# Transforming Schools: Art, Science or Illusion?

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by

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**Abstract**

Transforming Schools: Art, Science or Illusion?

Bernard Barker

This ethnographic case study of Hillside School's two years in special measures investigates a number of theoretical perspectives derived from a substantial review of the literature on effectiveness, improvement and leadership. The claim that appropriately trained heads can motivate teachers and students to achieve ever more challenging targets, and transform the education and prospects of the next generation, is tested against the experience of two headteachers in the field. Repeated participant interviews, a contemporary diary and extensive documentation are used to examine how the heads built the school's capacity and raised its effectiveness in terms of OFSTED inspection criteria. Using authoritative and coaching styles appropriately, the new leaders enhanced the performance of their colleagues and created a resilient culture for continued improvement, despite adverse circumstances that included social disadvantage, the school's proposed closure and an ineffective local authority. But closer enquiry reveals that governors, parents, teachers and students were also motivated by beliefs, values, perceptions of interest and micro-political concerns that are inadequately explained by recommended models of school effectiveness and improvement. At Hillside, the heads mobilised all the available sources of moral, political and professional authority to resolve conflicts and dilemmas at micro, meso and macro levels. There are no neat, transferable lessons because variations in the combination of context, leaders and followers seem more significant than the common elements emphasised in popular models. Although high levels of effectiveness were achieved, examination and test results appeared unchanged, suggesting that student intake mix may have shaped performance more than the organizational characteristics influenced by the headteachers. As few schools achieve a step change in performance, the policy conclusion is drawn that new, qualitative measures of improvement are required as a framework for understanding change. A modified theoretical viewpoint is developed that acknowledges and explains the 'messy reality' of school life.

14.01.03

Dedicated to the memory of Sylvia West,
Warden of Impington Village College
and the inspiration for this thesis.

*During this transformation the forest moves with a speed greater than that of animals, for animals do not grow as fast as plants; yet this movement cannot be observed. The forest does not change its place, we cannot lie in wait for it and catch it in the act of moving. However much we look at it we see it as motionless. And such also is the immobility to our eyes of the eternally growing, ceaselessly changing life of society, of history moving as invisibly in its incessant transformations as the forest in spring.*

**Doctor Zhivago,** Boris Pasternak, 1958

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | *Acknowledgements* | vii |
| | *Abbreviations* | viii |
| | *Hillside Staff Named in the Text* | ix |
| **Chapter 1** | **Introduction** | 1 |
| | Policy Transformed | 1 |
| | The Hillside Case Study | 2 |
| | The Policy Context | 3 |
| | The Rise of Leadership | 4 |
| | Critical Perspectives on Leadership | 7 |
| | Leadership Effects | 11 |
| | Art, Science or Illusion? | 12 |
| **Chapter 2** | **Improving Schools** | 15 |
| | Scientific Management | 15 |
| | Organizational Theories | 17 |
| | The Headmaster Tradition | 19 |
| | Comprehensive Reorganization and Reaction | 20 |
| | School Effectiveness | 23 |
| | School Improvement | 26 |
| | The Self-Managing School | 29 |
| | Conservative Education Reforms | 30 |
| | Headteachers' Roles | 31 |
| | The 1992 Education Act | 34 |
| | Improvement or Compliance | 36 |
| | Fear of Failure | 37 |
| | Local Education Authorities | 40 |
| | Labour Education Reforms | 42 |
| | Margin for Improvement | 44 |
| **Chapter 3** | **Transforming Schools** | 51 |
| | Towards Transformation | 51 |
| | Managing People | 55 |
| | Managing Organizations | 57 |
| | Transformational Leadership | 61 |
| | Leadership Development | 69 |
| | Headship Training | 72 |
| | Leadership Styles | 75 |
| | Troubling Women | 77 |
| | Research Themes | 81 |
| | Critical Perspectives | 81 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| **Chapter 4** | **Methods** | 88 |
| | Points of View | 88 |
| | Case Study in School Improvement | 90 |
| | Participant Research | 93 |
| | External Research | 99 |
| | Ethical Issues | 102 |
| | Data Analysis | 104 |
| | Generalization | 106 |
| **Chapter 5** | **Sleeping Giant** | 108 |
| | Social Geography | 108 |
| | Albert Wake at Hillside | 112 |
| | Shell Shock Night | 120 |
| | Closure? | 126 |
| | Several Sticks of Gelignite | 128 |
| | Opening Moves | 131 |
| **Chapter 6** | **Fireworks** | 139 |
| | New Head | 139 |
| | Roles & Responsibilities | 147 |
| | Shell Shocked | 154 |
| | Financial Crisis | 158 |
| | Pressure and Support | 161 |
| | Leadership: Impact & Response | 170 |
| **Chapter 7** | **Dictatorial Powers** | 175 |
| | Kitchen Cabinet | 175 |
| | Disappeared Without Address | 179 |
| | Senior Management Audit | 183 |
| | Rejects and Pussies | 185 |
| | No Compulsory Redundancies | 190 |
| | You're not going to shout at me are you? | 193 |
| | Technology | 195 |
| | A Couple of Ferrets in Your Trousers | 201 |
| | SWOT | 204 |
| **Chapter 8** | **Saved and Out!** | 207 |
| | Stabbed? | 207 |
| | Secondary Review | 212 |
| | Option 1 or 2? | 216 |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | Improving Teaching | 220 |
| | Powerless and Lumbered | 228 |
| | Summer Monitoring | 229 |
| | Lord of the Rings | 232 |
| | The Reckoning | 238 |
| **Chapter 9** | **Art and Science** | 244 |
| | Strong Intervention | 244 |
| | Sources of Authority | 247 |
| | Bureaucratic Power | 249 |
| | Interpersonal Skills | 252 |
| | Professional Knowledge | 265 |
| | Moral Authority | 268 |
| | Transformational Leadership | 271 |
| **Chapter 10** | **Illusion** | 274 |
| | Structure | 274 |
| | Social Geography | 276 |
| | Local Government | 279 |
| | OFSTED | 285 |
| | Perspectives | 289 |
| **Chapter 11** | **Conclusion** | 290 |
| | Agency in Messy Places | 290 |
| | Recommended Models | 291 |
| | Transferable Transformations | 296 |
| | School Variables | 298 |
| | External Variables | 300 |
| | The Limits of Improvement | 302 |
| | Policy Implications | 304 |
| | Further Research | 308 |
| **References** | | 312 |
| **Appendix 1** | **List of Sources** | |
| | Monitoring Files 1 – 5 | |
| | Administrative Files 1 – 13 | |
| | Additional Sources 1 – 4 | |
| | Interview Transcripts (HB) | |
| | Interview Transcripts (BB) | |
| | Interview Notes (BB) | |

Lecture Transcript

**Appendix 2 Tables and Charts**

| | |
|---|---|
| Table 1 | Analysis of Hillside Teachers in Service Y1 |
| Table 2 | Headteacher Characteristics: Chris Moore |
| Table 3 | Inspection Findings Y1 |
| Table 4 | Inspection Findings Y3 |
| Table 5 | Hillside School Student Data Y3 |
| Table 6 | CSI/Leadership Style Relationships |
| | |
| Chart 1 | Domestic Property Values |
| Chart 2 | Housing Benefit Claimants |
| Chart 3 | Youth Offending |
| Chart 4 | Standardised Mortality Rates |
| Chart 5 | Unemployment Rates |
| Chart 6 | GCSE Results |
| Chart 7 | Easton LEA Schools: 5 Year Mean to Y3<br>Students Obtaining 5+ GCSE A* - C Grades<br>Students Entitled to FSM |
| Chart 8 | Leadership Styles Inventory: Chris Moore |
| Chart 9 | Context for School Improvement: Chris Moore |
| Chart 10 | Hillside Attendance |
| Chart 11 | Hillside Exclusions |

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I have tried to describe comprehensive schools as they were in my time (1971 – 2001) through the eyes and ears of the parents, teachers and children at Hillside as they struggled against the odds for meaning, identity and survival. If I have failed to do justice to their experience, it is not their fault and I wish to record my admiration and thanks to them for allowing me to share their adventure and accepting my research as another quirk in a peculiar world.

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Bernard Barker
December 2002.

## Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| APU | Assessment of Performance Unit |
| CAT | Cognitive Ability Test |
| CEM | Centre for Education Management |
| CSI | Context for School Improvement |
| DES | Department of Education and Science |
| DfEE | Department for Education and Employment |
| DfES | Department for Education and Skills |
| FAS | Funding Agency for Schools |
| FSM | Free School Meals |
| GCSE | General Certificate of Secondary Education |
| GMS | Grant Maintained School |
| HCP | Humanities Curriculum Project |
| HEADLAMP | Leadership and Management Programme for New Heads |
| HMI | Her Majesty's Inspector(s) of Schools |
| HOD | Head of Department |
| HOY | Head of Year |
| IEP | Individual Education Plan |
| IN | Interview Note |
| IQEA | Improving the Quality of Education for All |
| ISIP | International School Improvement Project |
| IT | Interview Transcript |
| LBDQ | Leadership Behaviour Description Questionnaire |
| LEA | Local Education Authority |
| LMS | Local Management of Schools |
| LPC | Least Preferred Co-worker |
| LPSH | Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers |
| MP | Member of Parliament |
| NAS/UWT | National Association of Schoolmasters/ Union of Women Teachers |
| NCC | National Curriculum Council |
| NCSL | National College of School Leadership |
| NDC | National Development Centre |
| NPQH | National Professional Qualification for Headship |
| NQT | Newly Qualified Teacher |
| NUT | National Union of Teachers |
| OFSTED | Office for Standards in Education |
| OFSTIN | Office for Standards in Inspection (Name of group that campaigns for reform of the inspection system). |
| OHMCI | Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools |
| PAG | Parents Action Group |
| PANDA | Performance and Assessment Report |
| PGCE | Post Graduate Certificate in Education |
| QCA | Qualifications and Curriculum Authority |
| SAT | Standard Assessment Task |
| SCAA | School Curriculum and Assessment Authority |
| SEAC | School Examinations and Assessment Council |
| SEN | Special Educational Needs |

| | |
|---|---|
| SEU | Standards and Effectiveness Unit |
| SMSC | Spiritual, Moral, Social and Cultural |
| SMT | Senior Management Team |
| SMTF | School Management Task Force |
| SSA | Standard Spending Assessment |
| TTA | Teacher Training Agency |
| UK | United Kingdom |
| US | United States |

## Hillside Staff Named in the Text

| | |
|---|---|
| Albert Wake | Head until March Y1 |
| Anne | Personal Assistant |
| Brian Goodlad | Acting Head from March Y1 – July Y1 |
| Chris Moore | Acting Head from August Y1 – August Y3 |
| David Brown | Geography Teacher |
| Derek | Languages Teacher |
| Di, Ian, John, George, Damian | Main Scale Teachers |
| Donna | Temporary Senior Teacher Y2 |
| Elaine | Curriculum Deputy Head from April Y1 |
| Gerald | Bursar until December Y2 |
| Graham | Temporary Senior Teacher Y2 |
| Jeanne | Office Manager (from January Y2) |
| Jenny | Head of Humanities |
| Julian | Head of Languages & temporary member of SMT Y2 |
| Matthew | Science Teacher |
| Michelle | Science Teacher |
| Peter | Pastoral Deputy Head from April Y1 |
| Sidney | Senior Teacher |
| Terry | Languages Teacher |
| William | RE Teacher |

# Chapter 1 Introduction

## Policy Transformed

Thirty years ago, as local education authorities (LEAs) and schools prepared themselves for 'going comprehensive', the policy assumption was that local opinion and local initiatives should prevail in developing new patterns of schooling, and that secondary reorganization alone would greatly enhance access, opportunity and skills (Kerckhoff et al., 1996). When Edward Boyle suggested that heads should take account of the extent to which education was caught up in the process of social, economic and technological change (Boyle, 1968), their response was to interpret the task of leading the new, large comprehensives in managerial and cultural terms:

> The school is, in fact, a focus for a diversity of organizational pressures, and leadership is effective, whether concentrated within a single individual or dispersed, in so far as this diversity is recognised and understood (Baron, 1968, p. 7).

The head's job was to reconcile the 'claims and rights of individual pupils and individual families with the needs of society as a whole' (Mays, 1968, p. 34), and to avoid autocratic behaviour that might work against the long term interests of a democratic community. When a variety of curriculum projects proved disappointing, the conclusion was drawn that headteachers were not an important influence on school improvement (Fullan, 1984, Wolcott, 1984, Sarason, 1996). Sociological perspectives shaped the study of schools (e.g. Jackson & Marsden, 1962, Lacey, 1970) and expectations of their results (Jencks et al., 1972).

A contrasting paradigm has been established in the years that have followed. The sociological perspective has melted away (Harris, 2001a) and individual self-managing schools have become the target of successive waves of reform, designed to improve effectiveness, raise standards and enhance performance (Department of

Education and Science [DES], 1988, Department for Education and Employment [DfEE], 1997a). Since the publication of **Ten Good Schools** (HMI/DES, 1977), the head's role in bringing about change and improvement has been increasingly emphasized. Today, leadership is a major concern (Blunkett, 2000, National College for School Leadership [NCSL], 2001, 2002a, 2002b, 2002c). Government agencies seem convinced that:

> Inspection evidence shows the clear link between the quality of leadership, the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils. Good heads enable teachers to teach well (OFSTED, 2001, p. 1).

Contemporary policy-makers assert that with appropriate training school leaders can motivate teachers and students to achieve ever more rigorous and challenging targets (DfEE, 1997b, 1998a), transform their schools, and liberate the next generation from the fetters of social disadvantage.

**The Hillside Case Study**

Although claims as grand and far-reaching as this are not likely to be validated or refuted by a single study, there is an obvious need to test whether headteachers are able to transform their schools in the manner suggested; to clarify the nature of the transformations that have been achieved recently in United Kingdom (UK) schools; to investigate how heads bring about organizational change; to check the correlation between school reform and improved results; and to consider the transferability of successful examples. This study investigates these and other questions in the context of the extensive changes brought about at Hillside School in Easton LEA, where conditions were favourable for an experiment in transformational leadership.

Hillside is an 11 – 16 co-educational, multi-cultural comprehensive situated in a mixed residential neighbourhood on the edge of an urban area in the Midlands. After twenty years of untroubled isolation, the school was placed in special measures by an Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) inspection team that was scathing about the leadership and management provided by the long-serving headteacher and governors (AF2.2, p. 14). Easton, the newly formed unitary authority responsible for

the school, announced that it would close as part of a wider reorganization to reduce the number of surplus places in the district (AF8.1, p. 8, AF6.1). Thirty three months later, led by the fourth head in four years, Hillside was out of special measures and poised to expand. OFSTED reported that the percentage of lessons found to be satisfactory or better had risen from 70 to 90 (AF11.5, paragraph 12).

**Transforming Schools** examines this apparent transformation through the data contained in:

- Hillside's administrative and monitoring files;
- A diary of over 300,000 words written by one of the headteachers;
- Transcripts of interviews with 10 members of staff, repeated at intervals over a fifteen month period;
- Background information gathered from social surveys;
- Additional material from DfEE, OFSTED and LEA sources.

**The Policy Context**

The New Labour government's shift towards 'sharply interventionist education policies' (Gleeson & Husbands, 2001, p. 1) shaped the context within which this seeming transformation was achieved. Barber (2000b), head of the new Standards and Effectiveness Unit (SEU) from 1997 to 2001, describes the cumulatively high challenge and low support provided by the Conservatives before and after the 1988 Education Act. Open enrolment, Local Management of Schools (LMS), key stage tests, OFSTED inspections and the publication of pupil performance tables had created a fearsome educational architecture that held individual schools accountable for their results without interfering with the logic of the marketplace (Ball, 2001, Gunter, 2001, Ribbins & Sherratt, 1997, Bridges & McLaughlin, 1994). Barber (2000b, p. 8) calls for multi-level intervention and extra assistance for teachers, and quotes Michael Fullan's description of the new Prime Minister's strategy, to sharpen the challenge but add support, as 'the most ambitious, comprehensive and aligned ... anywhere in the world.'

Ministers immediately signalled 'zero tolerance of failure' (Stoll & Myers, 1998, p. 5, Chitty, 1999) and prepared increasingly 'direct interventions in pedagogy, professional development and institutional management' (Gleeson & Husbands, 2001, p. 4). Prompted by 'the sharpness of the focus on performance management' (Husbands, 2001, p. 10), schools were expected to 'take responsibility for their own improvement' (DfEE, 1997b, p. 4). Barber (1998b, p. 18) envisaged an education service with no more failing schools, arguing that 'we can only even come close to ending failure if we acknowledge its existence and face it squarely.'

Early policy initiatives were mainly informed by empirical research into school effectiveness. West et al. (2000, p. 35) share the commonplace assumptions of policy makers and their advisers: 'a wide range of school characteristics have been identified and correlational analysis has been undertaken that links particular characteristics with higher pupil performance'. Lodge (1998, p. 159) explains that:

> The understanding from the school effectiveness tradition that individual schools make a difference, joined with the understanding that schools must be the site of change, and the creation of schools as units of financial accountability ... have together created a widespread assumption in this country that the school should be the unit of accountability and of improvement.

Guidance on target-setting (DfEE, 1997b, p. 4) aimed to help 'schools set challenging yet realistic targets' and 'draws evidence from research and inspection to show head teachers and governors how best to use target-setting to improve pupil performance.' Development planning was strongly endorsed 'as a key strategy for school improvement.'

**The Rise of Leadership**

Although professional leadership has long been recognised as a significant variable in efforts to improve schools, the link between 'strong' heads and effectiveness was observed rather than developed as a policy theme during the 1980s and 1990s. HMI/DES (1977, p. 36) concluded that 'the most important single factor in the

success of their ten good schools was the quality of leadership of the head'. Rutter et al. (1979, p. 203) reported that: 'obviously, the influence of the headteacher is very considerable.' Hall et al. (1986, p. 5) described the emergence of a new policy paradigm asserting the 'link between the quality of headship and school "success"'. The School Management Task Force (SMTF) claimed that effective organizations have 'visionary leadership able to motivate others' (1990, p. 5/6). Sammons et al. (1995, p. 8) synthesized the research evidence for the link between leadership and school performance: 'Almost every single study of school effectiveness has shown both primary and secondary leadership to be a key factor'.

Firm, purposeful and committed to a participative approach (Sammons et al., 1995), heads around the world were recognised as critical to their schools' success, but policy initiatives and resources to research the role and provide appropriate training were limited. The National Development Centre for School Management Training (NDC), for example, opened in January 1984 at Bristol University, but employed only six professional staff and did not undertake management training or large scale research (Glatter, 1972, Bolam, 1986a). Bolam (1986b) argues that the centre's impact on management practice was not great and believes that the knowledge base for school management development and training was inadequate. Morgan (1986) was disappointed by the slow response of LEAs to the findings of the Open University's three year POST project, which investigated growing concern about the quality of heads and the methods of selection employed.

The new government's 'concerted drive towards higher standards' (DfEE, 1997b, p. 4) and its 'sense of urgency' coming from the 'belief that time is running out for public education to prove its worth' (Barber, 2000b, p. 1) ended this complacency. The search for solutions to the problem of failing schools prompted a new emphasis on leadership. Michael Stark, the civil servant responsible for the 250 schools placed in special measures by January 1997, had already identified leadership as a key issue. Half of the heads had been changed, either shortly before or after failing an OFSTED inspection, enabling a fresh appointment to create a 'common purpose' and identify and prioritise 'points where improvement was needed' (Stark 1998, p. 40). Barber (2000a) drew a stronger conclusion:

> It may be a simplification to say that the difference between success and failure is the quality of the headteacher but it is not far from the truth. In the turnround of failing schools for example, a change of head has been a feature in around 75% of cases.

Official policy (Blair, 2001, Blunkett, 2000, NCSL, 2001) subsequently developed an ambitious, transformational approach of the type advocated by Burns (1978), Caldwell & Spinks (1992), Leithwood et al. (1992), Bass & Avolio (1994), Blase & Anderson (1995), Kotter (1996) and Starratt (1999).

Bass & Avolio (1994) typify the aspirations of those who propose, support or enact transformational leadership. They use a multi-factor questionnaire as part of an assessment and training programme to develop leaders who persuade followers to view their work from new perspectives; who communicate a vision of the team and organization; who encourage higher levels of ability and potential; and who motivate employees to be less self-centred and more concerned with group interests. This conception of moral leaders who transform organizational behaviour draws on a substantial and mainly American literature grounded in occupational psychology and business consultancy.

McClelland (1975, 1987, 1995) identifies three social motives (achievement, affiliation and power) that can be aroused in energising combinations by well-judged leadership behaviour, while Covey (1989, 1992) visualises a self-improvement project that leads to success for all. Peters & Waterman (1995, p. xxii) draw the conclusion from their consultancy work that: 'excellent companies require and demand extraordinary performance from the average man' and show the role of 'strong', essentially transformational, leaders in making companies excellent. Peters (1989) argues that empowering leadership is the answer to a turbulent, competitive market place.

The Leadership Programme for Serving Headteachers (LPSH: DfEE, 1998a, 1998b, DfES, 2002) is the first government training initiative to adopt this approach and illustrates the official commitment to preparing heads to transform schools. Commissioned by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA), the consulting company Hay

McBer adapted models originally devised for the international business community. The newly established NCSL assumed responsibility for LPSH and all other headship training in April 2001 (DfES, 2002) and asserts:

> We know that the passion, energy and skill of school leaders lie at the heart of educational transformation. Leaders who can inspire staff, pupils and parents change lives (NSCL, 2001, p. 1).

The Hay Group (1999) argue that the enhanced leadership styles adopted by programme participants will improve workplace climate, employee motivation and school performance.

**Critical Perspectives on Leadership**

Despite these claims, the role of leadership in general and transformational leadership in particular is by no means as well established as official policy and statements suggest. Gronn (1996, p. 198) describes a debate in which:

> ...leader-watchers agree that qualitative differences can be made to organization members' behaviour, some seeing these as for the best and others for the worst, but they disagree on whether such changes are to be attributed causally to the actions of individuals presumed to be leaders or to some other factors altogether.

Blase & Anderson (1995, p. 129) suggest that 'real-life examples of democratic, empowering leadership are difficult to find ... democratic, empowering leadership is still more rhetoric than reality', while Bennis (1959, p. 259) is painfully aware that 'the concept of leadership eludes us or turns up in another form to taunt us again with its slipperiness and complexity.'

Autobiographical accounts of transformation (Boyson, 1974, Dawson, 1981, Clark, 1998) tend to dwell on semi-heroic struggles with behaviour and discipline rather than efficiency and effectiveness, while Hampton & Jones's (2000) version of 'the reality of school improvement' at Northicote School is compromised by its reliance on the

perspective and judgement of the authors. Ethnographic reports from the field (Lacey, 1970, Richardson, 1973a, Ball, 1981, 1987, Burgess, 1983, Hall et al., 1986) portray a messy, ambiguous world, untouched by concerns about effectiveness and performance. Headteachers seem shadowy figures in these accounts, mainly preoccupied with systems maintenance, micro-politics and personal survival. Hall et al. (1986, p. 211/212) report that:

> ...few of the headteachers ... had regular scheduled meetings or timetabled extended blocks of time to study specific policy issues ... they had created few opportunities to think out and develop strategies and instruments to meet the complexity of demands on them for the development of school educational policy and classroom practice.

Revisiting his 1973 account of Ed Bell's principalship, Wolcott (1984, p. vii) concludes:

> As I noted in the original Epilogue – in what seemed heresy at the time – the principalship is essentially a task of management, not leadership. Teachers expect principals to manage a school so they can get on with the one responsibility they retain essentially unto themselves – instruction.

Gunter (1997, p. 25) criticises an extensive 'technicist' literature that aims to help the leaders of self-managing schools improve their efficiency, effectiveness and outcomes. She asks 'whether teams and value-driven organizations really are the solution to the fact that management is messy and has to deal with ambiguity and paradox.' Giddens (1991, p. 2) considers this reliance on self-improvement manuals a symptom of a world in which all manner of 'guides, therapeutic works and self-help surveys contribute to modernity's reflexivity.'

Heads' own accounts seldom refer to the performance raising techniques Gunter (2001, p. 14) describes as the 'product of laboratory science ... currently labelled "transformational" leadership'. Contributions to the National Union of Teachers (1958) collection emphasize organization and administrative solutions to problems of

complexity and size, while Allen's (ed. 1968) authors are primarily concerned with the changing role and authority of the headteacher. Peters (ed. 1976) assembles writers who are mainly interested in the slow demise of authoritarian leadership. Taylor (1976, p. 44) contributes an openly sceptical view of the benefits of management science:

> Experience of payment by results in this country, and of the skill with which in countries under foreign occupation teachers have managed to subvert official doctrine whilst maintaining a superficial compliance, should have made clear that the teaching transaction is one over which it is almost impossible to exercise direct external supervision.

Mortimore & Mortimore's (1991) heads tend to describe professional lives at the centre of diversity and conflict. Cutler (1991, p.130) believes that the role of head and governors can become 'increasingly symbolic and the focus of all discontent', while Rao (1991, p. 65) argues that the school's emphasis on cultural integration is a necessary counter to 'perpetual fear of the evils of society, dishonour of the family and losing respect in the community.'

Only recently have heads begun to describe explicit attempts to transform their schools and to improve student outcomes. Tomlinson et al. (1999) include heads like Bates (1999, p. 87), whose 'vision for the school was to effect a significant shift towards an achievement culture based on a genuine belief in the capability of teachers and children.' In the language of government publications (DfEE, 1997b), she reports that the data collected at Lilian Baylis 'enabled the school to set realistic but challenging targets for the performance of the school, departments and individual pupils' (Bates, 1999, p. 92). Other heads in the same volume distance themselves from the performance agenda. Duffy (1999, p. 111) argues that:

> Teaching should be a creative, passionate profession, not a 'delivery' of a common package of knowledge and skills by teachers who have been passed by, and/or been deformed by, the Teacher Training Agency's quality control bureau or who blindly follow the leader's vision.

Cain (1999, p. 104) regards the current emphasis on techniques to raise standards as a game: '...whatever the rules of the game I will play to win using them.'

These headteacher self-descriptions are consistent with Sarason's (1996, p. 161) perception that:

> ...the principal is constantly wrestling with the problem of leadership with the feeling, which increases in strength over time, that the battle is being lost, that the individual is not the leader he or she expected to be, or that others expect him or her to be.

Weindling & Earley's (1987) study of new headteachers has a similar conclusion. Organizational changes were made by most new heads during their first years, after which innovation was mainly led by others, often in response to external events. Early initiatives were often about establishing the regime's preferred style and structures rather than transformation to raise performance. Reynolds et al. (1987, p. 127) report that the heads of two Welsh schools struggled to create successful comprehensives, mainly because their charismatic, authoritarian leadership styles were unable to overcome 'all sorts of defences against change.'

More recent work (Ribbins & Sherratt, 1992, Tomlinson et al., 1999, Gronn, 1999, Gunter, 2001) is concerned with biography, career and identity, with what Tomlinson et al. (1999) call 'Voices, Values and Visions', rather than qualitative change with measurable outcomes. The literature of headship seems to relate to schools and issues quite different from those presented in official publications. Barker (1995a) describes the emotional cost of juggling these competing versions of school improvement:

> The league tables, the cross parents, the disappointed staff, the long hours, this chasing after the rainbow, this damned impossible job ... My body and the school's merge as our Ofsted inspection looms.

Barth (1990, p. 39), writing in an American context, recognises the danger of such a gulf between policy and practice:

> The vivid lack of congruence between the way schools are and the way others' lists would have them be causes most schoolpeople (sic) to feel overwhelmed, insulted, and inadequate – hardly building blocks for improving schools or professional relationships.

**Leadership Effects**

Although the characteristics of effective schools have been described often (Rutter et al., 1979, Wilson & Corcoran, 1988, Sammons et al., 1995), there is growing doubt about the causal relationship between the variables identified, and uncertainty about how improvement should be brought about. Sammons (1995, p. 1 - 3), for example, emphasizes the need for caution in interpreting the evidence, 'much of which, in the early research, is derived from studies of the characteristics of small numbers of outlier schools (selected as either highly effective or highly ineffective)', especially when the majority of United States (US) and UK studies 'have also been conducted in inner city schools'. Successful schools seem less easy to reproduce than describe.

Documented, evidenced accounts of transformation, in terms of effectiveness and results, are very rare. Few studies describe specific changes in English or Welsh schools that have brought about lasting, verifiable improvement in performance. Gray et al. (1999, p. 138) report 12 case studies of schools that claim to have achieved higher levels of examination results but it seems that effectiveness factors drown out evidence of improvement: 'None of the schools in our study quite succeeded in making it definitively from one level to the next.' Hall & Southworth (1997, p. 164) comment that while belief in the power of visionary leaders to enhance a school's effectiveness is widespread, longitudinal and observational studies of heads achieving these effects are 'presently lacking.' Hallinger & Heck (1998, p. 26) conclude from their review of 41 studies of leadership impact:

> ...the general pattern of results drawn from this review supports the belief that principals exercise a measurable, though indirect effect on school effectiveness and student achievement. While this indirect effect is relatively small, it is statistically significant ... Even as a group the studies do not resolve the most important theoretical and

practical issues entailed in understanding the principal's role in contributing to school effectiveness.

Berman & McLaughlin (1977, p. 71) would be surprised that even a small, indirect effect had been detected. Their study of educational change concludes that 'no class of existing educational treatment has been found that consistently leads to improved student outcomes (when variations in the institutional settings and non school factors are taken into account).' The school improvement literature tends to recommend bland, benign actions likely to lead to benign results, without the foundation of qualitative or quantitative evidence that there are tangible benefits for students. Brighouse & Woods (1999), for example, recommend staff participation in innovation and research, in the hope of a 'great leap forward' in pupil success.

Hopkins et al. (1996, p. 6) draw on their 'Improving the Quality of Education for All' (IQEA) network to argue that changes in curriculum, teaching methods, grouping practices and assessment have the greatest potential impact on the performance of students, but they do not supply the data necessary to evaluate their propositions. Although Hopkins (1987a, p. 1) defines school improvement as a 'carefully planned and managed process that takes place over a period of several years', the IQEA headteachers were asked to embark on substantial change programmes without much evidence that successful implementation would lead to better results.

**Art, Science or Illusion?**

In short, there is a marked contrast between policy-making, informed by positivist research, and the critical perspectives adopted by many heads as well as school and university teachers. OFSTED (2001, p. 1), for example, declares that 'effective leadership is of crucial importance to the quality of education and the standards of achievement in our schools' but Bates (2002, p. 134) finds 'no possibility of an axiomatic theory which specifies the reciprocal and systematic variations produced in one phenomenon through alteration in another'. Fullan (2000b, p. 2) is certain that 'effective schools virtually always have strong school leaders' but Angus (2002, p. 74) is resolutely sceptical:

> ...the rhetoric of moral vision, purpose, organizational covenant and the like begin to sound like the reduction of complex issues, contested and contradictory demands, and essentially problematic questions about appropriate social formation and quality of life as well as education, to a rather simplistic and conservative slogan system.

This apparent mismatch between recommended improvement strategies and school processes as they appear in ethnographic studies, participant accounts and inconclusive, even conflicting research reports, requires urgent investigation. Does the dominant policy model, a combination of moral leadership and scientific management designed to enhance school efficiency, effectiveness and performance, represent a sufficiently full description of the organizational reality and potential of the nation's schools and the educational landscape within which they are located? Does it offer a practical, reproducible formula for transformation? Can transformational leaders stimulate a step change in efficiency and effectiveness, leading to a lasting improvement in results?

Positive answers to these questions that explain the divergence between official models and much practitioner experience should enable us to reconcile the common sense conviction that leaders matter (Barker 2001a) with the lack of persuasive evidence that sustained institutional change can be achieved. By what combination of art and science do headteachers make a difference, and what is changed by their magical 'charms' (Barker, 1999, p. 82)?

Negative answers would raise serious questions about a current agenda that challenges visionary leaders to build the capacity of their schools (Hopkins, 2000), create detailed development plans (OFSTED, 1994), set challenging targets (DfEE, 1998c), and 'transform our secondary schools' (Blair, 2001). Evidence that the existing performance paradigm takes insufficient notice of the 'messy' nature of management (Gunter, 1997), or Wasserberg's (1999, p. 155) suggestion that schools are 'messy places' because they are about people, might prove liberating, possibly opening space for enquiry beyond the illusion created by the empirical, technicist solutions that prevail today. Leithwood et al. (1992, p. 42) envisage a swamp where a more complex understanding of educational institutions may be required:

> ...the ground on which school-leaders base their practices becomes increasingly swampy, as fewer and fewer of these conditions are met: the swamp is especially deep when one only vaguely understands the present situation, has no clear way of knowing what would be better, and lacks procedures for addressing obstacles or constraints.

No one should be surprised, however, if the immediate demands of the policy cycle generate methods and objectives that may be frustrated by complex, multi-dimensional organizations in the public sector, where there is a substantial lapse of time between actions and the results that may be attributed to them. Barber (1997a, p. 194) argues that 'government in this country, at least in education, is endemically short-termist', drawing attention to the rapid turn-over of Secretaries of State and the creation and abolition of six curriculum and assessment agencies in 12 years. The pursuit of quick fixes (Stoll & Myers eds. 1998) and unrealistic targets may, however, lead to unhelpful assumptions about the nature of change and encourage misleading research. Ribbins & Sherratt (1997, p. 16), for example, suggest that:

> Taken as a whole, the reform agenda seems to contain a number of fundamental ambiguities which ... turn upon a search for centralization and uniformity on the one hand and for decentralization and diversity on the other.

This study examines the development of this urgent, contemporary policy agenda through the literature of school effectiveness, improvement and transformation (chapters 2 and 3); explores the processes of leadership and change at Hillside School (chapters 5 to 8); uses the research data to test the validity of models identified in the literature (chapters 9 to 11); and suggests alternative directions for research and policy development (chapter 11).

# Chapter 2 Improving Schools

## Scientific Management

The idea that education can transform individual lives, local communities and whole societies is rooted in the Enlightenment (see Rousseau, 1768) and has been a staple of radical and progressive politics since Robert Owen (1969, p. 99) argued that a manufacturing society should not neglect the education of the people:

> The characters of these persons are now permitted to be very generally formed without proper guidance or direction, and, in many cases, under circumstances which directly impel them to a course of extreme vice and misery.

At his mills in New Lanark Owen had put into practice his belief that:

> Any general character, from the best to the worst, from the most ignorant to the most enlightened, may be given to any community, even to the world at large, by the application of proper means.

The search for the 'proper means' has proved more complex and problematic than many reformers imagined. Positivist thinkers and social scientists have been perennially optimistic about discovering the laws governing human behaviour and improving the performance of social institutions (see discussion of Saint-Simon & Comte in Bowle, 1963, pp. 101 – 133). Cuban (1988) considers how dreams of scientific organization have been a continuing feature of American education, encouraging reformers to construct planned, bureaucratic systems of schooling that deliver predictable learning and results with maximum efficiency. He cites the monitorial system, prevalent before 1910, as an example of an hierarchical organization, characterised by explicit rules and regimented behaviour. Ball (1987, p. 6) believes that 'a long-standing concern ... with measuring and improving educational efficiency' in the United States is a consequence of a scientific approach to organizational research. Callahan (1962, p. 95, quoted in Ball, 1987, p. 6) reports

the pervasive influence of Frederick 'Speedy' Taylor's (Taylor, 1911) work on scientific management in America:

> Before the mania ran its course various 'efficiency' procedures were applied to classroom learning and to teachers, to the program of studies, to the organization of schools, to administrative functions, and to entire school systems. Most of the actions before 1916 were connected in some way by educators to the magic words 'scientific management'.

Cuban contrasts bureaucratic, technical images of teachers and principals, implicit in these early attempts at scientific management, with an alternative, craftsman-artist model that has survived a good deal of reform. He also charts a return to 'the notion of rational approaches to increase efficiency and productivity' (Cuban, 1988, p. 12) during the Johnson years. Benne et al. (1976, p. 17) recognise the extent to which the 'New Deal, World War II and the scientific management movement had familiarized our society in the uses of the expertise of economists and other students of people and of society according to the engineering model of planning.' Burns & Stalker (1995, p. ix) discuss the role of social science in identifying obstacles and sources of friction which 'impeded the proper functioning of organizations', while Hodgkinson (1999, p. 11/12) argues that in 'the dialectic between the philosophy of administration and science of management the latter has achieved a salience unthought of or undreamt of in earlier epochs'. He also regrets (1991, p. 55) Taylor's logic that 'there must be one best way of doing work' and is doubtful about rational analysis that leads to operational research, time and motion studies and other industrial management techniques.

Recent policy developments in Britain and the United States suggest the continued influence of scientific management. Merson (2001, p. 78) claims that 'the discourse of new managerialism is set within assumptions about the inevitable logic of ever-increased efficiency and productivity' derived from Taylor and Ford (the US motor entrepreneur). McNeil's (2000) study of the reforms introduced in Texas by House Bill 72 in 1984, similar to those adopted in other states during the Bush and Clinton

years, suggests a renewed emphasis on bureaucratic themes, including control, uniformity and output. Teachers were forced (McNeil, 2000, p. 192) 'to teach watered down content ... because it was computer gradable. The standardization brought about by the state policies forced them to teach artificially simplified curricula.' Riley & Louis (2000) complain that while the school effectiveness movement has been successful in challenging the social pathology of failure, its scientific approach, shaping policy initiatives in the UK since the 1988 Education Act (DES, 1988), has led to unproductive research, designed to generate laws to be applied to all schools, teachers and situations.

**Organizational Theories**

Max Weber (1964) challenged the German tradition that natural science methodology operates in a domain distinct from human culture and behaviour, and established a framework for theorising about organizations that has shaped or influenced the study and improvement of social institutions ever since. In describing his ideal types, he contrasts the impersonal, rational, legal basis of modern bureaucratic organizations with traditional forms of personal authority that are not enacted by law or procedure. Weber (1964, p. 337) sees large scale corporate groups, subject to bureaucratic, hierarchical control, as an inescapable feature of modern society, and believes 'the primary source of the superiority of bureaucratic administration lies in the role of technical knowledge.'

His discussion of leadership includes the insight that 'every true leader ... preaches, creates, or demands new obligations' (Weber, 1964, p. 361) and draws on an authority that 'has a charismatic basis in some form' (Weber, 1964, p. 76). Weber was not so beguiled by rationalist assumptions, however, that he missed the likelihood that 'discipline and authority, probably always in any large scale permanent system' would 'generate various forms of resistance and resentment' (Weber, 1964, p. 69). Gronn (1996) suggests that this idea of charisma anticipated the aspirations of more recent writers who advocate transformational leadership (e.g. Burns, 1978, Starratt, 1999):

> Charisma ... may involve a subjective or internal reorientation born out of suffering, conflict, or enthusiasm. It may then result in a radical

> alteration of the central system of attitudes and directions of action with a completely new orientation of all attitudes towards the different problems and structures of the 'world' (Weber, 1964, p. 363).

Bell (1988) points out that Weber's concept of bureaucracy, as a response to an increase in the size and complexity of units of administration, shapes our understanding that when schools engage in multifaceted activities they adopt more efficient and formal structures.

Weber's influence is widespread. Greenfield (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 9) appreciates the extent to which Weber 'explored the ideas, doctrines and beliefs with which men endowed their organizations and which provided the motivation for action within them.' Hoyle (1982) suggests that Weber's theory of bureaucracy and concern with authority is the source for many current theories of educational administration and school organization. Hughes' (1973, p. 183) discussion of organization, for example, examines the tensions created by and experienced through the head's dual, 'professional-as-administrator' roles, and distinguishes between the possibilities open to those who emphasize the 'leading professional' or 'chief executive' aspects of their work. Bernbaum (1976) describes the organizational pressure on heads to become 'charismatic' experts. Blase & Anderson (1995, p. 1) suggest that early work on micropolitics challenged Weber's traditional-rational models of organization, without recognising that he expected resistance to characterise the human response to discipline and authority.

Administrative and organizational studies appeared to have few policy implications, however, and led only to the discouraging conclusion that leadership was imperfectly understood and hard to improve. Bennis's (1959, p. 259) survey of the 'wreckage' of functional leadership, bureaucratic leadership, charismatic leadership, and other once promising concepts was underscored by findings like Korman's (1966), that variations in leadership behaviour and attitudes were not significantly predictive of later effectiveness. Hemphill et al. (1962, p. 340 – 341, quoted in Wolcott, 1984, p. 198) were pessimistic about the benefits of training in administration:

> The finding of essentially no relationship between amount of

> academic preparation and performance on the various tasks in school administration that were investigated is consistent throughout. There is no evidence that the principal with a lengthier preparation does a more effective job of school administration, from any point of view from which one may examine the data.

**The Headmaster Tradition**

Scientific approaches to improving instructional efficiency continued to attract interest in the US (Cuban, 1988, Callahan 1962, Chin & Benne, 1976) however, but had little impact in the UK, where the prevailing structure of national, local and school responsibilities was loosely-coupled (Simon, 1991; the image is Weick's, 1988) and unresponsive to initiatives of any kind (Reynolds, 1988). Dennison (1998, p. 126) describes the essentially unmanaged, unscientific regime that continued until the 1980s:

> It was assumed that all schools were making reasonable progress, offering most children a decent standard of education but with few procedures for checking the accuracy of either perception – certainly not in any systematic way. A management by exception principle obtained. Under-performing schools were sometimes, but not always, detected as a result of complaints, chance visits or random inspection. Arrangements to assure improvement or to establish rigorous monitoring procedures were rudimentary. There were no formal procedures for detecting, never mind correcting, poor quality teaching.

Peters' (1976, p. 7) anxiety was typical of this period. He feared that the 'business-like efficiency' of the head would teach pupils to think of themselves as 'marketable commodities', while Taylor (1976) suspected that education management's eclectic mixture of classical organization theory, the human relations movement, systems analysis, curriculum objectives and notions of accountability might prove positively harmful. Much later, Angus (1993, p. 16) still felt that 'we tend to fall back too easily upon a general faith in managerialism that has been socially constructed in industrial

societies through the institutionalisation of practices of bureaucracy and scientific management.'

As Everard & Marsden (1985) reported, education was virtually untouched by the tradition of management and organization development as practised in industry, commerce and the armed services. Grace (1995, p. 11) attributes these structural and cultural tendencies to the 'headmaster tradition':

> Its construct of school leadership and its culture of headship as personal, powerful, controlling, moralizing and patriarchal has become an important constituent in the subsequent discourse and practice of school headship.

He argues that heads in the 1960s and 1970s could choose whether to be agents of cultural reproduction, renewing and defending academic standards; agents of cultural interruption, introducing progressive methods; or agents of cultural transformation, redefining the cultural and social purpose of the school. These themes are evident in contemporary accounts (Poster, 1968, Bernbaum, 1973, 1976, Boyson, 1974, Watts, 1976, Fletcher et al., 1985).

**Comprehensive Reorganization and Reaction**

Education policy in the post-war period was in any case dominated by another, quite different issue. British and American sociologists had uncovered the role of social and economic structures in shaping individual lives. Wright Mills (1970, p. 12) argued 'that the individual can understand his own fate only by locating himself within his period, that he can know his own chances in life only by becoming aware of those of all individuals in his circumstances', while Jackson & Marsden (1962) assembled evidence of the extent to which students of middle class origin were favoured by the tripartite school system in Britain.

Schools were increasingly seen as agents of cultural reproduction, one of a number of social processes that resisted change and restricted mobility. Bernstein (1977) described the potent interactions of class, education and power. Comprehensive

reorganization was intended to challenge these institutional and cultural constraints by creating more equal opportunities for all. The long, slow process of secondary reorganization was undertaken by local authorities, sometimes stimulated and sometimes discouraged by the DES (Benn & Simon, 1970, Barker, 1986, Benn & Chitty, 1996, Simon, 1991, Kerckhoff et al., 1996). As the comprehensive experiment (Boyson, 1974, Davies, 1976, Watts, 1977, Dawson, 1981, Reynolds et al., 1987) unfolded, to a mixed public response (Fletcher et al., 1985, Simon, 1991), a variety of events, campaigns and conflicts led to a new policy paradigm.

There was a marked, negative reaction to comprehensive and progressive education, terms often misleadingly conflated (Benn & Chitty, 1996), as studies of newly reorganized schools (Ball, 1981, Burgess, 1983, Reynolds et al., 1987) have since indicated. **Black Paper 1** (Cox & Dyson, 1969) was the first of five widely publicised collections of anti-comprehensive, anti-progressive articles published between March 1969 and March 1977. The papers began as a reaction to the student movement then troubling universities across the west, but soon became an assault on the alleged collapse of education and standards (Simon, 1991). Boyson (1975, p. 1) claimed, for example, that there were:

> ...three crises in literacy: standards are static or falling; many bright children are functioning below their mental age; and there is an increasing segment of our population unable to cope with everyday life because of illiteracy.

At a political level, James Callaghan, as Prime Minister, and Denis Healey, as Chancellor, were attracted by monetarist solutions to Britain's worsening economic crisis (Simon, 1991, Healey, 1989). High taxation and redistribution through welfare were increasingly believed to contribute to social inefficiency (Calvocoressi, 1978). Healey (1989, p. 491) criticised neo-Keynesians who 'were wrong in paying so little attention to the monetary dimension of economic policy', while Lawson (1993, p. 8) later remembered that: 'While always a firm believer in the market economy and the enterprise culture, it took some time for me to recognise that this needed to be set within a firm framework of financial discipline if inflation was to be suppressed.'

Social expenditure was scrutinised and public sector efficiency became a major policy theme.

The DES Assessment of Performance Unit (APU), founded in 1975, and James Callaghan's now celebrated Ruskin College speech (1976), were early signals of a shift in education policy, influenced by the changed public mood and a widespread perception that comprehensive schools had proved a disappointment. The APU's terms of reference (DES, 1981, p. 1) were 'to promote the development of methods of assessing and monitoring the achievement of children at school and to seek to identify the incidence of under achievement.' Policy interest began to move from unequal social structures and opportunities (Pedley, 1964, Rubinstein & Simon, 1969) towards questions about schools, teachers and learners (DES, 1977).

Callaghan (1976, p. 332) criticised the education system in the context of the global economy. 'I am concerned,' he said, 'to find complaints from industry that new recruits from the schools sometimes do not have the basic tools to do the job.' Callaghan began a long process in which educational goals were increasingly defined in terms of skills and training for the workplace (Holt, 1987). 'There is no virtue,' claimed the Prime Minister, 'in producing socially well adjusted members of society who are unemployed because they do not have the skills' (Callaghan, 1976, p. 332). He proposed a 'basic' school curriculum which would fit young people for 'a job of work'. Additional resources should not be provided. Instead, priorities should be re-examined to secure 'as high efficiency as possible by the skilful use of existing resources.'

By the time the Conservatives came to office in 1979, state schools were identified as a significant obstacle to a more skilled and effective workforce. Lawson (1993, p. 607), impressed by Barnett (1986), needed little prompting to connect 'our disappointing economic performance' with 'Britain's educational failure' and later, as Chancellor (from 1983), he was an important background influence on the 1988 Education Act (Lawson 1993, p. 609), believing that the schools should be wrested from 'the so-called local education authorities' and made accountable for their results. Young (1993, p. 522) describes Sir Keith Joseph's perceptions in 1981:

> The crisis appeared to reach into every corner. Teachers of low quality, pupils of low achievement, schools with leaking roofs and wretched libraries, curricula and exams of doubtful relevance ... all these defects made themselves plain to Joseph.

**School Effectiveness**

This was the climate in which Rutter et al.'s (1979) study of 12 London secondary schools challenged many of the assumptions on which previous policies had been based. Coleman (1966), Jensen (1969), Jencks et al. (1972) and Bernstein (1977) had helped to create a climate of social pessimism, where education could not be expected to break the cycles of wealth and disadvantage. Jencks et al. (1972, p. 256), for example, concluded that 'the character of a school's output depends largely on a single input, namely the characteristics of the entering children.' Home influences were perceived to be far more powerful than those of the school, so that inequality and scholastic achievement were presented as stable products of the social environment, beyond teachers and beyond reform. Comprehensives might open opportunity, but so far as individual pupils were concerned, many considered the results almost preordained.

Rutter et al. (1979, p. 175) presented detailed research evidence that schools in similar, unfavourable environments achieved very different outcomes: 'Children's attainment was ... strongly and consistently associated with school process influences.' Once a suitable adjustment had been made for variations in the background and ability of children attending each school, intake was no longer seen to determine results. Teaching made a difference, because lesson observations showed that in schools where pupils were 'actively engaged in productive activities' outcomes were better. Individual schools, teachers and students could change their own futures. Rutter et al. (1979, p. 6) were careful, however, to define the margins of influence. In discussing the relative importance of home and school they comment: 'The question is very difficult to answer because, statistically speaking, the size or degree of effect of any factor is strongly dependent on the range or extent of variation on that factor or measure.'

**Fifteen Thousand Hours** helped crystallize a continuing debate about improving education and opened new lines of enquiry for the burgeoning school effectiveness and school improvement research traditions. Reynolds (1985, p. 17) describes the change that took place:

> Over the last decade the main question behind school effects research has shifted away from that of asking which economic and direct policy related variables could be manipulated to equalize or raise outputs, to one of asking what would explain the pattern of differences in the effects of schooling, in terms of the social processes and educational practices which take place in the process of schooling ... In particular, the new frameworks count instructional variables and social psychological inputs, such as pupil motivation, attitudes and behaviours, among the resource inputs.

Gray et al. (1999) identify the main features of school effectiveness research as a primary focus on outcomes; the study of formal organization rather than informal processes or cultures; a concern with the characteristics of schools already deemed to be effective; and a static methodology producing cross-sectional or snap shot pictures of the variables studied. Wilson & Corcoran (1988, p. 3) identify nine structural dimensions associated with effectiveness, including instructional leadership, staff stability, and the recognition of academic success; and four process dimensions, including collaborative planning, clear goals, and high expectations. In their review, Sammons et al. (1995, p. 8) tabulate 'eleven factors for effective schools' found consistently in a wide range of studies, even when these were completed in apparently dissimilar education systems. Purposeful, collaborative leadership; clear goals and objectives; orderly, attractive environment; emphasis on learning and achievement; high expectations; positive reinforcement and fair discipline; monitoring and evaluating progress; emphasis on students' rights and responsibilities; parental involvement; and staff training and development were all associated with schools found to be effective.

Wilson & Corcoran (1988, p. 2) conclude from their extensive research in the US that effective schools differ from schools in general in systematic and predictable ways.

They are tightly managed, with carefully aligned curricula, instructional practices and tests. These schools make greater demands on their students and 'reduce, if not eliminate' the influence of the social environment on behaviour and academic performance. The internal processes and social environments of successful schools account for a significant proportion of the variation in student achievement. Studies in the United Kingdom and elsewhere (Sammons et al., 1995) confirm this general description. Harris (2001a, p. 11) reports that effective schools are 'structurally, symbolically and culturally more tightly linked than less effective ones' and 'operate more as an organic whole and less as a loose collection of disparate sub-systems.'

Although there is near unanimity about the 'key' characteristics of effective schools, the value added to student performance by school processes, after allowance has been made for background variables, is disputed. What is the margin available where schools and teachers can make a difference? Rutter et al. (1979, p. 5) criticise cross-sectional surveys, typical of the school effectiveness literature, because they gather insufficient information 'on what the children were like when they entered the school', and recommend instead longitudinal studies with repeated measurements of the same student cohort to measure progress at each stage. Sammons et al. (1995, p. 4) infer from the evidence reviewed that 'although the ability and family backgrounds of students are major determinants of achievement levels, schools in similar social circumstances can achieve very different levels of educational progress.'

Sammons et al. (1995, p. 6) argue that although school and classroom effects 'do not appear exceptionally large', they can be educationally and statistically significant. Stoll & Fink (1995, p. 37) arrive at a similar positive conclusion:

> ...most studies have identified that between eight and 14 per cent of the total variance in pupils' achievement is attributable to the school. This does not sound like very much but it may turn out to be the crucial difference between success and failure.

Creemers (1994, p. 13) agrees. School and classroom factors can explain 'between 12 and 18 per cent' of the variance once account is taken of student background. Myers & Goldstein (1998, p. 184), however, report a contrasting 'disappointment with the

apparently low (typically about 10%) amount of the total variation attributable to schools.' Reynolds & Reid (1988) concede that school effects are relatively small compared with home influences but emphasize the 'seven or eight points in verbal reasoning scores' apparently gained by students attending effective schools.

Despite their reservations about the methods involved and the degree of change achieved, Harris & Bennett (2001, p. 4) conclude that effectiveness and improvement research have been important in confirming the proposition that 'schools make a difference.' Even the recent, more pessimistic estimates of the margin for improvement, calculated by Gray et al. (1995) and by Myers & Goldstein (1998), contrast sharply with the orthodoxy established by Jencks et al. (1972) and help explain why the search for factors associated with effectiveness became so attractive. Harris (2001a, p. 11) is clear that the effectiveness tradition drew its strength from an attack on 'sociological determinism and individualistic theories about learning.' The hunt for 'what worked' (Duffy, 1999, p. 106, Ribbins, 1999a, p. x) was on. A national drive to raise standards, launched in earnest after the 1988 Education Act, was increasingly justified by effectiveness research that claimed the factors associated with success were well known, and could be applied to improve internal school processes, potentially responsible for up to 18 per cent of the variance in student outcomes, after adjustment for social background (McMahon, 2001).

**School Improvement**

School improvement researchers were also encouraged, because Rutter et al.'s emphasis on internal school processes confirmed their own thoughts about the failure of curriculum reform during the 1960s and 1970s. Sarason (1996, p. 33) examined why Federal programs failed. New maths failed to 'solve' old maths because the change had been introduced:

> ...without taking into account their structural and cultural characteristics, and without any discernible theory of how change was to be effected and the criteria by which its effects were to be evaluated.

Educational change had stumbled because no one thought about the pre-existing assumptions and values of teachers and students. The culture of complex, traditional organizations could not be changed without 'a time perspective that the advocates of change seemed unable to confront' (Sarason, 1996, p. 333). Rudduck's (1984) discussion of the Humanities Curriculum Project (HCP), a British example of failed curriculum change, also blamed 'the culture of the school' (Sarason, 1996). Students as well as teachers were unfamiliar with the norms of discussion and teacher neutrality required. Stenhouse (1984, p. 75) himself believed that 'teachers must want change, rather than others wanting to change them.' Hopkins (1984, p. 8) saw the failure of curriculum reform as a 'clear indictment of a centralised and linear approach to curriculum development'.

Fullan (1982, p. 15) acknowledged that 'one of the main consequences of introducing innovations is career advancement for the sponsor and subsequent failed implementation.' He believes that without sufficient support from within the school, 'well-intentioned change initiatives can create havoc' (Fullan, 1982, p. xi). Fullan learned from the failure of large scale, externally sponsored innovations that the rational assumptions of a proposed new curriculum do not make sense in the 'capricious world of the teacher' (1982, p. 27). Marris (1975, p. 166, quoted in Fullan, 1982, p. 21) explains that all real change involves loss, anxiety and struggle, little appreciated by reformers, who often express 'contempt for the meaning of lives other than their own.' Whiteside (1978) was uncomfortably aware that large scale change also tends to ignore the complex relationships and transactions between students and teachers. Fullan (1982, p. 84) believed it was easier to put a 'person on the moon' than to raise reading levels across the United States, because innumerable factors were keeping reading at current levels and they were not conducive to major alteration.

Hopkins (1984, p. 10/11) drew two conclusions. Values 'which emphasize control, accountability, certainty and predictability' militate against 'uniqueness, creativity and individual autonomy.' Stressing outcome measures like examinations and tests would reduce the quality of education by encouraging more 'instrumental forms of teaching' (Hopkins, 1987a, p. 5). The solution (Hopkins, 1984, Schmuck, 1984) was to initiate and implement change at school level, shifting control as close as possible

to the centre of educational activity. School improvement (Harris, 2001a, Reynolds, 2001) should be owned by the school, not imposed from outside; strategies should be planned and managed systematically over a period of years; ultimate success will depend on cultural change achieved by working on internal conditions to build the organizational capacity for development and growth. Van Velzen et al. (1985, p. 48) define school improvement as:

> ...a systematic, sustained effort aimed at change in learning conditions and other related internal conditions in one or more schools, with the ultimate aim of accomplishing educational goals more effectively.

During the 1980s, school improvement became a global concern, with the International School Improvement Project (ISIP), launched in 1982 at Palm Beach in the US, drawing together 40 institutions from 14 countries to consider a wide range of approaches, methodologies and case studies (Van Velzen, 1987). Hopkins (1987b, p. 192) argues that the important features of ISIP were an 'emphasis on the school as the prime unit of change' and on the 'qualitative factors comprising the internal conditions of the school.' Ainscow et al. (1994, p. 10) describe the work of the IQEA project in the UK. Forty volunteer schools in East Anglia, North London and Yorkshire are in partnership with the Cambridge Institute and emphasize a collaborative, empowering approach, with tutors providing the challenge to 'increase their capacity to handle change.'

Although Stoll & Fink (1995) include leadership in their list of conditions for building capacity, Fidler (2001) notices the absence of headteachers from most improvement studies, except in generally supportive roles. The emphasis on collegiality, empowerment and shared values seems to exclude the conception of leadership familiar from the effectiveness literature (Sammons et al., 1995). Fidler (2001) is conscious that the school improvement and effectiveness traditions are almost critiques of one another. The former emphasizes the interactive intangibles of cultural change but struggles to assess outcomes, while the latter defines specific factors and conditions associated with excellent outcomes, without providing a route map for the less successful.

**The Self-Managing School**

Reynolds (1988, p. vi) underlines the degree to which enthusiasm for the self-managing school, accountable for its efficiency, effectiveness and results, was derived as much from the 'experience of past top-down change programmes' that had failed, as from the neo-liberal experiment in market economics launched by the 1988 Education Reform Act (Bridges & McLaughlin, 1994, Morris, 1994). Reynolds (1988, p. vi) claims that 'commitment to personal and institutional change is greatest where the individual school is in charge of its own schemes.' Morris (1994, p. 23), Chief Education Officer in Cambridgeshire, where a pilot scheme in Local Financial Management (LFM) was launched in 1983, insists that LFM was:

> ...based on the principle of good management that responsibility for spending should rest with those who will directly experience the consequences of that spending. It has nothing to do with free market economics and assumed a continuing role for the LEA as employer.

He says that Kenneth Baker, as Secretary of State, discovered the scheme while on a visit to Cambridgeshire LEA.

Caldwell & Spinks (1988) present an Australian version of delegated financial management (at Rosebery District High School in Tasmania), stressing the educational benefits of self-budgeting. Bureaucracy was reduced, heads were empowered and spending could be adjusted to need. They identify school culture as the main target and describe detailed arrangements for policy groups and programme teams to participate in the Collaborative School Management Cycle. Downes (1999), head of one of the Cambridgeshire pilot schools, argues that LMS, as LFM became as a result of the 1988 Act, lifted morale, encouraged cost effectiveness and enabled resources to be applied flexibly.

The language and assumptions of educationists (Hill et al., 1990) and business consultants (Coopers and Lybrand, 1988) were aligned. Opinion-forming headteachers (Hill, Downes), education officers (Morris, Oakley Smith) and

researchers (Hopkins, Reynolds) were as attracted by the ambiguous appeal of site-based management as local politicians (in Solihull and Cambridgeshire, where pilot schemes operated from the early 1980s). The chair of Solihull's education committee (quoted in Caldwell & Spinks, 1988, p. 11) was eager to apply business principles to school management:

> ...if you applied the same sort of procedures to running a school as he used in running a small business there could be some improvement in performance, and that if you are spending your own money you exercise more care than if you are spending somebody else's.

**Conservative Education Reforms**

The ground was well-prepared, therefore, for the self-managing LMS and Grant Maintained Schools (GMS) introduced by the 1988 Education Act. Site-based management would energise senior staff, sharpen accountability and stimulate greater efficiency and effectiveness. Grace (1995, p. 21) argues that the market-driven, Conservative agenda enacted by Kenneth Baker (DES, 1988) went beyond educational concerns. LEAs were undermined and traditional forms were reconstructed: '...education is regarded as a commodity; the school as a value-adding production unit; the headteacher as chief executive and managing director; the parents as consumers.' Levačić and Woods (2002a, p. 208) describe how 'the quasi-market reforms were progressively buttressed by strengthening "performance regulation"'. Chitty & Dunford (1999) detect a programme of reform wider than the 1988 Act, designed to augment the powers of the Secretary of State, to reduce the powers of the LEAs, and to apply pressure to schools by emphasizing parental choice, pupil-based funding and published performance information, including examination results and inspection reports.

Ball (1990b, p. 11) locates these policy developments within new right discourses stimulated by a 'legitimation crisis'; Bell (2000, p. 3) cites a pre-1997 discourse 'about efficiency, effectiveness, quality and value for money that underpinned a belief in the efficacy of market forces as a mechanism for social organization.' Simon (1988) emphasizes Baker's ruthless seizure of power; Ribbins & Sherratt (1997) draw

attention to the paradoxes and ambiguities implicit in legislation that devolved human and financial management to the schools, while establishing the National Curriculum Council (NCC) and the School Examination and Assessment Council (SEAC) as advisory bodies to regulate what could be taught and learned. The professional contribution seemed to have been reduced to implementation and delivery. Grace (1995, p. 80) wonders whether these prescriptive curriculum and assessment arrangements represented a return to the nineteenth century system and suggests that:

> ...under the appearance of surface devolution of educational responsibilities to governors and parents, the deep structure of central educational control is actually strengthened.

Davies & Hentschke (1994) describe the benefits of decentralization as they may have appeared to the protagonists at the time. School autonomy would enable a flexible response to change; would enhance effectiveness; would stimulate greater rates of innovation; would boost morale; and would increase commitment and productivity. The combination of accountability, competition and empowerment would bring about the improved efficiency and results that had eluded the 'LEAs with their interventionist and paternalistic approach' (Morris, 1994, p. 22). Chitty & Dunford (1999, p. 5) certainly found that the 'cycle of poor examination results, small intake numbers, less finance and fewer teachers created enormous pressure.' John Patten, appointed Secretary of State in 1992, admitted (in Ribbins & Sherratt, 1997, p. 41) that 'what I hadn't realized was just what a powerful lever ... the simple publication of information has been.'

**Headteachers' Roles**

Grace (1995, p. 23) argues that the implied model of market-shaped entrepreneurship involved a reconstruction of the headmaster tradition, 'away from the leading professional' towards 'a new executive freedom – a new form of enterprise and management empowerment'. Doughty (1998, p. 166) revisits Hughes' (1973) analysis of the potential conflict between the head's professional and organizational perspectives in the early 1990s and confirms that many heads found themselves acting as chief executives:

> Secondary headteachers in the three counties surveyed are less likely to behave in the way specified for the leading professional dimension but more likely to behave in the way specified for the chief executive dimension.

Sixty per cent were placed in the low leading professional, high chief executive quadrant, while thirty five per cent were located in the high leading professional, high chief executive quadrant. Doughty concludes that although heads now considered they were more autonomous and free to develop their own policies, 'headteachers place less emphasis on ... working with members of staff and pupils ... managing "the organization" can take over in terms of priorities, time and focus of attention' (Doughty, 1998, p. 331).

As the newly configured institutions (LEAs; LMS and GMS schools; NCC and SEAC), brought into being by the 1988 Act, learned and developed their unfamiliar roles, heads and senior staff had to manage a 'legislative hyperactivity' (Chitty & Dunford,1999, p. 3) that created a 'turbulent environment' (Bell, 1988, p. 11). They were 'bombarded ... by a series of circulars and regulations' (Bell, 2000, p. 2) as the National Curriculum was implemented, but had also to cope with uncertainty and conflict at many levels (Atkinson, 1991). Required by the legislation (DES, 1988) to recreate their schools as self-managing units, and to share complex new responsibilities with their governing bodies (Bell, 2000), heads discovered that the supposed benefits of freedom and flexibility (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988, Baker, interviewed in Ribbins & Sherratt, 1997) were compromised before they were put into practice. Already vulnerably 'anarchic', disrupted by the semi-autonomy of subject departments and lacking clarity about values and goals, schools had now to:

> ...operate in a complex and unstable environment over which they exert only modest control and which is capable of producing effects which penetrate the strongest and most selective of boundaries (Bell, 1988, p. 7).

This entailed more role disturbance for the heads than a simple shift to entrepreneur - ship (Grace 1995) or an increase in the chief executive dimension, concerned with the maintenance and defence of their institutions (Hughes, 1973, Doughty, 1998, Bell, 2000). Cutler (1991, p. 125), at St Paul's Way School in Tower Hamlets, for example, struggled for a new philosophy of education that 'to be relevant, must be able to accommodate a perpetual state of flux and unplanned occurrences', and reported that her institution 'is in itself in a perpetual state of flux in its constituent parts' (1991, p. 128), with its teaching and learning systems disrupted by the National Curriculum. Evans (1991, p. 89) explains that the 1988 Act led to the break up of the faculty system at Trinity Church of England High School in Manchester, and regrets that there is 'far too much scope for sabotage in the classroom' (1991, p. 100). Atkinson (1991, p. 150) at Cranford regarded the National Curriculum as a 'threat to the school's mixed ability investigative style teaching.' The aspect of the new curriculum that worried him most was 'not what we know, but, rather, what we don't know' (1991, p. 153). These heads were engaged with the impact of change on all aspects of their institutions, from financial systems to curriculum organization, but in addition had to manage their own hopes, fears and values.

The SMTF (1990) reported on the features of effective schools, but apart from a preference for 'visionary leadership' (see p. 5) was unable to offer strategies that would help heads in the unpredictable, multi-dimensional turbulence described by Bell (1988). The 'chaos' and 'flux' (Cutler, 1991, p. 125/128, Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996, p. 11), experienced by many heads and teachers in the wake of the 1988 legislation, seemed as challenging as the search for efficiency and effectiveness. Baker remained confident that the new, market-led system would (interview in Ribbins & Sherratt, 1997, p. 109):

> ...release the energy in the system. An energy which was being constrained by all sorts of historic devices, of traditional ways of doing things. I genuinely wanted to energise people; to allow them to do things they had always wanted to but could not within the existing system.

**The 1992 Education Act**

A much stronger form of regulation followed disputes over the burdens of the National Curriculum than anything envisaged in the 1988 Act, and came to exert a profound influence on heads and efforts at school improvement. Chitty & Dunford (1999, p. 3) claim that Kenneth Clarke's reform of Her Majesty's Inspectors (HMI), and the creation of the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector (OHMCI), was inspired by his resentment of the critical messages on school buildings publicised in 1989, and 'effectively turned the inspectors' fire almost entirely on to the teachers and away from the Government'. Clarke may also have wished to control 'a diverse and potentially unruly system' (Fitz et al., 2000b, p. 19).

OHMCI was established by the 1992 Education (Schools) Act, and has been known ever since as OFSTED, at the request of Stuart Sutherland, the first Chief Inspector, who saw parallels with OFTEL, the telecommunications regulator (Fitz et al., 2000b). The new non-ministerial department soon became 'one of the most rigorous and public school inspection systems anywhere in the world' (Downes, 1999, p. 36) and penetrated 'some of the hidden areas of the school sector' (Hampton & Jones, 2000, p. 1). The stated purpose of OFSTED inspections (OFSTED, 1995, p. 8) is:

> ...to identify strengths and weaknesses so that schools may improve the quality of education they provide and raise the educational standards achieved by their pupils. The published report and summary provide information for parents and the local community about the quality and standards of the school ... The inspection process, feedback and reports give direction to the school's strategy for planning, review and improvement by providing rigorous external evaluation and identifying key issues for action.

When the Education and Employment Committee of the House of Commons reviewed the work of OFSTED, members concluded that the organization reflected 'a growing expectation on the part of the public that public services will be more directly answerable to those who used them' (House of Commons 1999a, p. x) and quoted Dr

Colin Scott's evidence (p. x) that the information produced by OFSTED should contribute to:

> A form of regulation by the market to encourage higher standards in schools ... the clear objective of the publication of league tables and so on is to use a kind of market mechanism to improve standards in schools.

The increase in the quantity of inspections was striking. Dunford (1999) found that HMI had inspected 154 schools in 1980 and even fewer by 1990, while Fitz et al. (2000b) report that, commencing in September 1993, OFSTED inspected all 24, 000 schools at least once and many of them up to three times. Schools are inspected against published criteria that have been revised three times since their introduction (OFSTED, 1993, 1995, 1999). The criteria and guidance prompt inspectors to recognise the features of an effective school. OFSTED (1993, 1.2, p. 3) advises how to measure effectiveness and efficiency:

> Information about pupils' attainments on entry may be derived from standardised tests ... Background indicators include socio-economic data such as the proportion of children entitled to free school meals. An informed view of the socio-economic environment of the school and pupils' attainment on entry will help the inspection team to set in context the standards achieved by pupils in the school.

Inspectors are urged to 'ensure that full weight is given to standards and quality, efficiency, and the quality of the school as a community, rather than to factors contributing to those outcomes' (OFSTED, 1993, 2.1, p. 5).

Governors are required by the 1992 Act to write an action plan to show what the school intends to do in response to the inspection report, within 40 days of the report's publication. OFSTED (1994, p. 3) advise that 'Action plans are primarily concerned with raising achievement ... and incorporate: specific targets for raising standards ... practical strategies ... focused on these goals; and arrangements for monitoring and evaluating the progress.'

Fitz et al. (2000b, p. 7) believe that the purpose of the inspections is 'to secure some homogeneity of curriculum, pedagogical and assessment practice, management procedures and efficiency in an education system ... previously characterised by large variation in all these areas.' Dunford (1999, p. 120) claims that Chris Woodhead, the second HMCI, 'had a strong agenda, not only for inspection as a device to raise standards in schools, but on pedagogy too.' The HMCI's annual report (e.g. OFSTED, 1998) became an influential and controversial document, drawing attention to 'issues and challenges' (Fitz et al., 2000b, p. 5) in teaching, learning and management.

