Head-to-head: school leaders' perceptions of excellence in high-performing secondary schools and academies in England

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Abstract

This is a qualitative study of leaders' understanding of excellence and conceptions of leadership at eleven high-performing English secondary schools and academies. It uses semi-structured interviews between a headteacher-researcher and school leaders.

The leader's role in achieving and sustaining excellence is considered in the light of theories of leadership, notably Instructional, Transformational and Leadership for Learning. Distributed leadership, literature on Continuing Professional Development and the practices in successful and high-performing schools are also considered. Models of Servant Leadership, rarely seen in the literature on schools, are used to build a conceptual framework to understand leaders' practices.

The study confirms prior research that models of Leadership for Learning predominate, supported by Distributed Leadership practices. Servant Leader attributes complement the focus on pedagogy.

Characteristics of schools in the study focus on pedagogy and innovation. Continuing Professional Development is a further feature, supported by the importance of recruiting talented staff. Leadership characteristics include the pursuit of high standards and expectations. Headteachers are 'human' leaders, who are visible, care for and empower colleagues. Moral purpose is also important in driving school leaders.

The study also finds that leadership stability and succession planning are important. Furthermore, that for some leaders, whilst understanding the OFSTED accountability expectations, these do not unduly influence their actions in the pursuit of excellence.

The study's conclusions are useful to inform policy and practice with the aim of improving outcomes more widely for pupils. To this end, it is recommended that further research should be conducted into practices in high-performing schools and, in addition, their use of innovation, particularly in relation to pedagogy. Using models of Servant Leadership and the allied conception of moral purpose would also provide additional insights into the success of these schools.

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Acknowledgements

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1 Introduction

1.1 Rationale

This study considers what constitutes a high-performing school or academy and what are the characteristics of school leadership that support these institutions . The focus is on the leaders in 'outstanding' secondary schools and academies in England and has been an area of professional interest for me as a secondary school headteacher in a shire county market town for over eleven years (2007-2018). At the last inspection in 2015 OFSTED judged the school to continue to be good. My constant challenge has been for our school to gain an 'outstanding' grade in our next inspection. I have held middle and senior leadership positions in three other schools for over ten years prior to headship, within a variety of school contexts and performance outcomes. Throughout this time, I have been professionally intrigued by what makes and sustains an outstanding school and how good schools become highly-performing. Furthermore, what is it that their headteachers do to support this?

My research proposal was also inspired by a book well-known amongst my peers: '*Good to Great'* (Collins, 2001) which*,* although based on businesses, has parallels for Education. Indeed, this was further defined in the book Collins (2006) published for the social sector. The book describes the highest performing leaders as 'Level 5 leaders', who have created 'great' companies. They are described as a 'paradoxical blend of personal humility and professional will' rather than more autocratic or charismatic leaders. In leading institutions, they were able to 'confront the brutal facts' of their circumstances with an open, questioning, disciplined approach. They 'got the right people on the bus… and the right people in the right seats' and built momentum towards the transformation to becoming 'great' (Collins, 2001, pp. 12-14). Hence, the emerging issues of leadership style and school context as areas of interest in focusing on school improvement. This is also linked to an interest in this definition of the very best leaders' humility, suggesting that a predominant focus on student outcomes should not be at the expense of more pastoral concerns toward colleagues and the school culture.

This is a qualitative study, using semi-structured interviews with eleven leaders of 'outstanding' secondary schools or academies, some of which had been outstanding for some time. I will use the term 'school' when referring to both schools and academies where the difference in terminology is not of key importance to a point under discussion. The term 'institution' is also used synonymously.

As a headteacher-researcher, I am in the rare and privileged position of having been granted access to these fellow school leaders and their shared perceptions. Hence, as these are interviews between peers, I have used 'Head- to- head' in the title of my work.

Not only have I found it difficult to find a rich vein of literature specifically on the characteristics of high-performing schools, but the literature search suggests that there is little published. A search (using Google Scholar) on 'high-performing schools characteristics' over the last ten years, only gave around ten references from a search of fifty, many of which were closely contextually related in terms of socio-economic area, country or educational phase and only two showing citation rates over forty. A similar search of the broader conceptualisation of 'successful' schools only led to just over fifteen citings. Of these, there was little evidence, in terms of methodology and method, of the kind of access which I was granted, as a fellow headteacher, or of this research method. Of the ten searches, five used a qualitative method which included the use of interview. I was therefore able to interview fellow school leaders giving quite a rare insight into the ways in which high-performing institutions achieve and maintain their levels of success.

This research has happened at a time and place of high accountability in the English education system and with a changing organisational structure, in terms of the rise of Academies. This context creates an environment where it may be easy to lose the focus on school improvement as structures change. Additionally, in focusing so acutely on performance outcomes, some of the more holistic aspects of what defines excellence in schools have the potential to become lost. Hence this research provides an opportunity to explore what these high-performing schools are doing and how the school leaders perceive the key to their success. Hence my research questions can be summarised as:

1. What do school leaders understand by excellence in English Secondary Schools?
2. What is the role of the school leader in achieving and sustaining excellence?

The study will consider the findings from these semi-structured interviews with school leaders in the light of literature on school leadership, particularly instructional and transformational models. Regarding what I would term the pastoral aspects of leadership, I used the working concept of 'human' leadership to consolidate the findings and then reviewed the work of leaders in the light of models of servant leadership . We also see these less frequently in school leadership research literature, with only around ten examples, using the same retrieval method as above.

The initial analysis will develop themes from the interview transcripts, empirically and informed, to some extent, by the literature. I will suggest nine characteristics which act as a conceptual framework that encapsulate both the features in these high-performing schools and the role of their school leaders. In turn, this focuses directly on answering my research questions, which

are further explored by considering these characteristics in the light of theories of school leadership.

Hence, the aim in this study is to contribute to the under-researched field of practice in high-performing schools. In times of high accountability a focus on meeting targets tends to dominate at the expense of a more free and responsive approach to school improvement (equally capable of meeting targets). This expression of confidence in leadership and a capacity for innovation, whilst acknowledging the climate of accountability, is a core theme emerging from the study. Indeed, some of these school leaders continue to follow the path they believe is best for their school notwithstanding or, possibly and more forcefully, *in spite of* the accountability framework.

The other key contribution to knowledge of this thesis is the application of theories of Servant Leadership to the school context. This is associated with the concept of moral purpose (Sergiovanni, 1992, 2013) which I also suggest as one of the nine characteristics of these schools and one that drives the work of the school leaders to improve outcomes for those children in the communities that they serve.

1.2 Organisation of the thesis

Having set out the reasons for undertaking this work, I will complete the introduction by contextualising the study in terms of the school improvement background. I will then outline the policy context in terms of the focus on accountability measures in the English state education system and how schools are held to account by the OFSTED inspectorate, before briefly situating the schools in the study within the structural and organisational context of the growth of academies and Multi-academy Trusts.

In chapter 2, the Literature Review examines the theories of leadership which are prevalent in the literature on school leadership. These are considered in the light of what is viewed as success in school leadership, as well as in their representation within the limited literature on the characteristics of high-performing schools. I then introduce and review the notion of Servant Leadership, before discussing Distributed Leadership and Continuing Professional Development in the context of school improvement. This chapters ends with an elaboration of a conceptual framework for researching discourses and practices of excellence in schools.

In chapter 3, I discuss the methodology and methods used in the study. I consider my position in terms of this being a piece of qualitative work, as well as the issues of reflexivity and power in conducting the research and in relation to the interview situation. I will set out how participants were selected, issues of access and ethical considerations. I will discuss the

interview questions and consider the issues of reliability and validity in the data before outlining the analytical process used.

In chapter 4, I present the analysis of the transcript data and the themes and constituent sub-themes that I propose are the findings from the semi-structured interviews with school leaders, when considered as a whole. These are divided into school leader characteristics and actions together with school characteristics.

In chapter 5, the discussion considers each school leader's interview in the light of the leadership theories discussed in the literature review. I conclude with chapter 6, where I draw together the findings and propose a way of considering how school leadership and high-performing schools achieve and sustain excellence. I will briefly return to my place as headteacher-researcher in the study before ending the thesis by considering how this study could be used to support school improvement, the limitations of the work and suggestions for further research.

1.3 Recent historical context

Research studies into school improvement and school effectiveness can help us to understand the practices in achieving and sustaining high performance, supported by the literature on the management of change (for example Fullan, 1999, 2003a, 2007). However, the study does not investigate this change process in sufficient chronological detail nor the way leaders approached particular school improvement activities. Hence this will not be a focus in this work, albeit pertinent in a wider discussion of school improvement.

School effectiveness could be defined as focusing on student outcomes and the associated characteristics of schools and classrooms (the 'what') compared with *school improvement* which focuses on changing the quality of teaching without necessarily focusing on student outcomes (the 'how') (Stoll et al., 2006a, p.90) by changing organisational processes (Hopkins, 2001, p. 56). These two research communities, originally more separate, have understandably shared greater links in recent years (Stoll et al., 2006a, p.90 noting Gray et al.,1999 & Macbeath & Mortimore, 2001).

Over the last four decades, the development of school effectiveness and school improvement research, can be framed as having taken place in five overlapping phases (Hopkins, et al., 2014, pp. 258-267), as 'projects, interventions and innovations' have taken place across many countries in an effort to provide more effective learning experiences for pupils.

In Phase 1, there was an increasing awareness of the organisational culture in schools. In Phase 2, during the 1980s, teachers were engaged in action research and other research initiatives at individual school level. Phase 3, which began during the early 1990s, saw the management of change and comprehensive approaches to school reform at a national level. For example, in the 2000s, the National Strategies for literacy and numeracy in primary schools showed partial success and there was recognition of the growing need to differentiate the approach, scaling up best practice from individual schools. System change at both a national and local authority infrastructure level to implement these strategies then led to a 'roll-out' to secondary schools and expanded to more subject areas, including aspects of leadership and management (Department for Education and Skills, 2005).

In Phase 4, the emphasis was on building capacity, for example via networks and Professional Learning Communities, to improve student learning locally, whilst maintaining an emphasis on leadership. The creation of the National College of School Leadership in England was a good example of a way of providing a professional network as well as developing leadership capacity within the education system. There has been an increased focus on research-based evidence on learning, metacognition and the acquisition of knowledge. Simultaneously there has been a move towards a Transformational style of leadership, with a view that this was 'a necessary but insufficient condition for school improvement', hence the growth in the 'historic' notion of Instructional leadership and the concept of Distributed Leadership (Hopkins, et al., 2014, p. 266). In Phase 5, there is the emergence of more systemic improvement with a greater influence of the research knowledge base and the impact of benchmark studies.

1.4 Policy Context

1.4.1 The accountability framework in England

The leaders of these high-performing schools are working in the context of OFSTED's inspection framework, within an education system with high accountability measures. School accountability 'headline measures' set by the Department for Education (2019a, p. 6) currently include: progress across 8 qualifications (Progress 8) for the whole cohort, the percentage of pupils achieving a grade 5 or above in English and maths (Attainment in English and maths), attainment across the same 8 qualifications as Progress 8 (Attainment 8) together with the percentage of pupils entering the English Baccalaureate (EBacc entry) and the percentage of students staying in education or going into employment after key stage 4 (pupil destinations). Schools continue to be able to be compared in performance tables (Department for Education, 2019b) and had previously, using performance measures (Department for Education, 2012) including the attainment measure of the percentage of students gaining five or more GCSEs (or equivalent qualification), including English and Maths and, the value-added progress score

based on the eight best examination results for students, using their prior attainment as the benchmark.

At the time of the research, OFSTED (2012b, pp. 12, 22) judged the achievement of *all* students, teaching quality, behaviour and safety and leadership and management. There is a particular focus on the quality of learning in the classroom and of literacy, including reading and mathematics, across the school. Consideration was also made to students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural experience. The arrangements for children with special educational needs or a disability were also assessed. Grades were given in each category; outstanding (1); good (2); requires improvement (until September 2012 described as 'satisfactory') (3) and inadequate (4).

Schools were then judged for overall effectiveness, considering the grades in each of the four categories. Specifically, the first criterion to be satisfied is that 'teaching is outstanding and, together with a rich and relevant curriculum, contributes to outstanding learning and achievement' (OFSTED, 2012b, p. 25). Until this particular framework, a school had been able to gain 'outstanding' for overall effectiveness without necessarily having outstanding teaching. This places learning at the centre of school leaders' focus and OFSTEDs definition of outstanding teaching helps to define parameters. In judging outstanding teaching, the criteria (OFSTED, 2012b, p. 34) are challenging and I would consider to represent a fair overview of what would be expected in an outstanding classroom, with the main areas that I would focus on in italics below:

- 'Much of the teaching….is outstanding and never less than consistently good. As a result, '*almost all pupils ….are making rapid and sustained progress'*.

Teachers:

- '…have *consistently high expectations* of *all* pupils'
- '…plan and teach lessons that enable pupils to *learn exceptionally well'*
- '…*systematically and effectively check pupils' understanding*… anticipating where they may need to intervene…' and ensure '*consistently high quality marking and constructive feedback* … [that] ensure that pupils make rapid gains.
- '… generate high levels of *engagement and commitment* to learning…'
- '…use well-judged and often inspirational teaching strategies... [and] *match individual needs* accurately.'

There is a focus and challenge for school leaders in providing the very best learning experiences for all pupils. We also see here a focus on the learning process and the challenge for leaders is in how well a school has made explicit and articulated a shared understanding

of an exceptional learning experience in practice in the classroom; one which is matched to individuals needs and in doing so engages the learner.

OFSTED criteria for leadership and management (OFSTED, 2012b, p. 43) had a clear focus on learning and the provision of CPD and having a 'deep and accurate understanding of the school's performance…'. Phrases were used such as 'focus relentlessly', 'are highly ambitious for the pupils', 'lead by example' and 'the pursuit of excellence': phrases that challenge and may be seen as aspirational. The focus on learning was supported by the 'forensic' analysis of relevant data in the support of school improvement.

Again, we see that outstanding schools are expected to provide consistency, sustainability and high levels of reliability in terms of a relentless focus on improvement and a demand for excellence throughout the school. This includes having the highest expectations for students. These institutions should also provide support and challenge to staff in understanding a vision of excellence, in raising expectations and in consistency of provision over the long term. Leaders should also be a model of high expectations to others: students, staff and stakeholders. Finally, we are reminded that leadership is not just vested in the headteacher or school leadership team but in *all* leaders within the school.

Looking at the 2019 OFSTED Framework (OFSTED, 2019d, pp. 8-12) there are four areas for inspection: quality of education, behaviour and attitudes, personal development and leadership and management. The 'Quality of Education', replacing the 'Achievement' and 'Teaching Quality' criteria from 2012, focuses on curriculum, defining this in terms of the school's curriculum 'intent', 'implementation' and 'impact'. Leadership area continues to have CPD as one of its foci and refines the definition further to 'improving staff's subject, pedagogical and pedagogical content knowledge'. There is also an emphasis on engagement with stakeholders and a consideration of staff workload and well-being. In terms of 'good' criteria, we see the 'clear and ambitious vision' of leaders is achieved through 'strong, shared values, policies and practice' again, linking to qualities in Transformational and Instructional Leadership (OFSTED, 2019b, pp. 74-75), discussed further in the literature review.

The model of learning (OFSTED, 2019b, pp. 41-45), used in the Framework, refers to working memory in relation to the storage, retrieval and fluency of use of knowledge. There is a focus on how knowledge is sequenced in curriculum planning. In terms of teaching, elements of the learning model remain in terms of teachers providing feedback to pupils. This is now framed in terms of supporting pupils in correcting their misconceptions in order to embed knowledge. This can be summarised in the challenge given by one of the 'outstanding' criteria for 'Quality of Education':

> The work given to pupils, over time and across the school, consistently matches the aims of the curriculum. It is coherently planned and sequenced towards cumulatively sufficient knowledge and skills for future learning and employment. (OFSTED, 2019b, p. 49)

We again see a strong focus on pedagogy which complements the concept of Leadership for Learning.

1.4.2 Challenges to the accountability framework

There are consequences of an accountability framework insofar as if headteachers' have a narrow focus on OFSTED definitions and measurement this could, ironically, stop educators focusing on the goals of education. The school organisation will inevitably change its behaviour to meet these externally defined measures rather than focusing on 'genuine learning' (Ravitch, 2010, pp. 160, 242) and hence compromise the learning experience for students in the hunt for better results or measurements. Indeed the Chief Inspector admitted, in a presentation to the parliamentary Public Accounts Committee, that 'cuts to OFSTED and longer gaps between inspections have increased the risk of schools gaming the system' such as narrowing the curriculum or not entering pupils for more challenging subjects (given as examples in a question from a committee member) (George, 2018). This has led to 'an issue of schools entering pupils for inappropriate qualifications in order to boost their scores' (noting the comments of an Ofsted regional director) (Roberts, 2018). In response, OFSTED (2019b, p.75) have now made clear, in the criteria for good or outstanding schools, that gaming and off-rolling, whereby students are removed from roll to improve the school's overall scores, are not allowed.

The OFSTED four-point grading system is another opportunity for 'league table gaming' because inspection, in an accountability regime, has become so 'high stakes'. Furthermore, OFSTED have been criticised for inspectors' judgements lacking sufficient reliability and validity. This has been further compounded by the difficulties in reducing school performance down to one over-arching grade (Henshaw, 2019). This point, also noted by the Chief Inspector (OFSTED, 2019a, p. 4), was further challenged by reminding us that some 'outstanding schools', exempt from routine inspection by legislation, unless results have been risk-assessed (OFSTED, 2019b, pp. 7-8), had not been inspected for more than ten years, and that a further issue was that this was under a different inspection framework, with different criteria with which to make judgements. So we now have different schools measured as 'outstanding' using different criteria. This also means that judgement validity decreases with time. Indeed, the Chief Inspector reported to Parliaments Public Accounts committee that three-quarters of

outstanding schools recently inspected subsequently lost that rating with a third dropping by two grades (Richmond, 2019, p. 15).

To give some detail to the concern about inspection reliability, independent research has shown, for example, that for Secondary schools performing below the government's minimum 'floor standard', 35% were rated 'good' or 'outstanding', rising to 69% for Primary schools. In addition, of the schools receiving a 'requires improvement' or better grade at their previous inspection, whose performance had subsequently declined 'substantially', 33% of secondary schools and 47% of primary schools saw their grading improve at the next inspection. This means that in spite of very poor assessment outcomes, high ratings have been awarded. (Richmond, 2019, pp. 1-2). Coe (2014) also found that in using lessons observations to judge teacher quality compared with the 'actual' quality defined by value-added progress made by pupils, there was only a 49% chance of the quality of the lesson being the same and that observers only agreed 61% of the time, in the 'best case scenario' (Waldegrave & Simons, 2014, pp. 18-19).

1.5 The academies programme and the rise of Multi-academy Trusts

The academies programme was introduced by the Labour government (1997- 2010) to improve education outcomes, particularly in areas of disadvantage and those with poor performance in England. This built on the previous Conservative government's City Technology Colleges initiative from the 1980s with the first academies opening in 2002. The Learning and Skills Act 2000 allowed for the creation of city academies which were renamed as academies under the Education Act 2002. Academy freedoms include setting their own pay and conditions and a greater degree of flexibility in curriculum provision than following the National Curriculum in all areas, together with the ability to change the length and number of school days to support improvements in educational outcomes. Sponsors were extended to high-performing schools and universities (Long, 2015, pp. 1-6). When the Conservative/ Liberal Democrat coalition government came to power in 2010, it wanted to further improve educational standards, compared with other countries, by creating 'a more autonomous and diverse school system'. From 2010, all schools could become academies and the government introduced state-funded Free schools where a group could apply to set up a school to meet a perceived local community need. These were then followed by University Technical Colleges and studio schools in 2011, providing 14-19 education, supported by employers in tailoring the curriculum, in order to provide students with the skills required for the work place (Department for Education, 2015).

This has developed into the growth of Multi-Academy Trusts (MATs), which could be seen as private monopolies with similar 'techno-bureaucratic' structures to local government agencies.

Despite the government's case that this provides a 'school-led' self-improvement system with school autonomy (Department for Education, 2016b, pp. 10-11), particularly for 'converter' rather than sponsor academies, the impact on improving the education system remains contentious (Wilkins, 2017, pp. 172-179). To exemplify this, there are now over 2700 secondary schools that are academies out of 3700 in total. Furthermore, eighty-five MATs contained three or more secondary schools, totalling 389 in 2018 and academies in general and those in MATs continued to have a wide range of performance outcomes (Department for Education, 2019a & 2019d) despite this change in education policy at a systemic level in England.

If we consider the impact of this policy on the most vulnerable children, research conducted on behalf of the Sutton Trust (Hutchings & Francis, 2018, p. 3) suggested that 38 out of 58 academy chain sponsors had attainment outcomes in 2017 below the mainstream average for disadvantaged pupils. This is concerning, given the government's commitment to 'educational excellence everywhere' (Department for Education, 2016b). In terms of the study, investigating the successes of high-performing education institutions can contribute to this evidence base to support improvements in outcomes in other schools and more widely across the education system.

1.6 The relevance of the contextual factors to this study

The main contextual factors outlined above should be considered when interviewing the school leaders. Nevertheless, the status of each school as either local authority maintained or an academy was not a focus of this work. The School Improvement and School Effectiveness research contexts provide important background information to frame the study and consider the questions to be drafted for the interviews.

Given that OFSTED make judgements on all schools in England, the interviews included a question (Appendix 6) which focused on school leaders' conceptions of excellence and asks them to consider the OFSTED criteria for an outstanding school. This is extended in later interviews (Appendix 7) to their impact on teaching and learning and the extent to which they influence the school. Hence, whilst accountability measures and the inspection regime were referred to in the interviews, the question posed related to OFSTED did not place great emphasis on these aspects given the other questions posed that focused on the activity within the schools.

2 Literature Review

2.1 Introduction

In this review, I critically assess the main conceptualisations of school leadership. I start with a discussion of Instructional and Transformational models before considering models of Leadership for Learning. I also review the constructions of successful school leadership (section 2.6), notably in the specific context of high-performing schools. I refined the initial literature review in the light of the preliminary findings and supplemented it with studies of models of Servant Leadership (section 2.8) before returning to the concept of Distributed Leadership (section 2.9) and to the literature on Continuing Professional Development (CPD) (section 2.10). This provides the basis for the conceptual framework (figure 1), presented in section 2.11, to analyse the role of school leaders in achieving and sustaining excellence . In turn, the framework supports fieldwork planning and is then refined, following analysis, and presented as a model of achieving and sustaining excellence in the conclusion.

The initial literature search considered theories of leadership; policy contextual factors; school effectiveness and school improvements traditions; characteristics of successful, 'outstanding' or high-performing schools, as well as organisational issues such as sustainability, succession, capacity building and the management of change, together with theoretical considerations such as complexity and network theory. Some of these factors contribute to the conceptual framework which I describe using the headings: 'Context' and 'Other leadership and management issues'. I also searched for literature on creativity and innovation in schools following findings from the analysis. Due to the limited number of references found, I discuss these in association with theories of leadership, rather than in a separate section, and expand further during the analysis (section 4.3.4).

2.2 Theories of Leadership: Introduction

The two main theories under discussion are Transformational Leadership and Instructional Leadership. Both have been historically separate and today we see these in a more unified sense as Leadership for Learning. Allied to these theories is the use of Distributed Leadership in school improvement and the central place of Continuing Professional Development in improving pupils' outcomes.

The theme of 'Moral purpose' (Fullan, 2003b) and a consideration of values and beliefs in terms of 'Moral Leadership' (Sergiovanni, 1992) remain pertinent today and a much used reason for what drives us as leaders in education. In terms of a framework for considering

these dimensions, I will use, as Sergiovanni (1992) suggests, a Servant Leadership model, with literature in school contexts having been harder to find than that of other models.

Whilst these models will be useful in the analysis, I acknowledge that in their day-to-day practice, school leaders develop a 'portfolio of leadership styles' as part of what is often described as a more 'contingent' model of leadership (Bush & Glover, 2003, pp. 12-13; Bush, 2011, pp. 164-165, 204). We can also define leadership in terms of other allied concepts such as 'contextual' and 'situational' leadership. Contingent leadership can be described as a form of 'ambiguity model', in that it takes into account the instability or uncertainty in an organisation (Bush, 2011, pp. 147-154, 166-167). There is a suggestion in this term of lack of clarity in goals, a lack of understanding of processes, unplanned decisions, and a tendency towards fragmentation: features not necessarily seen in a more stable organisation. Hence, in the schools in the study, a less reactive way of considering this concept could be in terms of leadership 'praxis'. In this sense, rather than being in line with a model describing a particular, right way of leading, it is seen as 'praxis' because of a continual interplay between theory, actions (practice), ends and means, where pedagogy shapes leadership (Male & Palaiologou, 2015, p. 216). Indeed, this praxis and sense of context is seen in the leadership of more effective schools where leaders use a specific combination and timely implementation of strategies in response to the unique context of the school and its pupils (Day, et al., 2009, p. 1).

2.3 Instructional Leadership

School leadership should rightly be strongly focused on learning since this is the core purpose of schools (Southworth, 2011, p. 71). Instructional Leadership has its origins in studies from the late 1970s and early 1980s of successful schools in poor urban communities (Robinson, et al., 2008, p. 638, acknowledging Edmonds, 1979) with a focus on clear teaching objectives, high expectations and disruption-free learning. It was centred around the headteacher with little reference to teachers or middle leaders in terms of shared or distributed leadership. These were 'strong and directive leaders' as well as 'culture builders' with a focus on student outcomes. 'Vision, goals, and mission' were a central part of these leaders' dialogue at a time when the school reform agenda was evolving. In their practice, these were 'hands-on principals' working directly with teachers on improving teaching and learning. Inevitably, this led to a critique of this style of leadership having the potential for 'heroic status' (Hallinger, 2005, pp. 223-224). The style has also been challenged for being too classroom focused and missing wider organisational issues (Bush & Glover, 2003, p. 7).

A model of Instructional leadership (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985, pp. 220-224) , cited as most frequently used in empirical research (Hallinger, 2005, p. 224), focuses on three dimensions of Instructional Management, further expanded into ten functions. The headteacher defines the school mission by framing and communicating school goals. The head manages the 'instructional program', coordinating the curriculum, monitoring student progress and supervising and evaluating instruction. In the third dimension, the head promotes the school climate for learning by protecting instructional time, promoting CPD, being highly visible, supporting high academic standards and providing incentives for both students and their teachers.

This influence of the headteacher on improving learning uses three strategies: modelling, monitoring and dialogue. Successful leaders are aware that they are 'on show' and choose their words with care, ensuring that 'their words and deeds are in harmony'. Leaders focus on the dialogue of learning by talking with others about their lessons, visiting classrooms and ensuring that meetings focus on learning and thus demonstrate the strength of connection between leadership and learning (Southworth, 2011, p. 75). At a deeper level, a headteacher's ability to discuss learning theory is important (Schoen, 2008, p. 42) as part of this dialogue, ultimately contributing to how colleagues perceive the headteacher. Furthermore, this ideally contributes to a growth in their respect, further supporting the headteacher's leadership for learning.

Research on effective schools indicates that those headteachers who focus on teaching and learning made a significant difference in student outcomes (Leithwood & Day, 2007, p. 6). Instructional Leadership has also been developed in the UK as *learning-centred* leadership, a model supported by the National College for School Leadership where leaders were involved in modelling, monitoring and dialogue (National College for School Leadership, 2005, pp. 2, 8).

The concept of *shared* instructional leadership has evolved whereby there is '…active collaboration of principal and teachers on curriculum, instruction and assessment', sharing responsibility for CPD, curriculum development and the supervision of instruction. This builds on the previous conception of the headteacher as lone leader of instruction, to where leadership is 'not dependent on role or position' (Marks & Printy, 2003, pp. 371, 374-375). This is pertinent in leading school improvement given the complexity of a school in terms of social interactions, direction and outcomes (Timperley & Robertson, 2011, p. 3).

2.4 Transformational Leadership

Transformational Leadership originated as a paradigm in James McGregor Burns' work on leadership (Burns, 1978), whereby staff are inspired 'to new levels of energy, commitment and moral purpose' (Robinson, et al., 2008, p. 639, after Burns, 1978) thereby subscribing to a common vision and working collaboratively in reaching ambitious goals. A theory of leadership to transform organisations was later suggested by Bass & Avolio (1994, pp. 1-4). The 'Transformational' leader is seen as a motivator to staff, someone who sets challenging expectations which ultimately lead to the achievement of high performance. They suggest a model, described as the '4 *I*'s', to encapsulate this: *Idealized influence*, where the leader is the role model for followers. The aim is that staff will admire, respect and trust the leader importantly because, in part, this is achieved by leaders considering the needs of others before their own. Leaders 'do the right thing' because of high ethical and moral standards, further strengthening their influence by sharing risks and ensuring that they are consistent.

The leader also provides *Inspirational motivation:* providing meaning and challenge. The aim is that 'followers' are enthused and optimistic for a better future and have a shared vision and commitment to goals with clearly communicated expectations. *Intellectual stimulation* is provided to support efforts to be innovative and creative in problem-solving. Staff feel safe to do this because there is an understanding that there will be no public criticism of mistakes. Situations are considered in new ways by questioning assumptions and reframing problems. The fourth 'I' is *Individualized consideration* where attention is given to the needs of individual staff members in terms of her or his achievement and growth. In addition, individual differences are accepted, and the leader communicates on a human, personalised level with individual staff as they practise 'management by walking around'. The leader listens effectively and considers staff holistically, not just as employees. This consideration extends to delegation which is seen as an opportunity for development where monitoring is used to gauge the need for additional support (Bass & Avolio, 1994, pp. 1-4).

Work on defining a model of Transformational Leadership for an educational context has been attributed to Leithwood (1994) and colleagues. In this theory of leadership , the school leader models best practice and organisational values whilst setting high expecations. The leader builds vision and ensures shared goal-setting in order to create a productive school culture. Staff are offered individualised support and intellectual stimulation, including the use of rewards.

The model developed by Leithwood & Jantzi (1999, p. 114, acknowledging Leithwood, 1994 and Leithwood et al., 1999) has six dimensions: 'building the school vision and goals; providing

intellectual stimulation; symbolizing professional practices and values; demonstrating high performance expectations; developing structures to foster participation in school decisions'. These were supplemented by four management dimensions: 'staffing, instructional support, monitoring school activities and community focus'.

These were supported by four categories of Transformational Leadership Behaviours (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005, pp. 180-181):

- 'setting direction': involving the development of both vision and goals. High-performance expectations are emphasised, as is 'inspirational motivation'.
- 'helping people': 'individualized" consideration and support, 'intellectual stimulation' and 'idealized influence' by 'modelling key values and practices'.
- 'redesigning the organisation': by building 'collaborative cultures' and 'creating structures…' in order to do this, and forming 'productive relations with parents and the community'.;
- 'transactional and managerial aggregate': including 'contingent reward', 'management by exception' and management activities including focusing on staffing, instructional support, monitoring activity and 'buffering' from distractions to their work.

The application to the educational context remains close to the work of Bass & Avolio (1994) summarised as the 4 *I*'s. The emphasis on the leader as modelling the values of the organisation and best-practice regarding student learning, the core purpose of the educational organisation, is maintained. High expectations are congruent with a high-performing organisation. The sense of a shared vision, where 'followers' are integral to the success of the school, also supports the idea of considering individual needs and 'helping people', emphasising a human, moral dimension. This is seen too in the CPD opportunities for staff, similarly supporting intellectual stimulation, again part of both models. The sense of delegation to develop individuals and the idea of a creative and innovative environment to provide stimulation can be seen, in the original model, in the emphasis on collaborative cultures and a connection to Distributed Leadership.

Both models do have much in common: creating a shared sense of purpose, developing a climate of high expectations, a culture of improvement in the quality of teaching and learning. Both provide activities aimed at the intellectual stimulation and development of staff (CPD) and have headteachers being a visible everyday presence, modelling the values of the school (Hallinger, 2003, p. 343). Less obvious in the Instructional model is the sense of distributed leadership with the headteacher remaining the focus, although the development of shared instructional leadership as a model has led to further connections between the two models.

In his review of the literature, 'Instructional Leadership and the school principal: a passing fancy that refuses to fade away', over the 25 years from 1980-2005, Hallinger (2005, pp.233-235) suggests that the enduring areas of focus for leaders are on creating a shared sense of purpose, with clear goals, focused on student learning, a 'climate of high expecations and a school culture aimed at innovation and improvement of teaching and learning', co-ordination of the curriculum and montioring student outcomes, CPD, being a visible presence, modelling the values of the school's culture.

There had been a move away from a more Instructional Leadership style in the context of the School Effectiveness period of school development during the mid-1990s, attention shifting towards Transformational leadership (Hallinger, 2005, p. 228) as the predominant model in responding to education reform policies (Leithwood et al., 2003 in Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005, p. 184). There was also a suggestion that more distributed leadership styles were closer to the reality of the context in schools at that time. Possibly, this was, in part, a response to a key concern of Transformational Leadership 'having the potential to become 'despotic' because of its strong, heroic and charismatic features' (Bush & Glover, 2003, p. 8 noting Allix 2000). A criticism in a similar vein is that in a situation where followers are offered trust and respect, there is the potential for a leader with narcissistic tendencies to abuse his or her power (Hay, 2006, p. 13).

Hopkins (2001, p. 116) suggests that there was a return to an interest in Instructional Leadership, possibly because of Transformational Leadership not being sufficiently focused on student learning. However, this separation is not necessarily helpful in finding the best leadership techniques to achieve that focus. In a different consideration of Transformational Leadership, we could take the concentration on individual needs and consider a leader then seeking influence from a 'bottom-up' rather than a 'top-down' approach in order to do this. This would show Transformational Leadership being a form of shared or distributed leadership (Hallinger, 2003, pp. 337-338). The style could also be seen to vary from a more directive to more participative and democratic approach, dependent on school context (Bass, 1995 noted by Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005, p. 178 and also in their own review of research, p.183). For example, in the case of a 'school at risk', a headteacher would have a greater top-down approach and a more hands-on role to support instructional improvement (Hallinger, 2005, p. 235).

There is an acceptance that the impact of leaders on student outcomes are largely indirect (Timperley & Robertson, 2011, p. 5, Hallinger, 2003, p. 333) with a 'chain of variables' joining leaders' actions to student learning (Leithwood, 2007, p. 46). Instructional leadership can be seen as affecting first order factors in school improvement, that is those that directly impact on classroom learning, whereas Transformational Leadership creates second order effects by, for

example, increasing the capacity of staff to support first order effects by creating a climate which encourages the sharing of learning via CPD. These activities create the conditions for meaningful school improvement (Hallinger, 2003, p. 338), hence leading to the suggestion that Transformation Leadership is 'a necessary but insufficient condition for instructional leadership'. Moreover, this becomes a more powerful combination when Transformational Leadership is *integrated* 'in tandem' with *Shared* Instructional Leadership, becoming 'Integrated Leadership', where the two models are coupled, leading to high quality pedagogy and students with high-performing outcomes (Marks & Printy, 2003, pp. 370, 373, 392-393).

In reviewing more recent literature we see that this debate continues, although there is an increasing blurring of the two leadership models and a growing call for an integrated conceptualisation instead of those separate definitions (Kwan, 2019, p. 26). This leads to a consideration of Leadership for Learning as an integrated framework.

2.5 Leadership for Learning

Although nuanced variants of Leadership for Learning have emerged, including instructional-, learning-centred-, pedagogical- and educational- (Timperley & Robertson, 2011, p. 7), I will situate Leadership for Learning as an evolution from both Shared Instructional and Transformational Leadership, acknowledging the increasing convergence between Transformational and Instructional Leadership research.

Indeed, research should focus further on teaching practices that make the most difference to student outcomes (Robinson, et al., 2008, pp. 664-668). Notably, the closer leadership is situated to teaching and learning practices, the more likely the headteacher is to have an impact on students' outcomes. In the quantitative meta-analysis undertaken by Robinson, et al. (2008), Instructional Leadership was found to have three to four times the impact of Transformational Leadership, the rationale suggesting that the latter is more focused on the relationship between the leader and staff than on the focus on educational outcomes in the school. Furthermore, the quality of this relationship cannot necessarily be causally linked to the quality of student outcomes.

A Leadership for Learning framework, suggested by Murphy, et al. (2007, p. 182-194), resulted from research in highly 'productive' schools and schools districts in the US, and their high-performing principals and superintendents. This suggested eight dimensions (1-8, below) which I have drawn together:

- A focus on the school's vision for learning (1) and how it is developed, articulated, implemented and stewarded. Leaders model the vision in both formal and informal ways, including symbols and ceremonies, and communciate well with stakeholders.

Leaders translate the vision into operation and carefully steward and monitor it. Effective leaders frame and solve problems, make decisions and build consensus.

- Translating the vision into the instructional, curricular and assessment programmes (2-4). Leaders are *deeply* involved with, and knowledgable about, the instructional programme. They visit classrooms and work with groups of teachers, both formally and informally. The 'institutional programme' also includes the recruitment of staff and the support they are offered. School leaders realise that excellent teachers are required for quality education and devote much time in ensuring their recruitment. Teachers are provided with intellectual stimulation and leaders take a personal interest in staff, making themselves available to them and recognising and rewarding quality in teaching and learning. Assessment data is skillfully used in monitoring instruction and the curriculum.
- 'Communities of learning'(5) focus on professional development and professional practice and the idea of 'community anchored school'. Hence these leaders treat individuals with fairness, dignity and respect, thus creating the trust that holds the school community together. There is often shared or distributed forms of leadership, empowering members of the school community.
- These aspects are supported by a leader's gift for resource acquisition and use (6) to support learning. They ensure that the organisational culture (7), based on high expectations, is personalized by finding ways for students to feel part of the school community such as providing leadership opportunities and acknowledging and rewarding participation. Symbolism is used to distinguish the school in the community. Leaders provide a safe and orderly learning environment, by involving the school community in the development of behaviour policy. They seek continuous improvement and frame success in terms of performance.
- These leaders engage in 'social advocacy'(8), engaging stakeholders and ensuring the school takes advantage of the benefits that diversity can bring and are sensitive to the environmental context in which the school works. There is an ethical sense to their advocacy and moral agency which is a central dynamic of leadership in schools where children flourish. Leaders treat others fairly and with dignity and respect and set this as an expectation for the school community. They shape their behaviour according to their own ethics and have a reflective and self-critical stance.

We see here aspects of both Instructional and Transformational Leadership in terms of building a shared vision and school culture around learning, setting high expectations and modelling values and best-practice. These leaders are 'hands-on' and highly visible. There is also the Instructional Leadership focus on the instructional programme; getting into class, working with staff to ensure that monitoring and the evaluation of progress are well established and that the leaders are meeting individual needs and supporting a climate for learning with CPD. This is

framed within a context of the school as a learning community and aligned to the notion of Distributed Leadership and Professional Learning Communities, which I discuss below. There is also an acknowledgement, seen in Leithwood's (1994) model of Transformational Leadership, of the benefits to students of working with parents and the community. We see a moral dimension to this model, aligned to the high moral standards and the consideration of the needs of others that is part of the Transformational model but seen also within the concept of Servant Leadership. Also resonant here are two characteristics of these high-performing leaders; they are reflective and have built schools which flourish because of trust.

Comparing this with a different Leadership for Learning model shows significant congruence. The Comprehensive Assessment of Leadership for Learning (CALL) is a framework with five 'domains" which focuses on distributed leadership practices rather than that of the principal and is aimed at high-performing schools. This has 'a focus on learning'(1), where instructional leaders enable collaborative planning of an 'integrated learning plan' (which I interpret as 'curriculum') which includes support for students who find learning particularly challenging and underpinning this by 'monitoring teaching and learning'(2). Leaders place importance on 'maintaining a safe and effective learning environment'(5) ensuring student behaviour expectations are clear, consistent and enforced. This is supported by providing '…a safe haven for students who traditionally struggle' and 'buffering of the teaching environment', so that teachers can focus on teaching and learning. Leaders ensure a focus on learning and the provision of CPD by 'building nested learning communities'(3) which focus on solving problems associated with teaching and learning. This opportunity for professional learning also enhances collegial relationships. These domains are supported by 'acquiring and allocating resources'(4) for learning. This includes the integration of external expertise to support instruction and the coordination of relationships with families and the community. (Kelley & Halverson, 2012, pp. 5-6).

This model, with its strong focus on learning, has clear links with Instructional Leadership, as well as showing more collegiate features seen in both shared instructional leadership and distributed leadership models. Professional Learning Communites, the engagement with stakeholders and use of resources to support learning are also seen in the model after Murphy, et al. (2007). There isn't an explicit reference to key aspects of the other models, such as the setting of high expectations or building vision. Indeed, the authors acknowledge that the focuses are on both learning and distributed leadership. Hence these features of the school leader, like others such as their visibility, modelling and attention to individual needs, have not been emphasised or included.

It is noteworthy that Seashore, et al. (2010, pp. 19, 37, 66-69) use a model which is more or less the model cited by Leithwood & Jantzi (1999, 2005), which I described, in section 2.4, as

a Transformational Model of school leadership (Leithwood was one of the authors). Here it is reframed as a model for school leaders, who focus on instruction and impact pupil achievement through their influence on teacher motivation and working conditions in terms of the professional community and school climate. The high-performing school leaders and teachers (citing previous research for the report) include four areas of practice in the model which I will note now to avoid confusion with the original conception and to allow for its use in analysis of the findings:

- *setting directions:* including sharing the vision, high performance expectations and communicating direction
- *developing people:* by providing individualized support, intellectual stimulation and modelling expected values and practices,
- *redesigning the organisation:* to build and support collaborative cultures and build productive relationships with families and the community
- *managing the instructional program:* staffing, instructional support, monitoring, buffering staff from distractions to their work and aligning resources (Seashore, et al., 2010).

In a further, and more recent, reflection on Leadership for Learning, Bowers, et al. (2017, p. 2) suggest that it is a compelling framework for integrating theories such as shared instructional, transformational and distributed leadership with human resource and resource management. Their definition of 'human resources' includes teacher satisfaction, building commitment and their retention, to provide a more integrated model (Boyce & Bowers, 2018, pp170-173). In their meta-analysis of over one hundred studies over twenty-five years, they link these human resource management factors to four instructional leadership factors: principal leadership and influence, teacher autonomy and influence, adult development and school climate to suggest a framework of Leadership for Learning. They note that their framework captures aspects of the model defined by Murphy, et al. 2007. For example, in terms of building the school vision, leading and organising the instructional programme and hiring staff. I would add that 'school culture' (from the Murphy, et al., (2007) model) is informed by the principal's and teachers' influence and has clear links to 'school climate' as outlined in the Boyce & Bowers (2018) model and that adult development and professional development are synonymous in both models and support the human resource features of Boyce & Bower's (2018) model. Less obvious here are the 'social advocacy' aspects of leadership offered by Murphy, et al. (2007) including working with stakeholders and the moral and ethical aspects of the school leaders profile, which I will discuss in section 2.8, Servant Leadership.

2.6 Successful school leadership

In their seminal paper, *Seven strong claims about successful school leadership*, Leithwood, et al. (2008, pp. 27-28), remind us that, 'school leadership is second only to classroom teaching as an influence on pupil learning'. This relationship is critical to improving pupils' outcomes and the school leaders' influence on pupil learning, whilst indirect, is at its most powerful when having a positve impact on 'staff motivation, commitment and working conditions' as well as when it is distributed in a co-ordinated way throughout the school'.

The findings, from this comprehensive literature review, showed that the most successful leaders have the same set of leadership practices which were applied and matched to the specific school context in which they led. The set of traits was so compelling in its universality that there were only a few 'personal traits' which account for the variance in leadership effectiveness.

