

2019

HEADTEACHER EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF STANDARDS-LED REFORM IN ENGLISH SECONDARY SCHOOLS

Norman, Paul Stuart

<http://hdl.handle.net/10026.1/15112>

<http://dx.doi.org/10.24382/586>

University of Plymouth

All content in PEARL is protected by copyright law. Author manuscripts are made available in accordance with publisher policies. Please cite only the published version using the details provided on the item record or document. In the absence of an open licence (e.g. Creative Commons), permissions for further reuse of content should be sought from the publisher or author.

Copyright Statement

This copy of the thesis has been supplied on condition that anyone who consults it is understood to recognise that its copyright rests with its author and that no quotation from the thesis and no information derived from it may be published without the author's prior consent.



**UNIVERSITY OF
PLYMOUTH**

**HEADTEACHER EXPERIENCES AND PERCEPTIONS OF STANDARDS-LED
REFORM IN ENGLISH SECONDARY SCHOOLS**

By

PAUL STUART NORMAN

A thesis submitted to the University of Plymouth
in partial fulfilment for the degree of

DOCTOR OF EDUCATION (EdD)

Plymouth Institute of Education

December 2018

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Professional Doctorate in Education (EdD) has the author been registered for any other University award without prior agreement of the Graduate Committee.

Work submitted for this research degree at the Plymouth University has not formed part of any other degree either at Plymouth University or at another establishment.

A programme of advanced study was undertaken, which included research into Apprenticeship – an analysis of Coalition policy development, Communities of Practice in Professional Learning and Young people not in education, employment or training (NEET).

Presentations at conferences:

Norman, P., (2013), ““Yes Minister” – The Impact of ‘policy churn’ on standards in secondary education” (Poster), Institute of Health and Community Postgraduate Student Research Conference, Plymouth, United Kingdom.

Norman, P., (2015), ““Yes Minister” – The impact of pace of policy change on standards from the perspective of headteachers – Early data and points arising”, Institute of Health and Community and Institute of Education Postgraduate Research Conference, Plymouth, United Kingdom.

Word count of main body of thesis: 54, 937

Signed

Date

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to record my eternal thanks to my fantastic family for their unswerving support and encouragement. To my parents who made the whole experience possible and, while I am sad that Dad didn't get to see the finished product, I know he would have been proud that I had reached the end. To my wife Alison and my wonderful children whose patience and support through some very challenging times have been invaluable, and without whom I would have struggled to complete day one.

I can't adequately express how grateful I am to my Director of studies, Dr. Peter Kelly and my Supervisor Dr. Ulrike Hohmann, for their challenging but always calm and professional support and kindness at every stage of the process. The last seven years have thrown a lot at me and the Doctorate has become as much a form of therapy as an intellectual challenge, but throughout I have been supported and gently nudged forward with endless optimism and kindness. I would also like to thank Dr. Nick Pratt for having the belief that I could achieve something through this process and allowing me the opportunity in the first place.

No Professional Doctorate would be possible without the support of one's employer, and I will always be grateful for the support of The Wey Valley School, Phil Thomas, my original employer, for part-sponsoring me and encouraging me and to Sara Adams, his successor, for continuing the support. I'd also like to thank my colleagues in SLT for picking up the pieces when times were tough and supporting my times out of school to attend meetings, lectures and conferences.

Finally, I would like to thank all the Headteachers, Principals and school leaders who gave so generously of their valuable time to participate in the process, Leora Cruddas and ASCL, my professional body, who allowed me to access their network to publicise the survey. Without the willingness of my colleagues to open themselves up this project wouldn't have gone very far!

ABSTRACT

Title: Headteacher experiences and perceptions of standards-led reform in English secondary schools

Author: Paul Stuart Norman

The purpose of this research was to explore the perceptions of Headteachers in English secondary schools, to determine how the protracted standards-led programme of high-paced reform, sometime referred to as ‘policy churn’, had impacted on their experiences and on standards in their schools. The research employed a mixed-methods approach using an online survey, followed by semi-structured interviews with 11 practicing Headteachers from across the spectrum of school type, location and experience. Findings were considered against a framework of concepts including technologies of neoliberal reform - marketization, new managerialism and performativity drawn from Ball; concepts of capital drawn from Bourdieu and discourse, subjectivity and ‘care of the self’ drawn from Foucault. The research found that there is a significant dissonance between how Headteachers position themselves and view education in terms of their values, and what they perceive the position of politicians to be. This, combined with a feeling of disempowerment, has left them feeling jaded and cynical, potentially feeding the recruitment and retention crisis. It also found that Headteachers feel ill prepared for the new world of Academies and publicly funded, independently run schools where they have been subjectivated as business managers as well as lead practitioners, and this has led to increased personal and professional risk from legal and regulatory frameworks, previously in the purview of local authorities. The research also identified how the reform-justifying discourse of ‘standards’ has become a technology of Governmentality, using different objectified measures, some of which are opaque and controlled by Government and may be used to reward compliance with policy through official endorsement. To help address the crisis in recruitment and retention, it is proposed that there is greater cross-party strategic planning for education which includes the profession, confronts the negative consequences of the punitive model of performative accountability currently in place and reviews national profession qualifications for Headteachers to ensure they are properly prepared for the significant legal and financial responsibilities they adopt.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION.....	i
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	ii
ABSTRACT.....	iii
LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND TABLES	viii
CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Reforming the education system in England	2
1.3 The role of the Secondary Headteacher in England	5
1.4 The issue of standards.....	10
1.4 Research Aims	17
1.5 Research Questions.....	17
CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK.....	19
2.1 Introduction.....	19
2.1.1 Critique of research	20
2.2 Policy, ideology and discourse	24
2.2.1 Educational discourses	26
2.2.1.1 Discourse of Standards.....	27
2.2.1.2 Economistic discourses – Marketization, Globalization and Academization	32
2.2.1.3 Discourse of Derision and Redemption.....	37
2.3 Conceptual Framework.....	40
2.3.1 Governmentality and Power.....	40
2.3.2 Subjectivities	47
2.3.3 Bourdieu's Forms of Capital	51
2.4 Summary.....	60
CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND ETHICAL APPROACH.....	63
3.1. Research Overview.....	63
3.1.1 Methods.....	63
3.1.2 Overview of sample.....	65
3.2 Methodological approach	65
3.2.1 Positionality.....	69
3.3 Phase 1: Survey phase	71
3.3.1 Designing the survey - conducted via online questionnaire.....	71
3.3.2 Piloting the survey.....	73

3.3.3 Conducting the survey and sampling	74
3.3.4 Data	81
3.3.5 Data Preparation	82
3.3.6 Analysis	83
3.4 Phase 2: Semi-structured interview phase	84
3.4.1 Interview Schedule Design.....	84
3.4.2 Piloting the interview	86
3.4.3 Conducting the interviews and sampling	87
3.4.4 Data	91
3.4.5 Data Preparation	92
3.4.6 Analysis	93
3.5 Validity and reliability	95
3.5.1 Possible bias	97
3.6 Ethics	99
3.6.1 Limitations.....	99
3.6.2 Ethical processes	100
3.6.3 Data storage and protection	101
3.7 Summary.....	101
CHAPTER FOUR the experience of change, a changing experience?	103
4.1 Values and moral purpose.....	103
4.1.1 Values and the purpose of education.....	104
4.1.2 Moral purpose and values seen through policy	115
4.2 School leaders' perceptions and experiences of reform	119
4.2.1 Preparedness for new managerialism	119
4.2.2 Impact of change on School Leaders' professional identity	121
4.3 The impact of standards and performativity	136
4.3.1 Standards	136
4.3.2 The perceived impact of fast-paced reform on standards.....	142
4.3.3 Accountability	144
CHAPTER FIVE Concluding Discussion	151
5.1 Introduction.....	151
5.2 Discussion of findings against original research questions	151
5.2.1 How does rapid, standards-led reform impact on Headteachers?	151
5.2.2 Do claims of greater autonomy for Headteachers match their experiences?	156

5.2.2.1 How a Headteacher may choose to implement policy	158
5.2.3 Are there examples of reforms which have impacted positively on standards?	161
5.3 Evaluation of my research	166
5.4 Contribution of this work to knowledge	168
5.4.1 I Identify a perceived dissonance in the purpose and value of education between headteachers and politicians.....	168
5.4.2 I introduce a new conceptual model for the process by which a headteacher decides to comply with or resist reforms.....	170
5.4.3 I Identify an emerging need for improved training for Headship to strengthen business management skills.....	170
5.4.4 Identifying the complexity of ‘standards’ and its use as discourse, commodity and political tool.....	171
5.5 Limitations of study.....	172
5.6 Implications for professional practice	174
5.7 Areas for further research	177
References.....	179
APPENDIX A: A potted history of reform.....	192
APPENDIX B: DfE documentation on floor standards (adapted).....	204
APPENDIX C: What do I mean by policy?.....	208
APPENDIX D: Survey questions for Surveymonkey online survey portal.....	212
APPENDIX E: Feedback and reflection on pilot survey and interview	216
APPENDIX F: Question 5: How many years of experience in school leadership do you have?	220
APPENDIX G: Initial survey data	221
APPENDIX H: Participant briefing pack, interview schedule and consent forms.....	281
APPENDIX I: Full and part-time regular leadership teachers in state funded schools by salary bands, sector, gender and age. (adapted from DfE, 2016c).....	286
APPENDIX J: Codebook.....	288
APPENDIX L: The only constant is change.....	293
APPENDIX M: Further discussion on headteacher identity and pragmatism.....	305
APPENDIX N: Responses to Question 18	313
APPENDIX O: Performance management	317
APPENDIX P: Perceptions on workload and other implications of reform.....	321
APPENDIX Q: Timeline of New Labour initiatives (Heath <i>et al.</i> , 2013, pp. 4-5).....	327
APPENDIX R: Ethical approval application	329

APPENDIX S: Ethical approval letter	341
APPENDIX T: Interview participants identified from survey and email shot	343
APPENDIX U: Population estimates – mid year 2015 (extracted from Office for National Statistics Mid-Year estimates 2015 at ONS, 2015).....	344
APPENDIX V: Word frequency describing reform – (question 25 appendix G, p. 221)	346
APPENDIX V: Examples of policy success and failure.....	347
APPENDIX W: Sample Transcript.....	370

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS AND TABLES

Table 2.1: Political interpretations of standards and accountability	28
Figure 3.1: Completion rates of Phase 1 survey	76
Table 3.1: Participation by gender	76
Table 3.2: Participation by institution type	77
Table 3.3: Participation by Secondary phase	78
Table 3.4: Participation by role.....	79
Table 3.5: Participation by region (author's classification)	80
Table 3.6: Participation by Leadership experience	81
Table 3.7: Interview participant characteristics	90
Figure 3.2: Constant comparative method of data analysis (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994)	94
Table 3.8: Eight 'Big Tent; Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research (Tracy, 2010, p. 840)	96
Figure 4.1: The Purpose of Education – School Leader Priorities (Appendix G: Question 12).	104
Figure 4.2: The Purpose of Education – School Leader perception of policy makers' priorities. (Appendix G: Question 14).	111
Table 1.1: Cross tab descriptive stats for Q3:Q29	143
Figure 5.1: Factors involved in how headteachers decide whether to resist or comply with reform.....	160
Table A.1: Continuum of Political and Educational Ideologies	202
Figure C.1: Education policy levels and its making contexts	208
Figure C.2: Influential groups in the Policy Making Process	209
Table F.1: Question 5: How many years of experience in school leadership do you have?	220
Figure G.1: Initial Survey Data Question 1	221
Figure G.2: Initial Survey Data Question 2	222
Figure G.3: Initial Survey Data Question 3	224
Figure G.4: Initial Survey Data Question 4	225
Table G.1: Initial Survey Data Question 5.....	228
Figure G.5: Initial Survey Data Question 6	230
Figure G.6: Initial Survey Data Question 7	231
Figure G.7: Initial Survey Data Question 8	232
Figure G.8: Initial Survey Data Question 9	233
Figure G.9: Initial Survey Data Question 10	234

Table G.2: Initial Survey Data Question 11	238
Figure G.10: Initial Survey Data Question 12	239
Table G.3: Initial Survey Data Question 13	240
Figure G.11: Initial Survey Data Question 14	241
Table G.4: Initial Survey Data Question 15	242
Figure G.12: Initial Survey Data Question 16	243
Figure G.13: Initial Survey Data Question 17	244
Table G.5: Initial Survey Data Question 18	247
Figure G.14: Initial Survey Data Question 19	249
Figure G.15: Initial Survey Data Question 20	250
Table G.6: Initial Survey Data Question 21	254
Table G.7: Initial Survey Data Question 22	257
Table G.8: Initial Survey Data Question 23	261
Table G.9: Initial Survey Data Question 24	265
Table G.10: Initial Survey Data Question 25	269
Figure G.16: Initial Survey Data Question 26	270
Table G.11: Initial Survey Data Question 27	271
Figure G.17: Initial Survey Data Question 28	272
Figure G.18: Initial Survey Data Question 29	273
Table G.12: Initial Survey Data Question 30	277
Figure G.19: Initial Survey Data Question 31	279
Figure G.20: Initial Survey Data Question 32	280
Table I.1: Full and part-time regular leadership teachers in state funded schools by salary bands, sector, gender and age.	287
Table J.1: Codebook Table	289
Table L.1: Perceptions of effectiveness for policy planning.....	298
Figure M.1: The evolution of Headteacher identity over time.....	310
Figure P.1: Question 31: How do you believe that the pace of education reform / policy change has impacted on workload in secondary schools?	322
Table Q.1: Timeline of New Labour initiatives	328
Table T.1: Interview participants identified from survey and email shot.....	343
Table U.1: Population estimates – mid year 2015	344
Figure V.1: Word frequency of responses to Q25	346

CHAPTER ONE INTRODUCTION AND CONTEXT

And it ought to be remembered that there is nothing more difficult to take in hand, more perilous to conduct, or more uncertain in its success, than to take the lead in the introduction of a new order of things, because the innovator has for enemies all those who have done well under the old conditions, and lukewarm defenders in those who may do well under the new.

(Machiavelli, 1513)

1.1 Introduction

School leaders in England have been subject to an extended period of educational reform, through different governing administrations and focused on differing aspects of the system. Education, or more specifically schooling in England has seen many changes introduced over the last few decades. Some have focused on structural change, for example the introduction of Academies, free schools, studio schools and University Technical Schools, but there has also been significant reform of curriculum, governance and assessment / examinations systems - the pace of which, since 2010, has been described by Dame Glenys Stacey, former Chief Executive of OfQual¹ as “eye watering” (Day, Elliot and Kington, 2005).

I have experienced this through holding positions of responsibility within senior leadership teams in a large, high performing state secondary school in Essex and then in a smaller, far more challenging school in Dorset. Regardless of size, success, funding or any other contextual factors, both schools had the same pressures to comply with government policy, reform, mandatory requirements and performance measures. The high pace of reform has meant interpreting and implementing policy from national, local authority and school level, often before previous policy has been fully implemented or given time to impact. On many occasions, I have often questioned the validity of the

¹ The Office of Qualifications and Examinations Regulation

policy or its proposed method of implementation and what I have perceived to be very weak processes for evaluation and impact assessment. In recent years, these changes have seemed to occur at a particularly high rate and often with limited consultation or buy-in from the profession. As Russell Hobby, former Secretary of the headteachers' professional body the NAHT² reflects:

The constant change in schools makes it hard to plan ahead. What new wheeze will come down the line from Whitehall next? How will the inspection framework change? Who will even be in charge in six months' time?

(Hobby, 2015, p. 24)

This has led me, at times, to feel frustrated and disempowered within my role and has led me to question how such a pace of reform or 'churn' of policy impacts on the very outcomes it aims to achieve.

This section will introduce three key areas of interest. The nature of reform of English education, how the role of the secondary headteacher has developed through the current era of reform, and how meaningful the discourse of standards is, when applied to English education. It will then set out the main aims of the research and research questions.

1.2 Reforming the education system in England

Reform of publicly funded education and schooling in England has been an ongoing process for a considerable period of time and has been described as policy overload (Ball, 2008), however, changes can be enacted in a number of ways and with differing levels of significance. The pace of reform has also been persistently high for an extended period in time, a phenomenon labelled by some as policy churn (Hess, 1999) and this extended period of rapid reform has continued across different political administrations and numerous Secretaries of State, 12 during my 25 years in teaching. It is not my intention

² NAHT - National Association for Head Teachers

here to give a detailed history of English education policy as this has been done by others many times, notably Finch (1984), Adams (2014) and Ball (2006); but it is important to understand the role reform and policy change has played as a socio-historic context for the current system and to explore what has driven it.

I have included a fuller discussion or ‘potted history’ of reform in the English system in Appendix A (p. 192). I would, however, refer briefly to some of the key education reforms of the last three decades. Perhaps the most significant was the 1988 Education Act, an important piece of ‘liberal’ legislation which facilitated a new “economy of power” (Ball, 1994), changing the balance toward the state and away from local authority control. It is this act, under a Conservative administration, which introduced Local Management of Schools³, the reform which has acted as the foundation for many of the policy developments that have appeared subsequently. It may also be seen as the starting point for a neoliberal reform process, opening up “an infrastructure of possibilities within which business could establish a presence within state education services” (Ball, 2007, p. 19). This has ultimately changed state education from being publicly funded and managed to publicly funded, privately managed, and repositioned education as a consumer commodity (Ball, 2006), rather than a public good. This change in focus to providing the consumer with ‘choice’ was a fundamental development which forced schools to consider “image and impression management” (Ball, 1994, p. 51) as much as educational processes and outcomes. Teachers’ performance became tied to a techno-rationalist ideal of ‘performativity’ (Ball, 2013) processes and structures, including a primary focus on testing and inspection as tools to hold schools accountable and to provide information to facilitate consumer choice.

³ Local Management of Schools is also referred to as ‘LMS’

The neoliberal agenda developed further under the Conservatives with the change to Grant-Maintained schools, passing funding directly to schools, bypassing and disempowering local authorities further. The change of administration to New Labour in 1997 may have been expected to usher in traditional socialist welfare policies but Tony Blair had come to power on a manifesto based around a “Third Way”, an idea expounded initially by “Leading Third Way intellectual” Anthony Giddens (Leggett, 2005). Initially an attempt to look for “a new relationship between the individual and the community” (Leggett, 2005, p. 40), this has subsequently been interpreted as move from the old values of the left to the adoption of neoliberal ideals, a “capitulation to the requirements of the free market” (Leggett, 2005, p. 43), while others have described it as “updated” or “post-revisionist social democracy” (Hill, 1999). New Labour did not undo the 1988 changes but built on them, demonstrating a zeal for the performative technologies and developing a new ‘City Academies’ policy to target underperforming inner-city schools (Walford, 2014). This policy, built on the original introduction of City Technology Colleges in the late 1980s (Maclure, 1988; Mortimore, 2013) and made possible by the 1988 Act, was developed by the Labour administration in 2000 (Walford, 2014) and significantly accelerated by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition elected in 2010. They also introduced a wider range of publicly funded independent schools, including free schools (ibid), University Technical Colleges and Studio schools (Courtney, 2015), alongside expansion of the Academies policy to include all schools, not just underperformers. The subsequent election of a Conservative Government led to the rapid growth of Multi-Academy Trusts as a preferred structure (Crawford, 2018), a model which in my view, replicates the management and school improvement functions of a Local Authority but meets the neoliberal ideal of being a private entity. While there have been many other policy enactments in this time, it is the Academies policy which has had perhaps the biggest impact on the role of headteachers and the performative frameworks

which have enabled academisation have, arguably, applied the most significant pressures to those within the system.

Reform is not necessarily one simple process or policy an homogenous type. There are nuances to how reforms are identified and targeted. While the impact on schools is often the same, regardless of the intent, how individual headteachers react and adapt to a new policy may change depending on their perceived value or intent. Three key types of change have been identified by Lupton and Obolenskaya (Lupton and Obolenskaya, 2013b):

- Reforms to the nature of education: curriculum, assessment and the types of schools available.
- Policies to improve system performance across the board, such as inspection, training, central guidance on pedagogy, investments in school buildings and equipment, and accountability through targets.
- Specific targeted initiatives and programmes to address the needs of children from low income homes, those needing particular or complex support, and/or those at risk of or already disengaged from learning.

(adapted from Lupton and Obolenskaya, 2013b)

While these definitions are useful to help define the range of work that may be undertaken in school ‘reform’, this work focuses on the processes of change itself, whether driven by major reform or small-scale policy development. It is the cumulative effect of such changes and the pace at which they occur that interests me, in terms of the actual impact on the systems and outcomes from the perspectives of headteachers.

1.3 The role of the Secondary Headteacher in England

English education has seen the role and responsibilities of headteachers change substantially since the establishment of universal education. Since the earliest days, however, headteachers held considerable power (Mortimore, 2013) and the role allowed them to be strong and autonomous (Finch, 1984). The autonomy of the headteacher:

to some extent is based in custom and tradition, but it is also reinforced by quite concrete powers over deployment and promotion of staff, use of buildings, making school rules and some parts of the school's budget

(Finch, 1984, p. 57)

Headteachers were leading professionals (ibid, p. 57) and the administrative roles of the secondary school, including budget, human resources and more fell to the local authorities who also had a responsibility for staff development and inspection. The 1988 Education Reform Act sought, in line with neoliberal thinking, to shift the balance of power away from local authorities. Kenneth Baker was sensitive to accusations he was “assuming dictatorial powers” (Maclure, 1988, p. xii) and claimed that greater power for central Government was incidental with the primary aim being to ‘enhance the life chances of young people’ (ibid, p. xii), by inference suggesting that local authorities were failing to do so. Maclure (1988) also suggests one aim of the act was to “liberate teachers (and particularly headteachers) from the control of local authorities and their administrators, in the belief that more freedom would enable them to be more efficient” (Maclure, 1988, p. xiii). However, the introduction of LMS pushed headteachers away from teaching and learning toward administrative activities and led to both headteachers and teachers having to “analyse the nature of their previous relationships and made them question whether the latter are still workable” (Hellawell, 1990; p.401 in Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992, p. 143). It is interesting to note, however, that the role of the headteacher, as defined in the National Standard of Excellence for Headteachers (DfE, 2015c), makes no mention of administrative or business-related duties.

I would argue that since 1988 teaching and school leadership in the English education system has become increasingly more demanding and challenging (Morrison, 2015). The job of headteacher has grown in complexity, with headteachers overseeing many “administrative and business functions” (Mortimore, 2013, p. 92) and with the rise of the ‘Superhead’ or Executive Head, some are even taking the role on across federations of

schools and MATs⁴. This change in role is highlighted through the modification of key linguistic identifiers, in this new world of Academies, the top position is decreasingly defined as ‘headteacher’ and increasingly as ‘principal’, however I will use the term headteacher for both throughout this work. While the definition of principal is acceptable as “Head of a school or College” (OUP, 2016a), there is a clear separation from the former expectation that school leaders should be qualified teachers and lead practitioners (Morrison, 2012). This may not only result in headteachers questioning their own professional identity, but arguably provides a significant point of debate with a teaching profession who would be expected to invest social and professional capital in their school leader. Such a change in focus and power through the ‘managerialisation’ of education has been described as giving headteachers / principals “pernicious powers in the eyes of many rank-and-file teachers” (Beckmann, Cooper and Hill, 2009, p. 314), in terms of performance management and pay. This increased managerialism and separation from teaching has developed further with the increasing growth of MATs as they are often led by CEOs⁵, a term more often associated with private commercial enterprise than public education.

School leaders have arguably faced the apparent juxtaposition of taking on more autonomy, to a degree which (Beckmann, Cooper and Hill, 2009) posit is “unprecedented”, while meeting increased centralised accountability measures, the ‘policy technologies’ (Ball, 2003) of performativity that underpin the neoliberal reform agenda, allowing “the state to retain considerable ‘steerage’ over the goals and processes of the education system (while appearing not to do so)” (Ball, 1994, p. 10). This may have an impact on how headteachers view themselves and construct their individual and

⁴ MAT – Multi-Academy Trust

⁵ Chief Executive Officers

community identities (Weindling and Dimmock, 2006). Such challenges may also be exacerbated by a tendency of politicians and the media to over-simplify the nature of headship as well as possibly leading to the perception that reform or policy is often ‘done to’ schools rather than ‘done with’, leading to a feeling that the profession “don’t always have the voice they would like” (Morrison, 2015).

While it is debatable that the role of school leadership has changed and has become as much about business management as teaching and learning since the introduction of LMS, the increased autonomy has been linked with a reduction in local democratic process with parents and local authorities left unable to hold Academies and new schools to account in the same way. Instead there has arguably been a significant increase in centralised accountability, a form of pressure referred to by Oates (2015) as a culture of ‘hyper-accountability’, which can have ‘unintended’ consequences. Russell Hobby, General Secretary of Headteachers’ body NAHT⁶ said: “Headteachers are already publicly and stringently accountable – to the extent that we are struggling to get people to do the job.” (TES, 2015, p. 7). Research has shown that the leading cause of problems with teacher retention is workload, combined with accountability and performativity and the stress that stems from that (Perryman and Calvert, 2019), leading perhaps to high turnover and difficulty in recruiting and such difficulties may be compounded by the way that governing bodies are now responding to poor OfSTED (Office for Standards in Education) inspections or poor results.

Headteachers’ jobs, they say, will become even more insecure at a time when many worry about “football manager syndrome” owing to increasingly severe accountability measures

(Vaughan, 2015b, p. 6)

⁶ National Association of Head Teachers

Professor John Howson points out that in football management, losing one's position is rarely a barrier to being re-employed elsewhere, while in headship it can be a 'career risk' (Howson, J in TFLT, 2016, p. 6)⁷. The implications of such high stakes accountability seems to be increasingly negative perceptions of the headship role and significant difficulties in recruitment, particularly to challenging schools (TFLT, 2016). I would argue that some elements of the media are complicit in aggravating these difficulties through a negatively biased discourse on school standards and effectiveness, a view seemingly shared by our former Secretary of State, Nicky Morgan:

The problems facing schools, Ms Morgan said, were being exacerbated by the mainstream media. The negative reporting of education and the language used by the press was "putting people off" from joining the profession.

(Vaughan, 2015a, p. 17)

Ball refers to such negative reporting as 'discourses of derision' (Ball, 2006) where those who wish to see greater reform undermine confidence in any apparent success through a "cocktail of misrepresentation, ad hominem attacks, the recycling of discredited myths, and above all a refusal to engage with the vast array of evidence " (Alexander, 2010, p. 107). The quote above, attributed to Nicky Morgan, caused some amusement at the time as there was a clear perception and belief that, under Michael Gove at least, the right wing press built their 'discourse of derision' (Boyle and Woods, 1996) firmly on foundations that he and Conservative supporters had laid. The discourse of derision may be promoted through a political speech or the media might post negative reports, e.g: "teachers are 'gaming' the system" (Woolcock, 2012), "Kennet's headteacher comments on drop in league table standings: Head proud of pupils' achievements" (Herring, 2019) the derisive tone is apparent between the leader and the sub heading (although it could be unintentional), "Headteacher blasted over heartless four word sentence to child, 9, at sports day" (Rodger, 2019), "Headteacher at St Helens school where pupils scored record

⁷ TFLT – The Future Leaders Trust

results but teachers complained of 'management intimidation' set to retire" (Rodger, 2019). This propagates the discourse in such a way that it seems irrefutable and yet, it is argued, this is not "evident due to the hegemonic control of the media and the information industries"(Apple, 1995, p. 5). It is worth remembering that the media, like headteachers and politicians, are not a politically neutral force (Fowler, 1991) and may act to promote a political position or exaggerate or dramatize an issue in order to increase sales.

It may be argued that the role of headteacher has changed since 1988 but is still clearly defined. I feel issues to be further considered here are how school leaders construct their identity in this age of managerialisation. Do they identify as business managers or do they still seek professional capital from the teaching body? Given their allegedly increased autonomy with the increasingly unforgiving accountability regimes and the discourse of derision that may exist, how do they define themselves in the role and measure the impact of their implementation of policy? Are there circumstances under which they would actively resist policy or reinterpret it to meet their own agenda, and what motivates them to make those choices?

1.4 The issue of standards

Education reforms are often predicated on an "overbearing 'focus' on raising standards" (Ball, 2013, p. 102) in schools or to stop their supposed 'decline' (Gove, 2010). So clearly, standards are exceptionally important, but what does the term 'standards' mean in this context? As an Engineer, I have always used the term to define a measurable benchmark against which a product can be tested, the Oxford online dictionary defines this as: "Something used as a measure, norm, or model in comparative evaluations" (OUP, 2016b). Standards in this context will be well defined, including acceptable tolerances, and may be changed over time to meet new legal requirements or health and

safety concerns. I believe this is what education standards purport to do, although a second definition may also be argued: “A required or agreed level of quality or attainment” (ibid). There is an enormous difference, however, between testing the tolerance of thousands of bolts made by the same tooling and trying to set standards for an education system which can only be described as ‘unstandardized’ by nature and which has only limited influence over the product being measured, the pupils or students. If education standards meet either of these definitions, we might expect to see a very clear set of measurable criteria of what those standards are, and we might expect to see those standards maintained in a way that allows them to be measured across time, given that a cohort of children will take several years to come up to the ‘standard’.

Standards are very much a political hot potato at national level but have, historically, been self-referential, are we improving against ourselves? In recent years we have seen an increased focus on international comparison via the PISA⁸ tests (Benn, 2012) operated by the OECD⁹. English politicians have sometimes used the data in a way that has been statistically invalid and has resulted in censure for doing so (Eaton, 2012). Schools in England do not teach children to undertake PISA tests and their use as a political justification for reform remains controversial, as do the tests and judgements themselves (Chalabi, 2013). Their use, however, is logical within a neoliberal focus on education as a workforce producer, supporting the economy at a time and in a context of ever-increasing globalisation and international commerce and finance. PISA (in the mind of the politicians) allows Governments to compare the performance of the nation’s children and to compare to other PISA nations, they are then able to selectively draw on strategies

⁸ Programme for International Student Achievement

⁹ Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development

used by “high performing nations” to justify reform in the English education system (Gove, 2013). There is no explicit ‘Standard’ other than to be high up the league tables.

In terms of standards at a national level, there are several official standards definitions, e.g. teachers standards (DfE, 2011) and headteachers standards (DfE, 2015b). The standards layout the expected behaviours and characteristics of qualified practitioners and against which they can be measured through the performance management processes. For school performance, rather than employee, Standards are set by the Department for Education and monitored by ¹⁰ OfSTED. As with many aspects of education policy, the reality becomes a little more complicated once we start to examine the standards themselves.

The Government set a ‘Floor Standard’ for secondary schools, defined as: “the minimum standard for pupil achievement and/or progress that the Government expects schools to meet” (DfE, 2015d, p. 8). This standard has changed over time both in type of measure used and in the level at which the expected standard is set, from 20% of pupils getting 5 A* to C GCSEs (English and Mathematics not included) in 2004 rising to 25% in 2006, 30% in 2007 but on a changed measure including English and Mathematics and continuing up to an expected standard of 50% in 2014 (DfE and Gove, 2011). The final phase of change to 50% never happened at the end of the Parliament as the method changed further to measure school performance in a completely different way, changing from attainment to progress (Appendix B p. 204). So, within a span of 12 years there have been six major revisions to floor standards or, considering this another way, in a typical secondary school, between 2004 and 2016; school leaders would have been working toward two or three different floor standards within the same school.

¹⁰ Office for Standards in Education

The argument for increasing the floor appears to be to raise minimum expected standards (DfE and Gove, 2011), a slightly circular argument in my view, but rapid changes in expectation may justify rapid implementation of school improvement policies to help meet the newly raised bars. Such an approach is questioned by Professor Hattie who identifies an issue with the ‘politics of standards’ and its tendency to misdirect politicians’ perceptions on the effectiveness of schools:

It will never be the case that all students will exceed most achievement standards. The aim of schooling should not be to get 100 per cent of students above the standard, although this is what the current politics demands

(Prof. Hattie quoted in Henshaw, 2015, p. 1)

It is arguable, however, how well aligned (if at all) other Government policies are with the ‘standards’ agenda. I would argue that two of the main strategies that have been employed, at least since 2010 (and before to a different extent), are structural change, with a move to a fully ‘Academised’ system (DfE, 2016a) being part of the 2016 White Paper, and the use of inspection as a mode of regulating policy compliance.

The English schools inspectorate, OfSTED is an ‘impartial and independent’ body (OfSTED, 2016a), which monitors standards within the system through Inspection and associated processes. Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools ¹¹ is, nominally, independent of the Secretary of State, however, their appointment is in the gift of the Government, so it is an odd sort of independence and it may be argued that appointees tend to be sympathetic to the aims of Government. The former HMCI, Sir Michael Wilshaw, was hailed by Michael Gove as a “real hero” (Gove, 2010) prior to the formation of the Coalition Government and he even asserted that “if you want to know

¹¹ Her Majesty’s Chief Inspector of Schools is also referred to as ‘HMCI’

what Conservative education policy is in a nutshell it's taking what has made Sir Michael's school excellent and spreading it to every school." (ibid). Despite this support, the Coalition relationship with Sir Michael and OfSTED soured after a number of issues including "highly critical reports" on free schools, a flagship policy (Wiener, 2014), no notice inspections and the "Trojan Horse" letter which led to an OfSTED investigation into a number of Birmingham schools (Coughlan, 2014). There were suggestions that Gove was considering sacking Wilshaw (Perry, 2014) and key Government think tanks even questioning whether OfSTED was fit for purpose (Withnall, 2014).

While OfSTED remain a non-ministerial Government department, they do react and respond to Department for Education policy, adjusting their inspection frameworks to consider changes in Government expectations. This has happened so frequently that it has led to serious concern about its impact on schools, as Brian Lightman, then General Secretary of ASCL¹² highlighted:

We agree Ofsted inspections need to be reformed, and something needs to be done about the constant changes to its framework as schools are repeatedly asked to follow new requirements

(Brian Lightman in Vaughan, 2015e, p. 17)

This was a view very much echoed by headteachers leading to a perception that constant changes meant the inspection frameworks no longer made sense (Vaughan, 2015e) and the issue became an electoral issue with the Coalition partners pledging "to stop introducing major changes to Ofsted inspections or Government policy during the academic year" (Vaughan, 2015c, p. 14).

¹² Association of School and College Leaders

OfSTED claim that “School Inspection supports and promotes school improvement by establishing a clear standard for an acceptable education” (Hicks, 2014) and that this is achieved through the use of a number of “metrics” (ibid) to aid them in judging the school effectiveness against descriptors laid out in the School Inspection Handbook, also referred to as the framework. At the time of writing, the current version of the framework was the fifth change since 2012 (Exley, 2015) but the key areas of judgement have stayed more or less the same with the current headings being:

1. Effectiveness of Leadership and Management
2. Quality of Teaching, Learning and Assessment
3. Personal Development, behaviour and welfare
4. Outcomes for children and other learners

(OfSTED, 2015b)

It is immediately apparent that the judgements OfSTED are making about standards go some way beyond the DfE floor standards which would fit under the ‘outcomes’ heading. Given this broader range, some deeper consideration will need to be given to how these ‘standards’ are being measured and how schools and school leaders are responding to, or managing them within, the school context. As some are qualitative judgements made against descriptive criteria and not a quantitative measurement, there must be questions as to the effectiveness and fairness of what is essentially a subjective model and the potential for confirmation bias and inconsistency in making judgements (Stewart, 2015a), an issue raised by a former HMCI Sir Mike Tomlinson who also stated: “Ofsted and the Government have become too data reliant” (ibid), a problem OfSTED themselves acknowledged prior to a significant change of methodology (OfSTED, 2015a).

As far as the direct impact on headteachers goes, the most relevant standard which judges their effectiveness at inspection is judgement 1: Effectiveness of Leadership and

Management. This grade descriptor had 18 bullet points in its most recent iteration, many of which define strongly subjective judgements, for example

whether leaders and governors have created a culture of high expectations, aspirations and scholastic excellence in which the highest achievement in academic and vocational work is recognised as vitally important

(OfSTED, 2018)

While the judgements extend to include all leadership and management of the school, including governors and the wider leadership team, it is not hard to see that such a statement allows for subjective judgement. Many of the other descriptors share this vagueness and leave themselves open to the impact of confirmation bias of the inspector, for good or bad. Judgement 1 monitors a wide ranging and diverse group of leadership aspects (OfSTED, 2018, pp. 42-43) and a poor result in any category can result in a lowering of the overall judgement and potential consequences for the headteacher. For those with weak schools, there is a risk that weak academic outcomes will simply be seen as validation that none of the leadership standards are met sufficiently, while in a strong school, the pressure to maintain that level is constant and unrelenting. The standards also strongly position the leadership as ‘responsible’ for these aspects, as if the issues of extremism, child protection, etc, are purely attributable to them. There is a statement that support from a MAT will be considered, but even if the policies and practices are the MAT’s, it will be the local leadership team which is judged, not the MAT.

It is evident that ‘standards’ are a more complex issue than might be assumed and I would suggest that part of this lies in attempts to objectify them to make them politically useful, to take the complexity and present it as absolute fact to justify a perception or an ideological stance. For example, when exam results go up you would expect everyone to applaud improved standards, but the opposite can happen. Improvement may be used to claim grade inflation, dumbing down (DfE and Gove, 2014) and falling standards, while static or falling outcomes may be claimed as raised standards. I would argue that this

occurs because objectified standards only exist in very limited forms e.g. School GCSE results, and even these can be energetically debated as to meaning, due to the inconsistencies and inequalities built in to our system and the individually differing contexts of schools which are assumed to be comparable (selective vs non-selective, high deprivation vs low, etc.). It may be more useful to consider standards as a discourse that allows individuals to construct meaning from their own experience and perceptions and cloak it in whatever political or value driven meaning suits their purpose. However, given that the standards used to judge schools are set, measured and owned by the political administration of the time and that they can gain cultural and political capital from them, can we trust any claims or inferences made?

1.4 Research Aims

The aim of this research is to identify what impact, if any, the high pace and frequent change in education policymaking has, from the perspective of those tasked with leading schools. Impact may be measured in many ways including outcomes (e.g. GCSE results), inspection judgements, “standards”, as well as experiences and perceptions of parents, teachers and students and I am particularly interested in the ability of our system to recruit and retain both teachers and school leaders. More specifically, due to devolved responsibility for education in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, this will focus on England and specifically secondary education. The research will explore themes of headteacher subjectivation, values and autonomy, along with discourses on standards and the purpose of education. Positioning myself as a school leader, albeit not a headteacher, offers insight and knowledge of the subject being researched and situates me firmly within it.

1.5 Research Questions

This project set out to explore some of the issues explored in this chapter as they are experienced by contemporary school leaders in England. I want to examine and explore their experiences and perceptions of how policy affects them and their practice, their self-image and their lives. In order to achieve this, I will aim to answer the following research questions:

1. How does rapid, standards-led reform impact on headteachers?
2. Do claims of greater autonomy for headteachers match their lived experiences?
3. How are standards viewed and interpreted by headteachers in the light of reforms?

All school leaders who participated in the research were active or recently retired

CHAPTER TWO LITERATURE REVIEW & CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Introduction

In this chapter I will explore how the literature and research can help illuminate some of the key issues and concepts I have identified. I will begin with a brief critique of some existing research and then undertake a review of literature to explore issues of policy and ideology as well as some of the key discourses speaking education today. I will then develop a conceptual framework based on some key theoretical ideas, such as capital, Governmentality and subjectivity.

I began the process of literature review at the thesis proposal stage by reading widely around the history of the English education system and by reading professional journals and papers e.g. TES, Leader magazine. I developed this further by doing key word searches to identify further sources, on the internet. This allowed me to identify key issues and concerns and place them within the sociohistorical context. The second phase was broken into three main strategies. I identified policy documents and texts, as well as books about policy development and headteacher experience e.g. *Headstrong* (Coates, Adcock and Ribton, 2015). The second strategy was a ‘key terms’ electronic search programme using the University’s PRIMO search tool and Google scholar. This allowed for the identification of peer reviewed papers and articles which drew on some of the key terms identified e.g. churn, headteacher perspectives, etc. The final approach was to identify further citations and references from books and papers read. Parameters for the literature review were to identify papers within the last 10 years for England, specifically, but it quickly became apparent that this was too restrictive, and I opened it up to other jurisdictions which had experienced similar reform e.g. USA, Canada. I also extended the search back to the 1990s after the implementation of the 1988 Education Act.

2.1.1 Critique of research

There does not appear to be a substantial amount of research specifically examining the perceptions of Headteachers when it comes to rapid and continuous policy reform. The research tends to focus more on ‘specific’ policy implementations or on the ‘how’, more general responses and practices in implementation, e.g. Ball et al. (2012b). That said, there are some papers with similarities which may be considered.

A key paper, which focuses purely on headteacher retention, is the NFER report “Keeping your Head” (Lynch *et al.*, 2017). This used a mixed methods approach to combine analysis of the School Workforce Census over five years and then conducted qualitative telephone interviews with 22 headteachers who identified as happy, considering leaving or who had left headship. One slight weakness of this paper is the inability to include data for headteachers who had moved roles within MATs in the dataset. This does not affect the interview group, however, which is where the issues and causes are identified. For me, the key issues identified by the paper are the 4% reduction in secondary headteacher retention rates between 2012 and 2015, strong correlations between lower rates of retention and headteachers in OfSTED graded ‘inadequate’ schools, challenging schools or schools serving more deprived communities, particularly of heads who had spent more than two years in post; and a stronger correlation between larger MAT organisations and lower retention. The heads interviewed recognised the risks of poor OfSTED gradings to their career and felt that this made the post vulnerable and that timescales for improvement were “completely undoable and unrealistic” (Lynch *et al.*, 2017, p. 16). They identified a risk of colleagues seeing the job as too vulnerable and failing to take it on rather than seeing it as a career opportunity. Indeed, participants reflected a sense of attraction to ‘challenge’, but the performative pressure was a key contributor to decreased retention rates. Heads are held accountable for the success of their school even when

supported by MATs, although concern was raised about the capacity of small MATs to support and some reflected a sense of a loss of autonomy and potential downgrading of their role within a MAT structure. In addition, the MAT support itself was not the focus of inspection with any inadequacy placed firmly on the school, which calls into question the veracity of the process. If a school follows MAT directives and consequently fails at OfSTED, there appears no mechanism to place the responsibility with the MAT.

Researchers recognised the risk of falling retention rates and the lower rates in schools where end of key stage 2 and 4 attainment was lower. They made several recommendations around career pathways, improved guidance and support for headteachers but recommended that more investigation was needed with 11 suggested research questions. The report doesn't provide a great deal of methodological information, so it is unclear what the demographics, school types and geographic contexts were, but I think the findings are valid and reliable.

Shirrell (2016) examined the experiences, perceptions and sense-making of a group of first year principals in the United States. The methodology included a series of surveys and interviews of a group of 12 practitioners, leading some of the lowest-performing schools in a single district in Chicago. This approach resonates well with my approach, however, transferability of findings may be limited to the urban area that has been used as a focus. While he observes that, in a similar way to England, standards-based accountability, increasing standardization of practice and increased performative monitoring are all common trends more widely, the specific nature of funding and support that exists within the target district may vary significantly from other state and municipal school jurisdictions. Such a limited pool (geographically speaking) within a system which has diverse governance structures, raises questions about validity, at least in terms of

wider application across the US system. The paper looks at the oppositional pressures of increasing accountability while trying to build commitment within very challenging schools and claims that:

work on school improvement has demonstrated that trust, cohesion, and professional community are key aspects of successful schools, and crucial to improving low-performing schools in particular.

(Shirrell, 2016, p. 559)

The subjects reported a tension between the accountability and commitment objectives and the suggestion is that such a challenge is particularly strong at the start of the principals' careers where they are asserting positional (rather than personal) power (Shirrell, 2016), which becomes a function of greater experience and a period of relationship building with staff. I would have greater confidence in the claims if the work had extended to working with principals with differing degrees of experience as a comparison for the 'new principal' data set, to corroborate this perspective. Methodologically speaking, the approach is sound and the use of three interviews before, during and after the first year adds a longitudinal element into the data and allows for reflectivity throughout a learning process. The use of semi-structured interview with questions regarding the challenges at work is valid, I believe, however I wonder if an alternative approach using narrative research methods would have opened a wider world of experience and personal impact, looking for the ripples caused by those challenges throughout that subjects professional and personal experience. I would also suggest caution at looking for transferability between the English and US systems as, while there are clear similarities in the instigation of neoliberal reform, the functions of a principal in the US are more administrative and may not carry the same implications for symbolic capital, with English headteachers being positioned as lead practitioners as well as business leaders within the newer 'market' form of managerialism. Implications from the study included a suggestion that new principals should be given time to accumulate social capital (commitment) from their teachers before accountability mechanisms are applied,

which seems sensible; along with the use of “principal preparation, induction and mentoring” (Shirrell, 2016, p. 572). There is a useful point here, although the suggestion is hardly ground-breaking. Qualification is not the same as experience and headteachers should be allowed a period to develop into the role, in the same way NQTs¹³ have a year to develop before achieving QTS¹⁴. My personal observation is that, in England, new leadership is seen as a risk factor and draws greater performative focus, increasing the pressure.

A second paper offer insights closer to home as Gu et al. (2018) examine “How successful Secondary School Principals Enact Policy” in a work drawing on research from England and Hong Kong. The paper has the benefit of access to a substantial period of longitudinal data (2005 – 2014), which also incorporates the transition between Governments in England, a useful approach in terms of validity and undermining any claims to potential political bias. Data was also analysed from Hong Kong and I suggest the paper is weakened by diluting the focus between very different jurisdictions. I accept the validity of comparison and to draw out differing strategies, but in terms of transferability of findings I would argue that success in one jurisdiction does not guarantee success in another. ‘Success’ itself is another factor that causes me concern. The paper defines success as “characterising those schools that had shown sustained improvement in student academic outcomes over time” (Gu *et al.*, 2018, p. 327), which is understandable as it follows the dominant discourse of schooling, but I would argue that this is an overly-simplistic, instrumentalist measure. Limiting ‘success’ purely to academic outcomes undervalues other types of success, such as engagement from children previously disengaged and not attending, or successful progression post 16 in an area with high

¹³ NQT – Newly Qualified Teacher

¹⁴ QTS – Qualified Teacher Status

dropout rates. It also ignores the very real problem of schools socially engineering their cohorts through illegal exclusion and other strategies, in order to achieve rapid improvement, a strategy recognised by Hill et al. (2016). There appears no control for differing contexts, including funding levels, other than a means to selection of schools to study, and I would also argue, strongly, against their decision to construct the reality of ‘policy or policy analysis’ (Gu *et al.*, 2018, p. 329) as ‘environmental factors’ justifying this as an unavoidable political reality. While I understand the logic of this approach, I can not agree with it as it renders invisible the interplay of power through policy discourse and texts, and the impact on practitioners.

2.2 Policy, ideology and discourse

It is not the purpose of this work to extensively analyse policy, that has been done very well by others, such as Stephen Ball. It is important to consider why education sees a high level of policy development and how this relates to educational discourses which permeate the field. Further discussion around what ‘policy’ means is included in Appendix C (p. 208).

Policy is done by and done to teachers; they are actors and subjects, subject to and objects of policy. Policy is written onto bodies and produces particular subject positions

(Ball *et al.*, 2012a, p. 2)

Bates et al (2011) identify a “policy cycle” where economic and social crises engender changes in governance and education policy, with alternating or conflicting ideologies around education driving reform and “informing education acts at national level to influencing classroom practices at a local level” (Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011, p. 44). Trowler (1998) identifies the relationship between ideology and “values, ideas and beliefs” (Trowler, 1998, p. 103 adapted from Hartley 1983, pp. 26-7) which underpin how

political decisions may be made by placing “limits on thinking” and, thereby, define the priorities, issues and actions that may be considered. The greater the difference in ideology between administrations, the greater the potential for significant reform with the short 5 year term of a Government (and terms of office as Secretary of State) perhaps contributing to the pace of that reform.

The potential for dynamic tension between politicians and practitioners with oppositional or incongruent ideologies is high. To add to the complexity, policy makers sometimes seem to pursue contradictory ideological policies or apparently abandon or “move beyond traditional ideological boundaries” (Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011, p. 45). This was arguably the case with ‘New Labour’, where traditional socialist / Labour policies were replaced by a more neoliberal model of marketization in the school system. New Labour’s policies were influenced by Anthony Giddens’ ‘Third Way’ ideas, which attempted to restructure “social democratic doctrines to respond to the twin revolutions of globalization and the knowledge economy” (Leggett, 2005, p. 23).

Sutton (1999) suggests that ideologies are woven from the threads stemming from a “configuration of ideas” (Sutton, 1999, p. 6) situated as a discourse, and it is through the concept of discourse that we may better understand what drives the policy cycle on both a macro and a micro scale. Discourses are numerous in and around education and can “relate either to particular ways of thinking about an issue, for example, a scientific discourse, or to the kind of language that is employed in the policy-making process” (Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011, p. 46). Ball (2013) highlights the Foucauldian view that discourse is not spoken by actors, but that discourse speaks them, reinforcing the idea that discourse is somehow ‘woven’ into the fabric of our lives, creating and being created, consciously, subconsciously and unconsciously influencing, defining and framing our

actions, behaviours and belief systems. Discourses themselves are made possible by their positioning within an episteme, a “regime of truth or general politics of truth” (Ball, 2013, p. 21) which provide us with the “unconscious codes and rules or holistic conceptual frameworks” (ibid, p. 21) that help us problem solve and form our views of the world. Discourses, however, are not isolated. In policy terms, they exist within architectures of policy positions which are:

A frame or field within which divergent discourses, new and old, confront one another, in which some are marginalised or subjugated and others are appropriated to define the “domains of validity, normativity and actuality” (Foucault, 1974, p. 68)

(Ball, 2013, p. 23)

Ball (1993) proposed that policy could be viewed both as discourse and as text, but for me the idea of policy as discourse is of most interest. What happens when those being ‘spoken’ by one discourse are creating policy and applying technologies of power to ensure that those, perhaps being ‘spoken’ by a different discourse, enact it? I would suggest these conflicting discourses are exposed as a form of ideological cognitive dissonance, with resulting tensions between politicians and practitioners resulting in rejection, resistance or compliance.

2.2.1 Educational discourses

Numerous discourses are woven through education and these speak to different aspects of schooling. Education has also, increasingly, offered a nexus for discourse between fields of schooling, social care, public health, employment, the economy and beyond. These discourses are not in static states, they are dynamic and evolving, moving, Ball suggests, through three levels: 1. Economic, Social and welfare policy; 2. Education policies and 3. Institutions and persons (Ball, 2007); as “national, public sector and institutional policies are re-articulated and reoriented toward a common purpose” (Ball,

2007, p. 139). Such movement and re-articulation will not result in a settled state of discourse but rather introduce new tensions and harmonics.

Discourses will exist both outside and inside policy, framing and being framed. Discourse outside policy may be used to justify policy decisions, while discourse within policy may be used to “legitimize particular ways of viewing situations” (Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011, p. 46) by definition rendering other interpretations illegitimate. The values and intrinsic ideological beliefs which flow through these discourses can shine light on why reform is ‘justified’, why implementation must be at a certain pace and what potential impact there is for the identities and practice of school leaders and the outcomes for their schools.

2.2.1.1 Discourse of Standards

One of the most significant discourses in English education, is the discourse of standards. In my experience, many policy announcements or education reforms are predicated on a perceived need to ‘raise standards’, so that everyone has access to education of the same ‘quality’ (Biesta, 2010) and many other discourses are interwoven with the language of standards, measurement and comparability. Alongside the desire to raise standards against historic measures, it is also increasingly the case that politicians look to justify policy reform by measuring standards in our system against other education systems globally, often with a stated aim of creating a ‘World Class System’.

Fenwick (2010) highlights one possible definition of ‘standards’ as “any set of agreed-upon rules for the production of (textual or material) objects’ (Bowker and Star 1999, 13).” (Fenwick, 2010, p. 119) and this is important as the production of “texts, identities, objects and bodies” (ibid, p. 119) may enable the ordering of “practice at a distance” (ibid, p. 119), allowing administrations to:

ensure consistency and comparability in the everyday conduct that occurs at diverse locations in which a whole constellation of relations meet and weave together in particular ways to constitute practice.

(Fenwick, 2010, p. 119)

While “standards must extend out from some centre of regulatory power” (Taubman, 2009, p. 112), the ‘standards’, themselves, may be interpreted differently depending on the political standpoint of the party of Government (see Table 2.1). Understanding which political discourse is driving the policy process may help us to understand which of these interpretations are applicable, but I would argue the period from the 1990s to 2010 was predominantly neoliberal in designation and purpose, whereas the period since 2010 has seen the re-emergence of language in discourse reflecting the more traditional Conservative designation. Michael Gove, for example, was known for wanting greater academic rigour (Morris, 2013) in English schools.

Political ideology	Designation of ‘standards’	Accountability
Conservative	Intellectual rigour Preservation of hierarchy Maintenance of systems of privilege	Individual responsibility
Neoliberal	Accounting and auditing practices to make commensurable heterogeneous phenomena for global economy	Regulations to ensure competitive national and global market

(adapted from Taubman, 2009, p. 112)

Table 2.1: Political interpretations of standards and accountability

While I concur with Taubman (2009) that there is “no one monolithic discourse that constitutes the transformation we are witnessing in education” (Taubman, 2009, p. 3), I would argue that the neoliberal mode of reform followed since 1988 has created an episteme within which current discourses are framed, and while there are tensions and

competing perspectives in these discourses, from a policy perspective it feels like alternative voices are silenced through ‘no excuses’ or are simply not heard.

The discourse of standards is serving two purposes, to provide information which facilitates “the sanction of ‘exit’” (Mattei, 2012, p. 234) for the consumer (parents) and enabling politicians to challenge professional power (ibid, p. 234). Standards ‘make’ children and teachers into “objects of scrutiny, interpretation and administration” (Fenwick, 2010, p. 119), problematizing various issues within a normative discourse of education (Taubman, 2009), thus opening them up to the technologies of performativity, such as targets and inspection. This is achieved through the production of ‘traces’ such as curriculum documents, assessment systems and accountability structures (Fenwick, 2010). However, the rhetoric of standards separates the practices and structures in schools from the more complex political and social discourses which they are embedded within. Taubman (2009) argues that this is driven by the business practices now proliferating through public services and that a money-centric approach has created a “kind of equivalency among blank meanings” (Taubman, 2009, p. 124), in which the complexities of schooling are translated into “standardized “best practices”, data, and test results” (Taubman, 2009, p. 125). Ultimately, discourses of teaching and curriculum have been “appropriated and transformed” (ibid, p. 125) in the process of corporatizing education. Biesta (2010) also suggests that standards led education is a function of the marketization of education and is closely aligned to a rise of a “culture of quality assurance” (Biesta, 2010, p. 54) but with the contention that, as such, the focus is on systems and processes rather than the outcomes themselves (ibid, p. 54). As a result:

The constant emphasis of the British Government on “raising standards” in education and other public services is rather vacuous since it lacks proper (democratic) discussion about which standards or “outcomes” are most desirable. (Biesta, 2010, p. 54)

Bates et al (2011) highlight the view that raising standards has become ‘the’ central objective of education policy. This creates an issue as there is real difficulty in measuring system performance accurately and consistently to see if standards are changing, and then, to be able to attribute any such change to specific policies or processes.

In terms of accountability, OfSTED, are responsible for policing standards in schools, allowing Governments “to enforce further prescriptions of practice without resorting to legislation, simply introducing new criteria to the inspection framework has guaranteed compliance” (Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011, p. 105). They create an “evaluation schedule” which guides inspectors on how to judge standards under various headings. As these ‘headings’ are explicitly defined by OfSTED it is reasonable to interpret them as ‘standards’ to be measured. In the case of teaching and leadership there are published ‘standards’ to be met (DfE, 2011; DfE, 2015b), and the judgement on outcomes is linked clearly to floor standards and national averages (OfSTED, 2016b). In Inspection terms, judgements of effectiveness are based, not explicitly on the published standards, but on a set of ‘grade descriptors’ which are open to the interpretation and ‘professional judgement’ (ibid) of the inspectors, thus introducing a significant risk of inconsistency into the process and allowing only for broad comparative judgements between schools (Outstanding, Good, Requires Improvement and Inadequate).

Challenging behaviour and higher incidence of Special Educational Need is more prevalent in areas with higher deprivation (Parliament, 2006) and outcomes are affected by behaviour and attendance as well as by teaching quality. Evidence shows that deprivation correlates to poor academic progress and attendance (OfSTED, 2007) and also to poor inspection judgements (Fitz-Gibbon and Stephenson-Forster, 1999) leading to question marks over the possibility of discriminant validity. “HMI seemed unable to

recognize good teaching in a context that was not middle class” (Fitz-Gibbon and Stephenson-Forster, 1999, p. 106). In addition, the inspection handbook has changed frequently, which also introduces an element of inconsistency over time, meaning any judgements about improvement or decline in standards are going to be hard to evidence fairly and robustly. Such complexity is recognised by Gorard and Taylor (2002) who, in trying to identify a measure as to whether standards have risen, argue for an “explicit form that is comparable over time” (Gorard and Taylor, 2002, p. 6). They go on to argue that most outputs from the school system are so long term or nebulous (ibid, p. 6) that they cannot be used in this way and that the only possible measures are exam outcomes and financial performance. Coe (2010) rejects the argument that standards ‘cannot’ be defined and suggests that the issue which leads to the annual arguments over grade inflation and lowering examination standards is, in fact, one of differing interpretations, “using the same words to mean different things” (Coe, 2010, p. 271).

The main metric used to measure standards by OfSTED and the DfE for performance measures, is through outcomes, examination results and progression rates (which are driven by examination results) and there has been ongoing controversy over comparability of examination standards (Coe, 2010). As the key measures for schools are underwritten by exam results, and as any ‘raising’ of standards would presumably show in those exam results, understanding this issue is vital, but not simple. From a school perspective the accuracy of awarding and the comparability of outcomes is crucial, but Coe (2010) argues that it will never be possible to solve the problem of comparability, because “as long as there are multiple uses for examinations and multiple possible interpretations of their results, there will be multiple definitions of comparability” (Coe, 2010, p. 283). To add to the complexity, examinations and the performance measures they inform exist within an inherently inconsistent system of different national testing agencies

(exam boards), identified as a peculiarity of the British system within the OECD context (Gorard and Taylor, 2002). Not just different exam boards, but different specifications and assessment systems being used to compare performance under the same measures. Another added complication to this model is the use, by OfQUAL, of a statistical safety valve known as comparable outcomes. The principle governing this process has been to maintain similar proportions of students gaining certain grades each year based on prior attainment (Isaacs, 2014). While this approach has helped to reduce grade inflation (Benton and Bramley, 2015; Isaacs, 2014) it does so by normalising out significant changes in performance. Benton and Bramley (2015) suggest this mechanism was originally used to mitigate against the possible suppression of outcomes when qualifications change to new specifications or assessment models, but its continued use may be having the impact of hiding both improvement or deterioration in standards and work against the stated aim of raising standards or, at least, allowing them to be visible.

2.2.1.2 Economistic discourses – Marketization, Globalization and Academization

The ‘neoliberal’ discourse around schooling has been hegemonic in political circles since the 1988 Education Act, a “romantic discourse of perfection which represents the private and market forms as magical solutions to the ‘problems’ of the public sector” (Ball, 2007, p. 21). The 1988 act effectively replaced the welfarist settlement, which constructed education as a ‘public good’, with a more liberal position where public good “carries no currency” (Adams, 2014, p. 13) and “sits in opposition and deference to the economic” (ibid, p. 13). This switch from ‘public good’ to the ‘responsibilization’ (Shamir, 2008) of the individual is a ‘praxis’ of neoliberal governance, where the individual serves a responsibility to the state and themselves through economic imperatives and the state assumes social actors will practice “moral agency which is congruent with the attributed tendencies of economic-rational actors: autonomous, self-determined and self-sustaining

subjects” (Shamir, 2008, p. 7). Ball (2012) argues that neoliberalism exists not just as an imposed set of structures and practices but that it:

gets into our minds and our souls, into the ways in which we think about what we do, and into our social relations with others. It is about how we relate to our students and our colleagues and our participation in new courses and forms of pedagogy and our ‘knowledge production’, but it is also about our flexibility, malleability, innovation and productivity in relation to these things.

(Ball, 2012, p. 18)

In terms of ‘neoliberal’ education policy, which Clarke (2012) suggests has been “reduced to a technical discourse” (Clarke, 2012, p. 298), the economic imperative becomes exposed through the technologies of marketization, performativity and managerialism (Ball, 1994; Ball, 2007; Ball *et al.*, 2012b; Clarke, 2012) alongside increased centralised control at the cost of local (governance) accountability, paradoxically resulting in increased intervention from the state (Gulson, 2007). This is a way of “establishing a framework of possibility and legitimacy for ‘privatisation’” (Ball, 2007, p. 17).

Ball (2006) defines new managerialism as a “culture” within which are embedded discourses of “excellence, effectiveness and quality” (Ball, 2006, p. 10). These discourses position traditional bureaucratic modes of control, such as local authorities, as inefficient and “unwieldy” (ibid, p.10) while promoting a model in which success is gained by “motivating people to produce ‘quality’ and strive for ‘excellence’ themselves” (Ball, 2006, p. 10). The logical consequence of this is that, when success is not gained, it must also be the responsibility of the people and this leads to the discourses of derision and redemption discussed later. Within schools, the headteacher represents the ‘embodiment’ (ibid, p. 10) of new managerialism and this can be clearly seen with the labelling of senior staff as senior leaders, rather than managers, the implication being that they lead a “corporate commitment” (ibid, p. 10) to school improvement based on quality systems. The change in the leadership regimes constitutes a “significant change in the subjectivity

and values of leadership in schools” (Ball, 2006, p. 11) and is a direct consequence of marketization.

The discourse of marketization ‘speaks’ education and schooling as commodity (ibid, p.11) with parents ‘consumers’ offered choice and rights not previously evident. The move to provide parents with choice has raised concerns about social segregation and a lack of evidence to support contentions that standards are raised. Gorard and Taylor (2002) found that choice did not clearly lead to improved standards as policy intended but allows parents to exercise ‘consumer’ power over schools in a limited way. Reduced numbers result in financial consequences and, thereby, possible redundancies and reductions in expenditure on capital projects, resources and curriculum. This may lead to degradation of the ‘product’, as measured through exam outcomes, which correlates strongly to reduced student recruitment (Bradley *et al.*, 2000). This can become a spiral of decline as subsequent generations of parents perceive the school to be weakened and reduced cultural and social capital for the organisation may impact on recruitment and retention of staff, as well as on recruitment of students from more aspirational backgrounds. This may lead to less effective and unqualified staff being employed, combining with a less engaged, more challenging student cohort, further exacerbating the spiral of decline. The consequences of such decline may not be as obvious as they would with, say, a retail business as, while the discourse constructs schooling as a market, there is a lack of direct economic interplay between the parent and the school, with the state remaining sole purchaser of the services on their behalf. In addition, unlike businesses which may go into administration or close due to decline, schools in areas without significant over capacity are unlikely to close completely, so what we see is a ‘quasi-market’ (Bradley *et al.*, 2000; Gulson, 2007). The most recent development in this ‘half-way house’ (ibid) system is the discourse and policy of ‘Academisation’.

The Academies programme, introduced by New Labour (Adams, 2014; Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011; Ball, 2007), was originally ‘legitimised’ through a discourse and policy of ‘failing schools’ (Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011) interwoven with discourses of standards and performativity, with the view that publicly funded but independent schools working with ‘sponsors’ would succeed in raising standards. More recently, a fully ‘Academised’ system was proposed as part of the Conservative Government’s education white paper, “Educational Excellence Everywhere” (DfE, 2016a), despite not appearing in their election manifesto (Garner, 2016). A Conservative amendment was required to water down the original intent in light of the reaction from the electorate and subsequent criticism and resistance from the Conservative’s own council leaders, back benches and think tanks, such as The Bow Group (Helm and Adams, 2016; Garner, 2016). Ball (2007) describes this as “an experiment in and a symbol of education policy beyond the welfare state” (Ball, 2007, p. 171), with Academies playing a significant role in the post-welfare state reform agenda because, as well as blurring the “demarcation” between state and market, they:

introduce and validate new agents and new voices within policy itself and in processes of governance and play a key role in bringing schools policy ‘much closer to the business agenda than it has been at any time in the past’ (Farnsworth 2004: 104).

(Ball, 2007, p. 171)

If this is correct then the Academy policy acts, not only as a technology of marketization in education, but also a means to positively reinforce ideology and practices by introducing sympathetic actors into the machinery of policy making, thus ensuring a greater chance of reproduction and development.

Academies fit within an economistic discourse of education, rooted, it is argued, in the economic crisis of the 1970s (Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011). This discourse situates

education and those within it, as highly influential to the nation's economic prosperity but also to social cohesion and, at the time, responsible for a rise in social disorder. This has resulted in a deeply entrenched view, in political circles (across parties), that the 'purpose' of education is to serve the economy. The wants, needs, desires and preferences of the individual are subjugated on the altar of the nation's competitiveness and, as a result, education is "increasingly being couched in economic terms" (Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011, p. 47), while failure is firmly identified as the responsibility of the "The key 'social actors' in education policy – the schools, children, parents and teachers" (Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011, p. 47). This shift of responsibility from the social, under the welfare state, to the personal is referred to in the literature as 'responsibilization' (Ball, 2013; Shamir, 2008; Gerrard, 2014) and marks a significant feature of a neoliberal state which is retreating from fulfilling its "socio-moral duties" (Shamir, 2008, p. 3). It is my contention that this economistic view of the purpose of education is not necessarily shared between politicians and practitioners and, as such, creates a site of significant dissonance.

The discourse around the importance of education to the economy has been increasingly defined by a drive for improved economic competitiveness on a global scale, caused in part by decreasing economic performance against the 'Asian Tiger' economies (Rea and Weiner, 1997; Ball, 2007). This has led politicians to determine success or failure of the education system, not just on how each cohort does against preceding ones (a complicated concern given the degree and pace of reform) but how the nation performs within international performance tables. Programmes, such as PISA provided by the OECD and TIMMS ¹⁵ provided by the IEA ¹⁶ are used to justify the pace and extent of reform. The

¹⁵ TIMMS - Trends in International Mathematics and Science Study

¹⁶ IEA - the International Association for the Evaluation of Educational Achievement

aim of such tests is to acquire data, which allows for comparisons of the performance of different education systems in OECD countries (and a few non-members such as Russia) (Doyle, 2008; Biesta, 2010) in literacy, math's and science. This then allows politicians to identify where their national system is compared to others and this can then be used to talk down the policies of previous administrations and to justify reform (Gove, 2013; Mortimore, 2013), often using the pretext of 'raising standards' (Biesta, 2010). System leaders then identify perceived 'best practice' or argue the need to improve toward generic comparators, such as 'world class systems' (Morris, 2015).

Clearly, the challenge of comparing outcomes in systems which are completely different on a social, cultural, economic and structural level, is inherently complex, even "daunting" (Mortimore, 2013, p. 191). The efficacy of the tests is certainly contested with the methods used by and the statistics produced by PISA having been described as problematic (Sjøberg, 2015; Goldstein *, 2004; Kreiner, 2010). There was also condemnation of their use as a policy lever in 2000 and 2003 when low participation rates in the UK meant they were not an effective tool to judge the performance of the system (Mortimore, 2013).

2.2.1.3 Discourse of Derision and Redemption

While the discourses already explored help to understand some of the intentions of reform, they don't explain the how. What has facilitated such extreme programmes of reform in a country with a well-educated population, able to question both the motives and methods of the policy makers and against a profession that has, historically, been held in high esteem by the public? For such change to go unchallenged, it is likely that the electorate must believe such reform justifiable or be ambivalent to the extent that changes are tolerated, if not actively supported. I propose that the answer to this lies, in part at least, in a discourse of 'failing schools' which (Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011) situate

within a broader discourse of ‘derision and redemption’ of schools and teachers. This “blame and shame” culture is identified as being part of the economic discourse of education (ibid) which identifies poor performance or decline within the economy as being driven by the failure of schooling and which leaves teachers to operate within a “culture of guilt” (Hargreaves (1994) in Rea and Weiner, 1997) and undermined by a media propagated ‘discourse of derision’ (Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011; Trowler, 1998; Ball, 2015; Ball, 1999).

The discourse of ‘failing’ schools was dominant under New Labour with then Secretary of State, David Blunkett, naming and shaming the lowest performing secondary schools despite the evidence that such schools were serving the most challenging and socially challenged demographics, children from areas with high social and financial deprivation, high proportions of children with English as a second language and those who had been excluded or refused entry to other schools (Adams, 2014). Having identified schools as failing, New Labour had found a means to justify the increasing imposition of measurement and accountability strategies, a culture which is highly evident in the ‘technocratic rationalist’ (Leggett, 2005) discourse interwoven in the fabric of the ‘Third Way’:

This quest for precision, the conviction that knowledge of all the variables will inevitably lead to better performance, is a particularly strong obsession of bureaucracies and one which has not disappeared but become exaggerated in a phenomenon such as Blairism

(Leggett, 2005, p. 81)

This obsession with targets, measurement and testing led, ultimately, to the current culture and discourse of ‘performativity’ (Ball, 2006; Ball *et al.*, 2012a; Ball, 1994). Elements of funding may be linked to performance targets. Academy conversion under a sponsor is linked to ‘floor standards’ that must be met and a poor OfSTED judgement can see the end of a headteacher’s career. (Ball, 1994)

The discourse of the ‘failing school’ evolved further to see teachers themselves being labelled as failing (Biesta, 2010), with those in the weakest schools at greatest risk of criticism. Chris Woodhead, Chief Inspector of Schools in 1999, infamously claimed that there were 15000 incompetent teachers in UK schools (Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011) in a spectacular misrepresentation of statistics. Ball (1999) suggests that this negative discourse around teacher effectiveness, rooted in an aim to de-professionalize the workforce, is evident where an intrinsically humanistic role is subjugated to the promotion of the teacher as ‘technician’ and ‘manager’. This instrumentalist approach, interwoven with a discourse of managerialism (Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011; Trowler, 1998; Ball, 2006; Ross, 2015), serves to de-intellectualise and reconstruct teaching as a “competence-based role” (Ball, 1999), rather than a skilled, professional undertaking.

Trowler (1998) suggests that New Labour adopted a more muted form of the ‘Discourse of derision’ but, ultimately, the impact on teachers has been to undermine their “status, self-confidence and credibility” (Trowler, 1998, p. 159). This is enabled through the discourse of marketization where parents, children and other stakeholders are encouraged to accept the changing vision of schooling “from something that is clearly 'represented' as a public service to something that might be a consumption good” (ibid, p. 159), encouraging parents to feel empowered as consumers to challenge the authority of the school and the professional judgement of the staff within, when they feel unsatisfied with the service they are receiving (Biesta, 2010). I would argue that the market philosophy led to an interesting juxtaposition of technocratic-rationalist measurement, working against the liberal belief in personal responsibility. Students who performed poorly through absence or lack of engagement were seen as having **been** failed by poor schools and teachers, rather than having failed themselves.

2.3 Conceptual Framework

The purpose of this section is to develop a conceptual framework within which I can frame and position this research. I identify and define the main concepts as Governmentality, power, identity and capital. These inter-related concepts will help to understand the complex nature of policy implementation and its impact and implications for those enacting education reform at school level and particularly the relationship between headteachers and policy enactment.

2.3.1 Governmentality and Power

Power is a hard term to define due to its disputed nature, but from a sociological perspective it is a concept that helps us to understand social stratifications and pertains to how groups exercise their own will over others through communal action, even when resisted (Scott and Marshall, 2009). One way of conceptualising the workings of power at a social level, is through the work of Michel Foucault (1926-1984), who was particularly interested in how individuals were made into subjects, that is both subject to the actions of government but also to their own. This involved looking at power relations and particularly how they relate to government leading to his ideas on ‘Governmentality’, a “complex system of processes through which human behaviour is systematically controlled in ever wider areas of social and personal life.” (Scott and Marshall, 2009, p. 294).

Governmentality is a conceptual architecture of the modern liberal state and all its strategies, techniques and procedures as they act upon the human body and social behaviour through the many and varied capillaries of power.

(Ball, 2013, p. 60)

Control is achieved through the use of the “coercive and repressive” (Scott and Marshall, 2009, p. 294) ‘sovereign power’ and ‘disciplinary power’, in which individuals come to

manage themselves in socially acceptable ways through the formation of “motives, desires and character in individuals through techniques of the self” (ibid, p. 294). The ultimate outcome of disciplinary power is to reduce the need for coercive and repressive action as individuals comply with the will of the state through their own choices and agency, while the state becomes the “definer, watcher and manager of difference” (Ball, 2013, p. 76). Such a position requires the state to control the mechanisms of difference - the identification of groups, classifications and categories; and to establish a normative state by which to highlight those differences. This leads to the creation of knowledge through discourse in a way which allows the exercise of power to be “rationalised” (Ball, 2013, p. 121) and implemented through technologies of Government. Conceptually, I would argue that this applies equally to ‘Government’ at a whole system level but also to governance and administration at a school level, as it refers to action used to direct “categories of social agent to specified ends” (Dean, 1999 in Ball, 2013, p. 120). Governmentality can even be said to apply to the microsystem of the classroom, sitting at the centre of a “perfect diagram of power” (Ball, 2013, p. 59) as we have to consider “the government of children and the great problematic of pedagogy” (Foucault, 1994, p. 201). I believe it is evident in the way knowledge is categorised into subjects and children normalised through the mechanisms of testing and examination. Schools may be classified as ‘outstanding’ or ‘good’ while children may be classified as ‘special educational needs’ or ‘disadvantaged’, casting the discourses of difference into obvious relief. The technologies of Government are evident in inspection and other mechanisms of performativity, ensuring that the state is seen as responsible for measurement and accountability but not delivery which, in turn, allows a discourse that directs accountability for the ‘effectiveness’ of the system firmly toward teachers and schools.

Foucault introduced new ways of viewing the relationships between knowledge, power and identity or ‘selfhood’ and positioned them within a changing cultural context where power works “through producing truths about the world” (Lawler, 2008, p. 56) and we ‘position’ ourselves, relative to these truths.

practices which produce meaning involve relations of power. Individuals can neither be free from, nor operate outside of, the exercise of power (Foucault, 1984). It is diffuse, interwoven into society operates through networks and allows for the exploration of different discourses at different times.

(Jones, 2008, pp. 692-693)

Discourse, power and knowledge are intricately interwoven together and as policy is enacted in schools in ways which are “limited by the possibilities of discourse” (Ball *et al.*, 2012b, p. 3) I think we must consider them together. It should not be assumed that every discourse and every power relation will be identical but rather that “those relations need to be explored in every case” (Ball, 2013, p. 15).

From the perspective of public education, controlled through government policy, these relations are key to identifying how and why Headteachers comply or resist, “issues of power and of interests need to be investigated” (Ball *et al.*, 2012b, p. 3). Schools respond to policies and these are “permeated by relations of power” (Ball *et al.*, 2012b, p. 9) and this should be viewed, not as a top down force driving the desired outcomes of government, but as the “manifestation of relationships” (ibid, p. 9) situated in a specific context. Such considerations apply not just to the relationship between government and school, although they are key for this work; but also within the schools themselves as the web of relationships between teachers, management, departments and so on, involve “overlapping, intersecting and mutual reinforcing and productive relations of power” (Ball *et al.*, 2012b, p. 61).

Education is ‘social policy’ and as such can be viewed as the “representation and enactment of management of the population” (Ball, 2013, p. 70) and in the context of a ‘normalizing society’ (ibid, p. 70) it is easy to see the benefits to the state of exercising power to reproduce ideological positions, particularly in class and social structures or to mark out oppositional voices as different or not normal. When ‘education’ fails to fulfil or challenges that ‘institutional role’ (Chomsky, 2002) by questioning current value systems, the state may attempt to intervene, for example through policy enactment or major reform. The work of schools is set within policy discourses and regimes which may employ differing relations of power through imperative or exhortative policy approaches (Ball *et al.*, 2012b). While exhortative policy stems from a ‘humanistic discourse’ allowing for headteachers and teachers to become an “active policy subject” (Ball *et al.*, 2012b, p. 94), exercising power through imperative or disciplinary policies may render the subject passive, although this does not mean powerless. The relationship between policy, discourse and knowledge means that the policy enactment process is a site for continual interplay of power between the individuals / institution and the state as headteachers interpret and re-contextualise the policies laid out in policy texts and documents, a process which “involves interpretations of interpretations” (Ball *et al.*, 2012b, p. 3). The process of translating texts into action or practice offers a site for headteachers to utilise the power that they hold as they create knowledge and influence discourse in ways which meet their own ends.:

Policy is no simple asymmetry of power: ‘Control [or dominance] can never be totally secured, in part because of agency. It will be open to erosion and undercutting by action, embodied agency of those people who are its object’
(Ball, 1994, pp. 10-11)

It is clear that headteachers consciously and unconsciously consider if and how they will comply with a policy once they have accessed the policy text and interpreted its meaning. They will weigh up the risks of implementation or non-implementation and balance those

against the implications for them, their colleagues and their school. This process is complex, being linked to their own motivations such as how it impacts on reputation as they negotiate capital within the fields in which they hold agency, and how they decide at what point the risk to their reputation, integrity and identity is too high. I will consider how they may, in effect, use their agency and ‘power’ to comply with policies they agree with, which I define as ‘sympathetic compliance’. They may decide that the best choice in their circumstances is to comply, or appear to comply, ‘pragmatic compliance’, or interpret the policy in such a way that it is bent to their own ends rather than to the spirit of the original intended policy, ‘subverted compliance’. They may also refuse to implement policy they are completely opposed to through ‘non-compliance’. I feel that this process requires defining and I will develop a model for this process as part of the concluding discussion in chapter 5.

Despite the opportunities for agency in the policy enactment process, some imperative policy leaves little room for reinterpretation and in this case headteachers become “policy enforcers” (Ball *et al.*, 2012b, p. 93), operating within “well-defined conditions “ (ibid, p. 93) regardless of their own feelings or beliefs. While some senior staff may “revel in the opportunities for exactitude” (Ball *et al.*, 2012b, p. 93) such tightly defined policy frameworks may require, those who disagree with the policy agenda may employ strategic and pragmatic devices in order to implement mandated policy, without absorbing the rhetoric of the driving discourse (Moore, George and Halpin, 2002). In this regard, the way a head redefines policy to fit with their own ‘vision’, may actually reflect an “internalization of dominant official discourses, resulting in self-policing at the local level” (Moore, George and Halpin, 2002, p. 184), thus serving a function for politicians by mediating “potentially unpalatable central policy” (ibid, p. 184) in a way that minimizes the degree and nature of any resistance.

While power may be employed through such imperative policy or through the imposition of rules and laws, a shift has occurred to the use of “normalizing and regulatory power” (Lawler, 2008, p. 56) where individuals seek personal fulfilment by conforming to normalizing discourses, “It is a form of power which does not rely on coercion, but in which we scrutinize, regulate and discipline ourselves – the self comes to act on itself” (Lawler, 2008, p. 56) and I suggest that this is visible in the way headteachers behave in response to the policy landscape and, in particular, the use of inspection. Teachers and students have been positioned within “systems of inspection and comparison” (Ball, 2013, p. 42) and the drive to avoid becoming a victim of the discourse of derision, falling foul of the officially sanctioned ‘normal’ through student progress, or of being labelled as deficient through inspection, with negative consequences for social and professional capital as well as student recruitment; drives headteachers to operate in a way reflective of Foucault’s concept of ‘Panopticism’, where:

the success of disciplinary power derives no doubt from the use of simple instruments; hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination
(Foucault 1977 in Perryman, 2006, p. 1)

Perryman (2006) labels this use of inspection to manage school behaviour as “panoptic performativity” (ibid) where schools are labelled as failing through inspection and then expected to use sanctioned technologies of performativity and normativity as a proven “recipe” for success. Headteachers must operate within a “regime of numbers” (Ball, 2013, p. 104), a standards agenda which defines the ways in which they must behave to succeed, the “ “pertinent space within which and regarding which” they must act” (Foucault, 2009, p.75 in Ball, 2013, p. 104). This idea that schools exist in a state of permanent readiness (Perryman *et al.*, 2018), awaiting the panoptic technology of

inspection and, through ‘care of the self’, ensuring that normative practice is in place through self-surveillance resonates strongly with me. Some, however, identify shortcomings with the concept and this has led to the idea of ‘post-Panopticism’, where “playing the game of panoptic performativity leads to simulation” (Perryman *et al.*, 2018, p. 149). Rather than ‘care of the self’ resulting from the threat of surveillance / inspection, it is possible to train, practice and prepare so that the panoptic threat is eliminated. Post-Panopticism imposes ‘norms’ but rather than being clear and well defined they are “purposively in flux, transient and fuzzy” (Courtney, 2016, p. 627 in Perryman *et al.*, 2018, p. 150). The argument here is that the way OfSTED manages its frameworks, changing and adjusting frequently has led to continual re-normalisation, which schools, being driven by the risk of poor judgements in the future, look to mitigate and avoid the potential negative judgements in the now, “a perception of post-panoptic perpetual readiness for inspection” (Perryman *et al.*, 2018, p. 161). It is possible that OfSTED’s ever present influence has changed it from being a technology of surveillance and performativity and into a “set of rules by which school leaders and teachers lived, having been inculcated into a certain way of thinking?” (Perryman *et al.*, 2018, p. 150)

Panopticism is still a useful concept for explaining the purpose of inspection, but post-Panopticism offers a very interesting theory as to how the inspection process has developed as a technology of Governmentality. Whichever way you view it, it poses questions as to exactly how much power a supposedly ‘autonomous’ head can employ against the performative technologies arrayed against them, a ‘paradox’ of greater autonomy within a system where the state is increasingly able to achieve the “shaping and reshaping of individual conduct” (Ball, 2013, p. 108). Ultimately, the powers held by the Secretary of State and the influence wielded by the inspectorate, offer a formidable behavioural control mechanism or as Ball (2013) puts it, headteachers are ““nudged” or

perhaps in this case “shoved” by the techniques of economic behaviourism” (Ball, 2013, p. 108).