**Improvement or Compliance**

Gray & Wilcox (1995c, p. 186) ask whether 'inspection (is) ... a change strategy which is driven by factors connected with compliance or can it generate and draw on a school's commitment?' They have found no major studies of the effects of inspection on subsequent development and no sustained account of how the inspection process might bring about improvement. Their study of 6 schools in 5 LEAs found that twelve months after inspection only 7 out of 43 recommendations made by inspectors had been implemented, and that after eighteen months only 17 had been fully adopted. Gray & Wilcox (1995c, p. 210) detected no serious attempt by the heads 'to turn inspection recommendations into broader visions and strategies ... owned by the staff' and speculate that 'superficial compliance' is the likely outcome. Gray & Wilcox (1995d, p. 255) are similarly sceptical about the planning process designed into the inspection procedure. There is only 'limited direct evidence that it brings about significant improvements in children's learning'. Gray & Wilcox (1995b, p. 183) believe that 'inspection privileges the voice of the inspectors' and may not arouse the motivation of those who have to implement appropriate action.

Chaplin (1995, p. 143) claims that 'inspection under the Act is intended to lead to improvement. The Framework recognises that schools are complex organisms' but does not allow for the extent to which institutions began to police themselves by 'meeting specifications in order to gain approval' (West-Burnham, 1995, p. 107). This is not improvement as understood by Hopkins (1987a), for example.

Fitz et al. (2000b, p. 12) describe the mechanisms by which OFSTED secures compliance. OFSTED has a major role 'in relating performance data to the various operational features of schools' and thus in identifying 'what works' and is in a strong position to shape policy and debate. Collings (1999, p. 67) complains that it was unfair that the 'OFSTED report format at the time began each section with standards achieved in relation to national norms' but was in no position as a head to challenge the powerful combination of an active, regulatory agency with long term performance data.

Schools are also inclined to align themselves with the published documentation (OFSTED, 1993, 1994, 1995) in anticipation of inspections, as the Education and Employment Committee (House of Commons, 1999a, p. xxvi) acknowledges:

> We recognise that it is simply human nature that the prospect of any kind of inspection will make individuals and organizations undertake some preparation to ensure a high level of performance ... one recent survey of 500 primary heads found that 'more than one in ten used an LEA adviser, inspector or other consultant to undertake a full review of the school's activities and almost 70 per cent had used an adviser or other consultant to undertake a partial review'.

In Fitz et al.'s study (2000b, p. 14) all 20 schools used the OFSTED framework (1995) to review practice, while 'headteachers and their senior management teams generally embraced ... the successive inspection frameworks as models for school improvement.' Ouston & Davies (1998, p. 14) describe OFSTED's impact in terms of a 'two to three year process' and identify a range of responses by 'developing/reflective', 'complacent' and 'struggling' schools (1998, p. 16).

**Fear of Failure**

OFSTED's ability to declare that schools have serious weaknesses or are failing (1992 Education Act, Education Act 1993 Part V) has an impact that 'far outweighs the number of schools directly affected by it' and 'enforces compliance with centrally generated policy initiatives' (Fitz et. al., 2000b, p. 15/16). The 'failing school' label

'is a huge fear factor that brings untold stress into the inspection process' and no doubt encourages others to match requirements (2000b, p. 15). Fitz et al. (2000b) further report that few of the 2 per cent of secondary schools actually placed in special measures achieve a long term improvement in standards, as measured by General Certificate of Secondary Education (GCSE) results. The Office for Standards in Inspection (OFSTIN, 1999) concludes that:

> ...the OFSTED inspection system is imposing centrally-dictated ways of running schools and of teaching ... OFSTED inspection is hostile to alternative ways of doing things ... the system discourages schools and teachers from thinking for themselves; instead it encourages them to become dependent on instructions from OFSTED ... as a result, teachers are in danger of losing the confidence and professionalism which makes for exciting schools and good teaching.

There is widespread concern about OFSTED's methodology and many question whether sustained, real improvement (as opposed to compliance) can be achieved by this approach. Bottery & Wright (2000, p. 2) believe that teaching 'is being deprofessionalised through its increasing lack of autonomy in how and what it teaches.' McNeil (2000, p. xvi) is concerned about 'what can happen, especially to our most effective teachers and schools, when business models are connected to systems of tight control in education.' Wragg (1997, p. 2) is critical of the coercive style adopted:

> The policy adopted by the Government and its agencies is presumably founded on the belief that professional people are best motivated by threat and criticism ... The 'blame and shame' school of educational management has been most clearly implemented in three closely linked forms: (1) a mechanical style of school inspection, (2) a narrowly focused programme of national testing, and (3) the use of league tables to encourage schools to improve their performance ...Announce that a school is going to 'have an OFSTED' and the place is blighted. This is because of the high degree of stress generated by the punitive and stilted model used by OFSTED.

Mortimore cites evidence that 'the academic results of recently inspected schools decline as staff and pupils recover from what, for many, may be a highly traumatic experience' (House of Commons 1999b, p. 96), while Stoll and Myers (1998, p. 11), also concerned with the psychological dimension of the OFSTED experience, speak of:

> The sometimes devastating impact of OFSTED inspections on staff morale, the 'development paralysis' that is caused purely by the knowledge of an impending inspection...

A general practitioner wrote to the Education and Employment Committee to highlight the 'significant symptoms of stress' suffered by three teachers at a local primary school (House of Commons, 1999a, p. xxvii). Dr Janet Ouston told the Committee that stress was experienced more in primary schools than secondary. Sir Geoffrey Hampton argued that a school's senior management team may 'transfer the pressure and workload that is brought to bear on them by the inspection to their staff' (House of Commons, 1999a, p. xxviii). Jeffrey & Woods (1998, p. 118) provide a case study of the state of mind induced in a primary teacher by government initiatives and inspection:

> I don't have the job satisfaction now I once had working with young kids because I feel every time I do something intuitive I just feel guilty about it. 'Is this right; am I doing this the right way; does this cover what I am supposed to be covering; should I be doing something else; should I be more structured; should I have this in place; should I have done this?' You start to query everything you are doing – there's a kind of guilt in teaching at the moment. I don't know if that's particularly related to Ofsted but of course it's multiplied by the fact that Ofsted is coming in because you get in a panic that you won't be able to justify yourself when they finally arrive.

**Local Education Authorities**

The 1992 Act removed the power to inspect from local authorities, and switched the relevant resources to the private contractors who would in future conduct inspections (Ranson, 1992). The cumulative effect of the 1988 and 1992 legislation was to weaken the extent to which LEAs could influence their schools and to reshape the management environment (Bridges & McLaughlin, 1994). Heads faced high risk inspections while learning the intricacies of self-management.

Barker (1997) describes how local government in Cambridgeshire lost authority and much of the ability to support schools as the logic of central regulation and local management unfolded between 1988 and 1997. Employer responsibilities were transferred (GMS schools) or delegated (LMS schools) to governing bodies, while all schools received extra funds to buy services. Councils were under continuous pressure to delegate a greater percentage of their education budgets to the schools, while the government used the mechanism of the standard spending assessment (SSA) and rate-capping to reduce the scope for local government. Competitive tendering obliged councils to sub-contract meals, cleaning and other functions to the private sector. Some GMS schools managed even their own admissions. LEAs were invited to reinvent themselves as service providers, retaining lead responsibility only for transport, special needs and school organization.

Morris (1994, p. 26) explains how the 1992 Act led most authorities to 'reorganize their support teams on an agency basis.' Gradually, management by 'contract and consent ... replaced management by control as the financial levers have been removed' (1994, p. 32). Ranson (1992) argues that without their former controls, LEAs should learn to share power with partners and stake-holders across the system. They should ensure that future facilities are planned; that information is provided to support the market; and that appropriate funds are distributed to schools and colleges. Morris (1994, p. 30) believed that the LEA's key role was to formulate strategic policies, particularly about the 'number, location, size and shape of the schools.'

Riley et al. (2000, p. 124) studied 23 LEAs from different parts of the UK and found that they were now 'caught between the expectations of schools and the pressures of

national government.' Although LEAs could and did make a difference in some areas, a great deal depended on local leadership, focus and activities. Gwynne (2000, p. 68 - 69) reports the frustrations of a sample of large school heads when officers and services were perceived to be unsatisfactory:

> '...when we have the annual triangulated review meeting with the Head, the Chair of Governors and the Link Advisor ... it's a waste of time'; 'I find in my LEA, anyway, that they haven't been any use'; 'In terms of direct relationships with officers of the LEA I must confess I try to keep that to a minimum...'; 'my time was spent trying to find routes through the absurd LEA bureaucracy.'

Doughty (1998, p. 306) found that headteachers in her sample regarded the LEA as 'distant and not investing the resources required', as if they were unaware that the local government regime had changed. Wood (1998) describes the many ways in which effective LEAs can help their schools raise standards.

The story of Hammersmith School, however, told by Whatford (1998, pp. 67 – 80), shows that even in the difficult circumstances experienced by local authorities during this period, sustained action was possible and could make a real difference:

> For a school at risk the very act of saying you were consulting on closing it and opening a new school on the site would have caused the school to collapse completely ... I had concluded that only an experienced head could succeed in the school ... Endless phone calls led me to such a person ... he was an existing head ... in a neighbouring authority ... One condition was the germ of the way we eventually found to close and reopen the school. He would only apply if he were able to start immediately on the first day of the summer term ... the way to make the maximum impact would be to say that not only was it a new head but it was a new school. We could not do that in law but there was nothing to stop us just saying it. Most people don't understand the complexities of the legal process of a school closure anyway ... so just announcing that Hammersmith School was

> closing on the last day of spring term 1995 and that Phoenix School was opening on the first day of summer term 1995 was simple but effective.

Hammersmith and Fulham devised an interventionist strategy, recruiting and supporting a new headteacher to ensure its success. Mr Atkinson was invited to take over the failing Hammersmith School, 'sure ... the authority would give him its absolute support' and able to 'define what he found supportive and what he did not'. A new start, a new head, additional funds, efficient services and well-targeted training and development were important factors in 'turning the school round'. Local government could still marshal an appropriate strategy and resources when they judged it was necessary.

Hopkins (2000, p. 9) insists that this type of intensive outside support is essential for failing or ineffective schools but anticipates that in some cases 'the LEA might be part of the problem'. Barber (2000b, p. 19) concludes from LEA inspection reports that 'too few LEAs perform their functions well', while Riley et al. (2000) report that weak authorities are very often those in areas of disadvantage. Kerckhoff et al.'s (1996) study of comprehensive reorganization suggests that not all the deficiencies in LEA performance should be attributed to disadvantage or the organizational turbulence following the 1988 Act. Each LEA 'represents a unique combination of factors' (1996, p. 47) and key personnel could produce striking variations in the climate experienced by their schools, as well as progress towards desired objectives. Barber (1997a, p. 190) recalls Keele University's research for OFSTED: '...even in 1993 and 1994, an unhappy era for LEAs, many were playing a decisive role in promoting school improvement.'

**Labour Education Reforms**

At the end of the Conservative period (1997), therefore, government policy was based on efficiency, markets and competition (Bell, 2000), with OFSTED inspections and performance tables applying the main pressure on heads to comply with school effectiveness criteria (OFSTED 1993, 1994, 1995) in the continued quest for improved test and examination results (Fitz et al., 2000a). The LEA role in school

improvement had been significantly reduced. LMS and GMS had encouraged heads to emphasize the executive and administrative aspects of their duties (Grace, 1995, Doughty, 1998). Bureaucratic, hierarchical models of headship were evident in official documentation of the role (e.g. DES, 1985, 1991). Although the importance of the headteacher was fully recognised (SMTF, 1990, OFSTED, 1996), training opportunities were limited and OFSTED became the main prompt for heads to attend to their leading professional and instructional leadership responsibilities. HMCI (OFSTED, 1996, pp. 10 – 11, quoted in Bell, 2000, p. 6) declared:

> ...headteachers must have a clear vision of the curriculum ... the strength of personality ... needed to engage with teachers in raising standards; (and) the administrative drive to plan programmes of improvement and see that they were carried through.

There was considerable potential, however, for tension amongst the various government agencies (Barber, 1997a). The DfEE, the Funding Agency for Schools (FAS), the School Curriculum and Assessment Authority (SCAA), the TTA, and OFSTED all dealt directly with the schools and had 'overlapping functions and the incentive to compete for ministerial and, indeed, public attention' (1997a, p. 188).

Despite so many reforms, Barber (2000b, p. 12) found that 'there is immense variation in performance among our secondary schools, even after controlling for intake.' After May 1997, the new government made education a leading priority. According to Chitty (1999, p. 31/32), 'Labour's politicians have preferred to believe that many comprehensive schools are performing badly and therefore need "modernising"'. Incoming ministers were swift to signal an intensification of the pursuit of standards and named and shamed the 18 'worst performing' schools (Chitty & Dunford, 1999, p. 7). **Excellence in Schools** (DfEE, 1997a, p. 12) reflected a new, and less publicised, emphasis on research evidence at the department: '...we know what it takes to create a good school.'

Leithwood (2000, p. xi) believes that under Labour, education has moved from a 'market phase' to an 'excellence phase' that is 'highly interventionist and prescriptive'. Husbands (2001, p. 9) suggests that 'Labour progressively marshalled

the entire education system around this reform agenda.' Bell (2000, p. 10) declares that 'intervention is back'; Gleeson & Husbands (2001) draw attention to Labour's modernising imperative and the close links established between teacher, student and school performance. The government is concerned with operational and managerial activities, even to the extent of prescribing 'curriculum content, pedagogy and the processes of performance appraisal' (Bell, 2000, p. 16). Statutory target setting (DfEE, 1997b, Fitz et al., 2000a) to achieve key stage and GCSE objectives is the government's hallmark. LEAs were assigned a role in raising standards (Riley et al., 2000).

The Secretary of State's letter to the Chief Inspector (House of Commons 1999b, p. 10) demonstrates his determination to use OFSTED to 'achieve higher standards'; to 'monitor the implementation of the literacy and numeracy strategies'; and 'to provide data to schools to help them measure progress and set targets for improvement.' Labour 'in some respects intensified' the regulatory regime and applied pressure to secure compliance (Fitz et al., 2000b, p. 8). According to Gunter (2001, p. 36), 'the scientific epistemology of school effects and the processes of improvement have become integrated into the political goals of New Labour.'

**Margin for Improvement**

Effectiveness and improvement research has come under close scrutiny as its influence and use in government policy and initiatives has increased, especially as the 'taboo' on taking account of social background has receded (Mortimore & Whitty, 2000) and decision-makers have shown 'a greater understanding ... of the need to recognise the strength of links between intake and schools' results' (Sammons, 2000, p. vi). Recent writers tend to emphasize the importance of culture and context and to doubt the value of generalizations about effectiveness (Bottery, 1995, Glatter, 1997, McMahon, 2001). Joyce et al. (1999, p. 17) are discouraged by the 'flat levels of student achievement' revealed by 'massive testing programs' in the United States, while Hopkins & Reynolds (2001, p. 461) sense that the school improvement community regards the improvement of educational outcomes 'as a mountain still left to climb'. The problem of change seems unchanged.

Effectiveness research is now widely criticised for its 'weak theoretical basis' (Sammons et al. 1995, p. 1), the lack of an agreed view of 'what an organization is, nor how it should be analysed' (Bennett, 2001, p. 99), and the failure to build models to explain how the processes fit together (Stoll & Fink, 1995, Taylor, 1987) inside a black box (Hopkins, 1996). Sammons et al. (1995, p. 1) draw attention to 'the dangers of interpreting correlations as evidence of causal mechanisms', while Carspecken (1996, p. 25) argues that variables distort what they are intended to explain: '...factors are simply not discrete by nature, so making them discrete conceptually can greatly distort our understanding of what is taking place.' Fidler (2001, p. 53) believes 'there are too many variables which interact' and that 'seemingly identical situations do not yield anything like identical results.'

Much effectiveness research is now perceived as naïve and mechanistic (Bennett, 2001), relying on an unjustified assumption that schools are rational, goal oriented systems with clear, measurable objectives (Harris, 2001a, Bell, 1988). Bechhofer (1974) warns against mindless empiricism as a response to the lack of good theories. Meyer & Rowan (1988, p. 94) criticise reformers who 'imagine that rationalized control and accounting measures can drive out less "modern" mechanisms of control once a few recalcitrant and reactionary groups are eliminated'. Fielding (1996) is concerned that success indicators, usually test and examination results, are chosen because they lend themselves to statistical treatment and are used to the exclusion of other important pointers to the quality of school life.

Reynolds (2001, p. 39) is troubled that because 'effective schools have already become effective, we do not know what factors made them effective over time.' Lodge (1998, p. 153) quotes an HMI with a similar complaint, that while effectiveness research has 'largely confirmed the obvious ... what it doesn't say too much about is how a poor school turns itself into a good one.' Sammons et al. (1995, p. 2) are unambiguous in their view that 'research results do not provide a blueprint or recipe for the creation of more effective schools.'

As the debate has continued and statistical techniques have become more sophisticated, awareness has grown that effectiveness and improvement issues are more complex than early models suggested. Advanced statistical methods have

enabled scholars to investigate much larger data sets and to come to more sophisticated conclusions about the relationship between socio-economic and school influences.

Gray et al. (1995, p. 128) examined eleven data sets, for example, discovering that the between-school variance ranges from 'about 1 to 5 per cent in the models incorporating prior attainment measures' and from 'about 4 to 25 per cent in those including just social background measures.' Gray (1995, p. 100) suggest that the readily available free school meals (FSM) data on social disadvantage, used by OFSTED Performance and Assessment Reports[1] (PANDAS) to 'benchmark' test and examination results, should be supplemented with evidence about 'backgrounds reflecting social advantage'. The proportion of pupils from 'professional' homes was an 'important predictor of subsequent performance.' Replicated elsewhere, this finding would help explain the apparently wide variation in examination results achieved by schools judged socially similar on the basis of FSM data alone.

Gray et al. (2001, p. 404) analysed a large national data set relating to Advanced Level examinations to assess whether there were long term trends towards improved effectiveness. The longitudinal, large scale nature of the study revealed that such trends were 'relatively short-lived', generally showing signs of regression after three years. Continuous improvement in effectiveness proved elusive for the institutions included in the database.

Recent studies have also reduced the margin believed to be influenced by schools. Davies (2000, p. 9), for example, cites a statistical analysis carried out by Dr Phil Budgell, Chief Inspector of Schools for Sheffield:

> Using multiple regression analysis, Dr Budgell found that more than 90% of the difference in exam results between schools was accounted for simply by the poverty, gender and final-year attendance of the children who were enrolled there. What was being done by the schools was influencing only the remaining 5 to 10%.

[1] Available in schools from 1998.

Fidler (2001, p. 55) draws the conclusion from other studies that 'for 80 per cent of schools their effectiveness is indistinguishable from each other.'

Reynolds (2001, p. 30) acknowledges that even after adjusting for social background and prior achievement levels, 'there is a tendency for schools in low socio-economic status areas to do worse than one would have predicted and for schools in middle-class areas to do better.' Reynolds' (2001, p. 30) recognition that 'school and home have additive effects' confirms the finding of Alexander & Eckland's (1975, p. 413) pioneering, longitudinal (1955 to 1973) analysis of compositional factors that 'status composition ... positively affected the likelihood of enrolment in a college preparatory curriculum.' Levačić & Woods (2002b, p. 245) show that disadvantaged schools suffer from the 'cumulative impact of a range of factors internal and external to the school.' Rutter et al. (1979, p. 154) anticipated that composition might be significant, suspecting that 'a largely disadvantaged intake might depress outcomes in some cumulative way'.

Studies like this have led to the hypothesis that the balance or social mix of a school's intake may be the single most important influence on variations in student performance. Thrupp (1999, p. 4) uses the concept of school mix to reverse the logic of school effectiveness research:

> ...many school processes which have been identified as contributing to student achievement may be less independent of school mix than researchers have typically allowed. Instead, aspects of schooling such as student relations, classroom instruction, and school organization and management may be powerfully influenced by social mix.

Opdenakker & Van Damme (2001, p. 408) support the proposition that supposed effectiveness characteristics 'may be continuously indirectly related to student characteristics by way of school processes influenced by school mix ... these factors may be school based, they may not be school caused.' The idea that a school's effectiveness may be a product of its social mix may help explain Gray et al.'s (1999, p. 138) conclusion that:

> Differences between schools in their effectiveness simply swamped any changes in effectiveness (upwards or downwards) ... schools which are really changing in terms of their effectiveness are in rather short supply.

In a changed policy climate, influenced by a desire to encourage social inclusion, Mortimore & Whitty (2000, p. 6) describe the cumulative effects of disadvantage for children who are physically weaker and more easily 'upset by the tensions in their lives' than their peers. John Gray (private letter to the author, 1999) suggests the impact of poverty on what schools can achieve:

> Schools have very different pupil intakes which shape what they can achieve. In particular, schools serving disadvantaged communities have to cope with a series of problems which would flummox schools in more advantaged areas. Their understanding of how to tackle such difficulties is under-valued by current frameworks for judgement.

On the basis of data from a longitudinal study of over 300 secondary schools, Levačić & Woods (2002a, p. 222) suggest that such differences are shaped and compounded by the operation of local school hierarchies:

> Schools low down the hierarchy, which are therefore characterised by a high concentration of socially disadvantaged students relative to other schools, have particular difficulties in improving academic results.

The mix is not an accident. Mortimore & Whitty (2000, p. 10) report a 'strong negative correlation between most measures of social disadvantage and school achievement' and conclude that while some schools may disturb the 'long term patterning of educational inequality' (2000, p. 21), the likelihood of their challenge being sustained over time is small. They are also pessimistic about the relative position of the disadvantaged being changed by school processes that impact on all student groups. Thrupp (2001, p. 446) is unequivocal that there are 'no grounds for

thinking that SER' (school effectiveness research) 'can overcome the effects of social inequality.'

As researchers have become 'realistic' (Thrupp, 1999), a search for more sophisticated, context-sensitive, improvement strategies has developed. Generalized, 'whole school' improvement efforts are seen to have over-emphasized management systems, so researchers are switching their attention to departmental and classroom level variables (Hopkins, 2001, McMahon, 2001, Harris, 2001b). Variations in performance between subject departments and different groups of students within a single school (Nuttall, 1990, Harris, 2001a & b) are seen as important points for further investigation and improvement effort. Gilbert & Gilbert (1998) discuss the negative consequences of masculine constructions of school and sketch a programme of radical reform.

Fidler (2001, p. 47), however, doubts whether any form of research, even that linking the effectiveness and improvement traditions, as suggested by Gray et al. (1999), could 'identify clear recipes for improving the performance of schools'. Harris & Bennett (2001) comment on the elusiveness of a merger between the traditions, despite attempts to use mixed methodologies to build a capacity for change. Fidler (2001, p. 60/61) believes that writing about school improvement is flawed by vague, collegial assumptions that unreasonably discount 'power as a potentially distorting influence on the process' of change. Busher (2001) finds that school improvement recipes ignore unequal power relations and reduce complicated social dynamics to simple formulae for best practice.

The investment in self-managing, self-improving, effective schools is such that educators are reluctant to contemplate the consequences of the discovery that, after several decades, reform has made little impression on the 'patterning of educational inequality' (Mortimore & Whitty, 2000, quoted above, p. 48). Like Barker (1995b, p. 9), policy makers, researchers and the education community at large seem to be asking themselves: 'Have we made progress or was it all a coincidence? Have we improved the numbers or the quality of learning? ... illusion or not, we daren't stop now.'

The government appears unwilling to acknowledge 'the theoretical, methodological and technical limitations' of the research findings that underpin current policies (Fidler, 2001, p. 52). Barber (1997b) cited Sammons et al. (1995) as having demonstrated 'how much difference school makes' and 'what the characteristics of the more successful schools are' without qualification. Attacking poverty was important (as the social exclusion initiative showed) but meanwhile we should not write off tens of thousands of disadvantaged children. 'After all,' he concluded, 'If schools and teachers make no difference, what's the point of doing the job?'

# Chapter 3: Transforming Schools

## Towards Transformation

The government's early insistence on effectiveness and standards (DfEE, 1997a, 1997b) was accompanied by a new prominence for leadership and active policies to improve its quality. **Excellence in Schools** (DfEE, 1997a, p. 46) stated that: 'Good heads can transform a school ... It is essential that we have measures in place to strengthen the skills of all new and serving heads.' A range of programmes was developed while preparatory work began on the proposed NCSL.

Barber (2000a) argued that school improvement, 'with its emphasis on schools themselves taking responsibility for their own destiny, puts a high premium on leadership.' Caldwell & Spinks (1992, p. 50) had made a similar point a few years earlier: '...a powerful capacity for transformational leadership is required for the successful transition to a system of self-managing schools.' Blunkett (2000, p. 1) declared:

> Leadership and vision are crucial to raising standards and aspirations across all our schools. The Government is establishing the National College for School Leadership as a major new partner ... The College will play a key role in the Government's strategy to transform our schools, drive up standards and ensure that every school is excellent or improving or both.

Barber (2000a) believed that leadership training was necessary to overcome the problem of heads who expected to 'administer the traditional education system' but found themselves required to lead 'a process of radical transformation'. Blair (2001, p. 22) confirmed the government's commitment to this project:

> So our task now is to transform our secondary schools. That transformation will be achieved only by the creativity, dedication and vision of our headteachers, the new social entrepreneurs, the key to any school's performance.

Although Bell (2000, p. 11) selects performance management as an example of a continued policy emphasis on 'hierarchical relationships and bureaucratic processes', Labour also drew upon the resources of the school improvement literature, with its concern for internal capacity and culture. West et al. (2000, p. 30) found from their IQEA partnership that 'the centrality of leadership in the achievement of school level change remains unequivocal.' Fullan (2000b, p.2) said that the 'measure of a strong school leader is one who develops the school's capacity to engage in reform.' OFSTED (2001, p.1) quoted inspection evidence of a 'clear link between the quality of leadership, the quality of teaching and the achievement of pupils.'

The chief executive/managing director conception of headship, described by Grace (1995) and Bridges & McLaughlin (1994), was replaced by a new transformational paradigm, similar to that advocated by Caldwell & Spinks (1992). The TTA's **National Standards** (2001), for example, envisage that heads will 'lead by example, provide inspiration and motivation (and) embody the vision, purpose and leadership of the school.' Bell (2000, p. 6) saw that the 'heads, therefore, were being cast in the role of hero innovator by this set of policies' and would shoulder the burden of success and failure. Gray et al. (1999, p. 25) recognised, however, the continuing problem of change:

> ...most school improvement strategies fail, in practice, to a greater or lesser degree to affect the culture of the school. They tend to focus on individual changes, and individual teachers and classrooms, rather than how these changes can fit in with and adapt the school's organization and ethos.

The theme of leadership, neglected by many improvement studies (Fidler, 2001), but now adopted by a determined government (Blunkett, 2000), promised to unlock

stalled efforts at change and to reform problematic cultures. As Hopkins (2001, p. 2) explains:

> This style of leadership focuses on the people involved, their relationships, and requires an approach that seeks to transform feelings, attitudes and beliefs. Transformational leaders not only manage structure, but they purposefully seek to impact upon the culture of the school in order to change it.

Before the change of government, Grace (1995) had identified a contradiction in official reports and policy statements between a desire for strong and effective leaders and a formal commitment 'to the values of consultation and participation in decision-making' (p. 17) but the evolving transformational model seemed to transcend this uncertainty about the formal roles of leaders and followers in school improvement (Fullan, 2000b).

The government's conviction (DfEE, 1997a, Blunkett, 2000) that leaders, schools and teachers could and should 'make a difference', despite the intractable nature of some social environments (Barber, 1997b), was supported by a widespread, common sense expectation that schools could be improved. In 1998 and 1999, Hay McBer (DfEE, 1998a, p. 98) conducted intensive interviews and focus groups with over 200 people closely involved with schools, including politicians, educators, governors, parents and students. A consistent, positive picture emerged of how 'highly effective headteachers' raise standards and informed the creation of LPSH. Stake-holders believe their schools can be improved, whatever the context (Whatford, 1998).

Stories of schools in crisis seem to confirm the popular assumption that all institutions can be 'turned around' or improved by relatively straightforward actions (Clark, 1998, Hampton & Jones, 2000), or ruined by mistakes and poor relationships (Berg, 1968). Sir Alec Clegg told how one of the worst behaved schools in his area was improved in a short space of time. The new head isolated each problem and tackled it with 'common sense, resolution and humanity', reducing the incidence of corporal punishment and introducing lunch clubs and societies (Mays, 1968, p. 39). Fullan (2000a) concludes that today 'schools can be taken out of special measures status in

about 19 to 22 months by employing strong intervention methods.' Stark (1998) describes the practical steps towards improvement that worked for his schools in special measures.

Hopkins (2000, p. 7), however, argues that the beneficial effects of tactics such as those reported in Gray et al. (1999) are short-lived and 'plateau or decrease after two years.' Fullan (2000a) is worried that quick improvements can be undone when 'one or two key leaders leave ... the progress is real but not deep' and stresses the need for an infrastructure at each level to sustain change. Hopkins (2000, p. 3), like Fullan (2000b), believes that to achieve lasting progress, schools should build their 'capacity for development', adopting strategies relevant to their current position and context. Failing or ineffective schools, for example, should change their leadership; receive intensive outside support; survey student and staff opinion; should focus on easy changes initially (e.g. uniforms/ buildings); emphasize learning behaviour rather than behaviour management; and re-skill teachers in a limited but specific repertoire. Low achieving schools should change their style of leadership and create task groups and teams; should improve the environment to show that learning is valued; should restructure the curriculum; should review something linked to standards to focus attention; should talk to students about their aspirations; should harness energy and optimism; and should generate a dialogue about values.

The long nurtured assumptions of the school improvement movement (Harris, 2001a, Fullan, 1982, 1991, Wilson & Corcoran, 1988) are aligned with the conviction of educators and politicians (Blair, 2001, Blunkett, 2000, Barber, 2000b). The example of schools that have been turned round (Clark, 1998, Whatford, 1998, Hampton & Jones, 2000) reinforces the government's confidence that transformational leaders can achieve dramatic improvements, even in the most unpromising, disadvantaged circumstances. Gunter (2001, p. 1) identifies the policy conclusion 'that what we need is more leadership of educational institutions, with superheads being drafted in to turn "failing" schools around.'

**Managing People**

Research in occupational psychology, particularly by McClelland (1975, 1987) and Litwin & Stringer (1968) at Harvard Business School, aimed to provide a theoretical basis for the proposition that the motivation and performance of people at work can be improved. As global competition and the rate of technological innovation increased, the limitations of large, hierarchical corporations were exposed, creating a crisis-induced imperative for change and an opportunity for a new, more human management philosophy that believed organizations were strengthened by paying greater attention to customers and employees (Peters, 1989, Peters & Waterman, 1995).

Belbin's (1981) work on team effectiveness, at the Administrative Staff College at Henley, further confirmed the significance of psychological factors and demonstrated their importance for group function. As New & Cormack (1997, p. 4) suggest: 'Finding the right fit between people and jobs is a fundamental challenge to all business and individuals today.'

McClelland (1975, 1987) developed his theory of motivation from earlier work by Murray (1935, discussed in DfEE, 1998a, p. 117), Maslow (1954), McGregor (1960) and Hertzberg (1966). Murray's Thematic Apperception Test was burdened by too many motives and proved unreliable in practice. McClelland instead defined the three primary social motives (achievement, affiliation and power) that drive 80 per cent of behaviour. McClelland & Burnham (1995, p. 11) describe the motivation and behaviour of successful leaders. The manager's need for power and influence, not intellectual ability, is the decisive factor for job performance. The best managers are interested in using 'socialised' power to benefit the organization as a whole and are not concerned to be liked by people. These leaders are emotionally mature, display few signs of egotism and adopt democratic, coaching styles.

McClelland & Burnham (1995, p. 6) explain that power-motivated managers empower their subordinates by creating workplace climates that arouse their social motives. Authoritarian, bullying behaviour has the opposite effect, stimulating

compliance and submission. Machiavellian ideas, they claim, have discredited power so that its importance in successful leadership has been under-estimated.

Litwin & Stringer's (1968) classic business experiment investigated the relationship between leadership styles, the work environment or climate, and employee performance. Climate was measured by asking employees to rate their perceptions of how they were treated on six dimensions. These were (1) how much compliance with rules is expected; (2) the amount of responsibility given; (3) the emphasis on quality and standards; (4) how far rewards exceed criticism for mistakes; (5) how clear are goals and objectives; (6) how warm and supportive the organization feels, team spirit.

Three different simulated environments were designed to create and test a particular climate. The director of each organization adopted a distinctive leadership style, intended to arouse one of the three core motives believed to influence everyone's behaviour at work. Organization A was led to arouse the need for power, defined as the need to control or influence others and to control the means of influencing others; Organization B was directed to arouse the need for affiliation, defined as the need for close interpersonal relationships and friendships with other people; and Organization C aimed to arouse the need for achievement, defined as the need for success in relation to an internalised standard of excellence.

Invited to participate in a business game scenario, Harvard students were asked to construct radar sets, working within regimes that emphasized respectively: (A) Rules, control, order, standards and criticism of poor performance. (B) Informality, positive rewards, relaxed atmosphere, cooperation and warm personal relationships. (C) Informality, high standards for individuals and the organization, rewards for excellent performance, cooperation, stress and challenge. After two weeks, Litwin & Stringer (1968, p. 144) concluded that distinct organizational climates could be created by varying leadership styles: 'Such climates can be created in a short period of time, and their characteristics are quite stable ... Once created, these climates seem to have significant ... effects on motivation, and correspondingly on performance and job satisfaction.' Organization C proved easily the most successful.

It seemed that if leaders learned to manage their own motives, and selected an appropriate combination of styles, they would be able to create an achievement oriented organizational climate that would enhance performance and productivity.

Belbin (1981, p. 50) asks 'what are the characteristics of the man who best leads in a complex problem-solving environment?' and after over 120 teams with different personality combinations had been tested in a management game, concluded that 'successful chairmen were not on average more mentally able nor more creative than their less successful counterparts' (p. 52). Instead, their personality profiles included: natural trust, strong basic dominance, strong morally based commitment to external goals and objectives, unflappability in the face of controversy, enthusiasm that arouses excitement and motivation in others, distance in social relations and positive behaviour in a group.

When Belbin discovered that visiting top leaders did not match this chairman profile, he developed the concept of the 'shaper' who was 'the antithesis of team men. They challenged; argued; disagreed' (p. 59). Shaper-led groups were always galvanised into action and seemed best equipped to deal 'with the stagnation ... this political complexity generates.' Belbin relates his work to Burns (1978) and McClelland (1975), whom he quotes to illustrate the 'strengthened and uplifted' (p. 259) feelings aroused by charismatic leaders.

**Managing Organizations**

A changing business environment also prompted dissatisfaction with organizational studies that emphasized rational, predictable systems and structures. Mintzberg (1975) found that the management systems (organization, planning, control, coordination, use of management information systems) described in functionalist textbooks were at odds with workplace reality. A diary of 160 British middle and top managers showed they worked without interruption for half an hour only once in two days. 93 per cent of verbal contacts were ad hoc. Mintzberg (1975, p. 5) concluded that the 'manager is simply responding to the pressures of the job' and that when managers plan, 'they seem to do so implicitly in the context of daily actions, not in

some abstract process' (1975, p. 6). Managers did not use their elaborate management information systems, preferring gossip, hearsay and speculation

Wolcott's (1984) account of Ed Bell, an elementary school principal, captures a similar messy reality, where the pressures of the job distract the post-holder from managerial priorities. One principal told him that 'just keeping the school functioning is almost more than one person can handle ... I don't spend 25 per cent of my time with the people who are handling the instructional program' (1984, p. 229). Hall et al. (1986, p. 205) portray a comparable pattern of behaviour in British schools. Heads seemed to be driven by events and gave little apparent attention to strategy and planning. The research showed:

> ...their daily work to be fragmented, people-intensive and to encompass a range of tasks. Teaching emerged as the longest sustained activity for many headteachers and formal scheduled meetings constituted a low proportion of the job.

Jones (1987, p. 177) reported that heads were 'reactive rather than proactive' and were 'preoccupied with internal matters, particularly personnel' and complained that most initiatives were thrust upon them from outside the school. 'In fact,' concluded Mintzberg (1975, p. 11), 'The manager is in a kind of loop, with increasingly heavy work pressures but no aid forthcoming from management science'. The characteristics of managerial work - brevity, fragmentation and verbal communication – seemed to have frustrated scientific attempts to improve its effectiveness. Giddens (1984) suggests that this is because the functionalist approach ascribes rationality to social systems, not to human beings, so explains nothing adequately.

Burns & Stalker (1995) investigated the impact of new and unfamiliar tasks on concerns that were organized for relative stability. They describe two forms of rational organization. One is a mechanistic management system suitable for stable conditions. Such systems tend to be hierarchical in structure; there is specialised differentiation of functional tasks; the rights and obligations attached to each technical role are precisely defined; communications and interactions between superiors and subordinates tend to be vertical.

The other is an organic management system, appropriate to changing conditions where fresh problems and unforeseen requirements do not fit functional roles defined within a hierarchic structure (Burns & Stalker, 1995). These systems are marked by the adjustment and continual redefinition of individual tasks through interactions with others; by the spread of commitment to the concern beyond any technical definition; and by a network structure of control, authority and communication. This analysis relates the internal form and processes of the organization to changes and pressures in the environment and helps make sense of the apparently disconnected or loose-coupled behaviour Mintzberg (1975) observes in the workplace.

A similar shift from mechanistic to organic explanations can be found in studies of schools. Hoyle (1986a) cites Hanson & Brown (1977), who argue that organizations are open systems influenced by their environments, and suggests that change must involve an adjustment between external requirements and internal constraints. Schools are increasingly theorised as 'organismic' (1986a, p. 49), loosely coupled systems, combining bureaucratic and human relations models, with different components for dealing with routine and non-routine events and tasks. This is congruent with contingency theory (Hoyle 1986b) where organizations are seen to exist in turbulent environments. Structures need to be flexibly differentiated since varied problems require different approaches. Hoyle (1986a, p. 170) reports that leadership theory identifies the most effective head as 'the one who can adopt a contingent style which involves variation according to circumstances'. A functional perspective does not enable Wolcott (1984), Jones (1987) and Hall et al. (1986) to fully explain what they observe.

Wolcott (1984) is therefore obliged to interpret schools and the role of the principal in essentially conservative terms. In 'complex, bureaucratically organized societies' schools serve to 'maintain tradition and continuity' (p. 321). Principals are 'formal bearers of organizational and societal tradition' (p. 321) and their position requires them 'simultaneously to present the appearance of change and to provide the stabilizing effects of continuity' (p. 322). They have become 'agents of the rhetoric of change rather than agents of change itself.'

Handy & Aitken (1986), however, recognise the important interplay of internal and external factors and explain school organization in terms of changing rather than fixed cultural patterns, influenced by personal and environmental dynamics. Size, work flow, new external requirements and past history influence the blend of club, personal, role and task cultures that shapes an individual school's working practices. For Peters (1989, p. 388), though, working with organizations in trouble, theories and explanations were not enough. He saw no alternative to rapid, radical change:

> ...in the past twenty years, the stable conditions (large-scale mass production) that led to the slow emergence of these universals have blown apart. So now the chief job of the leader, at all levels, is to oversee the dismantling of dysfunctional old truths and to prepare people and organizations to deal with – to love, to develop affection for – change per se, as innovations are proposed, tested, rejected, modified and adopted.

In search of a new paradigm, Peters & Waterman (1995) reported 'lessons from America's best run companies', whose pursuit of excellence had enabled them to survive the intense competition and turbulent environment of the late seventies and eighties. They had aimed to discount leadership because it was everyone's answer but 'what we found was that associated with almost every excellent company was a strong leader (or two) who seemed to have had a lot to do with making the company excellent' (1995, p. 26). Successful companies had a bias for action; were close to the customer; fostered leadership throughout the organization; achieved productivity through people; were driven by values; stuck to the knitting; adopted a flat, simple structure; and were simultaneously tight (around core values) and loose (in being flexible and responsive). Like Belbin (1981), Peters & Waterman (1995) draw attention to McClelland's (1975, p. 259) passage on charismatic leadership. Such a leader:

> ...does not force them to submit and follow him by the sheer overwhelming magic of his personality and persuasive powers ... In fact, he is influential by strengthening and inspiriting his audience.

Covey (1989, 1992) is a further, influential source of optimism about leadership and change. Armed with his seven habits of highly effective people (from 'be proactive' to 'sharpen the saw') and the eight characteristics of principle-centred leaders (from 'radiate positive energy' to 'see life as an adventure'):

> ...leaders can expect to transform their organizations and their people by communicating vision, clarifying purposes, making behaviour congruent with belief, and aligning procedures with principles, roles, and goals (Covey, 1992, p. 69).

Although these studies came from business-centred environments and were ostensibly compatible with the entrepreneurial, managerial approach implicit in the Conservative reforms (Chitty, 1989), the new right discourses chronicled by Dale (1989) and Ball (1990b) were not really at ease with messages of transformation and employee empowerment (Peters & Waterman, 1995, Peters, 1989) that criticised many features of smoke-stack capitalism. But the ideological reconstruction of schools as self-managing business units, obliged to operate in competitive markets and to pursue challenging targets for measurable success (Grace, 1995, DfEE, 1997b, Gunter, 1997, 2001) created, nevertheless, an unfamiliar imperative for leaders 'to prepare people and organizations to deal with ... change' (Peters, 1989, p. 388, quoted above, p. 60).

**Transformational Leadership**

Burns (1978) sought an alternative to the top down management models that had survived into the democratic age and hoped for a new general theory of leadership, embodied in a broader concept of social causation (Allix, 2000). Peters & Waterman (1995, p. 81/82) quote Burns and emphasize the need for transforming leadership to create an 'excellent culture', while Caldwell (1992) borrowed from **Leadership** (Burns, 1978) when writing **Leading the Self-Managing School** (Allix, 2000). Burns' analysis depends on a distinction between familiar, transactional leaders and transforming leaders, who recognise and exploit 'an existing need or demand of a potential follower' but seek 'to satisfy higher needs' and develop a 'relationship of mutual stimulation and elevation that converts followers into leaders and may convert leaders into moral agents' (Burns, 1978, p. 4).

Transactional leadership occurs:

> ...when one person takes the initiative in making contact with others for the purpose of an exchange of valued things. The exchange could be economic or political or psychological in nature: a swap of goods or of one good for money; a trading of votes between candidate and citizen or between legislators; hospitality to another person in exchange for willingness to listen to one's troubles. Each party to the bargain is conscious of the power resources and attitudes of the other ... The bargainers have no enduring purpose that holds them together (Burns, 1978, p. 19/20).

The idea of a leader initiating a series of transactions with followers to achieve organizational goals would fit within a formal management system (Bush, 1995), where the head sets institutional goals and seeks their implementation by negotiation, or within a micro-political interpretation of the type provided by Ball (1987) or Hoyle (1986a). Starratt (1999 p. 25) describes transactional deals ('a granted request here for a future request there, a vote on this in return for a vote on that') that could be explained as moments in a continuing struggle for control. Ball (1987, p. 13) maintains that 'schools contain within them members committed to and striving to achieve very different goals' and that the 'changing pattern of control is not the product of abstract organizational systems; rather, it emerges from the confrontations and interactions between individuals and groups in the organization' (1987, p. 10). Hoyle (1986a) pictures schools as loosely-coupled systems where interaction and conflict result in varying levels of coordination and integration. Weick (1988, p. 60) suggests the frustration available for transactional leaders in a loosely-coupled setting such as a school:

> Given a potential loose coupling between the intentions and actions of organizational members, it should come as no surprise that administrators are baffled and angered when things never happen the way they were supposed to.

According to Starratt (1999, p. 25) transactional activity involves an extended process of bargaining between people 'whose individual interests and claims serve their own goals primarily, and only secondarily, if at all, serve the interests of the organization.' Burns believes, however, that transactional exchanges point towards another, higher level of leadership and finds conflict of the kind charted by Ball (1987) 'intrinsically compelling' (Burns, 1978, p. 38) rather than destructive. Transforming leadership converts 'conflicting demands, values, and goals into significant behaviour' (1978, p. 38). Such leadership occurs when:

> ...one or more persons engage with others in such a way that leaders and followers raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality ... Their purposes, which might have started out as separate but related, as in the case of transactional leadership, become fused. Power bases are linked not as counterweights but as mutual support for common purpose ... transforming leadership ultimately becomes moral in that it raises the level of human conduct and ethical aspiration of both leader and led, and thus, it has a transforming effect on both (p. 20).

Starratt (1999, p. 25) points out that transforming leadership 'attempts to elevate members' self-centred attitudes, values and beliefs to higher, altruistic attitudes, values and beliefs' and describes Mary Doe's 'profoundly moral resolve' (1999, p. 22) as she built a new culture, passing through transactional, transitional and transformational stages of leadership at Blue Sky.

Bass (1985) proposed a formal theory of transformational leadership, extending Burns (1978) 'transforming' leaders into 'transformational' leaders, to match the scale of organizational change now envisaged (Gronn, 1999, p. 119). Bass & Avolio (1994, p. 3/4) describe how idealised influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation and individualised consideration enable leaders to raise followers to 'higher levels of motivation and morality' (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Transformational leaders avoid using power for personal gain and provide role models for their followers, who identify with them and seek to emulate their behaviour. They provide meaning and challenge for followers, inspiring and motivating them to pursue a

shared vision and goals. These leaders also listen carefully as they give attention to each individual's need for achievement and growth, and delegate as a means of developing followers.

Blase & Anderson's (1995) model of transformational leadership, derived from Burns (1978), assumes two spectra of leadership behaviour, from transactional to transformative, and from closed to open (see diagram below).

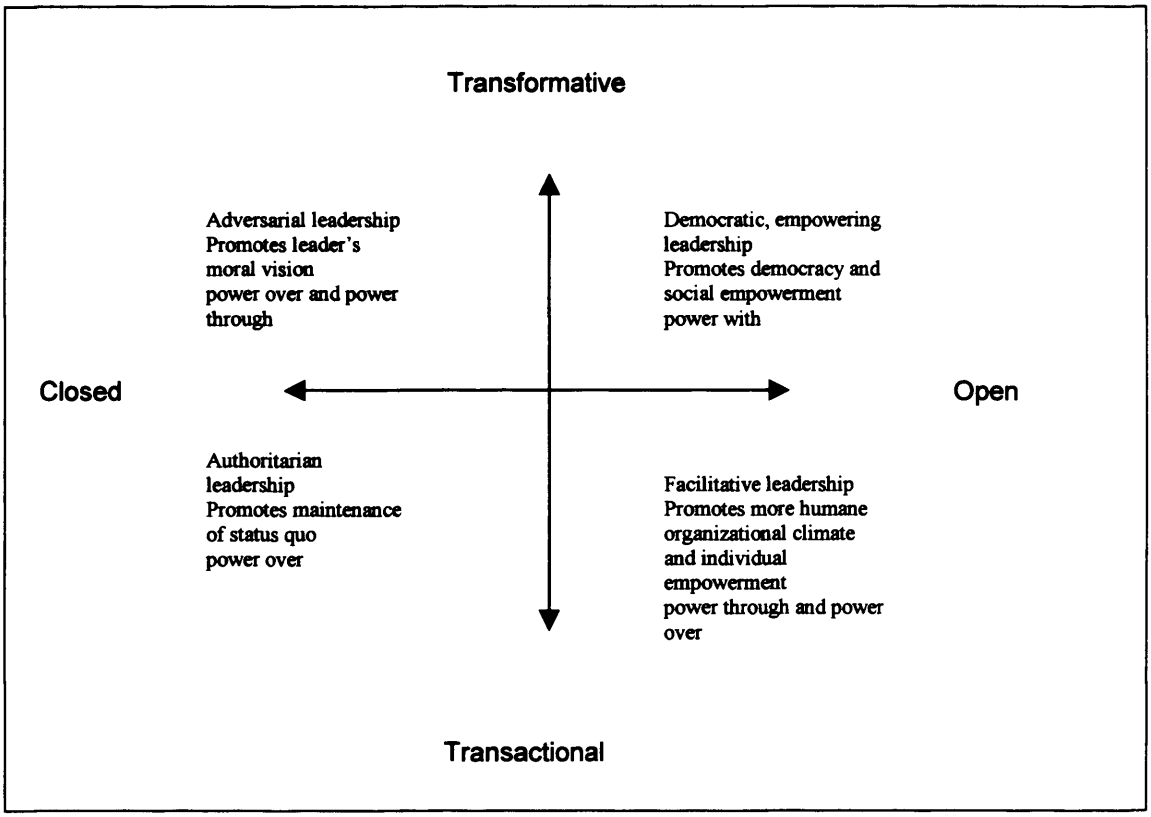


*Diagram from Blase & Anderson (1995, p. 16)*

They contrast the impact of the styles adopted by principals (e.g. 'closed transactional', 'open transformative') and conclude that:

> ...the kind of micropolitical culture that results from each form of leadership is qualitatively different ... teachers tend to develop patterns of social interaction that are often in direct response to principals' leadership styles (Blase & Anderson, 1995, p. 25).

When leaders choose open styles and are less concerned to control subordinates, the quality of transactional or micro-political relationships can be transformed. 71% of research participants (226 teachers) reported 'negative outcomes' (1995, p. 42) for their classroom and school wide performance when principals adopted closed, transactional styles. Open principals were far more effective and had a positive effect on teachers. Blase & Anderson's data fall conceptually between:

> ...the idea of transactional leadership ... and the idea of transformational leadership, in which actions transform teachers into leaders who possess decisional authority and responsibility (1995, p. 106).

As Gronn (1996, p. 201) remarks, 'the meaning of transformational leadership has evolved over a ten-year period', so that new distinctions overlap or become blurred in use, defying 'precise specification'. King (1968, p. 103) had political examples in mind when he reflected that heads with a mission 'may hope to initiate social change in the world outside the school ... (and)... may sometimes be the visionary of a new society'. On the strength of their 'Moving Schools Project', West et al. (2000, p. 38) propose a similarly radical departure: 'a dispersed leadership model which is both opportunistic and "intrapreneurial" in seeking ... to encourage ... a broadly based leadership approach'.

MacBeath et al. (1998, p. 28) suggest that, unlike 'scientific managerialism', 'transformational leadership is about flexibility and pragmatism', a point developed by Day et al. (2000, p. 158) who examine the interplay between values, dilemmas and culture to establish the ground for a 'post-transformational', 'values-led contingency leadership'. They speculate that the best of the human relations, open systems, rational goal and internal process models can be combined to resolve the conundrum of governments, leaders and followers who have different values and interests.

Stoll & Fink (1995, p. 100) believe that 'culture ... defines effectiveness' and see transformational leadership as a 'model of cultural pluralism' (1995, p. 106) that is consistent with the school improvement literature. They report work at 83 Halton schools to show how leaders impact on conditions and cultural norms through a four stage planning cycle. They recommend 'invitational leadership' which is about

'communicating invitational messages to individuals and groups ... to build and act on a shared and evolving vision' (1995, p. 109). Schein (1985) emphasizes the role of leadership in creating and managing culture (as distinct from goals). School culture is to be found in:

> ...the deeper level of basic assumptions and beliefs that are shared by members of an organization, that operate unconsciously, and that define in a basic 'taken-for-granted' fashion an organization's view of itself and its environment (p. 6, quoted in Stoll & Fink, 1998, p. 198).

Torrington & Weightman (1993, p. 53) believe that all school members are responsible for organizational culture and that 'change in culture is effective and swift only when there is wide agreement, "ownership", concerning the change to be sought.' Schein (1973, p. 780) warns that there is 'no abstract entity called organization' to hold responsible, only the human beings whose motives and values conflict. Stories and legends will be as important in changing culture as structures, systems and formal statements of philosophy and policy.

Sergiovanni (1995) identifies four sources of authority for the new, powerful but empowering leadership role envisaged by much of the literature. He suggests that heads should draw on bureaucratic authority, with an emphasis on rules, mandates and regulations, in an effort to direct thought and action; on interpersonal style and political guile to achieve thought and action; on professional authority based on knowledge of best practice; and on moral authority that asks people to respond by doing their duty. Accumulating authority by these means, heads should then barter, build, bond and bind, according to the stage they have reached. Sergiovanni acknowledges that cultural leadership 'can become a powerful weapon for masking the many problems of diversity, justice and equality that confront schools' (1995, p. 316) but believes that successful schools have 'strong, functional cultures' based on shared values 'that define acceptable behaviour' (1995, p. 95).

As Stoll & Fink (1995) acknowledge, the literature of transformational leadership contains many recommendations about creating visions, impacting on culture and building capacity (Blase & Anderson, 1995, Day et al., 2000, Sergiovanni, 1995) that

are similar to those found in improvement studies (Ainscow et al., 1994, Hopkins et al., 1994, Hopkins, 1996). They are vulnerable to the same critical questions raised by Fidler (2001), Harris (2001a) and Busher (2001). Reported projects have seldom been evaluated in terms that could confirm or challenge whether sustained benefits flowed from recommended changes, while the actions suggested are usually defined in process terms, so that 'it is difficult to collect evidence to show what has been achieved' (Fidler, 2001, p. 64).

Leithwood et al. (1992, p. 7) welcome the 'culture changing' potential of transformational leadership but retain an effectiveness framework based on empirical studies. In contrast with the persuasive tone of the contributors to the NCSL Leadership Evidence Base (e.g. Hopkins, 2001, Fullan, 2000b), Leithwood & Jantzi (2000, p. 51) are cautious. Although principals and teachers are sources of leadership:

> ...there is almost no evidence available concerning their relative effects. As a consequence, we know little about such critical matters as how these two sources of influence interact in schools, how they might work synergistically to add value to the school.

No statistically significant effects have been found for either source of leadership, once family educational culture is taken into account. Quantitative 'evidence about principal leadership effects remains surprisingly tentative' (2000, p. 52).

In earlier research, into principal effectiveness, Leithwood & Montgomery (1986) adopted a grounded methodology, collecting data without a conceptual framework and then developing 'a set of behavioural categories' (1986, p. 114). Effectiveness was defined in terms of gains made on behalf of students, while the question of direct and indirect effects on outcomes introduced a level of uncertainty into the calculations. Four levels were identified in relation to 'some 17 classroom and school-wide factors which highly effective principals attempt to influence' (1986, p. 122). The administrator was concerned with smooth organization and operational management; the humanitarian emphasized a friendly atmosphere but was inexplicit about expectations; the program manager was eager for consistency, was student-centred and stated goals clearly; the systematic problem solver rose above these

preoccupations with a highly developed educational philosophy, clear goals and a variety of strategies to achieve them.

Leithwood et al. (1992, p. 15) are unsure 'whether principals can significantly influence school culture' and develop criteria for expert leadership (e.g. the use of abstract categories to look at problems), based on 135 studies. They propose strengthening school culture by increasing the number of shared meetings and using goal and target setting to secure commitment but it is uncertain whether the 'systematic problem solver' is capable of inspiring a transformation. Bell (1988, p. 8) suggests the limitations of a strategy like this:

> Different members of the school may perceive different goals or attribute different priorities to the same goals or even be unable to define goals which have any operational meaning.

Kotter (1996, p. 136) explains that change efforts mostly fail because 'changing highly interdependent settings is extremely difficult because, ultimately, you have to change nearly everything'. Organizations are not simple sets of individual variables or factors that can be turned up or down. The management skills that keep complicated systems operating will keep transformations from running out of control but 'a purely managerial mindset inevitably fails, regardless of the quality of people involved.' Successful change depends on leadership processes that:

> ...create organizations in the first place or adapts them to significantly changing circumstances. Leadership defines what the future should look like, aligns people with that vision, and inspires them to make it happen (Kotter, 1996, p. 25).

Kotter describes an eight stage model to ensure transformation. Leaders should:

1. Establish a sense of urgency;
2. Create a guiding coalition;
3. Develop a vision and strategy;
4. Communicate the change vision;

5. Empower broad-based action;
6. Generate short-term wins;
7. Consolidate gains and produce more change;
8. Anchor approaches in the culture.

Barker (2001b) applies the eight stages to case studies from his own fieldwork, identifying the reasons for unsuccessful initiatives in schools. Kotter regards transformation as a huge exercise that 'plays itself out over years, not months' (1996, p. 143) and involves the stages being revisited repeatedly within interrelated projects and changes. A fundamental mistake is to see culture as an obstacle to be tackled first. Kotter explains that:

> Culture refers to norms of behaviour and shared values among a group of people ... group members tend to behave in ways that teach these practices to new members (1996, p. 148).

Culture only changes when you have successfully altered people's actions.

**Leadership Development**

The leadership literature is enormous and increasing, up from 3,000 entries by 1974 to 7,500 by 1990 (Gronn, 1999), and includes practical advice (West-Burnham, 1992, Holmes, 1993), critical perspectives (Grace, 1995, Gunter, 1997), empirical studies (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986) and much more. An education management industry has grown up to 'support educational institutions in how to manage in a turbulent environment' (Gunter, 1997, p. 11). The problem for the government, the NCSL, and others with hopes of transformation, is that the literature's multi-faceted perspectives do not encourage belief in an easily reproduced formula for improving leadership effectiveness.

The main themes to emerge from the sample reviewed here (pp. 55 – 69) are:

1. authority, power, style, climate (Sergiovanni, 1995, Hoyle 1986a, McClelland & Burnham, 1995, Litwin & Stringer, 1968);

2. vision, values and strategic planning (Stoll & Fink 1995, Kotter, 1996, Day et al., 2000);
3. culture, systems, capacity-building (Schein, 1985, Stark, 1998, Hopkins, 2000);
4. contingent relationships between internal processes and external environments (Burns & Stalker, 1995, Handy & Aitken, 1986, Busher, 2001, Busher & Barker, 2001, Busher et al., 2001).

Hodgkinson (1993, p. x) argues that there is an inescapable discord and discontinuity within and between these themes:

> ...educational administration is neither unitary nor homogeneous nor monolithic. It is fragmented and factional, obscure in its dimensions, vague in its ends, and contentious in its methodologies.

Should heads develop political expertise (Hoyle, 1986a, Ball, 1987, Sergiovanni, 1995), for example, or emphasize informality; high standards; rewards for excellent performance; co-operation; and stress and challenge, in the hope of creating an achievement climate like Litwin & Stringer's (1968) Organization C? Should they be chairman, shapers (Belbin, 1981) or highly effective people (Covey, 1989)? Would these possibilities help realize Blase & Anderson's (1995) social empowerment, Bass's (1985) 4 Is of transformational leadership, or Kuhnert's (1994, p. 18) 'transformational self-defining leader'? Would the introduction of a collaborative management cycle (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988), with task groups and teams (Atwater & Bass, 1994, Stark, 1998, Hopkins, 2000), and targets for improvement (DfEE, 1997b, OFSTED, 1994), prove complementary or amount to an alternative? Which of these would best increase capacity (Ainscow et al., 1994, Hopkins, 2000, Fullan, 2000b), impact on the culture (Schein, 1985, Stoll & Fink, 1995, 1998, Day et al., 2000), or solve problems (Leithwood & Montgomery, 1986)?

The problematic nature of leadership as a discourse and field of study has long frustrated the desire to distil the skills, knowledge and competences of headship and to prepare training programmes to improve job performance. The history of leadership training is a chronicle of limited initiatives (Poster, 1987, Pitner, 1987,

SMTF, 1990) and disappointment (Argyris & Schon, 1978, Bolam, 1986a, Pitner, 1987, Leithwood et al., 1992).

Pitner (1987, p. 67) relates how principals have reacted to training courses constructed from disparate theories and competing recommendations: '...as a group, educational administrators disparage the utility of university training for preparing graduates to face the problems of practitioners.' Wolcott (1984, p. 198) adds that 'principals not only eschew their formal training, they also look for evidence in support of their intuitive disregard for its utility.' On-the-job, practical training was preferred by the heads themselves. Weindling & Earley (1987, p. 49) found amongst their sample of new heads 'general agreement that ... the most valuable experience was gained as a deputy head.'

Argyris (1991, p. 103) believes that leaders bring powerful agendas of their own that defeat efforts to introduce new ideas: '...everyone develops a theory of action – a set of rules that individuals use to design and implement their own behaviour as well as to understand the behaviour of others' and this leads professionals to resist alternatives to their established reasoning patterns.

Bottery & Wright (2000) identify a new danger. Government schemes seem to have narrowed teacher education and to have discouraged professional development. As central initiatives increase in number a 'compliance culture' (2000, p. 111) has replaced the concept of the extended professional, so that 'virtually all the in-service education and training investigated appeared to be devoted to questions of legislative implementation' (2000, p. 128). Gunter (1997, p. 94) criticises management training and handbooks that provide ready-made, quick solutions.

Hargreaves & Fink (2001, p. 4) wonder whether prescribed methods or borrowed formulae can be implemented successfully in new settings.

> Transplanted initiatives soon become transformed ones – diverging sharply from initial intentions ... strategies of generalizing change have uneven success.

Greenfield (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 5) believes, simply, that:

> ...an academic industry which trains administrators by disclosing to them the social-scientific secrets of how organizations work or how policy should be made indulges at best in a premature hope and at worst in a delusion.

The government remains committed to transformation, however, and views leadership training as a high priority. There are 'too many weak' heads (OFSTED, 2001, p. 1), a considerable number of them raised on traditional assumptions that block change (Barber, 2000a). OFSTED believes that regular inspections and a framework emphasizing leadership tasks and self-evaluation are important, while the NCSL (2001, p. 1) is persuaded that: 'the skills and attributes of leadership can be developed through learning' and identifies ten leadership propositions as a framework for encouraging a distributed model that is strategic, purposeful, values-driven, instructionally focused and builds capacity.

**Headship Training**

Until April, 2000, when the DfEE assumed temporary responsibility for headship programmes before passing them to the NCSL, the TTA established what Glatter (1997, p. 216) calls 'a hugely ambitious programme – nothing of its scale or complexity has been attempted elsewhere.' National Standards (TTA, 1998, p. 1) were established as a training framework for all school management responsibilities, and aimed to improve the quality of leadership 'which will have the maximum impact on pupils' learning'. Heads were portrayed as a dynamic force, driving others forward. They 'lead by example, provide inspiration and motivation, and embody for the pupils, staff, governors and parents, the vision, purpose and leadership of the school' (1998, p. 9). A key attribute in a head was 'the ability to lead and manage' by using 'leadership styles in different situations' (1998, p. 7). The standards were revised when responsibility was transferred to the DfEE (2000).

The National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) was introduced in 1997 for candidate heads. Initially seen as relatively inflexible and competency-based

(Gwynne, 2000, Gunter et al., 1999), NPQH was redesigned after widespread consultation and now includes school-based assessment (DfES, 2002) and development activities including 'leading and managing teams' (NCSL, 2002b, p. 3). By September 2001 over 12,000 candidates had registered (DfES, 2002).

The Leadership and Management Programme for New Headteachers (HEADLAMP) was launched in 1995 and funds individually-tailored training for newly appointed heads during their first two years. Nearly 9,000 had benefited from the scheme by September 2001 (DfES, 2002). LPSH was introduced in 1998, and up to August 2001 some 7,000 headteachers had participated (DfES, 2002).

On behalf of the TTA, Hay completed structured interviews with 121 heads and deputies, providing a new empirical foundation for defining the characteristics associated with successful performance (DfEE, 1998a, p. 98). Using their own 'behaviour event' recording techniques, Hay established 15 characteristics that distinguish 'highly effective' headteachers (DfEE, 1998a, p. 15). Hay claims that exceptional school performance is strongly associated with heads who show high levels of 'developing potential', 'holding people accountable', 'transformational leadership', and other key characteristics.

Based on Litwin & Stringer's (1968) research, Hay's model of leadership effectiveness is that heads' characteristics prompt them to adopt particular combinations of six leadership styles that may impact positively and negatively on the climate, and so on teacher and student motivation. Climate, known to LPSH as the 'Context for School Improvement' (CSI), is measured on six dimensions, similar to those used in the Litwin & Stringer experiment (see p. 56 above). Coercive and pace-setting styles, used inappropriately, have been found to reduce the extent to which employees feel responsible and committed, while authoritative and coaching styles are said to have a positive, motivating influence (DfEE, 1998b). In advance of the programme, delegates and five school 'direct reports' of their choice complete questionnaires on their current perceptions of the characteristics and styles displayed by the head, and of the climate produced at the school. Hay Diagnostics analyse the questionnaires, norm-reference the data and provide feedback that forms an integral part of LPSH.

LPSH does not recommend one style or combination of styles. What matters is that the permutation adopted is appropriate for the situation encountered. The LPSH case is that as leadership is responsible for 70 per cent of the climate, heads who optimise their choice of styles, through training, reflection and practice, can secure large, potentially transforming improvements in motivation and commitment (DfEE, 1998a, 1998b).

The medium to long term success of leadership programmes is particularly hard to assess. Bass & Avolio (1994), for example, report that several thousand leaders in public and private sector organizations have been trained on their **Full Range of Leadership Program** (Avolio & Bass, 1990) but provide no evidence of specific benefits. The Nuffield Institute Centre for Leadership and Management (Leadership Project, 2001) offers one of many diagnostic instruments that claim to measure a manager's skills and competences. The **Transformational Leadership Questionnaire** is aimed at the public sector and provides a 360° multi-rater feed-back on the subject's 'leadership characteristics'. The Institute's IRIAM model enables participants to identify 'developmental needs in the area of Transformational Leadership' (Leadership Project, 2001, p. 2). Companies, like Hay with LPSH, are concerned to protect their intellectual property, are reluctant to disclose their research data and either shelter or fail to produce evidence that may emerge concerning the success of their chosen methods.

LPSH is, however, well-grounded in human relations theory and has been used in a wide range of settings. Characteristics, styles and climate dimensions are defined in systematic, consistent language (DfEE, 1998b) that participants have found plausible (Collarbone, 2001) and useful. Barker (2001a) examines data on six case study headteachers to test the usefulness of the LPSH model. He found that more successful heads were reported to use the authoritative and coaching styles; while the 'poor performers' (Barker, 2001a, p. 70) adopted distinctly coercive, pace-setting styles, apparently producing low morale and weak performance.

**Leadership Styles**

Watkins' (2002) analysis of Fiedler's (1967) contingency model identifies the obstacles to a satisfactory definition of leadership qualities and the measurement of their impact in particular contexts or situations. Fiedler correlates the leader's style with the 'group-task situation' (Watkins, 2002, p. 16) to form the contingency model. The correlation is measured by the leader's Least Preferred Co-Worker (LPC) score. But there is controversy about what the LPC measures. Watkins (2002, p. 18) comments: 'The contingency model merely suggests a set of relationships without exploring the basic dimensions of those relationships' and concludes that most of the 'conventional approaches to leadership are under attack on all fronts' (2002, p. 19).

Pitner (1987) is similarly dissatisfied with Kalis's (1980) Leadership Behaviour Description Questionnaire (LBDQ), which links the consideration dimension with teacher morale. Kalis treats the administrator's behaviour or style as an independent variable, with teacher satisfaction as a surrogate for organizational outcomes. Pitner (1987, p. 59) argues that this practice 'persists because of the complexity of the variable relationships and the difficulty in isolating their interaction effects.'

Goffman (1956, p. 8) speaks of the 'stage-craft and stage-management' which 'occur everywhere in social life' and Evans (1999, p. 30) is led by her awareness of tensions between 'real' and assumed beliefs, attitudes and emotions to question the concept of leadership style:

> Since typologies constitute generalizations, though, they inevitably exclude much ... leadership styles involve only interactive behavioural processes. They do not incorporate consideration of other factors that are relevant ... such as intellectual compatibility and the extent to which values and ideologies are shared.

Grace (1995, p. 37) points out that the analysis of styles can collapse into 'an endless typology of forms'. The absence of consistent, stable definitions across a range of studies for 'styles' variously labelled as 'charismatic', 'authoritarian' or 'democratic' calls into question whether they are real phenomena or generalizations without a

scientific foundation. Ball's interpersonal, managerial, adversarial and authoritarian styles, described as ways of 'doing leadership within the everyday social reality of the school' (1987, p. 85) do not include the possibility, for example, of Blase & Anderson's (1995, p. 16) shift from the 'authoritarian' or 'adversarial' to the 'facilitative' and 'democratic'. Although both studies use the language of micro-politics, their conceptions of leadership and style are quite different.

Heads themselves are inclined to describe management styles in very general terms, selecting words or phrases with positive associations ('open', 'consultative') in preference to those with negative connotations ('closed', 'autocratic'). Rao (1991, p. 71), for example, prided herself on 'open management with consultation'. Day & Bakioğlu's (1996, p. 209) sample of newly appointed headteachers *all* 'disagreed with their predecessor's management style which was identified as autocratic, and introduced a consultative management style.' Day & Bakioğlu (1996, p. 206) also trace 'multiple pathways and trajectories through different phases' of heads' lives, envisaging four stages of headship, from idealism to disenchantment, and complicating a simple picture of the leader as a continuous source of positive styles and motivation.

Dunford et al. (2000, p. 1) concede that 'styles of leadership vary greatly' and claim that 'style is less important than impact', a position with which Rutter et al. (1979, p. 203/4) agree: '...our informal observations indicated that no one style was associated with better outcomes. Indeed, it was noticeable that the heads of the more successful schools took widely differing approaches.' Perrow (1986, p. 92, quoted in Watkins, 2002, p. 19) suspects that our understanding of leadership works 'at the extremes', where 'we can be fairly confident in identifying good or bad leaders', but in other circumstances 'we will probably have little to say.'

