'You can't show impact with a new pair of shoes': negotiating disadvantage through Pupil Premium.

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The Pupil Premium policy was introduced in 2010 by the UK coalition government to tackle the attainment gap disproportionately affecting children from low-income families. Semi-structured interviews and policy documents are examined for the way the policy has been enacted in a single comprehensive secondary school in England. In 2014, this school had a lower population of Pupil Premium pupils (18%) compared to (29%) nationally and (25%) countywide. Despite this, the study provides evidence that the Pupil Premium has become invested within and gives rise to, a number of neoliberal techniques, technologies and practices. The study bridges insights from Mitchell Dean's (2010) 'analytics of government' and Ball et al's (2012) work on policy enactment to provide an in-depth, grounded analysis of the way the policy plays out within this school's context. It argues that the combination of national accountability measures used to show impact for Pupil Premium, and the school's ongoing struggle to raise overall attainment, leads school leaders and staff members to rethink the concept of disadvantage for their school population. This results in disadvantage being reconceptualised to fit a matrix of moral/pastoral obligations and efficiency/economic competitiveness, in which the tensions between these two orientations are uncomfortable and unresolved.

Introduction

In this paper, I focus on the way one school set in its context, has gone about the task of enacting the 2010 UK coalition government's Pupil Premium (PP) policy. Its central contribution lies in its sustained analysis of one institution's attempt to enact the policy, and in tracking the subsequent negotiation of values about the concept of disadvantage within a context of practice. This task begins by situating the PP policy at state level within a broader lineage of New Labour's pursuit for better accountability and increasing reliance on data systems and economic rationality as tools to improve standards. However, it also recognises key shifts in emphasis from New Labour's 'universal child' and 'well-being' embodied in their flagship policy *Every Child Matters* (ECM), to the 2010 coalition government's preferred focus on attainment for measuring successful outcomes in disadvantaged pupils.

The study draws on fieldwork that took place over four months at one secondary school in the East of England in 2014. The paper provides an analysis of six semi-structured interviews with school leaders responsible for embedding PP, and staff members specifically working with disadvantaged pupils. It sets out a number of 'artefacts' and policy documents that have been created in response to PP, such as management documents, monitoring forms, impact assessment forms, and staff training documents. Moreover, over 160 PP tracking sheets shed light on the way support staff developed ways to self-reflect on their practice and to communicate the impact of their work back to school leaders.

This case study therefore provides an opportunity to scrutinise how school leaders went about framing the priorities of the PP policy in relation to their own school environment and their values about disadvantage. This includes mapping out the *interpretation* and *translation* work of communication, actions, and practices that made PP 'visible' to the wider staff and external authorities and parents. Secondly, the study demonstrates how the policy, in entering the governmentality of the school's data infrastructure, led to the development of a number of

'instruments' and 'technologies' which provide the technical resources needed for governing. Particular use is made of Mitchell Dean's (2010) *analytics of government* and Ball et al's (2012) work on policy enactment, to conceptualise how PP shapes the practices and 'thought' of policy subjects as they go about the everyday work of interpreting, translating and transacting the demands of the policy. Evidence is also provided that PP has ushered in insecure labour conditions for practitioners working on temporary contracts within this school, a theme that is being discussed recently in other schooling contexts (Hulme and Menter 2014) and more generally in many UK employment sectors (O'Connor 2016). Most significantly though, PP prompted staff to reconsider the concept of disadvantage in relation to their school population. The demands of the policy led staff members to negotiate from a number of 'world-views' (Boltanski and Thevenot 1999; 2006) when trying to fit their school's particular context and their own professional values, into a matrix of moral obligation, pastoral care, efficiency and attainment outcomes.

In the final part of the paper, I reflect on how Mitchell Dean's (2010) *analytics of government* can be further supplemented by Ball, Maguire and Braun's (2012) work for thinking about neoliberal policy. This includes how grounded analyses map out in some detail the way neoliberal policies shape practitioners' language about moral debates in institutional contexts. With the PP, this manifests itself in a highly moralised policy by which teachers are judged within a tight performance system: where the twin peaks of equity and economic efficiency are deployed within a specific programme for dealing with social justice issues in neoliberalised systems. This is an unconvincing account because neoliberalism itself is understood as an economic and political project which has led to a 'sickening rise in inequality' (Metcalf 2017). In particular, the paper argues that any further research must look towards the way neoliberal policies (such as PP) successfully develop responsible, active and creative subjects via which governance occurs through their capabilities to act as educators. In attempting such a task, I

conclude it is essential to closely document the creation of new practices, artefacts and shifts in 'thought' on the ground through sustained, interpretive and in-depth analyses of policy, and to problematise and deliberate over the direction of this shift or the way concepts such as disadvantage are being constructed.

The Pupil Premium Policy

Establishing Pupil Premium funding was a key pledge in the 2010 UK coalition government's education White Paper: *The Importance of Teaching* (DfE 2010). A re-commitment to the policy was made following the 2015 Conservative government's victory when the former Chancellor George Osborne increased spending to £2.5bn per annum. This secured it as an essential component of the Conservative government's 'one nation' strategy to tackle the educational attainment gap (or the measurable academic progress) between young people of different social classes (Cameron 2015). This funding is set to continue in the Brexit aftermath (May 2016) and it maintains political consensus following the 2017 election across all parties. PP was introduced at the same time as austerity policies which have been shown to have increased the wealth of the richest, whilst substantially reducing it for those in the bottom half (Portes and Reed 2017). Thus, PP could be read as part of an overall strategy to shift the responsibility for declining life chances of the poorest children as a result of sustained material deprivation, on to schools instead.

Through the PP, schools are given an additional sum of money of £1350 for ages 4-11 and £975 for ages 11-16 for every pupil they admit from a disadvantaged low-income family (Jarrett, Long and Foster, 2016). What counts as a disadvantaged pupil has been extended to include other groups of children, such as those that have ever been recorded as qualifying for free school meals in the past six years, children in care (looked after children), and those with parents in the military (service children).

A key message of the policy stipulates that schools are 'best placed' to know how to spend the money and that they are therefore able to use it how they see fit, in return for demonstrating impact for money through raising the academic attainment of these pupils (DfE 2010, 81). As a DfE evaluation report notes, it is important for the government to know what 'initial impacts' the policy is having on schools, how they are spending the money, and monitoring whether this is helping to improve the 'life chances of eligible pupils' (Carpenter et al 2013, 15). Schools would be required to publish their PP spending details online and be made accountable through performance tables, and a rigorous Ofsted framework to assess the impact of the money spent (DfE 2010, 81).

The policy guidance follows a key logic in an ongoing intensification over the past decade to encourage schools to promote better systems for tracking progress data in order to know more about their school population. In 2004, David Miliband, who was at the time New Labour's Schools Minister, called on schools to adopt an 'intelligent accountability framework', which could ensure 'effective and ongoing self-evaluation' for every school, as well as provide a school profile for individual students and better data and information systems (Miliband 2004, 3). This continued under Michael Gove as Education Secretary, but with a change of emphasis about bureaucracy: under New Labour too much data had gone upwards, whereas, for him, more publishable data should go back down to individual parents and communities (Gove 2012).This is all consistent with a neoliberal vision of education that puts the onus on individuals, parents and schools to take the responsibility for the education system and its pupils. John Clarke, for instance, has referred to the 'responsibilised citizen' of the New Labour era, where 'ideal citizens are moralised, choice-making, self-directed subjects' (Clarke 2005, 451). This has been realised more intensely in policies such as academisation and the free schools programme, where the new models of school governance encourage entrepreneurial types, (whether they be parents, teachers, or businessmen), to take on the responsibility of

opening schools (Walford 2014). In this context, education and schooling are applied as a 'self-help' project that rewards individual merit and effort (Barker 2010, 158) or as forming a number of go-to 'levers' in order to deliver social mobility outcomes (Riddell 2013).

The pursuit of 'intelligent accountability' may be read as a strategy responding to a mixture of 'teacher discontent', 'escalating costs' and a desire to shift the 'locus' of responsibility from central government to self-governing individuals' (Ozga 2009, 155). Ozga has referred to how data has become an essential component of the state's capacity to govern, or 'steer', through the way it 'enables a comprehensive monitoring of performance' which is opened up by institutions being data driven (155). In essence, she captures how we are now effectively governed by numbers (Ozga 2008). This move is not merely about the material collection of data and its subsequent analysis; it is an 'assemblage of practices', which connect people, objects, plans and social practices that may make up part of an institution's data infrastructure (Sellar 2015, 773). Wider international contexts need to be considered too. Opening up schools to better data management at local level allows for international measurement tools such as PISA to provide 'explanatory power' to individual schools, who may see themselves as part of a global competitive environment (Grek 2008; Sellar and Lingard 2013b; Sellar and Lingard 2013a; Carvalho and Costa 2014) or used as method of comparison (Nóvoa and Yariv-Mashal 2003). The speed by which this has occurred shows how the 'data machine has taken a life of its own', and is something we should be actively seeking to understand more about (Lawn and Ozga 2009, 3), not least because it is occurring on a 'culturally reckless scale' (Alexander 2012, 5).