2.3.2 Subjectivities

In the sociological model of identity, identity is sometimes proposed as a strand of intertwined threads drawn from an individual’s experiences and the process of identity formation is an ongoing lifelong process. One possible limitation of such a model is the tendency to see all aspects of identity as entirely self-constructed and completely disassociated from other influences, allowing for the ‘sense of self’ to be solely within the agency of the individual. Such a model could be seen to overplay agency and underplay the delineating or limiting role that discourse and sociocultural structures and practices may play in the construction of identity. Rather than choosing our identity from a limited range of options, “we are confronted by a bewildering, fleeting multiplicity of possible identities, any one of which we could identify with, at least temporarily” (Hall (2003) in Jones, 2008, p. 692). One way of addressing this is to view identity in terms of ‘subjectivities’. Subjectivity is the:

abstract or general principle that defies our separation into distinct selves and that encourages us to imagine that, or simply helps us to understand why, our interior lives inevitably seem to involve other people, either as objects of need, desire and interest or as necessary sharers of a common experience.

(Mansfield, 2000, p. 3)

Subjectivity relates to how an individual experiences life within differing contexts, both as an agent and as an object or subject (Ball, 2013) and it “enables the identities which we claim, and these identities are historically contingent” (Ball, 2013, p. 125). How we ‘write’ ourselves and the choices we make in the moment as “free subjects” gives form to our lives and perception of self (Ball, 2013) but more in the form of “what we do, rather than who we are” (Ball, 2013, p. 125).

The term ‘subject’ itself is open to different interpretations and in this work, I follow Foucault who suggested that there were two meanings:

subject to someone else by control and dependence, and tied to his own identity by a conscience or self-knowledge.

((Foucault, 1982: 212) in Lawler, 2008, p. 62)

Subjects do not appear pre-formed and unaffected by power, “there is no individual, no self, that is ontologically prior to power” (Ball and Olmedo, 2013, p. 87). They are ‘produced’ as subject through processes of subjectivation (Lawler, 2008; Ball, 2013), tying them to specific identities but also *subjecting* them to “the rules and norms engendered by a set of knowledges about these identities” (Lawler, 2008, p. 62). This is a process both of ‘being formed’ and of forming oneself as an objectivised “speaking subject” (Ball, 2013, p. 127) through ‘modes of enquiry’ such as economics or linguistics; through “dividing practices” which objectivise them in terms of differences from others (ibid, p.127), and through the ways they perceive or recognise themselves, within discourse for example (Lawler, 2008), turning “him- or herself into a subject” (Foucault, M. 1982, p.208 in Ball, 2013, p. 127). An individual however, is not one single, fully formed subject, “threatened or controlled by power” (Mansfield, 2000, p. 110) but a multifaceted one where differing subjectivities are connected together to create some form of coherent entity. In so doing, power makes us:

feel vulnerable to judgement, as well as responsible for our behaviour, appearance and deeds, and the imaginary coherent and autonomous subjectivity they are supposed to reflect.

(Mansfield, 2000, p. 110)

Thus the modes of production work together with ‘technologies of the self’ (Lawler, 2008; Ball, 2013) and technologies of Government, not just Government in the political

sense but Government in the form of self-regulation (Ball, 2013); contriving the subject as the ‘ideal’ way to be (Mansfield, 2000).

In the context of the English school system, parents are created as responsible individuals (Olmedo and Wilkins, 2017) and consumers of the market, exercising ‘choice’ and achieving ‘governing’ of the market through their agency, rather than through the direct regulation which had existed in the Keynesian Welfare State (ibid). New types of subject are also created within the schools’ workforce. The deployment of neoliberal technologies of performativity, managerialism and the market “requires and enacts a ‘new type of individual’, that is a ‘new type of teacher and headteacher’ formed within the logic of competition.” (Ball and Olmedo, 2013, p. 88). This new paradigm of educational practice is promoted as ‘common sense’, it positions the practices of performativity as overwhelmingly sensible, unquestioningly desirable and irrefutably rational (ibid, p. 88). The technologies, e.g. league tables, performance management, etc, become “‘sites of veridiction’. They articulate truth as the practice of Government” (Ball, 2016, p. 1131). Practitioners are “‘incited to recognise” (ibid, p. 1131) themselves in those terms, coming to desire what performativity suggests they should desire, as the new subjectivity becomes normalised. The seductive, apparently logical changes are justified with arguments that appeal to the moral senses of the teaching subject and they respond through self-regulation, **becoming** the subject spoken by the neoliberal discourse. In so doing they are not so much being shaped by power through the technologies of governmentality, but rather they become the “site of power, where it is enacted or resisted/refused” (Ball, 2016, p. 1131). It is within this context that inspection and Government performance thresholds work to ensure practitioners accept their subjectivity with the aim of normalising them through regimes of “terror” (ibid, p. 1131). The technologies of performativity are thus applied alongside a “technology of agency” whereby teaching subjects are produced as

“subjected and practised bodies, “docile” bodies” (Foucault, 1991, p.138 in Grant, 1997, p. 101) rather than oppressed (Ball and Olmedo, 2013, p. 88) .

2.3.2.1 Positioning

The range of contexts we live and operate within will expose us to a range of discourses but within each context we are “governed by certain social expectations which result in us positioning ourselves, or being positioned according to the ‘fields’ of operation.” (Jones, 2008, p. 692). Discourses define both “what can be said and thought and how these things can be said and thought” (Lawler, 2008, p. 57) and as such, it may be argued, that we aren’t identifying with (or against) some fundamental truth but one which has been produced from within the powerful systems of knowledge that we exist within. It is a relative and restricted form of self-identification. The discourses we identify with, the knowledge and the truths they represent and communicate are situated within historically positioned sociocultural mores and influence of power. We may have some agency in positioning ourselves relative to discourses, but power structures that operate within different discourses may also limit this agency or choice and position us instead (Jones, 2008). As teachers and headteachers, each individual positions themselves, or is positioned, relative to the prevailing educational discourses of the day (Burr, 2003) which, in turn, ensures that they are “locked into the system of rights, speaking rights and obligations that are carried with that position” (Burr, 2003, p. 111). The discursive position they take, the acceptance or rejection of the discourses they are exposed to, potentially leads to conflict in the construction of their identity (ibid, p. 111), affecting how they see themselves, their ‘sense of self’ as a teacher or headteacher as well as a person.

Positioning may also function as an ‘active’ process (Burr, 2003) where the individual has to “seek to locate themselves within particular discourses during social interaction”

(Burr, 2003, p. 113). In this regard, headteachers may choose a position they feel will illicit the most support from the party they are interacting with, demonstrating very different positions to their teaching staff and an OfSTED inspection team on an aspect of policy. They may assign a position, accurately or inaccurately, to another party when feeding back an interaction and this may be done intentionally or unintentionally depending on the response they want / expect from their audience as they “claim or resist” (Burr, 2003, p. 114) the positions they feel are available to them. It is possible that a headteacher will choose to publicly position themselves in opposition to the prevailing discourse to achieve some personal agenda or to show themselves as principled or independent. Why an individual chooses to position themselves in the way they do may be seen through the concept of Capital, what the individual stands to gain professionally, socially, economically or culturally from that position.

2.3.3 Bourdieu's Forms of Capital

Pierre Bourdieu developed the concept of capital to help understand how agents have “an objective position in social space in virtue of their portfolio of economic and cultural capital.” (Grenfell, 2008, p. 88). Every individual holds a portfolio of capital, but the composition of that portfolio is unique to the individual and may be weighted more toward the economic or the cultural. Being able to map the distribution of capital within a population aids the visualisation of an individual's position, which is dependent on their personal “volume and composition of capital” and thus it is possible to model the structure of the social world (Bourdieu, 1986). The different forms of capital discussed by Bourdieu: economic, social, cultural and symbolic, are “interconvertible as part of the social world in flux” (Grenfell, 2008, p. 214). This interconnectivity between the concepts and their mutual influence is important to retain in mind.

Bourdieu's concept of capital distinguished him from Marxism as he posited that "Power and dominance derive not only from possession of material resources but also from possession of cultural and social resources" (Grenfell, 2008, p. 88). It is 'valued' through personal and socially awarded recognition, for example social status or a qualification. The different forms of capital "can be traded or exchanged for desired outcomes in their own field or within others" (Webb, Schirato and Danaher, 2002, pp. 109-110), a process Bourdieu refers to as conversion or transformation (Bourdieu, 1986). While it is possible for the different forms of capital to be derived (ibid) from economic capital, it is also possible to convert between capitals in such a way as to "produce the type of power effective in the field in question" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 24), for example through the production of social obligations, a sort of economy of "social exchange" (ibid, p. 24).

The concept of capital is closely entwined with the concept of habitus, which can be understood as an attempt to reconcile social structure and individual agency, that is "how the "outer" social, and "inner", self-help to shape each other." (Grenfell, 2008, p. 50). Habitus is synthesised, or "structured" (ibid, p. 51) from our past and present experiences in the family context and the wider social world. It then structures our dispositions, our perceptions and how we behave (our practices) in line with those contexts and experiences (upbringing or training), in the present and future (Grenfell, 2008). Habitus and capital (our position within a field of practice (ibid)) interplay within the current context of that field, resulting in our practice. The structuring of habitus is an active process, it "focuses on our ways of acting, feeling, thinking and being" (Grenfell, 2008, p. 52) and as we move into different fields of practice, becoming subjectivated within that field, our exposure to the practices and dispositions within that field will, to some extent, affect the 'form' of our own. This links closely with the concept of capital as how well formed our habitus is

within a field or social context will influence the degree and nature of social exchange, the acquisition of capital, that we can negotiate within that field.

2.3.3.1 Economic and Symbolic Capital

An individual's portfolio of capital, in Bourdieu's terms, is composed of both Economic and Cultural capital, one of a subgroup of forms Bourdieu frames as "predisposed to function as symbolic capital" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 18). Individuals will hold greater or lesser amounts of each, and this can be mapped across a population (or within a field) to show everyone's position in social space. If a group is formed and mobilised (Grenfell, 2008) within that social space it may then be characterised as a common social identity or 'class'. Bourdieu modelled the position of groups or individuals based on surveys to demonstrate how individuals derive their social power, the volume of capital held is weighted, either toward economic or cultural. To appreciate the distinction, the two terms need defining.

Economic capital is best understood as the monetary 'worth' of an individual or organisation based on factors such as income, savings and capital value of goods or property (Grenfell, 2008). While a Marxist perspective takes the view that economic capital correlates to the ownership and control of the means of production (ibid), I am considering the concept in far more individualised terms as to how it acts as a motivator and empowering agent for teachers and Headteachers.

Symbolic capital may be defined as an individual's power and dominance derived from cultural and social resources which have accumulated through social recognition. This may be considered as similar to reputation (Ihlen, 2018) as Bourdieu himself suggested, it is "a reputation for competence and an image of respectability and honourability" (Bourdieu, Nice and Bennett, 2015, p. 285) or "the prestige or recognition which various

capitals acquire by virtue of being recognized and ‘known’ as legitimate” (Lawler, 2008, p. 128). Accumulating symbolic capital within a field may also act as a legitimizing agent, “it is the power granted to those who have obtained sufficient recognition to be in a position to impose recognition” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 23).

Bourdieu developed the distinctive concept of symbolic capital to differentiate between apparently ‘instrumental’ economic capital and other forms. In his system, symbolic capital contains a number of sub-types, such as cultural capital, and others related more specifically to fields of operation, such as linguistic, scientific or literary capital (Grenfell, 2008). Accumulation of these types of capital may be understood by considering the relationship to habitus and field.. The field is the “social space or network of relationships between positions occupied by actors” (Ihlen, 2018, p. 3), for example the field of schooling; and habitus, as already discussed, a system of “durable dispositions” (ibid, p. 3) created from our experiences and which helps create the conscious and unconscious behaviours we need to relate successfully to a field. Acquiring symbolic capital within a field requires negotiation between the actor and the field, demonstrating a commonality of habitus (shared dispositions and behaviours) as well as knowledge or expertise. Successful accumulation of symbolic capital presents as reputational enhancement through validation from the field.

Within this work I will be using two of these forms of symbolic capital as framing concepts, cultural capital and social capital, and these are defined and discussed subsequently. While economic capital is transparent in nature, forms of symbolic capital may attempt to “deny and suppress their instrumentalism by proclaiming themselves disinterested and of intrinsic worth” (Grenfell, 2008, p. 103). Through this process of ‘misrecognition’, specific fields attempt to render the economic incentive of their

existence as somehow subjugated to a higher truth or purpose, rather than allow their position as “transubstantiated types of economic capital” (Grenfell, 2008, p. 104) to be evident. Such fields may attempt to accumulate symbolic capital through higher risk strategies and experimentation over a longer period of time than those who focus on the accumulation of financial or economic capital (Apple, 1986).

One key aspect of Bourdieu’s notion of symbolic capital is the role of ‘class’ in legitimising certain knowledges and competencies over others. It is argued that this arbitrary elevation means that the shared ‘social mechanisms’ (Lawler, 2008), cultural knowledges and competencies of one social group are more likely to ‘legitimise’ aspects of symbolic capital than those of another. The cultural and symbolic capital of the working class is not ‘equal’ to that of the middle class but is considered ‘different’. Difference implies a norm against which it is judged (Lawler, 2008) and there may be considered a dominance of the middle class habitus when it comes to that which is judged ‘normal’ and the conference of legitimacy. Bourdieu (1989) argues that the idea of ‘class’ as a single group in social space, is “a political work aimed at producing classes as corporate bodies, permanent groups endowed with permanent organs or representation, acronyms, etc.” (Bourdieu, 1989, p. 17). One criticism of such a claim is that it is a reductionist view of class structure (Grenfell, 2008; Bourdieu, 1989), a suggestion that everyone who is middle class is of a single type, thus simplifying the claims of a dominant group. In reality, classes “are not homogenous entities” (Lawler, 2008, p. 127). A social group or class will be graduated (Grenfell, 2008), with those who exhibit a “well-formed habitus” (Grenfell, 2008, p. 103) more likely to hold greater symbolic capital. There is “intra-group variance” (ibid, p. 103) as well as inter-class variance that should be considered and this will help to understand why, even within a ‘class’ some hold greater

cache than others. Grenfell (2008) provides the example of the difference in cultural capital conferred on the Artist as opposed to the Craftsman.

Cultural capital, in Bourdieu's terms, can exist in three states: embodied, objectified and institutionalized. Embodied capital must be acquired first hand and refers to "long-lasting dispositions of mind and body" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 17). These dispositions, which Bourdieu defined as 'habitus', are situated within the person (embodied) and cannot be given away, growing, declining and dying with the individual. They can be transmitted and reproduced but this is not "instantaneous" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 18) and the processes are not as obvious as they are with the transmission of economic capital (ibid, p. 18). Objectified cultural capital exists in 'material objects' which require economic capital for legal ownership to be transferred, but they require embodied capital to be present in order to use or appreciate them. Bourdieu uses the example of a machine, to possess a machine an individual requires economic capital but to use them effectively he must "have access to cultural capital, either in person or by proxy" (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 20), for example by employing someone who has trained to use the machine. Institutionalized cultural capital exists as a form of objectified capital where the capital, for example an exam certification, is recognised to have legitimate value because that legitimization has taken place through an official, legally guaranteed authority. Unlike other objectified forms of cultural capital, the institutionally validated form can be compared and upgraded, and can be aligned more easily with economic capital as higher qualifications or stronger grades may lead to greater earning power, i.e. increased accumulation of economic capital (Bourdieu, 1986).

More generally, cultural capital may be seen as the "symbols, ideas, tastes and preferences that can be strategically used as resources in social action" (Scott and Marshall, 2009, p. 148) and may be understood as our cultural 'worth' calculated "for example, by "adding

up” our qualifications, culturally valuable goods, etc” (Grenfell, 2008, p. 89). These “cultural and symbolic artefacts of class” (Lawler, 2008, p. 128) are accumulated over periods of time and through processes of “pedagogical action” (Johnson, 1993 in Lawler, 2008, p. 128) involving family, diffuse members of a social formation and institutionalized education (ibid). They may then be used, accumulated or invested and may be converted into other types of capital or resources (Grenfell, 2008). Lawler (2008) follows Bourdieu and suggests that not all capital is equal, however, and needs to be legitimated to convert to ‘symbolic’ capital. In this regard, it appears that the ‘middle classes’ hold the advantage, as:

It is only the cultural capital of the middle classes which is legitimated in this way; their tastes, knowledges and dispositions are coded as *inherently* ‘tasteful’, *inherently* knowledgeable, *inherently* ‘right’

(Lawler, 2008, p. 128)

In education, for example, middle class parents are able to furnish their children with advantages that are not accessible purely through financial means, e.g. “positive attitudes towards learning, ‘taken for granted’ knowledge and understanding how the education system works” (Mortimore, 2013). They are also able to utilise this cultural capital at “moments of crisis or key moments of transition to ensure access to privileged trajectories or to avert calamity” (Ball, 2006, pp. 269-270). An example may be in knowing how use the system to appeal an admission decision that is unsatisfactory or choosing to attend church so that a child may be accepted to a voluntary aided church school. Economic capital does interplay here as these families may also “minimise risk by deploying their economic capital to buy educational advantages in the private system” (ibid, p. 269-270) or by buying private coaching or tutoring for the 11 plus exam in order to gain access to Grammar Schools (Mortimore, 2013).

Schools play an important role in reproducing the ‘relations’ of production as they are, in the main, structured around a hierarchical model with a focus on authority and discipline (Finch, 1984) and reject or devalue the types of cultural capital more evident in the working classes (Lareau, 1987). They also “utilize particular linguistic structures, authority patterns, and types of curricula; children from higher social locations enter school already familiar with these social arrangements” (Lareau, 1987, p. 74), allowing them to effectively convert their cultural resources into ‘cultural capital’ (Grenfell, 2008; Lareau, 1987) and this, it is argued, inculcates the young with the social relations of production they will encounter once they enter the world of work. While some teachers may be unaware or in denial about their role in social reproduction, they are in no small way attempting to provide children with some degree of access to cultural capital. They offer access to those cultural resources art, literature, music, language, aspiration; that the home culture may be less likely to provide but they are doing so in an environment where educational success is more likely with greater parental involvement (Lareau, 1987; Tomlinson, 2005).

2.3.3.2 Social Capital

Social capital is defined by Bourdieu as “the aggregate of the actual or potential resources which are linked to possession of a durable network of more or less institutionalized relationships of mutual acquaintance and recognition, or in other words, to membership of a group” (Bourdieu, 1986, p. 21), and this is an important concept in schooling where the networks between community, school, parents and pupils result in field specific negotiation of social capital. Within this context social capital may be understood as the:

types of relations that exist between individuals as located within both families and communities and that are said to exert a strong influence on levels of educational achievement.

(Scott and Marshall, 2009, p. 697)

I define social capital here in line with Hargreaves (2001) and highlight two key facets. Firstly, cultural elements viewed as “the level of trust between people and the generation of norms of reciprocity (mutual favours) and collaboration.” (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 490) Secondly, structural elements, the ‘social networks’ (Grenfell, 2008; Hargreaves, 2001) of relationships between people, which are evidenced by strong ties and in which “high levels of trust generate strong networks and collaborative relations among its members and stakeholders” (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 490). The ability to generate high levels of trust within the social network of the school, between teachers, students, parents and school leadership; supports a greater capacity for ‘intellectual capital’ within the school, that is “its capacity to create and transfer knowledge” (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 491), resulting in improved educational outcomes. The strength of this concept, in my view, is that it recognises the agency of the students and staff as the degree of trust or social capital held by the school will be reflected in the willingness of students to collaborate in their learning (ibid) and will also be reflected in a culture where teachers can share their professional and pedagogic knowledge, “derived from research evidence or personal experience” (Hargreaves, 2001, p. 493).

Parents directly influence the social capital available to their children through their choice of residence and establishing ties within restricted groups in their community, actively excluding others and indirectly influencing the peer-groups that are available to their children (Scott and Marshall, 2009). Such limited peer-group choice may further reproduce habitus, behaviours and attitudes, while excluding the child from negotiating and acquiring other forms of social capital through the excluded networks. Additionally, the choices made by middle class parents, self-excluding their children from accessing schools they deem culturally discordant, unsafe or inadequate, further contributes to the

social exclusion of disadvantaged families (Simmons and Thompson, 2011) as their social capital is rendered inaccessible.

From the headteacher's perspective, effective school improvement, the ability to leverage change in the outcomes, both 'moral' and 'cognitive' (Hargreaves, 2001), of the school will come from managing and building the trust within the networks and accruing social capital from improved collaborative engagement between stakeholders, thus leading to more effective knowledge creation and transfer (Hargreaves, 2001). This may be done via the mechanism of social engineering, excluding those from disadvantaged backgrounds and achieving a 'critical mass' of middle class families who bring that capital with them (Mcinerney, 2016). If this approach is considered morally questionable, then the head must work to compensate for the relative perceived deficit in the stakeholders' social capital in other ways, by helping them to negotiate and accumulate the capital through their resources. They may invest in building and supporting the networks that they can influence, manage the workforce to develop trust and mutually supportive practice, while attempting to build aspiration and engagement within the parent group.

2.4 Summary

Education reform or policy enactment in schools represents one process of Governmentality, which is conceptualised in this research as a complex system of processes which allow Governments to achieve their aims through overt and 'sovereign' use of power, or through the subtler use of 'disciplinary power' which pushes or encourages those tasked with policy enactment to conform, through their own agency or choice, to a sanctioned 'normative' model of behaviour. Such norms are established through discourses which themselves may be controlled by the Government in power,

effectively establishing ‘groups of difference’ or categories that schools need, for purposes of accountability and pupil recruitment; to avoid. These processes are not confined solely to the top level of Government practice but may be found at local authority, Academy trust, school or Academy level and even down to the practice of teaching itself as students are ‘governed’ within the classroom. While there may appear to be an increased tendency for disciplinary power through policy enactment, there still exists opportunities for those tasked with policy implementation to resist or subvert the intent of policy and to re-align it to their own ends or undermine the intent altogether. Every agent within the system has power which may be employed sympathetically or in opposition to policy intent.

Headteachers are responsible for setting the vision and values for their institutions and, more practically, for implementing policy handed down from Government level. How this is done will be, in great part, guided by their own sense of identity and what motivates them in terms of capital accumulation. Some policy may resonate with personal values and identity, positioning them in line with normative discourse and resulting in ‘sympathetic compliance’, others may result in ideological dissonance, potentially positioning them outside of the normative discourse, whereby the result may be ‘pragmatic compliance’, ‘non-compliance’ (active or passive resistance) or ‘subverted compliance’ (re-interpreting policy texts to meet own ends). The degree to which the individual chooses to comply or resist, to use their professional agency, will be a function of their innate pragmatism, coupled with the motivator of capital accumulation. Consciously or subconsciously they will position themselves in line with their personal values, core beliefs and moral purpose, but may also be influenced by the motivating implications of economic capital (pay and rewards or school level funding incentives) and symbolic capital (local or national recognition). Symbolic capital will be a complex

amalgam of professional and cultural capitals, the degrees to which these factors interplay will not be linear and will vary with every decision made.

CHAPTER THREE METHODOLOGY, METHODS AND ETHICAL APPROACH

3.1. Research Overview

In this chapter I will set out my methodological approach, data collection methods and how the data was subsequently analysed. The ethical considerations of the research are also outlined. The methodology utilised in this work is primarily qualitative, focusing as it does on the lived experiences and personal views of those tasked with leading schools and implementing policy. A mixed methods approach is used which incorporates a survey and a series of semi-structured interviews. The survey was used as a tool to provide context and identify key areas of interest to inform the interviews, and while some of the data collected may be viewed quantitatively, the core approach remains qualitative.

The research was conducted in two phases. Phase 1 was a survey conducted via an online platform with the primary aim of identifying some of the key issues and opinions of the school leader group, using as large a sample as possible and from as wide a range of educational contexts and geographical locations as possible, within the restricted range of 'England', these were broken down into regional classifications to simplify the process. The data collected through the survey was then analysed and key themes identified to be carried through to Phase 2, a series of semi-structured interviews with school leaders from different educational contexts and differing amounts of experience.

3.1.1 Methods

The experience of implementing education policy and experiencing reform is highly subjective. All headteachers will experience it from a unique, individual position and their view will be shaped by their values, beliefs and personal investment in their schools, their 'vision'. They will also be influenced by the demand on their financial and human resources, the implications of accountability structures and by the degree to which their

‘autonomy’ is being restricted. Decisions on these areas will balance motivators, such as capital accumulation, with the pragmatism or idealism of the individual. Consequently, it was clear to me that an adaptable qualitative approach, such as interviews (Bell, 1999), was required to create a discourse (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994) with and to hear the voices of, those in such positions; to see where there may be commonality and shared views and where perspectives are different. In this regard, the approach offered a form of co-construction through negotiated meaning (ibid). The main issue was that the target subject group was so large and diverse, and the possible fields of enquiry were too numerous for a study of this type. To address this, I determined to employ a mixed methods approach and to split the project into two phases.

In adopting a ‘mixed methods’ approach, I rejected the argument that qualitative and quantitative methods are somehow mutually incompatible and dependent on specific “epistemological and ontological commitments” (Bryman, 2008, p. 604). While I accept that there may be a correlation between types of research method and the positivist or interpretivist nature of research undertaken, I do not accept that there is a fundamentally limiting relationship or that such approaches are locked into ‘paradigmatic’ compatibility (ibid, p. 604). Quantitative methods can be used to gather data which can also be viewed in an interpretivist manner, the proportion or quantity of a target group who share beliefs or opinions on specific issues being a case in point, much can be drawn in an interpretivist sense from questions which produced ostensibly statistical data. I would agree with Bryman (2008) that it remains highly contestable that the two forms of research represent paradigms, even when certain methods may lend themselves more readily to each approach. I think it is an oversimplification of the issue and prefer to see the different approaches as ‘fusable’, in agreement with the technical version of the qualitative and quantitative approach outlined by Bryman (2008). In the case of this study, my aim was for the combination of approaches to lead to a “better understanding of a phenomenon

than if just one method had been used” (Bryman, 2008, p. 624), with an initial phase of a survey helping to identify key concerns and themes for later examination through a second phase of semi-structured interviews.

3.1.2 Overview of sample

Phase 1 of the research, the online survey, was first piloted with six volunteer participants. After review and adjustment, the final survey was made available to secondary school leaders in England and promoted via my professional body ASCL¹⁷ and by direct email contact based on DfE school contact information. The sample which resulted was 121 unique responses with representation across genders, school phase, types and locations (regions), years of experience, ASCL members / non-members and leadership roles. Not all the data was usable and the impact of this and the detailed breakdown of the sample is considered further in section 3.3.3.

The Phase 2 sample, for the semi-structured interviews, was identified from participants from the survey who identified a willingness to be involved further. The interview was piloted with one helpful local Head and a further 10 were invited to participate from across the range of characteristics mentioned above. This was complicated by some volunteers being unable or unwilling to follow up on their initial indication of willingness and the original identified sample had to be adjusted to suit. The final dataset included all of the interviews including the pilot giving a sample size of 11 participants. The detailed breakdown of this sample is considered in section 3.4.3.

3.2 Methodological approach

This work is grounded in the epistemology of social constructionism. My experiences in life, and through the work I have undertaken as research and higher study, have led me to

¹⁷ ASCL – Association of School and College Leaders

identify with the notion that our lived experiences, thoughts, knowledge and sense of self, are constructed from and through our experiences and that these are socially, culturally and historically mediated and situated (Crotty, 1998; Hammersley, 1995; Searle, 1995; Burr, 2003). I do not deny an underlying reality which underpins our socially constructed one (Crotty, 1998), and I am sympathetic to the view that our language defines and constrains our reality, as we ascribe meaning to ‘real’ objects through socio-cultural, linguistic devices. In Burr’s (2003) words: “real phenomena, our perceptions and experiences are brought into existence and take the particular form they do because of the language we share.”(Burr, 2003, p. 92).

School leaders come from a very diverse range of backgrounds, including different social, religious and ethnic groups, so while there may be commonality of experience and ‘habitus’ stemming from their “interactions within concrete social networks” (Grenfell, 2008, p. 93), any meaning ascribed to their experiences will be, to a degree, subjective. Crotty (1998), however, argues that the “existentialist concept of humans as beings-in-the-world” (Crotty, 1998, p. 43) and the concept of ‘intentionality’¹⁸ (Crotty, 1998; Searle, 1995) mean that we should not simply define meaning as ‘subjective’. When one becomes conscious of an object, the object becomes shaped by that consciousness (Crotty, 1998), in effect, ‘knowing’ is an active, interdependent process between subject and world (ibid).

This work is anchored in an interpretivist perspective, which aligns with my constructionist standpoint (Crotty, 1998). Using an interpretivist approach acknowledges the interdependence of “the knower and the known” (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 12) and allows us to try and “understand the subjective world of human experience” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 22). It is a function of the interpretivist approach

¹⁸ Intentionality – “the capacity of the mind to represent objects and states of affairs in the world other than itself.” (Searle, 1995)

to ‘get inside’ the subject and to try and “understand their interpretations of the world around them” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000), to try and understand how they have constructed meaning for themselves, but to do so while acknowledging the limitations this offers for claims of universally valid knowledge (Hammersley, 1995). Such limitation feeds into one major criticism of this approach, that it is highly dependent on the interpretation of the researcher. It is not possible for one researcher to have ‘detailed knowledge’ of anything outside of their own direct experience, so what they are producing as knowledge is only their version of ‘meaning’ filtered through their own limited experience (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Hammersley, 1995) and linguistic references. It is also possible that the interpreted ‘meaning’ will have been consciously or unconsciously influenced by the innate biases and beliefs of the researcher. While it may be possible to ‘recognise’ aspects of the subjects’ experience and construct or interpret ‘meanings’ from them, it is not possible to ‘know’ them as the subject does (Schostak, 2002). Therefore, the only one with a true understanding of intended meaning is the one who has lived the experience and, as such, the process of data gathering and analysis becomes more a process of negotiation of meaning (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). Another criticism follows, that any such knowledge is a product only of the specific culture or group that undertook the research and that any such work is subjected to the ‘interest’ of those who sponsored or participated in it, it can no longer be a matter of “disinterested enquiry” (Hammersley, 1995, p. 15).

This research set out to understand the impact of rapid policy change through the experiences of those tasked with implementing it in secondary schools in England. It is their voices I wished to be heard, their views and experiences through the lens of their realities. To achieve this through the use of quantitative methods alone risked minimising and potentially ‘muting’ (Webber, 2015) these voices, although I felt that the complex nature of English schooling and the variety of institutions that now exist, suggested some

form of descriptive statistical comparison could offer some useful insight. In effect, I concur with Merton and Kendall (1946) that the choice between the positivist and interpretivist approaches can be spurious and agree with the view that positioning qualitative and quantitative research as mutually exclusive is a false dichotomy (Pring, 2000). I may gain greater insight by concerning myself with “that combination of both which makes use of the most valuable features of each.” (Merton and Kendall (1946) in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 45)

The methodology in this work perhaps fits best into the domain of symbolic interactionism, (although I make no claims to it being a particularly good fit!) as I have taken seriously, and given “priority to, inmates own accounts” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 25) and recognise both the importance of their natural drives and instincts, as well as the way they will respond to policy as a socially constructed phenomenon, with meaning interpreted from symbols, such as language (ibid). Headteachers respond or act toward policy in response to the ‘meaning’ they construct or ‘negotiate’ (ibid) from it and this is “derived from, and arises out of, the social interactions” (Crotty, 1998, p. 72) and personal experiences they have with their peers and colleagues, as well as with stakeholders such as pupils, parents and governors. Their interpretation is also considerably influenced by the wider social context of policy formation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000).

Having initially considered a narrative enquiry approach, which I felt could offer me insight into the lived experience of headteachers, through the telling of their stories; I grew concerned about the potential implications for my self-funded budget, schedule and impact at work, due to the time it may take to build the trust relationship necessary to achieve meaningful data (Bell, 1999). Instead, I decided to employ a mixed methods approach, including survey and interview methods. This was a suitable methodology as it allowed me to take a broadly ‘representative’ sample from a larger group, which would

then allow me to extract patterns (Bell, 1999) and themes to follow up in greater depth in a limited number of interviews, which I felt would allow for a more productive focus. Surveys offer a means of “describing the nature of existing conditions, or identifying standards against which existing conditions can be compared, or determining the relationships between specific events” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 169) in this case the aim was to identify the experience of policy change, its implementation and the subsequent impact on standards.

3.2.1 Positionality

Adopting an interpretivist methodology raises issues around my role as researcher in terms of positionality. I could position myself broadly as an ‘insider’ within the field of research (Merriam *et al.*, 2001), as I participate in school leadership and policy implementation. From this perspective, such a position may give greater likelihood of “meanings shared, and validity of findings assured” (Merriam *et al.*, 2001, p. 406). I would argue that such an assumption may be too simplistic, however. As a Vice Principal (Deputy Head), while I hold some equivalence of role and qualifications, my position is subservient to that of headteacher and as such I may also be considered an ‘outsider’ and may not be assumed to be ‘equal’ within that specific network. This may lead to issues of ‘power’ and participants positioning themselves differently toward me than they may have done, had I been a head also (Chavez, 2008). I believe that this need not be a significant concern. There is recognition that the issue is a false dichotomy (Chavez, 2008), with the lines between ‘inside’ and ‘outside’ blurred or not clearly delineated (Merriam *et al.*, 2001; Moore, 2012). Both positions offer complexity and different advantages and disadvantages, but “in the real world of data collection, there is a good bit of fluidity and slippage between these two states” (Merriam *et al.*, 2001, p. 405).

While the lines between positions may be blurred, it remains important to acknowledge the implications and impact that my positionality has, and I would argue that I hold both positions simultaneously in a form of ‘polyvocality’ (Chavez, 2008). I could draw on my ‘insider’ experience of managing reform processes and policy demands, and to more accurately negotiate and construct meaning through the interview process. A criticism of this may be that this represents a more “biased position” (Chavez, 2008, p. 474) as I co-constructed the meaning with my peers from a position of ‘interested’ enquiry. Such a position carries the risk that congruent positions with the subjects may impact on the data as a “rose-colored observational lens or blindness to the ordinary” (Chavez, 2008, p. 475). At the same time, I could be empathetic to the stresses and demands of the school leadership role and the impact it has on family life and physical and emotional states.

My position as ‘outsider’ allowed a sense of ‘objectivity’ (Chavez, 2008), of detachment from the direct experience of the majority interviewees. I have not held the ultimate responsibility for the success and failure of a school. I have not experienced managing multi-million pound budgets or the full range of strategic and administrative burdens that headteachers now carry. As previously stated, I cannot ‘**know**’ what it is to be a head. Such removal from that direct experience carries the risk of the imposition of my beliefs and perceptions on to the lives of those who participated and an “overly positivistic representation or interpretation” (Chavez, 2008, p. 475), however, personal experience of working with a highly regarded and valued headteacher colleague, who experienced significant and, ultimately, career ending mental and emotional turmoil during the period of my research; had a significant negative impact on my perception of the role. This must be acknowledged and confronted within the context of my interpretation and co-construction of meaning with my interview subjects as it may have risked contaminating the quality and challenging the validity of the interview data.

I tried to minimise the potential for interviewer bias (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000), which is considered a persistent problem with interview based data capture (ibid), by consciously trying to keep a sense of detachment from the subject and by using reflection techniques to clarify understanding. Interviewer bias can also take the form of “a tendency for the interviewer to see the respondent in her own image” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 121) and I tried to minimise this by positioning myself as researcher first and Vice Principal second. I felt this self-positioning or detachment worked in most interviews, at least consciously, but there were interviews where I was aware that my professional role was a factor in the dialogue, with interviewees trying to enrol me in their point of view, positioning me sympathetically to their own position.

In summary, I have taken a polyvocal position, trying to manage a complex positionality of both inside and outside the subject group. I have recognised and acknowledged the risks of my position and potential for impact on validity and reliability of the data and have attempted to stay alert to those risks throughout the research process, appreciating when my own experiences may colour my perception or when my interview subjects are attempting to position me. In the sections that follow, I will lay out in more detail the methods and process that were used and how that links clearly to my epistemological position as well as how the risk of bias or researcher contamination, was minimised.

3.3 Phase 1: Survey phase

3.3.1 Designing the survey - conducted via online questionnaire

The process of designing the survey (Appendix D p. 212) was initially rooted in my early reading and reflections on my own experiences. There was a clear need to make the survey focus on aspects of practice which related most directly to the research questions, but the scale of the research field also demanded a narrower focus to ensure manageability. I decided to mix quantitative and qualitative questions to allow for recurrent themes to be

identified, thus allowing for a more focused interview schedule. The qualitative responses would also allow for verification with the Interviews in phase 2. The first 7 questions were set up to describe participant characteristics, gender, years of experience, institution, role, region, membership of ASCL, etc. These were to allow for patterns or themes to emerge, if appropriate, across different contexts which could then be followed up at interview.

The main data collection questions were based on the key themes identified from reading and the research questions. These were mainly presented as multiple choice, rating or ranking questions with open text questions to allow for greater illustration / explanation of responses. Some questions e.g. Q8: Do you believe that the term “standards” is clearly defined and understood in our education system? (Appendix D p. 212); demanded a simple binary response. In the case of the ranking questions e.g. Q12: What do you believe the purpose of education to be? (please rank from 1 (most important) – 6) (ibid). It is never possible to include the full range of potential answers without making the survey unmanageable or off-putting to participants, so choices were limited to 6-8 options with what I felt were a balanced representative range of those identified. Such an approach is open to criticism as respondents may not be able to differentiate their responses and long lists may become overwhelming (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). To address this, I ensured that options were clearly defined and covered a broad range of possible perceptions, while I accept the preferability of limiting choices to five (ibid), in a few questions I felt strongly that a wider range had to be offered to allow the participant a fully representative range, rather than potentially influencing the choices through my own reductive selection of a more limited one.

In terms of those questions which were offered as rating scales e.g.: Q20: How has the pace and frequency of policy implementation changed over the course of your time in school leadership? (Appendix D p. 212); I ensured that there was a Likert type scale range

of responses to “exhaust the range of possible Responses which respondents may wish to give” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 253). These questions assumed a level of unidimensionality to the scale (ibid) and I was careful to ensure that the response range was discrete e.g. Significantly improved, Partially, improved, No impact, Partially declined, Significantly declined.

A further strategy I employed within the survey was to offer opportunities for respondents to give greater definition to their responses through free text answers. In some cases, these followed on from another question e.g. Q15: If you said 'other' to q14, please define here (Appendix D p. 212). This allowed for expansion and for respondents to include issues / reasons I had not included in the choices, thus negating the potentially leading or limiting nature of these types of question. In other cases, I was aware that any attempt to reduce the options down to a minimal range would be too restricting and set the question out as a free text response from the start e.g. Q18: Are there any circumstances under which you have / would refuse to implement Government policy? (ibid). In these questions I was looking for an “honest, personal comment” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 255) or additional ideas, observations which may otherwise have been missed through the more reductive mechanisms of questionnaire design. This meant that for these questions, the respondents had far greater control of the data. I recognised that such data would not be easily converted into numerical form, but the intent was to identify patterns, key words or themes within the responses to highlight perceptions from their experiences. Each element stands alone as the view of the individual or, at best, allows for loose aggregation (ibid) to help inform questioning at interview level.

3.3.2 Piloting the survey

Multiple choice, rating and ranking questions can be victim to ambiguity as different participants may interpret them in subtly different ways (Cohen, Manion and Morrison,

2000). In these cases, I was aware of the limitations and tested the veracity and ambiguity of the questions, initially through asking a colleague who had experience in research to check them, and then through piloting with a small sample of 6 Headteachers, all of whom were local to me and willing to participate and to offer feedback on the questions and process. Piloting is essential to ensure that the questionnaire is tested for accessibility and length and also to allow me to “remove any items which do not yield usable data” (Bell, 1999, pp. 127-128) and the pilot group was not just similar to the target population, but were valid members of it.

The pilot took place over a three day period and was essential to “increase the reliability, validity and practicability” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 260) of the survey. The pilot was also conducted through the same online survey system that was used for the main survey, ensuring that all aspects of the process from question suitability, minimising ambiguity and even the visual presentation of the survey were tested (ibid). Only one of the subjects had constructive criticism to make at this stage and refinements were made in response (Appendix E p. 216), however, despite refinement, given the similarity between the pilot group and myself, I assumed that there may still be a small potential for ambiguity and that within a larger group of respondents the risk remained that these questions may not be interpreted exactly as I intended. As I wanted to use the data for descriptive statistics, only, I was satisfied that this was not a major concern. Due to the familiarity of the pilot group and the potential for contamination of their responses through closer contact with me, I made the decision to exclude the pilot data from the final dataset.

3.3.3 Conducting the survey and sampling

The sample was determined by the number who chose to respond and complete the online questionnaire. Once the survey had been piloted, the main survey was made available on

SurveyMonkey¹⁹ for a month, during which period the invitation to participate was sent out through my professional body ASCL. One criticism of this was the potential for the subject group to then be representative of only ASCL members and, arguably, not the wider population of school leaders. ASCL is known for being a moderate body, so potential subjects with more militant views may not have been aware of the survey. This potential narrowing of respondents could have challenged validity, which is why I subsequently sent out an invitation to all Headteachers via email from the secondary phase part of the DfE schools 'Edubase'²⁰ database (DfE, 2017). This gave access to potentially 18000 ASCL members (ASCL, 2017), not all of whom would fit the subject profile and 3047 Schools via Edubase, assuming that all records on the DfE system were current and up to date. This resulted in several responses from non-ASCL members, leaving a 20:80 non-member to member ratio (Table 3.8). Not even, but significantly more diverse than a 100% membership return would be, allowing greater confidence in the data.

Responses to the survey are shown in Figure 3.1 and the highest response rate came after the ASCL email shot. The Edubase email strategy supported this, but there were a lot of failed deliveries and rejections. I also received several emails explaining that the school did not participate in surveys of this type, suggesting that the association with the school as institution was more sensitive than for an individual responding as a member of a professional body, offering, as it did, an anonymous route to contribution with names only being provided if they were happy to be contacted regarding phase 2 of the research.

¹⁹ SurveyMonkey is an online survey application.

²⁰ Edubase is the Department for Education's register of educational establishments in England and Wales.

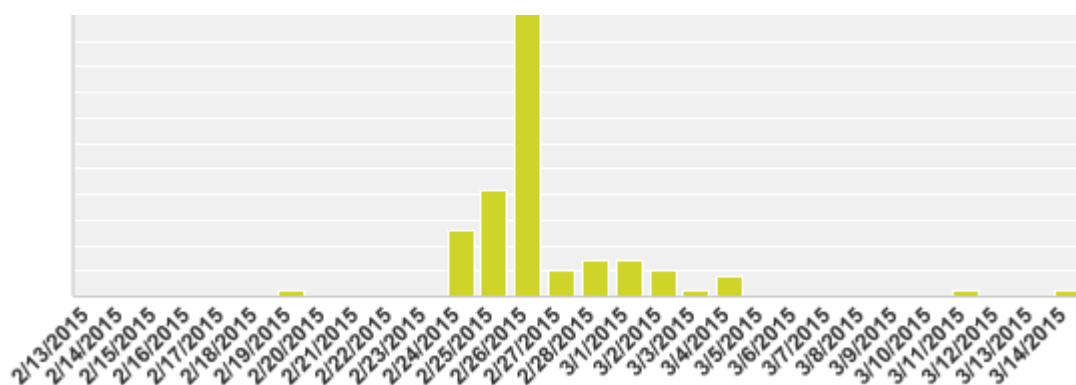


Figure 3.1: Completion rates of Phase 1 survey

Participation was ‘voluntary’ in nature and therefore subject to ‘volunteer bias’ through non-response (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). The distribution of participants in the survey, however, seemed well spread and representative of the range of regions, school types, roles and degrees of experience. The initial response showed 121 unique responses but only 91 of these continued through to the main part of the survey and, of these, another 6 failed to complete all the questions. The final dataset for analysis has been filtered to exclude the 30 who did not contribute beyond their personal characteristics, and the key characteristics of those who did are shown in Table 3.1.

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	41	45.1	45.1	45.1
	Male	50	54.9	54.9	100.0
	Total	91	100.0	100.0	

Table 3.1: Participation by gender

The DfE statistics for the year of the survey show the proportion of female teachers in English secondary schools was at 62.4% (DfE, 2016b) which may call into question the relative validity of the data set. In leadership positions, however, the relative representation of females was 49.1% across maintained and academy schools (calculated from School Workforce data (2015) in DfE, 2016c). The survey sample was 4% below

full proportional representation, making it far more acceptable. The disparity in workforce versus leadership gender representation is a complex, if interesting, phenomenon that does not fall into the purview of this work.

Participation was also viewed by institution type (Table 3.2). While most schools in England may be classified as maintained (Local Authority), voluntary aided (usually religious affiliation) or Academy (publicly funded, privately run) there are still schools which clearly identify as Grammar or secondary moderns, whichever operational category they fall into and I felt it important to be able to see the relative views of these discretely. ‘Free school’ was offered as a category, as was ‘University Technical College’ (UTC), however these were very new school types at the time with very limited numbers operational. The responses reflected this with one Free school response (rejected due to only completing the characteristics questions), and one UTC. Such new types of school may have leaders who might demonstrate significant variance in their responses to the questions I posed, however, the limited number means no general conclusions may be drawn.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Academy	47	51.6	51.6	51.6
Grammar	5	5.5	5.5	57.1
Maintained School	31	34.1	34.1	91.2
Secondary Modern	2	2.2	2.2	93.4
University Technical College	1	1.1	1.1	94.5
Voluntary Aided School	5	5.5	5.5	100.0
Total	91	100.0	100.0	

Table 3.2: Participation by institution type

Within secondary schooling there are several different types or models of delivery, so I also asked for identification with one of the ‘phase’ types (Table 3.3). This was important as different models have different pressures and are subject to variations in funding and accountability. For example, 11-18 schools have had to deal with reductions in post 16 funding, while middle schools are not subject to the GCSE accountability league tables that 11-16 and 11-18 schools are. Such differences could colour or skew the responses of the participants.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	2	2.2	2.2	2.2
Middle (9-13)	3	3.3	3.3	5.5
other (eg all through)	4	4.4	4.4	9.9
Secondary (11-16)	22	24.2	24.2	34.1
Secondary (11-18)	58	63.7	63.7	97.8
Upper (14-18)	2	2.2	2.2	100.0
Total	91	100.0	100.0	

Table 3.3: Participation by Secondary phase

Another variable to be considered was the nature of the role that the specific school leader undertakes (Table 3.4). School leadership is not just about headship, but subservient roles of deputy or assistant head and senior teacher take a significant degree of responsibility in the running of the schools. Governors are also considered part of the leadership structure by OfSTED and so they were included too, however, the one governor who did respond had to be excluded due to only completing characteristics questions. Offering these classifications meant that data could be analysed by role to see if there was any significant variance in perspective and experience.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
--	-----------	---------	---------------	--------------------

Valid	Assistant Head	5	5.5	5.5	5.5
	Deputy Head / Vice Principal	8	8.8	8.8	14.3
	Executive Head / Principal	11	12.1	12.1	26.4
	Head / Principal	63	69.2	69.2	95.6
	Senior teacher	4	4.4	4.4	100.0
	Total	91	100.0	100.0	

Table 3.4: Participation by role

Geographic region was not originally going to be a focus but the huge variation in funding to different parts of the country and the impact it has on the experience of running a school was too influential to exclude (Table 3.5). As well as the economic divide for the communities they serve, schools are subject to an economic divide through the funding formula. It is not as simple as ‘rich’ authorities get more money. The F40 group²¹ includes many more affluent authorities (F40Group, 2017) whose funding falls significantly below that of places like London, the 10 lowest funded authorities, for example, receive £4,208 per pupil compared to a national average of £6,297 (ibid) and this may have an influencing effect on the perceptions of those tasked with enacting policy and meeting required standards through a significantly lower amount of funding. My categorisation does not quite match the Office for National Statistics as regional population is measured through a slightly different regional structure (ONS, 2015) (Appendix F p. 220), however, this is not necessarily an issue as school density may not correlate to population density due to the variation in age profiles in some regions.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid London	9	9.9	9.9	9.9

²¹ f40 represents a group of the lowest funded education authorities in England where Government-set cash allocations for primary and secondary pupils are the lowest in the country.

Midlands	21	23.1	23.1	33.0
North East	10	11.0	11.0	44.0
North West	9	9.9	9.9	53.8
Other	1	1.1	1.1	54.9
South East	30	33.0	33.0	87.9
South West	10	11.0	11.0	98.9
Southern	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	91	100.0	100.0	

Table 3.5: Participation by region (author's classification)

The final variable is that of experience. When examining the rate and pace of policy change, it is reasonable to assume that leaders will have views based on their own experiences over time and that a more prolonged exposure to rapid reform may lead to differing views to that of someone who has only been doing the job for a couple of years. The longest serving participant offered 27 years of leadership experience (Table 3.6) and they would have been in a leadership role at the time of the 1988 Act (measured from the survey year in 2015). The shortest period of school leadership experience was shown to be two years which would mean the participant would only have known education leadership under the coalition Government and their experience of change may be far more limited.

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2.0	2	2.2	2.2	2.2
5.0	4	4.4	4.4	6.6
6.0	3	3.3	3.3	9.9
7.0	3	3.3	3.3	13.2
8.0	6	6.6	6.6	19.8
9.0	2	2.2	2.2	22.0
10.0	8	8.8	8.8	30.8
11.0	5	5.5	5.5	36.3
12.0	8	8.8	8.8	45.1
12.5	1	1.1	1.1	46.2
13.0	3	3.3	3.3	49.5
14.0	3	3.3	3.3	52.7

15.0	8	8.8	8.8	61.5
17.0	2	2.2	2.2	63.7
18.0	7	7.7	7.7	71.4
19.0	2	2.2	2.2	73.6
20.0	11	12.1	12.1	85.7
21.0	2	2.2	2.2	87.9
22.0	1	1.1	1.1	89.0
23.0	1	1.1	1.1	90.1
24.0	1	1.1	1.1	91.2
25.0	5	5.5	5.5	96.7
26.0	2	2.2	2.2	98.9
27.0	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	91	100.0	100.0	

Table 3.6: Participation by Leadership experience

3.3.4 Data

The survey contained 33 questions (Appendix D p. 212) and a range of data types, some of which may be considered qualitative and others quantitative. The first questions were to establish the contexts of the participants and included purely numerical responses e.g. Years of experience, and preference choices from ranges of text-based pre-set options e.g. institution type, role, etc. In these cases, the data was representative of choice and was presented as a numerical or percentage-based value indicating preferred choice or priority within a wider range.

Further questions were also presented as choices or prioritisation of text-based choices, again producing numerical or percentage-based indicators e.g. “Question 10 - Do you believe that the use of international comparators is an appropriate driver of school reforms?” (Appendix D p. 212), but there were also a range of free text questions e.g. “Question 11 - If you answered No to the previous question, why?” (Appendix D p. 212). These were used primarily to test reasons for choice or to provide opportunity to identify issues or themes not covered in the pre-set options and may be considered more qualitative in nature.

The numerical representation of responses may be considered quantitative as, while the options themselves may be text-based, the data produced is numerical. These questions were to be used to examine context and perceptions and the data produced are used as “Descriptive statistics” (Wilson, 2010), in that they allow examination of a summary of data collected. The representativeness of the sample allowed for a sense of reliability and validity in the survey data, which along with the ability for respondents to be anonymous, if they chose, gave me confidence in the honesty of their responses (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000). The sample size was also considered adequate for reliable and valid descriptive data being neither too large or too small to cause distortion (ibid).

The free text answer data falls into the domain of ‘content analysis’ (Silverman, 2001) and as such the reliability is a function of the question construction and representativeness of the sample (ibid), already discussed. Reliability in the qualitative elements was achieved through the piloting of the survey (Bell, 1999).

3.3.5 Data Preparation

The data captured by the survey was initially prepared automatically within the online-software and then presented and downloaded as an auto-analysis report from SurveyMonkey (Appendix G p. 221). This allowed me to view results in the form of descriptive statistics for each question, and listings of free text responses. This allowed me to look for themes and points of interest. The auto-analysis presents the data for each individual question in both numerical and graphical formats for quick reference but does not undertake any more advanced work, such as cross-tab analysis. This basic analysis threw up some key questions to build into the interview schedule. It is important to highlight again at this stage that the use of the statistics from the survey was descriptive only.

To undertake simple cross-tab analysis to identify patterns and relationships in the data, between question fields, I exported the data set from SurveyMonkey as an Excel spreadsheet file and imported it in to SPSS. Key characteristics of role, gender, school type, years of experience, ASCL membership could then be viewed as cross-tab analyses with other survey questions to identify any clear anomalies or inconsistencies which might require further investigation through interview.

The final step of preparation was to import the survey data set as an excel spreadsheet into NVIVO so that free text responses could be analysed alongside interview data. In addition, the 'years of experience' data needed to be edited into a purely numerical format as some respondents had added a text element to their response e.g. "years". As the questionnaire was completed online by the respondents, the data in the free text responses also needed some checking for spelling or typing errors before import.

3.3.6 Analysis

Once the data had been prepared it was exported as a pdf file for ease of reference (Appendix G p. 221). This version was used to analyse the responses to each question to establish the demography of the sample and the general patterns and priorities of responses for each question.

For context-based questions the data was examined to identify the representativeness of the sample and the distribution of the various characteristics: gender, position, institution, secondary phase, years of experience, region, membership of ASCL, willingness to participate at interview and contact details. The remaining questions were then analysed to identify general perceptions, e.g. the proportion of respondents who felt that the term "standards" is clearly defined and understood in our education system; or perceptions / rankings e.g. How would you best define standards? These were analysed to see what

the general responses or aggregated priorities were, and the free text questions were used to help illustrate reasoning or to identify missing explanations / choices.

Importing the survey data into NVIVO allowed me to review the text-based responses and, where appropriate, code them inductively in the same way as the interview data discussed later. Due to the more limited nature of the survey responses these tended to be codes identified via the questions e.g. good policy examples.

Points of interest from the analysis of the survey, unexpected outcomes and interesting observations, were discussed with the supervision team prior to writing the interview plan. Some of these points of interest were also presented as a round table discussion to other Post Graduate students and staff at the annual Post Grad conference. While this was an interesting exercise, it did not produce any new insights or learning. An example of a question outcome that piqued my curiosity would be “Q29. With reference to your understanding of 'standards' - what impact do you think the current pace of education reform / policy change has had on education standards in English secondary schools?” (Appendix G p. 221). The outcome of this question showed a weighting toward the ‘no impact’ / ‘declined’ classifications but a more positive level of response for “Partially improved” than I would have expected from my reading. This was, then, an element I felt should be explored further at interview.

3.4 Phase 2: Semi-structured interview phase

This phase consisted of a series of interviews of school leaders, informed by the survey, to explore the current and past experiences of those who have been responsible for implementing policy in schools.

3.4.1 Interview Schedule Design

The purpose of the interview was to capture personal perceptions and experiences, a similar mode to life history research, and this approach allowed me to see “how

participants view the world” (Bryman, 2008, p. 438) and to test their interpretations of their experiences more thoroughly than a fixed and limited structured interview would.

Question design for the survey was undertaken after discussion of the initial survey results with my supervision team. There were several themes that I was curious about from the survey research, e.g. the apparent confusion over standards, the mixed perceptions as to impact of policy change on standards, the unhappiness over performative technologies. To lead directly into questions around these may have been too leading and a more open, generalised approach was needed. For example, the first question in each interview was “What have you spent your time doing today?” (Appendix H p. 281) rather than a question specifically worded to test strategic or operational activities. This allowed the participant to focus on recall and depending on the nature of tasks completed and allowed me to follow up with questions more specifically focused on the nature of the work they had been doing and their perceptions of their role more generally. I wanted to ask specifically about the issue of standards, but this may have led to an answer perceived to address our shared values; instead the question was broken down and worded as “How would you hope your students / parents would describe standards in your school?” (Appendix H p. 281). This took away any policy nuance and asked them to look outside of their own perception and interpret the question via their knowledge of their stakeholders. Another example is where I wanted to query their perception of workload, but I know that this is a very emotive point and one which is easily deflected on to politicians and OfSTED. Instead I asked what advice they would offer to new Headteachers, an approach which I knew would result in a far more considered and rationalised response as most Headteachers are keen to encourage others and to respond in a purely personal and emotive way would be off-putting.

The Interview schedule was shared with participants through their information pack. This was in part to ensure ethical disclosure of the type of questions they would be exposed to,

and as such formed part of the ethics proposal. A second reason was to give opportunity for them to consider their beliefs and perceptions in advance. The participant's time was valuable, and the interview was likely to be time limited, so allowing the participant some idea of the nature of the questions, or at least the starting points, allowed for more focused use of the time. At the point of interview, some participants had considered the questions in advance and had clearly considered their responses, while others had not. Using a semi-structured approach allowed a basic framework with which to direct the process and help to "reveal what is important to understand about the phenomenon under study" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 81) but it also allowed me the flexibility to be adaptable (Bell, 1999) and to follow up themes and issues in an emergent design approach (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). This was useful as the participants tended to focus on one or two key issues which they felt were particularly pertinent to their school situation. So, for example, the Grammar school leader did not have the same concerns around accountability that other headteachers reflected. While others feared for their job as they tried to raise outcomes, he was more focused on maintaining recruitment in his context, ensuring he was able to keep the school at the top. This was useful for clarifying statements and for following threads from other parts of the interviews. The semi-structured interview schedule also ensured that I asked, by and large, the same questions with the same or similar wording to the candidates although I was able to avoid sticking "slavishly" (Bryman, 2008) to the schedule where interesting or unexpected responses arose.

3.4.2 Piloting the interview

When selecting a participant to pilot the interview I knew I wanted to try the process out on someone who could not only offer valid data, but who understood the principles of research and could act as a critic to the schedule and my own performance in managing it. I asked a head local to my school who I knew had experience of research and who ran

a school a short distance away, if he would be willing to participate and he willingly volunteered. I sent him the participant pack and arranged to meet him at his place of work at a mutually convenient time. The interview was recorded on a pocket digital recorder and, as it was the first interview, I kept some written notes as well in case of technical failure. After the interview had concluded I asked for feedback on the process and, pleasingly he had no negative comments to make, although he did raise concerns about the visibility of the data via email (Appendix E p. 216).

3.4.3 Conducting the interviews and sampling

Interview participants were identified via the online survey and a question asking for those interested in being interviewed to leave contact details. At the close of the survey there were 28 volunteers who had provided contact details. The email shot brought in another 5 or 6 direct responses and many, many more refusals or bounced returns (see Appendix I p. 286).

All research is open to questions regarding its ability to accurately reflect a generally accepted interpretation of meaning, or as Schostak (2002) puts it, “projects are haunted by questions of validity, reliability, truth” (Schostak, 2002, p. 134). This may also be considered as the challenge of ensuring research findings are ‘trustworthy’, how believable and credible the findings are (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994). Reliability may be defined as “the extent to which a test or procedure produces similar results under constant conditions on all occasions” (Bell, 1999, p. 103) and this is more of an issue in qualitative research, which relies on the interpretation of the researcher rather than a positivist process of observation and measurement.

In the interview phase, my aim was to have a sample large enough to offer a representative cross section of the subject group, but small enough to manage within the time and budget of an EdD project. Achieving ‘validity’ in qualitative research is always challenging, due

to the subjective nature of responses (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000) and the aim is to “minimize invalidity and maximize validity” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 105). I was comfortable working with an “Opportunity sample” (Bell, 1999) of those who were willing and available and within the limitations of time and resources.

One major criticism of qualitative interviews, where the experiences and perceptions of individuals are captured and interpreted, is that each interview represents a sample size of 1 and thereby calls into question any degree of generalizability (Bryman, 2008). Within my approach, while I was capturing individual experiences and voices, I was looking for patterns and themes which emerged as commonalities of experience or points of view and I believe that this still produces valid and reliable data. Indeed, every voice has value and, regardless of generalizability, may offer useful learning and insight.

I aimed to select a group that was a cross section of those who had responded to the initial survey, a mix of gender, experience, region and type of school. I also decided to include at least one deputy headteacher to allow for the wider range of leadership types. Unfortunately, despite the initial indication of their availability, 8 of the candidates I responded to either failed to reply or had suffered a change of mind or circumstances and felt unable to participate at that point. This left me with a distorted profile as 4 of those had been maintained schools and one was the only representative from the North West. Due to time pressure, I decided to take the pragmatic view and I invited a couple of new participants who had volunteered from the email shot and who represented different types of institution that I hadn’t managed to cover. The secondary modern doubled as a maintained school and many of the Academies had been maintained up until conversion in the recent past. This offered a valuable perspective from those who had managed schools under both funding methods and who could offer a view of enacting structural reform. The original pool had been evenly split by gender, but it was mainly female participants who withdrew, and I ended with a slightly unbalanced gender profile. While

this is a little more skewed than the national profile, I felt that reducing the number of participants to even the numbers out would leave me with insufficient data. Again, pragmatism was employed, and I decided that all data, taken at face value, was representative even if it would be more challenging to draw conclusions on gender grounds.

Field	Participants				
Gender	Female		Male		
	4		7 (including pilot)		
Position	Executive Head		Head/Principal		Deputy Head
	2		8		1
Institution type	Academy	Maintained	Grammar		Vol Aided
	8	1	1		1
Institution phase	11-18		11-16		All Through
	7		3		1
Region	NE	Midlands	SE	London	SW
	1	2	3	2	3
	1-10		11-20		21-27

Years of experience	2	5	4
----------------------------	---	---	---

Table 3.7: Interview participant characteristics

Within the limitations of 11 interviews, I think I selected a broad group that allowed for generally ‘representative’ responses (ibid). In effect, I was less concerned here about validity in terms of generalizability across the whole subject field and more with communicating the ‘authenticity’ (Silverman, 2001) of those interviewed, demonstrating “honesty, depth, richness and scope of data achieved” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 105). In this regard, I hoped to achieve a degree of ‘interpretative validity’, achieving fidelity in the (subjective) meanings and interpretations that I draw from the data (ibid) and in this regard a ‘representative’ group was of more importance than a larger sample.

All participants agreed to be part of the research, completed a consent form and were offered the choice of location for interview or phone interview. The majority (9) opted for phone interview with the pilot opting for interview at his office and another local head deciding to visit my place of work.

Phone interviews offer several advantages to the participant and the interviewer. They dictate a need for good organisation, agreed times for the call and length of interview. This allows for blocking out on the diary so that the chances of being disturbed are lower. The fact that the call is solely conducted in auditory mode reduces distractions and the fact that both parties are in a venue that they have chosen to work from means they will be comfortable, hopefully leading to a more relaxed process. Disadvantages include technical considerations of call quality, effective and reliable recording equipment as well as the more human constraints. I like to see body language when I interview, possibly

because of my training in counselling, and this aspect of communication is completely neutralised. You cannot see gesticulations or facial expressions and are reduced to listening to vocal cues only. These can be easily misunderstood and may lead to uncertainty about the tone of an answer, although this is easily rectified with follow up questions. Although these are constraining issues, I liked the way that the telephone interviews kept us focused without too much digression. The call recording quality was highly dependent on the call quality and did not produce recordings which were as easy to transcribe as the pilot. Overall, though, I found the process effective.

3.4.4 Data

The data produced from the interviews is qualitative in nature being made up of each participant's views, perceptions and experiences as recorded from their spoken responses.

The participants were questioned for the purpose of:

(a) gathering facts; (b) accessing beliefs about facts; (c) identifying feelings and motives; (d) commenting on the standards of actions (what could be done about situations); (e) present or previous behaviour; (f) eliciting reasons and explanations

(Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 146)

Interview data poses its own set of challenges around quality, reliability and validity, the latter of which I have discussed in the preceding section. The quality or "trustworthiness" (Bryman, 2008, p. 34) of the data was determined in large part by the 'credibility' (ibid) of the participants, all of whom were relevant in terms of position within the field of school leadership, either currently or very recently. Quality was also dependent on the degree of honesty of the individual participants within their responses. I worked on the assumption that they would speak their truth as a construct of their own experiences. The questioning and the analysis allow for differences with everyone's own interpretations of the questions and specific terminology, enabling "respondents to project their own way of defining the world" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, pp. 146-147). I was confident

that their honesty was encouraged by their awareness that they would be completely anonymous within the research.

3.4.5 Data Preparation

Interview data was recorded via a hand-held digital recorder, for the two local interviews and through a phone line monitoring recorder linked to a PC running Audacity sound editing software for the rest. The technical test for the interview took place with the kind permission of the policy lead at ASCL, who agreed to allow me to record a general conversation we had around my project. While our conversation was interesting and enlightening, it does not form part of the data set for the research. For the pilot, the participant was recorded on to digital recorder and notes were made in case of failure. For the main interviews, all participants knew they were being recorded and had agreed through the participant consent form (Appendix H p. 281). Interview time was set at an expected maximum of an hour both due to the limitations of the technologies and the time demands on the headteachers. Most interviews ran close to the hour except for one participant who was called away during the interview at 37 minutes.

Most audio recordings were transcribed by me into NVIVO, using a foot pedal control. Due to time constraints, I paid an administrative assistant to input 3 of the transcriptions into Microsoft Word and then I checked for accuracy before importing into NVIVO. The assistant had no access to any information regarding the participants or the project, just a sound file to work from. Transcription runs the risk of decontextualizing the interview (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000), however, the use of semi-structured interview already introduces the risk of question variability (ibid) and I would argue that creating a complete transcript minimises the problem of abstraction while helping to identify where such variability lies. Transcription still offers a “highly reliable record” (Silverman, 2001, p. 13) when compared to some recording methods used for direct observation, such as

field notes (ibid). The quality of the line recordings was not as good as I would have liked, and this made transcription more challenging, but only a few elements were completely inaudible, and these were recorded as such within the transcript. In addition, there were occasions when the comments of the interviewee made the likelihood of identification slightly higher, comments regarding location or other local school, even the names of key political figures or Local Authority personnel. In these instances, the comments were redacted by me to assure that anonymity of the source was assured.

On completion of the transcripts, copies were sent out to the interviewees to review and to identify any concerns or misunderstandings within the text. Most were happy. But the pilot interviewee expressed concern about the audience and just needed reassuring that the full transcript would not be available to anyone other than the research team and that all steps had been taken to remove identifiable references. More significant was interviewee Teddy, who was very open during the interview about her experiences of involvement with policy reform at a national level. Although I had redacted any references to people and places, she felt, on receipt of the transcript, that there were still too many elements which may render her identifiable. She consequently requested many additional redactions. This was unfortunate as there were many comments of interest, but my ethical guidelines allowed for such an eventuality and she was happier with the second version.

3.4.6 Analysis

Once the participants had been given the opportunity to request changes, data analysis began with a simple coding approach, using NVIVO to log specific phrases against codes that I identified as “units of meaning” (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 129). I employed the “constant comparative method” (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 134) (Fig 3.2) and category codes were inductively determined from literature, the survey and my memory

of the interviews. Initially, to avoid any subconscious bias in creating categories, I coded almost anything of meaning. This left me with many categories, some of which were essentially subcategories of more major themes. The transcribed data from each interview was further inductively coded (ibid), allowing for refinement and expansion of coding categories resulting in the codebook (Appendix J p. 288) growing organically during the process. Relationships between units of meaning were identified which allowed the data to be linked to illustrate the developing understanding of the experiences of the subjects. To ensure complete anonymity when presented in the findings section, I also allocated each participant number (A0001 – A00011) to a gender-neutral name. This allows the findings to be read more fluently while ensuring that the original participants are completely disassociated from their real names and identifiable characteristics (Appendix J p. 288).

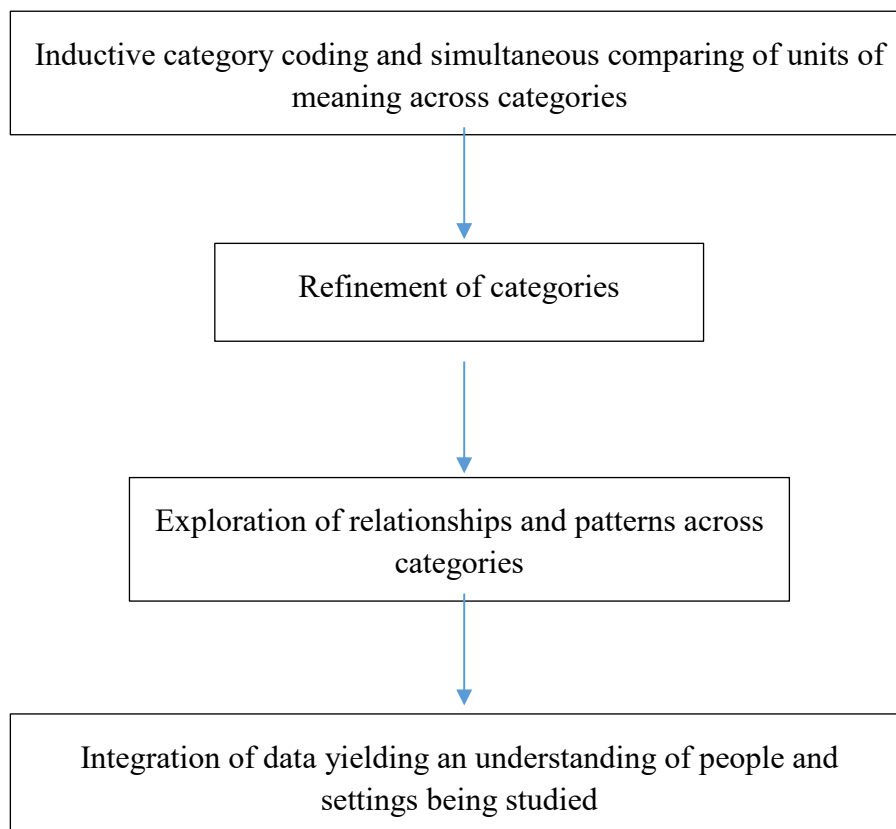


Figure 3.2: Constant comparative method of data analysis (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994)

3.5 Validity and reliability

Qualitative research is open to the criticism that the innate subjectivity “of respondents, their opinions, attitudes and perspectives together contribute to a degree of bias” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 105) and as such should be accepted as a “matter of degree” (ibid, p. 105) rather than absolutes. When considering the validity and reliability of this work I position myself sympathetically with the observation of Cohen et al (2000) that, due to my situatedness within the world that I am researching, I cannot guarantee that I can be completely objective. As a result I am trying to develop ‘understanding’ rather than ‘validity’ (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 106) and am concerned with the ‘fidelity’ of my own reporting of views of my subjects (ibid). This resonates with the view that qualitative research should be assessed against the criteria of trustworthiness and authenticity rather than validity and reliability (Bryman, 2008).

In order to ensure an acceptable degree of “qualitative goodness” (Tracy, 2010, p. 837) I draw on the work of Tracy (2010), who built on the ideas of Lincoln and Guba (1985) to develop eight criteria that could be used to ensure “excellent qualitative research” (Tracy, 2010), a framework of criteria that act to simplify the complexity inherent in the qualitative research landscape (Table 3.8).

Criteria for quality (end goal)	Various means, practices, and methods through which to achieve
Worthy topic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The topic of the research is • Relevant • Timely • Significant • Interesting
Rich rigor	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study uses sufficient, abundant, appropriate, and complex • Theoretical constructs • Data and time in the field • Sample(s) • Context(s) • Data collection and analysis processes
Sincerity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study is characterized by • Self-reflexivity about subjective values, biases, and inclinations of the researcher(s) • Transparency about the methods and challenges
Credibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research is marked by • Thick description, concrete detail, explication of tacit (nontextual) knowledge, and showing rather than telling • Triangulation or crystallization • Multivocality • Member reflections
Resonance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research influences, affects, or moves particular readers or a variety of audiences through • Aesthetic, evocative representation • Naturalistic generalizations • Transferable findings
Significant contribution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research provides a significant contribution • Conceptually/theoretically • Practically • Morally • Methodologically • Heuristically
Ethical	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The research considers • Procedural ethics (such as human subjects) • Situational and culturally specific ethics • Relational ethics • Exiting ethics (leaving the scene and sharing the research)
Meaningful coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The study • Achieves what it purports to be about • Uses methods and procedures that fit its stated goals • Meaningfully interconnects literature, research questions/foci, findings, and interpretations with each other

Table 3.8: Eight ‘Big Tent; Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research (Tracy, 2010, p. 840)

The criteria for quality are aspects of commonality within qualitative works considered to be of good quality and, while not exhaustive by any means, provides a “parsimonious framework” (Tracy, 2010, p. 838) which may be used to frame and communicate research to a range of stakeholders, some of whom may value the more quantitative research traditions more highly. Ultimately, she proposed her model as a universal solution which would operate across different qualitative paradigms and I follow this as a well-reasoned and innovative attempt to establish an approach to developing a language of best practice. The eight “big tent” criteria for excellent qualitative research (Tracy, 2010, p. 840) are shown in Table 3.8 and will form a framework for final evaluation of the research. My intent throughout is to “Seek the Good” (Ellis (2007) in Tracy, 2010, p. 849), to aim for a sincere, credible and rigorous piece of work, and to be “willingly self-critical” (Tracy, 2010, p. 849).

3.5.1 Possible bias

It is important to recognise the potential for bias to exist within this research. As a single researcher conducting and interpreting the interviews, the possibility of bias is ever present, although the chance of it going unnoticed is higher (Bell, 1999). The possibility of bias is a favoured criticism of solo qualitative research in a society where quantitative methods tend to find greater support (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994; Silverman, 2001), particularly with Government agencies looking for “quick answers based on ‘reliable’ variables” (Silverman, 2001, p. 26).

To minimise the risk of bias, I piloted the survey and interview schedule in advance. I reflected on the pilot interview (Appendix E p. 216) and this issue was a key concern at that point as shown by this extract from my reflective review of the pilot:

I very quickly became aware that my follow up reflection and extension questions were falling into the trap of applying my innate bias or feelings through the language and mode of response that I used. Rather than simply reflecting what had been said, I would try to illustrate with an example or illustration which tended to draw, not from their response, but from my experience. This became obvious to me quite early on and, while I don’t believe it contaminated the answers given up to that point it is something I will need to take action to prevent in future interviews. I think the open nature of the questions, for me, was less structured than I have used in previous research and this left too much opportunity for me to ‘fill in the blanks’.

(Author’s reflective notes after pilot, Appendix E p. 216)

“Interviewer neutrality is a chimera” (Denscombe, 1995 in Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 121) and I cannot claim that the main interview series was completely free from bias contamination. There are several potential sources of bias in interview-based research (Cohen et al, 2000). For example, “the attitudes, opinions, and expectations of the interviewer” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 121). After the pilot interview I was very reflective and aware of the further potential of this colouring my interpretation or construction of meaning and tried very hard to take a neutral stance in interview, even

when I could sense participants attempting to get me to validate their responses. This was also true of the second risk factor “a tendency for the interviewer to see the respondent in her own image” (ibid), a completely understandable risk given that I was interviewing within the field of my own practice. However, I am always aware that teaching and school leadership is a very broad church, any foray into Twitter will verify that fact; and believe I was able to place myself outside of the community of practice and position myself as interviewer. A third risk factor is “a tendency for the interviewer to seek answers that support her preconceived notions” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 121), however, I was working from the position of exploring facets of experience which had already been raised through survey and in some senses my own ‘preconceived’ notions had already been challenged through that process. As well as trying to take nothing as read, I was very aware that others construct meaning from their experiences very differently to me and was genuinely curious about their perceptions. While my interpretation of their responses is obviously a construct of my own, underpinned by my own sense of meaning, I worked hard to stay positioned as ‘outsider’ for this purpose.

The final two risks outlined by Cohen et al (2000) are specifically to do with understanding -

- misperceptions on the part of the interviewer of what the respondent is saying;
- misunderstandings on the part of the respondent of what is being asked.

(Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 121)

This was addressed mainly through the construction of the survey questions and interview schedule, keeping the initial questions quite open, as well as through the management of the pilot interview, interview process and subsequent transcription and analysis. Using a semi-structured approach also allowed me more freedom to further question the participant as to their meaning or to use reflective strategies to test my understanding.

Other potential risks include the possibility of selective recording or interpretation of transcripts and, significantly, the possibility of reciprocity, i.e. interviewees giving answers they think I wanted to hear (Cohen et al., 2000). I did consciously attempt to keep a neutral position, although, unconsciously and subconsciously, I can make no such claim. The provision of transcripts to interviewees to allow for mis recording or inadvertent mistakes in transcription should have minimised the risk of bias up to the transcription text, so the key issue of bias after that stage is in my interpretation of statements made and the attribution of meaning to them. I can only construct meaning through the lens of my own knowledge and experience and it is inevitable that this will limit the interpretation of the subject's intended meaning. Awareness that the transcripts of these interviews are selective by nature as they are "interpretations of social situations" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 126) is important.

3.6 Ethics

All research involving human subjects must take ethical approaches seriously. While the research I conducted was, I believed, low risk in terms of ethical considerations, certainly when compared to studying children in medical or educational settings; it is still vitally important to ensure that subjects are protected from harm and that the ethical protocols meet the standards required of the University. All research is contaminated, to a greater or lesser extent, by the researcher's values (Silverman, 2001; Hammersley, 1995) and I subscribe to the view that the subjects in this research were "essentially collaborators who together with us mutually shape and determine what we come to understand about them and their situation" (Maykut and Morehouse, 1994, p. 70). For further consideration of ethical aspects of this research, please refer to Appendix K (p. 289).

3.6.1 Limitations

While every care has been taken to minimise the ethical risks within this work, it is not possible to remove risk completely. I believe that, while individual participants may recognise their own contributions within the findings, the risk of identification by others is negligible. Should the participants have made others aware of their involvement, it may be possible, however unlikely, for them to be identified through syntax or by the nature of the comments made. I consider this risk as too small to gauge and the availability of redaction for those individuals means that such risk is in their control.

3.6.2 Ethical processes

The research was conducted in line with the Plymouth University ethical protocols and consent was gained from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Education Research Ethics Sub-committee (Appendices R & S) in advance of the survey and interviews taking place. My approach to ethical considerations was based on BERA²² best practice and the ethics training received through the University.

The survey was introduced by email and this provided information about the survey. This was also the case in the ASCL newsletter. Due to the anonymised nature of the survey and the online method, no consent form was required as participation implied consent, however, a field was included asking participants to consent to providing details if they were interested in participating in the interview phase.

Interviewees were identified through the survey and the selected participants contacted by email to check they were happy to participate. Once agreed they were sent a consent form which contained more detailed information about the study and the key details about data, withdrawal, etc.. A participant briefing pack (Appendix H, p. 279) was sent, including an interview schedule containing possible questions and a consent form, which

²² British Educational Research Association

included a detailed checklist of what they were consenting to, along with a stamped addressed envelope. Participants were advised that they were able to withdraw or seek redaction at any point up to the start of data analysis and were invited to call or email to discuss any of the issues or elements of consent prior to the process beginning.

3.6.3 Data storage and protection

The data protection process was provided as part of the informed consent. All data files would be stored on a secure server on the site of The Wey Valley School and be password protected. Non-electronic files would be stored in a locked filing cabinet in my office. Should I move from The Wey Valley School, all data files would be transferred to secure storage at Plymouth University and permanently deleted from the servers at The Wey Valley School. Research data will be destroyed ten years after completion of the project.

In the actual event of my moving schools, data was transferred to an encrypted space on Dropbox, an online storage tool, and from there copied to the Plymouth One Drive system. Data was removed from my encrypted space on the school server as agreed.

3.7 Summary

The preceding sections exemplify how and why I have employed the methodological approach and research methods used in this study. I have explained how my constructivist epistemology has led me to an interpretative methodology and how survey and semi-structured interview fit as appropriate and relevant methods for gathering data and for a degree of co-construction of meaning between myself and the interview subjects. The methods employed have given a high degree of control and ethical consideration to the participants and have met the protocols demanded by the University.

CHAPTER FOUR THE EXPERIENCE OF CHANGE, A CHANGING EXPERIENCE?

In this chapter I will explore the findings from this research, I will review the degree to which school leaders feel their values are shared by politicians and how they position themselves in relation to policy discourse. I shall consider how the breadth, pace and nature of education reform has impacted on their experiences and self-perception and how educational standards have become objectified.

The Collins online dictionary declares “your perception of something is the way that you think about it or the impression you have of it.” (‘The Collins Dictionary,’ 2019), but for me this feels a little lacking. I use the term perception in this work as it represents an ongoing constructive process through which an individual senses and understands their world. This is a continual process stimulated by the interplay between their experiences, understandings and interpretations of themselves, others they interact with or observe, the world in which they exist and how these all relate to each other. It is from this process that they construct meaning. The term self-perception refers specifically to people making sense of themselves. (Merleau-Ponty, 2013)

The term ‘belief’, which may be considered as an alternative, implies stability and permanence rather than a fluid and ongoing constructive process and the term ‘views’ privileges a visual metaphor which I consider to be less suitable to my needs.

4.1 Values and moral purpose

In the survey I asked participants to reflect on and to indicate what they believed the purpose of education to be and which justifications for reform most influenced them.

They were then asked to repeat the exercise based on their perceptions of how politicians are positioned for the same questions.

4.1.1 Values and the purpose of education

Initially, the participants were asked to consider their own perception of the purpose of education (Appendix G: Question 12), the aim being to identify, broadly, the values and beliefs that underpin their professional practice (Figure 4.1):

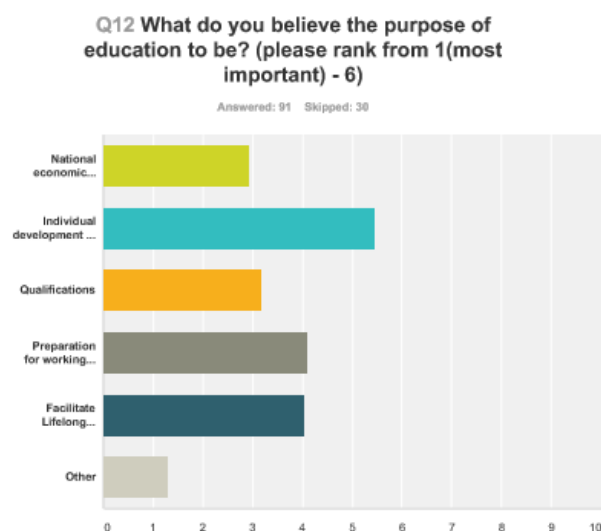


Figure 4.1: The Purpose of Education – School Leader Priorities (Appendix G: Question 12).

