Schools are adequately funded for the job they do*

Category E: regulation - *Schools should be free from LEA control*

There was no attempt to make the volume of statements within each category the same because the areas were not seen as "equal" areas of investigation. Each has its place within a school environment but it was felt that an area such as customer focus was more developed in terms of current educational practice and debate and offered opportunities to gain insights which impacted upon other areas. Similarly, it was felt that there were a number of issues that could be investigated under the heading of "general market conditions" given the nature of debate that has been occurring in recent years. The other three areas appear in the school environment but as such are perhaps not as well developed in school practice terms. Consequently, it was felt that an initial insight could be gained which would enable further investigation at the second stage.

The individual statements were constructed to elicit a boundary of opinion within an establishment against a range of positive and negative statements. Although the boundary being constructed was that of the teachers' economic perceptions, the intent was to use language that would be recognised by teachers and enable them to respond in a confident manner. It was also desired that teachers would provide their immediate reactions to the statements rather than be the product of personal or corporate dialogue. This was not simply as a result of concerns over ease of use, but also to gain the individual teacher's attitude towards particular questions. As a consequence the statements had to be simple and offer clarity within the context of the teacher's environment.

The sample used was the entire staff of both schools. The junior school had a staff of 22 whilst that for the secondary school was 51.

An approach has been used to bring together the results and analysis sections. This is because the nature of results being sought extends beyond simply identifying categories of response. Indeed, it was not altogether clear whether the understandings of the respondents would fall neatly into categories or that some elements of data might contribute to more than one area of meaning. As a consequence an iterative process has been used by which a consideration of results has been undertaken at the same time as categorisation. Additional comment is thus provided with the results to illuminate how the shaping of categorisation has taken place. The comment illuminates how, in some instances, there are additional meanings to be acquired from the combination of elements of data that complement and add to the meanings provided by the data when taken individually.

Construction of an Attitude Test

The objective of the test was to obtain data that would give initial indications of the attitudes amongst teachers towards their economic environment. The decision to develop and use an attitude test arose from the evidence available from earlier data collection within which there appeared to be attitudes underlying some responses. Given that the results were based upon qualitative data, it was felt that the development of a test might offer an additional opportunity to locate data that might add to the existing results. Thus the development was undertaken to see if an appropriate test could be produced and to see if attitudes could be identified and measured.

The enterprise was not an easy task and it is acknowledged that more work is needed on the issue of a test to measure teachers attitudes towards their economic environment. The notion of what attitude strands there might be and how they may be identified through a test is complicated. Indeed, it is possible that there are complex set of attitudes that interplay in a way that makes the use of a Likert scale difficult to apply or reflected in the difficulty in designing fairly simple straightforward statements for teachers to agree or not agree with.

Never-the-less, some progress was made and the following illuminated the extent to which gains were made against the objective set.

Initially a total of 74 statements were constructed across five categories (See Figure 3). These consisted of 23 items under the heading of "general market conditions", 18 items under the term "customer focus", 16 items for "regulation", 10 items under the heading of "personnel" and 6 items for "finance". Examples of each category include:

In total 49 teachers completed the test – 13 from the primary and 36 from the secondary school. This represented a response rate of 67.12% (59.08% primary) and 70.59% secondary). Of the 49 respondents there were 15 male respondents, 30 female and 2 who gave no indication of sex. There were 44 full-time staff and 5 part-time staff. The age range of staff was as follows:

Table 1 Age range of teacher respondents

21-25	4	41-45	10
26-30	4	46-50	13
31-35	4	51-55	11
36-40	3	55+	0

Of the 49 respondents, 31 held posts of responsibility whilst 18 held no responsibility other than as a classroom teacher. The posts of responsibility held were as follows:

Table 2 Posts of responsibility held by respondents to attitude test

Head teacher x 2	Key Stage 3 Art/Design
Deputy Head x 2	Key Stage 3 English
Head Lower School	Drama
Key Stage 3	Music
Key Stage 4	Food
Head of Year x 5	Geography
Mathematics	Literacy
Science x 2	Able Child
ICT x 3	Textiles
Head of Department x 4	

Staff were asked to complete the attitude test on their own and without discussion. They were encouraged to complete the test quickly so that it was their first thoughts that were recorded rather than the product of a lengthy thought process. Statements were included on the test that gave assurance to the respondents on confidentiality and what to do with the test upon completion. In addition, it was also decided to offer the teachers the opportunity to enter a draw for Marks & Spencer vouchers for those who completed the test. This addition was intended to help motivate the teachers into responding and offer a gesture that something was being offered to them in return for the data they were providing. Following completion the tests were collected by the head teachers and returned to the researcher for analysis.

Information from the discrimination index suggested that a number of items did not discriminate well and would be removed from the instrument when taking it forward to become a reliable attitude test.

Table 3 Initial Discrimination Index for Items from the Attitude Test

Item	Index	Item	Index	Item	Index	Item	Index
8	5	26	7	44	1	62	14
9	17	27	8	45	14	63	14
10	12	28	21	46	18	64	13
11	9	29	10	47	14	65	11
12	4	30	-9	48	5	66	10
13	11	31	1	49	8	67	7
14	7	32	10	50	5	68	7
15	3	33	0	51	5	69	2
16	-4	34	13	52	5	70	12
17	-5	35	9	53	7	71	12
18	7	36	1	54	15	72	7
19	6	37	5	55	-7	73	10

20	12	38	5	56	3	74	-6
21	8	39	0	57	14	75	13
22	4	40	3	58	13	76	17
23	8	41	2	59	-9	77	4
24	11	42	-11	60	6	78	14
25	-2	43	17	61	-5	79	11
						80	12

(Note: Items 1-7 were respondents' personal details)

An initial consideration of the discrimination data for the 73 attitude items suggested that, for some items, teachers opinions are divided demonstrated by a relatively high discrimination index. The items having the highest discrimination indices were:

Table 4 Attitude Test – Items with highest discrimination index

Item	Discrimination Index
Schools with very low added value should be closed	21
Schools have good personnel functions	18
Schools have customers	17
Competition between schools improves the education provided	17
Schools should be able to select pupils as they wish	17
State schools should be able to charge for statutory provision	15
Promotion in schools is based upon personal merit	14
Teachers are well supported in their job	14
Schools with high added value should be expanded	14
Ofsted provides a valuable service to teachers	14
Information received from the LEA helps teachers in their job	14
Learning on the Web will decrease the importance of schools	14

That some items have not discriminated well whilst others appear to have done so, suggests problems with the wording of the items or that the respondents have demonstrated responses with little variation. In other words, that the respondents responses have not tended towards sharply divided positions.

The number of items was reduced from 74 to 30 by introducing a cut-off point at a discrimination index of 8. This resulted in a revised discrimination index.

Table 5 Revised Discrimination Index for Items from Attitude Test

Original Item Reference No	Index	Original Item Reference No	Index
9	17	54	15
10	12	57	14
11	9	58	13
13	11	62	14
20	12	63	14
24	11	64	13
28	21	65	11
29	10	66	10
32	10	70	12
34	13	71	12
35	9	73	10
43	17	75	13
45	14	76	17
46	18	78	14
47	14	79	11

The scores for each respondent for all 30 items (Appendix 4) were split into two halves. Items 1,2, 5, 6, 9, 10, 13, 14, 17, 18, 21, 22, 25, 26, 29 constituted half A and items 3, 4, 7, 8, 11, 12, 15, 16, 19, 20, 23, 24, 27, 28, 30 half B.

Frequency distribution tables were constructed for both halves A and B along with the test as a whole and standard deviations calculated. (over page)

Table 6 Frequency and Standard Deviation for Half A

Scores	f	d	fd	fd ²
60	1	14	14	196
59	0	13	0	0
58	1	12	12	144
57	0	11	0	0
56	3	10	30	300
55	1	9	9	81
54	0	8	0	0
53	1	7	7	49
52	5	6	30	180
51	2	5	10	50
50	1	4	4	16
49	2	3	6	18
48	1	2	2	4
47	2	1	2	2
46	5	0	0	0
45	3	-1	-3	3
44	5	-2	-10	20
43	3	-3	-9	27
42	1	-4	-4	16
41	4	-5	-20	100
40	2	-6	-12	72
39	0	-7	0	0
38	2	-8	-16	128
37	1	-9	-9	81
36	2	-10	-20	200
35	0	-11	0	0
34	0	-12	0	0
33	0	-13	0	0
32	1	-14	-14	196
SUM	49		9	1883

$$Sd_A = \sqrt{\frac{\sum fd^2}{N} - \frac{(\sum fd)^2}{N^2}}$$

$$Sd_A = \sqrt{\frac{1883}{49} - \frac{81}{2401}}$$

$$Sd_A = \sqrt{38.43 - 0.03}$$

$$Sd_A = \sqrt{38.4}$$

Table 7 Frequency and Standard Deviation for Half B

Scores	Freq	d	fd	fd ²
56	1	14	14	196
55	1	13	13	169
54	0	12	0	0
53	0	11	0	0
52	2	10	20	200
51	1	9	9	81
50	2	8	16	128
49	0	7	0	0
48	3	6	18	108
47	2	5	10	50
46	4	4	16	64
45	4	3	12	36
44	3	2	6	12
43	4	1	4	4
42.5	0	0	0	0
42	2	-1	-2	2
41	6	-2	-12	24
40	2	-3	-6	18
39	2	-4	-8	32
38	2	-5	-10	50
37	1	-6	-6	36
36	3	-7	-21	147
35	1	-8	-8	64
34	1	-9	-9	81
33	0	-10	0	0
32	1	-11	-11	132
31	0	-12	0	0
30	0	-13	0	0
29	1	-14	-14	196
Sum	49		32	1443

$$Sd_B = \sqrt{\frac{\sum fd^2}{N} - \left(\frac{\sum fd}{N}\right)^2}$$

$$Sd_B = \sqrt{\frac{1443}{49} - \frac{1024}{2401}}$$

$$Sd_B = \sqrt{29.44 - 0.43}$$

$$Sd_B = \sqrt{29.01}$$

Table 8 Frequency and Standard Deviation for the Whole Test

Score	Freq	d	fd	fd ²
121	1	29	29	841
120	0	28	0	0
119	0	27	0	0
118	1	26	26	676
117	0	25	0	0
116	0	24	0	0
115	0	23	0	0
114	0	22	0	0
113	0	21	0	0
112	0	20	0	0
111	0	19	0	0
110	2	18	36	648
109	0	17	0	0
108	1	16	16	256
107	2	15	30	450
106	1	14	14	196
105	0	13	0	0
104	1	12	12	144
103	2	11	22	264
102	1	10	10	100
101	2	9	18	162
100	1	8	8	64
99	2	7	14	98
98	3	6	18	108
97	0	5	0	0
96	2	4	8	32
95	3	3	9	27
94	2	2	4	8
93	2	1	2	2
92	1	0	0	0
91	0	-1	0	0
90	3	-2	-6	12
89	2	-3	-6	18
88	1	-4	-4	16
87	2	-5	-10	50
86	1	-6	-6	36
85	0	-7	0	0
84	0	-8	0	64
83	3	-9	-27	243

82	1	-10	-10	100
81	1	-11	-11	132
80	1	-12	-12	144
79	1	-13	-13	169
78	0	-14	0	0
77	0	-15	0	0
76	1	-16	-16	256
75	0	-17	0	0
74	0	-18	0	0
73	0	-19	0	0
72	0	-20	0	0
71	0	-21	0	0
70	0	-22	0	0
69	0	-23	0	0
68	0	-24	0	0
67	0	-25	0	0
66	0	-26	0	0
65	0	-27	0	0
64	0	-28	0	0
63	1	-29	-29	841
Sum	49		103	6093

$$Sd_T = \sqrt{\frac{\sum Fd^2}{N} - \frac{(\sum fd)^2}{N^2}} =$$

$$Sd_T = \sqrt{\frac{6093}{49} - \frac{15876}{2401}}$$

$$Sd_T = \sqrt{124.35 - 6.61}$$

$$Sd_T = \sqrt{117.74}$$

Reliability Calculation:

$$\text{Rel} = 2(1 - \frac{\text{Sd}_a^2 + \text{Sd}_b^2}{\text{Sd}_T})$$

$$\text{Rel} = 2(1 - \frac{38.4 + 29.01}{117.74})$$

$$\text{Rel} = 2(1 - \frac{67.41}{117.74})$$

$$\text{Rel} = 2(1 - 0.57)$$

$$\text{Rel} = 2 \times 0.43$$

$$\text{Rel} = 0.86$$

The evidence from the discrimination index suggested that there were a number of items where discrimination was evident. There was a desire to see a little more about the pattern of teacher responses to the items. There was only one item which attracted a scoring of 1, 2 or 3 from all teachers. This item was ‘A school is part of its local community’. Similarly, there was only one item that attracted a score of 3, 4 or 5 only from the responses of all teachers. This item was ‘Teachers should adapt the curriculum to meet parents’ wishes’

There thus seemed to be an ebb and flow of responses between positive and negative attitudes where only on two occasions from 73 did teachers respond in a way where there were only neutral and positive and neutral and negative responses to items. This suggests a mixture of attitudes was held by the teachers as a group which sometimes appeared as a stronger collective view at one or other end of the scale.

The mixture of responses is illuminated by asking the question which items received scores of both 1, strong agreement, and 5, strong disagreement.

Table 9 Items receiving both scores of 1 (strong agreement) and 5 (strong disagreement)
(General Market Conditions)

Schools should have a good marketing strategy
The services offered by local schools are essentially the same
Schools are in competition with each other
Competition between schools damages education provision
Foundation schools should be scrapped
English schools have to catch up with standards overseas
Standards are falling in schools
Competition between schools improves the education provided
Schools should be allowed to work in whatever ways they want
Schools with high added value should be expanded
There should be more schools specialising in subjects or skills
The range of different types of schools should be increased
Schools have the same objectives as companies
Schools should aid the development of the local economy

Table 10 Items receiving both scores of 1 (strong agreement) and 5 (strong disagreement)
(Customer Focus)

Local businesses are customers of schools
Parents' involvement in school policy-making is about right
All parents are essentially the same
Many parents are more skilled than teachers
Parents are only interested in their own child(ren)
Parents have an equal stake with teachers in school matters
Teachers need to know more about the local community
Parents should have more involvement in school policy making
Children are customers of schools
Parents don't have sufficient skills to help their children
Parents need courses in parenting
Parents are customers of schools
Teachers should adapt the curriculum to meet parent' wishes
Teachers help parents to bring up their children
Parents help teachers educate their children
Schools are very customer orientated

Table 11 Items receiving both scores of 1 (strong agreement) and 5 (strong disagreement)
(Regulation)

Schools should be free from LEA control
Schools with very low added value should be closed
Performance information helps teachers and school managers
There is too much government regulation of schools
Schools are best organised through LEAs
Ofsted provides a valuable service to teachers
Schools should be free to negotiate contracts with teachers

Table 12 Items receiving both scores of 1 (strong agreement) and 5 (strong disagreement)
(Personnel)

International comparisons of standards are useless to teachers
Schools should recruit more teachers from ethnic minorities
Schools have good personnel functions
Teachers are well supported in their job
Performance should be a central part of teacher appraisal

Table 13 Items receiving both scores of 1 (strong agreement) and 5 (strong disagreement)
(Finance)

State Schools are adequately funded for the job they do
Schools should be able to borrow money to increase expenditure
Taxes should be raised to increased funding for schools
State Schools should be able to charge an annual fee to parents

Whilst these results suggest the staff did not have a set of attitudes that were held by all, a further review was undertaken to see if any trends were visible.

93.8% of the respondents agreed with the statement that a school is part of its local community and whilst 46.9% teachers agreed that they have a good understanding of the local community

some 59.2% agreed that teachers need to know more about the local community.

Looking at the teachers construction of an economic environment, some 51% agreed that schools have customers. However, 32.6% agreed that local businesses are customers, 38.8% agreed parents are customers whilst 51% agreed that children are customers of schools

Whilst 61.2% of respondents agreed that teachers should be accountable to their customers it was less clear what form such accountability should take given that only 10.2% agreed that schools with very low added value should be closed, 10.2% agreed that parents should be compensated by failing schools and only 2.0% agreed that schools should be accountable to local industry. Just 16.3% of respondents agreed that schools are very customer orientated.

There appeared to be an acceptance that some sort of economic relationship existed between schools given that 55.1% agreed that schools are in competition with each other although it was unclear whether this was a situation that was clearly supported or not given that 40.8% agreed that competition between schools damages educational provision and 28.6% agreed that schools with high added value should be expanded

That a limited relationship with parents is desired by teachers, is perhaps indicated by just 26.5% agreeing that parents should have more involvement in school policy making and nearly half of the respondents (46.9%) agreeing that parents need courses in parenting. No respondent agreed that teachers should adapt the curriculum to meet parents' wishes.

Whilst 32.6% agreed that schools should aid the development of the local economy, just 18.4% of respondents agreed that schools have the same objectives as companies and only 2.0% agreed that schools should be accountable to local industry.

A further economic relationship was indicated through 24.5% agreeing that schools should be able to borrow money to increase expenditure, whilst 8.2% agreeing that state schools should be able to charge for statutory provision whilst more than half (53.1%) agreed that taxes should be raised to increase expenditure.

Whilst most respondents agreed (67.3%) that there is too much government regulation of schools and more than a third (38.8%) agreed that international comparisons of standards are useless to teachers, perhaps not surprisingly just 8.2% agreed that teachers are respected in society and the same proportion also agreed that teaching is a high status occupation.

Methodological Review

The methodology used sought to provide for a triangulation of evidence from documentation, teacher interviews, observation and attitude test involving teachers from two schools. The research was not meant to generalise across all schools and, as a consequence, no formal sampling process was used to locate the schools. Attempts were made to ensure that neither school had features that made them stand out from other schools of their type, never-the-less it is acknowledged that the results apply to these particular schools and other might offer a different picture.

Whilst the period over which data was collected extended for some weeks, each element of data capture reflected a snapshot of views at one time. The documentation log covered a period of one month in the autumn term and it is possible that another month during a different term might have shown a different distribution of incoming documentation from the local community. However, none of the respondents suggested that the data collected was particularly inconsistent with other months. Indeed, the data included a major report response process from parents that inflated the incoming documents from one major community source.

A careful process was undertaken to explain the purpose of the research to teachers in each school and to undertake a process of familiarisation so that the researcher would not only gain easy access to teachers and activities, but also that teachers would be sufficiently at ease with the research to provide honest and accurate answers to questions posed. It is likely that some, perhaps many, of the teachers would be sufficiently politically aware to be conscious that the nature of the research was contentious in that the relationship of schools to their communities is something that has been subject of discussion in and outside schools. It was possible, therefore, for teachers to be aware of 'politically correct' answers to be given. Whilst attempts

were undertaken to make each teacher feel as relaxed and non-threatened as possible, it is acknowledged that some teachers might have been conscious to provide an answer they felt should be given rather than their true feelings.

The triangulation of evidence was one way of checking teacher responses, but the evidence from teachers did not seem to suggest any attempt to provide the politically correct response. The responses from teachers whether directly or within observed meetings seemed to reflect a genuine attempt to respond honestly to questions posed whether in interviews or in observed meetings.

The logistics of interviews and meetings worked reasonably well, although staff illness impacted upon the access to some teachers at school A. Additionally, the timings of meetings at School A also impacted upon the volume of access possible. The desire to have a range of ages and experience across the two schools was partially achieved but teacher absence and other school activities impacted upon the final sample of staff. As a consequence it was decided not to pursue the idea of analysing results by age and experience and it was not felt the distribution of the two variables across the sample supported a meaningful analysis.

The approach used in deriving meaning from the teacher dialogue and written information was a hybrid between trying to identify statements that appeared to shed light on teachers' attitudes whilst at the same time trying to place the individual statements within the overall meanings arising from the totality of passages of discourse or whole documents. The dangers of a deconstructionist approach whereby short passages or statements may be taken out of context from the whole meaning of a longer statement or passage were appreciated. It is for this reason that a considerable volume of evidence is provided including extracts of some length to show that meanings have been derived from a consideration of statements set within a consideration of the totality of discourse and text. Never-the-less, interpretation of comments has been undertaken given that the teachers did not regularly use the language of a commercial market.

The attitude test is dependent upon an assumption that teachers have each interpreted the statements in the same way. If this is not the case, they may each respond in a similar fashion but the meaning behind the response will differ. Thus whilst 51% of respondents agreed that schools have customers, the teachers may differ in their concept of customer and, therefore, underlying meanings may differ between individuals who provide the same response on the test. The revised test provided a reliability coefficient of 0.86. Whilst this is reasonable, there is room for improvement and it is acknowledged that more work is needed on the issue of attitudes found within teachers of their economic environment so that the propositional statements will have closer relationship with sharper drawn economic attitudes.

4. RESULTS AND ANALYSIS

Following an analysis of the data the following results were obtained:

- The relationship between schools and their external community is based upon an imbalance of power.
- Teachers value their own knowledge, values and situational interpretations above those of non-professionals.
- Teachers' conception of the community is based upon belief and historical ritual.
- Schools deliver a supplier based model of service to the community.
- Schools behave towards the community as a paternalistic monopoly in the supply of services.

a) The relationship between schools and their external community is based upon an imbalance of power.

The external community of a schools is made up of various elements: parents, other general population, business community, local government agencies, voluntary agencies, religious groups and the like. Schools interact with the community in both individual groups – as with parents of pupils at the school - or in a more general way through a general provision of service to the local community – as stated by school A.

The format of the relationship varies also. Schools have a formal and legal requirement to report to parents through the school's annual report and Annual General Meeting. In addition, schools have less formal and informal arrangements to discuss and consult with specific groups and the local community as a whole on what the school does and how it does it. Both schools A and B had their variations of informal meetings with representatives from the local community allied to formal arrangements to meet and consult with parents.

What the evidence suggests is that the power held by the differing parties to the discussions – whether formal or not - was uneven. The term power is used to identify a capacity to control or

influence decisions or actions within schools. The basis of power may come from a variety of sources. It may be conferred by law and local authority regulation providing to schools and teachers the authority to take decisions – to seek specialist status for business and enterprise for example – which directly impacts upon those inside the school and those external to it. Power may also derive from an educational advantage held by teachers in comparison with students and those in the local community. Teachers are mostly graduates working at an interface with those from the external community where the majority may not be. Consequently, teachers may have advantages in the use of language and numeracy, a broader conceptual understanding and a greater understanding of educational issues and initiatives. Additionally, power may also arise from the historic relationship that exists between most members of the community and schools through their personal experience of schooling. The former relationship may on the one hand, have created feelings of inadequacy, fear and deference whilst on the other hand former pupils may feel confident arising from a relationship of mutual respect.