The way the authors use the term 'context' reminds us that the four main areas of leadership are used in differing ways dependent on the stage of a school's improvement journey. Thus, in comparing a 'turnaround' school with one that is 'achieving and sustaining success', a leader in the former will focus on stabilising the school by quickly set clear and short-term goals. This version of 'building vision and setting direction' contrasts with that in a successful school where there is greater capacity for a more shared, deeper and sustained ownership of the vision coupled with more distributed leadership 'required to achieve and sustain high levels of success' (Leithwood, et al., 2008, p. 31)

Fourteen core leadership practices were identified and organised into four categories (Leithwood, et al., 2008, pp. 29-31):

- building vision and *setting directions*:
    - building a *shared vision*
    - fostering the acceptance of group goals
    - demonstrating *high performance expectations*
- understanding and *developing people*
    - providing *individualised support* and consideration
    - fostering *intellectual stimulation*
    - *modelling appropriate values* and behaviours
- *redesigning the organisation*
    - *building collaborative cultures*
    - restructuring [and reculturing] the organisation
    - *building productive relations with parents and the community*

    - connecting the school to its wider environment
- *managing the teaching and learning programme*
    - *staffing the teaching programme*
    - *providing teaching support*
    - *monitoring school activity*
    - *buffering staff against distractions from their work*

The significant areas of explicit overlap with the Transformational-style model of Leadership for Learning, above and the original conception, described previously, are shown in italics in the list above. Even statements not in italics can be implicit interpretations of features seen in both models, for example ‘foster the acceptance of group’ (above) goals can be achieved by ‘communication’ (previous model).

Today, in their 2019 paper, revisiting the claims, Leithwood, et al. (2019, pp.1-4, 9) have strengthened their claim about the importance of school leaders in improving pupil outcomes, which they describe as ‘vital’. They suggest that school leadership has a significant, albeit moderately sized, effect on the school organisation which, in turn, influences the quality of teaching and learning.

In terms of considering the leadership practices that are most effective, the original fourteen practices have been extended to twenty-two. The main categories have been sustained over time, albeit renamed to ‘set direction’, ‘build relationships and develop people’, ‘develop the organisation to support desired practices’ and ‘improve the instructional program’. Of significance to this study, the section focusing on relationships and staff now contains a reference underscoring the importance of CPD, defined as ‘stimulate growth in the professional capacities of staff’. The enduring importance of the concept of trust and its importance in leadership and school improvement is also captured in the statement, ‘building trusting relationships’ with all stakeholders. We also see the continued importance of Distributed Leadership under the organisational support descriptor whereby the term ‘collaborative culture’ has been reinforced with ‘… and distributed leadership’. Furthermore, ‘Claim 5’, concerning Distributed Leadership, has been reinforced to state that it can have ‘an especially positive influence’ on outcomes.

This now reflects the key aspects, beyond Transformational Leadership, captured in the previously discussed models of Leadership for Learning and acknowledging the usefulness of Distributed Leadership in school improvement.

Empirical evidence from a 3-year national study of how successful school leaders undertake school improvement, supports these findings. This focused on the combination of both

transformational and instructional leadership styles and found that Headteachers had a clarity of vision, determination and responsiveness 'driven by strong, clearly articulated moral and ethical values that were shared by their colleagues'. They were respected and trusted by staff and parents and distributed responsibility with accountability and a focus on a range of learning and development opportunities for students and staff. Furthermore, these leaders understood and diagnosed needs through 'multiple combinations and accumulations of time and context-sensitive strategies that are "layered" and progressively embedded in the school's work, culture and achievements' (Day, et al., 2016, pp. 221-222, 251).

2.7 Characteristics specific to high-performing schools

The literature on the characteristics specifically associated with high-performing schools appears to be sparse, would seem to support the claim in section 2.6 that there are a common set of leadership practices, applied in different ways, depending on the stage of a school's development. I will, nevertheless, turn to five independent studies to help situate the characterstics of both the high-performing schools in the study and their leadership.

In a case study of ten *outstanding* headteachers, Gold, et al. (2003) noted how leaders developed leadership capacity and worked with a variety of leadership teams, managing information and the change process whilst encouraging a sense of shared values. Findings from research in 'Twelve Outstanding Secondary Schools' (OFSTED, 2009, p. 9) suggested that leadership strengths included, building vision, values and high expectation, in common with Gold et al. (2003). A further strength; progress-tracking and target setting is a more focused version of what Gold et al. (2003) described as 'managing information'. These schools also developed teaching and learning and built relationships with pupils, parents and the community. These schools, 'maintain rigour and consistency whilst continuing to innovate and develop' (OFSTED, 2009, p. 28).

In 'The International Project to Frame the Transformation of Schools', based on research of thirty 'outstanding' schools in six countries (Australia, Finland, China, US, England & Wales) (Caldwell & Harris, 2008, p. 10), schools not only had a high degree of autonomy but succeeded in building four kinds of capital. Firstly, intellectual capital, in terms of staff knowedge and skills, which I would suggest aligns with a focus on high quality CPD. Social capital, defined in terms of partnerships with individuals and agencies supporting the school is complemented by spiritual capital. This is interpreted as 'moral purpose' and the coherence in values and beliefs about both life and learning. These are then supported by financial capital to realise the school's vision. This then shows the development of a common thread around vision and values, a focus on teaching and learning, relationships with stakeholders and now, the mention of CPD, in line with the discussion around Leadership for Learning (section 2.5).

This continues in the study of high-performing English, non-selective, state secondary schools (Smith, 2011) where the findings pointed towards schools that had a clear 'core purpose' and sought 'consistency and coherence' to this end. There was a focus on the classroom and learning, ensuring the curriculum best matches the students in their school context. Academic achievement as well as learning skills development were supported by an optimism for students learning. These schools also focused on evidence-based CPD and engaged with all stakeholders, for example, in curriculum enrichment. Additionally, the school is seen as a community with a 'strong coherent team ethos', where there is 'collaborative competition' and the celebration of success. (Smith, 2011, p. 11).

Finally, a study into the Characteristics of High Performing 'TeachFirst' Schools (Bell & Cordingley, 2014, pp. 4-5) found that 'exceptional' schools placed significant focus on mentoring, coaching and networked learning as part of CPD. There was also a whole-school focus on 'explicit pedagogical strategies linked to student achievement' including the use of strategies to overcome barriers to learning. These schools also prioritised subject specific knowledge and the modelling of learning. Furthermore, leaders worked with outside agencies to enrich the curriculum. Hence the focus on learning is reinforced together with the importance of high quality CPD in support of this.

What we haven't seen is anything different in these high-performing settings that would not be seen in a model of success for all schools or a Leadership for Learning framework (see also, for example, Shannon & Bylsma (2007) and Wilson (2011).

I now turn to the Servant Leadership model with its emphasis on moral dimensions of school leadership which has much to complement other leadership styles discussed.

2.8 Servant Leadership

2.8.1 Moral Purpose and Moral Leadership

Moral leadership focuses on the mutual needs, aspirations, and values of leaders and followers in the process of social change. This therefore has resonance with the relationships seen in Transformational Leadership (Greenfield Jr, 2004, pp. 176-178). Taken as a broader conceptualisation, Moral Leadership focuses on integrity, values, beliefs and ethics and is in a field where other terms such as Ethical Leadership and Authentic Leadership are used (Bush & Glover, 2014, p. 559). Briefly touching on these terms; Authentic Leadership can be defined as that which emphasises being true in interactions. However, this lacks a form of inner intent to serve, be that from a spiritual and/ or altruistic place (Eva, et al., 2019, p. 113). Whilst Ethical

Leadership focuses on moral dimensions sharing traits such as integrity with other theories, including Authentic, Spiritual and Transformational Leadership (Brown & Treviño, 2006, p. 598).

The concept of 'moral purpose' has been a driving force for headteachers throughout the time that trends in other leadership models have ebbed, flowed and evolved. Moral purpose in schools can be defined as**:**

> '… where all students learn, the gap between high and low performance becomes greatly reduced, and what people learn enables them to be successful citizens and workers in a morally based knowledge society.' (Fullan, 2003b, p. 29)

For school leaders this involves leading 'deep cultural change' that harnesses the 'passion and commitment' of stakeholders, developing leadership in others, to improve student outcomes. Importantly, this requires significant trust (Fullan, 2003b, pp. 41-43). Segiovanni (1992, p.39) uses the term 'moral authority' to describe the areas of influence the school leader would be employing to affect this change. He points out that what is 'right and good' is as important as 'what works and what is effective' meaning that what is morally good should be combined with the pragmatism to undertake the most effective school improvement activities. To this end, the leader identifies the shared values and beliefs that define the school community as a 'professional learning community' where collegiality, seen as a 'professional virtue', supports professional and community values. This is underpinned by a moral rationale for these values, leading to an 'expansive and sustained' collective performance.

This encompasses a vision of the 'Virtuous School' (Sergiovanni, 1992, pp. 104, 112-117) as a learning community of mutual respect, trust and goodwill, in partnership with parents and the community, in the context of developing the whole child, where caring is seen as key to academic success. The leader, in this context, is a servant. Respect is at the heart of service and in turn empowers people to take more responsibility in the school community. The school leader also shows stewardship (Sergiovanni, 2013, pp. 376, 387-388), with links to Instructional Leadership, by being in and out of classes, communicating high expectations of pupils and staff both, 'a disciplinarian' and 'devoted and loving one'. The leader also demonstrates Servant Leadership because of a deep commitment to values and moral authority. Sergiovanni (2013) finally notes that the concept of Servant Leadership is virtually missing from the mainstream leadership discourse, hence my interest in it, given its evidence in the study.

2.8.2 Provenance, characteristics and attributes

Servant Leadership has been suggested as a new research area, given that it has been understudied. Further empirical studies would then lead to a theoretical framework for future use (Parris & Peachey, 2013, pp. 378, 389-390). In their systematic literature review of empirical studies across multidisciplinary fields, they concluded that whilst there was no consensus on a definition for what constitutes Servant Leadership that its is a viable leadership theory. However, 'a lack of coherence and clarity around the construct has impeded its [theory] development' (Eva, et al., 2019, p. 111). Nevertheless, Parris & Peachey (2013) suggest Servant Leadership has traits in morals, ethics and virtues.

The term seems first to have been used by Greenleaf in 1970 to describe a style which 'enriches the lives of individuals, builds better organizations and ultimately creates a more just and caring world'. It places care for others and their personal growth before leadership power. 'The servant-leader shares power, puts the needs of others first and helps people develop and perform as highly as possible' (Robert K Greenleaf Center for Servant Leadership, 2016).

In the business community, the term's use has been suggested as a way of creating a more optimistic future and to counteract the perception of big business with 'selfish' business leaders. There is a suggestion that Greenleaf's concept was more of a philosophical one and less of a pragmatic management technique. The term can also been seen as deriving from more religious conceptions of serving, as seen, for example in Christian teaching about the leadership of Jesus Christ as well as having associations with monarchs and the public service function of politicians (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002, p. 58). In terms of the business world, Collins (2001, pp. 21) defines the highest level of leader as someone '…who blends extreme personal humility with intense professional will' and in this sense are aligned with Servant Leadership (Gandolfi & Stone, 2018, p. 266).

Spears (1998, pp.5-8) identifies ten characteristics of Greenleaf's concept of servant-leadership:

- Listening: to 'identify the will of a group' and to reflect and listen to 'one's own inner voice'.
- Empathy: recognising for their 'special and unique spirits' supports improves confidence, assuming 'the good intentions' of workers even when their performance may not be as expected.
- Healing: seen as 'a powerful force for transformation and integration' and opportunity to 'help make whole' those who have 'broken spirits'.
- Awareness: of both one's self and others.
- Persuasion: by building consensus rather than from compliance with authority.

- Conceptualization: in terms of vision.
- Foresight: as a product of intuition using learning to support decision-making
- Stewardship: serving the needs of others, using openness and persuasion and holding the institution 'in trust for the greater good of society'
- Commitment to the growth of people: Recognising that 'people have intrinsic value beyond their tangible contributions as workers'. Nurturing the 'personal, professional and spiritual growth' of staff by, for example funding CPD, involving staff in decision making and incorporating their suggestions.
- Building community: in the institution.

The work of Russell & Stone (2002, pp.146-152) brings together a set of attributes, acknowledging the work of many other writers, that could be used as a way of defining Servant Leadership. In acknowledging the work of Spears (1998), above, they suggests twenty attributes with nine deemed as 'functional' due to the degree of repitition noted in the literature they reviewed. These are interdependent and supported by complementary 'accompanying' attributes:

Servant Leadership Attributes	
Functional	**Accompanying**
Vision	*Communication*
Honesty	*Credibility*
Integrity	*Competence*
Trust	*Stewardship*
Service	*Visibility*
Modelling	*Influence*
Pioneering	*Persuasion*
Appreciation of others	*Listening*
Empowerment	*Encouragement*
	Teaching
	Delegation

Table 1: Servant Leadership attributes (after Russell & Stone, 2002, p.147)

Russell & Stone (2002) link 'vision' to 'conceptualisation' used by Greenleaf (Spears, 1998). In addition, leaders communicate and model the shared vision and values by being visible. They are influenced using persuasion; they consult and inspire (noting Yukl, 1998). They empower others and delegate responsibility. Their honesty is closely related to truthfulness and integrity and complemented by moral purpose. Together, these attributes support the leaders credibility, in turn engendering trust, which in itself is a key attribute (noting Kouzes and Posner, 1993; Ulrich, 1996). Credibility can also be enhanced by dynamism (noting

Hackman and Johnson, 1996) and by leaders demonstrating competence resulting from expertise in their fields and by being well-informed about substantive issues related to the organisation (noting Yukl, 1998). There are links to the 'Teaching' attribute as leaders support the professional growth of staff as well as to 'stewardship' noted also by Sergiovanni (2013). The 'pioneering' attribute involves leaders meeting challenges, taking calculated risks and showing courage, identified by van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011 in Greenleaf's (1991) work, below. 'Appreciation of others' by listening, nurturing their growth focusing on their needs, helps in the development of empathy and ultimately builds trust.

Using the Servant Leadership Attributes (Russell & Stone, 2002), above, Stone et al. (2004, pp.350-354; note also Smith, et al., 2004, pp. 82-87) suggest, using Bass & Avolio's (1994) conception of Transformational Leadership (the 4 *I*'s) many areas that the two theories have in common. They defined attributes, derived from the literature, which they assigned to the 4 *I*s. They then considered what Servant leadership attributes would match these. Their conclusion was that both models have much in common: 'influence, vision, trust, respect or credibility, risk-sharing or delegation, integrity and modelling'. They both 'emphasize the importance of appreciating and valuing people, listening, mentoring or teaching, and empowering followers'. Furthermore, the high ethical and moral standards noted in Transformational Leadership compare strongly with features in this summary in terms of integrity, credibility, trust and respect and also in terms of stewardship and hence moral purpose, noted by Sergiovanni (2013) in the school context .

In terms of Leithwood (1994) and Leithwood & Jantzi's (2005) conception of Transformational Leadership and shared areas with Instructional Leadership, discussed in section 2.4, there are similarities with Servant Leadership in terms of creating a shared vision, modelling values, and being highly visible. 'Helping people', seen in the Transformational Model in schools, has links with the appreciation of others and delegation in terms of distributed forms of leadership within the school. 'Intellectual stimulation', within the Transformational model and with links to the Instructional model, has roots in CPD and hence are both congruent with the Servant Leader as servant and teacher. These concepts also carry forward into the Leadership for Learning model suggested by Murphy, et al. (2007) (section 2.5) where we are reminded of the 'social advocacy' dimension and the ethic of dignity, respect and trust and the concepts of moral agency driven by high moral values seen across all of these models.

Servant Leadership arguably differs from Transformational Leadership regarding the level of mutual trust between leader and followers (Stone, et al., 2004, pp. 354-355) in giving 'great freedom for followers to exercise their own abilities' hence leading to the potential for a higher level of trust. We can also use the concept of Servant Leadership as an explicit way of guarding against and reducing the effect of more negative aspects of Transformational Leadership seen

in terms of charismatic attributes (Stone, et al., 2004, pp. 356-358) of the 'heroic' or 'despotic' leader, which I discussed in section 2.4.

However, Servant Leadership could be viewed as producing a 'spiritual generative culture' focusing on personal growth of staff within the organisation, compared with an 'empowered dynamic culture' with a focus on high skills, expectations and performance where risk taking and innovation do not feature strongly (Smith, et al., 2004, pp. 82-87). If we also consider the balance between the leaders' organisational objectives and the 'service to their followers', there is stronger emphasis placed by Transformational leaders on the former and more emphasis on the latter in Servant Leadership. Whilst this is a way of differentiating these theories, there is greater benefit in considering this as providing a further leadership iteration in terms of 'dynamic leadership' as a conceptual framework which includes both theories (albeit, lacking further conceptual definition by the authors) (Stone, et al., 2004, p.359) since both provide useful frameworks to support the leadership required for school improvement.

To contextualise this way of viewing Servant Leadership, I offer a different model based on 'eight dimensions' (1-8 below). This 'Servant Leadership Survey' followed a literature review and, unlike other attempts the authors acknowledge have been made, their version focuses on both the human aspects of the servant leader, as others had done but, in addition, considers the leadership aspects in terms of direction, accountability and being a 'courageous steward' (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011, pp. 251-252). The concept of stewardship (1) discussed above is now met with organisational objectives that I had linked with more of a Transformational conception of Servant Leadership, above. Accountability (2) is seen in terms having confidence in colleagues as well as making expectations clear. Courage (3) is needed to take calculated risks and try new ways of approaching problems and is 'essential for innovation and creatvity' and resonates with the 'pioneering' attribute in Russell & Stone's (2002) model.

Authenticity (4) arguably has elements of the Russell & Stone (2002) model in terms of credibility, integrity, honest and trust. Both models have 'empowerment'(5) in common. 'Interpersonal Acceptance' (6) does include 'empathy', seen in both models and develops this concept further, in terms of compassion and forgiveness as attributes of development of a culture of trust, seen in both models and especially in the manner that is more explicity in Spears (1998) description of Greenleaf's conception of Servant Leadership. Colleagues feel free to make a mistake in this culture of trust and it supports the opportunity to take risks in order to be innovative, discussed above.

A further attribute, made explicit in this model, is that of humility (7), associated with a deep understanding of self, including one's own limitations, and being able to put accomplishments

and talents in perspective (noting Patterson, 2003) and admitting to mistakes and fallability (noting Morris et al., 2005). A final attribute, 'Standing back' (8), returns us to 'serving the needs of others' (Spears, 1998) and, the 'appreciation of others' and 'encouragement' (Russell & Stone, 2002) by giving them support and then 'standing back' to allow others to enjoy the credit for a job well done.

These models offer some different perspectives on Servant Leadership, for use in the analysis. Furthermore, a framework for Ethical Leadership (ASCL, 2019, p. 7), aligns well with models of Servant Leadership. The work is based on 'The 7 Principles of Public Life': selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership (Committee on Standards in Public Life, 1995) and defines seven 'characteristics and virtues' (ASCL, 2019, p. 11). These include:

- trust, associated with honesty and reliability
- wisdom, defined by 'experience, knowledge and insight' in addition to 'moderation', 'self-awareness' and 'propriety'
- kindness, shown in 'respect', 'generosity of spirit', 'understanding' and 'good temper'
- justice, marked by fairness and 'working for the good of all children'
- service, defined as conscientiousness and a sense of duty. This is also associated with 'humility', 'self-control' and a focus on 'high quality education'
- courage, which underpins safeguarding pupils, providing a 'broad, effective, and creative education' and holding 'one another other to account'.
- optimism defined in terms of positivity and offering encouragement

In considering this framework in the light of models of Servant Leadership, I note that 'trust' and 'honesty' also feature in the model by Russell & Stone (2002). 'Optimism', whilst not explicit in the other models, other than in the inclusion of 'encouragement' as part of this definition, could be implied as a necessary aspect of successful servant leadership or all leadership styles. The term 'reliability', used here, has connections with the concepts of 'credibility' and 'authenticity' (Russell & Stone, 2002; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Whilst 'wisdom' is less explicitly defined in the other models, it could be linked to 'credibility' in terms of its definition, including 'knowledge and insight'. 'Kindness and understanding' could be interpreted as part of the 'appreciation of others' and the concept of 'empathy' in models of Servant Leadership. 'Courage' is seen both in this framework and, in particular, the Servant leadership model suggested by van Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011). The definition of 'service' in terms of 'sense of duty' and 'high quality education', could be allied to 'stewardship' and 'moral purpose', both seen in Sergiovanni's (2013) conceptualisation. Finally, we could view 'justice' in this model's conception, as aligned to 'social justice' and therefore also with 'moral purpose'.

2.9 Distributed leadership

Distributed Leadership, used to some degree in organisational theory in the 1960s (Harris, et al., 2007, p. 338 noting Barnard 1964), is a *shared* leadership concept (Timperley & Robertson, 2011, p. 5 citing Etzioni, 1965), pertinent in terms of organisational learning and the notion of the 'learning organisation', as well as in a more mundane sense of a 'division of labour' needed to complete the actions required for an organisation to progress. The development of Distributed Leadership also marked a move away from the dualism of leader and follower(s) and the perception of leadership in terms of 'visionary champions' (Gronn 2000, pp. 333-335). The 'dispersal of responsibility' (Gold, et al., 2003, p. 129) when formalised and expanded into the concept of Distributed leadership which can be defined as '…engaging expertise wherever it exists within the organisation rather than seeking this only through formal position or role' (Harris, 2004, p. 13). Both the concept of *teacher leadership* and *collegiality can be* seen as key factors in school improvement and are congruent with Distributed Leadership (Harris, et al., 2007, p. 340). Indeed, collective and shared leadership has a stronger influence on student achievement than individual leadership. In terms of activities used to improve student outcomes, creating structures and opportunities for teacher-collaboration was seen as one of the more useful together with maintaining a focus on goals and expectations for student achievement and monitoring staff CPD needs (Seashore, et al., 2010, pp. 19, 37, 66-69).

By *teacher leadership* we mean when expert teachers, who spend the majority of their time teaching, take on different leadership roles at different times to empower and give agency to other colleagues, with no perceived division between leader and follower. This is very much within a cultural or symbolic perspective of leadership whereby there is an interactive process of team-learning where meaning and knowledge are co-constructed (Harris, 2003, pp. 314-316) to enhance the success of school improvement activities (Chrispeels & Harris, 2006, p. 299). This then connects Distributed Leadership with the notion of Professional Learning Communities (Harris, et al., 2007, p. 341) (PLCs).

The collegiality being described is that of a 'collaborative culture', based on openness, trust and support. This compares with what has been called 'contrived collegiality', which is rooted in administrative control where interactions are reduced to implementing strategies developed by others (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990). There is a kind of professional comfort which aids the learning process and motivates participants to learn further (Wood, 2010, pp. 119, 133, 139) but this does need balancing with the risk of 'comfortable collegiality' (Timperley & Robinson, 2007, p. 253) where the focus is not sufficiently on analysis and a shared accountablity for pupil outcomes.

Hence, whilst Distributed Leadership can, at a deeper level empower people, blurring the lines between formal and informal leadership (Bennett, et al., 2003, pp. 4-5), it is also seen as core to building leadership capacity and therefore supports sustainability over time (Harris, et al., 2007, p. 340 noting Mitchell & Sackney 2000). Key to the success of Distributed Leadership, seen in high-performing organisations in different sectors, is that it is used in a 'carefully managed and strategic way'. With the greater responsibility given to teams in a flatter organisational structures comes the need for mutual trust, if it is to succeed (Harris, 2013, pp. 550-552).

The extent of Distributed Leadership impacts on the quality of school improvement (Harris, et al., 2007, p. 345 noting Leithwood et al. 2007) which could be reduced if a leader was resistant to a more democratic school culture, perhaps because of 'reasoned scepticism' or 'self-interest'. This could also result from a school culture which proliferates 'habits of deference' or where staff feel a sense of 'apathy' (Woods, 2005, p. 107). Hence school leaders need to consider and allow the concept of 'constructive dissent' (Woods, 2005, p.111 noting Grint, 2005) which does then require them to exercise a degree of humility and have confidence in their own expertise as headteachers when fully embracing Distributed Leadership. The nature of PLCs, as part of this culture, is as a disrupting influence in the management of change and may be seen as running counter to a hierarchical school culture where more passive staff behaviour may exist:

> '…practitioners cannot be both malleable and acquiescent and yet also assertive and innovative in taking responsibility for student learning'. (Wood, 2010, pp. 64-65)

In terms of critique of Distributed Leadership, it could be claimed that the concept amounts to no more than the normal sharing of responsibilities and that it doesn't really need to be conceptualised as a specific theoretical framework (Leithwood, 2007, pp. 42-43). In this sense it could be viewed as being a simplified concept centred on organisational need rather than a 'richer conceptual and philosophical context' of *democratic* leadership (Woods, 2005, p. 33). Taken to its extreme, one could also suggest that it can lead to incoherence in reaching school aims due to the differing agendas of colleagues created during the act of distribution (Bryk, 1999 in Harris, 2008, p. 178). We could also see the distribution of leadership to enforce a form of power on staff 'to work harder and be more innovative' whilst complying 'uncritically' with the school's organisational purposes and the values of those in authority. If the educational goals are within a school culture characterised by performativity where it is 'dominated by an instrumental rationality' and meeting performance targets, then this risks there being a narrower and more limited conception of 'self' (Woods & Woods, 2013, pp. 5-6) than the sense of the holistic view of individual staff seen in the other conceptions of leadership discussed. Lumby (2013, p.581, 586) would go as far as saying that distributed leadership is 'a kind of

inclusivity lite' in terms of addressing issues of power and that the current power dynamics are maintained because school leaders 'allow' the sharing of leadership. In this context, Lumby (2016) suggests that staff are attracted by 'the illusion of greater empowerment', which is a term providing them with an emotional rationale for its adoption because it links empowerment to the concept of 'moral purpose' (acknowledging Harris, 2013 in terms of this linkage). Going further, and I would suggest colourfully, she also claims that not only is there no adequate definition of Distributed Leadership, but that when challenged, proponents make changes to the conceptualisation by engaging in 'ongoing hybridization of distributed leadership theory … rather as a virus continues to evade attack by changing its form' (Lumby, 2016, pp. 161, 164).

2.10 Continuing Professional Development (CPD)

The term 'Professional Development' is one of many terms used in the context of teacher professional learning and their meaning is not always clear. In this work, I have used the term Continuing Professional development or CPD as meaning professional development which directly aims to improve specific pupil outcomes. This contrasts with indirect CPD where links to pupil outcomes are less clearly defined such as leadership development, training in operational matters or attending conferences to increase awareness of the latest ideas. (Department for Education, 2016a, p. 5).

In their report into the world's best performing school systems, Barber & Mourshed (2007, p.15, see also p.26) make explicit that 'the quality of an education system cannot exceed the quality of its teachers', and requires school systems to have effective teacher selection processes supported by a package of CPD which focuses on improved classroom instruction. There is increasing and strong evidence for the impact of CPD on professional learning and the link to improved outcomes for pupils. This typically involves a careful focus on classroom practice though professional dialogue and collaboration, and the use of research evidence to inform practice. Professional learning is further enhanced by using external networks which offer broader support and further practical suggestions. to practitioners, thus giving greater opportunities for professional learning (Pedder & Opfer, 2011, pp. 741-758). External providers can also provide 'multiple and diverse perspectives, and challenge orthodoxies within the school' and when used most successfully, they engage in coaching and mentoring relationships, which then enable teacher leadership (Cordingley, et al., 2015, p. 24). Effective CPD should also incorporate pupil-voice in evaluating the impact of a chosen classroom practice. Not only does this keep the focus on the impact on pupil learning but the process itself can be highly motivating. We return to the importance of a climate of trust. In this specific context teachers can challenge their own pre-conceptions about pupil learning and compare this with pupils to show they have actually understood. This, in turn, enables deeper professional learning to take place (Nelson, et al., 2015, pp. 30-55).

Best-practice in school leadership of CPD is shown in helping colleagues to understand the place of the CPD activities in the wider school priorities. These leaders also set high expectations to enable a 'challenging learning culture and promote 'evidence-informed, self-regulated learning' whilst distributing leadership so that different teachers can lead on particular aspects of CPD (Cordingley, et al., 2015, p. 29).

CPD has the most positive impact on pupil outcomes when it happens over a more extended period (Cordingley & Bell, 2012, p. 4). The meta-research by Cordingley, et al. (2015, pp.12,13,15), of nearly one thousand international reviews since 2000, made a significant contribution to shaping the *Standards for teachers' professional development* (Department for Education, 2016a) and defined the duration of this extended period pragmatically as being at least two school terms and more often a year or more, rather than shorter, one session activities. They also suggested 'rhythm' to the structure of CPD activities. After the initial input, there should be experimentation accompanied by peer collaboration before follow-up, consolidation and support activities. This enables teachers' understanding to be considered in the light of research knowledge whilst also giving the opportunity to implement the suggested practice in the classroom.

CPD which focuses on subject-specific CPD provision is also seen to deliver most benefit in achieving high pupil outcomes (Whitehouse, 2011, p. 1), by focusing on developing expertise in subject knowledge, subject-specific pedagogy and by encouraging an understanding of how pupils make progress. This, in turn, should be complemented by CPD which focuses on formative assessment so that teachers can understand the impact of their work on pupils progress (Cordingley, et al., 2015, p. 20).

Peer-based approaches such as collaborative enquiry, coaching and mentoring are powerful ways of providing CPD because they help to instil confidence in participants in order to take the calculated risks required when engaging in this form of professional learning (Cordingley & Bell, 2012, p. 4). Peer- coaching, as an example, enables reciprocal, mutual support as colleagues model practice, observe each other and engage in reflective pedagogical dialogue. Its success is based on a feeling of mutuality. To be most impactful it has to be supported by school leaders recognising its importance and providing sufficient time for engagement. (Devine, et al., 2013, p. 1384, noting also the work of Cornett and Knight, 2009 and others and Fullan and Knight, 2011). Taking this point further, if schools are to provide meaningful and powerful CPD of the level and complexity being suggested, they must have effective planning and support systems in place (Whitehouse, 2011, p. 11).

This way of developing shared, pedagogical learning can be formalised by using the term *Professional Learning Community* (PLC), introduced in the discussion of Distributed

Leadership. Whilst there is no one definition, the suggested characteristics, as described above, include teachers working together in collaborative groups, reflecting and interrogating practice with the focus on group learning (Stoll, et al., 2006b, pp. 222-227). In enabling teachers to share expertise, build knowledge, problem- solve and innovate together, the PLC provides a 'critical leverage points for profound change in school cultures…' (Whitford & Wood, 2010, p. 1). PLCs can support a research-engaged approach (Dimmock, 2012, p. 115) and can be used to describe the peer-coaching activities, outlined above, as reflective professional enquiry in the form of dialogue, joint planning and peer observations. The collaboration in PLCs aims to develop both a deeper perspective and trust between colleagues as part of the school's professional culture and should be seen as the 'way we do things here' rather than being an adjunct to teachers' core work (Stoll, 2011, pp. 105-106). This is further enhanced by a sense of mutual accountability for classroom practice (Whitford & Wood, 2010, pp. 17-18). However, an overly narrow focus on pupil outcomes, as part of a high accountability education system, can impact detrimentally on the 'diversity, creativity and adaptability' which are important to the success of PLCs (Watson, 2014, p. 27).

The success of the PLC also depends on the use of skilled coaches, who understand the process of inquiry, enable members to take fuller responsibility for their own learning, and have the knowledge of the range of activities that would lead to changes in classroom practice. Best-practice is also supported by having protocols to guide professional discourse in the direction of professional learning by enabling insights to be connected to a broader line of enquiry (Yendol- Hoppey, 2010, pp. 78-80, 83-84).

2.11 Conclusion: towards a conceptual framework to put excellence into context

The two research questions consider school leaders' understanding of excellence (1) and their role in achieving and sustaining it (2). I have drawn together the themes emerging from the Literature Review and summarised them in figure 1, a conceptual framework to support field work planning, analysis and discussion. The emerging school and leadership characteristics shown (top-right) have been established from the theories and models of leadership (left) reviewed, together with the findings from the literature on successful and high-performing schools and CPD (top-left).

I reported earlier (section 2.4) the suggestion (Kwan, 2019) that there should no longer be a separation between these models and that instructional leadership and transformational leadership together could be viewed as a conception of 'Integrated Leadership' (Marks & Printy, 2003), to support high-performing outcomes.

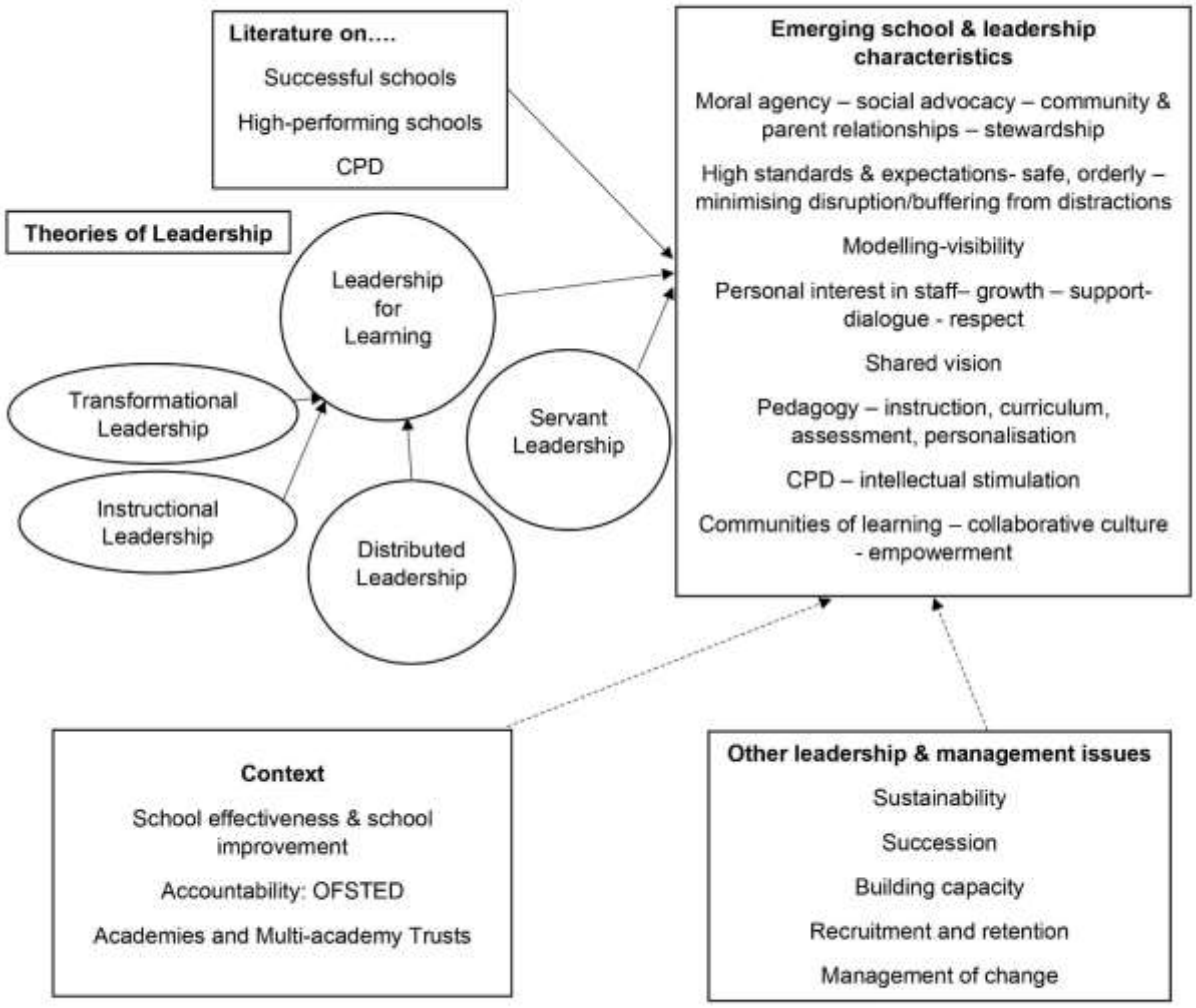


Figure 1: Conceptual framework for achieving and sustaining excellence

If we accept this increasing convergence over time and the suggestion by Robinson, et al. (2008) that the focus of research should be on the leadership activities that maximise pupil outcomes, this leads to consideration of models of Leadership for Learning as a way to define the characteristics of school leaders in these schools.

I have focused mainly on the work of Murphy, et al. (2007) whilst also considered the model offered by Kelley & Halverson (2012). In common with Instructional and Transformational Leadership models, as I discussed in section 2.5, there is a focus on vision, high expectations, management and visibility, modelling and the articulation of best-practice. CPD continues to be a key aspect of the school culture which is now supported by a formalised acknowledgement of Distributed leadership practices and 'communities of learning'. A focus on pedagogy and particularly learning, is seen in a student-centred approach to leadership. These characteristics are summarised in figure 1 (top right).

Hence, figure 1 shows both Transformational and Instructional leadership models connected to the Learning for Leadership framework. Distributed Leadership is also included with sufficient separation for consideration as a separate entity.

In terms of successful school leadership (section 2.6) and high-performing schools (section 2.7), I confirmed the presence of characteristics in the Learning for Leadership models, including the importance of CPD and Distributed leadership. The literature on CPD (section 2.10) reinforces its importance in school improvement (Barber & Mourshed, 2007) and underscores collaboration (Cordingley & Bell, 2012), which aligns with distributed leadership practices. These contributions to the model are shown to the top-left of figure 1.

Leadership for Learning, as envisaged by Murphy, et al. (2007), has a connection to the moral purpose and stewardship in the conception of Servant Leadership suggested by Sergiovanni (1992, 2013). However, there are also sufficient differences, particularly in the focus on colleagues in terms of their support and care in the Servant Leadership model to include this as a separate strand in figure 1, providing contrast with the emphasis on pupils and learning seen in the Leadership of Learning model.

There are two remaining aspects of figure 1. The first (bottom-left) shows the contextual themes introduced in chapter 1. School improvement and effectiveness (section 1.3) research traditions are congruent with issues discussed in the literature review. For example, the focus of school improvement research on the quality of teaching (Stoll et al., 2006a) and the focus in phase 4 of school effectiveness strategies on building capacity by, for example, the emergence of professional learning communities (Department for Education & Skills, 2005).

Accountability measures and specifically the impact of OFSTED (section 1.4), create a powerful context in which school leaders work and schools are judged. Hence, characteristics should be considered in this light. The academies and MATs policy issue (section 1.5), whilst not the main focus of this study, provides a context where an institutions' status, whether maintained school or academy, may contribute to the school improvements activities. Hence, an institution's status has been included during analysis and discussion, to provide transparency.

The remaining leadership and management concepts in figure 1 (bottom-right) arise from both initial literature searches and professional knowledge and experience. They are also related to the other elements of figure 1, providing a more complete framework in which to consider leaders and their schools.

I now turn to how the research was conducted and the methodological considerations pertinent to my position as a headteacher-researcher undertaking a qualitative study with other school leaders. Importantly, the conceptual framework will be used to guide the construction of interview questions. The analysis of interview transcripts will then lead to a review of this conceptualisation and its further development.

3 Methodology

3.1 Introduction

In this chapter I start by discussing the philosophical position of the study as a piece of qualitative research. I then consider the issue of reflexivity which attempts to make transparent my 'situatedness' and 'personal investments' in the study as well as any 'biases' and, as they arise, any 'surprises and 'undoings' during the research (Gergen & Gergen, 2000, p.1027 referring to Behar, 1996 and Kiesinger, 1998). As a headteacher-researcher, interviewing other school leaders who are my peers, I also acknowledge issues related to any claims to knowledge that can be made even tentatively in research which is in the field of social interaction. The notion of power relations in the context of the interview process is also discussed as part of this reflexive reflection.

The practicalities of the study are then presented in terms of how schools were selected to be part of the study, the way questions were created and the semi-structured interview conducted. I will outline the refinements and changes made after the first tranche of interviews were completed and how the study changed in terms of its scope and methods.

Ethical issues are considered and methods for supporting the reliability and validity of the data are discussed, in the light of this qualitative study. In the final section I present how the post-interview analysis was conducted; from transcription to coding and theme development, to the final stage of the thematic analysis, involving the 'narrative rendition' or creation of the *meta*story (Riessman, 1993, pp. 8-15).

3.2 Epistemological and ontological position

My philosophical position in conducting this research can be considered in terms of both epistemological and ontological assumptions (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, pp. 19-22). From an epistemological perspective I am concerned what constitutes truth and how it is constructed and hence, what claims to truth or knowledge can be made? This position is based on my ontological assumptions about the nature of existence, of being, of reality (Grbich, 2007, pp. 4-5).

The study uses a thematic analysis of the transcripts from semi-structured interviews with school leaders and falls within a generic qualitative research paradigm rather than a particular qualitative research tradition such as Ethnography or Case Study. However, from a methodological viewpoint, we could argue that the semi-structured interview, between

professional peers, is more akin to participant observation seen in ethnographic studies, than the interviews (Platt, 1981, p. 75) used in other qualitative studies.

Qualitative research methodologies can be considered within the constructivist and interpretivist paradigms, which have very much informed the way the research has been conducted. This means that there is 'an interpretative, naturalistic approach to the world' (Denzin & Lincoln, 2000, p. 3). The research has a focus on '…what individual actors say and do' (Hitchcock and Hughes 1995:12) where 'social reality is constructed out of a plurality of subjective meanings.' (Carr and Kemmis, 1986, p.95; see also Schwandt, 2000, p.193 and Lincoln and Guba, 2000, p.165). Qualitative research is therefore 'constructivist' in that reality is constructed rather than discovered. It is also 'relativistic', in that knowledge is both experiential and personal (Stake 1995, see also Lincoln & Guba, 2000, p.165). There is a 'transactional' and 'subjectivist' epistemology in this paradigm which implies that the researcher and the object of the research are 'interactively linked' so that findings are 'literally created' (Guba and Lincoln, 1994, p.111; see also Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, p.5; Cohen & Manion, 1989, pp.32-38) or co-constructed (Simons, 2009, p. 23). There is also an acknowledgement of the researcher's subjectivity and the fact that life experience frames the interpretation of events by the researcher (Grbich, 2007, p. 8). This then leads to a need for a reflexive position, as discussed, where I, as researcher, must be both reflective and self-critical (Grbich, 2007, p. 10).

The interview is the main research method in this study which is interpretivist and constructivist in both the interview event and in terms of data analysis. During the interview, participants are telling their story of their experience. This 'story' metaphor reminds us that participants create order from experience in the form of the story to make sense of their lived experience, and that they make decisions about what is included or excluded and hence this is both a creative and interpretive (Riessman, 1993, pp. 1-3). In analysing the data, any abstractions from the study are essentially inductive, in that they 'come up' from the data, attempting to capture the meanings given by participants in trying to make sense of the world (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, pp. 4-8).

3.2.1 A critique of a qualitative stance

Having established that this is a qualitative study and acknowledged my position, in terms of the nature of truth and knowledge as constructivist, subjectivist, interpretivist and naturalistic, some critiques of this position should be noted. In terms of a post-modernist critique, we would consider the author's authority and linguistic writing style portraying 'reality' in a specific way. It is both contextual and rhetorical in that the writing is situated in a view of society and its norms and that the writing has certain expressive conventions which guide it (Alvesson &

Sköldberg, 2009, p. 219). A further criticism would be that if we only focus on a few participants in research rather than multiple voices, it is then hard to represent the multiple realities and ambiguities of all individuals. However, although accounting for many different views can provide a 'common immunity' against criticism, this additional focus on social construction can have an anti-theory tendency (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, pp. 36-39) and hence the work is in danger of losing its research purpose.

A further criticism concerns the issue of *intersubjectivity*. Here, the researcher attempts to reconstruct the views of participants from research data. This becomes problematic because we must ask if I have truly accessed the understanding of participants. Are we also in danger of concentrating too heavily on the smaller details in the data as opposed to the 'bigger picture'? This could then result in the research giving a superficial account of participants actions(Grbich, 2007, p. 9). Conversely, to not attempt this reconstruction will lead to a methodological approach which is less true to its core epistemological and ontological assumptions. Hence, we return to the need for transparency and reflexivity.

One last consideration in this study is the notion of generalisability and how this applies to qualitative research. Generalisations can be described as 'assertions of *enduring* value that are *context-free*' (Lincoln & Guba, 2000b, p.27). These general conclusions can give a sense of external validity if generalizations are possible when applying the findings of one study to others (Merriam, 1998, p. 207). This is very much a way of viewing the conclusions from a study used in quantitative research paradigms. However, this is not possible in a smaller scale qualitative study, given that the interviews with headteachers create 'unique, particularized knowledge' (Lincoln & Guba, 2000b, p.27 see also Merriam, 1998, pp.207-12).