Kotter (1996, p. 165) does not accept, however, the gloomy conclusion that 'you're either born with it or you're not.' He considers that leadership involves complex skills that 'emerge over decades' and that 'most of our development happens on the job'. He encourages the development of the mental habits that support life-long learning, rather than expectations of rapid improvement.

**Troubling Women**

The investigation of women's relative absence from leadership (Schmuck, 1986, Ozga, 1993), and the attempt to differentiate between masculine styles and those adopted by women leaders who break through the 'occupational glass ceiling' (Gronn, 1999, p. 122), raise questions about the language used to describe heads' behaviour. Can the value-laden, conceptually ambiguous words and phrases we use in everyday life provide the basis for scientific, normative descriptions of what leaders do? Used in studies comparing masculine and feminine styles, even apparently straightforward adjectives like 'open', 'closed', 'analytical' and 'sympathetic' (Bem, 1974, Ozga, 1993, Coleman, 1996, Shakeshaft, 1998) acquire positive or pejorative connotations beyond their dictionary definition.

Wittgenstein (2001, p. 18[e]) asserts that 'the meaning of a word is its use in the language' and investigates the relationship between language and the world it signifies. Asked to admire the shape or colour of a blue vase, for example, 'you will do something different when you act upon these two invitations', but Wittgenstein (2001, p. 14[e]) enquires whether 'you always do the same thing when you direct your attention to the colour?' The puzzle grows as we try to describe a move in chess, which does not consist in simply moving a piece:

> ...in such-and-such a way on the board – nor yet in one's thoughts and feelings as one makes the move: but in the circumstances that we call 'playing a game of chess' (or) 'solving a chess problem', and so on (2001, p. 14[e]).

As leadership interactions are a more complex 'game' (Goffman, 1956) than chess, it is questionable whether leader-follower exchanges can be satisfactorily described and analysed with the language available to us.

Blackmore (1999, p. 23) believes discourses of leadership and management 'are products of particular historical moments and particular readings' and cannot be separated from the politics, culture and language within which they are expressed. In the early twentieth century, for example, the cultural disposition was to associate

administration with the 'rational, logical and objective male' (Blackmore, 1993, p. 36). Hall (1998, p. 49) confirms that management has been seen 'as technicist, requiring rational problem solving techniques, strong task direction and detachment', qualities not ordinarily considered feminine.

Blackmore sees the recent trend towards more empowering forms of leadership as a response to changed conditions. She contends that 'new management theories gain ascendancy by incorporating, co-opting and transforming more emancipatory feminist leadership discourses.' Post-modern, 'greedy' organizations 'exploit ... the intimacy of social relations to achieve organizational goals' (1993, p. 37). Like Allix (2000), she supposes that transformational leadership strengthens management as it maximises commitment and effort. Coleman (1998, p. 18) agrees that transformational leadership emphasizes and draws upon qualities associated with women rather than men.

Ozga (1993, p.11) contrasts the stereotypically masculine qualities said to dominate the leadership literature ('authoritarian', 'charismatic', 'entrepreneurial', 'competitive') with behaviour observed in female leaders:

> Women's leadership style is less hierarchical and more democratic. Women, for example, run more closely knit schools than do men, and communicate better with teachers. They use different, less dominating, body language and different language and procedures. Women appear more flexible and sensitive and often more successful.

She suggests that 'it is not simply that "male" and "female" management styles differ: those styles are predicated on different values' (1993, p. 12).

Bem (1974, quoted in Coleman, 1998, p. 17) differentiates between male ('analytical', 'assertive', 'dominant') and female ('affectionate', 'eager to soothe hurt feelings', 'sympathetic') qualities. Shakeshaft (1998) records significant differences in the way men and women are said to manage. Women conduct more unscheduled meetings; observe teachers more often; have shorter desk sessions during the day; interact more frequently with teachers, parents and women; have more flexible agendas for

meetings; give more attention to individual differences between students; and are more likely to see the job in educational rather than administrative terms.

The meaning of these observations of workplace behaviour remains unclear. Shakeshaft (1998) reports that an analysis of 12 dissertations examining sex differences on the LBDQ (see above p. 75) found no divergence between males and females. Evetts (1994, p. 3) is unconvinced by the literature on style because most of the research on 'gender differences in leadership styles has been American, fairly small-scale and relatively inconclusive.' She finds the concept of style 'elusive and intangible, problematic to measure and demonstrate' and concludes:

> There are differences in style between headteachers but few of these differences are consistently gender related (1994, p. 94).

Schmuck (1986, p.180) concludes that 'research on the behaviours of males and females as elementary school principals shows only minor variations.' Hardy's (1999, p. 94) study of three upper schools reports that 'leadership styles are not gender-related.' Henderson (2000) was dismayed to find that, beyond the senior management team, his successful, female head was perceived to operate bureaucratically rather than collegially.

The research evidence does not point unequivocally towards the existence of masculine and feminine styles, with an objective existence beyond the language used to describe them. Tannen (1996), for example, identifies gender differences in workplace conversation but is careful to acknowledge that there is nothing inherently male or female about particular ways of talking at work. Her data means only that a larger percentage of women than men are likely to put themselves at a disadvantage in competitive talking environments (e.g. business meetings). Goffman (1977, quoted in Tannen, 1996, p. 15) avoids the danger of attributing behaviour to a single variable (i.e. gender) by coining the term 'genderism' for 'a sex-class linked individual behavioural practice.'

Gronn (1999, p. 124) is concerned that gender stereotypes may disguise more than they explain:

> There would seem to be little merit, then, in claiming that there are gender-derived styles, when in actual fact the leader style differences within gender categories ... are likely to be at least, or more, significant than those thought to exist between categories.

Hall (1998, p. 57) considers the research base too weak 'to challenge existing theories of educational management or lead to their reconceptualisation to include both women and men.' It is not clear 'whether men and women draw on different repertoires or repertoires that are limited by perceptions of gender-appropriate behaviour.'

The search for contrasting masculine and feminine styles suggests that the use of everyday language in behavioural descriptions is problematic. The 'coercive style', for example, defined by LPSH (DfEE, 1998b, p. 76) as giving 'lots of directives ... does not listen to or permit much staff input ... controls tightly; relies on negative, corrective feedback' may describe some people's behaviour in certain situations but is also phrased in language that arouses value judgements in respondents. Bem (1974) or Ozga (1993) would place these behaviours in the 'masculine' column of their inventories; Day & Bakioğlu's (1996) sample of heads would at once associate the coercive style with their 'autocratic' predecessors.

Attempts to analyse distinctive qualities in terms of a repertoire (Hall, 1998) may distract attention from other, important aspects of women's experience of leadership. West (1996) describes 'a certain outsideness even as a woman in our society' and confesses:

> I don't share very often with ... head colleagues. I have been a bit ambivalent about this in the past – wanting to belong in some respects, but evidently unable to play whatever is the game, and really not wanting to either, as it is often such a constricting game.

**Research Themes**

This review suggests that the dominant policy model for school improvement combines four main interrelated themes (see pp. 69/70 above). If the government and other supporters of a transforming leadership that leads to improved effectiveness are right about 'what it takes to create a good school' (DfEE, 1997a, p. 12, cited above, p. 43), the Hillside case study should provide substantial evidence of:

1. Leadership characteristics and styles used to win moral commitment, create a positive climate, and enhance staff and student motivation; and of power used to develop leadership in others.
2. A compelling, constantly communicated vision, based on shared values, that guides plans and efforts to secure improvement.
3. An increased capacity (of people and systems) for continuing change that is progressively absorbed into the culture.
4. Positive guidance and support from external agencies (particularly from OFSTED and the LEA) to stimulate and encourage improvement.

Should Hillside's record contain significant positive evidence in relation to these themes, then at the point of leaving special measures and afterwards the school should also match the Key Characteristics of Effective Schools (Sammons et al., 1995) and demonstrate substantially improved outcomes for students.

**Critical Perspectives**

The diverse literature surveyed (see above, pp. 69/70) suggests that these apparently straightforward, empirical questions arise within conceptual frameworks or fields (Bourdieu, 1988) that are 'fragmented', 'factional' and 'contentious' (Hodgkinson, 1993, p. x, quoted above, p. 70). Gunter (2001, p. 1) visualises leadership studies:

> ...as an arena of struggle in which researchers, writers, policy-makers and practitioners take up and/or present positions regarding the theory and practice of educational leadership.

Scientific, normative methodologies (Taylor, 1911, Barber, 2000b) for school improvement are challenged by critical perspectives that emphasize contested values, ideologies and subjective experience (Ball, 1990a, Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993). MacBeath & MacDonald (2000, p. 17) feel that 'the tensions between the different goals for schooling are becoming increasingly irreconcilable.' This has led to unending controversies (MacIntyre, 1993) around the themes summarised above (pp. 69/70).

The role of leadership in achieving change is stressed (Blunkett, 2000, Hopkins, 2001) but also denied. Gronn (1996, p. 199) argues that human agency has been exaggerated and that 'this deeply ingrained romanticized significance accorded leadership is the outcome of generations of cultural conditioning'. Astuto & Clark (1986, p. 59) believe leaders act within narrow constraints of influence and that 'followership empowers leadership.' Lakomski (1999, p. 37) claims that the findings of leadership studies 'are artefacts of methodology rather than scientific accounts of empirical phenomena.' Allix (2000, p. 17) suspects that Burns' (1978) formulation contains the conditions for 'despotic forms of social organization and control' because it is contingent on a leader's personal vision or ideology that followers are ill-placed to question.

Litwin & Stringer (1968), McClelland (1975, 1987) and Belbin (1981) present experimental evidence of the regularities of human behaviour and suggest strategies for improving motivation and performance. Greenfield (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 556) protests that 'the notion of discovering the ultimate laws which govern social reality becomes an ever receding fantasy which retreats as we attempt to approach it' and contends that positivist science loses sight of 'human intention, value, commitment ... human will and choice' (1993, p. 140). Hoyle (1982, p. 44) considers that administrative theory has underestimated the variety of interests at work, and the goal diversity they produce (see also Ball, 1987), and is inclined to treat them as 'recalcitrant, a suitable case for leadership, or socialisation or coercion.' Richardson (1973a, p. 15) regrets the failure to recognise 'conflicts, uncertainties and inconsistencies' that seem to her an inevitable part of school life.

Calder (1969, p. 117/118), writing in another context, warns against relying too heavily on increased motivation and commitment. In 1940:

> ...all the workmen and supervision staff involved in radar at the Metropolitan Vickers factory in Manchester worked for forty-eight hours without a break to dispatch eight special transmitters ... (but) the new effort negated itself. Production rose by a quarter in the first week after Dunkirk; but by the fifth week it was practically the same as before, although sixty to seventy hours a week were still commonly worked ... Excessive hours produced fatigue and poor health, and so increased both voluntary and involuntary absence from work.

Jackson & Marsden (1962), Jencks et al. (1972), Riley & MacBeath (1998), Thrupp (1999, 2001), Mortimore & Whitty (2000) and Levačić & Woods (2002b) visualise schools as belonging to a broad social context and relate individual performance and effectiveness to patterns of disadvantage, local hierarchies of schools and the resulting social mix or composition. Thrupp (1999) and Levačić & Woods (2002b) begin to suggest that a school's effectiveness or capacity may be a result rather than a cause of variations in student characteristics. On the other hand, Rutter et al. (1979), Wilson & Corcoran (1988), Caldwell & Spinks (1988), Hill et al. (1990) and Sammons et al. (1995) emphasize the agency of the individual, self-managing school and the organizational characteristics that lead to improved student outcomes.

Advocates of transformational leadership (Burns, 1978, Blase & Anderson, 1995, Hopkins, 2001) dwell on values and visions that arouse moral commitment and empower followers, but their theories must work within a structure of bureaucratic rationality (DfEE, 1997a, OFSTED, 1993) that appeals only to efficiency and effectiveness (MacIntyre, 1993). The effectiveness and improvement traditions seem to have been brought into conflict with one another rather than synthesized (Reynolds et al., 1996, Gray et al., 1999).

Ball (1990a, p. 154) asks the question 'efficiency for whom' and points out that efficiency itself is taken as 'self-evidently a good thing.' For Ball, the 'discourse of management' (1990a, p. 155) is part of a thrust 'to gain closer and more precise

control over the processes of schooling.' Ball quotes what he calls Weber's rationalist nightmare, where the:

> ...mighty cosmos of the modern economic order ... the iron cage (in which) specialists without spirit, sensualists without heart (are) caught in the delusion that (they) have achieved a level of development never before attained by mankind (Weber, 1948, p. 182, quoted in Ball, 1990a, p. 157).

Bottery & Wright (2000), McNeil (2000), Wragg (1997), OFSTIN (1999), Stoll & Myers (1998), Fitz et al. (2000b) and Troman & Woods (2000) detail the coercive strategies and psychological costs of government pressure to comply with official effectiveness criteria, applied mainly through OFSTED.

Taylor (1987), Fielding (1996), McNeil (2000) and Angus (2002) question the criteria selected to measure the quality and effectiveness of education. They criticise the use of standardized tests that narrow the curriculum, exclude teachers' and students' personal knowledge, and reduce the 'complex nature of education ... to particular problems that are represented as being capable of direct solutions' (Angus, 2002, p. 66). School administration is thus limited 'to a narrow range of techniques for improving test results in areas where there are clearly non-controversial, right or wrong answers' (2002, p. 66). Riley & MacBeath (1998, p. 143) claim that:

> The terms of 'good' and 'effective' are not neutral but contested. The notion of a good school is a social construct, shaped by national expectations and local aspirations ... the notion of an effective school is socially constructed.

Apple (1989) and Beare et al. (1989) discuss how the increasing emphasis on 'excellence' appears uncontroversial but has nevertheless encouraged a value shift towards an individualist, competitive approach to schooling that is consistent with self-managing schools and performance tables. Stoll & Fink (1995, p. 27) are clear that: 'to arrive at a definition of a school as effective, people are forced to choose between competing values.'

These confused debates stem from modern uncertainties about authority, values and language (MacIntyre, 1993, West, 1993, Wittgenstein, 2001), a resulting difference in the interpretation of social organizations (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993), and sustained disagreement about the nature of scientific method and the validity of varied types of evidence (Bechhofer, 1974, Kuhn, 1975). West (1993, p. 14) locates the origin of these difficulties in the 'fragmentation of corporate and community purposes' and argues that:

> The twentieth century has seen a disintegration of conventional and traditional authority and morality and we have not yet formulated the possibilities of a new order (West, 1991, p. 26).

MacIntyre (1993, p. ix) asserts that the 'nature of moral community and moral judgment in distinctively modern societies' is such that it is no longer possible to appeal to moral criteria in a way that was possible in other times and places. He suggests that in post-modern, plural societies our lack of common ground condemns us to argument without end. Pro-Life and Women's Rights campaigners, for example, seem to engage in logical debate but each appeals to premises contested by the other. For Greenfield (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 5) there is no escape from this dilemma:

> Our concepts of organizations must therefore rest upon the views of people in particular times and places, and any effort to understand them in terms of a single set of ideas, values and laws must be doomed to failure.

Giddens (1991) argues that modernity and globalisation have eroded traditional structures and communities, obliging us to rediscover our identities through invented narratives of self. MacIntyre (1993, p. 32) points out that moral agency is found today 'in the self and not in social roles or practices'. The contemporary emphasis on science and bureaucracy (MacIntyre, 1993) and reliance on experts (Giddens, 1991) is a predictable reaction to lost certainties and the danger of subjectivism. The National Curriculum's construction without reference to an over-arching framework

(White, 1987) is an example of how bureaucratic processes exclude values in favour of appeals to rationality and efficiency.

But ethical and moral issues are inescapable in schools and present themselves continuously through tensions and dilemmas of the kind described by Day et al. (2000) and Kruchov et al. (1998). As Begley (1999, p. 52) observes:

> ...competing value orientations manifest themselves ... Administrators become aware of values issues without any particular need for prior training in philosophy, or exposure to the literature on administrative ethics.

West (1991, p. 26) believes that the 'silence of a confused culture' has led to a 'divide ... between reflection and action', a silence that contributes no doubt to the 'dissonance and exhaustion' experienced by Barth's (1990, p. 41) teachers, who keep two sets of books, one adjusted to external requirements, the other to the human reality of the classroom.

Government agencies are bureaucracies, created to ensure that schools are rational, scientifically managed institutions (Ball, 1990a), while heads and teachers have to deal with the unresolved dilemmas implicit in modern, pluralist societies (Begley, 1999, Day et. al., 2000, Kruchov et al., 1998). 'Personal Values and Passionate Conviction' (DfEE, 1998a, p. 8) are central to LPSH's models of excellence but there is no discussion or elaboration of values and convictions. West (1993, p. 24) grumbles that 'any value-conflicts which might arise from the absence of legitimated macro aims are left to the schools and their stakeholders to work out.' Hodgkinson (1983, 1991), Ribbins (1995) and Greenfield (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993) conclude that leadership is a moral art rather than a science of improvement, requiring wisdom and judgement to manage values, resolve conflicts and determine priorities.

These critical perspectives challenge rational, empirical models and reinterpret education and the school as socially constructed worlds that cannot be properly known and understood through an organizational science that represents only one of many ways of understanding human interaction. With a different conceptual

framework, critical scholars would interpret data relating to each of the four themes quite differently, expecting to find:

1. Contextual, micro-political and cultural constraints on individual human agency; and that there is no transferable 'formula' for leadership.
2. Conflicting visions, values and goals adopted by individuals and groups, despite compliance with external requirements.
3. Cultural diversity marked by varied responses to changed conditions, from adaptation to compliance or even resistance; and that biographies are significant.
4. Conflict and tension between internal (self-managing) processes and external (imposed) requirements.

Critical writers would also take full account of social and economic variables in their assessment of student outcomes, and select broader, qualitative indicators to evaluate the progress of individual students and schools.

An 'arena of struggle' (Gunter, 2001) is not easily researched but the evidence gathered at Hillside should be adequate to answer the questions suggested by the discordant voices of the literature and by the tension evident within it, between central regulation and local management:

- Are heads able to play a prime role in transforming schools?
- Do recommended models of effectiveness, improvement and leadership provide an adequate description of how successful heads bring about change?
- Are the models transferable?
- How do school level variables assist and constrain change?
- How do external variables assist and constrain change?
- What limits are there to the levels of effectiveness, improvement and transformation that can be achieved?

The issues involved in (a) gathering evidence to illuminate the four themes, and in (b) developing answers to these questions are discussed in the next chapter.

# Chapter 4 Methods

**Points of View**

Our investigation of the themes and controversies identified in chapter 3 (summarised on p. 69/70 and p. 87) is compromised from the beginning by the post-modern dilemma described by Giddens (1991, p. 3):

> Modernity institutionalises the principle of radical doubt and insists that all knowledge takes the form of hypotheses: claims which may very well be true, but which are in principle always open to revision and may have at some point to be abandoned.

Our questions touch upon conflicting ideologies and critical perspectives but there is no firm ground from which to survey the field because 'we cannot divorce our underpinning values and beliefs from the ways we ourselves perceive a situation or what we expect to occur' (Moyles, 2002, p. 173). A growing awareness of the subjectivity of all experience, including our own, has led to the recognition 'that there is no absolutely secure starting point for knowledge' (Phillips, 1993, p. 59). As 'all "facts" involve theoretical assumptions' (Hammersley, 1992, p. 34), reality may be represented, not reproduced:

> ...representation must always be from some point of view ... there can be multiple, non-contradictory and valid descriptions and explanations of the same phenomenon (Hammersley, 1992, p. 51).

When 'the existence of any real situation that is independent of investigations of it' (Hammersley & Gomm, 2000, p. 7) is questioned, the methodological implications are considerable. Doubts about the validity of standardized quantitative indicators may be increased (Hammersley, 1993) but qualitative research becomes equally insecure since: 'All description is selective. Descriptions never reproduce the phenomena described' (Hammersley, 1992, p. 187).

Bourdieu's concept of field helps explain the intensity of the debate about school improvement and suggests the further problem that our motives in writing about leadership may influence our choice of methods, the evidence we select and the arguments we support:

> A field is a competitive arena in which struggles are not just about material gain but also symbolic capital, or authority, prestige and celebrity status ... This is linked to who is accepted as having legitimate views, who is listened to, who is published, who is read and who is talked with and about (Gunter, 2001, p. 13).

Ribbins & Sherratt (1992, p. 193) accept these restrictions on the search for truth as inevitable, however, viewing the world as 'socially created and sustained, a world of multiple realities'. Like Greenfield, they believe that:

> ...the purpose of social science is to understand social reality as different people see it and to demonstrate how their views shape the action which they take within that reality ... social sciences must work directly with man's definitions of reality and with the rules he devises for coping with it (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 10).

Ribbins (1997, p. 8) argues that there is 'no escape from the need for an approach which makes the study of the individual and her or his subjective interpretation of reality one of the "foundation blocks" of a satisfactory account of life within such institutions'. Ball (1981, p. xviii) presents his work as one observer's subjective perspective 'with all the problems of selection, chance and bias that entails; an historical snapshot of an institution in the process of change.' Eisner (1993, p. 54/55) concludes that as 'all we can know is the result of a transaction between our sentient and intelligent selves and a world we cannot know in its pristine state' it is more realistic and useful to recognise and accept that social studies like history and anthropology 'depend on interpretation and imagination, are themselves literally fictions' (Eisner, 1993, p. 54). This is not to give up the ideal of truth but to be aware

that what we consider it to be depends on shared frameworks for perception and understanding.

Hammersley (1992) argues that these concerns apply equally to natural and experimental methods. The distinction 'between natural and artificial settings is spurious' (Hammersley, 1992, p. 164) because what happens in a class or court room is no different from what happens in a social psychology laboratory and all research is subject to error of some kind. There is no straightforward choice between quantitative and qualitative methods but 'a complex maze where we are repeatedly faced with decisions and where paths wind back on one another' (Hammersley, 1992, p. 172).

**Case Study in School Improvement**

Changes in my professional life created an unexpected opportunity to enter this maze. After early retirement from my headship of a Peterborough community comprehensive, I was asked to teach at Leicester University's School of Education and at the same time began a research degree, with the idea of investigating leadership and change by one method or another. While visiting a student on teaching practice at Hillside School, I met and talked with a number of the teachers and realized that a combination of traumatic events had produced an exceptional site, worthy of further investigation. Within the space of a year, three headteachers had adopted contrasting styles and strategies as they responded to internal and external pressures, including OFSTED inspection and reorganization.

Caught up in special measures and threatened with closure, the latest principal and governors were pleased to find an experienced former head available and ready to join their campaign for the school's survival. They also welcomed the prospect of research that would document their dramatic experiences. So for the next two years I divided my time between the university and the school, teaching post-graduate students and undertaking a variety of projects at Hillside.

Guided by my supervisor at that time, I made a number of early decisions that proved critical in shaping the nature and outcomes of my research. I chose to design what

Bassey (1999, p. 47) describes as a theory-seeking and theory-testing case study, with the intention of producing 'a fuzzy generalisation – or proposition – which shows how the discovery may apply more widely'. My plan was to develop Hillside as a case study in school improvement where current models of effectiveness, leadership and transformation could be tested and perhaps challenged.

Practical considerations influenced my approach. As a part-time research student with full-time employment at the school and university, I lacked the realistic opportunity to sample several schools. Six authors were required for Gray et al.'s (1999) study of 12 schools; five authors and the National Association of Headteachers (NAHT) contributed to Day et al.'s (2000) survey of 'a variety of reputationally (sic) good schools' (cover description).

I was also unconvinced that a survey or sampling methodology would ensure that the resulting account of 'what heads say' would be sufficiently 'situated' in 'the context of what they do' (Ribbins, 1995, p. 258). I felt that:

> ...thick descriptions ... are vital. Such descriptions of both the site in which the studies are conducted and of the site to which one wishes to generalize are crucial in allowing one to search for the similarities and differences between situations (Schofield, 2000, p. 76).

An explanatory case study also seemed appropriate for testing models of how schools change over time. According to Yin:

> Case studies are the preferred strategy when 'how' or 'why' questions are being posed, when the investigator has little control over events, and when the focus is on a contemporary phenomenon within some real-life context (Yin, 1994, p. 1).

Hoyle (1986a), influenced by the famous studies of Nailsea (Richardson, 1973a, 1973b), Beachside (Ball, 1981), and Bishop McGregor (Burgess, 1983), believes that the best studies of schools as organizations are case studies of single schools which

set out to observe particular issues or problems. Louis et al. (1999), for example, raise questions about the leadership of change that may be best approached through the close observation of particular headteachers in their schools. Without the close-up perspective and detail of a single case study, it would be difficult to answer satisfactorily how leaders select their objectives, measure their progress or manage the effects of a turbulent environment on the dynamics of an individual school. Yin considers that case studies provide 'access to events or groups that are otherwise inaccessible to scientific investigation' (Yin, 1994, p. 88).

As Bassey (1999, p. 23) claims, the peculiar strength of case studies:

> ...lies in their attention to the subtlety and complexity of the case in its own right ... case studies can represent something of the discrepancies or conflicts between the viewpoints held by participants (and may form) ... an archive of descriptive material sufficiently rich to admit subsequent reinterpretation.

I was both encouraged and troubled that Ribbins & Sherratt (1992, p. 183) have found that in school leadership 'relatively few studies of this kind exist' and 'know of no close precedents upon which to draw in resolving some of the difficult theoretical and methodological problems entailed' (Ribbins, 1999b, p. 128) in completing a study where the participant has become 'both the principal subject of the research and also a full partner within it' (Ribbins, 1995, p. 258).

Although singular case studies conducted by participant observers may 'limit what generalizations you are able to make' (Beare et. al., 1989, p. 14), Busher (2002, p. 80) considers that in this instance:

> Membership of institutions gave privileged access to data that an external researcher may never have gained. This included not only minutes of meetings and internal school documents but accounts of conversations which occurred in (a) non-public arena.

I accepted, therefore, Stake's (1995, p. 2) suggestion that when 'we have an intrinsic interest' in them cases sometimes choose themselves, and embarked on my research guided by mainly 'pragmatic considerations' (Hammersley, 1984, p. 61). Attracted by the opportunity to observe the process of leadership and change for two years, I believed a 'single-case design' was 'eminently justifiable' (Yin, 1994, p. 31). Studies of 'ineffective' or 'failing' schools are relatively rare (Reynolds, 1998, Gray et al., 1999, Harris, 2001a), while the combination of events at Hillside (special measures, reorganization, community action) represented 'a critical test of existing theory' (Yin, 1994, p. 44) about how such schools are 'turned round'.

**Participant Research**

As I plunged into my participant role that first autumn, I encountered the multiple realities typical of social settings and was 'forced back to making the best sense one can of a complex reality by whatever means one has at one's disposal' (Bechhofer, 1974, p. 87). As I gathered, organized and analysed data I discovered that there is 'no single method' that 'is identified with the case study or ethnographic style of research' (Burgess, 1984, p. 260) and no best or single method of social investigation (Bechhofer, 1974).

I retrieved, assembled and organized a vast mass of documentary material that had been scattered about the school during the upheavals of the previous year. I established 13 administrative and 5 monitoring files that together provide a detailed record of actions and events through the period of this study, and include newspaper articles and other published and unpublished items. The files contain copies of all the school's new policies, systems and procedures, the action plan, progress reports, lesson transcripts, and other material relevant to the period in special measures. I also collected and analysed data relating to staff, students and the local community (see tables 1 - 6; charts 1 – 11).

I also obtained access to the diary kept by the principal during his first year (Y2) at Hillside. The diary extends to 605 A4 pages of word-processed text and over 300,000 words. It meets Elliott's (1991, p. 77) requirement that:

> Accounts should not merely report the 'bald facts' of the situation, but convey a feeling of what it was like to be there participating in it. Anecdotes; near-verbatim accounts of conversations and verbal exchanges; introspective accounts of one's feelings, attitudes, motives, understandings in reacting to things, events, circumstances; these all help one to reconstruct what it was like at the time (Elliott, 1991, p. 77).

Written mostly in the present tense, the main narrative is descriptive and chronological, covering daily events as they happen. Day by day reportage is punctuated with reflection, argument and speculation. Draft versions of the head's official correspondence, reports and other documents are cut and pasted into the diary at relevant dates. Passionately expressed opinions are balanced by passages where alternative interpretations and points of view are explored.

The principal was aware of many of the problems posed by the diary:

> It makes me doubt the truth of diaries – was it written on the day it happened, or written up a week later? This text poses as if it were spoken to camera/tape *as it happens*. In practice, there is often a gap of several days and I miss whole episodes out (MD, p. 314).

As he tried to capture schools as 'teeming, human places where very little of the intended learning takes place' (MD, p.109), the principal was conscious of his 'lack of method' (MD, p. 50) and realized that the final document might become 'unmanageably vast and useless' (MD, p. 50). He switches uncomfortably between participant observation, field notes and immediate analysis, at one moment recording the words and actions of governors, parents, teachers and students, and at another starting to construct a strategy for dealing with the problems and issues he describes.

Like Sherratt's 'frank diaries', the manuscript provides 'a fantastically detailed and illuminating account' (Ribbins & Sherratt, 1992, p. 186) of the view from the 'principal's office' (Wolcott, 1984), and gives access to 'experience which crossed boundaries between the personal and public' (Morrison & Galloway, 1996, p. 46).

The principal's method is 'demanding, intrusive and revealing' (Galloway & Morrison, forthcoming) but we should also remember that such 'accounts can be written in ways which allow diarists to manipulate and control the image of self, either through a rationalization of activities or a selectivity of data recorded' (Galloway & Morrison, forthcoming, p. 38).

The diary contains, despite these limitations, unusual, detailed evidence about the role, perceptions and actions of the principal himself, and the discursive discussion included in the text confirms Bechhofer's expectation that participant observation 'allows the continuous generation and testing of "hypotheses"' (1974, p. 74). As we shall see, the inclusion of this material in my research presented particular technical and ethical issues (for discussion, see p. 103), further complicating the dilemma arising from my own involvement as an active change agent who was also studying the process of change.

As participant researcher, I also observed students, staff and governors in a wide variety of contexts, including classrooms, was involved in frequent conversations with school and community members, attended many meetings, and conducted formal and informal interviews with teachers and children. These are listed below, with codes used for reference in the text in brackets. The code used to refer to each year of the study is explained on p. 103. The transcripts were prepared from tape recordings of unstructured interviews that lasted approximately one hour; the notes were typed from memory immediately following interviews similar in nature to those that were tape-recorded. Issues concerning the reliability of unstructured interviews are discussed below (p. 101/102).

| |
|---|
| Transcript of interview with a year 11 student, 10th February Y2 (IT: Student, 10.ii.2) |
| Transcript of interview with Deputy Head, 10th June Y2 (IT: DH, 10.vi.2) |
| Transcript of interview with Head of Department, 5th June Y2 (IT: HOD, 5.vi.2) |
| Note of interview with Albert Wake, 24th September Y2 (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2) |
| Note of interview with Teacher Governor, 25th August Y3 (IN: TG, 25.viii.3) |
| Note of interview with Geography Teacher, 26th September Y2 (IN: GT, 26.ix.2) |

I was present during the three HMI inspections that followed Mr Wake's retirement and observed the methods used to assess the school's progress.

I found myself in a puzzling landscape where there was a continuous threat to the validity of my study, methods and findings. I began to understand that the decision to write an ethnographic account of school life, based on subjective impressions derived from varied sources and perspectives, carried with it a particular obligation 'to give a detailed account of how ... a pattern of involvement, and particular findings, emerged' (Hitchcock, 1983, p. 22) and to guard against bias in all its forms.

Ethnographic fieldwork 'relies primarily on the engagement of the self' (Ball, 1993, p. 33), so ethnographers should 'acknowledge that their very presence can disrupt the "naturalness" of the members' behaviour' (Denscombe, 1983, p. 107). External agents and witnesses may introduce significant bias and distortion (Vidich, 1960, Gussow, 1964). My initial presentation of myself as a disinterested observer dissolved as I was drawn, like Richardson at Nailsea, into the micropolitical life of the school:

> At times it seemed that I might be at the centre of a conflict between the head and a particular individual or sub-group, at other times that I was caught between department heads and section heads, at yet other times between one sub-group ... and the rest of the staff (Richardson, 1973a, p. 177).

As the participant moves from context to context 'colleagues and pupils find it difficult to divorce an individual's position and role as researcher from his/her other positions and roles within the school' (Elliott, 1991, p. 62). Vidich (1960, p. 3) suggests that participant observation is the strategy of 'having one's cake and eating it' and it may be true that the 'role of participant and the role of observer are essentially complementary and mutually exclusive' (Wolcott, 1984, p. 7).

This was the centre of my difficulty in 'the construction and negotiation of a research identity' (Ball, 1983, p. 87) and in building trusting, ethical relationships with

informants. My participant role may have caused members of the school community to feel under pressure to contribute and their accounts may have been influenced by their awareness of risks for their future prospects within the school. Although the research project was approved by the principal and governors and outlined at a staff meeting, only the teachers who agreed to participate in structured interviews could be said to have given formal consent to the research. It was 'not clear ... to what extent participants can be said to have given voluntarily their informed consent to supply information' (Busher, 2002, p. 80). Burgess (1985) experienced a similar problem when he wished to draw on material collected without the conscious knowledge of his informants. He admits that he did not always tell teachers their conversations would be included in his work.

Although one or two staff were openly sceptical about the research and suggested that the principal might have a 'hidden agenda' or be on 'an ego trip' that would cause them to withhold trust (personal information; also IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2), the school community as a whole seemed disposed to treat me as a trustworthy participant. I gained access 'to people's lives for an extended period of time to witness the daily events that affect them' (Barter, 2000, p. 40) but my participant and research roles and agendas remained ambiguous, at least for some of those involved. I cannot know fully how this influenced the interactions represented in chapters 5 – 8, though my awareness of the dilemma was continuous.

It is essential, therefore, that 'the researcher's own actions are open to analysis in the same terms as those of other participants' (Hammersley, 1983, p. 3, Phillips, 1993, pp. 61 - 69), so that there is at least the hope of approaching Eisner's (1993) ideal of truth and writing reports that contribute to our understanding of human organizations. Without methodological self-awareness, case studies cannot be used for comparative analysis and are 'doomed to remain isolated one-off affairs' (Atkinson & Delamont, 1985, p. 39). A researcher should therefore discover how to investigate the social world in the course of studying it and should be aware:

> ...of the decisions he (sic) is taking and the motives that underlie those decisions. He must recognise that his own actions, like those of others,

> are subject to drift ... If the reader is to be able to understand how the findings of the research relate to the setting studied, and to be in a position to discount the biases that may be entailed, he must be provided with an account of the research process adequate for these purposes (Hammersley, 1983, p. 4).

I must acknowledge, therefore, that my personal and professional values and experiences have mediated what I have heard, observed, said, done and written. My balance has been disturbed by tension and conflict in all the dimensions of my working life. The research report below (chapters 5 – 8) is my latest attempt to resolve the professional dilemmas of those caught between the bureaucratic imperative of the state and the 'messy reality' of the school. As a recent paper discloses (Barker, 2002, p. 61):

> ...the wolf pack with its dismal howl about standards has encircled and distorted my professional life. From early, short-trousered days at a London comprehensive ... my egalitarian values and practice have been under fire from an individualist version of conservatism that permeates our political culture.

I have been sustained through this research by my continued faith in comprehensive education; by a burning resentment of the negative portrait of schools, teachers and children that has dominated public discussion and policy for over thirty years (Simon, 1991); and by my instinctive resistance to the imposed, bureaucratic reforms that have unfolded through my professional life-time. These beliefs have influenced my choice of subject (an acute case of negative labelling and imposed reform), my research preferences (a qualitative case study) and my interpretation of the people and settings I have observed (mainly positive).

Although I have made every effort to write an objective, empirical study, and have been determined to evaluate and reconcile the miscellaneous perspectives and sometimes inconsistent evidence of internal and external participants and observers, my own beliefs, and emotional engagement with the issues discussed, remain

problematic. My personal opinions and particular commitments are a potential source of bias in the construction of the narrative (chapters 5 – 8) and in drawing conclusions about the actions of those included in the study (chapters 9 – 11). My dual identity as an agent and analyst of change has enabled me to describe Hillside from a rare perspective but the strength and weakness of my account is its reliance on 'the engagement of the self' (Ball, 1993, p. 33, quoted above).

**External Research**

As my own case study began, I was approached by a colleague at Leicester University who wished to include Hillside in a separate but linked project, designed to compare and contrast the processes of leadership and change at two apparently dissimilar institutions. The research proposal, *Processes of being and becoming: the impact of a new headteacher on a school*, subsequently reported in Busher et al. (2001), accepted by the university and by the school, planned unstructured, repeated interviews with individuals chosen to represent the voices (Usher, 2000) or views and perspectives of members of the school community, one of whom was the principal. The proposal detailed the intended methods:

> Data will be collected through interviews by a researcher, who is not a member of the school, with staff, governors and, if possible, students. It is intended to select 8 key witnesses of different status within the school who will be interviewed on a regular, half-termly basis. These interviews will last about ¾ hour. If necessary other people may be interviewed ... to gain a variety of perspectives on an event. All interviews will be tape-recorded and transcribed, and the participants given the opportunity to check the transcripts for inaccuracies. The interviews and transcripts will be anonymous and confidential to try to avoid the interviews becoming part of the political processes of the school. By implication, in the writing up of the final study only selected quotes from the transcripts will be used to illustrate stories and perspectives.

The interviews were unstructured, though they were conducted as conversations with a purpose (Barter, 2000), and aimed to explore how teachers chose to act and how they perceived their particular social and organizational environments. Participants were asked to consider critical incidents that illuminated their response to the school's leaders and the impact of those leaders on culture and teaching. The interviews were retrospective in relation to the events of the first year. The selection of participants depended considerably on staff choice – those who wanted to join in – and on headteacher preference – those whom Mr Moore nominated. The sample was stratified by organizational hierarchy, although selection within each stratum was not randomised and selection between strata was not proportional to the original populations (see discussion in Busher et al., 2001, pp. 28 – 34).

In the event, as a result of the limited time available, no students or parents were interviewed, although two staff members included on other grounds were also parents of children at the school. Of the original 10 participants, only 5 remained at the end of the eighteen month project. One new participant was recruited during the life of the project. Those interviewed are shown in the table below, together with the number of interviews recorded, and the abbreviation used to refer to the interview in the text of the research report (chapters 5 – 8). The code used to refer to each year of the study is explained on p. 103.

| Transcript of an interview with: | No. of interviews | Abbreviation used to refer to the interview in the text |
|---|---|---|
| Acting Head of Hillside (Y2 – Y3) | 5 | IT: Mr Moore, 10.xii.2 etc. |
| Deputy Head (Appointed April Y1) | 2 | IT: DH, 11.xii.2 etc. |
| Acting Head of Design Technology | 1 | IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2. |
| Caretaker | 1 | IT: CT, 4.xii.2. |
| SENCO (Y2) | 1 | IT: SEN, 11.xii.2. |
| Newly Qualified Teacher (Y2) | 2 | IT: NQT, 10.xii.2 etc. |
| Head of Department | 2 | IT: HOD, 15.vi.2 etc. |
| Head of Year | 5 | IT: HOY, 10.xii.2 etc. |
| Personal Assistant (Y1 onwards) | 5 | IT: PA, 4.xii.2 etc. |
| Parent Governor | 5 | IT: PG, 4.xii.2 etc. |

All the interviews were tape-recorded, transcribed and checked (except in cases where participants declined the opportunity to verify their contributions, usually because they felt uncomfortable reading their own words). The external researcher completed an analysis of the transcripts independently and denied me access to the

interview data until my involvement with Hillside was concluded and there was no further opportunity for information divulged in the research context to feed-back into the internal processes of the school. A grounded theory approach was used (Strauss & Corbin, 1990). Quotations and extracts were fitted into a matrix that was developed inductively from the data and was subject to substantial revision in the early phases of its use as the categories emerged (see the charts of categories and themes in Busher et al., 2001, p. 34 and pp. 86 – 92).

I have had full access to the original transcripts of these interviews during the preparation of this study; and have assisted the external researcher with his separate investigation of the impact of new headteachers (Busher & Barker, 2001). The combination of internal and external research perspectives, and the wide range of points of view and stories contributed by those interviewed, enhance the trustworthiness of the case study (Bassey, 1999) and assist the triangulation of the version of events put forward by the main witnesses and in the principal's diary.

The combination of internal, participant research and external interviews, conducted by someone not compromised by active involvement in the school, enabled me to use multiple sources of evidence to corroborate one another, and to enhance the study's construct validity, as Yin (1994) recommends. I also adopted a form of triangulation that 'means comparing many sources of evidence in order to determine the accuracy of information or phenomena' and to cross-check 'data to establish its validity' (Bush, 2002, p. 68). As Elliott (1991) suggests, I compared and contrasted information from a variety of perspectives, following Bechhofer (1974) in bringing dissimilar methods to bear on the same unit of analysis.

Although 'interviewing as a technique does seem more reliable than participant observation', an interview constitutes an 'interactive process which we do not really understand and for which we have little theory despite a useful literature' (Bechhofer, 1974, p. 85). Although Gwynne (2000, p. 34) chose interviewing as the best way to gain data from busy, mobile heads, he remained concerned that his data was unreliable because it would be impossible to reproduce and difficult to transfer. The interviews conducted by myself and by the external researcher are equally open to

Bush's (2002) criticism that reliability is not easily achieved through unstructured or semi-structured interviews, while Denscombe (1983, p. 121) reminds us that 'accounts will always be influenced by the researcher-respondent relationship'.

Busher (2002) is concerned that participants may recall events in ways that suit their own interests and so compromise the trustworthiness of oral data. Unequal power relations between the interviewer and the interviewee may influence which stories are remembered and told (Ball, 1983, Busher, 2002). Yin (1994, p. 85) is convinced, nevertheless, that 'interviews are an essential source of case study evidence', while Denscombe (1983) recommends that accounts are checked against each other for inconsistencies, discrepancies and falsification. In this case the process included internal and external sources of data. A high level of consistency was found between the accounts and descriptions offered by witnesses.

**Ethical Issues**

School stories are about real people and are difficult to tell without possible harm to the individuals and institutions that are described. As Wolcott (1984, p. xii) reflects, studies that 'dealt in any depth with real administrative situations or real personalities, were likely to have been locked away'. Although anonymous case studies (Beachside, Bishop McGregor) and pseudonyms appear to be the solution (Ball, 1984, Delamont, 1984, Yin, 1994), simple disguise may be insufficient to fulfil a researcher's duty to those s/he has observed and to maintain adequate standards of ethical practice.

As Busher (2002) explains, ethical issues may arise in relation to the nature of the project; the context of research; the procedures adopted; the methods of data collection; the type of data collected; and in the preparation and dissemination of reports. In this case, the main concern is to present an honest, detailed picture of real people, based on participant observation and interview data, without compromising their privacy, harming their reputations, or reporting their actions and opinions without their permission. Ribbins and Sherratt (1992) describe the considerable methodological and ethical problems involved in using internal sources of knowledge to improve our understanding of school leadership and it may be significant that their

study of Great Barr, a named institution, has yet to appear. The research dilemma arises as soon as information becomes available to a participant researcher in one role or context (e.g. interview, meeting, discussion with participant, internal document) but may be used in another (e.g. decision-making in the school; subsequent publication) for which permission has been neither sought nor given.

The research report (chapters 5 – 8) has been written, therefore, so that the people concerned are represented as fully, fairly and truthfully as possible; and their dignity and privacy are respected (Pring, 2000, p. 143). Names, places, dates and other details have been changed so that the school itself and none of those involved may be identified. Academic years are referenced as shown in the table below to further disguise the identity of the school:

| Three years before the OFSTED inspection | Two years before the OFSTED inspection | One year before the OFSTED inspection | The year of the OFSTED inspection | One year after the OFSTED inspection | Two years after the OFSTED inspection |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Y0 -2 | Y0 -1 | Y0 | Y1 | Y2 | Y3 |

To protect individuals, quotations from the transcripts are referenced only by the status of the person interviewed and the date of the interview, using the year referencing system shown in the table above. An extract from a Head of Year in Y2, for example, will appear in the text as IT: HOY, 10.xii.2. So that Hillside's identity is not inadvertently disclosed through the details of chronology, extracts from the diary are referenced by the owner (Moore Diary) and the page of the entry (e.g. MD, p. 435) rather than by date. Details of my own participant role are also withheld, to further secure the school's anonymity.

The ethical questions raised by my use of the principal's diary are less easy to answer. Although I have full permission to quote verbatim from the diary, the narrative contains much that was recorded without the explicit permission of the relevant informant (e.g. the views of a head of department on a curriculum issue) and more that might jeopardise ethical practice (e.g. the principal's opinion on the head of department's conduct or capability). The principal recorded the comments and behaviour of many individuals who were unaware that their words and actions might

find their way into his diary and be used later in an account of transactions that seemed private and confidential at the time.

My research report is written, therefore, with acute sensitivity to these possibilities and uses the diary carefully, mainly to illuminate the head's own thinking and to triangulate evidence and interpretations offered by other witnesses and sources. I do not forget that a diary, like any other source, however private its appearance, is written for a purpose and audience, and should for that reason be subjected to rigorous scrutiny before conclusions are drawn.

**Data Analysis**

During my final term at Hillside, I prepared a chronology of the main events, from the OFSTED inspection (Y1) to Mr Moore's retirement in August Y3. I drew upon my personal knowledge, the recollections of key members of staff, Mr Moore's diary and documentation in the administrative files. I checked details with relevant participants and compared their recollections with written sources, including press reports, the Hillside Herald and governors' minutes.

After my involvement with the school had ended, the external researcher allowed me to study the matrix used to collect extracts from the interviews he had conducted. Quotations were organized under the following emergent themes:

1. Environment of schooling (external and internal processes);
2. Impact on staff and students of the external environment and the mediated external environment;
3. Staff, student and parent responses to pressures in the external and mediated external environment.

Observations about the heads were grouped under these headings:

- Personal (coping with change);
- Mission, vision and values;

- Style and decision-making;
- OFSTED inspection;
- LEA and government interventions;
- Governors;
- Community;
- Parents;
- Staff morale and management;
- Staff (practice and quality);
- Student respect;
- Student attainment.

I analysed the diary under the same headings, using a computer word search as well as reading the text and marking passages with coloured marker pens. Suitable and relevant quotations were assembled for each of the headteachers within this framework.

The first draft of the thesis (c. 60, 000 words) was written around these themes:

- Leadership – motivation, styles and climate;
- The external environment – students, communities, the LEA and OFSTED;
- The internal impact – micro-politics, time and change.

My premature analysis caused me to neglect the 'thick descriptions' that made Hillside unique and interesting, and led me into a dangerously generalized and incomplete argument.

The second draft, on which this final version is based, develops these themes through a mainly chronological narrative that contains 'an archive of descriptive material' (Bassey, 1999, p. 23, quoted above) and allows readers to follow the sequence and interaction of events for themselves. A third person narrative format enabled me to blend the primary sources of the study (diary, interviews and documentary material) together more effectively, and to ensure a balanced treatment of the story as it unfolded. The analysis and conclusions (chapters 9 – 11) now follow the account of

events presented below (chapters 5 – 8), and place developments in the context of a wider range of theories and arguments than originally intended.

During the writing-up of the case study I found a very high level of internal agreement in the recall, description and interpretation of events.

**Generalization**

Although Stake (1995, p. 85) believes that 'naturalistic generalizations' based on 'vicarious experience so well constructed that the person feels as if it happened to themselves' are entirely legitimate, there is an obvious need for caution in drawing general conclusions from the study of a single school in special measures. While Gomm et al. (2000, p. 98) confirm that 'much case study research has in fact put forward empirical generalizations' they also warn against 'drawing general conclusions from a small number of cases'. Evans (1983, p. 180) agrees that 'all ethnographers need to consider the limits on generalization of their findings for the context studied'. Lincoln & Guba (2000, p. 39) argue that 'there are always factors that are unique to the locale or series of events that make it useless to try to generalize therefrom' and suggest that conclusions from case studies should be in the form of 'working hypotheses' (Lincoln & Guba, p. 39) that may be continuously revised.

Simons (1996, p. 231) is convinced that by 'studying the uniqueness of the particular, we come to understand the universal' but Schofield (2000, p. 88) insists that:

> One cannot just look at a study and say that it is similar or dissimilar to another situation of concern. A much finer-grained analysis is necessary. One must ask what aspects of the situation are similar or different and to what aspects of the findings these are connected.

OFSTED inspections result in special measures for only 2% of schools nationally (Fitz et al., 2000b), while Vlaeminke (1998) reports on a range of untypical characteristics shared by 80 of the secondary schools placed in special measures before March 1998. Is the Hillside experience, therefore, a fair test of current models

of leadership? Does 'special measures' provide a special case, in terms of the context for transformation? Do 'challenging circumstances' demand particular leadership strategies, different in degree and perhaps kind from others?

Hopkins (2000, p. 1) argues that 'one size does not fit all' and criticises current school improvement practice for the assumption that 'all strategies are equally effective, and for all schools, irrespective of their effectiveness or stage in the performance cycle.' On the other hand, he considers that improved leadership is important for both failing and low achieving schools. Stark (1998, p. 41) lists the leadership skills required for school improvement and wonders whether 'failing schools tend to be dysfunctional and so different from other schools' but concludes:

> ...the calmer, organizational approach works in both contexts, and the catalogue of successful leadership characteristics ... is the same for both types of school.

Human relations models are based on the assumption that consistent styles and behaviour arouse predictable responses in team members and followers whatever the context or circumstances. LPSH (see DfEE, 1998a, p. 98 - 105) is considered equally suitable for schools of all sizes and types (primary, secondary and special). As Hopkins complains, the government and its agencies do recommend the same solutions (leadership, plans, targets, monitoring) for all schools. It may be that circumstances at Hillside, where there was a well defined breakdown in effectiveness and a compelling requirement to change, present a particularly useful set of conditions for testing government models and understanding how schools are turned round.

An improved knowledge of the 'paradoxes inherent in the people, events and sites we study and explore' (Simons, 1996, p. 237) may improve our understanding of the generalizations about school improvement that are currently offered, provided we 'treat the evidence fairly ... produce compelling analytic conclusions (and) ... rule out alternative interpretations' (Yin, 1994, p. 103).

# Chapter 5 Sleeping Giant?

**Social Geography**

Hillside is one of the 21 schools that serve Easton, a vibrant, medium-sized university town in the Midlands. The visitor drives northwards from the city centre on an arterial road lined with tall Victorian terraces and inter-war semi-detached housing before bearing left into the leafy suburban avenues of Hillside, a relatively affluent area developed in the middle years of the twentieth century. The school's cluster of low-rise, pebble-dashed blocks are built into the contours that rise above the river Ease as it flows out from the town into the open rural landscape beyond.

The immediate neighbourhood of the school (defined by postcode) falls within Type 4: Affluent Suburbs, Older Families:

> These suburban, family areas are affluent and stable ... The population profile ... shows a bias towards the 45 – 64 age group and towards children aged 5 – 14. Most households are family units and the proportion of single person households is small ... Unemployment is low, around half the national average, and there are above average numbers of working women. There is a strong bias towards the professional and managerial socio-economic groups (AS1: ACORN Profile).

As the number of school age children in the area declined during the late 1980s and 1990s, the proportion of the 11+ entry coming from Hillside itself was gradually reduced (LEA and school data files). Increasingly, families were drawn from postcodes scattered across the northern half of the city, particularly from Brownville, a large council estate on the far side of the arterial road. Brownville postcodes are described as Type 35: Low Rise Estates, Older Workers, New Home Owners:

> These neighbourhoods are located in older industrial areas and, in particular, in mining areas. The relatively poor health of many people probably gives rise to significant social problems ... ACORN Type 35 has 13% more 45 – 64 year olds and 28% more 56+ year olds than average. There are correspondingly fewer young people and children than average ... A striking feature of these neighbourhoods is poor health; the proportion of adults who are classified as being permanently sick is 75% higher than average and the proportion of the total population suffering from long-term illness is 58% higher than average ... The rate of manufacturing employment in these areas is 66% above average and the proportion of people working in the energy and water sectors is nearly 80% above average. The number of machine operatives is very high ... Rates of skilled manual, semi-skilled and, in particular, unskilled workers are well above average ... A significant proportion of council tenants purchased their homes between 1981 and 1991 ... These are relatively low income areas with over a third of people earning under £10,000 per annum (AS2: ACORN profile).

The data presented in the Easton Social Atlas (AS3.1 - AS3.6) confirms the mixed nature of the neighbourhoods served by Hillside School and illustrates the social context of the local student population.

The Domestic Property Values chart (AS3.1: Chart 1) shows that Hillside and adjacent wards contain very little of the town's more expensive housing stock. Apart from the small, type 4 community around the school itself, and another pocket of affluence to the west, council owned or low value ex-council property predominates in the districts that contribute to the student population. The Housing Benefit Claimants chart (AS3.2: Chart 2) confirms the contrast between Brownville (up to six times the number of claimants living in Hillside) and the wards to the south and west. The Unemployment Rates chart (AS3.5: Chart 5) indicates a similar variation by ward, with up to six times as many unemployed in Brownville. The Standardized Mortality Rates chart (AS3.4: Chart 4)

presents above national average trends for all the wards served by the school, corroborating the ACORN profile's (AS1/2) estimate of the amount of long-term illness in the relevant postcodes. Standardized mortality in Brownville is double the average, and approaches 50 per cent above average in Hillside. The Youth Offending chart (AS3.3: Chart 3) presents a relatively low incidence of offences across the school's catchment area, with more crime in north Brownville. The GCSE Results chart (AS3.6: Chart 6) shows marked variations in student performance by postcode. Children who live in south Hillside, and adjacent neighbourhoods where unemployment, illness and council housing are less frequent, tend to outperform those from Brownville and other areas where type 35 conditions predominate.

The Easton LEA Schools graph (AS4.2: Chart 7) shows the percentage of students at each school entitled to free meals, and the percentage at each that achieved 5 or more higher grades, averaged over a five-year period concluding with the last year (Y3) of this study. The schools are numbered (1 – 21) to indicate their local 'league table' position, as measured by the five-year mean percentage of students achieving 5+ higher grades. At the best performing school (no. 1), 52 per cent of students achieved 5+ higher grades; 13 per cent were entitled to free meals. At school no. 21, located at the northern end of the Brownville estate, 6 per cent of students achieved 5+ higher grades; 54 per cent were entitled to free meals. At Hillside School (no. 10), 32 per cent achieved 5+ higher grades; 22 per cent were entitled to free meals. The Easton data presented in the chart confirms the national picture reported in **The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools** (OFSTED, 1998, p. 31): '...as eligibility for free school meals increases, the average points score tends to decrease.' Based on GCSE success rates, the Easton hierarchy of schools was stable in the years before and during this study, and seems to have been closely related to the underlying patterns of disadvantage revealed by the town's 'social atlas'.

On the basis of unadjusted statistics, both Easton LEA and Hillside School lagged behind national GCSE higher-grade averages during the period of the study and were vulnerable to the criticism that their students were under-achieving.

*Percent achieving 5+ A*- C grades (Source: AS4.2)*

| **Date** | **Y0** | **Y1** | **Y2** | **Y3** |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Hillside School | 27 | 41 | 34 | 31 |
| Easton LEA average | n/a | 32.8 | 34.8 | 37.1 |
| National average | 44.5 | 45.1 | 46.3 | 47.9 |

The Headteacher's Form (AF1.1: prepared for the OFSTED inspection in November Y1) provides additional evidence about the composition of the student body, drawn from the wards detailed above. The total number on roll each year is shown below:

| **Year** | Y0 -2 | Y0 -1 | Y0 | Y1 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Number on roll | N | N+1 | N+20 | N+41 |

Almost 20 per cent of students were on the schools' register of special education needs (SEN), while 23 per cent were eligible for free school meals. Of those on the register, almost 20 per cent were placed at stages 3 to 5 of the SEN Code of Practice, due to specific learning disability (20 per cent), moderate learning disability (44 per cent), and emotional and behavioural disability (20 per cent).

Over 20 per cent of the students came from homes where English was not the first language, speaking in order of frequency, Punjabi, Gujarati, French and Khachi. Approximately 30% had non-English ethnic backgrounds, mainly Indian but also Black African, Black Caribbean and Chinese. Of the 10 boys excluded (five permanently, five fixed term) in the previous year, 8 were white. The school's intake included more boys (54 per cent) than girls (46 per cent).

The LEA and school data available at the time of this study was insufficient to enable the intake to be mapped by postcode but the main compositional trends during the five years concluding in Y3 are clear. Hillside School attracted:

- a declining, predominantly white middle class intake from the Hillside ward; an increasing, disadvantaged, predominantly white working class intake from the southern part of the Brownville estate and elsewhere;
- a growing number of relatively prosperous Indian families as they moved from the town centre to buy private property in the outer suburbs, especially to the south and west of the area shown in the charts.

**Albert Wake at Hillside**

When OFSTED arrived to inspect Hillside in November Y1, Albert Wake had been in post for over 20 years. He had opened the school in the 1970s and appointed many colleagues whose long-service became an important feature of his period as headteacher. By November Y1, eight members of staff had served over 20 years. The average full-time teacher had 16 years experience and had worked at the school for 10 years. Only eight teachers had departed during the previous two years (AF1.1: Table 1).

Testimony about the long years of Mr. Wake's headship, including his own, was collected after the OFSTED inspection (Y1) and is coloured by the judgement of the registered inspector that:

> Hillside School has a number of important weaknesses in standards of attainment, the quality of teaching and in its management and efficiency. Many of these weaknesses arise from serious shortcomings in the quality of leadership and management provided to the school by the headteacher and governing body (AF2.2, p. 4).

Mr Wake regarded this as an almost inevitable outcome: 'I wasn't surprised, I never fitted, they collected data to prove I was at fault; staff were happy to blame me' (IN:

Albert Wake, 24.ix.2). Recollections of Mr Wake's behaviour as head are consistent with one another and with his own, self-deprecating comments. A year head who later became a deputy summed up her perceptions:

> On a personal level he could be ... rude, blunt, aggressive, all very negative ... but on another level, he could be actually quite pleasant, quite jovial, quite amenable, and actually quite considerate, particularly if you have personal circumstances that were more difficult at the time ... But on a professional level he could often be quite ignorant ... he was a bit of a Jekyll and Hyde figure and you were never quite sure which you were gonna get (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

A newly qualified teacher reported a similar uncertainty about how Mr Wake might react: 'He taught my subject ... I found him a very nice bloke, personally ... you might say something and the reaction you would get ... would be quite negative' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). Another teacher said that: '...he was very good to me ... he was a very disillusioned person. He was very remote' (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2). A long-serving secretary remarked that he was 'a very pleasant man but I felt he glossed over things' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2). The caretaker felt that 'Mr Wake wasn't all that charming really ... he sometimes seems to look like he was in a bad mood so you don't feel confident' (IT: CT, 4.xii.2) while a year tutor saw him 'as an anonymous figure, never smiled, ignored people ... If you greeted him he would often ignore you. It was quite rude. It had an influence on the rest of the work of the school' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). An English teacher was one of several who remembered 'how he used to tell her to f-off or p-off' (MD, p. 449). One year 11 student commented:

> I don't think anyone really liked Mr Wake. I think his method was too strict and it made the school feel gloomy and not really enthusiastic (IT: Student, 10.ii.2).

Mr Wake considered himself to be 'an awkward sod, always have been, I go my own way, take no notice of them, I don't fit' (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2). He admitted that: 'I don't suffer fools gladly' and expressed impatience with heads' meetings. At first he had attended but then 'it struck me it could all be written down on a side of A4' (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2). As the head of an 11 – 16 school, he was dismissive of middle schools where there was 'no conception of GCSE' (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2). Like the special needs teacher, who said that 'he wasn't a traditional type of head ... he wasn't a man to give impressions' (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2), Mr Wake saw himself as a nonconformist who did not comply with official expectations. 'I was the track suited head,' he said, 'I didn't fit the model, I loved being with the children'. He agreed that he could be uncompromising with his colleagues but 'when people are down it's different, I'm hard but not when they can't take it' (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2).

Mr Wake attributed many of his difficulties to the local authority. In his opinion the county had mismanaged the school from the start. He never found out who had advertised the first jobs at Hillside and was himself appointed initially on an acting contract, with no say over the early appointments (MD, p. 24). 'You begin with a shambles and it is hard to get back from it,' he said, in explanation of later problems (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2). An office assistant said that he considered himself fortunate to have got a headship (MD, p. 24) and a number of staff believed that he had worked well during the early days: '...he was very good when he was acting head when the school was first built, but when he got the permanency he seemed not to be' (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2).

The Hillside Handbook (AF1.3, Y2) describes the school's organization in terms that were unchanged from earlier years (see also AF1.4 - 1.6). The primary aim was to ensure 'that ours is a caring school' (AF1.3, p. 3). Year heads and form tutors were responsible for mixed ability groups, while block timetabling 'allows for the adoption of setted groups, or smaller working groups within our support system, enabling the pupils to work at their best level in academic subjects' (AF1.3, p. 7). One teacher remembered that Mr Wake 'had a lot of time for the students, particularly ... lower achievers or students with social/emotional problems ... he knew the children very well' (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2).

Another said that 'he knew every kid's name ... in terms of being able to put his finger on a child' (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2). A governor reported that the head was prepared 'to accept disadvantaged students who were not wanted anywhere else' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2). A newly qualified teacher considered that Mr Wake was 'very reluctant to exclude pupils' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

Mr Wake emphasized his role in working with students (MD, p. 25). At the time of the inspection he taught for twelve contact periods (AF1.1) and believed in delegating much of the school's administration and management. As he said: 'It seemed to me that the deputy who liked administration should do it' (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2). Some staff placed a subtly different interpretation on the role of the deputy:

> He didn't run the school ... He had a very, very efficient and overworked and over-stressed deputy ... who did all the administration ... Mr Wake ... made final decisions if he felt like it (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

> If (there) was a really tough issue he usually passed it to the deputy head. A lovely man. I called him my boss (IT: PA, 4.xii.2).

Hillside's governors met infrequently and played no significant role in the school's affairs. The head's report was tabled at termly meetings, rather than circulated in advance, and there were no standing orders or a committee structure (personal communication from the clerk to the governors). A parent governor complained: 'The (governors) weren't even aware of being able to discuss school finances at any level. There was certainly no history of any direct involvement in the management of the school' (IT: PG, 30.iii.2).

Subject leaders were allowed the freedom to develop their departments. Mr Wake believed that: 'You don't buy a dog and bark yourself' (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2). An acting head of department discovered that the head 'didn't interfere unless he was sort of

disgruntled about something' (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2). Mr Wake warned his colleagues that 'you won't hear from me if it goes well; but I'll come down like a ton of bricks if you land me in it, make a mess' (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2).

When long-serving members of staff recalled positive experiences, these were located in the distant past. One recollected that:

> We used to have things like school musicals and school plays and these ... I can't remember when these stopped, I suspect that might have been when the union activity and the goodwill went out of the window ... I think the goodwill with the staff with the various union activities going on – that was the start of it all – and I think things never really picked up from these and I think Mr Wake took it very personally ... if he could do it on his own, he would do it on his own (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2).

A senior teacher later claimed that the problems began with the union action in the mid-1980s: 'He took everything personally, the industrial action he saw as against him'. Following a personal crisis, Mr Wake had 'lost his faith in human nature' and after that 'everything was too much trouble' and he would not allow 'things that would involve effort' (MD, p. 592).

As a result of the industrial action, when staff withdrew from dinner duties and extra-curricular activities, Mr Wake assumed responsibility for lunchtime organization and supervision. One teacher remembered that 'there were (teacher) strikes and nobody would do the dinner queues. He always did that' (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2). Another felt Mr Wake was 'battling against the staff' and described lunch arrangements that persisted until his retirement in March Y1:

> ...after ... the industrial action he took it upon himself to organize lunchtimes ... so he would stand at the front of the dinner (queue)

> getting all the kids through lunch ... if anything interrupted that or a child was late ... certainly the PE staff, we like to do practices at lunchtime ... he would go mad (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

A year tutor commented that clubs, trips and visits were discouraged because they disrupted the daily organization, especially at lunchtime (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). Students were locked out of the school but 'children still managed to find their way in through fire doors' (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2). A 'raw antagonism between many but not all staff and pupils' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2) developed.

Mr Wake's relationships with staff became increasingly negative. An acting head of department said that he became 'a bit of a dictator ... he described himself as a benevolent despot once' and reflected that if you 'put your hands up in the staff room who got on with him I don't think there would be many hands going up. He was quite a loner really and if you upset him he would come out with a few charged words' (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2). Some staff were afraid to speak at staff meetings:

> Mr Wake would speak for half an hour on a subject when holding staff meetings ... and he would just tell staff what we were doing ... you might say something and the reaction you would get from (him) would be quite negative (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

> ...staff did not like to make points in staff meetings because Mr Wake told them off in public (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2).

There was a widespread belief that Mr Wake neglected his duties. One teacher suspected that 'he didn't do half the paper work (he should have done)' and 'didn't go to any meetings that he should really to promote the name ... Its image was very poor – everybody thought it was a rough school' (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2). A head of year said:

> There was a lot of feeling that it didn't matter in years gone by what we did ...You were stopped from taking kids on trips or from opening the library after school because Mr Wake wanted to get home early, or because he didn't want the responsibility of kids out of school (IT: HOY, 4.xii.3).

Mr Wake was reluctant to conduct daily assembly. He sent off for inspection copies of almost every 'assembling' book that was published (MD, p. 25) but commented: 'I didn't use them, mind, I did assemblies off the cuff, a bit of this and a bit of that, I told the vicar, I'm not qualified to lead prayer, didn't feel up to it' (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2). He often cancelled assemblies. According to a year head: 'Assemblies were tedious, for example he always did the same assembly every year for Lent. Inevitably the pupils' attention would wander' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). A new teacher thought: 'his assemblies were not interesting ... well what assemblies there were very few ... There was little or no assemblies ... there was no assembly plan' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

The year heads and subject teachers were increasingly frustrated by the head's sympathetic approach to disadvantaged and disruptive students:

> A lot of kids ceased to have any respect for him especially in disciplinary matters because they knew it would go nowhere ... as year heads we found the job extremely frustrating because we would come with what we thought were serious discipline problems and all he would do was bounce them back to us ... he couldn't be bothered (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

A new teacher realized that 'Mr Wake would have parents of pupils in and say look you are on your fifth last chance. Please buck your ideas up' with the result that the heads of year lacked 'a higher referral. It was sort of take it to the headmaster and he would shelve it' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

One parent was infuriated by the head's inconsistency:

> There have been other boys and girls that have been excluded for various reasons who were told they could not go on the end of term trip as part of their punishment. One boy came back after his fixed-term exclusion and his parents came in to see the head to ask if the boy could go on the trip. The head said yes (IT: PA, 4.xii.2).

Hillside's social and cultural life seems not to have recovered from the impact of industrial action in the 1980s and many staff considered that Mr Wake did not communicate the school's values. One teacher, later involved in the campaign to save the school from closure, reflected that in the past 'we were never in the paper for anything' (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2), while another commented: 'hardly anything got into the papers – he didn't want to know' (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2). A governor thought that Mr Wake 'had limited vision' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2) while staff and children interpreted bare walls and corridors as an absence of values. As a head of year noted:

> The only thing you would see as you walked in – despite objections from the kids – was a stuffed animal in the display area, the emblem of the school (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2).

According to a PE teacher who was keen to offer lunchtime activities:

> I think (visitors) saw very little going on at lunchtimes in terms of extra-curricular activities ...You would have seen some displays but very limited. You wouldn't have seen many staff around the school apart from duty teams ... the atmosphere was lukewarm (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

No religious festivals (e.g. Diwali, Christmas) were celebrated. One teacher complained: 'We never had Christmas assemblies, Christmas didn't exist ... we have got Christmas

celebrations planned this year – first time ever' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). The reception area and staff were unwelcoming and there were 'complaints about their telephone manner and attitude to people' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2). A governor noticed 'a lack of care in the school about students' work – a lot of tatty wall displays including in one room that was often used for parents' evenings' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2).

Despite these concerns, most parents were happy. As a head of year at the time remembered: 'we were providing reasonable exam results ... overall (parents) thought that the school was doing OK by their kids' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). Some parents were worried about the quality of teaching for the average and less academically able students (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2) but those from more socially advantaged, 'middle class homes' were perceived to be doing well at the school (IT: PA, 4.xii.2). The banded curriculum seems to have produced a 'big gap between the academic pupils and the SEN' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2). Compared with two neighbouring schools, however, situated on large council estates, Hillside appeared to be successful (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). Governors, staff and a majority of the parents retained a positive view of the school, despite reservations about the head's personal style (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2).

One governor recognised that 'teachers had a strong loyalty to the school. Perhaps a lump of this loyalty was that this was an easy place to work ... and incredibly overstaffed' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2). As in-service training and attendance at meetings at other schools were discouraged (MD, p. 25), most of the teachers were unaware of the extent to which Hillside had become 'a back water' (IT: HOY, 4.xii.3), protected from external requirements by the head's determination to 'take no notice' of the outside world (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2).

**Shell Shock Night**

A year before Hillside's OFSTED inspection, a county audit team conducted an evaluation of the school and submitted a critical report for the attention of the governing body (AF1.2). The audit found that 'the practice of locking some internal doors at

lunchtime is an affront' (AF1.2, p. 3) and considered that 'reception and administrative staff are not effectively deployed to ensure good service' (AF1.2, p. 5). According to the report, 'there was no evidence to suggest that a development planning cycle is in place' or that 'young people are encouraged to become involved in ... groups and activities' (AF1.2, p. 4). Staff were found not to 'meet regularly with their managers to discuss their work or their professional development needs' (AF1.2, p. 6) and the audit team believed that 'fundamental changes in attitude and practice are needed' and that 'a similar process to that for a failing school be adopted' (AF1.2, p. 17).

