# An investigation into the perceived effectiveness of primary teachers: Skilled performance, purposeful communication, culturally responsive, utilising reflection and democratic leadership.

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## Abstract

This research aims to contribute to the debate surrounding perceived beliefs concerning effective teaching, within a primary school setting. The research questions gathered perceptions of teachers, leaders, parents and children on the impact of: planning and teaching on pupils' academic development; teacher behaviour on the learning environment and Headteacher effectiveness on teacher effectiveness.

This study was undertaken in a two-form primary school in Hertfordshire. The data included: non-participant observations, follow-up semi-structured interviews, focussed group discussions, individual pupil interviews and parental questionnaires.

The data revealed that developing as an effective teacher relies on being an effective planner and practitioner, achieved through inter-linked professional and personal behaviours. Effective teachers are perceived to be 'skilled performers' and 'purposeful communicators', use reflection to aid professional development and are 'culturally responsive'. To enhance effectiveness as a skilled performer, teachers should utilise their subject and pedagogical knowledge to plan for and teach well-paced and challenging activities. To develop as a reflective teacher, their experiences must lead to change. To be more culturally responsive, teachers should have high, yet realistic, expectations of children. To develop as a purposeful communicator, teachers need to utilise visual communication as a prompt to remind children of objectives. Honesty and sharing more information regarding subject and pedagogical knowledge is needed to generate more effective teacher-to-teacher communication. Teachers need to generate more opportunities to discuss children informally with their parents.

Effective Headteachers are committed to developing teachers professionally through having high expectations and standards of everyone in the school community. They communicate these through a continuous dialogue and enforce them through a fair, consistent and respected behavioural policy. To be more effective they should refrain from an 'autocratic' style and adopt a 'democratic' style, involving greater leadership-to-teacher communication, incorporating valuing and sharing ideas, being open to new suggestions and explaining protocol.

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I have always been interested in the labelling of teachers as ‘effective’. The teachers, parents and children who participated in this study have helped me to add clarity and definition to this label and for this I am deeply grateful. This gratitude also stretches to embrace the school - without it, and the support of the people in it, this study would not have been possible.

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An EdD requires all of the commitment expected in a long-term relationship. It demands attention, nurture and is time-consuming. Like any consuming relationship, it tests friendships to their limit and filters out those who lack empathy for its constraints. I feel immense gratitude to my network of friends, whom I’ve had to abandon at various opportunities to dedicate myself to certain stages of this research. However, my true friendships have stood this test of time and are still there to support me.

This piece of research is complete partly due to the support of my family and partner. There have been times during it where I have raised questions as to whether it is possible to produce a quality thesis. It is due to the support of certain members of my family who have always instilled confidence into me that I have been able to do it.

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# 1. INTRODUCTION, CONTEXT AND RESEARCH AIMS

## 1.1. Introduction

*"You did really well and there were many effective aspects during your lesson but…"*

*"Here we go again,"* I thought as I drifted off and started planning my weekend. Walking out of yet another feedback session from the Headteacher after a lesson observation, I joined my colleagues in the staff room for my predictable post de-briefing grumble. There I was greeted with the usual sympathetic murmurings of, *"never mind, better luck next time"*, *"you know you're a great teacher"* and *"no one ever gets 100% anyway"*. These experiences got me thinking. Every colleague I have worked with in a variety of schools has expressed similar negative opinions when reflecting on observational feedback. All have voiced that they feel that they are improving their effectiveness but it seems like there is always something that the Headteacher focuses on as room for improvement. Questions began to generate in my mind:

*"What do we mean by effective?"*
*"Can a teacher be truly 100% effective?"*
*"How can we measure this?"*
*"Is there always going to be something that needs improving?"*
*"Surely during this teacher retention crisis shouldn't we be more concerned with boosting teachers to keep them in the classroom?"*

This research began to emerge from these questions. During the late 1990's and early 2000's teacher retention and recruitment was at its all time low and attrition rates were rising weekly. Schools were struggling to fill posts even in the most sought-after locations and schools. Some Headteachers were desperate and wanted bodies in the classroom, and at times were less particular about whom they selected for posts. However, 2002 began to see a gradual change and a lull in the teacher retention crisis. There were no longer hundreds of unfilled posts and many vacancies were in the obvious areas such as inner city and desolate rural areas, and in shortage subjects in the secondary sector. Demand for teachers in some areas started to decrease rapidly and Headteachers

began to question the quality of some of their most recent appointments, as well as their long-standing colleagues.

This research is not suggesting that interest into teacher effectiveness boomed during this time as the quality of teachers has always been an ongoing reoccurring aspect for research. However, schools during this period were now in the position to be more selective about whom they recruited, and were looking for the most effective candidates for vacancies.

## 1.2. Context

### 1.2.(a) School demographics

The school where the research was conducted is a large two-form entry[1] primary school situated in a village location in the county of Hertfordshire, 5 miles from the town of Watford and 7 miles from outer London. The village has a population of between 10,000 and 15,000 people, with approximately 1,000 migrants. A quarter of the residents are retired and a quarter are educated to degree level. The residents earn a salary above national average and people travel on average 14 miles to their place of work. The house prices are above the national average and the school is located at the end of the fifth most desired and expensive road in the village. ¾ of the people own their own homes, which is above the national average, and a fifth rent, which is also above the national average. The crime rate is below that of the average in Hertfordshire and nationally.

The school is made up of 467 children with over ¾ being of white British heritage; the rest of the children come from 11 different backgrounds with no prominent second background. The children are, in general, socially and economically advantaged, and the majority live in the immediate area. The proportions of children who have learning difficulties, are disabled, or claim free school meals are half the national average. The percentage of children who are absent over the course of an academic school year is lower than the LEA (4.8%) and the national averages (5.2%) at 3.6%. At the time of the study there were 18 qualified teachers employed at the school (excluding the Headteacher), 3 of whom work on a part-time basis. Additionally, there are 20 teaching support staff employed on a full-time and part-time basis.

[1] This comprises of two classes with an average of 30 children per year group, with 7 year groups in a primary school (not including Nursery).

### 1.2.(b) School academic standards for 2007

The school achieved an outstanding Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) report in May 2007 in all aspects except for the curriculum (mainly due to the Information, Communication and Technology resources allocation) and the provision of utilising outside partnerships to promote the well-being of the children, both of which were judged as good. The average points score (APS) for the school, as a result of the end of Key Stage 2 (KS2) compulsory SATs (Standard Achievement Tasks) in 2007, was 29.6, compared to the LEA average of 28.6 and the national average of 27.9. The result for the English KS2 SATs test was 93% Level 4[2] and above, compared to the LEA (85%) and the national (80%). Similar was Maths with the school achieving 91%, the LEA 82% and the national 77%. Science was a lot closer but the school still achieved the highest with 95%, the LEA 91% and the national 88%. However the Contextual Value Added amount (CVA), which involves a calculation that tracks the progress that each child makes from the end Key Stage 1 compulsory SATs to the end Key Stage 2 compulsory SATs, is under the national average of 100.1 at 99.3. A score of 100 means that each child has made two levels of progress between the end of Key Stage 1 and the end of Key Stage 2.

### 1.2.(c) Researcher's background

At the time of the study I was in my eighth year of teaching, and working as a Deputy Headteacher in a one-form entry[3] school in Essex. I worked as a year 3 teacher and Art and DT (Design Technology) leader at the school where the research was undertaken between April 2007 and August 2008. I have worked at five other schools in Suffolk, ranging from large urban through to one-form entry. I have undertaken the role of a subject leader for Art, DT and Humanities at the majority of these schools and have mainly taught junior classes, significantly, upper juniors. I trained in South London at Goldsmiths College during 2000 - 2001 and gained a MA in Education at Anglia Ruskin University in 2004.

[2] The expected level for all children to achieve at age 11 when leaving primary school at the end of KS2.
[3] This comprises of one class with an average of 30 children per year group, with 7 year groups in a primary school (not including Nursery).

## 1.3. Research aim and research questions

The aim of this research is to contribute to the debate surrounding perceived beliefs concerning effective teaching within a primary school setting. I intend to research this aim using the following questions:

- What are the perceptions of teachers, leaders, parents and children of the impact of planning and teaching on pupils' academic development?

- What are the perceptions of teachers, leaders, parents and children of the impact of teacher behaviour on the learning environment?

- What are the perceptions of teachers, leaders, parents and children of the impact of Headteacher effectiveness on teacher effectiveness?

The intention of the research is not to create a checklist to which teachers should adhere but, rather highlight areas for thought as to where and how they can improve their practice to make them more effective practitioners.

# 2. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

My initial interest was looking at the effects of the teacher retention crisis spanning from the late 1990's through to the early 2000's, which made up much of my research during the first part of my earlier research (2004-2006). Although there has been an abundance of small and large-scale research, both nationally and internationally, concerning the attrition, recruitment and retention of teachers spanning the last two decades[4], I wanted to contribute to this field, particularly as I was affected professionally when the crisis eased from 2003 onwards. This led me to be interested in the impact of this crisis, particularly the effectiveness of teachers who may not have been considered suitable for a post if the profession was not suffering from a recruitment drought. During this period it has been suggested that many schools were understandably forced to recruit less effective teachers in order to fill vacancies (Cockburn and Haydn 2004, See et al. 2004, Bush 2005, Lupton 2005). This then led me to develop my question 'what do we mean by an 'effective' teacher?' in general, regardless of the crisis. The aim of this study is to explore perceived beliefs concerning effective teaching within a primary school setting and the following review raises questions regarding attrition and effectiveness, including the impact of attrition on effectiveness.

## 2.1. Attrition

### 2.1.(a) What are the statistics on attrition?

A Guardian opinion poll undertaken during the teacher recruitment retention crisis of 2000 revealed that half of England's teachers expected to quit the profession within 10 years (Carvel, 2000). The survey found that the most serious problem was in primary schools that underwent the biggest reforms during David Blunkett's tenure as education and employment secretary. Among primary staff, 31% voiced that they did not expect to be teaching by 2005, 56% by 2010 and 77% by 2015 (Carvel, 2000). The 'crisis' is presumably represented by the rise from 1999 to 2001 when vacancies were at their highest since 1990. Between 1998 and 2001, teacher numbers rose by 3.9% while pupil numbers increased by 5.1% and this period saw one of the most dramatic increases in teacher vacancies, from 970 to 2,590. During this time I was recruited for my first post (2001) and I found the market to be plentiful, even being contacted at home and being asked to apply for

[4] Menter et al. 2002, Moyo-Robbins 2002, Towse et al. 2002 (Tanzanian study), Daresh 2003,, Ingersoll and Smith 2003 (USA study), Kyriacou et al. 2003 (joint study UK and Norway), Cockburn and Haydn 2004, Colgan 2004 (USA study), Inman and Marlow 2004, See et al. 2004, Webb et al. 2004, OECD (Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development – a large-scale international study) 2005, Bush 2005, Barmby 2006, Brundrett 2006.

posts. It was only in 2002 that teacher vacancies started to ease—falling to 2,440. The drop was due in part to the narrowing of the gap between teacher and pupil numbers with teacher numbers increasing by almost 4% between 2000 and 2002 while pupil numbers increased by only 2.5% (See et al., 2004: 107). The teacher retention crisis seemed to have eased since 2003 and I found myself falling victim to this. In 2004, spurred on by the ease of getting a post in 2001 and unaware of the lull in the vacancies market, I somewhat naively resigned from my role in the hope of securing another role with similar ease. However, I was soon quick to realise that the crisis had eased up dramatically and the vacancies were few and far between. Fortunately I did secure a position at another school. This experience fuelled my future research. During initial research I discovered that while vacancies had indeed decreased, teacher attrition is still high for the entire teaching profession, affecting beginner teachers more than others. Ingersoll and Smith found in their study into beginner teacher attrition, that after 5 years, between 40 and 50 percent leave the profession, though this is not a new issue as teaching has always lost many of its newly trained members early in their careers, long before the retirement years (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003: 2). During the early stages of the Ed.D. I researched the reasons as to why attrition occurs and summarise them as: poor pay (See et al. 2004, Carvel 2000), workload (Barmby 2006, See et al. 2004, Ingersoll and Smith 2003, Carvel 2000), increasing bureaucracy (See et al. 2004, Carvel 2000), stress (See et al. 2004, Carvel 2000), financial gain, particularly for those working in and around London (Barmby 2006) and the behaviour of the children (Barmby 2006, Lupton 2005).

### 2.1.(b) What are the perceived effects of attrition?

There are many perceived effects of attrition although there is not extensive research into the actual effects. In 2005, the Headteacher of a Kent school with the joint-worst GCSE results in England blamed a severe shortage of teachers for the poor results (Anon, 2006). That academic year just 9% of pupils at New Brompton College in Gillingham got at least five C grades at GCSE. During an interview by the TES (Times Educational Supplement) Headteacher Ms Rider stated that, *"the 2005 results were a direct result of a severe teacher recruitment shortage at the school..."* (Anon, 2006). Ms Rider said major issues had now been addressed, with 27 new teachers recruited for September 2005, but warned that; *"real change takes time"*. Ms Rider said that the Department for Education was *"satisfied"* that the school was doing all it could to improve (Anon, 2006). This study by the TES suggests that teacher attrition causes Headteachers to have to settle for those 'not up to the job' in desperation to fill a post. Many Headteachers stated that they were

unhappy with some appointments made, with up to a fifth judged to be unsatisfactory teachers (Anon, 2006). During the academic year of 2001-2, Headteachers in the UK complained about having between only 5 - 6 applicants for each post, averaged across all subjects including shortage subjects, and all areas including those with population density of 0.2 persons per hectare (Brace, 2002 in See et al., 2004: 121). Other Headteachers admitted that they had appointed teachers who they would not have previously looked at before the retention crisis (Cockburn and Haydn, 2004: 12) and, in some places with severe shortages, they relied on foreign teachers with a poor command of English (See et al., 2004: 104). Cockburn and Haydn argue that there is, "*a difference between filling a vacancy with a 'body' and getting hold of one of the best, brightest and most committed teachers emerging from their training*" (2004: 8). It is perceived that this lack of vacancies, and existing teachers leaving the profession, drove some Headteachers to take desperate measures. Sue Sayles, president of the National Association of Headteachers and Headteacher of Riccal Primary School in North Yorkshire, stated: *"The teacher recruitment crisis has been going for years and we are having to recruit whoever we can get. For example, the last four people I have brought in have been older, and, in fact, older candidates are more attractive than younger candidates because of their experience,"* (Plomin, 2001). Similarly, all the Headteachers questioned in Lupton's study expressed concerns and anxiety over future staffing and were all engaged with identifying and nurturing promising students or teaching assistants for future staffing (Lupton, 2005: 596). It is scenarios such as these that concern me because once these appointments have been made, unless they are temporary, some of the teachers working since the crisis eased may possibly be less effective than those who are looking to secure a post. It frustrates me that, for example, while I was looking for a post in 2004, there were teachers already in post who were recruited out of necessity during the crisis up until 2002. Although I am not researching the impact of the crisis, I am offering data on perceptions regarding the effectiveness of the teachers in the study school, and I am aware that some of them could have been recruited during that time.

### 2.1.(c) What is being done to halt attrition?

A major concern I have is that schools are willing to appoint unsatisfactory teachers or new teachers rather than invest in ways to retain existing experienced and effective teachers, even though it is widely acknowledged that a high quality stable workforce of teachers, backed up by good leaders, is one of the most important factors in raising levels of attainment in schools facing challenging circumstances. (Bush, 2005: 1). With the teaching recruitment crisis easing there are opportunities to focus on retaining effective teachers to halt future attrition rates. Not enough is

done to retain dedicated effective teachers already working in schools, even with Headteachers such as Sue Sayles claiming that older candidates are more attractive due to their experience. A possible reason for this is that it is possible that judging the effectiveness of teachers is a difficult concept, thus adding justification to research in this area.

There are schemes that target the recruitment and retention of high quality teachers. A scheme introduced in April 2004, which focussed on giving financial allowances to recruit and retain high quality teachers in struggling schools, ceased because it was deemed problematic. The allowance points were pre-agreed, which made it difficult for a school to 'back-track' on them if they realised that the teacher they were rewarding with this incentive was not worth it. Salary incentives have also been introduced to areas of disadvantage worldwide, including London and places in the Netherlands and the USA, to encourage teachers into these areas of development (OECD, 2005: 177). Financial incentives such as these raise issues regarding judging effectiveness, as they seem more concerned with getting a teacher than determining what they mean by 'quality'. Another scheme that adds to the debate on the difficulties of judging teacher effectiveness is the existing Fast Track scheme which was introduced in 2000 to encourage teachers in the early years of their profession to 'fast track' their way to management. Teachers have to apply for the scheme and face vigorous tasks to see if they have the potential to be a future leader. This scheme is not without problems such as adding extra pressures to those in their first few years of the profession and causing a pigeon-hole effect for the teachers enrolled on the scheme, by out-pricing themselves in a competitive job market. It is also contradictory to the retention and recruitment of effective teachers as it can be argued that a teacher showing the potential to be an effective future leader may not necessarily be the most effective teacher. A scheme that seemingly promotes the quality of teaching is the Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs) introduced in 1998. It was hoped that headline salary figures of over £40,000 would lure graduates into the profession, and at the same time keep excellent teachers in the classroom, offering an alternative to senior management. The ASTs spend a day a week on outreach work, mostly in other schools. There are no restrictions on who can apply to be an AST; the majority are experienced teachers, often already working as heads of department posts. The application forms avoid the pitfalls of allowances incentive schemes by asking candidates to explain ways in which they meet a range of "excellence criteria", and to include a portfolio of work. Assessors then spend a day observing lessons, interviewing pupils, and looking at teaching materials. This process of judgment is similar to how I carried out

my research to gather perceptions regarding effective teachers, through the use of observation and interviews with teachers, children and parents (discussed in detail in Chapter 3).

Two further aspects that have been introduced to try to halt attrition are the introduction of a compulsory reduced timetable in primary schools in England and Wales from September 2005 as part of the 'Workload Agreement' (Barmby, 2006: 263) and the upper limit for Foundation Stage and Key Stage 1 classes (infant years, ages 4-7) being fixed at 30. The reduced timetable allows teachers 10% of their working week as non-contact time to be used for planning, preparation and assessment (PPA) (Lupton, 2005: 602). I was interested to know whether this would form part of what teachers perceive as helping them to be more effective, as I know from personal experience that this time is invaluable to my planning and teaching. The second incentive is one that I expected teachers and parents would both comment on in relation to effectiveness as it is a topic that always generates discussion within the school community. Furthermore, large class sizes can add extra workload and burden for many teachers and can result in stress and an overwhelming feeling of an inability to cope; therefore it has been suggested that reducing class sizes could help to lower attrition rates (Lupton, 2005: 602). Sarah Teather, Liberal Democrat Education spokeswoman, supports this and argues that there is, *"simply no excuse for primary classes of over 30"* (Taylor, 2006). However, suggestions of smaller class sizes throughout the school system are costly (Lupton, 2005: 602). From experience in working with classes ranging from 19 to 33 children, parents prefer a smaller class size as they feel that the teacher will have more time to have an impact on their child, thus being more effective. I intended to pursue this point during the formation of my questioning for my parental questionnaire.

### 2.1.(d) What are the effects of campaigns to recruit more teachers?

During a teacher retention crisis of the early 1980's in the USA, 'The Alternative Route Certification Programme', aimed at talented mid-career changers to help with shortages in the 1980's, produced 35,000 teachers nationwide (Easley, 2006: 241). With only a small percentage of teachers in the 30-39 age range, a suggestion was to attract these potential teachers while they were at the early stages of their alternate careers and to generate a group of teaching professionals aiming for middle and senior management. More recently in the UK, the TTA launched a powerful recruitment campaign in 2004 focusing on subject shortages in secondary schools such as Mathematics and Science to counteract regional problems with secondary school teacher

recruitment. This built on from their ongoing 2000/1 campaigns with the encouraging slogans of 'Those who can – Teach' and 'Use your head – Teach'. These were also backed with promises of 'Golden Hellos' of up to £6000 for shortage subjects such as I.C.T., Design and Technology, Modern Foreign Languages and Mathematics (Anon, 2004). It can be argued that these campaigns have been successful because the primary teacher market seems to have become over-supplied.

I find this puzzling, as the government has had years to prepare for the fall in the number of primary school children. The government and the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) regulate the number of trainees, yet in 2003, with 60,000 fewer primary school children expected, they increased the target for primary trainees (Catcheside, 2004). A BBC News article revealed that, during the academic year of 2002-3, 392 out of 1,475 Primary school trained graduates from 60 teacher-training institutions questioned by the TES had failed to gain work, with this figure as high as 41 out of 110 at one college in Northwest England. The TES also revealed that the Department for Education claimed that recruitment campaigns had created more competition for posts (Anon, 2004). In contrast, institutions stated that during the summer of 2003, 95% of newly qualified secondary school teachers had found positions in time for the start of the new academic year. Figures released by the Teacher Training Agency (TTA) in a BBC News article on November 2003 showed that too many people were training to become primary teachers, while too few were entering the secondary sector. They discovered that in 2003, 15,651 people were enrolled on primary school teaching courses - up 8% on 2002. A total of 18,246 were on secondary courses, a rise of 9%, but some subjects were still short-staffed. They also revealed that the number of primary school pupils in the UK fell by an estimated 43,300 in 2004 (Anon, 2004), so it is unsurprising that newly qualified teachers are having trouble finding vacancies. Furthermore, competition for first teaching appointments is extremely high as schools (such as those in York, UK) say they can only afford to appoint inexperienced teachers because of falling class numbers (Catcheside, 2004).

This issue also has global effect, with countries including Korea and Greece reporting that the current teacher workforce is 'saturated' and that it is difficult to ensure that these able and motivated teachers find jobs (OECD, 2005: 30). When questioned on this surplus in 2004, a TTA spokesman said some surplus was good for quality. He dismissed the notion of thousands of unemployed teachers stating that, *"many more than hundreds would be a surprise"* (Catcheside, 2004). A spokesman for the Department for Education pointed out that in January 2004, vacancy

figures still showed 790 unfilled primary posts across England and Wales, but hastened to add that those jobs were concentrated on the more traditional shortage areas of London and the South East (Catcheside, 2004). However, a surplus of teachers relates to the discussion regarding the effectiveness of teachers. An oversupply of teachers can prove to be advantageous by providing an opportunity to increase quality of teacher employment and improve conditions in schools located in places and countries with high student-teacher ratios (OECD, 2005: 90). Peter Harrison, who recruits teachers for Durham in the UK, said that in 2002 he had 250 applicants for 90 primary places, whereas the following year in 2003 he had 400 applicants for about 70 (in Catcheside, 2004). Likewise, for schools in deprived parts of the world and the UK, such as South Stanley Junior School, the increased competition for jobs was good news. They had 70 applicants for a post advertised in 2004 - four times as many as usual. Headteacher Alan Black was delighted and claimed in a BBC News article that it meant they could recruit someone of a higher standard, *"I could have appointed any of the applicants; they were all of a very high standard. But the choice means that we can find someone to suit our exact needs. It's a buyer's market and it'll be good for standards"* (in Catcheside, 2004). There may be opportunities in my small-scale study to compare the perceptions regarding teacher effectiveness of the more recent appointments and those who were recruited during the retention crisis.

## 2.2. Effectiveness

The following discusses the existing research concerning the local and global standards for the recruitment of effective teachers, how the effectiveness of teachers is perceived and determined, theories on factors that determine the effectiveness of teachers, the recruitment process of teachers and the development of teachers as more effective.

Numerous studies into teacher effectiveness have concluded that an effective teacher is one of the most important aspects in raising learning and social interaction standards[5] (see appendix 1). Day et al. state that there are statistically significant associations between teachers' commitment and pupils' progress and levels of pupils' performance in value added attainments in national tests (Day et al., 2007: 231). Harslett et al. concluded after their 1998 study that:

[5] Grossman 1990 (USA study), Askew et al. 1997, Harslett et al., 1998 (Australian study), Medwell et al. 1998, Patrick and Smart 1998, Brown and Askew 2000, Vialle and Quigley 2000 (Australian study), Carpenter et al. 2001 (Australian study), Cripps and Walsh 2001, Carroll 2002, Lunn and Bishop 2003, McDonough 2003 (Australian study), Ayres et al. 2004 (Australian study), Bonesronning 2004 (Norwegian study), Sakarneh 2004 (Australian study), Sachs 2004, Grant and Gillette 2006 (USA study), Howe 2006, Murphy 2006.

> "There is little doubt that teachers are a critical variable in students' school experiences and learning. It can be the case that a negative experience with just one teacher is enough for a student to get into a conflict cycle..." (Harslett et al., 1998: 1)

These studies reiterate previous data such as Renzulli's 1968 survey of twenty-one experts in gifted education, which determined that the most important element in the success of programmes for students was the teacher (in Vialle and Quigley, 2000: 1). More recently, Hay McBer was commissioned by the DfEE in 2000 to undertake a significant UK project entitled 'Research into Teacher Effectiveness: A Model of Teacher Effectiveness'. It was designed to provide a framework describing effective teaching and they identified three interrelated factors that determine an effective teacher: classroom climate, teaching skills and professional characteristics. They also noted that the biographical data (i.e. information about a teacher's age and teaching experience, additional responsibilities, qualifications, career history and so on) did not allow them to predict effectiveness of a teacher. This study helped to structure my initial thoughts for this research. I wanted to look at perceptions of teacher effectiveness from various viewpoints rather than just from teachers. I intended to achieve this through looking at the behaviours of teachers as well as their characteristics. Unlike the McBer research I intended to collect and analyse the biographical data of my teacher participants but was concerned that my small-scale study would not yield enough data for this.

### 2.2.(a) What are the local and global standards for the recruitment of effective teachers?

Much of my reading has focussed on a global scale to see if there are any correlations between countries regarding perceptions of effective teachers. Furthermore, I am aware through my reading that teacher standards have always raised issues worldwide and are often fuelled by international concern for identifying and raising pupil achievement and standards. Closer to home, with stories of a significant number of teachers in the UK being dismissed every year through redundancy, disciplinary dismissal and underperformance (OECD, 2005: 147), it is no wonder that teacher standards and pupil achievement are commonly assumed to be linked, the former a crucial pathway to the achievement of the latter (Storey, 2006: 215). The USA certainly perceives this to be of some importance as it has been committed to raising pupil attainment over the past decade by introducing the Improving America's School Act (IASA) in 1994 and the No Child Left Behind Act (NCLB) in 2001. Both of these acts make direct references to teacher effectiveness and raising pupil attainment. Nichols and Good wrote in a New York Times article in 2000 that the public

concern with the quality of teaching in the USA was one of the four major and enduring themes when asked how they felt pupil standards could be raised (Good et al., 2006: 410). However, Berliner (2005: 212) argues that this is another way of saturating the monitoring of teacher effectiveness and that we should pursue a genuine programme to assess teacher quality to best serve the education sector. Good et al. also demonstrate their frustrations through their analysis of numerous studies regarding the quality of teaching preparation programmes and teacher quality. They conclude that these studies have, *"not yielded persuasive evidence that illustrates the value of teacher education programmes"* (Good et al., 2006: 411). These findings are of some concern to me; if large-scale research has not provided evidence that monitors teacher quality, I am unsure as to how my small-scale research can contribute to the field. However, my research is not intended to provide a checklist for teachers to which to adhere; instead it intends to highlight the perceptions that a range of people involved in teaching (teachers, parents, children) have regarding effective teachers. Thus the intention is that teachers can identify aspects within this research where they feel that they could improve and it also intends to provide recommendations on how to act on these.

Looking for patterns in recurring aspects is somewhat difficult because perceptions and judgments regarding effectiveness differ according to needs across the globe. Berliner argues that in Britain and the USA, teachers must have high quality behaviour management styles that are not a necessity in countries like Russia and India. (Berliner, 2005: 206-7). Therefore a skill such as good behaviour management is not a priority requisite in some countries, giving those who wish to branch out into teaching in other countries something to consider when completing application forms for posts. For example, to be licensed to teach in the USA it is required that a trainee demonstrates knowledge of content; knowledge of how children differ and the ability to address the needs of each child; knowledge of development and the use of a variety of instructional techniques; he ability to create a positive learning environment and manage behaviour through a range of disciplinary methods; communicates in a variety of ways including through technology; plans appropriate and effective lessons; assesses students' learning and acts on it; reflects on personal practice and improves and communicates with students, parents and carers (Standards taken from the New Teacher Assessment Support Consortium (INTASC) in Castle et al., 2006: 66). Similarly, the standards stipulated by the Teacher Training Agency in the UK are rigorous and set out formally what a trainee teacher is expected to know, understand and be able to do in order

to be awarded qualified teacher status and succeed as an effective teacher. The standards are organised under three inter-related categories:

i. Professional values and practice, which outline the attitudes and commitment expected of anyone qualifying to be a teacher – e.g. treating pupils and students consistently; communicating sensitively and effectively with parents and carers.

ii. Knowledge and understanding that requires newly qualified teachers to be confident and authoritative in the subjects they teach and to have a clear understanding of how all pupils should progress and what teachers should expect them to achieve.

iii. Teaching, which relates to the skills involved in actually delivering lessons - e.g. planning, monitoring, assessment and class management. These are underpinned by the values and knowledge covered in the first two sections (Source: Training and Development Agency for Schools website).

Furthermore, Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) base their criteria for evaluating effective teachers during inspections of schools in England and Wales on two publications that complement both the USA and UK standards for achieving qualified teacher status. Firstly, Section 5 of the Education Act 2005 states that Ofsted inspectors must report on the quality of the education provided in schools. Secondly they cite Every Child Matters (ECM), the UK Government's initiative formed in 2003, which states that every child should, whatever their background or their circumstances, have the support they need to be healthy, stay safe, enjoy and achieve, make a positive contribution and achieve economic well-being. During an inspection by Ofsted the quality of provision is determined by how effective the teaching, training and learning are; and how well the teaching and/or training and resources promote learning, address the full range of learners' needs and meet the course or programme requirements. They also focus on how well the learners are guided and supported; and the quality of the care, advice, guidance and other support provided to safeguard welfare, promote personal development and achieve high standards (Sources: Ofsted website and Every Child Matters websites).

### 2.2.(b) How is the effectiveness of teachers determined?

One of the difficulties when determining what we mean by effective teachers is the manner in which Governments judge it. Traditionally the effectiveness of a teacher is measured 'en mass', through school inspections and league tables (Storey, 2006: 215). Many arguments support this,

such as those by Good et al. who conclude that teachers make a difference to student learning and that research consistently suggests that among the educational variables that can influence student achievement, the quality of teaching is the most important (2006: 412). The OECD (2005: 26) echo this by suggesting that there is a broad consensus that 'teacher quality' is the single most important school variable influencing student achievement. However, although others agree with this, they stress that the quality of the teacher is not always related to their experience and qualifications and that it is important to remember that a teacher of high quality is both experienced and well qualified in addition to possessing many other traits. Rivlin, Hanushek and Kain (2002 in Castle et al., 2006: 66) argue that the evidence is found in how well children are learning and that experienced teachers produce greater student learning gains than inexperienced teachers (those with less than 3 years experience). Lupton elaborates on this, stating that schools who do not have qualified or experienced staff will struggle to deliver a high quality of education and this has a dire impact on the status of the school. The school is viewed as 'undesirable' to potential staff because it relies on attracting staff based on its reputation and organisational stability (Lupton, 2005: 596). However, these theories leave beginner teachers in a quandary because half of what it means to be qualified is ignored at the beginning of their career as evidence of student learning is not the main focus of the assessment for beginner teachers (Berliner, 2005: 207). Although this is an aspect that I looked at during my research, as the school has several teachers new to the profession (less than 3 years experience) and many experienced teachers, I did not want it to become a focal point as I am more interested in perceptions of effectiveness, regardless of experience. Furthermore, Ofsted do not differentiate between beginners and veterans when assessing and evaluating the quality of teachers, so my findings are universal within my chosen focus school.

The 2006 Ofsted criterion judges the teaching as either: good, satisfactory or unsatisfactory, without a mention of effectiveness and it is this difference between 'good' and 'effective' which is an aspect that I find difficult to define. I am in agreement with Berliner who distinguishes good teaching from effective teaching and argues that good teaching is when the standards of the field are upheld and that good is normative and what should be expected, whereas effective teaching involves reaching for more achievement goals and is about children learning beyond what they are supposed to learn. Furthermore, I agree that a high quality teacher shows evidence of both good and effective teaching (Berliner, 2005: 206-7). However, Berliner argues that determining teacher effectiveness is somewhat difficult because psychological and moral acts can only be judged

through observation, whereas good teaching can be judged through scores and results (Berliner, 2005: 208). This helps me to clarify that my definition of 'effective' teaching includes some aspects of 'good' teaching, and I expect that there will be a cross-over between the two, particularly when asking other teachers about their perceptions of effectiveness. Fenstermacher and Richardson help to add direction to my research by providing a model determining the characteristics to look out for when observing potential effective teachers (2005, in Berliner, 2005: 207) and these are aspects that emerged in my data, particularly from the children, so I used this as a base for my 'pupil voice' interviews (discussed in detail in Chapter 3).

- Logical – teacher is demonstrating, modelling, explaining and correcting.
- Psychological – teacher is caring, motivating, encouraging, rewarding and evaluating.
- Moral – teacher demonstrates tolerance, compassion, fairness and respect.

Muijs and Reynolds argue that teacher characteristics are important when developing a positive classroom climate that is a warm and supportive environment where pupils feel unthreatened and are therefore willing to make a positive contribution to the lesson (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 115). However, Good et al. (2006: 412) argue that focusing on the characteristics of effective teachers can be problematic because many researchers believe that effective teachers are based exclusively on their characteristics (knowledgeable, verbally fluid, energetic, etc). While they do not dismiss that characteristics play a part in determining teacher effectiveness, they state that it is essential that teachers must have sufficient skills to adjust to the context in which they teach in order to be effective. The OECD found it difficult to measure teacher characteristics but concluded in a similar fashion to Good et al., that an effective teacher means having a balance of certain characteristics and flexibility, which enables them to: convey ideas in a clear and convincing way, create effective learning environments for different types of learners, foster productive teacher-student relationships, be creative and enthusiastic, work effectively with colleagues and parents, provide professional advice to parents and build community partnerships for learning (OECD, 2005: 27 and 97-98).

The OECD (2005: 27) provides a model to classify the three different characteristic levels that effective teachers should be working at:

- Classroom level: teaching in multicultural classrooms, new cross-curricular emphasis, and integrating students with special needs;
- School level: working and planning in teams, evaluation and systematic improvement planning, I.C.T. use in teaching and administration, projects between schools, management and shared leadership;
- Individual student level: initiating and managing learning processes, responding effectively to the learning needs of individual learners, integrating formative and summative assessment.

They go on to stress that teachers need to be capable of preparing students for a society and an economy in which they will be expected to be self-directed learners who are able and motivated to keep learning over a lifetime (OECD, 2005: 7). These levels differ from those of Fenstermacher and Richardson and are on a more practical level rather than a personal one. Again, these emerged in my data, particularly from teachers who focussed on their practical skills rather than their personal attributes. Good et al. argue that this also applies to beginner teachers entering the classroom. He suggests that they should possess a mix of: subject knowledge, pedagogical knowledge about how to teach subject matter and the ability to assess what they have learned, alongside good communication skills and the ability to encourage students to take responsibility for their own learning (Good et al., 2006: 413). Muijs and Reynolds argue that children taking responsibility for their own learning is an important part of developing their self-concept. To encourage and develop this, children should be given responsibilities in the classroom and should be involved in some decision-making (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 149). To do this, teachers need to limit the amount of rules and procedures and need to set them at the beginning of the year. It is also more constructive if the children have a hand in setting these and that the reasons for them are explained in order to engage them (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 83).

## 2.2.(c) Theories on factors that determine the effectiveness of teachers

*Teacher characteristics*

Criticism of previous research into the effectiveness of teachers infers that the literature has tended to focus narrowly on the cognitive outcomes of the students, their academic achievements and examination scores, and I've certainly found that to be significant when discussing effectiveness with colleagues. Furthermore, this has resulted in insufficient attention being placed upon the broader domains associated with student moral and social well-being and the establishment of positive relationships with colleagues and parents. Campbell et al. (2003) argue that terms associated with the characteristics and relationships of effectiveness such as social skills, interpersonal skills, social intelligence, emotional intelligence, social competence and social cognition, have taken second place to the cognitive outcomes. Yet when students in their study were asked to judge the effectiveness of their teachers, they focused on their personal characteristics rather than their abilities to produce high scores in assessments or examinations (in Stemler et al., 2006: 103). Furthermore, Muijs and Reynolds found through research that one of the most important aspects of direct instruction is the interaction between teacher and pupil (2005: 50). Similarly, Day et al. found that pupils themselves are generally positive about their school and teachers (Day et al., 2007: 252).

Sakarneh found, in his study into effective Australian teachers, that the teacher characteristics mentioned the most by students were the ability to foster good relationships with them and provide them with positive feedback and general support (Sakerneh, 2004: 15). These findings echo those by Ayres et al. more than a decade earlier, during their USA study on teacher effectiveness and thinking. They concluded that effective teachers not only possess skill-based pedagogic knowledge but also have the capacity to foster positive, respectful relationships with students and colleagues (Ayres in Ayres et al., 2004: 144-145). Similar findings are also presented by Vialle and Quigley (2000: 1) from their Australian study into the effectiveness of teachers working with gifted students. They researched whether gifted students believed that the personal-social characteristics of their teachers were more important that their intellectual qualities. The survey results demonstrated that the personal characteristics of teachers were highly regarded by these selective high school students. This finding is in accord with several US studies that also found a preference for the personal-social characteristics of teachers among gifted students. Vialle and Quigley's data

demonstrated that the personal-social qualities of the teachers were more highly valued than their intellectual qualities, although there was a shift between Year 7 and Year 11 toward the intellectual end of the continuum. Overall there were no gender differences but, in Year 9, girls favoured the teacher's personal characteristics more than their male counterparts. However, the open-ended questions that they asked in their interviews and questionnaires, demonstrates that the characteristics (personal-social versus intellectual) cannot be neatly dichotomised. Additionally, they do present a counter-argument to these findings and suggest that their analysis of the open-ended data gathered in their study revealed that their conclusion might be simplistic. Furthermore, they summarise that the judgments made by the students regarding teachers' personal qualities are inextricably linked with the teachers' intellectual characteristics and their teaching strategies (Vialle and Quigley, 2000: 7).

*Teacher behaviours*

For me this raises issues of how to approach my research with my participants. I do not want to place emphasis on student results and outcomes; equally, I do not want to focus on characteristics only. Therefore, I must consider carefully the notion of teacher behaviours, which incorporates the practicalities of teaching (what they do) and the personal characteristics (how they do it). This is not a new way of researching the effectiveness of teachers as, four decades ago, during his research into US teacher characteristics and behaviours, Renzulli suggested that it is counter-productive to focus on teacher characteristics. Instead he argued that the focus should be on teacher behaviours that incorporate a complex combination of personality characteristics, knowledge and skills, professional attitudes, and teaching approaches and strategies (in Vialle and Quigley, 2000: 1). Ten years later, Bishop examined the characteristics of US high school teachers regarded as successful by their gifted, high achieving students and he too found that a combination of intellectual and personal characteristics was highly regarded by the students. In brief, Bishop concluded that successful teachers possess intellectual superiority and a favourable attitude towards students (in Vialle and Quigley, 2000: 2-3). Campbell et al. add to this argument and state that looking at actual teacher behaviours can make a difference and could be more useful to practice than advocating global teaching styles (Campbell et al., 2004: 45).

Muijs and Reynolds researched effective teacher practice in the classroom with a focus on the behaviours of teachers and found that they:

- Use questioning to check understanding, to help children to verbalise their thinking and at the beginning of the lesson to aid thinking and at the end to summarise. Effective questioning involves a mix higher and lower order questions, open and closed and product and process.

- Plan lessons that are well structured, with the objectives of the lesson clearly laid out, key points emphasised and main points summarised at the end.

- Use modelling to help aid lesson clarity.

- Deliver lessons using pace that is fast for lower-level skills, leaving more time for reflection when higher-level skills are used. Muijs and Reynolds state that this is critical to understanding. They argue that teachers need to present the material they are teaching in well structured, clear small steps, which children need to master before going on to the next part (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 40). They also cite Kounin (1970) to support their claim. He argues that pace relies on teachers not 'dangling / flip-flapping' (starting an activity and going onto another, or changing their mind halfway through), 'over dwelling' (not realising when children have grasped a concept) and 'fragmentation' (giving too many short instructions a once) (Kounin, 1970 in Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 82-83).

- Circulate the room while children are working on an independent task. They help children experiencing problems, without staying with one child or one group for too long.

- Are flexible rather than sticking to a fixed lesson plan, and take the responsibility to ensure that work is tailored to the objectives of the lesson and the pupils taught. However, as Schön (1983) argues, differentiation is a difficult task and he acknowledges its limitations. He stresses that a teacher must somehow manage the work of thirty children in a classroom, so it is difficult to really listen to any one of them (Schön, 1983: 333).

- Use classroom discussion as a whole class or in small groups, and plan it carefully to ensure that children who are less assertive do not get overlooked, thus taking the job of a facilitator to keep the discussion on track and to note and summarise any points.

Shulman points out that research into teacher effectiveness that concentrates on teacher behaviours has diverted away from the importance of practice. He argues that there is little focus on how subject matter is transformed from the knowledge of the teacher into the content of instruction, which he refers to as a 'Missing paradigm' (Shulman, 1986: 7). He defines this as a blind-spot with respect to content and argues that teachers are under pressure to explain their subject knowledge. He acknowledges that how a teacher behaves is important, but argues that these behaviours also need to include where their explanations come from and how they decide what to teach. He also raises questions surrounding the behaviour of teachers and questions how do teachers decide how

to represent what they choose to teach and how do they deal with misunderstanding (Shulman, 1986: 6). He stresses that he is not being derogatory towards pedagogical understanding as pedagogical knowledge is also needed, but attention needs to be paid to the *teaching of* as well as the *gathering of* content and subject knowledge (Shulman, 1986: 8). He defines subject (content) knowledge as the teacher knowing that something is so, as well as understanding further why it is so. Pedagogical knowledge involves the teacher having a varying range of alternative forms of representation and strategies, some which derive from research while some derive from wisdom of practice (Shulman, 1986: 9 - 10).

*Teacher beliefs*

Campbell et al. argue that behaviourist researchers tend to focus on a similar set of behaviours and this can produce narrow data, while focusing on belief structures that have been studied is wide-ranging, as the universe of teacher beliefs is larger than the universe of in-class behaviours (Campbell et al., 2004: 50). Cripps and Walsh (2001: 4) agree with Campbell et al. and suggest that it is not just the way in which a teacher behaves that impacts on their effectiveness as a teacher, it is also based on their personal beliefs that make up moral codes such as honesty and integrity and personal self-belief that motivates and instils confidence in students. They argue that this code works in combination with their behaviours to provide the foundation for a trusting relationship between the teacher and his or her students. For them this relationship is a significant part of the teacher being judged as effective because the students will respond positively to the teacher and be more receptive to learning. However, Harslett et al. (1998: 5) argue that it takes more than this code to develop the teacher-student relationship. They suggest that the ability to be understanding is the key and that by teachers taking an interest in their students' personal lives and finding out what goes on at home, a non-judgmental understanding of their experiences and lifestyles is reached. They stress that teachers also need to be consistent and fair with all students, while at the same time have an understanding and appreciation of student differences as critical factors in teacher-student relationships (Harslett et al., 1998: 6). Teachers who exhibit this socio-cultural awareness view students' experiences as valuable and meaningful and integrate the realities of their students' life, experience, and culture into the classroom and subject matter (Sachs, 2004: 178). Grant and Gillette (2006: 294) argue that this forms the basis of what they define as being 'culturally responsive' and that the profession needs to acknowledge that all students can learn and achieve if we do away with the labels that we use to describe children (e.g.

single-parent home, at risk, deprived). Their model defines a 'culturally responsive' teacher as one whom:

- Believes that all students can achieve and holds high expectations for all learners.
- Builds a "community of learners" in the classroom and connects with students' families.
- Is a self-learner and varies instruction to meet the needs of students.
- Has knowledge that students have a wealth of skills and knowledge and uses these in teaching.
- Has the will to be introspective about themselves and their teaching, monitor their beliefs and actions for bias and prejudice, and be unafraid to teach about the "isms."