3.3 Reflexivity

Throughout the study, I have tried to adopt a reflexive stance. Gibbs (2007, pp.92-93 adapted from Brewer, 2000) makes a useful list of reflexive issues to be considered. Firstly, reflexivity is shown when there is discussion of aspects of the study which remain unresearched, why the choices were made not to pursue certain areas and what this then means for the findings. I have attempted to do this in refining the research questions and narrowing the frame of the literature review around the area of study. It is also shown in being explicit about the theoretical framework of the research and my values. This is seen in the philosophical section of this chapter as well as in the way I write during the study. This is also seen in the extent to which I critically assess my integrity in justifying claims to knowledge. Being transparent is an important aspect of a reflexive stance, demonstrated in being explicit about the way I have developed the themes from the analysis of the data and giving sufficient data to enable readers to make

their own judgements and to support my claims. Being transparent about the issues of power in the study, is also critical to reflexive practice as a researcher (see section 3.4). I should also consider alternative explanations of the data if I am to take a reflexive stance as well as accounting for limitations and weaknesses of the study (Bridges, 2003, p. 128) .

I acknowledge that the selection of findings is based on my values and those aspects I consider contribute important knowledge. This also extends to our tendency to look for evidence of success in findings based on a research methods which we value (Stake, 2006, pp.84-86). Hence, in this study of human organisations and its 'actors' interactions and actions, with its nuance and complexity, I am pre-disposed to use semi-structured interview as a method because it generates rich and plentiful qualitative data and consider it best suited to answering the research questions. This also reveals my bias towards school leaders who more fully understand and put in place inclusive practices both for pupils and colleagues, with a focus on service, the development and care of others and the strengthening of school culture.

Given this stance, I need to continue to be reflexive, mindful and check for bias. I should remain aware of the complexities of the interview transcript data and consider what I *don't* report by, for example, underplaying negative aspects of the findings. As I review the quality of the interview during the interview itself and during transcription, I will also consider the extent to which answers were 'spontaneous, rich, specific and relevant'. The participant's voice should far outweigh mine, with the interview forming a 'self-reliant' piece, needing little additional contextual explanation (Kvale 2007, p.80).

This reflexivity also continues into the written account. The way I construct the narrative; my representational, rhetorical or authorial style (see also Merriam, 1998, pp.203-05; Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, pp.304-05) needs to be considered. To what extent do my 'literary tropes lend rhetorical force' (Gergen & Gergen, 2000, p.1027 referring to Behar, 1996 and Kiesinger, 1998) to the narrative to be engaging whilst conveying a sense of transparency (Yin, 2009, p. 190) to illuminate the case. Therefore a balance is needed to downplay my authority as author when writing by using, for example, more open styles and considering different theoretical frames of reference (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, pp. 219-222). I also acknowledge that even when my narrative account is complete, there is an inherent ambiguity in language (Alvesson & Sköldberg, 2009, pp. 304-305) which means that the reader will further reconstruct the knowledge '…in ways that leave it differently connected and more likely to be personally useful' (Stake, 2005, p. 455).

3.4 Issues of power in the interview

The relationship between the researcher, those interviewed and the setting needs consideration (Altheide and Johnson, 1998 cited by Flick, 2007, p.17). There is a power asymmetry in the interview (Cohen, et al., 2000, pp. 122-123) to be explored, made transparent and, in so far as is possible, mitigated. Considering the researcher as interviewer we can see ways of exerting power in the way the interview is conducted in terms of deciding the questions and the topics to follow up. The interviewer also has a 'monopoly of interpretation' in the way the transcript is analysed and resulting themes constructed. Furthermore, there is authorial power in the way the participant's voice is interpreted and constructed in the narrative. Thus, a way of mitigating this power imbalance is by showing the voice of the participant in longer extracts of the interview (Herzog & Ali, 2015, p. 46 and noting Ali, 2013 after Dornfeld, 1998).

Power is also exercised by the participants. This could manifest itself in effecting various types of 'counter-control' such as withholding information, talking off-subject and counter-questioning (Kvale, 2007, pp. 14-15). Headteachers are powerful people leading large institutions. They may be anxious to maintain their reputations and hence be more guarded in response (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 352).

The literature on interviewing 'elites' has some useful insights into the conduct of the interview with high school leaders as elites in their institutions. Whilst considering a definition of an elite in terms of position within the hierarchy of an institution, it can also be useful to consider the extent to which an elite exerts influence (Mason-Bish, 2019, p. 265, also acknowledging Harvey, 2011). Both definitons would seem to fit school leaders.

When interviewing elites, it has been recommended that open-ended questions are used in a semi-structured interview (Aberbach & Rockman, 2002, p. 674). This gives participants greater latitude to expand on and deepen responses, explaining their reasoning. This leads to a semi-structured style of interview tending towards one which is more open; hence the title of the study begins, 'Head-to-head'. Participants also had a greater opportunity to organise answers according to their own frameworks, which in turn contributes to response validity (see section 3.9.2). However, as the interviewer, I had to pay a great deal of attention and follow the question framework in a sometimes erratic way. Furthermore, this style led to a more challenging process of coding and further analysis as themes were not necessarily following in a clear sequence or train of thought.

A successful interview is supported by establishing trust. This in turn is helped by being thoroughly prepared and researching into the interviewee's background and demonstrating an in-depth knowledge of the research topic. In this sense and taking the school leader to be an

elite, tips the balance of power in her or his favour, thus decreasing the status imbalance and hence supporting a more meaningful and informed interview (Mikecz, 2012, pp. 483, 487, also noting Laurila, 1997, 491). Challenges made during the interview may then lead to new insights because the researcher is able to contribute emerging conceptions of the themes being revealed (Kvale, 2007, p. 70).

Having discussed ways of mitigating power imbalances by considering the exertion of power by both the interviewer and participant, it is worth also noting that elites don't always exert the power associated with their position in the interview (Smith, 2006, p.650). It is also a consideration that, during the interview, we can think of power as being fluid and 'porous and dynamic in the co-construction of a narrative during the interview' (Mason-Bish, 2019, p. 275).

This could be seen as leading to periods within the interview or even considering the entire interview as having a very open structure and dialogue between peers. In this case, it is difficult to exert power over my equal because as a headteacher-researcher and the school leader, as participant, we belong to the same professional community. Hence there will be shared norms of how interactions will take place during the interview. Furthermore, the open structure could lead to 'confession' being more freely made because I am an 'insider' and am more likely to share similar experiences with the school leader-participant. This then leads to greater insight into the voice of the participant and much richer data (Platt, 1981, pp. 81-82, 86). Confession does come as a result of the greater trust created by our shared experience.

Of course, with access to more researchers and resources, power issues inherent in, and amplified by, relying solely on the interview as the main source of data could be reduced. This could be achieved by allowing greater time in the field and enabling, for example, more autobiographical accounts in reporting (Cohen, et al., 2000, pp. 156-157). Nevertheless, as I am reliant solely on the interview in this study, given the issues of power discussed and maintaining my reflexive stance, I offer the conclusion, in chapter 6, in this context and hence with tentativeness.

3.5 Methods

3.5.1 Selecting school leaders for Phase 1 of the study

Six school leaders were initially part of the study (Phase 1) with a further five in the second phase of the research. Schools were selected, from the OFSTED Outstanding Providers database (OFSTED, 2011), using the following criteria:

- Geographical - schools in the East of England and North-eastern quadrant of London, enabling a variety of rural and urban locations over a wide area. The area defined is shown in Appendix 8.
- Sustainable Success - schools with two or more consecutive outstanding overall judgements from OFSTED inspections since 2002/3.
- Comparable type of institution to my school: comprehensive; mixed gender; non-religious character. I did not include pre-2010 academies as I felt that they were sufficiently different in terms of funding, support and statutory framework.

In an attempt to reduce the impact of a school that may have gained this grade for one inspection or a short period of time, I refined the initial OFSTED database search to those that had sustained this rating for at least ten years in the expectation that this would mitigate against schools that were not able to sustain this practice. The selection was based on the school and not a particular characteristic of the school leader, such as whether they were a National Leader of Education (NLE). This supported a focus on the whole-school culture without having additional caveats included about how selection criteria based on a school leader may have influenced the study's findings.

Given the issues raised in the introduction regarding the reliability and validity of OFSTED ratings, we can say that OFSTED has judged the schools in this study as 'outstanding' and separately, that the headteachers of these 'outstanding' schools have then discussed their *perceptions* of high quality or excellent provision in their schools. What is not possible is to link these features in a meaningful way. It is problematic because there are school leaders in other contexts, for example whose schools have gained 'good' inspection grades, who could make a valuable contribution to this study but whose voice, I acknowledge, has been excluded.

This was a 'criterion-based selection' because I defined the characteristics for the potential participants and matched those available to the criteria to create a shortlist (Le Compte and Preissle, 1993, cited by Merriam, 1998, p.61). In some ways we could also consider this to be a 'purposive' sample (Merriam, 1998, p.61 citing Chein, 1981; Simons, 2009, p.34) because institutions were selected on the basis that the leaders in the study would hopefully maximise learning about the research questions because they led high-performing institutions.

A database was created and a final shortlist of 18 schools evolved (Appendix 9). These met the requirement of being relevant to the research questions, providing diversity across contexts and allowing for further learning about both complexity and context (Stake, 2006, p.23). The first criterion is met using a definition of 'outstanding' (OFSTED, 2012). OFSTED judgements were used to define 'outstanding' overall effectiveness (OFSTED, 2012b, p. 25). Until September 2012, a school had been able to gain this grade without necessarily having

outstanding teaching; a situation which has subsequently changed (OFSTED, 2012c, p.5) and which is addressed in Phase 2 of the study. A further constraint on diversity is given by geographical distance. However, diversity has been attempted using the geographical selection criteria above. Diversity is also challenged because it depends on those invited and who then choose to take part. Fieldwork in the Phase 1 schools began in July 2012 and into the early Autumn 2012. Six schools were part of this phase and I conducted semi-structured interviews with the school leaders in each.

3.5.2 Refinements for Phase 2

For the second tranche of schools I decided to adapt the research plan in the light of emerging data which was suggesting that the issue of *Leadership for Learning* (Timperley & Robertson, 2011, pp. 4-7) was pertinent and a key focus of further research. I therefore extended the research, until December 2012, with headteachers in another five schools that had been graded 'outstanding' overall *and* for the criteria of 'teaching and learning'. As noted above, this greater focus on teaching and learning during inspection was reflected in the OFSTED evaluation schedule changing in January 2012 (OFSTED, 2012) so that a school could only be outstanding if this was reflected in the teaching and learning grade. I did visit a sixth school leader but did not include the interview in the study. This was because the leader has been in post since the start of that academic year. I was concerned that issues around perceptions of the school and a deeper understanding of the culture in the school would make analysis problematic.

In arriving at this list, I searched the OFSTED website for inspection reports from January to September 2012 inclusive (OFSTED, 2012d). All secondary schools were included, giving a short list of 19 schools. Eleven schools were invited to participate, based on geographical location; they were located south of, and including, the Midlands (Appendix 10). This selection process will have missed out schools not inspected during this period, including some already identified as 'outstanding' under the previous framework, which are inspected less frequently (OFSTED, 2012c, p. 8).

Between Phase 1 and 2, I also adjusted the scope of the study. The wide extent of the original research planned, based on a Case Study methodology in each school, following initial headteacher interviews, was apparent after transcribing interviews in Phase 1. To immerse myself in different aspects of the school's life would involve the collection of data from a wide variety of sources including pupils and staff, with different jobs within the school structure. In addition, this would have involved a variety of different data collection methods such lesson and meeting observations together with the writing of field notes and the review of documents and other records (Richards & Morse, 2013, p. 31; Stake, 1995, pp.60-68). This use of multiple

evidence sources and methodological triangulation of data would have then enabled me to engage with the complexity of the cases (Yin, 2009, p. 18; Stake, 1995, p114) but I knew that in choosing to focus on teaching and learning, that further interviews would provide much rich data and that, pragmatically, as a solo-researcher, I could not undertake the detailed and different activites required for a meaningful Case Study approach. I was also aware, after Phase 1, that the commitment of school leaders would be challenged by further immersion in the field and that the response rate could be potentially lower than accepting an invitiation to be interviewed for an hour.

Hence the headteacher interviews have become the formal source of data for the study. I contextualised these meetings by familiarising myself with the school's website and other documents offered by the school. OFSTED reports (OFSTED, 2019c) were also used in contextualising the interviews together with the latest school performance data (Department for Education, 2019c). I also toured the schools, with visits to classrooms, meeting pupils and staff. In the second phase, further contextualisation involved lesson observations, selected by headteachers. I requested that lessons chosen 'typified' the school's learning culture. There are issues around the nature of the selection and the issue of 'typicality' if these were to be used in more detailed analysis.

The benefit of this preparation when interviewing the school leader as 'elite' was discussed in section 3.4. It also meant that I was more able to situate the interviews and use my own experience and intuition to become more sensitive to the context of the school. This then meant that I could better suit the questions to the circumstances of the school and to tease out, where possible, any areas of interest pertinent to the research and singularities about an institution. Furthermore, I could remain open to knowledge that might reveal itself, but had not been expected when structuring the interview questions.

3.6 Gaining access to the field

Status can close certain knowledge bases, such as informal networks, but will also afford access to more and different networks and sources of information (Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, pp. 67-68). So, whilst this would make insider-research problematic, as a fellow school leader, my position has influenced the ease with which I was granted permission and privileged access to conduct the research with my peers.

Gaining 'gatekeeper' permission from the school leaders does require tact and a cooperative style. It requires openness and honesty in the initial correspondence about the research and how it will be conducted (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, pp. 84-89). In this respect, I initially wrote to

shortlisted headteachers (Appendix 4) and tried to ease their decision by making the initial letter concise; making clear the research focus, that I was a fellow headteacher, the commitment entailed and potential disruption involved. I tried to keep the information sheet (Appendix 2) both sufficiently detailed and to the point. This outlined the focus of the research, how participants were selected, what was involved in the interview and how this information would be used (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, pp. 84-89; Yin, 2009, pp.80-81). The method of reply, via e-mail, further eased the process and aided subsequent communication by e-mail and/or telephone, prior to the visit. I also gave an indication of how confidentiality would be maintained and that quotations from the transcript would be anonymised in terms of the participant's name and that of their school. The letter further stated the participant's right to withdraw at any point and gave contact details for my supervisor and Head of School.

I am reliant on the leaders' altruism and felt uncomfortable 'selling' advantages to an already 'outstanding' school. In retrospect, what has been humbling is the way all headteachers treated the process as an opportunity to reflect on their own practice. The second phase of interviews used an adapted letter (Appendix 5) and information sheet (Appendix 3). At this stage the letters prepared for the potential that there would be limited uptake and hence included interviews with other staff, pupils and governors, together with the request for some representative digital images to support the interview discussion. A tour of the school and time in class was also requested. The response to my request to take part in the research was greater than expected, which meant that these activities were scaled back, as discussed in section 3.5.

3.7 The semi-structured interview

The semi-structured interview suited this study because there was some prior knowledge of the focus to frame discussion. Questions have sufficient structure to provide assurance that all participants are asked the same questions but the framework is also loose enough to support more detailed and complex answers, thus widening rather than closing down lines of enquiry (Richards & Morse, 2013, pp. 127-128). I prepared a selection of themes and open-ended questions (see Appendices 6 & 7) giving me freedom to change the sequence or wording as the interview progressed (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 361). This was supported by the conceptual framework discussed in section 2.11. This guide supported a structure to the interview with outline topics and suggested questions. This was used as a starting point as new aspects of questioning to follow up were revealed in the interview (Kvale, 2007, pp. 56-57; see also Merriam, 1998, pp.81-83), allowing for probing and expansion on responses, the introduction of new material and questioning out of sequence, enabling the participant to answer more freely (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989, pp. 83-87). However, the semi-structured format does risk reducing opportunities for participants to present their own structure to the area of study, giving

rise to the potential loss of another layer of data (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 104), as discussed in section 3.4. I shared Phase 1 questions with my supervisor and modified them lightly after gaining participant feedback. In Phase 2, I moderated questions with my School Leadership Team.

The researcher should be sensitive to the social context of the interview (Hitchcock & Hughes, 1989, p.84 noting Cicourel, 1967). Hence, the importance of building rapport and empathy to avoid the possibility of creating bias (Cohen et al., 2007, p.151 noting Oppenheim, 1992) resulting from the way responses are made to questions. My status as a fellow headteacher, as someone who understands the language and culture of participants, helps to build both trust and rapport (developed from Fontana & Frey, 2008, pp.131-33). Furthermore, to support the participants in articulating their points fully and generating richer data, I need to enable them to feel relaxed and free to voice their views. To support this, I used verbal and non-verbal signals to show interest and listened attentively, seeking clarification and probing for detail as necessary(Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, pp. 103-106). I also felt that the school tour, prior to interview, allowed me to show an interest in and respect for the school leader's work, further supporting the interview process.

3.7.1 The questions

The questions, selected to answer the research questions, and again supported by the conceptual framework discussed in section 2.11, were in four areas in the first phase of the research (Appendix 6). The first set focus on participants' perceptions of the features of an 'outstanding' school and how this may compare with the definition provided by OFSTED. The reference to OFSTED was asked later in the first set in an attempt not to frame answers. In retrospect, even using the term 'outstanding' could now be perceived as part of the vocabulary of OFSTED and the terms 'high-performing' and 'excellence' may have been less 'loaded' with meaning.

The second set of questions were around school improvement, with an opportunity to give examples, identify key milestones, give an indication of future plans and to consider the role of Head in the process. This led into the third section on leadership with a question exploring the idea of whether there may be common features of leadership found in leaders of outstanding schools. This theme continues in the fourth set of questions, around building capacity and sustainability and includes a consideration of the possible changes in leadership style to support different phases of the school's improvement journey.

In the second phase, where the focus was more on leadership of learning, the list of questions became longer and focused on the Head's journey in the school, hence becoming more auto-

biographical (Appendix 7). The interviews remain semi-structured and the list of questions is used as a starting point with a constant review of coverage as the questions are not necessarily asked sequentially according to the list. A question about the Head's view on why the school was outstanding and how this had been achieved and sustained led into questions around teaching and learning and the notion of quality. One question referenced OFSTED. Another around leadership differences in differently graded schools was removed, having been based on an initial research question which didn't result in fruitful data and was itself removed. I also asked questions around school culture before understanding information about the school's leadership structure and quality assurance systems. The final questions are around the Head's leadership style and working practices and the impact on the school. I also asked directly about succession planning and issues around sustainability.

In this last example, I am aware that I need to be conscious of question selection bias. I have asked a specific question, therefore given a prompt, and this then focuses an answer in a particular area (Yin, 2009, pp. 99-102). Hence, the conclusions need to be understood in this context and cannot be seen as 'emerging' freely from the data.

3.8 Ethical considerations

Ethical principles ensure appropriate conditions for quality and the achievement of maximal validity and claims to truth during the research process (Bridges, 2003, p. 172). I conducted the research following the British Education Research Association guidelines (British Education Research Association, 2011). Particularly important were: voluntary informed consent, the right to withdraw at *any* point throughout the research; confidentiality and anonymity; and respect (British Education Research Association, 2011, p. 6). The ethical principal of beneficence means that the risk of harm to those participating is minimised (Kvale, 2007, p. 28). The Participant Information Sheet (Appendices 2 & 3) supported informed consent and the Consent Form (Appendix 1) addressed each of the other issues including a clear explanation of how data will be used in the research.

Another ethic is ensuring accuracy (Christians, 2000, pp. 138-140). Furthermore, since the research is an on-going process there should be on-going informed consent (Simons, 2009, p. 103). To satisfy both protocols, ideally I should have shown participants the emerging issues as part of the validation processes and ensured that permission was given for direct quotes used (Simons, 2009, p. 103). This exposure to the correction and criticism of participants at *each* stage of the research (Bridges, 2003, p. 141) would have been good practice, however, the practicalities of this became challenging due to the limited contact with each participant and the length of the study. The right to withdraw consent remained throughout the process,

ensuring that participants were treated appropriately from an ethical stance. Also important in this context was the fact that the research proposal has undergone University of East Anglia ethics committee scrutiny and had further external advisor review (Stake, 2005, p. 459), via supervision. These activities both give additional ethical protection for participants. (See also Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, pp.48-53; Silverman, 2006, pp.323-2; Kvale, 2007, pp.26-30; Yin, 2009, p.80; Coghlan & Brannick, 2005, p.78; Silverman, 2010, pp.158-78).

3.9 Reliability and validity

3.9.1 Reliability

Reliability can be defined in qualitative research as the degree of fit between recorded data and what is perceived in the setting studied. Conversely, the more scientific definition is of 'literal consistency across different observations' (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 40) or where the same data is produced when the research is repeated and has therefore demonstrated replicability (Silverman, 2006, p. 282) In qualitative research we can also show this aspect of reliability when different researchers reveal different findings from different data in the same field but both studies have complementary or compatible results (Bogdan & Biklen, 2007, p. 40) (see also Merriam, 1998, pp.205-06).

Reliability is strengthened with 'low-inference descriptors' (Silverman, 2006, p.283 citing Seale, 1999) or more transparency (Flick, 2007, p. 16) by, for example, including verbatim written accounts from interviews rather than a reconstruction from research notes, where there is a risk of greater subjectivity. Reliability is also supported by making the position of the researcher transparent, as discussed in section 3.3. If we also provide audit trails and guide the reader through the research process, as I hope I have demonstrated in this chapter, this will further strengthen the reliability of the study (Merriam, 1998, pp. 206-207) (see also Bridges, 2003, pp.90-91).

In further supporting reliability we come back to the idea of 'naturalistic generalizations', enabled by writing including 'vignettes' with clear, transparent reference to the data sources and sufficient raw data to allow readers to make independent interpretations of the findings by vicarious experience (Stake, 1995, pp. 85-87; Yin, 2009, pp. 119-122). Ultimately the research needs to be conducted 'as if someone were always looking over your shoulder' (Yin, 2009, pp. 40-41,45).

Reliability is also tested during the analysis of the transcripts (section 3.10) whereby after the initial coding of transcripts, a period of time is allowed to elapse before returning to the data to

cross-check that codes have been applied in a consistent manner (Schreier, 2012, pp. 6, 15-17, 19).

3.9.2 Validity and Triangulation

From a scientific perspective, whilst reliability is defined as a measure of consistency, validity is a measure of accuracy (Wikipedia, 2013). However, in qualitative research the validity of findings are considered more in terms of how sufficiently trustworthy they are (Mishler, 1990, p. 417) by reviewing whether the findings are sustained by the data. They should be plausible and credible (Cohen et al., 2007, pp.135-6, noting Hammersley, 1992) and have congruence with the perceived 'reality' (Merriam, 1998, p. 201). The narrative account should also be considered in terms of the persuasiveness of the writing and the extent to which it seems both reasonable and convincing. This is supported, as discussed in section 3.4, by providing sufficient evidence from the transcripts and considering alternative interpretations in the account (see also Cohen, et al., 2000, p.109). The final test of validity is in considering the extent to which the findings can be pragmatically used as the basis for other work (Riessman, 1993, pp. 65-69).

Had the study allowed us to use multiple evidence sources as a form of data triangulation (Yin, 2009, p.115-17 citing Patton, 2002) this could have allowed a further way of validating the data. However, this is still problematic (Cohen et al., 2007, pp.141-44) because it suggests that social phenomena can be treated using a scientific method and doesn't acknowledge the view that social reality can depend on the perspective (Silverman, 2006, pp. 290-293). It also suggests that there is a 'true' state to be found by comparing different sources. If one views reality as socially constructed, '…you cannot appeal to a single 'phenomenon' which all your data apparently represents' (Silverman, 2010, p. 134).

Validity can also be achieved by nesting the research in previous literature (Cohen, et al., 2000, p. 109) and by reducing bias (Cohen, et al., 2007, p. 150), when constructing questions and conducting the interview, as discussed in section 3.7. Furthermore, transparency can strengthen a claim for reliability (section 3.9.1), it can also be seen as a claim to validity in terms of showing the reader how data is collected and analysed (Yin, 2009, pp.40-41, 45, 185-89; Bridges, 2003, p.128) and by making the 'self' 'more transparent' (Simons, 2009, pp. 4, 91).

Participant validation could also have been used as a form of internal validation (Cohen et al., 2000, p.108 citing Lincoln and Guba, 1985, pp. 219,301). Those interviewed could have considered the claims being reported in the narrative analysis, discussion and conclusion and confirmed that they captured their stances. This use of 'multiple perceptions to clarify meaning'

(Stake, 2006, p.37) is congruent with the interpretivist approach used in this study. Ideally, I would also have liked the opportunity to conduct follow-up interviews for further clarification as I engaged in 'progressive focusing' (Simons, 2009, p. 122) as themes drawn out from the data during analysis.

3.10 Analytical techniques

I transcribed each interview, in order to conduct a thematic analysis (Boyatzis, 1998, pp. 4-11), using coding to assign meaning to the data (Schreier, 2012, pp. 1-2). Whilst this is typically used in research methodologies such as conversation or discourse analysis or Grounded Theory, it can also be used in conjunction with a range of qualitative approaches, as its appeal lies in it yielding a rich, detailed and complex account of the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 78-79).

A critique of this interpretivist form of analysis is that it is reductionist in trying to achieve a sense of objectivity by the researcher taking a stance which is further distanced from the data. Furthermore, that the act of coding assigns 'symbolic meaning' and is an 'act of personal signature' by the researcher because we each perceive the social world differently. Hence to search for objectivity is a 'contrived and virtually impossible goal', which is more in the Quantitative research tradition (Saldaña, 2016, pp. 40-41). Indeed, as discussed in section 3.2, this pursuit is not a goal of qualitative research. We do our best by the participants to enable their voices to prevail in the themes developed and in the narrative discussion.

The first stage of analysis was the transcription of interviews from digital recordings. This was followed by coding transcripts before identifying themes. Here, I used three techniques: coding frequency, thematic mapping and the use of a thematic analysis table. After discussing these stages I will outline the issues related to the development of a model, based on the themes and in the light of the initial conceptual framework, discussed in section 2.11, before discussing the issues related to the development of an analytical narrative.

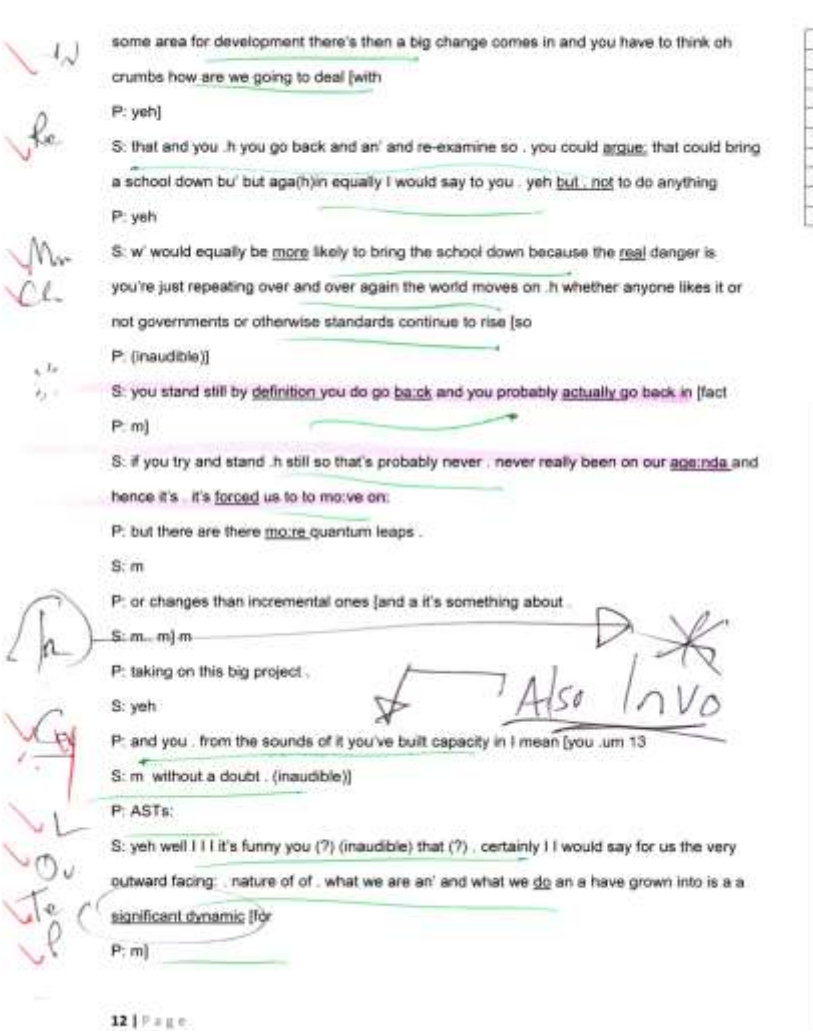
I am mindful that in transcribing we lose much of the contextual, live, social interactions involved in the interview, including tone of voice and body expression; 'Transcripts are impoverished decontextualized renderings of interview conversations' (Kvale, 2007, p. 93). It is therefore important to capture maximal intended meaning in the dialogue, during the process of transcription, to further support claims to validity (Cohen & Manion, 1989, p. 311). I completed the transcription using the Jefferson Transcription system (University of Leicester (2019), Appendix 11), painstakingly, with close and repeated listening. This allowed me time to reflect on the voice and intended meanings of participants and to begin to articulate codes

and potential themes (Riessman, 1993, pp. 58,60). This system was chosen to convey not only what was said but how it was said, for example showing speech effects such as pauses, changes in volume or emphasis and times of overlapping speech, thus adding richness to the analysis to support data reliability and validity. When it came to further analysis this additional information was removed to enable a focus on the content and its relevance to the leadership analysis.

During the next stage, whilst coding, I also created a codebook or log (Appendix 12) to apply to further transcripts. For example, in the section of transcript in figure 2, I used the code 'Re' for 'reflective' because the Head says 'go back' and 're-examine'. The code is also seen when he compares different aspects of the situation being described using 'you could argue' to give one viewpoint and 'equally' to give another.

I continued to check that codes captured one aspect of the data (unidimensionality) and that they were mutually exclusive. Furthermore, I tried to capture all data with a code, in order to answer the research questions (Schreier, 2012, pp. 71-78).

Figure 2: Example of a page of transcription showing codes and text selection



some area for development there's then a big change comes in and you have to think oh crumbs how are we going to deal [with

P: yeh]

S: that and you .h you go back and an' and re-examine so . you could argue: that could bring a school down bu' but aga(h)in equally I would say to you . yeh but . not to do anything

P: yeh

S: w' would equally be more likely to bring the school down because the real danger is you're just repeating over and over again the world moves on .h whether anyone likes it or not governments or otherwise standards continue to rise [so

P: (inaudible)]

S: you stand still by definition you do go ba:ck and you probably actually go back in [fact

P: m]

S: if you try and stand .h still so that's probably never . never really been on our age:nda and hence it's . it's forced us to to mo:ve on:

P: but there are there mo:re quantum leaps .

S: m

P: or changes than incremental ones [and a it's something about

S: m.. m] m

P: taking on this big project .

S: yeh

P: and you . from the sounds of it you've built capacity in I mean [you .um 13

S: m without a doubt . (inaudible)]

P: ASTs:

S: yeh well I I I it's funny you (?) (inaudible) that (?) . certainly I I would say for us the very outward facing: . nature of of . what we are an' and what we do an a have grown into is a a significant dynamic [for

P: m]

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Codes

W	worries
Re	reflective
Mm	momentum
Ch	change
In	innovation
Cy	capacity
L	leadership
Ou	outward-facing
Te	teaching & learning
P	pedagogy

The codes used identified both concepts and description as well as affective codes indicating qualities of human experience such as emotional and values (Saldaña, 2016, pp. 102-105, 119-131). During the coding process, I did not formally separate these two categories. In hindsight, approaching the transcripts with a more simply defined 'what/how' system when considering how participants construct what they say, would have been useful (Watts, 2014, pp. 5-6; see aso Braun & Clarke, 2006, p.84). To develop themes and, ultimately, theory in the production of new knowledge, we move from more concrete material to more abstract concepts, during the coding process. However, in the narrative account, there should still be sufficient concrete information to convey meaning and allow interpretation by the reader (Schreier, 2012, pp. 7-8, noting Früh, 1992).

In further cycles of re-reading and familiarisation, I cross-checked that codes had been applied and that categories covered the breadth of data. I was mindful not to subsume categories and hence risk losing important, differentiated meaning. This was balanced by not creating so many categories that meaning became lost in the data. Given the significant quantity of data involved, it is also difficult to capture the full meaning of all aspects of the transcripts, as one can become lost in the data (Schreier, 2012, p.4, pp. 115-120, acknowledging Mayring, 2010).

Given that coding is a heuristic technique, in that it is an exploratory or problem-solving method, there are no specific formulae to follow. As I have suggested, I have engaged with the transcripts in an iterative way, in a cyclical procedure, with further rounds of coding, to focus in on and create categories and themes to build theory (Saldaña, 2016, p. p.9).

Whilst in a formal application of Qualitative Content Analysis, the term 'unit of coding' is used for a section of text, where only one code is assigned to each unit, a more general use of coding allows several codes to be applied to the same section of material, as was the case in my analysis (Schreier, 2012, pp. 40-44; 126-145). Whilst this provided less constraint in trying to represent participants meaning, it did mean that analysis was further complicated.

Coding and theme production engage various cognitive processes including induction, deduction, abduction, synthesis and evaluation. Simultaneously, I needed to persevere, deal with ambiguity, be creative and apply an extensive vocabulary, whilst continuing to be rigorously ethical (Saldaña, 2016, pp. 38-39). For example, in the section of transcript (figure 2), some of the codes are derived more explicitly. This is seen when I state in the interview that '…from the sounds of it, you've built capacity', and the headteacher replies '…without a doubt…'. This was coded for 'capacity'. The 'Innovation' code comes from an emerging line of thought from the Headteacher, and hence feels more ambiguous initially. I start by using the 'reflection' code (as discussed earlier in this section). The Head says that, '…not to do anything would be more likely to bring the school down', which implies a sense of momentum is required

to maintain progress. A 'momentum' code is used and further supported by the 'change' code as he says, '…the world moves on…' and then reinforces this line of thought by saying, '… so you stand still, by definition you do go back…', and then completes the point by saying, '…that's never really been on our agenda and hence it's forced us to move on…', thus bringing together both codes.

I have also needed to use my creativity and professional vocabulary to make coding decisions about the headteacher's meaning and reflect carefully to ensure I have been true to a participant's words, hence the continued need for ethical rigour.

In the following section, coded as 'Innovation', I talk about a 'big project'. This is an explicit reference to 'innovation' but I have gone back to the transcript and written 'also innov' and then linked capacity building to the concept of innovation. In the conversation that follows there is a continuation of reflections on this in terms of the explicit reference by the headteacher to being 'outward facing' and the idea of this being a 'significant dynamic'. This then leads, during further analysis, to linkages between these codes under the theme of 'innovation' with 'outward facing', 'capacity', 'momentum' and 'management of change' (rather than 'change' alone) (section 4.3.4 and figure 9). Given the short extract used to exemplify this point, the issue of perseverance becomes clear when considering the length of the transcript with sixty-three pages and that coding was used on a further eleven transcripts.

I then moved to the next stage of analysis: the identification of larger categories and then themes, using three techniques. The first was to give an indication of the numerical frequency or intensity of occurrences of a code (Boyatzis, 1998, pp. 132-134), which I define as the coding frequency. This is problematic because a code may only be mentioned a limited number of times and yet hold important meaning to generate a key theme. Furthermore, the infrequency of incidents may also suggest something that is less important in the data. Hence, I needed to reconcile these possibilities (Saldaña, 2016, pp. 25, 27), whilst acknowledging that this process supports an increasing sensitisation to and immersion in the data.

In terms of validity, and particularly face validity, coding frequency can be used to consider whether a code represents what it is meant to (Schreier, 2012, pp. 185-187, noting Neuendorf, 2002, p115) or whether it is too broad or abstracted and further sub-categorisation is appropriate in an effort to maximise the capture of meaning from the transcript data. Conversely , it could indicate an empirical finding because of a greater code distribution in the transcript, thus needing no further refinement.

As an example, in the extract from the codebook (figure 3) for the different schools, labelled A-L, 'culture' is coded across nine of the twelve schools. The category proved to be too broad

and required further analysis and dissection to provide clarity. The emerging and significant code, ‘teaching and learning’, later coalesces with ‘pedagogy’ and ‘curriculum’ and has connection with, for example, ‘high expectations’ and ‘CPD’. This is explained further when discussing the use of Thematic Maps (figure 4). The table is also useful in highlighting areas where further investigation is not required, such as in the case of ‘theory’, where there is little mention of the use of theory in interviews.

The code ‘moral purpose’, whilst not always explicitly mentioned and therefore coded, will eventually become a larger theme when the concept is further analysed and other codes such as ‘care’, as a manifestation of moral purpose, are then incorporated. This code becomes a leadership theme discussed in the analysis (section 4.2.1). We also see that some schools have particular features of interest such as the ‘outward facing’ nature, seen in the high coding frequency of school ‘E’.

			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K1	K2	L
Culture (Ethos, inc. faith)	C		26	12	11	4	1	13	2	4	12	8	1	2	8
Care (inc. happy students, pastoral)	C	a	1	3		5	1	2	3	6	3	2		3	5
CPD (Staff Development , inc. coaching, mentoring, nuture)	C	p	8	2	4	2	9	3	6	7	3	3	10	1	13
Curriculum (inc. global issues)	C	u	10	2	1	5		4		1	6		1	5	5
DfE (League tables, Government, Data, performance)	D		7	7	7	15	4	14	1	1	2	3		3	
High expectations (high standards, high aspirations)	H	i	1	4	2	1	5	2	1	6	5	3	3	3	3
Human touch ('hands -on', respect, 'open-door', 'people-centred' , Emotional Intellligence, inclusive (of staff e.g in decision making - for students see	H	t	1	4	7		4	3	4	8	4	4		1	4
Innovation	I		3	1	1		8	5	1	7	9		1	2	8
Moral Purpose (Moral)	M	o	7			3	1	8	2	1				4	
OFSTED (inc. change in framework	O		9	7	7	9	4	6	3		1	1	1	3	
Open to new ideas	O	p	1				3	1	1	1	1			1	
Outward facing	O	u	2	2		2	13	1		5	1	1	3	6	6
Pedagogy (inc. differentation, Assessement for Learning)	P		6			2	5	1	10	8	3	1	4		9
Quality of staff (inc. NQTs and Initital Teacher Training)	Q		8		1	1	11	8	4		4		1		
Resources (provision)	R		1	2	5	3	1	1	1	1	1	4		5	2
Reflective (including teacher peer co-construction)	R	e	10	1	1		8	8	3	6	1	5		1	6
Support	S	p	2		1	2	4	10	1	7	2	1	2	3	4
Teaching and Learning	T	e		14	9	7	13	8	19	19	10	6	15		17
Theory (Use of Theory)	T	o					1		1	1		1	1		3

Figure 3 Extract from codebook showing coding frequency

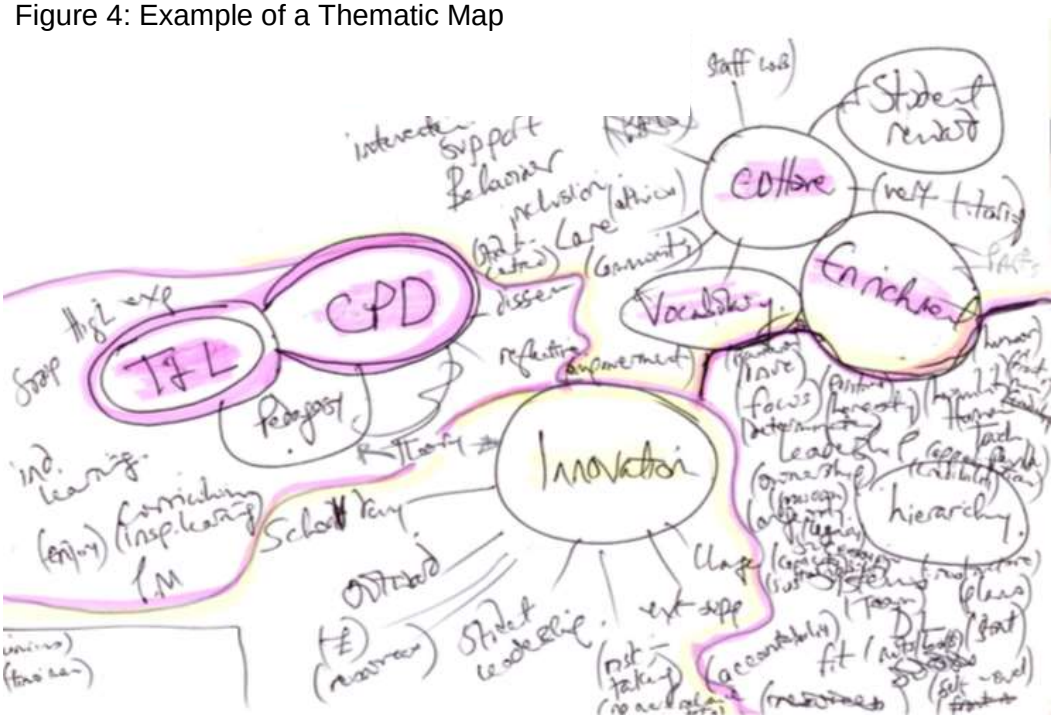
The second method used was ‘code landscaping’, which ‘integrates textual and visual methods to see both the forest and the trees’. This can be based on a correlation between the visual frequency of words to their size, for example in the case of ‘Wordle’, but as discussed earlier in this section, this should not conflate frequency with significance (Saldaña, 2016, pp. 223, 226).

A thematic map is a further example and used in this study. This helped me to consider the relationship between codes, themes and between different levels of themes (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 89-91). The term ‘concept map’ is often used in this context. This can be defined as a visual representation which contains labelled concepts and linking words of explanation. It is often associated with more quantitative disciplines and we could say that a broadened definition, which offers more flexibility for use in the social sciences, would describe it as a

'free-form concept map' (noting Daley, 2004) to help in the task of reducing data and creating themes during analysis (Wheeldon & Faubert, 2009, pp. 69-71).

In the example, show in figure 4, I have clustered codes around emerging themes and sub-themes. Taking the example theme of 'T&L' or 'teaching and learning', it has 'pedagogy' and 'CPD' associated with it. It also shows 'ind. learning', meaning 'independent learning', and 'High exp.' meaning 'high expectations', and 'curriculum'. There is no sense of frequency in the clusters other than where a code did not appear often and when it did present as a key feature. For example, 'enjoy', as part of the Teaching and Learning theme, is not significant and therefore appears in brackets. The map also shows how themes cluster, connect and separate as areas of different meaning. For example, whilst 'CPD' has been clustered next to 'teaching and learning', and also, less prominently, with 'pedagogy', there is a separation with 'innovation' and also with 'culture'.

Figure 4: Example of a Thematic Map



Using both techniques, all transcripts were then reviewed to check if themes made sense and cross- checked for any missed data. Themes were then considered in terms of clarity, ensuring that they were not too diverse or complex with sub-themes used if this was the case. (Braun & Clarke, 2006, pp. 91-92). I then checked that themes were 'sensitizing', insofar as they were sufficiently sensitive in capturing a phenomenon. As with codes, themes and sub-themes should also be 'exhaustive', ensuring all data is placed and each is 'mutually exclusive'. Where these tests were not met, I analysed the transcripts further and made further refinements (Merriam, 1998, p.184; see also pp.179-183).

The third technique used a thematic analysis table (Appendix 13). An extract, in Table 2, shows themes and sub-themes for a participant mapped against examples of dialogue (quotes) and any reflections (comments). This was used in theme development in initial interviews and then reviewed in the light of the thematic map and the coding chart for each participant.

Table 2: Two examples of themes and their constituent sub-themes, developed in the analysis for a participant. (Red codes show where these are coded for a particular participant from the larger set, shown in black.)

Theme	**Appreciative Leadership***	**Moral Purpose**
Sub-themes	• Appreciation of others • Authenticity • Empathy • Thoughtfulness • Informal • Humility • Human Touch • Humour • Well-being • Care • Nurture • Growth • Relationships • Positivity • Trust	• Belief • Ethics • Purpose • Vision • Vocabulary • High expectations (see also culture of excellence) • Inclusion • Care Holistic view of child

*Later described as 'human' leadership

In these examples, 'moral purpose' has incorporated further sub-themes which had originally been separate codes such as 'care' and 'inclusion' (discussed earlier in this section). Furthermore, codes coalesce *as* sub-themes around an initial conceptualisation of 'appreciative' leadership, later re-defined as 'human'. Other leadership themes included, at this stage in the analysis: 'model', 'worries and concerns'; 'longevity and succession'; 'innovation' and; 'management'.