The report was not seen or considered by the governing body and the county team initiated no further action or enquiry. Mr Wake may have been encouraged by this experience to believe, as one teacher suggested, that he could 'treat the inspectors the way he treated us, waffle through' (MD, p. 449). The OFSTED Inspection did not, however, provide many opportunities for 'waffle'. The inspectors found that 'the progress that significant numbers of pupils make is unsatisfactory' (AF2.2, p. 5). 'Progress was judged to be unsatisfactory in almost 40% of lessons at KS3 and KS4' (AF2.2, p. 5). Attendance, at below 90%, was reported to be unsatisfactory, while the 'quality of teaching varies widely across the school' (AF2.2, p. 5). Mr Wake's personal responsibility was emphasized by the finding that: 'The leadership provided by the headteacher and governing body is ineffective as it does not promote high expectations or take a strategic view of the need to improve standards' (AF2.2, p. 6). The report also pointed out that 'the workloads and responsibilities of the senior management team are distributed unevenly and some individuals carry an undue burden' (AF2.2, p. 19). Hillside lacked 'effective strategic planning procedures' (AF2.2, p. 20) and employed an unsustainable number of teachers:

> A significant amount is now being spent on maintaining staffing levels. At the current rate of spending the school will exhaust its reserves within two years but there are no plans in place to review staffing (AF2.2, p. 22).

Inspectors also rejected the 'widely held view that the standards of attainment of the intake are low and have fallen over the last few years. This view is not borne out by the evidence provided from the results of statutory assessment' (AF2.2, p. 20).

According to the registered inspector (personal communication, 2.viii.1), Mr Wake received the oral debrief without comment, apart from a grunt of dissent when the location of the science block was praised. During a subsequent interview he claimed that he knew the school would fail by the Tuesday evening of inspection week and believed that 'nothing we did after that would make a difference' (IT: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2). The inspection team was based on the county's advisory service and in his opinion included individuals who were collecting evidence to get rid of him (MD, p. 25). For many teachers, however, the inspection was a traumatic experience, followed by the blow of the school being placed in special measures.

Staff learned that the school had failed from the teacher representatives who attended the registered inspector's oral report to the board of governors, almost a week after the head had received the news. One of the teacher governors remembered that it had been 'shell shock night' (IN: TG, 25.viii.3), while a year head felt 'this was a shock to the staff because the academic work in the school was better than other local schools' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). A parent governor believed 'staff were demoralised because they thought the OFSTED report unfair' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2).

Almost at once 'there were lots of rumours about how the inspection was geared towards trying to get rid of (Mr Wake) ... they already had an agenda to get rid of him' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). A head of department claimed that the head's uncooperative attitude had caused the inspection team to arrive with a 'hidden agenda' (personal communication, 10.x.2), which involved gathering evidence to discredit him and the school. A head of year remarked that Mr Wake had been 'really very antagonistic to OFSTED' and that 'most of the inspectors in the team were from the LEA and they already knew the problems before the inspection'. She felt 'very wronged when the LEA inspection team put us in special

measures. I felt we had been abandoned by our local authority' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). There was resentment that Mr Wake had done so little to prepare them for inspection:

> He wasn't present in these sort of meetings so really ... we never saw our leader through the week ... he was out for much of the OFSTED week ... If he were truthful he would probably say that he didn't do enough to prepare us for inspection. During the OFSTED inspection things were very tense ... he was quite rude about (the registered inspector) ... sort of implying he didn't know what he was talking about. He said I'm not going to have people coming here telling me what to do (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

In retrospect, teachers felt they 'were playing a game completely blindfold. The only information we had was from members of staff who maybe had partners who had been through an inspection ... none of us knew what to expect' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). Reactions to the inspection process were varied but 'a lot of teachers were very tense and almost took things personally' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). A special needs teacher was upset by an inspector who 'based all her judgement on withdrawal on about eight minutes (observation) ... and was very rude' (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2). She left Hillside a few months later. A geography teacher wept when talking about the experience a year later:

> I've not got over it, I'm sure they said positive things but she destroyed me, I've lost all my confidence, I doubt what I'm doing, I thought it was alright; I know I've got problems ... I can get going, but if they won't I can't handle it; she said they weren't making progress, I've lost my way (IN: GT, 26.ix.2).

Mr Wake's reaction was that: 'I've always been able to walk away from it, I always said I'd stop when I stopped enjoying it' (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2). But others realized that the school could not continue as it was. As one teacher noted: 'Mr Wake had no concrete structures to get us out ... He was saying that we should not have failed it anyway. But

everybody else was saying ... what are you doing to solve these problems?' (NQT, 10.xii.2). After an unsatisfactory meeting with him, staff forum wrote 'to express its great concern that there is a lack of commitment on the head's part to lead us successfully through any Special Measures, as proposed by OFSTED' (AF4, 13.xii.1). The letter was copied to the chair of governors. When Mr Wake met with the staff again a few days later the mood was angry:

> People were saying ... 'we failed OFSTED. It's his fault' ... There was a motion of no confidence proposed ... and that this should be offered to the governors (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

In the event the staff drafted a statement and voted (with 9 abstentions) to send it to the governing body:

> Following the head's statement of intent in the last staff meeting we doubt his ability to change his present style of management to one which would be suited to carrying the school forward. The implementation of the proposed action plan would require effective and strong leadership. This, we feel, cannot be offered by the present principal (AF4, 17.xii.1).

The next day the chair of governors visited the school and met with Mr Wake and then with his deputy. He wrote to the county's personnel consultant:

> We should accept, with thanks for his past performance and dedication, the anticipated request from (the) deputy to take early retirement from Easter Y1 ... We should accept Mr Wake's expected decision to take retirement from Easter Y1, which I have requested he announces before the end of this term (AF4, 18.xii.1).

Mr Wake did not comply with this request to announce his resignation before Christmas. A county adviser was drafted in to assist the staff in preparing the required statutory action plan, while a personnel consultant continued to work with the chair of governors to secure the departure of the head, who had ceased to play an active role in the school. The OFSTED report was eventually published on 22nd January (Y1) and Mr Wake's resignation followed shortly afterwards (AF4, 10.ii.2). The chair of governors persuaded him to 'accept absence with full pay and conditions' (AF4, 10.ii.2) from the end of February, clearing the ground for the arrival of a temporary, seconded head from another school. As a new teacher remembered:

> Mr Wake walked into morning staff briefing in his confident manner and said at the end ... 'oh, by the way some of you will be very pleased to know that as of a month's time I am resigning' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

The decision by three other members of the senior management team to seek early retirement at the same time did not assist work on the action plan. The deputy was shattered by the outcome of the inspection. According to a colleague 'the poor bloke was physically worn out by the time OFSTED had finished because everything was left to him' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2). The deputy interpreted the inspection outcome as a stain on his professional work and reported that it was over a year before his ability to sleep and concentrate returned to normal (personal communication, 21.vi.3). The governors also agreed to release two senior teachers at the end of term, so that within four months of the inspection the school was left without experience or expertise in any aspect of senior management.

Task groups were established at the training day on 6th January (Y1). Task group 3, for example, aimed to develop and research a range of strategies for improving attendance and punctuality (AF4.2). A variety of objectives were listed, including 'devise a systematic way of monitoring attendance and punctuality to include more pastoral meetings' (AF4.2). The suggestion was made that someone should be appointed 'in

overall charge of attendance' (AF4.2). Group 6 were asked to review Hillside's management structure and it was proposed that 'patterns of management in other schools' (AF4.2) should be looked at. The qualities of 'good management' were identified and included 'consultation, consideration, cooperation ... and consistency of approach' (AF4.2). As staff worked on the action plan they unconsciously succeeded in identifying many of the reasons why it was difficult for the school to move forward without new leadership.

**Closure?**

The action plan was completed and presented to the parents on 20th February Y1 (AF6.1, p. 1). Brian Goodlad, seconded from another school to replace Mr Wake for the summer term, was at the meeting and said he saw Hillside as 'a good school which could be an excellent school' (AF6.1, p. 1). Meanwhile, the chair of governors wrote to the director of education for Easton, the newly created LEA that would takeover responsibility for the school on 1st April Y1, to request permission to advertise for a permanent head (AF6.1). The director's response was unexpected. He invited the chair of governors to a meeting on 28th February (AF6.1) at which he announced the authority's intention to close Hillside. According to a parent governor, who became a prominent campaigner against the closure proposal: 'The LEA intended to close local schools and open a new school on another site in order to take surplus places out of the system' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2). A subsequent OFSTED inspection of the LEA (Y3) summarised the position as it had been in Y1:

> There was a backdrop of falling rolls, with over 6,800 surplus places. The largest proportion of these surplus places (3,900) is in the secondary sector (AF8.1).

It seemed that the 'new authority felt that the focus was somewhat on them to do something about (the problem) ... The bright idea was that they would close all three, raise two phoenixes from the ashes on two sites' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

Word of the threatened closure spread quickly (AF6.1, p. 1) and 'all hell let loose ... the TV cameras were outside, radio, everybody wanted to be interviewed' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). One staff campaigner later remembered a parents' meeting at the school on 19th March (see also AF6.1): 'There were a lot of parents there and governors. At the end (deputy head) asked any parents to stay behind who were interested because he announced that (the threat of school closure) was very unfair ... unjust but (the fight against it was) winnable' (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2). The closure threat galvanised the community in support of the school, despite its recent OFSTED report. A year head commented that 'parental activism of whatever sort was started when the three school review was announced and a group of parents got together and decided that they weren't having that' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). 'As soon as the parents found out that this school would be possibly closed down they decided ... to get involved more in trying to save it. This school is probably one of the most popular in the area for the Asian families. They ... said that school is too good ... our kids are not that bad' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

Parents at the meeting protested that Hillside was 'by far the most successful' of the three nominated for closure and were suspicious that the council had a hidden agenda 'to sell off the valuable Hillside site and to protect itself from the bad publicity it was about to receive for being the local authority with the highest number of failing schools in the country' (AF6.1, p. 1). The Hillside Parents' Action Group (PAG) was founded on the spot. Led by an experienced local campaigner whose children attended the school, parents and a few teachers launched themselves into action:

> We were all chucking money in buckets to try to finance ... we all ran round to get as many kids to (town) education offices ... and Michael would tell us when the next council meeting was and how many people he wanted there ... or can we ring so many councillors (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2)?

The PAG organized an intensive lobby, mobilising hundreds of parents, staff and students to appear at council meetings, to write letters, to make phone calls and to besiege local politicians. In their newsletter they made their objective clear:

> All this is designed to achieve the simple objective of persuading the Council to rethink by making sure that they are in no doubt that Hillside has very strong support from its parents – and will not be easily closed down. Will we win? YES – we are determined that nothing will get in the way. We will not allow the Council to sacrifice a good school to solve problems which are none of our making (AF6.1, p. 2).

**Several Sticks of Gelignite**

The LEA had asked Brian Goodlad to become acting head of a school in special measures during the summer term but the ink was no sooner dry on his contract than he discovered the director's plan was to close Hillside. A secretary remembered:

> He agreed to take over a school in special measures, and had already accepted the post when the LEA earmarked the school for closure. This upset Mr Goodlad because he wanted to keep the school open. It led to conflict with the LEA (IT: PA, 4.xii.2).

His deputy at Hillside later recalled: 'He got a phone call just before he was due to arrive at the school saying "actually its not quite like that, we are going to close it" and his job was changed completely from what I can make out' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). A new teacher sensed that 'he had not applied for a school that was going to be closed down ... It just wasn't his brief at all. He had applied to try to get a school out of special measures and help create the development plan' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). The PAG chair recognised the awkward position in which Mr Goodlad found himself:

> Hillside was threatened with closure. It was not clear whether Mr Goodlad was appointed to achieve an orderly closure, but he thought he was appointed to turn the school around (IT: PG, 4.xii.2).

Initially 'brought in as an expert by the LEA' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2), Mr Goodlad was caught up in a campaign to save the school from the 'local council that had already shown itself quite clearly to be unprincipled in terms of the way they were prepared to do things' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2). According to his deputy, appointed shortly after his arrival, 'he never knew what game he was playing from one week to the next' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

When Mr Goodlad arrived at the beginning of March Y1, Hillside's predicament was grim. The old head and deputy had retired, together with two senior teachers who had been responsible for most of the administration. The school was in special measures and had been named for closure. The new LEA seemed an adversary rather than a source of support (IT: PG, 4.xii.2). The staff were near despair because 'their jobs were on the line' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2) and within a few days OFSTED rejected the action plan prepared with the help of the county adviser, on the grounds that it paid too little attention to the key issues identified in the inspection report (personal communication, B. Goodlad).

Much younger than his predecessor, Mr Goodlad was perceived by many as 'a very loveable man ... incredibly open, excitable, boyish, lots of humour, loads of energy and joie de vivre' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2); and as 'an enthusiast who very quickly got to know what people could do' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2). Staff and students alike 'were swept along' by his enthusiasm (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). His deputy thought he had 'a real common touch ... he can talk to anybody, he is quite happy to mutter on to anybody and the kids really like that about him, they could identify with him' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). The caretaker said 'we were waiting for somebody like him really to take over which he did encourage everybody because of his personality ... He's got the charm, you know' (IT: CT, 4.xii.2).

One teacher thought 'he could have sold sand to the Arabs ... he oozed confidence ... He had the gift of convincing people to what he wanted ... so he had already come up with a

solution but he was trying to make it out as if we (staff) were involved' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). Although he was mostly seen as 'a fantastic motivator' others 'had to be convinced ... that their efforts were going to be rewarded' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2). His deputy discovered that:

> ...not everybody took to him ... other people felt that he was a bit like several sticks of gelignite being set off at one time ... From years and years of nothing happening, you know, to Mr Goodlad with stuff going off all right, left and centre, and I don't think they found that easy to deal with (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

He was said to make 'people feel valued' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2), especially important at a time when staff were all too aware of the threat to the school and their jobs (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2). Passion and praise were prominent at morning briefing and his use of the term 'brilliant' to describe almost any constructive effort was soon noticed (IT: PA, 4.xii.2). Other colleagues believed that he 'push(ed) aside people who were not competent, like the bursar. He wanted quick results' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2). An acting head of department acknowledged that although he had swept in and upset a lot of people 'he did apologise before he upset anybody - a collective apology, you know, I am very sorry, I am going to upset a lot of you but I have got to do a lot of things fast' (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2).

The PAG chair thought the acting head 'was a bull in a china shop ... I think he was working at the intuitive level ... there was no time for calm reflection' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2) but Mr Goodlad was clear and consistent in his stated objective:

> I aimed to challenge the staff through the students, they were at the centre of everything. I got them together in the hall and asked them what was wrong with the place. I wanted to use them to generate a buzz. Their energy would save the school (MD, p. 3).

At his previous school his approach had been similar:

> The school has a very clear statement of principles, values and aims. These relate to and assist the school in making explicit its considerable contribution to the moral, social and cultural development of its pupils. The school's approach to discipline, based on the code of conduct and respect, responsibility and rights is used effectively to create a positive learning environment. All pupils are valued and respected. The quality of relationships between all members of the school community is excellent. Pupils' involvement in decision-making contributes to developing their sense of responsibility and community (OFSTED report on the school from which Mr Goodlad was seconded).

**Opening Moves**

Mr Goodlad decided that 'if we were going down then we were going down fighting, so that's the route we went down!' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2) and worked with the staff and the PAG to bring about 'amazing changes' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2). Within days of his arrival at Hillside, he had introduced a daily staff briefing to get 'people involved for the first time' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). For students, too, there were now daily assemblies and a student council was set up to work on a new behaviour code for the school (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). 'Students responded well to (his) dynamism and to his assemblies. Suddenly they were being asked questions in them and they were being asked what they wanted' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). Mr Goodlad emphasized the importance of students in the school, treating them 'as equals; pleasant and polite to them; formed a student council' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2) and 'promised each child ... would get a locker, and vending machines ... drinks machines, chocolate machines' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). The chains that had secured the main entrance at lunchtime were symbolically cut and students were allowed to remain in the 'open school' if they chose. As a result, 'clubs and societies began to come back in the summer of Y1' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2).

Mr Goodlad also spent 'the £100,000 surplus in the school budget, appointing a number of staff to temporary middle level management posts to help improve the quality of

learning and teaching' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2). Five internal candidates, three of them heads of year, were interviewed on the 14th April for two temporary deputy headships (AF5.3). One deputy was to be responsible for the 'quality and consistency of teaching' (AF5.1), while the other would lead the 'monitoring and evaluation of pupil progress' (AF5.2). As the successful candidates each held two point allowances as year heads before Mr Goodlad's arrival, they viewed their internal promotion as 'a fairly significant leap' that had led to a degree of 'altitude sickness' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

Some teachers were embittered when they missed out on the cascade of temporary points. One said later: 'Do you know I'm the only member of this staff who hasn't been promoted?' (LT: Chris Moore, 16.i.2). Another commented that Mr Goodlad 'was in too much of a rush' with his staff changes:

> (He) decided that various people were doing different jobs and instead of discussing them with the people who were actually doing it at the moment, they would arrive at the door and find that 'you are not doing that job any more' (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2).

Within weeks, work started on a new reception area (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). Although critical of the expense and haste, a design teacher also appreciated the symbolism of building a smart, modern extension:

> Mr Goodlad came in to try and convince everybody that this place isn't closing and also I think it was a big morale boosting job for the staff as well. Who in their right minds would spend whatever thousand pounds that cost on a school that was going to close? (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2)

A 'major upheaval in the offices' followed. The head of careers protested that he was:

> ...kicked out with nowhere to go ... Then I was given a classroom and now I am actually in the laundry room which is horrendous. So I have got a careers office, trying to interview students, and there is a washing machine clattering away in the background (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2).

The PAG chair welcomed this burst of activity that immeasurably strengthened the campaign and acknowledged that 'there was no way that I could be out there defending the school on moral and political grounds alone' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2). Although the PAG was 'self-started by the parents ... with Mr Goodlad's support and help ... a lot of parents came on board from a whole different range of backgrounds' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). Assemblies were used to encourage students 'to write to the (local) authorities to lobby and make petitions ... to the right people ... Quite a hefty proportion of our students took up the fight with a lot of the parents' (IT: NQT, 25.iii.3). The PAG also helped to raise morale in the school. The emergence of powerful parental support made the teachers 'really want to work hard to keep the place open' (NQT, 10.xii.2).

One hundred parents lobbied councillors at the LEA Education Committee meeting on 7th April, Y1 (AF6.2, p. 1). A proposal to stage a three-school review, instead of closing them without further consultation, was referred to the full council meeting on 24th April. When the full council met to consider the plan:

> Nearly three hundred parents, teachers and children met (outside) the town hall to demonstrate support for the school. A 700-name petition, prepared by pupils, was presented to (the) chair of Education ... (who) ... refused to say whether the Director had stated that he intended to recommend closure of Hillside before announcing his review. 'I was not present at any meeting when the Director announced this' was (the) less than honest reply (AF6.2, p. 1).

Few votes shifted as a result of the pressure, however, so the campaign to save the school moved into a new phase. It was vital to persuade the council that common justice

required that all Easton secondary schools should be reviewed, not just the three that happened to be in special measures. The PAG chair secured the support of the local Member of Parliament (MP) for the campaign, while Mr Goodlad 'decided to make the school look really good and to make presentations to the press to prevent the school closing' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2).

On the 1st June, Hillside staged an Open Day that featured the MP, guided tours of the school, demonstrations of the newly installed computer suite, exhibitions of students' work, sports, activities, sideshows and refreshments (AF6.2). A head of year remembered:

> When the parents decided that an open day would be a good thing, suddenly wall displays began to go up all over the place. It was very successful with the people from the local community, (and) helped to raise the school's profile (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2).

A fortnight later, the PAG chair wrote to Stephen Byers, Minister of State for Education, arguing the school's case for survival and emphasized 'the very real parental and community support for Hillside':

> The result of the Ofsted inspection, and the council's reaction, has been rather like letting the cork out of the bottle: parents have now found a voice and have made that voice heard very loudly indeed (AF4, 13.vi.1, p. 2).

Shortly afterwards, the council 'dropped the decision to close the three schools' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2), with members voting instead for a two-year long review of all Easton secondary schools (AF6.3, p. 1). Mr Goodlad wrote to Hillside parents with the 'good news' that a breathing space had been won:

> The threat of imminent closure is now over ... (the authority wide review) will take at least two years to fulfil. We intend to take full advantage of this situation to put our Action Plan into operation and prove that Hillside is a highly successful and thriving school. Already we have reached targets that we had set for Y3 ... our ... results are all in line with, or above national expectations and we await the GCSE results in August with confidence (AF7.1, 25.vi.1, p. 27).

Although Mr Goodlad seemed to work 'at the intuitive level' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2), appearing to explode 'like several sticks of gelignite being set off at one time' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2) as he tackled problems (communications) and launched initiatives (open day, reception area, lockers), he adopted a more formal, systematic approach as he drafted a new action plan to replace the original rejected by OFSTED. His secretary remembered him pacing up and down his office as he dictated the plan (personal communication, 22.vii.2) and his new deputy recalled that it 'was taking quite a lot of his time' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). A governor recognised Mr Goodlad's dilemma:

> The school had to create a new action plan very quickly and Mr Goodlad did it mainly himself, because of the low chances of getting staff to agree to work on it again (after the failure of their first effort) (IT: PG, 4.xii.2).

Mr Goodlad organized the action plan (AF5.5) so that the four Key Target areas for action matched exactly the Key Issues identified by OFSTED inspectors:

- To raise standards and improve the quality of education by introducing a rigorous system for monitoring and evaluating pupil progress;
- To build an effective management that emphasizes high expectations and reinforces a positive whole school ethos;
- To improve the quality and consistency of teaching;

- To review systematically the use of resources to improve the value-for-money offered by the school.

Detailed actions to achieve these objectives were set out as a table under six column headings: ACTION, PERSON RESPONSIBLE, BY WHEN, METHOD OF MONITORING, SUCCESS CRITERIA and RESOURCES REQUIRED. A new, permanent head as well as the two deputies were to be appointed; a new management structure was to be established; pupil progress and curriculum teams were to be created; regular meetings were to be established; homework, attendance, punctuality, attitudes, behaviour and personal development were to be monitored and improved. Lesson observation, appraisal, consultancy and training were to be used to eliminate inconsistencies in teaching. The student council, computers, lockers and multi-cultural celebrations would be introduced to improve the school's ethos. The pupil teacher ratio was to be increased from 1:14 to 1:18 and all spending decisions were to be analysed. The use of support staff would be reviewed (AF5.5).

On 23rd May, Mr Goodlad convened a staff weekend conference at a local hotel before he finalised and submitted the action plan he had prepared. Determined to return to his own school at the end of term, Mr Goodlad also drafted an Action Plan Timetable (AF5.4) as a checklist for his successor and the senior managers who would be responsible for achieving the targets he had set. The timetable showed month by month what had to be done by whom. Middle management job descriptions were to be revised in April Y1, for example, while office arrangements were to be reviewed by the end of May, and a scheme for reporting to parents on pupil progress was to be in place by June.

Mr Goodlad resisted pressure to stay at Hillside and implement his plan. He wished to return to his old place 'where his heart lay' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). The governors had no alternative but to commission their personnel consultant to search for another temporary head, because the LEA would not allow any headship appointments during the two-year review period. Hillside and other schools might still be closed. Names were canvassed, phone calls were made and interested parties came to visit (personal knowledge). By the

20th June, the day set aside for interviews, only two candidates remained. One involved a secondment from another school; the other was a recently retired head from a neighbouring authority. The governors opted for Chris Moore, an experienced headteacher who had contacted the LEA after seeing the vacancy advertised in the **Times Educational Supplement**. Mr Moore accepted a two-year contract, to commence at the start of the autumn term, Y2.

Mr Moore's first diary entry recorded everyone's joy when the examination results came out that summer:

> Great excitement because the results have improved from 27% 5+ A*-Cs to 40%, placing Hillside near the head of the local averages and perhaps high in the list of 'most improved' schools nationally. Terrific public relations material and a boost for staff and students. There was a lovely atmosphere in the foyer with excited and surprised young people and some of their parents. As Brian Goodlad didn't arrive almost until the students were on study leave it is hard to see how the action plan has contributed; but what has? Demoralisation and fear seem to have done the trick? Or a lucky twist of fate with a known 'good' year group? But Brian has the credit and deservedly so, because he has injected confidence, optimism and hope, although moving so fast I suspect there will be a lot of details for dogged me to pick up, not least the lunch supervision arrangements and the office imbroglio (MD, p. 1).

In retrospect, one of the deputies tried to assess Brian Goodlad's contribution:

> If you look at it in terms of trying to personify the school as some kind of being – Brian Goodlad described it as a 'sleeping giant' – well, it was a very quietly sleeping giant and it was a very quietly sleeping disgruntled giant in that it really didn't care ... whereas this wasn't a

> sleeping giant that it was up and awake and moving about and doing good things. It was lively and there was evidence that the kids wanted to be involved ... staff were being encouraged to follow their own 'yellow brick roads' (IT: DH, 4.xii.3).

Mr Goodlad himself could not forget that after the LEA had placed him in the school, he had been abandoned. The promised extra support had never materialised (quoted in MD, p. 16) and he had been caught up in an impossible turmoil. In a letter to an LEA assistant director the PAG chair claimed: '...no support (was) made available during the critical period of (Mr Goodlad's) leadership' (AF8.7). Another assistant director disagreed but could identify no help beyond that available to all schools (AF8.8).

# Chapter 6 Fireworks

**New Head**

The **Easton Morning Post** reported Chris Moore's arrival at Hillside under the headline 'New head vows to help rescue school' and quoted his promise 'to continue an improvement in exam results to prevent the school being closed' (AF7.6, p. 1). The school had been:

> ...threatened with closure after a poor OFSTED report last year. But an action plan, put into place by the former head, Mr Brian Goodlad, has seen a turn-around at the school with the proportion of pupils gaining five or more C-grade GCSE passes rising from 27 per cent last year to 40 per cent this summer (AF7.6, p. 1).

Chris Moore did not discourage this interpretation of the examination results and emphasized his view that: 'It's difficult to close a school where standards are improving' (AF7.6, p. 1). 'The school will be part of a general reorganization next year,' he added, 'I don't believe the school will close' (AF7.6, p. 1).

Although Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore projected a self-confident public image, earning the respect of colleagues who noticed that the school had 'been in the press more times in the last 12 months than in the last ten years. All for good reasons' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2), both were acutely aware of the school's vulnerability (MD, p. 15). Over 20 per cent of the student roll was lost in the five-month period between April Y1 and September Y2 (Star Database Totals). A widespread impression was that most of those who departed were 'children whose parents were most concerned about their education' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2), and that it was mainly the most able academic students who were taken away (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). The transfer from primary partner schools was down by a third, reflecting fears that if Hillside 'closed the children here would have to go to (two locally unpopular

schools)' (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2). Not one student transferred from the school's largest designated primary partner. The financial implications of such a catastrophic mid-year loss of numbers were equally serious, particularly as Gerald, the bursar, had ceased to function during the summer of Y1.

Mr Moore calculated that the staff had to be won over before there was a chance of sustained recovery and planned to build confidence 'through a speedily established new discipline system' (MD, p. 5). As an experienced head, he knew the importance of being seen to support teachers and decided, in advance, to 'search for 3 or 4 permanent exclusions to back staff and send (a) powerful message' (MD, p. 5). He concluded that a 'high energy, high profile, high impact strategy should work' (MD, p. 7). He also planned an 'open forum at least once a week where all information and developments can be shared and debated and the school's problems brainstormed – as unlike traditional staff meetings as possible' (MD, p. 5). A retired deputy from another school was commissioned to audit the school's finances and stabilise the current budget.

Mr Moore spent his first morning at Hillside on the telephone, speaking with various companies that were pursuing the school for unpaid bills:

> Gerald has made a point by not turning up in the holiday and no one else has the computer codes or knows how to work the system, especially in this case as some building tax or other applies (MD, p. 1).

After further enquiries he concluded: 'Gerald is disempowered and can't do the job; others don't know how to' (MD, p. 15). The bursar then had several periods of absence during the autumn (Y2) before long term sickness overcame him. When he was at work, he complained bitterly about the 'unnecessary' changes introduced by Mr Goodlad (MD, p. 3). Mr Moore realized that the support staff were 'unhappy and resentful' as a result of that summer's hurried reorganization (MD, p. 1):

> Brian Goodlad got something started but saw nothing through to

> completion. As issues unravel I realize how little time he had and how little he finished. He reorganized the office without job descriptions, advertisements or governor involvement ... he ... thought big gestures were important ... He did everything hurriedly with nothing written down (MD, p. 3).

Mr Goodlad's main objective had been to isolate Gerald, whom he viewed as incompetent, and Sidney, a long-serving senior teacher who had been identified as untrustworthy and uncooperative (personal communication from B. Goodlad). He had moved the senior teacher to a small office at the end of a corridor and had disconnected his telephone and computer (MD, p. 1, p. 229). During the holiday, Sidney had returned all his furniture and equipment to the old office and stimulated discontent amongst the secretarial staff (MD, p. 1/2). Mr Goodlad's management restructuring had brought new people into administrative positions and succeeded in isolating remnants of the old order like Sidney, whose post as Head of Lower School simply disappeared. Unfortunately, at the last moment, the LEA refused to fund his redundancy (MD, p. 1).

Mr Moore was invited to attend the PAG celebration buffet that evening and met with parents and staff who were still excited by their success in winning a stay of execution:

> A lovely evening with friendly, open people keen to improve the school. I received questions ('Tell us about yourself, what you like') ... People took quiet chances to alert me to issues and needs. I warm to them, they seem to need me and to believe in themselves (MD, p. 2/3).

Elaine, the newly appointed deputy, thought the objective was to maintain the PAG's support so that their campaigning energy would be available as the LEA review unfolded:

> ...the Action Group was set up to fight the closure and once that battle was won then their actual aims were a little unclear, but they are

> keeping an eye on the existing review and he is keeping in touch with them through going to the consultative meetings (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

Immediate problems with budgets and telephones did not deflect Mr Moore from his determination to 'consolidate (Mr Goodlad's) changes and to focus on methodology and making sure what is agreed happens' (MD, p. 1/2). He recognised the statutory status of the action plan (approved by OFSTED in August, see AF2.1, 6.viii.1) and the impossibility of changing any substantive objective:

> I've gutted the action plan now and feel more or less in command of it and able to anchor my own thoughts in it and my own early priorities are equally clear – support staff, lunch supervision, awkward senior teacher, revised time structure, staff training for the classroom (MD, p. 3).

Mr Moore used the two training days at the beginning of his first term to establish an agreed framework for developing, monitoring and evaluating lessons. A set of lesson guidelines and three lesson transcripts were distributed and teachers were asked to 'use your experience and the guidelines to consider whether the selected lesson matches your expectations of good practice' (MF2.23, p. 3). The aim of the workshop was 'to develop a common approach to lesson planning, preparation and classroom teaching so that:

- we all emphasize and work towards the same key features of good practice
- we establish an agreed basis for monitoring, evaluation and development as required by the action plan
- we impress inspectors and other visitors with our shared strategy – even less successful lessons are purposeful, with aims, objectives and outcomes reinforced
- we match OFSTED criteria and expectations, not individual preferences

> To achieve the aim, we must identify the key features of good practice which are relevant for all activities and subjects (MF2.23, p. 1).

A lesson planner was agreed so that everyone would prepare their lessons to emphasize learning objectives and the new, common approach. One teacher commented:

> Mr Moore made it very clear what was expected of us ... he set lesson plans where we had to identify our learning objectives ...We were taught to teach in a certain style ... and we would all start the lesson in the same way (IT: HOY, 4.xii.3).

Mr Moore later emphasized the extent to which:

> I've talked about monitoring teaching and learning, the dialogue about it, the development of systems, getting the departments, getting the schemes of work, getting the development plan, getting the lessons all synchronised so that they're all focusing on the same thing, which is learning objectives and not the content that is being processed (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2).

An English teacher remembered that:

> One of the things that Mr Moore did on the first teachers' day was to tell us what the inspectors were looking for and to help us to put self-assessment procedures in place. He also made people more confident about the inspections and more prepared (IT: HOY, 28.i.2).

Mr Moore explained that his approach was:

> ...to explain why I want it instead of 'I want it because I say so' ... I always think that unexplained irrational demands from authority ...

> that's the sort of thing that really causes you problems in schools and one way of trying to defuse it is to explain (LT: Chris Moore, 16.i.2).

On the whole, teachers welcomed his method:

> ...we had been taught the command style of teaching (by Mr Wake) but Mr Moore is about 'get a partner, discuss, talk about, see what things you can come up with' ... he is very up to date on things that are going on (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

At his first assembly with the students the following morning, Mr Moore chose to announce a decision that he knew would be unpopular. Mr Goodlad's promised lockers had arrived but there was staff disquiet about the vending machines he had ordered:

> I think the children thought he was the best thing since sliced bread because suddenly lockers appeared ... the drinks machine was on offer, which I thought was a foolish thing – but he disappeared before that came along and Mr Moore decided it wasn't a good idea, which I was relieved at (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2).

Mr Moore 'decided to cancel Brian's empowering decision to install drinks and chocolate machines, mainly because the canteen boss, Pam, was unhappy and Eileen and the staff were not keen' (MD, p. 4). But he also wanted to signal a changed approach:

> I announced the drinks stoppage (in assembly) which prompted a response only from the older pupils. I also challenged their lack of uniform (MD, p. 4).

Teachers welcomed the new head's firmness with the students. One noted that: 'Mr Moore came in and said he didn't want the vending machines and so he was instantly unpopular' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). Mr Moore reflected on the difference between Brian

Goodlad's stance and his own: 'He is very student centred, uses them to challenge the staff; I'm more of a cautious politician, handling the staff like an electorate' (MD, p. 4).

When he dealt with the first few students referred to him because of their repeated, violent misbehaviour, Mr Moore applied rigorously the behaviour code that had been developed during the summer term. Elaine commented later:

> We have a code of conduct that we keep referring to, that they had a hand in dealing with and putting together. They know that there is a discipline procedural referral system and they know where referrals will go and how they will be dealt with ... they see a clear line of command (IT: DH, 4.xii.3).

A year head noticed the impact on the students:

> ...on the whole I think (student) behaviour has improved. People are dealt with more efficiently than they were and more fairly. It is the same rule for all, rather than one rule for one and one rule for another as it was under the old regime (IT: HOY, 4.xii.3).

There were fewer children out of class because 'they've tightened up on procedures ... A lot of them used to go to the sick room with a headache' (IT: PG, 11.xii.3).

Although Mr Moore was ruthless in eliminating longstanding, unresolved cases, he was acutely aware of the competing priorities involved in dealing with troublesome students:

> A home visit to Jade Smith and her mother ... I dread to think who was related to whom in the house and the bleakness of what might have been a nice property was grim to perceive. Plenty of other houses boarded up, wired off or abandoned or demolished. Mrs Smith knows Jade needs help; tells me that Jade used to attack other children out of

> the blue even when very young ... I suggest that permanent exclusion might provoke a sufficient crisis to get her special education ... But the risk of readmitting her and allowing her to carry on stirring trouble and punching those concerned? Jade's eyes roll; she has an angry core and it could be very dangerous in time. She is mature ... for y8 - her mother agrees that she's grown from a little girl in next to no time. But the entanglements with other children keep on happening. But why has this not been referred or statemented before? Why has it reached this stage? Our provision for children with acute problems is awful and we leave headteachers to agonise over whether or not to sacrifice individuals for the good of the whole ... I don't think Jade can stay. She is beyond what teachers can do for her already. She doesn't want to be in school; learning is the last thing on her mind (MD, p. 35).

Jade was excluded, despite Mr Moore's reservations, and the staff welcomed her swift departure and the exclusion of several other seriously disruptive students who had not been dealt with during the summer turbulence. He was anxious to create a 'climate where learning is possible' (MD, p. 502) and wanted the staff to 'feel that I am backing them in their relations with the children' (IT: Chris Moore, 10.xii.2). The year heads in particular appreciated the arrival of a head who took an active role in student discipline:

> I think that the children are aware of the structures. They are aware that there is a line and that they can be suspended ... and that could lead to permanent exclusion (IT: HOY, 4.xii.3).

A junior member of staff saw the change in simple terms:

> When Mr Moore came in he identified a few troublemakers and got rid of a few and sent the message out that 'we are not standing for this'. Mr Moore came in and made an immediate impact (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

**Roles & Responsibilities**

The two temporary deputy heads appointed by Mr Goodlad were at the centre of Mr Moore's plan to 'establish roles and responsibilities for everyone' (MD, p. 3). The departure of the long-standing, permanent deputy in the spring (Y1) meant that no one was now looking after basic routines (MD, p. 3). Elaine (responsible for the curriculum) and Peter (in charge of pupil progress) had set to work to establish effective systems, although gaps remained:

> As positive comments flow I'm beginning to realize how much the deputies have achieved. They've been inventing and introducing systems for five months and I have to admire Mr Goodlad's vision in appointing them (MD, p. 36).

Mr Moore agreed to meet with them every morning at 8.00 am to plan and monitor progress (MD, p. 7) and led after school training to help them master the techniques of budget and curriculum analysis. Elaine recalled:

> ...we have been in on everything and he has involved us in everything and he has actually asked our opinion and consulted us on things which has felt nice because it seems like he respects us as individuals (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

The deputies were eager to learn and impressed Mr Moore with their 'awesome' (MD, p. 7) professional commitment. He was soon aware of the 'extraordinary degree of staff confidence and trust' (MD, p. 35) inspired by his new colleagues and recognised the importance of their role:

> ...having really credible people inside the school doesn't half build up the confidence of the rest ... they have done a wonderful job in

> carrying the staff through what's been an absolutely diabolical experience (LT: Chris Moore, 16.i.2).

He decided to make them permanent so they would be able to help others cope with the rough ride ahead without 'their own position being vulnerable' (MD, p. 36) and to ensure a bridge between himself and the staff. According to Elaine:

> Mr Moore decided that he wanted some stabilising influences so he effectively made Peter and myself permanent – he wanted two permanent deputies (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

The three were soon working closely together, taking decisions, preparing initiatives and providing mutual support (MD, p. 92). Mr Moore considered 'the quality of leadership of the two deputies and the level of trust they have from the other staff is ... the core of the school's development' (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2) and delegated major responsibility to them. As a member of the administrative staff saw it:

> I think he feels that the more decisions that can be made jointly the better. It takes the work off him. For example, one of the deputies is in charge of the curriculum and goes to governors' committees (IT: PA, 28.i.2).

After discussion with the other members of the temporary senior team created by Mr Goodlad, Mr Moore drafted a scheme of management, placing each team member in charge of a governor committee, a staff working group and a 'Key Issue' within the OFSTED action plan. The retired deputy head was offered a temporary, part-time contract to lead on 'financial operations, induction of business manager ... (and) premises coordination' (MF1.14). Task and system outcomes were prescribed and tabulated. Elaine, the curriculum deputy, for example, was responsible for drafting a school calendar for the year and for leading a working group to review the curriculum. Her task was to increase the pupil teacher ratio and broaden the curriculum. Her targets

were specified within the action plan. Peter, in effect the pastoral deputy, was responsible for the heads of year and ensuring that the new behaviour code was properly established. In addition to the pupil progress targets specified in the action plan, including homework and attendance, Peter was required to devise a tutorial programme for almost immediate implementation and to set up the lunch supervision scheme that Mr Goodlad had left incomplete.

Graham, a temporary senior teacher, was made responsible for training, daily cover and the spiritual, moral, social and cultural (SMSC) dimension that had been criticised in the OFSTED inspection report. Graham led a working group and organized a series of public events, from daily assembly to multi-cultural festivals. Staff appreciated Graham's ability to 'delegate effectively, ensuring that tasks are moved forward and completed' (MD, p. 596), while a new teacher laughed: 'He's been fantastic for me as an NQT (Newly Qualified Teacher), he sent me maps, helped with my CV' (MD, p. 596). Donna, another temporary senior teacher, was in charge of press, publications and presentation. Although Graham and Donna worked tirelessly, they were also responsible for substantial departmental and pastoral responsibilities, a fact that compromised their ability to operate as full members of the senior team (MD, p. 7, p. 107).

The Head's Report to Governors (AF9.7, p. 1) detailed the progress of the four staff working parties led by senior management:

> The Communication Group has ... produced a ... Guide for Parents, an advertising supplement for the **Easton Herald** ... and ... displays throughout the school ... I have visited seven schools to meet with the heads and staff and have returned to most for an extended discussion with year 5 and 6 students. Lack of communication ... has reduced our 'share' of catchment area children...
>
> The Tutoring & Mentoring Group's ... task is to improve ... systems for monitoring and assisting student progress. They are designing a Record

> of Achievement as a focus for a number of developments, including the introduction of individual interviews for all students, at which work is reviewed and targets for the future set. Performance information (e.g. GCSE results; SAT[1], CAT[2] and reading test scores) is to be entered in a database so we can analyse our effectiveness at teaching and learning.
>
> The Ethos group is concerned with celebration and aims to establish a revised assembly programme based on themes, a strong cultural dimension within the curriculum and a variety of events, including a Diwali evening (24th October), Christmas and other social functions. We want the texture of school life to be rich and rewarding so that everyone enjoys working at Hillside and feels valued ... The most important of these is the first ever Certificate Evening ... to be attended by the Mayor and ... Brian Goodlad, who will present awards...
>
> The Curriculum Group has (to implement the action plan promise) to increase the pupil-teacher ratio from 1:15 to 1:18 and to increase the contact ratio (the amount teachers teach) from 75% to 80%. In view of the serious loss of pupils since the budget was constructed in April Y1 ... this may be insufficient.

These new staff working groups joined with parents who had campaigned to save the school to stage numerous activities. When Mr Moore was told that: 'We never celebrate anything at Hillside', he decided to 'create a social calendar with a strong emphasis on doing things together and involving students' (MD, p. 6). Led by Graham and the 'Ethos' group, teachers and parents launched themselves into a flurry of events. Elaine noticed 'all these clubs and activities that are going on at lunch times (sic) the place is buzzing. There is stuff going on after school as well' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). 'People have been coming

[1] Standard Assessment Task.
[2] Cognitive Ability Test.

out of the woodwork with - can we run this activity ... can I run a trip ... can we go here? Can we do that?' (IT: DH, 4.xii.3). A teacher commented:

> There has been an awful lot of work on parents' evenings, presenting the school in a very positive way to parents ... slowly we are receiving a trickle of children from other schools (IT: NQT, 25.iii.2).

There was a 'history club, a homework club, a chess club, a computer club, a design club and arts' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2) and a new emphasis on the display of students' work. A head of department commented: 'The kids love to see these displays ... I always put everybody's work up' (IT: HOD, 6.i.3), while another noticed students 'who have said "don't touch that, I've done that, don't you spoil that" ... which is quite nice to see happen' (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2).

People remembered the Diwali evening as the highlight of the term:

> We had a Diwali celebration that was open to parents, children ... it was a case of 'join us at our house to celebrate something we have in common' ... it was really successful ... next week there is to be some sort of Christmas extravaganza where they will put on a bit of a show in the evening for parents and pupils (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

> We had fireworks and everybody enjoyed themselves – we had lots of food – Indian food, you know, because we've got quite a lot of Indian children, you know, and it's nice to make them feel part of the community, you know (IT: CT, 4.xii.2).

> We had no idea that they could do it and there was a lot of Asian girls who did Asian dancing and we have got an Asian science teacher so she trained the girls up and taught them how to do that ... they did sketches and poems (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

Mr Moore regarded Hillside's dysfunctional office as an equally important priority: 'Until the administration is sound, nothing else will work' (MD, p. 3).

> I met with the support staff, stressed their importance and undertook to complete a speedy interim review. It needs nailing to the floor. The bursar is deeply bitter about Mr Goodlad but is conciliated by my efforts to link him with personnel. Gerald has agreed to accept retirement soon and in the meantime to work with the deputy head (MD, p. 3).

All members of the support staff were interviewed and significant concerns emerged about the efficiency of almost every aspect of the school's administration. Mr Moore's Support Staff Review (MF1.16, p. 1) identified the following points:

> ...only one assistant (is employed) to undertake all the business of the general office. Although there are four computer suites there is no computer network manager, no technical support and no in-class support for users. No learning support assistants are employed ... Some staff are employed on a temporary basis; others are paid different rates for different aspects of their work; others are inadequately recognised for the skills required for the jobs concerned. Some have confused and confusing duties ... Lines of responsibility and communication are unclear. The bursar's role has been disrupted ... so that old structures no longer function and new structures are undefined ... Job descriptions are required for new roles created during the summer.

The review report contained detailed proposals to resolve these difficulties.

> Discontinue the post of bursar.

> Introduce the new post of Business Manager to ... control and to manage all aspects of the school's finances, including income generation.
> Introduce the new post of Office Manager to establish and manage (the administration).
> Discontinue the post of head's secretary, at present undefined.
> Introduce the new post of head's Personal Assistant to provide professional and administrative support to all members of the ... senior management team, with particular responsibility for personnel administration.
> Redefine office roles and responsibilities.
> (MF1.16, p.1/2).

Additional posts were created to cover the gaps that had been identified, while all the administrative and support staff were assimilated to a common pay spine, with scales adjusted to the degree of responsibility held (MF1.16, p. 4).

The governors approved these proposals in early October and the head proceeded to implement them at once, through a mixture of consultation, negotiation and advertisement. Gerald eventually and reluctantly accepted the redundancy that had been engineered for him (MD, p. 164) and departed at Christmas (Y2), while everyone else slotted into the posts that had been created, accepting the detailed job descriptions prepared as part of the review.

As the governors had been criticised as 'ineffective' in the OFSTED inspection report, Mr Moore was not surprised when the clerk to the governors (a retired LEA official) informed him that there were 'no committees, no calendar, no procedures, no terms of reference' and that 'exclusion systems are non existent' (MD, p. 12). He set to work with the chair of governors to produce a Scheme of Governance that would ensure 'effective accountability through the governing body' (AF9.7, p. 1). Each governor was attached to a year group and was expected to 'monitor progress in ... Academic Attainment;

Homework; Attendance; Punctuality; Attitudes; Behaviour; (and) Personal Development' (MF2.19, p. 2) through discussion with tutorial staff and the observation of students. Standing orders were established for meetings of the full governing body, while terms of reference were drafted for each of the five committees that would monitor the implementation of the action plan. Members of the senior management team were expected to support the chairs of the committees in managing their business effectively.

As he worked on these systems and structures, Mr Moore reflected that:

> When a headteacher doesn't communicate or bring people together, no one else can and fragmentation is the result. I think that's what's happened here. Already I'm pulling in the boundaries and making contacts with all the people who can help us; pulling the staff together to look for solutions (MD, p. 5).

**Shell Shocked**

While interviewing the office staff, Mr Moore discovered that Sidney had been 'agitating' about the changes that were being made. He asked the senior teacher to explain his 'continuous stirring of negativity':

> He admitted to subversion of Mr Goodlad ... he takes responsibility for nothing, blames the school or me for the absence of whatever and encourages an atmosphere of complaint and dissatisfaction (MD, p. 40).

Mr Moore administered an immediate oral warning, issued a revised job description and hired a consultant to 'assist' Sidney with his new, strictly limited duties (MD, p. 5). A few weeks later Mr Moore's personal assistant told him that Sidney was encouraging the receptionist to leave the telephone unanswered. After another unproductive interview, the

head issued a Memorandum of Meeting (10.x.2, included in MD, p. 42), warning him that further misconduct would lead to formal disciplinary action. Sidney became ill and did not return to the school. A year later, his application for ill-health retirement was successful.

As the head began to implement his new structures, with their inevitable personnel implications, he found the LEA less than helpful. Hillside was at odds with the new director as a result of the events of the summer and the secondary review had added:

> ...a level of destabilisation to the relationships between the LEA and schools, within the schools and between the schools, so it's sort of implosion of boundary management, watching all the headteachers at work, it's a nightmare. They're all trying to avoid something nasty happening to them (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2).

Mr Moore was frustrated when:

> You ring her (the head of personnel), she's away for a couple of weeks but will get back to you – a month later she gets back to you to tell you, you want someone else, then that somebody ... tells you, you didn't want that in the first place (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2).

The LEA was reluctant to fund Gerald's redundancy package and warned against taking action on Sidney's disruptive behaviour. Mr Moore felt that important lines of communication had ceased to work:

> I don't feel I've got a working relationship with anybody, really. They don't talk to you, they don't communicate with you (IT: Chris Moore, 22.vi.2).

The Inspection of Easton LEA (AF8.1, p. 32) subsequently noted that support for governing bodies was unsatisfactory, while 'communication on specific issues relating to a school is poor'. As Hillside's internal systems and processes began to improve, the school's demand for advice and services seems to have increased beyond the LEA's ability to respond. Mr Moore wrote to the LEA director:

> We become increasingly dependent on the council to bring staffing and budgetary issues to a conclusion. Unless there is effective exit support, we are unable to remove unsatisfactory staff (AF8.5).

Two months later, the LEA informed Gerald that it had 'innocently misrepresented your entitlement to a retirement package' (AF8.4). No progress had been made in resolving the employment position of several teachers who had agreed to leave (personal communication). The Inspection of Easton LEA report (AF8.1, p. 6) included the recommendation that the LEA should 'improve the effectiveness of its personnel services'.

Once his new schemes were written, Mr Moore embarked on individual interviews with every member of staff. Elaine reported her perception of these exchanges:

> He has had a half hour/ three quarters of an hour chat with everybody ... build up a profile of each one of them so that they have had opportunities to talk to him one to one. I think they were quite blown away by him when they first met him, because he is quite impressive and I can remember the first time I met him, it was like being hit by a heavy blunt instrument ... he has tried to be honest and straightforward (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

Mr Moore's plan to improve the quality of teaching involved:

> Training in monitoring and evaluation to establish/agree a model lesson for Hillside: Consultancies (me & all staff) on personal development ... Message that I'll train them like hell to get through OFSTED hoops and that those who don't need training can help others who do (MD, p. 6).

His interviews with staff members did not entirely clarify how far stress and breakdown could be attributed to individual or school factors. He noted that '66% of the teachers (were) found to be satisfactory ... there are some outstanding teachers' (LT: Chris Moore, 16.i.2) and sympathised with the:

> ...excellent people who never deserved to be caught up in the fiasco of a failing school ... who think they've failed in some way; who've been humiliated in public for their leader's faults ... they give themselves absolutely and unreservedly (to the school) (MD, p. 26).

But he also identified a group of teachers who had been recruited during the final phase of Hillside's decline, when the school had become unpopular with parents and was known locally to be an unwise career move:

> We have at least 8 teachers whose careers have been seriously broken by redundancy, periods of unemployment, re-deployment or unintended absence from the (job) market (MD, p. 112).

When he had seen everyone he reflected that:

> ...there's a shortage of yuppies, nobody's ever gone anywhere for a very long time ... people have forgotten what an interview is (LT: Chris Moore, 16.i.2).

His overall impression was that:

> People seem so defeated, so lacking in power that 'politics' is not really the word. They're not inert, they're very much together ... (but when) I asked the consultative group about (micro) politics ... they immediately said: 'Smokers and non-smokers' (MD, p. 160).

During the personal interviews, Mr Moore heard stories that he struggled to interpret. William, for example, was an RE teacher, Mr Wake's last appointment:

> He describes his career in teaching - age 40 and he has been made redundant, reorganized and otherwise unfortunate over and over again, even beginning his career with three or four maternity leaves where the mother returned against expectations. Now his car has gone and he needs a loan and he's wondering whether his temporary post will last and is too old for a head of department and too junior (+1 permanent) for a deputy. He is an honest man and knows he's good at GCSE results and that's about it. He teaches in this open double bay with Richard and they listen to one another, video and lecture, day in, day out ... my sense is that he's a worthwhile human being who has been horribly treated, just like almost everyone at Hillside (MD, p. 34).

A few were visibly distressed:

> ...one or two in tears remembering the Ofsted experience. They're just gutted by it to the point of whatever nervous state they were in before Ofsted, it was much worse after (LT: Chris Moore, 16.i.2).

**Financial Crisis**

As the personal development interviews progressed, the head received a detailed report on the school's finances from the retired deputy head, brought in to investigate after Gerald's breakdown:

> We're nearly £165,000 down in April Y2. The numbers have dropped (by 20%) ... since the last budget was made (and it) ... was underpinned by a (previous) under-spend and an over-allocation. We must repay the over-allocation (about £45k) and there is no money to fund the 5/12ths from April – August Y2. This increases the degree of reduction required thereafter. Without better figures I must be cautious but we could need to lose up to 14 teachers (MD, p. 15).

Mr Moore decided to tell the staff, although the prospect of 14 redundancies would be devastating for them, on the grounds that the news would 'leak out anyway' (MD, p. 15). The strategic issue, however, was whether or not to tell the LEA. Should Hillside:

> ...keep it to ourselves and perform heroic surgery in private in the hope of surviving and building up numbers slowly in Y3 and Y4; or talk it through with the LEA, providing perfect ammunition for closure(?) ... the figures prove what they want; not viable, too expensive, no children (MD, pp. 15 - 16).

There was so much suspicion and mistrust between the school and the LEA that he doubted whether there was sufficient common ground for a satisfactory solution (MD, p. 16). After a successful, well-attended open evening with improved displays, Mr Moore met with the PAG chair to agree strategy (MD, p. 17). As a result he prepared a paper, entitled: 'Case Study: How to Destroy a School', that blamed the local authority for the budget crisis:

> As a direct result of the LEA's actions, Hillside has suffered a catastrophic loss of pupils which has induced a serious financial crisis. No discussions have taken place as to how this may be resolved (MD, p. 21).

A week later the head and the PAG chair agreed that 'the financial problem is not catastrophic. The action plan reductions may be enough, though there's the double jeopardy of the LEA reorganization (next year)' (MD, p. 31). They decided to invite the LEA director to visit the school and to use 'the paper as the focus and possible blackmail if they are unresponsive' (MD, p. 31).

After attending Staff Forum, a group that had aired complaints and grievances under Mr Wake and Mr Goodlad, Mr Moore was irritable, mainly because they raise 'lots of detail about things that don't work' (MD, p. 32). Later he reflected:

> I dislike the procedure they've lumbered themselves with ... they're genuine in working for the good of the school and not at all antagonistic or difficult. But I didn't try too hard to reassure ... I want them to think a bit about what staff forum is for and how it should relate to me' (MD, p. 62).

He preferred the separate Consultative Group that he had established himself. It included union representatives, teacher governors and the chair of Staff Forum. Consultative Group members all held temporary promotion points and had been active in the campaign to save the school (MD, p. 32). He explained the school's dilemma and promised that when the teaching structure was revised and reduced in the spring, no process for filling posts or identifying redundancies would be adopted without their agreement and commented:

> A rash promise but I'm determined to manage the internal reorganization and restructuring so that there is the least possible damage (MD, p. 32).

Mr Moore used the daily staff briefing, Staff Forum, the Consultative Group and senior management meetings to explain the circumstances of each major decision or development (e.g. budget reductions, curriculum changes, staff structure, secondary

review, HMI monitoring) so that his colleagues had time to assimilate and understand what was happening. Keeping staff 'on board and keeping them happy was a very, very important objective' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2).

All these groups agreed to what Mr Moore described as a 're-launch' after half term (MD, p. 38). The working day would be adjusted so that there was time for tutorial work, using a set of materials to be provided by Graham. An assembly scheme would be introduced so that a variety of appropriate SMSC themes could be included, while in future all staff would be required to maintain careful lesson plans and to be observed against the 'common approach' criteria agreed on the training day at the start of term (MD, p. 38).

The director visited on the last day before the half-term holiday and met with the head and deputies. There was 'no need for my paper or a nuclear device ... because (he) ... agreed to all I wanted' (MD, p. 39). There was immediate agreement that the action plan should be reviewed to see whether the objectives could be achieved more cheaply; that the LEA would support Mr Moore's plan to restructure the school's staffing; that the LEA would check and verify the budget figures that had been presented and approve a deficit recovery plan spread over several years if necessary; and would work positively to deal with the senior teacher who had disrupted Mr Moore's reforms (MD, p. 39).

Although the outcome was satisfactory, Mr Moore was surprised to find the director was 'nervous of me' and worried that 'my two main objectives (survival and exit SM) still seem a long way away' (MD, p. 40).

**Pressure and Support**

David Brown, the geographer who believed he had 'lost my way' (see chapter 5, p. 123) after the OFSTED inspection, was one of the first teachers called in for a personal development consultancy. When he broke down and described how OFSTED had

undermined him (MD, p. 29), Mr Moore was sympathetic and questioned the wisdom of a harsh policy on poor performance:

> When we've harried people into despair, damaged everyone's confidence ... how will standards rise? What is the management trick that's needed? The teachers of Hillside have been victimised for faults that aren't their fault. There are some poor teachers but they're all good people doing their best ... Think of (the maths teacher) sitting in the smoking room for an hour before the day starts; empty, hopeless and almost helpless. Shall we sack him, improve standards? ... Or David? Let's have them all out. Then who'll apply for their jobs? And we, diminished because we are not an island, where shall we be? (MD, p. 30)

Mr Moore offered to help David Brown come to terms with the new, OFSTED-based agenda. They agreed an extended mentoring programme, backed up by external training in geography methods. Elaine, the deputy head responsible for humanities, and herself a geography teacher, warned Mr Moore about David's track record:

> ...there was an awful lot of unpleasantness about the previous head of department ... he did support him a great deal in ways that he either didn't see, or refused to see or couldn't see ... you have got a very complicated individual there who plays different games depending on what mood he's in or how he sees things (IT: DH, 10.vi.2).

Mr Moore also compared notes with Jenny, the new head of humanities appointed by Mr Goodlad to sort out the department:

> (Mr Goodlad) told me the department had two exceptionally talented teachers and two teachers who struggled and your job is to have two struggling teachers come to some sort of acceptable standard ... So if

> these two people had difficulties, obviously one prong was the (external training) ... but what my priority had to be was to raise their awareness of how to deliver quality teaching and learning (IT: HOD, 5.vi.2).

David Brown had buttonholed Jenny on her first day at Hillside:

> ...he more or less told me his history of involvement at Hillside. His history with the head, the past head of department and the history of his back illness and his experience of OFSTED and more or less told me he was hoping for better things from me ... I had in the back of my mind that he had something specifically wrong with him that he wanted me to know about (IT: HOD, 5.vi.2).

David had also described his OFSTED lesson to his new head of department:

> ...he was standing in the room and things were going on around him and he had no power to control what was happening ... as if he was standing in a tunnel really and the lesson was just going badly wrong in front of him with the inspector sitting there ... there was far more to it than somebody numbed by the fear of being inspected (IT: HOD, 5.vi.2).

Mr Moore's initial lesson observation was positive. There were 'only seventeen (students) in the room and hands up all the time' (MD, p. 37). The walls were decorated with maps, children's work, and pictures from around the world. Mr Moore thought the lesson was 'highly organized' (MD, p. 37) and afterwards enjoyed leading David through the self-evaluation pro forma. Although he was 'on the whole ... impressed', he explained to David that 'while the lesson is complex with lots of variety ... his teaching was itself one-paced. He has the same tone and approach consistently' (MD, p. 37).

When Mr Moore next visited, three weeks later, his reaction was very different:

> I saw David's first lesson with year 11. He was very worried about me seeing it because the class is difficult. What I saw was 13 children sitting passively while he struggled to string a lesson together out of a couple of test sheets (and a map) ... his pace was slow, his responsiveness to the pupils poor ... You'd be scraping him from the wall after lesson one (in a school where class size was larger) and rescuing him from drowning in his own tears ... by the end of the day ... He did not follow the planner, didn't explain links with previous work, didn't propose lesson outcomes, didn't suggest how to tackle the test, accepted answers when they were shouted out, didn't organize departure (MD, p. 109).

Mr Moore conferred with the head of humanities. Jenny questioned how long the school could tolerate David 'switching children off and generating incidents' (MD, p. 109) and reported her own observation: 'I noticed that there wasn't a lot of interaction at all, between him and the students, there certainly didn't appear to be much (discussion) or group work going on at all' (IT: HOD, 5.vi.2). The number of disciplinary incidents was increasing:

> He (wants) to go from 1 to 10 immediately and ignore the bits he could do himself and bring them straight to me ... The strategy in someone who is a passive aggressive, who is complaining and trying to dump things on your doorstep (IT: HOD, 5.vi.2).

The deputy reported a steady flow of complaints from the children:

> ...a lot of kids don't relate to him particularly well and complain about him. They complain in social terms that they don't like him as an

> individual and some have complained ... because they don't feel they get anywhere (IT: DH, 10.vi.2).

Elaine also suggested a common thread running through their cases of poor performance:

> ...look what we've dealt with so far this year. All those people who are dealing with things poorly in the classroom. I hesitate to use the word bonkers, but that's what we're looking at aren't we? (IT: DH, 10.vi.2)

Mr Moore concluded that the school was 'reaching the end of the support phase' (MD, p. 109). David was 'incredibly reluctant' to meet that afternoon for an evaluation of the year eleven lesson. When asked why he had not made the learning points more explicit, he answered: 'they know it, it's obvious'. 'So why were you teaching it?' asked Mr Moore (MD, p. 109). David Brown was at first 'tough and depressed ... then soft' and concluded: 'It looks as though it's back to the drawing board for me, I thought I was making progress' (MD, p. 109).

David complained to Peter, the pastoral deputy, about this interview (MD, p. 113), perhaps because he recognised the head's changed opinion. Meanwhile, Mr Moore recorded his conclusion that: 'David is hopeless and would be kicked to pieces by normal size classes' (MD, p. 113). He was like a 'lead weight ... dragging Jenny down and she's weary of it' (MD, p. 136). As competency proceedings now seemed inevitable, Mr Moore decided to disengage from his personal involvement with David. He arranged for Peter to take over responsibility for the mentoring programme.

After Christmas (Y2), Mr Moore had to deal with a sequence of complaints and incidents concerning David Brown. Two girls objected to being separated from one another in geography. The head mediated between them and their teacher, listening to both sides of the story before inviting them to meet with him over lunch (MD, p. 201, p. 234):

> It was one of those gratifying occasions when the work was already done. Samantha said she felt she'd been wrong to blame Mr Brown. 'I've worked much better since I've been sitting on my own.' She pulled out her geography book to show me. Obviously a neat, well-organized candidate. David explains his point of view ... 'I certainly haven't got a thing about you.' ... Both leave happily (MD, p. 234).

When a father complained about his son's lack of progress at a parents' evening, and asked whether the boy could give up geography, Mr Moore offered reassurance:

> I've observed four full lessons ... and am fully convinced that whilst you can't guarantee a student enjoying a particular teacher, his lessons are competent and contain all a serious individual would need to achieve the desired result (MD, p. 223).

This reassurance was unexpectedly endorsed by HMI during their January Y2 monitoring visit: 'David is praised for a lesson, which sends him home deliriously happy ... When I mention all the work on David but indicate my worries they refer to his "good" lesson' (MD, p. 242, p. 244).

Within a few weeks, David was reported to be suffering from depression. Jenny told the head: 'there is so much undealt with in David's personal history it will be remarkable if he lasts' (MD, p. 315). Mr Moore believed that the number of incidents with children 'have increased in volume as David's personal problems have increased. He's attending therapy and the children are treated with impatience and lack of consideration' (MD, p. 355). In the space of a single week, David was involved in an unseemly scuffle with a girl who refused to handover her personal stereo; slapped a boy round the back of the head 'to get his attention'; and dragged another girl to the front of the class where he insisted that she explain the difference between a stalactite and stalagmite (MD, p. 355).

Mr Moore thought that schools like Hillside were prone to collect 'vulnerable individuals' (MD, p. 330), while Jenny believed that inspection was often the trigger for nervous collapse, touching the 'genie' people carried around with them: 'Whatever it was, OFSTED touched the button and I could predict how people would react, who'd break down' (MD, p. 330). Both considered that something had to be done, despite David's delicate and unpredictable state of mind. As Jenny later remarked:

> It's like a student in a class whose problems, emotional/behavioural problems are such that they take up a lot of teacher time. You have to judge how far your strategies are helping that child and how far they affect the rest of the class (IT: HOD, 5.vi.2).

Mr Moore wanted his moves 'to have an element of surprise' but worried there was 'a risk of tipping David over the edge' (MD, p. 355). An outside adviser warned him 'to be careful' and suggested that David would either go sick or call in his union (MD, p. 355).

When he eventually met with David, the meeting was 'highly charged' (MD, p. 372):

> I negotiated my way through the three incidents. He denies physical contact. He didn't drag. 'Why has the girl made it up? Do you allow for the impact you have, the impression you leave? These children were pretty fired up, pretty angry.' I work to establish a common pattern of David, wound up himself, winding children up. He denies he's worse this term than last. I use the example of his reaction to comments I made as a mentor. 'You're defensive, get angry, that's what children do when you put them on the spot.' He acknowledges that he did pull the girl to the front (to explain the difference between stalactites and stalagmites). 'How could you do that?' We have to break when I've not reached a natural resting point but I'm confident I've opened up explicitly the question of David's relationships with children. I've begun to hint at the degree of reliance on the system, on

> Jenny. But I suggest we go away and think and come back to look at it again. David is very thoughtful and I wonder how he will react as the case develops. My next step is to open up the incident sheet issue and to set some targets for improvement. 'Your relationships must improve' may prove an interesting objective. 'Accept responsibility yourself, don't lean.' Teaching touches the heart of what we are so thoroughly that any performance or capability issue pressed to a logical conclusion must inevitably destroy the person concerned. You are under a remorseless searchlight tracking your least successful moments. No wonder Ofsted prompts such fear and trembling (MD, p. 372).

Six weeks later, when David returned from stress-related illness, the conversation continued:

> At lunchtime I resume my discussion with David and Jenny. I find acceptable ways to describe his problems with students and negotiate our perceptions to lodge the idea that youngsters often react negatively to him. At first he denies; then accepts. Initially he's reluctant to challenge, then he gets cross and can be very powerful. Jenny and I tell him how he impacts on us. 'You're not always an easy person, David, you can be very assertive, very demanding, you want us to solve your problems. Imagine how it feels to be a thirteen year old who doesn't want to learn geography!' I talk about the need to woo children ... 'You have to win them over, make the reluctant learners want to be with you' ... Jenny suggests that David spends too much time at the front; I remind him of my impression, an unsmiling presence behind the OHP. 'You need to smile, to engage, to include ... I know this is like riding a bike, easy if you can do it' ... Isn't pace the problem - time enough for trouble? We agree to meet next term when he's had time to try another style, to avoid some of the conflict. 'If things go

> wrong, try to remember what made you cross, what it was that caused you to react as you did, why the students reacted as they did' (MD, p. 420/421).

A month later, David burst into tears when Jenny challenged him about the apparent mismanagement of the GCSE coursework and was so distressed that Peter had to take him home (MD, p. 492). Jenny thought his sudden collapse was because 'as the exams approached I think he panicked more that he hadn't done as much preparation as he might have' (IT: HOD, 5.vi.2). Mr Moore believed that David had already 'half destroyed himself without my raising a finger' (MD, p. 492) and hoped the problem was resolved when a sick note arrived to cover the next month:

> He is the fifth long term absentee ... On paper he's a victim of OFSTED; of Moore; of Hillside. I don't now buy it. He's a profoundly unhappy man who has great difficulties sustaining relationships with children and adults. His self-esteem problem leads him into endless misery (MD, p. 505).

To everyone's surprise, however, David rang Jenny about returning to work. He was unsure whether he could cope with Mr Moore's demands (MD, p. 556). According to Jenny, Mr Moore:

> ...had come to be the person he projected all ill on to ... You were then denounced ... as the person putting on too much pressure. My personal opinion is that you are only expecting him to be professionally responsible (IT: HOD, 5.vi.2).

But David was also dissatisfied with the help he had received from Jenny as head of humanities:

> He said to me many times that I haven't helped because comparing himself to me, I am a very, very different teacher and that hasn't helped him (IT: HOD, 5.vi.2).

Determined that David should not return to school for a few days then disappear again, Mr Moore insisted on a meeting with him before he resumed classroom duties (MD, p. 562). As far as the head was concerned, 'it is important to clear up his allegations about my supposed "pressure". Incidents will occur and I do not intend to be blocked by fear of his accusation' (MD, p. 562). David agreed to the meeting without demur and told the head that he was very much better. His doctor had advised him 'not to give up taking the tablets, he believes the problems may well be chemically induced'. He insisted that he no longer had dark dreams in which the head appeared 'as a demon' (MD, p. 599).

Elaine believed that David was a 'lost cause':

> If you are particularly tangled and particularly complex and you're having difficulty in seeing where other people are coming from and see how where you are coming from is seen by them, you know all the perceptions are all mixed up, then you're never really going to get very far ... the best teachers are those who've got a fairly clear vision about what they're doing, a clear vision about how it's perceived and can handle that (IT: DH, 10.vi.2).

David continued to teach at Hillside for a further two years.

**Leadership: Impact & Response**

At first, Mr Moore startled the teachers and students at Hillside. Some were suspicious after their recent ordeal:

> We have had three heads in such a short time ... What has Mr Moore come in here to do? It might be quite innocent – to get on with the job; or has he been given another brief? We don't know. I might get on fine with him, but you have got to ask that – you just don't know the answer (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2).