Explaining this further, Grant and Gillette argue that 'culturally responsive' teachers use models such as these to take into account how students develop physically, socially, and cognitively; how students develop conceptions of themselves; and how these conceptions influence their learning. They understand that a student's cultural identity is based on many factors, including ethnic group, social class, gender, language, sexual orientation, and religious affiliation. They work hard at finding the balance between a student's group affiliation(s) and his or her individual characteristics to help them to see each student as a complex person with unique needs and talents. In addition, effective teachers are aware that a student's physical and cognitive development is affected by his or her environment—not only the physical features in the environment (e.g., pollution, geography) but cultural and historical events as well (e.g., discrimination, poverty, war, immigration). Furthermore, 'culturally responsive' teachers know that a student's interaction with his or her physical and cultural environment influences the development of personal characteristics and ways of viewing and acting in the world. (Grant and Gillette, 2006: 295-6). Lastly, they know that the concept and practice of culturally responsive teaching is not static but is continually undergoing evaluation and change. For example, during the past 10 years, religion and sexuality have become more pronounced within the fabric of US daily life and school life (Grant and Gillette, 2006: 294). The term 'culturally responsive' was determined by US research. It is strongly linked to the behaviours of teachers and looks at the child from a holistic point of view by acknowledging the identity, life experiences and culture of the child. Teachers often talk about developing the child 'holistically' though very little thought is often directed to the 'holistic' experiences that the child already has. This is an aspect that I develop through this research and raises the question, 'Is focusing on the child's existing 'holistic' experiences part of what is perceived to be an effective

teacher?' However, Muijs and Reynolds warn that teachers should not use the holistic experiences of children to define their expectations of them to attribute certain characteristics to them to avoid self-fulfilling prophecies occurring, and those expectations should always be high but still realistic (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 116).

It is this ongoing and ever-changing interaction that integrates the teachers into the community of the students. Ladson-Billings (1994) described effective teachers as individuals with positive self-concepts who see themselves as a part of the community and who see teaching as giving back to the community. They develop a knowledge base about the community to include events, people, and places that rarely get addressed in the curriculum (Ladson-Billings in Grant and Gillette, 2006: 296). A study by Mayer et al. (1997) entitled *'Teachers' Knowledge of Students: A significant domain of practical knowledge?'* aimed to document what highly effective primary teachers knew about the students they taught and the ways in which they used such knowledge during classroom instruction. The rationale for the study stemmed from a proposition that knowledge of students could be a vitally important component of the practical knowledge of highly effective teachers. Their findings certainly seem to support this rationale, as data from the study showed that the teachers themselves regarded such knowledge as critical to being able to function effectively in the classroom. The study also gives an indication of the nature of the methods used by these highly effective teachers for gathering and interpreting information about students, and establishes a link between these methods and teachers' role conceptualisations. In brief, their methods were shaped by what individual teachers believe about teaching and learning and their classroom roles. The study also revealed that these highly effective teachers used a wide variety of sources and techniques to acquire their knowledge of students, and that these techniques were used regularly to monitor social, psychological and behavioural changes in students. Finally, the study documents the ways in which the teachers use their knowledge of students to fulfil their professional responsibilities in the classroom and to optimise learning conditions for their students.

*Using reflection*

To me the notion of a teacher being 'culturally responsive' is linked to the teacher being able to reflect. It is dispositions, structures and experiences in a variety of fields that can cause the teacher to reflect, and new dispositions and responses to new fields are determined by reflection on previous experiences. Carroll (2002: 206) found in her study (into effective teachers of

Mathematics) that as the teachers looked back over their learning during their careers they were able to reflect on and identify significant events that stood out as points of development or change for them. Various events dated back to their own experiences as a child in school, which often had an emotional component such as an adopted love of Mathematics because of a specific teacher or a determination that students should not struggle with Mathematics as they had done.

Harslett et al. also noted the effect that the teachers' teachers had on their own practice. In their study they found that when teachers recalled their own schooling they tended to remember the best and worst of their teachers and the impact that these teachers had on their lives. Harslett argues that teachers who have the ability to motivate, encourage, be understanding, and are caring and inspiring, provide a positive school experience, which in turn contributes to students' success in later life. Furthermore, teachers who were unable to do these things made school a negative and unproductive experience for the students (Harslett et al., 1998: 1). Silberman argues that teachers benefit from reflecting on these school-age experiences because it helps them to relate to the life experiences of their students, and that these experiences can give them an insight into their purposes as a teacher in order to reflect on why they are teaching what they are teaching. He suggests that this is more vital then developing the knowledge of their subject matter and experiencing teaching before they enter the classroom (Silberman, 1970: 489-490).

I am aware that the notion of the effective teacher using reflection is not a new concept. In 1933 John Dewey discussed the effective teacher evolving as a result of utilising reflection on their practice and experiences in order to develop and implement change. Similarly to Silberman, he argued that content knowledge and pedagogical expertise are not enough if a teacher does not have the attitude to work at becoming an effective teacher. Dewey believed that effective teachers needed to have three characteristics to connect knowledge and skill: open-mindedness, wholeheartedness, and intellectual responsibility; and it is these characteristics that point towards the practitioner who uses reflection to seek to implement change. Dewey referred to open-mindedness as a teacher's willingness to examine himself or herself, to admit mistakes and learn from them, and to work at always becoming more effective. He contended that if a teacher is wholeheartedly absorbed in what they are doing, questions naturally occur and continually, and new ideas spring up spontaneously, enabling them to change and challenge ideas. Dewey described intellectual responsibility as two things: (a) the desire to learn new things and the willingness to become absorbed in the task, and (b) holding oneself accountable for teaching in an engaging way

and willingness to implement change (Dewey, 1933: 32-33). Arguably, these two points could be linked to teachers wanting to improve their practice through professional development, and I envisage that professional development will be an area that teachers refer to when asked how they perceive they can improve.

Stemler et al. propose that teachers need more than the ability to reflect to implement change, and suggest that they need a systematic set of strategies for dealing with social interactions that fit within a larger theoretical framework, such as Sternberg's theory of successful intelligence (1997, 1999). According to the theory, intelligence comprises analytical, creative and practical skills. Analytical skills are typically involved when knowledge is applied to relatively familiar kinds of problems where the judgments to be made are fairly abstract in nature. Creative skills are particularly well suited to problems in which the individual must cope with relative novelty. Practical skills involve applying intelligence to the kinds of problems that are confronted in everyday life. Within the context of teaching, practical skills are especially important. For example, teachers need to communicate their ideas effectively during instruction. In addition, teachers must be able to adapt to a wide variety of situations that call upon a range of social skills. According to Sternberg and his colleagues, practical skills can be further divided into three subcomponents: (1) dealing with self; (2) dealing with others and (3) dealing with tasks. Dealing with self involves self-management skills. By contrast, dealing with tasks involves situations in which the pressure to take action centres on a particular task. Finally, dealing with others requires strong social and interpersonal skills. These examples given all require practical skills in dealing with others (cited in Stemler et al., 2006: 104). I would argue that Sternberg's theory is key to the success of a teacher as analytical, creative and practical skills are all needed when working in the classroom and with others. Furthermore, the role of a teacher involves developed self management skills, being able to deal with tasks under pressure and strong social and interpersonal skills when dealing with children, parents and colleagues. Sternberg's theory highlights many of the aspects that previous research unveiled as significant characteristics of effective teachers (see appendix 1).

Schön states that through reflection, the teacher can make new sense of the situations of uncertainty and uniqueness which they may allow themselves to experience (Schön, 1983: 61). He argues that this reflection occurs more often or not when teachers think about what they are doing while doing it and he refers to this part of reflection as reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983: 49). This involves many variations and can include reflection on strategies, theories, behaviours, feelings

and their own role. Similar to being post-reflective this can be troublesome and self-critical but, as with all reflection, can lead to a new theory being articulated (Schön, 1983: 62-63). Schön describes reflection-in-action as an extraordinary, yet not rare, process which is the core of practice. He argues that many teachers view themselves as experts and have become too skilful at dealing with situations when they arise so they find nothing in their practice on which to reflect. Some are uneasy as they view it as a sign of weakness; others are more accepting yet are unsure of what to do (Schön, 1983: 69).

*Psychological theories*

Theories of what determines an effective teacher do not limit themselves to the field of education. When researching the behaviours of teachers and children it is impossible for me not to delve into the science of mind and behaviour, the psychological field. Whilst I do not want to base this study on psychology, there are significant theories that renowned psychologists suggest are indicative of what determines an effective teacher. The following discusses how Piaget and Vygotsky's theories of cognitive development differ and how the effective teacher in the classroom can apply them.

According to Piaget, cognitive development occurs through the interaction of innate capacities with environmental events and progresses through a series of hierarchical, qualitively different, stages. All children pass through the stages in the same sequence without skipping any or regressing to earlier ones (except in the case of brain damage) and each stage is the same for everyone irrespective of culture (universal). The principle cognitive structure that changes is the schema – a basic building block of intelligent behaviour that organises past experiences and provides a way of understanding future experiences. As we grow our schemas become increasingly complex. When a child can deal with most, if not all, new experiences by assimilating them, she/he is in a state of equilibrium. But if existing schemas are inadequate to cope with new situations, cognitive disequilibrium occurs. To restore equilibrium, the existing schema must be stretched to accommodate new information (Piaget, 1987 in Gross, 2005: 582). When looking at Piaget's theory in relation to my research, he perceived that effective teachers give careful thought to the individual child's capacity for handling particular experiences through a child-centred approach, where the tasks set by the teacher are adapted as precisely as possible to the child's cognitive level (Schaffer, 2004 in Gross, 2005: 592). Furthermore, central to Piagetian perspective is that children learn from actions rather than from passive observations (active self-discovery / discovery

learning). In order to be effective, the teacher must recognise that each child needs to construct knowledge for her/himself and that deeper understanding is the product of active learning (Smith et al., 1998 in Gross, 2005: 592). However, rather than providing the appropriate materials and allowing children to get on with it, the teacher should create a proper balance between actively guiding and directing children's thinking patterns, and providing opportunities for them to explore by themselves (Thomas, 1985 in Gross, 2005: 592). Lastly, the teacher should be concerned with the learning process rather than its end product. This involves encouraging children to ask questions, experiment and explore. They should look for the reasoning behind children's answers, particularly when they make mistakes. They should encourage them to learn from each other (Davis, 2003 in Gross, 2005: 592). Von Glaserfeld supports this principle of constructivist teaching. He argues that all knowledge is constructed rather than directly perceived by the senses and that children construct knowledge rather than receive. Therefore teachers should encourage children to do this by structuring learning activities to explore concepts thoroughly and connect new knowledge to what they already know (in Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 70).

Vygotsky differed from Piaget in that he believed that children need not reinvent the world anew. On a cultural level, they can benefit from the accumulated wisdom of previous generations as each generation stands on the shoulders of the previous one (Schaffer, 2004 in Gross, 2005: 593). Children inherit cultural tools including technological, psychological (concepts) and values (speed, efficiency, power) and it is these tools that help children to learn how to conduct their lives in socially effective ways, as well as understanding how the world works. The most essential tool is language, the main channel of communicating culture from adult to child. This enables children to regulate their activities and, on an interpersonal level, the ability to think and reason for themselves is the result of a fundamentally social process. Cognitive development involves an active internalisation of problem-solving processes that take place as a result of mutual interaction between children and those with whom they have regular social contact. This is the reverse of how Piaget initially saw things, where his idea of the child as the scientist is replaced by the idea of the child as an apprentice who acquires cultured knowledge and skills through graded collaboration with those who already possess them (Rogoff, 1990 in Gross, 2005: 593). On a social level, Piaget saw children as largely independent and isolated in their construction of knowledge and understanding of the physical world (children as scientists) and this excluded the contribution of other people to children's cognitive development. According to Vygotsky (1987), the child (in Piaget's theory) is not seen as part of the social whole, as a subject of social relationships and he is

not viewed as a being who participates in the life of the social whole to which he belongs from the outset; the social is viewed as something standing outside the child. Vygotsky, in contrast to Piaget, sees the child as a participant in an interactive process, by which socially and culturally determined knowledge and understanding gradually become individualised. (Vygotsky, 1987 in Gross, 2005: 582). When applying Vygotsky's theories to my research, it is essential to remember that he defines intelligence as the capacity to learn from instruction. An effective teacher should refrain from playing an enabling role and instead they should guide pupils in paying attention, concentrating and learning effectively. Therefore, by doing this, the teacher scaffolds children to competence (Gross, 2005: 595). Vygotsky rejected any approach advocating that teachers have rigid control over children's learning. Alongside with Piaget he believes that teachers' control over children's activities is what counts, and effective teachers extend and challenge children to go beyond where they otherwise could have (Gross, 2005: 596).

Vygotsky's theories influenced Bruner who stresses that the role of language and interpersonal communication and the need for active involvement by expert adults or more knowledgeable peers is essential when helping the child to develop as a thinker and problem-solver. He sees effective instruction as a fundamental part of the learning process, both in naturalistic and educational settings. Bruner opposed Piaget's theory of readiness and proposed a more active policy of intervention, based on the belief that any subject can be taught effectively in some intellectually honest form to any child at any stage of development. He argues that effective educators need to help children to understand underlying principles and concepts; they need to encourage learners to make links, and to understand the relationship within and between subjects (Smith et al., 1998 in Gross, 2005: 597). In contrast to Bruner, Bandura's theory of 'social learning' places an emphasis on the behaviourist approach of observational learning modelling (learning through watching the behaviour of others). He argues that this occurs spontaneously with no deliberate effort by the learner or any intention by the teacher to teach anything. He stresses that all behaviour is learned according to the same learning principles and that observational learning takes place without any reinforcement from a teacher, regardless of whether they are effective or not, and that mere exposure to the watching of the behaviour of others is sufficient for learning to occur. However, it can be argued that if the child is exposed to negative and ineffective behaviour and environments, they will learn to be ineffective (Bandura, 1965 in Gross, 2005: 615).

## 2.2.(d) How do we develop effective teachers?

*Qualifications*

Berliner speculates that there are 3 million teachers worldwide who are not suitably qualified for the school that they teach in (2005: 209). The UK criterion for selection of teachers includes: past experiences, interpersonal skills, qualifications and subject specialism and can include teaching skills in a demonstration class (OECD, 2005: 151). Once a teacher has achieved qualified teacher status in the UK and has completed their induction year satisfactorily they are not retested to see whether they are still effective, whereas for teachers in the USA re-certification is required every 5–10 years. A scheme in Illinois involves teachers having to renew their licences based on Professional Development (PD) goals and implementation. Similarly, to maintain their license, up until the scheme was stopped in 2003, in the province of Ontario in Canada, teachers earned 14 PD credits every 5 years in 7 core categories accredited by training institutions (OECD, 2005: 193). These schemes are a result of the theory of action behind the NCLB Act that if American teachers were of sufficiently high quality then education would improve (Berliner, 2005: 205). This has led to a federal law, not a state prerogative, that by the end of 2005-6 each teacher has to be highly qualified in the core subject that they teach (Shaul and Ganson, 2005: 158). Bond et al. (2000) discovered that US teachers who have been certified within schemes, such as the National Board for Professional Teaching Standards (NBPTS), are more effective classroom teachers. The UK does not have re-certification but has introduced compulsory standards tests for new teachers. From 2001, UK Primary teachers were required to pass Literacy and Numeracy skills test in order to receive qualified teacher status and in 2002 Science and ICT skills test were also introduced. In Arizona, USA, where there is a relatively tight labour market with 1.1 teachers per vacancy, 95% pass similar tests the first time that they sit them (in Berliner, 2005: 209). Similarly, in some places experienced teachers have to gain further qualifications within a set amount of time to continue to teach. In several states in the USA it is required that teachers achieve a Masters degree within a specific time after hiring. Likewise, in Finland, all general education teachers have to complete a five-six year course (a Masters degree) before hiring. The Finish government argue that not only does this keep standards high but it benefits teachers by giving them a higher social status and attracts more competent people to the profession (OECD, 2005: 100). There is scope for comparisons and correlations in my small-scale research regarding the qualifications and effectiveness of teachers. 3 out of 18 teachers in my study hold a Masters degree in Education and

one is working towards achieving one and raises the question, “Does having a Masters degree affect the teachers’ perceptions of the effectiveness of certain teachers?”

*Professional Development*

The OECD argue that professional development (PD) is part of an ongoing evaluation that should take place throughout the teaching career to identify areas for improvement, recognise and reward effective teaching and ensure that teachers have the resources and support that they need to meet high expectations (OECD, 2005: 12). It is believed that effective teachers are more likely to seek out PD activities than their less effective peers and that effective teachers also tend to have better student outcomes. However, the correlation between student achievement and PD does not necessarily point to a causal link, especially if the PD was voluntary (OECD, 2005: 128). A recent study in the USA by Castle et al. (2006: 67) found schools that focus on the professional development of trainees generated more effective beginner teachers. They studied Professional Development Schools (PDSs), which involve school and university partners focusing on improving teacher education and the professional development of practising teachers as well as improving student achievement and conducting research. The admission criterion onto an ITT programme in a PDS school and a non-PDS school are the same although there are subtle differences between the running of ITT programmes at a PDS school and at a non-PDS school. At a PDS school the trainees take a methods course during a yearlong internship, whereas non- PDS trainees complete their methods course prior to the semester of student teaching. After extensive research they found that both types of school produced teachers who were professional, competent, and licensable and met the INTASC standards. However, the PDS trainees were found to be more effective in instruction, management and assessment; and were more integrated and student-centred in their thinking about planning, assessment, instruction, management and reflection. They also scored higher on classroom management, which is a very important finding as this aspect is deemed one of the most difficult aspects for beginning teachers to master. Castle et al. (2006: 78) also found that the PDS trainees talked in the present tense in their portfolios, almost if they were doing the real thing rather than practising for it. They also talked about the required standards in an integrated way, whereas non-PDS talked about them in more isolated ways.

Boyle et al. (2004) produced results from a national sample and found that 77% of teachers in the UK attended a LEA-based conference or workshop in 2001-2 and 91% participated in a long-term

professional development activity, which were heavily linked to the core subjects (courses undertaken by teachers in 2002 included 97% Literacy, 96% Numeracy and 79% Science). 69% observed colleagues, 63% shared practice, 52% did both and only 3% did not participate in any PD. The least popular PD activities were those that involved study groups, drop-in clinics and coaching (Boyle et al., 2004: 63). They also found that 77% of teachers made at least one change to make their teaching practice more effective as a result of PD (Boyle et al., 2004: 64), contradicting Ofsted who claim that PD is rarely perceived as part of a longer-term cycle to develop teacher effectiveness. The OECD believes that PD could be used to decrease the length of the pre-service education of trainee teachers. They feel that ongoing PD should be viewed as a lifelong learning incentive to support teachers in the early stages of their career (OECD, 2005: 13). Some countries are using teaching portfolios that help track and structure PD around individual needs for improvement. These can be used to give employers an insight into the motivations and experiences, skills and knowledge and effectiveness of teachers (OECD, 2005: 130). Similarly, in 1998 in the UK, the Advanced Skills Teacher (AST) programme was introduced for effective teachers who wish to stay in the classroom but increase and improve their pedagogic leadership in their own and other schools. This programme involves the teacher undertaking 20% outreach and spending 80% in school each week whilst working on their individual PD and leadership needs, where they are required to prepare a portfolio and are assessed, interviewed and observed by an assessor. In July 2004, 5,000 teachers passed and became an AST and it is intended in the future that ASTs will make up 3-5% of the UK workforce (OECD, 2005: 195). Teachers do not deny the value of formal professional development when available; indeed their claims to have learnt ‘through experience’ are often made in the context of lamenting cutbacks to formal professional development. It is quite feasible that some teachers who declared that they had ‘picked up’ a particular effective teaching strategy through experience may have done so much earlier given the greater availability of formal professional development (Ayres et al., 2004: 161 -162). In regards to the duration of PD, Medwell et al. found that the experience of longer in-service courses and participation in long term projects had significantly affected teachers’ views about effective teaching. The most significant feature of these longer-term experiences appeared to be that they had provided the opportunity and drive for the teachers to develop and clarify their own personal philosophies about teaching effectively. Shorter courses were also seen as useful in professional development, but largely in terms of meeting a personal need or keeping in touch with recent developments (Medwell et al., 1998: 66 - 67).

Although future case studies and research needs to be undertaken to determine whether PD has an impact on teachers' effectiveness (Boyle et al., 2004: 64) there are many publications regarding teacher effectiveness that are commonly used in PD. The book and the accompanying videos entitled 'Effective Teachers in Primary Schools: a reflective resource for enhancing practice' by Tony Swainston (2003) involves 6 effective primary school teachers being filmed and analysed using recent research findings. The book is used in PD for teachers generate a mechanism for discussion during school INSET (in-service training), during sessions on classroom management and in training colleges who wish to show their students examples of effective teachers and as areas for discussion. A similar programme used in PD in the US is the Teacher Effectiveness Training (TET) programme, designed by Dr. Thomas Gordon, which claims to offer hundreds of teachers from around the world the essential communication and conflict resolution skills they need to have high quality relationships with their students so there will be less conflict and more effective teaching-learning time. They list one of the proven benefits to the programme as being increased academic achievement. Furthermore, the Teacher Effectiveness Enhancement Programme (TEEP) investigates the hypothesis that rather than teacher personality, it is the effectiveness of teacher behaviour that will primarily influence pupil achievement, an area that over forty years ago Renzulli suggested should be focused on. This UK based programme grew from the evaluation of the Gatsby Mathematics Enhancement Project that ended in 2002, which aimed to help understand what caused the differences in performance of similar pupils in different schools and classrooms in project schools. The substantial literature of the value of PD is relevant to my study, particularly as evidence suggests that quality PD has a positive effect on teachers. However, although teachers may perceive certain PD as having a positive impact on their effectiveness, this raises the question as to how this is measured. Teachers may feel like they are making positive changes to their practice but how is this monitored and evaluated? I expect that PD will be an aspect that is mentioned when I ask the participants in my study about what they perceive can help them to be more effective. It will be of interest to note how valuable teachers perceive PD to be, considering the time and financial efforts that have been put in by local authorities regarding the research into delivering quality PD.

*Rewarding effective teachers*

Many teachers, including myself, would probably state that seeing a child achieve and blossom socially and morally is rewarding enough, however, once 'effective teachers' have been identified

should they then be ‘rewarded’ with more than just incentives like the Fast Track scheme? Lupton argues that many ‘good’ teachers are under performing due to a vast array of difficulties and getting so little back in return both financially and professionally (Lupton, 2005: 598). In the UK and the USA, the accumulation of years of experience rather then teacher quality is reflected in teachers’ pay, thus they are being financially rewarded for time spent in the profession (durational experience), regardless of effectiveness. In the UK, salary is based on durational experience alone in the first 6 years of teaching, although teachers need to produce evidence of competencies and effectiveness to move onto the upper pay spine (UPS) at the end of their sixth year. However, a teacher can stay on the main pay spine (MPS) at point 6, which in itself is regarded as a good salary. I find this concerning as, apart from yearly performance management reviews, a teacher can be satisfactory but not necessarily effective. In the USA, salary is determined by durational experience as well as which state you teach in and your qualifications, thus adding to my earlier point of perceiving those with more qualifications as more effective. Sweden has incorporated teacher effectiveness into their pay structure by controversially introducing an individual teacher performance related pay system where a teacher is paid depending on qualifications, the labour market situation, the effectiveness (performance) of the teacher and the range of responsibilities (including rewarding a teacher for working hard and taking on extra responsibility than expected). Thus the competition for teachers has increased and schools are therefore benefiting from being able to select from a higher quality ‘pool’ of teachers who have had to raise their standards (OECD, 2005: 146 - 147).

In the UK 60% of primary teachers have progressed to a responsibility allowance or more within 7 years. Between their 4$^{th}$ year and 12$^{th}$ year of teaching there are more teachers with a responsibility allowance than at any other level and after 20 years, 20% of males and 10% females are in the position of a Deputy Headteacher with 40% of males and 12 % of females appointed as Headteachers (Menter et al., 2002: 165 - 167). Although these promotions suggest that these teachers must be effective to be given such responsibility, there is little research to suggest that these teachers are indeed effective, instead some of these could be a result of a position needing to be filled. To counteract this, an additional and useful incentive for involving teachers in the leadership process is to allocate them the responsibility for a subject that they can drive forward in the light of the whole school improvement planning. This method of distributed leadership involves a group responsibility and is more proactive than working collaboratively because teachers take on the responsibility that contributes to the direction of the school as a whole and

they are given the opportunity to prove their effective leadership skills (Hammersley-Fletcher, 2005: 46). Although the literature on individual teacher based performance pay schemes is modest, Atkinson et al. (2004) found that a performance-related pay system for teachers in England did improve test score gains on average by about half a grade per pupil. Their results show that teachers do respond to direct financial incentives and an incentive scheme strongly based on pupil progress does improve test scores. Their results suggest that teacher-based performance pay is a policy tool that education authorities should consider as part of their drive to raise educational performance (Atkinson et al., 2004: 1).

Without deviating from the aims of this study, I would like to point out that I do not receive any salary incentive for my Masters degree and neither will I get any for my Ed.D. However, I cannot place a financial value on the impact that undertaking educational research has had on my practice. Whether it has made me a more effective practitioner is inconclusive. However, it has alerted me to areas of my own practice that I have addressed, hopefully more effectively. Thus, one of the aims of my research is to gather perceptions of effective teaching in order to highlight areas for thought of where and how can teachers improve their practice.

## 2.3. Summary of Chapter 2

### 2.3.(a) Attrition

Teacher shortages and attrition has eased since the crisis between 1999 and 2001, although it is still high for the entire profession with more beginner teachers still leaving within 3 years of taking up their first post. I gathered my data and carried out my research between 2006 and 2008, a time where the primary market had become saturated, presumably as a result of schemes such as Fast-track and AST status, successful TTA campaigns, the Workload Agreement introducing PPA time and reduced class sizes for children aged 4-7. My participants will include teachers who were recruited during the crisis, a time when Headteachers were forced to recruit candidates at whom they would not previously have looked. The range of my participants also includes teachers who were chosen to be part of the TTA incentives such as Fast-track and AST. The study school is situated in the South East of England on the border of London, where shortages are still high nationally despite TTA campaigns and incentives. However, the school does not suffer from a

shortage of applications for vacancies - on the contrary it often receives more than 50 applications for each post.

**2.3.(b) Effectiveness**

*What are the local and global standards for the recruitment of effective teachers?*

Teacher effectiveness is a concern both locally and globally and data gathered from research provides evidence that teacher effectiveness is linked to child achievement. Some have argued that there are too many programmes in place that judge and monitor teacher effectiveness and numerous studies exist regarding effectiveness of initial teacher training programmes that do not yield enough data.

With reference to a global scale I acknowledge the limitations of my small-scale research and realise that it may not yield data that reflects aspects of teacher effectiveness in other countries. As established, certain areas that are judged to be important when looking into teacher effectiveness are not always as important in other countries. For example, in Britain and the US, having strategies to manage behaviour is seen as important when judging the effectiveness of a teacher, whereas in countries such as Russia and India, this is of less importance. There is also a question of a difference in standards, as those set by the TTA differ from those by Ofsted. This could affect my data as my respondents may refer towards one more than the other when making their judgments and responding to my questions.

*How is the effectiveness of teachers determined?*

Traditionally teacher effectiveness has been determined by the academic outcomes of the child. This is important in my research as the study school achieves high academic results every year and is focussed on maintaining these annually. The teachers at the school show commitment to this goal and seem to strive to fulfil this, therefore they may consider themselves and their colleagues to be effective as they achieve this ambition annually. However, it was argued that effective teaching is different to good teaching and good teaching is where the standards of the field are upheld as in the case of the study school. Furthermore, there is an argument that an effective

teacher has aspects of good teaching but to be effective the teacher has to extend the child beyond their goals in a social capacity as well as academically.

*Theories on factors that determine the effectiveness of teachers*

The characteristics of teachers were highlighted as being important when looking into effective teachers and data revealed that these can also help to generate a positive classroom climate. These characteristics have to work on several levels including a classroom practical level, a school level and on an individual level. This is of interest to myself as I consider the study school to be a positive environment and am interested to see whether the characteristics of the teachers have an effect on this. Evidence from previous research suggests that teacher characteristics were highly regarded by children when they were asked to judge the effectiveness of their teachers and few children commented on their teachers' ability to help them to gain academic results. Again, the study school is very focussed on results and it would be interesting to gather data surrounding the children's perceptions on the effectiveness of the teachers. However, as it was suggested that focusing on characteristics was too narrow to yield data of teacher effectiveness, I decided to look at teacher behaviours which not only looks at their characteristics but also their beliefs and how they deploy both of these in their practice in the classroom. Data into teacher behaviours argues that teachers need to have a belief structure that allows them to understand and sympathise with the children that they teach. They also need to have high expectations of children, regardless of their backgrounds and experiences, and a knowledge base of the community that they teach in. This applies to the study school as the profiles of the participant teachers reveal that they come from a vast selection of backgrounds and there is a proportion of the teachers who live locally within the school community and their own children attended the school.

The use of reflection to help a teacher to become more effective is an aspect that could be revealed in the data. Previous research into teacher effectiveness states that teachers continue to develop their belief structures through reflection by reflecting on their practice as it is taking place and afterwards. They use these reflections to make changes to what they do and how they behave. They also benefit from reflecting on their own school-age experiences because it helps them to relate to the life experiences of their students and can give them an insight into their purpose as a teacher in order to reflect on why they are teaching what they are teaching. Through constructing profiles of

the teachers and asking questions regarding their own school-age experiences and backgrounds, the data may highlight reflection as being an important part of developing as an effective teacher.

With 4 out of the 18 participants holding a university degree in psychology, it is of interest to my research as to whether links are made by these teachers towards psychological theories regarding teacher effectiveness. To summarise, Piaget and Von Glaserfeld perceived that in order to be effective, the teacher must recognise that each child needs to construct knowledge for her/himself and they should create a proper balance between actively guiding and directing children's thinking patterns. They need to provide opportunities for them to explore by themselves and the teacher should be concerned with the learning process rather than its end product. Vygotsky argues that an effective teacher scaffolds the children to competence by guiding them in paying attention, concentrating and learning effectively; and that they do not have rigid control over children's learning, only over the activities. Bruner opposed Piaget and argued for a more active and intervening approach by teachers and Bandura felt that children learn best through behaviour and need little teacher input.

*How do we develop effective teachers?*

In the UK teachers are not retested annually for reaccredidation, though they need to provide evidence of their effectiveness to move on to the Upper Pay Spine (UPS) after being on the Main Pay Scale (MPS) for 6 years. In England and Wales trainee teachers are required to pass the standard tests in English and Maths introduced from 2001. In some parts of the US reaccredidation is compulsory after 5 years and in some states teachers are expected to pass a Masters degree within 6 years of certification. Similarly in Finland, teachers have to undertake a 5-6 year course which includes gaining teaching certification and a Masters degree. In relation to the study school, half of the 18 participants are working on the UPS and above. The remaining half all passed the standards tests in English and Maths and are working on the MPS. Furthermore, three of the 18 teachers hold a Masters degree.

77% of teachers who attended a PD course made changes to their practice so the effectiveness of PD providers needs to be considered. Introduction of ASTs involve the sharing of practice and PD for 20% of the time. Programs such as TET and TEEP commonly offer training regarding teacher relationships with children and how to develop these academically and socially. However, not one

teacher at the study school was aware of such programs and neither was I until I undertook this research.

Globally, financial incentives differ greatly. In the UK there are no financial incentives to achieving more qualifications, therefore teachers rely on schemes such as Fast Track to see them rewarded financially. Teachers up to MPS 6 only have to acknowledge their effectiveness through annual performance review. Within 7 years, 60% of teachers have received a promotion and salary increment, however it has been argued that it could be a case that some of these were a result of positions needing to be filled. Performance-related pay schemes in England and Wales are scarce therefore research is limited; however, there is data that found that grades increased by a half grade when financial incentives were rewarded. Out of the 18 teachers at the study school, one is a Fast Track teacher and six have been identified by the Headteacher as being ready to apply for AST status. Out of these six, two have recently been offered promotion at different schools, one as a Deputy Headteacher and one as a Key Stage 1 Manager. The remaining four are all on the MPS and thus have been teaching less than 6 years.

# 3. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this research is to contribute to the debate surrounding the perceived beliefs concerning effective teaching within a primary school setting. I intend to research this using the following questions:

- What are the perceptions of teachers, leaders, parents and children concerning the impact of planning and teaching on pupils' academic development?

- What are the perceptions of teachers, leaders, parents and children concerning the impact of teacher behaviour on the learning environment?

- What are the perceptions of teachers, leaders, parents and children concerning the impact of Headteacher effectiveness on teacher effectiveness?

Evidence from previous research suggests that using questionnaires, observations and interviews that focus on one particular institution are appropriate methods for undertaking this. The majority of the researchers used a selection of at least two of these methods where quantified data was used to substantiate the qualitative data.

For my research I selected to undertake research in the form of a study in the school in which I was teaching. I decided to do so through using: non-participant observations with follow up semi-structured interviews; two focussed group discussions; the distribution of questionnaires to my target group – parents with children at my school; and 'pupil voice' interviews with groups of children of varying ages (4-11 years old).

Those who have chosen this approach include Askew et al. who used a combination of lesson observations and follow-up interviews during their 1997 study into *Effective Teachers of Numeracy in Primary Schools: Teachers' Beliefs, Practices and Pupils' Learning*. They undertook 3 lesson observations and 3 follow up interviews for each of the 54 teachers participating in their research. The focus of their observations was to gather data on: organisational and management strategies, teaching styles, range of teaching resources employed and reactions to the responses of pupils. The interviews involved gathering data on: evidence on training and experience as well as

information on beliefs, knowledge and practices in teaching Numeracy; teachers' own perceptions of what has made them successful teachers of Numeracy; and reasons for factors identified.

The following discussion provides an insight into how I chose my participants and how I undertook this study, and utilises examples from relevant previous research to add explanation to my decisions.

## 3.1. Case Study

### 3.1.(a) Defining a type

Many types of case study and features of a case study have been suggested by Yin (1984), Adelman et al. (1980), Sturman (1999), Stenhouse (1985) and (Stake 1994) (all in Cohen et al., 2003: 183). Hitchcock and Hughes (1995, in Cohen et al., 2003: 181- 182) suggest that a successful case study has to have several hallmarks including: a vivid description of the case; a chronological narrative of relevant events; it describes and analyses events; it focuses on individuals or groups and seeks to understand their perception of events; it highlights specific relevant events and the researcher is integrally involved in the case. I aim that my case study will follow Hitchcock and Hughes' model in that it will focus on individuals or groups and seek to understand their perceptions of effective teaching through providing accounts that describe and analyse the behaviour of the teachers. This model also places emphasis on my intention of the role of the researcher as being integral to the research.

### 3.1.(b) Why choose a case study?

According to Cohen et al. (2003: 181) a case study provides, *"a unique example of real people in real situations, enabling readers to understand ideas more clearly than simply by presenting them with abstract theories or principles… They can establish cause and effect"*. It is this strength of a case study that would allow me as the researcher to concentrate on a specific situation that can be studied in some depth within a limited timescale. Moreover, by keeping my research small-scale I can focus on identifying the various interactive processes at work that can be sometimes hidden by large-scale research. Through using observations, interviews and questionnaires I can identify a scenario and fulfill the aim to identify perceptions concerning effective teaching within a primary

school setting. This research focuses on the perceptions of effective teaching as a freestanding exercise and is therefore open-ended and is not intended to generate a final set of definite outcomes. It will however generate issues that will warrant further investigation, a benefit of the flexibility of case studies as noted by Bell (2002: 10). However I am aware that, in contrast, case studies can raise criticism in that it can be difficult to cross check the information they generate, leaving them in danger of distortion, and as each case study is unique and more often based on an individual organisation, in my case, my own school, generalisation is not always possible. This in turn can raise questions regarding the value of the study of single events – is a case study not just a story or a description of a scenario? Although most of my data will be based largely on the personal experiences of the teachers, it should be noted that, as with any case study, it is more than a story or a description of a situation. As in all research, the evidence will be collected systematically in a methodically planned manner and will be triangulated to check for reliability and validity (Bell, 2002: 10). Bassey dismisses that a case study needs to demonstrate generalisation, rather he points towards relatability:

> "…an important criterion for judging the merit of a case study is the extent to which the details are sufficient and appropriate for a teacher working in a similar situation to relate his decision making to that described in the case study. The relatability of a case study is more important than its generalisability". (Bassey, 1981: 85)

He goes on to stress that case studies are valid forms of educational research if they fulfil the following criteria, (they)*"…are carried out systematically and critically…are aimed at the improvement of education…are relatable…"* (Bassey, 1981: 86). In agreement with Bassey, Denscombe warns that, *"this means that the researcher must obtain data on the significant features… in general, and then demonstrate where the case study example fits in relation to the overall picture"* (Denscombe, 1998: 37). By acknowledging these limitations within the grand scale of research I am in agreement with Stake and intend for my case study to represent the case and *not* the world (Stake, 1994 in Denzin and Lincoln, 1994: 245). However, time is a boundary that I am considering when choosing to carry out my small-scale research in the form of a case study and I intend that while my research may not offer generalisations, it will provide relatability as suggested by Bassey. To ensure this I heed the advice of Bell who warns that care has to be taken during the presentation, analysis and interpretation stages of the research. I attempt to do this through using triangulation to strive to ensure that generalisations are not made based on insufficient data and I do not claim more than is warranted (Bell, 2002: 172). Bell points out the

positive aspects of small-scale research, *"(it) may inform, illuminate and provide a basis for policy decisions within the institution. As such (it) can be invaluable"* (Bell, 2002: 172). As previously discussed, my case study is intended to highlight perceptions, but it is these perceptions that may add to future decisions in my school and can therefore be as valuable as Bell suggests. Bassey discusses how small-scale research that is structured within a timescale, such as mine, can be of further use to an institution. He argues that researchers undertaking small-scale research within a limited time-scale will produce research that is structured and will be of use to an institution when tackling a current issue or problem (Bassey, 1981: 85-6).

Among those who have successfully used case studies within their research are Brown and Askew (2000). They found it helpful when carrying out their longitudinal study entitled, *Progress in Numeracy: What sort of teaching helps children to make progress in Numeracy?* This large-scale study involved over 3000 children from over 40 schools in four Local Education Authorities in different regions of the UK. The research was undertaken using pupil scores at the beginning and end of each year, observing a mathematics lesson for each class in each year and interviewing the teacher, mathematics co-ordinator and Headteacher (Brown and Askew, 2000). However they found that although this work partly confirmed results of earlier work on effective teachers, it also left them with some unresolved problems about characteristics of effective teaching. They found that although they had a large enough sample to study effect, they had minimal data about each of the pupils and the teaching they were experiencing. For this reason they also included in the research programme a set of case studies. They selected 5 schools (each school chosen to represent the variety of schools in the UK) out of the original 40 and within these schools, one class in each cohort to generate a case study. To gather data, they attended the Numeracy lessons experienced by the children over one week towards the beginning and one week towards the end of each year. During this time they observed and talked to each of the children in the sample schools several times over the period of each week and gathered and analysed samples of their written work. In addition they scrutinised their test papers at the beginning and end of the year to see in which areas they had progressed (Brown and Askew, 2000: 2-3).

The following section reviews the relevant methods that I have chosen to use. This incorporates how other researchers within a similar field have used or written about the methods and ethical considerations. It includes the advantages and successes of each method and the disadvantages and

limitations, as well as the ethical implications, of using certain methods. Finally, I will use this review to explain my research design.

## 3.2. Sampling

Choosing participants for research relies on sampling and Bell argues that the size of the study has an impact on the size of the sample chosen. She suggests that if you are choosing to focus on a particular institution, like me, you will need to be realistic about the time or means that you have to include all of the possible participants during this small-scale research (Bell, 2002: 126). Cohen et al. also conclude that choosing a type of sample must be suitable to size of the study, the time scale of the study, the methods of data collection and the methodology of the research (Cohen et al., 2005: 104). They also stress that not only can sampling be affected by the researcher's time-scale but also that potential participants may not want to volunteer because they do not have time to spend with the researcher (Cohen et al., 2005: 99).

Cohen et al. state that there are two main types of sampling that occurs within research, probability sampling (also known as random) and non-probability sampling (also known as purposive sampling) (Cohen et al., 2005: 99). **A** probability sample is where the chance of members of the wider population being selected is known and every member has an equal chance of being included in the sample. A non-probability sample is where the chance of members in the wider population being selected is unknown. Some members will be included, some will be excluded and this is purposely undertaken by the researcher (Cohen et al., 2005: 99).

### 3.2.(a) Probability samples

A probability sample draws randomly from the wider population and will be useful if the researcher wishes to make generalisations as it seeks to represent the wider population. Cohen et al. go on to argue that because probability samples all have a measure of randomness, and therefore all have a degree of generalisability, they will have less risk of bias than a non-probability sample. (Cohen et al., 2005: 99). Simple random sampling involves each member of the population having an equal chance of being randomly selected but relies on a complete list of the population being available. Choosing is non-systematic and can involve selecting names from a hat. Systematic sampling is more modified than random and involves using a system to select, e.g.

every tenth person from a list. To keep it random, the list must be constructed randomly to give everyone an initial equal chance. Stratified sampling involves dividing the population into homogenous groups where each group contains subjects with similar characteristics (e.g. males and females). These characteristics should be kept simple to ensure that it stays random and does not begin to classify excessively. This type of sampling is a blend of randomisation and categorisation and so is useful for quantifying, being analytical and inferential and also qualitative in that it can target groups in institutions or clusters of participants (Cohen et al., 2005: 99).

### 3.2.(b) Non-probability samples

Non-probability sampling deliberately avoids representing the wider population and instead seeks to represent a particular group such as a class of students or a group of teachers. Cohen et al. argue that because a non-probability sample is unrepresentative of the whole population, it may demonstrate greater bias than probability sampling (Cohen et al., 2005: 99). Non-probability samples are selective in that the researcher targets a particular group but is aware that it does not represent the wider population, merely itself. They may have limitations in their ability to generalise, but they are less complicated to set up. Examples of this type of sampling include convenience / opportunity sampling. The researcher chooses the sample from those around her to which she has easy access. It represents itself as a group and does not seek to make generalisations about the wider population, rather perceptions of that group. This is acceptable as long as the researcher reports this point (Cohen et al., 2005: 102-103). Bell agrees with Cohen et al. that this type of opportunity sampling is generally acceptable as long as the sample is clearly stated and the limitations of such data are realised. (Bell, 2002: 126). She goes on to say that because research is dependent on the goodwill and availability of subjects, it is difficult for a small-scale study to achieve a truly random sample, therefore it may be that you have to interview anyone from the total volunteers. Quota sampling is similar to stratified sampling; however it is used to represent the exact percentages of the wider population. For example, if it was decided that the wider population had 60% males and 40% females, then the quota sample would need these equivalent percentages. This relies on having accurate statistics of the wider population and information about characteristics in order to group / classify. Purposive sampling is where the researcher handpicks participants based on a particular need. For example if the researcher was researching the stress levels of NQTs in the primary school, he may choose NQTs or teachers in their beginning 2 years

of the profession. Cohen et al. argue that this does not represent the population as it is deliberately selective and therefore is open to bias (Cohen et al., 2005: 104).

