

**The Impacts of OFSTED Inspection on Secondary Schools and their Teachers  
between 1993 and 2018: A Study of the Perceptions of Teachers with  
Multiple Experiences of School Inspection.**

**By Ian Richard Luff**

**A thesis submitted for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in the School of  
Education and Lifelong Learning, University of East Anglia**

**June 2021**

## **Abstract**

Tracing its origins from James Callaghan's Ruskin Speech of 1976, and exploring tensions relating to the aims and purposes of education, this study examines teachers' perceptions of the impacts of OFSTED inspection on secondary schools and teachers from 1993 to 2018.

This is a qualitative study based on semi-structured interviews carried out in a life history context of 30 teachers with a broad range of experience and seniority within the profession. Each teacher in the purposive sample was recruited on the basis of service in at least two schools and experience of at least two inspections in the OFSTED era. Many had multiple experiences of both. In total, the sample had seen 757 years' service and had experience of 119 inspections. It contained headteachers, middle leaders and those with responsibility only to their classes. As a purely qualitative study of the perceptions of such a large sample of secondary school teachers with so much direct experience of so many OFSTED inspections over such a long time period this study makes an original contribution to knowledge and understanding of the perspectives of experienced teachers on the impacts of OFSTED inspections.

The semi-structured teacher interviews in a life history context were conducted between November 2018 and June 2020. They used a Foucauldian framework to explore the appropriateness of the lenses of governmentality, power, and discipline and to elicit thoughts on the impacts of OFSTED on schools and teachers over whole careers. Interpretative phenomenological analysis was applied to the interview data. Findings indicated broad acceptance of the appropriateness of accountability to education and mixed views concerning OFSTED's suitability as the instrument of that accountability. Themes of the positive and negative impacts of the OFSTED accountability system were also elicited. Possible mitigations to identified negative factors included the suggestion that a more dialogic mode of inspection could help make the inspection process more acceptable to the teaching profession. However, the majority of participants had serious reservations about the use of school inspections to enforce extrinsic ends on the education system.

## **Access Condition and Agreement**

Each deposit in UEA Digital Repository is protected by copyright and other intellectual property rights, and duplication or sale of all or part of any of the Data Collections is not permitted, except that material may be duplicated by you for your research use or for educational purposes in electronic or print form. You must obtain permission from the copyright holder, usually the author, for any other use. Exceptions only apply where a deposit may be explicitly provided under a stated licence, such as a Creative Commons licence or Open Government licence.

Electronic or print copies may not be offered, whether for sale or otherwise to anyone, unless explicitly stated under a Creative Commons or Open Government license. Unauthorised reproduction, editing or reformatting for resale purposes is explicitly prohibited (except where approved by the copyright holder themselves) and UEA reserves the right to take immediate 'take down' action on behalf of the copyright and/or rights holder if this Access condition of the UEA Digital Repository is breached. Any material in this database has been supplied on the understanding that it is copyright material and that no quotation from the material may be published without proper acknowledgement.

## List of Contents

<b>Title Page</b>		Page i
<b>Abstract</b>		Page ii
<b>List of Contents</b>		Page iii
<b>Explanation of Acronyms and Key Terms</b>		Page vii
<b>Acknowledgements</b>		Page viii
<b>Chapter 1</b>	<b>From Ruskin Speech to Research Problem</b>	Page 1
Section 1.1	Author, Motivation, and the Research Problem	Page 20
<b>Chapter 2</b>	<b>Relevant Literature: Cutting a Research Pathway</b>	Page 25
Section 2.1	Introduction	Page 25
Section 2.2	Accountability: definitions, effectiveness, and transferability	Page 26
Section 2.3	Accountability Systems and Educational Professionalism	Page 34
Section 2.4	Performative Cultures and Accountability	Page 40
Section 2.5	Trust of OFSTED by the Teaching Profession	Page 43
Section 2.6	The Capacity of Schools to Improve Educational Outcomes	Page 49
Section 2.7	OFSTED's Self View	Page 51
Section 2.8	Alternatives to OFSTED	Page 55
Section 2.9	OFSTED related press coverage	Page 56
Section 2.10	Edited Collections and Academic Papers on OFSTED	Page 59
Section 2.11	The Impacts of OFSTED Inspection	Page 62
Section 2.12	Research Areas Identified in this Chapter	Page 65
<b>Chapter 3</b>	<b>Philosophical Framework and Methodology</b>	Page 66
Section 3.1	Introduction	Page 66
Section 3.2	Which Foucault?	Page 67
Section 3.3	Inspection and Governmentality	Page 69
Section 3.4	Inspection as Power, Truth and Knowledge	Page 71
Section 3.5	Inspection as Discipline	Page 73
Section 3.6	Teacher Perception and Foucauldian Lenses	Page 80
Section 3.7	Why Qualitative Method?	Page 80

Section 3.8	The Life History Method	Page 88
Section 3.9	Semi-Structured Interviews	Page 92
Section 3.10	Research Questions and Foucauldian Framework	Page 93
Section 3.11	Type of School Scale	Page 96
Section 3.12	Sampling	Page 97
Section 3.13	Ethical Considerations	Page 103
Section 3.14	The Interview Process	Page 104
Section 3.15	Transcription	Page 107
Section 3.16	Why Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis?	Page 110
Section 3.17	Heidegger and Foucault	Page 113
Section 3.18	The Experiential Codes	Page 114
Section 3.19	The 'Scene Setting' Questions: A Life History Context	Page 118
<b>Chapter 4</b>	<b>Analysis of most Prominent Themes</b>	Page 120
Section 4.1	Introduction	Page 120
Section 4.2	The Need for Accountability	Page 120
Section 4.3	The Early OFSTED Inspections	Page 133
Section 4.4	Shortened Observations and Inspections	Page 140
Section 4.5	Pre-Decided and Personal Inspection Agendas	Page 150
Section 4.6	OFSTED Inspections and School Policy and Practice	Page 163
	i) OFSTED as Drivers of Practice	Page 164
	ii) Policies for OFSTED Approval	Page 173
	iii) Caution and Formulaic Practices	Page 183
Section 4.7	OFSTED and Teacher Wellbeing	Page 192
	i) Teacher Morale	Page 193
	ii) Pressure on Teachers	Page 198
Section 4.8	Dialogue with and Support from OFSTED Inspectors	Page 207
Section 4.9	Data	Page 216
Section 4.10	OFSTED Inspector Behaviour	Page 227
Section 4.11	Inspection Judgements and School Circumstances	Page 242
Section 4.12	Consistency of Inspection Reports and Judgements	Page 251

Section 4.13	Overall Effects of the OFSTED Accountability System	Page 257
<b>Chapter 5</b>	<b>Conclusion</b>	Page 267
Section 5.1	Introduction	Page 267
Section 5.2	<b>Research Question 1</b>	Page 268
	How had the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affected teachers personally?	
Section 5.3	<b>Summary of Key Findings from Research Question 1</b>	Page 272
Section 5.4	<b>Research Question 2</b>	Page 273
	How had the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affected the culture and practices of schools?	
Section 5.5	<b>Summary of Key Findings from Research Question 2</b>	Page 278
Section 5.6	<b>Research Question 3</b>	Page 278
	How far had trust been evident in the OFSTED inspections experienced and what effects had its presence or absence had?	
Section 5.7	<b>Summary of Key Findings from Research Question 3</b>	Page 282
Section 5.8	<b>Research Question 4</b>	Page 282
	How consistent had inspection judgements and recommendations made by OFSTED been for schools and their staff?	
Section 5.9	<b>Summary of Key Findings from Research Question 4</b>	Page 286
Section 5.10	<b>Research Question 5 and Overall Conclusion</b>	Page 286
	How had overall effects of the OFSTED accountability system been perceived? Could any effects be mitigated and, if so, how?	
Section 5.11	<b>Summary of Overall Impacts</b>	Page 293
Section 5.12	<b>Dissemination</b>	Page 294
	<b>Bibliography</b>	Page 295
	<b>Appendices</b>	
Appendix 1	“A Rational Debate Based on the Facts”	Page 312
Appendix 2	The Ruskin Principles	Page 316
Appendix 3	Initial Format of interview Questions	Page 317
Appendix 4	Type of School Scale	Page 318
Appendix 5	Appeal for Participants	Page 320
Appendix 6	Final Interview Questions	Page 321
Appendix 7	Most Frequently Used Experiential Codes	Page 322

Appendix 8	Coded Transcript	Page 324
Appendix 9	Participant Profile	Page 325
Appendix 10	Most Prominent Themes before Combination	Page 326
Appendix 11	Example Page of Experiential Code Collation	Page 328

#### **List of Tables**

<b>Table 1</b>	<b>OFSTED Related Press Coverage</b>	Page 58
<b>Table 2</b>	<b>Summary of Overall Impacts</b>	Page 293

## Explanation of Acronyms and Key Terms

Acronym/Key Term	Explanation
The Black Papers	Private publications making a case for a view of 'traditional' education
Comprehensive School	A non-selective school taking pupils of all academic abilities
DCSF	Department of Children Schools and Families
DES	Department of Education and Science
DfE	Department for Education
DfES	Department for education and Science
ERO	Education Reform Office (New Zealand)
Eleven Plus	A selection examination given to primary school pupils aged 11
Grammar School	A selective school for pupils passing the 'Eleven Plus' examination
Green Paper	A consultation document for discussion in the UK Parliament
HMCI	Her Majesty's Chief Inspector
HM Government	Her Majesty's Government (The Government of the United Kingdom)
HMI	Her Majesty's Inspector
KS	Key Stage (of the National Curriculum for England and Wales)
LA	Local Authority
LEA	Local Education Authority
NCC	National Curriculum Council
NUT	National Union of Teachers
MAT	Multi Academy Trust
PGCE	Post Graduate Certificate of Education
SEF	Self-Evaluation Form
SLT	School Leadership Team
SMT	School Management Team
TES	Times Educational Supplement
SEN	Special Educational Needs
SEND	Special Educational Needs and Disabilities
Secondary Modern School	A school catering for pupils who had not passed the selective 11+ exam allowing access to a grammar school.
Technical School	A school offering technical education
White Paper	A draft of possible legislation for discussion in the UK Parliament

## Acknowledgements

I am deeply indebted to the following, without whom I could never have brought this formidable project to its conclusion. May they accept my grateful thanks.

- My wife, Amanda, whose patience, kindness, tolerance, and thoughtfulness knew no bounds and saw me through.
- My parents, Alma and Richard Luff. Your unconditional love and belief in education gave me the strongest possible start in life.
- The London Borough of Barking and Dagenham where my parents took me in search of a good education. We weren't disappointed.
- James and Anna, whose hints on ICT usage were more valuable than they knew.
- Michael Batten, my teacher, friend, inspiration, and mentor for over 50 years: the man who rescued me from a life on an assembly line.
- The 30 people who so selflessly gave of their time to share in interview their experiences of life, of education, and of OFSTED inspections. I know it was not always easy and I appreciated it greatly. There would have been no thesis without you.
- My supervisors, Professor Terry Haydn, and Dr John Gordon. Wise voices.
- Dr Simon Watts for his inspirational training sessions
- The University of East Anglia, which nurtured and shaped me since I first arrived in 1978. It gave me a chance and I like to think that I have now taken it properly.

## Chapter 1

### From Ruskin Speech to Research Problem

“My general guidance for the speech was that it should begin a debate about existing educational trends and should ask some controversial questions.” (Callaghan, 1987, p 410)

On 16<sup>th</sup> October 1976, Labour Prime Minister James Callaghan arrived at Ruskin College Oxford in response to an invitation to lay the foundation stone for new residential accommodation. He took the opportunity of this visit to an educational institution closely linked to the Labour Movement to deliver a speech written under his guidance by Bernard Donoughue and Elizabeth Arnott of the Number 10 Policy Unit (Donoughue, 1987; Chitty, 1989, p 73). The speech represented a highly unusual direct intervention by a Prime Minister into the area of education policy and a system referred to by a former Senior Chief Inspector as being, at this time, “a national service locally administered” (Bolton, 2014). This intervention alone of the Prime Minister in a field so defined could have been considered an important step but the contribution of his words to the objectives of British education in the long term will be shown below to have been very significant. This thesis will establish how that speech (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1) referred to from now on as ‘The Ruskin Speech’ proved to be a watershed the relations of HM Government with teachers in state funded schools in Britain and led in the longer term to the development of a new inspection system which submerged Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Schools within a much larger and differently-focused organisation: The Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED). The thesis will go on to explore the implications of this new relationship with schools as an example of tension between the Foucauldian concept of governmentality (Foucault, 2001) and the previously prevalent educational philosophy of Liberal Education expressed in the work of R.S. Peters (Peters, 1966). Using this tension as a lens and employing the qualitative methodology of Life Histories (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) using semi-structured interviews based on research questions built on a Foucauldian framework (Kendall and

Wickham, 2004) and analysed through Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis this thesis investigates teachers' perceptions of the effects of that inspection system on state secondary schools in England from its inception in 1992 to November 2018 when interviews began for this study.

James Callaghan's adviser in the Number 10 Policy Unit, Bernard Donoghue, had recognised the Prime Minister's personal interest in the field of education and first suggested that it was an area where he, Callaghan, might try to make an impact (Donoghue, 1987, p 111). Donoghue's view expressed in the first weeks of the premiership in a memorandum of 13<sup>th</sup> May 1976 (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) was that the Department of Education and Science (hitherto referred to as the DES) should concern itself with "quality in education, including basic standards and teaching methods in schools, and education as a preparation for work and adult life". (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) Donoghue's choice of words was very significant. His mention of "quality" (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) clearly means high quality; no other interpretation would make sense in this context. He identifies "preparation for work and adult life" (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) as at least two principal goals of education. Work addresses an economic purpose seen as extrinsic to education at this time and the goal of preparation for adult life could be seen to address both economic and social purposes in providing a stable and governable workforce. Both of Donoghue's principal goals serve the "art of government" as defined by Foucault (Foucault, 2001, p.207) and thereby concord with Foucauldian thought on Governmentality. (Foucault, 2001, chapter 7) It is likely therefore that Donoghue saw "quality in education" (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) as the adoption of means by which these principal goals could be achieved. He gives "basic standards and teaching methods" (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) as examples of these means but it is very difficult from these few words to specify what they might look like in practice. He does not expand on where these basic standards might apply and he gives no indication of the teaching methods he is referring to. Donoghue's conception of "quality in education" (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) is

incomplete and even vague here. Clues perhaps lie in the subsequent actions of the Prime Minister in receipt of Donoughue's memorandum.

The leader to whom Donoughue was speaking, James Callaghan, had been elected leader of the Labour Party in April 1976 following Harold Wilson's unexpected resignation and succeeded him as Prime Minister without a general election following internal ballot of Labour MPs. Wilson had been electorally the most successful Labour leader since the foundation of the Party and it is reasonable to believe that Callaghan, yet to face a national electorate as party leader, felt under considerable pressure to make a mark on policy. Add to this Callaghan's personal concern about education and policy action in this field became likely. He was "the only Premier born in the twentieth century who had not benefitted from attending university he revealed a deep concern for the quality of education available to the nation's youth" (Donoughue, 1987, P 111)

Callaghan himself confirmed this in 1987:

I have always been a convinced believer in the importance of education, as throughout my life I had seen how many doors it could unlock for working class children who had begun with few other advantages, and I regretted my own lack of a university education. I was also aware of growing concerns amongst parents about the direction some schools were taking and I was anxious to probe this (Callaghan, 1987, p 409)

On 21<sup>st</sup> May 1976 eight days after receiving Donoughue's memorandum (Donoughue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540), Callaghan summoned Education Secretary Fred Mulley to his office and voiced his concerns (Chitty,1989, p 73),

Many schools had developed experimental methods of learning more centred on the child and less on the subject. When I visited I saw many happy, alert children far less repressed than I had been and occupying themselves with a wider range of activities. But were they also acquiring skill in handling the basic knowledge they would need in later life? I raised four areas

of concern with the Secretary for Education. Was he satisfied with the basic teaching of the three Rs; was the curriculum sufficiently relevant and penetrating for older children in comprehensive schools especially in the teaching of science and mathematics; how did the examination system shape up as a test of achievement; and what was available for the further education of sixteen to nineteen year olds? I told Fred Mulley of my doubts and said I was considering making a speech on those issues. He undertook to prepare a memorandum on these matters and this reached me in early July (Callaghan, 1987, p 409)

By posing such questions of educational relevance to later life, curriculum, pedagogy, applicability and outcomes to the Secretary of State for Education and demanding a response Callaghan directly challenged the current educational provision of the Local Education Authorities and the role of the DES in accepting that provision as it stood.

From Callaghan's instructions to Mulley, Donoghue's "basic standards" and "teaching methods" by which "quality in education" (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) was to be achieved become clearer. Basic standards meant mastery of reading, 'riting and 'rithmetic supported by an examination system capable of testing such achievement. Teaching methods meant those that would instil knowledge for later life. "Quality in education" (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) had assigned extrinsic purposes to education and basic standards and methods had been identified as means of achieving those objectives. "Later life" in addition to its social dimension clearly included success in paid employment for the vast majority of state school pupils who would need to earn a living. Donoghue's two principal goals of education had been framed as definable in positivist terms and extrinsic in that they were both linked to the economic success of the country. From that point it became possible for methods and basic standards to be classified as either 'good' in that they could contribute to that measurable goal of economic success or 'bad' in that they could not.

Donoghue saw the DES as “traditionally reluctant to commit itself” (Donoghue, 1976, in Morgan, 1997, p 540) to addressing basic standards and teaching methods. Its reluctance would not have been surprising for three reasons. Firstly, the attempt under Minister of Education Sir David Eccles to involve the DES in curriculum development through its newly created Curriculum Study Group in 1962 had been met with great suspicion by teachers’ organisations to the extent that it was disbanded within two years. (Dunford, 1998) This resentment at a DES attempt to influence what was actually taught in schools would not have indicated that response would be any more favourable to attempts to define how it might be taught and to what standard.

Secondly, any attempt to define the purpose of education, even partially, as preparation for an economic end such as work would represent a direct and fundamental challenge to the then dominant educational philosophy among educational professionals in schools, universities and teacher-training institutions in Britain. This philosophy of ‘Liberal Education’ drawing on Platonic (Plato, 1941) and Aristotelian thought (Aristotle, 1970) from had been expanded in the nineteenth century by John Henry Newman, (Newman, 1996) and Matthew Arnold (Arnold, 1979) before refinement for the twentieth century by Hirst (Hirst, 1973) and Peters (Peters, 1966) Callaghan’s instructions even in the relatively mild early form directed to Mulley potentially represented a direct assault on this philosophy, defined by its leading exponent R.S. Peters as “a protest against confining what has been taught to the service of some extrinsic end” (Peters, 1966, p 43) The Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1) would realise that potential.

Thirdly, education in England and Wales under the terms of the 1944 Education Act (HMSO, 1944) kept the provision and administration of education in the hands of local education authorities. The Minister’s duties were defined as

To promote the education of the people of England and Wales and the progressive development of institutions devoted to that purpose, and to secure the effective execution by

local authorities, under his control and direction, of the national policy for providing a varied and comprehensive education service in every area (HMSO,1944, Section 1- 1)

That national policy for provision of a varied and comprehensive service therefore was executed by the Local Education Authorities under the control and direction of the Secretary of State but the aims, values and methods employed by that service had not been specifically defined by the Act. Donoghue claimed these had been left to Local Authorities and the teaching unions (Morgan, 1997, p 540) and his implication was that this had been a result of reluctance to exert the 'control and direction' provided for under the Act (HMSO, 1944).

Since HMI at that time was part of the "reluctant" DES (Donoghue, 1976, in Morgan, 1997, p 540) it is perhaps surprising that this body seemed to be concerning itself with some elements of "quality in education" as identified by Donoghue (Donoghue, 1976, in Morgan, 1997, p 540) but in an advisory capacity rather than giving any sense of "control and direction" as demanded by the Education Act (HMSO,1944). During the 1960s many HMIs were heavily involved not with conducting school inspections in any great numbers but in giving professional advice concerning the contentious areas later to be outlined by Donoghue (Donoghue, 1987) on an LEA, school or teacher level as well as to the ministers of the DES.

HMIs were busy with their now familiar advisory work with local authorities, schools and teachers. Much of that work was concerned with the value and relevance of what was being taught, the quality of teaching and standards of learning. A consequence of that emphasis and focus was that HMI was heavily involved in curriculum development and in-service work with teachers (Bolton, 2014, p 291)

The curriculum initiatives on which the HMIs were working came not from the DES alone but from the Schools' Council established in 1964 and consisting of representatives from the DES, HMI, LEAs and teaching unions. HMI was acting in full consistency with its brief that had remained largely unchanged since its inception in 1839: to inform government about the condition of the education

service; provide it with advice needed to develop and implement policies and finally to: “inform those with responsibility for providing and conducting education of its findings and to point out what was needed to encourage and spread good practice” (Bolton, 2014, p 289)

HMI was an advisory body. The DES built schools, made national policy and ensured a supply of trained teachers, but those responsible for conducting education in the sense of what was taught and learned in schools, how relevant it was and how well it was done were the LEAs, heads and teachers with an eye to the demands of external examinations. In Bolton’s (2014) phrase education in the very late 1960s was indeed a ‘national service locally administered’. (Bolton, 2014, p 292).

Even before Callaghan’s premiership the tide had begun to turn towards greater central governmental involvement in education policy and practice. The Fulton Report (1968) and the work of Senior Chief Inspector Sheila Browne preserved the advisory function of HMI but moved that advice focus away from schools and LEAs by 1974 back towards a national focus of inspections designed to inform strategic advice to the DES although, according to Donoghue, this had not disturbed its traditional reluctance to act even by 1976. (Donoghue, 1976, in Morgan, 1997, p 540)

As HMI moved back towards a national advisory focus the implementation of two highly controversial initiatives and resulting publicity brought educational methodology and curriculum into high public profile. The spreading adoption of child-centred education, as defined in the Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) in place of more traditional pedagogy, and the establishment of comprehensive schools in place of secondary moderns and grammars prompted a traditionalist and highly critical reaction in the form of the publication of the first four education ‘Black Papers’ between 1969 and 1975 (Cox and Dyson, 1969a) (Cox and Dyson, 1969b) (Cox and Dyson, 1970) (Cox and Boyson, 1975). The issue of these privately-funded publications to members of Parliament and their wider publication and dissemination gained a very high profile in the popular press thereby increasing the concern of politicians for education at a time of very close electoral margins.

The Labour Party came to power as part of a minority government in February 1974 against a backdrop of economic turmoil, industrial decline and frequent strike action. It gained a tiny majority of three seats in a second election held in October of that year. Between these two elections the Conservative Shadow Minister for Education, Norman St John Stevas anticipated Donoughue's 'quality' memorandum by 22 months in an interview published in the Sunday Telegraph on 4<sup>th</sup> August 1974 (Izbicki, 1974) in which he outlined his party's education policy "today there is unprecedented alarm amongst parents about the quality of education in our schools and in particular about conduct and discipline" (Izbicki, 1974)

He went on to expand on the theme of quality. In answer to the question: "What do you see as the most urgent reforms required in the present educational system?" Stevas replied: "First of all to improve the quality of education. Here there is the greatest anxiety. I want to see national standards of literacy and numeracy laid down once again" (Izbicki, 1974).

In addition, the affair of the William Tyndale School where it was argued that child centred education had been taken to a libertarian extreme came to public attention with the appointment of the Auld Enquiry in February 1975. The resulting report which was published in the July of 1976 (Auld, 1976) highlighted issues of curriculum, accountability, discipline and educational standards (Bolton, 2014) and received extensive media coverage for the rest of the year. These issues also came into stark relief in the specialist press when John Fairhall in the Education Guardian reviewed a book on the affair (Gretton and Jackson, 1976) by two journalists of the Times Educational Supplement

the powers and responsibilities of local authorities, the control of the curriculum, the criteria for assessing a school's efficiency, the aims of primary education, the need for testing, the role of the inspectorate, the function of managers and the professionalism and accountability of teachers – are proper subjects for consideration by the Secretary of State for Education. (Fairhall, 1976)

The fact that this review appeared in the specialist education section of the same issue of the Guardian which featured the Ruskin Speech as the principal headline on the front-page (Hencke, 1976) points to parallel interest among the public and education professionals in the debate over the legitimate degree of involvement of central government in education and what the aims of that education should be.

As a professional political advisor Donoughue would have been aware of the Conservative adoption of a 'quality in education' agenda (Donoughue, 1976, in Morgan, 1997, p 540) and of the public interest in the Tyndale affair. He would also have been aware that the commissioning of the Plowden Report (Central Advisory Council for Education, 1967) as well as the rapid expansion of Comprehensive schools had taken place under Harold Wilson's Labour administration of 1964-70 and that the current adverse publicity surrounding these ideas could land squarely at Callaghan's door unless he took the initiative. The economic performance and governance of Britain were also highly topical at the time since Edward Heath's government had called the first election in 1974 during a three-day week resulting from a national miners' strike. Labour took power after that election but strike action and economic problems remained commonplace and inflation was running at 12.85% in October 1976 (Consumer Price Index, 1976). In addition the Government was negotiating a loan from the International Monetary Fund throughout the latter half of 1976. It is not therefore surprising that Callaghan chose this moment to link education extrinsically not only to pupils' needs in later life but also explicitly and publicly to the needs of industry and therefore to both economic and social factors.

It was against this charged backdrop that James Callaghan delivered his Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1). In his own subsequent words Callaghan had very clear intentions for the speech "My general guidance for the speech was that it should begin a debate about existing educational trends and should ask some controversial questions." (Callaghan 1987, p 410) It succeeded. The speech (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1) made six major points which will be referred to below in the

Ruskin Principles (Appendix 2) and numbered for later reference in this thesis in the order which they were set out in the speech. These principles, although never referred to as such by Callaghan, were nonetheless the means by which he attempted not only to link education to extrinsic ends for which educational professionals should be accountable but also claimed that it was the right of the Executive to play a very large part in influencing how this should be done.

As soon as the third paragraph of the speech (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p 1) Callaghan made it clear that maintenance of the status quo would no longer be good enough and that nothing other than an improvement in educational standards would be acceptable “in modern life” (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p 1).

higher standards than in the past are also required in the general educational field. It is not enough to say that standards in this field have or have not declined. With the increasing complexity of modern life we cannot be satisfied with maintaining existing standards, let alone observe any decline. We must aim for something better. (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p 1)

At this stage of the speech what might constitute educational standards was not defined but since life can never become less modern as time progresses this effectively was a call for *continuous improvement of educational standards over time* which shall heretofore be referred to in this thesis as Principle 1. Please see this and the four subsequent principles listed in Appendix 2.

Callaghan went on to assert the right of non-educationalists to enter the debate on education (Callaghan, 1987, p410). He defended the right of such “profane hands” (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p2), a term used in an oblique reference to the defensive attitudes of educationalists whom he alleged had warned him off entering any educational debate, to address the subject of education on the grounds of legitimate public interest justified by the very high level of public spending on education. Probably deliberately and in the belief implied in the quotation immediately below that

direct intervention in education from his office was a sensitive matter, he claimed the right to intervene not exclusively on behalf of himself or of the office he held but in the public interest on behalf of a wide variety of groups

I take it that no one claims exclusive rights in this field. Public interest is strong and legitimate and will be satisfied. We spend £6bn a year on education, so there will be discussion. But let it be rational. If everything is reduced to such phrases as 'educational freedom' versus state control, we shall get nowhere. I repeat that parents, teachers, learned and professional bodies, representatives of higher education and both sides of industry, together with the government, all have an important part to play in formulating and expressing the purpose of education and the standards that we need. (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p 2-3)

Principle 2 therefore can be defined as *the legitimate involvement of interest groups, as financial resource providers, in formulating the purpose of education and of the educational standards needed to meet that purpose.*

The speech moves on to the criticism, allegedly addressed personally to the Prime Minister by industrialists, that recruits from schools do not have the skills required to carry out industrial tasks. Quickly this is linked to methods of teaching, what actually is being taught and a definition of purposes for education as economic and social. The

unease felt by parents and others about the new informal methods of teaching which seem to produce excellent results when they are in well-qualified hands but are much more dubious when they are not.....There is little wrong with the range and diversity of our courses. But is there sufficient thoroughness and depth in those required in after life to make a living  
(Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p 3)

And the question of the desirability of a defined basic curriculum is then obliquely advocated "It is not my intention to become enmeshed in such problems as whether there should be a basic

curriculum with universal standards – although I am inclined to think there should be” (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p4).

Callaghan moves on to define the aims of education as economic and social in a statement central to the Foucauldian framework of this thesis to which great significance for the inspection system 1992-2018 will be attached and established below.

“To the Teachers I would say that you must satisfy the parents and industry that what you are doing meets their requirements and those of our children. For if the public is not convinced then the profession will be laying up trouble for itself in the future.”

Here the phrase “what you are doing” establishes Principle 3: *legitimate public interest in both method and curriculum*. The defined need to “satisfy the parents and industry” (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p 4) whose legitimate interests in education have been established earlier in Principle 2 as providers of resources establishes both *a principle of public accountability for teachers*, Principle 4, and *extrinsic economic and social goals for education*, Principle 5, which is driven home beyond doubt by the later sentence “The goals of our education, from nursery school through to adult education, are clear enough. They are to equip children to the best of their ability for a lively, constructive place in society, and also to fit them for a job of work.” (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p 4). Donoghue’s “preparation for work and adult life” have been presented as extrinsic educational goals on a public stage and have emerged from any possible earlier vagueness by being there linked to curriculum and teaching method.

Immediately afterward a further link is made with accountability. Principle 1, improving performance, Principle 2, legitimate involvement of resource providers, Principle 3, legitimate interest in method and curriculum, Principle 4, public accountability for teachers and the purposes defined in Principle 5 are all pointed toward a new role for the Inspectorate directly related to the “quality in education” (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) agenda.

Let me repeat some of the fields that need study because they cause concern. There are the methods and aims of informal instruction, the strong case for the so-called 'core curriculum' of basic knowledge; next, what is the proper way of monitoring the use of resources in order to maintain a proper national standard of performance (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p5)

Callaghan then went on to cover the role of the Inspectorate in relation to these “national standards of performance” (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p 5) by saying “then there is the role of the inspectorate in relation to national standards; and there is the need to improve relations between industry and education.” (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p 5).

This thesis will show the significance of this statement for the Inspection system in England and Wales. Here Callaghan’s vision opened the way for HMI to move away from its previous position as advisor to the DES regarding what was happening in a “national system locally administered” (Bolton, 2014) where the goals of education were left to educationalists to address as ones intrinsic to education and relating primarily to the development of the individual (Peters, 1966). Progress towards such goals had, by their subjective nature, been very difficult to quantify and to measure and HMI had never been expected to do this. Now the Inspectorate was being seen by a prime minister as potentially inspecting “national standards of performance” (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p5) in education intended to address goals extrinsic to it and linked to economic performance. Progress towards these new goals would be quantifiable and measurable. Callaghan seemed to be pointing to HMI as the body most suitable to monitor progress of educational institutions towards these goals and possibly also to monitor the curriculum and teaching methods employed in the process since curriculum, methods and goals had been linked in the Ruskin Speech. The Speech can also be seen as more than simply an attempt to create a debate. By publicly and personally identifying government as the payer of education’s bills using money supplied by taxpayers and

establishing their legitimate interest in its workings Callaghan was seeking an unprecedented degree of government control in the interest of directing education towards extrinsic goals.

the speech marked a clear shift on the part of the Labour leadership towards policies which would facilitate government control of the education system. This was obviously necessary if government ideas on the curriculum were to be implemented. For above all the speech represented a clear attempt to construct a new educational consensus around a more direct subordination of education to what was perceived to be the needs of the economy (Chitty, 1989, p96)

If anything, Chitty here understates the case for the ambition of the speech. The dominance of Liberal education theory (Peters, 1966) in the late twentieth century and the locally administered nature of this national service (Bolton, 2014) meant that where education had previously addressed the needs of the economy in that period it had done so not through subordination to an extrinsic economic goal but through an acknowledgement that the needs of the individual sometimes overlapped with the needs of the economy. Numeracy and literacy for example were essential not only for the educational needs of an individual but were also clearly assets valuable for participation in a workplace. Liberal education always placed the needs of the individual as the main goal of education. Callaghan now was not therefore seeking “more direct subordination” (Chitty, 1989, p 96) but direct subordination to an extrinsic goal for the first time in the century. Chitty also leaves out in this summary paragraph Callaghan’s reference to the extrinsic social goal partnered with this economic goal in the sentence “They are to equip children to the best of their ability for a lively, constructive place in society, and also to fit them for a job of work” (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p 4) and throughout the speech.

The day after the speech the reaction in the popular press appeared to be broadly sympathetic to the link Callaghan had sought to make between the economic responsibilities of government and its right to intervene directly in matters of “quality in education” (Donoughue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p

540) previously left in the hands of local authorities and educational professionals. Under the headline “Schools action demanded to save industry” (Hencke, 1976) the traditionally liberal Guardian newspaper interpreted the speech as “A blunt warning to Britain that higher standards are required in schools and higher education if the country is to succeed in attracting better qualified people to regenerate industry was given by the Prime Minister yesterday”. (Hencke, 1976) The more conservative Times newspaper also gave the story front page coverage under the headline “Mr Callaghan calls for improved educational standards” (Devlin, 1976). The paper’s Editorial also seemed to express sympathy to the economic link by putting in rather starker terms than Callaghan had the Prime Minister’s idea that education professionals should accept the right of interest groups other than themselves to take an interest in the work of schools. “He has reminded the teaching profession that all and sundry have a legitimate interest in what schools do, parents in what is happening to their children, and employers in the skills and attitudes of those the public system of education releases to them”. (Rees-Mogg, 1976)

The Foucauldian echo is marked. Callaghan’s assertion through the five principles of the Ruskin Speech of the legitimate right of government to intervene directly in the content, and delivery of state education and monitor outcomes for what were ultimately economic and social reasons is in striking accord with Foucault’s theory of ‘Governmentality’

To govern a state will mean, therefore, to apply economy, to set up an economy at the level of the entire state which means exercising toward its inhabitants, and the wealth and behaviour of each and all, a form of surveillance as attentive as that of the head of the family over his household and his goods. (Foucault, 2001, p 207)

Simultaneously Callaghan’s speech had fulfilled the potential of his earlier instruction to his Secretary of State for Education (Callaghan, 1987, p 409) and had positioned himself and his government in contradiction of the theory of Liberal education so widely held by educational

professionals to be: “a protest against confining what has been taught to the service of some extrinsic end”. (Peters, 1966, p 43)

From the delivery of the Ruskin Speech the question whether central government had the right to impose and monitor the progress of a “quality” (Donoughue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) agenda for education on schools and local authorities had been placed firmly in the public domain.

Callaghan had taken advantage of a national mood of concern in times of economic turmoil and a political consensus in favour of actively pursuing such an agenda and had asserted the right of central government to intervene in education for economic ends. Since the Conservative Party was in accordance with these ends and the Liberal Party was working in active support of the Callaghan government from 1977 it was now a question of when rather than if government would act on “quality in education.” (Donoughue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) A Green discussion paper in follow-up to the Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1) was produced by the DES in June 1977 (DES, 1977) “and the department moved its stance to one more in line with the principles and proposals laid out in Mr Callaghan’s Ruskin speech” (Donoughue, 1987, p 113)

Ironically, as the Labour government became overwhelmed with economic issues until its fall in May 1979 it lacked both the time and the will (Donoughue, 1987, p 113) to implement the Ruskin Principles designed largely to address the problem in the long term it fell to the victorious Conservative Party to do so. In the education section of the manifesto issued for the 1979 election campaign the debt to the Ruskin speech was stark and prospective change for the Inspectorate specifically mentioned.

We shall promote higher standards of achievement in basic skills. The Government's Assessment of Performance Unit will set national standards in reading, writing and arithmetic, monitored by tests worked out with teachers and others and applied locally by education authorities. The Inspectorate will be strengthened. In teacher training, there must be more emphasis on practical skills and on maintaining discipline. (Conservative Party, 1979)

This manifesto commitment to strengthen the Inspectorate was taken most seriously at the highest level of government after the election. A letter written from a member of Sir Derek Rayner's team, currently carrying out an efficiency review of the Civil Service, to Prime Minister Margaret Thatcher's Personal Private Secretary referred in positive terms to a proposed scrutiny of HMI in Scotland likely to weaken the body. It stated that "owing to changes in the circumstances in which their inspectors work (including the abatement of traditional functions and the rise of LEAs' own advisors) there may be a case for a substantial reduction in the resources committed" (Priestley, 1980). The idea was quickly rebuffed in an annotation to the letter in the Prime Minister's own handwriting "I am loth to allow this scrutiny to go ahead. The truth is that the Inspectorate is not being used properly. It should embark on far more full inspections of schools. In (illegible) it does not do this because of an old understanding with the N.U.T. It is time that was changed and regular full inspections resumed. MT". (Thatcher, 1980) In addition she underlined the word 'incompatible' and marked an X next to the phrase "might be seen by some as incompatible with the Manifesto commitment to strengthen the Inspectorate". (Priestley, 1980)

By 1992 a statutory core and foundation curriculum in 10 subjects applicable in all state schools had been implemented by the DES through the National Curriculum Council following the passing of the Education Reform Act of 1988 (DES,1988) and its associated ten-level scale of assessment was being phased in (DES,1991). Standard Assessment Tasks at 7, 11, and 14 were in development to DES specifications and due for implementation in 2001. This was potentially leading to the situation whereby HMI, had it remained part of the DES, would have effectively been reporting on its own innovations. This potential conflict was compounded by the fact that HMI had exerted external influence over the content of the National Curriculum. "The NCC, in its turn, has needed to draw on HMI expertise and HMI were present as Assessors on the Interim Whole Curriculum Committee, and members of each of the five Task Groups concerned with cross-curricular themes" (Maw, 1997, p59)

In November 1990 John Major had succeeded Margaret Thatcher as prime minister without a general election mandate in a very similar way in which James Callaghan had succeeded Harold Wilson in 1976. As he took office for the second time after his own election victory in May 1992 Major needed to make his mark. As Callaghan before him Major had succeeded a multi election winning and very high-profile predecessor and needed to assert himself in terms of policy innovation. His chosen area, in another marked parallel to Callaghan and for similar reasons, was education

I put education at the top of my own personal agenda when I became prime minister: it was an old tradition in the party of Disraeli and Balfour and Butler. I had personal reasons too. I had failed at school, and while I couldn't prevent others from doing so, I could prevent the system from failing them (Major, 1999, p 394)

Major too saw education primarily in terms of creating contented individuals capable of achieving their maximum in meeting the needs of employers. He went so far as to link individual fulfilment with employment "How many people in our country are fulfilled?' I asked myself 'How many do the jobs of which they are capable?'" (Major, 1999, p 393)

His manifesto on education policy had adhered strongly to the Ruskin Principles and had foreseen the potential conflict of interest for HMI

We will complete the introduction of the National Curriculum offering 10 subjects at a nationally-defined standard - English, Mathematics, Science, History, Geography, Technology, Art, Music, PE and, in secondary schools, a foreign language. Regular and straightforward tests will be in place for all 7, 11 and 14 year-olds by 2001. GCSE at age 16 will be integrated into the National Curriculum. Full information will be published annually about the performance of all local schools in each area.

Independent inspection of schools will provide parents with straightforward reports on their child's school, together with an action plan from governors to remedy any weaknesses.

(Conservative Party, 1992)

On taking office Major moved quickly through his education secretary Kenneth Clarke to keep his promise. The National Curriculum came into force in August 1992 and the first Standard Assessment Tasks had been applied to seven year olds in 1991 but Major made it clear that these steps alone were not sufficient for him

To open up the system still further, I wanted a genuinely independent inspection system. We were so much in the dark about schools' standards that the country needed a Domesday Book of education, on which we could then build. The old inspectorate lacked rigour. It was an arm of the Department of Education, whereas logically a standard setter and a standard checker should be separate. The Audit Commission had shown in 1989 that many LEAs were failing to fulfil their obligation to monitor schools performance. Under the existing system it would have taken two centuries to have inspected all the country's twenty-four thousand schools, and then through a system that was compromised. I instructed the Policy Unit to work with Ken Clarke on a system of thorough and speedy inspection (Major, 1999, p395)

The result was OFSTED which began its inspections of schools in 1993

The creation of an Office of Standards of Education (OFSTED) was vital. From the outset I wished to set up a regular and fully independent inspection of schools. The idea had few friends in the educational establishment but Ken Clarke carried it into legislation in 1992 (Major, 1999, p397)

The creation of OFSTED can be seen as a result of Donoughue's "quality in education" agenda (Donoughue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) as expressed through the principles set out in the Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1). By the time OFSTED begun inspections in 1993 the existence,

even if not exclusively, of extrinsic economic and social purpose for education had been accepted by six successive British Governments: Callaghan 1976-79; Thatcher 1979-83, 1983-87, 1987-90; Major 1990-92, 1992-7. As consumer of state resources educational institutions and their staff should be open to public scrutiny. The purpose of that scrutiny was to ensure that content taught, methods used in that teaching and the outcomes gained were suitable to meet those defined economic and social purposes. In order for scrutiny to be effective and sufficiently rigorous it had to be regularly carried out by an organisation independent of government. For better or worse the trust in educational professionals endemic to the system prior to 1976 and reflected in the theory of Liberal Education (Peters, 1966) had been challenged by a positivist definition of “quality in education” (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540): ‘good’ education served an economic and social purpose. ‘Bad’ education therefore was, by default, defined as anything that did not. At the time of writing OFSTED had pursued this definition of “quality in education” (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540) for 25 years. This thesis examined what impact has this had on state secondary schools and their teachers.

### **1.1 Author, Motivation, and the Research Problem**

The author qualified as a teacher in 1982 to commence a career of thirty two years during which he served as class teacher, head of department, local authority advisory teacher, local authority inspector and assistant headteacher before retiring as a deputy headteacher at the end of 2013. The perceived contrast between the first twelve years of his career before OFSTED entered schools for the first time in 1993 and the last twenty during which OFSTED was fully active provided the initial stimulus for undertaking this thesis.

The author has a clear memory of the impact of OFSTED inspection on him personally and on the practice of the schools in which he worked and with which he worked. In the final two-thirds of his career preparation for OFSTED inspection, the inspection itself, the aftermath of inspection and the preparation for subsequent inspection are perceived by him as holding a dominant position among

his duties. He also has a perception of continual fear of falling short in the eyes of an OFSTED inspecting team in that time and of letting his schools and organisations down by failing to keep abreast with OFSTED's requirements: in particular, those contained in the latest incarnation of OFSTED's 'Framework for the Inspection of Schools' which appeared in 1992 (OFSTED, 1992) and was first used in schools in revised form in 1993 (OFSTED, 1993b). Such fear would seem to have been well-founded since between 1992 and 2013, the last year of the author's career, the OFSTED 'Framework for the Inspection of Schools' was revised ten times (National Archives, 2014). In one year of that period, between January 2012 and January 2013, it was revised on three occasions (National Archives, 2014).

The author's experiential perceptions, however vivid, are those of only one teacher of the impact of OFSTED inspection on him personally and on the secondary schools which he directly or indirectly served but it intrigued him to ask how much or how little did they overlap with the perceptions of other teachers? The potential archive is vast. In one school year covered by this thesis, 2015-16, there were 210,935 full-time teachers serving in 3401 maintained English secondary schools (DfE, 2021). In its time of operation OFSTED inspectors have been in direct contact with huge numbers of teachers. Each one serving in that year and every other since 1993 - overlapping groups in many cases - will have formed his or her perceptions of the impact OFSTED has had on them and on their schools. These perceptions matter. By virtue of its time spent in schools in almost constant contact with pupils, responsibilities for devising and applying policies in response to the requirements of inspection reports, and contact with inspectors in school since 1993, no one adult group has more broad experience than teachers of OFSTED in operation in schools. No other group has had its unique opportunity to form perceptions of the impact of OFSTED inspection on teachers and secondary schools. Although HMI or OFSTED inspectors are probably more fully versed in OFSTED's own perceptions of its impact on schools and teachers, in the internal operational side of OFSTED, and in its monitoring of the impact of its own objectives their perceptions will be formed from a different perspective to those of teachers: a perspective and its resulting perceptions as different as

those of batsman and bowler at any one moment in a game of cricket. Inspectors therefore cannot have the same continual day to day, year to year perceptions of the impact of OFSTED on schools and teachers in their own working environments held by teachers themselves. Inspectors are not continually present in any one school between inspections.

It has been considered in this thesis that frequently OFSTED inspectors and HMIs are and were recruited from the teaching workforce thereby creating considerable overlap between these groups. Before Sir Michael Wilshaw's change to an in-house policy in 2015, the majority of OFSTED inspectors were so recruited, often through third party agencies such as Serco (Adams, 2014). Four interviewees contributing to this study are teachers who have worked for OFSTED in an inspection capacity.

The author's recollection is given here only as explanation of the motivation for this study and will not be overtly used as part of its evidential base. However, caution is still clearly necessary and has been exercised. Heidegger has shown that personal experiential effects on any researcher's interpretative lens cannot completely be avoided and therefore must be considered and allowed for.

In interpreting we do not, so to speak, throw a 'signification' over some naked thing which is present at hand, we do not stick a value on it; but when something within the world is encountered as such, the thing in question already has an involvement which is disclosed in our understanding of the world, and this involvement is one that gets laid out by the interpretation (Heidegger, 2019, p 190-1)

Heidegger's work and thought will be revisited in Chapter 4 and applied particularly to the methods used in the interpretative analysis of evidence gained in the research that forms the heart of this thesis.

Teachers' perceptions of the impact of OFSTED represent an experiential archive which has developed much in the twenty-one years since Cromey-Hawke's thesis on its effects on School

Improvement based on teachers' perceptions between 1993 and 1999 (Cromey-Hawke, 2000) which will be considered in Chapter 2. In the time between submission of that thesis and the final year covered by this study, 2018, the 'Framework for the Inspection of Schools' had moved from its fifth to its thirteenth incarnation, six HMCI had come and gone and many more teachers in secondary schools had experienced OFSTED inspection on multiple occasions.

The time now seems appropriate to move study of OFSTED's impact on in an original work exploring teachers' perceptions gained through multiple inspection experiences of wider impacts of OFSTED on schools and teachers over the far longer time period of 1993-2018. This latter date, two years after the retirement of HMCI Sir Michael Wilshaw, marked a neat cut off point since at that time no inspections under the tenure of his successor HMCI Amanda Spielman had been experienced by teachers in the sample at the time of interview for this study. Ultimately this study will examine, through teachers' perceptions, a much broader range of potential impacts of OFSTED on secondary schools and teachers than has been attempted before. These will be viewed in the light of OFSTED's origins in Donoghue's memorandum of 13<sup>th</sup> May 1976 asking for "quality in education, including basic standards and teaching methods in schools, and education as a preparation for work and adult life" (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997, p 540), in Callaghan's Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1), and in the agendas of Margaret Thatcher and John Major. What has the perceived impact been of its accountability role regarding the "extrinsic end" (Peters, 1966, p43) for education so feared by Peters yet so coveted by those agendas?

The effect of OFSTED inspection on schools will be examined through the theoretical lenses of the ideas of Michel Foucault but most importantly through research questions designed to produce "rich Data" (de Chesney, 2015) from the experiences of teachers expressed in a Life History (Goodson, Sikes, 2001) context.

The specific research areas addressed in this thesis in were developed from the Literature Review in Chapter 2 and can be found on page 65 below. These are developed into full research questions in

Chapter 3 and appear on pages 95-6. The related Foucauldian Lenses also developed in Chapter 3 can be found on page 80.

Since 1993 many teachers have experienced OFSTED inspection: some once, some many times, some many times from differing perspectives as their careers developed. This thesis enables their voices to be heard.

## Chapter 2

### Relevant Literature: Cutting a Research Pathway.

#### 2.1 Introduction

Callaghan's Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976) asserted the legitimacy of the principle of accountability to Government of educational establishments, and the professionals working within them, for educational outcomes of students. Sir David Eccles, Minister for Education in 1960, had declared in March of that year that government would no longer merely be content only to resource education but declared the relatively modest ambition of finding out what was being taught in schools, thereby attempting to open 'the Secret Garden of the Curriculum' (Eccles, 1960). Callaghan announced an intention to do more than know what was being taught. He called for monitoring of the use of resources, for "national standards of performance" monitored in some way by the inspectorate (Callaghan, 1976). This vision of monitoring of national standards through a national inspectorate with a view to improving outcomes defined by itself was a blueprint for educational accountability to government which was realised seventeen years later with the launch of OFSTED.

This chapter deliberately does not examine the process of the development of Government policy since the intention of this thesis was to examine perceptions of the impacts of OFSTED and the policies employed by that organisation, rather than the origin of those policies to which schoolteachers and managers were subject. This decision allowed more of the space available within the word limitations of this study to be devoted analysis of participants' perceptions of impacts and maximised the use of the large amount of "rich data" (de Chesney, 2015) from their interviews. This decision was reinforced by the fact that the government papers concerning the formulation of policies in the OFSTED years from 1993 are currently held in the National Archives and were not available for study at the time of writing. They remain classified until at least 2043, and the issue of policy formulation can be fully explored then from original sources in a dedicated study.

## **2.2 Accountability Systems: definitions, effectiveness, and transferability**

The first year of operation of OFSTED's model of educational accountability in 1993 was entirely consistent with Callaghan's wish and involved HMI as part of a newly appointed national OFSTED inspectorate. Any involvement of an inspectorate would by its very nature base educational accountability on inspection: inspectorates, after all, inspect. This also carried an implicit recognition that an inspection model of accountability would be the best method of improving educational outcomes. OFSTED developed an accountability system based on the idea that "the purpose of inspection is to identify strengths and weaknesses in schools so that they may improve the quality of the education offered and raise the standards achieved by their pupils" (OFSTED, 1993b).

Concurrent with OFSTED's first phase of operation of this inspection-based model of accountability in the 1990s and early 2000s attempts were being made, principally in the United States, to define the meaning of accountability, to explore its effects on organisations and their employees and to examine methods of mitigating some of the more undesirable of these effects. Hall *et al* (2009) saw accountability as "holding people accountable for their decisions and actions" (Hall *et al*, 2009, p 381) and as a form of control mechanism "designed to channel and shape behaviour in organisationally prescribed directions to maximize goal accomplishment and organisation effectiveness" (Hall *et al*, 2009, p 381). This is merely one of multiple definitions of accountability which is acknowledged as a construct so complex "that it often is difficult to implement and a challenge to effectively measure" (Pearson and Sutherland, 2016, p 420). Hall *et al's* definition (2009) was developed from their earlier article (Hall *et al*, 2003) and built on the work of Lerner and Tetlock (1999) and Frink and Klimoski (1998) who saw accountability respectively in terms of justification of "one's beliefs, feelings and actions to others" (Lerner and Tetlock, 1999, p 255) or of "decision or action" (Frink and Klimoski, 1998, p9). Whilst not disputing these findings Hall *et al* (2003) developed the concept of "felt accountability" (Hall *et al*, 2003, p32) which introduced a subjective dimension based on an individual's perception of any system of accountability

“because individuals respond to their subjective perceptions rather than ‘objective’ realities, it is these individualised perceptions of accountability, or ‘felt accountability’ that in the end drives decisions or actions. This duality compels using a framework that accommodates the development of both these objective and subjective factors”

(Hall et al, 2003, p32)

This concept was later refined through an eight-point scale designed to measure “an employee’s level of felt accountability” (Hochwarter, Kacmar and Ferris, 2003).

This landmark idea of subjective perception as an integral element of the operation and effect of any accountability system (Hall et al, 2003, p32) offers a potentially rich avenue for qualitative exploration in this thesis of teachers’ perceptions of the operation and effect of the OFSTED accountability model based on the inspection of schools as applied between 1993 and 2018.

However explicit inspection intentions procedures and reports were designed to be, their complete effects can only be fully explored by considering the subjective feelings of individuals concerning the accountability process or processes to which they were subjected or to which they were subjecting others. This calls into question whether any accountability system can ever be truly objective however rigidly its practices are prescribed in documents such as OFSTED’s ‘Framework for Inspection’ (OFSTED, 1993b). The inevitable subjectivity of individual perceptions has the potential to be not only a tool through which to investigate the effects of OFSTED inspection of secondary schools but will also be an integral part of this study of the effects of that accountability process on those being inspected. What were their views about the pros and cons of the OFSTED process and regime?

The application of subjective perception to accountability systems is not the only factor affecting their operation. Pearson and Sutherland, (2016) showed that antecedents such as culture, strategic leadership and operational systems pre-existing in any organisation can also significantly influence the operation of an accountability system applied to that organisation even when specifically

designed for it by its own personnel. This invites investigation in this thesis of effects of antecedents operating within schools on the operation and effects of a centrally designed and applied accountability system such as that used by OFSTED. The inspection process may be uniform in design, but can it ever be so in practice?

In June 2015 OFSTED's head of training, Sir Robin Boshier, announced that OFSTED would no longer use in its inspections 1200 of 3000 additional inspectors who had been contracted from inspection service providers rather than employed directly by OFSTED itself. The remaining 1800 would be re-trained and assessed by OFSTED for suitability for direct employment by the organisation. Sir Robin claimed that this action had been taken as part of a policy to improve OFSTED's services to ensure that a his "colleagues in headship had a good inspector walking up the path" (Richardson, 2015, p1). The logical conclusion that could be drawn from this action and Sir Robin's explanatory statement was that inspections done using such additional inspectors had not consistently been carried out by good inspectors. This would call into question the validity of these inspections, of their reports, consistency with reports carried out by directly employed OFSTED inspectors and any cumulative statistical data used by OFSTED in its annual HMCI reports. Claims, such as Sir Michael Wilshaw's in December 2016 that "1.8 million more pupils are now in good or outstanding schools since 2010" (Wilshaw, 2016) are based on such cumulative data and could be seen to be compromised. Similarly, can it be legitimate to rely on cumulative inspection data, collected under multiple and very different OFSTED inspection frameworks over a very long time-period, to claim continuous improvement?

Even before Hall *et al* made the case for the consideration of subjectivity in analysis of the effects of any accountability process (Hall et al, 2003) positive and negative effects of accountability had been widely identified and possible mitigations of both kinds of effect had been explored. These studies showed that it is by no means certain that accountability systems in general or any one system in particular, have a net positive or a net negative effect on organisations and personnel. Frink and

Klimoski (1998) and Laird *et al* (2015) point to a “dark side” of accountability as stressor and Pearson and Sutherland (2016) point to their findings that employees can see themselves as “policed” rather than supported by such systems (Pearson and Sutherland, 2016, p 428). Alternatively, Lanivich *et al* (2010) and Breux *et al* (2008) highlight positive effects of accountability, linking it with opportunity and job satisfaction respectively. Breux *et al* (2008) acknowledge “the inherently stressful nature of accountability” (Breux *et al*, 2008, p 119) and showed, unsurprisingly perhaps, that abusive supervision as an extreme form of accountability reduced job satisfaction and increased both tension and emotional exhaustion in employees but also that a more supportive supervisory style in an accountability system can “enable managers to improve their organisations and have more satisfied as well as less tense and exhausted employees” (Breux *et al*, 2008, p 119). Hall *et al* (2009) established that absence of accountability can lead to chaos and breakdown of organisations as “individuals would be able to do whatever they wanted whenever they wanted” (Hall *et al*, 2009) and pointed to an increase in Organisational Citizenship Behaviour defined as “individual behaviour that promotes the effective operation of an organisation (Organ, Podsakoff and MacKenzie, 2006) within organisations with accountability systems.

This existence of positive and negative effects of accountability is therefore well-established and calls into question any assumption that the imposition of any accountability system or systems will necessarily lead to an improvement or decline in educational outcomes. OFSTED’s claim of ‘improvement through inspection’ (Gilbert, 2006) looks exclusively to the positive effects of its own system of accountability but makes it necessary to ask whether the equally likely negative effects in its accountability system can be mitigated and, if they can, whether they are being so according to teachers’ perceptions of the effects of OFSTED inspection of secondary schools.

Mitigation of negative effects of accountability and of “felt accountability” (Hall *et al*, 2003, p32) have also been widely researched. Whereas Hepburn and Brown’s (2001) work identified an accountability-strain connection in secondary teachers reacting to scrutiny and the possibility of

being “called to account” (Hepburn and Brown, 2001, p 706) their study went on to show that this perceived adverse effect of accountability could be mitigated and even turned to a motivation factor in some individuals. This could be done by declining professional solutions organised by managers such as counselling, which tended to place the focus on the individual as the source of stress, in favour of seeing the individual as the expert on his or her own feelings and the reasons for them. This latter approach empowered the individual to ask for organisational changes or “free space” (Hepburn and Brown, 2001, p 709) thereby avoiding potential psychological damage from seeing themselves as both origin of and sufferer from stress by avoiding individual blame and creating incentive to seek a solution within the organisation. Laird *et al* (2009) found that negative effects of felt accountability such as job tension and depressed mood were mitigated by perceptions of high personal reputation within an organisation measured on a 12-point scale developed by Hochwarter *et al* (2007). Low perceptions of personal reputation were seen to have had the opposite effect. As this thesis explores teachers’ perceptions of the effects of the OFSTED system of accountability on secondary schools evidence, or lack of evidence, of any possible mitigation of negative consequences in persons perceiving themselves as being of high personal reputation emerging from interview material will be of interest. This will be particularly so in the context of Laird *et al*’s study (2009) and will help form a conclusion of the overall effects of OFSTED based on teachers’ perceptions.

The conception of the OFSTED model of accountability in 1992-3 roughly coincided with researchers in the social sciences beginning to investigate the influence on organisations of an accountability model including trust as a factor (Ammeter *et al*, 2004). Despite this the adoption of an exclusively inspection-based model for school accountability (OFSTED, 1993b) sent strong signals that any element of trust of teachers in the OFSTED process would be minimal at best. If we accept Ammeter *et al*’s statement based on their meta-analysis of previous studies that trust involves “an expectancy held by an individual or group that the word, promise, verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon” (Ammeter *et al*, 2004, p49) or that of the Oxford English

Dictionary that trust is “firm belief in the reliability, truth or ability someone or something” (Oxford Dictionary of English, 2018) then an insistence on inspection by its very nature indicates a lack, indeed a possible complete absence, of trust in teachers by checking or reserving the right to check every “word, promise, verbal or written statement” (Ammeter *et al*, 2004, p 49) and, indeed, every action of individuals during inspection.

The introduction of the school Self Evaluation Form to OFSTED inspections in 2005 following David Miliband’s ministerial speech in 2004 (Miliband, 2004) represented perhaps the first introduction of any element of trust, and thereby a degree of recognition of its value, into the OFSTED process by allowing schools to indicate key features of their practice and present these for the attention of an inspecting team. It is perhaps interesting that the word ‘trust’ or, at least, some acknowledgement that those being inspected might have some voice in the process was not mentioned once in Miliband’s speech and it was made clear in its executive summary that the new form would be subject to “sharper edged, lighter touch external inspection” (Miliband, 2005). Any element of trust therefore was included more in allowing schools some degree of influence on the direction of an inspection through the new Self Evaluation Form rather than allowing aspects of practice to be exempted from its scope. It is possible and will be investigated in this study through teachers’ perceptions, that the very length and complexity of the Self Evaluation Form meant that some statements from schools were taken on trust since inspection was for the first time a knowingly limited process when the forms were deployed under the OFSTED inspection framework of 2005 (OFSTED, 2005).

OFSTED’s difficult relationship with trust has been further complicated by the subsequent abandonment of a recommended Self Evaluation Form from September 2011 and the removal of any exemplar from its website. The quality of school self-evaluation was still included in the OFSTED Framework of 2012 (Ofsted, 2012) but no longer was this to involve a standard format. Whether this

abandonment of prescriptive formula of but retainment of the requirement for self-evaluation represented a net increase or decrease in trust in schools is debateable.

The desirability of including some degree of trust in an accountability system is a clear conclusion of Ammeter *et al's* (2004) research study where trust and accountability are seen as two extremes of the same continuum. They state “the reality in any organisation must lie somewhere between” (Ammeter *et al*, 2004, p56) where “it is possible that the level of performance rises as accountability mechanisms are mixed with trust” (Ammeter *et al*, 2004, p56). This conclusion seems ripe for analysis through teacher perceptions in the light of OFSTED’s apparent shifts of position on trust since 1993.

The efficacy and definitions of employee accountability in the business world have been debated widely since the 1960s in business and administration focused academic journals through papers such as Berlew and Hall (1966) and Schaffer, (1974) which link business success directly to accountability. This link has endured through more recent works aimed at those seeking to improve company efficiency, and ultimately profit since that is the objective of any business organisation, through accountability systems. The very titles of works of this genre such as *‘Feet to the Fire: How to Exemplify and Create the Accountability that Creates Great Companies’* (Moore, 2017) and *‘Big Ideas to Big Results’* (Miles and Kanazawa, 2016) could strongly imply to prospective readers that these are not works of discussion on any link between accountability and business success but a near-assurance that success will result from the adoption of the methods recommended within.

Moore (2017) advocates high-pressure employee accountability as a direct means of improving the performance and thereby profits of commercial organisations and focuses accountability far more on ends than means. “Remember, success is achieved through measuring results, not activities.” (Moore, 2017, p. 5). Similarly, Miles and Kanazawa (2016) focus on organisational results and pressure on individuals designed to destabilise unspecified current practice “without individuals throughout the organisation staying committed to doing something different tomorrow than they

were doing yesterday, the organisation as a whole won't move forward" (Miles and Kanazawa, 2016, p 191-2). What is to be done differently, and its prior level of effectiveness is subordinated to the process of change itself; accountability is identified as the force that can bring about that change by exerting pressure on employees. The possibility that current practice could be more effective than that introduced through change, or that change might have negative and destabilising effects is not considered.

In Peters's vision of Liberal Education (Peters, 1966) he defines "the central cases of education as tasks in which the individual is being educated is being led or induced to come up to some standard, to achieve something" (Peters, 1966, p 41). His "tasks" (Peters, 1966, p 41) or activities are for the direct benefit of the individual being educated and are intrinsic to and as important as results. This is not entirely incompatible with the idea that activities are for the good of the organisation since in Peters's view (Peters, 1966) schools as organisations exist to educate much as business organisations exist to create profit. The difference is that the activities being planned and carried out by staff do have intrinsic value in creating student achievement and are seen as the "central cases of education" (Peters, 1966, p 41) and therefore the conclusion can be drawn that these should feature just as strongly as results in any educational accountability system. Moore's (2017) and Miles and Kanazawa's (2016) subordination of activity to ends and faith in constant change of practice in their advocated systems of accountability sit very uneasily with Peters's belief that curriculum activities have their own value as well as being concerned with results (Peters, 1966, p159). Business models of accountability which focus only on results would seem therefore to be only partially transferable to educational systems of accountability if we accept Peters's view. Peters's view (Peters, 1966) that the "something" being achieved is not extrinsic to education might not completely conflict with the business view of accountability because aim for profit is not an extrinsic one to a capitalist organisation and aim for individual achievement is not extrinsic to a school. Callaghan's vision of education for pupils being at least partially "to fit them for a job of work." (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p4) and call for teachers to be held accountable for this aim does push things further as

it seeks to merge business and educational aims. The fitness or otherwise of pupils emerging from education to contribute to business profits as efficient employees may be intrinsic to business accountability models and match Callaghan's expressed view (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p 4) but is an extrinsic aim to Peters's vision of education (Peters, 1966) and may create some tension with that vision when applied as even a partial focus of educational accountability. OFSTED may owe its origins to Callaghan's vision of holding schools accountable to the aim of fitting pupils for a "job of work" (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p 4) which Peters sees as an extrinsic end (Peters, 1966) but since OFSTED inspections principally focus on both activities and results within schools the organisation's activities may not necessarily work in complete opposition to the theory of Liberal Education as expressed by him. Teachers' perceptions of the operation of the OFSTED model of accountability in practice may hold the key to understanding whether its methods and effects on secondary schools have more in common with the ethos of accountability in a results-driven business environment thereby creating tension with Liberal Education, or whether they show evidence of working in some harmony with that theory (Peters, 1966).

### **2.3 Accountability Systems and Educational Professionalism**

Biesta (2015) builds on the work of Friedson, (1994) in defining professions as "special areas of work because they promote human wellbeing; they need highly specialised knowledge and skills; and they function in relationships of authority and trust" (Biesta, 2015, p81). He acknowledges that whilst acceptance of this definition implies an acceptance of self-regulation it can also turn into an authoritarian and closed way of operating as challenged by both Eccles (1960) and Callaghan (1976). This dichotomy throws up both the questions of tension between professionalism and accountability and the necessity for the latter to be a regulator of the former. Clearly accountability to an external body must by necessity create tension with any profession that sees itself as self-regulating as the sole possessor of specialist knowledge and skills in the interest of the lofty aim of promoting human wellbeing (Biesta, 2015). But the vulnerability of that very self-regulating profession to auto-

authoritarian tendencies would also seem to provide a justification for accountability to an external body, particularly if the welfare state has harnessed the professions to an external view of the common good and provided funding by the public purse (Biesta, 2015). This view could challenge whether any justifiable role for professionalism and professional judgement remains in education: a field made compulsory by state law and funded by the state for the good of state citizens. If the good of citizen-professionals as state employees conflicts with that of the good of citizens as consumers of, and stakeholders in state services, the question then of the proper role of professionals and professionalism perhaps becomes even more contentious and is a strong argument in favour of external accountability. However, how far OFSTED as an organisation really provides an accountability system as external to government as it is to the teaching profession is open to question to some degree given the power held by the Secretary of State for Education over the appointment of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector and the central role that individual in deciding OFSTED's strategic and tactical direction in his or her term of office. The degree and subjectivity of HMCI's personal influence on OFSTED's operations and her awareness of the priorities of government is evident from Christine Gilbert's 2007-8 HMCI report in which she declared

“As Chief Inspector I will focus inspection and regulation directly and proportionately where the need for improvement is greatest. Indeed, in a time of economic uncertainty and financial constraint, it is all the more important that regulation and inspection are able to provide timely and evidence-based recommendations, not only to those inspected but also to those responsible for establishing policy and direction for care, education and skills in England.”

(Gilbert, 2008, p 9)

Corruption allegations affecting OFSTED, such as those concerning the prior-warning of inspection of one of the schools of a prominent academy chain can also call the external nature of OFSTED to government into question. OFSTED admitted in a report issued in August 2014 that the head of this chain had indeed been informed of the date of the inspection of one of her schools whilst

undergoing training to become a seconded OFSTED inspector although it claimed this had been done “inadvertently” (Exley, 2014, p 1) and it was found that there was no evidence this had been done “to give them an unfair advantage” (Exley, 2014, p 1). Quite apart from the allegation of corruption which was widely reported in the press, including the specialist TES (Exley, 2014), it is hard to avoid the conclusion that OFSTED’s independent nature was called into question by the facts that a prominent academy chain chief was being trained as an OFSTED inspector at a time when the academy programme was being greatly expanded as a policy of the Coalition Government of 2010-15, and she was being publicly and widely praised by the Secretary of State for Education, Michael Gove (Exley, 2014). Teachers’ perceptions of OFSTED’s external nature to government as an accountability system and the effect of this on the organisation’s perceived credibility and trustworthiness will merit investigation through interview in this study.

A counter-case for not only the desirability of professionalism in education but also for its necessity has been made not only by Biesta herself (2015) but also by Berry, (2012) and Green (2014). This is based on the need for professionals to define the purpose of educational activities before any judgement of the effectiveness of either can be made, thereby making accountability dependent on professionalism. Johnston (2015) points out that some calls for raising of standards use ‘professionalism’ in a way which at first glance could seem to equate with an idea of competence: “educational standards need to be raised: that there need to be improvement in the quality of education and that teachers need to be improved in some way, and made more professional” (Johnston, 2014). However, if the raising of standards in the form referred to here allows some professional judgement as to what those standards might be, then a question arises what quality of education might look like in terms of its purpose and outcomes and what aspect of teachers’ practices might be improved to address that purpose. In this case use of the term ‘professional’ might align with that of Biesta (2015) and Friedson’s (1994) “special view of work” (Biesta, 2015, p 82). But if ‘outcomes’ become synonymous with only the measurement of pupils’ ability to demonstrate the acquisition of knowledge and skills in ways defined by an inspectorate which “fit

them for a job of work” (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1, p 4) then absence of required judgement can amount to professionalism indeed being regarded as a measure only of competence in achieving imposed ends. Examining the need for judgement in education and whether that judgement best be carried out by professionals would therefore seem to be a plausible test of whether professionalism has any meaningful place in education and whether it should be valued or not by an educational accountability body such as OFSTED. Biesta (2015) argues that judgement by professionals is essential to ensure balanced and appropriate application of not only education’s “Qualification” (Biesta, 2015, p77) - or knowledge/skills element but its “Socialisation” (Biesta, 2015, p 77) and “Subjectification” – or initiative /responsibility – elements (Biesta, 2015, p 77). She argues that the sometimes-contradictory nature of these three elements require a judgement based on a professional view of the purpose of education. It therefore cannot, if this argument is accepted, be imposed by governments or inspectorates which would have significant implications for the employment of external accountability systems.