A further theme, discussed in this section in relation to thematic maps, was leadership in supporting 'teaching and learning', with figure 4 showing the emerging sub-themes. A final area of study was initially described as a 'culture' and its association with leadership, with two sub-themes: a 'culture of excellence' and 'pupil culture'.

These three methods were re-visited to ensure on-going triangulation, so that the themes were congruent and sufficiently captured the meaning within and between different interview

transcripts. I then went back to the original transcripts to reaffirm the themes and curate extracts for the narrative analysis.

In the next stage of analysis I looked at how a model could be constructed to bring related themes and sub-themes together and tested these by reviewing the empirical data again (Ryan & Bernard, 2000, p. 780; see also Kvale, 2007, pp.105-07; Gibbs, 2007, pp.38-41). This reduction and refinement of themes, linking them together by tentative hypotheses, further develops theory (Merriam, 1998, p. 192) in attempting to explain the findings (Richards & Morse, 2013, pp. 170-174). This builds on the conceptual framework (section 2.11) and leads to the model suggested in the conclusion (section 6.1 , figure 21) which uses a Venn Figure as a visual representation (Saldaña, 2016, p. 275), acknowledging an example after Soklaridis, 2009).

The final stage of analysis is in the formation of the narrative. A simple narrative form can be used to 'tell a story' using 'vignettes' (Stake 1995:127-8 and Simons 2009:23) to '…connect the reader of the text with the lived experience of another…' (Bridges 2003:102). As discussed in section 3.3, I need to avoid too much of my presence, as author, in the writing. Reflexivity during this study supports this by making transparent my position as author and the possible effect on the findings (Bridges 2003:90-91). Furthermore, the narrative should include sufficient dialogue to allow interpretation by the reader of the participant's, rather than the author's, voice.

I can only pass my personal meanings of the events to readers who will:

> '…add and subtract, invent and shape – reconstructing the knowledge in ways that leave it differently connected and more likely to be personally useful' (Stake, 2005, p. 455)

I am acknowledging that, in the telling of the 'story' by school leaders, the primary experience has undergone both selection and the ordering of key points and remains an interpretation of events (Riessman, 1993, pp. 8-15). However, we should also note that:

> 'The weaknesses of interviewing are intrinsically bound up with its strengths as a specialized mode of social interaction.' (Platt, 1981, p. 89)

Hence, we must be careful not to see talking about the social action as a poor substitute for the original action and therefore a less authentic from of social action. Indeed, events observed first-hand can still be open to interpretation. As a result, we need to acknowledge that there is a difference between the past events and the memories elicited. Indeed, memory can be viewed as a cultural phenomenon because what we understand to be 'memorable' depends

on the cultural aspects that shape what is valued (Atkinson & Coffey, 2003, pp. 422-425, 427). In this professional context, this means that memories are guided by the activities in the schools where participants lead.

In my narrative or *metastory,* I have also made decisions about the order, form and style of the narrative, and my further interpretations, before the reader makes the final level of representation of the original experience. The narrative is therefore a piece of creation with content which is situational and with a style of writing chosen for my intended audience of academic and professional peers. Ultimately, given these layers of interpretation and representation, the claims I make must therefore be couched in terms which are tentative (Riessman, 1993, pp. 8-15).

When writing, I have used a conceptualisation of my position as researcher in a continuum between a first-person stance, as I have tried to reveal the perspective of the participants during transcription, to a third- person stance, as I have considered the themes in relation to the research literature. In selecting the extracts to include, a first-person stance has helped me to check how well I have captured participants' viewpoints. I have then used a third-person stance to consider how these extracts will have a narrative 'impact' and also support a discussion in terms of the meaning and implications arising from both the theoretical and substantive issues in the literature. A final way of reflecting on the narrative account is to consider the extent to which it illuminates the 'quality' and 'meaning' of each of the themes, thus reinforcing the intended outcomes of qualitative research. I have also checked that I have not slipped into a more quantitative stance by including more evidence from further extracts on the same point (Watts, 2014, pp. 4-5, 7-8), in the hope that greater quantity somehow strengthens the conclusion.

Having discussed my methodological stance and the methods used together with the analytical methods used to generate themes, I now turn to the presentation of findings.

4 Analysis

4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the main themes interpreted from the interview transcript analysis. I have separated these findings from the literature, allowing the analysis to remain faithful to the perceptions of participants and less framed by theory (Watts, 2013 and subsequently in this introduction). In the discussion (chapter 5) I will focus more on the themes in light of the literature, keeping some analytical distance from the original data.

I am aware that I am interpreting findings through both the lens of the Headteacher and then my evaluative lens. There will inevitably be overlap and connection between each section, given the complexity of the human system found in the school organisation. The selected themes provide areas for focus, to make sense of the significant quantity of transcript data. In my attempt, I have tried to draw out the participants' intended meanings although, where responses have been more descriptive and less reflective or evaluative, this has been more difficult to achieve. In this sense the themes summarised above are at a more macro level of interpretation and the extracts are interpreted in a more microscopic way.

I am also mindful that some of the themes have been more sought than revealed because they arose from more direct questions. In addition, themes based on personal characteristics, behaviours or attributes are problematic because they arise from interpretations which are at the more subjective end of the interpretative spectrum and hence open to a claim that a theme has resulted from a kind of speculation.

During analysis I have used the term 'theme', in keeping with the literature on analytical methods discussed in section 3.10. During this chapter I will increasingly use the term 'characteristic', rather than 'theme', in keeping with the substantive literature on leadership, discussed in the literature review. Whilst synonymous with 'traits' and 'attributes', 'characteristic' is used because I am also considering the school-level contextual factors in which the head's leadership is situated. In this somewhat awkward 'gear change' in definitions, the themes therefore become the leadership and school characteristics.

The schools presented, whilst unique, share many of the characteristics outlined in the themes. That does not mean that they share them in the same way or in equal 'amount', this would be to tread dangerously into generalising findings in a way that is not possible from the small sample of headteachers interviewed and my interpretative methodological stance. The choice of extracts, to substantiate the claims, is both personal and subjective. All participants' views

expressed could not be reported in relation to each theme presentation. This issue of representation is addressed by providing an indication of how common were the views expressed on a particular theme or associated sub-theme. There were twelve participants with two from one school. I have used the following terms to indicate those frequencies: 'around half' or 'half' for 5-6 participants; 'a majority' for 7; 'a large majority' for 8-9; 'nearly all' for 10. This may mean that sometimes the code is only present once in a transcript with issues around coding frequency discussed in section 3.10.

We will hear the voice of each school leader in the next chapter as I consider each participant separately, in relation to the themes. In this chapter, I will introduce you to the eleven school leaders, whilst presenting the findings, and will include evidence of the coding after each extract. The themes presented are in response to the research questions which consider the role of leaders in achieving and sustaining excellence, and their perception of excellence in schools. I have divided the themes into two main groups:

Headteacher leadership: characteristics and actions

Moral Purpose
High Standards, High Expectations
Drive
'Human' Leadership
Longevity and succession

School Characteristics

A focus on Pedagogy
Continuing Professional Development
High Quality staff
Innovation

There is interchangeability within the groups in that, for example, 'moral purpose' can be shared by a school staff and, from the second group, 'Innovation' can be predominantly driven by a leader. Furthermore, the themes, in keeping with a complex, human, institutional network, are interconnected in various ways. For example, in the discussion of the first theme 'moral purpose', I make connections to other characteristics: 'drive'; 'high standards, high expectations', and 'human leadership', in addition to sub-themes associated with 'moral purpose'.

I also reflect on how many of these themes began as singular codes, before ongoing analysis and further reflection led them to become amalgamated themes. For example, 'pedagogy' has come together with 'teaching and learning', 'longevity' has been associated with 'succession' whilst 'human leadership' started as 'human touch' and, via its original descriptor of 'appreciative leadership' has aggregated codes without being necessarily as initially well-constructed as the other themes.

Some of the themes or characteristics stand, with little, if any, further generation of sub-themes. This is the case for 'high standards, high expectations**';** 'a focus on pedagogy'; 'continuing professional development'; and 'high quality staff'. The remaining five ('moral purpose'; 'drive'; 'human' leadership'; 'longevity and succession'; and 'innovation') have been further defined and developed with sub-themes suggested. In these cases, at the end of each section, I will summarise the key aspects or sub-themes for each in a visual map.

4.2 Headteacher Leadership: characteristics and actions

4.2.1 Moral Purpose

This theme and its associated sub-themes, shown in figure 5, were present to a greater or lesser extent in all the headteachers' interview transcripts. A majority of participants transcripts were coded for 'moral purpose' with the commonly associated concepts, 'ethics and values', coded in virtually all transcripts. Moral purpose can be the basis for a school's vision and we see this code used in nearly all transcripts.

I have also suggested some applications of these concepts in the work of headteachers. For example, I have linked moral purpose to 'inclusion' and in turn, to the idea of 'community', both referred to by most headteachers. In addition, a connection to the need for 'intervention', coded for around half of the participants, to support improvements in pupils' outcomes. I have also suggested that moral purpose is allied to the sub-theme of 'care', coded in nearly all interviews. A final strand of this over-arching theme is in terms of the more holistic education of children. Whilst not a code used itself, I have linked this to the sub-themes associated with student-centred approaches coded in around half of the responses. In addition, it has been associated with enriching the curriculum with, for example, 'extra-curricular activities', referred to in over half the interviews, with around half of the headteachers referring to the Performing Arts.

I now turn to extracts from seven of the eleven schools to explore and articulate a conception of moral purpose. In the case of Silvergate High, I interview both the Executive Headteacher and her Associate Headteacher and have tried to use the data to give a sense of the

contribution to the thematic analysis from their combined perspectives and thus treat the data in a way that closely follows that of other schools with a sole participant.

Dave had been Headteacher at Cropton College for over eleven years and was now Executive Headteacher with Heads of School also in post to support the running of the schools he oversaw. Dave is a National Leader in Education (NLE) and the school has a Teaching School Alliance, involving partnership with other schools. The college is sponsoring and supporting another academy and has opened a further academy. The college serves a village and surrounding rural catchment area in a county on the outskirts of a provincial city.

Dave reflects on the role of headteachers and what drives or motivates them:

> '… you know genuinely do you actually believe or not that really really every child, you know, can and deserves to succeed and achieve d'you actually believe that or not 'cause if you really believe that, that's bound to drive quite a lot as well.'
>
> (Ethics & values, Moral Purpose)

This is a powerful message about inclusion and the right of every child to a high quality education. Dave speaks emphatically, indicating a belief that is deeply held and acts as a driving force in his work.

John has been headteacher at James Wood High School for six years, his first headship, having taken over from a previous head who had been in post for twenty-two years. The school serves a town in a Home County. Before the interview, I join a tour of the school with prospective children and their parents, led by John, who acts as a proud and diligent tour guide. After the tour we return to John's office for the interview:

> '…we've got fourteen Looked After Children in the school which is more than any other [Wexfordshire] secondary school why? Because we we look after them pretty well, they're not easy young people to educate but by and large we hang on to them we don't sling 'em out. They leave here with qualifications and sometimes it's a bit of a struggle but, of those fourteen, I think two live in our catchment area theother twelve have come here from elsewhere because both carers and social care believe that we do a good job by them. And the school's got a reputation of being good with Special Needs youngsters and it's a double-edged sword but, I think the care within the school is…is good.'
>
> (Inclusion, Care)

In this extract, John underscores the importance of inclusion by referring to two particular vulnerable groups; children in care (looked- after children) and those with special educational needs. The school is somewhere that the county authorities trust to look after these children and give them a great opportunity to gain their qualifications. There is an acknowledgement that the children are challenging but that the school is persistent, which highlights the strength of its combined sense of moral purpose. The school's good reputation for children with special needs underscores a sense of care, as part of the school's ethos.

Ian has been headteacher at Crabgate High School for twenty years. The school serves an inner London borough. The school has had a new-build and 'state of the art' performing arts facilities. I travel below ground to the practice suites where, behind sound-proofed glass walls, children are enjoying music tuition. We can see the City of London and its landmarks in the distance, a constant presence as a backdrop for the students quietly working in the Art studio. The modern buildings sit alongside the school's original buildings in red brick giving a reminder of the school's historic place in the community. The school campus feels aspirational and purposeful. I am greeted in the reception inside a light-filled high atrium and we go up to the Head's office, almost too small for the interview, with a small vase of flowers on the table. We conduct the interview in the boardroom next door.

> '…. we give pupils probably more chances than they ought to in some senses, but we are we will always come back and try and try and try. So I think, in terms of the way we support them, the way we support pupils, the fact that we teach ourselves and in our teaching, how we interact with pupils, I think all of that combines to convey an ethos which is about inclusion and is about a belief that our pupils can do well and we will do everything we possibly can for them to do well and that we want them to have a broad, balanced, enriched experience of education not just, you know, what's the target?...'
>
> (Support, Culture/ Ethos, Inclusion, DfE: League tables, government, data, performance)

Ian shows the commitment to inclusion in practice by giving pupils more chances when they have got things wrong. The school does not give up on children and intervenes to help them do well. The senior team model expected behaviours by teaching themselves and getting to know the children on an individual level. The modelling continues in Ian's belief that children can excel. His view of inclusion is about more that exam results and wants children to have a rich curriculum.

Anne is the headteacher of a Church of England School based in an inner-city area of a provincial city. This was her second headship and one of her first jobs, when new in post, was

to oversee a building project to provide much needed additional capacity on the cramped site. Anne is a member of some important boards and had spent some time previously working for a local authority. The interview takes place in her office, at the meetings table, in the new wing of the school with a view over the city. Anne is considered and reflective in her responses:

> '…our whole, our whole kind of Christian ethos is so through the warp and weft of everything that, and we're not kind of apologetic about it, so it kind of, it does drive everything.'
>
> (Culture and ethos, Ethics and values, Confidence, Innovation)

Anne had conducted research in faith schools and found that amongst other findings around children feeling safe and wanting to belong that:

> '… learning was empowered, which meant that there were high expectations of them and they got realistic feedback and clarity about what they needed to do next and then all of that, I think as a church school held together with a sense of hope for each young person and a belief that the glory of God is a human being fully alive and that's the kind of the vision of the school.'
>
> (Teaching and learning, Culture, Vision)

The interview with Anne gave a powerful sense of how important faith is in guiding and, as she says, driving the vision of a school in a deep, integrated and considered way. Her description of the high quality of the learning experience and equally high expectations is also part of the culture of the school driven by moral purpose. The 'hope' for every child reminds us of both the inclusion of, and aspiration for, all children. Her evocative phrase, 'the glory of God is a human being fully alive', is a powerful comment which is challenging and provides a focus for the school's vision in terms of ensuring children are offered opportunities by the school that enable them to fully embrace what it means to be a human being in terms of the curriculum and the care they receive whilst in school.

Philip has been at Brookdish High School for fourteen years and taken over from the principal he had been deputy to in the last year. The school is in a small market town in a rural county. Philip greets me in the reception area and we walk a short distance to his office which overlooks the entrance to the school and sit at lounge chairs around a coffee table.

> '… I don't think I would change the way I worked if there was no OFSTED. It does put an extra pressure on you, you are thinking about these things and maybe I hope I do

> things because they're the right thing to do? I mean for instance we've, you know, we've always had languages as a compulsory for the top two sets. We haven't done that because of the EBac. We've, you know, we've thought more able children should do that, likewise the very weakest, we've always had on vocational courses and we'll continue doing that, even though it harms us in league table positions. And I think the thing that really gets me cross in education is not so much OFSTED, it's league tables because that encourages us to put a lot of effort into improving the appearance of how well you are doing rather than truly improving the quality of teaching and learning and I find that quite depressing really.
>
> (OFSTED, Moral Purpose, Curriculum, DfE)

Philip is aiming to provide the right curriculum to match the pupils needs dependent on their ability. He describes two sources of external pressure: OFSTED and the Department for Education league tables. The EBac or English Baccalaureate is a government ambition for pupils which includes studying a modern foreign language. He shows that he will do the 'right thing' in spite of these pressures and shows his concern that the external forces may make things appear better at a superficial level and distract from the core purpose of school improvement.

Emma, the Head at Kerdy Green, who I will introduce later, describes the education experience for children in terms that cannot all be '…measured in outcome'. She talks about their responsibility in terms of 'broadening and fattening' it and states that '…kids can be well educated and well qualified and they're not necessarily the same things' (Innovation, Enrichment, Change, Student-centred, Ethics & values). This is a reminder that there are aspects of the curriculum and opportunities beyond the examinations, which help to develop children in a more holistic way.

John, at James Wood School, describes this broad and high quality educational experience and the care provided as 'the right thing, y'know, in terms of that moral purpose …' (Moral purpose, Enthusiasm, Care, Culture) and in doing so reminds us about the link with moral purpose and the core work of school improvement, maintaining the focus on pupils.

Ian also describes how this is enacted in school as being 'based on what middle class parents would do if a middle class parent's child is struggling..' (Inclusion, Enrichment, Community, Finance, Using external support, challenge and influence, Support, Care, Performing Arts, Enthusiasm, Innovation, Inspirational learning) and goes on to give examples of support: out-of-hours learning opportunities, including residentials, funding tutors. In addition, the school focused on raising aspirations by using business mentors from the City of London, having

speakers come into school and taking pupils on University visits. We see here a model of school improvement, enabling social inclusion with better academic outcomes. Ian describes the pupils as 'buying in' to what was being offered. This then led to 'a virtuous circle' (Accountability, Community, Change, Care, Enrichment) of school improvement.

James, the Head of Burnthouse Academy, who will be introduced later, describes how the assessor visiting the academy for the Investors in People Gold award, has said that, 'the corporate ownership of the vision, the ability to articulate the vision, was stronger here than in almost any other organisation he'd ever been to', which he puts down to, 'a very clear and simple message that's communicated at every stage of a member of staff's appointment' (Vision, Culture, Communication, Systems). This suggests how beliefs and consequent actions are incorporated in a compelling, shared vision and gives a sense of how carefully the message is communicated and how much thought goes into the processes involved in doing this.

Heather has been headteacher at Bluestone High School for two years. The school serves a town on the outskirts of London in a Home County. We sit at a meeting table in her office near the front of the school, on the corridor with two doors into it. She has a walkie-talkie on the table, ready for duty at break time. I ask her about what makes for an outstanding school:

> '… I think the bottom line you want them to be happy don't you, I mean it's a very kind of simple thing isn't it it's kind of happy, safe, successful, which encompasses pretty much everything but is, kind of, as a parent that's what you want for your children actually. That's what you want for your children full stop, isn't it? So because if they are happy and they're enjoying it they will engage and they will make progress and they will succeed.'
>
> (Student-centred, Care, Vision, Enjoyment)

There is a clarity about Heather's summing up of what high quality means for her and it is grounded in sense of familial care for the pupils and an aspirational, focused purpose summarised in the mantra, 'happy, safe, successful', linking engagement to improved outcomes.

The 'family' sense is picked up by Emma, the principal of an academy in a provincial city. This was opened twenty years ago. Her predecessor has been the principal since 1996 when the institution was a City Technical College, and is now Chief Executive of the Trust, which includes other schools and is an NLE supporting other schools. She had worked closely with him as Senior Vice Principal before becoming principal in recent years.

I am taken from the reception area in an atrium featuring a very large clock, which pupils had helped to design. We go down a narrow corridor and past some administrative offices with glass walls to Emma's office, where we sit at her coffee table. She is talking about the benefits of mixed age-group tutor groups of around fifteen pupils:

> '…it can also be about actually helping with that 'oh your mums not very well at the moment' issue. Oh your dad's having too many drinks again or your dad's not around again and that is the reality quite a lot of our children are facing. The great benefit of that sort of environment is that it fosters a very kind of cohesive, quite family-based atmosphere…'
>
> (Community, Care)

This suggests a feature of care and providing a place for children in the school where they are known as individuals and where they can feel supported and included, given that this can be challenging for them at home. This is also a strategy for building cohesiveness in a large school.

Moral purpose is a driver for school improvement and hence links with the themes of 'drive' and 'high standards, high expectations', discussed separately in this chapter (sections 4.2.2 and 4.2.3). In addition, moral purpose is an aspect of 'human leadership', which is also discussed separately (section 4.2.4). It also supports a school's vision and culture. It is articulated in an inclusive, caring school which focuses on the holistic education of every child. This is summarised in the following figure:

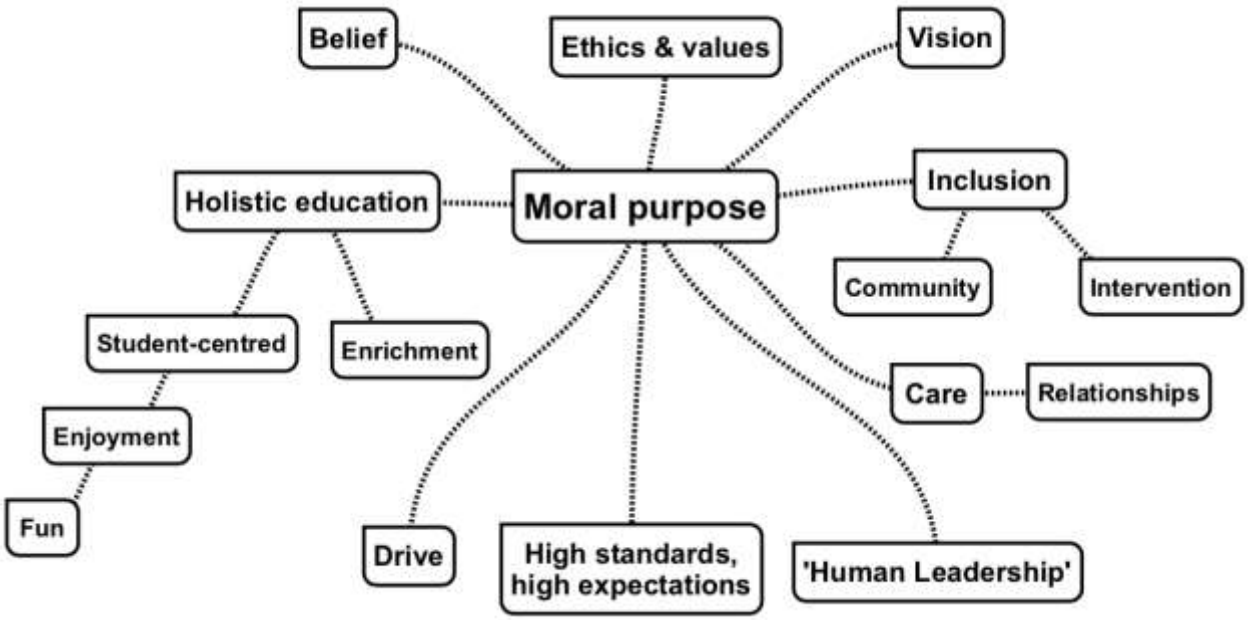


Figure 5: Moral purpose thematic map

4.2.2 High standards, high expectations

This theme was also present in each school's account. I have used five headteachers' comments, where the code varied in frequency. Furthermore, this exemplifies how frequency should not be used to suggest increased important in a point being made, when each participants account adds richness to the theme's development.

Silvergate High School serves a suburban town in an outer London borough. I interviewed Deanna, the Associate Headteacher, who had been in post for three years and Dee, the Executive Headteacher, who had been head for sixteen years. The school is a Teaching School, working with other local schools and formally supports another school with Dee, who is also a National Leader in Education, overseeing both schools. Deanna and Dee have worked together for fifteen years. The school has had Autistic provision since 2000. Dee is setting up an alternative provision Free School and Silvergate High is currently undergoing building work to expand. I met Dee who has an office, off to the side and at the front of the school. She has her leg in plaster below the knee and was making her way around the meeting room, near her office. In our first meeting, Deanna brought me down to meet her after she had been interviewed. I met one of the Assistant Heads also. We discussed the school and matters in general but weren't able to have our interview. Having been better acquainted with the leadership structure in the school, Dee agreed to a telephone interview.

> '…things have to be well-organised so that they look almost seamless and we had a member of staff who left a few years ago and she came back and she said trouble with you Dee is you make it look so easy! I've been to another school, I realised what you'd achieved but I don't like crises. I like to pre-empt, to be organised and be structured.'
>
> (Attention to detail, Systems)

This gives a sense of how meticulous Dee was and, whilst a personal trait, it opens the question about how headteachers influence a culture of high expectation in their schools.

Chris has been at Ollands High School as deputy headteacher for over 4 ½ years, having taken over as headteacher, from the long-standing predecessor he worked with, around a year and a half ago. The school is in a small market town in a rural county.

> '…at the moment our strapline is 'excellence in a caring community' which is important and I think that level of care I'll come back to in a sec' but what are the actual key aims of the school? And what we hit on was our aim is for every kid in the school to make better than expected progress. And then to qualify that by saying, academically, emotionally, socially and in terms of their enrichment opportunities and that's it, that's

> what we're about. So as a consequence you will get, for example, Geography results consistently over the last four or five years fifty per-cent A and A*, French results fifty per-cent A and A*. Now that comes through good teaching and where teachers are trusted in what they're doing. It also comes down to, I think, very high expectations on behaviour and a lot of very swift early intervention.'
>
> (High expectations, Enrichment, Intervention)

Chris links high standards to both academic outcomes and the expectations for pupil behaviour. He couples this with the ethos of care and the notion of support for students who are struggling. He sets the challenge high in terms of outcomes which then makes it explicit to the school community.

Philip, at Brookdish High, reminds us of the high expectations of staff in terms of a focus on teaching and learning, 'making sure it's the emphasis of meetings, of leadership, of expectations, you know, we expect the staff to work hard ...' (Teaching & Learning, Leadership, Quality of staff, Culture). He notes that the head should be modelling the high expectations to staff: '…the head is not only hard working but seen to be hard-working' (Hard work, Modelling). This maintains the focus on the core purpose of the school and supports the school's vision.

Dave, at Cropton, is asked how the high standards have been sustained for such a long period. He pauses and reflects on how some schools, 'go to sleep slightly', implying that results then decline and suggests that to avoid this one should be, 'remaining concerned that that's possible', (Focus, High expectations). He also describes the kind of monitoring and evaluation that is in place where, 'every single team leader performs their own self-review and has to write quite a meaningful document about what are the standards of teaching and learning', linked to the key areas of development and confirmed with evidence from lesson observations. This is supported by their line-manager (Leadership, Monitoring, High expectations, Self-evaluation, Teaching & learning). This then leads to a sense of rigour linked to high expectations and high performance.

Anne discusses high standards in the context of trust:

> 'I mean I think that the key is a clarity of vision high standards, a really good team that trust each other and also just enabling people to really use the skills and gifts and talents they've got. And it's also about both having high standards for your staff, but also trusting them as well and not waiting until things go wrong before you address them. Actually not being afraid to grasp some of the things that do need to be improved and do need to be challenged.'

(Appreciation of others, High expectations, Vision, Empowerment, Trust, Proactive, Steeliness, Change)

We see that high expectations are coupled to the need for strong teams in a culture of trust. Anne's respect for staff is shown in her acknowledgement of their 'gifts and talents' and recognising the potential that is realised by giving colleagues the latitude in which to work. She also links high standards to the need for monitoring and vigilance, together with the courage to tackle underperformance.

4.2.3 Drive

Whilst this was only used originally as an explicit code in around half of the interviews, the concept of a compulsion or effort applied to achieve an institutional goal, led to my reflection on what other sub-themes could reasonably be allied to this over-arching term (summarised in figure 6) which developed into a theme. Those sub-themes, associated with 'drive', present in the large majority of headteachers responses were: 'focus', 'confidence', 'steeliness'. Over half the participants' interview transcripts also showed evidence of 'enthusiasm' and 'positivity' as separate sub-themes. I now turn to the leaders' accounts to further explore the theme of 'drive'.

Heather, at Bluestone links the rapid intervention needed if a colleague is struggling with a class with the need to, '… ensure that those children don't suffer for a longer period of time'. She gives examples of the interventions, for example, using an experienced colleague to support the teacher, offering CPD, even changing the teacher. Heather says, '… it's not being afraid to do that or doing some' you know if we have to, doing something radical in terms of combining classes, whatever.' (CPD, Support, Community, Innovation, Proactive, Teaching groups, Strategy, Student centred, Confidence). Her focus is on providing the best learning experience for pupils. Tenacity and confidence are shown by the speed of response and the courage required when 'not being afraid' to tackle underperformance.

Dee, the Executive Head at Silvergate High, describes what motivates her: '…my passion is I'm here, I'm responsible for these kids and giving them a future and, yeh, that's my motivation I am very self-motivated ….' (Passion, Student-centred, Drive, Moral purpose). Her language is very focused and direct. She uses the word 'passion' and uses the moral purpose of providing an education for pupils as her motivation. Her emphasis and volume add to this sense of her conviction.

Heather, the Head at Bluestone, gives an example of how her approach to an area of underperformance in the school is to, 'pick them off one by one' (Innovation, Classroom,

Change, Strategy, Steeliness, Focus, Team, Teaching & Learning). She approaches this issue methodically and tenaciously as she describes the interventions, which included smaller teaching groups, additional targeted support and making Maths 'really important' by assigning a senior member of staff assigned as a 'Maths buddy' to each class. This resulted in a 10% improvement in GCSE results, from a base that was already above the national average, in terms of added-value. There is an element of persuasion required to convince the team: '… the challenge was winning over, as I said to you, the kind of hearts and minds of the department and in particular the Head of Department to say it is possible to be even better.' (Change, High expectations, Intervention, Teaching groups, Innovation in Teaching & Learning, Focus, Enthusiasm, Ethics & values) The Head is supporting with resources and collectively arriving at school improvement actions whilst setting the challenge to the team of improved outcomes. The Head is optimistic and positive in outlook in setting this challenging expectation. We also see links to a culture of care in terms of 'Maths buddies' and examples of innovation in the interventions created.

Dave, at Cropton, reflects on the school improvement journey:

> '…I think actually part of it is just being honest really and saying, you know, we're never as good as we think we are or should be and the moment we do think that, we're in big trouble really, you know. And if you're not always looking to say how do you get better?'
>
> (Honesty, Humility, Reflective, Purpose, Momentum, Self-evaluation)

He expresses a restlessness in ensuring the school improves and has a sense of critical reflectivity, avoiding an arrogance to avoid complacency and risk a decline in school performance.

For Ian, at Crabgate, he thinks of questioning areas for improvement in terms of a 'balance' metaphor whereby, '…you're continually adjusting that balance and you are saying right actually the marking's not good enough, we need to do more about this.'(Momentum, Reflective, Change). There is a sense of weighing things up and making judgements in order to focus school improvement activities. The questioning is on-going and focused.

Anne, at Stinton, reflects on maintaining focus. She is supported in this with time off-site for strategic planning and has a coach from the business community to support her:

> '… I feel a tremendous responsibility to have an impact both regionally and nationally because of the whole values dimension of the school. So I'm on the Anglican Association of Secondary Heads executive and I'm on the Diocesan Board of

> Education and, kind of, I really get involved in supporting other schools either though myself or other colleagues, and I think that's really important in terms of non-negotiables. I think, I won't waste my time or waste my staff time doing stuff that's kind of nice to have but doesn't actually really impact on the quality of what the students get. So I'm quite, kind of, ruthless about stuff that I see as time-wasting and I guess obviously the challenge for all heads at the moment is about how d'y' keep the focus on what matters while the government's being very random and unfocused and unclear, you know, and I think that's quite a challenge actually, and also through stuff being tighter financially. So I think that my job as head is to be like the semi-permeable membrane around the school and allowing what's helpful and good but keep out actually what wastes everybody's time or is really unhelpful and actually be quite kind of firm and clear about that.'
>
> (Reflective, Outward-facing, Innovative, Focus, Straight-talking, Confidence, Time-management, Mistrust of external agencies, DfE, Finance, Staff well-being)

Anne shows concern to do a good job and the need to show 'impact' in her work. There is a sense of responsibility and ambassadorship for the school and her faith-based values, in supporting other schools via her membership of the external boards. She also demonstrates a concern for constraints on the school's work in terms of her view on the government and the financial impact of their decisions. We also see her role in terms of strictly protecting her staff and allowing them to focus on teaching and learning whilst filtering what is good from outside the school for their use.

Drive is also linked to both moral purpose and high standards and expectations, both of which would give reason or purpose to the compulsion or drive in school improvement for better outcomes for pupils. The figure below also summarises the attribute-codes which I suggest contribute to a school leaders drive. Leaders have different combinations of these qualities dependent on their own personal context.

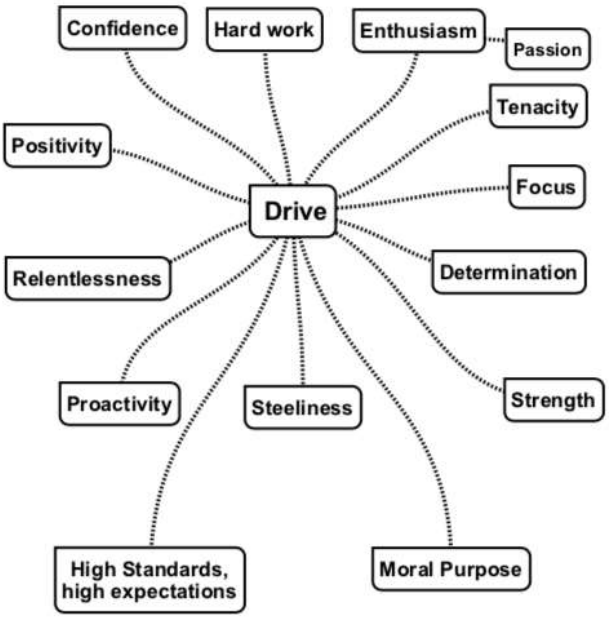


Figure 6: 'Drive' thematic map

4.2.4 'Human' Leadership

The working definition of 'Human' leadership was evident in all headteachers' discourses but emphasised in different ways depending on individual characteristics and circumstances . The sub-themes are shown in figure 7. Notably, 'distributed leadership', 'human touch', 'appreciation of others', 'support' and 'reflection' are coded in nearly every transcript, with the sub-themes of 'honesty' and 'humility' seen in a large majority of transcripts with 'growth' (or 'grow your own') coded in a majority of interviews. 'Visibility', 'time-management', 'well-being' and 'positivity' together with the allied code 'humour' were noted in around half of the transcripts. Whilst this theme has many sub-themes, some of them are each less represented, giving this theme a broader definition, realised in different ways depending on the leader.

Having given an overview of this theme and an insight into the complexity of its development, I now turn to some examples from ten of the eleven institutions. The first is Emma, at Kerdy Green who says, 'I'm privileged to lead this group of people. They are so passionate and energetic…'(Passion, Teaching & learning, Appreciation), which gives a sense of respect and honour to her colleagues. Dee, at Silvergate High, talks in the same vein in terms of the whole school community and a culture of respect and support, '… valuing kids, having that approach which is not about shouting, not doing to them, it's not an us-and-them environment. We're here to respect each other and to support each other and that has been an absolutely clear vision…'(Ethics & values, Culture, Communication, Care, Support, Vision). This reinforces the sense of community or family.

Philip sees an important part of this culture as children needing, 'to have fun', and doesn't want a, 'Gradgrindian sort of curriculum'. He thinks it is important that staff have fun and describes

his attempts at telling jokes, 'when we have a staff briefing hopefully people leave with a smile on their face' (Curriculum, Moral purpose, Culture, Fun, Systems, Staff well-being). There is a human quality to this desire and to the use of humour which he sees is part of his role in encouraging staff. The value of happiness, as an important feature of the school shows a desire to care for people and to encourage relationships, building community.

In the early stages of school improvement at Crabgate High, Ian picks up on the fact that building relationships had to proceed high achieving outcomes: '…we put a huge emphasis on developing relationships within the staff and between the staff and pupils, and modelling that … but at the same time raising aspirations and raising expectations in everything that we did…' (Human touch, Risk-taking, Modelling, High expectations, relationships). He also uses a powerful metaphor for when a behaviour concern is followed up and staff feel, 'that there's a kind of blanket that supports them' (Support, Tenacity). This gives a sense of family and community, protection and safety, and a culture of care for all.

'Positivity' is also an attribute of a headteacher. Brian, at Odessa says, '… I do a lot on praise so my briefings, 90% of what I say in briefing is positive. I virtually never complain about things. I think once a year you can afford to get away with that…' (Appreciation, Positivity)

Philip, at Brookdish, makes some self-effacing comments about the school when he says, '… we do not hold ourselves up as beacons of, you know, of brilliance for the rest of the county or country to follow we've got a lot to learn ourselves…' (Humility, Outward facing, Reflective). He is also reflective, and similarly humble, in thinking about his own journey as a leader: 'I haven't got all the answers. I hope I'm very willing, you know, I want to learn from others, I know, I've got several fantastic colleagues who I've learnt from here and outside…'(Appreciation, Hard work, Humility).

John, at James Wood, also shows the importance of modelling values and being a visible presence:

> 'I think that it's very very important that you personify what this school represents so therefore, and to some extent, you're on show all the time. And it's about the way you talk to children. So you go into a room and you talk to a child when you're showing parents around. Well, every other child in the class hears the way that you speak to that child and that member of staff hears how you speak to that child. Well, you're modelling that. So if you're disdainful, disrespectful, rude when you talk to children, well what sort of role model is that? So I think, you know, if moral leadership's really important in headship, and I think probably is if you're leading any large organisation, and I think as heads you need to personify that and it's about the whole deal, it's about the way you conduct yourself professionally, it's the way you present yourself. And I

mean not just physically, but the way you talk to people, the way you speak to people, the way you listen to people, the way you give people the impression that you actually care about them.'

(Moral purpose, Fit to institution, 'Front-man', Modelling, Ethics & values, Care)

John links the idea of care to moral purpose and believes that modelling the values of the school and 'personifying' as a role model are important aspects of leadership which he feels also extends to his role as a serving teacher as well as headteacher and uses this title instead of that of principal to underline the fact, ' that's really important to actually say to staff and kids I'm the headteacher here.' (Head as teacher, Ethics and values) This also gives John the opportunity to relate to children at a more personal level and reminds the school community that he is 'hands-on' in focusing on the school's core purpose.

Brian, at Odessa, describes this as, 'walking the talk', in that:

'you've got to do what you believe and it's gotta be seen as that, 'cause I don't believe people believe what you say, I think they see what you do and they believe that, and whatever you're doing is what they believe and that can be very hard work as a leader because you've got to be doing things in the right way, but it's the only way of really persuading people…' (Human touch, Ethics and values, Belief, Visibility, Authenticity).

When Dave, at Cropton, found that he was being asked to do more school improvement work in others schools, he decided that to ensure his home school didn't suffer that, 'you've almost literally got out the way' (High expectations, Distributed leadership), and acknowledges that there are, '…other very good people who actually have quite liked the opportunity to step into new roles. Effectively it's versions of internal promotion. It's a sort of gradual evolution…'(Distributed leadership, 'Grow your own', Evolution, Appreciation). There is an acknowledgement that leadership can be shared and that it has benefits to the success of the school, supports stability and empowers other colleagues. He also shows that he wants to empower his colleagues and respects their professionalism when he acknowledges that they are, 'pretty able', and, '…if they can latch on both to their ability and indeed to their genuine interest and desire with all of that which at the very least everyone had when they started out then probably the best thing is to let 'em get on with it and not get in their way.' (Quality of staff, Freedom)

Ian, at Crabgate, would use the term, 'professional trust', which recognises colleagues, 'strengths', and allows them, 'freedom', '…you genuinely, generally, if you trust people you get back more than you asked for. If you set them very clear prescribed objectives and goals and targets you get back what you asked for…' (Trust, Freedom, Mistrust of external agencies).

The notion of discretionary effort, builds capacity for school improvement. Trust can also be seen as a positive force to build community.

For Anne, empowering her team is important in school improvement: 'I think I set a really clear vision and espouse a really clear set of values, but I think I'm also very flexible in how we get there. I think I empower my team to really own their areas of responsibility and I really encourage dialogue and intellectual reflection.' Anne is considered and reflective, going on to describe how she is able to, '…enable other people to do the stuff and rightly get the credit for it, but I think not everyone would necessarily know what I'd just done behind the scenes.' (Empowerment, Focus, Vision, Ethics & Values, Flexibility, Distributed leadership, Human touch, Reflective, Drive, Determination). This also shows a leader who 'stands back' to enable colleagues to shine.

Dee uses Distributed leadership at Silvergate High:

> '…to have real distributed leadership you need to have that clear vision about what you're achieving and you need, you know, buy-in from the organisation for that and then you need the confidence to let other people get on with it but you need the monitoring to make sure that it's going in the right direction. And it's just intuitive when to pick, when to get involved and give something a push, or whatever when you're working within the organisation. But if you've got that clear vision about what you're about, it makes it a lot easier to do that.'
>
> (Distributed leadership, Vision, Confidence, Monitoring, Intuition)

Dee empowers others because she is confident in their abilities. This is the outcome of careful, systematic monitoring, the intuition and wisdom she has developed from experience and the clear direction she sets.

Brian, the Head at Odessa, has been in post over seven years. This is his third headship. Before taking up this post he completed two years working for the National College on the London Challenge focusing on the London Leadership Strategy creating the model of National Leaders of Education. The school is 35 percent selective and supported with additional funds from one of the City of London livery companies. It is also a Teaching School, supporting another school. The school serves a town on the outskirts of London in a home county. After a tour of the school campus with some impressive new buildings alongside those originally built in the 1970s, I return to Brian's study, near the front of the school. We sit at the meeting table as Brian finishes his lunch. It has been a non-uniform charity day in school so Brian is dressed more casually. Brian reflects on taking up his latest post:

> '…I came in very much with an understanding that it wasn't my school. I'd feared, I hate to think what I was like in my first school. I was young and arrogant and I'm still probably arrogant, but not so young, but I remember my first headship and I was going to make that school mine.'

He goes on to say, '…I came here to recognise the strengths and it's the students' school and I learned a lot from that and the self-reflection I gained was so important…'. Looking back over around 20 years, Brian reflects further that, '… maybe, actually, I'm much less confident about my ability to do this job now than I was when I was 37', and that, '…actually I don't know how to do this job and I need to work with people…'. Brian concludes that on taking up his current post, '…what I had to do was create the environment for other people to flourish.' (Reflective, Appreciation, Self-evaluation, Doubt, Honesty, Straight-talking, Teaching & learning, Culture)

This is a personal insight into the reflections of a very experience headteacher. He has moved from viewing it as his school, with the focus on him, to creating the very best environment, by nurturing other professionals to maximise school improvement. His recognition of loss of confidence possibly says more about his greater wisdom and insight that comes from experience than coming from a sense of insecurity. There is also great positivity and a human understanding of leadership, when he says 'recognise the strengths', in getting the best from all members of the school community and celebrating success.

Brian also describes how decisions are made in school by co-opting middle leaders into an informal, 'decision-making group'. In this sense he believes that, '…you're in the spot light. People like that spotlight feeling…'. He adds, '…'cause the more people who lead the whole-school, the better in my view.' (Distributed Leadership, Leadership, Empowerment). This is an example of shared leadership and a way of potentially strengthening the outcomes of a decision because of greater involvement staff in addition to showing staff respect by including them in decision-making. However, it also raises the question of how middle leaders are selected and how being part of this group changes the power dynamics amongst peers.

Heather, at Bluestone, gives an example of her visibility. As she patrols the site she remains vigilant and draws issues to the attention of the relevant middle leader. She gives an example from when she spoke to the Head of Science: 'This was quite a minor thing really but I just thought, one of the, more than one of the science rooms looked a bit of a mess…'. She then asks:

> '… is there a storage issue or is this a tidiness issue? This is just how it appeared. Maybe it was that one off-day, maybe, can you just look into it? And so it was, there's

not a kind of, 'why's your room a mess', type thing and no suggestion of that to the member of staff because you don't want people to, kind of, stand to attention when you walk in the room do you and be concerned about it?'

(Teaching & learning, Monitoring, Positivity, 'Nuts and bolts', Human touch)

Heather shows that she cares about the school and is a 'hands-on' head. She is not afraid to tackle problems and maintain standards and equally does not make a bigger issue out of the situation than there needs to be. She is not blaming but solution-focused and sensitive to not causing the teacher alarm by speaking to them directly. She shows respect for her colleagues if there are mistakes:

'…people don't need to be told off 'cause they're grown-ups, but they need to understand if it was a mistake and at the same time people want to be praised don't they? They want to be recognised when things are great, they want people to be nice to them […] and I believe that everybody thrives in a happy positive atmosphere. And I will at some point introduce compulsory smiling!'

