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Teachers' involvement in decision-making: a case-study of a primary school at a time of rapid change

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REFERENCE ONLY

Teachers' involvement in decision-making: a case-study of a primary school at a time of rapid change

by

Denis Hayes

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

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Rolle School of Education
Faculty of Arts and Education
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ABSTRACT

Teachers' involvement in decision-making: a case-study of a primary school at a time of rapid change by Denis Hayes.

This thesis rests upon a case-study of staff involvement in decision-making during a time of rapid change in the education system of England and Wales in a Church of England (aided) primary school for children aged 5 to 12, referred to under the pseudonym *St. Kerensa's*. Against this background of change, I develop a framework for the analysis of teacher involvement with special reference to the influence of statutory demands, focusing particularly upon the headteacher's attempts to establish a climate of collaboration and staff reactions to the opportunities for involvement. The imposition of government reforms affects the development of intra-school policy, diverting attention from various immediate school needs. The tightly coupled decision-making process established by the headteacher as part of her response in dealing with the reforms is found to be inadequate in itself to facilitate committed teacher participation. The case-study indicated that in her quest to establish this process the headteacher needed to take into account teachers' interpretation of events, value positions and workload, the effect of interest groups, and teachers' misgivings about involvement. Clarification over the purpose of the consultation process was found to be an important factor in ensuring teachers' satisfaction about their involvement; in this respect, the conditions under which consultation took place reflected the level of collegiality and consensus. The thesis contributes to our fuller understanding of teachers' involvement in decision-making by recognizing the importance of both the structural and inter-personal elements in decision-making. Headteachers need to be clear about the extent of their hegemony and the importance of a school culture in which staff well-being is valued, their concerns for children acknowledged, and the clarification of shared values and goals viewed as axiomatic in the quest for coherent decision-making during a time of imposed national reforms.

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Finally, to my long-suffering family, who have all shared my joys and frustrations across the past four years and more as I have been closeted for long hours in self-imposed isolation.

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

At no time during the registration for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy has Denis Hayes been registered for any other University award.

This study was financed by the University of Plymouth, U.K.

This programme of advanced study was financed by the University of Plymouth, United Kingdom, and undertaken as an extension of my work as a lecturer within the Faculty of Arts and Education in Exmouth, Devon, using a single primary school for the case-study.

Relevant research seminars at the Rolle Faculty of Arts and Education, seminars organized by the University of Plymouth at Dartington, Devon, and conferences at Nottingham, Birmingham, and Bristol were attended. Papers were offered at the latter two conferences. A number of articles were written for publication (Appendix 12).

During the period of the research, I have corresponded with Professor David Hellowell at the University of Central England in Birmingham and Dr. Geoffrey Southworth of the Cambridge Institute of Education.

Signed Denis Hayes

Date 18th May 1994

INTRODUCTION

This thesis reports the findings from a two-year case-study of a primary school in the south-west of England. Data were gathered through non-participant attendance at staff meetings and governors meetings and semi-structured interviews with teachers, headteacher and governors. In all, a total of 42 full staff meetings, 22 senior management team meetings, 14 early years and upper school age-specific 'phase' meetings, 3 curriculum working parties and 7 staff development days were attended over the period of the study. Further, 21 semi-structured staff interviews using two interview schedules and different unstructured agenda were conducted with teachers, of which 4 were with the deputy head, 3 with the second teacher-governor and 2 each with two of the senior management team. The headteacher was interviewed formally and informally on 20 occasions for times varying from fifteen minutes to two hours. A total of 14 governors' meetings (full and sub-committee) were attended and 5 foundation governors were interviewed (in addition to the two teacher-governors). A large number of informal conversations were held with different participants. As the thesis developed, opportunity was given to the headteacher and staff to comment on the findings. Factual errors were corrected and key respondents were offered a 'right of reply' to my analysis. As different articles about the role of the headteacher emerged from my findings, I kept her informed of their progress and showed her draft copies for comment. Similarly, staff were kept fully informed by letter about the research's progress and opportunity was extended for comment about aspects of the study (Appendix 1).

Background to the research

By common consent the years since the passing of the Education Reform Act 1988 have been ones of rapid change for schools throughout the United Kingdom. For example, Reed & Hall (1989) claimed that 'the provisions of the 1988 Education Reform Act leave no doubt about the magnitude of the task that

schools have been set' (p. 9). Similarly, Newton & Tarrant (1992) and Flude & Hammer (1990) referred to the late 1980's and early 1990's as one of imposed and unprecedented change. Osborn (1992) pointed out the tendency for central government to define educational goals but then to lay the responsibility for their achievement upon teachers in school. As a practitioner, Waterhouse (1993) commented upon the growing exhaustion that had taken its toll of her staff during the past few years as they attempted to negotiate National Curriculum implementation, and pleaded for 'a set of realistic and achievable expectations' (p. 42) for the future (also Macgilchrist, 1990). Coping with the rapidity of change has resulted in a phenomenon popularly referred to as 'innovation fatigue' amongst teachers. In this context, Osborn (1992) noted the considerable effects of the National Curriculum upon the working lives of teachers, commenting that teachers were tending to incorporate the changes into their working practice rather than attempting to resist or retreat into passive compliance. A number of authors have written of the way in which the need for staff to survive and prosper during these times requires of them to adopt a more collaborative stance and thereby increase staff involvement in decision-making and policy development. Smyth (1991), Fullan & Hargreaves (1992) and Southworth (1993) are amongst those who have advocated the establishment of enduring collaborative relationships between teachers during a time of change.

Focus of this research

This research was an attempt to discover how the staff of one school had responded to the rapid pace of change in terms of their own involvement in the process of decision-making. If it was true that one impact of recent reforms had been to increase involvement as claimed, for instance, by Muschamp et al (1992) a number of issues required clarification, including:

- * ways in which staff were involved

- * things that motivated and promoted involvement
- * hindrances to involvement
- * the place of collegiality and collaboration
- * the effectiveness of involvement

A brief comment on each of these areas to establish the context for the research follows:

Ways in which staff were involved

It was important to establish through observation and questioning the different forms that involvement took in order to more effectively address the other issues mentioned above. The obvious starting point for this search was an examination of the existing structures within the school which offered opportunity for involvement.

Things that motivated and promoted involvement

Data which merely traced the extent of teacher involvement were not adequate to explain the motives of participants for involvement or non-involvement. Much of this information could only be made available through discussion with teachers during interview and informal encounters.

Hindrances to involvement

It seemed unlikely that teacher involvement would exist in isolation from the other rest of school life and with the unconditional support of every staff member. Identification of hindrances to involvement was essential in gaining a more complete picture.

The place of collegiality and collaboration

Clarifying the reasons for staff involvement would hopefully lead to a fuller understanding of the relationship between the participants and existing power and authority structures. The validity of claims by a headteacher or senior staff for a collaborative or collegial culture could be tested in the light of this understanding.

The effectiveness of involvement

Finally, a more difficult area concerned the effect that involvement was likely to have upon the decision-making process. The case-study offered the prospect that evidence about effectiveness of involvement, gained through careful observations of proposal, involvement and outcome, and staff perceptions of the process, could be evaluated in the context of the time of change.

The case-study

I considered a case-study approach to be relevant in providing opportunity to gain an holistic perspective, thereby building a model for involvement through first-hand observation of individuals and groups of teachers, and discussions and interviews with them (Nisbet & Watt, 1978). I was not aware of any previous research which had achieved this depth of study within a single primary school, the closest recent development involving participant observation and interviews over one academic year in five different schools (Nias et al, 1989). I perceived that my own research would benefit from my regular attendance at staff meetings and developing opportunities for informal talks with staff and headteacher in addition to any timetabled interviews. My role was that of 'non-participant' for two reasons:

- (a) it would deflect from being viewed by staff as an educational adviser, with the accompanying tutor-role and responsibilities this would imply, and

(b) it would allow me more freedom to concentrate on the research in hand, largely untroubled by other responsibilities, particularly as I was travelling some distance to the school and time pressures were likely to be severe.

Theory development depended to some extent upon an awareness of previous studies and their implications; however, I intended that the proposed length of research would allow for a more gradual erection of models and tentative hypotheses based on the evidence from the case-study (Glaser & Strauss, 1967). Access to the school over a long-term was therefore necessary and I considered that two years was probably a minimum period to follow through the process. Choice of the case-study school depended, in part, on the willingness of staff to accept my presence as a non-participant observer and a school large enough to offer a range of involvement opportunities for staff. I was familiar with St. Kerensa's, having worked there as deputy and acting headteacher until 1988 plus regular contact since then with student-teachers in the school, and knew it to be a lively and busy place, located close to the inner-city, with a headteacher who openly claimed to espouse staff involvement in decision-making. I felt that my knowledge of the school would be greatly beneficial in developing insights and also increase the likelihood that staff would feel less threatened by my presence, though I was conscious that my preconceived ideas might interfere with objectivity. In the event, it took some months of negotiation with appropriate assurances given by me to the headteacher about confidentiality before the research could begin. The headteacher, Mrs. Boxer, was enthusiastic about my involvement with the school; she made it clear that I was welcome on the condition that staff were happy with the prospect. After clearing these matters through discussion with the staff, my attendance at formal meetings began in February 1991 and regular attendance ended in April 1993, though I continued to visit occasionally for a further nine months to clarify points about which I was uncertain, double check that teachers were happy about my use of data specific

to themselves, and make myself available to anyone should they wish to speak to me.

In addition to gaining access to the school, governors also agreed to a request for my attendance as a non-participant observer at their full and sub-committee meetings. At the time I was uncertain about the likely value of data from this source, but felt that it would assist me in gaining a fuller picture of the key issues affecting staff and the way they were dealt with by governors. In the event, it proved extremely useful, both from the insights I gained and from the contact with governors, particularly the two teacher-governors. I tried hard to speak openly with staff whenever they asked me about the research without betraying confidences or revealing too much of my developing ideas. On the other hand, I was anxious to test out any tentative thoughts by using both interviews and informal conversations as a means of confirming the hunches I'd gained from attendance at formal meetings in producing explanatory models. Throughout the research retaining my position as a non-participant proved one of the greatest challenges for a number of reasons:-

- * As I became a familiar sight around the school, the staff began to treat me as a colleague and sometimes shared very confidential thoughts and ideas. It proved difficult to respond positively to this gesture while retaining my 'detached' role.
- * The headteacher viewed me as a friend of the school and would frequently share some of the issues which were of concern to her. I needed to maintain my relationship with her yet avoid merely becoming another 'friendly adviser'.
- * The longer I remained in the school, the more I found that the issues I had raised with staff during interview were being raised elsewhere by them in formal meetings. I had to accept that by asking for a response to a particular question at interview, I was inevitably highlighting the issue for the respondent and likely to trigger subsequent reference to it.

Nevertheless, I persevered to maintain a balance between over-familiarity and aloofness, recognising that I would only unlock the complexities of staff involvement as I stayed closely in touch with them and their day-to-day work within the school. The first substantial feedback was given to the headteacher after two years of research by the use of a 'management audit' (see Appendix 9). After this time, I gradually reduced my visits to the school, feeling that I had accumulated a considerable amount of data and confident that I had gained sufficient insight to develop theoretical frameworks which would inform my thesis. I contacted teachers in October 1993 with copies of their interview transcripts, requesting that anyone who felt uneasy about their use or wished to comment about any aspect of the discourse, should contact me at home or work. Over the next three or four months, despite numerous visits to the school and frequent casual conversations with staff, only one teacher asked for me to be discrete over use of some comments from interview. By early 1994 I had completed a first complete draft of my thesis and later produced a summary for staff and a separate one for governors; a copy of the thesis was placed in the school for staff reference.

Presentation of the thesis

The thesis is divided into four main parts in addition to the Introduction:-

- Review
- Method
- Findings
- Interpretation and Conclusions

Appendices and references are included at the back of the thesis.

PART ONE: REVIEW

CHAPTER 1
THE CHANGE PROCESS

A note about terminology

Frequent reference will be made throughout this thesis to the terms 'change' and 'innovation'. I shall use the two words interchangeably but tend to offer 'innovation' where it appears that there is the intention on the part of the initiator of change to alter or shape existing practice substantially with a view to improvement. Dalin (1978), for instance, speaks of innovation as signifying something that is better than whatever has preceded it. 'Change' will be applied as the generic term which may or may not involve innovatory practice.

The two terms 'involvement' and 'participation' are also normally used interchangeably in the literature and unless otherwise stated I will conform to this practice throughout this thesis. However, it is useful to bear in mind that there may be a distinction between 'involvement' when interpreted as the opportunity for playing a part in a process, and 'participation' which implies that the involvement included an active role for that person. If this distinction is used, it will suggest that although a group of people may be involved, participation depends upon an individual's response.

Similarly, 'collaboration' and 'collegiality' are related terms but not necessarily identical. 'Collaboration' is a term used across a range of situations to describe the process of sharing and commitment towards a common goal. It does not necessarily operate within an established structure such as a school and may take many guises, including a need to harness expertise and wisdom for the purpose of solving an unpredictable dilemma or emergency. Collaboration can also reflect greed or the desire for personal aggrandisement such as in the selling of wartime classified information to an enemy. It is difficult to envisage a situation in which collegiality will not involve collaboration; however, it is quite possible for collaboration to take place outside a collegial system if collegiality is taken to imply a form of 'democratic equivalence' or using Campbell's definition, 'a society of scholars, equal to one another in status, with a common purpose, but with distinctively different knowledge' (1985, p. 3). In my

thesis, I shall not attempt any sharp distinction between the two words, but tend to use collaboration as a more general term and collegial to indicate a situation in which whole staff consensus is the intention. As such, collegiality implies a move towards a more egalitarian system of decision-making.

We may also consider that 'decision-making' may not be the single end-product of participation and envisage that participants may offer their perspectives, knowledge and expertise, yet not ultimately make the decision. In such a case, the appropriate term for their involvement would seem to be 'consultation', a particular form of participation. Using this definition, consultation would depend upon the leader's acceptance that the prospective contributor possessed insights, knowledge or skills which might assist the process. However, depending upon the situation, we would need to acknowledge that the ultimate decision-maker might choose to ignore advice, use it selectively or interpret it from a fixed perspective. As such, issues of power, authority, status, and accountability are likely to be important considerations. For instance, Hobbs et al (1979), in their wide-ranging research about decision-making in primary schools, warned that what a headteacher intended as 'consultation', the teacher may feel was an instruction. Conway (1984), in a thorough review of participative decision making since 1968, summarised the variety of approaches to the issue, including a comparison of differing definitions for participation, thus:

- * as an operation by those who were to execute the decisions;
- * as an operation distinct from delegation;
- * as joint decision-making involving at least two persons.

He explored the debate over ways in which individuals holding different value positions could share the rationale for participation (but with different motives),

and the importance of participation in allowing members greater control over their own destiny.

Conway further discussed the concepts of decision-making and participation, concluding that decision-making was 'a process whereby one or more actors determine a particular choice'; whereas participation 'refers to the sharing by two or more actors in some action or matter' (p.19). That is, participation was about the process needed to reach the point of choice, whereupon the decision could be made. He gave examples of how participation may be mandatory, formalised or informal, and direct or indirect ('direct' indicating direct access to the process by an individual; 'indirect' referring to representation by a member). Price & Reid (1989) investigated the differences between headteachers' and teachers' views on aspects of decision-making in primary schools, and referred to the variety of approaches to this issue adopted in the literature on decision-making. These included an identification of the stages involved; the importance of leadership styles; the role of the headteacher; the relationship between decision-making and curriculum; innovatory practices; the influence of parents; and the changes in the management of schools over time. Despite this, they regretted the dearth of literature relating to decision-making specifically in the primary school. Price and Reid drew from the work of Levin (1975) to clarify their definition of the term 'decision'. Thus:

...certain events...are manifestations of a resolve upon action being or having been deliberately formed. Such a resolve may form slowly in an individual's mind, or it may form as a result of a mental act at some moment in time. A collective resolve may be formed by a group of people sometimes emerging in the course of communication within the group, sometimes generated by the casting of votes. Where a resolve upon action is formed as the result of a deliberate individual or collective act, we can term that act a 'decision' (p. 21).

However, this definition is subject to the proviso 'a resolve upon action' and fails to take account of events whereby a particular course of action is seen as justified or desirable, but the willingness to initiate the necessary action is not

present within the group. The acknowledgement of a need to do something positive to resolve a situation does not necessarily lead to a firm course of action. Indeed, if the options are unpalatable in that the desired outcome is obscure or requires an unacceptable level of effort or may lead to instability, it is reasonable to predict that the resolve of those involved may weaken. Added to this is the question of accountability: if the proposed action seems likely to create a position where the participants themselves are vulnerable, it may be felt more prudent to take another option, defer the decision, or pass the problem to a 'higher authority'. This may, in itself, be termed 'a decision', though as Price and Reid acknowledge, the decision may be characterised by a failure to make any decision. Everard & Morris (1990) noted that decision-making could take many forms:-

- * Autocratic... Decision taken without consultation.
- * Persuasive... Decision taken before consultation and 'sold' to others.
- * Consultative... Views of others are sought and taken into account before a decision is made.
- * Codeterminate... Decisions taken on a consensus or majority.

It is interesting to note that Conway (1984) failed to refer to the indirect representation which might result from activity within the institution outside formal meetings, such as the spokesperson for a constituency of members or for a temporary alliance created by (for instance) older teachers opposed to a proposal which might threaten longstanding practices. Everard & Morris, on the other hand, implied that decisions were not necessarily made by the group involved in consultation, but might fall to the person or persons ultimately responsible and accountable. They suggested that informal structures played a significant part in the shaping of decisions and persuading others of their efficacy (a point explored by Hargreaves, 1992a, 1992b).

Establishing a framework

In the light of the aims of the research, the first part of the review is primarily concerned with establishing a framework for the following:

- * the impact of change upon teachers, and their responses
- * the challenge of change for teachers
- * the role of the headteacher during a time of change

I shall explore each of these in turn.

The impact of change upon teachers and their responses

By common consent, the past ten years have seen an unprecedented number of government-initiated reforms affecting teachers working in schools. Primary and secondary schools have been the focus for sweeping changes in the way they have been managed, including delegation of funds and many accompanying responsibilities to individual governing bodies. There has been legislation affecting parental choice of school and their entitlement to information about the school's functioning, philosophy and intentions, plus access to fuller details about their children's progress. Re-fashioning of links with the local authority has occurred due to a contraction in the range of the authority's power and influence and a redefinition of their responsibilities. In addition, schools have been obliged to develop stronger community awareness including co-option of local people onto the governing body. All of this has taken place within the context of National Curriculum implementation and associated testing, the development of pupil profiling and the prospect of more regular inspections of schools through the Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). Teachers and headteachers have become subject to regular appraisal, and the abolition of incentive allowances (from September 1993) have been accompanied by the

establishment of a single pay spine for all teachers other than headteachers and deputies and flexibility for governors to award or withhold yearly salary increments. Little wonder that a past chairman of the National Curriculum Council (NCC), Duncan Graham, wrote of the 'awe-inspiring prescription set in train by the 1988 Education Act' (Graham & Tytler, 1993, p. 117).

The rate of change in schools since the Education Act 1988 has been reflected in the amount of information passed to headteachers and governors from four main sources: the Department of Education and Science (DES; later the Department for Education, DfE); the National Curriculum Council (NCC) and the School Examinations and Assessment Council (SEAC), later to combine under the Schools' Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA); and the Local Education Authority (LEA). Teachers and headteachers have had to cope with the implications of these and many other changes and the role of the headteacher has been affected by increased managerial responsibility (Kirkpatrick, 1990; Laws & Dennison, 1991) and the need to work closely with governors (Baginsky et al, 1991; Golby, 1992). Teachers have experienced the difficulties of implementing a national curriculum which has undergone numerous alterations and about which there have been ambiguities that have necessitated short-term interpretation prior to receiving fuller guidelines. In particular, the timetable for implementation has made headteachers and governors sharply aware of their statutory responsibilities to ensure implementation of the different national reforms.

All this has happened against a backdrop of great changes in the responsibilities of local government, the diminishing influence of teacher unions, economic recession and accompanying low wage settlements. With few exceptions, every full-time primary teacher in England and Wales has been allocated a curriculum or related responsibility, necessitating familiarity in depth with a subject or subjects, and an associated need to inform and advise colleagues. Externally imposed innovation has persisted throughout this time

and teachers have had to negotiate a series of changes which were not necessarily predictable or consistent. Spasmodic changes had occurred in primary schools due to the impact of the reforms prior to the start of the data collection, but the impetus for change continued uninterrupted throughout the study.

During the implementation of the national reform programme, teachers have also had to cope with close public scrutiny of their professional conduct and classroom practice (see Kremer & Hofman, 1985). Sweetman (1992) pointed out a significant feature of recent history in the way politicians

have moved from commenting on subjects in the curriculum to a point where they feel free to make statements on aspects of educational theory and classroom practice (p. 14).

He referred to the highly publicised comments of senior politicians who challenged current classroom pedagogy as being obsessed with topics and projects, serving the interests of the teacher rather than the child, and failing to utilise a range of teaching techniques. In addition, the Alexander Report (Alexander, 1991) and the government-initiated 'Three Wise Men' discussion document (Alexander, Rose & Woodhead, 1992) and subsequent national conferences (OFSTED, 1993) served to sharpen the debate about the appropriateness of particular teaching approaches and the success or otherwise of teachers in responding to the demands of a subject-based National Curriculum and the possible benefits of specialist teaching. It is also relevant to note that teachers who have qualified since 1988 have only known teaching under the National Curriculum; more experienced primary school staff can recall the days when there was relatively little account taken of curriculum content, when whole-school policies were rare, and discussions about curriculum balance, record-keeping and assessment, inconsistent. Nevertheless, changes have inevitably affected all class teachers, caught between a desire to continue

teaching in familiar ways yet needing to respond to the plethora of statutory demands and give serious consideration to the debate about teaching approaches.

It would be foolish to anticipate that even during a time of extensive national reforms, internally-initiated innovations and decisions were absent from school life. However, internally-initiated small-scale changes may occur gradually and almost unnoticed as a result of the experiences teachers have while carrying out their job; others happen due to the dissemination of information by a colleague and subsequent modifications to practice. Sometimes there will be change due to a perceived need that is evident to one or more of the staff. On the other hand, changes which are initiated from among the staff are different in kind from those externally imposed by a local authority or the government. Externally imposed change cannot, by its very nature, be specific to a school situation. Inevitably, then, every school staff will need to interpret a directive in the light of their own circumstances yet (in theory) produce a comparable change-outcome to every other school. In addition, enforced change differs from internally-initiated in that the former does not normally permit teachers to engage in any far-reaching dialogue with the initiator to clarify any lack of understanding or to make amendments as a result of negotiation.

It is reasonable to anticipate that for teachers living through a time in which the impetus for change results from a statutory external policy-decision, any resistance to the proposal due to doubts about its efficacy will hinder implementation. Teachers' thinking and creativity could only be directed towards methods of implementing the reforms and it is reasonable to surmise that the greater their approval of the statutory directive, the more enthused their approach. It follows that staff involvement and participation would reflect the extent of this approval.

Even in a situation in which the impetus for change arose internally, the manner in which the idea originated could affect the nature of the response. As

such, the school climate favoured by the headteacher would be an important factor (Ball, 1987; Mortimore et al, 1988; Nias, 1989). With this in mind, we may contrast situations in which:

(a) a headteacher encourages staff to be imaginative and innovative and make suggestions about school policy, whether informally or by a systematic process such as school development planning, and

(b) the headteacher sees him/herself as the prime mover in initiating proposals or (more extremely) insisting on a course of action without consultation. In the latter case,

any discussions involving teachers are likely to be concerning details about the proposed innovation rather than about whether or not it is an appropriate one for the school (Nicholls, 1983, p. 45).

One could sympathise with teachers who, if not consulted by the headteacher in the early stages of planning an innovation, showed limited enthusiasm during the implementation period. However, Nicholls argued that because of the headteacher's ultimate responsibility, full participation in decision-making, (he did not clarify the meaning of 'full'), would always be rare, and correspondingly, true collegiality unlikely. In such circumstances, consultation would be the most likely approach favoured by the headteacher and teacher-generated ideas would become fewer, eventually leaving the headteacher as the sole initiator of proposed or directed change.

Thus: if proposed change is externally conceived (through, say, a government department) or internally conceived (through a member of staff), teachers' perceptions of the value of the change will help shape their enthusiasm for the innovation and their subsequent approach in the implementation process.

The challenge of change for teachers

The rapid pace of change is reflected in the contrast between Gammage's comment that a visitor to a primary school in the late 80's would notice 'little observable difference between the activities and organization employed now and in the 1960's' (Proctor, 1990, p. 43) and the claim by Alexander, Rose & Woodhead (1992) just a few years later that the task of the primary teacher had changed significantly with the advent of the National Curriculum. In particular, the pressure of time on teachers' priorities was documented by Webb (1993) in her research about the effect of the National Curriculum on teachers at Key Stage 2:-

Curriculum overload was viewed both as a source of stress for teachers and as a reason for pupils' work diminishing rather than improving in quality...the amount of documentation was viewed as detracting teachers from their work with children (p. 80).

The suggested link between overload, stress and quality of teaching is likely to be an important one in any consideration of teacher involvement in wider school issues. These time pressures were confirmed by Campbell (1992), who discovered that many teachers worked in excess of 50 hours per week, only a third of which was dedicated to teaching, the remainder associated with paperwork tasks and general administration. Campbell commented that although teachers felt that the action of teaching children remained largely the same, the amount of time available to do it had reduced considerably. His research was a reminder that recent developments in education may have afforded primary teachers little opportunity to think issues through carefully or analyse them. The extent of teacher involvement, then, must also take into account the quality of the participation. It is difficult to envisage successful teacher involvement without adequate time for deliberation (Wilkinson, 1990), and although one can sympathise with Alexander (1992) when he argued that it was important to maintain an 'open debate about educational purposes and

classroom practices...' (p.194), it is likely that excessive time constraints act against this happening. Further, if teachers feel that external impositions are unhelpful or damaging to the development of a profitable teaching and learning environment, the predictable lowering of motivation is also likely to devalue the small amount of time that is available for proper evaluation and review.

Staff faced with increased commitments and responsibilities have been, therefore, forced to re-examine their use of time. This has been intensified in the light of pupils' curriculum entitlement, and the problem of 'fitting it all in' has been widely recognised. To take one of many such comments, Sweetman (1992) emphasised the great difficulties teachers experienced in addressing 'the central problem of timetable space' (p. 26). Importantly, the National Curriculum Council took concerns over unreasonable curriculum pressure into account and accepted that adjustments were necessary. In a key speech, David Pascall, Chairman of the NCC, admitted that the load at Key Stages 1 and 2 had become unreasonable, promising that a further review would take place (Pascall, 1992). I considered it pertinent to my research to consider the likelihood that if curriculum demands and associated assessment procedures were found to be excessive and absorb too much of a teacher's energy, the likelihood of them contributing more widely to whole-school affairs and policy would be diminished. The Interim Dearing Report (SCAA, 1993), a response to the pleas for a rationalisation of curriculum and assessment, was published too late to influence my research directly, but his proposals that curriculum content should be trimmed and assessment procedures simplified suggested that the earlier concerns were justified (SCAA, 1994).

Additionally, the pace of change referred to above may bring hardship to school staff of the kind described by Newton & Tarrant (1992):-

Imposed changes often cause paper overload which has the effect of increasing a general feeling of not being able to cope.

and

The negative implications of change can mean that self-motivated or self-imposed change activity ceases or is considerably reduced. Individuals may lose their vision or it may become somewhat blurred, a feeling of pessimism may overwhelm them (p. 217).

The coping strategies which permitted hard-pressed teachers moments of respite in the hurly-burly of the day (Woods, 1984) may also have been endangered with the sheer busyness of life: involvement in meetings, planning, consultations and policy decisions could easily detract from the important comradeship and informality typical of many primary schools. Nevertheless, despite the prospect of coping with these dilemmas, as Nias (1989) reminds us:-

Primary teaching is, then, an occupation which requires the ability to live with, and handle constructively, a multitude of dilemmas, tensions, contradictions, uncertainties and paradoxes (p.150).

'Handling constructively' rapidly changing circumstances necessitates good time management if teachers are to cope with an increased range of demands when their performance is under wider scrutiny due to the government's close attention and accompanying media coverage. During the period of my research, in addition to handling the full range of curriculum demands, headteachers, governors and teachers experienced the policies of three different Education Secretaries and an unfolding timetable of statutory change with accompanying time pressures and expectations (Barber & Graham, 1993).

It is also important to confront the issue of staff involvement in the light of their perceptions of the origins and motives attached to any change, the need for decisions to be made, and the likely impact upon their lives. Put simply, staff involvement must be considered within the conditions existing as a result of the changes, and not despite them. Thirty years ago, the challenge that faced busy teachers was addressed by Miles (1964), who argued that all change was difficult because most of their energy was used in performing routine operations

and maintaining existing relationships. Teachers had, therefore, little energy remaining for matters of planning, innovation and formulated change. In addition, Havelock (1971) cited teacher defensiveness about their existing practice and lack of clear organizational goals as two of many reasons why schools were resistant to change. Even teachers who were willing to change were faced with obstacles; Shipman (1974) suggested that curriculum change 'does not proceed through a clear cycle form...(but)...is a process of bargaining, negotiation and horse-trading' (p. 43). Morrish (1976) warned that a simplistic view of change was dangerous, for it involved far more than a difference in procedures or systems; change required a change of attitude from those likely to be affected:-

Changes and innovations affect people and their attitudes, not simply institutions and their methods (p. 21).

However, Watson (1967) argued that structural approaches achieved the best results, with interaction processes second, and attitudes last. He reasoned that while primary teachers remained in a one-teacher-per-classroom position, interdependency and the diffusion of new practices was impossible. Marris (1975) also drew attention to the challenges arising when people faced proposals of change and stressed that change must be accompanied by a time of questioning and uncertainty, and may receive initial rejection. Rational planning, he argued, is useful only if it takes account of the conflict which may accompany the process. Thus:

...however reasonable the proposed changes, the process of implementing them must still allow the impulse of rejection to play itself out. When those who have power to manipulate changes act as if they only have to explain, and when their explanations are not at once accepted, shrug off opposition as ignorance or prejudice, they express a profound contempt for the meaning of lives other than their own (Marris, 1975, p. 166).

We may note in this context that externally imposed, statutory changes are less likely to allow the time or opportunity for such processes to be enacted. Part of this thesis is based upon a fuller understanding of how statutory change impinges upon these opportunities and affects the conditions under which forms of rejection can be expressed. Huberman & Miles (1986) referred to the importance of examining school improvement in terms of a 'conflict paradigm' (careerism, interpersonal relations, power plays, opportunistic coalitions, etc.) when considering the extent of teacher involvement in decision-making. More recently, Woods (1990) noted that change needed to release teachers' creativity; for this to happen they needed to have control of their working situations and not be 'dictated to by higher authority or pupils' (p. 300). Staff involvement, in which teachers are deprived of adequate time and opportunity to show defiance, elect to delay implementation or offer alternative innovatory recommendations, is being subjected to constraints which may lead to structural, managerially-driven changes but fall short of the desired quality. In the light of this possibility, it is noteworthy that one of the government's stated aims through the reforms was to bring about an improvement in standards (Jones & Hayes, 1991). The importance of members exercising a sense of control over the process was also represented by Toffler (1980) who described the danger of information overload, anxiety and stress resulting from the rapidity and uncertainty of change. Fullan (1982a) commented that we should not underestimate the impact that real change may have upon those affected by it:

...real change, whether desired or not, whether imposed or voluntarily pursued, represents a serious personal and collective experience characterised by ambivalence and uncertainty... (p. 26).

In the light of the wave of recent reforms and numerous subsequent modifications to the programme, this 'level of uncertainty' assumes greater significance. In an early exposition concerning the effective adoption of a

proposed change, Watson (1967) listed five preconditions for any successful attempt at institutional change:-

- 1 The participants must feel that the project is essentially their own and not devised by outsiders.
- 2 The project must be whole-heartedly supported by the senior officials of the project.
- 3 The project must be in reasonably close accord with the values and ideals of the participants.
- 4 The participants should experience support, trust, acceptance and confidence in their relations with one another.
- 5 The participants must feel assured that their autonomy and security are not in any way threatened.

Similarly, Fullan (1982a) noted ten factors associated with adoption, but warned that 'we would get hopelessly bogged down if we attempted to identify all possible variables in every situation' (p. 42). Nevertheless, the list refers to the quality of the proposed change, access to information, support of senior staff, teacher pressure and support, facilitation of the change, pressure from the community, funding, whether the change is mandatory, and incentives for adoption. Fullan's argument pivoted on the key question of the relationship between the adoptive process and subsequent implementation; that is, 'What other factors emerge during implementation which determine whether change in practice occurs?' (p. 53). A model conceptualising the nature of staff involvement must take account of the adoption and implementation process. If external change is demanded by statute, the adoption process is limited to an interpretation of the directive rather than evaluating the proposal. Internal proposed change may be governed more closely by staff opinion, depending upon the leadership style of the headteacher (Southworth, 1990; 1993) and the

decision-making structures. The role of headteachers is certainly crucial here as their sensitivity to the extent of staff involvement and the amount of change with which they can cope is likely to fall within their power to influence, despite Newton & Tarrant's reference (1992) to the 'pressures of time and other pressures (which) seem to leave managers with unresolved dilemmas about the degree of consultation appropriate to a particular situation' (p. 97). They pointed to the conclusion reached by Mortimore et al (1988) who argued that the nature and extent of consultation was an issue in which headteachers needed a very clear view on their leadership role:-

They need to be able to divide the decisions that they are required to make into two groups: those which it is quite properly their responsibility to take and for which any attempt at delegation to a staff decision would be seen as a dereliction of duty; and those which, equally properly, belong to the staff as a whole (p. 281).

The same authors emphasised the importance of headteacher judgement in this matter and accepted that mistakes were bound to occur, yet argued that the perceptive headteacher would soon learn to distinguish which decisions belonged to which category (full staff or headteacher). This proposition demands that we confront several issues, not least the latitude available to headteachers in 'learning to distinguish' at a time of statutory, time-related demands. Furthermore, individual teachers are liable to adopt different positions with shades of opinion and particular emphases. Even in a relatively mundane instance such as deciding the colour of new playground dustbins, a member of staff may regret (say) the choice of red, not green; another may favour the acquisition of swing top bins to prevent wind-strewn debris across the playground; yet another member may puzzle over the prospect of being consulted over such a trivial affair, reasoning that the only criterion that matters is that of cost. Such a seemingly trivial example highlights the delicate balance which headteachers need to achieve between decisiveness and whole staff

consultation and consensus, and suggests that teachers also need to be clear about the difference between the two if misunderstandings are to be avoided. However, we may argue that although the structure may be a static feature, the role relationships will not, and vary depending upon the circumstances. For instance, for two teachers of equivalent experience with differing curriculum responsibilities, their influence on decision-making and school policy will vary markedly depending upon whether or not it is their area under review. Similarly, a headteacher may need to seek advice about a curriculum issue from a well-informed newly qualified teacher on occasions. This thesis attempts, amongst other things, to establish how staff perceptions of different roles and relationships inhibit or encourage their involvement in the decision-making process.

It is also appropriate to remind ourselves that it is not only the headteacher who has the responsibility for deciding who else is invited to share in a debate and any subsequent decisions. Senior management teams are now commonplace in primary schools; every teacher (except some newly qualified) should, as part of their contractual responsibilities, have a curriculum or related responsibility and deputy headteachers are sometimes seen as assistant headteachers to acknowledge their management role (Coulson, 1985; Campbell, 1985; Mortimore et al, 1988).

The role of the headteacher during a time of change

I have already drawn attention to the fact that different studies have indicated that the headteacher is the single most important person in affecting the extent and nature of staff involvement in decision-making. Although school organizational structures should be decided with governor approval, it is the headteacher who manages the school and has the discretion to modify his or her actions in the light of new circumstances. However, I have also noted that the rapid time of change has significantly affected the task of headteachers, who

find themselves increasingly responsible for overseeing the implementation of politically initiated change in school. The dilemmas facing primary headteachers (Berlak & Berlak, 1981; Nias, 1989; Hayes, 1993) as they have sought to grapple with their changing role and responsibilities are predictable, particularly the tension between carrying out their statutory function and involving teachers who may, or may not, support the changes. The result of this is a job not only of complexity but also of unusual stress. 'The head is above all highly exposed, representing authority in a world in which traditional formal authority is decreasingly respected' (Winkley, 1984, p. 210), a comment which merits close attention as it predates recent reforms. With the responsibilities attached to local management and the implementation of the National Curriculum, this 'complexity' has extended beyond relationships with staff to take close account of the need to attract pupils and address parental rights and responses. Rapid change has substantially affected the role of headteacher, too (Muse & Wallace, 1988; Maiden & Harrold, 1988; Hellowell, 1991; Laws & Dennison, 1990, 1991).

For headteachers who wish to increase the level of staff involvement and create a more collaborative culture, strong pressure for change presents a number of challenges. The first is how to ensure that the teaching staff (who are the most expensive school resource) are most effectively used. Mercer & Evans (1991) posed this question when they asked how senior management in schools could create the conditions which would release the underlying talent of the individual teacher during a time when the pace of change appeared to have endangered both reflection and creativity due to the 'siege mentality' described by many teachers and observers. They argued that a lot of energy appeared to be directed towards keeping pace with the changes rather than initiating fresh ideas and approaches. Newton & Tarrant (1992) summarised the difficulty succinctly:-

It is naturally hard to consider innovation when the effort to keep things as they are is immense. Running hard in order to stand still is a valuable metaphor for how many of us feel and have to act (p. 7).

There are dangers accompanying overload: important business may be dealt with superficially or incompletely; creativity and self-motivated innovatory practice may be reduced or lost. Over the past few years, any headteacher wishing to see staff developing or maintaining a close involvement with a breadth of school affairs has had to take into account the possibility that teachers may not possess the will or motivation to respond to the opportunities, however presented. On the other hand, it is also possible to perceive of a situation in which the challenges presented by a pressurised situation could result in closer co-operation between staff and a determination to succeed against the odds. In this case, commonality of purpose, according to Nias (1989) a prerequisite for successful implementation of the National Curriculum, would result. In addition, to facilitate this climate of collaboration, we can speculate that the quality of leadership will become a key consideration during research concerned with events during a time of rapid change.

Headteachers have, as always, needed to weigh the demands resulting from statutory requirements against their concern for the well-being of staff. Concerns about overloading teachers with too much material in a short space of time have had to balance any increase in staff involvement. Headteachers have had to insist that directives were heeded, deciding upon the appropriate level of information to release to colleagues without overwhelming them, and weighing up the importance and priority of a missive before triggering any form of collaborative involvement. The pressures for change have had to be weighed alongside the need to maintain morale by affirming good classroom practice already existing whilst accommodating new demands. These endeavours to maintain staff morale have occurred in the knowledge that schools, their teaching approaches and performance have been scrutinized by politician,

parent, and general public. If closer teacher involvement in decision-making has been perceived by headteachers as essential for responding to these expectations, it accentuates the need for the establishment of a genuinely participative ethos in schools.

With this in mind, Ball (1987) argued that if participation were to form part of the decision-making process, it must be properly defined as the act of 'participation' could take many forms, depending in part upon the 'strategies of control' exercised by the headteacher. For example, a headteacher might employ formal managerial devices of committees, working parties, and so on to encourage participation, in which case the nature of the agenda, time constraints and context could act both as a spur and a restriction on fuller debate (also Hargreaves, 1992a). Similarly, interpersonal approaches allow for private discourse involving persuasion and compromise but risk becoming fragmented and diffuse. 'Adversarial' headteachers might use formal structures to secure a 'consensus' as the risk of public confrontation is likely to dissuade less secure staff from expressing opposition to a proposal. 'Appeasing' headteachers might abandon formal approaches in favour of a cheerful informality which appears to embrace staff views but is unlikely to achieve much of substance. Either way, the outcome is liable to be similar, namely, a decision which reflects the headteacher's beliefs and preference. Ball labels such participation as 'pseudo-participation' in which 'to a greater or lesser extent, (it) can be reduced to an appearance of participation without access to actual decision-making' (p. 125). In particular, in his own interviews with headteachers, the device of 'consultation' was used when staff were involved in decision-making in a capacity where the headteacher considered the process as an adjunct rather than binding. That is, involvement would be for the purpose of informing the decision-maker (in this case the headteacher) rather than reaching a consensus.

It would be remarkable if the headteachers' recent changing role and responsibilities had not influenced their management style and relationship with

staff. An interesting feature of the case-study was to ascertain how the headteacher of St. Kerensa's negotiated this particular challenge.

Implications for the case-study

So far, this section has concentrated on providing contextual information about the change process as a prelude to explaining both the nature of teachers' participation in decision-making and the role of the headteacher in establishing a suitable framework for involvement. I have indicated that an analysis of teacher involvement at a time of rapid change is likely to take account of many and varied factors. One of the related issues concerns the place of collaboration and collegiality as pre-requisites for staff involvement in decision-making.

Accompanying the national curriculum changes have been moves towards extended teacher participation in curriculum decisions in school. Despite Campbell's admission that the term 'participation' now has 'a tired feel to it' (1985, p.3), with the increase in responsibilities, the option for headteachers to involve staff in managing the curriculum has become more attractive; this process includes school development planning which, by its very nature, relies upon contributions from members of the teaching team (Morrison, 1991; Constable et al, 1991). The paradox that at a time of increasing headteacher accountability there should be more reliance upon teachers to assist in decision-making and policy development has underlined the necessity for staff to act corporately and share stated aims and purpose. Campbell & Southworth (1992) insisted that collegiality must involve 'staff working together in a school where the culture is cohesive and educational, and social beliefs are shared' (p. 77). Similarly, Alexander (1992) reminded us that for shared planning to be coherent, there was a need for shared values and genuine openness about curriculum priorities and preferences. Similarly, Crowther (1989) argued that there was a need for staff to

engage in dialogue about their professional activity, in debating the teaching and learning styles they use, in regularly revising content, in working in each other's classrooms (Crowther, 1989, p. 294).

Under these circumstances, corporate activity was likely to offset the tendency for individual teachers to retreat into isolation and self-dependency. However, teachers who perceive collaboration as a threat to their autonomy or signalling a lack of trust in their individual judgement, could decide to distance themselves from the process; a situation which would be unfortunate, as Nias (1987) reminded us, as even conflict can lead to growth and development if accepted as a natural part of the process. Ball (1987), referring to Richardson (1973) and Nias (1985) drew attention to the possibility of isolating particular members of staff who opposed the dominant coalition. This opposition went beyond 'personal disaffection and disgruntlement but... (rather)... a commitment to challenge and attempt to change the policies, in whole or in part, of the dominant coalition. Opposition...cannot be reduced to a clash of personalities; it is a micropolitical concept that at heart concerns conflicts of interest' (Ball, 1987, p. 148). Clearly, during a time of rapid change, with its uncertainties, conflicting demands and time pressures, teachers working within a collegial ethos must accept 'constructive and critical scrutiny of each other's practice and ideas... (as)... the normal expectation' (Campbell, 1985, p. 153). If 'periods of change often reveal the extent of latent dissensus within schools' (Ball, 1987, p. 149), the opportunity for teacher involvement in school management or school governance (through elected membership of the governing body) provides a forum in which the character of dissensus/ consensus can be scrutinised. In addition to examining the central role of the headteacher, an important element of this case-study will be to interrogate the perspectives of the school's two teacher-governors.

Therefore, using evidence from the review, the response of a school staff to the opportunity for involvement might depend upon:

- (a) the originators of the impetus for change;
- (b) the way in which teachers perceived that it influenced their autonomy;
- (c) the formal and informal opportunities for collaboration within the school;
- (d) the skill of the headteacher in handling the process of consultation about the implementation of national reforms.

Having, therefore, established a context for the management of rapid change, my next chapter deals with the arguments surrounding the claims made for teacher involvement within the collaborative framework as a means of enhancing the decision-making process.

CHAPTER 2

TEACHER INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING

Introduction

In the earlier part of my review, I suggested that a time of change provides opportunity for new or enhanced staff involvement but that the nature of the involvement and the level of participation are issues requiring clarification. A considerable amount has been written about teacher participation, some accounts extolling the attractiveness of involvement, others suggesting disadvantages and problems. As I shall make clear in the following account, opinions about staff participation in decision-making tend to have been polarised into a summary of advantages and disadvantages and pay insufficient attention to the context of involvement or its effectiveness. Therefore, in reviewing the arguments I shall first provide a brief review of the following areas which dominate the literature:

- * the case for teacher involvement in the decision-making process
- * resistance to involvement
- * the case against involvement
- * participation as a whole-school issue

The case for teacher involvement in the decision-making process

The tendency for leaders to espouse fuller staff involvement has attracted considerable interest in education. For example, support for this approach has been offered by Imber & Neidt (1990), who argued that greater participation in schools was in tune with a democratic society and led to enhanced commitment, improved performance and better productivity in the school system. Gaziel & Weiss (1990) claimed that participation, which included teachers establishing a strong voice in decisions and policies, was a characteristic of 'professional orientation' and fostered better relations among members. On the other hand, 'If teachers as professionals... are denied access to such power, it seems probable that they will become alienated with their work relations' (p. 57). Furthermore,

Bottery (1992) insisted that teachers should be involved, not so much because of their expert knowledge, autonomy or involvement in a caring profession, but because education is itself an interactive process. 'Teachers are human beings and deserve to be treated as such' (p. 174). As teachers are part of the community and therefore have rights and responsibilities, 'if one professes a serious commitment to the ideal of citizenship, then continued and increasing participation by its members is a necessary conclusion' (p. 175).

Other writers have seen involvement as beneficial in fostering a positive work ethos. Schambier (1981), for instance, insisted that an organisational climate should be predicated on the belief that people had a need for work and wished to pursue excellence, concluding that a recognition of this fact by the leadership led to reduced teacher alienation. He identified seven factors in achieving this aim:

- * the development of participative/support leadership processes
- * concern for staff motivation
- * improving communication
- * more productive interaction between staff
- * improving the decision-making processes
- * agreed goal-setting
- * improved monitoring of goal-achievement

Evers (1990) pointed out that this positive climate would be more likely where less hierarchical, and more decentralised, decision-making structures existed, stressing that any top-down system relied too heavily upon the original decision or intention being correct; whereas fuller participation reduced the risk of a single incorrect assumption damaging the subsequent decision-making process. Consensus was more likely to be reached if the members of the group (say, teachers in a school) were active in initiating and developing the proposed

programme of change. *Efficiency* was also an important consideration, for although the process of consultation, consideration of the issues, small-scale trialling, and feedback and modification of the original intentions might be time-consuming, it was likely to save time in the long run due to increased effectiveness of the process. Day et al also reminded us that 'Not every good idea originates in the head's office' (1990, p.89). However, this approach presupposed that the leadership were willing to accept their own fallibility and be open to accept criticism of their proposals. We must consider that the success of participation may lie in the ownership which staff feel they enjoy in the initiation of ideas as opposed to responding to the proposals of others.

Even with the assurance that the leadership was committed to fuller staff participation, Duke et al (1980) argued that *staff commitment* was equally necessary. He reasoned that for teachers to choose to devote some of their professional time to participate in school decision-making they had to view such participation as more rewarding than their teaching activity (see also Leese, 1978). Although today there are contractual obligations whereby all teachers can be asked to accept responsibility for leadership in an aspect of the curriculum or organisation, headteachers will obviously aspire towards wholehearted commitment to the process rather than mere acquiescence. Conley & Bacharac (1990) were more specific in posing four questions to clarify involvement:- In which decisions will teachers become involved? Who will make what decisions? What are the basic tasks of administrators and teachers in the context of decentralised decision-making? What is the role of teacher unions?

In a discussion of the manner in which teachers in the same school responded to the opportunity for greater involvement in decision-making, Gaziel & Weiss (1990) suggested that there were two groups of attitudes; teachers who 'perceive themselves personally responsible and punishable for events they experience in their lives' (p. 58), referred to as *internals*; and a second group, the *externals*, seeing themselves as 'pawns controlled by external forces' (ibid). This

had implications for participation in the decision-making process, for the 'internals' wished and expected to be involved in the process, whereas 'externals' expected decisions to be made by their superiors. This assertion is one to be tested through a case-study, for if staff involvement in a school is to be based on the principle of collegiality where every staff member has an equal right and responsibility to participate fully, the existence of two such groups would need to be acknowledged if true collegiality were to be a realistic aim. Failure to do so could lead to a fragmented participatory system in which group consensus relied not only upon those members who were convinced by the initiative but by those who were unwilling to dissent, whatever their true feelings.

In addition to the qualifications affecting participation described above, Duignan (1990) asked whether the benefits of participation lay more in the indirect effects upon morale and satisfaction than with direct effects upon decision outcomes, arguing that the benefits of well-informed participation could open opportunities for staff creativity and demonstration of initiative (also Gaziel, 1983). Accordingly, he argued that it was necessary to bear in mind that it was unwise to assume that participation was unidimensional in its effects, facilitating the process from proposal to implementation. Unexpected benefits could accrue, particularly if staff had grasped the full implications of a proposed change and were enthused by the prospect. Their acceptance could confirm the usefulness of the original idea and their resistance might signal that an element of the proposal has been overlooked by the initiators. The issue of resistance is explored below.

Resistance to involvement

Elliott-Kemp (1982) anticipated that resistance to change was inevitable and suggested that the 'power' and 'concern' of staff members were significant factors to be taken into account (also Bien, 1986). He reasoned that it was

essential for those convinced by the argument (high concern) to communicate this to those considered similarly empowered but unconvinced by the argument (low concern) and thereby endeavour to convince them of the rightness of the proposal. He also highlighted the danger of members with higher power attempting to persuade those of lower power status and the mistrust which could be engendered if this were interpreted as coercion. Elliott-Kemp's argument that the extent of members' knowledge was important was also referred to by Duignan (1990), who pictured those with a high level of knowledge and understanding of the principles and implications of the change needing to inform their colleagues in such a way that they, too, would become convinced of the efficacy of the proposal. Elliott-Kemp's model, though an ideal construct which offered limited insight into the micropolitical manoeuvrings which might accompany such discussions, nevertheless provided an interesting perspective on the interaction between hierarchy and informal exchanges, and offered a fresh perspective on the different zones of influence which may influence decision-making in a school (Lortie, 1969; Taylor et al, 1974; Kunz & Hoy, 1976; Hanson, 1977; Dale, 1981).

Some authors have claimed that it is mistaken to assume that proposed change will be automatically welcomed by those affected and that resistance to change can often be anticipated and even welcomed (March & Olsen, 1976; Pfeffer, 1978; Clegg & Dunkerley, 1980; Jones, 1985). Referring to the work of Bennis, Benne & Chin (1985), Beach (1989) suggested that when resistance to change seemed to emerge in a non-rational form, it might be that a different rationality was at work. Planners needed, therefore, to be aware that seemingly irrational resistance might indicate that the planner and the recipient of the proposed change were using different rationalities. Whereas the planner might be using positive institutional change to foster improvement, for instance, the members of a society or an institution might resist the change because they were applying a different norm such as the anticipated impact upon their relationship

with the children. Beach encouraged planners to put forward the proposal in the context of a return to norms that were acceptable to the recipients as opposed to arguing that the change would lead to greater efficiency in terms of educational progress and economics. Appeals to greater efficiency were unlikely to achieve much without re-assuring the members that the changes would not act detrimentally upon their existing collective norms. Similarly, March & Shapira (1982), argued that resistance to change may be a positive defence measure for organizations, particularly where there was a greater need for stability than for efficiency. Members needed to be convinced that the proposed changes were likely to bring benefits to themselves and the organization before they offered their support.

The origin of the change proposal might be a factor in the degree of resistance or compliance from those affected. Slater (1985) discussed the work of Havelock (1971) and of Becher & Maclure (1978) who considered the proposition that institutions could be changed from the outside as a deliberate attempt to improve practice. Slater argued that this assumption carried with it a belief that the implementors of such external directives would comply and those who would not do so would be considered 'resisters' with the result that persuasion or even coercive strategies might be used to achieve the desired result:-

As the nomenclature implies, a power-coercive strategy depends upon political, legal and economic power; compliance of those with less power is achieved by those with greater power (Slater, 1985, p. 448).

This instrumental approach would emanate from a single source (for example, a national working party) and be disseminated outward to those it was trying to affect. Change was therefore intended to influence a wide and extensive audience. The rationale underpinning the proposed changes was likely to

embrace 'improvement' as a central element as a justification and the subsequent change as 'innovative' i.e., better than has gone before (Dalin, 1978). However, the shortcomings of this model are located in two assumptions: (a) that the proposed change will spread by diffusion and (b) that there is a consensus among the recipients about the relevant values and goals behind the proposal. For instance, during the dissemination period of information within a school, staff may view the proposal as inappropriate for their particular situation and reject it on the grounds that a national initiative (say), though meritorious, was irrelevant to them. In this connection, Schon (1971) criticised the equating of 'diffusion' with 'communication', asserting that communication dealt with the relatively unproblematic transmission of facts and knowledge (the 'package') which practitioners could then transform and adjust according to their situation. Diffusion, on the other hand, depended heavily upon consensus and could cause disruption if agreement over the interpretation could not be reached when individuals or teams had to put the ideas into practice. The St. Kerensa's case-study needed to take into account the manner in which the diffusion process took place within school and test the extent to which staff were welcoming towards the external directive. Resistance to the change on the grounds that teachers felt that it was not a genuine innovation (i.e., that there would be no improvement as a result) might help to explain any unenthusiastic degree of involvement.

At this point, I want to underline the important distinction between an external directive and a proposed change that is 'in-school'. Whereas the external directive requires a response and may offer little or no opportunity for trialling or varied interpretation, any proposals emerging as a result of initiatives within a school are unlikely to be constrained by the same limitations. In particular, the time constraints associated with internally initiated proposals may be less severe for external ones. Further, the proponents of the in-school proposed change are available for questioning, offering clarification and explaining the initiative more fully as opposed to the case of an external directive

in which participation is likely to be undertaken in the knowledge that a decision concerning change has already been taken. In such a case, consultation would be concerned with the details of how the implementation is to be set in place rather than an essential part of the process towards making or modifying a decision. This important distinction over the nature of staff involvement is likely to prove significant when the success or effectiveness of any form of staff participation is being evaluated. For a proposed change to evolve into a workable policy, it is reasonable to claim that those affected by the change must be convinced that it is an improvement on current practice and worth making the effort to implement. If the proposal is going to negotiate the hurdles of initial interest, enquiry, evaluation, trialling, adoption and implementation, the recipients must be persuaded that their involvement is worthwhile ahead of other competing demands (Fullan,1982b). Further, an investigation of the strategies used by teachers in attempting to resist enforced change must also deal with ways in which they might manipulate circumstances during implementation to make the situation tolerable. Shipman (1974) commented upon the ambiguous nature of teachers' responses to proposals, whereby they demanded a carefully packaged approach which could be understood and acted upon, yet were critical if it were too prescriptive. The understandable reaction of teachers may reflect this ambiguity: resisting imposed changes on the one hand; demanding specific directing on the other (Pollock & Colwill, 1987).

The case against involvement

In the light of these resistance strategies, the case against involvement has to be taken seriously. Alutto and Belasco (1972), in the course of their large scale survey of teachers' responses in New York State to (1) the opportunity to be involved in decision-making and (2) whether they wished to be involved, challenged the assumption that increased participation was always desirable. They referred to the conclusions drawn from previous research:

- * that by encouraging participation, organizations will increase the probability that change will be accepted by staff, leading to greater effectiveness through the change;
- * that allowing participation in which members exercise little or no control is counter-productive;
- * that by allowing subordinates to participate, superiors gain influence over the actions of individuals;
- * that increased participation leads to greater job satisfaction...

but their research indicated that the situation was more complex. The response of individuals differed markedly depending on factors such as age, gender, experience, seniority and role perception. They found that some teachers were *decisionally deprived* (involved less than they wished; typically, younger males), others in *decisional equilibrium* (involved to the extent they wished) and *decisionally saturated* (over-involved; typically, older females; see Grambs, 1987). They claimed that no evidence had been found to support the assumption that decisional participation led to increased commitment; indeed, those who were deprived or saturated were more likely to express discontent or militancy. Participation issues assumed different significance for participants; thus:

given the high cost of participation in terms of time and effort, it would be useful to ascertain the differential effects of deprivation or saturation as they vary with the nature of the decisional issue (p. 124).

Alutto & Belasco concluded by regretting that their research had been unable to examine the quality of participation; for instance, whether participation was mere consultation or exercised absolute control over final decisions. They suggested that research could profitably focus upon the relative impact of the conjunction of

differing types and rates of participation. Similarly, Chapman (1990) asked whether the 'cost' of participation could be too great for some teachers, who thereby consciously opted out (also Hall & Wallace, 1993). She pointed out that for many class teachers their commitment to the welfare of their own pupils was a strong factor in the overall balance of priorities. If involvement were seen by teachers as detrimental to classroom duties, a clear choice faced them: to respond positively to the opportunities offered for involvement and bear the consequences associated with it, or to see involvement as an optional extra when time associated with the task of running a class allowed. Thus:-

When teachers feel that their time is spent on decisions that are not important...or decisions which will not be implemented due to constraints, either internal or external to the school, frustration, disillusionment and, at times, cynicism result' (p.232).

A further argument urging caution in wholesale acceptance of corporate involvement examines the notion that the move towards participation could indicate to members that leaders lacked confidence in individuals to act independently. Driscoll (1978) found that a significant indicator of staff satisfaction was trust rather than level of participation, sounding a caution that an increased level of participation could lead to a belief by participants that they were individually being trusted less: thus the need to act collaboratively. The response of members to the trust in their judgement displayed by managers, and the resulting feeling of control and commitment to the final decision by members who usually had to implement that decision, could determine the ultimate success or failure of the exercise.

The case against involvement rests on the proposition that factors such as teaching responsibilities, misunderstanding about the role of the participants, inappropriate decision-making load, and a low level of trust between persons with different ranks or seniority, have a detrimental effect upon the process.

Participation as a whole school issue

Despite the considerable interest in encouraging staff to participate in the process of decision-making, it cannot be assumed that all schools are moving towards a collegial model in which the views of all staff are valued and given opportunity for expression. Campbell & Southworth (1992) in their consideration of collegiality as appropriate for National Curriculum implementation, found that not all their project schools exhibited the collegial characteristics of cohesion and shared beliefs (also Loudon, 1991). They wondered, therefore 'about the appropriateness of such wholesale advocacy of (such) a simple style...' (p. 77). Bottery (1990) compared the fun aspect of typically contrived situations experienced on management courses with the real situation in schools where 'decisions affect status, self-perception and self-esteem, promotion, personal values, and payment of the mortgage' (p.46). When the consequences of participation were linked in teachers' minds with the school's future, their job security and promotion prospects, the issue assumed a sharper focus.

Arguments in favour of corporate involvement maintain that individual members are prepared to act collectively. However, Belbin (1981) found that the reason why teams succeeded or failed depended largely on how different personalities got on with one another. He claimed that getting the right mix of people was more important than having a team which included all the talents. The establishment of a system which invited participation needed to address the issue of team membership and leadership.

On this basis, it may be argued that participation is of limited value in itself unless other aspects of organisational life are secure. Duignan pointed out that many schools 'have unclear goals, uncertain technology and fluid participation' (1990, p. 327). He went on to describe the additional problem of establishing any causal link between goals and activities, referring to Schon who viewed those involved in the process as 'embroiled in conflicts of values, goals, purposes and interests' (1983, p. 16). He considered it axiomatic that

managers responded positively to the rapid changes in education and developed new strategies for coping effectively with the complexities. Estler (1988) took a measured look at the assumption that decision-making is a process for achieving goals, describing it instead as 'often a process only loosely connected to organisational outcomes or individual intention' (p. 312). Participation had to be seen to be of some account by those invited to be involved or the process lost credibility.

A move towards greater staff participation places on headteachers the requirement that they act judiciously, convincing staff that the offer of involvement is a real one and ensuring that the benefits gained through participation are not outweighed by the potential disadvantages. I have already mentioned that Mortimore et al (1988) concluded that headteachers found difficulty in identifying the particular level of participation which a specific decision needed; similarly, Conley & Bacharac (1990) pointed out the difficulty for them to decide where and when it was appropriate to involve teachers. In addition, Mercer & Evans (1991) referring to Buchanan (1989) asked how the headteacher and senior staff in schools could create the conditions which would release the underlying talent of individual staff members, claiming that genuine involvement that led to improved teacher satisfaction would have to offer opportunities for participation which included:-

- * Removing unnecessary controls on staff creativity and initiative.
- * Providing direct feedback on the way a project was developing.
- * Permitting the introduction of new tasks, as well as establishing the extent of individual accountability.

However, they also warned that the introduction of a national curriculum was contrary to these principles, restricting the system's flexibility due to the pressure

of meeting statutory requirements. Clearly, in the light of recent national reforms, this particular perspective merits close scrutiny.

Awareness of the practical implications for schools were explored by Whitehead & Aggleton (1986), who considered that the impact of participation was most clearly seen in the changes to the composition of governing bodies and the wider representation of different groups within them, and the greater accountability demanded of the participants. However, they doubted that all representation is effective, pointing to the involvement of parents as an example of a spurious reform, and that 'under the guise of involvement and partnership... (parents) become agents in the implementation of central government policies' (p. 444). This notion of the undermining of genuine collaboration in decision-making via political exploitation is supported by Wallin (1985), who argued that people's participation in education depended upon widely-shared historical understanding (Silver, 1990). The recent changes in education, associated with a particular political ideology, may not be shared by participants, yet due to the firmly established forms of institutionalised power, the responses of those involved tend to be constrained. Wallin also underlined the restrictions that notions of collegiality place upon the participants in which opposition to the accepted position was viewed as counter-productive, irrational, or cynical. This could lead to a rejection of the position by the majority, perceiving it to be hostile and in danger of disturbing the group's equilibrium.

Summary

Despite the weight of enthusiasm for greater staff participation in discussion and decision-making, there are many inter-related factors which must be taken into account in any assessment of the desirability of participative approaches and in evaluating the effectiveness of such an approach. The thrust of the above arguments is that the management of change must take close account of the extent of member-participation in the process. There are a variety of factors

which need to be considered if fuller involvement is seen as desirable by leaders and it cannot be assumed that the inclusion of staff members is, of itself, a guarantee of higher quality and more effective decision-making. Evidence from the case-study must be considered in the light of these factors.

The results of my review demonstrate that various claims have been made for the importance and appropriateness of staff participation in decision-making:-

- * It leads to enhanced commitment.
- * It fosters better relations among members.
- * Teachers have a democratic right to be involved.
- * Involvement provides status and life satisfaction.
- * It fosters a positive work ethos.
- * It reduces the likelihood of serious errors of judgement.

On the other hand, limitations and drawbacks have been acknowledged:-

- * Successful participation is heavily dependent upon the individuals involved in the process and their value position.
- * There is little control over the quality of the involvement.
- * Corporate involvement signal to participants that leaders lack trust in their individual judgement.

Successful participation must also take account of the following:-

- * Staff must be committed to the idea.
- * Participation in the process of decision-making must be seen as more rewarding than teaching.