Green (2014), goes further, criticising Hogan’s (1995) concept of “market-inspired managerialism” (Hogan, 1995) whereby clear targets are set and achievement is measured solely on the degree to which those targets have been achieved: in effect an audit. Green (2014) places the origins of such accountability practice in schools on their superficial resemblance to large commercial organisations and a resulting presumption that they can be managed in the same way (Green, 2014, p4). She goes on to claim that the result of this a depersonalisation of “the notion of responsibility by framing the arena of public accountability around private sector idealisations of ‘good’ management: goal definition, efficient resource allocation, financial performance and competition” (Green, 2014, p4). These idealisations do indeed bear a remarkable resemblance to elements of the first OFSTED ‘Framework for the Inspection of schools’ (OFSTED, 1993b) where competition between schools for OFSTED grades underpins the whole model, goals are defined as ‘Standards and Quality’ (OFSTED, 1993b, p17), and efficient resource allocation and value for money are mentioned specifically in the section ‘Efficiency of the School’ (OFSTED, 1993b, p 20). This would seem to indicate a considerable

degree of plausibility for Green's theory of a commercial model as at least one foundation of OFSTED's view of good practice (Green, 2014).

The attractiveness to government of explicit targets - understandable not only to professionals but also by the layman - as part of an accountability system applied to any public service is clear. In practice however, a requirement for explicit and measurable targets may act as a constraint both on the type of target it is possible to set and thereby on the chosen accountability system as a whole. Not all professional practice can be made explicit to the non- specialist (Green, 2014) and the logical corollary of this is that some professional knowledge must remain implicit. Should this implicit knowledge be frowned upon and "confined" (Whitty, 2001, p 169) as evidence of the secrecy self-serving professions as highlighted by Eccles (1960); or should it be celebrated as essential professional expertise? Whitty (2001) argued that the tension between a state-run accountability system with minimal degrees of trust and professional demands for autonomy could be addressed by a new "democratic professionalism which seeks to de-mystify professional work and build alliances between teachers and excluded constituencies of students, parents and members of the community on whose behalf decisions have traditionally been made either by professions or the state" (Whitty, 2001, p 170). Green (2014) conflicts with Whitty in that she does not seek to de-mystify professionalism by alliance but instead by analysis of what constitutes professionalism and by celebration of its esoteric elements which she believes would be an insurmountable obstacle to alliance. Green calls for an accountability which being based on Aristotelian practical wisdom – or phronesis - will avoid the constraints on professional decision making created by externally set explicit targets and thereby "compliments rather than undermines, professional judgement" (Green, 2014, p 2). Trust in the professional is merited and constitutes little risk through his or her devotion to 'metier' or vocation to do good, and through "responsibleness" (Green, 2014, p 116) based on the individual's personal and occupational formation which together make up a professional formation capable of "combining individual and personal responsibility with organisational or institutional accountability" (Green, 2014, p 116). The great advantage of all this would be the liberation of the

professional to act in a way that is based on judgement and not on externally set explicit targets which may harm some groups of pupils whilst focusing rigidly on others as in the example of a concentration on C/D borderline students may adversely affect the performance of higher or lower performers (Mansell, 2013).

Persuasive as all this might be to a professional audience the problem of the subjective nature of “doing good” remains. Any accountability system allowing the professional body to define this and relying on their “responsibleness” (Green, 2014, p116) runs the risk of government losing control of educational outcomes, particularly where it is seen to be desirable that these address extrinsic economic objectives as in Callaghan’s vision expressed in the Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976) That these extrinsic economic objectives have endured and become even more directly linked to accountability is evident from David Cameron and Nick Clegg’s foreword to the 2010 Education White Paper (Department for Education, 2010)

“So much of the education debate in this country is backward looking: have standards fallen? Have exams got easier? These debates will continue, but what really matters is how we’re doing compared with our international competitors. That is what will define our economic growth and our country’s future.” (Department for Education, 2010, p3-4)

“The second lesson of world class education systems is that they devolve as much power as possible to the front line, while retaining high levels of accountability. The OECD has shown that countries which give the most autonomy to head teachers and teachers are the ones that do best. Finland and South Korea – the highest performing countries in PISA – have clearly defined and challenging universal standards” (Department for Education, 2010, p3-4)

The endurance of such ideas suggests strongly that notions of autonomous professionalism had remained subordinate to accountability in the UK by 2010. Autonomy of action in education was surely a mirage if linked via accountability principally to the outcome of economic growth.

#### **2.4 Performative Cultures and Accountability**

It is perhaps notable that the consistent success of Finland in the PISA tables has been attributed not even partially to “high levels of accountability” referred to immediately above (Department for Education, 2010, p3-4) but to an attempt to design a comprehensive national schools system, or *peruskoulou*, as part of a national drive to build a “more socially just society with higher education levels for all.” And taking into account wider sociological and political factors (Sahlberg, 2012). Sahlberg pointed out that “there is no single reason why any education system succeeds or fails. Instead, there is a network of interrelated factors – educational, political, and cultural – that function differently in different situations” (Sahlberg, 2012). In an earlier article he also made it clear that “Finland publicly recognises the value of its teachers and trusts their professional judgement. The Finnish system does not employ external standardized student testing to drive the performance of schools or a rigorous inspection system of schools and teachers” (Sahlberg, 2011).

Finland’s success in the PISA tables on the measures of those surveys in the first decade of the 21<sup>st</sup> century is indisputable.

“Clear evidence of more equitable learning outcomes came in 2000 from the first Programme for International Student assessment (PISA) survey by the OECD. In that study Finland had the smallest performance variations between schools in reading, mathematics, and science of all OECD nations. A similar trend continued in the 2003 PISA cycle and was even strengthened in the PISA surveys of 2006-8” (Sahlberg, 2012, p 24).

The British Prime Minister and Deputy Prime Minister clearly implied in 2010 that the ambition of their education reforms of that year was to match that Finnish success (Department for Education,

2010, p3-4) yet their continued reliance on accountability would seem to conflict with an essential element of the Finnish model: trust in teacher professionalism. There is no disharmony between the Finnish success model and the studies above (Whitty, 2001) (Berry, 2012) (Green, 2014), (Biesta, 2015) which show a considerable tension and possible incompatibility between educational professionalism – as distinct from autonomy - and operation of accountability systems. It would therefore seem sensible to ask if the OFSTED system of inspection of schools is of more benefit in terms of educational outcomes for pupils than a system placing greater reliance on teacher professionalism might produce. Since the studies above (Whitty, 2001) (Berry, 2012) (Green, 2014), (Biesta, 2015) show that professionalism and accountability can conflict then it is legitimate to ask whether any sacrifice of one partially or wholly for the other is justified by potential or actual outcomes. If the PISA measures of success are the target then the Finnish model again suggests that accountability, even in a system valuing economic aims extrinsic to education in some degree, could be supplanted by trust which has remained largely absent from the conception and manifestations of the OFSTED model of accountability since 1993. That this lack of trust in teachers featured from the very early years of operation of the OFSTED system is shown by the comment of a senior HMI interviewed by McCulloch Helsby and Knight in the summer of 1995. “Certainly it’s not...only teachers who on occasion hide behind their professionalism or false professionalism. Doctors do it, lawyers do it, policemen do it, it’s not only teachers” (McCulloch, Helsby, Knight, 2000, p 100).

To assess the impact of OFSTED inspection proportionately in terms of teacher perceptions it is first necessary to explore through previous studies what can reasonably be expected and what has been expected in terms of school improvement from accountability processes that have been used and are currently being used in Western style education systems. Can greater requirement for accountability in education lead to proportionate, continuous or indefinite improvement in outcomes over time? If so or, indeed, if not, then this may have implications in considering the degree of pressure it is legitimate to exert on schools and their personnel. Can simultaneous and continuous improvement in all educational outcomes as expected in the OFSTED Framework of 1993

(OFSTED, 1993) and its successors ever be possible since improvement in one outcome deemed desirable could possibly be inversely proportionate in its effect on another: improvement in examination results may lead to a decline in wellbeing (something that is not measured by the system) and vice-versa.

The objective of optimising performance by ‘maximising outputs (benefits) and minimising inputs (costs)’ (Elliott, 2001, p 193) was how John Elliott refined Lyotard’s ‘principle of performativity’ (Lyotard, 1979). Elliott extended Lyotard’s definition of quality as an equation between input and output showing that under performativity ‘quality and cost effectiveness are not separate goals but one and the same’ (Elliott, 2001, p 193). Callaghan’s original vision called for monitoring of the use of resources (Callaghan, 1976) and under OFSTED’s original inspection framework (OFSTED, 1993) ‘Value for money’ formed a discrete and headed sub-section in the report under the main heading ‘Efficiency of the School’ and ‘best use of available resources’ (OFSTED, 1993) featured on the first line of ‘Amplification of Inspection Criteria’ (OFSTED, 1993). By 2016 the finance of the school and use of funding to impact upon the way pupils learn was mentioned under ‘Governance’ (OFSTED, 2016). This continuing link between OFSTED inspection and the ‘principle of performativity’ (Lyotard, 1979) throughout the period covered by this thesis is significant in that ‘performative cultures’ (Elliott, 2001, p 192) also have ‘unintended consequences’ (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 50): particularly concerning ones in terms of impact on schools and their staff. This has been starkly highlighted by Ball (2003), Elliott (2001) and Gleeson and Husbands, (2001, 2003). OFSTED’s role alongside that of government in creation and perpetuation of ‘performative cultures’ (Elliott, 2001) and teachers’ perceptions of the effects of such cultures is explored further through this thesis’s research questions. The extent to which the principle of performativity can be viewed in the light of Foucauldian governmentality (Foucault, 2001) and of the “Foucauldian metaphor of the Panopticon” (Courtney, 2016) which has been linked by Perryman, (2006) and Courtney (2016) to school inspection and developed into the latter’s concept of Post-panopticism: a deliberate disconcertment of school leaders by OFSTED through constantly changing Frameworks designed to make compliance

to its requirements “less possible” (Courtney, 2016, p639), thereby creating discomfiture and failure for purposes of control. This concept of Post-panopticism was extended by Perryman *et al* (2018) in terms of unpopular policy decisions being made for conformity, embodied in artificial performance motivated by resistance and unwittingly becoming embedded in the practice of the school in an automatic policing whereby schools “self-govern their performance” (Perryman *et al*, 2018) will also be tested in this thesis.

## **2.5 Trust of OFSTED by the teaching profession**

Much criticism of accountability systems adopts the themes of unwanted side effects created by using statistics for purposes outside the design of the studies in which they were originally used. For example, in a call for ‘Intelligent Accountability in Education’ Onora O’Neill (O’Neill, 2013) shows that accountability systems designed primarily to be used ‘by pupils, parents and teachers to judge what has been learnt, to take appropriate educational steps’ (O’Neill, 2013, p4) have been put to secondary use in holding teachers and schools to account. This secondary use is one for which the systems were never designed, and clumsy use can lead unfairly to the ‘placement or refusal of trust’ in and by teachers (O’Neill, 2013, p 13) based on ‘bogus numbers’ (O’Neill, 2013, p14). In addition, perverse incentives to avoid demanding subjects or to overload able students or to teach to the test can be created. In similar vein the practice of encouraging potentially low -performing students to leave before taking key assessments such as GCSE has been used by some schools with increasing frequency. This practice came to the attention of OFSTED inspectors in 2018 who expressed concern in a regular blog ‘about potential ‘off-rolling’ of pupils where schools may be encouraging pupils to move’ (Bradbury, 2018). Their early statistical investigations indicated the practice which had affected some 19000 Year 10 pupils (Bradbury, 2018) did seem to be more common in academies and multi-academy trusts than in local authority schools. This may point to a link between use of the practice and the higher levels of pressure for good results which may be expected from schools such as these created with the express purpose of improving results. OFSTED’s study had not been able to

confirm this by June 2018 but it had identified 300 schools 'with particularly high levels of off-rolling' and was looking at the potential effect of the practice on the Progress 8 measure (Bradbury, 2018). The Commons Select Committee for Education also expressed concern at the practice in July 2018 following 21% of teachers responding to an OFSTED survey saying they had witnessed 'off-rolling' (Cassidy, 2018). In cases such as subject avoidance, able student overload, teaching to the test or off-rolling, claims of academic justification for accountability may well be dubious as the design of the original study upon which the accountability was based has effectively been diverted.

Gaertner *et al* (2013) identified sixteen different measures of school effectiveness and refused to deal with any in isolation. Whilst not adopting this number of measures OFSTED too, have always used a multiple measure of school effectiveness which evolved into the inspection focuses identified in the framework of August 2016 (OFSTED, 2016). This gulf between a sixteen point and a five-point measure points to a need to explore previous thinking on the meaning of school effectiveness. School improvement is linked to these measures of effectiveness and can be defined as movement within these criteria in a direction accepted as positive. Not only is what constitutes 'positive' disputable, but some measures of effectiveness may work against each other. For example, 'outcomes for pupils' (OFSTED, 2016) is largely based on examination performance yet excessive pressure for results can lead to 'unintended consequences' (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 50) in narrowing of pedagogical practice or increase in anxiety which could directly work against 'behaviour and welfare' (OFSTED, 2016). 'Behaviour and welfare' (OFSTED, 2016) of teachers also should not be neglected since this has a possible link with retention and recruitment. As long ago as 1995 the potential disproportionate damage to the well-being of competent teachers from anxiety under pressure of inspection emerged in the work of McCulloch, Helsby and Knight (2000) from their interview with a 'Conservative politician and educationalist' (McCulloch, Helsby and Knight, 2000, p 102).

“It’s not the weak teacher who goes off sick as soon as OFSTED is mentioned [that is the problem] , it’s the damage that is being done to motivated teachers, to good teachers who feel threatened by a process that they feel doesn’t, in some cases, begin to address the very real problems that they, as teachers in that school, with that class, have to address on a day to day basis” (McCulloch, Helsby and Knight, 2000, p 102).

Since twenty one years have passed since that study (McCulloch, Helsby and Knight, 2000) follow-up of such potentially significant impact of OFSTED inspection is long overdue. Teacher perceptions of this possible link between inspection and teacher well-being and of possible related implications for retention are ripe for exploration.

A consideration of measures of school effectiveness is essential if any assessment of the overall impact of OFSTED is to be feasible. Debate in this area is live, particularly surrounding the use of data. Numeric data may be relatively easy to use in an accountability culture as a measure of effectiveness but can also be damaging if used as more than a weather-vane of school direction. Stewart, (2016 and 2017) casts serious doubt about current use of data in schools as a measure of effectiveness ‘it should be used in conjunction with human judgement by people with the freedom to admit when the numbers get things wrong’ (Stewart, 2017, p 39). Concentration on any one measure of school effectiveness has the danger of producing ‘unintended consequences’ (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 50) and numeric data, being so easy to generate in a computer age, is perhaps the most prone of all effectiveness measures to intentional and unintentional misuse. Distortion of curriculum in the search for less demanding courses certainly resulted from single vocational courses being given the statistical status of four good GCSEs (Stewart, 2017). Courses of this multiple-award type were severely criticised by the Secretary of State for Education in a speech to the National College of School Leaders in June 2012 (Paton, 2012). The annual dispute over the meaningfulness or otherwise of the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) as a measure of the effectiveness of English schools is a case in point (Stewart, 2016). Since the PISA

survey is carried out by the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (Triplett, 2017) it is perhaps unsurprising its findings concentrate on economically applicable skills and that its conception of equity as based on gender, family background and socio-economic status (Triplett, 2017, p 16) is contentious. If school effectiveness is defined only as reducing inequity then any institution so defined is doomed to fail since 'positive school influences are likely to have benefits for the advantaged and the disadvantaged' (Rutter and Maughan, 2002, p 451) Data also has the potential to be used as a convenient method of demonstrating all other effectiveness measures thereby potentially could compound any distortion.

O'Neill's point on the generation of bogus numbers (O'Neill, 2013, p14) quickly resonates in evidence gathered from practice in schools. The sole Attainment Target in the 1995 document 'History' (DFEE, 1999) in the National Curriculum for England' series was designed to provide summative student assessment at the end of a Key Stage. The document specifically stated, "An attainment target sets out the 'knowledge, skills and understanding that pupils of different abilities and maturities are expected to have by the end of each key stage" (DFEE, 1999, p 38) yet in the comprehensive school in which the author worked in Suffolk as a deputy headteacher staff were required by the Senior Management Team to split each summative attainment level into three sub-levels and use these three times in each year of the Key Stage as a measure of student progress to provide evidence of linear progression. Statistics generated in this way were accepted in the OFSTED inspection of this school on 12<sup>th</sup> November 2008 (OFSTED, 2008) in which the school was graded 'Outstanding' overall. 'Outcomes for Pupils' specifically received the same 'Outstanding' grade. In the experience of the author as a deputy headteacher, as a member of an LEA inspection team for a London borough and as a provider of national in-service training in history, such practice was common across Suffolk, was used across every school in the London borough and extended across much of England. In these particular examples OFSTED showed itself to be giving credence to "bogus numbers" (O'Neill, 2013, p 14) therefore O'Neill's criticism of accountability systems in general

would seem to apply directly to OFSTED and resulting refusal of trust (O'Neill 2013) can also be so applicable.

O'Neill's related assertion of "refusal of trust" (O'Neill, 2013, p 13) in teachers founded on such use of statistics has the potential to be a particularly damaging factor in a publicly funded education system subject to scrutiny by a free press, as democratically elected representatives of the taxpayer may be driven to policy reaction on unsound grounds. It may also damage the balance of trust and accountability seen as desirable in Ammeter *et al's* study (2004). This is a theme that will be revisited below. "Placement or refusal of trust" (O'Neill, 2013, p 13) in the form of self-trust by teachers in the face of apparently strong statistical data in its secondary usage could also be possible and may have side effects such as hubris or depression particularly if teaching professionals agree with the Foucauldian echoes (Foucault, 2001, p 219) of O'Neil's more serious charge that the real focus of accountability and audit systems is "on performance indicators chosen for ease of measurement and control rather than because they measure accurately what the quality of performance is" (O'Neill, 2002). This possible link to perceived, self-imposed and management-imposed stress as a side effect of accountability systems used for purposes for which they were not designed and resulting in possible refusal of trust (O'Neill, 2013) will be explored through teacher perception.

"Placement or refusal of trust" (O'Neill, 2013, p 13) is applicable to other critiques of accountability systems in education. Stakeholders in an accountability system must be satisfied of that system's validity for the use to which it is being put if trust is to be placed (O'Neill, 2013) and if its findings are to be used to develop or modify education policy or practices. Rosenblatt's paper on measure development and validation of systems designed to facilitate personal accountability (Rosenblatt, 2017) and her concept developed within of 'answerability disposition' meaning teachers' inclination to cooperate with, and thereby trust to some degree, an accountability system (Rosenblatt, 2017, p 20) sits well with O'Neill's 'placement or refusal of trust' (O'Neill, 2013) and creates an interesting harmony of criticism of any system from which trust is withheld, particularly when seen in the light

of Ammeter et al's (2004) view of the positive influence of trust on performance. This theme of teachers' trust and its counterpart 'trust of teachers' as applied to the OFSTED accountability system is developed in this thesis as one of its principal research questions and has considerable implications for the effectiveness of the OFSTED system in improving educational outcomes; since "it is possible that the level of performance rises as accountability mechanisms are mixed with trust" (Ammeter *et al*, 2004, p56) it may also be possible that level of performance can fall if it is absent. Rosenblatt further develops the theme of 'answerability disposition' (Rosenblatt, 2017, p 20) in making a distinction between accountability to an 'outer audience' (Rosenblatt, 2017, p 27) of non-teachers from accountability to an 'inner ethical codes and professional standards' (Rosenblatt, 2017, p 27). This distinction opens up a further avenue of enquiry for this thesis relating to trust: investigation of the extent to which 'outer' and 'inner' need to be present in any accountability system to ensure teachers' trust of that system.

Callaghan's assumption that accountability of educators to the state through inspection would lead to improved educational outcomes was the fundamental principle of his speech (Callaghan, 1976), and has been already shown above to be a direct antecedent of the OFSTED accountability system: one in which the state can be considered perhaps an extreme 'outer audience' (Rosenblatt, 2017, p 27).

Trust in OFSTED inspection judgements can quickly be lost, and such is the reliance OFSTED places in "improvement through inspection" (Gilbert,2006) that this is highly likely to lead to loss of trust in the organisation's capacity to promote improvement and ultimately in the organisation itself. Three examples of the ways trust in OFSTED inspection judgements can be lost will be developed below: dramatic changes of judgement from one inspection to the next, oscillation between judged grades over successive inspections and media reports casting subsequent doubt on inspection reports.

A dramatic and unexpected change of judgement of overall effectiveness over two consecutive inspections whereby a school moved from previous and successive judgements of the highest

'Outstanding' grade to the lowest 'Inadequate' grade occurred in the case of a Norfolk high school after conversion from LA maintained to Academy status (OFSTED, 2013). Oscillation between judged grade over three successive inspections as in the case of a comprehensive school in an Inner London borough (OFSTED, 2009, 2013a, 2013b) can lead to lack of trust very easily whether justified or not and inspection reports of 10 or 11 pages (OFSTED, 2009, 2013a, 2013b, 2013c) cannot possibly contain full justification of every judgement reached or supporting evidence for them. Questions can legitimately be asked in interview on the perceived validity of targets set by OFSTED in such reports, the perceived degree to which they had or had not been met and the perceived integrity or otherwise of a system capable of producing such dramatic swings in verdict from the same inspecting organisation on the same schools within very short periods of time. Investigation of teacher perception of these potential issues has the potential to advance knowledge of the degree of teacher trust in OFSTED inspection and its findings.

An overall judgement of 'Outstanding' was passed on an Essex Community High School and College in 2013 and the report also specifically mentioned leadership and management as 'Outstanding' (OFSTED, 2013c). Subsequent publicity concerning the suspension of the Head and Senior Deputy (BBC News Website, 2018) and grave unrest within the school casts grave doubts on the validity of that judgement. The typicality or otherwise of such cases generating mistrust, teacher perceptions of trust or otherwise in OFSTED, the reasons for them and changes of such perceptions over time are ready for research.

## **2.6 The Capacity of Schools to Improve Educational Outcomes**

Time spent at school constitutes a relatively small percentage of any student's waking hours between the ages of five to eighteen and constitutes only one of many influences on the life of a student alongside parents, environment, culture and a multitude of socio-economic factors. How much influence on educational outcomes for students therefore can reasonably be expected to result from actions seeking to influence school effectiveness alone? The Coleman report (Coleman *et*

*al*, 1966) linked variations in children's results in the US almost completely to their family environments rather than to changeable and measurable school characteristics (Downey and Condrón, 2016). In a paper written to mark fifty years since the publication of the Coleman Report (Coleman et al, 1966) Downey and Condrón (2016) pointed to a "refractory" effect of schools which could be "neutral, exacerbatory or compensatory" (Downey and Condrón, 2016, p 218) on pupil trajectories already established on entry to an education system. Nonetheless this study summarising fifty years of debate did not deny that schools did affect student outcomes thereby implying that school improvement alone could be taken as meaning positive effects on student outcomes.

Rutter *et al*, (1979) came to similar conclusions in the UK on the power of schools to make a difference to pupils' achievement, attendance and behaviour and showing a link between outcomes and "school process variables" (Bennett and Rutter, 1980, p 98). The logical corollary would be that change to those "process variables" (Bennett and Rutter, 1980, p 98) could also have a causal effect in changes in measures such as achievement, attendance and behaviour. If the changes in those measures were deemed positive, then school change could therefore be linked to school improvement. The process of change does not necessarily demand extra resources and therefore proved very attractive in terms of the "principle of performativity" (Lyotard, 1979) and in business models such as those expounded by Moore (2017) and Miles and Kanazawa (2016). Peter Mortimore, a contributor (Rutter et al, 1979), showed in several articles (Goldstein and Mortimore, 1997) (Mortimore, 1999) and interviews in the popular press that the work of Rutter *et al* (1979) had been seized upon by governments as evidence of the power of school change to bring about improvement in outcomes without any acknowledgement that such improvements could be finite or that there was any link between underachievement and socio-economic background.

There is a possible disconnection between expectation of constant improvement of outcomes and denial of the possible influence of socio-economic factors and school resourcing levels on student

achievement. OFSTED, through its claim “improvement through inspection” (Gilbert,2006) - which at best plays down other factors leading to improvement or indeed deterioration - has perpetuated this disconnect. As the education professionals working most closely with students there is a need through this thesis to seek teachers’ perspectives on the impact of this disconnection. Equally the perspectives of school managers familiar with both outcome and socio-economic data will be valuable. In their view what impact has the pressure for change in “school process variables” (Bennett and Rutter, 1980, p 98) had in secondary schools?

In addition, since “outcomes” was used in the plural by Downey and Condron (2016) and Rutter *et al*, (1979) also mention “outcomes” in the three areas of achievement, behaviour and attendance which concurs to some extent with the OFSTED view that school improvement involves simultaneous positive change in several factors; an approach which featured in every OFSTED Framework for Inspection from the first of 1993 (OFSTED, 1993) through to the final one in operation in the period covered by this study issued in August 2016 (OFSTED, 2016). The 1993 Framework (OFSTED, 1993) specified “Standards and Quality” to be judged through “Efficiency of the School”, “Pupils’ Personal Development and Behaviour” and “Subjects of the Curriculum and other curricular provision” as the focus points of inspection and inspection reports (OFSTED, 1993, p1) The framework of August 2016 specified: “Overall effectiveness: the quality and standards of education” to be judged through “Effectiveness of leadership and management”, “Quality of teaching, learning and assessment”, “Personal development, behaviour and welfare”, “Outcomes for pupils” (OFSTED, 2016) . It is perhaps notable that the lists are strikingly similar after the reigns of eight HMCI’s during a period in which six governments of differing political hues held office. This study intends to probe whether teachers’ perceptions of the consistency or otherwise OFSTED inspections match this apparent consistency of approach of two frameworks of inspection separated by 23 years and continued faith in the need to demonstrate simultaneous improvement across several factors.

## **2.7 OFSTED’s Self View**

The approach of OFSTED to reviewing its own work and purpose appears to display a marked contrast to any acknowledgement of alternative interpretations of accountability and improvement and stands to this day as an example of positivism in approach. It is taken as a given in the large body of literature produced by OFSTED itself in the period 1992 – 2018 that an accountability model with inspection at its heart is instrumental in “raising standards, improving lives” (OFSTED, 2017). This positivist message remains consistent over that period. As late as December 2016 Sir Michael Wilshaw claimed for OFSTED’s accountability system the lion’s share of the credit for any progress made in education since 1992

I was a teacher and head in inner London in the 3 terrible decades before Ofsted came into being. London’s schools – like many outside the capital – were failing whole generations of children. Schools like Hackney Downs – the predecessor to my old school Mossbourne – and William Tyndale may have grabbed the headlines, but there were many others that were only a whisker away from gaining similar notoriety. Since those dark days, greater accountability and much greater political focus have transformed our education system. (Wilshaw, 2016)

The central belief in inspection as the principal tool upon which the organisation bases its findings never falters but variations in its approach to inspection are traceable through its yearly HMCI reports despite the similarity between the specific focuses for inspection featured in the first ‘Handbook for the Inspection of Schools’ (Ofsted, 1993a) and the version published in August 2016 (OFSTED, 2016).

OFSTED’s most prolific documentary evidence base remains its vast number of published inspection reports. Most of those extant on the website date from the last five years since earlier reports are superseded if schools change name or merge with others but as an inspection record of 3268 state funded secondary schools in January 2012 (Department for Education, 2012) this still amounts to a very large database of reports. Although written under strict OFSTED guidelines, differences in style and inspection approach between lead inspectors is discernible, opening an interesting line of

investigation over the feasible degree of consistency of inspection and the implications of any variation. Even under any one set of guidelines schools were often visited by different OFSTED teams as in the case of Eastbrook School in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham which underwent fifteen inspections between 2000 and 2018. These are available on the OFSTED website (OFSTED, 2021) and are the work of twelve different lead inspectors of which ten were HMIs. Only when the school was in Special Measures between 2006-7 was it inspected by the same lead inspector on five consecutive occasions. OFSTED Inspection reports have also evolved over our period: those for this particular school having changed in length from fifty-seven pages in 2000 (OFSTED, 2000) to eleven in 2016 (OFSTED, 2016a). The implications of such major changes in inspection format on teacher trust of OFSTED's concept of school effectiveness will be explored through analysis of interview.

OFSTED not only monitors others: it monitors itself and reports its findings through a report from the incumbent HMCI annually to the Secretary of State for Education. Reports from 1994 are available on the OFSTED website (OFSTED, 2021) and provide a valuable insight into the organisation's changing priorities, methods and, most valuably perhaps, into its own interpretation of school improvement and its assessment of its own impact in this field. The format of OFSTED's self-assessment reports has changed repeatedly since the first in 1994 and the nature of these changes also reveal changes of priority and emphasis in reaction to changes in internal and external factors influencing the organisation; this is particularly noticeable on changes of HMCI or of government and leads from a different angle to questions of consistency of practice in the conduct and focus of school inspections. Comparison of identified causes of underperformance of schools and emphasis of language in HMCI annual reports suggests that markedly different approaches to inspection and interpretation of findings under different HMCIs. In the 'Commentary' section of HMCI Chris Woodhead's third annual report to Parliament (Woodhead, 1997, pp 5-8) the author was unequivocal in his condemnation of poor teaching as an identified cause of low standards of outcome in schools. "more is being done to tackle the problem of the small but significant number

of incompetent teachers who have a major impact on standards". Not only was the ability of a significant number of teachers criticised but clear recommendations made on teaching style, "too little direct teaching" (Woodhead, 1997, p 6) was holding back progress whereas a move to "schools setting by ability, particularly in Years 8 and 9, is leading to more effective teaching and therefore to higher standards". (Woodhead, 1997, p 6). These recommendations of ability-grouping and teaching method were only partially consistent with the contemporary inspection schedule although perhaps more so with its explanatory guidance (OFSTED, 1995, p 70-71). In the "Teaching" Section of the schedule the document states, "Judgements should be based on the extent to which teachers: employ methods and organisational strategies which match curricular objectives and the needs of all pupils" (OFSTED, 1995, p 70). On the opposite page in the document "Guidance on using the schedule" it states "Teachers' knowledge of the subject and the teaching methods and strategies they employ should be appropriate to the relevant key stage course and the needs of pupils" (OFSTED, 1995, p 71). No specific teaching or grouping method is recommended yet the guidance does go on to say "Overall judgements about teaching will derive from those made in each lesson observed, covering the subjects inspected and all year groups in the school. Pupils' work provides supplementary evidence. The report should include illustrations of successful and less successful methods" (OFSTED, 1995, p 71). It seems likely that the clear recommendations in the report on ability grouping and teaching methods derive from these statements and from interpretations of inspection evidence gathered making use of them.

Such direct condemnation of teachers and direct recommendation of teaching and grouping methods is noticeably absent from both the 2007-8 HMCI report to Parliament compiled a similar number of years into her period of office (Gilbert, 2008) and from that of Sir Michael Wilshaw at a comparable point in his (Wilshaw, 2013). Gilbert (2008) makes no mention at all of ability grouping, recommending only that "Children and learners are put first and treated as individuals; they are supported and expected to make progress and achieve well. Aspirations are high" (Gilbert, 2008, p 6). Her criticism of some teaching says only that "Too much teaching is dull, lacking challenge and

failing to engage pupils” and no method of teaching is singled out as an example of this or indeed of good practice. Wilshaw (2013) condemns “mediocre teaching” (Wilshaw, 2013, p5) but makes no reference to any teaching method. Grouping of pupils is only referred to in what might be an oblique criticism of ability grouping as he mentions “disproportionately poorer teaching in the lower sets” (Wilshaw, 2013, p 6) but steers clear of making any specific recommendation as to whether that method should or should not be employed. It is easy to see how the many teachers whose careers span the periods in office of these three HMCI might possibly have some perception of inconsistency. This thesis aims to explore perceptions of possible implications of such changes in inspection focus over time through interviews with teachers and school leaders who have experienced multiple inspections in the period 1993-2018 or part thereof. Teacher perceptions will be subjected to direct comparison with OFSTED’s self-view as expressed in its own documentation.

## **2.8 Alternatives to OFSTED**

A body of studies adopting a multi-country perspective probing both the validity of that link between inspection and improved educational outcomes, and the associated idea that the degree of pressure resulting from an inspection system has a direct and proportional link with both motivation for change and the process by which any change is brought about are highly relevant to this thesis. Exploration of the validity, through teachers’ perceptions, of these links directly impacts any justification of the OFSTED process and pressure associated with it.

Altrichter and Kemethofer (2015), building on the major EU funded project work of Ehren *et al* (2013) classified inspection systems as “high stake inspection systems” and “low-stake systems” (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 46). Altrichter and Kemethofer, rated the English inspection system as that in which school principals felt most pressure to do well on the inspection standards and classified it as a “high stake” (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 46) system for its inclusion of what were seen as the most “challenging elements” (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 45): differentiated inspection, threshold distinction of failing schools, sanctions for low performing

schools and reports to the general public. All of these elements can be seen as elements of a low trust system and risk the loss of performance identified by Ammeter et al (2004) Indeed, the study's finding that "accountability pressure" has a negative effect on the acceptance of feedback' (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 50) and can give rise to 'unintended consequences' (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 50) such as the narrowing of the curriculum opens a pathway for investigation in this thesis of teachers' perceptions of the effects of the pressure inherent in the OFSTED system.

It is particularly interesting to note that Ehren et al (2013) and Altrichter and Kemethofer (2015) relied exclusively on the evidence of school principals in compiling their data. Gaertner *et al* (2013) investigating a possible link between school improvement and school inspections in two German states also drew heavily on principals accepting classroom teachers into the evidence base only when they served on the highest decision-making body of the school and 'had access to information that well qualifies them to answer questions about school quality' (Gaertner *et al*, 2013, p 495). In examination of papers such as these investigating the links between accountability and pressure through interview over representation of school principals and managers does seem to be a sampling issue which may have led to some unwitting distortion of finding. The intention of this thesis to interview school staff of all levels of responsibility is designed to avoid concentration on any one level of seniority within schools. An assumption that only staff with leadership responsibility can point to beneficial and detrimental effects from school inspection and its associated pressures seems likely to produce incomplete findings in any study designed to assess overall impact of OFSTED inspection on secondary schools.

## **2.9 OFSTED related press coverage**

Since 1992 OFSTED related articles have appeared with great frequency in all sections of the national - and indeed local - press reflecting the interest generated in the organisation both inside and outside the circle of education professionals. From its very start OFSTED put many of its findings into

the public domain. Its publication inspection reports, subject reports, HMCI reports, reports into the effectiveness of the teaching of various subjects and advice based on these attracted press attentions on a very large scale. Equally statements and articles by, and interviews of, HMCIs frequently appeared in the press.

Analysis of OFSTED coverage in every newspaper from 1992 to 2018 is not feasible for a single-researcher project such as this but analysis of the nature of articles concerning OFSTED from two papers of different political standpoints during central years of the tenure of two very different HMCIs can reveal much about the extent of publicity gained by OFSTED and allow follow-up through interview of the possible impact of such publicity on schools and teachers in addition to any impact of OFSTED alone.

Through 2003, near the mid-point of the tenure of HMCI David Bell, 'The Times' newspaper ran 159 articles associated with various aspects of OFSTED practice whilst 'The Guardian' ran 174. In 1997, the mid-point of Christopher Woodhead's time as HMCI the numbers were 94 and, again, 174 respectively. Such publicity frequently mentioned individual schools, school-managers and teachers by name; consequently, it is clear that those working in schools knew that once an inspection report entered the public domain, they might form tomorrow's headlines with consequential pressures. Press coverage can therefore effectively be considered to form part of OFSTED's overall impact in, and on, schools and their staff.

The Pro Quest historical newspaper archive in November 2017 was used to compile the detailed overview below (Table 1) showing the types of articles, letters and advertisements featuring OFSTED in any way in the two specified years. Analysis yielded fourteen principal groupings of the finer focus of such articles (Table 1). Adverts mentioning OFSTED have been recorded at the bottom of the table but since these will have been compiled by school staff rather than by employed journalists and no figures were obtainable to provide comparison with adverts not mentioning OFSTED, they have been excluded from the analysis of press coverage.

**Table 1: OFSTED Related Press Coverage from Pro-Quest Archive**

<b>OFSTED Story Focus</b>	<b>Guardian 1997</b>	<b>Times 1997</b>	<b>Guardian 2003</b>	<b>Times 2003</b>	<b>% of total Coverage (to 1d.p.)</b>	<b>% of Guardian Coverage</b>	<b>% of Times Coverage</b>
Stress of Inspection	6	3	6	3	3.0	3.4	2.4
Methods used by OFSTED	50	40	50	40	30.0	28.7	31.6
Case Studies	60	13	60	21	25.6	34.5	13.4
OFSTED Personnel other than HMCI	3	5	3	4	2.5	1.7	3.6
Validity of OFSTED Inspection	7	0	7	7	3.5	4.0	2.8
OFSTED in FE	2	0	2	1	0.8	1.1	0.4
HMCI	14	8	14	4	6.6	8.0	4.7
OFSTED Findings - General	17	17	17	59	18.3	9.8	30.0
OFSTED Findings – Subject Specific	2	2	2	9	2.5	1.1	4.3
Cost	2	0	2	0	0.7	1.1	0
Recruitment Effects	8	1	8	0	2.8	4.6	0.4
Educational Research	1	0	1	0	0.3	0.6	0
Other	2	5	2	11	3.3	1.1	6.3
<b>Yearly Total (Jan 1<sup>st</sup> – Dec 31<sup>st</sup>)</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>174</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>99.9</b>	<b>99.7</b>	<b>99.9</b>
Adverts Mentioning OFSTED (Not in % calculations)	61	20	59	13			

*Listed categories had highest frequency of occurrence*

Even a preliminary analysis of Table 1 above reveals some surprises. Articles referring, usually critically, to the inspection methods used by OFSTED such as Stothard (1997) and Purves, (2003) in the Times and Mooney, (2003a) in the Guardian take up 30% of the total coverage in those two papers in the specified years, yet discussion of the validity of the findings based on those methods featured in only 3.5% of articles and did not feature at all in ‘Times’ articles of 1997. The reasons for these patterns could only be found by analysing in depth the content, authorship and examples used in a sample of articles (Stothard, 1997) (Purves, 2003) (Mooney, 2003a) covering method and those covering validity (Mooney, 2003b) (Halpin, 2003). Similarly, there is little coverage – indeed none in the Times in both 1997 and 2003 - of the cost implications of the OFSTED system which in both specified years was still employing very large teams of inspectors in an inspection cycle requiring

schools to be visited every four years, or more frequently if considered to be “failing” (OFSTED, 1993c, p11). Again, depth analysis of what was written, by who and its evidence base would be necessary. In these two years of OFSTED’s twenty-five year existence in the time frame covered by this study a total of 601 features on some aspect of OFSTED inspection were published in only two national daily newspapers from a total of eleven existing at the time. In addition, a total of 153 advertisements mentioning OFSTED were placed the pages of these two papers in 1997 and 2003. Since these advertisements would have been worded by school and local authority staff they alone indicate that OFSTED was having an impact in schools.

### **2.10 Edited Collections and Academic Papers on OFSTED**

From the late 1990s many contributions to the debate on the effect of OFSTED inspection on schools were published. As in the work of Ouston, Earley and Fidler, (eds, 1996) de Waal (ed, 2008) and Cullingford (ed, 1999) these frequently took the form of collections of articles by stakeholders in schools such as Tim Benson (Benson, 2008) or Graham Lester George, (George, 2008) (Brimblecombe, Ormiston and Shaw, 1996), or Russell, (1996). Others gathered those involved in the OFSTED process and its predecessor (Learmonth, 1996) (Perry, 2008), from organisations such as the NAHT reacting to OFSTED (Brookes, 2008) or from academics (Law and Glover,1999). Contributors to such collections addressed OFSTED from their own specialist angles relying on the editor to create a coherent theme for the collection. Some criticised the methods used by OFSTED (Law and Glover, 1999) (Brookes, 2008). Some described the workings of the system (Davis, 1996) (Kegan and Maden, 1999) (Hustler, 1999) (Drake, 2008) or its effects on schools and staff (Russell, 1996) (Cuckle and Broadhead, 1999). Such collected critiques of the OFSTED system in book form dated very quickly in the face of frequent changes to OFSTED’s inspection frameworks and their rate of appearance has dropped off with the appearance of constantly revived guidelines for inspection. These works were principally aimed at staff practising in schools and the fact that established publishers were willing to

invest in them did suggest a concern felt by many teachers concerning the possible effects of the new system in its early years.

Recent publications aimed at teachers in book form have been less concerned with the theory behind the OFSTED process or any attempt to criticise and change it. They seem to have accepted the practice and form of OFSTED inspections as given and have concentrated instead on giving instruction on how to obtain a desirable inspection outcome (Garvey, 2017) (Beere and Gilbert, 2012) (Findlater, 2015). This trend of publication suggests an acceptance of OFSTED inspections as an established fact and may possibly even mark a resignation to the inevitability of its continuation in what may be an example of Gramsci's cultural hegemony (Gramsci, 1992-6) linked to Foucault's ideas of governmentality (Foucault, 2001) by Sevilla-Buitrago (2017) as control of "the emergence of pedagogical power" (Sevilla-Buitrago, 2017, p 168). It certainly offers a line of enquiry through interview concerning teachers' possible changing attitudes to inspection.

Relatively recent academic papers on OFSTED inspection provide an extensive resource. Academics writing in the last five years have had the advantage of looking back at developments in OFSTED's practice and sources of evidence on the effects of those developments over more than two decades of OFSTED and will be of particular interest in this study because of this perspective gained over time. The principal use of these will be in comparison with teacher perspectives gained over that same period and analysed later in this thesis. Teachers and academics can be seen to be working from different parts of the same evidence base but accessing it from different positions and perspectives. Teachers are in schools for most of their working time and can form first-hand impressions on the impact OFSTED is having on schools and stakeholders. Academics, particularly those in university departments of education, will spend greater or lesser amounts of research time in schools - and much of that with teachers or pupils - but may lack the constant long-term and continuous contact with stakeholders enjoyed by most teachers. Academics may also have the

benefit of more reflection time than teachers, considerably more research expertise and are backed by dedicated research organisations. They may also have formed strong links to classroom teachers and middle managers through PGCE and other teacher training programmes such as 'School Direct'. In addition, academics can access and use the research of other academics far more easily than teachers are able to do. They also have far more motive to do this since peer-reviewed academic research is expected to refer to other academic sources to enjoy acceptance.

Academics are now well-placed to take full advantage of time perspective on OFSTED and its operation. Hutchinson (2016) made extensive use of OFSTED and other government data collected since 1993 in considering possible improvements to OFSTED inspections. Likewise, Courtney (2013) was able to compare headteachers' experiences under the 2012 framework unfavourably with their experiences under previous frameworks and Baxter and Clarke (2013) looked back to 1992 in examining OFSTED practices of inspecting schools and found that laudable as the intention of the 2012 framework was in attempting to forge stronger links between teachers and inspectors. The feasibility of so doing would depend on better training and professional development of inspectors. The fact that all inspector training was removed from agencies such as SERCO and taken back as a responsibility of OFSTED in house later in the term in office of Sir Michael Wilshaw as HMCI may point to academic research having increasing influence on OFSTED over time.

In 1998 HMCI Chris Woodhead had famously referred to academic educational research as "dross" explaining "The problem is we are paying for a lot of qualitative research that does not stand up to scrutiny" (Fletcher, 1998). It was then and remains simplistic and problematic to dismiss all academic research as flawed and it seems likely that Woodhead was trying to draw unfavourable comparison between the qualitative nature of much academic research with what he saw as OFSTED's quantitative based empirical approach. Such a simplistic assumption that one research method is of necessity better than another has been effectively challenged:

Sometimes people think that trials can answer everything, or that they are the only form of evidence. This isn't true, and different methods are useful for answering different questions. Randomised trials are good at showing that something works; they're not always so helpful for understanding why it worked (although there are often clues when we can see that an intervention worked well in children with certain characteristics, but not so well in others). 'Qualitative' research – such as asking people open questions about their experiences – can help give a better understanding of how and why things worked, or failed, on the ground. (Goldacre, 2014, p 211)

The statement could be viewed as provocative and simplistic if for no other reason that academic articles are based on disciplined research and can be wholly or partly reflective of, or based upon, the perceptions of teachers. This is explicitly the case in the work of Courtney (2012) and Brimblecombe, Ormiston and Shaw (1996). The perceptions of teachers and academics are therefore essential to gain a full picture of OFSTED's changing practice and impact of that practice in school over time as exemplified in the recent work of Perryman, Maguire, Braun and Ball (2018) in which research was carried out in four schools with ordinary profiles as defined by Maguire in an earlier paper (Maguire, 2011). Their main conclusion was that a perpetual readiness for inspection had replaced an earlier and more temporary distortion of normal practice immediately before and after inspection (Perryman, Maguire, Braun and Ball, 2018). This academic highlighting of a real shift of focus in schools as a result of OFSTED's change to an increasing number of no notice inspections had its origin in teacher perceptions. It is time that teacher perceptions through multiple experiences of OFSTED inspections were used for a wider assessment of the impact of those inspections on secondary schools.

### **2.11 The Impacts of OFSTED Inspection**

This thesis assesses through qualitative method the impacts of OFSTED inspection in secondary schools between 1993 and 2018 from perceptions of thirty teachers of all levels of responsibility

who have experienced more than two inspections in the OFSTED era in their careers. Four of these had also worked as OFSTED inspectors. The thirty participants in this study had served a total of 757 years in teaching on full time or fixed term contracts and had experience between them participants of 119 different inspections in the OFSTED era of which 118 were OFSTED inspections and one was carried out by the Independent Schools Inspection Service under OFSTED letter of authorisation. As such it will be a unique contribution to knowledge. No study currently exists incorporating all its intended elements: exclusive focus on secondary schools; this specific and extensive date range; predominantly qualitative method; interviews through life histories of teachers with multiple experience of OFSTED inspections, and focus on overall impact as opposed to impact in one area of school practice or outcome.

From 117 existing theses addressing OFSTED and OFSTED inspection by far the most closely-related study is Cromey- Hawke's thesis "Improvement through Inspection': schoolteachers' perceptions of the OFSTED years 1992-2000' (Cromey-Hawke, 2000). Cromey-Hawke (2000) used mixed methods to focus exclusively on the relationship between OFSTED inspection and school improvement. His study was wide-ranging combining quantitative postal survey with qualitative interviews of teachers of all levels of seniority - although headteachers and senior managers constituted over 50% of the qualitative interviews and all of the postal responses - within a sub sample of three schools over a maximum of three cycles of inspection in OFSTED's first eight years. Almost twenty one years of OFSTED inspections have passed since Cromey-Hawke's study. During that time, particularly after the publication of 'A New Relationship with Schools' in 2005 (DfE/OFSTED, 2004), methods of inspection changed radically and fundamentally being henceforth based on school self-evaluation and increasingly intricate baseline data incorporating value-added adjustment. This, alone, calls for a fresh analysis of teacher perceptions. Added to this, teachers currently practising or recently retired have amassed far more direct experience of OFSTED inspection than was available in the years Cromey- Hawke was actively researching, 1993-1999, which makes it possible to address a broader focus of impact over twenty-five years as opposed to only school improvement over six.

The field contains many studies focussing on the experiences under OFSTED exclusively of primary schools (Blunsdon, 2002), primary headteachers (Watts, 2012) (Burnitt, 2016) and primary teachers (Howard, 2000) along with teachers in FE colleges (Richardson, 2004). Such studies are not without parallel in some aspects of the secondary school OFSTED experience but centre on such a different teaching and learning environment in terms of organisation, curriculum and types of pressure on staff that they can be seen to be distant parallels to this study.

Of the relatively few studies of secondary schools and OFSTED inspection of thesis length the tendency is to concentrate on one aspect of its effect on a school rather than impact overall. Snelling (2016) for example, concentrates on quality of teaching, Shaw (2000) on GCSE performance data and Smith (1996) on the impact on ethnic minority pupils.

This study attempts a broader assessment of overall impact by pursuing research questions developed through a Foucauldian theoretical framework (Kendall and Wickham, 2004) which will be explained in Chapter 3. In the latter part of the chapter this will feed into a rationale for the choice of a methodology using the 'Life Histories' approach of Goodson and Sikes (2001) to elicit answers to the research questions in context from 30 semi-structured interviews with teachers, each of whom have experienced school inspection in the years 1993-2018 at least twice and often on multiple occasions. A case will also be made in the chapter for the use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis as the most appropriate strategy of analysis for this highly subjective, individual, and experiential evidence using an Heideggerian epistemological perspective. Heidegger's work played a highly influential part in Foucault's philosophical development "For me, Heidegger has always been the essential philosopher. My whole philosophical development was determined by my reading of Heidegger" (Foucault, 1988, p 250). Foucault critically engaged with phenomenology on the grounds that the experiences on which it depends are often shaped by un-investigated social and historic context (Nichols, 2014). The study's historical context was explained in Chapter 1 and it is accepted that the perceptions of every teacher interviewed here have been shaped by his or her individual

and unique social context encompassed in the 'Life Histories' approach (Goodson and Sikes, 2004). No claim is made for purity or indeed absolute accuracy of the teachers' perceptions which form the heart of this study: they are of course subject to individual interpretation, context, and the vagaries of memory. Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis of the interpreted experiential evidence here therefore complements the 'Life Histories' (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) approaches used in its accumulation and does not conflict with the Foucauldian framework (Kendall and Wickham, 2004) within which the research questions were developed. Chapter 4 will apply Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to the evidence on teachers' perspectives gained through the 30 qualitative interviews carried out by the author between September 2018 and October 2020. Conclusions will then be drawn in Chapter 5 on teachers' perceptions of the impacts of the OFSTED inspection system on secondary schools and their teachers between and including 1993 and 2018 placing emphasis on findings concerning the research areas below which emerged from this literature review.

#### **2.12 Research Areas to Be Investigated Arising from this Chapter**

- *The **personal effects** of OFSTED inspection on teachers.*
- *The effects of OFSTED inspection on the **culture and practices of secondary schools***
- *The **presence or absence of trust** in the OFSTED accountability system and its inspections of schools*
- *The **consistency of OFSTED's** approach, judgements and reports between 1993 and 2018*
- *The **overall effects of the OFSTED accountability system***
- *Possible **mitigations** of any adverse effects of the OFSTED accountability system*

## Chapter 3

### Philosophical Framework and Methodology

#### 3.1 Introduction

This thesis addresses seven areas of perception through the specific research questions set out later in the chapter. In addition, the 30 secondary teachers interviewed for this work were selected across a broad spectrum of seniority in terms of length of service and responsibility ranging from experienced headteachers to those in their first few years in the classroom. These teachers will have had a minimum of two experiences of school inspection, but the vast majority will have experienced many more during service in many different schools depending on length of service in the profession and career path. This differs from studies relying exclusively or heavily on interviews with heads and senior managers (Cromey-Hawke, 2000), primary schools (Blunsdon, 2002) or both (Watts, 2012, Burnitt, 2016). Full details of the sample used in this study and of its method of selection will be found later in this chapter.

Perceptions of OFSTED's impact will be examined through the scope of Foucauldian thought in three overlapping principal areas related to government control through school inspection: governmentality (Foucault, 2001), power (Foucault, 2001) (Hoffman, 2014), and discipline (Foucault, 1991). These are directly applicable to the 'Research Areas' on Page 65 above and feed into the research questions which can be found on page 95.

It is fully acknowledged that the path of using Foucault as a philosophical foundation in educational research is a well-trodden one, particularly after the works of Kendall and Wickham in the late 1990s and early 2000s (Kendall and Wickham, 1999) (Kendall and Wickham, 2004), and that of Peters and Besley, (2007). But paths are well trodden for a reason: they point a way and provide a means of going beyond previous destinations. It is what travels along the path and its destination that must be unique and new.

The research questions used have emerged from the study of literature in the field carried out in Chapter 2 and were developed from a Foucauldian framework (Kendall and Wickham, 2004) in a process explained below, thereby harmonising with the Foucauldian lenses emerging in this Chapter.

### **3.2 Which Foucault?**

The work of Michel Foucault does not lend itself to neat categorisation and he always resisted general labels for either it or of himself.

I am an experimenter and not a theorist. I call a theorist someone who constructs a general system, either deductive or analytical, and applies it to different fields in a uniform way. That isn't my case. I'm an experimenter in the sense that I write in order to change myself and in order not to think the same thing as before (Foucault, 2001, p 240).

Foucault aligned himself with structuralism during most of the 1960s "The way in which people feel things, how their sensibility reacts, their whole conduct is controlled by a theoretical structure, a system, which changes with the era and the society – but which is present in all eras and societies" (Foucault, 1966) but never accepted the label and increasingly took a standpoint against it in some senses "One can agree that structuralism formed the most systematic method to evacuate the concept of the event, not only from ethnology but from a whole series of other sciences and most extremely from history. In that sense I don't see who could be more of an antistructuralist than myself" (Foucault, 2001, p115) Foucault was similarly disregarding of accepted subject disciplines, developing his own understanding of what he called archaeology, itself a structure based on discourses, and genealogy - which moved beyond archaeology to incorporate power - to write highly unconventional historical works such as 'The Order of Things' (Foucault, 2002) and 'Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison' (Foucault, 1991). Such works refused to be constrained by the subject conventions of history – not least in disregard of memory, questioning of the significance of events and revision of causation into the discourse based archaeology and genealogy – much as 'The Birth of the Clinic' (Foucault, 1963) combined challenge of history with a probing of the origins

of medical progress (O'Farrell, 2005) and the unfinished 'History of Sexuality, of which Volume 1 appeared in 1976, (Foucault,1998) shook established views of psychology.

This originality and rejection of categorisation extended to epistemology. As was shown in Chapter 2 late in his career Foucault acknowledged his debt to Heidegger (Foucault, 1988) yet criticised the phenomenological practice of probing interpretation for hidden depths of meaning and phenomenology for undue abstraction (O'Farrell, 2005). This typified Foucault's fluidity and perhaps indicates the difficulty of positioning Foucault between an interpretive paradigm and that of critical theory – labels he considered irrelevant since it was his thoughts at any one time that counted “many things have been superseded, certainly. I'm perfectly aware of things being always on the move in relation both to the things I'm interested in and to what I've already thought” (Foucault, 2001, p 239).

This refusal to conform to any one epistemology throughout his career is seen here as a strength of using a Foucauldian lens rather than as a drawback. It gives a choice of Foucauldian lenses to use. There is also a symmetry and thereby an appeal in using the work of a man so unwilling to be placed in any one box as a lens through which to view the perceptions of teachers. In the author's experience of managing and training teachers he perceived it to be common to come across individuals who similarly refuse to be categorised or resist conformity in some way. It is this potential symmetry with the approach of Foucault and the perceived approach of many teachers that makes his work appeal for this thesis along with the sheer applicability of his thought to education.

The thesis is written using an Interpretive paradigm from the ontological stance that perceived reality is multiple and relative (Assalahi, 2015). Every teacher will have his or her differing view of the realities of OFSTED inspection and its impact on them and their school based on his or her personal experiences. There can be no one definitive reality of the impact of OFSTED on individuals and schools but there can be shared experience. It is accepted that the perceptions that form the

qualitative evidence base of this work are constructs of the human mind based on experiences which are remembered with an unknown degree of accuracy and supplemented by both subconscious memory and by subconscious compensation for unremembered or buried experience. When these perceptions are subject to hermeneutics in analysis, they become subject to the product of another human mind with its own hidden dimensions based on experience. Foucault's warning that this constructivism can lead more and more into the abstract and away from a concrete world (Foucault, 1966) is accepted as a potential hazard if subject to over-claiming. Consequently, the teachers' perceptions in this study are claimed to be nothing more than that: perceptions. Any truth they contain is multiple and relative, but these multiple and relative truths may overlap.

### **3.3 Inspection and Governmentality**

Foucault's essay on governmentality (Foucault, 2001, p201-222) set out his views of how effective central government as practised since the Middle-Ages had been developed to be effective among the rapidly growing populations of the post-modern and industrial eras. This refinement had been intended not merely as "advice to the prince" (Foucault, 2001, p 201) for the benefit of the prince alone but a technique of government to make possible control of large numbers for at least the declared benefit of the population as a whole. Foucault drew the analogy of the wise government of the family for the common welfare of all "which means exercising toward its inhabitants, and the wealth and behaviour of each and all, a form of surveillance and control as attentive as that of the head of a family over his household and his goods" (Foucault, 2001, p207). Foucault also paraphrased Rousseau by saying "the word 'economy' can only properly be used to signify the wise government of the family for the common welfare of all" (Foucault, 2001, p 207) Foucault uses the word economy here to equate to the heart and nature of pre-industrial government but by the mid twentieth century creation of wealth had assumed that central role with the promotion of the post of Chancellor of the Exchequer to second in importance in the Cabinet. The parallels with Chitty's

view of Callaghan's statements of intent for education in his Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976) are therefore stark.

the speech marked a clear shift on the part of the Labour leadership towards policies which would facilitate government control of the education system. This was obviously necessary if government ideas on the curriculum were to be implemented. For above all the speech represented a clear attempt to construct a new educational consensus around a more direct subordination of education to what was perceived to be the needs of the economy (Chitty, 1989, p96)

The needs of the economy by 1976 were connected to the welfare of all. Government control of education was being advocated as essential for the welfare of all and, as has been shown in Chapter 1, a direct trail leads from the Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976) to the creation of OFSTED in 1992.

Part 2 of Foucault's definition of governmentality speaks of "this type of power – which may be termed "government" – resulting, on the one hand, in the formation of a whole series of specific government apparatuses, and on the other, in the development of a whole complex of knowledges" (Foucault, 2001, p220). OFSTED is a government funded apparatus, whose head is appointed by the Secretary of State for Education. Its "knowledges" (Foucault, 2001, p220) can be seen to be its rapidly changing Frameworks which first appeared in the 'Handbook for the Inspection of Schools' in 1992 (OFSTED, 1992) and the interpretation of these by inspectors in a possible post-panoptic scenario of control (Courtney, 2016). Once again, a parallel emerges. OFSTED can be seen as a manifestation of governmentality (Foucault, 2001, p219-20).

The justification for viewing teachers' perceptions of the impact of OFSTED through a lens of governmentality (Foucault, 2001, Ch 7) can be further reinforced. HMCI, the head of OFSTED, has always been appointed by the Secretary of State for Education, a cabinet minister who was in turn appointed by, and is directly answerable to, the Prime Minister: leader of Her Majesty's Government. OFSTED is funded by HM Government and the maintained schools it supervises are

also so funded directly or indirectly. In the light of this and the Foucauldian echoes, pointed out in Chapter 1, of Callaghan's five underlying principles (Appendix 2) from his watershed Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976), it would seem OFSTED cannot live up to John Major's expressed hope of providing, "a regular and fully independent inspection of schools" (Major, 1999, p397). If OFSTED is not independent of government, the Foucauldian concept of governmentality will be shown to apply directly and can usefully extend not just to central government but to school leadership and control of the self (Perryman *et al*, 2018). This is of relevance to this thesis since the teachers' interviewed for this study in 2019-20 were in a position to form perceptions of all three of these levels of this application of governmentality. It will be tested in this thesis if they have done so.

### **3.4 Inspection as Power, Truth and Knowledge**

This position of neutrality and the related claim to be independent of Government by OFSTED can be seen as manifestations of the very factors Foucault claims to make techniques of power dangerous: "apparent neutrality and political invisibility" (Gordon, 2001, p xv). Closely related to governmentality (Foucault, 2001, p219-20) and equally useful as a lens through which to view educational research is the Foucauldian concept of bio-power or "techniques for achieving the subjugation of bodies and the control of populations" (Foucault, 1998, p143). "Subjugation of bodies" may seem a little strong at first glance, but Foucault was referring directly to secondary schools in terms of creating conformity and control of both teachers and pupils (Foucault, 1998, p140) in a physical but not brutal sense. It will be shown that bio-power (Foucault, 1998, p140) can interact with knowledge, forms of truth and ultimately, to the human subject (Foucault, 1991), through the OFSTED inspection system in a trail that leads to the self-imposed control of Panopticism (Perryman, 2006) and of control by disorientation which is the key feature of Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016).

Foucault saw truth only as a worldly thing grounded in the physical "produced by multiple forms of constraint" (Foucault, 1979). Each society had its regime of truth:

The types of discourse which it accepts and makes function as true; the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements, the means by which each is sanctioned; the techniques accorded value in the acquisition of truth; the status of those who are charged with saying what counts as true. (Foucault, 1979, p 73)

It is difficult to avoid drawing a parallel between “the mechanisms and instances which enable one to distinguish true and false statements” (Foucault, 1979, p 73) and school inspection based on the latest ‘Handbook for the Inspection of Schools’ (OFSTED, 1992). It is equally difficult not to see “those who are charged with saying what counts as true” as Lead Inspectors or HMIs.

OFSTED’s monitoring of school performance, award of categories and reliance on inspection can be seen as examples of Foucauldian manifestations of power and the application of ‘truth’ over school populations exercised through criteria only fully known to OFSTED inspectors in an example of a Foucauldian knowledge/power interaction (Robinow, 1991). Criteria have been put into the public domain through the many incarnations of the ‘Handbook for the Inspection of Schools’ since the original from 1992 (OFSTED, 1992) but those written criteria were, as are all written criteria, open to interpretation from individuals. Many Lead Inspectors in the field will probably have applied their own interpretations. They certainly seem to have attended yearly training meetings in which interpretation also featured and could be seen as a manufactured ‘truth’ to which the members of school populations are not party. Since these meetings were not open to non-OFSTED personnel the knowledge from them was not available only to inspectors, their power in applying the criteria was amplified by exclusive knowledge which became a held ‘truth’.

A teacher with experience as an OFSTED inspector, when interviewed for this thesis on 26<sup>th</sup> May 2019 revealed a perception of the existence of such meetings, which remained outside the public domain, imparting exclusive knowledge to inspectors not fully available in the written documentation used in schools (Teacher 7, Interview, 2019, p 3).

This was a perceived example of OFSTED using knowledge, power, and 'truth' as agents of control of transformation (Foucault, 1998, p143) of, in this case, schools.

The Foucauldian lens of knowledge as related to power and truth can be applied further as Foucault points those seeking to ascertain what knowledge is to look in an unexpected direction. That direction harmonises with the central tenet of this thesis: that the root of the OFSTED inspection system lies in a political attempt to control education and make it accountable in terms of "extrinsic factors" (Peters, 1966). Foucault states "If we truly wish to know knowledge, to know what it is, to apprehend it at its root, in its manufacture, we must look not to philosophers but to politicians – we need to understand what the relations of struggle and power are" (Foucault, 2001, p12). This resonates with Margaret Thatcher's hand-written annotation referred to in Chapter 1 (Thatcher, 1980). The tension in this case between Margaret Thatcher and the National Union of Teachers can be seen as a struggle to control the nature of school inspection with its links, established above, to power, truth and knowledge. How far teachers perceive OFSTED inspection as an example of power, knowledge and truth deployed in Foucauldian struggle between adversaries or indeed as one of trust with those of common aim will be explored.

### **3.5 Inspection as Discipline**

Foucault's idea of discipline depends on the pre-requisite of first developing "docility" (Foucault, 1991, p 136) by the breaking down of time and repetition to develop acceptance of applied norms to create control operating on an individual scale, even though applied to large numbers of individuals as may be found in a regiment or school. It is applied with an object of economy and efficiency through the modality of control of process of an activity rather than its result. The first two of these seem to fit school inspection well and "Efficiency of the School" with specific reference to "Value for Money" appeared explicitly in the first Framework to be used in inspection in 1993 (OFSTED, 1993b, p 19).

The third, control of process rather than of result, is perhaps a little more problematic since OFSTED from its very earliest applied 'Framework for the Inspection of Schools' (OFSTED, 1993b) specified using quantitative data in the form of "National Curriculum assessment results" and "external examination results" as "Indicators" (OFSTED, 1993b, p6) of appropriate inspection judgement for a school. This requirement remained constant and reached its apogee of relative importance in the January 2012 'Framework for the Inspection of Schools' (OFSTED, 2012) which enshrined the requirements of the Education Act 2011 in making the achievement of pupils one of only four areas of judgement in OFSTED inspection of Schools – as opposed to one of seven in 1993 - and thus shifting the emphasis decisively toward outcomes. Even in 2012 however process remained dominant in the framework, at least on paper, since the other three areas of judgement: "quality of teaching", "quality of leadership and management" and "behaviour and safety of the pupils" (OFSTED, 2012) remained process focused. Teachers' perceptions of the impact of OFSTED's consistent focus on process and outcome and the effects any possible change of balance could be very revealing concerning the appropriate application of this Foucauldian idea of "docility". Did outcomes remain at its 25% level of influence on judgement or is it perceived to exceed that in practice?

Concentration on Panopticism (Perryman, 2006) and Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016) as methods of maintaining discipline and control has meant that this Foucauldian pre-requisite of "docility" (Foucault, 1991, p 136) has been neglected as a lens through which to examine the impact of OFSTED inspection on schools and teachers. It would seem to have much to offer as a research tool and may go a long way towards explaining why the power of OFSTED to apply judgement on its own developed criteria seems to attract so little fundamental challenge from the teaching profession and has survived intact since 1992. Individual judgements on schools can be and are challenged but the existence of OFSTED and its consistent reliance on inspection as its principal accountability tool seems unassailable. "Docility" (Foucault, 1991, p 136) would seem to offer an insight into this status quo.

A mechanics of power was being born; it defined how one may have a hold over others' bodies not only so they would do what one wishes, but so they may operate as one wishes, with the techniques, the speed and the efficiency that one determines. Thus, discipline produces subjected and practised bodies, 'docile' bodies. Discipline increases the forces of the body (in economic terms of utility) and diminishes those same forces (in political terms of obedience). (Foucault, 1991, p138)

Do teachers' perceptions indicate that constant inspection, the threat of inspection and the judgements applied after inspection produce docility; or do they point to docility making constant inspection and the passive acceptance of the right to inspect possible? Do their perceptions link this docility to acceptance of performativity (Elliott, 2001)?

The work of Elliott (2001) and Ball (2003) on this theme of performativity (Elliott, 2001) as a manifestation of power is well known. Use of "docility" as a pre-requisite of disciplinary power can perhaps develop this further. Ball (2013) went on to show the role and influence of Foucauldian power on the development of educational policy in control of schools and repeated Perryman's charge (2007) that "teachers and learners were positioned within inspection and comparison and "terror"" (Ball, 2013, p 42) as part of that policy power structure. Power wielded initially through the surveillance of the "Foucauldian metaphor of the Panopticon" (Courtney, 2016, p623) has also been linked by Perryman, (2006) and by Courtney (2016) to school inspection and control. This "Foucauldian metaphor" (Courtney, 2016, p623) was later developed into Courtney's theory of Post-panopticism: a theory of deliberate disconcerting of school leaders by OFSTED through constantly changing Frameworks designed to make compliance to its requirements "less possible" (Courtney, 2016, p639), thereby creating discomfiture and failure for purposes of control. How far this concept of Post-panopticism matches the recent perceptions of teachers and how much it is a product of docility will be tested in this thesis.

Foucault's "docility" paves the way to methods of training through hierarchical observation, normalising judgement, and observation (Foucault, 1991, p177-183). Each of these in turn are useful in this study.

Foucault's description and definition of hierarchical observation in 'Discipline and Punish' (Foucault, 1991) makes it clear that such is presupposition of the mechanism of discipline as a "mechanism that coerces by means of observation; an apparatus in which the techniques that make it possible to see induce effects of power, and in which, conversely, the means of coercion make those on whom they are applied clearly visible" (Foucault, 1991, p 170-1). Inspection can be seen as just such an apparatus of discipline of the teaching professional and for the schools in which he or she works.

His Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools was established six years after grants of £10000 to each of two religious societies for the purposes of the construction of school buildings began the state funding of education in Britain in 1833. The inception of government inspection in 1839 reflected exactly perceptions of "observation" and "coercion" described by Foucault above (Foucault, 1991, p 170-1). MPs were concerned at the way in which the societies spent this money and "urged the Government to institute its own scheme of inspection for the schools which received a Government grant" (Dunford, 1998, p1). The fact that MPs wished to know how the money was being spent represents a form of observation. It also follows that any dissatisfaction with reports of the method of this expenditure would have been of little use unless some follow-up was made either to withdraw Government money or to exert pressure to spend it in a way that met with approval which could be seen as a form of coercion. The societies themselves frequently declined to accept Government money from perception of a necessary fear of Government interference triggered by such inspection; seemingly concurring with the view that inspection was a form of observation and a possible trigger for coercive action even though inspectors were charged only with collecting facts and information and were forbidden from interfering in the running of the school (Dunford, 1998).