Those that have used sampling in their research include Patrick and Smart. They utilised random sampling to select participants for phase one of their study. 148 (36 males and 112 females) undergraduate students were chosen as a typical example of tertiary students who had experienced a number of years in both school and tertiary study, and their ages ranged from 18 to 52 years with an average age of 25 years. In phase 2, they used quota sampling to ensure that the 266 undergraduate psychology student participants were representative of the total enrolled in the district. This sample included 64 (24%) males and 202 (76%) females and ages ranged from 17 to 52 with an average age of 24 years (Patrick and Smart, 1998). Sachs used purposive sampling to gather 179 participants for the first phase of her study. She wanted participants who were representative of Kindergarten through to Grade 5 and had 5 or more years of experience in a midwestern urban school district. She utilised purposeful sampling again during phase 2 where all elementary school principals in the district were asked to choose two highly effective, two moderately effective and two minimally effective Kindergarten through to Grade 5 classroom teachers to complete the questionnaire. The principals were instructed to base their ratings of effectiveness on the state criteria used in schools by administrators to formally evaluate in-service teachers (Missouri Department of Elementary and Secondary Education, 1999) (Sachs, 2004: 179-181).

### 3.3. Interviews

Interviewing involves the gathering of data through direct verbal interaction between individuals. As with other methods, the interviews may be used to test hypotheses or generate new ones and they may be used in conjunction with other methods (Cohen et al., 2003: 268-9). Ingersoll and Smith suggest that the best way to discover why people choose to do what they do is to ask them. During their research they found that many organisations use exit interview to find out why employees depart from educational jobs (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003: 30). However, choosing to interview is time consuming, as the researcher is required to allow the respondents to recount their experiences in their own way. As this may not emerge in the first interview, extensive subsequent interviews may be needed. Equally, until a trust relationship is established it is highly unlikely that such intimate information will be shared, which can result in substantial editing or even

withdrawal from the project (Gray, 1998: 2 in Bell, 2002: 18). Furthermore, extensive research by Byrne and Challen (2004: 2-3) into the use of interviewing has criticised them as being ineffective due to the subjectivity of judgments and factors influencing these, and often found them to assess personality more than ability, although it can be argued that this subjectivity is a result of the flexibility of interviews and it is this flexibility that is a major advantage. Responses can be probed and followed up at an appropriate speed unlike questionnaires that tend to be taken at face value (Cohen et al., 2003: 269). Furthermore, through research, Byrne and Challen (2004: 2-3) found that standardised structured interviews have been found to be more reliable and offer great predictive validity.

### 3.3.(a) Choosing a type

Cohen et al. (2003) identify four main kinds of interview: the structured interview, the unstructured interview, the non-directive interview and the focused interview.

*Structured interviews*

The structured interview involves the researcher determining sequencing, wording and questions in advance and therefore allows little flexibility during the interview. Lupton successfully used structured interviews to find out how to improve the quality of schools in disadvantaged US neighbourhoods. Interviews with Headteachers and local education officers were carried out in the initial phase and a second phase then used interviews to explore the impact of context on school organisation and practice. The respondents were asked to refer to the 11 aspects of effective schooling identified by Sammons et al. in 1995 (in Lupton, 2005: 592-4). As a result of this clear structure many researchers choose to use structured interviews when conducting interviews over the telephone to allow for a wide geographic spread (England and Wales) in a relatively short space of time (Barmby, 2006: 253-4).

*Unstructured interviews*

The informal unstructured interview is often used in ethnographic research to gain a greater insight into individual circumstances as it is built on and emerges from observations and interactions (Patton, 1980 in Cohen et al., 2003:206). The unstructured interview allows for more flexibility

and freedom than the structured interview and, although the themes of the research govern the questions asked, their content, sequence and wording is in the hands of the interviewer. However, it does not mean that they are a misguided chat. Unstructured interviews are centred on a topic and do produce a wealth of valuable data, but it needs to be remembered that they are more than just interesting conversations (Bell, 2002: 138). Mayer et al. decided that an in-depth, unstructured interview was considered to be appropriate to achieve the goals of their project, which enabled teachers to indicate the knowledge they held on three or four individual learners chosen by the teacher and to indicate how they acquired their knowledge about students and how they used this information in classroom interaction (Mayer et al., 1997: 3-4).

*Non-directive and Focused interviews*

In the non-directive interview the researcher takes on the subordinate role (Cohen et al., 2003: 269). They are based on the psychological and therapeutic fields where the respondent is responsible for initiating and directing the course of the encounter, and for the attitudes they express in it. They aim to reach deeper attitudes and perceptions and differ from other types of interview in that the persons interviewed are known to have been involved in a particular situation. They rely on the interviewer using content analysis to analyse elements in the situation that she/he has deemed significant and then use this analysis as a basis to construct an interview guide. This identifies the major areas of inquiry and also the hypotheses, and the actual interview is focused on the subjective experiences of the people who have been exposed to the situation. Focused interviews developed from non-directive interviews allow the researcher more control when undertaking the interview (Cohen et al., 2003: 289 - 290). Mayer et al. claimed to have used unstructured interviews adopting an approach that drew heavily on the principles and techniques used in stimulated-recall interviewing as discussed by Marland (1984) and Marland et al. (1990, 1992), in which the interviewee is seen as the expert and the interviewer is cast in the role of a facilitator whose main task is to assist the expert to recall the sought-after knowledge. This points towards a non-directive interview approach rather than an unstructured one because, in many respects, the role of the interviewer is similar to that of a client-centred counsellor. The emphasis is centred on active listening, reflecting, seeking clarification and extension through non-leading probes and recursive questioning, and avoiding being judgmental (in Mayer et al., 1997: 3-4).

*Semi-structured interviews*

Much of the research into effective teaching and schools has been undertaken using semi-structured interviews where the researcher asks a range of specific preconceived questions and leaves time and scope in the interview for issues that emerge and can be followed up instantly. Lunn and Bishop used semi-structured interviews to help focus upon issues that were emerging within their study (Lunn and Bishop, 2003: 198) and Brundrett et al. undertook a semi-structured interview phase in order to capture narratives and create characteristics of practice (Brundrett et al., 2006: 261-2). Carpenter et al. (2001) used semi-structured interviews to focus on the practice of the nine teachers observed. With the assumption that the teachers were highly successful, the focus of the interviews was on establishing their beliefs and attitudes towards teaching. A 'pod' of four people who had knowledge of each teacher's practice was also interviewed. These were the principal of her school, a teaching colleague (nominated by the teacher), a Board of Trustees member (usually the chairperson) and a community person (nominated by the teacher and usually the parent of a child who had been taught by the teacher) (Carpenter et al., 2001: 1 - 2). Like structured interviews, semi-structured interviews are also used when undertaking telephone interviews. In order to explore the perceptions of trainee teachers, Murphy (2006) decided to use this method within their study and argued that although there are disadvantages, such as the lack of eye contact or body language or a possibility that responses are limited, the advantages of reaching interviewees who had by then left the course outweighed these. During the interviews the trainee teachers were also asked to explain verbally the aspects of the course that had improved their confidence and why they felt the audit had (or had not) made a difference to their ability to teach primary mathematics.

### 3.3.(b) Why focus group interviews?

Group interviews bring together people with varied opinions which can potentially lead to discussion developing and can also provide an insight into what might be pursued in subsequent individual interviews. Focus group interviews rely on the interaction within the group to discuss a topic provided by the researcher, rather than a backwards and forwards between the researcher and the group of respondents, and it is from these interactions that the data emerges. The advantages for using this approach are: a focus on a particular field; a tool to help to generate hypotheses and an instant representative sample to gather data from different sub-groups of a population (Cohen et

al., 2003: 287 – 288). Goodrum et al. used focus group discussions within their 2001 large-scale Australian survey to yield insights into practice and beliefs and to extract the wisdom of the knowledgeable participants in the field of their study. They found these group interviews to be self-reporting as well as reporting on others and on research findings (Goodrum et al., 2001 in Tytler et al., 2004: 179-180).

### 3.3.(c) Why interview post observation?

Much of the existing research within my chosen area of focus has adopted the use of non-participant observations and follow-up semi-structured interviews. The benefits of using semi-structured interviews is that the researcher can have some prepared questions leaving the rest of the questions to be generated from what the researcher has observed and how the participant responds to the comments and questioning of the researcher regarding the observation.

Medwell et al. conducted their interviews with 26 teachers based on the content, structure and organisation of the lessons observed and about the knowledge underpinning them (Medwell et al., 1998: 4-5). Similarly, McDonough investigated the practices of highly effective teachers of Numeracy using teacher interviews following lesson observations to discuss the teacher intentions for the lesson and what had transpired (McDonough, 2003: 32-3). Furthermore, during Byrne and Challen's study, 143 candidates for a University primary PGCE course took part in a 5-minute presentation on a self-chosen current educational issue followed by a one-to-one standardised structured interview related to areas believed by the course team to reflect important personal and intellectual qualities needed in a future teacher (Byrne and Challen, 2004: 3-4).

Ayres et al. found that it was more useful if the researchers were able to use an interview schedule to interview the observed teacher immediately after the lesson. This semi-structured schedule included two questions that asked the teacher to identify successful outcomes of the lesson and then asked them to consider the strategies they employed. They found that earlier research by Brown and McIntyre, 1993, and Cooper and McIntyre, 1996, had indicated the benefits of focusing on successful aspects of the lesson. Four of their questions required the teachers to think beyond the actual lesson observed and to consider other successful strategies they utilised at HSC (High School Certificate) level. Ayres et al. (2004) found that previous literature noted the problems of identifying how teachers acquire their 'craft knowledge' and the difficulties involved in passing

this on to others. Hence these questions aimed to probe how the teachers concerned obtained their present repertoire of successful teaching strategies, sought to probe the issues of lesson planning and presentation and attempted to promote deeper reflection on the factors responsible for the teachers' successes. A further four questions required a deeper, more personal perspective, including taking up the issue of possible stages in the development of pedagogical expertise, the issue of school-wide or school-based factors underlying teaching success and the extent to which their expertise was shared with others. A final question was open-ended and allowed the teachers to comment on any other aspect of effective teaching of the HSC (Ayres et al., 2004: 146-9).

### 3.3.(d) Administering the interviews

*Focus group size*

The size is of the group is of great importance: too few and it can put pressure on individuals and be unrepresentative of the population, too large and the group fragments and loses focus. Lewis (1992, in Cohen et al., 2003: 287) summarises research to indicate that a group of 6 or 7 is an optimum size for adults, whereas Morgan suggests as little as 3 or 4 (Morgan, 1988 in Cohen et al., 2003: 273). Lunn and Bishop followed up 75 questionnaires using focus group interviews of 6 trainee teachers when finding out their perceptions on what it means to be an effective primary school teacher (Lunn and Bishop, 2003: 197).

*Hearing the voice of the respondent*

Kvale (1996, in Cohen et al. 2003: 148-9) points out that gathering what you need from your interviews is dependent on the interviewer. He notes that an interviewer needs to be: knowledgeable, structuring, clear, gentle, sensitive, open, steering and critical, remembering and interpreting in order to gain the trust of the respondents. Ely et al. (1991: 62) argue that not only is it important that the researcher is knowledgeable but sometimes that they have experienced what they are researching in. Similarly Cohen et al. (2003: 279) agree that the cognitive aspect of the interview needs to be addressed, in that the interviewer needs to be sufficiently knowledgeable in the subject matter so that the respondent does not feel threatened by lack of knowledge. However there is a tendency to become 'too close for comfort' leading to failure to see the viewpoints of others and taking for granted what they think they know (Ashworth, 1987: 13). This 'fine-line' has

to be executed carefully otherwise if the interviewer makes too many gestures or murmurs this could suggest agreement on their part and leave the respondent believing that they have to respond in a certain manner to please the interviewer (Ely et al., 1991: 61-2). This is certainly reflected in previous research. When processing the quantitative and qualitative data for their study, *Non-graduate teacher recruitment and retention: some factors affecting teacher effectiveness in Tanzania,* Towse et al. discounted the interviews, deciding that participants might have been inclined to offer what they thought the researchers wanted to hear rather than what they really felt. They also felt that the group interview data was dominated by a few outspoken individuals who were too preoccupied with flouting their knowledge (Towse et al., 2002: 638).

### 3.3.(e) Distributing the questions prior to interview

In order for the respondent not to be intimidated by the knowledge of the researcher, it is suggested that a copy of the questions be sent out to them pre-interview. However the more unstructured the interview the less possible this is and some researchers question the validity of responses where the respondent has had time to structure answers. Amongst those who sent out copies of interview scripts to reassure that unexpected questions would not be asked and also give time for teachers to think about their answers were Barmby (2006), Murphy (2006) and Carpenter et al. (2001). None of these three studies commented on any of the adverse factors mentioned above.

## 3.4. Observation

Observations give the researcher the opportunity to gather ‘live’ data from ‘live’ situations and therefore to look at what is taking place in situ rather than second-hand. The qualitative researcher seeks to catch the dynamic nature of events, to seek intentionality and to seek large trends and patterns over time (Cohen et al., 2003: 306). Observations are advantageous in that they allow the researcher to be open minded and to see things that otherwise may have been unconsciously missed and they also enable them to discover things that respondents might not freely talk about in interview situations. Equally, this type of data is less predictable so brings with it a sense of freshness (Cohen et al., 2003: 305) that can often reveal characteristics of groups or individuals that would have been impossible to discover by other means (Bell, 2002: 156). The main disadvantage of using observations is that they are reliable on the researchers’ interpretation of

what they have seen and, while they can be useful in helping to generate hypotheses for research, this does take a considerable amount of time (Bell, 2002: 157).

Ayres et al. found that effective teachers had difficulty when articulating what they do in the classroom, so they determined that the most appropriate methodology would be a research design based on classroom observations and follow-up interviews (Ayres et al., 2004: 146-9). Similarly, Medwell et al. successfully used observations during 26 lessons during their research into effective teachers of Literacy (Medwell et al., 1998: 4-5).

### 3.4.(a) Types of observation

*Unstructured, semi-structured and structured*

Unstructured observations involve the researcher not starting with preconceived ideas about what they want to observe. The researcher does not use checklists or charts but instead observes events, situations and behaviours and writes them up immediately afterwards. Structured observations devise a way of recording in order to ascertain aspects of behaviour identified beforehand as being relevant (Bell, 2003: 157-8). Semi-structured observations have an agenda of issues but gather data to illuminate these issues in a far less predetermined or systematic manner as highly structured observations (Cohen et al., 2003: 305).

Spillane (2005: 387) used structured and semi-structured observations to enable him to collect comparable data across various sites where informal and formal interactions were observed and observation interviews were conducted. Lupton (2005: 592-4) carried out unstructured observations and collected supporting documentation to help validate their interpretations.

*Participant and non-participant*

Much of the research undertaken into the effectiveness of schools has involved the observer as a non-participant. The role of a participant observer needs to take into consideration that she can find it difficult to stand back and adopt the role of an external observer when they know all the members of the group or organisation. She will be familiar with the strengths, weaknesses and personalities of the respondents and can overlook behaviour that may be noticed by a non-

participant observer (Bell, 2003: 158). However, Morrison (1993) sees this as an advantage because the participant observer is immersed in a particular context over time, thus not only will the relevant features of the situation emerge and present themselves but also a more holistic view will be gathered of the interrelationships of factors. It is these that lend themselves to accurate explanations and interpretations of events rather than relying on the researcher's own inferences (in Cohen et al., 2003: 88).

### 3.4.(b) Recording data during observations

When undertaking structured observations, a method of recording needs to be established in order to record all of the relevant data in an organised manner in a short space of time. To devise a method of recording for structured observations you need to be clear on what you are looking for. Bales (1950 in Bell, 2002: 159-160) devised a model to use for recording during structured observations using 12 headings that attempted to describe the behaviour of individuals in groups by classification and coding. Later, the Flanders system (1970 – influenced by Bales) devised 10 categories of student / teacher behaviour which required the observer to record every 3 seconds and enter a code into the appropriate category. The problems were that the headings were quite complex and they involved having to make a 'best-fit' judgment. Also they require the researcher to fully understand each category to be able to judge every 3 seconds (in Bell, 2002: 159-160).

Good et al. successfully used a similar method of recording during their structured observations. The THOR (Tsang-Hester Observation Rubric) system is an observational instrument that describes teacher interactions with students and involves entering codes on to a predetermined chart. The chart primarily describes the teacher in terms of three aspects of teaching practices: assessment of student learning (criteria and standards, learning goals, fairness / consistency of formal / informal assessment); maintenance of classroom learning climate (interaction with students, student interaction with peers, management of instructional groups and individuals, appropriate behaviour understood and followed by students, monitoring student behaviour and providing feedback); and implementation of instruction (activities, directions and explanations are congruent with goals, makes effective use of learning materials, demonstrates content knowledge, displays energy and conviction, uses clear, accurate and expressive oral communication, quality of questions, demonstrates flexibility in responding to students questions and interests, student

engagement and interest in lesson and importance and value of content presented) (Good et al., 2006: 416 and 419).

Ayers et al. did not use a coding system during their semi-structured observations, instead choosing to record in note-form similar to that of unstructured observations. However what made their observations semi-structured was that, similar to Good et al., they had determined preconceived categories based on what they were looking for. In particular, a focus was made on the following 9 themes; the general classroom climate; the relationship between the teacher and the students; the interactions between the teacher and students, and between the students themselves; the type of teaching with respect to whole class, individuals and groups; the role and type of questioning and discussion; the types of tasks set; and other notable or unexpected classroom strategies (Ayres et al., 2004: 146-9). McDonough aimed to describe the practice of effective teachers and to look for common themes through using a similar category system when her researchers made notes during semi-structured observations. Nine broad categories were agreed upon by the team: mathematical focus; features of tasks; materials, tools and representations; adaptations /connections /links; organisational style(s), teaching approaches; learning community and classroom interaction; expectations; reflection; and assessment methods (McDonough, 2003: 32-3).

## 3.5. Questionnaires

According to Blaxter et al. (1998), questionnaires generate a vast amount of data and the fact that the information can be collated in a measurable way and converted to create statistical data is an attractive prospect to researchers (Blaxter et al., 1998: 154-5). However, as Walker notes:

> "The questionnaire is like interviewing-by-numbers, and like painting-by-numbers it suffers some of the same problems of mass production and lack of interpretive opportunity… but what it lacks in potential opportunities it gains in time" (Walker, 1998: 91).

In their 2004 study into effective science teaching initiatives, Tytler et al. found that the data gathered from their questionnaires was limited. While it yielded lists of characteristics and showed that there is a way forward, it did not provide the detail of teaching–learning interactions that they needed to build upon in helping teachers develop their practice (Tytler et al., 2004). They suggest

that the way to develop findings is to use more qualitative methods such as interviews and observations. However, regardless of criticism many researchers have based their research into effective teachers on data gathered largely from using questionnaires. Patrick and Smart's 1998 study entitled, *An empirical evaluation of teacher effectiveness: The emergence of three critical factors,* used extensive surveys and questionnaires on students to reveal that teacher effectiveness is multi-dimensional in nature. These comprised three factors: respect for students, an ability to challenge students and organisation and presentation skills. In addition, they found several teacher effectiveness dimensions evident in past research (Patrick and Smart, 1998). Similarly, Sachs undertook her evaluation study into teaching attributes using questionnaires as her main methodology. A total of 121 teachers returned completed questionnaires of which 60 participants (49.6%) had been rated as highly effective, 36 participants (29.8%) had been rated as moderately effective and 25 participants (20.7%) had been rated as minimally effective teachers by their principals (Sachs, 2004: 179-181).

### 3.5.(a) Constructing a Questionnaire

*Questions*

When constructing a questionnaire it is of importance that the type of questioning is suitable for your target audience. Closed questions prescribe the range of responses from which the respondent may choose (dichotomous, multiple choice and rating scale). These types of questions are quick for the respondent to complete and do not discriminate unduly on the basis of how articulate the respondents are (Wilson and McLean, 1994: in Cohen et al., 2003). However, while they are straightforward for the researcher to code, they do not give the respondents opportunities to make remarks, explanations or to qualify statements. Additionally, there is no guarantee that the categories that the researcher has chosen are unbiased. On the other hand, open questions enable respondents to write a free response in their own terms but do rely on a level of literacy that may not be found in a primary school with respondents with varying levels of literacy. Furthermore, open-ended responses are difficult for the researcher to encode and classify. Equally, questionnaires rely on people bothering to complete them and asking people to write may leave the respondents reluctant to complete and return the questionnaire because they do not have the time to do so. In contrast to this, questionnaires that contain closed questions lend themselves to being shorter in length and much more 'respondent friendly', thus respondents are more likely to give up

a few minutes of their time to complete and return them (Cohen et al., 2003: 248). However, with no option of expanding on an answer the respondent may devalue the point of the questionnaire and not want to complete it. Carroll used a combination of closed and open questions to address these issues in her study into developing effective teachers of Mathematics. Her survey used closed questions to collect biographical data regarding years of experience, mathematics education and type of teacher training, and the teachers were asked to provide written responses to the question: 'Which things, people or events have been most influential in your teaching of mathematics?' (Carroll, 2004: 202-3).

The response rates for returning questionnaires vary due to the aforementioned restraints. Moyo-Robbins sent out questionnaires containing mainly closed questions to 193 teachers (157 BA QTS and 36 PGCE) to collect data for her study into the early careers of primary school teachers. There were 84 (44%) responses (Moyo-Robbins, 2002). Similarly, Murphy (2006: 232) found that an impressive 96 trainee teachers out of a cohort of 116 (83%) returned a completed questionnaire that contained closed questions. In contrast to this, Easley used a combination of open and closed questions and found the return rate to be only 27% (Easley, 2006).

*Using a scale*

A Likert Scale (Rensis Likert -1932) provides more opportunity than dichotomous questions for gathering information on attitudes, perceptions and opinions (Cohen et al., 2003). This scale and others like it are widely used in educational and social research as they maximize the opportunity for a more flexible response from the respondent, leaving the researcher to be able to determine frequencies and correlations. Plus, they combine quantity and quality by allowing the researcher to measure as well as to gather opinions (Cohen et al., 2003). Although scales are devices used to discover strength of feeling or attitude (Bell, 2002) they raise the problem of one person's 'agree' may be another person's 'strongly agree'. To avoid this, a variation of the Likert Scale called a semantic differential scale can be used. An adjective is placed at one end and its opposite at the other and the respondent answers by circling or marking a number on the scale that most represents what she or he feels. This does not present itself without problems as the respondent may unintentionally begin to grade the numbers and assume, for example, that a 4 is double the strength of a 2, which was not intended by the researcher. Furthermore, respondents often stick to a mid-range response regardless of the question and their feelings.

Those that have successfully used a scale within their research include Bonesronning who used 17 variables describing the behaviour of the Norwegian language teachers, where the students were asked to rank each of the statements about teacher practices on a scale from 1 (this does not describe my teacher at all) to 4 (this describes my teacher perfectly) (Bonesronning, 2004: 10). Easley generated the questions based on existing literature and used a Likert Scale for his closed questions (Easley, 2006: 243). To quantify his data, Murphy used a five-point Likert Scale with a semantic differential scale involving an odd number of scale points that provided a midpoint. This allowed respondents to give an ambivalent response and other than at the end points, the bipolar scales were not labelled so that the respondents could 'locate the scale point' rather than 'adopting the label' (Low, 1999 in Murphy, 2006). Vialle and Quigley used PICS (The Preferred Instructor Characteristics Scale, created by Krumboltz and Farquhar, 1957) for their questionnaire that they distributed to students in Years 7, 9 and 11 at an academically selective high school in New South Wales, Australia. The PICS is a forced-choice 36-item questionnaire that seeks to identify whether the academic or personality characteristics of teachers are more important to the students. Each item requires the students to select either a personal-social attribute or a cognitive-intellectual attribute. The reason for their choice was that PICS had been successfully used in two similar studies undertaken in the USA so it would make their comparisons with these studies more relevant (Vialle and Quigley, 2000: 7).

## 3.6. Analysing the data

### 3.6.(a) Processing and presenting

*Coding*

Questionnaires are somewhat easier than the observations and interviews to process when structured mainly using closed questions that can be easily quantified using coding. The coding of data, what we measure and how we measure it, is closely bound up with our view of social reality (Franzosi, 2004: 281). The conscious choice to exclude variables involves making a decision as to which are important as some variables cancel each other out naturally. However, excluding the wrong ones can be misleading. (Franzosi, 2004: 239). Quantitative socio-historical research is forced to concentrate on those processes that can be submitted to statistical testing profitably to the

exclusion of others, which may well be more relevant, but are not as easily quantifiable (Pring, 2000). This sorting is designed to produce a set of mutually exclusive and exhaustive categories that represent a nominal scale (Coxon, 1999: 5). As data, the question of representing sorting begins from two basic assumptions: that all the objects in the same category are considered to have a high similarity to each other and that the categories themselves are considered to be distinct and separated (Coxon, 1999: 55-56):

> "Categorization and classification – putting a number of things into a smaller number of groups and being able to give the rule by which such allocation is made – are probably the most fundamental operations in thinking and language and are central to a wide variety of disciplines. In a social science context, the process of a person performing such an allocation is called the method of sorting, and the outcome is the most common scale of all, the nominal scale" (Coxon, 1999: 1).

To analyse their interviews and observations, Askew et al. researched and used qualitative coding methods to build up their model of belief systems to classify effective teachers of Numeracy (Askew et al., 1997). Similarly, Vialle and Quigley (2000) coded the responses to the open-ended questions from their questionnaires to determine dominant themes. Castle et al. undertook their quantitative analysis using SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences), where they measured the differences between groups as the independent variable and student teacher evaluation from scores as the dependent variable (Castle et al., 2006: 68). Sachs also used SPSS to analyse data gathered to test the hypothesis that socio-cultural awareness, contextual interpersonal skills, self-understanding, risk taking and efficacy are attributes of urban teachers (Sachs, 2004: 179-181).

*Identifying themes*

While it is possible to perform quantitative analyses on data that is fundamentally qualitative in nature, in other words to go from words to numbers (Franzosi, 2004: 117), some of the researchers chose not to code their qualitative data but instead to identify recurring patterns and themes found within the data. Carroll refers to Marton's Phenomenographic approach (1993) to analyse the written responses to the open-ended questions. This approach aims to reveal and describe the various ways of experiencing a phenomenon or a situation without preconceiving ideas. All of the responses to the same open-ended question were combined, and then read as a whole to identify themes in the data (in Carroll, 2004: 202-3). Similarly, Minor et al. also used a phenomenological mode of inquiry for the first stages of their data analysis to examine the responses of students

regarding their perceptions of characteristics of effective teachers. They also used a method of constant comparison based on Glaser and Strauss (1967) to categorise units that appeared similar in content and to generate and represent a distinct theme. This method of analysis revealed a number of themes relating to students' perceptions of characteristics of effective teachers (in Minor et al., 2002). McDonough used data from observations to produce a list of themes showing 25 practices of effective teachers. It was agreed to list common elements where evidence was available for at least four of the six teachers (McDonough, 2003).

Those that chose to quantify their qualitative data include Castle et al. who undertook quantitative analysis to identify emergent themes and patterns and then went on to categorise recurrent themes. They used these themes to code the data field-notes from the portfolios and interviews (Castle et al., 2006). Ayres et al. used content analysis to identify a list of 'raw' concepts when looking at the data generated through observations and interviews. Once they were satisfied that they had identified the relevant concepts they returned to the observational and interview transcripts and coded all concepts consistently with this final list. This was then used to generate eight categories as follows: school background and students, subject faculty, personal qualities, relationships with students, professional development, resources and planning, classroom climate and teaching strategies (Ayres et al., 2004). In the latter part of their analysis, Minor et al. quantified the themes that emerged within their qualitative data. Such quantifying allowed the frequency of each theme to be calculated and, from these frequencies, they computed percentages to determine the prevalence of each theme (Minor et al., 2002).

### 3.6.(b) Interpreting the data

The interpretation of the data, whether quantified or not, brings about an abundance of issues. Coding data raises similar issues for questionnaires as it does for observations and interviews. It can be argued that simply adding all of the same answers together and giving them a score is something logically odd and it is as though all the answers added together are all of the same logical kind (Pring, 2000: 38). Ashworth identifies an approach to the interpretation of data to help to prevent this: analytical and empathetic. This approach seeks out the hidden meaning in data through finding gaps and is suspicious of what has not been uncovered. Furthermore, Ashworth argues that the use of predetermined categories skews the analysis in the sense that the gaps are present because not all of the responses have been acknowledged (Ashworth, 1987: 21). However,

generating categories derived from the data means that any gaps could be viewed as more genuine because every response has been coded. Interpreting qualitative data can also be problematic because when there are no numbers or tables to consult one has to rely on other interpretive tools, namely our senses. Using our sense of listening to stories is powerful and not a passive process, and a good listener is always alert for things of significance in a story and acts on what he hears (Daloz, 1986). However, this intrusion forms an interpretation that is based on the individual's consciousness and intentions, which in turn are the significant factors in explaining why things happen when they do (Pring, 2000). Just as researchers bring their own distinctive ways at looking at the world to their observations, so do those being researched bring their own understanding to answering the questions (Pring, 2000). Listening is not the only problematic sense that is intrusive during the interpretation stage; observation is also a dangerous and sometimes misleading intrusion. Delamont and Hamilton (1976, in Burgess, 1985) argue that there is an over-emphasis on observational behaviour that leads to the researcher making assumptions about meaning and context. Given the uniqueness of the understanding of each individual's experiences it would seem impossible for the researcher to grasp the significance about what is being said and done so they would need to filter, and this brings their own beliefs and understandings into the picture (Pring, 2000: 400). Intrusion also occurs both through editing and interpreting so it is advised that data is handled as close to its original format as possible to halt questions surrounding validity (Cohen et al., 2003: 167).

## 3.7. Validity, reliability, bias and triangulation

### 3.7.(a) Validity of the case study

Cohen et al. (2003: 133) argue that a case study does not have to seek frequencies or occurrences to make it valid because it is a key to understanding a situation where the quantity is replaced with quality and intensity that separates *'a significant few from the insignificant many'*. It is this significance rather than frequency that offers the researcher a valid insight into the real dynamics of a situation (Cohen et al., 2003). They elaborate further by suggesting that the validity of any qualitative data lies in its ability to represent the participant's reality (if not subjective), that is to say, his or her definition of the situation (Cohen et al., 2003). However, Plummer (1983, in Cohen et al., 2003) disagrees that qualitative data can stand alone as valid data and, alongside Franzosi, suggests that only by means of validation studies can we hope to obtain a better understanding as

they link the non-random sample of events collected during a case study to its population (Franzosi, 2004).

Medwell et al. used such validation studies in the form of a validation group when providing a rationale for their quantitative data and qualitative data. The data was collected to build up as comprehensive a picture as possible of the knowledge, beliefs and teaching practices of a group of teachers identified as effective at teaching literacy. Similar data was also collected from a sample of 'ordinary' teachers (referred to as the validation group) and from a group of student teachers (novice teachers). Thus the findings from the effective teacher sample could be compared and validated against those from the two other teacher groups (Medwell et al., 1998: 4-5).

### 3.7.(b) Reliability

Cohen et al. argue that, although it must be remembered that a case study is unique, it is this uniqueness that may present itself as inconsistent with other case studies. During data collection, critical incidents may be infrequent or happen once, which leaves the question as to whether they should not be discredited or not. They suggest that such incidents, regardless of how frequently they occur, should be credited by checking how reliable they are and that it is this reliability that will help to validate the case study data (Cohen et al., 2003). Bell argues that observations may be more reliable than what people say in interviews because, although interviews provide important data, they do not reveal what actually happens during a situation. Equally, observations can be particularly useful to discover whether people do what they say they do or behave in the way they claim to behave when being interviewed (Bell, 2002). Cohen et al. (2003) suggest that questionnaires are more reliable then interviews because they anonymously create greater honesty amongst those participating in them. However, during the analysis stage of the research, Munn and Drever dispute that with a small-scale questionnaire study, regardless of whether the respondents are honest or not, you would not rely on the statistics to strengthen conclusions. They advocate the 'Margin of uncertainty' when using a sample size of up to 100. They argue that these small samples have a +/- confidence range of 10%[6] (Munn and Drever, 1990).

To check for reliability during the analysis stage of their research, Sachs et al. looked towards previous research when examining factors for content validity. Similarly to Munn and Drever, they

[6] Therefore if 40 people answered 'yes' to a question the range would be that 36-44 agreed.

used statistics (via Cronbach's alpha coefficient and a reliability standard of .60) to ensure that the items within a factor were measuring the same construct and were highly inter-correlated (Sachs, 2004: 179-181). Carpenter et al. (2001) and Murphy (2006) returned copies of transcripts to all respondents for content verification prior to analysis.

### 3.7.(c) Bias

To minimise bias during data collection the researcher needs to eliminate preconceived ideas and prejudices when undertaking observations and interviews. Participant observations make it difficult to stand back and adopt the role of the observer when you know all the members of the group or organisation. The researcher will be familiar with the personalities, strengths and weaknesses of colleagues that would be immediately apparent to a non-participant observer seeing the situation for the first time. (Bell, 2002: 158). Borg (1981: 87) points out that interviews also raise similar issues regarding bias:

> "…the eagerness of the respondent to please the interviewer, a vague antagonism that sometimes arises between the interviewer and respondent, or the tendency for the interviewer to seek out the answers that support his preconceived notions are a few of the factors that may contribute to biasing of data obtained from the interview. These factors are called 'response effect' by survey researchers." (Borg, 1981: 87)

However, Gavron (1966, in Bell, 2002: 139) argues that, although it is difficult to avoid bias completely, an awareness of the problem plus constant self-control can help.

### 3.7.(d) Triangulation

Triangulation may be defined as the use of two or more methods of data collection in the study of some aspect of human behaviour. It is this definition, often cited as methodological triangulation, which is frequently used amongst researchers in the field of effective schools / teachers. It involves studying the richness and complexity of human behaviour from more than one standpoint by making use of a variety of quantitative and qualitative data. Cohen et al. argue that using a vast range of contrasting methods increases the researcher's confidence because findings cannot be attributed to similarities of method (Cohen et al., 2003: 112). Similarly, Munn and Drever suggest that you could use a qualitative method to check your interpretation of your quantitative data to ensure reliability during the analysis stage of the research (Munn and Drever, 1990: 16). Plummer

identifies ways in which to check for validity in qualitative data to include the use of comparison with similar sources, official records or by interviewing other informants (1983, in Cohen et al., 2003: 133). The importance of using other sources to validate data is echoed through Franzosi (2004: 183) who claims that, *"validation of one's data through alternative and independent measures should be an integral part of any research design involving data collection"*. In comparison, methodological triangulation can also involve using the same method on different occasions during the data-gathering stage. It is this combined level of triangulation that seeks to use the same method of gathering data with an individual respondent, a focus group and an organisation or society within one culture. This can lead to cross-cultural triangulation during the analysis stage, which attempts to overcome the limitation of studies conducted within one culture by testing theories amongst different people (Cohen et al., 2003: 113).

Triangulation does not present itself without criticism. Both Silverman (1985) and Denzin (1997) are critical of methodological triangulation. Silverman stresses that a multiple data-source should not be seen as superior to a single data-source or instrument. Denzin argues that measuring a situation more than once interferes with the principle of uniqueness that a case study can bring. Similarly, Patton (1980) argues that, while it most certainly helps, having multiple data sources does not automatically ensure consistency or increase validity, reduce bias or bring objectivity to research (all in Cohen et al., 2003: 115).

Castle et al. used methodological triangulation to add validity to their study. Sources of data were collected for each candidate including student evaluation forms and tapes of teaching presentations, and were used in conjunction with teaching portfolios and notes from portfolio interviews (Castle et al., 2006: 67 - 68). Lunn and Bishop also used triangulation through a variety of methodology (Lunn and Bishop, 2003: 198), as did Murphy who identified initial themes from the questionnaires and reviewed them in light of the evidence from the interviews (Murphy, 2006: 232).

It should be noted that even careful and concise validation of data results does not ensure a realistic and accurate representation. Munn and Drever warn that all research is fallible and at best you get a glimpse into the way things are. Most research leaves you feeling that you need to know more and can raise new areas that need investigation. Its ultimate justification is that it lends to school improvements and professional development and that the knowledge revealed by research is

inevitably incomplete, but it can and does lead to improving the quality of education (Munn and Drever, 1990: 71).

## 3.8. Ethical considerations

### 3.8.(a) Gaining access as an insider

Gaining access relies on achieving goodwill and co-operation. However, it does not present quite such a problem when a one-off survey requires respondents to give up half-an-hour of their time or when a researcher is normally a member of the organisation where the research is taking place. Cohen et al. (2003: 55) warn that in the case of the latter it is generally unwise to take co-operation for granted. Equally, researchers should not assume that the respondents are knowledgeable about the research and they should give as much information as possible about the aims, nature and procedures of the research (Cohen et al., 2003: 55).

### 3.8.(b) Administration of observations, interviews and questionnaires

The non-participant approach to observations presents itself with issues. Observer effects can be considerable as the presence of another teacher in a classroom can have a powerful effect on what takes place. Equally, the welfare of the respondents should be kept in mind even if this involves compromising the impact of the research (Cohen et al., 2003: 58). Furthermore, researchers who undertake their research in the institutions in which they work need to remember that they will be probably working there after the research has finished. A code of conduct has to be considered when researching in the classroom, to address witnessing something that is morally unacceptable (Cohen et al., 2003: 315). Strike lists ethical principles that researchers should adhere to when undertaking observations within the classroom (1990, in Cohen et al., 2003: 69):

- *Due process:* Any judgments that I make are reasonable;
- *Privacy:* The respondents right to control information about ones self;
- *Equality:* The respondents are not judged on gender, race, ethnicity, religion and sexual orientation;
- *Public perspicuity:* My openness to the public about the procedures, purposes and results;

- *Humaneness:* The need for me to be considerate and sensitive;
- *Client belief:* I show respect for the interests of students, parents and public;
- *Academic freedom:* Openness between my respondents and me is maintained in the classroom and that any evaluation should not 'chill' the environment;
- *Respect for autonomy:* The respondents are entitled to discretion and to exercise reasonable judgments about their work.

### 3.8.(c) Confidentiality and anonymity

Asking people who work in institutions to comment on the effectiveness of their institution does not present itself without issues regarding anonymity and confidentiality. Bell (2002: 45) warns that you have to, *"decide what you mean by anonymity and confidentiality"*. For example, it is obvious if you are quoting 'the Head of English' and there is only one Head of English in the school, you are referring to that person (Bell 2002: 45). Cohen et al. argue that anonymity means the information provided by participants should in no way reveal their identity and if there is a chance that a respondent can be identified then the interviewer can promise only confidentiality, not anonymity (Cohen et al., 2003:61). Carpenter et al. guaranteed anonymity of personnel and schools at the beginning of their empirical data gathering because, although they only had 9 teacher respondents labelled A to I, they argued that there was nothing in their analysis and discussion that could identify each teacher (Carpenter et al., 2001: 1 - 2).

## 3.9. Research design

### 3.9.(a) Time scale of my case study

The only time-scale that is relevant is the follow-up interviews being carried out on the same day or the next day. This is in order for the participant to reflect on the observation and for the researcher to generate questions based on what she saw. However, this small-scale research was restricted in order to be completed within a time limit; therefore data was collected predominately between September 2007 and January 2008.

### 3.9.(b) The participants

Choosing to undertake my study at my institution alone had an impact on the type of sampling that I chose. I was aware that this small-scale study, with only 18 teachers, was reliant on nearly all or if not all of the teachers participating if I wanted to generate patterns and themes concerning their perceptions. Therefore, I used non-probability sampling and avoided representing the wider population, instead seeking to represent a particular group of teachers. I was aware that, as discussed by Cohen et al., a non-probability sample is unrepresentative of the whole population and it may therefore demonstrate greater bias than probability sampling. However, by choosing this type of sampling, my data represents itself as a group and does not seek to make generalisations about the wider population, rather perceptions of that group (Cohen et al., 2005: 99). I used purposive sampling as I wanted to target teachers in my institution to gather their perceptions. I also utilised opportunity sampling because I was aware that, with my sample being modest to begin with, I was dependent on the goodwill and availability of participants and, as discussed by Bell, it might be that I would have to observe and interview anyone from the total volunteers (Bell, 2002: 126). Before I introduced my study and chose my teacher participants I spent time talking to all of the 17 teachers at the school (18 in total including me) about the issue of teacher effectiveness. I wanted to build up a picture of what they thought determined the effectiveness of a teacher in order to guide me towards what to look for. Considering the review of the literature I expected them to focus on the academic outcomes of the children and the importance of fostering positive relationships as a secondary aspect. This is what happened and left me thinking that I had answered my research question in a few minutes. However, when I tentatively broached the subject on *how* they thought they could be more effective rather than *what* makes them an effective teacher, many of them focussed on the children getting higher end of year levels. Three potential participants suggested that they could be more patient with the children and kinder to them. This added clarity to my choice to research the behaviours of the teachers as a method of contributing to the debate on what type of behaviours teachers deploy effectively, and in order to evaluate their own effectiveness and areas to develop. Furthermore, I wanted to elicit if the teachers could actually recognise *if* and *how* they were being effective in the classroom. This has an impact on what they look for when judging teacher effectiveness, required in their role as a subject leader.

A combination of quota and purposive sampling was used to select the 25 children aged between 4 and 11 from the seven different year groups at the school. 3 or 4 children of various academic abilities were chosen from each year group, with an even mix of girls and boys. I chose 50% boys and 50% girls based on the school data that there is 52% girls on roll and 48% boys. I purposely wanted an equal amount of children from each age group and of various abilities to be representative of the school community. I used a combination of random and opportunity sampling when choosing parents to receive the questionnaires. I chose to send them to every family to give everyone an equal chance. I anticipated that this would generate a random sample of this group as I knew that, based on previous research, the response rate would be about 25%. I wanted this group to be able to represent itself as a group and not seek to make generalisations about the wider population, rather than perceptions of that group. I also acknowledged the point made by Bell who states that, because research is dependent on the goodwill and availability of subjects, it is difficult for a small-scale study to achieve a truly random sample, therefore it may be that you have to interview anyone from the total volunteers (Bell, 2002: 126). Each of the 367 families was sent a copy of the questionnaire and 120 were returned (see appendix 2). As the questionnaire was confidential it was difficult to say whether this sample was representative of the group. However, 51 of the respondents added their names to the questionnaires and this showed that there was a response from a variety of families regarding social, economic and cultural backgrounds, which was in line with the school demographics. I wanted to ask the families to comment on what goes on in the classroom even though I knew it would be difficult for them. I hoped to establish whether parents understand what is meant by effective teachers and how, through their communication, they can help us develop as effective as practitioners by providing us with feedback from their children about what works best for them in the classroom. Below is a table outlining the details of my participants:

| Method | Amount of participants | Duration |
|---|---|---|
| Non-participant observations of lessons | 11 teachers volunteered from the 17* approached (Undertaken by me). | 60 minutes |
| Follow-up semi-structured interviews | The same 11 volunteered from the 17* approached (Undertaken by me). | 30 minutes approximately. Followed up on the same day or the next day. |
| 2 Focus group discussions | The remaining 6 (2 groups of 3) out of the 17 volunteered – groups composed by me (Administered by me). | 30 minutes approximately. |
| Anonymous questionnaire to parents | All 367 families sent a copy, 120 returned (return rate of 33%). | 2 weeks during October 2007 – late returns were accepted up until October 31st (half term). |
| Pupil interviews | 25 children (3 or 4 from each of the 7 year groups, of varying abilities and either gender) chosen by teachers. (Administered by another adult known to all 25 children). | 30 minutes approximately. |

**Table 1: Outline of the sequence of events and details regarding participants.**

**Note: I am the eighteenth teacher referred to in the discussion and though I was not observed, I did contribute by providing information based on the interview questions.*

### 3.9.(c) Gaining access, confidentiality and anonymity

To gain access to my respondents or colleagues I arranged a meeting with them to discuss the research, its content and timescale. This helped to keep the channels of communication open and generated goodwill from my colleagues. I endeavoured to follow the advice and guidance from Strike (as previously mentioned) to protect the professional integrity of my colleagues and myself when administering my interviews and observations. Although the school will not be named in my study I could not guarantee anonymity as there is a chance that it can be identified from the information provided about it (size, location, catchment area). My respondents were assured of confidentiality through the use of a pseudonym, however anonymity could not be guaranteed as description or information about colleagues may lead to identifying them. For example, if I make a reference to a subject leader, then the search is narrowed down to one person in most cases. Prior to the interviews, as well as during them, the respondents were reminded that they had the power to reveal as much or as little information as they wished.