Both schools held much more power over the format, progress and outcomes of the relationship than that held by individual groups or the community as a whole. Professional teaching staff appear to have the deciding hand in matters. Decisions tend to be made in school by professional staff and those external to the school are ‘informed’ and ‘notified’ of decisions as and when they are made.

Teachers are dominant in the relationship, they make judgements about how the relationship will be conducted, the agenda it will serve, its process and timing. Expectations are placed upon those external to the school to support them in the decisions made.

There is no room in the relationship for those outside the school to have a share of responsibility for core activities. Where parents are involved in school processes they are in roles where they help professional staff rather than leading or advising them and many of the tasks are in peripheral areas of school activity or on the edges of core classroom activity.

The relationship is based upon ill-defined terms such as partnership and participation.

Without clarity to such terms, professional staff have control over the interpretation of the terms and how they are used in specific points in the relationship. Thus systems are established which provide teaching staff the deciding hand in matters of interpretation. Examples include whether charges for certain elements of school provision may be remitted or how the AGM is conducted and what may or may not be discussed. The school has power to judge if reasons for absence are 'adequate', report parents to social services on the grounds of possible abuse with the prospect of an unannounced visit by a social worker and, in extreme cases, cause a parent to make a court appearance.

The imbalance in power thus moves from the subtle exercise of actions and control to explicit statements of potential control. School rules within both schools made explicit expectations upon families to conduct their lives in certain ways, extending from the clothing pupils wear, the use of jewellery, the size of containers with which to bring lunch, the sorts of activities pupils should undertake outside school and what counts as right and wrong behaviour.

Sanctions where they do exist are in the hands of schools rather than those external to it. The school agreement used in both school A and B led to sanctions being available to the schools in the event of non-compliance on the part of pupils or parents but there was no evidence of sanctions being available to parents, other than to withdraw their children and move to another school, should either school not fulfil its part in the agreement.

b) Teachers value their own knowledge, values and situational interpretations above those of non-professionals.

Teachers place a greater value on their own professional knowledge and understandings of situations than those of non-professionals. When they come to view or analyse aspects of their relationship with the external community they do so through a filter that seems to place their own professional knowledge and understanding at a higher priority in the construction of meaning and situational reality than that held by those external to the school.

The rules and procedures that govern the relationship with the external community are set by

the educational professionals to meet their own needs and priorities. School policies and procedures that inform the relationship with the community are designed to enable the professional staff to conduct their work rather than reflect the interests of service users such as students, parents or the local business community. For example, the establishment of the Friends of Association at school A was established to meet the financial needs of the school's building project. No mention was made of any direct benefit to families as a consequence of their involvement, perhaps through increased social interaction, building a stronger community network, identifying families with particular skills and interests or using the Association to contribute to consultation or participation in other aspects of school life. The clear and explicit reason for the Association was to meet the school's instrumental need to raise finance to meet its building project that would itself contribute to the development of the teachers' professional world.

The operation of the relationship through the day to day communication media also reflected the priority of the schools. Communication processes appeared to operate around the working times of the schools. There was little opportunity for out of school hours telephone service nor any e-mail provision. School holidays were marked with a general shutdown on the part of both schools' reception areas and their telephone systems. Staff were not available to meet with community personnel.

Teachers place their own internal professional knowledge at a priority over knowledge and situational understandings held by those external to the school. Teachers from the schools only mentioned their own professional knowledge as being important to them in the conduct of their work. Knowledge held by those external to the school was of no help to them. Further, the teachers viewed their professional role as one to be conducted using only internal professional knowledge and school based traditions of understanding situations and constructing responses to them. Teachers believed the most important information held by themselves was that used and focused upon the teaching process. They did not look to information about their community environment as a source of important professional development

The teachers did not see the knowledge or expertise held by parents or others external to the

school as being important to them in the conduct of their work. Information gained about and from members of the community was obtained for its use by teachers for their use rather than for what it told teachers about members of the community. For example, the request, at school A, to families to disclose if they were entitled to free school meals was to meet the school's agenda. There was no obvious benefit to families in disclosing the information. Additionally, information gained by School A about families was concerned with issues impacting upon teaching and learning in respect of the individual child rather than wider issues of family views about the performance or functioning of the school nor of them as customers or users of a service.

The teachers showed resistance to challenge on their views demonstrating a degree of suspicion about external accountability whether this was through the formality of Ofsted or via the informality of questioning from parents. In conclusion, there is a considerable strength to the collective mindset that locates the professional view above that of others.

c) Teachers' conception of the community is based upon belief and historical ritual.

Teachers displayed diverse conceptions of the local community. There was no evidence of any systematic or shared approach to constructing a conception of the local community. The notion of community was not the subject of discussion or school policy. Nor was it the product of an up to date information base obtained from the community. The evidence on documents received from the local community showed that very few documents came into the school from the local community, just 0.5% of documents received by teachers in the assessment period came from local community agencies other than parents.

Whilst teachers constructed their own and varied conception of the physical boundary and make-up of the local community, they relied, unquestioningly, upon a collective professional view of the relationship between schools and the community. The belief system exercised by teachers in the schools appeared to rest upon a number of factors. Central to the construction of the belief system was the adoption by teachers of schools' historic practices and ways of being that seemed to become the unquestioned way of understanding the teacher's world.

Such practices include the organisation of the school day, the core teaching role of the teacher, decision-making practices, the operation of events including parents' evenings and the AGM, the use of sanctions upon pupils and their parents, the form and nature of communication procedures and style. Such operational behaviours can become ritualised in the sense that they become central to the teacher's understanding of what a school is and how it should function. They can become taken for granted, seen as a necessary part of a school's identity and consequently, as the evidence identified, not subject to any significant discussion or question.

The relationship constructed by the teachers contained a number of characteristics.

The comments from teachers on the notion of community were personal comments rather than reflections of corporate policy. Teachers did not suggest there was an agreed view of what constituted the community. Rather, that each teacher held a personal understanding of the boundary to the community and who was included in it. The views offered ranged in their nature and style in describing the concept. Most referred to some sort of geographic boundary "*Down to the river feeding Woolston, not far in a northern direction and we go as far as a road with a funny name ...*" (Teacher G), "*.....the villages that have the feeder primary schools and the villages where the children live..*"(Teacher C). Additionally, teachers referred to the people who might constitute the community. "*I think it's everyone in the area*"(Teacher F). "*I think that generally you have the impression that it is mainly people who have got children who come (to the school). and if it was going to be the whole community then you need to make sure that everyone in the community knows what is going on at the school I don't think that's the case.*" (Teacher C). For some the business and institutions formed part of the community. "*it can be any organisation in Obviously you've got your immediate community, the parents, shopkeepers and so on and again all your outside agencies who are spread far apart within the city but I still see them as our community*" (Teacher D). "*well it's proper for us to try to be involved in the community as much as possible so we ought to be contacting local employers like Vosper Thomeycroft... .., but also things like Woolston Care Group, church of course is will represented, other local organisations both employers, we talk to a bank manager and voluntary organisations round the area so we need to be involved with health social services*

and police.” (Head teacher school B)

The teachers’ conception of the relationship with the local community created a set of categories that included:

- The core professional task of the teacher being separated from the everyday activity of the local community;

For example, in discussing professional development teachers responses included:

“ National tests like the Key Stage 2 tests, reading tests, the Margaret Peters spelling test”. Teacher C, school A, *“feedback from other members of staff about, you know, general progress, attitude, behaviour, attendance”* Teacher C, School A. *“New training packages, catalogues from educational sources”* Teacher D, school B.

Additionally, when discussing what was the most important information for teachers they included: *national curriculum, numeracy strategy”* Teacher F school B; *“Management planning”* Teacher C school A; *“It would be the fact sheet that comes up from the previous year group”* Teacher E, school A.

Thus only internal professional issues were included in the teachers’ considerations. The local community did not feature in their discussion of what was important information to them nor what was important for professional development.

- the local community not having the expertise to aid the professionals in their core work of teaching;

“Education has changed so fundamentally in the last 15 -20 years that I don ’t think the majority of parents have got any idea about what the function of a school is now seen to be and they don ’t realise the pressures being put on their children and I don ’t think they also realise what part they are expected to take in the education of their own child and I think it’s all those kind of things that parents need to be educated in, be made aware of.” Teacher E school B

- the prime role of the local community being to support or help the teachers in their professional tasks;

“We have included the vision 2000 statement which was drawn up by all teaching, non-teaching staff and governors over two years ago and hope that you will join with us in supporting the efforts of those who learn, teach and serve the school in so many ways to achieve their objectives.” School B’s Strategic Vision 2000 document

- the contributory function of those external to the school should be limited to peripheral activity such as fund raising and administrative help;

“We have a large amount of preparation to do for ALS. If parents had a little time, even an hour a week to help with photocopying, materials organisation, and making games etc, we should welcome assistance.” School B’s prospectus referring to help for additional literacy in school

- the motivations of the business community were not to be trusted;

“I think it would be good if they (companies) had involvement in the school but I suppose it would only have to be up to a point, you don’t want advertising of business in school but that’s just my personal opinion.I think a school is not a sacred place but it’s a place that ...uhm.....business involvement is good but you’ve sort of, without being funny, wonder as to whose gain it is.” Teacher F school B

- the prime service user is the pupil rather than parents or other external agencies or groupings.

Taken from a Year Leaders meeting at school B

“It’s very difficult because in the end it’s the children that can suffer and that’s not acceptable because they are the most important in all of this” HT

“They don’t seem to realise that the purpose of us being here is to meet the needs of their children and their actions don’t always help” Teacher D

When looking to the future, the focus of teachers' attention was their own immediate internal professional working environment. Issues of the future were concerned with pressure of work, the impact of technology on classroom practice and the behaviour of children. These issues are related to the immediate working environment of the teachers rather than issues about the relationship of the school to the local or wider community. For example, teacher B, the head of IT in school A, refers to the future impact of technology on his school teaching role but makes no mention of its potential impact upon the school's relationship with pupils' families or other community institutions or organisations.

d) Schools deliver a supplier based model of service to the community.

Teachers used some language of the market place and accepted that some concepts, such as the notions of competition and customer, applied to the arena of schools. However, there was no evidence to suggest that teachers had a consistent or shared explicit economic model of the relationship between schools and their communities.

The demonstration of a conception of an economic relationship with the local community was evidenced through the actions of teachers and the schools in respect of their decisions and actions rather than through agreed collective statements about the nature of the economic relationship. Its form was implicit through the actions of both schools towards their local communities.

The behaviours of the teachers in the schools when taken individually and collectively show the following characteristics:

- a lack of consultation with the community about what teachers believe to be the core business of the school – teaching

“Parents are informed whenever a change of set is thought to be appropriate.”

From school A's prospectus referring to educational progress and pastoral care;

“On the sporting side, depending on the time commitment of staff, we have the following:” . From school A's prospectus

- a belief that the teachers had within themselves the knowledge and skills to understand what form of service to provide through the school's operations and to deliver the service as specified;

“ In a more wider view of society I suppose it's all coming down to being more accountable. I do feel in the process we're losing something, I must admit as having been teaching for quite some time. I'm not totally against the emphasis on standards and levels but I think we are in danger of losing the child and what the child really needs in other ways, a broader view of the child in education rather than whether they're level 4 in this or 3A on Maths or whatever.” Teacher G, school B:

- a belief that the community should support the professionals in the decisions that they take;

“A very small minority of people are involved in supporting the school as well as I think they ought to be and I judge that on turnouts at the parents' committee, and I know that's true everywhere” HT school B

- a resistance to challenge from informal service user questions and formal accountability processes;

“The difficulty is what happens when questions are asked and you've just got to accept the fact that governors might not know the answers and therefore say I don't know the answer, but presumably D and HT can be around to fend off or to stall or whatever” Beacon Consultant at school B

- school processes that are designed and constructed to suit the professional rather than the service users such as pupils, parents or other community institutions.

“Governors are aware that there will be a need to raise further funds to help equip the Study Centre and for future projects. They therefore intend to set up a 'Friends of Association’”. From a newsletter at school A

When these characteristics are taken together they represent a model of service provision that

is geared towards the professional interests of the teachers rather than those who use the service. The service reflects traditional approaches to school opening hours and methods of interaction with the community allied to teachers' belief that it is only the professionals who possess the legitimate qualities to contribute towards the review and construction of the teaching curriculum. The professionals see the role of the external community of service users, as one in which they should accept what is provided to them and aid the teachers to deliver a service about which they are provided limited opportunity to influence. Thus a supplier based model of service appeared to exist at both schools in which the interests of the supplier were the principal considerations in the construction of the form and nature of the service provided to users. The service provided was designed to meet the needs of the service provider rather than the user and legitimised by the provider through an articulation of reasoning that focused upon the operations of the provider rather than the needs or aspirations of the user.

For example, at the management meeting at school B which considered pupil targets children and marking policy, the arrangements are discussed in professional terms rather than in terms of the users – pupils and parents. Consultation is suggested with heads of English and Maths about the use of Levels within the targets but there is no mention of consulting with parents upon the form and structure of targets that would be helpful to them. Whilst the group acknowledges that parents may have different views to teachers for having homework, this issue is not pursued. The reference point of the discussion is the impact on teacher practice. The group did not discuss the needs of pupils or parents in the homework process, rather how the homework policy could be updated and meet emerging teacher working conditions. The group's thinking process is legitimised by the advisory Beacon Consultant who reinforces the group's need to make homework work for the teacher.

e) Schools behave towards the community in the form of a paternalistic monopoly.

In addition to the characteristics set out in d) above, the two schools also demonstrated characteristics of a paternalistic nature. The relationship between the schools and the local community, and in particular between the schools and parents, resembled a parent/child relationship. The evidence suggested characteristics including the following:

- an unwillingness on the part of teachers to give major responsibility to parents;
“If parents had a little time, even an hour a week to help with photocopying, materials organisation, and making games etc, we should welcome assistance.”
 From School B’s prospectus referring to help for additional literacy in school.
- control by teachers over what teachers saw as central or important decisions;
“We have included the vision 2000 statement which was drawn up by all teaching, non-teaching staff and governors over two years ago and hope that you will join with us in supporting the efforts of those who learn, teach and serve the school in so many ways to achieve their objectives.” From school B’s strategic Vision 2000 document.
- informing members of the local community of decisions taken by the schools;
 Extract from a Year Leaders Meeting discussing policy for setting targets:
“I wonder if it would be possible to look at the targets for individual children before the next parents’ evening just to check through because that’s the one that would be a priority.” Teacher D.

The meeting considered establishing a marking policy linked to the establishment of targets:

“I wondered whether it would be worth consulting heads of Maths and Science about the possibility of getting little marking policies for their subjects.” Teacher G.

When the meeting agreed what the policy was to consist of and how the teachers would produce it, it then turned to informing others:

“I think that if the policy is going to be in all the classrooms that parents should be given a copy because when they come in on open eveningit would be nice for them to understand.” Teacher D.

- deliberate attempts by the schools to control or influence the behaviour of families:
“The only sensible time to have ears pierced is the beginning of the summer holidays in order to allow the ears time to heal ...” From a newsletter at school A.
- schools having sanctions available for use against members of the local community and making clear to them that such sanctions will be used.
“Schools have an important part to play in the detection and prevention of child abuse. Parents should be aware, therefore, that where it appears to a member of the school staff that a child has been abused, the school is REQUIRED to report the matter to the Social Services Division IMMEDIATELY. Consequently, in such situations it is likely that a social worker will contact the parents, NOT the school.”
 (Caps used by school) From school A’s prospectus

Thus the results imply a relationship in which the school acts as a parent who believes (s)he knows best, attempts to control the life of the community actors in their relationship with the school, reserves to the adult self the power to take important decisions and pass them down to the child who is expected to conform to them. Finally, the parent school has powers of sanction that it can use upon the child community and makes explicit warnings in its public utterances that the sanctions will be used if the community child breaks the parental school rules.

The results also demonstrate that in the case of both schools, each institution represented the only schooling option for most of the parents. In one instance the school was set in a rural location such that there were no neighbouring schools acting as competitor suppliers of education, whilst in the other case although the school was located in a city situation, other local schools did not have sufficient spare places to offer realistic opportunity for large numbers of families to take advantage of a competitor supplier.

As a consequence, both schools were, for the vast majority of the local community, the only schooling option of its type. Having the role of a sole provider of a service gives such an

institution power to strongly influence the market place. In the instance of the two schools in question, such influence was demonstrated through the control of the specification and delivery of the service and explicit attempts to control the behaviour of the service users.

Thus the two strands of monopolistic power and paternalistic power come together to generate a process of paternalistic monopoly whereby the institution controls the nature and delivery of the service provided to the local community through the medium of a paternalistic relationship with service users.

SECTION 5 – DISCUSSION

The literature illuminated different ways of describing the relationship between schools and their communities. At one end of a continuum is a description set within a language of the market place. Education becomes a commodity which is transferred to customers via market mechanisms including educational vouchers, or freedom for parents to select the product or school service of their choice. Schools become subject to normal market mechanisms by which they respond to the wants of the market place or go out of business. Focus is placed upon management, systems, outputs and the challenge of competition that raises the standard and quality of the product and service on offer to the customer.

At the other end of the continuum is a view, such as that of Snook (1992), that good education and good schools are those where head teachers are leaders not managers, where the dominant discourse is internal between teachers about educational matters. In this view, to force the school to become market responsive causes it to move away from all that is educational to something that is debased, lacking in the virtues and qualities that separate education from the imperfections of the commercial market place. Professional teachers should be trusted to know what curriculum is best to be delivered and how it should be done. Parents and the wider local community should trust the professional expertise and support the objectives and methods that teachers employ.

The formal documentation from Both schools A and B used with the external community showed influences from the market view of schools. Documentary evidence indicated that both schools expected a relationship with the community. School A stated “*Our aim is to provide a comprehensive social, recreational and educational service to all members of the community*” whilst School B stated in its AGM report “*The education of our children is very much a partnership between pupils parents, teachers and governors and the local education authority*”.

There is thus an acknowledgement of a relationship which in the case of school A uses the term ‘service’ to represent what it is delivering to the community. For school B the word

'partnership' is used to describe the nature of the relationship rather than the product of the relationship. In both cases the relationships are described as important and there seemed to be no intent through the formal and public statements to pursue a pathway of isolation though the documentation suggested that teachers knew best of what to do and were going to get on with it.

The evidence from the attitude test demonstrated that many teachers acknowledged the schools had customers although the pupils were seen as the major customer whilst parents and the local business community were seen as minor customers. The test also revealed that teachers acknowledged there should be accountability to customers although there was not apparent agreement on what form such accountability should take. Teachers did not agree with the normal market place accountability of financial compensation, nor the idea that failing schools should be closed or that good schools should be expanded. Thus teachers seemed to acknowledge the notion of customer and accountability that accompanied it. Yet when confronted with the problem of what to do when things go wrong, the teachers seemed to suggest that normal market systems should not come into force.

Most commercial organisations would have clarity about their market and in the case of schools, the local community that it served or took pupils from, might be seen as its market. What is then interesting in that when both schools state a clear intention to provide a 'service' (school A) or work in 'partnership, (school B) the staff responses showed no coherence of who or what constitutes the community body to whom a service is provided or with whom a partnership is held.

When the internal and informal discussion and documentation was considered a rather different picture was obtained. The testimony from teachers did not use the term partnership and the internal documentary evidence did not define the word partnership nor the word service offered by school A to its local community.

There was a lack of detail to teachers' description of the community and perhaps this was linked to the evidence from the documentation log that showed very little documentation

originating from the community was received by teachers. Of the documentation that did reach the school, 8% originated from parents and only 0.5% from other local community sources. On the assumption that much, if not most, of the documents from parents was notes regarding pupil absence, trips etc, the implication is that an extremely small proportion of documents entering the school was from and about the local community.

Further, the internal discourse and documentation did not suggest a form of relationship that was responsive to parent or local community needs or aspirations, rather it demonstrated a controlling function. For example, the production of a bullying policy in school A and the strategic curriculum plan in school B had no input from parents or other community agencies other than those represented on the governing body.

Further examples include the restrictions on parental input to the AGM of school B along with its statement that it teaches children 'acceptable personal and social skills', school A's information to parents that a court hearing is one sanction to be used against parents whose children have poor attendance, and school B's instruction to parents of the only form of body piercing allowed, the size of water bottles to be brought to school and that pupils should use the road crossing 'properly'.

When these and other examples from the evidence are taken as a whole, the impression provided is that the relationship in both schools between teachers and parents is one of an adult : child relationship rather than adult : adult. There was no evidence of any formal consultation with parents or wider community over policy and no formal consultation over the 'services' that school A provided to the community. Nor was there any evidence of formal review and evaluation of provision other than through procedures of parents consultation evenings and these concentrated on the progress of parents' children rather than general school policy or provision.

The informal discourse and documentation within both schools seemed to suggest that whilst both were making public statements of inclusion to the local community, their operational language and behaviour were more reflective of a form of supplier led market where the

priorities within, and process for, educational decision-making were to meet internal professional needs.

Hargreaves (1995) had suggested that issues of the past influenced institutional positions of today resulting in what might be a dysfunctional relationship between the community agenda of today surrounding a school operating upon a perceived need to deal with issues originating some time in the past. Perhaps this might explain the diverse attitudes shown though the attitude test. It was clear that some teachers acknowledged the market description of educational provision but these were in the main outnumbered by those whose attitudes seemed to reflect a stance dominated by professional issues and a view that teachers professional needs and not local or national interests should control school behaviour.

Fullan (1991) suggested that by and large schools find it difficult to cope with change, that there is a tension between schools needing to respond to new challenges but at the same time they also need to maintain some continuity between their present and their previous practices. There is, therefore a potential conflict between development and maintenance. This tension is ably demonstrated by teacher F in discussion the use of Ofsted information “ *I know why they're there and what they're doing and the purpose of it, the reasons why they're doing it, and I totally agree with that. But I sometimes do feel that the teachers are in the middle.....I sometimes think that you're trying to achieve something and sometimes people don't appreciate the pressure you're under or the hard work you're putting in. I know they look at the positives and the negatives but I'm all for them coming in but I just think not just specifically them, but other people, could appreciate the hard work that goes into a school day. You know, the hours we put in and the fact that I probably won't leave here until 7.00 pm tonight along with quite a few other members of staff.*”

Ainscow (1998) suggested that teacher belief systems were an important factor in the way that they construct their reality of their location and relationship with pupils, parents and the wider community. Their construction then impacted upon the design, selection and use of particular teaching approaches. Such belief systems were evident through the teachers' discourse of the teaching operations in the schools and their relationships with the local community. There

was almost no questioning by teachers of the historical processes of communication, liaison, consultation or decision making involving members of the external community. Indeed, much of the discourse reflected disappointment that the external community did not do enough to support them in what they were trying to do. Rather than question why this might be the case or try to find new ways of inclusion into the processes, both schools tended to rest upon the use of pressure brought to bear, particularly on parents, to cause them to fall into line with the operating direction of the schools.