It is a small yet significant step from considering inspection as a legitimate form of accountability to seeing it as an observational precursor of coercion and this small, early encounter between inspectors and inspected reflects very clearly this controversy into which James Callaghan was tentatively but deliberately stepping with his Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976). “My general guidance for the speech was that it should begin a debate about educational trends and should ask some controversial questions” (Callaghan, 1987, p410).

Foucault makes distinction between hierarchical observation carried out from the outside by inspectors and that functioning automatically and embedded in the institution. From here it is an easy move to the Panopticon which functions through self-regulation from the belief one could be being observed at any time (Perryman, 2006). The ever present ‘Framework for the Inspection of Schools’ sets out how one should be behaving and is a blueprint for continual conformity to that model (Perryman, 2006). Any school’s website is available to OFSTED at any time and here its “policies and documentation reflect the expected discourse” (Perryman, 2006, p150) and are deployed as a forward defence or credentials of continual awareness and implementation of requirements or supposed requirements in the case of Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016) (Perryman *et al* 2018).

Inspectors and inspected are a hierarchy in that inspectors then and now directly or indirectly represent the Government, which is ultimately responsible for paying teachers’ salaries and funding schools. It follows that inspection will be seen as hierarchical observation and the recommendations of inspectors as a form of coercion if these do not coincide with the educational philosophy of the inspected and if desired outcomes and methods differ. The famous semi-fictional encounter between School Inspector and pupil Sissy Jupe, daughter of a fairground horse trainer, results in the satisfaction of both he and the class teacher when Sissy’s description of a horse is dismissed as insufficiently factual in favour of the rote answer of another pupil who has never seen a horse (Dickens, 1854). Dickens’s naming of the class teacher character as Mr M’Choakumchild and of one

exponent of such facts as Mr Gradgrind reveals a view of such inspection as coercion and gives an insight of how differently the encounter between inspector and teacher may have gone had the latter been less enamoured with factual teaching or, even in that case, less keen to humour the inspectors view even in the face of his power. Do teachers perceive observation as a form of coercion?

Normalising Judgement can be related directly to any judgement measured against applied norms such as the judgements applied at the end of OFSTED inspection and frequently advertised by schools on giant banners if the outcome was 'Good' or 'Outstanding'. Normalising judgement is easy to accept, even to publicise, when such judgement is favourable but acceptance when awarded the categories 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate' is more difficult because of the stigma of the very language used and is not publicised with giant banners. Acceptance of these judgements or resignation towards them in the event of an unsuccessful complaint is more likely to be implicit in a decision to address the criticism in the inspection report and in endeavour to be awarded one of the higher categories in any subsequent inspection. In reality a school has little choice but to do this since the 'Framework for the Inspection of Schools' of January 2012 (OFSTED, 2012) made two consecutive awards of 'Requires Improvement' an automatic trigger for an 'Inadequate' judgement and a likely imposition of 'Special Measures'. A judgement of 'Inadequate' could hardly be ignored, whether accepted or not, since it risked closure of the school.

Such a process parallels Foucault's idea of "Normalising Judgement" (Foucault, 1991, p 177) whereby lack of conformity can result in punishment or gratification (Foucault, 1991, p180). In punishment "What is specific to the disciplinary penalty is non-observance, that which does not measure up to the rule, that departs from it. The whole indefinite domain of the non-conforming is punishable" (Foucault, 1991, p178-9); it reflects an inability to carry out required tasks. Parallels here with the language of OFSTED's 'Requires Improvement' and 'Inadequate' judgements are stark but in those cases the judgement because of the stigma attached can be seen not only as a trigger for

punishment but as the punishment itself. Similarly, gratification can be seen as the OFSTED judgements 'Outstanding' and 'Good'. Whether teachers perceive OFSTED judgements as punishment and gratifications such will be tested by this study.

The examination in Foucault's mind is a combination of observing hierarchy and normalising judgement "that makes it possible to qualify, to classify and to punish" (Foucault, 1991, p184). "the examination is highly ritualised. In it are combined the ceremony of power and the form of the experiment, the deployment of force and the establishment of truth." (Foucault, 1991, p184). In the author's perception the OFSTED inspection itself was highly ritualised: by the introduction of the inspectors, the expected courtesy, the right of entry to every classroom, the sanctity of the staffroom, the confidentiality of judgement, the negotiated report, the reveal, the reaction, and the consequences. Force is present in the inability to avoid the process. The establishment of "truth" as a held truth based on the published 'Framework for the Inspection of Schools' and on its interpretation based on more than the published as revealed by Teacher 7 as discussed above. Is the inspection as ritualised a shared perception or that of the author alone?

OFSTED's enduring strapline of 'Improvement through Inspection' and perceptions of the disciplinary power the organisation may thereby wield over schools through the implications of "docility" and the three categories of hierarchical observation, normalising judgement, and examination (Foucault, 1991, p177-183) are worthy of examination. Since OFSTED inspection as practised since 1993 contains all three of these categories it would seem reasonable to view perceptions of such inspection and its possible strengthening in Post-panoptical "flux" (Courtney, 2016, p 629) through this broad lens. Both Courtney (2016) and Perryman et al (2018) relied on re-analysed data from earlier studies gathered over ten years ago at the time of writing. This thesis will attempt to see if more recent perceptions of teachers gathered in interview for this thesis between autumn 2019 and summer 2020 can stimulate further thought.

### **3.6 Teacher Perception and Foucauldian Lenses**

In summary, the Foucauldian framework adopted for this study highlights the following areas of OFSTED's possible impact on secondary schools and their teachers to be examined through teacher's perceptions. These are:

Do teachers perceive OFSTED inspection in the Foucauldian light of governmentality (Foucault, 2001, p201-222) as a form of control by central government, school leadership and control of the individual?

Do teachers perceive OFSTED inspection as a form of power, knowledge and truth imposed from above?

Do teachers perceive repeated OFSTED inspection, the threat of such inspection and the judgements awarded after inspection as products or pre-requisites of Foucauldian docility (Foucault, 1991, p136)

Do teachers perceive any links between this Foucauldian docility, its corollary of Foucauldian discipline (Foucault, 1991) and the theories of Panopticism as applied to inspection (Perryman, 2006), and Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016)?

Do teachers perceive the elements of Foucauldian discipline: hierarchical observation, normalising judgement and examination as means of coercion, of punishment or gratification, or of ritual, respectively?

### **3.7 Why Qualitative Method?**

As mentioned in the 'Which Foucault' section of this chapter above, this study is founded on the interpretive paradigm in the belief that reality is multiple, relative (Assalahi, 2015), and based on personal experience.

Consistent with this interpretive paradigm, qualitative method has been selected for this study of teachers' perceptions of the impact of OFSTED inspection on secondary schools and teachers to

realise the potential and overcome the challenges of working with and within this subjective world of human experience (Cohen *et al*, 2007, p19). The interpretivist stance adopted accepts the impossibility of researcher objectivity explicitly and integrates the researcher's inevitable active interpretive role in any research he or she carries out. Every researcher has his own experiences and his own lifeworld which predates theory (Husserl, 1970) and cannot but affect his interpretation of the lifeworld and experiences of others from which their perceptions are formed.

The author of this study, in common with all of its participants, was a practising teacher and therefore sharer of the lifeworld (Husserl, 1970) of each to a greater degree than otherwise might have been the case for another researcher from a non-teaching background. It was therefore particularly important for the integrity of the study to adopt method consistent with the interpretive stance that acknowledges personal interpretive involvement. Qualitative research method stood out as the most appropriate choice for this reason and for reasons other than simple consistency with paradigm. Similarly, quantitative method was rejected for more reasons than inconsistency with that paradigm. Many of the defining characteristics of qualitative method seemed particularly suitable to release the potential of research involving investigation of teachers' perceptions of the impact of OFSTED inspection on schools and teachers whereas some characteristics of quantitative method would have proven restrictive to this study.

The rich material captured from an interactive process identified by Bloomberg and Volpe (2016) and rich description facilitated by interview based qualitative method offered much to a perception-based study on the impact of OFSTED inspection. Participants would have much to say since the inspection itself, preparation for that inspection and the reaction of its aftermath is a complex, often extended process extending over days, weeks, months or even years. Even in the case of an ultimately successful 'no notice' 24 hour inspection – the shortest possible contact time with an inspection team - a school can be in a constant state of preparation in expectation of an inspection and some recommendations will almost certainly be made in the inspection report that require

school action over an extended period of time. All of these factors were likely to form perceptions of impact and these were always likely to be extensive and rich in content and description and this proved to be the case, vindicating the choice of qualitative method. Of the 30 participant interviews ultimately carried out for this study the shortest lasted 37 minutes and the longest 94 minutes, extending to 6 and 19 pages respectively of transcript before coding and fully justifying a qualitative approach to access such rich and extensive material. It was possible to give central place to the value and detail of such descriptions through qualitative method whereas the often remote nature of much quantitative research tends to remove the researcher from direct spoken contact with his or her participant.

The qualitative methods adopted gave space to individual perspective and experiences and allowed for the fact that the interviewer would by necessity contribute interactively through questioning and through active interpretation of response during both interview and coding process. The method thus made the most of the author's shared teaching background with interviewees to allow him to re-enter the participants' worlds (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016) and allowed effective interaction in the interview process through supplementary questions and in subsequent interpretation of their experiences. Prior knowledge of likely areas of controversy also allowed the author to tread sensitively and thereby avoid the common criticism of interpretive approach of abusing the position of power as interviewer by persuading or imposing his view on others (Cohen *et al*, 2007). It concurred in practice with the view "actions are meaningful to us only in so far as we are able ascertain the intentions of actors to share their experiences. A large number of our everyday interactions with one another rely on shared experiences" (Cohen *et al*, 2007) and again seemed to justify the choice of qualitative methods since here shared experiences were manifold. These experiences were treated as belonging to the participants; any sharing was an acknowledged interpretive tool.

This study's investigation through interview of teachers' perceptions was deliberately focused on impact of OFSTED inspection on both teachers and secondary schools. This of course did not physically transport participants to their natural work settings, but it allowed them to mentally operate from there by focusing participants' attention on operation in his or her natural work environment and thereby relaxing them to speak about their experiences in that environment. This was particularly helpful in the light of Foucauldian theory regarding the influence of institutions on the constitution of individual subjectivities (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). This strength of qualitative method was amplified through the adoption of a loose 'Life History' format to the interviews (Goodson and Sikes, 2001), chosen for this reason among others expanded below. This allowed participants to move freely through the multiple work-spaces of their lives for purposes of comparison, triangulation, and description. Such operation in anonymised natural settings put participants at ease and allowed them to speak at length.

Although the attractions of interpretive paradigm and qualitative methods above proved ultimately persuasive and were adopted for this study alternative approaches were not dismissed lightly. It was considered that the inability to claim objective truth using an interpretive paradigm might limit the potential for any wider influence any study might have if based on a positivist or post-positivist paradigm using quantitative or mixed methods. HMCI Chris Woodhead's 1998 attack on "qualitative educational research that does not stand up to scrutiny" (Fletcher, 1998) and his colourful description of such research as "dross" (Fletcher, 1998) was accompanied by a call for research 'of use' in teacher training and in forming government policy. By implication and simple process of elimination the research being called for here by Woodhead would be based on a positivist, quantitative, evidence-based epistemology (Denzil and Lincoln, 2016). Annual HMCI reports followed this approach to the end of the period covered by this study as examination of Sir Michael Wilshaw's final report of December 2016 shows. (Wilshaw, 2016a).

Following the foundation of the National College for School Leadership in the UK in 2000 and, in the USA, the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001 a scientifically based research movement created a new hostile environment for qualitative research marked by calls for so-called hard, positivist and statistical evidence (Denzil and Lincoln, 2016, p 12-13) which proved particularly influential in the first two decades of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century and continue to be so. Such calls have never entirely dispersed and continue to attract funding. In 2021 the Education Policy Institute includes in its Mission and Purpose statement on its website

Identifying and promoting good education policy is therefore crucial. But the policy debate is often occupied by contradictory views, which can be based on personal experience, anecdote, and political instinct. There is an urgent need for objective, impartial, and independent research that can influence and inform the education debate – rigorous research which is grounded in evidence.

The Education Policy Institute’s aim is to help fill this space. Our data-driven research and analysis sheds light on whether current policy is delivering a high quality, equitable, education system, and identifies issues where further policy development is needed. (Education Policy Institute, 2021)

“Rigorous research which is grounded in evidence” (Education Policy Institute, 2021) could equally describe qualitative research but the references in the pejorative to “personal experience, anecdote, and political instinct” (Education Policy Institute, 2021) echo Chris Woodhead’s earlier criticisms of qualitative research from 1998 (Fletcher, 1998). The later reference to “data-driven research and analysis” removes any reasonable doubt that this organisation is championing positivist quantitative research as the most likely to approach an objective truth. But can any paradigm really claim a “special epistemic warrant” - in the phrase of John Worrall, Professor of the Philosophy of Science at the LSE (Worrall, 2012) - over any other? Newtonian Physics once had such a claim; was once seen as the epitome of positivism and scientific method, the guardian of truth. Its seemingly unassailable

evidence-based grasp of provable and manifest truth disappeared with the publication of the 'General Theory of Relativity' (Einstein, 1997). After that, time was no longer absolute; space no longer infinite.

It made people face up to the fallibility of science at least at the highest theoretical levels. And I think that posed the central question for science studies in the twentieth and twenty first centuries. How if at all to reconcile the traditional claim that science has special epistemic warrant with its demonstrated fallibility at the highest theoretical levels? Demonstrated from within science by a relativistic and quantum revolution. (Worrall, 2012)

If physical science thus proved itself relativist what value can be attached to any claim that social science from a positivist paradigm using quantitative method can approach an objective truth any more closely than an interpretivist paradigm using qualitative method? No paradigm can be claimed to be superior or inferior to any other in any universal sense, only perhaps some are more suitable than others to bring out the full potential of a particular investigational study. This places interpretive and positivist paradigms on level ground regarding any potential access to objective truth whilst leaving unaffected the natural consistency of qualitative method with an interpretive paradigm. Equally the advantages of qualitative method to allow access to perception through depth interviews stood out as particularly suitable for this study.

A quantitative approach was still not rejected out of hand on these grounds. It could have been combined with qualitative method - if inconsistency with the interpretive paradigm was overlooked - in the spirit of the pragmatism of the 1990s (Denzin and Lincoln, 2016). It could perhaps have been used in a confirmation or triangulation role in complement to a qualitative exploration and numerous examples of successful theses based on mixed methods exist proving the efficacy of such techniques: among them Cromey-Hawke (2000), and Thompson (2008). But times have changed and obstacles to

effective access to teachers by this kind of questionnaire had increased substantially and prohibitively in the years since these studies were written.

At the time of the author's retirement in 2013 pigeon-holes for personal mail were jammed daily with advertising brochures, catalogues, circular letters, leaflets to the point that daily sorting often meant mass, unopened transfer to a nearby bin. In his career he experienced huge growth in the amount of direct correspondence received by teachers. In the case of senior managers, the volume of such material had reached enormous quantities by 2013 and had to pass scrutiny by a Personal Assistant before ever reaching its intended recipient. Personal email had also reached obstructive quantity by 2013 and become subject to equally ruthless sorting and deletion after the merest glance in many cases. In such a climate the chances of the typical written surveys and questionnaires of quantitative method even being read by their intended recipients would be likely to be unacceptably low even at that time. Even if they did reach the intended target levels of return would be likely even lower than levels of receipt as questionnaires or surveys were lost, ignored in the face of more pressing matters, inadvertently deleted, swamped in over-full inboxes or remaining un-posted in a drawer. Of the two mixed methods studies mentioned above the first received back 47 postal questionnaires from an initial dispatch of 100 and the second 27 from 46 (Cromey- Hawke, 2000) (Thompson, 2008). Such a return rates from a considerable time ago might be expected to be worse for a study undertaken today. Low return rates can be counteracted by sending out many more than actually required but this does represent additional expense and can be a rather blunt instrument, taking little account of a person's current workload and perhaps troubling many more people than actually required for the study.

When completed surveys or questionnaires are received by a researcher, serious problems can still remain. The level of attention paid by the targets to such questionnaires cannot be guaranteed or easily ascertained and honesty of answer is next to impossible to verify. Such obstacles to reliance on questionnaires or surveys as existed in 2013 were likely to have been compounded by the passage of

time. This possibility was enough to undermine confidence in any quantitative element of a mixed methods study.

In contrast, qualitative interview alone seemed more likely to produce a pre-determined and anticipated quantity of material and some assurance of the quality of that material in terms of judging the commitment of the participant during direct interaction. Resistance to interview through pressure of work would be evident at the appointment stage and, should an interview not prove possible, this would become evident with minimal time commitment and a substitute could be approached. If a firm date is arranged the interview would usually take place even if the date has to be rearranged. The researcher is guardian of the material gained and will use a backup recording medium. Face to face or telephone contact does allow interaction and perception through voice of expression of commitment, reluctance, omission, or possible fabrication. Whilst not fool proof indicators, these seemed far less remote than trying to judge commitment or accuracy on a written questionnaire whilst not in direct interaction with the participant.

After the detailed considerations above the decision was finally taken in the summer of 2018 to design a qualitative study in the interpretive paradigm and using extended interview as its exclusive data gathering method. The purpose was to gain rich (de Chesney, 2015), high-quality, and extensive interview material through which to interpret teachers' perceptions of the impact of OFSTED inspection on secondary schools and teachers 1993-2018. The research questions derived from the study of existing literature in Chapter 2 would be investigated through interview after refinement through a Foucauldian framework (Kendall and Wickham, 2004) to subtly probe teachers' perceptions through Foucault's offered contexts. These questions would address a broader potential range of perceived impacts of OFSTED inspection from a sample selected of a more experienced body of participants, forming a wider spectrum of levels of responsibility, and over a far longer period of time than had been attempted before. Interpretation of the interview material gained from participants would be done through the Foucauldian lenses set out in the first section of this chapter.

Such a study presented considerable challenges and the deliberations behind the design process are described below.

### **3.8 The Life History Method**

For a study such as this of teachers' perceptions, using these as its sole data source, it was vital to ensure that the data generated from participants was rich in order that meaningful interpretive analysis could take place. A broad study sample as described above would be advantageous in itself as a form of triangulation between teachers of different seniorities, length of service and experience of OFSTED inspection. Rich data (de Chesney, 2015) from in depth interviews would provide a fourth dimension of sufficient human phenomenological (Husserl, 1998) experience to subject to interpretive analysis.

Since quantitative methods had been rejected it remained to choose the most appropriate qualitative method to produce rich data (de Chesney, 2015) and encourage participants to talk. A sensitive subject such as OFSTED inspection was not only likely to inhibit recruitment of participants (Lyon, 2011) but had the potential from the author's experience to do the same to willingness to talk. Since this was a study of perceptions it would be necessary to put these in a wider context of a whole career to avoid distortion. Ethnographical method could easily have excluded macro level factors influencing teachers' careers (Cohen et al, 2007) and would have demanded time in separate schools not available to a lone researcher seeking to maximise the number of interviews from which to draw. Case Study had similar drawbacks regarding time in location and would by necessity have limited sample size and generalisability from a few specific instances (Nisbet and Watt, 1984) was not sought. This method also had a fragility exacerbated by the sensitive issue (Lyon, 2011) of OFSTED inspection in that loss of participant schools could be an issue. Cromeey-Hawke's case studies (2000) had limited that section of his study to three schools, of which one withdrew.

Interviews in a Life History context seemed to offer the best potential to produce rich data (de Chesney, 2015), whilst allowing the number of participants to be maximised for a lone researcher

and reducing the impact of dropout. They could also bring a broad contextual base to this thesis. Participants would be encouraged to go through a process of reflection on lived events, experiences, feelings and emotions before the interview and whilst expressing themselves orally within it (Atkinson, 1998). Life histories had been used in many disciplinary settings (Atkinson, 1998) and had been developed extensively for use in educational settings since the early 1980s, principally in the works of Goodson (1983, 2008, 2014, 2016), Sikes (1998) and Goodson and Sikes (2001, 2016). Atkinson (1998) saw no difference between the terms 'life story' and 'life history' but Goodson and Sikes saw life histories to be more than personal stories of lived experience. They placed such stories into historical context thereby forcing "a confrontation with not only other people's subjective perceptions but our own also" (Goodson, 2016, p7). Lived experience is interpreted into life story by the participant and the researcher adds another layer of interpretation in adding context for the transformation into life history (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). For this reason, life history research is entirely consistent with the ontology of multiple realities and the interpretive paradigm underlying this study and appealed as such. This alone would not be enough: the researcher must be comfortable with the approach (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) and confident in his or her ability to generate trust and to collaborate with the participant in a relationship of symbiotic subjectivity producing quality (Goodson, 2016) and rich data (de Chesney, 2015).

Was life history method appropriate for this study? "Would it be the one most likely to produce data which address, answer or otherwise meet and fulfil the questions, aims and purposes" (Goodson and Sikes, 2016, p 73) of this enquiry? Participants in this study would be practising or retired teachers volunteering to give perceptions of the impacts of an organisation with which they had each come into contact on multiple occasions. Given the day to day experience of explanation to others and the need to relate to an audience demanded by a teaching job it was extremely likely that participants would be "prepared and able, in terms of both time and articulacy to talk for extended periods" (Goodson and Sikes, 2016, p 76) which clearly would be required if rich material were to be gained through extended interview. Not only would the participants be suited to a life history approach. The

author of this study had extensive experience of conducting interviews with teachers after ten years as a head of department and eleven as a senior manager in secondary schools and felt confident in being able to maintain the all-important flow of an extended interview designed to draw out perceptions and perspectives (Goodson, 2016). In addition, the author had been trained in interview technique during a short period of working for the British Civil Service between 1985-6.

All this seemed very promising and became more encouraging with the reinforcement that life history method required no rigid prescription or tight procedure (Goodson and Sikes, 2016) thus allowing flexibility of application. It encouraged creative use, rejecting “constraining formalistic definitions” (Smith, 1998, p217) as “out of keeping with the vigor of intellectual activity under way” (Smith, 1998, p217) in life history research. It could be defined by a researcher as “tentative guidelines toward their own creative inquiry endeavors” (Smith, 1998, p217). This resonated since the tools of enquiry are by definition forged to facilitate a particular enquiry, they do not stand unalterable and unassailable above it. If a previously successful tool is capable of creative modification and can be shown to be appropriate and rigorous in furthering an enquiry’s purpose, then it is the right tool for that enquiry.

A potential, but not insurmountable, obstacle to the use of life history method as a foundation of the interview strategy for this study was its association with unstructured or relatively unstructured interviews (Goodson and Sikes, 2016) or “gentle guidance to the subject” (Cohen et al, 2007). This is based on the belief that neither participant or interviewer can always know what is of importance to the participant and therefore too much structure can result in areas of potential importance being untapped or areas of relatively little importance being made the subject of focus (Goodson and Sikes, 2016). It is not disputed that in an ideal world with infinite time at a skilled researcher’s disposal a participant in a study about teachers’ perceptions could be allowed to speak at length about his or her life in and before teaching in a completely unstructured interview. Unexpected themes could have emerged in this way as in interviews using Grounded Theory (Glaser and Strauss, 1967) and

some of these may indeed have proven worthy of research. But that approach was rejected for the reasons given below

Were a study to start with a pre-determined focus it is possible that, if an extremely large sample of teachers were subjected to a completely unstructured interview, it is possible, given the frequency and unavoidability of teacher contact with OFSTED in any teaching career since 1993, that enough would mention OFSTED enough times to provide sufficient rich data for the enquiry to proceed meaningfully. This is such a study, undertaken from motivation described above, but it was “being conducted by a lone researcher, working on a personal, unfunded project” (Goodson and Sikes, 2016, p75). The focus on perceptions of the impacts of OFSTED was set and resources and time were not available to interview sufficiently large numbers of participants in an unstructured fashion in the hope that they would say enough of sufficient relevance to the focus to allow the enquiry to proceed. Even though it is accepted that any data so gained would have given a strong indication of the perceived relative importance of OFSTED inspection in teachers’ lives as a whole, the amount of researcher and participant time required to collect an unpredictable amount of useful material - in unknown proportion to the total amassed - would have been enormous, and simply could not be contemplated with the resources available.

Despite the above potential drawback life history method therefore offered consistency with paradigm, the potential of rich data, opportunity for participant reflection, a contextual element suitable for a focussed study and an embracing of dual subjectivity. In addition, both researcher and participants would have the qualities required to make life history interviews flow (Goodson and Sikes, 2016), the method had a proven record in educational settings (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) and offered flexibility of design. Given that number of potential advantages, the challenge of allowing flow (Goodson, 2016) and whole life perspective whilst retaining focus had to be overcome by interview design.

### 3.9 Semi-Structured Interviews

Ultimately it was decided to employ semi-structured research interviews set in a life history context (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p17) as the most appropriate format to preserve the advantages of life history method whilst ensuring focus on participants' perceptions of the impacts of OFSTED inspection on secondary schools and teachers. The semi-structured format had much to offer, being "sufficiently structured to address specific topics related to the phenomenon of study, whilst leaving space for participants to offer new meaning to the study focus" (Galletta and Cross, 2013, p24). It was envisaged that it would allow the researcher to encourage "a flow in the interview with limited interrogation to let the participants control the ordering and sequencing of their stories" (Goodson, 2016, p5) This would empower participants and let them tell of their perceptions in a way that reduced tension and relaxed them enough to provide rich data (de Chesney, 2015). In the semi-structured interview design for this study, questions would be used as necessary as a prompt to maintain flow (Goodson, 2016) and focus (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). This would be done by using questions broadly similar for each participant to enable comparability (Cohen et al, 2007, p354) and make it possible for perceptions to be used in combination to "tell a different story at a different level" (Bertaux, 1981, p187). These questions would be interjected at appropriate times for each individual to maintain or re-ignite the flow of account. If a question's particular focus had already been covered in an earlier response then questions could be omitted; conversely if an interesting new meaning (Galletta and Cross, 2013) did emerge then supplementary bespoke questions could draw this out further thereby ensuring flow (Goodson, 2016), focus and flexibility (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). The author was confident of his ability to omit or supplement questions in this way during any interview owing to the considerable interview experience he had amassed in his career as described above and this was the final factor in the choice of semi-structured research interviews for this study. The life history context (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p17) would be provided by early 'scene setting' questions designed to allow the participant to refer to his or her earliest years, background, education and career or careers. This would allow the later stronger focus during

the interview on perceptions of the impacts of OFSTED inspection to be placed and interpreted in the context of the participants' whole lives thereby providing the dual subjectivity that would turn life story to life history (Goodson and Sikes, 2001).

### **3.10 Research Questions and Foucauldian Framework**

Chapter 2 of this study carried out a broad review of existing literature pertinent to a study of teachers' perceptions of the impact of OFSTED inspection on secondary schools and teachers, 1993-2018. As the reader will recall, the areas for direct new research enquiry identified in the chapter and summarised at its end emerged either from gaps in the existing literature or from areas ready for fresh and original investigation after the passage of time. The 'Which Foucault' section of Chapter 3 supplemented these by forging and summarising other, over-arching, areas of enquiry emerging from application of Foucauldian lenses to a study of the impacts of OFSTED inspection through teachers' perceptions. The identified direct and over-arching lines of enquiry would now need to be approached through appropriate research questions designed to generate relevant and applicable data through the methods of qualitative interview selected in the immediately preceding section of this chapter. The Foucaultian (Please note that when referring directly to Kendall and Wickham's specific works on Foucault this study will use their spelling 'Foucaultian'. For other general references to Foucault's work and thought the more commonly used spelling of 'Foucauldian' will be used.) framework (Kendall and Wickham, 2004) for enquiry, being clearly based upon Foucault's thought and methods, promised much not only in the fine tuning of research questions but also in terms of consistency with this study's paradigm and compatibility with its own adopted Foucauldian philosophical framework. The four characteristics of Foucaultian framework of enquiry (Kendall and Wickham, 2004, p 144) seemed to align naturally with the methods and aims of this thesis.

The first characteristic of the Foucaultian framework for enquiry is identified by Kendall and Wickham (2004) as the adoption and use of the 'how' question on the grounds this was pointedly used by Foucault in preference to the 'why' question (Kendall and Wickham, 2004, p144). Foucault's

approach to causation was never based on a search for any single cause (Kendall and Wickham, 2004, p144) such as may be elicited by the question 'why' but sought a constructivist version of multiple reality of change based on discourse as practice (Horrocks and Jevtic, 2013). This later formed the basis of Foucault's archaeologies (Foucault, 2002, 2002a) and can be used as an "ordering tool for discussion" (Kendall and Wickham, 1999, p 24). The author's experience of interviewing prompts him to agree with this analysis and adopt the use of the 'how' question for this study. The question 'how' always seemed more likely to lead to a complex multi-faceted answer when interviewing teachers for a post than the question 'why'. It also seemed less likely to confine an answer to focus exclusively on the past. For these reasons using 'how' as a prefix to research questions could be expected to be helpful in producing the rich (de Chesney, 2015) data that had prompted the selection of qualitative interview method for this study.

The next two characteristics of the Foucaultian framework (Kendall and Wickham, 2004) for enquiry "a decision about an appropriate archive" (Kendall and Wickham, 2004, p144) and "a preference for programmatic texts" (Kendall and Wickham, 2004, p144) were highly suitable for use in this study. The appropriate archive would be the 30 transcripts of teachers' perceptions gained from semi-structured interviews carried out in the life history context (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p17) through interpretive process. The "programmatic text" (Kendall and Wickham, 2004, p144) such as used by Foucault in 'The Care of the Self' (Foucault, 1990) and defined as "texts that describe how people ought to behave, how societies ought to be constructed" (O'Farrell, 2005, p77) or "writings that try to impose a vision or spell out most clearly a new way of conceptualising a problem" (Kendall and Wickham, 2004, p144) was almost an exact fit as a definition of Callaghan's Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976) used extensively in Chapter 1 of this study. It also could form a very close working definition of many of OFSTED's key documents such as the perennial 'Handbook for the Inspection of Schools' (OFSTED, 1992) first used in 1993 and constantly revised and re-issued since.

More problematic was the fourth characteristic of the Foucaultian framework (Kendall and Wickham, 2004) for enquiry. “The commitment to keep digging until one finds the relative beginnings of a practice” (Kendall and Wickham, 2004, p144) might have been applicable to Foucauldian historical enquiries (Foucault, 1990, 1991, 1998, 2002, 2002a) but didn’t seem to offer any useful tool in a study of perceptions such as this. The “relative beginnings” of OFSTED inspection have been argued here to lay in the Ruskin Speech but this study concerns perceptions of its impact, not its “relative beginnings” (Kendall and Wickham, 2004, p144). More helpful was the caveat of a Foucaultian (Kendall and Wickham, 2004) approach being focussed on knowledge as a governor of non-discursive elements such as people and materials (Kendall and Wickham, 2004, p144). This provided consistency with this study since the case for ‘Inspection as Knowledge and Power’ was made in a section of the same name earlier in this chapter. This consistency opened the way for adoption of the Foucaultian framework here. ‘How’ questions (Kendall and Wickham, 2004) would be used in the production of a rich (de Chesney, 2015) and appropriate archive of data (Kendall and Wickham, 2004, p144) from teachers’ perceptions of the impacts of OFSTED inspection on secondary schools and teachers. Since OFSTED inspection has been shown to be based on programmatic texts and could be seen through a lens of knowledge and power (Foucault, 2001) the case was fully made for the use of the Foucaultian framework as a powerful tool for enquiry in this study. Consequently, it was used to expand the four research areas that emerged from Chapter 2 into a usable set of ‘how’ questions in a life history context (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p17) designed to facilitate flow (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) and elicit rich (de Chesney, 2015) and extensive data from qualitative interviews. The Research Areas identified in Chapter 2, Section 2.12 were expanded into the ‘How’ questions specified in Kendall and Wickham’s Foucaultian Framework (2004). Their final form was:

- *How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect teachers **personally**?*
- *How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect the **culture and practices of schools**?*

- *How far was **trust** evident in the OFSTED inspections experienced and what effects did its presence or absence have?*
- ***How consistent** were any inspection judgements and recommendations made by OFSTED for schools and their staff?*
- *How were the **overall effects of the OFSTED accountability system** both positively and negatively on secondary schools and their staff overall perceived? Could any negative effects be mitigated and, if so, how?*

To allow these questions to reflect a life history (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) context a scene setting question was included as a multi-part Question 1 and a single part Question 2 allowing participants to give perceptions of their lives before teaching and to put their choice of teaching career and their view of that career in the context of their early lives and family backgrounds. This would allow subsequent focus on perceptions on the impact of OFSTED inspection to be placed in a life and career perspective rather than create a false perspective of the perceived relative importance of OFSTED. In addition, a 'catch all' final question gave participants the opportunity to talk about perceptions of their teaching careers before OFSTED. As discussed above the interviews were semi-structured and these questions were designed a prompt to ensure flow (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) and focus. Participants were to be allowed to talk freely allowing questions to be omitted if already covered earlier in the interview. In some cases it was anticipated that it would be possible to ask very few specific questions whilst eliciting rich data (de Chesney, 2015).

### **3.11 Type of School Scale**

During the author's career he held a permanent teaching contract in four schools, each of which served a local community set in what he perceived as a different social context and each of which faced what he perceived as different challenges and levels of support from its intake and its parent body, seen by him as the circumstances in which it operated. He also perceived each school to have a distinct ethos and leadership style. Statistics showed that each student body achieved different

outcomes from external examinations, and he perceived those to be at least partially the result of that school's circumstances. He perceived each school to have different expectations of the likely outcome of its next OFSTED inspection, the treatment it could expect from OFSTED inspectors and the fairness of these. He also perceived each school to have different ambition regarding the highest level of judgement it could ultimately achieve from that organisation and of the fairness of the process.

Whilst serving as advisory teacher and inspector for an inner-city local education authority in London the author also perceived other teachers to hold such perceptions of their own regarding the circumstances of their school. Even within one borough he perceived teachers there to hold a wide range of views based on perceptions on these circumstances and outcomes of their own school and of other schools. On undertaking this study into teachers' perceptions of the impacts of OFSTED inspection on secondary schools and their teachers, it therefore seemed sensible to build in a mechanism with which to simultaneously explore teachers' perceptions of the circumstances of the schools in which they were serving. If such a mechanism could be designed into this study, then any relationship – or the lack of one - between teacher perceptions of the impacts of OFSTED inspection, and their perceptions of school circumstances could also form a factor for analysis.

This desire to incorporate these other levels of perception resulted in the design of a 'Type of School' scale, shown in Appendix 4, with which to prompt teachers to give their perception of the circumstances of schools in which they had served and were serving, leadership styles, student outcomes and previous OFSTED judgements. To explore these further, a specific question on these perceptions of circumstance was included in the interview questions along with another specific question on the fairness of OFSTED judgements and reports.

### **3.12 Sampling**

This was to be a study of the perceptions of a subset of specialist professional group - secondary teachers with more than one experience of inspection in the OFSTED era - on the impacts of an

organisation of which only stakeholders in education would have any forms of direct experience. This ruled out any form of probability sampling since any random sample of the population would be highly likely to throw up potential participants from outside of the specified subset or without direct experience of the impacts of OFSTED inspections on secondary schools and their teachers. In addition, there was to be no attempt to generalise from the findings of the study there would have been no need to employ probability sampling even if it had been possible. It was therefore clear from the research design stage that non-probability sampling would be employed in this study.

The choice of impacts of OFSTED inspection as the study's subject matter did present a potential obstacle in the recruitment of participants. OFSTED inspections and judgements have considerable implications for schools, for headteachers' careers and are in the public domain. They are also subject to considerable attention from the press: as the table in Chapter 2 in the section 'The impact of OFSTED related press coverage on schools and their staff' shows clearly (Chapter 2, Table 1). This is a high stakes inspection system (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 46). If, as seemed likely given these factors and this description, the author's perception of living in fear of OFSTED was shared by others then it was likely that interviews asking serving or recently retired teachers for their perceptions on the impacts of that organisation would be sensitive in nature and may indeed have implications for the recruitment of participants or the data resulting from participant interviews (Lyon, 2011). In practice, this did prove to have implications for participant recruitment. The first person asked to participate in this study declined to take part on the grounds of being a currently serving headteacher. The person declared great concern that any remarks made that might imply criticism of OFSTED in the interview could have implications for the person's school in any forthcoming inspection. The person felt that the offered terms of anonymity but not confidentiality still represented a risk to the school and was not prepared to take that risk. Whether this fear was grounded, or not, is not commented on here but the very fact that such a level of fear existed in the first person approached to participate in this study did indicate that recruitment of participants, particularly from serving teachers could present problems. This did prove to be the case and three

non-probability sampling strategies, and two safeguards of anonymity were ultimately employed in the study to reach the final participant number of 30: a number chosen as the realistic upper limit for the intended interpretative phenomenological analysis of the resulting data (Shinebourne, 2011). Even though no generalisation was to be employed outside the group as large a qualitative sample as possible was considered desirable in order to provide enough perceptions to make overlap and comparison within the group possible in sufficient numbers to highlight possible patterns occurring within it.

Purposive sampling was chosen as the initial sampling strategy partly because of its compatibility with interpretative phenomenological analysis (Shinebourne, 2011) but principally for the reason that participants were to be chosen for a clear purpose “to access ‘knowledgeable people’ i.e. those who have in depth knowledge about particular issues” (Cohen et al, 2007, p115), in this case knowledge of the impacts of OFSTED inspection on secondary schools and their teachers. Sample selection criteria were plural, thus rendering the sample more purposive (Andrade, 2021) than would have been the case of only one criterium had been adopted. Participants were required to meet the two criteria of being serving or retired secondary school teachers and of having a minimum of more than one experience of inspection in the OFSTED era in their careers between 1993 and 2018. This was designed to allow the sample as a whole to cover a broad time span and perceptions of consistency and changes over the entire period specified. Coverage of perceptions of OFSTED over such a broad time span had not been possible in the principal earlier secondary school based perception study of OFSTED referring to a maximum of its first three inspection cycles (Cromeey-Hawke, 2000).

The perceptions of teachers with experience of more than one inspection in the OFSTED era is an explicit focus of this study. This minimum experience bar was set low so as not to exclude teachers in the early part of their careers, but one of the advantages of using a broad time scale would clearly have been lost by concentrating exclusively on teachers with this relatively low level of experience.

Control of who was approached to participate made it also possible to recruit more experienced teachers with many more than two experiences of OFSTED inspections gained in many schools thus providing representation of a number of experience levels in the study.

Differences in perception by teacher gender was not a specified focus of this study and no such analysis by gender was to be attempted. Gender therefore was not formally specified as a criterium for the sample though a balance was seen as desirable. Control through approach again made it possible to provide a gender balance among participants. In practice, this meant that as the pool of participants grew approaches could be made to the under-represented gender rectify any developing imbalance in the sample. This ensured the final gender breakdown of participants in this study was almost even with 16 male participants and 14 females. Seniority in terms of responsibility level was also not a focus of the study but a sample was sought that would reflect as many levels of seniority as possible to give perceptions from different seniority perspectives and possibly different types of contact with OFSTED. This was also done by control of approach.

None of these balances adopted in practice detracted from the validity of the purposive sample and did not contravene its basic criteria which remained true of all participants. The intent was “to describe a particular context in depth, not to generalise to another context or population” (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016). It was advantageous to the study to gain the perceptions of a broadly equal balance of male and female participants and to represent differing levels of experience and seniority in the sample if only as a very blunt attempt at very crude reflection of the actual teaching workforce. These did not detract from the fact that this was a study only of the perceptions of a closed group of teachers of the impact of OFSTED on secondary schools in a specified time period.

The principal criteria ensured that the purposive sample consisted of teachers with experience of more than one inspection in the OFSTED era in secondary schools. Such a participant sample meeting these criteria fully was assembled; although not without difficulty, as will be explained below.

In the recruitment process as described below it will be seen that there were also elements of convenience sampling and snowball sampling (Cohen et al, 2007, p 113-116) employed in order to recruit enough people for the proposed sample of 30 persons, but the purpose criteria were never relaxed in the interests of recruitment and the sample remained a purposive one. Recruitment of the sample of 30 began in the summer of 2018 but was not completed until the spring of 2020. This gives an indication of the difficulty experienced before ultimately finding sufficient persons willing to take part who met the criteria described above.

The initial approaches to prospective participants were made either in person or by telephone or email to contacts made in the course of the author's career as a history teacher, provider of history and other CPD training and associate tutor on a history PGCE course at a university. This was likely to produce a sample with disproportionate representation of history teachers and that did prove to be the case. Ideally a representative cross section of subjects might have been desirable, much as a gender, and seniority balance was desirable, but it did not prove possible to recruit a sample giving access to a full range of teaching subjects. The priority was to assemble a purposive sample of 30 participants and, in the face of the sensitive nature of the subject matter of this study described above, a sample of that size could only be hoped to be assembled via the author's contacts. This was not considered a disadvantage to the study since no generalisation outside of the sample was to be undertaken and analysis by teaching subject was not intended. History teachers are still teachers and therefore fit the criteria for the purposive sample.

It was possible that interviews might reveal some teacher perceptions of subjects being treated differently by OFSTED but promising as this may or may not be for future research it was not a primary focus of this study. Analysis of data might reveal perceptions of subjects being treated differently by OFSTED but this was not certain. Whether it did or not, the purposive sample would remain valid to its defined criteria above as "appropriate data that fit the purpose of the study, the

resources available, the questions being asked, and the constraints and challenges being faced” (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016, p 148).

The challenge being faced (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016, p 148) was to get sufficient participants for a study addressing sensitive subject matter. The solution was to accept and be transparent about imbalances within the sample. The final sample of 30 contained 18 history teachers, 4 English teachers, 2 technology teachers and 1 teacher from each of science, maths, PE, religious education, ICT and geography. It also contained 8 classroom teachers, 7 heads of department or heads of year, and 16 senior managers of which 5 were headteachers. There were 16 male participants and 14 female.

The author’s approach to career contacts yielded 17 participants. This was a form of convenience sampling (Cohen et al, 2007, p 113) in that the existence of these people was known to the author but, in many cases, contact proved difficult and required considerable persistence and effort.

Convenience of access was not the driving factor for the author’s approach, and some participants were in remote locations, but 20 participants in the sample had indeed worked predominantly in the same broad geographical location in the east of England where the author had spent the majority of his teaching career. The sample was also convenient in the sense that the author had knowledge of the readily available contact details of people who met the criteria for the purposive sample, and these were known to be likely to be trustworthy from past professional contact. They were also likely to trust somebody known to them when being interviewed on a highly-sensitive subject than they would a complete stranger.

The next step involved seeking volunteers from educational conferences by handing out leaflets (Appendix 5) which made clear the criteria for the sample and invited people to contact the author. This yielded 3 new participants despite many more expressing interest on initially receiving the leaflets. The remaining 10 participants were obtained by snowball sampling. A possible disadvantage of snowball sampling was its known tendency to attract people of a similar demographic to the

recruiter (Tracy, 2013) but in this case that worked to the study's advantage. The tendency for teachers to know other teachers proved successful in attracting the final 10 participants, all of whom met the purposive criteria. Although approximately 10 people from ethnic minorities took the leaflet when offered none ultimately made contact with the author and for this reason, as well as the fact that the very few colleagues of BAME origin from his career had known the author well enough to share his contact details, no ethnic minorities were represented in the sample. This was unfortunate, but it had been hoped to be addressed by the leafleting method to no avail. Despite this, once again, since no attempt was to be made to generalise outside the purposive sample the integrity of the study was not threatened.

### **3.13 Ethical Considerations**

Each participant was sent the University of East Anglia Adult Opt-in Participant Information Statement and Consent Form (UEA, 2018) and willingly signed the permission sheet within and opted for anonymity. Anonymity was promised for school as well as individual. Each agreed to take part in the interests of research into the impact of OFSTED inspections in the belief that such should be put in the public domain through the medium of this study. Each also agreed to be recorded when interviewed and was warned that interviews could last upwards of one hour which did indeed prove to be the case for many interviews. Possible questions were provided in advance although follow-up questions could not be so indicated. Participants were offered the choice of telephone or face to face interview at a time and place of his or her choosing and exactly half of the sample opted for the telephone medium. This meant that gesture and expression would not be accessible to the researcher (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009), but it offered universal possession of the required technology which would not have been the case with the many possible forms of video call available. Use of the telephone also saved a great deal of expense and travelling time for both researcher and participants which was a real consideration in a self-funded study involving often very busy participants. The first interview took place in December 2018 and the final one in June 2020.

The author remained aware of the sensitive issues involved and possible personal distress that potentially could be generated from recounting painful issues arising from past experiences concerning school inspection. He was alert to signs of distress throughout such as pauses or changes of voice during telephone interviews or facial expression during face to face sessions. On two occasions the recorder was turned off and participants given a break of length determined by them. Where possible face to face interviews were carried out from a comfortable seating position such as an armchair to attempt to create conditions in which participants could at least partially relax. Two recorders were positioned between interviewer and participant in order that recording was done as openly as possible. Telephone interviews took place on speakerphone and the participant was informed when the each of the two recording devices were started up and stopped, again, in the interests of openness.

Participants were reminded several times each that participation was voluntary and that they could withdraw from the study at any time. After transcription manuscripts were sent to every participant who were again offered the chance to withdraw entirely or opt against the use of some material. None took either option.

### **3.14 The Interview Process**

In order to minimise inconvenience to participants an offer was made to carry out the interview in a place of their choosing. This offer proved highly successful and 10 of the 15 face to face interviews took place in the participants' homes by invitation; 2 took place in a place of work for the convenience of the participant and 3 took place in the author's study since participants happened to be travelling nearby and chose that venue.

The 'Type of School' scale (Appendix 4) was used in the first 8 interviews and had been sent to those participants via email when the appointment for interview was confirmed one week before the arranged date. In practice, instead of being the quick indicator of a participant's perception of the circumstances of the schools in which he or she had worked, it proved a cumbersome distraction to

the flow of the interview (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). Participants visibly or audibly wrestled with its gradations and attempted to give long and detailed descriptions of circumstance which proved a significant distraction to the main focuses of the interview, particularly when available allocated time was limited. From Interview 9 onward the scale was dispensed with and participants were simply asked to give a perception of social context in which the school operated, give a 'red, amber, green' or similar rating of the usual grades of external examinations received, briefly describe leadership style and, finally, to describe the judgement categories awarded to the schools by OFSTED for any inspections that took place during the participant's time of service there. This proved successful in both preserving the flow of the interview (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) and in gaining the participant's own perceptions of school circumstances to provide a perceived contextual background to their perceptions of the impacts of OFSTED inspection upon the school and its teachers and to their perceptions of fairness of any judgement grade awarded.

The interview questions themselves (Appendix 3) proved successful in generating extended and rich data (de Chesney, 2015) from participants. The semi-structured format worked well in that questions were used to maintain flow (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) of answer, but participants were allowed to finish answers in full and were never cut off even if covering in an early answer the subject matter provided for in a later question. For example, when asked question 3 "How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect you personally?" Participants often moved beyond the question to talk about the effect on the practice and culture of the school thereby moving into the area of Question 4 "How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect the practice and culture of the schools in which you have worked?". In such a case the participant would not be interrupted but would be allowed to talk on as long as he or she wished making it possible to omit formally posing Question 4. Even if participants covered several areas in one answer than this procedure was maintained, and the formal question omitted entirely or adapted to maintain flow and observe the spirit of the semi-structured format, remaining "sufficiently structured to address specific topics related to the phenomenon of study, whilst leaving space for

participants to offer new meaning to the study focus” (Galletta and Cross, 2013, p24). Sometimes additional prompts were inserted to probe a potentially fruitful area raised by the participant or ask for examples of an area of impact raised.

Questions, 1 and 2 (Appendix 3), the ‘Scene Setting’ questions intended to set the interview in a life history context (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p17) and provoke “confrontation with subjectivity” (Goodson, 2016, p7) did often elicit extended accounts of early life as was intended. Frequently this life history context (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p17) permeated much of an interview therefore embedding the life history context (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p17) firmly.

From Interview 5 it was realised that the separate Question 2 could be incorporated into Question 1 as an additional sub-point in order to maintain flow (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) and a natural progression into a more explicit OFSTED focus in the later questions. The questions used were duly modified to incorporate this change and were used in the new form (Appendix 6) from Interview 6.

All participants agreed to take part in the study on condition of anonymity but not confidentiality. All school names, LA names and academy chain names would also be anonymised as would the geographical area of employment. All agreed to the recording of their interview and the right to withdraw from the study at any time was explained to them. Each participant was sent a transcript of his or her own interview and given the opportunity to remove any sections for any reason and to correct any possible factual errors by email as soon as the transcription process was complete. Each participant was also promised that any extracts used from a transcript in the final manuscript would be shown in context to the participant in question in order that he or she could be satisfied that the extract was a fair reflection of any comment made and of the context in which it was made. The opportunity was also given to review the extract to ensure anonymity had been completely preserved.

Please see Appendix 9 to find anonymised details of each participant’s experience in the teaching profession, seniority at time of interview or on retirement, and number of inspections undergone in

the OFSTED era as far as he or she could recall. Teaching subject has not been linked to participants as an additional assurance of anonymity. Appendix 8 shows a coded page of a transcript from a participant interview. This will show the operation in practice of the experiential and interpretative levels of coding used in accordance with the style of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis adopted for this study (Cuthbertson et al, 2019) (Larkin et al, 2006) (Watts, 2014) set out in in Chapter 4 below.

### **3.15 Transcription**

Transcription may on the surface seem to be a clerical process of transcribing the spoken word as mechanically as possible into the written word, but it forms an interpretive process in its own right “where the differences between oral speech and written texts give rise to a series of practical and principal issues” (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). The seriousness of these issues was brought into stark relief by the warning from Cohen et al, (2007, p 367) that “transcriptions inevitably lose data from the original encounter”. These warnings were taken seriously on undertaking the transcription process for this study and it was recognised that resulting transcriptions did not “tell everything that took place in the interview” (Cohen et al, 2007, p 367) and represented a co-authored (Cohen et al, 2007) version of the interview. This co-authored version (Cohen et al, 2007) had undergone a first abstraction from audio recording and resulting loss of gesture and body language and a second abstraction on being transferred to written form losing intonation, irony, pause for effect and breathing (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p 178).

Taking these factors into account does not remove a researcher of a written study from the necessity of undertaking a written transcription of an oral interview. Co-authorship and interpretation were accepted in this study on the basis of its interpretive paradigm and it was also accepted here that some data loss would be inevitable (Cohen et al, 2007) but that precautions could be taken to minimise that loss within the resource and time constraints of a one-researcher study such as this. The use of a symbol code to make a written record of pauses, laughter, intonation sighing or gestures

(Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009) was rejected as overly complicated for the purposes of this study which was operating at the recognised upper limit of interviews for use of Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (Shinebourne, 2006) and was not attempting to employ linguistic or discourse analysis but other safeguards to minimise loss of data were adopted. Each interview was carried out in person by the author and each was also transcribed personally by him incorporating not a code system but writing in pauses such as 'er' and 'um' and descriptions of gestures. Long silences were also indicated accepting that judgement on what constituted a long or a short pause would form an interpretation and contribute to co-authorship (Cohen et al, 2007). In addition, the principal safeguard was the fact that the author had carried out the original interview and was now writing the transcription, thus having a significant advantage over a paid transcriber who had not been present at the interview, to retain visual memory of his original interpretation of gesture or tone in the context of the interview to minimise but not of course eradicate, inevitable data loss (Cohen et al, 2007).

Transcription was carried out using a high quality Philips DVT 2710 digital audio recorder with a three second audio delay on playback. A sentence or phrase was played back, typed by the author and checked by second replay for accuracy. The original intention was to transcribe each interview verbatim and the first three interviews of 73, 52 and 53 minutes respectively were transcribed in this way. Working on Kvale and Brinkmann's assessment (2009) that a 1 hour interview would take an experienced secretary 5 hours to transcribe it was estimated that the author as a reasonably fast non-touch typist would take 10 hours per interview. In fact, the result was the production of three documents of 11471, 6821 and 7439 written words respectively, each of which took over 20 hours to transcribe. This was taking the warning that "transcribing large amounts of interview material is often a tiresome and stressing job" (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009, p180) to an extreme. A new strategy was required that would preserve the advantages of personal transcription and the richness (de Chesney, 2015) of data but make the process manageable.

In order to explore solutions to this issue the already transcribed interview of Teacher 3 was re-visited, and the method of transcription was revised in two-ways which were subsequently adopted from that interview onward. The responses to the 'Scene Setting' questions were still asked in full because of their significance in providing a life history context (Goodson and Sikes, 2001, p17) throughout the interview but responses were now summarised in the transcript in a list rather than transcribed verbatim. This summary allowed the participant still to reflect on his or her own early life and entry into teaching and preserved answers but saved what amounted to many hundreds of words of direct transcription for most interviews and thousands for some. The interview of Teacher 1 for example, contained 4558 words of scene setting from a total of 11471. The summary of answers listed covered: service length; number of schools the participant had worked in on a fixed term contract during his or her career and the type of governance of those schools; perception of school circumstances and pupil outcomes; whether OFSTED was mentioned in of positives or negatives of teaching as a career; motivation to teach; teaching subjects; number of inspections remembered in a participant's whole career; OFSTED judgement grades remembered; and position held on retirement or at interview. In addition, responses to all other interview questions were still transcribed verbatim but if passages of obvious repetition or of sustained irrelevance to the research questions or Foucauldian lenses were encountered those passages were listened to but not transcribed. Where a passage or passages were omitted interview timings were inserted to show that this had been done. These passages and full answers to scene setting questions were retained on the recordings which form part of the Case Record (Stenhouse, 1978).

Even with these changes to transcription method it still took from December 2019 to August 2020 to transcribe the remaining 27 interviews, but the effort involved seemed entirely worthwhile in that it resulted in a large archive of rich (de Chesney, 2015) and accessible data with which the author was greatly familiar having listened to and typed out every word personally. Data loss had inevitably taken place (Cohen et al, 2007, p 367) but had been minimised in proportion to the resources and time available. Interpretation had also taken place, but the proposed use of Interpretative

Phenomenological Analysis was intended to make that as transparent as possible by including not only an experiential level of coding but an interpretative one (Larkin et al, 2006) (Watts, 2014). The full reasons behind choosing interpretative phenomenological analysis and the resulting analysis itself follow in Chapter 4.

### **3.16 Why Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis?**

This study now had research questions derived from gaps to be explored in existing literature that had been refined using a Foucauldian Framework (Kendall and Wickham, 2004) into a form practically applicable to semi-structured interviews to be carried out in a life history context with the aim of producing rich data (de Chesney, 2015). These research questions had been complemented by five potentially promising areas of investigative focus derived from viewing the OFSTED inspection process through the lens of concepts fundamental to works of Michel Foucault: governmentality (Foucault, 2001, p201-222); power (Foucault, 1998, p143); truth (Foucault, 1979, p73); knowledge (Foucault, 2001, p12) and discipline (Foucault, 1991, p 170-1).

The research targets and the means of producing data for analysis were clear. It now remained to select a means of analysis appropriate for this study and its interpretive paradigm sensitive enough to tap with maximum effect into the type of data which would have been accumulated. This amounted to the careful selection of what might be termed a tool or instrument for a particular job (Watts, 2014). Much as the tools required for an archaeological dig would differ from those needed to mine coal, choice of correct instrument would have a great deal of bearing on the success of the outcome. Tools alone do not decide outcome: a coal miner wielding the correct tools for the dig or the archaeologist those of the mine would probably meet with little success. It would also therefore be vital that the researcher be familiar with the purpose and capabilities of those tools to be able to put them to “skilled and confident” use (Watts, 2014, p2).

As its title suggests interpretative phenomenological analysis is an analytical tool with synthesised characteristics derived from Husserl’s work on the philosophical movement of phenomenology

(Husserl, 1970) explicitly linked by Heidegger (2019) to hermeneutics. It is idiographic, dealing with detailed analysis of individual cases of experience before reflecting on possible shared patterns within a purposive sample of up to 30 (Shinebourne, 2011) as used in this study. It originated as a research tool in qualitative psychology (Smith and Osborn, 2004) but its “accessibility, flexibility and applicability” (Larkin et al, 2006, p 103) allows use across disciplines.

The suitability of interpretative phenomenological analysis for this study stood out on several grounds. Its applicability to the examination of personal lived experience through a detailed account of how a “given person in a given context makes sense of a given phenomenon at a given moment in time” (Cuthbertson et al, 2019, p97) seemed ideal for data generated through interviews in the life history context as being used here to investigate the perceptions of teachers of the impacts of OFSTED inspection on secondary schools and their teachers. Interpretative phenomenological analysis lent itself to semi-structured, one-to-one interviews which had been used most often with the method (Shinebourne, 2011) and had been selected for use here. Its consideration of phenomenological enquiry as an interpretative process (Shinebourne, 2011) and its consequent acceptance of two levels of hermeneutics - as the participant interprets his or her lifeworld (Husserl, 1970) and the researcher adds a second level of interpretation from “an involvement which is disclosed in our understanding of the world, and this involvement is one that gets laid out by the interpretation” (Heidegger, 2019, p 190-1) - made it highly adaptable to the “insider’s perspective” (Larkin et al, 2006, p 103) adopted in this study. The potential of interpretative phenomenological analysis coding systems also stood out (Watts, 2014). The facility to apply phenomenology’s experiential level (Husserl, 1970) to data from a first person perspective concentrating on a participant’s lived experience (Shinebourne, 2011) (Watts, 2014), and then to move to a second interpretative level from a third person perspective applied by the researcher in the Heideggerian ‘as’ form (Watts, 2014), (Heidegger, 2019, p 201) seemed particularly powerful as a research tool. It did not merely allow for the “insider’s perspective” (Larkin et al, 2006, p103) but turned it to advantage as a particularly sensitive analytical tool. Researcher “insider” (Larkin et al, 2006, p 103) familiarity

with the participants' lifeworld (Husserl, 1970) could, if used with care and awareness, provide a level of interpretation of impact unavailable to those interpreting from the outside.

It had to be considered on the grounds of practicality that 30 qualitative interviews carried out in a life history context would generate an extremely large quantity of rich (de Chesney, 2015) data. Subjecting that to interpretative phenomenological analysis would represent a commitment to a formidable task for a lone researcher. Watts had pointed to the cruciality of reading the data through several times "very thoroughly before coding is even considered" (2014, p 5) in order for the researcher to be able to assume the first person perspective of the participant. It was also recognised that 30 interviews had been considered the upper limit in terms of realistic workload for interpretative phenomenological analysis of resulting data by Shinebourne (2011). It was felt however that gaining the individual perceptions of a relatively large group would be a great advantage in terms of richness (de Chesney, 2015) and possible variation of data. It would provide a large enough sample to guard against the possibility that some interviews could prove unusable should "participants fail to say anything interesting or informative about the appropriate subject-matter" (Watts, 2014, p 4). A worthwhile failsafe would therefore have been built in and it was felt that any resulting disadvantage in terms of workload could be overcome through organisational process and the presentation of data in "sensible and easily digested portions" (Watts, 2014).

The possibility of saturation in terms of constant repeat of similar or identical data also had to be assessed. Sikes had confined herself to 25 interviews in her seminal life history study of parent teachers (Sikes, 1998) and this was subsequently referred to by she and Goodson as "quite a large group" (Goodson and Sikes, 2016, p76) which did encounter some saturation of data. They also referred to Bertaux's 30-participant life history study of rural bakers (Bertaux, 1981) in the context of the latter's warning of beginning to encounter saturation of data at that number of interviews. It was important to note that both of these studies (Sikes, 1998) and (Bertaux, 1981) had successfully overcome the dangers of saturation to become widely cited examples of research. Any possible

saturation had been overcome by the wide ranging nature of the perceptions of participants and by sensitive interview technique. Similarly, it was felt likely that a study such as this addressing such a broad topic as teachers' perceptions of the impacts of OFSTED inspection through semi-structured interview carried out by an experienced interviewer using 9 prompt questions would not reach saturation level. It was also felt unlikely that participants volunteering to help with research into such a specific and sensitive topic would be uninteresting or uninformative (Watts, 2014) since they were keen to have their voices heard. So it proved.

### **3.17 Heidegger and Foucault**

At this point the study had established a methodology to investigate research questions and focuses through a Foucauldian lens and via a Foucaultian (sic) framework (Kendall and Wickham, 2004). The data generated would then be analysed using interpretative phenomenological analysis which owed most to the thoughts and works of Heidegger building on Husserl's (1970) foundations of phenomenology.

There was little doubt in the author's mind that this research design would be workable in practice but was it philosophically sound? Foucault's challenge to phenomenology on the grounds of what he saw as its undue abstraction (O'Farrell, 2005) revealed tensions between his own willingness to believe it was possible to escape or be wrenched (Foucault, 2001, p 242) from self and Heidegger's belief that something only becomes real when encountered and can only be understandable through interpretation of that encounter. Understanding through interpretation then to Heidegger was the only way of 'being in the world' (Collins and Selina. 2010) termed by him as Dasein (Heidegger, 2019).

Tension therefore existed but, as shown in the final section of Chapter 2 and in the 'Which Foucault' section of Chapter 3, Foucault acknowledged his debt to Heidegger as the "essential philosopher" (Foucault, 1988, p 250) and as a tremendous influence on his thinking (Lawlor, 2016). This could be taken to mean that Foucault kicked against Heidegger's thought much as a diver uses a springboard

to launch him or herself in another direction, but that interpretation seems to be misleading.

Foucault's idea of the 'subject' (Foucault, 2001, p331) is not simply another name for the individual but relates to an identity held through awareness much as Heidegger's idea of 'Dasein' (Heidegger, 2019) is the 'being in the world'. This is a simplification of complex thought, but the point is that the area of tension between Foucault and Heidegger does not mean that their thoughts are antipathetic and incompatible. It has been argued that Foucault may have built on aspects of "phenomenological investigation concerning the transcendental structures of our experience to reshape it into an active mode of experimentation on our knowledge and modes of existence" (Legrand, 2008, p289). If that could be considered as a possibility, then it could not be philosophically unsound to apply an analysis based on Heidegger's thought to questions emerging from the ideas of Foucault. That analysis begins below.

### **3.18 The Experiential Codes**

The first level of experiential coding was undertaken after conducting and recording every interview personally, listening to the recording once before transcription and re-playing it in small sections constantly through the transcription process as each line was typed. The typing for the transcription was also done personally as described in Chapter 3. All this meant that a high level of familiarity with the data had been gained before the experiential coding process began, allowing the author to be in a position to work in the service of the participants' words and viewpoint. This was done by adopting a first person view, whilst also acknowledging this cannot be done perfectly, and refusing to bring external knowledge to bear at that experiential stage of the analysis (Watts, 2014). Every effort was made to prioritise the participant's viewpoint and a line by line coding system – as often used in Grounded Theory - was adopted to minimise unwitting selection of which lines to code or leave uncoded, to illuminate implied and explicit experiences more effectively, and to facilitate comparison of data (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012, p 356).

The coding process at this stage proved a particular challenge. Initially whilst it was realised that terms absolutely central to the study such as 'OFSTED' would need to be split into sub-codes such as 'OFSTED observation' or 'OFSTED requirements' to reflect participants' experiences, it was not appreciated just how many sub-codes would be required or how many codes would have to be split to avoid monolithic blocks that would be incapable of registering nuance of experience. Not unexpectedly, given the nature of the study, if the term 'OFSTED' had been used as a singular code it would have occurred 1077 times. In that form it could not have been called an experiential code since the acronym OFSTED alone would not have referred to an experience. Additionally, it would have concealed a variety of different experiences under one, flawed, label. Ultimately the word OFSTED appeared in 165 separate single experiential codes used in the case record (Stenhouse, 1978) of which 17 were used more than 10 times in total. 'OFSTED Observation of Lessons' was used 87 times alone and became the second most frequently used experiential code after 'Data Use'. Similarly, 'Trust', which could have been valid as an experiential code in its own right since it did reflect an experience, would have appeared 72 times in that guise, but was split in order to show a more finely tuned picture of perceived experience. Splitting the code to show trust of who, by whom, seemed legitimate and useful information to provide from a first person perspective. 'Trust, Teacher - Inspector' was mentioned 32 times, 'Trust Teacher - SMT' appeared 21 times, 'Trust, SMT - Teacher' appeared 11 times. Splitting codes in this way helped fine tune the later interpretation of experiences from the third person perspective allowing legitimate strategic application of the researcher's external knowledge (Watts, 2014) and experience at the interpretative stage of the analysis.

Usage numbers attached to experiential codes were treated with extreme care. The numbers themselves did nothing other than provide a crude and raw first indication of the frequency of the experiences of OFSTED inspection as perceived by this sample of teachers and can be inspected as such in Appendix 9 to this study. The order of occurrence, whilst perhaps interesting as a convenient indication of frequency of experience, meant little *per se* since by splitting or combining codes

frequency of occurrence could have been varied, thereby sending any code up or down the frequency table as counters on a snakes and ladders board.

This is a qualitative, interpretative study using interpretative phenomenological analysis and therefore it will be the interpreted qualities of those perceived experiences brought out in the third person stage of analysis which will form the heart of its findings for this purposive sample of 30. For this reason, it would have been a mistake to use those raw frequency numbers alone as indicators of prominent interpretative themes for subsequent analysis in depth through identified extracts. However, combining the frequency of occurrence of particular experiential codes with legitimate strategic application of the researcher's external knowledge applied to those codes in the second, interpretative, 'third person' stage of the analysis (Watts, 2014) did become a useful tool. The frequently used codes then played a part in assessment of the suitability of an extract for deeper analysis to illuminate the foci of this study's research questions from Chapter 2, and that extract's receptivity or otherwise to examination through the Foucauldian lenses selected in Chapter 3.

The subsequent analysis below was carried out as follows:

- 1) Line by line (Charmaz and Belgrave, 2012, p 356) 'Experiential' coding was applied to the interview transcripts in the first person perspective of the participant once full familiarity with the transcripts had been gained (Watts, 2014). See Appendix 8. This coding was indicated in a column adjacent to the original transcript on the coded document.
- 2) Experiential codes used and the frequency of the use of each were manually recorded during the process of experiential coding. 2032 codes were recorded in total. The 80 codes used 10 or more times each were recorded on the table 'Most Common Experiential Codes Used' (Appendix 7). Codes occurring less than 10 times were not disregarded entirely but retained for comparison in the Case Record (Stenhouse, 1978) and subsequently examined in the light of the research questions and considered as possible partial indicators of additional themes to be pursued at a later stage.

- 3) The second 'Interpretative' stage of coding was undertaken from the third person perspective making use of the researcher's external knowledge (Watts, 2014). This was added to a second column on the coded transcript document. See Appendix 8.
- 4) After each transcript had been subjected to both forms of coding the Interpretative Codes arising from interpretation of the Experiential Codes were used to identify and record interpretation based themes of possible interest for each research question in an electronic workbook. The interview identification numbers in which these themes had occurred were recorded alongside each theme in separate columns of the workbook. Some themes recurred in responses to several interview questions owing to the life history context and semi-structured nature of the interviews carried out. Participants had been allowed to talk freely and flow (Goodson, 2016) had been maintained.
- 5) Repeated or closely related themes that had occurred in responses to more than one interview question and the total number of separate interviews in which these had occurred were compiled on a list of 'Prominent Themes for Analysis' alongside the matching commonly used experiential codes which had fed into the interpretative basis for the selection of these themes. Alongside each theme in a separate column was placed a code indicating in which interview questions these themes had appeared as responses. To the list were then added themes relevant to the research questions or Foucauldian lenses which may have occurred in responses to only one interview question but across a number of interviews. Occurrence in 10 interviews was taken as a bottom guideline number for inclusion as a 'Prominent Theme for Analysis' (Appendix 10) for the simple reason of limiting the exceptionally large number of themes that had arisen from the 30 participant archive of long interviews.
- 6) Extracts potentially "rich with possibility" (Larkin et al, 2006, p 114) and likely to "reveal something distinct and interesting about the theme" (Watts, 2014, p 7) were then selected

for further analysis after another reading of transcripts of all interviews addressing each of the 'Most Prominent Interpretative Themes'.

- 7) Finds of significance from the resulting analysis was then applied to the literature identified in Chapter 2, from which each research question had originated, using the Foucauldian lenses identified in Chapter 3.

### **3.19 The 'Scene Setting' Questions: A Life History Context**

Please see Appendix 9 for a full anonymised list of participants in this study. The list in Appendix 7 summarises the answers of each to the Scene Setting questions (Appendix 6) used at the start of each participant interview to give a Life History (Goodson and Sikes, 2001) context. This was described and justified in the 'Sampling' section of Chapter 3 of this study where a gender and teaching subject profile of the participant sample was also given.