The PP shares many continuities with New Labour's focus to streamline accountability measures. Its development by the Conservative/Liberal Democrat coalition does, however, mark a shift away from the 'sea change' brought about by New Labour's Green Paper *Every Child Matters* (DfES 2003). ECM was written, in part, as a response to the failures in care and

school interventions that led to the death of <u>Victoria Climbié</u>. The paper offered a number of recommendations for improving early intervention and effective child protection, through a better streamlining of national and local services so that multiple agencies could work 'around the child' by placing schools and good parenting at 'the heart of the system' (Christensen 2006). The policy also aimed to provide a 'positive vision' of outcomes children and young people wanted, including safety, health, enjoyment and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well-being (DfES 2003, 6–7), thus adopting a 'universal approach to children' (Williams 2004, 407).

Under Michael Gove, the language of ECM changed and well-being was squashed by a dogged focus on 'achievement'. The Ofsted framework by which schools are judged, was reduced from 27 graded points to just five, with many of those removed relating to spiritual, moral, social and cultural development, the promotion of healthy lifestyles and a school's contribution to their wider community. In particular, Gove had criticised New Labour for using schools as 'instruments to advance central government's social agenda' (2009). Gove's concern was for a Department for Education that would champion liberal learning and the spreading of core knowledge so that children could become 'authors of their own life story' (2009). As a policy, the PP translates this broader concern in the way it talks about 'disadvantaged' pupils achieving through measurable academic attainment rather than their well-being. The 2010 White Paper, for instance, states that schools should be judged on their interventions with disadvantaged pupils through 'performance tables' based on 'how much value' they add and for what they 'learn', with a particular concern for the progress of the 'lowest-attaining 20 percent' (DfE 2010, 68–69).

Conceptualising the Pupil Premium Policy in Context

This paper employs two main theoretical contributions through Mitchell Dean's *analytics of government* (2010) and Ball et al's (2012) policy enactment theory to carefully document how the PP unravels in relation to actions, speech, and 'thought' in one particular school. Ontologically, both approaches situate themselves within a broader tradition of Foucauldian-inspired analyses which concern themselves with a particular concept of 'government', which works as an activity that aims to 'shape, guide and affect' a person's behaviour or actions (Gordon 1991, 2; Foucault 2009, 258). These studies sketch out how actions become 'thinkable' and 'operable' within institutional contexts (Lessenich 2012, 304). This includes the mechanics of how social policy is actually done in an environment in which the liberal state considers social actors (in this case teachers), to freely act and make decisions (Dean 2010, 21–22).

Mitchell Dean (2010) outlines four 'reciprocally conditioning' but relatively autonomous dimensions that might make up an analysis of the 'regimes of government' (40). This includes 'the field of visibility', which could be understood through an image, picture or chart that may throw light on what is to be governed and how (42). Secondly, Dean refers to a technical dimension, which outlines the different procedures, instruments, technologies and vocabularies deployed in the process of governing (42). Thirdly, the analytic of government comprises of the formation of 'individual and collective identity through which government operates', and the nature of 'statuses, capacities, attributes, and orientations' that are assumed by people in authority, and of those who are governed, at any particular time' (42). Finally, Dean describes the 'forms of knowledge' which outlines the *episteme* of government by questioning the 'forms of thoughts, knowledge, expertise, strategies and means of calculation, or rationality' employed in practices of governing (42).

In this study, Dean's analytical framework is grounded through an application of Ball et al's (2012) work on enactment theory. As with Dean's 'analytics' which turns away from 'global' projects (Dean 2010, 46), enactment research puts aside the normative policy concern of large-scale "before" and "after" evaluations and instead endeavours to read policy as a process (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012, 2; Heimans 2012, 314). Adopting such an approach includes accepting the "messy particulars" of different school contexts: their material conditions such as budgets and staffing, or the situated contexts of history and intake (Braun et al. 2011). In this way, enactment theory attempts to document more than just what happens in school, but rather it looks to connect the type of ideas and practices a policy brings through 'government' and bureaucracy (see Heimans 2012). This paper places particular importance on the role of artefacts that are formed in response to PP—documents and pictures that can act as 'interpretation devices' for signifying "school leadership's 'take' on policy" (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012, 124). Artefacts help to explain how teachers not only must 'submit to disciplinary regimes' but that they also 'participate in their production and administration' (Scott 2010, 227 quoted in Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012, 135). Ball et al refer to policy being 'done by and done to teachers' (2012, 3), or as Dean puts it: the way the freedom offered by the various 'capacities and attributes of subjects' in the school can be 'shaped within regimes of government' (Dean 2010, 47). Bridging insights from these frameworks offers a way to see how policy governance unravels 'on the ground' in relation to specific contexts and policy subjects.

By putting the question of 'thought' and *problematisation* at its centre, Dean encourages a type of approach to social science research that prompts us to deliberate on values, rather than merely evaluating the effectiveness of existing practices (see also Bacchi 2012). Bent Flyvjberg, for instance, has evoked the Aristotelian notion of *phronesis* in the social sciences, which focuses on the ethical deliberation of a particular research project (Flyvbjerg 2001).

Whereas much social science research aims to incorporate instrumental rationality by offering evaluations or goal-building (social science as *techne*), research as *phronesis* is focused on practical value-rationality—that is, it prompts us to consider, deliberate and judge whether the direction in which we are heading is something we think is good, or whether the reorientation of values and goals is desirable (168). Enactment research, which tries to get close to reality, conceptualise power and emphasise context(s), can provide a useful set of tools to develop such an analysis within the parameters of talk, practices and thought as it is found on the ground (129-140).

PP has high consensus across the major political parties; it is the aim of this research to start a process of problematisation by thinking about why this is, and in so doing, point to the contingency of the dominant values prescribed in the policy language. Thus, this paper characterises PP as engendering and constructing a particular concept of pupil disadvantage, where escape from socio-economic disadvantage is embedded narrowly within a project of social mobility. Moreover, it embodies a 'responsiblised' version of professionalism within its accountability structure. In mapping out how this one school in its context enacts PP, it will be possible to detect whether it brings about any deleterious effects, or marginalises 'softer' aspects of schooling. It also asks whether we can draw out the different ways that practitioners negotiate 'disadvantage' within their context of practice. In so doing, the research invites practitioners working with PP currently to reconsider how the policy has necessitated shifts in their daily practices or values, and whether this is something that deserves further thought.

The School

Aphra Behn High School (pseudonym) is a non-selective, mixed sex, comprehensive secondary school situated in a suburb of the East of England. Its admission policy is identical to that laid down by the local Children's Service, which allocates places based on geographical

proximity and family circumstances (school website). Its 2015 Ofsted report confirms that the school is larger than most secondary schools and that a large proportion of the student population are White British. The proportion of children in the school receiving PP at the time of the fieldwork in the summer of 2014 was (19%) compared to (29%) nationally and (25%) in the county[i]. At the time of writing this paper, the school's PP population had increased to (21%) but it is still below the national average from 2016-17 (29%) and county average (25%). Within its parliamentary constituency (and its rough catchment intake area), four other secondary schools take PP pupils. All four of these are above the 2015-16 county average. This includes School A (43%), School B (42%), School C (35%), School D (25%) Schools A to D also maintain the same admissions policy as Aphra Behn and use the standard form provided by the County Council. School A is the nearest of these schools to Aphra Behn (1.5 miles apart) and has suffered from a severe funding deficit the past few years as a result of falling pupil rolls, a resignation of a head teacher and being put into special measures in 2014. Moreover, School A, in part, services a socially deprived catchment area on the edge of the city where parents may be less active in searching for other alternatives. This provides a tentative explanation about why Aphra Behn takes a lower number of PP children, despite there being a relatively high proportion of PP children in the area when compared both regionally and nationally, and when both schools' admission policies are the same. Furthermore, there has been a demographic population dip in the area which has resulted in a steady decline in Aphra Behn's pupil roll.