Participants ordered the choices as follows (Appendix G: Question 12)

1. ‘Individual development / progress’
2. ‘Preparation for working life’
3. ‘Facilitate lifelong learning’
4. ‘Qualifications’
5. ‘National Economic Prosperity’

The way in which participants ranked the responses suggests that school leaders perceive their purpose to be weighted more toward developing individuals, aiding employability and encouraging a desire to continue developing throughout life, and the desire to “make a difference” to pupils’ lives and society as a whole triangulates well with research as to

why people come into teaching (Menzies *et al.*, 2015). This does not negate the need for qualifications or that the outcomes will still support the national economy, but the focus is on the child as ‘person’ not ‘data’. Participants position themselves at the micro level rather than the macro, they are in contact with their students daily, forming relationships and investing emotionally at a personal level in their success and wellbeing. “School leadership is essentially a moral activity” (Belcher, 2017, p. 60) and the imperative to support children at the personal level is referred to as ‘moral purpose’.

It has been suggested that, “successful leadership has arguably been reduced to the translation of students into ‘good data’” (Hargreaves & Shirley, 2009 in: Belcher, 2017, p. 60). Classical economic theory “assumes that human beings are by nature selfish” (Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 19), motivated to ensure they “maximise self-interest” (ibid, p. 19) and this would suggest headteachers will behave in ways which will best support their own economic and symbolic capital by complying with policy to become compliant with the normalised expectations and behaviours instilled through dominant educational discourse and monitored via performative technologies. ‘Self-interest’, the ability to acquire personal capital, is more dependent on immediate student and parental perception of this ‘moral purpose’ and quality of care, than in the more distant and abstract concept of how well they are supporting the economy. Positioning themselves as morally motivated above ‘utilitarian’ forms of self-interest (Sergiovanni, 1992) may help them acquire immediate personal and social capital. A high level of social capital in the school community will also enable successful ‘recruitment’ of students and increase the probability of improving performative outcomes. In this regard, the tension between selfish ‘self-interest’ and ‘moral judgement’ (Sergiovanni, 1992) as motivations becomes an issue of:

self-interest *broadly conceived*: we seek to maximise not only our individual self-interest but also that of the commonweal, to enhance whatever promotes the general welfare, in the belief that it ultimately contributes to our own.

(emphasis author's: Sergiovanni, 1992, p. 19)

The point of tension between these two competing motivations, where the school leader decides to go against their moral imperative to facilitate self-interest 'broadly conceived' or otherwise, can be thought of as their pragmatic threshold, the breaking point between value-driven leadership and concession to policy or performative technologies with which they disagree. Should a policy arrive with which they are unable to pragmatically adjust their leadership in their own self-interest, the resultant moral or ethical crisis may result in resistance or stress and breakdown. It is also possible that self-interest may be sacrificed in favour of a morally-justified stand with like-minded leaders of other schools either nationally, through professional bodies like ASCL, or locally through school partnership. Such an approach is challenging at a time of competition, but collaboration built upon shared values can benefit a whole community, regardless of school type as Jo reflected.

we're very close links with five high schools who're very close to us geographically and we're federated with one of them, so we have the same governing body, so there's really close links and um, and everybody all the heads and of those schools really feel that that same sense of moral purpose about the education of life chances of these children in this quite deprived area. (Jo)

Other 'purposes' of education were identified by participants producing the following data:

- Development of potential to contribute to society and be fulfilled
- Becoming a good and useful member of society with appropriate subject knowledge
- To be happy and to enjoy education
- To ensure today's young people are tomorrow's socially conscious citizens with a strong moral compass, the ability to think for themselves and with levels of literacy, numeracy, technological skills, cultural awareness, aesthetical appreciation and democratic engagement to develop our country and beyond

(Appendix G: Responses from survey Question 12/13: 'Other')

The inclusion of these as ‘other’ suggests that these participants felt ‘contributing to society’ to be something broader than economic prosperity or preparation for working life, options given in the main responses. Producing “democratically engaged”, “socially conscious citizens” or “the ability to think for themselves” are more to do with personal development, actively involved ‘social’ individuals not just functional workers. Once again some of the responses use language which reflects an emotional investment in their students, “be fulfilled”, “be happy”, “enjoy education” (Appendix G, p. 221); all suggest a personal level of engagement with the learners, wanting to see them fulfilled emotionally as well as academically. The last statement suggests that the participant feels part of the purpose of school is to aid the acquisition of cultural capital, ‘cultural awareness, aesthetical appreciation and democratic engagement’ (ibid).

Survey participants position themselves within the education discourse as ideologically motivated to enable social justice and mobility, seeking to address the reproduction of inequality by compensating for parental deficit, ergo “moral purpose”. The market ideology that defines our current system of schooling is “built upon a model of ‘ideal parenting’ and treats the ‘ideal’ parent as the average parent” (Ball, 1994, p. 118). Both New Labour and Coalition administrations also assumed a position that Government knew better than parents what is good for their children (Ball, 2008), promoting the belief that addressing poor parenting through early years support and regulations to force parents to take responsibility for their children; would help to “break the cycle of what he²³ calls ‘dysfunction and underachievement’” (Ball, 2008, location 3627). It is argued this these approaches are weighted in favour of the middle class (Tomlinson, 2005) who are well placed and equipped to manage the challenges of the system in order to help their offspring acquire cultural capital and achieve stronger academic outcomes, thus reproducing the middle class ‘advantage’. Consequently, parents who have acquired only

²³ Graham Allen MP (2011) – (Ball, 2008, 79%)

limited symbolic capital, due to low achievement in the field of education or lower socioeconomic status linked to the field of employment, or social capital by means of poor reputation in the fields of parenting and schooling through lack of support for normative school expectations, attendance requirements and engagement with their children's learning; or who lack the desire or means to help their children negotiate and acquire it for themselves, 'self-exclude' possibly on the basis that the system is not perceived to work for them (ibid). The market is predicated on choice, but the ability to exercise choice through the "key points of articulation" (Ball, 1994, p. 119) is itself a function of cultural and social capital, so by self-excluding, working class parents may perpetuate the struggle for their children to acquire cultural capital, reproducing the 'cycle' despite efforts to address it. This struggle was highlighted at interview, also. The need for schools to become proxies for 'good' parenting to compensate for the self-excluded was highlighted.

you know, if parents are doing a bad job, tell them, whereas the politicians won't, and I think that that abrogation of responsibility by parents has increased the .. responsibility of schools, but it hasn't been matched with a comparable, kind of, what .. adjustment to accountability. (Alex)

The language used reflects a sense that self-excluding parents are failing. They are abnormal within the normative discourse of ideal parenting, doing a "bad job" and an "abrogation of responsibility" (Alex). This positions the participants as moral arbiters of the behaviour and normality or otherwise of parents within this discourse.

Participants were also asked to rank a series of justifications for reform to show which they felt were most influential for school leaders (Appendix G: Question 17). These options were also values based and the participants ranked them as follows:

1. 'improving individual life chances for students'
2. 'improving quality of learning experience for students'

3. 'improving standards'.
4. 'To satisfy OfSTED'
5. 'Improving access to 'Good' schools for parents'
6. 'Ideologically motivated reform'
7. 'Improving economic wellbeing of nation'
8. 'Gaining personal / political capital'

When looking at value driven priorities, the participants again position themselves more to the student-centric responses, followed by school level concerns. Their own personal gain is, notably, placed last. Being 'student-centric' is more important than long term macro level concerns, with individual students' needs positioned above the needs of self and the school. There may well be an element of 'political correctness' in these responses, with participants consciously or subconsciously selecting what they think they 'should' say, reflecting the habitus of their community of practice. Being ambitious for your students or your school is acceptable but being ambitious for yourself may be perceived more negatively. Of course, successful students result in successful schools and, we would like to presume, that successful OfSTED judgements would follow. Positioning themselves as being student-centric is not mutually exclusive with achieving increased personal and professional capital for themselves or social capital for their school, but it is a more appealing position to parents looking to place their children in your school.

The student-centric view was also reflected in the interview phase with the sense that the participants were concerned with improving life chances and levelling the social playing field. They also claim to be motivated by 'moral purpose', expressing the belief that their work is morally 'important' and answers to a higher ethical duty, not simply to enable national economic interests.

school leaders generally, yeah - I don't think I've come across one that hasn't had really strong moral purpose. (Pat)

I think they're all pretty passionate about kids and getting the best for kids and making sure the system works in favour of those who haven't had certain benefits

through their upbringing I'm not sure that is the case for policy makers though, (Phil)

The terms used carry positive inferences, “passionate”, “strong moral purpose”, and portray their role as one of creating positive experiences and outcomes, focused on the children themselves, enabling, enhancing and enriching their lives and improving their life chances. Phil also reflects the belief that the moral purpose includes achieving social justice by making the ‘system’ work, a tacit admission that they perceive the system to be weighted against those from more disadvantaged backgrounds. Phil also reflects the perception that politicians are not driven to achieve social justice in the same way and that their intentions are opaque, positioning themselves as being more open and honest and somehow ethically superior. This sense of purpose translates itself in to how school leaders try to build their organisations in ways which support their own values.

the biggest need is to get everybody within the organisation to buy into those vision and values and um.. putting the children first, which sounds really straightforward, but is not always as easy as it should be it's kind of establishing that strong sense, strong sense of moral purpose (Sam)

Sam reflects their experience as having its own challenge, recognising the need to employ staff who position themselves sympathetically to school ethos, they ‘buy in’ to or share the vision and purpose.

The participants’ perceptions of the values of politicians is quite a contrast to their perception of self (Appendix G: Question 14). Ball (2006) suggests that, under the neoliberal reform agenda, the purpose of the policy technologies of:

judgement and comparison is a gearing of academic production and reproduction (research and teaching) to the requirements of national economic competition and the concomitant ‘de-socialisation’ of educational experience

(Ball, 2006, p. 122)

When asked to repeat the ranking for their perceived views of what policy makers believe the purpose of education to be the views are almost reversed (Figure 4.2) from their own and certainly seem to reflect Ball’s observation:

1. ‘National economic prosperity’
2. ‘qualifications’
3. ‘preparation for working life’
4. ‘individual development / progression’ and
5. ‘facilitate lifelong learning’.

School leaders’ perceptions are constructed from prevailing educational discourses, interaction with policy technologies, discourses propagated via professional bodies and media (including social media), experiential observation and, as most headteachers will not have had opportunity to discuss policymaking in detail; a degree of assumption, some of which may be inaccurate or prejudiced. They cannot claim to ‘know’ the mind of politicians, only construct their perception from the information and experiences they are exposed to.

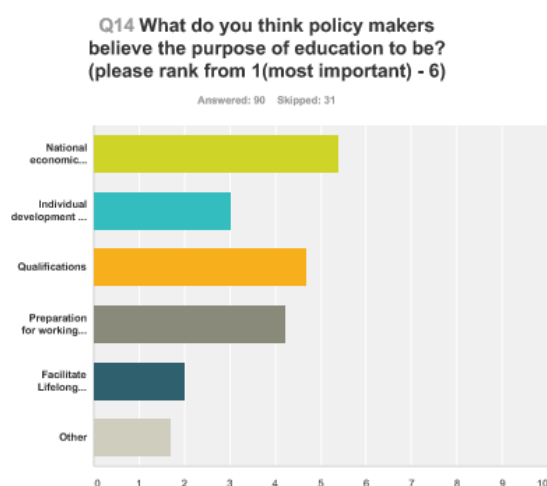


Figure 4.2: The Purpose of Education – School Leader perception of policy makers’ priorities. (Appendix G: Question 14).

Given the tendency of politicians to refer to international comparisons (e.g. PISA), ensuring global economic competitiveness and its relationship to the issue of qualification reform, this appears to have impacted on participants' perceptions. The implication of this is that the participants perceive the 'values' of politicians to be focused at the macro level, constructing education as a machine with which to power the economy and with less priority given to the needs or development of the individual. Essentially, opposed to their own.

For those who chose 'other' as the top priority for politicians, the reasons given tend to reflect a level of suspicion and cynicism in the underlying intent of those responsible, with answers given reflecting a perception of questionable motives rather than any clear definition of 'purpose', for example:

- A tool to increase their own popularity as politicians.
- A means of proving the previous regime/ Government were inadequate to gain power for their political affiliations.
- I think the Government follow short term goals with a view to success in elections
- Political point scoring
- It has become a political toy with a lack of understanding of key policy makers about what happens on a daily basis.

(Appendix G: Responses from Survey Question 14/15: 'Other')

The language here is emotive, constructing education as simply a 'tool' to advance careers or a 'toy', something to be played with but not of great importance. The participants position politicians as supremely Machiavellian and too far removed from the daily reality of school leadership. Using terms like 'self-glorification' and 'point scoring' suggests their behaviour is in some way unpleasant or unworthy, positioning politicians as selfish and working for their party's or their own advancement. By inference, it can be assumed that these behaviours are morally questionable in the opinion of the participants, reinforcing their self-positioning as morally superior.

Participants were again asked to rank possible justifications of policy reform, but this time as to how highly they felt they influenced policy makers, with ‘Gaining personal / political capital’ and ‘Ideologically motivated reform’ rated most highly. It is not a surprise that there is a mismatch between school leaders’ self-perception and their perception of politicians as “Competing aims of education are dominant forces. There is no consensus on aims or methods” (Bennett, 2018). It is curious that while participants perceived the ‘purpose of education’ for politicians to be national economic prosperity, the response to this question places that option lower down the ranking. The top options here position politicians as undertaking reform to benefit themselves or to meet some ideological belief. The needs of individuals are again placed low down in the ranking, reinforcing the perception that they are removed from the human element of education, they value the macro over the micro.

Despite the cynicism, there was recognition that politicians, too, may be driven by a moral purpose and that they may genuinely be trying to do the best for children, but their ideology and approach are perceived as misguided, inappropriate or incompetent.

I actually think they have the moral purpose, they want to do the right thing but they go about it in completely the wrong way. They're a bunch of idiots and I don't think, I really do think that and they.. I don't think that any of them - ***** is a good example - I don't think any of them have ever actually run anything and understand what you need to do to make things work. They just don't get it. (Pat)

that's not to say that some people aren't driven by a really profound sense of what they do believe to be right whether there was any strong evidence to sustain his views, you know, came across as heartily prejudiced most of the time. But, um.. and obnoxious but at least it was based on some sort of beliefs, whereas maybe others just throw something in the ring because they want their name attached to something. (Ali)

Clearly, the perceptions of interviewees about politicians is jaded, with terms like “idiots”, “prejudiced” and “obnoxious” positioning them as lacking intelligence and unworthy. Pat highlights the assumed lack of experience in running ‘anything’,

positioning themselves as competent in comparison, they, the school leaders, **do** “understand what you need to do to make things work”(Pat), being the implication. These views are shared with peers through professional networks and groups and become, in themselves, a discourse, constructing politicians as well-meaning but self-serving ideologues, who lack expertise and capital in the field of schooling and thus are positioned as incompetent. This helps school leaders to express their frustration at their own exposure to the neoliberal discourse of derision propagated by politicians and the media, expressed by interviewees not just in terms of being positioned as failures, but in terms of being positioned as something that they felt very strongly was oppositional to their fundamental beliefs and values.

there's been so much negativity in the press, hasn't there, about teaching and teachers and the failing schools and that whole rhetoric of failure you are actually swimming against the Government tide of abuse (Pat)

I've never, ever, ever used poverty as an excuse for underachievement, quite the reverse and yet, all of a sudden, because I actually know how to do it I'm part of the blob, that is under-aspirational for kids and that is stressful, it's a stressful position to be in. (Teddy)

I suppose if one is called an enemy of promise time after time after time, then you get a bit fed up with it, don't you? (Bertie)

There is a strong awareness of how school leaders and staff are positioned by political discourse, “rhetoric of failure”, “tide of abuse” and “part of the blob” reflect the sense that they are being positioned negatively within a powerful discourse of derision. While PAT reflects the sense that Government are exercising symbolic violence on the profession through their ‘tide of abuse’ and the imagery of ‘swimming against’ this tide positions them as feeling helpless against a strong oppositional or oppressive force. The phrase “Enemy of promise” is also very emotive, particularly when coined by the Secretary of State. It promotes a perception of a battle between sides, where the school leaders and teachers are positioned as the enemy, deliberately preventing youngsters from

achieving of their best, something that would run counter to the student-centric ideology they claim to hold. This perceived assault on their sense of professional identity generates intense frustration, as illustrated by the response of Teddy, who reflects a perception that they are positioned by discourse as being in opposition to their reality or ‘truth’ and labelling as “The Blob” effectively positions them as apathetic to or actively resisting change that politicians frame as fundamental.

The gap between the stated values of the participants and their perception of politicians’ values is an indicator of a system in tension, the driving ideology at the time of interview, at least in the minds of the school leaders, was dissonant with their own personal values, their ‘moral purpose’. Holding to their set of values was very important when deciding how to respond to policy with the reflection from Charlie that there are some aspects of policy that cannot be pragmatically accepted.

when you have a working set of ideals, values, which contribute to your vision - make sure you do everything you can to be guided by them, so whether that's policy coming in, policy that you have some discussion on, policy that, that you're forced to err take on board - do all you can to minimise the negativity for your school and stick to your principles (Charlie)

Ultimately, there is a perception that politicians are not motivated by the same moral purpose as school leaders and that they see education at a macro level. Losing sight of the individual children leads to a perception that the data driven, economic imperative is dehumanising and the inference from this is that the micro level focus on individual children and cohorts is, in some way, more morally just.

4.1.2 Moral purpose and values seen through policy

To triangulate whether participants’ self-positioning in terms of values was repeated in practice, I asked them to identify, from their experience, policies which they felt had had

a positive or negative impact on their schools. Through the survey there were a range of ‘positive’ policies suggested but the most dominant was the introduction of the ‘Pupil Premium’ grant. Reasons for the positive perception of these were broadly similar, a recognition that the additional money and associated monitoring had increased the focus on the most disadvantaged students, and this had allowed schools to ‘close the gap’, a term used to describe the differences in learning and outcomes that are closely correlated with socioeconomic factors. Poorer children do worse than better off children in terms of outcomes (Gibson and Asthana, 2013), both academic and social, hence ‘the gap’.

Pupil premium has had quite an impact on improving the life chances of our most vulnerable students.

Allowed for more intervention for under-achieving pupils which in return has raised standards

PP has provided targeted resources for disadvantaged pupils and meant that we have been more stringent in monitoring their progress over time and we have therefore narrowed the gaps..

(Survey responses, Appendix G – Question 22)

The participants equate a poorer socioeconomic status with vulnerability, a higher risk to harm, and ‘under-achieving’. This highlights a belief that students who have acquired less economic and cultural capital, such as through lack of opportunity in the field of the arts and other wider cultural learning experiences, are failing to meet normative expectations against other children who have greater opportunities. The participants position themselves as aligned with the neoliberal norm of self-responsibility. The student’s ‘achievement’ is their own doing, not a consequence of their socioeconomic context.

Interviewees also positioned themselves in favour of Pupil Premium as a valuable policy reform with Ali/Phil recognising the resonance between policy and personal values, an ideological synchronicity which reduces the administrative inconveniences to irrelevance.

I do think it's sort of any policy which provides some significant additional resource to youngsters who lack social capital, is always welcome (Ali)

in terms of policies, I think things that are to do with social justice, like the pupil premium for example because I think that is about trying to redress, redress social justice, which is you know one of the reasons that you come into the profession, isn't it (Phil)

I think one of the best policy things we've had though is pupil premium. Because that's really made us sit up and smell the coffee and do something about our kids who are entitled to pupil premium and the work that we've done has had a massive impact on their outcomes. (Bertie)

Each participant positions themselves sympathetically to policies which attempt to address inequalities, the “lack” of ‘social capital’ (I suspect they were referring more to cultural capital) probably referring to the inequality of capital between social groups rather than a complete absence of it; and addressing ‘social justice’. While Phil recognises the impact of these policies as small steps in the war on social inequality, Bertie acknowledges that school practice did not, perhaps, take as much notice of the deprived as they should, unwittingly reproducing inequalities and that the increased focus had produced a notable ‘massive’ impact on outcomes.

Other policies identified included the Academies policy and the ‘Every Child Matters’ initiative, which “set the tone for a more holistic approach to standards which helped to move the school forward in this area.” (ibid). They position themselves in support of the drive for social justice that Every Child Matters implies. This resonated with Phil who continues to use the language of the now defunct policy in their school.

I think anything that from a, aspects of Every Child Matters under the Labour administration for example, you know, we still use that little mantra because I think it encapsulates some really important things about children.... and we still think in terms of that when we're talking about um, chil, vulnerable children and all that kind of safeguarding. (Phil)

Another ‘morally’ positive aspect highlighted through survey was the introduction of ‘Progress’ based accountability measures, such as ‘Progress 8’. This had “Allowed school leaders to turn staff attention to all students and not just "boundary" groups” (ibid), one

of the key criticisms of the previous A*- C performative accountability structure. This opinion was not universally shared, however. Some participants felt that the way the Progress 8 measure had been introduced and linked to the English Baccalaureate was having a negative impact.

EBacc and Progress 8 mean that some learners will feel inadequate. There is little evidence that this new approach will drive up standards, increase rigour in learning or prepare pupils for the challenges and opportunities which lie ahead as adults to quote the hackneyed clichés which are used repeatedly by politicians and their agencies.

(Appendix G – Question 23)

The second respondent is concerned about the impact of some reforms on the wellbeing of students, they may feel ‘inadequate’, self-positioning as compassionate and morally directed, reflecting their sense of social justice. They see no acceptable evidence for the justification of such an impact, only ‘hackneyed clichés’, political dogma and rhetoric. The EBacc was also identified by several people as a restrictive move, making the curriculum less relevant and engaging for some students, intimating that

Forcing (through progress 8 measure) all kids to take EBacc subjects even if it's not relevant to their interests and aspirations.

(Appendix G – Question 23)

This was highlighted again at interview. The belief that a very academic curriculum, as progress 8 and EBacc promotes, is not suited to every child.

If I take the moral response and the ethical one which would be to actually look at that child and say what's best for you and I'm afraid that's what I'm going to be doing and my governors and the foundation response is going to be saying well that's going to impact if our figures, you can't do that so there's going to have to, there's going to be battles. (Ash)

Ash reflects the pressure school leaders feel from policy technologies, applied through accountability structures. They position themselves against the policy discourse that this set of subjects will improve standards and take a moral position that it is not right for

some students. The potential impact on outcomes and associated league tables affect a school at all levels, and the statement that “there’s going to be battles” (ibid) with Governors and the school’s foundation positions them as being prepared to take a ‘moral’ stand against opposition.

4.2 School leaders’ perceptions and experiences of reform

The participants in the survey and at interview shared the perception, clearly highlighted in literature, that the pace and scope of reform had been frantic and overwhelming. I discuss this element of the research further in Appendix L (p. 293). In this section I am focusing on how the experience of implementing reforms has impacted on school leaders, particularly in terms of the changing nature of their role, the impact on their professional identity and whether they feel a greater sense of autonomy. I will also examine if there is a point at which resistance is contemplated and, if so, under what conditions.

4.2.1 Preparedness for new managerialism

The technologies of managerialism require a level of expertise that many school leaders have not developed prior to achieving the post and the potential risks and consequences of being under-prepared can be significant. This lack of preparedness for the managerial aspect of neoliberal reform is something that was reflected on by interviewees:

Government policy was to turn schools into businesses and actually they've done it without finding out whether schools are capable of doing it, so.. so actually the downside of accountability is - what do you do when you are a public service but run as a basically a private company - who's then visited by her Majesty's Inspector of Taxes who then say ' Well you didn't do X, Y and Z' and you think I didn't know I had to do X, Y and Z - well, sorry, but that's no excuse. (Sam)

I spent seven years as an accountant before I came into teaching and it wasn't until I became a senior leader that I started to put those administrative and financial skills back into the mix, and you know I'm so glad I've got that experience now because I'm handling a multi-million pound budget, I can't imagine what other people who don't have that sort of um financial administrative experience, I can't imagine how they get it on the way up through teaching cause it doesn't seem to me that there's very much that can help them with it. (Jo)

Sam reflects the sense that systemic change to the market-model may not have been based on sound foundations, politicians have failed to check whether ‘schools are capable’ of implementing policy and highlighted the dichotomy schools face switching from a managed public service to a ‘private company’, different rules apply. There are aspects of business management which now fall to individual schools or MATs which have not been previously required. Jo, coming from a position of expertise, stresses the importance of ‘administrative and financial skills’ unlikely to be held by many teachers and qualifies this concern further by observing that the usual routes to headship do not prepare you for such a change in emphasis from lead practitioner to Chief Executive Officer of a business. Sam is positioned in the inexpert role, while Jo positions themselves as expert within the new managerial discourse of education. The risks of ‘failing’ as a subject of this new mode are not just present as outcomes of the performative technologies for student outcomes, but also for failing to run your ‘business’ within legal and performative norms. School leaders who position themselves as inexpert in such matters, may require greater access to brokered or traded services if they are to avoid failure. In addition, while poor results may lead to positioning as a failing school and headteacher, failure to abide by legal regulations as a business may lead to more even more severe sanctions.

quite recently we had the, the VAT man visit us and he read my Bursar her Human rights..... and this was over an exposed VAT issue which we exposed to them, not one that they exposed to us and that's when I thought, yeah, OK - that's where it's just gone stupid really. But, reading her her human rights, that just about sums it up really. (Sam)

The switch from local authority control to Academy status has removed a level of accountability above the school leader as well as access to a large pool of expertise. The direct accountability that arises and the legal consequences are far more severe than previously experienced and introduce new anxieties and pressures, as reflected by Sam who reflects the change in accountability as excessive or ‘stupid’. The rapid acceleration of the academies policy since 2010 has seen the commodification and increased

outsourcing of traded services to private companies effectively privatising the functions and responsibilities of Local Education Authorities. In larger academy chains and multi-academy trusts, as well as in schools who continue to hold maintained²⁴ status, there are greater opportunities for mutual support or shared specialist services, cost-effectively meeting the needs of multiple centres. This is not the case for convertor and stand-alone academies who may turn to traded services, thus achieving the neoliberal ideal of “privatisation, liberalisation, and an imposition of commercial criteria in any residual state sector” (Ball, 2006, p. 10).

4.2.2 Impact of change on School Leaders' professional identity

Adapting to a changing role will result in the reshaping of existing subjectivities or the introduction of new ones and headteachers reposition themselves continuously. Such fluid and dynamic identity formation will impact on headteachers in several ways, including how pragmatically they manage the role, including the implementation (or resistance) of new policy and I discuss this further in Appendix M (p. 305). Most headteachers have been drawn into the role via teaching, even if they had other careers previously, and may still identify strongly with their ‘teacher’ subjectivity.

I think the, the organisational structure discourages very strongly against continuing to teach and you know our, I prioritise my teaching, I have to because otherwise there'll be so many occasions when I miss classes, there's enough anyway, but you know you have to say well, no I can't do that then because I'm teaching and I won't be able to go to that external meeting because I've got a class and, and I do find that other heads look at me strangely and say what do you, you know, you're teaching? How do you manage that or why, why do you do that, or they say, oh, I wish I was teaching more. Um, and so it's something I want to keep but I don't think it's particularly usual. (Jo)

Jo recognises that their wide range of roles makes it hard to teach and asserts this as

²⁴ Maintained schools' finances are monitored and managed through a local authority, so there are significant resources, financial, legal and administrative that non-LA schools have to purchase as a traded service.

powerful influence on behaviour through the phrase 'discourages very strongly continuing to teach', and this has clear knock on effects for the normal expectations of their role. The job of being a head is seemingly structured in a way which expects them 'not' to teach and, in their experience, few headteachers do, but they position themselves as considering this a moral choice because of the potential damage caused by missing classes. The observation of colleagues stating, 'I wish I was teaching more' could reflect genuine wistful self-positioning that something that was valued has been lost or recognising an inherent aspect of wider discourses on schooling which position headteachers as leading practitioners. Other participants also seemed to place more capital in those who appear to be able to manage the combination of roles successfully.

when I look at Heads I have the highest respect for, I notice they still manage to in some shape or form, so .. for me personally it's an aspiration .. if I do it, I want to do it in a consistently .. in a good and outstanding way and I want to be convinced that I, I can do that (Alex)

Alex clearly feels that to lead a school while continuing to teach demands kudos, the 'highest respect', positioning themselves as keen to be able to do the same. The use of 'aspiration' to describe the intent suggests they place a lot of value on the issue, rather than simply saying it's something they want or would like to do. However, the need to be 'convinced' that it is possible, speaks of uncertainty, a lack of confidence in self to do so successfully. Most of the interviewees continue to position themselves within the teaching subjectivity and they clearly associated with the role, although they had very different views of whether it was right for headteachers to continue to teach.

I think it's fundamentally important you do teach um.. I think you should set the standards and um I was very, very proud of the results I achieved and they were as good, if not better, than anybody else in the school and I think that's important..... Fundamentally, I never asked anybody to do what I don't do. (Charlie)

the staff love it when you teach because it gives it.. well, I think it gives heads credibility with the staff because the staff realise that heads know what teaching's like (Teddy)

Charlie feels that a head demonstrating their teaching ability is ‘important’ and once again there is the underpinning drive, the ‘moral purpose’, as well as positioning themselves firmly within the teaching subjectivity, constructing shared values and purpose with teaching staff. This may also minimise the potential for staff to create a counter-narrative that they have lost touch and are no longer members of the teaching community of practice, positioning them instead as, somehow, in opposition, complicit with the negative implications and consequences of state governance. For both, there is also a desire to acquire symbolic capital in the field of teaching through demonstrating competence and building a positive reputation with their colleagues and possibly the community, enhancing their ‘credibility’. This was also reflected by Phil, who chose not to teach regular exam groups but opted in to teaching some citizenship:

I taught every single form group in the school a lesson, so at that time that was twenty seven lessons, a different lesson for Year 7, 8 and 9, and had the teacher in observing me and doing, um, a lesson observation, you know, giving me feedback....I had everybody observing me at least, um, over that period, um, and I felt that was helpful because I could at least establish my teaching credentials that way. (Phil)

Interestingly, Phil prioritises the reputational enhancement from staff as a key benefit, not the impact on the students themselves, establishing their ‘teaching credentials’ was more important than the teaching itself. These interviewees see their teaching as leading or setting the ‘standard’, what they expect others to achieve, but at the same time there is the ability to justify their performative role, they position themselves as competent enough to pass judgements on others’ practice. Other interviewees echoed some of these sentiments in different ways.

one of the reasons, for example, I choose to teach is firstly, you know, for personal reward and satisfaction but also so the staff see the Head teaching so that, so that they don't say 'oh he just sits in his office all day and never knows what it's like to be in front of a bunch of kids (Ali)

I think it's really important. I, I mean I like teaching so it's not a, it's not a chore to me, um, you know I don't come into senior leadership to get away from teaching. Um, but I'd think that actually being there in the classroom is really important, partly because I get to know the students, earn their respect, and you know I'm fairly new here so anything I can do to have contact with actual students and get to know them, what their needs are is very helpful for me and I hope them all to look up to me. But also I'd think you send a very strong signal to your colleagues (Jo)

These individuals clearly identify that teaching is a choice, Jo even going as far as to self-justify that promotion wasn't an attempt to avoid it, perhaps showing a sensitivity to the perceptions of staff. They identify their own enjoyment and 'satisfaction' in teaching, but it is again argued as a moral decision to demonstrate to staff their own professional standard and ability as well as their willingness to lead from the front. They also demonstrate a desire to be a positive role-model for students, 'hope they look up to me', positioning them again as motivated by 'moral purpose'. By teaching they demonstrate to their staff that they are still positioned as a teacher and want to acquire symbolic capital through an enhanced reputation in the field of teaching, from that subjectivity, but it also works for them by potentially undermining typical arguments teachers may have of their senior colleagues. Jo also makes the point that it helps them build knowledge of their school community as well as building relationships with children and 'earn their respect', this is also a means to accumulate cultural capital and to build social capital as positive responses from the students will improve the trust level.

Some interviewees had tried to continue in the teaching role and, at some point, stopped. They were at pains to argue that it was still a role they enjoyed, and that to not teach, was in some way a sacrifice, challenging their sense of self or professional identity. While others reflected the view that teaching became too disrupted because of the wider nature of their role, with the result being that lessons were missed and had to be covered.

I, morally, I desperately want to In realistic terms the length of my day is such that I will not do justice to the youngsters (Alex)

I took over two year 11 groups in January right the way through to Summer and actually what that taught me was, that it's a complete nightmare. I think I probably missed a third of their lessons which is just and that was trying to do everything possible not to and so I made the decision, right I'm not going to do that (Pat)

Alex again employs moral / ethical language to describe the decision not to teach, 'justice', clearly positioning themselves as someone who believes that students are entitled to a better standard than they feel they would have provided. Pat uses the term 'Nightmare' to describe the experience of trying to maintain a teaching role at the standard they would want, whilst managing the role of the head. This is an emotive term and suggests that the experience was challenging and frustrating, despite their efforts to avoid it and they ultimately decided that the disruption was too much.

For some headteachers we see that the introduction of new subjectivities and roles has changed their focus and priorities even beyond teaching. There is greater awareness of the business management side of their role, the CEO subjectivity; and for some this means that the day to day contact with children suffers.

I do have an open door policy here with staff, and I would say that that has remained a constant throughout and will always make sure I'm available to talk to a member of staff when they need to see me.....but I've had less contact with kids, definitely, and that's been regrettable. (Phil)

This headteacher clearly feels that management of personnel is a higher priority than constant contact with students. The 'open door' and availability to colleagues allows for capital accumulation through the sense of support that staff should feel. The interviewee believes that it is important enough to justify the 'regrettable' lack of contact with students, positioning themselves as a supportive and considerate employer, while protecting their position as being student centred.

4.2.3 Gatekeeping, autonomy and resistance

Headteachers experience policy reform direct from Government agencies, Local Authorities and, more recently, Academy trusts or partnerships. Frankie reflects the perception that staff will often struggle to see the differentiation between national and local policymaking and associate it all with the nearest authority, their school leadership team.

I think staff sometimes see us doing something which is putting something into place and they automatically think it's SLT (Frankie)

What is presented to staff and Governors as policy, however, is often the outcome of the leadership's interpretation of the policy and their own decision making and practice. Such "situated interpretations are set over and against what else is in play, what consequences might ensue from responding or not responding" (Ball *et al.*, 2012b, p. 44). While these interpretations act to "focus institutional activity" (*ibid*), in some cases, which party is responsible for the policy may become blurred and what staff are required to enact may be more tailored to the leadership's intent than the original policy text.

Given that reform is fast and frequent, there was a sense that staff were not always aware of new policies and that, as school leaders, there was a responsibility to act as gatekeepers.

they're not as aware, and you know there are big pressures on at the moment, and they kind of do get the bigger picture and the head of department certainly does, but, uh, you know, I think there's more of a communication issue there, for which I take my share of responsibility as well. Um, but you know, you, you try in essence to protect your staff (Jo)

There is recognition here that the demands of a teacher's role limit their ability to see the 'big picture' and this makes the communication and translation of policy incumbent on the management. This is seen through a lens of 'protecting' staff from some aspects of policy while trying to keep an open dialogue and transparency as an employer, although of course, such 'gatekeeping' is wholly subjective. Being responsible for the 'communication' of policy to staff provides an opportunity for adding their own

interpretations and meaning to policy, which few teachers will have seen as policy text. Jo reflects the difficulty in balancing useful information giving with creating unnecessary alarm and that there is a clear risk of misinterpretation.

I've worked in a school where every staff briefing the head talked about the financial situation and, and we understood that to mean threat of redundancy, and also talked about er, the need to raise standards, which we understood to mean that, um, performance management was going to be used to weed out incompetent teachers, so, you know I'm aware from having been not in management that sometimes what management says and what other people hear are quite different. (Jo)

This provides an important perception, that the interpretation of policy texts into policy in practice requires an element of interpretation, both via the people tasked with implementing it at school level but also, again through the knowledge and understanding applied by the final recipients of that policy enactment. What happens in the classroom may be significantly different to the original policy intent as each layer influences and interprets it in their own way and subject to their own beliefs and values. Whatever the interpretation of policy, who is held responsible for it by teaching staff can create its own problems.

some of them think that we have the power to say no and they'll get very union unionised about it which is also, really, you know, irrelevant (?) um, and I think, I think that does pose problems, pose a problem for us. We try and tell them that this is what we've got to do um, but, yeah - I don't think staff really understand that (Frankie)

Frankie suggests a level of naivety in the teaching staff where the interpretation of policy as SLT led can result in resistance and the involvement of unions, another interplay of power linked to a discourse of 'them and us' with the school leadership team and a denial or reduction of cultural capital from the teaching body. "The power to say no" could be an assumed privilege of autonomy, staff may assume school leaders will always act to resist policy that they disagree with, they may also assume that the leadership will always disagree with policies in the same way they do, which will not necessarily be the case. Positioning the unions as 'irrelevant' within this relationship of power reflects a sense of

frustration, highlighting the perceived distance between the leadership and the staff, it ‘poses problems’ because of the resistance to their autonomy and the power that the unions can bring to bear, risking a perception that the leadership team are either not in control or are non-compliant with a policy with potential performative consequences.

One reflection here is that a school is slightly unique in a sense when compared to other industries and this may engender a naturally strong expectation of autonomy:

I think we’re so used in this country to schools being quasi-autonomous bodies, um, or completely autonomous and so we tend to believe that, uh anything that happens in school is determined in schoolwhereas people who have worked in other, more corporate set-ups, you know they expect very much more accountability, they realise they’re a cog within a wheel, you know, it’s a different sort of mentality, isn’t it? (Jo)

Jo recognises that schools may only be ‘quasi-autonomous’, not necessarily in full control, and as such restricted in the degree of autonomy they can exercise. The consequence of this for Jo is that their staff may have outdated expectations of the power balance between schools and Government and be unaware of the constraints which exist on the school leadership.

I don’t think that they perceive that the climate has changed politically, uh, in education and that actually our freedom to do what we want is, is constrained (Jo)

The reality for the school leadership is more complex as there are things which are statutory, which ‘have to’ be done by all schools, while others are mandatory for maintained schools only. In this instance, it would appear Academy headteachers may have more autonomy over finance, curriculum and management, they may also have more opportunity for resistance, at least with a lower risk of sanction. The move from Local Authority control to local management via academisation was a point where there were inconsistent views from interviewees. Bertie, whose school converted to Academy status when they took up their role, did so for “a bit of money” (Bertie) not for the additional

autonomy that was offered. In their case, the loss of support and partnership from their LA was unwelcome.

I just feel that it's a real shame that that kind of cushion has disappeared, really. I mean people sort of talk about the bureaucracy of the local authority, the burden of the local authority - I never saw it like that, I always saw it as a safety net. (Bertie)

Bertie doesn't reject the notion of greater autonomy but perceives the loss of a more local form of accountability and support as a 'cushion' or 'safety net', suggesting a safe and warm support, acting as a barrier between them and the discomfort of being on their own, autonomous but also accountable. Other interviewees suggested that the perception of increased autonomy was an important factor for choosing to convert to Academy status.

actually the academy thing, in a sense, the more autonomy things for schools, actually I agreed with that as well. Not necessarily Academisation per se, but the autonomy to run your school as you want to run it and be able to choose who provides your services (Pat)

So, Pat positions themselves as not necessarily in favour of the structural processes of academisation but in favour of more autonomy, more control or 'choice'. They also reflected an increased sense of ownership and control through the increased autonomy that conversion gave them.

it empowered me and it empowered us not to just accept anything anywhere about anything. I don't know why I needed that to happen, why I needed that to do it, but it did and actually I think it made a massive difference to us taking charge of our own destiny in our own school. (Pat)

This increased sense of autonomy, of direct accountability, is reflected in a greater sense of ownership and 'empowerment', the ability to 'take charge' clearly indicating that they did not previously believe that was the case. The belief that they were now in control of their own 'destiny' a strong marker that they feel they have more power to influence their own future.

The construction of a narrative of autonomy may help encourage schools to convert to Academy status, but it is not necessarily as utopian a position as some may believe. It is argued that the governance narrative has presented the appearance of increased autonomy, while the “effect is to reduce autonomy and increase dependence on the centre among actors outside the core executive” (Goodwin and Grix, 2011, p. 537). Regardless, the discourse positions school leaders as responsible legally, morally and performatively, in a way that they weren’t previously. The construction of the ‘autonomous leader’ discourse allows control at arm’s length while abrogating direct accountability from policy level to implementation level.

The need to be compliant to a set of external measures, to be positioned as ‘normal’ within a normative discourse of ‘standards’ through performative measures, also has the effect of limiting autonomy:

the staff would like us to be more reacti.. radical, I suppose, than we can be. They would, and I know my staff would advocate, well who cares about the Government, let’s just go on and do it, ‘cause a lot of them share my sort of belief, but then when you explain to them the knock-on effect and the impact on funding and standards and reputation and accumulating, where we would eventually end up, they understand (Ash)

For Ash, Academisation offered increased autonomy and a freedom to work beyond the restrictive confines of LA management, even to the extent of practice becoming more innovative and new, ‘radical’; but the degree of autonomy is limited, constrained by statutory instruments, such as Academy funding agreements, and performative technologies, giving a sense that any additional power they may be offered is neutralised in other ways.

we took the step of becoming and Academy for greater freedoms and yet on one hand those freedoms appear and then, as it were, by a little bit of league table magic, there are intense pressures put on to force you down a particular path..... some of those freedoms, I feel, are policy intentionally or otherwise, have seized back. So the Lord giveth, the lord taketh away, as it were. (Charlie)

For Charlie the performative measures and statutory instruments apply ‘intense pressure’ to comply, immediately restricting the ability to be truly autonomous but they aren’t certain whether the tendency to remove ‘freedoms’, the ability to operate without restriction, are deliberate or not. The sense of ‘constrained’ autonomy was a feature in several interviews, although it wasn’t universally considered a negative issue and there were conflicting opinions on the degree of autonomy held.

I'm not autonomous, none of us is truly autonomousyou know I'm not a free-wheeling, free enterprise kind of person, I work within some kind of constraints, but I'm happy with that so I don't feel oppressed by it (Ali)

Ali is resigned to the fact that true autonomy, of the type it may be argued is promoted through reform discourse, is never ‘truly’ going to apply, but that they are pragmatic about the reality, not ‘oppressed’ which may indicate a point at which pragmatism gives way to idealistic resistance.

as an academy, we have the autonomy to set our curriculum. However, if we do not ensure that we make Progress 8 measures and E-bacc measures Ofsted will come in as we will be judged as failing, so while we have the autonomy to do it, we can’t because we have to hit the progress measures and the attainment measures, um, unless we are happy in our belief that we think our moral imperative is to get the kids to do this so we’re going to do it regardless. (Ash)

Ash indicates the same sense that the reality is one of pseudo-autonomy but also positions themselves in the ethical leader subjectivity by suggesting they would resist requirements that they believe are damaging to their students, ones where their ‘moral imperative’ overrides the fear of performative sanctions. The performative technologies are creating high pressure against truly autonomous and ethically justified practice, shaping behaviour towards compliance, with the potential consequences being serious for ‘irresponsibility’ through non-compliance. The recognition of that change in culture is evident in the experience of the interviewees.

when Ofsted started to acquire more teeth and you know you noticed the culture changing in the staffroom and in SLT meetings where all the time for talk is about compliance, and so the shift was from enhancing learning and enhancing life

experiences, equipping students for the future, and they, the shift from that to, we've got all these hoops to jump through, we've gotta make sure we're compliant (Jo)

There is acknowledgement that the language of compliance, the prioritisation it is given is present in SLT meetings, and an intimation that the talk in the staffroom is an outcome of SLT desire to be compliant. The consequences are significant as Jo feels that focus has switched from 'enhancing learning and enhancing life experiences' foci in keeping with the moral purpose of the school leader, to simply jumping through hoops. Alex felt that the challenges of context, location and funding, meant there was far less opportunity to autonomously achieve their objectives and that the drive for compliance was damaging.

we are so .. more severely affected by our rurality, our coastal location and the .. the demographics that go with being in this part of the world, that .. the resourcing is atrocious .. you can not do what needs to be done in order to get there, so I know what I would want to do in order to get a, to really improve the disadvantaged performance in this school .. I do not have the means to do it, (Alex)

The reflection here is almost one of loss of control. Both context, 'resourcing is atrocious' and 'political power' requiring behaviour which is not reflective of what they would choose to do if they were truly autonomous.

One way in which school leaders are truly autonomous is in the fact that they have agency and power to resist reform if they are prepared to risk the performative consequences. Survey responses suggest that resistance is subjectively based on their opinion of whether a policy is ethical or potentially damaging to their students' needs e.g. "yes, if policy had an adverse impact upon the life-chances and or wellbeing of the students in the school" (Appendix N p. 313), and if they felt they had the support of their stakeholders, sharing or mitigating the risks of non-compliance. Some speak to the power of performativity and the risk to economic capital, "What, and lose my job! Ofsted is like the Stazi - Government compliance and enforcement squad. PS You missed off keeping my job." (Appendix N p. 313), being one of the more extreme examples. Such an emotive term

reflects a feeling of oppression, that policy is policed in draconian ways. Others reflected a sense of moral dilemma, suggesting they would resist:

If the policy prejudiced the professional standing of teachers or if it simply went against the moral imperative to use ensure that education meets the needs of society and enhances the life chances of all young people.

If I believed that the outcome would be damaging to the life chances for students or to the school.

(Survey responses - Appendix N, p. 313)

There is a clear emphasis in the first response on cultural capital, 'professional standing' implicitly reflecting the high regard teachers have traditionally held. Both responses use the term 'life chances' positioning themselves as student-centric and motivated by moral purpose. Others reflected on the difficulties facing leaders who consider such resistance, the relative consideration of risk becoming a key consideration:

impossible to do this if in a vulnerable school situation - you have to conform

How can you if you are in a position where you are an Academy and have signed a contract with the DFE?

If there was a unified consensus and there would be no chance of losing my job by doing so

(Survey responses - Appendix N, p. 313)

For the first respondent, being positioned within the failing school discourse disempowers them from resisting, it becomes 'impossible', they position themselves as 'responsible' within the normative discourse of school leadership, whilst seeking to justify their position as one of lack of power. The second highlights a key distinction between the Academy position and the maintained school position, both subject to statutory requirements to an extent but with Academies also being subject to a 'contract', a funding agreement whereby failure to comply could result in funding being withdrawn. For both, there is always a route of resistance which allows them to exercise their agency, but only one participant suggests taking the ultimate decision to protect their integrity.

“I feel powerless, the only option is to leave” (ibid)

The irony is that through the knowledge that they have agency to resist through leaving their job, they are far from ‘powerless’, but the consequences for economic and cultural capital which arise from exercising that power are key influences.

The direct outcome of ‘agency’ within the policy interpretation stage in any school could include refusing to enact a policy that wasn’t considered right for the school, mitigating the policy requirements to make them more palatable to staff or simply implementing to ensure compliance.

In my role as school leader I'm not always able to make 'sense' of the policy but I'm sometimes able to stop the negative outfall of the policy (Sam)

Do you know, the first thing is we take no notice of Government policy, basically and haven't done for many years. We've always thought, what is right for our school and our, and our youngsters. (Pat)

when I make or endorse decision by my team, changes in direction there are, ultimately, unintended consequences and one of the skills of leadership is mitigating that (Charlie)

In these responses, Sam and Charlie reflect the reality that agency may be restricted to causing least harm, ‘mitigating’ the ‘unintended’ outcomes of policy at school level, suggesting a form of ethical subversion, being compliant at a pragmatic level but ensuring the moral purpose isn’t brought into crisis. Pat claims a high level of resistance, positioning themselves within the maverick model of leadership, ‘we take no notice of Government policy’. It seems unlikely that the school is completely non-compliant as under the current model of school performance accountability this would most likely result in a very negative OfSTED judgements and consequent intervention. It could be that the school’s practice is already closely aligned to an acceptable level of compliance, allowing the head to position themselves as not having to adjust what they do to come in

line, or that they are sufficiently robust in their outcomes that any consequent challenge from OfSTED would be hard to justify.

Resistance to policy is achieved in different ways, from simple non-compliance to forms of pragmatic compliance, such as matching existing practice to new requirements to give the impression of compliance:

'right you must implement key skills, it's absolutely crucial, you must do it, everybody must do it'..... and I would say - 'no, I think we won't bother. I don't think we'll do that, we'll just focus on making sure, students in the sixth form are able to access the curriculum, make the progress they're supposed to make, get the grades they're supposed to make - that's the most important key skill.' (Sam)

Here, the interviewee reports simply ignoring something that was perceived as a directive as they felt they were already achieving the same ends via their curriculum or recognised that by making sure the quality of provision was appropriate, the same outcomes would be achieved. It is worth noting that there was no significant risk for those who did not comply with the policy, it was not underpinned by significant performative sanctions.

Where non-compliance is not an option, or the risks are too high for the individual school leader, subverted or pragmatic compliance may be employed. Sam reflected on the introduction of British Values as a statutory requirement but recognised the similarity to their own school values and implemented them in a pragmatic fashion, simply mapping them against what was already being done.

we'd like you to call it something different, we'd like to call it British values and you say, yeah, yeah that's fine what we'll do, we'll just map it against all the things that are there. (Sam)

Such an approach allows for a display of compliance without any significant release of power or ownership and may even support SLT in achieving their own objectives by using the opportunity of reform to argue for other changes, or justifying them as Government policy

With the pace and range of reform being experienced, the opportunities for resistance are significant but it seems that the panopticon of performativity limits the appetite for doing so in an overt or extreme manner. I believe the reasons for this lie in the subjectivities which stem from the economistic discourse and how well or how poorly school leaders can mitigate their own actions against these subjectivities in a way which is ‘apparently’ compliant but doesn’t expose them to a crisis of identity or expose them to further subjectivation as ‘failing’ schools and, ergo, failing leaders. Once subjectivated in this way they are exposed to further, more extreme modes of performativity, e.g. forced academisation, discourse of derision, DfE / OfSTED / Regional Schools Commissioner visits and, ultimately, termination of contract. Such potential consequences seem to result in more pragmatic compliance although the data suggests that, when faced with an ideological crisis, school leaders like to believe that they would resist.

4.3 The impact of standards and performativity

In this section I will discuss the findings related more to school leader experiences of accountability, the nature and impact of standards and the performative technologies that they underpin.

4.3.1 Standards

Survey participants were asked to give their view on whether there was a clearly defined and understood meaning of the term ‘standards’ in our system (Appendix G – Question 8) and what, in their view, were the best descriptions for the term from a range that I provided (Appendix G – Question 9). There was a clear majority who felt that the term ‘standards’ was not clearly defined and understood, but when we examine the response to the ranking of descriptions there appears to be a contradiction. The highest ranked option was “Level of progress made from starting points” and the second highest ranked

was “Quality of Teaching and Learning”. These choices are key inspection indicators suggesting that, while they claim the definition is not clear or understood they are, in effect, positioning themselves within the discourse of standards in such a way that their stated understanding matches the official expectations. There was a clear disparity in the remaining definitions, however. The third rank response was “Expectations set by the school themselves”, fourth was “Meeting or exceeding Government threshold targets for tests / exams, while one of the other aspects of OfSTED inspection focus and school accountability, behaviour and attendance, was only ranked 5th overall. The lowest ranked definition was “Ranking against international benchmarks”, the measure by which systemic change has been justified at Government level.

At interview, the concept of standards was not generally seen as an issue although there was one participant who felt strongly about the use of the term.

It's a very misleading term, I think, erm it's, you know, what does raising standards mean? Are we talking about international comparisons or we're talking about, um, fighting grade inflation We hear this term and we kind of accept it unquestioningly, but I'm, to me it's a meaningless term (Jo)

Jo infers that the term ‘standards’ is not clearly defined, it is ‘meaningless’ and in effect its use has become a distraction or a deliberate obfuscation, ‘misleading’ to those expected to work toward achieving improvement. They make an interesting point and highlight the fact that the term is not a single well-defined reference but one which carries several potential meanings. There was a broader recognition that different stakeholders read different things into the term, rather than sharing a single view.

You talk to a parent and they'll talk about whether the children are looking smart in their uniform. You talk to the governors and it's: are the teachers doing their job? You talk to the Government and it'll be numbers and figures and whether we're hitting the PISA. (Ash)

The survey showed that the headteachers valued the local judgement (school expectations) more highly than comparisons made by external agencies and this speaks

to a localisation of standards. Those closest to the human aspect of schooling, the children and families being served, are interested in practice, high expectations with conforming and compliant behaviours which make for a safe and consistent learning environment for children. In effect, they see standards as the objectification of school values and culture. While there are standards within the OfSTED framework which look at behaviour and culture, these are more subjective judgements than the cold hard data of outcomes, leaving them open to criticism of inconsistency and lack of reliability.

There was concern over the type and justification for ‘standards’ used as a measure for school quality and performance, including the international context, the ability for politicians to influence those measures and the way the inspection system was managed.

I think the intervention of politicians year on year in to accepted and permitted levels of exams success is wholly negative in terms of standards (Sam)

I wouldn’t disagree that, um, that we have to have high standards and high aspirations, I’m absolutely fully supportive of that, but it’s their definition perhaps of standards, cause it’s about, you know, they have to, they have to do certain thing or jump through certain hoops, um, which isn’t really about standards, that’s just about some sort of political dogma (Phil)

In the first response, standards are positioned as measures but there is a suspicion that they are being manipulated for political advantage, calling into question their reliability as a true measure of schools, and that this is counterproductive. The second response shows an acceptance of the need for standards but unease about the genesis and effects of how this is managed as a tool of Governmentality. There is a sense that politicians are perceived to use performativity to enable quick fix solutions based on standards in other countries, but without testing for comparability and reliability, an issue also seen negatively in the survey (Appendix G – Questions 10 & 11). The issue of mapping English standards to international tests was a concern over both the quality of data used to make the comparisons and the appropriateness of such measures for comparing different systems.

we're doing it because Sweden are doing it, we're doing it because Finland are doing it, or Hong Kong, and therefore, you know they get these brilliant results and we should do it and that means, and those, that if we establish these standards, the, these other things will improve as a direct causal effect, which there isn't, so I think there is a different understanding of what standards are. (Phil)

politicians draw on dubious data where we're compared with national standards - not national - sorry - the international, those international benchmarks that they use which no one's ever really fully explained to me whether we are comparing like with like - that's one issue (Sam)

Phil recognises the dichotomy that setting standards as measures may not, on its own, be a 'causal' factor in achieving systemic improvement and that this demonstrates a difference in how politicians and school leaders interpret standards. Sam sees the data that such international tests create as 'dubious', untrustworthy and not a reliable justification for reform, but this appears to be more to do with their concern over comparability rather than principle. This is particularly acute when discussing how, in their view, reasonable challenges to contextual factors, as well as the reliability and veracity of such an approach, results in them being positioned as irresponsible within the discourse of 'standards' and consequently subject to the discourse of derision, devaluing and disempowering the voice of the profession.

you are labelled The Blob, you're labelled low aspiration, you've got no, you know - you've got to raise your expectations. (Pat)

I mean mathematics is a good example of where they've looked at PISA, they kind of see where we are in the table, don't contextualise it in terms of background and culture and basically say - look, if the Chinese can do it, you can do it. And then basically hit us with it (Pat)

There was also a sense that the drive to match international standards was devaluing what was a highly-respected system with a distinctive ethos and purpose. There is a fear that some of the skills and industries that we are highly regarded for are being lost in the drive for better PISA outcomes.

there's far too much emphasis put on international comparison and, and some of the softer skills that contribute to the distinctive Britishness - the creativity and manufacture and things like that, are not valued. Now, there's an appropriate balance to be established and, you know, that's the dark arts (Charlie)

Charlie makes an interesting point here about the use of standards as a measure, his perception is that there is too high a reliance on 'international standards'. PISA tests and GCSE exams are standardised measures which can easily be used to compare schools or jurisdictions, and that which he perceives as distinctive to us as a nation is 'not valued'. He feels that more nebulous outcomes, the softer 'distinctive' skills like creativity, are passed over. To complicate matters further, what is presented as the measure may not reflect the actual performance of the school. The use of normalisation processes like comparable outcomes, which statistically manage or ration the distribution of GCSE grades and the policy decisions taken to support that agenda, are thought to have had a distorting effect showing an unrepresentative 'standard' compared to that experienced in schools.

take something as ridiculous as the decision to say that those students that sit their GCSEs and just take maths and English as an example, and it's your first sitting that counts - and that certain subjects won't count - absolutely impacted on standards because it meant that in any, in a particular year students who should have secured grade C and above, didn't our view was those children are still secured the appropriate level or standards that they should have done it just hasn't been recognised in the grade. (Sam)

The experience of this Head is that the statistical controls being applied create outcomes which are inaccurate compared to the judgement of those working with the students in school. They position school 'standards' as more consistent or accurate, as the official measure is manipulated to not 'recognise' the standard as consistent with previous cohorts but to fit a normative distribution. This 'ridiculous' distorting effect could have a perverse impact, further reproducing the attainment gap between disadvantaged and middle-class students and the schools which serve them, any improvement (or deterioration) being normalised out through grade boundary changes.

Ash recognises the risk for them of new standards, actively working against what they

consider best for their students and, in effect, ensuring the reproduction of disadvantage and poor performance.

for a school like mine would mean in order to hit the Progress 8 and E-Bacc scores I'm going to have to start putting people who are not really capable of doing modern foreign language into modern foreign language, if Ofsted are going to come in and judge me as being a good school. (Ash)

This highlights another usage of 'standards' alongside performative measures and objectified values, that of standards as a commodity within the market. The attainment of the OfSTED judgement of 'Good' or 'Outstanding' allows the school to trade on their position, offering real benefits in terms of student and staff recruitment and allowing schools to positively market themselves in line with the discourse of marketisation. If they attract more compliant and able middle-class pupils through the application of 'consumer' choice, they may accumulate a higher level of social capital and subsequent benefits in terms of economic and cultural capital for the school leaders through performance related pay and access to further opportunities, such as acceptance as National Leaders in Education (NLE).

this inspection result will mean that the parents will have a bit of a reaction and say - Oh, I want my child to go to that school as opposed to that school (Sam)

in an area where there are four good schools, in order to attract the pupil numbers we need, we have to maintain our reputation. If we don't, pupil numbers go down, staffing cuts have to be made, we don't get the quality teachers, results drop, pupil numbers go down and you get caught in a downwards spiral. (Ash)

Sam and Ash recognise the consequence of the market that has been created, in that consumers (parents) will 'react' and look to exercise the right to choose, which may result in fewer pupils being 'attracted', applying to the school. This in turn means less money and resources which makes school improvement and management even harder. Ultimately, failure to comply or to show 'sufficient' improvement to justify an acceptable OfSTED grade, exposes school leaders to being positioned as 'failing', irresponsible within the normative discourse of school standards, and this can have negative

consequences for their and the school's 'reputation'. This may lead to informed, middle class parents looking to move away, trapping the school in a 'downwards spiral' of decline. This may be viewed as an erosion of the social capital acquired within the fields of teaching, schooling and school leadership by the professionals in the school as the reputational damage weakens the social network and trust and support provided by parents and pupils. The personal symbolic capital of the headteacher in the field of school leadership may also be eroded, leading to a crisis of identity and potentially loss of employment, and thereby loss of economic capital due to loss of trust from the school's governing body and other stakeholders.

4.3.2 *The perceived impact of fast-paced reform on standards*

Survey respondents were asked to consider (Appendix G – Question 29), what impact the pace of reform has had on standards, in their perception. This threw up an unexpected result in that, rather than the overwhelmingly negative impression other questions had given, there was a far more balanced response to this question with 40.7% indicating a perceived decline in standards of some degree and 37.21% indicated a partial improvement. No one indicated significant improvement but 22.09% felt that nothing had changed (Appendix G – Question 29). Such a response demanded greater analysis to see if there were any contextual commonalities. Cross tab analysis of the school type to perception of impact showed that for Academy headteachers there was a balanced response for declined / improved, maintained schools and voluntary aided, also; but the Grammar school response, admittedly a small sample, indicated no perception of decline.

					Q29:With reference to your understanding of 'standards' - what impact do you think the current pace of education reform / policy change has had on education standards in English secondary schools?	Total
blank	No impact	Partially declined	Partially improved	Significant lv declined		

Q3:Please	Academy	2	9	16	17	3	47
indicate which of	Grammar	1	2	0	2	0	5
these best	Maintained School	3	5	8	10	5	31
matches your	Secondary	0	1	1	0	0	2
institution?	Modern	0	1	1	0	0	2
	University	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Technical College	0	0	0	0	1	1
	Voluntary Aided	0	2	1	2	0	5
	School	0	2	1	2	0	5
Total		6	19	26	31	9	91

Table 1.1: Cross tab descriptive stats for Q3:Q29

Given the cohorts that Grammar schools serve and their tendency to remain at the top of performance tables regardless of policy changes and performance measures, this suggest that the ‘volatility’ experienced by other schools has been of less concern to Grammar headteachers. Also of interest is the response of the UTC leader who indicated significant decline. Although UTCs are a very recent addition to the school estate, recent data shows that the proportion receiving the lowest OfSTED judgements is high compared to the overall picture (Camden, 2018).

When asked to give reasons for their answers in free text there were some very interesting responses (Appendix G – Question 30). Many expressed the view that there had been positive changes (focus on progress, focus on English and maths) but that these had been balanced out or exceeded by the negative, “Some nuggets have been in there - focus on En and Ma, removal of some abuses, but there has been an awful lot of negative stuff too which obscures.” (survey responses), being a representative example. In terms of negative impacts, workload is identified as an issue, and this is discussed further in Appendix P (p. 321). The pace of change and a perceived lack of time for implementation were also concerns. One response argues that “the school community is not 'signed up' to policy and convinced of its moral purpose” (Appendix G – Question 30) reflecting a sense of

disconnect or dissonance between politicians and practitioners. Another suggests that standards appear to be declining “because the bench mark of qualifications has changed and has been set above what is reasonable” (ibid), this is a perception likely to exist where the definition and setting of ‘standards’ is perceived to be opaque and based on political expediency rather than systemic strategic planning. Another respondent summarises one challenge very well.

Can no longer compare year on year - this allows schools to slip through the net; cannot attribute impact to any particular initiative because so much is changing, eg, if there was an initiative that had a massive positive impact and one that had a negative impact, overall, there is moderate impact.

(Survey responses – Appendix G Question 30)

This respondent recognises that the speed and range of reform, without effective modes of evaluation, results in difficulty identifying when genuine impact has been achieved. It is too difficult to ‘attribute impact’ scientifically and specifically to any initiative.

The 'standards' we are working to achieve are constantly being changed before we have a chance to embed practices that would enable the students and the school to meet them. In aiming for one set of standards we miss the target because it moves and then get chastised for it

(Survey responses – Appendix G Question 24)

A further response illustrates a concern over the way policy is policed through inspection, “Constantly changing frameworks etc to be in line with the latest political rhetoric is damaging to progress and hinders the focus of school leadership” (ibid), reflecting how the rapid changing of standards and inspection frameworks takes time and attention away from senior leaders, time which could have been used focusing on school improvement rather than compliance with performative technologies.

4.3.3 Accountability

The performative technologies we see in the school system may be expected, given the positioning of schools within the ‘marketization’ discourse as service providers, paid for

with public money, for which politicians and school leaders are accountable. This system of performative measures has been made to fit with the managerial model of education promoted by neoliberal reformers but is different from that which preceded it.

I talk to other people who are in Industry and they're used to a very regimented approach to accountability and, you know, if people don't hit their targets they can lose their job, so I am .. I think, maybe it's just school waking up to the reality of .. yeah, the modern world (Alex)

Alex recognises the performative landscape as that of another world, that 'targets' and related sanctions / rewards are the 'normative' condition and schools have been living in the past. They position themselves as accepting of the colonisation of ideas through the marketization and managerialism discourses, because that is the 'reality' of the modern system.

Accepting a need for performative measures to satisfy public accountability is not the same as accepting that the measures and methods used are appropriate to the sort of work done in schools and this is perceived to be notable change. "I think there's a cultural shift which is so utilitarian that it kind of, you know, takes the humanity out of it" (Alex). Alex reflects the sense that the risk of reducing to numbers and data in a field which deals exclusively with people, risks dehumanising them and the people who work with them. In addition, a system which changes frequently can leave those tasked with managing it uncertain about where they sit within it and this can be detrimental to improvement.

I think when there are lots of different changes, it it just confuses the matter. I mean, besides the fact that OfSTED come with all their criteria which they change um, that that is also, you know, we, we - I think in schools, that makes it very difficult to, to link it all together. (Frankie)

Frankie perceives a key impact of rapid reform as one of 'confusion'. They struggle to make sense, 'to link together' different aspects of policy and standards through the OfSTED frameworks due to ongoing changes.

The OfSTED category awarded at inspection may have a significant impact in several ways, the stakes are high and, consequently, the need to 'satisfy' inspectors can influence behaviour, negating the autonomy that headteachers are supposed to have.

I don't think it has an impact on standards but I think it has an impact on activity. I'm, one of my roles and responsibilities is to be the kind of OfSTED standard bearer. So, I'm always looking at the framework um, at the evaluation schedule at changes to the framework, things that they're asking us to do - so we've currently got a focus on more able and transitions (Bertie)

For this participant, the inspection regime influences their role and the activity in the school, driving them toward compliance for accountability. The use of the phrase 'standard bearer' positions the role as important, a responsibility to draw everyone toward those expectations. Rather than focusing on consistent high-quality practice, the nature of the inspection framework, the weight it carries and the frequency of changes to it, require Bertie to keep a constant watch and to implement changes to practice in response, a reflexive rather than strategic approach. It is notable, however, that this additional work and distraction is questionable as to the impact on the actual 'standards' in the school and there is concern that the tendency of Governments to statistically manage outcomes effectively limits the progress possible and restricts the reality of achieving improved inspection outcomes, in some cases.

they fail to understand it's all norm referenced, the whole thing is done by comparable outcomes, so it's impossible to have more than half of schools above average in terms of outcomes and if that's driving the judgements on the progress of the children, which it will do; then it's impossible to actually achieve what the Government actually wants them to achieve. (Pat)

The suggestion is that such impact is unplanned and that those in charge are unaware or have 'failed' to foresee the side effects of policy. The use of 'impossible' a sign of the frustration and sense of futility that working within this system engenders. The interviewee positions themselves as oppressed by unreasonable expectations. I suggest that this impact is well recognised but that, as a tool of Governmentality, it is doing the

job it is designed to do, to pressure the bottom 50% of schools, through the mechanism of ‘care of the self’, to work to ensure they are not labelled as irresponsible thus (arguably) improving ‘standards’.

There is a feeling that the performative process distorts the view of what good standards are, as the threshold statements are broad and open to interpretation and the inspection process is subjective and, by its very nature, there is a high degree of variability in judgements due to variability in inspector competence.

I did train to be an OfSTED Inspector but didn't Inspect that much I can only tell it, tell from my own perspective and the perspective of the Heads I deal with locally. I think, when I was going around, you know, in my other job, there was, actually, a broad range of ability in terms of looking at data and standards (Bertie)

No, not all policy is bad - I think there are many aspects of the OfSTED framework which allow schools to effectively self-review. I think the difficulty is when um.. when the inspectors come and they seem to have a fundamentally, have a fairly deeply rooted hypothesis - that's inevitably bound up in English and mathematics and that's what they follow for a day and a half (Charlie)

Charlie can see benefits from the way OfSTED frameworks support their own processes of ‘self-review’, which in turn would facilitate holding their own staff to account, but the short inspection, subjective nature, the variability in quality of inspector and a perceived over-simplistic and heavily weighted view of data may give a skewed view of the school’s quality. There is a risk of ‘confirmation bias’ as the inspectors attempt to prove their ‘deeply rooted hypothesis’.

One counter-argument is that the way the inspection regime has changed to ‘standardise’ teaching, i.e. consistency of practice and progress, has increased accountability for every pupil, not just specific groups. It is less likely, in performance management or inspection, that a teacher who is ‘coasting’ most of the time can sell themselves as higher quality in

a one-off observation, they are now more accountable for ongoing performance and every child in their care.

you're not going to be impressed by a showcased lesson so, with a .. a...I guess, actually it's two phased - improving appraisal and then making that decision that, actually what we are really interested in - and this comes through OfSTED and through Government policy - what we're really interested in is what progress are pupils making (Sam)

Sam recognises and positions themselves positively in line with the policy that has refocused schools on every students' progress, not just raw outcomes or that of the disadvantaged or most able. They also recognise that managing the performance of their staff through 'appraisal' is another improvement gained and this is discussed in greater depth in Appendix O (p. 317).

Despite some positive outcomes from the changes to performative technologies, like inspection, the perception that they lead to unnecessary levels of stress for staff leads to some headteachers deliberately sanitising improvement strategies to remove the stigma of OfSTED association.

I would never stand up in staff briefing and say you're doing this because of OfSTED because I think it's counterproductive. I've seen many Heads come a cropper by doing that. So they're constantly banging on about OfSTED and when OfSTED actually arrive they're suffering from OfSTED fatigue (Bertie)

Bertie suggests that deliberately associating or justifying a strategy with the purpose of meeting OfSTED's needs or perceived preference, is liable to result in 'fatigue', a loss of energy or momentum within their work. This may counterproductively result in negative impact on performance and may also make it harder for the senior team to negotiate valuable symbolic capital with the teaching staff who, as a field, define what is symbolic capital in that field and what is its value. Conversely, success can lead to increased symbolic capital in the field of school leadership from the wider education community, as a sum of the capital in teaching and leadership that all members of the school have negotiated and acquired through different groups of stakeholders. This may lead to

reputational enhancement on an organisational scale with other schools and school leaders seeking guidance on what to do.

we have had a higher footfall, I suppose, of senior staff coming to ask us how we did it, how that worked as soon as you become successful, they want to know what. Yeah, how did you do it... (Sam)

This apparent desire to look for solutions shows that the process is perceived to be enigmatic. It is not obvious what is needed to tick the 'safe' boxes for a grade 1 or 2 at inspection, even though the inspection framework should make that clear and this could be due to the subjective nature of the process as mentioned previously. The stakes are so high, and the anxiety caused severe enough that headteachers will look for any shortcuts or ideas to lower the risk. This can lead to a high stress environment for everyone in the school, which limits meaningful and sustainable improvement to achieve compliance and can negatively impact on the health and wellbeing of staff.

we were put into OFSTED level 3, grade 3 and we were very conscious that the next two years people were working at a pace that we felt was completely and utterly unsustainable (Charlie)

Despite achieving the recognition of compliance by moving to a 'Good' judgement, Charlie's experience was that the pressure of 'improving' the school was not relieved, at least at the level of school leadership.

I was struggling to turn around and say, well we can leave that alone now , we can leave that alone - you couldn't turn around, for example and say, right no we won't make any changes to the curriculum for the next two years because your hands were, you know, your hands were tied. (Charlie)

Having demonstrated the expected 'standards' and convincing a subjective reviewer of their improvement Charlie still felt constrained, 'your hands were tied', imprisoned by the need to sustain the position. The perception of pressure was not relieved as they became subject to the panopticon effects of performative technologies, exercising 'care of self' through the continuation of things that may otherwise have been set aside or 'left alone'.

The consequence of such high stake's accountability is that, what has long been held to be a hugely rewarding role, has lost some of its appeal and, consequently, people are leaving the profession or choosing not to move into Headship.

as [HMI name] said at the Teaching Schools Conference, you know, it's a, he said .. you know, there are more people having career, career changing conversations as a result of OfSTED, you know and it's ..it's .. it takes the joy out of the job, let's put it in those .. those terms (Alex)

if I was younger, um, I thought I wanted to be a Head, actually while I was a Deputy and now I just think, no I'm not doing that. I'm not going to put my whole career on the line if something goes wrong in the school (Frankie)

Alex positions themselves as perceiving the impact of high stakes accountability to be one which reduces job satisfaction, it 'takes the joy' away from what otherwise, through inference, is a joyful job. Frankie positions themselves as managing a perceived high level of risk to their 'whole career', which echoes Alex's statement about 'career changing conversations'. For them, the risk of leading a school in the current high-risk climate is not worthwhile.

CHAPTER FIVE CONCLUDING DISCUSSION

5.1 Introduction

In this concluding chapter I will explore how the findings may be viewed against the research questions, the implications that stem from this and what further research may be needed to extend our knowledge further. I will evaluate my research against Tracy's (2010) Qualitative Quality Criteria to examine how well my project met the aspiration of 'goodness' and to identify what significant contribution I believe my work makes to our current understanding and knowledge of the field.

5.2 Discussion of findings against original research questions

Within this section I will identify and discuss the key findings from the research and how these can be interpreted using the concepts and ideas from my theoretical framework.

5.2.1 How does rapid, standards-led reform impact on Headteachers?

The programme of reform since 1988 has increasingly seen headteachers become the main embodiment of a new 'professional' managerialism, where they are both a subject of change but also the means by which change is achieved. Being both 'agents' and 'subjects' of change in school policy reform has involved a fast paced and ongoing programme of policy enactment, sometimes involving rapid and significant reform and, at other times, smaller tweaks or developments of policy. Headteachers in the project were less concerned about pace but tended to a cynical perception that such change was generated by the personal ambition or ideological objectives of politicians rather than responding to real needs, due in part to a perceived lack of justification through trusted evidence.

Headteachers position themselves as not 'anti-reform' but are clearly better motivated by and are more accepting of reforms which resonate with their own values and beliefs. While the seemingly constant programme of change is accepted as part of the current

education system, not all reform is valued or accepted and this stems from two main concerns, 1) whether the nature of the reform was in line with the personal values of the school leader and 2) how well the Government were perceived to have managed the design and implementation of the policy. They expressed the idealised view that they would stand against policy they felt was against their moral judgement but at the same time indicated fear of consequences for their schools and themselves. They are experiencing a disequilibrium between the ideal politics of their role and real politics.

Reforms may fit with the existing values of the headteacher and culture of the school or conflict with it, they may be 'contained' or 'disruptive' (Ball *et al.*, 2012b, p. 10). There is a significant gap, in the perception of school leaders, between their own values and belief in the purpose of education, the values they apply in their school i.e. their moral purpose; and that of politicians and those responsible for the programme of reform. Where policy tends to disrupt, playing against the values of the headteacher, it is set within an infrastructure of performative technologies and high-risk accountability mechanisms, which require the school leader to balance the risks of non-compliance against their own personal values. They may, of course, feel positive or ambivalent and ensure compliance. They may be reluctant but judge the negative risk to their capital or to performance measures to be more important and comply pragmatically. If they disagree with a policy, do they experience 'subjugation' by ensuring compliance, or do they actively resist through the way they interpret or implement that policy? Some choose to mitigate policy by re-interpreting the policy texts in ways which are more sympathetic to their own values and culture or which allow a simple repurposing of existing structures and strategies within the school. The decision to employ modes of resistance or non-implementation, pragmatically adapting or subverting to a greater or lesser degree, hinges on their own pragmatic threshold and willingness to risk challenging in a way which may have

significant personal and professional performative consequences and I offer a new model for this decision-making process later in this chapter.

To attain school improvement or positive outcomes, headteachers must convince the stakeholders of the school to trust them even when implementing unpopular policies. In so doing they can acquire symbolic capital for themselves in the field of school leadership due to reputational enhancement from actors such as teachers, parents and pupils and this will also benefit the school. This may subsequently have a positive impact on pupil performance and thereby school ‘standards’, which in turn helps them to accumulate further symbolic capital as they are positioned, within the performative discourse, as effective and successful, increasing reputation and thereby credibility.

Politicians are perceived to be out of touch, self-serving and not competent in their role and headteachers report feeling isolated and excluded from the policy making process. There is clear unease that politicians will consult with thinktanks and other ideologically sympathetic partners whilst, in their perception, excluding headteachers and teachers. Negotiating and accumulating symbolic capital in the field of school leadership from stakeholders is made harder by the way headteachers are positioned within education discourses. They were very aware of the ‘discourse of derision’ and felt it to be unjust and unduly influential in the media. Taken together, the publicly held derision alongside the exclusion and isolation of the profession, spotlights a strategy of neoliberal Governmentality. They are subject to ‘abjection’, “an act of force” (Ball, 2013, p. 116) which demotes them from their former position of public trust and social worth, to a position of abnormality, of shame and derision. They are positioned within the neoliberal political discourse of education as part of a problem, “The Blob” (see page 193), acting as an obstruction to reform and through this becoming a threat to an improving economy. The ‘threat’ justifies the need to reduce their collective power, which is achieved through positioning them as ‘failing’ within the education discourse. This may also be recognised

as a neoliberal strategy of Governmentality, the identification of groups as degenerate, aiding their division from what is expected or accepted classifying them as ‘abnormal’ and thus justifying the denial of access to knowledge. Ultimately, this leads to the limiting of their power in the process of policy development at the formative stage, so that they are rendered voiceless and what they are required to implement becomes *fait accomplis*.

Headteachers individually or collectively are not powerless, “resistance is never in a position of exteriority to power” (Foucault, 1981 in Ball, 2013, p. 32), they are still trusted highly by the electorate and some are resisting by creating counter-discourses (Fuller, 2019) which challenge the Government’s accounts, building political power through providing parents with greater knowledge. They may communicate concerns about policy directly with parents, supporting their counter-discourse and they may choose to act collectively through their professional bodies, although some interviewees felt that these were not as effective as they would like. Ultimately, headteachers recognise that their agency allows them to leave the profession when policy requires them to go past their pragmatic threshold or to subjugate their integrity or moral values to an unacceptable degree. The pressure of the need for economic capital, the everyday mundane need to pay the mortgage is a powerful behavioural tool in engendering compliance.

Marketisation and new managerialism discourse positions headteachers as business leaders, employers, financial controllers and ‘subjects’ them to a view of children as system outputs, reduced to data, measured on arrival and exit to judge effectiveness of the system, an industrial model, but one where the raw materials have a relatively high degree of agency to resist their own subjectivation. The research participants reported feeling unprepared for changes in school structures and responsibilities which hold them legally liable for things which were not previously in the purview of headteachers. Headteacher standards and training (NPQH) focus on effective school leadership but not

on business management, and only headteachers with prior experience of the business world felt more confident in dealing with these issues.

The change from bureau-professionalism to new managerialism has introduced ideas which are not all suited to educational leadership and one impact may be an erosion of their personal and professional identities. For some, having to compromise their moral principles and values to pragmatically implement policy and being positioned as responsible for a myriad of society's problems, has a detrimental effect on self-image and mental wellbeing, as I can attest to, personally. With the imposition of new 'professional' subjectivities: "It is not simply that what we do is changed; who we are, the possibilities for who we may become, are also changed" (Ball, 2006, p. 15) and such change may have positive and negative consequences for the individual. Alongside these new subjectivities, headteachers also remain positioned as leading professionals, expected by all stakeholders to be pedagogically expert and capable of leading and developing the quality of teaching and learning in their school as this is hegemonically held to be the determinant of outcomes. Current discourse on school performance constructs the narrative that, if a school's outcomes are low, it must be due to poor teaching and learning, if high, good teaching and learning. Such a simplistic correlation is highly contestable due to the various influences of socio-demographic factors such as ethnicity and deprivation and, yet, it remains a 'non-negotiable' belief within the performative frameworks. Any attempts to rationalise based on school context are commonly seen as excuse-making, effectively silencing discussion around key issues that school may face.

Some headteachers feel they do not have time to continue teaching, something they believe helps build capital with their staff as they can demonstrate pedagogical expertise pertinent to the position of lead practitioner. If they do teach, which for some is essential despite the potential disruption to learning, there is concern over how their other commitments will impact on the experience of their students and they may feel 'deskilled'

or too distracted by their responsibilities. Not being able to produce their own highest standards of practice leaves them concerned about staff perceptions negatively impacting on reputation, which may be understood as an erosion of symbolic capital negotiated with other actors in the field of teaching. This could reduce teacher trust in their performative judgements, consequently damaging their ability to lead their schools effectively. The overall impact of these issues can be increased stress and anxiety, contributing to the cumulative erosion of experienced leadership as existing teachers and headteachers retire or leave early “as a result of a perceived drop in the standards their schools are achieving” (Roberts, 2018) and deputies show little appetite for an increasingly unforgiving role.

5.2.2 Do claims of greater autonomy for Headteachers match their experiences?

There was some inconsistency in the perceptions of headteachers when it came to their autonomy and I think this is in large part because such matters are situated, specific to the institution that the individual works for, but also in how the individual positions themselves. The Government academisation programme has been built, in part, upon the appeal of casting off the shackles of local government control and having ‘autonomy’ (Gove, 2011), but it has been demonstrated that such autonomy is not achievable in reality, particularly when considering the impact of subsequent policy, such as the promotion of MAT membership (West and Wolfe, 2018). Some of the interviewees rejected the idea that they had autonomy, outright. The restrictions of funding and teacher supply combined with the perceived straitjacket of panoptic performative technologies such as threshold targets and league tables, led them to conclude that their options for autonomous decision making and actions were highly limited. A couple of participants felt that they did have autonomy, but they specified it as within certain limits, autonomy to appoint staff, for example. How autonomous they feel may be a function of their realism about what they ‘should’ be allowed to do and what they can do. If they have

experienced highly controlling local authority direction, the switch to Academy status may indeed feel like greater autonomy, but for those expecting free reign in all things, disappointment is likely.

Some participants valued the greater performative autonomy they had been given, the ability to confront and deal with perceived underperformance of colleagues more rapidly, even despite their objections to how this operates at a system level. However, the autonomy to do so is offset against the current challenging climate in terms of being able to successfully recruit quality replacements. The recruitment context binds and limits the headteachers actions and restricts their perceived level of autonomy.