- * Leaders must be aware that not every member wishes to be involved in participation which incorporates a management role.
- * Participants must be well informed factually and have had opportunity to reflect upon the issues.
- * Power and status of participants are significant factors when aiming to reach a consensus.
- * Participation in a process which anticipates change must take account of members' value positions, not merely the effectiveness of the change.
- * Participants must understand the goals, processes for achieving them and the status of their involvement.
- * Successful corporate participation pre-supposes the establishment of an effective team.
- * The participative process must be sufficiently flexible to respond to rapidly changing circumstances.

The headteacher's role is also crucial:-

- * To convince staff that the offer of involvement is real.
- * To know where and when to involve staff.
- * To release staff energy and talent.

In this chapter, I have reviewed how the support for the concept of teacher involvement in decision-making is subject to a number of provisos which demand close attention in any research on the issue. I now wish to look more closely at the proposition that a consideration of staff participation must pay attention to the level of commitment to the process of encouraging involvement from the senior staff of a school, particularly the headteacher. To achieve this, it is useful to consider strategies which might be employed to achieve this: both

formal organizational structures and informal micropolitical. I shall consider these two elements in turn.

CHAPTER 3

FACILITATING TEACHER INVOLVEMENT

The following section is devoted to an examination of how teacher involvement might be encouraged.

Facilitating involvement through formal structures

Many attempts have been made to describe the relationships existing between individuals and groups within the school setting. For instance, the fluidity which characterises groups within schools was referred to by Weick (1982) as 'loose coupling'. He argued that the bureaucratic approach to management assumed that schools were characterized by staff being subject to an agreed set of rules, inspection to ensure compliance with those rules, and feedback to senior management as a means of monitoring compliance. He concluded that this approach resulted in an irregular flow of information, unpredictable relationships, careful control of knowledge about key issues by leaders (such as the headteacher), selective use of members deemed competent to deal with issues, and member-passivity in the decision-making processes. Similarly, Barth (1987) explained that under bureaucratic control, an authoritarian hierarchy is exercised, in which schedules and priorities are established by the headteacher who thereby retains tight personal control over resources, and dictated curriculum goals and means. In this way, staff gradually become dependent upon the headteacher and, perhaps, reluctant to show initiative with a resulting loss of creativity and flexibility which would be to the detriment of the school. Duttweiler (1989) argued that a bureaucratic approach is out-of-step with an ethos in which teachers are well educated and familiar with what is needed to develop a healthy and productive learning environment. She maintained that any prospective leader had to earn the right to lead, reasoning that staff are motivated to respond positively when the leader (a headteacher, say) is 'someone worth working for rather than by being someone performing an organisational role' (p. 9). Duttweiler supported the argument that attempts to involve staff in different aspects of organisational life would lead to greater

satisfaction, increased creativity and the generation of a wider range of alternatives and ideas. She summarised her review of current research literature as follows:-

Schools that engage teachers in job-related discussions and have teachers share in decisions about instructional programmes are more effective than schools in which decisions are made by rule-bound, bureaucratic procedures (p. 11).

Nevertheless, I have already shown that the degree of effectiveness depends not only upon organizational factors but upon the nature of the participation and the conditions under which it takes place. Thus, organizational planning devices which neglected involvement could result in a disappointing outcome. For instance, Constable et al (1991), using the results of case-study material from a variety of schools in five different local education authorities, claimed that there was a mismatch between the intentions of school development planning and its implementation, brought about by a lack of whole staff involvement. They asserted that it was urgent for headteachers to establish decision-making structures in the school that encouraged all staff to contribute collegially to the statements of intent and to agree the priorities for whole-school development. By contrast, Packwood (1989) countered that bureaucratic concepts 'provide an opportunity to shape school organisation more flexibly than is commonly appreciated' (p. 9). He referred to the variety of theories which have attempted to explain the way schools operate: organised anarchies; loosely coupled systems; micropolitical fora; construction of subjective interaction or a combination of several, but claimed that 'no single conceptual approach has a monopoly of the truth (p. 9). He claimed that the recent changes in educational provision were an additional reason for a re-consideration of the bureaucratic model. Central to Packwood's argument was the hypothesis that the application of a National Curriculum, appraisal and delegation of management to schools

must assume the existence of a hierarchy of authority and accountability. To reduce tensions between the senior bureaucrat (the headteacher, say) and the professional teacher, the precise nature of the relationship that exists between the roles must be established. The co-ordinator relationship was seen as crucial in that they were able to carry out their responsibilities without being accountable for the work or responses of others. Packwood concluded that work in schools

is too important and too unsure to be obstructed by the uncertainties of not knowing what is expected and by whom, and by having to continually negotiate what one can do with individual power players (p. 14).

Packwood's exemplars referred exclusively to secondary school settings. The relevance of his distinction between managerial, co-ordinator and professional roles, and the assumption that increased accountability must invoke the establishment of an hierarchical, authority-driven structure, will fall under closer scrutiny in the tighter community of the medium-sized primary school used for my case-study.

These arguments highlight the relevance of gaining a staff consensus, and reinforce the need to define what is meant by collegiality. That is, a collegial system may be viewed as power-equivalence in which any existing hierarchy is set aside for the purpose of decision-making. Without fulfilling these twin conditions (power-equivalence and suspension of hierarchy), the definition of collegiality becomes more problematic. In this connection, other questions are relevant:-

- * Is there a distinction to be made between participation taking place within and without a collegial system?
- * Is participation in a situation where seniority exists more correctly termed 'consultation'?

- * How can a collegial structure be defended or sustained in the light of the accountability of the headteacher and governors of the school?
- * Are all staff equally able to accept and feel comfortable with collegiality?
- * What are the boundaries and limitations of collegiality? (i.e., is collegiality a seamless robe covering every aspect of relationship or only relevant during certain and specific occasions?)
- * Who takes the final responsibility for a decision?

The above arguments do not constitute a convincing rationale for any particular kind of formal structure likely to facilitate staff involvement. Certainly, there are a number of inter-related issues of control and status within an organization such as a school which have a bearing upon involvement. However, it is becoming increasingly clear from my review that involvement through a formally constituted structure may or may not refer to the act of making a decision. That is, the structure may facilitate involvement relating to other forms of participation such as consultation, providing information or modifying an idea that has already been formulated by the leader. With this in mind, I turn to evidence that refers to facilitation through informal strategies.

Facilitating participation through informal strategies

Although all maintained schools have been obliged to respond to national directives, interpretation by individuals or groups can have important implications for the manner in which an agreed decision is implemented. Micropolitical activity (that is, interactions between persons which take place outside formal channels) may offer the potential for staff to agree about appropriate strategies, the manoeuvrability they feel to be acceptable to them, or their tactics during the formal meeting. Thus:-

The rates, patterns of flow and confluence... shape certain organizational events which come to be labelled as 'decisions'.... organizational events are the outcome of bargaining, negotiating and exchange (Hoyle, 1982, p. 264).

If this 'bargaining, negotiating and exchange' takes place outside, as well as inside the formally constituted meetings, then micropolitical activity is an important element in gaining a clearer picture of teacher involvement (Emerson, 1962; Blau, 1964; Nias, 1989; Hargreaves, 1992a). To gain a more complete understanding of involvement there may be a need to consider some or all of the following:

- * the complexity of micropolitical activity (March & Olsen, 1976) that takes place in advance of decisions;
- * the importance of power relationships between participants (Crozier, 1975; Elliott-Kemp, 1982);
- * the existence and operation of different factions, interest groups and coalitions (Bacharac & Lawler, 1980).

Hoyle recognised the need to explore the impact of micropolitical activity within organizations but acknowledged the gaps in our understanding of the processes (Hoyle, 1982; 1987). Ball (1987) drew from Hoyle in his reference to micropolitics as 'those strategies by which individuals and groups in organizational contexts seek to use their resources of power and influence to further their interests' (Hoyle, 1982, p. 88). He noted that a number of issues could provide the incentive for micro-political manoeuvring, including :

- * differing perceptions of more and less experienced teachers (Hannan, 1980);
- * differing teaching approaches (see also Marland, 1982);
- * tensions between academic and pastoral goals (see also Burgess, 1983);

- * gender factors;
- * leadership roles (King, 1968; Bernbaum, 1976).

In any consideration of these 'resources of power and influence', Wishner argued that the distribution of power or exercising of influence was in itself no guarantee either of staff satisfaction or of greater effectiveness (Wishner, 1986). He maintained that much depended upon the power-bases which existed and the inter-dependence of those powers. For instance, governors are in a position to demand from the headteacher that every reasonable effort is made to carry out what he or she perceives as priorities for the school, yet the headteacher has to consider the impact upon the staff, notwithstanding governor demands. Senior staff form part of the link between governors and classteacher, yet are also class teachers and colleagues to the teacher working next-door to them. The move towards participative decision-making not only makes assumptions about the shared goals of the members of staff, but is likely to entail a shift in the pre-existing power relationships. Further, Seddon et al (1990) referred to the tension which lay in a situation where joint-decision making (for example, among members of a teaching staff) was seen as desirable or necessary, and the accountability issue which saw the headteacher and governors as ultimately responsible for the decisions and their implementation. For instance, decision-making could not ignore the requirement for parental access to decisions, strengthened through the government legislation of the 1980's and 90's. Seddon et al summarised the core problem as being

...how to manage pluralist demands in education while simultaneously maintaining the legitimacy of the system by attending to questions of representation, evaluation, resource management and accountability (p. 36).

In my case-study, any evidence of the impact of formal or informal debate could not be viewed separately from the accountability issue. In this connection, it was

important to determine the existence of powerful factions and alliances which affected the progress of decision-making through micropolitical activity outside the existing structures.

Summary of the Review findings

The review raised many issues which required interrogation through the case-study, including the extent to which:

- * members will accept the initiatives and priorities established by senior members of the team or externally imposed change;
- * participation is sufficient in itself to attract the loyalty and commitment of those who have to implement the change;
- * proposals for change and subsequent innovations are perceived similarly by members;
- * implementation is objective, rational and measurable across a group of implementors;
- * collegial relationships are sustained during the initiating, discussion, decision and monitoring stages.

If collegiality is already established as a principle within a school, it is realistic to assume that there is more chance of initiatives coming from the views and perceptions of those immediately involved, leading perhaps, to a higher level of commitment and greater likelihood that the proposal will find popular support. However, even within a single group of staff there will exist a range of understanding and acceptance of the need for change, and interpretation of its implementation. To reach a decision as a staff which relied upon a false consensus would likely result in what Bolam (1974) referred to as a 'facade' phenomenon. That is, a situation in which the agreed change or innovation has the appearance of operating across the establishment but which, in fact, has

succumbed to modifications in its detailed operation to reflect the views and priorities of the participants. To accept the principle of collegiality in staff involvement has implications for issues of power, status, hierarchy and evaluation which will require a process of constant review and monitoring if long-term benefit are to be realized . The following principles are therefore proposed in advance of data from the case study:-

- (a) Involvement involves a cost to the participants.
- (b) Opportunity for involvement is likely to produce a reaction among staff which will lead to the potential for increased alienation from or attachment to the decision-making process.
- (c) This increased or reduced involvement will result in a number of distinctive outcomes.
- (d) The level of staff influence upon the decision-making will affect both the process and the outcome.
- (e) The level and quality of involvement will vary according to a number of definable contextual and teacher-specific factors.
- (f) The attitude of the headteacher will be axiomatic in facilitating purposeful involvement.
- (g) Decisions by staff as to the nature of their involvement could result in clearly definable sub-groups emerging within the staff which facilitate or hinder the decision-making process.

This construct is a method of conceptualising staff involvement, facilitating an investigation of these propositions through a detailed ethnographic case-study of staff participation during a time of rapid change.

PART TWO: METHODS

CHAPTER 4
METHODOLOGY

Ethnography and case-study

This thesis relies upon evidence from an ethnographic case-study. The support for developing such research has now well documented: for example, Wolcott (1975); Shipman (1985); Hammersley & Atkinson (1983); Woods, 1985; Burgess (1985a, 1985b); Bell, (1987); Yin (1989); Hammersley (1990). Borg & Gall (1983) defined ethnography as 'an in-depth analytical description of an intact cultural scene' (p. 492). They outlined the characteristics of ethnographic research as including the use of continuous observation and recording as much as possible of what was happening in the setting. At the start of the research, the researcher was 'likely to start with a broad theoretical framework or with tentative working hypotheses...' which may then 'generate hypotheses that can be tested using further observation or other methods...' (p. 493).

The use of ethnographic case studies has been supported by researchers, including Stenhouse (1982). Bell (1987) described the case-study as being principally concerned with the interaction of factors and events. She stressed that methods of collecting data should be selected which are appropriate for the task, the great strength of case-study method being that 'it allows the researcher to concentrate on a specific instance or situation, and to identify, or attempt to identify, the various interactive processes at work' (page 6). Bell contrasted them with larger-scale surveys which, she claimed, may fail to reveal highly significant processes crucial to the success or failure of the system or organisation. The case-study researcher should therefore aim to identify these significant features and show how they affect or influence the system. Bassey (1981) accepted that case studies were valid forms of educational research, providing they were carried out 'systematically and critically...and if by publication of the findings they extend the boundaries of existing knowledge' (p. 86).

There are, however, potential problems associated with ethnographic case-studies which are widely acknowledged, including:

(a). *The need for the researcher to be selective about the material.* Inevitably this raises the issue of appropriate judgement, and the danger of excluding significant material. To some extent, this is always a problem faced by a researcher who is dealing with large amounts of data. Nevertheless, it does place upon the individual a need for vigilance and openness over his/her motives for carrying out the work, and the intention for future action, although must be acknowledged that every kind of research is open to misinterpretation or even deliberate distortion if the researchers are merely seeking to confirm a strongly-held opinion. An ethnographic study is no different in this respect, but the use of cross-checking with the respondents (Mehan, 1978) can control uncorroborated surmise or wishful thinking.

(b). *Concentration on particular aspects of a complex situation through selection of key elements will fail to yield a complete picture.* This is an automatic consequence of the casualness described above. However, we may ask whether it is ever possible to gain a complete picture, for any situation involving people is going to provide a maze of complex networks and interactions. The fear that a case-study could lead to an incomplete, and therefore, inaccurate presentation of the real issues is valid. Nevertheless, we are advised by Bassey (1981) in this matter when he argued that data must fit the facts from the participant's point of view. If the theorising became remote from the experiences of the actors involved, their own witness would confirm the unacceptable nature of the research findings. This self-regulating system required a trusting relationship between researcher and subject; nevertheless, participants may not ascribe appropriate significance to every turn and event and could themselves be mistaken or biased. The researcher has the responsibility to assess the overall picture and provide examples and instances which illuminated the situation, neither denying the relevance of participant evidence nor unduly

persuaded by it. In this context Maxwell (1992) referred to the danger that an account could be 'descriptively, interpretively, and theoretically valid as an account.... but may miss other aspects of the person's perspectives that were not expressed outside the interview situation' (p. 294).

(c). *As case-study is a particular, it is unreasonable to generalise from the particular.* There is always a difficulty reconciling limited data from one situation with broad-based claims on a wider basis. It could be claimed that this limitation may be particularly ascribed qualitative research, as quantitative research has the popular image of providing accurate and irrefutable evidence. Yet our horizons are always constrained by the limits of the research, whatever the methodology adopted. Widely accepted 'facts' can prove untrue in the light of further, more sophisticated and accurate research which sometimes invalidates the former work or reduces the impact of its findings; yet without the former, it would often be difficult to attain to the latter. Qualitative data will not necessarily provide generalizable results in the way that other research methods claim to do; but it is reasonable to argue the reverse, namely, that generalizable research findings cannot be guaranteed to fit the particular. Case-studies may only provide a shaft of sunlight, a glimpse of issues that affect the wider domain, but they can at least provide footholds for future research. Tripp (1985) argued that it was a matter of debate whether generalisation was 'an appropriate requirement to demand of case-study research' (p. 33) anyway, though Maxwell (1992), referring to Becker (1990), pointed out that generalization usually took place through a theory which not only made sense of the particular persons or situation studied, 'but also how the same process, in different situations, can lead to different results' (p. 293).

With the above considerations in mind, the case-study at St. Kerensa's depended in the first instance upon a chronological report in which the central

issues were progressively focussed, relying upon a procedure described by Ball (1987) as follows:

(It)...is data-led; it is grounded in research materials; it is inductive. The categories and concepts employed emerged from the scanning and analysis of data. They were tested, elaborated and developed by further collection and interrogation of data. That is to say, analytical insights and interpretative hunches were ploughed back into and used to organize and direct the continuing process of data collection and literature search (viii, Introduction).

Representations referred to as 'ideal constructs' were elicited from the data to reflect early interpretation and hypothesising (Appendix 6); these were gradually modified through a second record of understanding (Stenhouse, 1975) of participants' meanings as they became available through interpretation of interview transcripts and other confirmatory evidence. (Appendix 7 contains a number of models to support interpretation of evidence at the end of the research period.)

The use of St. Kerensa's

The decision to use St. Kerensa's for the case-study was based upon a number of factors, including its position, size, and my previous association with the school as deputy and acting-headteacher. The school drew children from a wide range of backgrounds, including university academics, families recently arrived from overseas (often the Middle East), private housing of differing kinds, and bedsit accommodation. A full-time Section 11 teacher, funded from the Department for Education, was employed for work with children from New Commonwealth countries for whom English was a second language. A counsellor worked part-time in the school, dealing principally with distressed children from the Women's Refuge nearby, but also providing some support for staff members.

Eight of these teachers, from a total staff of fifteen (staffing, see Appendix 2), were people with whom I had previously worked and I was anxious that my own position as a researcher and non-participant observer might not be adversely affected by this close association. In addition, I had supervised several students within the school undertaking their own small-scale research programme as part of their B.Ed. degree at a local Higher Education Institution. There was the prospect that my role as a non-participant could easily be compromised by these earlier contacts and I would need to steer a careful course between the advantages I could gain as 'friend of the school' and the disadvantage of being used in an advisory capacity which might undermine my status. I was afraid of destroying my good standing with teachers by appearing too remote, yet equally cautious not to be seen as expert or (even worse), some sort of appraiser. This latter point was unlikely to be a problem for those who knew me already, but the appraisal process was beginning to gain impetus at this time (1990-91) and was a frequent subject of conversation among the staff. These conditions created additional urgency for me not to be seen as an 'arm' of the headteacher.

These circumstances meant that the choice of the school bristled with possibilities, and with snares. Possibilities: because I had considerable foreknowledge of the school and its history, plus a number of established relationships with staff members. Snares: because my position as non-participant could appear to conflict with my previous close associations. I felt that it was important that I did not permit myself the indulgence of automatically 'siding' with those who were working in the very situation that I had experienced for over six years, though Becker (1970) argued that it was impossible to do research which is value-free, suggesting that researchers need to ask themselves the question: 'Whose side are we on?' (page 99). Nevertheless, I was determined to maintain a sense of perspective in the situation and preserve my objectivity as far as circumstances allowed. In practice, far from being a

disadvantage, my knowledge of the school gave me a number of important advantages as I knew the school's history and could identify with many of the issues that emerged during discussions. This perception was quickly confirmed by early informal comments from teachers who remarked that they believed I would understand the situation better having once worked at the school.

The practicality of being 'non-participant' was challenging for me. Certainly, my oral involvement in the formal meetings could be controlled; but to make sense of the conversations, to come to terms with the complex interchanges and content of various exchanges and gain an understanding of the processes at work in decision-making, required a participation of some kind. Teachers in a meeting may not contribute any word towards the discussion, yet actively participate by means of their nods, frowns, smiles and laughter which contribute towards the tone and direction of the exchanges. Even their silence can have significance, indicating dissatisfaction, confusion, boredom with the topic, uncertainty about the appropriate response, or resentful frustration. However, whatever the intended or unintended purpose, body language cues were significant for every attender, including myself. In order to make sense of a situation I had to look around the room, inevitably catching people's eyes, responding to their facial expressions, laughing along with everyone else during the lighter moments. To attempt a cocooned existence, without allowing myself to relax into the situation, and subsequently expect a healthy response from staff during interviews, did not seem to be an option. I was persuaded by the arguments of Adelman et al (1980) who claimed that anonymity was often counter-productive as it failed to provide the best conditions for the subsequent feedback process, attempting to avoid extremes of approach which might jeopardise either my objectivity or my relationships with staff.

During the Autumn Term 1990, I spent several hours explaining my intentions and the kinds of issues I hoped to tackle to the headteacher, Mrs.

Boxer. She in turn, asked me a variety of searching questions about the practicalities such as time spent, and implications such as confidentiality, which assisted me greatly in clarifying my own thinking. Questions relating to the time I would spend in school were not easy to answer, as my own work commitments were sometimes difficult to predict, though I intended to be present at every formal meeting to which I had access as frequently as possible. The research would also involve other interactions with staff outside the formal meetings, raising a number of practical and ethical questions about access, confidentiality, and use of data.

In fact, although I found that teachers were nearly always pleased to talk, and were often astonishingly willing to offer their time and energy in supporting what I was doing, there was a fine balance to be drawn between getting to know staff informally in the staff-room or around the school, and unintentionally interfering with what they were engaged in. Once, early on in the research, I was talking with a teacher in the corridor as she made her way down to the classroom. She was keenly expounding an aspect of school life when another teacher came up the corridor, anxious because this teacher's class were waiting for her to arrive and were becoming boisterous. Although there had not been any deliberate attempt at delay on my part, it made me realise how easily I could be seen as interfering with the smooth-functioning of the school. It also made me aware how my very presence in the school made a difference to the 'normal' conditions.

The enthusiasm of certain members of staff to be supportive sometimes left me with a dilemma, as to continue to allow them to be generous with their time in this way could lead to trouble with the headteacher or other colleagues; on the other hand, to ignore their generosity might reduce the information I was keen to learn and weaken the good relations I enjoyed. In the event, I gradually discovered a balance and over time the early flush of staff enthusiasm

moderated. Towards the end of the data collection, I had become so familiar to staff that they appeared to be indifferent to my presence.

Mehan (1978) referring to Tylor (1972) used 'constitutive ethnography' to describe recurrent patterns of behaviour in school contexts (p. 36). He described the importance of retrievable data, exhaustiveness of treatment, the convergence between researchers' and participants' perspectives on events, and close analysis of interactions. This required (for instance) detailed transcription and the use of 'elicitation frames', whereby the participants response to questions from the researcher confirmed the tentative analysis. He also pointed out the danger with this method of verification in that the very structuring of questions can create a framework within which responses are possible, thereby placing restrictions on the responses. This form of 'convergent validation' is itself liable to suffer from the same shortcomings that single researcher interpretation might create; that is, responses within a restricted framework. Nevertheless, I anticipated that the posing of my own questions would inevitably involve tentative hypotheses, and any meaningful discussion with participants would entail exploring these embryonic thoughts. Mehan added that the findings of ethnographic research using these principles can lead to a higher level of motivation on the part of participants, thereby opening-up further opportunities for investigation. However, I was conscious of the dangers of 'seeking a convergence between researchers' and participants' perspectives' (Mehan, 1978, p. 38) in such a manner as to jeopardise my 'non-participation' status.

It was important for me to take a 'micro' view of the occurrences, conversations and decision-making processes evident through the research, but not at the expense of seeing the overall pattern of events, conscious of Barton & Walker's warning that an analyst's assumptions and perceptions can 'so deeply penetrate description and analysis of the world under investigation as to jeopardise the chances these analysts have of presenting a 'truthful' account'

(1981, p. 241). As such, single events could not be detached from my awareness of the wider constraints and influences. Certainly, the single instance had much to offer, revealing the complex pattern of processes and factors at work; yet these single instances would be of much greater value when seen as an entrance into the larger picture. The greater the number of instances, the clearer the whole picture should become and, as I couldn't be everywhere at once, it was difficult to see any other method of proceeding other than representative sampling. The ethnographic case-study would have to cement reports of occurrences supplied by teachers, summaries of meetings, and other data in a cohesive manner, yet acknowledge that 'diversification was an indication of the complexity of any cultural scene' (Borg & Gall, 1983, p. 492).

Interviewing staff

The use of the interview as a research tool has been the subject of attention for various researchers (e.g., Platt, 1981; Tripp, 1985; Measor, 1985). I felt that it was important to speak to as many staff as possible early on, both to gather their impressions of my own presence in the school and to gain some feel for the issues which were most pressing for them. It also offered me the opportunity to rediscover or forge a bond with individual teachers.

The teachers were approached informally about being interviewed. I didn't always use the term 'interview', feeling that its formal sound might have acted against the kind of trusting relationship sought, accepting Riches' (1992) position on the importance of trust:-

Probably the most neglected aspect of interviewing is the need to establish good interactive relationships with interviewees...The gaining of good quality information in an interview depends upon establishing good relationships...(p. 219).

My first two interviewees worked with the same age children: one highly experienced, the other in her first year, thereby offering a useful chance to hear

their individual accounts and contrast their views. Further interviews followed with all members of staff. Most of the earlier interviews were with staff from the upper part of the school due largely to the demands upon early years teachers at that time, exacerbated by the imposition of the government demands for information from Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) at Key Stage One (School Year 2), and the pressure of implementing core subjects of the National Curriculum into the school's programme, the weight of which had fallen on early years teachers (1990-91).

The semi-structured interview schedule was designed to allow for comparisons to be made between interviewees' responses yet allow respondents to develop their own trains of thought in a manner which helped them to have some ownership of the interview. I had already interviewed four of the staff on a previous occasion for my Master's Degree when the subject had been staff (and parent) perceptions of the school as a 'welcoming place' (Hayes, 1988) so they had some previous experience of my interview technique.

I also sought to respond to the points raised by Stenhouse (1978) who argued that over time and with a more intimate knowledge of the circumstances and subjects, the researcher constructs a 'second order' of understandings. That is, insights were gained through a re-consideration of the responses in the light of further understanding about the context and the personal experiences and perspectives of the respondents. However, when it came to my analysis and writing-up of results, it was also important for me to take into account his warning these insights can be advantageous for the particular researcher involved but problematic for others wishing to utilise the findings as they do not possess such insights. Hull (1985) also stressed the importance of establishing the 'meaning' behind the responses (i.e. taking into account the respondents' motives and expectations when analysing data). These considerations were significant for me as I sought to gain trust, establish confidence and further my understanding of the teachers' position.

I began the first set of interviews in June 1991, using a broad format but making minor changes in the light of the comments made by the first few respondents about their view of the current consultation process. As the end of the academic year (1991) was approaching, it seemed sensible to complete as many interview sessions as possible before the break. This would allow time over the holiday to look closely at my data and clarify my thinking for the coming year. In practice, there was little problem in gaining co-operation of staff. I approached them in a gentle fashion, enquiring whether, in their busy schedules (of which I was genuinely conscious), they could 'spare me half-an-hour to chat about my research'. I suggested that the anticipated time-limit would be thirty minutes in the expectation that a weary teacher would be willing to spare this modest amount of time, but would be unlikely to respond so favourably to a whole hour or more. Secretly, I anticipated that many of the 'chats' would exceed this allotted time. In practice, a half-hour slot was often adequate for the initial round of interviews, though they occasionally extended to forty-five. Interestingly, the 'interview' often continued beyond the specific time as we walked back to the staff-room or out into the car-park. Throughout the research, during informal conversation following an interview, a teacher often referred back to that time with comments such as: 'As I was saying when we were chatting the other day...'.

Apart from ensuring that I spoke to the two teachers who were leaving at the end of the school year (Mrs. Hemyock and Miss Young), I did not have any clear picture of an order for interviewing the staff. I was determined to gain as wide a view as possible for as a 'part-time' researcher I had limited opportunity to carry out interviews and wanted to use every moment fully. In the light of subsequent events, I need have had no such fears, for every member of staff approached responded positively to my invitation. Eventually, it proved possible to interview only six staff during the Summer Term 1991; fatigue and the onset of the end of the academic year prevented further opportunities. Two members of

staff that I had casually approached about finding a time to talk, actually sought me out near the end of term to apologise that we hadn't had a chance to meet and one of them offered to see me during the vacation! This 'first round' of interviewing continued during the Autumn, using the same semi-structured schedule.

The interviews during that Summer and Autumn Terms 1991 nearly always took place in the classroom of that particular teacher or a nearby room, either after school or during the lunch-break. During the first interviews I asked for permission to tape-record them, though I felt that there was a degree of risk attached in introducing the equipment as it might affect the relaxed relationship I had worked to establish with the respondents. I made it clear to them that they were joint-owners of the tape and could 'pause' the machine at any time if they so wished (Platt, 1981). I was conscious that my own body-language and responses would act as an indicator of my interest and intentions; this meant that I frequently gave encouraging nods and murmurs of understanding about their responses. I tried hard not to make the respondent feel under any time pressure and avoided reading the question in front of me but picked up a comment they had made and wove it into the next question to produce more natural conversation. From time to time I attempted to summarise what I felt the respondent was saying and to offer them the opportunity to qualify earlier comments. This also allowed the teacher to feel that their opinions and comments were being taken seriously (see Appendix 5 for transcript examples).

Interviews during the Autumn Term were more varied than in the Summer. Staff were very busy and I was anxious not to intrude, so I found myself having to compromise over the timing of interviews, especially with some of the early years staff who seemed stretched to the limit dealing with new children and curriculum implementation. In practice, meetings sometimes took place following one of my visits as tutor to students on teaching-practice to save organizing a separate day and time for the interview. I also found that as I continued with the interviews, the

original schedule seemed less appropriate due partly, perhaps, to over-familiarity and partly to the rapidly changing events in school life. The data from earlier interviews affected my approach as issues emerging from the Summer Term responses found their way into my questioning and comment during the Autumn. I also found that I was using the respondents as 'confirmers' or 'deniers' of the perceptions I had gained from previous respondents (Burgess, H, 1985).

The second round of semi-structured interviews began in Spring Term 1992 with members of the Senior Management Team (SMT) and the other (non-SMT) teacher-governor. The schedule (see Appendix 4) was composed of questions more specific to the management of the school, including reference to their own experience and training, their view of staff collaboration operating in the school, and their perceptions of interest groups and influential members. One member (Mrs. Ellie) was only able to offer me brief comments due to what appeared to be a whirlwind of activities and responsibilities as she came to terms with her new demanding role as early years co-ordinator. In her case, I decided that I would forego the structured interview and depend upon a number of shorter informal exchanges.

My meetings with the headteacher (Mrs. Boxer) began early in the research but the first semi-structured interview was in October 1991 following the first round of interviews with staff. I decided to wait this long to give myself the opportunity to hear the 'staff voice' and gain clearer insights into the school's life and work before discussing issues with her. Over the next two years, she was extremely generous with her time and willing to discuss any relevant matters with me. However, she preferred our discussions to be loosely structured and eventually I used a few general headings or sent her a sample of my written work relevant to her own role in advance of the meeting to comment on and use as a basis for discussion. This latter approach proved very fruitful and enabled me to clarify my thinking and correct factual errors contained in written accounts.

Over the period of research (until January 1994) I maintained this contact and the process of clarification and 'right of reply' continued.

To make doubly certain that respondents were happy for me to use material from our interviews, I sent copies of the transcriptions to each teacher who still worked at the school in September 1993. In January 1994, I gained permission from the two teacher-governors to include two full interview transcriptions in the appendix of my thesis. I also included an interesting transcript with a newly qualified teacher who had left the school in 1992 as she had expressed herself cogently and spoke openly, perhaps in the knowledge that she was shortly leaving the situation (Appendix 5 contains the full transcript).

In addition, as I became a familiar sight around the school, members of staff would cheerily remark something to the effect that 'people will think you work here!', though after a few terms of visits, I appeared to be accepted as an appendage to the staff rather as (say) a 'supply' teacher might be. The headteacher remarked favourably that she felt that I was never intrusive, confirming that my attempts to be unobtrusive were worthwhile. It also meant, however, that I needed to nurture the position and ensure that I did not do anything to damage the development of the positive relationship. As time passed, I was finding the tape-recorder to be rather obtrusive and increasingly resorted to a reliance upon oral comments and taking notes longhand during the interview and/or writing a summary as quickly as possible afterwards. In my many interviews with the headteacher, I relied completely on this approach as she expressed a dislike for the use of a recorder.

There was also the problem of making a note of the many useful informal exchanges outside formal interview sessions. Teachers' comments were sometimes made on a one-to-one basis with the intention of excluding other possible hearers and safeguarding confidentiality was of paramount importance, yet the insights gained were often significant. I found that the trusting relationship between the teachers and myself resulted in numerous interesting

but sensitive comments which illuminated previous conversations. This 'storehouse' of information gradually accumulated as a valuable source of circumstantial evidence in conjunction with the more public data from interviews and attendance at meetings. Sometimes several staff were involved in sharing something close to their hearts which they, as a group, wished to air within the security of the 'closed membership'. It was inappropriate to take notes as it would have acted against the trusting mood within which much personal feeling was disclosed, but I made mental note of the key points which sometimes helped to shape future conversations and interview questions.

The contents of the recorded semi-structured interviews were transcribed by myself as soon after the event as possible. This ensured that I listened carefully to what had been said and avoided a backlog of data, raising my awareness of areas which were worth pursuing further and of those which were potentially blind alleys. Where a tape-recorder was not used and I had to write up the notes from memory, it proved to be a constructive exercise, forcing me to summarise and order points raised in a way which straightforward transcription did not require, though naturally some loss of detail occurred as a result.

Following transcriptions, the analysis of interview data presented specific challenges as it was not always possible to directly compare different respondents' responses due to the variations in the direction characterising the conversations. Hull (1985) reasoned that 'live talk must always be interpreted within its situational as well as its textual context' (p. 27); that is, analysis must take account of the particular situation in which the interview took place, and of the 'meaning systems of participants' (p. 28). This accumulated knowledge of participants (Hull's 'black-market stock') increased the dependence of reported interpretations on the special understandings of the participants, and thereby exacerbated the problems of offering the results to wider public scrutiny. That is, 'how were my interpretations to be accessible to the judgement of readers if the

data on which I drew were, for me, uniquely, a trigger to remembrance of lived events?' (p. 28). The interpretation of data was, therefore, not static; my understanding of comments and responses altered as I became more familiar with individual's preferences, values and circumstances. To help monitor the impression I created and my handling of situations, I asked staff during the first round of interviews to comment upon their own perceptions of me as researcher.

Interview data concerning my role

From the staff responses about my role a number of interesting points emerged:

1 Responses indicated that I would need to spend more time discussing with teachers my own role and the main purpose of the research. (Although I thought that I had gone to great lengths to do so, it was obvious that I had to make more effort.) There were some down-to-earth questions about why I attended the staff meetings, why I took copious notes, and where it was all leading. It also became clear that I still had some work to do in persuading a few staff in the school that I was not likely to be a hindrance to any career aspirations they may have had or being viewed favourably by the headteacher. Two staff mentioned that I might be used by some teachers as a transmitter of their own viewpoint about the school (especially to the headteacher) without them having to reveal their position openly.

2 The interviews confirmed that I was not interfering appreciably with any of the normal processes operating within the school. I was seen as an independent researcher by those less familiar with my past history of working at the school, and 'an old friend' by those who knew me better. I was viewed largely by staff as impartial, unimposing, and part of the familiar 'furniture' of the school.

Over a period of time, however, I became aware that the large number of interviews and casual conversations I was having with staff were affecting their

perceptions of the issues in which I was interested. For some teachers, these were previously unthought of issues; for others they confirmed or affected and refined their thinking. For instance, the headteacher confessed that she had become more aware about collaboration in decision-making, especially the involvement of her deputy. I also noticed that some teachers began to raise more publicly the kinds of issues that we had discussed at interview. In this respect, I was unintentionally focusing staff attention on particular issues. The term 'non-participative' was not synonymous with 'non-influential,' as my presence in the school did affect teachers' perceptions and awareness about the decision-making process.

Use of fieldnotes

From the start of my data collection to its conclusion, I kept details of every meeting that I attended in a research log, using a number of hardback notebooks. Data occupied the right hand page; the left hand side was used for reflections and points of clarification. As the significance of particular topics became apparent, key phrases and themes were highlighted; these were useful in the development of the semi-structured interview schedules during the staff interviews and assisted in the first phase of analysis. Pages were numbered and dated, allowing for cross-referencing and accessibility. Interviews which were not taped were recorded in the log, together with notes of relevant informal comments or incidents.

Feedback to staff

As part of my agreement with Mrs. Boxer to provide her with some feedback at regular intervals throughout the research, I arranged to give her regular updates about current progress. I was concerned not to say too much, too soon, yet appear open and ethical about my intentions. I deliberately withheld any detailed mention of my findings until two years of data collection had passed, by

which time I felt that the critical period was over and I could afford to release more information without compromising my 'non-participant' stance.

The first substantial feedback took the form of a 'management audit', consisting of a series of questions about a wide range of school life and practice for Mrs. Boxer to consider and share as she felt appropriate. On the basis of her responses, some re-phrasing of a few sections was completed (final version, Appendix 9). The major feedback to staff, consisting of summary papers, was given in March 1994 and to governors in the Summer Term 1994. A copy of the final thesis was made available in the school.

Throughout the research, I was extremely conscious of the sensitivities involved when dealing with teachers in a school community and the ethics of confidentiality and trust required while pursuing my research aims. Over the period of the research, I tried to develop a number of ideal constructs through data analysis to inform and shape the work and progressively focus my theory (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Merriam, 1988). The construction of a series of illustrative models assisted my attempts to clarify the position (see Appendices 6 and 7). Further details relating to data collection and analysis are held in Appendix 11.

The following account relies heavily upon insights gained using chronologically accumulated data to confirm, modify and shape my perspectives. The following chapter begins, therefore, by developing a contextual framework based upon the earlier stage of the study (1991).

PART THREE: FINDINGS

CHAPTER 5

SCHOOL DECISION-MAKING STRUCTURES

Introduction

After gaining right of entry to the school, I felt that it was appropriate to attend as many staff meetings as possible in the early stages before attempting any interviews. During the first few months of data collection, there were a number of on-going and emerging situations which occupied the majority of staff time and attention and the following section is a description of those issues during (approximately) my first year at St. Kerensa's which affected staff involvement in the decision-making process. However, underpinning the consultation process was the formally constituted structure established by the headteacher, Mrs. Boxer to facilitate whole staff involvement in wider school issues. The structure at that time (1991) consisted of three regular weekly meetings:

- * a senior management team (SMT) comprised of the headteacher, her deputy and the three Rate 'A' allowance holders;
- * two separate phase meetings for the upper and early years staff;
- * a full staff meeting.

The principle which underscored the process was that issues raised in the SMT meeting would be carried through to the phase meetings by the members; during the phase meeting, these issues would be clarified and discussed in preparation for the full staff meeting where common agreement could be found about appropriate action, resolutions passed, and decisions made.

The issues of immediate concern to the school when I arrived at the start of 1991 were outlined during informal discussions with Mrs. Boxer who explained that the school was particularly concerned with five areas for internal discussion or review. These had been agreed by staff during the previous summer (1990) as priority areas for 1990-91 and the responses had been analysed by Mrs. Boxer who subsequently drew up a development plan:

- (1) updating the existing Language document;
- (2) developing a policy for Humanities;
- (3) reviewing the policy for Special Needs;
- (4) examining the implementation of Year 2 assessment tasks;
- (5) establishing a Record of Achievement system throughout the school.

Different areas were in various stages of development. The Language document was nearing completion following months of discussion in staff meetings. The Humanities document was a priority due to the impending start of National Curriculum History and Geography in the following September. The review of Special Needs provision was an issue which had been the focus for staff attention due to a serious incident involving an assault by a child on a non-teaching assistant (late 1990). The Year 2 assessment, in particular SATs, was on the point of commencing and staff were understandably anxious that final details had not yet arrived from SEAC (by February 1991). Similarly, the Records of Achievement procedures were waiting for clearer information from the DES (Broadfoot et al, 1988; Ashforth, 1990), though some preliminary work was underway throughout the school. Two things quickly became clear as I attended meetings and observed staff responses:-

1 A considerable part of the impetus for St. Kerensa's planning and development came as a result of externally imposed national reforms. School development planning and staff participation in decision-making were subject to the fact that some issues had been pre-selected outside teachers' control and were not necessarily reflecting their personal or corporate priorities.

2 Staff were uneasy about the speed and fluctuating nature of the changes. During a staff meeting (27/2/91) the discussions were dominated by concerns over the demands made by the onset of legislation and the effect of the

accompanying work pressures on staff well-being. In addition, there were numerous internal affairs relating to the behaviour of children, liaison and communication across the school between staff to deal with in addition to preparation of material for inclusion in the new parents' prospectus. These early staff meetings were characterised by dark humour and outlandish morale-boosting comments by experienced staff to emphasise points and offer support to colleagues (Woods, 1983), or, in contrast, by a gloomy acquiescence.

Typically:-

The agenda was dominated by concerns over individual children...the conversations were characterised by frequent interjections and a kind of grim humour which pervaded discussion; for example: 'Let's face it, we're just waiting for disaster to strike before something gets done' and 'I'll book an appointment with the psychiatrist in advance!'. There was a fluency of exchange and gritty humour, balanced by a deadly seriousness. Morale was maintained by expressions of empathy and stories which gave credence and recognition to previous accounts.
(Field notes, 27/2/91)

This duality of concerns about the uncertainties of correctly interpreting and implementing the government reform programme and day-to-day stresses with immediate school issues was replicated in a variety of ways over the next two years. As I shall demonstrate, these concerns played an important part in shaping the agenda of meetings, the nature of staff involvement and the morale of teachers.

The responsibility for interpreting the plethora of information that poured into the school during 1991 lay principally with the headteacher who was in receipt of a large amount of post each day. (See Appendix 8, 'Information Overload' for details of the range of communications received prior to, and over the period of, the research.) She commented frequently about the task of sifting the essential from the non-essential and the time spent dealing with form-filling and associated paperwork (Clerkin, 1985; Maiden & Harrold, 1988; Muse &

Wallace, 1988; Mortimore & Mortimore, 1991; Hellowell, 1991). However, it was in keeping with her desire to involve staff more fully in school affairs that the system of an SMT and two phase groups had been instigated. On receipt of the post, Mrs. Boxer made the initial decision about which information was important; subsequently, the SMT decided which issues were relevant for whole staff consideration, and the phase groups discussed those issues from their own age-phase perspective in advance of the full staff meeting when it was anticipated that a consensus could be reached. The fact that the headteacher made the initial decision about the importance of items prior to presentation to the SMT signalled that in the chain of events associated with decision-making, she was the initial filter for the priority accorded to different issues. Considering that nearly every communication was initially addressed to her and she was the only person without regular teaching commitments, this was hardly surprising. Managing the volume of information and subsequent action or implementation of the directives was, therefore, carried out by means of an intra-school procedure through:

- (a) the headteacher's judgement about the importance of an item;
- (b) discussion by the SMT to ascertain the significance of items for fuller staff consideration;
- (c) deliberations by teachers in the two phase groups (upper school and early years) to offer their own perspectives on an issue;
- (d) a full staff meeting at which the opinions from phases and the SMT and headteacher perspectives were offered to find a way forward through consensus.

In addition, other parties were involved in helping to shape the direction of the decision-making. The Chair of Governors received copies of most documentation sent to the headteacher by the local authority or the regulating

bodies such as the NCC and SEAC (later Schools' Curriculum and Assessment Authority, SCAA). This meant that, in theory, both school management and governors would be similarly informed about statutory requirements and non-statutory advice. In addition, liaison with the local education authority (LEA) and the headteachers of maintained schools in the city (referred to as an 'Academic Council') also provided support in the task of placing the many demands in priority order and responding appropriately to statutory requirements. Details of these relationships are developed in the accounts which follow, together with insights into the nature of staff involvement and the role of the headteacher in the decision-making process.

First, it was useful to gain insights into the function and activities of the formally constituted groups established by the headteacher and their place in the overall process of consultation and decision-making.

Senior management team meetings

Attendance at the SMT meetings, which were held during Monday lunchtimes for about half-an-hour, offered opportunity for me to observe first-hand the methods by which issues considered urgent by the headteacher, Mrs. Boxer, were received and discussed by senior staff. I have already indicated that Mrs. Boxer, having initial access to the information arriving from external agencies, had made some decisions over which were the most important items in advance of the SMT meeting. During my preliminary discussions with her about the nature of the research, she justified this in terms of her responsibility as headteacher to ensure that appropriate action was taken in the light of the conflicting demands and statutory nature of some missives. A DES report (1990) about developing school management had stressed that for senior staff in schools 'in times of rapid change there are new expectations and new accountabilities' (p. 2) which 'reinforces the corporate responsibility of the staff for the quality of education offered to the community...' (p. 14). An LEA document which arrived at about the

same time underlined the need for headteachers to ensure that pupils had a curriculum in line with the LEA's general policy as adapted by the governing body. A complex document from the DES in the first part of 1991 described (amongst other things) the need for school development planning, collaboration with staff and governors, liaison with the LEA, and selecting an action plan based on an appropriate audit of strengths and weaknesses (DES, 1991). Thus:

...the highest possible level of agreement about the plan among governors, head and staff will be vital if the necessary commitment and collaboration are to be mobilised. Consensus requires consultation...
(p. 7)

These communications, intended, no doubt, to both encourage a particular management style in schools, also resulted in a flurry of activity by Mrs. Boxer to respond to the directives. Mrs. Boxer recognized that was obliged to implement the timetabled reforms (in particular National Curriculum and assessment), yet at the same time was attempting to establish a more collaborative decision-making structure.

It was interesting to note the assumption in the DES document that consultation was necessarily accompanied by consensus if optimum progress was to be made in school development implementation. This assumption was to be tested in the following months and years as my thesis will demonstrate.

Mrs. Boxer's rapidity of response to statutory requirements also had to take some account of on-going decisions about school organization and maintenance. For example, deciding class arrangements for the next academic year (1991-92) was a priority due to the need to print details in the prospectus; the time scale was such that the governors' sub-committee dealing with the matter required confirmation of the proposals as soon as possible. However, members of the SMT were anxious that planning was too well advanced and would result in decisions being taken before numbers were known for the following September or proper discussion with teachers about their age-group preference had taken place (SMT meeting, 4/3/91). Against this priority,

statutory requirements such as the Key Stage 1 (KS1) SATs in Mathematics, Science and English needed time in order for teachers to interpret procedures and ensure adequate resourcing was in place. Similarly, activity to monitor the implementation of the National Curriculum core subjects and Technology at KS 1 and KS 2 and prepare for the start of KS2 Geography and History (in September 1991) occupied teachers' thoughts as they struggled to cope with the different demands.

Attempts by Mrs. Boxer to maintain a balance of interests between externally imposed and internally-initiated priorities was typical of many that were to follow; namely, an external imperative with an accompanying time limit weighed against servicing regular school procedures, while enhancing collaboration with staff, governors and the LEA. It was easy to envisage how, under such conditions, Mrs. Boxer wished to respond to directives as promptly and exactly as possible whereas the other members of the SMT, as classroom practitioners, expressed a wish to reflect upon the directive, consider different interpretations, and assess how much flexibility existed in its implementation.

There was, therefore, something of a tension between the aspirations of Mrs. Boxer and the other SMT members, whose reaction was, in part, a response to the concerns they said had been voiced by their colleagues. This difference of perspective appeared sharpest in decisions which directly affected the teachers' working habits. For instance, following the statutory requirement that parents should be fully informed about their children's school progress and the knowledge that they could subsequently challenge a teacher's judgement, Mrs. Boxer pressed for teachers to keep extensive evidence of appropriate children's work to act as proof to support the teacher's judgement in the event of any controversy. During subsequent discussion (11/3/91 and 18/3/91), members argued that it was unrealistic to expect classroom teachers to keep numerous samples of written work for every child, dated and with details of the context in which the piece was completed; in addition, there were numerous

non-written examples of children's work such as pottery, models, and the like which were impossible to keep for long.

The important question of evidence for assessment/Records of Achievement purposes was the focus of some uneasy discussion. The headteacher was particularly anxious that the 'letter of the law' was obeyed. The head's view differed from the staff...(who) were concerned about paper-overload.
(Field notes, 18/3/91)

Further complications existed because the advice from SEAC was ambiguous; their suggestion that teachers should keep samples of work to the minimum appeared to conflict with the statute. Mrs. Boxer, aware of her accountability and of the importance of satisfying parents, seemed more determined to resolve the issue than the other members, who, though conscious of the need to respond to statutory requirements, were equally sensitive to the extra workload involved. During my subsequent attendance at phase meetings and informal conversations with a range of teachers, I noted that their reluctance to respond wholeheartedly to the headteacher's proposals appeared in part due to their awareness that some other local primary schools were taking a more relaxed view of implementing the national reforms. Such was the divergence of opinion over the way ahead, together with the messages from the regulating bodies about the amount of evidence that was necessary to keep which staff claimed were confusing, that this particular issue was not resolved before the end of the research period (April, 1993). Uncertainty about government intentions fuelled headteacher anxiety and staff unease, making the task of the SMT more difficult as they sought to reconcile the conflicting factors whilst being sensitive to staff concerns.

It quickly became apparent from attendance at the SMT meetings and informal comments from members that the SMT, formed ostensibly to facilitate the smooth handling of documentation and fuller staff participation, were faced with a number of dilemmas:

- * SMT members (other than the headteacher) were also teachers associated with different phases, and thereby influenced by their colleagues through day-to-day liaison and canvassing;
- * the main agenda was drawn up by Mrs. Boxer and this, together with time constraints, allowed little time for other pressing in-school items to be discussed;
- * not all SMT members were happy about being the link between headteacher and colleagues. For instance, one member of the SMT confided that she was 'tired of being the go-between' (12/3/91) from headteacher to staff during phase meetings. This was significant in the light of Mrs. Boxer's determination to develop a more collegial climate through furthering collaborative decision-making.
- * some SMT members did not view themselves as being part of the management system of the school. During casual conversations with members it was interesting how often they referred to the SMT as if 'separate' from their own role. There appeared to be a reluctance to locate within the management team if it meant that their links with the general staff team were weakened or compromised.

Nevertheless, it was the responsibility of SMT members to inform colleagues at phase meetings about key issues and concerns, either through points of information or by seeking a response in advance of the full staff meeting. As such, it demanded good and accurate communication skills to ensure consistency and equivalence across the two phases. Reference will be made later in my thesis about the reconstitution of the SMT which took place in September 1992 in which the number was trimmed to three persons only and the impact of this change upon the decision-making process. Nevertheless, the initial membership (during 1991/92) worked alongside the headteacher in

helping to process the large number of demands which were received during this period of the research and liaising with colleagues in the phase groups.

Phase groups

Allocation of staff to phase groups is listed in Appendix 2. There were two phase groups operating in the school: the *early years phase* for teachers of the nursery and children up to Year 3; the *upper school phase* for teachers of older children. The Section 11 teacher (responsible for the English language needs of New Commonwealth children) and the non-class based teacher (the 'floating' teacher) were associated with both phases but spent the majority of their time working with younger children and therefore normally attended the early years phase group. During phase groups meetings, discussion topics centred on priority issues emerging from the SMT brought to the phase by members of the Team, one of whom chaired and provided an agenda; for the early years, Mrs. Hemyock (later Mrs. Ellie), and for the upper school, the deputy, Mr. Jamieson. For instance, during attendance at my first upper school phase group (27/2/91), the items discussed reflected the SMT agenda:

- * agreeing the broad curriculum plans for the next academic year (to be made available for governors and published in the forthcoming parents' brochure);
- * discussing the progress of staff record-keeping, both from the statutory obligation to fill in National Curriculum record cards and in the light of developing a school Record of Achievement pupil profile.

Similarly, in the early years group (5/3/91), the following topics were discussed:

- * managing the SATs;
- * utilising a large, centrally positioned activity area;

- * responsibilities of allowance holders.

In the case of the upper school phase group, the curriculum decisions were urgently needed to comply with the time frame for publication of the brochure; the issue of record-keeping was on-going and would be under review throughout the period of the research. In the early years phase group, management of the SATs preoccupied staff as implementation was imminent. It was significant that the late arrival of the documentation was still being absorbed by the co-ordinator (Mrs. Hemyock) charged with the job of interpreting the tasks, advising colleagues and organizing the procedures. Naturally enough, her own anxieties, openly expressed, were transmitted to the group as a whole who shared her disquiet and responded sympathetically.

From this early example, confirmed by subsequent meetings, the variety of items for consideration by the phase group members in a single half-hour lunchtime meeting became apparent. Some were on the agenda due to external demands (such as SATs); others were internal matters (such as the use of the central activity area). Some required immediate decisions (such as the curriculum topics); others were part of an on-going debate (such as record-keeping). Some discussion was concerned with ways of reaching a given objective (such as implementation of the government assessment tasks); others sought to clarify the objective (such as responsibilities of post-holders). By any standard, these were wide ranging demands for any group of teachers to address during thirty minutes. Clearly, more time and more direction (in certain instances) was needed in order to fulfil the expectations to respond to the range of items placed before them.

Despite the constraints of the heavy agenda, the discussions were fairly free-ranging, notably in the upper phase group. Policy issues relating to statutory obligations were sometimes dealt with superficially; the strongest interest was expressed by staff over issues that reflected their immediate

classroom work and life within school ('proximal' issues), such as the obligation to carry out SATs and ensuring National Curriculum coverage. For instance, from an upper years phase group discussing curriculum coverage (Field notes, 18/3/91):-

In Science there were 16 Attainment Targets (ATs) to cover, with 5 teachers. This could be done as three ATs per teacher (i.e. total of 15) plus an extra one for one teacher. Mr. Dawn recommended longer-term planning on a 2-year rolling programme to ensure greater continuity. Some discussion over the implications for next year and the likelihood of larger numbers of children. Further discussion over how many ATs could realistically be covered in one term/year.

This conversation demonstrated the confusion over the statutory requirements and the practical implications for classroom practice. Many questions remained unanswered as the following portion from the same exchange reflected:-

Teacher 1: Some exposure to most or all of the ATs has taken place.

Teacher 2: Yes, but there's the danger of superficiality.

Teacher 3: Are we going to decide which ATs are covered by which teacher?

Field Note: The key point raised was over whether to look at ages of the children involved or abilities. Age-related would mean working with own class. Ability-related requires groups.

Teacher 3: Can we ignore Key Stage 3 in Year 7?

Teacher 2: Science is unique (being subject-related); History is skills-centred, Maths is more of a continuum.

Field Note: Some confusion over the statutory requirements. General agreement that a whole-school plan urgently needed.

Teacher 2: The greatest problem is the content-based part of the National Curriculum.

Teacher 3: Can we use the previous year's record-sheets to decide which ATs need to be covered?

Teacher 2: Yes, but we don't get the sheets until July!
(18/3/91, paraphrased)

In addition to these specific teaching-related concerns, the wide-ranging conversations typically included a consideration of aspects of broader school life, notably how to deal with the behaviour of key individual children, the high absentee rates of staff due (it was claimed by most staff to whom I spoke) to stress, and the way that both these combined to produce discontinuity in

teaching, thereby lowering the quality of learning. Staff in both phases appeared unwilling to deliberate on imposed topics before immediate and pressing issues had been aired. For instance, Mrs. Driver (the 'floating' teacher), was concerned that her involvement with the older children would be affected by the imminent SATs (Key Stage 1) where the headteacher had directed her to focus her efforts during the following months. As such, the imposition of the assessment procedures were cutting into her teaching role, affecting her routine and the support she could offer to the teachers of older children. This example indicated that the requirement for staff to respond to an externally enforced directive had implications for other cherished areas of school life.

Significantly, as issues were debated during phase meetings and curriculum implementation was discussed, there were frequent references by Mrs. Boxer to her preference for particular teaching approaches; in her view team-teaching was the best way to gain most from staff expertise. Thus:-

The headteacher seems anxious that the notion of co-operation, team planning, etc. is not lost. There is also a tension between the group of teachers holding to more traditional methods and those favouring a different approach....(she) is determined that the 'old-fashioned group' are not permitted to take control.
(Field notes, 12/3/91)

One consequence of implementing this philosophy was that upper school staff planned together for Mathematics and children moved between different teachers (and rooms) as teachers took responsibility for ability-related groups. This principle began to extend to other areas of the curriculum, but not every teacher was fully convinced that this was the most effective method, as captured in a conversation during a curriculum working party session:-

Teacher 1: We can transmit anxiety and rush to the children in team teaching, such as clearing tables for the next group.

Teacher 2: Is it team teaching next year?

Teacher 1: Only Maths. Some are saying 'please give us our own class'.

Teacher 2: Children are often not at a mental age to match their chronological age.

Teacher 1: With all the rush, there's often not time to share and listen with children.

Teacher 2: I've never seen team teaching work well.

Teacher 1: Only in Maths does it seem to work.

Teacher 2: Who made the decision, anyway?

(Working party, field notes, 15/5/91)

Some teachers were anxious about the amount of time spent liaising with one another and the practicalities of movement of children from one room to another during the day. In a subsequent whole-staff discussion these feelings were made explicit. For instance:-

- * 'I'm anxious to give each child an identity within the class.'
 - * 'I'm concerned over the principle of children being allowed to wander; we need a firm structure.'
 - * 'It's a question of whose responsibility they (i.e., the children) are, especially the difficult ones.'
 - * 'This raises the question of school policy about moving children.'
- (Fieldnotes, staff meeting, 6/3/91)

The implication of these remarks was that policy based upon the headteacher's preference for team approaches was viewed by some staff (in particular those of older children) as potentially undermining their ability to control the children, particularly as a few troublesome individuals were, at that time, creating problems. This unease reflected a key concern among teachers during phase meetings (and numerous subsequent informal exchanges) about the need to develop a clear and unambiguous discipline policy across the school, and a general acceptance that teaching was as much about social training as teaching subjects. There was a strong feeling expressed that curriculum planning was of little purpose unless teachers felt happy that internal order had been established and that they could teach in a manner with which they felt comfortable. These issues of 'internal order' and 'feeling comfortable' with the teaching approach, which emanated from phase group meetings despite the existence of a formal agenda which dealt largely with externally imposed matters, were to recur during

the remainder of the year. The preferences of the headteacher about appropriate ways of working were affecting the enthusiasm with which some staff addressed the legislative requirements as they felt that externally imposed demands should have been subordinate to settled and coherent internal order. This impression was confirmed during subsequent staff meetings (see later).

Thus the initial purposes of the phase meetings were not always realised due to the pressing personal concerns of staff. This was the first indication that staff involvement in the decision-making process would need to take close account of factors which were perceived by them to have relevance to their teaching and life within the school; that is, the principle of teaching 'children not subjects' (DES, 1978; DES, 1982; Alexander, 1984, 1992; cf., Campbell, 1989b). This consideration was at this stage influencing their willingness to support the headteacher's ideas and aspirations. Teachers believed that with the heavy demands accompanying the rapid time of change, it was essential that priorities which immediately affected their ability to maintain an effective teaching programme and order throughout the school were addressed. There were indications that due to the staff's perception of their obligation to discuss and debate imposed legislative matters at the expense of pressing items, the resistance to accept innovations which might further challenge their current practice was strong.

Moreover, the progress made during the phase meetings suggested that many issues were to defy swift resolution; some were still being debated two years later, notably the impact of the SATs and appropriate record-keeping procedures. Mrs. Boxer's view of the same situation is described in a later chapter; suffice to say at this juncture (1991) that she was aware that staff were under pressure but argued that she was obliged to respond to government strictures. She saw her promotion of team-planning and collaborative teaching as part of her central philosophy of involvement, and a necessary part of coping

with the demands of rapid change, a point she made firmly on several occasions in meetings and informally to me.

This pattern of response became a feature of phase meetings during the early stages of the research which were dominated by staff concerns over the imposition of statutory obligation at the expense of more immediate issues relating to procedures and problems associated with the workaday world. The early years group was less vociferous than the upper school group and followed the agenda more closely, but the effects of proposed measures were similarly evaluated in their likely impact upon classroom practice and teacher-pupil relationships (Sellick, 1989). For instance, the time spent on mastering the procedure for SATs and the effect upon pupils and staff was widely discussed. Typically:-

Everything is taking such a long time. Children reach a point during the SATs where you move into a teaching mode and you're not allowed to teach!

and

SATs only confirm teacher assessment anyway. We were originally told we'd do them without extra cover...It has split Years 2 and 3. (Year 2 teachers, field notes, 8/5/91)

It was noticeable how the SMT members in both phases, while presenting the issues to the phase group on behalf of the team, became closely involved in the resulting discussions as fellow colleagues. However, although shared values about the need for examining statutory requirements in the light of their effect upon classroom practice and teacher-pupil relationship were evident across the phases, the difference in emphasis between the phases suggested the growth of separate constituencies with identifiable and distinctive priorities. The organizational structure which had been established by Mrs. Boxer to allow different age-phases to concentrate upon matters pertinent to themselves began to assume significantly different identities. The impression I gained was one of

greater compliance with the agenda emanating from SMT meetings from the early years teachers than their upper school colleagues. The explanation for this seemed to lie in the fact that upper school staff were often preoccupied with internal matters, especially control and discipline, whereas early years staff were more concerned with the implementation of government reforms that had fallen most heavily upon KS1 activities at that juncture and had implications for their classroom practice and resourcing.

At a time when unity of purpose was considered essential by the headteacher if the legislative programme was to be implemented successfully, the staff appeared to be increasingly conscious that phase groups were adopting distinctive stances. A number of informal comments from teachers in different phases indicated that feelings were deep about the need to maintain unity across the whole staff and awareness of the danger of dislocation. Seemingly minor issues could catalyse division. Discussions about the details of a joint-school activity, for example, became heated when early years staff felt that upper school colleagues were making excessive use of the hall at a peak time. One experienced teacher, Mrs. Driver, later commented that 'the saddest aspect of this affair is the way in which the uncertainty has created a division between the upper and lower school' (23/10/91). More serious issues were also significant; for instance, staff approaches to control and discipline seemed markedly different in the two areas of the school, with early years teachers considerably less disposed towards potentially confrontational strategies to deal with indiscipline. These examples suggested that the structure of the decision-making process using phase groups was in danger of creating certain divisions and thereby restricting the development of a whole-school approach and consensual decisions. Initial impressions indicated that a teacher's commitment to a proposal or priority was affected not only by his or her own values and professional judgement but by the phase constituency of which he or she was a member. (Bush, 1989 found similar loyalties between secondary school internal

groups.) Later attendance at the phase group meetings confirmed that in the early years the discussions tended to focus upon methods of implementation and clarifying administrative arrangements, whereas in the upper years there was an emphasis upon justifying a particular action and establishing its relevance (Dickinson, 1975).

For instance, an early years planning meeting (22/10/91) agreed that as resources were limited, there was a need for teachers to see each other's plans for the following term to minimise clashes associated with resource provision. Each teacher agreed to produce suggestions for a different subject area to share with colleagues at the next meeting. They also accepted that although long-term planning should follow the headteacher's prescribed format, each teacher should be free to present short-term plans (for one term) in any way preferred. By contrast, an upper school planning meeting at around the same time (13/11/91), while examining the resource implications for teaching different subjects, repeatedly commented upon the effect that resource shortage had upon their teaching strategies, practical issues such as interruptions to lessons when children were required to leave the room for activities such as choir practices, and the appropriateness of using phase meetings to consider issues raised at SMT level. There was strong agreement that the principle purpose of phase meetings was for curriculum-related discussions rather than general policy issues or organizational strategies.