### 3.9.(d) Choosing my questions

*Questionnaires*

The questions and categories regarding parents' perceptions of effective teaching were generated from the reoccurring factors of effective teachers determined from selected research undertaken between 1976-2006 in the UK, USA and Australia (see appendix 2). The 10 categories regarding the question relating to the effectiveness of the school were based on the 10 most frequent comments made by parents during an Ofsted meeting in May 2007. As part of protocol, they were invited to discuss aspects of the school which they felt would help Ofsted to make a judgment of outstanding (this is the judgment that the school had judged itself in its SEF (School Evaluation Form). 37 parents attended, representing 26 families out of the 367 families invited.

*Individual interviews*

The basis of these questions was to find out perceptions of effectiveness, therefore they were described to the participants as structured prompts rather than questions to generate a 'correct' answer (see appendix 5).

The first question I asked was to gain an insight regarding what the teachers perceived the terminology 'effective' meant to them when describing teachers and schools (What is your understanding of the terminology of an: 'Effective' teacher? 'Effective' school?). Asking this question first allowed me to relate their subsequent answers to their understanding to compare for correlations during the data analysis stage. Furthermore, it helped the teachers to clarify what they perceived as effective, and enabled them to use this definition in subsequent responses. I wanted to gather perceptions to see if the teachers were in agreement with my definition of effectiveness. With reference to Berliner, I distinguish good teaching from effective teaching and argue that good teaching is when the standards of the field are upheld and that good is normative and what should be expected, whereas effective teaching involves reaching for more achievement goals and is about children learning beyond what they are supposed to learn. Furthermore, I agree that a high quality teacher shows evidence of both good and effective teaching (Berliner, 2005: 206-7).

I chose to follow with a question regarding what the teachers perceive themselves as doing in their practice to make them effective early in the interview as I wanted to gather their perceptions as true to their belief as possible. (What are the main factors that you try to employ in your practice to make you an 'effective' teacher?). I felt that if I asked this question nearer to the end, they would draw on their answers given about other teachers and represent these perceptions in their answers. I believe that by choosing the wording carefully and by placing the emphasis on their 'practice', they would comment on their behaviours in the context of the practicalities of teaching (what they do) and the personal characteristics (how they do it) as suggested by Renzulli (1968, in Vialle and Quigley, 2000: 1). I did not want to use the terminology 'behaviour' in the question because I felt that they may focus on how they act in the classroom, rather than the definition that I have adopted in reference to Renzulli.

Question 3 was formulated from my reading during the review of the literature and my observational notes from the observations. (When I observed you I noticed that you……. This is similar to the theory / ideas of …… who believes that……. a) Is this something you are aware of? b) Do you strive to do this? c) Has anyone told you this before? d) Do you do it because you have been advised to or have seen others do it successfully?). I cross-referenced the notes that I made during the observations with the main themes of effective teaching from the literature that I read[7]. I used this to scaffold my line of questioning as I wanted to see if the teachers were reflecting on existing ideas / theories and linking them to their practice as discussed by Schön's theory of reflection-in-action. This can include reflection on strategies, theories and behaviours. Similar to being post-reflective this can be troublesome and self-critical but, as with all reflection, can lead to a new theory being articulated (Schön, 1983: 62-63).

I then went on to broaden the discussion of their perceptions by asking them to think of a colleague that they have encountered at any point during their career and describe how they perceive them to be effective in their opinion. (Is there a teacher, either at this school or another school, whom you think could be described as 'effective'? (You don't have to name them!) What do they do that makes them 'effective' in your eyes?). This was asked directly after the previous question in an attempt to compare what the teachers perceived as effective in others and how they utilise these

[7] McBer 2000: classroom climate, teacher skills and characteristics, Fenstermacher and Richardson 2005 (in Berliner 2005): teacher characteristics (logical, moral and psychological), Good et al 2006: teacher communication, classroom environment, relationships, Piaget 1987: child centred approach, Vygotsky 1987: teacher as a guide / scaffold, Cripps & Walsh 2001: moral code of teachers, Harslett et al 1998: teachers being understanding, Grant and Gillette 2006: 'culturally responsive', Renzulli 1968: behaviours of teachers, Vialle & Quigley 2000, Campbell et al 2003 and Sakarneh 2004: teacher characteristics, Dewey 1933: reflect on practice.

perceptions within their own teaching. By asking the teachers to focus on how they perceive others, I was aiming for them to clarify how they had answered the first three questions. I made the assumption that their responses to this question would compare with those in previous questions, but would also elicit their perceptions on a wider scale (effectiveness of others) rather than concern their own effectiveness.

Once I was confident that I had elicited a clear account of their perceptions of effectiveness of both themselves and others, I wanted them to focus on an area for development to see if they were referring to the positives in others or reflecting on their own practice to look for improvement. (Although this is a positive study what do you think that you could do to be more 'effective'?). I followed up by asking them how they perceived this could be achieved. (How will you do this?). This question forms an essential part to help address the aims of this study. This research is not only attempting to uncover perceptions of teacher effectiveness, it is also aiming to offer suggestions for areas of improvement and I wanted to see if teachers could offer these themselves. I also wanted to determine whether the teachers were placing a focus on the practical skills of teaching as discussed by the OECD's model of 3 levels that teachers should be working at (classroom, school and individual) (OECD, 2005: 27), or the 3 personal characteristics (logical, psychological and moral) of the teacher as defined by Fenstermacher and Richardson (2005, in Berliner, 2005: 207). Asking teachers to reflect on how they think they can improve builds on from Schön's theory of reflection-in-action. Although this study was promoted as a positive study, I wanted to research whether the teachers could reflect on their practice and offer improvements as I know from informal discussions and experiences with colleagues, this is an aspect that teachers find challenging. Schön argues that many teachers view themselves as experts and have become too skilful at dealing with situations when they arise so they find nothing in their practice to reflect on. Some are uneasy as they view it as a sign of weakness; others are more accepting yet are unsure of what to do (Schön, 1983: 69). Furthermore, I asked these two questions to elicit further the teachers' perceptions of effective teachers. My rationale was that if they could identify an area for improvement and an idea of how to improve this, then this also would add to their perceptions of what they deem to be effective.

The next 3 questions focussed on the effectiveness of the school as I wanted to compare their perceptions of effective teachers to those of effective schools to see if there were any correlations. (1. According to Ofsted and yearly SATs results this could be described as an 'effective school'.

What factors do you think makes this an ‘effective’ school? 2. Having worked at other schools, either as a teacher or a student teacher, how would you compare this school in terms of effectiveness (is this the most effective school that you have worked in)? 3. What do you think this school could do to become more ‘effective’?). Although not directly related to effectiveness, it has been proven that schools with teachers who do not have qualified or experienced staff will struggle to deliver a high quality of education and this has a dire impact on the status of the school. The school is viewed as ‘low’ and this leaves potential staff unable to see themselves easily succeeding because a school can attract staff based on its reputation and organisational stability (Lupton, 2005: 596). I am keen to make the links as to whether the teachers perceive teacher effectiveness as being important to overall school effectiveness. The OECD (2005: 27) has already made links between the importance of the effectiveness of the teacher on the development of the school by suggesting that an effective teacher should be working at a school level which sees them planning in teams, using evaluation and systematic improvement planning using I.C.T. in teaching and administration, taking part in projects between schools, and being involved in management and shared leadership. The effectiveness of a teachers’ ability to be ‘culturally responsive’ can also impact on how effectively the school is viewed within the wider community. ‘Culturally responsive’ teachers build a “community of learners” in the classroom and connect with students’ families. (Grant and Gillette, 2006: 294) It is this ongoing and ever-changing interaction that integrates the teachers into the community of the students. Ladson-Billings (1994) described effective teachers as individuals with positive self-concept who see themselves as a part of the community and who see teaching as giving back to the community. They develop a knowledge base about the community to include events, people, and places that rarely get addressed in the curriculum. (Ladson-Billings in Grant and Gillette, 2006: 296).

The final question attempted to identify any connections the teachers perceive between teacher and school effectiveness by asking them how they perceive their role is contributing to the development of the effectiveness of the school (How could you contribute to helping the school to do this?). I wanted to gather perceptions on whether teachers were making links between their own Professional Development and the development of the school. 77% of teachers made at least one change to make their teaching practice more effective as a result of PD (Boyle et al., 2004: 64). Longer-term PD provided the opportunity and drive for the teachers to develop and clarify their own personal philosophies about teaching effectively. (Medwell et al., 1998: 66 - 67).

*Focus group interviews*

These were based on the questions in the individual interviews but were less structured. The subsequent follow-up prompts were also based on these questions (see appendix 4).

*Pupil voice interviews*

The pupil voice questions were more structured than the individual interviews with the teachers in order to keep the children more focused (see appendix 3).

I wanted to gather their perceptions regarding effective teachers. I chose to question them about their current teacher first to focus them as I didn't want them to have to think on a wider scale for the beginning question. I anticipated that, similarly to previous research, the children would focus on the behaviours of their teacher (Renzulli 1968 in Vialle and Quigley 2000), their personality and characteristics[8]. I wanted to gather their perceptions on areas for teacher improvement to see if they correlated with any of the areas that the parents and teachers raised during their questionnaires / interviews. Lastly, I wanted to broaden their answers so as not to focus on just their current teacher, so I asked them about their 'best' teacher and what they did or do to figure as their 'best'.

The final question: 'How do you know this is a good school?', may seem to be leading the children by suggesting that the school is a good school. However, the children were fully aware at that time that the school could be deemed good as the research was undertaken in October 2007, soon after the successful Ofsted in May 2007. During this time, the school promoted the notion of the school as being a good school and the children were aware of the reasons why the school was described as such. The administration of the interviews also coincided with the official Ofsted report being published 2 weeks prior to this and during this time the report findings were discussed with the children at a level that they could access. I was confident that if I were to ask the children to judge the school they would have said it was a good school, so I was more interested in gathering their perceptions of what they think makes this a good school.

[8] Vialle and Quigley 2000, Campbell et al 2003, Sakarneh 2004; teacher characteristics, Cripps and Walsh 2001: moral code of teachers, Harslett et al 1998: understanding teacher, Grant and Gillette 2006: 'culturally responsive'.

### 3.9.(e) Administering the observations, questionnaires and interviews

*Observation followed by interviews*

All 17 teachers were invited to participate in the study as I wanted my data to be representative of a varied sample, particularly because of the small sample of teachers approached. 11 teachers volunteered to take part in the observation and follow-up interview stage of the research and the remaining 6 wanted to take part in the focus group discussion. I chose to undertake non-participant lesson observations followed up by semi-structured interviews with 12 respondents (myself included in this total). I decided to use the observation criteria set by the school when observing teachers. This format has relevant headings ('agenda of issues') that combine simple coding and space for notes ('less predetermined'). Also, using a similar format will make comparisons easier and more relevant if I want to utilise data from observations previously undertaken by others to aid validity or to look for common themes during the data analysis stage. To identify the effective elements of the lesson, the interviews focussed on using pre-structured questions (see appendix 5) and unstructured questions generated from the observations and from the responses of the participant. Although I used a semi-structured interview approach there were elements of focussed interviews with an emphasis placed on my respondents' subjective responses to a known situation in which they have been analysed (lesson observation) by the researcher prior to the interview (Cohen et al., 2003: 273). I wanted to give my participants a voice as true to their experiences as possible without too much guidance from me. Like Towse et al. (2002), I believe that too many instructions and questions intrude on and compromise the quality of the data. Equally, while I wanted my participants to feel that they could relate to me because I too have relevant experiences to share, I aimed to keep my own experiences and thoughts aside to ensure that the interview data reflected their words and experiences. As noted by Mayer et al. (1997: 3-4) during their research, this focussed approach frequently saw the respondent as the expert and myself cast in the role of a facilitator whose main task was to assist the expert (participant) to recall the sought-after knowledge. I gathered their responses to the observation immediately or a day or two after the observation in order to keep the responses as reliable as possible. The unstructured questions that arose through the interviews helped to clarify and elaborate on the structured responses.

*Focus group interviews*

To ensure that the group for the group interviews did not lose focus or was too large to be representative I carried out two focus group interviews (that lasted 38 minutes and 49 minutes respectively) with the remaining 6 participants and selected 3 respondents with varying levels of experience in each group (see appendix 4). Similar to Goodrum et al., I wished to yield insights into practice and beliefs and to extract the wisdom of all the knowledgeable players in the field of study (Goodrum et al., 2001 in Tytler et al., 2004: 179-180). During the interviews I strived to follow Whyte's 1982 six-point scale of 'directiveness' (1= least directive, 6 = most) to ensure that I gathered data that was reflective and relevant to the lesson observations. This is summarised in Cohen et al., (2003: 268) as:

1. Make minimal encouraging noises;
2. Reflect on remarks made by the respondent;
3. Probe on the last remark made by the respondent;
4. Probe an idea preceding the last remark by the respondent;
5. Probe an idea expressed earlier in the interview;
6. Introduce a new topic.

*'Pupil voice' interviews*

25 children were chosen to take part in the interviews. Class teachers were asked to identify 3 or 4 children of either gender from each of the 7 year groups (ages 4-11), who were willing to talk openly during a 1-1 situation. It was not specified whether they had to be all of one gender and of mixed abilities and as a result of this I was given 25 names, 13 boys and 12 girls. When constructing the 'pupil voice' interviews with the 25 children I used a structured approach as I felt that they needed clear structured questioning to understand what was being asked of them (see appendix 3). Furthermore, because the ages of the children varied from 4 – 11 years old, I differentiated the questions accordingly but still allowed for this wording to be changed instantly during the interviews if needed. I foresaw that these 1-1 interviews would be problematic in gathering the quality of information that I required. I was concerned that the children would

answer to try to please me or to tell me what they think I wanted to hear, as I am one of the teachers that they are being asked about in the interviews. To counteract this I enlisted the help of an outside interviewer known to all of the children to conduct all 25 of the interviews. I wanted the same person to carry out all 25 of the interviews to counteract the effect of interviewer variance. Having worked in the roles of a Teaching Assistant and Midday Assistant during the past 8 years, my chosen colleague is well known to all of the children. She was required to encourage them to be as free with their answers as possible and reassure them that they will remain anonymous. Another benefit of this was that I saved valuable time because interviewing children is time-consuming due to them taking longer than adults to process and answer.

*Distributing questions before the interviews*

I chose to ask respondents if they wanted me to distribute copies of the structured questions before the follow-up interviews. As all but one participant declined this, I gave my respondents a brief synopsis of the structured questions before the observation, explaining the focus of the observation and the follow-up interview to give them an insight into the themes that I am looking for and those that we will also be discussing in the interview. This brief was also administered a day before the focus group interviews as I chose to give my focus group respondents this time to think about the brief in more depth. It was aimed that this would instill confidence and allow all respondents to be given the opportunity to participate, regardless of amount of knowledge, role or assertiveness. I also chose to generate profiles of each teacher to see if their route to teaching and their own educational experiences affected their behaviours (see appendix 6).

*Questionnaires*

My target audience was 367 families with children in the school. I was concerned that if I had a return rate similar to Moyo-Robbins (2002) or Murphy (2006), I could be looking at over 200 questionnaires. I would have liked to use a combination of closed and open questions but due to time restraints I knew that I would not be able to encode over 200 questionnaires. To avoid this, I generated questions based on a variation of the Likert Scale called a semantic differential scale. This allowed my respondents to choose the response that best fitted their thoughts, but did not include a middle value in order to discourage them from choosing the middle of the road response. I also included a statement to encourage my respondents to make any additional comments.

### 3.9.(f) Presenting and analysing the data

When presenting and analysing the data I chose to generate categories based on the recurring themes found in the qualitative data (observations, interviews and additional comments by parents). I also coded the quantitative data from the questionnaires to note recurring points. The three findings chapters were organised as the three research questions.

*Validity, bias, reliability and triangulation*

To validate my data I used methodological triangulation to understand the dynamics of a particular situation / culture. The observations followed by interviews gave me an insight into comparing the reliability of what people do and what they say they do. However, in order to be as objective as possible as an observer, I was careful not to make assumptions about meaning and context when interpreting the notes from the observations (Delamont and Hamilton, 1976, in Burgess, 1985). It was difficult for me not to bring my own beliefs and understanding into the picture, given the uniqueness of the understanding of each individual's experiences (Pring, 2000). To counteract this intrusion, I handled and utilised my data as close to its original format as possible when making judgments (Cohen et al., 2003). The questionnaires were anonymous so it is expected that they generated a greater honesty amongst the parents of the children. The transcripts of the interviews were returned to the respondents to check for accuracy. During the interviews, to avoid the 'response effect' as discussed by Borg (1981), I did not disregard data that did not support my preconceived notions. Furthermore, the antagonism that sometimes arises between the interviewer and the respondent was negligible due to minimal input from me. I allowed the freedom and the flexibility of the respondent to talk. Equally, to help to minimise any eagerness of the respondent in wanting to please me, this study was put forward to them as a positive study that focuses on good practice. This left the respondent feeling comfortable to focus on and talk honestly about their practice.

# 4. PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPACT OF PLANNING AND TEACHING ON PUPILS' ACADEMIC DEVELOPMENT

Previous research concludes that one factor which determines the effectiveness of a school[9] is that an effective teacher[10] can raise the standards of the children's learning and social interactions. These studies into school effectiveness date back as far as Renzulli's 1968 survey, which determined that, *"the most important element in the success of programmes for students was the teacher"* (in Vialle and Quigley, 2000: 1) and more recently, the OECD (2005) who claim, after extensive worldwide research into effective teaching, *"that 'teacher quality' is the single most important school variable influencing student achievement"* (OECD, 2005: 26). Equally, Good et al. (2006) concluded that, *"teachers make a difference to student learning and research consistently suggests that among the educational variables that can influence student achievement, the quality of teaching is the most important"* (Good et al., 2006: 412). Furthermore, Lupton (2005) researched the opposite phenomenon when they carried out their study of 'failing' schools and found that, *"schools that do not have suitably qualified or experienced staff will struggle to deliver a high quality of education"* (Lupton, 2005: 596). 112 (93%) out of the 120 parents who responded to the questionnaire made statements that replicate the aforementioned previous findings from research. The parents claim that the quality of the teaching[11] is the most important factor when attempting to determine the effectiveness of the school. This was also reflected in the interviews with the children, where a third of them (8 individual responses) stated that the teaching was the most important factor. As many of the children gave answers using words that are difficult to define such as 'good', 'well' and 'nice', they were pressed to elaborate on what they meant by these words:

> I find the teachers are very good at teaching; they use expression to add meaning when reading texts. (Child G)
>
> All the teachers are good; they are firm but encouraging. (Child K)

[9] An 'effective school' is defined by Ofsted (Office for Standards in Education) who cite the aims of 'Every Child Matters' (ECM), the UK Government's initiative formed in 2003, for every child whatever their background or their circumstances to be in a supportive environment that promotes: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and achieving economic well-being. During an inspection by Ofsted the quality of provision is determined by how effective the teaching, training and learning are and how well the teaching and/or training and resources promote learning, address the full range of learners' needs and meet course or programme requirements. They also focus on how well the learners are guided and supported and the quality of the care, advice, guidance and other support provided to safeguard welfare, promote personal development and achieve high standards (Sources: Ofsted website and Every Child Matters websites).

[10] Discussed in chapter 1 and 2 as their commitment to developing the academic achievement of each child through planning and teaching and someone who can create a desirable learning environment for learning through their behaviour.

[11] Comments from parental questionnaire summarise this as the teacher's commitment to developing the learning of their children via going out of their way to benefit the children, being fair and consistent with the children, setting realistic expectations and boundaries and nurturing the children.

> They (teachers) do good teaching; they are good at talking to us in a loud voice so that we understand what we need to do. (Child Q)
>
> All the teachers have good teaching techniques; they make lessons fun by letting us use things like artefacts and computers. (Child L)
>
> They (teachers) teach well, they know a lot about their subjects and this helps them to teach us better. (Child V)
>
> The teachers teach you how to spell hard words and they explain what to do really well. (Child M)
>
> All the teachers are nice and I've learnt a lot. They make the lessons fun by letting us work in groups and getting our hands onto stuff. (Child D)
>
> They (teachers) make lessons fun by taking us outside to learn and sometimes they challenge me by giving me hard work. (Child B)

This chapter discusses the perceptions of teachers regarding how they use their pedagogical and subject knowledge and skills to plan and teach activities that are tailored to the academic development of each child. The data from the interviews, observations and questionnaires suggests that they demonstrate their ability to do this through planning activities and using teaching strategies based on a child-centred approach. Previous research by Minor et al. revealed that teachers and students regard being student-centered as one of the most common characteristic of effective teachers (Minor et al., 2002: 121). This is supported by comments made by three teachers during their individual interviews:

> An effective teacher develops each child's needs. She considers the child as a whole, as an individual as opposed to part of a whole class. I definitely focus on the individual child. I'm very much more aware of how I need to give each child specific strategies for them that are personal to them that allow them to achieve their own targets rather than giving them one that works for the bulk of the children. You need to home in on the individual child. (Verity)
>
> I like to make sure that I know the children individually and I know what their strengths and weaknesses are. In this school there is a huge impetus in making sure that every single child achieves the best in which they are capable and that is a driving force in this school and I think there are other schools that could learn from that commitment and focus on individual children. (Hyacinth)

> The staff should know their children as individuals to help them to develop. (Anna)

This was evident during the teacher observations when all three of these teachers, plus an additional five out of the ten teachers observed, used differentiation of questioning to target the individual child. They showed that they have a secure understanding of the requirements of each individual child by adapting their questions to suit the ability level of each child when they struggled to respond. In particular, Verity spent time with each pair of children going through their individual writing targets in relation to the piece of writing that they were working on. Although each child in the pair was working on a joint piece of writing, she steered her questioning of the children towards their own personalised writing targets to help them move their own writing on. This commitment to the development of the individual child through differentiation is echoed through Julian:

> On a purely simplistic and personal level I believe an effective teacher is someone who is able to use differentiation to help each individual pupil achieve in their own right regardless of any data indicator which could 'pigeon hole' them at the outset and ultimately prejudice your opinion of them. (Julian)

This is further supported by the data from the report conducted by The OECD in 2005. After extensive worldwide research into factors that determine effective teachers, they concluded that teachers should address the learning needs of the individual learner (OECD, 2005). Tytler et al. emphasise the link between teachers being child-centred and planning and teaching. They found that this individual child-centred approach determined what or how the teacher taught. They concluded that effective teachers, *"are all 'student centered' in the sense that children's ideas and interests are given serious attention and often determine the direction of classes"* (Tytler et al., 2004: 187). The data from this chapter discusses in detail how teachers are effective when using the interlinked tools of planning and teaching to focus on and develop each individual child academically. This includes planning and teaching well-paced and challenging activities that cater for all abilities including extending the more able. For example, Kaitlin planned a task that involved the children working in groups. None of the groups were given a set amount of Maths problems to solve in the time allowed, rather she gave them the flexibility of a set of progressively challenging problems to tackle and they were asked to work through as many as they could. The lower ability children worked on two of the problems whereas the higher ability group got to the eighth one and found that it was difficult for them to do as it involved a multi-step process.

Furthermore, this chapter discusses whether during planning and teaching, teachers effectively utilise their subject knowledge and knowledge of where the children are aiming towards regarding their learning (an aspect that also requires the teacher to know where they are coming from) and their pedagogical knowledge of how children learn and behave. During Sasha's observation it was evident that she was using her subject knowledge and awareness of where the children were coming from and going to in terms of their learning. Many of the children were asking thought provoking questions about the scientific elements of gases around them. One child asked about how we know that there are gases around us and Sasha gave him a correct explanation using a visual example with a plastic bag to demonstrate. Another child was struggling to grasp a particular concept so Sasha questioned her about what she already knew and then built her explanation and demonstration on the child's knowledge. This example shows that effective teachers carry out planned activities using a variety of learning styles, teaching techniques and differentiated questioning to suit the individual learner. It also demonstrates that they project their planned objectives to the children in a manner that they understand what is expected of them and put the learning into context (relate it to previous learning). Equally, Sasha showed that effective teachers are flexible and adaptable within their teaching and planning in order to change aspects of pre-planned activities to benefit the learning of the children.

The following discusses these six factors that emerged from this data in more detail. The focus discusses the perceptions of teachers regarding how they use their pedagogical and subject knowledge and skills to plan and teach activities that are tailored to the academic development of each child. This chapter also discusses perceived improvements to these six factors and concludes with a summary of the chapter.

## 4.1. Plans and teaches well-paced activities

The importance of planning and teaching activities that extend and cater for the needs of the individual child has been established as one of the main factors of effective teaching and planning through extensive research such as that by Tytler et al. (2004). They found that the most effective teachers in their study were all 'student-centered' in the sense that not only were the children's ideas and interests given serious attention and often determined the direction of the classes, but that the children also had a strong sense of their own intentions and direction. They concluded that one aspect that effective teachers emphasised was, *"the role of individual learners by focusing on*

*assessment and differentiation"* (Tytler et al. 2004: 187). Another dimension that they noted was that effective teachers embraced the children's learning as a community phenomenon at a range of levels as well as having an individual responsibility for individuals having different needs and pathways (Tytler et al. 2004: 188). Three of the teachers interviewed acknowledge the needs of these individuals and group communities and plan activities to engage their interest and prevent them from getting bored.

> I believe in excellence through enjoyment and I think that we bore children of school very early on with our demanding and sometimes mundane curriculum, so I do try to make it fun for everyone, not just the group as a whole. (Kaitlin)

> Actually, I do like to keep things really moving and try lots of different things to try to keep all of the children interested otherwise they do get bored. (Katrina)

> I'm conscious of pace and speed, not boring them with the things that they do need to know. That if it's more hands on as it sinks in more if they are doing it rather than always sitting and listening to me. I try to think about children who learn better this way. (Sandy)

It was noted during the observations that these three teachers had planned activities and whole class work that was challenging and well-timed in that there was good 'pace' to keep the children motivated and on task. Muijs and Reynolds argue that the pace needs to be fast for lower-level skills, leaving more time for reflection when higher-level skills are used (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 40). Kaitlin displayed this by allowing her groups to set their own pace of working through maths problems that got progressively challenging[12] for the ability of her group. It was noted that the children spent more time on the more challenging concepts. Katrina organised a carousel of thought-provoking activities that lasted for a limited time. This meant that the children could circulate in order to keep them more focused because they had a time limit to adhere to (computer, art and working with the teacher on science questions). Sandy was aware that the children were excited about working on the computers so she allowed them to use them but she stopped them at intervals to explain what to do. Muijs and Reynolds state that this is critical to understanding. They argue that teachers need to present the material they are teaching in well structured, clear small steps, which children need to master before going on to the next part (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 40). They also cite Kounin (1970) to support their claim. He argues that pace relies on teachers not 'dangling / flip-flapping' (starting an activity and going onto another, or changing their mind halfway through), 'over dwelling' by not realising when children have grasped a concept and

[12] After discussion with several children, a 'challenging' activity can be defined as being more difficult because it is more thought-provoking.

'fragmentation' by giving too many short instructions a once (Kounin, 1970 in Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 82-83). Evidence from the interviews (Jane) and the focus group discussions (Janice) echo the importance of planning such activities.

> Lessons must contain a balance of talk and activities and these should be varied and imaginative and tailored to suit the individual learner. (Jane)

> An effective teacher is a good planner, planning activities that are engaging, interesting and challenging for their children to do. (Janice)

For Janice it is essential that she adhere to this as she is planning for the Foundation Stage (Ages 3-5) where it is mandatory that the children experience a wide variety of activities (based on the requirements as set out in the Foundation Stage Profile that tracks the progress in 6 disciplines for each individual child). This was reflected in the comments made by the children, where they expressed their enjoyment when having the opportunity to partake in fun and engaging activities. They defined these as: being able to play games (Child P), get to do fun practical things (Child T) and were able to make lots of interesting things and get messy (Child U).

Dewey states that it is the responsibility of the teachers to commit themselves to plan for and carry out these types of activities that the children enjoy. He argues that they can do this by being willing to try and learn new things themselves. This is not a modern concept as Dewey defined this as 'intellectual responsibility' over 70 years ago and explains it as two interlinked concepts:

> "The desire to learn new things and the willingness to become absorbed in the task and holding oneself accountable for teaching in an engaging way." (Dewey 1933: 17)

### 4.2. Cater for all abilities including extending the more able

Vygotsky rejected any approach advocating that teachers have rigid control over children's learning. Alongside with Piaget (1987) he believed that teachers' control over children's activities is what counts. He argues that effective teachers can extend and challenge children to go beyond where they otherwise could have if they guide them through activities rather than just leaving them to get on with it (in Gross, 2005). It was evident from the observations that eight out of ten teachers were catering for the range of abilities by using differentiated questioning and activities to

guide and extend the more able. An example of this was noted during Kaitlin's observation. When two children had finished a Maths task long before the rest of the class she used questioning to check that they had understood the task properly. She then gave them a more thought-provoking additional task to do based on what they had been doing. This structure gave them the guidance they needed to go off and work on the activity together whilst still giving the teacher the control over the activity. Muijs and Reynolds support this style of planning and teaching, enforcing that it is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that work is tailored to the objectives of the lesson and the pupils taught (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 41). Additionally, this is something that the Headteacher has noticed when observing certain teachers at the school and has passed on to Katrina to aid her own development in this area.

> There are two or three teachers (at this school) that I've noticed who are effective at extending the more able but who are also the ones that I've been told (by the Headteacher) to watch to get some ideas from them as I think that they are good at extending the more able children. (Katrina)

During the focus group discussions Jenny expressed that a teacher needs to know where the children are starting from in terms of their learning and to be aware of their level when pitching activities and differentiating lessons if they want to extend the more able effectively. This was evident in both Kaitlin's Maths and Sasha's Science observations where they both pitched questioning and activities based on the previous knowledge of the children in the group. Eve agreed that while this does happen at this school, she is concerned that some of the children with special educational needs and those who are more able are not always catered for fully enough.

> I think that we do differentiate here and do use what we know about the children's knowledge to plan but at times some of the children with SEN need either lower ability or the higher ability are not always catered for fully enough. (Eve)

Child B also reflected this and claimed that he sometimes gets challenged by the teachers but not always. When asked to clarify what he meant by 'challenged' he explained that a harder activity is when he has to think more about it and take more time to work it out rather than just doing more of the same thing. Both Kaitlin's observation and Child B's comments suggest that a more 'challenging' task is one that extends the thinking of the children through being more thought-provoking. However, as Schön (1983) argues, differentiation is a difficult task and he

acknowledges its limitations. He stresses that a teacher must somehow manage the work of thirty children in a classroom, so it is difficult to really listen to any one of them (Schön, 1983: 333).

4.3. Utilise their subject knowledge and their pedagogical knowledge

Being knowledgeable was a factor that was deemed important in other previous research such as that undertaken by Gustafsson and Rice in 2003 who state that, *"effective teachers are intellectually capable people who are articulate and knowledgeable…"* (in OECD 2005: 98). Kathy from the focus group discussion explains that teachers should possess both subject and pedagogical knowledge to help them to be classed as knowledgeable and this is supported by Shulman. He argues that much of the research into teacher effectiveness has concentrated on teacher behaviours and process-product studies but there has been little focus on how subject matter was transformed from the knowledge of the teacher into content of instruction (Shulman, 1986: 7). He refers to this as a 'Missing paradigm' and defines this as a blind-spot with respect to content. He goes on to say that teachers are under pressure to explain their subject knowledge but questions where their explanations come from and how they decide what to teach. He also raises questions surrounding how teachers decide how to represent what they choose to teach and how they deal with misunderstanding (Shulman, 1986: 6). He stresses that he is not being derogatory towards pedagogical understanding as pedagogical knowledge is also needed, but attention needs to be paid to the *teaching of* as well as the *gathering of* content and subject knowledge (Shulman, 1986: 8). He defines subject (content) knowledge as the teacher knowing that something is so, as well as understanding further why it is so. Pedagogical knowledge involves the teacher having a varying range of alternative forms of representation and strategies, some deriving from research and some deriving from wisdom of practice (Shulman, 1986: 9 - 10). Kathy reinforces the need to possess both:

> You need to have good knowledge. You need to know your subjects so that you can move the children on or answer their queries instantly. You also need good pedagogical knowledge, you know? Knowing about teaching styles and all that. But if you don't know how to apply them what's the point? They go together don't they really? I think I must have good knowledge then. (Kathy)

When considering these comments by Kathy and those made by 12 of the parents who responded that they felt that teachers at the school are knowledgeable, there are two types of knowledge that the teachers need to possess to make them effective planners and teachers. It was noted in the

additional comments part of the questionnaire that parents help to define pedagogical knowledge in a similar manner to Kathy. They felt that it was important that the teachers know a range of teaching styles and how to apply them, and they should base their teaching on a child–centred approach including having realistic expectations of each individual child. The rest of their comments help to define subject knowledge as: the teachers have a broad knowledge of a vast range of subjects; they use this knowledge to help them to plan and to find out where the children are in terms of their own knowledge and where they need to go to make progress. In a sense similar to Kathy, Grossman (1990) suggests that these two types of knowledge are interlinked. He calls this 'skilled performance' and defines it as having the knowledge to know what to do (subject knowledge) and also being able to apply this knowledge at the right time (pedagogical knowledge) (Grossman, 1990). This 'skilled performance' was reverberated by Child E who claimed that his teacher is great at teaching P.E. because she has lots of good ideas, knows a lot about P.E, and teaches him the things that he needs to help him be more skilful. Furthermore, during her interview, Hyacinth clarified the importance of utilising both subject and pedagogical knowledge within planning and teaching.

> As well as my knowledge of teaching Maths I use my knowledge and experience of working with lower ability children where their work has to be more practically based and has to be very explicit and broken down into the smallest of stages. You can frame what you do in a more supportive way when you have a lack of confidence in the children. (Hyacinth)

This was evident during her observation where the lesson was pitched at a pace where all of the less able children were on task. Although at times the activity was challenging in places, they could access the activity, which was interactive and incorporated a wide variety of practical activities to aid the learning. Additionally, Hyacinth looks for this application of knowledge in other teachers when she was asked to choose a colleague who she feels is effective.

> One (teacher) is particularly effective because she had been trained up in the 'National Curriculum', which came half way through my career and she is completely in tune with the expectations of what all the new directives are, so whenever you ask her anything she is completely on the ball and she was a great person to have on the team because she was always completely ahead of the game. She really knew her stuff and how to apply it and she kept abreast of everything, which is wonderful to have on the team. (Hyacinth)

4.4. Plans for and uses a variety of learning styles and teaching techniques and utilises differentiated questioning to suit the individual learner.

This aspect was deemed an important factor of effective planning and teaching in previous research such as Ayres et al. who concluded that, *"effective teachers have a large 'kitbag' of routines and teaching strategies at their disposal, including a variety of questioning techniques"* (Ayres et al. 2004: 146). This is a difficult aspect for parents to monitor and comment upon because they do not have the opportunities to assess the teachers teaching and rarely get to see teachers in action in the classroom. However, through discussions with their children, 32 parents (27%) concluded that the teachers at this school use a variety of teaching strategies to suit the learner. Furthermore, it was evident from comments made during the focus discussions by two teachers from group 1 and one teacher from group 2 that in order to be an effective planner and teacher there is a need for teachers to plan for and use a variety of teaching techniques and strategies in order to access the different varieties of learners.

> (An effective teacher) can adapt their teaching styles to children's different ways of learning so having a varied approach, which doesn't necessarily make it an easy way, but you have to take it into account that some children learn visually, some learn by instruction, just all of the different ways that anybody learns and finding ways of reaching all of them. (Josie)
>
> (In response to Josie) I would agree with that to a certain extent but I think as children get older they may have their preferred learning style but they have other ways of learning, they learn other ways, so I think that an effective teacher is somebody who can teach the same thing in different ways. (Denise)
>
> They (effective teachers) also need to think of all the learning styles that they need to accommodate, children who are auditory learners, children who are visual learners, they have to be aware of those things going on in the classroom and accommodate those children. (Janice)

In eight out of ten observations teachers did indeed do what the teachers from the focus group claim they are doing. During these observations differentiation of questioning was evident. Katrina, Anna, Sasha, Verity and Vanya used questioning to support and extend the children in their lessons, as well as asking questions to extend the thinking of the more able. The benefit of using questioning is explained by Muijs and Reynolds, who state that questioning can be used to check understanding and to help children to verbalise their thinking. It can be also used at the beginning of the lesson to aid thinking and at the end to summarise (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 50). They go on to argue that effective questioning involves a mix of higher and lower order

questions, open and closed and product and process (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 50). Also evident in these observations was variation in the manner in which the direct (teacher-led) and indirect (independent-led) teaching was undertaken. There was evidence of a use of auditory, visual and kinaesthetic activities, and independent, paired, group and whole class work. For example, during Hyacinth's lesson she gave the children cubes to help them with their fractions work so that they could visualise the fractions. Sasha used whole class work; Kaitlin, Sandy, Rachel and Vanya used group work: while Anna, Verity, Tracy, Hyacinth and Katrina used paired work. All of the observations involved some whole class direct teaching and Hyacinth, Katrina and Anna also utilised indirect independent teaching. Research undertaken by Souster in 1982 highlights the importance of utilising a range of direct and indirect teaching strategies. He concluded that teachers who used a combination of direct and indirect teaching styles had higher scores than either using just direct or indirect styles (Souster, 1982 in Campbell et al., 2004: 43).

4.5. Project their planned objectives to the children through teaching in a manner that enables them to understand what is expected of them and put the learning into context (relate it to previous learning).

As a result of their 2005 study, Fenstermacher and Richardson created a model to determine the characteristics to look out for when observing potential effective teachers. They concluded that the teacher is logical in their demonstrating, modelling, explaining and correcting (in Berliner, 2005: 207). This supports other research into this area such as that by the OECD who claim that, *"(effective) teacher characteristics include the ability to convey ideas in a clear and convincing way…"* (OECD 2005: 27). 18 (15%) parents also thought that the teachers display good presentation, delivery and communication skills. Four teachers: Sandy, Rachel, Vanya and Tracy, reverberated this during their interviews and also elaborated on what they define as good communication and presentation skills.

> (When explaining what to do) you need to have a sense of knowing what your goal is, what you want them to achieve. (Sandy)

> (An effective teacher means) having clear objectives and the children understanding what they are about to learn. (Rachel)

> I try to think about each lesson as if it's new, as if you've never done it before. You know when you try to think from that point, particularly with the younger ones because you have to explain it, they don't even know the words. When you are learning for the first time, try

> to switch your brain to try to make it as simple as possible. If I do it really simple, they are always my best lessons. If you think right and really choose your words, I think that if I go a bit mad with speaking then they get a bit lost, you're really careful they seem to understand it better. It's picking out those that don't understand to make sure they get it, repeating it if not, and talking to them a lot more. A teacher I am thinking of who I think is effective is also so clear in what she explains. (Vanya)

> I try to check that I have been clear in what I've said as sometimes I'm not always sure if I'm clear so I try and ask the children to tell me what I've told them to see if they understand what I've said to them. (Tracy)

All four of these teachers are beginner teachers and also demonstrated during their observations that they set objectives that explain clearly what they want the children to achieve. They all modelled and demonstrated in a concise and calm manner and when the observer checked with individual children if they knew what they needed to do to be successful they all could explain. Muijs and Reynolds support this and state that the lesson as a whole needs to be well structured, with the objectives of the lesson clearly laid out, key points emphasised and main points summarised at the end (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 40). Furthermore, they also stress that modelling can help aid lesson clarity (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 40).

A comment made by Jane during her interview also reiterates Vanya's point that the way the teachers use language is imperative. Similarly to Vanya, she argues that teachers should speak clearly and carefully and also allow for pauses during delivery to enable the children to process the language and this process time also allows them to make connections to other areas of their learning. During their individual interviews Sandy and Sasha both stated that for the children to develop a greater understanding of what they need to do they need to connect the current learning to previous learning to put it into a meaningful context. They demonstrated this during their observations where they made appropriate links with the current learning to other areas of the curriculum that the children were currently studying. This reflects one of the principles of constructivist teaching (Von Glaserfeld, 1984 in Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 70).He argues that all knowledge is constructed rather than directly perceived by the senses and that children construct knowledge rather than receive. Therefore teachers should encourage children to do this by structuring learning activities to explore concepts thoroughly and connect new knowledge to what they already know.

4.6. They are flexible and adaptable within their teaching and planning in order to change aspects of pre-planned activities to benefit the learning of the children.

Existing research notes flexibility and adaptability as one of the factors that determines the effectiveness of planning and teaching. As a result of their research, Good et al. suggest that, *"…teachers must have sufficient skills to adjust to the context in which they teach"* (Good et al. 2006: 412). This is further supported by Muijs and Reynolds who also reverberate that teachers need to be flexible rather than stick to a fixed lesson plan (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 70).This data reveals that two teachers perceived being flexible and adaptable as one of the important factors when determining the effectiveness of planning and teaching.

> (To be effective you need to be able to) work on your feet, know when to admit defeat and move on a little bit, if the lesson isn't going to plan I think 'right, I'm not going to carry on doing a lesson that is not working, I'm going to correct myself as I go along and do that'. There is not point carrying on with a lesson that you know is going absolutely wrong, rather stop and think 'this isn't going the way I planned'. Plans should be followed, not necessarily rigidly because you say it one way and you may think it would be better this way around, but your general targets what you need to hit are hit. I know and feel more confident now that I can go around my planning as opposed to sticking to it exactly. (Sandy)

> (To be effective you need to be) somebody who can adapt the teaching to suit the present situation, even if that means moving away from the planning. They should be able to use their plans as working documents and not treat them as set in stone. Differentiation should be via outcomes and the situation, being prepared to move away from my planning in the interest of the children. For me it's doing that, not just planning for it but adapting it on the spot which is a really tricky thing to do as it is thinking on your feet and realising when things are not going according to plan and we all talk about differentiation but there is a big difference in planning for it and doing it when it comes up and that takes a lot of skill. (Kaitlin)

Kaitlin and Sandy demonstrated their flexibility and adaptability during both of their observations. Kaitlin soon realised that she had overestimated the previous knowledge of her very able Maths group and had to differentiate the activity then and there by utilising a more 'hands on' approach and using resources and games. During Sandy's lesson the computers would not work properly so she adapted the lesson to suit the situation instantly, giving the technician time to rectify the problem. Once the problem was solved Sandy adapted the lesson again to fit in with the scheduled time they had left to use the computers. Three teachers: Kaitlin, Sandy and Josie, claim that it relies on great skill to differentiate and adapt on the spot but it was noted by the observer that both of these incidents caused minimal disruption to the learning. Josie goes onto say that an effective

planner and teacher needs to possess the additional skill of thinking ahead as well as this on the spot skill because most of the time what you actually pre-plan for can be very different to the situation in which you end up teaching your plan.