The list given in Appendix 7 is divided into 8 columns giving respectively:

- Participant number allocated in order of interviews. Teacher 1 was interviewed at the end of 2018 and Teachers 27-30 at the start of 2020. All other interviews took place in 2019.
- Response as to whether OFSTED was mentioned in perceived pluses or minuses of teaching as a career
- Number of inspections experienced in the OFSTED era and judgement grades where remembered
- Number of schools served in career on full or fixed term contract
- Total length of service on retirement or at time of interview
- Perceived intake profile of schools served
- Response regarding experience of service with OFSTED
- Response as to whether SMT status had been attained during career at time of interview or at retirement

The thirty participants in this study had served a total of 757 years in teaching on full time or fixed term contracts. No more than two participants who had served in any one school together were included. Teachers 1 and 3 had experienced the same inspection in same school once together as had Teachers 18 and 30. Similarly teachers 17 and 23 had undergone two inspections in the same school together as had Teachers 21 and 27. All other participants' experiences were unique to them.

This meant, taking into account the same inspections experienced by more than one person in the sample, participants had experience of 119 different inspections in the OFSTED era, of which 118 were OFSTED inspections and one, experienced by Teacher 19, was carried out by the Independent Schools Inspection Service under OFSTED letter of authorisation. Taking into account participants with experience of the same school together participants had served in 91 different schools between them.

Analysis of the most prominent themes that emerged from participant interviews follows in Chapter 4 below.

## Chapter 4

### Analysis of Identified Most Prominent Themes

#### 4.1 Introduction

The order of presentation of the analysis of themes below has been selected to provide a logical and smooth flow and thereby facilitate readability (Bloomberg and Volpe, 2016). The number of interviews in which a particular theme occurred will be referred to but has not been used to decide the order of presentation.

#### 4.2 The Need for Accountability

Chapter 2 looked at existing thinking and tensions concerning accountability. The concept itself was seen as a construct so complex that “it often is difficult to implement and a challenge to effectively measure” (Pearson and Sutherland 2016, p 420). This view was borne out in interview by the nuanced perceptions of the concept from participants in this study as set out below. Hall *et al*'s definition as “holding people accountable for their decisions and actions” (2009, p381) seemed legitimately extended to justification of “one’s beliefs, feelings and actions to others” by Lerner and Tetlock (1999, p255). The following examination of accountability through new data from this study aims to see if these views tell the whole story. This study has thrown up as a major theme the concept of accountability, its application via OFSTED inspection and its impacts on secondary schools and teachers.

The power of applying perceptions to the concept of accountability in practice originated in the introduction of subjectivity to the concept through the idea of “felt accountability” (Hall *et al*, 2003, p 32) meaning effectively that the nature of accountability was whatever an individual felt it to be through the personal effects and wider impacts of its application in schools. This made the concept particularly suitable to investigation through perception. It could now be investigated in that way through this new and unique sample as a possible stressor (Pearson and Sutherland, 2016); as an

opportunity for advancement or change (Lanivich et al, 2010); as a positive force (Breux *et al*, 2008); or as a negative force (Fink and Klimoski 1998) and Laird *et al* (2015).

An acceptance of the need for accountability in education was a commonly recurring perception among the sample. 24 interviews mentioned accountability specifically by name rather than just equating the term firmly as synonymous with established OFSTED accountability. Of these only three, Teachers 1, 3, and 17 declared themselves to be firmly against central accountability in education. Even these refused to condemn educational accountability completely but perceived an alternative form to the centralised OFSTED model to be desirable.

Teacher 17 was emphatic,

“I’d get rid of it. I don’t, we never had it before, and schools ran perfectly well. But you’ve got to have something. You’ve got (sic), I don’t believe in having nothing. I do believe you need something” (Teacher 17 Interview, 2019, p 12)

This participant went on to praise the Local Authority based localised system of accountability as equivalent in its awareness of a school’s strengths and weaknesses being one of only two teachers in the sample to do so, agreeing with Teacher 1 who also praised the “collegiate” (Teacher 1 Interview, p4) feel of local accountability.

Teacher 3 declared

“I’m not anti-accountability. I just think it needs to be much more refined and more grown up in a sense. So, it’s not just done *to* (bold italic used to indicate voice emphasis on recording) you.” (Teacher 3 Interview, 2019, p 10)

and is specific in the objection that the current OFSTED accountability system is a one way, top-down, process. “Grown up” here being interpreted as a two-way process as between adolescent and parent as opposed to the top down ‘telling’ approach from parent to toddler. Teacher 3 would also

have moved away from a central system completely on the clear grounds that it did not work and was counter-productive.

I think it's that external accountability through exams through league tables and very much through OFSTED which are driving something is fuelling something that's really unhealthy because none of that needs to be happening. It's only happening for political reasons that they want to publish league tables they want to publish. I think there's acknowledgment that accountability - even by the DFE now - that doesn't work. It doesn't actually make things better. I think it's very unhealthy as a culture in terms of the stress it puts on teachers and in terms of the stress we are putting on our teachers and the stress we are putting on our kids. I think it's getting to a critical point where things will have to change. (Teacher 3 Interview, 2019, p 10)

This clearly concurs with the view of the dark side of accountability as a stressor expressed by Fink and Klimoski (1998) and Laird *et al* (2015) and points to the stress that Breux *et al* saw as inherent to any form of accountability (2008, p119) as so damaging as to negate any possible good arriving from its application in OFSTED form. Teacher 1 concurs on the dangers of accountability

“accountability can be a negative thing. It stops you sharing, stops you asking for help, stops you saying ‘I’ve cocked this up’. So sometimes accountability of the wrong kind is a negative thing without question.” (Teacher 1 Interview, 2018, p 3).

But the use of “can be” and “sometimes” shows these are not seen by this participant as inevitable or as doing inevitable damage thereby reserving room for application of local accountability for which this teacher’s support has been shown above.

Possible damage and negativity from even a central system of accountability was not perceived as inevitable by the remaining teachers in this sub-group of 24 which had mentioned accountability specifically by name. Some perceived accountability as necessary, even desirable, but saw things as

being not quite right with the current system of accountability in education, but fixable through an alternate central system or a change in emphasis within the existing OFSTED one.

“I feel like there needs to be something, some kind of checks. You know some kind of – but supportive” (Teacher 16 Interview, 2019, p 7).

“I certainly think there needs to be a much better way of doing things. And it’s not, I don’t think we should be inspected but I think the framework of the inspection should be much wider. It should be longer. Potentially more regular.” (Teacher 26, Interview, p 10)

“they never quite captured the heart of places. That’s where I think damage was done. I’m not for a second opposed to the idea of schools being accountable. I think of course they should be.” (Teacher 30, Interview, 2020, p 9)

All three extracts above pointed to potential improvements in accountability, not abolition. Teacher 16 saw a need for support in partnership with any checks. This theme of support appears in its own right later in this chapter and the implications of Teacher 16’s perception concerning support will be developed there. Teacher 26 backed inspection but wanted a widened, more thorough brief. This is interpreted as meaning a focus on more than outcomes and flexibility of considering factors such as a school’s community outreach flexibility of curriculum to serve intake which can be seen as vital but difficult to quantify numerically. This could go some way toward meeting Teacher 30’s criticism of failing to capture the heart, interpreted as ‘deeper nature’ of schools. The specific backing for inspection as a method of doing this is absent from Teacher 30’s perceptions. A picture emerged among the sample of support for central accountability for reasons to be visited below but backing for the OFSTED inspection system specifically was far less frequent. Alternative systems or improvements were often wished for but rarely were ideas put forward of even a vague notion of such a system and how it might work. Admissions of having no idea of how an alternative could work were not uncommon and freely given:

And I think to have nothing perhaps wouldn't work because I've worked in shit schools. In shit schools where things have been covered up and change needs to happen. And again if you put the kids in the forefront of that you need to have something, some accountability but whether that's through, um, results or, I don't know. I don't know how you? P9 (Teacher 25, Interview, 2019, p 9).

Support for central accountability was given for a discernible pattern of reasons. For the benefit of the pupils – often referred to as 'kids' as in the extract above – was echoed frequently.

My own personal opinion is that you do need to be accountable. There needs to be accountability because your, these kids only get one chance at education. Erm and they need the support and you know? Somebody needs to be, but there's got to be a different system. (Teacher 24, Interview, 2019, p 9)

This perception of Teachers 24 and 25 of pupil benefit as being one of the main reasons to use a central accountability system sat uneasily but was not incompatible with Teacher 3's perception given earlier that accountability damaged pupils through stress passed on by teachers. The implication would be interpreted as the nature of any replacement central system which would test Breaux et al's (2008) idea that stress was inevitably linked with accountability. The perceptions of pupil benefit and general benefit from accountability, concurring with the positive views of Lanivich *et al* (2010) and Breaux *et al*, (2008) were grounded in two principal ideas: education as a user of public money and an unwillingness to leave the teaching profession to its own devices. The latter, as more connected to the previous perceptions of pupil benefit, is dealt with first.

Well the schools I taught in before OFSTED you were much more aware that you were teaching in your own room and the accountability wasn't as great so I guess in that case it may be better. (Teacher 15, Interview, 2019, p 7)

This refers to lack of accountability in the pejorative and equates it with individual teaching in a largely unobserved manner and refers to the start of the participant's career in 1982. At that time from the author's - and this participant's - experience observation was usual only until the successful completion of a probationary year. After that point, the teacher was assumed to be professionally capable and largely deemed self-sufficient. It is a reflective view from an interview carried out in 2019 and may reflect an acceptance of the OFSTED system. This perception of 'own devices' as undesirable was not isolated in the sample.

"I don't think it should be, no, leave you to your own devices and you know. I think it is important, you know." (Teacher 16, Interview, 2019, p 7)

"I mean things did need to tighten up, don't get me wrong. You know when there's no accountability then people just do their own thing. They sort of went too far." (Teacher 23, Interview, 2019, p 8)

These perceptions provide an interesting tension with Peters's idea of an intrinsic profession (Peters, 1966) and Biesta's idea of a profession working for human wellbeing under self-regulation. (Biesta, 2015, p81). They could reflect a genuine acceptance of the need for accountability, or a fear of abandoning it as a potential risk. Both of which can be seen as Foucault's Governmentality (Foucault, 2001) in action since it also represents acceptance of a need for external control of teachers. At the extreme it represents a vindication of Courtney's Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016) whereby panoptic control becomes so established that it becomes self-perpetuating where individuals become unwitting instruments of external control. It is extremely difficult to discern whether these perceptions of the need for accountability come from within as symptoms of professional judgement and experience or originate externally and unwittingly as a result of the working of Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016). This dilemma can perhaps be summed up in the song lyric about the extent to which humans have independence of action "Are we human, or are we dancers?" (Flowers *et al*, 2008) and suggests, in accordance with Courtney (2016) that teachers as well as this researcher

could indeed be unaware of the origins of their own perceptions. This reinforces the idea of a link to Foucauldian docility (Foucault, 1991, p 136) via Post-Panopticism (Courtney, 2016) as mooted in Chapter 3.

Use of public money was mentioned emphatically both through tone of voice and force of statement four times. Teacher 27, an experienced headteacher with some OFSTED training saw it as what can be interpreted as a fundamental, unarguable justification for accountability in some form and one that presented few real problems of execution:

Right. We're putting public money into this school. Is that public money being used well or not well, that should be it, shouldn't it? (Teacher 27, Interview, 2020, p 13)

Well, we've got to be accountable haven't we because we're using public money? There are some simple things you can do there. (Teacher 27, Interview, 2020, p 12)

Teacher 30 went further, arguing equally emphatically, that use of public money justified accountability through a regulatory body:

That's where I think damage was done. I'm not for a second opposed to the idea of schools being accountable. I think of course they should be. They are in receipt of huge amounts of public money. Of course they should be accountable and there should be a regulatory body. (Teacher 30, Interview, 2020, p 9)

Teacher 29, a senior staff member who went on to work for OFSTED in an inspectorial role over many years, also saw the public funding issue as a strong justification for external accountability.

Now to me, if you're spending several million pounds worth of public money it's right that someone comes through the door and checks what you're doing.

Because so you should be accountable for what goes on. (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p9)

Perhaps this is unsurprising since this participant worked for OFSTED, an organisation which itself used public funds in order to check on others using public funds and such a justification simultaneously legitimised OFSTED's operations in schools. It should be noted that the parallel of the justification is strong with Callaghan's justification for insistence on government intervention in the debate on education "Public interest is strong and legitimate and will be satisfied. We spend £6bn a year on education" (Callaghan, 1976) and points to the latter's success in starting the move towards acceptance of what can be seen as the central point of his Ruskin Speech: to establish the legitimacy of government involvement in education which had been by no means accepted by the teaching profession at that time. No teacher interviewed denied absolutely the need for accountability, all but three accepted or did not speak against the need for a central system and three spoke strongly in favour of the expenditure of public money as a strong justification for accountability in education.

Teacher 27's view of the simplicity of execution of financial accountability was given in contrast to a particular view of what can reasonably be measured or is measurable with any accountability system including the current OFSTED one. This extract continues directly from the one above from Teacher 27.

You can do financial accountability – fairly simple. Safeguarding should just be an audit. So a lot of it can be done by audit can't it? The difficulty which they struggle with is the craft of teaching isn't it? So you've got a teacher in a room with 30 kids all with different backgrounds and problems that they've arrived at that lesson with. Might have been from home. Might have been on the way to the lesson. The teacher's got to try to suss out the ability level of each kid as in are they getting what I'm putting across here? There are so many nuances and variances within that that it's a bloody difficult thing to do. You know. It isn't a one size fits all. You see a really good teacher in action and you just marvel at it. That bit's always going to be difficult to work out isn't it? Doesn't

matter how they say it they can't. Progress in a lesson? You can't measure that! We all knew that. How ridiculous is that. Well you look in the book you know. Have they made progress in their learning for one hour? Seriously, have they? I don't know. Who would know? Who is going to put their hand on their chest and go, yeah, they have? OFSTED do. Well they don't know either if they're honest. They're too busy scribbling. They're also looking at so many more things in a lesson than they used to. Who's going to give us that answer? How can you judge learning? People write books on it, theses on it. How can you judge learning? And it's always going to be subjective one. But then we also know that kids evolve at different rates. Kids just switch on when they're 16, don't they and suddenly they want to do it. Kids have got different problems like we said. Background problems developmental problems, So one size fits all is difficult. So why aren't we just sitting back and saying it is too difficult. Let's not grade schools, let's develop them. I think grading is a real problem. The grading for me has caused too much hurt. Too much focus on it. (Teacher 27, Interview, 2020, p 13)

This extract suggestions have considerable implications for the feasibility of observation based inspections ever being able to widen enough in their focuses as desired by Teacher 30 in a previous extract since some areas of a school's work will remain inaccessible to observation-based inspection. This is due to factors unknown and unknowable to an inspector visiting a classroom over even one whole lesson. At best, it suggests that any judgement made has been subjective owing to the sheer complexity of the task before the teacher and consequently the complexity of an inspector's task of making any fair judgement on that teacher and the school's performance in those areas. It also suggests that the craft of teaching, and its complex relationship with learning, is an unfathomable art beyond any useful or meaningful dissection and judgement. This leaves the reader with Teacher 27's clear view that even though accountability is justifiable it is almost impossible to carry out objectively and fairly through inspection based on direct observation. This would also have implications for the validity of any support if such were ever linked to inspection outcomes. The

extract also displays the participant's firm perception, from a role as headteacher, that the inspector was definitively looking for demonstrated progress within the lesson. This almost certainly would have been passed down to the participant's staff as a firm fact for consideration during observations. Yet any idea this had ever been an OFSTED focus was specifically denied by Teacher 29 from the basis of considerable experience as an OFSTED inspector.

And actually, I think that got worse which is why OFSTED falls over itself now with its clarification of myths and everything. Yeah, OFSTED say you've got to provide evidence of children making progress every fifteen minutes and that sort of thing. You say, 'why?' I remember a teacher saying that to me 'That's what you want'. And I said 'Why would I want that? What would be the point of that?' (Interview, Teacher 29, 2020, p 6)

This issue of honestly held, firm, but possibly mistaken conviction as to what OFSTED was actually looking for must have been a cause of concern to the organisation as it did issue a clarification document in September 2018 (OFSTED, 2018). This, and the issue of what is actually measurable may well go some way towards explaining and reinforcing the view of accountability as a stressor (Fink and Klimoski, 1998) and Laird *et al* (2015) when applied to the OFSTED system.

Even when OFSTED's focuses were factual and verifiable through the incarnations of the Handbook for the Inspection of Schools (Ofsted, 1992) this did not mean accountability was seen as entirely a positive force in the sample. Teacher 29, an experienced OFSTED inspector, perceived a mistaken and, at least partially, counter-productive focus after 2012 raising the question of what were the 'right' issues on which to focus.

When I was inspector through that period then in terms of the OFSTED inspections I'd like to think that they supported schools in moving forward. Whether that was the case or not, who knows on that particular one? Do I think that approach to accountability has on balance worked well or not? I think on balance it's worked well when the inspectorate has focused on the right issues. It hasn't always focused on the right issues.

To me parents have three things that are important for their children in a school: one is that their children are happy; one is that they're safe; and the third one is that they do well. And their interpretation of the phrase 'do well' would depend on their own ambitions and aspirations for them. So I think it's happiness, safety and do well. How often has OFSTED focused sufficiently on all those three? And of course, I think they completely lost their way under Wilshaw in terms of this focus on 'Get your English results up, get your maths results up, narrow the gap between disadvantaged and advantaged. Job done. (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p14)

This radical perception moves away from a central focus on attainment in favour of accepting a parental subjective view of 'doing well'. Subjectivity here extends to the wishes of pupils and parents since happiness must be a subjective state of mind leaving only safety in the hands of a relatively easily produced set of rigid criteria. If adopted this would shift accountability into the realm of school ethos, values and community values and could have great bearing on "felt accountability" (Hall et al, 2003). Effectively here, schools would be accountable to parents and pupils which must be based on a perception of the impact of OFSTED, in the 2012-16 era of Sir Michael Wilshaw specifically, as being a negative one in accordance with the views of Pearson and Sutherland, (2016). It also would have implications for viewing inspection through the Foucauldian lens of governmentality (Foucault, 2001) since under this model it could be under the *de facto* control of parents. This would be a radical departure indeed according to Teacher 3's perception of OFSTED inspection being a 'top down' model (Teacher 3, Interview, 2019, p 10).

Teacher 15 raised the issue of the fitness of some OFSTED inspectors to pass judgements on schools and their staff in points that overlapped considerably with some made by Teacher 27, particularly in the perception of people being upset. The tone and words of Teacher 27 reinforced the interpretation that he shared a sense of upset for a similar reason: the perceived appropriateness of

the experience inspectors employed by OFSTED and the necessity of that experience to be similar to the people they were judging in schools.

And the credentials of the OFSTED inspectors needed to be looked at, much more. Because some of them were totally irrelevant and had very little teaching experience. Let alone being able to pass whether somebody was good or not. And that upset people. (Teacher 15, Interview, 2019, p 7)

Overall I think they've done way more harm in the way that they've done it because I think heads got the impression that these guys are coming in actually to tell me how to do my job. And they've never done it. And a lot of them are failed deputies and people who've been got rid of and seconded and they're earning a crust. Everybody's got to earn a crust but they're earning a crust coming in to tell me how to run my school. I don't think so. (Teacher 27, Interview, 2020, P12)

These perceptions of doubts of the suitability and capability of some OFSTED inspectors were borne out. Sir Robin Boshers's announcement of ending OFSTED's use of contracted inspectors in 2015 on the grounds of ensuring a good inspector would be walking up the path (Richardson, 2015, p 1). This resulted in the release of 1200 inspectors (Richardson, 2015) and must call into question the validity of the many OFSTED outcomes reached by those inspectors before 2015.

In a related point Teacher 27 brought up the issue of accountability of OFSTED itself. Having sought and elicited an apology, but not a change of judgement category, from an OFSTED team after official complaint (Teacher 27, Interview, p 4) a sense of frustration and perceived injustice came through in interview.

I don't think they are accountable. They're not. They're just accountable to themselves aren't they normally. They just slap each other on the back. Erm if they were

independent, properly independent they probably could be accountable. But then to who? And how? How would you do that? (Teacher 27, Interview, 2020, p 12)

This does bring up questions on the actual line of accountability of OFSTED and concurs with the 'top down' accountability view of Teacher 3 dealt with above. It is an organisation nominally independent of government yet funded publicly and with a leader chosen by the Secretary of State for Education who is himself accountable to Parliament. It is the perception here that is important. If an experienced head who has undergone OFSTED training such as Teacher 27 sees OFSTED as ultimately not accountable other than to itself this may point either to confusion of message from OFSTED, from actual injustice or merely of frustration at an unwelcome judgement. It certainly points to accountability as stressor (Fink and Klimoski,1998) and Laird *et al* (2015).

Breaux *et al* (2008) argue that accountability is inevitably stressful. This may be the case but perhaps more important is the question of whether that stress results from an accountability system that serves a purpose. The number of teachers interviewed in this sample who believed accountability to be necessary would suggest if Breaux *et al* (2008) are correct that they accept this trade off. Some were very specific in taking the need for accountability beyond that of not trusting teachers to be left to their own devices. Teacher 2 and Teacher 10 cited what, on the surface, seemed widely varying justifications for maintaining an accountability system perhaps arising from their very different career stages when interviewed. Teacher 2 was a retired headteacher who had spent 25 years in the profession and had become a head before the establishment of the OFSTED system. Teacher 10 was a young person in the first stages of career currently serving as a class teacher operating within a multi academy trust.

I mean I have to say that I thought that, going back to my time in schools there was a great need for greater accountability. Because the quality of what went on in schools was far too variable, the quality of teaching the quality of management erm so there was a need to improve accountability, to improve consistency. To try to move on from

the situation where if you lived, for instance in a town with a high flying comprehensive school you could achieve wonderfully or you could be somewhere with a bog standard school. You know there was a need to you know, stop a postcode lottery if you like. But whether the OFSTED system was the right way to achieve that I doubt very much.

(Teacher 2, Interview, 2019, P11)

Here the surface focus is the lack of consistency between schools perceived in the era of strict catchments and minimal accountability. In the interview it was mentioned almost in passing that the controlling LEA didn't even ask its schools for examination results. (Teacher 2, Interview, p 2). The underlying justification however is interpreted here to be the poor educational experience of a pupil in an underperforming school. Similarly Teacher 10 focuses initially on unaccountable management of schools in the era of MATs and financial incentive to run schools.

It's useful to have a school and to have a board of governors and an executive principal and a headteacher to be held to account to somebody because I don't always believe in the world of MAT that you've got people the best standard of education of the kids.

When you start to have car owners or car dealers owning schools and taking 10% you have to have them accountable to somebody. (Teacher 10, Interview, 2019, p 7)

Again though the underlying reason for this justification is pupil educational experience. Both extracts here synthesise earlier perceptions above in a combination of lack of trust when teachers and schools are left to their own devices and the necessity of giving pupils a worthwhile educational experience. The overall message of the perceptions making up this theme of the study was that accountability, stressor (Fink and Klimoski, 1998) (Laird *et al* 2015) as it may be, is justified principally for those two reasons. At this stage of the study there was no similar consensus, other than the current system was perceived as flawed, on the desirable format of any inspection system nor on whether the current OFSTED system could be modified. On this latter point please see below.

#### **4.3 The Early OFSTED Inspections**

Reference to the early years of OFSTED, defined at its broadest extent to mean the pre SEF years of inspections where large teams of inspectors were deployed as the default model, very quickly emerged as a prominent and recurring theme in many participants' perceptions. It occurred in 13 different participant interviews in responses to 3 different interview questions: those on personal effects of inspections, judgements and reports and the final 'anything else you would like to mention' question (Appendix 6) henceforth referred to as the 'catch all' question. In addition, the experiential code 'OFSTED Early Years (Pre SEF)' was used on 42 occasions.

If mentioning a date at all these participants most often identified this era with the years of the 1990s even though inspection by teams of 15 lasted until inspections began under the Education Act of September 2005 (Education Act, 2005). Many of these participant perceptions recalled the form of inspection with its separate reports and judgements for individual subjects included in a report on the whole school, rather than the exact chronological year in which it occurred.

Inspection in the early years of OFSTED was regarded as more helpful to teachers than the subsequent small team SEF based inspection model of post 2005 which was perceived as less helpful overall and, when it was so, helpful mainly to senior managers to the exclusion of classroom teachers and heads of department. This perceived greater level of helpfulness of the early years was seen as benefitting many across the school. Teacher 8, an experienced deputy headteacher, was clear about wider benefit of the older inspection style

I would like to go back to having a larger team so that you know the arts get valued, the humanities get valued, things like community links get valued. So I'd like to see a larger team in personally. I know some teachers hate the idea. A large team in over the course of a week where people were looking at subject specifics, I think would be really helpful.

(Teacher 8, Interview, 2019, p 11)

This focus on benefit in terms of valuing the whole curriculum and of looking at subject specifics can be seen in the context of the outcomes focused approach of the SEF years and particularly the era of

HMCI Sir Michael Wilshaw which, in the perception of Teacher 29 in the section above – an experienced inspector – had focussed specifically on the core subjects to damaging effect on the broader work of schools. When the interview with Teacher 8 was carried out the new curriculum focused inspection of OFSTED under HMCI Spielman had not yet been implemented. The reference to some teachers' hatred of the idea in the perception of Teacher 8 elsewhere in the interview originated from their insulation from inspection in the post SEF years' concentration on school leadership and reduction in observation of classroom teachers relative to the older model of inspection.

The first inspection I had at (name of school) lots of teachers were very nervous but ironically the last two inspections for most teachers I think it had very, very little impact because the last two were definitely really the OFSTED inspectors would have spent 90% of their time with SLT and very little time in lessons. (Teacher 8, Interview, 2019, p 7)

In Teacher 8's view this was allowing them to feel immune to inspection and was having the effect of producing complacency and a feeling of being under valued by OFSTED and thereby de-motivated. This resonated with the views of participants speaking on the need for accountability in the section above in this chapter. The question of teacher nerves here as beneficial puts a different perspective on the work of Breaux *et al* (2008) on the inevitability of nerves under accountability systems without necessarily contradicting it. This theme of teacher nerves in relation to wellbeing is visited below in a separate section of this chapter.

The link of subject specificity of inspectors and inspection recurred with Teacher 3.

As a teacher, I generally thought it, it, was a quite, it was an OK experience but that was in the early days of OFSTED and things were very different then. You were dealing in my time with people who were subject specialists, just happened to be subject specialists and I suppose the process was supported more in those days. I do remember vividly on one of my early inspections, I think it was one of the trial ones but money used to follow

OFSTED then and er we managed to get a new set of atlases out of them. They said just say about your lack of resources and books and so the £700 came to the department to buy atlases. And but on a bigger level although they were quite intrusive, they were equally quite informative in terms of things you could work on. (Teacher 3, Interview, 2019, p 3)

Dialogue here on a subject level had produced concrete benefit accepting the perceived intrusion of a closely attached subject inspector as a trade-off for constructive advice and the perception of a supportive process. This resonates clearly with Teacher 29's view of the, perhaps uncomfortable, but supportive effect of department inspection in the pre SEF era.

And for a week, you spent a week with the department; when you really got to know the department, you got into the ins and outs of it. You found the warts and all. Because by about the Wednesday the subject leader knew you were going to be all over them for two more days so they might as well tell you everything. Because you were going to find it. And in the end you could then have a conversation about well how can you move this forward from whatever position you were at? So I think that was really valuable  
(Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 14)

Teacher 27 perceived the same effects and identified the inevitability of nerves (Breux et al, 2008) in a more neutral way than above.

Massive team came into (name of first school) and they were in there for about a week. Which was a bit of a problem. Everybody's a bit nervous aren't you when you're being watched and all the rest of it. But actually, it was developmental (Teacher 27, Interview, 2020, p2)

Helpfulness as being rooted in subject specific attention extended to classroom teacher level in the perception of Teacher 30.

They felt a bit more worthwhile to you as a subject teacher in the early days. Because you got more time to talk to them. And it felt like they wanted to help. I think later on that changed. (Teacher 30, Interview, 2020, p 8)

More worrying perhaps is the second perception here that this welcome, dialogue based, subject specific support subsequently disappeared as OFSTED inspection evolved. This perceived helpfulness to middle managers and class teachers extended to SMT completing a picture of broad helpfulness in the early years from this sub-group of the sample. Teacher 2, a headteacher, supported this view citing helpfulness in dealing with staff in the school.

The first one with the team of HMI I found that actually quite pleasant, but they were very respectful professional people. The way they handled things the way they talked through. And they admitted you know during the process that they were finding their way in the dark you know getting in this so you know it was quite collaborative. It wasn't as if we were fighting each other. The second one with (name of county OFSTED team) as that was going on you were obviously a bit worried about certain people. Who's going to let you down? .....But in that second one, you know, apart from a few people who were perhaps not as good as they should have been, were worried and they probably deserved to be. They needed that outside. Because in fact you know, what I found useful was that inspectors were reinforcing some of the things that I'd been saying to staff about how we needed to develop. (Teacher 2, Interview, 2019, p 6)

Here perceptions of being helpful involved moving the school forward through collaborative dialogue with a head and the senior team and the consequent "outside" (Teacher 2, Interview, 2019, p 6) empowerment of an OFSTED reinforced message of change deemed necessary by inspectors and SMT. A perception of professionalism and respect for professionals from inspectors as a grounding for helpfulness in the form of promotion of wellbeing "through specialist knowledge and skills" (Biesta, 2005, p 81) also emerged here and found echoes elsewhere in the sample. Teacher 1

another headteacher who, like Teacher 2, took up the post well before the onset of OFSTED expressed confidence in the early teams.

So you're trying to encouragez les autres, be the leader. Inside you're thinking you, know. I hope you're not found wanting really. Then I think in the early days you did have some latent respect that the team would be professional and would know what they are doing and would have some credibility. I think they did in the early days to be fair. I think they were more nervous probably as well in thinking that we're going into unknown territory. I think later they got more arrogant and more gung ho and some of the quality of inspectors went down. I'm sure of that. (Teacher 1, Interview, 2018, p 9)

This confidence of a professional that judgement from other professionals would be fair was perceived to have been upheld in those early years. Later in the interview, and after a recent re-read of a very early OFSTED inspection, Teacher 1's perception was one of satisfaction and fair treatment.

I think the early ones I'm talking about when the school was growing, I think the reports were generally very reasonable. As I say I read them again a week back and I think they were reasonable and generally very accurate and well-written. (Teacher 1, Interview, 2018, P15)

This satisfaction expressed in the early process reflecting the positive view of accountability (Lanivich *et al*, 2010) clashed markedly with the perceived decline in inspector quality and attitude in the later post-SEF OFSTED years. Teacher 1 retired in 2007 indicating that the perceived decline had set in by then. The perception above of professional confidence is rooted at least partially in the idea that the OFSTED team were also getting used to a new process was echoed in Teacher 2's interview and may go some way to explain the perceived decline in professional attitude in later inspections. This could be interpreted as a growing confidence from OFSTED teams working with a procedure that had become more familiar, or even a greater belief in their own power to impose knowledge

and truth from above through a Foucauldian power explanation (Foucault, 2001). But there is yet no conclusive evidence here in these perceptions for anything other than decline in attitude.

Teacher 18's interview did take things a little further. It also remembered a sympathetic attitude from a 1990s team and satisfaction with early reports as contrasting with later decline of attitudes, and competence, but also introduces a factor of later interpretations of language.

Well, as I said before I think that the early reports that I've got in front of me which go to 36 pages. Seem, from my memory seem to be accurate. This is pre-Miliband. I think that they seem to be quite accurate based on the objectives that they were inspected against which were quite wise I feel. I feel and I know that later inspections, I don't think that they were (Teacher 18, Interview, p10)

I remember in that first inspection in 1998 in the morning briefing on the Monday the Lead Inspector with all the ten, eight, ten inspectors who were there, said, literally, he said that 'a satisfactory judgement is exactly that. It's satisfactory. And that is nothing to be ashamed of; that is what we expect. Satisfactory means satisfactory'. And yet fast forward fourteen, twelve, fourteen years satisfactory didn't mean satisfactory anymore.

(Teacher 18, Interview, 2019, p 11)

The perceptions of satisfaction with the thoroughness and approach of early teams and later decline in professional approach matches other participants above but the particular perception of interpretation of language by teams does seem to reinforce a tentative interpretation of growing confidence and assurance from teams creating distance from school staff. The knowledge of the meaning of satisfactory now belonged to the OFSTED team and its application represented a Foucauldian manifestation of power (Foucault, 2001) which could go a long way towards explaining the perceptions of the loss of collaboration, common-cause and confidence that seemed present between the early OFSTED teams of the pre SEF years and teachers. The picture of perceptions painted in this section indicated that the OFSTED inspections of the pre SEF years were seen by

participants as helpful to teachers of all levels of responsibility, were carried out with sympathy and with professional attitudes and achieved a thoroughness based at least in part on the size of teams and their deployment into subject areas. Inspections carried out in smaller teams after 2005 were not perceived in these lights. More detailed perceptions of aspects of inspections from the later OFSTED period 2005-2018 can be found below.

#### **4.4 Shortened Observations and Inspections**

Following the Education Act (2005) OFSTED teams of 15 were replaced by smaller teams of 4 inspectors or fewer (Elliott, 2012). Less emphasis was placed on inspecting subject areas, although separate subject-specific inspections were to continue until 2014, and the focus of inspections turned to the leadership of schools through completion of a Self Evaluation Form (Elliott, 2012). Effectively inspection had taken one step back from intensive inspection of all departments as a matter of course on every inspection through a subject specific inspector. From this point observations of lessons by OFSTED inspectors also became fewer in number, rarely involved observing whole lessons and often were perceived as concentrating on core subjects. Inspections of secondary schools were reduced from five days to two or three days (Elliott, 2012).

These changes could be viewed through the Foucauldian lens of panopticism - see Chapter 3 - as developed by Perryman (2006). Was this step back merely tactical and pragmatic given the enormous cost of the big team model of OFSTED inspection, or had it represented the first stage of panopticism whereby being observed intensively, here through a subject specialist, had been replaced by the mere possibility of that happening? According to the panoptic model (Perryman, 2006) the thought of remote inspection would ensure continued conformity with an expected model without the need for routine and frequent inspections of departmental practice in all subjects.

Concern at the impacts of short observations and shorter, more centralised inspections emerged quickly as a prominent theme emerging from interview in this study. It was mentioned in depth in 18 interviews and mentions were spread across responses to 3 questions: those on personal effects of

inspections, judgements and reports, and trust. (Appendix 6). 'OFSTED Observations of lessons (length)' appeared as an experiential code 26 times and 'Inspection Length' 25 times.

Perceived loss of credibility of judgements made during a short inspection or from observation of part of a lesson was a recurring concern of participants. The reduced length of the whole inspection was perceived as pressurising inspectors' work as everything had to be fitted into a smaller time frame by a much smaller number of inspectors yet schools of course had not changed in size.

Because it is ridiculously concentrated over a day and a half. How can you really get under the skin of something like this, as big an organisation as this is, even though it's only a medium sized comprehensive? (Teacher 27, Interview, 2020, p 5)

And I think it's about the amount of time that OFSTED comes in. I don't think there's really time to get under the skin of a place (Teacher, 24, Interview, 2019, p 10)

Without going in there for a week, a month and getting a true feel for the school it would be very difficult to put on an ethos and values of a school which I think would be, you know would allow for a lot closer, a lot better, and a lot fairer representation of the school. If you're going in there and saying alright this school is in the middle of London but we've been there for two months and dear God those teachers try hard and dear God these kids are horrendously disadvantaged these people are working and they are making outstanding progress with these kids even if they're still minus on their EBACC scores (Teacher 10, Interview, 2019,p 8)

This idea of "getting under the skin" of organisations of considerable size was interpreted as an absorption of atmosphere and values of a school, a true understanding, which by necessity would take time and form an essential balance with the data in an inspection team's possession and impressions from very short interviews or observations. This was perceived as what might be called a triangulation for fairness.

the problem is with formal observations is that again only one person is coming into your classroom for a specific short amount of time. They're not part of your class the whole year through knowing how different things are developing and how you work with the class. It's only a snippet (Teacher 15, Interview, 2019, p 8)

This would be applicable to a whole lesson observation but if observation of a whole lesson is perceived as a "snippet" (Teacher 15, Interview, 2019, p 8) then observation of only a part of a lesson or an interview of only one player in a team would be a 'snippet of a snippet' and thus potentially even less fair or even misleading to an inspection team.

So you had to show it in the lessons regardless of what it was. I felt that was the thing and it didn't matter what the agenda was. How could you show all of those things in one 20 minute section? Does that make any sense? (Teacher 22, Interview, 2019, p6)

And maybe not having the time? Because they're in probably is it a day and a half. And half of that is writing their report, so they're just in for a day and it's just a snapshot.

And if you happen to talk to the wrong person, i.e. talking to the woman who had only just started doing attendance as the attendance officer and get a judgement from her (Teacher 24, Interview, 2019, p 8)

The knowledge that judgements could be based on observation of part of a lesson was perceived as creating a fraught atmosphere of artificiality whereby teachers manoeuvred to ensure that even a short observation could be used to show what the inspectors were thought to be wanting to see.

I think that frustration comes from the fact that – it's not quite fair on the inspectors – but they don't see what's actually happening because they haven't got the time to watch a good amount, so teachers feel that they're being judged on, they perhaps didn't see explicitly the aims or whatever but they had walked in half way through so it wasn't explicit at that point. And like I alluded to earlier that you know, you're caught. Like

you're caught in that kind of what shall I do, shall I stop and say 'oh just to remember our aims' and it's all a bit So yeah, there's not much trust between teachers and OFSTED inspectors. They just feel like they're trying to be caught out. (Teacher 20, Interview, 2019, p 5-6)

This perception is interpreted as a feeling that the short visit to a lesson has engendered distrust in the inspection process and is viewed here as a tactic to disconcert the teacher which has to be countered by resorting an ever ready fall back script at cost to the flow of the lesson and to the nature of what is being observed. Other interviews echoed this sub-theme of artificiality, not necessarily exclusive to short observations but perceived as being exacerbated by such.

You just super prepared and you put on a performance and they judged the performance. They did judge the whole lesson so in that sense it was a better, it was an accurate judgement of that lesson on that day but no more and no less (Teacher 14, Interview, 2019, p 5)

Because the big thing with OFSTED is this, you just don't know, what do they see? They see a bunch of actors. And some people can act better than others, including the Head. And they'll come in they'll get a first impression. They're making a judgement, a human judgement at the end of the day. (Teacher 27, Interview, 2020, p 11)

In addition to the partial distortion of a lesson in progress above Teacher 28 perceived the entire content of the lesson as having been changed from that required by the pupils at the point of the course coinciding with possible observation. This change was perceived to have been made in order to provide lesson content deemed more likely to impress an inspector.

Or cancel the practicals because of course a practical would last about half an hour so what would OFSTED say if they came in and the 25 minutes they were in there the kids did nothing but a practical? They probably say 'That's a bad lesson. Not enough progress

made if they're just doing a practical. So you suddenly introduce loads and loads of stupid activities like a card sort exercise for ten minutes followed by something else in there (Teacher 28, Interview, 2020, p 6)

Even if interpreted as short term sacrifice for long term benefit of the school as a whole such a change could work against the interest of pupils in the short term and as such is a manifestation of a possible dark side of accountability in accordance with Fink and Klimoski (1998) and Laird *et al* (2015).

Teacher 29 agreed with this concern of artificiality and linked it from an inspector's point of view to the soundness of any judgement made based on observation of only part of a lesson and the difficulty of getting to grips with a school in a very short amount of time.

I then was inspecting, it was the two day model. And the two day model requires you as an inspector to assimilate a huge amount of information in a very short space of time (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 3)

And, later in the interview.

So I don't think that would be accurate actually to say a teacher on that half an hour I've just seen you, you're outstanding. Erm because as you and I have just said people can turn it on. So I don't think that's helpful at all. Really (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 12)

Once the credibility of accountability is perceived as undermined the "felt accountability" (Hall et al, 2003, p 32) also is surely in danger becoming tainted as the process is felt to be flawed and therefore fair game to be deceived by acting and prepared fall back scripts or "turning it on" (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 3 and p 12). It is easy to forget that pupils can suffer from such gaming of a perceived flawed process. What can be turned on can also be turned off as this participant relates.

Then that first inspection, unfortunately for me, they did pop into one of my lessons; it's probably better to do it on an inspection by inspection basis, by popping into one of my

lessons about 15-20 minutes from the end it seems. And I'd stupidly started to relax thinking 'Oh that's alright, thank God I've got through this OFSTED inspection.' And I was relaxing, the kids were relaxing because we were all quite tense and then this guy appeared in my lesson and it was like 'Oh God I've already done all the positive learning, all the fancy stuff. What did I have in reserve? And er he gave me a 3, needs to improve (Teacher 28, Interview, 2020, p 1)

This can be seen as a rejection of Foucauldian docility (Foucault, 1991, p 136) as the teacher, interpreted as reacting here to accountability as a stressor (Laird et al, 2015) adopts a ploy to avoid teaching flat out throughout the period. Here panopticism (Perryman, 2006) and indeed Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016) are not applying; once seen as beyond observed accountability for the period the participant certainly did not conform to any expected norm and could be seen as undermining the purpose of the whole accountability process: to ensure pupils are taught according to extrinsic aims (Peters, 1966) to contribute to society (Callaghan, 1976). Here they fall victim to a perceived flawed process.

Failure to spot school weaknesses known to school managers was also perceived as evidence of the shortcomings of short, leadership and core curriculum-focused, inspections. Teacher 13's perception here is interpreted as disillusionment with the inspection process after 2005.

So there are some curriculum areas in our school inevitably that are not as strong as others and I think they didn't pick up on the fact. Because there was that obsession with core subjects at the time in those two inspections they never picked up on the fact that actually, outside of core there were some real strengths and some real weaknesses. And they just didn't notice (Teacher 13, Interview, 2019, p 6)

If teachers do not accept the validity of judgements made on the basis that they are the product of a flawed process, then the credibility of the accountability process is further undermined. Teacher 12

perceived dangers in teacher attitude arising from making judgements from a very short observation base.

when you get the report back and they've been critical, your feeling is that you automatically say 'oh, well they were only in my lesson for a quarter of an hour', which is true usually. They didn't usually stay the whole lesson, they were very rarely, they cut off and came to the beginning, they sometimes came for the end and you might get a little patch in the middle, but they very, very, very rarely stayed for a whole lesson. So they were only getting a snapshot so I think that their verdicts were not necessarily trusted. But obviously if they gave you a positive feedback then you'd be more likely, you'd just automatically think 'oh yes, I definitely can believe that, you know (Teacher 12, Interview, 2019, p 4)

Here the adverse verdict which might be expected to have an ultimate purpose of changing teacher behaviour is perceived as being likely to be rejected as unsound; yet a positive verdict, even if based on an equally short amount of observation time, is accepted. Either way the short observation format is perceived here as doing damage to the credibility of the whole accountability process and indeed damage to pupils if challenge to poor practice is automatically disregarded as unsound.

Potentially similarly undermining to any improving effect of inspection was the perception that an increased focus on leadership and fewer and shorter classroom observations had the effect of creating a form of isolation from the inspection process for middle managers and classroom teachers.

Because they were doing such broad brushstrokes by 2016 I didn't really feel like there was a lot of pressure on me and I don't think most of my colleagues did either. And we were told that as well by our SLT quite explicitly that actually the pressure was going to be on them and not on us. (Teacher 13, Interview, 2019, p 5)

This appears to be accepted with a shrug by Teacher 13 from the point of view of a classroom teacher but the implications of such a perception could be that the SLT become effectively the instruments of OFSTED and thereby the instruments of post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016) – a theme that will be picked up later in this study.

Shorter observations were also perceived as coinciding with a change in the atmosphere of inspections.

So the third inspection I was head of humanities and also doing some work in teaching and learning. And that inspection I felt, that kind of shocked me I suppose because it was less, very, very little observation of lessons. I felt it was very, very brief and the I felt that the tone of the inspections had changed. So, it was very much I felt in terms of trying to catch you out when you were being interviewed. Teacher 8, Interview, 2019, p 3)

Teacher 8 here is interpreted as distrusting inspectors' motives for this move away from observations seeming to perceive the move as a tactic to place emphasis on the less time consuming method of interview. Teacher 3 also perceived ulterior motives to lay behind short observations.

They often don't stay in a room for more than 20 minutes you know, 20 minutes, so they don't have to give feedback for instance. That's the latest game and what can you really tell in a classroom for 18 minutes or in a walkthrough, a learning walk. I just think there's a lot of nonsense talked from their evidence base and they make sometimes quite superficial judgements to support what they want to find. (Teacher 3, Interview, 2019, p 8)

The perception of less observational evidence being easier to manipulate in support of superficial, pre-determined objectives was a passionately expressed view, as above, in the sample and perhaps has as much to say about distrust of OFSTED as it does the impact of inspection and observation

length. Teacher 3 was a serving head of a large and successful comprehensive at that time of interview and this perception was based on conviction from a bitter encounter with an OFSTED lead inspector that will feature under the later prominent theme of inspector conduct.

Sitting alongside perceived questions of credibility of findings from short observations and inspections arising from participants were other concerns expressed by participants of the effectiveness of observation of any kind as an indicator of good or bad practice.

First of all, I'm not sure about observation as a method for gauging whether teachers are any, are good teachers or not. I have real questions about that. And I think it might be changing in that respect. I don't know but I just don't think you can come in and observe one teacher for an hour and make a judgement on them (Teacher 19, Interview, 2019, p 6)

I think again they didn't take into account. It was only a snapshot and it wasn't looking at the whole picture. And especially people who come and inspect you and don't even talk to you.

How on earth can they understand anything about your practice? (Teacher 25, 2019, p 8)

Such concerns may be more an appeal to modify observation or to make a part of a range of strategies to inspect teacher performance in front of a class rather than to abandon its use altogether. For all the flaws that have been perceived by participants inspectors can claim if any observations have been carried out in an inspection and have been used as part of a body of evidence for reaching an overall verdict on a school that they have seen things first-hand. Some teachers interviewed for this study welcomed observation of any kind as a positive (Breux et al, 2008) and as a chance to display good practice and to see perceived bad practice from others called to account.

And thinking am I going to get seen, am I going to get seen? You almost want them to feel, yes, good teachers get a chance to show off. Good teachers get to show what they

do on a good day to day basis and other teachers were worried. I was almost happy about that. As horrendous as it sounds, that OFSTED should be coming in no notice and getting an accurate, an accurate picture (Teacher 10, Interview, 2019, p 3)

Disappointment at not being seen also indicates a perception of observation of any length as having some value and can be interpreted as a desire for external reassurance or validation of practice.

Something that makes people feel cheated - and this is certainly true of colleagues that I've worked with where you've been through three OFSTED inspections in the same school and nobody, nobody has come through your door. And I think that made people resentful. And that was often things deemed 'not important' (Teacher 30, Interview, 2020, p 7)

A perception of an inspector taking time to view a teacher is clearly perceived here as a recognition of value in the teacher's work. This perceived disappointment at not being seen recurred frequently in participant interviews. The experiential codes 'Disappointment' or 'Validation, desire for' were used a total of 28 times in this study.

Concerns of partial pictures, distortion and artificiality may not be terminal flaws to the use of observation in inspections and indeed some participants expanded on how the practice could be modified to overcome some of the issues perceived above. A developmental approach was seen as possible by Teacher 25.

And it's exactly what I think OFSTED and observations really ought to be about. It ought to be teacher led rather than observer led and build that confidence back up in teachers to allow, to allow that trust. To go 'OK this is a friendly environment where I can improve and not be, punished.'(Teacher 25, Interview, 2019, p 7)

This teacher-led approach of indicating areas of practice to be observed with a view to developmental advice was being used for internal observations in the participant's school and was working well. For OFSTED to adopt such a measure calls into question the difference between judgemental and developmental models of inspection and these form a separate prominent theme below in this study.

Another perception of possible improvement to observations as part of inspections seems to address many of the concerns expressed above about the working of all form of observation.

The encouragement now is to stay in for longer and that you go into a series of lessons. Now having spent time talking to the subject leader about what they're doing you'd have looked at the timetable and said 'I see you've got Year 9 on next. Right tell me what you're doing in year 9, why do you think you're doing that in Year 9? Where do you think you're up to? How well do you think they're grasping the knowledge that's here? Right, let's go and look at a series of Year 9 lessons, and talk to some of the Year 9 pupils and look at the Year 9 books and talk to the teacher later in the day about what was going on. You'd be far more stitched together. Woven together approach and you'd spend longer in the lessons. (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 19)

This would seem to have the potential to address artificiality, incomplete pictures and lack of dialogue. It also seems to be applicable to both a judgemental and developmental model of inspection but would clearly take up much more inspector time and necessitate longer term contact with departmental staff. The resemblance to perceptions of the longer, subject based inspections OFSTED's early days in the immediately preceding section of this Chapter is stark.

#### **4.5 Pre-Decided and Personal Inspection Agendas**

This theme arose from 16 interviews mentioning possible pre-existing agendas as influences on the course or outcome of inspections. All of these perceptions suggested to that OFSTED inspections

were not being carried out with a completely open mind by some inspection teams because of the alleged existence of non-legitimate agendas outside of the public domain. Such perceptions and their associated allegations directly related to the issue of the importance of trust in accountability. As pointed out in Chapter 2, the adoption from the earliest days of OFSTED of inspection as a method of accountability indicated at the very least a lack of “an expectancy held by an individual or group that the word, promise verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon” (Ammeter et al, 2004, p 49). If the very adoption of inspection as a method alone implied a lack of trust then any perceptions that these were being carried out under the perceived influence of pre-determining factors, other than those legitimately in the public domain such as previous results or requirements of the original Handbook for the Inspection of Schools (OFSTED, 1992) and its successors, could have clear implications within this sample of “placement or refusal of trust” in and by teachers (O’Neill, 2013, p 13).

Perceptions of pre-determined non-legitimate agendas were seen as arising from national political contexts for OFSTED operation, from local contexts, and from particular idiosyncrasies or personal priorities of OFSTED inspectors and Lead Inspectors. Teacher 3, an experienced headteacher at the time of interview, saw a clear national agenda as providing an unfair context of pre-judgement to an inspection carried out in the 2013 following award of an earlier ‘Outstanding’ judgement to the school by OFSTED in 2008. Here the 2013 inspection was contrasted with the 2008 inspection which had been carried out by an HMI-led team.

His rapport with the senior team was exceptional and with the teachers. And he did all that in I believe a day, but it might have been two days, I can’t remember. He didn’t have a big team of people, but he knew his stuff. I suppose I would say that because we were outstanding. Contrast that to the next experience where teams were sent into (name of county). It was a time with a national view that there were too many outstanding schools in (name of county) and we were going to kick them off their perch

so without doubt they knew what they wanted from the data before they came in and they were going to push us into good whether we liked it or not. If they didn't, if they didn't find the evidence they would, well they would find the evidence to do that.

(Teacher 3, Interview, 2019, p 5)

Teacher 3 is interpreted as being convinced that this perceived National Agenda stemmed from perceived new priorities arising from the appointment of Sir Michael Wilshaw to the post of HMCI in 2012. This perception would seem to have had some substance according to a Guardian article reporting on a speech from the new HMCI dating from the early days of that appointment "A quarter of schools rated as outstanding may be downgraded from this autumn, the chief inspector of England's schools has warned" (Shepherd, 2012). The article was published in the context reported in the same article that "unless schools had outstanding teaching, they could be stripped of an overall outstanding rating" echoing earlier comments by the Education Secretary Michael Gove (Shepherd, 2012).

In 2008 Teacher 3's school had achieved outstanding in its teaching rating and therefore should have had nothing to fear from having an existing rating removed without inspection but nonetheless the message of HMCI could be interpreted as meaning that too many schools rated outstanding in February 2012 did not merit the grade thereby possibly creating a subliminal agenda for inspectors reading the speech and a message for headteachers such as Teacher 3. It also could have implications for OFSTED's independence of government if interpreted as an example of HMCI following a lead given by the cabinet minister who had appointed him.

In 2013 both Teacher 3's school's teaching rating and its overall judgement grade did indeed slip to 2 following the inspection referred to retrospectively in the participant interview above. The expressed perception that this was the result of a pre-judgement is understandable in that context if not impossible to detach from possible emotion at the outcome. Teacher 3 freely admitted this could have been the case with the earlier satisfaction with the 2008 inspection. Teacher 3's reaction

to the 2008 inspection compared to that of 2013 could be seen as a perfect example of placement of trust followed by refusal (O'Neill, 2013). The former through an 'Outstanding' rating, the latter through a decline in grade or, at least as plausibly, in the existence of an underlying National Agenda for which a triangulated case can be made through Shepherd's reporting of the speech by HMCI (Shepherd, 2012).

Teacher 8's experience on which was based a perception of a pre-existing agenda was strikingly similar.

We'd just had what I thought were our best ever set of exam results. I think they were like 77- 8% A-C, but it was an inspection that was triggered by pupil premium and statemented students not doing as well in comparison and that was a really horrible experience because definitely the OFSTED team that came in there, there was only four or five of them weren't really interested too much in anything other, I felt they definitely came in with an agenda and it was all about trying to find the evidence to downgrade the school. So, the final judgement was good, but I do feel that they almost came with an agenda to try and knock the school down. (Teacher 8, Interview, 2019, p 3)

Again, it is not possible to detach this perception from an origin of disappointment and the focus of the OFSTED team on the underperforming pupils could be seen as perfectly justifiable in the circumstances. It is possible that a perfectly honestly held view of a suspicious pre agenda could be mistaken in a context of "placement or refusal of trust" by teachers in the sample (O'Neill, 2013, p 13).

A political origin for a pre-existing agenda was perceived by some participants to lay in the academy expansion programme of the Coalition and Conservative Governments in power from 2010 to 2016. This programme was seen by the then Prime Minister, David Cameron and his Deputy Nick Clegg in their foreword to the Education White Paper of 2010 (Department for Education, 2010) as a method

of devolving “as much power as possible to the front line whilst retaining high levels of accountability” (Department for Education, 2010, p 3-4). This phrase in itself can be seen as hitching OFSTED to the wagon of academisation and participants in the sample saw promotion and support of academisation of schools as another origin of pre-existing unofficial agendas underlying inspections.

Teacher 25, a teacher in a new academy programme which had gained a high profile in the national press after being established in the east of England witnessed what was perceived to be a highly unorthodox direct intervention in an OFSTED inspection by the then HMCI, Sir Michael Wilshaw.

Because it was (name of Chief Executive of governing trust)’s you know, baby, the school. It was supposed to be the Government’s sort of flagship school he decided to get involved. And there were so many teachers, again who were very inexperienced in floods of tears because he was just walking into rooms and barking at children. He was getting involved. And I remember really clearly that one of the questions he asked was something because one of the teachers were saying to him that we worked until 5.30 and he said ‘well don’t all schools finish at 5.30?’ Yeah. And I thought Jesus Christ you’re the head of OFSTED and you don’t even know? Unbelievable. (Teacher 25, Interview, 2019, p 3)

Direct intervention in an OFSTED inspection by HMCI is a highly unusual event in the experience of the author. It does not represent usual OFSTED inspection practice and the perception that this was motivated by external political factors is therefore understandable: the OFSTED report of this inspection makes no mention of HMCI’s participation in the Inspection Team - recorded as having been conducted by two named HMIs and another named Inspector (OFSTED, 2016b) - and the academy chain was a new one receiving national publicity. To balance this, the school was rated only ‘Good’ in the inspection whereas perhaps the expectation would be an ‘Outstanding’ grade had a pre-determined agenda been at work and HMCI applying possibly undue influence. Trust by Teacher

25 of HMCI here is interpreted to be a major casualty of the perception from the last two sentences of the extract.

Teacher 12 perceived unusual factors to be at work when the school which had been consistently rated as inadequate and maintained in Special Measures for an extended period suddenly improved in the eyes of an OFSTED inspection team despite perception that no material changes had taken place.

For us on the ground when we came out of Special Measures we didn't feel there had been any really noticeable improvements in management support and pupil behaviour which were the big things as far as we were concerned. And yet, suddenly, we come out of special measures because we've done better. And by the time we got the last report they were seeing far fewer members of staff. And I don't know to what extent it was engineered but we did, we did wonder whether there was a sort of picking and choosing of what was going on. And as I say whether it was a political decision. By that time, they'd decided they were going to close the school. They were going to make an academy, but they didn't want us to be still in special measures. And I may be being very cynical and very unfair and there may have been an awful lot of improvements that I wasn't particularly aware of: but I wasn't particularly aware of them (Teacher 12, Interview, 2019, p6)

This perception, matches that of Teacher 25 in only some respects, but body language and tone of voice in the interview indicated puzzlement at a verdict considered otherwise unexplainable and a perception particularly passionately felt. Teacher 12 concedes, perhaps with what could be interpreted as some sarcasm, that other material improvements could have taken place alongside those considered important and previously unmoving by staff. It is also the case that on becoming an academy a school is officially closed thereby retaining no possible stigma from previous OFSTED ratings that might be perceived as poor; therefore, motive for influencing a result as a result of a

pre-determined agenda is perhaps absent. "They" in this case was the Local Authority handing over to an Academy trust which could explain a desire not to hand over a school at rock bottom but any perception of Local Authority influence over OFSTED in any way is unmatched in the sample.

Nonetheless trust as defined by Ammeter et al, (2004) in the reported improvements is interpreted to be missing, perhaps withheld (O'Neill, 2013).

The HMCI's expressed desire to reduce the number of schools rated as 'Outstanding' (Shepherd, 2012) could possibly be a contributing factor to the perception of Teacher 21, a Senior Manager who had spent almost an entire career in one school.

So we were constantly getting notice to improve on what was actually a very, very good school and I've always been convinced some times by things that OFSTED inspectors have actually said that there was an agenda. Particularly as we were in an area where two other schools were very highly regarded by County. Erm one example I could give you of that is on one OFSTED, in the Head's office the Chief Inspector asked all the other inspectors. He went round and said 'would you send your child to this school?' And every one of those inspectors said 'definitely'. And what did we get? Notice to improve (Teacher 21, Interview, 2019, p 3)

Teacher 21 went on to explain a perception that two neighbouring schools were regularly awarded 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by OFSTED at inspection and the implication here was clear that only so many schools can be rated as outstanding in a locality. Earnestly expressed in interview, Teacher 21's view of the origins of an agenda stood alone in the sample and could be interpreted as arising from professional pride and its relationship with this teacher's own loyalty and metier (Green, 2014). Love of school is not guaranteed to reflect objective assessment and long term familiarity with one institution may possibly have influenced perspective. However, this is a study of perceptions and the view stands as such in its belief in the origin of a suspected pre-existing agenda. What does

resonate with other perceptions in the sample is an impact of OFSTED inspection manifested as a withholding of trust (O'Neill, 2013).

These perceptions of a pre-existing agenda outside of the public domain from OFSTED inspection teams were supported by related perceptions given below of how such agendas were implemented during inspection. If the unofficial agenda itself is seen as a manifestation of Foucauldian manufacture of knowledge (Foucault, 2001, p 12) then their implementation would follow as an exercise of power management (Foucault, 2001, p 52) through the OFSTED inspection as a medium of enquiry (Foucault, 2001, p 52).

Some perceptions referred to inspectors implementing a pre-determined agenda by simply not listening to anything that might counter or not relate to that agenda.

Well, overall I'm sure this is a lot of it, I think they came in to fail us. So they were looking to fail us. So, but I also had contact with other inspectors that actually weren't as bad, who would listen to you. We had a lay inspector who came and talked to us. And he was, he just wanted to listen to us (Teacher 17, Interview, 2019, p 6)

Some teams you were able to talk to and they were very understanding. Other teams came in with an agenda and whatever you tried to do, wanted to talk to them about they weren't listening. Erm. In some cases it had really detrimental effect on health, on staff. Made some staff very ill. So, people dreaded OFSTED (Teacher 15, Interview, 2019, p 7)

These perceptions of the receptivity of some inspectors from some teams are not blanket accusations in that they agreed with many others from the sample that not all OFSTED teams shut down answers. As above, participants often pointed to perceptions of experiences with OFSTED teams that were receptive and willing to listen. Where discussion was shut down in the ways so clearly recalled by Teachers 17 and 15 above however, the perception of Teacher 15 above about

serious implications for those subjected to such treatment was not isolated. Teacher 16 was also emphatic about the personal impact of criticism without meaningful dialogue.

So we're going from outstanding in 2010 and inadequate in 2013. It was just like a shock to the system. Erm and I would say that's the biggest hit, confidence wise on my teaching ever because I did have someone in my room watching me and she did tear me apart when we sat down and talked about the lesson. She clearly had an agenda and I still remember her name to this day. You know, I'll never forget her name and I came out, you know, absolutely in, you know, floods of tears, and went home in floods of tears. (Teacher 16, Interview, 2019, p 2)

The lesson was talked about but the direct perception of agenda in line 4 is supplemented by the phrase "she did tear me apart when we sat down and talked" interpreted as unwillingness to listen to any defence of the teaching methods used. In the view of Teacher 16 this unwillingness to receive a counter view was extended beyond merely that one lesson but was perceived as having been applied to the whole inspection judgement.

A lot of the time they make this judgement, and you go where the hell did that come from or, I see you're saying that because this is the agenda right now, not because. You're kind of ignoring certain things like a lot of the positive things that are going on. (Teacher 16, Interview, 2019, p 5)

This broader and passionate perception of inspectors deliberately accumulating only evidence that supported one view was echoed in both tone and content in the sample.

They know what they are going to see. I don't know whether they saw my stuff at all but er the overall school figures. And I think when they come in, they are possibly looking to embellish their report with some on the spot kind of reports about what they've seen. (Teacher 6, Interview, 2019, p 3)

This perception of targeting observations to support a pre held view from some teams or individual could scarcely be stronger as an accusation of closed mindedness and it did not stand alone in the sample.

I think that they came in with a view of what they thought the school was like. And sometimes, you know, on one occasion they wanted to prove their hypothesis, and on the other occasion it was that the inspector was more open to having a conversation.

(Teacher 18, Interview, 2019, p 7)

Teacher 18 does not accuse all teams, but the perception of a hunt for a particular type of evidence to support a pre-formed hypothesis resonates strongly with those of Teachers 6 and 16. Even if perceptions such of this are acknowledged as not being the norm their very existence would go a long way towards explaining an impact on teacher trust as defined by Ammeter *et al* (2004). No longer was an inspection perceived in the sample as a tabula rasa but as a means of reinforcing a pre-formed view. Any inspection judgement perceived to come from such a process undermines “an expectancy held by an individual or group that the word, promise verbal or written statement of another individual or group can be relied upon” (Ammeter et al, 2004, p 49).

Similarly, the implications for any idea of ‘Improvement Through Inspection’, OFSTED’s enduring strapline, could be undermined. If one pre-held view is suspected of being imposed by OFSTED , even some of the time, then hope of a school moving forward based on an inspection judgement perceived as flawed, is also damaged. Teacher 23, a retired headteacher deals with both a closed verdict and its impact on a school’s path forward.

And that was followed up a year later by the 1998 inspection which was absolutely appalling. Erm and you know we did object to it. I mean what was so appalling about that was it wasn’t an HMI inspection and it, it, you felt that the team came in with a set view. And I can remember sitting in the office, in (name of head)’s office and this guy went through all the categories and in every single category he said ‘poor’. And it was

sort of so damning that it wasn't really realistic. And I think we were all completely shell shocked after that. (Teacher 23, Interview, 2019, p 3)

And, later in the interview concerning the same inspection.

it was so damning. It was, it gave the school no light to reach out to it was bizarre because everything was poor, poor, poor and there were no constructive comments at all. (Teacher 23, Interview, 2019, p 10)

The expression of greater trust in the first extract from Teacher 23 above for HMI led inspections was not uncommon in the sample and will be revisited below, but delivery of such a comprehensively damning judgement is interpreted as the real destroyer of trust in this perception. Teacher 23 is interpreted as meaning that if a school is branded so bad as to have no redeeming features whatsoever then such a verdict must have been given through intention. The personal impact of the verdict was clear from Teacher 23.

But it left everybody devastated. The only way I can describe it. And I can remember coming home and being ashamed that I worked in such a terrible school. Because when you're given these judgements you think well, they must know what they're saying. But so much of what he said wasn't really fair. And I can remember us going through the report with a fine tooth comb. Erm and you know it was to no avail. (Teacher 23, Interview, 2019, p 3)

The last two sentences above describe a developing refusal to accept such a verdict and the ultimate denial of that view as being to no avail after appeal. The impact of that inspection on that school and its staff is interpreted from these experiences to have been a sense of a likely misuse of power (Foucault, 2001) on the grounds that no school should be so bad as to be denied any glimmer of hope by an organisation claiming to seek improvement. A second impact is interpreted as a denial of

trust (O'Neill, 2013) in the OFSTED inspection process at that time through the developing sense that the judgement had not been fair.

Another form of pre-determined agenda identified from the sample was that of the application in school inspections of personal agendas held by OFSTED inspectors or lead inspectors. The Registered or Lead Inspector from the earliest days of OFSTED has been expected to take a leading role in conducting the inspection according to the relevant education act in force at the time and in assembling a capable team (OFSTED, 1993b, p 8). Concerns were expressed by participants in this study when the influence of this Lead Inspector seemed to be taking an inspection away from the published evaluation criteria to be considered in making judgements on areas of the school's practice and on the school overall as perceived in the extract below.

I don't think since the 1990s I have had any trust in any of the OFSTED inspections at all. OFSTED lead inspectors that I've experienced have all had their own hobby horse that they've really tried to push. So I think definitely the first one at (name of school) had an agenda about data being God and was determined to knock (name of school) down. I think the second one was obsessed with marking in books so was literally walking into lessons and not even observing the teacher, just trying to fly through loads of books. And then the third one we had at (name of school) there was an obsession with boys' handwriting. I think that's the thing that has disappointed me so much in the three most recent OFSTEDs is that the personality and the particular focus of the Lead Inspector, is definitely a personal thing because the boys' handwriting thing there was nothing in the OFSTED criteria to prepare us for that so definitely, I felt that they've had personal agendas. (Teacher 8, Interview 2019, p 3)

Of the three individual foci of investigation identified in this perception as causing concern to the participant the first two, data interpretation and marking practice, clearly fall within the scope of any inspection. The participant's concern with them is interpreted here as being more about the ways

they were being investigated than with the fact they were being investigated at all. The methods used could be interpreted as rather blinkered in the case of the first, and unsubtle in the case of the second, but both are in accordance with published judgement criteria even if being looked at in ways perceived as flawed by the participant. The third, boys' handwriting, seems to be different in that appeared specifically in the official inspection report (OFSTED, 2016b, p 2) as a criticism of the presentation of the work of boys in particular and did not reflect any criteria for making a judgement in force at the time. The participant's perception of an unofficial "hobby horse" (Teacher 8, Interview, 2019) does therefore seem to be well founded.

Perceptions of pre-existing agendas stemming from inspectors own subject backgrounds and preferences unduly influencing inspection outcomes through disproportionate focus also featured in participants' interviews. Teacher 7, a senior manager with experience working with OFSTED as an inspector, saw such preference at work when an OFSTED lead inspector came to the school where Teacher 7 worked.

He was also an RE specialist and two of his team were RE specialists and so we knew, 1998, we knew that we were going to get beaten up about RE and RE was the key finding on the Inspection report. (Teacher 7, Interview, 2019, p 5)

Here the perception is interpreted as a combination of concerns. A feeling of vulnerability on RE at a time when, from the experience of the author, many schools were finding it difficult to meet the requirement to hold a whole school daily act of worship as required by law. This would have been compounded by the strength of the Lead Inspector in the area and undue proportion being placed on this one subject area perceived as being "beaten up" (Teacher 7, Interview, 2019, p 5)

Other questions of a pre conceived agenda were perceived as coming from a Lead Inspector focussing disproportionately on particular key stages in a school and applying a personal and unofficial calculation formula.

Again, we've always taken lots of managed move kids, lots of SEN kids. And er they weren't willing to take that into account. And of course, those sorts of kids have different life stories. He just wasn't interested. He was just interested in his little agenda which was KS3 he felt was underachieving in all schools therefore in his formula he felt it demonstrated underachievement. What he didn't realise is that our maths and English at that time were, he was using judgements at the end of Year 8 but that was what he put into his crude formula and he said you're underachieving at KS3, you're not outstanding. But I think he was wrong. I know he was wrong. (Teacher 3, Interview, 2019, p 5)

The link between a perceived misuse of power through an interpretation of knowledge being imposed without dialogue and a consequent withholding of trust (O'Neill, 2013) once again comes through as a perceived principal impact of OFSTED on schools and teachers. If the inspection process is not perceived as being immune from illegitimate pre-conceived agendas then the result for many in this sample has been the withholding of trust (O'Neill, 2013) in that process.