There was little indication of hierarchy or status affecting the interactions during any of the phase meetings; members of the SMT were certainly better informed due to their earlier briefing with the headteacher and able to provide information to colleagues, but were otherwise part of the collegial environment. In both phase groups, the SMT members were always more anxious to follow the agenda, aware of their responsibility towards the forthcoming full staff debate when they were expected to report back from the phase group. It was evident that, in general, teachers' reactions to agenda items relating to externally

imposed issues supported the assertion that their principle concerns related to classroom issues. The time spent discussing resources, for example, frequently dominated the discourse. Indications from field data suggested that shared priorities about issues which were of direct relevance to teaching created a climate of openness and mutual support amongst staff in a particular phase; this was evident in the mutually-supportive tone of the meetings. However, it appeared that this co-determinate ethos (Everard & Morris, 1990) could only be fostered and sustained if the authority of senior members (the SMT) was voluntarily suspended. That is, SMT members were willing to accept contributions and comments from group members without regard to their own position in the school hierarchy. Only when time pressed and a decision or response was urgently required did the SMT representative urge the group to reach a conclusion. Membership of a constituency appeared to promote collegiality within the phase group; its existence in the full staff meeting remained less clear at this stage.

Phase group meetings were a preparation for the full staff meeting, during which the issues originally raised at SMT level were discussed in the light of phase members' responses. However, there were indications that this process was premised on a number of unwarranted assumptions:

- * that SMT representatives would provide a satisfactory and accurate presentation of information and issues to other teachers in their phase;
- * that all staff would be present to hear and participate in the subsequent discussions;
- * that the issues emerging from the SMT meeting would take precedence over other priorities;
- * that there would be adequate time and motivation during the short phase meeting to reach a consensus and/or provide a helpful contribution to the full staff debate.

In practice, although there was some preliminary evidence that the system functioned effectively on certain occasions, there were others in which, due to staff absence, confusion, or reluctance to conform, the quality of feedback was variable, thereby hindering the next stage of the decision-making process by way of the full staff meeting.

Full staff meetings

Full staff meetings took place each Wednesday after school. All staff were expected to attend, though throughout the period of the research it was fairly unusual for everyone to be present owing to illness and other commitments outside school. Mrs. Boxer normally chaired the meetings and drew up the agenda, sometimes in consultation with SMT members or, where appropriate, curriculum co-ordinators. Staff were offered plenty of opportunity to contribute towards discussion, though in practice it was often dominated by senior staff and teacher-governors. Throughout my first year of observation, the staff meeting agenda was usually composed of a mixture of internal organizational matters and ways of coping with national reforms. Thus, during meetings in Spring 1991, a typical agenda included a discussion about internal matters such as the allocation of staff to classes for the following year (as the details were required urgently for the school brochure) and how to maintain pupil records, and externally imposed items such as the implementation of the Science curriculum at Key Stages 1 and 2 and the administration of SATs.

As an example of the exchanges which occurred during the meeting, decisions about matching teachers with classes were largely determined by individual teachers 'bidding' for the age-phase they favoured by stating publicly in the meeting where their preference lay or (for those less certain) by an invitation from the headteacher to discuss the matter with Mr. Jamieson (deputy). Once the situation was clearer, the discussion centred on a method to place

comparable numbers of pupils in each class to avoid major size discrepancies. Although this process absorbed a lot of time, staff interest was high and participation consequently intense. In this case, the debate extended to include an in-depth discussion about the special circumstances of the Year 2 classes, particularly coping with the SATs, and the involvement of the 'floating' teacher to help administer the tests, and provided a useful example of the way in which an apparently straightforward item (in this case, the matching of classes to teachers) rapidly became more complex as related issues emerged from the body of the meeting. A similar pattern was evident when pupil records were discussed; far from a rapid resolution, the concerns and misgivings of staff were forcefully expressed, leading to protracted discussion without definite resolution (Bolam et al, 1993). Two factors appeared significant at such times:

- (a) that sufficient time was allocated to items which were potentially complex;
- (b) that someone was sufficiently well informed about the implications of an issue to offer colleagues advice and support.

On the other hand, mention of cross-city initiatives such as a promotion of the work of maintained schools through a display of children's work in the city centre met with little enthusiasm. In this case, the co-ordinator for Art and Display (Mrs. Vollo) accepted the responsibility; there was an audible sigh of relief from other staff.

The progress of any one meeting could take a number of forms. Sometimes, a protracted discussion about issues close to teachers' hearts were extended and contributions were many and varied. A notable example of this openness occurred during Mrs. Boxer's absence when staff concerns dominated the discourse:-

Teacher 1: Realistically, let's note which we can deal with now. Also, what do we do with the list of concerns? We must be careful that we're all concerned about everything. Meetings in corridors are no use.

Teacher 2: Meetings in phase groups has not resulted in anything.

Teacher 3: We must stick to decisions.

Teacher 1: Too often we don't deal with the real issue.

Teacher 4: Reports from staff meetings should be available for those who are away.

Teacher 3: Breeze blocks on the field is a problem; needs to be cleared away every morning.

Teacher 1: It's the law of the jungle on the field.

Teacher 3: At one time it was fun on the field.

Teacher 2: First Aid...we need more supplies.

Teacher 5: Some children arrive covered in plasters!

Teacher 6: Stock. I'm aware that teachers need stock and I'm having trouble getting around to see people. I need to find a better procedure. I'm keeping some things back to ensure we have some! Teachers are magpies.

Teacher 1: As staff trust more, perhaps we can share more?
(Staff meeting, 23/5/91, paraphrased)

My field notes summary indicated the mood of the meeting:-

The final list of concerns stretched beyond thirty. Staff were concerned with many things, few of which related to curriculum matters other than resourcing and worries over the reading/ spelling approach. Some issues were related to discipline and behaviour and outcomes; others to procedures; some to pupil and staff attitudes. The way in which these matters were discussed indicated a staff concerned to get things resolved, striking at the core of an issue and doing so openly. The plethora of formal meetings had taken its toll and there was a desire to find time to discuss things which really mattered. (Field notes, 23/5/91)

The absence of the headteacher was undoubtedly a factor in the openness with which this meeting was conducted and over the following months, many of the concerns were resolved as they were raised both formally through staff meetings and informally. However, it was of considerable interest to note that Mrs. Boxer was never formally notified about the range of concerns discussed during the meeting; there appeared to be a fear among staff that she would receive them as a personal affront rather than a result of professional collegial discourse. Nonetheless, the recurring theme of clarifying the school policy for behaviour was addressed shortly afterwards during a meeting on June 12th when Mrs. Boxer explained that she had only just become aware of the scope of issues raised on May 23rd and suggested that they spent the time rehearsing them. My

impression of the June 12th meeting was that most teachers were uneasy and anxious at the thought of expressing their views openly, but gradually some of the key issues emerged as teachers became more relaxed.

This significant meeting of May 23rd involved a contribution from almost every member of staff, but on other occasions Mrs. Boxer and a small number of other staff dominated the discussions due to a lacklustre response from the majority of teachers. Although fatigue and the distraction of arriving straight from a busy classroom to the staff meeting doubtless played their part in dampening spirits on occasions, the level of participation appeared to rely heavily upon (a) the nature of the agenda and its perceived relevance to the staff present and (b) the teachers' perception of Mrs. Boxer's position on the matter. Stated simply, the existence of an agenda was insufficient in itself, however carefully prepared by Mrs. Boxer; the pressure upon her to convince the staff that the issues were worthy of active participation was essential.

Unfortunately, the multitude of demands currently faced by the headteacher sometimes affected her preparation for meetings. There were many occasions when she began the meeting immediately after returning from an outside commitment or following an intensive conversation with a visitor or on the telephone. Further, her own dismay about the weight of reforms and new responsibilities resulted in moments of anguish and despair, a mood rapidly communicated to the staff with a consequential sombre climate evident during the meeting.

The SMT representatives from phase meetings were often expected to offer a summary of discussions or an indication of preferences on behalf of fellow phase group members. The establishment of the phase groups was intended (in part) to prevent overloading the main meeting with discussions which could be conducted elsewhere. Sometimes, this appeared to work smoothly. For instance, agreement over practical matters such as which country's flag each class would produce for a major display on 'All Nations' in

the hall, and the locations for educational outings, were quickly established. Complications arose when discussions held during phase discussions required special expertise or explanation (for example, selecting an appropriate piece of Science equipment or the evidence required to support a teacher assessment of a pupil's progress), or appeared to staff to be a threat to their own philosophy of teaching or closely cherished values (such as the on-going debate about team planning in Maths in the upper school and appropriate organization). These uncertainties were projected into the full meeting, resulting in delays as positions were clarified and, consequently, 'stockpiling' the current agenda items.

Full staff meetings formed an important element of the decision-making procedure. They relied heavily on feedback from the phase meetings and Mrs. Boxer's ability to balance the pressing statutory demands with the numerous internal school policy issues. There was mounting concern, however, about the differing interpretations of key issues by SMT representatives in phases which led to differing understanding of issues by one phase group compared with another. Teachers began to insist that they were anxious to hear about issues first-hand and all together rather than separately in phases. They were most enthusiastic when agenda items reflected their own priorities; externally imposed time frames sometimes caused frustration and anxiety which did not facilitate a climate of participative collaboration across the whole staff but rather within separate phase groups.

The impact of staff meetings agenda on collaboration

Mrs. Boxer's insistence upon teamwork approaches in planning and (implicitly) in curriculum delivery was an indication of the value she placed on a collaborative climate. Early years staff were already regularly collaborating in detailed curriculum planning which meant that, while remaining in separate rooms for most teaching, they combined for some activities (such as watching a television broadcast) or a single teacher took two classes (for a story, perhaps),

freeing the second teacher for other duties. As there was little emphasis upon single subject teaching, the need to utilise staff for the purpose of providing subject expertise was not a significant factor in their planning other than in the case of Science and Technology which was, by popular admission, the one area in which teachers felt insecure. However, upper school staff, who had been operating a particular form of team-teaching for subjects like Maths were unhappy to embrace the principle wholeheartedly. The gist of their contributions during meetings was that although joint-planning was desirable, the organization necessary to sustain regular exchanges of pupils as part of a team-teaching approach generated difficulties, especially associated with discipline and control. This debate continued throughout the first period of the research; the headteacher's belief in co-operation was welcomed by teachers in principle, but they reserved the right to control pedagogy.

In response, Mrs. Boxer had to decide the extent to which she would insist on adherence to her strongly felt principle of co-operative planning. She believed that the success of decision-making in the school depended upon teachers adopting a collaborative identity yet was unhappy about anyone who might try to push forward what she described as 'old-fashioned ideas' at the expense of her preferred approach. Her firm stance indicated that contributions from staff were welcome up to the point that they threatened to hinder the basis upon which her ideas were founded. She later confirmed that this view was, in part, a reaction against her perceptions of government policy. Thus:-

I'm very unhappy about the apparent intentions of the government to return to more formal methods. It's against my own philosophy which I've had some success in developing throughout the school. (Interview, 11/11/91)

Similarly, variations of interpretation were permissible, providing they did not conflict with the basic framework within which all staff were expected to work. The challenge for Mrs. Boxer lay in making that framework explicit for staff and

negotiating any objections or confusions. As such, staff participation was not value-neutral; the headteacher was instrumental in setting the parameters and the staff were left to respond. Full staff meetings were intended to provide a forum for decision-making; my early impressions suggested that closer staff agreement and purpose had to be in place before consensus became part of the accepted strategy.

CHAPTER 6
DEVELOPING HYPOTHESES ABOUT TEACHER
INVOLVEMENT

Introduction

Although teachers' own perceptions of the decision-making process were made more explicit through interviews (see chapter 9), even my earliest impressions from casual conversation with staff and observation at formal meetings suggested that concerns over upsetting Mrs. Boxer or being perceived by her as 'awkward' were common among them. Some teachers hinted that they believed that decisions had been made beforehand so that the staff meeting was one of consultation about detail rather than prime decision-making. There were also many staff who kept silent during the meetings, others who spoke circumspectly, and a small number who seemed to enjoy their reputation as those who spoke their minds. Interview data later confirmed that whatever their view of the process, every teacher recognized that Mrs. Boxer was 'the boss' and it was apparent that some teachers hesitated to speak openly against the headteacher, despite their concerns about school policy or other aspects of school life.

Further evidence was also required about the possible existence of different staff constituencies, their view of issues and their subsequent impact upon the extent and quality of participation in the decision-making process (Alutto & Belasco, 1972). I hoped that interviews with staff would clarify how teachers felt about the question of being supportive and positive towards the headteacher. The existence of constituent phase groups also raised the prospect that teachers could be members of constituencies existing beyond the phases, in which case any attempt to categorise into staff who were, for instance, accepting or rejecting the principle of involvement, might prove complex. The relative position of younger and more experienced staff, as well as those with senior positions within the school and those on the main professional scale, offered some interesting possibilities in terms of alliances, closed ranks and support for, or resistance towards, a particular proposal.

From the regular flow of comments about the school (especially in the staff-room), the clear impression was that teachers were unhappy that the staff

meetings and associated parts of school life were too 'innovation-driven', and they were fearful of further changes. In an effort to divide the load, three separate working parties of teachers from across the school were established (24/4/91) to spread the work-load and specifically locate staff expertise where it was most useful. Teachers opted to join a working party for Science or for Humanities or for Assessment (SATs). It was agreed that throughout the remainder of the year, the weekly staff meetings would alternate between working party and the regular agenda. This structure was intended to ensure that attention was given to the statutory element (through the working parties) while maintaining opportunity to address other on-going issues (through the regular staff meeting). However, the fortnightly pattern began to place additional pressure on staff as discussion about problems associated with routine events were held over until the fortnightly full meeting, by which time the opportunity for action had sometimes been lost or informal contacts between different staff had replaced formal action taken as a result of agreed policy.

Circumstantial evidence at this stage of the research indicated that two factors impinged directly upon teacher participation. First, teachers were willing to resist a recommended course of action if they felt that it unreasonably affected their classroom practice. Second, a distinction had to be made between participation which was borne of teachers' initiatives (ideas, inspiration, innovation) and that which was necessary to grasp new procedural complexities associated with externally imposed conditions (changes to curriculum content, pupil assessments, appraisal procedures, etc.). The expression 'teacher involvement' was proving to be multi-faceted. Mrs. Boxer's desire to extend staff participation was constrained both by staff response and by her own awareness that particular issues were unpopular. Thus:-

I chivvy, chivvy, chivvy sometimes...Some teachers pay lip-service to decisions...Some staff feel comfortable about an issue for a time, then it lapses. With Records of Achievement, for instance, I decided to take it

gently at first due to adverse responses, then pick it up later when passions cooled. (Interview, 16/10/91, paraphrased)

Furthermore, there were implications for the staff meeting agenda: if external demands were perceived by staff as dominating affairs, there was resistance through what appeared to be a policy of non-cooperation. Although during the main meeting there was grumbling about the perceived effects of national legislation, discussions in other fora (such as phase meetings and informally) were vociferous and focused upon the unfairness of the demands, the impracticability of implementation within the given time scale, and the impact upon their working lives. Mrs. Boxer admitted that the intensity of the situation affected her own approach:

I don't have so much room to implement my own philosophy because of external demands...Staff are becoming very cautious. I don't go to teachers as readily as I once did due to the fact that they have enough to cope with already. (Interview, 16/10/91, paraphrased)

The statutory demands did not occupy teachers' minds to the exclusion of all else, for the pre-occupation with external demands vied for time with other on-going discussions concerning 'internal' affairs. For instance, discussions about how best to utilise a large space within the upper part of the school known as the 'Central Area' (see Appendix 3). This space, originally designed as a mini 'amphitheatre' was strategically placed in that everyone had to walk through it to reach the rest of the school. As it was used both for watching television and housing the main library, and was the first area to be seen by visitors, decisions about its function had occupied the minds of staff over the years. The need to resolve the issue had been catalysed by two factors: (a) the review of the school's English policy and the resulting importance of siting the library which occupied part of the Central Area; (b) the need to impress prospective parents who looked around the school. The situation at the time was unsatisfactory due to the large amount of movement and noise that confounded both objectives.

Staff agreed that action was necessary, yet the apparent consensus about the urgent need to modify the Central Area and develop a central library area in a nearby vacant classroom was shortly to be superseded by another unexpected priority. At the same time that the decision about the library was being made, Mrs. Boxer was taking advice from a local authority adviser about ways in which all the staff (including non-teaching) could be drawn together as a team, and consultation opportunities widened. The existing staffroom was too small for all staff to meet together at one time and Mrs. Boxer, the deputy and the adviser were convinced that allocating resources to this cause was essential; the decision had to be made before the summer recess to arrange for the work to be completed during the holiday. After some intensive debate during full staff meetings (12/6/91 and 26/6/91) about an appropriate way forward, it was agreed that the original decision about utilising the spare room for a central library should be overturned (17/7/91). Teachers accepted the arguments that cohesion among staff needed to be improved, reflecting Yeomans' argument that 'the skills and understandings of collaborative adult relationships are now too important as ingredients of professional life in primary schools to be ignored (1992, p.21). However, in the excitement of planning the new staff room, the original decision about siting the library was overlooked; it wasn't until the meeting was drawing to a close that Mrs. Farmer reminded everyone of the position. Staff reaction indicated that everyone had genuinely forgotten, though it was difficult to understand why Mrs. Northern (responsible for English) remained silent. Once Mrs. Farmer had raised the issue, Mrs. Northern then admitted that she felt upset over the relegation of the proposed curriculum innovation but hadn't felt that she could resist the prevailing mood of her colleagues. Mrs. Boxer later admitted that in the pressure and excitement of the moment, she had completely forgotten the earlier decision. 'It completely slipped my mind...I felt awful afterwards' (informal comment). It was an example of how easily a decision could be overlooked and indicated that the relationship

between 'agreement' (by which members reached a consensus or gave their assent) and 'enactment' (whereby the agreement was implemented) required careful monitoring. The concept of 'reaching a decision' was not absolute but depended upon the conditions under which it was made as to whether it remained constant and enforceable. Clearly, rapid changes in circumstances could threaten a decision and even make it obsolete, raising the prospect of differing interpretations of an agreed decision among staff, thereby leading to future complications or misunderstandings (Argyris & Schon, 1980). These considerations were important as markers for the extent of staff willingness to be involved in the decision-making process and consistency of implementing agreed decisions.

The meeting on July 17th was also significant in indicating the influence of other collaborative partners in the decision-making process. It was evident during this meeting that the LEA adviser had raised with Mrs. Boxer the issue of staff wholeness and openness of sharing as essential in the development of a collegial climate. Mrs. Boxer had responded so fervently to this advice that she had overlooked the earlier decision about the use of the area. The importance of finding a room to accommodate the full staff (including the many non-teaching) was of paramount importance in achieving her collegial objective. Field notes from this meeting underlined the point:-

The need to take care of the staff was an obvious theme. The discussion about the location of the staff room was underpinned by a deeper desire to enhance the quality of relationships and interaction between members. (Field notes, 17/7/91)

Subsequent informal conversations with staff indicated that the path to collegiality was far from smooth; the following comments were made by a variety of staff as they reflected on the different issues which had been raised during the meeting:

- * the SMT/phase procedure was unpopular
 - * some discord over the siting of the staffroom still existed
 - * there was sympathy for the English co-ordinator
 - * few definite decisions were normally made during formal discussions
 - * too many meetings were held in any one week.
- (Informal conversation, 17/7/91)

Shortly after the meeting, Mrs. Boxer commented to me that 'it's impossible to please everyone!'

Staff meetings held over the first two terms of my research were characterised by variations between intense deliberation and passivity among teachers. The importance of clarifying the parameters for discussion became more sharply focused as staff seemed to be unclear about the occasions when meetings were intended for debate or airing of views, and when they were meant to conclude with a consensus decision. Field notes from a full staff meeting (23/10/91) pinpointed the issue:-

There's still a degree of uncertainty over how the meetings will be used and what they will discuss. Concerns over different interpretations of whole staff decisions are evident.

The desire for a whole staff approach in hearing directly from Mrs. Boxer about important issues and interpreting the options gained momentum, typified by comments during interviews:-

I think there are times when a whole staff approach could work better. I sense in things I feed back to the phase group a little bit of resentment that I have access to this information. Quite often there are things which don't actually need to be sensitive...then it's all agreed, it seems to cut out a lot of hassle, a lot of areas where there might be friction. It spoils a relationship and some things don't need to be at that level.
(Interview, Mrs. Hemyock, 4/7/91)

And from a new teacher:

We talk about things in separate groups when we could have been together. At first I accepted the situation and went along with it. I'm aware that there's a parting between the early years and upper school, so perhaps we're better together. (Interview, Miss Winter, 24/10/91)

The staff meeting agenda was a crucial element in determining teachers' reactions to the opportunity for involvement and influenced the staff's thinking about appropriate forms of collaboration and consultation. The collegiality across the whole staff which Mrs. Boxer sought to establish was affected by the existence of constituent and interest groups, the philosophies of headteacher and staff, and the composition of the agenda itself.

Establishing ideal constructs

The problems associated with translating a highly complex set of issues into neat models to explain the effects of the change process on staff involvement in decision-making were demonstrated through the kind of situations described above. Nevertheless, I found that designing a number of explanatory models as 'ideal constructs' provided a useful framework to locate further data as it became available. As the composition of different constituencies was difficult to establish, the models were designed on the assumption that every teacher made his or her singular response to the opportunity for involvement within the decision-making process. They did not, therefore, take account of the likelihood that groups of teachers would act in unity to express an agreed position. In addition, the models did not attempt to discriminate either between (a) those occasions when participation was for the purpose of clarifying options or gaining a consensus about the appropriate decision (such as the re-location of the main library, allocation of resources to curriculum areas, etc.) and (b) occasions when the principle was agreed and discussion concerned detail (including, for example, the organization of an appraisal process, the composition of the report card sent to parents, responses to governors' questions about the teaching of R.E. in the school). The task of unravelling these complexities and providing a model to incorporate some of these vagaries depended upon the acquisition and analysis of future data. However, a number of tentative models based largely upon inductive reasoning were developed in an attempt to shape up the

situation as perceived by me during the earlier part of the research. For greater clarification, I produced six separate, but inter-related models (Appendix 6):-

Figure 1: 'A Deficit Model for Involvement'

Figure 2: 'Involvement and Teachers' Attachment or Alienation'

Figure 3: 'The Outcome of Teachers' Responses to Opportunities for Involvement'

Figure 4: 'Impact of Teachers' Preferences upon their Professional Role'

Figure 5: 'Diffusivist and Reductionist Positions'

Figure 6: 'Outcomes from Teachers' Adoption of a Diffusivist or Reductionist Position'

The case-study had already pointed to the fact that increased teacher involvement was costly and Appendix 6, Figure 1, 'A Deficit Model for Involvement', indicates the nature of that cost. Data from my observations of meetings, informal comments from teachers and the tone of the first interviews (Summer/Autumn Terms, 1991) suggested strongly that the extra time required to prepare for, attend and act upon the outcome of different meetings, led to fatigue and stress with an adverse impact upon energy levels, morale and (perhaps) effectiveness (Campbell, 1992). Such costs were evident, for instance, in the impact upon teachers' daily classroom work: a lunchtime SMT or phase meeting resulted in reduced preparation time for the afternoon session; lengthy meetings after school might be at the cost of attention to organizing resourcing and enhancing the appearance of classrooms; late arrivals home led to complaints among teachers in the staff room of their exhaustion and the impact it was having upon their professional responsibilities such as marking and lesson preparation (Kremer & Hofman, 1985). In addition, there were occasional, but regular, parent-consultation evenings, parent-teacher association meetings, governor sub-committee and full body meetings and in-

service events, which involved some or all of the teachers. The bulk of the responsibility for organizing and attending these meetings fell upon the senior staff but every teacher was affected by parent-consultations and in-service commitments (and the subsequent reporting-back to colleagues). Parent-teacher association meetings were normally only attended by Mrs. Boxer, Mr. Jamieson or Mrs. Ellie, despite regular reminders to the staff by the headteacher that anyone was welcome. Governors' meetings affected only three staff (headteacher, deputy and Mr. Dawn, the other teacher-governor).

Additional work for senior staff and curriculum co-ordinators came about as a result of communications from the DES and SEAC (later SCAA) and advice from the LEA to the headteacher and governors which stressed the need for school policy documentation for (a) the teaching of different curriculum subjects, continuity across the school, and procedures for monitoring appropriate matching of task with ability, and (b) agreed procedures for internal matters such as behaviour and discipline, and liaison with parents and the community. Thus, schemes of work had to be drawn up and specific decisions made and documented about whole-school approaches to persistent issues concerning pupil behaviour, movement around the school and standards of work. Copies of the accumulated paperwork associated with these tasks were distributed across the staff to be filed and available for reference. Top copies were carefully stored in Mrs. Boxer's office, particularly as the press at that time (1991-92) carried stories of the government's intentions to make school inspection procedures more rigorous and headteachers more accountable for demonstrating that policies were in place and their implementation monitored.

On top of their responsibilities for offering advice about pedagogy and curriculum development, co-ordinators were asked by Mrs. Boxer to give urgent thought to appropriate resourcing and associated expenditure in the light of the forthcoming fully delegated budget (April 1992). This proved more difficult than Mrs. Boxer imagined and she frequently mentioned that stimulating their interest

in financial affairs was proving a challenge. Some co-ordinators, such as Mrs. Hemyock for Early Years, Mr. Dawn for History, Miss Cain for Geography and Ms. Wolfendale for Science, were attending meetings with colleagues from nearby schools to discuss cross-city curriculum policy statements, and other early years staff were trialling exercises with teachers from nearby schools to moderate pupils' achievement for the same age groups. All these commitments subsequently required time to report back to the rest of the staff, a task that was sometimes delayed due to the pressure of other business.

In the light of these demands, it was little wonder that some teachers confided that the volume of work and the extent of commitment had gone beyond a reasonable limit. They also found translating ideas into documents a protracted task (with the added factor that without exception, every teacher to whom 'policy documents' were mentioned retorted something to the effect: 'What policy documents? I hardly ever look at them!'). Alongside these pressures, teachers were growing increasingly concerned about job security, a situation which compounded their worries, and a number of staff suffered from extended periods of ill-health (from several days to several weeks), placing pressure on other colleagues, including Mrs. Boxer, who needed to find 'supply' teachers to cover for them and attempt to ensure continuity of learning for the children affected by the circumstances. In the light of these pressures and responsibilities, it was easy to sympathise with any teacher who felt that he or she needed to exercise great caution about over-commitment to the collaborative process favoured by Mrs. Boxer.

Against these undoubted problems, there were benefits for those staff who felt willing and/or able to respond positively to the opportunities which were beckoning. A number of staff, notably those with existing allowances and those aspiring promotion, seized the chance to develop their expertise by familiarity with issues beyond the classroom door. In particular, the SMT of headteacher, deputy and three Rate 'A' allowance holders (that operated until September

1992) were all closely involved in the varied challenges mentioned above. For them, there was little choice about involvement, despite the fact that (prior to the start of the research) Mrs. Boxer had apparently decided the composition of the SMT and its responsibilities without reference to those affected. (Later interviews, during 1992, confirmed that none of the Rate 'A' allowance holders, Mrs. Vollo, Ms. Wolfendale, Mrs. Ellie, Mr. Jamieson had received any formal management training.) However, whether staff became part of the decision-making process by choice or default, they gained insights about whole-school policy issues and its implications which would otherwise have been denied to them.

Although the Deficit Model was inadequate to explain fully the complexity of the true situation, it did acknowledge that there was likely to be a price to pay for increased involvement and offered a reminder that participation in school-based decision making imposed costs (Chapman, 1990; Campbell & Southworth, 1992). Staff were constantly weighing up the value of participation against their responsibilities to the children in their classes. Meanwhile, Mrs. Boxer persevered with her philosophy of enhancing collegiality through collaboration, convinced that this would ultimately prove the most appropriate strategy for decision-making.

Teachers were anxious that their effectiveness as classroom teachers did not suffer, yet it was not always possible for them to determine in advance which decisions would, and which would not affect their classroom work. I have speculated that in the earlier phase of the research there was some evidence that a teacher's unwillingness to be committed to a participative approach was likely to result in alienation from the mainstream process and consequent failure to influence outcomes (see Appendix 6, Figure 2, 'Teachers' Attachment or Alienation'). This explanatory model assumed that teachers made a clear decision whether or not to become involved. Whether this simple selection

procedure truly reflected the complexity of the situation was conjectural at this stage; however, by accepting the principle that teachers rejected or accepted the opportunity for involvement depending upon the issue involved and their view of the genuineness of the consultation, it was possible to speculate about possible outcomes. For instance, a teacher's continual refusal to accept the opportunity to become involved could result in a degree of isolation from the mainstream decision-making process and subsequent dissatisfaction with the decisions that were ultimately reached. This hypothesis remained untested at the mid-point of the data collection (early 1992) but there were indications that discontent was greatest among staff who disapproved of the headteacher's leadership style and least among those who approved.

A further part of the explanatory model (Appendix 6, Figure 3, 'The Outcome of Teachers' Responses') recognized the way in which a teacher's decision whether or not to embrace involvement wholeheartedly might lead to a number of other outcomes. Thus, teachers who accepted the opportunities for involvement could find that:-

- (a) Classroom work dominated their thinking less.
- (b) A bond was formed with other decision makers, whether through formal committee work or due to a recognition of like-minded colleagues.
- (c) The chance of being offered the leadership of working parties and committees by the headteacher was increased.
- (d) Responsibilities other than curriculum subject ones became available.

Conversely, *rejection* of the opportunity might result in the following:-

(a) Classroom work remained at the heart of their professional life and occupied their close attention.

(b) Coalitions developed with others who had similarly declined the opportunity.

(c) The growth of followers or informally recognized leaders rather than formally recognized leaders.

(d) Staff overlooked for promotion within the school.

There were a number of practical outcomes to take into account from these ideal constructs. Appendix 6, Figure 4, 'Impact of Teachers' Preferences', indicates a likely prognosis for classroom practice and status; teachers who deferred to the principle of involvement (A1) were likely to find themselves asked to undertake wider responsibilities (organization; student affairs; liaison roles, etc.). Teachers who rejected involvement as a priority (A2) could concentrate more fully on classroom activities but might assume leadership within their own informally constituted interest group. The predictable consequences of selection included, for A1:-

- * Broadening responsibilities within school, management opportunities, chances to initiate ideas and extending of expertise; these characteristics could, in turn, result in formally acknowledged leadership roles and enhanced promotion prospects, though with accompanying strain upon classroom effectiveness.

And for A2:

- * Class-based craft development ('Artificer'), reacting to initiatives rather than creating them, and limiting the scope of their expertise; these characteristics could, in turn, result in membership (as opposed to leadership) of formal groups, but potential for informal leadership in addition to a strengthening of classroom expertise.

Appendix 6, Figures 5 and 6 ('Diffusivist and Reductionist') build upon this scenario and forewarn of the possible effects upon professional development as the teachers follow an 'involved' or 'non-involved' path. The 'involved' would exercise a more pervasive influence within the school (not necessarily dependent upon their status in the hierarchy) and are therefore referred to as 'Diffusivist'. Those who rejected wider involvement as a priority were likely to find themselves marginalised from the decision-making with reduced influence, thereby referred to as 'Reductionist'. Importantly, the implications for the two positions suggested that Mrs. Boxer needed to be aware of the diversity which might exist across the staff. Teachers who failed to take advantage of the opportunity for participating in decision-making might find themselves marginalised through Reductionist status with the characteristics of diminished professionalism ('Artificer status'). Those who embraced the opportunities invited higher professional status and career enhancement ('Connoisseur status'). Whatever the difficulties in accurately locating teachers within this model, the message at this stage was that levels of individual staff commitment to Mrs. Boxer's preferred management style might have important implications for future school development.

The complexity of attempting to categorize teachers in this way can be exemplified by reference to two examples. A teacher who appeared to fall into the first category (involvement) was Mrs. Hemyock who was already the co-ordinator for the first school and a member of the SMT. Apart from the

responsibilities associated with holding a promoted post, she was regularly at the centre of discussions, expressing herself forcibly during meetings, offering ideas about the organization of different initiatives (such as 'celebratory' events and multicultural education). However, her commitment to the principle may have been motivated in part by her desire to gain promotion, an aspiration which she openly espoused and which was fulfilled in September 1991. The implication from this glimpse at one teacher's motivation for involvement was that apparent commitment to the principle might conceal other motives; in this case, career enhancement. Although this inductive reasoning required the support of further data, it indicated that concerns over job security and promotion prospects might affect a teacher's attitude towards participation; that is, commitment would be posited on self-interest in addition to commitment to the principle of collegiality expressed through enhanced collaboration.

Again, Mrs. Harrison, a teacher of some five years experience, was not central to discussions during the first stage of the research and rarely contributed to whole staff meetings, often looking uncomfortable when debates became heated. According to the construct, this inactivity would have located her within the Reductionist category; that is, unlikely to receive public recognition or reward and isolated from mainstream decision-making. She admitted during several informal exchanges that she was the sort of person who needed time to ponder issues and was very anxious that her class responsibilities did not suffer as a result of over-commitment elsewhere. In the relative security of phase meetings, however, she was much bolder and found a less turbulent forum where her opinions could be expressed with the likelihood of a sympathetic hearing. By the end of the research, far from becoming a 'Reductionist', Mrs. Harrison was charged with the important task of co-ordinating home-school liaison and had received a payment allowance for these additional responsibilities.

Mrs. Harrison's case assisted in identifying another facet of the way that headteacher approval affected staff involvement and, perhaps, their enthusiasm

for a particular option. Prior to Mrs. Harrison's allowance reward, Mrs. Boxer affirmed her confidence in her abilities on three or four occasions. It was, therefore, no real surprise when she eventually won the internal promotion, despite her passivity during staff meetings and her fears about the impact upon her class teaching of fuller involvement in whole-school issues. This example, and numerous informal (confidential) comments from Mrs. Boxer about other members of staff, as well as her differing tone of response to different teachers during the staff meetings, suggested that the level of staff involvement did not reside solely with the participants, but that the headteacher's relationship with a teacher opened or closed a 'gate' for their participation. That is, Mrs. Boxer could, intentionally or unintentionally, restrict or encourage a teacher's willingness to become involved in the deliberations and decision-making process by her own attitude and responses to them.

It was difficult to distinguish between the occasions when teachers were actively motivated to participate through genuine interest, those when Mrs. Boxer's approval triggered their willingness to be involved regardless of their true feelings, and those when they co-operated because of the group's disposition (rather than be seen as unreasonable or 'difficult'). On occasions when Mrs. Boxer expressed her disapproval for an option, tensions existed for staff over the extent to which they felt able to support or oppose the headteacher's position. Sometimes I was left with the impression that their strong feelings on the matter or the whole staff's mood settled the position regardless of Mrs. Boxer's views, but her part in the process was nonetheless crucial.

These tentative conclusions did not disregard the premise that for all teachers concerned the needs of the children in their class were of prime importance. Identification of the teachers who were committed to close involvement because of an active belief that school-based decision-making was an appropriate way to proceed was, however, more problematic. Their public

enthusiasm and engagement with issues provided the most blatant evidence, supported by contributions to discussion which showed a firmer grasp of issues relating to wider aspects of school life and a willingness to accept responsibility for developing policy or chairing working groups. Those electing to remain detached from the process were identified by their silence, apparent reservations about decisions, responding to, rather than initiating ideas, protesting about being uninformed, and relating most of their arguments with sole reference to the impact upon classroom practice. Bottery's argument (1988) that fuller staff participation was a democratic right of all teachers (as opposed to a privilege in the hands of the most powerful figure) did not take sufficient account of the fact that not all teachers necessarily accept that it is appropriate to assume such a role (cf., Gaziel & Weiss, 1990 model of 'internal' and 'external' members). Within the staff of St. Kerensa's, the allocation of teachers to particular categories proved far more involved than, for instance, was implied by Elliott-Kemp (1982) in his matrix into those with high and low levels of concern about an option, and 'powerful' or 'subordinate' in their influence. The concept of persuasion exerted through increasing members' understanding of the purpose and nature of an innovation, which Elliott-Kemp considered to be an essential factor in the decision-making process, was difficult to discern through observations at meetings. Over the months of the research, however, the same teachers were frequently seen talking together and sharing perceptions of a particular issue; it was difficult to avoid the conclusion that micropolitical strategies and alliances were inevitably affecting decisional outcomes.

There were other important elements affecting teacher-behaviour to take into consideration: motivation (such as career expectations), confidence (such as fear of public humiliation), accountability (such as responsibility for a curriculum post) and inter-staff relationships (such as informal alliances), all of which were impossible to disentangle on the basis of non-participant observations and casual conversations. As the research developed, and more

data were accumulated through interviews and conversations, the position became clearer (see next chapter). In addition, I became increasingly aware that there were also influences outside the immediate school situation which needed to be taken into account in a consideration of a model to explain the management of change and the decision-making process. I continue my thesis, therefore, by considering how the influence of the Governing Body and that of two external bodies (the Academic Council and the LEA) appeared to impinge upon that construct.

The governing body

In addition to the regular staff meetings and casual encounters referred to above, the full governing body met at least once per term and regularly as sub-committees to focus on issues such as finance, special needs, curriculum and staffing. My attendance at these meetings (beginning April 1991) as a non-participant observer (agreed initially by the Chair and confirmed by governors) allowed me to discover more about the ways in which issues of significance to staff were influenced by the work of governors. In particular, I hoped to discover more about the process by which key issues were presented to staff following initial consideration by governors, and how staff responses to issues were represented to governors. Although the agenda at full meetings was always long, I only noted in detail those aspects which had relevance for staff involvement in decision-making; there were, of course, many other elements of their responsibilities which did not have significance for the research.

During full governors' meetings, it was evident that there were (a) issues presented to governors on behalf of staff by the headteacher and staff representatives, and (b) issues which were of primary concern to governors which would have implications for the staff. During the first year of research, a notable example of the interaction between staff and governor perceptions involved a confidential paper circulated by the headteacher about the

preliminary results of teacher assessment and SATs at Key Stage 1 (25/4/91). Mrs. Boxer was keen to demonstrate to fellow-governors that teacher assessment was a sufficiently accurate measure of pupil progress without the time-consuming SATs, which generally only confirmed the class teacher's view. She stressed the hardships that allocating extensive amounts of time to SATs had caused and the disruption to the teaching programme and (in particular) to those Year 3 children who were not involved. Governors responded sympathetically, though with few practical suggestions about how the situation might be alleviated. The case presented by Mrs. Boxer about assessment was a reflection of the conversations current among staff; however, the issue of reporting assessment results and the staff's feelings about the process was not restricted to a statement of the position by the headteacher, for once raised it elicited a series of responses from governors which, in turn, generated further need for staff discussion. Alongside this discussion of the significance of assessment, the nature of the interaction between the school and parents was of mutual concern to both teachers and governors. The Chair was sensitive to the growing need to allow and encourage parents to discover more from schools about their child's progress. Teachers had reacted angrily to the tone of a DES booklet, the Parents' Charter (DES, 1991) and stated firmly that they were unwilling to distribute copies (a decision supported by the Academic Council). However, a few governors viewed the booklet more positively, raising the issue of legalities and accountability if distribution were to be withheld. Clarification was needed over the flexibility available to governors in their decision about how best to respond to the DES request that the booklets be distributed to parents, bearing in mind the staff's disquiet over their contents and possible impact upon teacher-parent and teacher-governor relationships. In addition, the parent-governor commented on the disparity between scores in Mathematics and English, (the former showing less strongly), and the slightly weaker results for Reading in the English scores which, he claimed, reflected the school's

unsatisfactory Reading policy. The result of these responses was to return the issue to the school for teachers to review the Reading policy and ensure that parents had the fullest available advice about their child's progress should they request it. Subsequently, several governors agreed to spend time in school monitoring different teaching strategies if staff were willing to accept the idea (which they did at the next full staff meeting). A few months later an open evening was held at the school during which different teachers addressed visiting parents about different aspects of Reading policy and a forum was held involving a mixture of selected teachers and two governors to field questions from the sixty or so parents who assembled. Despite the potential trauma of facing these conditions, staff and governors seemed genuinely pleased to have satisfactorily cleared the air.

This example suggested that an issue emerging as a result of a staff-initiated concern (in this case, assessment) could, after being presented to governors, take on a governor-directed configuration, with consequential implications for staff in their future discussions and priorities. The staff concern over the pressures under which the reforms were placing them, and subsequent interference with patterns of working, resulted in governors becoming even more conscious of their own statutory obligations and allowed the teacher-governor to raise his own concerns about the pressures acting upon staff during the time of rapid change.

It was also apparent during my attendance at the governors' meetings that the position of the teacher-governors was a delicate one. On the one hand they had, as governors, to respond to important matters such as parental concerns; on the other, they were unwilling to compromise their colleagues' position by supporting strategies which would increase their workload. For example, one teacher-governor, Mr. Dawn (also a union representative), expressed his view:-

Sometimes I have to be a 'teacher-governor' rather than a 'governor's governor'. At the end of the day it's my colleagues at the chalk face, those who are actually having to work with the children, who are my main concern...It comes all the way back down to the children. What are the children getting? Are they getting quality education? (Interview, 6/2/92)

Staff participation in governors' meetings relied on presentation of issues by the teacher-governors, who, nevertheless, sometimes struggled to balance their different loyalties and obligations. Thus:-

If I am elected by the staff to represent them and it's seen the way I interpret that is wrong, (either by the staff or others), I should resign. (Mr. Dawn, 6/2/92)

The perceptions of the teacher-governors are explored in more detail later in this thesis; suffice it to say at this point that they played a crucial role as a link between staff and governors, both in representing staff views and interests at governors' meetings and communicating outcomes to staff. Issues of confidentiality and a tension between the demands of their different roles made this a difficult task.

Other issues were derived from governor concerns; for example, the government's requirement that a prospectus was made available for prospective parents and contained detailed information about the school's functions and curriculum approach. Governors were understandably concerned to ensure teachers' compliance with the demand. However, the situation was complicated by the fact that the sub-committee was having difficulty in finding time and opportunity to meet; progress largely depended upon the efforts of the sub-committee Chair who was attempting to juggle a number of different responsibilities and commitments. The government missive was, then, complicated by these practicalities and was consequently high on the governors' priorities. During the subsequent staff discussion about the issue, Mrs. Boxer was anxious that staff reached a rapid conclusion about details of topics for the next year to enable them to be included in the prospectus. Some teachers

expressed dismay that these decisions had to be reached so hurriedly; they were unaware, however, of the discussion at the governors' meeting that had heightened the sense of urgency, subsequently communicated to staff through Mrs. Boxer and (less insistently) the teacher-governors. In the event, the necessary details were decided by staff and passed on to the sub-committee for inclusion in the handbook. However, back in school, staff complained about the shortage of time to make the decisions and the fact that they were deciding which topics would be covered during the following year without even knowing which teachers would be teaching particular age groups. Although by requesting the curriculum information the governors were only responding to an externally imposed directive, staff were inclined to interpret it as interference in the process of exercising their professional judgement. The inter-relationship and timing of decisions was also significant: in this instance, a decision about class responsibility and distribution needed to take place in advance of the decisions relating to the parents' brochure. A seemingly straightforward matter involving teachers and governors could prove time-consuming and fraught with possibilities for misunderstanding. The role of the headteacher and teacher-governors, in clarifying the position through explanation and negotiation, was vital.

In this particular example, the high level of staff involvement in the curriculum decisions to provide information for the prospectus by a given deadline was as a result of an imperative 'twice removed'; that is, firstly through government legislation, then through the reaction of governors to the staff's concerns expressed via Mrs. Boxer and the teacher-governors. As such, decisions were not reached by way of a linear process; on the contrary, what began as a singular point of information from staff to governors, ended as a series of 'loops' as the issues grew more complex and were carried between school and governing body (Argyris & Schon, 1980). The locus of decision-making (Campbell, 1989a), although initially residing with the teachers, was

activated by the imperative, switched to the governors, and returned to school staff in a new form. It was also a test of the degree to which staff responded to the opportunity to be involved in an issue which originated externally and conflicted with their preferred approach. (In this case, their wish to leave detailed discussion of the curriculum programme until much nearer the time of delivery when the teachers responsible for its delivery would be known.) Governors and headteacher had, with little choice, been cast in the role of imposing their will upon an unwilling staff. The principle of collegiality dissolved in the fierce glare of statutory obligations.

I have spent some time developing this single example to provide evidence to support a tentative model explaining the relationship between staff and governors in the light of the pressure to respond to external demands. However, it is important to stress that governors' awareness of external priorities also had positive outcomes for staff; for instance, their awareness of the burden carried by staff encouraged them to offer three temporary Rate 'A' allowances to cover Records of Achievement (RoA), History and Geography. The temporary post for RoA ran for one year and was seen as a positive move towards the requirement that the school provided an appropriate portfolio of work, suitably selected to inform parents and provide a profile of achievement for every child. The other two posts (History and Geography) were established for a single term (Summer 1991) in advance of the implementation beginning in September as a means of providing a team leader for the working parties that had been established. These moves were seen as necessary if the school was to stay abreast of the statutory programme, but had the additional bonus of involving more staff in leadership roles with an accompanying financial reward. The temporary awards were accepted by the teachers selected for them and there was a perceptible increase in their contribution through the curriculum working parties and staff meetings, particularly when their area of responsibility was discussed. However, those teachers who were not selected for the allowances

expressed open dismay at being overlooked, a situation made more acute when two permanent posts were allocated. Involvement and enthusiasm in decision-making, while depending upon staff's interest in the issue under review, also relied upon motivation and a belief that their work was valued. (Implications of the staff position are further discussed later in the thesis.)

The influence of governors in affecting staff willingness to participate in decision-making was, therefore, twofold: (a) to act as another interpreter of external directives and determine priorities (in addition to the headteacher who was also a governor), and (b) to use its influence to guide and support staff in their work. However, a tension existed between the governors' view of their statutory obligations and their responsibilities towards the welfare and professional judgement of staff. This had important repercussions, for staff perceptions of the extent of governor and headteacher support and understanding proved significant in terms of teachers' morale and willingness to participate in discussions and the resolution of issues.

External liaison

In addition to the governing body, two other bodies outside the school were involved in shaping priorities and influencing the nature of staff participation. One was the local authority 'Support Team' for local management and the delegated budget, who provided advice to the headteacher about statutory requirements, training in the use of computer technology and management strategies to deal with curriculum implementation, and summaries of the latest missives with suggestions about their relevance and importance. During interview, Mrs. Boxer referred a number of times to meetings with the designated member of the LEA Support Team and on numerous occasions admitted that his professional counsel was invaluable. The designated member of the Support

Team began to attend the governing body meetings by invitation and was therefore on hand to provide information and suggestions when requested.

At the beginning of the research (February 1991), the LEA had been involved in settling a delicate issue about internal school policy (control and discipline) and advice from the LEA proved invaluable in helping to reach an amicable settlement. The use of an Authority adviser as 'honest broker' assisted a resolution, particularly in the light of the imperfect communication existing between the Mrs. Boxer and the Chair of Governors at that time. Over the next two years (1991-1993), re-organization of the governing body (including a new Chair) and the growing confidence of the headteacher led to a change in her attitude:-

At one stage, the LEA officer was very helpful in smoothing things over when relationships between myself and some staff were difficult, and when communication between the old Chair of Governors and I was less than perfect. You know, smoothing ruffled feathers, that sort of thing. I hardly ever 'phone him now...There are some things where I would once have rung the LEA, but now if I want to discuss anything important I contact the Chair of Governors first ('Right of reply' interview, Mrs. Boxer, 7/7/93)

This shift of approach was reflected during the period of time when staff redundancy was imminent. Mrs. Boxer, alerted initially by the governor with financial expertise to the state of affairs, liaised closely with the LEA about the legal requirements and procedures, but with the governors about the detailed process of how the person would be nominated for redundancy. Fortunately, one teacher was anxious to accept voluntary redundancy (details are discussed later in the thesis), but until this was confirmed, there were a considerable number of meetings and discussion among governors. Mrs. Boxer, trying to summarise the change in balance between her reliance upon the LEA and upon governors, remarked that

a key feature of change over the past couple of years has been the transfer of responsibilities from the LEA to the governors. This is one of the most

important changes you should keep in mind ('Right of reply' interview, Mrs. Boxer, 7/7/93)

In personnel matters as in other areas, the LEA assumed the role of an adviser; the governors making the decisions, but always with careful reference to LEA direction. However, Mrs. Boxer admitted that the days of the Authority acting as a 'safety net' were passing and increasingly turned to the governors for support.

Finally, the majority of in-service courses attended by the teachers and Head were organized by the LEA, which also provided curriculum expertise through its advisory teachers, who came into school regularly. As headteacher, Mrs. Boxer was keen to take full advantage of these opportunities but found that two factors affected the smoothness of this process:

(a) The over-use of outside help was resented by some staff, who felt that too much time was spent on discussing an agenda set by the visiting speaker at the expense of more immediate and pressing problems. This resulted in a temporary hold on any visitors (much to Mrs. Boxer's regret) and more emphasis on sessions led by curriculum leaders. Some of the teachers' concerns were met by allowing an open agenda time at the start of each meeting and opening the SMT meeting to all staff if they should wish to attend. However, the only regular LEA advisory staff to visit the school were those able to provide specific advice about issues such as special needs and appraisal.

(b) Not all staff took opportunities to attend available courses. Mrs. Boxer felt that some teachers required strong direction from her to do so, and were often the first ones to complain about the quality of provision. In addition, a further complication existed in that staff were expected to provide some feedback to colleagues following the course as part of their responsibility. Nevertheless,

although three teachers were involved in higher degree work at the local university, the majority relied upon the LEA for in-service provision.

It should also be noted in passing that Mrs. Boxer continued to liaise with the LEA on other broad aspects of her own development such as the introduction management technology, training days dealing with the responsibilities of headteachers and governors, and advice about re-organization of the early years department. The situation was not without irony, however, for her increasing confidence in handling new responsibilities and procedures through LEA support led to an increase in her expectations of the quality of their provision. The power of payment for services allowed her to be more discriminating about their services and more likely to reject unwelcome advice or complain about the lack of relevance of courses and training. However, despite this growth in confidence, her loyalty to the Authority remained undiminished:-

I'm in favour of local authorities. If what they provide is unsatisfactory, I'll ring and tell them so that they can get it better next time. I want them to survive. ('Right of reply' interview, Mrs. Boxer, 7/7/93)

Not every governor shared this positive view and she had to tread a careful path in her efforts to recognize divergent opinion without compromising her own beliefs. Decision-making did not rely solely upon Mrs. Boxer's ability to involve staff and draw upon external sources of advice, but to negotiate different views of appropriate action when discussions were in progress prior to a decision.

The second external body that Mrs. Boxer used for advice and information was the local headteachers' Academic Council, a group that met regularly to discuss current issues, offer mutual support, and initiate joint action. For instance, the Council had established its own working party composed of local teachers to make recommendations about Records of Achievement and set up a

working party for Humanities which the newly appointed temporary Rate 'A' allowance holders were encouraged to attend. A policy had already been agreed within the Academic Council that all schools in the group would pursue a similar approach based on National Curriculum Programmes of Study rather than Attainment Targets. This decision, taken without consultation of school staff, meant that the two teachers attending the Academic Council working parties were faced with the need to reconcile this approach with staff views in the school's own working party. One co-ordinator summarised the position in a meeting early in the Summer Term (1991) when he expressed concern over the difficulty in finding a way through which would allow for joint ownership by staff' (Mr. Dawn, History co-ordinator) at a time when topics had already been chosen for the following year (published in the prospectus), information from the NCC was incomplete, and there was a fierce debate about the appropriateness of a 'thematic' approach (further fuelled by comments in November, 1991, by Michael Fallon, a member of the ministerial team at the DES, about teachers who had an 'obsession with topics and projects'; see Sweetman, 1992). In response to a question about the influence that staff had over decisions made by the Council, the same teacher-governor replied: 'None, in my experience' (Interview, 18/7/91). Nonetheless, the working parties were charged with providing discussion papers for the full staff meeting and the time scale demanded rapid progress if the implementation dates were to be met. Mrs. Boxer saw benefits from cross-city curriculum development (such as the Humanities policy), although she was discriminating about her acceptance of documents and openly criticized the poor quality of the Mathematics guidelines, eventually substituting it with an in-school version prepared by the deputy and accepted without modification by the staff (3/9/91). Nevertheless:-

We ought to be able to share expertise more, with curriculum leaders going back into their schools with recommendations from the Academic Council (Interview, 16/10/91)

She also saw value in other forms of liaison, not necessarily curriculum based:-

I feel that by belonging to the Academic Council, I've got more of a voice to influence city-wide decisions. For example, the Early Years Market that I organized might never have happened. (Interview, 16/10/91)

External liaison proved to be an important feature of the headteacher's ability to cope with the rapidity of change. It created security for Mrs. Boxer through the network of informal contacts with other headteachers and LEA officers at a time when the rapidity of change threatened to overwhelm her, but also created dilemmas for her: (a) because some governors were unsympathetic towards the LEA position despite valuing their advice on contentious issues; (b) because some staff expressed concerns over the apparent intrusion of another external body. The main effect of the Academic Council upon staff involvement in decision-making was therefore twofold:-

- * Its influence upon Mrs. Boxer's actions and attitudes.
- * The decisions taken by the headteachers of the Council which affected all city teachers.

Both the LEA and the Academic Council played an important role in coping with the rapid pace of change and were valued by Mrs. Boxer as sources of advice and reassurance. Over the remaining period of the research, this relationship was to evolve significantly and I shall refer briefly to this development later in my thesis.

Throughout this last two chapters, I have tried to demonstrate that the decision-making process through SMT to phase groups and full staff meeting was subject to a number of constraints, including staff perceptions of the process, differences in emphasis across the phase groups, uncertainty about priorities, conflicts over timing of inter-related decisions, the influence of the

governing body, and the effect of other external bodies. At this stage of the research, my thesis was predicated upon the tentative claim that during a time of rapid change, decision-making relied as much upon the disposition of staff, their perceptions of the appropriateness of procedures and a belief that their contributions were significant, as upon hierarchies, systems, or the headteacher's desire to extend the collaborative process. Additionally, that the weight of demands resulted in an excessively busy climate, thereby reducing opportunity for reflection and creative interpretation. This, in turn, placed excessive time pressures on all staff, extending the gap between the initial consideration of an innovation and its implementation (Becher, 1989). As the research progressed, and in the light of these indicators, particularly the consistently high level of stress experienced by staff in their attempts to implement the necessary changes, I became aware that a number of outcomes were being shaped:-

- (a) As a consequence of this pressure, implementation of national reforms would be inconsistently applied across the school.
- (b) Teachers would rely increasingly upon specific directives from senior staff (notably the headteacher) in their quest to keep abreast of the changes.
- (c) This could result in a move away from the notion of whole-school collegiality to a more hierarchical model of management.
- (d) At the same time, there might emerge an increase in collaboration among members of different interest groups and other constituencies as they sought to implement the directives within their own situation.

As such, the progressive focusing during the first stage of my research generated insights from my observations and the developing hypotheses helped to define my investigation more sharply (Woods, 1986). As part of this refining process, the following chapter continues to examine the sorts of issues which

dominated staff discussions and shaped the decision-making process during 1992 and early 1993.

CHAPTER 7
FURTHER DEVELOPMENTS

Introduction

In the last chapter, I indicated that as the research developed, a number of 'signposts' emerged which provided provisional evidence of the interlocking and inter-dependent factors affecting the extent of staff participation and its impact upon the development of a collaborative climate favoured by Mrs. Boxer as part of her management strategy. Amongst other things, each signpost provided evidence about the manner in which particular circumstances influenced the disposition of staff in the school towards involvement and either limited, promoted, or otherwise constrained the extent of their participation. Involvement was not an ideological principle or notion waiting to permeate each and every situation but could be determined by an individual or a group depending upon (1) the way the situation was perceived or, in some cases, (2) because of Mrs. Boxer's expectations of them due to their seniority and the associated responsibilities they held. By reference to further data, I shall try to establish that over a period of time, the extent and quality of this involvement relied heavily upon staff motivation as well as opportunity provided by the headteacher. Further, I shall continue to develop my earlier suggestion that the mere provision of opportunity for involvement would do little to enhance the collaborative climate within the school and might create illusions of involvement which fed hostility or resentment and thereby damaged relationships. The distinction between a climate of collaboration and a collaborative culture was also pertinent: the former implying a policy decision about the type of relationships wanted for the school by the headteacher and governors (say); the latter (collaborative culture) indicating a form of behaviour which was the accepted norm within the school and infiltrated every aspect of institutional life.

I have already made reference to staff comments during interview which helped to clarify some of their observed behaviour during meetings; the evidence from this data relied largely upon an interview with every staff member between June 1991 and November 1991. (A second interview with senior staff

and teacher-governors was held during 1992.) There were also a number of informal conversations with the same teachers held after the main interviews which assisted in clarifying points that had been raised. Before utilising this data, I will first summarise the main issues which affected teachers during 1991 and go on to explore the development of these and other issues which emerged during the second year of data collection.

During the first year of research, teachers had the opportunity to be involved at a variety of levels with decisions relating to a varied range of issues. The impetus to participate was driven by: (a) the structures established by Mrs. Boxer; (b) their ambition for themselves and their pupils; (c) the compulsion attached to the national reforms. One or several of these factors were relevant across the following key areas of discussion during 1992:

- * the school management plan
- * the dissemination of information
- * National Curriculum demands
- * pupil records of achievement
- * parental expectations
- * staff appraisal and job security
- * financial pressure and resourcing

Although some of these (such as appraisal) were minor matters in the first half of the study, as the research proceeded they formed a substantial part of on-going discussions in formal meetings and informally amongst groups of staff in the staffroom and elsewhere. They occupied a great deal of staff time and energy as teachers sought to clarify expectations, deliberate on options, contribute to discussions and implement agreed decisions (Hitt, 1990). For convenience, I shall consider each of them in turn, whilst recognizing that some were inter-dependent and related.

The school management plan

Within the constraints established by external demands, the staff were engaged in their own school development programme (Wallace, 1991a, 1991b; Morrison, 1991). As an element of this programme, each year the whole staff were asked by Mrs. Boxer to consider which areas of whole school policy they considered required attention, plus their personal in-service training needs. The formal approach used by the headteacher to gain these perceptions (through a questionnaire) was followed by several staff meetings during which priorities were formalised. From my attendance at these meetings, the now familiar distinction between curricular obligations due to timetabled events, and other staff priorities relating to in-house policy, was evident. The results from the formal staff questionnaire reflected curriculum priorities such as the need to review existing policies and put others in place before the national implementation deadline. Items such as the necessity to develop a structured and controlled discipline policy within the school, the importance of the well-being of teachers, the need for good quality communication and (most emphatically) the value of discussing issues of general interest in a whole staff forum rather than using the established SMT/ phase route, were also mentioned in teachers' responses.

Teachers' differing formal and informal priorities suggested that the staff were (at the start of 1992) uncertain about the extent of freedom available to them under a collegial system. The 'strategic redefinition' referred to by Johnston (1988), whereby teachers utilise high risk approaches to state their position, only characterised meetings where Mrs. Boxer was not present. When present, staff generally preferred to utilise 'strategic compliance', adopting a safer position and apparently accepting Mrs. Boxer's explanation and summary of a situation. There also appeared to be a recognition among teachers that whatever their personal disposition, the school management plan had to reflect the fact that: (a) statutory requirements had to be met; and (b) school policies

had to be sufficiently understandable and workable for the purpose of facilitating implementation. However, in contrast to the majority of items put towards the plan, proximal issues such as children's welfare and staff well-being figured strongly in teachers' comments. While differing views among staff sometimes existed over appropriate teaching approaches and curriculum priorities, a common bond was secured through their desire for a shared understanding of decisions and policies leading to more secure relationships within school. In effect, the school development plan, though treated seriously by teachers, did not necessarily reflect their deeply held convictions about their role and responsibilities.

Dissemination of information

Underlying dissatisfaction within any institution or among any workforce may often be traced to poor communication and consequential misunderstandings or worse. (Havelock, 1971; Morrish, 1976; Nias et al, 1991) The staff of St. Kerensa's were, as I have suggested, also anxious to be reliably informed about matters that concerned their ability to carry out their teaching job and their future welfare. In the decision-making process, great reliance was placed upon curriculum leaders to provide the necessary information for the rest of the staff to consider the appropriateness of policy decisions or select from a range of options. Mrs. Boxer usually spoke with the leader prior to the full meeting to ensure that she was happy about content and philosophy (confirmed by informal comment, 14/12/92). The co-ordinator's presence was therefore essential whenever his or her area of responsibility was being discussed. His or her absence affected the smooth running of working parties and the transmission of information and ideas via phase groups, thereby disrupting the process of dissemination. Generally, the availability of staff due to sickness and other duties curtailed the wide ranging discussions which were intended to occur, though on the whole members accepted the co-ordinator's recommendations

with little comment. Nevertheless, staff absence sometimes meant that an essential piece of information was not transmitted to the absentee on their return. An example of this occurred when one teacher was away due to a professional development commitment, only to discover by chance a few weeks later that a decision about the format for a parents' evening had not been communicated to him. The subsequent confusion had caused him considerable embarrassment and irritation due to the need for frantic last minute arrangements.

Sometimes, the absence of a particularly well informed teacher led to disruption because they alone had the necessary expertise to advise colleagues. Allowing for the fact that the process of dissemination was proving to be lengthier than anticipated, the influence of the particular curriculum leader in assisting colleagues to explore central issues and explain or answer questions about detail was crucial to the process (Campbell, 1991). Participation was therefore partly dependent upon the extent of the receiver's knowledge and partly the quality of the curriculum co-ordinator's leadership and communication skills. This dependency sometimes affected the nature of staff participation. During the Humanities working party, for instance, the History co-ordinator spent much of the time providing detailed comment about content and how it might be covered, using information gained from attendance at a recent LEA-led course. Other members of the group usually listened attentively and accepted the curriculum leader's recommendations without comment or qualification. These instances were unremarkable; during the first year of my attendance at staff meetings, draft curriculum policy documentation which an individual member of staff presented to the full meeting was accepted with alacrity. This passivity was in sharp contrast to recommendations about procedures which might directly affect teachers' working practices or self-confidence. For instance, the two staff (Mrs. Northern and Mrs. Ellie) who presented a paper about appraisal were questioned closely by teachers about its contents and, as a result of the discussions, were asked to make a number of

significant adjustments. Similarly, the discussion paper about Records of Achievement created a lively debate resulting in major alterations to the proposal. These different responses indicated that whereas staff felt that a curriculum policy was merely a device for staying within the letter of the law and allowed for variations in interpretation by individual teachers, a procedural document was binding and could be monitored closely by the headteacher and colleagues. Informal comments from every experienced teacher who mentioned the subject (at least six or seven) confirmed that curriculum documentation was rarely referred to unless absolutely necessary; staff gained the gist of what was expected and implemented it loosely. Nevertheless, teachers demanded to know what was going on; they were sensitive to those occasions when they perceived that they were failing to receive adequate information about events, communications about decisions, or advance warning about changes in procedure. These sentiments resulted in increased use of bulletin boards and a weekly diary sheet produced by Mrs. Boxer for staff every Monday morning.

In addition to the opportunity to participate and the desire to do so, staff involvement in decision-making was facilitated by clear, unequivocal dissemination of information. The act of disseminating was distinct from 'informing' (Schon, 1971): the latter indicated the mere transfer of knowledge about a decision which had already been taken, the former involved information which would enable staff to make informed choices at a later stage. Appropriate and accurate information was essential for teachers if they were to make the best use of their time and have the capacity to think beyond their classroom responsibilities and embrace whole-school issues.