Since 2013 the school has been judged by Ofsted twice (2013 and 2015) that it 'requires improvement' across all areas, in large part because its standards 'have not risen quickly enough' and the reduction of the attainment gap between the disadvantaged pupils and others 'has not been rapid enough' (Ofsted Report). Because of this, the school has put a lot of energy and resources into improving the attainment gap between its overall school population (OSP)

and its disadvantaged pupils (PP). With data available going back to 2014, it is possible to make comparisons with disadvantaged 'Pupil Premium' pupils (PP) and the OSP that achieved a grade C or above pass in both maths and English. In this area, the school has made progress since 2014 in elevating both its OSP and its PP, even though this has not been a consistent improvement year on year. For instance, in 2014 the PP achievement was 28% and this has risen to 36% in 2016. Similarly, the OSP has gone from 47% to 66% (above the 2016 county average of 60.9%). This is an increase of the gap between the two populations but the overall trajectory of both populations has improved. This measure, however, only gives a decontextualised picture of the statutory requirements that appear on the DfE website. Within the school itself, its latest Section 8 report acknowledges that the school (across key stages 3 and 4) has made some progress in closing the gap, but this has not been consistent, especially in mathematics (section 8, Ofsted, 2015). The school's current Progress 8 score puts it in the DfE's category 'below national average' (around 20% of schools fit in this category). As of 2016, the school had started a process to join a multi-academy trust, although this was not an immediate theme whilst the fieldwork was being conducted.

Is Aphra Behn a *typical* school? Such a question is difficult to answer given that even defining 'ordinariness' or the typical school can be problematic given that most schools will want to define themselves as distinctive or better than their competitors in the current accountability climate, or will seek to understand themselves in relation to features such as intake and locale (Maguire et al. 2011, 6). Based on the fact it has lower numbers of PP and is currently 'requires improvement', this might be enough to make Aphra Behn a *deviant* case. If Aphra Behn is understood here as a "deviant case" with regards to PP numbers, this might allow for richer data set given that such cases usually 'activate more actors and more basic mechanisms' (Flyvbjerg 2001, 78). Here also, the deviant case *should* put more weight on understanding 'the deeper causes behind a given problem', rather than simply measuring frequencies (78). In this

study, however, I want to place an emphasis on the fact that this school had become stuck because of accountability pressures that the PP policy imposed on it, and this led to very limited alternative discourses about causal problems behind disadvantage ever actually emerging as a result of the policy initiative. As a result, practitioners may find common recognition in the way policies with inbuilt high accountability typically narrows the range of responses that one can make.

This all assumes a different way of generalising which is sketched out in the next section. Importantly though, this paper rejects bracketing off contextual features as outside to, or separate from, a policy actor's agency or a school's understanding of itself. Instead, context becomes part of the process of *interpretation* and *translation* in relation to action and practice. Policy actors thus work through context and attempt to understand their actions in relation to it. It is through drawing out these contextual particularities in detail that we can further problematise any dominant policy implementation instrumentalism, and focus instead on education as a 'complex social product' where 'education practices are organised and distributed' through 'institutional arrangements' and 'discursive practices' (Seddon 1995, 61).

Methods and Data

This paper draws on various data collected in the summer of 2014 as part of a research project designed to understand how teachers made sense of the PP policy. This included the different ways staff discussed the policy and the actions and practices that followed through its enactment, within this particular school's context, such as creating policy documents and monitoring systems. During the research, I had access to 'whole school' email correspondence that was being sent to support staff and teachers regarding interventions of pupils, school announcements, and changes to the system information management systems (SIMS). This proved helpful in identifying key policy subjects. I also attended whole school meetings, two

INSET training days (one of which focused heavily on the delivery of the PP policy), and regular morning briefings (twice a week) over the course of four months.

Two school leaders and four staff members were interviewed using semi-structured interviews. All but the deputy head and the SEN Coordinator were funded by the PP fund. The assistant head was only part-funded by PP (10% of his salary). Interviews were audio recorded and transcribed verbatim and interviewees were fully anonymised. 160 PP tracking sheets, written by PP specific learning support assistants (LSAs) were coded and analysed. Furthermore, over 20 policy documents and artefacts that included monitoring forms, management information sheets, training manuals, PowerPoints and whole-school impact assessment forms, were photographed or photocopied to document how school leaders and staff produced material in response to the policy (see *Box 1.*). After an initial coding process that showed practices around 'data' had become a central preoccupation for enacting the PP policy, the fieldwork data was then analysed via theoretical analyses informed by Mitchell Dean's (2010) *analytics of government*, and some of Ball, Braun and Maguire's (2012) enactment theory. Policy documents, relevant email correspondence, and notes from morning briefings and training days were coded individually and collectively to check for internal consistency with the themes that emerged during the interviews. This was done to combat any potential selection bias that may have arisen from speaking to PP funded staff members, and because the research wanted to delve beyond a small but significant interview set.

Box 1. A list of policy documents and artefacts collected during the fieldwork

By working from the ground up and by providing a careful analysis of one school, others are invited to make a judgement about whether the PP policy produces similar implications for other schools that find some parity in Aphra Behn's various contexts. Insights might be found in relation to material things such as insecure contracts for staff, or external pressures to raise the standards of attainment quickly. At a more theoretical level, the study provides a

methodological strategy for exploring how utterances and thought are shaped during the process of enacting policy. The case study, therefore, 'seeks to move from a purely empirical level of exposition to a level of general statements' (Moses and Knutsen 2007, 139). The way this works, however, is more complex than trying to generalise in the common sense of term. Rather than testing hypotheses that can then be acknowledged as typical, this research attempts to formulate so far unexplored practices, actions and thought that have been brought about by the enactment of the PP policy.

Rich case studies can provide the opportunity for different readers to draw diverse conclusions about what a case is trying to do. Thus, a good case study will be many things to different people, allowing the reader to occupy their own interpretive space (Flyvbjerg 2001, 86). Applying a strong, deep narrative alongside concepts and theoretical intuitions can provide valuable insights for practitioners and researchers wanting to know how PP has played out in an institutional context. This is how a case study invested in providing a problem-led, deliberative (re)valuation of the PP policy seeks to extend beyond its specific 'depth'— avoiding summary and allowing the reader to occupy the space of determining what the "case" is a case of (e.g. PP as neoliberal policy, a close examination of context, a test of enactment research). There has been much research that seeks to apply large samples to understand the effectiveness of PP interventions in schools since 2010 (studies from the Sutton Trust, Education Endowment Foundation, Ofsted and the DfE); much less has been written on understanding the 'deeper' implications of the policy on local institutional practices, actions and thought. As Flyvbjerg reminds us, a healthy social science should seek to furnish us with both approaches (2001, 87). This paper now proceeds with a reading of the fieldwork data, paying attention to how talk, practices and 'thought' play out in relation to one school's approach to the PP policy.

'The aim is to narrow the gap': Making Pupil Premium Visible to Staff and Ofsted

In taking the coalition government's focus for 'narrowing the attainment gap', school leaders had to find ways of communicating the significance of Pupil Premium within their own school context, to their staff, and to external authorities such as Ofsted. During the fieldwork, visuals were a regular feature. As Mitchell Dean (2010) states, *forms of visibility* are those things that can characterise several components making up a 'regime of government' (41). A visual can show how the *seeing* and *doing* are bound together into a *field of vision*. This can tell us lots about how different people are connected to one another, what problems need to be solved, or what objectives must be sought (41). Dean's *analytics*, therefore, helps us to remark on these things at an institutional level by examining both 'what' is made visible and 'how' school leaders translate this to middle managers or other staff members and Ofsted inspectors. With Ball et al's work, visuals often take the form of the 'artefactual', which provide policy representation and direction about what needs to be done (2012, 121). Typically, artefacts encompass both the *production* of things such as newsletters, handbooks and student planners and *activities* such as briefings, which provide the impetus and space for 'making sets of ideas about policies' (121).