#### **4.6 OFSTED Inspections and School Policy and Practice**

This theme emerged from three others which featured strongly in participant interviews. On investigation of interpretations of the experiential codes making up each component theme a strong degree of overlap in participant perception was identified. Each component theme was seen to illuminate perceptions of closely related aspects of the research question identified in Chapter 2 which appeared as the interview question 'How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect the culture and practices of schools in which you have worked?' The first component theme 'OFSTED as drivers of school priorities and practice' appeared in 16 participant interviews; the second 'Policies were conceived principally or solely for OFSTED' appeared in 18 and the third 'OFSTED has led to excessive caution and formulaic practices in schools', appeared in 20. The degree of overlap was striking in that 11 of these interviews addressed all three sub-themes, 8 addressed

two of the three and only 5 mentioned one of these sub-themes alone. This justified marshalling these themes to look jointly at the 'Impact and Consequences of OFSTED inspection on school policy and practice' from slightly different angles since each sub-theme was subtly different yet connected through the common thread of adopted policy. The first looked at the extent to which the outcomes of OFSTED inspections and published priorities drove school strategic priorities and practice such as curriculum formation, ethos and data collection. The second looked not at general school direction but concentrated on individual policies perceived to have been imposed solely or principally to please past and future OFSTED inspection teams. The third investigated tactical considerations such as imposed protocols, teaching methods and monitoring and evaluation. The component themes will initially be considered separately to highlight their subtle differences but perceived overall impact on policy and practice will be considered jointly through the relationship between the three.

**i) Ofsted as Drivers of Practice**

Participants' comments were interpreted as accepting that OFSTED judgement categories and the implications of being awarded a grade in the public domain represented such "high stakes" (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 46) for a school that OFSTED's perceived and published priorities could not be ignored with impunity however unwilling a management team might be to accept extrinsic priorities (Peters, 1966). Teacher 4, a long term middle manager who was interviewed after recent promotion to the Senior Management Team, reflected a common perception of realpolitik and acceptance of Foucauldian governmentality and power (Foucault, 2001) in dealing with OFSTED.

There's sudden realisation that, guess what 25 years later that the interventionalist approach that they do set the agenda because they are, they are the arbiters of what success and failure looks like (Teacher 4, Interview, 2019, p5)

That kind of acceptance of the power and influence of any OFSTED team could explain the perceptions immediately below that OFSTED was a great influence in shaping culture and practice in a school, particularly those in more challenging circumstances perceived to be at great risk of falling

into the 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate' categories. (See below in this chapter for more detailed consideration of perceptions of the relationship between school circumstances and OFSTED category judgements). Perception of the developing direct influence of OFSTED category on school practice as the organisation moved into its later 'SEF' era after 2005 come across clearly from Teacher 11, an experienced senior manager then an adviser in a chain of faith schools.

And I think that was the difference it was er, with the early ones it was 'this is what the school does and this is how we do it' whereas with the later ones it was more a case of 'this is what OFSTED want we have to do it in this format' and we have to present it to them in this format and if we don't get that they're not going to give us the badge that says whatever we are (Teacher 11, Interview, 2019, p 4)

The importance of the "badge" (Teacher 11, Interview, 2019, p 4) or OFSTED judgment category is implicit in the extract and is developed in a perception of the type of practice engendered by a perceived need to gain the organisation's approval by adaption to its latest inspection format.

They want something that is easily bundle-able and sold to OFSTED not something that needs a five minute explanation. And I think with OFSTED being such a short process – which I grant you is a hell of a lot better than a full OFSTED – it will be that schools avoid it if they can't sell it quickly, if they can't sell it on a spreadsheet, then its pointless.

(Teacher 10, Interview, 2019, p 4)

A dislike of the process comes across here in tandem with an acceptance of its influence on school policy and practice. This could be interpreted as the bite-sized format adopted for OFSTED shaping the policy with implications for staff and pupils in that a policy so conceived could be in danger of not fulfilling its full educational purpose in a trade off with a perceived favoured OFSTED format. This could have much the same distortive effect on the educational quality and effect of a policy as the Eurovision format imposed on a song does on musical quality.

Perceptions of a powerful outcomes focus adopted as an impact of OFSTED inspection were strongly expressed and common among the sample.

Well we became results driven. Which now makes me laugh. And I think the ironic one, Amanda Spielman saying. And I, you know, I celebrate it but hang on a minute, you were part of that. You created that fear culture. You created us all looking at outcomes.

(Teacher 27, Interview, 2020, p7)

I know we appointed someone on the Senior Leadership Team whose responsibility was solely data. I think also that the culture of the school very much became one of accountability then in terms of exam results and also about people feeling very much in terms that exam results were everything (Teacher 8, Interview, 2019, P4-5)

These perceptions can be interpreted as a frustration of being pushed in a direction clearly not welcomed by these participants. The deeper question now suggests itself as to why they might be so passionately opposed to an outcomes focus. Teacher 29's perception is of damage done to pupils.

It was more outcomes focused. In terms of what's coming out the end of this er, you know, this being, this school. So, I think that was one that there was an unintended hold back on curriculum development within schools and what schools might do to reflect their context, what they might do to meet the needs of their pupils. And you've then of course that allowed some of these, I have to be careful here, don't I? Really poor quality. I suppose they were termed, I suppose you'd call them Applied GCSEs. These courses that came in equivalent to four GCSEs. (Teacher 29, Interview 2020, p 17)

An explanation of the trend for courses that were accredited by OFQUAL as being the equivalent of multiple GCSE passes thereby having a dramatic effect on a school's outcome statistics is given in the extract above. Its more general point of creating tension between a centrally created demand for statistical outcomes and the curriculum needs for pupils is stark example of the effect of an

accountability system valuing extrinsic factors (Peters, 1966) above teachers' professional judgement of the needs of pupils in a particular educational context. This perception of conformity by SMTs to centrally prioritised external requirements exemplifies Foucauldian docility and provides an example of panopticism (Perryman, 2006) in action. This perception of damaging effect from a narrowed curriculum addressing central priorities was by no means an isolated example.

They were making decisions based on what they thought OFSTED wanted to see and what other accountability measures wanted – which wasn't what was the best for the kids - so, for example, they, you know, the EBACC measurement and the Progress 8 measurement. They narrowed the curriculum in this school where the kids needed, they needed Design Technology you know, they needed mechanics, building, cookery kind of stuff and the options; they created options where they had to do a humanities subject and it was just madness. Just think about these kids futures rather than what you think OFSTED want. (Teacher 18, Interview 2019, p 7)

Teacher 18 had multiple experience of the operation of schools having served as a head of department, a Local Authority adviser and a university PGCE tutor. This perception therefore is based on experience in a very large number of schools. Both the EBACC and Progress 8 measures referred to here were initiated from central government by Michael Gove as Secretary of State for Education. Neither were ever made compulsory, but the EBACC was first included in Secondary School Accountability measures in 2010 (DfE, 2013) and Progress 8 from 2016 "as the headline indicator of school performance" (DfE, 2021). As such both became part of the performance indicators for a school to be considered by OFSTED in school inspections. By giving more statistical value to some subjects than others they did create incentives for Senior Management Teams to narrow the curriculum thereby giving contextual weight to Teacher 18's perception above of a central focus desensitising the curriculum to some pupil needs and forcing schools down a similar line irrespective of the context in which the school operated and the community it served. Teacher

23's frustration as head of a school in challenging circumstances faced with judgement based increasingly on outcomes was expressed very clearly.

You felt you were constantly having to, I don't know, prove the unproveable. You see and about this time I began to feel that you know the Emperor wasn't wearing any clothes because things were being said out of context and suddenly all schools had to achieve the same results irrespective of the nature of the intake and you know it was just crazy. (Teacher 23, Interview, 2019, p 5)

Some participants saw ultimate positives in OFSTED pressure to move in a certain direction even if resistant at first to imposed change. Teacher 23, without moving away from comments above, did not deny some benefit to the school from the influence of OFSTED suggesting that the picture of being forced to change was a complex one.

So it did change things. It took the fun out of teaching and learning in many ways. But in some ways the planning that came out of it was a beneficial thing in the end. So I wouldn't like to say that there were no positive outcomes from it. (Teacher 23, Interview, 2019, p 8)

Teacher 13's perception below is interpreted as one of unpleasant medicine tasted in order to allow future flexibility of approach under an 'Outstanding' "badge" (Teacher 11, Interview, 2019, p 4).

I mean the SLT has changed so it was partly to do with people but it is also partly to do with the OFSTED inspection but there was, it felt like the was kind of like a very rigid 'this is the plan, you all follow it'. As soon as we got that outstanding inspection, it changed. And everybody went then actually we can do what we want. And what works in maths is not necessarily the thing that's going to work in humanities and not necessarily the thing that's going to work in MFL. So there felt like there was much more a culture of trust after that point. (Teacher 13, Interview, 2019, p 7)

As in the perceptions of Teachers 29 and 18 above of OFSTED driven change operating through complicit SMTs anxious to win OFSTED's approval Teacher 13's perception is interpreted as SMT applying a strict OFSTED directed plan to achieve a certain category, here 'Outstanding', which then provided leeway to allow professional flexibility in future. Teacher 29 from experience working with OFSTED perceives rigidity to have been necessary to allow some schools to build a platform to improve. This perception does gel with Teacher 13's perception of freedom being launched from a re-established solid foundation or from a solid foundation established for the first time.

I think those schools undoubtedly felt more inhibited, particularly around teaching and learning, there was very much an approach taken there of worrying about the next inspection and what might happen. Therefore, we need to play to what they created as their party line. No there's no doubt though just to be fair on that, that Special Measures schools usually were so chaotic that there had to be a party line by the leadership. They had to actually knock some people into line to actually get behaviour sorted perhaps even to get some basic teaching done in lessons. (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 18)

Teacher 24 paints a similar positive picture of OFSTED requirements imposed through SMT rigidity having some beneficial effects in just the sort of school described by Teacher 29 above. Teacher 24 at the point described here had just taken on a role as Deputy Head in a fresh start school in the inner-city.

You know obviously if you're going to a fresh start school you were going to have to put all the systems and the monitoring in place. And you know when OFSTED came in obviously, we dissected their reports and looked at what they felt were weaknesses. It just people under pressure. And I think some of them felt – suspicion. And others really rose to it. You know like trying to get heads of department to understand their

responsibility for their departments and working with them. (Teacher 24, Interview, 2019, p 5)

In a situation where heads of department were perceived as not fully understanding the responsibilities to their own departments it can be appreciated why rigid guidance from an external body would be a useful reference point and indeed anchor from which to stabilise the school. Perceptions of suspicion from some teachers and of others having risen to requirements are interpreted as directly related to their reactions to that perceived as change imposed from without: the former group are interpreted as having grudgingly complied with requirements or having resisted change, whereas the latter group are likely to have reacted enthusiastically to new policies and practices conceived and imposed by the SMT to comply with OFSTED criticism. A Foucauldian view of the latter group acting with docility (Foucault, 1991, p 136) to policies exemplifying governmentality (Foucault, 2001) and Panopticism (Perryman, 2016) could explain this and accordingly could see the first group as individually or professionally independent. Alternatively, the former group could be seen as stubborn resisters of change and the latter concerned for the greater good of the school. Without seeing the actual policies involved or being able to talk to the teachers reacting to the policies it is hard to delve further. Foucauldian labels are not helpful here without greater detail but even if this had been forthcoming it would always be hard to distinguish reaction to the policies themselves from reaction to a perception of imposition.

The complexity of reaction emerges further with two perceptions from one teacher. Teacher 17, a long serving middle manager over three decades in a school that had spent long periods in Special Measures following an 'Inadequate' judgement from OFSTED, at first comes across as an acceptor of change.

They said, so one typical example was lesson plans people used to write. Now lesson plans had to all be written before OFSTED came but to be used all the time. You had

your lesson plans and they had to go to the management team. (Teacher 17, Interview, 2019, p 4)

The lesson plans referred to were explained earlier in the interview to be a new, common format imposed by SMT after OFSTED inspection. No great enthusiasm comes across here, but the change has clearly been complied with. But compliance perhaps doesn't tell the whole story.

That was all it was because I can honestly say I did not teach, let's just take hitting in rounders, any different from the first year I taught to when I left. We still taught the same thing despite folder after folder after folder. (Teacher 17, Interview, 2019, p 2)

Compliance here is not interpreted as meaning the same thing as wholehearted acceptance. It is strongly implied here from the word "despite" that the technique for hitting being actually taught is not that included in the folders. This illustrates the possible limits to imposed change. No SMT can monitor every lesson from every teacher, every day. If a change is not wholeheartedly accepted it can be evaded. Imposition had failed in this case but perhaps would not have done so had it been accompanied by persuasion. Docility (Foucault, 1991, p 186) appears on the surface here and governmentality (Foucault, 2001) appears to be in operation through apparent compliance; but Teacher 17 is not accepting, and is not interpreted as being docile having apparently maintained unchanged practice against the wishes of OFSTED channelled through the SMT over three decades. Panopticism (Perryman, 2006) has also broken down with this example as has "the gaze" (Foucault, 2003, p 138) or unseen surveillance which has failed to uncover that "which has remained hidden and unseen" (O'Farrell, 2005, p 39).

The final word on OFSTED as drivers of practice bringing multiple benefits to the school comes from Teacher 20, an SMT member in a school previously categorised as good which found itself placed in Special Measures after being graded 'inadequate' following OFSTED inspection regarding an issue of safeguarding. Teacher 20 talked of an uncomfortable and extended period of monitoring inspections as a largely supportive experience.

And then the monitoring visits would be, we had about three, so about once every term and a half sort of thing. Erm and they were quite a different feel actually and quite an exhausting but quite positive experience. So it's a very different aim like the role of the monitoring inspector is to get you out of measures. That's his job and while he could be a bit of a git but he was, what they were saying was supportive. It was less judgement more 'OK I see this is happening have you, how are you going to tackle that?' And they're not allowed to advise you but in the conversations you have you kind of get that way. And you, yeah. I found monitoring visits quite useful. (Teacher 20, Interview, 2019, p 6-7)

The direct support mentioned above was perceived as welcome and Teacher 20's voice and body language during the interview signalled relief at what was interpreted as having the way out of Special Measures subtly signposted. This perceived need among the sample for support as well as diagnosis from OFSTED will be dealt with as a specific theme later in this chapter. The school emerged from Special Measures transformed as Teacher 20 went on to explain.

Yeah. It's undeniable. It's hard but we're a better school now because of what happened. And you can't argue with that. Children deserve a good education and it's better. Curriculum's better. Support in place is better. Monitoring everything is better, tighter. And I think actually we're more confident partly because we're just used to it. But also now knowing what they're looking for kind of helps you to provide that. And they're looking for it for a reason because it's what we should be doing. So I think, whereas before we can't, we thought things were ok, I think maybe we were probably a bit naïve. It was a big wake up call. Teacher 20, Interview, 2019, p 9-10

That this perceived improvement was the result of direct conformity with the requirements of the original OFSTED report and the subtle guidance of the Monitoring Inspector is evident from the two extracts from Teacher 20. The perception of a greatly improved school matched that of OFSTED

since the school did emerge from Special Measures but the enthusiasm with which the perception above is expressed indicates more than a cynical complicity. Teacher 20 is interpreted as wholeheartedly believing the changes to the school to be a good thing readily attributable to the driving force of OFSTED inspection; to epitomise 'Improvement by Inspection'. The interpretation is also that she will continue to press for similar improvements in future. OFSTED saw them as improvements. Teacher 20 saw them as improvements. Can the latter be put down simply to the successful operation of Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016) in that constant movement of what constitutes improvement has worn down Teacher 20 to the point that judgement is no longer that person's own? Or should it be put down to an idea of improvement being shared by OFSTED and Teacher 20's professional judgement? An indication of this perhaps will come from the long term development and wellbeing or otherwise of the pupils of that school. The jury is out. The ultimate measure of school improvement is the degree to which that school fulfils the needs of its pupils. Since each pupil is an individual with different needs it seems that school improvement can only ever be a best fit measure based on the needs of an ever-changing pupil body. This returns to the idea of subjectivity of the operation and effect of any accountability system (Hall et al, 2003, p 32) as discussed in Chapter 2. It also revisits the idea expressed there that boosting one measure of success such as exam results can adversely affect pupil wellbeing and vice versa. The perfect system can never exist.

## **ii) Policies for OFSTED Approval**

The perceptions above concerned OFSTED as drivers of school practice whereby a school's strategic priorities were perceived to have been influenced by OFSTED inspection into a direction different from that which might otherwise have been followed had the school been left to its own devices. Closely related were participant perceptions of SMT teams so anxious to please OFSTED inspectors that school policies were perceived to have been devised principally or solely for that purpose rather than for what participants judged to be for the good of the school and its pupils. In some extreme

cases such policies were perceived to go so far as to neglect or run counter to the interests of pupils and teachers in the school.

Motivation for such extreme desire to please any future inspection team was perceived to be closely related to the desire to achieve a particular OFSTED judgement category or “badge” (Teacher 11, Interview, 2019, p 4). The two most commonly referred to judgement categories in the experiential codes for this study were ‘Outstanding’, mentioned 67 times and ‘Special Measures’, mentioned on 51 occasions. The latter was in fact a consequence of an ‘Inadequate’ judgement rather than a judgement category in its own right but frequently referred to as a “badge” because of perception of accompanying publicity and associated stigma. The desire to gain an ‘Outstanding’ judgement or to escape from ‘Special Measures’ were frequently mentioned in the sample as great incentives for change.

The school came out very well erm I think they got outstanding from this overall, and I suppose when you are graded excellent that there’s less follow-up to do, really.

(Teacher 14, Interview, 2019, p 3)

A release of pressure from achievement of the ‘Outstanding’ judgement is the perceived incentive here. This matches the perception of Teacher 13 in the section above of this chapter where ‘Outstanding’ opened the door to increased trust and freedom within the school. This incentive is interpreted as coming initially from the kudos of an external OFSTED validation of the school’s practice awarding the highest judgement available under the system. This would make criticism of the school from other outside sources such as the press very difficult indeed and give great freedom of action to its SMT. This was joined in 2012 by the even greater incentive that schools achieving an ‘Outstanding’ judgement were officially exempted from routine OFSTED inspection. In practice this meant that many such schools went uninspected for a decade until the exemption was rescinded in 2020 (Adams, 2020). Such a period of complete freedom from the pressure of impending routine

inspection was unprecedented in the OFSTED era and makes Teacher 14's perception rather an understatement.

The "High stake" nature (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 46) of the OFSTED system and the extent to which an 'Outstanding' judgement was valued becomes very clear from the perception of Teacher 25. This great valuing had been exemplified by the constant emphasis to the staff that only an 'Outstanding' judgement would be regarded as good enough and the consequent introduction of initiatives to that end.

I mean it was all based around OFSTED and every single thing was like a scheme or an initiative that would make sure that we were an outstanding school. But like I said it was so weird because the people in charge of it didn't have that experience or that like. And so they kept giving us all these initiatives and they didn't follow any of them through.

(Teacher 25, Interview, 2019, p 4)

This perceived focus of the destabilising effect of constant short-lived changes perceived as being flagged primarily to please OFSTED rather than for any intrinsic educational value is stark. The effect of these unfollowed up and short lived initiatives is interpreted as effectively undermining the next announcement of policy and its effect on credibility of the SMT is clear from the extract. After such emphasis on the value of an 'Outstanding' judgement and the unacceptability of any other the impact of the award of an overall 'Good' judgement came with a perceived sense of failure – at least from the headteacher in question.

No. they got good with outstanding. And the head at the time, (name) she was absolutely gutted. Like actually cried in the briefing when she told us. And she told us she was going to invite them back in in a month's time to re-do it. And of course, the whole staff went 'what?! That's not going to happen' and she backed down on that in the end. (Teacher 25, Interview, 2019, p 6)

The significant point here is interpreted as the willingness of this headteacher to put her staff through the upheaval of an immediate second inspection merely to improve on what was already a very high OFSTED judgement - albeit silver gilt rather than gold in the eyes of this head. This would be very likely to impact on both staff and pupils in the months since in the experience of the author and of many participants in the sample undergoing even one OFSTED inspection is an experience inducing enduring exhaustion. Attention in the local press for particularly high or low headline judgement grades was mentioned several times in the sample and is interpreted to be a factor here in this headteacher's drive to gain an outstanding judgement. Press attention was also mentioned as a factor contributing to the desire to escape from 'Special Measures'.

At the other end of the scale for schools constantly being judged by OFSTED as 'Requires Improvement' or being placed into 'Special Measures' the only way to escape the consequent spotlight of, respectively, re-inspection in a period of no more than 30 months or of constant monitoring inspections is to achieve a 'Good' judgement. This was perceived by Teacher 26, a middle manager in a succession of schools in challenging circumstances in the inner-city as giving total focus to gaining approval from OFSTED at the next inspection.

Certainly, the feeling of doing stuff for OFSTED was certainly in (name of schools 2 and 3). Was certainly about, most of my experience obviously comes from those schools so it was very much about everything we did was geared to making sure we got out of Requires Improvement or out of Special Measures. (Teacher 26, Interview, 2019, p 3)

Again, the perceived priority of judgement grade above all else again emphasises the high stakes (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 46) nature of the OFSTED system and the danger of imparting to staff that work is for OFSTED's sake rather than for the pupils. This is interpreted as dangerous in that a professional teacher from his or her metier (Green, 2011) is much more likely to work hard for the benefit of the pupils than for the benefit of a remote organisation. If this work is perceived to

benefit both the school's OFSTED rating and pupils thereby working in harmony with metier (Green, 2011) that is not necessarily damaging, but when work is presented or perceived as benefitting only OFSTED then it is there that the danger of de-motivation and bitterness can creep in: as in the perception below.

Oh yeah, I mean you, you ended up having to produce piles of paperwork for the sake of it. I mean all the policies. Had to be there on everything even down to wiping your bloody arse, basically. (Teacher 2, Interview, 2019, p5)

The perception of useless work and the crude exaggeration to illustrate the frustration that resulted speak volumes here of the potential damage of perceived diversion from metier (Green, 2011). The exasperation comes across clearly from this extract and came across even more clearly in Teacher 2's body language and angry intonation.

The weariness from constant change and resulting repetition of work also came across from Teacher 17's interview.

By the later ones we had to use: lesson plan. Here is your lesson plan format. And every single lesson must be written like this then it got changed before the next one and now it's got to be like this. Development plans they've got to be like this then they've got to be like that. Policies, risk assessments. (Teacher 17, Interview, 2019, p 5)

The perception of one perfectly good lesson plan format being replaced by another as a result of instruction alone is interpreted as possibly coming from a lack of explanation – or a lack of understanding of an explanation - from SMT as to why a change of format was necessary. The blame may or may not have rightfully lain with OFSTED, but this could explain why Teacher 17 jumped to the conclusion in the wider interview that OFSTED was responsible for a change she perceives above as being unnecessary and futile. It is also interpreted as possible that SMT could have deliberately diverted blame or allowed it to fall on OFSTED. That a remote organisation can be easy and

convenient scapegoat for unpopular change did emerge from perceptions in the sample. More than one SMT was perceived as acting as a “quasi OFSTED” by Teacher 9 (Interview, 2019, p 4) from a perspective of middle manager and PGCE tutor.

SMT too could find itself caught up in work perceived to be necessary only for OFSTED. Teacher 21 described a system put in place by the principal of the school to pre-empt any possible line of OFSTED questioning.

He started something, it was a clerical name within the school, the ten folders. It became the six folders, it became the five folders. Just as I was leaving it was becoming the four folders but they were the pillars of OFSTED. They were based on the pillars of OFSTED. And we would write extensively everything we had done in that period of time with also where we were going to go. Claim statements and things like this. OFSTED changed its requirements so often we were doing this at least twice a year. And I would say. I remember spending one whole half term doing nothing but working on one of those when I first joined the leadership team. But I would say it would take 3-4 weeks of writing every time we did it. So we were doing it twice a year. (Teacher 21, Interview, 2019, p 4)

The size and time consuming nature of this clerical task is clear from the perception. This writing about what had been done as a purely defensive measure against OFSTED can only have detracted from Teacher 21’s day to day duties and priorities as a senior manager. The perception of doing nothing but work on these retrospective looking folders for extended periods is alarming from a point of view of moving the school forward and seems to detract from the stated OFSTED mission of Improvement through Inspection maintained to this day but refreshed in 2019 to read “Ofsted exists to be a force for improvement through intelligent, responsible and focused inspection and regulation” (OFSTED, 2019, p 4). The addition of the adjectives “intelligent responsible and focused” could imply a perception from OFSTED of previous deficiencies but nonetheless inspection remained

at the heart of OFSTED's strategy for school improvement. Defence against inspection regarding this extract from Teacher 21 is interpreted as a key factor which is preventing senior managers going about their role which might reasonably be seen as one of providing forward looking leadership. If leadership is detracted by such a task, then staff priorities could also fragment. This perception provides a stark example of policy generated solely for OFSTED, and an equally stark example of how this could be counter-productive in terms of school improvement.

The perception of an outcomes focus from OFSTED, particularly after 2012, was discussed in the section 'OFSTED as drivers of practice' above as a perceived force for narrowing the curriculum. It was also seen within the sample as providing incentive for curriculum manipulation in order to maximise results and show linear progress from pupils from the point of entry into the school in Year 8.

You knew that the children had to move up at least a level, in history from whatever they were when they came in to a different one again. But if you started off looking at say. Interpretation or significance, one of the difficult aspects of the KS curriculum as it was then, and you ended up with learning and understanding, or knowledge and understanding that actually their levels would go up. (Teacher 12, Interview, 2019, p 3)

Whilst it was the order of the content that was being manipulated here rather than the content of the course itself, it is clear from the perception that the motive was to create an impression of linear progress by covering the more challenging topics first. An alternative view might suggest that it would make sense to introduce new pupils gently with confidence building topics then move onto more challenging work from an established platform of confidence. This is debateable, but the interpreted concern here from the participant was that the starting point for this policy was not the need to optimise the pupils' educational experience but to manipulate it in a way designed to please what was perceived as an outcomes-focussed inspectorate. This can be seen as a form of external control of not only what was taught as hoped for by Prime Minister James Callaghan in his Ruskin

Speech (Callaghan, 1976), but of the order in which it was taught even if that risked running counter to the needs of the pupil. Teacher 12's professional judgement has been overruled by a head of department to please an external, Government initiated, body in a clear example of governmentality (Foucault, 2001) in terms of central control and panopticism (Perryman, 2006) in terms of self-regulation in anticipation of being inspected.

A particularly strong thread from participants' perceptions of policies conceived for the sake of OFSTED was the example of unrealistic and unsustainable marking practices imposed on teachers by SMT following a comment in an inspection report, or in an attempt to second guess OFSTED requirements and forestall such a comment. This extract from Teacher 8 encapsulates both concerns.

I think there's been ridiculous things in terms of marking policies and the colour pen you should use to provide feedback and I think it's done a lot of harm and although we've resisted it as a school, we always feel worried that because we're not following the latest bandwagon or the latest big thing that we'll always be caught out so I think we're second guessing ourselves rather than having confidence in the fact that what we're doing is right. We're doing our best and actually we're values-driven I think that sadly is, has gone so it has created a real sense of uncertainty that what you are doing is going to be good enough for OFSTED rather than what would be far better is all of us thinking is what we're doing right for the pupils? (Teacher 8, Interview, 2019, p 12)

The "bandwagon" reference above is interpreted as the rumours that circulate before a new framework and its likely interpretation by OFSTED inspectors, as referred to by Teacher 7 above in the 'Inspection as Power, Truth and Knowledge' section of Chapter 3, (Teacher 7, Interview, 2019, p 3) becomes familiar. It is then that Teacher 8's perception of fear of failing in second guessing OFSTED's likely focus and doubt in the school's own practice would apply. The tension between being values driven and OFSTED driven is interpreted as the knob of the extract. "Values driven"

implies internal choice from professional judgement and Teacher 8 clearly perceives OFSTED driven as meaning exactly the opposite and a diversion from the real work of the school. Overlaps with the implications of Teacher 12s perceptions and with echoes of governmentality (Foucault, 2001) and panopticism (Perryman, 2006) are clear. Resistance has proven possible here with the rejection of perceived pressure to adopt what were seen as over-complex feedback procedures but not all schools have been so resolute. Complete Foucauldian docility (Foucault, 1991, p 136) may have been resisted here but that was not always the case within the sample.

Teacher 16 perceived the roots of an unworkable marking policy to lay in comments made in an OFSTED report which gave the school an 'Inadequate' judgement (OFSTED, 2013).

Erm you know, some of the things that they picked up on. Like the marking, for example. Yeah, OK, the marking could be better, you know. That was one of the big things they criticised was marking and feedback. Fair enough. It wasn't good enough but then obviously the school took that and went completely you know, super, super crazy on a new marking policy that was absolutely impossible to deal with and implement and keep up with. (Teacher 16, Interview, p 7)

The perception reflected the fact that OFSTED had directly criticised marking and feedback in the report saying, "Students' work is not always marked, and where it is marked the comments do not always make clear to students what they need to do to improve their work." (OFSTED, 2013, p 1). This criticism however could have been addressed without imposing a marking policy of extreme complexity that could not be implemented effectively. The blame for that can only lay with the school's SMT who would have designed the new policy, and Teacher 16 partially acknowledges this in the reference to the school going "super, super crazy". OFSTED had only criticised the existing policy and did not specify any particular modification or replacement. The OFSTED requirement was only that marking should happen consistently and should make clear what students needed to do to improve their work. The new and unworkable marking policy was designed to meet an OFSTED

requirement, but it was not a policy produced solely or principally to please OFSTED even though it was, at least partially, seen as such here. The new policy tried, and seems to have failed, to address a shortcoming affecting students' education that had been highlighted by OFSTED. Only in that sense was it designed to please OFSTED at a subsequent inspection. The existence of such a shortcoming was an affront to teachers' professionalism and OFSTED's only contributions were to have found and highlighted it. The reality here shows that here OFSTED were responsible only for identifying a failing of practice - acknowledged as such by teacher perception – but not for designing the impossibly unworkable remedy. In this case external requirements shared a goal with professional judgement. SMT missed that goal through misjudgement. An effective marking and feedback policy is essential for any educational focus and it has perhaps been too easy within the sample to perceive OFSTED as the villain of the piece as originator of a failed and unpopular policy.

Teacher 28 was clearer about where the blame lay for unworkable policy perceiving that SMT used the threat of OFSTED deliberately as a motivational tool through fear

We have a new Head and he's at every staff briefing he's on and on about OFSTED. But talk about, we talk about history demonising the enemy, well it's a bit like demonising OFSTED so every staff briefing OFSTED are coming. Don't get complacent, OFSTED 'll be on their way. And then of course just before Christmas we did have OFSTED. And I was a (indistinct), and then we had a meeting just before the Christmas holiday about OFSTED and then coming back after Christmas the first words out of the Head's mouth again were 'this is what OFSTED found'. (Teacher 28, Interview, 2020, p 2)

This perception of unsettling and constant use of the threat of OFSTED by SMT had emerged before in the sample as was shown above in this section through the perceptions of Teachers 25 and 17.

The corollary of Teacher 28's perception above, illustrated in a second perception below, is that over rigid and formulaic policies were being subtly passed off and accepted by other members of staff as necessary to please OFSTED yet were a product of the management of the academy chain.

The practice of the school is now more about ticking boxes than ever before and the boxes aren't directly from OFSTED the boxes are from (name of academy trust) as in you must meet and greet at the door. You're supposed to shake hands with the pupils as they come in. I mean that's mad. I don't know how many teachers do that. Shaking hands with 30 kids as they try to come through your door. And you're supposed to do this. I told you the Head issued a 20 point guideline of what we're supposed to do in lessons. (Teacher 28, Interview, 2020, p 3-4)

Policies such as this in the experience of the author inhibit rather than enhance learning. Whilst taking the time to shake every pupil's hand those already greeted and in the room are effectively unsupervised, creating a disorderly start to learning. Time has been wasted where learning could have been taking place. Additionally, it might be possible to follow a three or four point guide for the conduct of lessons but one of twenty points would be difficult to recall without constantly referring to the document and taking eyes of the pupils. Damage will be done that can in no way be attributed to anything about OFSTED apart from the fact that the organisation exists and is able to be demonised relatively easily by an SMT create an atmosphere of acceptance or imposed Foucauldian docility (Foucault, 1991, p 136). Control here is being exercised internally, not externally, through formulaic practice.

Perceptions of the existence of formulaic practice in schools and the attribution of these to both OFSTED and SMTs were strong amongst the sample and will be interpreted below.

### **iii) Caution and Formulaic Practices in Schools**

Teacher 29's perception, given from an OFSTED perspective on that occasion, visited earlier in the section 'OFSTED as drivers of practice' was clear that there was a need for rigid, imposed policies in some schools to dispel what is interpreted as disorganisation and uncertainty, particularly those in 'Special Measures'.

I think those schools undoubtedly felt more inhibited, particularly around teaching and learning, there was very much an approach taken there of worrying about the next inspection and what might happen. Therefore, we need to play to what they created as their party line. No there's no doubt though just to be fair on that, that Special Measures schools usually were so chaotic that there had to be a party line by the leadership. (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 18)

The perception is equally clear here that the responsibility for imposing such measures lay with the school's leadership but was approved of as necessary by OFSTED in the phrase "we need to play to what they created". In both a situation of disorder and in one of rigid, imposed policy the scope for application of teacher professionalism and metier (Green, 2016) is minimised. In the former situation teaching creatively could be difficult through an atmosphere of chaos spreading to classrooms. In the latter, personal freedom to apply professional judgement to a situation would be very difficult indeed. Neither situation seems to be completely satisfactory regarding professional freedom but since the latter, at least according to the perception of Teacher 29, is necessary to prevent the former the question to be examined would seem to be whether rigidity does more good than harm or vice versa. The perceptions below do have much in common regarding this question.

Teacher 29 saw OFSTED as complicit in approval of an SMT strategy. Perceptions below do indicate appreciation within the sample that the measures described were designed by SMT, but the extent to which OFSTED was seen as the force ultimately responsible is less easy to determine.

Perceptions of formulaic and rigid systems fell into two categories: those designed to inform teaching through systematic recording data on pupils and those designed to influence, even dictate, practice in the classroom. Teacher 26's perception addressed both.

As well as you having the fact that there was lots and lots of drop-ins there was one thing called 'Get Teaching'. And this was a check list that had to be met for you to get beyond a 'four'. So this was various things like lesson objectives, literacy objective on

the board. Your questioning. All of those things. Standard kind of stuff. But also, that you had to have a spot folder which is a folder with your lesson plans, your seating plans. Detailed data analysis information. Who's doing what. All this sort of stuff. And that you had to have with you. If you didn't have that on you, you would get a 'four' immediately. Right? Absolute 'four' – inadequate lesson – if you haven't got that book, folder. So that folder was massively heavy. (Teacher 26, Interview, p 4)

The rigidity of the immediate lesson fail from lack of possession of a data folder is perceived as absolute. Adoption of the recommended standard teaching techniques as an essential element of any higher classification also comes across strongly. Teacher 26 was employed in an inner-city school in Special Measures at the time described in the extract so such rules would fall into the realm of necessity from Teacher 29's earlier perception. Pupils would here receive a standard offering from lesson to lesson regarding pedagogical technique but the application of some professionalism is interpreted as still being possible through each lesson's unique subject content and the teacher's knowledge of such. It is not possible to judge harm or good from such a short extract apart perhaps from possible pupil boredom with constant replication of teaching techniques but Teacher 26's tone and body language reflected exasperation at being so confined in technique and perceived injustice at the immediate fail from a forgotten folder was evident. Professional satisfaction was interpreted as missing and exasperation as very much present.

Teacher 16 described an imposed underlying data system to inform teaching and to guide intervention.

We have to on an electronic file we write for each class we write their name, we write down what target they should be at, where they're at and what their barrier to learning is; why aren't they getting that target? But you can't focus it too much on behaviour. They say oh no, no, no. You can't write an issue on behaviour down which is a little bit like. Ok, why is it they're not (indistinct) learning well? They're not like, getting much

breakfast in the morning. I can't really think about this so myself but then you have to sort of like say what you're doing about it. And then every half term you go back to that. You then review it and then you write down what effect that action has had on that child's learning. Erm and you do that every half term and, I mean it takes a long time.

(Teacher 16, Interview, 2019, p 4)

Teacher 16 made it clear that "they" here was the SMT, not the OFSTED team even though the inspection report had identified serious weakness in information gathering saying "The information gathered about how well students are doing does not focus sufficiently on their progress" (OFSTED, 2013). The frustration of dealing with an imposed system but being unable to write what was perceived as the real cause of pupil underachievement comes across in the extract. This is interpreted as a clue to where Teacher 16 apportions blame. Any reference to behaviour as an obstacle to learning might satisfy the OFSTED requirement above but could also shoot the school in the foot by effectively admitting to OFSTED that behaviour was preventing progress which would explain its prohibition by the SMT or "they" on design of the policy. Being forced to operate a system which effectively would conceal the underlying reason for lack of pupil progress robs Teacher 16 of professional judgement and could harm pupils educationally. The policy may have stemmed from an OFSTED comment, but any damage done seems to have come from an SMT desire to please that organisation rather than operate a remedial policy in a way that could be of real benefit to pupils. Another perception from a school in 'Special Measures' came from Teacher 18 a senior manager with previous experience as a subject adviser.

One of the schools I worked in as an assistant head, the OFSTED report; the school went into special measures before I went and I kind of went and was seconded there and the OFSTED report suggested that teachers spent too long talking so the school in its wisdom had created a policy where teachers could only talk for 25% of a lesson. Which was just absolute madness, you know. To me it was madness. And I was trying to help

improve teaching and teachers were, had planned work that was booklet and work sheet based because they thought that they couldn't talk for longer than what, ten minutes a lesson? And it was these unintended consequences of OFSTED that had a big impact, I think. (Teacher 18, Interview, 2019, p3)

Perceived by Teacher 18 as "madness" the policy limiting teacher talk once again is interpreted as over rigid interpretation of an SMT of a comment from OFSTED. It would be possible to question the usefulness of that blanket comment in uncertainty of what constitutes "too long talking". That concept is interpreted here as implying talking beyond or without any useful purpose. Uncertainty creeps in with the realisation that such talk beyond use could happen in a very short time, such as if pupils have grasped what is required of them yet the teacher continues to explain; much as a very long time talking, in the case of a complex narrative explanation, might be completely justified as useful. It is possible the comment was a simplification intended to prompt a response from the school without the need for a long explanation in the judgement. It is also possible the school's SMT wished to sidestep the need for judgement on what constituted "too long" from its teachers and create that simple response by merely insisting that staff consider how long it is appropriate to talk at any one point in a lesson. This had been achieved with a simple percentage quota which had then avoided the concept of applying only useful talk whilst having the drawback of putting all talk, useful or not, into one category of undesirability. The "madness" perception from Teacher 18 came from the result of this policy which had been to push teachers into avoiding talk completely and issuing worksheets. Once again, the perception acknowledges the role of SMT but still sees this as a consequence of OFSTED rather than principally one of flawed management policy. Whatever the origin of the policy the consequence for the culture and practice of the school had been extensive and not for the better in the perception of Teacher 18. This was also the case with the perception of Teacher 16 in the example of data recording above. When accountability is associated with the imposition of flawed policies as happened with both these teachers then a danger of employees as

seeing themselves as “policed” rather than supported by such systems (Pearson and Sutherland, 2016, p 428) emerges.

In a classic example relating clearly to the constant fear of surveillance of panopticism (Perryman, 2016) Teacher 30 related an account of palpable demoralisation resulting from a perception of excessive SMT rigidity applied to a voluntarily run extra-curricular club

We once ran an after school extra-curricular thing for history students. So we did this kind of classic history mystery where they had to try and work out what was going on. And we had kids working in teams and we were drip feeding in evidence and we did it after school and we put food on. And then the next day being told by the Headteacher ‘erm I really enjoyed that, but I need you to write a sub-group analysis for that for which of your different groups attended because that’s the sort of thing OFSTED will see.’ That kind of slow ramping up and focusing on things that felt like they were kind of pointless and they took you away from actually planning and delivering lessons. (Teacher 30, Interview, 2020, p 3)

Not only had Teacher 30 sacrificed an evening but was now required to submit a complex analysis which would have the effect of removing or reducing preparation time with a predictable effect on the quality of lessons the next day. That this incident had a negative effect on Teacher 30 and the pupils in classes the next day is difficult to dispute. Whether this could be seen as a negative side of accountability (Frink and Klimoski, 1998), as a negative side of an over-rigid interpretation of accountability by a head or as both, is more open to question. It is interpreted here as an insensitive and over rigid interpretation by a head reacting to a high stake inspection system (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 46) since the activity was extra-curricular and voluntary.

Such defensiveness in management could easily spill over to defensiveness in the classroom.

Teacher 2 talks about the commencement of OFSTED inspections in 1993 and the effect on Teachers

in the school which was situated in a very difficult socially deprived 'overspill' area on the fringe of a southern city.

I think it made people a bit more defensive about their teaching. Erm. People started going a bit over the top on record keeping and paperwork. You know. I think. Some teachers played safe in their teaching style. Because of the kind of area we worked in I think some teachers, while there were some who needed to improve their discipline and classroom management some got a bit over the top about it and were obsessed about what would people think about their classroom control destroying them being a bit adventurous.

Interviewer: Was this before the inspections or during the inspections or both?

S: I think both I think the whole cult, it led, the system led to teachers playing safe a lot. In terms of the general culture, I think they did create in many teachers an atmosphere of fear. (Teacher 2, Interview, 2019, p 5)

This perception of inhibition had the potential to display the counter-productive or negative side of accountability in a "high stake" system (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 46) and could give rise to the "unintended consequences" (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 50) of excessive and inhibiting caution.

In the experience of the author, who grew up and worked as an LA adviser in such an area, the need for teachers to experiment and come up with adventurous, out-of-the-ordinary lessons can give an extra dimension to their work and can often provide a hook for engagement with pupils who can more frequently be resistant to learning than those in other environments. Such lessons can reap enormous rewards in terms of building a relationship with a class and in learning and anticipation, but they do represent more of a risk of back-firing in the sense of unleashing pupil disruption than a

lesson that has been defensively designed. The temptation to play safe with an inspector in the room or with a visit imminent at any time is viewed by the experienced Teacher 2 as a handicap.

Teacher 2's perception of caution resulting from inspection matches that of Teacher 16 describing lessons in a school situated in a similarly deprived coastal town on the east coast of England. At the time of the interview the school had just achieved a 'Requires Improvement' judgement after a previous inspection grade of 'Inadequate' had resulted in 'Special Measures' and consequent regular monitoring inspections.

So it almost like cemented the changes that'd been put in place. And I suppose it meant you couldn't experiment again. You couldn't, say, OK we've gone through this, I'll go back to how I was. It was like 'no, no, no, no, carry on doing this box ticking, kind of thing' and, you know, 'just do it better'. So we got Requires Improvement and once again it was 'OK, these are the things you need to do to improve'. I think that's maybe where the kids became more and more enjoying (indistinct) us for being spoon fed. If you see what I mean. Because the culture was no longer about, you got to be a bit experimental to get kids to want to learn, you know. You've got to get, you know. And then if you take that experiment and experimental sort of learning away then I think that's really where they've got this culture of you just spoon feed them. (Teacher 16, Interview, 2019, p 3)

Here a perception of reluctance to experiment in the situation of gradually improving judgements extends to one of concern at taking risks that might endanger the level of approval from OFSTED that had already been achieved since the low point of 'Inadequate'. The result was perceived as the establishment of a culture of passive learning which is referred to in the pejorative and can therefore be interpreted as a perception of settling for the adequate whilst abandoning the chance of achieving a more inspiring or challenging lesson.

There are powerful perceptions in this section of the Chapter of some change for the better in some schools taking place as a result of OFSTED requirements or of perceived OFSTED requirements thereby inclining towards the positive view of the impacts of accountability expounded by Lanivich et al (2010) and Breaux et al (2008). These are joined by other powerful perceptions of over rigid policies, of over-zealous SMTs, narrowed curricula, formulaic practices and excessive caution in the classroom that pushed back towards the negative aspects of accountability identified by Fink and Klimoski (1998) and Laird et al (2015). Both views are supported to some extent by perceptions in the sample, but the negative views cover numerous areas of perceived damage and did appear more frequently in this sample than positive views. No generalisation outside the sample can be made but this inclination towards the negative within the sample could be of note.

Possibly the deadlock can be loosened further by looking again at the latest OFSTED strapline of “Ofsted exists to be a force for improvement through intelligent, responsible and focused inspection and regulation” (OFSTED, 2019, p 4). Did perceptions within the sample point, on balance, to improvement as a result of inspection? Some did. Again more pointed to unintended negative impacts resulting possibly from perceptions of a flawed process or from flawed interpretations of OFSTED requirements by school management teams. The fact that there were more perceptions on the negative side within the sample cannot lead to generalisation here as to whether school improvement of any kind has taken place as a result of OFSTED inspection of schools.

An appropriate way to end the section is perhaps with the perception of Teacher 23, a headteacher, of a conversation with an HMI concerning the overall effects of what was at that time almost a quarter of a century of OFSTED inspections of schools.

One interesting thing. I had quite a lot of long conversations with (name of HMI) I liked him. And I said to him one day. I said ‘tell me, do you think since OFSTED have come in that standards have risen?’. And he said ‘I think results have gone up’ he said ‘but I don’t think education has improved’. He said ‘results have gone up as we all know because

everybody's playing games'. But real education isn't improving at all. I actually think, through it all, that people with special needs get a raw deal. They were hidden away. The curriculum wasn't designed for them anymore (Teacher 23, 2019, p 7)

If any perception can exemplify the tension between Callaghan and Peters over "extrinsic end" (Peters, 1966, p 43) versus teacher professional judgement, perhaps it is this one. The narrowing of curriculum, seen as a result of OFSTED pressure for results in other perceptions above also appears here and is additionally perceived as particularly damaging to SEND pupils through what is interpreted as a perceived gulf between the outcomes focus of external examination grades and teachers' professional judgement (Green, 2011) of what constitutes "quality in education" (Donoghue, 1976 in Morgan, 1997). The perception here from one seasoned professional in conversation with another of some doubt existing over whether standards have risen or not after over 20 years of OFSTED operations is potentially significant when considering the impact of the latter organisation on secondary schools and teachers. The perceptions of doubt from Teacher 23 and the HMI in the effectiveness of the OFSTED accountability system reflect not only the tension between "extrinsic ends" (Peters, 1966) and the value of teachers' metier and professional judgement (Green, 2011), they also reflect an upper hand within the sample of the negative aspects of accountability identified by Fink and Klimoski (1998) and Laird et al (2015) over more positive views and highlight the unintended consequences of OFSTED inspection (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015).

#### **4.7 OFSTED and Teacher Wellbeing**

This section of the study addresses the research question on the personal effects of the OFSTED inspection system identified in Chapter 2 and included in the list of prompt questions to be used as prompts in semi-structured interviews (Appendix 6). This had been expanded into a second, related interview question on wellbeing and retention of teachers designed to elicit a broader response in those specific areas. These were inserted by the author as a result of indication from his career

experience as having the potential to provide rich material (de Chesney, 2015) in life history context interviews (Goodson and Sikes, 2001). He had frequently in his career had to deploy supply staff to cover teacher long and short term teacher illness and replace those who decided to leave the school for any reason. This had formed a strong perception that the anticipation, actuality, and aftermath of OFSTED inspection had exacerbated illnesses and decisions to leave and that both had often represented life changing events. The intention was to investigate how far such perceptions were supported or refuted in the sample. Had the pressure of inspection and associated elements of performativity (Elliott, 2001) panopticism (Perryman, 2006) and post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016) played a part in such decisions?

19 participant interviews covered these issues in depth and themes arose from interpretation of experiential codes. 'Pressure on teachers' - coded in the sense of extra pressure rather than that endemic to teaching classes of pupils on a day by day basis - was used 40 times, and the more specific 'Pressure from SMT' 23 times. 'Teacher loss' appeared on 28 occasions and 'Fear' and 'Fear Culture' arose 21 times. 'Teacher illness' and 'Workload' appeared only 12 times each. Given the intensive nature of teachers' work the relative infrequency of the last two codes seemed surprising but in accordance with interpretational phenomenological analysis third person interpretations layered onto first person experiences are of more importance in this study than the isolated frequency of use of experiential codes (Watts, 2014). Following analysis of interpretations two sub-themes emerged from interpreted participant responses each relating to teacher wellbeing and OFSTED inspection: teacher morale, and the sources and results of pressure on teachers, including illness.

#### **i) Teacher Morale**

Perhaps unsurprisingly perceptions of decline in teacher morale tended to coincide in the sample with a school being awarded judgement categories of 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate' resulting in 'Special Measures' with the connected levels of pressure attached to both judgements in

the form of more frequent inspection or regular monitoring inspections respectively. When a school becomes subject to frequent and regular inspection the only haven within for teachers is the staffroom in that it is specifically excluded from inspector presence and less likely to be visited by the office based SMT for long periods. It was therefore possibly no coincidence that it was there that Teacher 16 perceived hearing teachers speaking freely during the school's extended period in 'Special Measures'.

and you hear a lot of negativity in the staff room. And sometimes I, I you know, engaged with that. And also talked very negatively. But then sometimes I sort of had to steer away from it because if you go in every day and have that neg.....(hesitation in original) and talk negatively all the time. It wears you down and it wears you know. It's not a nice place to work then. (Teacher 16, Interview, 2019, p 4)

The perception of a school to which Teacher 16 expressed considerable loyalty in the interview as "not a nice place to work" is interpreted as damaging to morale and wearing if continued over a long term. The perception of engaging with such talk testifies to its pervasive quality. Such an interpretation of declining morale under pressure of repeated scrutiny by OFSTED is matched by the perceptions of Teachers 20 and 4

What I've always loved about that school is that it's very supportive. And if someone heard you struggling, they'd step in and help out. And that seemed to just go. I think people were just so tired. It was just getting through the day really. (Teacher 20, Interview, p 7)

You know I've got colleagues who spent years working in schools that are requires improvement in the last ten years. And I've seen it affect their lives. And they have become, you know, people who are living with this label that says they require improvement. They might be absolutely outstanding teachers. They might have delivered ten years of good results in that school. (Teacher 4, Interview, 2019, p 9)

Teacher 4's perception of personal identification by teachers with the school's judgement grade is marked. This could perhaps be expected from a "values centred practitioner" (Courtney, 2016, p 639) or conscientious professional carrying out his or her metier to the best of ability (Green, 2011) yet repeatedly being subjected to unfavourable judgement. The wearying effect of long term scrutiny, similar unfavourable judgements and of guaranteed inspection also comes across clearly in that of Teacher 20. In such cases the difficulty of retaining self-esteem and a work-life balance can become amplified as Sikes identified "Constant criticism and the eroding of autonomy may well have a negative effect on how teachers perceive themselves" (Sikes, 2001, p 88). The remedy to save one's self esteem and escape a label is clear in the perception of Teacher 2 below: leave the school.

Well basically they felt, particularly the head of languages and the Head of English, who were good people, I think they felt 'we've come and worked here' – they could've got jobs anywhere, you know – but they'd stayed in that school, put their heart into it then they get (makes whooshing sound) 'you're crap' so what are they going to do? 'I'll go and work somewhere easier, where I'm valued'. One of the heads, the head of English, she got a job, - bolt hole, escape isn't it – she got a job as head of English at a girls' grammar school. She wasn't going to have that crap anymore was she? (Teacher 2, Interview, 2019, p 8)

Teacher 2's school was in challenging circumstances and had just been judged 'Inadequate' just before the departures of these members of staff. The interview goes on to make clear that the loss of such people damaged the school's hopes of recovery. No animosity in tone, text or demeanour towards the departing teachers was detected from Teacher 2. Blame was not attached to anything other than what is interpreted as the unfavourable OFSTED judgement pushing them too far and being received personally by these as external direct criticism of their own work. This has parallels with Teacher 4's perception of criticism of the school being carried as a personal label. Such criticism may well have been perceived as disregarding work carried out in difficult circumstances for the

benefit of challenging pupils day after day. Teacher 2, and the two valued staff members clearly perceived this as excessive and unfair pressure and all three ultimately left the school.

The situation was not an isolated one in the sample. The school referred to below had been left by Teacher 26 after repeated criticism from OFSTED. It had been merged with another school judged to have been 'Inadequate'.

I left in July/August 2012. Went back there in January 2016 so within three and a half years there were only 8 people that I knew from I suppose the two schools must have had 80 teachers. So significant and much of that would have been due to the pressure of OFSTED. They wouldn't have said they'd left because of OFSTED but the pressure that future OFSTED inspections would have done and the fact of being in Special Measures and I imagine a few people were kind of moved on. Or at least hounded out to be quite honest with you. (Teacher 26, Interview, 2019, p 6)

Here the perception is of staff leaving both voluntarily and through compulsion after repeated attention from OFSTED. Why members of staff were perceived to have left voluntarily without citing OFSTED is probably explained from the need to facilitate getting another position. As Teacher 29 put it

Retention? I'm not so sure if it had much of an impact on retention because if you were leaving a school you couldn't say to the next Head well, I'm leaving it because the other one's in Special Measures. Nobody's going to appoint you on that ground. If so you run away when life gets difficult, do you? So no one's going to go for that. (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 10-11)

Those "moved on" in Teacher 26's perception are interpreted to have been viewed by SMT as unable to survive the scrutiny of 'Special Measures' or as unable to facilitate the school's rehabilitation to a more desirable judgement. The perceived 90% teacher loss in four years does not

point to high morale or to a happy working environment but does suggest significant personal impacts from inspection. The consequences for the school were ultimately positive from the point of view of the need to please OFSTED as by the 2016 visit it had been judged as 'Good'. This may mean either that the teachers who left had indeed not been competent or that they had been unwilling to conform to the actions deemed necessary by SMT to achieve the external approval of OFSTED. Either way the school had been brought to an externally approved central standard in an apparent example of governmentality (Foucault, 2001) producing through imposed docility (Foucault, 1991, p 136) and conformity. These factors were repeated in the perception of Teacher 5 of teacher departure after 'Special Measures' below.

I don't think we lost anybody that I would really, really want to keep. There were teachers who left, some of the older teachers, that sounds awful, I'm one of the older teachers, anyway, but some of the older teachers who had been good teachers twenty years ago but had lured in this little rural school to wheeling out the same old things again and again and again and were not willing to make changes to their practice er and so some of them either rebelled, clashed and had to go or left and that the teachers whose practice either was already good or had a kernel of being really good in it have stayed and now really improved their practice. (Teacher 5, Interview, p 5-6)

Morale and wellbeing seem to have been expendable to achieve conformity with OFSTED requirements in both this perception and in that of Teacher 26. Both perceptions could however be seen in the light of a legitimate need to commit to change in the organisation in a business model of accountability (Miles and Kanazawa, 2016, p 191-2) but the applicability and appropriateness to education of such systems designed to further an "extrinsic end" (Peters, 1966, p143) in the form of money and involving placing results above activity (Moore, 2017) is disputable and the tension so produced goes to the heart of this study.

The question arises now of what additional pressure can teachers be reasonably expected to take in the name of accountability whilst doing what already is perceived to be a very hard job.

## ii) Pressure on Teachers

The issue of SMT and OFSTED as inter-related sources of pressure which was seen above in the 'Impact and Consequences of OFSTED Inspection on School Policy and Practice' section of this chapter re-emerged when considering perceptions of sources of pressure on teachers. SMT had been perceived at times in that earlier section as being over-zealous in applying policies designed to anticipate or meet OFSTED requirements but also as being sometimes willing to cite OFSTED as reason for the imposition of unpopular policy when that was wholly or partially untrue. Even when an SMT imposed policies that could not be directly traced back to OFSTED but were designed to win the organisation's approval - such as in the extreme marking policies described by Teacher 16 (Teacher 16, Interview, 2019) - this could still be seen as an application of governmentality (Foucault, 2001) dependent on SMT docility (Foucault, 1991, p 136) where the latter had been created by the constantly shifting accountability landscape of post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016).

It emerged quickly in this section that SMT were again perceived, in a similar light through the same Foucauldian lenses, as originators of pressure alongside OFSTED and other perceived factors to be explained below. SMT behaviour was highlighted in this extract from Teacher 26.

Like she was excellent. And in fact she over-marked stuff and I was teaching her not to do it. So they used to do, this was one thing they used to literally. They were like a SWAT team. They would parachute in and grab a kid in the corridor, take all their books away from them and go and scrutinise them. So this one kid was given a look, and he was one of the laziest kids in the school. I taught him as well. I taught him for geography – or I taught him the year before or something like that. So teacher comes in. Actually, I'm sitting at home with my Mrs. Phone goes. It's this girl, this teacher, NQT. Phones me up in tears. She's received an email from the Deputy Head saying your books are

unmarked. A really negatively written email bout your books not marked, blah, blah  
blah, this is unacceptable (Teacher 26, Interview, 2019, p4)

It emerged further in the interview that the email from the Deputy Head had been sent late in the evening to the NQT mentioned requesting she report in person at 8 am the next morning to account for the alleged marking deficiency referred to above. No account seemed to have been taken of the NQT's otherwise excessively conscientious marking nor of this pupil's attitude to work until both were pointed out at the arranged meeting by the more experienced Teacher 26 to the Deputy Head who then withdrew the accusation without apology. The NQT left the school at the end of the year to take up a post at a private school abroad in what she stated to Teacher 26 was an anticipation of less pressure in her new establishment (Teacher 26, Interview, 2019, p 6).

Such management practice can at best be called clumsy and at worst constitutes intimidation or bullying. It is interpreted here as an attempt to ensure uniformity of marking practice as the school underwent repeated OFSTED inspection but even if this was the explanation unnecessary stress was caused on the NQT. Less extreme but with a similar perception of damage through SMT pressure, this time directly using an OFSTED justification.

Well that's always down to how well it's managed by whichever senior leadership team you've got at the time. The thing I used to hate was the ramping up of pressure and the fact that it became impossible to have a conversation with anybody about anything in a school without the 'O' word being mentioned. And you kind of end up living in this sort of weird state of constant adreno drip and that's really wearing. (Teacher 30, Interview, 2020, p 2)

Teacher 30 spoke of illness perceived as related to the constant application of pressure by SMT and ended the interview tellingly. "I think we've covered it. It's been a slightly gruelling trip down memory lane." (Teacher 30, Interview, 2020, p 10)

Such management practices, particularly in the case of that experienced by Teacher 26, sail close to the line of the counter-productive abusive supervision identified by Biesta *et al*, (2008, p 119) and seem to have resulted in just such counter-productive outcomes in the departure of Teacher 26's NQT and the demoralisation and illness of Teacher 30.

Much as pressure from OFSTED can be hard to distinguish from that of an SMT the natural pressure of a highly inter-active job such as teaching can sometimes be very difficult to separate from external or internal accountability pressure. Teacher 25 outlines the merging of all three sources of pressure on teachers in a combination that is too much for some.

I know quite a lot of people professionally because the stress and the worry of teaching generally and a lot of that comes from above and the worry of OFSTED is too much for them. Having to constantly tick all the boxes was just, you know, it was too much. And again, from teaching on a PGCE. I've had to have lots, several conversations with trainee teachers and I've had to say 'look this is a really hard job'. (Teacher 25, Interview, 2019, p 7)

Teacher 10 emphasises the demanding nature of the job itself combined with a marking policy imposed by SMT that was incompatible with the existing, unevenly spaced two week timetable.

There's also not the flexibility in there for teachers to be human. If you've got a parents' evening, or we're on a two week timetable with five lessons across two weeks trying somehow to schedule homework and mark and get it back to them, was nigh on impossible just because the way the two week timetable works with an uneven amount of lessons each week. (Teacher 10, Interview, p 7)

The "human" reference here is interpreted as a desire for a work life balance which Teacher 10 went on to satisfy by drastic means.

I've recently, very recently taken up a job in a private school to start in September to start after this interview. That idea that I've taken the job basically for a more holistic life, for a better work-life balance. But where I know their marking policies are less rigorous than anything I've ever known in the state sector. And I don't know what the logic is. I don't know whether it's specious knowledge or not to say that that is due to a lack of OFSTED. And if OFSTED were there to say are you plus or minus, what is your EBACC score would they start to go up to the 190 for the kids, 195 for the staff?

(Teacher 10, Interview, 2019, p 9 -10)

Here the hidden inter-relationship between the actions of SMT and of OFSTED had led this young teacher to wonder if the new school is not quite up to standard. It would be hard to find a better example of the operation of post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016) than in a young teacher now beyond the reach of OFSTED looking back almost guiltily.

Teacher 29 also strikes a note of what might be interpreted as 'pain in order to gain'.

Teacher wellbeing? Erm well, you know, teacher wellbeing. Teacher wellbeing doesn't necessarily mean making life comfortable for them. Teacher wellbeing is actually, well yeah, like in any job you have to take the rough with the smooth. And there are times when things could be better – and that's actually better for you in the long run. So the fact there may well have been some stress is not necessarily the end of the world.

(Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 10)

But are any of the sources above really ones of necessary pressure? Teacher 27 saw them in a different light of avoidability following a recent visit to schools in China.

But the answer for me really is you need more teachers. I need double the amount of teachers like Shanghai had so they're teaching half the time. And then they're developing so then when they actually go in front of a class they haven't just got rid of

the last class. They have to go out and stop the chaos in the corridor and then come back in but they've actually had a free lesson beforehand then go in and do a presentation. There is a huge thing with teacher workload, I think. There is a huge thing there. At the end of the day if you want a world class education system you've got to treat teachers properly. And fund it properly and fund them whilst they're doing their job but also give them time off. But they never want time off. They feel guilty, don't they? (Teacher 27, Interview, 2020, p 13-14)

The implication here is that improvement in education can be achieved primarily through giving teachers the time and resources to prepare high-quality lessons. The guilt referred to in the last line is interpreted as being directly related to metier (Green, 2011) and the authority and trust of professionalism (Biesta, 2015) in the belief that most if not all teachers want to do a good job for their pupils. Guilt in this perception is interpreted as a form of self-pressure which does not necessarily require accountability to exist. It can be a positive force for professionalism as Biesta demonstrates (Biesta, 2015) and Teacher 27 seems to believe, but it can also be a source of great personal damage as shown below: particularly when combined with criticism by OFSTED. Teacher 16 is referring to the atmosphere of negativity in the school following the imposition of 'Special Measures'.

Yeah, I'd say pretty much everybody. I don't think, I don't think to be really, unless you're a teacher that really didn't care but I would say, I would say, I don't think you're in teaching even if you're a little bit like, kind've like 'I'm over this' I think you still care. I think you still get affected by it somewhere, somehow. (Teacher 16, Interview, 2019, p 4)

Professionalism despite adversity could explain an emerging determination to succeed here but not all teachers can shake off criticism, as Teacher 22 relates of a colleague.

He was identified in the OFSTED report in a very negative fashion. He became very ill following this he was very depressed, very distressed. That illness actually led to his death within two years. He was also somebody by the way who'd been nominated for the teacher of the year, been down to London for that big erm glitzy occasion. But when he died, which I think was in 2001 he ended his life believing that he had been a failure but I can tell you that in the town, for his funeral we closed the school – against the Local Authority's permission – I might add or at least their judgement. Every member of staff, every kid went to it. They flew in from all over the place. Place came to a stand-still. It was an amazing and very touching moment and yet that man ended his life believing he'd been a failure. (Teacher 22, Interview, 2019, p 8)

The perception may have been made from unawareness of possible other underlying factors but a combination of external criticism and loss of self-esteem come across very clearly. Others are willing to risk possible health consequences by applying self-pressure to come to the aid of a school about to be subject to inspection despite being already seriously ill at home.

I actually, having been written off for three months when the OFSTED took place because obviously as Assistant Principal in charge of Student Support, being that part of it would be student support, I er phoned the Head and offered to come back in and he refused to let me.'(Teacher 21, Interview, 2019, p 2)

And others are perceived, albeit by the same conscientious participant, to have been unable to take the added stress of that same inspection which proved very disappointing for the school and resulted in a judgement of 'Requires Improvement'.

And I have to say, you know, I may be totally out of order here, our deputy who was totally committed and was absolutely heartbroken by this – you'd never get a nicer man and a hard-working man. A man who cared more about the children. Shortly afterwards

he died of a heart attack. We can't prove that but we believe the stress of this affected him. (Teacher 21, Interview, 2019, p 6)

The direct charge of illness in particular cases, especially cases of fatal illness, being attributable wholly or partly to inspection is not easy to substantiate but the combination of self and external pressure under active accountability is clearly perceived as a dangerous one. Such an accountability strain relationship was identified by Hepburn and Brown (2001) and possible mitigations were discussed in Chapter 2 and are pursued at the end of this section below.

Other factors too were perceived as being related to occurrences of illness among teachers in combination with accountability pressures. In particular the social and economic contexts or circumstances in which some schools operated were perceived within the sample as creating challenges such as disaffection, resistance to learning, disruptive behaviour and disorganisation already difficult to deal with without the added pressures of inspection. Added to this was the constant underlying threat of adverse press attention. Table 1 in Chapter 2 shows the level of interest concerning OFSTED in the National Press but the perceived pressure on teachers expressed in the sample was much more often attention from the local press for high or low inspection judgements, dramatic changes of judgement grade from one inspection to another or, as in this extract from Teacher 12 dramatic incidents of pupil behaviour during an inspection.

I mean this poor teacher who was involved in this glue thing, with the glue on the chair in Technology. He never lived it down. I mean front page of the local paper, you know, I mean what do you do? So, but it only tells part of the story in a way although things had got pretty bad. (Teacher 12, Interview, 2019, p 4)

The underlying possibility of being exposed in such a way, particularly in a school in challenging circumstances where, from the author's experience the chances of serious misbehaviour are far higher, is interpreted as a significant addition to pressure on teachers.

The perceived effects of school circumstances on the outcome of inspections will be dealt with separately below in another section of this chapter. Here, perceptions of the effects of such circumstances in combination with accountability pressures on teachers are considered.

Teacher 24 had joined a fresh start school situated in an area of economic challenge and great social deprivation. Even though, at the time referred to in the interview, school outcomes were still measured in a context of value added designed to take a school's context into account the pressure of reaching even these targets in order to escape 'Special Measures' was perceived as too much for many teachers.

Our value added wasn't very good. And we were constantly getting people, we had a stage where the head of English was off with a nervous breakdown, the art teacher was off with a nervous breakdown. We previously had the Head off with a nervous breakdown. You know the number of people that ended up having long periods of time off due to mental health issues, you're never going to get your value added, you're never going to get the exam results. (Teacher 24, Interview, 2019, p 6)

To have three senior members of staff off with breakdowns and a perception of many others going the same way points to an extreme situation where escape from a poor OFSTED rating seemed impossible. This was matched in the perception of Teacher 12, also in a school situated in an extremely challenging area facing inspection pressure and pressure from targets.

We had a huge number of people off, on and off, sick. We didn't have anybody off long term but there was a lot of, I mean there were two teachers at least who were very close to crack up. And er staff absence. There was one later on when we were still having difficulty. We must have been in 'notice to improve' after we came out of special measures, and I became head of department and I was given one teacher who because by that time history had dropped down to very small numbers for GCSE and we lost our A level ages before and there was a teacher appointed to come and I was moved up to

become head of department to fill the gap. He lasted three weeks then went off sick for eight months. But that was, there weren't any others who were quite as bad as that but there were a lot of anxiety, a lot of staff absence. (Teacher 12, Interview, 2019, p 5)

In such extreme cases of difficult circumstances, inspection pressure and very low levels of teacher wellbeing other factors than school circumstance and inspection pressure are interpreted to have been at work. Some schools do succeed in challenging areas and create high levels of wellbeing and motivation amongst staff, such as the Robert Clack School in Barking and Dagenham. This school is rated 'Good' (OFSTED, 2021) at the time of writing, has had its headteacher knighted and has achieved one 'Outstanding' OFSTED rating and two of 'Good' (OFSTED, 2021) since opening in 2004 yet it operates in an area of great economic deprivation and low aspiration. An explanation for the success of some schools and the failure of others in troubled areas was suggested in the sample for this study where other factors such as the organisation of schools were perceived to contribute alongside school circumstances and inspection pressure to such cases where teacher illness was frequent and serious.