National Curriculum demands

Staff concerns over the need to meet the demands of the National Curriculum led, as I have indicated above, to problems of time and motivation. The curriculum working parties met to consider ways forward at a time when teachers

were regularly and openly expressing their concerns about meeting the demands of the curriculum, perform assessment tasks properly and keep profiles of pupil achievement. Two features exacerbated teacher concerns: (a) the continual flow of directive and guidance from central sources (NCC, SEAC, etc.); (b) unfamiliarity with the content of the new National Curriculum documentation and unease about accommodating the demands into a working programme.

Staff had been reminded at the beginning of the academic year (1991/92) by both headteacher and deputy that responding to the demands of the National Curriculum were a priority. In response, their discomfiture had been apparent:-

It was clear that there were widely differing perceptions of how to approach this whole issue. Teachers are not clear about terminology, content of documents, etc. This affects their attitude to the way ahead, contributions to discussion and general passivity/assertiveness. Much of the time has been spent in coming to terms with issues and details of the problem rather than any definite decisions. (Field notes, 18/9/91)

By contrast, by the end of the academic year, the emphasis had changed; staff were much more concerned with successful implementation. Thus, from a SMT meeting nine months later:-

No staff development time has been available for Music, P.E. and Art, yet they all have to be implemented in September 1992. It was agreed that individual teachers would liaise independently with curriculum leaders to discuss details. (Field notes, 29/6/92)

One way or another, the demands of the National Curriculum were sufficiently heavy to absorb a considerable amount of staff energy and time both in grasping the underlying philosophy and (increasingly) effecting implementation. The imposition of the National Curriculum and their engagement with the material and uneasy responses during the discussion exposed their insecurities due to concerns about meeting statutory obligations. This also resulted in a paucity of fresh initiatives coming from among themselves as they struggled instead to come to terms with the growing obligations to implement the national reforms.

The associated issue of National Curriculum record-keeping became a major point of interest. The local authority had developed its own record card, but rumours about impending changes to attainment targets in Mathematics and Science and the consequent obsolescence of the card for these subjects undermined staff morale. The rumours were confirmed in the New Year (1992), though records for 1991-92 were still based on the 'old' system; all the staff complained bitterly that record-keeping using the outdated system would be of limited future use. In addition, the volume of National Curriculum content was becoming burdensome, especially at Key Stage 2. The deputy spoke on behalf of the upper school staff when he claimed that

it's impossible to deliver the National Curriculum... Year 3 and 4 work in History is a particular problem (Staff meeting, 16/10/91).

The effect on morale over the uncertainty about content and assessment issues continued into the new year (1992). Webb (1993) found that the requirements for National Curriculum assessment and reporting to parents produced 'an exponential increase in the paperwork required to track and record the progress of individual pupils' (p. 85). The discomfort experienced by the staff at St. Kerensa's reflected Webb's comments and was exacerbated by the uncertainties created by changing government expectations.

Meanwhile, other important issues emerged across 1991-92. There was concern amongst staff over the new computerised system (linked to the local authority computer at County Hall) installed to facilitate the approaching local management responsibility. Although assessments were meant to be placed in the computer records, the system could not be mastered by the staff quickly enough to make this a realistic proposition. Eventually, it became obvious to everyone that placing pupil-records on the computer was not possible in the immediate future and the decision to do so was put in abeyance, to the obvious relief of everyone. This issue provided an interesting example of the limits to

involvement as senior management were not convinced by the relevance of the computer link themselves, but recognised that on-going support from the authority and genuine local financial control required technological support. However, it was clear that a massive investment of time and effort would be necessary to make the system operational at a time when staff were already burdened.

The demands of National Curriculum continued unabated and obliged teachers to take a closely involved interest in the documentation and statutory expectations. Nevertheless, even experienced, conscientious teachers admitted privately that they could not keep abreast of the changes; one teacher was still using out-of-date material some twelve months after it had been modified.

Pupil records of achievement

Alongside the demands resulting from National Curriculum legislation and awareness of parental rights, pressure was growing from the DES for teachers to involve every child in compiling a record of their achievements. Mention has already been made of the appointment of an allowance holder (temporary, one year) to assist the process (Mrs. Harrison). DES Circular 8/90 had required, amongst other things, the need for fuller reporting of children's progress to parents, and improved liaison with the next phase, a process involving the child in the production of the Record. Mrs. Harrison led the staff discussions and emphasised the need for a whole school policy, beginning with the nursery's pre-assessment sheet, including samples of children's work as they progressed through the school and producing a transfer document. The one-to-one contact with children was to be a feature of the development of the Record; it was emphasised that this would require careful time management and prompted expressions of concern from among the staff about how this could be handled in addition to the demands of the National Curriculum. However, uncertainties over the practicalities of selection of children's work, handling of documentation,

storage and confidentiality were points of concern for staff. Although they appeared to accept that Records of Achievement were good in principle, teachers were worried about questions of the practical implementation. The appropriateness of the selection of work also troubled staff. Some were concerned that children might insist on including inappropriate work in the folder which did not reflect their true ability; others pointed out that younger children would probably require more assistance than older ones. There was, however, general agreement that the Record must only include a small number of pieces per term to avoid a massive accumulation as the child went through the school. Staff acknowledged that creative, non-paper tasks would not be included in the folder, though suggestions were made about the use of photographs of work as a substitute. Teachers also considered that the conditions under which the piece of work was produced was an important indicator of the work's relevance to the overall profile. Advice from SEAC over ways of recording the circumstances under which the work had been produced was accepted with little enthusiasm, viewed as a further 'paperwork' task in addition to the growing number of other similar demands emerging as a result of the reforms. Nevertheless, the detailed comments about the practicalities of implementation highlighted the teachers' depth of interest when an issue directly impinged upon their classroom practice and their unwillingness to accept procedures which they felt to be inappropriate.

These exchanges further underlined the gulf which existed between the government's intentions and the staff's readiness or ability to implement the changes. In this case, the statutory requirements meant that the development of a Record of Achievement was necessary and the decision about the provision had already been made externally. Although teachers were unable to influence the decision, and had varying degrees of sympathy with the principle which underpinned the concept, they were all concerned with clarifying the correct

procedures and ensuring that the maintaining of a Record was consistent with what they perceived to be workable and useful. Merely responding to the directive without exercising the right to interpret and, if necessary, revise its form, acted against the teacher role. Nias referred to this need as 'feeling like a teacher' (Nias, 1989) and the resistance to an immediate acceptance of the proposed procedure for Records of Achievement reflected that position. By contrast, the passive acceptance of the curriculum policy documentation produced by co-ordinators appeared to result from a belief that individual interpretation remained within reach.

Mrs. Boxer was anxious that some system evolved that would satisfy both the directive and the governors who had recognised the importance of the task by making the temporary allowance available to Mrs. Harrison. She, in turn, felt an obligation to fulfil her role and remain central to the process, and the staff expressed varying concerns over the practicalities of implementation. Some staff (notably the younger ones) were anxious to be told precisely what they had to do; their involvement was on the basis of clarifying procedures to assist them when they came to do it. A few (notably the teacher-governors) took a more philosophical stance and argued about the issue itself, apparently less concerned with the practicalities and more anxious to establish a rationale for the practice of keeping such records. The level of staff participation and the nature of the involvement in this debate pointed to the fact that it depended upon a variety of factors, including their degree of confidence, familiarity with the issue, and certainty of their own position as members of staff.

Parental expectations

In addition to concerns over National Curriculum demands, the publication of the Parents' Charter (DES, 1991) and close media attention to parental rights, provided another key issue for staff as they continued to wrestle with their role in decision-making at a time of rapid change. Staff were keenly aware of the

growth of rights for parents and the widespread debate throughout the country about quality of teaching and appropriateness of teaching methods. The emergence of the Charter caused a strong reaction among staff, who seemed single-minded in their opposition to it. A number of the more experienced staff considered that it was government propaganda and that its tone invited confrontation between parents and teachers. For a time, the issue dominated staff-room conversation and distracted them from other pressing tasks. Uncertainty over such issues only served to create a more unsettled atmosphere within the staff and detract from the cohesiveness sought by Mrs. Boxer. In the meantime, a number of examples occurred which sharpened teachers' awareness of parental aspirations, including:-

- * A parent who complained to the deputy about what he perceived to be the school's insufficiently rigorous approach towards the needs of more academic children, including his own daughter. Mr. Jamieson later admitted that the pressures were already so great that this single incident had caused the loss of several night's sleep.
- * The headteacher who came under pressure from a small lobby of parents who expressed concern about the school's approach to Reading and had gained support from the parent-governor (see earlier). In addition to a number of individual discussions between the headteacher and parents, the matter was raised at several governors' meetings and caused repercussions throughout the school as the issue was thoroughly aired.
- * Concerns expressed by a dozen or more parents over the proposed class distribution for the new academic year (1991-92), which Mrs. Boxer suggested would be based almost solely on chronological age due to the imbalance of numbers in different Year groups. Some parents confronted Mrs. Boxer with their opposition to the policy and argued that their child should be allocated to a different class. Two parents even produced medical

evidence in support of their claim that their child's separation from friends would not be in their best interests. In these extreme cases, after several meetings of the SMT and several full staff discussions, an exception was made to the rule for these particular children.

These examples suggested that government legislation promoting the parents' 'right to know' had placed them in a position to challenge the preference and priorities of the headteacher and staff. Naturally, with the on-going problems of implementation and change, this experience of parent-power caused further uncertainty amongst staff about their own response to the changing situation: both at the formal level of issuing sufficient information about a child's progress, and informally in relating to parents. Mrs. Boxer was anxious to demonstrate to parents that the school was 'accessible', facilitated through the development of a parents' area in the school and a number of 'open evenings'. Staff seemed to accept the fact that parental satisfaction was necessary if the school was to maintain pupil numbers and thereby strengthen their job security, and sensitivity to parents' rights was a key consideration in spurring teachers' close involvement in these issues.

Staff appraisal and job security

Staff appraisal emerged as a growing staff concern towards the end of 1991 and into 1992 (Skitt & Jennings, 1989). During the Summer of 1991 there were rumours and counter-rumours around the school about the impending enforcement and implications of an appraisal system; this continued for the next two years until appraisal became an accepted feature of school life. In the staffroom, teachers were frequently disparaging about the attitude of some sections of the Press and the suggestion that appraisal was a means of reducing the number of inefficient teachers. Although appraisal was eventually promoted by Mrs. Boxer as a means of supporting and enhancing teachers' work, the issue

was of deep concern to everyone despite reassurances. These concerns did little to enhance Mrs. Boxer's ambitions for greater staff involvement due to four factors:

- (a) its statutory, enforceable nature, requiring Mrs. Boxer to assume responsibility for its implementation and thus create an 'enforcement' role for her;
- (b) the mechanics of appraisal, in which headteacher was to be appraised by colleagues from outside the school while the remainder of the staff were initially appraised by colleagues from within, a situation which could confirm the 'us-and-them' mentality of teachers;
- (c) specific LEA appraisal training for senior staff, different in kind from the brief in-school training received by everyone else, thereby emphasising the differential nature of staff status;
- (d) staff suspicions that it would be linked with merit payments and promotion.

Appraisal became, for a time, the number one topic of conversation as the speculation heightened. The conversations in the staffroom confirmed that staff viewed appraisal as another imposition and a sign that the government wished to diminish their professional status. Appraisal was widely referred to in terms of 'them' (the government) failing to trust 'us' (the teachers). It was interesting that teachers did not appear to discriminate between government and the NCC or SEAC; all were viewed with hostility, blamed for causing stress and additional work, and threatening teachers' most deeply held convictions about educational priorities. The slow release of this information over the purpose and process of appraisal did not create the conditions for enthusiastic staff commitment or settle the obvious distress about the issue which was evident at this time.

Financial pressures and resourcing

The issue of finance and resourcing touched virtually every area of school life and due to its pervasive influence and the implications for the approaching delegation, I shall spend a little more time developing the ways in which some key events touched the lives and attitudes of staff towards involvement.

As part of her desire to increase the level of participation, Mrs. Boxer was keen that curriculum co-ordinators should take responsibility for the financial implications of curriculum resource decisions which she saw as a natural development of their increased participation. Co-ordinators were normally diligent in presenting ideas and proposals for staff consideration and explaining the resource-needs associated with a particular subject area during staff meetings, but seemed unenthusiastic about accepting and handling a budget. As St. Kerensa's prepared for full financial delegation (April 1992), it was understandable that Mrs. Boxer was keen to establish a precedent of staff sharing the responsibility for decisions about expenditure as part of the collegial framework. She was convinced that prudent financial control was essential if St. Kerensa's was to prosper under the influence of local management.

As working parties were gradually formulating their priorities, teachers were expressing worries about (for example) the lack of resources to teach Humanities, typified by: 'The shortage of atlases is having a major effect upon my teaching strategies' (upper school phase meeting, 13/11/91). At the same time, governors were equally anxious that the stringencies should not adversely affect teaching quality. However, they were not in a position to offer much comfort due to the uncertainties they faced. Typically, in a full governors' meeting (November 1991), the Chair of the Finance sub-committee in sharing his anxiety with other members, complained: 'Everything is so fluid...like elastic bands around a jelly!' He explained that they had to rely upon details from the LEA, but the budget figures issued by the Authority kept changing. At the heart of his concern was the imminent loss of the equivalent of at least one half of a

teacher's salary due to the latest set of figures. This latest amendment was due to the withdrawal of the LEA's historically preferential treatment of St. Kerensa's since the mid 1980's. With the advent of local management, this extra money, an acknowledgement of the unusually challenging social circumstances faced by the school, would be withdrawn. The Chair of Finance spoke of the choice between reducing expenditure in areas such as 'supply' teachers or contemplating redundancy. The accompanying need was the maintenance of pupil numbers; any further shortfall would result in further loss of revenue. This prospect opened up a debate about the importance of adequate marketing (Brunt, 1985) and a possible change in admissions policy.

The implications for staff of the issues raised in this governors' meeting were considerable and placed the shortage of (say) a set of atlases into perspective when contrasted with the possible loss of staff. When these matters were initially shared with staff, three possible options were discussed (Staff meeting, 18/11/91):

- (a) cutting capitation
- (b) reducing supply teachers
- (c) saving on light and heat

Capitation cuts were greeted by staff with undisguised horror, who argued that although some small savings could be obtained, they were insufficient to combat the deficit problem. Savings on light and heat were seen as a reasonable option, though much had already been accomplished in this way and further significant reductions were considered unlikely. This left the supply teacher budget as the only major source of saving. Staff agreed that it was important that a policy for supply cover was drawn up by the headteacher, despite the impossibility of predicting sudden staff absence through (say) illness. The subsequent policy, the central point of which was that classes would be split

during the first three days of absence, with a maximum of five extra children for any one class, was accepted by staff in the two phases at subsequent discussions. However, concerns were expressed about the accompanying stress for teachers that would be caused by reducing the supply cover and the need for flexibility in special circumstances.

The teachers were placed in a difficult position: if they approved the proposed policy it would result in extra work for them as they coped with more children; if they failed to do so, the prospects for finances would be gloomier. The financial constraints were eventually eased by a voluntary redundancy (in July 1992), but earlier in the year when these discussions were held, teachers were agitated by the growing financial constraints. The staff's anxieties were epitomised by a comment from a member of the SMT (Mr. Jamieson), who lamented what appeared to be an unending struggle to cope: 'We're close to crisis management. Stress is taking its toll on staff...The joy of teaching is being squeezed out of it' (19/11/91). This proved to be true in that the amount of staff absence in the following few months (Spring 1992) increased unpredictably and included several long-term absences.

I have already alluded to the fact that the need to maintain pupil numbers as a means of raising revenue and thereby protecting the school's future viability was a serious concern for all staff. Discussions about ways of making the school more attractive elicited suggestions about the possibility of allowing children into school the term before the one in which they were five years old. (That is, 'rising-rising fives' instead of 'rising fives'.) This would allow two, instead of three entry points per year; namely, September and Easter. The implications were severe, for it would necessitate a number of changes:

- (a) reception class sizes would increase
- (b) reception classes would contain some early four year olds
- (c) funding would not be available for the rising-rising fives

The rationale for such a move was the hope that children, once in the school as four year olds, would continue at the school once they reached statutory school age, thus increasing numbers in the long term. The idea emerged from the early years staff and met with general approval, subsequently confirmed at the next governors' meeting. However, Mrs. Boxer was doubtful, partly because of the extra demands it would place upon the reception staff and partly because of the effect it might have upon neighbouring primary school headteachers who would perceive it as an example of 'breaking rank' with other members of the Academic Council. Despite her concerns, the staff and governors' view prevailed and she supported the move.

Finally, the shortage of funds meant that the governors agreed (26/11/91) that no enhancement of staff salaries would be possible until the financial position had been clarified. For similar reasons, it was not be possible to offer further allowances for staff currently on the Main Professional Grade, MPG, (i.e., those without additional increments for special responsibilities). Mrs. Boxer, while accepting the inevitability of the decision, was concerned about staff morale, the need to provide leadership for the whole National Curriculum, and staff/governor relationships. She also referred to the pressure upon staff, including herself, and made the frank admission that due to time constraints, she was rarely able to visit classrooms during the day. Staff were therefore doubly handicapped; they had more work themselves, yet the headteacher was less able to provide active professional curriculum leadership. Mrs. Boxer frequently mentioned that the preoccupation with finance and associated procedures was causing her considerable distress as it distracted her from building a staff team through personal interaction and collaboration.

In an SMT meeting (17/2/92), the agenda was dominated by discussion about the shortfall predicted in the 1992-93 budget and the likely impact upon staffing. A number of different scenarios were debated, including the possibility

that if an experienced teacher were to gain promotion and move school, this would immediately alleviate the position and classes could subsequently be reorganized accordingly. However, the likelihood of this happening was small due to the current shortage of promotion opportunities in the area; the financial situation was too urgent to rely on a chance occurrence. Discussions therefore ranged across a number of options:

- * to offer voluntary redundancy to all staff; or if there were no takers;
- * the governors' staffing sub-committee would be asked to draw up the criteria for compulsory redundancy (advised by the local authority) and make recommendations to the full governing body. Once agreed, the procedure would take its course.

Other possible outcomes were considered:

- * using the headteacher as a part-time teacher to avoid larger classes;
- * expanding the nursery provision to attract more families;
- * opting-out from local authority control.

Field notes from this meeting indicated the seriousness of the issue:-

Mrs. Boxer felt strongly that the news of this necessary redundancy should be communicated to the staff as quickly and sensitively as possible, stressing that 'they have a right to know'.

Ironically, at the following full staff meeting (19/2/92) only nine teachers were present (out of a possible fifteen) owing to illness (including the headteacher) and previous commitments, and the issue was not discussed.

In the coming weeks, rumours were rife among staff and it became the 'worst kept secret'. The senior staff and teacher-governors, in particular, were

placed in a difficult position as they attempted to field questions from colleagues without pre-empting the governors' report. In fact, the official recommendation was not placed before staff for a further month (18/3/92) by which time the issue was being spoken about fairly freely by clusters of teachers, though there was a fear that parents might hear of the impending loss and that this might undermine their confidence in the school.

It is difficult to transmit in print the mixture of emotions which were apparent during this period of time. The implementation of statutory requirements, planning for the following year's curriculum and the on-going issues of appraisal, special needs provision, parental liaison and the like, plus the daily round of regular commitments, continued in the midst of the uncertainty and insecurity emanating from the redundancy issue. Teachers continued to meet in phase groups, Year planning teams, and as a SMT, to plan for on-going maintenance tasks and future developments. Yet there was a surreal atmosphere within the school as conversations were often accompanied by a conditional caution to the effect 'if I'm still here then'. This depressed climate was particularly hard on the two newly appointed teachers in their first year of teaching, confronted by their colleagues' constant references to the precariousness of the job of teaching.

The impact of developments on staff involvement

The issues that I have referred to above dominated staff thinking and strongly influenced the extent and quality of their participation due to uncertainties about the future, concerns about government expectations and a lack of time to share with colleagues. Time to meet, report back, agree and consider resource and organisational implications was a significant factor influencing the level of staff participation. During the period that working parties alternated with full staff meetings (1991-92), time pressures were increased due to the two-fold demands (included reporting back to the whole staff). The difficulties in finding

adequate amounts of time to balance the different demands created by the approaching implementation dates meant that resolution and debate continued well beyond the expected time-frame.

Evidence from this busy and demanding period suggested that in order to allow sufficient time for presentation of propositions, formation of teams, thorough briefing by leaders, consideration by working groups, reporting back to staff and subsequent amendments, the consultation period had to be set at a realistic length. The provision of organizational procedures to service the business was insufficient in itself due to the many unforeseen events. Staff involvement proved far costlier in time than had been allowed for in the original procedural framework due to the complexities of competing demands and the interpretation of paperwork from the statutory bodies. Decision-making often took the form of comment upon decisions made elsewhere rather than deciding the most appropriate option themselves. Teachers were left to interpret the form of implementation and adjust their work patterns and priorities to accommodate the weight of legislation affecting them.

Formal consultation procedures continued to be an important feature of staff involvement. Concerns expressed by teachers over their access to information from SMT meetings were countered by an offer by Mrs. Boxer that the meetings would be open to anyone who wished to attend (although in practice only two teachers ever did so). Alongside this, the decision to site the new staff room in the area originally earmarked for a library was confirmed and money allocated for refurbishment. These two issues (more open access to management decisions and the provision of a comfortable staffroom area) were seen by Mrs. Boxer as important steps in fostering collaboration and the developing collegial relationships (Campbell & Southworth, 1992). The completion of numerous policy statements had involved all the staff during 1991. In practice, despite using many of the recommendations from the LEA and local

Academic Council as guidelines, the process of consultation to consider draft proposals took longer than had been anticipated. When curriculum policy proposals were offered by co-ordinators, they tended to be accepted by staff without comment. Expediency dominated as staff were pre-occupied with the procedures for implementation rather than the content of the document itself. For instance, there was often more concern over shortage of available resources than in the detail of the documentation. Indeed, the amount of time spent discussing resources highlighted the teachers' priority about their own classroom practice. Whole-staff involvement appeared to founder when the necessity for implementation outweighed the opportunity for fuller consultation. The demand for consultation became subsumed within the urgent need for consensus which would allow planning and teaching to proceed without disruption. Many meetings were opportunities for a wide-ranging exchange of views about procedural matters rather than selecting between options, due largely to the statutory nature of most directives.

Throughout the research, the extent of the teachers' workload was a regular topic of conversation and the high rate of absenteeism was commonly attributed by teachers to the work overload due principally to the incessant flow of externally generated demands. Typical of this was a conversation with a member of the SMT (Mrs. Vollo), in which she described the impossibility of fitting everything into a week. In particular, the demands of meetings were placing a heavy burden upon her:-

- * Monday, lunchtime SMT meeting
- * Tuesday, lunchtime phase group meeting
- * Wednesday, lunchtime club activity
- * Wednesday, after-school full staff meeting
- * Thursday, lunchtime and after school team meetings

In addition, her own curriculum responsibilities, involvement with students and part-time studies were proving difficult to maintain. She claimed that gaining advice from colleagues about other curriculum areas was fitted into snatched time at the end of a lunch-break or after school, and sometimes this had led to inadequate preparation for the afternoon session. Similarly, early years teachers complained of having at least one meeting every day during and over many weeks and the exhaustion this was causing.

Teachers' concern over the pressure of regular meetings, curriculum responsibilities and the uncertainty over government reforms was reflected in the number of occasions that the issue of overload was raised by staff (Stewart, 1986). Teachers recognized that statutory reforms had to be implemented, requiring extra work and effort, and they began to complain openly about any meetings considered unnecessary and the need to justify and clarify any decisions made. For example:-

Teacher 1: Somewhere between meetings, messages are going astray, especially between the first and upper school. Perhaps we need to look again at our meetings...sometimes I get messages wrong and have to check with Mrs. Boxer. Can we have a time for 'functional' items at the start to avoid messages going astray and 'Chinese whispers'?

Teacher 2: Isn't it inevitable when we have so many meetings and messages are relayed...?

Headteacher: All meetings are open; anyone can come.

Teacher 1: Yes, but it means an extra meeting; Tuesdays are for phases.

Teacher 3: Can we have a representative from each group of teachers? Take it in turns. We can then discuss things later in, say, twos or threes.

Headteacher: There's then the danger of (say) Years 3 and 4 becoming detached from the rest of the school if one rep comes and relays to the other two.

Teacher 3: Tuesdays tend to be a repetition of SMT meetings anyway!

Headteacher: Isn't it more the case that we're failing to act on decisions that we *have* made at meetings?

Teacher 1: Yes, but people are sometimes away and don't hear the details, so they can't act upon it. For instance, some people didn't know what to do with Records of Achievement.

Teacher 3: Why don't we keep minutes...at least at the full staff meeting?
(Agreed)

Headteacher: Don't forget that on a big staff it's inevitable that we have different interpretations of decisions.

(SMT meeting, 23/10/91, field notes)

From the above examples, the following constraints were affecting the depth of staff involvement: (a) the opportunity for all staff to attend the SMT meeting was not helpful because teachers were already over-committed; (b) uncertainties over the practical implications of a decision was causing some confusion; (c) consistency of implementation needed monitoring; (d) the need for good quality communication within the school was becoming increasingly evident, with an agreement that a minute book would be kept for staff meetings; (e) externally imposed issues were dominating events at the expense of important proximal ones, though the decision to allocate the first few minutes of every full staff meeting to items of immediate concern to teachers offset much of the staff concern over this issue.

The decision-making procedure established by Mrs. Boxer which was intended to release the staff from the burden of paperwork and involve them more closely in whole school issues, failed to take into account the need for a whole-school identity prior to embarking upon collaborative ventures. Mrs. Boxer's role was crucial in this; she was the main source of information about recent national innovatory practice and the person who had the opportunity to influence staff morale and unity despite the undoubted anxieties which existed (Nias, 1989). The problems associated with maintaining the regular school functions while at the same time responding to the statutory demands ('planning mode', Wallace, 1992), were proving stressful for both staff and headteacher. In addition, the restrictions upon finance gave rise to a cautious approach amongst governors and staff which, when combined with the other pressures, led to a situation in which morale suffered. Thus, evidence suggested that Mrs. Boxer's intention of involving staff more fully in the decision-making process was in jeopardy due to:

- (a) the strain of too many formal meetings which led to some staff complaining that the formal decision-making structure was too rigid and demanding of their time and energy;
- (b) difficulties establishing consistent and reliable communication channels especially (i) the transmission of important information between senior staff and members of phase groups, and (ii) ensuring that all staff were aware of decisions and clear about their implications;
- (c) the two phase groups developing different strategies to deal with the allotted tasks and responsibilities, resulting in distinctive, even divisive approaches;
- (d) the reduction in available time for the discussion of externally imposed issues and opportunities for discussion of immediate school-related matters of concern to class teachers;
- (e) Mrs. Boxer's busyness in establishing and maintaining relationships with governors, LEA and the Academic Council, leaving less time for the promotion of in-school collaboration and the fostering of a collegial climate.

Teachers' perspectives were also significant:

- (a) there was a desire amongst staff to clarify the extent of their accountability for decisions and the implications for their present work and future;
- (b) staff were frustrated by the uncertainty about correct procedures for National Curriculum associated activity, struggling with mastery of the heavy content (especially at Key Stage 2) and with assessment procedures (especially at Key Stage 1);
- (c) linked with the decision-making process were concerns over the impact that specific decisions might have upon an individual teacher's work and practice.

Informal comments from the majority of teachers indicated that a 'siege mentality' was developing. Typically, from an early years teacher: 'I just keep my head down while the missiles fly overhead, and I carry on with my class as usual down in the air-raid shelter' (Mrs. Farmer, paraphrase). This tendency to hold on to the familiar was unsurprising considering the pace of change, the uncertainty and the general feelings of antagonism towards the government, sometimes vociferously expressed in the relative privacy of the staff room, and reinforced by numerous unhappy informal comments to the effect: 'I just don't know what's happening in education any more'. Staff and governors continued to spend a great deal of time making sense of the implications of different reforms. The headteacher's task was particularly difficult as she sought to respond to staff concerns, maintain morale and foster the collaborative climate that she favoured (Skitt & Jennings, 1989). The use of words such as 'war', 'battle', 'struggle' and 'weapons' were commonplace in staff comments about education during this period.

The complexities associated with managing change had to take into account teachers' regular teaching commitments alongside the plethora of other demands. Teachers appeared to feel that nothing was secure other than the time they could spend with their own classes in the confines of the teaching-and-learning situation and that even this was threatened by the shortage of time to clarify internal school policy, and the impact of curriculum reforms. Mrs. Boxer, without the solace of her own class, turned this way and that to seek advice and continue to promote her philosophy of teacher-involvement. If teachers hoped that 1992-93 might herald a change in the pattern of events and a deceleration of innovation, they were to be disappointed. On top of the growing fear of redundancy, many further changes awaited attention, consideration, choice and decision. In the next chapter of my thesis, I will explore a number of selected areas which continued to have a significant impact on staff participation in

decision-making throughout the remainder of the research and affected Mrs. Boxer's search for extending the extent of collaboration.

CHAPTER 8

THE IMPACT OF CONTINUING CHANGE

Introduction

In the last chapter, I indicated that Mrs. Boxer's attempts to establish a climate of collaboration were subject to numerous constraints, though evidence of staff collaboration was more evident at the start of 1992 than it had been a year earlier. Nevertheless, St. Kerensa's was still a long way from showing evidence of a collaborative culture. There was still antipathy towards the reforms and some dissatisfaction with the decision-making process that had been established by Mrs. Boxer. Fragmentation of the staff across phase group lines and the growth of other 'interest sets' (Hoyle, 1982) was affecting the whole-school unity that was sought. The creation of an atmosphere in which staff expertise was openly valued, opinions about policy issues exchanged and 'an overt commitment to evaluate their initiatives collectively...working groups of teachers engaged in the process of developing school-wide policies and practices for the curriculum' (Campbell, 1985, p. 153) proved more difficult to establish than Mrs. Boxer could possibly have realised at the outset. In part, this may have been due to her expectation that collegiality would lead to a higher level of consensus and, therefore, enhance the quality of the collaborative process and subsequent outcomes. In fact, dissensus was frequently evident in staff attitudes towards innovations (Pfeffer, 1976; Hanson, 1977).

In this chapter, I want to refer to a number of on-going issues during 1992 and in to 1993 which were relevant to the work of every teacher, occupied a prime place in the agenda of staff meetings, and required regular decision and amendment as policies were established and strategies for implementation were agreed. Some of the issues were on-going; others were relatively insignificant during 1991 but grew in significance over the next year or so. I shall attempt to show that teachers related with the decision-making process in a number of different and varied ways, and became inconsistently involved in whole-school policy development at a variety of levels. Mrs. Boxer's wish to establish a collaborative culture needed to take account in particular of the impact upon

teachers' attitudes towards involvement in three areas of professional life during this period of the research:-

- Job security and teacher appraisal
- Record-keeping and assessment
- Curriculum responsibilities

I shall consider the significance of each of them in turn before exploring issues which dominated teachers during the second half of my research.

Job security and teacher appraisal

During the early part of 1992, the possibility of redundancy sat like a cloud over the staff as they continued to develop a curriculum programme for staff meetings, tidy up their broadly agreed termly plans and absorb the detail of SAT material for use in the early part of the year. (Although this was the second year of KS 1 SATs, Mrs. Ellie had taken responsibility for early years co-ordination in place of Mrs. Hemyock, who had been promoted to a headship. Mrs. Ellie was, therefore, carrying out the job of overseeing the SATs for the first time.) The regular programme of SMT, phase, team and full staff meetings continued much as before. Other in-school policy decisions were also awaiting processing at this time, agreed by staff through the school management plan compiled the previous summer (1991); these included policies for Guidance for Ancillary Staff, Coping With Disturbed Children and First Aid Procedures. The finalising of all of these matters had been delayed by the time pressure from national reforms earlier described despite the fact that in-school items had been included in the list of priorities. Nevertheless, the prospect of staff cuts dominated conversation. Although eventually a volunteer came forward before the deadline when a teacher agreed terms with the governors and LEA to accept voluntary redundancy in the following July, the prospect of job losses dominated

conversation until the matter was cleared up in May 1992. Mrs. Boxer expressed her own concerns about the teachers' worries:-

I can't seem to quell the staff's nerves over redundancy issues. One teacher commented in the middle of a sentence during the last staff meeting: 'If I'm here in September!'...I can't seem to quell their fears despite the fact that someone has volunteered for redundancy and is likely to find the terms acceptable. Even if this doesn't happen, there's always a chance that someone gets promotion and we lose someone that way. (Interview, 2/4/92, paraphrased)

As if to compound staff worries, teacher appraisal was approaching in the following September (1992), though initially involving only senior staff. Uncertainties about correct procedures and details of implementation were again evident; questions about purpose, time, legalities and consequences were numerous, despite the availability of an explanatory document for staff prepared by two teachers in advance of the meeting. It was understandable that at a time when redundancy was in the air, the prospect of appraisal was unwelcome. A comment from Mrs. Ellie (early years co-ordinator), in attempting to clarify the position, was typical of many:-

There's a need to know how the appraising is to be done. For example, is it hierarchical? Will the head appraise the deputy, the deputy appraise other SMT staff and so on? If so, we need appraisal training. (Staff meeting, 1/4/92, paraphrased)

Other responses by different staff confirmed the uncertainty as a selection of questions and comments which arose during the same meeting indicated:-

- * Will appraisal be part of professional time (i.e., the 1265 contractual hours)?
- * Will there be any system of review in a few years time?
- * There will need to be strong links between appraisers and appraisees.

- What happens if there is staff turnover? How does this affect future appraisal?
- Who has access to the outcome: the Chair, the headteacher, the LEA?
- How does appraisal link with job descriptions?
- We need to understand how INSET works to support staff development.

(All taken from staff meeting, 1/4/92)

Some of these concerns were resolved by information included in the document received from the two staff who had researched the issues. However, at the staff meeting on April 1st, convened to explore appraisal issues, Mrs. Boxer was absent and unable to supply answers to many of the questions; staff therefore agreed that a further meeting was necessary as soon as possible. In fact, due to the approaching end of term, the commitment of both teacher-governors to an outdoor pursuits' week with the top classes, and a series of minor, but significant issues which required immediate attention (including details of record-keeping, church service arrangements, and staff concerns about improving communication within the school), formal discussions about appraisal were relegated to the Summer Term.

Clarification of the implications and functioning of teacher appraisal was a protracted process. From the first mention to staff by Mr. Jamieson (6/3/91) at which he expressed his concerns over the proposals which he had heard mooted at a recent conference, the issue was discussed regularly until the end of the school year (July 1992) when members of the SMT reported back to the headteacher on behalf of the phases (6/7/92), some fifteen months later. Even then, the early years staff requested more time to establish pairings for the agreed approach using 'peer appraisal' as they were overwhelmed with other, curriculum-related concerns. There were also documents issued on behalf of the major unions representing staff within the school, giving their own cautious perspective on the issue. Despite the length of time that appraisal had been on

the agenda and its relevance for staff, teacher participation was principally one of absorbing information about the options for implementation. There was little enthusiasm for the prospect of what was perceived as inimical, despite reassurances from Mrs. Boxer that the process was part of staff development and not intended to be threatening. In the climate of impending staff cuts, this reassurance did not appear to placate teachers' anxieties.

Teachers were closely involved in discussing and debating the intricacies of appraisal and the redundancy threat, which they seemed unable or unwilling to separate. Their participation was affected by deep concerns over job security and the long-term welfare of the school. One teacher, for instance, expressed concern over the imminent birth of a second child and his need to remain in work; several of the older, more established staff nonchalantly commented that as they were the most expensive (at the top of the salary scale) they were 'bound to be the first to go'. Although it was common knowledge that Mrs. Driver had been keen to retire for some time to spend more time with her husband, teachers expended a lot of time agonizing over their futures and the worst case scenario (Bottery, 1990). A pall of gloom descended upon the staff who, despite their continued hard work and involvement in their classroom work and necessary chores, wrestled with these worrying prospects.

Record-keeping and assessment

Staff anxiety was exacerbated by a widespread lack of confidence over aspects of the National Curriculum, in particular appropriate and accurately maintained record-keeping and assessment. Their confidence had been undermined by the changes and proposed further changes by the NCC to the number and composition of attainment targets for Mathematics and Science which angered them and frustrated attempts to establish settled policies for these core areas. There was also confusion over different forms of assessment, in particular between Records of Achievement (samples of children's work selected each

year by the children for their cumulative folder carried with them throughout primary school and on to secondary) and evidence to support the teacher's formal assessment requirements (both formative, yearly and end of Key Stage). During an upper school phase meeting (28/1/92) this uncertainty was evident:-

Teacher 1: We've got £50 per teacher to work on Records of Achievement, to be spent by March 31st (1992).

Teacher 2: As the £50 is for half a day's supply, it will leave some money over, so can we buy decent boxes for the records?

Teacher 1: Do you want to meet in teams to discuss it? And where does Year 7 fit in? That's got to be a priority for High School.

Teacher 3: We all need to use the same format.

Teacher 2: We haven't yet agreed how to fill in the cards! What are we to do about the National Curriculum sheets, especially with Maths and Science Attainment Targets changing? Mind you, high schools don't use the material anyway!

(General agreement)

Teacher 2: We could spend the whole morning discussing the criteria. We need a city-wide system, then the high schools can use them properly.

Teacher 1: We have to fill in the county National Curriculum cards. Let's work with the tangible.

(General dissatisfaction with the confusion and uncertainty over the role of the temporary Rate 'A' allowance holder for Records of Achievement)

Teacher 1: Will the early years revised planning sheet be acceptable?

Teacher 3: What of the second record sheet with attainment targets?

(Field notes, 28/1/92, paraphrased)

The confused nature of this interaction epitomised the way in which staff were grappling to understand systems at the expense of spending time implementing and monitoring them. In this case, three separate records were involved: the National Curriculum card provided by the LEA; the Record of Achievement; and the regular intra-school curriculum planning sheet. Decisions about efficient implementation were handicapped by a lack of understanding about the principles which underlay the process. Despite the efforts of the temporary post holder (Mrs. Harrison), uncertainty over the Record of Achievement continued throughout the year and required further clarification during early 1993. The National Curriculum records were completed in June 1992 using the old

attainment targets before switching to the amended card incorporating the new targets for Maths and Science during 1992-93.

In addition, there was confusion amongst staff over the nature of the evidence they needed for reports to parents to support their own professional judgement over a pupil's performance. Mrs. Boxer, who had consistently asserted that evidence should be minimal and should only include samples of regular classroom activities, found that worries of teachers about justifying results to parents were deep. (At the end of the research period in Spring 1993, there were still expressions of unease from staff about the exact nature of the evidence.) During Spring 1992, the number of references to Records of Achievement that I recorded during the formal meetings I attended again highlighted the length of time that elapsed between the recognition of an issue's importance and final staff agreement about policy. The issue of securing a policy for assessment and record-keeping throughout the school had originally been indicated by staff in the summer of 1991 during the composing of the school development plan for the following twelve months. The process of consultation and decision then proceeded as follows:-

September 1991: appointment of Mrs. Harrison to the temporary post

Autumn 1991: Mrs. Harrison attends courses and consults colleagues

January 1992: LEA offers money for training staff about the different forms of assessment

January 28th 1992: Discussions in phase groups about clarifying procedures

February 3rd 1992: SMT consider options for altering format of N.C.-linked planning sheets

February 19th 1992: Full staff discussion over incorporation of new N.C.C. documents for Maths and Science into existing records

March 9th 1992: Draft document for Records of Achievement circulated to staff by Mrs. Harrison

March 17th 1992: Concerns expressed in phase meetings and subsequent governors' meeting (31/3/92) about the pressure placed upon staff due to the complexity of record-keeping procedures

April 9th 1992: During a staff development day, the first concern raised by staff during the open forum was the question of record-keeping and assessment

May 5th 1992: Use of records for pupil transfer purposes raised as problematic due to changes in the N.C. attainment targets for September 1992 (thereby diminishing the value of the records) and confusion over the amount of information required by the secondary schools

May 13th 1992: Policy statement for Records of Achievement presented to the full staff meeting by Mrs. Harrison followed by intensive discussion about detail and practicalities

May 18th 1992: During a review of the management plan for 1991/92, Mrs. Boxer stated that the policy for Records of Achievement was complete. (In fact, this did not prove to be the case as discussion continued into the next academic year.)

Towards the end of the summer, the on-going confusion about record-keeping and assessment had reached a crucial stage with the need to send reports to parents which had to include statutorily required details. In a SMT meeting (11/5/92) teachers agreed that the priority was for all staff to comply with their statutory obligations. During this particular SMT meeting, the tone of the contributions indicated that members were working under duress, exacerbated by the fact that Mrs. Boxer was out on school business and they felt unable to resolve the issue without advice or clear guidance from her. It was evident that members were worried over the possible consequences of failing to respond precisely to the directives coming from the DES (DfE):-

Teachers felt that they must cover themselves when they make a decision about transfer records, whatever the secondary schools think. They were not in a position to make a proper decision. As one teacher said: 'if someone had said 'do it' that would have been fine!' (Field notes)

The mood of uncertainty was captured by another member when she commented:-

We need to know what to do quickly! When they (LEA, government) tell us, we'll do it. Until then, we'll stick to what we've got. (Ms. Wolfendale, 11/5/92)

Other field notes from this meeting reflected the unease:-

- * Mrs. Vollo advised colleagues to continue using the LEA National Curriculum record sheet until the position was clearer;
- * Uncertain over whether the existing school report would meet the new government regulations;
- * Clarified the point that Levels of Attainment do not have to be reported to parents other than at the end of a Key Stage;
- * As the attainment targets were due to change in September 1992, previous record sheets would be of little use.

Clarification about other aspects of assessment continued until the end of the research (and no doubt beyond). However, even the Records of Achievement policy had taken over eight months to establish, a significant amount of concentrated work by the post-holder to organize and numerous meetings to clarify its position in the wider picture of assessment as a whole. Other aspects of assessment waited upon the LEA to interpret government pronouncements which teachers found ambiguous, difficult to implement and liable to alter. This evidence threw further light on the constraints affecting staff involvement in decision-making:-

1 Uncertainty about the nature and timing of National Curriculum related record-keeping, assessment and reporting.

2 Concerns over details of intra-school policies and procedures; (in this case the storage of different record cards to ensure access or confidentiality).

3 A lack of understanding of the relative importance of different procedures; (for example, their accountability in supporting their judgement about a pupils' attainment).

Staff participation was most intense in their common quest to identify priorities, clarify the existing situation and gain a suitably reassured position.

Unfortunately, time pressures due to other competing demands did not allow for the luxury of clarifying the position prior to attempting to implement a procedure on the basis of the best knowledge available; record-keeping and assessment in its different forms was already underway and teachers had to cope as well as they could despite the uncertainties.

Curriculum responsibilities

Earlier in this account, I stressed that low staff morale was in evidence for long periods throughout the period of the research and was a matter of concern to Mrs. Boxer and the governors, who all recognized the pressures under which staff were working. This was in part due to the numerous occasions when both Mrs. Boxer and the teacher-governors (Mr. Dawn and Mr. Jamieson) referred to this fact during governors' meetings. During the Spring of 1992, the governors' staffing sub-committee recommended the allocation of two additional Rate 'A' allowances and the upgrading of one current 'A' to a 'B' (third in seniority behind the headteacher and deputy). This had been made possible by additional government funding: the result of an election promise by the Conservative Party earlier that year in which all schools were guaranteed financial resources to ensure that over fifty per cent of the staff in a school were allocated allowances. Governors no doubt hoped that the extra awards would encourage staff and compensate to some extent for the turbulence they had all experienced in recent

times. Although Mrs. Boxer welcomed the new posts, she was conscious that some staff were hopeful of receiving a promoted post and 'would be very disappointed if they didn't receive one...this could create bad feeling' (informal interview, 8/6/92). She was keen that after a year of uncertainty and confusion, staff morale would be strengthened by the allowances; however, she also recognized that some teachers would have to be disappointed due to the limited number of allowances available. Eventually, governors accepted her recommendation that the posts would be allocated for areas that were not subject-specific, namely, in the areas of (a) home-school liaison and marketing, and (b) whole school assessment and record-keeping. The first of these reflected the urgent need to attract more pupils as a means of offsetting any further redundancies (see above), and second the consequence of confusion over the assessment issue that had been evident during the past eighteen months. Accordingly, Mrs. Boxer and the governors decided that these must take priority over subjects for which there was no allowance holder (English, Music, Art, P.E., Geography). This decision meant that a teacher with current oversight for any of these subject areas was less likely to be considered for the non-subject post. In fact, the disappointment was severe for those who were not offered the allowance, and resulted in understandable expressions of dismay from some staff who were overlooked. A few teachers openly complained that their efforts to develop their particular curriculum area over the years had been disregarded and expressed dissatisfaction with the procedures over the awarding of allowances. Mrs. Boxer later informed me that one teacher had formally complained about the procedures, in particular the governors' failure to advertise internally and hold formal interviews. In fact, Mrs. Boxer had insisted that each member of staff be considered in turn by the governors before the allowances had been allocated. Although the teacher was eventually reassured that an appropriate procedure had been followed, the school climate during the

second half of the Summer Term was characterised by unease over the decisions, doing little to enhance the collaborative ethos.

This regrettable situation was only one example of the dilemmas facing the headteacher and governors as they sought to implement government policy and enhance curriculum leadership throughout the school. Despite having the opportunity to reward some teachers financially, the governors had been placed in a difficult position:-

- * If they appointed on the basis of subject leadership (say, in Geography), there was really only a single choice of candidate, namely, the person currently responsible for that subject on a non-allowance basis.
- * If they did not appoint on a subject-specific basis, (such as assessment and record-keeping) it would appear that they were failing to acknowledge the work carried out by the standing curriculum leader.

Ironically, the eventual allowances for non-subject based responsibilities appeared, to some extent, to have been a result of the pressures from staff for clarification and information over issues like assessment and parental rights, as their high profile over the previous eighteen months had inevitably brought them to the forefront of governors' attention. Nevertheless, at the SMT (22/6/92), Mrs. Boxer admitted that she was 'very concerned about morale and the possible consequences for jobs' (Field notes).

Additional constraints upon involvement

The examples described above (job security and appraisal; record-keeping and assessment; curriculum responsibilities) were key contributory factors to teacher anxiety and illustrated that their involvement in decision-making was, in part, affected by government policy and the way in which school governors responded to the directives. As a further complication, staff absence was high

during Spring Term 1992; several meetings were cancelled as a result and the agenda for future meetings further cluttered. The impact of the redistribution of the absent teachers' classes between neighbouring classes compounded the problem. Mrs. Boxer initially tried to cover classes herself to avoid splitting them, but became increasingly busy with other administrative duties and was unable to provide this service. The situation was exacerbated by the long-term illness of one teacher and the school secretary. The latter proved to be the more serious of the two, for the transference of records and payments to a computerised system relied heavily upon the secretary's expertise. Although a replacement was eventually found, the intervening weeks were difficult ones as Mrs. Boxer absorbed much of the extra load herself.

In addition, her out-of-school commitments continued to occupy a considerable amount of time. For instance, across the academic year, she was out of school for about twenty percent of the school day on average (Hayes, 1993); that is, about one full day per week (see Appendix 10). Mrs. Boxer's busyness made her less available to staff at a time when they were labouring with the demands described earlier. Some staff with subject responsibilities (Geography, History, Maths and Science) also spent time out of school on curriculum working parties and liaising with secondary colleagues on the development of city-wide transfer policy documents. Others were out of school for SATs training (Mrs. Ellie and Mrs. Farmer); Mrs. Boxer and Mr. Jamieson spent a further two days on appraisal training. On one occasion (11/2/92), Ms. Wolfendale, a member of the SMT, found herself 'in charge' of the school at 3.30 p.m. as every other member of the SMT was absent for one reason or another. She admitted to feeling poorly equipped to cope with this responsibility and uncertain about her own powers in such a situation. The problem of headteacher and deputy absence, and the subsequent lack of an accountable member of staff, prompted Mrs. Boxer to express a wish for a third-tier post in school to allow for such occasions (finally fulfilled in September 1992).

As the academic year passed, major issues did not always receive sufficient attention due to the large number of immediate and pressing matters such as:

- * decisions about details for the approaching parents' evening, allocation of children to classes for the next academic year (1992-93) and distribution of resources for different curriculum areas and classes;
- * the reorganization of Music teaching in the early years, Maths in the upper school and redistribution of Mrs. Driver's other commitments when she left at the end of the term;
- * the onset of National Curriculum Music, Art and P.E. in September 1992.

Consequently, staff involvement in the decision-making process continued to be subject to a number of constraints:-

- * A lack of time to thoroughly air issues, reflect upon their implications and respond appropriately.
- * The unavailability of the headteacher or other colleagues to offer informed advice about implementing the reforms.
- * A deep-seated concern to respond to statutory obligations while ensuring that regular commitments were maintained.
- * The need for a teacher to balance responsibilities to her own class alongside single subject leadership and whole-school policy involvement.

Pressure on time frequently resulted in hurried discussion rather than thoughtful deliberation, and anxiety over clarifying a position sometimes led to the point where staff were happy to be told rather than be consulted (e.g., in the SMT meeting, 11/5/92); lack of accurate information about professional development issues such as appraisal increased the pressure on staff who were already

complaining about work overload. Certainly, Fullan's comment that 'the single most frequently cited barrier to implementation is lack of time' (1982a, p. 293) was confirmed constantly.

Increasingly, though, a new dimension was apparent; namely that lack of time for deliberation and debate, and accompanying information overload and uncertainty, appeared to be leading to a position whereby teachers were more willing to relinquish consultation opportunities for the certainty gained through being told specifically what they must do. The gradual yielding of this right pointed to the insecurity felt by the staff and was represented by one of the teacher-governors at a governors' meeting when the deputy referred to the

low morale...feelings of being undervalued...When you've had so many setbacks, you become punchdrunk...you're just an empty shell. (Mr. Jamieson, 20/5/92)

The close level of consultation favoured by Mrs. Boxer suffered under the pressure of responding to the many and varied requirements. There was often insufficient time or certainty to permit close concentration on any one area of need without neglecting others, and meeting the implementation dates for national reforms was a constant source of concern for the headteacher and her staff. These difficulties were compounded as the school year approached its end.

The closing weeks of the school year

The school year 1991-92 had been a busy one for all teachers. Two new staff had been appointed for September 1991, plus an internally appointed early years co-ordinator and a multiplicity of changes had affected curriculum planning and teaching. Redundancy and appraisal issues had raised new fears. Time out of school and other absences had created additional pressures as well as opportunities. Concerns over the quality of internal communication, staff

morale and team spirit had been important considerations both for Mrs. Boxer and governors, who had sometimes been torn between responding to statutory requirements and deferring to staff preferences. With the end of year approaching, (traditionally a busy time for teachers), the intensity of the consultation, deliberation and decision-making process seemed to intensify. For instance, in the SMT meeting (29/6/92), the following agenda and discussion was noted:--

1 *Appraisal*: the need for LEA support; identifying peer-appraisers among the staff; releasing adequate time for appraisal; organizing training for deputies and senior staff. There was still a need to clarify appraisal procedures and continue to reassure staff.

2 *School Management Plan*: the responses showing staff priorities for 1992-93 needed collating, analysing and examining in the light of other statutory obligations.

3 *School Fete*: a query from staff about the use of Directed Time (the 1265 contracted hours) for this purpose. Staff attendance at the fete had traditionally been strong; concerns were expressed by Mrs. Boxer that any diminution could adversely affect parent-teacher relationships.

4 *Reports*: suggestions about a revision of LEA reports cards were considered. The new rate 'A' allowance holder for this area would be left to liaise with the new Rate 'B' and produce appropriate recommendations.

5 *National Curriculum documentation*: Music, Art and P.E. were due to be implemented in September 1992, but there had not been time for staff development or updating of any documentation. It was agreed that the implementation of Music, Art and P.E. would require sensible handling, as this extract from the meeting (29/6/92) suggests:

Mrs. Boxer: It's better to let teachers 'have a go' instead of trying to cobble something together.

Mrs. Vollo: As well as that, there are three Key Stages to consider, so whole-staff discussion of documents is a waste of time.

It was agreed rather airily that individual teachers would liaise independently with the curriculum leaders to discuss details. This approach was, in part, a response to previous experience with responding promptly to directives only to discover that subsequent changes superseded the initial version, thereby rendering the earlier discussions obsolete. The SMT had learned from these experiences and were all more careful before launching into a major new initiative.

6 *Her Majesty's Inspectorate*: an inspection of Equal Opportunities throughout the school would take place before the end of term. Notably, the headteacher was already committed to another meeting on that day and would not be present; other staff were away on courses at that time.

(Based on field notes, 29/6/92)

The diversity of the agenda characterised this meeting as with so many others. Some items were concerned solely with maintenance or proximal tasks ; others with interpreting externally imposed change ('Higher Order', Kallos & Lundgren, 1979; Duignan, 1990); yet others were concerned with future policy issues. Typically, time was short: despite the complexity and mixed composition of the items, some of which required specific decisions, and the end of the school year was less than a month away leaving little room for manoeuvre. The intensity of this and other SMT meetings in June and July, and the subsequent urgency at subsequent staff meetings to resolve issues before the end of the term, confirmed that at a busy time of year teachers' involvement was unrealistically demanding. Informal discussions with a group of five staff shortly after this SMT meeting indicated that there was some dismay about the perceived impracticality of coping with so many diverse tasks. The teacher

responsible for Music (Mrs. Stone), a subject to be implemented in September 1992, was anxious that the National Curriculum demanded specialist knowledge unfamiliar to her colleagues and yet she, as curriculum leader, had 'not had opportunity to absorb the details of the documentation, yet is expected to advise staff' (29/6/92). Two other teachers (Miss Cain and Mrs. Harrison) referred to similar problems with implementing Geography in which the terminology was obscure or contained concepts which demanded a depth of understanding which they struggled to master. The group of staff were unanimous in their assertion that there had not been any chance for curriculum leaders in Music, Art or P.E. to attend training courses to gain information about the new documentation. These concerns were mentioned in addition to worries over reports, the school fete, parents' evenings and 'tying up the loose ends of the year'. Several staff were uncomfortable that the heavy content of the National Curriculum was intruding into their approach to teaching, particularly as the last few weeks of the term had to be spent rapidly covering the gaps left in the teaching programme during the past year. Thus: 'I feel that my creativity is being reduced as I always have to get back to the content' (Mrs. Stone) and although most teaching was still taking place within a 'project' framework, the links were becoming more tenuous, with the gradual move towards specific subject teaching. All five staff also agreed that there was far too much content in Key Stage 2, making excessive demands upon them to cover the content despite the impact it had upon their preferred method of teaching.

The concerns of these upper school teachers over reduced opportunities for demonstrating their creativity in classroom practice and an excessive workload were mirrored by an early years teacher, Mrs. Farmer, in a separate informal conversation when she outlined her week (8/7/92) only a fortnight before the end of term. This schedule was even more intense than one encountered by Mrs. Vollo some six months earlier in the relatively tranquil middle of the school year. Thus:-

- * Monday lunchtime: team meeting to list children who had only reached level 1 in the SATs and offer reasons (for use by the headteacher when informing governors).
- * Tuesday lunchtime: early years phase meeting.
- * Tuesday after school: weekly extra-curricular activity (Computer Club).
- * Wednesday after school: full staff meeting.
- * Thursday lunchtime: team meeting to discuss planning.
- * Thursday after school: team meeting to discuss next year's curriculum.
- * Friday lunchtime: team meeting to tidy up any loose ends in planning.

The concept of 'decisional saturation' (Alutto & Belasco, 1972) was markedly relevant for Mrs. Farmer, who claimed that all staff were equally busy. Although this was an unusually hectic time, Mrs. Farmer spoke of her concern over the effect that the schedule was having on her teaching due to the continual burden of formal meetings. This intensity had also led to a shortage of opportunities to talk informally to other staff, a habit seen by her as essential for the maintenance of morale and exchanging ideas and information. The burden of formal planning affected the important coping strategy using the comfort of close relationships with trusted colleagues, thereby reducing the opportunity to offload and share concerns.

Ironically, Mrs. Boxer's absence through illness during the penultimate week of the school year led to the abandoning of most formal meetings and subsequent relief from this particular pressure. However, staff absence from school plus other work pressures also resulted in a number of important pieces of unfinished business, of which two examples were notable:-

1 The staff were not formally notified of governor decisions concerning the new allowances for September 1992 until very late in the term. Teachers who were

disappointed in failing to receive one of the allowances (e.g., Mrs. Northern) did not have opportunity to talk through the implications of this with the headteacher or a governor.

2 The constitution of the SMT for September 1992 was unresolved, bearing in mind that more than half the staff would theoretically be eligible to join from the beginning of the Autumn Term because of their allowance-holder status.

Teacher's experiences throughout these latter days of the school year suggested that rational forms of decision-making foundered when faced with the realities of time pressures, fatigue and deadlines. Established procedures were inadequate to deal with situations in which delay, shortage of accurate information and a plethora of documentation interfered with the process of dissemination and making firm decisions. The collaborative climate promoted by Mrs. Boxer and reflected in the invitations and opportunities for staff to participate, and the openness of discussion in governors' meetings, suffered as a result of this pressure. Staff were too involved in their own designated tasks and role as classroom teacher, too uncertain about the important priorities, and too worried about unresolved issues to be churlish over the niceties of opportunities to be involved or consulted. They were principally concerned that decisions should be taken by 'someone' and communicated clearly and concisely to them so that they could get on with the job of teaching and implementing the reforms successfully.

Both staff and governors were burdened: angry about imposed government reforms, anxious to gain reassurance, concerned to safeguard the school's reputation, protect their own futures, and fulfil their statutory obligations and professional responsibilities. The last few weeks of the school year only served to intensify the frustration and heighten concern about the prospect of

facing the start of the following term inadequately prepared for the latest curriculum implementation.

Academic Year 1992-93: forms of teacher involvement

The Spring and Summer Terms 1992 were characterised by a heavy workload and sense of frustration on the part of staff and governors that too many decisions were needed without adequate time for reflection and debate.

However, the start of the new academic year (1992-93) demonstrated that, given space and opportunity, a great deal could be achieved in a short period. During the two staff development days prior to the first day of term (1/9/92 and 2/9/92), in conjunction with an LEA adviser, a number of key issues were raised and addressed, including:-

- * What do we want for our children?
- * How can the school's strengths be marketed?
- * What forms of communication within the school need strengthening?
- * How can consistency be achieved between phase groups?
- * What should be the school policy in terms of resources?
- * How can curriculum leaders gain a school-wide view of the subject or area?
- * How can staff curriculum strengths be more widely shared?

Discussion of these issues resulted in free ranging debate about the priorities and a strong measure of agreement about appropriate action. In particular, staff accepted that St. Kerensa's was characterised by its widely recognized 'caring' image, claiming that this fact was commented upon by many parents, social workers and visitors. The staff perceived the challenge as being how they could 'spread the good news' at a time when pressure of work was already severe. They agreed that the future success of the school depended, in large measure,

on the success of liaison with parents and prospective parents. As such, the newly formed Rate 'A' for this purpose (Mrs. Harrison) was a significant element in achieving the desired goals.

The difficulties encountered by staff over the large number of regular weekly meetings was also addressed. A number of teachers commented that opportunities for open discussion about immediate issues had become squeezed out by the imposition of statutory obligations. The unsatisfactory practice of meeting at lunchtimes, sometimes leaving staff ill-prepared for the afternoon session, was also raised. The ubiquitous concerns about the tendency for information and discussion to be replicated across the different weekly meetings were firmly re-stated; one SMT member seemed to meet with general approval in lamenting the fact that she often heard the same thing discussed on three separate occasions (SMT, phase and full staff meetings). There was general agreement among teachers who were not members of the SMT that it would be helpful for the whole staff to hear the full details of an issue rather than (as one described) a 'diluted version'. Several teachers made comments to the effect that 'if it concerns all of us, we should all hear it'. However, the issue was less clear cut; Mrs. Boxer reminded staff that the original decision to use a SMT/phase/whole staff procedure was to avoid teachers wasting time in meetings that dealt with topics that were not relevant to them. Nevertheless, she agreed that the rigidity of the process acted against the best interests of busy teachers and had absorbed crucial planning and informal discussion time. Consequently, it was agreed that phase meetings would become optional and only be called as and when considered appropriate. Mrs. Boxer stressed that if informal team meetings were held, any decisions or important details must be communicated to her, and any matters likely to affect the whole staff must be raised at a full staff meeting.

An important feature of this discussion was agreement that the systematic nature of regular meetings must not prevent staff from organizing and taking

ownership of the agenda. It was accepted by all staff that motivation was central to a successful outcome, leading to enhanced commitment. In addition, it was agreed that the composition of the SMT was unsatisfactory as the inclusion of the new Rate 'A' members would make it too large and unwieldy. (In fact, composed of over 50 per cent of staff.) Mrs. Boxer's proposal that a new 'streamlined' version, consisting of herself, the deputy and the newly appointed Rate 'B' holder should replace the old one was accepted without resistance (see Appendix 2, 'Options for Senior Management Team Formal Structure 1992-93'). Subsequently, informal discussions with allowance holders indicated that there was relief that they would have one fewer meetings to attend each week. It was agreed that the new system would be trialled for one half-term and reviewed (Autumn 1992).

Finally, an action plan, drawn up as a result of staff consultation during the previous term, was confirmed. Priorities for Autumn 1992 had to include Music, Art and P.E. as the implementation period had begun for Key Stages 1 to 3. In addition, the issue of consultation and decision-making had been raised by a majority of staff as a key matter (due partly, perhaps, to the influence of my research). Other items included: use of premises; health and safety; review of Science and Design and Technology; staff development and in-service provision; and Information Technology, especially computers in the classroom. Two other on-going affairs were important: (a) clarifying details of the appraisal process; (b) allowing the newly appointed Rate 'A' holder to initiate assessment and record-keeping procedures.

By the end of September 1992, many of these priorities were being addressed, despite the unexpected arrival of a new proposed LEA Religious Education syllabus which required consideration by staff and governors (see below). The long-running issue of where to locate the central library was resolved (23/9/92), when a compromise solution was agreed whereby it was

placed within the upper part of the 'central area', suitably restructured. Although accepted in practice, the decision was not fully implemented during the time of the research (April 1993) due to numerous practical problems associated with the construction of dividing walls and a lack of resolve due to 'second thoughts' about the expenditure and time involved. This was an interesting example of the way in which practicalities could affect the implementation of a resolution and illustrated that developmental planning was inconsistent and affected by the turbulent environment that was 'neither wholly chaotic nor entirely stable' (Wallace, 1992, p. 156). Nevertheless, efforts to implement the agreed action plan continued: for instance, Health and Safety policy was dealt with in detail during a full staff meeting (30/9/92); concentrated discussion about assessment and record-keeping began in October and continued throughout the term and into 1993. Work by the newly appointed allowance holder resulted in a new initiative for home-school liaison, resulting in a letter circulated to staff by the post-holder:-

During the half-term, I shall be producing a newsletter which will reflect the work that has been going on across the school this term. The newsletter will also advertise forthcoming events and report on others that have taken place; e.g., fund-raising, etc. Please could I have any children's work... writing, drawings (to be photocopied) to include... and anything that you think should be mentioned. I will need the items by Friday, 23rd October 1992. Thankyou.
(Mrs. Harrison)

During the latter stages of the research (Spring Term 1993), the intensity of externally imposed requirements in addition to the weight of carrying through the internal management plan continued to burden staff and governors. Thus, between January and March 1993, in addition to the on-going business referred to earlier, the following matters were considered during staff meetings:-

- * A review of Special Needs within the school caused through the local authority's insistence that allocation of monies for that purpose (other than

children with a special needs 'statement') had to be justified by the school with specific reference to the particular needs of the individual children involved (Staff meeting, 24/2/93). Field notes for this meeting refer to the high level of staff interest; followed up in phase groups and further discussed in (Staff meeting, 3/3/93).