Within a publicly funded and accountable system it would be foolish to expect complete autonomy, even private schools have an inspection regime and legislation they must adhere to. What headteachers experience is more quasi or pseudo-autonomy, a semi-autonomous reality where they may have free will in some things but where technologies of Governmentality create a performative panopticon, influencing behaviour to ensure compliance (normativity) to Government, LA or Trust dictat. It has been argued that the increasing tendency of schools to maintain OfSTED type surveillance, even beyond inspection, and the increased planning and preparation for OfSTED has now produced a post-panoptic performative system, keeping schools in a state of readiness at all times, despite the challenge and stress that results (Perryman *et al.*, 2018). Education discourse and policy, both at Government and local Trust / LA level, speaks the ‘responsible’ headteacher, and performative technologies bind and limit the choices that can be made without negative consequences. Headteachers act as self-governing individuals, positioning themselves in line with policy pragmatically, or subverting policy through interpretation where they feel the risk is low; trying to fit, or at least appear to fit the ‘norm’ of the responsible school leader. As Ball (2013) pointed out, they are unable to escape the “regime of truth”, a term coined by Foucault.

5.2.2.1 How a Headteacher may choose to implement policy

Policy enactment and implementation will affect many different actors as it progresses through the system, including pupils, parents and teachers. Ultimately however, it is the headteacher ‘actor’ who is accountable for the implementation of policy and they do have autonomy in terms of their agency to comply or resist as they find themselves in “a continuous quest to find a marriage of convenience between dutiful compliance and intellectual subversion” (MacBeath, J. (2008) in *Educational Leadership: Context, Strategy and Collaboration*, 2012, p. 171). This is an important concept and to this end I have visualised a conceptualisation of the process for how a headteacher makes these decisions by considering aspects of identity, pragmatic threshold and negotiation of capital within the various fields associated with their role. My model is an original contribution to the field and can help us understand how policy processes may be ‘managed’ by headteachers and how and why they may choose to resist (Figure 5.1). Please note that while this purely focuses on the direct experience of the headteacher it does consider how the other actors will influence the headteacher’s experience, as symbolic and social capital will be negotiated within those relationships.

When policy is enacted through ‘disciplinary’ power it becomes a matter of ‘care of the self’. Once the headteacher accesses the policy through policy texts, they ‘translate’ it (Ball *et al.*, 2012b) and consider how it fits with their values, available resources, cross-contamination with other policies and other considerations making it “simultaneously a process of invention and compliance” (Ball *et al.*, 2012b, p. 48). They reflect on the potential impact it may have on their school and consequently on what effect it may have on their ability to negotiate capital in the fields most relevant to them, such as social capital across their networks and cultural capital through the fields of school leadership and teaching. They may also consider, if the consequences are potentially job threatening, what impact it may have on their current and potential economic capital. The degree to

which a policy opposes fundamental values, fear of loss of job or capital through performative consequences and innate pragmatic threshold, how morally flexible (integrity) they can be without causing a crisis of identity, all influence, consciously or unconsciously, how compliant or resistant they will be when deciding how to implement the policy. The decision-making process will respond to the perceived impact on personal capital, but also capital for the school and colleagues stemming from any risk to reputation and the subsequent impact on the recruitment of good teachers and aspirational pupils. Decisions, then, will also be influenced by local and national contexts in terms of funding and recruitment potential. The process is also a cyclic one where the impact of implementing a policy, how they position themselves or have been positioned by others, can influence subsequent actions depending on the individual's perception of how they or their school has been affected.

The headteacher may decide that the policy is beneficial and agreeable and implement it in line with their interpretation and as allowed by funding or resource constraints. I refer to this as 'sympathetic compliance' as opposed to MacBeath's (2008) "dutiful compliance". However, if they feel that the policy is wanting, their innate pragmatism and pragmatic threshold will guide to what degree they comply or resist. They may choose to implement the policy in line with their interpretation because they feel that there is little point resisting and, if it falls below their pragmatic threshold, it doesn't place their sense of integrity or identity at risk of crisis. I refer to this as pragmatic compliance. Some participants admitted to subverting policy to enable apparent 'performative' compliance without the need for changing what they were doing.

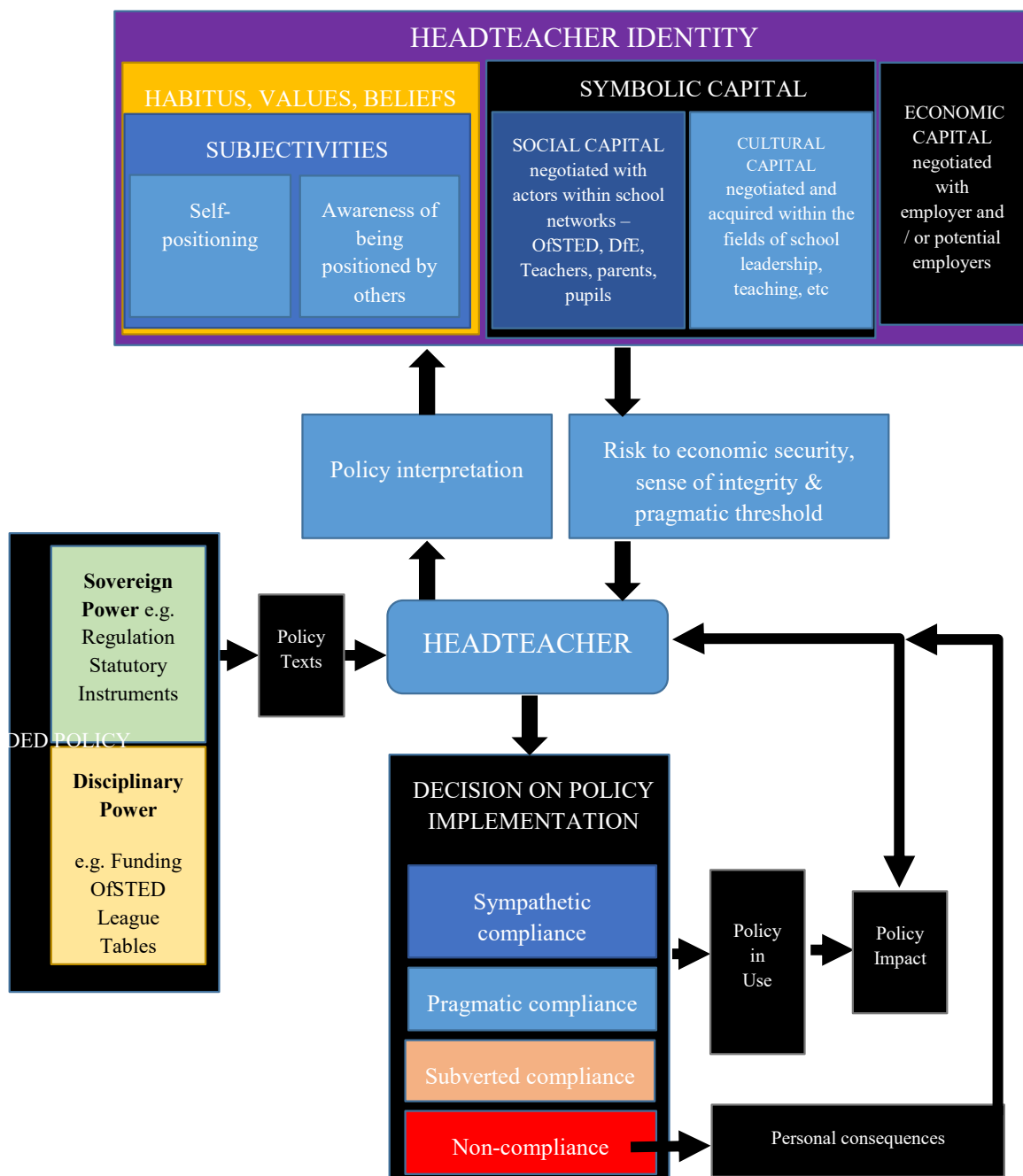


Figure 5.1: Factors involved in how headteachers decide whether to resist or comply with reform

In this case they will be aiming for the semblance of compliance, but may employ strategies such as “game playing, selectivity, masquerade and reinvention” (Fuller, 2019, p. 33). This approach is attributed by Fuller (2019) as a form of resistance but for this model I will refer to this as subverted compliance as I perceive resistance to be a much

broader issue, which may be present even within acts of compliance, through counter-discourses or critical reflections and utterances (ibid). Finally, should the headteacher feel the policy is unacceptable and potentially damaging to their school, staff or pupils, they may choose to act more forcefully through “resistance such as rejection, refusal and / or collective action” (Fuller, 2019, p. 35), ultimately failing to implement the policy. I refer to this as non-compliance. This decision may have significant consequences for them, personally, so at this point they will have been pushed beyond their pragmatic threshold. They will have decided the risk of crisis to their integrity or identity, and potentially health / mental health and ability to negotiate and accumulate the different forms of capital, is sufficiently high that the potential impact of losing their job, or of being held to account by those who created the policy through technologies of Governmentality and performativity, is worth refusing to implement the policy.

Where they choose to draw the ‘compliance’ line will be specific to the individual’s sense of integrity and risk tolerance, where ‘care of the self’ is the technology used to encourage normative behaviour in practices where disciplinary power is used rather than the more overtly binding instruments of sovereign power. Consequences of being positioned as abnormal in either mode are real and further restrict the headteacher’s perceived sense of autonomy. Having complied or resisted the policy, the subsequent impact on school or self may lead to reconsideration and a change in level of compliance. In the case of those who initially complied, if the policy impact is such that it appears to be resulting in unacceptable consequences for stakeholders, the headteacher may switch to a mode of non-compliance. To this end there is a feedback loop in the decision-making system, where the headteacher remains the locus of control.

5.2.3 Are there examples of reforms which have impacted positively on standards?

To judge whether a policy has impacted on standards, there first needs to be a shared understanding of what standards are, what their purpose is and a degree of continuity over which any change in the attainment of such standards can be measured. Participants reflected an acceptance of the necessity of inspection for a publicly funded system, and an understanding that standards are how schools are measured, be it through OfSTED inspection grading descriptions or Governmental threshold measures. The suitability and fairness of the standards themselves and the processes used to make judgements were, however, challenged.

Standards are supposed to represent an objective measure of a school's performance, but increasingly the processes and systems which measure them are dependent on subjective performative technologies (inspection) or are subject to statistical manipulation to ensure the reproduction of the nation's performance profile. OfSTED's frequent changes to their frameworks and the tendency of the DfE to 'change the goalposts' mid-process, reinforced the participants' perceptions that those in charge are incompetent or are acting without regard for the impact on schools, particularly if there is insufficient time for schools to adjust their approaches before the accountability system judges them. The tendency of OfSTED judgements to show greater likelihood of low inspection grading outcomes if the school serves a more deprived, white British community also calls into question the purpose of such standards, when schools with low judgements are forcibly Academised, and participants expressed concern about both the inconsistency in competence of inspectors and the subjective nature of the process where schools can become victim of prejudice and confirmation bias.

Headteachers in areas with high socio-economic deprivation and predominantly white-British cohorts feel that they are being expected to meet impossible expectations and feel disadvantaged by the consequences of the discourse of derision and the contexts of their pupils. The literature shows that success in the market may be gained through recruiting

middle-class children who should attend well, be compliant and who will bring the accumulated cultural and social capital of their middle-class families to benefit the school. Ensuring that non-compliant children and families are dissuaded from enrolling can also impact, driving an increase in zero-tolerance behaviour policies and illegal exclusion. Instead of being a measure of what has been achieved, the 'standards' have become a focus in themselves, driving school behaviours, even when they are perceived to be against the best interests of pupils, and this is reflective of a post-panoptic mode of inspection and accountability. The OfSTED judgement acts as a recruitment stimulus for both pupils and teachers and has become commodified, aiding the reproduction of advantage as middle-class and aspirant parents exercise 'choice' within the market. Headteachers recognise the risk of slipping into a spiral of decline if a poor inspection grade is achieved.

Participants identified policies that they perceived to have had a positive impact and these were varied in nature. The main policies identified reinforced the headteacher's self-positioning as being morally driven, with Every Child Matters (DfES, 2003), under New Labour, and the Pupil Premium being identified by several headteachers. These programmes aspired to aid social mobility by ensuring that children from poorer backgrounds were not relegated in importance behind those more likely to achieve the performative targets, e.g. % A*-C Grades including English and maths. There was recognition that the extra money that Every Child Matters and Pupil Premium brought into schools was very useful, but there was also acknowledgement that it was the performative lens, the required forensic focus on those students, which had allowed schools to meet their needs more effectively and particularly regarding targeting their aspirations and level of parental support such students receive. The changes to capabilities processes allowed headteachers to challenge underperformance and remove ineffective teachers, the abnormal or irresponsible in a Foucauldian sense, more quickly with the aim

of faster improvement, although this has been subsequently hampered by the significant challenges in recruiting high quality staff. The tension here is that the very issues that headteachers felt aggrieved about from a school accountability perspective became more positive when viewed from the position of their own ability to manage performance in their school.

Pupil Premium and Every Child Matters, focus on the perceived deficiencies of the disadvantaged (mainly ‘working class’) children and the moral aim of facilitating social mobility and ‘closing the gap’ between the performance of the middle-class and the disadvantaged. Headteachers do reproduce the normative expectations of ideal parenting and expect parents to send their children to school and support school expectations on the ‘standards’ of behaviour and attendance. It is through the school’s focus on these parents and their children’s attendance, that improvements in key measures may be achieved. Policies which position and objectify parents as “socially and politically irresponsible” enact ‘dividing practices’ (Foucault, 1979 in Ball, 2008, location 3648), and a narrative is constructed which sees such parents as being incapable of ‘ideal’ parenting, forcing the state / school to intervene, with the effects of social inequality positioned as being due to failures on personal or educative practice, rather than as effects of other social or economic policies. Such discourse positions parents who may not have the economic and cultural capital to conform to the normalised expectations of ideal parenting, as “lacking initiative or strength of character; irresponsible” (OUP, 2018).

Parents who do not possess the middle class / cultural tools to comply, or who actively resist or challenge their ‘subject’ position through facilitating poor attendance, being unsupportive of school uniform and behaviour policies; are formally identified as irresponsible through both local and national mechanisms of accountability, parent / teacher meetings, headteacher interviews, governors’ disciplinary panels and local authority attendance procedures. The participants identified these parents as failing to

meet expectations, the term ‘feckless’ was used, and they position themselves as sympathetic to the normative expectations of ideal parenting. Thereby, the headteacher becomes a technology of Governmentality for parents as they respond to and position themselves in line with the discourse and the normative expectations of parental behaviour, pragmatically positioning themselves as helping or supporting a child’s educational improvement through holding the parents to account. In so doing they position the parent as ‘abnormal’ and themselves as morally superior to the aberrant parent(s), even while recognising that these parents may lack the tools to meet the normalised expectations. Applying disciplinary procedures to the parents allows the headteacher to exercise power, justified through moral purpose, and can result in fines and court orders for such parents, officially validating their irresponsibility. Parents resisting these normative expectations could expose the head to censure and they may find themselves being positioned as ‘failing’. The process encourages the continued reproduction of middle-class ‘standards’ and advantage and helps maintain the ‘gap’ between them and the working classes whose values and cultural norms are not represented in policy.

Finally, another policy which participants recognised as having had more positive impact was the change from the old performative measure of 5A*-C to a progress-based measure. The focus on the progress of all children and not just those around the threshold of the C grade, was widely accepted as a good thing as it was perceived to be a fairer measure, as well as for any benefit it brought children. Headteachers argue that by removing the focus on the boundary grades more children benefit from intervention and support and thus standards rise. Unfortunately, having implemented this at the same time as the changes to GCSEs were being introduced, schools which work in poorer areas with high proportions of white British disadvantaged students continue to be disadvantaged (Thomson, 2018),

as the new progress measures failed to act as a more objective measure and schools with the most selective and middle-class intakes continued to dominate.

5.3 Evaluation of my research

In chapter three I outlined how Tracy (2010) had developed a list of criteria to establish an overarching, common framework for judging the quality or goodness of qualitative research. In this section I will examine my work against these criteria.

Ninety-one completed surveys and 11 hours of transcribed interviews provided me with rich data and allowed rigorous analysis. The context and sample were suitable and adequate for the aims of the study and appropriate methods have been used as discussed earlier in Chapter 3.

I kept my mind open, regardless of my earlier hypotheses, to being wrong and have been intellectually curious about what I may discover. I meet Tracy's test for sincerity by being open and approachable rather than "snobbish" (Tracy, 2010, p. 842), through direct communication with my research participants, offering them choice over location of interview and the opportunity to redact statements (within time limits) and by communicating gratitude for their participation when following up after interview.

I pride myself on being self-aware and reflexive. I am honest about the risks of my own biases and work hard to examine and consider the impact my own beliefs and practices have on my interpretation of the views expressed by my subjects. I have recorded the processes of reflection as part of my research piloting. I also presented a round table discussion on early findings from my work at a Post Graduate research conference at Plymouth University, Plymouth (June 2015), where I talked about survey findings which had presented in opposition to my expectations, using the opportunity to discuss and explore why this may have been with colleagues.

To achieve a high degree of credibility, I attempted to “show” (Tracy, 2010, p. 843) as much as possible within the restrictions of a word count, rather than tell, using direct quotes from the research participants. I also ensured that the work had greater credibility through triangulation, choosing to use two research methods on top of the literature review. The complexity of reality means there is no neat overlaying of findings or data to every research paradigm (Tracy, 2010), the use of multiple methods allows “different facets of problems to be explored, increases scope, deepens understanding, and encourages consistent (re) interpretation.” (Tracy, 2010, p. 843).

Tracy (2010) suggest two modes of evaluation for resonance, ‘aesthetic merit’ and ‘generalizability / transferability’. I would like to believe that my work has aesthetic merit. I have tried to write it in a readable and accessible style, and this has been supported by the comments of my supervision team. My work can still be improved further. No matter how ‘expert’ one may become, and I am always open to critique and feedback on my writing as well as being self-reflective and reflexive.

I also believe that this work will resonate with the experiences of school leaders across England. I would not be so naïve or arrogant as to claim ‘all’, but I know from conversations with my colleagues and reading professional publications, that the experiences and perceptions I have presented are transferable to the situations of many Headteachers and Principals. I have, in effect, gathered “direct testimony” (Tracy, 2010, p. 845) and I believe I have presented it accessibly and ‘invitationally’ (ibid) so that colleagues can see their own experience reflected or, just as importantly and as valid, identify where their experiences differ from those in this Thesis and any subsequent papers arising from it.

The research has been conducted within the ethical requirements of the Plymouth University and was approved as appropriate at the start of the process through the research

proposal (Appendix R, p. 329 & Appendix S, p. 341). Throughout the process I have ensured the highest levels of ethical consideration for the subjects in terms of procedure, minimised harm, ensured that my practice was not deceptive and followed ethical principles of informed consent and right to withdraw. I operated under a high degree of *relational ethics* (Tracy, 2010), attempting to behave empathetically and considerately, considering the potential impact of participation on my subjects. Finally, I continue to consider the impact on the subjects through *exiting ethics* (*ibid*), having agreed in advance to allow all participants to see the final version of the transcript of their interview and to share the research once the paper is completed.

I have been able to address my findings to the research questions and have used different theories and ideas, including concepts espoused by Ball, Foucault and Bourdieu, to help explain these experiences in a way which creates new knowledge and understanding. I have, throughout, reflected on the literature to ensure that all aspects of the research are interconnected.

5.4 Contribution of this work to knowledge

5.4.1 I Identify a perceived dissonance in the purpose and value of education between headteachers and politicians.

The first significant contribution is to demonstrate that there appears to exist, in the perceptions of headteachers, a fundamental dissonance between their values and those of politicians. This is not to claim that there are no shared values, rather that priorities are different. Key to this is the driving “moral” purpose for headteachers which is focused at the human level of the children they work with day in and day out. Education is about, at a very personal ‘micro’ level, ensuring that their children are happy, safe and prepared for life. Headteachers are emotionally connected to their work and the life chances of

their children, which supports the expectations of parents. In return they can negotiate and accumulate, from the different fields and social networks, the essential social capital needed to raise standards and improve outcomes for all. At a very local and personal level, ‘capital’, success and reputation are built on these relationships. Headteachers perceive politicians’ priority to be on a macro scale, promoting reform as an economic necessity but losing sight of the individual lives that policy change impacts. Children and staff are subjugated to the demands of the market and performative comparisons.

The disconnect and the way in which headteacher behaviours are nudged and constrained through performative technologies and the normative discourse (through care of the self), has resulted in a sense of isolation, of being undervalued and of the oft promoted autonomy being seriously restricted. This is further amplified by feelings of disempowerment and disenfranchisement within their own field, as politicians appear to value only sympathetic voices, vested interests and personal ideological peccadillos. Professional voices are further undermined through the discourse of derision which, while rooted in a genuine sense of frustration with perceived anti-reform, obstructive attitudes of the profession; has become a technology of Governmentality. Headteachers, through ‘care of the self’ work to avoid being positioned as abnormal, a ‘failing’ headteacher or school within this discourse which, promoted by politicians through a sympathetic press, may have helped achieve the aim of positioning them as unworthy of having a voice. This has made the selling of marketisation and reform easier with the population but, from the headteachers’ perspective, it has eroded the trust between those who create and those who implement policy. The result has been a negative impact on recruitment and retainment of teachers and school leaders, discouraging some from taking on these roles and from working in areas where outcomes and OfSTED judgements are low.

5.4.2 I introduce a new conceptual model for the process by which a headteacher decides to comply with or resist reforms

Headteachers find themselves faced with making significant decisions as to how to implement policy, particularly when the policy is fundamentally opposed to their own values and ‘moral purpose’, or they believe it may be damaging to their pupils, staff or themselves. I have developed and proposed a conceptual model for this process aligning the policy implementation process with the way in which the headteacher may decide to comply or resist (Fig. 5.1). This draws on Foucault’s concept of care of the self within a panoptic performative landscape and Bourdieu’s framing concepts of capital, field and habitus to visualise how a headteacher may consider their interpretation of the policy text and decide whether to sympathetically comply, pragmatically comply, comply but with subversive intent or actively resist. This decision process will involve weighing the risks to their sense of self, integrity and values and their ability to negotiate economic capital and symbolic capital in the fields of school leadership and teaching, with the potential impact and personal consequences of that decision. The point at which they are unable to act pragmatically to comply and choose to resist I have called their pragmatic threshold. This is the point at which resistance, and its performative consequences, are chosen over potential crisis of identity and subsequent health and or mental health difficulties. I believe this model will be useful to the field for considering how best to work positively with school leaders to achieve policy aims without worsening the current recruitment and retention crisis.

5.4.3 I Identify an emerging need for improved training for Headship to strengthen business management skills

A second contribution is in the identification of how reforms have led to new tasks being allocated to headteachers which had not previously been a feature of headteacher training.

Before the 1988 Act and even during the first phase of marketisation with local management of schools, the main legal and financial risks were mitigated by local authorities, leaving headteachers to focus on operational functions and teaching and learning. To that end the NPQH programme offered, arguably, sufficient preparation for the induction phase of headship when built on the foundations of teaching and middle / senior leadership experience. The relatively recent and rapid increase of privatised, publicly funded academies has exposed headteachers to a range of new responsibilities manifest around the marketisation of schools. Legal and fiscal responsibility has been assumed without, for many, adequate training or preparation. Headteachers feel ill prepared for risks and demands of these new responsibilities and, while they may be able to purchase or access professional services on a commissioning basis, the severe pressure on funding makes this a difficult choice. Even if they do access such services, employing staff directly or commissioning a service provider, they may lack adequate expertise to monitor effectively whilst still retaining legal responsibility. Failure to comply with regulations can result in loss of symbolic capital negotiated within the field of school leadership, employment and even imprisonment if financial regulations are breached.

5.4.4 Identifying the complexity of 'standards' and its use as discourse, commodity and political tool

This research into the experiences of headteachers has offered insights into the complexity and commodification of 'standards' in education discourse. The term 'standards' has multiple meanings, be it educational outcomes through examination results, behaviours and values demonstrated by practitioners, operational measures judged subjectively by OfSTED, expectations held by schools and stakeholders, etc. While standards have been objectified within policy texts, such as OfSTED handbooks and teacher / headteacher standards, the judgement of whether such standards are being met is a predominantly subjective matter and, as such, open to abuse or conscious /

unconscious confirmation bias and even apparently empirical measures are being openly statistically managed. As a result, outcomes-based standards may not be an accurate reflection of performance. The complexity of meaning and the tendency in discourse to accept perceptions as real measures, combined with the ability of the incumbent Government to control many of the measures used; has rendered the term so opaque as to be meaningless.

Standards can be seen to be a political discourse, but they are also now promoted and supported by government as a technology of the market, a means to promote schools which are successful or compliant within the normative discourse of schooling. Therein lies a dichotomy. Government control the measures and technologies upon and by which schools are judged and there is little trust, based on perceptions built from experience, that they will not / do not abuse that position. Compliance has been rewarded through promotional strategies, e.g. OfSTED Outstanding logos, offering official validation that a school fits the Government's normative model. This has disproportionately benefited schools with more able and more middle-class demographics.

5.5 Limitations of study

This thesis has focused on the perceptions of headteachers who are practicing in a time of significant policy change. While the research has been designed to ensure validity and reliability within the limits defined in Chapter 3, there are other limitations which need to be taken into consideration when considering the transferability of the findings and analysis. The two forms of data generation were both conducted at a relatively small scale and, as such, their perceptions cannot be applied to all headteachers and school leaders unilaterally. I ensured that the interview process was rigorous, in line with Tracy's (2010) framework discussed earlier, and I am confident, through my own experience and

conversations with school leaders more widely, that they are representative more generally.

Another limitation relates to the historical and cultural relevance of the research. The data was collected at a specific point in time during a period of significant reform in education and schooling. While the research asked for reflections over a wider period of experience, it is important to note that the data collected will be valid only as evidence of the subjects' perceptions at the point it was collected. This is a valid criticism of qualitative study in general and I do not believe it reduces the validity or usefulness of the work. It is situated at the time of collection and cannot be inferred to have specific meaning at points before or after the collection. I would reflect, from my experience of conducting this research, that headteachers tended to be focused on more recent events and their reported perceptions were greatly coloured by their current concerns, meaning that exploring a broader period was quite difficult for them. I would posit that the pace and degree of reform has continued and the current crisis in recruitment supports the perceptions shared during this work and demonstrates a longevity to the findings applicable to the general processes of rapid reform.

An additional consideration has been my own positionality in this research. I proposed in my methodology that I was both insider and outsider and I would argue that this has in some ways acted as a limitation but in others strengthened my work. As an insider I was emotionally grounded in the field of research and this could be seen as having limited my perspective. I worked hard to avoid this happening, taking a reflective approach throughout and self-auditing at each step. I would argue that I was in fact more empowered and able to interpret and relate more closely to the meanings that were captured through the process. My positionality as an insider meant that meanings were shared, and although I could not fully comprehend what it means to be a headteacher, I could at least accurately translate the perspectives and experiences shared into relevant

and useful data. It is very probable that a different researcher, say a serving headteacher, would take a different line in this research, perhaps avoiding aspects which expose their role in reproduction of disadvantage and the dichotomous nature of their dislike of accountability for then while celebrating the increased accountability they hold over others. They might be more aggressive in exposing other aspects of practice that I have not had insight to. Such an approach would be equally valid, but I believe my approach has produced meaningful, useful and valid outcomes.

5.6 Implications for professional practice

The English system of secondary schooling is at a critical point in its development where the negative consequences of continuous, rapid, standards-based reform are starting to limit any benefits which may have been attained. It is good to see improvements in standards of teaching and outcomes for young people, but that will be scant comfort if the system starts to collapse due to lack of qualified staff and experienced school leaders. Evidence is already showing that, outside of London, the number of unqualified teachers is increasing, putting continued improvement at risk (Sibieta, 2018; Busby, 2018). If politicians are to reverse the teacher and headteacher shortages and rebuild trust between themselves and the profession, they must address the perceived dissonance in values, the headteacher training programmes and ensure clear, unambiguous and objective use of standards, addressing the concerns over the punitive nature of performative technologies and the subjective inconsistency in inspection.

Reform would be far more readily accepted if it was clearly evidenced-based rather than driven by (perceived) ideological preferences of politicians and vested interests and if headteachers felt that they had been able to contribute to policy development. Schools need time and resourcing to implement new policies and the changing of performative frameworks and measures alongside major reforms of curriculum, have put enormous

stress on the system and the goodwill of school leaders. Implementation timescales need more careful consideration and consultation, particularly when multiple policy strands are reforming at the same time. Greater consideration should also be given to the potential implications and impact of reforms in terms of their influence or direct and unintended effects on other initiatives and in all cases, any process of reform or policy implementation should have clearly defined impact evaluation processes built in.

Standards, in the form of performance measures, are generally accepted as a necessary evil and claims that reforms are undertaken to address endemic social inequalities should be taken at face value by headteachers in order to address their apparent cynicism. Politicians do need to ensure that systems of measurement and accountability are not, even inadvertently, aiding the reproduction of such inequalities if true systemic improvement is to be achieved, and this requires a forensic level of evaluation. It is an almost impossible task to ensure a “fair” model of comparison in such a diverse system. There can be no one-size fits all as there is little universality between funding, socio-demographic makeups and prior attainments of most schools. That very diversity of context should inform the ‘Progress 8’ performance measurement policy, rather than being seen as an ‘excuse’ by OfSTED. This could start with a realistic analysis of how progress can be measured in a way which is fair and equitable to all schools, regardless of the socioeconomic demographic that they serve and, consequently, the development of less damaging form of school inspection for those who work in the most challenging schools. Current concerns, such as the reduction in Deputies willing to risk their careers in taking on a challenging school, could be addressed through positive incentives and support. At present, the risks of moving to this type of role are too high, and the benefits of gaining experience in these contexts are being overpowered by those risks. Taking on a challenging school needs to be re-framed as an opportunity for leadership development. For example, it would be possible to extend the NPQH to include a period seconded to

such a school and any school identified as high risk should be automatically allocated a National Leader of Education (NLE) with proven experience in these contexts as a critical friend, ideally one who also had experience as an OfSTED inspector. This would provide essential mentoring and experience to draw on but also act as a mediating voice and quality control for school governance and inspection teams to draw on.

As far as the monitoring of standards are concerned through school inspection policy, OfSTED must allow greater transparency of, and stability in the processes it uses. Reducing the revision of frameworks would allow headteachers to build greater confidence in the 'standard' they are attempting to achieve, aiding more consistent and sustainable improvement work. Lack of confidence in the inspectorate is a significant issue and OfSTED should reform its subjective approach to school inspection if they are to convince school leaders that they are there to help support schools and raise standards, rather than exist simply to police policy and enable the academisation or privatisation of schools, as low inspection grades act as a trigger. Additionally, turning OfSTED into a truly independent inspectorate, with the power to hire and fire removed from the Secretary of State, and including school leaders within the governance arrangements could ensure that the process becomes a valued aid to monitoring quality and aiding school improvement. Doing this would create a more democratic process of accountability and ensure that checks and balances exist to reduce potential bias. Maintaining the ability to rapidly address critical concerns is vital but such an approach would help develop greater credibility and alleviate the perception that there are other motives and agendas in play.

Headteachers feel ill prepared for a vastly changed role and are increasingly frustrated at being isolated from policy discourse and decision making and the disproportionate impact that the Inspectorate has on their professional lives. Ensuring that headteachers are well prepared for the role can only have a positive impact and it should be possible to develop the National Professional Qualification programmes so that they act as a means for

developing business knowledge and skills and clear awareness of ethical and legal responsibilities, for aspirant headteachers. Giving headteachers a more significant role in the discussion and development of policy, through professional bodies or non-partisan secondments, could aid in reducing the sense of isolation and help generate practice and evidence informed strategies to achieve Government aims.

There needs to be far greater strategic planning for the education system on a cross party basis. A programme of long-term development could go a long way to stabilising the system and re-establishing mutual trust. Some effort spent on celebrating the work done by schools and teachers and a deliberate rolling back of the discourse of derision, coupled with a more compassionate approach to support for failing schools, would also aid a wider re-establishment of trust from parents and an increase in social capital and outcomes for schools. A Royal Commission has been suggested (Vaughan, 2016) and that may be a way to negotiate a consensus around the core purpose of schooling and its structures. Achieving consensus could facilitate a much longer term, sustainable programme of improvement.

5.7 Areas for further research

This research has offered a glimpse into a complex and fascinating aspect of English education and offers numerous routes for further research.

The research opportunity that would be most interesting to me is to look more closely at the impact of change on headteacher subjectivity and identity, following a more narrative inquiry approach, to explore their experience more fully than interview questions allow and over a far greater period, introducing a longitudinal element. This would perhaps combine a self-reflection approach and timeline against policy developments and changes. Such an approach, conducted across a range of school types, could illustrate where key pressures have the most direct impact on headteachers, providing diagnostic

indicators that could be used to help plan more effective policy implementation processes and to address the causes of headteacher burn out and problems with recruitment and retention. It would also be an effective model for capturing where headteachers find themselves or their training wanting in terms of the activities and responsibilities they must undertake. This in turn could be used to inform the review and development of the headteacher preparation programmes offered by the National College.

Another aspect which requires more research is to try and measure the actual impact of changing 'standards', OfSTED inspection outcomes and policy objectives to directly evidence the correlation between policy and recruitment and retention. A centralised 'exit' survey system, which all levels of practitioner would be asked to complete when leaving, could provide relevant information. This would facilitate system-wide feedback on specific reasons for leaving teaching / school leadership, but also for movement to other schools. Such a process could facilitate greater understanding of the reasons for the decline in interest in taking on headship and provide information down to individual school level. This would provide hard data for the impact on schools in different contexts. There is a risk that schools would try to influence feedback to ensure reputational protection and that disgruntled employees might act maliciously in giving feedback, so the processes would have to be carefully thought through.

REFERENCES

- Adams, P. (2014) *Policy and Education. Foundations of Education Studies* London: Routledge, p. 180.
- Adonis, A. (2012) *Education, Education, Education: Reforming England's Schools* London: Biteback Publishing (Accessed: 09/02/2016).
- Ahmed, K., Hinsliff, G. and Bright, M. (2002) *How Estelle learnt the toughest lesson of all*. The Guardian. www.theguardian.com: Guardian news and media Ltd. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2002/oct/27/publicservices.schools> (Accessed: 09/02/2016 2016).
- Alexander, R. J. (2010) 'Speaking but not listening? Accountable talk in an unaccountable context', *Literacy*, 44(3), pp. 103-111.
- Apple, M. W. (1986) *Teachers and Texts: A Political Economy of Class and Gender Relations in Education*. New York: Routledge.
- Apple, M. W. (1995) *Education and Power*. Second edn. New York: Routledge.
- ASCL (2017) *About Us*. <http://www.ascl.org.uk>: Association of School and College Leaders. Available at: <http://www.ascl.org.uk/about-us/> (Accessed: 12/03/2017 2017).
- Ball, S. (1993) 'What is policy? Texts, trajectories and toolboxes', *Discourse*, 13(2), pp. 8.
- Ball, S. (1994) *Education Reform: A critical and post-structural approach*. Buckingham: Open University Press.
- Ball, S. 'Global Trends in Educational Reform and the Struggle for the Soul of the Teacher!', *British Educational Research Association Annual Conference*, University of Sussex at Brighton, 2-5 September 1999. www.leeds.ac.uk: Centre for Public Policy Research, King's College London.
- Ball, S. (2003) 'The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity', *Journal of Education Policy*, 18(2), pp. 215-228.
- Ball, S. (2007) *Education plc: Understanding private sector participation in public sector education*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Ball, S. (2008) *The Education Debate* Bristol, UK: The Policy Press.
- Ball, S. (2013) *Foucault, Power and Education. Routledge Key Ideas in Education* first edn. New York: Routledge.
- Ball, S. (2015) 'Education: who runs our schools?', in *In Defence of Welfare*. pp. 83-86 [Online]. Version. Available at: http://www.social-policy.org.uk/wordpress/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/23_ball.pdf.
- Ball, S. and Exley, S. (2011) *Something old, something new....understanding Conservative education policy*: UK Social Policy Association. Available at: http://www.social-policy.org.uk/lincoln/ball_exley.pdf.
- Ball, S., Maguire, M., Braun, A., Hoskins, K. and Perryman, J. (2012a) *How Schools Do Policy: Policy Enactments in Secondary Schools* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge (Accessed: 30/03/2015).
- Ball, S. J. (2006) *Education policy and social class : the selected works of Stephen J. Ball*. New York: Routledge.
- Ball, S. J. (2012) 'Performativity, Commodification and Commitment: An I-Spy Guide to the Neoliberal University', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 60(1), pp. 17-28.

- Ball, S. J. (2016) 'Subjectivity as a site of struggle: refusing neoliberalism?', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 37(8), pp. 1129-1146.
- Ball, S. J. and Bowe, R. (1992) 'Subject departments and the "implementation" of national curriculum policy: An overview of the issues', *Journal of curriculum studies*, 24(2), pp. 97-115.
- Ball, S. J., Maguire, M., Braun, A., Hoskins, K. and Perryman, J. (2012b) *How Schools Do Policy: Policy Enactments in Secondary Schools* Abingdon: Routledge [Kindle] (Accessed: 4th May 2015).
- Ball, S. J. and Olmedo, A. (2013) 'Care of the self, resistance and subjectivity under neoliberal governmentalities', *Critical Studies in Education*, 54(1), pp. 85-96.
- Bartlett, S. and Burton, D. (2012) *Introduction to Education Studies*. 3rd edition edn. London: Sage.
- Barton, G. (2015) 'Schools, yield no longer. Let's reclaim education.', *Times Educational Supplement*, (5144), pp. 75.
- Bates, J., Lewis, S. and Pickard, A. (2011) *Education Policy, Practice and the Professional*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Beckmann, A., Cooper, C. and Hill, D. (2009) 'Neoliberalization and managerialization of 'education' in England and Wales – a case for reconstructing education ', *Journal for Critical Policy Studies*, 7(2), pp. 310-345.
- Belcher, D. (2017) 'Moral Leadership in an Age of School Accountability', *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 11(2), pp. 60-62.
- Bell, D. (2014) *Michael Gove should not surround himself with yes men*. www.theweek.co.uk: The Week Ltd (Accessed: 03/04/2016 2016).
- Bell, J. (1999) *Doing your Research Project*. Third edn. Buckingham: Open University Press, p. 22.
- Benn, M. (2012) *School Wars. The Battle for Britain's Education*. London: Verso.
- Bennett, T. (2018).
- Benton, T. and Bramley, T. (2015) *The use of evidence in setting and maintaining standards in GCSEs and A level*. www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk: Cambridge Assessment. Available at: <http://www.cambridgeassessment.org.uk/Images/204310-maintaining-standards-discussion-paper-tom-benton-and-tom-bramley.pdf> (Accessed: 23/10/2016 2016).
- Biesta, G. J. J. (2010) *Good Education in an age of measurement. Ethics, Politics, Democracy*. Boulder, Colorado: Paradigm Publishers.
- Blackmore *, J. and Thomson, P. (2004) 'Just 'good and bad news'? Disciplinary imaginaries of head teachers in Australian and English print media', *Journal of Education Policy*, 19(3), pp. 301-320.
- Bourdieu, P. (1986) 'The Forms of Capital', in Richardson, J. (ed.) *Handbook of Theory and Research for the Sociology of Education*. Westport, CT: Greenwood, pp. 15-29.
- Bourdieu, P. (1989) 'Social Space and Symbolic Power', *Sociological Theory*, 7(1), pp. 14-25.
- Bourdieu, P., Nice, R. and Bennett, T. (2015) *Distinction : a social critique of the judgement of taste*.
- Bowe, R., Ball, S. and Gold, A. (1992) *Reforming education and changing schools: case studies in policy sociology*. London: Routledge.

- Boyle, M. and Woods, P. (1996) 'The Composite Head: coping with changes in the primary headteacher's role', *British Educational Research Journal*, 22(5), pp. 549-568.
- Bradley, S., Crouchley, R., Millington, J. and Taylor, J. (2000) 'Testing for Quasi-Market Forces in Secondary Education', *Oxford Bulletin of Economics and Statistics*, 62(3), pp. 357-390.
- Bryman, A. (2008) *Social research Methods*. Third edn. Oxford New York Oxford University Press.
- Burr, V. (2003) *Social Constructionism*. second edn. London & New York: Routledge.
- Busby, E. (2018) *England face growing challenge to recruit enough highly qualified teachers, report says*. Independent.co.uk: Independent Digital News and Media. Available at: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/teacher-shortage-recruitment-crisis-social-mobility-education-policy-institute-epi-england-a8512966.html> (Accessed: 15/09/2018 2018).
- Camden, B. (2018) *Over two thirds of UTCs rated less than 'good' in the last year*. feweeek.co.uk: **Learning & Skills Events Consultancy and Training Limited**. Available at: <https://feweeek.co.uk/2018/03/10/over-two-thirds-of-utcs-rated-less-than-good-in-the-last-year/> (Accessed: 07/05/2018 2018).
- Chalabi, M. (2013) *The Pisa methodology: do its education claims stack up?* www.theguardian.com: Guardian News and Media. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2013/dec/03/pisa-methodology-education-oecd-student-performance> (Accessed: 03/04/2016 2016).
- Chavez, C. (2008) 'Conceptualizing from the Inside: Advantages, Complications, and Demands on Insider Positionality .', *The Qualitative Report*, 13(3), pp. 474-494.
- Chomsky, N. (2002) *Understanding Power: The indispensable Chomsky*. New York: Vintage.
- Clarke, M. (2012) 'The (absent) politics of neo-liberal education policy', *Critical studies in education*, 53(3), pp. 297-310.
- Coates, S., Adcock, S. and Ribton, M. (2015) *Headstrong: 11 lessons of school leadership* Woodbridge: John Catt Educational Ltd.
- Coe, R. (2010) 'Understanding comparability of examination standards', *Research Papers in Education*, 25(3), pp. 271-284.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L. and Morrison, K. (2000) *Research Methods in Education*. 5th edn. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Collins, N. (2013) *Poorer pupils held back by 'soft bigotry of low expectations'*. www.telegraph.co.uk: Telegraph Media Group. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/10468677/Poorer-pupils-held-back-by-soft-bigotry-of-low-expectations.html> (Accessed: 15/02/2016 2016).
- Coughlan, S. (2007) *Education, education, education*. www.bbc.co.uk: BBC. Available at: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/6564933.stm> (Accessed: 26 Jan 2016 2016).
- Coughlan, S. (2014) *Trojan Horse: OfSTED says schools were targeted*. www.bbc.co.uk: BBC. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-27763113> (Accessed: 03/04/2016 2016).
- Courtney, S. J. (2015) 'Mapping school types in England', *Oxford Review of Education*, 41(6), pp. 799-818.

- Crawford, M. P. (2018) 'Emerging School Landscapes in England: How primary system leaders are responding to new school groupings'.
- Crotty, M. (1998) *The Foundations of Social Research: Meaning and Perspective in the Research Process*. Los Angeles: Sage Publications.
- Day, C., Elliot, B. and Kington, A. (2005) 'Reform, standards and teacher identity: Challenges of sustaining commitment', *Teaching and Teacher Education*, 21(5), pp. 563-577.
- DfE 2010. Schools receiving Leadership Incentive Grant.
https://data.gov.uk/dataset/schools_receiving_leadership_incentive_grant: Department for education.
- DfE, Education, D.f. (2011) *Teachers Standards*. www.gov.uk: Department for Education.
- DfE (2015a) *Education and Adoption Bill 2015-16* Progress of the bill through uk parliament. www.parliament.uk: Department for Education. Available at: http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/bills/cbill/2015-2016/0004/cbill_2015-20160004_en_1.htm (Accessed: 21/11/2015 2015).
- DfE, Education, D.f. (2015b) *National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers*. www.gov.uk: Department for Education.
- DfE, Education, D.f. (2015c) *National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers*. London: Department for Education.
- DfE, Education, D.f. (2015d) *Progress 8 measure in 2016, 2017, and 2018*. www.gov.uk: Department for Education.
- DfE (2015e) 'Protecting children from radicalisation: the prevent duty'.
- DfE, Department for Education, Education, D.f. (2016a) *Educational Excellence Everywhere*. www.gov.uk: Department for Education.
- DfE, Education, D.f. and Statistics, O.f.N. (2016b) *School Workforce in England: November 2015*. <http://www.gov.uk>: Department for Education (SFR 21/2016).
- DfE, Education, D.f. and Statistics, O.f.N. (2016c) *School workforce in England: November 2015 - Tables: SFR21/2016*. <http://www.gov.uk>: Department for Education.
- DfE (2017) *EduBase2* National database of schools held by DfE. <http://www.education.gov.uk>: Department for Education. Available at: <http://www.education.gov.uk/edubase/home.xhtml> (Accessed: 25/02/2015 2015).
- DfE and Gove, M. (2011) *A press notice on Michael Gove's speech to headteachers at the National College for School Leadership*. www.gov.uk: Department for Education. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/michael-gove-face-reality-reform-urgently> (Accessed: 01/04/2016 2016).
- DfE and Gove, M. (2014) *GCSE and A Level reform*. www.gov.uk: Department for Education. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/gcse-and-a-level-reform> (Accessed: 03/04/2016 2016).
- DfES, DfES, DfES (2003) *Every Child Matters*. Norwich, UK: The Stationery Office (TSO) (Cm5860).
- Dorrell, E. (2015) 'Amid all this change, it's time for a change of pace', *Times Educational Supplement*, (5155), pp. 55.
- Doyle, A. (2008) 'Educational performance or educational inequality: what can we learn from PISA about France and England?', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 38(2), pp. 205-217.

- Eaton, G. (2012) *How Michael Gove manipulated education statistics*. www.newstatesman.com: New Statesman. Available at: <http://www.newstatesman.com/politics/2012/11/how-michael-gove-manipulated-education-statistics> (Accessed: 03/04/2016 2016).
- Educational Leadership: Context, Strategy and Collaboration* (2012) London: Sage. Available at: <http://sk.sagepub.com/books/educational-leadership-2v> (Accessed: 2019/08/22).
- Elliott, M. (2013) *Matthew Elliott: What kind of machine do political parties need to win elections in the present age?* www.conservativehome.com: Conservative Home. Available at: http://www.conservativehome.com/majority_conservatism/2013/03/matthew-elliott-3.html (Accessed: 03/04/2016 2016).
- Evans, R. and Jones, D. (2008) 'Men in caring, parenting and teaching: exploring men's roles with young children', *Early Child Development and Care*, 178(7-8), pp. 659-664.
- EveningStandard (2010) *Michael Gove U-turns on Labour drive to help school sport*. www.standard.co.uk: London Evening Standard. Available at: <http://www.standard.co.uk/news/michael-gove-u-turns-on-labour-drive-to-help-school-sport-6548865.html> (Accessed: 05/02/2016 2016).
- Exley, S. (2015) 'The 115 schools that the inspectors forgot', *Times Educational Supplement*, (5135), pp. 91.
- F40Group (2017) *F40 Members*. <http://www.f40.org.uk>: F40 Group. Available at: <http://www.f40.org.uk/f40-members/> (Accessed: 12/03/2017 2017).
- Fenwick, T. J. (2010) '(un)Doing standards in education with actor - network theory', *Journal of Education Policy*, 25(2), pp. 117-133.
- Finch, J. (1984) *Education as Social Policy*. Harlow: Longman.
- Finn-Kelcey, T. (2013) 'It's high time we put our heads together', *Times Educational Supplement*, (5068), pp. 63.
- Fitz-Gibbon, C. and Stephenson-Forster, N. (1999) 'Is Ofsted Helpful', in Cullingford, C. (ed.) *An Inspector Calls*. London: Kogan Page, pp. 227.
- Foucault, M. (1994) *Power*. Translated by: Hurley, R. London: Penguin.
- Fowler, R. (1991) *Language in the News: Discourse and Ideology in the Press*. London: Routledge.
- Fullan, M. (2003) *The Moral Imperative of School Leadership*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press Inc.
- Fuller, K. (2019) "'That would be my red line": an analysis of headteachers' resistance of neoliberal education reforms', *Educational Review*, 71(1), pp. 31-50.
- Garner, R. (2016) *Jeremy Corbyn condemns Government plans to turn all schools into academies*. www.independent.co.uk: The Independent. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/jeremy-corbyn-nut-conference-condemns-government-plans-to-turn-all-schools-into-academies-a6952586.html> (Accessed: 17/06/2016 2016).
- Gerrard, J. (2014) 'Counter-narratives of educational excellence: free schools, success, and community-based schooling', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 35(6), pp. 876-894.

- Gibson, A. and Asthana, S. (2013) 'Schools, Pupils and Examination Results: contextualising school 'performance'', *British Educational Research Journal*, 24(3), pp. 269-282.
- Gillard, D. (2011) *The Blair decade: selection, privatisation and faith*. Education in England: a brief History. www.educationengland.org.uk: Education in England. Available at: <http://www.educationengland.org.uk/history> (Accessed: 05/02/2016 2016).
- Goldstein *, H. (2004) 'International comparisons of student attainment: some issues arising from the PISA study', *Assessment in Education: Principles, Policy & Practice*, 11(3), pp. 319-330.
- Goodwin, M. and Grix, J. (2011) 'BRINGING STRUCTURES BACK IN: THE 'GOVERNANCE NARRATIVE', THE 'DECENTRED APPROACH' AND 'ASYMMETRICAL NETWORK GOVERNANCE' IN THE EDUCATION AND SPORT POLICY COMMUNITIES', *Public Administration*, 89(2), pp. 537-556.
- Gorard, S. and Taylor, C. (2002) 'Market Forces and Standards in Education: A preliminary consideration', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 23(1), pp. 5-18.
- Gove, M. (2010) *Michael Gove: Failing schools need new leadership* Speech. London: The Conservative Party. Available at: http://www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2009/10/Michael_Gove_Failing_schools_need_new_leadership.aspx (Accessed: 30 Dec 2011 2011).
- Gove, M. (2011) *Michael Gove – 2011 Speech to the Education World Forum*. <http://www.ukpol.co.uk>: UKPOL. Available at: <http://www.ukpol.co.uk/michael-gove-2011-speech-to-the-education-world-forum/> (Accessed: 23/09/2018 2018).
- Gove, M. (2013) *Secretary of State for Education Michael Gove's statement in the House on the OECD's 2012 PISA results*. . www.gov.uk: Department for Education. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/2012-oecd-pisa-results> (Accessed: 16/02/2016 2016).
- Grant, B. (1997) 'Disciplining Students: the construction of student subjectivities', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 18(1), pp. 101-114.
- Grenfell, M. (2008) *Pierre Bourdieu: Key Concepts*. Durham: Acumen.
- Grice, A. and Garner, R. (2013) *Michael Gove forced into humiliating U-turn over EBacc*. www.independent.co.uk: Independent News and Media. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/michael-gove-forced-into-humiliating-u-turn-over-ebacc-8484074.html> (Accessed: 15/02/2016 2016).
- Gu, Q., Day, C., Walker, A. and Leithwood, K. (2018) 'How Successful Secondary School Principals Enact Policy', *Leadership and Policy in Schools*, 17(3), pp. 327-331.
- Gulson, K. N. (2007) 'Neoliberal spacial technologies': on the practices of education policy change', *Critical studies in education*, 48(2), pp. 179-195.
- Hall, V. and Southworth, G. (1997) 'Headship', *School Leadership & Management*, 17(2), pp. 151-70.
- Hammersley, M. (1995) *The politics of social research*. Sage.
- Hammersley - Fletcher, L. and Qualter, A. (2009) 'Chasing improved pupil performance: the impact of policy change on school educators' perceptions of their professional identity, the case of further change in English schools', *British Educational Research Journal*, 36(6), pp. 903-917.
- Hargreaves, D. H. (2001) 'A Capital Theory of School Effectiveness and Improvement', *British Educational Research Journal*, 27(4), pp. 487-503.

- Hatcher, R. (2005) 'The distribution of leadership and power in schools', *British Journal of Sociology of Education*, 26(2), pp. 253-267.
- Heath, A., Sullivan, A., Boliver, V. and Zimdars, A. (2013) 'Education under New Labour, 1997–2010', *Oxford Review of Economic Policy*, 29(1), pp. 227-247.
- Helm, T. (2013) *Nick Clegg turns on Michael Gove over his 'ideological' school reforms* www.theguardian.com: Guardian News and Media Ltd. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2013/oct/19/clegg-gove-schools-education-policy> (Accessed: 15/02/2016 2016).
- Helm, T. and Adams, R. (2016) *Tory plan on academies faces cross-party opposition*. www.theguardian.com: Guardian News and Media Ltd. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/education/2016/mar/26/academy-schools-plan-cross-party-opposition-councillors-anger> (Accessed: 17/06/2016 2016).
- Henshaw, P. (2015) 'Political Reforms are too often 'low impact distractions'', *SecEd*, 18 June 2015, pp. 1-2. Available at: <http://www.sec-ed.co.uk/news/many-political-reforms-are-low-impact-distractions/>.
- Herring, J. (2019) *Kennet's headteacher comments on drop in league table standings Head proud of pupils' achievements*. <https://www.newburytoday.co.uk/>: Newbury News and Media Ltd. Available at: <https://www.newburytoday.co.uk/news/home/26599/kennet-s-headteacher-comments-on-drop-in-league-table-standings.html> (Accessed: 20/08/2019 2019).
- Hess, F. (1999) *Spinning Wheels, the politics of urban school reform*. Washington, D.C.: Brookings Institution Press.
- Hicks, D. 2014. Letter to Paul Norman. OfSTED.
- Hill, A., Mellon, L., Laker, B. and Goddard, J. (2016) *The One Type of Leader Who Can Turn Around a Failing School*. <http://hbr.org>: Harvard Business Review. Available at: <https://hbr.org/2016/10/the-one-type-of-leader-who-can-turn-around-a-failing-school> (Accessed: 13/02/2018 2018).
- Hill, D. (1999) *"Education, education, education", or "business, business, business"? The third way ideology of New Labour's educational policy in England and Wales*. England.
- Hitlin, S. (2003) 'Values as the Core of Personal Identity: Drawing Links between Two Theories of Self', *Social Psychology Quarterly*, 66(2), pp. 118-137.
- Hobby, R. (2015) 'We must go forward together, or not at all', *Times Educational Supplement*, (5131), pp. 87.
- Ihlen, Ø. (2018) 'Symbolic Capital', pp. 1-4.
- Isaacs, T. (2014) 'Curriculum and assessment reform gone wrong: the perfect storm of GCSE English', *The Curriculum Journal*, 25(1), pp. 130-147.
- Jones, D. (2008) 'Constructing identities: perceptions and experiences of male primary headteachers', *Early Child Development and Care*, 178(7-8), pp. 689-702.
- Jost, J. T., Pelham, B. W., Sheldon, O. and Ni Sullivan, B. (2003) 'Social inequality and the reduction of ideological dissonance on behalf of the system: evidence of enhanced system justification among the disadvantaged', *European Journal of Social Psychology*, 33(1), pp. 13-36.
- Katiliute, E. 'Education policy problems - links between higher and secondary school ', *European Conference on Educational Research*, University of Hamburg, 17/09/2003: Kaunas University of Technology.

- Kelly, P. 27th April 2014. *RE: FW: Draft*. Type to Norman, P.
- Kidson, M. and Norris, E. (2014) 'Implementing the London challenge', *Institute for Government/Joseph Rowntree Foundation*.
- Kreiner, S. (2010) *Is the foundation under PISA solid?: A critical look at the scaling model underlying international comparisons of student attainment*. Department of Biostatistics, University of Copenhagen.
- Lareau, A. (1987) 'Social Class Differences in Family-School Relationships: The Importance of Cultural Capital', *Sociology of Education*, 60(2), pp. 73-85.
- Lawler, S. (2008) *Identity: Sociological perspectives*. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Leggett, W. (2005) *After New Labour - Social theory and Centre-Left Politics*. Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan.
- Lincoln, Y. S., Guba, Y. S. L. E. G., Guba, E. G. and Publishing, S. (1985) *Naturalistic Inquiry*. Sage focus editions: SAGE Publications.
- Logue, S. (2014) 'External Pressures', *Leader*, (82), pp. 34.
- Lupton, R. and Obolenskaya, P. (2013a) 'Labour's record on education: policy, spending and outcomes 1997-2010'.
- Lupton, R. and Obolenskaya, P. 2013b. Social Policy in a Cold climate: Labour's record on education. <http://sticerd.lse.ac.uk/dps/case/spcc/wp03.pdf>. Centre for Analysis of Social Exclusion.
- Lynch, S., Mills, B., Theobald, K. and Worth, J. (2017) *Keeping Your Head: NFER Analysis of Headteacher Retention*, Slough, Berkshire, UK: The National Foundation for Educational Research. Available at: <https://www.nfer.ac.uk/media/1926/lfsc01.pdf>.
- Machiavelli, N. (1513) *The Prince* Sweden: Wisehouse Classics [kindle ebook].
- Maclure, S. (1988) *Education Re-formed*. Sevenoaks: Hodder and Stoughton.
- Male, T. (2006) *Being an effective headteacher*. London: London : Paul Chapman.
- Mansfield, N. (2000) *Subjectivity : theories of the self from Freud to Haraway*. New York, N.Y.: New York, N.Y. : New York University Press.
- Mattei, P. (2012) 'Raising educational standards: national testing of pupils in the United Kingdom, 1988–2009', *Policy Studies*, 33(3), pp. 231-247.
- Maykut, P. and Morehouse, R. (1994) *Beginning Qualitative Research: A Philosophic and Practical Guide*. The Falmer Press Teachers' Library London: The Falmer Press, p. 12.
- McGuinness, R. (2017) *Free school meals and fox hunting: All of Theresa May's U-turns since the general election*. Yahoo News UK: Yahoo. Available at: <https://uk.news.yahoo.com/free-school-meals-fox-hunting-theresa-mays-u-turns-since-general-election-150836233.html> (Accessed: 17/08/2017 2017).
- Mcinerney, L. (2016) *Meet the people behind school gaming research*. <http://schoolsweek.co.uk/the-men-behind-the-gaming-message/>: @SchoolsWeek. Available at: <http://schoolsweek.co.uk/the-men-behind-the-gaming-message/>.
- Menzies, L., Parameshwaran, M., Trethaway, A., Shaw, B., Baars, S. and Chiong, C. (2015) *Why Teach?*, <http://whyteach.lkmco.org>: LKMco. Available at: <http://whyteach.lkmco.org/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Embargoed-until-Friday-23-October-2015-Why-Teach.pdf>.
- Merleau-Ponty, M. (2013) *Phenomenology of perception*. Routledge.

- Merriam, S. B., Johnson-Bailey, J., Lee, M.-Y., Kee, Y., Ntseane, G. and Muhamad, M. (2001) 'Power and positionality: negotiating insider/outsider status within and across cultures', *International Journal of Lifelong Education*, 20(5), pp. 405-416.
- Moore, A., George, R. and Halpin, D. (2002) 'The Developing Role of the Headteacher in English Schools:: Management, Leadership and Pragmatism', *Educational Management & Administration*, 30(2), pp. 175-188.
- Moore, J. (2012) 'A personal insight into researcher positionality', *Nurse Researcher*, 19(4), pp. 11-14.
- Morris, E. (2013) *Why Gove's type of education is not the way forward*. www.theguardian.com: Guardian News and Media Ltd. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/feb/25/rigour-education-policy-michael-gove> (Accessed: 25/09/2016 2016).
- Morris, P. (2015) 'Comparative education, PISA, politics and educational reform: a cautionary note', *Compare: A Journal of Comparative and International Education*, 45(3), pp. 470-474.
- Morrison, N. (2012) *Do you need to have been a teacher to be a head?* Guardian Professional. www.theguardian.com: Guardian News and Media. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/teacher-network/2012/nov/12/teaching-background-essential> (Accessed: 31/03/2016 2016).
- Morrison, N. (2015) 'Staff quit teaching at highest rate in 10 years', *Times Educational Supplement*, (5131), pp. 87.
- Mortimore, P. (2013) *Education Under Siege: Why There is a Better Alternative*. Bristol: Policy Press.
- Nudzor, H. (2009) 'What is "policy", a problem-solving definition or a process conceptualisation? ', *Educational Futures*, 2(1), pp. 12.
- Oates, T. (2015) 'Investigating volatility in exam results', *SecEd*, p. 6. Available at: <http://www.sec-ed.co.uk/best-practice/investigating-volatility-in-exam-results/>.
- OfSTED, OfSTED (2007) *Attendance in Secondary Schools: Briefing Note*. London: OfSTED (070014).
- OfSTED (2015a) *Ofsted confirms radical reforms to education inspection*. www.gov.uk: OfSTED. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/ofsted-confirms-radical-reforms-to-education-inspection> (Accessed: 03/04/2016 2016).
- OfSTED, OfSTED (2015b) *The Common Inspection Framework: education, skills and early years*. www.gov.uk: OfSTED.
- OfSTED (2016a) *Our governance*. www.gov.uk: OfSTED. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/ofsted/about/our-governance> (Accessed: 03/04/2016 2016).
- OfSTED, Office for Standards in Education, Education, O.f.S.i. (2016b) *School Inspection Handbook*. Manchester: OfSTED (150066).
- OfSTED, Education, O.f.S.i. (2018) *School Inspection Handbook (Section 5)*. <https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/>: OfSTED.
- Olmedo, A. and Wilkins, A. (2017) 'Governing through parents: a genealogical enquiry of education policy and the construction of neoliberal subjectivities in England', *Discourse: Studies in the Cultural Politics of Education*, 38(4), pp. 573-589.
- ONS, Office for National Statistics, Statistics, O.f.N. (2015) *Population Estimates Analysis Tool*. <https://www.ons.gov.uk/>: Office for National Statistics (MYE9AT2).

- OUP (2016a) *Definition: Principal*. Oxford Dictionaries. www.oxforddictionaries.com: Oxford University Press. Available at: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/principal> (Accessed: 31/03/2016 2016).
- OUP (2016b) *Definition: standards*. Oxford Dictionaries. [oxforddictionaries.com](http://www.oxforddictionaries.com): Oxford University Press. Available at: <http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/standard?q=standards> (Accessed: 31/03/2016 2016).
- OUP (2018) 'Oxford Living Dictionaries', *Definition of Feckless in English*. <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com>: Oxford University Press.
- Parliament (2006) *Select Committee on Education and Skills Third Report: Why SEN Matters*. www.parliament.uk: UK Parliament. Available at: <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm200506/cmselect/cmeduski/478/47806.htm> (Accessed: 24/10/2016 2016).
- Paton, G. (2012) *Michael Gove: 'progressive' teaching undermines social mobility*. www.telegraph.co.uk: Telegraph Media Group Ltd. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/9288095/Michael-Gove-progressive-teaching-undermines-social-mobility.html> (Accessed: 15/02/2016 2016).
- Perry, A., Amadeo, C., Fletcher, M. and Walker, E. 2010. *Instinct or reason: How education policy is made and how we might make it better*. Reading: CfBT Education Trust.
- Perry, K. (2014) *Michael Gove considered removing Wilshaw as Ofsted chief, says leaked memo*. www.telegraph.co.uk: Telegraph Media Group Ltd. Available at: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/11153071/Michael-Gove-considered-removing-Wilshaw-as-Ofsted-chief-says-leaked-memo.html> (Accessed: 03/04/2016 2016).
- Perryman, J. (2006) 'Panoptic performativity and school inspection regimes: disciplinary mechanisms and life under special measures', *Journal of Educational Policy*, 2, pp. 147-161.
- Perryman, J. and Calvert, G. (2019) 'WHAT MOTIVATES PEOPLE TO TEACH, AND WHY DO THEY LEAVE? ACCOUNTABILITY, PERFORMATIVITY AND TEACHER RETENTION', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, pp. 1-21.
- Perryman, J., Maguire, M., Braun, A. and Ball, S. (2018) 'Surveillance, Governmentality and moving the goalposts: The influence of Ofsted on the work of schools in a post-panoptic era', *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 66(2), pp. 145-163.
- Pietersen, J. (2014) *A history teacher's appraisal of Michael Gove's approach to the teaching of history*. www.independent.co.uk: Independent News and Media. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/voices/comment/a-history-teachers-appraisal-of-michael-goves-approach-to-the-teaching-of-history-9047407.html> (Accessed: 15/02/2016 2016).
- Pring, R. (2000) *Philosophy of Educational Research*. Second edn. London: Continuum.
- Rea, J. and Weiner, G. 'Cultures of Blame and Redemption When Empowerment Becomes Control: Practitioners' Views of the Effective Schools Movement', *British Educational Research Association Annual Conference* University of York, 11-14 September 1997.

- Richardson, H. (2013) *Michael Gove like a fanatical personal trainer, union says*. bbc.co.uk: BBC. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-22595474> (Accessed: 21 May 2013).
- Roberts, J. (2018) *Six Ways School Accountability Does More Harm Than Good*. TES.com: TES Ltd. Available at: <https://www.tes.com/news/six-ways-school-accountability-does-more-harm-good> (Accessed: 15/09/2018).
- Robinson, N. (2014) *Michael Gove - 'Battling the Blob'*. www.bbc.co.uk: BBC. Available at: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-26008962> (Accessed: 15/02/2016).
- Rodger, J. (2019) *School headteacher blasted over heartless four-word sentence to child, 9, at sports day*. <http://www.birminghammail.co.uk>: Reach plc. Available at: <https://www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/school-headteacher-blasted-over-heartless-16559816> (Accessed: 20/08/2019).
- Ross, H. (2015) 'Negotiating managerialism: professional recognition and teachers of sustainable development education', *Environmental Education Research*, 21(3), pp. 403-416.
- Schostak, J. F. (2002) *Understanding, designing and conducting qualitative research in education: Framing the project*. Open University Press.
- Scott, J. and Marshall, G. (2009) *Oxford Dictionary of Sociology*. Third edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Searle, J. R. (1995) *The Construction of Social Reality*. London: Penguin.
- Sergiovanni, T. J. (1992) *Moral Leadership: Getting to the heart of school improvement*. San Francisco: Jossey-Bass.
- Shamir, R. (2008) 'The age of responsibilization: on market-embedded morality', *Economy and Society*, 37(1), pp. 1-19.
- Shirrell, M. (2016) 'New principals, accountability, and commitment in low-performing schools', *Journal of Educational Administration*, 54(5), pp. 558-574.
- Sibieta, L. (2018) *The Teacher Labour Market in England: Shortage, subject expertise and incentives*, epi.org.uk: Education Policy Institute. Available at: https://epi.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/08/EPI-Teacher-Labour-Market_2018.pdf (Accessed: 15/09/2018).
- Silverman, D. (2001) *Interpreting qualitative data : methods for analysing talk, text and interaction*. 2nd ed. edn. London: London : SAGE.
- Simmons, R. and Thompson, R. (2011) *NEET young people and training for work: learning on the margins*. Stoke-on-Trent: Trentham Books.
- Sjøberg, S. (2015) 'PISA and global educational governance—A critique of the project, its uses and implications', *Eurasia Journal of Mathematics, Science & Technology Education*, 11(1), pp. 111-127.
- Stewart, W. (2015a) *Inspections are inconsistent and too dependent on data, warns former Ofsted chief*. www.tes.com: Times Educational Supplement. Available at: <https://www.tes.com/news/school-news/breaking-news/inspections-are-inconsistent-and-too-dependent-data-warns-former> (Accessed: 03/04/2016).
- Stewart, W. (2015b) 'It was great fun. You're sitting in the political cockpit', *Times Educational Supplement*, (5148), pp. 63.
- Sutton, R. (1999) *Working Paper 118: The Policy Process: An Overview*, London: Overseas Development Institute. Available at:

- <https://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/publications-opinion-files/2535.pdf> (Accessed: 08/06/2016).
- Taubman, P. (2009) *Teaching by Numbers: Deconstructing the discourse of Standards and Accountability in Education*. New York: Routledge.
- TES (2015) 'Calls for 'parental trigger' to fire headteachers', *Times Educational Supplement*, 5164, pp. 7.
- TFLT (2016) *Heads Up: Meeting the challenges of headteacher recruitment*, London.
- 'The Collins Dictionary', (2019) *The Collins Dictionary*. <http://www.collinsdictionary.com> Collins.
- Thomson, D. (2018) <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2018/07/the-relationship-between-progress-8-and-ofsted-judgments-for-disadvantaged-schools/>. <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/>: FFT Education Ltd. Available at: <https://ffteducationdatalab.org.uk/2018/07/the-relationship-between-progress-8-and-ofsted-judgments-for-disadvantaged-schools/> (Accessed: 23/09/2018 2018).
- Thomson, P. (2008) 'Answering back to policy: Headteacher' stress and the logic of the sympathetic interview', *Journal of Education Policy*, 23(6), pp. 649-667.
- Tomlinson, H., Gunter, H. and Smith, P. (1999) *Living Headship: Voices, Values and Vision*. London: Paul Chapman Publishing Ltd
- Sage Publications Ltd.
- Tomlinson, S. (2005) *Education in a post-welfare society*. second edn. Maidenhead: Open University.
- Tracy, S. J. (2010) 'Qualitative Quality: Eight "Big-Tent" Criteria for Excellent Qualitative Research', *Qualitative Inquiry*, 16(10), pp. 837-851.
- Trowler, P. (1998) *Education Policy. Gildredge Social Policy* Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Vaughan, R. (2015a) 'How a cry from the heart led to a red-letter day', *Times Educational Supplement*, (5150), pp. 63.
- Vaughan, R. (2015b) 'Priority No 1: action on 'coasting' schools', *Times Educational Supplement*, (5146), pp. 63.
- Vaughan, R. (2015c) 'Teachers refuse to believe hype on workload policies', *Times Educational Supplement*, (5138), pp. 83.
- Vaughan, R. (2015d) "To win back trust politicians need to stop posturing", *Times Educational Supplement*, (5135), pp. 91.
- Vaughan, R. (2015e) 'What do we want? To change politics, say headteachers.', *Times Educational Supplement*, (5137), pp. 83.
- Vaughan, R. (2016) *Government must launch a royal commission into 'failing' state system, says private school head*. www.tes.com: TES Global Ltd. Available at: <https://www.tes.com/news/government-must-launch-royal-commission-failing-state-system-says-private-school-head> (Accessed: 07/12/2018 2018).
- Walford, G. (2014) 'Academies, free schools and social justice', *Research Papers in Education*, 29(3), pp. 263-267.
- Watt, N. and Wintour, P. (2014) *Michael Gove demoted to chief whip as Cameron shows no sentimentality*. www.theguardian.com: Guardian News and Media Ltd. Available at: <http://www.theguardian.com/politics/2014/jul/15/michael-gove-chief-whip-david-cameron-reshuffle-cabinet> (Accessed: 15/02/2016 2016).

- Webb, J., Schirato, T. and Danaher, G. (2002) *Understanding Bourdieu*. London: Sage Publications Ltd.
- Webber, L. A. (2015) *MATURE WOMEN AND HIGHER EDUCATION: RECONSTRUCTING IDENTITY AND FAMILY RELATIONSHIPS*. EdD, Plymouth University, Plymouth University.
- Weindling, D. and Dimmock, C. (2006) 'Sitting in the "hot seat": new headteachers in the UK', *Journal of Educational Administration*, 44(4), pp. 326-340.
- West, A. and Wolfe, D. (2018) *Academies, the School System in England and a Vision for the Future*, London: London School of Economics (ISBN: 978-1-909890-42-8. Available at: <http://www.lse.ac.uk/social-policy/Assets/Documents/PDF/Research-reports/Academies-Vision-Report.pdf> (Accessed: 23/09/2018).
- Wiener, L. (2014) *Labour warns Gove over Ofsted 'smear campaign'*. www.itv.com: ITV. Available at: <http://www.itv.com/news/2014-01-26/labour-warns-gove-over-ofsted-smear-campaign/> (Accessed: 03/04/2016 2016).
- Wilson, L. (2010) *Descriptive Statistics*. Explorable.com: Explorable.com. Available at: <https://explorable.com/descriptive-statistics> (Accessed: 27/01/2018 2018).
- Withnall, A. (2014) *Ofsted chief Sir Michael Wilshaw 'spitting blood' over row with Gove;s Education Department*. www.independent.co.uk: Independent. Available at: <http://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/ofsted-chief-sir-michael-wilshaw-spitting-blood-over-row-with-michael-goves-education-department-9085969.html> (Accessed: 03/04/2016 2016).
- Woolcock, N. (2012) *New exam will stop schools playing system, says Gove*. The Times: Times Newspapers Ltd. Available at: <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/education/article3622121.ece> (Accessed: 28 May 2013 2013).

APPENDIX A: A potted history of reform

Education in the modern era began with the 1944 Education Act, which was highly significant and, in the post-war era was driven by social reform with a strong view on the welfare of the child (Finch, 1984) and it “turned into a charter for ‘universal’ public provision and local experimentation” (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992, p. 1), setting the basis for the system we have today. The most recent phase of major reform, though, can be argued to have begun with the 1988 Education Act, through which the Conservative administration utilised a more liberal ideology to facilitate a new “economy of power” (Ball, 1994), changing the balance toward the state and away from local authority control. As Ball stated, it would be difficult to underestimate the effect or impacts of policy at this time with schools faced with a reform package including:

a new national curriculum, but also changes in school governance, management and funding, in the roles of local authorities, in student testing and school inspection, in pedagogy and classroom organisation (like the press for more whole-class teaching), and in teacher training and teachers’ conditions of work and employment.

(Ball, 1994, p. 11)

The ideology underpinning the 1988 Act rejected “welfare economics” (Adams, 2014) and many of the principles of the 1944 act, applying the doctrine of the market to the education sector. This included allowance for private provision of public services and the application of ‘market competition’ (ibid) with parents becoming consumers and schools becoming providers. This change in focus to providing the consumer with ‘choice’ was a fundamental development which forced schools to consider “image and impression management” (Ball, 1994, p. 51) as much as educational processes and outcomes. Children and their outcomes became viewed as commodities (ibid) and teachers’ performance became tied to a techno-rationalist ideal of ‘performativity’ (Ball, 2013) processes and structures, including a primary focus on testing and inspection as tools to hold schools accountable and to provide information to facilitate consumer choice. The

introduction of LMS (Local Management of Schools) aimed to reduce the ‘red tape’ of local authority bureaucracy and to give greater financial and management autonomy to the schools themselves, whilst allowing for the breaking up of “taken-for-granted” practices (Ball, 2007) and opening up “an infrastructure of possibilities within which business could establish a presence within state education services” (Ball, 2007, p. 19).

It may have been expected when New Labour came to power in 1997, with Tony Blair displacing the John Major Conservative Government, that the election of a Labour Government would:

usher in a ‘golden age’ in education. Tests and league tables would disappear, Chief Inspector Chris Woodhead (who had become something of a hate figure for teachers) would be sacked, Ofsted scrapped, and grant maintained (GM) schools would be brought under local authority control

(Gillard, 2011)

Tony Blair, however, had come to power on a manifesto based around a “Third Way” an idea expounded initially by “Leading Third Way intellectual” Anthony Giddens (Leggett, 2005). Initially an attempt to look for “a new relationship between the individual and the community” (Leggett, 2005, p. 40). This has subsequently been interpreted as move from the old values of the left to the adoption of neoliberal ideals, a “capitulation to the requirements of the free market” (Leggett, 2005, p. 43), while others have described it as “updated” or “post-revisionist social democracy” (Hill, 1999). This “retrenchment of the welfare state” (ibid) saw New Labour not just accept market economics and the enormous wealth that the minority could accrue as an acceptable reality, but it essentially signified “a retreat from a commitment to reducing inequality of outcome through redistribution” (ibid). Regardless of this developing ideology, which some argue made them “indistinguishable from its Tory predecessor” (Gillard, 2011), New Labour firmly promoted the importance of schooling as a means to improving life chances, perhaps best

illustrated by Tony Blair's famous quote summarising his political priorities as "Education, education, education" (Coughlan, 2007). This was clearly underpinned by significant investment with New Labour overturning the "historic low" (Lupton and Obolenskaya, 2013a, p. 47) of education spending, with it rising 78 percentage points (ibid) over the period they were in power.

Reform under New Labour was directed, in most part, by Andrew Adonis, a former journalist and lecturer. He recalls his motivation for reform:

Across much of England comprehensives were palpably and seriously failing. I regarded this not only as an educational crisis, but a social and economic crisis too, since the poor standard of education and socialisation among school leavers was so obviously at the heart of England's problems at large. I saw failing comprehensive schools, many hundreds of them, as a cancer at the heart of English society.

(Adonis, 2012, location 51)

Adonis was given a post in the number 10 policy unit and in 2005 was given a life peerage, the position of junior education minister (Gillard, 2011) and oversaw a significant period of reform. The Academy programme, specialist schools, reviewing the national curriculum, Literacy and numeracy strategies and University top up fees to name but a few. It is suggested that his influence became a problem for some Secretaries of State, as they ended up promoting his policies rather than creating their own and felt undermined by him (ibid). It has even been suggested that Estelle Morris's resignation from the role was, in part, because of the "debilitating problem" (Ahmed, Hinsliff and Bright, 2002) of Adonis, who was essentially an unelected official. Adonis certainly saw himself as a bold reformer (Adonis, 2012) and believed that fundamentally change was required, that increased investment had to be matched by radical reform. He saw the reforms New Labour introduced as necessary for a national good, with the Conservatives just "offering

opt-outs to benefit small numbers of children while under-investing in mainstream state education and ignoring the mass of failing schools.” (Adonis, 2012, location 3786).

In 2010, and after 13 years where new labour were “almost hyperactive in implementing reforms and new initiatives” (Heath *et al.*, 2013, p. 3) (see Appendix Q, p. 327), the rejection by the electorate of a fourth term of Labour Government led to the formation of a Conservative / Liberal Democrat coalition. The Coalition’s reforms can be seen both as continuing an unfinished project to ‘privatise’ state education but, also “can be understood in terms of previous Labour policy, taking it further in particular directions by different means.” (Ball and Exley, 2011, p. 12).

In the early years of the coalition, Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove, was accused of waging an ideological programme of extreme reform leaving headteachers unhappy with the "constant churn of educational change" (Richardson, 2013). His period in office and programme of school reform was marked by controversy (Helm, 2013) with a perception that “a new partiality had crept into Government policy-making” (Benn, 2012, p. 12). He was perceived to have politicised appointments to posts in the Department for Education, receiving praise from Tory supporters (Elliott, 2013) but was warned not to believe his own hype and surround himself with ‘Yes men’ (Bell, 2014). He was certainly unpopular with teachers and Headteachers, leading to two votes of no-confidence in him as Secretary of State (Pietersen, 2014).

Michael Gove was motivated by a need to undo the damage he argued had been caused by decades of progressive education (Paton, 2012) and the erosive effect he believed it had had on educational standards and this was combined with frustration at what he termed the “soft bigotry of low expectations” (Collins, 2013) for poor children. Gove,

who himself experienced a classical liberal education, expressed his preference for “a traditional education, sitting in rows, learning the kings and queens of England, the great works of literature, algebra by the age of eleven, modern foreign languages” (ibid). He tended to favour those who shared his ideological aims but the reluctance of the education establishment to accept change and his vision of education led to Gove labelling those who disagreed with him as “The Blob” (Robinson, 2014) which resulted in a further souring of relations, even with those who worked closely with him (ibid). There did appear to be a reluctance to trust the teaching profession and it was suggested that he was ignoring professional guidance and dictating curriculum content with the resultant outrage leading to his History curriculum being “rejected by its own advisors and denounced by professional Historians and associations” (Pietersen, 2014), this subsequently led to one of a number of U-turns on Coalition policy (Helm, 2013; EveningStandard, 2010; Grice and Garner, 2013) and eventually to a rejection of much of his policy from Nick Clegg, leader of the Coalition partners, particularly a plan to reintroduce O’ levels.

Gove was also criticised for announcing policy with little or no notice and often via the media, with the resultant perception being that policy was, as Logue (2014) observed, often presented in an “ad hoc manner” with no clear rationale and poorly planned with “time frames that are wholly unreasonable” (ibid) or as Barton puts it, slightly more colourfully:

policymaking has been more like wayward adolescents hurling dog-dirt over a pensioner’s fence. There has been a kind of gleeful sense of abandon and a schoolboy relish for the resulting turmoil.

(Barton, 2015, p. 20)

This perception was such that even the Conservative Chair of the Education Select Committee grew concerned that teachers felt “they are permanent victims of a pace of

change which they can't cope with" (Graham Stuart in Stewart, 2015b, p. 18) and suggested, of the Secretary of State for Education, that he should "Stop taking the urgency pills and recognise the need to slow down. Stop changing things all the time" (Stewart, 2015b, p. 18). Gove's lack of popularity with the electorate became seen as a potential liability and he was demoted to Chief Whip prior to the 2015 election (Watt and Wintour, 2014) being replaced as Secretary of State by Nicky Morgan. Even after his departure and the subsequent success of the Conservatives in gaining a second term as a majority Government, the pace of change seemed to slow little, with yet another Education Bill placed before Parliament (DfE, 2015a). This was certainly recognised in political debate prior to the last general election with Tristram Hunt, then Shadow Education Secretary, claiming "he would put an end to the "relentless initiative-itis" that had emerged under the coalition Government" (Vaughan, 2015c, p. 14). Even David Laws, a former coalition Minister, recognised that:

an "enormous number" of contributing factors were affecting workload for teachers, but that the major issues were caused by Government-imposed policy changes. A period of stability for teachers was vital
(Vaughan, 2015c, p. 15)

Given that even the ministers responsible for much of the change enacted since 2010 are questioning the actual need for (and impact of) reform, I question whether the pace of reform is detrimental to effective school improvement – as Suffolk headteacher, Geoff Barton put it:

Gove's legacy may well be that improvements in teaching actually stalled as a result of his toxic cocktail of initiatives. The sheer quantity of changes was a distraction from the quality of what matters most: the classroom
(Barton, 2015, p. 21)

Alongside national policy reforms, schools are subjected to or subject themselves to further change through local authority / Academy trust policy initiatives and school

level reforms. These have an impact at all levels of the school, whether externally or self-imposed. Many will be in response to changes in policy, inspection or examination requirements and standards, but my experience suggests that many are alongside and additional to the demands placed on schools by the wider system.