(Human touch, Appreciation, Culture for Innovation, Humour)

She understands the need to hold people to account but also to praise and value staff and respect their dignity. She values getting the best out of people by creating a productive climate. I also think that her humour shows well here, and her belief in people feeling positive and happy to work well.

James, at Burnthouse Academy, follows this theme: 'valuing staff and high staff morale', and, '…holding people to account but not bullying people, giving people a chance to develop their skills and their talents but with a sense of integrity. But all of these are important, really, aspects of Christian leadership…' (Appreciation, CPD, Leadership, accountability, Culture). This suggests the importance of nurturing staff. His use of the word 'integrity'` encapsulates attributes such as honesty and a moral outlook and a sense of fairness, trust and decency, which then also contribute to the concept of Christian leadership.

Heather says that her team are very good at sharing information: 'anything that goes on [with] any, all, of the teachers, we all know.' She adds, '…I think the location of this office is particularly good because I see them all day every day. They're in and out, and we're bumping into each other in the corridors all the time…' (Team, Human touch, Informal). This shows how important day-to-day information sharing and good communication is to the smooth running of the school. It also shows that Heather is not only visible, due to the position of her office and

her accessibility, but shares responsibility with her team in supporting colleagues and aiming to make the best climate for children to learn.

James, notes that this kind of knowledge base does not involve, '… a complete control freakish reign of terror.' He adds that, '…we have tried very hard to get a balance between knowing our school inside out but a highly distributed model of leadership with a lot of trust.' (Staff stability, Human touch, Distributed leadership, Trust). We see the need to 'balance' monitoring with the confidence and trust to allow professionals to carry out their roles; being vigilant rather than neglectful.

As I stated at the start of this section, I have used the term 'human' leadership to give a freer rein during the analysis of the school leaders more people-related attributes. There is clearly much which will contribute to the discussion of Servant leadership in the next chapter. In the figure below, I have linked the concept back to the other themes of 'moral purpose', 'drive' and 'high expectations, high standards'. To reiterate the main aspects of this theme and their prevalence in the discourse, 'modelling' shows itself in being visible to staff as well as in demonstrating traits that a school leader would encourage in the school, such as reflectivity. 'Positivity' and 'humility' in addition to 'honesty', as a manifestation of 'authenticity', support the 'empowerment' of colleagues. This significantly features the concept of distributed leadership. Furthermore, the headteacher , as a 'human' figure, shows respect for and takes an interest in, or appreciates, colleagues. This is also manifest in supporting peers, a concept seen in all headteachers accounts and seen in paying attention to their well-being and professional growth.

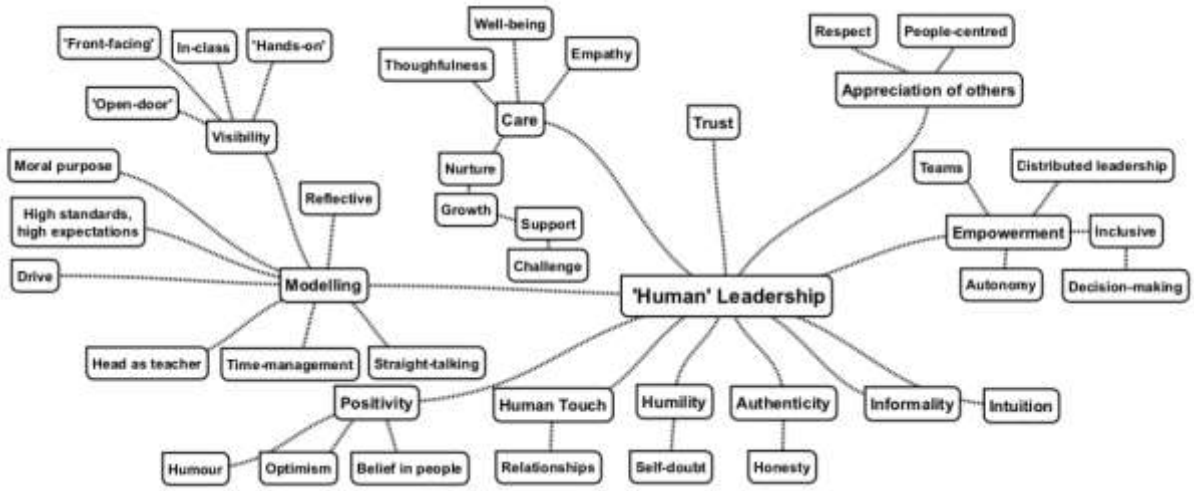


Figure 7: 'Human' Leadership thematic map

4.2.5 Longevity and succession in leadership

Resilient institutions have strong foundations. We see this in terms of leadership longevity and an emphasis on succession planning to enable the school to have a secure, sustainable future. Capacity for innovation (section 4.3.4), can be built to further strengthen the institution to support its continued success. Longevity was part of almost all accounts, and succession featured particularly in the interviews with Philip and Chris. Figure 8 gives a suggestion for how sub-themes could be linked to this joint theme. The concept of 'grow your own', in terms of the professional development and preparation for leadership of colleagues, was coded in over half of the responses. However, other sub-themes appear infrequently or have been develop later during analysis, such as the relevance of previous experience when considering the sub-theme of 'recruitment'. Furthermore, 'longevity and succession' is linked to 'retention', which is a particular feature of Dave's account where he emphasises its relevance in building capacity.

Ian, at Crabgate, had been headteacher for over 18 years, with six colleagues in his team having been at the school for over ten years (Sustainability, Culture, Succession, Longevity). Whilst he didn't attribute the success of the school to this continuous service, it was also featured in some of the other institutions. For example, Dave's long service, also for over 18 years, has also been seen as a positive aspect of the school:

> 'I guess you, one of the advantages of having been somewhere for quite a long time is you can, well I've gotta be careful how I phrase this but, in one sense of the word, take more for granted. In other words, you know, people understand you and you understand them and people can get on with things without you having to be there and looking over their shoulder but, and also, you know the pattern of an organisation, and that you can be strategic about when you're around…'
>
> (Longevity, Visibility)

This statement reflects the fact that people are able to be strategic and work in a more autonomous way, without the head needing to be around all the time. Because people understand the people with whom, and the structures in which, they are working, this allows for a stable environment in which to pursue school improvement.

Emma became the Head when her predecessor became Trust CEO, and notes that, 'we've always, always been about succession planning' (Succession). We also saw at Silvergate High that this succession model involved the Deputy Headteacher, Deanna, becoming the Associate Headteacher, as Dee became Executive Head, having worked together for fifteen

years. Chris, at Ollands and Philip, at Brookdish, had both worked as deputies before becoming Head. As Philip describes this:

> ‘I’ve been very fortunate to have worked with Lionel ‘cause I’ve learnt so much just from, you know, from watching and observing him. There is sort of natural progression because obviously Lionel and I worked so closely together, all the ideas, you know, was him […] or both of us and we’d implement them. So I didn’t have a magic wand! I think the governors were a bit disappointed I didn’t have fifteen new things up my sleeve to do.
> (Succession)

This ‘natural progression’ allows for a settled and smooth continuation of leadership to allow the school to remain focused on its core purpose with both predecessor and current head sharing a common core of knowledge and experience.

Chris’ predecessor and the Governing Body actively planned for succession by appointing him as Deputy, three years before he became the Head (Succession). Joining a school with a stable staff meant that this positive aspect needed to be monitored to ensure that the staff did not become stagnant and create an environment which might jeopardise the school’s success. As Chris notes, ‘… the school was never a career development ground’. Dave considers the retention of staff more broadly and thinks that they have remained in the school because they, ‘…have stayed here and been loyal and in that sense, to the cause, they’ve actually got proper genuine progression.’ (Quality of staff, ‘Grow your own’, Longevity), and describes the opportunities that have appeared in terms of promotion to other schools in the Trust. He also says that working in other schools not only provides CPD, as previously discussed, but also makes the posts at the school attractive in terms of ‘recruitment’. This has allowed the school to build capacity and supports succession planning by allowing for progression within the school so that high quality staff remain part of the Trust (CPD, Longevity, Outward facing, Quality of staff), even though they may not still be part of the school. For Chris, at Ollands, he is clear that, ‘…there is an informal succession plan for just about every position in the school’, which contributes to the stability of the school.

Ian considers the sustainability of the school beyond the current school leaders:

> ‘It’s about creating an ethos which is powerful enough that it can withstand change. The interesting thing will be when I go obviously, but I would like to think is that the ethos is sufficiently strong, that somebody else will come in and will take the school off in a different direction, but hopefully with some of the same core values.’

(Sustainability, Culture, Succession)

Ian is hoping for the strong culture to remain as a new leader takes position. This is a comment on the continued sustainability and stability of the school beyond the leadership succession and without reliance on a particular leader as a result of a more rigid hierarchical leadership style.

The key themes in terms of ensuring longevity and succession, summarised in the figure below, are based around recruitment and retention of staff and nurturing colleagues in the school community. Whilst the specific question regarding planning for succession and ensuring sustainability was part of the second phase of the field work, this has not led to further contributions, beyond what Dave has outlined, above. Staff retention and capacity building are also supported by the attributes in 'Human' leadership, such as care, appreciation and empowerment, as well as with opportunities for CPD. The stability of the school is further supported by maintaining the staff's collective knowledge of the school.

In terms of the longevity of school leaders and planning for their succession, whilst this is something that contributes to institutional stability and sustainability, it is not something that was further pursued in this study but is certainly an area for further research. This is also the case for the theme in general, given the exploratory nature and lower coding responses of the large majority of sub-themes.

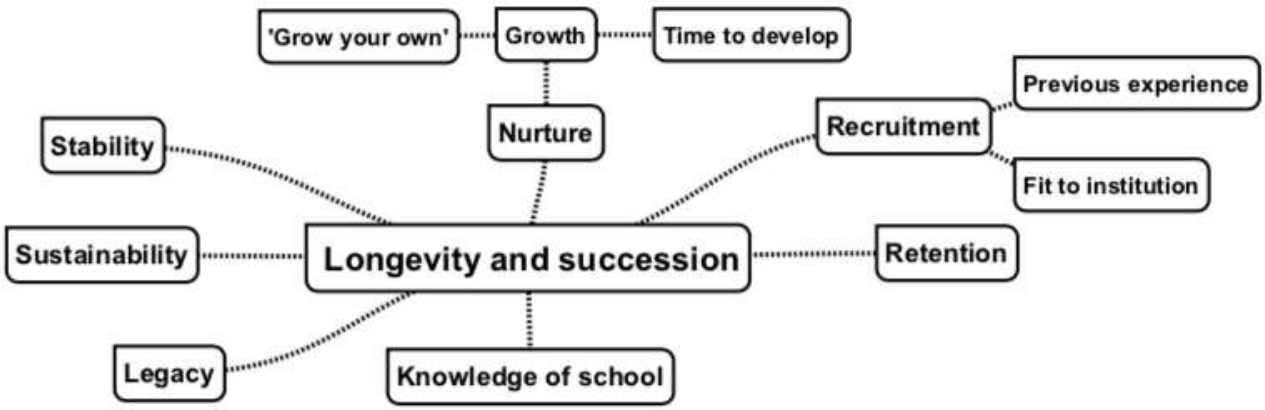


Figure 8: Longevity and succession thematic map

4.3 School characteristics.

4.3.1 A focus on pedagogy

There is a heavy focus on teaching and learning in all schools in the research. This led to a further focus on this theme in the second tranche of schools. Allied codes which featured include the concept of ‘student voice’, seen in around half of the interviews. Furthermore, ‘student behaviour’ was coded in nearly all transcripts, with 'curriculum’ coded in a large majority of interview transcripts.

When Brian came to the school, he made teaching and learning the focus of his discourse with staff and describes it as ‘…indoctrination; if you want to call it that way of teaching and learning because it’s ‘motherhood and apple pie.’’ (Focus, Teaching & learning), thus underlining it’s importance with emphasis, exaggeration and the use of a saying related to value and worth.

Heather, at Bluestone describes this focus as being a, ‘…that buzz of teaching and learning and talking about teaching and learning being everywhere with everybody.’ (Enthusiasm, Teaching & learning), to give a sense of communal excitement and enthusiasm.

James discusses the importance of student voice in the learning process, at Burnthouse Academy. He has been Principal for three years since the Church of England sponsored academy opened in 2009. He had previously been a Head for four years and was appointed four terms before the academy opened, overseeing the completion of building work and making the first appointments of staff. He also created policies and procedures arising from the ethos, vision and values emerging from the core launch team, which also included three former headteachers. The school, situated in an inner London borough, was a new-build and, with limited space, has an innovative design, leading to the use of underground space for a sports hall and fenced, astro-turf roof spaces for sports. We meet for the interview in his office, near the academy’s reception.

> ‘…so there are many opportunities for students to develop that confidence and a lot of that comes through simply being invited to contribute to a lesson in different ways. So, you know, as in many schools, the good teachers will regularly ask students to talk constructively in lessons to prepare something or put them on the spot in order to talk and making sure that the lessons are as active and engaging as possible and are as much as possible about students talking and receiving feedback rather than the teacher talking. So that again is really about our philosophy of education.’
>
> (Student voice, Innovation in Teaching & learning)

The school's focus on learning is shown by the emphasis of student-voice in the learning process. In the cognitive process of articulating their understanding and being offered feedback, the learning process is more fully supported. This is prioritised over teacher-talk and in doing so also supports confidence building as another important attribute to develop.

Philip, at Brookdish describes how the school creates clarity and consistency in the expectations of classroom practice:

> 'we have agreed what […] an excellent lesson looks like and we talk about that at some length. We get presentations from the children, Pupil Researchers, to the staff. They don't tell us anything we don't know, but it makes the staff think a bit more if it comes from the children doesn't it?
>
> (Teaching & learning, High Standards, student voice, communication)

We see here that input from student voice in terms of guiding the dialogue and engaging teachers is making learning experiences better. James describes the need for, '…as much autonomy and freedom as possible…', for teachers to plan and teach. There is a standard, whole-school consistent approach to setting and sharing learning objectives (Teaching & learning, Innovation, Freedom, Consistency), thus providing a framework within which professionals have autonomy to be creative.

A model of learning can be used to support consistency and a school's shared vision for learning. For Anne, at Stinton, this includes five skills such as communication and being able to revise; five qualities, for example being creative or resilient; and five values such as, 'I value trust', and, 'I value faith':

> '…we want our learners to be more independent and empowered. You don't want them to just be like, you know, spoon-fed by us. So we did quite a lot of work as a staff a few years ago on creating that model and saying yes if we had a learner like that we'd be delighted.'
>
> (Innovation, Teaching & learning, Plans, Vision, independent learning, Culture)

This way of making explicit the expectations creates alignment and clarity. The imperative to support pupils in developing independent and a holistic view of education is also seen here. Anne's inclusive, empowering stance is shown in the development of the qualities which form the model, working with staff:

'…there's a lot of richness in them so I'm not too bothered whether everybody's using exactly the right language. I think it's more generating the discussion and the thought and really helping people reflect because actually teachers do go into teaching because they're passionate about stuff and so you need to have a language that allows people to express that kind of commitment and passion really.'

(Teaching & learning, Plans, Innovation and flexibility)

This shows how much thought goes into creating the vision and its purpose in providing focus for further consideration whilst also engaging, enthusing and motivating staff, to support school improvement.

Brian, at Odessa, exemplifies how school the school pastoral staff structure can be aligned to a focus on learning rather than mainly on pupil behaviour whereby, 'Key Stage co-ordinators', observe lessons and monitor student progress. 'Heads of Year', have been renamed as, 'Heads of Student Progress' (Care, Behaviour, Teaching & learning, Monitoring, Accountability), thus using a change in role title to also signal the increased focus on learning.

4.3.2 CPD

Continuing Professional Development (CPD) was a theme in each institution and particularly in the interviews with Philip, Dave, Brian, Heather, Emma and Deanna (who had a focus on CPD in conjunction with teaching and learning, as Associate Headteacher at Silvergate High).

Dave, at Cropton, uses fifteen 'Advanced Skills Teachers' (ASTs) to support continued excellent in teaching and learning . This is a significant number and contributes a, 'sheer critical mass', to the staff:

'…they're usually not in y' standard sort of linear leadership position. Some of them are, 'cause some of them are on the Senior Team, but others are, you know, almost like disruptors coming in at the sides really because of the nature of the way they work, but then in terms of the impact that can have…' (he trails off)

(CPD, Distributed leadership, Teaching & learning)

This describes a form of both shared and pedagogical leadership which is aligned with the traditional model of Heads of Subject and builds capacity. The term 'disruptors' is interesting

and could be interpreted as a way of provoking to support innovation and new ways of thinking in order to support further school improvement.

James, at Burnthouse, has 'Lead Practitioners', what he describes as an internal form of AST, '…who have a remit to experiment, to try things out, to share best practice, to invite people in to watch their lessons, to go and watch other peoples', (Distributed leadership, Innovation & Systems, Hierarchy, Teaching & learning, Leadership, Dissemination). This innovation, coupled with a low-threat offer of support and an open-door, supports free-flowing discussion about good practice and helps to build the professional community and its capacity for school improvement.

Heather, at Bluestone, uses her 'Learning Leaders' to support peers. They are:

> '…self-selected by another member of staff who says I want some help with my teaching. They'll go to one of those Learning Leaders and they usually start by observing the Learning Leader teach and then they do it the other way round and that Learning Leader will work in whatever way is appropriate to try and help that member of staff improve the quality of their own teaching and learning.'
>
> (Innovation, CPD, Teaching & learning, Leadership, Dissemination, Distributed leadership)

This peer-led support creates a safe environment for improving practice. The Learning Leaders support professional development via voluntary meeting based around teaching and learning as well as using staff briefings to share top tips so that it is, '…kind of getting it into the dialogue all the time so people are constantly trying out what works for them.' (Teaching & learning, Dissemination)

Dave explains, in a rapid-fire set of points, how working with other schools contributes to professional development:

> ' [Staff] that are engaged in the raft of, the sort outward looking work with a teaching school, sponsored academy, we'll be setting up a new school, supporting professional development. Huge amounts of teacher training is the other part that, you know, which I think is a healthy bit of all of this. That in it's own right, it tends to be, it seems to me probably the most powerful professional development; simply engaging in that way and learning from that, reflecting on yourself, working with other organisations, giving input so that that actually provides a major dynamic within its own right…'
> (Outward facing, CPD)

We see Dave's drive and enthusiasm in the way he speaks here and how there are mutual benefits for the schools and staff in terms of this relationship. It is both professional development and support school improvement.

Brian, at Odessa, has used a further type of peer support in the form of coaching triad as a way of supporting professional development (CPD). He also uses a research-based teaching and learning qualification as way to support professional development (CPD, Groups, High expectations, Dissemination).

The focus on research can also be achieved via peer-learning groups, which I have defined as Professional Learning Communities. Asked about key milestones in the school's journey, Anne describes their importance in the process of school improvement:

> '…there were real pockets of excellence in the school and a lot of it was around getting mechanisms for sharing that good practice. So, you know, one area might be really good on something, another area might be good on something else, but one of the big steps forward was actually getting these Learning Communities because then you get people from different subject areas sharing…'
>
> (Innovation, Teaching and learning, Dissemination, Groups, CPD)

Anne describes how these groups meet for part of the training days together with meetings after the school day, throughout the year. Between them, they focus on about five themes and some of the time will be spent doing, 'action-research type projects', as well as sharing good practice: '…they'll be stuff that you act on and take back into your lessons in between the days and then obviously you'll share what you tried and how it's been working…' (Innovation, CPD, Dissemination). Staff are able to experiment with new ideas in class practice and evaluate and make improvements together. This forms the basis for dynamic discussion and activity around teaching and learning, supporting school improvement.

There are two final, short areas to consider; firstly, the focus of CPD activities. For Ian's school, training sessions throughout the year are mainly for subject teams with some whole-school sessions focusing on pedagogical training on, for example, questioning or pupil feedback (CPD, Dissemination, Teaching & Learning, Resources). In the second area Heather, at Bluestone, gives an example of how leadership CPD is supported with yearly secondments, on a Middle Leadership programme, where colleagues have a specific responsibility and then, 'add value in other ways as well.' (Innovation, Hierarchy, Distributed leadership, Middle leaders, CPD). This also builds capacity for school improvement.

4.3.3 High quality staff

A large majority of headteachers highlight the high quality of staff as being a key aspect of their schools. This is important, in concert with other factors, at both whole-school and headteacher levels. For Philip, the high quality of staff has been a key feature in the school's success, conceived in terms of their hard work and drive. I ask him what he thinks has led to the school being as outstanding as it is over such a period of time?

> 'I think it goes back to many many years of good leadership and creating a culture. I don't think that it is something that can be achieved overnight. I've been here fourteen years but I think the team before that played a very important role erm the key factors beyond that would be the quality of the staff. Having hard-working, enthusiastic motivated staff who want to improve, and I think with that you can achieve things and I think it's the hardest, it's very easy to say that, but keeping that culture amongst the staff going is not so straightforward.' (Leadership, Culture, Quality of staff)

This desire to improve the school also needs to be harnessed and channelled. Ian reflects on the motivation of staff joining the school:

> '…I would say that what I've noticed over the time I've been here that the majority of staff who come here have, what I would call a healthy moral purpose. You don't come here to save the world, they're not kind of naïve in that kind of, with missionary zeal, but they do actually come here with a commitment to the fact that the young people here come from very disadvantaged backgrounds, and they would like to give them a better start in life. And therefore, and we get a lot of people come and see it, from say the Institute of Education, well qualified, could have chosen to work elsewhere but have made a conscious decision to come here. And what that does, I think it's one of the best things about teaching somewhere like this is that, if you if the leadership get that bit right, you can have a high, the core values of the school are shared by the vast majority of the staff, so you have a big, I don't like the term, 'buy-in' …' (p.8)
>
> (Moral purpose, Inclusion, Quality of staff, Ethics & values)

This alignment, focus and 'buy-in' of all colleagues around a common moral purpose and vision, combined with their high-calibre training, supports school improvement. When I asked him why he thought the school had been outstanding for around fifteen years he summed this up as, 'I'd say the main reason overwhelmingly is the quality of the staff.' (Quality of staff).

In the previous section, Dave cites the appointment of so many ASTs in the school as a key contributor to the school's success. The quality of staff is also linked to successful recruitment and this provide more opportunities in some more urban areas with a large population and/ or where there is a strong Initial Teacher Training (ITT) provider. Dave makes the point that we have to focus on, '…all the time recruiting quality…', and acknowledges that:

> '…I totally accept we are in a privileged position, you know, we recruit heavily from the Faculty of Education at [*Provincial City*] PGCE. We have lots of our staff seconded on that. We probably know who the best trainees are there on a regular basis. We're probably a fairly attractive place to come and work we're just outside of [*Provincial City*] …'
>
> (Quality of staff, CPD, Longevity)

This also shows the mutually reinforcing nature of the relationship with an external ITT provider which leads to a stronger institution.

4.3.4 Innovation

Innovations are novel methods, practices or ideas that are both advanced and original. The concept of creativity is allied because imagination and original ideas are used to invent or innovate. Whilst one person's innovation is another's common good practice, the examples I will give stood out to me. It is also difficult, unless explicitly stated by participants, to know the origin of an innovation. So, perhaps I should refer to the 'use' of innovation to suggest a willingness to experiment with new ways of working.

We have already seen examples of innovative practice in the use of CPD in section 4.3.2, where I gave seven examples. I would also suggest that the headteacher's 'drive' is an attribute that creates a disposition towards innovation, thinking particularly in terms of moral purpose and the headteacher's confidence. I also referred to shared leadership and how this was supported by giving professionals the freedom, autonomy and trust for creativity and innovation. This also contributes to building institutional capacity for innovation. The majority of participants, gave evidence of an aspect of innovation, each of which is referred to in this section, with nearly all institutions coded for 'innovation' during analysis.

Dee, at Silvergate High, innovates in setting up alternative provision as a Free School. She has a clear vision of providing, 'an occupational route and it's about developing social capital with those youngsters, you know, etiquette how t' behave themselves through an adult sort of business working environment'. She is keen to focus on the right learning experience for each

child and recognises that, '…it's gonna be a big challenge but I think we've got the experience and the capability to do it now…'. Furthermore, she says that, 'it would depend on what the kids are all about now we're used to doing this 'cause because we do it through the autistic provision so we're not frightened of personalising the curriculum …'(Vision, Ethics and values, Moral purpose, Inclusion, Curriculum, Innovation, Restructure, Resources). She also shows here the previous innovation in terms of having on-site autistic provision. Dee's drive is seen in her moral purpose, confidence and energy.

Cropton, where Dave is Head, is an innovate institution. He says that in order to '…continue to develop, to learn yourself and not stagnate, to continue to bring in new ideas and thoughts rather than just trudge out the same old stuff…', that the Head needs to allow others to lead and take on responsibility (Innovation, Outward facing, High expectations, Distributed leadership). He has also been involved in sponsoring an academy in [*Wexton*] and admits that it's been difficult financially because of needing to invest in advance but, '…you gotta build up your capacity, you gotta put structures and fundamentally people in place…' (Capacity, Outward facing, Innovation, Open to new ideas, Finance, Expansion, External support & challenge). This suggests that he has the courage, confidence and conviction to offer support outside the school. He reminds us that this needs strategic planning, referring both to staff and 'structures', which suggests paying attention to financial and resource management when innovating.

On an institutional level, innovation is possible by paying attention to finances. For example Heather, at Bluestone, has reduced the number of leadership positions and was then able to increase expenditure on teachers, providing smaller classes to support improvements in pupils' learning experience (Innovation, Finance, Resources, Teaching groups, Leadership).

Dave warns against schools overuse of data '…to have the data driving absolutely everything […], that sort of almost subdues development and innovation and actually might stop schools, y'know, becoming truly outstanding, certainly doing innovative and interesting things…'(Challenging others, Data, Freedom, No over-reliance on systems, Innovation). He also remembers a quote about, '…the notion of tighten up to become good and then loosen up to become outstanding…' and adds that, '…if you don't allow people to develop things themselves and challenge themselves and come up with new ideas…' (as he trails off) (Innovation, Freedom, Open to new ideas, Systems). This suggests that innovative schools need a climate where professionals are free to experiment and work together in order to release their combined creativity and that outstanding schools are ones where this innovation takes place.

When recalling an OFSTED report Dave says, ‘still the best quotation we’ve ever had […], innovative and experimental teaching and learning are the norm. This makes for exciting learning.’ (Innovation, Inspiration learning), which reminds us that the focus of innovation is classroom practice, in order to improve pupils’ learning experience.

Ian, at Crabgate, reflects on successful school improvement:

> ‘…it does worry me that there is, people think there is a formula for education and for good schools and I don’t think there is other than around the, it has to focus upon, on trust, professional trust and creativity and innovation and in a context where people are held to account but that the accountability doesn’t take over to the exclusion of the other things which are essential.’
>
> (Trust, Innovation, Accountability, No over-reliance on systems)

This suggests that school improvement and its leadership are contextual and reliant on trust and empowerment and that these concepts are linked to creativity and innovation.

At Stinton, Anne has created large ‘base rooms’ for different subject teams, based on the fact that the Humanities team, that had this, acheived high results. This allowed staff to talk about teaching and learning as well owning areas of the corridor. Offices and classroom have glass walls creating more visibility into classrooms so that practice is shared passively (pp.8-9) (Restructure, Resources, Innovation & self-improvement, Dissemination). Anne also understands what is needed to get the best from her staff and to create a cohesive team culture: ‘…it’s kind of creating that energy amongst your staff and finding where the hunger for the next change is…’. She then adds, ‘…then it’s also about working with the people who’ve got really good energy and positivity and kind of listening to what they are saying…’ (Innovation, Momentum, Community, Human touch, Communication, Enthusiasm).

Heather describes trying to change the, ‘very very orderly’ atmosphere in school where staff weren’t willing to make a decision. and all had to be run by her as Head as staff were, ‘…frightened to try something new…’, and thinks that the school has, ‘…still got room on that, particularly in the teaching and learning…’ (Innovation, Culture, Tradition, Freedom, Need to delegate). Here we see that part of the school’s improvement journey is to provide that space and give staff the confidence to try new things.

Heather also describes how she picks up new ideas in order to pass on innovations by reading, going out and visiting and networking, ‘…if nobody ever goes out you become very insular, don’t you, really never find out the good things…’ (Open to new ideas, Outward facing). This

shows that innovation requires an outward-facing position to maximises the opportunity to apply new ideas in the best interests of pupils.

Innovation, was a government requirement when building a new academy. James, the Head at Burnthouse, was joined by three other experienced headteachers and the London Diocese, as sponsor in leading this team. He says that, '…the strength of the original implementation team and the pillars upon which the academy was built are very sound educational concepts that are both tradition, a blend of traditional and innovative …' (Innovation, Finance, External support and challenge, High standards, Systems, Tradition, Steeliness, Leadership).

James describes a variety of student-centred and learning focused innovations that had been implemented including 'vertical coaching', using non-teaching pastoral managers as Heads of House and the use of student-voice in teacher feedback to suggest ways in which the learning could be enhanced. Students are also involved in a co-construction learning model and have a longer school day, to give more focus to English and Maths and also to include enrichment with a choice of around 80 mixed-age 'electives' (Innovation & change, Curriculum, Teaching groups, Student voice, Vertical tutoring, Student reward, Teaching & learning, behaviour, Self-evaluation, Culture, Student-centred, School day, Enrichment, Community, Inclusion, External support and challenge, Support, Performing Arts).

This gives a sense of vibrancy which complements the new school building to provide a memorable school experience for pupils and supports high performance, with the focus on nurture, support, classroom learning and enrichment.

Ian describes, a curriculum innovation based on practice in another school, where pupils have a three year Key Stage 4 with many some pupils taking one or two GCSEs in Year 9 with mixed age classes as a result, with 'big chunks of time' in half day sessions, and the workload being spread for Year 11 students (Outward facing, External support & challenge, Change, Innovation, Curriculum, High expectations). Heather, at Bluestone, describes another curriculum innovation whereby children learn in broader, more mixed ability groups following, '… the philosophy of making the vast majority of children believe they're in the top set.' (Teaching groups, Innovation, Curriculum, Intervention). Both of these examples again focus on improving the learning experience for pupils and demonstrate Headteachers who are comfortable taking the risk of trying out new ways of working.

Heather is a problem-solver with a positive, pragmatic way of approaching school improvement. In terms of CPD, she had taken an innovation from another school in creating a 'teaching and learning market'. Each department has a stall and they would 'sell' ideas and, as she says, it creates, 'a bit of fun and competition…'. She also describes a previous training

session where staff have taught lessons to groups of staff, 'as if you're children'. (Innovation, CPD, Enthusiasm, Fun, Dissemination, Teaching & learning).

Kerdy Green Academy is an innovative environment. Emma gives the example where, '… staff don't do duties here, you know, they all eat and drink with the children in the college restaurant…' with staff taking children there during the lesson (Innovation, Behaviour, School day). Innovation extends to the use of particular language to influence school culture and support improved pupil outcomes: 'we have a whole vocabulary here Peter…'. Emma then describes how this has been used to, '…get rid of some of the baggage that was associated with education…'. Hence using the term, 'students', rather than, 'pupil' and, 'tutors', rather than, 'teachers' because the academy was, '…trying to encourage a tutoring approach rather than a stand up at the front and didactic learning…'. The academy does not have homework because, '…some of our children don't have homes in which there's any kind of work going on…'. This is replaced with, 'extended learning', which takes place at the end of the afternoon lessons (Innovation, Vocabulary, Culture, Resources, Teaching & learning, Independent learning, Enrichment).

This use of language together with using the freedoms offered by academisation to change the school day and to create a different lunchtime have the potential to powerfully influence the school culture and make a quantum shift in school improvement, changing the perception of students. They arrive at school, to a very different environment symbolised in the different language being used. The 'students' are treated much as adults would be on a college campus. The classroom experience has been framed as a more college-like 'tutoring' and 'homework' is 'extended learning', giving the opportunity to consolidate learning enable students to develop independence and a healthy work habit. It is also a way of including and supporting more vulnerable children.

Innovations seem to fall into two groups in this study; those which are broadly curriculum-based and those which are around organisational structures, institutional support and growth, such as developing or supporting another school. The factors which contribute to this are shown in figure 9 and focus on a form of institutional confidence which has developed as a result of a school's success and creates an exciting environment which then supports staff retention, builds capacity and enables the school to continue to be sustainable.

The components of innovation: 'external support and challenge', 'open to new ideas', 'freedom' and 'momentum' were coded in more than half of the interviews with 'outward-facing' coded in nearly all transcripts.

Innovation requires capacity in order to allow it to flourish. Dave focuses on this and, whilst under half of participants aren't coded for capacity, I have linked this to the other key theme of 'Human' leadership (section 4.2.4) and hence to the notion of empowerment via Distributed Leadership (coded in nearly all interviews). Emma's was the only example which focused on influencing school culture by the use of innovative vocabulary whilst both Emma and James particularly emphasised student voice which, I would suggest, is in itself innovative.

The factors contributing to an innovative institutional environment, also appeal to more inclusive, empowering forms of leadership, including Distributed Leadership, as noted above. A leaders' drive to take calculated risks is supported by moral purpose and the pursuit of high standards and expectations. New ideas are generated and supported by the institutions being outward facing and monitoring the changing educational environment.

Innovation also requires very secure supporting systems and diligent practices, such as monitoring and evaluation, to fully realise a project. This area of figure 9 is shown as the 'management of change' with the concept of change featuring in all headteachers' accounts. I suggest here sub-themes which help to lubricate the innovations in practice to support their delivery. Particular features of the transcript included 'self-evaluation' and 'monitoring', seen in a large majority of responses, with 'reflection' evident in nearly all, with around half of the participants coded for 'accountability' which, I would suggest, would be reasonable to align with the 'management of change'. Nearly all headteachers speak of systems, in some form, and the allied use of data, and the sense of operational management activity (or 'nuts and bolts' as I have also coded). Finally, all headteachers refer to finances in the context of management of change with 'resources' and/or 'finance' being a particular feature in around half of the participants' interviews.

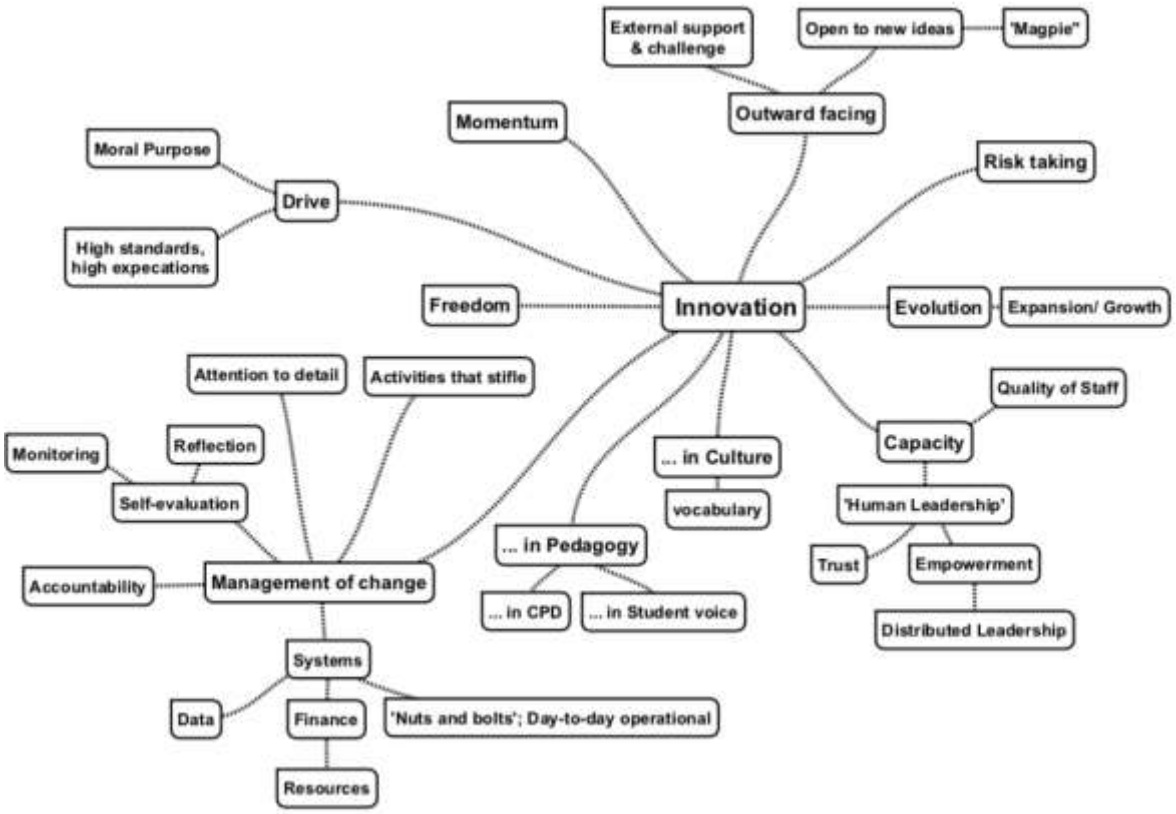


Figure 9: Innovation thematic map

Having proposed nine leadership and school characteristics resulting from the analysis, I will now consider these in the light of the models of leadership discussed in the literature review. I will then discuss each leader's discourse using frameworks provided by both the characteristics and models. This will support development of the conceptual framework in section 2.11 towards a model of achieving and sustaining excellence presented in the conclusion.

5 Discussion

5.1 Introduction

The analysis is drawn from participants' perceptions and is based on a single interview with each leader. Consequently care should be taken in not over-interpreting each account and in trying to not assume or mis-interpret participants' views. Each interview transcript was considered in the light of the leadership models and nine characteristics presented in chapter 4, with a summary comment, presented in a table, exemplifies each of these at the beginning of each account. I also include the thematic map used in analysis to give more transparency to this interpretative process. The first action in this discussion is to bring together the findings from the last chapter and to consider these in the light of the leadership models.

5.2 Situating the analytical findings within the theories of leadership

Table 3 shows each of the nine characteristics presented in the analysis. These are not now divided into headteacher and school characteristics to allow movement between them, as discussed in section 4.1. Each is compared with the main characteristics of the models of leadership presented in the literature review. A tick shows where I am suggesting a stronger association, with brackets showing a weaker one. The theories and my synthesis are both open to interpretation and the use of the table might suggest a degree of certainty, which is not the case.

Leadership theory	Instructional	Transformational	Distributed	Servant	Leadership for Learning
Characteristics					
Moral purpose	(✓)	(✓)		✓	✓
High standards, high expectations	✓	✓		(✓)	✓
Drive	✓	✓		(✓)	(✓)
'Human' Leadership	(✓)	✓		✓✓	✓
Longevity and succession		(✓)	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)
Pedagogy	✓	(✓)	✓		✓
CPD	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
High quality staff	(✓)	(✓)			✓
Innovation		(✓)	(✓)	(✓)	(✓)

Table 3: Comparison of headteacher and school characteristics with theories of leadership

In terms of moral purpose, the strongest connection is with models of Servant Leadership (SL) (Spears, 1998; Russell & Stone, 2002; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and Leadership for Learning (LfL) (Murphy, et al., 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012) with an acknowledgement of

the importance of community relationships seen in the Instructional (IL) (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and Transformational (TL) (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999, 2005) models.

High expectations are indicated (or implied, in the case of SL) in IL, TL and LfL. This extends to the importance of high quality staff which is explicit in the LfL model (Murphy, et al., 2007) and I would argue is implied in the IL and TL models, given the focus on high standards. CPD is common to all models with a focus on pedagogy clearly seen in instructional models and the use of Distributed leadership (DL) to support school improvement (Leithwood, et al., 2019). The attributes discussed as part of 'human' leadership very strongly align with Servant Leadership with some aspects, such as modelling, seen in IL, TL and LfL and with an explicit reference to 'consideration and support' in TL and also in LfL, with more aspects seen in LfL, such as trust, respect and empowerment. Drive is an attribute which feels implicit in LfL and SL but is more explicit in IL, because of the traditional focus on the headteacher and in TL, where the headteacher offers 'inspirational motivation and 'idealized influence' (Bass & Avolio, 1994).

The remaining two characteristics; longevity and succession, and innovation, are not explicit in the models. However, in terms of the high-performing institutions in the study, I draw comparison with a study of 'winning organizations' over one hundred years (Hill, et al., 2018), which found that all had '… a stable core, but a disruptive edge.' This included keeping senior leaders in post for more than ten years with care and attention paid to succession planning, including hand-over periods to ensure continuity. This suggests that innovation is pertinent to successful organisations over the longer term, but that the issue of longevity of headteachers and planning for their sucession is also important.

These latter characteristics are realted to models of leadership, via second order connections. For example, I briefly discussed, in section 2.8.2, attributes, such as taking calculated risks, that support innovation in relation to the van Dierendonck & Nuijten (2011) conception of SL. This is also exemplified by both succession and longevity, or staff retention, being supported by more distributed leadership practices in addition to high quality CPD, 'intellectual stimulation' and a culture of support, as part of all models discussed in the literature review.

The LfL model suggested by Murphy, et al., 2007, is arguably most aligned to enabling innovation where the focus is on improving pedagogy. Distributed leadership practices including 'communities of learning', as part of this model, encourage this because an organisation's learning occurs out of the dissonance created by identifying and solving a problem, which then stimulates creativity. This is then supported by exposing colleagues to new ideas and ways of thinking differently (Stoll & Temperley, 2009, p. 70).

Having bridged between the findings summarised in the nine characteristics from the analysis chapter and the models of leadership discussed in the literature review, I will now discuss each leader's interview in the light of these frameworks.

5.3 School leaders and the theories of leadership

5.3.1 John at James Wood School (County bordering London)

Moral purpose	'both carers and social care believe that we do a good job by them' (Children in care)
High standards, high expectations	'you personify what this school represents' ; 'I'm the headteacher here.'
Drive	
'Human' Leadership	Teaching head, culture of care
Longevity and succession	Six years as head with a predecessor of 22 years
Pedagogy	Traditional approach
CPD	Learning walks, sharing good practice
High quality staff	
Innovation	

Table 4: Examples of findings linked to characteristics for John

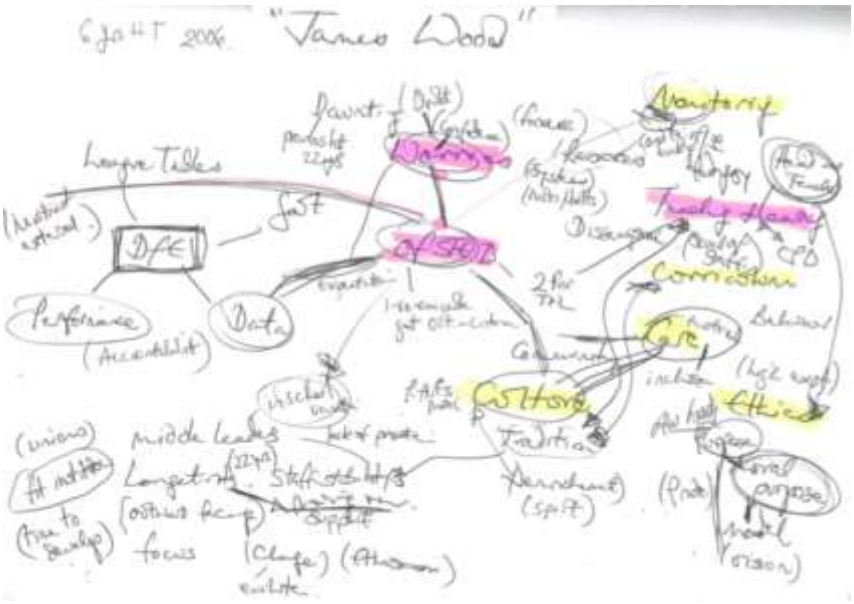


Figure 10: Analytical thematic map for John

John had been in post for six years and had taken over from a headteacher of 22 years standing. There was staff stability, a traditional curriculum, monitoring and evaluation, and

conservative approach to pedagogy. John was a headteacher who was worried about a forthcoming inspection and the accountability measures used by the Department for Education. This was unusual in the school leaders interviewed and John still felt daunted by his role in view of his predecessor's long and successful service. John was very much proud to be a teaching head and made a point of using the term 'headteacher' rather than 'principal' to this end.