- * New arrangements for teachers' pay and conditions, including the abolition of 'incentive allowances' and replacement by a single pay 'spine'.
- * Implementation of a revised National Curriculum Technology document. (Staff meeting, 20/1/93)

During the same period of time, full staff meetings also included 'in-house' items such as planning a fete, liaison with the parent-teacher association about appropriate expenditure of monies, organizing the use of school premises for local elections, allocation of students to classes, clarification of procedures for pupils arriving late to school, new advice from the local authority about exclusions of pupils, storage of resources, and the practicalities of how individual classes would utilise the newly established central library area. Further issues were related directly to the internal school management plan, though in each case influenced by current DfE initiatives:-

- * Clarification of the school policy for Records of Achievement, including the need for evidence to support teacher-assessments and general evidence of progress using representative samples of work agreed through a conferencing procedure with individual children (Staff meetings, 13/1/93; 3/2/93).
- * A consideration by all staff of a document prepared by the co-ordinator for home-school links (Mrs. Harrison), deputy and headteacher (Staff meeting, 27/1/93).

- * On-going discussion about appraisal using a draft document prepared by the deputy and Mr. Dawn clarifying the specific aspects of performance which would form part of the process.

Discussion about multicultural policy (an issue emerging from the previous summer's staff development plan for 1992/93) was an example of the uncertainty over the responsibilities of school, LEA and governors (Pascall, 1987; Golby, 1992). The LEA policy was presented at the meeting (3/3/93) by the LEA's advisory teacher for multicultural education and staff were asked for their comments. However, this was the first sight of the document for most of them and they had little opportunity to absorb the detail (although there was common espousing of the principles outlined by the advisory teacher). She recommended the use of the LEA document which would, she claimed, meet the legislative requirements. In addition, she stressed the need to positively promote multicultural education throughout the school, make a specific and determined effort to examine any prejudice existing within the school, and, in this context, agree acceptable standards of behaviour for children and adults. Staff were also reminded that Equal Opportunities formed part of the new inspectorial arrangements. The urgent need for an agreed policy thereby raised a number of practical challenges:-

- * Should current documentation be altered or started afresh?
- * Were there any resource implications?
- * How would governors be involved?
- * What would happen if the governors and staff disagreed?

This last question had its roots in previous discussions about the special nature of a church-aided school in which governors were responsible for Religious Education. The Foundation Governors were anxious to retain influence over the

teaching of R.E. and argued that any policy for Multicultural Education should not be confused with it. At the governors' meeting on 30th March 1993, a compromise was accepted: the LEA policy would be used specifically as a resource in conjunction with the existing aided schools' guidelines. In addition, the Foundation Governors would consider Key Stages 1 and 2 in turn and add diocesan produced material in due course.

However, this decision meant that swift action was necessary, for implementation would begin in September 1993 and for the staff to have opportunity to absorb any additional material from the diocese, they would require the amended document during the Summer Term (that is, within the next few weeks). The practicalities facing the governors were considerable as Easter was imminent and a meeting of the appropriate sub-committee could not be convened for some time due to standing commitments. Someone had to be responsible for contacting the diocesan education officer, organizing distribution of materials, allowing time for governors to reflect upon it, convening meetings, and so forth. Importantly, the proposed changes had to be written up in a form which would allow for teachers to interpret and implement them satisfactorily. It was understandable that staff were weary of a succession of innovations over the years which had not allowed them adequate time to properly absorb new material before being expected to teach it according to National Curriculum criteria. The teacher-governors present at the meeting (30/3/93) pointed this out and earnestly requested that the receiving of last-minute directives be avoided.

This example, involving the Foundation Governors in an unusually direct way, indicated the dilemmas existing when a wide variety of people became involved in the consultation process. In this case, the whole staff (particularly the Section 11 teacher); the headteacher, deputy, the Rate 'B' holder and others (responsible for taking school assembly and organizing church festival occasions); the Foundation Governors (specifically the Rector); and the LEA adviser, were all affected (Pascall, 1987). From field notes:-

Reviewing or considering a policy is not always straightforward. Despite agreement amongst staff (apparently) over a need to develop the multicultural policy, a variety of factors had to be taken into account: the view of governors in this church-aided school; wording of the policy; putting it into practice; separation from R.E.; development of a whole-school ethos; parental views (perhaps); resource implications such as suitable literature; demands of the National Curriculum; inspection; further development of the curriculum.
(Field notes, 3/3/93)

This example indicated that teacher involvement with decisions about policy and implementation continued to demand a great deal from them in terms of commitment in attending meetings, contributions to discussions and responses to documentation. Yet some decisions remained beyond their grasp, despite the fact that they had the responsibility to implement them and were accountable for the learning outcomes.

The continuity in staffing between 1991/92 and 1992/93 (other than Mrs. Driver's voluntary redundancy and the long-term absence of Mrs. Stone) was a much needed element of stability in the turmoil which had characterised teachers' lives throughout the previous few years. However, there were still matters to resolve. For instance, teachers with new responsibilities took time to adjust to their role and some curriculum areas were not adequately monitored due to staff absence or lack of expertise (notably Music). Complex matters like appraisal, assessment, and home-school liaison required time for papers to be prepared, discussed, reviewed and modified alongside the new challenges such as the R.E. policy and Sex Education. The demands left little time for reviewing existing curriculum policies (such as Science and Information Technology). Little wonder that one teacher-governor commented that 'Not everything imposed by central government is always implemented in the full spirit of the Act' (Mr. Jamieson, 30/11/92). Even assuming that all staff were fully committed to a position, practicalities made it difficult to keep pace with the variety of

innovations. A remark by Mr. Dawn during interview reflected other teachers' informal comments:-

We really need a breathing space. It's been 'tin helmet weather' for so long with the changes whizzing over the parapet and having to cope with them. (Interview, 30/11/92)

Some of the areas identified by staff for the development plan had, necessarily, to be picked up later in the year. Thus, in the Spring Term: assessment and record-keeping/creative arts/ review of multicultural policy/ Special Needs provision/ parental involvement/ community liaison. The Summer Term: review of implementation of National Curriculum Music, Art and P.E./ review of assessment procedures/ review of school organization. By April 1993, priorities for 1993/94 were already being identified by staff and included a review of the Science policy, Information Technology, Design Technology, and the development of Listening Skills, as the planning cycle continued to unfold.

Mrs. Boxer was acutely aware of many of the difficulties which accompanied the statutory demands and rapid pace of change at St. Kerensa's. In particular, she saw her own role as crucial in maintaining morale and good relationships among staff, overseeing implementation of the National Curriculum, managing the delegated budget, retaining close links with the local authority, governors and community, and presenting a positive image for the school through successful marketing. (For further details of Mrs. Boxer's perspective, see next chapter.) As I indicated earlier, progress towards policy development and implementation was sometimes laborious or hindered by unexpected delays (Becher, 1989; Newell & Wood, 1990). Further, Mrs. Boxer's concern to involve staff and governors closely in policy development produced a wider consultation base but in doing so activated a range of differing perspectives and philosophies. Her aim of fuller involvement to achieve a

consensus resulted in 'the influence of personal as well as official interests that were undoubtedly present when some decisions were made' (Wallace, 1992, p. 159). Jones (1985) made a similar point, stressing the fact that any group decision did not negate the responsibility or rights of individuals; a point well understood by the teachers at St. Kerensa's.

During the preceding part of my thesis I have tried to develop a theoretical framework which largely depended upon my own observations at meetings and numerous encounters with teachers and the headteacher. I have attempted to show that the large number of innovations, the multiplicity of changes and the sometimes laborious processes involved in moving from proposal to implementation, made excessive demands upon teachers and resulted in 'innovation fatigue' and 'decisional saturation'. Having spent a considerable time describing the context for teacher involvement over a period of two years and more, the following chapter uses interview data from the semi-structured interviews with teachers and with the headteacher to clarify and extend understanding of the motives underlying their involvement and role in the decision-making process.

CHAPTER 9

TEACHERS' PERSPECTIVES

Introduction

Through earlier accounts in my thesis, I claimed that the demands placed upon the staff and governors of St. Kerensa's to develop long-term plans and cope with a multiplicity of innovations while maintaining on-going commitments, proved extremely difficult to manage (Wallace, 1991b; Campbell, 1993). I attempted to show that during a rapid period of change, rational planning (reflected, for instance, in school development plans) competed with unanticipated requirements (many externally imposed) and the need for rapid decision-making in response to short-term necessities, and this prevented adequate time for reflection and deliberation. In addition, the extent of collaboration among staff pointed not only to the headteacher's desire to achieve collegiality but numerous organizational practicalities and variation in teachers' willingness to participate. Hargreaves (1992b) points out that the ringing endorsements of collegiality which are argued, for example, by Mortimore et al (1988) as positively affecting school effectiveness, and by Fullan (1991) as a way of securing effective implementation of externally introduced changes, require closer scrutiny, from which two issues are significant:

- (a) the difficulties teachers experience in finding time to work together;
- (b) the unfamiliarity that many teachers have with the collegial process and its demands, expectations and opportunities (also Campbell, 1985; Nias, 1987).

Hargreaves also warns about making unwarranted assumptions:-

In our headlong rush to manage collegiality, it therefore seems important that we first understand its meaning...questions about the meaning of collegiality lead, inexorably, to questions about who guides and controls (it)...about its micropolitics (1992b, p. 82)

However, Nias et al (1989) found that in many primary schools the majority of staff espoused the same beliefs and some groups built a shared culture which exercised a powerful effect upon its members. However, although there was sometimes unanimity about a basic principle, there were varied interpretations about the process for achieving agreed goals. Evidence from my case-study indicated that although teachers often referred, for example, to the need to 'put children first' and provide security for them, there were disagreements about the degree of insistence with which this should occur, some favouring a firm, no-nonsense approach (notably the upper phase staff), others inclined to favour a more conciliatory pattern (notably the early years staff). To 'espouse the same set of beliefs' did not in itself ensure a consensus over appropriate methods of implementation. The outworking of those principles was constrained by individual interpretation of any decision and the desire or pressure to maintain group solidarity within interest sets or constituencies.

Furthermore, the rapid pace of change often demanded a pragmatic approach that required compromises between philosophy and necessity. For instance, an internal curriculum document was sometimes drawn up very hastily by a single member of staff due to time limitations and the 'agreed policy' subsequently used throughout the school despite minimal consultation. This haste led to the need for later adjustments and consequently, additional meetings, discussions and decisions, but was an inevitable consequence of an over-busy schedule. Such was the reality of school life. Teachers appeared to accept that the person responsible for the curriculum area was normally best placed to produce the policy and were relieved that they did not have to be involved in the process other than to confirm their approval. Although discussions over detail (such as resourcing) often absorbed time, broad curriculum policies were often accepted at face value.

Teachers' priorities

Teachers at St. Kerensa's were anxious to retain their professional autonomy over freedom to interpret decisions for their situation; typically, teachers commented informally that 'policies were one thing, implementation another'. They were willing to accept a policy proposal without consultation providing they felt that they could retain some flexibility in its interpretation. Thus:-

We make decisions among ourselves; we don't feel we have to go to the top for that. So a lot of decisions are taken informally. We say: 'Down here this or that doesn't happen'. (Interview, Miss Cain, 17/6/91)

Things in school are not closely enough defined. There's too much uncertainty. I want more prescription, boundaries, within which I can exercise my autonomy and discretion. (Interview, Mrs. Northern, 3/9/91, paraphrase)

Mr. Dawn (a teacher-governor) accepted the teacher's right to modify original curriculum decisions with regard to the classroom context, but added that teachers needed to remain 'true to themselves' as professionals and as people:-

As a caring professional one has to modify what one does in the classroom to suit the environment in which we're teaching. If we were trying to work in a way which we simply couldn't because we didn't agree with the way in which we were being asked to work, stumbling ahead blindly, carrying out directives when your heart wasn't in it, this would clearly affect your teaching and lead to negativism coming back from the children. It would lead to children getting the wrong messages from us as adults. I believe quite strongly that you have to be true to yourself as a human being, as a professional and as a teacher in what you do. (Interview, 18/7/91)

However, teachers were anxious that for non-curricular issues in particular, once a decision had been made, all staff should abide by it as failure to do so could lead to difficulties. This was particularly true for decisions affecting the treatment of children. For instance, I have referred to the fact that one small but important organizational issue which concerned staff throughout the research was the rule governing the times that children were allowed inside the building during the breaktime. Due to different interpretations of the rule by staff, some children

were 'playing off' one teacher against another; gaining permission from certain teachers to remain inside despite being denied the privilege by another. This had resulted in a number of incidents involving damage to property and minor theft. Feelings ran strong during both formal and informal discussions of these matters. During one full staff meeting (12/6/91) when issues of establishing and enforcing a consistent policy for control and discipline were raised, there was a high level of teacher participation and they agreed that (a) all staff had responsibility for maintaining discipline throughout the school; (b) there had to be a common policy; (c) staff must be perceived by children as having a 'united front' (Field notes). Individual freedom to interpret curriculum policy was one thing; issues of control and discipline, which affected everyone in the school, were quite another.

Putting children's interests first necessitated an unambiguous and realistic policy for control and discipline that would assist teachers in their ability to work effectively. The staff's determination to place the children's welfare ahead of other considerations was a regular and powerful factor in their attitude towards the development of school policy and their involvement in staff discussions. On every occasion that the needs of a particular child or group of children emerged during a meeting, there was, without exception, a surge of conversation and contributions from the teachers. Most staff made specific reference to the centrality of their class-teaching role during interview and their concerns for the children. For instance:-

I enjoy working at this school. The teachers here are motivated by a concern for the children and not, for instance, as a way of getting back at somebody else on the staff. I'd welcome clearer rules and regulations concerning child behaviour. (Interview, Mrs. Northern, 3/9/91, paraphrased)

There are times when you have to prioritise whatever the issue is and live your life by the principles in which you believe. The one guiding principle I hold to be paramount over all else is: 'Are the children going to benefit from this?'...When it comes into the area of 'the children' or 'not the

children', the children win out every time; then after that we fight for the scraps! (Interview, Mr. Jamieson, 6/2/92)

Some of their additional responsibilities were perceived as threatening this role. An early years teacher, Mrs. Harrison, found that she was being offered leadership opportunities in being invited, for instance, to prepare steering documents for whole staff discussion:-

I'm anxious that the expectations of me as a 'management person' are growing. I didn't come into teaching for that! (Interview, 6/1/92)

This view was not exclusive to teachers in the earlier stages of their careers like Mrs. Harrison; even members of the SMT such as Mr. Jamieson were similarly motivated:-

First and foremost I'm a classteacher. I came into teaching to teach and that's my prime motivation for being here. (Interview, 6/2/92)

One member of the original SMT, Ms. Wolfendale, was so closely attached to her role as class teacher that she had not even considered herself one of the 'management' team and confessed during interview (11/2/92) that she had never thought of herself in those terms. "I always think 'Why don't they do something?' ". Another SMT member described the problems in maintaining good classroom practice while fulfilling her role as curriculum leader:-

First and foremost I'm a teacher. I'd like to think that my classroom set-up is organized well enough to allow me access to go around and do whatever task might be needed (as an allowance holder)...Yes, you do look to your class because you know them best and apply examples to your own class, your own children. (Interview, Mrs. Vollo, 21/1/92)

This reference to her class as 'belonging' to her was a sentiment expressed by virtually every teacher in some way and the use of phrases such as 'my kids' or 'my children', and the desire to ensure that they were doing well, was important to them both for the sake of the children and, it would appear, themselves. This

may be one explanation for the level of anxiety about clarifying school policy for discipline and control, as uncertainty and insecurity in this area left staff feeling vulnerable and threatened in one of the major sources of their job satisfaction. Staff involvement in discussions about other aspects of school life such as curriculum innovations were subordinate to the key issue of establishing acceptable norms for behaviour and relationships across the school. Teachers' willingness to be involved in the decision-making process depended to a significant extent upon their view of their role as class teacher. If this was seen to be under threat or circumstances appeared likely to make their job more difficult, there was a strong move towards resolving such matters before concentrating upon other decisions. However, the rapid pace of change had obliged teachers to concentrate more on aspects of whole school policy, management and curriculum leadership, leaving less time for gaining fulfilment from the part of their job that motivated them. For the headteacher, Mrs. Boxer, there was little choice but to respond to external directives, but she was sympathetic towards their love for classroom work. Indeed, she confessed on several occasions that the pressure of management tasks had made it difficult for her to carry out much teaching, a fact she very much regretted. For Mrs. Boxer, too, a great deal of fulfilment lay through success in teaching.

In part, these findings confirm previous work. For instance, Taylor et al (1974) showed that the school and its individual classrooms were separate 'zones of influence' in which teachers saw the headteacher as being in charge of the school while they were in charge of their class. Thus:-

The teacher secures his reward out of what takes place in the classroom and is not greatly concerned about how the school's curriculum is ordered...so long as he secures to himself a personally manageable and satisfying set of transactions with his pupils' (Taylor et al, 1974, p. 62).

Alexander (1984) described the class teacher's preoccupation with 'my class' and 'my children' which were protected, nurtured and defended against others

interference or criticism. Nias (1989) concluded that the high level of motivation evident among primary teachers offered an explanation for the 'high level of fatigue, stress and self-expenditure' (p.212) which they were prepared to endure to gain fulfilment in their work. She also predicted that the 1988 Education Act and accompanying national reforms could 'reduce the satisfactions of the job (especially as they relate to affective relationships with pupils, control, autonomy, influence, self-extension and self-esteem)...' (p. 213). Evidence from my case-study suggests that this warning was amply justified. Campbell's comment on this tension supported the view that it was essential that primary teachers were allowed to defend their 'zone of influence' against what they perceived to be the unreasonable requirements of the curriculum:-

Delivering the curriculum was seen as an enervating treadmill in which the teachers worked very hard but obtained little sense of achievement. The overload had carried into their personal and domestic lives and most of the teachers were experiencing stress (Campbell, 1993, p. 23)

However, teachers at St. Kerensa's were faced with a position in which involvement in decisions affecting whole-school policies was an expectation rather than a choice. Their willingness to invest a great deal of themselves in finding fulfilment through these other commitments seemed to depend in some measure upon the extent to which such involvement would enhance their ability to protect their professional integrity expressed through teaching.

The establishment of a framework for decision-making in which staff participation was actively invited was a reflection of Mrs. Boxer's preferred style of leadership. This approach assumed that staff would welcome the opportunity to become involved and would respond accordingly and their willingness to be involved had important implications for:

- (a) the extent to which consensus in decision-making was achievable, and

(b) the extent to which collegiality could be achieved through the promotion of a climate of collaboration.

However, there was evidence to support the view that although the staff, through working within a developing collaborative culture, were involved in deliberations about issues and making their own contributions of expertise and knowledge during debates and working parties, they were not necessarily affecting the final decisional outcome directly. The demands of statutory requirements frequently involved a fixed purpose or at least a pre-disposition towards one, and teachers' involvement was often restricted to methods of implementation or ways of incorporating the new requirements into existing policy and practice. At St. Kerensa's, though actively promoting involvement, Mrs. Boxer maintained her right to exercise veto over decisions when she considered that it was necessary in the best interests of the school. In particular, her concern about fulfilling statutory obligation or occasions when the prevailing mood among staff about a preferred outcome appeared likely to endanger the school ethos she favoured, caused her to resist the popular option through a firm resistance to the proposal, forceful and well informed argument during meetings or micropolitical strategies involving the persuasion of key staff to her view. Mrs. Boxer's intention to gain a consensus among participants about appropriate options paled in the light of the axiom that room for manoeuvre was limited by the extent of her own accountability. However, by publicly espousing collegiality yet influencing circumstances to bring about her preferred outcome, she was opening herself to accusations of contrivance, a reminder of Hargreaves' warning (1992b) that any collaborative culture characterized by 'a set of formal, specific bureaucratic procedures to increase the attention being given to joint teacher planning and consultation' (p. 229), and established merely to tame, control or regulate the workforce through the establishment of formal procedures, was 'contrived'. That is, attempts to offer teachers a role in joint-planning and other forms of working

together as a temporary measure to facilitate genuine co-operation was justified, providing there was the intention to move towards truly collegial relations.

Without this intention, the 'contrived collegiality' would reduce teachers' motivation to co-operate further. Hargreaves also cautioned against 'bounded collegiality' in which the teacher culture is 'made up of separate and sometimes competing groups, jockeying for position and supremacy' (p. 223); that is, any attempt to superimpose supposed collegiality on a staff lacking unity could result in dislocations and disharmony.

From my observations and interviews with Mrs. Boxer, there was no indication that she intended to restrict staff involvement to this functional role, but that the teachers' perceptions of the opportunities for involvement required clarification. From the contextual descriptions provided earlier in this thesis, participation and enthusiasm for involvement among staff was inconsistent. I therefore used data from the semi-structured interviews to develop a second order of understanding by (a) offering them opportunity to speak about the issues which were concerning them, and (b) further clarify issues which I had identified as critical in my hypothesising. The final section of my evidence, therefore, seeks to explain more fully from use of the interview data: (a) the extent to which the structures set up by Mrs. Boxer to promote collaboration and move towards collegiality were understood, interpreted and appreciated by staff, and (b) the factors influencing staff involvement.

During the semi-structured interviews, there were five issues specifically referred to by teachers which, they claimed, influenced the extent of their participation and commitment to the established decision-making process:

- * time pressures and excessive involvement;
- * past experience of indecision;
- * a belief that the decision had already been made;

- a feeling that staff efforts and opinion were not valued;
- concern over the headteacher's reaction.

I shall consider each of these in turn.

Time pressures and excessive involvement

I have referred on many occasions to the consequences of severe time pressures upon the staff of St. Kerensa's School. This resulted in them monitoring their time usage closely and, in some cases, making specific decisions about priorities. The extent to which all staff were consciously attempting to monitor their use of time is beyond the scope of this research; however, decisions about time-led priorities undoubtedly influenced teacher involvement. Amongst the factors raised by teachers during interview and informally, the issue of 'time' was always mentioned. Thus, from a highly experienced teacher, Miss Cain:-

The time factor is a problem. We can't discuss things in enough detail. We need regular 'wide' staff meetings, little and often. Sometimes it's a month before we have a real get-together. There's such a backlog of things to talk about, you can't cover it. (Interview, 17/6/91)

And from a new teacher:-

The staff throw up their hands in horror saying: 'We can't possibly do twenty things in the first term; there isn't enough time!' (Interview, Miss Young, 19/6/91)

One member of the original SMT was troubled about how difficult it had become to fit everything into a single week:-

There are the demands of mid-day meetings, senior management group, phase meetings, lunchtime clubs...they all eat into the time and make it impossible to discuss curriculum matters. Then I get all sorts of things in my pigeon hole that I don't know what to do with. (Interview, Mrs. Vollo, 17/10/91, paraphrased)

She later explained that these different responsibilities resulted in a tension between her differing roles, including her job as a class teacher, which, as I have argued, was a strong influence on the staff:-

The conflict comes through time and things overlapping. If there are things to organize, or making contact with colleagues about certain things. It's a balance. For example, leaving the classroom to make contact with other colleagues about, say, an extra meeting, rapidly collect information I need or leave a message and then back again. (21/1/92, paraphrased)

Alutto & Belasco (1972) alerted us to the danger of staff becoming so closely involved in the decision-making process that they were unable to cope with all the differing demands. The rapid pace of change witnessed throughout the period of the research affected everybody at St. Kerensa's and endangered a thorough consideration of key areas such as curriculum development and internal policy decisions. For instance, from an experienced teacher:-

There's so little time. I haven't seen the Humanities draft anyway...we've got the Science and Maths...but the Humanities is only going to be aims-purposes, and still won't be usable so that you can get your teeth into it. You know, we do this in the first year, then next year aim at this. Even the Science one is very, very broad aims and not actually the topic, and we're still doing our planning in phase groups.
(Interview, Mrs. Driver, 9/7/91)

The same inexperienced teacher who had expressed concern over fitting everything in (above) also explained how staff could become disgruntled by referring to the need for a policy document (in this case, Language) to be restructured over what she considered to be an over lengthy time-span (in excess of a year):-

For example, what are we going to do over the next three terms? And the volume of work to be covered, plus Language coming up again after spending the whole of the first term on it. It didn't go down too well. Everything became very repetitive and I was bored thinking this is quite a waste of time. From what I've heard, everyone feels the same way.
(Interview, Miss Young, 19/6/91)

Similarly:-

A lot of issues are discussed that don't really have to be; they are just sidelines. For example, the English syllabus, digested and regurgitated several times, and still we have to do it next term... Some of those meetings could be used to iron out things to do with the general running of the school, things which matter to the staff. (Miss Cain, 17/6/91)

These latter comments indicated that some teachers, at least, did not accept the need for policy documentation to be prepared, trialled and re-structured in the light of experience. For them, the issue seemed to be more clear-cut: namely, an issue should be discussed, a policy agreed, a document produced (by the curriculum leader), agreements made over implementation, then proceed to the next item. This attitude underlined the necessity for the headteacher to make explicit the probable programme of events when major policy decisions were made; in particular, the likelihood that reviews would form an integral part of the process. A further point of interest was the extent to which the newer teacher, Miss Young, appeared to be influenced by the more experienced teacher, Miss Cain. Interview data from the two of them, held only weeks apart (towards the end of Miss Young's first year) were very similar in tone and content. As the two had worked closely throughout the year with the same age-group of children, it suggested that they had grown closer in their beliefs and understanding about wider school issues. This tentative finding had to be treated with care as confirmatory evidence was difficult to find, particularly as further interview data indicated that for most staff the existence of policy documents was of marginal consideration in the daily teaching programme.

The pressure of time not only hindered close engagement with important issues but gradually reduced motivation. Coping with large numbers of competing demands meant that opportunities for reflection were few; the sheer busyness resulted in a tendency to process the demands as rapidly as possible to prevent a backlog of items. As I discussed in the last chapter, an unforeseen absence or emergency could cause severe hold-ups and place further pressure

on the system. A member of the SMT explained her regret about the adverse effect on opportunities to reflect and deal more positively with the various challenges:-

There are things in theory we talk about, and sometimes introduce because we have some directive from the Office (LEA) whereby we're obliged to discuss certain matters; but really you know in your heart that they're not going to take place, either through time constraints or constraints of resources. You simply haven't got it, either materials or human resources.

Last night in the staff meeting we were talking about appraisal, teacher appraisal; there were all sorts of pitfalls that left you wondering how on earth it was going to take place. If there isn't time to reflect on feedback or important aspects of appraisal, you wonder about the worth of things. (Interview, Mrs. Vollo, 21/1/92)

Concerns over the way in which coping with the externally imposed demands reduced the time available for discussing intimate matters also troubled one teacher:-

The problem is with the mass of material that has to be dealt with in meetings. It stops us discussing issues of a very sensitive nature. (Interview, Miss Cain, 17/6/91)

Mrs. Ellie (SMT, early years) commented informally that the number of formal meetings, and the length of the agenda, led to a reduction in the amount of time available for informal chit-chat, an important element in maintaining staff morale during stressful periods. Implementing the National Curriculum was, of itself, very demanding. Every teacher appeared to be struggling with interpreting the documentation and responding appropriately to statutory expectations that every pupil should receive their curriculum entitlement. The well publicised promotion of parental rights to gain access to detailed information about their child's progress and national controversies over the government's use of schools as distributors for associated DES publications, along with more stringent instructions concerning reports to parents, had increased anxiety considerably.

This resulted in extensive amounts of time spent by staff discussing curriculum and organizational matters in Year-teams to ensure that they conformed to these expectations. Naturally, this acted as a constraint upon sparing time and energy to attend to areas considered 'non-essential'; at a time when Mrs. Boxer was striving to increase collaboration on a wider front (i.e., with a range of school-related issues), staff were collaborating within narrower parameters, notably those issues which affected their classroom practice. For instance, despite the publication of a number of documents explaining the place of 'cross-curricular themes' (cf, NCC, 1989), all staff agreed that the burden of implementing the documented National Curriculum Programmes of Study demanded first place in their attentions. Other, associated concerns simply had to take a lower priority. The section 11 teacher, for example, was anxious that multicultural education should not be marginalised because of the National Curriculum and other time intensive demands:-

People take the National Curriculum very seriously and worry a lot about it, so they get tied up with that and marginalise the multicultural work... some teachers need a bit of a push with it. (Interview, Mrs. Josie, 16/10/91, paraphrased)

Paradoxically, one result of the time pressures and the weight of externally imposed change was not only that policy decisions were hindered and important issues rushed through, but the implementation gap between initial consideration of a curriculum innovation and classroom implementation was sometimes longer than had been anticipated. In the last chapter, I referred to the problems experienced over deadlines and the length of time required for working parties to complete their assignment and disseminate the information. These sharp deadlines adversely affected staff, who became noticeably agitated by the prospect of meeting one implementation deadline after another. This was particularly true in the earlier part of the research, though it became apparent

that during the second year attitudes became markedly more relaxed. Thus, an early set of comments from an Early Years member of the SMT:-

I think I have a view of the decision-making process. In theory we do the right things (but) there is this gap between making decisions and putting them into practice. Why it happens I don't know. It's like consensus, how what has happened is nobody's burning desire to push it through. Yet we've all agreed that it's the way to go. Maybe it's to do with time management; the gap is very frustrating sometimes. You feel, 'yes, we have decided that, it went through all the processes', but nothing's actually happened, so the need comes up again and we go through it again, and we're going over it and over it. It causes a lot of discomfort. (Interview, Mrs. Hemyock, 4/7/91)

This compared markedly with the oft-remarked 'we can't possibly do it all, so why worry' style of comment typical of the latter stages of the research. However, there were still hindrances to smooth implementation. For instance, two or three teachers referred to the delays resulting from the headteacher's own uncertainties about recommending the most appropriate course of action and the time she spent gaining advice from the LEA, governors and headteacher colleagues. When this was mentioned in a subsequent informal interview with Mrs. Boxer, she acknowledged that she did spend time checking and double-checking the appropriateness of different action but argued that where legalities or the possibility of litigation was a concern (for example, in grievance procedures, redundancy and reporting to parents), it was better to be cautious than hasty. This contrasted with the normal use of a staff consultation process for many issues and offered some insight into the limitations upon collegiality. That is, Mrs. Boxer evaluated the seriousness of a particular course of action, using the extent of necessary governor involvement and notification from LEA officers as two indicators of the care that needed to be exercised in reaching a suitable decision or deciding a course of action. In the case of the Grievance Procedure, for example, as the Chair of Governors had also received information about the importance of establishing an agreed policy, and the LEA had contacted headteachers of maintained schools advising them of the urgency of

the matter, Mrs. Boxer personally initiated proceedings. In doing so, she only informed the SMT of her intentions.

Time pressures resulted in staff saturation with the need to make decisions, suggest modifications, arrange resourcing, monitor progress, produce documentation and recommend appropriate teaching strategies to cope with the plethora of demands (Crowther, 1989). In addition to these pressures, there were other, important influences acting upon staff as they grappled with these problems, particularly the confusion over whether consultation was about reaching a consensus or merely confirming a previous intention.

Past experience of indecision

An additional concern that was seen as adding to the time pressures was repetition of the subject matter during different discussions. This was attributed by teachers to two causes:

- (a) the structure of the decision-making system (specifically mentioned during interview by four of the SMT and by several others informally);
- (b) past experience of indecision (specifically mentioned by five respondents during interview).

If the effort put into participation was to be justified, some teachers reasoned that there was a need for any time of deliberation to be followed by a definite decision and a specific plan of action which would then be instigated.

Respondents referred to the extensive time spent in discussion and reflection, including phase meetings, full staff meetings and informal gatherings, yielding too little reward. For example:-

It seems that on occasions when we have actually prioritised an issue and used some time to discuss that issue, at the end of the meeting we are faced with a chance to make a decision which doesn't actually occur. (Interview, Mr. Dawn, 18/7/91)

If there are people who don't agree with some things then nothing is done about it. It's not actually opposed, but it's not supported either, so nothing is done. We feel as if we go over the same ground too many times. (Interview, Mrs. Hemyock, 4/7/91)

This last comment offered an insight into the difficulty facing any attempt by the headteacher to develop a collegial system, namely, that offering staff the right to be involved as an 'equal among equals' had to take into account the fact that some staff might choose to abstain from specifying their opinion, leading to an impasse and 'no decision'. Although this strategy could appear initially as a 'wrecking tactic', there was some evidence to support the view that when these interviews were held (at the very end of the school year), staff were simply incapable of being decisive. Exhaustion from the year's demands and current busyness with school events had drained their stamina and led to inability to offer any useful perspective towards a decision. Repetition of previous discussions did not, therefore, sit easily alongside these pressures. Thus, from a younger member of staff:-

We spent the whole of a Tuesday phase meeting talking about some things we'd already decided! (Interview, Miss Winter, 24/10/91)

And from an experienced teacher:-

We spend a lot of time during staff meetings talking and repeating things and not really getting anywhere. Then there's the same discussion at phase meetings and SMT...some things like Records of Achievement were discussed at the beginning of term. (Interview, Mrs. Josie, 17/10/91, paraphrased)

Some weeks later in the staff room (date not recorded), an (unidentifiable) teacher's voice cried out: 'Please will someone tell us what we're meant to be doing; just tell us and we'll do it!', a plea that appeared with general grunts of approval from the other staff present. Further, although in the earlier stage of the research, indecisiveness was often blamed on the shortcomings of the school's

decision-making process, it was increasingly laid at the door of the government, the expression 'this lot' (i.e., government ministers) usually accompanying the complaint. However, in the first year or so, indecision was attributed both to school structure (and the approach of the headteacher in particular) and to external policy decisions. Thus:-

We find at these staff meetings that we want decisions to be made but the problem is at the core; we talk all around it and we never make any decisions! (Interview, Mrs. Stone, 17/7/91)

I find that many things are discussed but few are followed through...it makes me very angry. (Interview, Ms. Wolfendale, 11/2/92)

There were, however, genuine practical problems acting against decisiveness. The opportunity for staff involvement and the need for sufficient reflection and deliberation time had to be weighed against the need for a rapid decision which allowed staff time to determine how it could be implemented. Further, too much time spent on one issue meant a subsequent loss for others, some of which were of pressing interest to staff. For instance, the regular re-consideration of the English policy document, together with the complications of siting the central library, caused many respondents to complain that consultation had become a mockery owing to the delays and uncertainty, subordinating pressing issues associated with school routines, discipline and control, appropriate resourcing, and other functional matters.

This unease seemed to be due in part to an uncertainty about the purpose or status of a meeting. In the previous chapter, I made reference to the increase in numbers of formal meetings and constant demands upon staff time during lunch breaks and after school. Even in the slacker periods, the regular pattern of three or four meetings per week plus extras placed a strain on teachers who were sometimes unable to respond to one meeting before the next one demanded attention. This resulted in a number of difficulties:-

- * There was often insufficient time for reflection about issues raised in one meeting before the next one came.
- * Teachers were not always available for every meeting, resulting in an information gap and subsequent confusion about decisions; (this led to the keeping of a minute book for the main staff meeting).
- * Uncertainty over the reason that some meetings were held at all, especially if (as noted earlier) the outcome was unsatisfactory.

A teacher-governor seemed to capture the mood:-

As to a way ahead for decision-making procedures to become clearer and more easily observed by staff, I have a strong feeling that if the number of meetings were reduced, and therefore the number of variables there are in terms of staff not being at those meetings, with attendance requirements made stronger, it might mean that important meetings were extended in time, but the process of imparting information from one person to another would be made much easier. (Interview, Mr. Dawn, 18/7/91)

It was, therefore, essential that the purpose of meetings was understood in order to help teachers feel that time had been well spent. For example, as I described earlier, repetition of topic was a problem for some members of the SMT, frequently hearing the same points raised on three separate occasions per week as the issue moved from SMT to phase to full staff. Almost every teacher I spoke to conceded that a single meeting with all staff present would have prevented the 'familiarity fatigue' the staff were experiencing. The re-working of issues, though intended to provide a comprehensive approach, took insufficient account of the time pressures under which staff laboured. Teachers welcomed a situation in which a single meeting involving everyone would enable a decision to be made without resorting to what was perceived as an unnecessary duplication and wasting of precious time.

In addition to the number of meetings and the over-familiarity with repetitious issues was the length of agenda. Frequently, at SMT and full staff meetings, the agenda was unrealistically lengthy. Further, in response to staff requests for some 'open agenda' time, the key items were sometimes squeezed into a smaller time slot. Typical of this was a staff meeting (20/1/93) in which the open agenda time triggered a range of items: LEA curriculum policy; clarification over the structure of family groupings throughout the school; a mention of the new Technology document; a description of the forthcoming cuts in LEA expenditure; forecasts of numbers on roll; a reference to the prospective worker for Travellers' Children; the option to use a teacher exclusively for special needs (suggested by the LEA as a method for the school to justify expenditure); new arrangements for exclusions; problems with long-term staff sickness; proposed improvements to the playground; storage of resources (one of the longest discussions). The key item (siting of the new library) received little attention, despite the fact that it was a longstanding issue.

In practice, it was difficult for Mrs. Boxer to resist dealing with such issues. Some of them she raised herself, clearly intending to mention them and return to the substance on a later occasion; however, once the matter was out in the open, teachers' interest was aroused and they demanded more information, with the inevitable extended discussion. There were also issues concerning staff for which they needed a rapid answer or reassurance. The 'open agenda' time became the one occasion when this was possible as the headteacher was often the only person with the knowledge or perspective on the matter. Her unavailability during the day, coupled with staff busyness with their various tasks, meant that the staff meeting was one of the few places where things could be clarified and minds settled. Nonetheless, the resulting reduction in time available for deliberations or discussions about the main agenda item put extra pressure on adherence to a timetabling of issues. Consequently, sometimes

decisions were taken too rapidly before staff had opportunity to weigh up the implications; and sometimes too slowly due to the time shortage.

A belief that the decision had already been made

About half the staff interviewed stated that they felt that many matters had already been decided prior to the full meeting and that consultation was, on such occasions, spurious. In the earlier stages of the research (1991-92) this view was most strongly evident. A teacher-governor summarised the situation as follows:-

It appears to some members of the school community that...decisions are made in smoke-filled rooms and we're simply told of things that may matter to us very much in our area of the school (or may not). Sometimes people feel that things are being imposed upon them rather than what they perceive should be happening in terms of them having an input towards a decision. We're sometimes faced with what appears to be a *fait accompli*. (Interview, Mr. Dawn, 1/7/91)

On the other hand, reference was frequently made by respondents to the role of the headteacher and the power that accompanied her status, some staff accepting that Mrs. Boxer's position gave her the right to decide. For example, one of the young, newly qualified staff gave her perspective:-

Things are brought up at staff meetings; we say what we want; it goes to the head who has the final say on whether it's accepted or not...It's a bit more complicated than that; they have the management meetings; we're below the management, and ultimately it's the Head's decision. (Interview, Miss Young, 19/6/91)

And a more experienced colleague expressed a similar view:-

I don't feel that if I say anything it will make an awful lot of difference because the person at the top is ultimately going to decide anyway and decide what they want to do. So really you can change little things but not the more important. (Interview, Ms. Wolfendale, 11/2/92)

Another new teacher did not appear to find the idea of prior decisions unacceptable, but similarly viewed the consultation process as a means of modifying a previously agreed decision:-

Generally decisions are made beforehand and the talk is for understanding and modifying. (Interview, Miss Razall, 24/10/91)

Understandably, the attitude of new staff was more compliant (Gaziel & Weiss, 1990), although the impression that newer staff gave was of personal accountability for learning outcomes in their class under the final authority of the headteacher. This is not to imply that normally compliant teachers were not prepared to speak out when necessary. Ms. Wolfendale for instance, remarked:-

I think that the headteacher felt that I should have been supporting her, but I don't think it's right for me to support willy-nilly just because that's what is wanted or expected of me. (Interview, 11/2/92)

The tone of this remark seemed to reflect teachers' attitude towards education reforms in general. Morale was generally low throughout the period of the research, and although there appeared to be a general improvement as things settled and the threat of redundancy diminished, the majority of staffroom talk was 'reluctantly compliant' rather than upbeat and enthusiastic about legislative reforms.

One teacher explained how she felt that discussions were not necessarily about reaching a consensus but a way in which the headteacher and deputy could establish a measure of support for their strongly held beliefs, especially when important issues were at stake:-

With important issues, decisions may have already been made by the headteacher; she may want the decision confirmed by members of staff. The staff feel that some things have already been decided by the head, the deputy, perhaps, or a combination.

Sometimes I feel that they have been discussed and obviously made and I sense they want support for something they have strong feelings on. (Interview, Mrs. Vollo, 21/1/92)

In truth, interviews with the headteacher and deputy indicated that some issues had already been decided, but more often than not the manoeuvrability available during whole staff consultation had been severely limited by external factors, including directives and missives from the regulating bodies which restricted the number of possible outcomes, rather than by a manipulation by the headteacher to achieve her desired purpose. Some teachers implied that although they were confused and a little angry about the inconsistency between the agreement and the final documentation, they would modify the decision to suit their own circumstances anyway. This meant that their reduced commitment to discussion was compensated for by greater autonomy in implementation.

Thus, about documentation:-

Sometimes we've said we want this or this, then a few days later the draft document is out and it's not what has been said at all. (Interview, Mrs. Driver, 9/7/91)

And subsequent implementation:-

Particularly if it's something which affects the way we organize and work ourselves...I don't think that sort of thing should be imposed from above; such as your big organization and your classroom or the way you do preparation. That's an individual thing so you can't say 'this is how everybody's going to do it'. (Interview, Ms. Wolfendale, 11/2/92)

Over the period of the research, as the system of consultation was established and modified, and as staff accepted the headteacher's genuine intentions to involve them, a more open climate developed. There appeared to be a number of factors affecting teachers' growing confidence in the decision-making process as one in which decisions were not contrived:-

- (a) The restructuring of the SMT (in September 1992) and subsequent clarification of roles, thereby releasing non-SMT staff from the burden of some decisions.
- (b) The closer involvement of the co-ordinators in presenting draft proposals and informing colleagues about innovations, thereby raising the level of participation and allowing individual staff to concentrate on their strengths and interests.
- (c) A growing concern over other serious issues, especially the threat of redundancy, etc.
- (d) A considerable effort by Mrs. Boxer to improve communication by means of a weekly staff bulletin, a centrally positioned noticeboard and information given during weekly staff meetings.
- (e) A number of successful staff development days when decisions were thrashed out and given credence by a high level of staff participation in a relaxed setting.

This last factor was also significant towards re-assuring teachers that their involvement was requested because of the expertise and comment they could bring, rather than as a conciliatory gesture; for it was important to teachers that their contributions were genuinely valued.

A feeling that staff efforts and opinions were not valued

Five staff interviewed referred specifically to concerns that their efforts and opinions were not valued. One experienced teacher pointed instead to the critical media coverage as proof that her status in the community was undervalued, a criticism voiced by a number of teachers informally. Thus:-

Fundamentally, everyone wants to remain loyal to the school and do the best for the children; all the teachers are working jolly hard, but sometimes I feel that our efforts are not recognized; they are taken for

granted. The government and press don't really appreciate what we do; your feeling of self-worth is undermined all along the line. (Interview, Miss Cain, 17/6/91)

The deputy headteacher was blunt in condemning the tide of reforms:-

There's too much stuff from the DfE and LEA, in assessment for example; there's a need for continuity...There's still considerable anger (among staff) about government policy. Most people accept the National Curriculum as good, but St. Kerensa's has been hit hard by local management of schools. (Interview, 23/11/92, paraphrased)

There were also worries that the pressure of business in meetings resulted in too little opportunity for staff to contribute fully. For instance, one teacher- governor suggested that the staff's self-esteem would be improved if there were more frequent opportunities to express opinions during formal meetings:-

I'm not necessarily saying that ordinary members of staff should have a direct control over the decision-making process, but it would be nice to think that our views were being sought and that what we were saying was actually being heard in that process. I have a feeling that if we had a chance within the weekly staff meeting to do that, it would seem that everybody's place within the school was being considered more importantly than it is at the moment. (Interview, Mr. Dawn, 18/7/91)

The belief that effort was being undervalued was a source of disillusionment.

Thus, from an experienced teacher:-

I feel rather undervalued; my expertise wasn't being adequately used ...since my old Scale 2 was taken and absorbed into the new professional grade I've continued to do the tasks I did formerly, but I've never been considered for an incentive allowance. I've reached the point where I'm easing up on the (voluntary) activities I once did. (Interview, 23/9/91, Mrs. Stone, paraphrased)

The rapid pace of change caused some teachers to feel that they were being swept along on a tide of legislation and statutory requirements which acted against their best interests. The national changes in the structure of the profession and associated responsibilities had obliged the headteacher and governors to make some specific choices about staff enhancement which

inevitably resulted in difficult choices about which teachers were allocated salary enhancements. On the whole, the more experienced staff were most sensitive about this factor.

The importance of feeling trusted was also mentioned in terms of the internal decision-making mechanism, in particular the fact that the SMT met privately to discuss issues before offering the whole staff opportunity for involvement indicated to some staff that their own judgement was considered suspect or that an element of secrecy was involved. Although Mrs. Boxer explained her reasons (it was more efficient to do so in the light of the volume of external communications), some teachers believed that this reflected adversely upon their ability to discriminate between the issues that affected them and those that did not. The implications for the functioning of the SMT are discussed elsewhere; suffice it to say at this point that the private complaints about exclusivity gradually became more public, resulting in the decision by Mrs. Boxer to open SMT meetings to anyone who wished to attend. However, only two non-SMT staff did so and the pressure for a larger number of whole staff meetings and fewer 'exclusive' meetings grew stronger. This view was strongly expressed by a teacher in her first year:-

We (a group of teachers) were chatting about it the other day and we felt that there should be plenty of open staff meetings; we are in a school where we have got a lot of problems and things that are occurring. We've got children coming in and we don't know what they're like; a week later you find out that they're very disruptive; that needs to be discussed. Everything's pre-planned and you're meant to do this, this and this. It's not going to work. Last year the same kind of itinerary was worked out but it hasn't happened and we couldn't keep to it, so why follow the same policy again this year? And why discuss it at senior management level? Perhaps it would have been better to have discussed it as a whole staff first and then gone to senior management and narrowed it down and worked it out and brought it back to the whole staff? (Interview, Miss Young, 19/6/91)

This situation was difficult to resolve. Mrs. Boxer had, in part, established the management structure to prevent overload and allow age-phase staff to

concentrate on specific issues. The selection of items for whole-staff discussion presented a challenge for the headteacher as she balanced the time spent on external demands with on-going internal matters that were often of greatest immediate concern to staff. However, I have already stated on a number of occasions that the process of selecting the issues for staff consideration began well in advance of the SMT meeting because much of the selection depended upon factors completely outside the control of the teachers and largely beyond the immediate control of the headteacher. Timing of events to ensure compliance with statutory implementation times, and associated resource implications, often left limited room for manoeuvre before staff had an opportunity to be involved or consulted.

Concern over the headteacher's reaction

In addition to the feeling that the headteacher, Mrs. Boxer, had already made a decision in advance of a staff discussion, most staff admitted that there were occasions when they hesitated to express their views for fear of upsetting her. A few teachers saw themselves remaining at St. Kerensa's for a long time and accepted that it was easier to accept a decision and adapt it to suit their own philosophy than to publicly voice objections. Mrs. Driver summarised the position:-

It's the decisions that are made when there aren't really end-products for on-going things that can be interpreted differently by how ever many members of staff we've got in all those different ways. (Interview, 9/7/91)

And Miss Cain specifically rejected all thought of increased responsibility inside or outside St. Kerensa's:-

I don't want more responsibility...I want to be a classroom teacher; I don't want the hassle of management decisions. I never have and I never will! (Interview 17/6/91)

For a larger number of staff who hoped to improve or alter their circumstances, concerns over damaging career or enhancement prospects were significant. As a new teacher, Miss Winter admitted to feeling anxious during staff meetings but made herself contribute:-

I've found it hard to speak out but I made myself. I felt encouraged that I was able to say something. I've got to look to the future and I must contribute. (Interview, 24/10/91, paraphrased)

Some teachers were willing to co-operate with the headteacher's wishes to a certain extent, but drew the line when appeasement crossed the point at which fundamental values were compromised. Typically, from Mrs. Northern:-

We have a clear division on the staff over dealing with children's behaviour and I feel I need to speak my mind. I want to get on, but not at any price, and I won't tow the line to achieve that end. (Interview, 3/9/91, paraphrased)

Another teacher was scornful of the suggestion that she might hesitate to speak because of Mrs. Boxer's presence, claiming that she was known and accepted as forthright by all the staff. Thus:-

I can recall an instance of where I felt strongly about something in particular that was just thrown out and I was very anti the proposal and put my feelings as a person before what the headteacher wanted. I knew what she wanted and I didn't agree with her; I said so very forcibly at my phase meeting, slightly out of turn. It caused quite a lot of trouble!

Nevertheless, on a subsequent occasion:-

I had a personal reason for keeping my mouth shut, 'cause last time I opened my mouth it stirred up quite a thing, so I thought 'I'm not going to say a word this time'. (Interview, Ms. Wolfendale, 11/2/92)

These remarks strongly suggested that when the headteacher was present, contributions at formal and informal level were, for certain staff, affected by thoughts of Mrs. Boxer's reaction and (in some cases) the teacher's future

prospects. In an early interview, one new teacher tried to summarise how she saw the overall position:

I think in a way everybody's worried; we'll say things when the head isn't present and air our grievances to each other, but in a full meeting when she's there we're much more reluctant to say because obviously some of them are looking for promotion and you always think: 'Well, if I cause too much trouble, what will happen to my references or put in my records? There's a certain amount of fear about what you're saying and you want to guard your own back. Everybody will admit to that to a certain extent. (Interview, Miss Young, 19/6/91)

The reference to 'guarding your back' (an expression used by at least two other staff) indicated the extent of the concern which existed during the earlier part of the research. However, these fears appeared to ease with the passage of time as both the staff and headteacher gradually became more secure about their relationship. The comments made during 1991-92 by teachers who were sceptical about their perceptions of Mrs. Boxer's over-hasty reactions to external demands and her prolonged consultation about internal ones, were less apparent during the second year. Although the reason for this was difficult to judge, staff appeared weary of the turmoil characterising the previous few years and longed for a more settled existence; other teachers, newly appointed, were largely unaware of the earlier struggles prior to their appointment and accepted the relatively calm situation they found on entering the school as normal.

Despite any intolerance or dissatisfaction with the process of decision-making described above, there remained a deference to Mrs. Boxer as the appointed leader and authority figure. The acknowledgement that care had to be exercised in expressing views publicly due to the headteacher's power to influence situations was mirrored by a belief that she carried authority through her position. A new teacher accepted her own low status position:-

My own part in the decision-making process is quite near the bottom, I think. I think I always feel conscious that I mustn't stick my neck out too

much; I've got to get my probationary year. If I cause too much of an uproar then that could be a black mark against me.
(Interview, Miss Razall, 19/7/91)

As a teacher-governor, union representative and experienced teacher, Mr. Dawn saw the situation from a different perspective but similar respect for the headteacher's position:-

The day-to-day running of the curriculum and internal management of the school is the responsibility of the headteacher by law. As a member of the staff I'm subservient to the headteacher and must abide by internal decisions that are made. (Interview, 3/2/92)

As I have previously explained, even this issue was not clear-cut; concerns over the headteacher's reaction also depended on the type of issue under consideration. For instance, issues affecting teacher-autonomy or threatening their preferred method of teaching approach were most likely to cause a defensive reaction. Where staff perceived that Mrs. Boxer was determined to follow a procedure, objections to the proposed course of action were restrained and resistance to a proposal was more likely to take the form of indifference or unenthusiastic restraint.

In this chapter, I have tried to provide further evidence to construct a framework to describe the factors influencing teachers' willingness to become involved in the decision-making process. I use the expression 'decision-making process' deliberately, for it was rare that teachers were directly involved in making a specific decision for issues other than immediate organizational ones. Often their role was one of offering their thoughts, clarifying detail and making recommendations about appropriate forms of implementation. Reluctance to commit themselves wholeheartedly to participation was principally posited upon their strong belief that class-teaching, the welfare of children, and their own well-being, were best served by closely monitoring their involvement. Concerns about being perceived as obstructive by Mrs. Boxer were, in some situations,

ameliorated by passive resistance rather than overt opposition. However, some staff were in positions of responsibility which transcended their role as classroom practitioners. I have selected two of these teachers, the teacher-governors, to exemplify the effects that formally recognized status exercised upon teachers' attitudes to involvement.

The teacher governors' perspective

St. Kerensa's two teacher governors, deputy headteacher Mr. Jamieson and Mr. Dawn, with responsibility for History and assessment policy, were regularly at the forefront of discussions and gave some of the most comprehensive responses during interview. They both occupied key positions: in the case of Mr. Jamieson as governor, deputy, member of the SMT and class teacher; for Mr. Dawn as governor, union representative and class teacher. In addition, both were confident in debate and involved in wider school activities such as the Parent-Teachers Association. The quotes that follow are largely drawn from interviews in July 1991: Mr. Jamieson, 3/7/91 and Mr. Dawn, 18/7/91. Full transcripts of these interviews, used with their permission, are held in Appendix 5. I also use some data from interviews held later in the research: 6/2/92 and 23/11/92 (Mr. Jamieson) and 3/2/92 (Mr. Dawn).

In the earlier part of this chapter I explained how different factors influenced the staff's willingness to be involved in the process of decision-making and the constraints that acted upon that process. Mr. Jamieson was quite clear about his view of staff involvement in the decision-making process:-

I see my own philosophy of decision-making as corporate, everyone having a say; we abide by the majority decision. It's no use forcing things on people; they won't carry them out properly if you do. (3/7/91)

The importance of considering staff needs was stressed by both teacher-governors during interview and confirmed and extended many of the points

made by the staff themselves. For instance, staff morale was referred to by the deputy as a critical factor in the success of the collaborative process:-

Teachers are feeling more and more undervalued and their professionalism being rubbished. The knock-on effect is that more and more people are deciding not to commit the time and effort that they would have done previously. 'Why should I bother?' This engenders negative vibes which makes it hard to develop a cohesive working unity with these constraints. (Mr. Jamieson, 3/7/91)

Mr. Dawn underlined the importance of his own role in ensuring that staff views were heard:-

If you're going to have an efficient, happy and hard-working staff, their views have to be heard. If they are not, you can quite easily lose goodwill. In terms of school management, goodwill is extremely important. (18/7/91)

They also confirmed that it was important for staff to perceive that the consultation process was genuine. Experienced teachers, in particular, were seen as having a major role in providing expertise and knowledge borne of their classroom experiences:-

If members of staff are not satisfied with outcomes of decisions being made or don't feel they've been consulted or don't feel that their ideas (which are often very good from experienced, practising teachers who have been in the job a lot longer than I have) and which could contribute quite sensibly to decisions that are made; if they feel they're not being heard and there's not a forum for their views, it's bound to lead to those teachers not feeling undervalued. (Mr. Dawn, 18/7/91)

He went on to describe the effects that this could have upon the implementation process. Ownership of decisions was crucial and shortcomings in this area could lead to 'those teachers perhaps modifying what they're being asked to do within the context of the classroom'. If staff disapproved of particular decisions, it would affect the efficient running of the school where 'some things which have been decided upon are modified within the classroom or...some things that

should be done in the classroom, aren't!' Mr. Jamieson confirmed that frustration with externally imposed directives was adversely affecting staff attitudes:-

I just wish (the staff) could be offered a better deal as far as the government go, instead of making processes we have to be involved in. Some teachers feel they've worked themselves into the ground for nothing. People are frustrated, and that frustration's growing. (3/7/91)

Although both respondents expressed the belief that staff wanted their views to count in the decision-making process, they were seen as less happy about involvement in externally imposed deliberations. The tension between internal priorities and external imposition was summarised by the deputy:-

...the time scale is such that we can't get through the management plan within the target we set. Unfortunately, issues are being thrust at us that need a decision almost instantly. Whereas before the decision would have been made by head and deputy, now, as we've set up the decision to consult with everyone, the process is lengthier (though more valuable) and we're not getting through the workload we would have done, and that can be a problem. (Mr. Jamieson, 3/7/91)

The suggestion that extended consultation might act against the best interests of staff was the sub-text of this comment and he went on to describe the cascade effect of a situation in which everyone became busier and busier. The senior staff attended more meetings than they could handle to stay abreast of the developments, with the consequence that 'this in turn pushes the workload onto other senior colleagues further down the chain of command. They, of course, unburden their own role onto new shoulders and then it passes all the way down the line'. In addition, 'people are asked to take on board a specialist curriculum area, but without enhancement or extra pay or recognition; just as a matter of course'.

Both of the teacher-governors stressed the value of good relationships between staff and the importance of informal relationships. For example:-

Issues are people, people are issues, certainly in this place. The management is seen very much as a personality thing...without the people the place would break down; the staff here are amazing, a wonderful staff and a credit to the profession. (Mr. Jamieson, 3/7/91)

This commendation reflected many similar comments from almost every teacher in the school. However, the realities of difficulties associated with interpersonal relationships were also acknowledged, in particular the manoeuvrings performed by different factions or interest groups within the staff:

...there are various power-group factions within any school who have their own interests at heart and will seek whatever vehicle they can to enhance it and discredit others.

and

I think members of staff find it difficult to accept the views that have to be taken long term...they attribute a decision to a personality, whereas the decision has already been made and the person is carrying out what he or she has to carry out; and there is this personality clash where some members of staff feel maybe even that they're being victimised, whereas it isn't the case. (Mr. Jamieson, 3/7/91)

In this instance, the deputy referred to the problems being experienced by the SMT (and the headteacher in particular) in implementing government reforms with any skeptical staff who might attribute the blame for the changes on Mrs. Boxer rather than on government ministers. As I explained earlier in the chapter, this interpretation was only partly true, for some staff were sympathetic towards the SMT's plight but critical of the speed with which Mrs. Boxer insisted that responses were made and annoyed that important internal matters were sacrificed for the sake of external imperatives.

The teacher-governors also found the complexity of their different roles (as governor, SMT member, etc.) to be a considerable challenge. Mr. Dawn claimed that his job as an 'ordinary class teacher', (not a member of the SMT) enabled him to carry out his duties as a governor more satisfactorily:-

I think that as a teacher-governor I'm an ordinary member of staff because I can represent in governors' meetings the views of ordinary staff more

ably. Certainly, there have been times when I've had to stand up for certain issues which staff have considered to be important. Had I been a member of the senior management I might have been unable to do so due to a conflict of interests. (18/7/91)

Mr. Jamieson saw his role more in terms of management responsibility, claiming that as staff could not have access to government ministers, they found expression for their hurts through the people who administered the school itself:-

And so it does become a coconut shy, and the role of the deputy in that case is to be the coconut. One has to field as many shots as one can and try to keep both ends of the spectrum in perspective because people's opinions are valuable; but to keep things in a sensible, balanced perspective is difficult because the movement is so great from one idea to another. Marrying the two together is not an easy one and reminds me of a swimming pool full of enormous floating balls and the object of the game is to walk across! (3/7/91)

There was, however, sympathy for the role of governors who were also trying to make sense of a rapidly changing situation:-

The governors feel pressured, especially as the majority are elderly and retired and perhaps are not able to give of the same intellectual commitment of the vast barrage of paperwork that's coming in. Sometimes they feel a bit swamped...My heart is warmed by the support that the majority of governors give the teachers; they recognize the job is hard and getting harder. (Mr. Jamieson, 3/7/91)

Mr. Dawn agreed that the governors had a lot to cope with but regretted the problems of communicating relevant issue to staff following a meeting without breaking confidentiality:-

I think that particularly as a member of staff, the recent changes to staff conditions of service which have been marched through by government in the most recent Education Act, such as the LEA's approach to disciplinary procedure and periods of notice, redundancies, etc. There have been some very important issues there in governors' meetings which, as teacher-governor, I haven't always been able to feed back to staff. When decision-making regarding school organization and curriculum planning is made, we ought to be the first to know... (18/7/91)

These comments underlined the difficulties facing governors when discussions about policies which affected staff were taking place at a time when teachers felt uncertain about their future prospects; the lengthy time scale involved in convening governing body meetings together with the length of some of the deliberations created a hiatus in communicating decisions to staff. This placed the teacher-governors in an awkward position as they wrestled with the appropriate amount of information to release, especially Mr. Dawn who was also the union representative and therefore concerned that members' interests did not suffer.

Many of these issues were alluded to in the second round of interviews (February 1992): Mr. Dawn, 3/2/92 and Mr. Jamieson, 6/2/92 and 23/11/92. Mr. Jamieson reiterated the need for appropriate negotiation and gaining staff support when decisions were made. He acknowledged that classroom teachers were fairly territorial but saw a close link between the teacher's work and the teacher's identity:-

It has to be recognized that teachers are fairly territorial and their classroom is an extension of themselves. If you begin to criticise their classroom, they begin to perceive it as a criticism of themselves...If people have ownership of something, they will perform it better because they believe in it. (6/2/92)

Nevertheless, his perception of the collegial process had undergone some modification and in the light of experience he recognized that issues of accountability were highly significant:-

There are different decisions, carrying different weight. There are certain decisions which one happily takes along in a collegiate sort of way; there are other decisions which are pre-ordained. They're brought before the group for the rubber stamp. People coming to meetings come with different sorts of power. In many cases the decision has already been made. (Mr. Jamieson, 6/2/92)

Mr. Dawn described the lines of demarcation which he saw existing within the decision-making framework. Some decisions were held in the remit of particular bodies who needed to exercise their responsibilities:-

It's the question of demarcation; which things in the school are the responsibility of the governing body and which are those of the headteacher, delegated through the staff. In some situations I often find myself casting a vote as a governor against votes cast as a member of the staff management team. Sometimes I find a conflict of interests between a class teacher responsible to the headteacher and not always voting with the headteacher in governing body meetings...It depends upon the nature of the business.

The day-to-day running of the curriculum and internal management of the school is the responsibility of the headteacher by law. As a member of the staff I'm subservient to the headteacher and must abide by internal decisions that are made. Yet a decision I abide by in the classroom, I might question in a governing body meeting...

He stressed the micropolitical strategies at work in liaising with colleagues:-

It's a question of internal school policy; you have to work with people. In terms of staff meetings, I would be a little more vocal than otherwise, simply because I'm a teacher rep. I'm responsible to staff not only in governing body meetings but in staff meetings as well. Often through knowing members of staff I find myself asking questions on their behalf when they wouldn't ask a question.