It is quite possible that belief systems reinforced through professional practice of the past limit the capability to alter professional behaviour when new challenging positions arise. As a consequence teachers might say one thing but actually do something quite different as belief system over-ride the public statements of today's political or educational agenda.

The evidence has shown that families were seen in a segmented way – the few that support enthusiastically, a large bulk who could do more and a smaller group who cause problems. There is also evidence that some parents at both schools were seen through a deficit model – that they lack interest, energy and skills. This evidence seems to support Crozier (1999) in her suggestion that schools focus parents towards family issues. In this way issues of pupil behaviour, both in and out of school, along with parental support for teachers become the talking point rather than how parents can be included in the planning, delivery and evaluation of the curriculum. Evidence was clear from a number of respondents of a focus upon what parents do or do not do to support the teachers in their work. References were made to re-educating parents and the attitude test showed that half of the teachers thought that parents were in need to parenting classes. The process of familialisation seems to set a framework of engagement with parents, it results in a language of description and analysis that supports the belief system that schools are the preserve of teachers and that the prime role of parents is to manage the behaviour of their children and to support the actions and procedures of the school.

The evidence has shown how little information from the community enters the school and that which does tends to rest on the head teacher's desk. Of the documentation that did reach the

school, 8% originated from parents and only 0.5% from other local community sources. On the assumption that much, if not most, of the documents from parents was notes regarding pupil absence, trips etc, the implication is that an extremely small proportion of documents entering the school was from and about the local community.

With the exception of some comments from the head teacher of school B and some from teacher D there was little evidence to suggest teachers took the view of Easen (1998) who suggested that parental involvement was a key theme needed to support educational achievement. Nor was there evidence that the teachers, as a group, agreed with Reynolds & Packer (1992) that schools and teachers need to have a focus towards those forces outside the school that seem to impact so greatly upon pupil performance. The teachers' reasons for actions seemed centred upon their own professional interests rather than have discussion with those who directly use the service or those in the community who have an indirect interest in the outcomes of the service.

There seemed some evidence to support Bottery (1999) in his representation of teachers in two main classifications – 'simplex' and 'duplex'. The majority of teachers interviewed seemed to fall into the simplex category showing passion for their work but their concerns were bounded by the nature of the teachers' values and the nature of pedagogy. Their informal discussions did not take them to an exploration of issues beyond the school even when encouraged by, for example, the head teacher of school B in discussions upon the relationship with parents.

It might be argued that the two head teachers and teacher D reflected Duplex characteristics in that whilst they held strong values which had been reassured in experience, they encouraged continued engagement with a number of broader issues. They acknowledged the influence of the outside agencies to the work of the school and were willing to raise and discuss such influences. However, even in these instances they appeared to suggest that their biggest influences were internal to the school.

The picture that emerges is perhaps one in which school statements of community 'partnership' and 'community service' are made in the public domain whilst teachers seem inwardly focused on their immediate professional needs – teaching and curriculum planning. Information beyond this does not seem as important and little community sourced documentation finds its way into schools.

Although respondents acknowledge economic relationships, whether through the concept of customer or via their view of being financially undervalued, the teachers seemed rather distanced from the economic community offering unconfident comparisons to other occupational groups.

Whilst teachers in the study acknowledged the economic world around them, through their comments they appeared to be disengaged from it other than to express concern that they were disadvantaged within it. Teachers expressed a view of the need for increased financial resources in schools but did not express an acceptance of commonly held economic conditions that are found in the community around them - thus the rejection of performance related pay, for example. Teachers appeared to accept the notion of accountability to customers but not the processes by which the accountability might express redress to those who may have fared badly in their relationship with schools.

It is as if the teachers are acknowledging the language of the market, suggesting they have heard the messages and are making some effort to include the language in their repertoire but at the same time wanting to retain their control over their professional activity through the retention of an independence that allows them to continue to 'call the shots' as they have done in the past. Thus the relationship between the schools and their local community was reflective of a supplier led market in which the provider of the services conditioned the terms of the supply of services to meet their own internal requirements.

Thus the teachers are aware of an economic environment around them but not fully engaged with it, retreating to internal discussions based upon their own professional issues and priorities. They did not see parents or local industry as customers to any great strength. For

the teachers, it was pupils who were the customers and through such a view could look to their own professional systems to find out and respond to their interpretation of customer needs.

It was clear from both schools that neither engaged in any systematic approach to find out about the community, understand its boundaries or its make-up. Teachers' knowledge seemed to be based upon history and tradition, personal experience and belief systems about the locality, who lived in it and how the individual teacher related to it. Perhaps it is this lack of systematic approach to the community that causes teachers to rest upon belief systems rather than fact or meaningful coherent exposure and engagement with the institutions of the local community. The lack of engagement and the resulting inward looking dialogue and controlling practices seem to suggest a lack of confidence in the transition from a relationship of the past to that of the future.

The result of combining a form of supplier led operational process with the schools' familial controlling practices causes the production of a paternalistic monopoly to exist in both instances. This is not an explicit relationship, rather it is implicit formed from the combination of belief and historical practices that make up teachers' understandings of the local community and their relationship with it then formulated into operational practices legitimised by the teachers through their professional construct which provides a backcloth of qualities and characteristics that make up the teacher role and how it should be exercised.

Previous research into the relationship of schools and their communities have either tended to look at economic relationships at system level (Tooley 1993), focus upon the relationship between teachers and specific groups of parents with particular needs in mind (Howard 2001) or consider how parents can help their children to learn in school (Whalley 2001). The findings of this research are important because, they bring into focus the way in which two schools create understandings of their local communities and formulate operational responses reflecting such understandings. If schools are to be more community orientated and responsive to parental or local economic needs, the results of this research, if generalisable, inform us that the transformation process is not based upon shared explicit considerations, rather that supporting teachers in the consideration of reform is the cultural cloak that teachers

and schools have that implicitly orientates them towards a range of understandings and actions towards the local community. The challenge is to change the belief systems that are so intimately linked with professional role and self-esteem.

With the emergence of Pathfinder, specialist and leading edge schools, all of whom require closer working relationships with the local community and a funding regime that requires a clearer statement about what a school will do with the local community through the involvement of identified agencies and institutions and at what cost, schools will need to have a much clearer view of what constitutes its local community along with their aspirations and fears concerning current and future needs. This research suggests that such initiatives will prove difficult if they do not address the belief and historic practices that schools may bring to the activity. Without acquiring a more evidential approach to consultation and decision-making, the risk remains that schools may continue with their implicit belief in a relationship in which they are the dominant partner with a belief that it is for the local community to agree with and support their understandings of what the new initiatives mean.

The research suggests that the two schools considered are not well placed to take part in the emerging agenda that includes enterprise education within the Pathfinder process and community involvement in planning to deliver a curriculum meeting a broader community agenda through the specialist schools programme. To do so requires a process through which schools move from the relative economic disengagement caused by supplier led tendencies to a more economically engaged operational mode in which the interests, capabilities and aspirations of the local community of service users form a greater part in the consideration of what schools do and how they do it whilst finding ways with the local community to retain those core competencies and qualities that make schools different from commercial or other community organisations. Such a process may enable a movement away from belief systems to evidential based dialogue with a systematic understanding of what actions need to be taken on a local basis and the role each constituent may play. There is no reason why the soul of the teacher need be lost through economic engagement. Indeed, a more economically engaged school might offer a more relevant curriculum resulting in higher community achievement leading to improvements in community and professional self-esteem.

SECTION 6 – CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The objectives of the research were to explore the understandings teachers have of their environment and to explore whether such views are created through a systematic process of interaction with the local community.

Teachers in both schools demonstrated an awareness of the economic community around them through formal statements placed into the public domain and through attitudes expressed through the attitude test. However, teachers also demonstrated a disengagement from the economic community operating through a paternalistic monopoly. This relationship had the qualities of a supplier led market in which the supplier based operations upon internal considerations and priorities whilst also exercising power and influence over the lifestyles of service users. Teachers demonstrated an inward looking discourse in which the agenda and priorities reflected their professional interests. Teachers in the two schools demonstrated a desire to control the relationship with parents and other external agencies in away that would secure the achievement of their own professional aspirations.

The teachers acknowledge the existence of an economic landscape but appeared to deliberately distance themselves from it and build a form of self-serving practice around themselves as a means of protection from what are seen as unwanted and unreasonable economic market practices.

There was no evidence of any systematic approach to understanding the local community. The consequence is a reliance upon belief systems allied to ritual and historical practices as a means to rationalise teachers' location with the local community. The main institution of the community that was found in both literature and dialogue was that of parents who were often seen negatively as a group not supporting teachers sufficiently.

At a time when the school curriculum, at the older age ranges, is including increasing vocational directions and specialist schools in business and enterprise are being created along with the coming requirement for all schools to find ways of including enterprise within the secondary curriculum, there are signs that schools are not well placed to create sustainable responses to such changes. These changes seem to require a much closer working relationship with the local community but the evidence of this research suggests, if generalisable, that many schools will struggle with accepting a closer relationship if such a relationship means accepting those outside the teaching profession into the heart of curriculum planning, delivery and evaluation.

If such curriculum changes are suggesting, through an increased exposure to economic issues set within the local community, that a community response is necessary for an effective and sustainable set of new community roles, relationships and actions then there are measures that need to be put into place to aid that process which will address the existing power imbalance. Without such a redressed balance of power, it is difficult to see that these new curricular initiatives will be sustained, without legislative enforcement, due to the strength of the professional culture which seeks to retain to itself the capability to interpret and create meanings of such initiatives and responses to them.

Recommendations

For those schools wishing to have a close working relationships with their local community or those who by virtue of new initiatives are required to work closely with their local communities, the following recommendations identify how a more balanced relationship may be achieved which reflects the strengths, qualities and aspirations of all community stakeholders and enables a more balanced distribution of power and influence.

There should be a structure containing representatives of the local community, including the business community, faiths, parents, charitable bodies etc, which operates on a basis in which the participation of members are of equal value, differences between stakeholders are valued and the integrity of each stakeholder is secured and observable through the outcomes of

planning, execution and reflection. The structure can be, but need not be, convened and facilitated by a school. The structure enables a discourse and an operational process which:

- Agrees a clear and shared understanding of what constitutes the local community, what its boundaries are and who are the groups of which it is constituted.
- Creates, maintains and adapts meanings to terms describing the relationship between community partners (such as partnership, service to users, working together), and creates an understanding of differing groups' issues of priority.
- Creates a shared understanding of local community objectives and strategies to deliver local and national initiatives including the role of each partner in each activity.
- Identifies experience within the local community to contribute to the planning, delivery and evaluation of curriculum and project initiatives.
- Ensures that evaluation and reflection processes include the views of all participant groups and is not automatically led by school staff.
- Agrees a set of relationship protocols that are designed to acknowledge the needs of all stakeholders.
- Creates a strategy by which necessary competencies are developed by community partners to achieve a situation in which all partners have the expertise to contribute to the common objectives taking place within agreed social systems and procedures.

Further Research

The thesis has suggested additional opportunities for research to illuminate the research questions further. The research opportunities include:

- a) A further investigation of teacher attitudes towards their local community in additional schools to see if the results in this study are replicated and in particular schools subject to strong competition from local providers.
- b) Further consideration of the nature of economic attitudes held by teachers and their translation into a valid and reliable test.
- c) The investigation of teacher attitudes by age group and experience. This investigation is to see if there is a relationship between attitudes held and the age and experience of the teacher.
- d) The investigation of community institutions' understanding of their economic location in respect of their community's schools. The purpose of this work would be to map out the understandings against those held by teachers to consider similarities and differences.
- e) An investigation of the economic understandings of teachers within Specialist schools, Enterprise Pathfinder schools and CTCs to see if they have a more economically engaged position with their local community than those schools without a specialist status.

DOCUMENTATION RECEIVED CATALOGUE (FIGURE 1)

This form should be used to record all documentation received by you at your company over a period of one month. Please try to be as precise as you can about the content of the document and what you did with it. The examples given are merely for guidance only, your documents and actions might be quite different. Please use more than one line per document if necessary. **Please remember your responses are confidential and will not be seen by any other employees or your line manager.**

Date Document Received	Nature of Document <i>eg: a) Internal circular on new Products b) Sales statistics c) Industry body information d) Letter from customer e) Promotion programme</i>	What did you do with it? <i>eg: a) In the bin unread b) Read and filed c) Read and threw away d) Filed for reading later e) Read & prepared briefing paper for staff f) Read and actioned g) Used in carrying out role</i>

The form should be returned in the envelope provided.

DOCUMENTATION RECEIVED CATALOGUE

Date Document Received	Nature of Document	What did you do with it?

The form should be returned in the envelope provided.

(FIGURE 2)

STAFF QUESTIONNAIRE

- 1a. **What is the most important information you use in the course of your job?**
(Subsid'y) Where does it come from? How do you use it?

- 1b. **What other information do you use in your work that you find useful?**
(Subsid'y) Where does it come from? What do you think of the information provided by Ofsted?

- 1c. **Do you use many of the government documents?**
(Subsid'y) How do you use them. Why do you not use them. Have there been particular ones that have been useful?

2. **What do you think of government reforms of recent years?**
(Subsid'y) Can you think of any that you have particularly welcomed or disliked?

3. **Can you please describe your parent body as best you can.**

4. Most schools are seen as part of a community. What do you see as the boundaries of the community of which is a part?
(Subsid'y) Do think the boundaries have changed over recent years? Do you think they might change in the future?

5. Do you think schools are funded adequately?
(Subsid'y) If no, where do you think additional finance should come from?

6. Do you think that teachers are paid adequately?
(Subsid'y) What do you think an ordinary teacher should be paid? What other workers do you think are comparable to teachers?

7. As we look ahead, what changes do you see, if any, to the way schools or teachers work?

(FIGURE 3)

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

CODE: T

NUMBER 0170

TEACHER ATTITUDES TOWARDS ASPECTS OF SCHOOL ACTIVITY

1. This research forms part of a wider study investigating how teachers view certain aspects of a school's activity. This questionnaire seeks some information about you and how you feel about particular elements of what your school does and how it does it.
2. All information received is treated in the strictest confidence. The study is aimed at providing a general picture and no person or school will ever be identified.
3. Please mark your responses in the spaces provided.
4. For section 2, please try to respond as quickly as you can to the questions. It is your immediate thoughts that are being sought and should be your personal reaction rather than a product of discussion with colleagues.
5. Please tick this box if you would like to be entered into a draw, for a £10.00 Marks & Spencer token, for questionnaires returned from your school. The unique number above will be used in the draw, which will take place on Monday 13 March 2000, so please record your number if you want to be able to claim the prize.
6. Thank you very much for your help in this work.

SECTION ONE - SOME DETAILS ABOUT YOU

1. Are you male or Female ?

2. What is your age?

21 - 25 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	36 - 40 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	51 - 55 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
26 - 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	41 - 45 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	55+ years	<input type="checkbox"/>
31 - 35 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	46 - 50 years	<input type="checkbox"/>		

3. Please indicate the proportion of the week that you are contracted to work in school:

Full-time	<input type="checkbox"/>	0.4 - 0.59	<input type="checkbox"/>
0.8 - 0.99	<input type="checkbox"/>	0.2 - 0.39	<input type="checkbox"/>
0.6 - 0.79	<input type="checkbox"/>	0.0 - 0.19	<input type="checkbox"/>

4. In what year did you qualify as a teacher?

1993 - 1997	<input type="checkbox"/>	1978 - 1982	<input type="checkbox"/>	1963 - 1967	<input type="checkbox"/>
1988 - 1992	<input type="checkbox"/>	1973 - 1977	<input type="checkbox"/>	1958 - 1962	<input type="checkbox"/>
1983 - 1987	<input type="checkbox"/>	1968 - 1972	<input type="checkbox"/>	1957 or earlier	<input type="checkbox"/>

5. How many years have you been teaching? (Please include years spent as an advisory teacher or other teacher related role. Please exclude years away from teaching undertaking other employment or raising children etc.)

0 - 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	16 - 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	31 - 35 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 - 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	21 - 25 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	36 - 40 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 - 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	26 - 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	41+ years	<input type="checkbox"/>

6. How many years have you been at your present school?

0 - 5 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	16 - 20 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	31 - 35 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
5 - 10 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	21 - 25 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	36 - 40 years	<input type="checkbox"/>
11 - 15 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	26 - 30 years	<input type="checkbox"/>	41+ years	<input type="checkbox"/>

7. Please state any specific responsibility for which you receive an identified payment within your salary. (For example Literacy across the school or year group/ Deputy Head)

.....

SECTION TWO

Please ring the number which best reflects your view.

		Strongly Agree		Neutral		Strongly Disagree	
		1	2	3	4	5	
8	State schools offer high quality education	1	2	3	4	5	
9	Schools have customers	1	2	3	4	5	
10	Teachers know the needs of their parents	1	2	3	4	5	
11	Schools should be free from LEA control	1	2	3	4	5	
12	The numeracy and literacy hour will improve teachers' skills	1	2	3	4	5	
13	Local businesses are customers of schools	1	2	3	4	5	
14	Parents' involvement in school policy-making is about right	1	2	3	4	5	
15	All parents are essentially the same	1	2	3	4	5	
16	Many parents are more skilled than teachers	1	2	3	4	5	
17	Parents are only interested in their own child(ren)	1	2	3	4	5	
18	Parents have an equal stake with teachers in school matters	1	2	3	4	5	
19	Teachers should be accountable to their customers	1	2	3	4	5	
20	Parents should be compensated by failing schools	1	2	3	4	5	
21	Teachers need to know more about the local community	1	2	3	4	5	
22	A school is part of its local community	1	2	3	4	5	
23	Teachers have a good understanding of the local community	1	2	3	4	5	
24	Schools should have a good marketing strategy	1	2	3	4	5	
25	The services offered by local schools are essentially the same	1	2	3	4	5	
26	Schools are in competition with each other	1	2	3	4	5	
27	Schools recruit teachers from all sectors of society	1	2	3	4	5	
28	Schools with very low added value should be closed	1	2	3	4	5	
29	Parents should have more involvement in school policy making	1	2	3	4	5	
30	Competition between schools damages education provision	1	2	3	4	5	
31	Information about individual schools should be widely available	1	2	3	4	5	

		Strongly Agree		Neutral		Strongly Disagree
32	Performance information helps teachers and school managers	1	2	3	4	5
33	Foundation schools should be scrapped	1	2	3	4	5
34	Children are customers of schools	1	2	3	4	5
35	English schools have to catch up with standards overseas	1	2	3	4	5
36	Teachers are respected within our society	1	2	3	4	5
37	Teaching is a high status occupation	1	2	3	4	5
38	Education has a higher political status than five years ago	1	2	3	4	5
39	The future looks good for schools	1	2	3	4	5
40	Standards are falling in schools	1	2	3	4	5
41	More people seem to want access to education than before	1	2	3	4	5
42	International comparisons of standards are useless to teachers	1	2	3	4	5
43	Competition between schools improves the education provided	1	2	3	4	5
44	Schools should recruit more teachers from ethnic minorities	1	2	3	4	5
45	Promotion in schools is based upon personal merit	1	2	3	4	5
46	Schools have good personnel functions	1	2	3	4	5
47	Teachers are well supported in their job	1	2	3	4	5
48	Teachers are well paid	1	2	3	4	5
49	State Schools are adequately funded for the job they do	1	2	3	4	5
50	Schools should be able to borrow money to increase expenditure	1	2	3	4	5
51	Taxes should be raised to increased funding for schools	1	2	3	4	5
52	Foundation schools meet a specific educational need	1	2	3	4	5
53	Performance should be a central part of teacher appraisal	1	2	3	4	5
54	State schools should be able to charge for statutory provision	1	2	3	4	5
55	There is too much government regulation of schools	1	2	3	4	5
56	Schools should be allowed to work in whatever ways they want	1	2	3	4	5

		Strongly Agree		Neutral		Strongly Disagree
57	Schools with high added value should be expanded	1	2	3	4	5
58	There should be more schools specialising in subjects or skills	1	2	3	4	5
59	Parents don't have sufficient skills to help their children	1	2	3	4	5
60	Parents need courses in parenting	1	2	3	4	5
61	Schools are best organised through LEAs	1	2	3	4	5
62	Ofsted provides a valuable service to teachers	1	2	3	4	5
63	The range of different types of schools should be increased	1	2	3	4	5
64	Levels of school funding are linked to school performance	1	2	3	4	5
65	Parents are customers of schools	1	2	3	4	5
66	Teachers should adapt the curriculum to meet parent' wishes	1	2	3	4	5
67	Teachers help parents to bring up their children	1	2	3	4	5
68	Real learning only takes place in schools	1	2	3	4	5
69	State schools should be run by companies or LEAs	1	2	3	4	5
70	Schools have the same objectives as companies	1	2	3	4	5
71	Schools should be accountable to the local industry	1	2	3	4	5
72	State Schools should be able to charge an annual fee to parents	1	2	3	4	5
73	Parents help teachers educate their children	1	2	3	4	5
74	Schools should be free to negotiate contracts with teachers	1	2	3	4	5
75	Schools should aid the development of the local economy	1	2	3	4	5
76	Schools should be able to select pupils as they wish	1	2	3	4	5
77	Mergers between schools and play/pre-schools will happen	1	2	3	4	5
78	Learning on the Web will decrease the importance of schools	1	2	3	4	5
79	Information received from the LEA helps teachers in their job	1	2	3	4	5
80	Schools are very customer orientated	1	2	3	4	5

**Thank you for your help.
Your form should be returned in the envelope provided to your school**

(FIGURE 4)

ATTITUDES TOWARDS ASPECTS OF SCHOOL ACTIVITY
CODING FRAME

0 = Unknown

Q/(Var) Number	Variable Name & Code Details	Range of Codes	Column Numbers
	v1 Teacher Number	145 - 154	1, 2, 3
	- Dateline Number	1	4
	v2 Institution 1 2	1 - 2	5
1	v3 Sex 1 Male 2 Female	1 - 2	6
2	v4 Age 1 21 - 25 years 2 26 - 30 years 3 31 - 35 years 4 36 - 40 years 5 41 - 45 years 6 46 - 50 years 7 51 - 55 years 8 55+ years	1 - 8	7
3	v5 Proportion of week contracted to work 1 Full-time 2 0.8 - 0.99 3 0.6 - 0.79 4 0.4 - 0.59 5 0.2 - 0.39 6 0.0 - 0.19	1 - 6	8
4	v6 Year of qualification 1 1993 - 1997 2 1988 - 1992 3 1983 - 1987 4 1978 - 1982 5 1973 - 1977 6 1968 - 1972 7 1963 - 1967 8 1958 - 1962 9 1957 or earlier	1 - 9	9