> I find with differentiation, when you are thinking ahead, for example an activity for small children, you think of ways that you can differentiate it but when you actually come to it there are might be a wider differentiation to what you have planned for. (Josie)

4.7. What improvements to planning and teaching do the teachers need to do to be more effective?

There was evidence in all of the observations that the teachers were using a variety of teaching techniques and differentiating questioning and neither the teachers nor the parents focussed on this as an area that needs developing. Only one child (Child W) commented that her teacher could teach R.E. in a more interesting way by planning more fun activities to do. Moreover, there were no comments from the interviews or questionnaires on the need to improve flexibility and adaptability when planning. Equally, this was not noted as an area for development during any of the observations. However, this absence of evidence does not necessarily mean that the teachers, parents and children feel that these areas do not need improving. Rather it suggests that the areas they have mentioned are readily significant to them when focusing on improvements.

The data suggests that to be more effective planners and teachers the teachers need to make improvements in 4 of the areas of planning and teaching.

**4.7.(a) Plans and teaches well-paced and challenging activities – improving pace of lessons**

It was noted during 6 out of 10 of the observations that the main area for improvement within the planning and teaching of challenging activities was pace, both in the planning aspect (the time *planned* to complete the activity) and in the teaching aspect (the time *given* to complete the activity).

The children in Kaitlin's lesson were discussing meaningful points during a paired activity but did not have sufficient time to develop these before she asked them to move on to discuss a different point. Similarly, the importance of giving sufficient time for ideas to develop during paired discussion was evident in Katrina's observation. When they did not understand a question the

children were relying on each other's strengths but did not have enough time to offer support before they were asked to share ideas with the whole group. Anna could have allowed more time for children to explain their choices when she asked them to estimate an answer after she demonstrated a method of doing it (dividing by 10). Many of the children began using their own ways of estimating and needed more time to explain to their partner why they chose this way. It was equally important when working independently that the children were given the time to develop their responses. During Hyacinth's lesson the children were showing their written answers to questions on individual mini-whiteboards and it was noted that when later questioned some children had found the answer but not in the time given.

In contrast to lack of time there were also issues raised regarding activities lasting too long. During her observation Sasha spent 25 minutes teaching to the whole class at the front of the classroom. It was evident to the observer that after 15 minutes the children were becoming restless and disinterested in the lesson even though the content was visually stimulating and connected to previous learning. Similarly, during Vanya's observation, the reading session was too long for the age range of the children. After 20 minutes (maximum time limit recommended by the Primary Literacy Strategy team) other children were starting to get distracted and seeking unwanted attention from her.

### 4.7.(b) Cater for all abilities including extending the more able

During all of the observations it was noted that the teachers catered extensively for the least able children in a variety of ways including differentiating the questioning and the activities set and providing teaching assistant or teacher help. There were aspects of beginning to extend the more able through differentiated questioning and activities, although many of the extension tasks that were set were not challenging enough and were often just producing more of the same or similar work. Furthermore, the teachers that struggled or feel they struggle to extend the more able effectively are those who are in the beginning of their teaching career. During Rachel's observation the more able children were set the same task as the standard ability children and when they finished their task they were asked to do another task of the same level. Extending the more able appropriately was a concern that both Katrina and Vanya raised during their interview. They expressed that to become more effective they should be planning for targeting and extending the more able rather than just extending the children when they have finished a current task.

> Well it's something since training really, extending the more able, but *really* extending the more able, not just doing it. I think by watching these two or three teachers that I've mentioned but I think getting some ideas from year group colleagues and working together to get those children more motivated and actually produce work that they are capable of rather than work just because you've asked them to do something and they fill the page. (Katrina)

> Last year I was always concerned about challenging the more able enough, you know like supporting the differentiation, I think it's still a bit of a concern with such a big class. We do plan for differentiation, especially in maths, literacy is more outcomes. You know when you just think, have I picked up on them? (Vanya)

This pre-planning was evident in Tracy's observation as she did stop the class for a 'pit stop plenary' to tell them of an extension task. However this could have been given earlier as some more able children had already finished and were not extended, instead they began to colour in the maps on which they were working on.

**4.7.(c) Utilise their subject knowledge (determined by their awareness of where the children are coming from in a subject and where they are moving towards in terms of their learning) and their pedagogical knowledge (of how children learn and behave): improving subject knowledge and PD and engage with teaching more reflectively.**

Several of the children felt that certain individual teachers could develop their subject knowledge in some areas. Child A wants his teacher to develop her Geography so they can choose a subject to study. Child C feels that his teacher would benefit from teaching more ICT and Child N wants his teacher to teach more History as she relies on outside organisations to arrange History days instead of teaching it herself. Three of the five beginner teachers interviewed feel that they are developing their subject and knowledge through training and experience while they are constantly looking to apply it to their planning and teaching.

> (To be more effective) I would quite like to experience teaching P.E. across the board. Because I don't teach P.E. on a Monday (PPA cover) I feel like I'm losing touch. I feel that maybe I would like to gain that back through doing it. (Sasha)

> (I have become more effective by) finally persuading the others to plan a lot more in advance although in terms of phonics you can't go too ahead of yourselves because it depends on what they are retaining but I think it's getting myself tuned in a little bit more, reading a little bit more about what is going to come next to increase my knowledge and applying it by preparing resources as I feel like I'm running against myself all of the time. (Sandy)

> (To become more effective I need to) increase my subject knowledge, because I haven't taught the Greeks before so I had to do some research before I did that and with the art stuff I sometimes feel like I haven't got the knowledge but I think it will come with training (Tracy)

Two of the other beginning teachers expressed that having pedagogical knowledge about the expectations of the children and how they learn was a factor that was worth developing to become an effective teacher. Unlike subject knowledge, which the three other beginner teachers suggest can be developed through a combination of research and experience, both Rachel and Kathy feel that this developing pedagogical knowledge is also an ongoing professional development aspect that progresses with reflection on experiences rather than just through formal training and experience.

> Well I think as an NQT you've always got areas to build on so I would say having a really clear focus about the children's ability and setting them realistic targets to suit how they learn because sometimes you think that you've done the lesson and think that you've being really clear on how to pitch it but you haven't. I think it comes with experience and hopefully short term as well, you know every day, if the lesson hasn't gone right then the next day you reflect on it and address those weaknesses. I don't think you can go on a course to learn this stuff properly. (Rachel)

> I try to reflect on my lessons when they don't go quite right! If I'm going to make it better then I have to be honest with myself and be critical. It's not fair on the children if I don't pick up where I went wrong…it's an ongoing issue but hopefully it'll get better. (Kathy)

Grant and Gillette (2006) argue that being reflective means different things to different people. They conclude that this means a teacher who not only thinks about what is happening in the classroom, thus agreeing with Rachel and Kathy, but also researches his or her classroom practice to make changes. They claim that doing this, *"will result in a more democratic, ethical, and student-centered classroom where learning takes place every minute of the day"* (Grant and Gillette, 2006: 296). Kathy and Rachel mention reflecting on an unsuccessful session after it has happened thus are being post-reflective. Schön agrees with Kathy and Rachel and states that, through reflection, the teacher can make new sense of the situations of uncertainty and uniqueness which they may allow themselves to experience (Schön, 1983: 61). However, according to Schön, teachers often think about what they are doing while doing it and he refers to this part of reflection as reflection-in-action (Schön, 1983: 49). This involves many variations and can include reflection on strategies, theories, behaviours, feelings and own role. Similar to being post-reflective, as mentioned by Kathy and Rachel, this can be troublesome and self-critical but, as with all

reflection, can lead to a new theory being articulated (Schön, 1983: 62-63). Schön describes reflection-in-action as an extraordinary, yet not rare, process which is the core of practice. He argues that many teachers view themselves as experts and have become too skilful at dealing with situations when they arise so they find nothing in their practice to reflect on. Some are uneasy as they view it as a sign of weakness; others are more accepting yet are unsure of what to do (Schön, 1983: 69). This data supports Schön and suggests that teachers earlier on the profession, such as Kathy and Rachel, do not view themselves as experts and have not yet developed enough skills to deal with situations and are therefore more open to using reflection.

From this it can be argued that the term 'Professional Development' extends beyond attending training courses and that developing professionally is something that can be achieved through a combination of formal training, through reflecting on experiences and from discussing with and observing others. Stemler et al. agree with this and state, *"Professional development may involve presentation of the various strategies, both to pre-service and experienced teachers and, through dialogue, the explication of tacit knowledge and the sharing of expertise"* (Stemler et al., 2006: 115). In support of the views of the beginner teachers and similarly to Stemler, Carroll also places value on sharing experiences and reflecting on experiences. She agrees with Rachel and Kathy that professional development is ongoing:

> "Professional development is part of lifelong learning and involves the development of new mindsets and attitudes, the development of insight into experience, and the taking of personal responsibility for learning about teaching" (Carroll, 2004: 206).

She goes onto argue that teachers perceive this to occur through interactions with significant others and this is evident through comments made by the teachers in this data (Carroll, 2004: 207).

> …I think by watching these two or three teachers that I've mentioned but I think getting some ideas from year group colleagues… (Katrina)

> …Perhaps I need to ask other teachers…all the teachers are nice, they still help. (Vanya)

> There are two or three teachers…that I've been told (by the Headteacher) to watch to get some ideas from them as I think that they are good at extending the more able children. (Katrina)

Carroll concludes that the contribution of liaising with others and utilising more experienced teachers' experiences is imperative. It is these professional relationships that have a personal component and have developed over a period of time that are beneficial to effective professional development for teachers. The personal interaction of the teachers contributes towards the development of positive attitudes and changes in the teachers' beliefs about teaching. Additionally, teachers may benefit from professional development programmes that value the understandings and affective factors that teachers bring to the task, and that help teachers to reflect on their experiences. Such programmes will be most beneficial if they occur within a supportive social context. (Carroll, 2004). Ayres et al. warn that formal professional development is devalued at times because teachers report this development pattern as dominated by learning through experience, with unofficial mentoring and faculty influences as additional factors. They stress that teachers do not deny the value of formal professional development available. They argue that their claims to have learnt 'through experience' are often made in the context of lamenting cutbacks to formal professional development. They go on to say that it is quite feasible that some teachers who declare that they have 'picked up' a particular teaching strategy through experience may have done so much earlier given the greater availability of formal professional development (Ayers et al., 2004).

### 4.7.(d) Project their planned objectives to the children through teaching in a manner so that they understand what is expected of them and put the learning into context (relate it to previous learning: improve use of clear verbal, written and visual language.

All five of the teachers who could benefit from developing how they communicate what they intend the children to learn are beginner teachers. Sasha spoke very clearly and concisely but sometimes too quickly leaving some children unsure of what was being asked of them. This was an aspect that Vanya felt was important.

> If you think right and really choose your words, I think that if you go a bit mad with speaking then they get a bit lost, if you're really careful they seem to understand it better. (Vanya)

Vanya demonstrated in her observation that she explained the task clearly to the children and they understood what to do at the time but a visual reminder could have been offered to remind them once they had finished their task as some children had forgotten what to do next. This was similar for the children in both Rachel and Tracy's observations, where although they knew what to do

when they were challenged by the teacher while on the carpet, once they had left the carpet area many children returned to the teacher to ask her to clarify what to do. This is something that Tracy is aware of.

> I try to check that I have been clear in what I've said as sometimes I'm not always sure if I'm clear so I try and ask the children to tell me what I've told them to see if they understand what I've said to them. (Tracy)

Depending on the age and ability of the children, a visual or written reminder could have been placed in each work area as a prompt to help them to know what to do. Sandy would have benefited from providing a visual reminder to help the children to get on with the required task independently without bothering her excessively (write a sentence about the ending of the 'Three Little Pigs'). This could be in the form of a written reminder for more able readers ('write a sentence about the end of the story') and a picture reminder to remind those with weak reading skills (could have included an image of the wolf climbing into the chimney or falling into the pot). As these are very young children this would not stop all of the children asking what to do but it may prevent some from asking more than once and would certainly help towards promoting the development of their independence. The fact that this was highlighted during the observations and interviews as being an issue for beginner teachers further adds value to continuing professional development. It can be argued that these beginner teachers can develop as effective communicators within the classroom and school environment with experience and through reflecting on experiences, along with observing more experienced teachers, having discussions with them and also attending formal training,

## 4.8. Summary of the findings in Chapter 4

This chapter discussed perceptions by the teachers, parents and children in this study regarding the commitment of the teachers to the development of the individual child through six areas of planning and teaching based on a child-centred approach. It also raised perceptions that highlighted improvements surrounding four of these areas.

- Effective teachers consider the needs of the individual children as well as groups when planning engaging activities that are challenging and well-paced. Children enjoy these types of activities and

teachers take ‘intellectual responsibility’ for planning and teaching them. The pace of the activities can be improved, both in the planning aspect and in the teaching aspect.

• They cater for the range of abilities by using differentiated questioning and activities to guide and extend the more able. They pitch questioning and activities based on the previous knowledge of the children in the group, use questioning to check that the children have understood a task properly and set ‘challenging’ tasks. Possible improvements include ensuring that extension tasks are challenging enough and not just producing more of the same or similar work and this was also a concern that some teachers expressed during their interviews.

• Effective teachers have both pedagogical and subject knowledge and these two types of knowledge are interlinked and include *gaining* the knowledge of a range of teaching styles and techniques and *applying* this knowledge through planning and teaching. Teachers could develop their subject and pedagogical knowledge in some areas, especially beginner teachers. This knowledge can develop through a combination of research and experience, while pedagogy can be developed through reflection as well.

• Effective teachers have and utilise a large ‘kitbag’ of routines and teaching strategies at their disposal. They use these to plan for and use a range of teaching strategies in the classroom including auditory, visual and kinaesthetic activities and independent, paired, group and whole class work.

• The effective teacher is logical in his or her demonstrating, modelling, explaining and correcting techniques. Some beginner teachers can improve on their delivery and presentation through speaking clearly, concisely and not too quickly. They can develop the independence of the children through using a visual or written reminder as a prompt to help them to remember what to do.

• They have sufficient skills to adjust to the context in which they teach and have the ability to move away from their planning and rely on the skill of differentiating and adapting their activities on the spot; managing to do so without disrupting learning. They think ahead as well as on the spot to allow for what they actually plan not being appropriate for the situation in which they end up teaching their plan.

# 5. PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPACT OF TEACHER BEHAVIOUR ON THE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

During the teacher interviews, several teachers commented that they believe one way in which an effective teacher can create a desirable learning environment for learning is through how they behave. This corroborates previous research where it has been established that classroom climate, alongside attitudes towards students and teaching strategies (discussed in Chapter 1), are major factors associated with effective teaching (Ayres et al. 2004). Three teachers: Anna, Rachel and Tracy, state this.

> (An effective teacher is) someone who makes you feel comfortable in the learning environment. (Anna)
>
> (An effective teacher) creates an environment where they (the children) can learn and are keen to learn. (Rachel)
>
> (Effective teachers) create an environment where they (the children) enjoy learning and is not something that they fear, something that they enjoy and learn as they go along. (Tracy)

This data agrees with the argument by Campbell et al. that looking at actual teacher behaviours can make a difference and be more useful to practice than advocating global teaching styles (Campbell et al., 2004: 45) This data suggests that to create a desirable environment for learning relies on how the teacher behaves both within their classroom and within the school environment. Within this environment they work as a team and display their job satisfaction through their commitment to their role. This commitment is evident in their behaviours in the classroom where they deploy a range of attributes including the following: being positive, encouraging, motivating and giving praise; they have a fun personality and plan fun activities; have a caring, nurturing and understanding manner; value the children and have high expectations of them; are fair, consistent and respectful; help the children with their work and social issues; have the ability to manage children's behaviour in a positive way, have good communication skills and are systematic and organised in their classroom organisation and management.

Good et al. (2006) argue that using characteristics as a tool to help to define the effectiveness of teachers is difficult because many people think that effective teaching is based on them possessing such characteristics. They go on to say that these characteristics should not be used solely to judge

the effectiveness of the behaviour of teachers (Good et al. 2006). The data from chapter 1 supports this by highlighting other issues that can help to define teacher effectiveness, such as the *practice* of teachers through their planning and teaching[13]. Furthermore Berliner (1986) states that teachers themselves add to the difficulty of researching the behaviours of teachers. He found that teachers had difficulty explaining their behaviours during interviews. Many of them believed these behaviours to be inferred behaviours that occur naturally and gave responses such as, "I do it naturally" and "Isn't that what all teachers do?" As Berliner says, "*judging the behaviours of teachers is problematic because of the difficulty teachers have in articulating their behaviour due to its tacit nature"* (in Ayres et al., 2004). It is because of this that I chose to use the interviews to find out if teachers behave and do the things that they claim that they do in the classroom. I decided that if I wanted to look at these behaviours more closely, then I would need to observe the teachers and use this in conjunction with the interview data. Berliner also did this in his research where he, *"attempted to judge these psychological and moral acts through observation"* and he found that this was successful, claiming that, *"this (behaviour) was evident throughout the observations for this research"* (2005, in Ayres et al., 2004: 208).

This chapter gives an insight into ten behaviours that teachers deploy in the school environment and classroom and adds clarity to the definition of these behaviours that contribute to creating a desirable environment for learning. This chapter also discusses perceived improvements to these ten behaviours and concludes with a summary of the chapter.

## 5.1. Teamwork, job satisfaction and commitment

Day et al. state that there are statistically significant associations between teachers' commitment and pupils' progress and levels of pupils' performance in value-added attainment in national tests, (Day et al., 2007: 231) and that to be successful, teachers themselves must be passionately motivated and committed (Day et al., 2007: 233). Ayres et al. defined and included their definition of teacher 'commitment' in their summary of practices that make an effective teacher. This included the dedication of the teachers to the job via working longer hours and taking the

[13] Chapter 1 provides evidence that the factors of the practice of effective teachers were determined as being reliant on the teaching and planning by the teachers and included: plans and teaches well-paced, challenging and stimulating activities; caters for all abilities including extending the more able; utilises their strong subject knowledge (determined by their awareness of where the children are coming from in a subject and where they are moving towards in terms of their learning) and their pedagogical knowledge (of how children learn and behave); plans for and uses a variety of learning styles and teaching techniques with a particular focus on using differentiated questioning to suit the individual learner; projects their planned objectives to the children through teaching in a manner that they understand what is expected of them and put the learning into context (relate it to previous learning) and they are flexible and adaptable within their teaching and planning in order to change aspects of pre-planned activities to benefit the learning of the children.

responsibility to organise activities and events in order to benefit the children, thus creating hard-working teachers (Ayres et al. 2004: 146). Hyacinth, Kaitlin and Vanya further support this definition.

> We have a very professional set of teachers with many years experience. The teaching staff here are tremendously committed and they put an awful lot of personal energy in ensuring that they do a job, not because Ofsted is going to come or that somebody is going to be looking over their shoulder, but because they are professionals and they do a job to a standard that makes them feel happy and that is a high standard. (Hyacinth)

> Many of the teachers here work hard – it would be difficult for me to name many slackers. (Kaitlin)

> Hardworking teachers, I think that all the teachers put the hours in; I don't think there's anyone who slacks off. (Vanya)

It has been noted that the majority of the teachers arrive at work between 7.30 – 8am, rarely take a full lunch hour and frequently leave between 5 and 5.30pm. For some teachers, this accounts for over 50 hours working time per week. Five interviewees felt that the 'team' aspect of teachers working together during these long days and getting on well with each other was important, thus suggesting that they deem 'job satisfaction and enjoyment' to be the most important factor.

> The staff need to know their children and work well together; the communication between the staff should be good, in the sense that you know about the children you taught previously and know what they are capable of and where they should go next in terms of their learning. (Anna)

> Staff that can work together and get on well. (Eve)

> Being able to negotiate with each other even if we don't always agree. (Janice)

> Needs to have a really good team that works together, that supports each other. (Verity)

> Staff that get on really well despite there being small problems, people who can talk to each and resolve things quickly. (Katrina)

Research by Kester et al. also noted this and further link the impact of teamwork and job satisfaction to how committed the teachers are to their job by claiming that, "'*team work' can*

*increase job satisfaction, promote greater commitment and therefore improved efficiency"* (Kester et al. 2002 in Hatcher 2005).

Similarly to Kester et al. Verity and Katrina focus on being able to 'get on' with people which leads to satisfaction in their jobs, but they further elaborate and link these interactions between teachers as a vital element to offering support in the form of help and guidance.

> Well a good staff, as a whole we have a supporting staff, a staff that helps each other out and gets on well together and that obviously influences how the school runs because our happiness reflects onto the children. (Verity)

> The people - the way in which the people get on, you know there are always disagreements, things that go wrong, quite often, but people can sit in a meeting and talk about it and get it out and done with. I've not really seen any hostility, I've seen people that have disagreed with each other but I've not really seen any bitching or hostility towards people. I think that even if you do feel that way people take it out of here or keep it within a very small group of people privately, that helps. The staff seem to genuinely like and get on well with the children and each other on the whole and do try to help each other out. (Katrina)

It is this support that Carroll also found to be an important factor during her research where she found that, *"colleagues are referred to as important influences, who share ideas, model good practice, help with planning and programming, and provide encouragement and support"* (Carroll, 2004: 207). This is further evident from the positive interactions that take place in the staff room daily, which involve many staff offering advice and guidance, discussing personal and work issues and laughing together.

## 5.2. Positive, encouraging, motivated and gives praise

Previous research concurs that, *"motivated teachers tend to have better student outcomes"* (OECD 2005: 128) and that children feel motivated to learn when they are encouraged and praised for their efforts. Muijs and Reynolds argue that in order to develop a positive classroom climate teachers must create a warm, supportive environment in which pupils feel unthreatened and are therefore willing to make a positive contribution to the lesson (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 115). Comments from three of the most experienced teachers at the school support this, in particular, the comment made by Hyacinth is similar to the views of Muijs and Reynolds.

> (In order for children to learn, effective teachers should) make sure that there is a motivating and supportive atmosphere in the classroom where it's okay to make mistakes and that everybody is recognised in positive ways for the things that they do manage to achieve. (Hyacinth)

> In my case (an effective teacher) is somebody who makes a difference and motivates a child to want to learn. (Anna)

> (An effective teacher is) someone who has enthusiasm, enjoys what they are doing, has a way of motivating the children and try to be as positive as you can with every child. (Verity)

Furthermore, during her observation it was noted that Verity applied her views by spending personal time spent with pupils, getting down to their level and praising their efforts. Two teachers new to the profession also used positive praise in their lessons; both Vanya and Sasha used positive praise and there was a good working noise level in the room too. Vanya encouraged her groups of children to stay on task by telling them how well they were doing with the work and Sasha praised children for offering answers, even though they may not have been accurate. Hyacinth used frequent praise and encouragement during her observation when teaching low ability children Maths. By setting realistic expectations and valuing the attempts of the children in a positive manner, they were responding and interacting with the lesson even though some were struggling to grasp the concept of fractions and decimals. Equally, they didn't seem upset or perturbed by giving the wrong answer because Hyacinth continually praised their efforts. This meant that the children volunteered an answer more often regardless of whether they were right because they were asked questions stemming from realistic expectations of their abilities. Harslett et al. acknowledge that this is a factor that deems the effectiveness of teachers and, as a result of their research, stress the importance of them setting, *"realistic individual expectations for students and giving positive acknowledgment when they are achieved"* (Harslett et al., 1998: 4). Moreover, during the focus group discussion, Denise, another long serving teacher, explained the value of using positive praise in the diverse society that we now live in and how teachers could use this knowledge to make improvements to how and when they deliver praise.

> I worked in a social priority school and I loved it. The children always tried their best and worked hard because you praised their efforts. They may sometimes have a lot of problems but they were keen to please because they didn't always get that praise at home. (Denise)

> You can always improve because as times change and society changes and over the years children are much different, then we need to change to be on top of the underlying pressures in society. Nowadays most parents work so children need to have us praising them because lots of them are not going to be met outside by their mum, now they will have their grandma or someone else. (Denise)

Two parents expressed views concerning the effect that praising has on motivating the children to reinforce Denise's comments. One parent feels that the teachers are giving the children positive feedback and praise to keep them motivated. Another felt that the teachers at the school have been a positive link in her children's development that complements the encouragement they receive at home. Furthermore, this parent feels that negative teachers damage the children and that the school is getting it 'right' on the whole and this is echoed by Child K who feels that their current teacher is very encouraging.

### 5.3. Has a 'fun' personality and plans 'fun' activities

It is evident from this data that the difference between a teacher having a fun personality, thus displaying 'fun' behavioural traits, and planning and teaching activities that are fun are two concepts that are seemingly treated as the same. The importance of a teacher creating a fun environment through the activities that they plan and taught and possessing a good sense of humour was mentioned as a factor of importance in studies such as Ayres et al. (2004). They summarised that effective teaching practice often includes teachers using humour as a tool to help them to develop positive relationships with children (Ayres et al., 2004). The data from this study reveal that this was one of the reoccurring factors that emerged throughout the teacher interviews, focus group discussions, case studies and the interviews with the children. During the interviews with the children they initially focussed on the behaviour of the teachers by stating that it was important for their teacher to be fun. However, when pressed to elaborate it was established that they often did not mean the behaviour of the teachers but rather the activities that they planned and taught in the sense of planning fun and engaging activities. This was supported by the adults who also concentrated on how the teachers make the learning fun and engaging. The four teachers who commented on the need to make the learning fun use it as a tool in order to engage the children in learning and this was evident during their observations too. I note that these four teachers were the four most experienced teachers observed in the study.

> I believe in excellence through enjoyment and I think that we bore children of school very early on with our demanding and sometimes mundane curriculum, so I do try to make it fun. (Kaitlin)
>
> (Effective teachers need to) make learning interesting and fun for the children. (Katrina)
>
> I try to make the learning enjoyable and fun but also relative and relaxed but determined learning. (Anna)
>
> (The effective teacher I'm thinking of) had a tremendous interest in the children that came through her class and she made decisions that would enable all of the children in her class just to really enjoy their learning and really have fun. (Hyacinth)

All four teachers planned and taught practical 'hands on' activities that allowed the children to work with their friends and to solve problems; these included using computers, planning and carrying out science experiments and art activities. These comments also focus on the activities that the teachers plan and teach rather than their personality. However, all four were observed as using gesticulation and humour to explain difficult aspects and to laugh at themselves when they made an error, which demonstrated that they had a good rapport with children. Similarly, Julian revealed that not only should teachers plan fun and stimulating activities too but that it is important that teachers possess this good sense of humour and can laugh at themselves in order to reinforce to the children that it is acceptable to make mistakes and to enjoy learning. This data suggests a link between these two seemingly different concepts – the need for the teacher to deploy 'fun' behaviour and plan and teach 'fun' activities.

Ten out of the twenty five children interviewed expressed that their current teacher makes lessons fun when they are learning with a variety of responses that concentrated on how the teacher plans and delivers the lesson rather than the actual personality of the teacher. There was only one comment made regarding the personal behaviour of the teacher. It was difficult to get the children to elaborate on what they meant by a 'fun' personality but after pressing them for more explanation their comments can be defined as: the teacher is relaxed and can laugh at things that go wrong and joke about things and on an activity level she plans activities that are fun, which include: playing games, practical, outdoors, messy, scientific 'wow' factor experiments and working with friends. In addition to this, when asked to comment on their most effective teacher the majority of the children (nine out of ten) again commented that their teacher planned and taught fun activities, whereas only one out of the ten commented that their teacher had a fun personality.

Made the lesson quite fun to learn by laughing with us and telling us funny stories (Child N)

Was fun because we played games (Child Y, G and H)

Made lessons fun by letting us work with our friends in groups (Child B, D and L)

Made it fun when were are learning by letting us do practical things (Child I)

Made the lessons a lot more fun by letting us get messy (Child F)

I liked the way my teacher taught Maths and made it fun as we played games (Child A)

## 5.4. Caring, nurturing and understanding

Caring about the children in terms of their social and academic development has been identified as an important aspect in previous studies such as research by Grant and Gillette (2006) who state that, *"translating curriculum into effective lessons day after day requires a knowledge base built from multiple perspectives, including an ethic of caring…"* (Grant and Gillette, 2006: 296). 45 (38%) of the parents believe that the teachers at the school have a caring and nurturing manner and 16 out of the 25 children supported this by commenting that their current teacher is: understanding[14] (2 children), is kind[15] to them (4 children), is nice[16] to them (4 children), is kind and nice to them (1 child), is understanding and kind to them (1 child), doesn't shout at them (2 children), doesn't shout at them and is nice to them (1 child) and isn't bossy towards them (1 child). This kindness and niceness of their current teachers are also traits that the children look for when judging the behaviour of their most effective teacher. The most important factor that the children focused on was a negative aspect, with ten out of the fourteen children saying that it was important that their teacher did not shout at them. Comments were made regarding: kind to them and never shouting at them (2 children), kind to them and soft (let them do what they wanted) (1 child), kind to them and patient with them (1 child), nice to them and never shouting at them (3

[14] After extensive questioning of the children, being 'understanding' has been determined as the ability to not get angry when the children have made a mistake and appreciate if the children are having a difficult day or things are difficult in their lives at the moment.
[15] Extensive questioning determines being 'kind' as taking an interest in the children, letting them have treats and talking to them in a respectful and calm tone.
[16] Extensive questioning determines being 'nice' as similar to being kind but involves less treats and more of talking to them in a respectful and calm tone on a regular basis.

children), kind to them (3 children), nice to them (2 children) and never shouting at them (2 children). To define what the children meant by 'understanding' included the teacher appreciating if the children are having a difficult day or if things are difficult in their lives at the moment and allowing them some leeway for their comments and actions. It is this behaviour that makes understanding part of being 'culturally responsive', in the sense that teachers need some knowledge of the home and cultural background of each child in order to fully understand their actions and reactions (Harslett et al., 1998: 5). Harslett et al. stress that while consistency and fairness is important so is *"having an understanding and appreciation of their differences are critical factors in teacher-student relationships"* (Harslett et al., 1998: 5). Furthermore, Grant and Gillette claim that this is one of the most important factors and state that, *"translating curriculum into effective lessons day after day requires a knowledge base built from multiple perspectives including knowledge of the social conditions of the students and the world"* (Grant and Gillette, 2006: 296). Cripps and Walsh (2004) go on to say that one of the main keys to the development of a caring and nurturing relationship between the child and the teacher is how well the teachers know each child individually and understand their background and where they are coming from.

> "Teachers need to know individuals and the ways they interact and develop within their group because, as the group develops, so relationships within the group continuously develop. Building relationships begins with a genuine concern to listen, to be aware of the changing nature of the classroom context, and to be interested in, and responsive to, the needs of students" (Cripps and Walsh, 2004: 6).

Vygotsky (1987) attaches more importance to the need of teachers to be culturally responsive. He believes that teachers can use this 'cultural knowledge' of the children to benefit their learning and development. He argues that children do not need to reinvent the world anew and that on a cultural level they can benefit from accumulated wisdom of previous generations as each generation stands on the shoulders of the previous one (Vygotsky by Schaffer, 2004: 593 in Gross, 2005). This accumulated wisdom and the ability to learn from others is not only applicable to how children learn. The ability to behave in a caring and nurturing manner was a behaviour that this data proved to be one desired to be emulated by others. Both Katrina and Kaitlin felt that this is one of the behaviours that teachers need to possess as part of being an effective teacher and both felt that teachers needed to improve on this. They indicated during their interviews that this could be developed through learning from the behaviour of others and through accumulating knowledge.

> The teacher I am thinking of has a strong nurturing side to her that I have struggled to develop even though I think it is getting there, I'm always asking her how she does it, you know, like does it come naturally or not? (Kaitlin)

> (The teacher I'm thinking of was effective in) the way in which they deal with the children, they were quite nurturing and their personality; this is something that is growing (the nurturing within me). (Katrina)

During her observation it was noted that Vanya was patient and calm when explaining to the children and was supportive to the children who were struggling by offering praise and encouragement. When one child looked as if he was going to cry, she consoled him by hugging him and telling him he was doing a great job, again reiterating the need to offer positive reinforcement and praise (discussed and established previously). Consequently, he quickly recovered from this episode and after a few sniffles he willingly joined in with the session again. Both Julian and Jane also feel that it is important that teachers are patient and caring towards children. Jane emphasises that in order for this to happen teachers need to first genuinely ensure that they actually like children and enjoy their company.

> Effective teachers should possess a basic humanity; they should like children, enjoy their company, listen to them and be patient, should not be verbally aggressive or sarcastic with children and have a basic kindness. (Jane)

> (Effective teachers are) patient and kind with the children. (Julian)

## 5.5. Values the children and has high expectations of them

Another aspect of being 'culturally responsive' is that effective teachers, *"must believe that all students can achieve and hold high expectations for all learners"* and that to do this we must, *"…do away with the codes (e.g., at risk, single-parent home) that allow us to speak with a false tongue"* (Grant and Gillette, 2006: 294). Kaitlin supports this view and argued during her interview that in order to fully value the children and to have high expectations of them it is important that the teacher has high expectations for themselves. She goes on to say that this lack of expectations can be fuelled by negative experiences.

> We need to have high expectations of ourselves too. We can't expect the children to value themselves if we are not confident enough or push ourselves. Some teachers know what

> these kids are going through because they have had it tough too and they want to better themselves; you need high expectations to do it! (Kaitlin)

Again this can be argued as being part of what forms the term 'culturally responsive'. It can be said that to be 'culturally responsive' the effective teacher would have to have a similar set of dispositions common to the class of the pupils that they teach. The characteristics and beliefs of teachers seemingly evolve from their lifelong experiences, both at school and at home, from childhood experiences through to adulthood (Lechte, 1994: 47-48). However, Muijs and Reynolds warn that teachers should not use the experiences of children to attribute certain characteristics when having expectations of them to avoid self-fulfilling prophecies occurring and those expectations should always be high but still realistic (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 116). This data and previous research reveals that the teachers having high expectations of what the children can achieve makes them feel valued and respected and in turn will lead to them being more motivated to learn. Patrick and Smart found in their research that, *"students positively regard the teacher who genuinely respects students and treats them as equals, while the ability to challenge students, is characterised by setting high, but realistic goals for students"* (Patrick and Smart, 1998: 4). Muijs and Reynolds point out that a benefit of having high expectations of children is that this will improve their self-concept as well as their performance (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 148-9). Hyacinth, Verity and Kaitlin stress that having high expectations and valuing the children are linked.

> An effective teacher manages to create a learning atmosphere in the classroom that is fuelled by high expectations, so that the children all feel valued and they all make some progress at their appropriate level. (Hyacinth)

> They (effective teachers) have very high expectations, they know what they want from their children, they know how to get it and except no less and the children appreciate this. (Verity)

> Effective teachers ensure that children are happy and their opinions and suggestions are valued. They do this by having high expectations to set the standards for the children so that they know how far they can go and where to draw the line. (Kaitlin)

Comments made by three teachers during the discussion with focus group 1 strengthen the connection between having high expectations of the children and how valued they feel.

> We should also train children to finish work off otherwise they grow up with the attitude of 'it doesn't matter'. (Denise)
>
> (In response to Denise) It makes them value their work. (Kathy)
>
> (In response to Kathy) If you value their work and have an expectation that they will finish it then they value their work and wanting to finish it excites them. This shows that the work has been effective because they choose to finish it (Denise)
>
> (In agreement with Kathy and Denise) They give it priority. (Josie)

It was evident in the observations that it was the oldest children who responded significantly to the high expectations that their teachers had of them. During Anna's observation she set her high ability maths group a difficult multi-step problem and told them that she expected to see them working through the problem in a systematic way, utilising what they know to help them. She didn't give them any indication of how to approach this problem but had high expectations of them being able to find a way to do it, thus, I noted that all of the children sought to produce work of a high quality level. During Katrina's observation she made it very clear to the children working on the computers that she expected them to utilise each other's skills if they were stuck because she was working with another group. The children all helped each other and none of them were off task or sought help from the teacher. Moreover, 22 (18%) of the parents support these findings and conclude that the teachers at this school have high expectations of their children in terms of work ethic and progress and this benefits their learning by making them feel motivated to learn. They also felt that these high expectations were realistic but challenging. Using realistic goals to challenge the children was evident during Kaitlin's observation where she constantly adapted her questioning to challenge and push the thinking of her more able mathematicians and this too was noted as an element of effective teaching by Ayres et al., who found that, *"effective teachers have a large 'kitbag' of routines and teaching strategies at their disposal, including a variety of questioning techniques"* (Ayres et al., 2004: 146).

### 5.6. Fair, consistent and respectful

Current research by Ayres et al. (Ayres et al., 2004) established that teachers promote and practise mutual respect in their classrooms. This contributes to positive relations and high behavioural expectations in the classroom. Previous research by Patrick and Smart (1998) concluded that it was

important that teachers treated the children in a fair, consistent and respectful manner. Similarly, Harslett et al. (1998: 6) concluded that, *"while flexibility is an element in the profile of teachers, so is the ability to be consistent and fair"*. They also go onto say that, *"consistency and fairness with all students while at the same time having an understanding and appreciation of student differences are critical factors in teacher-student relationships"*(Harslett et al., 1998: 5). It is this understanding of student differences that again relates to teachers being 'culturally responsive'. When the children were pressed to elaborate on what they meant by their teacher being fair, consistent and respectful, it was established through their comments that their current teacher respects them by treating them like an adult and that she is fair because she is straightforward with them and gives them realistic choices to put things right rather than just telling them what to do. Equally she is consistent in that when she says something she means it and will do it. When asked to describe the factors that determined their most effective teacher three different children commented that she was strict, but also fair, consistent and fun at the same time, suggesting that the children appreciate firm but fair and consistent boundaries. 63 (53%) of parents expressed that the teachers at the school are fair, consistent and respectful and that this leads to generating a good rapport with the children. They summarised this in a similar fashion to the children with an additional comment that they also respect and treat them like children who are developing into young adults.

There were several events noted during the observations where the children were treated with respect and fairly when dealing with behaviour. Sasha first tried to selectively ignore a child when he was persistently calling out to her and disrupting a whole class session. When he carried on she explained to him that he needed to be patient and to remember that there were other children in the class who may like to answer the questions. She then negotiated with him that he could answer one if he could let five other children answer a question before him. He seemed happy with this and didn't call out again until it was his turn. When taking into account the definition of being fair, consistent and respectful by children and parents; it should be noted that being respectful and fair is not exclusive to dealing just with behaviour. Although this link cannot be ignored as previous research such as that by Ayres et al. conclude that, *"teachers allude to, and practise, a policy of mutual respect in their classrooms and this obviates any necessity for overt disciplinary measures"* (Ayres et al., 2004: 20). This made it difficult to locate a particular incident during the observations where teachers were treating the children fairly, consistently and respectfully during a scenario that was not linked to behaviour. However, during Rachel's observation one of the

children wanted to do an activity that another group was doing and she had to explain to him that it wasn't his turn today and that the whole class had to share turns. She used an appropriate example of a boy not sharing sweets fairly with him by giving more to another child. She asked the boy to put himself in each of the boys' shoes and to explain how each boy would feel. This seemed to satisfy him and he went off happily to continue with his task and when he was observed for a few moments afterwards he was not commenting on the issue.

5.7. Manages children's behaviour positively

Day et al. found that a selection of teachers in their study reported behaviour as having a negative impact on their work (Day et al., 2007: 252). As previously mentioned, Ayres et al. found that the ability to treat the children fairly, consistently and respectfully when managing behaviour was a significant factor when determining the effectiveness of teachers. Three out of four of the teachers who commented on the need for good behaviour in the classroom were beginner teachers. For Vanya achieving good behaviour in the classroom seems like a personal crusade that determines her success as an effective teacher. Rachel expresses that managing behaviour is a difficult thing to do, whereas in contrast Tracy feels that behavioural management comes naturally when you are in situ.

> Although I wasn't strictly brought up I know that children can behave because my mum was like 'you have to behave' and my primary was Catholic and I don't know whether it's because it was very strict. From just talking to other teachers, you know some teachers think that you can't change a class but then my brother's wife is a teacher and she says you can. It's an ambition of mine to make sure that I change each class I have. I think that this class were quite noisy, boisterous and they've calmed down. All the parents have said 'we're pleased you're strict, they've calmed down'. I don't think I've changed them, I think that they mature in year 2 so it's not all that, I think that in year 1 they are more immature. But I'm hoping that you can change a class but as I am only in my second year I don't know if you can. When I was on placement there was a teacher who was so strict on behaviour, they were in year 3 and they were absolutely silent, she would give them a look and they would just be quiet. She was new at the school so I don't think that this was typical of the school. She was just really good, I think it was her and she gave me inspiration to be like that. (Vanya)

> I do try to focus on behavioural management because I think it is a hard area to get right and I've got to learn more about it because I think that I've got quite difficult kids really. (Rachel)

> Behavioural management has been ok generally; it is natural when you're there. (Tracy)

Both Jane and Kaitlin believes that effective behavioural management stems from all teachers having strong expectations and being consistent when implementing the behavioural policy regardless of whether it is something that needs working towards or is something that occurs naturally. Harslett et al. further support this and found that effective teachers *"manage, respond, and anticipate the behavioural and learning needs of students in the classroom environment"* (Harslett et al., 1998: 3). It is this anticipation that forms part of having high expectations of the behaviour of the children. Two teachers stress this:

> There needs to be strong expectations of behaviour and all staff need to be consistent when implementing the behaviour policy, like we do here. (Kaitlin)

> Effective teachers should have good behaviour management, which includes setting clear expected parameters and maintaining them, which allows everybody to relax within them. (Jane)

This was evident in Kaitlin's observation where she demonstrated that when she wanted the attention of all of the children she managed to use a countdown from 5 to 1 even though the room was noisy at the time. All of the children were ready to listen on 0 and Kaitlin offered a simple praise of 'well done', which seemed to satisfy the children as they were focussed and well behaved during the rest of the session.

16 (13%) of parents feel that the teachers at the school are effective in managing the children's behaviour without confrontation and it was evident in all of the observations that the teachers were utilising various strategies to manage the behaviour in the classroom. Every teacher used positive reinforcement that included praising peers who were making positive behaviour choices, however, Muijs and Reynolds argue that not all praise is effective. To be effective it needs to be specific, credible and oriented towards both effort and ability while encapsulating the expectation that similar performance can be attained in the future (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 95). Examples noted in this data include: Kaitlin displayed very high expectations of behaviour and reminded the children of their choices, with the aim that they would make the correct choice; Verity used one word positive reminders to remind individual children to make positive choices; Hyacinth used a singing strategy to engage all of the children when she wanted all of their attention; similarly, Vanya and Tracy used a clapping sequence to get all of the children's attention and Rachel differentiated this for her young class and shook a rattle in a sequence. Sandy used a selective

ignoring behavioural strategy and carried on talking with another child when a child was getting out of his seat and being persistent in asking for help and attention. This seemed to work as he returned to his seat and attempted to begin the work with his partner.

5.8. Helps the children with their work and social issues

An aspect that was raised within the interviews with the children was that one of the factors that they used to judge a teacher as effective was based on whether she helped them with their work or social issues. This aspect has not been the main focus in other research and was not mentioned by any of the teachers or the parents. However, four children commented that they appreciate it when their current teacher helps them with their work when they need it and one child feels that her teacher is effective because she sorts things out in a fair manner when there is any trouble with her friendships. Arguably, this aspect could also be incorporated into several of the other behavioural categories that emerged from the data such as: the teacher is kind and understanding in that she wants to help them and understands if they need her help if the work is too easy; she is fair and respectful in that she gives her time to all the children equally or that she values the children's work so wants them to do their best.

5.9. Communicates effectively

**5.9.(a) Teacher-to-teacher**

It was noted that three of the teachers stated reasons why effective communication between teacher-to-teacher is important. These ranged from utilising each other's knowledge, valuing each other's opinions and checking for consistency. Clandinin and Connelly's (2000) research supports this and determines how the development of a teacher's pedagogical knowledge relies on others:

> "Teachers' personal and professional experiences provide a rich database of pedagogical knowledge and through personal reflection as well as collaboration with colleagues, tacit understandings and wisdom in the practice of teaching can be uncovered and better understood" (Clandinin and Connelly, 2000 in Howe, 2006: 287).