We've, as with many, many schools we've suffered a lot over the last six years, seven years with teachers on long term illness with stress and well, is that OFSTED or is it the pressure of working in a badly organised school? So no, certainly teacher wellbeing has been low. Yeah, actual OFSTED inspections absolutely floods of tears behind closed doors all over the place. You know. My job when I was a teacher and now as a leader in OFSTED inspections, a lot of it was going around mopping people up and propelling them back out again. (Teacher 5, Interview, 2019, p 5)

Teacher 5 is a senior manager in an isolated rural school which had been rated 'Inadequate' at inspection. The perception here is of poor school organisation working in combination with the pressures of a failed inspection and 'Special Measures' to contribute to high levels of teacher illness and low wellbeing.

These perceptions on the sources and results of pressure on teachers fall into the area of inevitable stress of the accountability-strain connection highlighted by Hepburn and Brown (2001) and discussed in Chapter 2. They also substantiate as still existing the ideas of potentially disproportionate damage to the well-being of even competent teachers pointed out long ago by McCulloch, Helsby and Knight (2000). Hepburn and Brown (2001) went on to highlight that the inevitable strain of accountability could be mitigated to some extent by placing the focus on the individual as the expert on his or her own feelings, but the extracts above show that not all individuals are capable of such mastery of feeling and, even if they are, this expertise can be overridden by poor school organisation, guilt, loyalty, SMT behaviour, other forms of self-pressure and factors often beyond the control of teachers such as school circumstances. If stress is an inevitable corollary of accountability (Hepburn and Brown, 2001) and collateral damage to even competent teachers exists (McCulloch, Helsby and Knight, 2000) as perceived above, then the issue of whether any gains from accountability in terms of school improvement are worth the human cost becomes a moral one.

#### **4.8 Dialogue with and Support from OFSTED Inspectors**

This theme is an amalgamation of two closely related themes which emerged from interpreted interview data: 'Diagnosis of problems by OFSTED without consequential support' and 'A need for dialogue as a means of producing lasting change'. The first theme was mentioned in 12 interviews and the second in 11. On analysis only 3 interviews from the second theme were found not to have covered the first which indicated that the relations between the two themes were of sufficient overlap to justify the inclusion of both in one section of this chapter. The dominant relevant contributory experiential code was 'Dialogue' which was used 37 times in total.

There was a perception within the sample of a wish for dialogue with inspectors and of frustration that support was not automatically forthcoming. Both of these factors harmonised with the broad acceptance in the sample covered earlier in the chapter of the need for accountability because any perception that dialogue with and support from inspectors could be considered positive effects of an

accountability process and would imply an acceptance that inspectors do have something to offer. This would link to Linivich et al's (2010) view of accountability as opportunity and would point away from Pearson and Sutherland's view of accountability as policing rather than as support (Pearson and Sutherland, 2016, p 428). It would also leave room for the liberation of teacher professionalism in the accountability process and trust of the teacher as professional (Green, 2014) by acknowledging cooperation between teachers and inspectors as potentially offering mutual benefit. The idea of support from inspectors would not necessarily smudge a Foucauldian lens regarding inspection as a form of power, knowledge and truth imposed from above through bio-power (Foucault, 1998, p 143) since inspectors could offer support in order to establish an imposed view of change still conceived from above. Any teacher perception of dialogue between teacher and inspector as a tool to produce change might however have serious implications for that view since change would no longer be exclusively coming from above but could be jointly conceived between teacher and inspector.

A frustration that inspectors could have something to offer in terms of support but frequently provided only judgement was common in the sample. Teacher 14, a middle manager in a school regularly judged as 'Outstanding' and never less than 'Good' by OFSTED, saw this as a wasted opportunity.

I don't know practically how possible it is but it would be much better if, I mean if OFSTED really have got top quality people who are experienced in schools, you know it seems that it's so wasteful for them to come in and just judge, and not come in and judge and help. It always seems to me that that's silly, you know. They just judge and they don't offer any sort of coaching and help in future. (Teacher 14, Interview, 2019, p 7)

This 'even better if' view is interpreted as essentially supported by the view of Teacher 12 below but from the perspective of a school struggling to emerge from Special Measures.

And the local authority inspections previously, had been more supportive in the follow-up. You know if, it's like a medical thing isn't it? You can go in, and you can look at all the symptoms and you can see that there's masses wrong with your body and they'll say OK we diagnose you as chronic whatever it is, whatever it is, whatever it is, and then if they go away and they leave you to die ain't a fat lot of good, is it? So, you know. (Teacher 12, Interview, 2019, p 6-7)

The analogy of a patient diagnosed but ultimately left to die by doctors is an uncomfortable one since Teacher 12's school ultimately did close. These extracts encapsulate many more from the sample which perceived OFSTED as often passing judgement but being unwilling or unable to actively help schools implement change. This was particularly acutely felt since it was often perceived that such support had existed in the past from Local Authority advisory and inspection teams, as referred to by Teacher 12 above, or from OFSTED itself before the 'New Relationship with Schools' (Department for Education/OFSTED, 2004) made law by the Education Act of 2005 ushered in the SEF and more school leader focussed inspection. Teacher 2 had appreciated OFSTED support for Heads of Department in the 1990s in a pilot OFSTED inspection carried out by HMIs.

That first trial inspection with HMIs was very helpful because, they, a couple of them actually came back after the inspection and talked through things and you know, pointed to a few of the head of departments courses to do and things they might try, or schools they might want to go and visit to get some ideas. (Teacher 2, Interview, 2019, p 10)

The perception that OFSTED had stopped giving such directed support apart from when a school entered Special Measures with resulting scheduled 'Monitoring Inspections' was strong. Here Teacher 30, a classroom teacher expresses that view and is interpreted as having been prepared to undergo the rigid 'Special Measures' regimen in the belief that the school would then have been offered much needed support. This school was also closed, described emotively by Teacher 30

earlier in the interview as ‘bulldozed’ (Teacher 30, Interview, 2020, p 4) thereby expressing a sense of loss and frustration as Teacher 12 did above.

Around the turn of the 2000s I think it had a Good rating and then we just seemed to get Requires Improvement after Requires Improvement. It probably would have helped us out if we’d actually had a Special Measures. I think that might have arrested the downward spiral. (Teacher 30, Interview, 2020, p 2)

Teacher 24 looked back with interpreted fondness on experiences from a time teaching in New Zealand when inspected by that country’s Education Review Office, perceived as using techniques modelled on the earlier OFSTED model

You know, the changes. There were a lot of changes happening in New Zealand education in 98, 99, 2000 and they were modelled a lot on the British system so yeah, I guess it was. Reading the report, it was very similar but they were just they were very kind of much more supportive and that was the feeling I got throughout the school. (Teacher 24, Interview, 2019, p 4)

The comparison “more supportive” referred to Teacher 24’s experiences with OFSTED working in a fresh start school in Special Measures in the 2010s. Teacher 24 perceived in what was interpreted as bitter irony that the supportive ERO model had been derived from OFSTED which had now abandoned that approach. Teacher 24 had respected that model but it would perhaps be too simplistic to see a re-import of the ERO approach as appropriate now. Success or failure of an education system is not determined by any one factor as Sahlberg pointed out “there is no single reason why an education system succeeds or fails. Instead, there is a network of interrelated factors – educational, political and cultural – that function differently in different situations” (Sahlberg, 2014, p 487). England in 2021 is a different place politically and culturally to the England of the 1990s but nonetheless the dominant perception in the interviews carried out for this study between 2018 and 2020 was that OFSTED support or at least a supportive attitude following OFSTED

judgement would be welcomed. This was partially because other forms of support for secondary schools were perceived to have withered away with the decline in Local Authority advisory teams and the advent of academisation from 2010, but it also reflected a common perception in the sample that the OFSTED approach had become increasingly adversarial and therefore an obstacle to SMT cooperation with an inspection team to allow deeper understanding of a school.

I think the real unfairness is that there is no dialogue. I think the real unfairness is you feel that people are coming in to try and catch you out and almost trying to second guess the opinions that they're forming, and I don't think any of the schools I've worked in or any of the schools that I've known have been proactive enough in terms of selling what their school's really like. Because I think you're immediately put on the back foot in terms of the way that the interviews and the meetings and the whole thing is set up.

(Teacher 8, Interview, 2019 p 9)

But the need for support after judgement came out most strongly from the sample in both frequency of mention and in forcefulness of expression. Teacher 22 here and Teachers 14 and 12 already mentioned above made that view clear.

The judgement is one thing isn't it, but how do you help that school to get back on its feet is different? Does the fairness of it support that school in the future? And I don't think that's the case. When things go wrong there's nobody. There's nobody there to support that school. So, and all OFSTED do is come and give their judgement. Well what happens after that? (Teacher 22, Interview, 2019, p 6-7)

A perception of unfairness is clear from this extract. Teacher 22 perceives OFSTED as responsible for the judgement and therefore obliged be instrumental in the school's response.

Teacher 4 went further, placing the responsibility with OFSTED for the way forward after inspection in a way seemingly in complete accord with the Foucauldian lens of inspection as the imposition

of power, knowledge and truth from above in an application of bio-power (Foucault, 1998, p 143) that is welcomed by this participant.

I think that would be my major criticisms of OFSTED inspections actually, that they don't, they're not transformative. They don't transform. They don't, they don't give a road map to transformation. And I think if they did that, they would have more power  
(Teacher 4, Interview, 2019, p 10)

Other participants, such as Teacher 30 below, made it clear that they wanted not complete control of inspection response from OFSTED but guidance from fellow professionals.

There's got to be time for dialogue, some sort of professional conversation where you can, you can tell your story and try and explain the decisions you're making and have some advice given to you. You would never, think about how you would treat students, you would never take student's piece of work and just go 'Well that was crap' and 'here's a bunch of reasons why it was crap' You'd go 'Ok, that wasn't as good as we'd like it to be, but you did this well and this well and if you do this and this it'll be even better'. Why are we not applying that kind of logic to our own regulatory body?  
(Teacher 30, Interview, 2020, p 9)

Perceptions of collaborative dialogue as a method of charting a way forward following inspection as above featured often in the sample. Here a clear analogy is drawn with formative assessment of pupils.

Teacher 8's similar belief above (Teacher 8, Interview, 2019 p 9) in the development of such collaborative dialogue as a potential positive of accountability as opposed to the perceived negative of adversarial questioning mirrors the tensions between those such as Lanivich *et al* (2010) and Breux *et al* (2008) who highlight the positives of accountability and Frink and Klimoski (1998) and Laird *et al* (2015) seeing its darker side. The margins between positive and negative are perceived by

Teacher 8 to be very close indeed. Teacher 8 saw collaborative dialogue as a means of gaining more accurate knowledge about the school during inspection and this view is shared by other participants in the study below who perceive it additionally as a means of creating a viable platform to move the school forward by harnessing the strengths and expertise of both teachers and inspectors in reaching a judgement or in guiding the school's response to that judgement.

Teacher 23, a Head who had seen the school struggle to escape 'Special Measures' in the 1990s perceived a great improvement in the way later OFSTED judgements were reached by 2011 just before this teacher's retirement.

And in the last two inspections it was where you talked with the team and you gave your views and everything. You almost agreed on the inspection judgements together. And they were positive, I felt. So I thought that was OK. Teachers and SLT. (Teacher 23, Interview, 2019, p 8)

This perception is not completely compatible with a Foucauldian view of imposition from above (Foucault, 1998) since inspectors would not come empty handed to any such discussion and would be applying OFSTED criteria. However it also seems that inspectors had been willing to listen and could be interpreted to have compromised from Teacher 23's phrase "You almost agreed on the inspection judgements together". This does imply give and take even if not a complete collaboration of equals.

Teacher 26 also saw a way forward through collaborative dialogue contributing to a judgement and in creating a developmental route once a judgement had been reached.

There should be a chance that they should come in on the third day and allow the teachers to chat to them. Come in, in a staffroom, in an office in a non-confrontational way. I wondered why here and make more developmental after the judgement.  
(Teacher 23, Interview 2019, p 13)

This perceives a meaningful interaction to be possible and implies that this would mean a move away from an existing confrontational style. Teacher 26 went on to display considerable trust in the ability, potential and fairness of individual inspectors to help teachers assess their own work and that of colleagues.

I had an experience with an OFSTED inspector in a training concept. So he came in, he was a he's been a chief inspector somewhere. He'd come in. He'd been an HMI inspector and an OFSTED inspector. He was quite big up in OFSTED. He came in and he, did a couple of sessions. The first one was lesson observations, so you did a lesson observation with him and talked through it with him. And you gave him the feedback you would give a teacher. And he showed you how to do it. The little nuances of how to quickly scan to see what your kids should be doing and so on and so forth. Which was brilliant because it taught me how to do lesson observations. Really simply.

Interviewer: Was this actually official?

No, no no. He was being paid by the school. And he was a nice guy. He also sat down and did book scrutiny with us. He showed us how to do a book scrutiny. How to do it quickly, and effectively – and fairly. (Teacher 26, Interview, 2019, p 12)

This extract, despite perceiving considerable dialogue and inspector approachability, calls into question whether this was a genuine dialogue in terms of interaction and mutual exchange. Teacher 26 seems to have valued the inspector's coaching in observations and book scrutiny and these skills would have been valuable in allowing teachers to assess their own practice and tune it accordingly to one dominant view: that of the inspector. This is supportive to the extent that it equips teachers for success in OFSTED inspections, but it effectively imposes on and solidifies within those teachers the OFSTED view of what constitutes a successful observation or book scrutiny, thereby applying considerable bio-power (Foucault, 1998, p 143) via a conduit of teacher trust if viewed through a Foucauldian lens. Additionally, since this coaching had not been applied during an inspection as

regular practice but was being paid for privately from school resources it can be considered a striking example of Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016) whereby the school has arranged extra coaching to ensure conformity with constantly shifting inspection criteria (Courtney, 2016).

Nonetheless the perceptions from teachers within the sample came down clearly in favour of seeing dialogue between teachers and inspectors as desirable in what was interpreted as a welcome recognition of the value of teacher professionalism (Green, 2014). Dialogue was also seen as useful in helping gain a more in depth picture of a school on which to base a judgement and in plotting a route forward from that judgement. Some teachers saw OFSTED support of a school after judgement had been passed as morally incumbent upon the organisation and as a reasonable expectation that OFSTED had once given but had been for too long absent.

Teacher 29, from the standpoint of considerable experience with OFSTED, did not disagree on the power of dialogue to help inspectors make an informed judgement taking a teacher's view into account. When the author drew upon his 32 year career experience to state during Teacher 29's interview "People seem to welcome a dialogue with the inspector as well. They actually like to talk things through" (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 20) in an attempt to elicit Teacher 29's view on the matter, the response was assertive about the value of the technique and regarding its future use by OFSTED under HMCI Spielman.

Well they do. They do like to talk about it. Undoubtedly, they like to and that has been something that's been a bit of a shame really. But it hasn't been the case. But yeah they've certainly found more time now for that sort of discussion to go on. And actually, it's more interesting from my point of view you might say it's from an inspectorial point of view, a viewing point of view. And I think it's more interesting for them because they can then talk about what's important and why they're doing it in that particular way. (Teacher, 29, Interview, 2020, p 20).

The last sentence is interpreted as a strong perception from a person with long-term experience working with OFSTED of the value of genuine interchange of ideas and views between teachers and inspectors. This seems to mitigate significantly on an individual level against the Foucauldian view of use of bio-power to impose a truth from above (Foucault. 1998, p 143).

#### **4.9 Data**

'Data' was the most frequently used experiential code in this study, being recorded 98 times during interview indicating a significant level of perceived participant encounter with OFSTED use of data. It was discussed at length, often great length, in 16 interviews and interpretative analysis produced three dominant sub-themes emerging from participant semi-structured discussion regarding data use centrally by OFSTED as an organisation and by OFSTED inspection teams in the field: data use by OFSTED as necessary for effective inspection; data use by OFSTED as excessive and damaging to school practice, and data use by OFSTED as a factor in producing deceptive or misleading inspection outcomes. These overlapping and merging sub-themes once again directly address the research question developed in Chapter 2 of perceived positive and negative effects of the OFSTED accountability system on the schools in which participants worked and on the teachers in those schools.

Teacher 1, who started teaching in 1971 and had risen to the position of headteacher by 1984 had strong recollections of Local Authority based accountability before the advent of OFSTED inspection in 1993.

Twice a term, I think. Advisors would come and want to see what your department, a department was doing. And so on. So there was a lot of accountability, a lot of ability to talk to other heads and ask their opinion. Oh Harry, I'm doing this. What do you think? Or, Brian you had a go at doing this didn't you? How did it go? There was a lot of that where you didn't know whether their school was better than yours results wise, you

didn't know anything about that, but you could talk to people because there wasn't any threat. (Teacher 1, Interview, 2018, p 6)

The perceived frank sharing of ideas in the 1980s and freedom to ask opinion of other heads can probably be interpreted more as a result of the complete absence of competitive league tables and of the associated threat of giving information to what had become rival schools as a result of those tables, than from an absence of central inspection. As was shown in Chapter 1 the latter did exist at this time in the form of HMI but was not regular or inevitable before the advent of OFSTED and was not competitive in any sense in an era when catchment areas ensured a full quota of pupils irrespective of any school's outcomes in terms of external examination results. From Teacher 1's perception here regular school accountability in this LA was real under the 1944 Education Act as a "national service locally administered" (Bolton, 2014, p 292) but only in terms of measurement of performance against a school's own prior levels internally and externally. How effective such accountability would depend on the LA's internal comparisons and its actions thereon, since a school could not know from the account above how its performance compared with other similar schools and would seem to have had no incentive to peek over the wall into other "Secret Gardens" (Eccles, 1960) in terms of examining the results and entries of other schools.

Teacher 1, along with Teacher 8 below, did welcome as helpful the imposed increased focus on data in the 1990s

I think it shifted the culture of the school at the time into being more data driven. Part of that wasn't a bad thing because I don't think people really did before that OFSTED worry too much about data (Teacher 8, Interview, 2019, p 4)

I think there were a lot of things that one learned from the fact that someone out there said we better find out what schools are really like. We better see what schools are like. (Teacher 1, Interview, 2018, p 17)

Teacher 1 saw this as particularly useful – and indeed a sense of pride also comes across below - when confined to the early, broad measure of the percentage of pupils claiming Free School Meals as an indication of school performance in terms of results. Teacher 1's school then was convinced enough to develop its own internal measure whereby pupils' individual expected performance was plotted against actual performance using the Free School Meals measure later supplemented with Fischer Family Trust data in an evolving model known as a 'Flightpath'.

Data has become very important in terms of how one can use it but I do think things like the flightpath were far superior in terms of their impact and general culture because they weren't too accurate. I know it sounds odd. But you get a sense of whether progress is being made. You get a sense that things are moving in the right direction rather than having an obsession with 'will the kids get to this point by June'? Come hell or high water. If they don't there's trouble and that kind of culture. And I think what you want in schools is not as judgemental, not as data driven. But undoubtedly in my time as head data and one's knowledge of it, and one's knowledge of how to use it improved exponentially. (Teacher 1, Interview, 2018, p 17)

This positive attitude is interpreted as stemming from a feeling that the previous situation of knowing no other schools' performance figures and thereby having no relative benchmark for one's own school's performance was unsatisfactory. A note of caution about more precise data being later used as a measure of expected progress over time at the expense of other educational considerations more difficult to measure is sounded and elsewhere in the interview described as.

..starting to, as (name) used to say, weigh the pig, not feed it. You know you could only assess what's assessable (Teacher 1, Interview, 2018, p 12)

This is interpreted as a warning against concentrating on assessment of pupils rather than attending to what they are taught and how. This possibility of data use evolving into something more damaging will be looked at in more detail below in the next sub-theme, but Teacher 1 was far from

alone in the sample in seeing thoughtful use of data in perspective as a positive result of accountability whilst remaining aware to dangers of its use to drive results or form hasty conclusions regarding curriculum or pedagogy.

Teacher 18, a Senior manager with extensive experience as a county adviser, emphasised the different ways data could be used by OFSTED teams as another example of the fine line between positive and negative effects of accountability.

How much they used the data compared to quality of teaching that they saw in the school. Some inspectors looked at the data and then looked at what was going on in the school – the quality of teaching and the curriculum and could make quite a good, nuanced judgement. Saying actually the data doesn't seem very good but we can see the quality of the teaching here is really high so we will, you know, we can see that it's going to have an impact. Whereas others would say well the data's no good so the teaching can't be any good. It really, you know, it really was I think it really the quality of the judgement really is variable depending on the inspectors completely. (Teacher 18, Interview, 2019, p 10-11)

The increased use of data feared by Teacher 1 and perceived by Teacher 18 above happened in the wider context of an national emphasis on data in John Major's second term as Prime Minister with the advent of League Tables, accelerating under the target or goal-driven philosophy of the three Blair governments (Blair, 2010, p 273) when it became more greatly emphasised through the incorporation of Contextual Value Added data and the SEF by OFSTED after the adoption of the 'New Relationship with Schools' (Department for Education/OFSTED, 2004) in 2005. The advent of the Coalition government of 2010-15 saw Pupil Premium data and a results focus emphasised in the Education White Paper of 2010 (Department for Education, 2010). These, and its appointment of Sir Michael Wilshaw as HMCI took the use of data to new levels in OFSTED inspections.

Many participants agreed that OFSTED's use of data in reaching judgements gradually increased over time and, perhaps more importantly in terms of impact on schools, were perceived to have carried greater weight in the form of outcomes emphasis in inspection judgements and knock on effects on school priorities.

It's focused on aspects which have deflected leaders perhaps from what they've needed to focus on. And I think the best example of that was the focus on data because we became virtually a whole country focused on data and targets from the John Major Tony Blair years. So, I mean there was a focus on data and all that mattered was data.

(Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 16)

And it became very, very significant indeed because all of the judgements centred around that. But also I would say first of all I think Senior Leadership Teams became more understanding of what the data was saying and I know that I spent a huge amount of time trying to get teachers to understand the data about their own classes. (Teacher 7, Interview, 2019, p 10)

2012 onward it was all about outcomes and GCSE results and I think what has happened since then is schools have just focussed teaching on getting kids to jump through those hoops to get good grades at the expense of kids learning. And I think kids are leaving school clutching exam certificates but knowing very little. I genuinely think that that has been an effect of OFSTED since particularly 2012. (Teacher 18, Interview, 2019, p 12)

An initial cautious welcome for increased and thoughtful use of data was morphing in the sample to concern at possibly excessive use and damage to pupil outcomes. Judgements were perceived to hang in some cases on the use and counter use of data as SMT fenced with OFSTED teams.

And the exam results the previous summer had not been good. You know, they weren't through the floor, but, I think, where the national average is about 55% 5 A\*-C we got

45. You know so you knew you were on dodgy ground and there had been a trend downwards for three years and so you were on the defensive with standards. And I went with the head into the meeting where judgement was finalised, which was an innovation by 2010, and they were going to put us into a measure and fortunately I was able to, to identify three pieces of data which saved us. (Teacher 7, Interview, 2019, p 6)

Participants perceived excessive data emphasis as the cause of over-caution, along with emphasis, as Teacher 1 had warned above, of concentration on easily measurable outcomes over less measurable ones. This was perceived to have resulted in damage to curricula and a drive to show linear progress as in the following extracts.

I think that because data is king a lot of departments, even in our school which is a very, very, good school, a lot of departments there is a real obsession with data driven outcomes and not broader outcomes. I think that's really sad. So I think they have done a lot of harm. (Teacher 8, Interview, 2019, p12)

All that mattered was data. It was data that mattered. And therefore then it was, you know, collecting data. And the issue then of course became that the National Curriculum levels became abused and sub-levels were created. And children always had to make progress every term and you had this wonderful thing that yeah as parents often quoted that isn't it peculiar that in the autumn term my child is always working below and then in the Spring term they're working at and in the Summer Term, miracle, they're working above. And so the whole thing became deflected so I think that that was kind of the other side of it. (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 17)

In some cases, data expertise had been the main criteria for the recruitment of Senior Managers

At the end I had a colleague who was also an assistant principal, he's now deputy principal, who was a data expert. As part of our MAT he was also farmed out to help

another school that was in special measures. Erm and was very very good with his data. He could argue anything. And he would prepare. He used to say you look at any data and you can read it in 5,6,7 different ways. He said I could prove to you now a school is a successful school and a failing school on the same set of data using it in different ways. But he was good to have on the team because he knew what he was doing and could argue the stuff. But to me as a pastoral person who believes in the human side of things, I found it increasingly depressing. (Teacher 21, Interview, 2019, p4)

Where schools were not big enough to recruit a data specialist Local Authorities deployed central staff with a perceived brief to re-interpret data.

So they were bringing in people from County just to analyse the data. Just to make it look better. So what's all that about? What you know I just feel we've just lost sight of the children involved so. In the early days with OFSTED you used to be asked 'talk about your children'. You know. None of that. Not it's seen as an excuse and it's not an excuse it's just putting it into context. (Teacher 22, Interview, 2019, p 4)

Perceptions within the sample such as this from Teacher 22 indicate measures taken to ensure success with an accountability system had the effect of distorting school priorities towards measurable outcomes at the expense of pupil need. They indicate SMT teams and Inspectors disputing the finer points of data, and data being manipulated within schools to show linear progress. These perceptions would seem to form a strong case for seeing accountability as a largely negative force regarding the impacts of OFSTED's use of data. Even though data's potential for positivity as a tool of accountability was also acknowledged to a lesser extent, Laird *et al's* dark side (2015) was interpreted to be in the ascendant in this area of accountability practice.

Participant perceptions of data creating a partial or misleading aspect to judgements were also common. A shared feeling was that disproportionate concentration on data represented a failure by OFSTED teams to look at many areas of a school's work. Teams were perceived to be basing

judgements on only the part of the picture measurable through data or on outcomes with neglect of the all-important educational processes leading up to those outcomes.

If you looked at data you've just looked at the outcomes therefore the end is the only thing that matters and the means so to me it's the means that matter. The end is the kind of icing on the cake. It's the means that you get there that really matters. (Teacher 29, Interview 2020, p 15)

This was joined by the perception that excessive concentration on data was being reflected in OFSTED judgements which were therefore being based on only a partial picture of a school. This, on judgements, from Teacher 7 who had worked extensively as an OFSTED inspector.

I think they became increasingly standardised once people looked at data critically. And the thing about, the data at times had a domino effect so if the data's good then the teaching and learning must be good. If the teaching and learning's good then leadership and management must be good; and likewise, the reverse. If the data's not right. So it took you all through the various judgements about the school: they were all data led. (Teacher 7, Interview, 2019, p 10)

Teacher 8 saw this as connected to the perception covered in an earlier section of this chapter of OFSTED coming in with a pre-decided view of the school.

I think the problem is that, I'm sure lots of other people have touched on this, that you've got your OFSTED inspection Data Board and there's definitely a feeling that that is everything and that OFSTED are coming in already having made a judgement (Teacher 8, Interview, 2019, p 8)

The perceptions of a partial picture being gained from inspection were shared and identified as damaging by Teacher 29 from the point of view of an inspector.

And I think sometimes to experience things within a school because every school is different in its context. To pick it up. You don't get that with data analysis or through desk-based analysis or even scouring the internet scouring the websites and all sorts of things. But I think it's only when you're in there that you get a flavour of what's going on and how this school is trying to develop and look after its children that it cares for.

(Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p15)

Some light was shed by Teacher 29 on the pressured days before an inspection begins and a picture emerged of limited time available for an inspector to digest very large amounts of data.

That was released to you so you could look at some of the documents that were in the public domain as a preparation but of course you were preparing for your next piece of work rather than one three down the road if you see what I mean. Therefore, it was only in perhaps two or three days before that we would start to look seriously at it and then of course you, some of the data that OFSTED gathered together you could only access perhaps a couple of days before. It just wasn't available. But so you only had a very short amount of time in which to scan a lot of documentation and try and form a view.

(Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 7)

The impact of this combination of perception is stark. In the belief that much or all of an inspection judgement would depend on data, and with staff actually employed for their data analysis skills, every incentive seems to have existed for schools to produce copious amounts of data to sit alongside or to challenge the OFSTED pre-inspection data made available to an inspector. In Teacher 29's perception it was extremely difficult to get to grips with this quantity of data.

The conclusion from perceptions in the sample seems unavoidable. Judgements, being disproportionately based on data, were already giving only a partial picture of a school's work. If the quantity of data made available to inspectors on which to base those judgements seems to have

been difficult to absorb other than partially, then it seems likely that only 'a partial picture of a partial picture' was being provided in some inspection judgements.

Partial could also have a close connection with misleading depending on what is left out of a judgement and what is included. Perceptions brought up the idea of data highlighting an issue which was then perceived by teachers to have been taken out of proportion by an inspection team to create what was felt to be a misleading picture of the school by some participants.

So, they'd pick on something, they'd pick something up and then it would be inflamed quite a bit. To, to you know be the data that they had in front of them, you know? It's not to say it was made up but we could all take something and run with it and I feel like that was what they were very good at. (Teacher 16, Interview, 2019, p 7)

And that misleading picture was not always seen to have been to a school's disadvantage in terms of the judgement grade awarded. Teacher 16 again.

I didn't really think the school was outstanding anyway and I was like 'Oh, Ok'. So I thought then they don't seem to be like, you know, pushing too much for anything, you know. But I think it's if the data's good then, you know, they'll go with it, you know. So our data looked pretty good so they were like yeah, we'll, we're happy with that and they were happy to give us that award. And then, in 2013, so only three years later we got inadequate. (Teacher 16, Interview, 2019, p 2)

Teacher 16's dissatisfaction comes across clearly in both cases suggesting that a fair and accurate picture of the school is all that this teacher desired. This desire for a fair and whole picture of the school came across repeatedly across the sample. Teacher 3, a headteacher, begins by reference to the school's SMT. "They" refers to the OFSTED inspection team.

I had a great team who worked really hard to support me we felt we they weren't looking at the data fairly. Again we've always taken lots of managed move kids, lots of

SEN kids. And they weren't willing to take that into account. And of course, those sort of kids, have different life stories. (Teacher 3, Interview, 2019, p 5)

The complaint here was of an OFSTED team neglecting key data but the same teacher perceived credit as being due to another OFSTED team for going beyond the data to gain a more holistic view of the school. This reinforced the idea of an underlying desire for fairness through inspection of every aspect of a school's work. The "high stake" (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 46) nature of the OFSTED accountability system comes across clearly in this extract – all the more reason for the desire for a complete picture of the school, perhaps.

They'd come in because our data Progress 8 looked really shocking about minus 0.5 on the Richter scale. So that's near special measures. So obviously that flagged and er he brought in the regional assessor guy with him. We didn't know that at the time. What was his name? (name) or something. (name) someone or other. who sat quietly but was like an Exocet missile, (name) the HMI. I had figured that but, but he was very sharp. They demanded, demanded, demanded, that we explain our results which we did and they gave us nearly a morning to do that and they were, they understood what we were doing. That we were still doing something called Applied Science which didn't count in league tables so jettisoned half our kids straight out of the window in terms of the Progress 8 measure. And we were doing other things as well that didn't count in the league tables. They understood that. They allowed us to rework it as if they did. And the results were great. Better than great, good. We then got into the territory of curriculum and we got a glowing report. (Teacher 3, Interview, 2019, p 6)

To finish this section of the chapter Teacher 27's extract seems a fair encapsulation of the frustration felt by many in the sample at the perceived dominance of data in driving OFSTED judgements. Education as a fluid human process is perceived to be unsuited to such treatment.

These are not baked beans are they? These are kids. You know so the assumption that I can go up by 2% this year and then 2% next year and then 2% the next year..... 'Hang on a minute. This is Year 10, look at their ability levels. Look at their FFT fifty, their targets, you know? Which is built on what they've done before. I can't make them 2% better than my Year 11s last year. They were wholly different' (Teacher 27, Interview, 2020, p 2)

In such a way was data dominance largely perceived within the sample as an example of Laird et al's dark side of accountability (2015). The need to conform through statistics could be seen in the Foucauldian light of truth imposed from above through bio-power (Foucault, 1998, p 143). It also could be seen as a form of Foucauldian hierarchical observation (Foucault, 1991, p 170) by inspectors with a narrow focus imposing a normalising judgement (Foucault, 1991, p 177) through centrally set statistical measures of success or failure for a school. From the evidence gained in this study the sample seemed to perceive this data dominance in terms of the imposition of a partial truth from above in terms of statistics covering only part of a school's work. These were perceived as being used in turn to highlight and incorporate only that limited part of a school's work in an inspection judgement. This represented for participants in this study a partial truth at best, imposed not through bio-power but through what might be interpreted as a flawed cyber power. The objections of participants did not seem to be based on resentment of hierarchical observation or normalising judgement *per se*; they seemed instead to resent only partial observation of a school's work and normalising judgement based on only a partial picture of that work.

#### **4.10 OFSTED Inspector Behaviour**

Perceptions of Inspector behaviour which was considered surprising or unusual enough for participants to mention at length, arose 18 times in interview. Accounts ranged across a spectrum of perception describing perceptiveness, sensitivity, helpfulness, rudeness, bullying and intimidation

from inspectors. Interviews also covered the perceived extent to which inspector behaviour or personality had influenced the outcome of an inspection.

Perceptions in this section arose mainly from responses to interview question 4 which probed the presence or absence of trust in the inspection process itself. In participant responses across all questions the experiential code 'Trust, Teacher – Inspector' arose 32 times being the 20<sup>th</sup> most frequently occurring experiential code and 'Trust, SMT – Inspector' arose 10 times indicating a high level of interest within the sample. 'Lead Inspector Personality' arose 14 times mainly in the responses of senior managers. This skew could be explained by the lower likelihood of frequent close contact between teachers of lower seniority with the Inspection Team Leader and this view is supported by Teacher 29 in the second extract used below (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 8).

Interview question 4 had been a direct attempt to address the research question on trust arising from Chapter 2. In follow-up to the discussion on Foucauldian discipline (Foucault, 1991) in Chapter 3, perceived inspector behaviours were also examined to see if participants in this study could be interpreted to have viewed them to any degree under the Foucauldian light of hierarchical observation and normalising judgement, as coercion, gratification, or ritual (Foucault, 1991, p 170-195) or in any other ways.

It will be seen that the extracts used below divide between two extremes of perceptions of inspector behaviour. That which participants found to be shocking for different reasons on one extreme, and perceptions of inspectors going out of their way to understand the school being inspected and come to a judgement that was as fair as possible on the other. Two exceptionally rich extracts, one from each of these extremes of perception, will be used at unusual length below for interpretative analysis. This is justified in the judgement of the author based on his extensive experience of interviewing over his career, by the exceptional experiential depth of these two accounts and the passionate manner made evident from use of language and from voice emphasis in the case record (Stenhouse, 1978) recordings.

Analysis in this section begins on what might be interpreted as the middle ground with extracts from the interviews with Teachers 7 and 29, both of whom had risen to SMT level in long school careers and both of whom had served extensively with OFSTED.

Whoever it is, you know, if they're in and they are looking critically at your work then you've got to build a relationship with them and challenge if you think they've got something wrong but also provide them with the information that they can make a judgement which is accurate about what you are doing. And erm it's the warning I would always give staff prior to an inspection is that when the inspectors come in they are not your friends, so you do not confide in them that your head of department's awful or (laughs). You had to engender a professional relationship with them. And likewise, when I was a team inspector that was the way in which I approached my task as well. And so that was hard at times because I've certainly left two heads of department in tears (Teacher 7, Interview, 2019, p 7-8)

In expressing the idea of Inspection as a two-way process, as perceived here, Teacher 7 does not attempt to deny that friction and disagreement will still occur as one person is looking critically at the work of another in what seems to be a good example of a "high stake" system (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 46). Here Teacher 7 is interpreted as seeing the relationship between teachers and inspectors as key to allow the inspection to proceed with minimal friction and maximum advantage to the inspection team and the school. Responsibility is placed squarely between both inspectors and school managers in order to make this happen. Teacher 29 acknowledges in the extract below that at times some inspectors do fail to build this relationship that is interpreted as a professional trust.

So I think there were because of the mixed ability nature of inspectors and the mixed background of some of the people that went in it was potential not so much perhaps between the HMI but, I don't know – shall we say, between the ordinary inspectors who

did a lot of the groundwork on lesson observation etc because that's where teachers came across them. Sometimes there were some odd things said because you knew that. You read it on some of the forms and it came back in conversations. (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 8)

Again, the relationship created is perceived to be of importance as teachers "come across" inspectors and is rendered fragile in a perception of "odd things" said in what is a sensitive situation as one person judges the work of another. It is easy to see how an insensitive or unguarded remark by an inspector after a lesson observation could result in a teacher perceiving the whole process in the light of hierarchical observation (Foucault, 1991, p 170). If the remark is a harsh one, such as those which Teacher 16 in an earlier extract perceived have caused tears "You know, I'll never forget her name and I came out, you know, absolutely in, you know, floods of tears, and went home in floods of tears. Since then, teaching became very different." (Teacher 16, Interview, 2019, p 2) it could easily be seen as a form of coercion (Foucault, 1991) and is interpreted to have been seen as such here by Teacher 16.

Where perceptions of poor inspector behaviour were at their harshest in the sample the crucial relationship of Teacher 7 and 29's emphasis is interpreted to have broken down. The following extracts from the interview of Teacher 9, a young Head of Department at the time of inspection, do represent an extreme case within the study. The extracts do show how, when the relationship between inspector and teacher is perceived to break down, perceptions of hierarchical observation (Foucault, 1991, p 170) and indeed in this case, of coercion, (Foucault, 1991) can arise.

What I really couldn't stand about the demeanour and the attitude of the inspector was this kind of sanctimonious, you know looking down his nose at what we were you know trying to defend in our department. There seemed to be a choreography where the first day was just going to go wrong. Everything was going to go wrong, and he took me in for an interview at the end of the day which lasted about three hours. And so I didn't get

out until 7 completely exhausted of course because you don't sleep very well, you know before inspections. And funnily enough I was reading a book round about that time all about the techniques that were being used in extraordinary rendition you know in some of these Guantanamo Bay like operations in Afghanistan and Iraq and how clever interrogators and cross-examiners were using methods that weren't technically torture but nevertheless still eliciting through power you know confessions and this that and the other. And as I was reading the techniques one technique was just constant questioning. You know deprive the prisoner of sleep and make them hungry and thirsty and then just relentlessly, relentlessly question, question, question, question, question, question, question. And eventually they will just give out. They'll just break and they'll sign the confession and they'll run out of stories. And they just won't be able to respond. That was how I felt! At the end of that three hours, I was broken. I was just done. You know and I was basically ready to say 'whatever you say'. You know. Whatever you say. And he was basically showing up all of our granular practices. All of the dirty linen, everything that he'd uncovered. (Teacher 9, Interview, 2019, p 5)

The perception of coercive technique could not be clearer. This is an extreme perception of inspector behaviour from a person who is interpreted as caring deeply about the department for which responsibility was held in the school. Whether creation of this perceived coercive atmosphere was the intention of the inspector, and whether it was as extreme as remembered by a person who would have been very tired after a whole working day followed by a long intensive interview cannot be said with any certainty. What can be said is that a decade after the event a stark and traumatic picture remained in Teacher 9's mind as a result of perceived inspector behaviour. This is a perception of hierarchy, of coercion (Foucault, 1991) and of an inspection system at the highest end of "high stake" (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 46) where parallels are perceived with Guantanamo Bay, a military interrogation facility. Any accountability system which can leave such stark perceptions of near torture in a participant's mind must be open to question of producing

unacceptable strain. This appears to be an example of the emotional exhaustion shown to be a result of abusive supervision and producing tense and exhausted employees (Breux et al, 2015, p 119).

Teacher 9 continues in what is interpreted as the self-exploration of a conscientious, inexperienced Head of Department of great sensitivity.

Yeah, some of it wasn't great practice. Some of it was a bit shoddy erm and you know he was making me feel that I was breaking a moral code, and an ethical code by letting the pupils down because I was allowing these shoddy practices. And I felt absolutely terrible at the end of it. You know it was absolutely awful. And then of course I went back up to the department team and they were feeling equally terrible and awful, and ill and I had to support them you know even though I was feeling terrible. You know it was absolutely awful. Second day was same thing. You know it was all doom and gloom and then brought me down to the office at the end of the day and said 'that's great. Thank you very much, you're good. I'm pleased with this and everything's fine. There are some things you need to work on, curriculum particularly being one of them but erm basically everything's fine. Strong outcomes, you know good teaching'. And I was utterly offended by that. I just thought you put me through a process like that and there can only be one outcome. And that is, you know, I'm no good. This was a shambles. At least give me the dignity (laughs aloud) of that outcome. Because that's what it felt like. And then he didn't and he said it was good. And actually my overwhelming emotion to that was well that was, you could have got to a good judgement in a very, very different way.

(Teacher 9, Interview, 2019, p 6)

The genuineness of the perception is not questioned, but the feelings of breaking a moral code attributed as being intentionally imposed by the inspector may – or may not - have been the result of extreme sensitivity and conscientiousness on behalf of the participant. Again, the only thing that

can be said for certain is that the participant had retained this perception over an extended period of time and had recounted it with exceptional passion. The verdict of 'Good' in a school under the threat of 'Special Measures' may possibly have expunged such clearly painful perceptions from the mind of others: it had not done so in the mind of Teacher 9. It is possible to say from Teacher 9's interview that an intense experience of inspection of something a person holds dear and an inspector's perceived behaviour in that inspection can leave a long lasting and painful memory of the inspection process. Teacher 9 went on to say that it permanently destroyed personal trust in the organisation that carried it out.

At the other extreme of perceptions of inspector behaviour came the account of Teacher 23. Again, this is quoted at greater length than is usual as a particularly rich account delivered with what is interpreted as great feeling from the language used and from the recording preserved on the case record (Stenhouse, 1978). This time the perception is not interpreted as one of Foucauldian (Foucault, 1991) coercion but of communication and co-operation between an HMI and a headteacher in an attempt to reach a judgement grounded on empirical, rather than hierarchical observation (Foucault, 1991, p 170) to avoid a normalising judgement (Foucault, 1991, p 177) imposed from OFSTED central office.

So we gathered all the data and it was confidential and we couldn't see it and it went to OFSTED. So (name of HMI) came to see me and he said 'we have a bit of a problem'. 'And I said 'oh what's that (name of HMI)?' He said 'there is an unusually high percentage of your staff saying behaviour management here is terrible'. So I said 'well you know, that's a bit unexpected' and it was but you know staff aren't always the most supportive people. And I had a number of staff who left the school and went somewhere else and got back in touch and said 'I want to apologise to you because we've come to this school that has a much better reputation and the behaviour is worse.' You know it's the grass is always greener isn't it? But anyway so he said it's a bit of a problem but

anyway we'll carry on. So at the end of the first day he came to see me and he said. He said 'well,' he said. What I'm seeing isn't matching up with what the staff survey says' He said 'but I'm thinking that we'll have to give you a four for behaviour based on what the staff are saying'. And he said 'but this is not a failing school by any means whatsoever' It might have been the end of the second day. I think it was the end of the second day. He said 'you know so we'll put you through as satisfactory but I'll have to give you this four on behaviour'. (Teacher 23, Interview, 2019, p 6).

Here in the face of perceived conflict between the evidence of an unusually high proportion of Teacher 23's own staff and classroom observation from his own team, the HMI was prepared to accept the lowest verdict on behaviour to prevent a more general verdict of 'Inadequate' on the school as a whole which he is perceived to have believed would be unjustified in the face of broader evidence. Teacher 23, in what is interpreted as a manifestation of trust in the HMI was prepared to accept that as inevitable whilst clearly feeling that her staff were mistaken in their views. The HMI is perceived to have given priority to paper evidence from some staff in what is interpreted as a desire to arrive at an overall judgement on the school that will not place it in unjustified 'Special Measures'. The next day the HMI was perceived to have found this compromise in conflict with limiting judgement whereby one overall verdict is precluded by a verdict in another category: a 4, or 'Inadequate', for behaviour would inevitably have resulted in a 4 overall. Had this been applied it could have been interpreted as being as clear an example of central application of a Foucauldian normalising judgement (Foucault, 1991, p 177) as Teacher 9's analogy in the preceding extracts to Guantanamo Bay had been to Foucauldian coercion (Foucault, 1991). The HMI's perceived solution was very different.

So anyway, he went off and he came in the next morning and he said 'now look (name of head)' he said, 'I can't do that'. If you're a four on behaviour you're a four for the whole thing'. And he said, 'I can't get my head round it because what I'm seeing is not

what these staff are saying'. It wasn't all the staff by any means but it was a higher proportion than they were used to getting. Well anyway, so he said, I said 'Well I'll tell you what (name of HMI) this school won't be here, we're finished' So he said 'look, this is what I'm going to do' he said. 'I've been in touch with all my inspectors, and he said we're going to concentrate this morning on behaviour'. He said 'we're going to go in as many lessons as we can and be out and about in the corridors and come to a judgement about it'. Oh and previously, the previous day when he was saying you no 'I can't, I can't add up what's being said about behaviour with what I'm seeing' and he said 'Come on, you and I will go and sit outside. You know outside the Dining Room where there used to be the science block? And we sat out there and we watched the kids walking past and by then we'd really cracked uniform. There was no litter they were perfectly normal. So that's when he said 'Right, this is what we're going to do next'. And they went round loads and loads of lessons and he came back, and he said, 'I'm giving you satisfactory for behaviour'. But I never recovered from that. I was so hurt. And you know I don't know why anyone would be stupid enough to do that because it's no fun being in a school in Special Measures. But I mean I could have had somebody who wasn't as decent as (name of HMI). (Teacher 23, Interview, 2019, p 6-7).

The personal hurt perceived by Teacher 23 was still large but here, in direct contrast to the situation perceived by Teacher 9 with what is interpreted as similarly great personal hurt, it had been minimised by inspector behaviour. Ultimately both inspectors had given verdicts that pleased these teachers based on thorough observation and questioning but were perceived to have done it in very different ways. In Teacher 9's perception such a verdict was inevitable and had been reached with unnecessarily harsh methods. In that of Teacher 23 the outcome was not inevitable but was the result of considerable flexibility and kindness from the inspector.

The two perceptions of inspector behaviour were each echoed within the sample by others with similar but perhaps slightly less extreme polarity.

Teacher 3 perceived behaviour by inspectors to be shocking at the very first briefing of an inspection.

Their methodology was unpleasant. I remember them, (name) meeting with the staff and being flippant and making crude jokes. Actually referring in racist terms to someone on his team. Well you should walk them out at that point but it's very difficult. Er to be brash and rude and say 'which school is this? I can't remember' Oh just horrendous. His treatment of me as I say was definitely bullying. I erm, I found it horrendous (Teacher 3, Interview, 2019, p 5)

In this perception any relationship was poisoned from the beginning and in echoes of Teacher 29 and Teacher 7's perceptions the inspection did not go well regarding co-operation with inspectors from such a platform. Trust is interpreted as inevitably lacking from that point onward and the school dropped a judgement category.

Teacher 2's inspection also got off to a poor start for different reasons but trust once again is interpreted as the casualty.

The last one erm I found very unpleasant and did cause me a lot of grief personally because from the start the lead inspector was difficult over silly things, not educational things. For example, we had two meetings before and worked out how things were going to be set up. They needed a room that they could use to be their base. ... the morning they were due to come I went into school they'd said they'd be there at eight o'clock the first morning. I got there at twenty to eight to find them already there. The caretaker told me they'd arrived at a quarter past seven and were making a fuss because the room that I'd agreed with the chief inspector was now 'totally inadequate' and they

needed different accommodation. So that was a hopeless start (Teacher 2, Interview, 2019, p 4-5)

This inspection resulted in Teacher 2's school entering 'Special Measures'. Of course, both of these verdicts could have happened anyway and the perceptions of both these teachers could have been coloured by the ultimate verdicts but the incidents were graphically recalled and interpreted as being delivered with painful recall in interview.

Interviews with participants of less seniority elicited perceptions on a less strategic level of unprofessional or uncaring conduct.

He had a red nose and a slight odour of alcohol on him. Erm and I don't know. There were whispers about him. But I can't say for certain that he had an alcohol problem but that was what the teachers felt about him. That was the perception of him, and he was quite brusque and made very quick judgements and I didn't think that he was a really professional person to judge our performance. (Teacher 14, Interview, 2019, p 4)

I saw meetings with staff be handled very badly. You know a member of staff who'd been off ill but had kind of dragged herself in, bless her to sit on this panel because she felt she was letting the school down if she didn't. And she, she's coughing, and you know, reaching for water and he's looking at his watch tapping it going 'I haven't got all day, I've got another meeting'. I mean that was appalling. He should have been ejected from the premises on the spot. (Teacher 30, Interview, 2020, p 4)

Perceived incidents such as these may not impact on the overall verdict of an inspection but are interpreted as impacting on trust from teachers of the Inspection teams concerned. Loss of trust can quickly result in the conclusion drawn by Teacher 14 above concerning unfitness to judge others.

Opposite perceptions, coming from the same teacher at times, saw OFSTED as trustworthy judges based on inspector behaviour seen as praiseworthy perhaps showing that one perceived bad

experience of inspector behaviour need not have a permanent impact on how future inspectors and teams might be perceived. Teacher 30 again.

I think we probably had more time for OFSTED inspectors than we did at times for our own senior leadership team. So, I think there was more of a feeling of, 'Yeah, fair enough, they know what they're talking about. They've been trained for it.' I never, I can only speak personally, I always felt that the ones I dealt with were fairly, when they were in my classroom were trustworthy, were up for it, were honest. (Teacher 30, Interview, 2020, p 6-7)

Perceptions within this sample of 30 on inspector behaviour and its impacts varied widely. In terms of vividness of account and of language used this theme seemed to have elicited particularly strong feelings. The presence or absence of teacher trust was interpreted from participant perceptions as being particularly dependent on inspector behaviour. Evidence of participants viewing inspector behaviour as coercive and hierarchical existed vividly within the sample. Also present here were perceptions of competence, kindness, and co-operation.

Before leaving this theme, it now remains to consider whether the behaviour or personality of the Lead Inspector was perceived to have any impact on inspection outcomes. Teacher 14's perception below of the possible influence of hindsight on any perception on the cause of any inspection outcome serves as a useful cautionary note.

So erm as for Senior Management I mean, I think again it depends on the verdict. You know. If you get an adverse verdict, I think you're less likely to think they were trustworthy. If you get a good verdict you generally think they were pretty competent people. Erm so I think you're very veered by your hindsight thing. (Teacher 14, Interview, 2019, p 4)

The complexity of the issue of the possible undue influence on an inspection verdict of matters connected to a Lead Inspector's personality in participant perceptions should not be underestimated. The difficulty of attributing any outcome to inspector personality alone would require separating that from an inspector's possible intent, ability and application of subjective judgement to the written OFSTED Framework in force at the time of the inspection. Also the definition of 'undue' as opposed to 'legitimate' influence of personality on any inspector's task is extremely difficult to reach. Factor into that a teacher's own subjectivity regarding their own or their school's performance and this task is confirmed as one of great complexity and as challenging as those recognised and addressed by reflexivity in a researcher (Cohen et al, 2007, p 171-2). The perceptions below are given and analysed in that spirit of recognised complexity but are included as a result of the relatively high number of times, at 14, this issue was raised and recognised with an experiential code – particularly in interviews with senior managers in the sample. In the cases below personality of inspectors and possible undue influence on verdicts is taken from inference of participants.

Complexity comes immediately to the fore with two perceptions from Teacher 3, a headteacher following two successive inspections at the school. The first perception concerns a successful inspection.

The one where we got, outstanding which was 2008 I believe, was with an HMI, of quality (name). He was an exceptional man. He got to know this school inside out in, I think he was only here a day, but I could be wrong. He certainly wasn't here long and he was pretty much on his own, I think. Someone else just checked safeguarding. He was truly exceptional. He asked us really hard questions. (Teacher 3, Interview, 2019, p 4)

Although ability of the HMI in question was clearly perceived to be high by Teacher 3 the verdict described is interpreted to have been attributed to qualities of personality from the phrase "he was an exceptional man" and the almost reverent way it was delivered in interview. The implication was

that only an exceptional person could appreciate the school's finer qualities in a day operating almost alone. Although this feeling is interpreted as being genuinely held it is easy to see how, if the verdict had been less pleasing to Teacher 3 the perception of exceptional qualities of rapid assimilation could possibly have become one of inadequate investigation over an insufficient period of time.

The next extract from Teacher 3 deals with the subsequent inspection.

So, by breaktime on the first day he hadn't talked to his team, he'd sent them out. He'd been out, in and out, and used data and said if we didn't if I didn't shift my judgement that the school was outstanding, he would put leadership and management into category three, into requires improvement. And he was quite clear about that. And so I had a moral dilemma then and he gave me overnight to think about it. 'Oh thank you very much. That's lovely.' But it's threatening. It's unfair and, but I don't regret what I did which was to concede and go along with his judgement of good. (Teacher 3, Interview, 2019, p 4)

A perception of Foucauldian coercion (Foucault, 1991) comes across strongly in a one-person imposition of a verdict in a key inspection area reached so early in an inspection. It is very hard to separate out possible influence on Teacher 3's account that the imposed verdict represented a step down from that of the previous inspection. Teacher 3 perceives the inspector as using undue method to effectively force that unwelcome verdict. The issue of personality is interpreted as being inseparable from the choice of undue and unacceptable method perceived as being used by the inspector rather than the verdict. Trust of each party toward the other is interpreted as completely absent in this extract. The inspector from his perceived actions clearly is not seen to trust Teacher 3's judgement and Teacher 3's trust is interpreted as lost by an imposed ultimatum.

Perceptions of the personality of a Lead Inspector as being an unpredictable and important factor in the process of an inspection and, by implication in its outcome, were frequent in the sample.

I was wary because of the person who was the lead inspector. I didn't, you know from the first off meeting I thought 'don't like this'. I thought he had his own agenda he thought that he knew my type of school. (Teacher 2, Interview, 2019, p 4)

But I think the element of trust depended on: one, the attitude of the Lead Inspector in particular and the kind of imprint that they put on their team and the attitude of the senior leaders in the school towards the whole prospect of inspection. (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 9)

It's a lottery in terms of what kind of lead inspector you get. (Teacher 8, Interview, 2019, p 8)

It varied completely as to which kind of team you had. It depended on the Lead Inspector. (Teacher 15, 2019, p 7)

Ooh, wholly. Wholly significant. It's a gamble. Everybody says that it's a gamble whoever walks through that door. And within five minutes now I normally know (Teacher 27, 2020, p 7)

Such perceptions of a random person of great personal influence appearing in the school were too frequent to ignore within the sample and had implications for the research question from Chapter 2 of teacher perceptions of validity and consistency of inspection judgements. Both validity and consistency were interpreted as being perceived to be more dependent on the Lead Inspector carrying out the inspection than on the documentation he or she was applying. The "it" in these perceptions is interpreted as being the inspection in its entirety including the verdict. However open and public the latest version of the 'Handbook for the Inspection of Schools' (OFSTED, 1992) its application and outcome was perceived to be largely or exclusively in the hands of a random personality whose approach would be of great significance.

#### 4.11 Inspection Judgements and School Circumstances

In Chapter 2 tension was identified between the findings of the Coleman Report (Coleman *et al*, 1966) which linked variations in children's results in the USA more to their family environments than to changeable and measurable school statistics, and studies such as those of Rutter *et al* (1979) and Downey and Condrón (2016) which, whilst not denying the influence of family on attainment, pointed to a link between outcomes and school input or "school process variables" (Bennett and Rutter, 1980, p98). Although part of a complex picture, the potential for school improvement alone to improve outcomes was shown to have been seized upon by governments without acknowledgement that such improvement could be finite whilst downplaying socio-economic factors (Mortimore, 1999) (Goldstein and Mortimore, 1997). This tension and the latter emphasis on school improvement to improve outcomes in all schools regardless of their socio-economic circumstances with its parallels in OFSTED's enduring "Improvement through Inspection" strapline was identified in Chapter 2 to be linked to the research question on teacher trust in the outcomes of OFSTED inspections and will be explored below.

That the question of trust in OFSTED's treatment of schools operating in areas on the opposite ends of the socio-economic scale is ripe for research examination becomes evident through comparison of Inspection statistics on OFSTED's website (OFSTED, 2021) for two schools known to the author in a professional capacity in his career. Between 2001 and 2017 Kesgrave High School in Suffolk, operating in a socially advantaged area, has been subject to four full inspections and one short inspection by OFSTED. It obtained three judgements of 'Good' and one of 'Outstanding'. During that time period it was also visited for two single subject curriculum development visits. It remains in the 'Good' category at the time of writing. In contrast, Eastbrook School operating in the deprived socio-economic area of London Borough of Barking and Dagenham underwent fifteen inspections between 2000 and 2021 nine of which were full inspections, one was a curriculum development visit and six were follow-up monitoring visits after judgements of 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate'. In

addition, the school had two OFSTED monitoring checks under COVID regulations. The full inspections returned three judgements of 'Satisfactory', four of 'Requires Improvement', one of 'Inadequate' and one of 'Good'. The 'Good' judgement was awarded in January 2013 and was followed within ten months with another inspection which once more returned the school to 'Requires Improvement' where it remains at the time of writing. (OFSTED, 2021). On a measure of OFSTED judgement alone neither school has improved overall since the start of this century, but one has been subject to attention from OFSTED on six occasions the other on seventeen. At face value "Improvement through Inspection" does not seem to have happened in a period of twenty years although it could perhaps be argued that one or both schools might have declined without OFSTED visits. The treatment of Eastbrook school would seem to correlate strongly with the Foucauldian lens of punishment as a result of normalising judgement (Foucault, 1991) and some of the extracts below did seem to confirm the appropriateness of that lens through which to view OFSTED's approach to schools in difficult circumstances.

Participants in this study recounted experiences coded as 'School Circumstances' 42 times. These received extended mention in interview on 22 occasions, the highest number of any theme emerging from this study. This is interpreted as a high degree of interest in the circumstances in which a school operates as being connected to impact of OFSTED inspection processes and outcomes. The perceptions on which this interpretation is based fell into three broad categories with some degree of overlap: school circumstances and associated disadvantage/advantage not being sufficiently taken into account by OFSTED inspection teams in the field or centrally by OFSTED as an organisation; school circumstances locking schools into repeated "vicious or virtuous circles" (Teacher 14, Interview, 2019, p 6) of inspection outcomes; and the knock on effect of repeated verdicts on schools, teachers and pupils, particularly those in the bottom two categories of OFSTED judgements 'Requires Improvement' and 'Inadequate'.

The issue of school circumstances not being sufficiently taken into account by OFSTED teams or the central organisation appeared in several perceptions to be centred on the issue of schools in challenging circumstances being expected to meet national standards regarding examination outcomes but constantly failing to do so. Teacher 7 addressed the issue from the perspective of an OFSTED inspector.

And the statement that used to get people most of all in an inspection report was 'GCSE results are below the national average'. Now that's a statement of fact: it's not an opinion, but that used to really get people, to upset people. (Teacher 7, Interview, 2019, p 8)

This is interpreted as a belief in the teachers encountered by Teacher 7 that it was unfair to expect pupils from deprived backgrounds to meet standards taking into account the achievements of many others from more privileged and less disadvantaged backgrounds. This was not a position accepted by OFSTED at the time of the inspections referred to by Teacher 7. Sir Michael Wilshaw had argued in his speech given at Church House in June 2013 that "disadvantage and poor achievement are not necessarily tied to urban deprivation and inner-city blight" (Wilshaw, 2013a, p 2). He went on to argue that accepting lower standards for any children would be a form of betrayal which explains OFSTED's adherence to National Standards as a measure for all schools. Whether this was a reasonable expectation featured often in participant interviews. Teacher 1 pursued the issue from experience of holding the position of chair of governors in a school operating in a very deprived area of a county town in the east of England.

Well, I'll talk as Chair of Governors at (name of school) Erm. I think the last team we had was good, and if you read the (school name) report you'll find the word 'good' repeatedly. But 'requires improvement' was the judgement because that's all based on 'sorry we can't do it because sorry you haven't reached national standards'. Crazy, made

us all very angry and I think affected the morale of the staff. (Teacher 1, Interview, 2018, p 10)

Also the head of a school in a privileged area achieving never less than 'Good' from OFSTED, Teacher 1's frustration at being forced into the perceived unjust category of 'Requires Improvement' based only on failure to meet National Standards of achievement comes through vividly in the above extract and is expanded below.

When you look at the catchment area. I as chairman of governors and (name) we preached right from day 1 that I was involved that the catchment area they're in is no excuse. We preached that time and again. But, brackets, talking to you, yes of course it has an effect on the kids ability to produce good work where they've got one parent at home or if there's two they're shouting at each other and abusing each other and there's unemployment, poverty, lack of breakfast of course that's affecting. (Teacher 1, Interview, 2018, p 14)

Teacher 4, a senior manager with 34 years' experience in education at the time of interview, concurred arguing that even identical data is not truly identical since it represents a greater achievement for a school in a more challenging area.

If you are a leafy school in a suburban area with middle class pupils and you're not doing as well as some school in a more inner-city situation with the same data where you get satisfactory or requires improvement there is an argument that the system isn't proportionate, because it seems to privilege schools with a more middle class catchment. And that has been my experience. And that has been the experience and the frustration of the people I've worked with (Teacher 4, Interview, 2019, p 10)

This perception was passionately expressed in interview and is interpreted as matching the assessment of Sir Michael Wilshaw that underachievement "can be found in comparatively

prosperous communities, many achieving far less than they should” (Wilshaw, 2013a, p 2). The complex picture of the relationship between socio-economic deprivation, school improvement and pupil attainment drawn by Downey and Condrón (2016) and Sir Michael Wilshaw (Wilshaw, 2013a) seemed thus to find support from some in the sample whereas others agreed with Teacher 1 in perceiving it as unreasonable and maintaining it unfair and damaging to teacher morale to judge schools in challenging areas in the same way as others operating in different circumstances. Teacher 26 went further than Teacher 1, seeing the OFSTED approach expounded by Wilshaw as a form of punishment for teachers choosing to work in schools in difficult circumstances which had to overcome compounding issues as children grew older.

I just think that you know, essentially a section on how well the school are dealing with its contextual geographic, demographic issues. What, what is the underlying problem at this school? So you’ve got, take the (name) school in (name of socially deprived town). For example. This is a school in one of the most deprived areas in the country. Probably the most deprived area. Right? They’ve got no prospects, no hope. You’re a school that is now dealing with, you’re not a primary school where you’re dealing with kids of four or five where you can have a bigger impact. But you’re dealing with kids that essentially have got through primary school without being able to read properly and then I’ve got to teach them key concepts like interpretations in Year 11. Interpretations of Hitler (indistinct). Read those two interpretations. Which one do you trust the most? Which one is it? And how well you’re dealing with that stuff. And I don’t know how they do that. But they need to come up with a way of not punishing schools and punishing teachers for working in tough schools. That’s where I see the issue. (Teacher 26, Interview, 2019, p 11)

Teacher 26 here is interpreted as arguing for a more complex approach to deal with complex issues impacting not only on teacher morale but problems of teacher retention in a context of judgement

by National Standards resulting in the kind of constant inspection cycle experienced by the teachers of Eastbrook School in Dagenham between 2000 and 2021 (OFSTED, 2021). The language of punishment used by Teacher 26 above strongly suggests the appropriateness of a Foucauldian lens here to view the effect of applying normalising judgement (Foucault, 1991) to schools in challenging circumstances.

Perceptions in the sample identified the issue of stagnation within a limited range of judgement grades over an extended period of time as demonstrated in the situations of Kesgrave High School and Eastbrook School above. Teacher 14 perceived and expressed the issue succinctly in terms of two types of circle neither perceived as beneficial to the schools involved.

I think it creates a virtuous circle and a vicious circle. I mean the people, the schools at the other end very difficult to attract good teachers. Low retention rates erm, low numbers applying for it; and then the opposite end you get the oversubscribed schools, teachers who stay ages, you know, and all of that. So, I think OFSTED has a very malign effect on disparity between schools and actually increases the differences between schools and is really bad on the schools who get these bad verdicts. It's ever so difficult for them to get out of the trough they're in, and perhaps doesn't help the top schools to improve so in that sense I don't think it works. (Teacher 14, Interview, 2019, p 6-7)

The 'stuck in a groove' nature of the perception as a result of the application of normalised judgement (Foucault, 1991) echoed strongly in the sample with Teacher 13 using the same 'circle' metaphor and perception of damage but this time concentrating on damage at the more challenged end of the spectrum.

With those old frameworks there are some schools that are never ever. ever going to get higher than requires improvement. And in particular in the south, which is where I live, of the city. Which is predominantly white working class areas, because of their outcomes there are schools in the south that are never, ever going to get higher than

requires improvement. And that has a knock on impact because there are decent teachers in the city who wouldn't touch those schools. And that's a really, really sad thing. There are teachers who won't go anywhere near the schools that probably need the best teachers in the city, whereas the best teachers in the city are going to schools - horrifically like mine in (name of suburb) – that have good or outstanding results and, as a result easily breezed into a good result with OFSTED they then attracted more people and then it continued, it's like a vicious circle. (Teacher 13, Interview, 2019, p 6-7)

Without constraints of space, it would be possible to quote extract after extract from the sample in support of the tendency of the system to lock schools into grades and repeated cycles of inspection. This was interpreted to be impacting strongly on the trust of participants for the OFSTED inspection system as applied to schools in challenging circumstances. Similarly strong was a perception of various forms of resulting damage to schools stuck in both forms of circle - be it vicious or virtuous. Teacher 3 saw great damage to any goal of school improvement in both the exemption of 'Outstanding' schools from inspection under Sir Michael Wilshaw in a form of stagnation for those schools and in a perception of a climate of fear for the rest.

they should certainly be giving some pointers and putting some money into it and in terms of capacity and doing much more with the schools that need support and help rather than terrifying the whole system. It just needs to sort of shape itself and when a lot of that is unnecessary. But they let some outstanding schools run 10 or 15 years, certainly Suffolk schools with no checking at all. And I've been into those schools and I think well 'really'. They're not in the right century. You know in terms of what they're doing. (Teacher 3, Interview, 2019, p 9-10)

The choice of "terrifying" to describe OFSTED's effect on all schools suggests that the perception of Foucauldian punishment through application of normalising judgement (Foucault, 1991) spreads more widely than only schools in challenging circumstances. Teacher 3 was the headteacher of a

school operating in an affluent area at the time of interview. Teacher 3 Then goes on to highlight damage the damage done to the retention of both pupils and teachers by concentration of inspections on struggling schools.

But equally then spend more of your time working with the schools that are struggling. Let's face it many of those schools have horrendous mountains to climb and data is never going to do them justice. It's just, that's a nonsense and then they haemorrhage, with a bad OFSTED judgement they haemorrhage more teachers, more kids and it's a downward spiral that isn't getting better. (Teacher 3, Interview, 2019, p 10)

Teacher 3's "working with" is interpreted as a need of more support of such schools going hand in hand with inspection as the answer to this downward spiral which harmonised with Teacher 26's perception of exhaustion resulting from constant effort to bring pupil in difficult circumstances up to National Standards seen as too narrow and by interpretation more simplistic than unfair *per se*.

And I don't think that you know, the inspection process, makes teachers feel good enough about what they do. And that's the thing that really underpins it for me is that in all of those schools when you get that inspection – even though it's fair based on that narrow criteria it doesn't take into consideration how hard you work and how much you care. And how much you put in and what effort. And the fact that you're staying in a school like that. (Teacher 26, Interview 2019, p 11)

Teacher 24 saw the associated problem declining staff welfare as another issue of constant inspection whilst dealing with daily issues thrown up by schools in challenging circumstances.

And the other thing is you've got staff and you've got kind of their welfare to think about. And you're asking an awful lot of them and they're dealing with very difficult children and very little support from parents. You know the whole mixture is, and it's a

school, you know. Actually because of the intake I guess there's always been issues in this particular school. (Teacher 24, Interview, 2019, p 6)

To bring the section to a close the picture of complexity is underlined by Teacher 23 who turned a challenging situation in a very deprived area into an asset for recruitment whilst head of a school in Special Measures. It does have to be pointed out that whilst coming out of Special Measures the school has never managed to gain a higher judgement that 'Satisfactory' at the time of writing despite having had four headteachers in the OFSTED era to 2016.

Even in Special Measures it was deemed that we could recruit staff and NQTs. So that wasn't so bad. I mean we did get really some really good staff through saying it was a very challenging school. And trying to present it as a real opportunity to experience education in more challenging areas. And we did get some good staff like that. And so erm it worked both ways in a way. And in fact we put together a really good recruitment statement and so on. And that seemed to win quite a few people over. (Teacher 23, Interview, 2019, p 9)

Perhaps the perception of greatest damage resulting from OFSTED's concentration on National Standards also comes from Teacher 23 since it concerns pupils – the centre of Sir Michael Wilshaw's expressed ambition for the policy in 2013 (Wilshaw, 2013a).