There is a focus on teaching and learning, albeit with limited detail of particular practices discussed in the interview, and an implicit suggestion of high expectations. John, as head and teacher, is modelling behaviours, ensuring there is dialogue about teaching via a 'sharing best practice programme', supplemented by a CPD programme and organised learning walks. This 'intellectual stimulation' is complemented by monitoring, as part of the management of the instructional programme. Hence we see aspects of IL and TL (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999) practices in John's leadership, also seen in the LfL model (Murphy, et al., 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012) and to some extent in SL in terms of CPD. Specific examples of DL practice were not discussed in detail, beyond the opportunities to share best practice.

John clearly expresses his moral purpose. He believes that heads should be modelling behaviours expected for all in the school community. In turn, this felt like a culture of care was a key aspect of the school's identity and one of the reasons why the school had such a good reputation with those placing vulnerable children there. Care, in the form of inclusion and pastoral support, extends to the enrichment opportunities in the form of, for example, the performing arts. Here we see SL in terms of moral agency and issues of inclusivity and care for students and those at the vulnerable fringes of the school in John's 'stewardship' (Sergiovanni, 1992, 2013; Spears, 1998; Russell & Stone, 2002). This is also suggested in the LfL model (Murphy, et al., 2007) which, in addition, reinforces a personalised student-centred culture which we see in the inclusion of the vulnerable.

A line of discussion, not part of the analysis and consideration of the theories of leadership , is around the concern that John has about an impending OFSTED inspection. He suggests that it '…is inconceivable that we would get an outstanding judgement'. This is because the criteria now required that 'Teaching and Learning' be judged outstanding as a prerequisite for an overall 'outstanding' judgement, not previously the case in the school, and because the school's relative performance had fallen. John says that this is something 'I worry about every single day.' The accountability framework and its place in the thinking of the school leaders is something that I will return to where it appears for particular participants.

5.3.2 Chris at Ollands High School (Shire county)

Moral purpose	Care is an important aspect of the school
High standards, high expectations	'excellence in a caring community'
Drive	
'Human' Leadership	'verbal organisation'
Longevity and succession	Was deputy for three years before taking over from previous head. Many staff at the school for some time
Pedagogy	Behaviour management
CPD	
High quality staff	
Innovation	

Table 5: Examples of findings linked to characteristics for Chris

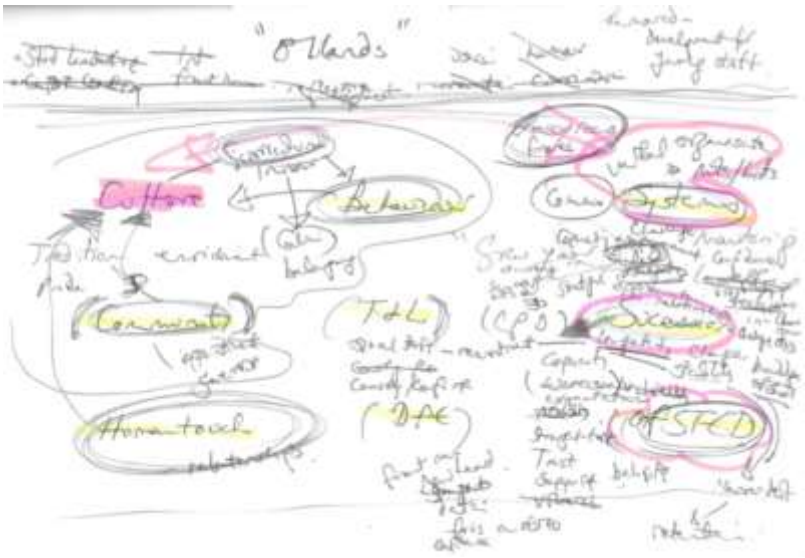


Figure 11: Analytical thematic map for Chris

Like John at James Wood, Chris is clear that he is a Headteacher rather than a Principal: 'I know what Headteacher means and that word means something to me and that's why I'm doing it – I don't want to be Chief Executive of a company.' This makes explicit the link to IL and LfL. When asked about his leadership qualities, Chris says that he is good at talking to large groups of people, that he is calm and 'we're not knee-jerk reaction to things'. Calmness is a way of indicating confidence on both a personal and organisational level. This gives a form of credibility or authenticity which is in keeping, particularly, with both SL (Russell & Stone, 2002; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and TL (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999).

There was also a focus on high standards and expectations, both of teaching and behaviour, seen in all models. When Chris talks about aiming for every pupil to have better than expected progress, he also acknowledges that care is an important aspect of the school ethos. He qualifies the aim of high academic progress in terms of a holistic view of pupils' education which he sees as '…academically, emotionally, socially and in terms of their enrichment opportunities.' This is in keeping with notions of moral purpose, service and stewardship seen in SL (Sergiovanni, 1992, 2013; Spears, 1998; Russell & Stone, 2002) and in terms of the student-centred approach to LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007). There are 'very high expectations on [sic] behaviour and a lot of very swift early intervention', and monitoring via, for example, learning walks and observations. These continue this expectational theme and reinforce the focus on high standards seen in all models. Also concentrating on disruption free learning, a key original component of IL and an expectation in LfL (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, et al., 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012), this focus on the classroom suggests less of a TL style.

Chris says that he wants to improve further the quality of teaching and learning by 'talking about, sharing and discussing and knowing where there's real strength.' In this sense he shows some aspects of a shared IL approach (Marks & Printy, 2003), but we heard insufficient about this in the interview to make a bolder claim in terms of DL.

The school culture is supported by a behaviour management technique which doesn't give '…kids the opportunity for things to go wrong.' The focus is on disruption-free learning in a traditional sense, IL as well as in LfL (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, et al., 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012), and has become part of the way things are done in the school, 'where we're going to manage it in such a way that you don't think we're managing you but we are'. Chris then gives the example of how potentially challenging behaviour from Year 11 students near to Christmas is dissipated by having a whole year group Choir lunchtime rehearsal.

Chris describes the school as 'verbal organisation', where staff meet children in the school reception in the morning and teachers are encouraged to talk with each other. Relationships were an important characteristic of the school's culture: '…this is a school that has always been about people, not processes.' This suggests an aspect of 'building community' (Spears, 1998) seen in SL and the 'Virtuous School' described by Sergiovanni, 1992. Chris makes a point of saying that the leadership team are not 'office bound' and that he 'walks the site, in and out of lessons or dealing with issues as they've arisen.' This 'hands-on', visibility is characteristic of all models.

5.3.3 Philip at Brookdish High School (Shire county)

Moral purpose	'OFSTED it's league tables…. encourages us to put a lot of effort into approving the appearance'
High standards, high expectations	'…we expect the staff to work hard' ; '…the head is not only hard working but seen to be hard-working'
Drive	
'Human' Leadership	'…Gradgrindian sort of curriculum' ; 'hopefully people leave with a smile on their face'; 'we do not hold ourselves up as beacons ...of brilliance'; 'I haven't got all the answers'
Longevity and succession	Deputy before becoming Head; 'I've learnt so much just … from watching and observing' the Head ; 'I didn't have a magic wand'
Pedagogy	'…we have agreed what we think ... an excellent lesson looks like and we talk about that at some length, we get presentations from the children …'
CPD	
High quality staff	'..creating a culture' ; 'hard-working, enthusiastic motivated staff'
Innovation	

Table 6: Examples of findings linked to characteristics for Philip

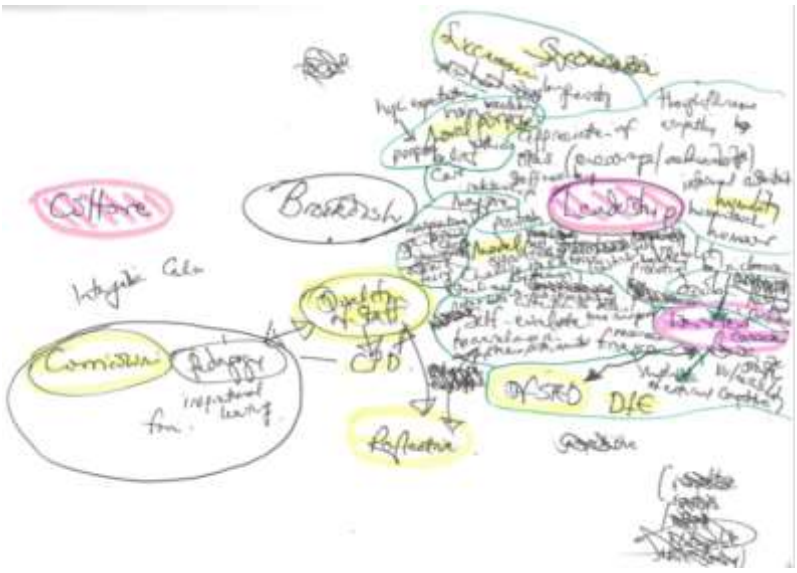


Figure 12: Analytical thematic map for Philip

Philip's moral purpose, highlighted in the Table 6, are shown in the curriculum being focused on pupils' needs rather than to satisfy league table position. This is also a service to the community (Sergiovanni, 1992) and as such resonates particularly with SL but also the traditional notion of IL, now also seen in LfL (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, et al., 2007).

Colleagues have an agreed definition of excellence in teaching and learning. This demonstrates aspects of shared leadership but this was not expanded on in the interview sufficiently to get a sense of more fully developed DL. The recognition of the need for high quality staff, in Table 6, is also an explicit aspect of the LfL framework (Murphy, et al., 2007).

Philip talks about getting the pupil culture right. '…they need to know that we're in charge, but it's not done through an iron fist. It's got to be done through humour, gentleness and having them working with us…'. Philip wants to '…broadly educate [pupils] and turn them into good citizens. I think it is very important that they […] do the right things and not the easy thing.' As part of the culture he gives the example of the importance of formal assemblies and of the daily routine to 'march then down the corridors […] in silence...'. The focus on the right behaviour for school and for learning goes back to an IL model and is also seen in LfL, in terms of a safe orderly learning environment (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, et al., 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012). It also complements the high standards and expectations seen across the models. The culture building, as part of the school's vision and values, is common to all models but particularly resonates with IL (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and also with aspects of moral purpose seen too, in SL (Sergiovanni, 1992; Spears, 1998; Russell & Stone, 2002) and LfL Murphy, et al., 2007). Showing children how to behave correctly and helping them become 'good citizens' supports service to the community and moral agency.

He expects his leaders to set high expectations and work 'with smiles on their faces, with a sense of fun, with a sense of purpose…'. In this sense he is setting the tone for the school. Again we see the high standards and expectations of all models, together with a sense of building the school culture amongst staff, as part of IL and setting clear direction in terms of how he expects his leaders to work on school improvement. This is a form of modelling by leaders that impacts on staff in their teams and also pupils (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). From a SL perspective, this also helps to build community (Russell & Stone, 2002).

Philips humility is shown in acknowledging that he hasn't 'got all the answers', and he talks about using humour and the school having fun. There is a human level to his interactions. He notes that, whilst the school has got systems to support communication, that what is '…more important is bumping into people in the corridor' and popping into classrooms and meetings. 'I think the informal is more powerful than the formal'. This is about building community and showing appreciation for colleagues and is very much in keeping with SL (Russell & Stone, 2002) .

This style is continued in Philip's acknowledgement that staff are motivated by praise where he tries to, 'find them doing the right things.' He recalls how, when he has a 'conversation' with a colleague about a lesson he has seen he will recount aspects that were really good and then,

'…there's one thing, is that something we could work on and improve?' Philip believes that 'cracking' teachers need motivation and a role model and so he should be seen by staff dealing with 'the naughtiest children in the school' and be on the corridors and also be a good teacher himself. In both of these examples we see the Headteacher with his 'hands-on' and very much visible: an aspect of all models. This also shows a SL attribute of nurturing the growth of people (Spears, 1998), which supports his credibility, authenticity and ultimately creates mutual trust (Russell & Stone, 2002). Philip understands that you have to have the confidence of the staff to drive forward improvements (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) but that in return they know that they will be treated fairly (Murphy, et al., 2007; ASCL, 2019). He also believes that he should 'cut quite a lot of the stuff that comes from the top because that can take people's eye off the ball.' In this sense he is 'buffering' colleagues from distractions which we see as supporting a focus on the classroom as part of IL, TL and LfL (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Kelley & Halverson, 2012) .

Philip does worry about things. He is concerned about financial cuts and how these constrain his opportunities, including in developing staff and recognising achievement. He is also worried about whether some of the data measures will lead to a reduced inspection grade. There are clear benefits to Philip's long service in the school and a period as Deputy working closely with his predecessor, which can mitigate these concerns and we see the context in which Philip is trying to maintain the school's rating and performance, in terms of financial and accountability constraints, whilst keeping true to his moral purpose.

5.3.4 Brian at Odessa School (county bordering London)

Moral purpose	'…you've got to recognise you're there for the students.'
High standards, high expectations	
Drive	Previous experience of national and city strategic programmes
'Human' Leadership	I do a lot on praise' ; 'walking the talk' ; 'it wasn't my school'; 'I don't know how to do this job' ; 'create the environment for other people to flourish'; 'the more people who lead the whole-school the better'
Longevity and succession	
Pedagogy	everything we do... is focused on teaching and learning'; 'motherhood and apple pie'; Heads of Student Progress
CPD	coaching triads; research-based teaching and learning qualification; ASTs
High quality staff	
Innovation	See CPD

Table 7: Examples of findings linked to characteristics for Brian

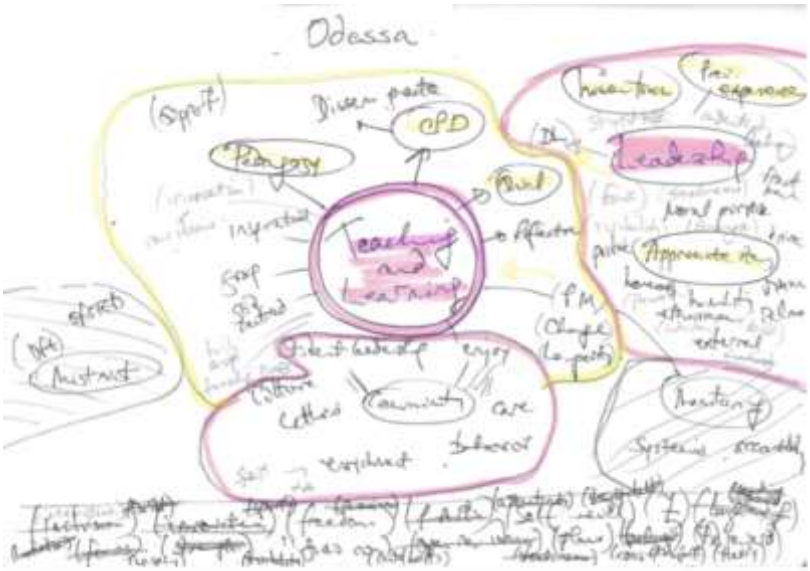


Figure 13: Analytical thematic map for Brian

Brian describes Odessa as more like '…a Metropolitan line train going at a reasonable speed in the right direction; it didn't need stopping, it didn't need my input, it needed me to pick up the good things in Odessa and build on those…'. This suggests less of the head as figurehead and more of an understanding of the power of shared leadership and respect for the work that

was already creating high outcomes. There is a sense of humility here which also complements the notion of SL (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011; ASCL, 2019). This continues with his view that he is 'very people-centred', and he adds that '…it's about people, it's about recognising that they're all individuals.' This implies SL (Spears, 1998), potentially meeting individual needs and offering consideration and support, also seen in TL (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). Brian says, 'It's just the human interactions that we do as leaders that make the difference', adding that, 'you've got to do what you believe and it's gotta be seen as that, 'cause I don't believe people believe what you say, I think they see what you do and they believe that and whatever you're doing is what they believe and that can be very hard work as a leader because you've got to be doing things in the right way but it's the only way of really persuading people …'. There is a sense of Brian's visibility, modelling expectations, seen in all models. In terms of SL, this develops credibility by Brian doing rather than just saying and being authentic by following up on what he believes. We also see that a visible, hands-on approach is part of IL, TL and LfL (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Murphy, et al., 2007).

Brian describes colleagues being part of a wider decision-making group and co-opting middle leaders to undertake whole-school initiatives. This is about shared leadership and a formal example of DL (Harris, 2004; Harris, et al., 2007), which supports capacity building and has an implicit aim of empowerment. However, whilst Brian talks about 'co-opting', I had missed the opportunity in interview to find out how this happened. Were there clear criteria and an interview panel that made a cabinet decision? Once appointed were colleagues genuinely empowered? Brian describes these colleagues as 'senior leaders' rather than part of a formal extended leadership team and he meets with them regularly: '…the feeling for them is… I'm fostering their personal agenda in the future.' Whilst this opportunity provides 'intellectual stimulation' and enables participation in decision-making, both of which are also aspects of TL (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999, 2005), this does feel conditional and mediated via the headteacher (Lumby, 2013). In terms of power-relations, this raises the question of how freely colleagues can participate in these meetings, given the status of the headteacher.

I asked if staff were paid in addition. Brian says that when he can afford to pay them for the additional responsibility, he does: ' …you pay them very little, you'll get a lot of work and so it's value for money.' This bold statement acknowledges the considerable discretionary effort of colleagues who gain little or no remuneration, and in doing so potentially undermines the impression of SL. Whilst the opportunity provides staff with CPD and enables personal growth, the empowerment is conditional, and the appreciation falls short of remuneration. With hindsight, this would have been a good opportunity to probe Brian's approach to this form of DL.

Brian has focused on teaching and learning as his key priority. He has changed pastoral leadership structures to focus on learning and the different forms of CPD provided opportunities for staff to share good practice and offer intellectual stimulation via research-based qualifications. He wants to create an environment where 'a good school talks teaching and learning', quoting the educationalist Tim Brighouse, with whom Brian had worked at a national strategic level, as well as having worked on a city strategic programme, reminding us of his breadth of experience. This could be seen as the 'inspirational motivation' of TL (Bass & Avolio, 1994) where Brian is modelling values based on aspiration – the head of a school with this CV is something which could be perceived to contribute to the school's culture and prestige.

Brian does have Advanced Skills Teachers (ASTs) who support CPD sessions on over forty topics throughout the year as well as a 'teaching and learning forum'. The focus on learning shows a strong sense of IL and LfL. CPD features in all models and is seen in 'intellectual stimulation' in TL (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005) and LfL and also as a way of supporting personal growth as part of SL (Spears, 1998). Brian's example of coaching triads is a way of providing peer support to this end and can be seen as part of DL, in terms of a collaborative culture (Cordingley & Bell, 2012) and the opportunity for teacher leadership (Harris, 2003; Chrispeels & Harris, 2006; Leithwood, et al., 2019), also seen in the role of ASTs.

Brian describes a feeling of self-doubt in saying that he doesn't know how to do his job. This sense of humility and honesty is in keeping with SL and supports his credibility (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Of course, he has opened up to me in the interview and this may not be the case in the way he conducts himself day-to-day. However, the fact that he is prioritising praise and 'walking the talk' is in keeping with SL (Russell & Stone, 2002).

Brian believes that 'you've got to be able to turn situations to your benefit for the school and you've got to recognise you're there for the students.' This is an acknowledgement of the moral purpose of leadership and also of the opportunities for the community to support the school and its work with students, in keeping with Leadership for Learning (Murphy, et al., 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012). When asked what 'outstanding' means in the school context, Brian sums it up in two words, 'enjoy and achieve'. He explains that children like to come to the school because it is a 'supportive community'. He says that people in school have heard him say that, 'I don't care about the government's targets', and to new pupils and their parents that, 'my target is 100% you take part in extra-curricular activities'. He also thinks that pupils will enjoy school and achieve by building important relationships with staff '…not by discipline and fear but by warmth and by expectations and by interest and by passion for their subject.'

Brian is also emphatic about OFSTED's role in the accountability framework : 'the reason we do things here is never OFSTED' and goes on to explain that 'I talk about it from the students' point of view, the moral purpose of Fullan', before ending with 'I don't care about OFSTED!' In these dismissals we see a suggestion of the confidence and possibly an arrogance that comes from being a leader of an outstanding school with the career experience that Brian has. The focus on the holistic development of the child and the broader curriculum is in keeping with LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012) and is part of the cultural development of the school as a community of learning, where building relationships with staff is important. This building of community is also seen in SL (Sergiovanni, 1992; Spears, 1998), and supports the moral purpose of providing a high- quality education for pupils.

Brian acknowledges that the school needs to work with partners, including the Local Authority. This includes focusing on student and parent voice. This shows the community relationships which are important in TL (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999, 2005) and in the community and social advocacy and student-centred culture of LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007). Students were also involved in creating and framing the school's aims, known as the 'Odessa Way', which is used in assemblies and in guiding lesson observations. This emphasis on the vision, goals and mission is a feature of all leadership models.

When asked about his leadership style, Brian says he is reassured, from leadership sessions and from his own studies and involvement with leadership, that 'there's no right way to lead' and that 'my leadership's intuitive, it's not learned, it's a case of I do what I think works and I think what I'm quite good at doing is thinking on my feet'. This is a view that supports a contextual, situational or contingent view of leadership (Bush & Glover, 2003; Male & Palaiologou, 2015; Day, et al., 2009).

5.3.5 Dave at Cropton High School (Shire County)

Moral Purpose	'…do you actually believe or not that really really every child …. can and deserves to succeed'
High Standards, High Expectations	'…remaining concerned' ; 'every single team leader performs their own self-review'
Drive	'we're never as good as we think we are'
'Human' Leadership	'…it's a sort of gradual evolution'; 'the best thing is to let 'em . get on with it and not get in their way'
Longevity and succession	'Over 18 years service; '...people understand you and you understand them and people can get on with things' ; Staff have been 'loyal' and 'they've actually got proper genuine progression' ; Working in other schools aids 'recruitment' and helps build capacity and supports succession planning.
Continuing Professional Development	'ASTS are 'like disruptors coming in at the sides' ; Staff '…that are engaged in the raft of ... outward looking work'
High Quality staff	'…we are in a privileged position, we recruit heavily from the Faculty of Education at Cambridge…'
Innovation	'…to not stagnate to continue to bring in new ideas' and 'allow others to lead' ; 'you gotta build up your capacity, you gotta put structures and fundamentally people in place'; '…to have the data driving absolutely everything …that .... almost subdues development and innovation' ; 'tighten up to become good and then loosen up to become outstanding…'; '…if you don't allow people to develop things themselves and challenge themselves and come up with new ideas'; 'innovative and experimental teaching and learning are the norm' (OFSTED report).

Table 8: Examples of findings linked to characteristics for Dave

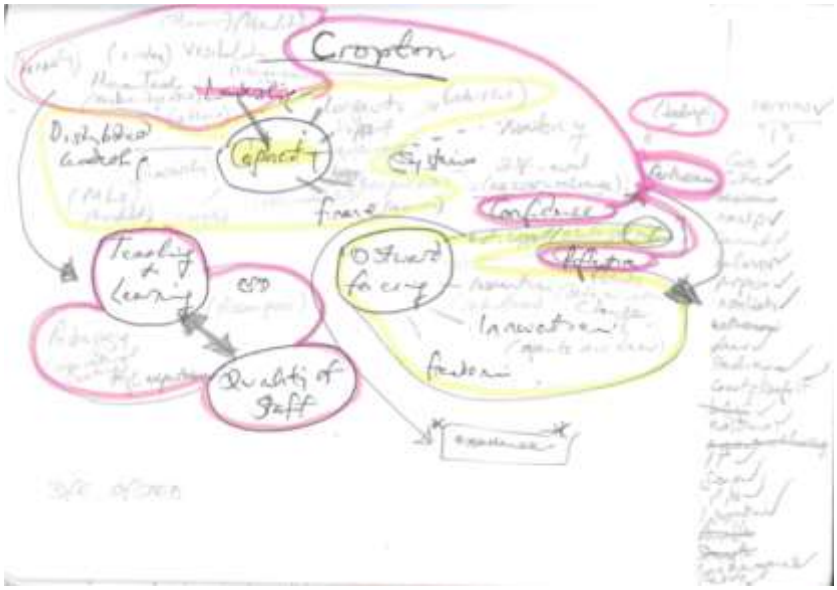


Figure 14: Analytical thematic map for Dave

Dave is fast-talking and enthusiastic in the interview. He articulates his moral purpose, detailed in the analysis and summarised in Table 8, which are features of SL (Sergiovanni, 2013; Spears, 1998, Russell & Stone, 2002) and LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007), as previously discussed. Dave also notes that the school has a 'strong pastoral framework' to ensure children are looked after, coupled with a positive ethos, whilst ensuring that there isn't unacceptable behaviour that's getting in the way of things. The senior team also patrol every lesson. The focus on disruption-free learning is in the traditional style of the Instructional Leader as well as the 'safe orderly learning environment' of LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012). This could also be seen in the pastoral framework which supports a focus on learning and high expectations.

We see that high expectations and standards, common to all models, are supported by Dave's drive and determination. He is not one to take the school's achievements for granted and is always looking for the next idea that would support the school's continued high performance. Dave also describes working with many 'outstanding' heads and notes that they have 'a very strong clear focus and probably belief really about what they see as really matters…', coupled with a, 'determination and probably a relentlessness.' This not only indicates the importance to these heads of vision, goal and mission seen across all models but underscores the importance of 'drive'. This isn't explicitly part of any of the models although it is hard to envisage any without necessary drive to realise a school's vision.

Dave is also very visible, seen across leadership models. On Monday mornings for example, having led staff briefing he stands, opening a particular door on a corridor, where lots of children pass at the beginning of the day.

When Dave talks about the 'gradual evolution' of giving 'very good' staff new roles, we see a school leader who appreciates his staff and wants to nurture their growth, in the style of SL (Spears, 1998). He is also empowering colleagues which in turn is building capacity in the school, both key aspects of DL (Bennett, et al., 2003; Harris, et al., 2007 noting Mitchell & Sackney, 2000). He acknowledges that if the school is not to suffer as there is more outward facing work for him and colleagues, that there needs to be this DL and there is something genuine in him recognising that 'you've almost literally got out of the way', showing that he values the opportunities for his colleagues that DL brings. We also see this in LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007), which encompasses DL and also empowers staff, also acknowledged as a key aspect of a successful school by Leithwood, et al. (2019).

Dave is asked about the leadership that marks out an outstanding school and talks about these schools developing 'considerable capacity' in terms of 'the depth' and 'strength' of leadership: '…you must have others, significant others with you if you're really gonna build and you know

I guess sustained outstanding...' and describes the Head as '…a necessary factor but not a sufficient factor.' This reinforces the sense of DL and its place in school improvement and in schools that are high-performing. Furthermore, it is in keeping with a model of LfL.

Dave believes that there is 'excellence' in teaching and learning and that this has been encouraged by the accreditation of fifteen Advanced Skills Teachers. This has also been supported by recruiting heavily from the University. Dave talks about 'recruiting quality' and considers the outreach work offered to colleagues as something which is 'mutually reinforcing'. Whilst this seems implicit in all models, this is a key strand of LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007). We also see the use of ASTs in the CPD offered to colleagues, an aspect of all models. The use of the term 'disruptors' shows ASTs identifying improvements needed and then supporting and challenging staff. This is also congruent with the notion of Dave allowing 'constructive dissent' to fully embrace the concept of DL (Woods, 2005 noting Grint, 2005). Whilst this is a good example of teacher leadership (Harris, 2003) within a DL model, this could conversely be seen as empowering a potentially elite group and creating another tier of the institutional hierarchy which has been 'allowed' by the headteacher, thus maintaining the institutional power dynamics (Lumby, 2013) This could be seen as running counter to the collaborative, collegiate and egalitarian culture suggested by a pure conception of DL. It requires those colleagues who are led to trust the ASTs who in turn should be respectful to their peers.

Dave believes that that to prevent decline, a school needs to embrace change: 'people have to be on the edge of being over-stretched in order not to go backwards.', but that, in tandem, headteachers must also 'cut out the nonsense', for staff by making 'a judgement about the latest thing…'. In this sense, Dave is supporting, protecting and also challenging colleagues. Dave also thinks that it is important to make sure 'people are motivated' by being able to 'just get on with it', rather than putting things in place to 'force people to do things'. We see here the protection of Instructional time as part of IL (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and the 'buffering' from distractions in TL (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005) and LfL (Murphy, et al.,2007). The idea of people being 'on the edge' and the importance of motivation to enable progress has a sense of the 'inspirational motivation' of TL (Bass & Avolio, 1994) and of the momentum, associated with the 'drive' discussed above. There is also a respect for professional expertise and autonomy which we see particularly in SL(Stone, et al., 2004); . This also relates to trust and empowerment which, align with DL (Harris, 2013) and LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007).

The appointment of high- quality staff also supports a focus on teaching and learning and the school has its own 'Cropton' definition of what an outstanding lesson is like, created by staff. This complements a vision for learning as part of LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007) and the traditional IL model (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985). This also demonstrates a collaborative culture as part of DL (Harris, et al., 2007) further shown in the teaching and learning group (Stoll, et al., 2006b)

which Dave says, '…we sort of like that group as much to drive the agendas of middle leaders as much as middle leaders to drive the agenda of that group but in a perfect world it sort of intermeshes really, so there is that, but there is no-one who says you're the lead on teaching and learning... '. This group provides the 'intellectual stimulation' (Bass & Avolio, 1994) which we see in all models as well as sharing IL (Marks & Printy, 2003) and enhancing teacher leadership as part of DL (Harris, 2003; Harris, et al., 2007). This is also very much a practice in keeping with LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007) and an example of empowerment, shown in how it is used to 'drive' the teaching and learning agenda. However, to judge if this is a genuinely collegiate approach, we would want to question further how 'representation' is ensured to avoid a form of imposed distribution which would be out of keeping with its democratic ethos.

We see that Dave thinks that the OFSTED descriptors are a 'pretty reasonable' definition of 'outstanding' but cautions that we should be 'mindful of these things and use these things but not be ruled by them.' This suggests a confidence in doing what is right for pupils, as a school leader rather than because OFSTED deem it to be right. The school is in a strong position, and over many years, so that Dave is confident to support fellow headteachers and also uses these opportunities to find good practice elsewhere to consider back at Cropton. He believes that '…the very outward facing nature of what we are and what we do, and have grown into, is a significant dynamic for on-going improvement…'. This extends to the schools in its Teaching School Alliance and its relationship in a Teaching Schools Network. The group has enabled Dave to 'challenge [his] own thinking and learning…'. We see a virtuous cycle which support school improvement by both Dave and members of staff having 'intellectual stimulation', seen in all models and particularly TL (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005) and LfL (murphy, et al., 2007). This enables further growth in capacity and confidence which supports further in-house improvement and enables the school to further develop its outreach and outward-facing aspect. This also then has resonance with the pioneering attribute in the conception of SL by Russell & Stone (2002).

5.3.6 Ian at Crabgate High School (Inner London)

Moral Purpose	'what middle class parents would do'; 'a virtuous circle' of school improvement; 'we will do everything we possibly can for them'.
High standards, high expectations	Ian believes that an outstanding school has to have very good examination results and also 'enrichment', for example the Arts.
Drive	'continually adjusting that balance'.
'Human' Leadership	'a huge emphasis on developing relationships'; a 'blanket that supports them' ; 'if you trust people you get back more than you asked for'.
Longevity and succession	Headteacher for over 18 years, six colleagues in team at the school for over ten years; 'it's about creating an ethos which is powerful enough that it can withstand change'.
Pedagogy	Support, intervention (see moral purpose). '…quite clear boundaries but we also want to include and we want kids to learning and to move on…'
CPD	subject team training sessions
High Quality staff	'the majority of staff who come here have … a healthy moral purpose' ; 'the core values of the school are shared by the vast majority of the staff '.
Innovation	'…professional trust and creativity and innovation and in a context where people are held to account but that the accountability doesn't take over'; mixed age KS4 classes over three years with large blocks of time for lessons.

Table 9: Examples of findings linked to characteristics for Ian

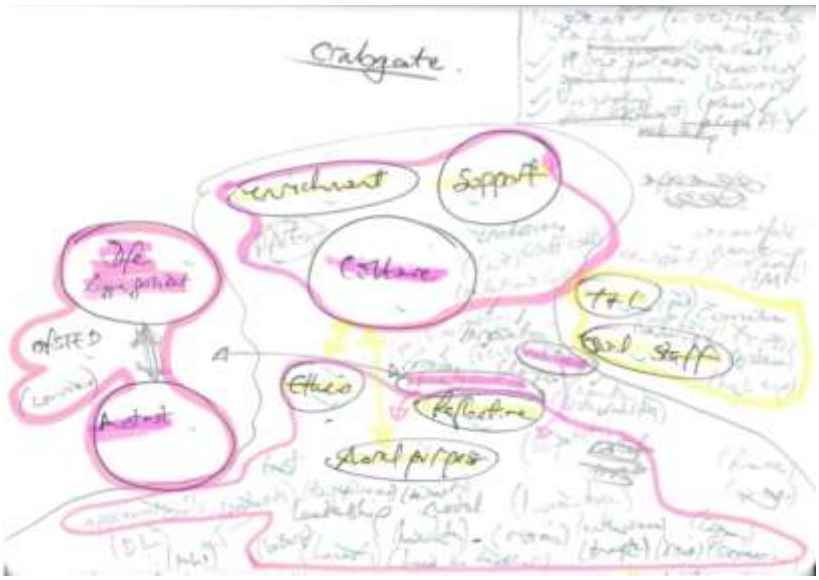


Figure 15: Analytical thematic map for Ian

Ian describes the context of the school he inherited, where results were the lowest in a low-achieving Borough, where there was a lot of 'racial strife' between communities and says that, 'we spent a lot of our time on the streets, you know, at the end of the school day…, in order to support children's safety home from school.' Ian thinks that, 'you can turn a school round very quickly by focusing narrowly on English and Maths…', but that building relationships and supporting families and children were the foundations that enabled the school to then improve further. This shows Ian's strong moral purpose which is rooted in school improvement in an area which has suffered underachievement. He also considers staff recruitment and quality in terms of their shared moral purpose. This is very much in the mould of traditional IL and SL (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Spears, 1998; Russell & Stone, 2002; Sergiovanni, 2013), providing stewardship to a school in the service of the local community. The shared moral purpose supports a vision for learning which is shared by the staff and part of all models, particularly those focused on pedagogy.

Ian's starting point was to focus on the Arts with funding resulting from the government policy of Specialist School status. He believes that the Arts enrich the whole institution and that lots of pupils experience success which can be built on as they grow in confidence, particularly with many children having English as an additional language. We again see Ian's community and social agency, together with the student-centred culture seen in LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007). He is building community within the school which supports the potential improvement in local community cohesion as a part of SL (Sergiovanni, 1992).

He considers the opportunities children experience as part of the school's moral purpose and a key driver in continuous school improvement to be a 'virtuous circle', because children buy-in and want to be more involved in their own learning. Ian believes that an outstanding school has to have very good examination results and that '…you can't get away with that and in our community even more so than anywhere else 'cause without them the kids haven't got a chance.', but also to '…recognise that there is more to education than examination results.' and that pupils need to have 'enrichment' and 'aspirational' experiences and '…be well-rounded in terms of their understanding of people who are different from them.' There is a focus on high standards and expectations, seen in all models and a clear vision for learning based around the holistic education of the child, seen in all models but particularly in the Instructional frameworks (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, et al., 2007).

Ian says that, 'staff see that we've got quite clear boundaries but we also want to include and we want kids to be learning and to move on.' He says that they 'give pupils probably more chances than they ought to', but that '…we will always come back and try and try and try.' He believes that the way pupils are supported, and the fact that senior staff teach and interact with the pupils '…combines to convey an ethos which is about inclusion and is about a belief that

our pupils can do well…'. This is very much an IL and LfL focus on disruption-free learning and managing the instructional programme. Furthermore, Ian believes that '…you have to model, you have to practice what you preach', and that his leadership team model can 'show their moral purpose'. He thinks that it is important that he and his senior team 'can't just talk it', but that they all teach exam classes. This is about senior leaders being visible and modelling expectations that we see in all leadership models.

Ian considers that an outstanding school should have '…a sense of inquisitiveness and creativity and wanting to improve and looking for improvement…', with people who are '…not content with what they're doing but always looking for the next improvement and it should have a high sense of moral purpose as well.' He thinks that it is '…something about the collective – don't' know what it is really - it's to do with the ethos and the values and the team work.' The focus on continuous improvement is in keeping with IL and LfL models (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, et al., 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012). There is also a clear emphasis on the sharing of values and of leadership in terms of the staff team working together on school improvement. Collaborative culture is seen as an aspect of TL (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). We also recognise DL in this light and that this builds capacity for school improvement (Harris, et al., 2007. We see this empowerment and trust also in SL (Russell & Stone, 2002; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007).

Ian thinks that it is important to talk with individual new staff twice in the first year about what has gone well and what could be better. Staff say, '…I've been incredibly well supported', This shows that Ian is giving consideration in the style of TL (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005) but also listening, being aware and nurturing staff as attributes of SL (Spears, 1998). Staff feel supported and part of the school community because the Head is taking a personal interest in staff, also an aspect of the LfL model (Murphy, et al., 2007), by building commitment and trust.

Ian also thinks that '…you have to have the confidence to give things away' and let your leadership team lead. He reflects on one of the most fulfilling parts of the job being '… just seeing that growth and something similar in the middle leadership as well where people have just been allowed and encouraged…'. This trust and empowerment, in aspects of DL (Bennett, et al., 2003; Harris, et al., 2007), is integrated into LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007) and in keeping with SL (Russell & Stone, 2002; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Ian wants a team to bring different skills and outlooks to the school. This underscores his authenticity and his genuine commitment to a collaborative, collegiate community, the latter seen as a key aspect of a successful school (Leithwood et al., 2019)

The interview with Ian also reveals some of his concerns which contextualise his leadership. His first is about 'the Academy approach', which he describes as 'autocratic', and believes that this creates a 'formulaic' approach to teaching and learning, with the potential loss of 'creativity and innovation' from the education system. He is also concerned about government policy which doesn't prioritise the Arts subjects in the EBac (English Baccalaureate) measurement leading to an 'unforeseen consequence' of schools reducing the Arts curriculum, because '…you will focus on what's going to be measured.'

5.3.7 Heather at Bluestone High School (county bordering London)

Moral Purpose	''cause if they are happy and they're enjoying it they will engage'
High standards, high expectations	Heather wants, '…outcomes to always be outstanding…'
Drive	'pick them off one by one'; 'say it is possible to be even better'; 'not being afraid', 'doing something radical'
'Human' Leadership	'the science rooms looked a bit of a mess' ; 'people don't need to be told off'; 'everybody thrives in a happy, positive atmosphere and I will at some point introduce compulsory smiling' ; '[SLT are] bumping into each other in the corridors'
Longevity and succession	
A focus on Pedagogy (T&L)	'that buzz of teaching and learning'
Continuing Professional Development	Learning leaders, 'will work in whatever way is appropriate to try and help that member of staff'; 'getting [teaching and learning] into the dialogue all the time' : Middle leadership programme
High quality staff	
Innovation	funding smaller classes; staff were 'frightened to try something' ; 'if nobody ever goes out you become very insular' ; 'children believe they're in the top set'; 'teaching and learning market' - 'a bit of fun and competition..'

Table 10: Examples of findings linked to characteristics for Heather

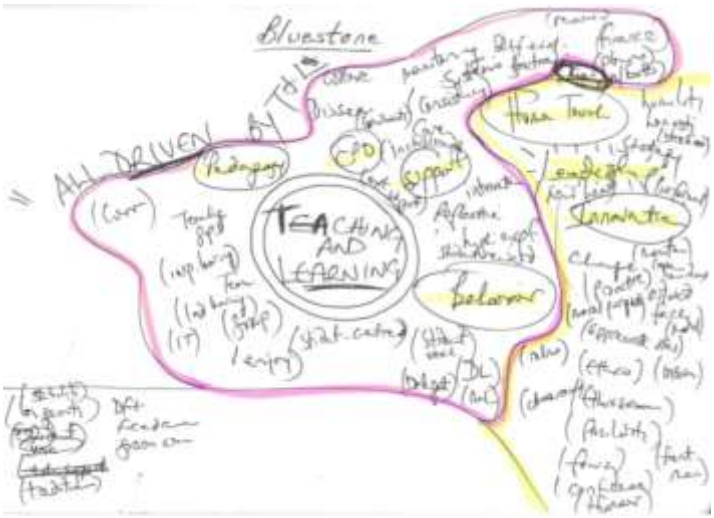


Figure 16: Analytical thematic map for Heather

Heather talks with speed and enthusiasm, her speech peppered with humour and laughter. When she joined the school, she was concerned that some staff '…revert[ed] back to satisfactory safe…' teaching which, she acknowledges, gets good outcomes, but Heather wants '…outcomes to always be outstanding…'. Her focus on teaching and learning is very much in keeping with IL and LfL. She has high expectations and a drive and determination which is part of the culture-building of these models. In her quest, Heather describes a variety of innovative CPD opportunities which help the school have that 'buzz' as discussed in the analysis and summarised in Table 10. This also includes staff with a formal role of 'Learning Leaders'. Her innovations are focused on the classroom, in the style of a LfL, with the examples such as smaller classes and broader setting, to support improved outcomes. Intellectual stimulation provided though CPD is seen in all leadership frameworks and DL via the 'Learning Leaders' as 'teacher leaders', developing a collaborative and supportive collegiate culture, and building further capacity for school improvement (Harris, et al., 2007; Chrispeels & Harris, 2006).

To support the focus on learning, Heather has also tried to get consistency in how low-level disruptive behaviour is managed, with 'staged consequences'. This is an aspect of both Instructional models, ensuring disruption free learning and a safe, orderly learning environment. The walkie-talkie on her desk reminds us of the leadership team patrol that enable this during school session and also shows her visibility as leader seen in all models.

I ask Heather if there are things that she doesn't waste her time with, to which she replies: 'I'm absolutely not having staff spending any time filling in forms and jumping through hoops to get a badge to say that we're good at something. It's good enough for us to know we're good at it.'. This is further evidence of her focus on learning, 'buffering' staff from distractions and protecting the instructional time seen in the Instructional frameworks and in TL (Hallinger &

Murphy, 1985; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Kelley & Halverson, 2012). The examples of Heather's drive and determination, above, show the courage of SL (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) in improving outcomes. She is also modelling the behaviours she wants to see in others in terms of challenging the status quo. This contributes to setting direction, as an aspect of TL would (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005). She is also building a culture of school improvement as part of IL and LfL.

When I ask Heather about outstanding teaching, she thinks this is a teacher '…that absolutely cares about every individual child.' These are teachers who, '…even though they're already brilliant [are] looking at ways to be even more so; they're the teachers that go the extra mile, that try the something new, that are reviewing and reflecting on their practice, are making it engaging for the children…'. She broadens this out to consider the whole staff: 'I think that's a real strength of the school: that everybody cares about everything'. This suggests less of a focus on the headteacher seen in a traditional IL model (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) and, whilst not explicit, more of the collegiate and collaborative culture seen in TL (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005) and Shared IL (Marks & Printy, 2003). It also suggests that colleagues are being trusted, respected and empowered to grow in their practice: features of both SL and LfL. Her own moral purpose is shown in her comment, summarised in Table 10, about caring for children, as a parent would, so that children are happy and then make academic progress. This is particular to SL and LfL and is an extension of community and family for children in school (Sergiovanni, 1992, 2013; Spears, 1998; Russell & Stone, 2002; Murphy, et al., 2007; van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011)

Heather's interview continues with her reflections on the challenging aspects of teaching such as differentiation and trying to '…teach children to be independent learners.' Her focus on the detailed aspects of the teaching and learning process are characteristic of the IL and LfL. Heather talks about making improvements in a subject team, which had had previously, '…quite a formulaic approach', by focusing on lesson planning and schemes of work. This is supported by over-staffing in order to build in peer-paired planning time. This shows a 'hands-on approach' and deep and knowledgeable engagement with teaching and learning, seen in these models. Heather thinks that 'we're quite critical of ourselves all the time…' and '…constantly looking at things that we want to improve.' She has a secondee to the Leadership team, '…increasing and improving our processes for student voice', for example. This focus on monitoring and evaluation of learning supports the management of the instructional programme. The importance of student voice is also part of the personalised, student-centred culture. These are both aspects of LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007). The suggestion of a 'secondee' suggest that there is an opportunity for the intellectual stimulation and growth of a colleague, an aspect of all models.