Intentions of reform

From the perspective of a School Leader, new education policies and initiatives can seem to appear overnight, and this brings into question what drives such reform and the degree to which those in a position of power are engaging with the profession which is required to deliver on their policies. It seems there is a perception, at least, that “endless top-down reform” (Dorrell, 2015, p. 4) is driven with a view to political gain or “political deckchair rearranging” (ibid). A view also demonstrated by Roy Blatchford, director of education charity the National Education Trust, when he “called for a “National Education Service” to be created, similar to the NHS, in order to protect schools from policy churn caused by the “five-year electoral cycle”” (Vaughan, 2015d, p. 17). Hess (1999) coined the term “churn” to describe the phenomenon of rapid policy change and allied it to the desire of politicians or system managers to have measurable impact within their relatively short tenure of office. The term ‘Churn’, arguably trivialises and objectifies a complex social process (Kelly, 2014), but frequent change appears to be feature of state education in England and it is even suggested that: “there has been an increase in the pace of policy change, perhaps associated with more rapid changes in political appointments and the growth of intermediary bodies” (Perry *et al.*, 2010, p. 4).

I believe the answer is more complex than the simplistic view expounded by Dorrell that: “Reform gives politicians a great sense of self-worth – otherwise, what would be the point of them?” (Dorrell, 2015, p. 4). There may, indeed, be personal or political capital to be gained from reforming the education system and furthering a career, but I concur with

(Mortimore, 2013) that politicians of all colours genuinely want to improve the education system and are acting in what they believe are the best interests of the nation - at least from the perspective of their political beliefs and values. For those in the thick of it, as an area of policy it can seem, according to Brian Lightman, former General Secretary of ASCL (Association of School and College Leaders) as if schools are subject to a “non-stop flow of reforms, all implemented in a great hurry” (Lightman, B in TFLT, 2016, p. 8) leading to massive changes in the education system (Exley, 2015).

Reforms and policy development may take place for several reasons but there can be a perception that they are often driven by political ideology rather than simply to improve outcomes.

We’ve seen how a single Education Act in 2011 has served as a catalyst for an onslaught of changes. We’ve learned how many of those were driven not by principle but by a disturbing pragmatism about how schools these days work.
(Barton, 2015, p. 20)

There must be consideration of these ideological intentions of reform, personal values and beliefs about what education is for and what it should be in practice. The neoconservative and neoliberal ideologies that have been prevalent in politics since the 1980’s expound the ‘individualist’ (Trowler, 1998) view that people are “motivated by individual not collective gain” (Adams, 2014, p. 8) leading to Margaret Thatcher’s claim that there was no such thing as society (Table 3.1 Trowler, 1998, p. 107). They also aimed for the “‘destatatisation’ – ‘the redrawing of the public – private divide, reallocating tasks, and rearticulating the relationship between organizations and tasks across this divide’” (Ball, 2007, p. 9), driving the marketization of education and the opening up to private business of previously protected public sector provisions and competition between schools on an hitherto unseen scale. One major criticism I have of this approach is the reduction in partnership working and productive networking that I have seen over my

time in schooling. Once fertile and productive inter-school projects, partnerships and federations appear to have faded away in recent years leading to direct competition for students, staff and resources, which has undermined the shared vision of local improvement across a whole area – the very premise that one of our most highly acclaimed education policies (in terms of successful outcomes), the London Challenge, was founded on. This New Labour policy took London from one of the weakest performing regions to the strongest in a relatively short time by implementing strong systems and structures at a local level, alongside collaboration and high quality support for improving teaching (Kidson and Norris, 2014). It feels like the lessons of this success have not been learned and schools are now being forced apart rather than into collaboration - “a culture of perverse incentives has developed, one that is preventing us from being as collegiate as we undoubtedly ought to be” (Finn-Kelcey, 2013, p. 24). My experience would support Marx’s view:

Karl Marx argued that alienation was a major flaw in the capitalist system. He described a process whereby the competitive ethos of the free market estranges us from one another.

(Finn-Kelcey, 2013, p. 25)

This aspect of neoliberal ideology focuses on the provision of schooling, the systems, structures and technologies of delivery. I would argue, however, that equally significant is the neoliberal view of the aims and purpose of education and suspect that there may be significant dissonance with the views and values of the teaching profession and school leaders. To examine this, a clear definition of education would be useful:

Education is the process through which society transmits its accumulated values, knowledge, skills, attitudes and customs from one generation to another and influences how an individual thinks feels and acts.

(Mortimore, 2013, p. 3)

‘Society’ is not a homogenous group, ideologically speaking, and contains groups with a wide range of political beliefs - we commonly use the terms ‘Left’ and ‘Right’ to describe these, but I would argue that such beliefs are more a wide ranging and eclectic spectrum than simple binaries. This, in effect, keeps the field of education policy-making a site of ongoing ideological and political tension, an ongoing “fight over the shape of education policy” (Trowler, 1998, p. 35). It is unsurprising that societal sub-groups with such varying ideologies and beliefs will come into conflict in this field as much as any other and, in some ways, more so as it may be argued that the success of reproducing their “accumulated values, knowledge, skills, attitudes and customs” would be made much easier by controlling the field of schooling and education. These differing political ideologies tend to take different views on the purpose and preferred outcomes of education and these can be simplified and summarised as shown in Table A.1.

	Right Wing		Left Wing	
Ideology	Neoconservative	Neoliberal	Social Democrat	Socialist
	Conservative		Labour	
Key Beliefs	Traditional Values leading to a healthier, more stable society	Market forces and individual freedom leading to greater economic efficiency	Opportunity for all and responsibility for all	Social equality for all. State ownership of major utilities and industries.
Education Policy	Discipline, school uniform, ‘proper subjects’,	Parental choice leading to competition between	Choice and variety of schools within	Free education provision. Abolition of public schools.

	traditional assessment	providers, league tables	a strong state framework	A comprehensive education for all
--	---------------------------	-----------------------------	-----------------------------	--

(Bartlett and Burton, 2012, p. 137 in Adams, 2014; p.12)

Table A.1: Continuum of Political and Educational Ideologies

Mortimore identifies with the German concept of ‘Bildung’ where education, in its most “pure and noble form” (Mortimore, 2013) is seen as useful to “individuals and their societies”, while in England it has tended to be treated with a more instrumentalist view – as a means to career progression, for example (ibid). Socially democratic ideologies hold that education is a social entitlement and partnership between stakeholders (child, parents, schools and Government) for the good of the individual and a means to “Personal and Social Development” (Table 3.6 Trowler, 1998, p. 120). Successful education aids social mobility and fits into a concept of ‘meritocracy’ (Trowler, 1998), where those who work hard and do well improve society through merit rather than simply through reproduction of entrenched advantage. Neoliberals hold that the purpose is to “increase human capital” (ibid) in order to build a workforce which feeds an efficient market economy, thus, arguably, subjugating the needs and opportunities of the individual to the demands of the national economy (Adams, 2014) encouraging and celebrating entrepreneurship and yet, in so doing, “produce docile individuals who see themselves as free but who are, in fact, tightly controlled” (Davies and Bansel, 2007 in Adams, 2014, p. 10).

It is my conjecture that, based on my experience, while the teaching profession is made up of individuals from across the ideological spectrum, the dominant mode is socially democratic and child centred and that they are being exposed to a form of ideological colonisation by governing administrations leading to an ‘ideological dissonance’ (Jost *et*

al., 2003) and behaviours that either accept, adapt, resist or reject the expectations of policy. If teachers are choosing the profession because of socially democratic principles and beliefs, how does this fit within the instrumentalist, economy-centric world of education policy? What impact does it have on teacher / school leader identity, power relations and practice and in what ways is it overtly or covertly resisted? Regardless, it does seem that there is a perception that: “Politicians have little or no regard for young people when it comes to developing policies, according to teachers.”(Vaughan, 2015d, p. 16).

Whatever the intentions, I have experienced a lot of change and it has led me to ask questions and to challenge assumptions that I may have made about my industry and the discourses which saturate, surround and define it. It has also challenged me to examine my own practice and perceptions as a teacher and school leader. It is this increasing inquisitiveness which has acted as condensation nuclei for this thesis, questioning how closely aligned the profession and politicians are on the purpose of education and is it possible to achieve real, sustainable improvement alongside the uncertainty and instability that frequent policy changes may create?

APPENDIX B: DFE documentation on floor standards (adapted)

Headline Performance Measures and Floor/Minimum Standards in Primary, Secondary and 16-19 phases 2013-2016

PRIMARY

Academic year	Floor standard
2012/13	<p>A school was below the floor in 2012/13 if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• fewer than 60% of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics and• below the average percentage of pupils at the end of KS2 made expected progress in reading (2013 national median = 91%) and• below the average percentage of pupils at the end of KS2 made expected progress in writing (2013 national median = 95%) and• below the average percentage of pupils at the end of KS2 made expected progress in mathematics (2013 national median = 92%)
2013/14 and 2014/15	<p>The primary school floor standard for 2013/14 and 2014/15 will be the same.</p> <p>A school will be below the floor in 2014 or 2015 if:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• fewer than 65% of pupils at the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) achieved level 4 or above in reading, writing and mathematics and• below the average percentage of pupils at the end of KS2 made expected progress in reading (compared with the 2014 or 2015 national median) and• below the average percentage of pupils at the end of KS2 made expected progress in writing (compared with the 2014 or 2015 national median) and• below the average percentage of pupils at the end of KS2 made expected progress in mathematics (compared with the 2014 or 2015 national median)

The 2014 national medians were 94% in reading, 96% in writing and 93% in mathematics.

Results of the English grammar, punctuation and spelling tests (GaPS) do not

form part of the floor standard.

2015/2016

Schools will be above the floor if pupils make sufficient progress across all of reading, writing and mathematics **or** if more than 65% of them achieve the national standard in reading, writing and mathematics.

Sufficient progress will be calculated using as a value-added measure from KS1 to KS2. The precise level of 'sufficient progress' will not be set until the first new KS2 tests are sat in summer 2016.

SECONDARY

**Academic
year**

Floor standard

2012/13,

The secondary school floor standard is the same for 2012/13, 2013/14 and 2014/15.

2013/14

and

A school will be below the floor standard if:

2014/15

- fewer than 40% of pupils achieve five or more GCSEs at grade A*-C or equivalent, including GCSEs (or iGCSEs) in both English and mathematics **and**
- the school has a below median score for the percentage of pupils making expected progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in English **and**
- the school has a below median score for the percentage of pupils making expected progress between Key Stage 2 and Key Stage 4 in mathematics

The median school score for pupils making expected progress in English and in mathematics was 73% for each in 2013.

The median school score in 2014 for pupils making expected progress in English was 74% and in mathematics was 67%.

Schools are only included in these calculations if they have 11 or more pupils and if they have published results for all measures above.

A school must miss **all** measures to be below the floor standard.

The recommendations of the Wolf Review will be implemented for performance measures based on 2014 results. This means that, for example, no vocational qualification can count for more than one GCSE and a maximum of two vocational qualifications per pupil can count in performance table measures.

**Progress 8
opt-in:
2014/15** These changes will make the floor standard more demanding in 2014 than in previous years.

Schools can choose to opt in to Progress 8 a year early, in which case the school agrees to be subject to new floor standards based on Progress 8. See 2015/16 below.

More information about opting in is in [Progress 8 early opt-in: terms and conditions for schools](#).

2015/16 A school will be below the floor standard if its Progress 8 score is below -0.5^1 , unless the confidence interval² suggests that the school's underlying performance may not be below average.

¹ A Progress 8 score of -0.5 indicates that the average achievement of a school's pupils is half a grade worse per subject than other pupils with the same prior attainment.

² Information about how confidence intervals will be calculated is described in Annex B of [Progress 8 measure in 2016: Technical guide for maintained secondary schools, academies and free schools](#)

- Further details of the floor standard based on Progress 8 can be found in [Progress 8 measure in 2016: Technical guide for maintained secondary schools, academies and free schools](#)
- RAISEOnline has a list of the [DfE approved qualifications](#) which can be included in Progress 8.

16-19

**Academ
ic year**

Minimum standards

2012/2013 The minimum standards cover A levels and Level 3 vocational qualifications at all schools and colleges.

In the 2012/13 academic year, a school sixth form or college will be seen as underperforming if its results show that:

- Fewer than 40% of students achieve an average point score per entry in vocational qualifications set equal to the 5th percentile of students nationally. In 2011/12 the 5th percentile was 194 points per entry.
- Fewer than 40% of students achieve an average point score per entry in academic qualifications set equal to the 5th percentile of students nationally. In 2011/12 the 5th percentile was 172 points per entry.

It is possible for a provider to fail the vocational minimum standard or the academic minimum standard or both.

2013/14 In the 2013 to 2014 academic year, a school sixth form or college will be seen as underperforming if its results show that:

- fewer than 45% of students achieve an average point score per entry in vocational qualifications of 194 points
- fewer than 45% of students achieve an average point score per entry in academic qualifications of 172 points

It is possible for a provider to fail the vocational minimum standard or the academic minimum standard or both.

2014/15 2014/15 minimum standards will be set in autumn 2015.

2015/16 The new minimum standards will be based on the progress measures. It is proposed that new minimum standards will apply to:

- Level 3 outcomes from the 2015/16 academic year.
- Level 2 substantial vocational qualification outcomes from the 2016/17 academic year.

More information about the new standards will be available from autumn 2014 onwards.

Details of the levels at which the Level 3 standards will be set will be provided to schools and colleges in 2015.

APPENDIX C: What do I mean by policy?

There is a good deal of literature which covers this complex area, notably the work of Ball (1992), Trowler (1998), Adams (2014) as well as Bates et al (2011) however, it is important to be clear about my understanding of the term ‘policy’ in the context of this work. I position myself firmly in line with Ball’s interpretation that policy is a process:

as diversely and repeatedly contested and/or subject to different ‘interpretations’ as it is enacted (rather than implemented) in original and creative ways within institutions and classrooms but in ways that are limited by the possibilities of discourse.

(Ball *et al.*, 2012a, pp. 2-3)

The concept of a socially mediated process has been defined by Ball and Bowe (1992) as having three “facets”: Intended Policy, Actual Policy and Policy in use (Ball and Bowe, 1992, p. 100) and Katiliute (2003) develops this to align with three contexts of policy development – see Figure C.1.

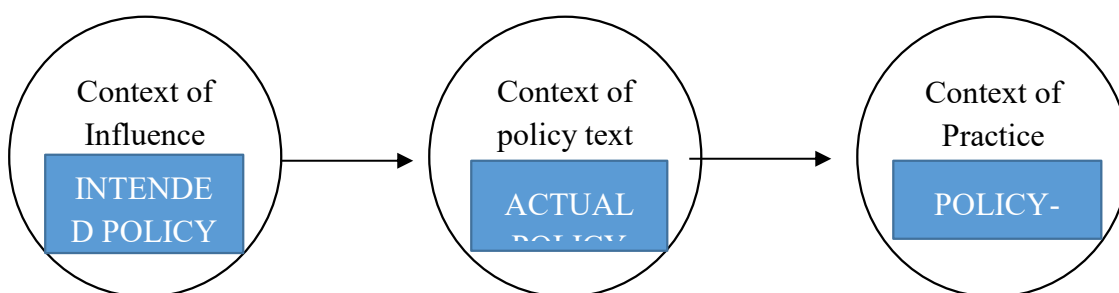


Figure C.1: Education policy levels and its making contexts

(Katiliute, 2003)

While the categorisation of the stages and contexts of policy development may be elegant, I believe it significantly over-simplifies the “messy” social process that Ball identifies. Each context within the diagram is a complex cycle of social interactions, every arrow between contexts a mini-cycle of negotiation and contestation. Aside from the political administration’s ideological objectives or manifesto and the Secretary of State’s own

political ones, there are several potentially competing stakeholders (see figure. C2) wishing to have influence and each approaching from differing ideological positions as well as with differing motivations or agendas. Each, potentially, being ‘spoken’ by a different discourse - converging, diverging or totally conflicting.

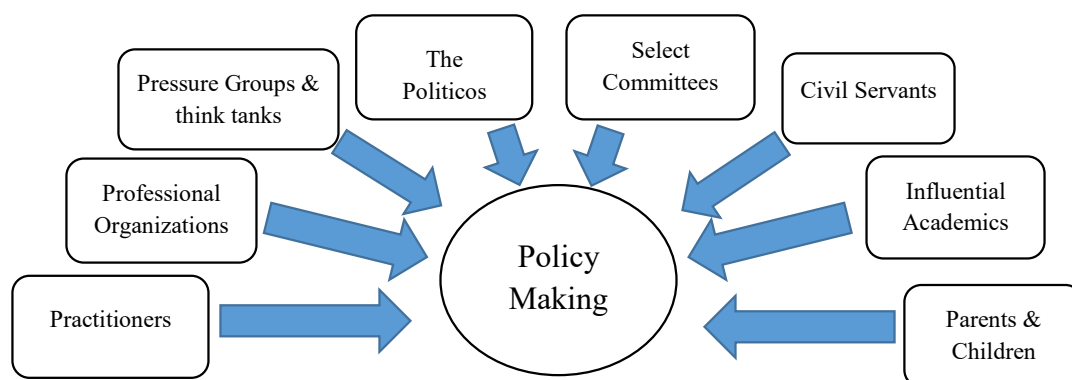


Figure C.2: Influential groups in the Policy Making Process

(Bates, Lewis and Pickard, 2011, p. 43)

Policies or “policy moments” (Ball and Bowe, 1992) are passed through documentation and via different “policy instruments” (Adams, 2014), or “policy artefacts” (Ball *et al.*, 2012a, p. 121) to schools for implementation or ‘enactment’. Changes to existing policy might be described as ‘reforms’ or ‘updates’, regardless of their complexity or implications, possibly reflecting through key linguistic identifiers the discourse which shapes them – ‘reform’ may imply addressing failure, ‘update’ merely a routine occurrence in the life of the system. These “texts and ‘things’” (Ball *et al.*, 2012a, p. 3) are quantified, set out and put in place through a dialectical process (Katiliute, 2003) but, however conceived and enacted, education policy tends to become objectified as “a thing” (Adams, 2014, p. 24) and is often identified as a process of ‘Government’ (ibid). I would argue, as policy can be produced at national, local authority, sponsor / trust or school level; viewing it as a process of ‘governance’ would be more appropriate, although

framing it as an issue of power, enacted by the state, may be useful for school leaders in a political sense, allowing the process of change (particularly unpopular ones) to be attributed to the external power rather than local decision making.

Policy may be viewed through a ‘normative’ lens where it is simplified to a process of problem solving, “done through the production of policy texts such as legislation, or other locally or nationally driven prescriptions and insertions into practice.” (Ball *et al.*, 2012a, p. 2). While such a view may appear superficially attractive through a desire for simplicity, in reality, Ball argues, policy development is far more complex and normalising it as a process of Government, isolated from the “jumbled, messy, contested creative and mundane social interactions” (Ball *et al.*, 2012a, p. 2) risks ‘marginalising’ (ibid) many of the other policy moments and activities that are involved in the process of implementation in schools as well as potentially being implicitly over-deterministic (Nudzor, 2009). This is a process or ‘policy cycle’, (Bowe, Ball and Gold, 1992) argue which, rather than just being a simple task of ‘enactment’ of policy texts, involves decoding, recoding, interpretation, negotiation, contestation and coalition building (ibid). This inherent complexity is increased further as policy must be ‘mediated’ in each school according to institutional factors (Ball *et al.*, 2012a), being constrained by differing school contexts and “frameworks of expectation” (Ball *et al.*, 2012a).

While viewing policy as both ‘text’ and ‘discourse’ allows a more refined level of analysis (Ball, 1993), it is important not to reify policy simply as ‘text’ due to the reality that some policies may never even be read first hand. The process of decoding and recoding for other communicative media (guidelines, training materials, curriculum materials, press releases, etc) may change the original intended meaning or allow that meaning to be constructed differently by those tasked with enactment. This may happen innocently or

not, and the potential for resistance / contestation should not be underestimated, as schools may employ “creative” or “performative” non-implementation, giving the appearance of compliance, for the purposes of inspection or audit, without substantively adopting the policy as intended (Ball (2001) in Ball *et al.*, 2012a, p. 10). Sutton (1999) recognises this as a dichotomy for those who view the policy process purely as a linear system with ‘Policy’ at the political level and ‘Implementation’ being seen as administrative, because those tasked with enactment are “crucial actors whose actions determine the success or failure of policy initiatives” (Juma and Clarke 1985 cited in Sutton, 1999, p. 22).

APPENDIX D: Survey questions for SurveyMonkey online survey portal.

Initial draft questions:

Questionnaire

Section 1 – Characteristics

Section 2 – Attitudes to policy

Section 3 – Pace of policy reform

Section 4 – Workload

Section 1

Gender:	Male / Female
Position:	Head / Principal, Deputy Head / Vice Principal, Assistant Head, Senior teacher, Governor
Institution Type:	Private, Secondary Modern, Grammar, Academy, Studio School, Free School, FE Institution, City Technology College, State Boarding School
Age range:	Middle (9-13), Secondary (11-16), Secondary (11-18), Upper (14-18), Sixth form (16-18), other (eg all through)
Years Experience (in leadership):	0-5, 6-10, 11-15, 16-20, 21-25, 26-30, 31-35, 36-40
Region (approx.):	London, South East, South, South West, Midlands, North East, North West
ASCL Member:	Yes / No

Section 2

“Standards” are often used as the justification for policy reform:

1. Do you believe that the term “standards” is clearly defined and understood in our education system?
2. How would you best define standards?
 - a. Rankings against international benchmarks (TIMMS, PISA)
 - b. Examination outcomes at 16 and 18
 - c. Quality of teaching and learning (Schooling)
 - d. Comparative judgements of behaviour, attendance, etc
 - e. Level of progress made from starting points
 - f. Other _____
3. Do you believe that the use of international comparators is an appropriate driver of school reforms? Yes / No
 - a. why? _____
4. What do you believe the key purpose of education should be?

- a. National economic prosperity
 - b. Individual development / progression
 - c. Qualifications
 - d. Preparation for working life
 - e. Facilitate Lifelong learning
 - f. Other _____

- 5. What do you believe the key purpose of education is considered to be by Government / policy makers?
 - a. National economic prosperity
 - b. Individual development / progression
 - c. Qualifications
 - d. Preparation for working life
 - e. Facilitate Lifelong learning
 - f. Other _____

- 6. Please rank these options in order of importance as intentions of education policy change for national policy makers?
 - a. Improving access to 'Good' schools for parents
 - b. Improving 'standards'
 - c. Improving quality of learning experience for students
 - d. Ideologically motivated reform
 - e. Gaining personal / political capital
 - f. Improving economic wellbeing of the nation
 - g. Improving individual life chances for students
 - h. To satisfy OfSTED

- 7. Please rank these options in order of importance as intentions of internal policy change for school leaders?
 - a. Improving access to 'Good' schools for parents
 - b. Improving 'standards'
 - c. Improving quality of learning experience for students
 - d. Ideologically motivated reform
 - e. Gaining personal / political capital
 - f. Improving economic wellbeing of the nation
 - g. Improving individual life chances for students
 - h. To satisfy OfSTED

- 8. Would you always implement external policy even when it conflicts with school ethos or practice? Yes / No / only if it benefits the school

- 9. From your experience how well is external policy planned to ensure effective and efficient implementation for the following issues? – (response range for each question)
Always, usually, sometimes, never
 - a. Sufficient degree of consultation with school leaders
 - b. Sufficient levels of funding
 - c. Consideration of impact on schools
 - d. Consideration of impact on teacher workload
 - e. Timing / timescales of implementation

- f. Sufficient oversight to ensure political accountability
10. Can you name any policies that have benefitted your own school(s) or practice? – Free text
- a. Did any of these positively impact on ‘standards’? Y/N
 - b. Why? Free text
11. Can you name any policies that you feel have negatively impacted affected your own school(s) or practice? – Free text
- a. Did any of these negatively impact in standards? Y/N
 - b. Why? Free text

Section 3 - Pace

12. What words would you choose to describe your experience of the pace of education reform / policy development? Free text
13. What do you believe is the most likely cause of the pace of change?
- a. Electoral timetable
 - b. Short terms in office of Secretary of State for Education (desire for attributable impact)
 - c. Concern about standards and refusal to allow slow pace of change to hold groups of children back
 - d. Influence of business and other economic interests
 - e. Other _____
14. Do you believe that justification for change is communicated meaningfully and effectively?
- a. To voters / parents? Yes / No
 - b. To school leaders? Yes / No
 - c. To teachers / unions? Yes / No
15. How do you believe that the pace of education reform / policy change has affected education standards in secondary schools?
- a. Significantly improved
 - b. Partially improved
 - c. Not affected – stayed the same
 - d. Partially declined
 - e. Significantly declined
16. Can you explain any further? Free text

Section 4 - Workload

17. How do you believe that the pace of education reform / policy change has impacted on workload in secondary schools? - Significantly increased, Partially increased, Not affected – stayed the same, Partially decreased, Significantly decreased
- a. For Governors
 - b. For School Leaders
 - c. For Teachers

18. Would you be interested in participating in an interview to discuss you experiences of headship? Yes / No

APPENDIX E: Feedback and reflection on pilot survey and interview

Feedback from pilot survey

Feedback from the pilot survey was limited and the subjects indicated a general approval of the system and the questioning. Some specific question related information was fed back for consideration.

Question 9 – Definition of standards – does the inclusion of exam outcomes and progress from starting points result in duplication? In this instance, I considered that the system had changed over time and that some Headteachers may only have experienced school performance measures from one system or the other and while I accept the possibility that there is an implied duplication, I think the variation in exam routes and experience of respondents justified the inclusion, provided there are only generally descriptive conclusions drawn.

Question 12 – Query whether this question would be better ranked with each option offering a rating. I wanted to specifically challenge the respondents to prioritise their responses to identify shared perceptions or values and allowing a system where rankings for each choice could be identical would not allow that to happen.

Question 16 – could the wording of the question be refined? The original question was worded “Please rank these options in order of importance as intentions of education policy change for national policy makers?” this was not as clear as it could have been, the final version was amended to read “Please rank these intentions of policy reform as to how highly they influence national policy makers? (1: highest 8: lowest)”

Question 26 – Could this be rephrased to ensure that they answer with respect to their best understanding of the term ‘standards’? The draft version of this question, which later became question 29, was “How do you believe that the pace of education reform / policy change has affected education standards in secondary schools?”. This was

ambiguous with regard to which definition of standards was being referred to, so the question was refined to say “With reference to your understanding of 'standards' - what impact do you think the current pace of education reform / policy change has had on education standards in English secondary schools?”

Reflection on Pilot Interview

The pilot interview took place with a volunteer who was happy to meet face to face and was prepared to offer feedback on the process and questioning. The interview was booked for a one-hour slot at his place of work and took place on Tuesday 19th May.

The interview was guided by the initial schedule with extension and follow on questions being used as required or new issues arose. In addition, a mind map of key terms and issues had been drawn up in advance to act as a prompt during the interview should any areas of interest be neglected. In general terms from my perspective the interview seemed to flow well, the responses were natural and although there were a lot of ums and errs, the responses were considered and appear to provide valid and useful data for analysis.

The interview was recorded using a digital voice recorder and was then exported and converted to an mp3 file using Audacity. This was then transcribed into Word using a NVivo compatible format. The audio and transcription files were then added to the NVivo project in readiness for coding.

Analysis of process

Overall, I feel the pilot was a successful interview. The interviewee was engaged and the hour went very quickly with some highly interesting feedback coming through the questions. There were, however, some significant weaknesses in the process which would need addressing prior to the main set of interviews.

1. It has been a long time since I interviewed anyone, and it took me a while to settle into active listening, although I found making brief notes during the interview helped me remember key comments or points.
2. The main aim of the process is to test the impact of the pace of policy change on the standards in schools. This was an area that was barely covered by my questioning until the very end and then only because I had realised it was a glaring gap in the questioning up to that point. The final question was not sufficient to test this area. Despite this, the data collected will be useful, but I will need to actively address this issue in subsequent interviews.
3. I am strongly positioned within the field of research and knew that I had to minimise the potential for me to lead questions or put any undue influence on the interviewee. In addition, I was very aware that how I structure questions would reflect my own biases and how I responded to answers would reflect how I had constructed meaning from the answer given, which would also be done through the filter of my own understanding and opinion. This is a high risk in this style of research and I had tried to minimise this by drafting very open and non-directive questions. I very quickly became aware that my follow up reflection and extension questions were falling into the trap of applying my innate bias or feelings through the language and mode of response that I used. Rather than simply reflecting what had been said, I would try to illustrate with an example or illustration which tended to draw, not from their response, but from my experience. This became obvious to me quite early on and, while I don't believe it contaminated the answers given up to that point it is something I will need to take action to prevent in future interviews. I think the open nature of

the questions, for me, was less structured than I have used in previous research and this left too much opportunity for me to 'fill in the blanks'.

4. Timing went slightly over the hour and while this was not an issue for this particular Head, it may be for others, so I will need to keep a closer eye on the timing near the end of the process.

Feedback from the interviewee

No feedback was received.

Actions prior to next interview

1. Redraft the interview schedule with pre-written extension question options to help ensure a more neutral follow up to responses
2. Redraft the mindmap to show links between areas and to include any new issues from the pilot interview
3. Ensure timing is monitored carefully not to exceed the agreed timespan.

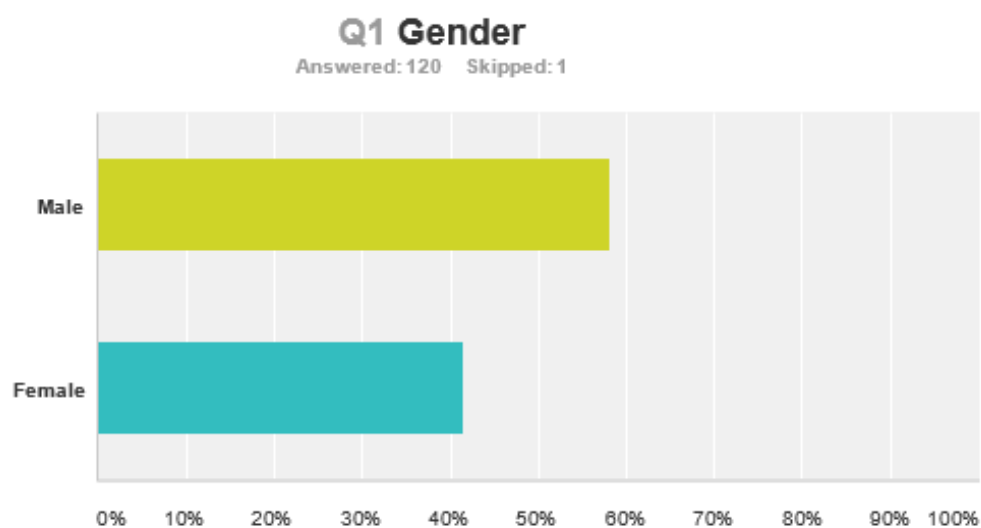
APPENDIX F: QUESTION 5: How many years of experience in school leadership do you have?

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid 2.0	2	2.2	2.2	2.2
5.0	4	4.4	4.4	6.6
6.0	3	3.3	3.3	9.9
7.0	3	3.3	3.3	13.2
8.0	6	6.6	6.6	19.8
9.0	2	2.2	2.2	22.0
10.0	8	8.8	8.8	30.8
11.0	5	5.5	5.5	36.3
12.0	8	8.8	8.8	45.1
12.5	1	1.1	1.1	46.2
13.0	3	3.3	3.3	49.5
14.0	3	3.3	3.3	52.7
15.0	8	8.8	8.8	61.5
17.0	2	2.2	2.2	63.7
18.0	7	7.7	7.7	71.4
19.0	2	2.2	2.2	73.6
20.0	11	12.1	12.1	85.7
21.0	2	2.2	2.2	87.9
22.0	1	1.1	1.1	89.0
23.0	1	1.1	1.1	90.1
24.0	1	1.1	1.1	91.2
25.0	5	5.5	5.5	96.7
26.0	2	2.2	2.2	98.9
27.0	1	1.1	1.1	100.0
Total	91	100.0	100.0	

Table F.1: Question 5: How many years of experience in school leadership do you have?

(survey results, Appendix G)

APPENDIX G: Initial survey data

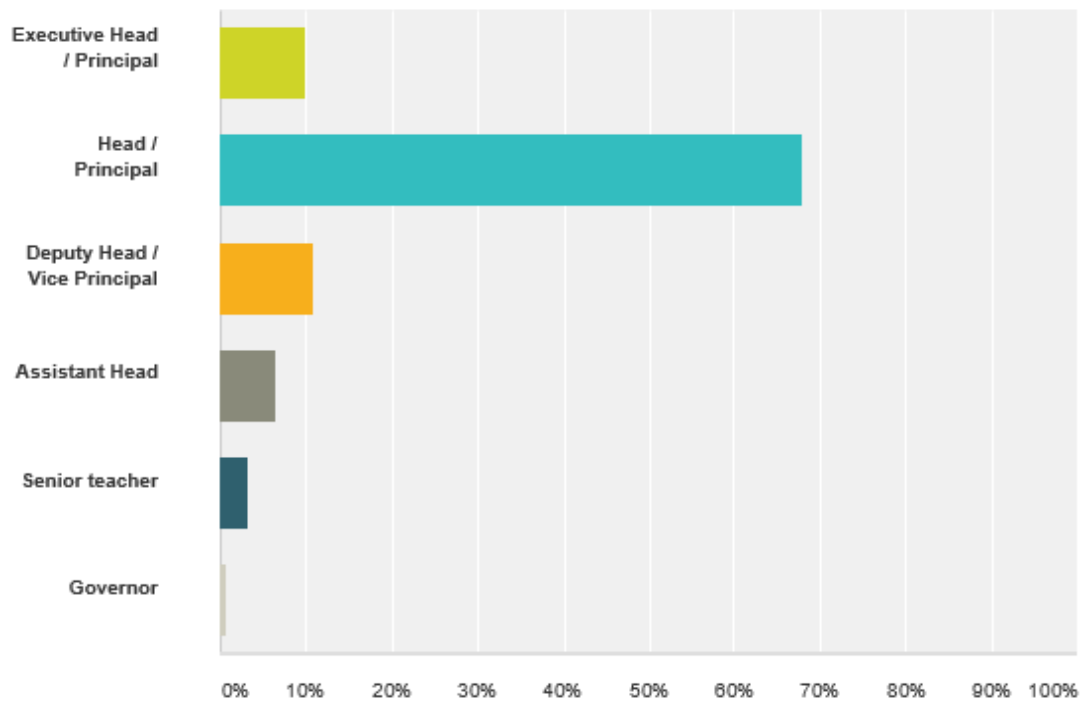


Answer Choices	Responses	
Male	58.33%	70
Female	41.67%	50
Total		120

Figure G.1: Initial Survey Data Question 1

Q2 What is your position?

Answered: 119 Skipped: 2

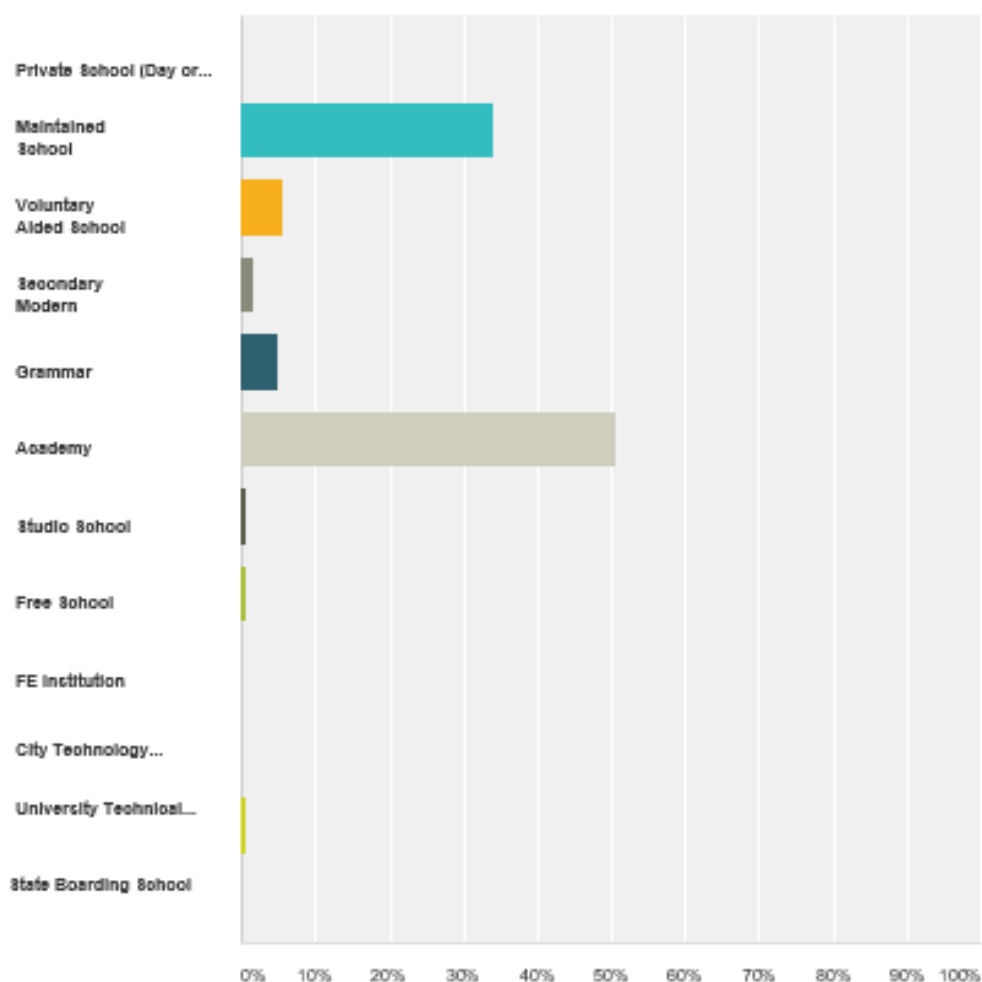


Answer Choices	Responses	
Executive Head / Principal	10.08%	12
Head / Principal	68.07%	81
Deputy Head / Vice Principal	10.92%	13
Assistant Head	6.72%	8
Senior teacher	3.36%	4
Governor	0.84%	1
Total		119

Figure G.2: Initial Survey Data Question 2

Q3 Please indicate which of these best matches your institution?

Answered: 120 Skipped: 1

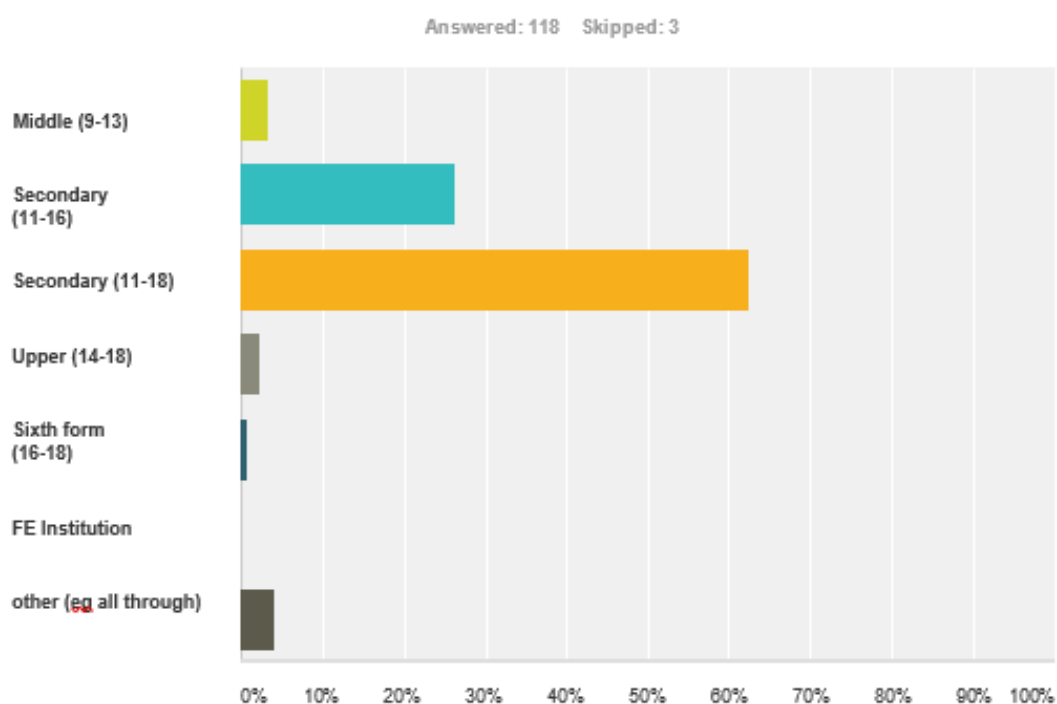


Answer Choices	Responses
Private School (Day or boarding)	0.00% 0
Maintained School	34.17% 41
Voluntary Aided School	5.83% 7
Secondary Modern	1.67% 2
Grammar	5.00% 6
Academy	50.83% 61
Studio School	0.83% 1
Free School	0.83% 1
FE Institution	0.00% 0

City Technology College	0.00%	0
University Technical College	0.83%	1
State Boarding School	0.00%	0
Total		120

Figure G.3: Initial Survey Data Question 3

Q4 Which of these best describes your secondary phase?



Answer Choices	Responses
Middle (9-13)	3.39% 4
Secondary (11-16)	26.27% 31
Secondary (11-18)	62.71% 74
Upper (14-18)	2.54% 3
Sixth form (16-18)	0.85% 1
FE Institution	0.00% 0
other (eg all through)	4.24% 5
Total	118

Figure G.4: Initial Survey Data Question 4

Q5 How many years of experience in school leadership do you have?

#	Responses	Date
1	20	3/14/2015 3:24 AM
2	7 at middle leader level, 1 as SLT	03/11/2015 04:09
3	7	03/04/2015 14:39
4	27	03/04/2015 11:03
5	6	03/04/2015 02:58
6	9	03/04/2015 01:15
7	35	03/03/2015 01:15
8	2 as Senior Teacher and 16 as Curriculum Leader	03/02/2015 05:15
9	26	03/02/2015 04:10
10	8	03/02/2015 04:10
11	6	03/02/2015 04:07
12	20	03/02/2015 00:45
13	10 in a senior ream	03/01/2015 13:02
14	18	03/01/2015 11:57
15	20 years	03/01/2015 11:38
16	12	03/01/2015 10:05
17	8	03/01/2015 05:13
18	10	03/01/2015 04:49
19	2	2/28/2015 11:37 AM
20	7.5 as Head (plus another 5 as DH)	2/28/2015 5:48 AM
21	20	2/28/2015 5:28 AM
22	2	2/28/2015 1:02 AM
23	10	2/28/2015 12:58 AM
24	30	2/28/2015 12:49 AM
25	5	2/28/2015 12:43 AM
26	5	2/27/2015 9:27 AM
27	7	2/27/2015 8:20 AM
28	Nine	2/27/2015 4:27 AM
29	11	2/27/2015 2:40 AM
30	7	2/26/2015 12:53 PM
31	20+	2/26/2015 10:11 AM
32	10	2/26/2015 9:57 AM
33	17	2/26/2015 9:56 AM
34	19 years	2/26/2015 9:07 AM
35	25	2/26/2015 8:26 AM
36	25 years	2/26/2015 8:09 AM
37	8	2/26/2015 8:04 AM
38	10	2/26/2015 7:55 AM
39	20	2/26/2015 7:50 AM
40	12	2/26/2015 7:22 AM
41	20 yrs	2/26/2015 6:55 AM

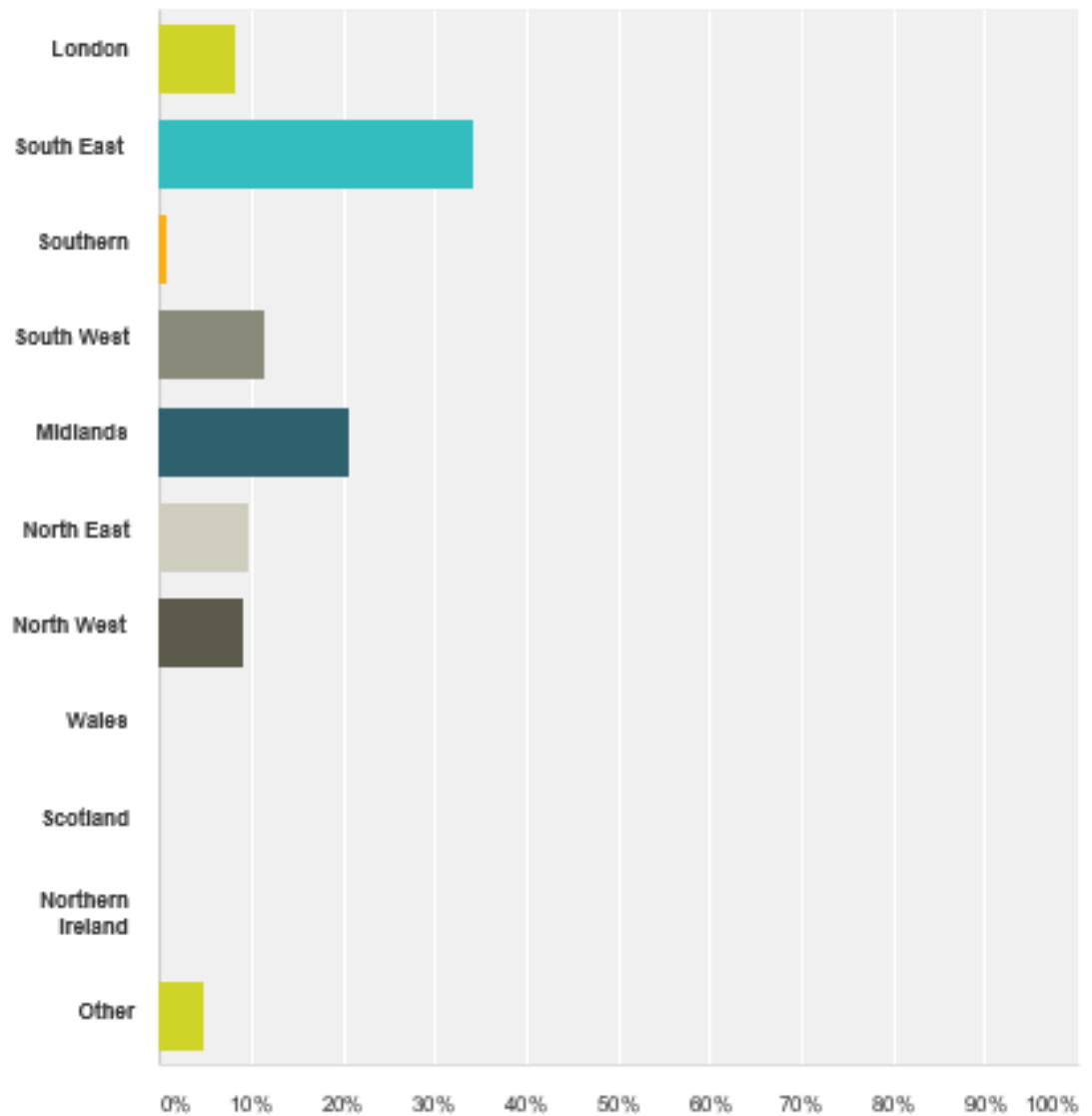
42	21	2/26/2015 6:54 AM
43	6	2/26/2015 6:54 AM
44	4	2/26/2015 6:50 AM
45	15	2/26/2015 6:23 AM
46	10	2/26/2015 6:19 AM
47	7	2/26/2015 6:15 AM
48	24	2/26/2015 4:42 AM
49	26	2/26/2015 4:33 AM
50	12	2/26/2015 4:32 AM
51	20	2/26/2015 4:30 AM
52	14 years	2/26/2015 4:25 AM
53	21	2/26/2015 4:07 AM
54	15	2/26/2015 4:01 AM
55	6	2/26/2015 4:00 AM
56	2	2/26/2015 3:21 AM
57	17	2/26/2015 3:20 AM
58	15	2/26/2015 3:03 AM
59	20	2/26/2015 2:32 AM
60	18	2/26/2015 2:05 AM
61	18 years	2/26/2015 1:46 AM
62	18 years	2/26/2015 1:46 AM
63	15	2/26/2015 1:45 AM
64	20	2/26/2015 1:33 AM
65	12	2/26/2015 1:26 AM
66	12	2/26/2015 1:23 AM
67	20	2/26/2015 1:21 AM
68	10	2/26/2015 1:21 AM
69	25 years	2/26/2015 1:19 AM
70	5	2/26/2015 1:14 AM
71	11	2/26/2015 1:08 AM
72	14	2/26/2015 1:05 AM
73	18	2/26/2015 12:53 AM
74	Seven	2/26/2015 12:48 AM
75	12	2/26/2015 12:45 AM
76	20	2/26/2015 12:29 AM
77	10	2/26/2015 12:28 AM
78	25	2/26/2015 12:26 AM
79	11	2/26/2015 12:25 AM
80	20	2/26/2015 12:19 AM
81	12	2/26/2015 12:07 AM
82	22	2/25/2015 11:47 PM
83	8	2/25/2015 11:37 PM
84	11	2/25/2015 10:51 PM
85	15	2/25/2015 10:49 PM
86	20+	2/25/2015 2:44 PM
87	11	2/25/2015 2:16 PM

88	14	2/25/2015 1:33 PM
89	13	2/25/2015 1:28 PM
90	20	2/25/2015 1:07 PM
91	15	2/25/2015 1:06 PM
92	12	2/25/2015 12:57 PM
93	8	2/25/2015 12:37 PM
94	13	2/25/2015 12:28 PM
95	12	2/25/2015 12:26 PM
96	10	2/25/2015 12:25 PM
97	10	2/25/2015 12:12 PM
98	25	2/25/2015 12:12 PM
99	10	2/25/2015 12:08 PM
100	15	2/25/2015 12:06 PM
101	16	2/25/2015 12:05 PM
102	14	2/25/2015 12:02 PM
103	15	2/25/2015 3:13 AM
104	19	2/25/2015 12:08 AM
105	8	2/24/2015 6:52 PM
106	23	2/24/2015 1:17 PM
107	23	2/24/2015 1:17 PM
108	5	2/24/2015 1:13 PM
109	5	2/24/2015 1:03 PM
110	13	2/24/2015 12:54 PM
111	6	2/24/2015 12:47 PM
112	11	2/24/2015 12:25 PM
113	9	2/24/2015 12:23 PM
114	14	2/24/2015 12:06 PM
115	18	2/24/2015 12:01 PM
116	15	2/24/2015 10:44 AM
117	11	2/24/2015 8:07 AM
118	15	2/24/2015 8:05 AM

Table G.1: Initial Survey Data Question 5

Q6 Which region best describes your location?

Answered: 120 Skipped: 1



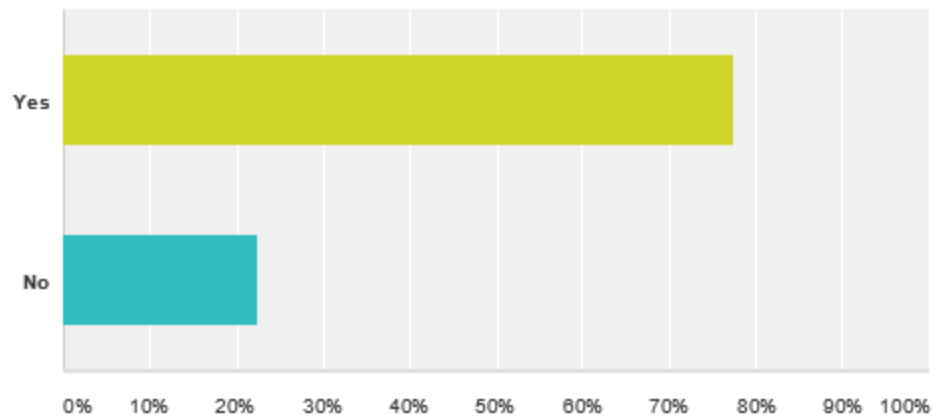
Answer Choices	Responses	
London	8.33%	10
South East	34.17%	41
Southern	0.83%	1
South West	11.67%	14
Midlands	20.83%	25
North East	10.00%	12
North West	9.17%	11
Wales	0.00%	0

Scotland	0.00%	0
Northern Ireland	0.00%	0
Other	5.00%	6

Figure G.5: Initial Survey Data Question 6

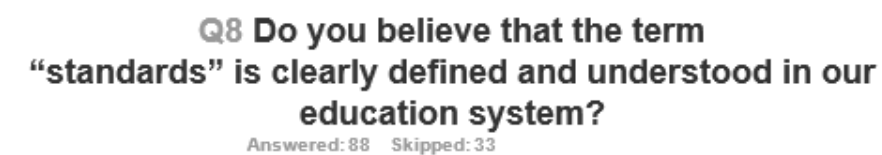
Q7 Are you a member of ASCL (Association of School and College Leaders)?

Answered: 120 Skipped: 1



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	77.50%	93
No	22.50%	27
Total		120

Figure G.6: Initial Survey Data Question 7

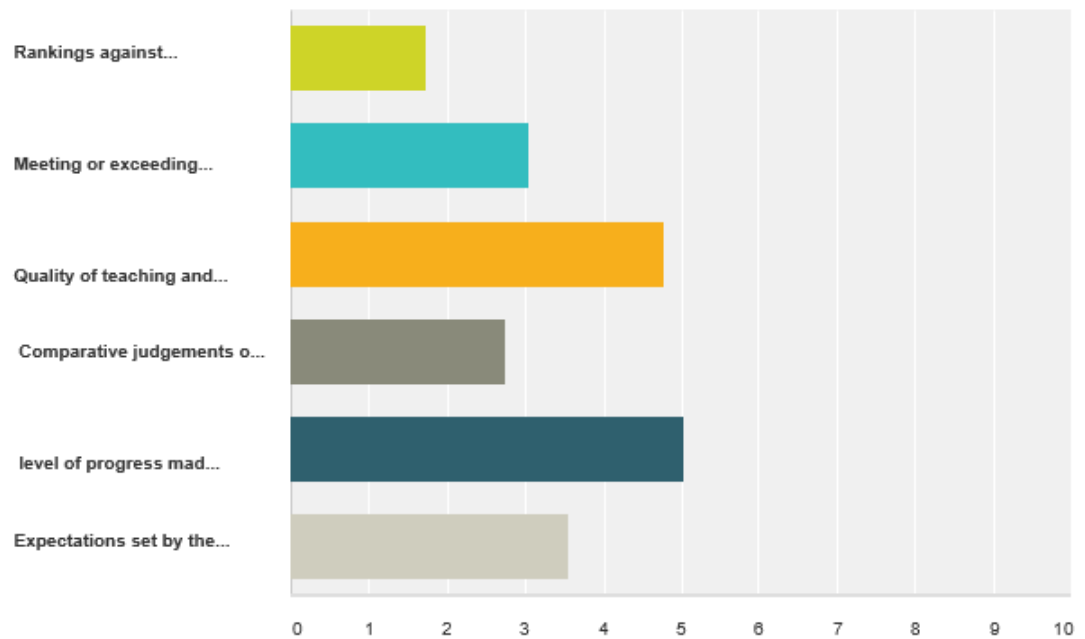


Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	28.41%	25
No	71.59%	63
Total		88

Figure G.7: Initial Survey Data Question 8

Q9 How would you best define standards (please rank in order 1: Most relevant 6: Least relevant?)

Answered: 91 Skipped: 30

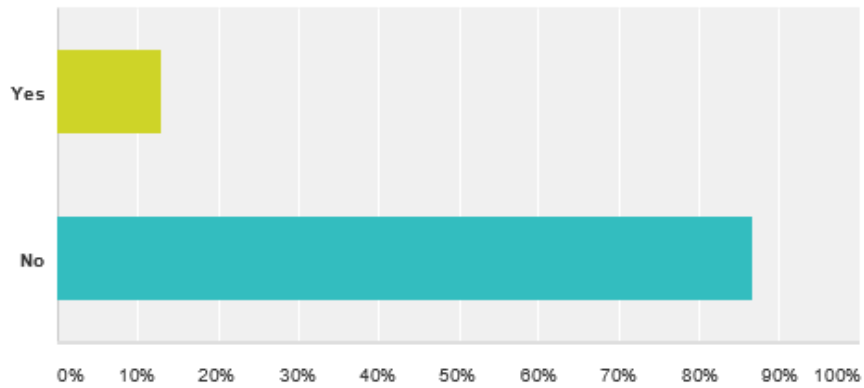


	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Score
Rankings against international benchmarks (TIMMS, PISA)	2.20% 2	1.10% 1	9.89% 9	5.49% 5	17.58% 16	63.74% 58	91	1.74
Meeting or exceeding Government threshold targets for tests / exams	9.89% 9	8.79% 8	18.68% 17	16.48% 15	32.97% 30	13.19% 12	91	3.07
Quality of teaching and learning (Schooling)	36.26% 33	29.67% 27	17.58% 16	12.09% 11	3.30% 3	1.10% 1	91	4.80
Comparative judgements of behaviour, attendance, etc	0.00% 0	6.59% 6	14.29% 13	38.46% 35	28.57% 28	12.09% 11	91	2.75
Level of progress made from starting points	36.26% 33	39.56% 36	18.68% 17	4.40% 4	1.10% 1	0.00% 0	91	5.05
Expectations set by the school itself	15.56% 14	13.33% 12	21.11% 19	23.33% 21	16.67% 15	10.00% 9	90	3.58

Figure G.8: Initial Survey Data Question 9

Q10 Do you believe that the use of international comparators is an appropriate driver of school reforms?

Answered: 91 Skipped: 30



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	13.19%	12
No	86.81%	79
Total		91

Figure G.9: Initial Survey Data Question 10

Q11 If you answered No to the previous question, why?

Answered: 78 Skipped: 43

#	Responses	Date
1	Not comparable curriculum, context or culture.	3/14/2015 3:36 AM
2	Too many cultural, political and socio-economic variables	03/11/2015 04:16
3	Issue sre reliability	03/04/2015 11:09
4	Impossible to reflect cultural differences which have a massive impact on standards	03/04/2015 01:37
5	They are not compared appropriately	03/02/2015 05:23
6	Because they could be interpreted differently and may not be as useful. people such as employers may not understand or rate them	03/02/2015 04:21
7	Because although useful to see what other countries do the way it is compared and what is published is not helpful to improving standards	03/02/2015 04:21
8	There are very different contexts in each country.	03/01/2015 13:11
9	Not a like for like comparison	03/01/2015 12:08
10	Because there are huge variations in outcome measures between countries	03/01/2015 11:45
11	Cultural norms have a significant impact on educational structures and skill focus	03/01/2015 10:34
12	Because they are never truly comparable and often value unimportant things.	03/01/2015 05:22
13	Not always relevant	2/28/2015 11:43 AM
14	because the data is not reliable. there are too many factors affecting it and it is given in different ways and different countries deal with different situations, and in some places they compare towns to countries. some statisticians do not even think the data is statistically significant.	2/28/2015 5:57 AM
15	Context !	2/28/2015 1:07 AM
16	Too many variables, not enough appropriate context considered, I don't accept the premise that some international systems are to be coveted or chased.	2/28/2015 12:51 AM
17	Other school systems and cultures are very different. It is like comparing apples and bananas; they are both good for you but deliver different things.	2/27/2015 9:37 AM
18	We should be defining our own criteria for excellence	2/27/2015 4:35 AM
19	Different context. Not comparing like with like.	2/27/2015 12:17 AM
20	Different context in different countries	2/26/2015 12:59 PM
21	the currently used systems are very limited. different countires place emphases on different skills and qualities.	2/26/2015 10:19 AM
22	Oversimplistic and too many ways of interpreting data	2/26/2015 10:05 AM
23	because of very variable cultural factors	2/26/2015 10:05 AM

24	Too many variables in the systems of different countries.	2/26/2015 9:25 AM
25	different contexts-economical and political, different views on what a successful student looks like, different views on welfare of the whole child ie too much cramming can cause mental stress, etc	2/26/2015 8:39 AM
26	different contexts	2/26/2015 8:15 AM
27	Different cultures and educational systems mean a reliable comparison is not possible.	2/26/2015 8:03 AM
28	Comparators need to be comparable. Our education and social systems, principles and values are very different to other countries.	2/26/2015 7:32 AM
29	There are too many other variables (eg level of funding) to make comparisons valid	2/26/2015 7:07 AM
30	Countries are different	2/26/2015 7:06 AM
31	The contexts are so different	2/26/2015 6:32 AM
32	Schools emerge from different contexts which is not captured by simplistic testing. Not all areas of countries are represented in international tests i.e. Shanghai skews the Chinese figures	2/26/2015 6:20 AM
33	Comparing entirely different cultures, economies and social systems is mostly like comparing apples and oranges.	2/26/2015 4:58 AM
34	Limited narrow focus upon academic aspects of one assessment programme.	2/26/2015 4:53 AM
35	The statistics used are inconsistent and the ways in which pupils are tested are too varied to provide meaningful comparisons.	2/26/2015 4:46 AM
36	Too much variation in school systems compared to what is being examined	2/26/2015 4:12 AM
37	Too many variables to make fair comparisons	2/26/2015 4:08 AM
38	If we are educating students in order to prepare them for their futures then this should drive school reform, if this is not a priority in other countries why would we want to benchmark ourselves against them?	2/26/2015 3:50 AM
39	We're not comparing like with like	2/26/2015 3:28 AM
40	Too many contextual differences.	2/26/2015 2:41 AM
41	You are making comparisons between very different contexts/cohorts. It is not a fair test.	2/26/2015 2:13 AM
42	There is no baseline for comparison. The students tested are not representative of the whole population in our schools.	2/26/2015 2:02 AM
43	Completely different variables to compare against.	2/26/2015 1:58 AM
44	Too many variables that mean the comparisons lack validity	2/26/2015 1:35 AM
45	Depends which ones	2/26/2015 1:32 AM
46	Because of the differing cultural contexts	2/26/2015 1:27 AM
47	The measurement is not of performance in similar schools internationally. many factors influence performance differently in other countries.	2/26/2015 1:24 AM
48	because we are not always comparing like with like and because these focus too much on assumed language skills	2/26/2015 1:24 AM
49	You cannot make direct comparisons of hard data without taking into account context i.e. methodology, social attitude to education, group size, teacher conditions of service etc.	2/26/2015 1:18 AM

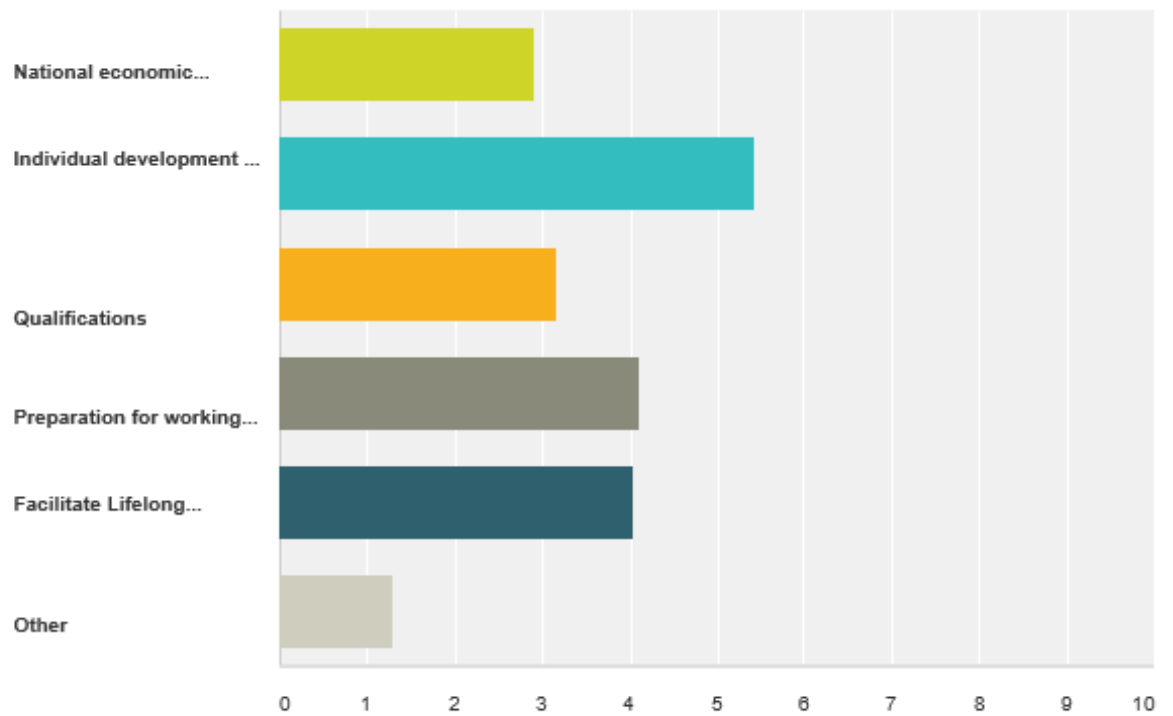
50	apples and pears comparisons	2/26/2015 12:59 AM
51	International comparators are useful in terms of learning about different experiences of education. However, any measure must be narrow to make it form into a league table. Given the differences in national structures in education and attitudes to elements of education striving for this type of league label success is worthless.	2/26/2015 12:58 AM
52	Different cultures, different emphasis on particular subjects so unfair	2/26/2015 12:54 AM
53	Not comparing like for like, different system, different outcomes	2/26/2015 12:33 AM
54	too many unknowns in the samples from other countries; diversity of practice in terms of inclusion/selection	2/25/2015 11:56 PM
55	Different cultures, attitudes to schooling, public and political attitudes to teachers (i.e. denigration by the media in this country)	2/25/2015 11:51 PM
56	Too narrow a measure to be a driver alone. It is part of a broader suite of information	2/25/2015 11:00 PM
57	No standardisation - how representative is the sample of students used?	2/25/2015 2:59 PM
58	The cultural and social differences in different countries make this impossible. this is probably a greater effect size than any education system	2/25/2015 2:31 PM
59	Too many variables when comparing systems across countries	2/25/2015 2:07 PM
60	A very broad brush measure - and sweeping conclusions about why some countries are better than others, can create huge policy decisions, and expense. Educational research and small tweaking are best.	2/25/2015 1:42 PM
61	Because there is so much more to a good education. The arts, courtesy, good manners, consideration for others etc	2/25/2015 1:17 PM
62	not like for like in terms of culture, hours of schooling etc.	2/25/2015 12:40 PM
63	Systems are not comparable and there are a wide variety of statistics that can be skewed to prove different points about the same subject matter.	2/25/2015 12:35 PM
64	no two schools are the same so how can you compare based on data	2/25/2015 12:22 PM
65	Unreal	2/25/2015 12:17 PM
66	Not the same measures	2/25/2015 12:16 PM
67	Cultural differences, different levels of deprivation, different status given to education in different countries,	2/25/2015 3:23 AM
68	We are comparing different cultures, different school systems, levels of investment, social expectations - use detailed research to improve our pedagogy, but policy tourism by politicians and the use of PISA by politicians such as Cameron and Gove to denigrate the efforts of schools in this country is demotivating and demoralising beyond words	2/25/2015 2:17 AM
69	Validity of tests/comparisons	2/24/2015 6:59 PM
70	Because they are not representative- eg Shanghai is not a whole country!	2/24/2015 1:28 PM
71	we're just not similar in so many other ways	2/24/2015 1:07 PM
72	Not a level playing field. Comparing different variables	2/24/2015 12:58 PM
73	Countries are different	2/24/2015 12:54 PM

74	Differing contexts, systems, values and priorities	2/24/2015 12:31 PM
75	Because the context is so varied that it is almost impossible to make direct comparisons of true learning!	2/24/2015 12:20 PM
76	Cultures differe	2/24/2015 12:10 PM
77	Too many variables to consider	2/24/2015 10:53 AM
78	Because they do not measure like with like, for example Shanghai with a selective system compared to England	2/24/2015 8:20 AM

Table G.2: Initial Survey Data Question 11

Q12 What do you believe the purpose of education to be? (please rank from 1(most important) - 6)

Answered: 91 Skipped: 30



	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Score
National economic prosperity	4.40% 4	3.30% 3	21.98% 20	25.27% 23	40.66% 37	4.40% 4	91	2.92
Individual development / progression	61.54% 56	25.27% 23	9.89% 9	3.30% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	91	5.45
Qualifications	2.20% 2	10.99% 10	19.78% 18	36.26% 33	30.77% 28	0.00% 0	91	3.18
Preparation for working life	12.09% 11	30.77% 28	28.57% 26	16.48% 15	9.89% 9	2.20% 2	91	4.12
Facilitate Lifelong learning	15.38% 14	29.67% 27	18.68% 17	17.58% 16	17.58% 16	1.10% 1	91	4.04
Other	4.40% 4	0.00% 0	1.10% 1	1.10% 1	1.10% 1	92.31% 84	91	1.29

Figure G.10: Initial Survey Data Question 12

Q13 If you said 'other' to q12, please define here.

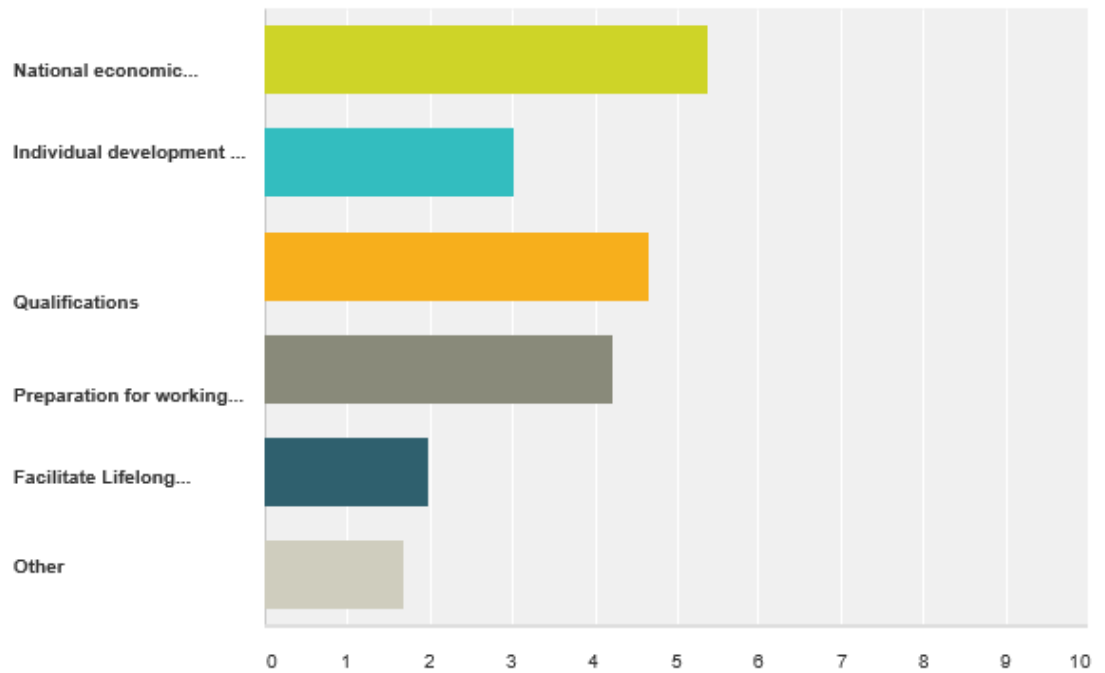
Answered: 11 Skipped: 110

#	Responses	Date
1	Development of potential to be contribute to society and be fulfilled	3/14/2015 3:36 AM
2	Becoming a good and useful member of society with appropriate subject knowledge	3/2/2015 5:23 AM
3	i wouldn't have said other - last on list	3/2/2015 4:21 AM
4	Build communities	2/28/2015 12:51 AM
5	Social mobility and cohesion	2/26/2015 9:47 AM
6	SMSC/ethical issues	2/26/2015 8:39 AM
7	Fulfilment of the human souls natural curiosity	2/26/2015 7:32 AM
8	To be happy and to enjoy education	2/26/2015 2:16 AM
9	I know there's a Philosophical difference, but practically that it's hard to separate qualifications from prep for working life	2/26/2015 1:12 AM
10	Some will never need qualifications so life skills are more needed	2/25/2015 12:22 PM
11	To ensure today's young people are tomorrow's socially conscious citizens with a strong moral compass, the ability to think for themselves and with levels of literacy, numeracy, technological skills, cultural awareness, aesthetical appreciation and democratic engagement to develop our country and beyond	2/25/2015 2:17 AM

Table G.3: Initial Survey Data Question 13

Q14 What do you think policy makers believe the purpose of education to be? (please rank from 1(most important) - 6)

Answered: 90 Skipped: 31



	1	2	3	4	5	6	Total	Score
National economic prosperity	50.00% 45	42.22% 38	6.67% 6	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1.11% 1	90	5.39
Individual development / progression	1.11% 1	3.33% 3	15.56% 14	58.89% 53	18.89% 17	2.22% 2	90	3.02
Qualifications	31.11% 28	24.44% 22	28.89% 26	12.22% 11	2.22% 2	1.11% 1	90	4.67
Preparation for working life	7.78% 7	28.89% 26	45.56% 41	14.44% 13	3.33% 3	0.00% 0	90	4.23
Facilitate Lifelong learning	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1.11% 1	12.22% 11	73.33% 66	13.33% 12	90	2.01
Other	10.11% 9	1.12% 1	2.25% 2	2.25% 2	2.25% 2	82.02% 73	89	1.69

Figure G.11: Initial Survey Data Question 14

Q15 I you said 'other' to q14, please define here.

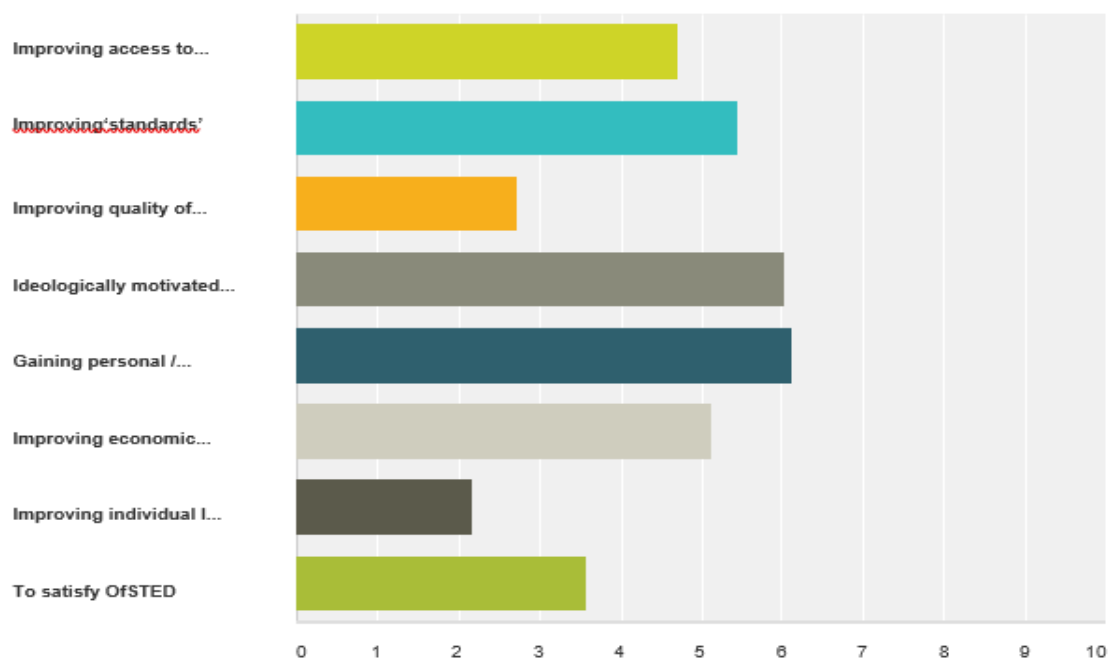
Answered: 18 Skipped: 103

#	Responses	Date
1	see answer to 13	3/2/2015 4:21 AM
2	A tool to increase their own popularity as politicians.	3/1/2015 5:22 AM
3	Political gain and perception of being strong Government	2/28/2015 12:51 AM
4	Influenced by what might appeal to future voters/supporters	2/27/2015 4:35 AM
5	Not entirely sure - comparing us with China possibly?	2/26/2015 8:39 AM
6	National standing against other nations	2/26/2015 7:32 AM
7	Social engineering.	2/26/2015 4:58 AM
8	A means of proving the previous regime/ Government were inadequate to gain power for their political affiliations.	2/26/2015 4:46 AM
9	I don't think policy makers care much about those below a C grade	2/26/2015 3:28 AM
10	I think the Government follow short term goals with a view to success in elections	2/26/2015 2:13 AM
11	political measures	2/26/2015 1:32 AM
12	Really good question and really hard to answer. They will say all of these at different times. I've no idea which is the predominant one in their thinking. There are many words and total lack of clarity in the national debate.	2/26/2015 1:12 AM
13	I dont think they value education for its own sake and confuse qualifications with genuine education	2/25/2015 11:51 PM
14	Political point scoring	2/25/2015 11:00 PM
15	It has become a political toy with a lack of understanding of key policy makers about what happens on a daily basis.	2/25/2015 12:35 PM
16	To be better than other countries....self glorification.....lack of reality about what actually day to day is like in our schools	2/25/2015 12:22 PM
17	Economic recovery	2/25/2015 12:17 PM
18	Political gain	2/24/2015 6:59 PM

Table G.4: Initial Survey Data Question 15

Q16 Please rank these drivers of policy reform as to how highly they influence national policy makers? (1: highest 8: lowest)

Answered: 90 Skipped: 31

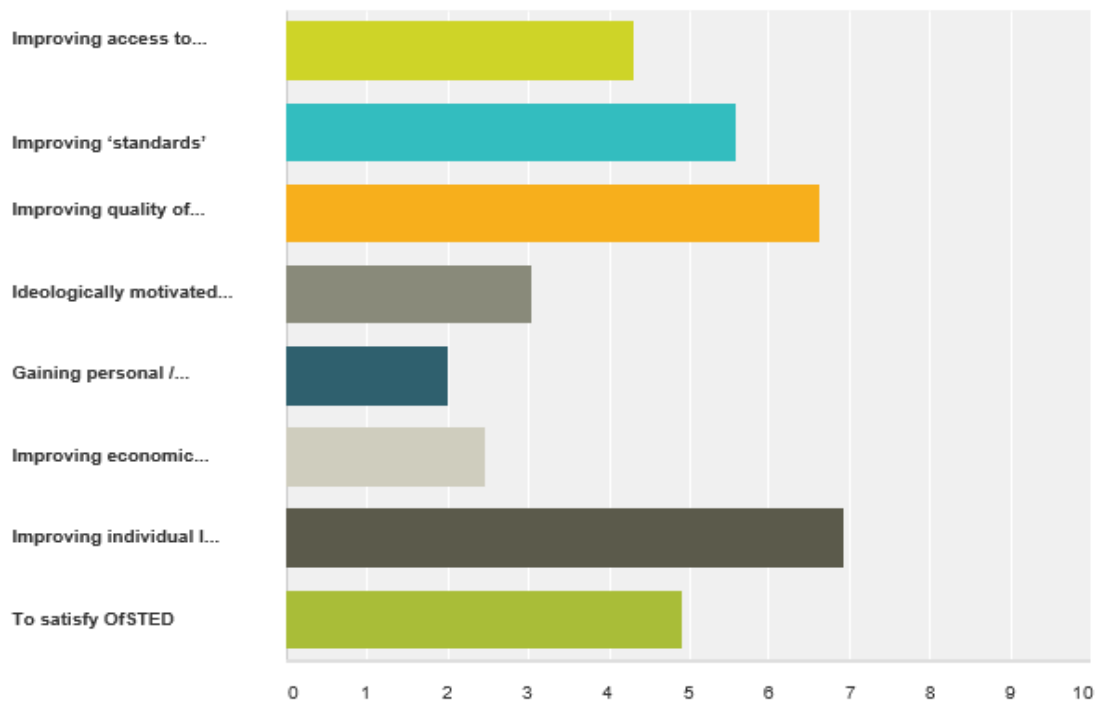


	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	Score
Improving access to 'Good' schools for parents	0.00% 0	11.11% 10	20.00% 18	23.33% 21	25.56% 23	15.56% 14	3.33% 3	1.11% 1	90	4.71
Improving 'standards'	12.22% 11	13.33% 12	20.00% 18	27.78% 25	17.78% 16	8.89% 8	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	90	5.48
Improving quality of learning experience for students	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	1.11% 1	3.33% 3	18.89% 17	30.00% 27	37.78% 34	8.89% 8	90	2.73
Ideologically motivated reform	32.22% 29	21.11% 19	18.89% 17	6.67% 6	0.00% 0	13.33% 12	4.44% 4	3.33% 3	90	6.04
Gaining personal / political capital	36.67% 33	25.56% 23	8.89% 8	3.33% 3	10.00% 9	4.44% 4	7.78% 7	3.33% 3	90	6.14
Improving economic wellbeing of the nation	12.22% 11	16.67% 15	17.78% 16	17.78% 16	12.22% 11	8.89% 8	13.33% 12	1.11% 1	90	5.13
Improving individual life chances for students	0.00% 0	1.11% 1	3.33% 3	3.33% 3	7.78% 7	13.33% 12	30.00% 27	41.11% 37	90	2.17
To satisfy OfSTED	6.67% 6	11.11% 10	10.00% 9	14.44% 13	7.78% 7	5.56% 5	3.33% 3	41.11% 37	90	3.59

Figure G.12: Initial Survey Data Question 16

Q17 Please rank these drivers of policy reform as to how highly they influence school leaders? (1: highest 8: lowest)

Answered: 87 Skipped: 34



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	Total	Score
Improving access to 'Good' schools for parents	0.00% 0	1.15% 1	16.09% 14	24.14% 21	36.78% 32	18.39% 16	2.30% 2	1.15% 1	87	4.33
Improving 'standards'	5.75% 5	14.94% 13	34.48% 30	26.44% 23	14.94% 13	3.45% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	87	5.60
Improving quality of learning experience for students	25.29% 22	40.23% 35	14.94% 13	12.64% 11	5.75% 5	1.15% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	87	6.63
Ideologically motivated reform	2.30% 2	3.45% 3	1.15% 1	8.05% 7	12.64% 11	36.78% 32	18.39% 16	17.24% 15	87	3.05
Gaining personal / political capital	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.60% 4	3.45% 3	14.94% 13	44.83% 39	32.18% 28	87	2.03
Improving economic wellbeing of the nation	0.00% 0	1.15% 1	3.45% 3	8.05% 7	10.34% 9	17.24% 15	27.59% 24	32.18% 28	87	2.49
Improving individual life chances for students	43.68% 38	34.48% 30	12.64% 11	3.45% 3	1.15% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	4.60% 4	87	6.93
To satisfy OfSTED	22.99% 20	4.60% 4	17.24% 15	12.64% 11	14.94% 13	8.05% 7	6.90% 6	12.64% 11	87	4.93

Figure G.13: Initial Survey Data Question 17

Q18 Are there any circumstances under which you have / would refuse to implement Government policy?