The deputy head in charge of Every Child Matters, Inclusion and Child Services (ECM) described the process for initially picking up key parts of the PP policy by stating that the County Council flagged up key information for schools. Councils will often develop Management Information Sheets (MIS) (see *Figure 1*.), adapted from the Department for Education that are then passed to school leaders. These documents work as an initial translation of the policy 'in terms of what this means for your school' (Sue, deputy head, ECM). Even at state level, the policy text is rarely static. The online DfE information page used by the Council to put together the MIS was created in March 2014 but had undergone 11 iterations in three

years as the funding formula changed or becasue information was added, altered or taken away.[ii]

Figure 1. Management Information Sheets created by the County Council and passed on to school leaders

The MIS document is written in general terms with a view that all schools will have some prior infrastructure for the core competencies outlined in the MIS. This includes developing strategies for identifying 'potential barriers', 'assessment and tracking strategies', 'data systems and evaluation', 'quality provision', 'successful impact', 'professional development opportunities' and 'parental engagement' (MIS document). The MIS is a good example of a decontextualised benchmarking document that offers a standardised best-practice strategy, which can weather ongoing iterations in the policy cycle, but in doing so, ultimately dispenses with 'history as a form of knowledge' where 'recently done things [are] irrelevant' to how a school might do things in the future (Brown 2015, 136). Benchmarking documentation, therefore, leaves a lot out by dematerialising policy. School leaders have to provide a way of balancing its recommendations for their own environment. Braun et al (2011) have referred to the different contexts making up 'real' schools (595). At the time of the fieldwork, the staff at Aphra Behn were negotiating a unique set of circumstances, such as the school's 'requires improvement' Ofsted grading, and an intake of PP children that was a lower number than the average. Moreover, it had an established, large and influential Special Educational Needs (SEN) department that had become very focused on pastoral concerns and which housed three of the support staff that I spoke to. The school had a marginally larger than average population of these pupils. The 2013 Ofsted report had noted how the achievement of disabled students and those that had special needs were 'good', and that students had 'praised the help they were given' by their LSAs (2013 Ofsted report). The department had also been praised for getting

their pupils to work with local charities, promoting 'responsibility' and helping them with 'spiritual, moral, social and cultural development' (2013 Ofsted report).

The size and complexity of the school meant that a great emphasis was placed on communicating a workable whole school approach to the policy. Throughout the interviewing process, no fewer than 19 people (approximately 15% of the staffing population) were referred to by interviewees as being a key part of their institutional PP network. According to interviewees, getting a coherent PP strategy embedded across the whole school relied on support from the headteacher, classroom teachers, the attendance support manager, the work related coordinator, the literacy teacher, the Special Educational Needs Coordinator (SENCO), LSAs based in the SEN department, pastoral workers, and data admin staff. From this position, school leaders must attempt to make sense of policy guidance in their school context by using 'a combination of paperwork' and 'training events' to find strategies that can help them to contextualise the text of a policy into a workable whole school approach (Sue, deputy head, ECM). This leaves an unsettled space for ideas to emerge and is consistent with the signature of 'freedom' written into the PP policy, that pits schools and head teachers as 'best placed to decide how to support their pupils' (DfE 2010, 81).

The coalition government's education White Paper points to the fact that PP redresses the 'morally wrong' expectation forged within New Labour's 'contextual value added measure[iii]', that pupils eligible for free school meals might make less progress than their peers (DfE 2010, 68). The lack of space for any form of pastoral discourse in the White Paper can arguably be seen as an attempt to draw attention away from the *real* troubled lives that pupils face at home, which have been further exacerbated by austerity politics. Once again, it pushes the responsibility on to school teachers and diminishes the space for considering other reasons and contexts for disadvantage.

Ball et al suggest that the work of *translation* is that 'iterative process of making institutional texts and putting those texts into action' (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012, 45). In the school, this work was done through regular emails, 'staged events' during Wednesday morning briefings or during whole school INSET training day presentations.

Figure 2. shows a series of PowerPoint slides delivered during an INSET training day by the assistant head in charge of data, assessment and timetabling

The slides in *Figure 2.* make up a selection of a presentation delivered during the morning of a school INSET day focusing on PP. They form a product of interpretation that comes from engaging with the language of the policy found in guidance documents. In the presentation, PP is communicated as a 'statutory duty' and 'moral obligation' (briefing manual). The slides act as a medium for visualising and communicating the policy and its aims to school leaders, teachers, and non-teaching support staff through an inclusive language that PP is 'everyone's responsibility' (briefing manual). The fourth slide in the presentation situates PP in terms of the number of PP pupils found in the school. As the assistant head explained, there was evidence from the Sutton Trust that schools that had a high number of pupils or a very low number of PP pupils tended to do better than those school that fell somewhere in the middle. This is because small PP cohorts were 'swept along with the general population', whilst large cohorts brought in sizeable pots of money (Neil, assistant head). At Aphra Behn there was a significant number of PP children but not enough to make a massive difference, so interventions had to be carefully 'focused on those individuals' (Neil, assistant head, data).

The slides also provide evidence of senior leaders' thinking about how PP might refocus their current teaching and learning and behaviour strategies. Thee deputy head pointed out that lessons had been learnt for other significant school populations of vulnerable groups, such as SEN and EAL pupils. PP had helped the school to 'positively discriminate' and 'analyse disadvantage' across the board, by 'ranking' all students 'from achieving and not achieving' in

literacy, numeracy, behaviour and attendance, and through identifying 'blockages' caused by problems in mental health and confidence (Sue, deputy head). The INSET presentation thus asked questions to middle managers, class teachers and other staff members about how they could take forward the school's strategy through their own practice and departments. To prompt this thinking, school leaders discussed a number of best practice examples, such as improving classroom feedback and developing metacognition and self-regulation. Encouraging whole-school strategies on classroom feedback, in particular, became a key focal point given the crucial effect it had on the progress of PP pupils, and in delineating a broader idea of what now constituted 'good and bad teaching' practice within the school (Sue, deputy head).

In addition to communicating strategy to their staff, it became clear that the PP policy also came under the *gaze* of outside authorities such as Ofsted, and was being formally assessed within the wider discourses of standards and impact (Rose 2010, 86). As seen on the final PowerPoint slide in *Figure 2*, the lines on the graph, the gradient of each and the gaps between them, became a point of debate and *the* defining measurement of the school's success with their PP strategy. With PP, the main measurement for narrowing the attainment gap pits the entire school population (including PP pupils) against just PP pupils. The rationale behind this is to stop schools from closing the gap by overseeing lowering attainment in non-PP children, meaning both trajectories of lines need to go upwards. This means that when a PP pupil does well, this score is added on to the overall school population making it slower progress to close the gap. Even when there has been an improvement in PP pupils' performance, their added value to the school population meant that although the overall school population improved, the gap had not closed 'quickly enough' (Neil, assistant head, data). This adds to the intensification of the attainment drive where schools find themselves locked in a relentless battle for self-improvement. The inspectorate's fixation on the line of the graph, and its gradient meant that senior leaders had to argue their case that their PP strategy was working. It also meant accepting

that their hard work in developing other interventions and systems were marginalised during the inspection:

> *We've got very good systems with Pupil Premium. All of our money, virtually 95% is dedicated to Pupil Premium, it's not put in a general pot, but, there's still a lack of our outcomes and therefore, even though we can be open to scrutiny, we are quite proud of what we've done, we know we're still a bit vulnerable because we're not quite seeing at year 10 and 11 the outcomes for Pupil Premium. Until we can, they're going to be saying, yes well we can see you've got the right intention but actually is that money being spent the right way. Because that, of course, is the aim, to narrow the gap.*

<div align="right">(Sue, deputy head, ECM)</div>

The school's 2013 Ofsted that it 'requires improvement' meant that the success of their PP population had become scrutinised to the degree that good improvements across the board were not enough to satisfy accountability measures. Much energy was therefore spent trying to show urgent data trends for Ofsted whilst other important things that involved work on aspirations, or careers events, which were opened up to the whole school and wider communities, fell outside the authoritative gaze. The deputy head, for instance, discussed a couple of visits to outstanding schools where they admitted Ofsted 'didn't really look at that' because all their pupils were making the right progress and therefore seemed to be 'getting away with it a little bit' (Sue, deputy head, ECM). The drilling down by external authorities was intensified by the pressure to raise standards within the school's current context of below average attainment data for their whole school population. PP thus acted as yet another tool to refocus the school on its overall attainment data situation.

'It's pink to make you think, NOT to make you sink'': Pupil Premium and coloured data as a technology

In their book, Ball et al (2012) point to the 'new science of deliverology' that comes with the standards discourse and operates through "the discursive and interactive articulations of

'expectation', 'focus' and 'pressure'" (73). Certainly, the PP can be read as an attempt to intervene on the expectations of school leaders and teaching staff. For instance, one could point to Michael Gove's perception of a schooling system enthralled to 'soft bigotry of low expectation' blighting the progress of poor children in schools (2013b). Government as technique, however, relies on more than just having a worldview. The technical aspect of government (*techne*) then, documents the means, technologies, techniques and instruments that allow government to achieve its ends, and for authority to be accomplished (Dean 2010). In neoliberalised policy measures, government sets the technical means of achieving these aims through the league tables and progress indicators, and this sets out a shared, self-contextualised understanding about how schools should respond. The fieldwork considered this in relation to how PP was being 'delivered' in this particular school, and how it had become invested in other technologies and techniques already present within the existing school infrastructure.