Particularly since schools are judged on what their results are and erm therefore those students who are capable of getting more, in my time it was five plus A\* - C, were the kids you concentrated on. And you know vast numbers of students have been erm following a curriculum which is not appropriate for them. And in which they are bound to fail. (Teacher 23, Interview, 2019, p 12)

It seems fair to say that a concentration on school improvement and outcomes as a means of overcoming "disadvantage and poor achievement" (Wilshaw, 2013a, p 2) was seen as simplistic and

damaging by many participants in this study. Their perceptions and the language in which they were expressed suggested application of the Foucauldian lens of punishment to the imposition of normalising judgement on schools. Downey and Condrón's acknowledgement of complexity (2016) in this area of tension seems to be in accordance with that shown by this study.

#### **4.12 Consistency of Inspection Reports and Judgements**

Interview question 7 had been designed to examine perceptions of the consistency of OFSTED judgements and recommendations in the schools in which participants had worked. As such it was designed to address specifically the research question to that effect which had emerged for investigation in Chapter 2 after examination of existing literature regarding OFSTED's changing position regarding teaching methods and ability grouping during the tenure of three HMCI's in particular: Chris Woodhead (Woodhead, 1997), Christine Gilbert (Gilbert, 2008) and Sir Michael Wilshaw (Wishaw, 2013).

In an attempt to generate rich data (de Chesney, 2015) and in recognition, from the experience of the author, that judgements and recommendations were likely to have been instrumental in any school's planning following inspection question 7 had asked participants to think about six aspects of judgements and recommendations: accuracy, fairness, proportionality, consistency, and helpfulness. In practice, participant responses on judgements and recommendations were not confined exclusively in responses to this question in interview and were expressed in response to other questions or in general expression of perception as might be expected from the use a semi-structured interview format (Kvale and Brinkmann, 2009). Limited words are available to this study and many areas addressed by interview question 7 concerning aspects of reports and judgements have already been analysed in earlier sections of this chapter: 'helpfulness' and 'proportionality' were analysed in the sections 'The Early OFSTED Inspections', 'Dialogue with and Support from OFSTED Inspectors', and 'Pre-Decided and Personal Inspection Agendas'; 'fairness' and 'accuracy' have been addressed in 'The Impact of Shortened Observations and Inspections' and also in 'Pre-

Decided and Personal Inspection Agendas'. This section will therefore confine itself to the issue of consistency of reports and judgements alone as the heart of the address to the research question that gave rise to interview question 7.

Consistency of judgement and recommendation after inspection would seem to be a benchmark of normalising judgement by examination (Foucault, 1991). If judgements of and recommendations for schools were not to be perceived to be consistent by teachers in those schools, then logically the appropriateness of those Foucauldian lenses through which to examine OFSTED's practice in those areas could be questioned. Inconsistency would highlight judgement as possibly not normalised and examination in the form of inspection as potentially unreliable.

Eight interviews revealed perceptions that judgements and recommendations had been consistent even if carried out under different versions of the Handbook for Inspection of Schools (OFSTED, 1992). These perceptions were interpreted as pointing to consistency once a school had been locked into one of two levels of expectation: the higher pair of OFSTED judgements, 'Outstanding' or 'Good', or the lower pair, 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate'.

Teacher 1 gave the fullest explanation of this reason for an expectation of consistency from OFSTED based on experience as head of one school consistently judged as 'Good' and chair of governors of another constantly oscillating between 'Requires Improvement' and 'Inadequate'.

Well, I think (name of school where subject was head) was fine. As I say once you've crossed the threshold in OFSTED's mind for it being a good school anyway you can get, you know, everything else can fall into place. It's like that game you know where you've got the bricks and you knock one down and the other one comes up. OFSTED when they are in tune with a school can knock them all down and that's fine. When you've got (name of school where subject had been Chair of Governors) and thousands of other schools I'm sure. Where you knock down the results as not good enough everything else pops up as being a problem. (Teacher 1, Interview, 2018, p 16)

Teacher 16 had experienced something very similar having entered a school with a realised expectation of 'Outstanding' grades over many years. The school underwent turmoil having fallen from 'Outstanding' to 'Inadequate' in 2013 but then once again settled into a pattern of consistency now within the lower pair of potential judgements.

So it felt like the threads were from inspection to inspection, especially from 2013 to 2017 the same things were picked up on but gradually less of an issue if you see what I mean. It went from 'marking and feedback is terrible' to 'marking and feedback is inconsistent' to 'Ok it's pretty good now with a few inconsistencies'. So yeah, I mean I'd say there was consistency. (Teacher 16, Interview, 2019, p 8)

Teachers 13 and 28 in high performing schools, and Teachers 12 and 17 in low performing ones, all felt their schools were consistently treated when in a stable situation.

I think they were pretty consistent. (Teacher 13, Interview 2019, p 6)

Yeah, they have been. They're all pretty consistent. I think the first one was outstanding and the subsequent two were good. I think at our school it's pretty consistent. I think, I do wonder. The school's changed a lot since 2011 but I think sometimes if school's generally OK they'll be consistent.(Teacher 28, Interview, 2020, p 6)

Interestingly I think they were, right up until we came out of special measures. (Teacher 12, Interview, 2019, p 6)

Well, the same thread ran through for all the years, achievement really.(Teacher 17, Interview, 2019, p 11)

Teacher 2, a head who had operated as a School Improvement Partner after retirement hereby encountering many inspection reports concurred.

I saw the inspection reports of all the schools I was dealing with and most of them I dealt with for four years in a row. The majority of them I think were Ok. They were fair. But you just got the odd rogue one that goes off the scale. (Teacher 2, Interview, 2019, p 9)

Twelve participants perceived judgements and reports to be inconsistent. These views tended to be more passionately expressed in interview but, although sharing a perception of inconsistency did so for reasons which fell into two broad categories: inconsistencies between the approaches of individual teams, and inconsistencies due to perceived constant and rapid change in the inspection framework as the Handbook for the Inspection of Schools (OFSTED, 1992) was updated.

Where teams were blamed for inconsistency, this was interpreted as being due either to inconsistency of method or to inconsistency of interpretation of information gained during the inspection. Both were interpreted as causing great frustration. Inconsistency of method between teams is dealt with first.

Not at all. From the way that they came into the classroom. From the way that they interacted with students and staff to the way that it was all written up. Not consistent in any way. (Teacher 25, Interview, 2019, p 8)

Teacher 25 is referring here to different teams operating in the same and in different schools. Teacher 9 below to three judgements in one school. From the reference to “dour workmanlike inspection” in contrast to the others this perceived inconsistency is interpreted as due to difference of method.

Totally inconsistent, you know. We had a very, very, very closed practice inspection in 2001 with a good outcome. We had a extremely light touch inspection in 2007 which led to this unbelievably outstanding inspection report with no areas for development. Then we had a pretty much normal, dour workmanlike inspection which was ‘requires improvement’. (Teacher 9, Interview, 2019, p 8)

Perceptions of differing interpretation of information by different teams gained during the inspection as a cause of inconsistency were equally strongly expressed. Teacher 3 and Teacher 20 both perceived this as the cause of wide differences in inspection outcomes

I just think there's a lot of nonsense talked from their evidence base and they make sometimes quite superficial judgements to support what they want to find. So I don't think there's consistency. I think it's just starting to be proven that you know, different OFSTED teams will come up with totally different judgements. (Teacher 3, Interview, 2019, p 9)

It's entirely different. As I said earlier there's no way on Earth we were a good school when we got good. No way. We were getting there. We were very close but not, not quite. And now it's, it's almost as if they were too generous before and then too harsh. (Teacher 20, Interview, 2019, p 9)

Teacher 18 from broad experience of OFSTED inspections due to work as a county adviser also dismissed any thought of consistency for the same reason.

No. Definitely not at all. As I say I think it's very variable depending on the team, the Lead Inspector, what their hypothesis about the school was. How much they used the data compared to quality of teaching that they saw in the school. (Teacher 18, Interview, p 10)

Such inconsistency of interpretation of information or of methods employed by different teams, interpreted as the cause of genuine frustration, even exasperation, among participants in the extracts above do have implications for the Foucauldian lenses of normalising judgement and examination (Foucault, 1991) in that they have the potential to render both ineffective. These explanations of inconsistency do seem to have been perceived in the extracts above as resulting from human error rather than as any organised attempt to impose Foucauldian discipline. They also

do not seem to have been seen as any manifestation of the constant intentional moving of criteria inherent to Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016).

Perceptions of Inconsistency resulting from constant change of inspection criteria in the Handbook for the Inspection of Schools (OFSTED, 1992) imposed from government by Act of Parliament, as in the Education Act (2005), could be seen as adopting a stance identifiable with that of Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016).

I think the issue was erm the changes in framework and people weren't sure what to expect when the frameworks changed and whether or not they were looking for the same things or the same things with a different hat on almost. That was the problem with that. And I think the changes in framework and changes in the amount of time spent in school has changed the consistency of what they've seen and what they've been able to see. (Teacher 11, Interview, 2019, p 8)

This Post panoptic (Courtney, 2016) view of change to disconcert, coupled with the closely related idea of performativity (Lyotard, 1979) (Elliott, 2001) was put even more strongly by Teacher 9.

The public humiliation accompanying poor reports is on the level of medieval justice. It is short sightedly performative and the fact that the organisation has since rejected its own previous approaches without any recognition at all that many hundreds if not thousands of promising individual teachers have been humiliated, or worse, have given up as a result of those flawed approaches is a testament to the arrogance that can only come with impunity. I do not have a problem with inspection and feel that it is necessary but OFSTED's understanding of how it should be done and the consequent nudge-effect on school practices taints the work of our teachers and the achievements of pupils. It also prevents change and creates enormous workload and huge levels of bureaucracy which merely serve to distort and camouflage the state of the education system.

(Teacher 9, Interview, 2019, p 8)

The effect of such change on individuals is interpreted as evident in the perceptions of lack of consistency below. Teacher 21's language seems to point to near despair and Teacher 22's short line was delivered with a sigh.

I feel that it's changing the whole time. You know that in the end it was almost with a heavy heart that you knew that over the summer holiday everything would be slightly adjusted, slightly moved by September (Teacher 21, Interview, 2019, p9)

No. Definitely not. Constant change (Teacher 22, Interview, 2019, p 6).

The sample was therefore split on perceptions of consistency of OFSTED judgements and recommendations. Those participants who had perceived consistency are interpreted to have found some reassurance in it. This could be seen as a form of Foucauldian docility (Foucault, 1991, p 136) in the face of the normalising judgement and examination (Foucault, 1991) of inspection, but such reassurance from participants is not compatible with the unsettled restlessness of Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016). Others saw great inconsistency in OFSTED judgements and recommendations which paradoxically was not compatible with the successful application of normalising judgement through examination (Foucault, 1991) but did identify with the nature of Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016) in operation.

Within the sample the views of inconsistency of OFSTED judgements and reports was more powerfully and more frequently expressed. Post-panopticism does therefore seem to have gained traction in this study. By the same measure the lenses of normalising judgement imposed through examination (Foucault, 1991) come out as somewhat reduced in relevance.

#### **4.13 The Overall Effects of the OFSTED Accountability System**

To ensure address of the final research question emerging from Chapter 2 concerning the overall positive and negative effects of the OFSTED accountability system all participants were asked a direct question on this in interview. Question 8 (Appendix 6) was designed to prompt participants to

review previous answers and statements given in the interview and attempt to assess whether in his or her perception OFSTED had done more good than harm overall or vice versa. It is recognised that 'good' or 'harm' in this context is a subjective concept regarding both the nature of good or harm done and concerning who it has been done to (Hall *et al*, 2003). To illustrate, in Chapter 2 it was discussed that emphasis designed to boost one educational outcome such as examination results could result in deterioration in another such as pupil wellbeing. Whether that outcome is perceived as good or as harm will depend on the personal priority between those two outcomes of the person being interviewed. Similarly, adopting performative policies (Elliott, 2001) may enhance a school's league table position and individual pupils' exam results but simultaneously create decline in staff wellbeing (Elliott, 2001). Whether such an outcome is viewed as harmful or not is again dependent on individual priorities and personal view on the appropriateness and morality of applying a business models of accountability such as those of Moore (2017) or Miles and Kanazawa (2016) to education. In that context extracts from teachers' perceptions of the overall effects of the operation of the OFSTED accountability system are given and interpreted below.

Concepts of good and harm were not always seen as clear cut or mutually exclusive within the sample. Teacher 4, from memory of six inspections saw OFSTED's impact as having elements of both.

I think that it, you know, it's done a combination, because I've done so many inspections it's been a combination. So that 'balance question' is about the maths of the combination (Teacher 4, Interview, 2019, p12)

After pausing noticeably for thought in interview Teacher 26 also saw elements of both good and harm in what is interpreted as a largely optimistic view of impact and particularly of potential impact.

It's a mix. A difficult question actually. I think in its current format I'd, what I'd say is I don't think they do. I'd say more harm than good but I'd say it in a more positive way. I

think they don't do enough good. That's the thing. That's where I'd go. (Teacher 26, Interview, 2019, p 13)

Teacher 23, after mixed experiences with OFSTED as a headteacher gave a somewhat grudging welcome to OFSTED not as the best form of accountability in terms of method and approach but of meeting a need for accountability, nonetheless.

Well my heart tells me to say it's been a bad thing, but my head tells me that it has made teachers more accountable. It's no longer just a free-for-all. But somehow it's the way it's been done. And you know some inspectors, some of them we've had, I've said to you that I always found the HMIs to be approachable and you could talk to them but some of the others, I don't know, were very pompous and dictatorial. And didn't even seem to have a particular knowledge of education, or particularly like kids (Teacher 23, Interview, 2019, p 11)

Such a view is not blind to the negative impacts of accountability but is interpreted as being in accord with its positive potential (Breux *et al*, 2008) if carried out sensitively.

In a complex extract Teacher 10, having laid distortion of assessment at OFSTED's door earlier in the interview, and although waiting to take up an independent school job for reasons interpreted at least partly to avoid pressures resulting from OFSTED inspection, nonetheless expresses unease at moving away from OFSTED's imposed rigour.

No only that erm I've recently, very recently taken up a job in a private school to start in September to start after this interview and where they don't have OFSTED I know they've got the Independent School Inspectorate? I learnt it for the job interview, but I've forgotten it since then and it does, even though I've railed against the idea of progress and the idea that assessments can actually be truly reflective. The fact that they don't have that system, the fact that they don't have this idea of progress does,

does worry me. It does worry me that there is just an unknown. And I guess that comes back to it that do I think OFSTED are fantastic? No, but do I like the fact that it provides us with more information and more knowledge: yes. (Teacher 10, Interview, 2019, p 10)

Foucauldian discipline (Foucault, 1991) seems to have taken root in Teacher 10s view by acceptance of centrally imposed accountability even when dubious about some resulting impacts in school. Any view of docility as a pre-requisite to this acceptance (Foucault, 1991) seems incompatible with Teacher 10s earlier vehement criticism of OFSTED and ultimately in escape from the state system. Whether Teacher 10 remains outside the state education system will perhaps be the best test of how deep the roots of Foucauldian discipline (Foucault, 1991) had become established.

There was no shortage within the sample of participants willing to commit themselves to perceptions of OFSTED having done either good or harm overall. Five participants from the sample of thirty were prepared to adopt the view of OFSTED as having an impact for good overall. In a qualitative study of a purposive sample this numerical inferiority to those perceiving OFSTED having done overall harm means little. Analysis of these more polarised views on both sides concerning good or harm does merit detailed investigation and interpretation in the context of the research question. For the reason that the interview question asked participants in for views of good, then harm analysis will also proceed in that order.

Four of the five participants who saw OFSTED as having done more good than harm overall had experience teaching predominantly in schools rated 'Good' or better consistently and two of these had also had extensive experience as OFSTED inspectors. Only Teacher 5 had experience teaching in a school in 'Special Measures'. Teacher 1 had served as chair of governors after retirement in a school in 'Special Measures' after 33 years as head in a school rated never less than 'Good' by OFSTED.

The view most strongly positive about OFSTED's impact was that of Teacher 7, a senior manager with service as an OFSTED inspector.

I think it did more good by a considerable margin. I think it's been helpful. But it's one of a series of measures which have actually led I think to improve the quality of the education system. I remember going back thinking when I was training to teach and er the lecturer saying 'oh you can't teach someone to teach'. I think they worked on some sort of apprenticeship model where you sort of sat at the master's feet and you accrued a few tricks of the trade from that or you relied on your own school experience to be a good or a bad teacher and er whereas I think that the OFSTED, looking critically at the work of the schools has actually encouraged people to reflect on what is good practice because there are generic elements of a lesson that's good practice. (Teacher 7, Interview. 2019, p 11)

This view of good does not look at the "extrinsic ends" (Peters, 1966, p 143) in which OFSTED was shown to be rooted in Chapter 1 since results or employability of pupils are not mentioned in the extract. This concentrates on improved quality of the system compared to pre-OFSTED years prior to 1993 of which Teacher 7 had had considerable experience. Teacher 1 also looks at quality within the system and in schools rather than extrinsically when assessing OFSTED's impact.

And I'm not by any means going to say that what happened prior to 93 was the best system. I mean I think, I think pre 93 we as heads or heads of departments didn't actually know the quality of work going on in our classrooms in the same way. That's undoubtedly true. I didn't as a head of department watch other people teach. I should have done but the culture wasn't like that. Your own classroom was your classroom and I enjoyed that fact (Teacher 1, Interview, 2018, p 17)

Teacher 29, a senior manager with extensive OFSTED experience, talks of moving schools forward rather than the whole system which, earlier in the interview had been held responsible by this participant for a narrowing of curriculum and imposition of results culture in the Wishaw years. This had been seen as a damaging concentration on "extrinsic ends" (Peters, 1966, p 143). Again,

although a favourable judgement, the extract below is interpreted as a turning away from judgement only in terms of “extrinsic ends” (Peters, 1966, p 143). The “who knows” at the end of the extract could express some lingering doubt in even that school-based favourable judgment.

If you take the two schools I was in, the two inspection experiences which was in 1998 and 2003, In that period I think they did the school good because they focus their minds on some of the key issues which we hadn't done in the, previously. When I was inspector through that period then in terms of the OFSTED inspections I'd like to think that they supported schools in moving forward. Whether that was the case or not, who knows on that particular one? (Teacher 29, Interview, 2020, p 13)

Teachers 13 and 5 both saw OFSTED as an overall force for good in school terms although both acknowledge some misgivings, elsewhere for Teacher 13 but firmly school-based for Teacher 5.

I quite like it. I think to an extent I've had, and I know, I appreciate I'm unusual and I appreciate that of my colleagues in the city I think I've had quite an interesting experience with it. Actually, it's been mostly quite good for us really. And I know that's not the case for everybody, but it has mostly been quite good. (Teacher 13, Interview, 2019, p 7)

It's a funny combination between pride in what we've done and horror at the way in which we've had to do it. It shouldn't have to be like that but at the same time what we're coming out with is really good. (Teacher 5, Interview, 2019, p 7)

The accounts below, interpreted as seeing OFSTED as having done more harm than good overall, did come from teachers serving in schools receiving the entire range of OFSTED judgements. Criticisms of OFSTED are interpreted of being based on broad and varied grounds. Foucauldian docility (Foucault, 1991) is not evident.

Teacher 19 had served in an independent school before experiencing OFSTED in a state school which had never been graded less than 'Good' and on this occasion was graded 'Outstanding'. Here OFSTED's effect on teachers is interpreted as the reason for slightly hesitant condemnation.

I think on balance it did more – and we were outstanding, though it was outstanding, I would still say it possibly did more harm than good.

Interviewer: In what ways would you say that?

I think the time spent preparing for it. The stress and the pressure on individual members of staff and the staff as a whole. We didn't need OFSTED to tell us we were outstanding and we were over-subscribed before OFSTED came and we were over-subscribed afterwards, so, in that respect. (Teacher 19, Interview, 2019, p 6)

Teacher 28 was also serving in a school that had been consistently highly rated by OFSTED but saw the organisation's methods as harmful.

I think in my view it's done more harm than good. I mean I can see the need for an independent body to inspect schools. But then I think the way it's conducted is just a, creates a culture of fear, paranoia. (Teacher 28, Interview, 2020, p 7).

Teacher 27, a head in a school constantly rated 'Satisfactory' or 'Requires Improvement' until ultimately gaining a 'Good' rating just before the time of interview questioned the fitness of the body to inspect.

Overall, I think they've done way more harm in the way that they've done it because I think heads got the impression that these guys are coming in actually to tell me how to do my job. And they've never done it. And a lot of them are failed deputies and people who've been got rid of and seconded and they're earning a crust. Every body's got to earn a crust but they're earning a crust coming in to tell me how to run my school. I don't think so. (Teacher 27, Interview, p 12)

Teacher 16, fresh from a recent climb out of 'Special Measures', saw headline grading, as distinct from OFSTED's detailed findings, as causing harm.

It's so harmful. But had that judgement not been there you know, they could have said the same things without the word 'inadequate' I think it would have had a very different impact. Yes, I think OK you do need people to come in and have fresh eyes and things and give you advice and so on. But the nature of how it's done. You know the grading is, I think it's ruthless. (Teacher 16, Interview, 2019, p 10)

Teacher 18's assessment of harm is interpreted as based on the "extrinsic ends" (Peters, 1966, p143) that had given rise to the OFSTED system in the first place and on the high stake nature of the system (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015). Results are delineated as distinctive from learning.

I think overall, from my perspective it's definitely done more harm than good. Because it's such a high stakes game that if, whatever the judgement is and whatever the recommendations for improvement are whether they're right or wrong the school has to concentrate on those for the next inspection. I think that from 2012 onward it was all about outcomes and GCSE results and I think what has happened since then is schools have just focussed teaching on getting kids to jump through those hoops to get good grades at the expense of kids learning. And I think kids are leaving school clutching exam certificates but knowing very little. I genuinely think that that has been an effect of OFSTED since particularly 2012. (Teacher 18, 2019, p 11)

Teacher 9 questions the very idea of school improvement as prioritising the measurable at the expense of what should be measured in echoes of Mortimore (1999).

OFSTED has made schools change. So much that they are very very different. Almost in some cases they are unrecognisable from what they were 10 or 15 years ago. Is that a change for the better? Well I don't know. I mean you see the whole notion of

improvement is I think actually a little bit flawed. It just tends to be assumed. You can only improve when you start to invoke certain metrics or measures but you know as well as I do that the moment you only look at those metrics is the moment that you promote a short-sightedness. And that you are, you become myopic because you're just looking at those measures and what you're missing, you know could be horrendous damage and unless you start measuring that then you won't see it. It's that question isn't it, improvement but at what cost and who's paying? I just think look at the increasing number of reports of youngsters entering university or entering the workplace who are unfit, and unready for further study or work. (Teacher 9, Interview, 2019, p 9)

It is this comment on the overall effects of OFSTED that is perhaps the most damning of all from the sample. It accuses OFSTED of doing harm through promoting excessive concentration in schools on narrow objectives without corresponding increase in pupil expertise in "extrinsic ends" (Peters, 1966, p 143). Teacher 9 sees this as damaging to curriculum breadth and thereby diminishing educational quality in terms of liberal education theory (Peters, 1966) and as futile in the context of OFSTED failing even to promote success as defined by Callaghan in the Ruskin speech of 1976 (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1). OFSTED is seen here by Teacher 9 as having been unable to promote "sufficient thoroughness and depth" (Callaghan, 1976, Appendix 1, p 3) in quality of liberal education (Peters, 1966) but also in the purpose for which Callaghan had intended that "thoroughness and depth" (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1): employability and economic contribution from "those required in after life to make a living" (Callaghan, 1976, Appendix 1, p 3). OFSTED is accused of failing to contribute to the "extrinsic end" (Peters, 1966) for which it was shown to have been conceived in Chapter 1. Its enduring strapline of 'Improvement through Inspection' is portrayed by Teacher 9 as an illusion pursued through damaging means.

This concludes the analysis and interpretation of themes emerging from the 30 interviews carried out between November 2018 and June 2020. It now remains to step back and draw conclusion on what has been learned from this study.

## Chapter 5

### Conclusion

#### 5.1 Introduction

This thesis makes a new contribution to knowledge since no qualitative study of teachers' perceptions of the impact of OFSTED currently exists which incorporates all its elements: exclusive focus on secondary schools; this specific and extensive date range; exclusively qualitative method; interviews through life histories of teachers, some of whom had served as OFSTED inspectors, with multiple experience of OFSTED; and focus on a broad range of perceived impacts as opposed to impact in one area of school practice or outcome. Participants had been asked for perceptions of OFSTED's operations and their impacts over a more extended period and from a greater experience base than had been attempted before in a qualitative study.

This study set out to investigate research questions arising from examination of existing literature on accountability systems in general and school accountability systems in particular, with special reference to the OFSTED accountability system. It also addressed research questions arising from gaps identified in that literature.

The applicability of the Foucauldian lenses of discipline (Foucault, 1991) governmentality, and imposition of power, knowledge, and truth from above (Foucault, 2001) to teachers' perceptions were also investigated. This was possible to do simultaneously and naturally alongside the research questions since the interview questions designed to elicit teachers' perceptions in this study had been designed through Kendall and Wickham's Foucauldian framework (2004) as explained in Chapter 3.

No generalisation of findings from this study will be attempted for reasons also covered in Chapter 3: all findings therefore should be taken to apply only to this study's purposive sample of 30 teachers

and all apply to OFSTED inspections and practices in the time period September 1993 – November 2018 unless stated otherwise.

## **5.2 Research Question 1**

### **How had the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affected teachers personally?**

This question had sought to investigate whether the impacts on schools and their staff of “performative cultures” (Elliott, 2001, p 192) written about extensively by Ball (2003, 2013) (Elliott, 2001) and Gleeson and Husbands (2001, 2003) were linked to pressures originating from OFSTED inspection as possible “unintended consequences” (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 50) of that accountability system. The analysis of perceptions carried out in Chapter 4 addressed this research question principally in three sections of that chapter: ‘OFSTED and Teacher Wellbeing’; ‘The Early OFSTED Inspections’ and ‘OFSTED Inspector Behaviour’. The findings were as follows.

There was considerable support in the sample for the view that some form of pressure on teachers was inevitable from any accountability system and that that pressure would inevitably have a different effect on different individuals thereby supporting the concept of “felt accountability” (Hochwarter, Kacmar and Ferris, 2003) and of subjective perception of accountability (Hall *et al*, 2003). There was very strong feeling that some form of accountability was desirable because of the amount of public money received by schools pointing to the enduring legacy of the Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1). Opinion was more divided on whether OFSTED was the right organisation to apply that accountability although most feeling was on the side of changing current OFSTED practices and priorities as applied to 2018 rather than on sweeping the system away entirely.

Personal effects of the anticipation, actuality and aftermath of inspection from the sample concerned those on the morale of individuals. These were most often connected with repeated inspections following judgements of ‘Requires Improvement’ or of ‘Inadequate’ resulting in the

imposition of 'Special Measures'. Judgements of 'Satisfactory' although equivalent to the grade of 'Requires Improvement' used after 2012 were not similarly perceived to be associated with effects on morale. This was explained by the positive linguistic connotations of the word 'satisfactory' and from the fact that a 'Satisfactory' judgement was not associated with a shortened interval between inspections as became the case with 'Requires Improvement'. Repeated inspections following such adverse OFSTED judgements in particular were seen as creating an atmosphere of negativity in the staff room with effect on the personal wellbeing of some individuals. The judgement labels themselves, being available in the public domain, were perceived as applying to all teachers within a school which had been so labelled irrespective of individual ability. Some participants mentioned this as a cause of talented teachers seeking to leave schools within the lower judgement categories thereby reducing the chances of these schools improving in terms of judgement grade or indeed accelerating their decline. Some participants spoke of teachers having had their careers damaged by being associated with schools in the lower judgement categories but others cited teachers in these schools having been able to move to more successful schools. This dichotomy of views is interpreted as explainable in the differing abilities and subject specialisation of individual teachers when applying to move positions and the different management attitudes and requirements in the schools being approached. Perceptions of schools and individuals being affected adversely by judgement grades and their implications indicated some adoption within the sample of the Foucauldian view of potentially damaging effects of normalising judgement (Foucault,1991).

Pressure on teachers as a personal effect was widely accepted in the sample as an inevitable result of any form of inspection and not always in a negative sense. There was feeling within the sample that pressure was needed to motivate some teachers and avoid complacency and could have the effect of facilitating the removal perceived weaker teachers from the school – particularly when these had been identified as such during or after inspection. In some cases SMT pressure on teachers regarded as 'weak links' had been shocking to participants. Some perceptions pointed to dramatic adverse effect of this on some individuals in the form of deteriorating health and even of

having been a contributory factor to subsequent death. The complexity of individual personalities and other circumstances in their lives were recognised as making it impossible to state definitively that this was the decisive factor, but this was thought to be likely where such a case was mentioned by participants.

There was feeling in the sample that teaching was a demanding and difficult job already without added pressure from inspection, particularly when compounded by SMTs felt to be over-zealous in the pursuit of a favourable or more favourable OFSTED judgement. This pointed to an unclear boundary between pressure applied by OFSTED requirements and inspections and the interpretation of these by school SMTs. Some management teams were seen to be protective of teachers, but this was most often seen to be the case in schools less likely to fall into one of the lower judgement categories. Perceptions of abrasive management styles were more common in schools in lower judgement categories and the effects of such management styles perceived in the sample accorded with the view discussed in Chapter 2 that such styles increased tension and emotional exhaustion in individuals (Breux et al, 2008, p 119). The OFSTED accountability system was overwhelmingly seen as “High stake” (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 46) by participants of all levels of seniority and as such accorded with the adoption of the Foucauldian view of being an application of power (Foucault, 2001) applied through examination and normalising judgement (Foucault, 1991).

Other factors repeatedly mentioned as affecting individuals personally were direct criticism by inspectors, particularly where this was felt to be unjust or based upon a personal agenda such as a focus on handwriting or particular view of appropriate teaching techniques, rather than criteria published in the version of the ‘Handbook for the Inspection of Schools’ (OFSTED, 1992) applicable at the time.

Direct questioning by inspectors at great length after a long school day, particularly when perceived as being designed to ‘catch out’ teachers rather than elicit reasons for policies or actions was also seen as hurtful and, more often, as disillusioning to individuals regarding the inspection process and

the reputation of OFSTED. Disillusionment of individuals was also seen as being caused in extreme cases such as by perceived threats of imposing grades unless particular views were accepted or of questioning so intense and prolonged it invited comparison with interrogation. This was also caused by unprofessional behaviour such as smelling of alcohol whilst inspecting, by racist references in a briefing, dismissal of individual illness or by behaviour seen as petty such as objecting to a previously agreed inspection base at the last minute.

Views also existed within the sample of confidence given by exceptional sensitivity or perception - particularly by HMIs, by helpful advice and encouragement after observation, by seeking out an individual after school to praise a lesson or by exceptional shared expertise. Such examples of help and support were perceived as far rarer as inspection teams shrank dramatically and became less subject focussed after 2005.

Some personal effects of the OFSTED inspection system were seen in the sample as highly positive ones showing that accountability through the OFSTED system need not be a negative concept and thus showing the views on this of Breaux *et al*, (2008) as still highly relevant. Many of the adverse personal effects that were attributed in the sample to OFSTED inspection and the workings of the OFSTED accountability system were interpreted as attributable most often to individuals - both OFSTED inspectors and school senior managers - who had damaged, hurt or disillusioned teachers through inconsiderate, insensitive or over-zealous behaviour. Such behaviour, again in both senior managers and OFSTED inspectors could include an over-reaction to OFSTED criteria or requirements. In senior managers a desire, often understood by participants, to achieve a successful judgement from OFSTED was frequently perceived in the sample as resulting in impossible work demands or over-harsh pressure on teachers with a contribution to catastrophic personal effects on some. Accounts within the sample of multiple members of staff off with breakdowns or long term ill health are interpreted as being attributable to this effect of the "High stake" (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 46) nature of the OFSTED inspection system with its emphasis on headline judgement grades

in the public domain. Often such pressure was passed on and amplified, sometimes to extremes, by SMTs or by the behaviour of individual inspectors. Poor behaviour by inspectors was perceived in the sample to have been partly addressed by OFSTED's dismissal of a large number recruited by third party agencies and taking recruitment in house in 2015 (Adams, 2014). Insensitive and excessive behaviour by some SMTs was perceived to remain a problem at the time of writing. This is interpreted from responses in the sample as partly rooted in individual ambition to succeed at all costs, partly in the need to constantly react to changing inspection frameworks within the 'Handbook for the Inspection of Schools' (OFSTED, 1992) particularly between 2012 and 2016, and partly in reaction to myths about the requirements of OFSTED. All three of these uphold the view that governmentality (Foucault, 2001) in the form of Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016) still exists and remains extremely damaging in its personal effects on many individual teachers.

### **5.3 Summary of Key Findings from Research Question 1**

- The need for accountability was accepted on the grounds that public money was being used and schools and teachers should not be left to their own devices as they had been pre-1993. It was also seen as an incentive for schools and teachers to improve and for validation of practice
- Individuals were perceived to react differently to Inspection pressure in a clear echo of "Felt Accountability" (Hall et al, 2003)
- Morale was most often adversely affected in a situation where a school was being inspected repeatedly within relatively short time periods following 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate' verdicts
- Adverse health effects were most likely to occur as a result of the "High Stake" (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015) nature of OFSTED inspection and headline judgements. Resulting SMT pressure could lead to unworkable policies and unsustainable workloads.

- Dialogue with inspectors was likely to result in acceptance of verdicts and often reduced pressure felt by individuals.

#### **5.4 Research Question 2**

##### **How had the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affected the culture and practices of schools?**

This research question had arisen from the tensions between the traditions of Liberal Education as expounded by Peters (1966) and that of education for goals linked to industrial and economic performance set out by Prime Minister James Callaghan, (1976) (Appendix 1). Peters had seen Liberal education as essentially founded upon the idea of education for “intrinsic worth” decided by professionals “free of restrictions and impediments”(Peters, 1966, p 43) and as a protest “against confining what has been taught to the service of some extrinsic end such as production of material goods, obtaining a job or manning a profession” (Peters, 1966, p 43). Peters saw this as a potential distortion of the unique culture of individual schools as decided by professional educators (Peters, 1966). Peters’s views on professional judgement as essential to education as opposed to vocational training had been supported by Biesta (2014), Berry, (2012) and by Green (2011) who rejected the idea of Johnston (2014) that professionalism could be seen as a measure of competence in applying external objectives. Green in particular saw professionalism as a celebration of esoteric elements based on a sense of personal metier (Green, 2014).

Callaghan’s desire for government control over what was being taught and of its outcomes through a re-purposed Her Majesty’s Inspectorate (Callaghan, 1976) subsequently came about through the creation of the compulsory National Curriculum with associated attainment targets overseen by OFSTED as was shown in Chapter 1. This research question sought to explore how the culture and practices of schools had been impacted by OFSTED inspections over two and a half decades in the light of that tension between views of professional judgement and education for extrinsic or intrinsic ends (Peters, 1966, p 43). Simultaneously it explored if school culture and practices were perceived

as having been influenced centrally in a manifestation of Foucauldian governmentality (Foucault, 1991).

Responses by participants exclusively saw OFSTED as a “High stake” (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015, p 50) process in which the consequences of being awarded a low judgement category were wide reaching. In this context OFSTED had been seen as “the arbiters of what success and failure looks like” (Teacher 4, Interview, 2019, p 5). There was great acceptance in the sample that this perceived power of OFSTED had influenced the practices and culture of schools, particularly when they were in or under threat of being put into the ‘Requires improvement’ or ‘Inadequate’ categories with the pressure implications of repeat inspections or ‘Special Measures’. There was perception that the higher categories allowed greater freedom of action by schools likely to be visited less often by OFSTED or indeed not at all with the de facto exemption from regular inspection carried by an award of ‘Outstanding’ under Sir Michael Wilshaw.

The greater outcomes focus of OFSTED after 2005, which had been perceived as all-pervading between 2012 and 2016 by participants, was frequently blamed in the sample for the adoption of low quality examination courses with high points value such as the multiple award Applied GCSEs. It was also blamed by many participants for the narrowing of curriculum, particularly but not exclusively in the period 2010-16, through adoption of courses included in measures statistically valued by OFSTED such as Progress 8 and the EBACC. There were strong views that this narrowing of curriculum towards what were seen as more ‘academic’ subjects had been detrimental to many students who would have benefitted from more creative or vocational subjects which had been jettisoned in some schools as being outside of the Progress 8 and EBACC combinations. Students with Special Educational Needs or Disabilities had been seen as particularly damaged by this academic focus. Since Progress 8 and the EBACC came directly from Michael Gove, Secretary of State for Education 2010-14, it is hard not to see this narrowing of curriculum as anything other than a manifestation of governmentality (Foucault, 2001) whereby schools and individual pupils had been

directly influenced and effectively controlled by government policy. Ironically for James Callaghan who had wanted education to prepare youngsters for employment (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1) this government control of content and outcome had pushed education in many schools away from vocational courses of value to industry and employment in favour of a more narrow academic subject diet. Such a diet was seen in the sample as being particularly unsuited to those schools most likely to adopt it: those struggling to avoid 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate' judgements from OFSTED which were seen as far more often being situated in challenging socio-economic environments. This perceived connection between school circumstances and judgement grade will be explored in greater depth in the sections below focussing on research questions on 'trust' and 'consistency'. It was mentioned more than once in responses that an award of 'Outstanding' had been followed by more freedom of action in terms of courses adopted and approaches. As one teacher put it, once graded outstanding there was also less follow-up change to carry out (Teacher 14, Interview, 2019). In illustration of freedom of action Teacher 3's school had rejected EBACC and Progress 8 priorities from that position of 'Outstanding' but was perceived even from that high level as having been saved from 'Requires Improvement' or worse when very poor outcomes in terms of those measures were overridden in an inspection in the very early days of HMCI Spielman's announced focus on broader curriculum.

The perceived 'outcomes focus' and narrowing of curriculum above was seen in the sample as closely related to the increased concentration on data by OFSTED which accompanied the 'New Relationship with Schools' (DfE/OFSTED, 2004) and was seen as continually growing in emphasis in the years to 2016. This perceived preoccupation with data by OFSTED both centrally and by individual teams and inspectors was viewed negatively by many participants, principally as deflecting school leaders into a concentration on ends over educational means or, more colourfully, as weighing the pig rather than feeding it (Teacher 1, Interview, 2018).

Participant accounts mentioned the creation of school policies with the primary or sole reason of pleasing OFSTED which was perceived as particularly de-stabilising in a time of uncertainty as to OFSTED's actual requirements in the face of frequent changes in the 'Handbook for the Inspection of Schools' (OFSTED, 1992) and consequently to the inspection framework. These changes were seen as particularly rapid and de-stabilising in the period 2012-16 resulting in a perceived need to second guess the requirements of the next inspection team in what was described as trying to get on the latest bandwagon. In what was perceived as frantic desire to gain a favourable or improved judgement grade, seen as a 'badge' because of its attached publicity, there were perceptions of short-lived initiatives and of policies imposing impossible workloads in a desire to exceed or interpret to extremes requirements given in the previous inspection judgement or given to neighbouring schools. This was more than once described by participants as creating a climate of fear. Often there was reference to an all-encompassing drive to change in order to achieve a good or improved judgement giving a strong feeling in the sample agreeing with the statement that "everything we did was geared to making sure we got out of Requires Improvement or Special Measures" (Teacher 26, Interview, 2019, p 3). This perceived 'dash for approval' was clear confirmation within the sample of the rush to conform to constantly moving requirements described as Post-panopticism by Courtney (2016).

Similarly, there was a perceived move towards caution and formulaic policies as another assured way through which to gain OFSTED's approval. Participants talked of policies such as tick lists to ensure conformity with rigid lesson procedure inhibiting creativity; of obligation to record data on interventions taking time from lesson planning; of being forced to shake hands with each pupil on entry to the room which ate into teaching time; or of having to fill in a Pupil Premium attendance profile for an after school club which led to the abandonment of the activity. There were also cases in schools in challenging circumstances where defensive teaching had been perceived as making things worse by failing to engage difficult pupils. Participants were clear that such policies had not been directly imposed by OFSTED but were an indirect consequence of the "High stake" (Altrichter

and Kemethofer, 2015, p 50) system creating a need for OFSTED approval which had the effect of driving SMTs towards extreme policies.

It did also emerge from the sample that in some cases, seen as relatively rare by participants, there were benefits to imposed caution and rigidity. These would occur most often where a school was in Special Measures after the breakdown of even the most basic discipline and order. In such schools imposed changes of culture in the form such rigid policies of teaching and learning and assessment under the supervision of a monitoring inspector did provide a platform of stability from which to build. There were also admissions that even though much had suffered in the short through rigidity and a 'party line' ultimately the school that emerged was a better place. To balance this some schools were perceived as finding themselves locked in a cycle of inspection disapproval no matter what policies were adopted. This point will be developed in the next section of this chapter.

Participants in this study did confirm a perception of successful central control of much of what was taught by schools and the imposition of an 'Outcome focus'. Teachers do not talk in the language of Foucault but the perceptions of those in the sample is interpreted as confirming a wielding of central power having considerable effect on the practice and culture of schools and a consequent knock on effect on individuals within. Curriculum had been narrowed in many schools by an outcome focus enforced by an increasing concentration on data over the period covered by this study. This had largely been perceived as being carried out by SMTs in anticipation or interpretation of OFSTED's requirements of the last or the forthcoming inspection in manifestations of panopticism (Perryman, 2006) and later, between 2012 and 2018, of Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016). This 'Outcome focus' and narrowing of curriculum was perceived as having denied many pupils of appropriate courses for their needs and had impacted particularly on creative and vocational offers within schools. Government control had been successfully imposed but had ironically detracted from courses more directly of use to the economy. An "Extrinsic end" (Peters, 1966, p 43), but perhaps not the intended one for many pupils.

## 5.5 Summary of Key Findings from Research Question 2

- The “High Stake” (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015) nature of the OFSTED accountability system had led to widespread acceptance by SMTs of the organisation’s power and the importance of its headline judgements. This had influenced policy decisions within schools and had led to the adoption of defensive and formulaic approaches to teaching and learning
- The outcomes and data focus of OFSTED since 1993, particularly acute between 2012 and 2016, had led to narrowed curriculum with a particularly damaging effect on SEND pupils and adoption of examination courses of dubious quality prioritising ends over means
- Constant change of the inspection framework had de-stabilised schools and had led to a dash for approval whereby policies had been adopted in some schools more to please OFSTED than to meet the needs of pupils.

## 5.6 Research Question 3

### **How far had trust been evident in the OFSTED inspections experienced and what effects had its presence or absence had?**

The adoption of an inspection model as the heart of the OFSTED accountability system in 1992 had suggested that any element of trust of teachers would be minimal at best. The use of teams of 15 inspectors to investigate every aspect of a school’s practice over four or sometimes five days (Elliott, 2012) seemed to confirm this. The adoption of this accountability model coincided with social science investigations of the effectiveness of trust as part of accountability systems in the 1990s. When Ammeter *et al*’s meta-analysis (2004) of these studies came down firmly on the side of the desirability of including some degree of trust in accountability systems potential tension between this and the early OFSTED accountability system was highlighted. Ammeter *et al* (2004) saw trust and accountability as two extremes of the same continuum. Although the original inspection model seemed to lay very much on the accountability end of that continuum it was unclear if OFSTEDs adoption of an inspection system, based on a Self-Evaluation Form and carried out by much smaller

teams in 2005, represented a move towards trust of teachers and SMTs. This new model was still built on a platform of inspection but perhaps offered some chance to influence the direction of any inspection. This research question in the form of interview question 5 (Appendix 6) was designed to probe teacher perceptions of where OFSTED inspection lay on Ammeter et al's continuum (2004) and the perceived impacts of presence or absence of trust of the inspection system. In actuality, owing to the semi-structured format of the interviews, participants' perceptions concerning trust came from responses to a particularly wide range of interview questions indicating multiple impacts and a high level of importance of its presence or absence in inspection on schools and teachers.

Trust was perceived as being closely related to the length of OFSTED inspections and classroom observations. The early 'large team' inspections were seen in the sample as more trustworthy because of their thoroughness from the point of view of SMT participants in the sample or because of their more subject-specific nature for participants who were middle managers or class teachers. The small team, SEF based, inspections after 2004 with their fewer and shorter observations of lessons were seen as insufficient to get what more than one participant described as a 'real feel' of every aspect of a school or of a lesson. This had engendered a lack of trust in the verdict. Lack of trust of observations in particular was either attributed to not being carried out by subject specialists, or to the perception that only a small fragment of a lesson was being observed but the whole lesson was being graded. Where inspectors had engaged in dialogue after observations with teachers some participants saw this as a method of at least understanding reasoning for a verdict thereby raising the degree of trust and acting in partial mitigation of limited observation time. Strong feeling remained that more must be seen of a school or lesson for a verdict to be fully accepted, whether favourable or unfavourable. There were several participants who admitted they were less likely to question a favourable verdict although this was still often accompanied by what is interpreted as underlying distrust if that verdict had resulted from a short inspection or observation. Teachers in the sample who had worked as inspectors also expressed dissatisfaction with shorter inspections or observations as engendering mistrust in verdicts. They also added the dimension that

teachers could 'turn it on' for a short period in an observation and mislead an inspector. Senior managers were seen as having had more opportunity to conceal weaker areas of school practice in a short inspection. Such short inspections were perceived therefore as damaging trust among inspectors and teachers. Some degree of initial distrust was perceived as likely in any situation where one individual judges another, but this was seen as minimised in a longer, more thorough inspection and amplified in a shorter one with implications for the smooth running of the inspection as well as trust of its findings.

Trust was also perceived as compromised where participants suspected that a national or personal agenda was having influence on an inspection. Several participants felt that the stated intention under Sir Michael Wilshaw to reduce the number of outstanding schools had unfairly influenced the outcome of an inspection with clear implications for trust in future inspections. Government national priorities such as academisation were felt by some participants to have influenced inspection outcomes affecting trust in the stated independence of OFSTED in an echo of Foucauldian governmentality (Foucault, 2001). Perceptions of unofficial personal focuses from Lead Inspectors had also affected trust in both the conduct and verdict of some inspections.

Other perceived practices of OFSTED inspectors had led to expressions of distrust in verdicts and of the fairness of some inspections. These included concentration on one pre-identified inspection focus with an unwillingness to look at other areas of practice and unwillingness to listen to a teacher's reasons for adopting a certain approach in a lesson before making a judgement. In stark contrast to this not one participant expressed any distrust whatsoever in the verdict of inspections conducted by HMIs, even when these had been unfavourable to a school. Many had been impressed by the ability and sensitivity of HMIs and maintained a very high degree of trust in their ability to judge a school fairly. This had not been the case regarding trust of many non-HMI OFSTED Lead Inspectors and more than one participant had likened inspection outcome to a lottery depending on which of these inspectors walked through a school's doors. Many participants had certainly not

given the impression of Foucauldian docility (Foucault, 1991) as they had not been equally willing to trust the verdict of all inspectors.

School circumstances were found to be strongly correlated in the sample to level of trust of OFSTED as an organisation. Schools in more challenging circumstances were perceived to be far more likely to be subjected to frequent inspection and far more likely to be judged as 'Requires Improvement' or 'Inadequate'. This was largely perceived as resulting from the blanket application of National Standards regarding examination results which was regarded by participants of taking insufficient account of the challenges of many catchment areas and to insufficient recognition of the greater amounts of hard work perceived as necessary to get a disadvantaged child to the same standard regarding examination outcomes as one from a privileged background. As one participant put it "based on that narrow criteria it doesn't take into consideration how hard you work and how much you care" (Teacher 26, Interview 2019, p 11).

There were also expressions in the sample of schools falling into vicious and virtuous circles (Teacher 14, Interview, 2019), of expected unfavourable or favourable OFSTED judgements relating to School circumstances - with consequential distrust of an open minded and fair approach from inspection teams. This was seen as possible to mitigate by a reduction in emphasis on headline judgement grades and a concentration on dialogue, support, help and sharing of best practice by inspection teams. In several cases participants mentioned the support of a monitoring inspector when a school had been in 'Special Measures' as creating an atmosphere of trust instrumental in ultimately successful emergence from the category. It was seen as a missed opportunity that such support was not forthcoming in the 'Requires Improvement' judgement category.

The acceptance of accountability in schools and acceptance largely of OFSTED in some form as an appropriate vehicle of applying that accountability has already emerged from the sample in the section on 'Personal Effects' at the start of this chapter. That acceptance and the valuing within the sample of trust within the inspection system enhancement of this could be seen as a method of

making accountability more effective through the smooth running of inspections and acceptance of verdicts. This could provide an alternative to seeing accountability as an opposite to trust as described in Ammeter *et al's* meta-analysis (2004). It seems from the perceptions here that there is currently, but need not be in the future, tension between the operation of an inspection based accountability system and trust. Longer inspections, abandonment of headline inspection grades, dialogue between inspectors and teachers and support for schools caught in the vicious circle (Teacher 14, Interview, 2019) could produce an inspection system producing and expecting mutual trust.

### **5.7 Summary of Key Findings from Research Question 3**

- The inspections between 1993 and 2005 carried out by big teams over several days had been trusted more by teachers than the shorter inspections post-2005. This was explained by perceptions of thoroughness, dialogue and subject focus in the earlier inspections that was missing from those post 2005
- National focuses by OFSTED and personal agendas of some Lead Inspectors were perceived to have unfairly influenced inspections
- Personalities of some Lead Inspectors had been perceived to have had disproportionate influence on some inspection outcomes. This had led to a perception of something of a personality dependent lottery regarding inspection outcome
- Inspections conducted by HMIs were widely trusted.
- Inspection outcome and frequency of inspection were seen as largely dependent on School Circumstances. There was apperception of schools falling into vicious or virtuous circles with the former being applicable to those schools in challenging circumstances

### **5.8 Research Question 4**

**How consistent had inspection judgements and recommendations made by OFSTED been for schools and their staff?**

This study dealt with the perceptions of teachers with experience of at least two and often multiple inspections (Appendix 7) in the OFSTED era 1993-2018. Since this was a longer period of time than covered by any previous study of teachers' perceptions it extended a unique opportunity to this study to explore the consistency of OFSTED judgements and recommendations over an extended period within this highly experienced purposive sample (Appendix 7).

Chapter 2 had shown OFSTED's approach to be consistent in some ways in the period 1993-2018 in that inspections had always remained at the heart of its methodology. The 1993 Framework for the Inspection of schools (OFSTED, 1993) although revised many times, sometimes in quick succession, still had many similarities with that in force at the end of 2016 (OFSTED, 2016). Consistency was also highlighted in Chapter 2 through the experiences of Eastbrook School in the London Borough of Barking and Dagenham, which had undergone fifteen inspections between 2000 and 2021 yet only once had been judged higher than 'Requires Improvement' or its equivalent (OFSTED, 2021). This did point to consistency of judgement grade over an extended period for one school throughout the period of tenure of six permanent and three acting HMCI's.

In other ways the picture from existing literature in Chapter 2 showed inconsistencies such as different policies towards teaching methods and styles, different styles and approaches to the writing of inspection reports despite strict guidelines, and greatly differing lengths of reports particularly pre-and post the 2005 transition to smaller teams and a SEF based inspection, (Elliott, 2012). In addition, OFSTED had removed 1200 inspectors from its workforce in 2015 and whilst standing by previous judgements made by these inspectors (Richardson, 2015) the extent to which their level of consistency could be relied on had been publicly questioned by the teaching profession in the educational press (Barton, 2015). Perceptions of this could now be tested in the sample and OFSTED's perceived level of consistency within that sample would have implications for the appropriateness of considering OFSTED inspection as a form of Foucauldian normalising judgement

by examination (Foucault, 1991). If OFSTED was perceived as inconsistent judgement could not then be seen as truly normalised and examination could be seen as unreliable.

In practice perceptions from the sample were significantly split on the issue of consistency. When OFSTED judgements and reports were seen as consistent by participants this was expressed in terms of expected outcomes within either the top two or bottom two inspection judgement grades. Many schools in which participants perceiving consistency had had experience had tended to remain within the top two or bottom two inspection grades through many changes in the Framework for the Inspection of Schools (OFSTED, 1993) and throughout the tenure of different HMCI's. Some perceived similar inspection focuses over successive inspections such as statistical outcomes (Teacher 17, Interview, 2019) or assessment and marking (teacher 16, Interview, 2019). Where schools had jumped between the two pairs of categories this was often put down to a rogue inspection team or Lead Inspector and this view had been supported by accounts of schools reverting to their 'usual' grade in the following inspection in a similar pattern to that shown by Eastbrook School's move to 'Good' on one occasion then reversion to 'Requires Improvement' (OFSTED, 2021). Normalising judgement through examination did seem applicable to these response from the sample.

Those in the sample perceiving inconsistency were more numerous than those perceiving consistency in a ratio of 3:2. More important than numbers to a qualitative study their views were more passionately expressed which is interpreted as the results of feeling frustration at being subjected to erratic outcomes in a "High stake" accountability system (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015). Perceptions of inconsistency fell into two broad groups: those attributing inconsistency to differing approaches from different teams thereby rejecting any normalising judgement (Foucault, 1991); and those attributing it to rapid changes in the Framework for the Inspection of Schools (OFSTED, 1993) who were adopting a stance consistent with the reference in Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016) to such de-stabilising change. It was less clear if they saw this as a deliberate de-

stabilising strategy to facilitate government control in complete accordance with Courtney's view (Courtney, 2016). In the interpretation of the author from tone and vocabulary it was more likely to have been regarded as accidental or the result of OFSTED insensitivity to the results of constant rapid change.

Where teams or individual inspectors were blamed for inconsistency of verdict in the same school or between similar schools this was perceived as being caused by differing interpretations of one set of inspection criteria by different teams or different lead inspectors or by different teams or different lead inspectors adopting differing approaches to inspection or adopting what were perceived as pre-adopted inspection focuses.

Where changes in criteria between inspection had been blamed for inconsistency transition between one Framework for the Inspection of Schools (OFSTED, 1993) to another seemed to be a particular shared pressure point. Particularly memorable was the account of Teacher 21 referring to an inspection on the actual first day of operation of a new Framework for the Inspection of Schools (OFSTED, 1993) resulting in differing inspection findings from previous reports, confusion, and controversy between SMT and the OFSTED Team. This had resulted in partially upheld complaints to OFSTED (Teacher 21, Interview, 2019) although the inspection judgement grade had remained unchanged. Frequently mentioned in the sample was inconsistency resulting from periods of exceptionally rapid change between succeeding versions of the Framework (OFSTED, 1993) of which the worst was that between January 2012 and January 2013 when three sets of changes were issued. Such rapid change had been perceived as the origin of many inconsistencies of inspection judgement in that period.

With such division among perceptions in the sample concerning the consistency or otherwise of OFSTED judgements and reports it is not possible to come to any definitive answer concerning the applicability here of Foucauldian normalising judgement from examination (Foucault, 1991) to

OFSTED inspection. All that can be said with certainty is that it was naturally applicable only to those who saw OFSTED as consistent, and this represented a slight minority of view in the sample.

#### **5.9 Summary of Key Findings from Research Question 4**

- Perceptions of the consistency of procedure and outcomes of OFSTED inspections were split in the sample
- Where consistency was perceived, it tended to be so in follow-up inspections after Special Measures or in inspections of schools with a previous record of 'Outstanding' or 'Good' outcomes
- Where inconsistency was perceived, it was in the approaches of different teams and/or in interpretation of new Inspection Frameworks

#### **5.10 Research Question 5 and Overall Conclusion**

**How had the overall effects of the OFSTED accountability system on secondary schools and their staff overall been perceived? Could any negative effects be mitigated and, if so, how?**

This interview question, number 8 (Appendix 6), had been designed to allow participants to step back and review their answers in an attempt to summarise their perceptions of the overall effects of the OFSTED accountability system. The research question on which it had been based had arisen from the work of Lyotard (1979) and (Elliott, 2001) on performativity and the work of Rutter et al (1979), concerning what could reasonably be expected of schools and the appropriateness of business accountability models (Moore, 2017) (Miles and Kanazawa, (2016). The exploration of the subjective concepts of 'good' and 'harm' done and to whom it had been done had come from the work of Hall et al, (2003).

Because of an obvious overlap, responses to this question will be combined with perceptions from the whole study as interpreted by the author to form an overall general conclusion to this work.

23 participants from 30 had responded in depth to the challenge of summarising 'good' and 'harm' and the vast majority of these had perceived a mixed picture although 18 of these had come to the conclusion that, on balance, OFSTED had done more harm than of good; 5 arrived at the opposite view. This should be read in the context of a strong feeling in the sample covered in the first section of this chapter that accountability was necessary in education and a net feeling on the side of changing current OFSTED practices and priorities as applied to 2018 rather than on sweeping the system away entirely. This represented a considerable vindication within the sample of one of the aims of James Callaghan expressed in the Ruskin Speech (Callaghan, 1976 (Appendix 1) and the abandonment by participants of the "secret garden of the curriculum" (Eccles, 1960). It could also be seen as an acceptance, albeit unwitting, by the sample of at least some measure of Governmentality (Foucault, 2001) in the form of central control.

Where participants had perceived more good than harm they had pointed to validation of practice, to increased accountability in schools creating incentive to improve in terms of judgement grades, to a sense of rigour and urgency and to a rise in external examination results - although with some questioning of the worth of the qualifications so gained marking some doubt in "education for extrinsic end" (Peters, 1966, p 43). More widely in the study, the early OFSTED inspections to 2005 had been seen as helpful in developing practice through their combination of whole school perspective with detailed subject focus and dialogue with inspectors resulting from extended time spent in departments. This had been in marked contrast to the situation after shorter, SEF focussed, inspections became the norm after 2005. These had been felt to base judgements on an incomplete picture of schools and lessons. Advice and support had been perceived of having been forthcoming after 2005 only in 'Special Measures'. In addition, increased focus and pressure on SMTs had led to perceptions knock on pressure on teachers and, in more than a few cases, the imposition of a climate of fear in a resultant 'dash for grades'.

HMI expertise and sensitivity had almost exclusively been welcomed and valued as had HMI leadership of inspections which had been seen as trustworthy and helpful. Some had mentioned great improvement in individual schools after the shock of an adverse inspection judgement and had valued the inherent support of monitoring inspections attached to 'Special Measures'. This could be seen in the Foucauldian light of valuing a form of knowledge and truth imposed from above through power (Foucault, 2001) and even as some indication of Foucauldian docility (Foucault, 1991).

Perceptions seeing more harm than good resulting from OFSTED inspection in responses to question 8 had concentrated on the damaging effects of some methods employed by some inspectors and the fear created by a "High stake" (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015) inspection system particularly after 2005 where perceived pressure from and fear of OFSTED was seen as equalled or exceeded by SMTs anxious - sometimes desperately anxious - attempts to gain approval from that organisation in terms of a headline judgement. Many participants had seen the very public nature of these judgements as unnecessarily damaging to schools in terms of pupil recruitment and staff retention and as detracting from constructive recommendations and even praise in some reports. The fear of public loss of reputation through an adverse judgement was also perceived as having been responsible for adoption of formulaic practices, excessive caution in the classroom and unworkable and policies creating unnecessary or impossible workload. The abandonment of such headline judgements in the public domain was seen by participants as a desirable and essential means of mitigating these adverse impacts of OFSTED inspection. The perception of adverse inspection judgements proving damaging to schools could be seen as an example of Foucauldian discipline imposed through coercion and punishment (Foucault, 1991).

The increased outcomes focus of OFSTED inspections from 2005, and particularly under the tenure of HMCI Sir Michael Wilshaw, had been seen as very damaging to the quality of courses adopted in schools and to breadth of curriculum. This was perceived as having led to the adoption of a narrowing and increasingly academic offer in many schools with particular damaging consequences

to pupils whose needs lay in more practical or vocational subjects: a particularly ironic outcome in terms of James Callaghan's aim to promote employability and economic contribution through education (Callaghan, 1976) (Appendix 1). Less focus on outcomes in favour of concentration on a broader curriculum was seen as essential by many in the sample to mitigate these unfortunate effects and this was beginning to emerge under the tenure of HMCI Spielman after announcements in 2018 concerning a new Framework for the Inspection of Schools (OFSTED, 1993) "it is clear that as an inspectorate we have not placed enough emphasis on the curriculum. For a long time, our inspections have looked hardest at outcomes" (Spielman, 2018). In 2019 a new inspection framework was published (OFSTED, 2019) and although the importance of a broad curriculum has been accepted within as of equal importance it would be misleading to say that an outcomes focus has been abandoned altogether. The 'Quality of Education' judgement category examines whether

learners develop detailed knowledge and skills across the curriculum and, as a result, achieve well. Where relevant, this is reflected in results from national tests and examinations that meet government expectations, or in the qualifications obtained (OFSTED, 2019)

It is perhaps naïve to expect an organisation dedicated to its own view of school improvement to abandon any measure of outcomes since this the most easily measurable indicator of school improvement and it is perhaps not desirable that it should do so completely. This study indicates that it is concentration on that measure above all others that was perceived to be particularly harmful in the sample.

There was strong feeling within the sample for the need for dialogue with OFSTED inspectors both during an inspection and in the process of arriving at an inspection judgement. This was seen as entirely feasible since it had been perceived as regularly the case in inspections carried out between 1993 and 2005. Dialogue was seen as a strong method of identifying what was best practice, spreading such practice between schools. It was also seen as a method to strengthen trust between

inspectors and teachers and to mitigate any feeling of inspection judgements as having been partial or incomplete. It was also seen as a way of mitigating what was seen as inevitable tension surrounding any accountability situation (Breux et al, 2008), and the climate of fear sometimes referred to in the sample, by promoting mutual understanding between inspectors and teachers and of making the most of the expertise of both groups. This replacement of “the gaze” (Foucault, 1990) with genuine dialogue could end any applicability of Foucauldian Panopticism (Foucault, 1991) to education (Perryman 2006) and in turn de-fuse the mistrust and confusion of Post-panopticism (Courtney, 2016).

The most keenly felt sense of harm as an impact of OFSTED inspection 1993-2018 was the idea of schools becoming locked into virtuous and vicious circles (Teacher 14, Interview, 2019) of patterns of success or failure in terms of continual award of either the top two or bottom two inspection judgement grades over many years. In the top two judgement grades this had been perceived sometimes as creating complacency. In the cases of schools locked into the bottom two judgements this had been perceived as consistently creating an absence of hope and an unfair labelling of talented staff working in school in challenging circumstances as ‘failing’ and making it difficult to recruit pupils in particular but also sometimes preventing the attraction or retention of teachers capable of promoting school improvement in terms of atmosphere and outcomes. It had also led to great distrust of OFSTED among participants who had worked in challenging schools as failing to recognise sufficiently the difficulties faced by such schools operating in locations of social challenge or extreme economic deprivation. The perception was of a difficult job made more difficult by repeated inspection, too little support in the case of the ‘Requires Improvement’ judgement grade, and blind application of national standards without concordant recognition of

“how hard you work and how much you care” (Teacher 26, Interview, 2019, p 11).

The principal of acceptance of central accountability of schools had been firmly accepted in the sample. If OFSTED was to be accepted similarly strongly as the correct vehicle through which to

deliver that accountability it would require application of mitigations to the adverse impacts of OFSTED inspection in the period 1993-2018. This study of the perceptions of a more experienced sample of teachers over a longer period of time than had ever been attempted by a similar study identified these mitigations as: abandonment of headline judgements in the public domain; consistent adoption of dialogue between teachers and inspectors as a part of inspection methodology; less frequent changes to the Framework for the Inspection of Schools (OFSTED, 1992); provision of support for schools to meet OFSTED requirements; and much more recognition of the challenges of schools operating in difficult circumstances. Attention to these is interpreted as capable of creating true acceptance within the sample of OFSTED as the appropriate vehicle to oversee the principal of central accountability in education.

Interpreted as underlying all of the adverse impacts of OFSTED inspection requiring these mitigating factors in the sample was the constant and increasing focus on outcomes which eclipsed all other OFSTED focuses in the years 2012-2018. The 2019 'Framework for the Inspection of schools' (OFSTED, 2019) whilst maintaining an outcomes focus, claims to have reduced its importance. At the time of writing nobody in the sample had experienced inspection under this framework and it remains to be seen how this most easily measured of all indicators of school performance will be interpreted by inspection teams. If its dominance is retained in practice this will perpetuate the other adverse impacts of OFSTED as perceived in the sample. Teacher 27 was sceptical concerning OFSTED's announcements as opposed to its possible intentions.

Well, it said it all didn't it when they put out that thing that said 'OFSTED does not expect this, does not expect that'. And our mantra was always a little caveat that you put on the end of it which said, 'but you'd be stupid not to'. (Teacher 27, Interview, 2020, p 8)

It can also be called into question whether, easy to apply and compare as it is, whether outcome is a true measure of school improvement at all. As Teacher 23 put it following a conversation with an HMI.

I said 'tell me, do you think since OFSTED have come in that standards have risen?'. And he said 'I think results have gone up' he said 'but I don't think education has improved'. He said 'results have gone up as we all know because everybody's playing games'. But real education isn't improving at all. (Teacher 23, Interview, 2019, p 7)

Whether education can be harnessed to a measurable and applicable "extrinsic end" (Peters, 1966, p 43) is consequently also seriously questioned by this study.

Over four decades after the Ruskin Speech education had been accepted as being correctly and properly subject to central accountability within this experienced sample. Inspection by OFSTED was shown in this study to have been perceived to have had many serious adverse impacts alongside any good that it had done. It was also accepted by many in the sample as a legitimate method of carrying out that accountability if subject to the modifications discussed above, and particularly if based around dialogue and support for schools and teachers to mitigate against repeat of its most inhuman and shocking impacts on individuals.

For his funeral we closed the school....Every member of staff, every kid went to it. They flew in from all over the place. Place came to a stand-still. It was an amazing and very touching moment and yet that man ended his life believing he'd been a failure (Teacher 22, Interview, 2019, p 8)

## 5.11 Summary of Overall Impacts of OFSTED Inspection on Secondary Schools and Teachers

1993-2018

<b>Table 2: Summary of Overall Impacts</b>	
<b>Perceptions of Good Done by the OFSTED Inspection System</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Accountability accepted as necessary for validation of practice, incentive to improve and when spending public money. Teachers and schools should not be left to their own devices as pre 1993</li> <li>• OFSTED was largely accepted and seen as probably the most effective vehicle for applying accountability to schools but only with modifications to its focus, priorities, methods and procedures. See ‘Mitigations’ below. Where OFSTED had not been accepted as the appropriate body no alternative suggestions had been forthcoming.</li> <li>• The ‘Big Team’ Inspections from 1993 to 2005 were largely trusted as being based on dialogue, subject specialisation, and extensive observation over several days. They were seen as ‘getting a feel’ for a school that had not been the case with later inspection models</li> <li>• HMI expertise was trusted and welcomed almost universally within the sample</li> </ul>	
<b>Perceptions of Harm Done by the OFSTED Inspection System</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The “High Stake” (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015) nature of the OFSTED accountability system had led to widespread acceptance by SMTs of the organisation’s power and the importance of its headline judgements. <b>This had influenced policy decisions within schools and had led to the adoption of defensive and formulaic approaches to teaching and learning</b></li> <li>• <b>Adverse health effects</b> were most likely to occur as a result of the “High Stake” (Altrichter and Kemethofer, 2015) nature of OFSTED inspection and headline judgements. Resulting SMT pressure could lead to unworkable policies and unsustainable workloads.</li> <li>• The outcomes and data focus of OFSTED since 1993, particularly acute between 2012 and 2016, had led to <b>narrowed curriculum with a particularly damaging effect on SEND pupils and adoption of examination courses of dubious quality prioritising ends over means</b></li> <li>• <b>Constant change of the inspection framework had de-stabilised schools</b> and had led to a dash for approval whereby policies had been adopted in some schools more to please OFSTED than to meet the needs of pupils.</li> <li>• Personalities of some Lead Inspectors had been perceived to have had disproportionate influence on some inspection outcomes. <b>This had led to a perception of something of a personality dependent lottery regarding inspection outcome</b></li> <li>• <b>National focuses by OFSTED and personal agendas of some Lead Inspectors were perceived to have unfairly influenced inspections</b></li> <li>• <b>Inspection outcome and frequency of inspection were seen as largely dependent on School Circumstances.</b> There was apperception of schools falling into <b>vicious or virtuous circles</b> with the former being applicable to those schools in challenging circumstances</li> </ul>	
<b>Perceived Mitigations to Negate the Harmful Impacts of OFSTED Inspection</b>	
<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Maintenance of written reports in the public domain but the <b>abandonment of Headline Judgements which were perceived to work against school improvement</b> when a school was judged as ‘Requires Improvement’ or ‘Inadequate’</li> <li>2) The introduction of a <b>requirement for developmental dialogue between inspectors and teachers</b> and inspectors and school leaders would increase trust in judgements and create a developmental atmosphere</li> </ol>	

- |   |
|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>3) <b>Schools should be given more support based on inspectorial expertise in <u>how</u> to meet OFSTED requirements.</b> At present this was only present when a school was in Special Measures.</li><li>4) <b>Greater recognition by OFSTED of the challenges of schools and teachers operating in areas of extremely challenging social and economic circumstances</b></li></ol> |
|---|

### 5.12 Dissemination

Although this study extends only up to 2018 in its findings OFSTED remains extant and will resume full inspections after a pause for COVID-19 in September 2021 (OFSTED, 2021). Its impacts on secondary schools and teachers will continue.