Q/(Var) Number	Variable Name & Code Details	Range of Codes	Column Numbers
5	v7 Number of years teaching 1 0 - 5 years 2 5 - 10 years 3 11 - 15 years 4 16 - 20 years 5 21 - 25 years 6 26 - 30 years 7 31 - 35 years 8 36 - 40 years 9 41+ years	1 - 9	10
6	v8 Number of years at your present school. 1 0 - 5 years 2 5 - 10 years 3 11 - 15 years 4 16 - 20 years 5 21 - 25 years 6 26 - 30 years 7 31 - 35 years 8 36 - 40 years 9 41+ years	1 - 9	11
7	v9 Responsibility attracting an identified payment within salary. 1 2 3 4 5 6	1 - 6	12
8	v10 Schools have customers	1 - 5	13
9	v11 Children are customers of schools	1 - 5	14
10	v12 Parents are customers of schools	1 - 5	15
11	v13 Local businesses are customers of schools	1 - 5	16
12	v14 Schools are very customer orientated	1 - 5	17
13	v15 Teachers know the needs of their parents	1 - 5	18
14	v16 Parents' involvement in school policy-making is about right	1 - 5	19
15	v17 All parents are essentially the same	1 - 5	20
16	v18 Parents have a lot of skills that could be used in school	1 - 5	21

Q/(Var) Number	Variable Name & Code Details	Range of Codes	Column Numbers
17	v19 Parents are only interested in their own child(ren)	1 - 5	22
18	v20 Parents have an equal stake with teachers in school matters	1 - 5	23
19	v21 Teachers should be accountable to their customers	1 - 5	24
20	v22 Parents should be compensated by failing schools	1 - 5	25
21	v23 Teachers need to know more about the local community	1 - 5	26
22	v24 A school is part of its local community	1 - 5	27
23	v25 Teachers have a good understanding of the local community	1 - 5	28
24	v26 Schools should have a good marketing strategy	1 - 5	29
25	v27 The services offered by local schools are essentially the same	1 - 5	30
26	v28 Schools are in competition with each other	1 - 5	31
27	v29 Schools recruit teachers from all sectors of society	1 - 5	32
28	v30 Schools with very low added value should be closed	1 - 5	33
29	v31 Parents should have more involvement in school policy making	1 - 5	34
30	v32 Competition between schools damages education provision	1 - 5	35
31	v33 Information about schools should be made more widely available	1 - 5	36
32	v34 Performance information helps teachers and school managers	1 - 5	37
33	v35 GM schools should be scrapped	1 - 5	38
34	v36 Schools offer high quality education	1 - 5	39
35	v37 English schools have to catch up with standards overseas	1 - 5	40
36	v38 Teachers are respected within our society	1 - 5	41
37	v39 Teaching is a high status occupation	1 - 5	42
38	v40 Education has a higher political status than five years ago	1 - 5	43
39	v41 The future looks good for schools	1 - 5	44
40	v42 Standards are falling in schools	1 - 5	45

Q/(Var) Number	Variable Name & Code Details	Range of Codes	Column Numbers
41	v43 More people seem to want access to education than before	1 - 5	46
42	v44 International comparisons of standards are useless to teachers	1 - 5	47
43	v45 Competition between schools improves the education provided	1 - 5	48
44	v46 Schools should recruit more teachers from ethnic minorities	1 - 5	49
45	v47 Promotion in schools is based upon personal merit	1 - 5	50
46	v48 Schools have good personnel functions	1 - 5	51
47	v49 Teachers are well supported in their job	1 - 5	52
48	v50 Teachers are well paid	1 - 5	53
49	v51 State Schools are adequately funded for the job they do	1 - 5	54
50	v52 Schools should be able to borrow money to increase expenditure	1 - 5	55
51	v53 Taxes should be raised to increased funding for schools	1 - 5	56
52	v54 GM schools meet a particular educational need	1 - 5	57
53	v55 Performance should be a central part of teacher appraisal	1 - 5	58
54	v56 State schools should be able to charge for statutory provision	1 - 5	59
55	v57 There is too much government regulation of schools	1 - 5	60
56	v58 Schools should be allowed to work in whatever ways they want	1 - 5	61
57	v59 Schools with high added value should be expanded	1 - 5	62
58	v60 There should be more schools specialising in subjects or skills	1 - 5	63
59	v61 Parents don't have sufficient skills to help their children	1 - 5	64
60	v62 Parents need courses in parenting	1 - 5	65
61	v63 Schools are best organised through LEAs	1 - 5	66
62	v64 Ofsted provides a valuable service to schools	1 - 5	67
63	v65 The range of different types of schools should be increased	1 - 5	68
64	v66 Levels of school funding are linked to school performance	1 - 5	69
65	v67 Schools should be free from LEA control	1 - 5	70

(FIGURE 5)

EXAMPLES OF DATA

School Documentation

A range of documentation was examined to see if any references were made to the school's community. It was not expected that formal or technical language would be used necessarily and, consequently, statements and comments were examined to see what contribution they could offer to clarifying a school's conceptualisation of their position and relationship. The first focus of the documentation was on the characteristics of the relationship.

a) The foundation of the relationship:

- i) Based upon ill-defined terms such as partnership, joint, participation, involvement, process and acceptable personal and social skills.

Example 1 From school B's prospectus:

"The task of providing our pupils with the best education we can offer them is a joint exercise in which parents, pupils and teachers all have a part to play. We welcome your involvement in this partnership."

Example 2 From school B's prospectus:

"Pupils will be encouraged to view learning as a life long process ..." and "We endeavour to give the children as many opportunities as possible to experience the world"

Example 3 From a newsletter at School B:

"Please would parents of pupils who live locally remind their sons and daughters to use the crossing outside the school properly"

ii) Based upon ill-defined processes.

Example 1 From school B's prospectus:

“At we have already begun to plan ahead and are putting the children's learning at the centre of everything we do, now and in the future.” “To that end it is important that the whole school environment is developed to ensure both staff and pupils get the very best and that we are all pulling in the same direction.”

Example 2 From the AGM report of school A:

“The role of the school, parents and society in general in preparing our students for the twenty-first century becomes increasingly complex as we strive to equip our children for the rapidly changing world around them. We all have our part to play and good communications between all parties will make it easier for each to fulfil their roles.”

Example 3 From a description of the Community Education Department for school A:

“We believe that education is a lifelong process and should be available to everyone regardless of age. Our aim is to provide a comprehensive social, recreational and educational service to all members of the community.”

b) Form of the relationship

i) Part of a process extending beyond a pupil's time at school.

Example 1 From school B's prospectus:

“Pupils will be encouraged to view learning as a life long process ...” and “We endeavour to give the children as many opportunities as possible to experience the world”

ii) Consists of school personnel, parents, LEA, community institutions

Example 1 From school B's Annual Report:

"The education of our children is very much a partnership between pupils, parents teachers, governors and the Local Education Authority..."

No definition of the word 'partnership' was found in the documentation from school A or B.

iii) Teachers are dominant in the relationship, they make judgements about how the relationship will be conducted and place expectations upon those external to the school to support them.

Example 1 At school B from their AGM documentation:

"We feel sure you will understand that this meeting is not the place to raise individual matters relating to either pupils or members of staff, for which the usual opportunities remain."

Example 2 The appearance of parents in the prospectus of both schools was near negligible. In one newsletter from school A, parents are mentioned:

"Mr Palmer and Mr Bell two of our parents are taking part in the Saunders Lakeland marathon on July 1st and 2nd... ..They are looking for sponsors to help them raise money for equipment for our new Study Centre."

iv) Professional staff appear to have the deciding hand in matters. Those external to the school are not involved in decision-making but are 'informed' and 'notified'.

Example 1 From School A's prospectus referring to its community education provision:

"Our classes are tutored by well qualified, dedicated and experienced tutors who make each session interesting and enjoyable. We also welcome suggestions for

new courses, so if you have any ideas for new classes which are currently not advertised in this brochure, please let us know”.

Example 2 From school A’s prospectus:

“An anti-bullying policy was developed by staff and pupils working together”

Example 3 From school A’s prospectus under Expeditions and Exchanges:

“parents are notified of such visits well in advance and asked to contribute to the cost.”

Example 4 From school A’s prospectus under the category of extra-curricular activities:

“On the sporting side, depending on the time commitment of staff, we have the following:” .

Example 5 From school A’s prospectus referring to educational progress and pastoral care:

“Parents are informed whenever a change of set is thought to be appropriate.”

Example 6 From school B’s prospectus on charging policy:

“A charge for board and lodging on residential courses will be made but this may, if an application is made to the governors be remitted for parents in receipt of Income Support or Income Based Job Seekers Allowance.”

Example 7 From school B’s invitation to parents to attend a parents evening:

“You should have your appointments for next week. You know we anticipate meetings should be a conference between teacher, parents and children. At his meeting some targets will be agreed. If you have any thoughts about your child’s targets please don’t hesitate to mention them at the evening.”

- v) **The schools assume parents will provide unpaid provision of help into non-core educational operations.**

Example 1 From school B's prospectus comments on voluntary help with the school:

"We welcome parents and others into school to help in classes, in the library with games, admin work, practical tasks such as the school grounds, help with our school stationery shop and drama productions."

Example 2 From school B's prospectus regarding a 'better reading project' where mentors were sought for children:

"If you would like to volunteer for this project please fill in the slip below and return it to the school."

Example 3 From School B's prospectus referring to help for additional literacy in school:

"We have a large amount of preparation to do for ALS. If parents had a little time, even an hour a week to help with photocopying, materials organisation, and making games etc, we should welcome assistance."

- vi) **Based upon the procedures of the school.**

Example From school A's prospectus parents are asked:

"If you wish to contact the school by telephone please call between 8.30 am and 3.30 pm."

- c) **Relationship with parents** – there was a clear emphasis in documentation on the schools' relationship with parents which exhibited the following characteristics:

i) Parents are expected to support the objectives prepared by professional staff.

Example From school B's strategic Vision 2000 document:

"We have included the vision 2000 statement which was drawn up by all teaching, non-teaching staff and governors over two years ago and hope that you will join with us in supporting the efforts of those who learn, teach and serve the school in so many ways to achieve their objectives."

ii) School policies and procedures are designed to enable the professional staff to conduct their work rather than reflect the interests of service users such as students or parents.

Example 1 From a statement from the governors of school A regarding a building project:

"Governors are aware that there will be a need to raise further funds to help equip the Study Centre and for future projects. They therefore intend to set up a 'Friends of Association'".

Example 2 From the prospectus of school B describing its 'Friends Of' organisation:

"The Friends of not only raises money for extra equipment such as books and computers, but they also provide important links between home, school and our community."

Example 3 From a newsletter at school A:

"Join the 1000 Club - raise money for the school".

iii) The relationship with parents can be very formal and controlling.

Example 1 From school B's prospectus informing parents about pupil absence:

"Some times we may require a medical certificate" (with no criteria for when certificates might be required)

“Numbers of authorised and unauthorised absences (that is absences for which we do not have adequate explanation) are reported weekly to the EWO...” (again, with no criteria for what counts as adequate)

Example 2 From school A’s prospectus:

“Schools have an important part to play in the detection and prevention of child abuse. Parents should be aware, therefore, that where it appears to a member of the school staff that a child has been abused, the school is REQUIRED to report the matter to the Social Services Division IMMEDIATELY. Consequently, in such situations it is likely that a social worker will contact the parents, NOT the school.”

(Caps used by school)

Example 3 From School A’s prospectus with information about education social workers:

“Their main role is to work with pupils who have poor attendance. Each case is different and the strategy employed will depend upon the severity of the problem, but in general a house visit is the starting point, leading to referral to the Educational Psychologist and/or the Behavioural Support Team, non-attendance review meetings with an LEA casework officer and ultimately, in a few cases, to a court hearing.”

iv) The school attempts to exert control over aspects of lifestyle and behaviour of family members

Example 1 From a newsletter at school A:

“The only sensible time to have ears pierced is the beginning of the summer holidays in order to allow the ears time to heal ...”

Example 2 From a newsletter at school B regarding bottles at lunch time:

“Although we allow children to bring unbreakable bottles at lunch time, some

children are bringing very large ones which can topple over. Please use bottles with a base circumference no more than 10 cms and a height of no more than 20 cms.”

Example 3 From a newsletter at School B:

“Please would parents of pupils who live locally remind their sons and daughters to use the crossing outside the school properly”

Example 4 From a further newsletter at school B:

“May we remind you that the only form of body piercing allowed in school is pierced ears. Pupils may only wear one stud in each ear”.

Example 5 School B provides examples of how parents can help their children’s learning. Included in a list are:

*“take regular exercise
visit and revisit exciting places studied at school
teach them the difference between right and wrong
watch television in a careful and planned manner
encourage your child to join organisations and clubs
eg Cubs, Brownies etc*

v) Schools expect families to meet the needs of the school rather than meeting joint or negotiated needs.

Example 1 From a short article headed Free School Meals in a newsletter at school A:

“It is very important that we know exactly how many of our pupils are entitled to free school means.

Of course we know how many pupils take up their entitlement and actually have a free meal. We believe that there are other children who may be

entitled to a free meal but who do not claim it. This may be their choice, or it may be that their parents do not wish them to claim the meal. Some perhaps prefer to bring their own food.

The proportion of children entitled to free meals is a figure which is used by the government to compare schools. It is very important to us that we have accurate figures. Children are entitled to free school meals if parents are receiving income support or job seekers allowance (income based).

We would be very grateful to parents if they would indicate on a reply slip for this newsletter if their child is entitled to free meals. The information will be dealt with entirely confidentially.”

Example 2 Teacher D at Year Leaders meeting at school B

D “They don’t seem to realise that the purpose of us being here is to meet the needs of their children and their actions don’t always help”

Documentation Log

Teachers recorded documents received over a period up to one month and the results below indicate the main characteristics found.

i) Very little documentation entering the school comes from the local community.

Example:

Table 14 Source of documents received

Source	Number Of items	Percentage of total	Source	Number Of items	Percentage of total
Internal to school	1315	69.4	LEA	88	4.6
External education	211	11.1	Government	23	1.2
Parents	151	8.0	External local community	10	0.05
External other	91	4.8	Pupils	6	0.03

Staff Interviews

Staff were questioned using a semi-structured set of questions to further probe their understanding of their relationship with the community surrounding the school.

a) Information used in school

i) Teachers viewed the most important information used in their work to be that provided by colleagues in school, the LEA or that from the DfES.

Example 1 Teacher G in school B:

“Probably management planning. It comes from within the year group, from sources like the year group, within sources like the national numeracy strategy, literacy etc, schemes of work throughout the school.”

Example 2 Teacher C school A

“Record keeping, definitely, yeah, looking at facts and statistics of different tests that children do, keeping records of scores and marks, keeping them all up to date. You use them to inform your planning to make sure you’re addressing the needs of individual children.”

Example 3 Teacher F school B

“There are things that we look at, you know, like national curriculum, numeracy strategy, literacy strategy that all helps planning and suggesting how to do things, and our own policies within the school.”

Example 4 Teacher B school A

“Important items of information are things that have my name on them, if it says Head of IT or something like that then I think well they don’t know who I am so it is probably some sort of mailshot or something, an thing that relates to national curriculum I find is quite important, CDC sort of special offers are always worth looking at it depends upon what it is really.....it’s all important in its own way”

Example 5 Teacher D, school B

“If it has Southampton City Council Inspectorate or EQS (Education Quality Services - Inspectorate) on it I don't throw it away, I read it and file it. If it's a letter from the community, I also think that's important.”

Example 6 Teacher E, school A

“ It would be the fact sheet that comes up from the previous year group which gives you an overall picture of what the child is like in terms of ability, it includes a few and national curriculum tests, it also includes one or two lines about the attitude of the child. That's completed by all the staff in the previous year.”

ii) Head teachers' most valuable information was of a broader range that included information about and from families.

Example 1 Head school B

“A range of information about the academic achievement of children but then there's the background information about the families and personal concerns, health and safety those sorts of issues with many children.. There's other information I'm getting from the government like the PANDA and from the authority to show progress and help us context our curriculum information.”

Example 2 Head school A

“Probably information about pupils....uhm....and that information comes from all sources really, from primary school information about pupils, parental information added to information generated in the school”.

iii) Information gained about families is concerned with issues impacting upon teaching and learning in respect of the individual child rather than wider issues of family views about the performance or functioning of the school nor of them as customers or users of a service.

Example 1 Head teacher from school A:

“It depends in what form it comes in, some of the information will come in a very structured way at this time of year from primary schools and it’s dealt with....uhmeither I will get sight of some of it but a lot of it will go straight toHead of Lower school. That can be used in terms of groupings she is thinking about. It can be about behaviour, special needs, all sorts of things....uhm... by and large if that information comes to me it will be passed on at that stage and used within the processes in school.”

iv) The most important information to teachers is used to focus upon the teaching process.

Example 1 Teacher F, school B

“I’m actually the numeracy co-ordinator so what I do is just make sure it’s planned thoroughly in a child friendly way. It’s a very easy document to follow, to be honest, it’s lays out in a prescriptive way when it’s best to do something and when it’s not but then there’s also the medium planning that allocates a certain amount of days to each topic which is just about to change and what I’m going to do is put in a pre-assessment paper so that we can alter that planning depending upon the needs of the child. If the child doesn’t understand shape and space then we will allocate more time to the topic. So we use the document and professional judgement which in some cases is just as valuable if not more.”

Example 2 Teacher G, school B

“Basically, I teach from it.”

Example 2 Teacher B, school A

“I would tabulate the information I required, things like reading ages, spelling ages, mathematical ability, the standardised tests, any thing like that I would have my lists and that would give me a basis for when I teach the children, whatever subjects it is, I would already have a running order in my file of what they’re capable of doing, It also helps me in terms of grouping children in the year

because I could look at those with a reading age above 10 or 12 because that helps with spelling groups because you've got official information to go from."

Example 3 Teacher D, school B

"Well it depends what the nature of the information is. If it's just a question of a report or analysis of SAT results or whatever then obviously that's fed back to other relevant staff and they do something with it. It could be informing us of different codes of practice in which case that then is disseminated to the SMT and possibly the whole staff and sometimes it's just read and filed, nothing's done"

v) With the exception of the Head teacher, information that teachers find of secondary importance is of an internal professional nature.

Example 1 Teacher G, school B

"All sorts of things, IT trainingall sorts of input from staff meetings, various people who have responsibility for bits of the curriculum, parents sometimes, you know specifically about their children."

Example 2 Teacher F, school B

"There are some good text books around, there are some good things that have good worksheets in them that you can give out to your class or you can use as a point to start on.There are some produced books from someone like WH Smith who are producing a good range of books which I rely upon, well not rely upon but I know they are there, they're easily accessible. I don't think there's any sort of official documentation that I do rely upon, you know I make myself aware of the policies in the school."

Example 3 Head teacher school B

"From the government in things like what's going on in personnel management, threshold and all that sort of thing, the governance of schools generally so where governors are and their responsibilities, there's the individual information about

our school concerning our Ofsted, particularly leadership and management, which was a huge issue, so I need to know where we're going in all of that. But there are other areas like community information that I want to use to context our school in what we're doing around here, from the vicar and other organisations and all that."

vi) Teachers do not look to information about their community environment as a source of important professional development

Examples taken from comments upon what respondents considered important in professional training.

Example 1 Teacher F, school B

"Well the first thing I would do is ask someone, you know if I didn't know something. I've only been teaching about a year and part of my development was to become numeracy co-ordinator which started in January so I'm quite pleased the way things are going."

Example 2 Teacher C, school A

" National tests like the Key Stage 2 tests, reading tests, the Margaret Peters spelling test. All of these things can indicate what kind of grade people are likely to get at GCSE. Well they're sort of subjective obviously because you can have an off day when they do the test, but it usually gives a clear indicator of the level they are working at, but otherwise as well as those I usually keep records of my own marks as well. I also tend to, when I mark a set of work for a particular class I write down common mistakes that a lot of them are making and I make sure that I address them and then I know that they're covered."

Example 3 Teacher C, school A:

"It's useful to know about a child's behaviour, how they are across the board in other subjects, It's useful to have feedback from other members of staff about, you know, general progress, attitude, behaviour, attendance - things like this because if there was a problem across all subjects then it would be something that needs

addressing. So I think it is very important for teachers to be in communication with each other so that, you know, you are made aware of problems. Also, medical records and things like that to know if a child's got a particular problem - bad eyesight or whatever so you can address that in each sessionuhm.....the special needs register records obviously you need to know about them."

Example 4 Head teacher school A:

"Education is an ever-changing game in some ways and different governments come up with different solutions and there are different initiatives, sometimes weekly initiatives, and what part of my role as head teacher is to keep tabs on these things in order to see what we might tap into for the benefit of our pupils. whether that is a government initiative or a county initiative, who knows?"

Example 5 Teacher D, school B:

"New training packages, catalogues from educational sources.....uhmgosh, so much junk comes throughwell, teacher's publications like the TES and Union publications."

Example 6 Teacher E, school B:

"We get lots of information from the subject specialists about what we would teach and of course one of my jobs as Year Leader is to make the curriculum map before the year starts so I'm very aware by the time we get to September how many hours I've got for each subject, and what the priorities of the subject specialists are, what the objectives are for each subject arena in each of the ten main subjects."

vii) Teachers hold mixed attitudes towards the value of the external view of schools provided by Ofsted.

Example 1 Head teacher school B:

"Severely limited because of its subjective provenance. My own experience as an Ofsted inspector is that it is very difficult to be objective about lessons and about standards and it's my view that while there is, of course, a great deal of truth in

much of what Ofsted says about individual schools, to them extrapolate that to the general picture of the education system that the HMCI tries to do is I think severely flawed as a research method.”

Example 2 Teacher F, school B:

“ I know why they’re there and what they’re doing and the purpose of it, the reasons why they’re doing it, and I totally agree with that. But I sometimes do feel that the teachers are in the middle.....I sometimes think that you’re trying to achieve something and sometimes people don’t appreciate the pressure you’re under or the hard work you’re putting in. I know they look at the positives and the negatives but I’m all for them coming in but I just think not just specifically them, but other people, could appreciate the hard work that goes into a school day. You know, the hours we put in and the fact that I probably won’t leave here until 7.00 pm tonight along with quite a few other members of staff.”

Example 3 Teacher G school B:

“I was rather disappointed with our main Ofsted with what came back. Being honest, it was not very welcome but I think most people have accepted it. It tended to use one example to show lots of things in rather a negative way .. uhm..it wasn’t all that helpful in finding a way forward.”

Example 4 Teacher C, school A:

“Its interesting to know what’s happening in your subject area, you know across the country or whatever, but it’s all subjective I think, I don’t think you can take it too much as being exactly as how things are because, you know you have different inspectors, you may have different values as well, you have different areas, different catchment areas, you know everything. I think it is totally subjective really.”