I ask Heather about the significant cultural aspects of the school that she thinks make it great. She says that, '…the relationships between the staff and the students are very positive …' and that, '…the culture of the school is this is a comprehensive school and we celebrate the successes and the kind of abilities, if you like, of all students regardless of where they start…'. She says that she doesn't encourage or discourage any type of student or family, '…this is for the local community and for everybody…'. This suggest a firm sense of service and stewardship to the local community seen in SL and also in terms of community and social advocacy in supporting children which we see in LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007).

I ask Heather about her leadership style. She says that, '...there are times when you have to take the figurehead role but it is about working with the team and if the team requires it to be a democratic process at that time, then it's done democratically…'. The focus on 'team' and democratic leadership shows Heather's understanding of shared and distributed forms of leadership and also an understanding that leadership style is dependent on situations and contexts (Bush & Glover, 2003). Indeed, one of Heather's challenges on joining the school was to change the, '...atmosphere…', which she describes as '…very, very orderly' and '…very restrained', with staff 'not willing to make a decision and having to run every decision by me…'. Hence, she has needed to empower people to make decisions and enable more shared leadership.

In the 'Human Leadership' comments in Table 10, we see the visible and vigilant leader, who in turn has a leadership team who are out and about in school, with the feeling of free-flowing and regular communication, ensuring the school in session is working well. This is seen in all leadership frameworks. There is a suggestion of high expectations that are monitored and corrected, which are common to all frameworks, but we also see that staff are dealt with in a dignified way and that Heather wants a positive and happy atmosphere for her colleagues to thrive. This is very much in the frame of SL, enabling staff to grow and feel confident because they are forgiven for errors (Spears, 1998). A positive atmosphere supports and encourages staff. This in turn builds trust (Russell & Stone, 2002) to support further school improvement .

5.3.8 James at Burnthouse Academy (a faith school in Inner London)

Moral purpose	'the corporate ownership of the vision'
High standards, high expectations	not a school, '…for the faint hearted…'; examination results are important.
Drive	Setting up a new school
'Human' Leadership	valuing staff and high staff morale': 'holding people to account ...but not bullying people, giving people a chance to develop their skills and their talents but with a sense of integrity but all of these are important really ....aspects of Christian leadership' ; not 'a . complete control freakish reign of terror'
Longevity & succession	A new school
Pedagogy	In lessons, 'as much as possible about students talking and receiving feedback rather than the teacher talking'; 'autonomy and freedom' for teachers
CPD	Lead practitioners: 'a remit to experiment, to try things out, to share best practice'
High quality staff	Attracting high quality staff by opening the Sixth Form alongside the first Year 7 intake
Innovation	'a blend of traditional and innovative …'; student-voice, co-construction learning model; 80 enrichment 'electives' with a longer school day.

Table 11: Examples of findings linked to characteristics for James

Figure 17: Analytical thematic map for James

Burnthouse Academy, as a relatively new school, was concerned to attract high quality staff. So, when the school took its first Year 7 intake, it also opened the Sixth Form. The focus on high quality staff and their intellectual stimulation, with the opportunity to teach Sixth form classes, are both aspects of LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007).

James explains that the school ethos is communicated to staff right from the start of the selection process and during induction. They serve a disadvantaged area with '…many children facing multiple problems at home which could affect their attainment and progress…' and that this is not a school '…for the faint hearted…'. The message is also carried into staff briefings and training days, which the school puts '…a very big emphasis on…'. James emphasises that '…it's about communication, regular, clear, consistent communication.' This shows James' moral purpose and service to the community, as part of SL and LfL (Russell & Stone, 2002; Murphy, et al., 2007; Sergiovanni, 2013). CPD, seen in all models, is considered here in terms of focusing on moral purpose and this is also a key part of the school's vision, thus part of the culture-building also seen in IL (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

James thinks that examination results are important, particularly in light of the fact that the school had been inspected without any results as evidence but he doesn't want to lose the school's ethos: '…the breadth of education that the students have, the sense of fun that they have when they're here…'. This is part of a clear vision for learning, seen in Instructional models and also gives and implicit sense of being student-centred which is a focus on LfL (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, et al., 2007). This is further reinforced by his leadership team doing lesson observations and by the opportunity for peer-observations and to observe outstanding teachers. The focus on monitoring and CPD are both in keeping with these models.

James has accepted the challenge to innovate in a new school and his focus is very much on teaching and learning in the mode of LfL. As such, he describes in our interview the focus on learning and feedback, and in so doing demonstrates that he is involved in the learning process. The vision for learning focuses on student-centred approaches, such as co-construction, capturing key aspects of this model. This also extends to the many enrichment opportunities which support the school's moral purpose and enhance the vision for Learning and also focus on personalisation for students. The 'lead practitioners' complement this model and are an example of DL, supporting the development of a learning community (Harris, 2003; Harris, et al., 2007).

James considers the Christian ethos of the school and gives the example of the behaviour management system:

> '…being firm and strict and having good discipline but also being fair and the opportunity for restorative justice and the idea of redemption, the idea of good coming out of bad, the idea of repentance, of being able to turn around and live your life in a different way…'.

The Christian ethos gives a framework for the moral purpose and vision for learning. Direct comparison is made with the SL of Jesus Christ (Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002), which strongly influences James' service and that of his colleagues, thinking particularly of forgiveness and compassion seen here in the examples of the behaviour system. This could also be considered an attribute of LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007), given that James' ethical code is heavily supported by Christian values.

Looking at the 'Human leadership' characteristics in Table 11, we see that staff accountability is framed by dignity and respect which we see particularly in SL but also in LfL and TL (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Russell & Stone, 2002; Stone et al., 2004; Murphy, et al., 2007). When I ask James about his leadership style, he describes it as '… certainly distributed…' and 'collegiate'. However he acknowledges that, '…there's always a mixture of things and I think people know that I know exactly what I'm looking for and exactly what sort of school I'm trying to build and maintain so I'm very clear on the vision.' He also talks of '…delegation of trust…', and enabling people to '…try things out; make mistakes being OK, within reason…', in a, '…no-blame culture…'. This is in keeping with LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007) as is the understanding that trust needs to be built in order to support school improvement. Enabling people to make mistakes and innovate is also part of the SL style and requires trust and a commitment to empowering staff (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). His understanding that leadership is '…a mixture of things…', reminds us that leadership is dependent on the person and context (Bush & Glover, 2003; Day, et al., 2009) and what Male & Palaiologou (2015) define as leadership as 'praxis' . He exemplifies this when he describes his setting a clear vision, alluding to a trait of TL (Bass & Alvolio, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999, 2005), in terms of setting direction. Perhaps this has been necessary as the headteacher building the culture in a new school.

5.3.9 Anne at Stinton High School (a faith school in a Provincial city)

Moral Purpose	our whole kind of Christian ethos is so through the warp and weft of everything'; 'the glory of God is a human being fully alive';
High Standards, High Expectations	'...a really good team that trust each other'; '...not being afraid to grasp some of the things that do need to be improved...'
Drive	my job as head is to be like the semi-permeable membrane around the school '; whilst the government's being very random and unfocused and unclear...'; 'I feel tremendous responsibility to have an impact both regionally and nationally...'
'Human' Leadership	'I think I empower my team'; 'I set a really clear vision and espouse a really clear set of values...'; flexibility; 'dialogue' and 'reflection'; 'enable other people to do stuff …. and rightly get the credit...'
Longevity and succession	
Pedagogy	A model support learning; '…we want our learners to be more independent and empowered '; '...a language that allows people to express that kind of commitment and passion'
CPD	Learning communities: 'mechanisms for sharing that good practice'
High quality staff	'…building the right leadership team, and kinda of getting everybody doing the right jobs'
Innovation	...working with the people who've got really good energy and positivity and ... listening to what they are saying .'; glass walls in classrooms and subject base rooms.

Table 12: Examples of findings linked to characteristics for Anne

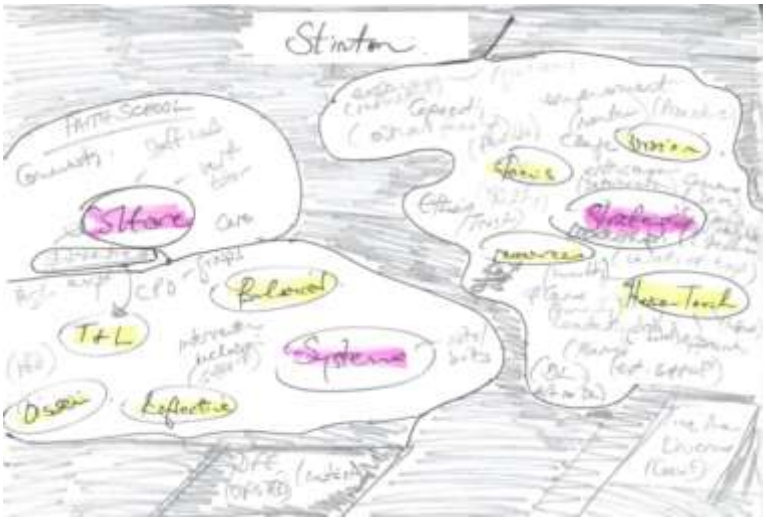


Figure 18: Analytical thematic map for Anne

Anne considers the two main factors in the school's successful OFSTED outcomes were:

> '…building the right leadership team, and kinda of getting everybody doing the right jobs. I think as well the other big challenge has been around making sure that every child kind of owned and helped to do their very best so that the very good culture of care that I inherited at the school results in delivering those actual gains in results.'

This shows a focus on learning seen in IL and LfL. The latter framework is shown in a personalised culture around individual pupils and the care which is part of the moral agency, also seen in the service and stewardship of SL. There is a sense of high expectation and a focus on continuous improvement for her team as a part of LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007).

Anne has also created base rooms for each subject team and glass walls to offices and classrooms to enable the sharing of good practice and support higher levels of vigilance, to in turn ensure disruption free learning and a safe orderly learning environment. These are also aspects of IL and LfL (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, et al, 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012). This is also seen in her desire (see Drive, in Table 12) to protect staff from the distractions of government, where she is critical, and to protect instructional time.

She describes the appointment of a new deputy whose responsibilities included '…operational behaviour stuff.', before focusing on '…achievement and teaching and learning stuff…'. Anne then appointed a second deputy to oversee the day-to day running of the school because she recognised that she was '..far too operational…'. This is in the mode of IL and LfL, formally sharing the management of the instructional programme (Marks & Printy, 2003) and also ensuring disruption-free learning.

Anne talks about her leadership team and their complementary skills. She has one, who is a Head of Faculty and is '…very much coming from a kind of energetic teaching and learning background and creating the chemistry within the team.' She talks about a deputy in charge of achievement who is '...absolutely brilliant on data and timetabling.' There is also somebody '…who's got a passion for staff development and coaching', and somebody who's a '…really good systems thinker'. This suggests a LfL framework (Murphy, et al., 2007) in that Anne is focused on recruiting high quality staff into the leadership team. This drives change and supports the instructional programme, including the leadership of CPD. To this end, Anne also has systems for sharing good practice including the establishment of 'Learning communities' and staff undertaking, 'action research type projects'. These also show a good example of Teacher Leadership as an example of Distributed Leadership which is helping to strengthen and grow the learning community in the school (Harris, 2003; Stoll, et al., 2006b; Harris, et al., 2007; Stoll, 2011; Cordingley & Bell, 2012), in keeping with the LfL framework.

In reviewing the extracts under 'Human Leadership' in Table 12, we see aspects of SL in terms of empowerment and the emphasis on 'standing back' to let others get the credit (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). Anne is also encouraging aspects of SL (Spears, 1998; Russell & Stone, 2002) in her team, such as 'dialogue', which links to listening, awareness and communication and the reflectivity also seen in LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007). When Anne talks about her clarity of vision, the focus is more on her as leader and suggests TL in terms of 'setting direction' Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005), and also the 'conceptualization' as an attribute of SL (Spears, 1998). When discussing high expectations, and the drive to tackle underperformance, summarised in Table 12, Anne also talks about the importance of the team and of trust, which are aspects of all models.

When I ask her if there is anything in lessons that I should expect to see, she talks about annotated seating plans focusing on how lessons are supporting a particular child and to have '…good assessment for learning…'. She does not expect staff to have particular features of a lesson such as a starter or plenary, '…there's not like one right answer.' This is an Instructional leader, overseeing the management of the instructional programme and being knowledgeable, maintaining the focus on the key aspects of successful learning.

The staff were involved in creating the model to support learning, summarised in the Table 12. Anne says, '…we did quite a lot of work as a staff', and we said, '…if we had a learner like that we'd be delighted..'. This process helps build the staff community and shows trust and respect for colleagues, seen in both SL (Spears, 1998) and LfL and is part of the collaborative culture fostered by TL. This also provides the 'intellectual stimulation', common to LfL and TL (Bass & Avolio, 1994; Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Murphy, et al., 2007). The themes are also used in assemblies and 'tutor worships'. This is also about the creation of a vision for the school which is personalised for students and put into practice in the curriculum. There is a sense of moral purpose of SL (Sergiovanni, 2013) as well as aspects of instructional models of leadership with a 'Vision for Learning', articulated and shared (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, et al., 2007).

The moral purpose of the school, outlined in Table 12, is framed within the Christian ethos which Anne believes drives everything, and acts as a vision for the school: 'the glory of God is a human being fully alive.' Anne says that the school has '…quite an explicit ethos about how we expect people to treat each other...'. Anne also describes a particular part of the school's improvement plan, focusing on the concept of 'hope': ' …particularly at a time of uncertainty, at a time when fifty per cent of young black men are unemployed, actually focusing on hope is really really important.'

We return here to SL, with its direct links to Jesus Christ, discussed with James above Sendjaya & Sarros, 2002). The clarity of vision is a key feature of all the theories of leadership and the way Christian belief is integrated into the school gives a link with opportunities for supporting learning and hence is a powerful contribution to LfL. The focus on developing 'hope' in young people complements these leadership frameworks, as this is a form of social advocacy (Murphy, et al., 2007) or service (Sergiovanni, 1992) on behalf of the community.

5.3.10 Dee at Silvergate High School (Outer London)

Moral purpose	'…about the creativity and about kids having confidence and being able to explore and develop things themselves.'; '…my vision and my passion is about being a good school for the kids we're serving.'
High standards, high expectations	'things have to be well-organised'; '…the biggest strength is that we're relentless…'
Drive	I'm responsible for these kids and giving them a future'
'Human' Leadership	we're here to respect each other and to support each other' ; 'to have real distributed leadership you need to have that clear vision'
Longevity and succession	Deputy Headteacher became Associate Headteacher as Dee became Executive Head, having worked together for fifteen years
Pedagogy	'My passion is the curriculum'
CPD	'Leaders of learning'; 'Improving Teacher' and 'Advancing Teacher' programmes; 'market-place'- style CPD session
High quality staff	'if she doesn't bite that then I'll go for capability and I'll dismiss her.'
Innovation	Free school: 'about developing social capital with those youngsters' ; autistic provision

Table 13: Examples of findings linked to characteristics for Dee

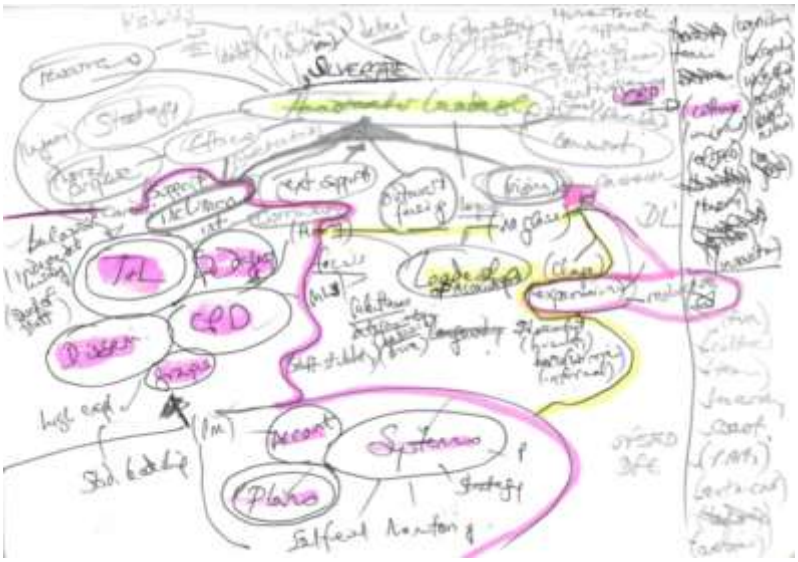


Figure 19: Analytical thematic map for Dee

I interviewed both Dee, the executive headteacher, and Deanna, the associate headteacher. The interview with Deanna focuses on the leadership and management of teaching and learning: '…we can't afford to not still have that push push push […] and it is that teaching and learning push', with the expectations defined by the 'Silvergate Standard'. After OFSTED graded the school as 'good', Deanna says that, 'we just immersed - everything we talked about was learning, people would avoid me in the corridor …'. She felt that this was '…about shifting a culture and that is probably the hardest thing I've done.'

Deanna is showing a very close focus on LfL with a focus on high expectations and the 'push' for continuous improvement (Murphy, et al., 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012). Dee has delegated oversight of teaching and learning to Deanna, much as would be in the case with Headteacher and Deputy. As their roles are emerging, the way LfL is shared between roles will also do so. The development of the 'Silvergate Standard' aligns with a clear vision for learning seen in this model: '…we went back and looked at our school improvement vision and all of that was about learning.' Deanna goes further and explains that the school wants learners who are 'independent' and 'a bit more sort of global thinking' and to be resilient and to 'feel that aspiration'. We also have this sense of Deanna's commitment in driving forward the change and, in doing so, showing a deep engagement with staff and managing the instructional programme: '…the biggest strength is that we're relentless, Dee is relentless, I've caught it so and the Leadership Team have it and actually a lot of our colleagues do…'. This also shows that the leadership team are modelling this attribute, which further supports school improvement in creating a culture of high expectation.

LfL is also seen in the 'individualized support' offered in 'Improving Teacher' and 'Advancing Teacher' programmes, in which colleagues work in triads to plan, observe and deliver lessons,

and is in keeping with the development of 'communities of learning' seen in the LfL model . This is also seen in the way meetings work '…a bit like a Teacher Learning Communities session…' and that training is 'consultative, it's discussion you know, it's developing these sorts of shared ideas and principles.' This is further developed in subject team bulletins. This 'intellectual stimulation' is also seen in another example of CPD where a 'market place' style is used to engage staff. Support is given via 'Leaders in Learning' who operate across Silvergate and the partner school. These are examples of DL and Teacher Leadership (Harris, 2003; Stoll, et al., 2006b; Harris, et al., 2007; Stoll, 2011; Cordingley & Bell, 2012).

The focus on learning is supported by monitoring the instructional programme in the form of departmental evaluations and action plans. Furthermore, the school is also re-evaluating classroom expectations and conducting a curriculum review. The school also tries to reduce the negative impact of pupils' behaviour, so that learning is not disrupted. Teachers have completed 'Assertive Discipline' CPD, and Heads of Year focus on 'learning as the way to move their Year groups forward so they're not always banging on about behaviour; they're always talking about behaviour for learning…'. These LfL traits are also seen in the emphasis on a personalised culture which Deanna exemplifies in the school's systematic approach to different 'waves' of intervention, with a large inclusion centre to support this, in a context where around eighty percent of pupils have English as a second language. This also then supports the local community and is in keeping with social advocacy (Murphy, et al., 2007) as part of this model.

Whilst less involved in the management of the instructional programme, Dee has a vision for learning in keeping with the LfL framework: 'my passion is the curriculum'. She explains that she wanted a 'coherent progression' with 'real choice', with academic subjects and more vocational and creative subjects. To this end as 'part of our vision' the school became a 'media arts college' (an aspect of the Specialist schools programme, at that time). Dee '…wanted something that was the future, that the whole school could engage with and about the creativity and about kids having confidence and being able to explore and develop things themselves.' Not only is this a vision for learning but it also exemplifies Dee's moral purpose and service to the community, also aspects of this model and features of SL (Sergiovanni, 2013). To further this point, Dee describes the fact that there are around six hundred external applications to the Sixth form from 'often really bright kids'. She doesn't take them '…because we're a comprehensive school and we're looking at our own kids and we're looking at different routes so you can see my vision and my passion is about being a good school for the kids we're serving…'. (see also Table 13). This shows her drive to support school improvement, because of her strong moral purpose and clear vision for the school. Furthermore, Dee believes that being 'here to support youngsters' is so 'so embedded here within the culture', and hence we see the suggestion of a shared vision seen in all models. Dee also describes, in the 'human

leadership' row of Table 13, the twin attributes of respect and support in relations to both pupils and staff. This gives a sense of building the school community as an aspect of SL.

Dee describes the journey to get an 'outstanding' judgement and the use of accountability measures: 'I wasn't prepared to sell my soul to OFSTED either because my drive on the curriculum is about progression opportunities so it wasn't about making all kids to do a BTEC.'. Her point being that, at this time, some schools were using this qualification to 'game' their data outcomes: 'I'm not there for the league tables I'm there for providing those opportunities for the kids…'. This reinforces her confidence and determination in keeping true to her moral purpose and shows the integrity and authenticity of SL (Russell & Stone, 2002). We can also see aspects of IL in building a school culture (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985).

Dee says that she focuses on the 'strategic vision' and likes to 'keep absolutely up-to-speed with what's going on.' She considers 'what it means for us' and then aims to 'pull people into those strategic discussions' and focuses on 'facilitating people through distributed leadership', which she says, 'has always been my passion', and in this context says that she doesn't need to be 'centre-stage'. We see here aspects of TL (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999, 2005), setting a clear direction for the school, involving colleagues in decision-making,also seen in SL(Spears, 1998), and providing 'inspirational motivation' (Bass & Avolio, 1994) via her 'strategic discussions'. She is also fostering a collaborative culture, not only an aspect of this framework but also explicitly stating her commitment to DL. By involving colleagues in decision making, she is showing respect and appreciation, seen also in LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007).

Dee also makes clear, in her comments on 'Human' Leadership, in Table 13, that DL requires a clear vision and 'buy-in' as conditions of its successful use. This supports the development of a 'community of learning' and collegiality, also seen in LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012). Dee reminds us also that a Head needs confidence to allow others to lead and thus focuses on the key features of trust and empowerment seen in these models. She also makes clear the importance of monitoring and support that are required as a condition of DL. This mitigates any potential for neglect which may impact on colleagues' ability to make progress. This needs to be handled carefully so that accountability does not impact negatively on the level of trust and empowerment.

Dee explains that she doesn't want to 'promote' herself, 'I'm not driven by my own ego, I'm driven by wanting to get the right sort of provision for youngsters and for colleagues and for the community'. She explains that this was the motivation for supporting another school. She says, 'I relish that challenge' and wants to use her experience 'to benefit others'. Dee is outward facing and expanding her reach, as Servant Leader and Leader of Learning, to a wider community, she provides social advocacy and moral agency and uses the language of humility

and service (Sergiovanni, 1992, 2013; Murphy, et al., 2007; van Dierendonck & Nuijen, 2011; ASCL, 2019).

Dee's energy and drive to provide for the local community are seen in the school gaining the 'high-performing school specialism', in 'applied learning' (vocational learning), and having autistic provision. She is waiting for an application to lead a Teaching School Alliance and there is also a school building expansion programme about to start on site. Dee is also applying to open a Free School for 'alternative provision', of which she says, 'it's about developing social capital with those youngsters, you know, etiquette, how to behave themselves through an adult sort of business environment.' She links this to the autistic provision in school: 'we're not frightened of personalising the curriculum' and being 'flexible with who the kids are and what they're about and you have high expectations of them.' Dee gives the example of a school concert and how autistic children felt 'so much part of that school community', and that this is what she also wants for the alternative provision. This shows a clear vision built on inclusion and learning which serves the local community. It is a feature of all leadership models and feels particularly coherent with Instructional styles (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, et al., 2007) and the stewardship of SL (Sergiovanni, 1992, 2013). Her leadership provides the 'inspirational motivation' of TL (Bass & Avolio, 1994), as she acts as a role model (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999, 2005) for staff. In terms of outstanding features of the school, Dee thinks that it is the '…quality of what we provide, it's the extent of it', as well as '…the care and progression routes…', together with '…the attention to detail.' In this sense she is setting high standards and expectations seen in all models (see also the extract in Table 13).

We also see here, as an aspect of SL in Dee's pioneering spirit and courage (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011). This steeliness is also seen in her approach to staff capability: 'I'm very pragmatic though and won't act until there's a way forward.' She gives an example of offering a member of staff a different role because she is undergoing monitoring as part of an informal capability process, and says that 'if she doesn't bite that then I'll go for capability and I'll dismiss her.' Although this expression lacks the sense of compassion and awareness of SL, it reveals that school leaders do need to be inured to make difficult decisions. In addition, we are reminded that this is the language that I am privy to and not how this may play out in how this action would be handled face-to-face with the member of staff. However, she does reveal a more reflective and humble side when she considers the school expansion programme, in the privacy of our interview that: 'In my darker moments I think oh my goodness can you pull this one off?' The latter being in keeping with both the humility of SL (van Dierendonck & Nuijten, 2011) and the reflectiveness of LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007).

5.3.11 Emma at Kerdy Green Academy (Provincial city)

Moral purpose	'a very …cohesive quite family based atmosphere'; 'kids can be well educated and well qualified and they're not necessarily the same things'
High standards, high expectations	'…unless you're ready to […] get on the thoroughbred and ride it every day it can be a really challenging place to work!'
Drive	'But this is the mothership; this is the Starship Enterprise and this cannot, this has got to be, you know, maintained if not improved even further…'
'Human' Leadership	'I'm privileged to lead'
Longevity and succession	Became Head when predecessor became Trust CEO: 'we've always always been about succession planning'
Pedagogy	'co-constructors'; 'learning habits'; 'split-screen teaching'
CPD	'learning coach programme; 'Learning Champions'; ten CPD days; 'Enhancing Learning programme'
High quality staff	Outstanding teachers in the leadership team
Innovation	Staff 'eat and drink with the children in the college restaurant'; 'we have a whole vocabulary here' ; 'to ...get rid of some of the baggage that was associated with education'; 'some of our children don't have homes in which there's any kind of work going on.'

Table 14: Examples of findings linked to characteristics for Emma

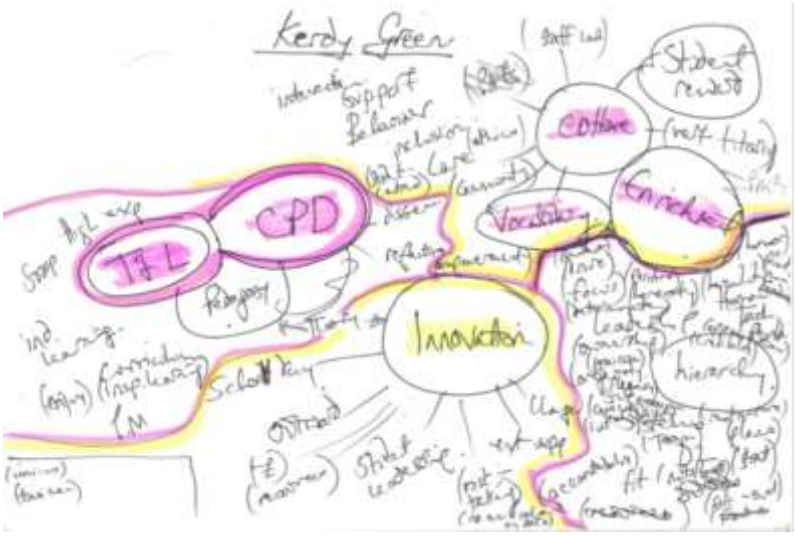


Figure 20: Analytical thematic map for Emma

The interview with Emma provides evidence for many aspects of LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012). As part of a vision for learning, Emma's states that, '…the expectation, over time, is that children will become more autonomous, independent…' There are also many examples of the importance given to student voice in the learning culture where they are 'co-constructors in the situation.' The focus on learning extends to Learning Support Assistants being located in departmental offices. This facilitates the sharing of information in the day-to-day management of the instructional programme and enhances the collaborative and collegiate culture. With no formal staffroom, there is staff presence around the building to support a safe orderly atmosphere. This supports a focus on learning and is also a feature of a more traditional IL model (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985) with 'disruption free learning' provided with a positive behaviour management system which focuses on 'reward and recognition'.

The focus on learning as part of a LfL framework is shown when Emma reflects on the school's journey to outstanding. She suggests that, whilst the school was focusing on teaching, that they needed to focus '…more about learning and what learning was…'. External support was used to 'empower' by initiating a 'dialogue with staff and with children about learning…', which released '…an energy and a drive…', which Emma describes as like 'a key to Pandora's Box'. She explains that the focus on 'learning habits' is supported by staff using 'split-screen teaching' to describe not only what is being taught but also 'how children are learning.' This shows Emma as knowledgeable in overseeing the management of the instructional programme and that there is a focus on learning which is as part of the academy's vision.

Monitoring happens in common with Instructional models, discussed above, and TL (Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005): '…we are always identified here as a self-improvement organisation…'. In fact, Emma says that the school is 'broadening out the way we are talking and reviewing and evaluating that with our students themselves…'. Hence, this shows that the school is continuously improving, student- centred and genuinely focusing on improving the students' learning experiences, in line with the LfL model.

In terms of CPD, the school has a 'learning coach programme', with some 'pretty able practitioners', who were also identified as 'Learning Champions', both leading activities and disseminating 'joint practice' within their teams and 'developing a coaching model'. This focus on CPD is seen in all models and resonates with LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007; Kelley & Halverson, 2012) particularly as we see DL in the form of Teacher Leaders. This is supporting the development of a community of learning (Harris, 2003; Harris, et al., 2007; Cordingley & Bell, 2012). To reiterate, this focus on CPD as part of a collaborative culture, supported by DL, is a key feature of successful schools (Leithwood et al., 2019) The focus on students, as part of this culture, is seen in their contribution to the coaching programme, where they support interview of teaching candidates and conduct lesson observations, or reflect with teachers on

their practice. The importance of CPD is underlined by the fact that the school uses the freedoms of being an academy to increase the number of training days to ten, twice the usual allocation. In addition, an evening every week focuses on 'an Enhancing Learning programme' which in turn maintains the focus on learning.

The focus on learning continues into the staff roles supporting this. The three Vice Principals all teach, are outstanding teachers and all have a teaching and learning responsibility for the, 'Directors of Learning'. Emma describes the 'cross-function' of these colleagues meeting together as part of the CPD programme and '…co-planning or talking and, or learning from each other…'. She also says that, '…there are lots and lots of staff with little bits of responsibility…', and gives the example of eight 'literacy ambassadors' across the school. This shows DL and teacher leadership (Harris, 2003; Harris, et al., 2007), as colleagues share practice and a wider pool of colleagues lead different aspects of the instructional programme. Further research would enable us to discern the extent to which this was genuine empowerment or 'contrived collegiality' (Hargreaves & Dawe, 1990) within a structure defined by the Trust and the Principal. However, Emma does say that the academy has always encouraged 'risk taking' and trying to '…keep away from the set ways', which gives an indication of some autonomy for staff to feel empowered. Nevertheless, these DL actions build capacity and develop a learning community with 'intellectual stimulation' for staff, as part of the LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007).

The school uses different language (section 4.3.4) to reframe systems, structures and actions in school to enhance the school's identity and to keep the focus on learning. This is arguably also a form of symbolism, suggested as a characteristic of the LfL model defined by Murphy, et al. (2007). This can be a simple example such as calling student assemblies 'gatherings', or more nuanced in redefining the teachers' roles. Emma believes staff now like to think of themselves as 'facilitators of learning' rather than teachers because '…teachers smacks of that old-fashioned Victorian model…'. There are also 'Learning Leaders' which used to be called 'Curriculum Leaders' and were renamed to refocus the organisation in learning.

This sense of identity can, in turn, enhance the sense for belonging for children. In doing so, it shows a focus on pupils and provides a service to the community. We see here elements of SL in terms of stewardship (Sergiovanni, 2013) on behalf of the local community and an environment which nurtures young people. This is also seen in each student having a personal tutor. Whilst common in most schools, the focus here is made greater by the small groups of sixteen students. This ensures that they are '…all know well by at least one person.' Part of the programme includes a focus on literacy and particularly reading, supplemented by a catch-up reading programme, supported by the Inclusion centre. This again shows that time is focused on learning and individual students as part of the LfL model. Personal tutors are

‘buddied together’ with a more experienced colleague providing peer support. This is an example of the collaborative culture in school and teacher leadership being used as part of DL (Harris, 2003; Harris, et al., 2007), integral to LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007).

The strong sense of the academy’s culture and brand is suggested by Emma saying that, ‘while we have a Kerdy Green DNA, if you like, we’re not into empire building.’ Emma also uses a metaphor to describe the school as she outlines an issue of balance maintain the focus on learning:

> ‘…trying to manage the tension which definitely, definitely exists between succession planning, outreach, supporting other schools. But this is the mothership; this is the Starship Enterprise and this cannot, this has got to be, you know, maintained if not improved even further…’

We also see how carefully the culture and ethos is protected and shared. Emma describes herself as ‘just a product of Kerdy Green’ and in doing so suggests that the school’s status transcends individuals. She reinforces this by saying, ‘…I probably am just a really good embodiment of the culture and ethos here…’. She makes clear that both senior and middle leaders needed to be ‘…walking and talking that talk as well…’, in terms of ensuring the school’s ethos is sustained and shared. Emma suggests the culture and ethos of the schools is about ‘…doing things differently…’, ‘…providing outstanding opportunities for children …’, and to ‘…expect the absolute best from everybody…’. Emma explains that some students and staff find this a challenge: ‘…unless you’re ready to […] get on the thoroughbred and ride it every day it can be a really challenging place to work!’. We see here a strong sense of vision and high standards and expectations common to both IL models (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Murphy, et al., 2007) and TL (Leithwood & Jantzi, 1999, 2005) in particular, with a further metaphor of a racing horse used to describe the prestige of the school. Emma and her leaders are symbolizing professional practice and modelling values as they ‘walk the talk’ and when Emma describes ‘embodying’ the school ethos.

Emma understands that areas of improvement aren’t:

> ‘…necessarily always therefore measured in outcomes some things, some of it is about broadening and fattening and keeping this massive massive experience, which is for children who come here, it is an experience, and it is all for the access stuff, all of the opportunities they get and somewhere in there they hopefully will get some good qualifications…’.

When Emma describes this experience for children and the additional enrichment offered by the academy, we see a student-centred focus and an acknowledgment of the moral agency of the school in ensuring children have a well-rounded education. This is again exemplifies LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007) and has the moral purpose and service to the community that we see in SL (Sergiovanni, 1992, 2013), which is particularly pertinent in serving an inner-city catchment area.

5.4 Summary

In section 5.2, I compared the nine characteristics of leaders and schools, presented in the analysis (chapter 4) and noted that the first, 'moral purpose', had a strong alignment particularly with both SL (Sergiovanni, 1992, 2013) and LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007). We see this sense of service to the community the headteachers' serve and their stewardship expressed across the schools. This is seen in practice in terms of inclusion and care for all pupils and, in particular, for those more vulnerable. For both James and Anne, this is supported further by the fact that they lead faith schools, and faith is a foundation for, and permeates, the way the school community develops.

'High standards and expectations' were a common theme in the interviews with school leaders, which I linked to all models in section 5.2 and, in the theme of the need for 'high quality staff', to the LfL model. In terms of a vision for learning, in keeping particularly with LfL, we see the importance of enrichment to provide a holistic education for children and a focus on personalisation. All headteachers focus on learning, as is often shown in a detailed knowledge of key pedagogic issues and the day-to-day management of the instructional programme.

Also noted in section 5.2, CPD is common across all leadership models and an important aspect of all the schools discussed, with collaborative approaches common (for example, Johns 'sharing best practice programme', Brian and Dave's use of ASTs or Anne's learning communities) and many examples of the use of teacher leadership to provide peer support as part of a focus on school improvement. This use of DL empowers staff and builds capacity (Harris, et al., 2007). It is a key feature of LfL (Murphy, et al., 2007) and has been a notable aspect of successful schools (Leithwood, et al., 2019). For Dave and Dee's in particular, this is supported by an outward-facing disposition which aligns with the 'pioneering spirit' in van Dierendonck & Nuijten's (2011) conceptualisation of SL.

OFSTED does feature in many of the interviews. Often this is framed in terms of acknowledging the importance of accountability measures, whilst ensuring that childrens' education is not dictated by this. Headteachers have the confidence to do what they think is the right thing for

children in the local community. As Dee says: ‘I’m not there for the league tables I’m there for providing those opportunities for the kids…’.

Ensuring disruption free learning and an insistence on a safe, orderly learning environment, are common features amongst the school leaders, seen particularly in instructional models. School leader visibility and a sense of being ‘hands-on’, common to all models, is seen across many participants’ responses. Some leaders (for example, Philip) talk in terms of protecting or buffering colleagues from distractions. This aligns with the instructional leadership models and TL (Hallinger & Murphy, 1985; Leithwood & Jantzi, 2005; Murphy, et al., 2007, Kelley & Halverson, 2012).

The interviews with school leaders suggest that they are using leadership characteristics and actions found in the theories of leadership which were the focus of the literature review. The focus on learning is not surprising, given that these are high-performing schools and that the focus of the study tended towards this core activity. There is also reference to the fact that leaders do not adopt a particular style. As Brian says, ‘there’s no right way to lead’.

The remaining characteristics: ‘longevity and succession’ and ‘innovation’, were more challenging to align with leadership models, as discussed in section 5.2. Furthermore, the leaders’ accounts provide some insights into other contextual factors such as OFSTED and accountability measures as well as policy issues, such as the school status and the freedoms suggested as being offered by Academisation (section 1.5). The school’s location, whether inner-city or more rural, and its faith or secular status, provide additional contextual richness to the study.

In the conclusion I will consolidate these ideas before reflecting on how the study can be used within the profession and research communities. I will also reflect on how I, as a practitioner, have used the study and finally suggest areas for further research. The conceptual framework introduced in section 2.11 articulated the interaction between leadership praxis and the models of leadership. In the conclusion I will present a model which is a refinement of this initial conceptualisation, incorporating the nine characteristics suggested during analysis and discussion.

6 Conclusion

6.1 Introduction

In framing this conclusion, I reiterate that I can only interpret what was said in the interviews with leaders, and cannot assume that these discourses expressed the full reality of practice that other research methods might have revealed.

I introduced key theories of leadership in chapter two where I also reviewed the literature on CPD and successful and high-performing schools. This literature, together with contextual factors were used to develop a conceptual framework (section 2.11, figure 1) to guide the analysis and discussion of interviews with headteachers. I focused on models of Leadership for Learning and, in particular, that of Murphy, et al. (2007). Characteristics that this model shared with both Transformation and Instructional leadership, such as leader visibility, were discussed in section 2.5 and 2.11, and these were considered further during the discussion in chapter 5. I also discussed the congruence of Leadership for Learning to practices in successful and high-performing schools (sections 2.6,2.7,2.11) .

School leaders' discourses do reveal leadership characteristics and actions from different models, seen in the discussion in chapter 5. Although it would be reductionist to define different leaders as fitting into one or the other of these models, treating them more as typologies, the study provides evidence of the predominance of the Leadership for Learning model. Importantly, this is true across these high-performing schools which range in location from inner-city, close to a city, to shire county market towns. Furthermore, two were faith schools, one of which was recently opened, and some of the institutions were academies.

The study suggests nine characteristics being present across both leaders and the high-performing schools (numbered 1-9 in the following paragraphs). 'Pedagogy' (1) is explicitly associated with Leadership for Learning. To enable this focus on learning, we see examples of headteachers ensuring disruption-free learning, buffering colleagues from distractions, and a safe, orderly learning environment. These are visible and knowledgeable leaders, with 'high standards and expectations' (2), employing 'high quality staff' (3) where CPD (4) is seen as critical to improving the quality of learning experience for pupils.

There are many examples of collaboration and distributed leadership in the form of teacher leadership to support peers and ultimately improve outcomes for pupils. Furthermore, Leadership for Learning model, suggested by Murphy, et al. (2007), encompasses the holistic

education for each child, involving both personalisation and enrichment, which is seen across the leaders' discourses.

The additional consideration of Servant Leadership, during the discussion, provided examples across participants. Most striking was 'moral purpose'(5), notably in Sergiovanni's (1992) conception of the 'Virtuous School' and the service and stewardship of headteachers (Sergiovanni, 2013). I noted in section 2.11 that this also aligned with the Leadership for Learning model of Murphy, et al. (2007). In the discussion about 'drive'(6) (section 4.2.3), I suggested that 'moral purpose' could also be a motivational aspect of a headteacher's 'drive'. A further characteristic was, 'human' leadership (7) (section 4.2.4) which I suggested in section 5.2, was most aligned to models of Servant Leadership.

The initial conceptual framework, based on the literature, was supplemented by a more empirical consideration of transcript data during analysis. This acceptance of a form of conceptual pluralism has led to some characteristics, not so explicit in the theories of leadership (section 5.2) notably 'innovation' (8), and 'longevity and succession' (9), coming into focus.

There are connections with these characteristics and distributed leadership practices which, together with high quality CPD and the intellectual stimulation of a supportive, empowering school culture, thus encouraging staff retention as a sub-theme discussed in relation to 'longevity and succession' (section 4.2.5). In turn, retention supports sustainability and builds capacity. Furthermore, in high-performing organisations, a culture of both high-risk and high-trust benefits from distributed forms of leadership which again increases commitment and confidence (Leithwood, et al., 2013, p. 161) to enable 'no blame innovation' (Harris, 2009, pp. 9-11).

Leaders' actions are also mediated by policy context. In this study the status of the institution as a maintained school or as an academy, either standalone or as the lead institution in a multi-academy trust, was not a central focus of inquiry. Nevertheless, if a particular status provided opportunities for networking, supporting other institutions and an outward-facing disposition, these were considered when they were part of the interview dialogue. We have also seen, for those school leaders who discussed OFSTED, inspection as a necessary component of an accountability system but not something that drives their working practices. Indeed, accountability measures did not drive curriculum decisions, with headteachers rather emphasising childrens' holistic education.

This study's aim was to consider what constitutes a high-performing school and what characteristics of school leadership, expressed by the leaders themselves, support excellence. This was summarised in two research questions:

1. What do school leaders understand by excellence in English Secondary Schools?
2. What is the role of the school leader in achieving and sustaining excellence?

This study concludes with a model of achieving and sustaining excellence (figure 21), building on the initial conceptualisation (section 2.11, figure 1), with four of the suggested characteristics answering the first question: a focus on 'pedagogy', supported by 'high quality staff'; 'CPD' and propensity for 'innovation'. In answering the second, I suggested four school leadership characteristics: 'moral purpose', high standards & expectations', 'drive' and 'human leadership. 'Longevity and succession', whilst not a characteristic in the theories, is shown in brackets and is a reminder for school leaders to consider recruitment and retention with regard to all staff and in terms their own succession.