Elaine sensed that 'A lot of trust is being withheld and people are approaching everybody now with caution because they are not quite sure what is going on ... I don't know if they know quite exactly how much they can trust us any more' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). She also pointed to a sharp difference in style between Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore:

> Mr Moore ... is bigger words and longer sentences and he is that bit more academic in his approach to the kids than Mr Goodlad was ... Mr Moore seems a little more remote from the kids and he doesn't have that kind of empathy with them ... he has a procession of kids to his door to talk to him (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

But people were soon responding to his positive attitude. The caretaker said: 'Mr. Moore's got the personality and he is a wonderful person ... smiling, approachable, follows things ... and you feel you have got his support' (IT: CT, 4.xii.2). The head of careers appreciated receiving a note of thanks for saying that he had done 'a grand job' with work experience: 'I have never ever been told that before ... it is little things like that goes a long way – someone has noticed me! ... Mr Wake, he did nothing, not a thing' (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2). Colleagues began to value his 'open door policy to staff and students' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2) while a head of department noticed that senior management were now 'very quick to praise, verbally and in writing' and was 'impressed by the regard in which I feel (held). I certainly feel an equal' (IT: HOD, 15.vi.2). Younger teachers 'don't feel reluctant to speak now ... you can see Mr Moore taking on board the information but saying well yes but...' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2).

Students were initially said to be a bit wary of Mr Moore, 'because his predecessor was so good' but by December Y2 they were said to be warming to him because 'he is seen as

a firm headteacher who is consistent ... and fair' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). 'If a child complains about a teacher ... he always likes to get right to the bottom of an issue' (IT: PA, 29.iii.2). Students also liked his sociability, for example:

> ...the way he was willing to get up on stage and dance during the Diwali evening ... it helped bring a human quality, that you don't have to be stuffy if you are a headteacher (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2).

Elaine described the change in attitudes:

> They are getting used to him ... I think they quite like him but I think they are taking their time to make their minds up. He is not the kind of person I would have thought that the kids would instantly latch on to because ... he has a sort of intellectual remoteness about him from them that they won't immediately be able to grab hold of but they find him perfectly approachable and talkable to when they come across him (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

Some staff were encouraged by his enthusiasm and recognised that he wanted to 'shift the culture from blaming staff to a supportive, collaborative one' (IT: PG, 6.ii.2). The caretaker noticed that Mr Moore had 'introduced all this hard work. He's the first one here in the mornings and the last one to go so it just shows, you know, how hard he works and obviously wants everybody else to follow' (IT: CT, 4.xii.2). A head of department thought 'He has got a lot of enthusiasm, a lot of drive, seems to exist to work' (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2). Others said he 'expect(ed) an awful lot of staff' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2). He produced 'loads of paper-work ... (and) sets up loads of meetings' (IT: PA, 28.i.2). People saw him as:

> Absolutely relentless ... does not tolerate mediocrity and he's clear to people ... but he is also prepared to go very softly until the point

> where he feels that there is no more capacity in that person to deliver (IT: PG, 11.xii.3).

Everything was 'much more clearly defined than it was before' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2), especially in terms of line management. He inspected the school before public events occurred, to the dismay of colleagues who had worked hard on the displays in their rooms:

> I mean he walked through this suite of rooms just before Open Evening ... looked round and said 'It's quite good but there's some old stuff.' I had six different displays one of which was old because that one wasn't quite ready ... I can do with a bit more support than that. We all need to feel valued and praised (IT: HOD, 6.i.3).

The PAG chair realized that Mr Moore would be useful in the campaign ahead. He described the new head as:

> ...energetic with a strong intellect ... knows how to carry things through, honest but a political operator - a strategist (who is) clear about where he can put his energies. Knows how to get on board influential people (IT: PG, 4.xii.2).

Parents, too, were pleased with Mr Moore's arrival:

> The (parents) admire him. That level of positive regard ... is quite an important feature of running a school. On key occasions he's at community events and presents sharply and well. People are slightly in awe of him, but that is not unhelpful. I think people who have actually needed to speak to him have found him very approachable and warm, so that's OK (IT: PG, 11.xii.2).

The parents knew that 'a minor revolution has been brought about' (IT: PG, 11.xii.3) while 'young people in the school have spoken to (visitors) ... in glowing terms ... They have been talking with pride ... about their team. There is a strengthened sense of identity with the school, a sense of belonging' (IT: PG, 11.xii.3).

Mr Moore concluded his diary for the first half of term with the words: 'Goodness, I've worked hard' (MD, p. 41).

# Chapter 7 Dictatorial Powers

## Kitchen Cabinet

After the half-term holiday, advertisements were drafted and placed for the business manager and office manager posts created by the Support Staff Review (MF1.16). Mr Moore found it strange to be 'working on this now, weeks after the review' (MD, p. 49) and told himself that it was nonsense to believe you could 'turn a school round in a week, fortnight, term' (MD, p. 49). Gerald was out of action and neither of the vacancies could be filled before January (Y2). Fortunately the review also confirmed and extended the role of head's personal assistant, established on an informal basis by Mr Goodlad (MD, p. 1), so there were immediate benefits. Anne showed that she was prepared 'to work indefinitely for the perfect finish' (MD, p. 532) and became a member of the informal inner cabinet, acting as chief of staff to the head and two deputies and managing Hillside's personnel administration (MF1.16, p. 7).

Like Elaine and Peter, Anne had been a junior member of staff before Mr Goodlad arrived (MD, p. 1). Under Mr Moore, she managed a constant flow of business, including appointments, correspondence and documentation for the governor and staff committees and working parties that began to flourish during the autumn (Y2), as well as the paperwork for senior management, OFSTED and the PAG. She co-ordinated and advised the chair of governors, the clerk to the governors, the PAG chair and many other official and unofficial visitors to the school. Mr Moore considered that 'her common sense, ability to anticipate problems and read situations makes her more like a deputy than a secretary' (MD, p. 105). She alerted Mr Moore to hazards ahead, informing him about unhelpful staff and shifts of opinion within the school and community (MD, p. 46, p. 69). Although she was not herself perceived to be involved in manoeuvring for position, she was an 'indispensable part of the information network' (MD, p. 46) and ensured that new systems and procedures became operational. A deputy commented: 'The school would stop running without her' (MD, p. 46). Mr Moore wondered 'how many managers realize

how dependent they are on their "kitchen" cabinet and deliberately organize their work/school around it?' (MD, p. 46).

Elaine and Peter proved equally satisfactory. Elaine's 'work on the curriculum is brilliant. She has managed the group superbly and produced a series of closely reasoned broadsheets with all the implications and possibilities worked through' (MD, p. 78). When he was tempted to interfere with Elaine's curriculum plan she was 'very, very crestfallen' (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2) and he changed his mind, realizing that he had promised to implement whatever the staff working group proposed:

> ...it is not right now for me to come in and start second guessing and throwing up all these questions ... I apologised and she was thoroughly relieved (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2).

Peter was very successful in leading the pastoral team. A year head commented: 'There's no hidden agenda, he does it for the good of the school' (MD, p. 557), while students and staff regarded him as 'hands on' (MD, p. 557), realizing that he found it difficult to give up his direct involvement with the pastoral casework that had been his main responsibility as a year head six months previously. Peter helped design the ACCESS database to monitor progress and watched attendance 'which could easily slip before the next monitoring visit' (MD, p. 289). With his tutoring and mentoring working group, he produced a stream of policies and procedures, including admissions, induction (MF1.5), attendance and punctuality (MF1.6), homework (MF1.8) and mentoring (MF1.9).

Mr Moore also used the deputies to check his own impact. Elaine told him that 'everyone's tired and you mustn't overload them' (MD, p. 32), advice he valued because he was uncomfortably aware of his tendency to be 'driven by the demands of the agenda, by action plans, by fear, by excitement and then transmit it to others' (MD, p. 32). Later he was reassured that the deputies 'have got used to my drive, they haven't asked me to slow down much in the last few months ... (even) when I've double checked with them' (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2). Mr Moore also intervened to protect the deputies when they ran

into troubles of their own. When a student complained that Elaine was missing lessons to work on management issues he was told: 'She's already racked with guilt, she doesn't need you to tell her!' (MD, p. 225)

The formal senior management team was scheduled to meet once a week and soon became a much less congenial grouping. Julian was a senior teacher, responsible for modern languages and assessment, and like Sidney very much regretted his decision not to take early retirement at the same time as Mr Wake and the others who had departed before Mr Goodlad's arrival in March (Y1). Unhappy with Mr Moore's insistence on long meetings and overcrowded agendas, Julian protested:

> (he) has seen me a number of times about the need to reduce meeting commitments and each time I've ducked and postponed resolution. I twice asked him to work on (a time plan for) 1265 hours but when he did nothing I let the matter rest (MD, p. 77).

Julian next raised the matter at the weekly senior management meeting:

> SMT began with Julian declaring that he would be leaving at 4.30 come what may and complaining about the length of Monday's staff meeting and about the content, which he felt was unjustified. He didn't allow me to laugh it off, repeated his determination to go and wanted to know what I would do about it. 'Get the governors on to me?' I responded pretty angrily and did not succeed in hiding my annoyance (MD, p. 80).

The meeting became 'intensely uncomfortable' (MD, p. 80), with the others embarrassed and startled by the strength of Mr Moore's reaction. But he felt there was no alternative:

> Julian is one of those who speaks with authority, wisdom and conviction (which I know I won't change) and I ... am quite clear he

> can't have it his way. It is ... because nobody met to discuss anything that the school got into its difficulties but (he) grew up with, was happy under, and doesn't see the problems with, the old regime. He is a survivor, trapped on a journey he's fed up with by the new pension rules. His role models are the warp and weft of him and I've no hope of influence but can't discount the challenge. The contribution was only the latest of a number of similar challenges (MD, p. 80).

Mr Moore told him that he had 'no hope of understanding, never mind contributing to, a discussion (of the) curriculum scheme in 40 minutes' (MD, p. 81) but his response was to tell the head 'to get on with the agenda' (MD, p. 81). Afterwards, talking with Elaine, Mr Moore was upset, believing that he had mishandled Julian's truculence. Elaine was at pains to reassure him. 'Julian put you on the spot, that's Julian ... the overall picture is good' (MD, p. 83).

Mr Moore acknowledged that the particular combination of personalities in the senior group had produced 'de facto ... two management teams' (MD, p. 7) and described a typical meeting of the full SMT:

> SMT is a fair non-event, as it's set up to be. Sidney isn't trusted so people are cautious what they say; Julian's ready to go before it starts; Donna needs time to unwind before she'll talk easily; Graham worries about departmental issues ... the easiness of Elaine, Peter and I is lost in the confused agendas of those present (MD, p. 229).

The head and deputies formed a cohesive, closely co-ordinated inner cabinet, meeting several times a day to take decisions and work up policies that were then presented for comments at the weekly full SMT. Sidney and Julian would offer opinions and occasionally introduce issues of their own. Mr Moore regarded these as potentially dangerous. Julian, for example, persisted with his demand that the school's time budget be recalculated, knowing that the extra meetings introduced by Mr Moore had overloaded

the official 1265 hour allowance (The School Teachers' Pay and Conditions document specifies 1265 hours directed time). Mr Moore's response was to ask Elaine to lead a working group, including union representatives, to complete a full review by the end of the academic year (MD, p. 80/81):

> I don't trust senior management to deliver what I want. Trust is a vital basis for any effective political grouping (MD, p. 447).

He manoeuvred around the group of people brought together by Mr Goodlad, frustrated because:

> I need dictatorial powers to deal with problems and my colleagues do persist in behaving as though a little tweak here and there and things'll be able to carry on in the same comfortable old way (MD, p. 107).

**Disappeared Without Address**

As the individual interviews continued, Mr Moore began a series of classroom tours to improve his knowledge of the teaching and embarked on a round of lunches with departmental staff to discuss improvement. At first he was unsure what to make of the lessons he saw:

> I wander round the school twice, visiting most classrooms ... Di's poor relations with students were evident ... she seems to have no 'knack', her responses seem naturally brittle and too much ... There are others where the teachers teach sitting down. Ian is in his chair as if he were on the bridge of the Enterprise. Everywhere there are rows and writing. But the behaviour is good ... The whole atmosphere, from my perspective, remains unnatural, with small classes, passive teaching strategies and lots of empty space (MD, p. 48).

He concluded that Di 'doesn't allow people enough space, doesn't communicate calm, seems impatient ... (She) is o.k. provided she hasn't to deal with people; (but) Damian can't deal with anything' (MD, p. 68). Several lessons were judged unequivocally poor, however:

> William's teaching is as dire as I imagined. He doesn't explain or introduce or summarise or round up. He just ploughs into abstract activities the children don't really like or understand and talks over the top of everyone until the time runs out, providing a negative, discouraging commentary on everything he can think of. The tasks are straight from the book (MD, p. 70).

He wondered how to debrief the teacher without being negative but was surprised when William admitted the lesson was 'crap' and agreed that he had not completed the required scheme of work either. Increasingly, as he coached David Brown and encountered other colleagues with similar problems, Mr Moore recognised that he had to deal with 'nice, well-intentioned, intelligent, personally sad, almost tragic figures' but 'they are ... failing to perform the basics of the job' (MD, p. 71). The question was how to 'sustain morale and deal with this level of problem'. Elaine told him to take the issues 'one at a time' (MD, p. 71).

Some personal interviews were depressing. Two staff declared their desire to leave:

> Y wants to go. This leaves the field clear ... what a difference it will make to lose them ... Cigarettes, chat, 'ain't it awful' and low levels of output are the main features of the pair (MD, p. 50).

Another 'disappeared without address for an indefinite period' and 'moved on to depression, divorce and homelessness' (MD, p. 65). The consultations also revealed that several colleagues were dreaming of retirement:

> Why do conversations revert to retirement and opting out so often, even amongst those who are making little visible effort? Or perhaps it is an effort for them (MD, p. 89).

One long-serving teacher had calculated that 'compared with retirement, he is working for £300 per month' (MD, p. 85), a thought no doubt prompted by the premature retirement of five colleagues the previous term. A young member of staff, made redundant from a previous school, had become ill in the immediate aftermath of the OFSTED inspection and by the end of term was unable to go on: 'I felt good when I said I'd come back but I've been ever so worried about it' (MD, p. 454). She said that she didn't mind the children but was 'overwhelmed' by the other demands of the job, like marking course work, collecting absence notes, attending meetings and working at night.

Mr Moore asked himself whether she had been 'vulnerable in the first place, with shallow reserves of energy?' (MD, p. 455) He concluded that she 'has a very wide range of skills (but) has been squeezed' (MD, p. 455) so that even the least effort caused tiredness, sleeplessness and acute anxiety. Others seemed detached from reality and provoked complaints from their colleagues and students. The children said of one teacher that they couldn't 'understand what he wants them to do' and were upset that 'he insists on silence' (MD, p. 12) when they asked for an explanation. A distressed group catalogued numerous occasions when their teacher 'refused to explain work or to help them or has exploded unreasonably' (MD, p. 360). Mr Moore began to investigate a complaint and was immediately frustrated by the teacher's response:

> He wants to argue about the meaning of words, the philosophy of language, the motives of others ... he's all over the place in an ordinary conversation, never mind a lesson (MD, p. 57).

On another occasion, checking out a critical judgement in the inspection report, Mr Moore discovered 'an awful cacophony with no obvious teacher interventions or direction. What were they doing and why were they doing it?' (MD, p. 150) In a

neighbouring classroom, he found year eleven students 'doing nothing' and was embarrassed as the teacher told him that 'they can be quite difficult' (MD, p. 150/151) and had been reluctant to read as directed. A more capable teacher saw himself as 'permanently tired' and reported that he had 'learned not to be too energetic and lively because I got exhausted' (MD, p. 363).

The agenda for the departmental lunches was designed to be positive:

> 1. Expected no. GCSE higher grades Y2 & strategies to ensure achievement.
> 2. How to contribute towards the school's reading improvement targets.
> 3. Towards a (development plan). Identify needs: include resources, facilities & training.
> 4. Confirm launch of peer review and operation of (common approach) process.
> 5. Collect views on current assessment methods, scales.
> (MD, p. 42)

The modern linguists used their lunch to protest. Julian told the head: 'We're duplicating here Chris, it's all in the scheme of work, we're wasting time writing things out, our teaching is ok, we're being punished for the failings of others'. Mr Moore's response was to 'read them the inspection report paragraphs on languages, which highlighted exactly the failings the planner is designed to correct' (MD, p. 47/48).

Others were reluctant to change and failed to comply with Mr Moore's requirements for lesson planning and assessment. He noted that 'there are signs that people aren't too keen on the planner, on taking the register; hope to get by in much the same old way' (MD, p. 71). A temporary teacher said that his partner 'doesn't like him working in the evenings' (MD, p. 395) while a head of department 'fills in the planner after the sessions as a record; the opposite of its purpose' (MD, p. 204). Mr Moore decided to take this 'evidence of resistance' as the text for 'a sermon' at morning briefing:

> ...gently reminding people of why we agreed to progress with a

> common planning framework and emphasising that it is not a voluntary activity. We've been caught out for lack of suitable structure, planning and monitoring and now have to be seen to have appropriate procedures (MD, p. 48).

There were flickers of ideological opposition as well as resistance to the increased demands of the job. One experienced and effective teacher 'dislikes the national curriculum' and informed Mr Moore that 'there has to be something outside teaching, there has to be time for family, I'm working all the time already' (MD, p. 103/104). When a good teacher was offered promotion he declined because 'it (would) take up too much of (my) time' (MD, p. 99). A head of department 'readily agrees that he hasn't done the schemes of work. He's had so much to do' (MD, p. 71), and shrugged when told the task was an action plan priority. Across the corridor, another subject leader said he would like to be a restaurateur and intended to 'put family and health' (MD, p. 89, p. 575) first.

**Senior Management Audit**

Although he was still not sure whether he should have a personal role in monitoring lessons (MD, p. 44), Mr Moore used a staff meeting in early November to introduce his proposal that teaching should be monitored by senior and middle managers (MD, p. 75). He believed that with the audit, and a planned 'mock monitoring' visit by the deputies: '...we shall fulfil the action plan's commitment to monitoring and evaluation in spades' (MD, p. 75).

Appraisal and monitoring systems were set up as part of a strategy to 'improve the consistency and quality of teaching', as required by the action plan (MF2.22, 2.27). A senior manager was assigned to each department, with a monitoring role to include observing lessons; discussing the development plan (including staffing, facilities, equipment, resources and training); monitoring the use of the staff and student planners;

and checking homework, marking, behaviour, discipline and the registration of students (MF2.27).

This ensured that the senior staff helped implement a potentially uncomfortable innovation, removed possible sources of opposition and emphasized the positive, developmental aspect of classroom observation. When HMI visited, the inspectors were presented with files of reports on every teacher, each compiled by a senior manager (e.g. MF3.15). Routine audits were supplemented by 'mock monitoring' (MD, p. 71/72) designed to rehearse HMI visits. Mr Moore was concerned that although Hillside had been in special measures for over a year, there had been no contact or communication with OFSTED or the SEU at the DfEE. He began to question whether there were any 'special measures' (MD, p. 16).

At the end of November, the deputies toured the school for two days and simulated the anticipated HMI procedure by unexpectedly entering classrooms, observing parts of lessons, checking behaviour and scrutinising lesson plans, exercise books and assessment records (MF2.21). After Christmas, Mr Moore decided to join the monitoring team himself and challenged a number of staff about their unsatisfactory practice. When one teacher was summoned to explain: 'What is the point of the lesson, why are they drawing cartoons?' (MD, p. 204) he said that he had been ill, that friends of his had died, that his relatives were seriously ill but that: 'None of that was an excuse for what he accepted was, in fact, a disaster' (MD, p. 204). The department head also felt criticised and burst into tears while narrating what had happened. The teacher's short-term contract was not renewed.

'Mock monitoring' yielded 'an enormous volume of material for reflection and action' (MD, p. 471) and supplied the senior team with detailed information about their colleagues' morale and performance. The audit process and subsequent questioning could be remorseless. Mr Moore asked about a departmental handbook, which he described as 'an unusable, motley collection of scraps that won't help anyone teach' (MD, p. 290). Apparently reassured by the reply, 'That's the next priority to sort out' (MD, p. 290), Mr

Moore allowed time for progress to be made. But after further visits by the two deputies, he summoned the member of staff to explain why he did not teach his class more actively (MD, p. 466). The department head complained that it was his 'Second bollicking in two days' (MD, p. 466). The head warned that inspectors would be less than impressed to find rows of quiet children 'set little tasks out of the book' (MD, p. 89).

**Rejects and Pussies**

Although his firm stance had won the support of the staff, Mr Moore found himself drawn into dealing personally with more and more difficult students:

> I'm beginning to worry about the sheer number of serious student/family problems and the keynote of violence; I could be overwhelmed with a social worker's case load at this rate. The work is worthwhile but I don't see how it does more than keep the lid on families who overspill neighbours, school and community (MD, p. 31).

Like Mr Wake and Mr Goodlad, Mr Moore was obliged to accept students excluded from other schools:

> I'm finding it harder and harder to fend off all the rejects from other schools who want to come here ... The delaying process consumes time and energy and isn't particularly effective (MD, p. 36).

The specially contrived admission and induction arrangements (MF1.5) regulated and delayed the arrival of new students but Peter informed the head that parents were too persistent to be discouraged by procedural devices (personal communication). Mr Moore was not surprised by individual cases but found the volume of demanding students worrying:

> I'm not meeting kids I have not met before in various guises (but) I'm learning an enormous amount ... there must be ... 30 per cent Indian/Asian families at Hillside but then everybody else comes off (the Brownville) estate, so you have got a huge cultural mismatch coming into the school and shaping it in ... various ways. So you have got part of a school that is ... aspirational and quite ... middle class in what it wants to do and what it wants to be involved in and then you have got the sort of rump working class Britain which goes along if you treat them right (IT: Chris Moore, 10.xii.2).

Problems with students were compounded by the high rate of staff absence and sickness. Mr Moore noted that five names (the long term sick) had to be placed at the head of the cover list before routine illness and training were considered. The result was that for many students 'two lessons out of the six' could be supply and 'that has a bad impact on discipline, behaviour, attitude' (IT: Chris Moore, 22.vi.2). Although visitors noticed that 'the children ... are so gentle and pleasant compared with what might hit you in other local schools' (MD, p. 229), and an LEA adviser 'used the phrase "pussies" to describe the children's willingness to go along with teachers' (MD, p. 37), 'the number of "off-the-wall" disciplinary cases is pretty high, with some extreme, semi-hysterical behaviour' (MD, p. 45). Reluctant or ineffectual staff combined with the trailing tail of the school's intake to generate a time-consuming caseload of disciplinary incidents. Mr Moore reported that:

> The tally of incidents grows faster than we can deal with them and my diary is swiftly peppered with appointments with parents to disentangle frustration, anger and disaffection between teachers and children (MD, p. 259).

Mr Moore was scrupulous when he investigated complaints by students or staff. According to his assistant:

> If a child complains about a teacher then he has to have the teacher in for a discussion to get their side of the story. Then he has to have the child back (IT: PA, 26.iii.2).

He tried to understand the points of view involved, to support the teacher, however much at fault and to salvage everyone's honour. The aim was to defuse conflict that might prove disruptive and to coax staff and students back to the classroom for work. But as he recorded in his diary:

> You are dealing in human relationships, not crime ... Each case is different, each requires sustained long term help, support and negotiation, each consumes infinite time (MD, p. 480).

Absentees, emotionally vulnerable individuals and weak practitioners diluted the positive impact of those teachers who were able to respond enthusiastically to the changed climate and initiated new extra-curricular activities, public celebrations and more varied teaching methods. As Mr Moore reflected:

> ...people are nothing like as flexible and adaptable as they like to think and rigidity is never more evident than in our characteristic approaches to other human beings, especially children (MD, p. 108).

The head believed the school was 'very vulnerable ... to recycled children excluded from elsewhere' (MD, p. 27), who would have been problematic however skilful the teaching. He expected trouble with an admission 'despite his mother and he proclaiming their desire for education' (MD, p. 27). Another was accepted though he suffered from 'attention deficit syndrome'. At his previous school he had climbed on the roof and given teachers V-signs before expulsion for a violent attack on a fellow pupil. Occasionally Mr Moore was able to avoid admitting a prospective student:

> Dale bridles when pressed, so I press him harder, instinctively seeking the blow up which will destroy his case for admission and maximise his mother's difficulty in complaining about us. 'Will you please leave?' I say. He refuses. He ain't going nowhere without his mum. But I want to talk to her. I ain't going. I don't see how we can take a student who defies the head. His mother gets up and they move towards the door, which Dale kicks with considerable force (MD, p. 541).

In the past, Mr Wake had been blamed for the admission of disaffected students but Mr Moore soon discovered that if there were vacant places there was 'no choice but to admit him' (MD, p. 27).

'Recycled' students were not alone in proving difficult. Some admitted in the ordinary way were equally troublesome and pursued agendas unconnected with GCSE results or achievement of any kind. Katrina was 'intensely intelligent (but) self-destructive' (MD, p. 161). She spent a lot of time in the toilet, meeting up with Tracey between lessons to:

> ...haunt corridors, get into scrapes with other students (who are far from innocent, enjoying too the soap opera of who hates whom and who called whom a white/black bitch/slag) and achieve desperately poor academic grades (MD, p. 162).

One student became a father and 'has shown no interest in school, even when we've offered a part-time schooling package' (MD, p. 183), while a mother was in despair:

> ...acknowledging that her boys often lose their tempers, kicking doors, walls etc. 'My ex was like that, I've holes in the wall to prove it,' she says. 'I wonder if Russ saw too much of him abusing me?' (MD, p. 354).

A particularly volatile student told the head, when questioned about her threatening behaviour and bad language, that her mother had just married a much younger man: 'I don't have a problem with school; I have a problem at home which I bring to school' (MD, p. 25). Another student was more philosophical, confiding over lunch:

> My mum had me when she was 15, she's only 27 now, I'm glad I don't see my dad, he sounds to have been horrid, he knocked her downstairs when she was pregnant with me, I was lucky to live, so I don't see him, I got a CD and a video for Christmas (MD, p. 184).

Mr Moore's diary shows him to have been continuously involved with dysfunctional rather than disaffected students and families, meeting with adults, counselling children and calming staff. Mr Moore found almost all the children 'open and friendly' (MD, p. 184) and recognised that troubled families were no less concerned about their sons and daughters than those in more fortunate circumstances. Parents valued the efforts of pastoral and teaching staff to help their youngsters through personal and emotional problems. He worked to 'negotiate staff attitudes and expectations and avoid flare-ups with parents and children while doing so' (MD, p. 162). Sometimes he was close to despair, commenting that he had been 'sucked into an exhausting morass of student issues' (MD, p. 373) and lost the 'thread of serious planning' (MD, p. 84). Even in the lunch queue, he had to stop a fight. He told them that when 'I hear about a large boy treading on a small boy and the small boy's in tears, I'm prejudiced!' (MD, p. 447)

Disturbed home lives often led to irregular attendance. There were long-term absentees in each form by years 10 and 11, so that the small bottom sets became progressively smaller as the GCSE course progressed. A teacher reported that in year 11 'about seven students decided long ago that French was not for them' (MD, p. 287). Mr Moore and his colleagues questioned the relevance of GCSE for many students who seemed to them 'at risk'.

At one level Mr Moore was concerned with control and harmony; at another he felt a personal engagement with people in trouble. A boy and girl in year eight aggravated one another and were referred to the head:

> Both have experienced abusive families ... Sarah is traumatised, clings to her mother; John erupts with anger when challenged and has already locked his mother in the bathroom. So I have the two round my table (MD, p. 480).

Mr Moore talked them into agreeing to support one another: 'You've both got problems, you both need support, couldn't you be friends?' (MD, p. 481) John declared that 'I ain't doing nothing sloppy' but was incredulous when the head proposed a 'get to know you' bowling trip. In the weeks that followed, Mr Moore intervened repeatedly to remind them of their commitment to one another. The next term, Sarah fell out with a group of girls and her mother transferred her to another school.

Despite these efforts, Mr Moore acknowledged the depth of resistance and drew a despairing conclusion about the young people he knew best:

> If you are a complete loser, you live in an estate nobody wants to live in, there's no jobs, there's no prospects, you've got no chance of getting a GCSE, your parents don't care about you, your teachers think you're horrible, actually it's quite a rational, sensible strategy not to bother. (LT: Chris Moore, 16.i.2).

**No Compulsory Redundancies**

An LEA finance officer brought surprising news that made nonsense of Mr Moore's earlier budget calculations. Although 20 per cent of the student roll had been lost, the Easton LMS formula did not require schools to repay funds over-allocated in April (Y1).

The officer presented the Hillside SMT with a draft budget 'which shows the small school allowance increasing as we lose money through lower numbers' (MD, p. 87):

> It means the budget gap could be half what we were working towards ... we should be able to handle the reductions within the single year and without compulsory redundancies (MD, p. 87).

The overall position was about £100, 000 better than expected. This discovery had a significant impact on the strategic review of the action plan that immediately followed. Mr Moore now believed the required reduction in costs could be achieved by discontinuing temporary contracts. He 'decided not to go for redundancy' (MD, p. 112), even if that meant risking a financial problem in April Y2. Any attempt to preserve the redundancy option by issuing the relevant statutory notices would cost a 'huge amount of ill will' (MD, p. 112). Mr Moore was worried that he had over-estimated 'the scale of the budget problem' but relieved that the 'easier position than we feared' was unlikely to 'traumatise too many people' (MD, p. 94). He was also more confident that the school could afford external appointments to the vacant business manager and office manager posts, which he saw as an essential step towards an efficient administration. Interviews were held and two suitable candidates were appointed.

Reassured on this front, SMT pressed on with plans for new curriculum and staffing structures. One weekend Mr Moore prepared a draft staffing plan, which he gave to Elaine and Peter for comment. The aim was:

> ...to produce a consistent, objective structure to ensure effective management; criteria which ensure fairness and comparability between posts; clear lines of management and responsibility for all aspects of the school's work; management units (e.g. department, year) whose size promotes effective teams; a close match between the school's size/needs and the overall management structure; medium and long term financial stability (MF1.17).

Mr Moore reflected that:

> ...my early morning meetings ... have taken place almost every day this term and have been my main influence route on the school, a vehicle and filter for ideas and progress chasing ... (they) are invaluable, enabling us to monitor the work we're doing, to check progress, to bounce ideas off one another and to ensure calendar and timetable details (MD, p. 92).

He acknowledged that 'I'm 90% pressing forward during these meetings' but found that his deputies' 'judgement is invariably sound and they are a good test base for my initiatives' (MD, p. 92). They agreed 'to progress the review plan through HOD, full staff, governors' strategy and full governors' (MD, p. 78).

Mr Moore's influence was evident in Elaine's curriculum proposals, which she had succeeded in steering through her working group (MD, p. 78). Before Christmas there was 'no obvious dissent from the curriculum scheme' (MD, p. 132) as it passed through all the committees and meetings. By February, however, when the heads of department had assimilated the document, several began to oppose mixed ability. Mr Moore intervened at once to amend the proposal and win their support without reopening the debate. He suggested that each department should have 'flexibility' with clusters of two or three forms:

> Science is resistant but quickly persuaded by my (new) formulation; Humanities is also won over. I convince them that it is wrong to give one department another's sets; and that the option of small bottom sets has all but disappeared ... I declare my intention, which is to short-circuit the debate about mixed ability with my proposal for flexibility. English and Languages are won over (MD, p. 464, p. 467).

As he reported to the governors, when they received a much-amended document in the spring, Hillside would in future offer:

> New entitlement curriculum, including drama and technology in their own right for the first time. Options have been greatly reduced, eliminating uneconomic, low-GCSE output sets. Bottom, sink groups will be eliminated; y7 will be organized as a mixed ability induction year; departments will receive y8 in combinations of 2 or 3 forms to assist flexible grouping; no department will be obliged to adopt another subject's sets ... All teaching groups will be economic and ensure equal opportunities for students and staff (AF9.8).

Mr Moore regarded the stigma of the 'bottom set' as one of the school's fundamental problems and was determined to solve it:

> I think because of the bottom set mentality, we actually have designer misbehaviour here. We actually cause the problems that we then try to solve by repression. I am aiming to go out and win those kids for the school (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2).

**You're not going to shout at me are you?**

Mr Moore continued to tour the school, 'to remind people I exist and to show I listen', but mainly found supply teachers 'supervising people doing not very much' (MD, p. 140). Di was 'struggling with ten less able y7s who seem to have the initiative', while he discovered that one of the English staff was off for the week with stress. Ian was 'supervising children fair-copying manuscript into the computers' and John was 'coaching a tiny maths class' (MD, p. 140). A biologist was 'teaching the characteristics of living things as delightfully as you could imagine' (MD, p. 140). At lunch he encountered a teacher who expected a rebuke:

> She said 'you're not going to shout at me are you?' and I said 'well, what have you done?' and she said 'well, I'm thinking of taking a sandwich out of the hall, will that be alright?' (LT: Chris Moore, 16.i.2)

The exchange reminded him of his earlier perception that: 'Mr Wake is now a scapegoat but I'll be living with his warped images for a long time to come' (MD, p. 2).

Like many staff, Mr Moore was worried about the behaviour of year ten and assembled them for 'a pep talk':

> Not a comfortable group of students at all, untidy in their seats and not very happy with what the school offers them. I embarked on a reasonable but firm path ... Pause to rocket late arrivals ... '(you) hide in the toilets, don't do homework, don't bother with planners, disrupt teachers, interfere with other students ... it isn't satisfactory, you're shooting yourselves in the foot' ... and more in the same vein (MD, p. 129).

He suspected that the assembly was more for the benefit of himself and the staff than the students, who had heard it all before:

> The trouble with this type of approach is that self-belief soon melts. Where is it going? Is it a ritual, unless backed up with sustained action, checks, contacts with parents? The 'good telling off' is very satisfying for staff and you can claim you've done it but on the whole I suspect you just celebrate the misbehaviour you are out to discourage. As I spoke I was already thinking. We can't leave them like this for another two years, accept that year ten carries forward unaltered while the curriculum is renewed for everyone else; we've got (a new year head) taking over in January; so why not remove a form, re-shuffle the

> students ... how about a residential experience? Is this because they lost a dozen brighter children during the implosion last summer? Has the balance swung against positivism? What about the departments? Could we remove some of the tiny groups (MD, p. 129)?

He asked Peter and the new head of year to look at these ideas and offered to fund a programme of adventure training courses at a local centre.

As the end of term finally arrived, with the main budget, curriculum and staffing issues resolved, at least in his own mind, Mr Moore attended the Christmas Extravaganza and reflected on the progress that had been made:

> Two hundred plus parents, staff and children all happily enjoying themselves, this time celebrating Christmas almost for the first time ... How far from their mood of last year, how far they've come, together. And they've done it themselves, through solidarity and determination ... This will do more for the quality of relationships and quality of learning than all the targets in the government book (MD, p. 158).

**Technology**

In early January, the arrival of the new business and office managers, and a phone call from HMI to arrange the first monitoring visit, accelerated the pace of change. According to Mr Moore the newcomers were: 'very positive and easily shocked by Hillside's lack of systems ... new financial systems (are) on their way ... (the office manager) is easily dismayed by the computers and routines' (MD, p. 180). Anne (the head's PA) and Jeanne (the office manager) worked together through the spring and summer to implement sweeping changes to the school's basic procedures. The alterations were summarised in two papers prepared for a conference on schools in special measures. Updating office admin. systems (AF10.2) describes improvements in the postal and filing systems; in the

management of student records; in reprographics; in management information systems; and in the reprographics service.

| Postal System | |
|---|---|
| Old System | New System |
| Separate system for community and school<br>Use of postage stamps | Franking machine<br>Postage tray<br>Deadlines for post<br>Merging community and school post |

| Telephone System | |
|---|---|
| Old System | New System |
| Only rang in reception<br>Limited extensions<br>Use of personal calls not monitored (could ring outside from any extension) | New BT system installed<br>Call box in reception for student & community use<br>Routing system<br>Answer phone installed<br>Record sheets used for all incoming calls<br>Personal message sheets used for staff<br>Outside calls limited on most extensions |

| Student Records | |
|---|---|
| Old System | New System |
| Each department maintained records<br>Admission sheets not held centrally<br>Student records situated at various points throughout the school | Tracking system for transfer students and admissions<br>New admission sheet drawn up and situated in the office<br>Sorting out of student records and filing system<br>Use of photograph importer for quick reference<br>Updating records monthly both on paper return to LEA and SIMS (School Information Management System[1]) |

Setting up systems (AF10.1) details improvements in communications with parents and students; in the management of exclusions; in personnel administration; in the coordination of governor committees; and the creation of an ACCESS database to store and analyse student performance information. Efficiency gains were achieved in each

[1] Software to manage administrative data.

case by introducing appropriate computer software to manage the new systems proposed by the head, deputies and other relevant managers.

As Anne, Jeanne and the business manager laboured to establish straightforward, efficient systems and administrative procedures, Mr Moore felt 'I'm riding with the tide on the administrative front' (MD, p. 447) and rejoiced in 'the best (administrative) team I've had, three key, very able people with whom I talk more satisfactorily than the full senior management team' (MD, p. 292). With the Support Staff Review (MF1.16) now in full operation, job descriptions linked everyone's work to the action plan, so that long-serving staff were also harnessed to new methods and objectives. Mr Moore set up an administrative group to plan and monitor progress and soon began to worry that the business manager was already too powerful (MD, p. 511). There was a risk that the deputies 'could find themselves marginalized by this burgeoning office outfit' (MD, p. 504). He advised Elaine to instruct the business manager to order the furniture she required. 'You'll need to win this one on your own, or he'll assume deputy heads only relate to children' (MD, p. 511).

Mr Moore himself began to observe lessons systematically, using the criteria from The Hillside Lesson: A Common Approach (MF2.23) as a basis for discussion with teachers afterwards. He visited technology first, knowing that it was an area of weakness. OFSTED inspectors had commented that:

> Low expectations and lack of pace also hinder pupils' standards and progress ... Curriculum leadership and management are weak (AF2.2).

The Acting Head of Department felt the criticisms were unfair:

> ...the technology area needs a massive refurbishment and it is not within our budget ... I have been asking and asking just for new bench tops. I said I would make them – just give me the money for timber – 'no, can't afford it'.

> The management of design was criticised because the chappie was hardly ever here and senior management hadn't really responded to that, we should have had a supply teacher in who could take over the management of the department ... there were occasions when they were literally living from day to day (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2).

Mr Moore observed George (a member of staff who had served at Hillside for over twenty years) guide 15 year eleven students through their GCSE coursework. The lesson transcript was completed immediately following the observation and was included amongst the papers later submitted to the inspectors (MF3.15):

> George calls the register and stands to one side (the room opens in various directions - to the forge, the machines, store area etc) to explain the mark scheme and assessment objectives for GCSE coursework. He offers the students extra time at lunch time to complete projects or move them forward. 'I want you cracking on with these ... I'll let people go to the library or to the computer room.' He draws attention to a spiral bound guide book which spells out what they have to do to make a success of their project. George sits at his desk and calls students up one by one for a consultation.
>
> Three girls leave for the library when prompted. There are prompts on the board: 'Research, Analysis, Specification, Brief, Generation of Ideas.'
>
> One student asks for magazines. George directs him 'round the corner'. George then works through the register checking progress and offering pointers. Students are working variously on *sketches of ideas e.g. for an educational toy, for a clock for a garage *cutting out and sticking (e.g. illustrations) *pasting material downloaded from Encarta.
>
> Work is at an early stage and the quality is indifferent without being scrappy. The pace is very relaxed, nobody attacking the task with urgency. George comments on one lad's productivity: 'You've taken 4 hours on that ... you need to get stuck in ... that should go with research ... presentation isn't bad at all.' He explains a point to Darren, making encouraging noises.
>
> George walks round the tables, pausing by Laura. 'These are nice shapes but what are they? Are you thinking these'll be separate letters

> ... how'll you get the mechanism in...' When George turns to Alistair, Laura talks across the bench to Simon, who produces nothing significant during the lesson.
>
> Students work quietly. George returns to his desk. Another student goes up. 'Put down where you've got that from. You've spent 4 hours of your time, are these all there is ... that is smashing that, if every sheet looked like that, smashing, brilliant.' Then a general remark: 'Whatever you do, don't hand in identical information out of CD Rom.' The individual consultations continue.
>
> 'You'll have to find out what other people think ... you've got to make sure the project can be produced in quantity ... the specification has to be right ... all I'm putting is I've looked at ideas, there are some nice ideas, but you need more, next lesson ... more.'
>
> Meanwhile Chris wanders quietly. Alistair says: 'Stop disturbing us.' George calls out from his desk: 'What are you doing Simon?' Simon offers an excuse. George chuckles: 'Quick thinking' (because the response is half plausible though obviously untrue). Simon continues to wander - not really distracting others or trying to be disruptive.
>
> George calls for the attention of the class. 'If I've not looked at your work today, next lesson I'll certainly get round ... o.k., begin to put things away.' Three minutes before the end most students have their coats on. Simon is chatting amiably with various others. George asks: 'Anyone else want an appointment for parents' evening?'
>
> Pens are put away, everyone is packing up. Simon has wandered to several more groups but the atmosphere remains calm. 'Pencils still floating around chaps,' says George as clearing up proceeds quietly. As the bell rings the students dismiss themselves. 'Off you go,' calls out George after them, from his seated position at his desk.

Mr Moore doubted whether the extended time given to GCSE coursework was appropriate for less able students. Could 'they cope with no reward for so long?' (MD, p. 196) Once the students had embarked on projects there was little that the teacher could do, 'beyond repeating simple advice or guidance and despairing because the candidates don't read or follow the instructions they've been given' (MD, p. 196). Thinking ahead to the HMI monitoring visit, the head wondered how inspectors would measure a lesson of this type. He almost sympathised with 'poor old HMI who have to observe and report on standards in one indifferent school and classroom after another' (MD, p. 196).

A consultant, hired to help the science department, presented an unsettling report. Although HMI were poised to visit, there was little evidence of regular homework, 'marking (is) not really done regularly', and there was widespread 'indiscipline and absenteeism in years 10 and 11, especially in the bottom sets' (MD, p. 119). The head told his deputies and the LEA inspector to have modest expectations of the first monitoring visit:

> ...we had a long way to go ... it would take time to deal with the poor teaching and establish new systems and cultures. Until the new timetable and curriculum have worked through, all the changes will be superficial and their impact will be on the surface (MD, p. 190).

At their regular morning meeting, the head and deputies worried about staff morale. What should be done to reassure their colleagues in the run up to the publication of the secondary review proposals in a month or so? They sensed 'three main levels of staff anxiety':

> (a) Will I keep my points? (b) will I have a job at the end of the year? (c) will I have a job if the school is reorganized or merged? Better ... to let people know where they stand, give them a chance to find another job; even if some are unhappy, reassure the 90% ... The problem is that people have been living in a world with a guillotine that doesn't drop for so long they no longer believe in cutting edges, only the fear of cutting edges (MD, p. 188).

At morning briefings, he constantly reminded the staff 'to stick to (the) game plan' and insisted that 'our routine' in the classroom 'isn't an option and that people should stick to it because HMI will be looking for consistency' (MD, p. 204). As a final preparation for HMI, the deputies presented their report on the 'mini inspection' held before the holiday. They asked teachers to concentrate on the main issues that had been identified:

> Disruption at start of lessons by latecomers; Lesson outcomes clear to all, perhaps on board at start of lesson?; Disruption on the corridors and stairs. This includes students out of lessons and student movement around school between lessons; Reinforcing the usefulness of student planners; differentiation – use of/evidence of IEP's being used (MF2.21).

Elaine and Peter also offered some encouragement, estimating that the proportion of lessons that were satisfactory or better had risen from 66 per cent at the time of the full inspection (November Y1) to 83 per cent at the time of their joint tour (November Y2).

**A Couple of Ferrets in Your Trousers**

When two HMI arrived at the end of January they were presented with the head's Action Plan Progress Report (MF1.1), where Mr Moore detailed the difficulties he had faced on appointment:

> Support and administrative arrangements were in disarray, with one APT&C post-holder assigned to the general office ... The college's finances were almost inoperable ... no senior manager was assigned responsibility for financial management ... SIMS expertise was minimal. It was October before a reliable, SIMS-based pupil roll was established. A new telephone switchboard was promised for June ... but had not been ordered by September ... The lunch supervision scheme ... had not been established (MF1.1, p.1) ... There are significant problems with the management of the (X) department ... which make it unlikely that the specified targets will be achieved (MF1.1, p. 3) ... Some departments were slow to develop schemes of work to match the analysis and consultants were employed (MF1.1, p. 6).

Mr Moore felt 'I must confess to certain things to bank the necessary credibility but you can talk yourself into trouble by unnecessary frankness' (MD, p. 243). He also expressed concern about the impact on teachers in their classrooms:

> It's like having a couple of ferrets in your trousers. They go through everything, they inspect everything, they question everything, they move at incredible speed – I mean, they're very, very skilful I would have to say ... 30 lessons in a day (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2).

He feared that 'even in positive inspections there is a huge psychological build up then deflation afterwards ... whatever your views on accountability, the actual physical process of a couple of blokes coming in and going through the drawers in your room and opening up your mark book ... is bullying' (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2).

Despite this empathy with his colleagues, Mr Moore had presented special measures as an escape route from purgatory, a hard, narrow road to professional self-respect and survival (MD, p. 48). For months he had adopted the role of mentor and coach, as one teacher reported: 'He helped staff to have a particular structure to their lessons and also all teachers to have a lesson planning booklet' (IT: HOY, 28.i.2). Many teachers had responded to the opportunity to improve: 'One in particular has taken criticism very well. She wants to be better, which is lovely' (IT: PA, 28.i.2). He was perceived to deal with 'those people who are not up to scratch' by explaining 'firmly, not bawling them out' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2).

Others were less clear about the benefits of the new approach and their comments sometimes mirrored the head's own reservations about the scrutiny to which they were subject. A governor observed that:

> Mr Moore has given a lot of support to weaker staff but it hasn't necessarily been felt to be supportive. It has been felt to be scrutinising (IT: PG, 22.vi.2).

The OFSTED report and HMI monitoring visits had placed the head:

> ...in a very powerful position as a manager because he was not tainted with what went on before he came. The head uses Ofsted to mercilessly bring about change. The fact that it encourages a sense of blame and guilt should not hide the benefits that it brings. What remains to be seen is whether the changes are lasting (IT: PG, 30.iii.2).

Mr Moore accepted the truth of comments like this. He feared that his close monitoring and control of teaching would contribute to the 'intrinsic oppressive qualities' he detected in schools, hospitals and prisons (MD, p. 396). He was aware that his behaviour as head was 'driven by the demands of the agenda' (quoted above, MD, p. 32). It was a dilemma beyond resolution:

> My attempts at rescue (myself, them) depends on ... (a) my will to power ... (b) the principles of comprehensive education ... learn from need and expression, not handed down, watered down, instructed ... (c) glass bead game with the oppressor (Bergman film, chess with death) ... but to win I must abandon (b). (a) and (b) mutually destructive - paradox of my career (MD, p. 313).

Other witnesses concentrated on OFSTED's destructive potential. An assistant commented: 'Special measures is just too much. Everyone looks like zombies. I think they've had enough. Widespread depression ... they can still see a bit of a long haul ahead of them' (IT: PA, 26.iii.2). A long serving member of staff reflected that: 'People perform well under pressure for so long, then they're destroyed by it' (MD, p. 245). To others it seemed as if teachers 'are to be crucified ... for not converting a penny-pinched pre-fab into a Georgian country mansion' (MD, p. 121). 'There is now no room' for people who 'can't teach very well' (IT: PG, 30.iii.2). But there was also a reluctant recognition that this was not altogether bad news: 'I think all the other teachers realize

that the ones who are being squeezed out are weak anyway and we do need some new young blood' (IT: PA, 15.vi.2).

At the end of their two-day visit, HMI reported:

> Teaching was satisfactory or better in three-quarters of lessons seen. It was good in a quarter but was also unsatisfactory in a quarter ... The marking and routine assessment of pupils' work is inordinately variable in quality ... Homework ... is not set sufficiently regularly and when it is set, the tasks are not always appropriate or worthwhile ... The headteacher, supported by the senior management team, provides strong leadership and a clear sense of direction. Teachers are responding to the high expectations he sets. Staff morale is steadying and generally improving ... The number of exclusions in the last term is already twice the national average per annum. This is not yet cause for concern, with a new headteacher wishing to establish clear rules, but requires close supervision (AF11.3).

Attendance had improved, averaging 89 per cent in Y2 so far (AF11.3), while 'every single indicator is up' (MD, p. 247). The school had made satisfactory progress with two key issues and good progress with the other two. Mr Moore felt that HMI had 'put together a picture of the school that to me was remarkably accurate and reasonable' and he admitted that 'HMI monitoring reinforced my picture' (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2). His mind was 'immediately seething with ideas ... I want to start immediately. How can we sustain the pace?' (MD, p. 251).

## SWOT

The head's positive outlook changed briefly when he was told that a teacher had broken down after HMI had visited his classroom (MD, p. 253):

> ...the pain and pressure is endless. What next? My restructuring? Amalgamation? Another monitoring visit? And another? ... Then redundancy ... Imagine an end to failure, says Michael Barber in the Dark Side of the Moon. What about imagining an end to the torture? Or even the uncertainty? (MD, p. 253 - 254)

He was excited, nevertheless, by what he had learned from the visit. He had observed the two inspectors closely and believed he now understood their methodology well enough to orchestrate Hillside's exit from special measures:

> What we need for a couple of days in late May or June is evidence of progress. Not progress itself, but evidence. Documents, statistics, lessons which match the requirements. And thanks to the visit, I've mastered the genre. What we need is to gear everyone up for a perfect fortnight (MD, p. 258).

He called a staff meeting for early February and asked his colleagues to consider the school's Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities and Threats (SWOT). Although the LEA budget was far better than expected and the HMI report was 'very positive', 'current levels of illness/stress' were high. The revision of the schemes of work through the summer and autumn would greatly enhance consistency, while the proposed timetable and curriculum changes would make Hillside a coherent, efficient unit. The biggest threat was the secondary review that might lead to closure, demoralisation and redeployment next year (MF3.8). Mr Moore was certain that the 'new curriculum framework going into place for September' would 'remove the silly small groups' and 'create a more normal teaching environment' for the autumn (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2) but was less confident about his ability to generate and demonstrate enough progress for the next monitoring visit, expected in June.

The pressure seemed intense:

> There's the staff structure to implement by April; the curriculum to become a timetable; the budget to finalise; the new development plan to write; all those policies and monitoring schemes to put in place. And above all, my burst of energy to produce the perfect two days for (the inspectors) has only half-materialised and there's precious little time now before Easter to complete all the preparatory tasks (MD, p. 331).

Mr Moore created an ACCESS database. He envisaged 'a computer floppy disk containing performance data' for every member of staff and set up 'a switchboard of enquiries that can be operated by staff whether or not they understand (the software)' (MD, p. 333). At a specially convened meeting, he explained the revised staff structure and was greeted by silence, except from the head of sociology who thanked him the next day because it was 'the first time since he's been at the school that anyone's tried to create some kind of rationale or system' (MD, p. 320). The head and deputies worked on a development plan to replace the action plan, 'now complete apart from the commitment to continuous monitoring of the vital statistics' (MD, p. 335). He was surprised at the GCSE evening to find 'no anxiety expressed, no sense of impending withdrawals', despite the possibility that the school could be closed by the review. The parents seemed to accept the school's 'affirmation of our own continued existence' (MD, p. 342). A heads of department meeting was planned at a local hotel, where they would prepare 'for the May/June monitoring visit and intend to leave nothing to chance or individual foibles/fancies' (MF3.8).

In the midst of these plans and preparations, Mr Moore did not at first attend to the details of an incident in technology, where a student was alleged to have assaulted a member of staff. But on the day of the disciplinary hearing he discovered that the groundwork for the case had not been done and all the staff involved had other engagements. 'So by evening I was obliged to present poor documentation about a girl I've never met' (MD, p. 316). The ensuing crisis nearly led to Mr Moore's resignation.

# Chapter 8 Saved and Out!

**Stabbed?**

Mr Moore compared his approach to discipline with that adopted by Michael Duane, the head at Rising Hill whose anti-corporal punishment stance seems to have contributed to the school's troubles and eventual closure by the Inner London Education Authority (Berg, 1968): 'He seems to have regarded authority as objectionable in itself; I regard the (effective) use of authority as the problem' (MD, p. 502). Mr Moore's own 'use of authority' was tested when a teacher was assaulted shortly after the first HMI monitoring visit and in the lead up to the publication of the LEA's secondary review proposals.

The head had established formal procedures to manage incidents of this kind (MF2.19). Dismayed by the lack of system before his arrival, Mr Moore had hoped to strengthen the governing body by improving its conduct of business: 'The head just got rid of people. The governors didn't have a role and that's what was severely criticised in Ofsted' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2). As one governor acknowledged:

> Mr Moore has completely changed the culture of the governing body in terms of its procedures. There were no procedures before (IT: PG, 30.iii.2).

A student support committee had been established and was required to 'deal with disciplinary issues as appropriate, including the provision of disciplinary panels in relation to exclusion and permanent exclusion' (MF2.19, p. 5). The heads of year were expected to prepare and present evidence. The clerk organized hearings and prepared minutes and correspondence.

The head therefore excluded the assailant, requested a disciplinary hearing before the governors, and recommended permanent exclusion. He was confident that governors would endorse his decision, particularly as witnesses alleged that a knife had been used, though without inflicting serious injury.

Although the systems were established on paper, the governors and the pastoral tutors were inexperienced in handling disciplinary cases. The year heads had never before been asked to present evidence at a disciplinary hearing (personal communication from year head). According to Mr Moore: 'the governors need coaching into their role, the staff coaching into their role, the support staff need coaching into their role'. The inexperienced head of year 'didn't put a report together until the day of the hearing so that was thin and I was left ... with a very weak case about a really high profile and important incident' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2). The year head, and another teacher who had investigated the assault, were unable to attend the hearing, so Mr Moore had to present the case himself.

The chair of the disciplinary panel had been concerned for some time about the growing number of fixed term and permanent exclusions brought before the governors:

> I worry for the child being excluded and for the behaviour in the context of all the other cases, when, as happened in a recent case (which Mr Moore had brought to the governors for exclusion), the addition of misbehaviour was made up of items with the same staff always being involved in incidents (IT: PG, 30.iii.2).

The chair wished to introduce greater rigour to the proceedings because:

> Those governors engaged in the student support committee seem to be in and out all the time because there's been a rush of exclusions over this last term. Far too many – several governors have been very

> concerned to ensure that they get very close to that process to make sure it is not being abused (IT: PG, 30.iii.2).

Although Peter, in charge of pastoral care, saw the assault as an 'open and shut permanent exclusion case' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2), the governors were not convinced. The committee chair questioned the head and discovered that he lacked personal knowledge of the student and events he described in an attempt to justify the permanent exclusion. The chair suggested:

> ...it could show that there are some teachers who do not know how to deal with awkward pupils ... he sees a situation ... where there has been a relationship breakdown with that teacher (AF11.3).

Another committee member commented that '...no teacher should be subject to assault, but there is a lack of depth of detail relating to this incident' (AF11.3). The chair asked the head 'if he felt that any serious assault on a teacher should always lead to a permanent exclusion', to which Mr Moore replied that 'other cases would be dealt with on merit and evidence' but that 'when cases lead to untenable situations, pupils should not return to school' (AF11.3).

The head withdrew to allow the committee to deliberate and returned to learn their decision. The governors considered that the case against the student was based on a single incident:

> ...they did not believe that a case had been established, to their satisfaction, to show that every other method of discipline management had been explored in this case ... (the pupil) should be reinstated ... whilst recognising the difficulties that such a decision may cause, they would wish the school to use the time available to make every effort to bring about the circumstances for a successful readmission (AF11.3).

The governors had effectively decided to re-instate the student 'without any conditions' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2). When Mr Moore discussed the case with his deputies the next morning, 'the full awfulness of it sank in' (MD, p. 318), 'it was now a huge political imbroglio' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2). Alert to the immediate danger, Mr Moore struggled to contain the damage:

> The staff will be outraged - there's now a massive problem in terms of staff attitudes and reactions. It could blow up ... We could be like The Ridings in a few days if the wrong responses surface' (MD, p. 318).

The head telephoned the assaulted teacher; contacted the teacher governors; and recounted the details of the hearing to his deputies and other influential members of staff. His strategy was 'to keep everybody in my confidence and to go to the next governors' meeting with huge umbrage about the reinstatement' and to brief the teacher governors to raise 'a whole series of serious issues'. The assaulted teacher was a member of the National Association of Schoolmasters/Union of Women Teachers (NAS/UWT). A few days after the hearing, a union official arrived at the school 'wanting to ballot the staff about not teaching X when X comes back' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2). As the governors had reinstated the assailant unconditionally, there was no mechanism for re-exclusion, so Mr Moore feared that Hillside might be caught in an explosion of media interest in violent students, just as the secondary review was about to report on the school's future. For a few days the atmosphere was tense:

> Assaults on staff have a special emotional charge ... Unless I lead the staff counter-attack my credibility with them will be nil; if I do lead the charge, I'll be at loggerheads with the panel and possibly the entire governing body (MD, p. 318).

Fortunately, the assaulted teacher and her immediate colleagues were not eager to be at the centre of a media storm and were equally anxious not to compromise the outcome of the secondary review. Mr Moore's decision to lead the protest about the governors'

decision, although he knew the school's case had been poorly prepared and presented, produced the desired effect in the staff room:

> There is strong support for my stand, indignation about the re-instatement and a unanimous letter of complaint to be tabled (MD, p. 320).

Mr Moore was determined to reverse the governors' decision and to continue the assailant's exclusion. The head saw the chair of governors and threatened resignation; he also intrigued with the teacher governors and the deputies 'on how to play the staff letter at the full governors' meeting' (MD, p. 321/322). One of the deputies visited the student's home and arranged a meeting between Mr Moore and the family. The student's reluctance to return to 'that school', and adamant denial that any violence had occurred, enabled Mr Moore to find a solution. The chair of governors persuaded the disciplinary panel to meet with teacher representatives and after a long discussion (MD, p. 332), it was agreed that conditions could be imposed on the assailant's return. Mr Moore and his deputies already knew that the student would refuse to apologise or promise to behave well in future (MD, p. 361).

Mr Moore's conclusion was that:

> Two or three key governors can have a hugely disproportionate power, if they are on board with you, you can muddle through. If they start to take independent positions, you can be in great difficulty very quickly' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2).

The incident aroused strong emotions, becoming 'a protracted and painful and disruptive element' (ibid). Mr Moore realized that although the governors 'are willing to nod things through without question; they'll approve documents they've not seen or read' (MD, p.

520), they could also introduce an agenda of their own. The committee chair had a different perspective on the case:

> The rush of exclusions (in the last term) has been brought about by a more assertive disciplinary code which is attempting to be clearer but in the absence of, I believe, a properly thought through whole school behaviour policy. Some staff would say this is long overdue (IT: PG, 30.iii.2).

The chair of governors, however, was bewildered by the head's attitude and could not understand why he thought it was a resigning matter (MD, p. 321/322).

**Secondary Review**

As the secondary review unfolded through the autumn of Y2, Mr Moore began to appreciate the extent of the pressure on the authority to improve the lack-lustre performance of Easton Schools:

> ...the LEA is hyper-sensitive about all the schools in special measures, secondary and primary, they're desperately worried that they may lose control and the government may take them over ... the review is driven by the desire to sort everything out (IT: Chris Moore, 10.xii.2).

His consciousness of behind-the-scenes menace was increased when a DfEE adviser visited Hillside to ask questions about the LEA. Mr Moore was unsure how to respond: 'I didn't know for sure how to handle him. Friend or spy?' (MD, p. 62) When he read in the local paper that the chair of education and senior officers had been summoned to the DfEE (MD, p. 213), he concluded that there were 'wide and powerful forces which we ignore at our peril' (MD, p. 138). In the absence of effective communication, heads, teachers and even LEA employees were 'feeding gossip and speculation' (MD, p. 136)

into their interpretation of events. Rumours spread quickly, including scurrilous suggestions about the sexuality and personal lives of senior officials (personal communication).

With 'no ground to stand on; no security; no stability; no certainty; no confidence' (MD, p. 430), Mr Moore felt obliged to devote considerable time to boundary management. He pushed hard for support, inviting senior officers and councillors to the school, with mixed results. Although the director had promised support, he had failed to impress Mr Moore with his vision or capability (MD, p. 39/40).

The Member of Parliament found time for another gathering of Hillside supporters, while the Mayor attended an evening contrived to emphasize the school's improved results. The chair of the Education Committee was too busy to meet the head (letter, chair of Education Committee to Mr Moore, quoted in MD, p. 16). With the school poised on the edge of survival, Mr Moore listened carefully for news of the local authority's intentions and concentrated on the targets most likely to clinch a good report. His intention was:

> ...to hammer on with getting out of special measures ... as a morale counter-balance to the possible demoralisation that may come from the LEA's plan (MD, p. 336).

When the PAG chair and the head debated whether or not to launch a public critique of the LEA's handling of the secondary review, Elaine was alarmed: 'I've seen Mr Wake brought down, the vote of no confidence and the rest, I don't want to go there again, just when we've got the school moving forward' (MD, p. 137). Mr Moore dropped the idea of an attack on the review process and was persuaded to wait for the publication of the official proposals at the end of February.

The 'success d'estime' (MD, p. 275) of the first HMI monitoring visit helped him persuade officers and elected members that Hillside was making good progress and he

ensured that the letter from OFSTED (AF11.3) was circulated widely. He met the PAG chair regularly to monitor developments and:

> ...to interpret what we have heard. Is the school safe? Are they afraid of judicial review? Do they fear me or would they like to finish us? Are they after the schools with no political support? What kind of steer does the officer team have? (MD, p. 136)

Managing relations with the LEA became an increasing challenge. Hillside had accelerated and needed to 'speed up the slow, plodding council red tape so that we get somewhere' (MD, p. 430). Under pressure itself, the LEA seemed unable to monitor or develop its own systems and organization because it was preoccupied with a secondary review that consumed political energy and resources without earning the commitment of local teachers. According to Mr Moore, 'the LEA chaos is continuing to impact on us' (IT: Chris Moore 11.xii.3), arousing fears that his new staffing structure, designed to 'make everybody's position permanent' (IT: PA, 26.iii.2), would be overtaken by events. His 'new' posts would last less than a year if Hillside were closed or reorganized. As the review deadlines approached, Mr Moore felt that: 'We do not control much of the agenda and I sense that next year will see power and decisions slip further from my grasp' (MD, p. 362) and feared 'possible melt-down if the school is closed or merged' (MD, p. 251).

He also complained about the nervous energy and thinking time consumed by the 'prospect of imminent closure' and commented that 'you can see how schools get knocked off their improvement course' (MD, p. 331). This did not happen, however, mainly because Mr Moore convinced himself and his colleagues that getting out of special measures was the key to survival. He was determined to 'get to May or June and the next monitoring visit and get another good report' (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2).

Meanwhile, he was active on the telephone, talking with other heads and guessing the right moment for an initiative that might make the difference between life and sudden death. Above all, he feared that Hillside would be merged with another school and lose

control over its own destiny. He discovered that the DfEE adviser had become 'the power behind the plan, constantly in touch, constantly adding touches' (MD, p. 403). After an ambiguous call, during which the adviser asked whether he would like to be the head of a new school on the Hillside site, Mr Moore concluded that he knew 'almost exactly what was proposed' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2), a full two weeks before the review proposals were due to be published. When he reported the news, he was surprised that the PAG chair was 'not particularly pessimistic' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2) about the outcome and was 'cooler and less inclined to respond to the emotions of the moment' (MD, p. 437).

Towards the end of February, the LEA director convened the Easton heads to tell them that nineteen out of twenty one secondary schools would be affected by the result of the review. Papers would be sent out to schools by courier the following week. Mr Moore was fearful that 'Hillside could be imploding within a few weeks, with students and staff bailing out and recruitment nearly impossible' and was confirmed in his belief that the best way to hold the school together would be to use 'HMI monitoring as a focus' (MD, p. 257). He told the staff 'We can do ourselves a lot of good if we get ourselves out of special measures and I'm beginning to visualise a plan to do it' (MD, p. 272).

When the LEA review proposals were eventually released (AF10.5), there were two options for Hillside School. It could be closed and replaced by a new school on the same site (AF10.4, AF10.5) or the school could 'continue in its present form but with a catchment area revised' to expand the number on roll (AF10.4). Mr Moore and the PAG chair seized the opportunity presented by the second option almost immediately. Together they:

> ...came up with a plan ... based on what happened with the Hammersmith school where they declared it closed and reopened it without actually going through the statutory process (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2).

Their proposal (AF10.7) was designed to build on option two and to appeal to LEA officers as they struggled with decisions about closing, expanding and reorganizing different schools. Instead of being merged with another school, so that 'all staff will have to reapply for their posts' (IT: PA, 26.iii.2), Hillside would change its name voluntarily, appoint a new, permanent headteacher at the earliest possible date, and accept children from a wider catchment area (AF10.6, 10.7). All the current staff would keep their jobs. A young teacher warmed to the fact that: 'Mr Moore and the governors have come up with another plan to change the nature of this school in December (Y3)' (IT: NQT, 25.iii.2).

The document asked a fundamental question. In the case of Hillside, where rapid improvement was already taking place and was approved by HMI, why impose an unnecessary, time-consuming statutory process? The Hammersmith precedent showed that it was possible to 'avoid almost a year of uncertainty, confusion and demoralisation' (AF10.7). Adding Hillside to the list of closing schools would throw away what had been achieved already and add unnecessarily to the complexity of the LEA's reorganization.

Governors approved the plan and convened their own public meeting to consult with parents and the community (AF10.6, 10.7). There were 'three half-page adverts in the local press and a massive mail shot to every pupil's home' (IT: PA, 26.iii.2), while '150 plus people came along to the meeting ... and there was a lot of support' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2, AF10.6). Mr Moore handed the DfEE adviser a copy of the proposal, 'hoping to slide it into their thinking' (MD, p. 399/400), and was delighted to receive an immediate call from one of the assistant directors who thought the scheme was 'interesting' (quoted in MD, p. 403).

**Option 1 or 2?**

The five-week consultation period and the prospect of closure (option 1) threatened to extend the 'planning blight' caused by the review (AF6.4, p. 1) into the indefinite future.

One younger teacher noticed that 'Older staff are particularly uncomfortable ... they are looking at the possibility that they might have to find another job'. It was obvious that:

> Mr Moore is trying to reassure staff by being confident with us but he can't really guarantee anybody's job ... but he is just keeping up to date with all the developments. We are getting print outs ... notes from meetings he has attended (IT: NQT, 25.iii.2).

Mr Moore's staffing structure seemed to have become 'just another phase of the temporary and interim arrangements which have afflicted my colleagues' (MD, p. 4). He decided that his position was little different from Brian Goodlad's the previous summer as there was 'incipient demoralisation and an acute need to buy teachers into the project at this critical stage' and resolved to 'push my deployment through ahead of the LEA's publication of final decisions' (MD, p. 386). Although these decisions were imminent, the LEA did not have the legal power to insist on temporary appointments or to prevent the governors implementing their own structure (MD, p. 386).

Rather than fill vacancies by interview, Mr Moore 'invited ... members of staff' to write to the head expressing interest in 'up to 3 posts, indicating their order of preference' (MF3.9, p. 5). A carefully drafted procedure would be followed so that permanent post-holders at Hillside were guaranteed posts and allowances comparable to their present positions. Temporary post-holders would be given consideration before jobs were advertised. He told the Consultative Group that 'we just want to keep them motivated ... we don't want any beauty contests and disappointment' (MD, p. 403). The head devoted '3 full days' to interviewing all the teachers to 'resolve outstanding contractual issues' because he was 'determined to provide' as much security as he could (MD, p. 362). He published an agenda for the meetings, 'coupling discussion of next year's contract with preparation for the next monitoring visit' (MD, p. 362). The strategy and personnel committee of governors met a few days later to endorse the structure and the appointments that had been offered. Mr Moore was pleased because the:

> ...final position is so much better than feared. We're set to lose 3.2 teachers (I expected to lose about 6 or 7) and half a dozen points (initially I aimed for a reduction of 15) and most of the loss has happened naturally ... the process has been without rancour, bitterness or divisions ... better than everyone had been led to expect, not least by me (MD, p. 402).

The staff accepted that: 'Most of what's happened was sort of inevitable. Once the curriculum was put into place for next year, you have got to fit your staff to the curriculum' (IT: SEN, 26.iii.2).

Mr Moore hurried on with the ACCESS database because he was keen to present the inspectors with 'persuasive evidence of data analysis, targeting and monitoring, as indicated in (the) report' (MD, p. 401). He prepared a table to show that year seven had made 'convincing' gains in reading ability (MD, p. 401). An average 10 months improvement in reading age (after adjustment for chronological age) was recorded, while the target group gained a remarkable 17 months (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2). With Elaine, he worked on a format for departments to use when revising their schemes of work. At a local hotel the heads of department were trained to play their part in preparing for the next monitoring visit. They were expected to:

> Revise schemes of work to common format. Aim 6 – 8 weeks ahead; keep the revision process rolling; involve all department members; don't overload with detail ... focus objectives and homework tasks;
> Ensure all colleagues teach the revised scheme of work i.e. topic, objective, resources, homework task, success criteria/marking;
> Ensure all staff and student planners are up to date and focus objectives and homework tasks. In the week of the monitoring visit, everyone will produce a full pro forma lesson plan ...
> Evaluate samples of student work ...
> Evaluate expenditure ...

> Check every colleague's marking, records and paperwork are beyond reproach;
> Identify 'at risk' lessons and ensure full preparation and support;
> Ensure individual targets in place for all students... (MF3.8).

By 'raising expectations, challenging people to do things,' Mr Moore had 'generated a lot of action' (MD, p. 434). He saw the staff 'becoming more pro-active, more professional, more convincing' though he thought some teachers remained 'moth-eaten and cob-webbed' (MD, p. 434). Over lunch Elaine told him off. 'You've only seen one review, this lot have seen two, they're knackered' (MD, p. 430).