Example 5 Teacher E, school B:

“ Sometimes it’s the latest jargon which always irritates me, some of it’s useful, but it I think it’s more useful to the school on a school basis than to the individual

class teacher,”

vii) Teachers’ interest in government documentation was focused upon those documents centred upon their immediate professional practice rather than issues outside the school or more general educational matters.

Example 1 Teacher G, school B

“Certain things like curriculum 2000 has been the most recent one. Anything regarding my subject, history, comes my way plus at lot more recently about literacy and numeracy.”

Asked if the teacher found the documents helpful, she responded:

“We’ve used obviously the numeracy and literacy a lot. I use particularly the numeracy every week for planning and so on. I suppose literacy we still do use but with not quite so much focus and emphasis as we did last year because we’re one year on uhm but numeracy we’re certainly using a lot.”

Example 2 Teacher F school B to the question if government documents were helpful:

“No not really.”

Example 3 Teacher B, school A:

“If they’re legally binding I expect them to come my way. I would certainly expect to see what I’m supposed to be informed of. With the literacy and numeracy there has been quite a lot of documentation in the last few years.”

Example 4 Head teacher school B:

“We get the monthly mailing from the DfEE and there’s a system now they’ve created for that information.....my view is that certainly governors need to know all about that as much as we can so I channel a lot of that to Chairman and on to other governors where necessary and, whole governing body where necessary. I copy much of the rest of it where I think it’s going to be useful to

teachersI'm personally not very convinced of this notion that Heads ought to be holding lots of stuff back to themselves because my view, and what I want this staff to be like, is I think they need to be exposed to as much information as is proper for them.....”

To the question how did the Head teacher judge what was ‘proper’ he responded:

“Well I try to focus what information to pass on, on what our primary task is. I mean our primary task at this moment is to raise standards in the core subjects and to work on those areas Ofsted found wanting in the last report. So my priorities for development are guided by our next visit by Ofsted whenever that's going to be and my objective ... is to make this one of the most rapidly improving schools in the country judged by Ofsted criteria. A very minimum requirement for that is going to be we've fulfilled the past Ofsted action plan and put right all of the wants that were found in the last Ofsted inspection, so the information I'm passing on is very much focused on those areas.”

Example 5 Teacher C, school A:

“Yeah, we have things that come back about examination papers and things that candidates have done wrong across the board and they're always useful to look at. Feedback from moderation.....uhm.....”

Example 6 Teacher D, school A:

“Any of the DfEE guidelines, yes as the PSHE co-ordinator, yes I do certainly the sex and drugs ones I do refer to managing drug related incidents.....and I read circulars”

Example 7 Teacher B school A:

“Anything that involves questions and mark schemes, optional test questions, disks we received some time ago that were going to be used to test kids at the end of Key Stage 3, we found them so useful that we've put them on the system and use them for teaching”.

Example 8 Teacher E, school B:

“If you mean something like the national literacy and national numeracy strategies and the kind of calendars of what you’ve got to do what, when, now that’s useful, beyond that probably no to be honest.”

Example 9 Head teacher school B:

“One that I’m particularly taken with at the momentis a large sheet that opens outon using data in school. The PANDA was also very interesting.....one of our staff did a very useful exercise on that and the information that came back, for instance, on locating us just within the upper limit of band 2 for free school meals. Now using that on the free school meals data we’re Cs. If we slipped into band 3, and that would only need half a dozen children to move to free school meals, we would move to a higher grade because we would be in the next tranche of free school meals, so it’s having that kind of information around tells you roughly where you are.”

b) Accountability of teachers

i) Teachers are not comfortable with high levels of external accountability.

Example 1 Head teacher school B

“I do think the extra accountability of schools to the community for the amount of money on a very general thing we’ve got to be more accountable. It’s useful to remember back what it was like in 87 and , as you know I was a Head then, schools were able to do just what they wanted to and I don’t think any of us should be proud of what was going on in a lot of schools at the time. So I don’t worry about any of that at all. I think to appoint an inspectorate that wasn’t focused very much on real school improvement and allow lots of outsiders, partly who haven’t been educationalists but even more important who had not been head teachers.”

Example 2 Teacher F, school B

“I hear things but I’m the kind of person who keeps his head down until the

changes come around because there are just too many things to think about all the time. I really don't think that people appreciate the amount of work that we put in when were here."

Additional question to teacher 'Who should give people the information about what teachers do?'

Example 3 Teacher F, school B:

"Well I think the government should to be honest.....You know some of them send their kids go to school in any old state and think we're their baby sitters or something like that and their kids will come in and disrupt, you know not all of them because we've got really nice kids here as well but its the same with a lot of areas its either they need re-educating about what we do in here or they need re-educating in their parent skills. I'm 23 and I don't have kids but I know that I could bring up kids better than some of this lot can do after seeing the way they're treated, you know giving them 50 p to buy breakfast on the way to school and then the respect breaks down for the teacher and the homework and you know they can't read and things like that."

Example 4 Teacher G, school B:

"I think we've gone through an awful lot of changes which has not been an easy time for education in many ways. I'm hoping it is beginning, the dust is settling. If we think of when the national curriculum first came out we've had so many stages to gear up to do something and then something else comes out or another initiative or slightly different initiative. In a more wider view of society I suppose it's all coming down to being more accountable. I do feel in the process we're losing something, I must admit as having been teaching for quite some time. I'm not totally against the emphasis on standards and levels but I think we are in danger of losing the child and what the child really needs in other ways, a broader view of the child in education rather than whether they're level 4 in this or 3A on Maths or whatever. Amongst all that somehow I think we're losing a few other important

things.”

Example 5 Teacher B, school A;

“I think I was with the majority right at the start, it was a lot of things to think about but to be honest I think that it’s not been a bad idea because we know where we were going to some extent and what we’re supposed to doOn the IT front I think it’s been very usefulhaving documentation coming in has been quite useful thing.”

Example 6 Head teacher school A:

“I think some of the changes going on out there you can readily understand and interpret in terms of changes in the country. For example, the big push on social inclusion, yes philosophically you would say that’s a good thing, we don’t want a divided society within the country. Yes, a lot of the problems are clearly urban problems and therefore we understand that a good proportion of the funding is targeted at where the problems are. I very much welcomed the Chancellor’s or David Blunkett’s initiative to give us a lump sum identified in the budget and just say Heads now have the best view of how their schools are arranged and that’s it..... and I would welcome more of that sort of thing.....freedom to set out own agenda.”

Example 7 Teacher F, school B:

“Behind all these changes I feel have they got the child and its importance at the centre of these changes? From this course over the last four days, mixing with a whole range of teachers and we all came up with the same ideas, you know, too much change and why and again we’re going round in circles all the time. Structure of schools has changed, how management is seen I think is a great change and not always for the best. We seem to be apart from the rest of the working community.”

c) Teachers' views of parents

i) Parents are viewed with negativity, often described as lacking in specific qualities.

Example 1 Head teacher school B:

“Generally fairly complacent, ill informed about the need to support learning at home and that I do think is partly school’s fault as well. I think there is still a reluctance to get involved with children’s learning which we’ve got to do something about because we can improve children’s learning by getting parents on board. But this could be true of many schools in lots of places. A very small minority of people are involved in supporting the school as well as I think they ought to be and I judge that on turnouts at the parents’ committee, and I know that’s true everywhere, and the response we get to things like the booster club meeting we having this evening. We’ll be lucky to get double figures of parents out of 150 in the year. If the other side of that is that they trust the school to do a reasonable job then we’re flattered but that’s flattery coming from ignorance and that’s not worth very much is it.”

Example 2 Teacher F, school B:

“When I came to this schoolI didn’t get a lot of support from the parents with their education side of it but which was where it was needed, yet at a summer fair I did a cake stall and every parent baked a cake so they do support. I think that sometimes perhaps its this re-education thing of them not knowing how to give support, not that they don’t want to but they think, you know.....perhaps the idea of adult literacy and numeracy classes to give them support so they don’t , you know perhaps that some do feel that because they can’t do it that they’re not in a good position to give their child any support in how to learn.”

ii) Parents are seen as differentiated into groups having differing qualities:

Example 1 Teacher B, school A:

“Working class and caring for their children and I’d say they were really more the sort of parent that wants their child to be happy at school I don’t think

they're terribly honed in on SAT results and that sort of thing. I think that most of them are hard working sensible people. Obviously there are elements at the lower end that we do get some children that don't get much support at home."

Example 2 Teacher G, school B:

"We're not a very high class area. We've only got a certain number of parents who I would class as middle class, certainly it tends to be lower middle and working class parents generally. We do get some parents who are very supporting, we do also get a very high proportion of parents who just want us to get on with the job and not get too involved and you don't always get support with things like working at home. I think the emphasis now is to improve our working relationship with parents, certainly since(HT) been here it's one thing we've had to take on board, to try to encourage them to get more involved."

Example 3 Teacher E, school B:

"I think there's a very small minority that's incredibly enthusiastic and supportive, I mean typified by the Friends of that they will give up their own precious spare time to come and do things for the school. I think there's a large silent majority who send their kids to school and show some interest in how the children do but are pressurised in other ways other than the school but don't attach as much importance to school as we would ideally like and there's a small minority who do cause you lot of grief that you are always trying to cajole, sort out and help. I think there's a need to re-educate parents. Education has changed so fundamentally and society has changed so fundamentally in the last 15 -20 years that I don't think the majority of parents have got any idea about what the function of a school is now seen to be and they don't realise the pressures being put on their children and I don't think they also realise what part they are expected to take in the education of their own child and I think it's all those kind of things that parents need to be educated in, be made aware of."

iii) Teachers did not use the term partnership in their description of parents.

Example 1 Teacher B, school A:

"I think they're well informed on an individual basis and they get lots of

information from us about their individual pupils or what the latest development is in the school but my wife is chair of governors atschool and I know there is a feeling there that parents could be more involved. I think that some of them like to be governors and be involved in that side of things and there is a tremendous ethos in this area to be involved in fundraising and I think that there's a lot of feeling out there that there could be a PTA"

Example 2 Head teacher school A:

"You will remember last night at the AGM where there were only four parents and one wasn't a parent of a child at the school. Contrast that with the night before with the turnout at the parents' evening where we had a turnout of 74% which is about average for our parents' evenings. I think that at this school there is a significant interest, parental interest, in the education of their individual son or daughter without necessarily wanting to become involved in the school beyond that. Now having said that, we have never had a PTA here. What we have tried to set recently is a group called Friends of, we held an open meeting inviting parents into that just asking them whether they could support the school in an way whatsoever whether it's the giving of time, prepared to get involved helping with events and so on. Trying to be as gentle as possible, not laying down expectations about the use of their time or money and that request for a meeting generated a meeting of about 20 people and we've got 1216 pupils on role so you can see what I mean about tremendous interest in the welfare and progress and education of their individual son or daughter without there being an overwhelming feeling of wanting to get involved with school"

The respondents have indicated a conception of parents that reflects a stratified structure – a *"very small minority that's incredibly enthusiastic and supportive"*, *"those who have significant interest, parental interest, in the education of their individual son or daughter without necessarily wanting to become involved in the school beyond that"* and a small group who *'cause you a lot of grief'*.

d) The boundaries of the community surrounding the school

i) Teachers understanding of the boundaries of the community and who would be found in it are based upon personal conceptions rather than shared understandings.

Example 1 Head teacher school B:

“There is the immediate catchment area which is very much the sort of housing you can see around here, we do have a particular boundary I suppose in as much as we are the largest junior school in and therefore my view is that that’s something we’ve got to make something of so I would say that eventually this ought to be the flagship school as far as primary education goes. The other boundaries, intellectual I suppose, well it’s proper for us to try to be involved in the community as much as possible so we ought to be contacting local employers like Vosper Thorneycroft I’ve already mentioned, but also things like Woolston Care Group, church or course is will represented, other local organisations both employers, we talk to a bank manager and voluntary organisations round the area so we need to be involved with health social services and police.”

Example 2 Teacher F, school B:

“I think uhm its slightly difficult for the school because is a new Head and the thing is he’s establishing linksso I think as far the community’s concerned I think it’s everyone in the area, within the catchment area is considered our community. Also, you know, counsellors as well, you know perhaps they live near here and oversee the area, you know other sorts of individuals like that I really believe its individuals like that who need to be more involved with the school”.

Example 3 Teacher F, school B:

“I think it would be good if they (companies) had involvement in the school but I suppose it would only have to be up to a point, you don’t want advertising of business in school but that’s just my personal opinion.I think a school is not a sacred place but it’s a place that ...uhm.....business involvement is good but

you've sort of, without being funny, wonder as to whose gain it is. I mean I know ideally in something like that both people, you know in a business agreement both people gain but this is not a business agreement we're dealing with children here so I think rules are slightly different.....It would be good to have members of companies in to help work with the children perhaps if there's someone with an expertise in English or IT or Maths, that would be good, that's the sort of thing we would like, or to run a club after school or lunch time would be things that we as teachers would appreciate. I think we have to realise these are just childrenand we don't want school to become a production line, do we, we don't want to shoot them off from school to night school to work, you know, they've got to have some enjoyment out of their life as well, there's got to be a balance."

Example 4 Teacher C, school A:

"I think that people are invited on to the site. the local community which is probably the catchment areathe villages that have the feeder primary schools and the villages where the children live ... certainly (... ..) and the immediate surrounding area. I think it's open to people who haven't got children at the school I think that generally you have the impression that it is mainly people who have got children who come. The newsletter with the courses is sent out with the children I think and if it was going to be the whole community then you need to make sure that everyone in the community knows what is going on at the school but I don't think that's the case."

Example 5 Teacher G, school B:

"Down to the river feeding, not far in a northern direction and we go as far as a road with a funny nameGardens which is about as far east as we go. The catchment hasn't changed much over time. It's amazing how many families are still within the catchment area that don't move away and how many parents and even grand parents who came here."

Example 6 Teacher G, school B:

*“I live quite near so I know it well. It goes down to the water’s edge to old,
..... village and up to the so it’s a large area but most of the housing
is of a similar ilk, terraced housing or semi-detached of that sort of era. There are
some new buildings of the last 10 years or so. We certainly don’t look
outside this area really. We don’t mix much with other schools really. We do with
our feeder schools and our secondary school I think there is communication with
but other than that we don’t really.....”*

Example 7 Teacher B, school A:

*“As far as I am aware anyone in the local area, we have a large catchment area.
If we go out side that we are halfway to Taunton, halfway out to Bridgewater and
most of the way to Yeovil. I would define that as our local area.”*

Example 8 Teacher D, school B:

*“I don’t think of it in terms of mileage. Just generally the wider community, it can
be any organisation in if they link with us in some way. Obviously
you’ve got your immediate community, the parents, shopkeepers and so on and
again all your outside agencies who are spread far apart within the city but I still
see them as our community.”*

Example 9 Teacher E, school B:

*“ I don’t think there necessarily should be any boundaries, uhm I think it goes into
terms of things like time, the time of people outside the school to link into school
and time of staff in the school to link outwards plus the sort of economic factors
..... invariably when schools go into the local neighbourhood they’re looking
for sponsorship of some kind and that has in the past put some businesses off
linking with school because they don’t just want to be seen as a provider, they
want something back.”*

e) The economic environment of the school

i) Teachers believe their schools are not funded adequately

Taken from respondents' remarks to a question whether schools were adequately funded.

Example 1 Head teacher school B:

"No"

Example 2 Teacher F, school B:

"No"

Example 3 Teacher C, school A:

"No"

Example 4 Teacher G, school B:

"One would always like to have more money but we're a large school and we seem to do reasonably well."

Example 5 Teacher B, school A:

"No, I think there are a lot of things we are expected to do but funding doesn't seem to match that."

Example 6 Teacher D, school B:

"No"

Example 7 Teacher E, school B:

"I don't think any school is adequately funded because it's like the NHS it could always use moneybut there are things here that because it's an old school I do think you know there's a place for saying it requires special funding for supporting something like the playground."

ii) The majority of teachers believe that the lack of funding should be met by central government funds.

Example 1 Head teacher school B:

“It ought to be from central taxation, no doubt about it”

Example 2 Teacher F, school B:

“I would be happy to pay more tax.”

Example 3 Teacher C, school A:

“ I’m not opposed to fundraising activities myself although my head of department is very much against thisbut I think that schools have to take a certain amount of ...you knowupon themselves and actually ... you know if you need something for your school then its not good sitting down waiting for the government to hand it to you that’s generally not how it happens is it? In certain ways I think you’ve got to go out and grab it yourself if you have big open days or whatever, barn dances, discos or anything it makes it more of a community feeling to the school because people are more aware of what’s happening, it promotes the school by saying were doing something positive about this.

Example 3 Teacher F, school B:

“I’m sure there’s money out there. You know, if you look at something like the Lottery, why can’t some of that money be spent?”

Example 4 Teacher G school B:

“Probably the central government, because no doubt local government is saying they’re restricted for cash.”

Example 5 Teacher B, school A:

“What seems to happen is that money flows into county designated for education and when it comes back out to schools we always seem to be worse off. What we

hear on the television is that schools have more money but here our budgets have been cut with one unofficial kind of redundancy. I think that money should come more directly to schools. Schools borrowing doesn't seem to be a very good idea as we have done it and then borrowed more to pay off the last year's loan. Now the county won't give us any more and we have to pull our belt in."

"I am not sure parents want to pay that much" "I think that most people are of the opinion that parents have already paid for it"

Example 6 Head teacher school A

"I don't know really. I know there has been the Liberal campaign to put a penny on income tax. As a member of the public I wouldn't object to that if it meant that my school and other schools would benefit from that."

Example 7 Teacher D, school B:

"Well if you're talking about teachers wages then ok its taxes. If you're talking about resources that children need then perhaps the community can have more input."

Example 8 Teacher E, school B:

"Well logically, I would say central governmentand local government hasn't got that amount of clout so I would say go to central government."

iii) The majority of teachers believe they are paid inadequately in comparison to other occupations.

Teachers were asked questions about teachers' economic relationship with the wider community including 'Do you think that teachers are paid adequately?' with subsidiary questions of: 'What do you think an ordinary teacher should be paid?' 'What other workers do you think are comparable to teachers?'

Example 1 Teacher C, school A:

“I think I am. I think compared to industry and compared to a lot of other professions we are paid poorlybut I do think I have since leaving University done other jobs - I’ve worked as a chef, in a factory, I’ve worked in a dry cleaners and compared with those kind of jobs I’m on a very good wage. I’m very happy but in ten years time or so when I’ve either gone through the threshold or got points of responsibility or whatever unless you go right to the top of deputy head or whatever, then you’re not ever going to exceed a certain limit you know and I think it must become demoralising because it’s almost like it seems you’re at the end of what you can offer we’re not going to offer you any more because you haven’t got any more to offerit gives out that kind of message.”

Example 2 Teacher B, school A:

“Not really for what they’re asked to do. Certainly not youngsters who come in I’d say my pay is adequate if I’m not expected to work 70 hours a week” “I’d like a little more on my average - about 25-27 grand.”

Example 3 Teacher E, school B:

“I don’t think the payment is too bad. If you look at other jobs there is a lot of others working very hard for a lot less. I am very much against payment by results they’re trying to bring in. I’m totally against that.”

Example 4 Teacher G, school B:

“No, I don’t think, on balance, think we are, not commensurate with the responsibilities we have. I’m not saying that it should be excessively more. I think we’re in danger now of.....not having enough of the right calibre of teachers basically.”

Example 5 Head teacher school A:

“I think by and large they are”.

iv) Teachers do not have a consensus upon which other occupations they should be compared with.

Example 1 Teacher C, school A:

“Police and nursing”

Example 2 Teacher B, school A:

“On the workload frontdon't know really I would have said we're up there with doctors really.”

Example 3 Head teacher school A:

“I don't know really, you couldn't take one alternative, you'd have to have a look at a range of alternative occupations and see whether they could be welded together. In this job a personnel officer is important or other occupations where people skills are involved. You also need to have some sort of job where there is a need for good organisational skill and I'm not sure what would be really but also you can't get away from that core area of working with children for which I don't think there is an alternative really.”

Example 4 Teacher E, school B:

“The one they always used to pick out was the police which in some ways I would agree, you're dealing with the public, you have to be trained to deal with certain situations. We probably need a higher standard of education than they do but even they're getting more technological. If not, I would go for solicitors that kind of group.....”

vi) Teachers believed their pay should be in the region of £30,000.

Example 1 Teacher B, school A:

£30,000 – “I wouldn't have thought that that was far way.”

Example 2 Teacher C, school A:

“Too difficult, again it depends upon the effectiveness and I agree with the performance thing the threshold, I think that’s good because you have to prove you are effective.”

Example 3 Teacher G, school B:

“Most teachers, by the time they get to the top of their teaching career, not taking account going into being a head or deputy, nearer £30,000 rather than my level of around £23,000.”

Example 4 Head teacher school A:

“£30,000”

Example 5 Teacher D, school B:

“Around £30,000”

Example 6 Head teacher school B:

“I think they used to be 125% of average wage, now if they’re not at the moment I suspect that’s where I would be pitching them and that may be a little increase on where they are now and I would pay all senior managers extremely well because there is a crisis in leadership and management.”

v) When looking to the future, teachers tend to focus upon their own immediate internal professional working environment.

Example 1 Teacher C, school A:

“I think its going to be a lot more technological and I think the role of the teacher will change hugely and that the children will be taught more through programmes on computers and you’re there more as an aid if they don’t understand and you’re there more as a facilitator. I also think that discipline is going to get weaker and weaker and weaker and its going to become harder to make them interested because I’ve noticed a huge change in children since I was at school the kids

don't care, they're not afraid of anything, they're not in awe of you as a teacher.....they don't have any respectnot all children and lots of children here are lovely but the amount of cheek you get is quite shocking and the amount of answering back and rudeness and they just don't care.The way children are at home these days they are given much more freedom these days they've all got access to TVs in their rooms and they watch what they want they've not got as strict parental guidance on some of themthey know that within the school you can't really do anythingthey really are aware of this sue culture and what their rights are they get very aggressive”

Example 2 Teacher D, school B:

“I don't think we can keep on with the pressures at the moment. I think someone's got to wise up soon that you can't put teachers through this type of pressure.”

Example 3 Teacher B school A:

“I think the electronic revolution is going to change so muchI think there is the potential to completely change how this schools worksI think there are so many implications for schemes of workhow to do things quickerthat's partly one of the reasons why people don't want to address them because they're aware of things that traditionally took a couple of weeks could take a couple of days...”