Answered: 68 Skipped: 53

#	Responses	Date
1	Yes and I have refused.	3/14/2015 3:36 AM
2	Yes, if I had the backing to act on what the wider community (governors, SLT etc) felt was right for the school	3/11/2015 4:16 AM
3	Yes	3/4/2015 11:09 AM
4	Yes, if not in the best interests of our students.	3/4/2015 3:04 AM
5	Dependent on whether i would be penalised for it	3/2/2015 4:21 AM
6	Illegal or amoral!!	3/2/2015 2:19 AM
7	If policy fundamentally was at odds with my own moral perspective	3/1/2015 1:11 PM
8	No	3/1/2015 12:08 PM
9	impossible to do this if in a vulnerable school situation - you have to conform	3/1/2015 11:45 AM
10	Yes	3/1/2015 10:34 AM
11	not that i can think of from things currently happening, but if they told me to implement say corporal punishment I would refuse	2/28/2015 5:57 AM
12	I feel powerless, the only option is to leave	2/28/2015 1:07 AM
13	If pupils were at risk of being disadvantaged in their futures	2/28/2015 12:51 AM
14	I am not pushing any students to take the Ebacc. It is better to give a broad and balanced menu of qualifications.	2/27/2015 9:37 AM
15	Being 'creative' with fulfilling NC requirements	2/27/2015 12:17 AM
16	Yes	2/26/2015 9:47 AM
17	If I had the backing of my union and I disagreed in principle and felt my staff were behind me.	2/26/2015 9:25 AM
18	yes if policy had an adverse impact upon the life chances and or well being of the students in the school	2/26/2015 8:45 AM
19	I wouldn't dare!	2/26/2015 8:39 AM
20	If policies were racist, homophobic, ageist etc.	2/26/2015 8:10 AM
21	No - but I have come closer to considering industrial action recently than ever before.	2/26/2015 8:03 AM
22	NA	2/26/2015 7:35 AM
23	I am getting close - Fundamental British Values is an affront to British Values, freedom of speech and self determination of the individual.	2/26/2015 7:32 AM
24	it depends if it is recommended action or a statutory responsibility	2/26/2015 7:07 AM

25	Daily act of collective worship	2/26/2015 7:06 AM
26	Yes - if I felt it directly jeopardised the health, safety or mental well-being of a child.	2/26/2015 4:58 AM
27	If I judged it to be against the best interests of our students	2/26/2015 4:53 AM
28	Yes. If the limited range of approved qualifications did not suit a pupils' learning needs or would result in them feeling they made no progress whatsoever - particularly the least able pupils - ie P scale	2/26/2015 4:46 AM
29	can see possibilities of refusing to do reference tests	2/26/2015 4:39 AM
30	No	2/26/2015 4:08 AM
31	I subvert! E Bacc - Maths early entry last year when best and first changed - maintaining mixed ability	2/26/2015 3:28 AM
32	Yes.	2/26/2015 2:16 AM

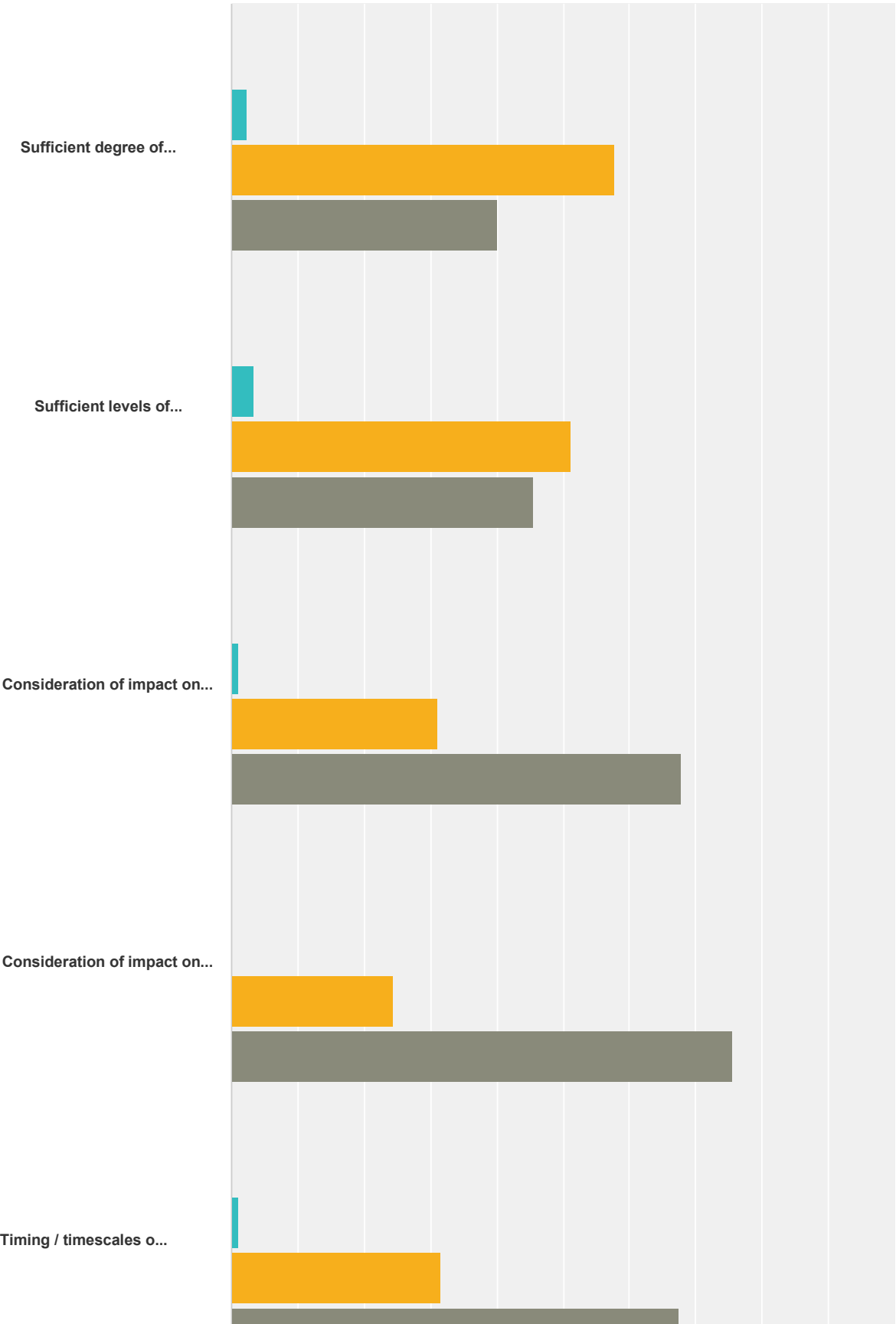
33	yes	2/26/2015 2:13 AM
34	If I believed that the outcome would be damaging to the life chances for students or to the school.	2/26/2015 2:02 AM
35	Yes	2/26/2015 1:35 AM
36	If it was not in the interests of the students	2/26/2015 1:27 AM
37	The cost of refusal is high.	2/26/2015 1:24 AM
38	If the policy prejudiced the professional standing of teachers or if it simply went against the moral imperative to use ensure that education meets the needs of society and enhances the life chances of all young people.	2/26/2015 1:24 AM
39	Things like the EBACC which channel students down inappropriate pathways is something I would stand against.	2/26/2015 1:18 AM
40	(Comment on 17) I do not feel qualified to speak on behalf of all school leaders. I have seen many behaviours among school leaders, including statements that suggest one main driver and behaviour that suggests another..	2/26/2015 1:12 AM
41	yes and have - lots	2/26/2015 12:59 AM
42	Yes - we enter no students for the Ebac - our score is therefore 0% for this measure.	2/26/2015 12:58 AM
43	If it was against the ethos and what I thought best for the children in my care. We're an academy so ignore initiatives unless they impact positively on our students	2/26/2015 12:54 AM
44	Often do already!	2/26/2015 12:33 AM
45	Not yet	2/25/2015 11:56 PM
46	What, and lose my job! Ofsted is like the Stazi - Government compliance and enforcement squad. PS You missed off keeping my job.	2/25/2015 11:51 PM
47	where I am able to due to conflicting requirements - i.e. deliver RE to all and balance the budget	2/25/2015 11:00 PM
48	Yes	2/25/2015 2:59 PM
49	Yes - I have ignored directive on multi entry to GCSE exam for performance tables	2/25/2015 2:31 PM

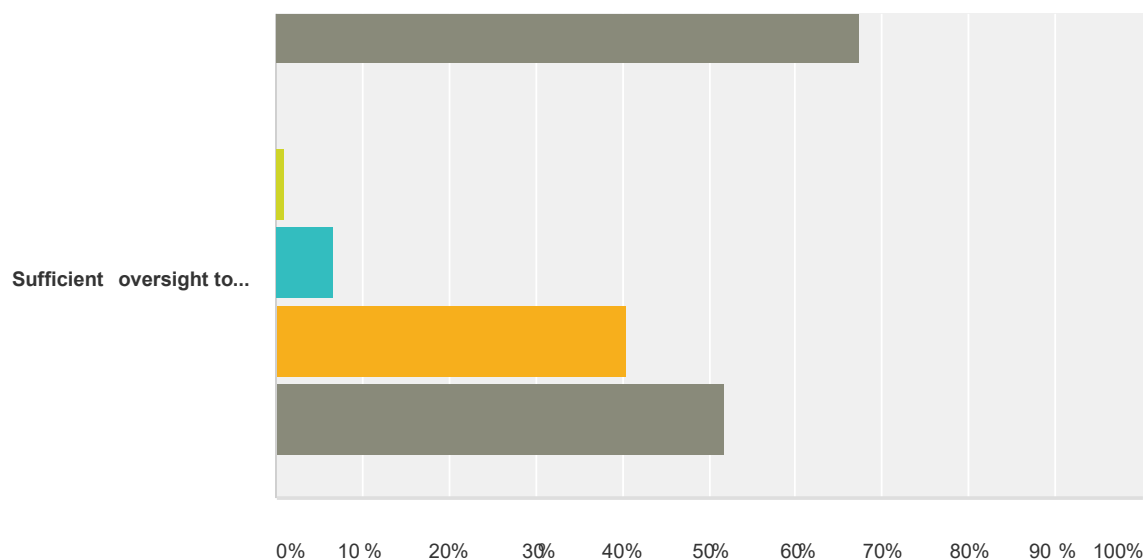
50	Where it conflicts with what is morally right for our students ie we did not change students off BTEC courses half way through their programme of study as the accountability measures were constantly changing even though this has had a negative impact on our VA in Raiseonline this year	2/25/2015 2:07 PM
51	Where it does not meet the needs of the local community	2/25/2015 1:42 PM
52	Yes, eg NOT forcing every child to take ebbac For some it is not appropriate	2/25/2015 1:17 PM
53	How can you if you are in a position where you are an Academy and have signed a contract with the DFE?	2/25/2015 12:35 PM
54	If it did not fit with the needs of my students.....my judgement of my school etc outweighs gov policy	2/25/2015 12:22 PM
55	If it was against the interests of students	2/25/2015 12:16 PM
56	If there was a unified consensus and there would be no chance of losing my job by doing so	2/25/2015 3:23 AM
57	When it is fundamentally wrong for our pupils e.g. no vocational education pre-16	2/25/2015 2:17 AM
58	Yes.	2/24/2015 6:59 PM
59	Yes- refused to implement the whole Diploma agenda. Which subsequently proved the right thing to do	2/24/2015 1:28 PM
60	Not sure I'm allowed to! If I were a head of an academy - then yes, national curriculum	2/24/2015 1:07 PM
61	No	2/24/2015 12:58 PM
62	When not in interests of the children.	2/24/2015 12:54 PM
63	Yes - if it harmed the life chances of our students	2/24/2015 12:31 PM
64	Yes if I thought it immoral or detrimental to the life chances of my students.	2/24/2015 12:20 PM
65	Refuse to promote Ebacc subjects as better than others	2/24/2015 12:10 PM
66	Yes	2/24/2015 10:53 AM
67	Not if it was an Ofsted requirement. Thinking hard about ignoring the new food standards.	2/24/2015 8:20 AM
68	Yes	2/24/2015 8:13 AM

Table G.5: Initial Survey Data Question 18

Q19 From your experience how well is external policy planned to ensure effective and efficient implementation for the following issues?

Answered: 80 Skipped: 24



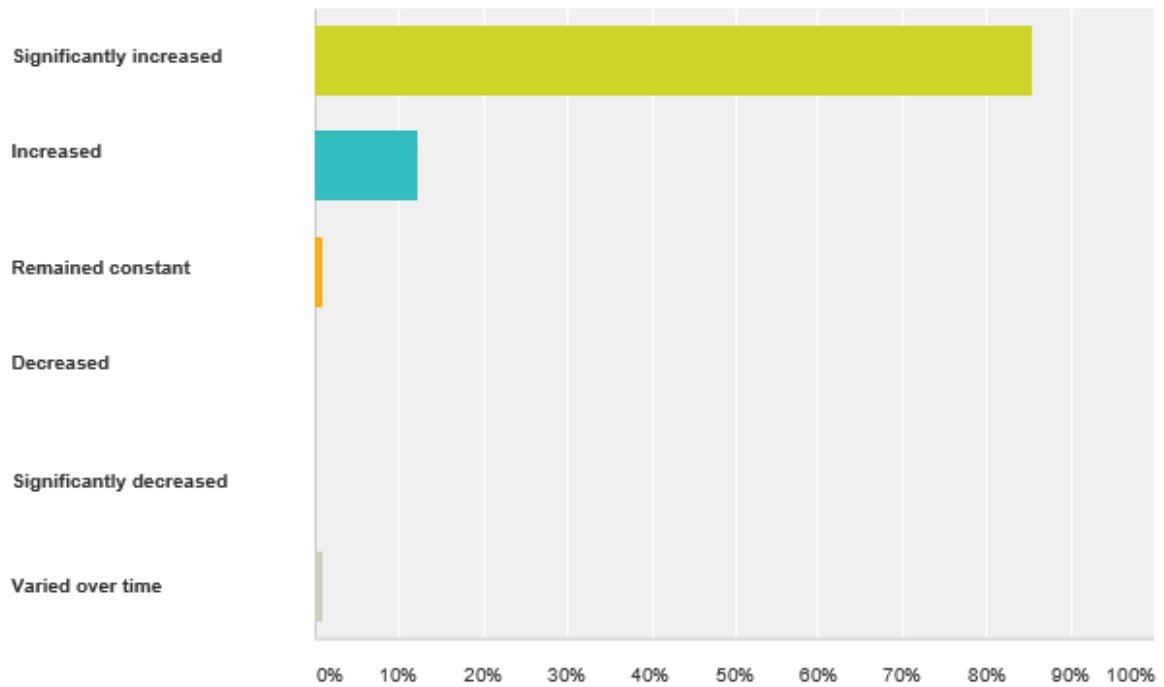


	Always	usually	sometimes	never	Total
Sufficient degree of consultation with school leaders	0.00% 0	2.22% 2	57.78% 52	40.00% 36	90
Sufficient levels of funding	0.00% 0	3.33% 3	51.11% 46	45.56% 41	90
Consideration of impact on schools	0.00% 0	1.11% 1	31.11% 28	67.78% 61	90
Consideration of impact on teacher workload	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	24.44% 22	75.56% 68	90
Timing / timescales of implementation	0.00% 0	1.12% 1	31.46% 28	67.42% 60	89
Sufficient oversight to ensure political accountability	1.12% 1	6.74% 6	40.45% 36	51.69% 46	89

Figure G.14: Initial Survey Data Question 19

Q20 How has the pace and frequency of policy implementation changed over the course of your time in school leadership?

Answered: 90 Skipped: 31



Answer Choices	Responses	
Significantly increased	85.56%	77
Increased	12.22%	11
Remained constant	1.11%	1
Decreased	0.00%	0
Significantly decreased	0.00%	0
Varied over time	1.11%	1
Total		90

Figure G.15: Initial Survey Data Question 20

Q21 Can you name any policies that have benefitted your own school(s) or practice?

Answered: 81 Skipped: 40

#	Responses	Date
1	Focus on En and Ma in accountability measure	3/14/2015 3:36 AM
2	higher targets for students, use of data to drive improvement	3/11/2015 4:16 AM
3	No because they are too short lived	3/4/2015 11:09 AM
4	Focus in levels of progress rather than attainment in Ofsted inspections	3/4/2015 3:04 AM
5	Becoming an Academy, following from the Grant Maintained days	3/4/2015 1:37 AM
6	Possibly the implementation of EHC plans	3/2/2015 4:21 AM
7	no	3/2/2015 4:21 AM
8	Teachers' Standards	3/2/2015 2:19 AM
9	Specialist schools initiative and Every Child Matters	3/1/2015 12:08 PM
10	Appraisal; national curriculum; national standards; Ofsted in earliest days	3/1/2015 11:45 AM
11	PP funding	3/1/2015 5:22 AM
12	No	2/28/2015 11:43 AM
13	Introducing AS levels worked well	2/28/2015 5:57 AM
14	Acadamisation	2/28/2015 1:07 AM
15	catch up funding	2/28/2015 12:51 AM
16	Progress 8 rather than attainment.	2/27/2015 9:37 AM
17	Pupil Premium	2/27/2015 4:35 AM
18	Pupil Premium	2/27/2015 12:17 AM
19	pupil premium	2/26/2015 10:19 AM
20	Removal of modular exams has reduced frequency of testing but the end of course tests were not modified in time so meant students had to sit on average 3 exams per subject at the end of the course.	2/26/2015 10:05 AM
21	changes to SEND practice	2/26/2015 10:05 AM
22	Assessment reform. Pupil premium. Ofsted focus on Literacy.	2/26/2015 9:47 AM
23	Every Child Matters.	2/26/2015 9:25 AM
24	no	2/26/2015 8:45 AM
25	ecm,	2/26/2015 8:39 AM

26	a focus on progress	2/26/2015 8:15 AM
27	Pupil Premium Grant	2/26/2015 8:10 AM
28	Curriculum reform	2/26/2015 7:35 AM
29	Not in this parliament. Last one - Every Child Matters, Behaviour and Attendance, 14-19 Vocational Diplomas.	2/26/2015 7:32 AM
30	Becoming an academy	2/26/2015 6:32 AM
31	Pupil Premium	2/26/2015 6:20 AM
32	Pupil Premium, Specialist Schools Programme	2/26/2015 4:58 AM
33	Performance related pay	2/26/2015 4:53 AM

34	No. Most generate a significant drain on our time and energy with a focus on new policies and systems to provide a tick in the box for the DfE and Ofsted. In some respects they dicert us from our core business of effective teaching and learning.	2/26/2015 4:46 AM
35	the move to include proggress 8 in the accountability tables, the inclusion of ebacc has increased opportunities for students in some schools that weren't offering these courses before	2/26/2015 4:39 AM
36	Introduction of progress/.best 8 accountability; pupil premium funding	2/26/2015 4:13 AM
37	Beacon Schools (when they existed); Specialist Schools (when it came with funding); Teaching Schools; ACMF/CIF bids	2/26/2015 4:12 AM
38	No	2/26/2015 4:08 AM
39	introduction of PPG grant	2/26/2015 3:50 AM
40	Equalities changes - Progress 8	2/26/2015 3:28 AM
41	No	2/26/2015 2:41 AM
42	Abuility to innovate over curriculum	2/26/2015 2:16 AM
43	additional funding from the early days of being an academy	2/26/2015 2:13 AM
44	Changes to school performance measures	2/26/2015 2:06 AM
45	Intro of P8 (we think), addition of AS post 16,	2/26/2015 2:02 AM
46	Pupil premium	2/26/2015 1:58 AM
47	Pupil premium funding	2/26/2015 1:35 AM
48	no	2/26/2015 1:32 AM
49	not really	2/26/2015 1:27 AM
50	Single entry saves money!	2/26/2015 1:24 AM
51	Academy conversion, The Pupil Premium, freedom to develop curriulum, more appropriate exclusion policies and in its day the Leadership incetive grant which had a massive impact on schools success.	2/26/2015 1:24 AM

52	Some of the recent finance decisions have been of benefit. for instance pupil premium funding and funding for students arriving below level 4. previously my school was very poorly funded for socila deprivation factors and SEN. However, other cuts in funding mean that we are still struggling financially. The new Ofsted criteria focusing on progress over time was a refreshing change.	2/26/2015 1:18 AM
53	National Challenge, Pupil Premium	2/26/2015 1:12 AM
54	acadamy programme	2/26/2015 12:59 AM
55	The work carried out around assessment for learning under the previous administration.	2/26/2015 12:58 AM
56	Pupil Premium initiative	2/26/2015 12:54 AM
57	Pupil premium	2/26/2015 12:37 AM
58	Pupil premium funding	2/26/2015 12:33 AM
59	academisation increased school budget for a while; new performance measures (A8, P8) will better reflect student performance	2/25/2015 11:56 PM
60	Not within the last 5 years - before that 1:1 programme and school sports co-ordinators	2/25/2015 11:00 PM
61	Pupil Premium funding	2/25/2015 2:59 PM
62	National strategy	2/25/2015 2:31 PM
63	Emphasis on progress and not just attainment	2/25/2015 2:07 PM
64	No	2/25/2015 1:42 PM
65	Er no, I can't	2/25/2015 1:17 PM
66	Pupil Premium	2/25/2015 12:40 PM
67	Pupil Premium	2/25/2015 12:35 PM
68	No....always seem to be jumping through unnecessary hoops....goalposts always changing	2/25/2015 12:22 PM

69	PP funding	2/25/2015 12:16 PM
70	pupil premium money and for primary schools money ring feced for sport	2/25/2015 3:23 AM
71	Appraisal, National Curriculum when it was for all, replacing satisfactory with Requires Improvement	2/25/2015 2:17 AM
72	Pupil premium	2/24/2015 6:59 PM
73	Becoming a converter academy	2/24/2015 1:28 PM
74	academy	2/24/2015 1:07 PM
75	No	2/24/2015 12:58 PM
76	Pupil premium funding	2/24/2015 12:54 PM
77	National challenge	2/24/2015 12:31 PM

78	Academies programme, Pupil Premium Funding, encouraging state schools to follow IGCSEs ruined when this was stopped!	2/24/2015 12:20 PM
79	No	2/24/2015 12:10 PM
80	Pupil premium funding. Academy capital funding.	2/24/2015 8:20 AM
81	KS3 strategy	2/24/2015 8:13 AM

Table G.6: Initial Survey Data Question 21

Q22 Did any of these positively impact on 'standards' and, if yes, why?

Answered: 66 Skipped: 55

#	Responses	Date
1	Yes because forced a focus on the quals that are of most use to students post 16	3/14/2015 3:36 AM
2	Both have raised 'standards' as related to exam outcomes	3/11/2015 4:16 AM
3	Allowed school leaders to turn staff attention to all students and not just "boundary" groups	3/4/2015 3:04 AM
4	Ability to focus on local needs	3/4/2015 1:37 AM
5	Making it easier for stuents to access services and support in school	3/2/2015 4:21 AM
6	n/a	3/2/2015 4:21 AM
7	Clarity about expectations	3/2/2015 2:19 AM
8	YES Providing a focus on learning ,a breadth of curriculum and a focus on the whole child	3/1/2015 12:08 PM
9	all outlined in No.21 as increased accountability, quality of teaching and learning and raised standards	3/1/2015 11:45 AM
10	Focus and money on policy	3/1/2015 5:22 AM
11	yes because it enabled useful motivation and tracking through the A level course	2/28/2015 5:57 AM
12	Not particularly	2/28/2015 1:07 AM
13	yes we were able to support below L4 pupils more effectuvfky	2/28/2015 12:51 AM
14	We can show better progress from lower starting points than other schools who would be higher up in the league tables.	2/27/2015 9:37 AM
15	Autonomy the school chooses how to use funding	2/27/2015 4:35 AM
16	Yes - targeted funding	2/27/2015 12:17 AM
17	yes, additional funding to improve the quality of the learning experience	2/26/2015 10:19 AM
18	No	2/26/2015 10:05 AM
19	Yes, ensuring higher levels of aspiration. Supported by actual funding.	2/26/2015 9:47 AM
20	The ECM agenda set the tone for a more holistic approach to standards which helped to move the school forward in this area.	2/26/2015 9:25 AM
21	on the nebulour welfare side, yes	2/26/2015 8:39 AM
22	a slight move away from pure targets based onn attainment	2/26/2015 8:15 AM
23	Yes, we have been able to raise the expectations and outcomes for more students	2/26/2015 8:10 AM
24	Too soon to say, but, for example the end of AS modules has meant a greater emphasis on learning than on preparing for exams.	2/26/2015 7:35 AM
25	Not directly or measurably in terms of exam results.	2/26/2015 7:32 AM

26	PP funding gives a flexibility to effectively target additional support. Specialist School status was a massive driver for improvement across all faculties, and gave a real identity to a school.	2/26/2015 4:58 AM
27	Increased accountability below TLR holders	2/26/2015 4:53 AM
28	None	2/26/2015 4:46 AM
29	too soon to say about progress 8 but will be fairer	2/26/2015 4:39 AM
30	; because they get to the heart of schools which is to improve the quality of learning for all students and the good things such as improving life chances follows	2/26/2015 4:13 AM
31	Yes. School to school support; most came with sufficient funding attached	2/26/2015 4:12 AM
32	additional funding directed towards disadvantaged students	2/26/2015 3:50 AM

33	Yes, gave greater freedom to teachers	2/26/2015 2:16 AM
34	yes, smaller class size and teacher retention	2/26/2015 2:13 AM
35	School performance better reflects achievement of students compared to other schools.	2/26/2015 2:06 AM
36	Our curriculum offer will benefit us in the P8 measure. AS as a separate qualification gave students the opportunity to "check " their progress prior to the full A Level exam.	2/26/2015 2:02 AM
37	Allowed for more intervention for under achieving pupils which in return has raised standards	2/26/2015 1:58 AM
38	Providing one-to-one support for students in need	2/26/2015 1:35 AM
39	No	2/26/2015 1:24 AM
40	Academy conversion created opportunities to improve the teaching environment which benefitted all pupils, the PP has provided targeted resources for disadvantaged pupils and meant that we have been more stringent in monitoring their progress over time and we have therefore narrowed the gaps..	2/26/2015 1:24 AM
41	Yes as we have been able to put in more early intervention.	2/26/2015 1:18 AM
42	Targeted investment in students from disadvantaged background in selective system which systemically disadvantages them	2/26/2015 1:12 AM
43	freedom to innovate and get VFM	2/26/2015 12:59 AM
44	Yes - created a real focus around the pedagogy of teaching and learning.	2/26/2015 12:58 AM
45	Yes - allowed/forced resources to be allocated to most in need	2/26/2015 12:54 AM
46	Slight increase in money available	2/26/2015 12:37 AM
47	Enabled funding for targeted intervention	2/26/2015 12:33 AM
48	Yes, through better resourcing.	2/25/2015 11:56 PM
49	Targeted finance to help us to develop and embed improvement	2/25/2015 11:00 PM
50	Yes - afforded pupils individual attention	2/25/2015 2:59 PM
51	Improved focus on teaching and learning	2/25/2015 2:31 PM

52	Yes in as much as it enabled students to achieve less than a C grade and still get better than expected progress whilst not being satisfied with a B for a student when that was less than expected progress - it realigned the dynamic on success	2/25/2015 2:07 PM
53	NO	2/25/2015 1:42 PM
54	provision of 1:1 or small group teaching	2/25/2015 12:40 PM
55	Allowed to invest more heavily in teaching personnel and resources	2/25/2015 12:35 PM
56	Renewed focus	2/25/2015 12:16 PM
57	is doing somewhat. pp gap reducing	2/25/2015 3:23 AM
58	Appraisal - easier to remove underperforming staff, who could never get to good	2/25/2015 2:17 AM
59	Funding for intervention, appraisal	2/24/2015 6:59 PM
60	Not really- made no difference	2/24/2015 1:28 PM
61	yes, not forced to follow national curriculum	2/24/2015 1:07 PM
62	£ to access additional support, eg Speech therapist in EYFS	2/24/2015 12:54 PM
63	refocused school on key priorities, tightened up tracking and intervention	2/24/2015 12:31 PM
64	yes as they allowed additional resources for us to direct towards teaching and learning.	2/24/2015 12:20 PM
65	Scrapping higher weighting of some vocational qualifications	2/24/2015 12:10 PM
66	Pupil premium has had quite an impact on improving the life chances of our most vulnerable students.	2/24/2015 8:20 AM

Table G.7: Initial Survey Data Question 22

Q23 Can you name any policies that you feel have negatively impacted / affected your own school(s) or practice?

Answered: 84 Skipped: 37

#	Responses	Date
1	EBacc	3/14/2015 3:36 AM
2	Loss of LA support through cuts, over-emphasis on individual lesson judgements	3/11/2015 4:16 AM
3	Many eg change to computing without appropriate lead in time or available teachers	3/4/2015 11:09 AM
4	Lose of early entry options, does not reflect a need to develop reflective learners/resilience	3/4/2015 3:04 AM
5	Current funding policy	3/4/2015 1:37 AM
6	Abolishing NAtional Curriculum LevelsForcing students to stay on at school and limiting what they can study	3/2/2015 5:23 AM
7	Changes to examinations	3/2/2015 4:21 AM
8	Changes to GCSE examinations and how they are measured.	3/2/2015 4:21 AM
9	Reforming national curriculum and, simultaneously, assessment without levels.	3/2/2015 2:19 AM
10	change of early entry GCSE policy mid- year, curriculum changes and uncertainty, AS/A level decoupling, pace of change of curriculum	3/1/2015 1:11 PM
11	Worried about decoupling of AS and A levels .	3/1/2015 12:08 PM
12	Funding changes at Post 16; assessment without levels; changes in exam specs in mid cycle	3/1/2015 11:45 AM
13	First entry over best entry	3/1/2015 5:22 AM
14	Constant curriculum change	2/28/2015 11:43 AM
15	forcing schools to embrace diplomas was nonsense	2/28/2015 5:57 AM
16	Performance related pay	2/28/2015 1:07 AM
17	Changing qualifications rules around entry and changing whole school assessment systems	2/28/2015 12:51 AM
18	Changes to first entry / best entry exams, the changes to GCSE exams from 2015, the A level funding, the reduction in budgets.	2/27/2015 9:37 AM
19	SOR (Suffolk authority)	2/27/2015 4:35 AM
20	Changes to GCSE exam entry/qualification value in league tables policy mid-way through students' courses	2/27/2015 12:17 AM
21	Progress 8 reforms	2/26/2015 12:59 PM
22	removal of levels, changes to GCSEs,	2/26/2015 10:19 AM
23	Removal or early entry counting in league tables means we have to question procedures which were in place to get the best out of students. Our timetable is set up to do early entry English in Y10 and Lit in y11 but the new policy means that exams will not count in 2017 tables	2/26/2015 10:05 AM

24	New national curriculum and the removal of levels	2/26/2015 9:25 AM
25	Progress 8 measure, A level reform	2/26/2015 8:45 AM
26	Too many to name - sorry - but some of the H&S/safeguarding red tape is frustrating	2/26/2015 8:39 AM
27	targets	2/26/2015 8:15 AM
28	Performance Management	2/26/2015 8:10 AM
29	Performance related pay - it has created an additional system, which was not needed if there exists proper monitoring and capability is addressed.	2/26/2015 7:35 AM
30	alignment of post funding with FE colleges. Compulsory education to 18. SEND reforms. Performance Related Pay	2/26/2015 7:32 AM
31	The change in performance table measures. 14-19 Diplomas	2/26/2015 7:07 AM

32	First entry GCSE End of ECM agenda	2/26/2015 7:06 AM
33	Where do we start- linear exams, changing exam requirements assessment mid year (e.g English), A level changes,	2/26/2015 6:32 AM
34	A Level Reform in 2014	2/26/2015 6:20 AM
35	OFSTED dominates all levels of decision making and strategy. The denigration and devaluation of vocational courses will lead to a generation of underperforming and disenfranchised students. It will also create a skills gap in the economy.	2/26/2015 4:58 AM
36	Constant adjustments of league tables/accountability measures.	2/26/2015 4:53 AM
37	EBacc and Progress 8 mean that some learners will feel inadequate. There is little evidence that this new approach will drive up standards, increase rigour in learning or prepare pupils for the challenges and opportunities which lie ahead as adults to quote the hackneyed cliches which are used repeatedly by politicians and their agencies.	2/26/2015 4:46 AM
38	new pay policy - lots more work for little gain, the move from national pay to discretionary pay, the removal of early entry, the removal of speaking and listening tests, the removal of coursework	2/26/2015 4:39 AM
39	Too many to mention	2/26/2015 4:13 AM
40	Rushed nature of the impact of the recent GCSE and especially AL changes. Bad enough for schools, but phased changes over several years is not good. Would have been better to wait and implement them all together once specs agreed, and give schools two years planning once specs agreed. Although the idea of Pupil Premium is laudable, it has been funded by reducing funding available to other schools, with the impact on schools like ours of having to remove minority subjects, or run them on lower hours per week, with the concomitant reduction in student grades. Policy of all staying on to 18 with NO increase to 16-19 national budget has had the same effect - significantly less funding now per sixth form student and yet still want the same number of subjects studied.	2/26/2015 4:12 AM
41	No	2/26/2015 4:08 AM
42	continual change in syllabus and in the make up of attainment labels as well as Government views (eg Gove described iGCSE as a gold standard and now it represents a drive for the bottom!)	2/26/2015 3:50 AM
43	free schools and academies	2/26/2015 3:28 AM
44	GCSE and A Level Reforms,; frequent changes in Ofsted framework	2/26/2015 2:41 AM

45	Excessive accountability	2/26/2015 2:16 AM
46	Performance tables only recognising first entry	2/26/2015 2:13 AM
47	Performance Management and pay Policy	2/26/2015 2:06 AM
48	Changes to A Levels and GCSE's (timeframe), changes to early entry reporting, removal of qualifications from performance tables,	2/26/2015 2:02 AM
49	Life without levels and the new national curriculum, too little time to implement	2/26/2015 1:58 AM
50	First entry rule, AS/A2 decoupling, sixth form funding etc etc	2/26/2015 1:35 AM
51	timing of not allowing resits to be counted	2/26/2015 1:32 AM
52	the change to the status of iGCSEs	2/26/2015 1:27 AM
53	The disgraceful way in which speaking and listening was dropped from English in the same year as single entry impacted. A generation of youngsters were badly let down.	2/26/2015 1:24 AM
54	The decision to move to first entry at GCSE was ridiculous and clearly a knee jerk reaction to a problem that did not exist. This created uncertainty around early entry and the use of first and second attempts at exam that were inherently challenging. No thought can have been given to the decision to make the exams harder and at the same time making it impossible for students to try, fail and then try again. This is further made a nonsense by the act that at the same time schools have been made responsible for making sure that all students in post 16 achieve C and above in English and Maths because somehow this is more important than using the same strategies to get them through at 16.	2/26/2015 1:24 AM
55	Change to sixth form funding means we are having to cut courses. This is changing the dynamic of our sixth form.	2/26/2015 1:18 AM

56	Changes to rules regarding early entry to GCSE. Removal of speaking and listening assessment in English GCSE. Introduction of "comparative outcomes" methodology. Rules on measuring "expected progress" which disadvantage non selective schools in selective areas. Reforms to initial teacher training.	2/26/2015 1:12 AM
57	curriculum change funding changes	2/26/2015 12:59 AM
58	Change of vocational qualifications and the mess this has created. Tinkering with qualifications such as science. Change to Ofsted framework every term, league tables,	2/26/2015 12:58 AM
59	The whole exam reforms - aimed very much at academic and able children rather than the whole school cohort	2/26/2015 12:54 AM
60	change to Sixth Form funding	2/26/2015 12:37 AM
61	Changing in funding post 16	2/26/2015 12:33 AM
62	performance-related pay	2/25/2015 11:56 PM
63	Move to national funding formula and academisation as well as the issues caused by the way that new policy is introduced (lots of it delivered through various websites)	2/25/2015 11:00 PM
64	It's not individual policies, it's the combination of a number of policies all at the same time	2/25/2015 2:59 PM
65	Current exam reforms, new national curriculum, free school programme, national funding formula....etc	2/25/2015 2:31 PM

66	So many changes to the OFSTED framework which keeps moving the goalposts, as does the perpetual tinkering with what qualifications are/are not included in accountability measures- both link together to create the perfect storm	2/25/2015 2:07 PM
67	constant hand book changes to ofsted	2/25/2015 1:42 PM
68	Forcing (through progress 8 measure) all kids to take ebbac subjects even if it's not relevant to their interests and aspirations.	2/25/2015 1:17 PM
69	Removal of early entry	2/25/2015 12:35 PM
70	Too many that are not realistic to inner city schools	2/25/2015 12:22 PM
71	changes to assessment/specifications/	2/25/2015 12:16 PM
72	EBacc, constant accountability changes, Ofsted changes (constant), early entry rules, Wolf report, terminal exams	2/25/2015 3:23 AM
73	Constant changes of Ofsted framewor, competitor Free School built nearby, acadmisation of other schools, reduced funding, reduced funding for LA meaning pupil support services are disappearing, consatnt changes to GCSE exam system DURING the course	2/25/2015 2:17 AM
74	Early entry, AS uncoupling, expansion of grammars	2/24/2015 6:59 PM
75	All of them- too many to mention	2/24/2015 1:28 PM
76	removal of early entry, SEN changes	2/24/2015 1:07 PM
77	Decoupling As and A levels	2/24/2015 12:58 PM
78	First exam entry being used for league tables, et al	2/24/2015 12:54 PM
79	ofsted, inspection, league tables	2/24/2015 12:31 PM
80	first entry policy as it harms the success rates of less resilient students.	2/24/2015 12:20 PM
81	English fiasco	2/24/2015 12:10 PM
82	Removal of modular assessments	2/24/2015 10:53 AM
83	Mid-course changes to exam criteria. Theft of English grades in 2012. Removal of courses that qualify on league tables, half-way through course. The whole Free School and Academy programme that removed £6bn from the education budget. Cancellation of the BSF programme. Knee-jerk introduction of policies that are subsequently followed-up by Ofsted (eg British values). Constant chaning of the Ofsted framework. Encouraging parents to complain to Ofsted. Progress 8 and the way it forces you to skew the curriculum.	2/24/2015 8:20 AM
84	Changes to sixth form funding, A level changes(again!)	2/24/2015 8:13 AM

Table G.8: Initial Survey Data Question 23

Q24 Did any of these negatively impact on standards and if yes, why?

Answered: 75 Skipped: 46

#	Responses	Date
1	I ignored it and continue to do so in order to prevent negative impact on standards.	3/14/2015 3:36 AM
2	Consistency across school, sharing of good practice reduced. Low teacher morale	3/11/2015 4:16 AM
3	As above	3/4/2015 11:09 AM
4	Yes, First entry measurement as national benchmark disadvantaged our most vulnerable students considerably	3/4/2015 3:04 AM
5	Provision for students is being directly affected	3/4/2015 1:37 AM
6	Creating new systems of measurement plus students should be able to leave/work/do apprenticeships	3/2/2015 5:23 AM
7	Too much changing of specifications and schemes of work. Sometimes reinventing the wheel	3/2/2015 4:21 AM
8	not at the moment	3/2/2015 4:21 AM
9	Yes, time-consuming and vague. How can there be assessment without levels that ultimately lead to an examination that will be assessed and reported in levels?	3/2/2015 2:19 AM
10	As a whole all. Attrition - We are constantly responding, fire fighting, answering to parents for changes we have to implement but may not support.	3/1/2015 1:11 PM
11	Not yet	3/1/2015 12:08 PM
12	All had a negative impact which we are trying to work through now	3/1/2015 11:45 AM
13	Put need of school in conflict with best for students	3/1/2015 5:22 AM
14	constant change	2/28/2015 11:43 AM
15	no	2/28/2015 5:57 AM
16	Yes, fear among good staff	2/28/2015 1:07 AM
17	Yes time wasted trying to keep up with changes and children unable to follow pathway that was legitimate when they started KS4	2/28/2015 12:51 AM
18	Yes, our RAISE report although fairly positive would have been significantly better had the best entry been counted.	2/27/2015 9:37 AM
19	Loss of teacher morale, waste of resources in implementing the strategy, excessive levels of staff turnover	2/27/2015 4:35 AM
20	Yes on student moral and the necessary haste with which we had to react to the changes.	2/27/2015 12:17 AM
21	too early to say	2/26/2015 12:59 PM
22	yes, because of the increased workload for teachers	2/26/2015 10:19 AM
23	Not yet but will - see above,	2/26/2015 10:05 AM
24	Too early to say. It has involve a lot of change and work in an area which was impacting positively on standards. Many schools are simply reinventing levels.	2/26/2015 9:25 AM

25	What are we preparing for with the new A levels, will As levels stay or go	2/26/2015 8:45 AM
26	I think some curriculum ones have unnaturally skewed learning for some students and added to their demotivation	2/26/2015 8:39 AM
27	a focus on the targets taking away from learning to learn	2/26/2015 8:15 AM
28	Stifles creativity and excitement	2/26/2015 8:10 AM
29	Too soon to say. It could have a potential impact on motivation for staff who work hard and do not receive a pay increase because they did not meet challenging appraisal targets.	2/26/2015 7:35 AM
30	Funding - reduction in breadth of curriculum offer, reduction in 'taught time'.	2/26/2015 7:32 AM

31	they would do unless we significantly change our curriculum. Diplomas - complete waste of time and money	2/26/2015 7:07 AM
32	Yes studnets were de motivated by in year changes.	2/26/2015 6:32 AM
33	The need to satisfy continually moving OFSTED requirements stifles true innovation and long-term strategy. It has narrowed curriculum and focus to the detriment of the development of young people.	2/26/2015 4:58 AM
34	Potential to impact upon well established pathways particulalrly to vocational destinations	2/26/2015 4:53 AM
35	Changing GCSEs with little preparation time or resources to facilitate the change is a challenge as is constructing a completely new assessment system following life after levels! The mid cohort changes to current GCSE examinations has also affected standards as it is difficult to know what grades now actually represent.	2/26/2015 4:46 AM
36	early maths and English entries boosted confidence and motivation. had a 10% drop in maths last year.	2/26/2015 4:39 AM
37	There is no real strategy to any political ideological reform of schools from any political point of view	2/26/2015 4:13 AM
38	Just look at how similar schools are all doing something different next year as regards Y12 curriculum and it is obvious that we are all confused as to the best way forward in the intervening years until all ALs have been reformed.	2/26/2015 4:12 AM
39	If we want employability skills we ahve to allow qulaifications that promote these to be counted on tables and not have a system where state schools are penalised for taking iGCSE while public/independant schools are not.	2/26/2015 3:50 AM
40	yes, teachers focus on the wrong priorities eg 'preparing for Ofsted' when they should be focusing on what is best for the children in their care.	2/26/2015 2:41 AM
41	Yes- turned teachers into Ofsted robots	2/26/2015 2:16 AM
42	yes, confsuin over the value of vocation subjects	2/26/2015 2:13 AM
43	No - But it did have an impact on relationships with staff	2/26/2015 2:06 AM
44	Removal of early entry from performance tables had an impact (-10%) on 5ACEM - we contiuned it as it enabled more students to achieve the C Grades that they needed for progression to further study. Changes to ocurses with such a tight timeframe will inevitably result in a down turn in results for many schools.	2/26/2015 2:02 AM
45	No because my teaching staff came in during the summer holidays to plan and ensure they had some grounding at the start of the new academic year	2/26/2015 1:58 AM
46	Yes all of them.	2/26/2015 1:35 AM

47	timing of not allowing resits to be counted made it look like we had done less well for our children than was the case	2/26/2015 1:32 AM
48	The changes to English halfway through the course and the advent of single entry interfered with course planning and resulted in ridiculous u turns in delivery.	2/26/2015 1:24 AM
49	See above - GCSE results in English and Math were definately affcted by the rapid introduction of the first sitting rule.	2/26/2015 1:24 AM
50	Yes cut to tsixth form funding, meant we became too keen to accept students on courses which we were running this led to bigger classes and more students struggling to reach targets.	2/26/2015 1:18 AM
51	Students who are not confident learners benefit from the opportunity to prove that they can succeed. Our proportion of top grades has gone down. The reforms to ITT are likely to have been disastrous in terms of teacher quality and supply	2/26/2015 1:12 AM
52	Too fast, too under resourced. Huge drop in budget means bigger classes and fewer teachers	2/26/2015 12:59 AM
53	This depends what is meant by the term standards. If it refers to the progress students are able to make due to good quality teaching then all of the above.	2/26/2015 12:58 AM
54	First not best - children sometimes do need a second bite of the cherry - as many adults do - but now very difficult to justify entering a borderline student for a "practice"	2/26/2015 12:54 AM
55	Led to a reduction in teaching hours	2/26/2015 12:37 AM
56	Caused redundancies, smaller curriculum and bigger class sizes	2/26/2015 12:33 AM
57	Significantly lowered morale in an already good/borderline outstanding school	2/25/2015 11:56 PM

58	The impact is I am reducing staff significantly in a school that is performing well. The consequence of this and of curriculum change is that the curriculum is narrower and the curriculum is less able to properly meet the needs of all learners. Governors and the HT are also spending too much time on governance and structural matters and, as a consequence, less time focusing on teaching and learning.	2/25/2015 11:00 PM
59	Yes - distracting from teaching and learning and demoralising staff	2/25/2015 2:59 PM
60	Yes because they increased uncertainty and diminished time to carefully plan curricula, and were badly implemented	2/25/2015 2:31 PM
61	The 'standards' we are working to achieve are constantly being changed before we have a chance to embed practices that would enable the studnets and the school to meet them. In aiming for one set of standards we miss them target because it moves and the get chastised for it	2/25/2015 2:07 PM
62	Yes the constant change to the Ofsted handbook leaves schools constantly playing fiddler to someone elses tune that may not be right for their school	2/25/2015 1:42 PM
63	Students in certain circumstances had a chance of progressing through a stepped approach, punishing Academies by releasing first entry results is a double standard.	2/25/2015 12:35 PM
64	Return to Terminal exams as ongoing external assessments suits the needs of my students	2/25/2015 12:22 PM
65	time dedicated to change	2/25/2015 12:16 PM
66	Loss of pupils equals loss of funding, no monet to commission services, local academies no longer have to follow same constraints as us e.g. implementing new NC	2/25/2015 2:17 AM
67	All	2/24/2015 6:59 PM

68	Most of them. Standards have improved despite Government changes.	2/24/2015 1:28 PM
69	fewer students given opportunity to pass exam - too much left for sixth form. SEN - reduced funding - so less help for students	2/24/2015 1:07 PM
70	Decoupling	2/24/2015 12:58 PM
71	our children lack confidence. Need more than one attempt quite often. Some already refusing to attempt all papers	2/24/2015 12:54 PM
72	affect staffing and enrollment	2/24/2015 12:31 PM
73	More stressed students	2/24/2015 10:53 AM
74	All of the above because they take attention away from what really matters to schools - improving teaching and learning.	2/24/2015 8:20 AM
75	hard to say, due to the methodology of marking external examinations	2/24/2015 8:13 AM

Table G.9: Initial Survey Data Question 24

Q25 What words would you choose to describe your experience of the pace of education reform / policy development?

Answered: 84 Skipped: 37

#	Responses	Date
1	Ill-thought through. Ideologically motivated.	3/14/2015 3:40 AM
2	random, erratic, ill-conceived	3/11/2015 4:18 AM
3	Too fast, too ideologically motivated, too little consultation	3/4/2015 11:11 AM
4	unchecked, unsustainable, damaging	3/4/2015 3:07 AM
5	Relentless	3/4/2015 1:39 AM
6	Atrocious. Poorly thought through and based on personal privileged experience of people with littel experience in education	3/2/2015 5:23 AM
7	People who implement the change are not usually the ones who are in education and do not listen to the teachers	3/2/2015 4:24 AM
8	Too fast, without time to reflect and be effective in their implementation	3/2/2015 4:23 AM
9	Inappropriate pace to implement vague policy. Good Ofsted reform, 2012; poor national curriculum timescale, lack of consultation and expertise; poor assessment without leveles - vague - not sure what the end product will look like and how transferable it will be: does not reflect having a national curriculum!; good pay and appraisal - focussed, portable, clear accountability.	3/2/2015 2:28 AM
10	Attrition, lack of control, stressful, I question why I am doing this?, uncoordinated, ill-thought out, no regard for those who must implement or children who must accessan increasingly inaccessible curriculum due to progress 8 pressures	3/1/2015 1:15 PM
11	Ideological in motivation	3/1/2015 12:12 PM
12	at times overwhelming	3/1/2015 11:47 AM
13	Disruptive, badly thought through and politicised.	3/1/2015 5:24 AM
14	too fast and not thought through. politically driven	2/28/2015 5:59 AM
15	Fast, high lighting start up, but little about sustainability	2/28/2015 1:09 AM
16	Unreasonable unhelpful not pupil centred	2/28/2015 12:53 AM
17	Shambolic.	2/27/2015 9:40 AM
18	Ill conceived, rushed, lack of clarity	2/27/2015 9:07 AM
19	There is no time given to embed anything before the next strategy is to be implemented	2/27/2015 4:46 AM
20	unmanageable	2/26/2015 1:01 PM
21	ridiculous, hectic, unreasonable	2/26/2015 10:32 AM
22	frantic and ill-considered	2/26/2015 10:07 AM
23	Incoherent	2/26/2015 9:49 AM

24	Ideologically driven, poorly thought out, contradictory.	2/26/2015 9:30 AM
25	largely impossible when faced with reduced funding with little demonstrable impact on student outcomes and engagement	2/26/2015 8:42 AM
26	uninformed, ill judged, too fast	2/26/2015 8:19 AM
27	nonsensical and pushed through without consultation at too fast a pace	2/26/2015 8:17 AM
28	Injudicious misguided	2/26/2015 8:15 AM
29	Chaotic, relentless, unmanageable	2/26/2015 8:07 AM

30	Relentless. grinding, demotivating, ill considered, ill-informed.	2/26/2015 7:40 AM
31	rapid, incoherent, based on whim rather than empirical data, driven by pressure and accountability rather than by reasoned argument	2/26/2015 7:13 AM
32	We need education removed from the political arena! Perhaps a multi-party group to oversee this - I can dream!	2/26/2015 6:35 AM
33	Runaway train	2/26/2015 6:21 AM
34	Continual change, little real reflection or embedding of genuine good practice.	2/26/2015 5:02 AM
35	Unsustainable	2/26/2015 4:55 AM
36	Exhausting, frustrating, ill conceived, mammoth, ignorant, random, divisive	2/26/2015 4:50 AM
37	too fast. anxiety inducing as heads worry about missing something and then being hit in the league tables	2/26/2015 4:41 AM
38	Manic speed; lack of proper planning time; confusion of schools but especially parents and students regarding phased introduction of new AL	2/26/2015 4:15 AM
39	Hectic and lacking in preparation	2/26/2015 4:15 AM
40	Frantic, ill informed, negative	2/26/2015 4:09 AM
41	too quick	2/26/2015 3:52 AM
42	Concerned - alarmed for young teachers having to manage the pace of change	2/26/2015 3:30 AM
43	Too quick	2/26/2015 3:06 AM
44	Too fast and ill-considered without adequate time to prepare for new syllabuses etc	2/26/2015 2:43 AM
45	despair	2/26/2015 2:14 AM
46	Relentless, ill conceived, demoralising.	2/26/2015 2:12 AM
47	ridiculous, reckless rash	2/26/2015 2:10 AM
48	Relentless	2/26/2015 2:07 AM
49	Challenging, difficult, confusing, poorly planned and implemented	2/26/2015 1:37 AM

50	The pace of ideologically driven change has demoralised and drained the workforce. This was unrealistic and unnecessary.	2/26/2015 1:34 AM
51	frustration	2/26/2015 1:32 AM
52	chaotic	2/26/2015 1:28 AM
53	Relentless	2/26/2015 1:27 AM
54	Mostly far too much in too small a timescale. Also order of change is not always sensible.	2/26/2015 1:18 AM
55	A lot of wasted time and money to limited discernible benefit. A frustrated sense that politicians keep on getting away with it because as a profession we are largely compliant. There are many examples of this, but would highlight the enormous waste around the attempted introduction of 17 diplomas under the last administration.	2/26/2015 1:14 AM
56	Disgusted! We all want our young people to achieve and go on and lead successful lives. This does not seem to be a view shared by the recent administration who have used the word 'standards' to underpin a set of politically, ill thought out changes.	2/26/2015 1:01 AM
57	too fast and ill conceived	2/26/2015 1:01 AM
58	relentless	2/26/2015 12:57 AM
59	rapid, ill-conceived, rushed	2/26/2015 12:38 AM
60	exhausting	2/26/2015 12:34 AM
61	unrelenting	2/25/2015 11:57 PM
62	driven by political expediency and not by educational need	2/25/2015 11:55 PM
63	frustrating; worrying; disbelief; ill-judged; political; idealogical; structurally inadequate...i could go on.	2/25/2015 11:03 PM
64	Frantic	2/25/2015 2:59 PM

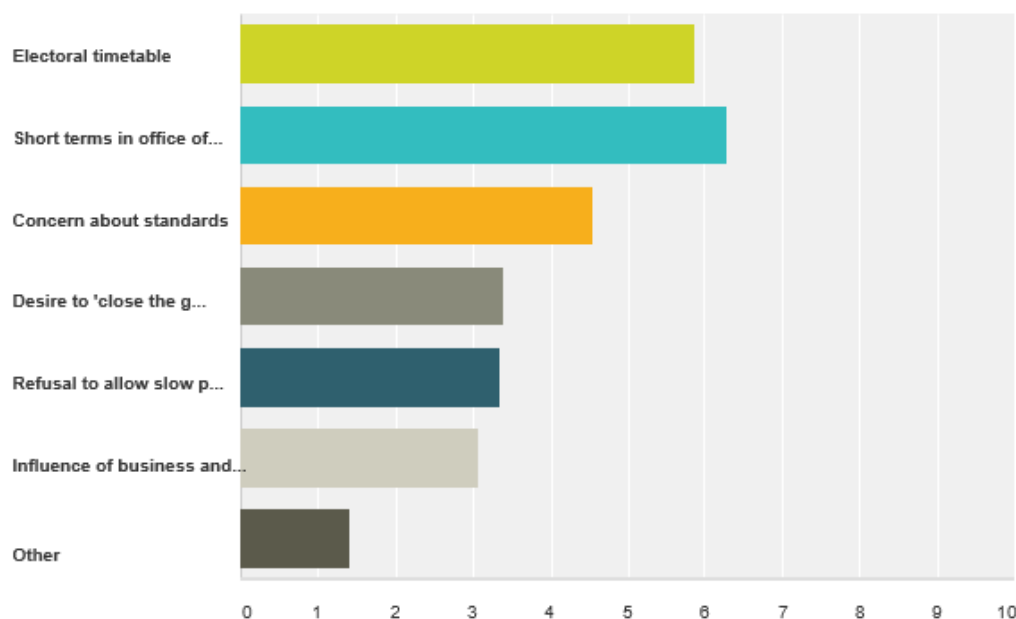
65	Chaotic, disillusioned, disjointed.	2/25/2015 2:34 PM
66	Exhausting	2/25/2015 2:21 PM
67	Impossible and now has reached stages of the ridiculous!	2/25/2015 1:44 PM
68	Farcically fast changing	2/25/2015 1:19 PM
69	rapid	2/25/2015 12:43 PM
70	Awful in the past 18-24 months, leaving Academies near breaking point	2/25/2015 12:38 PM
71	Not thought through and lacking in understanding of impact on schools	2/25/2015 12:25 PM
72	Rapid and uncoordinated	2/25/2015 12:19 PM
73	too fast and driven by politics and not what is best for schools and students	2/25/2015 3:25 AM
74	relentless, overpowering, de-motivating, energy-sapping, politically motivated, rushed, incoherent	2/25/2015 3:20 AM
75	Relentless	2/24/2015 7:01 PM
76	Ridiculous and detrimental	2/24/2015 1:32 PM
77	fast, selfish, political	2/24/2015 1:07 PM
78	Constant	2/24/2015 1:00 PM

79	Unsustainable	2/24/2015 12:57 PM
80	Too fast	2/24/2015 12:32 PM
81	Exhausting, unrelenting, unfocused, kneejerk	2/24/2015 12:24 PM
82	Ill thought, unsustainable	2/24/2015 10:56 AM
83	Frenetic. Ill conceived. No-one seems to carry out any 'what if tests'.	2/24/2015 8:23 AM
84	too fast	2/24/2015 8:15 AM

Table G.10: Initial Survey Data Question 25

Q26 What do you believe is most likely to drive the pace of change? Please rank 1: Most likely 7: least likely

Answered: 85 Skipped: 36



	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	Total	Score
Electoral timetable	32.94% 28	43.53% 37	11.76% 10	5.88% 5	2.35% 2	2.35% 2	1.18% 1	85	5.87
Short terms in office of Secretary of State for Education (desire for attributable impact)	54.12% 46	31.76% 27	7.06% 6	3.53% 3	3.53% 3	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	85	6.29
Concern about standards	4.71% 4	9.41% 8	41.18% 35	32.94% 28	7.06% 6	3.53% 3	1.18% 1	85	4.56
Desire to 'close the gap' for disadvantaged children	0.00% 0	2.35% 2	9.41% 8	34.12% 29	36.47% 31	15.29% 13	2.35% 2	85	3.40
Refusal to allow slow pace of change to hold back improvement	2.35% 2	4.71% 4	15.29% 13	8.24% 7	43.53% 37	25.88% 22	0.00% 0	85	3.36
Influence of business and other economic interests	1.18% 1	7.06% 6	14.12% 12	15.29% 13	7.06% 6	50.59% 43	4.71% 4	85	3.09
Other	4.76% 4	1.19% 1	1.19% 1	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	2.38% 2	90.48% 76	84	1.42

Figure G.16: Initial Survey Data Question 26

Q27 If you answered 'Other' to the previous question, please give description here:

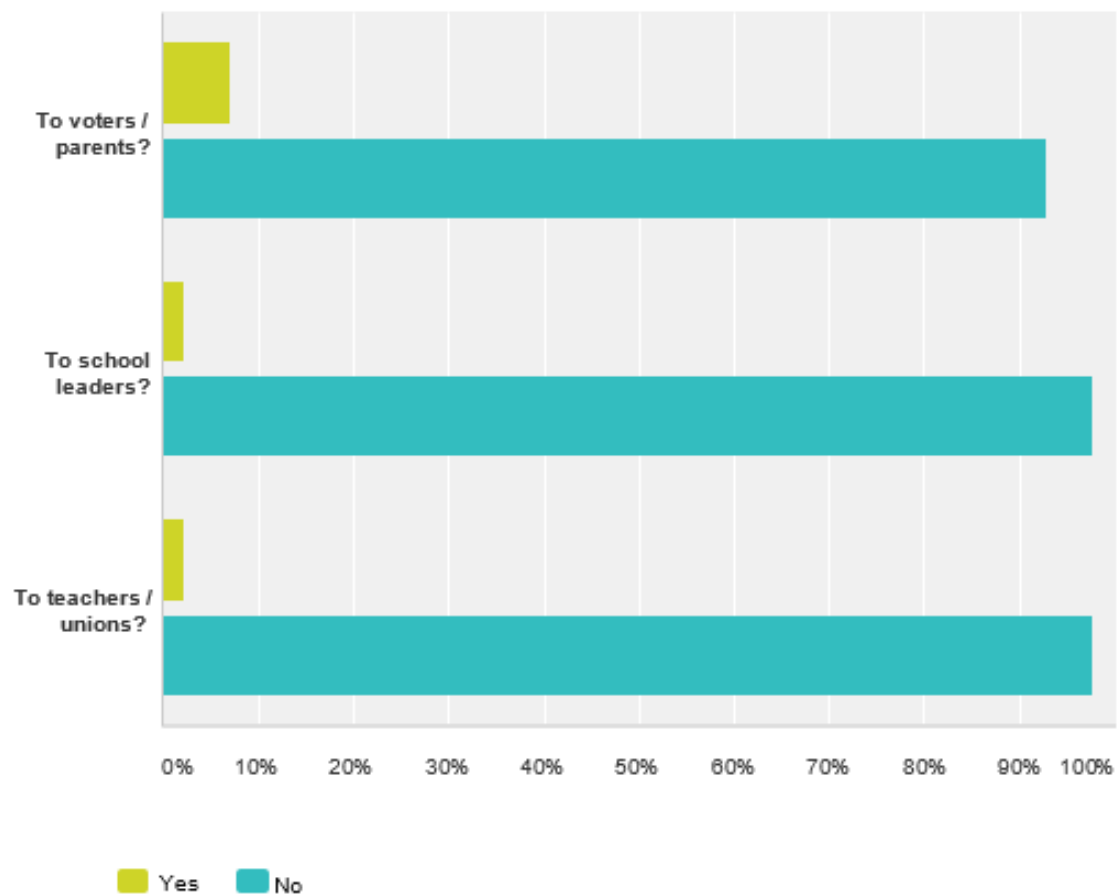
Answered: 8 Skipped: 113

#	Responses	Date
1	see response to 13 and 14	3/2/2015 4:24 AM
2	An illusion that change equals improvement and that politicians are better placed to understand what improvement is than those in the education profession - including those researching education in the HE sector.	2/26/2015 7:40 AM
3	The political aspirations of the secretary of state.	2/26/2015 1:01 AM
4	Ludicrous ideologies founded on middle class, privileged, educational "rose-tinted" experiences that bear no relation to the realities of today's society	2/25/2015 2:59 PM
5	Global standing	2/25/2015 2:21 PM
6	Personnel political gain and influence	2/25/2015 12:38 PM
7	Lack of empathy from gov decision makers.....decisions made after consultation with a very narrow group of educational experts	2/25/2015 12:25 PM
8	Media perception - the Daily Mail myths	2/25/2015 3:20 AM

Table G.11: Initial Survey Data Question 27

Q28 Do you believe that justification for change is communicated meaningfully and effectively?

Answered: 85 Skipped: 36

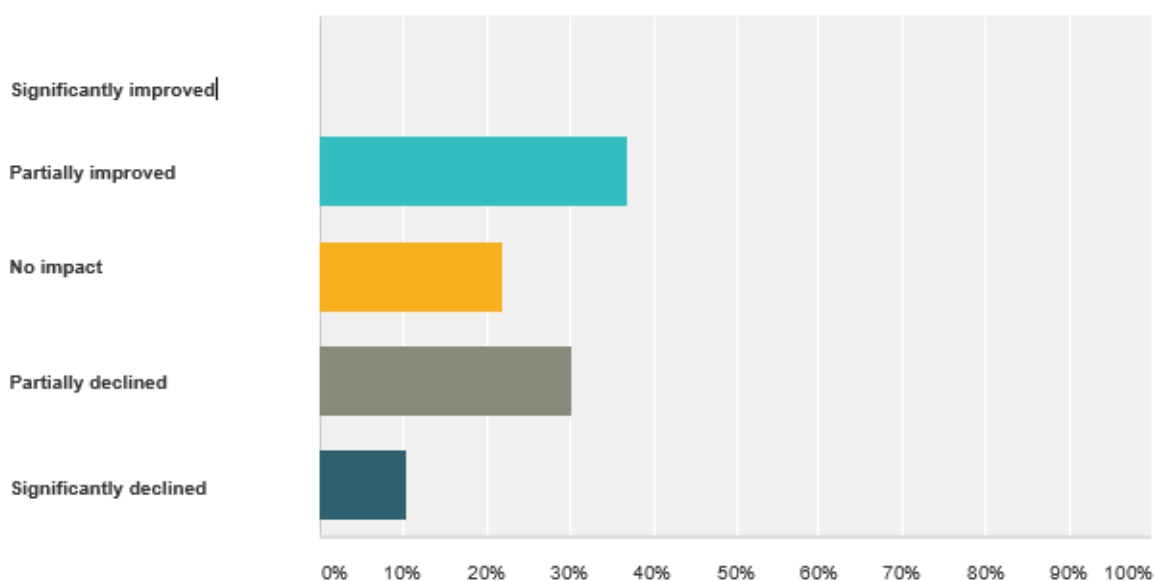


	Yes	No	Total
To voters / parents?	7.06% 6	92.94% 79	85
To school leaders?	2.35% 2	97.65% 83	85
To teachers / unions?	2.35% 2	97.65% 83	85

Figure G.17: Initial Survey Data Question 28

Q29 With reference to your understanding of 'standards' - what impact do you think the current pace of education reform / policy change has had on education standards in English secondary schools?

Answered: 86 Skipped: 35



Answer Choices	Responses	
Significantly improved	0.00%	0
Partially improved	37.21%	32
No impact	22.09%	19
Partially declined	30.23%	26
Significantly declined	10.47%	9
Total		86

Figure G.18: Initial Survey Data Question 29

Q30 With reference to the previous question, why?

Answered: 77 Skipped: 44

#	Responses	Date
1	Some nuggets have been in there - focus on En and Ma, removal of some abuses, but there has been an awful lot of negative stuff too which obscures.	3/14/2015 3:40 AM
2	morale and embedding of change	3/11/2015 4:18 AM
3	some potentially positive changes but the reforms have driven a lot of great teachers and leaders out of schools. We face a recruitment crisis!	3/4/2015 11:11 AM
4	Focus on progress has been beneficial but other amendments have not centred on the factors that actually make a difference to children's education	3/4/2015 3:07 AM
5	Schools have focused on some standards but at a cost to others	3/4/2015 1:39 AM
6	We are all running to stand still- increased workload and ridiculous policies introduced.	3/2/2015 5:23 AM
7	Difficult to get to grips with the pace of change and difficult with the change to be able to measure any success	3/2/2015 4:24 AM
8	Can no longer compare year on year - this allows schools to slip through the net; cannot attribute impact to any particular initiative because so much is changing, eg, if there was an initiative that had a massive positive impact and one that had a negative impact, overall, there is moderate impact. I think that the Government should concentrate on the effectiveness of the pupil premium and keep this significantly high on the agenda, especially as the number of poor families is rising. Also, to evaluate the impact of student tuition fees on students aspirations and long-term debt attitudes. So much else to say!...	3/2/2015 2:28 AM
9	Changes are not thought through or embedded. Standards are superficially met by schools and students.	3/1/2015 1:15 PM
10	The school community is not 'signed up' to policy and convinced of its moral purpose	3/1/2015 12:12 PM
11	Because the benchmark of qualifications has changed and has been set above what is reasonable	3/1/2015 11:47 AM
12	No time to implement properly, and forced to implement policies which have a detrimental effect.	3/1/2015 5:24 AM
13	because all schools have been forced to deliver sound education	2/28/2015 5:59 AM
14	Too much, no real guidance, eg life without levels, huge impact but individual schools will have to make it work.	2/28/2015 1:09 AM
15	School improvement needs time, stability and a pupil focus. Constantly changing frameworks etc to be in line with the latest political rhetoric is damaging to progress and hinders the focus of school leadership	2/28/2015 12:53 AM
16	Only because I can now set my own pay policy which is closely linked to standards and forces staff to demonstrate that they are good or outstanding if they want a pay rise.	2/27/2015 9:40 AM
17	The pace of change has impacted on teachers workload and schools planning & curriculum not standards in the subject	2/27/2015 9:07 AM
18	Constant negative press about what is happening in schools so	2/27/2015 4:46 AM
19	narrowed the breadth of curriculum accessible to lower ability learners	2/26/2015 1:01 PM
20	It would be detrimental but school leaders and teachers have worked ceaselessly to make sure this has not happened	2/26/2015 10:32 AM

21	rapid change with no planing, changes away from appropriate qualifications, strange and arbitrary rules about qualifications and examinations leading to unfair discounting rules	2/26/2015 10:07 AM
22	Schools have had to face more rigorous accountability measures which has narrowed the curriculum.	2/26/2015 9:30 AM
23	we have changed our system of tracking/reporting & mentoring	2/26/2015 8:42 AM
24	too much emphasis in the wrong areas	2/26/2015 8:17 AM
25	insufficient time to make good policy initiatives work.	2/26/2015 8:15 AM

26	Unpalnned changes have led schools and teachers to implement policy too quickly, with far reaching consequences. I would give as an example the overnight imposition of the First Entry Policy, which has lead to huge confusion over results and confused staff, students and parents.	2/26/2015 8:07 AM
27	Ships founder in storms and sink. The best headway is gained in calm seas, with good visibility and a steady wind.	2/26/2015 7:40 AM
28	we are simply measuring different things and trying to do too much too quickly to really gain the benefits	2/26/2015 7:13 AM
29	The pace of change has not enable anyone to review in the last few years using any form of benchmarking	2/26/2015 6:35 AM
30	Because the measures of success are too narrow, and too prescriptive. Children have to be trained to pass state tests, to the exclusion of wider learning and deeper understanding.	2/26/2015 5:02 AM
31	Issue is on the narrow academic definition of standards	2/26/2015 4:55 AM
32	If you change the goalposts it is difficult to compare one set of data with a previous set - hence the issues with Raise and Ofsted assessment!!	2/26/2015 4:50 AM
33	changes to exam system and changes to accountability criteria	2/26/2015 4:41 AM
34	I am speaking about the experience in my own school	2/26/2015 4:15 AM
35	Expectations of what teachers can deliver has been raised, however, with no consideration of the impact on teacher workload	2/26/2015 4:15 AM
36	Insufficient time to properly implement all the exam reforms and curriculum changes	2/26/2015 4:09 AM
37	no tolerance of poor teaching	2/26/2015 3:52 AM
38	Rigour	2/26/2015 3:30 AM
39	Has challenged under-achievement in some areas, but in a rather clumsy fashion	2/26/2015 3:06 AM
40	Schools forced to be accountable for additional income such as pupil premium.	2/26/2015 2:43 AM
41	I think there has been an improved focus on literacy and maintaining challenge for most	2/26/2015 2:14 AM
42	Overall outcomes have fallen this year and the upcoming reforms will undoubtedly have a negative impact again got the next set of results.	2/26/2015 2:12 AM
43	The threat of OFSTED has led to a tick box exercise by many school leaders rather than concentrating on the 'love of teaching' children that we came into the profession for. I do accept that it has helped raised standards in some schools	2/26/2015 2:10 AM
44	Expectations have shifted.	2/26/2015 2:07 AM

45	Schools are still adjusting to the changes with more significant changes and cuts to come. The current Government, despite talking about empowering schools to make their own decisions has driven unprecedented change from the centre. This is hypocritical.	2/26/2015 1:34 AM
46	some reforms are good but poorly rolled out and too quickly	2/26/2015 1:32 AM
47	lack of time and cohesion	2/26/2015 1:28 AM
48	because we have been 'forced' to consider the progress of all students and not just the headline GCSE and A Level figures which have masked progress.	2/26/2015 1:27 AM
49	Last year my own school was able to use the change for English GCSE assessment work to our advantage by using the November entry in a different way to previously. However, I am not convinced that this was a genuine improvement in standard of education of that cohort.	2/26/2015 1:18 AM
50	Whatever change is introduced we show a Pavlovian response which means we get good at demonstrating the external standard. It is a moot point whether this makes standards in the way I understand them any better. The core point is that a school is only ever as good as the quality of its teaching (in the sense of all the ways it promotes the learning and development of young people) and its leadership. Much of the reform has no impact on those things. The issues of teacher supply and succession planning for leaders suggest an incipient staffing crisis which is not being recognised by policy makers.	2/26/2015 1:14 AM
51	The changes cause teachers to be continually rewriting schemes of work, not actually improving the quality of delivery.	2/26/2015 1:01 AM
52	Pupil premium good - rest bad - so overall slightly negative	2/26/2015 12:57 AM
53	Too soon to judge what the outcome has been	2/26/2015 12:38 AM
54	Assessment method is now too narrow, not looking at skills	2/26/2015 12:34 AM

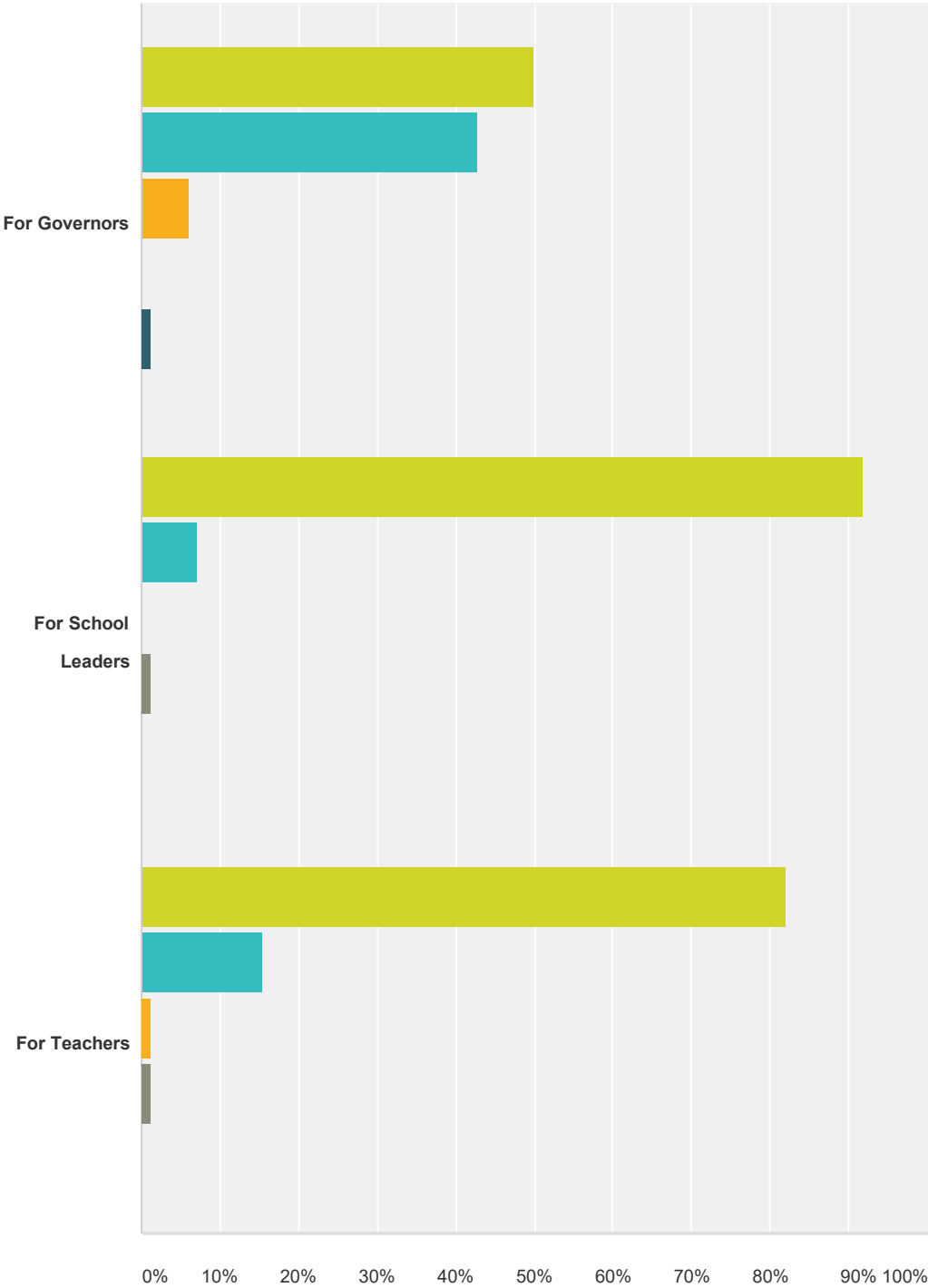
55	teaching is getting better all the time.	2/25/2015 11:57 PM
56	Because everything is too rushed and never enough time to find out what works AND is sustainable. Too much noise due to too many changes means there are too many variables.	2/25/2015 11:55 PM
57	Early days yet, but the impact of changes so far has already convinced many children that they cannot succeed in this area. This has affected their motivation.	2/25/2015 11:03 PM
58	Until last summer's decline, GCSE results were showing some improvement but this is through leaders pushing staff and students in fear of an Ofsted downgrading = stress levels up	2/25/2015 2:59 PM
59	Badly implemented change, poorly understood has detrimental effect on learners	2/25/2015 2:34 PM
60	a better understanding of progress is helping schools target the 'hidden' students and improving their outcomes	2/25/2015 2:21 PM
61	The number of high calibre and experienced individuals leaving the profession is immense	2/25/2015 1:44 PM
62	Because nothing in gives policies relates to children as human beings with lives and families and hopes and dreams that might not fit in with his narrow view of education	2/25/2015 1:19 PM
63	retrospectively changing rules	2/25/2015 12:43 PM
64	Through a forced hand of double points for English and Maths (Academies in certain instances will do nothing else) mirroring the Y6 curriculum pre-sats	2/25/2015 12:38 PM
65	One model does not fit all	2/25/2015 12:25 PM

66	Too fast change/ intimidation of ofsted framework	2/25/2015 12:19 PM
67	The focus is on making things more difficult fro schools, especially thos ein areas of significant deprivation. therefore oucomes for students who are of lopwer ability have gone down, standards fallen Nationally. How can this be good apart from from a political standpoint and school bashing.	2/25/2015 3:25 AM
68	The benchmarks have changed e.g. you can't compare 2013 and 2014 GCSE results	2/25/2015 3:20 AM
69	Teachers leaving the profession, recruitment etc means there will be a dip in performance	2/24/2015 7:01 PM
70	Pace and scope of change is detrimental to school improvement	2/24/2015 1:32 PM
71	Ofsted focussing on results - so schools do too	2/24/2015 1:07 PM
72	Inconsistent results	2/24/2015 1:00 PM
73	Lost focus on great learning; about outcomes at any price	2/24/2015 12:57 PM
74	Skewed effort toward admin, inspection and away from deeper learning. Teach to test.	2/24/2015 12:32 PM
75	Because we are not allowed time to embed and develop one policy before another arrives	2/24/2015 12:24 PM
76	Stress on young people	2/24/2015 10:56 AM
77	GCSE results have gone down nationally.	2/24/2015 8:23 AM

Table G.12: Initial Survey Data Question 30

Q31 How do you believe that the pace of education reform / policy change has impacted on workload in secondary schools?

Answered: 85 Skipped: 36



Significantly increased

Partially increased

Not affected – stayed the same

Partially decreased

Significantly decreased

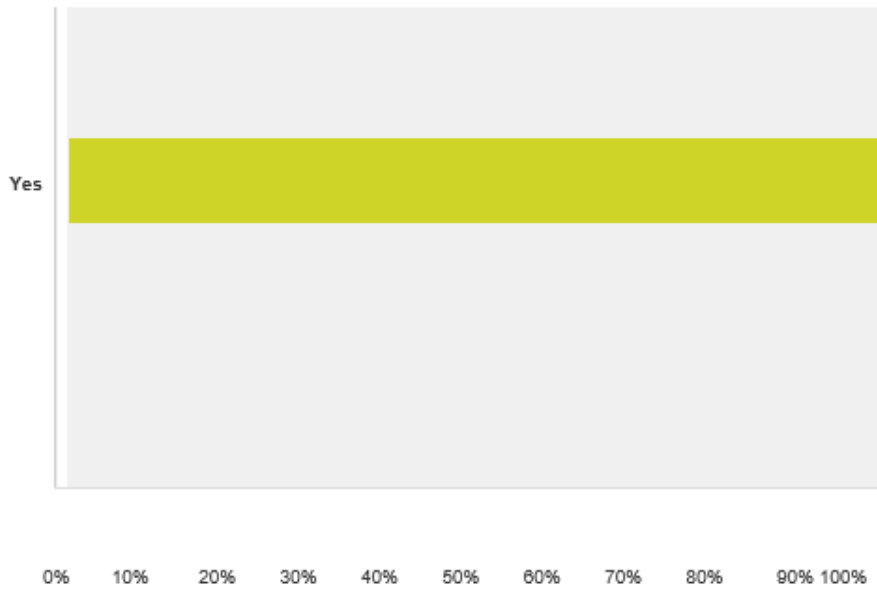
	Significantly increased	Partially increased	Not affected – stayed the same	Partially decreased	Significantly decreased	Total

For Governors	50.00% 42	42.86% 36	5.95% 5	0.00% 0	1.19% 1	84
For School Leaders	91.76% 78	7.06% 6	0.00% 0	1.18% 1	0.00% 0	85
For Teachers	82.14% 69	15.48% 13	1.19% 1	1.19% 1	0.00% 0	84

Figure G.19: Initial Survey Data Question 31

Q32 I give permission for you to contact me regarding participation in an interview.