When the Review of Secondary Education Report (AF10.8) finally appeared, Hillside survived the axe. The LEA director recommended option two for Hillside:

> On balance, it is considered that the principle of expanding existing schools is more appropriate than the new start proposal put forward for Hillside as part of the proposals for consultation, because of the compressed timetable for implementing the review (AF10.8, Paragraph 3.110).

Mr Moore found the committee report and scanned through for the recommendations:

> Where are the recommendations? I find them. We've done it! Done it! 'Anne! I think we've done it!' I give her a hug and feel tears in my eyes (MD, p. 460).

Elaine and Peter rushed out for bottles of sparkling wine and the staff celebrated their salvation:

> It is fantastic news that we are not closing ... We stay here. We keep our jobs and we are an expanding school. Fantastic news from the picture that was painted just over a year ago (IT: PA, 15.vi.2).

Mr Moore 'congratulated everybody on their hard work (but) we realize that there is an awful lot of work to do and a long way to go even now' (IT: PA, 15.vi.2). Later, when the head wondered aloud whether their plan had influenced the result, the PAG chair commented: 'The politicians have taken the easy way out. They always do' (personal communication).

By the early summer of Y2, Hillside's future was secure. Ahead lay the June HMI monitoring visit, the November re-inspection, the appointment of a permanent head (Mr Moore's contract ended in July Y3) and expansion to accommodate students displaced by the closure of neighbouring schools. For many staff, however, the trauma seemed unending. As an observer noted:

> But some teaching staff are becoming disillusioned ... It has been going on for so long now. We've been in special measures 16 months (IT: PA, 26.iii.2).

**Improving Teaching**

With the school's future secure, Mr Moore was 'able to offer ... genuinely permanent position(s)' (MD, p. 465) and moved to fill the vacancies in the staffing structure that remained open after the internal consultation was completed. Two heads of major departments and five newly qualified teachers were recruited through national advertisements, to contribute to new areas of the curriculum (e.g. drama) or to improve areas that had been covered temporarily, and often unsatisfactorily, through the crisis of the previous year. The head was excited at the prospect of newcomers arriving to reinforce the changes that he had initiated:

> Wonderful to be able to appoint ... keen, bright young teachers (two heads of department) and to reflect the difference it will make ... the transfusion is badly needed (MD, p. 517).

As a result, most curriculum areas were renewed as heads of department were replaced, less successful teachers departed, short-term contracts were terminated and alternative structures were established. Humanities (history, geography, sociology and RE), Technology (woodwork, metalwork and textiles) and the Expressive Arts (art, drama and music) were established, and grouped together a number of previously isolated one or two teacher departments.

Within his overall strategy to 'use HMI inspection as a disciplined focus to ensure the completion of major changes in systems, methods and practice' (AF9.10, p. 2), Mr Moore also applied a combination of pressure and support to individual departments and teachers to secure improvement. He considered that the Hillside staff garden had never been weeded:

> You are constantly needing to be weeding and planting and the garden never ... looks nice all over. You've always got a patch where you're working on it and where you put the new seed in or you've transplanted something, or you've got something out of the greenhouse and are putting it in or where, basically, you've got a flamethrower and are clearing the undergrowth (IT: Chris Moore, 22.vi.2).

*Department A*

The changes introduced by Mr Goodlad, and then extended, supported and occasionally reversed by Mr Moore, produced a complex and variegated pattern of development. The head of department A was a senior teacher who had neglected his subject for years. When he accepted premature retirement (March Y1), there was insufficient time to make a permanent appointment, so Mr Goodlad invited a temporary teacher with no

qualifications in the subject to take charge for a year (MD, p. 66). Another temporary teacher, who became ill very quickly, filled a second vacancy (MD, p. 66), while a junior member of staff continued to struggle with student discipline. The only qualified, effective teacher of the subject declined to accept increased responsibility and frequently expressed his desire for early retirement (MD, p. 85). The acting head of department aimed to improve morale by taking difficult, low ability classes himself and by supporting his colleagues when they faltered, but was reluctant to mark students' work and lacked subject knowledge (MD, p. 73, p. 100). During Y2 the department muddled through with a series of supply teachers but lacked a convincing curriculum rationale. Mr Moore failed to persuade the less able staff to complete lesson plans and mark books regularly (MD, p. 119).

Once the school's future was secure, Mr Moore recruited a well-qualified, permanent head of department (MD, p. 504) and rewarded the teacher who had been 'holding the fort' with a transfer to a subject in which he was qualified (MD, p. 464). Mr Moore described the successful candidate as 'positive, cheerful, student-centred ... has the crisp new attitude we need' (MD, p. 512). Elaine commented: 'I feel good about next year, we've broken something here at last' (MD, p. 512).

The sick teacher's contract was not renewed (MD, p. 455), while the struggling junior was appointed to another school and was replaced by an NQT. The new head of department proved outstanding during Y3 and quickly established subject policies, systems and procedures (MF5.9, 5.10). Developments in numeracy were commended by inspectors in November Y3 (AF11.5). The department began to function as a team, sharing tasks and introducing a new scheme of work as well as other, cross-curricular initiatives (MF5.9). The department became a showcase, with improved display and a bright, positive atmosphere. In Y4 the head of department took maternity leave and returned to a reduced contract (personal communication).

*Department B*

Meanwhile, the long-serving head of department B remained in post, bitterly regretting his decision not to accept early retirement when it was offered (MD, p. 80). Department B achieved consistently excellent GCSE results, so the staff resented Mr Moore's introduction of standardized, school-wide procedures (MD, p. 48, p. 246). Although three of the teachers were experienced, monitoring revealed that their teaching was vulnerable and inconsistent, especially with less able students (MD, p. 212, p. 354, AF11.1). The head of department was a gifted teacher, however, and supported his colleagues, earning their loyalty and respect (MD, p. 92, p. 354). Mr Moore used one of the head of department's lesson plans as a model to explain learning outcomes (MD, p. 332). The curriculum was unchanged throughout the period of the study and new initiatives were resisted (MD, p. 77).

Mr Goodlad appointed an enthusiastic NQT for September Y2, who was soon involved in the extra-curricular programme developed under Mr Moore (MD, p. 52), while Mr Moore enabled the weakest member of the department to leave (August Y2) by part-funding a secondment that became permanent (AF9.8). None of the teachers was included in Mr Goodlad's round of temporary promotions (MF2.32). Mr Moore's final act at Hillside was to fix the head of department's retirement (August Y3) and to commission improved, purpose-built accommodation for the subject (personal communication).

*Department C*

Department C was divided, with a weak head of department under pressure from two energetic colleagues (MD, p. 105, p. 591). The department was further disturbed by a recently appointed teacher who was unable to manage children (MD, p. 95, p. 106). The department also lacked strategic direction, with serious inconsistencies in the operation of policies and procedures (MD, p. 105, p. 291). Two capable staff became angry about the prevailing atmosphere of incompetence and reported incidents to senior management (MD, p. 105).

Mr Moore engaged in active, informal discussions with subject teachers, gathering different perspectives on the work of the department (MD, p. 105). He also observed lessons and involved the deputy head in monitoring the quality of teaching (MD, p. 267 – 269). He invited the LEA inspector to conduct a review of management arrangements and to report on the department's apparent inconsistencies (MD, p. 89). Meanwhile, serious incidents obliged Mr Moore to offer direct guidance to the recently appointed teacher (MD, p. 261). When this was unsuccessful, disciplinary procedures were invoked. The teacher agreed to leave (MD, p. 293/294; February Y2). The inspector's review and HMI monitoring led to further discussions with the head of department, who also became ill (MD, p. 591; June Y2). An internal, temporary promotion provided new leadership and the department was transformed (MD, p. 591). A close-knit team of able teachers was reinforced by the recruitment of an NQT to cover long-term illness, while all the department's policies, systems and schemes of work were rewritten (MF5.9). One member of staff remembered:

> ...we never had any real structure or procedure for recording levels (of performance). Now each half term we will set an assignment and there is a level that is recorded (for each student) ... they are being pushed more in lessons ... partly because of the objective(s) we have introduced in our lessons ... The objectives have ... aided them (students) certainly by knowing clearly what is expected of them (IT: HOY, 4.xii.3).

*Department D*

The respected head of department D secured early retirement at the latest possible moment, leaving Mr Goodlad with two vacancies in a subject where recruitment had proved difficult in recent years (MD, p. 29/30). A recruitment agency was approached and found a very capable and experienced replacement (MD, p. 84; July Y1). Unfortunately the other vacancy had to be filled on a temporary contract by a less than

capable teacher. Another member of the department was the subject of frequent complaints by students and required continuous support (MD, p. 49, p. 360). The deputy head arranged extended remedial training for the two vulnerable members of staff (MD, p. 30), while the new head of department established regular team meetings and encouraged colleagues to share the work of rewriting policies and schemes of work:

> So our department had to really write schemes of work from scratch ... we took responsibility for a year group each and looked at how we could approach the topic area and then we pooled that knowledge and went away and worked on our own (IT: HOD, 15.vi.2).

At the end of Y2, Mr Moore discontinued the contract of the temporary, part-time teacher and appointed a full-time, newly qualified replacement (MD, p. 465). The head of department worked hard to support the new teacher in September Y3:

> I thought it was a really important thing ... that we planned as a department ... we set out ... centralizing resources, that's all worksheets or hard text ... we tried to give her a start with each of the topics she was starting out with and we tackled the schemes of work ... I think there's been changes in their quality of learning because we've worked hard to improve that aspect of our planning. We've worked hard to make sure that our objectives are clear every lesson (IT: HOD, 6.i.3).

Despite these interventions, senior management monitoring continued to identify inconsistencies in the teaching. Mr Moore's audit during the review consultation period provided a discouraging glimpse of science:

> 9.20 am. Matthew is seated at his bench; 2 children are tussling at the rear; others argue. The class contains approximately 16 y10 set 4 students. Matthew states baldly: 'It's not called the small intestine because it's long.' A boy calls out 'small, ain't it?' Most students write quietly at their benches. Matthew says: 'I want you to figure it out for yourselves so you remember

> it.' He uses his jacket to demonstrate how the gut is 'connected to the outside world.' He explains the bloodstream and its connection with the gut. There are several students in coats, unchecked. Tracey struggles to understand and calls out a range of questions which more or less take over the lesson. 'So you're trying to say...' Matthew responds each time: 'You've got muscles, bones, right, here's your body, right...' Children talk amongst themselves. Matthew tries again. 'The stomach's mainly about digestion, breaking down, makes food into a liquid so it can be absorbed, it uses enzymes, acids...' Tracey replies: 'Stop it sir, you're making me feel sick.' She doesn't understand why we don't have permanent diarrhoea if it's a liquid. Matthew points out that the large intestine absorbs water.
>
> The lesson more or less ends of its own volition, with Matthew indicating: 'We'd better go through these questions some time but I'd rather do a practical tomorrow'. No learning summary; no specification of what to be done next time (AF11.1).

In another laboratory, Michelle taught with a similar disregard for the 'common approach' that senior management was trying to promote:

> Michelle has her class answering questions about electrical currents; another apparatus/practical free lesson. Y10 set 3, approx. 15 students. I'm unclear whether Michelle is giving notes or answers to questions and there are long gaps although for the most part the students sit at desks making notes. Several keep their coats on, uncorrected.
>
> A girl walked out for no obvious reason - called back. From time to time I catch the drift of the answers. 'What are fuses designed to protect?' (answer - us and appliances). Students are attentive but the lesson seems to be a disjointed mixture of reading out and explanation. Michelle doesn't explain so much as read. There is no learning summary; no indication of the next lesson and its direction. The homework task: 'Copy this table into the back of your books, so you can finish it for homework.' Michelle wanders; the bell goes, the class dismissed spontaneously (AF11.1).

The report (AF11.1) details two art lessons where the students 'worked with care and concentration' and records a couple of classes taken by supply teachers in technology where the 'students do very little'. In languages, there were striking differences in style between a capable and a less capable teacher:

> 11.10 Terry with 22 y7 students. Various towns are shown on a sketch OHP of the UK. He has them responding in complete sentences about where the towns are in relation to one another. Lots of hands are up, total attention. Terry uses eye contact, dramatises N, S, W and E, pauses, searches with his eyes, adapts expression to indicate cues/clues. All locate Easton 'dans le centre'; Ipswich 'C'est dans l'est d'Angleterre'. The walls are covered with ... displays of work in progress and sentence builders.
>
> 11.16 Derek with 23 y7 students. They look at cartoons for units of meaning, would please the National Literacy Strategy people. 'What we have here is une bande dessinee...' Because the class is interested, well behaved and co-operative it is an opportunity to compare Derek with his ... neighbour. He speaks in English much more, explains much more, uses far less body and facial language, gives a thousand fewer signals and infinitely less warmth, though his delivery is pleasant. He switches from English to French mid-sentence. 'The French are keen on cartoon strips, some schools teach history through cartoons ... for homework we had to look at using adjectives to describe people ... une bete is a funny little animal...' You can't even imagine Terry speaking like this, yet what's wrong with it? Everything and nothing, it expresses a difference in philosophy as well as in skill. Derek reads the cartoon aloud at the front of the class - although a few hands go up there is none of Terry's inclusiveness. 'I want to go through the text again to identify expressions to describe people...' (AF11.1).

In late April, the head and deputy (pastoral) between them:

> ...observed the first or second half of 22 taught lessons. In their judgement, applying Ofsted criteria 5.1.1 to 5.1.8, 70% of these lessons were for the most part satisfactory. Although some teaching was excellent, there were common weaknesses affecting a significant proportion of the lessons observed (AF11.2).

The 70 per cent figure was lower than that recorded by HMI in January and the report was critical. 'Few lessons were underway within ten minutes of the previous bell,' while 'too often, teacher explanations are very brief or non-existent' and 'very few of the observed lessons had an obvious learning outcome ... Students were invited to undertake a variety of activities for no obvious reason, e.g. copying pictures from books, answering questions from textbooks' (AF11.2). The report recommended that: 'Team preparation,

team development and team discussion and evaluation are essential if we are to generate the ideas, confidence and energy that will make a difference' (AF11.2). But Mr Moore also acknowledged that 'you can coach people and you can steer people to do things that are constructive (but) you probably won't make very ineffective teachers into effective ones' (LT: Chris Moore, 16.i.2).

**Powerless and Lumbered**

As Mr Moore worked to finalise the staffing for September, he found the LEA unhelpful:

> I'm also concerned that ... personnel seem to have done nothing about terminating temporary contracts. Nowadays a temporary contract is almost permanent, especially if it runs into a second year, so termination has to be prepared and presented like a redundancy. We are very short of time. So if X or Y decide they've been unfairly treated or realize that their posts are more secure than they seem, I may have quite a problem (MD, p. 505).

Minor works also gave difficulty. Mr Moore tried to secure LEA approval for a building project and described the process as 'the Kafkaesque thing' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2). When Hillside was summoned to an industrial tribunal after a series of mistakes by the personnel division, the head was 'explosive with rage ... I feel powerless and lumbered' (MD, p.512). He argued that 'if you manage it, you can get it sorted out very quickly but if somebody else manages it, you can't sort it out' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2). Even basic communications were ineffective: 'Letters, faxes and phone calls seldom elicit prompt responses' (AF8.6, p. 1).

As LEA inefficiency hindered progress, Mr Moore became reluctant to be involved in projects that would involve Easton and its officers. When an Education Action Zone was proposed he commented:

> I view the potential for wasted and diverted effort as considerable. Who will be in charge? Who to lead? (MD, p. 590)

A governor concluded that 'the LEA isn't responding at all. I think they are preoccupied with other issues' (IT: PG, 11.xii.3). When the LEA came to implement the secondary review proposals, Mr Moore's frustration was further increased:

> Inspectors were not allowed to play a part in the staffing process for the secondary review (on equal opportunities grounds); they are no longer allowed to assist with capability or competency issues. This means that schools have no access to LEA subject specialist expertise when dealing with poor performance (AF8.6, p. 2).

As the inspection of the LEA later confirmed (AF8.1), the LEA was routinely inconsistent and ineffective, failing to deal with many personnel, property and development issues. The report's recommendations concluded:

> We have many recommendations to make, which set the LEA a formidable agenda. We do not believe it will be able to implement them unassisted (AF8.1, p. 3).

As Hillside improved, its relationship with the LEA became increasingly problematic:

> The partnership between the LEA and its schools is not yet properly articulated and understood, and the criteria for challenge and intervention from the LEA have not been clearly defined (AF8.1, p. 3).

**Summer Monitoring**

Shortly before the June Y2 HMI monitoring visit, Mr Moore reported on a 'major accommodation upgrade and re-organization' that had been pushed through by Elaine,

the business manager and the retired deputy head who now worked part-time on the school's resources and premises (AF9.8, p. 2). A new staff room, with improved furniture and a free coffee and snacks service, was carved out of a disused classroom; eight open plan classrooms were partitioned so that teachers could hear themselves teach; two derelict home economics rooms were converted and equipped for use by the humanities faculty; a drama studio was created; a special needs suite was established; and departmental and year accommodation was grouped so that subject staff and year teams occupied neighbouring classrooms (AF9.8).

Meanwhile, the heads of department worked with their colleagues 'to train them in what we've trained them in' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2). A head of department remembered that they 'had to follow this common approach to writing schemes of work and we had to have a grid to concentrate on ... this was to help staff concentrate on the minutiae of lesson planning' (IT: HOD, 15.vi.2). Mr Moore was confident that these preparations would win the approval of HMI:

> That is what OFSTED like to see. They like to see the action plan, they like to see the targets, they like to see strategies going for these targets and they like to see in classrooms evidence that everybody is listening and are doing it. So by the time of the last monitoring visit, they see lesson planners on every table, they see homework diaries and planners on every student's desk, they see learning objectives up on walls and it looks like a coherent approach (IT: Chris Moore, 22.vi.2).

The head visited every form, 'urging them to help their teachers do their best on Monday and Tuesday' and told the children that 'I only want three words to go on holiday with, Good progress maintained' (MD, p. 535). Despite these extensive preparations, the teachers were more relaxed:

> On the evening of the latest monitoring inspection visit it was clear that it was quite a low key affair. I think only 11 lessons were looked

> at ... (the head) is now in a sense leading the monitoring ... what six months ago would have been thought to have been a very threatening process is becoming less so. Now whether that is because people's confidence or even levels of skill are increasing or whether they are learning to play the game (IT: PG, 30.iii.2).

Only one HMI appeared for the second visit and Mr Moore found himself 'treating him as my father, anxious for approval, adopting expected behaviours. This is near ridiculous in the circumstances and at my age' (MD, p. 539). He tried to convince the inspector that all the changes, combined with the curriculum, staffing and premises developments, 'will make a different school in the autumn' (MD, p. 540). The head was doubtful whether the teaching would be seen to have improved since the January visit.

In the event, the HMI asked 'when ... we'd like the team to come to get us out of special measures' (MD, p. 550) and although the 'staff were exhausted after the HMI visit' they 'were pleased to have been successful and pleased to have an opportunity to get ourselves out of special measures' (IT: HOD, 15.vi.2). The oral debrief, followed by the letter from the head of school improvement at OFSTED (AF11.4), confirmed that:

> ...the headteacher, supported by the senior management team, continues to provide strong leadership and clear direction for the work of the school. Staff morale has steadied, is resilient and continues to improve ... Behaviour in classrooms is also satisfactory and often good ... The headteacher has been resolute in his endeavour to improve teaching. Support to address weaknesses in teaching and proposed staff changes augur well for continual overall improvement (AF11.4, p. 2).

Good progress had been made with three out of four key issues, with satisfactory progress on the fourth. Mr Moore felt vindicated:

> So when we had a very good report and the fact that now there's the inspection coming in the autumn which will take us out of special measures, I think people are seeing actually the school sitting on so much firmer ground ... all the changes for the teaching are due in the autumn because, basically, there's eleven people gone ... I mean the turn around is sort of 30% of the staff in a year, I think that gave the HMI a feeling the school was going to change very radically (IT: Chris Moore, 22.vi.2).

Although the staff 'are just too tired to celebrate' they welcomed the staff evening arranged for the end of term. The external researcher was told: 'We are having a staff evening out in the last week of term and Chris has ways of repaying his staff ... only our partners pay' (IT: HOD, 15.vi.2).

Mr Moore contrasted the July presentation evening with the previous year's event which he had attended as a guest:

> Last year's was nice but no refreshments; this year we have drinks before and after; tea, coffee, savoury nibbles. Last year was just prize-winners; this time lots more certificates and the year heads presenting their charges. Very well attended ... a lovely atmosphere, and rousing applause for my thanks to the PAG chair, who presents the certificates. 'He's made us all believe in ourselves, he's helped us save the school' (MD, p. 602).

**Lord of the Rings**

The autumn term (Y3) began with energy and optimism. Elaine commented: 'The impression is that there is new blood in here ... we have got five NQTs alone, two new heads of department ... we have got seven members of staff that have started this year' (IT: DH, 4.xii.3). She was encouraged to think that:

> ...we have now got a staff who are 50% not OFSTED scarred. You know they are not the original bunch that went through it so they are not coming with the same baggage, they are not coming with the same history (IT: DH, 4.xii.3).

Staff turnover was in reality less than Elaine's estimate, but was still significant. Within one year of the original inspection (August Y1), 20 per cent of the teachers working at Hillside had departed; within two years (August Y2), 35 per cent had moved on; within three years (August Y3), 55 per cent had left (AF1.1, MF2.32, MF4.17; see Table 1). Six heads of department had left by September Y3, including the leaders of all the core subjects. Within 16 months of the inspection, six teachers were affected by long-term illness and none returned to duty. Of the nineteen full and part-time staff serving without responsibility points, fourteen left within three years of the inspection. This contrasted with the eight teachers who left in the two years before the inspection (AF1.1, p. 17). For Mr Moore, these changes were positive:

> There has been a time lag on the improvement factor in terms of morale. But it was a tremendous start to the year because you had got all these new staff ... most of the heads of department have changed now since the original inspection and the school felt almost normal. A year previously it had felt like there had been a motor crash and people had sat around in chairs ... Walking in here in September it felt like a normal school ... you got laughter when you made jokes (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3).

Elaine was equally optimistic:

> People had worked very hard over the summer to get schemes of work in place ... so that they knew what they were doing, where the departments were going and the new staffing structure was finally

> setting in with new heads of department taking up their responsibilities ... The old senior management team from last year, which Mr Goodlad had put into place the previous year, was now pared down to Mr Moore, Peter and me ... the other three members of the senior management had moved away to be heads of department (IT: DH, 4.xii.3).

A visiting deputy head from another LEA commented that:

> What I pick up in the staff room is a tremendous buzz of people wanting new ideas and wanting development and wanting things to happen – how on earth was this (place) in special measures? (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3)

Term began with two training days, providing time for departments to work on revised schemes of work and displays for October and November; and for everyone to 'develop lesson evaluation and feedback skills so that you can support colleagues as they improve their effectiveness in the classroom' (AF12.1).

Heads of department were less sanguine:

> I think the first few weeks of term were very tricky because there was an awful lot to be done and, necessarily, there had to be a tight schedule to get it done in time. What didn't help was that, over and above the normal ... there was also target setting and we had schemes of work to do for a certain date ... and then the target setting on top of that and other things to come (IT: HOD, 6.i.3).

When the LEA inspector came to observe the teaching he reported that 'this is a (school) very different from the one inspected by OFSTED in Y1' (AF12.2):

> In every lesson which I observed, pupils were well-behaved and working well, with just a few exceptions ... All of the work in classrooms was purposeful and focused ... The preferred style of teaching at Hillside tends to be one where the pupils are taught 'at', rather than lessons being part of an ongoing dialogue ... there is already evidence that the introduction of drama is playing a significant part in developing a more positive attitude on the part of pupils. The drama lesson I observed was outstanding in several respects (AF12.2).

The public celebration of religious festivals continued, with 'a major Diwali event before half-term' (AF9.10). Year assemblies with student participation followed 'a general thematic approach' (AF9.10).

Mr Moore believed that the main improvement stemmed from the new timetable and curriculum. Compared with the previous year, supply teachers had disappeared because there was 'very little illness, very little absence and all the long term sickness disappeared. We had got consistent staff in all the areas'. All the 'peculiarities of the school were disappearing fast. You weren't going to open a door and find five children in a small room' (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3). He was concerned that the staff were working too hard and urged them to relax (IT: HOD, 6.i.3) but it made no difference:

> The Friday night before the inspection, Peter and I were throwing people out at 6 o'clock at night because they were still putting up display materials (IT: DH, 4.xii.3).

A head of year reported that 'they were under pressure, under a lot of strain ... but you would still have people working here until 6 o'clock' (IT: HOY, 4.xii.3), including Mr Moore who 'did a (display) board himself ... symbolically important ... senior management making their faces seen around the place ... there was a corporate approach to display' (IT: HOD, 6.i.3). Even the governors found themselves pressurised into a final burst:

> Mr Moore ... pushed the governors very hard to make sure that their visits are made and written up ... governors' agendas have been very carefully constructed to ensure that all ends were covered (IT: PG, 11.xii.3).

The head was less anxious about the new heads of department:

> Instead of having no leadership in two core subjects for about two years we have suddenly got two ... very bright and energetic women ... beavering away all the time ... constantly looking for new and better ways of doing things (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3).

In the final stages of preparation, a development plan extension was prepared to cover the next three years (AF12.3). Three weeks before the inspection 'he gave them a "this is the rules of the game sheet" ... he went through thoroughly ... in briefing' (IT: DH, 4.xii.3). The Staff Script (AF12.5) instructed the teachers in the handling of the inspection:

> Constructive, active engagement with the children should be the prime feature of our work – don't set written tasks which occupy most of the time inspectors are with you ... Explain the learning objective ... All student assignments marked up to date.

Although there was a 'widespread expectation that we would come out of special measures' (IT: PG, 11.xii.3), the tension became almost unbearable:

> For many people it was re-visiting the previous OFSTED ... we had teachers vomiting before they came to school, we had teachers who were ... in a desperately psyched up state. We had teachers who were really frightened (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3).

A head of department later described the experience:

> I think I was the first person observed by one of them ... he was in my next lesson and that was good for me, personally, you know, the worst thing is waiting for them to come – they've seen everybody else. They were as they had been before, silent. I think that's very unnerving. You don't get any feedback whatsoever, blank faced – better than having poor feedback ... They were very omnipresent. Even when you were out in the morning, you'd come across somebody walking in the corridors, looking at the displays so that was worth it or you'd be doing duty pre-school, out in the car-park – one of them would be there, you know, they were everywhere, but, in a low-key manner (IT: HOD, 6.i.3).

The inspection report (AF11.5) declared that the school 'no longer requires special measures' and indicated that in the fifty lessons observed, the teaching in nine out of ten was 'sound or better'; and that in two out of five 'it was good' (AF11.5, paragraph 7). After the oral debrief on the third day, Mr Moore 'told them immediately and people were grinning from ear to ear with a big sense of relief and then we had a bit of a bash for them on the Wednesday night, buns and cake and a glass of wine' (IT: DH, 4.xii.3). Several people felt that their 'self worth and the school's self worth and everything else had been restored and so they were quite happy' (IT: DH, 4.xii.3) while others were angry that they had been put through such a process for the failures of the previous administration:

> Some of the new members of staff, especially the younger ones ... were really quite joyful. Whereas the older ones and people like me who had been here for the two years ... almost (had) a feeling of resentment ... that they had put us through this process (IT: HOY, 4.xii.3).

Mr Moore 'noticed a wave of Mr Wake stories ... there is a strong sense amongst the staff that they were led into the shit and abandoned there' (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3). Although he was pleased with the result of the inspection, he noticed that 'our teaching became very convergent, much less user friendly than it needed to be' and reported that the LEA inspector had found the 'amount of exchange between teachers and children in the classrooms was much less than he would have expected. In other words, everybody is following the formula' (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3). He suspected that this was because the staff had experienced 'a very directed management style over the last few months and perhaps forever and we now need to start to carve out the time for more collaborative work'. Heads of department had to become a 'powerful group' because 'it is no good sitting there waiting to be told what to do' (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3).

Like Brian Goodlad, Chris Moore was pressed to stay on. Governors and parents wanted him to build on the success of leaving special measures and to lead the expansion of the school. But he was exhausted:

> OFSTED ... is the Dark Lord in the educational system and I feel as if I have ... been a ring bearer ... Frodo can't stay with them (because) the bearing of the ring is unbearable (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3).

**The Reckoning**

*Inspection Evidence*

The Inspection Report of November Y3 (AF11.5, summarised in Table 4) shows a significant improvement in relation to all but one of the key characteristics of effective schools identified by Sammons et al. (1995), compared with the judgements of the first OFSTED inspection (AF2.2, summarised in Table 3) on the same dimensions. 'Serious shortcomings in the quality of leadership' (p. 19) became 'strong leadership' that gives 'clear direction' (paragraph 15). In Y1, leadership failed to 'take a strategic view' (p. 6) but by Y3 'the ethos of the school matches its aims' (paragraph 15). The first inspection

found that 'teachers, by their attitude, provoke ... bad behaviour' (p. 13), in contrast to the Y3 judgement that 'the behaviour of pupils in classrooms is good' (paragraph 19). A low level of punctuality had 'an adverse effect on attainment and progress' (p. 5); by Y3 it was a problem only for a minority, while attendance was better and extra-curricular activities were a strength. Teaching improved from 'a third of lessons are unsatisfactory or poor' (p. 5) to 'the quality ... was sound or better in nine out of ten lessons' (paragraph 12) by Y3. The proportion of lessons found to be 'good' rose from 25 per cent to 40 per cent.

Expectations in Y1 were 'low and the pace of teaching is slow' (p. 5). In Y3 the head was judged to have been 'resolute in his endeavour to improve teaching. Support in order to address weaknesses in teaching, and staff changes, have proved beneficial for continual overall improvement' (paragraph 24). Weak provision for 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural development' (p. 6) was replaced by 'moral and social development' that was 'good' (paragraph 18). From a low base line ('the school does not evaluate its work systematically') Hillside had developed systems so that 'the work of the school is monitored and evaluated in a systematic way' (paragraph 15). Pupils used to have 'few opportunities ... to take responsibility for themselves or for others' (p. 6) but by November Y3 'demonstrate a worthy sense of values and show respect for each other's views' and the school had 'taken a number of initiatives to reflect and celebrate the multi-cultural nature of the school population' (paragraph 18).

The Y1 report found that 'there is a limited involvement of parents in the daily life of the school' (p. 19) but the Y3 inspection made no reference to parental involvement, despite the obvious contribution of the PAG. In Y1, Hillside had not been a learning organization because 'the amount of staff development and contact with a range of sources of new ideas and expertise is low' (p. 21) but the Y3 report noted that 'Staff have worked hard to improve the school, they feel valued and confident, and moral is high. The school has the capacity for self-improvement' (paragraph 15).

Two HMI visited Hillside in June Y3 as part of the Easton LEA inspection and observed eight lessons in addition to conducting interviews with senior staff. Their remarks further confirm the improved character of the school:

> Seven of the eight lessons observed were good or very good; the eighth was satisfactory but showed insecure subject knowledge ... the teaching was impressive overall. Lessons were well prepared and planned; there was a clear focus on objectives; targets were set. Questioning and direct teaching/explanation were good ... Expectations were high and right ... Although all the classes seen were of lower ability they listened well (especially in drama) and picked up on the teachers' expectations. Attainment was low (because of the nature of the groups) but progress was satisfactory or good ... HMI further commented on the school's progress since the November 1998 inspection which brought Hillside out of special measures. They believe the school is continuing to improve ... Work with subject leaders has been effective (AF11.6).

*Student Outcomes*

Hillside attempted to demonstrate the impact of these improved organizational characteristics on the results achieved by students in the Student Outcome Report (MF5). The attendance figures (MF5.2: Chart 10) had reached a low point in Mr Wake's last full year (Y0, 85.7 per cent) but had recovered to 88.4 per cent for the whole of Y1, despite the considerable turbulence arising from the OFSTED inspection, the LEA response and the change of leadership. According to the OFSTED Panda report for Y2 (AF13.1, p. 5) this placed the school 2.5 per cent below the national average attendance for England of 90.9 per cent. Although considerable resources were directed into monitoring and managing attendance during years 2 and 3, as the action plan required, further improvement was limited to 1 per cent in Y2 and 0.9 per cent in Y3.

The Headteacher's Form (AF1.1, p. 5) indicates that in the year to November Y1 there were five fixed term exclusions and seven permanent exclusions. This compares with sixty-eight fixed term and six permanent exclusions in Y2; and seven fixed-term and two permanent exclusions in the autumn only of Y3 (Chart 11).

Records of student performance are incomplete, mainly because the process of bench-marking, recording and evaluating progress did not become fully operational until the spring of Y2. The ACCESS database (see Table 5) nevertheless provides significant detail for the eight year groups of immediate relevance for this study.

Hillside's performance at GCSE (measured by the percentage of students achieving 5 or more higher grades) fluctuated in relation to national and local averages as shown in the table below:

| Year | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Hillside cf national average** | -17.5 | -4.1 | -12.3 | -16.9 |
| **Hillside cf local average** | n/a | +8.2 | -0.8 | -6.1 |

(Source: AS4.2)

The proportion of students obtaining no GCSE qualification was 13 per cent in three of the four years (dropping in Y2 to 8 per cent), significantly worse than national or local averages for those years. The proportion obtaining 5 GCSE grades A* to G was the same in Y3 as in Y0 (78 per cent).

The mean key stage 2 levels in English, mathematics and science achieved by students entering Hillside were similar each year. The mean key stage 3 level attained in English

rose by 1.3 over three years but the levels for mathematics and science varied little. Mean CAT and Reading Age scores were consistent through the three years of the study, indicating a student cohort with an ability profile well below the national average, as might be expected from the FSM entitlement shown in Table 5. In Y2, using only FSM data, Bath University accurately predicted GCSE points scores for all Easton LEA schools, with a margin of error of 10 per cent (LEA data folder).

Analysis undertaken at Hillside in Y2 (Source: ACCESS database) indicates the extent to which students in receipt of free school meals underachieved compared with their classmates:

| **Entitled to FSM** | **Number** | **% of Year 11 total** | **Number with 5 A*-C grades** | **% FSM with 5 A*-C grades** | **Total Number of A-C grades achieved** |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Males | 11 | 7.2 | 0 | 0 | 4 |
| Females | 17 | 11.2 | 5 | 29 | 38 |
| Total | 28 | 18.5 | 5 | 17 | 42 |

*Leadership Evaluation*

As part of the LPSH programme, Mr Moore's characteristics and styles were assessed during his final term at Hillside, and their impact on the climate of the school was evaluated. Senior staff, the PA, and the chair of the PAG (five people) completed three questionnaires. Colleagues had to indicate how closely the head's behaviour or the school's current practice matched a series of contrasting statements. The diagnostic data (see Table 2) shows that Mr Moore was perceived to possess the characteristics associated with successful headship. Although his scores on 'Hold People Accountable' and 'Develop Potential' were just below the thresholds set for those competences, he compensated through his ratings for 'Transformational Leadership' and 'Teamwork'.

Chart 8 (Leadership Styles Inventory) displays the extent to which Mr Moore was seen to use the six styles indicated. The CSI/Leadership Style Relationships (Table 6) indicates the likely impact of these styles on the CSI (see p. 73 above), Hay's measure of a leader's success in motivating his/her colleagues. The generally high, positive scores suggest that Mr Moore's use of a range of styles (especially the Authoritative, Coaching and Affiliative styles) helped to create favourable conditions for school improvement. The gaps between the ideal and actual scores for Rewards, and for Team Commitment, are significant and may reflect Mr Moore's frequent use of the Coercive style. Coercive leaders tend not to give recognition; and their criticism outweighs their praise; they tend to secure team commitment through 'forced compliance' (see Table 6).

These findings are discussed below in chapters 9 and 10.

# Chapter 9 Art and Science

**Strong Intervention**

The evidence presented in chapters 5 to 8 can be interpreted as a case study in school improvement, with 'strong intervention methods' (Fullan, 2000a) and a 'calmer, organizational approach' (Stark, 1998, p. 41) leading to an improved capacity for development (Hopkins, 2000) and a dramatic recovery in organizational efficiency and effectiveness (Tables 3 and 4). Within the two-year time span proposed by Fullan (2000a) and Stark (1998), Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore seem to have applied the lessons of school improvement research to produce a genuine 'transformation' in 'feelings, attitudes and beliefs' (Hopkins, 2001, p. 2) and to develop the school's structure and culture to secure 'continual overall improvement' (AF11.5). Like Clark (1998), Hampton (Hampton & Jones, 2000) and Atkinson (Whatford, 1998), Goodlad and Moore seem to justify the policy conclusion 'that what we need is more leadership of educational institutions, with superheads being drafted in to turn "failing" schools around' (Gunter, 2001, p. 1, quoted above, p. 54) and that 'the public identification of unacceptable standards tends to speed rather than delay recovery, and indeed is often a precondition for it' (Stark, 1998, p. 35).

After the first OFSTED inspection (November Y1), governors, heads and staff at Hillside began work on a sequence of initiatives that corresponds with Hopkins' (2000, p. 3) recommendation for failing, ineffective or low achieving schools; and with Stark's (1998, p. 40) description of the strategies adopted by schools that have left special measures; and with Fullan's (2000b) insistence that the head's role is to build the capacity for improvement. Prompted by the staff, the chair of governors intervened to remove Mr Wake after the publication of the OFSTED report (AF4), and with the help of a personnel consultant and the LEA secured the successive appointment of two heads with appropriate experience and expertise to lead the campaign to get out of special measures (MD, p. 1, IT: DH, 4.xii.3).

Early in the first term of change, Mr Goodlad convened assemblies to harness the energy and optimism of the students (Hopkins, 2000), and to discover their opinions

(MD, p. 3), and the process was continued under Mr Moore through the regular administration of an LEA student attitude questionnaire (MF1.4). Observers noticed that the students now spoke of the school in glowing terms and that there was a new sense of identity and belonging (IT: PG, 11.xii.3). Mr Goodlad concentrated on 'easy' changes (Hopkins, 2000) that would make an immediate impact, including building a new reception area (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2) and introducing lockers and vending machines (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). Mr Moore continued Mr Goodlad's drive to improve the building and facilities at Hillside, but with a new emphasis on priorities related to the action plan. Open plan classrooms were partitioned, a drama studio was created and disused home economics rooms were converted (AF9.8). Mr Moore also challenged the lack of uniform (MD, p. 4), and emphasized wall displays to show that learning was valued (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2, HOD, 6.i.3), as Hopkins advises.

Mr Goodlad drafted an action plan that identified and prioritised points where improvement was needed and held daily staff briefings to develop a common purpose and direction (Stark, 1998, p. 40). Through the action plan, he created new staff structures that were later implemented and developed by Mr Moore (AF5.5). These included a temporary senior management team with two deputies, responsible respectively for improving the quality and consistency of teaching; and for monitoring and evaluating pupil progress. Curriculum and pupil teams were established and temporary responsibility points were distributed to teachers who worked towards particular action plan objectives (LT: Chris Moore, 16.i.2).

Displaying Stark's 'collegiate skills' (1998, p. 40), Mr Moore formalised the roles and responsibilities of the senior management team (MF1.14), wrote a Scheme of Governance for the board of governors (MF2.19), initiated four staff working parties (AF9.7), and insisted on a school calendar to ensure that all developments were reviewed, amended and approved by a sequence of meetings that included governors, senior management and the staff consultative group. Action plan objectives, roles and responsibilities, and staff and communication structures were aligned to achieve task and system outcomes (MF1.14). The Curriculum Group was asked to review and restructure the curriculum, while the Ethos Group was invited to discuss and enhance the school's ethos and values (AF9.7), a course of action proposed for low achieving schools (Hopkins, 2000). Mr Moore proved an expert in resource management,

relating limited means to strategic ends (Stark, 1998) by ensuring a close link between educational priorities and financial decisions (AF9.7, MD, p. 15). Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore were successful ambassadors (Stark, 1998), achieving a high profile in the media and winning the support of parents and the wider community (IT: PA, 4.xii.2, HOY, 10.xii.2, AF7.6, AF7.7).

Like the heads whose strategies are reported by Stark (1998), Mr Goodlad launched an intensive staff development programme (AF5.5), including individual coaching, paired observation and departmental consultancies. When Mr Moore took over, he led workshops for the whole staff, trained them in OFSTED expectations and developed a common approach to learning (MF2.23, IT: HOY, 28.i.2), using a lesson planner to focus a limited but specific repertoire (Hopkins, 2000). Mr Goodlad by-passed or undermined ineffectual staff members, like Gerald and Sidney, but promoted and encouraged those who could respond to the demands of the action plan (MD, p. 1, IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2, PA, 4.xii.2). Mr Moore observed lessons (MF3.15) and involved senior and middle management in monitoring performance and setting individual improvement targets (MF5.10), evidence of the thesis that:

> ...the central purpose of transformational leadership ... (is) the enhancement of individual and collective problem-solving capacities of organizational members; such capacities are exercised in the identification of goals to be achieved (Leithwood et al., 1992, p. 7).

Mr Moore also used competency procedures to remove weak teachers (e.g. MD, p. 42) and terminated temporary contracts when performance was consistently unsatisfactory (MD, p. 505). The turnover of teachers between the inspections in Y1 and Y3 was approximately 35 per cent (Table 1), however, exceeding by a wide margin Stark's (1998, p. 39) estimate that only 'a small number of staff leave' schools in special measures.

This interpretation presents Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore as the main agents behind a rapid improvement in Hillside's effectiveness and capacity for further development, documented by the successive monitoring and inspection reports, and confirmed by the testimony of the interview transcripts. The role of the two heads in bringing about

change provides evidence for Fullan's (2000b, p. 2) assertion that 'effective schools virtually always have strong school leaders' who produce a capacity to engage in reform that is 'stronger at the end of the leader's term than at the beginning', rather than for his earlier opinion that 'recent empirical evidence confirms that the majority of principals play a limited role in educational change' (1984, p. 94). HMI reports on the strength of Mr Moore's leadership, on the direction he gave the school, and on his resolve to improve teaching and bring about continual improvement (AF11.3, 11.4, 11.5) contrast with research studies concluding that educational change fails more often than it succeeds, and that heads are more concerned with organizational stability than with becoming 'dynamic change agents' (Sarason, 1996, Wolcott, 1984, Weindling & Earley, 1987, Fullan, 1992).

The two main inspection reports (Y1, Y3), and the contrast between them, provides detailed, externally verified evidence that Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore produced a significant change in Hillside's observed performance against OFSTED (1995) criteria. The quality of leadership, management, teaching, learning, progress and behaviour was judged to have improved remarkably. HMI visiting in June Y3 further found that 'the teaching was impressive overall' and that 'Expectations were high and right' (AF11.6). Tables 3 and 4 match OFSTED inspection findings with the Key Characteristics of Effective Schools (Sammons et al., 1995) and suggest that in Y1 Hillside lacked all the expected features of an effective school. By Y3, however, inspection comments indicate that the school had become highly effective in terms of these same characteristics.

**Sources of Authority**

Although this description represents a persuasive summary of developments at Hillside, it is unsatisfactory as an explanation of how change was initiated, implemented and sustained. Sergiovanni warns against accepting too readily seemingly straightforward, positivist accounts that lead us:

> ...to think in the rationalistic tradition about our work, to make unwarranted assumptions about the linearity and predictability that

> exist in the world, and to overestimate the tightness of links between research and practice (1995, p. ix).

For Sergiovanni, Stark and Hopkins are 'neats' (p. ix) who provide common sense lists of actions that are supposed to lead to improvement, but fail to analyse the process of change, except at the most general level. The question 'how?' is neither asked nor answered. Reynolds & Creemers (1990, p. 2, quoted in Sammons et al. 1995, p. 2) point out a similar problem with texts that detail the characteristics of effective schools:

> ...our knowledge of what makes a 'good school' greatly exceeds our knowledge of how to apply that knowledge in programmes of school improvement to make schools 'good'.

The inspection findings (Y3, Table 4) that 'pupils demonstrate a worthy sense of values' and that staff 'feel valued and confident', so different from those of two years before, are insufficiently explained, for example, by the suggestion that Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore simply followed Hopkins' advice that they should generate dialogue about values and harness energy and optimism. The 'neat' version of 'strong' leadership emphasized in OFSTED reports (e.g. AF11.5) also risks over-emphasising the agency of the head to the point where other people's contributions become invisible or unduly subordinate. A more complete account of the 'how' and 'why' of leadership should also include a close analysis of the means by which heads mobilise varied sources of authority and power to achieve their goals, and of the complex human and organizational reactions that follow, with apparently unpredictable influences on the process of change itself.

Sergiovanni adopts this approach. Instead of the 'technicist' leader (Gunter, 1997, 2001) who implements 'someone else's prescription or vision' (Barth, 1990, p. 64), he envisages a 'scruffy' art of administration that lies in:

> ...balancing the four competing sources of authority in such a way that moral and professional authority flourish without neglecting bureaucratic and personal authority (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 314).

**Bureaucratic Power**

Bureaucratic and positional power enabled first Mr Wake, then Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore, to shape and effectively control every aspect of the school's operations, including internal and external communications; curriculum and budgetary priorities; appointments and staff structures; and student exclusions.

Mr Wake

Mr Wake saw himself as an 'awkward sod' determined to go 'my own way' (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2) and arranged matters so that his personalised view of the school and its purposes should prevail (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). He told the staff what they were to do and adopted an intimidating stance at meetings, so that alternative opinions were not articulated in public (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2, HOY, 10.xii.2). Governors met infrequently, did not receive the head's report in advance, and had no significant involvement in the running of the school (IT: PG, 30.iii.2). The deputy was overloaded with tasks while other roles were undeveloped (AF2.2, IT: DH, 11.xii.2). Budget and curriculum decisions were made by the deputy on a personal basis but there were no arrangements to review allocations (AF2.2).

Mr Wake would not allow extra-curricular activities that compromised his control of the lunch interval, and locked students out of the school without regard to their wishes (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). His reluctance to adopt consistent disciplinary procedures or to exclude students seems to have undermined year heads and tutors (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). He appears to have perceived formal procedures and collaborative structures as an unnecessary constraint on his own judgement and authority. He did not 'suffer fools gladly' and was dismissive of other sources of influence, including the LEA, OFSTED and neighbouring heads (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2). His positional strength was such that even the negative conclusions of the LEA Review Report (AF1.2) had no impact on his authority and it was not until the OFSTED Inspection Report (AF2.2) was published that there was sufficient opposition to persuade him to resign (AF4).

Although observers tended to place a negative construction on Mr Wake's use of power, considering him the 'quite ignorant' leader of a 'quietly sleeping disgruntled giant' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2, 4.xii.3), the reality of his power, and his deliberation in using it, should not be underestimated. Whilst it is true that 'leaders, typically, are accorded potency and given credit for securing positive outcomes and blamed for circumstances that go wrong' (Gronn, 1996, p. 199), and Mr Wake himself commented that staff were happy to blame him (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2), there is abundant evidence here that Mr Wake used the resources of his office to maintain his authority and philosophy, with significant consequences for Hillside as an organization.

Mr Goodlad

The LEA's announcement that the school was to close created an immediate crisis that strengthened rather than qualified the powers available to Mr Goodlad. Although governors, teachers, parents and the wider community had been spurred into action (IT: SEN, 11.xii.2), they instinctively looked to the acting head for leadership during the emergency, and recognised that they could not save the school without someone to take the initiative and mobilise Hillside's available resources (AF6, IT: PG, 4.xii.2). He wrote the action plan himself, spent over £100, 000 in five months, and distributed promotion points and building contracts on his personal authority. Briefings, meetings and a student council were established at his command, while offices, classrooms and equipment were reorganized overnight, often without discussion with those concerned (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2). Furniture and equipment were ordered and the new acting deputies were asked to create a host of systems to monitor and improve performance (AF5.5, IT: NQT, 10.xii.2, PA, 4.xii.2). Mr Goodlad mobilised all the legitimate power of his office to exploit the opportunity created by OFSTED and the LEA to impose 'amazing changes' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2).

Mr Moore

Mr Moore seems to have been much more self-conscious about the dangers of positional and personalised forms of power than his predecessors. When Hillside emerged from special measures, he likened himself to Frodo Baggins (in Tolkien,

1995), who was tempted by the power of the ring he was supposed to destroy and warned his colleagues that they had to become a more 'powerful group', less dependent on the 'very directed management style' he had felt obliged to adopt (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3). It worried him that many of the staff were 'so defeated, so lacking in power' (MD, p. 160) and that his own behaviour was driven by the demands of a coercive external agenda (MD, p. 32). He detected 'intrinsic oppressive qualities' (MD, p. 396) in the bureaucratic structures of the modern state and feared their consequences for his educational values and beliefs (MD, p. 313). The task groups reflected his belief that 'the more decisions that can be made jointly the better' (IT: PA, 28.i.2) and that staff ownership was important.

Despite these self-aware reservations, Mr Moore seized the initiative from the moment that he entered the school (MD, p. 7) and took full advantage of his position at the centre of the school's networks, and of the knowledge of internal and external developments (e.g. progress with the secondary review; news of the LEA budget) that it brought him. Although his schemes and structures (MF1, MF2) were designed to define and distribute responsibility, and to limit the degree to which personal and arbitrary decisions influenced decision-making (MF1.17), he was the sole author of each proposal and subsequent consultation was concerned with minor details (MD, p. 320).

When his exclusive control of the staff agenda seemed to be challenged by the forum, he established an alternative consultative group which met in his room and responded to his proposals (MD, p. 32, p. 62). Mr Moore's approach was to inform, explain and consult on papers that had been formulated by the 'kitchen cabinet', rather than to seek a decision-making partnership (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2). He claimed that he needed 'dictatorial powers to deal with problems' and was painfully aware that his colleagues would revert to the 'comfortable old way' (MD, p. 107) if the opportunity arose. Although he was rigorous in directing resources to the requirements of the action plan, the decision to go-ahead with a new telephone system and administrative computers (AF10.2) was debated only within the inner senior management group.

Appointments, disciplinary hearings and exclusions followed formal procedures, however, with governors and senior staff enacting roles prescribed in the Scheme of

Governance (MF2.19). Mr Moore's determination to remain in control was revealed, however, when a disciplinary committee rejected his recommendation that a student should be permanently excluded (MD, p. 318). He threatened to resign and encouraged the staff to protest against the decision to reinstate someone who had assaulted a member of staff (MD, p. 320). He knew that his manoeuvres undermined the procedures that he had created but considered it more important to defuse the 'special emotional charge' (MD, p. 318) associated with violence against teachers. He used his position to outmanoeuvre the governors involved, including the chair of the panel.

**Interpersonal Skills**

The three heads' personal characteristics and interpersonal behaviour or styles provided them with a further source of authority as they pursued their objectives (Sergiovanni, 1995), and illustrate psychological theories about how leaders contribute to organizational effectiveness (Litwin & Stringer, 1968, McClelland, 1975, Belbin, 1981, Covey, 1989, 1992, Peters & Waterman, 1995, McClelland & Burnham, 1995, New & Cormack, 1997, DfEE, 1998a). The micro-political or transactional exchanges described by Burns (1978), Hoyle (1986a), Ball (1987) and Starratt (1999) are also well-represented and there is some evidence that Mr Wake's 'closed transactional' regime was converted into a qualitatively different 'micro-political culture' (Blase & Anderson, 1995, p. 25) by the use of 'open transactional' and 'closed transformative' styles that helped staff to accept 'decisional authority and responsibility' (1995, p. 106).

Mr Wake

Mr Wake's interpersonal behaviour attracted negative comments by all the witnesses included in the study. If you greeted him, 'he would often ignore you' and his unpleasantness 'had an influence on the rest of the work of the school' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). He could be a 'Jekyll and Hyde' figure (IT: DH, 11.xii.2) whose moods meant that 'you don't feel confident' (IT: CT, 4.xii.2). Several female informants reported that they had been told to 'f-off or p-off' (MD, p. 449) and parents often found him 'very rude' and 'saw through him' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). Students thought

he was 'too strict' and complained that it made the school 'feel gloomy and not really enthusiastic' (IT: Student, 10.ii.2). Mr Wake believed in professional autonomy, however, and did not interfere with subject departments or teachers 'unless he was sort of disgruntled about something' (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2). But he exercised tight control over the lunch routine (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2), discouraged extra-curricular activities and blocked contributions at staff meetings (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). He described himself as a 'benevolent despot' but seemed a 'bit of a dictator' (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2) to his colleagues. Although he claimed to love being with the children (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2), his assemblies were often cancelled and students had few opportunities to participate (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2, NQT, 10.xii.2).

Mr Wake's reported behaviour was almost exclusively coercive, in terms of the leadership styles defined by LPSH (DfEE, 1998a), and provides an example of McClelland & Burnham's (1995) true authoritarian in action, using personalised power to maintain his authority. Precise rules were laid down (e.g. lunch time); innovation was discouraged (by a generally dismissive attitude towards development initiatives); frequent criticism, much of it expressed in unreasonable terms, stimulated a fear of failure; staff complied with requirements but lacked commitment, except to their own area of work; the absence of clear procedures (e.g. governors, discipline) reflected the lack of long term version.

Table 6 shows the relationship between the six styles and the six organizational climate dimensions defined in the LPSH model, and predicts generally negative results for coercive leadership. Mr Wake's conduct resembles some aspects of the style adopted by the president of Organization A, the least successful of the companies in Litwin & Stringer's (1968) business simulation. Unlike the company president, however, Mr Wake did not detail his requirements for tasks and roles, preferring to delegate to his deputy on an ad hoc basis (IT: PA, 4.xii.2), and was apparently unconcerned about standards. The staff believed 'it didn't matter' what they did (IT: HOY, 4.xii.3) and sensed that the head 'didn't want to know' (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2). Mr Wake appears to have varied his approach only with people who were 'down' (IN: Albert Wake, 24.ix.2), when he seems to have adopted a more affiliative style (DfEE, 1998a).

Although questionnaire data about Mr. Wake's styles, and their impact at Hillside, is not available, other sources of evidence suggest that he consistently displayed characteristics and behaviour associated with poor performance and that these contributed significantly to the low levels of organizational effectiveness reported by OFSTED (AF2.2). Barker (2001a, p. 72) compares Mr Wake with a number of other less successful heads and concludes:

> The heads ... were inclined to blame failure on forces beyond their control. Alternative, more strategic approaches were discounted because they were concerned to maintain their own values, position and control. They felt threatened by a paralysing external agenda.

Mr Wake's 'choice' or 'zone of discretion' in his approach to leadership seems to have been limited so that he displayed a particularly narrow 'range of personal characteristics' (Gronn, 1999, p. 110). Of the five typically defective style types described by Kets de Vries & Miller (1984, quoted in Gronn, 1999, p. 117), the paranoid most closely resembles Mr Wake's reported behaviour:

> Paranoid, the third type, denotes suspicion. This translates, in leadership terms, into an obsession with control ... Threats, wariness, competitive challenges, anxiety and fear tend to preoccupy the mind of the paranoid leader.

On the basis of empirical data from 226 teachers, Blase & Anderson (1995) also predict negative consequences for authoritarian behaviour. Although their model of leadership styles is different, Blase & Anderson's 'closed transactional' head is concerned with 'power over' rather than 'power through' others, and adopts a similar coercive style to that adopted by Mr Wake.

Mr Goodlad

Equipped with the OFSTED report (AF2.2), Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore both knew that Mr Wake's leadership was perceived to be an important factor in the school's downward spiral and set out to create a very different impression through the careful

stage management (Goffman, 1956) of their interactions with the staff and community. Mr Goodlad's positive, self-confident approach enabled him to make an immediate, dramatic impact. Public occasions (assembly, briefing, open day) were contrived to create a larger-than-life persona that was projected beyond the school through television, radio and the press (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2, HOY, 10.xii.2, PA, 4.xii.2). Symbolic actions (cutting the chains, lockers for all, building a new reception area) were chosen for their eye-catching, positive impact. Everything would be as different as possible from his predecessor's inward-looking, non-communicative stance, a familiar stratagem for new heads (Weindling & Earley, 1987, Day & Bakioğlu, 1996).

He was seen to be 'very loveable ... incredibly open, excitable, boyish, lots of humour, loads of energy and joie de vivre' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2). Staff morale rose because 'he made people feel valued' while 'pupils were swept along' by his enthusiasm (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). Mr Goodlad communicated intensively with staff, students and parents at every opportunity, establishing that he was 'a fantastic motivator' (IT: PG, 4.xii.2) for whom everything was 'brilliant' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2). Rapid promotions (IT: PG, 4.xii.2) and regular praise (IT: PA, 4.xii.2) created a positive atmosphere, although he was seen to push people aside (IT: PA, 4.xii.2) and upset others (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2) by the urgency of his behaviour. The action plan was shared at a staff conference, jobs were defined, and goals were set (AF5.4, AF5.5). The two temporary deputies were asked to invent and introduce a variety of systems to improve the quality of teaching and student progress (MD, p. 36). Hillside became lively, when it had been moribund, and staff were encouraged to follow their own 'yellow brick roads' (IT: DH, 4.xii.3).

The problems involved in analysing reports of Mr Goodlad's interpersonal behaviour confirm Perrow's (1986) suspicion that our understanding of leadership works 'at the extremes' (e.g. Mr Wake) but falters in less straightforward circumstances. In the space of five hectic months, Mr Goodlad presented a multitude of contrasting and ambiguous impressions that could be interpreted within a variety of explanatory frameworks. He displayed 'a high need for power and an interest in influencing others' (McClelland & Burnham, 1995), as well as a determination to use that power for the benefit of the whole organization, but he showed little respect for Sidney and

Gerald as he pushed them aside (IT: PA, 4.xii.2) or for the head of careers who found himself interviewing students above the noise of the washing machines, or the post-holders whose jobs and offices disappeared beneath them. Although he was said to be a fantastic motivator, his actions upset and demoralised people (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2) who were committed to the 'comfortable old way' and felt themselves to be victims of an unjust inspection (IT: HOD, 5.vi.2).

Mr Wake's 'pattern of control' (Ball, 1987, p. 13) was broken but a struggle for 'very different goals' continued, with Mr Goodlad switching within Ball's schema of styles (1987, p. 87), from the interpersonal (in dealing with responsive staff) to the managerial (in preparing the action plan and establishing new posts and job descriptions), and the authoritarian (in dealing with less capable staff). He also bargained and bartered in transactional mode (Burns, 1978, Sergiovanni, 1995, Starratt, 1999), distributing promotion points to buy commitment to the action plan and purchasing additional resources and equipment for departments that responded to his campaign (e.g. new computers, new furniture for offices). He organized the human and practical resources of the school to help the PAG and received their support and commitment in return (AF6.1, 6.2). Elaine, Peter, Graham and Donna were elevated to the senior management team, despite their lack of experience and training (IT: DH, 11.xii.2) and committed themselves to the new regime, based on the OFSTED agenda, in return for the opportunity they had been given.

Although Mr Goodlad's actions can be evaluated in terms of LPSH styles (DfEE, 1998a), his impact on the climate at Hillside could be perceived positively or negatively, according to the experience of the staff members who completed the questionnaire. For the less responsive, he could appear more coercive than Mr Wake. He made decisions about capability swiftly (IT: PA, 4.xii.2, AHDT, 11.xii.2) and acted without making his intentions or expectations clear to the individuals concerned. Although there were more meetings than before, key decisions were taken (e.g. building the reception area, opening the school at lunch time) without reference to the staff. He aimed to 'challenge' the culture by using the students to 'generate a buzz' (MD, p. 3) and was more likely to remove responsibility (pace-setting) than to encourage debate about the school's direction (democratic). Unlike Mr Wake, he

could be authoritative, presenting a compelling vision of the future, with Hillside saved from the LEA and OFSTED if the teachers proved they were good enough.

Mr Goodlad's interpersonal behaviour is also difficult to interpret because of the unusual, turbulent environment within which he was obliged to operate and the uncertain nature of the agendas he faced (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). He had to compress an induction phase that can last for several years (Weindling & Earley, 1987, Day & Bakioğlu, 1996) into a few months. In normal circumstances, new heads 'start to realize the gap between their ideals and the limitations imposed by the school context' during the second and third years and only then begin to learn and manage the culture (Day & Bakioğlu, 1996, p. 209). Mr Goodlad threw himself into culture-changing actions at once (e.g. open school, student assemblies) because he felt there was nothing to lose. Unless there was rapid change, the LEA would close the school; and the key issues identified by OFSTED (AF2.2, AF5.5) legitimised the alterations he wished to bring about.

His dilemma was that whilst the demoralised staff urgently needed to hear positive messages, he considered the school's culture was unproductive (MD, p. 3) and liable to obstruct 'the calmer, organizational approach' recommended by Stark (1998). Evans (1999) describes the tension that can develop between 'real' and assumed beliefs when values and ideologies are not shared, as in this case, and argues that the notion of 'style' deals with only one aspect of complex interactions between human beings. This suggestion is consistent with Mr Goodlad's success in motivating the staff he trusted, and with whom he shared common ground in terms of beliefs and outlook, and his negative impact on those who remained loyal to the formal but loose-coupled (Weick, 1988) structures of Mr Wake's Hillside, where teacher autonomy was valued.

Mr Moore

Mr Moore had to deal with an equally demanding contextual turbulence but had the luxury of a longer period of time (two years) within which to establish changed systems and ways of working. After the drama of the summer and the haste with which many changes had been introduced, but not necessarily implemented (IT: PG,

4.xii.2), Mr Moore believed it was important 'to consolidate Mr Goodlad's changes' and make sure 'what is agreed happens' (MD, p. 3). But although he produced a series of written documents (MF1.14, 1.16, 1.17, 2.19) in his first term, his emphasis was on sustaining the morale and motivation of the staff by continuing and even expanding the levels of engagement and involvement that had developed under Mr Goodlad. As Sergiovanni suggests (1995), he gave the personal support and encouragement that enhanced teachers' opportunities for achievement, responsibility, competence and esteem, inviting his colleagues to work with him to improve the school, on the assumption that 'people are able, responsible and worthwhile' (Stoll & Fink, 1995, p. xiii).

Although trust was withheld initially, and at first he seemed intellectually powerful and somewhat remote (IT: DH, 11.xii.2, PG, 4.xii.2), he was soon reported to be 'smiling' and 'approachable' (IT: CT, 4.xii.2), while staff no longer felt 'reluctant to speak' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). He had an 'open door policy to staff and students' (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2) and made key members of staff 'feel an equal' (IT: HOD, 15.vi.2). He was seen as a political operator (IT: PG, 4.xii.2) who wants to 'shift the culture from blaming staff' to a supportive, collaborative one (IT: PG, 6.ii.2). At staff meetings teachers realized that he was the polar opposite of Mr Wake, inviting people to discuss ideas and contribute suggestions (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). Others found him 'quick to praise' (IT: HOD, 15.vi.2), and appreciated his written notes of thanks and approval of their work (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2). Although parents were said to be 'slightly in awe of him', they found him 'approachable and warm' and were inclined to 'admire him' (IT: PG, 11.xii.2). There was 'a procession of kids to his door to talk to him' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2).

These impressions were the result of a deliberate, transactional strategy. Mr Moore set out to win staff support and boost morale by backing them on discipline (MD, p. 5). Known troublemakers were permanently excluded to show that 'we're not standing for this' (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2), and the drinks machines that some teachers suspected would make their lives more difficult were cancelled. When the support staff expressed unhappiness in the aftermath of Mr Goodlad, he was swift to reassure them of 'their importance' (MD, p. 3) and provided immediate, tangible benefits through a review (MF1.16). He courted temporary unpopularity with the students

deliberately, aiming to demonstrate his firm hand. Like Mr Goodlad, he was prepared to barter (Sergiovanni, 1995) and to engage in transactional deals (Starratt, 1999), moving from a closed to an open style (Blase & Anderson, 1995) in deliberate contrast with Mr Wake's perceived behaviour.

Even before he started to work at Hillside, he had planned open forum meetings with the staff to share information and brainstorm problems (MD, p. 5), and was quick to realize that while Mr Goodlad had mobilised the children's energy, his own approach was to handle 'the staff like an electorate' (MD, p. 4). At every stage, he was open with information, disclosing the possibility that 14 staff might have to be made redundant (MD, p. 15) and presenting his notes on each HMI monitoring visit as soon as the inspectors were out of the building, often drawing attention to weaknesses where more work was required (AF11.3). His diary reveals that his strategy was to increase the staff's understanding of the school's dilemma, to remove fears about their security (MD, p. 188) and his motives, and to allow his colleagues time to assimilate bad news (MD, p. 15, p. 62).

Like Mr Goodlad, Mr Moore was quick to recognise capable staff who could be trusted to push the action plan forward and influence their colleagues positively. He realized that Elaine and Peter were the 'core of the school's development' (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2) and that it would be useful to have them as 'stabilising influences' through the turmoil ahead (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). He built a 'kitchen cabinet' around Anne, Elaine and Peter, using them to help 'pulling the staff together to look for solutions' (MD, p. 5) and to overcome his potential isolation by involving them in 'directional' decisions (Burns & Stalker, 1995, p. 213). The 'cabinet' ensured a two-way flow of information and provided mutual support, as well as advising about reactions in the staff room and elsewhere (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2, MD, p. 32, p. 225). Senior staff enjoyed near-independent authority as they introduced new systems, implemented policies and chased targets (MD, p. 596, AF9.7). When Mr Moore was tempted to interfere with the result of the curriculum review he realized 'it is not right now for me to come in and start second guessing' (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2) because he had given the job to Elaine and her working group.

Mr Moore worked intensively with the staff to coach them in OFSTED expectations (MD, p. 3, MF, 2.23) and to strengthen their ability to deal with regular monitoring and inspection (IT: HOY, 4.xii.3). He 'made people more confident about the inspection and more prepared' (IT: HOY, 28.i.2). He met with each department to understand their points of view and to enlist their support for what needed to be done (MD, p. 42). Heads of department were trained to play their part in writing schemes of work, monitoring teaching and in encouraging their colleagues to follow agreed procedures (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2, MF3.8). He manoeuvred around the various temporary and permanent heads of department, seeking out people capable of leading and persuading them to accept responsibility, not always successfully (MD, p. 85, p. 119, p. 504), whilst also preparing the ground to remove the less capable (MD, p. 455, AF9.8). But Mr Moore was eager nevertheless to 'explain why I want it' because he saw the irrational demands of authority as a source of negativity for ordinary members of staff (LT: Chris Moore, 16.i.2). Strategies like these gave others real authority, helped them 'to develop to be able to use this authority wisely' (West et al., 2000, p. 34), and led to 'a dispersed leadership model' (2000, p. 38).

Social events and celebrations (MD, p. 6, p. 158) were held frequently, partly to emphasize the change from Mr Wake's time, and partly to 'build' and 'bond' the staff team (Sergiovanni, 1995), exploiting the organizational flux to increase 'the extent to which the individual yields himself (sic) as a resource to be used by the working organization' (Burns & Stalker, 1995, p. 122). Mr Moore considered that the Christmas extravaganza 'will do more for the quality of relationships and quality of learning than all the targets in the government book' (MD, p. 158). He attended important community events (IT: PG, 11.xii.2) and the PAG committee (IT: DH, 11.xii.2), and initiated a 'social calendar with a strong emphasis on doing things together and involving students' (MD, p. 6). He also asked the students to support the staff during monitoring visits, speaking with every form and spelling out his expectations (MD, p. 535).

Mr Moore was seen to 'expect an awful lot' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2), however, and to be 'absolutely relentless' (IT: PG, 11.xii.3). The caretaker pointed out that he had initiated all the hard work and was the first to come and the last to go (IT: CT, 4.xii.2), while a department head thought that he 'seems to exist to work' (IT: AHDT,

11.xii.2). Remarkably, many of the staff responded, confirming Burns & Stalker's (1995) observation about the commitment that can be developed in organic organizations. An awful lot of work had been done and remained to be done (IT: NQT, 25.iii.2, PA, 15.vi.2). Staff even prepared schemes of work during the summer holiday (IT: DH, 4.xii.3) and had to be thrown out of the school by the deputies because they were still putting up display materials at 6.00 pm. By 'raising expectations, challenging people to do things' he had 'generated a lot of action' (MD, p. 434).

Busher & Barker (2001, p. 26) consider that the 'power differentials' between the headteachers, staff, students and governors made this working culture 'collaborative rather than genuinely collegial' in the sense used by Hargreaves (1994) because the heads were 'more influential than their colleagues in choosing particular ways of working' to meet action plan targets. Extended professionalism of the type encouraged by Mr Moore can easily 'turn into a kind of distended professionalism, where teachers are stretched so far by their new responsibilities they almost tear apart with the workload and strain' (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996, p. 17). Although educational reform may lead to increases in skill and collaboration, engagement with goals and purposes has been 'largely excluded' from the 'new professionalism' (Hargreaves & Goodson, 1996, p. 17).

Mr Moore was perceived to be coercive when he used this advantage in unequal relationships (Busher 2001) to secure compliance with objectives most staff would never have formulated for themselves. Although he explained what was required 'firmly, not bawling them out' (IT: PA, 4.xii.2), and was prepared to 'go very softly until the point where he feels that there is no more capacity in that person to deliver' (IT: PG, 11.xii.3), he was ruthless in applying pressure. He countered Sidney's micro-political manoeuvres in the office by threatening disciplinary action (MD, p. 40), and humoured Gerald while arranging his early retirement (MD, p. 3). He confronted Julian's demand for fewer, shorter meetings with a display of anger (MD, p. 80/81) and created an inner group to circumvent the problem of a senior management team that contained people he did not trust (MD, p. 447). When the modern linguists complained about the lesson plan procedures he had introduced, he read them the inspection subject report that highlighted their weaknesses and used a subsequent

staff briefing to re-emphasize his requirement that everyone should comply with the 'common approach' (MD, p. 48).