Example 4 Teacher G, school B:

“I'm concerned for younger members of staff of burnout. I wonder whether they can sustain this for the number of years that I've done. I've quite this pace now. I feel perhaps, I don't know, like the police force is a profession perhaps we're at a certain point where it is easier to leave it to younger members of staff. I know you've got to have a balance of experience with youth and enthusiasm but I think increasingly it seems to becoming a young person's activity in terms of energy levels or whatever. I'd like to think that curriculum wise things would settle because there has been a long time where we do seem to have been constantly changing, not that it can ever be static but as a basis to work from and develop

from. I am concerned that in some ways the statistical side of things doesn't take over completely, totally payment by results for example."

Example 4 Teacher E, school B:

"I can't see the pressure easing, I think payment by results will come in but I think you will have increasing problems getting teachers of my kind of age staying in the job and you will have increasing problems getting the youngsters to come in so that's quite a negative view point but I honestly feel that that's the way its going because it doesn't really matter at the end of the day how much you pay people if they haven't got the time to relax and enjoy it there's not a lot of point them having it."

a) Teachers' view of parents

i) Teachers conceive of parents as individuals lacking certain qualities.

Example 1 Extract from a meeting of school B senior management team discussing home school relationships:

HT: *"This goes on from the last one, uhm making certain that parents do understand that they do have to do all the things in homework but then things like on admin, and (Admin) and I have been talking about this recently, when they sign the music agreement they've go to pay up, it's as simple as that. Where else do people agree to pay and they half way through say well I'm sorry I've changed my mind I don't want to pay. I mean it's just not on and I wouldn't like to think how much it's cost us in money but it's certainly cost you a lot of time hasn't it (Admin) in trying to sort these out, get replacement people in when necessary."*

Administrative officer *"I think there's a general feeling with a minority of parents, I mean we've got it with the dinner situation, with the concert, like it's the time of year when Z needs to be getting the free meals forms back in and the deadline gives two weeks to do that in except they will have had all those letters a month before we broke up and even last night I was posting another lot of letters because they hadn't brought them in. It's the same with the data checking sheets,*

we need emergency numbers but you'll always get the ones that don't provide us with the numbers.....uhm ...its an ongoing situation isn't it."

HT "How hard nosed can I, can we become on this. I mean if we said that free school meal sheets would not be accepted after the deadline and therefore wouldn't be eligible for free school meals it's the child that suffers. If we said that we will not be accepting mobile phone numbers as primary contacts because they cost 2, 3 or 4 times as much as land lines, how hard could we be about that?"

"HT "It's very difficult because in the end it's the children that can suffer and that's not acceptable because they are the most important in all of this. It is the parents, and this is the flip side to what we were talking about, because these are.....the minority of people who are uncooperative and who think blow you I'm only interested in getting rid of the kids."

D "They don't seem to realise that the purpose of us being here is to meet the needs of their children and their actions don't always help"

HT "What do we do about it? Do we just sit back and say that's life and there are always going to be people we can't please or do we try and develop a sort of continuing dripping on that stone to try to wear them away, carrying on saying please, please, please we need you to help us and help your children by doing this, this and this in this way."

Admin Officer "The thing is that what we're doing is the right thing and I don't think we should change it just because you've got an element of people who can't be bothered. I think the majority of parents do read them (school newsletters) and enjoy them and again its excellent communication."

HT "So what you're saying is that we've just got to accept that it's just not going to be all things to all people but we keep working on those people who its not working with."

Example 2 Extract from Year Leaders Meeting discussing parents' evenings.

Head teacher *"Because the recent parents' evening was so successful the Governors have decided they would like to do more to give parents opportunities to see children's work"*

Teacher E *"What we wanted to do is to educate the parents in what to look at in things like wall displays, not just oh that's pretty or that's my kid's work but this has come out of, this is how it started, this is what's behind it, this is how it meets the national curriculum and it would do somebody like the governors, you know it would be useful to them because they also then have to think well, why have this class done this work? How does it meet the national curriculum? What does the national curriculum say on this subject?"*

Teacher E *"If you had something like teachers or governors showing them (parents) round, you're controlling the parents but also educating them at the same time."*

Teacher D *"I like that idea"*

Beacon Consultant *"The difficulty is what happens when questions are asked and you've just got to accept the fact that governors might not know the answers and therefore say I don't know the answer, but presumably D and HT can be around to fend off or to stall or whatever"*

b) Relationship with parents

i) School policies and procedures are designed to enable the professional staff to conduct their work rather than reflect the interests of service users such as students or parents.

Example 1 Extract from a Year Leaders Meeting discussing policy for setting targets:

Teacher D - *"I wonder if it would be possible to look at the targets for individual*

children before the next parents' evening just to check through because that's the one that would be a priority I think, where we should start.....We've all in our years got targets and some of them are very similar and it would be a very good idea to sort them into sections, that's what I would like to do."

Teacher E *"It seems appropriate that since we're so focused upon children achieving certain levels then the targets going home need to be specifically level related for English, Maths and Science."*

Teacher G *"I wondered whether it would be worth consulting heads of Maths and Science.....about the possibility of getting little marking policies for their subjects because they've got their own angles."*

Teacher G *"I'm still not happy with the word satisfactory. I looked it up in the dictionary and it found 'its ok' was one of the definitions and I thought, well, that's not the impression that people at the last meeting were trying to give. Satisfactory was kind of minimum of effort and to me its never been that but I know we all interpret words differently so I did wonder about changing or adding another one - barely adequate. I looked up adequate and it said equals satisfactory - damn!"*

Administrative Officer *"Perhaps we could use satisfactory but more effort could have been put in"*

Teacher D *"I think that if the policy is going to be in all the classrooms that parents should be given a copy because when they come in on open eveningit would be nice for them to understand."*

Example 2 Extract from Year Leaders Meeting discussing a review of homework:

Teacher D *"From the parents' questionnaire 75% of them were in favour of homework for whatever reasons and they may not be the same reasons as us. The DfEE have published guidelines as have Ofsted. The DfEE ones aren't statutory but they're pretty good and certainly the Ofsted book here contains examples from*

different schools how they're tackling the homework problem. Looking at it from the teachers' point of viewit has got to be manageable and if on a Monday morning masses of extra work to be marked or be used as a feedback exercise, I don't know how successful it's going to be. I'm also concerned about our policy, I think parents need to know what homework actually is. I know that sounds rather banal but I think there is a place to actually identify what homework is, why we're doing it at and what sort of tasks parents should expect the children to do and I think throughout everything we do there should be an emphasis on the parents working with the children so that there's a whole family enrichment in learning."

Beacon Consultant *"To my mind the biggest problem is the management of homework in such a way that what you give out can be suitably marked, digested and get the information back to the children quickly on top of everything else that's done."*

ii) Teachers demonstrated a limited acknowledgement to work closer with the community

Example Extract from Year Leaders Meeting at school B discussing homework:

Head teacher: *"How are parents judging us by this and what are Year Leaders doing about this? ". I still think we haven't still got a widespread understanding that we need to capture parents' interest and involvement in their children's learning. They accept it as far as illness goes, uniform, summer fairs and all that sort of thing but I'd trade all of that for parents actually helping their children do some positive learning at home doing the sorts of things that we would want them to do and mostly that is characterised by homework." "I don't think yet that we have sufficiently engaged with parents because we don't understand as a schoolexactly what it is, or how we can motivate parents to say well I know I've got to read with my child even when they are in year 6."*

Teacher D: *"Well I think it's partly our fault because we're not setting the right*

tasks that can be done at home with the parents. I mean it's easy enough to write, I know we've been doing this in Maths, here's a worksheet this will consolidate the work we've done. Some parents won't have a clue and you can't expect them to but if you have more open ended tasks that would involve the parent like Johnny go into the fridge, look at the top shelf, how much do you think the items cost, ask mum and they can listen and add them up'. I think this is what we've got to work towards, not only so that parents can feel they have a more positive input to the homework, but also for ourselves so that we don't have this incredible amount of marking to do"

Administrative officer: *"Well the other thing is that if you do it just as a piece of work there may be parents who can have problems with it as well, whereas if you do it as you just said, go into the fridge, yeah they can support the child whereas there are other things they themselves might feel a little bit difficult about"*

HT *"So you do agree with me?"*

Teacher D *"Yes"*

Administrative Officer *"When have they ever actually been told, the parents, at what meeting have they actually been told how important the homework is and their involvement?"*

Teacher D *"Well, they have all received the homework policy which, I've been having a look at that today and I think there are some gaps there having had a look at the Ofsted guidelines and also lays out what is expected in each year group and also how they expected to help their child but normally, as (HT) was saying, it's really helping with checking with spellings and hearing them read but we want to develop that more."*

Administrative Officer *"You see I think that some parents actually like that, actually like to think that, like we've said before haven't we, that is such a link that"*

how much is judged by what the child does in their homework because they're not seeing their books at school unless it's a parents evening and we said how much they would take from what homework they're doing, how much they see from it."

HT *"Yes, the first thing we need to do, from what Sue was saying, is to update homework policy and perhaps Sue (DH) you and I should do that. Uhm, something more will come out of Year Leaders on Friday anyway and I'll certainly ask them to be ready to consider what they are doing."*

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Parent Network -
A study of the organisation as it approached
merger with ParentLine UK

An Institutional Focused Study submitted as part of the
Degree of Doctor of Education

by

Ken Brown

Department of Education, Brunel University

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ABSTRACT

This study looks at Parent Network over a four year period from 1996 to 1999. A national charity that provides courses to parents across Britain, it was the largest provider of parenting support within its sector during this time. The study traces the consequences of actions by the Trustees to tackle problems within the organisation. Although some of the problems had been raised previously, it was only from 1996 that the Trustees took decisive action. In appointing a chief executive and a new initiatives manager from outside the organisation, the Trustees began upon a course in which would bring to the surface differences in practice, value and aspiration within the organisation.

During the period the organisation had financial difficulty resulting in consequential moves towards a merger with ParentLine UK, the study seeks to explore the conflicting experiences of the organisation's members and how the organisation's structure of 29 local areas had hidden the deep differences in culture that had developed since the organisation's establishment in 1986.

The study attempts to make clear how for some the purpose of the organisation was to maintain a culture and value system believed to be in place at the organisation's outset in 1986, a culture that was focused upon the needs of its members. Whilst for others, there was a desire to focus upon the needs of parents across the country to whom the organisation was attempting to provide services with the consequential need to change the charity's organisation and ways of providing a service. The struggle between the two aspirations concludes with the agreement to merge with ParentLine UK in the autumn of 1999.

CONTENTS

	Page
1. Introduction	5
2. Methodology	9
3. The Context of Parenting Education and Support in Britain - 1986-2000	15
4. Results Section 1 - The Challenge of Childhood to Puberty	19
5. Results Section 2 - The Stropky Teenager	26
6. Results Section 3 - Taken Into Care	35
7. Conclusions	42
8. References	45

1 INTRODUCTION

Parent Network was established in 1986 by Ivan Sokolov and Jacquie Pearson, two individuals working in the counselling field who had a desire to “*provide education and support to parents and thus avoid intervention in family difficulties by any of the statutory services*”.¹ Their focus was upon preventative work which they viewed as inadequately funded and limited in provision. What support and intervention measures were available appeared, to them, to be triggered by crisis and Sokolov and Pearson wanted something to be available to help prevent crisis point being reached. Further, the intention was to “*ensure that every parent has access to parenting education and support, irrespective of where they live or their circumstances*”.² With such a grand plan in mind, financial support was needed and it was provided in the form of the Artemis Trust. This was a new trust based in London, established by Richard and Gail Evans. Their desire was to support a major project of social worth and so a partnership was formed that was to be the foundation of Parent Network for much of the next ten years.

The primary objective of the new organisation was “*to educate families and the public in better standards of child care, and in the importance of sound relations between parents and children, for the maintenance and enrichment of family life*”.³ The basic model of operation was to train parents as group facilitators who would then return to their local communities to run courses for parents. From those parents who took part in courses more facilitators would be selected and trained. From this cascading format a network of facilitators across the country would be spawned. In time, it was assumed, there would be facilitators across Britain such that any parent would be able to access support in their local community.

A number of ideas were critical to the formation of the organisation at the time. The underlying theoretical position of Sokolov and Pearson lay in the field of neuro linguistic programming⁴. Their conception was a programme of experience that taught parents to

use language in a way that would impact upon their children's behaviour. It needed parents to observe and listen to their children, to understand the world as the child saw it and to make a response that would engage with the child in its terms so that an acceptable form of behaviour would result. It rested upon an assumption that language could have an 'hypnotic effect' upon individuals. *"As adults, we have a powerful influence on our children. What we say to them and about them, matters very much because they are likely to believe it. They are also likely to 'internalise' what is said - that is, take it in and absorb it into their unconscious mind where it continues to have an effect. If you tell your child something often enough s/he can become 'programmed' into believing it. That is why, as adults, we often have negative beliefs about ourselves that are very hard to change - they were programmed into us when we were young."*⁵ Thus for Parent Network the intent was to use the 'programming' process in a positive way, developing positive self esteem and a positive understanding by the individual of themselves within the world that surrounds them. The Parent Network method also required participants to revisit their own childhood and reflect upon how they were brought up by parents or carers and the consequential feelings and conceptions about themselves. For participants, the courses offered by Parent Network were to be as much a voyage of discovery about themselves as an opportunity to learn skills to be used with their children.

The original concept also rested upon a notion of 'humanism' arising from the work of Carl Rogers' person-centred approach to counselling⁶. Although this concept does not appear to have been defined by the organisation at the time⁷, a number of labels appear and reappear in discussion between members. These include: a non-judgemental approach, respect, openness, acceptance, trust and acknowledging the importance of feelings⁸. Perhaps what these ideas suggested was that the organisation wanted to approach the relationship with parents on an 'adult to adult' basis rather than service provider to customer. By using phrases such as 'parents for parents'⁹ the organisation focused upon a model of equality between those who provided the service and those who received it. It also made explicit an assumption that those who led the courses needed themselves to be

parents. It was grounded in the belief that those who were parents would understand the position of parents who attended courses.¹⁰ It was also seen as a good marketing position, that courses would start from a common and shared set of experiences between course leaders and participants. There is no evidence that the notion of shared experiences between those who led courses and those who participated was ever fully explored, rather there seemed to a general assumption that the principal experiences of parenthood were common whatever the background¹¹.

The use of the term 'facilitator' was important to the organisation because it gave messages about the form of relationship between course leader and participants. Because the roots of the organisation lay in counselling, the view was not that the course was educational in the sense of a course at a school or college, rather that the format was more like a group counselling session and that the role of the course leader was to enable a profitable discourse between members. Thus course leaders were not 'teachers' and whilst the organisation used the term 'course' it was not taken to mean a defined period of experience with pre-determined outcomes. The courses did have a structure but importantly, rather like a counselling session, the assumption was that the participants would be critical in steering a pathway through the structure. Thus even the term 'course leader' was more to do with course management of recruitment, timing and location rather than hard edged leadership through given and fixed course content¹².

The notion of 'parents for parents' underpinned the name of the first and prime Parent Network course - Parent-Link. It signified the bringing together of parents both within the immediacy of the course group context, and also the aspirational local and national linkage of parents to bring mutual long term support¹³.

The structure envisaged at the outset was a peer association of facilitators who, over time, and as their numbers increased would form local associations¹⁴. The assumption was that those parents who participated in courses would themselves join the network to become

facilitators. Thus a cascading model of development was envisaged but set in an organic context in that the process and volume of cascading would appear in locations where conditions were best suited. The multiplication of facilitators was not a planned exercise to ensure even coverage across the country nor that the growing facilitator group reflected society as whole in terms of gender, social class or ethnicity. An assumption seems to have been in place that because the courses were for all types parents, that all types parents would take part and that a reasonable cross section of those parents would then become facilitators. Thus through an organic process it was believed by the original Trustees that a nation wide group of facilitators would grow and that group would reflect the diversity of parents in society¹⁵.

Finally, the model had provision for individual groups of facilitators in local areas to proceed to become charities in their own right. They would then become self-governing and self-financing but carrying on with the principles and format of the original organisation.

The prime course - Parent-Link - was designed into a number of units and each unit was produced in small A5 sized booklets, each with a different colour cover. With the organisation's message now enshrined in print, facilitators were able to take the message to parents at large. With the large subsidy available from the Artemis Trust it was possible to offer free or very low cost courses. As a consequence, from the charity's outset the volume of parents participating on courses rose rapidly as did the volume of facilitators. The organisation began to attract attention and the support of prominent figures including Peter Bottomly, Sir Anthony Jay, Helena Kennedy QC and Rabbi Julia Neuberger¹⁶. The origins of Parent Network came at a time when there was little organised provision for parenting support and Parent Network quickly gained attention and financial support¹⁷ from those who welcomed a contribution to an area lacking service providers.

2 METHODOLOGY

This study centres upon the workplace of the researcher who worked for Parent Network during the two year period of 1998 and 1999. Although the study itself focuses upon the forces at play during a period of time leading to a merger with another organisation (ParentLine UK), the data used comprises of items that were generated before the researcher joined the organisation and other data generated during the author's term of office. The data collected falls into five categories:

- a) primary data developed before 1998 - internal and external correspondence,
- b) secondary data developed before 1998 - reports, minutes of meetings etc,
- c) primary data developed during and after 1998 - internal and external correspondence,
- d) secondary data developed during and after 1998 - reports, internal documents, minutes etc,
- e) primary data collected by the researcher acting as employee within the organisation - transcripts of meetings and personal correspondence.

The last of the items above posed potential problems to the data capture process and the subsequent interpretation of data used in the study. How far could the researcher produce research that could be considered valid given he was a major player in the organisation being investigated? A starting point to this question was that this question was acknowledged as a potential problem from the outset of the research and that deliberate attempts were undertaken to separate the actor as employee from that of researcher. However, a further question could be asked whether it is possible to fully neutralise the employee within the researcher? Is it possible to eliminate the emotions of taking part in acts and events from a dispassionate analysis of the data? As Walsh¹⁸ suggests, "*There is an inevitable tension between being faithful to the data and at the same time creating, from the point of view of the researcher, a tidy construction that is useful for other explanatory or educational purpose*".

If the analysis of data is the product of a relationship between the researcher and data, how far in this instance is that relationship haunted by Jeckyll and Hyde interchanging places at points along the pathway? It is contended here that it is not possible to fully eliminate the passion of being an actor in the events from the researcher's quest for validity and objectivity. What can be done is to put into place procedures that limit the researcher's capacity to fall back upon the intimacy of events in a way that might inappropriately affect analysis of data and subsequent judgements. It is this course of action that was undertaken.

However, before proceeding to the data collection and analysis methods, a further point is offered concerning the relationship of researcher and employee. What is being suggested above is that the emotions of involvement in actions cannot be entirely suppressed from a self analysis of data and the construction of meanings attached to events and acts and that a safety net of research procedure can offer some, if not complete, protection from bias. Additionally, it is also being suggested that a view of research can be held in which a researcher is seen as always being in some way part of the events that are being investigated. In other words, even if the researcher is not a player in events being investigated, it is not possible for the researcher to be wholly 'independent' or 'objective' in viewing or interpreting acts and events because the researcher has to bring some form of process tools and interpretive framework to the events if any progress is to be made. A researcher has to have absorbed a range of cultural experiences prior to undertaking research. Consequently, ways of seeing and interpreting the world will have already been developed. S/he does not come to the act of research with a methodological blank piece of paper. It is the process used that sets out the boundaries of ontological and epistemological reference through which the research is conducted.

The consequence of this latter argument is that what is being proposed here is not whether being a participant in the events being investigated transgresses the independence of the researcher, rather that all researchers, whether taking part in the events or not, are related

process.

The organisation was one in which emotions and tensions were often evident. As a consequence, in addition to the language used were the attached styles of language, emotional presence and body posture all of which contributed to the force and meaning of what was said. In conducting a role within the organisation, it was not always easy to record the visual cues and tones of voice used at the moment they occurred. A practice was used in which after a meeting an additional note was added to the meeting record where the general tone of the meeting was described along with specific instances where forceful emotion was used. With telephone conversations, it was less of a problem to add notes of the emotional content of the conversation as well as the actual wording of what was being said.

Meeting records were often ran to between 2-4 pages in length and were contained in bound notebooks to reduce the possibility of loss.

The approach used to analyse data was to firstly consider all the data available without focussing upon any particular element. This was done in order to try to gain an overall sense of meaning to the data. This was done because it was believed that individual items of data were set within a wider organisational context and that the meanings of individual statements or acts might be conditioned by the wider organisational events taking place. Thus any individual comment or act could be interpreted at face value but there was a desire to see how such comments and acts fitted a wider social and organisational context so that perhaps alternative or secondary interpretations could be developed that might be more appropriate.

At the outset of the research it was believed that it may be possible to find evidence that the organisation had moved through phases of development. Consequently, an attempt was made to see if the data taken as a whole pointed towards discernible phase changes.

to the data in some way and that it is the control and transparency of the relationship that offers a route to some form of validity. In this respect it is asserted that this investigation is valid research because the relationship of the researcher to the participant in the events investigated is acknowledged and has been controlled through a methodological procedure.

There were limits to data collection as a consequence of the circumstances operating. Given that the organisation was established in 1986, the process of recording information within Parent Network had developed over time. In general terms, as the organisation developed it formalised its recording and reporting procedures such that more secondary data was available in latter years than earlier. The organisation was, and remains, one heavily dependent upon spoken transactions between members. As a consequence discourse was an important form of data, rather than letters, memos or briefing papers. In view of the first employed role held by the researcher - that of deputy chief executive - it had been anticipated that recording conversations was to be an important element of the execution of role. Consequently, a diary of all meetings was maintained that contained a written record of the meeting. The record contained the date and time of the meeting, and those present. For those meetings seen as particularly important, there would also be a drafted series of objectives or outcomes to be achieved. The researcher was conscious that the use of language was important in the organisation and that 'who said what to whom' had been an issue of contention. Consequently, an attempt was made to record the meetings in a written form in such a way that as much of the actual wording used was recorded as possible. Thus important sentences, propositions, words, phrases were recorded with the full knowledge of the participants. Indeed, the notes made were checked during the meeting as were principal agreements, conclusions or parting positions. The records were not verbatim but were a detailed minute recording the language of all parties to the meeting. Additional to recorded meetings were a number of interviews conducted as a consequence of the research. They are recorded as interview notes to distinguish them from meeting notes so that it is clear where meetings took place as part of the natural life of the organization and where a discussion took place that was the product of the research

At this stage the edges to phase changes were not expected to be clear cut at all but the data when taken as a whole was allocated to what appeared to be general phases of development that had broad characteristics. Once this was done, the data was reconsidered to try to identify if there were clear edges to phase changes - perhaps through specific events that precipitated changes in behaviour - or whether there was a blurred transition from one phase to another. It was accepted that a combination of both styles was possible. A continued re-examination of data took place to further see if it was possible to identify characteristic features of phases and if causal acts or events were present.