A number of examples of instruments were identified and this included monitoring and impact assessment forms, the SIMS network and student evaluation and feedback forms. Some of these had been designed specifically to help track the PP policy, as in the case of tracking sheets and impact assessment forms, but others had been adapted to better streamline the data collection process for making sense of the PP school population. This was demonstrated through the way admin staff added extra columns on SIMS to highlight aspects such as attendance, behaviour and attitude towards learning. These elements were regularly communicated as a 1-4 quantifiable scale input by teachers and support staff. This scale adopted a miniature version of the larger Ofsted scale of 'Outstanding' to 'Inadequate' and was complemented with a supplementary document created by school leaders and distributed in morning briefing to teaching staff about how to judge behaviour within the Ofsted scale.

One technology that formed a part of all of these examples, and provided the link between them, was 'data'. The presence of data is not unique to the PP policy. It has become an important part of developing management infrastructures in schools (Sellar 2015) and at a supranational level where large bodies such as the EU are increasingly turning to numbers to inform educational policy decisions (Grek 2008). In this school, data was generated in qualitative formats from below through an evaluative 'model of listening' to the voices of PP pupils, and quantitatively through attendance, attainment and behaviour data. At the top, school leaders were required to look at the 'bigger picture' or generate ideas by plugging themselves into research conducted by external research institutions such as Sutton Trust and the EEF to inform school policy in teaching and learning. School leaders thus became part of a wider network connecting themselves to think tanks, LEAs, direct official government guidance and other schools. Although this provides school leaders with an understanding of some of the official research that is being produced, drawing on decontextualised studies is a deeply un-pedagogic approach to thinking about education more generally. As Terry Wrigley has argued, basing our ideas of education on 'what works' style research actually says very little about the multiple aims we might have for adopting such an intervention and it ignores the reactive nature of schools and the people inside them (Wrigley 2016).

Aphra Behn already had strong data systems prior to PP, however, the policy forced a renewed emphasis on the importance of better data production, management and evaluation of data. The deputy head described how they had to create a new leadership role so that the school could make sure 'the data was in place in order that we [the school] could narrow the gap' (Sue, deputy head, ECM). Money was put aside from the PP fund for this purpose. Over the course of several months, daily school communications such as emails and morning briefings about working with data, pupil trends and attainment, helped to cement, legitimate and naturalise the 'rhetoric of necessity' for getting data right (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012, 71). Leadership

members encouraged middle managers, teachers and support staff to draw on technology more regularly during their daily practice within a data hierarchy that had been developed by the assistant head. This included trying to train everyone with management responsibility to use the more 'powerful', 'user-friendly' data software programme 4Matrix (Neil, assistant head, data). This was because people 'got overwhelmed' by the old model of SIMS, and 4Matrix moved 'away from that databasey, spreadsheet-looking format and [put] in nice colourful graphs' that made identifying the 'child so much easier' (Neil, assistant head, data).

The emphasis on getting the data right, and picking up underachievement meant that the PP produced a necessity to create effective ways of 'seeing' when staff pored over a vast amount of data. One way this was achieved across the school was to produce an extended traffic light system, where green, amber, pink and red stood for codes of action for the teacher to act on. For instance, the pastoral worker talked about picking up 'those kids that have got a minus 16 or a minus 12… those in the red' for one-to-one intervention where different shades of red (including pink) correlated with the strength of the negative residuals in attendance, attitude towards learning and behaviour (Michelle, pastoral worker). Moreover, the assistant head, referring again to 4Matrix, suggested PP had created the need for a new colour (blue) altogether, to help distinguish PP underachievement with non-PP because the two groups 'could statistically get a bit mixed up' (Neil, assistant head, data).

Colour is powerful because it simplifies entanglements of data. After class teachers entered attainment-tracking data into the system, an individual child's column would return a particular shaded colour to indicate whether they were falling behind, on track, or excelling. A seven-page colour heavy guidance manual distributed to staff on data tracking opened with the phrase: 'It's pink to make you think, NOT to make you sink'. This document situated the role of in-school data tracking, within the broader context of the forthcoming Progress 8 measure and

Ofsted criteria for 'ideal scenarios' in calculating pupil 'flight paths' (tracking guidance manual). Its final emphasis rested on a bold formatted, underlined comment that said 'looking at data has zero impact of raising attainment [without] taking steps to address that underachievement' (tracking guidance manual). In the same way as stronger positive or negative residuals returned a stronger shade of red or green, Figure 4. shows how this was translated to show different levels of progress.

Figure 3. Charts of coloured data presented during a morning briefing

Figure 4. Self-help sheet for identifying Pupil Premium children found in the guidance manual on data tracking

Here, there are prompts for teachers to direct themselves by following a system of identification that lets them pick up children who are falling down the attainment ladder. In large part, picking children up for intervention (pink) before they fall into the red category is essential if "flight paths" are to retain a continuous upwards trajectory, without fluctuating over the course of a pupil's schooling. The standardised feedback, associated with the different colours, encourages each individual teacher to reflect on their practice in a way that identifies the situation as good (green), cautionary (amber), to think about types of intervention (pink), and bad (red). This demonstrates how individuals are regularly guided by the construction of 'a field of possible action,' through which the leadership's impetus on creating better and more effective data systems could be realised, and interventions systems might be adopted (Lemke 2002, 52). In this case, power is conceived as a 'designation of relations' where school leaders look to shape the conduct of their colleagues in order to encourage an effective response to failing pupils (Foucault and Senellart 2008, 186).

'Impact, always Impact' Pupil Premium and the formation of identities

The third dimension to Dean's *analytics of government* explores the way in which forms of individual and collective identity are operated through, by authorities seeking to govern (Dean 2010). Within the remit of PP, it was possible to consider some of the statuses, capacities and attributes that were taken up by staff members as a result of the policy. At the very top of the school management structure, key designated policy actors were expected to take on the complex task of understanding and acting on the PP policy. They used their power and experience to make sense of the policy, translate it, and enthuse other staff members in order to put practices into action (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012, 49). Drawing from 'guidance meetings,' 'paperwork,' 'attending training,' 'visiting outstanding schools,' 'getting stuff on the internet,' 'identifying blockages,' and responding by 'creating [job] posts' are all part of the deal for leadership members tasked with embedding the best strategy for PP (Sue, deputy head, ECM).

It is through this process of doing the work of policy that staff become both simultaneously receivers of a state policy initiative and creators of it (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012, 49). Thus, they are tasked with the responsibility of setting up school interventions and strategies but must do so within the remit of what is acceptable in terms of the expectations and criterion set out for them in the PP framework. Measuring the impact of interventions through online reporting, Ofsted, and performance tables, is an important component of PP policy accountability structure, and this meant having to work in a way which could show the positive outcomes for softer and harder interventions (DfE 2016). In part, this is driven by the statutory obligation to provide a breakdown to Ofsted and parents about how money is being spent in relation to outcomes. This was done through school leaders creating PP strategy documents, end of year impact assessments and expenditure lists that have to be available on every school

website. These final documents are built by drawing on evidence from smaller tracking sheets and impact reports written by LSAs, literacy co-ordinators and the pastoral workers.

A content analysis of qualitative comments listed on written tracking sheets of PP children showed how staff tried to understand children's performance in relation to three separate categories that included: 'attitude towards learning', 'behaviour concerns' and 'pastoral concerns'. These were short forms which allowed the LSA to give a 1-4 rating mark and a further comment. Of 160 tracking sheets analysed, 233 'further comments' were produced. Many were simply qualitative extensions of what LSAs were asked to provide within a 1-4 ranking system (see *Figure 5.*). Significantly though, just under half of the comments (109 instances) displayed examples where the LSA wrote in personal actions into the observation with comments such as: 'student X was reluctant to work but then became receptive to my help', 'student X laughed at me when I threatened to show his lack of work to head of year', or 'I made inclusion [the behaviour unit] aware of her phone'. Often these personal actions were framed with active verbs that tried to demonstrate how the LSA was acting on something, through how they 'made', 'told', and 'helped' in a variety of learning situations.

Figure 5. LSA tracking sheets for reporting on Pupil Premium pupils

The PP tracking sheets in particular made up the evidence-base for half-termly reports which were written by LSAs on underachieving children and passed on to the deputy head and shared with parents. At the time of fieldwork, these two LSAs were writing about 20 different pupils each across the year groups. As such, approximately 240 impact forms a year were produced for senior leaders as ways of monitoring the progress of children. These fed their way up and formed the evidence for a yearly whole-school impact form which was posted on the school's website. The final impact report for 2013/14 stated that 'data tracking sheets for identified students' had shown them 'responding positively to the additional support' and that they had 'shown improvements in learning and progress and attitudes to learning/behaviour' (final

impact report, 2013/14). Moreover, 'case studies' were available that showed 'significant impact' for lower school students including rises in attendance and attainment and an overall fall in behaviour issues (final impact report, 2013/14). Although the impact report was dominated by hard attainment data, it also included 'qualitative' student feedback about how well they felt supported through some of the careers and enterprise events funded by the PP.