Carroll (2002: 207) also notes that, "*an important aspect of their (effective teachers) ability to reflect on their experiences was the presence of a colleague, mentor or facilitator with whom to*

*discuss their reflections"* while Ladson-Billings (1994) feel that effective teachers use this communication to, *"develop a knowledge base about the community to include events, people and places that rarely get addressed in the curriculum"* (in Grant and Gillette, 2006: 296). The benefits of communicating were also further elaborated on in comments made by Denise, Janice and Verity.

> You need to have good relationships between the staff at the school so people can go to other people for resources or ideas or even 'I've tried everything with this child but I can't get through to them, can you suggest something?' Sometimes it's a silly thing that you've overlooked. We need to pass on accurate records especially about any worries or concerns. We need to know their (children) background. (Denise)

> We should be able to negotiate and discuss things and iron things out so that everyone's opinion should be counted and the children are benefited. (Janice)

> We need to see if everyone is following the same line or at least talking to each other so that the children have consistency from what we say to them. (Verity)

To ensure that these liaisons are not just confined to informal meetings and discussions between individuals and groups, staff meet regularly as a whole team on a formal basis to ensure that certain aspects of school life are implemented consistently and accurately and that important information regarding individual children is shared. This regular communication between staff is an aspect that both Sandy and Sasha find valuable.

> Communication is something that works really well here in terms of all of the staff get together every week to discuss the preceding week. (Sandy)

> The constant communication between year partners is better especially now that we split them (the children into sets) all the time. We spend more time together planning and discussing the children. (Sasha)

### 5.9.(b) Teacher-to-child

The communication from teacher to child was deemed as an important factor when determining the effectiveness of a teacher. This communication is defined using the comments made by the teachers, parents and children as: how well they help the children to understand what they want them to do, how well they help them to understand aspects of learning through their oral delivery,

and providing oral and written feedback both during and after the children produce work. This was also noted in research by Westwood (1995) who established that, *"the effective teacher uses easy presentation of material, is direct in teaching, explains and outlines instruction clearly, frequently observes what students are doing taking into account differences between the students and re-teaching when necessarily, gives frequent feedback for all students and checks for understanding by using probing questions"* (in Sakarneh, 2004: 8). Ayres et al. (2004) also noted that effective teachers, *"had more effective instructional methods, including superior presentation and questioning techniques"* (Ayres et al., 2004: 143) while Brophy and Good (1986) felt that they placed, *"an emphasis on reviewing processes and that presentations would be clear and conducted with enthusiasm"* (in Ayres et al., 2004: 143-144). Evidence from the questionnaire supports this with a fifth (22) of the 120 parents stating that the teachers give useful feedback to the children regarding their work and progress. This consists of verbal and written comments that help the children to move their learning on and this was further reflected during the interview with Sasha:

> I think talking to the children, like after our writing assessments. We went through it with them and told them how to get the next level and what they missed. (Sasha)

Furthermore, 7 of the children were satisfied with how their teachers communicate with them. They commented on three aspects: how well the teachers use communication to help them to understand the task being explained to them, to help them understand certain aspects through teaching and to provide them with feedback (both orally and written), and to help them to move their learning forward and make improvements. This was evident during the observations where Anna used oral feedback to explain the written feedback that she had put in a child's book. She read through the comments with the child and explained what she needed to do next time to improve her writing. Furthermore, she picked out one aspect for the child to improve before the end of the session and went through this improvement with her at the end of the lesson. Tracy, Vanya, Rachel and Sandy demonstrated during their observations that they explain clearly what they want the children to achieve. They all modelled and demonstrated in a concise and calm manner and all of the children could explain what was expected of them when the observer later checked with individual children to see if they knew what they needed to do to be successful.

### 5.9.(c) Teacher-to-parent

Although this is a hugely researched area, only two comments were made by parents regarding the communication from teacher to parents. Both of these comments were negative but do offer ideas of how to improve.

> I do feel that the teachers need to communicate better with parents as individuals by informing them of things happening with their children and not waiting until parents' evenings or reports, as by then it is too late to intervene. (Parent 1)

> The feedback received about my child from the teacher when in Nursery was not helpful because the organisation of giving this to parents was poor. Maybe more opportunities to discuss things about our children would help. (Parent 2)

## 5.10. Systematic and organised in their classroom organisation and management

When judging teachers in terms of effective behaviour their personal organisation within the classroom was a factor. Previous studies reiterate this such as Patrick and Smart who found that, *"organisation and presentation skills defines the second teacher effectiveness factor…"* (Patrick and Smart, 1998: 4). This data suggests that an organised teacher is an effective one because their systematic approach in how they manage their classroom environment helps to promote the independence of the children. Four teachers reflected this in their comments:

> Effective teachers should be organised in order to promote the independence of the children regardless of their ages. (Kaitlin)

> I feel an effective teacher also comes down to organisation - we have to be organised within ourselves. We always talk to the children about being more organised and independent and there's nothing worse than children seeing a teacher flapping around the room. You need to have an organised classroom, as children need to know where things go. If you want to make them independent you have to train them up for that through modelling your own organisation. (Kathy)

> (An effective teacher is) somebody who is organised so that the children can be independent and know what to do. (Janice)

> (An effective teacher should display) good organisation, tidy, well organised classroom; uses daily timetables in the classroom; uses timetables to give outline of lesson to help the children to be more self-reliant (Jane)

This was evident in the lesson observations where all of the classrooms were clearly labelled and had defined routines. Although young, the children in Vanya's class were self-sufficient and knew what they should be doing and where to look to gather resources. Those in Kaitlin's tidied up at the end of an Art lesson and every child had a clearly defined role and knew exactly what to do and where to put resources away. Consequently, these young junior age children managed to achieve an immaculate classroom in a controlled and calm manner within ten minutes. Muijs and Reynolds argue that this is an important part of developing their self-concept. Like Kaitlin, they suggest that children should be given responsibilities in the classroom and should be involved in some decision-making. Teachers should recognise and celebrate their successes by telling them what they are doing right to show that their contributions are valued (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 149). Moreover, 23 (19%) of the parents feel that the teachers at the school are systematic and organised and this was reverberated during the interviews with the children with four children commenting that their current teacher is effective because she is very organised and is good at organising things too.

## 5.11. Perceived improvements to teacher behaviour

When determining the effectiveness of teachers' behaviour the improvements can be categorised as: the need to be more positive and have high yet realistic expectations of the children, classroom management when managing behaviour, and own organisation and communication between teacher-to-teacher.

### 5.11.(a) Positive and have high, yet realistic, expectations

Kaitlin acknowledges that she sometimes forgets to be positive and considers that the children are young, and gets frustrated that they don't always understand.

> I sometimes feel frustrated with the children and I need to remember to be very positive at all times and that it is not their fault that they don't understand it! I am developing in this area all of the time. I stop and take a breath and think to myself that it's not their fault and maybe it is my fault that I am not describing it in a clear enough manner or maybe I could get out some resources to help make it clearer. (Kaitlin)

A parent who feels that it is very important for teachers to remember that a great deal is expected of the children from a very young age also mentioned this over-expectation. She went on to elaborate that high expectations can sometimes turn into unrealistic expectations and this pressure at times appears to make teachers forget how young the children are and treat them as they were older. Furthermore, she stressed that a little more caring and nurturing would go a long way and means so much to the children and their parents! Similarly, a different parent also commented that the Nursery needs to be more nurturing to both parents and pupils because for first-time parents this is their first experience as well as the children's and the teachers need to take this into account.

### 5.11.(b) Classroom, behavioural and time management

Classroom management and teachers' own personal organisation were also aspects that could be improved. One parent commented that for them it has been interesting to observe that on occasions when children's behaviour had been managed in a confrontational manner, it had the effect of lessening the respect the child had for the teacher. Muijs and Reynolds warn that it is important for teachers to remember that, when correcting misbehaviour, it is important to correct the behaviour without criticising the person (Muijs and Reynolds, 2005: 148-9).

Another parent expressed that they found Nursery to be less effective because the feedback received about her child was not helpful and the general organisation of the teacher providing this feedback was poor. However, Anna explains that it is difficult to manage a classroom effectively when teachers are faced with many responsibilities and how these responsibilities can be restrictive, mainly because they rely on time and teachers do not like to take time away from the classroom in case there is a negative impact on the learning.

> (I would like to be more effective at) organisation, not in my lessons as I am able to do a lesson ad hoc if anyone asks me to go into a year group but more within my working classroom because of my different roles. With all the things I have to do I have to dip in rather than focus on one area specifically. It's a time issue, I need more time to do things, but having said that I've been offered the time and I need to be willing to say 'yes I want that afternoon to do it'. I don't like to leave my class though because of their SATs.[17]

[17] Compulsory Statutory Assessment Tasks (SATs) undertaken at the end of Year 2 and 6 in Primary Schools in England and Scotland (Wales – Year 6 only).

### 5.11.(c) Communication

Others feel that communication between teacher-to-teacher can be improved to be more effective. When asked what factors would make the school more effective, four teachers commented.

> Communication, I think we need to work on how we communicate better with each other and other adults in the school, but also I don't just mean communication like, 'is there enough bits of paper in our pigeon holes?' (Administration in trays) as there are too many, but I think there are things that teachers just sometimes need to know that bypasses them because it's quite an old-fashioned way of managing the school. It works but not as well. I've started off with my TA (Teaching Assistant) and the other TA in the year group by working more closely and making sure that the communication happens there and try to improve that with all of the people I work with. Sharing planning is a good way of including TAs in the whole scenario (Katrina)

> Communication really - I find that there are certain things I don't know about my children that come up and I think I would have liked to have known that. We need to be really careful that the communication between us all should also be about the social side (of the children) and not just their levels and scores. (Kathy)

> I hear a lot from Denise but only because she is on the SLT. I'll never start off really forthcoming with other teachers as it takes me a while to be more confident. (Vanya)

> Communication between the staff regarding the children you taught previously and knowing what the children are capable of and where they should go will help us to form relationships with them (the children) quicker. (Anna)

Lastly, two teachers offered suggestions as to how the communication between teacher-to-teacher could be improved.

> Maybe it would help by generating even more communication between the year groups possibly on a subject level and find out what other year groups are doing, sort of like on the boards, but sometimes we don't even know even though we speak to each other. (Rachel)

> I communicate with other colleagues by being honest and stating a case for something backed by strong evidence and making my points to the people in question rather than driving the sniping underground. I think you'll find that I do get my point across anyway! (Kaitlin)

## 5.12. Summary of the findings in Chapter 5

This chapter discussed perceptions by the teachers, parents and children in this study regarding ten behaviours that teachers deploy in the school environment and classroom. It also raised perceptions that highlighted improvements surrounding some of these behaviours.

- Teachers rely on teamwork to gain support and guidance from others, share ideas, model good practice, help with planning and encourage and support. They are committed and hard-working.

- Effective teachers set realistic expectations and value the attempts of the children in a positive manner through using frequent praise and encouragement. This results in children responding and interacting with lessons even though some may struggle to grasp the concept.

- The need for the teacher to deploy 'fun' behaviour and plan and teach 'fun' activities are linked. Experienced teachers plan for and teach 'fun' activities'. They deploy a 'fun' personality but do not plan for this.

- Children appreciate when their teacher is kind, nice and understanding towards them. This forms part of what it means to be 'culturally responsive' and teachers use this knowledge to help build relationships with the children. Some claim that they can improve on being caring and nurturing and could do so through observing colleagues.

- Some parents concluded that expectations are too high resulting in children not being nurtured enough by teachers. Teachers display part of what it means to be 'culturally responsive'. They do not label children because of their backgrounds and cultures and have high but realistic expectations of all the children. Some teachers felt that to be 'culturally responsive' they would have to experience similar backgrounds and cultures as the children. Valuing the backgrounds, cultures and differences of the children leaves them feeling respected and more motivated to learn.

- They are fair, consistent and respectful towards the children. Children and parents defined this as: teachers treat them like an adult, they are straightforward with them and give them realistic choices to put things right rather than just telling them what to do, and they are consistent in that when they say something they do mean it and will do it.

• They are consistent, respectful and fair when managing behaviour. This relies on them having strong expectations of behaviour and being consistent when implementing a behavioural policy. They use a variety of strategies to manage negative behaviour including positive praise, selective ignoring, peer reinforcement and noises or actions to gain attention. Some parents noted that respect for the teacher lessens when behaviour is managed in a confrontational way.

• Children appreciate it when their current teacher helps them with their work when they need it and sorts things out in a fair manner when there is any trouble with friendships.

• The communication from teacher to child is effective and teacher to teacher communication is important and helps teachers to utilise each other's knowledge, value each others opinions, check for consistency and to develop knowledge about children. It can be improved through honesty with each other and by sharing more information regarding subject and pedagogical knowledge. Some parents claim that teachers could be more informative when feeding back to them about their children. This can be achieved through teachers generating more opportunities to talk or meet with them rather than leaving it to formal meetings such as parents' evenings.

• Managing the classroom environment in a systematic and organised manner helps to promote the independence of the children. Teachers claim it takes time to be organised and they are reluctant to take time even when offered it because they feel responsible for the children's learning.

# 6. PERCEPTIONS ON THE IMPACT OF THE HEADTEACHER EFFECTIVENSS ON TEACHER EFFECTIVENESS

The data from this study suggests the effectiveness of a Headteacher can impact on the effectiveness of teachers. This chapter focuses on three perceived areas surrounding what makes a Headteacher effective and the impact this has on the effectiveness of teachers. This chapter also discusses perceived improvements to these three areas and concludes with a summary of the chapter.

Previous research, such as that by Bush, has established that, *"the most important factor in raising levels of attainment in schools facing challenging circumstances is a high quality, stable workforce, backed up by good leaders"* (Bush 2005: 1). When asked during this study what makes any school an effective school, *Teachers* was the most frequent mentioned factor of school effectiveness mentioned by the parents. The second most frequently mentioned factor was Leadership, with a focus on the Headteacher. In the questionnaire comments made by the parents, they summarise this as similar to traits they look for in effective teachers. These include: the Headteacher's dedication to high standards and expectations, the ability to be fair and consistent with the children and parents, and encouraging the channels of communication from parents to school. This is reiterated through a quarter of the sixteen teachers who were interviewed. They state that, as well as effective teachers (discussed previously), an effective school relies on effective leadership, with a focus on the Headteacher. Like the parents, the teachers' definition also suggests similarities between the effective behaviours of teachers and those of the Headteacher. However, they go further to elaborate that the effectiveness of the Headteacher is linked to part of their effectiveness as a teacher. For example, they are inspired by her high expectations and strive to achieve them. They respect her commitment to developing them professionally within her own school and for a career in other schools to become more effective. They emulate her consistency, firmness and fairness with the children in their own practice. They feel that they are more effective through her encouragement and guidance when using school data to help the children become more responsible for their own learning. Vanya, Katrina, Eve and Kaitlin explain:

> It has to be the leadership; it has to come down from the Headteacher, the way that she manages the school and what she expects of everyone. I strive to follow her expectations to make me a better teacher. (Vanya)

> Really good management in that the Headteacher informs us of what we need to do. (Katrina)

> Strong leadership where subject coordinators know their subjects and can help other year groups and not just particularly within their own area. (Eve)

> A Headteacher who will not pander to the children - she is strong and consistent. I admire that in her. (Kaitlin)

## 6.1. Committed to the development of others

### 6.1.(a) Development of staff

The teachers' perceptions of what they feel makes any school effective are also reflected in comments by Verity, Vanya and Kaitlin when asked to elaborate on what makes this particular school effective. All three focus on the Headteacher and link her effectiveness with their own.

> We have good leadership who will develop teachers in areas where they want to be developed in order to make us more effective in the classroom. (Verity)

> The strong leadership, I liked that, that's part of why I went for it (the position). I like the Head's strong personality, she knows what she wants and expects and how she develops staff to improve us as teachers. (Vanya)

> The strong leadership. She (Headteacher) knows what she wants and how to get it. She'll help us to further our own careers. She certainly knows her stuff! (Kaitlin)

This is certainly evident at the school where during the academic year of 2007-8, 4 staff left for promotion and secured positions at their first attempts. Tracy took up a co-ordinator post in her second year of teaching. Verity gained a promotion to Key Stage 1 leader and both Kaitlin and Katrina secured Deputy Headship posts. When questioned, all of these teachers felt that the Headteacher had helped them to become more effective and this had a positive impact on their interview and application. Furthermore, through the persistence of the Headteacher, Sasha and another teacher have registered to become leading teachers and Vanya was promoted to SENCO (special educational needs co-ordinator). In addition to this, two comments made by parents refer to the Headteacher as being 'fantastic'. Asked to clarify this, one said that she is committed to

helping everybody to develop individually, while the other feels that she has high expectations of everyone.

Verity and Anna comment on how the Headteacher has also helped the teachers to develop effectively and professionally within the school as well as securing the aforementioned promotions.

> Good management and good leadership in that we have learned more about how to use data to move the children's learning on and the Headteacher has high expectations of everybody. (Verity)

> I do think the leadership at the top has proved really effective in that the staff now know more about levels and what they need to do to move children on. I think it's got us to know the children a lot more. (Anna)

### 6.1.(b) Development of children

When Anna and Eve were asked to elaborate on what makes this *particular* school effective they focussed on the effectiveness of Headteacher within the school and how she impacts on their effectiveness.

> I do think the leadership at the top has proved really effective in that the staff now know more about data and levels and what they need to do to move children on. I think it's got us to know the children a lot more. (Anna)

> I think that the leadership is effective; she (Headteacher) is a very good Head as she knows how to get us to effectively move the children on (in their learning). (Eve)

This was also evident during Anna's observations where she gave informed guidance of how a child could improve her writing by pointing out what she needed to do in order to get to the next level.

The benefit of the Headteacher requesting that the teachers use data to target specific areas of learning is reflected in the end of year assessments carried out for each year group, which show how much progress all of the children have made as well as those specifically targeted as a result of this data. The importance of this is highlighted by relevant research as well, such as Cripps and

Walsh (2001) who conclude that the results that students achieve and the assessment of them is one important factor used when judging a teacher as effective. Furthermore, Grant and Gillette also stress the importance of this aspect and conclude that, *"translating curriculum into effective lessons day after day requires a knowledge base built from multiple perspectives, including an ability to continually gather and use data to improve practice"* (Grant and Gillette, 2006: 296).

6.2. Enjoyment, expectations, behaviour

When asked what factors they look for when determining *any* school as effective, Tracy, Kaitlin and Anna focussed on the communication between the staff and the Headteacher and the enjoyment of the children. When asked what makes *this* school effective they referred to the effectiveness of the Headteacher. Both Tracy and Kaitlin had similar explanations as to what they believe defines an effective Headteacher. They felt that she focuses on high expectations of the children both within the context of learning and behaviour, and of the teachers in terms of their commitment and hard work. Moreover, they link this to their own effectiveness.

> Well, I think that she is an effective Head; I think that she is determined and that she will do whatever it takes to make the school a good school by having high expectations of the children and the staff. She expects us all to work our hardest and we do! That makes us better teachers in my eyes. (Tracy)

> (We have) a Headteacher who will not pander to behavioural incentives - she expects the children to behave and they do! I have those same expectations in the classroom as well. (Kaitlin)

When asked what determines an effective school there was a similarity in what Hyacinth, Kaitlin and Vanya expected to see. All three commented on the Headteacher and there were two separate comments made regarding the enjoyment the children get from attending school and two separate comments made regarding the behaviour of the children.

> Where every member of staff and every child feels valued for what they do and achieve, from the Headteacher downwards. There needs to be strong expectations of good behaviour and all staff need to be consistent when implementing the behaviour policy to ensure this. (Hyacinth)

> Where children and staff are happy and opinions and suggestions are positive and valued. The Headteacher should communicate effectively with all staff (explaining how and why we are doing things). (Kaitlin)

Vanya explains that it is essential that it is the responsibility of the Headteacher to implement a behavioural policy that works from the top and infiltrates downwards and then the teachers' responsibility to implement it effectively.

> It has to be the Headteacher, it has to come down from her and when schools have a whole school behaviour policy you can see that it really works as ours does. The teachers have to then do it effectively otherwise there's no point really is there? (Vanya)

Vanya showed evidence of this during her observation where she used aspects from the behavioural policy including positive praise and peer reinforcement to gather the attention of some children who were carrying on talking when she wanted the attention of the whole class.

### 6.3. Communication between Headteacher and staff

The communication from the Headteacher to teachers was a factor that teachers feel needs improving to make the Headteacher more effective. When asked what the Headteacher could do to improve, nearly half of the teachers interviewed (seven) made negative comments that focussed around the communication from her to the staff. These included being told what to do rather than discussing it and listening to ideas from others; not explaining clearly why things are done the way they are, and the inability to embrace change or try other options. It was noted that four of the following teachers who made negative comments regarding the Headteacher had previously stated that she is effective although they did not make any comments that specifically focussed on the effectiveness of the communication of the Headteacher.

> I think that the school is very slightly stuck in the dark ages and a little bit latched onto certain things and although I think that the communication is good here, overall it could be improved because we are sometimes told what to do rather than discussing certain issues because people (the Headteacher) like to do things in a traditional way and sometimes the connection between things that need passing on could be better. (Kathy)

> (In response to Kathy) I would agree with that and I think that the way the school is run and managed on the whole is generally okay but sometimes we have some very strong characters (the Headteacher) who are often not open to discussions and suggestions perhaps from others. (Janice)

> (In response to Janice) I agree as I think that there are some people (the Headteacher) who are strict in how they feel things should be done without liaison with others. (Eve)

> (In agreement with Eve) Sometimes we are told (by the Headteacher) that we are going to do it this way and that rather than how could we try this and how do people feel about it. (Jenny)

> At times I feel like the school is stuck in its ways, a case of 'we have always done it this way so will we keep doing it until the year dot'. Also although I understand that the SLT (Senior Leadership Team) has to make certain decisions, I feel that the Headteacher insists on some initiatives even when the SLT are in disagreement. There is no point having a collective if the Head will do her own thing anyway. (Kaitlin)

> I would say it's communication between the general teaching staff and the Headteacher. I think that at times it is quite divisive and I think we need to work on more of getting that kind of a link. I am trying to do it already but it's quite a difficult position to be in when you are trying to be in both camps but I think it is possible if you are fairly open and honest and are willing to listen and that's something that I want to work on. (Anna)

> I think we are mainly following the same page but maybe not always, I don't know if we could have a bit more communication from the leadership team as sometimes you can miss out on decisions, important information, but I don't think it's a big problem. Sometimes I think with organisation things could be a bit better, particularly in my first year I found it confusing. Unless you've been here for a while it can be hard to know what's happening. It's more of a management thing, like organisation, isn't it? I sometimes feel like I have an active voice but there isn't enough time, teachers are so busy, you're in your classroom and I am right over there (in a mobile classroom) so I don't hear a lot of things sometimes. (Vanya)

These aspects made some of the teachers feel as if they are being dictated to and result in the relations between the Headteacher and the staff being divisive. At times, the teachers do not feel valued and that they do not have valid opinions, which can lead to them feeling ineffective as future leaders. All of these aspects are similar to the three out of the five components that Fullan (2001) established after his study into effective Headteacher leadership. He stated that demonstrating the ability to understand change and ensure others do too, relationship building and knowledge creation and sharing were equally important when deeming a Headteacher as effective. He argues that the Leadership needs to value that every teacher is capable of contributing to the carrying out of these aspects to create an effective collective leadership (in Hatcher, 2005). Similarly to Fullan, Hammersley-Fletcher (2005) defines three different types of leadership and the consequences and benefits of them. His distributive leadership and democratic leadership are complementary to Fullan's collective leadership (Hammersley-Fletcher, 2005: 48-9).

- Autocratic leadership involves a school led by the Headteacher and in general staff tend to lack confidence and are less likely to be thinking about promotion prospects or professional development to improve their effectiveness.

- Democratic leadership involves having a secure staff built on a core of long-serving teachers who know each other well and where everyone's contribution is valued, thus leaving teachers encouraged to want to develop as effective practitioners.

- Distributive leadership involves learning from the practice of others and this flexibility allows Headteachers and their staff to build good practice in order to become more effective and focus on the particular context and culture of their school.

In relation to this model, when considering the negative comments from the teachers regarding the Headteacher, she could be described as autocratic. However, it was established earlier that many staff have left the school for promotions that the Headteacher helped them secure through aiding them in developing effectively. Furthermore, others feel that the Headteacher has helped them to develop as more effective professionals within the school. This leads it more towards a distributive leadership and this is further reinforced by Hammersley-Fletcher who concludes that this type of leadership, *"can result in a high turnover of staff because teachers are seeking new challenges and opportunities"* (Hammersley-Fletcher, 2005: 48-49). The comments from the teachers suggest that a collective, democratic and distributive leadership would be more effective. The school will have four new teachers starting at the beginning of the academic year (beginning September 2008) as well as a new temporary Headteacher for one term until a replacement is secured. If they wish to build their leadership with elements of democracy, they should ensure that they communicate with each other to utilise their effectiveness and experiences of everyone, with a particular draw on the longer service teachers.

## 6.4. Teachers' perceptions of Headteacher's strengths and areas for development

It is evident from this that teachers feel that communication between the Headteacher to staff is important in order to leave them feeling valued and that this will increase if they are included in some of the decision making by the Headteacher. Moreover, they link part of their effectiveness to how valued they feel, in that they are more likely to want to develop professionally if they feel that their experiences and ideas are valued by the Headteacher. They feel that this relies on the Headteacher being more receptive to new ideas and alternate options of approaching issues of teaching and learning instead of following stagnant methods. Equally, they understand that certain

decisions have to be made by the Headteacher but would appreciate that these are communicated to them to explain what the decisions are and more importantly why the decisions have been made. They acknowledge and appreciate that the Headteacher effectively explains to the staff how to use data to move on the children's learning and she has high expectations of how the staff effectively use this data to ensure that the children can achieve academically. Additionally, she has a behaviour policy in place that enforces high expectations of behaviour and allows the teachers to manage behaviour effectively and implement it consistently throughout the school. It is evident from this research that for an effective collective, democratic and distributive leadership to work, it is essential that the Headteacher needs to ensure that she includes the staff in some decision making or at least shares the reasons why certain protocol needs following. An effective Headteacher needs to have high expectations of what she expects from staff but still ensure that this does not get confused with dictating expectations that are unreasonable and leave staff feeling ineffective through being under pressure and under valued.

## 6.5. Summary of the findings in Chapter 6

The effectiveness of the Headteacher is perceived by teachers to have an impact on their effectiveness as teachers.

- Parents defined the effectiveness of the Headteacher as similar to that of the teachers: she is dedicated to high standards and expectations, is fair and consistent with the children and parents and encourages the channels of communication from parents to school.

- Teachers went on to define it as similar to the parents but suggested that her effectiveness impacts on their own: they strive to achieve the high expectations that she has of the children, they acknowledge how she effectively develops each member of staff professionally within her own school and for a career in other schools, and they respect how she has made them more effective when using data to help them to encourage the children into taking responsibility for and moving forward their own learning. Some teachers applied specifically for the post because of the Headteacher's commitment to developing the staff professionally both within this school and in other schools.

- Teachers claim that communication from leadership to teachers needs improving and they link this to their own effectiveness. When they are told what to do rather than taking part in discussions and listening to ideas from others, they feel devalued and ineffective. With a new Headteacher soon to be appointed teachers would like a ‘democratic’ leader, which involves having a secure staff built on a core of long-serving teachers who know each other well and where everyone’s contribution is valued. This is instead of an ‘autocratic’ leader, which sees the Headteacher in a dictatorial role.

# 7. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

## 7.1. Recommendations and implications for teaching

This research looked at a broad set of behaviours that teachers perceive as effective in the classroom. It does not focus on one aspect because the effective behaviour of teachers is so vast. It has been suggested that I could have focussed this research around one of these behaviours in more depth. However, as a teaching practitioner myself, I am concerned that many of the various publications that arrive in school focus on *being a* more effective practitioner and not *how* we can achieve this. Thus, this research contributes to the debate on what type of behaviours teachers effectively deploy and has generated a reference point to help them to reflect on their own practice in order to become more aware of their effectiveness as teaching practitioners. It is intended to encourage them to be confident in looking at what behaviours they are deploying effectively and which ones can be focussed on as areas for development. In theory it gives them tools to help them to 'do', rather than a final product of 'what needs to be done'.

This research has established that this effectiveness can be measured through the academic and social development of individual children. It also discusses how the effectiveness of the Headteacher impacts on the effectiveness of the teachers. One of the significant factors that link this is the effectiveness of communication from Headteacher to staff. Lastly it offers recommendations as a tool to help teachers and Headteachers reflect on and improve their own practice in order to become more effective practitioners.

### 7.1.(a) Behaviours of effective teachers

Developing as an effective teacher relies on being an effective planner as well as teaching practitioner. Thus the effectiveness of the practice of the teachers relies on the quality of their pre-thought and planning. This research concludes that teachers develop as effective planners and practitioners through inter-linked professional and personal behaviours. They do this through being a skilled performer and a purposeful communicator. Furthermore, they are culturally responsive and use their reflections on their experiences to aid their professional development in order to improve their practice.

*Is a skilled performer*

Effective teachers are, 'intellectually responsible' (Dewey, 1933) for planning and teaching activities that are varied and concentrate on a child-centred approach. To achieve this they utilise and apply the interlinked knowledge of their subjects and pedagogy as 'skilled performance' (Grossman, 1990). This skilled performance includes *gaining* knowledge about different teaching and learning styles and strategies that each child uses to access learning most effectively. However, it is the *application* of this knowledge through planning and teaching activities that are 'fun' and access the kinaesthetic, auditory and visual learners which is more significant when determining the effectiveness of a teacher. The children defined such activities as including playing games, engaging in practical, outdoor and messy work, doing scientific 'wow' factor experiments and being allowed to work with friends. Effective teachers also display their skilled performance to interpret the responses of the children during activities and adjust to the context in which they teach accordingly (Good et al., 2006). They apply this through being flexible and adaptable which enables them to disregard their planning and rely instead on their skill of differentiating to adapt activities on the spot without disrupting the learning. This ability to differentiate involves having vast pedagogical knowledge of how a range of children learn and sufficient subject knowledge to know what the children need to move their learning forward or to support them to make links to prior learning. They use their skilled performance to *anticipate* this differentiation in order to prepare themselves for the situation they end up teaching their planned activity in being different. This research does suggest that to be more effective as a skilled performer teachers need to ensure that they apply their subject and pedagogical knowledge to plan for the differentiation of *pace* at which each child learns. They need to make certain that the time they *planned* for the children to complete the activity and the time *given* to complete the activity is sufficient and that the majority of the children can realistically complete the tasks during the time given. Furthermore, they need to plan activities for the children who complete a task within the time given and ensure that they have high expectations of these children. Thus these activities should be challenging enough for more able children and make sure that they are not just being asked to produce more of the same or similar work when finishing a task prematurely.

*Is a purposeful communicator*

Effective teachers are logical in their demonstrating, modelling, explaining and correcting (Fenstermacher and Richardson, 2005 in Berliner, 2005). This means that they use what they want the children to achieve to model and explain in a clear and concise manner and check that they understand the delivery through questioning. They also use verbal questioning to find out about the prior learning of the children and to challenge their thought processes further to extend their thinking. Furthermore they utilise the responses from the children alongside their skilled performance to plan and teach activities that build on previous learning. During verbal delivery of such activities they pause to encourage the children to process and link to their prior learning. Teachers use the responses of the children to help explain further or to add clarity to a point and to assess learning. Additionally, they use this verbal explanation and feedback as a method of correcting and explaining both during and after the children produce written work. Furthermore this feedback is used to offer suggestions to help the children to take the responsibility to improve their own learning. It is also used to offer colleagues' suggestions and ideas in order to look at and improve their own practice. This feedback involves valuing each others opinions to check for consistency when teaching and planning and to develop knowledge about children (Ladson-Billings, 1994 in Grant and Gillette, 2006; Clandinin and Connelly, 2000 in Howe, 2006 and Carroll, 2004). This research suggests that teachers are effective when providing feedback for the children that aims for improvement. Greater honesty and sharing more information regarding subject and pedagogical knowledge via feedback is needed to generate more effective communication between teacher-to-teacher. Moreover, the communication from teacher to parent would benefit from the teachers being more informative when feeding back to them about their children. This can be achieved through teachers generating more opportunities to talk or meet with parents rather than leaving it to formal meetings such as parents' evenings. Additionally, to develop as a purposeful communicator, beginner teachers also need to utilise visual or written communication as a prompt to help the children remember what to do and ensure that they are presenting and delivering activities through speaking clearly and concisely.

*Is culturally responsive*

Effective teachers are culturally responsive (Cripps and Walsh, 2004) in that they have high yet realistic personal expectations of the children. They value the attempts of all children in a positive

manner through using frequent praise and encouragement (Harslett et al., 1998). This results in children responding and interacting with lessons even though some may struggle to grasp the concept. They do not label or stigmatise the children because of their backgrounds and cultures. Instead they value their backgrounds, cultures and differences and this leaves the children feeling respected and more motivated to learn. The teachers reflect on and use their own experiences, backgrounds and cultures to understand the children and make links in terms of where they are coming from. They demonstrate this understanding through appreciating if the children are having a difficult day or that things are difficult in their lives at the moment and therefore allow them some leeway when responding to physical and verbal actions that may be out of character. They deploy their cultural response in a fair, consistent and respectful manner. This includes treating the children like developing adults and recognising when they need help with their work and offering it willingly. This also means being straightforward with the children and giving them realistic choices to put things right rather than just telling them what to do. Effective teachers also have high yet realistic expectations of behaviour and are culturally responsive through being fair, consistent and respectful when managing behaviour. They show consistency by following through with something if they say they will. They follow a behaviour policy that encompasses what it means to be culturally responsive and utilise a variety of strategies to manage negative behaviour including positive praise, selective ignoring, peer reinforcement and appropriate noises or actions to gain attention. Children appreciate it and feel valued when their current teacher takes the time to use this policy to sort things out in a fair manner when there are any negative issues with their friendships. To be more culturally responsive teachers need to ensure that all of the expectations that they have of the children both in terms of learning and behaviour are realistic. When expectations are too high the nurturing and caring behaviour of the teacher lessens, yet teachers can learn to be caring and nurturing through observing the practice and behaviours of others. They need to ensure that they use their high expectations of behaviour to approach negative behaviour in a non-confrontational manner as this helps to maintain respect between the child and the teacher.

*Uses reflection to aid professional development in order to further improve practice*

The skilled performance of teachers can be developed through ongoing professional development, which includes a combination of research and formal training, reflection on own experiences and interaction with and observation of the practice of colleagues. However, to develop as a reflective teacher they need to ensure that they are not confusing the term ‘being reflective’ with a ‘reflective

teacher' (Grant and Gillette, 2006). Being post-reflective involves reflecting on an experience after it has happened but does not necessarily lead to change whereas reflection-in-action as defined by Schön (1983) will see teachers use their reflections on experiences as they happen to identify a problem. They will then use a combination of PD (professional development), classroom data and logistics and utilise the knowledge and practice of their colleagues to develop a plan to alter their current practice and implement change. Teachers rely on teamwork in order to utilise colleagues to help them to act on their reflections and develop their practice. This teamwork helps them to gain support and guidance, share ideas, model good practice, help with planning and encourage and support each other (Carroll, 2004). However, effective teachers do not rely solely on colleagues when reflecting. They are also independently responsible when reflecting on and researching their practice in their own time and organise activities and events in order to benefit the children both academically and socially. Thus they show commitment in that they are dedicated to their work through working long hours and being self-motivated (Ayres et al., 2004).

### 7.1.(b) The impact of the effectiveness of the Headteacher on the effectiveness of the teachers

*Positive contributions*

Leadership in the form of the Headteacher is recognised for its positive contribution to the effectiveness of the teachers. This contribution reflects the effective behaviours that teachers deploy in that it includes the dedication to high standards and expectations in order to keep standards within the school high. To keep these expectations high and avoid a compromise of their expectations and standards, effective Headteachers are fair and consistent with the children and parents. They enforce their high expectations, fairness and consistency through implementing a behavioural policy that is respected and emulated by staff, parents and children within the school. They use their knowledge of data to encourage teachers to be more effective when expecting the children to take responsibility for their own learning in order to lead to improvement. They also demonstrate their high expectations of the staff regarding their practice and it is these expectations that partly help teachers to be more effective with their own expectations of the children. Furthermore, they also show commitment to developing each member of staff as effective professionals within their own school and for a future career in other schools. As a result of this they are respected amongst the teaching community, which can lead to teachers specifically applying for a teaching post at their school. They verbally communicate their high expectations to

parents and children to ensure that they know what is expected of them and use these channels of communication to promote a valuable and effective continuous dialogue between the parents and the school.

*Development towards becoming a purposeful communicator*

Although teachers recognise this positive contribution, they claim that the communication from the Headteacher to teachers needs improving to enhance the effectiveness of the Headteacher. It has previously been established through this research that teachers feel valued when their contributions are considered and that they in turn value the experiences and contributions of others. Thus they are more likely to seek to develop as effective practitioners if the Headteacher values their ideas and contributions. This research suggests that teachers would appreciate a 'democratic' leader within a school, which would involve having a staff built on a core of long serving teachers who know each other well, work well as a team and where everyone's contribution is valued (Hammersley-Fletcher, 2005). Teachers do not appreciate an 'autocratic' leader, although they do acknowledge that they can become more effective from aspects of this type of leadership, such as the Headteacher being committed to developing staff professionally. However this type of leadership involves the Headteacher in a predominantly dictatorial role. The teachers feel that their opinions and experiences are devalued in that they are told what to do rather than discussing issues, listening to and utilising ideas and reflections from others. Teachers understand that some things need to be carried out in certain ways and are not always appropriate for discussion but they would appreciate it if the Headteacher takes the time to explain clearly why things are done the way they are. Lastly they would like the Headteacher to be flexible during discussions and meetings to embrace change or try other options in order to benefit the learning of the children and leave teachers feeling that their ideas and reflections are valuable. Through valuing their effective ideas, teachers will benefit greatly when they embark on their own personal journey to become an effective leader as well as an effective teaching practitioner.

## 7.2. Methodological reflections

This section discusses the methodological issues that were raised when gathering, presenting and analysing the data.

### 7.2.(a) Choosing to do a case study

I felt that choosing to carry out the research as a case study provided data with a rich insight into people in real life situations that Cohen et al. suggested it could do (2003). Bell suggested (2002) that a case study raises issues that warrant further investigation. This case study has also raised such issues, which are discussed later in the 'future research' section. The case study generated a large amount of data that was based largely on the personal experiences of the teachers. However, this data was substantiated through quantitative data generated from part of the questionnaires and data collected from the observations by the researcher. Furthermore, the 'pupil voice' interviews, based on individual children's personal experiences, added corroboration. I aimed that my case study would follow Hitchcock and Hughes' model (1995, in Cohen et al., 2003: 181- 182) and be descriptive (provide accounts), evaluative (explain and judge), and intrinsic (in order to understand the particular case in question). On reflection, I believe it did provide accounts that added explanation regarding the behaviour of the teachers and it offered some insight into what we mean by 'effective teachers'. Moreover, I believe this case study contributed to our understanding of teacher perceptions on what type of behaviours teachers deploy effectively, and has generated a reference point to help them to reflect on their own practice in order to become more aware of their effectiveness as teaching practitioners (Bassey, 1981).

### 7.2.(b) Choosing to focus on the positive aspects

My choice to focus on the positive aspects helped to yield a group of behaviours that teachers can recognise and use for areas of development when seeking to improve their effectiveness. As previously discussed, I wanted to make a positive contribution to the development of teachers, in order to provide a variety of ways in which they can be more effective, instead of merely telling them how not to be. Any negative aspects that I observed I turned into a positive line of questioning. For example, on one occasion I noted that a teacher wasn't giving the children much praise. I used this to question them about how they use praise in the classroom and how they value it. Their response helped me to focus on the use of praise during other observations.

### 7.2.(c) Interviews

I found that one of the most useful exercises to find out why people do what they do was to ask them. The interviews provided me with the flexibility to follow up on a line of questioning in an instant and to ask the respondent to elaborate further (Ingersoll and Smith, 2003 in Cohen et al., 2003). I followed the advice of Cohen et al. (2003: 269) who suggested the use of semi-structured interviews. This involved the researcher asking a range of specific pre-thought out questions but allowed time and scope in the interview for issues that emerged and could be followed up instantly. This research benefited from this approach as many issues emerged that needed to be elaborated instantly to refocus the questioning. In agreement with Ely et al. (1991) it was important that I as the researcher am knowledgeable and that I have experienced what I am researching as I could adapt the line of questioning on the spot by relying on my knowledge. I also knew what line of questioning to take when I wanted the participant to elaborate on a point without pausing or hesitating. I found that there were very few occasions when the participant seemed to be responding in a manner in which they believed that they had to please me (Ely et al. 1991). Lastly, although I was aware that some researchers question the validity of responses where the respondent has had time to structure answers, I asked colleagues individually if they would prefer that I distributed copies of the structured questions pre-interview. Only one out of the sixteen participants wanted me to do this and I found that her answers were no richer than the other fifteen participants. With the children's interviews I chose to keep the questions structured and not to let them read them in advance because I did not want them to prepare answers. However, in hindsight, some of the responses that the children gave were one-word and they used broad adjectives that were difficult to classify when presenting and analysing the data. Furthermore, because another researcher undertook these interviews, I feel that they did not have the knowledge as stipulated by Ely et al. to focus the questioning and probe the children to elaborate further. As a result of this, my choice to use a different researcher to undertake the children's interviews in order to prompt them to speak freely (as I was one of the teachers that they may comment about) and to save valuable time is something that I would consider carrying out differently in future research.

### 7.2.(d) Focus group discussions

It was intended that the group discussions would bring together teachers with varied opinions which would lead to discussion developing and provide an insight into what might be pursued in

subsequent individual interviews. These focus group discussions rely on the interaction within the group to discuss a topic provided by the researcher rather than a backwards and forwards between the researcher and the group of respondents and it is from these interactions that the data emerges (Cohen et al., 2003). This interaction was not evident during the focus discussions in this research. The 3 participants in group two were reluctant to elaborate on answers, giving short answers that would be normally found in a questionnaire. They also took it in turns to answer a question with one response each and they did not participate in discussion, rather they responded with their own individual answer with little reference to what had been said before. Furthermore, even my attempt to generate a discussion by using questioning to probe some of their points did not encourage them to pursue a point further. Group one attempted to discuss and there were elements of the 3 participants agreeing and disagreeing with each other, however, much of the agreement was in the form of a nod or a short responses rather than contributing much to the conversation. Regardless of this they did help to provide some useful data to triangulate with the interview data.

The size of the group could have had impact on the reluctance of some of the participants to contribute. I chose to follow Morgan's suggestion of 3 participants because I wanted to keep the group focused (1988 in Cohen et al., 2003) and disregarded Lewis who suggested that 6 is optimum because too few can put pressure on individuals and be unrepresentative of the population (1992 in Cohen et al., 2003). I feel this could have been a factor within my focus groups and would consider this closer in future research. I did consider that the dynamics of the group could have been a factor that left some participants reluctant to elaborate. However, the three participants from focus group 2 all socialise and work within the Foundation Stage of the school and those in group 1 also socialise and consider themselves to be more than colleagues.