Answered: 29 Skipped: 92



Answer Choices	Responses	
Yes	100.00%	29
Total		29

Figure G.20: Initial Survey Data Question 32

APPENDIX H: Participant briefing pack, interview schedule and consent forms

Introduction

My name is Paul Norman and I am currently Vice Principal at The Wey Valley School in Weymouth as well as a Doctoral student with Plymouth University. I am currently undertaking the thesis stage of my Doctorate (EdD) and am working with the support of ASCL (Association of School and College Leaders) to research the question:

“How do head teachers experience the relation between frequent education policy reform and their capacity to improve student success? Does this change in relation to the circumstances in which the head teachers work?”

This document will provide information about the research and your involvement in it, should you decide to participate. I am very happy to talk to you about any aspect of the research, explain terms you may be uncertain of or provide greater information if required.

Should you wish to test the validity of this work you can also contact Dr. Peter Kelly, Director of Studies for this Thesis on the EdD programme at Plymouth University.

Dr. P. Kelly, c/o Rm 502, Rolle Building, Plymouth University, Drake Circus, Plymouth. PL4 8AA

Phone: (01752) 585439 email: peter.kelly@plymouth.ac.uk

Purpose of the research

The main purpose of this research is to try and ascertain if frequent changes in Government policy actually work against the oft stated aim of improving standards. It is my belief that the views and experience of headteachers are too often ignored in this debate, yet they are best placed to know what impact policy change actually has on their schools and students. I am hoping that by surveying headteachers who have different levels of experience and across a range of institutions, we will get a rich set of data which will help to answer the question and to provide illustrations and examples of experience as evidence to support the findings.

Whatever the impact on standards of the current pace of policy implementation, then I would aim, with the support of ASCL, to communicate this back to those in the position of generating policy – regardless of political persuasion or party.

Research method

This research uses the method of survey to generate data. This is broken down in to two parts - a questionnaire (that you have already completed) and a semi-structured interview that allows me to explore key issues and experiences in more detail and to provide actual examples from your experience to illustrate the findings. I would expect the interview to take about an hour and this may be done by phone or face to face.

Participant selection

You have been invited to participate in the interview stage of the research because you expressed an interest via the online questionnaire that you have already completed. You have been selected from the pool of possible interviewees to help ensure a representative sample of headteachers and principals in terms of gender, experience, region and type of institution.

Voluntary Participation

Your participation in this research is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide to participate or not. Deciding not to participate will not prevent you from participating in future research projects run by Plymouth University.

Procedures & Duration

If you decide to participate in this research you will be asked to make yourself available for a semi-structured interview. The interview should last for approximately an hour and can be held at your place of work, somewhere neutral or on the telephone, depending on your own preference.

A semi-structured interview uses a range of set questions, which are outlined in the interview schedule enclosed, but is able to develop and roam beyond those questions depending on your responses. This allows for the interviewer or the interviewee to develop a point of interest or bring in additional questions if the need arises. In addition, you are not required to answer questions if you do not wish to – in this instance you should just indicate that you would like to move along to the next question.

The questions in the interview will focus on your experience of school leadership and how this has been affected and influenced by policy, both from Government / local authority level and internal school processes. You will be asked to reflect on your experience and practice and draw on observations of how you and your students have been affected by policy implementation. You will also be asked to think of examples to help illustrate your observations.

The interview will be recorded using a tapeless recorder and then transcribed for analysis. No reference will be made to your name or specific school and only I and my Doctoral supervisory team, and my examiners (on request) will have access to the recordings.

Risks

Your contribution will be kept anonymised and will not identify you other than by experience, type of institution (eg: Academy) and broad region (eg: South West).

If you feel uncomfortable at any stage of the interview you are fully entitled to refuse to answer or even to request an end to the interview.

Benefits

The main benefit of participation is in the positive action of allowing your views to be heard.

Confidentiality

I will not be sharing information about you with anyone outside my supervisory team. The information that I collect will remain confidential and any reference to you will be in the form of a number not a name. Information matching numbers to names will be kept in an encrypted file, separate from other files and will only be accessible to me and the supervisory team.

All data files will be stored on a secure server on the site of The Wey Valley School and will be password protected. Non-electronic files and data will be stored in a locked filing cabinet in the office of the researcher, also at The Wey Valley School in Weymouth.

Should, at any stage, the researcher move from The Wey Valley School, data files and physical media will be transferred to secure storage at Plymouth University and will be permanently deleted from the servers at The Wey Valley School

In accordance with Plymouth University policy, the research data will be destroyed ten years after completion of the project.

Sharing of findings

Once the analysis and report are completed and the work has been approved by Plymouth University, I will endeavour to provide you with an electronic copy of the summary, for your reference. This will give you access to key findings and recommendations. Please be aware that this is also an academic study and will have to be written in the style required of Doctoral examination. It is my aim that the whole process should be completed by July 2016. The findings may also be shared through Post Graduate conferences, via the ASCL network and will also be published in line with the University policy on EdD Thesis publication. It is possible that elements of the report or an edited version of it may also be published via academic journals.

Right to refuse or withdraw

I will provide copies of transcriptions on completion for you to check and verify and changes to accuracy of transcribed data can be notified at this stage. You will also be able to request that responses are removed from the data. Please be aware that all efforts will be made to do this during the data collection phase but once the data analysis has started it will not be possible. I would ask that all changes are notified to me within two weeks of receipt of the transcript.

You also have the right to withdraw completely from the interview process at any stage, without suffering any negative consequences; should you change your mind about participating. Should you consider withdrawing your contribution, once the interview is complete, please be advised that this will only be possible prior to data analysis taking place. It is expected that this will be from 1st October 2015.

Please note that any decision to withdraw is entirely yours to make, without having to provide a reason and this will not affect your relationship with the University or opportunities for future participation.

Who to contact

Should you wish to ask for any additional information or need to contact me regarding the research, you can do so through the following means:

Mr Paul Norman, Vice Principal, The Wey Valley School, Dorchester Road, Weymouth, Dorset, DT3 5AN

(01305) 817065 email 1: paul.s.norman@plymouth.ac.uk email 2: normanp@weyvalley.dorset.sch.uk

Should you need to contact someone with concerns or complaints and would prefer not to speak to me, you can contact either Dr Peter Kelly (Director of Studies) or Dr Nick Pratt (Programme Leader) at the address provided at the start of this information sheet.

Interview Schedule

These represent questions that you may be asked during the interview. They are not exhaustive and as the interview will be semi-structured there may be follow up questions that aren't included in this schedule.

1. What have you spent your time doing today?
2. Ideally, how would you choose to spend your time?
3. Can you talk about your experience of leading schools?
4. How has this changed over time?
5. How do you feel about your current situation / experiences?
6. What advice would you give to a new or prospective headteacher?
7. What determines where and how you invest time and money in your school?
8. How would you hope your students / parents would describe standards in your school?
9. What do you think you need in order to get the absolute best from your school?
 - a. What stops you?
 - b. What helps?
10. What would you hope staff would say about your school?
11. What would you hope students would say about your school?
12. What advice would you give a new teacher or senior leader about work life balance?

Participant Identification Number:

CONSENT FORM

“Yes Minister” - The impact of frequent policy change in English education

Name of Researcher: Mr Paul Norman

Please initial boxes to indicate understanding / acceptance

1. I confirm that I have read and understand the participant briefing sheet for the above study. I have had the opportunity to consider the information, ask questions and have had these answered satisfactorily.
2. I understand that interviews will be recorded.
3. I understand that my participation is entirely voluntary and that I am free to withdraw at any time, without giving any reason.
4. I understand that, once I have participated in the research, my contribution can only be withdrawn prior to the analysis stage of the project.
5. I understand that any information given by me will be anonymised and may be used in future reports, articles or presentations by the research team.
6. I understand that my name will not appear in any reports, articles or presentations.
7. I understand that I have the right to express any concerns about the research directly to the researcher or the supervisory team
8. I agree to take part in the above study.

Name of Participant

Date

Signature

Researcher

Date

Signature

When completed, please return in the envelope provided (if applicable). One copy will be returned to you and the original will be kept in the file of the research team at: The Wey Valley School until the project is complete and then at Plymouth University

APPENDIX I: Full and part-time regular leadership teachers²⁵ in state funded schools by salary bands, sector, gender and age. (ADAPTED FROM DFE, 2016C)

Table 9c (cont): Full and part-time regular leadership teachers¹ in state funded schools by salary bands, average salary², sector, gender and age.													
November 2015													(Thousands)
England													
			UN DER	£40, 000 -	£50, 000 -	£60, 000 -	£70, 000 -	£80, 000 -	£90, 000 -	£100, 000- -	OV ER		
		Notes	£40, 000	£49, 999	£59, 999	£69, 999	£79, 999	£89, 999	£99, 999	£109, 999	£110,000	UNKNOWN	TOTAL
			Note 3								Note 4	Note 5	Note 6
	LA MAINTAINED SECONDARY												
	Men												
	Under 25		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	25-29		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	30-34		-	0.1	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.3
	35-39		-	0.1	0.4	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.7
	40-44		-	0.1	0.4	0.3	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	0.9
	45-49		-	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	0.8
	50-54		-	-	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	0.7
	55-59		-	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	0.4
	60 and over		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1
	All ages	8	-	0.4	1.5	1.0	0.4	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	3.9
	Women												
	Under 25		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	25-29		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1
	30-34		-	0.1	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.3
	35-39		-	0.1	0.4	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.7
	40-44		-	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	0.8
	45-49		-	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	0.6
	50-54		-	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	0.7
	55-59		-	-	0.2	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	0.5
	60 and over		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1
	All ages	8	-	0.6	1.7	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	-	0.1	3.8
	Men and Women	9											
	Under 25		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	25-29		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1
	30-34		-	0.2	0.4	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.7
	35-39		-	0.3	0.7	0.3	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	1.3
	40-44		-	0.2	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.1	-	-	-	-	1.8

²⁵ Includes Headteachers, deputy, assistant Headteachers and advisory teachers.

	45-49		-	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	1.4
	50-54		-	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	-	-	1.3
	55-59		-	0.1	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	-	-	0.9
	60 and over		-	-	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.2
	All ages	8	-	1.0	3.2	1.8	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.2	7.8
	SECONDARY ACADEMIES	10											
	Men												
	Under 25		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	25-29		-	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.1
	30-34		-	0.2	0.4	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.8
	35-39		-	0.2	0.7	0.3	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	1.5
	40-44		-	0.2	0.8	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	1.9
	45-49		-	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.1	0.1	0.1	-	-	0.1	1.4
	50-54		-	0.1	0.3	0.3	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	-	1.1
	55-59		-	-	0.2	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	-	0.8
	60 and over		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.2
	All ages	8	-	0.9	3.1	1.7	0.7	0.4	0.3	0.3	0.2	0.3	7.8
	Women												
	Under 25		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	25-29		-	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.2
	30-34		-	0.3	0.5	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.9
	35-39		-	0.3	0.8	0.2	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	1.4
	40-44		-	0.2	0.8	0.4	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	1.6
	45-49		-	0.1	0.5	0.3	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	1.2
	50-54		-	0.1	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	1.1
	55-59		-	-	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	0.9
	60 and over		-	-	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.3
	All ages	8	-	1.2	3.4	1.5	0.5	0.3	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.3	7.6
	Men and Women	9											
	Under 25		-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	25-29		-	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	0.3
	30-34		-	0.5	0.9	0.2	-	-	-	-	-	0.1	1.8
	35-39		-	0.5	1.5	0.5	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	0.1	2.9
	40-44		-	0.4	1.5	0.8	0.3	0.2	0.1	-	-	0.1	3.5
	45-49		-	0.2	1.0	0.6	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	-	0.1	2.6
	50-54		-	0.2	0.7	0.5	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	2.1
	55-59		-	0.1	0.5	0.4	0.2	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	0.1	1.6
	60 and over		-	-	0.1	0.1	0.1	-	-	-	0.1	-	0.5
	All ages	8	0.1	2.1	6.5	3.2	1.1	0.7	0.5	0.4	0.3	0.6	15.4

Table I.1: Full and part-time regular leadership teachers²⁶ in state funded schools by salary bands, sector, gender and age.

(adapted from DfE, 2016c)²⁷

²⁶ Includes Headteachers, deputy, assistant Headteachers and advisory teachers.

²⁷ published here under the Open Government Licence for Public Sector Information:
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>

APPENDIX J: Codebook

Name	Description	Files	References
Autonomy		7	70
bad policy		8	152
Context		7	96
curriculum		4	4
Evidenced based policy		2	6
good policy		8	122
Heads Experience		12	273
identity		9	100
instrumentalism		9	41
Key concerns		12	170
media		1	2
neg standards		8	89
neoliberalism		11	55
Partnership		6	28
Performative		12	159
pisa		4	5
Policy		8	130
Policy churn		13	114
Policy enactment		6	57
policy examples		10	87
Policy Impact		7	95
Policy Quotes		18	153
Power and Discourse		17	216
Pressure		7	63

Name	Description	Files	References
Priorities		7	59
Pupil progress		5	36
resistance		11	81
standards		21	249
Values		7	98
workload		9	31

Table J.1: Codebook Table

Participant Aliases

Participant Number	Alias
A0001	Alex
A0002	Sam
A0003	Pat
A0004	Charlie
A0005	Ali
A0006	Ash
A0007	Teddy
A0008	Jo
A0009	Frankie
A00010	Phil
A00011	Bertie

Table J.2: Participant aliases

APPENDIX K: ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS

The research was conducted in line with the Plymouth University ethical protocols and consent was gained from the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Education Research Ethics Sub-committee (Appendices R & S) in advance of the survey and interviews taking place. There were three key considerations at this stage:

- ensuring that participants were fully informed about the research and their rights within it via a participant briefing pack and had given their ‘informed consent’ (Appendix H, p. 281)
- ensuring participants were anonymised through the processes of redaction of interview data and careful participant labelling
- that a right to refuse or withdraw was a fundamental principle of the study up until the point data was analysed.

It was important to me that subjects were fully informed as to the aims of the study and I was confident that participants would feel safe and secure in their participation. The relationship between me, as researcher, and the participants could not be “legislated by methodology” (Hammersley, 1995, p. 61), but I was confident that issues of power (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000) were more of risk to me than the subjects as they held positions more powerful than my own. The open nature of the questions gave them bounded freedom to direct the course of the interview as they may have felt “both a personal and professional investment in being interviewed” (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 123). Although there was a small risk that the participants may have confronted painful professional and personal experiences, the nature of the questions and the protocol were designed to allow them to pass over or refuse to answer if a topic was uncomfortable for them.

It was a key principle that the participants remain anonymous and their information confidential so that they could not be recognised from the findings. I also felt that participants would feel more relaxed and comfortable about reflecting 'honest' perceptions of their experiences. A level of anonymity was sacrificed as the research is clearly based on the perceptions of school leaders i.e. Headteachers and Principals (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000), so it was important to remove other identifiable characteristics from the data to protect their identities. Names were converted to participant code numbers and only I am aware of who each participant is. The participant data has been redacted to remove identifiable links to places, school names or local authorities. While the participants provided signed consent, this is not included in this report, nor is the contact information within the participant identification table (Appendix T, p. 343). As an approach, this has been proven beneficial as two participants requested minor additional redactions and participant IC_0007 requested substantial additional redactions, due to the very specific nature of her comments relating to national policy strategies that she had participated in. Although I was disappointed that some very interesting data had been made unavailable, it was a signifier that the ethical protocol was effective and I believe, if no change had been possible, they may have withdrawn their data completely.

The right to refuse or withdraw without reason and without penalty was also very important as a principle as I did not want any participant to feel they carried any personal risk. Such a consideration does offer challenges to the research, as withdrawal reduces the dataset and confidence in the validity of the findings. One aspect of the research design which made this far easier for participants to manage was the invitation for them to control the mode / location of the interview. Although telephone interviews are limiting due to the restriction to "auditory sensory cues" (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000, p. 123), they do make the socially awkward process of withdrawal more easy. It is less

embarrassing to withdraw during a phone call than if the interviewer / interviewee are meeting face to face. The right to withdraw without explanation was always a key element of the ethical protocol, however, to realistically manage data once processed, I added a specific date after which withdrawal would no longer be possible.

Other than the enquiries over redaction, I received no requests for refusal or withdrawal and, as far as I am aware, no complaints or concerns were raised by participants during or after the interview phase.

APPENDIX L: The only constant is change...

When questioned as to whether the pace of reform / change had increased or decreased over their time in leadership, survey responses were overwhelmingly weighted toward the ‘increasing’ or ‘significantly increasing (Appendix G – Question 20) – a clear mirroring of the perception expressed in the literature. A further question asked the participants “What words would you choose to describe your experience of the pace of education reform / policy development?” (Question 25 – Appendix G). The strongest response of “*Too fast*” resonates with the outcome from the previous question, not necessarily positioning the participants as anti-reform but that the speed of reform is counterproductive. Many of the terms reflect a negative perception – “*frantic*”, “*ridiculous*”, “*shambolic*” and “*chaotic*” suggesting a poor perception of implementation, while “*relentless*”, “*grinding*”, “*detrimental*” and “*demoralising*” reflecting concern over the perceived impact on staff or students of a continual, seemingly endless process of reform. Some phrases used do suggest a frustration with the nature of reform – “*ill thought through*”, “*structurally inadequate*” and “*lacking in understanding of impact on schools*” positioning the participants within the discourse of reform as opposing the intent and the implementation, while “*not pupil centred*” illustrates the perceived gap between their values and the perceived values of politicians.

Following up this focus in interview, the high pace of reform was clearly an issue and it was clear to me that there was a sense of ‘reform fatigue’ (Thomson, 2008).

if we go back to curriculum 2000 that sticks, that does stick in all of our minds because it was the first big change to post 16, As and A level and it took us a bit of time to bed in to that and get used to it and, actually, I think, I think it started - it did a, it did a good service for schools, a really good service for students and it seemed to work really well. That takes a number of years to bed in and, actually, to be fair, the policy makers gave it enough time to bed in (SAM)

Interviewee SAM recognises the benefits of the curriculum 2000 changes but puts the success of that down in great part to effective strategy with sufficient time for implementation. The phrase '*good service*' is applied to both students and schools, implying that the reforms were concerned with a systemic improvement rather than one focused on a narrow outcome. There was also a perception that the issue was wider than simply the high pace, but also the degree of aspects of schooling being targeted for reform.

lord, yes.. policy change - the pace of policy, policy change has changed considerably and I think that it's not the pace of change it's the breadth of the change.. (SAM)

Change across multiple aspects of schooling from curriculum to accountability structures and Academisation stretch the limited capacity of schools to manage change. Rapid reform in one specific area is less stretching than when applied at different points in time across many foci, giving an impression of being buffeted from one thing to another, the experience which has been simplified in some texts as 'churn'. The concern over policy flipping between administrations was highlighted by others and was well summarised by one long serving Head who had been in leadership since the 1988 act:

you've got huge changes, you've got changes with GCSEs, you know I was teaching O-Levels and CSEs initially, so you've got all of that change to GCSEs, you've got changes to management systems, you've got changes to appraisal and performance management, you've got, you know, the tasks that teachers can't do, you've got national curriculum coming and going and everything flowing, you've got, um certain subjects were compulsory then they weren't compulsory, [inaudible], you've got sort of endless things that were in and out of favour with just successive Governments and even within, um particular administrations, so that, that I think has become more of a, more of a constant. (PHIL)

PHIL highlights the '*huge*' and '*endless*' nature of reform and the inconsistencies that occurred not just between administrations, but even within the same – the overall impression given is one of resigned frustration.

On top of the amount of turbulence that schools encounter in their day to day operation, there is the need to consider how any new policies are planned and delivered so that

leaders can successfully implement them and this is another area where interviewees found the policy machine wanting. Policies “pose problems to their subjects” (Ball, 2006, 7%) and

the pace with which Governments expect things to happen isn't realistic on the ground. Obviously they're, you know, they're governed by their, their five year term, and they want to see change happen but to embed it properly in in a school, proper lead-in time, proper consultation, development time and then implementation, it just takes far longer - if you want it to be successful and sustainable. (ASH)

There is a clear perception that the short term of political appointments and the desire to demonstrate impact in the short term, is not just impacting on the pace of change but also on schools' ability to successfully implement in a way which allows the policies to achieve positive outcomes, which are replicable over a longer period. This concern is only exacerbated by a perception that some policy is deliberately designed to negatively affect schools in the short term. This is most keenly felt over changes to performance measures or inspection handbooks which change mid-cycle, with almost immediate impact on school performance measures.

I mean, the one that always makes me laugh, actually, is the never-ending revision of the OfSTED framework, because every time they tell is going to be rigorous and really get to the bottom of what makes a school tick and you think, well what was wrong with the one before then, because you told us the same about the last one. (ALI)

I also think that sometimes they play some unfair tricks, you know, like you, you, you know, the way that they discount courses that are already running. So, we lost our - we went down to 68% last year, we should have been 70 because our ICT course was discounted half way through the course. Well, you can't do that. No other profession would put up with that. (BERTIE)

There is a sense of injustice here and the belief that schools and teachers are, in some way, less able to defend themselves against such ‘attacks’. There is a perceived lack of logic and this builds a more cynical view of the need for change, suggesting that for these participants, changes are not well communicated and rationalised. Their perceptions may

also speak to a sense of disempowerment caused by the limited degree of consultation and the dissonance of values.

Politicians may reasonably question whether school leaders are simply resistant to change, as Gove's "Blob" comments suggested, and their responses are merely illustrating that resistance, or whether the pace and frequency of change has created a situation where the frustration and exhaustion of trying to implement multiple reforms across multiple foci in short spaces of time results in burn out. At interview there was a sense of frustration that there can be little coherence in the policy work being done and that policy changes according to political whim, but not that reform was unnecessary or even completely unwelcome in some regards.

it's the whimsical nature of, of .. our political, you know, paymasters, really.
(ALEX)

you probably need a change of policy as frequently as you need to change it - it's the rationale - if there's an absent rationale then bloomin' well don't do it and don't do it on the basis of dogma. (ALI)

ALEX reflects an understanding that politicians will act as politicians, and this may mean changing things because they want to, despite evidence. ALI is pragmatic about reform but clearly feels it should be justifiable. It is much harder to tolerate reform if it is perceived to be predicated on flawed logic, unevidenced or poorly evidenced proposals or appears to be strategically unjustified. The use of evidence is one area where interviewees reflected a perceived difference in policy management between the New Labour administration and the coalition / Conservative ones. There was a sense that, while pace and breadth of reform was just as manic, the New Labour administrations were willing to follow evidence.

I was working with some other heads, um and with the local authority and Government were really interested in this and they badged it up, um the DFE and rolled it out - and they had us, we were very successful, it was a really very successful turn-around, um, and they had me and the other heads we had been

working with, going around other failing schools and explaining what our model for school improvement was. They adjusted Government policy according to things that we were telling them (TEDDY)

While the reflection from TEDDY here is very much one of inclusion and evidenced-based policy, it is notable that the language of failure, the failing schools discourse, has been consistent over that period. The way the interviewee outlines the work being done with other Headteachers and their perception of success, they felt valued – the work they had done was adopted and officially sanctioned '*badged*' by the Government of the time. While the discourse of failure was present and TEDDY clearly positions themselves as part of a group of '*failing*' schools, nationally - there is a sense that school leaders were empowered to address it, and sharing of good practice was encouraged and fed back into policymaking.

So, policy was being developed on the back of practitioners who were doing stuff and knew what they were talking about. (TEDDY)

This appears to have changed consequently with a perception that subsequent administrations would only use evidence if it supported their intent.

the Government talk about evidence-based pedagogy using the evidence but of course, when the evidence doesn't suit what they want to do they just ignore it. school structures don't actually make much difference, but of course it doesn't fit with her Philosophy that 'academies good, local authority bad' and therefore the policy follows through - so it is actually bad policy. (PAT)

I don't think its evidence led and I don't think they evaluate what the changes, what impact they've been. (ASH)

There is a view for PAT that the Conservative dislike of Local Education Authorities and their amplification of New Labour's Academies programme, is not based on evidence unless that evidence supports their narrative, and this makes it 'bad' policy. The interviewee positions the policy maker as irrational - holding blind faith that such structural changes will improve standards, whilst positioning themselves as rational – the evidence does not support the claims made. ASH reflects the view that policy is

unevidenced and not evaluated, showing a perception that the intent is the reform itself, rather than any supposed impact on outcomes, standards, etc.

The perceived quality of the leaders' experience is not just determined by the pace of reform, but also by how well communicated and resourced changes are. Survey respondents were asked to consider how well policy changes were planned for a number of considerations (Table L1).

	Always	usually	sometimes	never	Total
Sufficient degree of consultation with school leaders	0.00% 0	2.22% 2	57.78% 52	40.00% 36	90
Sufficient levels of funding	0.00% 0	3.33% 3	51.11% 46	45.56% 41	90
Consideration of impact on schools	0.00% 0	1.11% 1	31.11% 28	67.78% 61	90
Consideration of impact on teacher workload	0.00% 0	0.00% 0	24.44% 22	75.56% 68	90
Timing / timescales of implementation	0.00% 0	1.12% 1	31.46% 28	67.42% 60	89
Sufficient oversight to ensure political accountability	1.12% 1	6.74% 6	40.45% 36	51.69% 46	89

Table L.1: Perceptions of effectiveness for policy planning

The perceptions reported are again skewed toward the negative with most responses for each consideration showing a view that implementation was effective only some of the time or never. Degree of consultation and funding was slightly more skewed to 'sometimes' suggesting a perceived inconsistency over time, but impact on schools and teacher workload, appropriate timescales and degree of oversight were skewed toward 'never'. The most notable of these was 'consideration of impact on teacher workload' which was rated as 'never' by three quarters of respondents. This is of concern as rapid reform which appears to make no consideration of those tasked with delivering it has an increased likelihood of resistance resulting in increased risk of failure. Taken as a whole, the responses reflect a group who feel disenfranchised from, undervalued by and isolated

from a process in to which they have limited input, and feel inadequately resourced to implement.

The challenge of implementing policy is a view reflected during the interview phase:

we're not afraid of change, you know, we are constantly looking for that which is advantageous to what we are trying to do, but to be trying to do that now and to be weaving your way through the battlefield that the Government are throwing down, it's an ever more complex - you know, the one constant in education is change but it's the pace, I think, that I'm emphasising, um.. and , and the severity of some of the changes, you know - the consequences. (CHARLIE)

The interviewee is defensive about their willingness to accept change, and goes as far as to highlight the fact that they voluntarily seek out ways to improve, positioning themselves in opposition to the 'blob' perception. However, alongside the perception of policy change as a '*game*' we now also have a '*battleground*', the ultimate game, perhaps reflecting the same sentiment but significantly emphasising the perceived risk and consequences of failure. Another interviewee pinpointed the gradual 'mission creep' through policy that he had experienced in his time. This is where reform is not just rapid but where schools are expected to deliver a wider service to the public than academic schooling. Within the schooling context, there would have been limited capacity for adapting to new demands beyond curriculum and the interviewee reflects a view of politicians striving to manage their normative expectations of parents and children via school mechanisms.

They're distractions and some of the things we have to pick in schools now are you know not necessarily what schools should be doing. It seems that, that, um, the, you know, primary schools where you, what is it, you have to weigh every child and, from the obesity, well OK, we've got an obesity epidemic, but.. There are certain things that schools can do and there's things that parents should do or maybe somebody else in society should do (PHIL)

For politicians, schools offer a means of contact with most parents and thereby a means to 'manage' the population in various ways through building a discourse where education

/ schooling becomes 'responsible' for wider social policy. Obesity and deprivation become a failure of education, alongside poor social mobility, rather than of political will. Managing a high pace of reform alone is a challenge for school leaders who must manage changing workforce demands and budget pressures without being properly trained for it. The curriculum and delivering learning in classrooms are the key functions of the leaders' role and as new expectations are placed on them this subjectivates them in new ways and introduces new performative technologies to ensure they are compliant. There is also an issue of capital accumulation or deficit as they are required to network with a broader band of agencies and professionals in areas which are beyond their personal expertise, such as e-safety, terrorism²⁸ and Health and this runs alongside their own self-perception within the fields of teaching and school leadership as they identify themselves inside or outside of various subjectivities.

In terms of strategic direction, another of the school leader's key responsibilities, one risk is that, where strategic planning beyond Government policy is carried out, focusing on aspects of practice that the senior leadership may feel are essential to school improvement; it can accentuate the sense of manic change that colleagues in school may feel and act as a disincentive for self-directed reform, and in so doing restricting the sense of autonomy that school leaders are positioned as having through the Academisation discourse.

there is a certain amount of strategic blue skies thinking but, you, if you indulge in too much of that it can be very upset, unsettling for everybody because I think we've all worked for heads who had fifty five ideas every day and then some other poor person has to run round mopping it all up or saying do you really think so, um so there's a limit to what you can do (JO)

²⁸ Schools have a legal duty under the Prevent strategy [DfE (2015e) 'Protecting children from radicalisation: the prevent duty'.] to report any suspicions or concerns over potential radicalisation of members of their community. In many cases, training is a short online or lecture style course.

The pace and unpredictability of external reform has not just made strategic planning difficult, but can work against strategies already in place or being implemented, what Ball refers to as the “policy-practice gap with an implicit or explicit assumption that the gap represents failure on the part of teachers or schools.” (Ball, 2006, 7%). This means that alongside the negative discourse around school performance and standards, schools are destabilised by an inability to plan effectively for sustainable improvement.

We used to have a three year school development plan which we knew we could work towards. Now if I've got a one year development plan I'll be lucky if something hasn't come in to mess it up halfway through the year.Um, we're forced to react very quickly to kneejerk Government policies or changes in policies or statements or the latest thing that OfSTED is looking at. (ASH)

The choice of phrase here *'kneejerk Government policies'* implies a perception that policy is being made in response to changing discourse or media / public opinion, rather than as a carefully researched and planned strategy and again there is a sense that they feel isolated and unable to influence things. I would also highlight the tendency of recent Governments to respond to public outrage in the media and on social media by scaling back policy or completely u-turning – as in the recent case of the abandonment of Grammar School plans (McGuinness, 2017). Other interviewees also reflected that the pace of reform left them feeling unable to be strategic, but able only to react to policy change.

if you're in a situation and you're under a fairly intense level of scrutiny .. that inclination is just to react and react and react and, I think, therefore schools that are closer to 40% or whatever the .. the next performance indicators going to be, that .. they're .. there is a greater pressure on the schools that, actually, probably most need to do something strategic, when the only tool in their armoury is actually let's just react, you know. (ALEX)

I think you feel more enabled and more empowered if you .. can work so strategically that you are not just reacting to policy because if pol.. if, if, if you .. if you kind of find that golden bullet, then you feel in control (ALEX)

This interviewee reinforces the sense of relentless change through their use of the phrase '*react and react and react*' constructing a sense that there is no time for thinking and planning. The close correlation in this response between pace and '*level of scrutiny*' suggest that the pressure felt via performative measures is significant and that the need to respond to new policy, to be compliant and seen as fitting the normative mode, is leaving less time and resources for strategic development and improvement. This offers a huge challenge as, in performance terms, normativity is defined by performance against the national average. This means 50% of schools and school leaders will always be 'abnormal' and suffer the risk of greater exposure to performative technologies and the discourse of derision that is associated.

The desire for reflection and strategic planning time came up in interview several times, for example:

I would like more time to be able to sit down with my senior colleagues, and.. to plan well where we're going, to develop to develop initiatives that we're going to have to do, rather than having to be reactive all the time. (ASH)

Such a desire, focused on what the local team can plan and implement themselves speaks to a desire to be in control, as was highlighted by ALEX, above. This suggests that the school leaders feel that they have limited control, the power is not in their hands and they are simply responding to circumstance in ways which will allow them to be compliant with performative requirements of the policies they implement. I will return to performativity later, but this is crucial to understanding the pressure perceived by the school leader who needs sustainable improvement to achieve long term, consistent and ongoing benefits rather than short term but unsustainable impact. The possible response to this lack of strategic planning space is that school leaders look for quick fixes which appear, superficially, to show improvement, enough perhaps to convince an inspector, but which don't address underlying problems.

quick fixes and early wins and, you know, gaming basically, .. aren't Headship – you know, Headship is about owning it and making the school your own and ..

whatever happens at policy level might, kind of, make you, you know, sort of touch the tiller slightly but it shouldn't actually change things that much (ALEX)

In this comment the interviewee shows how they have been drawn into the political and media-based discourse on school performance, where strategies which allow a school to show improvement through adopting a particular exam or by excluding students likely to underperform; are labelled as '*gaming*'. This suggests that the pace of change combined with the level of scrutiny has resulted in a tendency for school leaders to look for the superficial responses as a way of subverting compliance. They are making decisions which they know to be short term, but they are expecting the political picture to change again rapidly, so it is a calculated risk.

Some interviewees suggested that they employed more selectivity about how they adopted or implemented policy.

we are the people who create the joined-upness and always have been, so, so school leaders are the gatekeepers of some of the madness that takes place outside of school and that's why for 27 years I have always been very careful, selective about which things I'm told I have to do um.. and what margin there is for giving me the opportunity to say, well you can do it if you think it's the right thing to do - and then I'm able to make that judgement, so - no, it's not the right thing to do so we're not going to do it. (SAM)

maybe it goes back to that why and that moral purpose - you need to stick to what you think is important for your school and stick to it, that way you don't get run into the ground, basically. Or, or get buffeted by national policy. (PAT)

The language used suggests that there is little logic or rationale in policy reform "madness" and that it is the school leaders who filter the information and make it work ("Joined upness"). They again reflect the moral justification in their actions through their judgement as to what is "the right thing to do". If they believe that a policy is not morally justified they are suggesting that they would not enact it or they would subvert it to their moral satisfaction. This is spoken as if potential consequences are ignored and there is a reflection that schools with able, compliant pupils are more likely to achieve positive

outcomes and therefore their Headteachers are able to take more risks, to be more autonomous and resistant to change they perceive as potentially damaging or morally unacceptable.

It comes with being a successful school, I think it comes with your mindset as well, it depends who you are as a person, as a headteacher I think, and I can imagine some heads having that and then not being quite sure what to do with it, maybe. (PAT)

Such strength in autonomy is not without risk and school leaders are answerable to other parties who may not share their moral compass or may not relate in the same way to the needs of individual children. In such cases there was recognition that resistance or subversion may offer greater challenge and could only be defended on a moral basis.

If I take the moral response and the ethical one which would be to actually look at that child and say what's best for you and I'm afraid that's what I'm going to be doing and my governors and the foundation response is going to be saying well that's going to impact if our figures, you can't do that so there's going to have to, there's going to be battles and it's going to come down, in a sense, to the strength of the headteacher or the principal in standing up to other people and saying you've got to do that. (ASH)

Making decisions on a policy by policy basis as to whether they will be adopted, subverted or resisted even against the concerns of governors, when the pace is high and seemingly 'relentless'; requires strong and confident leadership. ASH reflects this by commenting on the need for 'strength' within the role and being prepared to 'battle' and 'stand up to' people. Undertaking such a role impacts on them as an individual and affects their sense of self and how they relate to the role and to their teaching colleagues and students. We shall examine some of these impacts next.

APPENDIX M: Further discussion on headteacher identity and pragmatism

Teachers who progress into school leadership and Headship will do so from a variety of different starting points and for all, taking on the role of Headteacher will be another stage in their personal evolution – another thread that must be teased and negotiated into the multithreaded yarn of their identity. Not only are they continuously readjusting the threads of their personal self as cultural norms evolve but they must also do the same with their professional classifications and manage a negotiation between the two as they experience new challenges and roles and this may lead to conflict or tensions for them (Jones, 2008). This process itself has, in more recent times, taken place within a changing work and accountability context which has led to “a conflict of values, a colonization of their lives, and a de-professionalization of their role” (Jeffrey & Woods (1998) in Ball, 2003, p. 221). Such experience leads to “guilt, uncertainty, instability and the emergence of a new subjectivity” (ibid) which leads to insecurity of identity as the focus moves from what is held internally through knowledge, practice and to that which is imposed, which Bernstein refers to as “mechanisms of projection” (Bernstein (2000) in Ball, 2003, p. 221). This has led in turn to a sense of ‘fragmentation’ (Hammersley-Fletcher and Qualter, 2009) as the traditional practices and responsibilities identified with by English teachers have been the site of sustained reform and ever increasing accountability.

The role of Headteacher holds a requirement for both ‘management’ and ‘leadership’, which is recognised as a “fundamental contradiction” (Hatcher, 2005, p. 255). It is a complex composite (Boyle and Woods, 1996), incorporating a number of roles that may be interpreted as strands of identity and it is tempting to reduce these to a simple binary of personal threads interwoven with, but discrete from the professional ones. Classifications such as gender and ethnicity are, however, as defining (or, perhaps, even more so) *within* the professional role as they are on a personal level and may be mutually

interdependent and influential in terms of the evolving sense of self. How these strands are ‘identified’ with and perceived by the individual will be influenced by prevailing discourses and may become a site of resistance or compliance to social norms and expectations. A male Headteacher in a primary school setting must negotiate their identity within a social discourse that it is ‘women’s work’, or that is low status (Jones, 2008). There may be contradictory influences on their identification of normalcy and difference, for example suffering from the dichotomy of discourses of adulation and risk (Evans and Jones, 2008), celebrating their place as role models in a ‘feminised’ job while concern is raised over the intentions and motivation, “suspicion manifested both in homophobia or accusations of abuse” (Evans and Jones, 2008, p. 659).

Some strands of identity are broad and generic to the role of any Head but some may have greater influence within the specific sector of the post and, I would argue, that some are more greatly affected by social discourse than others – e.g.: gender. The introduction of national standards for Headteachers²⁹ in 1997 (Male, 2006) introduced a framework of “key characteristics” (DfE, 2015c) and classifications which were also tied to the National Professional Qualification of Headship. This is an example of Governmentality in action through the production of ‘sanctioned’ knowledge and texts which define a normative discourse around effective Headship. In turn the discourse defines the roles and positions from which Headteachers may speak and against which they will position themselves, or perhaps, *be positioned* as a ‘failing’ Headteacher when things don’t go well. Identity is constantly negotiated within this discourse and as such, reform and change will introduce new experiences and challenges through which the individual must re-examine their own effectiveness. This, in turn feeds into the constant and never-ending re-negotiation of their

²⁹ Current iteration – DfE, Education, D.f. (2015c) *National Standards of Excellence for Headteachers*. London: Department for Education.

professional identity. The preamble to the current standards effectively highlights the complexity of the role and the broad range of classifications against which identity is being constructed:

Headteachers occupy an influential position in society and shape the teaching profession. They are lead professionals and significant role models within the communities they serve. The values and ambitions of headteachers determine the achievements of schools. They are accountable for the education of current and future generations of children. Their leadership has a decisive impact on the quality of teaching and pupils' achievements in the 5 nation's classrooms. Headteachers lead by example the professional conduct and practice of teachers in a way that minimises unnecessary teacher workload and leaves room for high quality continuous professional development for staff. They secure a climate for the exemplary behaviour of pupils. They set standards and expectations for high academic standards within and beyond their own schools, recognising differences and respecting cultural diversity within contemporary Britain. Headteachers, together with those responsible for governance, are guardians of the nation's schools.

(DfE, 2015c)

The standards are provided under four domains: Qualities and knowledge, Pupils and staff, Systems and process, and the self-improving school system (ibid). Each domain sets out several characteristics from financial competency to personal outlook on life with 24 in total. While these identify aspects of moral rectitude and managerial competence, they offer a techno-rationalist view of school leadership and don't reflect the highly social nature of teaching and schooling and the personal investment teachers of all levels make, beyond reference to "clear values and moral purpose" (DfE, 2015c, p. 5).

Beyond the national standards, the wider role of Headteachers is identified with a number of other professional strand, such as that of "Nurturer" (Jones, 2008, p. 697) or "professional mother" (Boyle and Woods, 1996, p. 562), though perhaps 'professional parent' is more appropriate. I contend that this is more likely to feature strongly in the identity of a Primary phase Head than a Head of a large Secondary school where the role of "authority figure / disciplinarian" (Jones, 2008, p. 695) may be more resonant. Other

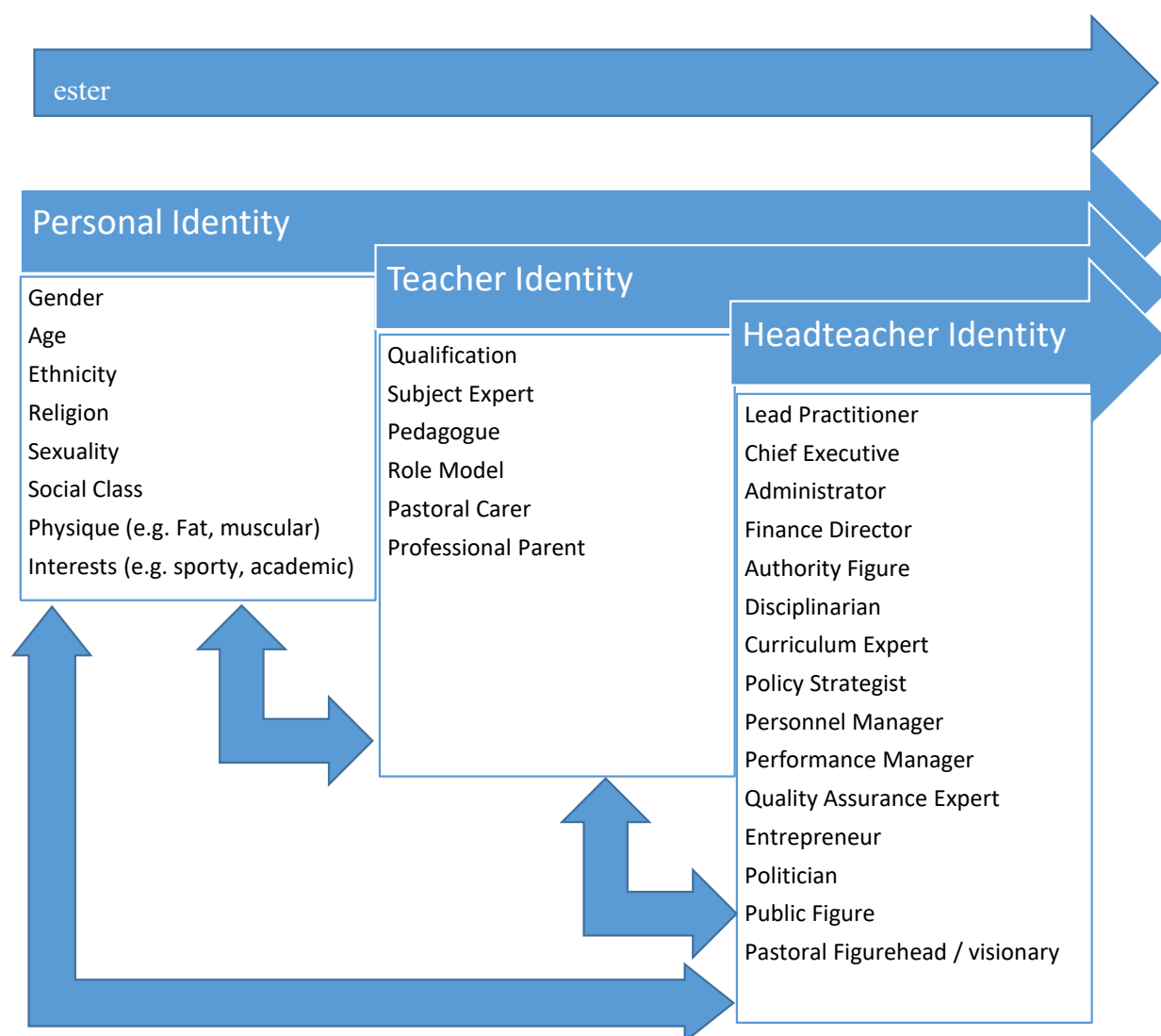
strands identified by Jones include The Expert, The Role Model and The family man (Jones, 2008). While I don't take issue with any of these strands, I would argue an oversimplicity of identification. Where the national standards neglect the 'human dimension' of the role, here there is little consideration given to the significance of the Chief Executive role, the administrator and financial director, while the significance of these aspects has increased over the last twenty years. This oversimplicity also masks complexity within the dynamic of each individual role. The identity of 'Role Model' may also be seen in different ways as social / aspirational role model and professional role model as it may be applied separately to both pupils and colleagues. The role of Expert may exist both as part of Teacher identity (subject or course expert) and separately at senior level (curriculum expert, safeguarding expert, finance expert, etc).

While the role of Head may strengthen the fibres of 'whole school' expertise, the identity formed as a teacher is not necessarily lost. It may be rejected in favour of a new identification which places the Head as somehow completely different to the teacher, but I suspect it is more likely modified or remodelled into the Headteacher identity. From here it may be used to aid positioning in solidarity with teachers to engender cooperation and acquire professional capital, or it may be used as a point of difference – a rite of passage that has been completed and elevated the Headteacher 'above' the lowly role of teacher, thus justifying the position of power and validating the right to direct the work of others. In this regard the role of capital is more nuanced and I will revisit this in the next section of this chapter.

This leads me to the conclusion that aspects of identity constructed (and continually renegotiated through childhood and into adulthood) are interwoven with aspects of professional identity formed as the individual moves into the field of teaching and that

these are kept, modified, re-negotiated or replaced as additional responsibilities expose them to new experiences. These aspects are historically, situationally and contextually related, being formed and reformed to fit with social mores and prevailing discourses at each point in time. Ultimately, moving into Headship brings a whole new range of experiences and responsibilities, which also must be interwoven alongside and within the existing aspects, which may themselves change and evolve in response to the changing context or experiences. Managing fast changing education reform will inevitably lead to further and potentially rapid evolution of identity and compliance or resistance will stem from the level of pragmatism that the individual can bring to bear on policies with which they take issue and compliance with a policy which significantly challenges the individual's sense of identity may result in a crisis of confidence.

This level of complexity and the interweave with other aspects of experience make it very difficult to fully conceptualise what the identity classifications of the Headteacher may look like. Figure M.1 illustrates my view of how identity is constructed over time and broadly based within the personal and professional experiences of the individual. Each frame negotiated within a specific and unique moment in time, informed by prevailing social and educational discourses and influenced by the experience of contemporary policy. It is quite possible that an individual may construct a substantially different version of their identity should they undertake the change of role to Headship at different point in History. Likewise, a Headteacher considered successful under one phase of education policy may find themselves as being positioned or positioning themselves as less successful at different times, even though they have not changed their values, beliefs or practices.



(Jones, 2008; Hall and Southworth, 1997; Boyle and Woods, 1996; DfE, 2015c)

Figure M.1: The evolution of Headteacher identity over time

Personal identity may be anchored in the individual's personal values and beliefs (Hitlin, 2003) and their vision and moral compass is an aspect of character which is recognised as significantly important for successful Headteachers (Fullan, 2003; Male, 2006; Tomlinson, Gunter and Smith, 1999; Coates, Adcock and Ribton, 2015), not in any specific ideological form, but simply that values and vision are clear and communicable to the school community and exist as an anchor for one's professional identity:

Individual beliefs and value systems will be challenged as you move into formal leadership positions and these may be subject to change. It is the intensity of the learning experiences you face as you prepare for and enter headship that

determines at which point your ideals are compromised or changed. The greater the challenge the more assured you will be that the beliefs and values you hold are secure as you enter and manage the transition to effective headship.

(Male, 2006, p. 44)

How an individual manages the challenges of implementing policy they disagree with and where they draw the line at subverting their own personal values and vision depends on their innate pragmatism (Moore, George and Halpin, 2002). The need for headteachers to be pragmatic can be seen in different ways, but it is argued that ‘discursive pragmatism’ is: “a constructive alternative to ‘polarized’ or ‘extreme’ positionings, allegedly belonging to a more divisive past” (Moore, George and Halpin, 2002), where education was seen as promoting the “common good” (ibid). The pragmatic approach is considered more effective at aiding the replacement of those traditional education values with the market form (ibid) and perhaps identifies more with the entrepreneurial business leader current policy favours, rather than the more traditional principled idealist. The need to meet the demands of policy and the high stakes of failure mean that implementation may trump personal ideals in order to stay below the radar of performative accountability, as: “it is often the case that ethical-democratic concerns come into play only weakly over and against and within the interpretation and enactment of policy” (Ball *et al.*, 2012b, p. 11).

Experiences like this will build in to the ongoing process of identity re-formation and could lead to the less pragmatic actors choosing to make a stand against a policy, refusing to enact it or subverting it through their agency at implementation (Moore, George and Halpin, 2002), or they may choose to resign, removing themselves from the site of conflict, retaining or reinforcing their self-perception or identity as a ‘principled’ leader. More pragmatic leaders may publicly attempt to subjugate the policy to their own ends, identifying with the characteristics of the ‘Maverick’ Headteachers, who “are represented as standing in opposition to the technocratic view of education promulgated by

politicians” (Blackmore * and Thomson, 2004, p. 309), while others may accept the situation, even while in disagreement and create a self-image of failure, subjugation or complete pragmatist. Moore, George & Halpin (2002) refer to this process of pragmatic policy management as ‘strategic pragmatism’, which:

involves a conscious practice of creative—sometimes subversive—response to reform and to the effects of reform, with each issue being carefully measured and judged in terms of what is and is not acceptable when set against the institution’s or institutional manager’s preferred Philosophy and practice

(Moore, George and Halpin, 2002, p. 186)

Every head is an individual and every head will act, either in a way they already ‘identify’ with or their identity will evolve, re-constructed from the experience of compromise.

APPENDIX N: Responses to Question 18

Responses to the question “are there any circumstances under which you have / would refuse to implement Government policy?”

Yes and I have refused.

Yes, if I had the backing to act on what the wider community (governors, SLT etc) felt was right for the school

Yes

Yes, if not in the best interests of our students.

Dependent on whether i would be penalised for it

Illegal or amoral!!

If policy fundamentally was at odds with my own moral perspective

No

impossible to do this if in a vulnerable school situation - you have to conform

Yes

not that i can think of from things currently happening, but if they told me to implement say corporal punishment I would refuse

I feel powerless, the only option is to leave

If pupils were at risk of being disadvantaged in their futures

I am not pushing any students to take the Ebacc. It is better to give a broad and balanced menu of qualifications.

If I had the backing of my union and I disagreed in principle and felt my staff were behind me.

I wouldn't dare!

yes if policy had an adverse impact upon the life chances and or well being of the students in the school

No - but I have come closer to considering industrial action recently than ever before.

NA

If policies were racist, homophobic, ageist etc.

it depends if it is recommended action or a statutory responsibility

I am getting close - Fundamental British Values is an affront to British Values, freedom of speech and self determination of the individual.

If I judged it to be against the best interests of our students

can see possibilities of refusing to do reference tests

Daily act of collective worship

Yes. If the limited range of approved qualifications did not suit a pupils' learning needs or would result in them feeling they made no progress whatsoever - particularly the least able pupils - ie P scale

Yes

No

I subvert! E Bacc - Maths early entry last year when best and first changed - maintaining mixed ability

yes

If I believed that the outcome would be damaging to the life chances for students or to the school.

Yes

Yes - if I felt it directly jeopardised the health, safety or mental well-being of a child.

Yes.

If it was not in the interests of the students

If the policy prejudiced the professional standing of teachers or if it simply went against the moral imperative to use ensure that education meets the needs of society and enhances the life chances of all young people.

yes and have - lots

(Comment on 17) I do not feel qualified to speak on behalf of all school leaders. I have seen many behaviours among school leaders, including statements that suggest one main driver and behaviour that suggests another..

If it was against the ethos and what I thought best for the children in my care. We're an academy so ignore initiatives unless they impact positively on our students

Things like the EBACC which channel students down inappropriate pathways is something I would stand against.

Often do already!

Yes - we enter no students for the Ebac - our score is therefore 0% for this measure.

The cost of refusal is high.

Being 'creative' with fulfilling NC requirements

Not yet

What, and lose my job! Ofsted is like the Stazi - Government compliance and enforcement squad. PS You missed off keeping my job.

where I am able to due to conflicting requirements - i.e. deliver RE to all and balance the budget

Yes

Yes - I have ignored directive on multi entry to GCSE exam for performance tables

Where it does not meet the needs of the local community

Where it conflicts with what is morally right for our students ie we did not change students off BTEC courses half way through their programme of study as the accountability measures were constantly changing even though this has had a negative impact on our VA in Raiseonline this year

Yes, eg NOT forcing every child to take ebac For some it is not appropriate

How can you if you are in a position where you are an Academy and have signed a contract with the DFE?

If it did not fit with the needs of my students.....my judgement of my school etc outweighs gov policy

If it was against the interests of students

If there was a unified consensus and there would be no chance of losing my job by doing so

When it is fundamentally wrong for our pupils e.g. no vocational education pre-16

Yes.

Yes- refused to implement the whole Diploma agenda. Which subsequently proved the right thing to do

Not sure I'm allowed to! If I were a head of an academy - then yes, national curriculum

No

When not in interests of the children.

Yes - if it harmed the life chances of our students

Yes if I thought it immoral or detrimental to the life chances of my students.

Refuse to promote Ebacc subjects as better than others

Yes

yes

Not if it was an Ofsted requirement. Thinking hard about ignoring the new food standards.

APPENDIX O: Performance management

While the experience of OfSTED as a technology of performativity had a mixed response, it was notable that the changes to how teachers are managed, in terms of performance, seemed to engender far more positive feedback. There was recognition that, from the perspective of one subjectivated as the assurer of quality, recent policy had made it easier to achieve what was considered a moral responsibility, dealing with ineffective teachers.

I think that the .. that the the political kind of sharpness of what we now have to turn in to practice now, actually, helps to achieve what is the right thing for youngsters, you know. There are some people who, who shouldn't be in the classroom or some people who so need to shape up, you know, they're still replicating what they did 25 years ago and they're still and it's not good enough and so they need to be told. So, yeah, it does it definitely does help to .. to focus that (ALEX)

There have always been teachers like this in schools, but ALEX appears to be suggesting that policy has empowered them to ensure their moral purpose. These 'irresponsible' teachers are positioned as 'not good enough', but this is a case of 'care of the self' where the reference point, the norm, of what is good enough will be determined by OfSTED referencing and risks. Their thinking has been colonised to ensure the reproduction of the dominant discourse on standards and performance. This can be seen when viewed against reflections on how this type of process was managed previously.

it was totally, purely compliant - it was all about compliance - so that you could just prove - yeah, we'll go through the motions and we'll have.. it didn't matter if you had a good appraiser or a bad appraiser, it didn't matter - it was all.. it was like really bad homework, it's not the quality that counts it's just the fact that you've done it. Kids get, kids get rewarded for being compliant not for being highly effective in their use of homework so, in in, you know, the not too distant past - appraisees and appraisers got rewarded for doing it, um and it didn't matter what sort of quality and that's, that's never been a position that I can take - I always felt that was a bit pointless actually. (SAM)

SAM recognises the relative weakness of the former processes while positioning themselves against them. In general, the sense of moral purpose and the need to protect the rights of children to a good education, reflecting policy discourse, is a common

justification for capabilities processes, although attitudes to the management of such processes varied. There was in several cases a desire to be seen as dealing humanely with the issue and a recognition that employing harder approaches could be detrimental.

We wouldn't be cruel on behalf of youngsters, ever, because I feel that if you look after your staff they'll look after the kids for you, but where you've got someone who is patently failing the kids then you've got to do something about that. (BERTIE)

we do performance management and all those things, but it's from the perspective of um teachers' professional development. Not from the perspective of holding to account here's your target, have you achieved this blah blah, it's just, it's all about culture really and how you go about things - so it's got the potential of dest.. I could destroy this school in 5 minutes by going hard on that and approaching it in a certain way (PAT)

In this instance, PAT recognises the potential loss of capital and trust they could encounter if they were overly strict with the accountability processes, so they have subverted the neoliberal discourse from managing 'irresponsible' behaviour outside of a sanctioned normativity – the OfSTED framework and official teaching standards, to one of professional development, supporting individual improvement for all staff – not just 'failing' ones. While this perspective was not unique, other participants did recognise that, ultimately, there may be staff who were unable to demonstrate acceptable compliance to the normative standards and having tried the supportive approach, other more punitive actions may be necessary.

maybe it's just because I've got very high standards, I think some of them are really, when you look at, they, because they do departmental [inaudible] and you look at them and they're awful, they're really bad, but as I said, you either put training in, or you, or, or you somehow or other get rid of them, or they're on capability. And I don't think we've really pushed that enough (PHIL)

Other participants recognised that policy reform had made it easier to deal with those staff they felt were not up to the job, but the perceived negative impact of the wider programme of reform on recruitment had made them more cautious as they could guarantee to replace someone who was dismissed.

Getting rid of them was easier, replacing them has been much more difficult, so I would think twice now, where er, where I was a bit gung-ho in the past. Gung-ho is the wrong word, we always did it in a human way. But, where I have been more robust with people, getting them in here and saying, 'look, you're not good enough to work here and I'm going to put you on a programme and you won't survive the programme', that's basic, basically. These people have had a lot of chances, I hasten to add (inaudible). Now I would be thinking 'where the hell am I going to get somebody?', whereas, in the past I would be a bit more confident of being able to recruit. (BERTIE)

BERTIE use of the term 'gung-ho' suggests an aggressive approach to ensuring teacher quality in the past, and this itself, may have impacted on recruitment if potential employees decided that the processes used at the school seemed draconian – why expose themselves to it? The more moderate approach of subverted accountability was considered safer – the challenges of replacing staff perhaps outweighing the tendency toward the neo-liberal, performative 'gung-ho' approach and allowing those Headteachers to position themselves positively as 'teacher friendly' both in terms of wellbeing and recruitment, gaining positive capital in the process. This more pragmatic approach is self-justified and positioned in their discourse as a moral decision to protect the field from negative impressions and to create an ethos of 'development' under the umbrella of accountability.

I do think that that clarity of focus is important – as a teacher, and as someone who wants teaching to still be an attractive career to people in the future, that .. I think that .. I would rather work – the ideal would be to work in a way where you could help to improve people .. where the emphasis is on formation rather than accountability, really. (ALEX)

For Headteachers who are prepared to employ the performative technologies of observation (inspection) and capabilities processes, the application of the process may be moderated to ensure that staff have an opportunity to become 'responsible' and demonstrate compliance to the sanctioned 'norm', but also allow for, in their mind, the individual to use their agency to avoid a humiliating disciplinary process – they have provided them with 'choice', the power to exercise their agency in a way which minimises conflict. The Headteachers also position themselves as morally justified as taking the

action and allowing the colleague the option of resignation may, again, be justified as a more humane approach.

I'm very lucky in that I've got a fantastic SLT and so it would be somebody on the SLT will be actually working with that person on that programme and they will say to them, [name] is going to put you on capabilities, you know, you've got a choice and I see them and oftentimes that works. Um, well, I suppose you got back to your core principles which is about doing the very best you can for youngsters. (BERTIE)

In the case of BERTIE, they were also at pains to position themselves as emotionally engaged and effected by such decisions – it makes them 'sad', however, they ultimately reassure themselves about the decision by constructing the cost in more positive terms, the teacher who has been positioned as irresponsible and failing is freed from the tyranny of the system and ends up better off as a result.

I do feel sad when people do eventually resign. I do feel for them, but actually, it often makes them feel an awful lot better. (BERTIE)

APPENDIX P: Perceptions on workload and other implications of reform

Management of change in any scenario brings challenges and managing the processes of reform in schools, particularly high paced and regular policy changes, is potentially a stressful situation for school leaders and teachers. At survey (Appendix G – Question 31), participants were asked to give their perception of the impact reform had on workload for themselves, their teachers and their governors (Figure P.1). The question invited them to judge the impact on workload on a scale of Significantly increased – Significantly decreased and the results were stark. 85/91 responded to the question for school leaders but only 84/91 for the other groups, however, for all groups, most respondents felt that the impact had been a significant increase, although this was less marked, in their perception, for governors with only 50% indicating this choice, 42.86% indicating a ‘partial increase’, 5.95% suggesting it had stayed ‘the same’ and 1.19% (1 respondent) suggesting it had ‘significantly decreased’. For School leaders, the comparative figures were 91.76% ‘significantly increased’, 7.06% ‘partially increased’ and 1.18% ‘partially decreased’. The one respondent who felt the decrease was the Head of an Academy in the Midlands with 19 years of experience, no generalised conclusion can be taken from that.

There is a clear message that Headteachers, of all types and degrees of experience, have found the impact of persistent reform time consuming and impacting. They were slightly less convinced about the impact on teachers with the ‘significant increase’ proportion reduced to 82.14% and 15.48% perceiving it as ‘partially increased’. 1.19% responded that it was ‘the same’ or ‘partially decreased’. This indicates that school leaders feel the bulk of reform workload has fallen on them, which as many policy reforms are structural or to do with school performance, is little surprise – even if they delegate, they are ultimately responsible.

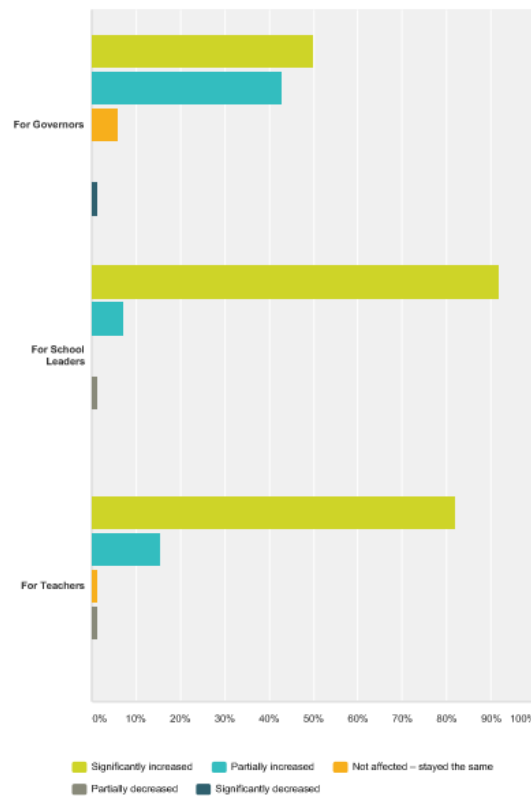


Figure P.1: Question 31: How do you believe that the pace of education reform / policy change has impacted on workload in secondary schools?

The degree of impact on teachers is of concern as previous policies had tried to address a reduction in teacher workload, but this would suggest recent reforms have undone that work to an extent. The implications for this were discussed at interview and, participants were very realistic about the nature of the job and their own shortcomings in managing workload and work life balance.

how hard you work, how much you take home, how much you choose to do will largely depend on you. So if you are a bad delegator don't blame your team if you're taking stuff home that they should be doing because you haven't asked them (SAM)

I think in terms of school time it's almost impossible, to be honest, but I think what you do is important as, as a role model, I mean, once a week I will leave school around 4 O'clock and go to the gym and I will do that every week and um.. I think that's really important a- because I need to do it, otherwise I'd go insane, but I think the message it gives people that actually .. it's not good to be here late every single night. That is not the culture, you know. Go home, be with your family, do something it's important as well (PAT)

you've got to be prepared to make sacrifices in your home life, I think, is the bluntest way of saying it. Because if you don't do it, things will slide and everybody will point the finger at you, so you can't say oh well I was trying to manage, make, you know, my work-life balance, you have to manage everybody else's work-life balance, but nobody manages yours (PHIL)

There is a clear recognition of the difficulties in managing the demands of such wide ranging and dynamic job, PAT is dramatic in describing it as 'impossible', but both they and SAM recognise that they are the masters of their own destiny in this respect. PHIL is a little more resentful that they must 'sacrifice' their own time and work-life balance, and yet are expected to ensure everyone else is looked after, indicating a sense of isolation within the role. They do recognise a duty of care to staff and in this case, they are subjectivated as role models for their colleagues. They set the culture and expectations through their own behaviour and failing to carefully manage the workload of their teams could have implications for staff stress and illness and, ultimately, retention. It is important, however, to recognise the positive intentions for staff, the things that keep them motivated. CHARLIE recognises here that a senior colleague values one particular role and would suffer more if it were made unavailable to her, even if the justification was duty of care.

I just think leopards have spots and you may commit to doing more at home or spending less time in the job, but you can't. It's very difficult to change, but there should be balances and checks built in for, for everybody's sake. But most, most - if I went to my assistant principal who does the production each year and said, for your wellbeing I'm going to ask you not to do that, she'd have a breakdown (CHARLIE)

Several strategies for managing the work-life balance and the stresses of leadership were discussed. A variety of distraction strategies – the gym (A003), cycling (ASH), walking (ALI), leaning on family (ALI, ASH), gardening, etc and a firm ability to put the job aside were suggested, although no one suggested they had managed to strike a perfect balance, in most cases they were self-deprecating about their failure to do so.

the only way I manage work-life balance is when I'm not at work, I'm really not at work, you know? (TEDDY)

I try to have a bit of a work life balance because I'm a music specialist, you know I was a professional music at various times, so I still do a lot of singing, um so I'm a member, part-time member of four different choirs, so, you know that's the sort of thing I do and when I'm doing that I can't be thinking about anything else, and I know that other people go to the gym or they, you know play golf or whatever, and it's that sort of absorption in another activity, isn't it, and that's the way I sort of try and rebalance things. (JO)

JO recognises that the purpose is to 'rebalance' the stress of the job and to do this requires detachment, redirection and 'absorption' – a complete distraction. The implications of not getting the balance right are potentially severe, particularly in terms of impact on family and health. Once damage is caused by a poor balance, family life and relationships can suffer and contribute to a lack of job satisfaction.

I've been divorced twice, so I think that's probably one of the reasons, my sort of, er, ide.. fact that I'm sort of so driven in my job. (BERTIE)

I am noticing now that my little daughter - she's only got 9 more years of education and I'm, and an awful lot of it I spend in school. Tonight, after this, I've got to go and get her and bring her back into school, so, ahhh, for years you see, it's taken me a long time, for years I've just, it's always been work, work, work - um, I think it needs to be healthier but I just don't know how it's ever going to be because of the demands on teachers and um, on senior leaders. (FRANKIE)

In terms of managing the processes of reform and the day to day leadership of schools, other concerns were raised. The rapid and "relentless" nature of reform is stressful and carries a risk that the job will become less attractive compared to other jobs, particularly due to the workload issues.

young people in the profession leave as well, 'cos the thing for them is about work life balance as well. They want time with their , with their families and with their friends and they want to go out for an evening and do all this sort of stuff, which they can't if they're a teacher, basically because it's impossible - so they leave, and I've seen one or two, I've seen a really good maths teacher a year ago leave teaching, go off to London to work in the city. Just couldn't hack the hours anymore really um.. and the other thing of course is in terms of young graduates thinking about teaching as a career. Top people, a 12% reduction this year did I see, in interest in teaching um.. and as for maths.. maths, physics and scientists well... there's hardly anybody there. That's the outcome of what's happening. (PAT)

PAT has experienced first-hand the impact of workload increase and the link to recruitment and retention of teachers. A job which is perceived as offering poor work-life

balance becoming less appealing to potential recruits and to current employees and the knock-on effect for Head Teachers of having to replace or recruit staff in such a 'market', is greater stress and anxiety. Being able to seek support from peers or professional bodies was quoted as a key strategy to address isolation in the role as well as mitigating the sense of needing expert advice across a range of areas. When some of those resources are provided by Government, changes in policy can render them unavailable and, consequently, increase the sense of isolation and unpreparedness.

to have SSAT and then have it disappear, you know, off the map .. is not helpful, because you're then continuously dealing with management issues to do with restructuring and reallocation of funds and, I know people say, 'well that's your job, that's what you're paid to do', but actually the .. the emphasis being so much more outcomes driven, more aspiration and raising the bar – the pressures are phenomenal - you know, it's not .., even in my .. four years here, it's not the same job as it was (ALEX)

The use of the term 'phenomenal' to describe pressure and the reflection on the changing nature of the role in a relatively short term, show that the perception is of high stakes, high pressure – a destabilising level of performativity. The consequences for poor exam results or league table position are easily recognised and, as ex-teachers, the challenges of improving Teaching and Learning will be familiar if unwelcome. For the wider subjectivities of business management, for example, the roles that school leaders feel less prepared for, some of the risks and consequences may be less obvious until they become an issue.

we always managed within a, with the financial standards that were imposed on us or presented to us by other people now we're ah.. we're no longer a herd of wildebeest being preyed on a by a herd of.. of lions we're really individuals being picked on by the lions, that's quite a vulnerable... I only say that because quite recently we had the, the VAT man visit us and he read my Bursar her Human rights..... and this was over a a an exposed VAT issue which we exposed to them, not one that they exposed to us and that's when I thought, yeah, OK - that's where it's just gone stupid really. But, reading her her human rights, that just about sums it up really. (SAM)

In this case the switch from local authority control to Academy status has removed a level of accountability above the school leader as well as access to a large pool of financial

expertise. The direct accountability that arises and the legal consequences are far more severe than previously experienced and introduce new anxieties and pressures. Once this is added to a dynamic performative framework, where the high frequency of change means that strategic planning becomes more difficult, as FRANKIE points out, the result can be 'confusion' and this will also have a destabilising effect.

I think when there are lots of different changes, it it just confuses the matter. I mean, besides the fact that OfSTED come with all their criteria which they change um, that that is also, you know, we, we - I think in schools, that makes it very difficult to, to link it all together. Um, to put policies into practice, to, you know when you're changing your own school policies and then you find you're going to be inspected in a different way, the emphasis changes... (FRANKIE)

APPENDIX Q: Timeline of New Labour initiatives (HEATH *ET AL.*, 2013, PP. 4-5)

1997	Schools White Paper 'Excellence in Schools'	Promised to limit classes for 5-7 year olds to 30, encouraged ability setting in secondary schools.
	Education (Schools) Act	Abolished the Assisted Places Scheme.
	Targets for English and maths at KS2 (age 11), national numeracy and literacy strategies launched,	Specified literacy and numeracy hours with tightly prescribed content
1998	Schools Standards and Framework Act	Introduced specialist schools, limited infant class sizes, introduced Education Action Zones
	Sure Start launched	Programme intended to support families from pregnancy to age 4. Initial Sure Start areas were targeted according to area-level poverty.
	Teaching and Higher Education Act	Abolished student maintenance grants and introduced tuition fees
1999	Excellence in Cities strategy	Aimed to tackle underachievement in urban areas
	The Moser Report 'A Fresh Start - improving literacy and numeracy'	Estimated that one in five adults are functionally illiterate, and a higher proportion innumerate. The Government responded by launching the <i>Skills for Life</i> strategy in 2001.
2000	First Academies announced	Academies are self-governing schools, directly funded by central government, and independent of local government.
2000	'Curriculum 2000' reform of A levels,	Designed to broaden choice at 16+, modularisation of A levels into AS and A2, with extensive scope for resits. Vocational A levels introduced.
2001	Key stage 3 strategy and GCSE targets.	Schools expected to set targets for improved attainment.
	Pupil learning credits scheme	Made extra funding available to secondary schools with high levels of Free School Meals eligibility in order to provide additional educational opportunities to pupils from deprived backgrounds.
	White paper 'Schools: achieving	Proposed lesser role for LEAs, more

	success'	private sector involvement, greater school diversity and more diverse 14-19 curriculum.
2001	AimHigher: Excellence Challenge	Aimed to promote participation in FE and HE among young people from disadvantaged backgrounds, for example through school links with colleges and universities.
2002	Education Act 2002 (implementing 2001 white paper)	Promoted creation of more faith schools, and more specialist schools, which would be allowed to select 10% of their pupils by 'aptitude'.
	Teach First founded	A scheme placing well-qualified graduates (with at least a 2:1 and BBB at A level) into deprived schools.
2003	Green Paper '14-19 Opportunity and Excellence',	Set out creation of a 14-19 phase
2004	Revised national curriculum	Only English, mathematics, science, ICT, physical education, citizenship and religious education compulsory at 14-16. Foreign languages dropped as national curriculum requirement.
2004	Education Maintenance Allowances rolled out (piloted 1999-2003)	A payment incentivising participation and attendance in further education for 16-19 year olds from poorer families.
2004	Tomlinson report '14-19 Curriculum and qualifications reform'	Recommended replacing GCSEs and A levels with a new single modular diploma at four levels.
2005	White paper 'Education and Skills'	Rejects Tomlinson, but introduced new vocational diplomas at levels 1-3
2005	White paper 'Higher Standards, Better Schools for All'	Proposed independent state schools backed by Trusts, LEAs to commission not provide school places, more parental choice.
2005	Education Act 2005	Measures related to school inspections and teacher training.
2006	Education and Inspections Act 2006:	Established Trust Schools
2006	Higher Education top-up fees introduced	Allowed differential fees of up to £3000
2008	Education and Skills Act 2008:	Raised the school leaving age to 17 from 2013 and to 18 from 2015

Table Q.1: Timeline of New Labour initiatives

(Heath *et al.*, 2013, pp. 4-5)³⁰

³⁰ Permission to reproduce this table has been granted by the Anthony Heath, University of Oxford

APPENDIX R: Ethical approval application

 <p>FACULTY OF ARTS AND HUMANITIES</p> <p>Education Research Ethics Sub-committee</p> <p>APPLICATION FOR ETHICAL APPROVAL OF RESEARCH</p>		(For EdRESC use only)	
		Application No:	
		Chairs action (expedited)	Yes/ No
		Risk level -if high refer to UREC chair immediately Cont. Review Date	High/ low / /
		Outcome (delete as necessary)	Approved/ Declined / Amend/ Withdrawn
ALL PARTS OF THIS FORM MUST BE COMPLETED IN FULL IN ORDER TO GAIN APPROVAL. Please refer to the guidance notes.			
Part A: PROJECT INFORMATION			
1	Investigator <i>*Note 1</i> <i>Mr Paul Stuart Norman</i>	If Student, please name your Director of Studies or Project Advisor: Dr P Kelly Course/programme: Professional Doctorate in Education EdD School/directorate (if not PloE):	
	Contact Address: 33, Weatherbury Way, DORCHESTER, Dorset, DT1 2ED Tel: (01305) 251295 / 07962117573 E mail: paul.s.norman@plymouth.ac.uk		

7	<p>Attachments (if required):</p> <p>a) Application/Clearance (if you answered Yes to question 6)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ye No</p> <p>s <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>b) Information sheets for participants</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ye No</p> <p>s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>c) Consent forms</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ye No</p> <p>s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>d) Sample questionnaire(s)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ye No</p> <p>s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>e) Sample set(s) of interview questions</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ye No</p> <p>s <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>f) Continuing review approval (if requested)</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Ye No</p> <p>s <input type="checkbox"/> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>g) Other, please state:</p>
---	---

**1. Principal Investigators are responsible for ensuring that all staff employed on projects (including research assistants, technicians and clerical staff) act in accordance with the University's ethical principles, the design of the research described in this proposal and any conditions attached to its approval.*

**2. In most cases, approval should be sought individually for each project. Programme approval is granted for research which comprises an ongoing set of studies or investigations utilising the same methods and methodology and where the precise number and timing of such studies cannot be specified in advance. Such approval is normally appropriate only for ongoing, and typically unfunded, scholarly research activity.*

**3. If there is a difference in ethical standards between the University's policy and those of the relevant professional body or research sponsor, Committees shall apply whichever is considered the highest standard of ethical practice.*

**4. Approval is granted for the duration of projects or for a maximum of three years in the case of programmes. Further approval is necessary for any extension of programmes.*

8	<p>If you are staff, are there any other researchers involved in your project? Please list who they are, their roles on the project and if/how they are associated with the University. Please include their email addresses. <i>(Please indicate School of each named individual, including collaborators external to the Faculty/University):</i></p>
	<p>If you are a student, who are your other supervisors? Dr Peter Kelly - Director of Studies, Dr Ulrike Hohmann - Supervisor</p> <p>Have you discussed all ethical aspects of your research with your Director of Studies prior to submitting this application? Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/></p>
9	<p>Type of application:</p> <p>Initial application <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Resubmission with amendments <input type="checkbox"/> Version Number:</p> <p>Amendment to approved application * <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>Renewal <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p><i>* For full details of the amendments procedure, please see the guidance notes</i></p>
10	<p>Summary of aims, objectives and methods (max 250 words)</p> <p>Research aims: to find out how head teachers experience the relation between frequent education policy reform and their capacity to improve student success? Does this change in relation to the circumstances in which the head teachers work?</p> <p>Main objective is to identify if, from the experience of headteachers, rapid change in education policy achieves the oft stated aim of improving standards, the opposite or a 'variable' level of success depending on the value placed on it by school leaders and any oppositional behaviours they may employ. Further to this to explore and exemplify the issue of 'standards' and 'ideological dissonance' between the politicians (including school leaders themselves) and those required to implement policy.</p>

	<p>The main research methods are literature review and survey – being made up of a questionnaire targeted at secondary school leaders in England and a series of 10 semi-structured interviews of a cross section of school leaders.</p>	
11.	<p>When do you need/expect to begin the research methods for which ethical approval is sought?</p> <p>As soon as possible – By the end of November 2014 if possible.</p>	
	<p>How long will this research take and/or for how long are you applying for this ethical approval?</p> <p>I am expecting to take 20 months but would ask for approval for up to 2 years from the point of approval</p>	
12	<p>What will be the outcomes of this project?</p> <p>The main outcomes will be findings / conclusions and recommendations on the processes and practices that lead to policy change with an aim to improving politicians’ understanding of the issues that lead to policy failure and a greater understanding of the interplay and issues of power / discourse between them and school leaders. These will be published as a thesis and, if suitable, in academic journals and via The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) website / “Leader” magazine</p>	
13	<p>Is the project subject to an <u>external</u> funding bid?</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes (<i>please complete questions 14- 18</i>)</p> <p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No (<i>please go to Part B</i>)</p>
14	<p>Bid amount:</p>	
15	<p>Bid status:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Not yet submitted Submission deadline:</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Submitted, decision pending</p>	

	<input type="checkbox"/> Bid granted		
16	University Project Finance Team costing approved with Dean's signature? Yes: <input type="checkbox"/> . No: <input type="checkbox"/> (Please contact the University Project Finance Team as soon as possible)		
17	Has the funding bid undergone peer review? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No		
18	Partners & Institutions:		
	Name (including title)	School:	Institute / Organisation:
	Leora Cruddas – Director of Policy		Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL)

Part B: ETHICAL REVIEW STATEMENT

The purpose of this statement is to clarify whether the proposed research requires ethical clearance through an Ethics Protocol. Please read the relevant section of the guidance notes before you complete your statement.

Please indicate all the categories into which your proposed research fits:

	Data collection / analysis involved:	Action required:	
1	This study does not involve data collection from or about human participants.	➤ <i>Complete this Ethical Review Statement and add a brief (one page) description of your research and intended data collection methods. Part C not required.</i>	<input type="checkbox"/>
2	This study involves the analysis or synthesis of data obtained from/about human subjects where such data are in the public domain (i.e. available in public archives and/or previously published)	➤ <i>Complete this Ethical Review Statement and add a brief (one page) description of your research, the nature of the data and intended data collection methods. Part C not required.</i>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

3	This study involves the analysis of data obtained from/about human participants where the data has been previously collected but is not in the public domain	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Complete this Ethical Review Statement</i> ➤ <i>Please complete Part C – Ethical Protocol</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
4	This study draws upon data already collected under a previous ethical review but involves utilising the data in ways not cleared with the research participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Complete this Ethical Review Statement</i> ➤ <i>Please complete Part C – Ethical Protocol</i> ➤ <i>Submit copy of original ethics protocol and additional consent materials (if relevant) attached.</i> 	<input type="checkbox"/>
5	This study involves new data collection from/about human participants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ <i>Complete this Ethical Review Statement</i> ➤ <i>Please complete Part C – Ethical Protocol</i> ➤ <i>Submit copies of all information for participants AND consent forms in style and format appropriate to the participants together with your research instruments.</i> 	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Please Note: Should the applicant wish to alter in any significant regard the nature of their research following ethical approval, an application for amendment should be submitted to the committee together with a covering letter setting out the reasons for the amendment. The application should be made with reference to one or more of the categories laid out in this document. ‘Significant’ should be interpreted as meaning changing in some fundamental way the research purposes and processes in whole or part.

Part C: ETHICS PROTOCOL

Please indicate how you will ensure that this research conforms to Plymouth University’s Research Ethics Policy - *The Integrity of Research involving Human Participants*. Please complete each section with a statement that addresses each of the ethical principles set out below. Please note that you should provide the degree of detail suggested. Each section will expand to accommodate this information.

Please refer to Guidance Notes when completing this section.