Although the PP staff felt they had some freedom over things like discretionary budgets, this arrangement of writing down and reflecting on the impact of decisions staff made, meant that whilst the 'formal independence of the professional' was retained, the technique rendered 'their decisions visible and amenable to evaluation' (Rose 2010, 154). Within the school hierarchy, this is a criterion so often provided for us by others and which operates through 'delicate' and 'minute infiltration' and works on the very 'interior of our existence and experience as subjects' (Rose 1999, 10). At a school level, policy responses led to staff being made 'calculable' for their effectiveness, and 'visible' by their need to evidence policy activity and its effects (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012, 57). Here the theme of impact was key:

> *She [Michelle] can tell me exactly what she's bought… so 87 percent of students who have had targeted support have improved their levels of progress, examples and names. This process is encouraging as a practice more evaluation of what have I done, what did work, what didn't?*
>
> (Sue, deputy head, ECM)

> *As I've learnt more and more the last few weeks, everything is about impact, since the day I started this job, I have had to prove I've made impact, always impact. I have to write an impact form every single half term, obviously, students are measured on how much impact we've made.*
>
> (Michelle, pastoral worker)

For support staff, writing data and impact forms meant that they had to continually self-reflect on their impact for the purposes of 'accountability', or at the harshest level, as a way of 'almost justifying their existence' (Sue, deputy head, ECM). Ball refers us to the performance culture

which comes with a 'hard logic' in which an organisation will only spend money 'where measurable returns are likely to be achieved' (Ball 2003, 223). The deputy head referred to 'impact' 16 times during her interview; the pastoral worker mentioned it 12 times. The criterion set by policy-makers to demonstrate accountability for PP money worked on staff through their 'classification, measurement and comparison' of a wide range of their 'capacities and dispositions as human capital' (Sellar 2015, 771). In this sense, the PP had encouraged staff to evaluate their impact on disadvantaged pupils within their own professional capacity. The deputy head pointed out how the practice of managers reading impact forms of PP funded staff had led to this informing their appraisals and contract renewals:

> *Interviewer: Does this [monitoring of forms] feed back to their appraisal?*
>
> *Yeah absolutely and in fact whether their jobs are renewed… at a really harsh level… that if we haven't [shown] impact, that it's having an impact, so evidence of impact and I don't particularly like the model of one year contracts but because Pupil Premium funding could be pulled at any time, that in the next election the government changes they may pull that, we can't take the risk of appointing any Pupil Premium post as a permanent post, so these guys are almost justifying their existence all their time… now I don't particularly like that because I'm a big believer in people having job security but on the other hand it creates a sort of accountability and they've got to prove to me at every point that spending… now it's a lot of money I think we have £200,000… now if we don't have that then we are misusing public money.*

<div align="right">(Sue, deputy head, ECM)</div>

As discussed earlier in the paper, PP funding nationally has increased since its inception, as it has for this particular school too. However, the job security that might follow from having a policy embedded for seven years, had not materialised. The drive to increase evaluation and monitoring had also increased demands for staff to take on extra work that was not fully remunerated:

> *I write about 20-30 kids, and one of those reports takes 20-30 minutes to write there's not enough time in an hour and I don't get paid enough to do it at home, if they want to add, even if they said I'll pay you £12k a year I would say, yeah fair enough, I'm not asking for loads of money but admin hours are not enough and they won't let Heather [SEN Co-ordinator] give us two hours.*

(Maggie, LSA)

This follows Maurizio Lazzarato's description of a contemporary capitalism that brings about 'new strategies' to 'insecuritise or make precarious the condition of wage-earners', whereby a 'contract no longer provides the guarantees and securities once prevailing' (Lazzarato 2009, 124). It is telling that of all the PP funded staff that I had met and interviewed, all but the assistant head had either moved on from the school by early 2017 as a result of either the school not renewing their contracts, or because they themselves were seeking less precarious employment, despite the fact PP money had not fallen significantly. The yearly whole-school expenditure and impact reports from 2013-14 through to 2015-16 cited staff costings at around 75% of overall spending each year (approx. £150,000). This makes the type of employment conditions that come with the PP a significant part of the overall discussion.

'You can't show impact with a new pair of shoes': Forms of knowledge and Pupil Premium

School leaders and staff work creatively to enact policy by using these instruments to put into practice the little guidance they are given from central government. The choices and responses they make, however, should not be considered as natural or inevitable; rather they are situated in a particular way of thinking, or what Dean refers to as 'thought', essentially how government is employed as a rational and thoughtful activity (2010). The final dimension of the *analytics of government*, therefore, looks to explore the *episteme* of government. It asks about what *forms of knowledge* arise from practices? Alternatively, what are the *forms of knowledge* that inform practices? Within the context of PP, it is possible to think firstly, about how the state attempts to define the problem of disadvantage and poverty, and secondly, how this is interpreted by school leaders and staff actually working "on the ground". It is also at this point that the paper can now draw together the earlier sections about the school's context, with the technologies

and artefacts that have been examined, and the formation of identities of teachers, to discuss how these all feed into their wider understanding about disadvantage in relation to their vulnerable children.

I have tried to make the point throughout this paper that an instrumental version of accountability enabled through a form of 'impact', has become the dominant organising principle of the PP. This logic has some consequences for the way staff 'think' about their practice and the measurement of their interventions. The argument I make in this section is that the staff I spoke to often recognised that disadvantage is a very material problem. Aphra Behn decided to hire a pastoral worker, for instance, to provide equipment and clothing because of this. The impact framework, however, made demonstrating the worth of these 'softer' forms of intervention difficult and this led to some rather odd acrobatics around framing their interventions with types of data usage in order to reach an adequate solution: one which might show its worth in "impact".

As mentioned earlier, PP employs a different emphasis to the policy language found in New Labour's *Every Child Matters*. Under the coalition government, continuities can be found in the ever-increasing entrenchment of accountability and data infrastructures. The language of schooling, however, has shifted away from a softer focus on vulnerability, safety, well-being and contribution, to a harder emphasis on learning, achievement, progress and attainment. Ken Jones has characterised Gove as having presided over radical education programme that draws from the two poles of 'cultural conservative traditions' and the tools of the neoliberal order (Jones 2013b, 336). This often leaves Gove arguing that 'liberal' learning for its own sake is best secured through linear examinations (2011), or that access to a core knowledge is necessary for unlocking the previous 'intellectual improvement that existed among working people' (2013a). Jones states that what Gove has in mind when he combines these particular strands of conservatism and neoliberalism is less a theory of pupil equality, but rather a system

of Hayekian 'procedural fairness in matters of competition and economic goods' (Jones 2013b, 336). From this position, it is possible to see how policy 'architects' of the PP attempt to intervene in debates around disadvantage and how technologies such as performance tables might be the primary drivers for producing successful outcomes.

Overwhelmingly, the environment of 21st century UK schooling means that leadership members have to work within the 'narrow' and 'well-defined' remit set by the standards discourse (Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012). Policies, however, need to be interpreted by policy subjects that find themselves in contexts of certain histories, departmental strengths and weaknesses. As already mentioned, one of the predominant features about Aphra Behn was that it had a well-established, pastorally-driven, special needs department. This department, which housed PP LSAs, seemed to have a tangible effect on the attitudinal approach taken by one of the PP LSAs to their classroom practice:

> *When I started the role, the SENCO said you're there to help specific children but where you can, try and avoid stigma. If I turned around to a child and said I'm here because you're free school meals [Pupil Premium] it would open up the possibility of stigma. When I first started, a teacher would ask me: 'who are you here to support, what are their needs and what are you going to do to achieve this'? I was getting asked this question, not at the end, just to show them so they know, but [they] would ask me in front of the class and I would feel very uncomfortable answering that question and [I'd] actually just give the statemented children because, with the utmost respect, there would be a general awareness that they might need support. I found this uncomfortable because I didn't want this stigma attached to a [PP] child and neither did they.*

> (Abdul, LSA)

Even when line-managed outside the department, the PP LSAs were receiving training from the SENCO and this would ultimately affect their understandings of the role. They were conscious about not drawing unnecessary attention to PP children despite there being a great emphasis to actively identify PP children and their success in the classroom. The role of LSA also spilt over into things that were not necessarily explicit in the job description. Joining a

classroom and building up relationships with different pupils allowed LSAs to deal with emotional anxieties that pupils had:

> *Yeah, in the course of the last year a lot of what I've done has been emotional support with exam anxiety, people turning up to lesson upset. Whereas a regular LSA would find it difficult to do that, because [the] emphasis would be on heavily statemented children... I think it's part of the groups I've been supporting; it's not really done a lot with the heavily statemented children in the department. I can go out and say, what do you need, so you need something else, do you need someone to work through with it with you?*
>
> <div align="right">(Maggie, LSA)</div>

As it became clearer to school leaders that PP necessitated combining pastoral, and teaching and learning, it forced a change in the school's structure and encouraged previously isolated staff members to work together. This brought about a new appointment that could bring together predominantly quantitative and qualitative job posts, a theme that was reinforced in a line management structure chart I was shown by the assistant head:

> *Well, you can split the line management structure where these posts [pointing to SIMS management, his own role and attendance] are quantitative focused and these guys [pointing to LSAs, pastoral, SEN) are qualitative... now we've just appointed a Pupil Premium manager post on Monday which will have oversight of all of it because Sue and I haven't got time to micro-manage all of the posts and it just wasn't appropriate really and so we've got this new post coming in.*
>
> <div align="right">(Neil, assistant head, data)</div>

> *The difficulty of Pupil Premium is that complicated knitting of pastoral and teaching and learning practice... I think what it's done actually is that it's made us realise as a school that we can't... we've got this very isolated separated system of me and Vicky doing pastoral and Brian and Helena doing teaching and learning, heads of year and heads of faculty and they don't work well together. Now Pupil Premium has been a good example that that doesn't work and it's encouraged us to have more joint meetings so, so we're doing more meetings where teaching and learning and pastoral come together.*
>
> <div align="right">(Sue, deputy head, ECM)</div>

Boltanski and Thévenot (1999; 2006) discuss how social actors must negotiate from a number of different available 'world views', sometimes simultaneously, in order to reach a justification about the issues they face. One 'world-view' is the 'domestic world', which among other things finds a relation to the importance of developing 'character' or a worth which ties itself to 'acting in all simplicity', delicacy (of feelings), and 'thoughtfulness' (Boltanski and Thevenot 2006, 166). It is possible in thinking about the PP policy to draw on expressions of the 'domestic world' where school leaders and support staff, encourage a familial imperative to care and nurture their PP pupils through mentoring, giving material support and funding trips, in order to develop a sound, full and social character. At the same time, however, there was a pressure for school practitioners to demonstrate proper accountability about these interventions in a way that could help the school justify the money that had been spent on these activities, and which at the same time would improve the school's attainment data. Here, it is possible to see thinking located in both the 'industrial' and 'economic' worlds. An industrial world encompasses: 'the efficiency of beings, their performance, their productivity, and their capacity to ensure normal operations and to respond usefully to needs' (Boltanski and Thevenot 2006, 204), whereas, an 'economic' worldview focuses on the competitive component of commodities and money. Pupils are 'cared' for with money going towards funding trips, school uniform and other material goods but these often needed to become expressed as plots on a graph or table so they could demonstrate impact to external authorities. Rather than simply describing what staff had done, they needed to be encouraged to write impact forms that could demonstrate how a new school uniform had 'reduced NEET figures, reduced behaviour figures, increased attendance' (Sue, deputy head, ECM). The pastoral worker and the deputy head echoed one another in their discussion of impact for softer roles:

> *My problem has always been that you've got those hard targets in terms of the data, so you can see that a child has achieved eight levels of progress over two tracking points, but you can give them as much uniform as possible, so that might mean that they come to school when they wouldn't have come to school,*

but you can't really prove that. I might know that a student wouldn't be here if I hadn't given them a uniform but in terms of impact and the financial impact that just isn't enough.

(Michelle, pastoral worker)

There's many of our softer roles. Where it's hard to show direct impact and I tell them to do impact reports, they tend to be more: 'these are the things I've done' but rather than [this] they should say: 'here are reduced NEET figures, reduced behaviour figures, increased attendance'… and that's very difficult, you can't show impact with a new pair of shoes. You can't show impact with a lot of the softer outcomes that make these children feel less different… more comfortable.

(Sue, deputy head, ECM)

Being able to demonstrate 'high impact' was a result of accessible hard data, such as the literacy leader who could show improvements in 'baseline testing' (Sue, school leader). School leaders also drew, however, on qualitative feedback from pupils in focus groups. These interventions helped to highlight how children were struggling with extended homework projects because they had no 'computer at home' or 'internet access' or how it highlighted the importance of having a strong form tutor for pastoral concerns (Sue, deputy head, ECM). At its heart, PP was this 'model of listening to their voice' and it meant that between the drive for hard data there was an opportunity to pick up the 'little things' which concerned the school's pupils:

I interviewed six panels of six… really interesting what they said, year seven, eight and nine. I would like to have done this more, but just haven't had the time… a lot of the children I work with just need good feedback, everyone would gain if we would focus on this… and I think we get a little bogged down with the post holder stuff.

(Sue, deputy head, ECM)

At times in her interview, the deputy head moved between an appreciation for pastoral systems and a harder-headed focus on attainment that the policy language prompted—sometimes these became fused into a wider appreciation of what 'achievement' now meant:

I think what embodies Pupil Premium is that complete change of ethos in schools. It's one thing to care and nurture a kid and that's important… I don't

want to lose that but actually, the best way to care and nurture for a kid is to help their achievement and we've got to make that achievement focus much bigger… I've got no doubt that we've never neglected our Pupil Premium kids, and that we've done the child protection stuff, but have we ever focussed on their learning? Well, clearly we haven't otherwise there wouldn't be such a gap between their attainment.

(Sue, deputy head, ECM)

In the case of the PP policy, reframing social justice and equity in education goes beyond simply the reduction of the social and moral concerns to economic ones. Rather, at times, the policy encourages a fusion of different orders of worth that are reinforced through the impact of the governmentality function, which gives the state and the school a vision of what a successful PP intervention looks like. PP becomes both a 'moral responsibility' but also something worth investing in as it makes up 18% of the overall school population (school briefing manual). Here, economic considerations do not act as a mere add-on but rather moral issues are framed through an epistemology which 'dissolves' the gap between market and society (Shamir 2008, 14). It shows education systems can work in malleable ways as a 'market-enhancing system[s]' which concern themselves with a nation's economic interests, whilst at the same time promoting 'nourished' populations through an 'ethics of equity, and justice'(Savage 2011, 34; Savage 2013).

On the face of it at Aphra Behn, we have a moral imperative to tackle disadvantage through securing better achievement for a pupil (moral), an improvement in the school's data systems (technical), and the traffic-light system (perceptual). The traffic light system offers an effective and simple technology to align the goal of good achievement and efficient data systems together. In particular, the governmentality function of data acts as an intensifier because it plays a powerful role in encouraging staff to fully get on board with the building of the data system. Within an institutional context concerned about flagging attainment data, PP becomes entwined in a bigger concern about the school's need to improve overall data attainment for their pupils and it becomes another performance-driven 'methodology' for identifying the

'blockages' causing low attainment (Sue, deputy head, ECM). As we have seen, however, this practice also provides a space by which other second order interpretations can emerge, derived from a broader 'field of memory', such as through training by the SENCO who had taught for nearly thirty years (Foucault quoted in Ball, Maguire, and Braun 2012, 62). It also provides an opportunity for staff to pursue alternative practices during their piecemeal everyday work, which is not always recognised through hard data, but nonetheless, makes up part of the schooling reality for pupils. Achievement may now be the current way of thinking about success in pupil outcomes but this is still manifestly broader than it might be understood in the government diktat.

Further Discussion and Conclusion

Data presented in this paper provide grounded insights into how the PP has been enacted in one secondary school. It has mapped out, within the parameters of a single case study, the ways school leaders and staff have responded to the policy within their own existing school contexts. It is not possible or even desirable to try to isolate everything explored in this paper as a direct causal effect of the PP policy. Such an analysis would ultimately lead to a discussion of 'the formalities' and 'surface features', whereas, this study has sought to examine the ways in which the policy becomes organised within its context via an analysis of talk, artefact and practices (Ball, Pol, and Švaříček 2011, 2). After all, policies connect to other more established policies, people and roles in unexpected ways. As in the case of the deputy head, she held the ECM role, which had laid down prior understandings and duties concerning the school's disadvantaged pupils before PP. The introduction of PP with its bigger focus on achievement and accountability structures caused a negotiation of values in the process of interpreting and translating policy. This had structural ramifications too. The PP had highlighted an 'isolated separate system' and brought about the need for heads of year and different faculties to work together (Sue, deputy head, ECM). For leadership, the PP policy was another 'ball in the air'

amongst a great many other things expected of the school, where enacting the policy was set against the backdrop of improving attainment, with a 'prong of well-being' and making sure children 'are safe' and 'valued' (Sue, deputy head, ECM).