### 7.2.(e) Observations

The observations gave me the opportunity to gather 'live' data from 'live' situations and to look at what is taking place *in situ* rather than second-hand. The data from the observations gave me a valuable insight and helped to validate what the teachers then followed up with during their interviews. Similarly, like Ayres et al. (2004), I found that it was more useful to interview the teachers on the same day after the lesson. This allowed me the time to use my notes from the observations to generate additional questions to complement those predetermined and I found that the teachers referred to the observations because they were still fresh in their mind. Unlike similar

researchers within this area who also chose to adopt the role of a participant observer, I did not note issues such as knowing when to stand back and having difficulty adopting the role of an observer when all the members of the group or organisation are known to me. In reference to Bell (2002) I believe that part of this stems from the positive aspect of my research. Although I was focusing on constructive behaviours, I did note any such unconstructive behaviour and used these notes to structure positive questions to ask during the interviews. Furthermore the features that I noted during the observations were of more relevance because I am immersed within this particular subject. This helped to generate a more holistic view and, alongside my own experiences, helped make my explanations and interpretations of events more accurate, rather than relying on my own inferences (Morrison, 1993 in Cohen et al., 2003: 88). Before I embarked on the research I thought that the interviews would yield more insight into the behaviours of effective teachers. On reflection, they did add much clarity to teachers saying what they actually do in the classroom (discussed previously). However, it was the observations that unearthed more of the tacit knowledge and behaviours that teachers find hardest to elaborate on or display. As the focus of this research is in order to examine how perceptions and behaviours are linked, I would consider observing the teachers over a time and focusing closely on the responses of the children in a classroom setting.

### 7.2.(f) Questionnaires

The questionnaires generated a large amount of data that I used to identify themes to triangulate with the rest of the data. Although Tytler et al. (2004) argue that data gathered from questionnaires is limited and does not provide details, the questionnaires in this research were intended to generate themes to be triangulated with those from the other sources of data. With reference to Bell (2002) I took into consideration that when distributing questionnaires it is important that, as far as possible, they attempt to yield data that is representative of the population as a whole to ensure that generalisations can be then made from findings. When constructing the questionnaire I considered my target audience carefully and deduced that many of my respondents were busy working families and families with limited literacy skills so would be more likely to answer closed questions. Taking this into consideration, I was pleased with the response rate of 120 out of 367 (33%).

I also wanted to give the respondents opportunities to make remarks, explanations or to qualify statements so they were given the option to comment further, which several did. Furthermore, because I wanted to give my respondents more of a voice rather than just inviting them to make additional comments I decided to construct some of the questions based on a Likert Scale (Rensis Likert -1932) in attempt to provide more opportunity than dichotomous questions for gathering information on attitudes, perceptions and opinions (in Cohen et al., 2003). To avoid the problem of one person's 'agree' possibly being another person's 'strongly agree', I used a semantic differential scale, a variation of the Likert Scale where I placed an adjective at one end and its opposite at the other and the respondent responded by circling or marking a number on the scale which most represented what she or he felt. Prior to distributing the questionnaires I was conscious that some respondents might circle the middle values, however this was not the case as many of the responses veered towards one adjective or the other.

### 7.2.(g) Data analysis

I chose to generate three findings chapters based on the recurring perceptions found in the qualitative data (observations and interviews) and referred to Marton's Phenomenographic approach (1993, in Carroll, 2004: 202-3) to analyse the written responses to the open-ended questions. In doing I aimed that the analysis revealed the variation of ways of experiencing a phenomenon or a situation (the classroom) without preconceived ideas. All of the responses to the same open-ended questions were combined, and then read as a whole to identify reoccurring perceptions in the data. To prevent omitting any less frequently occurring perceptions as of lesser significance I used Ashworth's analytical and empathetic approach (1987), which involved not predetermining the expected perceptions. I consciously handled my data as close to its original format as possible when analysing and interpreting to avoid intrusion and this was helped by my decision not to quantify my observations or interviews.

### 7.2.(h) Validity, reliability, bias and triangulation

I considered the words of Franzosi (2004: 183) and concentrated on the importance of using other sources to validate the data. He claims that, *"validation of one's data through alternative and independent measures should be an integral part of any research design involving data collection…"* The data raised a few significant themes rather than many insignificant themes and it

was the frequency in which these themes emerged that contributed to the validity. It is this intensity that determined the quality of the data and offered a valid insight into the dynamics of the research *in situ*. Referring to Cohen et al., the validity of the qualitative data lies within its ability to represent the participant's reality, that is to say, his or her definition of the situation (2003). Therefore the transcripts of the interviews were returned to the respondents to check for accuracy and to ensure validity. Cohen et al. suggest that any theme or incident, regardless of how frequently they occur, should be credited by being checked for reliability to help validate them (2003). This was one of the main reasons why I chose to use a variety of methods to collect my data. The observations were particularly useful to discover whether teachers behave in the way they claim to behave during the interviews. The questionnaires were anonymous so could have created a greater honesty amongst those participating in them.

I did find it challenging to minimise my preconceived ideas and prejudices when undertaking the observations and interviews and it was somewhat difficult to stand back and adopt the role of the observer when all the members of the group or organisation were known to me. However, my awareness of this issue helped me minimise this problem when I analysed and interpreted the data. Moreover, many of my preconceived ideas were based around how I would tackle any negative practice if I witnessed it during the observations. This did not emerge as the study places an emphasis on good practice rather than on deficient practice. Although I did witness some not-so-positive practice, rather than negative practice, I used these observations to generate positive questions. On reflection, I would consider observing my participants more than once to see if there was any pattern in this not-so-positive-practice. I feel that this would have allowed me to focus on my agenda because I would be aware of any negative practice rather than concerning myself as to whether I would witness any. This of course raises questions as to what I would have done if I had noted a trend of negative behaviour from a colleague and would I really be able to dismiss this and focus on my agenda.

To avoid the 'response effect' as discussed by Borg (1981) I did not disregard data that did not support my preconceived notions. Equally, the antagonism that sometimes arises between the interviewer and the respondent was negligible due to minimal input from me during the interviews. In order not to steer the respondent to give an answer to please me, I allowed them the freedom and the flexibility to talk and put the study forward to them as a positive study that focuses on good practice. This left the respondent feeling comfortable to focus on and talk honestly about their

good practice. This data gave me an insight into the particular points of view and left me feeling that I need to know more and raised areas that warrant further investigation (see future research)

### 7.2.(i) Ethical implications

Gaining access to the school and colleagues did not pose any problems. Equally, all of my colleagues were co-operative and happy for me to observe them and to give up 30 minutes of their time for interviews. Fortunately, the teachers at the school are used to being observed in a formal and informal setting. In terms of confidentiality and anonymity, I made it very clear that while I could guarantee confidentiality I could not guarantee anonymity as the school could be identified by my CV and this could lead to their identity being discovered through a process of elimination. This was clarified through a pre-research meeting and again before the interviews.

## 7.3. Further research opportunities

As a result of this research there are two areas that I feel would benefit from further investigation in order to provide more insight into the debate on what type of behaviours teachers deploy. Both of these areas have developed from my reading of the book entitled, *Crisis in the classroom: The remaking of American education,* written by C. E. Silberman in 1970.

### 7.3.(a) Teachers' experiences, reflection on experiences and 'culturally responsive'

Information was gathered during this research regarding the demographics of the teachers and used to attempt to generate a profile (see appendix 6). This profile includes information regarding the type of schooling that the teachers received and an explanation of what experiences and influences led them to a career in teaching. It was intended that this profile be used during the presentation and analysis stage of this research to discuss whether certain aspects of effective teaching were linked to the teachers reflecting and if this has an effect on their ability to be 'culturally responsive' (Cripps and Walsh, 2004). I was particularly interested in Silberman's view that teachers benefit from reflecting on their own past. He argues that to relate to the children (an aspect of being 'culturally responsive') it is more vital to reflect on their own experiences than to focus on developing their subject and pedagogical knowledge ('skilled performance' - Grossman, 1990).

> "Teachers benefit from reflecting on school age experiences because it helps them to relate to the life experiences of their students and that these experiences can give them an insight into their purposes as a teacher in order to reflect on why they are teaching what they are teaching. This is more vital then developing the knowledge of their subject matter and experiencing a little practice teaching experience before they enter the classroom." (Silberman, 1970: 489-490)

However, when looking at the profiles I did not find any plausible links and felt that this was due to having only 18 profiles. I felt that pursuing this aspect would not generate sufficient data, cross-references and themes to provide an in-depth insight into comparing experiences and the effectiveness of teachers. I feel that a larger and more diverse target group of 50 or more respondents and a specific research focus on the areas of culturally responsive' and 'skilled performance' could provide this. I also noted that during the significant UK project commissioned by the DfEE in 2000 undertaken by Hay McBer and entitled 'Research into Teacher Effectiveness: A Model of Teacher Effectiveness', it was concluded that the biometric data (i.e. information about a teacher's age and teaching experience, additional responsibilities, qualifications, career history and so on) did not allow them to predict their effectiveness as a teacher.

### 7.3.(b) Children's commitment to being 'intellectual responsible'

This research places an emphasis on the teacher being intellectually responsible for their own effectiveness through planning, teaching and how they behave (Dewey, 1933). Silberman suggested that children need to also take some of the responsibility for their own learning through an understanding of the manner in which their teachers teach.

> "Perhaps they (children) need to understand the kinds of questions their teachers will raise and to have some sense of where to turn for further understanding." (Silberman, 1970: 489-490)

I have just started a new job teaching in a school that focuses on 'The Mantle of the Expert' (MoE) approach. This is a dramatic inquiry-based approach to teaching and learning invented and developed by Professor Dorothy Heathcote at the University of Newcastle upon Tyne in the 1980's. The main principle is that the class do all their curriculum work as if they are an imagined group of experts. This enables the children to work from a specific point of view as they take the responsibility for and explore their own learning. Similarly to the view of Silberman it also

encourages the children to anticipate what their teachers will teach, thus leaving them not so reliant on teachers when learning and gaining understanding. For the teacher this involves a different approach to planning. They become the facilitator who does not necessarily produce comprehensive planning but instead uses their planning and teaching expertise and 'skilled performance' to guide the children's learning. The role of the facilitator is supported by psychological theory such as Vygotsky (1980s) who believes that the teacher should not play an enabling role but should guide pupils by having control - not *rigid* control - over their activities. Similarly Piaget (1987) argues that in order to be effective the teacher must recognise that each child needs to construct knowledge for her/himself and that deeper understanding is the product of active learning. Alongside Vygotsky he believes that rather than providing the appropriate materials and allowing children to get on with it, the teacher should create a proper balance between actively guiding and directing children's thinking patterns and providing opportunities for them to explore by themselves. The MoE approach impacts on further research into teacher effectiveness because it advocates the child as the expert who takes more responsibility for their own learning. This leads to future discussion surrounding the need to research the effectiveness of the teacher and moves towards researching the effectiveness of the role of the teacher as a facilitator for learning.

## 7.4. Personal reflection

Whilst lying in bed recently I began to reflect on my experiences of doing the Ed.D. during the last 5 years. I remember back in July 2004 when I had just accepted a new job and promotion and I was offered a place on the course. Rev. Tony Jones, the Chair of Governors at my existing school, wrote in my leaving card, *"I hope that you find the work life balance that you seek"*. As we always had a testing relationship I interpreted this as, *"You'll be on the floor by Christmas"*. Ironically, this course hasn't caused me many sleepless nights over the past five years, instead it has been my constant during a period of personal issues and has helped me to focus my thoughts. Undeniably I have fretted about certain parts of the thesis, but it has proved to be an escape and it does worry me a little that this 'zone of comfort' will soon be (hopefully) no longer there!

I have enjoyed doing the Ed.D. and feel that it has given me the opportunity to reflect on and make improvements to my own practice within the classroom. More importantly, it has given me the confidence and skills to help others to look at their own practice in order to make improvements.

Lastly, part of my new role as a Deputy Headteacher involves the promotion within the school of the importance of continuing professional development and I can use my experiences of the Ed.D. to do this.

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## Appendix 1: Table of significant factors from previous research

| Shows factors of effective teachers determined from selected research undertaken between 1976-2006 in the UK, US and Australia. | Factors from most occurring through to least. | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | Positive / encouraging / stimulating / enthusiastic | Systematic and organised | Subject knowledge and experience | High expectations / good feedback | Empathetic / respect | Good presentation, communication and listening skills | Pedagogical knowledge | Uses a range of teaching strategies / resources | Target sets according to child / realistic expectations | Has strong beliefs / caring | Good rapport with students | Manage student behaviour without confrontation | Encourages independent thought and learning | Reflects on practice in order to seek to improve | Seeks to develop professionally |
| Bishop, 1976, '*On characteristics of USA high school teachers regarded as successful by their students*' (in Vialle and Quigley, 2000: 2-3). | * | * | * | * | * | | | | | | | | | | |
| Larrivee, 1985. Australian study (in Sakarneh, 2004: 10). | | * | | * | | | | * | | | | | | | |
| Entwistle and Tait, 1990 (in Patrick and Smart, 1998: 7). | | | | | | | | * | | | * | | | | |
| Swartz et al., 1990 (in Patrick and Smart, 1998: 7). | | | | | | | | | | | | * | | | |
| Ramsden, 1991 (in Patrick and Smart, 1998: 7). | * | * | | | * | * | | | * | | | | * | | |
| Brown and Atkins, 1993 (in Patrick and Smart, 1998: 7). | * | * | | | * | | | | | | | | | | |
| Brown and McIntyre, 1993 (in Ayres et al. 2004: 145). | * | * | * | * | * | * | | | * | | | | | | |
| Lowman and Mathie, 1993 (in Patrick and Smart, 1998: 7). | * | | | | | | | | | | * | * | | | |
| Teddlie, 1994 US study (in Ayres et al. 2004: 143). | * | | | | | * | | | | | | | * | | |
| Sammons et al., 1995 (in Ayres et al. 2004: 143). | * | | | * | | | | | * | | | | | | |
| Westwood, 1995. Australian study (in Sakarneh, 2004: 8). | * | * | | * | | * | | * | * | | | | | | |
| Harslett et al., 1998, '*On working with aboriginal students in Australia*'. | * | | | * | | * | * | | | * | * | * | | | |
| Medwell et al., 1998, '*On effective Teachers of Literacy in the UK*'. | | | * | | | | * | | * | * | | | | | * |
| Patrick and Smart, 1998. | * | * | | * | * | | | | | | | | | | |
| Carpenter et al., 2001. Australian study. | * | | * | * | * | | * | * | | | | * | | * | * |
| Cripps and Walsh, 2001. | | | * | | * | | * | | | | * | * | | | |
| Sutherland and Thimmippa, 2001. South Pacific study. | * | | * | | | | * | | | | | | | | |
| Gustafsson and Rice, 2003 (in OECD, 2005: 98). | | * | * | | | * | | | | | | | | * | |
| McDonough, 2003, '*On pre service teacher perceptions of characteristics of highly effective teachers of Numeracy in Australia*'. | * | | | | | | | * | * | | | | * | | |
| Murphy et al., 2004. Australian study (in Sakarneh, 2004: 9). | * | * | | | * | | | | | * | | | | | |
| Grant and Gillette, 2006. USA study. | * | * | * | | | | | | | | | | | * | |
| Howe, 2006. | | | * | | | * | * | * | | * | | | | | * |

## Appendix 2: Questions for parents

1. Considering all of your children that currently attend this school, how effective would you rate the teaching overall?

Effective Ineffective

1 2 3 4 5

2. At present how effective would your say this school is?
(Consider all aspects of the school, not just the teaching).

Effective Ineffective

1 2 3 4 5

3. Please tick 3 aspects that you feel are the most relevant when judging this school as effective.

| | |
|---|---|
| The teaching | |
| The leadership | |
| The SATs results (end of Key Stage 1 and 2 results) | |
| The behaviour of the children | |
| The facilities that are offered (clubs, trips, events, resources) | |
| The size of the classes (normally 30 to a class: Years 1 -6) | |
| The ethos and expectations of the school | |
| The contribution of ALSA (Parents and Teachers Association) | |
| The school grounds | |
| The area in which the school is located | |

4. Based on your overall experiences, please tick up to 3 aspects that best describe the teachers in general at this school.

| | |
|---|---|
| Are positive, encouraging and motivating | |
| Have a caring and nurturing manner | |
| Are systematic and organised | |
| Have good rapport with children yet are respectful | |
| Manage children's behaviour without confrontation | |
| Have a strong subject and pedagogical (of the child) knowledge | |
| Have high expectations and give useful feedback to children | |
| Use a variety of teaching strategies to suit the learner | |
| Have good presentation and delivery skills (communication) | |
| Seek to develop themselves professionally (e.g. go on courses) | |

## Appendix 3: Questions for children

1. What things does your teacher this year do well in the classroom?

2. What is your teacher like as a person? Tell me the good things about her.

3. What is something that your teacher could get better at?

4. Think of a teacher that you like the best (it does not have to be your one this year) do not say their name but do tell me why you chose them? What did / do they do they makes them your best?

5. How do you know this is a good school?

## Appendix 4: Questions for focus group discussions

*Lead questions*

**1. What factors do you think determine the effectiveness of any teacher?**

**2. What factors do you think determine the effectiveness of any school?**

**3. Based on this, is this school an effective school?**

*Subsequent questions*

**1. What factors do you think determine the effectiveness of any teacher?**

- What do you base this on?
- Do you look at the opposite then, and think that effective practice is opposite to ineffective practice?
- You mentioned anonymously a colleague here; do you aspire to be like her? Do you think she is effective in every way? How do you know that she is effective? What basis do you use to judge her on?

**2. What factors do you think determine the effectiveness of any school?**

- Have you seen these factors in other schools? What similarities and differences between the schools do you look for when judging effectiveness?
- What are you basing this effectiveness on? Teaching, learning, ethos, enjoyment?
- The Headteacher has been mentioned several times during this discussion, both negatively and positively. How important then is her role to the effectiveness of this school?

**3. Based on this, is this school an effective school?**

- So is it fair to say that the Headteacher plays a huge factor when determining the effectiveness of a school?
- How does she impact on you as an effective teacher?
- What would you like her to do to help you to be more effective?
- How can you help her to do this? What is your role in this development?

## Appendix 5: Structured interview questions observation

1. What is your understanding of the terminology of an:

    a) ‘Effective’ teacher?
    b) ‘Effective’ school?

2. What are the main factors that you try to employ in your practice to make you an ‘effective’ teacher?

3. When I observed you I noticed that you……. This is similar to the theory / ideas of…… who believes that…….

    a) Is this something you are aware of?
    b) Do you strive to do this?
    c) Has anyone told you this before?
    d) Do you do it because you have been advised to or have seen others do it successfully?

4. Is there a teacher, either at this school or another school, whom you think could be described as ‘effective’? (You don’t have to name them!) What do they do that makes them ‘effective’ in your eyes?

5. Although this is a positive study what do you think that you could do to be more ‘effective’?

6. How will you do this?

7. According to Ofsted and yearly SATs results this could be described as an ‘effective school’. What factors do you think makes this an ‘effective’ school?

8. Having worked at other schools, either as a teacher or a student teacher, how would you compare this school in terms of effectiveness (is this the most effective school that you have worked in)?

9. What do you think this school could do to become more ‘effective’?

10. How could you contribute to helping the school to do this?

## Appendix 6: Profiles of teachers

| Name | Type of secondary schooling experienced | Profile |
|---|---|---|
| Eve | Comprehensive | Retired last year, returned for 1 term as a favour |
| Denise | Girls convent school | Always wanted to be a teacher, has worked at this school for 20 years, near retirement |
| Anna | Comprehensive | Loved sport, P.E. trained, encouraged by P.E. teacher |
| Hyacinth | Grammar convent school | Dad was a Headteacher, lots of teachers in family |
| Verity | Comprehensive | Did a degree in Education Psychology – wanted to go into that but enjoyed teaching – in 11th year now |
| Kaitlin | Comprehensive | Working class, no other educated member in family except brother (secondary teacher) wanted to teach but didn't want to seem as if was copying older brother who often compared to. Older brother didn't plan on going into teaching just fell into it |
| Kathy | Comprehensive | Bullied at primary school and found secondary boring |
| Jenny | Comprehensive | Wanted to be a Physiotherapist, parents teachers, followed them, fell into it, enjoyed working with children |
| Katrina | Comprehensive | Wanted to be a pilot, failed vision test, got into teaching by 'accident' |
| Janice | Comprehensive | Trained and worked as a nurse, left with children a lot at work, liked it, helped in a school |
| Sasha | Comprehensive | Went into teaching because it was in the family, destined to do it, influenced by mother who told her to do it as she would be good at it and that it was a good job |
| Vanya | Catholic primary | Did work in industry for a few years (office), mum a teacher (secondary German), many members of dad's family primary teachers |
| Sandy | Comprehensive | Mum a pre-school teacher who encouraged her |
| Rachel | Comprehensive | NQT (part-time), has children at the school, wanted to be an Educational Psychologist, helped out at a school, enjoyed being with the children, has now left |
| Tracy | Comprehensive | NQT, mum deputy Headteacher at school, went to this school herself, ideally wants to be an Educational Psychologist but cannot afford to train |
| Josie | Comprehensive | Career change after motherhood, childminding fitted in with home life, then worked in a preschool, then trained |
| Jane | Comprehensive | Trained 30 years ago as a secondary teacher then re-trained and worked in a special needs unit attached to a mainstream school for 8 years. |
| Julian | Comprehensive | Been teaching for five years after his redundancy in 2001 triggered his move into teaching, struggling to cope |

**Appendix 7: Table 2 - Perceived areas of effectiveness from response during individual interviews, focus group interviews, parental questionnaires (including any additional comments made) and 'pupil voice' interviews.**

| Perceived areas of effectiveness: | Teachers who held the same view based on comments made by 18 teachers during interviews. | Parents who held the same view based on quantified data from 120 questionnaires and any additional comments made. | Children who held the same view based on comments made during 'pupil voice' interviews with 25 children. |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Chapter 4. Perceptions on the impact of planning and teaching on pupils' academic development** | | | |
| Plans well paced activities | 5 | | |
| Presentation and communication skills | 4 | 18 | 2 |
| Range of strategies used | 3 | 32 | 1 |
| Student centred | 3 | 4 | |
| Flexible with planning and teaching | 3 | | |
| Pedagogical and subject knowledge secure | 2 | 12 | 1 |
| Differentiation / extends more able | 2 | 5 | 1 |
| **Chapter 5. Perceptions on the impact of teacher behaviour on the learning environment** | | | |
| Values the children and has high expectations | 6 | 2 | |
| Manages children's behaviour positively | 5 | | |
| Teamwork | 5 | | |
| Communication – teacher to teacher | 5 | | |
| Systematic and organised in their classroom organisation and management | 4 | 23 | |
| Caring, nurturing and understanding | 4 | | 16 |
| Has a 'fun' personality and plans 'fun' activities | 4 | | 10 |
| Positive, encouraging, motivating and gives praise | 4 | 2 | |
| Teacher commitment | 3 | | |
| Communication – teacher to child | 1 | 22 | 7 |
| Fair, consistent and respectful | | 63 | 3 |
| Helps the children with their work and social issues | | | 4 |
| **Chapter 6. Perceptions on the impact of Headteacher effectiveness on teacher effectiveness** | | | |
| The leadership | 5 | | |
| Enjoyment, expectations, behaviour | 5 | | |
| Development of staff | 4 | | |
| Development of children | 2 | | |

**Appendix 8: Table 3 - Perceived areas of development from response during individual interviews, focus group interviews, parental questionnaires (including any additional comments made) and 'pupil voice' interviews.**

| Perceived areas of development: | Teachers who held the same view based on comments made by 18 teachers during interviews. | Parents who held the same view based on quantified data from 120 questionnaires and any additional comments made. | Children who held the same view based on comments made during 'pupil voice' interviews with 25 children. |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Chapter 4. Perceptions on the impact of planning and teaching on pupils' academic development** | | | |
| Utilise their subject and their pedagogical knowledge | 3 | | 3 |
| Cater for all abilities including extending the more able | 2 | | |
| Project their planned objectives to the children through teaching in a manner that they understand what is expected of them and put the learning into context (relate it to previous learning) | 2 | | |
| Plan and teach challenging and well paced activities | | | 1 |
| **Chapter 5. Perceptions on the impact of teacher behaviour on the learning environment** | | | |
| Communication – teacher to teacher | 6 | | |
| Positive and have high, yet realistic, expectations | 1 | 2 | |
| Classroom and behavioural management | 1 | 2 | |
| Communication – teacher to parent | | 2 | |
| **Chapter 6. Perceptions on the impact of Headteacher effectiveness on teacher effectiveness** | | | |
| Communication – Headteacher to teacher | 7 | | |

## Appendix 9: Atkinson et al. (Atkinson, A., Burgess, S., Croxson, B., Gregg, P., Propper, C., Slater, H., and Wilson, D.) (2004). 'Evaluating the impact of performance-related pay for teachers in England'. *Working Paper 04/113, Centre for Market and Public Organisation, University of Bristol.* (Accessed October 2006 – no longer available on line)

This paper evaluates the impact of a performance-related pay system for teachers in England. Using teacher level data, matched with pupil test scores and value-added, we test whether the introduction of a payment based on pupil attainment increased teacher effort. Our evaluation design controls for pupil effects, school effects and teacher effects, and adopts a difference-in-difference methodology.
We find that the scheme did improve test score gains, on average by about half a grade per pupil. We also found heterogeneity across subject teachers, with maths teachers showing no improvement. A caveat is the necessity, given our data, to define the experience-effectiveness profile in quite a parametric way. Nevertheless, our results add to the very small literature on individual teacher-based performance pays schemes, evaluated in the context of a robust research design. The results show that teachers do respond to direct financial incentives. In an incentive scheme strongly based on pupil progress, test scores improved. Whether this represented extra effort or effort diverted from other professional activities is not something we can determine in our dataset. But our results suggest that teacher-based performance pay is a policy tool that education authorities should consider as part of their drive to raise educational performance.

Although there is little literature on individual teacher based performance pay schemes, Atkinson et al. (2004) found that a performance-related pay system for teachers in England did improve test score gains, on average by about half a grade per pupil. The results show that teachers do respond to direct financial incentives and an incentive scheme strongly based on pupil progress does improve test scores. Their results suggest that teacher-based performance pay is a policy tool that education authorities should consider as part of their drive to raise educational performance.

## Appendix 10: Brown M. and Askew M. (2000) 'Progress in Numeracy: What sort of teaching helps children to make progress in Numeracy?' *Proceedings of the Early Years Conferences (June/November 2000). Victoria, Australia: State Department of Education* (Accessed October 2006 – no longer available online)

The Leverhulme Numeracy Research Programme and the UK context

A group of several colleagues at King's and I are currently involved in the Leverhulme Numeracy Research Programme, aimed at developing our understanding of the causes of underachievement in numeracy, and hence assisting in a raising of standards. This is a 5-year research study funded by the Leverhulme Foundation, a UK educational charity, and we are now in the third year.

It is important to make it clear that in this programme we are regarding virtually all children as underachieving and hence potentially capable of higher achievement, and hence we are not concentrating only on those with perceived low attainment. The programme is taking a two-pronged attack, including both examining the effectiveness of the teaching of more than 500 teachers to see if we can work out which approaches are most successful and why, and also monitoring the effectiveness of carefully designed interventions.

It is important here to repeat the point made in my plenary paper at this conference that in the UK the meaning of numeracy is slightly different to that in Australia and New Zealand. In the Leverhulme Programme we have interpreted numeracy as including number understanding and skills out of context as well as applications, although the National Numeracy Strategy, which I have described in the plenary paper, also includes spatial and statistical aspects of primary mathematics.

The Leverhulme Case-Studies

A central part of the Leverhulme Programme has been a longitudinal study of the progress of two cohorts of primary pupils, one group as they go from Reception (ages 4 to 5) to Year 4 (ages 8 to 9), and the other as they go from Year 4 to Year 6 and into the first year of secondary school (Year 7). This has involved about 1600 children in each cohort in about 70 classes in 40 schools, 10 in each of four Local Education Authorities in different regions of the UK.

Within this exercise we have been able to collect pupils' test scores on our specially designed tests towards the beginning and end of each year, as well as their performance on national tests (statutory at ages 7 and 11 and voluntary at age 9) and other background data. We have also observed a mathematics lesson for each class in each year and interviewed the teacher, mathematics co-ordinator and head teacher.

In the plenary lecture, I have talked about how this work has partly confirmed results of earlier work on effective teachers, but has also left us with some unresolved problems about characteristics of effective teaching.

One of the problems about the large-scale survey is that although we have a large enough sample to study effect sizes, we have minimal data about each of the pupils and the teaching they experience. For this reason we have also included in the research programme a set of case-studies. We selected 5 schools out of the original 40, and within these schools, one class in each cohort, for more detailed study. The five schools are:

Greenacres - a rural village school with mixed age classes

St Luke's - a 1-form entry (state-funded) fairly traditional Catholic school

in a suburban area with mixed housing
Rowan - a 2-form entry suburban school in a wealthy neighbourhood with 'progressive' teaching methods
Pinedene - a 2-form entry urban school with a very mixed intake, both socially and racially
Willowbank - 2-form entry linked infant and junior schools in a an urban area with children mainly from racial minorities.

Within each of the five classes in each cohort we asked teachers in the first year of the project to select nine pupils, three above average, three average and three below average, where possible including at least one boy and girl in each group. After a year we reduced this to two in each group, and hence six in each class. In fact the children selected do not fully represent the different distributions of attainment in the five schools but are more similar across the schools than might have been expected. Perhaps not surprisingly, by the third year in the project some of the case-study children would now be identified differently.

We have attended the numeracy/maths lessons experienced by the case-study children over one week towards the beginning and one week towards the end of each year, observing and talking to each of the children in the case-study sample several times over the period of each week, and gathering and analysing their written work. In addition we have scrutinised their test papers at the beginning and end of the year to see in what areas they have progressed. Each weeks' visits are shared between the two researchers responsible for each school, to allow discussion of the findings.

I realise that this audience would probably prefer to see data on the youngest cohort, but unfortunately we have done little analysis yet on this group, so I will, with apologies, concentrate on the progress of the older cohort as they move from Year 4 into Year 6.

Because I cannot cover very much in the time I will focus in first on one class in each of two schools, Willowbank and Pinedene, and then on one child in each of these classes, Muna and Debbie, respectively.

Willowbank and Pinedene

Willowbank and Pinedene are probably the most alike of the case-study schools, both being 2-form entry schools and both in (different) multi-racial urban areas of London. The differences are that Pinedene, which is in a more mixed and prosperous area and has a strong local reputation, takes children from a wider range of backgrounds, including some from professional homes. It also has a higher proportion of white children (about 60%). In the Willowbank class there is a more mobile population, more social deprivation (only 20% of pupils in the case-study class are thought to live with both parents compared to 80% in the Pinedene class; 37% of the Willowbank class are entitled to receive free lunches compared with 20% at Pinedene). Unlike Pinedene, Willowbank is split into an infant and junior school under different head teachers, but they are on adjacent sites.

The overall scores for the case-study children in these two classes from the start of Year 4 (age 8-9) to the start of Year 6 (age 10-11) are shown in Table 1. (It should be noted that the tests given at the start and end of each year are the same so scores are comparable, but the tests change from year to year; each year some of the easier items are removed and more difficult items are

added to leave the test scores fairly similar at the beginning of each year. The numbers of items is about 80 but varies slightly each year.)

Year 4
Oct. 97Year 4
June 98Year 5
Oct 98Year 5
June 99Year 6
Oct. 00
Willowbank
G(H)5156695959
B(H)4858727467
Muna (A)-52537263
G(A)3548455548
G(L)3133305829
B(L)-29333928
Mean38.5*4650.359.549

Pinedene
G(H)6164656963
G(H)55-506457
Debbie (A)4152384535
B(A)3947263929
B(L)2745393731
B(L)1832122428
Mean40.251*38.346.340.5

Greenacres35.548.1*38.7*48.740.3*
St Luke's4150.747.2*5846.5
Rowan42.9*50.7*47.5*54.9*48.5
OVERALL39.6*49.3*44.4*53.5*45*

Table 1 Test scores from Year 4 to Year 6 for the case-study pupils in Willowbank and Pinedene in cohort 2 and the mean for the case-study pupils in all five schools. (*Where there are missing values, the means are estimated. G/B: girl/boy. H/A/L: identified as high/average/low attainer)

Unfortunately some of the means are estimated, but nevertheless at the start of Year 4 the average for the six pupils at Pinedene seems to be slightly ahead of those at Willowbank, mainly due to the higher scores of the two above average pupils (both middle-class girls from professional homes). By the end of the year, the group (and indeed the whole class) at Pinedene had also made a higher gain.

By the following October, though, it appears suddenly the Pinedene scores have fallen below those at Willowbank. In fact there is such a sudden switch that one might doubt whether the scores were not for some reason artificially raised by the way the test was administered at Willowbank. (Teachers were asked to take classes through the test together reading out the questions, with guidance given by us over response times.) However the difference is not only maintained at the end of the school year but also into the following year, in spite of the new test now being administered by two different teachers.

It would appear then that something seems to have gone wrong for the Pinedene pupils at the beginning of Year 5, whereas the more disadvantaged Willowbank pupils have made a leap forward by the start of Year 5. During Year 5 itself, the mean gains for this group, and for the whole classes, were very similar.

Towards the start of Year 6, the Willowbank pupils are still substantially ahead, although their lead is now slightly reduced.

We will see if we can account for this by looking first at the teaching we observed that was experienced by the two classes and later at the more specific experiences and performances of two pupils, Muna and Debbie, with the same scores at the end of Year 4.

The teachers

In Year 4 the Willowbank class was taught by Esther, the mathematics co-ordinator who started teaching at the school in September '97. Esther spoke of her commitment to making mathematics relevant by attending to appropriate contexts, and she showed concern for valuing children's own strategies and making them explicit. Black herself, from a Caribbean background, she had a particular concern and commitment to encouraging the black girls (of which Muna was one) that she taught and this was evident in her insistence in the classroom that girls be chosen to articulate ideas as much as boys.

That year the Pinedene class was taught by Clarice, a lively newly qualified teacher who was a mature entrant in her late twenties. Clarice was confident in her mathematics and used a style of teaching that encouraged open interaction with the whole class at the start and end of the lesson. Children sat and worked in attainment groups in the central part of the lesson. She drew material from a commercially published mathematics scheme adopted by the school (a commonly used one which provided differentiated work on the same topic for different attainment groups, although the practice in this school seemed to be that all pupils had to start by working through the easier work). She also sometimes used games and puzzles she had found from other sources. Pupils were generally very positive but were less happy about the two tests they did in one of their lessons each week, one common oral/mental test and one written test related to their attainment but unconnected to their class work.

However, both Esther’s and Clarice’s classes made gains in Year 4 which were among the highest for the whole sample.

The difference came at the start of Year 5. The Willowbank class was taught by Len, a young white teacher. The previous year he had taught the Year 4 class parallel to Esther's; the head was particularly pleased to have him and noted how good he had been with the Year 4 class who had been previously close to unmanageable. Although he repeatedly told us how bad he was at teaching maths, the gains made by his Year 4 class were the highest out of the 75 classes.

The gains made by this case-study Year 5 class Len taught the following year were strangely much lower and in fact were more than half way down the ranking. It is very difficult to account for this difference. Although the final performance of the class is high in relation to their previous scores, the discrepancy seems to be that the leap comes before the first assessment rather than between them. This assessment was done towards the end of the first half term (so that teachers could settle into the new classes before assessing them); it seems that by this point the children had either become highly motivated or

had been concentrating on the type of number work in the test (Len agreed the previous year that because he liked the type of items in the test he had made some adaptations in his curriculum, but he denied practising specifically in anticipation of the test.)

In the observations, Len's affection for the children and their admiration of and respect for him were obvious. Class interactions involved a lot of good-humoured 'banter' in which he appeared to be a bit of a showman but was often very blunt and honest with them about their work, attitude and behaviour. He was also very aware of what was going on in the class: friendships, hostility, who was working, or copying, and confronted anything which interfered between the children and their attention to work. He paid great attention to details and to tidiness, setting out, being organised. He put a strong emphasis on mental arithmetic and problem-solving, and encouraging children to think independently.

In contrast during Year 5 the Pinedene teacher was Sarah-Jayne, a pleasant young teacher in her fourth year of teaching who was extremely well-organised, well in control of the class, and confident of her mathematics. The test results at the beginning of the year for the case-study children dipped in relation to other classes. Although the gains made by the class over the year were little different from those in Len's class, they were below average and hence by the end of the year their performance was well down.

From our observations, it was clear that the class had lost the spark that they had shown the previous year and that many of the case-study children had developed a rather sullen attitude. This seemed to be partly because of the complex weekly organisation decided by the school - two lessons a week focused on the textbook work as in the previous year, but now with more class teaching, no attainment groups and the work set was undifferentiated (except that, as before, brighter children worked faster and therefore reached the harder examples). In the class interactions Sarah-Jayne used pupils' answers to move her explanations along rather than to find out about and discuss pupils' strategies. She seemed to spend a lot of time helping the lowest attainers while more able children found the work unchallenging. For one lesson a week the pupils were combined with the parallel class and divided into sets by attainment for differentiated work. Most of the remaining two lessons were occupied by tests, as before one oral/mental and one written short-answer. The tests seemed to serve little useful purpose; pupils tended to get much lower scores than before and to feel demoralised. Since there were different tests for different attainment groups, there was little opportunity for detailed discussion and feedback.

In Year 6 (this current academic year) the Willowbank class is being taught by Tricia, the deputy head. She enjoys and feels confident with mathematics. Our initial impressions are of a steady, careful, traditional teacher who plans carefully and puts considerable effort into helping children learn with understanding.

In many ways this is similar to what is happening at Pinedene, which has decided to abandon its setting and testing arrangements. The class is still being taught without any differentiation, and without much challenge for the more able pupils. Although lessons are from the start of the year focused on revision for the national tests, the young male teacher, Gordon, tries to

explain very clearly and has restored a more relaxed and positive atmosphere. Nevertheless our data shows that the Year 5 class he taught last year, which was the parallel class to the case-study class, made very low gains over the year, even less than those for Mary-Jayne.

In the next section these changes are reflected in the experiences of two pupils, Muna and Debbie.

## Muna and Debbie

It seemed worth examining further the cases of Muna and Debbie. Muna was not at Willowbank when the first test was taken but in June 1998 both she, and Debbie at Pinedene, had exactly the same score of 52, which was slightly above the overall average. Yet 4 months later Muna was 15 marks (about 20 percentage points) ahead of Debbie, and a year later was a full 27 marks ahead. Again last October this difference was maintained; Muna was 28 marks ahead. How can this difference in progress be explained?

There is a possibility that Muna was performing well below her potential when she arrived in the school, although in the national mathematics tests at age 7 carried out at her previous school she was judged to be exactly at the national average (there are no scores for Debbie). Sometimes children young for their year group are initially under-rated, but this does not hold as Muna is in the older half of the class and it is Debbie who is very young.

## Home circumstances

Muna is black, of African origin, but does not appear to have a particularly disadvantaged background since she, unusually for her class, lives with two parents both of whom are working in the public sector. The family income does not entitle her to free school lunches. Although Debbie is white, in other ways she seems to be from a similar home background. Debbie says that she never does any work at home except occasional homework set by the school; we have not yet asked Muna but we think it possible that her family encourages her to do extra work, as this would be usual among black families in the area.

## Excerpts from lessons: Muna

In Year 4 (July 98) Muna and her class are drawing rectangles of different shapes with a given perimeter. When Muna explains, in response to the researcher's question what she has to do she gives an apparently meaningful reply but is unable to use the rule that the teacher (Esther) gives to generate the rectangles. Instead she uses a "trial and error" method of drawing a rectangle then seeing if it has the right perimeter. When, eventually, she gets a correct solution it is by copying from her neighbour. She is often off task and prefers to talk about non-mathematical things. We saw little evidence of Muna being interested or eager in mathematics.

At the start of Year 5 (Nov. 98) Muna is in Len’s class, doing calculations. While he is discussing alternative methods she seems to focus on fixed procedures "We write one division, then one multiplication". Her setting out of the work is almost painfully neat. However her performance on routine calculation is erratic: sometimes she is quite accurate, sometimes quite incorrect. Later in the week Muna is praised as the only child in the class who judges the length of one minute exactly without a timepiece.

At the end of Year 5 (July 99) she has some grasp of decimal numbers as "whole ones" and "tenths" and can add correctly, e.g. 2.0 and 3.1, but this breaks down when the number of decimal places is increased and/or the numbers to be added do

not have the same decimal format. Muna is not forthcoming; she speaks very quietly, only in response to a specific question and sometimes not then, preferring to write her answers and not to have her understanding probed.
At the start of Year 6 (Nov. 99) there is class work about multiplication of decimal numbers and how to place the decimal point correctly. These she does correctly. Although she is unable, unaided, to demonstrate that her answer to one of the questions is roughly of the right order, she is able to round 4.235 to 1 significant figure and justify her answer. Later in the week Muna is able to extend the rule for divisibility by three when she is given a number whose digit sum extends beyond her known multiplication facts. She adds the digits again and can see that this is a generalisable rule. Her hand is often up in class, quick to respond to the teacher's questions. And in the moments of interaction with the researcher Muna's attitude is confident; she is willing to trust her own thinking to make her own reply.
Excerpts from lessons: Debbie
In Year 4 (July 98) Debbie is working on equivalent fractions illustrated by diagrams, fraction walls and arrays of window panes. At the start of the week she is puzzled and feels that two eighths should be 4, but working through the text with another girl they begin to get the idea and happily solve all the problems correctly; Debbie, who usually is quiet but self-assured, and maintains a low profile, confidently volunteered some answers to the class. In the rest of the lessons she did laborious but very neat written arithmetic, mostly correct except for a division, and when invited to add, subtract and multiply simple numbers mentally (e.g. 20-12, 8x25), she wrote them vertically and used the formal procedures.
At the start of Year 5 (Dec. 98) The teacher explains how to work out money problems involving totals and change by setting out rather formal addition and subtraction money sums. Debbie was generally proficient at this but in contrast to the previous year occasionally decided to work them out mentally when she felt confident. There are a number of apparently careless errors in her work.
At the end of Year 5 (July 99) Debbie was observed finding the weekly written test difficult, mainly because she had little understanding of decimals beyond addition of numbers like 2.1 and 3.5. (This was confirmed in her written test for us at the end of this year and the start of the next one.) However this problem seems not to have been addressed. She was one of about a third of the class who refused to publicly tell what their score was on the test but told her teacher afterwards in private (it was 8/15). The rest of the lessons were on fractions but were mainly concerned with the vocabulary (e.g. denominator, numerator, improper, mixed) and writing down addition sums for fractions with the same denominator represented on coloured pizza diagrams (e.g. 3/8+1/8 = 4/8, 3/5 +3/5 = 6/5 =1 1/5). Debbie said that she found this work very easy, and she did them all correctly without really having to think. Answers remained unsimplified by either teacher or pupils, in spite of the fact that a year earlier many of them (including Debbie) had understood about equivalent fractions.
At the start of Year 6 (Nov 99) the class were starting lessons by finding numbers in which both the hundreds and thousands digit changed when e.g. 300 was added or 500 was subtracted. Debbie was able to suggest appropriate numbers, but pupils were not asked for any generalisation. Most of the lessons were spent on

learning about centres of rotation and orders of rotational symmetry, and checking that they could write out correctly the answers to national test questions on this topic. Debbie found the work easy and could obtain the correct answers without using tracing paper, although she was told to use it. On two occasions her answers differed from the teacher's and were marked wrong; she tried to explain that she was correct - which she was - because the diagrams were not accurately drawn by the teacher, but he did not understand what she was saying and she gave in and 'corrected' the answers.

Conclusion

Thus both Muna and Debbie seemed to have started in Year 5 with average attainment and to have felt most secure carrying out written procedures conscientiously and neatly. However, while Muna seemed to be very keen to please but had little confidence and was prepared to copy from others, Debbie was prepared to work away at something until she understood it.

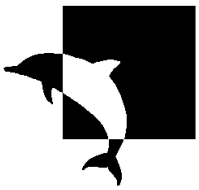
Through supportive and challenging teaching, Muna developed into a much more confident girl who is now achieving at a high level and is able and willing to think independently and justify her answers. Meanwhile Debbie's experiences at one extreme include shame at getting low scores in tests through not being able to cope with decimals, although her problems go unaddressed. At the other extreme she works long-sufferingly through pages of questions which are easy and unchallenging, with only the occasional unnoticed expression of rebellion.