Apparently less capable staff found his monitoring visits to be 'scrutinising' (IT: PG, 22.vi.2) and others were 'moved on to depression, divorce and homelessness' (MD, p. 65) when their temporary contracts were not renewed. He had a powerful effect on some people, 'like being hit by a heavy blunt instrument' (IT: DH, 11.xii.2), compromising his efforts to coach vulnerable colleagues like David Brown, who concluded that 'it looks as though it's back to the drawing board for me, I thought I was making progress' (MD, p. 109). The head of department who was told that his handbook was 'a motley collection of scraps' (MD, p. 290) became ill rather than improve, despite offers of support. The head of another department was in tears (MD, p. 209) after her class was observed doing nothing, and her assistant was equally dismayed when he was asked 'what is the point of the lesson, why are they drawing cartoons?' (MD, p. 204). When Mr Moore lost confidence in an individual's 'capacity ... to deliver' or improve, he adopted authoritarian or adversarial styles of the type described by Ball (1987) to secure obedience or departure, although he recognised that his coercive behaviour in dealing with poor performance could undermine morale and damage his work to create a positive atmosphere (MD, p. 71). Like members of Day et al.'s (2000) sample of headteachers, Mr Moore was sensitive to the dilemmas that arise when a colleague becomes an obstacle to an effective education or when there is tension or even conflict between internal and external imperatives.

Mr Moore's varied use of power (position, knowledge, styles) in dealing with individual members of staff, especially those who resisted him, confirms Watkins' (2002, p. 22) suggestion that school organization embodies unequal power relations and a continuous process through which dominant players accumulate resources 'to maintain their position within the organization and their power over subordinates'. Mr Moore invited some colleagues to become collaborative partners but coerced others to adopt particular teaching methods or even to leave, in the process revealing the extent to which 'leadership becomes a metaphoric symbol through which human beings construct the social reality in which they carry out their daily struggle for existence' (2002, p. 23).

The LPSH data gathered about Mr Moore's characteristics (Table 2), his leadership styles (Chart 8) and their impact on the context for school improvement at Hillside (Chart 9), are broadly consistent with the witness evidence presented in chapters 5 to 8, and confirm that he used a range of styles appropriately and effectively, arousing positive motivation and producing a climate perceived by many of his colleagues to resemble that of Litwin & Stringer's (1968) Organization C. The majority of staff were motivated to improve the school, although a substantial minority, for a variety of reasons, adopted a passive or even resistant stance towards new expectations and requirements, often absenting themselves from the action altogether.

This differential response, already evident under Mr Goodlad, suggests the possibility that people are not motivated by leadership styles alone, particularly if their previous experience, values, knowledge, skills and disposition are at variance with new demands. Although the contrasting effects of Mr Wake's limited, mainly coercive approach, and Mr Moore's calculated use of a range of styles, confirms the relationship between leadership behaviour, organizational climate and follower motivation established by Litwin & Stringer (1968) and McClelland & Burnham (1995), the political process that unfolded seems to have included dimensions beyond the purely psychological. Robertson's (1996, p. 45/46) winners and losers in school reform, for example, responded to goals, values and opportunities as well as leaders well-versed in how to motivate employees:

> The winners were teachers who embraced the market, new managerialism and technology, setting into place the structural and functional correspondence between schools and the economy. They were the new entrepreneurs – the new professionals amongst teachers. Their values corresponded to the values of the post-Fordist regime, and they were rewarded accordingly. The losers were those teachers who failed to exploit the new opportunities, either for ideological reasons or because they were in areas where their expertise was no longer needed or valued.

Like Mr Goodlad, Mr Moore mistrusted the capacity and loyalty of some staff at Hillside and was led into sustained micro-political manoeuvres to contain, control or

otherwise manage their behaviour. This suppressed struggle surfaces in Mr Moore's diary and confirms Ball's expectation (1987, p. 13) that goal diversity is inevitable and stems from 'the teachers' own school experiences, their teacher training, and more specifically their socialization within a subject subculture, and their political affiliations outside the school'. Without his willingness to challenge staff who found themselves at odds with the post-inspection agenda, and to push forward a strategy for institutional survival, even at the risk of destroying individual teachers, Hillside was unlikely to change or survive.

Mr Moore used socialised power as McClelland (1995) recommends to empower those who were prepared to commit themselves to the project and who seemed to have the capability to contribute to its fulfilment. His use of coercive strategies was quite different from Mr Wake's because he aimed to achieve institutional rather than personal objectives, but the consequences for individuals who found themselves out of favour were equally destructive. Their fate illustrates the extent to which improvement was defined and directed by two heads who possessed the external mandate, position power and interpersonal skills to impose their solutions to the problems faced by the school. Some teachers acted on their own initiative (e.g. Elaine, Donna, Peter, Graham), but most remained dependent on the vision, energy and favour of the leader. Mr Moore's committed, powerful persona suggests the 'adversarial' leadership associated with Blase & Anderson's 'closed transformative' style rather than the social empowerment of the 'open transformative' alternative, apparently preferred by teachers. As Blase & Anderson (1995, p. 46) acknowledge:

> Given the excessively bureaucratic nature of our current educational system and the multiple special interests that impinge on the school site, perhaps the current educational environment can only be dealt with effectively by individuals with strong wills and clear moral visions of 'their' schools ... it may appear that only through subversion and manipulation can transformation be achieved at the school site.

**Professional Knowledge**

Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore's use of bureaucratic and interpersonal power was further enhanced by their craft notions of what constitutes best educational practice (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 314). Their professional knowledge enabled them to present themselves as experts (IT: PG, 4.xii.2, HOY, 28.i.2), earning credibility as they guided and directed their colleagues through an emergency that had caused most of the previous senior management team to leave. Their authority was enhanced by their skill in communicating a 'mental picture of a preferred future' (Beare et al., 1989, p. 99), based on 'their vision of the healthy school' (Leithwood et al., 1992, p. 31), especially in relation to OFSTED expectations and criteria.

Mr Moore's expertise with finance, the curriculum and personnel enabled him to review structures and to propose generally acceptable improvements very swiftly (MD, p. 3, MF1.16, p. 1). He trained the deputies in budget and curriculum analysis, earning their respect and making them feel valued (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). By contrast, Mr Wake dismissed OFSTED (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2) without coming to terms with the new inspection regime, with the result that he lost the support of many teachers (IT: DH, 11.xii.2) who saw that he lacked knowledge of developments that could have negative impact for the school.

Mr Moore's intense, detailed involvement in the school's 'instructional program' (Leithwood et al., 1992, p. 13) is evident from many of the activities detailed above and confirms Fullan's (1982, p. 137) view that:

> ...the principal's interest in instructional matters and program and organizational planning is critical ... the schools in which principals showed a direct interest in instruction were significantly more likely to show gains in student achievement.

Mr Moore worked to ensure that the school's development plan, curriculum, organizational systems, schemes of work and lesson formats were consistent with one another and supported the general aim of increasing the percentage of purposeful, effective lessons (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2). As we have seen, he trained the staff in a

common approach to teaching, emphasized the need to formulate lesson objectives (MF2.23) and coached heads of department in the skills of writing schemes of work and classroom observation (MF3.8). He steered Elaine and her working group towards an entitlement curriculum and ensured that inefficient small classes were removed (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3). His continuous, planned interventions at departmental and classroom level, based on regular monitoring and observation (MF3.15, MD, p. 109), were designed to make sure that the 'common approach' was indeed common and that in so far as it was humanly possible, the school's teaching was coordinated, consistent and effective. He believed 'you are constantly needing to be weeding and planting' (IT: Chris Moore, 22.vi.2) and acted directly to remove ineffectual team leaders (e.g. Departments A and C), and to terminate the contracts of teachers who failed to respond to his 'train them like hell' (MD, p. 6) philosophy (e.g. Departments A and D).

This type of direct, practical, but strategic and multi-layered involvement in curriculum and pedagogic issues is seldom reported in the literature. Beare et al. (1989, p. 93) reflect that:

> ...it is as though administrators and supervisors work consistently inside one sphere, that of managerial activities, and the teachers act autonomously inside another sphere, that of instructional activities. The two spheres interact but are not concentric.

Pitner (1987, p. 57) reports on principals who spend 'most of their time working with students who are discipline problems and with teachers who have non-instructional needs'; Cuban (1988, p. 64) comments on the anguish of would-be instructional leaders who find themselves 'buried in administrative work'; and Wolcott (1984, p. 34) describes the organizational logic that causes a principal:

> ...to be moved about through most of his day by little problems brought to him or created for him by others rather than by any grand design of his own of what he wished to accomplish.

Martin & Willower (1981, p. 80, quoted in Fullan, 1982) express the widespread view that principals' working lives are highly fragmented (149 tasks a day), with the result that they 'engage ... in the most current and pressing situation' and invest 'little time in reflective planning'. Fullan (1982, p. 134) believes that 'unless special steps are taken ... the principal has no time for being an educational leader', while Doughty (1998) argues that since the introduction of LMS heads are more likely to prioritise their 'chief executive' role over their 'leading professional' role. Weick's (1988, p. 60) identification of 'a potential loose coupling between the intentions and actions of organizational members' helps explain why some heads are less than effective as leading professionals.

Mr Moore's strong emphasis on his 'leading professional' role, however, and his success in achieving agreed pedagogic goals, suggest that effective, determined heads need not succumb to organizational pressures (loose-coupling, frequent interruption) or the burdens of administration. A head's actions may be driven by a considered strategy and well-articulated principles, despite the 'brevity, variety, and discontinuity' of managerial life (Mintzberg, 1975, p. 4). Mr Moore planned 'in the context of daily actions, not in some abstract process reserved for two weeks in the organization's mountain retreat' (1975, p. 6).

Mr Moore's mobilisation of resources to deal with the Hillside crisis also provides some evidence that the boundary between 'professional' and 'executive' roles may be less clear than Hughes (1973) and Doughty (1998) suggest. A distinctive educational strategy was served by his work on the budget (to reduce expenditure on a high pupil teacher ratio and to increase departmental spending on books and equipment); on the premises (partitions for open plan classrooms; fitting out a technology workshop and a drama studio); and on administration (e.g. support staff review; correspondence). The administrative labour involved in securing partitions for eight open plan classrooms, for example, offered a visible demonstration of Mr Moore's professional commitment and values, and enhanced the quality of teaching, while his attempts to improve David Brown's lessons were unsuccessful and without wider significance.

Mr Moore's professional knowledge and expertise enabled him, therefore, to formulate a coherent, well-grounded strategy for leaving special measures, and enhanced his authority as he persuaded his colleagues to accept and support his plan.

**Moral Authority**

Mr Moore exploited all the personal, professional and organizational resources available to him, perhaps justifying Gunter's (2001, p. 102) critical recognition of the extent to which heads 'accept, go along with, or even collude with' the ways in which headship is being designed and driven by policy-makers rather than professionals. He was adept in applying the techniques of 'bureaucratic rationality' (Angus, 1993, p. 24) and accepted without audible dissent the goals of efficiency and effectiveness. He was content 'to use HMI inspection as a disciplined focus' (AF9.10, p. 2) and utilised 'OFSTED to mercilessly bring about change' (IT: PG, 30.iii.2). There is evidence, however, that action plan targets, and the techniques adopted to achieve them, were important to him, and to Hillside staff, only because they were the means through which survival could be achieved and professional dignity restored.

Mr Moore was driven instead by burning anger at the injustice inflicted on teachers, children and communities by government reforms, especially the decision to 'name and shame' failing schools. He believed that teachers bore the 'permanent marks of constant questioning and pressure' (MD, p. 312) and asked how policies that 'harried people into despair' (MD, p. 30) could raise standards. When he applied for the headship at Hillside, named for closure by the LEA, he was attracted by the opportunity to 'rescue another to recover my own damaged self' and acknowledged his tendency to use 'Bunyanesque language and imagery' (MD, p. 312). He considered that the best teachers had been 'labelled Jews despite all their talent' (MD, p. 312) and saw himself committed to a Manichean struggle to set them free from their 'oppressor', whom he compared to the figure of death in one of Bergman's films (MD, p. 313).

His conviction that children 'learn from need and expression', and that knowledge should not be 'handed down, watered down' (MD, p. 313) was at odds with the government's emphasis on standards and results (DfEE, 1997a). He was obliged to

keep two sets of books, like Barth's (1990, p. 40) teachers and principals, who kept 'a close eye on what others expect of them ... appeared to meet the specifications of these external lists' and maintained 'their own version' of a good classroom. The result for them was 'dissonance and exhaustion' as the effort of living with the dual agenda 'obliterates any good that might be inherent in either'. In Mr Moore's case, however, this duality served a useful purpose. His 'personal values' (DfEE, 1998a, p. 8) made him acutely aware of the divergence between the requirements of public policy and the views and needs of the Hillside community, stimulated by the trauma of 'Shell Shock Night' and the news that the school would close.

With his own 'will to power' aroused by an education reform programme that he considered coercive, Mr Moore was professionally well-equipped to play the 'glass bead game' (MD, p. 313) with the LEA and OFSTED, especially as he was not compromised by any previous involvement with the school and had learned the science of 'bureaucratic rationality' during his previous headship. But he could not forget that the human values of progressive education were incompatible with power games and powerful leaders. Mr Moore knew that his 'lack of innocence' would be a useful quality in the struggle ahead but was aware that if he played the game, it would be 'destructive' (MD, p. 313) for his version of 'the good classroom' (Barth, 1990).

This dual perspective enabled him to 'best perceive and best resolve value conflicts' (Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 11), and to achieve 'authenticity' as the temporary leader of the Hillside community by 'relating ... these values to the followership' (1991, p. 133). Intuitively, he recognised that 'the deadliest weapons in the administrative armoury are philosophical' and that he possessed:

> ...the skills of logical and critical analysis, conceptual synthesis, value analysis and commitment, the power of expression in language and communication, rhetoric and, most fundamentally, the depth of understanding of human nature (1991, p. 112).

Confident in his command of language, his ability to analyse and explain, and his understanding of teachers and children, based on long experience, he appealed to sources of moral authority that transcended immediate conflicts and aimed to arouse

the exceptional levels of emotional and professional commitment he considered necessary for success. As he wrote:

> But my words, my flow of words ... my imaginative power is greater than ever and from this whole experience ... must come ... a celebration of what is right and true and abandoned (MD, p. 314).

As soon as he arrived at Hillside, Mr Moore set out to promote human values, especially the idea that every teacher and student was valuable and had a contribution to make. As we have seen, he was thought to have moved the culture from shame and blame 'to a supportive, collaborative one' (IT: PG, 6.ii.2) and teachers felt able to speak up at meetings (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2) and contribute to the school's recovery through the working groups. The support staff review (MF1.16) and the new teaching staff structure (MF1.17) were based on clear criteria and principles (equal opportunities, rewards related to responsibility), and were designed to reassure people that their positions were secure and valued, despite the turbulent environment. Staff members who had been 'stigmatised' and 'labelled' (LT: Chris Moore, 16.i.2) were entrusted with all the main action plan targets (MF1.14).

The curriculum changes introduced in Y3 were based on a similar commitment to equal opportunities and inclusion. Banding and 'sink' groups were 'eliminated' (AF9.8) and students were guaranteed access to the full range of subjects. Mr Moore also promoted a positive approach to student behaviour and supported work experience, residential weekends and extra-curricular activities rather than traditional, more punitive measures (MD, p. 129). When disputes between students, parents and staff were referred to him, he investigated thoroughly and where possible negotiated solutions that preserved the dignity of all those who were involved (MD, p. 234, IT: PA, 26.iii.2). Even a seriously disruptive student like Jade was excluded reluctantly and with misgivings because Mr Moore was concerned about the failure of wider social systems and responsibilities (MD, p. 35).

Mr Moore directed blame away from the school itself by encouraging the natural belief of governors, parents and teachers that the LEA was an essentially incompetent enemy, led by 'vengeful politicians in city hall' (MD, p. 17) who had been 'less than

honest' (AF6.2, p. 1) and had failed to support Hillside's attempt to improve (AF8.7). Although Mr Moore saw inspection as a 'disciplined focus' that was helpful in bringing about change, he also empathised with his colleagues who had been labelled negatively, and encouraged them to win back their self-respect by playing the OFSTED game (MD, p. 48, IT: HOY, 28.i.2). With the chair of the PAG, he worked to build a 'fellowship' of school and community members who were committed to saving the place by whatever means were available. When the rescue mission succeeded, Mr Moore was presented with a card in which a colleague had inscribed these lines from Tolkien (1995, p. v):

> One Ring to rule them all, One Ring to find them,
> One Ring to bring them all and in the darkness bind them.

At the same time, Mr Moore insisted on socials, festivals and celebrations that emphasized the worth of the school and community as well as the value of individual members (AF9.7). Cultural festivals (Diwali, Christmas) were celebrated in ways that enacted and symbolised the school's transformed, inclusive, human values (IT: CT, 4.xii.2, DH, 11.xii.2, NQT, 10.xii.2) and drew upon the energy and commitment released by the end of the old order, and by the campaign to save Hillside from closure. Mr Moore aligned himself with groups brought together by their response to the crisis, and he sustained the campaign by appealing to their continuing sense of exclusion and injustice. This cultural transformation (in Y2) embodied and anticipated a transformation in educational values and working practice that was not formalised or fully evident until (in Y3) a new curriculum and new teachers had reinforced the commitment of the long-serving staff who had needed no second invitation to follow their 'yellow brick roads' (IT: DH, 4.xii.3).

**Transformational Leadership**

Mr Goodlad

Mr Goodlad can be seen as a transformational leader, asking teachers and students to commit themselves to a project larger than their private interests and goals (Burns, 1978), and was open and positive with those who responded to his warmth and

energy (Blase & Anderson, 1995). The new post-holders had considerable freedom of action (IT: DH, 4.xii.3). He told his colleagues that the school had to be transformed to be saved (IT: AHDT, 11.xii.2) and that they were involved in a struggle for survival (IT: DH, 11.xii.2) that required exceptional action. He did strengthen and inspire his audience (McClelland, 1975, p. 25), but the evidence that his appeal to his followers drew on any particular source of moral authority is limited. The transactional dimension of his leadership was always obvious (e.g. he offered promotion in return for commitment to the action plan) and not everyone found it easy to come to terms with an explosive personality who seemed disposed to demolish the settled culture of the school (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). In this respect, Mr Goodlad resembles the top leaders who surprised Belbin (1981) by not matching the chairman profile that had emerged from his experiments. Like them, Mr Goodlad seems to have been a 'shaper' rather than a natural team player, an independent minded leader who challenged existing practice and galvanised his group for the coming campaign.

Mr Moore

In many respects Mr Moore is an exemplary case of the transforming (Burns, 1978) or transformational (Bass, 1985) leader, although he did not usually operate in the democratic, empowering quadrant of Blase & Anderson's (1995) model. At Hillside 'leaders and followers' did, at least to some extent, 'raise one another to higher levels of motivation and morality' (Burns, 1978, p. 20). Mr Moore aimed to 'elevate members' self-centred attitudes, values and beliefs' (Starratt, 1999, p. 25) and his behaviour often resembled that of Mary Doe, whose moral resolve enabled her to build a new culture by passing through transactional, transitional and transformational stages. Although Mr Moore adopted micro-political tactics to deal with those who resisted change, many long-serving staff followed his lead and worked with remarkable intensity to save their school and recover their self-respect. Mr Moore's principled stance did make possible the transformed culture identified by the visitor who found a 'tremendous buzz of people wanting new ideas' (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3). Cultural change was 'effective and swift' (Torrington & Weightman, 1993, p. 53) mainly because so many community members seized the opportunity to

participate in the process of cultural definition (Schein, 1985) initiated and supported by the head.

Despite Kotter's (1996, p. 136) warning about the difficulty of attempting to change 'highly interdependent settings', Hillside provides a plausible example of his eight stage model in action. Mr Goodlad's abrupt and powerful actions created an immediate sense of urgency after the demoralising events of the previous weeks, and Mr Moore's unrelenting drive never allowed complacency to return or the pace to slacken. Mr Goodlad appointed a completely new senior management team, which Mr Moore used to develop the 'guiding coalition' that would implement and sustain the change programme. Mr Moore's 'kitchen cabinet', the active members of the senior management team, the PAG, and the staff working groups were powerful agents for transformation and ensured broad-based action.

Both leaders envisioned the school's salvation (from closure, from OFSTED) and developed plans for a radically different Hillside that commanded the support of governors, students and the majority of staff. Both leaders also used every vehicle of communication to repeat and reinforce their messages about what had to be done to achieve desired objectives, and to mobilise the widest possible support for those objectives. Mr Moore used the successful monitoring visits in January and June (Y2) to consolidate his strategy, emphasising what had been achieved and what remained to be done to persuade the inspectors that special measures were no longer required. The new systems and procedures introduced in Y2 had become part of the culture by Y3, while the annual calendar of socials, festivals and celebrations indicates the extent to which the culture reflected the school's new values and goals.

# Chapter 10 Illusion

**Structure**

Viewed from this perspective, Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore, like Lee and the generals of the Army of Northern Virginia, appear in the guise of heroes from the 'chivalric tradition', with their 'gauntleted hands resting on sword hilts and buttons gleaming on double-breasted coats' (Dowdey, 1993, p. 3). Mustering technical (bureaucratic), scientific (interpersonal) and artistic (values) expertise and resources, they succeeded, very quickly, in producing a school happier and more effective than it had ever been. But like Lee, whose repeated victories over much larger Federal armies only delayed eventual defeat, Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore seem to have been unable to convert their 'strong leadership' and the school's new-found 'capacity for self-improvement' (AF11.5) into proportionately better results. Despite a comprehensive reform programme, designed to enhance precisely those characteristics believed to contribute to student achievement (Sammons et al., 1995), and Hillside's well-attested, improved effectiveness (see Tables 3 and 4), there seems to have been no real impact on the quantifiable measures shown in Table 5.

Although annual variations in test and examination results are evident, there is no sign of a sustained upward trend on any measure, except the Key Stage 3 English mean (Table 5, line 17). The best GCSE 5 A* - C outcome (Table 5, line 11) was achieved in Y1 by the cohort most likely to have been affected by the negative conditions identified by the inspection report (AF2.2) of that year, and the disruption that followed. Hillside was 17.5 per cent behind the national average GCSE 5 A* - C performance in the year before the first (unsuccessful) OFSTED inspection (Y1), and 16.9 per cent behind in the year following the second (successful) OFSTED inspection (Y3). No other quantifiable measure, including attendance and exclusions (Charts 10 & 11), showed a consistent, sustained improvement over time.

The conclusion that Hillside was no less 'effective' under Mr Wake, when an unusually high percentage of poor teaching and behaviour (AF2.2) was reported, than under Mr Moore, when sound or good teaching and behaviour were said to prevail (AF11.5), may not be fully justified, however. Many teachers believed that a significant number of the 'most able' students (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2) departed during the closure crisis. Unchanged headline figures (e.g. percentage 5 GCSE A* - C grades) may represent an improved value-added performance by increasingly disadvantaged year groups. Unfortunately, comparisons that allow for possible variations in the composition of the intake are hindered by the limitations of the available data, especially for the students who graduated before the ACCESS database was fully operational. Another possible explanation is that the study may have concluded before the main improvements, especially at departmental level, had time to impact on classroom performance.

Alternatively, HMI may have misinterpreted the phenomena they observed but also shaped. Despite the near-unanimity of observers, participants and inspectors in reporting that Hillside became more effective during the period of this study, most witnesses had a significant interest in the outcome that may have influenced their perception and judgement. In the almost claustrophobic environment of special measures, the inspection process may have become circular, with HMI rewarding the school for implementing policies recommended by OFSTED, while governors and senior staff aimed to please the inspectors by following their advice. Participants may have agreed on the rules of a 'glass bead game' about compliance (Fitz et al., 2000b) that had little impact on student achievement (Gray & Wilcox, 1995c, 1995d).

This last argument is weakened, however, by the extent to which inspection criteria are based on effectiveness research and emphasize characteristics said to be linked with better performance. The alignment between the inspection framework (OFSTED, 1995) and research evidence is confirmed by Tables 3 and 4 which show a close correspondence between the key characteristics listed in Sammons et al. (1995) and judgements extracted from Hillside inspection reports (Y1, Y3). The climate charted at the school in Y3 (Chart 9) provides additional evidence from outside the inspection process that Hillside had become an effective organization, with high actual scores on all six climate dimensions. On balance, it seems that there was

indeed a marked improvement in those characteristics identified by the effectiveness literature as significant for student achievement.

A quite different explanation for the lack of quantifiable evidence of increased effectiveness is that the rational model of school improvement, influenced by the common sense expectation that heads are important, and beguiled by leadership theory and perspectives, over-estimates the agency of the headteacher and under-estimates the extent to which structural constraints limit what can be achieved. Like the Army of Northern Virginia, Hillside may have been circumscribed by the social, economic and political context to which it belonged. Ribbins (1999b, p. 126) concludes that more attention should be given to the wider world within which leaders operate:

> ...we ... need ... approaches which have a concern for both agency and structure viewed within a context seen to be shaped by the interaction of one or more of macro (the societal), meso (the institutional) and micro (the individual) levels of relationship. Reconceptualised as the sum of the situational, cultural and historical circumstances that constrain leadership and give it meaning, context can be regarded as a vehicle through which the agency of particular leaders in specific situations may be empirically understood.

When the dramatic events chronicled in chapters 5 – 8 are set in their broader social and political context, Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore may seem less powerful, struggling despite their charismatic qualities to transform the persistent realities of the structure surrounding them.

**Social Geography**

Davies (2000, p. 7/8) claims that social geography is the most important of the structural constraints on educational achievement:

> The banal reality is that the single factor which more than any other determines a school's performance is its intake – the children who go

> there ... The evidence that poverty undermines education is overwhelming – and has been for decades ... By obscuring this simple reality, the public discourse on our school system has entered the realm of the absurd and become lost there.

His analysis of demographic and educational trends in Sheffield seems to be confirmed by Hillside's unaltered, well-below average GCSE results. Students were increasingly drawn from disadvantaged wards with a high incidence of poor housing, poor health, unemployment and premature death (see charts 1 – 5). With a falling roll, following the closure announcement, the school became vulnerable to 'recycled children' (MD, p. 27), whose difficulties already included truancy and persistent absence, and recruited a higher proportion of its intake from 'rump working class' backgrounds (IT: Chris Moore, 10.xii.2) where ill-health was often a family characteristic (AS2). GCSE results in the wards served by the school vary by post code in ways that suggest close links between poverty and low attainment (Chart 6). The stable, inverse relationship between the percentage of students at Hillside, and at other Easton schools, that achieved 5 GCSE A* - C grades (Chart 7, Table 5), and the percentage entitled to free school meals, is consistent with the national picture (OFSTED, 1998, p. 31).

The social background of the intake, rather than Hillside's improved effectiveness, seems to have been the main influence on the pattern of achievement. This would not surprise Thrupp (1999, 2001), Mortimore & Whitty (2000) or Levačić & Woods (2002b), who argue in various ways that the composition or mix of a school's intake is the principal source of its effectiveness. This explanation is also consistent with Gray et al.'s (1999, p. 138) discovery that pre-existing differences in effectiveness between their twelve case study schools 'simply swamped' *changes* in their effectiveness, and with Gray's (1999) suggestion that 'very different pupil intakes ... shape what they can achieve'. Leithwood & Jantzi (2000, p. 50) also warn against the expectation that leaders improve results:

> Hallinger and Heck discovered that the common professional and public assumption of large principal leadership effects on school outcomes, an assumption accounting for the key role assumed by

> school reform initiatives, was not warranted. Instead, their analyses suggested that principal effects were small and usually required exceptionally sophisticated research designs to detect.

Social geography seems to exert a greater influence than the curriculum and organization of any individual, self-managing establishment, and to limit what leaders can achieve, however transformational their behaviour may seem in the context of a single school and its internal dynamics. As a case study, Hillside confirms the conclusion of recent research that an unbalanced, relatively disadvantaged intake has a cumulative, negative impact on outcomes. The relative stability of the school's test and examination results (Table 5), despite a transformation in its observed effectiveness, provides additional evidence for researchers who believe that the margin for improvement in student achievement at individual schools is relatively narrow.

Hillside also shows how external social and cultural influences permeate school boundaries, mould internal processes and distract the attention of students and teachers from educational objectives. Mr Moore noted that the 'tally of incidents grows faster than we can deal with them' (MD, p. 259) and felt that he was a social worker trying to 'keep the lid' on problems that were wide and deep (MD, p. 31). He was troubled by serious family problems, with their 'keynote of violence' (MD, p. 35), and reported home visits where houses were 'boarded up, wired off or abandoned or demolished' (MD, p. 35). Although HMI monitored exclusions, Mr Moore could see no alternative to removing Jade Smith who was 'stirring up trouble' in every lesson and 'punching those concerned' (MD, p. 35). There was 'extreme, semi-hysterical behaviour', while the incidence of 'off the wall disciplinary cases' (MD, p. 45) was alarming. Russ acted out the violence and abuse he saw at home (MD, p. 354); Katrina and Tracey pursued a strictly non-educational agenda in the toilets (MD, p. 162); and others confessed they brought their family problems to school (MD, p. 25).

A small but significant number of students like these disrupted lessons, especially those of weaker teachers, like David Brown; sucked year heads and senior staff 'into an exhausting morass of student issues' (MD, p. 373, MD, p. 480); sabotaged their

own educational prospects; and diluted the 'ethos' promoted by the student council. Unexplained absence, lateness and truancy absorbed professional time and energy in different ways. But although costly systems were established to monitor and encourage regular attendance, the percentage missing, especially from lower sets in years 10 and 11, remained stubbornly high. As Mr Moore reflected, if you were 'a loser' with no chance of a GCSE higher grade, it was a 'sensible strategy not to bother' (LT: Chris Moore, 16.i.2).

When the governors reinstated a student who was alleged to have stabbed a teacher, Mr Moore worked intensely to contain the explosive potential of the incident (MD, p. 318), negotiating with the assailant, parents, governors and staff to avoid a breakdown in relationships and find a solution acceptable to all parties. The near-disaster of this episode, and the high importance attached to its resolution, illuminates the significance of pastoral case work in schools in 'challenging' circumstances. Angry students who carry the burden of their past experience into the classroom and playground threaten the stability of the school community. Senior managers know instinctively that their priority is to manage this brittle behaviour and preserve delicate relationships that have been pushed towards the edge. Their success adds nothing to the 'improvement' measured by performance tables and targets; their failure may precipitate a catastrophe of the kind that befell The Ridings School (MD, p. 318).

**Local Government**

Although the 1988 and 1992 legislation weakened the extent to which local authorities could manage their schools, and encouraged heads to think of themselves as powerful chief executives, there is abundant evidence in chapters 5 – 8 that a primary concern with individual leaders and schools can be misleading. Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore's leadership was enacted within a framework of policies, interventions and resistances that were beyond their immediate control. As Busher, Barker & Wortley (2001, p. 71/72) argue, local and national government and their agencies exerted continuous pressure on Hillside, prompting the heads to search for allies, resources and counter-measures that would help secure the school's survival:

> The interaction between external contexts and internal management processes is vital to understanding schools' internal processes, since this is where the change agenda are often defined ... The interaction of these contexts forms a series of dialogues between external stakeholders and powerbrokers and internal leaders. For the internal leaders this dialogue is not rational-technicist boundary management but pressure group politics ... Headteachers are obliged to build support and alliances with local external and internal stakeholders ... Powerful external pressures at national and local level, such as OFSTED, can define what actions a school may take internally.

Schools may seem to be individual, self-managing units but they are also part of a complex, hierarchical system in which each level can be 'theorised as an ensemble of structured positions, occupied by institutions and agents, related in a struggle to become the authoritative shapers or interpreters of policy texts' (Fitz et al., 2000a, p. 130).

The old LEA had adopted a relaxed approach to performance, taking no action when the county audit team's critical report (AF1.2) was ignored by Mr Wake and the governing body. When Hillside was placed in special measures, the initial response was cautious, with a county advisor arriving to help write the action plan (which was subsequently rejected) and a personnel advisor sent to assist the chair of governors in his negotiations with Mr Wake and other senior staff who decided to leave (see correspondence, AF4). An acting head was seconded from another county school. Hillside staff later complained that the LEA had been so passive and had allowed the school to drift into special measures (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). Others suspected that the LEA advisors included in the OFSTED team had a 'hidden agenda' to get rid of Mr Wake (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2) and used the authority of the inspection to achieve changes that had been impossible to bring about under county auspices.

Whether they were right or not, the combination of the OFSTED inspection report and the new unitary authority's decision to close the three schools in special measures transformed the context in which Hillside operated and defined the immediate agenda

for the governors, head and staff (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). Many teachers were demoralised (IT: PG, 4.xii.2, IN: TG, 25.viii.3) or perplexed (IN: GT, 26.ix.2) and no one knew how to respond to the key issues identified by OFSTED (AF4.2). With the head, governors and teachers discredited, the school boundary had collapsed and the agents of the LEA and OFSTED were in a position to impose whatever requirements seemed to them appropriate. A new head would have no room for manoeuvre, it seemed, and would have to implement an alien agenda before closing the school, already stricken by the loss of over 20 per cent of the roll.

The OFSTED Scylla and the LEA Charybdis were poorly equipped and synchronised, however, while the new director of education for Easton LEA made serious mistakes that allowed Hillside to engineer a remarkable escape. Although OFSTED was uncompromising in rejecting the first action plan as insufficiently rigorous, and terse in accepting the second draft, prepared by Mr Goodlad, there was no other contact with HMI between the original inspection and the first monitoring visit over a year later. Mr Moore was astonished to find that:

> Special Measures don't exist; there aren't any ... The help, support and change are minimal (MD, p. 16).

As a result, there was time to deal with the immediate threat of closure first; and then time to organize and drill the staff to fulfil the promises of the action plan. The director's most important and fatal mistake was to announce the closure of the three schools before a formal review or consultation had taken place. This arbitrary, ill-considered decision (AF6.2) galvanised the Hillside community, including members of staff who had previously seen no way to make a constructive contribution, provided an obvious target for the newly formed PAG campaign (AF4, 13.vi.1), and placed local politicians on the defensive as they manoeuvred towards a full review of secondary education in Easton. The director also failed to explain his closure plan to Mr Goodlad, who thought he had been drafted in to help a school in special measures (IT: DH, 11.xii.2), and defaulted on the extra support that had been promised (AF8.7, MD, p. 16). The 'parents ... found a voice' (AF4, 13.vi.1), previously docile individuals were energised and the LEA became an enemy or scapegoat rather than a partner (IT: PG, 4.xii.2). The scale and organization of the campaign intimidated the

director, who remained 'nervous' of Hillside (MD, p. 40) and his apprehension may have been significant in the final decision a year later to expand rather than close the school.

This clumsy attempt to remove failing schools and surplus places from the Easton landscape transformed the caretaker role that Mr Goodlad had been persuaded to accept into an opportunity for heroic leadership. Stigmatised by special measures and angered by the apparent unfairness of the LEA's closure announcement, governors, parents, many staff and most students were ready to fight back and immediately warmed to Mr Goodlad's remorselessly positive approach, especially his suggestion that Hillside was in fact 'a good school' which could be 'an excellent school' (AF6.1). As we have seen, he aligned himself with key people (chair of governors; chair of the PAG; teacher governors; staff members of the PAG) who were campaigning for the school's survival and mobilised energy and resources that had lain dormant for years (IT: NQT, 10.xii.2). Injured pride and a sense of injustice disposed important members of the school community to accept the destruction of previous customs and practices and to fling themselves into a battle for self-respect.

Mr Moore was equally careful to cultivate people who had joined the campaign against the LEA (MD, p. 2/3) and emphasized unity and mutual support in a hostile world. He was tough with those who could not or would not commit themselves (MD, p. 42), a classic tactic in dealing with a unit where morale is low, but he also offered *his* commitment to those who volunteered to help (IT: DH, 11.xii.2). The example of Phoenix School in Hammersmith and Fulham (Whatford, 1998) shows that quite different strategies were available and that the sequence of events at Hillside was neither inevitable nor determined by isolated leaders fixed on a particular recipe.

The LEA also refused the governors' request for permission to appoint a permanent head. The school was told to recruit another caretaker-manager on a two-year contract that would terminate when the secondary review was implemented (AF6.1). An extensive head-hunting operation produced no suitable candidate for a vacancy that must have seemed particularly insecure and unattractive and the matter was resolved only at the last moment when Mr Moore volunteered his services (personal knowledge). The LEA accepted no responsibility for ensuring that the school was

properly led and no senior officer was involved in the final appointment. This passive or detached approach contributed to the school's continuing alienation from the local authority and provides a striking contrast with Whatford's (1998, p. 67) 'endless phone calls' to find a suitably qualified and experienced leader for Phoenix.

Once councillors had approved a review that included all the secondary schools (AF6.3), there was an 'implosion of boundary management' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2) and relationships with the LEA were destabilised across the city, especially in disadvantaged areas. Apart from the regular visit of the school improvement adviser, Hillside was left to its own devices (AF8.6, AF8.7). No one explained the funding formula (MD, p. 87), so Mr Moore wrongly assumed that he would have to repay over-allocated funds and was unaware that the small school allowance increased as numbers fell. Mr Moore's continual complaints about poor communications (AF8.6), poor personnel administration (MD, p. 505) and time-consuming procedures (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2) were vindicated by the subsequent inspection of the LEA (AF8.1). The poor quality of the LEA's services compounded a disaffection that had begun with the mishandled review.

Mr Moore described the LEA as 'the Kafkaesque thing' (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2) and was particularly frustrated when administrative mistakes prevented him from resolving important problems. Gerald was misinformed about his entitlement to a redundancy package while there was a long delay in terminating temporary contracts. As the secondary review proceeded, Mr Moore worried about 'melt down' if the school was listed for closure or merger (MD, p. 251) and felt powerless because 'we do not control much of the agenda' (MD, p. 362). The secondary review created a form of 'planning blight' (AF6.4) in the authority and there was insufficient information or communication for effective decision-making. Mr Moore was concerned that his new, capacity-building staff structure would be overtaken by events (MD, p. 362). The council's slow, inadequate administrative arrangements, and its preoccupation with the future organization of the school system, hampered those schools that pressed on with self-improvement (MD, p. 430). Hopkins (2000, p. 9) agrees that 'the LEA might be part of the problem'; Riley et al. (2000) suggest that this is often the case in disadvantaged areas, where failing schools and failing authorities seemed to be concentrated.

Although he was hindered by the 'LEA chaos' (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3), Mr Moore also saw the advantages of the authority's weakness and the manoeuvring room provided by the extended process of the review. He invited ward councillors, the mayor and the Hillside MP to visit (MD, p. 430), seeking alternative sources of information and support (MD, p. 136). When a DfEE special adviser arrived in town, Mr Moore was unsure whether he was 'friend or spy?' (MD, p. 62) and sensed that there were 'wide and powerful forces which we ignore at our peril' (MD, p. 138). With the PAG chair, he explored possible lines of attack on city hall but was held back by his deputy, who argued they should rely on the school's steady improvement (MD, p. 137). He used the firm framework of HMI monitoring to counter the surrounding uncertainty and believed that the success of the first visit strengthened the school's claim to survive (MD, p. 275).

When Mr Moore discovered that the special adviser was 'the power behind the plan' (MD, p. 403) and was sounded out about being the head of a new school on the Hillside site (IT: Chris Moore, 27.iii.2), he used the information to develop a rather different plan of his own, designed to appeal to councillors and officers and to exploit the 'option 2' escape route held out by the LEA review proposals (AF10.4, AF10.5). A draft was passed to the special adviser and an exchange of telephone calls implied that senior officers were attracted to a scheme that preserved what had been achieved at the school (MD, p. 399/400). Hillside governors, parents, staff and the local community were mobilised at a well-publicised meeting (AF10.6) to endorse a proposal that re-launched the school (AF10.7) without the necessity for formal closure. Mr Moore argued that there had already been a 'fresh start' under his leadership and that there was no need to add Hillside to the list of closing schools.

This last manoeuvre reminded LEA officers and members of the strength and quality of Hillside's community support and showed how the objectives of the review could be achieved without adding to an already unprecedented list of closures. Even so, the final decision was close, with the 'compressed timetable for implementing the review' (AF10.8) apparently clinching the argument. A threat that had oppressed the school for over a year was removed, enabling Mr Moore to advertise vacancies and appoint new staff to secure posts, and creating a transformed psychological climate for the last few months in special measures. If the decision had been different that April (Y2),

however, it seems unlikely that Mr Moore would have walked into a 'normal school' the following September (Y3), with 'a tremendous buzz' and 'very little illness, very little absence' (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3).

**OFSTED**

Described by Mr Moore as the 'Dark Lord' of the education system (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3), OFSTED permeates this study as it does the thoughts and feelings of heads and their staff, encouraging some to embrace the inspection framework as a model for school improvement (Fitz et al., 2000b) and subjecting others to a 'trauma which penetrates to the innermost being of the teacher' (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996, p. 340). It is a pervasive, inescapable and often defining feature of the contemporary education landscape. As Hampton & Jones (2000, p. 1) comment:

> Ofsted is no 'toothless tiger', and its powers of inspection have led it to penetrate some of the hidden areas of the school sector...

OFSTED seems to operate as the enforcer of government policy (Fitz et al., 2000b), designed to ensure compliance with the 'national curriculum and standardized testing' which are the 'mechanisms by which teachers are now controlled' (Robertson, 1996, p. 44). But although OFSTED is frequently described as an external policy agency that imposes 'centrally-dictated ways of running schools and of teaching' (OFSTIN, 1999), its requirements have been internalised so that the boundary between internal and external agents and values is dissolved.

The regime appears to be an example of 'bureaucratic rationality' (Angus, 1993, p. 24), with inspectors observing lessons, gathering evidence and reporting their findings in relation to objective criteria, but the emotions reported by many teachers ('fear, anguish, anger, despair, depression, humiliation, grief and guilt' according to Jeffrey & Woods, 1996, p. 340) reveal an acute tension between their 'real' and professional selves on the one hand, and the 'rational-calculative principles behind the government's reforms' (1996, p. 340) on the other. OFSTED (1995) promotes a version of 'strong leadership' and 'effective teaching' that is supposed to bring about higher test scores but can lead:

> ...to a preoccupation with production, workbooks, worksheets, and drills, whereas teachers report that the major reward they derive from teaching is promoting ... the growth and development of their students (Barth, 1990, p. 39).

As we have seen, both Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore accepted the OFSTED inspection report (AF2.2) without question and discounted complaints from the staff that the report was unfair (IT: HOY, 10.xii.2). Both perceived the organization, systems and culture of the school to be inefficient and ineffective and both immediately launched into reforms that dealt with problems identified by the inspection. Both used the report to bring about change and to apply pressure to those who were reluctant to help. Whatever their private thoughts about action plans and targets, both heads saw that there was no alternative but to embrace the OFSTED framework and use it as an instrument for change. As experienced, practical managers who had learned to survive in a 'turbulent environment' by adjusting to the rational model of action and development planning required by national policy (Davies & Ellison, 1999), Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore had an instinctive understanding of 'the glass bead game'. With tanks on the lawn, Mr Wake's attitude was not a realistic option.

As we have also seen, their efforts were quickly successful in bringing about improvements that earned the approval of students, parents, the local community and many of the staff, as well as the warm endorsement of HMI in three separate reports (January Y2, June Y2, November Y3). Mr Moore found himself in agreement with the 'remarkably accurate and reasonable' (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2) picture of the school produced by the inspectors and was uninhibited in dealing with weaknesses they identified. Hillside, like other schools in difficult circumstances that have been improved rapidly (e.g. Phoenix, Northicote), provides substantial evidence that inspection can play a significant role in school improvement and that a well-conceived action plan can assist the capacity-building process recommended by Fullan (2000b) and Hopkins (2000). This case study supplies 'a sustained account of how the inspection process might actually work out in practice to bring about such improvement' (Gray & Wilcox, 1995c, p. 187) and counters scepticism about OFSTED's constructive possibilities (West-Burnham, 1995).

Although Mr Moore accepted and worked successfully within the framework of special measures, his diary reads as a second, private book (Barth, 1990) that tells a different story from the documents prepared for the monitoring visits. He described OFSTED as the 'Dark Lord', partly because he disliked the ruthlessness the system demanded, and partly because he was wary of his alter ego, the managerial self that was prepared to trade progressive, humanistic sympathies for the excitement of power and saving the school (MD, p. 32, p. 313). Special measures undoubtedly provided a compelling justification and distinctive environment for rapid, top-down change in systems, procedures and methods but he resented the impatient bureaucratic imperative that disregarded the values and psychological needs of teachers and children and insisted on a mechanistic and probably unrealistic drive to increase production (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3).

An important, recurring theme in the diary is Mr Moore's effort to understand whether the 'zombies' (IT: PA, 26.iii.2) he encountered at Hillside were the victims of a 'motor crash' engineered by OFSTED, or whether 'there was far more to it than somebody numbed by the fear of being inspected' (IT: HOD, 5.vi.2). As the school entered the crash bend, it seemed to have collected an unusually high percentage of 'personally sad, almost tragic figures' who failed 'to perform the basics of the job' (MD, p. 71). His initial interviews identified 'at least 8 teachers' whose familiarity with redundancy, unemployment, re-deployment and stress-related illness suggested weaknesses that pre-dated their service at Hillside.

The deputy head felt that their problem teachers were 'bonkers', unhappy individuals who were 'particularly tangled and particularly complex' and had difficulty in seeing where other people were coming from (IT: DH, 10.vi.2), while Mr Moore himself had to help a colleague who was 'all over the place in an ordinary conversation, never mind a lesson' (MD, p. 57). These teachers contributed disproportionately to the high rate of illness and absence in Y2 (IT: Chris Moore, 22.vi.2). Even so, a head of department with previous experience of inspections believed that these vulnerable teachers carried a 'genie' around with them and that 'OFSTED touched the button' that led to their dismay and breakdown (MD, p. 330). Mr Moore doubted whether regular inspections that damaged confidence and induced despair (MD, p. 30) would improve their teaching.

He was even more concerned about the 'excellent people ... who never deserved to be caught up' in the accident (MD, p. 26) and who felt they had been 'led into the shit and abandoned there' (IT: Chris Moore, 11.xii.3). When these dedicated teachers were inspected again and again he wanted to imagine 'an end to the torture' (MD, p. 254) and identified with those who were 'vomiting ... in a desperately psyched up state ... really frightened' and others who were 'resentful' about what they had been put through (IT: HOY, 4.xii.3). He did not accept that 'professional people are best motivated by threat and criticism' (Wragg, 1997, p. 2) and believed that the psychology of the OFSTED model was completely misconceived. Mr Moore saw the monitoring visits, useful as they were, as a form of 'bullying' (IT: Chris Moore, 6.ii.2) that he could not reconcile with the morale-boosting leadership techniques that seemed to him appropriate in the circumstances. OFSTED's coercive methods were contrary to the advice of the school improvement tradition, at odds with the recommendations of the leadership literature (Covey, 1989, McClelland & Burnham, 1995, Peters & Waterman, 1995) and contradicted the LPSH programme (DfEE, 1998a). As a long-serving member of staff commented:

> People perform well under pressure for so long, then they're destroyed by it (MD, p. 245).

As we have seen, Mr Moore built group solidarity to mediate the pressure of inspection and helped his colleagues stage manage the performance that was expected of them (IT: Chris Moore, 22.vi.2), but in his eagerness to meet OFSTED requirements he adopted a coercive approach to monitoring (IT: PG, 30.iii.2) and proved ruthless in dealing with those who could not achieve an acceptable level of classroom performance (IT: PG, 11.xii.3). He believed nevertheless that intrusive surveillance would prove counter-productive and was likely to contribute to the increasing difficulty of recruiting, retaining and motivating suitably qualified and experienced teachers (Troman & Woods, 2000).

The loss (by August Y2) of four members of the senior management team, six heads of department and six ill-health casualties, indicates the human and psychological impact of the monitoring and inspection regime, and provides some evidence that coercive techniques induce departure more readily than change. Although coaching

by senior managers seems to have helped a number of teachers to come to terms with OFSTED requirements (IT: HOY, 4.xii.3), the deputy head believed that the observed improvement in the quality of teaching by Y3 was mainly due to the school's success in appointing new heads of department and newly qualified teachers who were untainted by the shame of OFSTED failure (IT: DH, 4.xii.3).

**Perspectives**

Viewed close-up as a case study in school improvement, Hillside provides evidence that 'strong' leaders can bring about far-reaching and rapid change in a dysfunctional organization and can increase a school's capacity for improvement as well as enhance its operational effectiveness. At the level of individual heads and individual schools, common sense expectations that they make an important difference seem well-justified, although the evidence of this study is that leadership in messy, swampy ground is less systematic, less scientific and less aided by bureaucratic devices than official policy presumes. The limitations of the 'close up' perspective are evident to Wright Mills (1970, p. 9/10):

> Yet men (sic) do not usually define the troubles they endure in terms of historical change and institutional contradiction. The well-being they enjoy, they do not usually impute to the big ups and downs of the societies in which they live. Seldom aware of the intricate connexion between the patterns of their own lives and the course of world history, ordinary men do not usually know what this connexion means for the kinds of men they are becoming and for the kinds of history-making in which they might take part.

This review of the structures and processes within which the changes at Hillside were brought about suggests that the school's decline, survival and improvement belong to a broader, more complex landscape, where the three heads were constrained, as Ribbins (1999b) suggests, by interrelated social, political, organizational and human processes. The conclusion that follows aims to combine macro, meso and micro perspectives on the actions and events observed at Hillside, and to formulate answers to the research questions set out at the end of chapter 3 (p. 87).

# Chapter 11 Conclusion

## Agency in Messy Places

The Hillside story confirms that schools are 'messy places' (Wasserberg, 1999, p. 154); that heads experience a messy reality (Beare et al., 1989, p. 28, Gunter, 1997, p. 25); and behave quite differently from the reflective, systematic leaders described by management science (Mintzberg, 1975). Mr Moore's work was fragmented, discontinuous and punctuated with interruptions (Mintzberg, 1975, Jones, 1987); he was constantly called upon to reconcile competing values and resolve dilemmas (West, 1993, Day et al., 2000) arising between members of the school community and between the school and external stake-holders. His diary chronicles time-consuming involvement with individual teachers and students and endless micro-political manoeuvres (Hoyle, 1982, 1986a, Ball, 1987), mainly to achieve organizational stability and survival (Wolcott, 1984). Mr Moore seems to have felt more responsible to HMI than to the chair of governors or the director of education (MD, p. 539), an indicator of the unclear lines of accountability for headteachers that have developed since the 1988 Education Act and of the ambiguity of leadership roles in schools.

This is the 'real' world of Ed Bell, who dealt with so many 'little emergencies' that he habitually avoided 'giving his sustained and uninterrupted attention to a single thought or activity' (Wolcott, 1984, p. 315) and whose goal was 'the immediate containment of any and every actual and anticipated problem that might possibly disrupt the "smooth" operation of the school' (1984, p. 316). Mr Moore's agenda was 'dominated by what is most pressing and most immediate' and his priorities were 'constructed on the basis of practical necessity, of survival' (Ball, 1981, p. 13).

This 'swampy' ground (Leithwood et. al., 1992) provides an uncongenial environment for scientific methods based on the assumption that 'there must be one best way of doing work' (Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 55). Rational, supposedly objective models, with their 'claim to superior efficiency and effectiveness' (1991, p. 54), seem almost irrelevant to Mr Moore's working life, to his absorption in human problems, and to his preoccupation with creating a culture strong enough to contain the

divergent perspectives of the Hillside community. The more a problem involves people, 'the swampier it is likely to be for school-leaders' (Leithwood et al., 1992, p. 45), and the longer they serve in the swamp, the more heads are prone to lose confidence in their ability to control events (Day & Bakioğlu, 1996) and to complain about the 'damned impossible job' (Barker, 1995a). The properties of 'structures and systems' seem to confront individuals 'with a series of limited choices' (Evetts, 1994, p. 22) and they doubt themselves whether they can make a difference.

Despite these organizational conditions, his reservations about OFSTED ('the Dark Lord'), and the contextual constraints described in chapter 10, Mr Moore enhanced Hillside's observed effectiveness to match the requirements and expectations of the external policy agenda (OFSTED, 1995, Stark, 1998, Hopkins, 2000). Although he does not appear to have altered the school's performance profile, internal and external witnesses were unanimous in reporting that Mr Moore brought about a transformation in every other aspect of the organization. This confirms that although leaders are constrained by structures, mega-trends, theories of management and school culture (Glaser & Strauss, 1967, Barter, 2000), there are circumstances when those same structures and trends can enable those who understand the swamp (Giddens, 1984).

Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore may have been 'part of a complex and organic network of influences' but the 'structural factors within the local and national context' (Gunter et al., 1999, p. xxviii) were not always unhelpful. Both heads worked to sustain the trust and commitment of their colleagues, and encouraged the newly appointed deputies and heads of department to develop the leadership potential of their own roles, thereby increasing the overall chances of success. Mr Goodlad's 'sticks of gelignite' were exploded in circumstances that helped save the school; the Diwali evening, with dancing and fireworks, symbolised the school's newly discovered energy and identity, and suggest the catalytic quality of Mr Moore's leadership.

**Recommended Models**

Rational models of school improvement, incorporated in government policy as a corrective to the perceived failings of schools (e.g. DfEE, 1997a, 1997b), do not provide an adequate conceptual framework for the description of what happened at

Hillside, nor a satisfactory theory to explain how change was brought about. The dominant paradigm defines and evaluates school effectiveness in terms of the 'factors affecting success' (Wilson & Corcoran, 1988, p. xi) or the 'key characteristics' (Sammons et al., 1995) that contribute to value-added outcomes for students. A school's improvement is measured by an increase in its effectiveness over time (Gray et al., 1999). The model cannot tell, therefore, what factors might make a school effective over time (Reynolds, 2001) or how improvement is brought about. There is growing evidence (Myers & Goldstein, 1998, Thrupp, 1999, Gray et al., 2001, Levačić & Woods, 2002a) that very few schools produce a sustained improvement in student achievement, and that intake variables like social mix may explain most of the differences between schools previously attributed to organizational characteristics.

Checklists of improvements reported to have been successful elsewhere (Stark, 1998, Hopkins, 2000) and procedures prescribed by government agencies (OFSTED, 1995, DfEE, 1997b) can be equally unhelpful. Advice on 'best practice' tends to emphasize the 'what' rather than the 'how' of change and encourages the mistaken belief that a school's context and particular circumstances are unimportant. Although various bureaucratic procedures were introduced at Hillside, including action and development plans and target-setting, their main role seems to have been to satisfy OFSTED requirements, as part of Mr Moore's 'glass bead game'. There is little evidence here that plans and targets in themselves improve performance and their emphasis on specific, narrow measures may be positively harmful (McNeil, 2000). Davies & Ellison's (1999) conclusion that there is considerable variation in the quality of development plans, with some schools producing documents too detailed to be useful, suggests that successful plans may depend on a pre-existing capacity for improvement. Davies & Ellison also argue that:

> A reliance on strategic planning assumes a rational and predictable process which, in practice may not be possible in the current turbulent environment (1999, p. 15).

The recent emphasis on leadership and leadership training, especially through the LPSH and NPQH programmes, has provided a more persuasive model, grounded in psychological theory and substantial studies of headteachers (DfEE, 1998a). The

interpersonal behaviour of the three heads at Hillside, reported through interviews and questionnaires, confirms the LPSH model of leadership effectiveness. Their contrasting impact on the motivation of the staff and the atmosphere of the school is consistent with Hay Group's assessment of the relationship between the six leadership styles and the six climate dimensions (Table 6). Mr Wake's limited personal resources and mainly coercive style created a predominantly negative, unproductive climate, while Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore displayed the full range of competencies (Table 2) and adopted combinations of styles that motivated the majority of their colleagues. The evidence gathered at Hillside supports the LPSH proposition that leadership has a powerful effect on workplace attitudes and motivation.

Despite these strengths, which have enabled LPSH to achieve a high degree of credibility with policy-makers and headteachers (Collarbone, 2001), the programme's scientific claims, like the LBDQ (see p. 75), are compromised by its reliance on teacher satisfaction as a surrogate for organizational performance, and by the inescapably value-laden language used in the questionnaires. A circular argument begins to emerge in which effective schools are led by heads whose effectiveness is judged by the satisfaction ratings of their colleagues. Hay Group claim that LPSH training has improved the CSI by an average 10 per cent in Australia (Hay Group, 1999) but comparable figures have not appeared for the United Kingdom and there has been no attempt to establish a correlation between CSI scores and student outcomes, nor to show an improvement in test and examination results at schools where the head has participated in an LPSH workshop. Collarbone (2001, p. 3) has identified a need for 'additional objective and independent measures, which will measure impact on school improvement.'

The unsuccessful attempts to distinguish reliably between male and female characteristics and styles (see chapter 3, pp. 77 - 80) suggest a more general problem with models that interpret, understand and seek to improve leadership principally in terms of human traits and psychology. As a variety of alternative theories argue (e.g. Richardson, 1973a, Hoyle, 1982, Kogan, 1985, Ball, 1987, West, 1993, Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993), and this study confirms, people are also motivated by beliefs, values

and perceptions of interest, as well as by micro-political and personal loyalties that have evolved through their lives. Although Litwin & Stringer (1968) and Belbin (1981), for example, were careful to test and control for intelligence and motivational characteristics, other influences on their subjects' thoughts and behaviour were disregarded. LPSH recognises 'personal conviction' as a source of motivation for headteachers but the model does not examine or allow for the particular values and professional philosophy that may shape the priorities and decisions of an individual headteacher.

Hillside staff were not all alike, clean slates poised for the arrival of a positive leader equipped with an approved repertoire of styles. On the contrary, there were 'winners' and 'losers' (Robertson, 1996), whose micro-political responses to each of the new heads were shaped by differing personal and professional values and past experiences. The languages department resisted Mr Moore's common approach to lesson planning; Julian refused to cooperate with the intensification of work represented by more frequent, longer meetings; David Brown was unable to come to terms with OFSTED requirements, despite extensive help. Over one third of the staff left within eighteen months of the inspection. These people would have found the lightest touch coercive and oppressive, mainly because they rejected the agenda imposed on the school by external pressures. Another group, led by Elaine, Peter and Anne, were promoted and committed themselves to new ways of working which they believed would improve and save their school.

Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore were not one dimensional, 'neat' leaders, armed with a smattering of management science, an action plan, challenging targets and the right combination of styles to optimise the motivation of students and staff at Hillside. They were, of course, more positive individuals than Mr Wake; and instinctively adopted an enthusiastic, encouraging approach with their despondent colleagues. They introduced the full apparatus of OFSTED plans and targets because there was no other way to escape the school's dilemma, and because they saw the practical value of 'tight' structures and clear objectives. Although these techniques, now an almost universal feature of the school system, proved a useful corrective to the passive management culture that had prevailed under Mr Wake, their successful application depended upon deeper, more complex interactive processes.

Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore were 'scruffy' administrators (Sergiovanni, 1995) who worked in the swamp without losing sight of their objectives (Leithwood et al., 1992). Contextual, structural factors created opportunities for particular types of change and leadership. The heads exploited and developed these opportunities by constantly adjusting to internal and external threats and demands, and by mobilising, blending and combining all their available moral, political, professional and material resources. Even 'neat' results (e.g. lesson observation reports) seem to have involved 'scruffy' methods (e.g. dealing with capability issues). Although the two men encountered familiar problems, each troublesome episode was made unique by the particular history and context of the people concerned. The successful resolution of recurrent dilemmas (e.g. when to exclude; what to do about poor teaching) depended on moral and educational leadership rather than the application of management science (Hodgkinson, 1991). The heads tended to adopt swampy methods because most organizational issues (telephones fail; marking not done; no departmental handbook) were rooted in uncomfortable human equations. As Hoyle (1986a, p. 52) argues:

> ...there are inherent limits to the effective coordination of organizational activities, partly because there are too many variables entailed to achieve fully a rational coordination and partly also because there are logical limits to rationality.

The introduction of transformational leadership as an important theme in school reform (Barber, 2000a, Blair, 2001, NCSL, 2001) reveals the extent to which policy-makers themselves have recognised the 'logical limits to rationality'. The call for 'futures oriented' leadership (NCSL, 2001, p. 5), an 'educational transformation' (2001, p. 1), an 'active view of learning' and 'experiential and innovative methodologies' (2001, p. 5) seemingly contradicts the 'bureaucratic rationality' that informs the drive by other government agencies (e.g. Qualifications and Curriculum Authority [QCA], OFSTED) to regulate, standardize, measure and increase the production of knowledge and skills.

Driven by their values, beliefs and vision of the future (DfEE, 1998a, NCSL, 2001), transformational leaders are supposed to be concerned with standardization (McNeil, 2000), efficiency (OFSTED, 1995), targets and improved test results (DfEE, 1997b).

This is a revealing example of the continued, unresolved policy tension between central direction and control on one hand, and local diversity and accountability on the other (Grace, 1995, Ribbins & Sherratt, 1997, MacBeath & Myers, 1999). The paradox also helps explain the frustrated but ambiguous reaction of heads like Mr Moore, who found the 'pain and pressure ... endless' but wanted to 'start immediately' (MD, p. 251 – 254), and presented one face to HMI and revealed another in the privacy of his diary. But there is also continuity. The National College's vaguely expressed commitment to 'purposeful, inclusive, values driven' leadership (NCSL, 2001, p. 5) also exposes a policy-maker's traditional 'preference for the avoidance of moral issues or contests of principle' which can be 'explained by the fact that lower-level resolutions may be amenable to compromise and persuasion, whereas higher-level conflicts may be irreconcilable' (Hodgkinson, 1991, p. 104). Utopian transformations, like bureaucratic rationality, aim for a world in which ideology, conflict and messy reality have been transcended, so that there are no further barriers to organizational efficiency. This dream of unlimited productivity, unhindered by incompetence and argument, is an illusion that leads to organizational pathos (Hoyle, 1986b) as heads and teachers strive for unattainable goals.

**Transferable Transformations**

Like the early apostles of scientific organization (Callahan, 1962, Cuban, 1988), policy-makers (Barber, 2000b) are persuaded that these recommended models of effectiveness, improvement and leadership are invariably relevant and useful and may be applied in any circumstances. This is an assumption actively encouraged by the authors of management handbooks (Gunter, 1997, 2001), consultants like Hay McBer (DfEE, 1998a), who design and sell training solutions, and the heads of apparently successful schools (Hampton & Jones, 2000, Caldwell & Spinks, 1988, 1992), who like to explain the secret of their own success. Heads are supposed to learn new strategies (development planning, target setting) and skills (leadership styles) that will improve motivation, performance and examination results.

Our desire for a transferable formula to bring every school to the level of the best is frustrated, however, by the unique interactions of people and situations, and by the consequent absence of a 'comprehensive theory about organizations' (Beare et al.,

1989, p. 39). As this study confirms, the infinite possible combinations of context, values, emotions and interests ensure the persistent particularity of administrative life, so that school leaders have to engage with an unavoidably messy reality and to decide between competing priorities.

This is why there is no 'golden rule-book or recipe for effective leadership' (MacBeath & Myers, 1999, p. 67), and why our knowledge of what makes an effective administrator or an efficient organization is limited by 'the complexity of the variables and the omission of human purposefulness' (Greenfield & Ribbins, 1993, p. 47). It is also why the recommended models described above are flawed and inconsistent, and why they deal in efficiency and performance rather than educational purpose and choices between values. Once the importance of the unique and particular is conceded, the usefulness of administrative science, except as a stimulus to reflection, is greatly reduced.

This is especially true of the various phenomena described as 'transformational leadership'. Although the literature is diverse and sometimes ambiguous (Burns wanted leadership theory for a democratic society but has been criticised by Allix for creating the theoretical conditions for dictatorship), the predominant concern with values, beliefs and moral improvement is such that a 'golden rule-book' for transformations is unlikely to emerge. As organizational theory has nothing to say 'about the choice and the decision to be made, nor the responsibility to be assumed' (Greenfield, 1991, p. 7), and each dilemma represents a unique combination of elements, solutions that involve values are not easily transferable from one context to another.

Mr Moore's acceptance of the contingent nature of his leadership (he struggled to 'anchor my thoughts' in the action plan written the term before he arrived), and his engagement with the particular beliefs and aspirations of the people he met, confirm the proposition that organizational reality is inescapable and that no one formula, recipe, or set of practices is likely to produce a miraculous transformation, however defined:

> The managerial mystique holds so strongly to the belief that 'the right methods' will produce good results that the methods themselves too often become surrogates for results, and to the belief that management and bureaucratic controls will overcome human shortcomings and enhance human productivity that controls become ends in themselves (Sergiovanni, 1995, p. 315).

The danger is that observers, like military historians, are tempted to extract transformational moments from their context and present them as panaceas suitable for all seasons. Management textbooks, like **In Search of Excellence**, fail to convert every company into a winner because variations in the permutations of context, leaders and followers are more significant than the common elements represented in popular models (e.g. Kotter's eight stages). As a policy objective, transformational leadership has the further limitation 'that there simply are not enough good principals to go round' (Donahue, 1993, p. 299, quoted in West et al., 2000, p. 39), a point emphasized by OFSTED (2001, p. 1):

> ...we still do not have enough good leaders and have too many weak ones.

As the available training programmes (NPQH, LPSH) do not emphasize the moral and philosophical education that is probably required to produce leaders (Hodgkinson, 1991) capable of draining the muddiest part of the swamp, the present shortage of appropriately skilled headteachers may undermine hopes of an early, widespread transformation.

**School Variables**

The Hillside case study confirms the extent to which a particular set of internal conditions may assist or constrain leaders who aim to improve their schools. A long established, essentially pessimistic regime was unpopular and increasingly discredited, mainly because the head failed to respond to important social and educational trends, and failed to build an organizational culture with which most students, parents and teachers could identify. Very few members of the community

believed in the old regime and there were many who felt oppressed and frustrated. Teachers wanted opportunities to contribute to their school; they wanted to run clubs and activities; they wanted a firm line with truculent students. Mr Wake did not acknowledge their aspirations or their concerns.

The result was a low level of organizational coherence and effectiveness, and a repressed desire within the school community for new leadership and new ways of working. Accelerated change was expected and welcome, while there was also unusual scope for visible improvements (lockers, computers, telephones, job descriptions, partitions). The positive response to the two new heads confirms the proposition that 'followership empowers leadership' (Lakomski, 1999, p. 37). Staff and students wished for an 'outstanding personality' who would symbolise and personify their aspirations (Burns & Stalker, 1995, p. 211, IT: DH, 4.xii.3).

The crisis created an opportunity for members of the school community to influence their own fate. The chair of governors persuaded Mr Wake to depart and provided unreserved support for the new heads when it was needed. The PAG chair converted a spontaneous protest into an effective campaign and worked with Mr Moore and the deputies to ensure that the school survived the review. Governors who had accepted Mr Wake's oral reports without question were equally content to endorse Mr Goodlad's dramatic appointments and building plans without enquiring into the details or looking at a budget sheet. The two new deputies provided continuity when the school's future was most at risk, maintaining morale and optimism in the face of possible disaster.

At middle management level, long-serving teachers agreed to lead various aspects of the action plan, while six newly arrived heads of department revitalised the curriculum. Although organizing the recruitment and support of middle managers is a key role for heads, the differing rates of change in the subject departments illustrate the complex interplay of personalities and circumstances that contribute to the 'variability of performance amongst departments within the same school' found by Gunter (2001, p. 110). The responses of followers can frustrate or alter intended outcomes and may explain why it is that although 'support for the idea of distributed

leadership is widespread, empirical evidence concerning its nature and effects in any organizational context remains extremely thin' (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2000, p. 53).

Other internal conditions were less helpful. As a result of previous neglect and the bias of the school's intake, the number of disruptive, disaffected and dysfunctional students was significantly above average. The case-load for Mr Moore and the pastoral team was a challenging distraction from other priorities, while the pressure on classroom teachers was continuous and often eroded their confidence and self-esteem. Specialist facilities (e.g. gymnasium, design technology) were in a poor condition, while several departments lacked modern equipment and resources. Worn-out work benches, open plan classrooms and the absence of a drama studio limited the curriculum that could be offered and slowed the pace of improvement by absorbing time, money and energy that might otherwise have been invested in lessons. Although Mr Moore appealed to the urgency of special measures when his plans and procedures were challenged, and successfully by-passed truculent members of the senior management team, it is easy to see how much more troublesome this internal resistance might have been in different circumstances.

**External Variables**

The evolution of national policy, with its emphasis on dealing with failure (DfEE, 1997a, 1997b, Barber, 2000b), created a climate that supported 'strong' leaders in 'turning round' less successful schools. The emergence of Easton LEA, with its determination to remove surplus places and improve the quality of local provision, also contributed to the dynamic of change. Although the immediate psychological impact of special measures and the closure announcement was harmful for some teachers, the Hillside community as a whole was energised by the events that followed the inspection.

The OFSTED framework also provided a consistent, compelling definition of the changes that were required (missing from the initiatives described by Sarason, 1996) and justified a rigorous approach to poor teaching that might have been problematic in a less precarious, less supervised environment. HMI monitoring visits became staging posts in the school's progress towards recovery, and enabled Mr Moore and his team

to adjust priorities appropriately as action plan targets were achieved. The head, the deputies and the heads of department knew exactly what was expected of them and were stimulated to adopt an unusually tight-coupled organization that might have been less acceptable in a school with a stronger track record of success.

These external pressures were also destructive. As staff later complained, the trauma and disruption of inspection and closure were a disproportionate response to a leadership problem that a competent local advisory service might have resolved years earlier. Teachers wondered why the county audit report had been forgotten and asked why the LEA had not operated effective monitoring procedures. They saw themselves as scapegoats for the head and the systems that had failed to hold him accountable, and perceived special measures as a punishment rather than as support for improvement. Some were permanently marked by their sense of shame and injustice; others suffered depression and illness or left the profession; almost everyone felt that an alien language and priorities had been superimposed on them and resented the loss of professional autonomy that seemed in retrospect to have been the main virtue of the old order. As the ambivalence reported in Mr Moore's diary reveals, teachers began to accept and work towards objectives defined by OFSTED, but were never reconciled to the bureaucratic rationality implicit in the special measures regime.