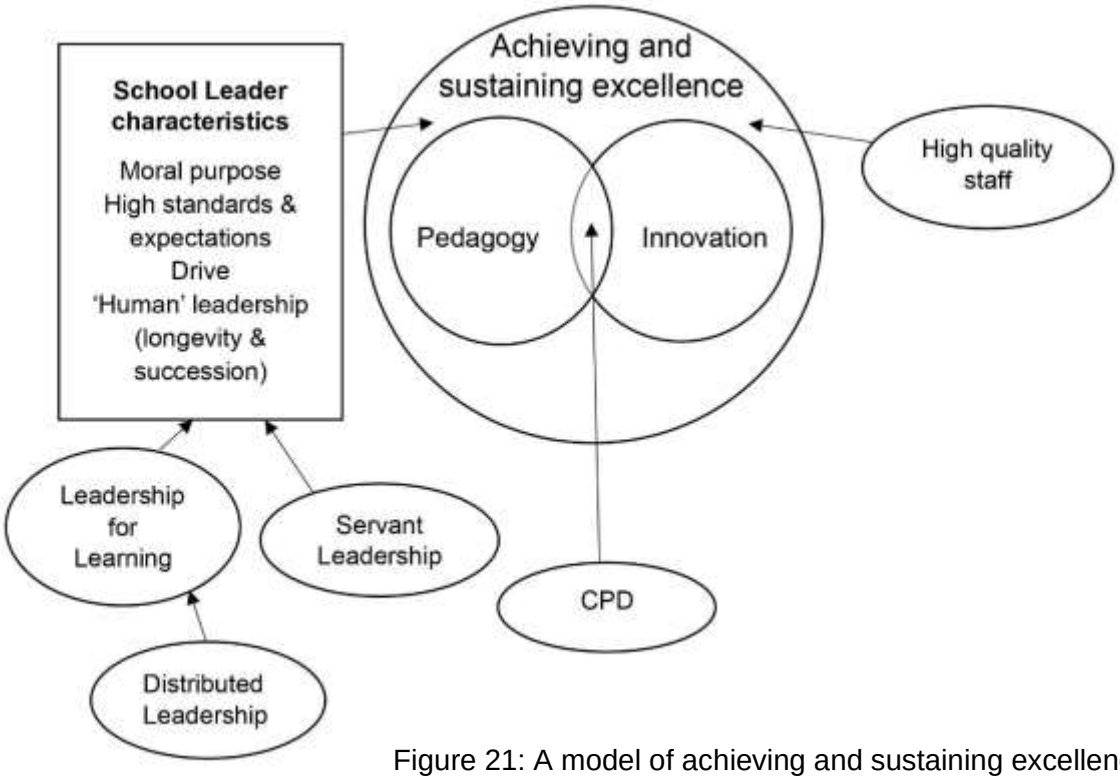


Figure 21: A model of achieving and sustaining excellence

At the heart of the model is a predominant focus on teaching and learning (pedagogy). The other key characteristic is innovation. These are shown in a Venn diagram with the area of intersection suggesting those innovations which focus on pupil-learning. These include those seen in the classroom environment (section 4.3.4) and we have also seen how different

schools have used CPD in innovative ways to support teaching and learning, such as the use of Lead Practitioners (and other named teacher-leaders) providing peer-support. CPD is an intrinsic characteristic of these institutions and hence shown within this area of intersection. This is complemented by high quality staff who are fundamental to high-performance.

The school leadership characteristics complement and influence school characteristics (shown to the left of figure 21) with interchangeability between these groups (section 4.1). The model also acknowledges the contribution to the leadership characteristics of the two theories, Leadership for Learning and Servant Leadership. Distributed Leadership is also highlighted as a powerful tool in school improvement and in maintaining high-performance.

In comparing this refined model with the initial conceptualisation, some of the emerging characteristics in the original remain: moral agency or purpose; high standards and expectations, pedagogy and CPD. The other four initial characteristics align with the practice in school leaders' discourses. They are referred to within the associated theories of leadership in the final model or closely associated with other characteristics within the model. The recruitment of talented staff, alongside structures and attitudes which allow for innovation, are emphasised in the final model and not in the initial framework. Similarly, I also make a leaders' drive and a 'human' aspect to their leadership explicit in the final conceptualisation. However, in the initial framework, I noted succession and sustainability as key issues to consider and these appear in some of the discourses, hence the inclusion of 'longevity and succession' in the final model.

6.2 Implications for professional practice

The conclusions from this study could be used to inform practice in other schools, particularly those that are currently high-performing or have the capacity to be so in the near future. The nine characteristics provide opportunities for consideration.

Schools can use the model (figure 21) and its components to consider practice in school improvement activities included in a programme of CPD, taking note (section 2.10) of best-practice such as providing a CPD theme over an extended period of time, maximising opportunities for collaborative enquiry (Cordingley & Bell, 2012) and ideally at a subject-specific level (Whitehouse, 2011). For example, the characteristics and theories of leadership can each be considered in a modular CPD framework before being integrated to more typically reflect their day-to-day interaction in the complexity of the school environment.

The model can also be used to support self-review. This can then contribute to a basis for more detailed whole-school strategic development planning. For example, a school leadership

team can audit and provide examples of practices which focus on pedagogy and then consider innovation in supporting children in learning and CPD to reinforce this, identifying gaps to be addressed as necessary.

I have constructed thematic maps (chapter 4) for five of the nine characteristics which can be used to support these school improvement practices together with the key characteristics of the theories of leadership, discussed in the literature review (and summarised in appendix 14).

Of particular note, given its limited discussion in school research literature, is the usefulness of theories of Servant Leadership and how these might support school improvement, for example in developing a nurturing culture to encourage the individual growth and development of staff.

Moral purpose was discussed as the first characteristic in this study. In agreement with the focus on Ethical Leadership currently championed by ASCL (ASCL, 2019), it is right for school leaders to reflect on this in their work and in that of their staff to ensure that they are maximising outcomes for children in their care, particularly the most vulnerable, reducing unnecessary distractions from this core purpose.

The final characteristic of particular note is innovation. Using the strategies suggested above, my study concludes that high-performing institutions provide the right conditions of trust and for risk-taking to enable innovations to take place, particularly those focusing on pedagogy. The implication for school leaders is that they should consider the extent to which these conditions exist in their school and then plan to work towards more distributed and empowering practices. Furthermore, reviewing the findings from this study (summarised in figure 9) would support further reflection on practice, particularly on the impact of an innovative environment on improved recruitment and retention, ultimately resulting in increased capacity for further school improvement.

6.3 Reflection and review

In undertaking this study, I have been privileged to visit some truly inspirational schools and their leaders. The visits themselves always provide considerable personal professional development as one is absorbed into the school, the environment always remaining quite visceral and providing opportunities to consider other ways of working when returning to one's own school. For example, how would it be to have classrooms with windows for walls? This extends to how children are learning and how teachers are engaging them in the process. Other features that support learning seen on tours of schools, for example, are using

photographs of older students, with descriptions of the course they are studying after leaving, as examples to inspire younger students, or the publication of the students with the best attitude to learning.

School visits can be part of professional development packages. What is unique about undertaking the study is the access gained to headteachers and their thoughts and reflections. From this I have also gained some very practical and pragmatic examples of activities that will support school improvement in our school. For example, the consideration of the use of broader, more mixed ability teaching groups and, in terms of CPD, using a 'marketplace' format for colleagues to 'sell' and share their examples of best practice.

This study has enabled me to take a further step by considering the leaders' comments in the light of the research literature, during the analysis and discussion. The profession is becoming more aware of the importance of research evidence in guiding practice. Having the opportunity to be more fully immersed in the literature than would be the case day-to-day has enabled me to more deeply understand the area of study and particularly the aspects of leaders and schools that contribute to their high-performing status.

In terms of limitations, I am aware that the study would have yielded more insight had I conducted follow-up interviews with school leaders. After initial analysis and development of themes, and following their consideration in the light of the literature, an opportunity to revisit particular questions and delve deeper would have provided even richer data concerning these leaders' practices.

Furthermore, the findings are based on accounts by school leaders only. An opportunity to triangulate findings with a more in-depth Case Study approach to leadership in practice may have further strengthened and validated the findings. This might also have further mitigated my subjectivity in the process.

6.4 Recommendations for further research

Given the limited research into the success of high-performing schools noted during the thesis, my first recommendation is for this to become more of a focus. This is in light of the growth of MATs and the data cited (section 1.5) on the wide difference in their performance and that of disadvantaged pupils. From a policy evaluation perspective, further research is recommended into how high-performance is sustained and disseminated, to increase the number of these institutions, particularly within and across MATs, to support improved pupil outcomes.

In terms of theories of leadership, I also suggest that those focused on Servant Leadership are considered further. As I have stated in this thesis, these are under-used models and yet have shown much alignment to characteristics and actions of the school leaders in the high-performing institutions in the study. This will also support the work of ASCL and their focus on Ethical Leadership Framework (ASCL, 2019). This also supports a focus on moral purpose as a characteristic for further research.

Turning to the other characteristics developed in the study, interesting areas for further research where there is more limited literature include innovation, and longevity and succession. As I discussed in section 5.2, there is a link between organisational learning and creativity (Stoll & Temperley, 2009, p.70) as well as between innovation and the success of institutions (Hill, et al., 2018). This focus complements Distributed Leadership practices which, in turn, support the recruitment and retention of high quality staff. Hence further research into Distributed Leadership and how this is fostered in high-performing schools is a further recommended area. Focusing particularly on the recruitment and retention of school leaders would also be a pertinent area for further research, given that longevity and succession was forwarded as a characterisitc of some of these high-performing schools and noted as an attribute of 'winning organisations' (Hill, et al., 2018).

My final recommendation (section 6.3) would be to conduct more detailed research in high-performing, successful insitutions using a Case Study methodology. This would enable a much richer description and provide opportunities to triangulate and further validate findings. In planning the study, I had considered the use of visual data: photographs, for example. I would make this suggestion for consideration in further research because of its potential power to convey meaning and provide additional richness to a qualitative study.

6.5 Final comments

This study has confirmed the claims made by Leithwood et al., 2019, concerning practices seen in successful schools. It has also confirmed a model of Leadership for Learning, specifically that of Murphy, et al. (2007), and underlined the continued importance of Distributed Leadership in supporting school improvement.

This study has used theories of Servant Leadership to consider the practice of leaders in high-performing schools and, in doing so, has contributed to the research knowledge which I suggest is currently lacking in this area. It also provides empirical evidence in support of the ASCL (2019) framework for Ethical Leadership (section 2.8.2).

Two particular characteristics are notable conclusions from this study. Firstly, the importance of 'moral purpose' in driving the work of high-performing school leaders. Whilst the term is in common use amongst practitioners, it has been hard to find rich seams of academic literature on this theme in schools. Hence, the study has revisited the work, in particular, of Sergiovanni (1992) and considered the practice of school leaders and their service to their communities. Secondly, the importance of acknowledging the innovative nature of high-performing institutions and providing empirical examples to support this. This, again, has been an area with little literature in evidence in relation to schools.

Ultimately, this study has been important in gaining a further insight into what constitutes a high-performing school. More broadly, as educationalists, our aspiration is for more children to have the opportunity to benefit from an excellent, world class and truly holistic education. School leaders have a moral duty in service to their communities in this respect. As Dave, at Cropton High, says: '…genuinely do you actually believe or not that really really every child, you know, can and deserves to succeed and achieve…'.

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Appendices

Appendix 1

Participant Consent Form

School of Education
and Lifelong Learning

Doctorate in Education Research by Peter Devonish

Headteacher Leadership and School Improvement: Moving from *Good* to *Outstanding*

Please read the following points and if you agree with them, please sign and date this form in the space provided overleaf.

- I have been given an information sheet about this research and have read and understood it.
- I agree to take part in the research.
- I know how to contact the researcher, the researcher's supervisor or the chairperson of the Research Ethics Committee if I need to ask a question or raise a concern.
- I have had an opportunity to ask any questions about the research and I know I can do this at any time during the study.
- I know that the name of the school will not be disclosed.
- I know that my name will be changed in any publication so that what I say is confidential and anonymous.
- I know that if there are any findings which are useful to the school that these will be shared but the source will be anonymous.
- I know that I will be interviewed by the researcher. This will be as part of a group if I am a child. For adults it will be individually or as part of a group.
- I agree that interviews can be audio recorded.
- I agree to anonymous quotes being used in reporting the research.
- I agree that if I have been asked to provide some digital images for use in the interview that they can be used as part of the research.
- I agree to digital images being used in any publication providing these protect the anonymity of the school or individual people.
- I know that any data from the research (audio recordings, digital images, transcripts) will only be used in the research and kept securely by the researcher until the research is complete. The researcher, supervisor and other members of the university academic staff will have access to the data for the purposes of the research only. The audio tapes, digital images, transcripts will be destroyed at the end of the project.
- I know that I will receive a copy of the interview transcript(s) and can expect corrections to be made by the researcher at my request.
- My decision has been voluntary and no pressure has been placed on me to take part.
- I know that I can withdraw from the research at any time without a reason and without this being an issue.

Participant Consent Form Reply Slip

School of Education
and Lifelong Learning

Doctorate in Education Research by Peter Devonish

Headteacher Leadership and School Improvement: Moving from *Good* to *Outstanding*

Name	
Signature	
Date	
Name of Parent/ Carer (for child involved)	
Parent/ Carer Signature	
Date	

Thank you for completing this consent form. Please return it in the envelope provided.

Appendix 2

School of Education
and Lifelong Learning

Participant Research Information Sheet

Headteacher, Colleague and Parent/Carer Version

Doctorate in Education Research by Peter Devonish

Headteacher Leadership and School Improvement: Moving from *Good* to *Outstanding*

What is the focus of the research?

At our last OFSTED inspection (May 2012) our school was judged to be good. My focus, as headteacher, has been on improving our school so that we become outstanding. The research aims to look at what it takes to move a school from good to outstanding. In particular, the leadership issues in doing this and specifically the leadership of the headteacher. I am also looking at what it takes to maintain a school's outstanding performance.

My hope is that in doing this it will help improve our school further and also provide some insights into what makes outstanding schools successful which may be useful to the wider educational community. I intend to use our school as a case study and also interview headteachers of other schools which have a proven track record as being outstanding.

The research questions I hope to answer are:

- What do we mean by a *good* or *outstanding* school?
- How is headteacher leadership manifest in *outstanding* schools in terms of characteristics and actions?
- How does headteacher leadership in a school moving from *good* to *outstanding*:
    - compare with that found in *outstanding* schools?
    - impact on school improvement activities?

Who will I be interviewing?

I intend to interview:

- groups of students
- headteachers in five other schools
- school leaders such as School Leadership Team members, Head(s) of Subject and key support staff.
- colleagues who do not hold posts of responsibility.
- the Chair of Governors and other Governing body committee chairpersons

How have interviewees been selected?

- Colleagues - I have tried to ensure that I get a variety of different viewpoints and positions in the school. I have used the School Leadership Team and my supervisor to support the selection process.
- Students - I will interview the students in the School Council and random samples of other students.
- Headteachers - I have selected on the basis that they lead schools that have sustained an outstanding OFSTED rating for at least two consecutive previous inspections. I have also focused on schools in the East of England which are comparable types of institution to our school. For example, comprehensive, 11-18 age range (but allowing 11-16 age group schools to allow a sufficiently wide selection), mixed gender, non-religious character.

What will the interview involve?

- There will be one interview of between thirty minutes and one hour (depending on who I am interviewing). I may need to conduct a follow up interview for clarification or to ask further questions about emerging issues, at a later date (this will be by telephone for headteachers of other schools).
- I will interview students in groups. I will conduct staff interviews in groups or individually. Headteachers will be interviewed individually but may decide to invite other colleagues to the interview.
- I will use a semi-structured approach to the interviews and will therefore prepare some topics and open-ended questions for interviewees to respond to.
- Interviews will be audio recorded and later transcribed.
- A copy of the transcript of the interview will also be returned to participants for their approval.

What else will be involved?
If I am visiting another school I would like a tour before the interview so that I can contextualise the interview (albeit in a very limited in the time available).

In our school, I would like people interviewed to take a selection of digital images (around five to ten) beforehand which, for them, represent key features of the school. We discuss these at the start of the interview before the more focused questions which move on to leadership themes.

When the interview data is analysed, you will have an opportunity to look at the findings and make any observations and corrections before it is finally published.

What other research techniques am I using?
I will also be looking at other written documents in our school such as minutes of meetings, the school improvement and development plan and self-evaluation documents, available external data and newsletters. I will also be keeping a journal.

When will the interviews take place?
Interviews in school are scheduled for November 2012- January 2013 with follow up interviews in May/ June 2013.

Interviews with Headteachers are intended to take place during June/ July 2012 - September / October 2012 with a follow-up telephone call, as necessary, in October/November 2012.

How will the information from the interviews be used?
Quotes and digital images will be used in the research report. The source will remain anonymous so that your participation remains confidential. The school(s) will also remain anonymous. Digital images will only be used providing they protect the anonymity of the school or individual people.

Data from the research (audio recordings, digital images, transcripts) will only be used in the research and kept securely by me until the research is complete. My supervisor, other members of the university academic staff and I will have access to the data for the purposes of the research only.

How will my involvement be kept anonymous and confidential?
The names of the school(s) and individuals will be kept anonymous by using different names. Post holders titles will remain generic for example, ‘subject leader’.
Do I have to take part in the research ?
No. You are under no obligation to take part. If you don’t take part, I will not follow this up or make an issue out of it.

If, having agreed to take part in the research, I have second thoughts, can I withdraw from the project?

Yes – absolutely. You are under no obligation to continue to take part in the research or to give a reason for withdrawing from the project. Again, If you don't take part, I will not follow this up or make an issue out of it.

What do I do if I have further questions or require more detailed in information about the research?

You can contact me at school on 01362 697981. You can also contact me via e-mail using my University of East Anglia address: p.devonish@uea.ac.uk . You are welcome to ask questions at any time during the study.

If you have further questions or any concerns you can also contact my supervisor, Professor Victoria Carrington, by e-mail: v.carrington@uea.ac.uk or by post:

School of Education and Life Long Learning
University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich NR4 7JT

Should you have further concerns or wish to make a complaint you should contact the Head of School, Dr Nalini Boodhoo, by post at the address above, or via e-mail: n.boodhoo@uea.ac.uk .

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Peter Devonish

June 2012

Appendix 3

School of Education
and Lifelong Learning

Participant Research Information Sheet

Headteacher, Colleague and Parent/Carer Version

Doctorate in Education Research by Peter Devonish

Headteacher Leadership and School Improvement: Moving from *Good* to *Outstanding*

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At our last OFSTED inspection (May 2012) our school was judged to be good. My focus, as headteacher, has been on improving our school so that we become outstanding. The research aims to look at what it takes to move a school from good to outstanding. In particular, the leadership issues in doing this and specifically the leadership of the headteacher. I am also looking at what it takes to maintain a school's outstanding performance.

My hope is that in doing this it will help improve our school further and also provide some insights into what makes outstanding schools successful which may be useful to the wider educational community. I intend to use our school as a case study and also interview headteachers of other schools which have a proven track record as being outstanding.

The research questions I hope to answer are:

- What do we mean by a *good* or *outstanding* school?
- How is headteacher leadership manifest in *outstanding* schools in terms of characteristics and actions?
- How does headteacher leadership in a school moving from *good* to *outstanding*:
    - compare with that found in *outstanding* schools?
    - impact on school improvement activities?

Who will I be interviewing?

I intend to interview:

- groups of students.
- headteachers in five other schools which have maintained an outstanding performance over time.
- headteachers in five other schools which have outstanding grades for the quality of teaching.
- school leaders such as School Leadership Team members, Head(s) of Subject and key support staff.
- colleagues who do not hold posts of responsibility.
- the Chair of Governors and other Governing body committee chairpersons.

How have interviewees been selected?

- Colleagues - I have tried to ensure that I get a variety of different viewpoints and positions in the school. I have used the School Leadership Team and my supervisor to support the selection process.
- Students - I will interview the students in the School Council and random samples of other students.
- Headteachers
    - I have selected on the basis that they lead schools that have sustained an outstanding OFSTED rating for at least two consecutive previous inspections. I

have also focused on schools in the East of England which are comparable types of institution to our school. For example, comprehensive, 11-18 age range (but allowing 11-16 age group schools to allow a sufficiently wide selection), mixed gender, non-religious character.

- I have selected a second group of schools based on them gaining an outstanding grade for overall effectiveness *and* the quality of teaching in inspection since January 2012, when the OFSTED framework changed significantly. I have focused on schools south of and including the Midlands.

What will the interview involve?

- There will be one interview of between thirty minutes and one hour (depending on who I am interviewing). I may need to conduct a follow up interview for clarification or to ask further questions about emerging issues, at a later date (this will be by telephone for headteachers of other schools).
- I will interview students in groups. I will conduct staff interviews in groups or individually. Headteachers will be interviewed individually but may decide to invite other colleagues to the interview.
- I will use a semi-structured approach to the interviews and will therefore prepare some topics and open-ended questions for interviewees to respond to.
- Interviews will be audio recorded and later transcribed.
- A copy of the transcript of the interview will also be returned to participants for their approval.

What else will be involved?

If I am visiting another school I would like a tour before the interview so that I can contextualise the interview (albeit in a very limited in the time available).

In the case of schools visited with outstanding grades for the quality of teaching, I would like to conduct two lesson observations of around 30 minutes in lessons chosen by the school (ideally one at Key Stage 3 and one, in a different subject area, at Key Stage 4) which typify the teaching and learning climate in the school.

In our school, I would like people interviewed to take a selection of digital images (around five to ten) beforehand which, for them, represent key features of the school. We discuss these at the start of the interview before the more focused questions which move on to leadership themes.

When the interview data is analysed, you will have an opportunity to look at the findings and make any observations and corrections before it is finally published.

What other research techniques am I using?

I will also be looking at other written documents in our school such as minutes of meetings, the school improvement and development plan and self-evaluation documents, available external data and newsletters. I will also be keeping a journal.

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Interviews in school are scheduled for November 2012- January 2013 with follow up interviews in May/ June 2013.

Interviews with Headteachers in the first group are intended to take place during June/ July 2012 - September / October 2012 with a follow-up telephone call, as necessary, in October/November 2012.

Interviews for Headteachers in the second group are planned for November/ December 2012 with a follow-up telephone call, as necessary, in January/ February 2013.

How will the information from the interviews be used?

Quotes and digital images will be used in the research report. The source will remain anonymous so that your participation remains confidential. The school(s) will also remain anonymous. Digital images will only be used providing they protect the anonymity of the school or individual people.

Data from the research (audio recordings, digital images, transcripts) will only be used in the research and kept securely by me until the research is complete. My supervisor, other members of the university academic staff and I will have access to the data for the purposes of the research only.

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What do I do if I have further questions or require more detailed in information about the research?
You can contact me at school on 01362 697981. You can also contact me via e-mail using my University of East Anglia address: p.devonish@uea.ac.uk . You are welcome to ask questions at any time during the study.

If you have further questions or any concerns you can also contact my supervisor, Professor Victoria Carrington, by e-mail: v.carrington@uea.ac.uk or by post:

School of Education and Life Long Learning
University of East Anglia
Norwich Research Park
Norwich NR4 7JT

Should you have further concerns or wish to make a complaint you should contact the Head of School, Dr Nalini Boodhoo, by post at the address above, or via e-mail: n.boodhoo@uea.ac.uk .

Thank you for taking the time to read this information sheet.

Peter Devonish, October 2012

Appendix 4

June 2012

School of Education and Lifelong Learning

Dear

Invitation to participate in an education research project

I am writing to invite you to participate in an educational research project which I am conducting for an Education Doctorate. I am also a secondary headteacher and am looking at what it takes to move a school from good to outstanding, focusing on leadership, particularly that of the headteacher.

As part of this I am interested in the leadership issues in maintaining outstanding performance. I would really appreciate your involvement as the Headteacher of ….. School, a school that has been graded as outstanding consistently over the last ten years at least.

I would like to conduct an interview with you, lasting no more than an hour. In case there were any points needing to be clarified, I may want to briefly telephone you, at your convenience at a later date. I would also appreciate a brief tour of your school, with a colleague or students, to contextualise the interview. A copy of the transcript of the interview will also be returned to you for your approval.

The information sheet (enclosed) describes the project in more detail. I would be really pleased if, having read this, you were happy to proceed. If this is the case, please could you reply to that effect at head@neatherd.org, ideally by Friday 6th July. I will then contact you to arrange a convenient time to visit.

We are busy people; so there is no need to respond if you are not able to participate. Thank you in for taking the time to read this.

Yours

Peter Devonish

Headteacher

Appendix 5

School of Education
and Lifelong Learning

October 2012

Dear

Invitation to participate in an education research project

I am writing to invite you to participate in an educational research project which I am conducting for an Education Doctorate. I am also a secondary headteacher and am looking at what it takes to move a school from good to outstanding, focusing on leadership, particularly that of the headteacher.

As part of this I am interested in the leadership issues in securing outstanding teaching and learning. I would really appreciate your involvement as the Headteacher/ Principal of …… School/ Academy. Yours is one of only nineteen secondary schools in England that has been graded as outstanding for overall effectiveness *and* for the quality of teaching in inspection under the current framework or the framework in use since January 2012.

I would like to conduct an interview with you, lasting no more than an hour. A copy of the transcript of the interview will also be returned to you for your approval. In case there were any points needing to be clarified, I may want to briefly telephone you, at your convenience at a later date. I would appreciate a brief tour of your school, with a colleague or students, to contextualise the interview. In light of your school's outstanding teaching record, I would also like to observe two lessons which you feel typify the climate for learning in your school. These would be around 30 minutes each, ideally one at Key Stage 3 and one, in a different subject area, at Key Stage 4.

The information sheet (enclosed) describes the project in more detail. I would be really pleased if, having read this, you were happy to proceed. If this is the case, please could you reply to that effect at head@neatherd.org, ideally by Friday 12th October. I will then contact you to arrange a convenient time to visit.

Thank you in for taking the time to read this. With so few schools in your position I hope that you are able to look on my request favourably. Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any further queries.

Yours

Peter Devonish

Headteacher

Appendix 6

Headteacher Interview Questions: Phase 1

Pre-interview: tour of the school

Interview introduction: Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed and for allowing me to have a brief tour beforehand. Can I just check that you are still happy to participate? Please remember that everything said is confidential and will be written up by using different names for the school and for you. Are you still OK for me to record our conversation?

1. Good and outstanding schools:
    a. You have had … OFSTED inspections in the last ten years all of which have rated the school as outstanding.
        i. Can you describe firstly what you think of as an outstanding school?
        ii. How does this differ from a good school?
        iii. We know the OFSTED criteria for outstanding but are there other aspects which are not captured within the framework which you think are important? (Have copy of framework criteria available).
        iv. What are the key features of this school which make it outstanding?

2. School Improvement
    a. Can you describe the key milestones in your journey from good to becoming an outstanding school?
    b. How much involvement have different people had in these aspects?
    c. Have you got a particular example that shows the way you have led a successful change as part of school improvement.
    d. Where does the headteacher's involvement lie in the school improvement process?
    e. How would you describe your impact on school improvement in school – how does it manifest itself?
    f. So what next… what else are you planning?

3. Leadership
    a. What does leadership mean to you? Who are the leaders in our school? How do they show they are leaders?
    b. Are there particular features of leadership which mark out outstanding schools (thinking about both actions and characteristics)?
    c. And your leadership – how would you describe it (thinking about both actions and characteristics)?

4. Building capacity and sustainability
    a. Can you describe the strategies you have used to support the school's continued success?
    b. Are there any similarities and differences between the leadership you have now and that you had when becoming an outstanding school?

5. Any other comments:
    a. Thank you for taking part in this interview.
        i. What should I have asked you which I didn't?
        ii. Have you got anything else you would like to add?

    Once I have begun to analyse the results, I may have some follow up questions. Are you still OK to take part in a follow up interview? Thank you.

Appendix 7

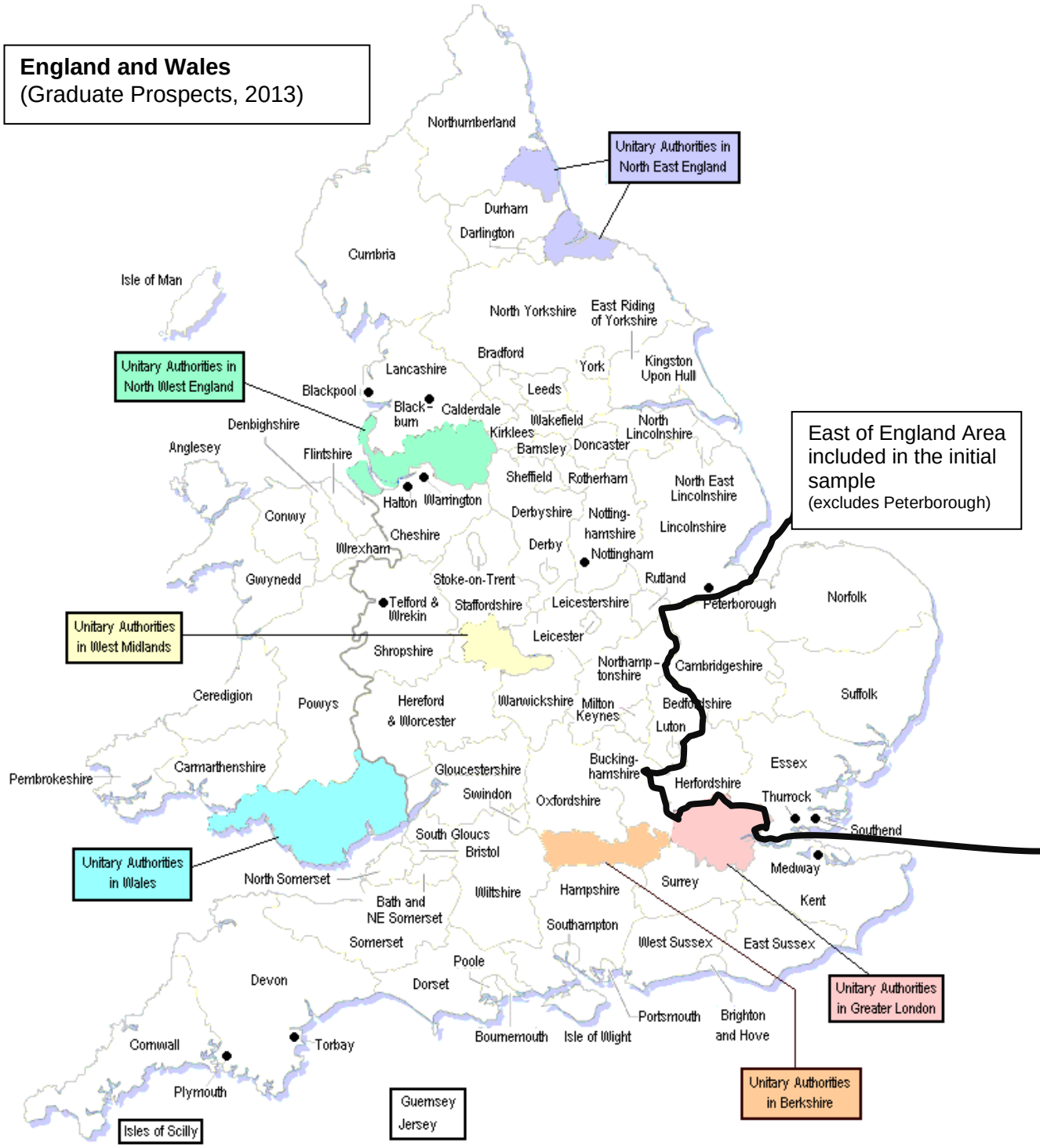
Headteacher Interview Questions: Phase 2 – Teaching and Learning*

1. Things observed and discussion around
2. How long have you been head here? Can you describe your key challenges and successes since starting in post?
3. Can you talk about the transition from the previous head?
4. Can you give an overview of why the school is outstanding, as opposed to good. How long has it been so?
5. What steps have been taken to achieve and/or sustain this grade? Have there been any key milestones?
6. Focusing on teaching and learning, how does this differ from 'good' teaching?
7. What does high quality learning look like/ feel like in the school, what are its characteristics? (pedagogy and assessment)
8. What part do the OFSTED criteria play in your view of outstanding, particularly in terms of t&l and also their influence in school? Are there aspects not captured?
9. What kind of learners do you aim for children to be?
10. What teacher characteristics are common in school that support this?
11. Is there an in-house style of common method for teaching and learning?
12. What support and guidance are offered to teachers?
13. What other activities or structures support classroom learning (check out class size, parents, resources, learning environment)?
14. What are you key priorities? What are your non-negotiables? What do you drop or play down?
15. Which cultural aspects of the school are significant? How would you describe the pupil and staff cultures? What signs do we see (display, meetings, discussions)
16. How do you, as Head, affect the culture?
17. Can you describe the place/ emphasis of self-evaluation in the school?
18. Can you talk about the leadership roles and structures in school which impact on teaching and learning (include middle leaders and their influence, student leadership, governance)
19. Are these particular to your school or outstanding schools?
20. And in terms of your leadership; how would you describe it – what are your main ways of working/ values – what motivates you?
21. And has this changed over time?
22. Can you say something about what you say and what you do that you feel contributes to the school's outstanding judgement.
23. And what is next for the school?
24. If you went to another school or had your time again what would you do first or what would you do differently, what would you drop?
25. Can you talk about how you have planned for succession and ensured sustainability for the school?
26. Is there anything else I should have asked you?

*Questions derived following discussion with tutor, SLT, review of previous questions (8 Nov 2012)

Appendix 8

Maps of Local Authorities



London Local Authorities/ Boroughs
(The London Life.info, 2013)

Appendix 9

Long-standing Outstanding Schools List (OFSTED, 2011)

School	Included in research	Region	Local authority	Times on Outstanding Provider list	1st time	2nd time	3rd time	4th time	Religion/ Single Sex/ Grammar/ boarding/ traditional academy	2 judgements since 2002/3
A		East of England	Cambridgeshire	3	1999/00	2005/06	2008/09		0	1
B	✓	East of England	Cambridgeshire	4	1994/95	1998/99	2004/05	2007/08	0	1
C		East of England	Essex	2	2005/06	2008/09			0	1
D	✓	East of England	Hertfordshire	3	1999/00	2005/06	2008/09		0	1
E		East of England	Hertfordshire	2	2003/04	2007/08			0	1
F		East of England	Hertfordshire	3	2001/02	2005/06	2008/09		0	1
G	✓	East of England	Norfolk	2	2005/06	2008/09			0	1
H	✓	East of England	Norfolk	3	1999/00	2005/06	2008/09		0	1
I		East of England	Suffolk	3	1997/98	2003/04	2007/08		0	1
J		East of England	Thurrock	4	1993/94	1997/98	2003/04	2007/08	0	1
K		London	Barking and Dagenham	2	2003/04	2007/08			0	1
L		London	Barnet	2	2002/03	2006/07			0	1
M	✓	London	Tower Hamlets	3	1997/98	2003/04	2007/08		0	1
N	✓	London	Havering	2	2004/05	2007/08			0	1
O		London	Newham	3	2001/02	2005/06	2008/09		0	1
P		London	Newham	2	2002/03	2007/08			0	1
Q*		London	Redbridge	2	2001/02	2006/07			0	0
R*		London	Barnet	3	1996/97	2001/02	2006/07		0	0

* These schools were included in the initial list because there had been an inspection in the previous academic year 2001/02

Appendix 10

OUTSTANDING SCHOOLS from January to September 2012 (OFSTED, 2012d)

School	Initial invitation	Included in Study	LA	Region
A	✓	✓	Redbridge	London
B	✓	✓	Kensington and Chelsea	London
C	✓	×	Southwark	London
D	✓	×	Islington	London
E	✓	×	Hackney	London
F	✓	✓	Surrey	South East
G	✓	×	West Sussex	South East
H	✓	×	Birmingham	West Midlands
I	✓	×	Essex	East of England
J	✓	✓	Derby	East Midlands
K	✓	✓	Bristol	South West
L	×		Kirklees	Yorkshire and The Humber
M	×		Wakefield	Yorkshire and The Humber
N	×		North Yorkshire	Yorkshire and The Humber
O	×		North Yorkshire	Yorkshire and The Humber
P	×		North Yorkshire	Yorkshire and The Humber
Q	×		Lancashire	North West
R	×		Blackburn with Darwen	North West
S	×		North Tyneside	North East

Appendix 11

The Jefferson Transcription System

There are many symbols used in the Jefferson transcription system and we provide you with some of the most common below:

Transcription Notation

(.) A full stop inside brackets denotes a micro pause, a notable pause but of no significant length.

(0.2) A number inside brackets denotes a timed pause. This is a pause long enough to time and subsequently show in transcription.

[Square brackets denote a point where overlapping speech occurs.

> < Arrows surrounding talk like these show that the pace of the speech has quickened

< > Arrows in this direction show that the pace of the speech has slowed down

( ) Where there is space between brackets denotes that the words spoken here were too unclear to transcribe

(( )) Where double brackets appear with a description inserted denotes some contextual information where no symbol of representation was available.

Under When a word or part of a word is underlines it denotes a raise in volume or emphasis

↑ When an upward arrow appears it means there is a rise in intonation

↓ When a downward arrow appears it means there is a drop in intonation

→ An arrow like this denotes a particular sentence of interest to the analyst

CAPITALS where capital letters appear it denotes that something was said loudly or even shouted

Hum(h)our When a bracketed 'h' appears it means that there was laughter within the talk

= The equal sign represents latched speech, a continuation of talk

:: Colons appear to represent elongated speech, a stretched sound

https://www2.le.ac.uk/departments/psychology/research/child-mental-health/cara-1/faqs/jefferson
School of Psychology, University of Leicester

Appendix 12

Example section of coding chart for each interview, showing code and frequency

			A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H	I	J	K1	K2	L
Attention to detail	A		1											2	
Active learning	A	c		3											
Analytical	A	n		1											
Appreciation of others (encourage/acknowledge	A	p	4	3	2		3	6	6	3	1	2		1	1
Arrogance (lack of humility)	A	r		1											
Accountability	A	t				1		4	2				4		2
Authenticity	A	u	2	1					1						
Belief	B		1	2			1	1	1						
Behaviour of students	B	h		6	10	2	1	1	3	7	3	5	3	1	6
Culture (Ethos, inc. faith)	C		26	12	11	4	1	13	2	4	12	8	1	2	8
Care (inc. happy students, pastoral)	C	a	1	3		5	1	2	3	6	3	2		3	5
Communication (inc. consultation	C	c		1	3						3	2			
Challenging others	C	g	1		2										
Change	C	h	2	4	2	1	5	4	3	6	1	2	1		3
Compliance (of students)	C	i		1											
Classrooms (e.g being in)	C	l	1	1	1		3			1					
Community	C	m		13	9	2	1	6	4	2	3	3		5	2
Consistency	C	n			1					3	1				
Confidence	C	o	4		3	1	8	1		3	1	2		2	
CPD (Staff Development , inc. coaching, mentori	C	p	8	2	4	2	9	3	6	7	3	3	10	1	13
Credibility	C	r		2											1
Coasting/ comfort	C	s		2	1		1		1			1		2	
Competitive (competition)	C	t	1	1											
Curriculum (inc. global issues)	C	u	10	2	1	5		4		1	6		1	5	5
Capacity	C	y			3		11					2			1
Calm	C	z	1												
DfE (League tables, Government, Data, performa	D		7	7	7	15	4	14	1	1	2	3		3	
Daunting (challenging)	D	a		4		2									
Determination	D	e					2					1	2		2
Distributed leadership	D	i	1	1	3		9	2	2	3	5	1		3	4
Doubt (self-doubt)	D	o	4	5	1	1			1					1	
Deprication (self-)	D	p		4											
Drive (self-motivation)	D	r		7				1	2			1	1	2	2
Disseminating practice (inc. talking about teach	D	s		3		3	2	2	4	6	2	4	8		4
Evolution	E		3	2			1								
Enjoy (students enjoyment)	E	j							2	2	1				2
Empathy	E	m	1												
Enthusiasm	E	n		3		1	1	2	2	3		2		2	
Empowerment	E	p			1							2			1
Enrichment (extra-curricular)	E	r		2	2	1		8	2		4			1	10
Ethics (values, snese of right & wrong	E	t	1	1		4	3	9	2	3	1	3		6	1
Expansion (growth)	E	x					3					2	1	2	
Finance	F		6		1	2	7	2	1	2	2	2		3	1
Fit to institution	F	i				2		1							3
Flexible (flexibility)	F	l					1					1		1	2
Front man'	F	m			1				2	1	1				1
Focus	F	o	4			2	4	2	1	3	1	4	3	1	2
Freedom	F	r					8	4	1	1	1				
Fun	F	u	5	1										1	
Group (of teachers)	G		1	1			1		2	3		3	6		3
Grown your own' (spotting potential)	G	r		4	5		3	1	1	1		1			1
Humility	H		10	1			2	3	2	4		1	1	2	2
Hard work	H	a	2										1		
Head (Principal) as teacher	H	d		3		2		2							
High expectations (high standards, high aspiratio	H	i	1	4	2	1	5	2	1	6	5	3	3	3	3
Honesty (transparency)	H	o					2	3	2	4		1	2		2
Hierarchy (structures)	H	r	1	3			2	1		2	3		1	2	8
Human touch ('hands -on', respect, 'open-door',	H	t	1	4	7		4	3	4	8	4	4		1	4
Humour	H	u	6	2	1		2			3					2

Appendix 13

Example thematic analysis table extract showing areas of study with associated themes, and sub-themes, examples of quotes and comments.

School Name		
Context	The Headteacher has been at the school for …. years. The school is situated in …... On the outstanding provider list since ….. Other points particular to the school…..	
Area of Study	**Leadership**	
Theme (sub-themes as bullets)	**Quotes**	**Comments**
Moral Purpose • Belief • Ethics • Purpose • Vision • Vocabulary • High expectations (see also culture of excellence) • Inclusion • Care • Holistic view of child	Example: …there is in London what I would call the Academy approach [.] which is the one where you . narrow down the curriculum you just put all your own (?) energies in [.] picking your 5 A to C up . you: you really . it's very autocratic it's very top down and I think it's really important that headteachers who don't . necessarily subscribe to that . actually and I think in a sense hopefully what you're doing [.] . actually articulate an alternative . [.] way . of running schools [.] 'cause it worries me at the moment that what I see around me . is: . a:: formulaic . [.] almost . the kind of reducing teachers to technicians type model . [1] I wouldn't want my children to go to a . specialist technology I'd want them to go to a good school [2] that the majority of staff who come here: . have what I would call a healthy . moral purpose you don't come here to save the world they're not kind of naïve [.] in in that kind of . with missionary zeal [.] but they do actually come here: . with a commitment to:: the fact that the young people here come from very disadvantaged backgrounds and they would like to give them .[.] a better start in life . an:d and therefor' an' and we get .. a lot of people come and see it from say (?) the Institute of Education [.] well qualified . could have . chosen to work elsewhere [.] but have made a conscious decision to come here . a' a' and what that what that does I think . a it's one of the the best things about teaching somewhere like this is . that if you if the leadership get that bit right .. you can have a high .. c' the . core values of the scho:ol . are: . a shared by the vast majority of the staff so you have a a big I don't like the term 'buy-in' but if you [.] want to use that kind of expression the buy-in to what the school's trying to do and believes in [8] …….	Example: **Moral Leadership** Link to holistic curriculum and issues with government policy. Also to issues around protecting culture of excellence/ teacher practice. **See also pupil culture – culture of inclusion** Link also to quality of staff and culture of excellence.

The following sections appear as above in the original table, with quotes and comments as required. They show the themes and sub-themes only within the two further areas of study.

Appreciative Leadership ***(Later described as 'Human' Leadership)*** • Appreciation of others • Authenticity • Empathy • Thoughtfulness • Informal • Humility	• Human Touch • Humour • Well-being • Care • Nurture	• Growth • Relationships • Positivity • Trust • Well being
Model • Visibility/ in-class • Proactive • Hard work • Time-management • Focus	• Steeliness • Support and Challenge • Head as teacher • Tenacity • Drive	• Honesty • Enthusiasm • Strength • [Confidence]

Worries & concerns
• New to Headship
  ○ NOT new to headship
	• External Forces
	  ○ OFSTED
	  ○ DfE
	  ○ Government
	  ○ Mistrust	

Longevity and Succession • Nurture • Growth	• Legacy • Time to develop	• Sustainability • Fit to institution
Innovation • 'Magpie' • Open to new ideas • Management of change • Evolution	• [Outward facing] • Risk taking • Momentum	• Freedom • Focus • [Watershed]
Management • Self-evaluation • Reflection • Nuts & bolts/day-to-day operational	• Attention to detail • Finance	• Resources • No over-reliance on systems, data, monitoring

Area of Study	Teaching & Learning (leadership in supporting….)
Theme (sub-themes as bullets)	
Pegadogy • Independent learning • Intervention (see culture of excellence)	
Curriculum • Relevance • Fun • Appropriateness	• Broad (not narrow) • Next steps
CPD • Dissemination of good practice	
Quality of staff	
Reflection	

Area of Study	Culture (Leadership in creating a culture that supports outstanding outcomes)	
Theme (sub-themes as bullets)		
Culture of excellence • Quality of Staff • Working together • Symbols of status • Confidence 'capital' • Nurturing talent • Growth	• Respect • High standards and expectations • Aspirational • Resources (see management) • Distributed Leadership • Middle Leaders	• Performance Management • Ex-support • Accountability • External support • Holistic • School improvement

Pupil Culture
• Pupil voice
• Enrichment
• Performing Arts
	• Support
	  ○ Inclusion
	  ○ Care
	  ○ relationships
	• Pupil behaviour
		• Energy
		• Community

Issues for further consideration		

Appendix 14

Theories of Leadership: summary used to support analysis