It is not difficult in the circumstances to see why Muna makes fast progress while, after a promising start, Debbie stands still. It is also interesting to note that the two key teachers who caused the differences, Sarah-Jayne and Len, embody clearly the characteristics of transmission and connectionist teachers which I discussed in the plenary lecture and which are the subject of an earlier research project (Askew, 1997). Yet I wonder if inspectors would judge them differently?

References

Askew, M., Brown, M., Rhodes, V., William, D. and Johnson, D (1997) Effective Teachers of Numeracy London: King's College London

**Appendix 11: Byrne, J. and Challen, D. (2004) 'Selecting the Best? An Investigation into the Predictive Power of Recruitment Procedures.' *Paper - University of Southampton, England, 2004. Paper presented to BERA Conference 17/09/04 Summary of findings: DRAFT* (Accessed October 2006 – no longer available online)**



University of Southampton

School of Education

Selecting The Best? An Investigation Into The Predictive Power Of Recruitment Procedures

*Paper presented to BERA Conference 17/09/04*
*Summary of findings: DRAFT*

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Background and Aim

This study was funded by the Teacher Training Agency, one of whose aims is to ensure the recruitment of high quality 'able and committed' candidates to teacher training.

In England, teacher training providers must comply with the statutory document *Qualifying to Teach* (TTA 2002), which includes a set of Professional Standards which must be achieved by each trainee in order to gain qualified teacher status. This document also sets out the minimum academic qualifications required of applicants for teacher training courses, and the requirement that they demonstrate 'appropriate personal and intellectual qualities to be teachers' (TTA 2002:15), to which end providers are required to include an individual or group interview within their admissions process.

However, little is known about the efficacy of recruitment procedures in making accurate judgments about candidates' potential to become good starting teachers. This study aimed to explore this area in terms of procedures utilised in one teacher training course, by correlating initial selection grades with teaching grades at the end of the course.

Summary of literature

- Little is known about relationship of interview decisions to later job performance (Young & Delli 2003)
- Considerable agreement exists on the qualities of an effective teacher, eg professionalism, communication, interpersonal skills, and qualities of leadership (Edmonds et al. 2002; OfSTED 1995; Johnson and Roelke 1999; Hay/McBer 2000)
- Findings appear to be contradictory about the relationship between academic performance and future teaching performance (Russell et al. 1990; Newton & Newton 2001; Baskin et al. 1996; Byrnes et al. 2003)
- Interviews may not be effective due to the subjectivity of judgments and factors influencing these - often found to assess personality more than potential ability to do the job (Cable and Gilovich 1998; Newton and Newton 2001; Coleman 1987; Jones 1990; Millar et al. 1992);
- Standardised structured interviews have been found to be more reliable and offer greater predictive validity, although this has been disputed (Robertson and Smith 2001; Young & Delli 2002; Baskin et al. 1996)
- Combined ratings from standardised structured group assessment tasks have been found to predict performance during teacher training, and success in teaching 2 to 5 years later, more effectively than academic measures (Schechtman 1992; Byrnes et al. 2003)

Method

143 candidates for a University primary PGCE course took part in a dual selection procedure:

- one-to-one standardised structured interview, graded in 10 cells
- 5 minute presentation on a self-chosen current educational issue to 4-5 peers, observed by two assessors, graded in 6 cells

Cells related to areas believed by the course team to reflect important personal and intellectual qualities needed in a future teacher:

*Interview*

- reasons for choosing teaching as a career;
- what candidates felt they could contribute to teaching;
- relevant experience in schools or otherwise with children;
- awareness of the wider role of the teacher;
- response to a hypothetical classroom 'problem';
- career aspirations;
- attitude to the PGCE course;
- general communication skills;
- perceived 'professionalism';
- overall apparent commitment to teaching as a career.

*Presentation*

- is it stimulating/interesting?
- how well does the candidate interact with others?
- is it well organised and structured?
- how good are the candidate's communication skills?;
- how aware is the candidates of current issues in education (more generally)?
- to what extent can the candidate analyse and/or defend an issue in education?

At the end of the course all were graded in terms of teaching performance on final school placement in 17 cells. These related to the Professional Standards in the following areas, which trainees must meet in order to qualify as teachers:

- Professional Values and Practice
- Knowledge and Understanding
- Teaching: Planning, expectations and targets
- Teaching: Monitoring and assessment
- Teaching and Class Management

Each cell was graded on an inverse scale of 1-4

1 VERY GOOD
2 GOOD
3 SATISFACTORY
4 POOR (REJECT)

When gradings across a number of assessment areas were amalgamated, the best (lowest) possible scores were therefore:

SELECTION 16 (comprising INTERVIEW 10 + PRESENTATION 6)
END PLACEMENT 17

Findings

Correlation between overall initial selection grades and end placement grades

- Selection procedures do provide an indication of outcome for the majority of trainees in that they are likely to pass the course.
- A small percentage of candidates identified at selection as very good are also rated highly at the end of the course.
- A minority who do not impress at interview go on to be graded highly at the end of the course, but a relatively high percentage of these trainees continue to perform at no more than a satisfactory level.
- The strongest predictive value occurs at the extremes of the distribution of selection grades.

Table 1 Spearman's correlation coefficient for selection grade totals associated with trainees' end placement grade totals (N=125)

| | TOTAL SELECTION GRADE | TOTAL INTERVIEW GRADE | TOTAL PRESENTATION GRADE |
|---|---|---|---|
| TOTAL END PLACEMENT GRADES | .232 (**) | .195 (*) | .179 (*) |

* significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed) ** significant at the 0.01 level (1-tailed)

Figure 1

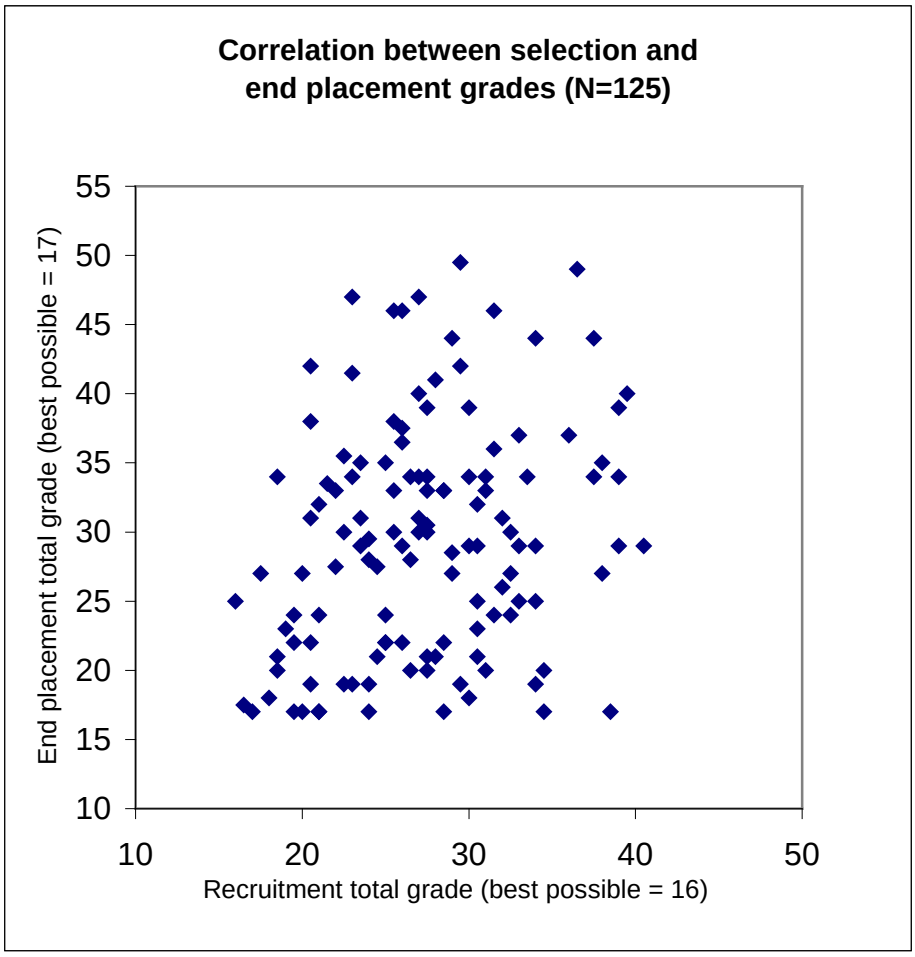



Table 2 Banded grades

| Selection Grades | N | Mean | End Placement Grade BEST WEAKEST | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | | | 17-21 | 21.5-25.5 | 26-30 | 30.5-34.5 | 35-39 | 40-44 | 44.5+ |
| All | 125 | 29.4 | 22% (28) | 14% (17) | 21% (26) | 19% (24) | 11% (14) | 7% (9) | 6% (7) |
| 16-20 (best) | 14 | 22.1 | 50% (7) | 29% (4) | 14% (2) | 7% (1) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) | 0% (0) |
| 20.5-24 | 26 | 28.9 | 27% (7) | 8% (2) | 19% (5) | 23% (6) | 12% (3) | 8% (2) | 4% (1) |
| 24.5-28 | 32 | 31.3 | 16% (5) | 13% (4) | 19% (6) | 22% (7) | 16% (5) | 6% (2) | 9% (3) |
| 28.5-32 | 28 | 30 | 18% (5) | 14% (4) | 21% (6) | 25% (7) | 7% (2) | 7% (2) | 7% (2) |
| 32.5-36 | 14 | 28.4 | 21% (3) | 21% (3) | 29% (4) | 7% (1) | 14% (2) | 7% (1) | 0% (0) |
| 36.5+ (poorest) | 11 | 34.3 | 9% (1) | 0% (0) | 27% (3) | 18% (2) | 18% (2) | 18% (2) | 9% (1) |

Correlation between separate interview and presentation grades with end placement grades

- Overall ratings are more strongly associated with future success than subratings of discrete elements.
- Interview procedures appear to have a lower discriminatory value in recruitment decisions compared to presentations.
- Judgments made by two assessors appear to provide greater differentiation.

Figure 2

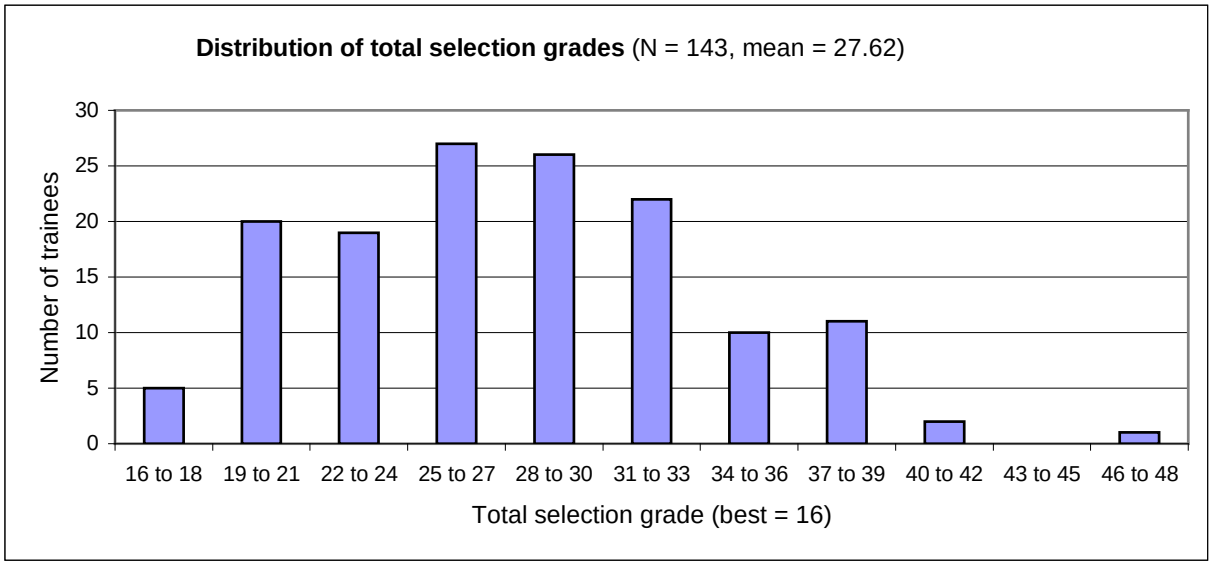



Figure 3

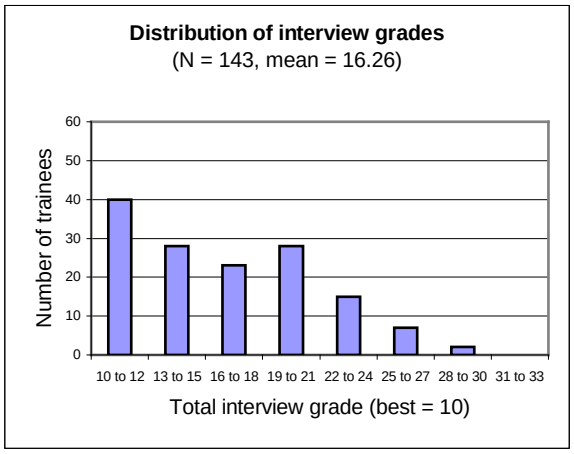
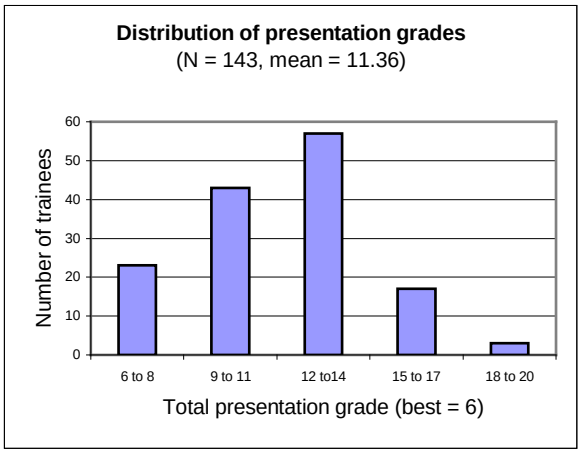



Figure 4



Recommendations

We would recommend that, when reviewing their own recruitment procedures providers consider the following:

- Whether their recruitment procedures provide a more holistic picture of each candidate
- How to devise assessments and criteria that indicate candidates' potential to become highly effective teachers and discriminate effectively between them
- How to promote a common understanding of the purpose of selection procedures, and their application, so that consistency of judgments by assessors may be achieved
- How to use data effectively to support trainees and improve retention rates
- How to use refine criteria in order to recruit more candidates of high calibre and to filter out candidates who are less likely to perform well

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## Appendix 12: Carpenter et al. (Carpenter V., McMurchy-Pilkington C. and Sutherland S.) (2001) 'The beliefs and attitudes which are common to successful teachers in Auckland's low SES schools.' *Auckland College of Education, New Zealand Kaiako Toa - Paper presented at the BERA 2001 Conference, Leeds, United Kingdom Auckland College of Education, New Zealand, 2001.* (Accessed October 2006 – no longer available online)

Kaiako Toa - the beliefs and attitudes which are common to successful teachers in Auckland's low SES schools
Paper presented at the BERA 2001 Conference, Leeds, United Kingdom

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Introduction

A substantial number of teachers working in Auckland, New Zealand's poor urban primary schools are highly successful in their practice. They have an expertise which takes children to their academic and personal potential, and they achieve this in a way which does not alienate children from their diverse home contexts. The case study research we undertook sought to ascertain the beliefs and attitudes which underpin the pedagogy of nine of those teachers.

Our findings identified a set of eleven beliefs and attitudes which the teachers hold in common. These dispositions underpin their success in poor urban schools. While the eleven beliefs and attitudes are undoubtedly transferable to any teaching context, it is our contention that it is the combination of the eleven which underpins and is integral to their highly successful pedagogies. The combination enables the establishment of successful working relationships within the professional milieux of their schools.

This paper first provides some detail regarding the methodology used in the study. A brief examination of relevant literature follows. The eleven findings are then detailed and elucidated. While overseas researchers have focused on the dispositions of successful teachers of working class children, this is the first research project which focuses on New Zealand primary school teachers.

In the conclusion some links are made to the literature and theory section. Of necessity this paper provides but a brief overview of the findings; we see it as our springboard to deeper analysis. We indicate the direction this analysis is likely to take.

Methodology

The Ethics Committee at Auckland College of Education (ACE) approved the research study prior to commencement. Confidential written recommendations were sought of 'exceptional teachers' who were currently teaching in any of Auckland's approximately 130 decile 1-3 (low socio-economic, multi-cultural and urban) primary schools. Specific justification had to be provided for each nomination. The recommendations came from our professional colleagues at ACE; lecturers and school advisers who spend significant amounts of time in Auckland schools either visiting students on practicum or in a professional development capacity.

Seventeen recommendations were received, some teachers received more than one recommendation. The principal of each teacher's school was contacted to discuss the nature of the research and the recommendation(s). In some cases more than one teacher was identified in a particular school - in these instances the principal was asked to make a selection between teachers. If the principal agreed that a nominated teacher was 'exceptional' in her/his teaching practice then

that person was formally invited to participate in the research study. We were emphatic throughout the entire selection process that we were not trying to identify 'the best teachers'. Our position was that the selected teachers were likely to be from amongst 'the best'.

Nine teachers agreed to participate: they are all women, one is Maori, one is Cook Island Maori, and the other seven are Pakeha (of European descent). Their ages range from approximately 25 through to late 50s. These teachers, by default middle class, spend their professional lives in a working class environment. As well as being working class the children largely identify as Maori, or as or descendants of (or new immigrants from) Pacific Islands nations such as Samoa, the Cook Islands, Tonga, Nuie, Tuvalu, or Fiji (Indian).

The nine teachers each participated in two formal interviews - one at the beginning of the study and one at the end. The teachers received an outline of the questions before interviews. With the a priori assumption that the teachers were highly successful, the focus of the interviews was on establishing their beliefs and attitudes towards teaching. Interviews, lasting approximately one hour, were semi-structured and consisted of open-ended questions.

All interviews in the study were taped and transcribed. A 'pod' of four people who had knowledge of each teacher's practice were also interviewed. These were the principal of her school, a teaching colleague (nominated by the teacher), a Board of Trustees member (usually the chairperson) and a community person (nominated by the teacher and usually the parent of a child who had been taught by the teacher). These interviews focused on the teacher's observed practice - again they were semi-structured, involved open-ended questions, and lasted up to one hour.

Copies of transcripts were returned to all interviewees for content verification. The data on which the findings are based consists of a total of fifty four transcribed interviews. Triangulation within each pod was possible as there was considerable overlap in the nature of the questions within each pod. Anonymity of personnel and schools was guaranteed at the beginning of the empirical data gathering; in this paper teachers are referred to as Teachers A through to I. Using qualitative data sorting techniques, NUD*IST and exhaustive debate and analysis, what emerged was a very clear picture of each teacher's pedagogy; what also emerged were a total of eleven similarities in their attitudes and beliefs.

Because the sample is limited, and the actual selection was not random, there is no intention of generalising beyond this case study. Notwithstanding this, the findings provide some indication of the dispositions of a group of highly successful primary school teachers of New Zealand's urban poor. These findings could be used to inform recruitment and training processes for pre-service teacher training. They could also be referred to as a component within teacher selection procedures in decile 1-3 schools.

## Literature

Across the western capitalist world children in low socio-economic schools have historically underachieved in their education systems (Kohn 1998; Kohn, Naoi, Schoenbach, Schooler, and Slomczynski 1995; Lareau 1989; Lynch and O'Neill 1994; Rist 1970). New Zealand statistics demonstrate similar findings (see Bell and Carpenter 1994).

Since 1987, with political moves towards neo-liberal reform in Education, poorer New Zealand schools have struggled for funding. With a political emphasis on competition, self governance and user pays, the neo-liberal market model of education has prevailed (Codd 1993; Gordon 1997; Jesson 2001; Lauder, Hughes, and Watson 1999; McKenzie 1999). At the same time as schools struggled to meet the needs of the market, teachers' work conditions deteriorated (Jesson 1999; Robertson 1998; Sullivan 1997). They became more controlled as managerialism impacted, and state-supported public rhetoric demanded that teachers be held more accountable (Codd 1999; Robertson 1998).

Aside from the lowering of teacher morale, the reforms and subsequent curriculum and assessment changes mean that teachers have been forced to be more technocratic in their practice. While in middle and upper class schools this perhaps has made little difference in terms of educational outcomes, the effects on poorer schools have been devastating [Office, 1996 #505; Gordon, 1997 #467; Thrupp, 1998 #41]. Notwithstanding this, teachers like those we describe have been highly successful in their practice.

Haberman (1991; 1995a; 1995b), Delpit (1995; 1997), Sullivan (1998; 1999), Hawk and Hill (2000) and Ladson-Billings (1994) are amongst those who discuss the practices, often including the beliefs and attitudes, of teachers who work successfully with economically poor and often marginalised children.

Haberman (1991) describes what should happen for students if good teaching is taking place. His contention is that students will be involved with: issues they regard as vital concerns, explanations of human difference, major concepts and big ideas rather than just facts, planning their own learning direction, applying ideals such as equity and justice to their world, activity rather than passivity, real-life experiences, heterogeneous grouping, questioning assumptions, redoing and perfecting their work, and the technology of information access.

Delpit (1997) concentrates more on cross-cultural issues. She outlines the need for teachers to identify alternative world views and give them voice; in particular she focuses on the political power games involved when students are the ‘other’, or from ‘minority groups’. In particular Delpit maintains that students need to be taught additional ‘games’ to those of their own culture, only this way will they ultimately be able to access power. For Delpit the codes involved in ‘games’ are arbitrary and representative of power relations. Suggesting that teachers’ ‘good liberal intentions’ alone are inadequate for student success, she maintains that appropriate education for poor or black students can only be devised in consultation with adults who share the students’ culture.

Like Delpit, Ladson-Billings (1994) places considerable emphasis on culture. Her exemplars of successful teachers of African American children are based on a study of eight excellent teachers. She discusses the notion of culturally relevant teaching ‘and its inherent conceptions of the teacher and others; of classroom social interactions, of literacy and mathematics teaching; and of knowledge itself’(p.xii).

Hill and Hawk (2000) take the issue to the New Zealand context with their research on successful teacher practice in New Zealand’s low SES secondary schools. Their findings are based on extensive interview and observation techniques. In their articulation of what motivates students, Hill and Hawk produce four key concepts, concepts which are ‘inextricably linked in a non-linear fashion’. Each impacting on the other, they are Motivation, Success, Self-Efficacy and Locus of Control. Notwithstanding the fact that the findings emerge from the secondary school sector, Hill and Hawk’s findings are relevant for this case study. Many of the teachers they describe teach children who could well be the older siblings or relatives of the children involved in our case study. In other words, teachers work in similar contexts.

In some respects Sullivan’s findings complement those of Hill and Hawk. Sullivan’s Australian research (1999) reports a study, albeit small. which attempts to identify and describe variables of how student empowerment, by teachers, is enabled.

The findings outlined above, plus seminal works such as those by Cummins (1986), Scheurich (1998) and, amongst the most important, Bourdieu’s theory of cultural capital (Harker 1990) have all provided frameworks for our thinking and analysis.

## The Eleven Beliefs and Attitudes

The findings detailed below are grouped under three sub headings. The first section (1-3) begins with perceptions of teachers as individuals, with what ‘drives’ them, their philosophies - the

findings in this section strongly feature the voices of the teachers themselves. Following this (4-7) are teacher attitudes towards children - in this section the teachers' voices are joined by those who have seen them in action. The final section (8-11) focuses on teacher beliefs and attitudes regarding their pedagogy.

Teachers and themselves (1-3)

> *I am shy in a big group situation ... being able to get on with the parents and students and teachers and not making them, not letting anybody think you're better than they are. I try really hard, for the students not to think I'm better than them or the parents to think I'm better than them ... you're only a step in a whole variety of processes.* Teacher G

1. Teachers know where they are going and they consciously work towards their goals

> *you do have to keep moving those goal posts, it's really easy to become complacent and not move them, because it's easier not to, but you have to keep making the child think more, work more, produce more.* Teacher E.

The nine teachers articulated their learning goals for their students through clear and explicit planning - all believed in the importance of planning for learning. They plan ahead and tend to work to their plans, but are willing to be creative if another direction seems more appropriate. Teacher I talked of *'reading the kids'* to gauge what kind of activity would be most appropriate to achieve the learning goals she had set. She was prepared to change her pedagogy at short notice if necessary; for instance if she sensed that *'sit down at your desk kind of work'* would not achieve her learning goals she would quickly adapt the programme to what she described as *'down at the mat and work in small groups'*. Teacher E discussed the importance of breaking things down into *'much smaller steps'* at times.

> *She's highly organised, she always knows where things are. At the end of every day, each day, she writes an evaluation of the day, how it went, kids that she needs to look out for the next day* ....Teacher G's colleague.

When the teachers were asked to share their personal professional goals, it was interesting that despite their attested competence, promotion within the education system did not figure highly. Most of the nine, but especially the older amongst them, had made a conscious decision to 'stay in the classroom'. Despite their ostensibly 'low status', in most cases their leadership emerged; it was apparent in the way that colleagues and Principals in particular spoke of these professionals.

> *there are leaders and followers and Teacher C is a leader.* Teacher C's BOT person

2. Teachers engage in personal and public reflection, and this informs their personal philosophy and pedagogical practices.

> *people who are good teachers care about the students ...you have to treat everybody with the same kind of consequences ... You don't have to treat everybody the same ... bear in mind their home life and their personalities.* Teacher G
>
> *... children are very good teachers as well, so if you listen to them they'll tell you a lot.* Teacher A.

These teachers all enjoyed talking about their professional insights, they were particularly passionate about the learning of the children they were working with. Teacher E's teaching colleague said they constantly discuss their practice: they talk about individual children and their progress, courses they have attended, and *'trial teaching'* they have undertaken.

Calm assurance surrounds all nine teachers. Interviewees noted the ‘shyness’ of some of the teachers in big groups, their humbleness, wisdom, efficacy. In our discussions we often referred to their ‘humility’. They were prepared to share their knowledge, and what motivated them was empowering others and sharing the excitement of learning.
At the same time the teachers were not afraid to admit they didn’t know something. They were prepared to do this in front of their classes or with their colleagues. Speaking up, disagreeing and questioning decisions was something they were all known for - they were the people in staffrooms who openly sought understanding or clarification and often this was on behalf of others. They encouraged this practice in the children also.

> *If you can get the children to think and ask the questions then they are going to keep learning.* Teacher D.

In sharing their learning they saw themselves as part of a community of learners, they wanted to learn from others as much as they were prepared to share their own insights.

3. Teachers seek consistent professional development with the aim of improving learning for children.

Professional development helps these women to reflect on their practice, to change their practice when necessary, and to articulate their practice. Everyone of them was passionate about being a learner. Teacher G said she found being a learner and participating in Professional Development empowering, *I love to run with new things.*

> *if people ... give me an idea or give me a suggestion, I will always try it before I dismiss it ... the best thing about any professional development I’ve done is that you take on board what people say, you give it a go, and if it doesn’t work, well then you say it doesn’t work for me.* Teacher G.

They were the people who were excited about any new knowledge, especially if learning involved a challenge. Information Technology, and computers in particular, excited them. All were computer literate; they saw this technology primarily as a means of enhancing learning processes and systems.

> *I’ve got a desire to learn myself which hasn’t diminished in any way as I’ve got older ... to the point now that I could spend hours and hours and hours on the internet at night time ... that desire ... has just got greater as I’ve got older ...* Teacher E.

Teacher C described how she became the IT co-ordinator at her school, *because I could format a disk or something.* The school now has 25 networked computers and a server, and Teacher G is responsible for all of them.
One of the most valuable forms of Professional Development was courses related to the teaching of English as a second or other language. This is understandable in their contexts, many children are English as second language learners.

Teachers’ interactions with children (4-7)

> ... sometimes you know how you are tired or I don’t feel very well or I’ve got a problem in my life, I just drive in the gate and I pull that blind down, and I think its going to be fun. *Teacher B*

The teachers build relationships with their students in a variety of ways and create environments and structures that enable everyone to feel valued. This takes many forms, from letters at the start of the year exchanged between teacher and student, to phone calls home if there are problems. Quite often initiatives were generated by the teachers themselves out of school hours, and in other contexts.

For the teachers, building relationships involves consistency, warmth and reciprocity. The relationships they build are personal, different for each child and according to Teacher D, *there are no rules*. The teachers' responses suggest that their interactions go beyond traditional teacher tasks. In other words they do more than teach the basics, they are prepared to facilitate what they believe is valuable for their students. Strong relationships appear to be a major outcome of this process.

4. Teachers read children non-judgmentally, as individuals

The teachers believe that their classrooms should be free of judgment. While they continually observe children's interactions and watch for those who might need help, at the outset of the year the teachers neither judge nor encourage the judgment of one another within the classroom. Consequently others describe their classrooms as 'neutral territory', where children are accepted in a non-judgmental manner.

For the children who arrive with learning or behaviour difficulties the protected setting the teachers provide is not a world of isolation but one which is conducive to learning. Most of the teachers orchestrate this non-judgmental process by writing, talking or sharing some of themselves with the children. The resulting trust often ensures an openness to learning.

Teacher D exchanges letters with her class at the outset of the year. In her own letter she includes her personal flaws. The exchange is designed to

> *….get a feel for the child, whether they are holding back ... it gives you another dimension to work with and you watch how they work, are scared of making mistakes …you get a picture of each child.* Teacher D.

For Teacher D reading children non-judgmentally involves starting each day with a clean slate.

> *I think is that every day is a new day, so you leave the old rubbish behind, so you give every child a fresh start every day. I guess a lot of people get stereo typed really early, I don't read the stuff that comes in with the children. I never believe it. It can trip you up.* Teacher D.

A protected setting for Teacher G went beyond the classroom to the playground where she noticed a student she had taught the previous year. The child seemed changed and unhappy, and the teacher invited her to come and talk to her: *she came and talked to me and it ended up being quite a serious issue.* Teacher G.

5. Teachers have high expectations of every child

Within the established contexts of mutual support, love and trust, the teachers have high expectations of every child and they consciously empower them to live up to those expectations. Being entrusted with high expectations often involves important learning and classroom responsibilities as well as schoolwide leadership and maturity. Many of the teachers hold to a belief that each pupil is unique and entitled to a personal vision of the way she or he 'becomes'.

There is an awareness that all children should experience the leadership role and teachers help the children learn to lead in various ways. Teacher G's parent described how empowerment of her daughter's potential was evident when her daughter was asked to take on a leadership role within the school

> *Jade ... was quite shy but yet she brought out her attitude and confidence… with the head girl (issue), she ... had a talk to her, said come on Jade you can do it and by making a lot of personal connection with her.* Teacher G's parent.

Positive reinforcement is integral to high expectations and teachers reward children in various ways. For Teacher G this meant helping the children set personal goals by demonstrating to them how their grades had improved since the end of the previous year.

*there was no one who hadn't improved and the looks on their faces and the joy that that gave them knowing that they're improved by 5 or 10% or 20%, that made it for me.* Teacher G.

Teacher D believes that every person has skills and it is up to the teacher to *find it and then in finding it you get to know the child - you get a whole personality that unfolds in front of you….* Teacher C's parent described how the children in Teacher C's class will produce work for the teacher but also *for their own success ... It's a real partnership.*

*... with Teacher A, her expectations are very high ...* Teacher A's colleague.

6. Teachers demonstrate an unconditional form of love for the children in their classrooms

*the main thing (is) ... that atmosphere, the warmth, the caring for all, that basic atmosphere, ... and then you get the actual academic, and not wanting to waste one minute.* Teacher E.

The sense of trust established by these teachers is manifested by a form of unconditional love which they demonstrate to the children they teach. Parents in particular reported on this quite special dynamic of the teachers' pedagogy. The parent interviewees were all sure that the teachers loved their children; not in the same way that they the parents did but in a way which is somewhat akin to parental love.

*Every parent that would wait with me would comment on how they were so happy with the way she works with their child, that she was really caring….it was just the way we saw her with our child, and the way our child was coming home….*Teacher B's parent

The lives of the teachers are shared with their children. This extends from taking individuals and groups out of the school environment, to organising events which celebrate the class's connectedness as a group.

*... at Christmas time ... we pull a name out of the hat and buy a $5 present, or make something ... Every single child had thought hard about the child they were buying for* Teacher G

Who the teacher is, the personal dimension she is able to bring to the classroom, is important.

*She's a get up and go type of person ... anything that needs to be done, she really gets herself involved with it.* Teacher A's BOT person.

Teacher H involves her whanau in some class programmes. Those who are mothers and grandmothers take those special aspects of their being with them into the classroom.

*Some little boy at the moment whose family has all broken up and who's living with dad but dad drops him off with grandma at 7 and picks him up at 6 at night. He's an unhappy little boy, he's the oldest of five children and he's only six ... at the moment he cries over nothing, he's never got any lunch and just to be able to be a bit motherly to him - it makes me feel good.* Teacher E.

As well as caring deeply for individual children the teachers will share selected aspects of their personal lives.

*We talk about what I do in the weekends all the time and they share with me what they do in the weekend ... sharing your personal life I think is very important.* Teacher H.

The bond established between teacher and pupil meant that many past pupils returned to the teachers in some way.

*(Teacher D) lives in the locality of the intermediate kids and they congregate outside her gate and wait for her to come home, so they can tell her how they are doing and what they are doing.* Teacher D's principal

Principals acknowledged the uniqueness of the experiences the children had.

*The last day of school where they have this assembly, there was just this group of wimping children. They had obviously just had an experience that they were all just recognising, and having her and they just loved her.* Teacher C's principal

7. Teachers make conscious attempts to understand what it is like to walk in the shoes of the other

> *(Teachers in this school) have to have an empathy with Maori/Pacific Island children and not ... come in and be a missionary type person because that doesn't work... they've got to have an empathy with children that are disadvantaged but accept them as children anywhere and ... have high expectations for them.* Teacher E's principal

Recognising that differences are often unacknowledged with a uniform expectation in the classroom, all nine teachers looked for difference, celebrated difference and saw it as a powerful way to promote learning. The teachers attempted to understand what it was like to walk in the shoes of the wide range of students before them. They constantly explored differences as an integral part of their practice.

> *I'm learning all the time… Polynesian culture … I have to seek resources and support for that.* Teacher C.

What children know is valuable to others in these teachers' classrooms. What is important for these teachers is what is different, not what is the same.

Teacher C felt that it was important for people of other cultures to get to know her and feel comfortable with her working with their children. Being a learner in the cultural process was important as well as using resources from all cultures in her room

> *…I think once they get to know you, our parents are very accepting of who you are and where you're coming from and know you're doing the best for their kids which is the most important for them ...* Teacher C.

Teachers and pedagogy (8-11)

> *(the classroom is a) space, a wonderful warm environment where people feel really happy, a place where parents feel really happy when they come and see ...It's full of colour, children's work, really important to see it presented really well ... literacy ... creative ... functional ... A place where children actually can get away from each other if they need to.* Teacher B.

8. Teachers are strong in teaching core basics, plus they bring creative, interactive dimensions to all of their teaching

All teachers are strong in the professional aspects expected of successful teachers. They have both professional and personal standards. As people they are thought of as enthusiastic, very reliable, and extremely hard working, with a sense of humour. In their dealings with others they are described as patient, fair, honest, enthusiastic, and caring.

Their organisation is reported as *superb*, with planning and classrooms that are highly organised yet creative and catering for difference. Environments, both safe and creative, are made through visible routines and structures. Parents and colleagues describe the classrooms as places where children can take risks.

> she's providing an environment nine to three that she lets anyone walk into. So it's safety. My children are safe .... a safe non-hostile environment (where) if they're not comfortable they can reach out to her and say help me please. *Teacher C's parent.*

The teachers are all reported as having a passion for, and a strong commitment to teaching. Parents, colleagues, principals and community members all had stories to tell about the teachers "willing to go that extra mile" for both the children and the adults in their environment.

> *Teacher E fights tooth and nail for the best for her class*. Teacher E's colleague.

Creativity comes into their teaching in a variety of ways. One is through the activities they prepare for their learners. Teacher D declares her belief that *teaching is a really creative profession* and that she wouldn't give children a worksheet as *that's not learning*. Public demonstrations of their creativity include the colourful visual appearance of their classrooms. The principal notes that when Teacher E paints, *everything is moved, they paint everywhere, they create some lovely stuff.* Creativity is apparent in such areas as their art work, guitar playing or taking the children for music or drama.

Like their IT skills many of the teachers have developed their creative skills during their teaching. Teacher A plays the guitar for school assembly. She taught herself, and extends her learning through attending music classes. Her class is musically oriented because she encourages them to *do music things*.

The teachers prepare learning experiences that are interactive and creative. These include reading and writing, listening, participating, doing, and physical movement. Teacher F talks about how she makes maths more fun for her groups by marching around the room singing the times tables together. Further examples of creative work include: reading poetry so children can feel and explore, making them imagine, shutting their eyes, using their feet; turning the classroom into a restaurant; going on a cultural journey to other classrooms with plane tickets and check-in points; creating and making a video along with children's music. Variety activities included having a "Marvellous Monday" or a "Tricky Tuesday".

9. Teachers' classrooms are deliberately extended into the wider community, and vice versa.

> *I think the school is blessed if they have open door policies and they have parents coming in.* Teacher H.

As an integral aspect of their programmes all nine teachers extend the children's learning beyond their actual classroom. This involves both bringing the outside world into the class, and moving the children beyond the classroom. This helps to ensure that, for the children, going to school is not like going to a foreign country - the boundaries between home, the community and the classroom are permeable, the relationship is organic.

Bringing the community in often means including the various community cultural groups within the school. Cultural concerts are common events, *we had the hall bulging at the sides with people* Teacher G. In practicing for the concerts Teacher H had 'live-ins' for their multi-cultural group; parents and families contributed in some way through their support, teaching or preparing food.

> *You get to meet a lot of parents and touch base with them... Maraes are just awesome for that sort of thing. You really get to know the parents that way, or working with cultural groups.* Teacher H.

Technology and social science topics lend themselves to involving parents and community members. The children write letters and ask if various people can come in and talk with them.

Topics like fashion technology are used to encompass the differences within the wider community. Children who are usually shy begin to open up and share what they wear at home, how the clothing are made, and the materials used. Teacher H discusses big events in the children's lives like White Sunday, or trips to Samoa; children are encouraged to bring in post cards and photos to share. Many classes use the internet, faxes and the phone to make links with the outside world.

Teacher C talks about how, for financial reasons, some out of school visits were limited. However:

> *(W)e go out into the community quite a bit around the area, we use the local library as well. We use community resources like the mountain that's behind the school, or the mountain bridge, get around the harbour. We use our community constable a lot.* Teacher C.

Teacher D took her class to the art gallery. As many of her children had never been to the inner city it was *fantastic* and the children *talked about it for ages*. Teacher A regularly took her class out busking to raise funds for the school.
While the teachers believe in encompassing the lived lives of their students in school programmes as much as possible, they also believe in the importance of widening students' horizons.

10. Teachers purposefully model successful learning and social interactions

Teacher G recalls a teacher who impacted on her. She said that if she could be that person to one child it would make her happy. According to those around them all nine modelled consistency, firmness and caring. In turn there was an expectation that these behaviours would be modelled by the children towards others.
The teachers modelled risk taking, making mistakes, and self correcting in front of their classes. Teacher A described how she learns as she goes along through making mistakes and then modifying her actions.

> I often make mistakes. I just re-read and go on and model strategies that I expect them to use. It's just modelling being a learner I think. *Teacher C.*

All of the teachers model a love of reading through reading orally to their children. At least two of them loved poetry but all had a passion, in particular, for reading and language. Teacher D's parent said that she brings beauty into her room and uses it as an art.
Many of the teachers write a diary about their own life experiences. Teacher C said she writes when her children write. The teachers read and write comments or questions in children's diaries and these encourage children to write in more depth. The children are also allowed to read and comment in the teacher's diary.
Teacher D uses a strategy whereby she finds out who the good spellers are and asks them for help at times. In this way, by correcting teacher mistakes, the children learn dictionary skills and also a strategy of self correction.
In their classroom social interactions the teachers build a rapport that includes an emotional and physical reaching out. Although they realised it was not always 'politically correct' their natural warmth meant that at times they cuddled the children. Teacher E talks about being a touchy person and how the children *love to be cuddled.* This strong family-like bond of trust and closeness encourages individuals to go to the teacher for a cuddle when they're feeling like affection.
Like parents, the teachers reprimand children, however their actions and words communicated to the children they cared.

11. Teachers empower children by reinforcing an internal locus of control

The teachers empower their learners towards having an internal locus of control. All talked about spending time with various children on a one-to-one basis establishing trust. This trust building was aimed at leading individuals to work through any anger, any concerns, so that children built up skills and confidence to deal with their own troubles.

> *I am here to help them to be the boss of themselves*. Teacher D.

Teacher C believes a lot of management is to do with children managing themselves and getting to the stage where they take control of their own actions.

> *I can't control 30 students' behaviour. They have to be able to control their own behaviour, I really really try to emphasise it with them or even to say to them, you have to be in control of your own behaviour.* Teacher G.

Teacher D believes that success comes from within. She doesn't encourage the children look to her for approval, however she continually encourages them to do better. While initially they may work to please her, eventually they work for inner reasons. Teacher I says her children fight their own battles instead of waiting for her to sort out the conflict or the conflict escalating. She has a treaty in the class which the children sign *... it's a case of respect... there were a list of things and the kids actually responded to it more than rules*.

All principals and colleagues of the nine teachers were emphatic that control, management and discipline strategies were extremely effective in their classrooms.

Teacher H believes reflection is part of growing up, of learning self control.

> *... we talk about them managing their learning. If I growl I make sure from the start that they know why I growl, its because I care about them and I want them to succeed .... Eventually the kids get to feel so good about themselves that they are able to monitor their own behaviour. They do listen and I get them to reflect on what they are doing and why they are doing it.* Teacher H.

The same teacher asks her children to write a 'think sheet'.

> *... it's all about what I did and why I do it, how do I feel, what's the rule I break, what can I do next, .. just to get them to reflect on their behaviour.* Teacher H.

Reflecting on behaviour was seen as an important element for building an internal locus of control. Strategies included having a grudge jar, writing a gratitude diary, time out, peer mediation, and encouraging children to give feedback to each other. The nine teachers believed strongly that if children are comfortable with themselves and with others they will learn. An integral step towards this was the establishment of an internal locus of control.

## Discussion

Apparent above is that these nine teachers share many of the attributes and beliefs identified by the writers noted in the Literature section. For instance the teachers' beliefs and attitudes encompass Haberman's (1991) self direction, real life experiences and technology of information access. The teachers welcome parents into the school and value their input (Delpit 1997), and they, like Hill and Hawk's teachers, place important emphasis on students' development of an internal locus of control. The high expectations they hold for children are integral to all of the surveyed literature.

Described above is but a summary of our case study findings. We maintain that it is a combination of the eleven beliefs and attitudes which underpins the successful practice of the nine teachers; all share all of them to a greater or lesser extent. It is our intention to enlarge on the eleven and the combination in later publications.

The data provides other information. For instance it tells us of the kinds of schools and particular management styles which support these teachers in their highly successful practice. It also provides abundant exemplars of ways in which teachers can work successfully across cultures. The wealth of data is rich, and it provides valuable perspectives on ways forward for improving primary school student achievement in New Zealand's poorer school. This paper is our beginning.

**These references belong to Appendix 12: Carpenter et al. (Carpenter V., McMurchy-Pilkington C. and Sutherland S.) (2001) 'The beliefs and attitudes which are common to successful teachers in Auckland's low SES schools.'** ***Auckland College of Education, New Zealand Kaiako Toa - Paper presented at the BERA 2001 Conference, Leeds, United Kingdom Auckland College of Education, New Zealand, 2001.*** **(Accessed October 2006 – no longer available online)**

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