It's complicated by the fact that I'm a union rep. as well... Views that are expressed to me in private are sometimes very difficult to bring to a staff meeting or governing body due to the confidentiality. (Mr. Dawn, 3/2/92)

These latter comments confirmed the remarks made by a number of teachers when interviewed that they hesitated to offer an opinion in meetings for fear of possible consequences should the ideas be construed as disloyal or in opposition to the headteacher. Use of a teacher-governor allowed views to be aired with the safeguard of anonymity. This view of teachers' micropolitical manoeuvring was supported by Mr. Jamieson, who admitted that he related to different individuals and groups on different levels:-

There are sub-groups within school, people I will ask advice from or information to reach a decision. There are people whose opinion I trust and listen to closer than others.

If you are wearing a particular hat, you tend to seek out people wearing similar hats. You tend to go towards experienced people. If it's a union matter or managerial level, I would seek out a sub-group to do with that.
(6/2/92)

Philosophy about appropriate teaching styles also drew him towards certain staff:-

It comes down to personal teaching style; there are styles closer to my own philosophy than others. There are some who are very clannish about class boundaries, which is not the way I work. Others are more willing to share children, resources, etc. and I would tend to deal with them more.
(6/2/92)

This open admission of interest sub-groups and the active pursuit of 'searching them out' highlighted the extent of the challenge of establishing a truly collegial decision-making process. The existence of sub-groups which cut across the recognized power and authority structures (Ball, 1987) had to be taken into account by those responsible for initiating discussions about crucial issues (notably, the headteacher). The mere fact that people in the organization were brought together for the purpose of decision-making, deliberation about the implications of an externally imposed stricture, or discussion of a number of options, did not of itself support the claim that consultation was truly collegial. The intricacies of the collaborative process were subject to interaction outside the formal meetings; indeed, providing that staff were aware of issues in advance of the meeting, the evidence from the deputy headteacher suggested that mutual-interest groups were established based on shared values or aspirations. The nature of these micropolitical strategies were later expounded by Mr. Jamieson (November 1992) when he explained how he perceived that some decisions were affected by micropolitics and deliberate tactics:-

There's a hidden structure existing within the school. People use other people as a domino or level effect to achieve what they want... Some people are the 'doers' or 'initiators'. They can be primed to initiate things. They get the job done.

If I went via the formal phase and staff meetings, I know that what needs to be achieved, won't be! It will be stifled by filibustering, talking things out of time... Someone can exercise power through obstruction: they either want things to head in another direction, or it's posturing.

We're at a stage where we're getting things working but using 'unseen' means. Some key people have first to be won over; without their support it won't happen, including informal groupings of disaffected staff. (23/11/92, paraphrased)

Similarly, Mr. Dawn admitted to the existence of groups resistant to change:-

Some staff resist any change in all situations and have gained a reputation for digging their heels in. (30/11/92)

The winning-over process (Elliott-Kemp, 1981) was important to Mr. Jamieson, who saw his role as deputy needing to take into account the probability that some staff saw their influence in school being threatened. In such cases he operated a 'damage limitation exercise' and attempted the 'difficult task' of channelling their energies more positively. Mr. Dawn, too, accepted that there was a network of informal contacts within the school that had to be considered:-

It's very difficult to define and the very nature of it depends upon the personalities involved. In any staff room you will get members of staff forming links of communication which are very informal; certainly such links exist here. Some staff would see me as a node within that net. I'm not sure I see myself like that.

He also referred to the part played by the more experienced staff:-

I would say that (I'm used) more by the older experienced members of staff. That may be a false impression in that the young members (such as probationary teachers) haven't yet acclimatised themselves to the school enough to be able to feel that they can speak to me, let alone use me as a teacher rep! (Mr. Dawn, 3/2/92)

The need to win hearts as well as minds was seen by Mr. Dawn as essential if the decisions made were to be carried through into practice. Thus:-

Decisions working best are those where many staff are involved. If not, they won't do it or will say they are when they aren't! (30/11/92, paraphrased)

He was skeptical about 'pseudo-decisions' in which a small but powerful group engineered a decision through collusion or a form of scheming, subsequently claiming a 'whole staff' decision on the matter. He saw such outcomes as misleading, offering false evidence for the existence of collegiality.

Interviews with Mr. Jamieson and Mr. Dawn provided valuable insights into the process of decision-making, the attitude of staff members and the existence of different sub-groups with particular self-interests. These two teachers also clarified the nature of their own roles and the tensions between the different responsibilities and commitments which sometimes appeared to distort or compromise their ability to act appropriately. The effort of making a distinction between their differing tasks to protect confidentiality yet remain open and accessible led to uncertainty as well as opportunity. They recognized that in the eyes of other staff they were powerful and could affect situations, yet they were wary about being used by colleagues as a vehicle for promoting opinions by proxy. Both of the teacher-governors agreed that interpersonal relationships and professional satisfaction were essential elements of truly collegial decision-making. They acknowledged that some decisions were already made and staff involvement was largely for the purpose of discussing implementation strategies. Any form of 'false collegiality' was pointless as it resulted in discontentment, the formation of constituent groups for the purpose of resisting change, and covert forms of classroom practice which passed for genuine implementation but was, in truth, a careful re-interpretation of agreed policy. Understandably, neither Mr. Dawn nor Mr. Jamieson were willing to support their ideas by reference to specific colleagues or situations; as such, this evidence must be treated with caution. Nevertheless, the tone of their remarks and the obvious clarity of thought and insight suggested that their conclusions were scrupulous and trustworthy.

The situation for the headteacher of St. Kerensa's

Throughout this thesis, I have referred to comments made by Mrs. Boxer as she attempted to negotiate the difficult passage through a time of rapid change and have suggested that her own role was crucial in establishing effective collaboration and other forms of teacher involvement. I wish to conclude my evidence by using data from the large number of unstructured interviews I held with her, including those involving 'right of reply' sessions, to clarify her own position in respect of teacher participation issues.

During numerous discussions with Mrs. Boxer between the end of 1990, when I first discussed the possibility of using St. Kerensa's for the case-study, and the latter part of 1993/ early 1994 when I was concluding the research, it was evident from her demeanour and comments that the closely controlled, externally-imposed time frame for implementing change had placed a heavy burden upon her (Laws & Dennison, 1991). Hull & Adams (1981) researching the management of change in school, noted the passage of time between the period when ideas were discussed and plans developed, and the implementation of those decisions. In this connection, Mrs. Boxer had to oversee the process at the same time as dealing with staff who had different views over the desirability of national reforms and often expressed them publicly, claiming that the imposition of change had denied them adequate control over major professional decisions. Stress-related illness had led to extended periods of sick leave, leading to further work for her in booking supply teachers, with the accompanying loss of continuity and disruption to the time schedule.

In an earlier part of this thesis I described how, convinced of the need for wider consultation and involvement of staff, both in decision-making and as part of a strategy to handle the large amount of documentation, Mrs. Boxer set up a senior management team, age-related phase groups, and a regular full staff meeting to draw together the various strands and resolve issues. This procedure, aimed at relieving the teachers from shouldering unnecessary

burdens while involving them as partners in school life, had led to unease about the system's appropriateness. The formation of different interest groups, sometimes transient, sometimes more permanent, resulted in a high level of collaboration and consensus within those constituencies about the issue involved without necessarily achieving the desired cohesion across the whole staff and the unifying collaborative climate that Mrs. Boxer tried to nurture.

Mrs. Boxer depended heavily upon guidance from well informed curriculum co-ordinators as policy statements were drawn up and implementation took place for different subjects. Co-ordinators were also responsible for the monitoring of resources and offering support to colleagues. This placed a heavy burden upon the responsible teacher to (a) provide advice and expertise; (b) attend appropriate courses; (c) become familiar with the documentation; (d) lead staff discussions, recommending appropriate resources and teaching approaches. It also highlighted the growing difficulty that Mrs. Boxer had in keeping abreast of curriculum issues while spending so much time on the variety of other tasks described earlier (Muschamp et al, 1992). Thus:-

- * Support for colleagues was easier in principle than in practice due mainly to her other pressing commitments, many of which necessitated time out of school.
- * Staff, not the headteacher, attended curriculum-orientated courses (throughout the research, Mrs. Boxer only attended one or two curriculum-related courses).
- * Familiarity with curriculum documentation was a slow process of absorption at a time when speed was of the essence and even subject co-ordinators confessed that they struggled to stay abreast of changes.
- * Staff discussions were often solely concerned with familiarisation with documentation rather than exploring implications for teaching.

Clearly, Campbell's vision of the collaborative culture, in which 'considerable sensitivity, personal enthusiasm and charm are required in order to maintain good working relationships' and 'teachers involved become used to tolerating uncertainty and working under pressure of time and conflicting demands' (1985, p. 153), written during the early to mid-80's, could not have predicted the increase in demands upon staff and the changes in accountability for the headteacher and governors during the 1990's (Davies & West-Burnham, 1990; Baginsky et al, 1991; Golby, 1992). Campbell's emphasis upon the need for an atmosphere 'distinctive to collegiality', whereby the staff gained confidence through the openness of sharing and derived strong personal and professional satisfaction from its maintenance and continuance, though desired by Mrs. Boxer, suffered from the demands of a closely defined time frame, concerns about appraisal and job security, and the statutory nature of curriculum implementation and pupil entitlement. Campbell also referred to Goodlad (1975) who claimed that positive in-school variables led to an increase in teachers' influence over decision-making and consequently, high teacher morale and sense of power, especially within their own 'sub-group' (constituency), and that these conditions were an important contributing factor towards effective change. In fact, Mrs. Boxer struggled to maintain teachers' morale at a time when she, herself, felt burdened and despondent.

Further, despite its significance in the development of a collaborative culture, curriculum leadership had to be considered by the headteacher as one factor among many in the overall management of the school. Mrs. Boxer knew that staff expected her to be responsive to their needs and concerns but acknowledged her own limitations. For instance, early in the research, when there were a number of in-depth discussions about behaviour policy and the need to monitor closely the activities of a few troublesome children, she exclaimed:-

Sometimes I think that some staff expect me to find an instant solution to problems which are simply beyond my powers! (Interview, 25/4/91)

She wanted to involve staff through utilising their curriculum expertise and was anxious to give encouragement for them to do, but afraid that going beyond the point at which they could cope would be counter-productive. Thus:-

I approach the curriculum person if there's a curriculum matter to be done and to my deputy or the early years' co-ordinator for more general matters. I don't go as openly to anyone else as before due to the stresses on teachers. They have enough to cope with... Sometimes, if I ask for volunteers for a job that needs doing, people say: 'Oh, no, not another one!' (Interview, 16/10/91)

Similarly, she tried to respond positively when she heard of staff concerns. For instance, from field notes (2/4/92):-

Mrs. Boxer had become aware of staff concerns through comments made by the deputy and school counsellor and tried to respond. These related to matters such as appraisal and use of directed time through to whether they had to spend their lunch break in school during Election Day.

I'm not particularly worried about appraisal myself but I'm conscious that some staff are worried. I see it more as a means of staff development.
(Mrs. Boxer)

On the other hand, she believed in delegation, claiming that with a large staff there had to be delegated decisions, especially for the day-to-day things, but also recognizing that teachers were really only concerned with issues which directly impacted upon their lives. Accompanying this awareness was an equally firm belief that she was ultimately accountable for school-based events, efficiency and progress. She was concerned to maintain an overall control of the situation, but worried that some things came and went out of her grasp, particularly when coping with statutory requirements. Whereas internal school policy affected everyone and tended to attract widespread interest and constructive debate, she felt that implementation of the reforms had to take into

account the teachers' bitterness over what they generally perceived as an unhelpful imposition:-

Some things in the National Curriculum have been done by teachers for ages, but the existence of the N.C. has made a big difference to staff pressure and created a loss of goodwill. (Interview, 16/10/91)

There were also particular instances of misunderstanding to deal with, such as times when she judged that a teacher was failing to maintain an acceptable professional standard (such as concerns expressed from time to time about the variation in quality of different teachers' planning records). It was often difficult for her to decide whether or not to face the issue head-on with individuals or through a general announcement to remind everyone of agreed procedures and hope that the individual concerned would respond. She was sometimes forced to make a decision about the extent to which she would tolerate slackness as a necessary price to pay for the maintenance of teacher confidence, good relations and, ultimately, a more open climate in which criticism would be perceived positively. For example, when the National Curriculum record cards were being filled in, problems emerged over individual teachers' interpretation of a child's progress. Mrs. Boxer referred to an instance in which a class teacher had been too generous and over-estimated a child's ability; by the following year, the next class teacher was placed in a difficult position when it came to make an assessment because she did not place the child as highly as the previous teacher had done a year before. When the second class teacher spoke in confidence to Mrs. Boxer about her dilemma, there were two unpalatable choices: (a) leave the child at about the same assessment point, risking the parents' anger at the apparent lack of progress; (b) artificially increase the level of progress to make it appear that the child was making progress but (apart from the ethical issue) compounding the problem for the teacher the following year. Eventually, option (a) was felt to be the least problematic and most principled

option. Nevertheless, such instances highlighted the need for clear policies and adequate monitoring of decisions which she accepted as being problematic due to time constraints and the possibility of being perceived as autocratic by the staff.

Similarly, Mrs. Boxer referred to the fact that a few teachers were much slacker than their colleagues in planning, maintaining accurate records of pupil progress and associated paperwork tasks. Thus:-

Staff differ greatly over their attitude towards planning and record-keeping. One of my teachers is over-zealous; another is too slack, but such a nice teacher with the children that I'm prepared to put up with it. (Interview, 8/6/92, paraphrased)

In addition to the differences between individual teachers, Mrs. Boxer realised that within the decision-making framework, there were differences existing between the phases, but having instituted the groups to allow for some autonomy and delegating the chairing to members of the SMT, she was reluctant to interfere. For instance:-

The upper years meeting tend to be more flexible than the early years and I don't interfere. Sometimes, a deadline doesn't always bring a willing response. (Interview, 14/12/92, paraphrased)

There was also an acceptance that bonding between members of a phase took time and persistence:-

Planning in teams tends to be done in their own time. It would be nice for all the early years staff to meet together, but finding a time is impossible. (Interview, 14/12/92, paraphrased)

At the same time as wishing to promote a strong working relationship between teachers within the same group, Mrs. Boxer was anxious that in her quest for greater staff involvement, she did not allow internal policy discussions to dominate their activities. During the earlier part of the research, she had

cancelled the visits of a number of outside speakers with special expertise so that more time would be available to concentrate on the internal affairs. She was unhappy with this arrangement but willing to accept it as a temporary measure while staff debated matters which were of immediate interest:-

In staff meetings we have fewer external speakers; but I don't want us to be too inward looking. There's a conflict between the time required for staff meetings and team meetings. (Interview, 14/12/92, paraphrased)

This 'conflict' centred upon discovering a balance between the need for small teaching teams to find time for in-depth discussions about their particular age-related plans and approaches, and the importance of whole-staff growth and maturation (Jones, 1990). The significance of teachers' ambivalent attitude towards visiting speakers reflected teachers' overall dismay about perceived interference. As I noted earlier, unless the speaker could address their specific needs, they were considered (at best) superfluous and (at worst) a further example of an imposition.

Across the period of the case-study, Mrs. Boxer's willingness to respond to teachers' concerns seemed to herald an increase in contentment, signalled by a marked decrease in the level of informal expressions of discontent among staff. In particular, the inclusion of in-school issues as an agenda item at staff meetings, the reorganization of the SMT which freed more staff to concentrate on class-related issues, and improvement in communication through the weekly bulletin, notice board, and minute book, resulted in a more settled atmosphere. Curriculum leaders were able to spend more time servicing the needs of their own area as implementation dates arrived and passed. As new staff were appointed and inducted into the school's practices, there was a greater range of expertise available for Mrs. Boxer to draw upon and she encouraged each leader to front at least one staff meeting in accordance with the agreed school development plan. This was not to say that she felt that her efforts towards

establishing a collaborative climate through greater staff involvement were complete. In particular, she agreed that decision-making and subsequent monitoring was subject to vagaries. For instance, some teachers did not appear to abide by an agreed decision:-

Some staff don't appear to respond to agreed decisions. It's a matter of ensuring that every teacher has understood the decision; then there's the difficult business of monitoring it. We need a policy for teacher competence. (Interview, 14/12/92, paraphrased)

She also reflected upon the problems of organizing meetings:-

There's sometimes a conflict between staff meetings and team meetings because of the time factor. Wednesdays are for staff meetings but teams also need to talk urgently. We've gone a full circle with our meetings. Staff complained that there were too many fixed meetings taking up too much time and wanted greater flexibility, so we made the phase meeting optional; staff would meet together as necessary. But during the term they've realized that having a regular meeting is the only way to operate satisfactorily. The hit-and-miss approach simply didn't work! (Interview, 14/12/92, paraphrased)

In addition to these familiar contexts for organization and micropolitical activity, Mrs. Boxer was obliged to develop a wider range of negotiating skills with governors and a variety of outside agencies (Evetts, 1993). Her increased accountability to governors and the community, in particular the need to exercise wise control of finance and curriculum implementation, resulted in a large portion of her time and energy used for purposes outside the development of greater staff involvement, collaboration and consensual decision-making than she had initially desired.

PART FOUR: INTERPRETATION AND
CONCLUSIONS

CHAPTER 10
INFORMING PRACTICE

Introduction

Responding to the rapid pace of change was a constant challenge for the headteacher of St. Kerensa's and influenced the level and quality of teacher involvement in decision-making. Much energy was expended in maintaining necessary routine tasks within the system (Miles, 1964; Havelock, 1970) and responding to statutory obligations. The headteacher, struggling to stay abreast of her own responsibilities, exercise financial prudence, and provide support for staff during times of duress, fostered a collaborative climate as a means of coping with the varying demands. However, the establishment of a decision-making process was inadequate in itself to ensure positive staff participation. Teachers were often unconvinced about the efficacy of change, agreeing perhaps with Argyris & Schon's assertion that 'there are kinds of change which are not good, such as deterioration, regression and stagnation' (1980, p. 128) and needed convincing that involvement was worthwhile. Staff participation could not be taken for granted and a number of influences affected their involvement; teachers varied in the extent to which they were willing to participate or the degree of resistance they exercised. The level of staff participation depended principally upon three factors:

- (a) whether they viewed both proposed and required change as worthwhile;
- (b) their own formal responsibility within the school;
- (c) the influence of their constituency or interest set.

In the light of these factors, the level of staff engagement with an issue depended upon a number of factors, including:

- (a) the location of ultimate responsibility and accountability (usually the headteacher);

- (b) expectations of senior staff by the headteacher and/or colleagues and associated loyalty to members of their team;
- (c) delegated responsibilities and accountability;
- (d) an individual's view of appropriate professional conduct;
- (e) the deemed relevance of the subject matter
- (f) the level of suspicion about the genuineness of the consultation.

Opportunity for involvement was subject to various constraints, including the individual's sense of responsibility, their seniority or status, and their confidence in the process. Whatever the motivation for fuller involvement, the influence upon decision-making and access to wider involvement in whole-school affairs offered the possibility for increased satisfaction and further willingness to participate. Compared with earlier models (Appendix 6) the route to involvement depended upon factors other than a teacher's deference to, or rejection of, the principle of involvement. However desirable Evers' suggestions (1990) about the need for the decision-making process to include an opportunity for teachers to reflect and modify ideas before coming to a final decision, evidence from the study demonstrated that the severity of different pressures did not easily permit such opportunity other than over a longer time span. Teachers had to make choices about where to put their efforts and largely chose to concentrate on matters which directly or indirectly affected their classroom practice (such as record-keeping) and their ability to relate to children throughout the school (for instance, clarifying behaviour policy) rather than involvement in broader school management activities. The rapid pace of national education reforms contributed to a lowering of morale and considerable frustration with the associated uncertainties. This was not merely because the political context was viewed as inimical and contrasted sharply with many teachers' views about educational priorities, but the implementation of the

reforms threatened their sense of well-being and enjoyment of teaching. In effect, 'the fun went out of the job'.

Internal and external teachers

Gaziel & Weiss suggested that in any staff there are teachers who prefer to be involved in decision-making and those who see themselves as the implementors of other people's decisions within a bureaucratic structure. This case-study indicated that this division between 'internals' and 'externals' (Gaziel & Weiss, 1990) is real but that the proposition fails to take sufficient account of the fact that membership of these two groups varies according to circumstances. Teachers who saw themselves as 'external' to one issue were 'internal' to another, depending upon the nature of the issue and the extent to which they felt that their involvement was genuine and, in some cases, approved of by the headteacher. Further, there were some occasions when teachers did not choose to be involved in decision-making because the issue lay outside their interest zone, an area referred to by Barnard (1976) as a 'zone of indifference'; that is, a directive is accepted without question by the subordinates (also Kunz & Hoy, 1976). In addition, individual teachers were affected by other members of the constituency in which they were located for discussions about the issue under consideration. For example, the early years staff, especially the Year 2 team, were closely united in a common bond of mutual anguish over the time and perceived wastefulness of the process when grappling with SATs. They assertively argued their case in phase group meetings, full staff meetings and informally, regardless of audience. Clearly, their close allegiance led to an alliance of will and purpose which superseded any normal concerns about seniority or hierarchy. The implementation of SATs was 'their' responsibility over which they exercised an unmistakable authority and diligence. It was assisted by the knowledge that all other staff, including the headteacher, expressed sympathy and understanding for their position and offered verbal reassurance and support. Other instances

were less clear-cut; occasionally members of an interest group or close colleagues took a strong position in a discussion (e.g. about the number of external speakers, the policy for trainee teachers, or a domestic matter like payment for coffee). At such times, they offered support for their colleague's position regardless of the disapproval of the headteacher or other staff, contrasting with the times when they deferred to Mrs. Boxer's opinion. Such instances were unpredictable and sometimes (expenditure over staff coffee) a minor matter escalated into a serious, protracted discussion. Typically, in decisions about resource distribution, organization of school events and involvement in city-wide initiatives, a small number of staff united in support or opposition, the latter using a variety of delaying or hindering tactics. These strategies were exceptionally difficult for me to monitor for they were, by their very nature, micropolitical, and depended upon subtlety, even a degree of stealth, not easily accessible for analysis. Nevertheless, such techniques were sometimes effective in delaying decisions or, more constructively, allowing opportunity for a re-consideration of the issue (March & Shapira, 1982).

In addition to the evolution of interest groups, the inter-relationship between the extent of an individual teacher's participation and factors such as her or his length of teaching experience, career aspirations, personality and so forth were difficult to analyse systematically other than to acknowledge that a simple classification into teachers 'for' and 'against' involvement, an element of my earlier hypothesising, was inadequate to reflect the true situation. This reflected the view of Johnston (1988), who asserted that teachers' involvement in decision-making transcended a simplistic categorisation into 'innovators' or 'resisters'. Tarter et al (1989) underlined this position: '...the issue of teacher participation in decision-making can be viewed as an either/or question...but a more useful view of participation asks: 'Under what conditions should teachers be involved in decision-making?' (p. 135, my emphasis). However, in Mrs. Boxer's absence, all the case-study evidence confirmed that items under

discussion were scrutinised by staff more openly than in her presence. Occasionally, in her absence, an apparently compliant teacher would express grave reservations about something which she or he had (apparently) been willing to accept. Group dynamics provided clues to the sort of conversations that had evidently been taking place between confidantes outside the main meeting which I occasionally witnessed. The looks, gestures, nods and murmurs of approval or disapproval suggested that these signals provided a public affirmation of a previously determined position; persuasive tactics within formal meetings were directly subject to previous informal exchanges. This is not to suggest that every conversation was negative or in opposition to Mrs. Boxer's wishes; on the contrary, there were occasions when great sympathy was evident, particularly when the discussion focussed upon an unpopular government directive.

The situation was, therefore, more complex than suggested by my earlier ideal constructs formulated part-way through the research. For instance, some teachers were considerably more assertive due simply to their forceful personality or because they were better informed than other colleagues and expressed their views more forthrightly than their quieter associates who may have had equally firm ideas. Where an issue required clarification, it was normally demanded by the longer-serving staff who felt more confident to ask than younger, less experienced ones. The degree of involvement of teachers was not attributable to a single pre-determined view of power and compliance; staff involvement, whether in favour or against a motion, relied upon a range of motivating, practical and ideological factors.

Collusion

Although my original interpretation of teacher participation depended upon an overly simplified view of individuals' willingness to accept the principle of staff involvement, the existence and significance of sub-groups or constituencies

within the staff became increasingly apparent. My earlier hypotheses, though not fully supportable in the light of further data, may nonetheless have been a reasonably accurate portrayal of the situation as it existed during 1991 when interest sets were less easily identifiable; however, throughout 1992-93, the importance of the constituency effects grew and became more significant. Some constituencies which relied upon the formal school structure were easy to identify (for example, phase groups, SMT); others appear to have been temporary alliances (such as the occasion when several teachers were all denied hoped-for allowances). Sometimes the constituencies were service-related (such as staff who had served for a long time at the school and were able to share exclusively memories of past events, or newly appointed staff); sometimes interest-related (such as an interest in outward bounds activities shared by the two male members of staff); sometimes philosophical (such as staff who believed in firmer discipline policies). Whether these interest groups/sets ought to be accorded the term 'constituency' depends upon the definition adopted, though I am using the term here to indicate a more permanent sub-group; nevertheless, observations of staff and informal conversations with them indicated that teachers were sometimes involved in different forms of collusion that resulted in clusters of support for, or opposition to, a given option.

The existence of small groups of teachers who were unhappy about aspects of policy or school management was acknowledged in some way by every member of the SMT; for instance:-

We're at a stage where we're getting things working but using unseen means. some key people have to be won over; without their support it won't happen... There are informal groupings of disaffected staff. (Interview, Mr. Jamieson, 23/11/92, paraphrased)

Bubbles of discontent, when they rise, tend to come from the same group, but I'm not sure how I know. Maybe there's an ethos problem; maybe they think that's the way schools ought to be. (Interview, Mrs. Ellie, 28/1/93)

Mrs. Ellie's reference to the teachers' perceptions of the 'way schools should be', implied that some teachers were less willing to espouse the collegial model or passively accept Mrs. Boxer's automatic right to exercise control, a point supported by the deputy and other SMT members. Collusion, whether seen by the participants as a necessary strategy to prevent adverse change (March & Shapira, 1982; Ganderton, 1991) or a defensive mechanism to protect existing norms as a result of insecurity or fear of the unknown or a negative attitude to things in general, is difficult to specify. One way or another, though, whether by deliberate collusion or simply a number of different teachers acting instinctively, opposition was expressed in a variety of ways:-

- (a). *Passive opposition*, demonstrated by a lack of involvement by staff during discussions.
- (b). *Fillibusting*, typified by an insistence by staff on close attention to detail rather than a willingness to recognise the principle of the issue under consideration.
- (c). *Obstruction*, in which coalitions of staff had made a pre-judgement of the issue in advance of the meeting and were determined to resist particular options by a grim refusal to be convinced without ever stating their opposition.
- (d). *Registered opposition*, characterised by rational arguments to counter the proposition.

Similarly, there were strategies used to support proposals:-

Enthusiasm about an option, expressed loudly, frequently and persuasively.

Decisiveness, insisting that a swift decision be made (frequently catalysed through a remark to the effect: 'Come on, we've got to decide something!').

Enabling, through close involvement in the dialogue, approving nods around the room, and the use of expressions such as: 'Sounds alright to me!'.

Although these tactics are doubtless common to most group interactions, it is important to recognize that the consultation process was subject to these kinds of influences, confirming Campbell's view (1985) that a sense of well-being and openness among staff which can transcend doubts and disappointments needs to be in place before formal structures. There are also implications in this scenario for leadership styles and the nurturing of a supportive school climate through close personal interaction between collaborators (normally the staff) and the final decision-maker (normally the headteacher, governors or a group of senior staff).

Accepting the opportunities for involvement

Throughout this thesis, I have tried to show through reference to different situations and examples that not every member of staff was enamoured with the opportunity for involvement that the consultation procedure provided, though a few entered in enthusiastically. Some of the reasons for this variation have been explored above: teachers' position in the hierarchy, their membership of a short-lived interest set or a longer term constituency, and their view of the appropriateness of responding in a particular way depending upon the audience and the importance of the issue under consideration. These influences upon the level of staff involvement needed to be taken into account by Mrs. Boxer in her quest to nurture a climate of collaboration in the school and establish a genuinely collaborative culture. The consultation process sometimes appeared to the staff as one of confirming the inevitable rather than discussing their personal or corporate priorities. To some extent they were correct, although differentiating between times when Mrs. Boxer conscientiously prepared the ground for (say) a full staff meeting to ensure good use of available time, and occasions when she pre-empted the decision by controlling the circumstances, was difficult to judge.

The use of micropolitical strategies by the headteacher to achieve her desired outcome indicated the tension which she perceived to exist between her attempts to achieve greater staff involvement and the potential problems associated with their resistance to policies supported by her as involvement became more substantial (Hoyle, 1986). Mrs. Boxer conceded (interview, May 1993) that her earlier intentions of developing collegiality within the staff had been modified in the light of experience and she felt clearer about occasions when consultation was needed. Thus, her desire for greater participation led to a variety of exchanges between herself and staff in which their co-operation was gained through a subtle bargaining in which the headteacher signalled her own intentions and the support she expected from those staff. These exchanges were, from the teacher's point of view, more significant if they were anxious to gain promotion, gain greater autonomy in their work or (in the case of new staff) acceptance as a team member. The paradox of a teacher voluntarily relinquishing his or her power to argue their case publicly in opposition to the head in order to acquire more freedom in his or her working life was in keeping with many such trade-offs that teachers make, (see for instance Nias, 1989). Staff participation occurred at a variety of levels and the notion of a single, corporate participation, devoid of differential knowledge and understanding of situations, and uncluttered by informal interaction and agreement, was not reflected through the case study. Neither, though, was it typified by a desultory approach, relying upon circumstances and chance encounters. The headteacher, conscious of her own responsibilities, consulted in any way which she believed would facilitate a satisfactory and appropriate outcome, whether within the existing school decision-making structure or outside it.

Building a collaborative culture

Over the period of the research, externally imposed requirements were gradually absorbed into the working life of the school so that the distinction between

'imposed' and 'school initiated' became blurred. Elements of assessment, reporting to parents, appraisal, and response to the National Curriculum guidelines, which at one time had been innovative encumbrances, gradually became part of the maintenance paradigm. That is, teachers' earlier involvement, interpreting and implementing the changes, was superseded by review, modification and incorporation into the regular work of the school (see Appendix 7, Figure 1, 'Growth of Maintenance Tasks During a Time of Rapid Change').

Under these conditions, evidence from the case-study suggested that a teacher could become distanced from one discussion yet closely involved in another, depending upon the extent to which they were convinced of its value. Accordingly, teachers moved closer or further away from the process at different times. However, there was a tendency for some teachers to remain uninvolved or less involved for much of the time and some to remain close to the heart of the process. It is important to note that whichever position a teacher took in respect of an issue, they were normally all responsible for its implementation in their classrooms or throughout the school. The challenge for headteachers and others wishing to involve staff more closely in decision-making is to identify the factors that discourage a teacher from involvement in the first place and ensure that subsequent monitoring of any decision is sufficiently rigorous to detect unsatisfactory implementation. When staff were committed to involvement, the quality of the contributions was high (Weston et al, 1993, found that primary headteachers placed involvement of staff in decision-making as the most important factor in successful curriculum implementation). However, it is also important to acknowledge that building a collaborative culture takes time. 'Building collaborative cultures involves a long developmental journey. There are no easy short cuts' (Fullan & Hargreaves, 1992, p. 77). Headteachers must persevere with the development of a school ethos in which mutual respect and support for every person become the norm, re-assure staff that events are under

control and together they can 'win through', and recognize that winning the hearts and minds of the staff will demand considerable inter-personal and leadership skills (Nias, 1980; Spooner, 1982; Johnston, 1990; Diclaudio, 1991).

Enhancing the quality of staff participation

In the introduction to my thesis, I suggested that one way of differentiating between the terms 'involvement' and 'participation' was to ascribe the former to opportunity for playing a part in a process and the latter to an active and committed involvement. Although I have tended to use the terms interchangeably, I wish to re-visit these definitions in the light of evidence from this case-study and suggest that there may be:

- (a) a relationship between staff *involvement* and a *climate* of collaboration;
- (b) a relationship between staff *participation* and a collaborative *culture*.

A climate of teacher involvement may be facilitated through the headteacher establishing a tightly coupled decision-making process which depends upon collaboration, but the development of a culture demands that staff commitment to the process and to one another is deeply rooted in the life and work of the school and the consciousness of individuals. It may be that my research at St. Kerensa's was insufficiently long to discern any embedding of the collaboration into the cultural fibre of the school, though collaboration was more evident towards the end of the research than at the start. The evidence pointed to a number of issues which required resolution before the collaboration was free to move beyond the 'climate' stage of involvement to a participative culture. First, three general points:-

- * In order to contribute wholeheartedly, a teacher must be in a position to offer relevant knowledge, expertise or experience. The most effective

contribution is likely to come from those who are best informed and have had opportunity to think through the issues involved. This has implications for the preparation for meetings and the time scale required for distributing an agenda and allowing members the opportunity to digest the necessary information and reflect upon it prior to the event. Appendix 7, Figure 2, 'The Consultation Process and Participant Knowledge Base' models the likely contributions during a consultation time. That is, 'consultation' is not a single definable act but rather depends upon an interchange of exchanges within a collaborative framework, an element of which is the knowledge and understanding possessed by participants (a finding reflecting the conclusions of Elliott-Kemp, 1982).

* It is the responsibility of all staff, particularly the headteacher, to create a mood of mutual respect and trust between teachers. If teachers are uneasy about a colleague's role, the power they can exercise or the status of the meeting, consultation will become stilted and unfulfilling. Purposes must be clearly defined and understood, and mutual tolerance and support fostered, if enthusiasm for involvement is to be sustained (Polite, 1990). Changing the formal organization is likely to prove insufficient without attending to the question of agreed social norms (Keedy, 1990).

* Teachers need to understand the extent to which consultation is being initiated as a result of uncertainty about appropriate future action as against consultation for the opportunity to persuade subordinates that a particular option is desirable. If this distinction is not made, leaders are open to the accusation of 'playing games' with colleagues and wasting their time. Senior staff, with the benefit of insights gained from previous discussions, may wish to offer suggestions to other (less senior) members. This is different in kind from a meeting in which there is 'everything to play for' and increasing

involvement results in a more complete collegial system and greater consensual decision-making. Appendix 7, Figure 3, ('Consultation Strategies') indicates that the form of consultation preferred by the consulter has implications for the level of collegiality and consensus necessary to reach a decision. That is, a state of shared uncertainty can facilitate a more democratically derived consensus due to the inter-dependency of participants. Appendix 7, Figure 4 ('Pathways in Consultation') describes the likely impact of these differentiated consultation procedures. That is, liaison with the full staff may take the form of (a) a pre-decision made by the headteacher or externally imposed and brought to the staff for their affirmation; (b) fully collegial participation with minimal pre-determination; (c) staff participation in consultation over the preferred option from a pre-determined range. Further levels of staff engagement will rely heavily upon which of the three pathways are followed, a further indication of the headteacher's central role influencing staff involvement in decision-making.

Second, issues specific to headteachers:-

* Headteachers should recognize that in any decision-making process, teachers perceive their own colleagues as belonging to constituent groups and have associated expectations of them. For instance, the members of the senior management team were corporately identified by other teachers. Some teachers were spoken of by colleagues as 'ready for promotion' or 'bound to get a deputy headship soon' or 'headship material' if they exhibited a desire to be fully involved in decision-making, and accorded great respect if they were found to be well-informed about significant issues. One teacher was frequently acknowledged by his colleagues in this manner.

* Headteachers must be clear about the extent to which delegation of responsibilities (e.g. to a curriculum co-ordinator) affords the teacher opportunity to initiate ideas and put forward proposals which reflect a personal ideology. That is, to what extent task allocation carries an implicit message that the individual will be expected to reflect the headteacher's philosophy in the way that he or she fulfils his or her responsibility and the extent to which the headteacher is prepared to 'trade off' with teachers to gain their co-operation. That is, teachers' own professionalism influences their behaviour, ensuring that they can be relied upon by the headteacher to be loyal because of their responsibility for the delegated task. If headteachers genuinely wish to establish and maintain a collaborative culture through teacher participation, they may be advised to explore openly the concepts of 'loyalty' and 'professionalism' with their staff before establishing a decision-making structure.

* Headteachers must acknowledge that some teachers do not wish to be accountable for decisions and wish to absolve themselves from personal responsibility for the outcome (Thorp, 1987). These 'less involved' teachers also form part of the staff team and should be encouraged to verbalise their fears rather than viewed as unco-operative or obstructive. Marsh (1990) offers a useful comment on this: 'It may take a considerable period of time for some persons to be willing to commit themselves...Building collegiality among staff is something which has to be nurtured patiently' (p. 158). The confidence-building is likely to be assisted by headteachers who clarify with staff the purpose of their involvement on different occasions (Hobbs et al, 1979).

* If senior staff are to be involved as part of a senior management group, adequate training needs to be provided for the teachers involved (Hitt, 1990).

Third, to teachers:-

* Teachers need to recognize that the opportunity to explore wider areas of school life and work does not have to be detrimental to the quality of their classroom teaching. (My earlier constructs suggested that greater involvement in school-wide issues might result in neglect of teaching; however, the increased time pressures of involvement have to be weighed against the potential advantages of additional knowledge, influence and satisfaction.) Teachers' close involvement with whole school issues does not have to indicate selfish ambition, weakness in the face of the headteacher's insistence or fading interest in the children's welfare; on the contrary, it is likely to offer the opportunity to widen horizons and influence decisions which reflect the participant's priorities and aspirations.

* Attention has also to be given to appropriate use of time. Involvement in wider issues should not be allowed to dominate a teacher's life to such an extent that it results in exhaustion and uninspiring classroom practice.

All staff, at every level of seniority and experience are advised to accept Shipman's assertion (1975) that 'the roles of the head, teachers and pupils will...have a common basis, but will rarely dovetail perfectly. There will always be areas where the roles grind in friction like faulty gears' (p. 45). Mutual tolerance and maintaining a positive outlook seems a fitting weapon to ward off the twin threats of overload and low self-esteem.

However, teachers are also advised to consider the following benefits of closer involvement:-

- * A higher degree of participation can allow teachers access to resources through budget control in addition to access through their regular responsibilities, though it cannot be assumed that they will have the necessary expertise or understanding to avail themselves fully of such opportunities.
- * As teachers have more influence upon decisions and priorities, they can exercise some control over the school philosophy of teaching, enhancing their chances of success in teaching, thereby leading to greater likelihood of headteacher approval, job security and other privileges.

Involvement and decision-making

One of the important conclusions from the case-study was that involvement in decision-making does not often equate with 'making the decision', due in large measure to the fixed obligations as a result of external demands, and partly due to a multiplicity of factors associated with time pressures, allocation of responsibility, and ultimate accountability of individuals, in particular the headteacher. Additionally, decision-making (a) sometimes involved a consensus and (b) sometimes left the headteacher or senior staff with the final decision. As such, decisiveness was important; the benefits of definite action often outweighed the thankless task of trying to please everyone, with the accompanying delays, repeated discussions and frustrations. This suggested that consensus may not always be possible with the various constraints and differing staff perspectives; however, staff consent may be a reasonable alternative if the climate is one of mutual tolerance and respect (Jones, 1985). That is, genuine agreement may be reached without the prospect of a 'false consensus', establishing an appropriate ethos prior to the formal structures to facilitate collaborative forms of decision-making. Even so, there can be no guarantee that teachers will be involved consistently; rather, their participation will depend upon the context and interpretation of the situation (Clarke et al,

1981; Bullough, 1987; Sparkes, 1991). However, teachers are more likely to respond positively to a leadership style that fosters collaborative patterns of working when they perceive that the outcome will promote the sort of pupil-centred approach upon which many of them continue to base their educational philosophy (Busher & Saran, 1994).

In addition, Blackmore (1990) suggested that participation should principally rely upon professional judgement about the appropriateness of a decision in respect of teaching-and-learning. The results of my research suggest that fixed national policies and rapid change has not allowed for much 'judgement about the appropriateness of a decision', but has given some room for varied interpretation and subsequent implementation by individuals or groups. Three implications emerge as a result:-

- * A teacher may accept the general principle of involvement but may or may not participate closely depending upon: (a) positional factors, such as a curriculum responsibility or member of the SMT; (b) pressure from interest set or constituent members, such as the phase or colleagues responsible for the same age group; (c) whole staff momentum, especially when passionate issue about children, job security, etc.
- * Even allowing for a teacher's willingness to participate, other factors can interfere or promote the extent of his or her influence (level of experience, absence through illness at a crucial meeting, self-doubt, lack of time to absorb necessary facts or information and form an opinion).
- * Willingness is not absolute; it varies with the conditions; e.g., other pressing business detracts from concentration on the issue in hand; too much time spent on a single issue can lead to tedium and discontent and a feeling that a decision (any decision) must be made. However, 'we must do something' may not be enough; it's more a case of doing the right thing.

This case study confirmed Conway's claim from reviewing empirical studies that teachers' satisfaction with decision-making is a function of the type of decision made as well as their degree of involvement (Conway, 1984). That is, close involvement is no guarantee of increased teacher satisfaction; some persons still felt deprived of real influence. Dale's bold claim that it is not legitimate to infer 'that teachers operate with the crumbs left from the bureaucrats' table' but that 'influences generated within the education profession are more influential in determining the form of educational policy than those produced by the central bureaucracy' (1981, p. 83) was not sustained by the evidence from St. Kerensa's. Staff struggled to retain control over their occupational practice but felt consistently threatened by the plethora of imposed demands, reforms, rapid changes and uncertain goals.

Compliance also has its limits, for it runs up against a 'philosophy barrier' of personal belief and ethic (see Appendix 7, Figure 5; 'Commitment to a Course of Action') which superintends other pressures which run counter to that belief (Dickinson, 1975). Although less experienced staff tended to have a greater 'compliance limit' due to their insecurity and uncertainty about expectations (Richardson, 1981; Osborn, 1992), the need for personal gratification from schoolteaching did not allow the majority of staff to accede to propositions or decisions which restricted achieving that goal. Figure 5 differs from earlier constructs in its recognition that teachers' commitment to a course of action is not dependent upon a single encompassing criterion but rather upon a series of 'judgement stages' made by each teacher. Teachers' responses at each of these stages determines their eventual position on a commitment continuum somewhere between 'Enthusiast' and 'Skeptic' depending upon the decisional context and issue involved. This, in turn, affects the extent and wholeheartedness of the individual's participation.

This finding further suggests that for all teaching staff there is a need for maintaining a high level of motivation through effective leadership which, in turn, strengthens morale and teachers' willingness to become involved (Nias, 1980; Musaazi, 1982; Southworth, 1990). Indicators of good practice in an ideal school will include a high level of co-operation and a free interplay of ideas within a relaxed framework in which individual and group responsibilities are clearly defined. Leadership will not be restricted by the hierarchical structures but opportunities for informal leadership will be accepted and acknowledged. The ideas and initiatives developed through informal interactions will be accorded consideration and form an inseparable whole with the regular formal patterns of decision-making. The purpose of meetings will be clarified, discriminating between elements of information sharing, dissemination and discussion about implementation, general consultation in which the leader reserves the right to arbitrate, and decision-making requiring consensus.

Despite the pressures for rapid change, school leaders (especially headteachers) must ensure that good quality, effective teacher involvement takes place in an atmosphere in which the rights and integrity of teachers are preserved. Additionally, any rational model which recognizes the value of staff involvement and is used to negotiate the complexities of the decision-making process from proposal to implementation must also take into account the part played by other interested parties. Teacher involvement in the consultation process cannot be isolated from the expectations, contributions and value positions of members from other constituent groups outside the immediate daily work of the school, including governors, LEA, and (where appropriate) headteacher colleagues and parents. Following any consultation with such groups, the decision largely rests with the headteacher as to the priority that the issue then receives. However, dialogue with key staff and the use of constituent groups within school (such as early years teachers) for further discussion, and opportunity for all teachers to reflect and discuss informally and feed back the

results of their deliberations into the formal meetings, should result in better informed decisions about appropriate action. Somehow, despite the crowded agenda, time has to be found to ensure that consultation incorporates both the formal and informal elements, offering security to the headteacher and encouragement to teachers that their participation in decision-making is worthwhile.

Finally, the case-study at St. Kerensa's provided strong evidence to support the view that the rapid pace of government reforms significantly affected the work practices and involvement of teachers in team and whole-school issues. Although many of the characteristics of involvement described in this thesis would undoubtedly have taken place outside a time of rapid change, the impact of national reforms catalysed new forms of collaboration and sharpened the relevance of existing ones. Additionally, the need for rapid change did result in a number of positive outcomes. For instance, it led to an increase in the extent of collaboration throughout the school and created the conditions for an intensive review of the school's decision-making structures and teachers' place within it. Considerable effort was made by the headteacher and her staff to ensure that appropriate documentation was produced and distributed, resources appropriately organized and the dissemination of information to staff given priority. Close attention was also paid to numerous aspects of school life and practice, including a strengthening of links with parents, governors and colleagues in other schools.

However, the pace of change also caused increased amounts of stress, anguish and hardship for all teachers. The timetable of implementation dates, volume of paperwork and assumptions about teachers' ability and willingness to cope with innovations, created an intensity of activity which undermined morale and enthusiasm for the job. Warnings given by many commentators about the structural weaknesses of the National Curriculum and the prospect of dire

consequences for teachers in school (e.g. Golby, 1987; Aldrich, 1990) were shown to be justified, reflected in the strain endured by teachers as they attempted to remain abreast of the demands. The detailed procedures and statutory demands which characterised the reforms, reflecting the government's belief that primary schools were organized on a rationally-based model and could incorporate the changes in an orderly and predictable manner, failed to take sufficient account of the existing norms within the school, teachers' hopes, expectations and aspirations, and the impact of the heavy burden placed upon the headteacher. The government, through its national reforms, assumed a convergence of understanding and belief which should not have been presumed, not least their apparent belief that teachers had confidence that the reforms would benefit children.

On the basis of my case-study, the initiation of change needed to take closer account of the time required for the development of new norms and understandings across a school staff before implementation was attempted. This required far closer consultation at national and local level in an effort to engage teachers' interest, fire their enthusiasm, and offer curriculum guidelines which individual school staff could interpret and utilise according to their circumstances. Monitoring of school performance would still have been possible; school staff would have had the right and responsibility to exercise their professional judgement as to which recommended innovations were accepted, which were kept under review, and which were rejected. As it was, the importance of the teacher's role was undermined by the introduction of statutory curriculum reforms at the same time as other changes to their conditions of service.

Effective change would have been better served by the deliberate use of government-initiated supportive strategies expressed through word and deed which would have reduced uncertainties for teachers rather than increased them, re-assured them of their worth rather than lowered their self-esteem, and

allowed them greater flexibility in the interpretation of statutory requirements in the light of agreed aims and priorities amongst the staff of particular schools. This approach would have encouraged teachers to feel that their involvement in decision-making was a worthwhile and fulfilling professional one rather than an onerous responsibility within an externally contrived, overloaded reform programme.

APPENDICES

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APPENDIX 1

COMMUNICATIONS

Letter to the headteacher of St. Kerensa's formally requesting access, 30th November 1990, following an earlier telephone call and meeting:

Dear Mrs. Boxer,

I am writing to you formally to request access to St. Kerensa's School for the purpose of research. I enclose a copy of the research proposal for your information. You will be aware from our previous discussions that interviews with different members of the school community will be necessary. Additionally, any relevant documentation would be valuable in gaining a complete picture during the case-study. Full confidentiality would, of course, be observed. My presence as researcher would be as a 'non-participant'. I am happy to explain the purpose of the study more fully to yourself or any other audience if you feel it to be appropriate.

Thank-you in anticipation.

Mr D. Hayes,
Polytechnic South West,
Rolle Faculty of Education,
Exmouth,
Devon,
EX8 2AT.

Your ref:
My ref:

Date: 11th December 1990

Dear Denis,

Thank-you for your letter of 30.11.90, requesting access to our school for the purpose of your research leading to your Phd.

You have my permission to use the school on the understanding of the assured confidentiality of sensitive material.

You are welcome to; have open access to enter school at anytime, to attend meetings as an observer, to refer to relevent documentation and to conduct formal and informal interviews with members of staff subject to their approval.

I would appreciate you keeping me informed, on a regular basis, of the progress being made.

I feel that it might be helpful if we could arrange a mutually convenient time for you to attend a staff meeting to outline your proposed research.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

**Letter to the staff of St. Kerensa's Primary School,
February 1991.**

Dear All,

Just a brief note to thank you for allowing me to come and explain my research proposal to you before half-term and your kind agreement to allow me access to the school over the next couple of years. I was most grateful to hear the verdict. I can understand that you may still be unclear about the purpose of the research... to some extent that makes two of us! Basically, I'm looking at the process of decision-making from the perspective of the participants (and that means everyone concerned), but you'll probably find that our paths cross infrequently. In a sense, I can only gain as much information as you are prepared to release. I do promise that I shan't intrude, though being inquisitive is part of the job. Please feel free to ask me anything about the work at any time; I'll do my best to answer. Perhaps I can stress again that the work is confidential. The locality of the school, names of teachers concerned, etc. are not released or made known to anyone except (where necessary) my own Faculty supervisor (Dr. Andrew Hannan).

I hope that everyone has had opportunity to recover over half-term and feel refreshed. I look forward to renewing acquaintance in the near future. If anyone wishes to contact me at any time, please telephone at work or home.

To the staff of 'St. Kerensa's' currently working at the school whose interviews were recorded over the period of research conducted by Denis Hayes from January 1991 to April 1993.

From Denis Hayes

23rd September 1993.

Dear

I enclose a transcript/ paraphrase of our conversation during interview. You may even recognise some of the things you said! As I would like to use some of your comments in my final write up of my thesis, would you be good enough to look through carefully. If there are any quotes which you feel you'd prefer were NOT used in the thesis, would you please let me know as soon as possible.

Naturally, I'm hoping that you will allow me to quote any of your comments, but I will respect your wishes if you say 'no'. In reaching your decision, may I remind you of the following:

- * pseudonyms are used to protect an individual's identity.
- * generally, only selective quotes will be used.
- * the analysis of quotes and interpretation of your comments is my sole responsibility, though I'm very happy to receive confirmatory or additional comment from you.
- * after the final draft of the thesis is completed, you are welcome to respond with further clarifications or amendments.
- * to ensure complete anonymity, the location of St. Kerensa's will be described as 'a primary school in the south-west of England' or similar.

The above points refer only to staff who are still employed at St. Kerensa's.

Thanks very much. Please don't hesitate to contact me about the research or have a chat sometime if you require clarification.

**NOTE TO ALL STAFF WHO HAVE CONTRIBUTED TO MY RESEARCH
DATA THROUGHOUT THE PERIOD FEBRUARY 1991 TO APRIL 1993**

From Denis Hayes

23rd September 1993.

Dear All,

You may have noticed that I have been around rather less over the past couple of months. This has been principally due to the fact that I'm in the writing-up phase of my thesis.

As part of the process, I have photocopied details of interviews held over the two years and given them to the individual to read, requesting that if there is anything the person does not want quoted, they should let me know.

I'm obviously hoping that everyone will be happy to let me use the material freely... I have taken every measure to protect the anonymity of the respondent.

Some of you may not have received an envelope with copies of an interview. This means that (as far as I can ascertain) we have never conducted a formal interview... so don't feel left out! If you think otherwise, please let me know. I have had a large number of informal conversations with almost everyone, but these were not recorded in any detail, so direct quotes are unlikely to be used. However, these informal conversations have been invaluable in helping me gain a fuller picture and I'm thankful to anyone who has generously given me their time during lunch breaks, etc. to chat about issues.

Finally, it's important to stress that the thesis principally examines processes and procedures, not personalities. It is meant to be a positive contribution towards explaining the immense pressures and coping strategies experienced by all of you in school over the past years.

I'm immensely grateful to everyone for your patience, time and openness, and thank you most sincerely.

Home telephone:

To all staff involved in my research during 1991-1993...

From Denis Hayes.

17th January 1994.

You may be aware that I am using some of my research data for the purpose of writing short articles. I am currently working on a chapter for a book, hopefully to be published during 1994, and thought you may be interested to see a draft copy and in particular the manner in which I use quotes from interviews and conversations.

A copy of the draft is available from the school secretary. Please ask to see it if you are interested but would you be kind enough to keep it confidential. Thanks.

If you have any useful comments on the way in which I have presented the data, I would be very happy to hear from you before the end of January 1994. Please telephone me, drop me a note or see me when I'm in school.

Many thanks for all your help,

(DENIS HAYES)

To all staff involved in my research

From Denis Hayes

April 1994.

Dear Colleagues,

I have completed the final draft of my thesis and am placing a copy of it in the school prior to eventual completion and binding. If you have time to look at it and have any comments as a result, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Due to the tight time frame, any comments will have to be given by **THURSDAY 5TH MAY** at the latest. I am particularly interested in any factual inaccuracies that you may pick up, but if there are areas in which you feel that there is misrepresentation, I will be happy to discuss this with you and put the record straight. Naturally, I'm hoping that there won't be anything too drastic at this stage as I have tried to give ample opportunity over the past months for this purpose.

May I thank everybody once again for their kind co-operation and courtesy which has been genuinely appreciated. With many thanks.

Yours sincerely,

P.S. As the document is still not public, your continued discretion would be valued. Thank-you.

APPENDIX 2

STAFFING

Staff Structure

The headteacher, Mrs. Boxer, was appointed in April 1988. The deputy headteacher, Mr. Jameson, joined the school in April 1990. At the start of the academic year 1990-91, when this research began, the staffing was as follows:

Headteacher:	Mrs. Boxer.
Deputy headteacher:	Mr. Jameson.
Early Years Co-ordinator:	Mrs. Hemyock.
Science and IT co-ordinator:	Ms. Wolfendale
Middle School Phase Co-ordinator:	Mrs. Vollo.

The last three, in conjunction with the Head and Deputy, were designated the title of 'senior management team' (SMT) owing to their permanent Rate 'A' allowance responsibility. Thus, in 1990-91, the SMT comprised:

Mrs. Boxer
Mr. Jamieson
Mrs. Hemyock
Ms. Wolfendale
Mrs. Vollo

The responsibility of Mrs. Vollo changed from Middle School co-ordinator to a curriculum area of Art, Design and Display co-ordinator. Ms. Wolfendale was appointed to the post late in 1989-90 following the promotion of the postholder. This responsibility also changed from one of 'Transition Phase Co-ordinator' to a curriculum area.

Class structure and staff were as follows:

Year 7 parallel classes: Mr. Dawn; Mrs. Northern

Year 5/6 parallel classes: Mr. Jameson; Mrs. Vollo

Year 4 parallel classes: Miss Young; Mrs. Cain

Year 2/3: Mrs. Hemyock
Mrs. Martin
Mrs. Stone

Reception/Year 1: Mrs. Harrison
Mrs. Ellie
Ms. Wolfendale

Nursery (mornings): Mr. Briony (a new appointment)

Non-class based: Mrs. Driver...allocated to work across the school,
particularly with Early Years

Curriculum co-ordination throughout the school:

English:	Mrs. Northern & Mrs. Hemyock
Mathematics:	Mr. Jameson & Mrs. Harrison
Science and IT:	Ms. Wolfendale
Design Technology:	Mrs. Driver
Art, Design & Display:	Mrs. Vollo
Humanities:	Mr. Dawn & Miss Cain
Health Education:	Mrs. Ellie
School Environment:	Mrs. Martin
Music:	Mrs. Stone
Family Groups: (counsellor)	Mrs. Boxer (headteacher) & Mrs. Connie
PE & Games:	Mr. Dawn (nominally)
R.E.:	Governors

By the start of the academic year 1991-92, a number of changes had taken place, including two teachers leaving the school and their replacements, and some re-allocation of teachers for specific age groups:

- * Mrs. Hemyock (promoted to the headship of a small school) was replaced by a newly qualified teacher, Miss Razall
- * Miss Young (who left teaching after a single year for a post in a bank in another town) was replaced by Miss Winter, another newly qualified teacher
- * Mrs. Ellie replaced Mrs. Hemyock in the SMT.

The class structure became:

Year 7:	Mrs. Vollo
Year 5/6:	Mr. Jameson (Deputy) Mr. Dawn Miss Razall
Year 3/4:	Mrs. Stone Miss Cain Mrs. Northern
Year 2:	Mrs. Ellie Mrs. Farmer

Reception/Year 1: Mrs. Harrison
Ms. Wolfendale

Nursery (0.5): Mr. Briony

Mr. Briony received a Rate 'A' allowance for work in the nursery. In addition, Mrs. Driver was allocated to Years 5 and 6 for half of her time, and to Reception/ Year 1 for the other half. This programme was seen to be flexible, particularly in respect of the SATs in the Spring Term of Year 2, when her assistance was especially valuable.

The Section 11 teacher, Mrs. Josie, would circulate among the classes as appropriate for New Commonwealth children for whom English was a second language.

Additional non-teaching staff included:

Mrs. Connie, the Church Schools' Counselling and Education Project counsellor.

A Nursery Assistant.

Two classroom assistants working with Early Years classes.

Five assistants working with individual children for whom a 'Statement of Special Needs' had been drawn up.

Curriculum co-ordinator posts remained much the same as the previous year, except that Mrs. Hemyock had now left the school and her work in Early Years language development was therefore 'lost'. Her replacement (Miss Winter), being a probationary teacher, did not receive a specifically designated curriculum responsibility. Similarly, the other new teacher, Miss Razall was not allocated a responsibility. The Section 11 teacher was designated 'co-ordinator for English as a Second Language'.

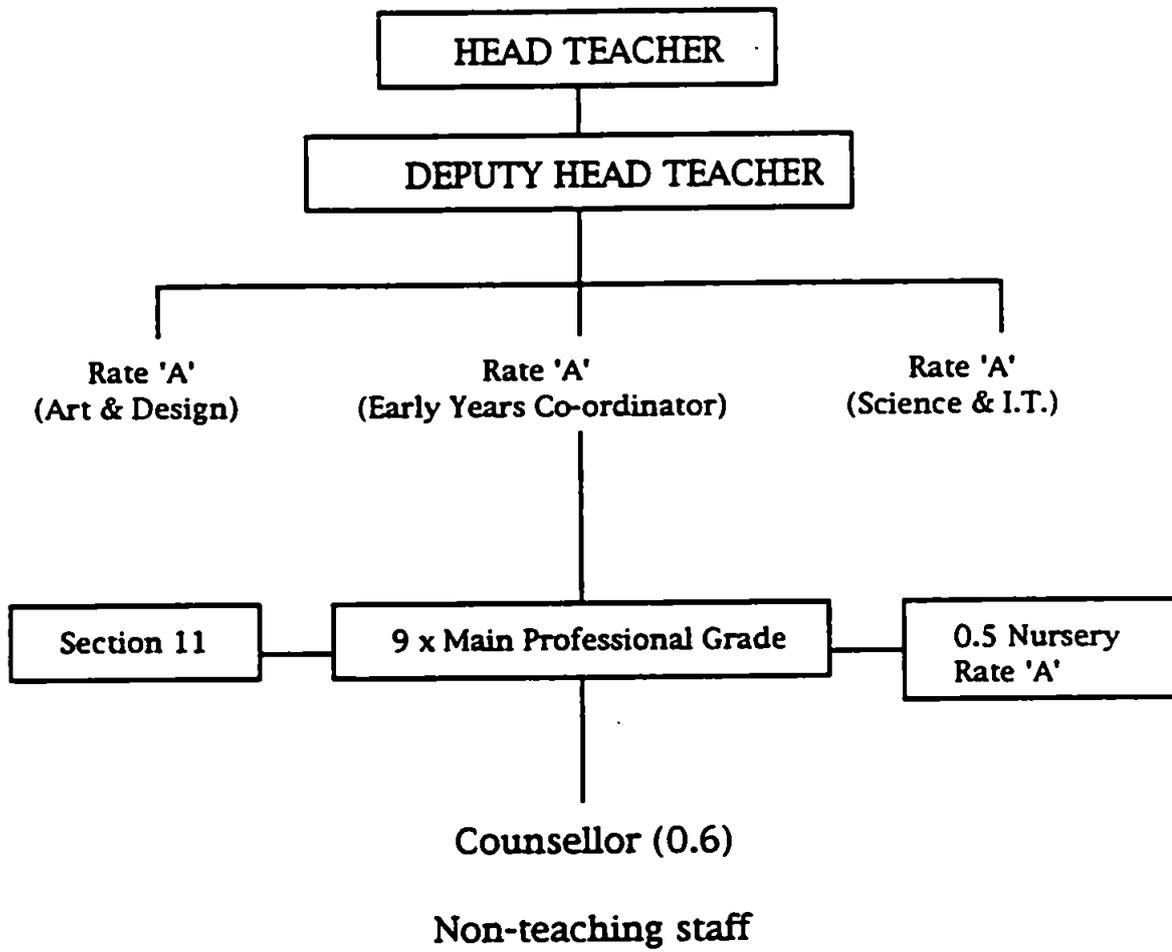
At the beginning of academic year 1992-93, Miss Razall left the school to be replaced by a teacher in her second teaching post; Mrs. Stone (retired on medical grounds) was replaced by a newly qualified teacher.

The 'new' SMT comprised:

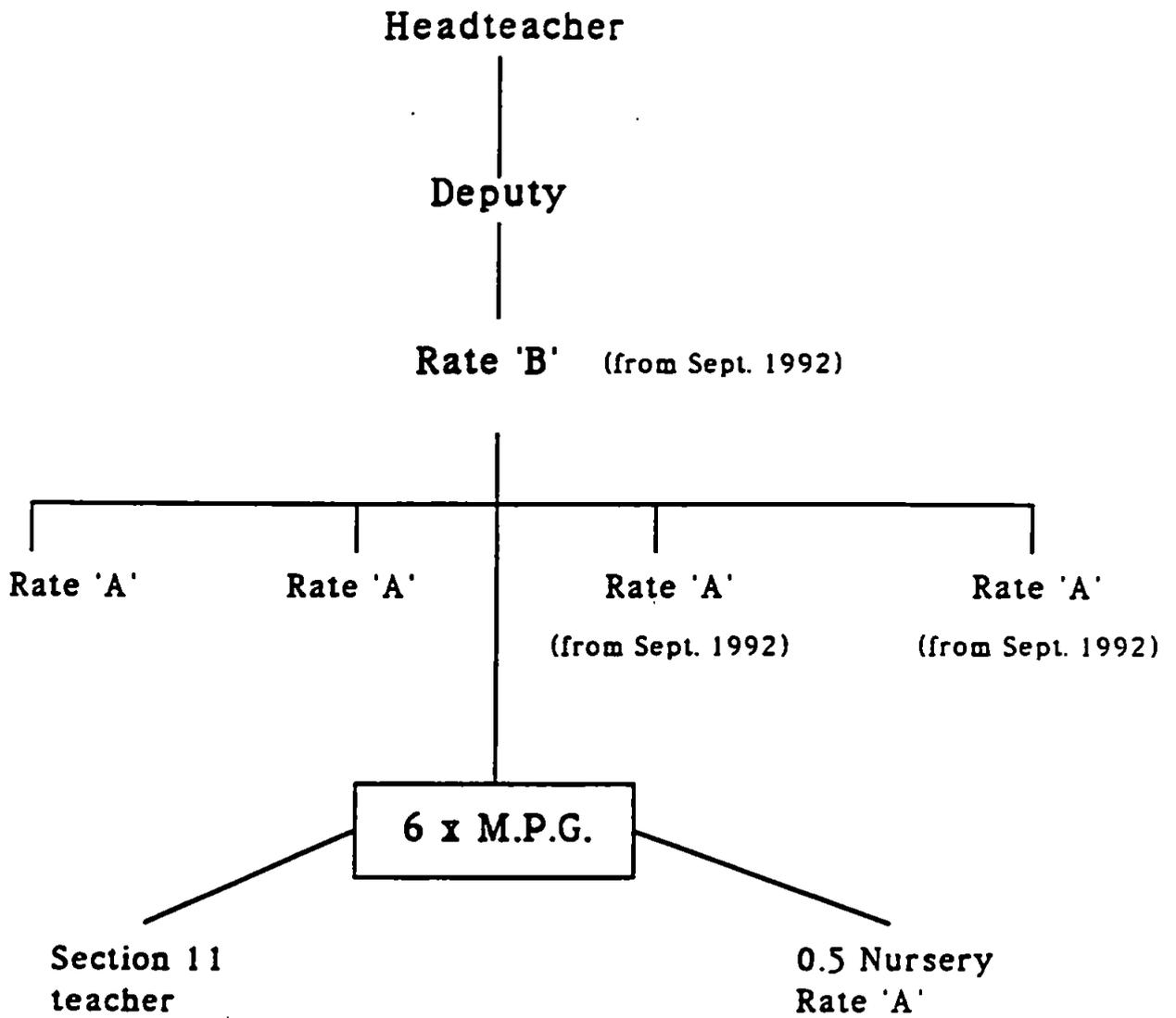
Mrs. Boxer (headteacher)
Mr. Jamieson (deputy)
Mrs. Ellie (Rate 'B' responsibility)

Other Rate 'A' postholders were not included in the re-formed SMT.