The closure decision, made without any formal procedure or consultation, was an extraordinary mistake and set up the dialectic between internal and external processes that followed. As the boundary imploded, the multiple, competing agendas of Easton LEA, OFSTED and the DfEE threatened to overwhelm what remained of the school's capacity for self-management, and stimulated teachers and the local community to protest against the organs and agencies of government. Hillside's transformation was produced in the context of a prolonged struggle for survival, in which the principal school-based participants saw the conventional agents of school improvement (LEA, OFSTED) as malign forces to be fought with their own weapons (secondary review, action plan, targets). The LEA's undeveloped systems and procedures provided the heads at Hillside with room for manoeuvre as they aimed to counter threats and exploit opportunities, but ineffective and inefficient services also made change more difficult to achieve, especially in relation to personnel and building issues.

**The Limits of Improvement**

The changes at Hillside, enacted within the framework of special measures and in full knowledge of OFSTED criteria, are inevitably discussed and interpreted through the prevailing positivist paradigm. A linear model of improvement disposes us to seek evidence of growing organizational effectiveness and enhanced student performance. Everyone involved has a vested interest in presenting the outcome as a 'restoration to health' achieved through strong leadership that motivated staff and students to commit themselves to hard work and new methods. Strong leaders and self-managing schools that improve educational opportunity against the social odds have an enduring appeal to professionals and policy-makers alike. We all want to make a difference. Hillside is also an attractive story because no one claimed that miracles and miracle-workers were involved, and the leading players chose to stress the heroism of the ordinary parents, students and teachers who seized the new opportunities they were offered.

The evidence is double-edged, however. OFSTED and the teachers at Hillside believed that the school was improved so much that the term 'transformation' could be applied without exaggeration. But there is no unequivocal quantitative data to validate the claim that a new level of effectiveness was achieved between November Y1 and November Y3 (see chapter 10, p. 274/5). In the absence of better test and examination results, the current research and policy model of improvement, as an internal process of innovation that enhances value-added performance (Hopkins, 2000, Gray et al., 1999), has no means of evaluating organizational change. The current conception of improvement depends on quantitative evidence of a progression in student performance.

Once the national year-on-year increase in the percentage of the age cohort obtaining five or more A*-C passes is factored out of the equation, however, the number of schools improving in these terms is very small (Gray et al., 1999, pp. 14 – 15). This apparent lack of improvement could be explained by continued, widespread weaknesses in school leadership and organization, but there is increasing evidence (see chapter 2, pp. 45 - 49) that compositional variations explain most of the differences in student performance between schools. Some recent estimates suggest

that the margin available to be influenced by organizational characteristics may be as narrow as 1 to 5 per cent in models incorporating prior attainment measures (Gray et al., 1995, p. 128). Should this be confirmed by further studies, the usefulness and validity of current models of effectiveness and improvement will be very much in doubt. The government's preoccupation with tactics and techniques that supposedly improve test and examination results, based on evidence that is increasingly questioned and the studied neglect of critical perspectives, has distracted attention from the unique complexity of each and every school and limited our understanding of other aspects of organizational change. The effectiveness criteria used to evaluate progress seem to have been relevant but the transformation at Hillside is not easily understood or explained in terms of the current improvement paradigm.

Although Mr Moore and HMI were in professional agreement about the need to improve the functional efficiency of the school (e.g. books marked, phones work), and the staff accepted, however reluctantly, the bureaucratic methods that would satisfy external demands, the change process was messily unscientific and inconsistent with rational models. Participants devoted much more time to human problems than plans and targets, and wrestled continuously with conflicts and tensions that involved school members, relations with other organizations and their agents, and the vagaries of external bodies. Mr Moore did not regard the values and interests he encountered as an inconvenient obstacle to the introduction of lesson plans and the installation of an efficient computer network. Instead, he saw the skilful management of dissent, dilemmas and issues as critical to the process of building a resilient working culture. Compliance with external requirements was accompanied by celebrations that emphasized the renewal of the school and the worth of its members.

Although the observed effectiveness of the school was reported to have been transformed, the changes that were introduced are not quite what they seem. The transformation seems to have won the commitment of teachers and the community mainly because it achieved a well-judged return to professional normality. Organizational health and security were restored, external agencies retreated. Straightforward rules about teaching and behaviour were introduced; there was consultation but a clear sense of direction; there was backing for teachers in trouble; and serious problems were dealt with firmly. Do such changes amount to a

transformation? Or must all transformations lead to a sustained improvement in results? As no one has 'set out clearly and accurately' the starting point for a 'successful programme of transformation' it is inevitable that people will 'question the extent of the transformation that has taken place' (Dunford, 2002, p. 6, p. 7).

It seems that OFSTED, the closure crisis and the collective breakdown they induced gave Mr Goodlad and Mr Moore's leadership an heroic aspect, and they appeared in the guise of 'super heads' committed to 'amazing' changes. But in reality they were managers rather than agents of change and built islands of stability as the turbulent forces that had been unleashed swirled around them. Mr Moore would have been content to judge his success by:

> ...the extent that he is able to contain and constrain the forces of change with which he must contend as a matter of daily routine; whatever force he exerts on the dynamics of the school contributes to its stability, even when he wants to act, or believes he is acting, in a way that will encourage an aura of change (Wolcott, 1984, p. 307).

The current, performance-centred policy model (Gleeson & Husbands, 2001) undervalues and under explains changes that do not lead to an upward trend in results, and under-estimates what is involved in producing and sustaining a purposeful, stable, well-organized school that adapts to its environment, successfully managing and absorbing 'forces of change' that include government initiatives.

**Policy Implications**

This study confirms the importance of headteachers and the priority given to their development by the DfES and the NCSL. Heads have a pervasive influence on the climate and culture of their schools and in critical circumstances may play a formative or catalytic role in transforming internal conditions to meet new pressures and requirements. Although the extent to which an individual head 'makes a difference' is contingent on the interaction of his or her personal qualities and career experience with particular settings and structures, there is clear evidence here that other members of a school community can be powerfully enabled or disabled by leadership.

Hillside provides significant evidence that although the leadership programmes (NPQH, LPSH) offered by the NCSL are constructive and useful, they are based on a one-dimensional conception of the qualities required to develop and sustain a school community and overestimate the significance of style and motivation. As there is little evidence that leadership has a direct impact on student performance, the proposition that an improved CSI will lead to better examination results seems an example of the triumph of hope over experience. As wartime attempts to boost production suggest (Calder, 1969), enhanced motivation and increased work rate are seldom sustained over an extended period without a consequent loss of quality. There is also evidence that pressure to perform has increased the incidence of stress and breakdown amongst teachers (Troman & Woods, 2000).

As interactions in school also involve various uses of authority in unequal relationships, moral dilemmas and choices between values and strategies, heads must be concerned with much more than the self-conscious adjustment of their interpersonal performances. The NCSL's policy for leadership development should in future acknowledge the limitations of the human relations approach and explore the educational potential of alternative, critical perspectives that take account of the conflicting values, beliefs and interests that characterise post-modern society. The suggestion that leadership should be 'values driven' (NCSL, 2001, p. 5) is quite meaningless until there is an open debate about the particular values and goals that *should* inform policy-making and headship. At present, the college's almost evangelical promotion of transformational leadership is unsupported by any detailed account of the nature and purpose of the desired transformation, or by a realistic plan to achieve 'radical transformation' (Barber, 2000a). In the absence of legitimate macro aims (West, 1993), transformational leadership may prove as dangerous as Allix (2000) fears.

Governments instinctively, and perhaps inevitably (Hodgkinson, 1991), avoid or elude questions like these about the aims and purposes of education. Officials have an intuitive knowledge of the bureaucratic form of organization described by Weber (1964, p. 337 - 339):

> ...the purely bureaucratic type of administrative organization ... is ... the most rational known means of carrying out imperative control over human beings ... it ... makes possible a particularly high degree of calculability of results for the heads of the organization ... It is finally superior both in intensive efficiency and in the scope of its operations ... Bureaucratic administration means fundamentally the exercise of control on the basis of knowledge.

The contested moral issues and dilemmas of the contemporary world are not susceptible to bureaucratic resolution (MacIntyre, 1993, pp. 6 – 10) and politicians recognise the high cost of attempting to decide between competing values. The attraction of an alternative, technicist methodology concerned with efficiency, effectiveness and improved results is plain enough. As we have seen, however, in the value-saturated settings of education, the preference for bureaucratic rationality, for standardized tests, examinations and performance, becomes a choice like any other. As bureaucracy approaches rival zones of professional knowledge and competence (e.g. school organization and management; the classroom), the tensions multiply and compromise the rationality of the administrative procedures (e.g. appraisal, targets) that have been imposed. This case study reveals the extent to which the imperative to control educational outcomes has carried bureaucratic methods into areas where value conflicts become ever more explicit, and where the need for resolution is acute.

The self-defeating 'contradictions of school reform' (McNeil, 2000) are abundantly illustrated at Hillside, where Mr Moore and his colleagues worked to reconcile their professional knowledge and expertise with the bureaucratic structures and requirements that surrounded them. Schools are self-governing, but must comply with the requirements of numerous government agencies; headteachers are supposed to have visions and transform schools, but their success must be judged on the narrow measure of test and examination results; 'experiential and innovative methodologies' are recommended but standardization is required; free markets prevail but the product is centrally-determined; the coercive, top-down style characterises the government apparatus, especially SEU and OFSTED, but heads are encouraged to empower their colleagues through distributed leadership (LPSH, NCSL).

The harmful consequences of these contradictions are most obvious in the case of OFSTED, where the inspection system traps many teachers between their own, 'child-centred, holistic philosophy' and 'the rational-calculative principles behind the government's reforms' and if 'surveillance continues or expands ... it could have long-term consequences for teachers' sense of professionalism and for any genuine educational improvement' (Jeffrey & Woods, 1996, p. 341). As the Hillside experience demonstrates, teachers at schools subject to repeated inspection and monitoring visits work in conditions resembling those that prevail under a foreign occupation, when there is a need to 'subvert official doctrine whilst maintaining a superficial compliance' (Taylor, 1976, p. 44). The emotional cost of the 'two sets of books' (Barth, 1990, p. 41), especially for the vulnerable (approaching a third of the staff at Hillside in Y1), seems high for the doubtful benefit of an increase in the quantity of convergent, standardized teaching and the more complete documentation of classroom processes (McNeil, 2000).

The increased central direction of the education service has reduced the zone of professional discretion much more than is justified by the knowledge and experience of the officials who manage the relevant government agencies, setting up unbearable tensions for many equally knowledgeable and experienced practitioners, and diminishing the scope for the lower level resolution of potentially destructive tensions between individuals, communities and the wider society. Bureaucratic rationality creates the illusion that these conflicts do not exist, or that they are caused by illegitimate forces that should be ignored, but their persistence is evident in a wide range of studies (e.g. Richardson, 1973a, 1973b, Fletcher et al., 1985) and is amply confirmed by the turmoil at Hillside. Policy makers should consider whether their pursuit of standards by bureaucratic means has become counter-productive, overwhelming other values and purposes, and limiting rather than building the capacity of our teachers and schools.

## Further Research

### Alternative Models

The central finding of this research is that the close-up perspective on the inner conditions of individual self-managing schools (Caldwell & Spinks, 1988, 1992, Caldwell, 1994) leads to an incomplete understanding of organizational change. At Hillside there were complex interactions between internal and external structures at macro, meso and micro levels, and evidence of a latent conflict between professional (moral, cultural) and bureaucratic (rational, instrumental) values and concerns. Although these interactive processes, and the value tensions within them, produce the patterns of leadership and organization we observe, they are excluded from linear models that seek to measure improvement in terms of value-added performance.

Without an alternative, qualitative framework for evaluating organizational change and development, there is no prospect of escaping the institutionalised positivism that permeates government funded agencies and research. The glass is focused on failure, on close-up perspectives, on strong leaders in narrow confines, on the heart beat of tests and results. Adjust the lens and we glimpse a panoramic, post-modern landscape where individuals and communities struggle in varied settings with an intractable but turbulent environment, and respond by attending to:

> The reflexive project of the self, which consists in the sustaining of coherent, yet continuously revised, biographical narratives (and) takes place in the context of multiple choice as filtered through abstract systems (Giddens, 1991, p. 5).

The symbols, rituals and metaphors observed at Hillside (the stuffed animal; cutting the chains; Indian dancing; the Dark Lord) provide evidence of the individual and group narratives at stake in the school's fight for survival, and illustrate the need for research based on a new, more comprehensive conception of school improvement, informed by the themes that have emerged from this study. Such a framework for the evaluation of organizational development should include indicators that track:

- Changes in the mission (direction, purpose);
- Changes in the values that inform priorities and decisions;
- Changes in emphasis between the sources of authority (positional, interpersonal, professional, moral) used to sustain the mission;
- Changes in organizational culture;
- Changes in organizational efficiency (routine operations, telephones);
- The quality of student experience;
- Consistency between these dimensions.

This framework for understanding, rather than judgement, is consistent with the findings of effectiveness research, though not with the expectation that particular organizational factors or conditions are conducive to enhanced performance in tests and examinations. In the absence of a comprehensive theory of organizations, the framework should be informed by a variety of theoretical perspectives and insights. Once developed and established, the indicators should assist in planning research to investigate further the relative significance and impact of the variables discussed in this thesis:

- Leadership behaviour (at all levels);
- Leadership stability and change (at all levels);
- Participant behaviour (at all stages);
- External structures and conditions.

Designed on these lines, research studies in a variety of settings should enable us to achieve a more realistic and broader-based understanding of how leaders shape and influence their schools.

Improving Successful Schools

An early priority should be to test in other circumstances the conclusion that appropriately skilled and experienced headteachers are able to mobilise an extensive repertoire of personal and organizational resources to produce a step-change in the quality of their schools. Although Hillside represents a fair trial of Stark's (1998)

assertion that failing schools can be 'restored to health' despite adverse conditions, including social disadvantage, the common features of less successful organizations may be particularly conducive to transformation. Mays (1968, p. 38) argues, for example, that heads are especially important in 'rough' environments:

> ...a Head and a Head alone, can, in course of time, change the nature of a down-town school in a rough area even if it has an adverse tradition and even when, in the past, it has acquired an unenviable 'blackboard jungle' stigma.

The low base-line established by passive leadership, poor morale and neglected students may provide a more promising foundation for transformation than a busy and successful school praised in its most recent OFSTED report. Are transformational methods relevant and useful in every context? Do heads behave differently when their schools are secure, respected and self-confident? Is substantial change a realistic goal for well-established, successful heads and leadership teams?

Deputy Heads

Mr Moore's diary is the only source to recognise the importance of the deputy heads (MD, p. 36) and their role in leading their colleagues (MD, p. 35). They were seldom mentioned by the witnesses interviewed for this study; and their names are absent from most of the monitoring and administrative files, even from policies and documents they prepared and implemented themselves. This is partly explained by the research design ('Are heads able to play a prime role?') but also by their colleagues' tendency to interpret the school in terms of the successive heads. As Burns & Stalker (1995, p. 211) note:

> The head of the concern stands for the concern and its relative successes – he symbolizes or personifies it.

As a result, deputy heads have become shadowy figures, revealed through the micro-politics of the senior management team (Weindling & Earley, 1987, Busher, Barker & Wortley, 2001, and pp. 175 - 179 above) rather than by their own actions and

decisions. At Hillside, Elaine, Peter and a number of other managers coaxed their colleagues through the trauma and turbulence of three headteachers in two years, and brought about 'amazing' changes that helped save the school. But although the significance of distributed (Gunter, 2001) and invitational leadership (Stoll & Fink, 1995) is increasingly recognised, these critical, complex senior roles remain under-researched. We should enquire how deputies influence visions and values and how they work with colleagues to bring about change.

Are Women Different?

As we have seen, detailed analysis of how the three heads pursued their goals at Hillside (see discussion in Chapters 9 and 10) demonstrates the limitations of behavioural models of leadership. Personal characteristics (see Table 2), leadership styles and interpersonal behaviour are important but have been over-emphasized in the management literature (Gunter, 1997, 2000) and in training programmes (DfEE, 1998a). The positional, moral and professional dimensions are equally important; and should not be considered in isolation from one another. These conclusions confirm studies (e.g. Wolcott, 1984, Hodgkinson, 1991, Sergiovanni, 1995, Ribbins, 1999b, Day et al., 2000) that emphasize the moral and political dilemmas of leadership. They also explain why attempts to investigate women's leadership in terms of gendered traits and styles have proved inconclusive. Women's experience of leadership and the sources of authority they find and develop should now be researched within the broad-based framework proposed above.

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# Appendix 1: List of Sources

| Abbreviation | Source |
|---|---|
| **MD** | **Chris Moore's Diary, Y2.** |
| **MF1** | **Monitoring File 1, January Y2: articles 1 – 18.** |
| MF1.1 | Action plan progress report, January Y2. |
| MF1.2 | Action Plan Key Target Area No. 1. |
| MF1.3 | Information from student planner. |
| MF1.4 | Summary of questionnaire. |
| MF1.5 | Admission & induction procedures. |
| MF1.6 | Attendance & punctuality procedures. |
| MF1.7 | Attendance summary table. |
| MF1.8 | Homework scheme. |
| MF1.9 | Advice for mentors. |
| MF1.10 | School dress information. |
| MF1.11 | How schools and teachers can help children who are bereaved. |
| MF1.12 | Action Plan Key Target Area No. 2. |
| MF1.13 | SMT revised action plan – Spring Y2. |
| MF1.14 | Scheme of Management, 15.ix.2. |
| MF1.15 | Staff groups for development. |
| MF1.16 | Support Staff Review. |
| MF1.17 | Staff Structure Review. |
| MF1.18 | Assembly structure & themes. |
| **MF2** | **Monitoring File 2, January Y2: articles 19 – 32.** |
| MF2.19 | Scheme of Governance. |
| MF2.20 | Action Plan Key Target Area No. 3. |
| MF2.21 | Report on mini-inspection. |
| MF2.22 | Appraisal and National Record of Achievement. |
| MF2.23 | The Hillside Lesson: A Common Approach. |
| MF2.24 | In-Service training policy. |
| MF2.25 | NQT policy document. |
| MF2.26 | Staff cover policy. |
| MF2.27 | SMT Audit Specification and Criteria. |
| MF2.28 | Lesson scores. |
| MF2.29 | Interviews: Selection & Self-Development. |

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| MF2.30 | Action Plan Key Target Area No. 4. |
| MF2.31 | Curriculum Review, Y2. |
| MF2.32 | Staff Handbook information. |

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| **MF3** | **Monitoring File 3, June Y2: numbers 1 – 20.** |
| MF3.1 | Head's Development Report, May Y2. |
| MF3.2 | Attendance figures; cognitive ability tests; exclusions; monitoring of student planners; mentoring progress. |
| MF3.3 | Student attitudes; reading progress data; performance indicators; visit to activity centre. |
| MF3.4 | SEN register; excluded students in youth activities. |
| MF3.5 | KS4 curriculum guidance booklet. |
| MF3.6 | Student interviews; student council information. |
| MF3.7 | Y11 monitoring; y11 career destinations. |
| MF3.8 | SWOT analysis; aims, values and objectives statement; HOD training programme; expectations of HOD's; teacher training day programme; training day objectives; scheme of work pro forma; lesson plan samples. |
| MF3.9 | Teaching staff structure and appointments. |
| MF3.10 | Governor sub-committees; governor reports on student progress. |
| MF3.11 | New school day; Vaisakhi celebration programme. |
| MF3.12 | Governors' report to parents. |
| MF3.13 | Head's monitoring report; SMT audit reports. |
| MF3.14 | Scheme for teaching staff development and appraisal; agreed classroom practices and sanctions. |
| MF3.15 | Lesson observations – reports. |
| MF3.16 | Head's report to parents on HMI visit, January Y2. |
| MF3.17 | KS4 literacy project. |
| MF3.18 | Curriculum review; summary statement. |
| MF3.19 | Draft budget structure, Y3. |
| MF3.20 | Capitation distribution formula, Y3. |

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|---|---|
| **MF4** | **Monitoring File 4, November Y3: numbers 1 – 18.** |
| MF4.1 | Literacy development. |
| MF4.2 | SEN register. |
| MF4.3 | Target setting. |
| MF4.4 | Results Y2. |
| MF4.5 | Attendance figures, Y2. |
| MF4.6 | Report from OFSTED on HMI visit June Y2; Head's summary of debrief on HMI visit, June Y2. |
| MF4.7 | Staff 'bonding' residential. |

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|---|---|
| MF4.8 | Planning and managing for the future. |
| MF4.9 | Assembly structure. |
| MF4.10 | How do they mix? |
| MF4.11 | Extra-curricular programme. |
| MF4.12 | Application for a Determination for School Worship. |
| MF4.13 | Calendar of events, Y2. |
| MF4.14 | Report of visit from LEA quality and development inspector. |
| MF4.15 | Literacy policy. |
| MF4.16 | Individual school improvement project. |
| MF4.17 | Staff Handbook, Y3. |
| MF4.18 | Staff resource policy. |

**MF5** **Monitoring File 5, November Y3: Student Outcome Report.**

| | |
|---|---|
| MF5.1 | Calendar of events. |
| MF5.2 | Graphs and attendance summary. |
| MF5.3 | Numeracy evaluation. |
| MF5.4 | Tracking pupil progress and monitoring pupil progress. |
| MF5.5 | Homework scheme. |
| MF5.6 | Attendance scheme and punctuality scheme. |
| MF5.7 | Restructured senior management team. |
| MF5.8 | (a) Support staff review (b) Guidance for new support workers. |
| MF5.9 | Departmental outcome responses. |
| MF5.10 | SMT audit. |
| MF5.11 | Deputy Heads simulated monitoring visit. |

**AF1** **Administrative File 1.**

| | |
|---|---|
| AF1.1 | Head Teacher's Form, Y1. |
| AF1.2 | LEA Review Report, Y1. |
| AF1.3 | Hillside Handbook, Y2. |
| AF1.4 | Hillside Handbook, 1994. |
| AF1.5 | Hillside Handbook, 1993. |
| AF1.6 | Hillside Handbook, 1992. |

**AF2** **Administrative File 2.**

| | |
|---|---|
| AF2.1 | Letter to the Chair of Governors: DfEE, 6.viii.1. |
| AF2.2 | Hillside School OFSTED Inspection Report, Y1. |

**AF3** **Administrative File 3.**

| | |
|---|---|
| AF3.1 | Miscellaneous staff and student files (not used). |

**AF4** **Administrative File 4.**

AF4 13.vi.1 Letter to Stephen Byers: PAG Chair.
AF4 13.xii.1 Letter to the Head: Staff Forum.
AF4 14.xii.1 Letter to the Chair of Governors: Chair of Staff Forum.
AF4 17.xii.1 Letter to the Governors: Staff Forum Statement.
AF4 18.xii.1 Fax to Personnel Consultant: Chair of Governors.
AF4 28.i.1 Letter to Chair of Education: Chair of Governors.
AF4 10.ii.2 Note to File: Chair of Governors.
AF4.2 Action Plan Notes.

**AF5** **Administrative File 5.**

AF5.1 Deputy Head Job Description 1, April Y1.
AF5.2 Deputy Head Job Description 2, April Y1.
AF5.3 Appointment Timetable, 14.iv.1.
AF5.4 Action Plan Timetable, Y1.
AF5.5 Action Plan, Y1.

**AF6** **Administrative File 6.**

AF6.1 Hillside Herald, newsletter of the Hillside Parents' Action Group, No. 1, April Y1.
AF6.2 Hillside Herald, newsletter of the Hillside Parents' Action Group, No. 2, May Y1.
AF6.3 Hillside Herald, newsletter of the Hillside Parents' Action Group, No. 3, December Y2.
AF6.4 Hillside Herald, newsletter of the Hillside Parents' Action Group, No. 4, March Y2.

**AF7** **Administrative File 7.**

AF7.1 Letter to Parents: B. Goodlad, 25.vi.1, p. 27 (in implementation report).
AF7.6 'New head vows to help rescue school', in **Eastern Morning Post**, 11.x.2, p. 1.
AF7.7 'We guarantee success', in **Easton TV Trader**, 25.ix.2, p. 1.

**AF8** **Administrative File 8.**

AF8.1 Inspection of Easton LEA, July Y3.
AF8.4 Letter to Gerald: LEA Officer, 27.ii.2.
AF8.5 Letter to LEA Director: Chris Moore, 14.xi.2.
AF8.6 Easton LEA Services, Chris Moore, 30.v.3.
AF8.7 Letter to LEA Assistant Director: PAG Chair, 8.xii.2.
AF8.8 Letter to PAG Chair: 2nd LEA Assistant Director, 8.i.2.

**AF9** **Administrative File 9.**

AF9.3 A Guide for Parents, Y2.
AF9.4 A GCSE Options Guide for Pupils & Parents, Y2.
AF9.7 Head's Report to Governors, October Y2.
AF9.8 Head's Development Report, May Y2.
AF9.9 Head's Development Report, October Y3.
AF9.10 Commentary for HMI Visit, November Y3.
AF9.11 SMT Roles & Responsibilities Y3, August Y2.
AF9.12 Chris Moore LPSH data (Characteristics, Styles, Climate) 15.iii.3.

**AF10** **Administrative File 10.**

AF10.1 Setting up systems, March Y2.
AF10.2 Updating office admin. systems, March Y2.
AF10.3 Letter to Chris Moore: PAG chair, 25.xi.2.
AF10.4 Letter to Parents: Chris Moore, 25.ii.2.
AF10.5 Letter to All Staff in Secondary Schools/Colleges: LEA Director, 25.ii.2.
AF10.6 'City college votes to abolish itself', in **Easton Morning Post**, nd.
AF10.7 Proposal to create N. Easton College.
AF10.8 Review of Secondary Education Report, Easton LEA, 20.iv.2.

**AF11** **Administrative File 11.**

AF11.1 Lesson Observation Report, 31.iii.2.
AF11.2 Internal Monitoring Report, 28.iv.2.
AF11.3 Letter to Chris Moore: Head of School Improvement, OFSTED, 17.ii.2; Minutes of Disciplinary Committee, 16.ii.2, version 1.
AF11.4 Letter to Chris Moore: Head of School Improvement, OFSTED, 22.vi.2.
AF11.5 Hillside School Report from the Office of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools, November, Y3.

| | |
|---|---|
| AF11.6 | Notes on HMI Debrief to SMT following observations on 15.vi.3 undertaken as part of the Easton LEA Inspection. |

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|---|---|
| **AF12** | **Administrative File 12.** |
| AF12.1 | Hillside Start Pack, Y3. |
| AF12.2 | LEA advisor's observation report, October Y3. |
| AF12.3 | Development Plan Extension Y3 – Y5. |
| AF12.4 | Development Plan Y2/3. |
| AF12.5 | Staff Script, November Y3. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **AF13** | **Administrative File 13.** |
| AF13.1 | Hillside OFSTED Panda Report, Y2. |

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|---|---|
| **AS** | **Additional Sources** |
| AS1 | **ACORN Profile, Hillside Ward EA3 2HI**<br>http://www.upmystreet.com/inf/msc/det/?locationX=PostCode (08.07.02). |
| AS2 | **ACORN Profile, Brownville Ward EA3 6BR**<br>http://www.upmystreet.com/inf/msc/det/?locationX=PostCode (08.07.02). |
| AS3 | **Easton Social Atlas**<br>http://www.Easton.gov.uk. |
| AS3.1 | Domestic property values. |
| AS3.2 | Housing benefit claimants. |
| AS3.3 | Youth offending. |
| AS3.4 | Standardised mortality rates. |
| AS3.5 | Unemployment rates. |
| AS3.6 | GCSE results. |
| AS4 | **Easton Schools Performance & FSM Data:** |
| AS4.1 | http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/inspect/index.htm. |
| AS4.2 | http://www.dfes.gov.uk/performancetables/. |

| | |
|---|---|
| **IT (HB)** | **Interview Transcript (HB).** |
| IT: AHDT | Acting Head of Design Technology. |
| 11.xii.2 | |
| IT: Chris Moore | Acting Head of Hillside (Y2 – Y3). |
| 10.xii.2<br>27.iii.2<br>22.vi.2<br>11.xii.3<br>6.ii.2 | |
| IT: CT | Caretaker. |
| 4.xii.2 | |
| IT: DH | Deputy Head (Appointed April Y1). |
| 11.xii.2<br>4.xii.3 | |
| IT: HOD | Head of Department. |
| 15.vi.2<br>6.i.3 | |
| IT: HOY | Head of Year. |
| 10.xii.2<br>28.i.2<br>26.iii.2<br>17.vi.2<br>4.xii.3 | |
| IT: NQT | Newly Qualified Teacher (Y1). |
| 10.xii.2<br>25.iii.2 | |

IT: PA — Personal Assistant (Y1 onwards).

4.xii.2
28.i.2
26.iii.2
15.vi.2
29.iii.2

IT: PG — Parent Governor (Y1 onwards).

4.xii.2
6.ii.2
30.iii.2
22.vi.2
11.xii.3

IT: SEN — Special Education Needs Coordinator (Y2).

11.xii.2
26.iii.2

**IT (BB)** — **Interview Transcript (BB).**

IT: Student — Hillside Y11 Student.

10.ii.2

IT: DH — Deputy Head.

10.vi.2

IT: HOD — Head of Department.

5.vi.2

**IN (BB)** — **Interview Notes (BB).**

IN: Albert Wake — Head of Hillside (Until March Y1).

24.ix.2

IN: TG, — Teacher Governor

25.viii.3

IN: GT Geography Teacher

26.ix.2

**LT** **Lecture Transcript.**

LT: Chris Moore Acting Head (Y2 – Y3).

16.i.2

# Appendix 2

Tables 1 – 6; Charts 1 – 11.

# SPECIAL NOTE

THIS ITEM IS BOUND IN SUCH A MANNER AND WHILE EVERY EFFORT HAS BEEN MADE TO REPRODUCE THE CENTRES, FORCE WOULD RESULT IN DAMAGE

Table 1
Analysis of Hillside Teachers In Service November Y1

| Hillside Teachers: Details and Departures Y1 to Y3 | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Gender** | **Grade** | **Long Term Sick** | **Total service** | **Hillside service** | **Contract %** | **Exit: No. Months After Ofsted** |
| M | H | | 35 | 22 | 1 | 3 |
| M | D | | 33 | 22 | 1 | 3 |
| M | 5 | Ofsted + 14 | 28 | 22 | 1 | 32 |
| M | 5 | | 30 | 22 | 1 | 3 |
| M | 5 | | 29 | 22 | 1 | 3 |
| M | 5 | | 31 | 20 | 1 | 32 |
| M | 4 | Ofsted + 12 | 27 | 20 | 1 | 32 |
| M | 4 | | 29 | 19 | 1 | 8 |
| M | 4 | Ofsted + 16 | 20 | 18 | 1 | |
| M | 3 | | 21 | 18 | 1 | |
| M | 2 | | 24 | 20 | 1 | |
| F | 2 | | 9 | 6 | 1 | |
| F | 2 | | 15 | 4 | 1 | 8 |
| M | 2 | | 27 | 20 | 1 | |
| M | 2 | | 23 | 22 | 1 | |
| M | 2 | | 24 | 12 | 1 | |
| F | 2 | | 21 | 5 | 1 | |
| F | 2 | | 10 | 6 | 1 | 28 |
| M | 1 | | 19 | 19 | 1 | |
| F | 1 | | 7 | 1 | 1 | 32 |
| M | 1 | | 12 | 1 | 1 | |
| M | 1 | | 15 | 10 | 1 | |
| F | 1 | | 6 | 6 | 1 | |
| F | 1 | | 6 | 6 | 1 | |
| F | 1 | | 18 | 18 | 1 | |
| F | 1 | | 18 | 5 | 1 | |
| F | 0 | | 16 | 14 | 1 | 32 |
| F | 0 | | 24 | 8 | 1 | |
| M | 0 | | 6 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| M | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 |
| F | 0 | | 4 | 0 | 1 | |
| M | 0 | | 10 | 7 | 1 | |
| M | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 8 |
| F | 0 | Ofsted + 12 | 5 | 0 | 1 | 20 |
| M | 0 | Ofsted + 13 | 13 | 0 | 1 | 20 |

Table 1
Analysis of Hillside Teachers In Service November Y1

| | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| F | 0 | Ofsted + 15 | 12 | 5 | 1 | 36 |
| F | 0 | | 0 | 0 | 1 | 20 |
| M | 0 | | 25 | 0 | 1 | |
| F | 0 | | 21 | 3 | 0.95 | |
| F | 0 | Ofsted + 12 | 15 | 3 | 0.8 | 29 |
| F | 0 | | 15 | 2 | 0.8 | 8 |
| F | 0 | | 24 | 5 | 0.7 | 15 |
| M | 0 | | 28 | 0 | 0.63 | 20 |
| F | 0 | | 14 | 1 | 0.5 | 32 |
| F | 0 | | 12 | 0 | 0.5 | 20 |
| | | | | | | |

| Portfolio Summary | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Cluster/Competencies | Level Required | Self Rating | Average of Others | Have | Need |
| Group 1<br>Strategic Thinking<br>Impact & Influence | <br>2<br>3 | <br>3.5<br>3.1 | <br>3.3<br>3.4 | 2 | 2 |
| Group 2<br>Drive for Improvement<br>Personal Conviction | <br>2<br>3 | <br>3.1<br>3.7 | <br>3.5<br>3.8 | 2 | 1 |
| Group 3<br>Transformational Leadership<br>Hold People Accountable | <br>2<br>4 | <br>3.3<br>2.7 | <br>3.3<br>3.7 | 1 | 1 |
| Group 4<br>Initiative<br>Scan the Environment<br>Analytical Thinking | <br>1<br>1<br>3 | <br>3.7<br>3.5<br>3.4 | <br>3.6<br>3.5<br>3.4 | 3 | 2 |
| Group 5<br>Develop Potential<br>Teamwork | <br>4<br>3 | <br>3.2<br>3.4 | <br>3.5<br>3.3 | 1 | 1 |
| Group 6<br>Respect for Others<br>Challenge & Support<br>Understands Others<br>Social Awareness | <br>1<br>1<br>2<br>2 | <br>3.4<br>3.3<br>3.4<br>3.5 | <br>3.5<br>3.4<br>3.3<br>3.6 | 4 | 2 |

# Table 2:
# Headteacher Characteristics
# Chris Moore

Note

Each competency (e.g. Impact & Influence) is rated (by 'Self' and 'Average of Others') on a scale 1 (lowest) – 4 (highest). LPSH sets the level required for each competency (e.g. 3) in relation to Hay's Models of Excellence. Heads must score at the required level or better to achieve a competence. The competencies are grouped in clusters (e.g. Group 1). To demonstrate capability in each group, heads must score at the required level or better in the number of competencies shown in the 'Need' column. The 'Have' column shows the number of competencies in each cluster where the head has scored at the required level or better.

| Table 3: | Inspection Findings Y1 |
|---|---|
| Key Characteristics of Effective Schools | Hillside School OFSTED Inspection Report Y1 (AF2.2) |
| Professional Leadership | 'weaknesses arise from serious shortcomings in the quality of leadership and management' (p. 4) 'there is a lack of awareness of the urgent need to link roles and responsibilities to the improvement of the school's effectiveness' (p. 19) |
| Shared Vision And Goals | 'leadership...does not...take a strategic view' (p. 6) 'there are no effective strategic planning procedures so there are important weaknesses in the quality of planning and decision-making' (p. 20) |
| A Learning Environment | 'pupils can become poorly behaved and restless' (p. 5) 'teachers, by their attitude, provoke...bad behaviour' (p. 13) |
| Concentration on Teaching and Learning | 'the low level of punctuality has an adverse effect on attainment and progress' (p. 5) |
| Purposeful Teaching | 'the quality of teaching varies widely across the school and this has an important impact on pupils' progress' (p. 14) 'a third of lessons are unsatisfactory or poor' (p. 14) 'just over a quarter of lessons...were judged to be good' (p. 14) 'the use made of this information to adapt teaching to meet the needs of...pupils is limited' (p. 5) |
| High Expectations | 'leadership...does not promote a positive ethos and high expectations' (p. 20) 'in many lessons, expectations are low and the pace of teaching is slow' (p. 5) |
| Positive Reinforcement | 'the school's provision for the development of pupils' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is weak' (p. 6) |
| Monitoring Progress | 'progress is judged to be unsatisfactory in almost 40% of lessons' (p. 5) 'the school does not evaluate its work systematically...does not have sufficient experience in the collection and evaluation of evidence' (p. 20) |
| Pupil Rights And Responsibilities | 'there are few opportunities for pupils to take responsibility for themselves or for others' (p. 6) |
| Home-School Partnership | 'there is a limited involvement of parents in the daily life of the school..' (p. 19) |
| A Learning Organisation | 'the amount of staff development and contact with a range of sources of new ideas and expertise is low. There is no agreed staff development policy.' (p. 21) |

| Table 4: | Inspection Findings Y3 |
|---|---|
| Key Characteristics of Effective Schools | Hillside School OFSTED Inspection Report Y3 (AF11.5) |
| Professional Leadership | 'the senior management team...provide strong leadership and give clear direction. They have been successful in establishing a work ethic' *(paragraph 15)* |
| Shared Vision And Goals | 'the reformed and developing ethos of the school matches its aims' *(paragraph 15)* 'progress is consistent across subjects' *(paragraph 11)* |
| A Learning Environment | 'the behaviour of pupils in classrooms is good. Pupils are generally orderly in their movement around the school, even in naturally congested areas' *(paragraph 19)* |
| Concentration on Teaching and Learning | 'the setting of homework is an integral part of curriculum planning and homework is well used to extend learning' *(paragraph 13)* 'attendance rates have improved, punctuality is a problem for a minority' *(paragraph 7)* 'extra-curricular provision is a strength' *(paragraph 7)* |
| Purposeful Teaching | 'the quality of teaching was sound or better in nine out of ten lessons, and in two out of five it was good...the structure of lessons is clear and teachers are increasingly using an appropriate range of teaching styles' *(paragraph 12)* |
| High Expectations | 'the headteacher has been resolute in his endeavour to improve teaching. Support in order to address weaknesses in teaching, and staff changes, have proved beneficial for continual overall improvement' *(paragraph 24)* |
| Positive Reinforcement | 'the pupils' moral and social development is good. There are clear and well-publicised guidelines for acceptable conduct' *(paragraph 18)* |
| Monitoring Progress | 'individual pupil planners play an important part in monitoring pupils' progress' *(paragraph 23)* 'marking and assessment support pupils' learning' *(paragraph 7)* 'the work of the school is monitored and evaluated in a systematic way and good practice is identified and disseminated to achieve further improvements' *(paragraph 15)* |
| Pupil Rights And Responsibilities | 'pupils demonstrate a worthy sense of values and show respect for each others' views...the school has taken a number of initiatives to reflect and celebrate the multi-cultural nature of the school population' *(paragraph 18)* |
| Home-School Partnership | No comment. |
| A Learning Organisation | 'Staff have worked hard to improve the school, they feel valued and confident, and morale is high. The school has the capacity for self-improvement' *(paragraph 15)* |

| Table 5: Hillside School Student Data Y3 | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Year 7 | Year 8 | Year 9 | Year 10 | Year 11 | Left Y2 | Left Y1 | Left Y0 |
| No. Students on Roll | 124 | 93 | 133 | 109 | 103 | 104 | 151 | 119 |
| 1 FSM | 17% | 26% | 15% | 17% | 16% | 15% | 18% | N/A |
| 2 CAT Mean | 90.5 | 86.7 | 90.5 | 84.1 | 83.2 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 3 CAT Mean (F) | 94.7 | 87.1 | 90.4 | 87 | 83.2 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 4 CAT Mean (M) | 87.1 | 86.2 | 90.6 | 81.5 | 83.2 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 5 CAT Mean (FSM) | N/A | 81.6 | 81.5 | 81.3 | 77.9 | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 6 RA-CA Mean | -5.3 | -11.1 | -8.8 | -5.9 | -7.5 | -10.3 | N/A | N/A |
| 7 RA-CA Mean (F) | -1 | -11 | -4.5 | -5.2 | -3.7 | -4 | N/A | N/A |
| 8 RA-CA Mean (M) | -8.8 | -11.2 | -13.8 | -6.6 | -11 | -11.9 | N/A | N/A |
| 9 RA-CA Mean (FSM) | -7.4 | -19.1 | -12 | -8.3 | 0.7 | -12.6 | N/A | N/A |
| 10 30% Chance 5A*-C | N/A | 38% | 45% | 42% | 31% | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 11 GCSE 5A*-C | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 31% | 34% | 41% | 27% |
| 12 GCSE 5A*-G | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 78% | 80% | 82% | 78% |
| 13 GCSE No Passes | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 13% | 8% | 13% | 13% |
| 14 KS2 E Mean | 3.5 | 3.2 | 2.9 | 3.4 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 15 KS2 M Mean | 3.4 | 3.2 | 2.9 | 3.3 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 16 KS2 S Mean | 3.4 | 3.3 | 2.9 | 3.6 | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A |
| 17 KS3 E Mean | N/A | N/A | N/A | 4.6 | 3.8 | 3.4 | N/A | N/A |
| 18 KS3 M Mean | N/A | N/A | N/A | 4.2 | 4.2 | 4.2 | N/A | N/A |
| 19 KS3 S Mean | N/A | N/A | N/A | 4.4 | 4.1 | 4.3 | N/A | N/A |
| 20 GCSE Points Score | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 27.1 | 29.8 | N/A | N/A |

Notes

The data shown in the table was collected as part of the routine monitoring of student attainment and progress initiated by Mr Goodlad in Y1.

1: The Hillside Free School Meal (FSM) data presented in the table is derived from the school's record of student uptake. This is invariably a lower figure than the eligibility percentage used by OFSTED and the DfEE for benchmark and value-added analysis. The DfEE (House of Commons, 1999b, p. 47) reports the Hillside FSM eligibility in Y3 as 34.57 per cent and in Y2 as 22.19 per cent. School uptake data is more stable year on year and provides a cohort specific indication of the degree of variation. The use of a 'whole school' FSM eligibility total to benchmark the results of a single cohort introduces a source of error in calculating progress or improvement on an annual basis.

2 - 5: Hillside students were tested on the National Foundation for Educational Research's (NFER) Cognitive Ability Test (CAT) battery, which comprises standardised verbal, non-verbal and quantitative reasoning tests. The national mean in each case is 100. The figures shown are the mean result of the three test papers. The mean for females, males and those taking free dinners is shown in lines 3, 4 and 5 respectively.

3 – 9: Mean Reading Age (RA) less Mean Chronological Age (CA) in months for females, males and those taking free dinners is shown in lines 7, 8 and 9 respectively.

10: Based on NFER/CAT predictions, line 10 shows the percentage of each cohort with a 30 per cent chance of obtaining 5 GCSE grades A*-C.

11: Line 11 shows the percentage of each cohort obtaining 5 GCSE grades A*-C at the end of year eleven.

12: Line 12 shows the percentage of each cohort obtaining 5 GCSE grades A*-G at the end of year eleven.

13: Line 13 shows the percentage of each cohort obtaining no GCSE qualification at the end of year eleven.

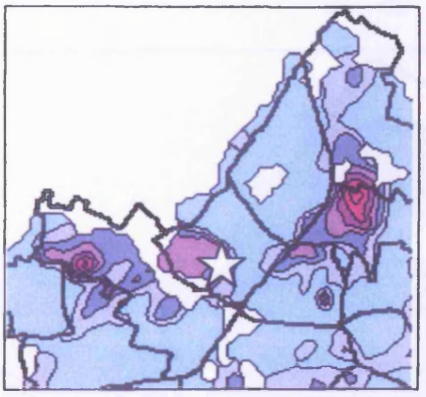
14 – 19: The mean Key Stage 2 (KS2) and Key Stage 3 (KS3) levels for English, Mathematics and Science are shown for each cohort for which data was available.

20: The mean GCSE points score is shown for the two cohorts for which data was available.

Table 6

# CSI/LEADERSHIP STYLE RELATIONSHIPS

| *CSI DIMENSION* | LEADERSHIP STYLE | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | **Coercive** | **Authoritative** | **Affiliative** | **Democratic** | **Pacesetting** | **Coaching** |
| ***Flexibility*** | -ve impact<br>• Detailed reporting<br>• Precise rules<br>• Innovation not encouraged | +ve<br>• Explains rationale for procedures, etc.<br>• Ideas listened to and encouraged<br>• Checks 'fit for purpose' | +ve<br>• Ideas not dismissed in order to maintain harmony | +ve<br>• Ideas encouraged and listened to<br>• Collective buy-in | - ve<br>• Subordinates unlikely to innovate due to risk of compromising standards and having task taken from them | +ve<br>• Encourages dialogue and looks to long term |
| ***Responsibility*** | -ve<br>• Clear direction as to how to do job<br>• Fear of failure so little risk-taking | +ve<br>• Explains 'why' but leaves freedom on 'how' to do job<br>• Understanding of big picture enables risks to be assessed | +ve/-ve<br>• Freedom permitted as to how to do job in order to keep individual happy but may not be in best interests of organisation | +ve<br>• Participation in how to do job and permissible limits of risk | - ve<br>• Takes responsibility away if performance shortfall<br>• Reluctant delegation | +ve<br>• Encourages input into how job done and joint agreement on levels of appropriate risk |
| ***Standards*** | +ve/-ve<br>• Short term compliance but no buy-in or commitment (fear of failure) | +ve<br>• Establishes meaningful and challenging goals and standards | +ve/-ve<br>• Harmony more important than standards<br>• Standards may be low so that everyone can succeed | +ve/-ve<br>• Buy-in and agreement but may be sub-optimal due to need for consensus | +ve/- ve<br>• Emphasises importance of high standards<br>• Support for improvement not provided however | +ve<br>• Standards may drop in short term whilst learning curve being climbed |
| ***Rewards*** | -ve<br>• Does not give recognition<br>• Criticism outweighs praise | +ve<br>• Uses +ve and –ve feedback based on performance<br>• Praise outweighs criticism | +ve/-ve<br>• Gives recognition but does not differentiate on basis of performance<br>• Successful performers may be demotivated | +ve/-ve<br>• May recognise group performance<br>• Rewards adequate performance and will not give -ve feedback | - ve<br>• Does not tolerate poor performance<br>• Rarely praises | +ve<br>• Provides regular feedback and reinforces performance improvements |
| ***Clarity*** | +ve/-ve<br>• No long-term vision, but<br>• Clear about tasks and roles | +ve<br>• Provides long term direction and how jobs, etc. fit into bigger picture | -ve<br>• Little explanation on direction or rationale behind tasks | +ve/-ve<br>• Depends on individuals capabilities and understanding to be able to see direction | +ve/- ve<br>• Does not create vision but addresses short term priorities<br>• Potential confusion as to level of empowerment (who does what) | +ve<br>• Focus on long term development<br>• Takes time to explain context/rationale |
| ***Team Commitment*** | -ve<br>• "Forced compliance" | +ve<br>• "Highly purposeful" | +ve<br>• "Get on well together" | +ve<br>• "Everyone involved" | - ve<br>• "Not co-ordinated" | +ve<br>• "Co-operative and supportive" |



**Domestic Property**
Town Clerks Department

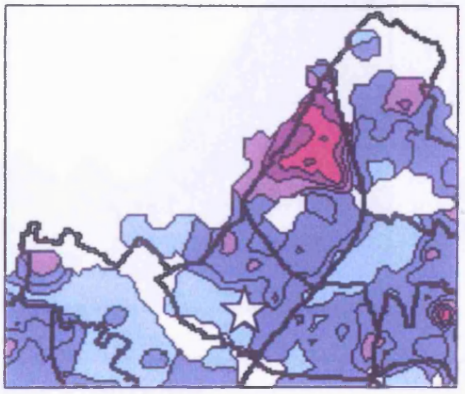
| | |
|---|---|
| 136,000 to | 149,000 |
| 123,000 to | 136,000 |
| 110,000 to | 123,000 |
| 97,000 to | 110,000 |
| 84,000 to | 97,000 |
| 71,000 to | 84,000 |
| 58,000 to | 71,000 |
| 45,000 to | 58,000 |
| 32,000 to | 45,000 |
| 19,000 to | 32,000 |

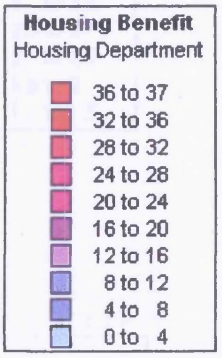
## Domestic Property Values

Individual domestic property values have been estimated using the mid-point of the council tax band for that building. The average value of the properties in a postcode was then calculated and it was these values that were turned into contours. The red contours on the map indicate where the most expensive houses are located.
Extracted from September 2000 data on http://www.Easton.gov.uk.

☆ Location of Hillside School

Chart 1
Domestic Property Values






**Housing Benefit**

The map shows the variation across the district in the number of people claiming both housing/council tax benefit and income support. The data was extracted in June 1995 and is based on a count of claimants per postcode.
Extracted from September 2000 data on http://www.Easton.gov.uk.

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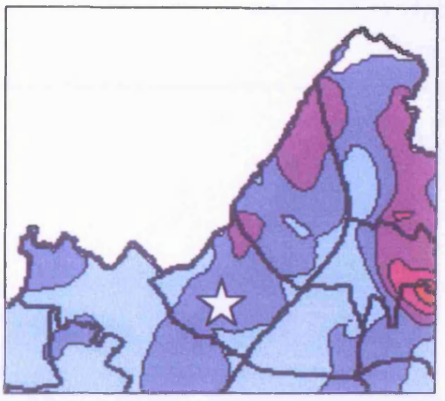
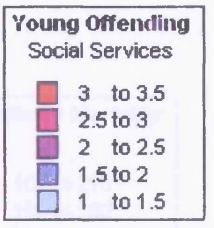
Chart 2
Housing Benefit Claimants






## Youth Offending

The map shows the area of origin of young people who committed offences, rather than the area where the offences were committed. The young people referred to are those who have been sentenced in the Youth Court, Magistrates' Court or Crown Court.

Extracted from September 2000 data on http://www.Easton.gov.uk.

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Chart 3
Youth Offending

**Standardised Mortality Rates**

Standardised Mortality Rates (SMRs) are calculated to compensate for the fact that men and women have different death rates and that these rates also vary by age. The figures have been averaged for 1992 to 1996 and include people aged under 65. Scores of above 100 equate to areas with above average death rates; a value of under 100 implies a below average death rate.
Extracted from September 2000 data on http://www.Easton.gov.uk.

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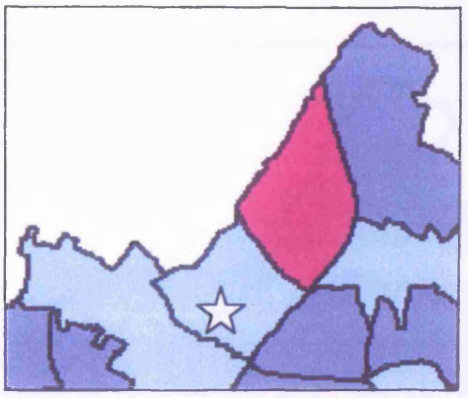
Chart 4
Standardised Mortality Rates



**Unemployment**
Office of National Statistics

| | |
|---|---|
| | 15.8 to 19.3 |
| | 12.5 to 15.8 |
| | 9.2 to 12.5 |
| | 5.9 to 9.2 |
| | 2.6 to 5.9 |

**Unemployment Rates**

The unemployment rates shown above are for April Y3 of this study and are based on information about people entitled to the Job Seekers Allowance.
Extracted from September 2000 data on http://www.Easton.gov.uk.

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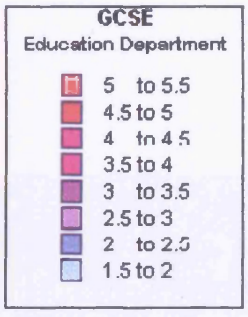
Chart 5
Unemployment Rates




**GCSE Results**

GCSE exams are awarded a grade ranging from A* to G. For the basis of calculation each grade is given a numerical value - 8 points for an A* grade to 1 point for a G grade. The chart shows the average points score for every student who took GCSEs in Y2 of the study. An average score of 5 indicates that a student was gaining principally grade Cs - a standard benchmark for progression to more advanced studies post-16.

Extracted from September 2000 data on http://www.Easton.gov.uk.

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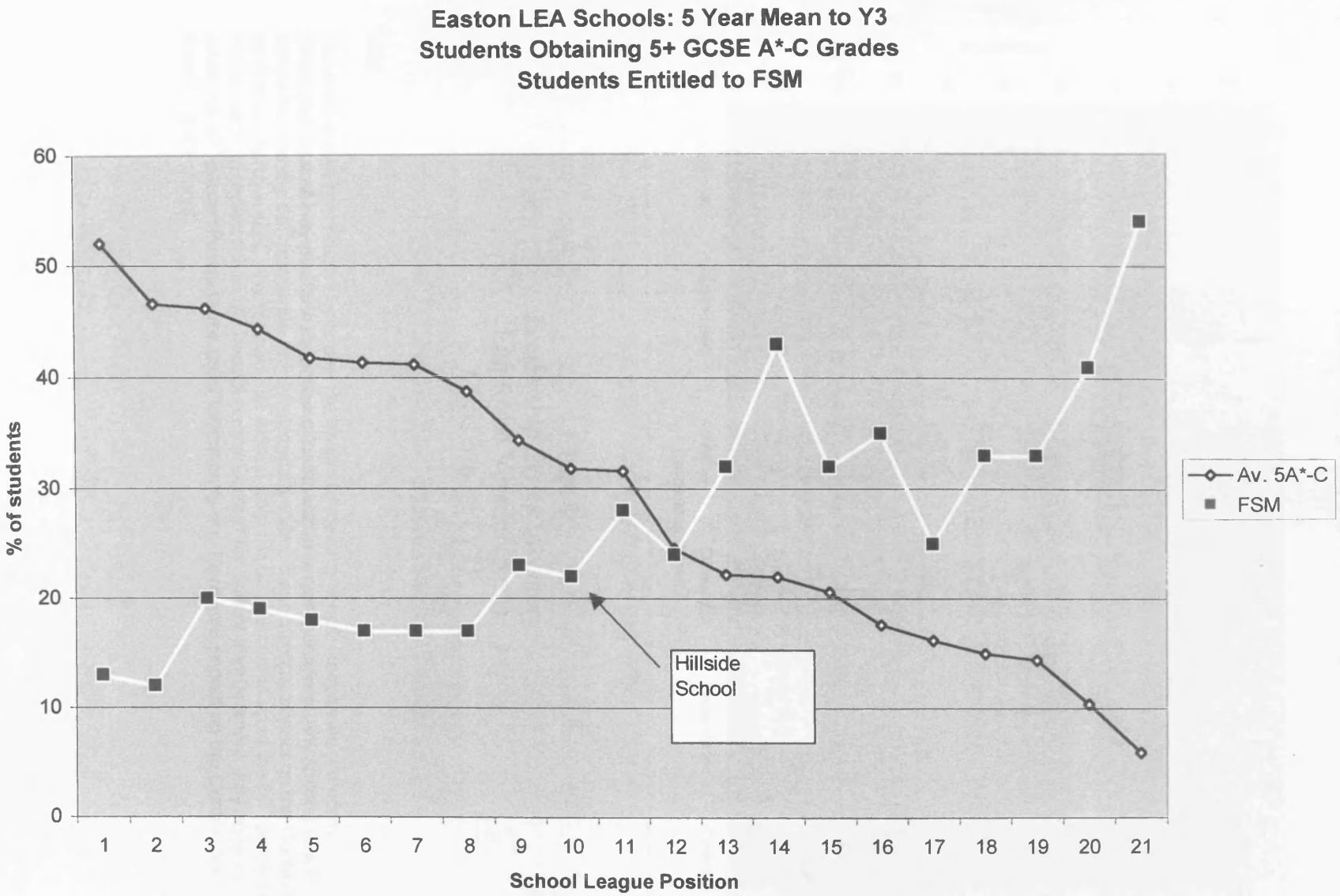
Chart 6
GCSE Results

Chart 7


Easton LEA Schools: 5 Year Mean to Y3
Students Obtaining 5+ GCSE A*-C Grades
Students Entitled to FSM
% of students
60
50
40
30
20
10
0
1
2
3
4
5
6
7
8
9
10
11
12
13
14
15
16
17
18
19
20
21
School League Position
Av. 5A*-C
FSM
Hillside School

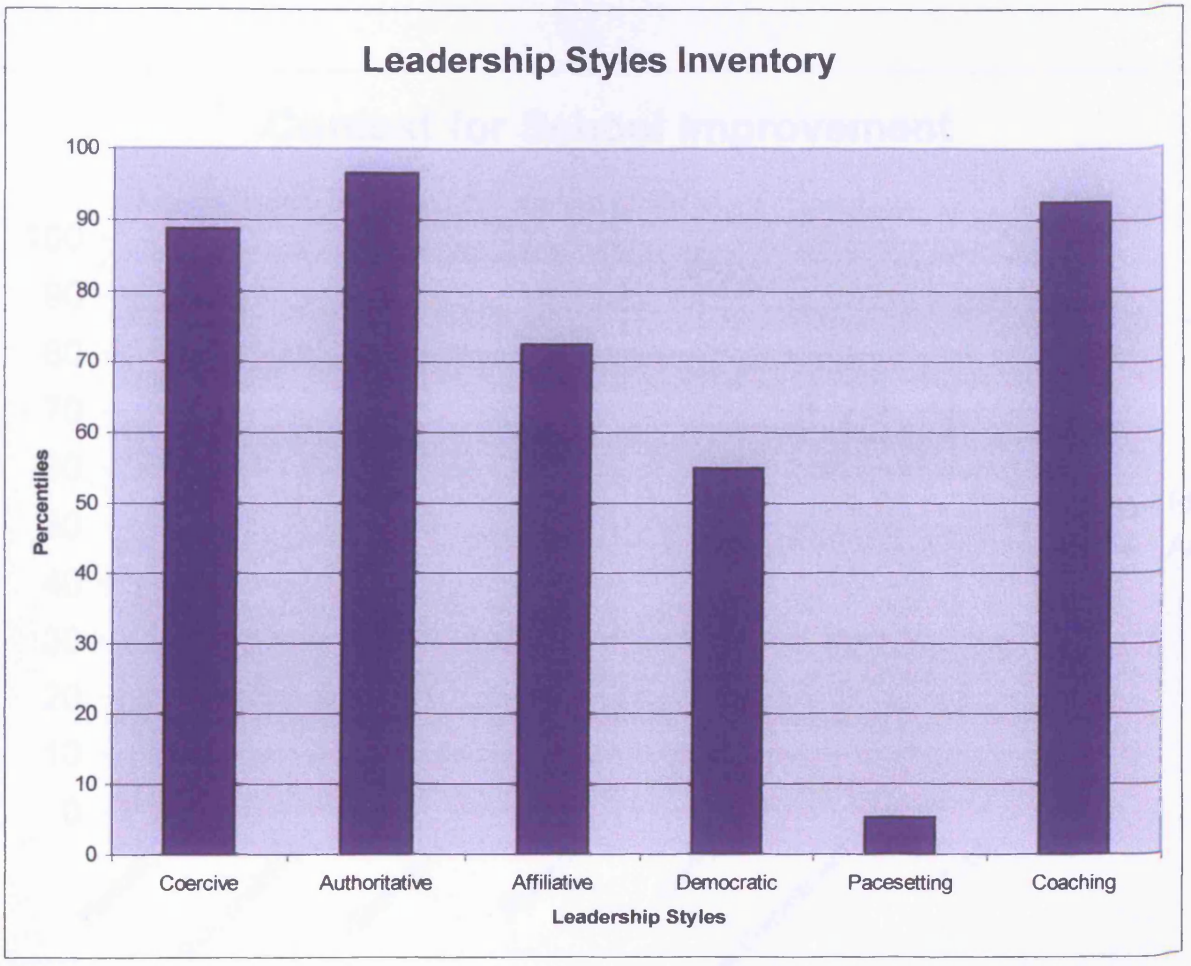



Chart 8
Leadership Styles Inventory
Employee Version (N=5)
Chris Moore (Y3)

Note

The chart shows how respondents see the head's leadership styles. Responses are norm-referenced against Hay McBer's database of comparable senior managers. Any style(s) which extend beyond the 66$^{th}$ percentile are the dominant styles; these strongly impact on the Context for School Improvement. Any style(s) that extend from the 50$^{th}$ percentile up to the 66$^{th}$ percentile are the back-up styles; these will impact on the Context for School Improvement. Any style(s) below the 50$^{th}$ percentile are those used infrequently and have little impact on the Context for School Improvement.

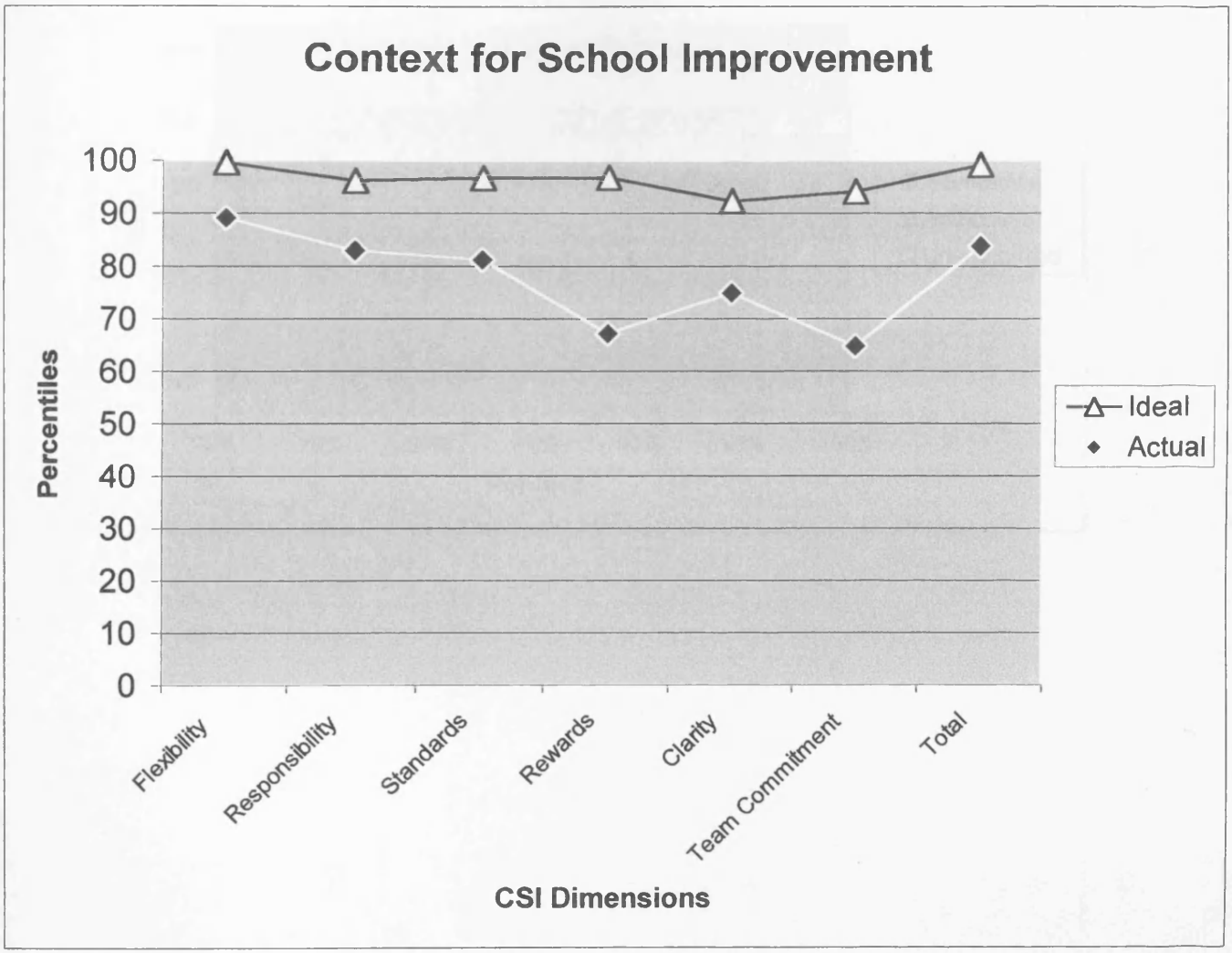



Chart 9
Context for School Improvement
Employee Version (N=5)
Chris Moore (Y3)

Note

The chart shows how respondents rated the actual CSI at Hillside compared with their ideal. Responses are norm-referenced against Hay McBer's database of comparable senior managers so that the 50th percentile for each CSI dimension represents an average rating.

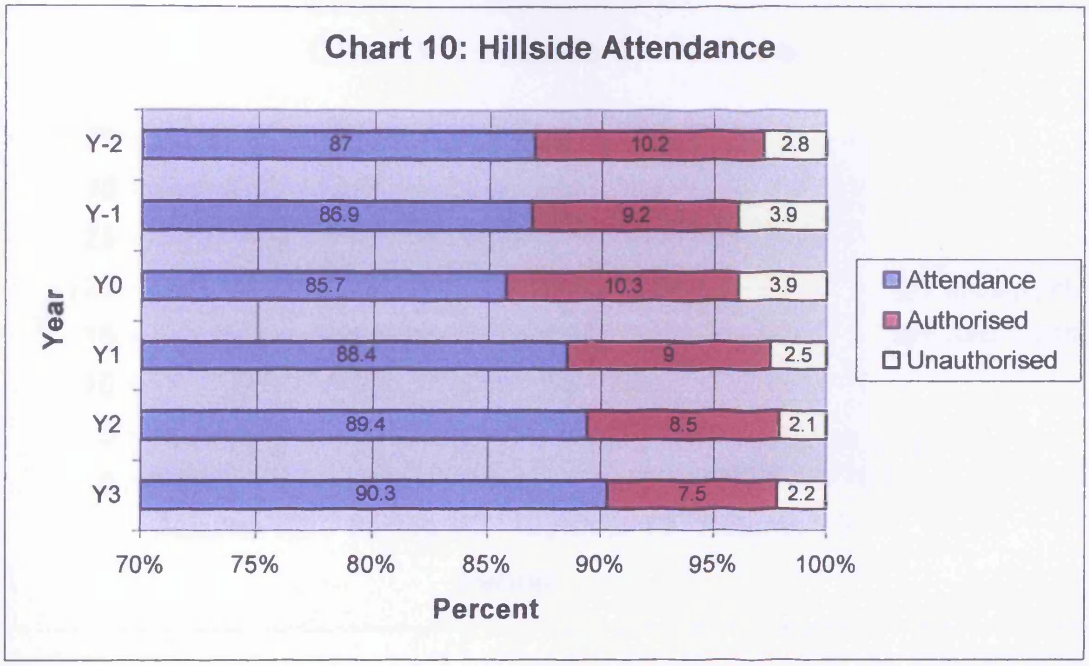


Chart 10: Hillside Attendance
Y-2
Y-1
Y0
Y1
Y2
Y3
87
10.2
2.8
86.9
9.2
3.9
85.7
10.3
3.9
88.4
9
2.5
89.4
8.5
2.1
90.3
7.5
2.2
Year
70%
75%
80%
85%
90%
95%
100%
Percent
Attendance
Authorised
Unauthorised

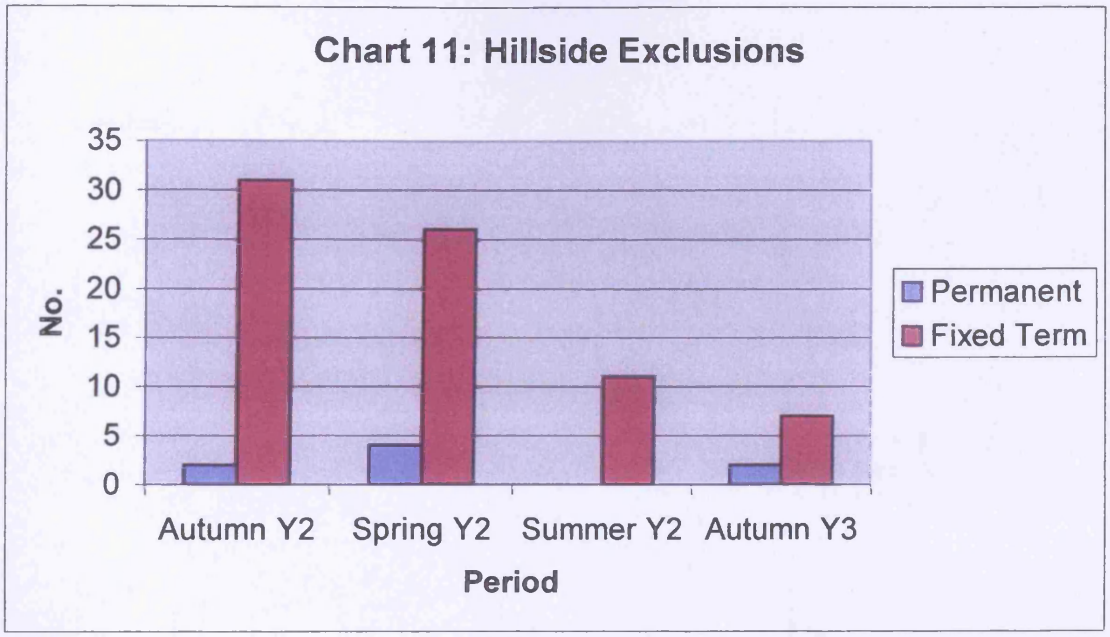


Chart 11: Hillside Exclusions
35
30
25
20
15
10
5
0
No.
Autumn Y2
Spring Y2
Summer Y2
Autumn Y3
Period
Permanent
Fixed Term