Thus a funnelling operation took place with the data that moved on to a more detailed examination of individual data in which relationships between data were sought that might provide evidence of corroboration. Validity of judgements was sought by bringing together different elements of data that appeared to give support to the identification of changes in phase and to the detail of what characterised each new phase.

Working at Parent Network became difficult due to an increasing hostile environment. This resulted in difficulties in executing the working role being undertaken. Even when operating as the acting chief executive, it was not easy to find out what was going on. Doubts were held of the consistency of testimony offered by individuals and the emotions that washed over many incidents and events seemed to drown the clarity of statements and their meanings. Interviews that took place with participants after the merger were often laced with the participants' emotion and passion. Consequently, it was not always easy to be sure of the veracity of responses to questions.

A lot of testimony within the organisation arose through face to face conversations or via the telephone with the consequence that many pieces of the jigsaw were missing through no accurate recording process being available. These jigsaw pieces were often contentious through competing claims of what was said and with no way of resolving the dispute.

A formal approach was made to the new merged organisation for access to records. Whilst access was granted it was done so only on the basis that nothing was to be made public. Further, what became clear was that a number of documents - for example the minutes of joint trustee meetings and the trustee's merger planning-group - were not available. The explanation provided was that the documents were 'missing'. It is perhaps easy to become suspicious and allow inappropriate 'tidy constructions' to be made. However, throughout this process whilst operating as researcher, an attempt has been made to seek meaning from evidence that is available and not to fill in the gaps with subjective conjecture. This attempt to separate the function of researcher from employee is further illustrated by the style of presentation adopted in which the use of an impersonal writing style that separates the role of employee within Parent Network to that of researcher. This has been a deliberate act to reinforce the separation of operating style between the two roles.

3 THE CONTEXT OF PARENTING EDUCATION AND SUPPORT IN BRITAIN: 1984-2000

The idea of offering courses for parents on a nationally organised basis is relatively new. In 1984 Pugh and De'Ath¹⁹, in what was the first national analysis of parenting education and support, had identified that very little formal parenting education was taking place. Although there was quite a lot of activity, most of it was informal and community based. The style of activity being undertaken was described as the "lifestyle" approach which meant that provision focused upon the temporal development of a parent's experience - from working with a new born child, the early years before schooling, into primary school and then on to puberty and the teenage years.

It was out this vacuum of little organised national support for parents that Parent Network was born. It was an attempt to bring support to parents wherever they might be. As the 1980s passed more provision became available both from organisations focused upon parents and from those who focused upon children but began to offer more support to parents. Through an organic development of provision, a number of aspirational principles began to emerge which seemed to accompany the provision. These included:²⁰

- making provision available to all families;
- using a life cycle approach;
- using an empowerment model rather than a deficit model;
- operating in partnership between provider and participant;
- offering relevant provision for fathers;
- acknowledging family patterns and cultural diversity;
- placing parenting within a wider social and economic context.

It is not always clear what some of the above would mean in terms of actual provision. If parents were to be empowered, for what tasks were such new powers to be focused upon? Was this simply child management tasks within the family or was there an intention that

parents armed with new or improved powers would take these along to schools, housing departments, social security or use them in dealings with agencies such as police, for example?

The focus upon empowerment rather than parental deficit implied that either parents had skill shortages but that these would be ignored focusing upon ways in which existing skills could be used more profitably, or that parents had skills already but were not using them or using them to their greatest benefit.²¹ There was an attractiveness to this position for it appeared to avoid the problem of suggesting that if only the participants had the skills of the presenter, their difficulties would be solved. It also moved away from the teacher and taught model of instruction towards the ‘working together’ concept of mutual personal development.

Whilst this was the rhetoric, the emerging form of education and support was located in a social system itself rooted in a class structure.²² As a consequence, contradictions could appear within organisational statements. In the case of the Parent Network constitution, reference was made to enabling parents to attain ‘better standards of child care’²³, yet it was not clear what these standards were, nor who would be the arbiter of what forms of child care counted as ‘better standards’. Nor was it clear, what forms of childcare were not of the appropriate standard being sought by Parent Network. Further, in the minds of those in Parent Network there did appear to be a view that participants coming onto courses may well be in a deficit position. *“Though our training programmes, parents gain a ‘tool kit’ of skills to help them manage more effectively ...”*²⁴ Yet this statement is then countered by *“Our courses are non-prescriptive because we recognise that different methods work for different people and that there is a wealth of different parenting styles in our current diverse culture.”*²⁵ This latter statement takes us back to the rhetoric of sharing experiences and enabling individuals to make their own solutions. This is at odds with the idea of ‘better standards’ which implies knowledge of qualitative differences in parenting style and the suggestion that by acquiring and using the ‘tool kit’ of Parent Network skills,

participants can improve their parenting performance. During the 1990's a tension arose in Parent Network as some facilitators believed that the organisation should be public in condemning 'smacking' as an inappropriate element to parenting.²⁶ This was opposed by others who took the view that if a parent decided to use such an approach that this should be accepted as merely one of the varied styles of parenting available.²⁷ The organisation seemed unable to deal²⁸ with this issue in terms of the desire to foster 'better standards of child care', contained in the organisation's constitution, set against the rhetoric of support for individual parents making their own decisions on parenting style and behaviour.

In the 1990s the concept of parenting education gathered more support. There were issues such as increasing divorce rates, lone parents and youth offending which seemed to call out for more parent and family support. However, there was still no overall strategy at national level and the limited evaluation that was taking place began to highlight some of the gaps in provision.²⁹ There was a belief³⁰ that little advice was being provided on pre-conceptual care - whether to existing parents or intending parents - or that even antenatal care met the social and emotional aspects of parenting. Further, it was felt that men were not participating as much as women and were consequently missing out on a valuable experience. It was not clear at this stage why men were missing from the process, just that they were. Further, fathers were not prominent in parenting forums or classes and the provision for black and Asian families was minimal.

1994 was the year of the family which offered yet more opportunity to raise the profile of parent education and support. From the resultant activity, the following two years saw a number of reports³¹ bringing further focus to this area along with the establishment of the Parenting Education and Support Forum, a national body designed to bring together the main players in the field to formalise some of the debate and to enable issues to be put into the public domain.

In 1997 the Labour Government was elected and quickly an inter-departmental committee

was established that focused upon family issues. Government departments were under pressure to include the family within their thinking and proposals for law reform. As a consequence a number of initiatives came forward that were either deliberately focused at parents and the family or included these issues as part of a broader set of proposals. Such initiatives included:

- the publication, in 1998, of a Green Paper, *Supporting Families*,³² that set out government thinking on the family;
- the establishment, in 1998, of Sure Start, a £540 million programme of support for parents and children under three years of age;
- the Crime and Disorder Act of 1998, that established the availability of Parenting Orders to Magistrates courts;
- the review, by QCA, of the personal, social and health education curriculum in primary and secondary schools and the establishment of Citizenship as an area of study;
- the publication of Quality Protects³³ that placed a responsibility upon a local authority to act as a corporate parent with implications for residential care, fostering and adoption as well as other children in need;
- the establishment, in 1999, of the National Family and Parenting Institute.³⁴

By the end of the 1990s a new agenda had begun to emerge that acknowledged parent and family support as having a positive contribution to a wide range of social issues. National policy was beginning to emerge and at the local level it was possible to see local authorities beginning to bring services together in order to make some coherence to the services provided. In particular, the introduction of Children's Services Plans and the Early Years and Child Care Partnerships brought more coherence to local authority planning. The volume and quality of research into parent and family support was still limited and much of the available work was based upon experience in the United States and many of the studies had methodological weaknesses including sampling and data analysis³⁵. The National Family and Parenting Institute, established in 1999, will address the issue of improving research and evaluation of parenting and family support programmes as well as advising government on policy issues.

4. RESULTS SECTION 1 - THE CHALLENGE OF CHILDHOOD TO PUBERTY

Although a review and propositions for organisational change had been made as early as 1990³⁶, by 1996 the national executive committee took a view that the organisation could not carry on as it was currently operating³⁷. A dual management system involving the chair of the national executive committee (NEC) and the company secretary was proving an inefficient mode of operation.³⁸ The former came from a wealthy background and had never been employed. As a consequence she did not have operational experience and but had good connections for funding purposes, whilst the company secretary had a good feel for operational detail but was not suited for, nor keen on, strategic or management roles.

The national executive committee agreed to appoint a chief executive and new initiatives manager who would have experience in management and organisational development roles. The new initiatives manager (NIM) would take responsibility for developing new initiatives and act as the deputy chief executive.³⁹

In this way a different form of management was to be introduced to the organisation. It was expected to be able to bring a continuous senior management presence, a range of appropriate skills and experience in the kinds of problem resolution facing the organisation⁴⁰. Until this point the facilitators were the principal point of everyday control in so far as they controlled matters within the 29 regions. They drew from their own local members those who would be trained as new facilitators and it was they who trained the new facilitators.⁴¹ There was both egalitarianism - an organisation controlled by its members who were principally facilitators - and yet inconsistency in so far as the way the Cumbrian group might operate need not bear any resemblance to the operation in Gloucestershire.

There were many in the organisation that were keen for the appointments to be made.⁴² There was an awareness of the limited capability of the NEC to provide effective

management of the organisation and of the limited management skills within the regions. New initiatives were needed to take the organisation forward and there was an acknowledgement, by some, that additional management capability was needed to effect such changes.⁴³

The chief executive appointed came from the National Council for One Parent Families whilst the new initiatives manager came from with a teaching and educational management background. Both came with backgrounds of management processes rooted in evidence based policy and procedure and both were keen to move the organisation towards the expressed aspirations of the NEC. The job description of the chief executive referred to *“take opportunities to secure the financial position of the organisation”* and *“developing new products, and assuring financial viability and the quality of service provided”*⁴⁴ whilst that for the NIM referred to *“...ensuring a significant increase in the numbers of parents..”* and to *“..”facilitating qualitative development in the work of local groups”* and to *“research for new business for the organisation..”*⁴⁵ There was thus evidence that the national executive took a view that there were weaknesses in the organisation and that reform was needed.

From its formation, Parent Network had been funded directly by the Artemis Trust for 10 years and had provided for the initial training of facilitators, central administration, literature and marketing costs. There had not been a need to undertake major fundraising and although at this time there was a part-time fundraiser, the effectiveness of the role to generate additional and new money was limited - unrestricted income at national level fell from £155,152 in 1995 to £136,499 in 1996 and £101,759 in 1997.⁴⁶ Potential funders had been asked to put money into a general pot and already signs were visible that funders were trying to look for more tangible outputs from money invested. The Artemis Trust began to indicate⁴⁷ that funding would come to an end at a point in the foreseeable future - perhaps one to two years - and that existing funding would be reduced during that period. The organisation needed to take more responsibility for its actions and wean itself off the

‘parental’ funder.

One test for an organisation providing courses to parents is the number of parents undertaking courses. After the initial rapid growth to 2000 parents per year, the participation figures had levelled off - in 1993 the volume of number on courses was 1,684 and in 1998 1,760⁴⁸. With costs rising the parental participation per course was falling. Both costs and revenues along with volume of participation needed to be addressed. Until the appointment of the chief executive, finance had been handled jointly by three people. Firstly, the company secretary who handled the day to day administration of financial matters, secondly the chair of the national executive committee who was a joint signatory to cheques (with the company secretary) and who gave agreement to major expenditure. Such agreements were shared with the company secretary although with no clear criteria for who agreed what⁴⁹. In general terms, the company secretary dealt with relatively small items of expenditure, whilst the chair dealt with larger items. Inevitably, some items fell between the two resulting in a lack of clarity about who had agreed what, or indeed if any agreement had taken place. Finally, there was a part-time accountant who maintained the accounts. This individual was a friend of the chair and who saw his job to prepare financial information that would provide to the chair and other NEC members the most positive view of the organisation’s finances⁵⁰. This was a general picture with limited detail and upon taking up her post the new chief executive discovered that reserves were being depleted as costs were higher than income.⁵¹

To move the organisation forward, a greater link had to be made between financial information and organisational activity and the membership of the organisation needed to come face to face with the consequences of the likely cessation of funding from the original funders and the need to address the changing climate of funding in this arena.

This period also saw the relationship of facilitators to the central office in London coming under scrutiny. The organic development of the organisation had seen the development of

‘local areas’ effectively controlled by local members. Such control was set within the constitution⁵² of Parent Network, which provided for a local management group, (although most areas had never established a formal management group) and the facilitator agreement⁵³ with Parent Network. These documents conveyed considerable power to local areas to take control of their affairs particularly given that the NEC did not issue many policy guidelines nor take strong action to monitor or ensure that policies were enforced⁵⁴. As a consequence, local areas were able to decide for themselves course formats, charging policies and remuneration arrangements for facilitators. The result of this led to great diversity between areas. Fees for 30 hour courses ranged from £175 in one part of London to £80 in another⁵⁵. In Cumbria some facilitators were delivering courses for little or no return whilst in Gloucestershire a complicated remuneration system allowed facilitators to earn up to £30 per hour.⁵⁶ Access to free or low cost courses for disadvantaged parents varied across the country. Evidence did not exist of clear or consistent criteria.

Whilst the Parent Network constitution set out an aspiration for all parents to participate in courses, the actual participation was approximately 84% women and approximately 6% for ethnic minorities although the participation of ethnic minorities was almost entirely contained to three local areas - East London, West Thames and West Midlands⁵⁷. To meet the changing funders’ objectives, Parent Network needed to show that it had an active equal opportunities policy operating through its course recruitment⁵⁸. This was proving difficult given the structure of the facilitators who were mainly white women. In 1998, out of an active total of just over 200 facilitators some 10% were men but only one male came from the Caribbean community and one from the Asian community.⁵⁹

The new chief executive and new initiatives manager believed that if Parent Network was to establish a national reputation that could attract government funding and funding from other national funders, it had to make changes to the way in which the organisation operated.⁶⁰ Both believed that the balance of power needed to shift further towards the centre and exercised through the introduction of corporate policies and procedures. That

this was not going to be an easy task was illuminated by an incident in 1998. In early March, a complaint was made by a parent concerning the approach and attitude of two facilitators who were together running a 30 hour Parent Link course. From the initial evidence⁶¹ the chief executive believed there was a case to be heard and instigated disciplinary proceedings under the constitution. This act was seen by many members as an attack on two long standing and loyal members.⁶² The argument in support of the Facilitators was clear. It could not be that the facilitators were guilty of any indiscretion, rather the fault had to lay with the complainant parents. The matter also illuminated the lack of adequate procedures to deal with such situations. The chief executive, chair of the National Executive Committee and the organisation's solicitor together formed a group to deal with the issue. The group first suspended the facilitators, an act that brought a swift response from the two individuals and a legal conflict developed⁶³. At the heart of the conflict lay the independence of the facilitators and the controlling or regulatory powers of central management.⁶⁴ The original agreement between Parent Network and facilitators gave them an entitlement to run courses 'privately'⁶⁵ - to set up, charge for and deliver courses within the specification of the Parent Network course structure and training previously provided to all facilitators. Having trained facilitators, an assumption existed⁶⁶ that the style and ethos would naturally be passed on. It was unlikely that there had not been unsatisfactory customers in the past, rather that these had been ignored or resolved in the group. Indeed, for many facilitators with a counselling background, their views of parents who came onto the courses was that they had a problem with their children and that their (the facilitator) role was to help them resolve the problem.⁶⁷ Such facilitators viewed themselves as making informed decisions in the light of what behaviour parents presented. Parents were viewed as not skilled in either their own behaviour management or/and that of their children. Consequently, such parents were not seen as skilled or objective in their judgements of the course delivery. Learning was thus seen as a process by which parents received wisdom from facilitators - the 'doctrine' of Parent Network. How could parents criticise course delivery until the doctrine had been received and accepted? This position seems to be in conflict with the 'mutual respect' and 'partnership' principles and appears

to lean heavily upon a deficit model.

The legal dispute between the two facilitators and Parent Network became the focus of a battle between two very different paradigms. In one corner, the holders of established knowledge and taken for granted customs and practice whilst in the other an approach seeking to take acts and make sense of them given that the events arise from courses sold to the general public. From this latter position, the question being asked by the disciplinary group was what was reasonable given the current general view of providing services to paying customers?⁶⁸ What kinds of obligations arose on the part of Parent Network to such 'customers'?

The battle of the two facilitators became a conflict between new and established styles of thinking. On the one hand were those who saw the organisation as an association of individual members who had a deep conviction to an original set of ideas developed thirteen years earlier and which had become to be seen as knowledge and skills as something to be handed down to parents so that they might see the world in a different way and might want themselves to join the association to continue the work. On the other hand were those who saw an organisation losing touch with current parent needs and national trends. For them it needed to be more responsive to the political and social context in which the organisation existed today. In short, the original ideas were now seen as out of date and needed changing, bringing up to date and based around a corporate response to new changing circumstances.

This conflict brought sharply into focus the relationship between facilitators and their local area organisations with the central office and national executive committee. Previous to the appointment of the chief executive, the management function had been exercised through a joint position of chair of the NEC and the company secretary who was also head of administration. There had grown a practice of individuals approaching the chair for views and decisions and it was clear that the individual was happy to act in this way to

judge organisational practice, confirm rituals and procedures and interpret events and acts⁶⁹. The chair's power came from espousing traditional ideology that found favour with the original members and many of those who followed in their footsteps. She understood the need for change but welcomed the power afforded to her by the disciples who looked to her for leadership. The appointment of the chief executive and new initiatives manager brought the beginnings of a separation of management between an executive function operated through the headquarters office in London and a strategic and policy function exercised by the national executive committee. Such a separation of function had been discussed and agreed by the NEC, however, the consequence would be a fundamental shift in power from the chair of the NEC to the chief executive and the collective members of the national office. Further, the membership would be required to refocus attention from the chair of the NEC to the chief executive. This latter shift had not been considered explicitly by the NEC⁷⁰, an assumption being made that the changes would fall naturally into place.

5. RESULTS SECTION 2 - THE STROPPIY TEENAGER

As the intention of the national executive committee to modernise the organisation began to bite, members began to react against the moves.⁷¹ One of the first moves of the chief executive was to replace the part-time finance officer with a contracted officer working 3-4 days per week. At about the same time the part-time fundraiser decided to leave. This latter move was seen by some as a negative statement about the new direction of the organisation.⁷² However, the decision gave the chief executive an opportunity to bring in another new member of staff that would bring fresh ideas to the organisation. Within a matter of months, and with the addition of a new additional administration officer, the national office had five new members of staff who collectively brought a very different approach to organisational management than had existed before.

The new initiatives manager held a responsibility for existing initiatives taking place around the country and for developing new projects. Moving the organisation towards a more business like approach led to some difficulty and can be illuminated with examples of existing and potentially new projects. One project already underway was located in Manchester and funded by the Van Leer Foundation.⁷³ This was a four year project designed to support disadvantaged parents in which the 1997/8 financial year accounted for its third year. Originally aimed at parents in the North West of England, the project had already been scaled down to Greater Manchester with the agreement of the Van Leer Foundation.⁷⁴ The prime reason for the scaling down was the inability of the part-time a project co-ordinator, who did not drive, to cover the original designated area. When the NIM examined the project a number of issues were agreed with the project officer⁷⁵. Firstly, a Manchester office - part of the project specification - had not been opened, the number of courses being run was very small and had stagnated. Further, the expected expansion of Parent Network services in Manchester had not materialised. Indeed, participation figures suggested that participation in courses had been greater before the project began⁷⁶. Finally, funding from the Van Leer Foundation had been granted on the basis of agreed levels of matched funding but this had never materialised although had

continued to appear in the project accounts. Thus on paper the project appeared to have a greater level of resources than was actually the case.⁷⁷ What had been published was a projected income and allocated expenditure.⁷⁸ Actual income and expenditure had never been published. As a consequence neither the project co-ordinator in Manchester nor the national executive committee had an understanding of the actual financial position relating to the project, only the original and modified planned figures. The position had been further complicated by the long term illness of the relevant officer from the Van Leer Foundation and as a consequence communication with the Foundation had not taken place for some time.⁷⁹ The NIM and chief executive believed that the failure to meet original and amended project targets placed the project in jeopardy such that not only would funding for the fourth year would be in doubt but that some of the existing funding risked having to be returned for not being used to meet project objectives. Consequently, it was their view that a ‘rescue’ operation needed to be undertaken.⁸⁰ The available funding needed to be carefully targeted to maximise outputs in the remaining time of the project. The Manchester office needed to be found and opened, clear evidence of disadvantaged parents being supported needed to be available as was evidence of successful course development and delivery. The response of the project co-ordinator to these views was that the proposals were not in keeping with the ethos of the organisation nor the way she had been operating for the previous two and a half years. Further, she felt that as she had not been party to the development of the original financial plan for the project, she did not owe it any allegiance. She did not support the ‘business approach’ and felt that operating from her home, as she currently did, was better reflective of the original approach of the organisation. Repeatedly, the individual suggested that she had received no criticism from the chair of the national executive committee.⁸¹

A draft plan was produced by the NIM setting out revised targets, time-scales and costings.⁸² The response of the co-ordinator was to appeal directly to the chair for the plan to be rejected⁸³ and to return to traditional Parent Network operating methods. The response of the chair was muted.⁸⁴ She was not willing to instruct the co-ordinator to

comply with the plan, rather to offer her 'personal support' - effectively counselling. As time passed and with the plan undergoing discussion between the co-ordinator and NIM but with the co-ordinator not willing to accept it and the chair of the NEC not willing to give clear and public support to the principle of a revised project plan. This perhaps suggested a difficulty for the organisation in separating its member functions from its employer functions. The chair of the NEC appeared to be approaching the co-ordinator as a member rather than as an employee and, indeed, within conversation with the chief executive and NIM gave the impression of not feeling comfortable with the organisation as an employer - something necessary rather than desired⁸⁵. The chief executive, new initiatives manager and chair of NEC agreed that a final push be made with the co-ordinator, offering to appoint an additional full-time project officer to assist her. The co-ordinator reluctantly agreed⁸⁶ and steps were swiftly taken by the NIM and project co-ordinator to find the office space and appoint the project officer.