Miss Winter was allocated the responsibility for Dance and Drama.

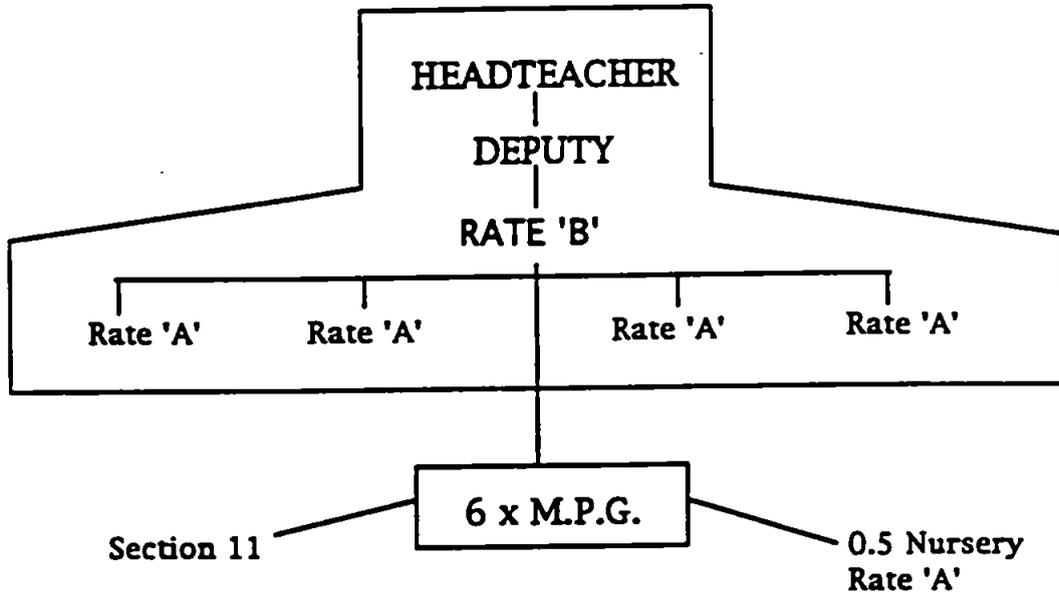


SCHOOL STAFF HIERARCHY 1991-92

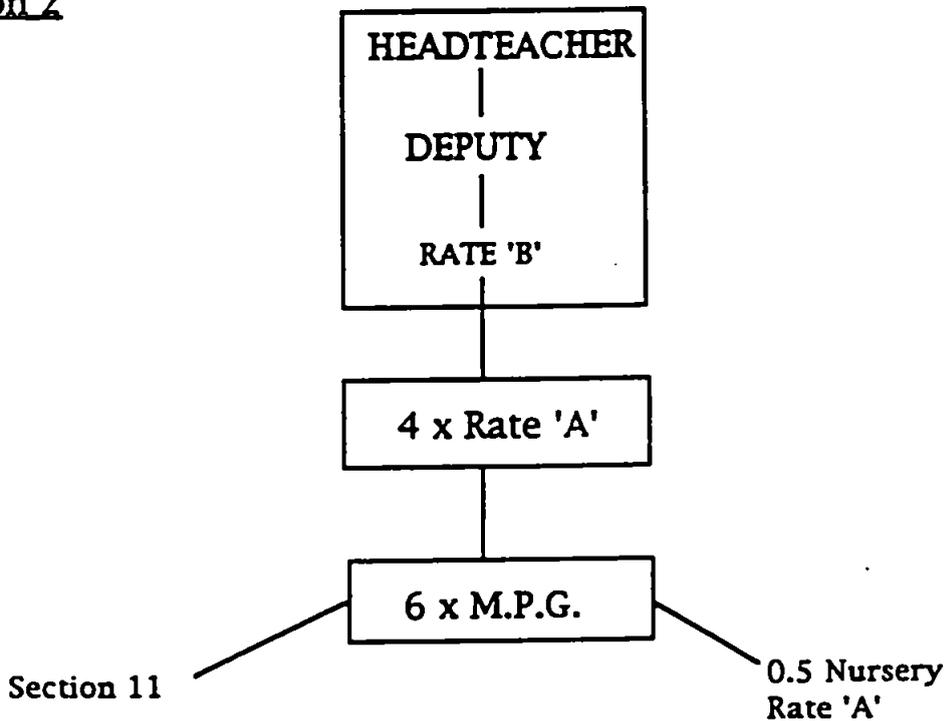


STAFF STRUCTURE
September 1992

Option 1



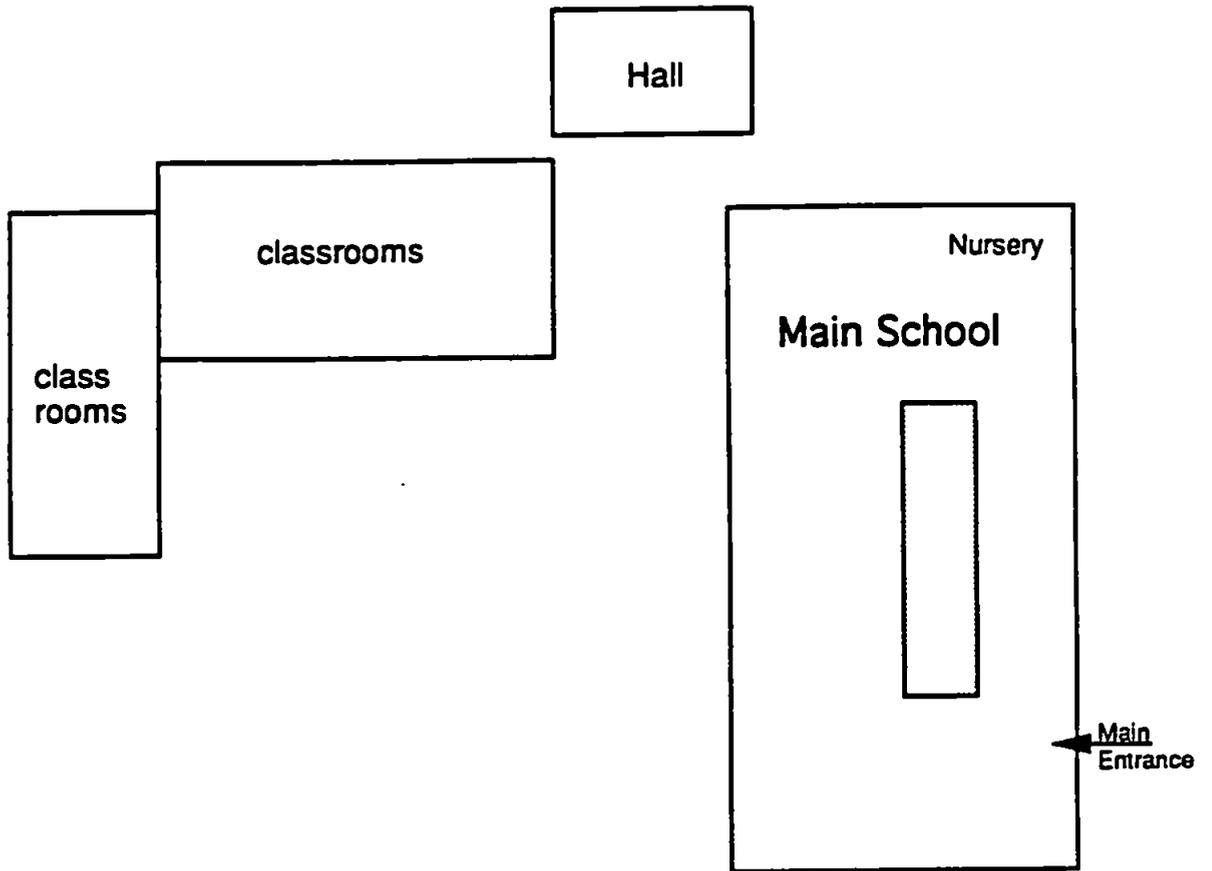
Option 2



**OPTIONS FOR SENIOR MANAGEMENT TEAM
(FORMAL STRUCTURE 1992-93)**

APPENDIX 3

PLAN OF ST. KERENSA'S SCHOOL



 'CENTRAL AREA'

St. Kerensa's Primary School

APPENDIX 4

EXAMPLES OF INTERVIEW SCHEDULES

INFORMAL INTERVIEWS June 1991 onwards.

NAME OF RESPONDENT:

DATE:

The date is I am talking to, who has right of access to this tape at any time.

1. How long have you been at the school?
2. Has my presence in the school affected you?
3. How would you describe my relationship with the school when I come in to do the research?
4. Have you got any concerns about my presence in the school?
5. Do you feel you know what I'm attempting to do?
6. I'm looking at this business of "decision-making" in the school. Do you feel that YOU have a grasp of how decisions are made?
7. What about your OWN part in the process?
8. How much does the system depend upon the PEOPLE involved?
9. What would you like to see changed if you could exercise more influence?
10. So where's it all heading? What about your own aspirations?

INTERVIEW SCHEDULE: HEADTEACHER OCTOBER 1991

Responsibilities of staff:

Are there job descriptions for staff, especially Rate "A" allowance teachers?

What about the temporary Rate "A" holders?

Who draws up the descriptions? Is there a mechanism?

Are the descriptions in any way negotiable?

Role of governors:

Clearly the governors have an important function in the overall life of the school. Can you summarise the kinds of liaison which continues on a regular basis between the school and the governors?

The responsibility for running the school on a daily basis is your own...how does this square with the presence of governors in the school?

Are there occasions when there is uncertainty about where responsibility lies for decision-making between yourself and governors?

Boundaries for decision-making:

To what extent do you think it is important to involve staff in the decision-making process?

Are there certain areas of school life where you consider that you have the sole responsibility for decisions.

Conversely, are there any times when staff make decisions which are exclusively their own without reference to you?

Monitoring decisions:

How difficult is it to maintain a standard method in the school for recording decisions taken and ensuring that everybody is informed?

To what extent is a decision absolute? Are there occasions when a decision is taken which simply doesn't work out in practice? What happens then?

Influence of Academic Council:

What powers does the Academic Council hold in terms of direct influence upon the school?

Can you resist a decision taken?

Do you ever implement a decision taken at the Academic Council without feeling completely sure about its appropriateness?

Local Management of Schools:

Presumably, the impact of LMS has been considerable. How has it influenced your control over decisions made within the school?

How largely does the issue of resources feature in the nature of decision-making?

Does the LEA still exercise any substantial control?

National Curriculum:

Many of your meetings are concerned with discussion about curriculum issues...to what extent do you feel that the National Curriculum has influenced the direction of decision-making within the school?

Other external demands:

Generally, how much do you feel that the range of external demands upon the school has taken control of the development of policy out of your hands?

Policies:

Do you have a particular view of what constitutes a "policy"? When is a decision translated into policy?

Aided status:

This is an Aided School...how much does this affect the development of policy decisions in the school?

Semi-structured Interview Schedule (senior staff)

Broad headings...

1. There is an established structure for decision-making in the school: how do you feel it has operated since the start of the academic year?

- * the SMT**
- * staff meetings**
- * phase meetings**
- * team meetings**

2. What are the other influences acting upon the decision-making process?

- * key persons**
- * unofficial structures**
- * power politics**

3. To what extent are you satisfied that the staff are united in purpose for the school?

- * is unity achievable?**
- * is there any preference for imbalance?**
- * who are the key persons to be won over?**

4. Where do you see your role in this?

5. What changes would you initiate given opportunity?

- * the key issues**
- * realistic possibilities**
- * desirable but unattainable**

6. So where next?

APPENDIX 5

EXAMPLES OF INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTS

Interview with Miss Young

June 19th 1991

After school/ In her classroom/ Tape-recorded/ 35 minutes

Key Points:

1. 'After this year, when I leave the school 'I'd quite like to go out of teaching, I think...I've applied for a job in a bank, but I thought I might do supply in the area (Nottingham, following marriage) for a while'.

2. *Has my presence in the school affected you?*

'I didn't know why you were there at all for quite a long time, then I thought I'd better ask somebody. I found you were doing something about school structure and decision-making. That was fine...and everybody already knew you except for me. I don't think it's affected staff-meetings.'

(Miss Young then referred to the staff-meeting of Wednesday, 23rd May when the staff spoke frankly of their concerns. The meeting was chaired by the counsellor, Mrs. Connie.)

'Everyone was quite open; I don't think you affected anybody's freedom of thought'

'I see you as a researcher; I don't see you as part of the group in any way at all.; most people forget that you're there'

'I don't know what you're heading towards...what your final outcome is.'

3. *Do you feel that you have a grasp of how decisions are made in the school?*

'In a generalised theory way it's that things are brought up at staff-meetings, we say what we want, it goes to the head who has the final say on whether it's accepted or whether it isn't. I don't think that actually happens a lot of the time. It's a bit more complicated than that, they have the management meetings...we're below the management...and ultimately it's the head's decision.'

4. *How do you see the Senior Management Group...do you see them exercising real power in the school...or are they just a link?*

'Well, I didn't realise at first that they even existed for quite a long time until it came out: 'Oh, I don't know why we have Management meetings; I don't know what goes on in them. I must say I have the same sort of feelings now...I don't know what goes on in them...and I'm not entirely sure what they have to discuss which is important to all the staff, which we all might need to know. We all might need to have some input in. If it's things of a more personal nature (to individual members of staff), why are there so many in the group, why isn't it just the Head and the Deputy? It's almost half the staff! What do they all discuss that we all can't discuss?'

5. *Is this something you feel quite strongly about?*

'I didn't at first because I didn't know they existed, but now it seems quite strange because so many are involved. What on earth do they find to bring up. Things they do report back and say they've discussed, I think 'well why wasn't that discussed generally?' There was something quite trivial, about coffee and not bringing it down into the classroom, but it was reported back from the Senior Management meeting. But why it couldn't have just been said straight away, first thing in an open meeting, because it didn't seem anything secretive that they had to do in a Senior Management meeting.'

8. *Do you view SM meetings as dealing with a lot of confidential stuff?*

'I don't really know what they do at all.'

9. *What's your own part in the decision-making process...have you got any part to play?*

'Quite near the bottom, I think I always feel a bit conscious that I mustn't stick my neck out too much. I've got to get my probationary year. If I cause too much of an uproar then that could be a black mark against me.'

10. *Are you saying that you might have more to say if you weren't in the position you are?*

'I think so, because when I have mentioned things about the class ('cause they are quite disruptive) and asked for assistance, it didn't come for a long time, and when it did come it was critical of my planning, which I'm quite good at, and isn't the problem at all. I thought 'well, if that's what asking for help gets you I obviously should never have bothered' and kept plodding on as I was because it didn't help, and it upset me rather than helping. I think I felt in quite an awkward situation.'

11. *Do you see anybody else on the same plane as yourself in terms of decision-making?*

'I think in a way everybody's worried...we'll say things when the Head isn't present and air our grievances to each other...but in a full meeting when she's there we're much more reluctant to say, because obviously some of them are looking for promotion, and you always think: 'well, if I cause too much trouble what will happen in my references or put in my records. There's a certain amount of fear about what you're saying and you want to guard your own back; everybody will admit to that to a certain extent'

12. *You don't see much of a role for yourself in the formal decision-making...how about the informal talk in little knots of twos or threes?*

'That's where the SMT might come into play a bit more, then the grievances aired in the informal situations do go through into Senior Management, and it can be said without you being named or mentioned'

13. *Where do most of the informal exchanges take place?*

'I don't think any of us deliberately sit down to air our grievances, but they come up...if there's one or two sitting in the staff-room, it will come up and turn into a full-blown discussion. In the small phase-meetings, on Tuesday lunchtimes, they often turn out to be a grievance session. Despite the fact they're meant to be a chance to liaise and pass down information from senior management (which they are), but often things that come up are a grievance in one way or another. For example, what we are going to do over the next three terms...and the volume of work to be covered, plus language coming up again after spending the whole of the first term on it (I was new and apparently they'd spent the whole of the first year on it as well, which Mrs. Northern had done as well) didn't go down too well. Everything became very repetitive and I was bored, thinking this is quite a waste of time. From what I've heard now, everybody else feels the same way. (Another teacher) most of all was quite cheesed off. There were lots of things like that. Also, Mrs. Connie came in on it, saying there's all these things (meetings, presumably) but no open staff-meetings for emergencies or things that might crop up in the meantime...there was nothing like that at all. Certainly, grievances are aired a lot during the phase-meetings.

14. *What about discussion of curriculum documents, etc. Does that happen in phases?*

'Not very much, no'.
(She agreed that this blockage in the system led to the large amount of upset amongst the staff.)

15. *Are you saying that everything depends upon the people involved?*

'Yes, we were chatting about it the other day and we felt that there should be plenty of open staff-meetings. We are in a school where we have got a lot of problems and things that are occurring. We've got children coming in, and we don't know what they're like; a week later you find that they're very disruptive. That needs to be discussed. Everything's pre-planned and you're meant to do this, this and this but it's not going to work. Last year the same kind of itinerary was worked out, but it hasn't happened and we couldn't keep to it, so why follow the same policy again this year?...and why discuss it at SM level? Perhaps it would have been better to have discussed it as a whole staff first and then gone to senior management and narrowed it down and worked it out and brought it back to the whole staff.'

16. *You seem to be saying that you perceive things as being initiated in the SMT and fed to staff, when it should have been the other way around?*

'Yes.'

17. *Have you a view of the pressures that are on senior folk in the school...do you feel that things are more structured because of all they've got to get through?*

'I'm not really very sure of what happens or how much they feed back to governors, or what things go on. We're told there's a governor's meeting, but

apart from the odd thing which might relate to us, it isn't reported back and you don't really know what goes on. Obviously it's a chore to the people involved because they've worked all day and they've got all this to comprehend.'

18. *Are there too many meetings?*

'Certainly some people have got too many meetings. Someone like Mr. James (the deputy), who's now spread so thinly he seems to be going under this term; and Wednesdays ought to be an open meeting. You don't need to spend weeks and weeks just looking at Speaking in English document; we're all working on it every single day!'

'The policies have got to be a lot more open. People are huddling in corners. We need much more communication; no-one really knows what's going on. Like tonight, no-one knew what was going on...it hadn't been written up in the staff-room on the notice-board, no-one had bothered. One week it was written on one sheet we would meet in one place and one sheet that we would meet somewhere else; people ended up in different places!'

20. *Are you saying that there are bits of paper, but it requires more of a human touch?*

'Yes, I think so. If it was found out that two venues had been put down, at the end of the day a runner could have been sent around, so that we could be in the right place at the right time. The newsletter is a good idea for the staff.'

21. *You don't feel influential...but if you were?*

"Rather than coming back to the staff saying 'We'll do this, this and this' and the staff throw up their hands in horror saying 'we can't possibly do twenty things in the first term; there isn't enough time' "

22. *It seems that the SMT are in quite a difficult position...*

'I think they are; they themselves feel in a difficult position and I felt that when they were reporting back this week in the phase meeting we'd heard the same the previous week, but Mrs. Vollo said she'd been instructed to go through it again, so we'll go through it again; that's just a waste of all of our time.'

'She was running through what had got to be done next year and looking at what we'd done this year even though Mr. Jamieson had done the same thing with us the previous year so we were looking at the same piece of paper again. The meeting was quite short and a bit of a grievance session but the issue was brought up that the actual amount of work planned for next year was too much and there should be more open meetings'

'We've obviously got to do a lot of work on History and Geography; it's coming in September and we've done nothing at all. Everybody's quite vague in the working-parties. I'm in the Science WP and we've discussed what we thought and how Science could be covered if we had a rolling programme right throughout the school so that children would meet certain things at, say, Year 1, 3 and 7, and we could work that out, but we needed to be with the whole staff to discuss what we put in each bit. That could have just been done...it could be

done and finished and up, ready to begin in September...but it hasn't been, because you get to the open meeting and everybody's vague and no-one knows what to do, then nothing's done.'

23. *'Are you saying that at the times decisions should be made, i.e., the staff meetings, decisions are not being made?'*

'It becomes a bit wishy-washy or pushed aside. Because we went to these working parties, we looked at the documents, at the Programmes of Study, decided that's what we wanted to do, that was best. Then we decided the best thing to do was a rolling programme, so at least for the time-being everybody knew where they were. Once we were more in tune with what everybody wanted we could divert more and abandon that programme but for a couple of years it would help us out because we were floundering, trying to cover all these different things. Whereas if there was a structure it would at least ease the burden, especially with History and Geography and everything else coming in. That needs to be a whole staff decision, not just the working group'

26. *Have the working groups been looking for too much depth when a skeletal framework would have been adequate for now?*

'I felt that all year because I got landed and no real help coming in anywhere. If there was something just simple such as these are the topics which can be covered in each Year, then you could fit them in; and it would just a simple way of knowing you were covering the right sort of things...that would help...especially to someone who's new. In my last school for teaching-practice, they had policies for everything and it gave you a list of topics for each school-year and it gave you a list of resources, just basic ones for basic information. It was really useful and really simple.'

27. *Does the geography of the school help or hinder?*

'Wherever a child goes they have to travel and it often causes disruption on the way in some way or another.'

28. *You mean the geography inevitably throws people together?*

'It is quite difficult; you don't know where anything is. I found when I first came that I didn't know where a lot of things are. I still don't. I didn't realise we had a kiln until a few weeks ago. I was never really told and I didn't know where things were...the Art Club outside, I'm not really sure whether I'm supposed to go and take paper or whether it's just for Years 5 and 6. There's just a vagueness. Maybe it's because there aren't many new people...that needs to be more clarified.'

'The thing could work in theory; the people are there'

Interview with Mr. Dawn

18th July 1991.

After school/ In his classroom/ Tape-recorded/ 50 minutes

1. *How do you feel I've slotted into the school and has my presence has made any difference?*

'As far as I can see, the meetings have carried on as normal; things don't appear to have changed at all. The fact that we were in a situation where you weren't new to us was very helpful. The fact that most teachers are naturally wary of people that they don't know...knowing you was useful as it eased that time transition time.'

'You're an interested old friend; the fly-on-the-wall, non-participant approach is much, much better than trying to play an active part'

2. *Have you been aware of my central focus?*

'Yes, both as a governor, and from the initial staff-meeting, I knew what the intentions were. At the first staff-meeting, it was the first time we'd been told as a whole staff...perhaps a bit unfortunate.'

3. *What's your view of the decision-making process?*

'The system that we should have is that things are discussed in a small group of staff, including the Head, Deputy and three Rate 'A' allowance holders. They should be fed back to staff at phase meetings, then back to the management at the following SMT meeting. A decision would be made there and passed down to a phase group, telling us the decision that had been made. The theory of that is that the decision-making process is really a shared one...through consensus and democratic decision-making. It's been my experience that the problem we're encountering time after time is that there are a lot of weak links in the process. In an ideal world it would work quite well; in the world we have here in school, sometimes people are missing or things are mislaid or things aren't taken back to other meetings or important people aren't there or the meeting is postponed. The very nature of the school is that it is not always possible for that to occur with the result that it appears to some members of the school community that this decision-making process is more of an ideal which doesn't work all the time and as a result decisions are made in smoke-filled rooms and we're simply told of things that may matter to us very much in our area of the school (or may not). Sometimes people feel that things are being imposed upon them...rather than what they perceive should be happening in terms of them having an input towards a decision ...we're sometimes faced with what appears to be a fait accompli'

4. *Is this with major or minor issues?*

'Both. I would say. From things like the organisation of an Open Evening and the way in which that has been organised...a thing which really affects staff because it's their own free time which is being used in that way...through to

things which affect the day-to-day running of the school, like where staff are to be at particular times during the day. Again, concerning Directed Time...through to curriculum decisions...through to decisions on general things such as display, quite widely affecting the running of the school in terms of staff management and curriculum management.'

5. *Is there a time-lag between raising of issues and decisions?*

'Yes, often the process of feeding things back to the staff as a whole doesn't occur, or it's patchy. The vehicle used to feed back to staff, the phase meeting, where not everybody has chance to attend, or cancellation of meetings. Sometimes it goes on so long, we're talking about ends of terms; things get forgotten about and don't happen, when they should.'

6. *How are meetings used...to discuss the issue, or to make a decision?*

'It seems that on occasions when we have actually prioritised an issue and used some time to discuss that issue; at the end of a meeting we are faced with a chance to make a decision, which doesn't actually occur, and we are informed of a decision after a discussion. The decision hasn't always gone with the majority feeling of the staff at the time.'

7. *Does it create any tensions being a teacher-governor, but not a member of the SMT?*

'I think it's very important that as a teacher-governor I'm an ordinary member of staff because I can represent in governors' meetings the views of ordinary staff more ably. Certainly there have been times when I've had to stand up for certain issues which staff have considered to be important; had I been a member of the senior management I might have been unable to do due to a conflict of interests. Certainly, in terms of the Articles of Government, which lay down the role of various governors, it's very clear that teacher-governors are there to take a general role in the running of the school, but also to represent the members of the staff. If you're going to have an efficient, happy and hard-working staff, their views have to be heard; if they are not, you can quite easily lose goodwill. In terms of school management, goodwill is extremely important.'

8. *How secure is the system for allowing expression of things that matter to staff?*

'I think we're looking at two systems here: a basic in-house school-management system, and decision-making at, say, governing body level that affects the running of the school. Within the governing body in making decisions which affect staff it is quite possible to feedback things which matter to staff to the governors at the meetings. Practicalities of arranging meetings within school mean it isn't always possible for those things (that matter) to be heard, or occur. Recently, being out of school (e.g., residential activities for a week; 3 days on INSET), I've only found out about quite important things which affect me, a day or two before they occurred. For example, I received a pile of letters for parents for an Open Evening, 2 days before it was to occur; I read the top page of the letter and blocked out times when I would NOT be available (out on another school trip). I sent the letters home. It wasn't until the following morning, when I received the slips back, I realised to my horror that it wasn't one Open Evening,

but two! Because I hadn't read the second sheet (due to pressure of time) and hadn't blocked out times on that, I realised that I'd let myself in for two Open Evenings rather than one. As it happened it didn't really matter...but it was a bit of a shock...'

9. *How satisfactory is communication...admitting the problems of geography?*

'It would be more satisfactory to allow a general business time to take place at a weekly staff meeting, to which most members of staff are there; think that would be very important. It needn't be very long, just a ten or fifteen minute 'notice-board', particularly in situations we've had this year with curriculum development going on as it has. We've had an awful lot of external speakers coming in (to staff meetings) and there hasn't been chance for this notice-board time to occur and as a result people have found that they haven't heard about things. If the weekly bulletin to staff were slightly more detailed, the mix-ups in communication which have occurred wouldn't do. There have been some things which could quite easily have been sorted out and tied up through the weekly letter but it hasn't been on there because of a lack of an open time in staff meetings, or because members of staff have not been here, so things have been a bit sticky.'

10. *How is the staff bulletin board used?*

'Often things aren't written up there; often there are quite blatant omissions from that. Certainly every morning I make sure I get up to the staffroom, even if only very briefly, to have a look at that, because I do find that's quite a useful system of knowing what's going on...but that hasn't always been the best source of information.'

'I think that a summary of the week's decisions could go on the bulletin which goes out at the beginning of each week; that would be particularly useful for what's gone on in other meetings we weren't party to.'

11. *What has been the effect of this time of rapid change?*

'I think even more reason that one should be well informed if you're to work efficiently as a member of a team; you have to know what's going on, particularly so at a time where things don't always remain the same. When the goalposts are moving you need to know where they've moved to and be informed as soon as possible.'

12. *Governors have had a great deal to cope with?*

'Yes, that's true. I think that particularly as a member of staff the recent changes to staff Conditions Of Service which have been marched through by government in the most recent Education Act. Such things as the county's approach to disciplinary procedure and periods of notice, redundancies, etc...there have been some very important issues there in governors' meetings which, as a teacher-governor, I haven't always been able to feed back to staff. When decision-making regarding school-organisation and curriculum planning is made, we ought to be the first to know, we ought to be told, either in writing or in a meeting. At times, it can seem frustrating to be informed of a decision that's been made when we didn't even know there was a question!'

13. *Made by whom?*

'Ultimately, made by the headteacher. It's the case that you'd expect ultimate decision-making to be made by a head in a school, anyway, but I have a feeling it's a question of 'style of management' as to how that decision-making process works. Again, that's a personal decision made by the school manager.'

14. *What are the possibilities for the future?*

'There's another variable which we haven't discussed yet...the role of the LEA and advisers within that authority...and decision-making which goes on outside the school which directly affects the way we teach.. Such things as curriculum decisions made in Academic Council over which we as teachers have no control whatsoever. Very often, we're informed of decisions which have been arrived at in Academic Council meetings which directly affect the curriculum and the way we're going to have to run the school...and again, we're simply informed that those decisions have been made.'

15. *Do you feel you're caught in a pincer movement of LEA, DES, school manager, governors...?*

'In a sense, the governors' role is less because the Articles of Government, it's made quite clear that the day-to-day running of the school, and the application of the curriculum on a day-to-day basis, is the responsibility of the HT...the governors are responsible for ensuring that the curriculum is delivered, but the way in which it's delivered is the responsibility of the manager of the school'

16. *Do staff have any choice over implementing Academic Council decisions?*

'None whatsoever in my experience.'

17. *So what's the way ahead?*

'As to a way ahead for decision-making procedure to become clearer and more easily observed by staff. I have a strong feeling that the number of meetings were reduced, and therefore the number of variables there are in terms of bodies (staff) not being at those meetings, with attendance requirements made stronger (both for staff and managers), it might mean that important meetings were extended in time, but the process of imparting information from one person to the next would be made much easier. It would be greatly simplified. I'm not necessarily saying that ordinary members of staff should have a direct control over the decision-making process, but it would be nice to think that our views were being sought, and that what we were saying was actually being heard in that process. I have a feeling that if we had a chance within weekly staff meetings to do that, it would seem that everybody's place within the school was being considered more importantly than it is at the moment.'

18. *Where is there informal discussion outside the formal staff meetings?*

'The very nature of any school lends itself to informal meetings of staff, over lunch or a cup of coffee in the staffroom, or walking down to the classroom

together at the beginning of a work period. There are bound to be meetings between staff in which there is a lot to discuss. If members of staff are not satisfied with outcomes of decisions being made, or don't feel they've been consulted, or don't feel that their ideas (which are often very good from experienced, practising teachers, who have been in the job a lot longer than I have), and which could contribute quite sensibly to decisions that are made...if they feel they're not being heard, and there's not a forum for their views, it's bound to lead to those teachers feeling undervalued, to those teachers not feeling ownership of things which they're being asked to do, those teachers perhaps modifying what they're being asked to do within the context of the classroom. It would happen anyway...it's bound to...with different teachers with different personalities. We all have different classroom practice, the way in which we put things into a running mode in the classroom, but if staff are feeling negative towards a decision being made, and don't agree with it and don't like it, don't feel they've been consulted on it, don't feel that they can change it, then certainly that is not going to lend itself to the efficient running of a school. That can either mean some things which have been decided upon are modified within the classroom or it can mean that some things that should be done in the classroom, aren't!

19. *So implementation can be very different from the original nature of the decision?*

'Very definitely...it's a tricky area to work with, but I think it's true to say that as a caring professional, one has to modify what one does in the classroom to suit the environment in which we're teaching. If we were trying to work in a way which we simply couldn't, because we didn't agree with the way in which we were being asked to work, bumbling ahead blindly carrying out directives when your heart wasn't in it, this would clearly affect your teaching and lead to negativism coming back from the children, it would lead to children getting the wrong messages from us as adults. There would be conflicting messages going on. I believe quite strongly that you have to be true to yourself, as a human being, as a professional, and as a teacher, in what you do...perhaps times can arise when one has to modify directives which one is given simply to do one's job properly.'

22. *Are you saying that if decision-making is unsatisfactory for whatever reason, and staff are dissatisfied, it creates an insecurity in the children which is reflected in their responses?*

'Yes, indeed! Children are very receptive and pick up things from us as adults very easily; what you've described is bound to occur.'

Interview with Mr. Dawn

3rd February 1992

After school/ In his classroom/ tape recorded/ 45 minutes

1. *Do you ever find a clash of interests in your role as a class teacher, member of governor, member of a phase group?*

A lot depends upon your personal philosophy. I believe strongly that the greatest asset a school has is in its serving staff. If I have to balance resources against teaching staff, I believe as a class teacher and as a member of the community and as a parent, the school should place its greatest weighting of its finances towards the staff. If it came to a choice between pupil-teacher ratios and pupil-teacher ratios, it would have to go towards pupil-teacher ratios.

2. *What about the recent discussion about supply teacher policy? (in which Mr. Dawn argued strongly against no reduction in staffing)*

It was a two-edged sword. We're having to stick ruthlessly to County policy on supply teaching and their employment but this also means that teachers are going to have to carry more of a load anyway. For instance, to make a saving in the next few years, we have to make sure that the amount of money spent on supply teachers is kept as low as possible. This may mean we have to cover for absent colleagues more; that's bound to affect us more as individual teachers although the Teaching Establishment (TE) is not going to be affected. I'd certainly argue for maintaining the TE as it is for as long as possible.

3. *Do you feel a tug of interests here between teacher and governor?*

There is a conflict of interests: some members of the governing body have looked at our balance and seen that with certain factors such as incremental creep as a teacher becomes more expensive as time goes on it may mean that we are unable to maintain our teachers as it is. The hard finances are there yet in the short term we have to make a case for maintaining it.

In three successive financial statements our money was cut back three times with result that we were trying to do long-term financial planning up to five years ahead and having to screw it up and start again. That was very frustrating. It was due perhaps to nobody's fault but it was easy to see inefficiency a County level in setting the figures in the first place and these figures are the thing we have to work with. I don't believe we should stand on our principles and overspend because I suppose that legally we are responsible for seeing that the school runs within its budget. We can be taken to court and sued as individuals so I believe.

4. *Do you find that having been a governor you can speak with more conviction or does it create tensions?*

I don't want to appear to be an over-mighty subject in terms of an ordinary main professional grade member of staff. Certainly I don't have a managerial role within the school; I'm not a member of the staff management team in terms of

being an Incentive Allowance holder, but I am in terms of the governing body, so there's a tension there.

It's the question of demarcation: which things in the school are the responsibility of the governing body and which are those of the head, delegated through the staff...in some situations I often find myself casting a vote as a governor against votes cast as a member of the staff management team. Sometimes I find a conflict of interests between a class teacher with responsibility for the day-to-day running of the class, responsible to the head and not always voting with the head in governing body meetings; that's a conflict of interests. It depends upon the nature of the business.

5. When you're in a staff meeting do you feel that the head is the person is the person to whom you are accountable...and how does that change when you move into the governing body?

The day-to-day running of the curriculum and internal management of the school is the responsibility of the headteacher by law.. As a member of the staff I'm subservient to the head and must abide by internal decisions that are made. Yet a decision I abide by in the classroom I might question in a governing body meeting or might take part in a discussion in a governing body meeting. I might also play devil's advocate in staff meetings in close questioning and sticking my head out a little more than I would if I weren't a governor.

It's a question of internal school policy. You have to work with people. In terms of staff meetings I would be a little more vocal than otherwise, simply because as a teacher-rep. I'm responsible to staff not only in governing body meetings but in staff meetings as well. Often through knowing members of staff I find myself asking questions on their behalf when they wouldn't ask a question.

I've always maintained that if I were unable to do that job as teacher-rep as I feel I ought to, I'd resign. If I am elected by the staff to represent the staff and it's seen that the way I interpret that role is wrong (either by the staff or by others) I should resign.

It's complicated by the fact that I'm the union rep as well. It's hard at times to represent people who are not as willing as they might be to represent themselves...views that are expressed to me in private are sometimes very difficult to bring to a staff meeting or governing body due to the confidentiality.

6. Do you have a legitimacy in the eyes of colleagues...even power and authority, that they do not possess?

I'm not sure I see myself as powerful, more as a servant. It would be an error to regard the fact that I'm a teacher-rep on the governing body as giving me power. It may enable me to feel a little more relaxed, but it's more as a protection than as a power. That's how I hope other people would see my role.

Also to be seen as someone who would not be afraid to make a stand in sticking up for people who I'm meant to be representing. In governing body meetings I've done this on several occasions when the latest Teacher's Pay and Conditions Act was adopted by the governors...I stood out for a couple of clauses which I felt

were unfair to serving members of staff...such as right of appeal, where previously the LEA had some standing.
I see it as my role to avoid situations arising where there are real conflicts re. disciplinary matters.

7. *Is there an informal network of informal contacts within the school?*

Definitely, yes. It's something very difficult to define and the very nature of it depends upon the personalities involved. In any staff room you will get members of staff forming links of communication which are very informal. Certainly such nets exist here. Some members of staff would see me as a node within that net; I'm not sure I see myself like that.

It's a two-way thing you see in terms of me feeding back the information from meetings and things being fed to me to put across in meetings; that's one of my vital roles.

8. *Do some teachers use you more than others?*

Oh yes! I would say that it tends to be more the older, more experienced members of staff. That may be a false impression in that the young members (such as the probationary teachers) haven't yet acclimatised themselves to the school enough to be able to feel that they can speak to me let alone use me as a teacher-rep.

9. *Does the informal network stretch beyond the school?*

Some members of staff who no longer serve here I might talk to, and other governors informally (from this school); but mostly I would stick to the school community itself. I haven't been here long enough to form a network outside the school.

Interview with Mr. Jamieson

3rd July 1991

After school/ In his classroom/ Tape-recorded/ 40 minutes

1. *What's your view of my research in the school?*

'The advantage that you've got is the relationship you already had with the staff. I don't think they would have been so open with you if you'd have been a stranger; they'd have felt defensive, and loyalty to the school and closed ranks and only given you the picture they'd wanted you to see rather than maybe the truth'

'Also your insights into the school having worked here are important, they will probably help you to have a clearer insight into what is being said and what is going on'

'Command structures work on many different levels and layers...there are the actual words themselves...and there's how they're interpreted, which is biased by individuals'

'Depending on what's being said and what's going on, depends on which role you're towards. I tend to forget you're there and just to speak as I would speak normally'

'Your presence does affect the way some people speak; perhaps with the higher management more so because they have words to say, a text to read that's been given to them. If they're going to be quoted as saying anything, they want to make sure that it's the right thing; noticeably a few change the way they're speaking and the content of what they're speaking when they know you're present. It's a fear of the unknown; they have a long-term view of career and job prospects and they will defend it. Those who are in less of a vulnerable position (the chalk-face workers) will tend not to (say what they think). They would rather use you as a forum to speak anyway and hope that it will actually be picked up by whoever may be concerned'

'Issues are people, people are issues; certainly in this particular place. The management is seen very much as a personality thing rather than a neutral vehicle. Certainly, comments and criticisms that are levelled, are levelled at a personal nature, rather than the actual structure itself'

2. *So I've still got a bit of work to do in convincing some people...or perhaps I won't succeed!*

'I wouldn't think you would succeed at that because there are so many layers to unpeel and there are various power-group factions within school who have their own interests at heart and will seek whatever vehicle they can to enhance it and discredit others'

3. *Are they hoping that I will be a channel, an expression, of their own hopes, aspirations and concerns?*

'Yes. Human beings being what they are'

4. *What's your view about the process of decision-making?*

'I think members of staff find it difficult to accept the views that have to be taken long-term and in consideration of other aspects which are larger than the school itself...policies to be implemented from the DES. They attribute a decision to a personality whereas the decision has already been made, and the person is carrying out what he or she has to carry out. That has spread disquiet and concern and there is this personality clash where some members of staff feel maybe even that they're being victimised, whereas it isn't the case. Because we're in a situation where we're implementing something new which isn't a constant factor, and the new keeps becoming newer and the goalposts keep being moved. There is this sense of uncertainty and fear and vulnerability which needs to find expression somewhere and as they can't get at the DES or the ministers and powers-that-be who make these decisions, they find expression for upset or concern through the people who administer in the actual school itself and so it does become a coconut shy; and the role of the Deputy in that case is to be the coconut. One has to field as many shots as one can and to try and keep both ends of the spectrum in perspective, because people's opinions are valuable but to keep things in a sensible, balanced perspective is difficult because the movement is so great from one idea to another. Marrying the two together is not an easy one and reminds me of a swimming pool full of enormous floating balls, and the object of the game is to walk across! The trick is to move quickly and get across very fast. The balls keep ducking underneath you. If you stood still, you'd go straight down to the bottom. One gets a feel sometimes very much like that; you're moving quickly to try and keep an equilibrium and a movement forward. Stand still, you'd sink, and it's hard to get the equilibrium back.'

'I find myself a go-between on occasions.'

5. *You are having to carry the buck for things beyond your control?*

'Yes, in effect; we're having to implement policies which perhaps we wouldn't do if we were the originators. We are the originators of some policies, but not the main driving force behind it...this comes from the LEA and DES.'

6. *Where do the governors fit into this?*

'The governors feel pressured, especially as the majority are elderly and retired and perhaps are not able to give of the same intellectual commitment of the vast barrage of paperwork that's coming in and I sometimes think that they feel a bit swamped. They were in the area where the governors sat and listened to the chairman and the head, and nodded wisely, and rubber-stamped everything. Now, that's gone and the governors are required to be a lot more energetic and the pressures on them are a lot more demanding. I can see the case coming in the near future for professional governors, for that's what's being required of them... to be accountants, lawyers, people who can make business-type decisions, and it may be something they're not quite used to in their working life.'

7. *Are governors working alongside you or are they another layer of this onion? Is it a genuine partnership?*

'My heart is warmed by the support from the majority of governors give the teachers. They recognise the job is hard and getting harder; teachers are under a lot of pressure. They have in the past resisted change which they have some authority over. In the main, governors are not 100 per cent aware of what's going on. They are only aware of the tip of the iceberg; this is not deliberate, it's that the role of the governors has changed and this body has not changed as completely as it needs to and it's going through an evolutionary process at the moment. It is being faced by some revolutionary-type ideas...certainly in how the government perceives its role to be.'

8. *Within this context, to what extent are day-to-day decisions within the school tenuous, spontaneous?*

'The day-to-day running is flexible and has to be so. Certainly with the demands upon the Head and the Deputy. They have to attend far more meetings than they actually would want to but they have to try and be abreast of the developments that there are. This in turn pushes the work-load onto other senior colleagues further down the chain of command. They, of course, unburden their old role onto new shoulders and then it passes all the way down the line. The stress factor is a lot greater in schools these days. When I first started teaching, the only thing I was required to be concerned about was my class and what it was doing, now everyone has to take a wider brief.'

'As an example, people are asked to take on board a specialist curriculum area, but without enhancement or extra pay or recognition, just as a matter of course. Before, they would have expected some remuneration and recognition and status; nowadays, it happens infrequently. That is divisive because people feel, with the awarding of Rate 'A' allowances, some do not receive it for doing the same job that others are doing, yet receiving the remuneration. This leads to hurt, upset and feeling undervalued. Things can't be backdated, so you've got the personal issued entering into the melting-pot as well; just another strand to take into consideration.'

9. *The term Senior Management Team is a term that staff seem to have accepted?*

'It's a term I've been familiar with...the schools I've worked in have been labelled 'flagships'. It used to be the head and the deputy, now the workload's so great, we're having to widen it: (a) to get a greater perspective on the decisions we've got to make; (b) because the workload is so great, two people couldn't do it, especially if those two are constantly called out to deal with other issues...NC, courses, school-based courses'

10. *The SMT is a fair-proportion of the staff?*

'Yes, about one-third.'

11. *The procedure...what sort of a working model is it?*

'As a working apparatus it ought to work efficiently because you've got a small work group, who then disseminate to the rest of the staff and then the staff feed back to that work group. It's a cyclic process; it should work efficiently. There are times when it breaks down. The breaking-down can be because a member of staff is away on a course or ill and not there when that decision is being discussed or implemented and feels that they haven't got ownership of them.'

12. *Does that have repercussions in terms of personal relationships?*

'Yes, and the time scale is such that we can't get through the management plan within the target we set. Unfortunately, issues are being thrust upon us that need a decision almost instantly. Whereas before, the decision would have been made by head and deputy, now, as we've set up the decision to consult with everyone, the process is lengthier (though more valuable)...and we're not getting through the workload we would have done. And that can be a problem'

'The DES gives us deadlines and its not accessible to all teachers then'

13. *What is the upshot of this?*

'I've been party to decision-making processes where we have not had time to consult all the staff. For example, I put the Maths. policy document together. I disseminated as best I could but I certainly haven't consulted as I would have liked to have done. That document is 'consultative' and therefore open to change but I put it together in the time allotted to me (I was given a morning to do it), and there was no consultations about the content.'

14. *Meanwhile life goes on?*

'Yes, for instance, I'm co-ordinator for the Maths. We have 14 ATs in the old system; it's now going to be reduced to 5 ATs. We've got to report back on the 14 ATs, with a view to knowing that we're doing is already redundant, which makes what we're doing frustrating. All the devices and equipment we've designed to help us facilitate reporting back, and the amount of money used in getting it printed are now totally wasted. All the LEA produced cards are no longer relevant. People feel dismayed by this and ask why it's taken such a long time and why it couldn't have been seen at its planning stages. Why weren't teachers consulted in the first place. Teachers are feeling more and more undervalued, their professionalism being rubbished; the knock on effect is that more and more people are deciding not to commit the time and effort that perhaps they would have done previously. Why should I bother? This engenders negative vibes which makes it hard to develop a cohesive working unit with these constraints.

15. *So this time of rapid change, intended to enhance the education system...?*

'It hasn't. Even through the SATs, it's only shown us what we knew already. Standards haven't risen. If the government want raising of standards they're going to have to have more workers on the groundfloor; more teachers, smaller

classes. But it all costs money. We have the expertise but we don't have the manpower.'

16. *Resources seem to be very important?*

'With the geography of the place, it's very hard. When you think about resources, you've got to think about storage and where is it accessible and can you turn this classroom into a resource area. What about children's access? Resources are very expensive.'

17. *And the people in the place matter?*

'Absolutely! Without the people the place would break down. The staff here are amazing, a wonderful staff and a credit to the profession. The work they produce is first-rate considering the catchment and resources. I just wish they could be offered a better deal as far as the government go instead of making processes we have to be involved in. Some teachers feel they've worked themselves into the ground for nothing. People are frustrated and that frustration's growing.'

18. *What if the school, exactly as it is today, were moved back 5 or 6 years...what would be different?*

'People would have more time for each other...they don't have the luxury of time. I hardly have the time to see my colleagues and say 'good-morning' which I feel is part of my role as a Deputy: to talk about their concerns, the children, the work they've done...and the National Curriculum has robbed me of it. The place is less for it; the school is as good as its staff and children, and that's on the back-burner to pieces of paper and that's a great sadness and a loss; it has not enhanced education, it has done it great damage.'

Interview with Mr. Jamieson

6th February 1992

After school/ His room/ Tape-recorded/ 40 minutes

1. *What management experience or training have you had?*

'One gathers experience as one goes along in teaching. The more responsibilities one is given, and the more decision-making processes one is able to get involved in, the more it sharpens your skills. A key part to management is being presented with various scenarios and being able to decide on one that will meet the needs of whatever situation arises.'

'I got my old scale 2 thirteen years ago; it was a small school, so the scale 2s were involved in the senior management-type meetings with the Head and Deputy and other scale 2s. I was quickly involved in helping probationary teachers and having curriculum responsibility.'

'At my next school I was a scale 3, member of the senior management team with more responsibility for stock and resources and accompanying balancing the budget. It's all stood me in good stead here.'

2. *And INSET training?*

'Northamptonshire were pioneers of a scheme. I went three days on a management course at quite a high level; it was tailored along industrial-type training. I ended up with a certificate, though what the worth of that certificate, I don't know. There are odd times when various phrases occur. We had mock situations like interviewing which come to mind. I wouldn't say it had any direct bearing.'

3. *Have you generally had to learn on the hoof?*

'Yes. There are courses available for governors; not many for teacher-governors. It presupposes that the governors have time to go on these courses. They're very busy people.'

'As to the appropriateness of the training, I don't know. Only time will tell. The powers of the governing body have been increased. I think we're waiting to see the whole situation stabilise.'

'Certainly the governors awareness of what's going on in the school has increased; there have been awareness-raising situations but I still feel that the governors think they are external to the processes which go on in the school.'

'They are responsible for making certain decisions; they hesitate to make comment on the teaching side of it and what's taught.'

4. *You wear many hats...do you find a conflict of interests?*

'There are times when you have to prioritise whatever the issue is and live your life by the principles in which you believe. The one guiding principle I hold to be paramount over all else 'are the children going to benefit from this?'

'Sometimes it's not an issue of children direct and so you're able to move into other areas of principle; where it comes into the area of 'the children' or 'not the children', the children win out every time. Then after that we fight for the scraps.'

'First and foremost I'm a classteacher. I came into teaching to teach and that's my prime motivation for being here.'

5. *Are there issues which emerge which conflict with your role as classteacher?*

'Certainly in terms of the financial commitment, I see in terms of the global scale outside of just this school.'

6. *There seem to be many times when you are the link person between (say) the staff and the governors (e.g., during the RE discussion)*

'I think that's part of my role as Deputy: 'when the going gets tough, the tough get going' or 'when the going gets tough, those who are paid more than others or have been given a responsibility should begin to show their mettle'. The senior manager should be seen as those who, if there's a mucky job, are the first there rolling their sleeves up, not delegating others to do it. I think it's better to lead from the front.'

'However, there are times when I will deliberately not do something, knowing it will fall flat on its nose, but the staff member will have learnt something by it.. There are situations where I have to bite my tongue, but I think that it's part of management. Sometimes there's as much to learn by failure than success; sometimes more so.'

7. *During that time with the governors and the R.E. discussion, in which capacity (ies) were you acting?*

'I was acting as Deputy and as teacher-governor as opposed to 'governor governor' because I could perceive my colleagues felt under threat and therefore I deliberately manoeuvred myself into the position where I was there to be shot at confident that I could field whatever questions were asked; it would deflect in some way from my colleagues.'

8. *Did you feel that your professional identity was being invaded?*

'Because we are the community we are, and the commitment that's expected of us, the problem is a mismatch between personal belief in R.E. and what is expected to be given within a church school.'

'I feel comfortable with it but I can perceive that others felt threatened and were going to be personally held to account and I was not prepared to allow that to happen as I thought that as being destructive.'

9. *Because it was R.E., it was a case of beliefs and individualism being invaded rather than their professionalism as a teacher...as say, with geography?*

'People would have been happier with that as it's neutral rather than something like R.E. which is very personal...value issues.'

'I was also working on another level; the meeting had obviously been under-prepared and rather than sitting in a 'sinking feeling' where people are groping what to say, I felt that if the conversation was enjoined we might get something out of it. I wanted to save the Chairman's face as well as everyone else's.'

10. *Are there times that you hold back or are extremely careful here because of circumstances?*

'There are times when you are dealing with individuals when there may have been a management decision that conflicts with personal ethos. To become authoritarian and demand 'you will!' you won't actually get support for the policy you want to implement; therefore it's more politic to get as much of the policy implemented in policy terms with a willing partner rather than dictatorially saying 'I want this done' and having people paying lip-service to it. I'd rather have people teach what they believe rather than what other people say they should believe.'

'At the end of the day it's my colleagues at the chalk face, those who are actually having to work with the children, who are my main concern, and I want to maintain as many avenues open for communication as possible. If one becomes too authoritarian you close down those avenues of communication and you don't get the delivery that you want.'

'It comes all the way back down to the children: what are the children getting? are they getting quality education? If not, what can we do to shift the ground towards what is perceived as quality education?'

'That sounds incredibly arrogant as if I have an idea of what is perfect education... I haven't! There are areas that have been identified as good practice and it's this good practice that I want to see extended because it already exists. It's not something that needs re-inventing.'

'People sometimes can get into a rut; they need other options to consider: can this enhance your performance with the children? enhance your relationships or help you teach better? At the end of the day it's the children that count.'

11. *So do staff get most closely involved in meetings when it affects their value position or their professional classroom decision-making?*

'It has to be recognised that teachers are fairly territorial, and their classroom is an extension of themselves. If you begin to criticise their classroom they begin to perceive this as a criticism of themselves.'

'If one is aiming to enhance a person's teaching, you've actually got to persuade them that it's coming from them and not from you, so it's not an imposition. It's 'evolution not revolution'...that's the key to it. If anything in a

single terse phrase sums up my view of management, it's that phrase. All staff (teaching and non-) should be involved; it's ownership. If people have ownership of something they will perform it better because they believe in it and be more committed to it.'

12. *Are you a person of power?*

'I'm a person of immense power: in the children's lives because of the position invested in me by getting a degree and being recognised by the DES, so there's an investment there.'

'Also as an adult one has power. Children want to please you; you have to balance that against what is best for them. It's a trust given you which borders on sacred.'

'One has the ear of people of influence and one belongs to various committees where one is able to put forward a point of view so you have an influence on policy making because you are there to influence that policy-making. The title itself is power and influences others.'

13. *What of accountability that accompanies the power?*

'Teachers have always been accountable; they are accountable to the children, parents, and colleagues. The form it takes is new, in terms of the NC, and more threatening in many ways. The way we're asked to produce doesn't always reflect that which is taking place.'

14. *Are people involved in a truly collaborative process...or merely being consulted...does the person who is ultimately accountable make the final decision?*

'There are different decisions carrying different weight. There are certain decisions which happily takes along in a collegiate sort of way; there are other decisions which are pre-ordained. They're brought before the group for the rubber stamp. People coming to a meeting come with different forms of power. In many cases the decision has already been made.'

15. *Are there any informal networks that you use in professional decisions?*

'I tend to spend most of my social life living as far away from teachers as I can because I've found that when teachers get together you end up talking about school.'

'Teachers I have met and who are useful I keep in the back of my mind; you can get a better level of information and communication with someone you can ring up on first name terms than if you never met them or as Mr. So-and-so.'

16. *Are you able to relate to all staff equally?*

'There are sub-groups within school; people I will ask advice from or information to reach a decision. There are people whose opinion I trust and listen to closer than others.'

'If you are wearing a particular hat, you tend to seek out people wearing similar hats; you tend to go towards experienced people. If it's a union matter or managerial level I would seek out a sub-group to do with that.'

17. *Do some people/groups approach you more?*

'It comes down to personal teaching style; there are styles closer to my own philosophy than others. There are some who are very clannish about class boundaries, which is not the way I work. Others are more willing to share children resources, etc and I would tend to deal with them more.'

18. *Anything else you want to add?*

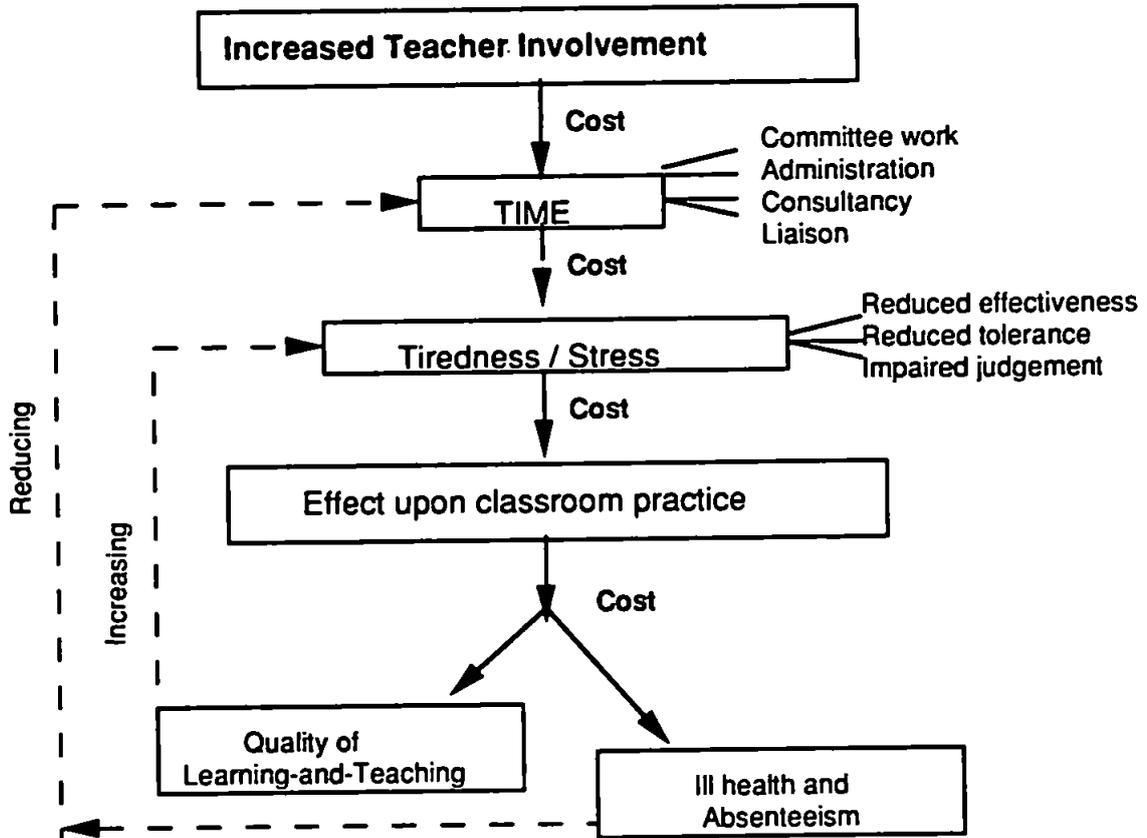
'The job of the Deputy is like a plate-spinner. You sometimes end up getting caught betwixt and between. My children suffer because I am called out to do other things, but that is being remedied.'

'The solution is that next year I shall become a float teacher. It will also give me a better overview of what's going on over the entire school, because really I'm 'top-end' oriented, that doesn't give me the view I'd like. I also wouldn't have a class commitment so the children will get a teacher who will provide that continuity which I find I can't give because of what the job entails. That eases my conscience in many ways because it's the children suffering. I shall miss them but at the end of the day it's for the best. That's a reflection of the changing role of the Deputy, becoming more of an administrator than a teacher, and I think that needs to be recognised. The National Curriculum and the constraints of LMS have brought this on.'