1	<p>Informed consent</p> <p><i>Please attach copies of all draft information / documents, consent forms, questionnaires, interview schedules, etc intended for the participants, and list below. When it is not possible to submit research instruments (e.g. use of action research methods) the instruments should be listed together with the reason for the non-submission. Please also indicate the attachments in Question A7.</i></p>
	<p>Briefing notes for participants</p> <p>Outline interview schedule</p> <p>Outline questionnaire</p> <p>Consent form for interviews</p>
2	<p>Openness and honesty</p> <p><i>It is generally accepted that research with human participants would not involve deception. However if this is not the case, deception is permissible only where it can be shown that all three of the following conditions have been met in full.</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <i>1. Deception is completely unavoidable if the purpose of the research is to be achieved.</i> <i>2. The research objective has strong scientific merit.</i> <i>3. Any potential harm arising from the proposed deception can be effectively neutralised or reversed by the proposed debriefing procedures.</i> <p><i><u>If deception is involved</u>, applicants are required to provide a detailed justification and to supply the names of two independent assessors whom the Committee can approach for advice. Please attach relevant documentation and list below.</i></p>
	n/a
3	<p>Right to withdraw</p> <p><i>Please provide a clear statement regarding what information has been provided to participants regarding their right to withdraw from the research.</i></p>
	<p>Within the briefing notes for participants, there is a section clearly headed “right to refuse or withdraw”</p>
4	<p>Protection from Harm</p> <p><i>Indicate here any vulnerability that may be present because of the:</i></p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ participants e.g. children or vulnerable adults. ○ nature of the research process. <p>If you tick any box below, please indicate in "further information" how you will ensure protection from harm.</p> <p>Does this research involve:</p>	
	Children	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Vulnerable adults	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Sensitive topics	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Permission of a gatekeeper in place of consent from individuals	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Subjects being academically assessed by the researcher	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Research that is conducted without full and informed consent	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Research that could induce psychological stress and anxiety	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Intrusive intervention (eg, vigorous physical exercise)	<input type="checkbox"/>
	Further information:	
	<p>Do ALL researchers in contact with children and vulnerable adults have current DBS clearance? Yes: <input type="checkbox"/>. No: <input type="checkbox"/> N/A: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p> <p>If Yes, Please give disclosure number(s)</p>	
	Name	Number
	If No, please explain:	

5	External Clearance <i>I undertake to obtain written permission from the Head of any external institutions (school, social service, prison, etc) in which research will be conducted. (please check box)</i> <div style="text-align: right;"><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></div>
6	Participant/Subject Involvement <i>Has this group of participants/subjects already been the subject of research in the current academic year?</i> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between;"> <div> <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> </div> <div style="text-align: right;"> Yes No </div> </div>
7	Payment <i>Please provide details of any payments, either financial or in kind, made to participants for participation, compensation for time given, etc.</i>
	No financial compensation or reward is being proposed or advertised for participation in this study.
8	Debriefing <i>When? By whom? How? Please provide a clear statement regarding what information has been provided to participants regarding debriefing.</i>
	The ability to review transcribed interview notes, seek alterations and access to final findings are covered in the “right to refuse or withdraw” and “sharing of findings” sections of the briefing notes for participants. This would be done by me as quickly after transcription as possible and would be via electronic means – email, unless a paper version was requested by the participant.
9	Dissemination of Research <i>Please provide a clear statement regarding what information has been provided to participants regarding dissemination of this research.</i>
	A statement about how research findings will be communicated to the participant and may be otherwise disseminated, is included in the ‘sharing of findings’ section of the participant briefing and will for part of the introduction to the survey.
10	Confidentiality

	<i>Please provide a clear statement regarding what information has been provided to participants regarding confidentiality issues.</i>
	Information regarding the level of confidentiality and who will have access to information is provided in the 'procedures' and 'confidentiality' sections of the briefing notes for participants
11	<p>Ethical principles of professional bodies</p> <p><i>Where relevant professional bodies have published their own guidelines and principles, these must be followed and the current University principles interpreted and extended as necessary in this context. Please state which (if any) professional bodies' guidelines are being utilised.</i></p>
	The Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) are supporting the research through access to their networks but are happy for ethical issues to be managed through the EdD / Plymouth University procedures

12	<p>Declarations:</p> <p>For all applicants, your signature below indicates that, to the best of your knowledge and belief, this research conforms to the ethical principles laid down by Plymouth University and by the professional body specified in C.11 above.</p> <p>For supervisors of PGR students:</p> <p>As Director of Studies, your signature confirms that you believe this project is methodologically sound and conforms to university ethical procedures.</p>			
		Name(s)	Signature (electronic is acceptable)	Date
	Applicant	Mr Paul Stuart Norman	Paul Norman	29/10/2014
	Other staff investigators:			
	Director of Studies (if applicant is a postgraduate research student):	Dr Peter Kelly	See email	03/11/2014

Completed Forms should be forwarded BY E-MAIL to Claire Butcher (claire.butcher@plymouth.ac.uk), Secretary to the Faculty Research Ethics Committee no later than 2 weeks before the meeting date.

You will receive approval and/or feedback on your application within 2 weeks of the meeting date at which the committee discussed this application.

APPENDIX S: Ethical approval letter

19 December 2014

Dear Paul

Application for Approval by Education Research Ethics Sub-committee

Reference Number: 14/15-83

Application Title: “Yes Minister” - The impact of frequent policy change in English education

I am pleased to inform you that the Education Research Ethics Sub-committee has granted approval to you to conduct this research subject to the following amendments, for which resubmission to the committee is not required:

- The confidentiality section of the information sheet should include the following information:
 - how or where there research data will be stored securely
 - in accordance with Plymouth University policy, the research data will be destroyed ten years after completion of the project.
- The sentence in the ‘Right to refuse or withdraw’ section of the briefing sheet “Should you decide to withdraw your whole contribution after the interview has taken place, the same restrictions will apply as to individual questions.” should be rephrased to state clearly that contributions can only be withdrawn before data analysis commences along with time frame within which participants can make this request
- The consent form should also state that participants understand that their interviews are recorded.

Please note that this approval is for three years, after which you will be required to seek extension of existing approval.

Please note that should any MAJOR changes to your research design occur which effect the ethics of procedures involved you must inform the Committee.

Please contact Claire Butcher on (01752) 585337 or by email

claire.butcher@plymouth.ac.uk

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'L. Velle'.

Professor Linda la Velle

Chair, Education Research Ethics Sub-committee -

Plymouth Institute of Education

Faculty of Arts and Humanities

APPENDIX T: Interview participants identified from survey and email shot

Gender	What is your position?	Please indicate which of these best matches your institution?	Which of these best describes your secondary phase?	How many years of experience in school leadership do you have?	Which region best describes your location?	I give permission for you to contact me regarding participation in an interview.	Indicate contact email or phone number here:
Female	Executive Head / Principal	Academy	Secondary (11-18)	20	North East	Yes	
Female	Head / Principal	Maintained School	Secondary (11-16)	20	North East	Yes	
Female	Head / Principal	Maintained School	Secondary (11-18)	10	North East	Yes	
Female	Head / Principal	Maintained School	Secondary (11-18)	5	North East	Yes	
Female	Head / Principal	Academy	Secondary (11-16)	25	Midlands	Yes	
Female	Deputy Head / Vice Principal	Academy	Secondary (11-16)	20	London	Yes	
Male	Head / Principal	Academy	Secondary (11-18)	24	Midlands	Yes	
Female	Executive Head / Principal	Academy	Secondary (11-18)	26	North West	Yes	
Female	Head / Principal	Maintained School	Secondary (11-16)	14	South East	Yes	
Male	Head / Principal	Academy	other (eg all through)	12	South East	Yes	
Male	Executive Head / Principal	Grammar	Secondary (11-18)	20	Midlands	Yes	
Male	Head / Principal	Academy	Secondary (11-18)	25	London	Yes	
Male	Head / Principal	Secondary Modern	Secondary (11-18)	7	South East	Yes	
Male	Head / Principal	Voluntary Aided School	Secondary (11-18)	10	South East	Yes	
Female	Executive Head / Principal	Maintained School	Secondary (11-18)	14	South East	Yes	
Male	Executive Head / Principal	Academy	Secondary (11-18)	23	South West	Yes	
Female	Head / Principal	Academy	Secondary (11-18)	15	South East	Yes	
Male	Head / Principal	Academy	other (eg all through)	12	South West	Yes	
Male	Head / Principal	Grammar	Secondary (11-18)	5	South East	Yes	
Male	Head / Principal	Voluntary Aided School	Secondary (11-16)	12	South West	Yes	
	Refused / withdrew						
	Participated (survey)						
	Participated (email shot)						

Table T.1: Interview participants identified from survey and email shot

APPENDIX U: Population estimates – mid year 2015 (EXTRACTED FROM OFFICE FOR NATIONAL STATISTICS MID-YEAR ESTIMATES 2015 AT ONS, 2015)

Estimated Population	Column Labels			
Row Labels	Female	Male	Grand Total	
England	27,757,041.00	27,029,286.00	54,786,327.00	
East	3,083,085.00	2,993,366.00	6,076,451.00	11.09%
East Midlands	2,367,841.00	2,309,197.00	4,677,038.00	8.54%
London	4,364,201.00	4,309,512.00	8,673,713.00	15.83%
North East	1,337,444.00	1,287,177.00	2,624,621.00	4.79%
North West	3,639,439.00	3,534,396.00	7,173,835.00	13.09%
South East	4,543,540.00	4,404,373.00	8,947,913.00	16.33%
South West	2,783,084.00	2,688,096.00	5,471,180.00	9.99%
West Midlands	2,906,242.00	2,844,758.00	5,751,000.00	10.50%
Yorkshire and The Humber	2,732,165.00	2,658,411.00	5,390,576.00	9.84%
Northern Ireland	942,492.00	909,129.00	1,851,621.00	
Northern Ireland	942,492.00	909,129.00	1,851,621.00	
Scotland	2,762,531.00	2,610,469.00	5,373,000.00	
Scotland	2,762,531.00	2,610,469.00	5,373,000.00	
Wales	1,573,525.00	1,525,561.00	3,099,086.00	
Wales	1,573,525.00	1,525,561.00	3,099,086.00	
Grand Total	33,035,589.00	32,074,445.00	65,110,034.00	

Table U.1: Population estimates – mid year 2015

(extracted from Office for National Statistics Mid-Year estimates 2015 at ONS, 2015)³¹

³¹ published here under the Open Government Licence for Public Sector Information:
<http://www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/doc/open-government-licence/version/3/>

**APPENDIX V: WORD FREQUENCY DESCRIBING REFORM –
(QUESTION 25 APPENDIX G, P. 221)**

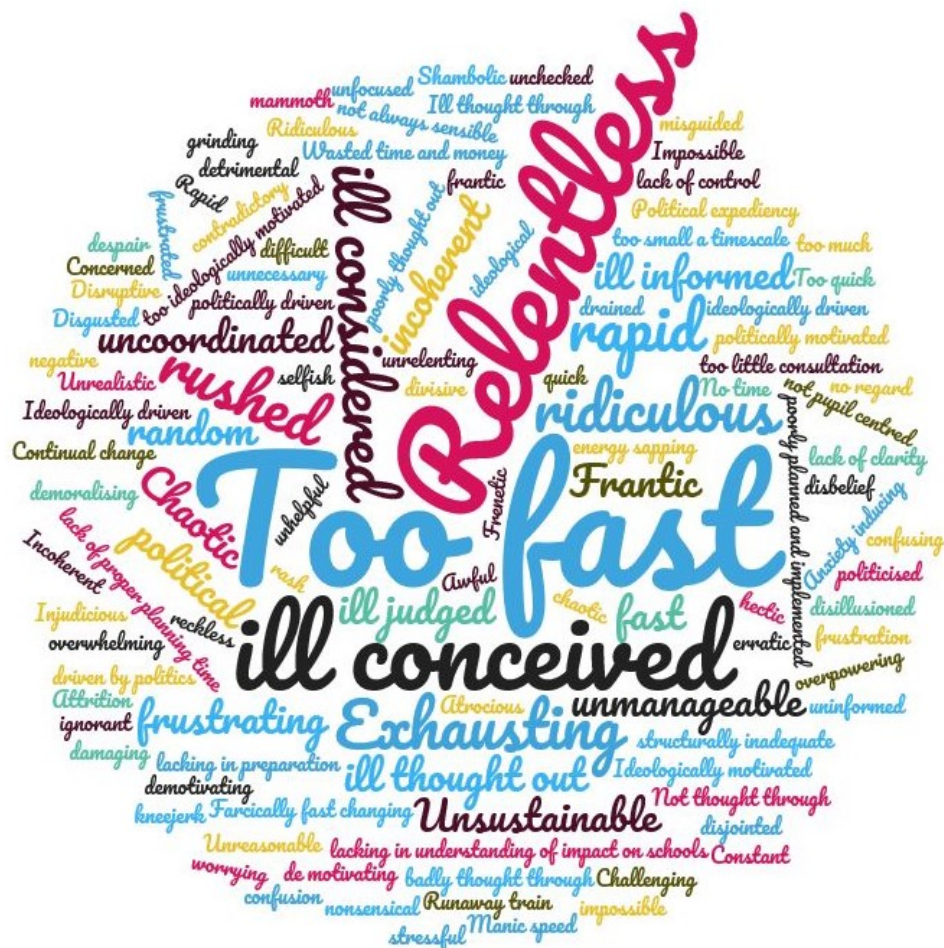


Figure V.1: Word frequency of responses to Q25

What words would you choose to describe your experience of the pace of education reform / policy development?

APPENDIX V: EXAMPLES OF POLICY SUCCESS AND FAILURE

The focus of this work has been about perception. Specifically, the perception of Headteachers and Principals as to how fast paced policy reform has impacted on standards. From my own experience, I have always accepted that not all policy is bad. Well-planned, properly funded policy, which has the support of practitioners has, in my experience, offered positive outcomes. The problem is that such an approach feels as if it has become increasingly rare. To establish how other school leaders perceive this phenomenon, survey respondents were asked to suggest both positive and negative experiences of policy. This was then followed up further as part of the semi-structured interviews.

Examples of ‘good’ policy

At survey, respondents were asked the question “Can you name any policies that have benefitted your own school(s) or practice?” (Appendix G – Question 21) and this was followed up with “Did any of these positively impact on ‘standards’ and, if yes, why?” (Appendix G – Question 22). 10 responses were left blank and 16 of the 91 respondents (17.6%) answer “No” or in the negative, with justifications. For legibility, I have corrected typos made when respondents entered their responses.

No because they are too short lived

Not in this parliament. Last one - Every Child Matters, Behaviour and Attendance, 14-19 Vocational Diplomas.

No. Most generate a significant drain on our time and energy with a focus on new policies and systems to provide a tick in the box for the DfE and Ofsted. In some respects they divert us from our core business of effective teaching and learning.

Not within the last 5 years - before that 1:1 programme and school sports co-ordinators

No....always seem to be jumping through unnecessary hoops....goalposts always changing

(Survey responses, Appendix G – Question 21)

In terms of positive impact, there were a range of policies suggested but the most dominant, mentioned by 27 / 91 respondents (29.6%) was the introduction of the pupil premium grant. Reasons for the positive perception of these were broadly similar, a recognition that the additional money and associated monitoring had increased the focus on the most disadvantaged students and this had allowed schools to ‘close the gap’.

Pupil premium has had quite an impact on improving the life chances of our most vulnerable students.

they get to the heart of schools which is to improve the quality of learning for all students and the good things such as improving life chances follows

Allowed for more intervention for under achieving pupils which in return has raised standards

PP funding gives a flexibility to effectively target additional support.

PP has provided targeted resources for disadvantaged pupils and meant that we have been more stringent in monitoring their progress over time and we have therefore narrowed the gaps..

(Survey responses, Appendix G – Question 22)

Other popular responses focused on the introduction of Academies with 10/91 responses (11%), an interesting statistic given the generally negative response to the Academies programme, nationally. It seems that those schools who were able to convert willingly to Academy status valued that change although two of those respondents reflected that the change had not impacted on standards. For those who did see a positive impact, reasons given included:

Ability to focus on local needs

Academy conversion created opportunities to improve the teaching environment which benefitted all pupils

not forced to follow national curriculum

(Survey responses, Appendix G – Question 22)

The remaining policies identified included the ‘Every Child Matters’ initiative 2/91 (2%), which “set the tone for a more holistic approach to standards which helped to move the

school forward in this area.” (ibid) and the introduction of Progress based accountability measures, such as ‘Progress 8’ 9/91 (10%), which had “Allowed school leaders to turn staff attention to all students and not just "boundary" groups” (ibid).

At interview, the pupil premium policy was also recognised as a valuable policy reform with ALI/PHIL recognising the resonance between policy and personal values, an ideological synchronicity which reduces the administrative inconveniences to irrelevance.

I do think it's sort of any policy which provides some significant additional resource to youngsters who lack social capital, is always welcome - so, in , in the last, in the coalition it was the pupil premium and prior to that we did receive - hah - we were going to receive significant funds, we received some funds from the National Challenge and even though that was launched in a very clumsy way, the intention, I thought, was a good intention, actually um so, so the recognition that, you know, schools do serve different populations and they do require different amounts of investment. You know, it's a form of progressive taxation, isn't it actually? (ALI)

in terms of policies, I think things that are to do with social justice, like the pupil premium for example, you know I was really pleased when that came in, I know there's sort of hoops and things that you've got to go through and I was really pleased that the new Government, and I was quite surprised actually, that they have still continued to support it, at least in the short term, because I think that is about trying to redress, redress social justice, which is you know one of the reasons that you come into the profession, isn't it (PHIL)

I think one of the best policy things we've had though is pupil premium. Because that's really made us sit up and smell the coffee and do something about our kids who are entitled to pupil premium and the work that we've done has had a massive impact on their outcomes. (BERTIE)

While PHIL recognises the impact of these policies as small steps in the war on social inequality and justice, BERTIE acknowledges that school practice did not, perhaps, take as much notice of the deprived as they should, unwittingly reproducing inequalities. The ring-fenced nature of pupil premium funding ensuring that the focus remains firmly on that agenda, but there was also recognition that in the early stages the guidance and accountability wasn't clear enough, suggesting that the positive impact could have been seen sooner.

at the beginning, of course, you were given carte blanche to spend it how you like and I think you probably still are but the accountability has been ratcheted up massively and possibly that's made us sit up and take notice a bit more. (BERTIE)

While there is recognition that the extra money that Pupil Premium has brought into schools has been very welcome, there was also an understanding that it was the performative lens, the forensic focus on those students, which had allowed schools to meet their needs more effectively and particularly in regards to targeting the aspirations and level of parental support such students receive.

I'm not entirely sure it's just the money that makes the difference, I think it's the actual focus on the free school meals students. I think what has raised our attainment and achievement, more progress, more, is my teachers knowing who the pupil premium students are and focusing more on them as individuals and tracking them half termly in English and maths and intervening and one of the major things that's made a huge difference here is a big focus on attendance and parents of those youngsters, because we had a big, we had three key thrusts really, to our pupil premium strategy - we've still got it. Parental fecklessness, attendance and personal organisation of students. We've worked on those three things plus teaching and learning. So maybe it wasn't the money so much, although that really helps you (BERTIE)

For some, the provision of additional funds and the implicit permission to innovate and take risks in their leadership has previously been possible with LIG³² (Leadership Incentive Grant), although there is recognition that the level schools were held to account for such large sums of money was perhaps not as high as it should have been and that this is one aspect of policy monitoring that had improved over time.

if I use as an example the Leadership Incentive Grant - um.. which frankly was just amazing - in the right hands and used by the right people was just an amazing windfall of money to help you to strengthen your school and strengthen provision um.. you're not getting that now, you got.. and actually to be honest with you the level of accountability for that money wasn't as high as it is now -incredibly high accountability for everything now. (SAM)

³² The Leadership Incentive Grant (LIG) was available to all mainstream secondary schools with over 35% of students eligible for free school meals in January 2002, or with under 30% of students achieving 5 GCSEs A*-C (or equivalent) in 2002 or 2001, or in Excellence in Cities (EiC) areas, Education Action Zones (EAZ) or Excellence Clusters. DfE 2010. Schools receiving Leadership Incentive Grant. https://data.gov.uk/dataset/schools_receiving_leadership_incentive_grant: Department for education.

The key point that arises from this is the sense that this type of funding, paid on top of base funds to make deliver basic provision; was seen to make a difference and in many ways the Pupil Premium Grant could be the modern version of LIG.

Alongside the pupil premium, interviewees also echoed the positive impact of the move to progress measures for school. These treat schools with different intakes more equally, but there was concern that the initial positive intent was being affected to by tinkering with the original proposal.

think the move to progress 8, I mean they're bugging it up now and it's not going to work the way it should do, but I think the move to measure progress as a um, as a key indicator, the 3 and 4 levels progress rather and move to progress 8, rather than simply attainment, I think has definitely raised standards in my schools and and will across the board because - I mean , I'm really, really worried that they're bugging about with progress 8 now and they're gonna um, mitigate against all the positive factors in it, but I think it was really possible for a student to just be ignored, really. (TEDDY)

Another aspect of policy that was reflected on positively was the review of performance management and capabilities processes. ALEX reflects a frustration that some teachers have not kept up with the pace of change in terms of expectations and practice.

There are some people who, who shouldn't be in the classroom or some people who so need to shape up, you know, they're still replicating what they did 25 years ago and they're still and it's not good enough and so they need to be told. (ALEX)

my view was that appraisal applied as a tool to develop professionals was, was always something that anybody in my position or in a position of leadership in a school should embrace and make the most of, and that, that has meant that we currently, you know, years and years down the line; we have a system in place that genuinely and really effectively supports progression, supports the evidencing of outstanding teaching and, and really addresses the relationship between that teaching and the progress of young people and then makes it clear to my colleagues that, that's what you get paid for. (SAM)

It is clear that, whatever their views on OfSTED and whole school accountability, there is a sense of responsibility and an acceptance that such a process is required at school level. For SAM, the improved procedures are not just about removing ineffective staff, they are about helping colleagues to improve their practice. The reflection that this has

happened 'years and years' down the line suggesting a sense of frustration that such a situation has not happened previously.

Other aspects of reform that were recognised, at least by some, as being positive were elements of curriculum and examination reform. This is important as, while the pace, methodology and intentions of such changes may receive criticism from school leaders, the actual intent is not always viewed negatively. The introduction of the National Curriculum in the late 1980s is one reform which appears to have been welcomed.

I'm old enough to remember the National Curriculum actually starting off, um.. and I remember all of that and actually, it was done in such a way.. I mean a lot of it was nonsense, but actually it was done in such a way that, actually, it did engage with teachers um.. we had far too many attainment targets in awfully, it was just unmanageable but sensible people at the time made it work. But the fact that there was a common curriculum across the country, which there wasn't beforehand, made total sense. (PAT)

if I go back to the implementation of GCSE back in 1988 I can remember the run into that and I know probably looking back over rose tinted glasses, I can remember a lead in of three years intensive programmes, intensive training of teachers and yet GCSEs and things like that now are implemented on an election cycle, you know, and to be going through the changes that are happening in 11-18 schools now with A' levels changing, GCSEs changing, um.. you know, to have prescribed timetable at a rate and a pace which just lack any sort of understanding of the consequences. (CHARLIE)

The view that policy was discussed with teachers, that there were attempts to engage and get 'buy-in' from those who would deliver is seen as positive, even in a flawed system. CHARLIE reflects the impression that more recently, the pace of reform and quality of planning and implementation has been lacking, particularly in terms of the knock-on effects which schools are left to deal with. Once again, there is acceptance that some of the more recent reforms are justifiable at some level, in the case of PAT, it is about challenging the more able; even if process is poor.

The fact that GCSE becomes more challenging for more able students, I think is actually the right thing to do and it's fascinating, because some of the dialogue we've had with our year 10 most able ones is, they're telling me the work's a bit dull now, it was great years 7, 8 and 9 and now we're having to do this and do that and we've got this controlled assessment to do and so it's just rubbish, isn't it - and

I'm saying Yeah it is rubbish but I'm afraid you have to do that in order to get the grades, but then you can get onto A level and you'll love it again (PAT)

Finally, the interviewees were able to recognise where policy initiatives and performative technologies, unpopular though methods may appear, had helped to improve standards, in their perception. The London Challenge was noted, as was the National Challenge in the survey responses. And OfSTED are recognised to have an important role to play in terms of achieving overall system consistency.

if you look at the London challenge, the impact that's had - there were some really, really ropery schools I think in the 80's and, er.. not to say children didn't come through them and didn't get, you know, in the end, go where they wanted to in their lives but I think the overall consistency is quite a success story actually and I guess there's a range of things that contributed to that and you'd have to include OfSTED in it and National Curriculum and exam accountability (ALI)

Similarly, the opportunity to access support and training from dedicated organisations, such as NCSL³³ and SSAT³⁴, was valued as a means for defining and supporting a working community or Network. The decision to close these bodies perhaps leaving Headteachers feeling more isolated and unsupported.

Things that have been part good the NCSL when it was here I personally found that very beneficial in the early stages of my sort of senior leadership experience to be able to go on NPQH courses, I know you can still do those but uh the other course that they offered for developing leaders and the ability to network with people and all of that and I felt it was a real shame when in a sense we lost that. (ASH)

Examples of 'bad' policy

As before, survey respondents were given the opportunity to reflect on aspects of policy they felt had hindered schools, school leaders and standards, with the question "Can you name any policies that you feel have negatively impacted / affected your own school(s) or practice?" (Appendix G – Question 23) and followed up with "Did any of these

³³ NCSL – National College of School Leadership

³⁴ SSAT – Specialist Schools and Academies Trust

negatively impact on standards and if yes, why?” (Appendix G – Question 24). 7/91 (8%) left the question blank and 1 simply said “No”. Of the remaining responses, several focused on aspects of policy that others had considered positive, such as progress 8 and curriculum change, but where detail was given, this tended to be for specific reasons – once again, text has been edited to remove typos to aid legibility)

Reforming national curriculum and, simultaneously, assessment without levels.

EBacc and Progress 8 mean that some learners will feel inadequate. There is little evidence that this new approach will drive up standards, increase rigour in learning or prepare pupils for the challenges and opportunities which lie ahead as adults to quote the hackneyed clichés which are used repeatedly by politicians and their agencies.

(Appendix G – Question 23)

The second respondent is concerned about the impact of some reforms on the wellbeing of students, reflecting their sense of moral purpose, and sees no acceptable evidence for the justification of such an impact, only political dogma and rhetoric. The issue of the reform of assessment, AWL (Assessment without levels), drew some attention in terms of the additional workload it had required and the perceived lack of necessity, direction and logic. Being required to develop systems independently may be positioned by politicians as offering schools ‘autonomy’ and control but for schools and school leaders, knowing you are being compared to other schools in terms of progress and outcomes, becomes very confusing if the measures used for comparison are all different and the perception is that the change has damaged standards through halting the progress which was being made.

Yes, time-consuming and vague. How can there be assessment without levels that ultimately lead to an examination that will be assessed and reported in levels?

It has involved a lot of change and work in an area which was impacting positively on standards. Many schools are simply reinventing levels.

(Appendix G - Question 24)

The EBacc was identified by several people as a restrictive move, making the curriculum less relevant and engaging for some students.

Forcing (through progress 8 measure) all kids to take ebbac subjects even if it's not relevant to their interests and aspirations.

(Appendix G – Question 23)

While improved accountability within schools was seen as positive there was a more negative response to the issue of performance related pay. This was perceived to be unnecessary and had, for some, increased workload.

Performance related pay - it has created an additional system, which was not needed if there exists proper monitoring and capability is addressed.

new pay policy - lots more work for little gain, the move from national pay to discretionary pay, the removal of early entry, the removal of speaking and listening tests, the removal of coursework

(Appendix G – Question 23)

There was also a fear that the changes to pay policy might lead to a negative impact on standards.

Too soon to say. It could have a potential impact on motivation for staff who work hard and do not receive a pay increase because they did not meet challenging appraisal targets.

(Appendix G – Question 24)

Pay appears to be a topic over which there is concern. Previously, national terms and conditions of employment meant pay progression was automatic through the main scale and after successful progression through the threshold - Headteachers were protected from the need to make sensitive or challenging judgements which would affect pay. A new subjectivity positions Principals and Headteachers as 'paymasters', not just responsible for quality of teaching, behaviour, etc but also for decisions on pay progression and this brings them into self-conflict with the need to manage budgets in an ever more austere system. This subjectivation has also, through Academy freedoms, allowed Principals to follow the behaviour of the market, offering more money and incentives to well qualified or highly skilled staff, and being driven to do so by the accountability regime. Ethically aware and morally driven, having to make decisions between rewarding staff and managing shrinking funds is stressful and conflicting.

There was a strong perception throughout the responses that more recent policies regarding curriculum changes and performance measures had been inconsistent and chaotic, leaving schools with problems mid-course. Given the high-stakes nature of exam results and their impact on inspection judgements, there is a strong sense of injustice throughout many of these responses, the ones below offering a representative view.

continual change in syllabus and in the makeup of attainment tables as well as Government views (eg Gove described iGCSE as a gold standard and now it represents a drive for the bottom!)

The decision to move to first entry at GCSE was ridiculous and clearly a knee jerk reaction to a problem that did not exist. This created uncertainty around early entry and the use of first and second attempts at exam that were inherently challenging. No thought can have been given to the decision to make the exams harder and at the same time making it impossible for students to try, fail and then try again. This is further made a nonsense by the act that at the same time schools have been made responsible for making sure that all students in post 16 achieve C and above in English and Maths because somehow this is more important than using the same strategies to get them through at 16.

(Appendix G – Question 23)

There is a definite aura of frustration in the second response, the use of ‘ridiculous’ and ‘nonsense’ suggesting contempt for the decision. The phrase ‘created uncertainty’ is clearly communicating the perception that the school(s) had been destabilised. They were left feeling off-balance and discombobulated by multiple changes over which they had no control but which would effectively punish them for decisions made in preceding years. In terms of standards, some reflected a sense that the overall effect of rapid policy reform had a negative impact on standards and this was exacerbated by a lack of ownership or shared purpose in the policies they were implementing.

As a whole all. Attrition - We are constantly responding, firefighting, answering to parents for changes we have to implement but may not support.

(Appendix G – Question 24)

These changes had led to a sense of injustice, which is reflected very strongly in the following responses.

The disgraceful way in which speaking and listening was dropped from English in the same year as single entry impacted. A generation of youngsters were badly let down.

Mid-course changes to exam criteria. Theft of English grades in 2012. Removal of courses that qualify on league tables, half-way through course. The whole Free School and Academy programme that removed £6bn from the education budget. Cancellation of the BSF programme. Knee-jerk introduction of policies that are subsequently followed-up by Ofsted (eg British values). Constant changing of the Ofsted framework. Encouraging parents to complain to Ofsted. Progress 8 and the way it forces you to skew the curriculum.

(Appendix G – Question 23)

The phrases ‘badly let down’ and ‘Theft of English grades’ are very emotive, communicating both anger and despair at the injustice of a political decision to statistically manage GCSE outcomes. They also feel they are being ‘forced’ into doing something against their will, in this case changing the curriculum, in a way that they feel leaves it unbalanced or ‘skewed’. For school leaders who want to feel in control and autonomous, such major restrictions on decision making are highly frustrating and for those who suffer poor inspection judgements, humiliating, also.

Other aspects of policy that were commented on included reduced funding and changes to sixth form structures, but more frequent was the issue of OfSTED changing their inspection framework and the impact this has.

yes, teachers focus on the wrong priorities eg 'preparing for Ofsted' when they should be focusing on what is best for the children in their care.

OFSTED dominates all levels of decision making and strategy. The denigration and devaluation of vocational courses will lead to a generation of underperforming and disenfranchised students. It will also create a skills gap in the economy.

So many changes to the OFSTED framework which keeps moving the goalposts, as does the perpetual tinkering with what qualifications are/are not included in accountability measures- both link together to create the perfect storm

(Appendix G – Question 23)

The first two responses reflect the belief that, rather than simply monitoring the standards of educational provision within a school, OfSTED has become a driver of behaviour.

Decisions are made less on the benefit they may have and more on the perceived response they will receive from inspectors. Given the importance of the performative technologies, this is unsurprising, as creating the impression of compliance and normative behaviour is perceived to be the only way to avoid labelling as 'irresponsible' or 'failing'. The result of this, in one respondent's view, was a negative impact on the ability of schools to plan for the longer term effectively and creatively, impacting on the experience that their students received.

The need to satisfy continually moving OFSTED requirements stifles true innovation and long-term strategy. It has narrowed curriculum and focus to the detriment of the development of young people.

(Appendix G – Question 24)

Other responses to the question of negative impact on standards could give quite specific detail on how they felt the recent policies had reduced standards in their schools, although some are still based in perception and assumption.

Yes students were demotivated by in year changes.

early maths and English entries boosted confidence and motivation. had a 10% drop in maths last year.

Yes, our RAISE report although fairly positive would have been significantly better had the best entry been counted.

Removal of early entry from performance tables had an impact (-10%) on 5ACEM - we continued it as it enabled more students to achieve the C Grades that they needed for progression to further study. Changes to courses with such a tight timeframe will inevitably result in a down turn in results for many schools.

(Appendix G – Question 24)

It is, of course, hard to establish causation, but there is a strong sense from the responses in general that reforms were damaging standards, at least on the level of measurable outcomes. Some reduced outcomes or lower standards are linked to policy behaviours, which revalue the data rather than the processes that take place in schools. Retaking exams allows some students to achieve success after a first disappointment. Only accepting the first result doesn't change that success for the students, but it effectively

neutralises or camouflages it from the school's performance, leaving a sense of injustice.

Several participants suggest that the effect of some policy changes was to reduce the time spent on developing teaching and learning and this was perceived to be likely to lead to reduced outcomes and standards over time

Changing GCSEs with little preparation time or resources to facilitate the change is a challenge as is constructing a completely new assessment system following life after levels! The mid cohort changes to current GCSE examinations has also affected standards as it is difficult to know what grades now actually represent.

The impact is I am reducing staff significantly in a school that is performing well. The consequence of this and of curriculum change is that the curriculum is narrower and the curriculum is less able to properly meet the needs of all learners. Governors and the HT are also spending too much time on governance and structural matters and, as a consequence, less time focusing on teaching and learning.

All of the above because they take attention away from what really matters to schools - improving teaching and learning.

(Appendix G – Question 24)

Not all respondents felt that the ongoing process of reform had impacted negatively one stating that standards had risen despite policy change, however, the sense of disillusion and frustration in trying to achieve standards in an rapidly ever-changing context, is neatly reflected here.

The 'standards' we are working to achieve are constantly being changed before we have a chance to embed practices that would enable the students and the school to meet them. In aiming for one set of standards we miss them target because it moves and then get chastised for it

(Appendix G – Question 24)

At interview, many of these same issues arose and some have already been discussed in previous sections of this work, e.g. mission creep. Two issues which were frequently raised were around funding and recruitment. Headteachers who had managed to accrue

reserves of funding could see, from current budget modelling and increased costs, that they were going to be confronted with significant financial issues in the near future.

But I would say that we are untypical in having these reserves, but it's because we knew that we were going to have a bit of a bumpy time ahead and so we felt that we'll make the sacrifices and savings now while we could, you get away with it as an 11-14 school, frankly, whereas you can't as an 11-16 school, and that's been my approach really. (PHIL)

I've spent quite a long time recently looking at the budget because we've got two years of reserves and in five year's time we'll be half a - if I don't do something - half a million pounds in deficit, that's largely to do with sixth form funding. Well, you know you've got the increase in National Insurance blah, blah, blah, blah, blah (BERTIE)

While PHIL and BERTIE have been able to set aside funds in previous years and have reserves to manage as contingency funds, they are already aware that the situation is changing. They have been able to act strategically and can manage the pressures for a while, but recognise that this is a finite situation and action will have to be taken. This is illustrated well by the response of SAM, who has also been able to use reserves up to this point.

in terms of money and resources, in the past, because we've been very cash rich, we've just built a building that cost us 1.8 million pounds ah.. the decision to build that building would have come through lots of discussions with the senior management team, scoping it out with the whole staff, working with the governors on what the implications are if we build the building it means we'll be, we'll down, we'll be down to no money in reserves for the start of the new financial year, that's going to have implications - so there's a lot of discussion and thinking around - if we spend it here, what will happen?(SAM)

In business, good fiscal management is seen as 'responsible', saving money good but there is an argument that schools should not be able to hold large reserves, that money allocated should be spent on providing for the education of those in the school at that moment, although capital projects are often dependent on the ability to save or match grant funding.

the previous headteacher had a million, I think, in the bank, um and she was keeping it for a sixth form. What he's said is, look, the kids in the school, it's

their money, they need to have it spent on them, so we've made new toilets and he's widening the corridors, he's looking at health and safety (FRANKIE)

Such a view positions prudent financial management as irresponsible in a way which would not be expected in a normal market – making savings through efficiencies is good; but may be understandable from the perspective of accumulating capital in the moment. For the new Head, being seen to invest in projects, which affect those currently in the school, wins student and parental approval, builds trust and results in increased social capital and, therefore, improved outcomes (hopefully). For those Headteachers who are not in a position of having reserves, they can be left feeling disempowered, able only to deliver the status quo or having to make cuts to deliver strategies they believe could improve standards.

if you, you are not financially secure and you don't have the wherewithal to deliver increased expectations that can leave you feeling 'well, I can't do anything'. You know, all I can think about here is how I can get a teacher in front of these children um.. and how I can make that work and pay for it, but, but, but when you are in very, very tight financial circumstances that can, that can be a real problem. (SAM)

For FRANKIE this has resulted in a need to reduce resources to some of the most vulnerable in the school community, a situation shared by CHARLIE who sees the need to reduce costs as impacting on aspects of the curriculum which may not directly contribute to exam outcomes, but improve the wider and softer standards of the school and the moral purpose which drives them.

the fact that um, the schools have got less money as well is linked with other things like reductions in budgets and cuts, that, that's all just, it's tightening different areas in our school so we're having to reduce the number of learning support assistants um, and special needs funding (FRANKIE)

another difficult decision we've had to make because of reduced money is, we've cut work experience and for a primarily 11-16 school, we are 11-18 but the post 16 is um a specialised provision for youngsters with additional needs; for 11-16 school whose job is preparing young people for post 16 education and employment etcetera, not to offer work experience goes very much against what I would regard as a complete education. (CHARLIE)

There is also a sense of frustration that many of the cost demands on schools are effectively out of their control. In a competitive market based system, there is a need to ensure high quality staff to ensure outcomes and maintain student recruitment, but in a situation where costs are rising against reducing budgets it becomes harder to justify.

you might look at some of the posts in our school and say 'gosh, they're relatively highly paid for the post that they do, ah, but if we didn't pay that then we wouldn't have the person and we don't get any.. I mean, actually, [county] is a very low funding authority as a result of the size of Government grants to [authority] so we have to make our budget really work to make sure we get good people and then hang on to them as best we can. (ALI)

Despite the market discourse, some Headteachers feel their hands are tied in terms of some specific costs, for example the examination system. They are required, for the purposes of performativity, to utilise them but quality and cost is a concern and there are limited opportunities for schools to exercise normal market behaviours. They cannot simply refuse to enter students for exams, so the market is weighted against them and their sense of power through autonomy becomes reduced.

There are things that we can, we don't have any say over. The extreme cost of the examination system, um, the charges that we're getting for those is just ridiculous, the fact that they are once again this is in all the press, making mistakes, mistakes on A-Level papers, poor marking of the SATs papers, GCSE papers without anyone to mark them at all, it's ludicrous. And that's somewhere where I think Government could get involved. (ASH)

In addition to exam costs, schools are required to meet maintenance and operating costs, meaning that the scope for creative and innovative use of money to impact on standards is reduced. While schools and Academies are being positioned as businesses, they do not have the same ability as private businesses to manage or offset costs over time by depreciating equipment against tax. They can, of course, reduce staffing but to do so can lead to increased class sizes, increased workload for remaining staff and a negative impact on standards.

it's an eighty-odd, low eighty percent on staffing, which is why we're going to have to restructure because that's not sustainable. Then when you look at all of

the fixed cost, that's heating and maintenance, recurrent costs, you know all of those, that takes out another large percentage. You come down to a very, very tiny percentage of the overall budget that you've actually got any flexibility in (ASH)

you've got the big-ticket items like you know, your, your IT, your servers need replacing next year, that's ninety thousand pounds, you know, it's, so you're very constrained but you know you're probably talking about ten percent of your overall funding, which you actually have complete freedom to move around. (JO)

JO refers to being 'constrained' by standing costs, the sense of being held back, imprisoned by the budget again reflected in the use of the term 'freedom', and for ASH – 'flexibility' - for the small degree of funding they may be able to be creative with. A perceived lack of 'freedom' will result in the perception that the much vaunted 'autonomy' is very limited.

The issue of retention and recruitment is one which also causes concern. There is the perception that policy is a) driving people away from teaching and b) failing to recruit adequate replacements and that the challenges of managing staffing to meet falling budgets is one where the subjectivation of Headteachers as CEOs positions them as responsible for managing restructuring processes and the inevitable impact that may have on their colleagues' jobs.

we've got a three hundred thousand pound black hole in our budget next year, as a lot of schools have, we're having to cope with that, so I do find myself explaining that to staff, but I try and do that in a strategic way so I, you know I have particular meetings that anybody can come to and I'm actually going to explain how the school finances work, and I've done that as, it's a very productive meeting we had, I did a presentation and we had a good discussion, so people are aware of it but I don't want to ram it down their throat all the time because I'm aware that, I've worked in a school where every staff briefing the head talked about the financial situation and, and we understood that to mean threat of redundancy (JO)

JO recognises the need to restructure to meet budget pressures but attempts to reflect their moral purpose and ethical practice by involving colleagues in the process through 'productive meetings' and 'good discussions', whilst being aware of the stress and

anxiety that such a process will bring. However, while budgets are leading to the pain of redundancy, the ability of Headteachers to recruit the good quality, well qualified staff they need in specific roles, is being restricted by low availability and competitive recruitment, perversely increasing costs further.

Other costs that are costs of recruitment, I spend an absolute fortune on recruitment, the Times Educational Supplement, again a profit-making business, charges in the excess of fifteen hundred pounds for a very small advert with no guarantee of success. (ASH)

I decided to go with [Hayes] recruitment when we were struggling to appoint through our normal advertising routes, um, because I was, you know, became quite disillusioned really with the sort of field we were getting, so we decided to, there's a cost to us to go with Hayes recruitment because you have to pay an upfront fee, we've actually gone with them for two years, something like, I dunno, five, six grand, and then every appointment that we make with them, they take a percentage of the salary. (PHIL)

Despite the budget situation and the costs of recruitment, Headteachers report feeling obliged to prioritise their recruitment to meet performative policies and this results in a further constraint on their autonomy.

under certain Governments in previous years you might have seen that a curriculum will be prescribed, you know, the national, the idea of a national curriculum, whereas we've seen recently that you can teach what you like but this is what you're going to be measured on. Now actually you'd be a fool not to comply with what you're going to be measured on, because that's going to affect your recruitment, therefore your funding, it's going to affect your local standards, it's going to affect your own promotion prospects and those of all your staff so we don't have freedom to do that but the line that's coming from the Government is what schools, we're not telling schools what to do, so it's very interesting change of emphasis. (JO)

JO recognises the influence performative measures have on their behaviour, suggesting it would be foolish not to comply. This is a tacit recognition that to appear 'normal' and to protect recruitment and performance, they follow the route to compliance. They do, however, recognise the political discourse within which the Government also positions them as doing so autonomously. Performative measures are clearly linked to outcomes

with 'core'³⁵ subjects carrying significant weight within the measures. This again drives behaviour as school leaders then prioritise curriculum time for those subjects, potentially narrowing the curriculum and driving a high demand for qualified recruits, leaving recruitment challenging.

I had my head of English, head of mathematics asking for more time to deliver these more robust curriculum but and yet more time equals more teachers and we can't even get enough teachers to deliver, well of the quality that we would wish, we can't even get enough to deliver the current commitment and that is a grave concern also. (CHARLIE)

I do try to favour them, in the same ways I would like to increase maths staffing, particularly with a new maths curriculum coming on and (inaudible) maths and everything else, so I'm increasing the curriculum time that maths has, but I can't recruit the maths teachers. (ASH)

It's a funding issue, but it's actually it's also an availability.. I mean, let's be perfectly frank about this, you know, if I was given an extra 250,000 which is what I have had to take out of the budget this year, if I was given an extra 250,000 um, I wouldn't be able to appoint the people that I want to appoint anyway, because they're not there. (TEDDY)

ASH recognises the need for additional maths teachers but also that the possibility of recruitment is reduced in an economic context where quality maths graduates can attain far better remuneration than in teaching.

you don't get enough children loving maths and wanting to go on and do maths and become a mathematician, um, and those who do will go through university and they will see what career do I want to work in, do I want to come out and have fifty, sixty thousand pounds in a year or so? If so, I'm not going to go into teaching. (ASH)

Problems with recruiting are not unique to maths and TEDDY recognises that the problem extends beyond supply to quality. The impact of low supply being that the teachers who are in post are required to teach more, impacting on workload, which we know is a factor in teachers leaving the profession. There is also the perception that the issue of recruitment is undermining their attempts to improve standards.

³⁵ Core subjects are English and maths with English Baccalaureate subjects (History, Geography, Science and Languages) treated as a separate element of the measures.

Geography is really, really hitting. I mean I got one but it's really hitting at the moment. Um, so I would like more teachers, just more qualified and good teachers, but also, because, because of um, the budget situation as well, I've got my teachers teaching more (TEDDY)

this is going to really, really damage standards. Um, I, I don't really know what we are going to do, because, you know, I know how to raise standards but I can't magic teachers out of thin air. (TEDDY)

While there is a perceived issue with recruitment for the whole system, the problem wasn't universally shared. PAT, the head of a 'successful' school reflected fewer issues as teachers were actively seeking employment with their school.

we're lucky because we actually get a .. we get quite a few people send me CVs and things like that. They either move to the area and they know the school, they've heard about the school and they, you know.. what people say is they want to come and work here, and I've actually picked up two or three people like that where I've written back kept their CVs and then maybe sixth months later given them a phone call and say 'you know you sent me your CV um.. we've got a position coming up, would you like to come and talk to us about it? (PAT)

The implication being that, for schools who are struggling to recruit quality staff, any negative impact on standards or on performative outcomes can lead to a vicious circle where recruitment becomes harder, as the few teachers in the system become more strategic about where they will work. This could reflect the sense, as I myself have experienced, that working in a challenging school could be dangerous. The 'failing' label of a school being projected on to the teaching staff, regardless of their quality and outcomes; resulting in erosion of professional capital and negative impact on their sense of self. This also applies on a system level, as there was also a perception that succession to school leadership was also being negatively affected by the culture of performativity.

very able Deputies .. are making career choices and this was expressed spontaneously by .. Heads of outstanding schools across [County name 1, and County name 2] .. in a conversation that, while they are really, professionally aspiring to encourage high levels of recruitment at all levels, including senior leadership, that, their own deputies, many of whom were headhunted to keep the, to get in to post, were .. had chosen not to go for headship for that reason and I think that's a direct consequence of .. the .. intensity and pressure that's, you know, laid in, you know, laid at our door. (ALEX)

The issue of recruitment is also impacted by other policy from beyond the DfE. For example, the ability to recruit skilled staff from other countries has been one way of managing staffing for some length of time, but more recent concerns over immigration have resulted in this route being restricted, leading to further frustration and sense of powerlessness.

we have a very good Canadian teacher here, who teaches History ah, we really need to, as well as want to keep him for September. We had gone through all the necessary hoops to make the submission to the Home Office, to get permission to retain him and we learned this afternoon from a phone call from a good colleague in the local authority that his case had been declined. Now that's the sort of thing that drives my blood pressure through the ceiling..... it's not like we haven't tried many, many, many, many times to recruit a History teacher, you know, from the local pool or the national pool and we have simply had no candidates. This guy's come in, he's struggled a bit at the start, he's really worked hard, he's shaped up - he's great and now we're told by some fat headed bureaucratic organisation that we can't keep him or if we tried to we are breaking some law somewhere. Now, I don't feel in control of that and that, that is the sort of point that I start to feel very angry and frustrated. (ALI)

The Headteachers interviewed clearly perceived a link between the way teachers and schools are measured and portrayed, the impact of policy on workload, recruitment and retention but they were also aware that, politically, it is convenient for politicians to try and place the blame elsewhere. In the case of TEDDY, the perception that Headteachers are being positioned as responsible through their failure to address challenges in their schools.

I mean, it it was incredible - I'm hopefully going to manage to blog about this, um, Headteachers being responsible for the recruitment crisis because they're not managing behaviour properly (TEDDY)

While it is true that individual schools may struggle to recruit staff if they have a poor reputation, poor outcomes and issues with behaviour, the concerns being raised were far greater than at individual school level and there is a perception that politicians deliberately and cynically construct school leaders as the instigators of problems that their policies have caused.

It would be disingenuous to suggest that all policy is bad and that all school leaders are anti-reform. The reality is far more complex and nuanced, reform itself is not inherently bad, it is the degree to which the need for reforms are justified, evidenced and shared and then how well school leaders perceive the planning and implementation to be; which seems to most strongly indicate whether it will be considered successful. Policies which are seen to be addressing social inequalities or injustices e.g. such as pupil premium funding; or which are, in the minds of school leaders, levelling the playing field between schools, as in the case e.g. progress-based school performance measures; are considered to be good policies. This resonates with the tendency of school leaders to position themselves as morally driven and the shared values around the purpose of education being about the development and furtherment of every individual. Given the generally negative attitudes toward performative technologies at a school level, it is unexpected to see a positive response to changes in the performance management processes for school level. The changes allow Headteachers to position themselves as morally justified in taking on poor practice in their schools and at the same time aid them in ensuring that they achieve compliance in terms of school performance.

The introduction of a National Curriculum was perceived as positive by some, with greater consistency across the nation. Given this, there is obviously not antipathy to curriculum reform. Where the National Curriculum was recognised as good, despite some flaws in assessment terms, the positivity seems rooted in an inclusive approach with a clear strategic plan for implementation which was properly funded and supported over a realistic period. Subsequent curriculum changes were not received as positively, with criticism of the justifications, the perceived weakness in planning and the lack of time and funding to implement before other significant changes came along. The issue with assessment has been exacerbated by the perception that the move to ‘assessment without

levels' is logically flawed and has left an incoherent system. It is the work of another thesis to determine what the costs and benefits of this approach may be but given the consistency of the National Curriculum and the examination system, it does seem odd to have no nationally consistent assessment process up to that point.

Policies which seem to engender negative responses were heavily focused on performative accountability (OfSTED) and the impact it is believed to have on constraining or even directing behaviour and limiting autonomy, along with the perceived negative impact on recruitment of staff and students. Recruitment was also a concern and linked also to initial teacher training changes and, most importantly, the need to staff a curriculum increasingly shaped by performance measure like EBacc. These changes were considered to be inappropriate for many children but would result in schools being punished by the performative technologies if they failed to comply. Funding policy generally was seen as unjust and damaging to standards in schools, with higher costs having to be met from existing budgets. These changes were forcing schools to consider staffing and curriculum changes which they did not believe were helpful to school improvement and exposed them to the painful processes of making colleagues redundant. The cumulative effect of the stresses of the Headteacher / Principal role were perceived to not only be driving colleagues away from the profession but were also severely limiting the ability to recruit high quality teaching staff. This is believed to have led to a crisis in recruitment for Headships with Deputies and Vice Principals more reluctant to take on the responsibility and potentially put their career on the line. The sense of injustice around these policies was then compounded by the perception that politicians were both denying the problems they had caused but also trying to shift blame on to schools and school leaders.

APPENDIX W: Sample Transcript

Name: IC_A0009

Description: Yes Minister - Interview 9

Interview Date: 25th June 2015

	Timespan	Content
1	0:21.0 - 0:53.3	<i>Int: Well as I said, I am ah, only interviewing one sort of Deputy, Vice Principal, so your views are really important and, in a way, they're unique because I not only want your perceptions and experiences but your, sort of, observations on how it's affected your Principal you work with as well. So the questions are very, very open, that's to try and avoid me leading you. Obviously as a Vice Principal myself, I've got my own views and things - I don't want to impose those on you, um, so they will be very open, they may feel extremely open to start with, I just want to see where you go with them, really.</i>
2	0:53.3 - 0:54.1	A0009: Yeah, OK
3	0:54.1 - 0:59.6	<i>Int: so, sort of, no right or wrong answers or anything like that and then I'll just follow up with questions as they occur to me, are you happy with that?</i>
4	0:59.6 - 1:00.9	A0009: Yeah, that's fine, Paul, yeah
5	1:00.9 - 1:06.5	<i>Int: OK, then, so the first question, this is always a, a good one, - what have you spent your time doing today?</i>

6	1:06.5 - 2:09.0	A0009: Ahhhh, yeah, interesting - well, since I came in today, um, I was covering lessons um, today I've been dealing with behaviour issues, um, also, following on from OfSTED, checking each Head of Department is doing what they should be doing, ie: monitoring. Um, I've also sort of tried to design some monitoring sheets for the various things we 've got to follow up after OfSTED and I've been doing, getting a paper trail for them as well, um, and I also took a behaviour and safety meeting this morning at eight O'clock before school started. Um, what else? You know, that, I mean, various things in between - individual staff queries, people calling me out to talk to students, um, my own little - Oh, then that's right, we're doing a sort of thing that's quite nice, which is getting pupil premium students all kitted up for various things like pencils, pens, things like that
7	2:09.0 - 2:09.7	<i>Int: that's a good idea, yes</i>
8	2:09.7 - 2:16.8	A0009: although that's a very small thing, um, it's still been a nice part of the day (laughs), it's ridiculous, isn't it?
9	2:16.8 - 2:18.9	<i>Int: yeah - but they appreciate it, do they?</i>
10	2:18.9 - 2:26.4	A0009: Oh, loved it! They even brought their friends back, so, um, that's really worthwhile, yeah.
11	2:26.4 - 2:28.9	<i>Int: Yeah, so, an awful lot of operational stuff?</i>
12	2:28.9 - 2:30.0	A0009: yeah
13	2:30.0 - 2:34.2	<i>Int: and I suppose the more strategic stuff, in a way, is in response to OfSTED, isn't it?</i>
14	2:34.2 - 3:08.2	A0009: It is, but in terms of, because I saw your questions before and how would I choose to spend my time, I think, I think, you know, if I could spend my time in school actually doing those, those sort of more challenging, thinking strategy bits of work, I think I would find it a lot more rewarding - but it

		is very much responses, you know, three things going on at once as people see you in the corridor and you're answering questions straight away, so a lot of the day is operational, as you say.
15	3:08.2 - 3:13.9	<i>Int: Do you, as an SLT, get enough time to sit and think strategically, do you think?</i>
16	3:13.9 - 4:03.2	A0009: No we don't, I mean our meetings as well, I sometimes kind of nose (?) out from them, because in our meetings quite often we're dealing with things that are, things that tend to get most focused on - is, is, is sort of behaviour. You know people just think it's um, you know, it's, it's the most important [inaudible] I think, it's about, it's about getting the teaching right and I suppose, because it depends on what kind of teacher you are, if you're somebody who doesn't.. I think if the kids, you know, command your respect that, that's the difficulty in schools, if we don't have the right teachers and at the moment recruiting we've got a real problem with recruitment, um, then an awful lot of SLT do, are , sort of mopping up, mopping up problems.
17	4:03.2 - 4:13.1	<i>Int: hmm, do you think, do you think the teaching staff in general have a, um, an accurate perception of what Senior Leadership's about?</i>
18	4:13.1 - 5:09.5	A0009: No, no, they absolutely don't and, it's really different - I haven't always been a teacher, I used to work for the civil service so I came in later, this is my um, 94, my twentieth year, I think actually -94, 2004, yeah I've only been in it twenty years and, I know when I first came in I, I don't know, I just did everything I thought I could do, which was sort of leading it.. I mean I was a mature student, leading assemblies, taking over days and asking for curriculums to be dropped down so we could do International Womens' Day, and I think what I find now is a lot of staff are, aren't - but I don't think they feel that they they're able to, or even can do these things or are even interested in it, you know, the truth is if there's anything, anything both inside or out of the classroom I just wanted to get involved in
19	5:09.5 - 5:12.0	<i>Int: Why do you think that is?</i>

20	5:12.0 - 6:31.6	A0009: Um.... I, ooh, what do I think about this? I really wanted to, I really really wanted to go into teaching. I didn't, I wasn't qualified to begin with as I worked in the Civil Service, um, possible, I think it's possibly a bit of my own personality as well. Um, I just loved doing things that I enjoy doing, rather than thinking it's my responsibility, it's somebody else's responsibility. I got into a conversation with that, actually, with somebody who, who is a head of drama and it was phoning [location] about something and I just said, 'oh. maybe you can do that' and she came back with 'that's not my job' and I just thought, you know, it's only, (sighs) I don't know, I was really exasperated and I just think, where did that come from. I think it's their background, maybe, I don't know, I'm not sure. You know, in my, you know, my background was the, with my family, you kind of, you know, you like doing things for people. I'm not sure it's a teacher thing or something that can get trained into you. Um, then maybe it's, maybe it is and I've got some other teachers here that would just do anything you'd ask them to do something and they'll come with you and just do it.
21	6:31.6 - 6:32.3	<i>Int: yeah, yeah</i>
22	6:32.3 - 6:38.9	A0009: um, loving the, loving the whole environment I think. You've got to love being in Education.
23	6:38.9 - 6:48.0	<i>Int: Yeah, so, sort of values driven, which you're reflecting, perhaps, is not as commonly shared across teachers as you might expect it to be?</i>
24	6:48.0 - 7:24.8	A0009: Yeah, I think I was quite naive when I first came in thinking it was there and actually, and fortunately my first school which was [name] there were loads of teachers, all around us, that were all like that so healthy competition as to who was going to lead at the moment. Loved, loved departments and I thought that's what school was but we just had extraordinarily good, professional people in that school um and then I went to another school and it just wasn't there. Teachers were backbiting and I think I was naive to think that's what it was like. More real now
25	7:24.8 - 7:31.9	<i>Int: Yeah. Do you think that's partly a function of the leadership of the school or do you think it's a</i>

		<i>function of national policy or possibly both?</i>
26	7:31.9 - 8:40.1	A0009: Ahh.. think, it's about how you - I think it's overall, about how and who you attract into teaching. It's the kind of people that you get in and it's not necessarily the ones that have got a first or, that have got, you know, they've got, you know, another profession and you're trying to draw them in from elsewhere um, [inaudible] I don't know because a number of schools, I think now, um, actually the leadership does matter as well, because I did, when I worked as a senior leader in a girls' school, a girls' Catholic school, the staff were up for doing anything, the headteacher at the time was just, I mean she was just, she would just publically insult people. My current Head would not do that, but she did it and the rest of the Leadership team went round making everybody feel OK and they did do very well, so, yeah - sometimes it is about how you value the staff that you've got, but it's got to be trust, trusting - always said in this school, it's all to do with whether staff trust us and they trust, you know, we trust them.
27	8:40.1 - 8:55.5	<i>Int: and you reflected a minute ago on the you don't feel that staff, necessarily, understand the role of SLT. Do you think they truly appreciate um, what comes down from Government level in terms of policy or, you know, sponsors or intermediate levels?</i>
28	8:55.5 - 9:03.1	A0009: No, I don't, I think staff sometimes see us doing something which is putting something into place and they automatically think it's SLT
29	9:03.1 - 9:03.2	<i>Int: yeah</i>
30	9:03.2 - 9:54.8	A0009: even though they know, they're intelligent people themselves; some of them think that we have the power to say no and they'll get very union unionised about it which is also, really, you know, irrelevant (?) um, and I think, I think that does pose problems, pose a problem for us. We try and tell them that this is what we've got to do um, but, yeah - I don't think staff really understand that and I think some, more so, would like don't choose to go to other schools - our school hasn't

		had that much movement and so part of it they think, again, is the school and the leadership - if they went to other schools they would see story is exactly the same there. I think movement between schools is a really good thing, I mean I've moved quite a few times, so..
31	9:54.8 - 9:58.8	<i>Int: you think it's a healthy way of keeping the system moving?</i>
32	9:58.8 - 10:15.3	A0009: I think, I think it's a healthy way of making staff realise that we've, you know, we've got a professional job to do and the various schools you're in are all moving in the same way. I think some of them think the grass is greener and until they get there they want to come back.
33	10:15.3 - 10:42.7	<i>Int: Yeah, so you've got a situation where you've got a, sort a, I'll use the word stable staff - that's a nice way of putting it. They don't really understand what SLT is about and, perhaps, they're not really aware of what policies are coming down from on high as they might be. So, of the time you do spend day to day, how much would you say is mitigating external policies and requirements - how much is actually driven internally?</i>
34	10:42.7 - 10:45.6	A0009: Oh, of what we want to do?
35	10:45.6 - 10:46.1	<i>Int: Yes, yeah</i>
36	10:46.1 - 11:26.8	A0009: Oh.. um.. I think you can turn around - I mean for example, the pupil premium grant and what we're expected to do with it, I mean, we've - to begin with I think I was just like, 'Oh, what are we going to have to do with this?'; but now it's kind of, making it work for us and that's quite good. In terms of trying to make a percentage of it, um, and a lot of the things, I think, are right, you never know - I mean OfSTED have come around this time around and now presentation of things are very important, um, and I've always, that's always been one of my things, but that's - you know that'll change in a couple of year's time.. ooh, I don't know..
37	11:26.8 - 11:57.8	<i>Int: that, that's fine, I mean - essentially that's a good enough answer in it's own right, because I</i>

		<i>suppose, what it suggests to me is that it's more nuanced than clear cut. So you seem to be suggesting that there are things that do come down from on high which, because you see value in them and, and actually they become meaningful to you, then they become a priority for you as well, so you almost absorb that. Um, can you think of any examples though where that's not the case and you've had something landed on you or, or, which really you...</i>
38	11:57.8 - 12:18.7	A0009: Um, sorry, someone's just popped in. [inaudible] Um, Something that hasn't been the case, let's think (tutting noises and pause) hmm, I can't think of one that we haven't... I think the..
39	12:18.7 - 12:31.4	<i>Int: So you make the most work - make most of them work, do you, essentially? You take on what we're asked to do as an educational establishment and then you restructure it, reframe it, re-build it so it works in your, your situation?</i>
40	12:31.4 - 12:49.6	A0009: Yeah, I'm thinking of the, um, the you know... I deal with behaviour and safety, so - it's, it's not my favourite area at all, I mean, you know, being pastoral is not me, but I've been stuck with it for a number of years now, so things like attendance, punctuality and, um..
41	12:49.6 - 12:52.2	<i>Int: you've become the expert and you can't break free, yeah?</i>
42	12:52.2 - 13:21.4	A0009: Well, yeah. I think there's other people that I think I would be better at teaching and learning, anyway (laughs) it's that sort of thing. Um, but yes, some of the things like the whole um attendance and working on pupil premium and looked after children. I'm trying to think - I moan about it but funnily enough, I can't really choose anything I don't think I, I think is a waste of time doing. I think it's just the number of them and the time that you you don't have enough time to really make any of them work.
43	13:21.4 - 13:28.6	<i>Int: Yeah, I was going to lead on to that, 'cos you, you've been um, in schools for twenty years and how long have you been in Senior Leadership?</i>

44	13:28.6 - 13:32.5	A0009: as in SLT?
45	13:32.5 - 13:32.6	<i>Int: yeah</i>
46	13:32.6 - 13:37.1	A0009: err, probably about ten, ten years.
47	13:37.1 - 13:48.5	<i>Int: OK, so you've seen different persuasions of Government, as well - how, can you reflect on your observations and perception of policy change, the pace of it, the frequency of it?</i>
48	13:48.5 - 14:29.2	A0009: Oh, I think the frequency and the changing is just, it, I think it's been too much to try and absorb and make it meaningful, really. I mean the whole move at the moment, you know, I started to actually - I realise now without levels, that actually, I quite like them, in that, you know, I've also got my daughter who's going through Primary and it's amazing how much I actually use where we actually think where she's at, so - and also in grades. But, how acc, how accurate you can be with them, that's very difficult, very, very difficult. Um, so, so I've gone off on a tack now - what did you ask me?
49	14:29.2 - 14:34.0	<i>Int: So how has the frequency and pace of change, changed over the term of your experience.</i>
50	14:34.0 - 14:59.7	A0009: Um, it, I think that the.. that the changes that seem to have gone right round, you know, I've been saying today that, you know, that soon things are going to go out of favour and we're going to get the old ones back and that isn't very efficient, I think it's, it's saying that something we were doing before is now not worth - you know, just in my time in teaching; it's not worth doing anymore.
51	14:59.7 - 15:17.2	<i>Int: Yeah, so you've got, you've got things you're seeing going round in cycles, do you think that the, the, the - you've already sort of said you think the pace is too high; do you think that when new policy comes in it's well planned, well prepared, well resourced?</i>
52	15:17.2 - 15:29.4	A0009: We - Sometimes we... well, I need to talk about one in particular, which one do you want to

		look at? Which one do you think, which we think about, go through one that and how we worked on it in school?
53	15:29.4 - 15:32.3	<i>Int: You could, absolutely - examples are brilliant, so</i>
54	15:32.3 - 15:53.5	A0009: [inaudible] I think, unfortunately, with the whole special education - the SEN needs - it's, with the changes there, that is causing us quite, quite a lot of trouble. I mean, it causes, it's gonna cause me particular trouble, as well, with my own daughter
55	15:35.5 - 15:57.8	<i>Int: You'd describe that as a significant policy change to the system, wouldn't you?</i>
56	15:57.8 - 17:17.1	A0009: I think it would, yeah, I think it would be. The funding, the fact that some bar is the same, they're not going to follow up any provisions for certain students. Um, we know we've got the issue - we know that on the other end we've still got to produce the results for students. That end isn't changing, but the fact that um, the schools have got less money as well is linked with other things like reductions in budgets and cuts, that, that's all just, it's tightening different areas in our school so we're having to reduce the number of learning support assistants um, and special needs funding um, but yet we're not able to, we're not able to have the LSAs when we've got the students in our school that have got the needs, so it's kind of tightening in lots of different ways, because, I think money is kind of probably another danger, a factor or being able to deliver on different policies. I think the whole English Baccalaureate, now, I am a humanities teacher, so I was sort of, personally quite pleased with that move but I also know that music, drama, art, you now - we've begun moving to make everybody do it, that's going to be, you know, negatively affected.
57	17:17.1 - 17:17.5	<i>Int: yeah</i>
58	17:17.5 - 17:53.0	A0009: Um, PSHE came in at one point, citizenship and then, you know, do we now cut it? Kind of I don't know, I just think you're playing around with the curriculum as well which isn't very useful for schools, um, think the other one which I've got, which I really - it's the whole thing about um, not

		having to have a qualified teacher teaching children, um, that would really bother me, again, if it was my own daughter.
59	17:53.0 - 18:18.5	<i>Int: yes - that, that, sort of, leads on quite well to the next question, really, which is about standards. A lot of policy change is, is sort of predicated on the need to raise standards, um, that's been particularly stron over the last five, ten years. Do you think the pace of change, the frequency of change do allow you to impact on standards positively or is it variable, is it..</i>
60	18:18.5 - 18:52.6	A0009: I think it makes it more difficult because you, when, when you keep changing your focus, um, and you keep, you get more, more demands on you, I think it's, it makes the - especially if you've got staff who are not taking these things on, so in our school where I am having to do an awful lot of checks on Heads of Departments and what they're doing, it it takes away our time in terms of being effective. Let's just see what I've written down here... was your standards one linked to the..
61	18:52.6 - 18:58.1	<i>Int: oh, it's more of a follow on question, really, linked to the policy question</i>
62	18:58.1 - 19:30.5	A0009: no, I think, I think when there are lots of different changes, it it just confuses the matter. I mean, besides tha fact that OfSTED come with all their criteria which they change um, that that is also, you know, we, we - I think in schools, that makes it very difficult to, to link it all together. Um, to put policies into practice, to, you know when you're changing you're own school policies and then you find you're going to be inspected in a different way, the emphasis changes...
63	19:30.5 - 19:41.5	<i>Int: So if, if, when they're talking about standards, do you think that everybody shares the same, sort of, um, understanding of what that actually means?</i>
64	19:41.5 - 20:01.4	A0009: Um, throughout the school I think it's quite hard work to, to get people to understand what, what they are because, yeah, it's about consistency and that - no I don't think, I think it's very hard to get that kind of consistency sometimes even across senior leaders, um, yeah..

65	20:01.4 - 20:08.1	<i>Int: Do you think you share the same interpretation of standards as the DfE or OfSTED or the Secretary of State?</i>
66	20:08.1 - 21:07.4	A0009: Um.. (pause) I think [inaudible] I thought, I did but when with our recent inspection, without telling you what it is, I, I felt that our school is a.. you know, our school and our students are, are good students and in terms of behaviour, for example, but, you know, being measured against whatever criteria they used um, now it's, it is changing so as before we'd get one or two, now it looks as though we're going to get 3s and 4s and I think, um, you know, even in that small way, if you've got a different understanding of what the expectations or the standard is, um, then I think it makes a role for senior leaders quite difficult, um..
67	21:07.4 - 21:21.0	<i>Int: hmm, so is that an example of essentially where you would argue that the standards in your school have stayed consistent or possibly even improved but the expectations for standards have have risen?</i>
68	21:21.0 - 22:12.1	A0009: Absolutely, I think our kids now are so much better. When I left for a year - I left for a year to be an assistant head in another school and then I was headhunted, if you like, to come back here - and even then, which is a couple of years ago, I could tell the difference in our, in our students and I couldn't believe how different some of the year 10s were when they'd gone into year 11. You don't appreciate that when you're working in the school. But, oh and also to do with, you know, like in terms of attendance. Our attendance has fallen to 93, you got a 3 for it - now it's 95 and it's something that's still only satisfactory and I just think, well, you're not comparing apples with apples or pears with pears - you're comparing different things together and then being judged on that and that's very disheartening for staff as well. Um,
69	22:12.1 - 22:28.4	<i>Int: so, in your current situation, though - you feel, sort of, that you are managing within the system, you are implementing policies um, successfully from from above, but it's not being recognised</i>

		<i>through the accountability system, would that be an accurate</i>
70	22:28.4 - 23:14.3	A0009: oh, I think the, yeah, I think definitely in terms of what we've been doing for behaviour and safety, safeguarding, you know, all of those various things that we've had to do - new directives from the borough as well, um, it's not, I think, in the previous system it would have, would have been really good and I think now it's being measured because of the actual data of the students, so that when, I think, for me, I think the framework is wrong - I know we're just talking about OfSTED but you know, that's the tool which Government use to determine how schools are doing, um, and I think that the framework's got to be different. Um, Paul, um, how far through the interview are we?
72	23:14.3 - 23:19.4	<i>Int: Um, I can make it as short or as long as you like, if you've got a time limit I can, I can..</i>
73	23:19.4 - 23:23.7	A0009: Is 15 minutes OK? I can..
74	23:23.7 - 23:25.1	<i>Int: I can, We can whizz through, yes, absolutely</i>
75	23:25.1 - 23:30.4	A0009: OK, yes. It's just I'm giving somebody a lift as well but I can do a follow up one if you want..
76	23:30.4 - 23:42.8	<i>Int: No, no I'm sure that'll be fine - we're already probably half way through because you've covered quite a lot of the early questions in what you've been saying, so, please don't worry - no, that's absolutely fine. Um, so, if we move on then.</i>
77	23:42.8 - 23:47.3	A0009: Paul, do you want to define what, then what you wanted me to talk about in terms of standards?
78	23:47.3 - 24:14.1	<i>Int: Ah, what I, I don't what to lead you, you see, the key thing is I'm trying to establish is if there is a um, a shared understanding of what the term standards means in schools. You've reflected on OfSTED setting standards, which would generally be outcomes, um, the metrics they use obviously generally tend to be around exam outcomes and things like that. One of the questions which I'll</i>

		come on to in a minute is what you think parents would say about standards and that can be broader can't it?
71	23:14.1 - 24:20.1	A0009: Yeah, parents tend to talk about the presentation of students and how well they're.. yeah
79	24:20.7 - 24:30.1	<i>Int: yeah and you've reflected on behaviour as well, so a sort of, broader range of judgements that people make about the school other than exam outcomes.</i>
80	24:30.1 - 24:30.7	A0009: yeah
81	24:30.7 - 24:46.6	<i>Int: um, OK, so obviously you've already reflected on the difficulties with recruitment and the huge issues with funding, given all of those challenges, how do you as a team, how do you determine how and where you invest your time and money? How do you prioritise?</i>
82	24:46.6 - 25:38.2	A0009: Well the, I suppose, we may have done it slightly differently if we had a different headteacher. Our Headteacher the money, um, at the moment in terms of the money that we've got ion the school, is looking at buildings, as well, so he's, he's spending some of the money that we've - the previous headteacher had a million, I think, in the bank, um and she was keeping it for a sixth form. What he's said is, look, the kids in the school, it's their money, they need to have it spent on them, so we've made new toilets and he's widening the corridors, he's looking at health and safety, but it seems though a number of schools in our area have got no, they, they, they've got no money so they've got budget problems, but we don't , so, um, yeah - he's kind of..
83	25:38.2 - 25:43.7	<i>Int: so he's putting the, the sort of environmental considerations are quite a high priority?</i>
85	25:43.7 - 25:45.3	A0009: for him at the moment, yeah
84	25:43.3 - 25:49.1	<i>Int: yeah, and, and you've already mentioned pupil premium, is that something you are deliberately prioritising?</i>

86	25:49.1 - 26:44.2	A0009: That's my area, yeah, pupil premium and we, we do look at different ways in which we can actually use it for the students who are ppg, yeah, we don't take it for anything else. Um, we use it on, you know, learning support um, all sorts of different small projects as well, um, laptops, um, equipment, trips and supporting students in having extra-curricular activities, clubs, for some of them, um, electric piano things, what are they.. keyboards is what they're called, um, some of them little hand held dictionary things, um, computer ones -yes so different things like that and then we're monitoring how it's, and using different case studies, but not just based on data - for me, it 's very important that it's, it's about the quality as much as quantity.
87	26:44.2 - 26:56.9	<i>Int: Yes, yeah - what a [inaudible] - so it's, I mean, when pupil premium was first imposed, did you feel, did you fear that was something you weren't going to have a lot of ownership or control of, or..</i>
88	26:56.9 - 28:02.6	A0009: I thought it was a .. to begin with I thought it was a waste, I thought, you know, ah, I really feel that it really should just, even now I really do think it should be part of the school's funding. I think we'd probably be doing those kind of things anyway, but maybe not the little.. it's the tiny little things that student's really value most, it's really strange, but, you know, little, the laptops all the little dictionary or a pencil set and you can do all your old, the fancy programme from the Sutton sort of pool, but actually, sometimes they just want somebody to say, to give them a little present and, that's what I've found after a couple of years, the girl that really changed her behaviour, we gave her a twenty pound Christmas present one year because she was a looked after child and, I'd like to - we have got the evidence because she has left really positive, but it was a thing that stuck it all together so, but actually, I would, I would actually - it would be a shame to lose the money but I think it would be better within the school budget.
89	28:02.6 - 28:05.9	<i>Int: Ok, right, I see, so you can be more flexible with it, essentially?</i>

90	28:05.9 - 28:16.6	A0009: and more meaningful, probably, because separating it out makes it - it's a huge amount of money and it's a shame that it has to be accounted for in the way that it does.
91	28:16.6 - 28:28.2	<i>Int: Ok, so given all of that and all of the other challenges, um, just thinking sort of aloud to yourself, what do you think you would need in order to to get the absolute best from your school?</i>
92	28:28.2 - 28:31.3	A0009: Um, ah,
93	28:31.3 - 28:34.2	<i>Int: If you were talking directly to policy makers, what would you be asking for?</i>
94	28:34.2 - 28:57.5	A0009: Oooh, to policy makers - um, I think it's, to, to - I think to discuss more with schools what it is that we need. Possibly, teacher training, I think, is very important and where you get new staff from, where you recruit new staff from.
95	28:57.5 - 29:04.2	<i>Int: So consultation and staff supply are two critical things?</i>
96	29:04.2 - 29:24.0	A0009: yeah, and (pause) I think, possibly, just trusting what leaders do. That it, I think, you know, trusting that we know, you know, that we're the professionals in the post, that we do know ourselves what we've got to do, but I think there's an awful lot of unnecessary direction, um,
97	29:24.0 - 29:31.5	<i>Int: do you think that acts then as a barrier to you being able to do it as effectively as you could?</i>
98	29:31.5 - 30:42.6	A0009: I think recently it has become, yeah, not so creative. I think, you know, we've found that we've had to move.. we've had to move away and almost, sort of, make a distinction between staff, um, a call coming into my mobile, um, it definitely, I mean on a day to day basis, I suppose I don't really think much about what we've got to, what we've got to account for and that's quite strange, it's when I get home, and in my.. at home I'm actually looking at things like what do we need to do, are we meeting this, or, you know, what, what haven't I, what haven't we been able to do - then planning that and bringing it in to school, trying to get all of that done during the

		meeting times that we have, um, but um, but you can, again, I think, the other thing is you have to have the staff that can, that can work with you. When you've got a brilliant group of staff and I had at the girl's school I worked in was amazing - they were outstanding - um, things are just, you can actually cope, you can actually cope with different directives.
99	30:42.6 - 30:48.3	<i>Int: OK. Um, what would you hope students would say about your school?</i>
100	30:48.3 - 31:30.3	A0009: It's really strange, because whenever our students are being interviewed by anyone, they always come out with they really like the school, they feel safe in school, um, they've got some really good teachers, they can explain, they can say who's good and who isn't and that they enjoy coming in to school. Whenever I stop some of them in the corridors they're never so, they're never so positive, so I think it's about how you put the question, but I would hope that they would say they really like it and I don't know that a lot of year 11 when they leave, a huge amount come back and actually huge amount of them, because it's a very odd area where the school is, they get married to local people and they send their own children here, so..
101	31:30.3 - 31:34.7	<i>Int: so that shows quite a high level of trust and, um,</i>
102	31:34.7 - 31:40.2	A0009: well, it does but it might also be just convenience because they're not hugely aspirational
103	31:40.2 - 31:41.3	<i>Int: oh, I see, yeah</i>
104	31:41.3 - 31:55.9	A0009: they, yeah, they'll continue to moan about the school but they, they still send their kids here um, but I would hope that they would, they would be happy with what they've achieved in school. Yeah.
105	31:55.9 - 32:04.4	<i>Int: Ok, yeah. Um, little bit harder, but um, if we adjust the question slightly. What advice would you give to someone aspiring to senior leadership?</i>

106	32:04.4 - 33:20.3	A0009: Um, well, for me, the senior leadership - they've always got to look for and make opportunities for staff that are in the school, that want to do things. I think, in my, in my first school, that's what I think gave me the um, gave me the belief that I could go on and do things in school, so it's kind of.. and it does, it hasn't happened, um, hasn't happened anywhere else, I've kind of noticed that after that, after that first school experience, there were very few senior leaders who actually wanted anyone else to be as good or better than them and that, I think, is the problem, um, and I still do it here, I still see staff who are really good and I say to them, why don't you do this, why don't you do that? Let's do this together or when new heads of department come in I will say to them, right - this is what you need to do to get the head to notice you and then this is what you need to do and this is what you need to follow up - so I love developing staff and I think, that's been, for me, really rewarding, so I think new people going into senior leadership have got to have that about them, because those are the people who are going to be supporting you to make it outstanding, um
107	33:20.3 - 33:24.4	<i>Int: and what would you say to them about work life balance as a senior leader?</i>
108	33:24.4 - 34:19.4	A0009: Oh, I'm a really bad person to ask that question to, because, um, you know, I am noticing now that my little daughter - she's only got 9 more years of education and I'm, and an awful lot of it I spend in school. Tonight, after this, I've got to go and get her and bring her back into school, so, ahhh, for years you see, it's taken me a long time, for years I've just, it's always been work, work, work - um, I think it needs to be healthier but I just don't know how it's ever going to be because of the demands on teachers and um, on senior leaders. I'd dearly like to have, because I was only ever a teacher for about a year and a half or two years and then I started taking on responsibility, and actually my goal is to maybe become a teacher again. Give up being a deputy and um, just enjoy curriculum development, I love it.
109	34:19.4 - 34:27.1	<i>Int: Is that so.. did you prior to your current role, did you have an aspiration to be a Principal or a Head?</i>

110	34:27.1 - 34:57.8	A0009: I didn't, I, I, well, no. My friend, around me, always said she came in late to teaching, Oh, I want to be a Headteacher and I said no, I want to stay in the classroom - then I got promoted and then, I just want to be head of RE, then I got promoted and, there was a time when I saw idiots leading the school when I thought, Oh god I can do that better, and then did. Um, but it seems, it's sort of different now. Now, it's more of about reducing numbers of senior leaders and too many deputies, or
111	34:57.8 - 35:09.6	<i>Int: and have you seen people um, obviously for you it's not been an issue, but have you seen colleagues from your school or elsewhere who have changed their view of moving into senior leadership or into headship?</i>
112	35:09.6 - 35:26.1	A0009: Yeah, I have done. There are and there are some, there another Headteacher friend of mine who got a head posts and we thought well, do you know, we must work together again but in another school just as teachers, um and he only wants to do it for a couple of years.
113	35:26.1 - 35:28.4	<i>Int: and what do you think is the main driver of that?</i>
114	35:28.4 - 35:29.8	A0009: Of wanting to change?
115	35:29.8 - 35:30.4	<i>Int: Yeah</i>
116	35:30.4 - 36:34.1	A0009: Um, I think it's the way in which schools are judged, I think it's the way in which headteachers and senior leaders are judged against you know, um, policy from Government. I think it's um, very harsh way of looking at what progress is in schools. Um, I mean when OfSTED came I made sure they saw my case studies it's where the kids looked as though they'd failed but, they were children that wouldn't have, you know, I try and make sure that they actually take that into account, because it's really important in schools like mine where there is no parental input, for any of these kids sometimes, that it's different from a grammar school, so, and I think maybe, I think

		a lot of people just don't want to take the role. I mean, if I was younger, um, I thought I wanted to be a Head, actually while I was a Deputy and now I just think, no I'm not doing that. I'm not going to put my whole career on the line if something goes wrong in the school, and, you know.
117	36:34.1 - 37:05.8	<i>Int: OK, right, well we'd better leave it there, because I'm just keeping half an eye on the clock and you're going to want to get yourself ready, but that's still been extremely valuable so thanks a lot for that. Um, what will happen is, I've got a lot of transcription to do over the summer holiday, ah, as soon as I've done yours I'll ping it to you by email. If there's anything you don't think has come across right in my transcription or you think, well actually that's not what I meant, then, please just let me know. I want to represent your views not my interpretation of your views.</i>
118	37:05.8 - 37:12.7	A0009: Yes, that's fine, and if there is anything you think I haven't quite got down to what you actually wanted, I don't mind you asking, you know, and I'll write it back to you, or whatever.
119	37:12.7 - 37:39.8	<i>Int: yeah, or I can ping you a follow up question, that's right. Um, and then essentially anything that you want taken out completely then you just let me know and I'll remove that. It'll all be anonymised as well, so I'll take out any references to area or anything like that, um, to be honest in documentation that most people see the transcripts won't be part of it, it'll just be segments or selections, um, it's only in the full thesis and work I send to ASCL that they'll actually see a bit more of the detail.</i>
120	37:39.8 - 37:42.9	A0009: Are you doing this while you are working full time?
121	37:42.9 - 37:43.9	<i>Int: Yes, yeah.</i>
122	37:43.9 - 37:44.3	A0009: It's a lot isn't it?
123	37:44.3 - 37:47.3	<i>Int: It is but it's um, ultimately very rewarding...</i>