This, however, was not the end of this episode. For the plan to be effective in increasing activity, there needed to be co-operation and teamwork particularly between the project co-ordinator, project officer and other facilitators in the Manchester area. Whilst there had been some co-operation⁸⁷, the principle of independent member was strongly held by the Manchester facilitators. Soon after the appointment of the new project officer it became clear that there were difficulties in the working relationship between the new project officer and project manager⁸⁸. There was no personal animosity between the two, rather as the co-ordinator said at the time *'I have been with Parent Network for 12 years and we have always been independent, able to work on our own. I find it difficult to work in another way'*.⁸⁹ In late March 1998, the project manager took sick leave and did not return to work

The principle of independence on the part of facilitators was again illustrated when, in May 1988, Kent Police approached Parent Network to help it with a project. The constabulary wanted to work with parents of young children aged 9-13 years who were on the brink of

criminal behaviour. The project had gained the support of the Home Office who would fund all activity with families. A meeting was arranged with the constabulary to which was invited the Kent facilitators' co-ordinator. This individual declined the offer and after the meeting with Kent Police, at which a contractual arrangement was agreed, the Kent facilitators were invited to undertake the work. This offer was rejected.⁹⁰

The desire of the chief executive and new initiatives manager to build the volume of contracted work with sponsors - ranging from government departments, local authorities and charitable bodies - was in keeping with ways sponsors were wanting to work. Even the TSB Foundation, who had a community fund that would make £5,000 available for each of three years to support local community activity, wanted detailed plans and output measures for such a relatively small amount of money. The offer of unrestricted funds had virtually dried up. Both the chief executive and new initiatives manager believed that the only way to cover core costs was to increasingly sell services to purchasing bodies and approach the activity in a business-like way⁹¹. This very move, however, was seen by some in the organisation as the very opposite of the original intentions to work alongside parents without the language of outcomes, effectiveness, efficiency and accountability.

In June 1988, the new initiatives manager, had been informed by the Gloucestershire co-ordinator that the local area was receiving money from a variety of funders and using all of it to pay fees to facilitators.⁹² Virtually no money was being held back to pay for marketing or course development. Additionally, the group was making claims about the courses that the NIM did not believe could be sustained. For example, claims were being made that adults with special needs could be catered for⁹³ and yet there was no needs analysis in place and no modifications to the programmes for any adult with learning needs. Additionally, claims of an active equal opportunities were being made⁹⁴ and yet the actual participation of ethnic minorities or men on courses was minimal. The predominant participants were single mature females. The Gloucester group had made no contacts with the black community even though a register of black and Asian community groups was

available through the local Race Equality Council.

The group was advised⁹⁵ to alter its marketing language for a form that could be justified to funders and participants. The suggestion did not find favour with the group. Their case rested on the belief that the courses as delivered could meet the needs of all adults - even though there was no evidence to support the claim and the national office's awareness of the difficulty Parent Network was having in building participation on traditional courses in Manchester, Bristol and South London. The Gloucestershire group's argument seemed to be akin to a religious belief, that all may come to hear the gospel and benefit from it. There was no need to have a version for disadvantaged parents, black parents or those with learning needs. The message was all embracing and accessible to all.⁹⁶ To make matters more complicated, funds were running low in Gloucestershire and the expectation was that the group would run out of money before the end of the financial year.⁹⁷ The new initiatives manager advised the group that the national office was not in a position to subsidise their operations and that they should not undertake any work beyond that which could be fully funded.⁹⁸ Effectively, the group would have to stop delivering courses before the end of the financial year but, more importantly, the risk was growing that the Gloucestershire part-time co-ordinator might have to be made redundant through lack of funds. The group did not take the advice well and were quickly on the offensive seeking support from the chair and others in the organisation to be allowed to carry on as they were.⁹⁹

At the same time the national office became aware that the group in Ealing, West London, had been constructing contractual work with the local authority without Parent Network's authority. This practice had begun before the appointment of the chief executive and had grown such that the value of the work was in excess of £20,000 per year.¹⁰⁰ The chief executive believed that the practice had been given tacit approval by the chair of the national executive committee but was clear that the arrangement, by only focusing upon delivery costs, was clearly underpriced because the costs did not take account of material

costs, supervision, local or national core costs. VAT had also not been charged. The agreement had no provision for resolution of disputes, copyright of materials or illness of facilitators.¹⁰¹

When confronted with the issue of contracts, the national executive committee confirmed their policy that only the national office could sign contracts on Parent Network's behalf and that any drawn up by local groups could place the organisation into legal difficulty should problems arise with the execution of such agreements.¹⁰² It further confirmed that any such agreements needed to be checked at an early stage by national office staff and that best practice would cause national office staff to be involved at an early stage. Again, the Ealing group saw such assertion as an unwarranted intrusion into their affairs and were unwilling to concede to the policy directive of the NEC. Relationships with the group grew frosty¹⁰³ even though with the new initiatives manager involved in the contractual discussions for 1999/0 the fee income to Parent Network would rise to over £30,000 offering a fully costed and protected position.

The problems of Manchester, Gloucester, Ealing and Kent appeared to cause a ripple effect as discussions across the network began to focus upon the organisational changes being made and a wave of unrest began to surface.¹⁰⁴ Comments became focused upon the chief executive and new initiatives manager but not the national executive committee that was passing the new policy resolutions. Some of the comments were personal and abusive.¹⁰⁵ Those who made such comments were making much of the fact that the chief executive and new initiatives manager were not members of the organisation in the same way that national executive members were. They had not come to the organisation through the same procedure as facilitators - via attending courses and then becoming facilitators. They were outsiders who had not acquired the cultural understandings of those who had been immersed in the teachings of the organisation. There was an unwillingness on the part of complainants to acknowledge that all organisational changes had been subject to NEC discussion and approval and that each year the AGM offered the membership an

opportunity to elect new members and question policy.

As pressure grew upon the national office, the new Parent Network finance officer disclosed that reserves were being depleted at a significant rate and that without the unrestricted funding that had previously been flowing into the organisation, the existing level of expenditure could not be sustained¹⁰⁶. Whilst this information was not particularly surprising to the chief executive, it underlined the need for continued change. What was different now was that the changes needed to take place rapidly if the organisation was to survive.

During the summer of 1998 the chief executive and new initiatives manager had begun discussions with British Telecommunications and the Home Office on separate major funding initiatives that would extend over a number of years. The government had launched its Green Paper *Supporting Families* in November 1998 from Parent Network's national office and there was a commitment on the part of the Home Office to put money into national structures to support parents. Signs were good within the Home Office that funding might be available but at a price.¹⁰⁷ The Home Office wanted a proposal that would confirm and embed the organisational changes already begun. As for BT, after initial positive indications, criteria for funding changed. BT wanted a collaborative bid to support its view that organisations working in the field needed to operate in a collaborative way to be more efficient with resources and to provide a more comprehensive and integrated service provision.¹⁰⁸ As a consequence discussions began with ParentLine, a national organisation providing a telephone helpline service, on the possibility of a joint bid.

As the early months of 1999 passed, tensions were running high. The discussions with BT were moving slowly although a joint bid had been produced with ParentLine¹⁰⁹. Its consideration within BT was taking longer than had been hoped and certainly too slow to meet the organisation's pressing financial needs. A bid to the Home Office had been

completed and positive signals had been received.¹¹⁰ However, because the bid fell into a funding round, no confirmation could be received until after April 1999 nor until the relevant Minister - Paul Boateng - had approved allocations. In the light of the worsening situation, the chief executive and new initiatives manager were pressing the national executive committee to take some action. Some members were reluctant to act. One suggested the situation be left until 2000 and reconsidered then¹¹¹. Another suggested that the national office be closed and all national office staff be made redundant,¹¹² the hope being that this would enable the local areas to continue. Neither of these suggestions would meet the requirements of either BT or the Home Office. A further factor was that the local areas had approximately £60,000 of unattached funds held in reserves held in their bank accounts. This money was owned by the organisation¹¹³ and the executive members had to decide what to do with it. One option was to claw back part or all of the money to help meet possible future liabilities. A decision was taken by the NEC¹¹⁴ to advise areas of a finance problem and they were asked not to arrange any further courses unless they were fully funded from external funds, thus hoping to minimise the depletion of the reserves. It was accepted, however, that committed expenditure had to be used causing, in some local areas, a reduction in reserve funds. For many members this decision brought disbelief and anger. For some, it was more evidence of modernising ways that were destroying the organisation, whilst for others an acceptance that the original concept had run its course and it was time to move on. Consequently mixed messages were being received at national office. Some supporting messages but many negative. The following examples are illustrative.¹¹⁵ The first is from someone against the changes:

“I joined the Network to have access to, and run, Parent-Link. I wanted the freedom to be self-managing and I hold firmly to the principle of running the groups in my own or parents’ homes.The driving attitude within the organisation seems to be one of fear - the fear of not being ‘top of the class’, of being sued, of being thought middle class, of failing, of not reaching impossible groups Our courses were never designed for parents with multiple difficulties. I refuse to accept that our organisation may be defined as failing

because wetend to reach the parts of society that are most receptive to education.”

The second is from a supporter of change:

“We clearly do not bring in enough income to fund our organisation as a whole. What is more important, we do not reach enough parents, in my view..... I am not satisfied with this at all. I am certain we need to reach 10 or even 100 times this number each year. We do not reach enough fathers.....We do not reach enough parents from ethnic, cultural and national minorities, from parents with disabilities or parents with children having disabilities. I believe we can only do this by radically changing our approach ...”

Although the national executive committee’s view was that about one third of facilitators were against change¹¹⁶, the volume of criticism was greater than that of support. Members of the national executive began to talk of merger with ParentLine and the bid to BT had brought the organisations closer. A beleaguered chief executive sought support from the chair and members of the national executive committee. Their response was not what the chief executive wanted and, consequently, resigned in April 1999.

6. RESULTS SECTION 3 - TAKEN INTO CARE

Once the news of the chief executive's resignation reached members, morale within the organisation reduced considerably.¹¹⁷ Here was evidence that a crisis was looming. A realisation began to emerge that the concerns expressed from the national office over previous months may have foundation. However, more was to come. The legal advice received by the national executive committee on the matter of the local area bank accounts confirmed that received from the chief executive. The only way that the national executive committee could ensure control over the accounts was to freeze their use and to replace local signatories with members of the national executive. With worries that some of the local areas might spend or frustrate access to the money, the national executive committee decided to inform all local areas that their accounts were to be frozen and requesting bank cheque books to be sent to London and change of signatory mandates to be signed. This was done in May 1999. Whilst most areas complied, a number did not including Kent, South London, Ealing and Gloucestershire. For those who believed that they could simply carry on even if they did not have access to, or use of, Parent Network finance they were reminded that copyright of all Parent Network courses, logo and materials was held by the organisation and subject to national executive control.¹¹⁸ From telephone calls to the London head quarters, facilitators around the country now appeared to realise that a crisis point had arrived and there was a strong possibility that Parent Network could close within the next 6 - 9 months.

Following the resignation of the chief executive, the national executive committee asked the new initiatives manager to assume the role of chief executive in an acting capacity. At this point the chair of the NEC believed that the future held only closure or merger and that the intent would be for the new initiatives manager to hold the post until one or other of the outcomes had been achieved.¹¹⁹ The new initiatives manager was weary of taking up the post having seen the circumstances by which the previous chief executive had left. Given that the national executive had already considered making all employees in the national

office redundant in an effort to save the organisation, the new initiative manager did not believe that all members of the national executive took seriously their employer responsibilities. He did not believe that security for employees was to be high on their agenda. Additionally, the initial discussions with ParentLine had revealed ample scope for rationalisation of staff should a merger ever take place. As a consequence he feared the worst that in the event of a merger probably all, or nearly all, of the employees in the national office would lose their employment.¹²⁰ Wanting to be as strong a position as possible, the new initiatives manager asked for not just the same terms and conditions as the outgoing post holder but also an assurance that he would be involved in the merger discussions. These terms were agreed and with strong support from the national office staff - perhaps because they feared for their jobs - the new initiatives manager took on the role.

The relationship between the new chief executive, chair and national office staff and the local areas became a mixed affair of strong support from some and criticisms from others. It appeared that many, perhaps a third although precise figures were not available, were against a merger with ParentLine.¹²¹ For this group three options appeared to gain their favour. Firstly, that local areas or individuals be allowed to carry on in whatever way they wished or could. Secondly, that the larger areas could become charities in their own right, whilst the third option was a stubborn refusal to accept merger with no other alternative course of action proposed.¹²²

The issue of independence of both facilitators and local areas had run through much of the organisational debate for the previous two years. It was this issue that was to dominate the discussions that lead towards a vote of members on what final action the organisation was to take. At the heart of the debate was the ability of individual facilitators and local groups to use Parent Network name in ways that they wished and to be able to sell 'private' courses in which the facilitator received and retained all fee income. History had shown that the original concept of common set of courses being delivered in a common way was

not what was actually happening. Individuals and groups had adapted courses to suit their own needs with the result of a diverse set of personalised adaptations around the country. This diversity was at odds with the national marketing position of Parent Network in which the use of accredited courses run through the national open college network was being promoted as a way of offering security to potential participants that courses were subject to quality control measures. Additional to this was the promotion of new resource books to support the courses that assumed a consistency in content and approach on the part of facilitators. At a time when the Home Office and bodies such as the National Parenting Education & Support Forum were discussing proposals for increased standardisation and quality control of parenting courses in order for participants to be confident of what they might experience¹²³, voices in Parent Network were arguing for increased freedom to deliver personalised courses based upon the Parent Network model and with little, if any, control from outside agencies.

The original idea of Parent Network facilitators being trained and then ‘franchised’ to offer and deliver courses in a personal way was at odds with the general trends of the 1990’s where education had moved towards explicit and transparent course content, explicit intended learning outcomes, national comparable standards and that the learner, as consumer, should have some means of judging value for money when seeking and acquiring a course. These ideas were alien to many of Parent Network’s facilitators who did not see themselves as offering educational courses, rather an aspect of counselling. As a consequence it was seen as reasonable to run courses in homes and allow the path of the resultant experience to be dictated by the interests or concerns of the learner(s) rather than a predetermined course structure. It had been found from participation data, and facilitator interviews by the national training manager, that the use of the accredited courses had been relatively low and one reason for this was that facilitators were conceding¹²⁴ that they were not covering all of the course content and the accredited course would pressure them to do so. Further, many of the facilitators did not like the idea of assessment of the course. They felt it was for the participants to judge for themselves the use they gained from the

experience and believed it wholly inappropriate for external assessment on pre-determined assessment criteria. Indeed, a number of facilitators did not believe it was appropriate to have pre-determined learning outcomes. Their view was that the course was a pathway of discovery for the participants and it was not possible to know where each participant's pathway would take them. Another factor was the course moderation which was viewed by some as an unwanted external assessment of them as facilitators. Outside the accredited course structure, Parent Network had no formal system for evaluating the quality of delivery or learning. What support systems that were in place were for the facilitators to enable them to work through the personal tensions arising from the delivery of a course.

The conversations with ParentLine had revealed¹²⁵ that it was an organisation made up of approximately 13 separate charities. Its strategic objective, for which £1 million of government funding was being made available over a three year period, was to standardise the provision of ParentLine services across the country. In many ways the objectives of ParentLine were congruent with those of Parent Network. Further, whilst there was considerable variety in the style accessibility and quality of the services offered by ParentLine, the issues for improvement lay in technical matters concerning the provision of a telephone helpline and the relationship with the 13 ParentLine areas - whether to combine them in some way or not. There was not an ideological tussle as with Parent Network, about what the nature of the service was and how it should be delivered.

Whereas ParentLine had a much better telephone help line service than Parent Network, the operators of the telephone help line had no direct contact with parents other than over the telephone. Further, the operators were not trained in working with parents, rather in the provision of a telephone service. If Parent Network was not in a position to offer large financial assets to a merger, it was able to offer a lot of experience working in a face to face environment with parents. This experience was seen as useful to ParentLine as was the Parent Network brand name. The new books that were beginning to be published were seen as market leaders with good prospects for income generation.¹²⁶

Whilst there appeared, from the discussions underway between the two sets of Trustees, to be a way in which the Trustees of both organisations could find a route to merger, the members of Parent Network were still expressing a considerable mix of views. The Parent Network Trustees decided¹²⁷ that the Annual General Meeting (AGM) for 1999 would take place on 12 September and on that date a vote would be taken on whether or not to merge with ParentLine UK. As the summer of that year approached, much work had to be done in order to prepare a prospectus for merger, but also to consider what ways of dealing with those in the organisation who did not want their conception of an organisation of independent facilitators to be changed.

As the date for motions approached it was clear from the discussions between the company secretary and local areas that there was a likelihood of many motions being brought forward. Legal advice¹²⁸ was that members could not vote on any proposition in which they had a financial interest. This was conveyed to members, but again interpreted by some as an attempt to prevent them voting on matters, such as fees for courses, of whether 'private' fees could be charged at all. Right up to the AGM there seemed to be an inevitable clash between those, including ParentLine UK, who wanted an organisation that was more client focused and operating within a corporate framework against those who wanted an organisation of many individuals each offering their own product or service based upon the Parent Network programmes. This was an individual facilitator product led approach and what a parent would receive would depend upon where a parent lived and from which facilitator a service was acquired.

It appeared probable that a significant proportion of the membership were intent to proceed with their desire to assert their independence. In the face of a possible defeat in the crucial vote of merger, it was agreed by the Trustees¹²⁹ of both organisations to allow motions to proceed into the AGM that would appear to give a wide range of powers to facilitators. It was hoped that after the merger there would be an opportunity under new management

arrangements to bring the Parent Network brand back towards a corporate position.

When the prospectus was published it contained 12 special resolutions and it was clear from the resolutions submitted that an attempt was to be made to wrestle some form of executive power away from any new Trustee body to a new facilitator executive body and to try to maintain the culture of independence. The following resolution was tabled:

*“This meeting agrees on principle that a forum for facilitators and trainers be established. This forum would enjoy a clearly defined consultative role and decision making responsibility in the field of training and development work and would consider and propose activities which uphold the standards and values of Parent Network. The Annual General Meeting instructs the Executive Committee to establish a working party elected from a cross section of the Parent Network Membership. This working party shall have responsibility to draft terms of reference and to look at how best the forum might fit into the Family Lives organisation.”*¹³⁰

The Trustees had taken legal advice on this resolution and had been advised that it could not be passed by the membership on the grounds that the Trustees could not give up responsibility for core activity functions of the organisation. On this advice, the meeting voted 46 votes against the resolution, 41 for, with 18 abstentions. On the motion that sought to give facilitators the widest individual powers, the Trustees now backed away from confrontation. This proposal covered considerable ground:

“In any constitutional or structural changes within parent Network, or upon any merger of Parent Network with any other organisation, it is resolved that the following parent Network principles and values be safeguarded and preserved in the interests of equal opportunities; and that the Trustees take active steps to introduce all necessary structures to further such values:

1 Parent Network courses be available to, and promoted to include, the widest diversity of participants (parents pre-crisis, parents in-crisis, parent post-crisis, parents interested in personal growth, all ethnic and religious minorities and majorities; all parents and those

working with children)

2. The courses be made available in the widest diversity of settings and locations (adult education, doctors surgeries, libraries, church halls, private homes, social services, schools, prisons etc)

3. The most diverse methods of delivery be available for Parent Network courses (accredited courses, non-accredited, tailor-made, Parent-Link, Parenting Matters, and other courses developed by the network)

4. The Trustees use their best endeavours to ensure that support systems for facilitators are implemented in the form of supervision, monitoring, on-going training and evaluation.”¹³¹

With little opposition from the Trustees, this motion was passed with 93 votes for, 21 against and with 7 abstentions. With this motion passed, the meeting was able to move on to the major issue of merger and the motion to merge was passed 128 votes for with none against and with no abstentions. With what might be seen as a classic fudge, both sides had gained part of what they wanted. Members had voted for merger but also to have the freedom to run courses of their choice in locations of their choice.

7 CONCLUSIONS

This study has attempted to chart the progress of Parent Network over a two year period as it moved towards a merger with ParentLine UK. It has attempted to show how an organisation that might have a superficial facade of structure, purpose and methodology, may have within it competing forces for each of these issues.

The origins of the organisation arising from the charisma of Ivan Sokolov and Jacquie Pearson, the philosophy of Carl Rogers along with the funding of the Artemis Trust were set within aspirational objectives - such as working in partnership with parents, to develop from a cascading model of organic development an organisation that would cover the country and provide support to any parent who wanted it. However, the organisation brought together people - mainly white women with roots more to do with middle class culture than that of working class - who had different motivations, expectations and desires for their personal involvement. The organisation grew but with local areas demonstrating different characteristics and working practices. There were those who were happy to run courses in their spare time and for no profit set against those for whom being a Parent Network facilitator was a part-time job and where income was important. For some learning was seen as a joint collaborative exercise, set within a non-judgemental arena, whilst for others parents were to be inculcated with the ways to better parenting, they were individuals with problems which could be solved by acquiring the Parent Network culture and joining the network.

At a time when the national executive committee was trying to find ways of reaching out beyond the boundaries of the organisation to reach new parent groups, new funders, new ways to organising support, there were those who seemed to be focused inwardly to issues of preserving historic interpretations of function and practice of facilitators. Every attempt to reach out beyond the organisation seemed to be interpreted as another threat to the origins of the organisation and its values as understood by a significant volume of

facilitators.

Even at its final act of merger with ParentLine UK, the AGM passed a motion that seemed to preserve what many saw as original rights of independence and culture rooted in the mid-1980s. They were voting to join, as one, with another organisation and yet at the same time voting to maintain, for those who desired it, the facility to carry on as before running the courses as they wished, where they wished.

The study has illuminated the power that is held by members within a membership organisation and the difficulty for both members and national executive members of separating membership functions with operational and employee functions. It is perhaps not without surprise that as ParentLine UK began its own process of reorganisation, it was to propose a non-membership organisation and one based upon non-voting affiliation.

The study has provided an opportunity to rehearse some of the methodology processes that will be used in the main Doctoral research. As such it has been valuable as a means to illuminate some of the problems that may be encountered. These include:

- a) Gathering data within an organization has its problems, not just in terms of the practical capture of data, but that the data itself may be camouflaged due to the circumstances in which it appears or is provided. This leads to issues of the collection of different forms of data and the process of triangulation by which some firmness can be brought to judgements upon the data. In the case of Parent Network there was a climate within the organisation that was formulated through relationships, verbal interchanges, subtle body language and shared histories. Collecting and interpreting such evidence was not a major methodological priority in this instance. However, the case study has illuminated the importance that organisational climate has on the style and form of evidence formulation.
- b) The role of researcher, whether as participative or non-participative, has impact upon the action being researched. This was evident in the case of Parent Network and steps were taken to be as objective as possible in the handling and

interpretation of evidence. In the research for the thesis a non-participative role will be used. However, one lesson from the Parent Network experience is that the researcher may be seen as an outsider and this may impact upon how responses are made and upon the content to them.

- c) Constructing meanings from the diversity of evidence within a vibrant organisation is a complicated matter. This study has reinforced ideas that individual items of evidence may have differing meaning when placed in context of a whole action or collection of evidence. Thus caution with deconstructing and similarly using evidence to make neat constructions. When looking at an organisation over time, the nature of the evidence changes due to changes in personnel, the activity focus of the organisation, priorities, pressures and other dynamic forces. Thus the evidence of today may say something quite different to that of yesterday simply because the organisation has moved on. This will be pertinent with future research where data collection over time will form part of the methodology.

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