The 'depth' of this case study, then, can be found in the particulars of the descriptions of the school, and how staff worked through these contexts. That is, the fact the school takes on less PP pupils than the national and local average, and that it has been struggling with raising attainment across the board for a few years. Moreover, the strong pastoral drive in its SEN department, where some PP support staff were based, seemed to have a tangible effect on LSAs' practices and values. Furthermore, the intensified governmentality function in the school, and the scrutiny of data it received from external authorities such as Ofsted, arguably led data and 'self-writing' to be overwhelming themes. The school's intense focus on individual pupils can be explained, in part, because the school had a significant but lower than average population of PP pupils. Resources, therefore, had to be focused on individuals, and the data technologies that were created enabled this to occur. Being a school under pressure, there is evidence here that PP became another tool available to external authorities for putting pressure on the school to raise the standard of attainment right across the school, through a renewed attention on disadvantaged pupils. Moreover, one other area of focus would be on whether the precarious working conditions of temporary one-year contracts is common amongst other schools, as well as the high levels of staff turnover seen at Aphra Behn. Despite a long period of monetary commitment and being a flagship policy, the accountability structures associated with PP puts pressures on schools not to offer a secure employment.

In another environment, where a school had more space to act without feeling the same level of pressure for improving its overall results, it would be useful to know whether different choices might have been made, whether budget trajectories shifted, or if emphases were broadly consistent with the findings in this study. Other research done on PP (Abbott,

Middlewood, and Robinson 2015), for instance, shows that " schools" with more freedom to manoeuvre are able to benefit from broadening the concept of "value" with their PP strategy for developing a whole school ethos, and not merely demonstrating value for money. This above all resists the temptation to pursue practices where the 'urgent so often drives out the important' (182). Outstanding results can still be achieved by 'holding steadfastly to a set of [broader] values', which arguably 'underlines the significance of those values in the first place' and should therefore recognise *fulfilment* alongside attainment (182). Leadership members at Aphra Behn, as noted earlier, mentioned frustration at not being given sufficient credit for their work in this area given the intense focus Ofsted had on their attainment scores.

The study's findings provide an informative evidence-base for mapping out two wider, prescient issues in schooling and neoliberal policy. The first is that this study adds to other research focused on the increasing ubiquity of data in schooling systems. Within this paper, it is possible to see the ongoing construction of a 'computational project' at different levels (Ozga, 2017) where ever-more energy is put into increasing data efficiency to remove the 'blockages' (Sue, deputy head, ECM; see also Sellar 2015, 772–773). Data provided a powerful technology for school leaders to demonstrate impact and to provide an individual focus on specific pupils when external authorities were drilling down on the school over their struggling attainment data. There is a danger here, however, that in building up data systems to this extent, the processes involved become semi-autonomous, with not enough time available to suitably contextualise or fully register the data. At the start of the year, for instance, around 20 LSAs were producing around '700 forms' on special needs children every week to be passed up to the deputy head (Heather, SEN co-ordinator). The sheer quantity and time-scale of feedback meant that of this had the potential to produce decision-making that was 'not always visible' and 'readily comprehensible' to the people who use these data processing systems at different levels (Sellar 2015, 773).

Using decontextualised data-driven research can also be problematic for fully understanding the wider implications of a school strategy. School leaders at Aphra Behn referred to the EEF regularly during their presentations and briefings. The EEF, however, barely expands beyond a short decontextualised summary of its intervention (see Wrigley 2016), and considers teaching assistants, for instance, as 'low impact for high cost based on limited evidence' of correlational studies for improving pupil attainment (EEF 2017). The research in this study also shows that within (and beyond) their specific duties, LSAs take on important roles, such as offering emotional support and building relationships that cannot and should not be measured by a child's attainment data alone. The high turnover of staff as a result of insecure working conditions makes building these relationships even harder to sustain in the long run, as does the time taken away for tracking impact in the first place.

The second broader contribution is that the paper makes an intervention into studies that have tried to highlight the way neoliberal policies combine complex relationships of equity and economic efficiency (Shamir 2008; Savage 2011; Savage 2013). PP is a UK-based policy and Michael Gove is a British politician. The policy, however, follows a 'global shift' towards 'efficiency' and 'accountability' (Rizvi and Lingard 2010, 72). Gove characterised his programme of reforms as providing 'greater autonomy' with 'sharper, more intelligent accountability' to mobilise the power of performance management (2014) as well as unleashing a programme for democratising access to knowledge and liberal learning (2011). PP thus encapsulates this logic through the way politicians mobilise the language of social justice and combine it with tools of the neoliberal order, in a way that makes clear-cut resistance to these changes difficult (although not impossible) even when they come into conflict with prior understandings held by staff helping disadvantaged and vulnerable children.

The view from Aphra Behn High School is that the strong desire to care and nurture their children is carefully weaved with a need to provide efficient data systems and better attainment

data. So, ultimately, within an entrenched neoliberal accountability system, can you show impact with a new pair of shoes? Well, the answer is that you can, but communicating this to external authorities means it must be justified in relation to measurable, quantifiable factors, such as attendance and behaviour points, rather than a decision taken as an end in itself with one's professional judgement. This is a type of performativity which fosters immense creative footwork in finding ways to demonstrate impact, but one that is basically instrumental in its ends. This tries to narrow any discussion about what it means to be professional in the 21st century, given that most practitioners want to be seen to be professional and will often enact and embrace a dominant framework that they have had limited voice in actually determining themselves (Moore and Clarke 2016, 671).

In light of the findings here, how might we think about schooling neoliberal policies such as PP in the future? Politicians increasingly draw on the language of social justice at the same time as trying to mobilise a logic that 'induces conformity to market-shaped systems of action' (Jones 2013a, 164). Paying attention to how this plays out in an institutional context can help to demonstrate how consensus-building occurs between social actors with different views, in varying contexts. The way PP accommodates and reshapes conflicting ideas that staff might have about their work in relation to disadvantage may help to explain why PP is able to form a high level of consensus across the board with politicians and educators. In trying to understand all this, the paper has provided a grounded theoretical contribution by building some tentative links between Dean's (2010) *analytics of government* and Ball et al's enactment research (2012).

Thus, at the heart of this study, is an engagement with how staff members (as policy subjects) become the centrepiece of policy work when they enact it within the professional capacities provided to them by supported autonomy. Governmentality studies start with an assumption that social actors 'can act' (Dean 2010, 22). More than this though, the art of liberal government

is so often done through bringing forward 'responsible and prudential subjects' that take on 'very specific obligations' (262). PP makes sophisticated use of this. It overtly puts a great deal of moral responsibility on teachers to rectify things they have little or no control over, including rebalancing the gap in attainment that exists as a result of economic and social deprivation. It is through thinking about and acting on these moral obligations, within powerful performance management frameworks, that teachers make themselves 'responsible' for the attainment prospects of their pupils and amenable to state actors as 'morally burdened agents' (Brown 2015, 134). Perryman et al have referred, for instance, to the powerful subjection of teachers to the 'morality' of policy, that brings forth a reflective practitioner "normalised within the discourse of the 'good' teacher" (Perryman et al. 2017, 4).

More in-depth research that locates teachers in their context can help to show how the performativity system is mobilised through piecemeal policy work, which requires 'moralised' responsible decision-making and action, within the different dimensions of governance set out by Dean's *analytics of government*. In the case of staff in this school (especially those involved in pastoral roles), this comprised of at least two sets of associative values: both a professional desire to care and nurture and a need to successfully show impact within a neoliberal performance culture. The thought at least in this paper is that staff negotiate these conflicting world-views within their everyday realities. A view from the surface might see PP as a relentless drive towards attainment. A closer look, however, shows a much more complex process of practices. Admittedly, this is often done on a discursively limiting ground, but it does still sometimes provide spaces to think and act differently.

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Notes

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[i] This data was attained from the following Department for Education source which tabulates pupil numbers from the school census (retrieved 24th May 2017): https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/pupil-premium-conditions-of-grant-2016-to-2017

[ii] This guidance page can be found at (retrieved 24th May 2017): https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pupil-premium-information-for-schools-and-alternative-provision-settings#history

[iii] The Department for Education explained this measure as 'an attempt to quantify how well a school does with its pupil population compared to pupils with similar characteristics nationally' (DfE 2010, 68). In compiling league tables in relation to pupil progress, such a measure took into account things such as gender, eligibility for free school meals, first language, ethnicity and the level of deprivation in the area where a pupil lives. In 2010 the Coalition government scrapped the measure and the most current indicator at the time of writing is Progress 8 which looks at attainment scores and progress across a number of different school subjects.