APPENDIX 6

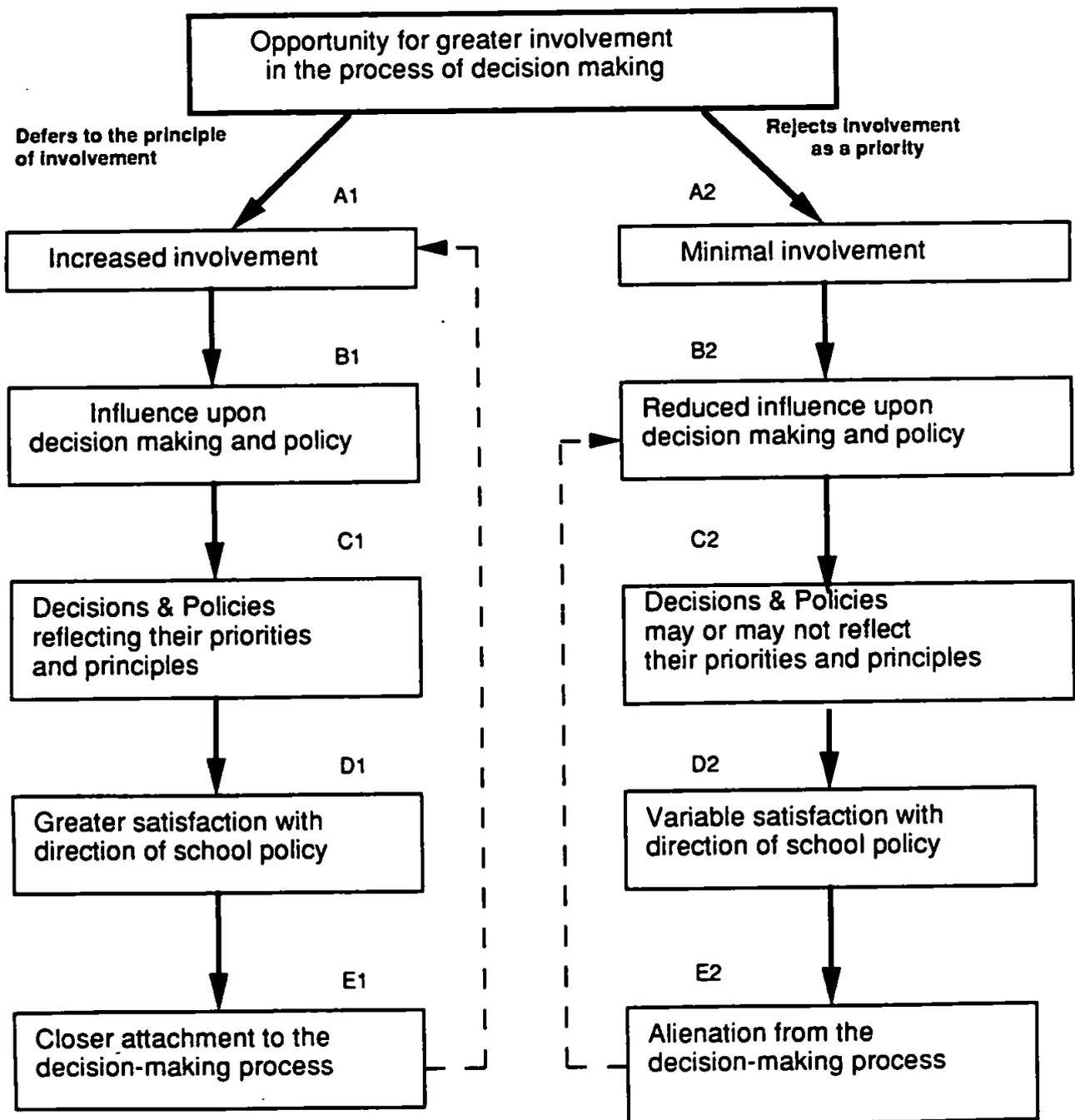
IDEAL CONSTRUCTS

FIGURE 1



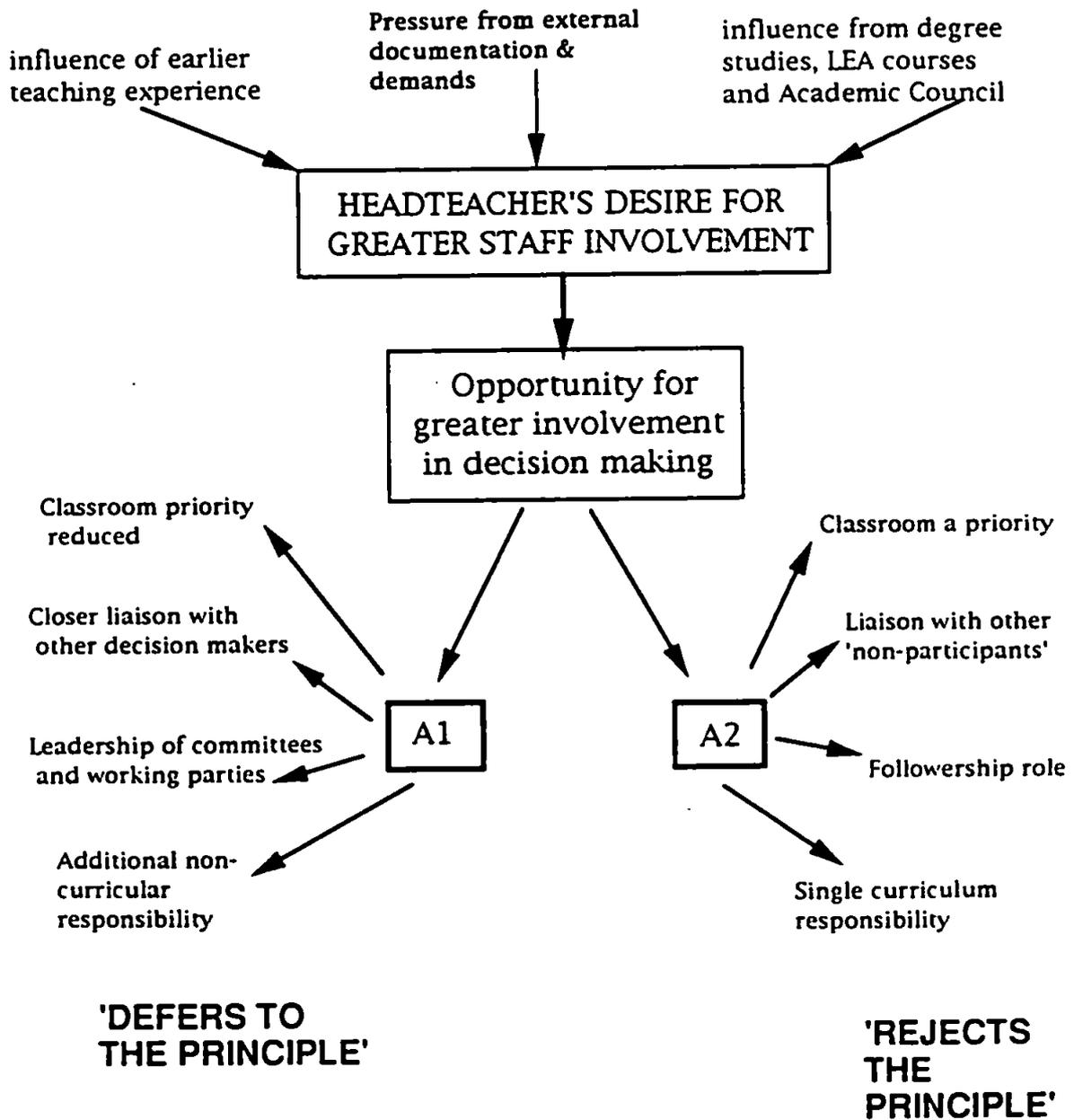
A DEFICIT MODEL FOR INVOLVEMENT IN SCHOOL BASED DECISION MAKING

FIGURE 2

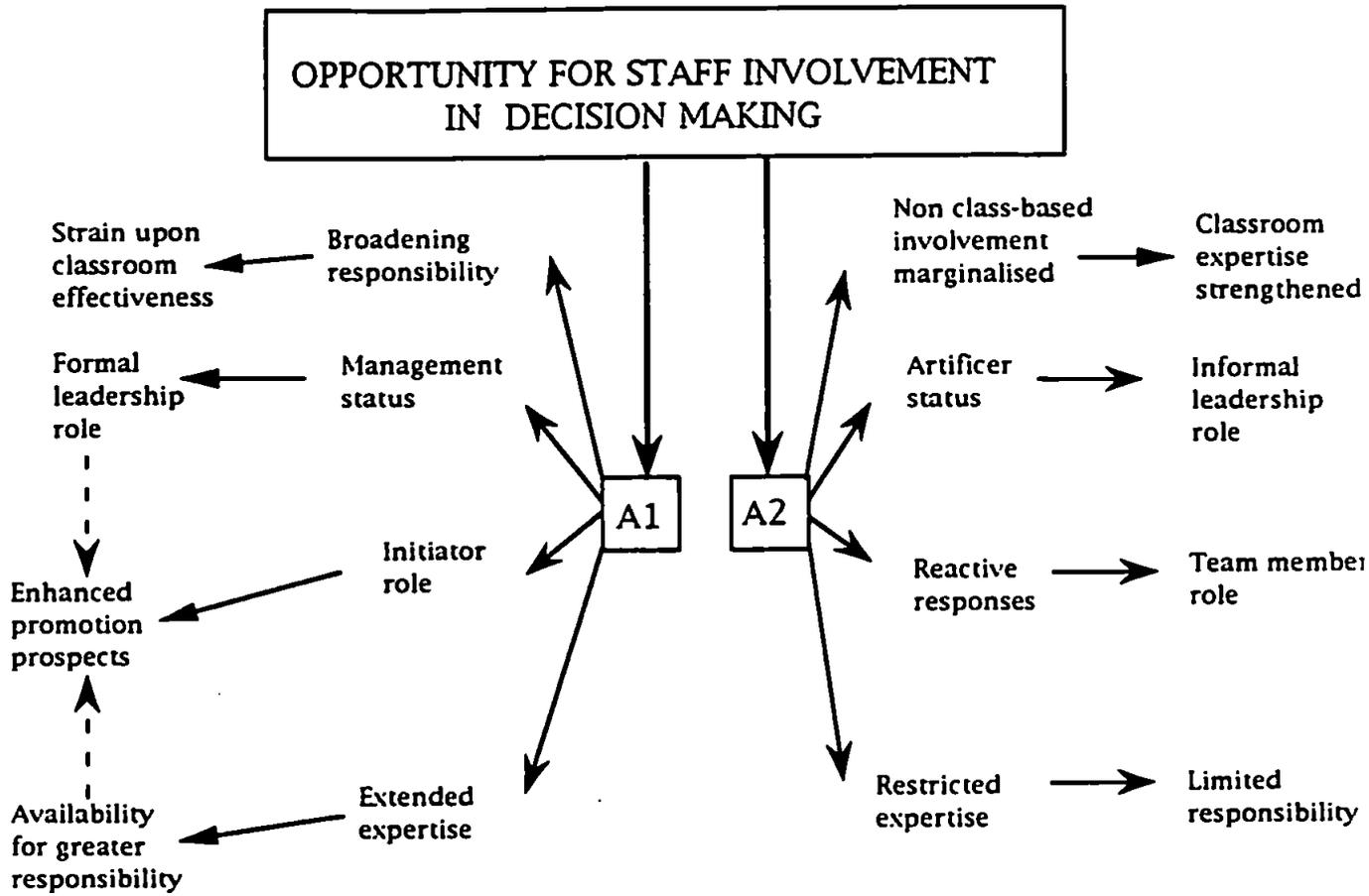


INVOLVEMENT AND TEACHERS' ATTACHMENT OR ALIENATION

FIGURE 3



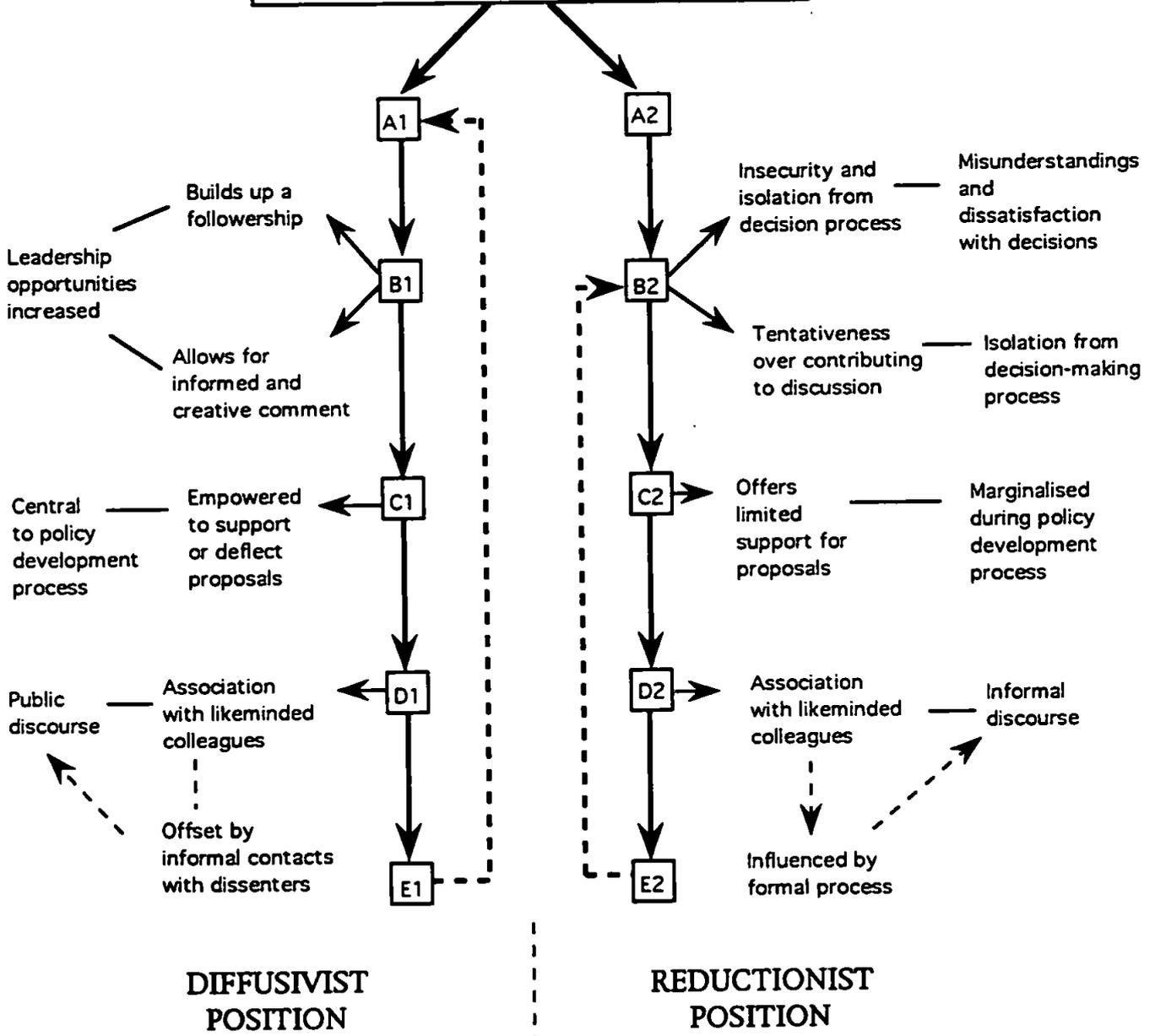
THE OUTCOME OF TEACHERS' RESPONSES TO OPPORTUNITIES FOR INVOLVEMENT



**IMPACT OF TEACHERS' PREFERENCES UPON
THEIR PROFESSIONAL ROLE**

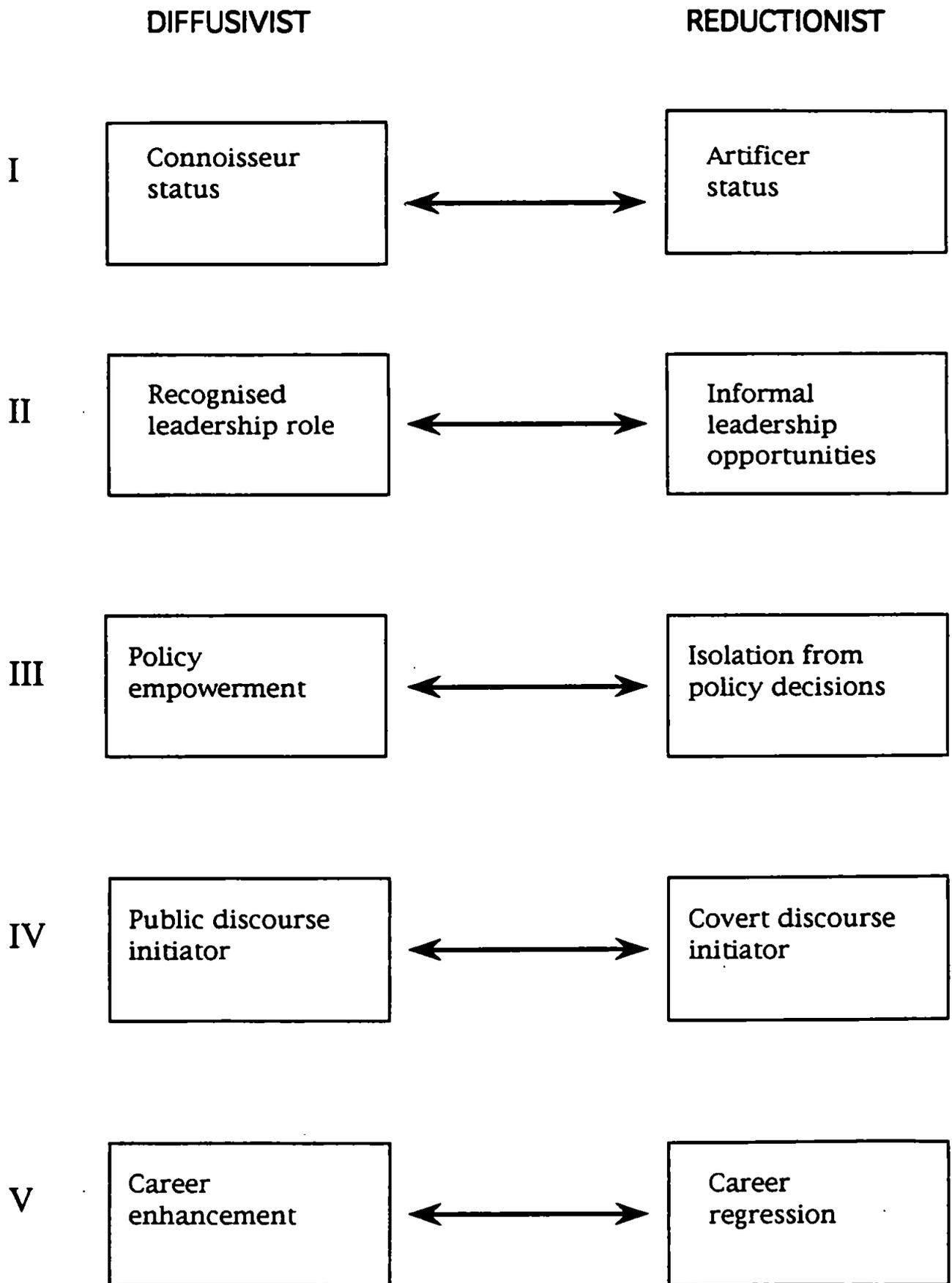
FIGURE 5

OPPORTUNITY FOR STAFF INVOLVEMENT IN DECISION-MAKING



DIFFUSIVIST AND REDUCTIONIST POSITIONS

FIGURE 6

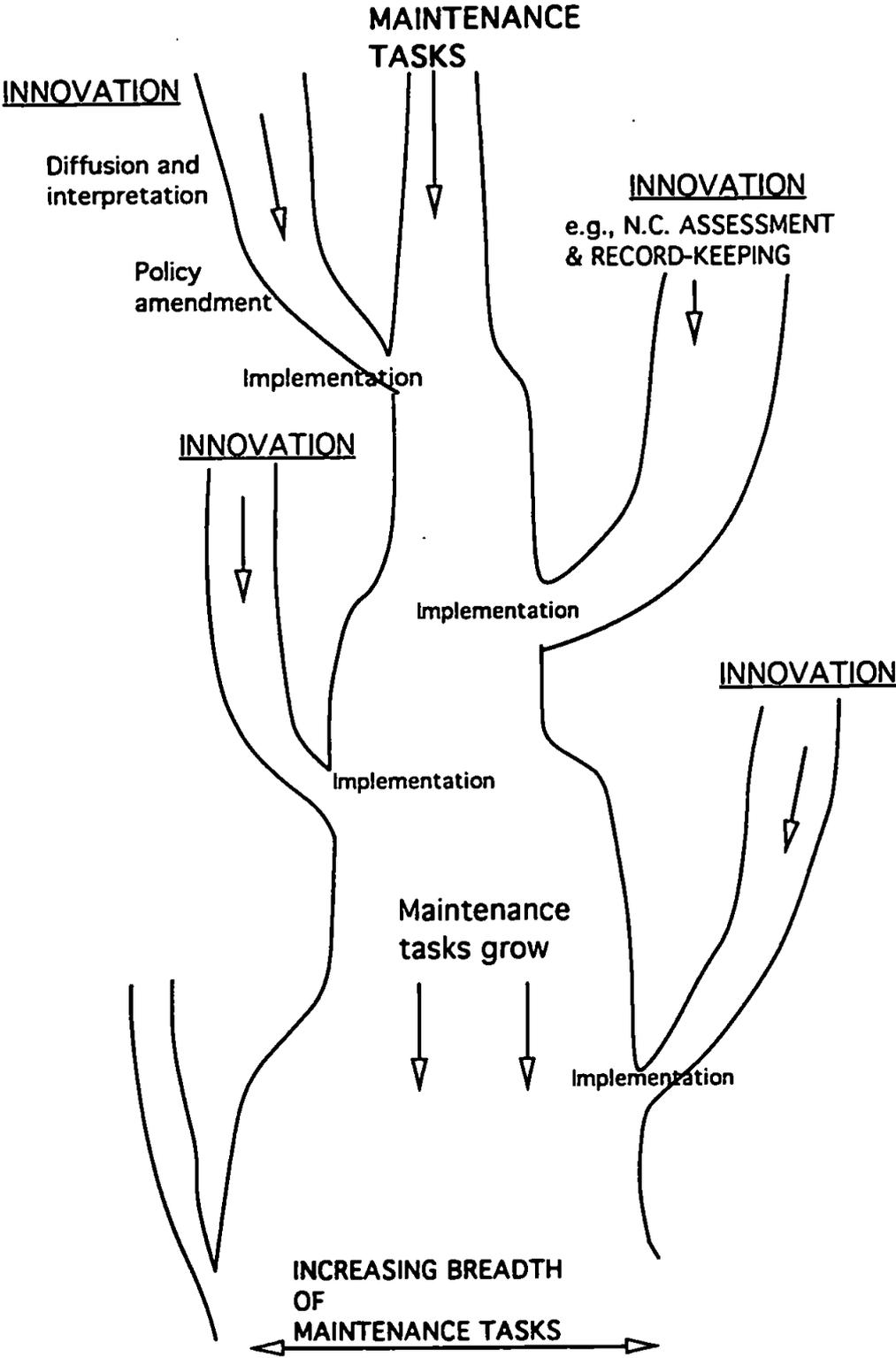


OUTCOMES FROM TEACHERS' ADOPTION OF A DIFFUSIVIST OR REDUCTIONIST POSITION

APPENDIX 7

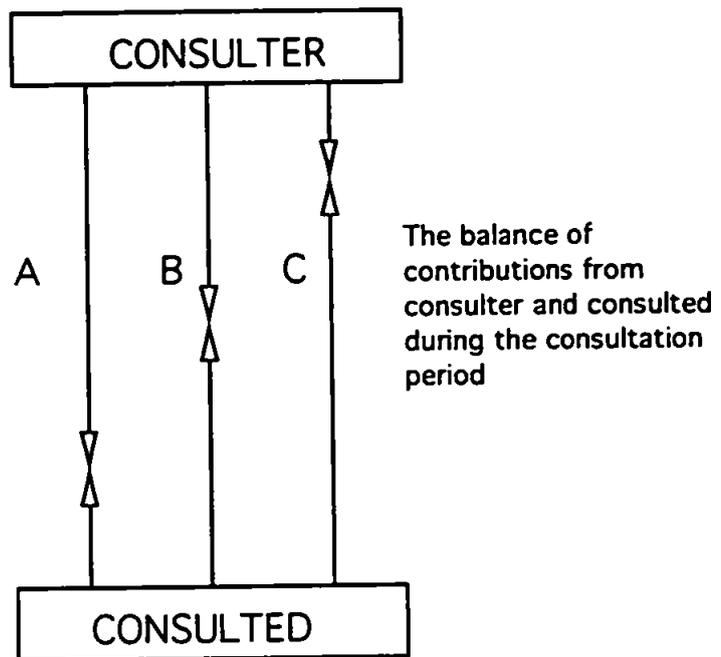
MODELS

FIGURE 1



GROWTH OF MAINTENANCE TASKS DURING A TIME OF RAPID CHANGE

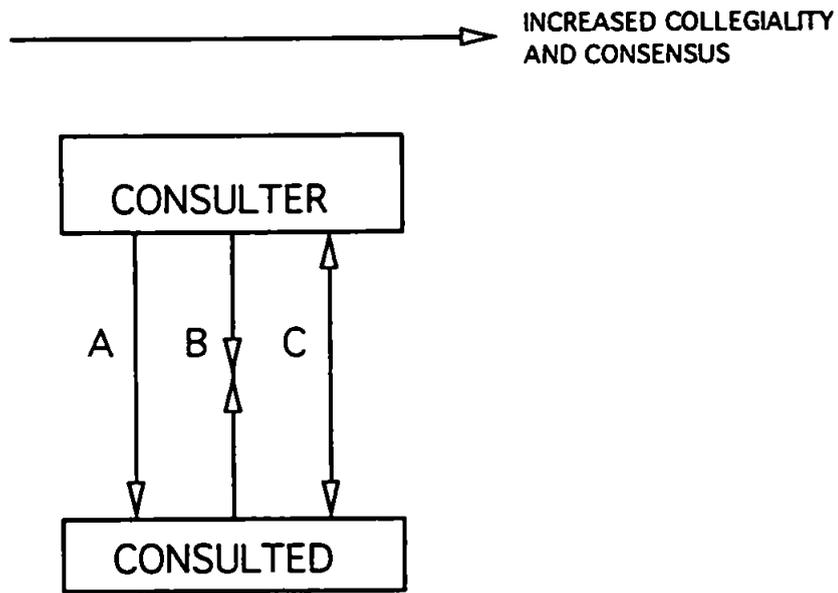
FIGURE 2



- A Limited contribution from the least well informed members
- B Both consultant and consulted sufficiently well informed to make a significant contribution
- C Consulted able to provide knowledge and expertise not possessed by consultant

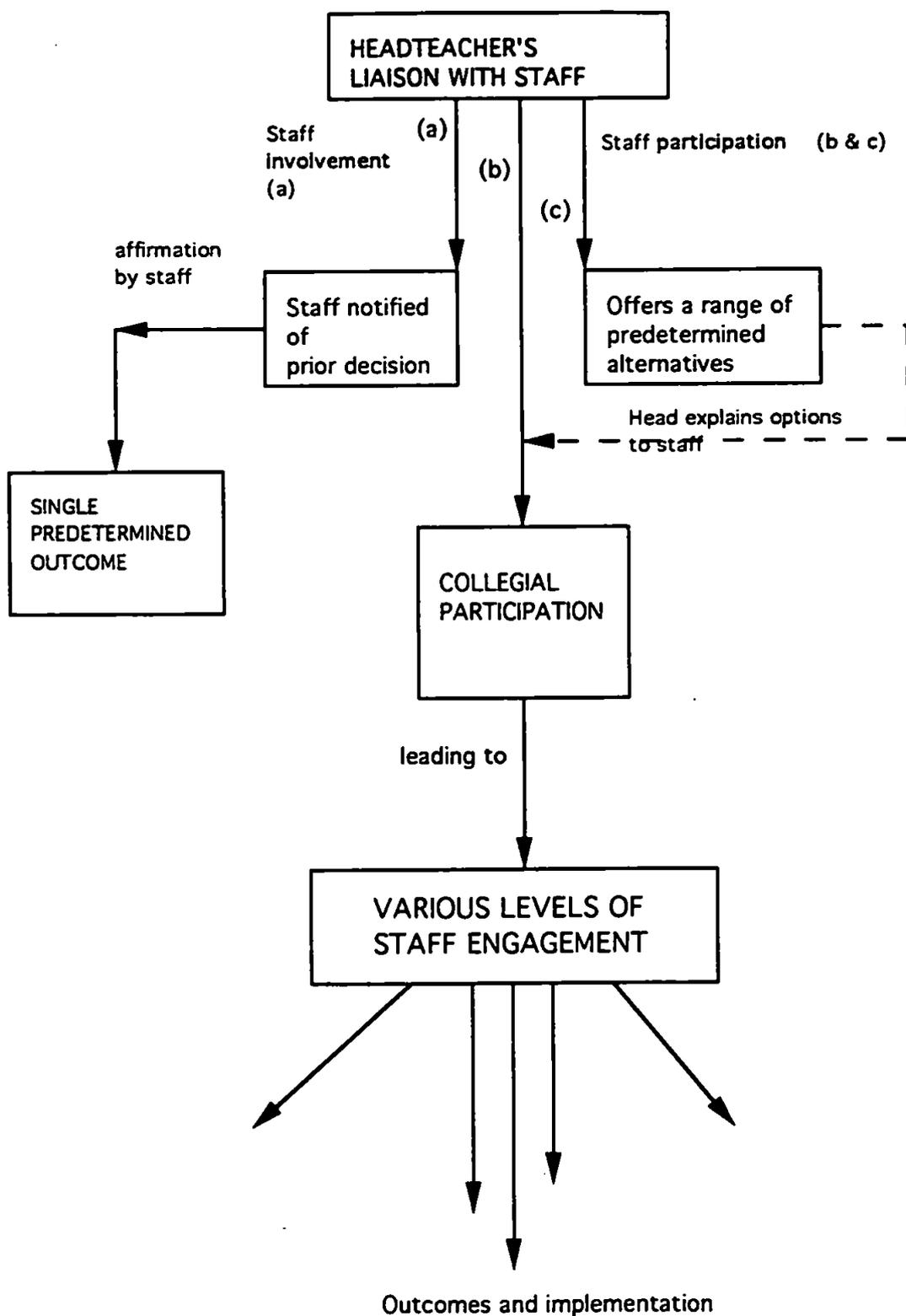
THE CONSULTATION PROCESS AND PARTICIPANT KNOWLEDGE BASE

FIGURE 3



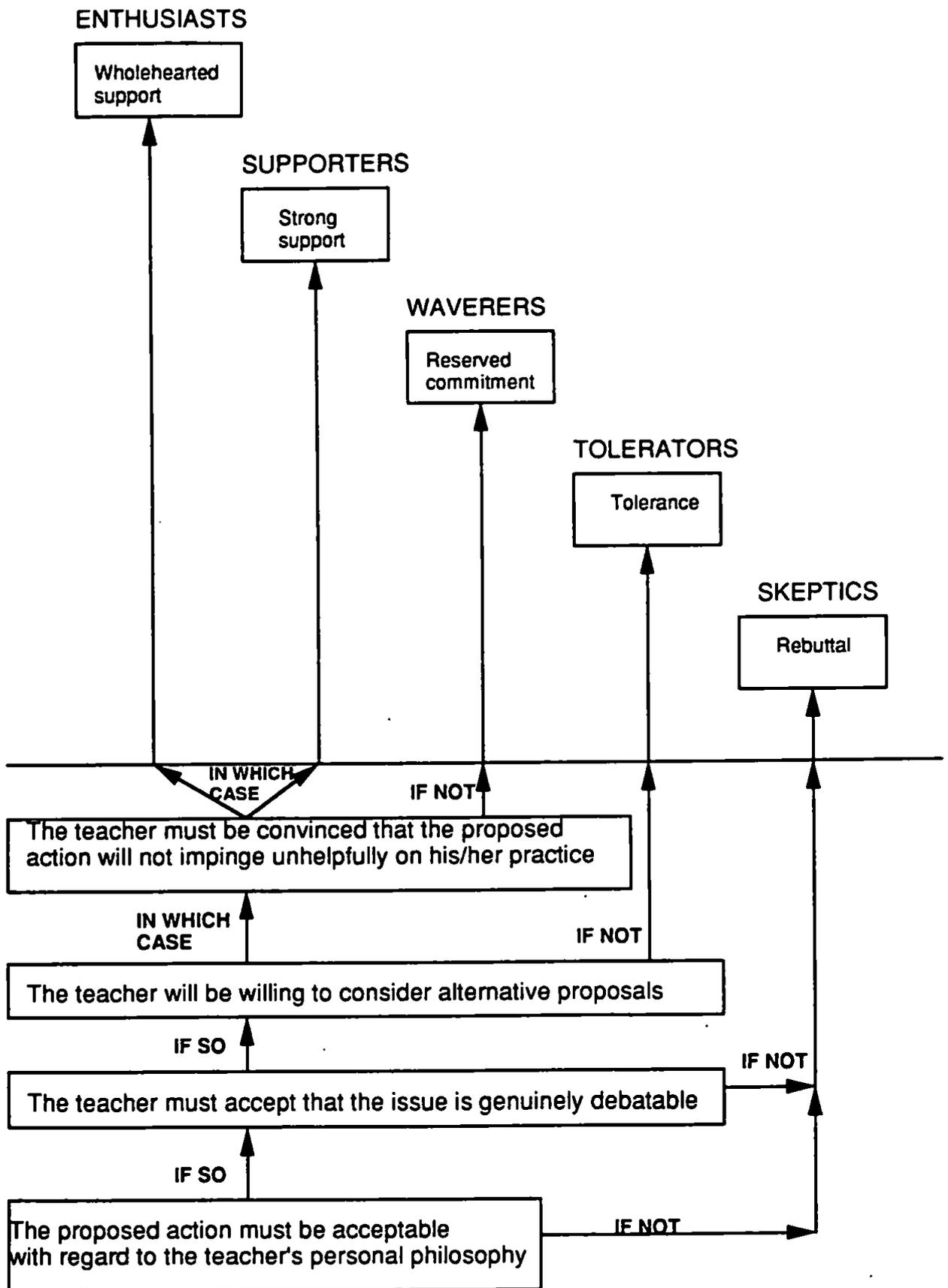
- A Consulters bring recommendations to consulted for approval and support.
- B Consultation to determine the most appropriate course of action from a range of options provided by the consulter.
- C Shared uncertainty and exchange of views over a full range of perceived options.

CONSULTATION STRATEGIES



PATHWAYS IN CONSULTATION

FIGURE 5



COMMITMENT TO A COURSE OF ACTION

APPENDIX 8

INFORMATION OVERLOAD

INFORMATION OVERLOAD: a selection of materials received by the headteacher as a result of government reforms

The number of circulars from the DES over the period September 1988 to September 1989 indicate the extent of the pressure upon the headteacher, governors and subsequently the school staff, as a result of the Education Reform Act 1988 prior to the start of the research. The breadth of the reforms ranged across a wide range of issues:

- Local management of schools (7/88)
- Grant-maintained status of schools (10/88)
- Admission of pupils (11/88)
- Local Complaints arrangements (1/89)
- Charges for school activities (2/89)
- Religious education and collective worship (3/89)
- School curriculum and assessment (5/89)
- Mathematics and Science in the National Curriculum (6/89)
- Modern foreign languages (9/89)
- English Key Stage 1 in the National Curriculum (10/89)
- Statutory approval of qualifications (11/89)
- The Education (School Curriculum and Related Information) Regulations (14/89)
- Temporary exemptions from the National Curriculum (15/89)
- Education (School Records) Regulations (17/89)
- Financial arrangements for grant-maintained schools (21/89)
- Assessments and statements of special educational needs (22/89)

In addition, various *non-statutory* documents had been received:

A Handbook for Parents

Education Reform Act (ERA) Bulletins

National Curriculum: From Policy to Practice

The National Curriculum: a guide for parents

Task Group on Assessment and Testing (TGAT)...

- * A Report 1988
- * Three Supplementary Reports 1988
- * A Digest for Schools

Further, detailed documents arrived at an inconvenient time for schools; for instance, the DES Circular 18/89: The Education (Teachers) Regulations 1989, made under sections 218 and 232 of the ERA 1988, which came during the Summer holiday, August 1989. This four-part Circular explained the scope of the regulations, the staffing of schools and matters common to the employment of teachers at schools.

Accompanying the circulars and non-statutory documents were a series of *Statutory Instruments*, a result of parliamentary legislation. One challenge for headteacher and staff had centred upon the time lapse between the arrival of the Statutory Instrument in school and the date of its coming into force. Eight out of the nineteen Instruments came into force over various dates; the others gave different degrees of notice prior to implementation. The complexity of this documentation necessitated interpretation supported by advice from the Local Education Authority (see below). For instance, Statutory Instrument 1989, No. 954, The Education (School Curriculum and Related Information) Regulations 1989, which came before Parliament on the 12th June 1989 and into force over three years (August 1st 1989, 1990, 1991) was a highly complex and involved document that required thorough consideration and considerable time expenditure.

The National Curriculum Council (NCC), over the same period of time, offered their own supportive documents (non-statutory), including circulars:

- *Applying the National Curriculum to 5-year olds*
- *A new description for school year groups*
- *Implementing the National Curriculum*
- *A Digest for English 5-11*
- *Participation by pupils with special needs*

Additionally:

Introducing the National Curriculum (October 1988)

English 5-11 Consultation Report (available March 1989)

A Framework for the Primary Curriculum

Special Needs in the National Curriculum

National Curriculum (September 1989)

National Curriculum Information Packs (In-Service materials for staff development)

Mathematics Consultation Report (available December 1988)

Science Consultation Report (available December 1988)

Mathematics Non-Statutory guidance

English Key Stage 1 Non-Statutory guidance

English Consultation Report (available November 1988)

Technology Consultation Report (available November 1988)

The third source of documents arrived on the headteacher's desk from the *School Examinations and Assessment Council* (SEAC). All of these were non-statutory and related to syllabuses and associated administrative issues.

The *Local Authority* also provided support material and advice to assist headteachers and governors in unravelling the complexities and implications of such documentation. Thus, a total of 56 briefing documents were sent out to schools in the two years preceding the start of my research, and three comprehensive guides relating to: charging for school activities, producing a policy for charges and remissions, and arrangements for the consideration of complaints about the school curriculum and related matters. Similar information was sent to governors, including the first edition of The Governor, (October 1989) published for school governors by the Local Authority. From the Local Management of Schools Implementation Team; three newsletters, advice about the school management plan (September 1989) and advice on promoting quality (September 1989). The County Council Newsletter of 9th December 1989 explained the hold-up in the (promised) Circular from the DES on the length and control of school session times. It summarised the current position on curriculum matters in a manner which clearly demonstrated the pressure on schools as a result of the Education Reform Act legislation:

The National Curriculum documents for Mathematics and Science and English (Key Stage 1) have now been issued and you will be familiar with these because they have been in use since the beginning of the Autumn Term (1989). During the course of this academic year it is anticipated that the documents on English (Key Stage 2), Design and Technology (with Information Technology), History and Geography will be distributed.

There followed a summary of other legislation, advice and non-statutory guidelines of which schools ought to have a copy.

This pattern continued during the following two years, complicated by the detailed changes to the core areas of the National Curriculum (Mathematics, English, Science) which had serious implications for the assessment, and uncertainty over the extent of information for reports to parents required as a result of legislation. A list of some of the more significant communications

received over this period illustrates the continuing pattern often referred to by commentators as 'information overload' or 'innovation fatigue'...

- * DES Circular 1/90, an update and slightly amended version of Circular 11/89
- * DES (12th February 1990), National Exclusions Reporting System, in which information about all cases between Summer 1990 and Spring 1992 in which a pupil had been permanently excluded from school had to be noted
- * DES (March 1990) Grant Maintained Schools: Questions Parents Ask
- * NCC Curriculum Guidance 3 (March 1990), The Whole Curriculum
- * NCC Curriculum Guidance 4 (April 1990), Education for Economic and Industrial Understanding
- * Annual Curriculum Return 1990-91
- * The DES Circular 14/89 (Annual Curriculum Return), originally issued in June 1989 for schools to submit two forms relating to the *past* year was amended in March 1990 to require only information supplied once per year about the *forthcoming* year.
- * DES (4th July 1990), Circular 7/90, Management of the School Day, outlining the procedures laid down in Section 115 of the 1988 Act
- * SEAC (Spring 1991), including information on the Key Stage 1 moderation process to assure consistency of quality across the country
- * LEA (28th June 1991), offering training and support for National Curriculum assessment training and support
- * LEA (19th July 1991), detailing a Staff Disciplinary and Grievance Procedure and urging compliance by 1st December 1991
- * SEAC (Autumn 1991) including details of the modifications to the Standard Assessment Tasks

- * NCC (Autumn 1991) including the simplified version of the Attainment Targets in Mathematics and Science
- * DES (Autumn 1991), describing the streamlined version of SATs for seven-year olds
- * DES Circular 5/92 (29th April 1992), Reporting Pupils Achievements to Parents, requiring maintained schools to provide an annual report on all pupils regardless of age, plus additional information, including comment on every National Curriculum foundation subject and a record of pupil's attendance

This last document caused a good deal of confusion as it contradicted the previous Circular 17/89 which had stated that 'these regulations do not prescribe how the records should be kept or lay down any detailed requirements as to their contents...' Similarly, the pressure exerted on schools through the Department for Education (DfE) and Welsh Office document Choice and Diversity: A new framework for schools, in which the advantages of Grant Maintained status were supported by a foreword from the Prime Minister led to a series of staff and governors' meetings, convening of local groups of headteachers to discuss the implications for their area, and concerns expressed by parent- and teacher-governors about the likely pressure upon the headteacher and governors if the Local Authority were not available for consultation and support.

APPENDIX 9

MANAGEMENT AUDIT

MANAGEMENT AUDIT

PURPOSE

Does the School have a clear mission statement?

- are all staff and governors aware of its content?
- to what extent does the life of the School reflect the statement?
- should the wording of the statement be in evidence around the premises?

LEADERSHIP

Do the Head and Deputy share a common perspective?

- towards (for example) encouraging and praising staff achievement and effort?

To what extent are the Head and Deputy perceived by the rest of the staff as having a close working relationship?

- is it evident to staff that there is any underlying disagreement?
- are the Head and Deputy seen as supportive of one another during open discussion?

To what extent are the senior staff displaying a positive attitude in the midst of current challenges?

- are staff encouraged or discouraged by the prevailing attitude?
- to what extent do senior staff exude an upbeat image?

Does the Senior Management Team share common values and aspirations?

- are staff clear about the purpose and intentions of the team?
- do staff perceive a unity of spirit within the team?

GOVERNORS

Are the Head and Chair of Governors perceived by staff as sharing a common purpose for the School?

- is unity between Headteacher and Chair publicly visible?
- how often does the Chair have opportunity to publicly affirm the work of the school and Headteacher?
- are the senior staff, by their words and actions, reassuring staff that relationships with Governors are secure?

What is the staff perception of governors?

- do staff know who governors are?
- is there opportunity for informal contact?
- is the role of a governor understood by staff?

Teacher-governors

- is there agreement within school about the extent of their influence and responsibility?
- is sufficient account taken of the demands made upon them when attending meetings?
- is there a smooth relationship between teacher-governors and other senior staff?
- is the teacher-governor perceived as a representative or as a delegate?

Parent-governors

- does the parent-governor liaise solely with the headteacher?
- do other staff always hear comment second-hand?
- is the parent-governor perceived as a representative or as a delegate?

HIERARCHY AND STRUCTURE

Does the Senior Management Team see itself as a united, identifiable group?

- are members clear about their responsibilities?
- do individuals within the team have opportunity to exercise initiative?

Is there a hierarchy of command...and to what extent is this understood by staff?

- which member of staff takes responsibility in the absence of the Head, Deputy and Rate 'B'?
- what is the role of the Rate 'A' allowance holders ?

Is the concept of 'line management' clear to all staff? (including relief teachers)

- is the extent of individual responsibility and accountability clear to all?
- how does the notion of a hierarchy square with any intended moves towards collegiality?

Does the weekly Senior Management Group meeting still serve the same function as originally intended?

- is open access to staff still an option?
- should a brief minute be kept, available for scrutiny by all staff?
- how is accurate transmission of issues carried from the SMT meeting to the rest of the staff?

MORALE

Is the school climate reflecting its aims?

- through improving the quality of interpersonal relations by (a) trusting individual members of staff to exercise their judgement appropriately; (b) showing confidence in that judgement; (c) valuing their recommendations; (d) giving sincere public and private praise.
- through all senior staff showing sincere and regular appreciation of colleagues?
- by convincing staff through the positive approach and attitude of the leadership that 'we are still in control of our destiny'.
- by creating opportunities for staff to rediscover or explore the 'joys of teaching'.
- by using resources to create a pleasant and pleasing working environment.

Are there ways of creating a greater sense of unity and cohesion across the staff?

- by encouraging open and healthy dialogue.
- by cross-participation of different phases.
- by stirring a belief that 'we're in this together'.

COMMUNICATION

Can the notion of central information points be developed?
- are there other areas where a communication board might be helpful?

Can the weekly bulletin be used for more than factual information?
- could it mention successes?
- congratulate individuals?

Are there imaginative opportunities for keeping parents in touch with current events, successes, etc.?
- do letters home need to become more imaginative in style, format and content?

TIME ALLOCATION

Is the Head's time used appropriately?
- are the Head's priorities understood and recognised by staff?
- is there an appropriate balance between time spent in school and outside?
- is the availability of the Headteacher to the staff adversely affected by time spent out of school or in the number of private meetings within school?
- how many sub-committee meetings does the Headteacher need to attend?
- are there tasks which might usefully be delegated?
- is enough time spent training potential delegates?

Is staff time used appropriately?
- can non-contact time available to staff (due to the presence of students, deputy deputising for the Head, etc) be used more pro-actively?
- are there means to enable specialist teachers to work alongside colleagues more closely?
- do teachers spend too much time away from their classes?
- can time be saved in reaching decisions by distributing paperwork in advance of the meeting?
- are decisions, once reached, adhered to?
- how can this be shown?

Is time used appropriately for consultation with staff?
- can any time be saved by staff receiving adequate briefing in advance of important discussions?
- are some issues brought before staff for consultation purposes which should rightly come as information?
- is staff opinion receiving appropriate recognition?

How might time be allocated prior to important single events? (Festivals, pageants, parent workshops...)
- should the teacher with overall responsibility be given time-release as part of the staff development programme?
- is sufficient account taken of the extra demands placed upon staff at busy times of the year?

CURRICULUM AND TEACHING

What are the implications for teachers of the increasing National Curriculum load?

- are there realistic expectations of what can be achieved by a member of staff?
- is there consistency of approach within teams?
- is there consistency across phases?
- can greater use be made of teachers' curriculum strengths across the school?
- is the staff development programme enhancing expertise?
- how is teaching style being influenced by the N.C.?

How is curriculum continuity being safeguarded?

- is the rolling programme sustainable?
- is there any visual method of showing overall school curriculum coverage, accessible to staff?
- how closely do records match the stated curriculum progression?
- would teacher planning files benefit from greater consistency of presentation?
- should individual files be considered jointly within phases?
- how are new children to the school eased into the programme?

Is the system of assessment and record-keeping consistent across the school?

- are statutory obligations being met?
- are staff confident of their abilities in assessing pupil progress?
- how closely does teacher assessment inform plans of work, grouping of pupils and teaching approach?
- are staff clear about assessment which informs their teaching, that which acts as evidence of pupil progress and that which provides data?
- to what extent is record-keeping realistic and informative?

Is there consistency over the training and development of each teacher?

- what proportion takes place within school?
- what proportion outside the school?
- what proportion through visits of externals?

PURPOSE OF MEETINGS

Is the purpose of every meeting clearly established?

- do staff know why the meeting is necessary?
- would they come, given a choice?
- if not, where do their priorities lie?

Are specific discussions used effectively?

- by staff having opportunity to consider issues prior to the meeting..
- by the purpose of the meeting being clear (to make decisions / analyse proposals / take soundings / seek advice...etc) ?

Are staff clear about their own role at meetings?

- the occasions when their views are genuinely being sought by the leader..

- the occasions when they are being presented with a set of options by the leader..
- the occasions when they are being asked to ratify a decision that has already been taken.

STAFF MEETINGS

Should chairing of the meeting become a shared duty?

- can senior staff be offered systematic opportunity?
- should some training in chairing be given?

How active a role should the Head and Deputy take?

- can they influence the tone of the meeting by allowing discussion to flow freely without unnecessary intervention?
- can they raise staff-confidence by their response to comments made by staff?
- are there ways of encouraging less bold members to contribute?

How aware are the Head and Deputy of those staff who like to offer their own ideas to a discussion and those who prefer to be guided by senior colleagues?

- are all staff involved in decision-making?
- how are new/younger staff treated during discussion?
- should some decisions be taken by secret ballot?

Should the use of the minute-book be extended?

- would a summary of the previous minutes at the start of a full meeting assist the 'matters arising' ?

How closely should Staff Development Days be timetabled?

- is there sufficient flexibility to allow teachers 'space' to re-orientate following a holiday break?
- are expectations for the day set at an appropriate level?

PHASE GROUPS

How should phase time be used?

- should discussion be based largely on the issues arising from Senior Management meetings?
- how is information from Senior Management to phases accurately transmitted?
- could more time be used for the purpose of discussing curriculum issues?
- is an appropriate amount of time spent discussing issues in year teams?

Are the phases working in harmony?

- does the independent planning in one phase lead to a conflict of interests with another phase?
- are decisions taken on behalf of one phase ever to the detriment of another phase?
- are members of a phase aware of what happens in other phases?
- are nursery staff adequately informed?

Is equal provision and support given to all phases?

- could a governor be allocated to take a specific interest in the upper school (as currently exists for the early years)?
- do staff in each phase feel that the Head and Deputy take a consistent interest in them?
- are resources fairly allocated to all phases?
- how is this ensured and seen to be fair?

POLICY IMPLEMENTATION

How effective is the implementation of decisions made at meetings?

- do all staff agree with the decision?
- are all staff empowered through adequate resourcing and encouragement to implement the decision?
- how can implementation affecting classroom practice be monitored without damaging professional relationships between headteacher, governors and staff?

Does a proper review procedure exist for curriculum documentation and School policy?

- is sufficient time allowed for the decision to be implemented?
- is a trial period necessary to judge the efficacy of the decision?
- are the staff who are responsible for the implementation given sufficient opportunity to express concerns and praise for the new practice?
- are senior staff willing to modify and alter policy in response to staff comment?

NON-TEACHING INFLUENCES

How are non-teaching staff consulted?

- is the system of consultation clear?
- are they kept informed of changes affecting their working lives?

Are non-teaching staff used effectively?

- is sufficient known about their individual expertise?
- is this expertise fully utilised?
- could teaching staff be relieved of time-consuming onerous tasks by support staff?

What is the status of the School Council?

- what weight do its decisions have?
- should staff become more involved?
- is it appropriate for the headteacher to lead the meetings?

RESOURCES

Is the system of staff involvement in resource decisions operating effectively?

- are curriculum leaders given sufficient opportunity to exercise initiative and discretion?
- are discussions in staff meetings about resource distribution and priorities well-informed?

Are funds equitably distributed?

- do different areas of the curriculum receive a fair allocation of funds?
- how is this decided?

- Are resources equally accessible to staff?
- is the concept of a single central store adequate?
 - is the concept of a single central library acceptable?

- Should Key Stage 3 work be given special status?
- should the 'secondary' element be recognised by advantageous staffing and resourcing?

MARKETING

How do parents view the School?

- what characteristics of the School are likely to appeal to parents?
- which characteristics need improving?
- which are less important than imagined?

What is the popular image of the School in the community?

- which decisions made within school are most likely to affect this image?
- what other promotional strategies are available?

Can the School enhance its marketing strategies?

- by exuding an upbeat, positive image...
- by celebrating its successes more publicly...
- by developing on-going close links with the local press?

What efforts are made to discern parental concerns and respond to them?

- are all parental views given consideration?
- what is the form of liaison between the head and the parent-governor?

EXTERNAL INFLUENCES

How much support should be sought from the Local Authority...(a). in the immediate term? (b). in the longer term?

- how dependent upon the Local Authority should the School become or remain?
- is the School looking towards ultimate independence from the Authority?
- how often does the Authority alert the school on the need to act?
- on which issues does the head most often consult the Authority?
- how could the relationship between the Authority and school be enhanced?

How influential are decisions from the Academic Council?

- when do they take precedence over staff opinion?
- when is it necessary to seek staff opinion before acceding to a request from the Council or agreeing to support a Council decision?

APPENDIX 10

MRS. BOXER'S TIME OUT OF SCHOOL

Mrs. Boxer's Time Out Of School

Based principally on evidence from the weekly staff bulletin sheets.

A). Her own development:

Week beginning...

- | | |
|----------|---|
| 9-4-91 | Computer system training |
| 5-5-91 | 2-day multi-disciplinary child-protection conference |
| 17-5-91 | Budget advice from LEA
Early Years steering group |
| 30-5-91 | Reading conference |
| 6-6-91 | Computer system training |
| 15-6-91 | Management conference |
| 29-6-91 | Computer system training
LEA governors' forum |
| 6-7-91 | Visits to other educational establishments |
| 15-9-91 | Budget conference with LEA |
| 22-9-91 | Training day for Chairs & Headteachers (Academic Council) |
| 6-10-91 | Local Payment Scheme conference (LEA) |
| 10-10-91 | Conference on 'Young Children's Learning' |
| 18-10-91 | 2-day computer system assessment training |
| 22-11-91 | External examining |
| 24-1-92 | Child-protection course |
| 1-2-92 | Meeting for Headteachers and Chairs (Academic Council) |
| 15-2-92 | Budget conference with LEA |
| 26-2-92 | Meeting about the Children Act (LEA) |
| 14-3-92 | Appraisal training
Governors' Forum
Conference on Travellers' Children
Computer system training course |
| 21-3-92 | Appraisal training |

28-3-92 Conference on governor training
Child-protection course
Computer system training course

25-4-92 Computer system training course

25-5-92 Headteacher's area conference ('Three Wise Men' report)

9-5-92 Industry Link and Management
'Parents and the National Curriculum' conference
Computer system training day

16-5-92 Industry Link & Management

29-5-92 Industry Link & Management

6-6-92 Computer system training day

20-6-92 Aided Schools Governors' Forum

12-9-92 Conference on management issues

19-9-92 Conference on management issues

23-9-92 Large schools' conference
Appraisal training

3-10-93 P.E. course (management)
Meeting of headteachers with Chief Education Officer

10-10-92 Management conference

17-10-92 Conference 'Managing the financial work of the school'

5-11-92 2-day management conference

14-11-92 Heads meeting about Service Agreements (LEA)
Large Schools' management conference

27-11-92 Large Schools' management conference

5-2-93 Meeting for headteachers and governors

13-2-93 Computer system course (Personnel)

27-2-93 Hospital School open morning

5-3-93 First Aid course

1-5-93 Visit to local High School

13-5-93 Large Schools' conference

B). Her engagement with other professionals:

Week beginning...

- | | |
|-----------------|---|
| 16-3-91 | Section 11 application to the DES (meeting with LEA) |
| 24-3-91 | Child-protection case conference
Meeting with LEA team support member about budgeting |
| 9-4-91 | Child-protection review meeting |
| 20-4-91 | Child-protection case conference |
| 27-4-91 | Academic Council |
| 11-5-91 | Academic Council |
| 17-5-91 | Early Years steering group committee |
| 30-5-91 | Youth Training Scheme meeting |
| 22-6-91 | Case conference at Area Education Office
Child-protection review |
| 29-6-91 | Diocesan Aided Schools' Forum
Academic Council |
| 6-7-91 | Child-protection review |
| 14-7-91 | Early Years steering group |
| 1-9-91 | Planning group for pre-school market (citywide) |
| 8-9-91 | Information Technology (led by curriculum leader) |
| 15-9-91 | Academic Council |
| 22-9-91 | Child-protection case conference |
| 29-9-91 | Academic Council |
| 6-10-91 | Pre-school market steering group |
| 10-10-91 | Child-protection case conference
Academic Council |
| 18-10-91 | Academic Council working party |
| 8-11-91 | Classroom assistants support group
Diocesan Education Officer visit
Nursery Admissions panel |

22-11-91 Academic Council
 7-12-91 Child-protection case conference
 10-1-92 Planning SAT day with other headteachers
 24-1-92 Child-protection case conference
 Special Needs meeting
 1-2-92 Academic Council
 10-2-92 Locality Planning team meeting
 15-2-92 Academic Council
 26-2-92 Nursery Admissions panel
 7-3-92 Child-protection case conference
 21-3-92 Stress management course
 28-3-92 Academic Council
 Child-protection case conference
 25-4-92 'See How We Learn' steering group meeting
 Academic Council
 9-5-92 Pre-school Market steering group meeting
 16-5-92 Meeting with an Academic Council colleague
 Stress management course
 29-5-92 Visit to another school to assist appraising colleague
 13-6-92 Visit to nearby school
 20-6-92 Nursery Admissions panel
 27-6-92 Child-protection case conference
 Special Needs support team
 4-7-92 Child-protection case conference
 18-7-92 Child-protection case conference
 Meeting with Refuge workers
 5-9-92 Community worker
 12-9-92 Visit to nearby school about nursery provision
 19-9-92 Academic Council
 23-9-92 Music adviser

See How We Learn meeting (curriculum)

3-10-92 Academic Council
Visiting staff member from F.E. college

10-10-92 'See How We Learn' day

17-10-92 Pre-school Market steering group

26-10-92 Meeting with LEA governor training officer
Academic Council

5-11-92 'Ethos of Church schools' conference
Visit to a local school's nursery
Nursery Admissions panel

20-11-92 Aided Schools' meeting
Special Needs meeting (LEA)

27-11-92 Child-protection case conference

12-12-92 Planning meeting for governors training day

1-1-93 Music (led by advisory teacher)
Child-protection case conference (1)
Assessment... Staff Development Day
Child-protection case conference (2)
Planning meeting for governors training day

8-1-93 INSET... discussion about staff needs with LEA

30-1-93 Academic Council

13-2-93 Academic Council

27-2-93 Planning Pre-school Market
Multicultural Education policy (LEA officer)

2-4-93 Special Needs provision (LEA)
Child-protection case conference

14-4-93 Pre-school Market

1-5-93 Visit to High School
Academic Council
Appraising a headteacher colleague

8-5-93 Meeting at Area Education Office

13-5-93 Special Needs (LEA)
Academic Council

APPENDIX 11

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS: An Explanatory Note

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS: An Explanatory Note

Summary

Throughout the research, my analysis was concurrent with the data collection (Glaser & Strauss, 1967), the two informing and driving one another (Miles & Huberman, 1984), and 'systematic and comprehensive but not rigid' (Tesch, 1990, p. 95). Categories for sorting were tentative and preliminary in the early stages and remained flexible until a higher-level synthesis was possible in the form of a composite summary. Tentative models based on theory from literature, together with my impressionistic, interpretative response to data, were refined and re-interpreted in the light of further evidence. Models were proposed based on this refining process, confirmed by respondents and tested in 'right of reply' sessions. Interpretation of data relied on a sifting process which resulted in a categorization of issues from which illustrative examples and transcript portions were extracted. Examples of full transcripts are given in an appendix (Appendix 5) to contextualise quotations for significant instances.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data collection relied upon two main sources: (a) observations at timetabled staff meetings; (b) semi-structured interviews with staff. During timetabled meetings I sat within the circle of teachers in a position to allow me a wide field of vision to hear oral exchanges between different teachers and note reactions. I used hard-backed A4 notebooks and recorded data on the right-hand page, reserving the left-hand page for additional comment and broadly-based headings as a preliminary data management categorization. Semi-structured interviews were taped or recorded longhand in the field notebook.

I took extensive field notes over the period of the study. In the earlier stages, I paid most attention to (a) the content of the agenda (to familiarise myself with areas in which decisions were needed) and (b) participants' overt involvement in the proceedings. At the end of each meeting, I wrote a brief summary of my immediate impressions and a note about key points. For instance, during an upper phase planning meeting (18/3/91) I noted the key items as they emerged (the complexity of ensuring curriculum continuity, the availability of the 'floating' teacher, development a rolling programme, record sheets, etc.); some samples of discourse (e.g., between three teachers over appropriate use of National Curriculum ATs); specific problems identified by the group and where agreement was reached (a need to cut down on the workload, pool expertise, and cut down

the movement of children between rooms between classes). My immediate impressions on the discussion (such as the teachers' concern over 'fitting everything in') were written opposite the log entry, and subsequent reflections summarised in a note at the end (including, in this case, the significance of the building in facilitating regular informal contacts between staff). As the research proceeded, the agenda issues became more predictable and I noted them on the left-hand page using colour-coding to identify different areas. For instance, issues relating to the nature of staff involvement in decision-making were coded in green, and issues relating to legislative requirements in yellow. These agenda headings were useful in drawing together data under general categories and in tracing the chronology of key issues such as the implementation of systems for record-keeping and assessment.

As further data became available through informal contact with staff and my presence in and around the school, I found that some staff appeared to be more enthusiastic for involvement in decision-making than others. At this time, I was largely unaware of the motives of individual teachers for the perceived extent of their involvement but noted three key factors:-

- (a) Whatever benefits might accrue from involvement, it was not cost-free; in particular, teachers appeared tired and enervated.
- (b) Some teachers appeared to participate enthusiastically during formal meetings, others considerably less so.
- (c) Some teachers were consistent in their claims that attendance at meetings was threatening the quality of their preparation and classroom work.

As I constructed my case-record chronologically, I began to speculate that two distinct groups existed within the staff: those who deferred to the principle of involvement and those who rejected this opportunity. From this (as yet untested) premise, I took account of the considerable literature on school-based decision-making and the competing claims over the benefits and disadvantages of staff involvement to establish a number of 'ideal constructs' (see Appendix 6). I used these evaluator categorizations as an heuristic device to establish my own constructions of the data and set out theoretical propositions that seemed to fit the data at that time. The constructs were a valuable structure against which to evaluate further data (notably from interviews with teachers).

During the on-going interviews and informal exchanges, I began to test my own perceptions in three ways:-

- (a) By posing general questions to participants about their involvement, their feelings about the decision-making process and their own experiences during the time of rapid change.
- (b) By making propositions to interviewees 'which remained unconceived in the phenomenology of the participants' (Lofland, 1971, p. 34) as a means of exploring constructions which they may have possessed but had never articulated. (Sensitive, nonetheless, to the dangers of imposing my own sense of reality upon them. Typically, I would use expressions prefaced by such phrases as 'You seem to be saying that...' or 'Are you claiming that...' or 'These concerns seem to provide a clue to...').
- (c) By comparing what was said in public with that said to me in private (this being particularly difficult to record while preserving confidentiality).

As interview transcripts became available, I began to analyse this data by systematically combing the transcripts, mindful of the patterns, categories and recurring themes that the earlier data had suggested, and looking for regularities. Statements from respondents were numbered for ease of reference and allocated to categories as I judged appropriate as an aid to data management. For example, teachers' contributions were compiled under the following categories: staff liaison with the governors; perceptions of the role of external bodies; the perspective of the senior management team; the way teachers perceived that decisions were made; attitudes towards the formal structure of decision-making; factors limiting staff enthusiasm for involvement, and so on. At this juncture, I was rather more interested in the 'topic' of the comment (i.e., what the statement was about) and less in the content. I then clustered the statements according to the frequency with which particular issues were alluded to and the intensity of the responses. In the latter case, I had to make a judgement about the strength of feeling, in part verified during the interview by confirming with the respondent how strongly she or he felt, and partly by the impact it had upon me as I listened. I listed the statements under these broad categories until I had exhausted the data; those which did not easily codify (such as issues mentioned just once) were put to one side for consideration should the issue be restated subsequently by a respondent. Finally, I examined the content carefully, looking for commonalities, uniqueness or contradictions. Where missing information or confusions appeared, and whenever possible, I approached the relevant person as soon as I could to clarify the position.

From this categorizing, I further refined the data under the broad headings (mentioned above) using sub-categories. For instance, under 'Factors limiting staff enthusiasm' there were thirty-four sub-categories initially, finally grouped and focussed under five recurring significant issues (see chapter 9). I tried, wherever possible, to cross-classify different dimensions from observations at meetings with data from interviews. For example, one of the five sub-categories, 'time pressures and excessive involvement' was cross-classified with the following: the number of staff meetings held each week, the distraction of peripheral demands, the difficulty for class teachers to visit colleagues, the number of curriculum areas undergoing change, shortage of resources, sensitivity of some issues, and the marginalization of permeation themes. Thus, my earlier evaluator categorization which I had based on 'issues of concern' to teachers noted at meetings, was elucidated by further data from transcript analysis. Continued attendance at meetings and further interviews with selected staff permitted me to re-examine the perspectives of the participants in the context of on-going debate about 'issues of concern' which were consistent throughout the research (notably behaviour policy, job security and National Curriculum implementation).

During the erection of these participant-generated typologies, I advanced explanations about the complexities of involvement at a time of rapid change, supported by a number of models (Appendix 7) and written summaries. These were shared with the headteacher and the whole staff, both informally and at specially convened meetings. As a result of this triangulation process, some over-elaborate models were rejected and the visual presentation of others, simplified. Implications for consultation, collegiality and teacher commitment to involvement were subsequently proposed in the main text.

Finally, a recurrent problem for ethnographic research is the selective use of data in support of the propositions and claims made through the research. I have tried to offer the reader the opportunity to evaluate this selection by providing a number of full transcripts for interpretation (Appendix 5) and offering detailed descriptions of meetings and exchanges from which field extracts and quotations were drawn, with dates and the name of the contributor where relevant. In this way I have attempted to supply some prime data with sufficient contextualization to make it possible, in a limited way, for the reader to undertake his or her own analysis. Inevitably, in the selection process, a considerable amount of material was not used; however, through the categorization and

focusing process described above, I have drawn together data which, so far as I can establish, accurately reflect the weight of evidence from the research.

APPENDIX 12

PUBLICATIONS ARISING FROM THE RESEARCH

Publications

Learning to live with the National Curriculum: a case-study of a headteacher's dilemmas

The Curriculum Journal, Vol. 4, No. 2, Summer 1993, pp. 201-213.

A primary headteacher in search of a collaborative climate

A chapter in Southworth, G (ed, 1994): Readings in Primary School Development, London: Falmer Press.

The Primary Head's Tale: learning to use collaborative relationships during a time of rapid change

Accepted for publication in Educational Management and Administration journal, April 1995.

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