Although this study has shown that the teachers within the sample have not perceived all impacts of OFSTED inspection to be negative they also identified perceptions of harmful, unintended consequences and suggested possible mitigations for these. The author firmly believes that is in the interest of all taxpayers, maintained schools, teachers, and pupils that these issues should be disseminated, discussed, and debated as widely as possible.

OFSTED is likely to endure in the future as it has through the tenure of the last fifteen UK governments. The challenge will be to maximise its positive effects and mitigate the negative in inspections to come. This will be facilitated by widespread dissemination of this thesis and the author will explore as many avenues as possible to enable that to happen.

## Bibliography

Adams, R. (2014) 'Ofsted to end third party contracts and employ inspectors directly'. *The Guardian*, Thursday 29<sup>th</sup> May 2014. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/may/29/ofsted-end-third-party-contracts-employ-school-inspectors-directly>. Accessed 26<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Adams, R. (2014) 'Ofsted to bring back routine inspections for outstanding schools'. *The Guardian*, Friday 10<sup>th</sup> January 2020. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2020/jan/10/ofsted-to-bring-back-routine-inspections-for-outstanding-schools>. Accessed 7<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Altrichter, H., Kemethofer, D. (2015) 'Does accountability pressure through school inspections promote school improvement?' *School and School Improvement*, Vol 26, No 1, p32-56.

Ammeter, A.P., Douglas, C., Ferris, G.R. Goka, H. (2004) 'A social relationship conceptualization of trust and accountability in organisations'. *Human Resource Management Review*, 14, pp 47-65.

Aristotle (1979) *The Politics*, Book VIII. Harmondsworth: Penguin Classics.

Arnold, M. (1979) *Culture and Anarchy*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Assalahi, H. (2015) 'The Philosophical Foundations of Educational Research: a Beginner's Guide'. *Journal of Educational Research*, Vol 3, Number 3, 312-317.

Atkinson, R. (1998) *The Life Story Interview*. Thousand Oaks, California: SAGE.

Auld, R. (1976) *Report of the Public Inquiry into the teaching, organization and management of the William Tyndale Junior and Infants Schools Islington London, N1*. London: ILEA.

Ball, S. J. (2003) 'The teacher's soul and the terrors of performativity'. *Journal of Education Policy*, March 2003, Vol. 18 Issue 2, p215.

Ball, S. J. (2013) *Foucault, Power and Education*. London and New York: Routledge.

Barton, G. (2015) 'Opinion: OFSTED Expects? Forget it'. *TES* 26<sup>th</sup> August 2015, London: TES <https://www.tes.com/news/opinion-ofsted-expects-forget-it>. Accessed 15<sup>th</sup> May 2021.

Baxter, J., Clarke, J. (2013) 'Farewell to the tick box inspector? Ofsted and the changing regime of school inspection in England'. *Oxford Review of Education* Vol 39 No 5.

Beere, J. Gilbert, I. (2012) *The Perfect (OFSTED) lesson - revised and updated*. Carmarthen: Independent Thinking Press.

Benson, T. (2008) 'Head Teacher Vulnerability in Challenging Schools', in de Waal, A. (2008) (ed) *Inspecting the Inspectorate*. London: Civitas.

Berry, J. (2012) Teachers' Professional Autonomy in England: are neo-liberal approaches incontestable? *Forum*, Volume 54 Number 3.

Bertaux, D. (1981) *Biography and Society: The Life History Approach in the Social Sciences*. London: Sage.

BBC (2018) *News Website*. <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-essex-44154738>. Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> May 2018.

Bennett, N., Rutter, M. (1980) 'Review of Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Their Effects on Children'. London: Open Books.

Berlew, D.E. and Hall, D.T., (1966) The socialisation of managers: Effects of expectations on performance. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, Vol 11, p207-223.

Biesta G. (2015) What is education for? On Good Education, Teacher Judgement, and Educational Professionalism. *European Journal of Education*, Vol 50, No 1, 2015.

Bolton, E. (2014) 'HMI Inspection between 1968 and 1991'. *Journal of Educational Administration and History*, 46:3, p288-305.

Blair, T. (2010) *A Journey*. London: Hutchinson.

Bloomberg, L. D., Volpe, M., (2016) *Completing your Qualitative Dissertation: A Road Map from Beginning to End*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Blunsdon, P.A. (2002) *Perspectives on the impact of the OFSTED system of inspection on primary schools: a case study approach*. University of Nottingham.

Bradbury, J. (2018) 'Off-rolling: using data to see a fuller picture'. *OFSTED blog: schools, early years, further education and skills*, <https://educationinspection.blog.gov.uk/2018/06/26/off-rolling-using-data-to-see-a-fuller-picture/>. Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

Breaux, D., Munyon, T., Hochwarter, W., Ferris, G. (2008) 'Politics as a moderator of the accountability-job satisfaction relationship: evidence across three studies'. *Journal of Management* Vol. 35 No 2 pp. 307-326.

Brighouse, T., and Moon, B. (1995) (eds) *School Inspection*. London: Pitman.

Brimblecombe, N., Ormiston, M., and Shaw, M. (1996) 'Teachers' Perceptions of Inspections' in

Oulston, J., Fidler, B., Earley, P. (1996) (eds) *OFSTED inspections: the early experience*. London: David Fulton.

Brookes, M. (2008) 'We need an Inspection Process – But Not This One!' in de Waal, A. (ed) *Inspecting the Inspectorate*. London: Civitas.

Burnitt, M. T. (2016) *Primary headteachers: perceptions on standards, accountability and school context*. University of Manchester.

Callaghan, J. (1976) *Speech at Ruskin College, Oxford*. 18<sup>th</sup> October 1976.

Callaghan, J. (1987) *Time and Chance*. London: Collins.

- Cassidy, S. (2018) 'Off-rolling: fifth of teachers have seen schools remove students through the backdoor to improve results.' *The Independent*. 21<sup>st</sup> August 2018.  
<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/education/education-news/gcse-results-day-2018-off-rolling-school-exclusions-teachers-exams-ofsted-a8501136.html>. Accessed 25th September 2018.
- Central Advisory Council for Education (England), Plowden Committee (1967) *Children and their Primary Schools*. London: Her Majesty's Stationery Office.
- Charmaz, K., Belgrave, L.L. (2012) 'Qualitative Interviews and Grounded Theory Analysis', in Gubrium, J.F., Holstein, J.A., Marvasti, A., McKinney, K.D. (eds), *The Sage Handbook of Interview Research: The Complexity of the Craft*. Thousand Oaks: Sage.
- Chitty, C. (1989) *Towards a New Education System: The Victory of the New Right*. London: Falmer Press.
- Cohen, L., Manion, L., Morrison, K. (2007) *Research Methods in Education*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Coleman, J.S., Campbell, E.Q., Hobson, C., McPartland, J., Mood, J.M., Weinfield, F.D., York, R.L. (1966) *Equality of Educational Opportunity*. Washington DC: US Govt. Printing Office.
- Collins, J., and Selina, H. (2010) *Heidegger: A Graphic Guide*. London: Icon.
- Conservative Party (1974) *Firm Action for a Fair Britain*. London: Conservative Party.
- Conservative Party (1979) *Conservative Party General Election Manifesto*. London: Conservative Party.
- Conservative Party (1992) *The Best Future for Britain*. London: Conservative Party.
- Courtney, S.J. (2013) 'Head teachers' experiences of school inspection under Ofsted's January 2012 framework'. *Management in Education* Vol 27 No 4 164-169.
- Courtney, S.J. (2016) 'Post-panopticism and School Inspection in England'. *British Journal of Sociology in Education*, 37:4, 623-642.
- Cox, C. and Dyson, A. (eds)(1969a) *Fight for Education: A Black Paper*. Critical Quarterly Society.
- Cox, C. and Dyson, A. (eds)(1969b) *Black Paper Two: The Crisis in Education*. Critical Quarterly Society.
- Cox, C. and Dyson, A. (eds) (1970) *Black Paper Three: Goodbye Mr Short*. Critical Quarterly Society.
- Cox, C. and Boyson, R. (eds) (1975) *Black Paper 1975: The Fight for Education*. London: Dent.
- Cox, C. and Boyson, R. (eds) (1977) *Black Paper 1977*. London: Maurice Temple Smith.
- Consumer Price Index (1976) <http://www.inflation.eu/inflation-rates/great-britain/historic-inflation/cpi-inflation-great-britain-1976.aspx>. Accessed 26th April 2017.

- Cromey-Hawke, N. (2000) *Improvement through Inspection': schoolteachers' perceptions of the OFSTED years 1992-2000*, Ph.D. Thesis. University of Bristol.
- Cuckle, P., and Broadhead, P. 1999) 'Effects of Ofsted Inspection on school development and staff morale' in Cullingford (ed) *An Inspector Calls: Ofsted and its Effect on School Standards*. London: Kogan Page.
- Cullingford (1999) (ed) *An Inspector Calls: Ofsted and its Effect on School Standards*. London: Kogan Page.
- Cuthbertson, L.M., Robb, Y.A., Blair, S. (2019) 'Theory and Application of Research Principles and Philosophical Underpinning for a Study Using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis.' *Radiography* 26 p 94-102, 2020.
- Davis, V. (1996) 'The Early Experience of OFSTED' in Oulston, J., Fidler, B., Earley, P. (eds) *OFSTED inspections: the early experience*. London: David Fulton.
- De Chesney, M. (2015) *Nursing Research Using Life History*. New York: Springer.
- Denzin, N.K., Lincoln, Y.S. (2013) *The Landscape of Qualitative Research*. Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.
- Department for Education/OFSTED (2004) *A New Relationship with Schools*. London: DfE.
- Department for Education (2010) *The Importance of Teaching – the Schools White Paper*. Norwich: The Stationery Office.
- Department for Education (2013) *Statistical First Release*. London: DfE.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/251184/SFR40\\_2013\\_FINALv2.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/251184/SFR40_2013_FINALv2.pdf). Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> April 2021.
- Department for Education (2012) *Schools, SFR10/2012 Pupils and their Characteristics: January 2012*. London: The Stationery Office. <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/schools-pupils-and-their-characteristics-january-2012>. Accessed 9<sup>th</sup> October 2017.
- Department for Education (2020) *Secondary accountability measures Guide for maintained secondary schools, academies and free schools*. London: DfE.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/872997/Secondary\\_accountability\\_measures\\_guidance\\_February\\_2020\\_3.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/872997/Secondary_accountability_measures_guidance_February_2020_3.pdf). Accessed 5<sup>th</sup> April 2021.
- Department for Education (2021) *Explore Educational Statistics*. Gov.uk <https://explore-education-statistics.service.gov.uk/data-tables/fast-track/6f36b849-e109-4bcb-9132-b611737c8a65>. Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> January 2021.

Department of Education and Science (1977) *Education in Schools. A Consultative Document*. London: HMSO.

Department of Education and Science (1988) *Education Reform Act*. London: HMSO.

Department of Education and Science (1991) *The Education (National Curriculum) (Attainment Targets and Programmes of Study in History) (England) Order 1991*. London: HMSO.

DFEE/QCA (1999) *History: The National Curriculum for England*. London: DFEE/QCA

Devlin, T (1976) 'Mr Callaghan calls for improved education standards.' *The Times* Tuesday, Oct 19, 1976; pg. 1; Issue 59838, London.

de Waal, A. (2008) (ed) *Inspecting the Inspectorate*. London: Civitas.

Dickens, C. (1854) *Hard Times*. London: Bradbury and Evans.

Donoghue, B. (1976) *Memo on Education*. (PU183) (private papers).

Donoghue, B. (1987) *Prime Minister*. London: Jonathan Cape.

Downey, D.B., Condron, D.J. (2016) 'Fifty Years since the Coleman Report: Rethinking the Relationship between Schools and Inequality.' *Sociology of Education*, Vol 89 No 3 p207-220.

Drake, S. (2008) 'Inspection Today', in de Waal, A. (ed) *Inspecting the Inspectorate*. London: Civitas.

Dunford, J. (1998) *Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Schools Since 1944. Standard Bearers or Turbulent Priests?* London: Woburn Press.

Eccles, D. (1960) House of Commons debate on the Report of the Central Advisory Council, *Hansard volume 620 cc40-80*. 21<sup>st</sup> March 1960, London: HMSO.

Education Act (1944) London: HMSO.

Education Act (2005) Accessed through UK Legislation Website <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2005/18/contents>. Accessed 24<sup>th</sup> March 2021 .Crown and Database right. Original, London: HMSO.

Education Act (2011) London: HMSO.

Education Reform Act (1988) London: HMSO.

Education Policy Institute (2021) <https://epi.org.uk/our-mission-and-purpose/> Website accessed 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

- Ehren, M.C.M., Altrichter, H., McNamara, G., O'Hara, J. (2013) 'Impact of school inspections on improvement in schools – describing assumptions in causal mechanisms in six European countries.' *Educational Assessment, Evaluation and Accountability*, Vol 25, p 3-43.
- Einstein, A. (1997) *The Collected Papers of Albert Einstein, Vol 6. The Berlin Years: Writings, 1914-17*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Elliott, A. (2012) 'Twenty Years Inspecting English Schools – OFSTED 1992 -2012'. *RISE Review*, November 2012. London: RISE.
- Elliott, J., (2001) 'Characteristics of performative cultures' in *The Performing School*, Gleeson, G., and Husbands, C (eds). London and New York: Routledge Falmer.
- Exley, S. (2014) 'Head was 'mistakenly' warned ahead of inspection, OFSTED admits.' *TES*, 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2014. London: TES Global. <https://www.tes.com/news/head-was-mistakenly-warned-ahead-inspection-ofsted-admits>. Accessed, 20<sup>th</sup> September 2018.
- Fairclough, N. (1992) *Discourse and Social Change*. Oxford: Blackwell.
- Fairhall, J. (1976) 'Who killed William Tyndale?' *Education Guardian*, 19<sup>th</sup> October 1976. London and Manchester: Guardian.
- Findlater, S. (2015) *How to Survive an OFSTED Inspection*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Fletcher, V. (1998) 'Education research is dross, says Woodhead'. *The Times*, 23<sup>rd</sup> July 1998, issue 66261. London: Times Newspapers.
- Flowers, B., Keuning, D., Stoermer, M., Vannucci, R. (2008) *Human*. California: Universal Music Publishing.
- Foucault, M. (1966) 'Interview with Madeleine Chapsal'. Translated by Kelly, M.G.E. in *Journal of Continental Philosophy*, Volume 1, Issue 1, p 29-35 (2020).
- Foucault, M. (1988) *The Return of Morality* in ed. Lawrence D. Kritzman, *Michel Foucault. Politics, Philosophy, Culture: Interview and other Writings, 1977–1984*. New York: Routledge, 1988, p. 250. Quoted from Kramer, L.(2016) 'Heidegger and Foucault' in Raffoul, F., and Nelson, E.B.(eds) (2016) *The Bloomsbury Companion to Heidegger*. London: Bloomsbury.
- Foucault, M.(1979) *Truth and Power*. An interview with Fontana, A., and Pasquino, P, in Robinow, P. (1991) *The Foucault Reader. An Introduction to Foucault's Thought*. London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M.(1989) *Madness and Civilisation. A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. London: Routledge.

- Foucault, M. (1990) *The History of Sexuality Vol. 3: The Care of the Self*. London, Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1991) *Discipline and Punish: The Birth of the Prison*. London, Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (1998) *The History of Sexuality Vol. 1: The Will to Know*. London, Penguin.
- Foucault, M., (2001) *Power: essential works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 3*. Faubion, D. (Ed), London: Penguin.
- Foucault, M. (2002) *The Order of Things*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (2002a) *The Archaeology of Knowledge*. Abingdon: Routledge.
- Foucault, M. (2003) *The Birth of the Clinic*, Abingdon: Routledge.
- Friedson, E. (1994) *Professionalism Reborn: theory, prophecy and policy*, Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- Frink, D.D. and Klimoski, R.J. (1998) 'Towards a theory of accountability in organisations and human resource management.' In Ferris, G.R. (ed) *Research in personnel and human resource management* (Vol 16. pp 1-15). Stamford, Connecticut: JAI Press.
- Fulton Committee (1968) *The Report of the Committee on the Civil Service*. London: HMSO.
- Galletta, A., Cross, W.E. (2013) *Mastering the Semi-structured Interview and Beyond: From Research Design to Analysis and Publication*. New York: New York University Press.
- Gaertner, H., Wurster, S., Anand Pant, H. (2013) 'The effect of school inspections on school improvement.' *School Effectiveness and School Improvement*, Vol 25:4 p 489-508.
- Garvey, P. (2017) *Taking Control: How to prepare your school for OFSTED Inspection*. Woodbridge: John Catt educational Ltd.
- George, G.L. (2008) 'Hanging by a Hair: OFSTED's Damoclesian Sword' in de Waal, A. (2008) (ed) *Inspecting the Inspectorate*. London: Civitas.
- Gilbert, C. (2006) *Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2005-6*; p 9. London, The Stationery Office.
- Gilbert, C. (2008) *Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Schools 2007-8*. London: The Stationery Office.
- Glaser, B.G., and Strauss, A.L. (1967) *The Discovery of Grounded Theory*. Chicago, IL: Aldane.
- Gleeson, G., and Husbands, C (eds) (2001) *The Performing School*. London and New York: Routledge Falmer.

- Gleeson, G., and Husbands, C. (2003) 'Modernising Schooling through Performance management: a critical appraisal.' *Journal of Education Policy*, Vol 18, No 5 p 499-511.
- Gramsci, A. (1992-6) *Prison Notebooks*. New York: Columbia University Press
- Green, J. (2011) *Education, Professionalism and the Quest for Accountability*. Routledge: New York
- Goldacre, B. (2014) '*I Think You'll Find It's a Bit More Complicated Than That*'. London: HarperCollins.
- Goldstein, H., Mortimore, P. (1997) 'Look before you leap. When one day's flawed research can influence government policy prior scrutiny is crucial.' *The Guardian*, 25<sup>th</sup> February 1997. London and Manchester: Guardian.
- Goodson, I. (1983) 'Life Histories and Teaching' in Hammersley, M., (ed) *The Ethnography of Schooling*, Driffield: Nafferton.
- Goodson, I. (2008) *Investigating the Teacher's Life and Work*. Rotterdam: Sense.
- Goodson, I. (2014) 'Investigating the Life and Work of Teachers.' *Estonian Journal of Education* 2014, Vol. 2 Issue 2, p28-47.
- Goodson, I. (2016) 'Introduction. Life histories and Narratives', in Goodson et al (eds) *The Routledge International Handbook on Narrative and Life History*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Goodson, I, Sikes, P. (2001) *Life History Research in Educational Settings*. Maidenhead, OUP.
- Goodson, I, Sikes, P. (2016) 'Techniques for Doing Life History', in Goodson et al (eds) *The Routledge International Handbook on Narrative and Life History*. Abingdon, Oxon: Routledge.
- Gordon, C. (2001) 'Introduction' in Foucault, M., (2001) *Power: essential works of Foucault 1954-1984, Volume 3*, Faubion, D. (Ed). London: Penguin.
- Gretton, J., Jackson, M (1976) *William Tyndale – Collapse of a School – or a System?* TES Special. London: TES.
- Hall, A.T., Frink, D.D., Ferris, G.R., Hochwater, W.A., Kacmar, C.J. Bowen, M.G. (2003) 'Accountability in Human Resources Management,' in *New Directions in Human Resources Management* (2003), Schriesheim, C.A., Neider, L.L. (eds). Greenwich, Connecticut: Information Age Publishing.
- Hall, A.T., Zinko, R., Perryman, A.A., Ferris, G.R. (2009), 'Organizational Citizenship Behaviour and reputation mediators in the relationships between accountability and job performance and satisfaction.' *Journal of Leadership and Organizational Studies*, Vol. 15 No. 4, pp. 381-392.
- Halpin, T. (2003) 'Huge increase in number of schools failing Ofsted test.' *The Times* 6<sup>th</sup> November 2003. London: Times Newspapers.
- Heidegger, M. (2019) *Being and Time* p 190-1. Eastford, CT: Martino Fine Books.
- Hencke, D. (1976) 'Schools action demanded to Save Industry.' *Guardian* 19<sup>th</sup> October 1976. London and Manchester: Guardian.

- Hepburn, A., Brown, S. D. (2001) 'Teacher stress and the management of accountability.' *Human Relations* 54 Issue 6, p691-715. 25p. 1 Chart.
- Hirst, P.H. (1973) 'Liberal education and the nature of knowledge'. In Peters R.S. (ed) *The Philosophy of Education* pp. 87-111. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Hochwarter, W. A., Kacmar, C. J., & Ferris, G. R. (2003). *Accountability at work: An examination of antecedents and consequences*. Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology, Orlando, FL.
- Hochwarter, W. A., Ferris, G. R., Zinko, R., Arnell, B., James, M. (2007) 'Reputation as a moderator of political behaviour – work outcomes relationships.' *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 92, pp 567-576.
- Hoffman, M. (2014) *Foucault and Power: The Influence of Political Engagement on Theories of Power*. New York: Bloomsbury.
- Hogan, P. (1995) *The Custody and Courtship of Experience: Western Education in Philosophical Perspective*. Blackrock County Dublin: Columbia Press.
- Horrocks, C., Jevtic, Z. (2013) *Foucault, a Graphic Guide*. London: Icon.
- Hutchinson, J. (2016) *School Inspection in England: Is there room to improve?* London: Education Policy Institute.
- Husserl, E. (1970) *The Crisis of European Sciences and Transcendental Phenomenology*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press.
- Hustler, D. 1999 'The Ofsted lay inspector: to what purpose?' in Cullingford (ed) *An Inspector Calls: Ofsted and its Effect on School Standards*. London: Kogan Page.
- Izbicki, J. (1974) 'Tory New Deal for Education', *Sunday Telegraph* 4<sup>th</sup> August 1974. London: Telergraph Newspapers.
- Johnston, J. (2014) *Issues of professionalism and teachers: critical observations from research and the literature*. Australian Association for Research in Education. Published online, 2014.
- Kendall, G., and Wickham, G. (1999) *Using Foucault's methods*, London: Sage.
- Kendall, G., and Wickham, G. (2004) 'The Foucaultian Framework' in Seale, C., Giampietro, G., Gubrium, G., and Silverman, S. *Qualitative Research Practice*. Sage: New York
- Kogan, M., Maden, M. (1999) 'An evaluation of evaluators: the OFSTED system of School Inspection.' in Cullingford, C (ed.) *An Inspector Calls: Ofsted and its effect on school standards*'. London: Kogan Page.
- Kvale, S., Brinkmann, S. (2009) *Interviews. Learning the Craft of Qualitative Research Interviewing*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

- Laird, M.D., Hochwarter, W.A., Perryman, A.A., Zanko, R. (2009) 'The Moderating Effects of Personal Reputation on Accountability-Stress Relationships.' *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, Vol 14, No 1 pp70-83
- Larkin, M., Watts, S., Clifton, E., (2006) 'Giving Voice and Making Sense in Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis', *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2006 No 3: 102-120.
- Law, S., and Glover, G.( 1999) Does OFSTED make a difference? Inspection issues and socially deprived schools.' in Cullingford (ed) *An Inspector Calls: Ofsted and its Effect on School Standards*. London: Kogan Page.
- Laird, M.D., Harvey, P., Lancaster, J. (2015) 'Accountability, entitlement, tenure, and satisfaction in Generation Y.' *Journal of Managerial Philosophy*, Vol 30 No 1 pp 87- 100.
- Lanivich, S., Brees, J., Hochwarter, W., Ferris, G. (2010) 'P-E fit as a moderator of the accountability-employee reactions relationships: convergent results across two samples.' *Journal of Vocational Behaviour*, Vol 77 No 3, pp.425-436.
- Learmonth, J. (1996) 'OFSTED: a Registered Inspector's View,' in Oulston, J., Fidler, B., Earley, P. (1996) (eds) *OFSTED inspections: the early experience*. London: David Fulton.
- Lerner, J.S. and Tetlock, P.E. (1999) 'Accounting for the Effects of Accountability.' *Psychological Journal*, Vol. 125, No. 2, 255-275
- Lyotard, J. F. (1979) *The Post Modern Condition: A Report on Knowledge*.' Manchester: University Press.
- Lyon, F. (2011) 'Access and non-probability sampling in qualitative research on trust' in Lyon, F., Mollering, G., and Saunders, M. N.K.(eds) *Handbook of Research Methods on Trust*. Cheltenham: Elgar.
- Mansell, W. (2013) 'Moving beyond the CD borderline' *The Guardian*, 14<sup>th</sup> October 2013, London and Manchester: Guardian. <https://www.theguardian.com/education/2013/oct/14/moving-beyond-c-d-borderline>. Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> September 2018.
- Major, J. (1999) *John Major: The Autobiography*. London: Harper Collins.
- Maw, J. (1993) 'The National Curriculum Council and the Whole Curriculum: reconstruction of a discourse?' *Curriculum Studies*, 1:1, 55-74.
- Miliband, D. (2004) *Speech at the North of England Conference*. 8<sup>th</sup> January 2004. London: DFES.
- Miles, R.H., Kanazawa, M.T. (2016) *Big ideas to big results. Leading corporate transformation in a disruptive world*.' Second Edition. New Jersey: Boger.
- Mooney, T. (2003a) 'Time's up for Ofsted.' *The Guardian*, July 8<sup>th</sup>, 2003. London and Manchester: Pro Quest Historical Newspapers.
- Mooney, T. (2003b) 'Beware of the watchdog' *The Guardian*, December 16<sup>th</sup>, 2003. London and Manchester: Pro Quest Historical Newspapers.

- Moore, L.A. (2017) *'Feet to the Fire: How to Exemplify and Create the Accountability that Creates Great Companies.'* New York: Business Expert Press.
- Morgan, K.O. (1997) *Callaghan. A Life.* Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mortimore, P. (1999) 'Writing on Classroom Wall was Ignored.' *The Guardian*, 14<sup>th</sup> September 1999. London and Manchester: Guardian.
- McCulloch, G., Helsby, G., Knight, P. (2000) *The Politics of Professionalism.* London: Continuum.
- National Archives (2014) *Maintained Schools Inspection Documents.* Archive OFSTED 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014. <https://webarchive.nationalarchives.gov.uk/20141107100046/http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/maintained-schools-inspection-documents-archive>. Accessed 19th January 2021.
- Newman, J.H. (1996) in *The Idea of a University*, Turner, F.M. (ed) New Haven, CT: Yale University Press.
- Nichols, R. (2014) *The World of Freedom: Heidegger, Foucault and the Politics of Historical Ontology.* Stanford, California: Stanford University Press.
- Nisbet, J., Watt, J. (1984) 'Case Study' in Bell, J., Bush, T., Fox, A., Goodey, J., Goulding, S. (eds) *Conducting Small-Scale investigations in Educational Management.* London: Harper Row.
- OFSTED (1992) *Handbook for the Inspection of Schools.* London: HMSO.
- OFSTED (1993) *Handbook for the Inspection of Schools*, Part 9 'Inspection Reports,' p 13. London: HMSO.
- OFSTED (1993a) *Handbook for the Inspection of Schools*, Part 4 'Guidance: inspection of schools' p 11. London: HMSO.
- OFSTED (1993b) *Handbook for the Inspection of Schools*, Part 2 'Framework for the Inspection of Schools,' p 4. London: HMSO.
- OFSTED (1993c) *Handbook for the Inspection of Schools*, Part 2 'Framework for the Inspection of Schools' p 11. London: HMSO.
- OFSTED (1995) *Guidance on the Inspection of Secondary Schools.* London: The Stationery Office.
- OFSTED (2000) *School Report, Eastbrook School, Dagenham Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 7UR.* London: The Stationery Office.
- OFSTED (2008) *School Report, Kesgrave High School, Main Road, Kesgrave, IP5 2PB.* London; The Stationery Office.

OFSTED (2009) *School Report, Eastbrook School, Dagenham Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 7UR*. London: The Stationery Office.

OFSTED (2012) *Framework for the Inspection of Schools*. London: OFSTED.

[REDACTED]

OFSTED (2013a) *School Report, Eastbrook School, Dagenham Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 7UR*. London: The Stationery Office.

OFSTED (2013b) *School Report, Eastbrook School, Dagenham Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 7UR*. London: The Stationery Office.

[REDACTED]

OFSTED (2016) *School Inspection Handbook*, August 2016, London: The Stationery Office.  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/school-inspection-handbook-from-september-2015>. Accessed 8<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

OFSTED (2016a) *School Report, Eastbrook School, Dagenham Road, Dagenham, Essex, RM10 7UR*. London: The Stationery Office. <https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/2550823>. Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> March 2021.

[REDACTED]

OFSTED (2018) *Ofsted Inspection – clarification for Schools*. Manchester: OFSTED.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/730129/Ofsted\\_inspections\\_-\\_clarification\\_for\\_schools\\_270718.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/730129/Ofsted_inspections_-_clarification_for_schools_270718.pdf). Accessed 1st April 2021.

OFSTED (2019) *The Education Inspection Framework*. Manchester: OFSTED.  
[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/801429/Education\\_inspection\\_framework.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/801429/Education_inspection_framework.pdf). Accessed 9th April 2019.

OFSTED (2021) *Robert Clack School. Activity, Reports and Ratings*. OFSTED: Manchester.  
<https://reports.ofsted.gov.uk/provider/23/101245>. Accessed 15th April 2021.

OFSTED (2021b) *Eastbrook School. Activity, Reports and Ratings*. OFSTED: Manchester.

<https://files.ofsted.gov.uk/v1/file/2762703>. Accessed 3rd May 2021.

OFSTED (2021c) *OFSTED Coronavirus (Covid 19) Rolling Update*

<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/ofsted-coronavirus-covid-19-rolling-update#history>. Accessed 30<sup>th</sup> July 2021.

O'Farrell, C. (2005) *Michel Foucault*, London: Sage.

O'Neill, O. (2002) BBC Reith Lectures 2002. *A question of Trust*.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/reith2002>. Accessed 29<sup>th</sup> May 2018

O'Neill, O. (2013) 'Intelligent accountability in Education.' *Oxford Review of Education*, Vol 39, No1, 4-16.

Organ, D., Podsakoff, P., MacKenzie, S.B. (2006) '*Organisational Citizenship Behavior: Its nature, antecedents and consequences*.' Thousand Oaks, California: Sage.

Oulston, J., Fidler, B., Earley, P. (eds) (1996) *OFSTED inspections: the early experience*. London: David Fulton.

*Oxford Dictionary of English* (2018) Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Paton, G. (2012) 'Mickey Mouse Courses to be cut in funding overhaul', *Daily Telegraph*, 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2012. London: Telegraph Newspapers.

<https://www.telegraph.co.uk/education/educationnews/9371184/Mickey-Mouse-courses-to-be-cut-in-funding-overhaul.html>. Accessed 14<sup>th</sup> September 2018.

Pearson, P. and Sutherland, M. (2016) 'The complexity of the antecedents influencing accountability in organisations.' *European Business Review*, Vol 29, No 4 pp419-439.

Perry, P (2008) 'From HMI to OFSTED.' in de Waal, A. (ed) *Inspecting the Inspectorate*. London: Civitas.

Perryman, J. (2006) 'Panoptic performativity and school inspection regimes: disciplinary mechanisms and life under special measures.' *Journal of Education Policy*, 24 (5), 609-629.

Perryman, J. (2007) 'Inspection and Emotion.' *Cambridge Journal of Education* 37 (2) p173-90.

Perryman, J., Maguire, M., Braun, A., Ball, S. (2018) 'Surveillance, Governmentality and moving the goalposts: The Influence of Ofsted on the work of schools in a post-panoptic era.' *British Journal of Educational Studies*, 66:2 pp145-163.

- Peters, M.A., and Besley, A.C. (2007) *Why Foucault? New Directions for Educational Research*. New York: Peter Lang.
- Peters, R.S. (1966) *Ethics and Education*. London: George Allen and Unwin.
- Plato (1941) *The Republic of Plato*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Priestley, C. (1980) *Letter to Prime Minister's Private Secretary, Mark Pattinson, from Clive Priestley. 20<sup>th</sup> August 1980*. National Archives PREM 19/730 Records of the Prime Minister's Office, Correspondence and Papers, 1979-1997.
- Purves, L. (2003) 'Testing, Testing...it just isn't working in schools.' *The Times* 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2003, London: Times Newspapers.
- Rees-Mogg, W. (1976) "Mr Callaghan's Mortarboard." Editorial. *Times* 19th Oct. 1976. London: Times Newspapers.
- Richards, C. (2015) 'More Outstanding Nonsense: a critique of Ofsted criteria.' *Forum*, Vol 37 No 2.
- Richardson, H. (2015) 'OFSTED purges 1200 'not good enough' inspectors.' *BBC News* 19<sup>th</sup> June 2015, <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/education-33198707>. Accessed 20th September 2018.
- Richardson, V. (2004) *Quality issues in post 16 education and training: perceptions of the impact of quality systems on teachers*. Durham: Durham University.
- Robinow, P. (1991) 'An Introduction to Foucault's Thought, Part 2 Chapter 10. An interview of Foucault by Paul Robinow March 1982.' *The Foucault Reader*. London: Penguin.
- Rosenblatt, Z. (2017) 'Personal accountability in education: measure development and validation', *Journal of Educational Administration*. Vol 55, no 1, p18-32.
- Russell, S. (1996) 'Schools' Experiences of Inspection' in Oulston, J., Fidler, B., Earley, P. (1996) (eds) *OFSTED inspections: the early experience*. London: David Fulton.
- Rutter, M., Maughan, B., Mortimore, P., Ouston, J. (1979) *Fifteen Thousand Hours: Secondary Schools and Their Effects on Children*. London: Open Books.
- Rutter, M., and Maughan, B. (2002) 'School Effectiveness Findings 1979-2002', *Journal of School Psychology* Vol 40 No 6 p 451-475.
- Sahlberg, P. (2011) 'Lessons from Finland. Where the country's education system rose to the top in just a couple (sic) decades.' *Education Digest*, v77 n3 p18-24.

Sahlberg, P. (2012) 'A Model Lesson. Finland shows us what equal opportunity looks like.' *American Educator*, Vol 36, no 1, p20-40.

Sahlberg, P. (2014) *Series on School Reform. Finnish Lessons 2.0: What can the world Learn from educational Change in Finland? (2<sup>nd</sup> ed)*. Teachers College Press. Cited in Hollier, D. 'Are we Finished Yet? Teacher Preparation and the Rise of Glocalisation'. *Journal of Education*, Vol.198(2) p 127-135.

Schaffer, R.H. (1974) 'Demand better results--and get them.' *Harvard Business Review*. Nov/Dec74, Vol. 52 Issue 6, p91-99.

Seale, C. Gobo, G., Gubrium, J., and Silverman, D. (eds) (2004) '*Qualitative Research Practice*', London: Sage.

Sevilla-Buitrago, A. (2017) 'Gramsci and Foucault in Central Park: environmental hegemonies, pedagogical spaces and integral state formations.' *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* Vol 35(1) p165-83. New York: Sage.

Shaw, I. (2000) *Assessing the effect of OFSTED inspections on GCSE school performance data from 1992-7*. Newcastle: University of Newcastle Upon Tyne.

Shepherd, J. (2012) 'OFSTED Chief: 'A quarter of "outstanding" schools may be downgraded.' *The Guardian* 9<sup>th</sup> February 2012. London and Manchester: Guardian Newspapers.

Shinebourne, P. (2011) 'Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis' in Frost, N., (ed) *Qualitative Research Methods in Psychology*. Maidenhead: OUP.

Sikes, P. (1998) 'Parent Teachers: reconciling the roles.' *Teacher Development*, Vol 2, Issue 1 pp87-105.

Sikes, P. (2001) 'Teachers Lives and Teaching Performance' in *The Performing School*, Gleeson, G., and Husbands, C. (eds). London and New York: Routledge Falmer.

Smith, J.A., and Osborn, M. (2004) 'Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis' in Breakwell, G. M., (ed) *Doing Social Psychology Research*. Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley.

Smith, L. (1998) 'Biographical Method' in Denzin, N.K., Lincoln, Y.S. (eds) *Strategies of Qualitative Enquiry*. Thousand Oaks CA: Sage.

Smith, M. R. (1996) *Ofsted inspection system and its impact on the education of ethnic minority pupils*. University of Manchester.

- Snelling, G. (2004) *Ofsted inspections: do they promote improvement in teaching quality?* University of Leicester.
- Spielman, A. (2018) 'HMCI Commentary: Curriculum and the New Education Inspection Framework' <https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/hmci-commentary-curriculum-and-the-new-education-inspection-framework>. Accessed 17th May 2021.
- Stewart, W. (2016) 'Education rankings: hitting a home run or a swing and a miss?' *Times Educational Supplement*, 25<sup>th</sup> November 2016. London: Times Newspapers.
- Stewart, W. (2017) 'Drowning in Data.' *Times Educational Supplement*, 5<sup>th</sup> May 2017. London: Times Newspapers.
- Stenhouse, L. (1978) 'Case Study and Case Records: towards a contemporary history of education' *British Educational Research Journal* Vol 4, No 2, 1978.
- Stothard, P. (1997) 'Sixes and Sevens.' Editorial. *The Times*, 16<sup>th</sup> July 1997, London: Times Newspapers.
- Tracy, S.J. (2013) *'Qualitative Research Methods: Collecting Evidence, Crafting Analysis, Communicating Impact'*. Chichester: John Wiley.
- Thatcher, M. (1980) *Annotation to letter to Prime Minister's Private Secretary, Mark Pattinson, from Clive Priestley. 20<sup>th</sup> August 1980*. National Archives PREM 19/730 Records of the Prime Minister's Office, Correspondence and Papers, 1979-1997.
- Thompson, J. (2008) *Key Stage 2 Teachers' Engagement with ICT: A Mixed Methods Study Investigating the Effect of School Size and Social Capital*. Unpublished Ph.D. thesis. Norwich: University of East Anglia.
- Triplett, N. P. (2017) 'Conceptions of Equity in an Age of Globalized Education: A Discourse Analysis of How the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA) Discusses Equity,' in *The Power of Resistance*. Published online: 15 Sep 2017; 3-30.
- University of East Anglia (2018) *Adult Opt-in Participant Information Statement and Consent Form*. Norwich: University of East Anglia.
- Watts, S. (2014) 'User Skills for Qualitative Analysis: Perspective, Interpretation and the Delivery of Impact.' *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 2014, 11:1-14.
- Watts, Y.J. (2012) *Ofsted, 2005: a new relationship with primary headteachers?* Open University.

Whitty, G. (2001) 'Teacher Professionalism for New Times.' in Gleeson, D. and Husbands, C. (eds) *The Performing School*. (2001) London: Routledge Falmer.

Wilsher, P., Macintyre, D., Jones, M. (1985) *Strike, Thatcher, Scargill and the Miners*. London: Coronet.

Wilshaw, M. (2013) *The report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills*. London: The Stationery Office.

Wilshaw, M. (2013a) *Unseen Children*. Speech given at Church House, 20<sup>th</sup> June 2013.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/unseen-children>. Accessed 3rd May 2021.

Wilshaw, M. (2015) *Speech to National Conference on School Improvement*, 10<sup>th</sup> September 2015.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/early-years-report-2015>. Accessed 25<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Wilshaw, M. (2016) *Speech to launch Ofsted's 2015/16 annual report for education, early years and skills*, 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/the-power-of-education>.

Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Wilshaw, M. (2016a) *The Annual Report of Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Education, Children's Services and Skills 2015/16*, London: HMSO.

[https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/574186/Ofsted\\_annual\\_report\\_education\\_and\\_skills\\_201516\\_web-ready.pdf](https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/574186/Ofsted_annual_report_education_and_skills_201516_web-ready.pdf). Accessed 20<sup>th</sup> April 2021.

Woodhead, C. (1996) *The Annual Report of the Chief Inspector of Schools*, London: The Stationery Office.

Worrall, J. (2012) *In Our Time: The Scientific Method*. BBC broadcast, 26<sup>th</sup> January 2012. London:

BBC. Accessed through BBC 'Sounds' App, 11<sup>th</sup> February 2021.

## Appendix 1

'A rational debate based on the facts'

**James Callaghan**

Ruskin College Oxford

18 October 1976

---

I was very glad to accept your invitation to lay the foundation stone for a further extension of Ruskin College. Ruskin fills a gap as a 'second chance' adult residential college. It has a special place in the affections of the Labour movement as an institution of learning because its students are mature men and woman who, for a variety of reasons, missed the opportunity to develop their full potential at an earlier age. That aspect of the matter is a particular interest of my own. Ruskin has justified its existence over and over again. Your students form a proud gallery and I am glad to see here this afternoon some of your former students who now occupy important positions. They include leading academics, heads of state of commonwealth countries, leaders of the trade union movement and industrial life and members of Parliament. Indeed, eleven of the present Labour members of Parliament graduated from Ruskin and five of them are either in the government, or have served there, including one present member of the Cabinet, Eric Varley, the secretary for the industry.

Among the adult colleges, Ruskin has a long and honourable history of close association with the trade union movement. I am very glad to see that trade unions are so strongly represented here today because you are involved in providing special courses for trade union officials and I hope that this partnership will continue to flourish and prosper.

The work of a trade union official becomes ever more onerous, because he has to master continuing new legislation on health and safety at work, employment protection and industrial change. This lays obligations on trade unionists which can only be met by a greatly expanded programme of education and understanding. Higher standards than ever before are required in the trade union field and, as I shall indicate a little later, higher standards in the past are also required in the general educational field. It is not enough to say that standards in this field have or have not declined. With the increasing complexity of modern life we cannot be satisfied with maintaining existing standards, let alone observe any decline. We must aim for something better.

I should like to pay tribute to Billy Hughes for his work at Ruskin and also for his wider contributions to education as chairman of the Adult Literacy Resource Agency. This has been a strikingly successful campaign for which credit must go to a number of organisations, including the BBC. It is a commentary on the need that 55,000 students were receiving tuition this year with a steady flow of students still coming forward. Perhaps most remarkable has been that 40,000 voluntary teachers have come forward to work, often on an individual personal basis, with a single student. When I hear, as I do in so many different fields, of these generous responses to human need, I remain a confirmed optimist about our country. This is a most striking example of how the goodwill, energy and dedication of large numbers of private persons can be harnessed to the service of their fellows when the need and the opportunity are made plain.

There have been one or two ripples of interest in the educational world in anticipation of this visit. I hope the publicity will do Ruskin some good and I don't think it will do the world of education any

harm. I must thank all those who have inundated me with advice: some helpful and others telling me less politely to keep off the grass, to watch my language and that they will be examining my speech with the care usually given by Hong Kong watchers to the China scene. It is almost as though some people would wish that the subject matter and purpose of education should not have public attention focused on it: nor that profane hands should be allowed to touch it.

I cannot believe that this is a considered reaction. The Labour movement has always cherished education: free education, comprehensive education, adult education. Education for life. There is nothing wrong with non-educationalists, even a prime minister, talking about it again. Everyone is allowed to put his oar in on how to overcome our economic problems, how to put the balance of payments right, how to secure more exports and so on and so on. Very important too. But I venture to say not as important in the long run as preparing future generations for life. RH Tawney, from whom I derived a great deal of my thinking years ago, wrote that the endowment of our children is the most precious of the natural resources of this community. So I do not hesitate to discuss how these endowments should be nurtured.

Labour's Programme 76 has recently made its own important contribution and contains a number of important statements that I certainly agree with. Let me answer that question 'what do we want from the education of our children and young people?' with Tawney's words once more. He said: 'What a wise parent would wish for their children, so the state must wish for all its children.'

I take it that no one claims exclusive rights in this field. Public interest is strong and legitimate and will be satisfied. We spend £6bn a year on education, so there will be discussion. But let it be rational. If everything is reduced to such phrases as 'educational freedom' versus state control, we shall get nowhere. I repeat that parents, teachers, learned and professional bodies, representatives of higher education and both sides of industry, together with the government, all have an important part to play in formulating and expressing the purpose of education and the standards that we need.

During my travels around the country in recent months, I have had many discussions that show concern about these matters.

First let me say, so that there should be no misunderstanding, that I have been very impressed in the schools I have visited by the enthusiasm and dedication of the teaching profession, by the variety of courses that are offered in our comprehensive schools, especially in arts and crafts as well as other subjects and by the alertness and keenness of many of its pupils. Clearly, life at school is far more full and creative than it was many years ago. I would also like to thank the children who have been kind enough to write to me after I visited their schools: and well written letters they were. I recognise that teachers occupy a special place in these discussions because of their real sense of professionalism and vocation about their work. But I am concerned on my journeys to find complaints from industry that new recruits from the schools sometimes do not have the basic tools to do the job that is required.

I have been concerned to find out that many of our best trained students who have completed the higher levels of education at university or polytechnic have no desire to join industry. Their preferences are to stay in academic life or to find their way into the civil service. There seems to be a need for more technological bias in science teaching that will lead towards practical applications in industry rather than towards academic studies.

Or, to take other examples, why is it that such a high proportion of girls abandon science before leaving school? Then there is the concern about the standards of numeracy of school-leavers. Is there not a case for a professional review of the mathematics needed by industry at different levels?

To what extent are these deficiencies the result of insufficient co-operation between schools and industry? Indeed, how much of the criticism about basic skills and attitudes is due to industry's own shortcomings rather than to the educational system? Why is it that 30,000 vacancies for students in science and engineering in our universities and polytechnics were not taken up last year while the humanities courses were full?

On another aspect, there is the unease felt by parent and others about the new informal methods of teaching which seem to produce excellent results when they are in well-qualified hands but are much more dubious when they are not. They seem to be best accepted where strong parent-teacher links exist. There is little wrong with the range and diversity of our courses. But is there sufficient thoroughness and depth in those required in after life to make a living?

These are proper subjects for discussion and debate. And it should be a rational debate based on the facts. My remarks are not a clarion call to Black Paper prejudices. We all know those who claim to defend standards but who in reality are simply seeking to defend old privileges and inequalities.

It is not my intention to become enmeshed in such problems as whether there should be a basic curriculum with universal standards - although I am inclined to think there should be - nor about any other issues on which there is a divided professional opinion such as the position and role of the inspectorate. Shirley Williams, the new secretary of state is well qualified to take care of these issues and speak for the government. What I am saying is that where there is legitimate public concern it will be to the advantage of all involved in the education field if these concerns are aired and shortcomings righted or fears put at rest.

To the critics I would say that we must carry the teaching profession with us. They have the expertise and the professional approach. To the teachers I would say that you must satisfy the parents and industry that what you are doing meets their requirements and the needs of our children. For if the public is not convinced then the profession will be laying up trouble for itself in the future.

The goals of our education, from nursery school through to adult education, are clear enough. They are to equip children to the best of their ability for a lively, constructive, place in society, and also to fit them to do a job of work. Not one or the other but both. For many years the accent was simply on fitting a so-called inferior group of children with just enough learning to earn their living in the factory. Labour has attacked that attitude consistently, during 60 or 70 years and throughout my childhood. There is now widespread recognition of the need to cater for a child's personality to let it flower in its fullest possible way.

The balance was wrong in the past. We have a responsibility now to see that we do not get it wrong again in the other direction. There is no virtue in producing socially well-adjusted members of society who are unemployed because they do not have the skills. Nor at the other extreme must they be technically efficient robots. Both of the basic purposes of education require the same essential tools. These are basic literacy, basic numeracy, the understanding of how to live and work together, respect for others, respect for the individual. This means requiring certain basic knowledge, and skills and reasoning ability. It means developing lively inquiring minds and an appetite for further knowledge that will last a lifetime. It means mitigating as far as possible the disadvantages that may be suffered through poor home conditions or physical or mental handicap. Are we aiming in the right direction in these matters?

I do not join those who paint a lurid picture of educational decline because I do not believe it is generally true, although there are examples which give cause for concern. I am raising a further question. It is this. In today's world, higher standards are demanded than were required yesterday

and there are simply fewer jobs for those without skill. Therefore we demand more from our schools than did our grandparents.

There has been a massive injection of resources into education, mainly to meet increased numbers and partly to raise standards. But in present circumstances there can be little expectation of further increased resources being made available, at any rate for the time being. I fear that those whose only answer to these problems is to call for more money will be disappointed. But that surely cannot be the end of the matter. There is a challenge to us all in these days and a challenge in education is to examine its priorities and to secure as high efficiency as possible by the skilful use of existing resources.

Let me repeat some of the fields that need study because they cause concern. There are the methods and aims of informal instruction, the strong case for the so-called 'core curriculum' of basic knowledge; next, what is the proper way of monitoring the use of resources in order to maintain a proper national standard of performance; then there is the role of the inspectorate in relation to national standards; and there is the need to improve relations between industry and education.

Another problem is the examination system - a contentious issue. The Schools Council have reached conclusions about its future after a great deal of thought, but it would not be right to introduce such an important change until there has been further public discussion. Maybe they haven't got it right yet. The new secretary of state, Shirley Williams, intends to look at the examinations system again, especially in relation to less-academic students staying at school beyond the age of 16. A number of these issues were taken up by Fred Mulley and will now be followed up by Shirley Williams.

We are expecting the Taylor Committee Report shortly on the government and management of schools in England and Wales that could bring together local authority, parents and pupils, teachers and industry more closely. The secretary of state is now following up how to attract talented young people into engineering and science subjects; whether there are more efficient ways of using the resources we have for the benefit of young people between the ages of 16 and 19 and whether retraining can help make a bridge between teacher training and unemployment, especially to help in the subjects where there is a shortage.

I have outlined concerns and asked questions about them today. The debate that I was seeking has got off to a flying start even before I was able to say anything. Now I ask all those who are concerned to respond positively and not defensively. It will be an advantage to the teaching profession to have a wide public understanding and support for what they are doing. And there is room for greater understanding among those not directly concerned of the nature of the job that is being done already.

The traditional concern of the whole Labour movement is for the education of our children and young people on whom the future of the country must depend. At Ruskin it is appropriate that I should be proud to reaffirm that concern. It would be a betrayal of that concern if I did not draw problems to your attention and put to you specifically some of the challenges which we have to face and some of the responses that will be needed from our educational system. I am as confident that we shall do so as I am sure that the new building which will rise here will house and protect the ideals and vision of the founders of Ruskin College so that your future will be as distinguished as your past and your present.

## Appendix 2

### The 'Ruskin Principles'

<b>Principle 1</b>	Continuous improvement of educational standards over time
<b>Principle 2</b>	the legitimate involvement of interest groups, as financial resource providers, in formulating the purpose of education and of the educational standards needed to meet that purpose.
<b>Principle 3</b>	Legitimate public interest in both method and curriculum.
<b>Principle 4</b>	Public accountability for teachers
<b>Principle 5</b>	Economic and social goals for education

## Appendix 3

### Initial Format of Interview Questions

- 1) Preliminary 'scene setting' questions
  - i) How long have you been a teacher?
  - ii) In how many schools have you worked on a permanent or fixed-term contract?
  - iii) How were these schools governed?
  - iv) Please use the 'types of school' scale in front of you to talk about the schools in which you served.
  - v) Please indicate on this postcard the five best and the five worst aspects of being a teacher
  - vi) How many OFSTED inspections have you experienced?
- 2) How were you motivated to become a teacher? (limit to 1-2 minute answer).
- 3) How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect you personally?
- 4) How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect the practice and culture of the schools in which you have worked?
- 5) How far was trust present in the OFSTED inspection process itself, in its run-up and in its aftermath? You may wish to consider:
  - i) Trust between OFSTED inspectors and teachers.
  - ii) Trust between SLT and teachers.
  - iii) Trust between SLT and OFSTED inspectors.
- 6) How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect teacher well-being and retention?
- 7) How far were OFSTED inspection judgements and reports:
  - i) Accurate
  - ii) Fair
  - iii) Proportionate
  - iv) Consistent
  - v) Helpful
  - vi) Unhelpful
- 8) How do you perceive the overall effects of the OFSTED accountability system both on the schools in which you have worked and their staff overall? On balance, did it do more good than harm or vice versa?
- 9) How far have these questions given you the opportunity to say what you wanted to say about OFSTED inspections and their effects on secondary schools? Is there anything else you would like to add.

## Appendix 4

### ‘Type of School’ Scale as used in First Five Interviews

Social Characteristics of Principal Area Served	
Largely Economically Deprived	Many parents unemployed with significant elements of an economic sub class
Mixed - Predominantly Working Class	Most parents work in manual or semi-skilled jobs
Mixed - Predominantly Middle Class	Most parents work in skilled or white collar jobs
Largely Affluent	Professional parents dominate

Situation	
Largely Rural	Village or hamlet locations
Semi-Rural	Rural with some small towns
Market Town	Town with aspects of economic independence from surrounding countryside
Suburban	Large town or city suburbs
Inner-city	No border with open country

Pupil Attitude to Learning	
Keen to Learn	Pupils in most classes will look for the positives in any lesson and work willingly
Willing to Learn	Pupils in most classes can be motivated by a sound or better lesson
Resistant to Learning	Pupils in most classes are only motivated by strong lessons and will resort to disruption if their attention is lost.
Hostile to Learning	Disruption is the norm in most classes and pupils will only desist in response to exceptionally strong lessons Few lessons grab the majority of pupils.

Senior Leadership Style	
Largely delegated	Teachers and departments are generally trusted to deliver school vision and values
Intervention by Circumstance	SLT intervene in response to external concern or incident
Intervention by Routine	SLT systems allow regular contact with staff holding responsibility points and monitoring of performance of all staff through data analysis
Highly Interventionalist	Learning walks and constant intervention in day to day teaching without notice.

PTO

School Reputation	
Resisted by Parents	Allocation of a place in the school is met by dismay or resistance by caring parents.
Accepted by Parents	Allocation of a place in the school is not seen as a cause of enthusiasm but is usually accepted without protest by caring parents
Welcomed by Parents	Allocation of a place in the school is seen as a positive.
Competition for Places	Parents will take steps to improve their child's chance of being allocated a place in the school.

Most Frequent OFSTED Rating since 1993 or Foundation
Inadequate
Requires Improvement/ Satisfactory
Good
Outstanding

Typical Examination Data Rating
Red
Amber
Green

## Appendix 5

### Appeal for Volunteers to Join a Purposive Sample

Given out at Historical Association Conference

17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> May 2019

#### **Would you be prepared to help me with my Ph.D. study, please?**

I am researching perceptions of the impact of OFSTED inspections on secondary schools and am looking to interview people who have experienced more than one OFSTED inspection of a secondary school as a teacher or inspector.

I can promise anonymity for person and school if desired but not confidentiality as the work is intended for publication.

Interviews can be carried out by phone, Skype/facetime as you wish and last for approximately one hour.

If you would be prepared to help, I would be most grateful as I believe the work is potentially of great importance. Please feel free to contact me by email [xyz@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:xyz@yahoo.co.uk) or on 0123456789 and I will arrange to send you full details of the research and a permission slip for you to sign should you so wish. We can then arrange a time and a place for interview.

Thank you for reading this sheet.

Ian Luff Post Graduate Researcher, University of East Anglia.

## Appendix 6

### Final Interview Questions

- 1) Preliminary 'scene setting' questions
  - vii) How long have you been a teacher?
  - viii) In how many schools have you worked on a permanent or fixed-term contract?
  - ix) How were these schools governed?
  - x) Please use the 'types of school' scale in front of you to talk about the schools in which you served.
  - xi) How were you motivated to become a teacher? (limit to 1-2 minute answer).
  - xii) Please indicate the three best and the three worst aspects of being a teacher
- 2) How many OFSTED inspections have you experienced?
- 3) How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect you personally?
- 4) How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect the practice and culture of the schools in which you have worked?
- 5) How far was trust present in the OFSTED inspection process itself, in its run-up and in its aftermath? You may wish to consider:
  - iv) Trust between OFSTED inspectors and teachers.
  - v) Trust between SLT and teachers.
  - vi) Trust between SLT and OFSTED inspectors.
- 6) How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect teacher well-being and retention?
- 7) How far were OFSTED inspection judgements and reports:
  - vii) Accurate
  - viii) Fair
  - ix) Proportionate
  - x) Consistent
  - xi) Helpful
  - xii) Unhelpful
- 8) How do you perceive the overall effects of the OFSTED accountability system both on the schools in which you have worked and their staff overall? On balance, did it do more good than harm or vice versa?
- 9) How far have these questions given you the opportunity to say what you wanted to say about OFSTED inspections and their effects on secondary schools? Is there anything else you would like to add such as, if applicable and relevant in your view, your experience of teaching before Ofsted?

## Appendix 7

### Most Frequently Used Experiential Codes

Data	98
OFSTED Observations of Lessons	87
Trust (All Mentions)	73
OFSTED Inspection (SCH)	71
OFSTED Requirements	68
Outstanding Grade	67
OFSTED Judgements (without mentioning grade)	66
OFSTED Reports	56
OFSTED Focus	53
Special Measures Grade	51
OFSTED Framework	47
Good Grade	43
OFSTED Early Years (Pre- SEF)	42
School Circumstances	42
Pressure on Teachers/Stress on Teachers	40
Exam Results	39
Notice of Inspection	38
OFSTED Pre-decided Agenda	38
Dialogue	37
Trust Teacher - Inspector	32
OFSTED Lesson Grading	30
OFSTED as Accurate	29
RI Grade	29
Accountability	28
Teacher Loss	28
Pupil Behaviour	27
OFSTED Observations of Lessons (Length)	26
Academies/ Academisation	25
Inspection Length	25
Local Authority Advisor	24
Inspector Feedback	23
Pressure from SMT	23
SMT Requirements/Demands	22
Desire for Approval	22
Evidence	21
Fear/Fear Culture	21
Marking	21
Trust Teacher -SMT	21
Inspection Team	19
Inspector Attitude	18
OFSTED Consistent	18
OFSTED Fair	18

Formulaic Practices Adopted by School	17
Pressure on SMT	17
School Improvement	17
Teacher Ability	16
Curriculum	15
Multi Academy Trust	15
SMT Use of OFSTED	15
Teacher Recruitment	15
LI Personality	14
Inspector Constraints	14
Preparation	13
Safeguarding	13
Teacher Insulation from Inspection	13
Teacher Retention	13
Complaint	12
Inspector Listening	12
Observations Other Internal	12
SMT Monitoring	12
Teacher Illness	12
Workload	12
Inspector Questioning	11
Inspector Subject Specialism	11
OFSTED Proportionality	11
Paperwork	11
Pupil Needs	11
Trust SMT - Teacher	11
HMI	10
Book Inspection (OFSTED)	10
Complacency (SCH)	10
Inspector Ability	10
Observations SMT	10
OFSTED Later (SEF) Years	10
OFSTED Subject Specific Inspections	10
Pupil Premium	10
SMT Support From	10
Trust SMT - Inspector	10

## Appendix 8

### Coded Transcript

<p>Challenge Wearing Additional Relentless Damaged Corrosive Too young Handicap Financial Reward Deserved Eroded</p>	<p>SMT line management Ongoing SMT regular duties Teaching duties Trust teacher – SMT Pressure on teachers Teacher age Teacher inexperience LA support INSET Staff dinner Rewards for teachers</p>	<p>management meetings with staff and that so I line managed some heads of department and one of the other assistant heads. And it was constant. Me having to constantly check on them. But this was amongst all the other everyday things that were going on like dealing with children’s behaviour, trying to raise attendance, you know, having your own classes to teach. And I think that people just felt there was a constant checking on them. That they weren’t trusted so no matter how you tried to do it and what you said to them they just felt under pressure all the time, especially when you had like NQTs coming in. And we had a pretty young staff because it was difficult recruiting. You know we had a very young staff, so I think for them it was difficult. I mean in the early days when (name of head) was there and we were having the HMI we had tons of money chucked at us. And so a lot of the training like we would have two INSET days and we’d take them off to a hotel. You know so they were getting that nice side of things and they’d have a nice dinner and whereas in the later days that money had dried up and disappeared and so it was difficult to do nice things for them.</p> <p>42.30</p> <p>S: And that’s one of the things people wanted right from way back. They wanted it to become an academy. The MP wanted it to become an academy.</p> <p><b>I: Did that influence the way OFSTED behaved, do you think?</b></p> <p>S: I think in the end it was influenced by OFSTED</p> <p><b>I: What makes you say that?</b></p> <p>S: Erm I think they used the report to say well actually you’re not making the progress you should be making.</p> <p><b>How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect the practice and culture of the schools in which you have worked?</b></p> <p>S: I think the culture became I mean we did look at, we were always looking at our systems and always trying to erm, right from the time I went there. You know obviously if you’re going to a fresh start school you were going to have to put all the systems and the monitoring in place. And you know when OFSTED came in obviously, we dissected their reports and looked at what they felt were weaknesses. It just people under pressure. And I think some of them felt – suspicion. And others really rose to it. You know like trying to get heads of department to understand that their responsibility for their departments and working with them.</p>
<p>Unfair Driven</p>	<p>MP pressure Academisation</p>	<p>S: And that’s one of the things people wanted right from way back. They wanted it to become an academy. The MP wanted it to become an academy.</p> <p><b>I: Did that influence the way OFSTED behaved, do you think?</b></p> <p>S: I think in the end it was influenced by OFSTED</p> <p><b>I: What makes you say that?</b></p> <p>S: Erm I think they used the report to say well actually you’re not making the progress you should be making.</p> <p><b>How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect the practice and culture of the schools in which you have worked?</b></p> <p>S: I think the culture became I mean we did look at, we were always looking at our systems and always trying to erm, right from the time I went there. You know obviously if you’re going to a fresh start school you were going to have to put all the systems and the monitoring in place. And you know when OFSTED came in obviously, we dissected their reports and looked at what they felt were weaknesses. It just people under pressure. And I think some of them felt – suspicion. And others really rose to it. You know like trying to get heads of department to understand that their responsibility for their departments and working with them.</p>
<p>Influential</p>	<p>OFSTED focus</p>	<p>S: I think in the end it was influenced by OFSTED</p> <p><b>I: What makes you say that?</b></p> <p>S: Erm I think they used the report to say well actually you’re not making the progress you should be making.</p> <p><b>How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect the practice and culture of the schools in which you have worked?</b></p> <p>S: I think the culture became I mean we did look at, we were always looking at our systems and always trying to erm, right from the time I went there. You know obviously if you’re going to a fresh start school you were going to have to put all the systems and the monitoring in place. And you know when OFSTED came in obviously, we dissected their reports and looked at what they felt were weaknesses. It just people under pressure. And I think some of them felt – suspicion. And others really rose to it. You know like trying to get heads of department to understand that their responsibility for their departments and working with them.</p>
<p>Slanted</p>	<p>OFSTED report</p>	<p>S: Erm I think they used the report to say well actually you’re not making the progress you should be making.</p> <p><b>How did the prospect and actuality of OFSTED inspection affect the practice and culture of the schools in which you have worked?</b></p> <p>S: I think the culture became I mean we did look at, we were always looking at our systems and always trying to erm, right from the time I went there. You know obviously if you’re going to a fresh start school you were going to have to put all the systems and the monitoring in place. And you know when OFSTED came in obviously, we dissected their reports and looked at what they felt were weaknesses. It just people under pressure. And I think some of them felt – suspicion. And others really rose to it. You know like trying to get heads of department to understand that their responsibility for their departments and working with them.</p>
<p>Unsettling Label Expected Guide for action Unhealthy Unappreciated Spur</p>	<p>Educational atmosphere Fresh start school School systems OFSTED reports Teacher suspicion HoD responsibilities</p>	<p>S: I think the culture became I mean we did look at, we were always looking at our systems and always trying to erm, right from the time I went there. You know obviously if you’re going to a fresh start school you were going to have to put all the systems and the monitoring in place. And you know when OFSTED came in obviously, we dissected their reports and looked at what they felt were weaknesses. It just people under pressure. And I think some of them felt – suspicion. And others really rose to it. You know like trying to get heads of department to understand that their responsibility for their departments and working with them.</p>

**Appendix 9 Participant Profile`**

Participant	OFSTED in +/-	Inspections/Grades	Schools	Service	Perceived Intake of Schools	OFSTED	SMT?
Teacher 1	N	3 (G;G;G)	4	36 years	WC; WC; WC; AMC	Y	Y
Teacher 2	N	3 (S;S;I)	4	36 years	WC; WC-DIC; WC; WC	N	Y
Teacher 3	N	7(??;??;O;G;G;G)	4	38 Years	WC; MC;MC;MC	N	Y
Teacher 4	N	6(G;G;?;O;G;G)	6	35 Years	M-WC;M-MC;M-MC;M-WC;MC;WC	N	Y
Teacher 5	N	7(??;?;O;G;RI;RI;I)	2	8 Years	NR;MC	N	Y
Teacher 6	N	3(G;G;S)	2+FE	21 Years	WC;WC	N	N
Teacher 7	N	5(S;S;G;G;S)	3+AE	37 Years	WC;WC;WC	Y	Y
Teacher 8	N	6(?;O;G;G;G;G)	2+AE	27 Years	M-MC;M-WC	N	Y
Teacher 9	N	6(G;O;O;O;RI;RI)	2+HE	25 Years	M;M-WC	N	N
Teacher 10	Y - neg	2(O;I)	3	10 Years	M-WC; M-MC; Ind	N	N
Teacher 11	Y - neg	7(Grades not recorded)	7+AE	33 Years	WC-DIC;WC;WC;WC;WC;WC;M-WC	N	Y
Teacher 12	N	6(RI;I;RI;I;RI;I)	6+PE	45 Years	WC;WC;WC;WC;WC;WC	N	N
Teacher 13	N	2(G;O)	2	11 Years	MC; M-WC	N	N
Teacher 14	N	2(G;O)	3	35 Years	M-WC;MC;MC;M-MC;WC	N	N
Teacher 15	N	2(S;G)	5+PE	23 Years	WC;M-MC;M-WC;WC;MC	N	N
Teacher 16	N	3(O;I;RI)	1	10 Years	WC	N	N
Teacher 17	N	3(S;I;S)	1	32 Years	WC	N	N
Teacher 18	Y - neg	4(Grades not recorded)	3+AE	20 Years	WC;WC;WC	N	Y
Teacher 19	N	2(O;O)	2+HE	14 Years	IND;MC	N	N
Teacher 20	N	3(?;G;I)	2	15 Years	MC;WC	N	Y
Teacher 21	Y - neg	7(S;S;S;S;S;S;S)	2	35 Years	WC;M-WC	N	Y
Teacher 22	N	4 (Grades not recorded)	3	21 Years	M-MC;M-MC;M-MC	N	N
Teacher 23	N	4(S;I;S;S)	4	38 Years	WC-DIC;M-WC;MC;WC-DIC	N	Y
Teacher 24	N	4(?;I;G;RI)	5	32 Years	MC;WC;M-MC;WC;SS	N	Y
Teacher 25	N	3(G;G;G)	6	16 Years	WC;MC;M-WC;M-WC;M-WC;MC	N	N
Teacher 26	Y - neg	6(G;S;O;RI;I;G)	5	12 Years	WC-DIC;WC-DIC;WC-DIC;M-MC;M-WC	N	N
Teacher 27	N	6(??;?;G;S;S;G)	2	31 Years	M-MC;M-WC	Y	Y
Teacher 28	N	3(O;G;G)	1	9 Years	M-WC	N	N
Teacher 29	N	2(G;G)	2	27 Years	M-WC; M-WC	Y	Y
Teacher 30	Y - neg	4(G;RI;RI;G)	3	25 Years	WC;WC;M-MC	N	N
KEY	AE= Adv Experience; FE = FEEd Experience; PE = Primary Experience; HE=Higher Ed Experience; M-WC = Mixed,Working Class; M-MC = Mixed pred. Middle Class. DIC =Deprived Inner-city.						

**Appendix 10**  
**Most Prominent Themes Before Combination**

<b>Question</b>	<b>Interpretative Theme</b>	<b>Experiential Code</b>	<b>Interviews Covering this Theme</b>
PE, WBR	Disappointment at Not Being Seen by Inspector/desire to be Seen	Desire for Approval	<b>11</b> 5,6,8,10,11,13,18,21,25,29,30
PE, JR, CA	Early format of OFSTED inspection most helpful	OFSTED Framework	<b>14</b> 1,2,3,8,12,13,18,21,24,25,26,27,29,30
PE, T	Intimidation or Bullying by Inspector	Inspector Attitude	<b>10</b> 2,3,7,8,9,16,17,23,25,30
PE, SCP	Long Notice as Source of Pressure	Notice of Inspection	<b>11</b> 6,11,14,15,18,20,22,23,24,28,30
PE, SCP, T	OFSTED Arriving with a Pre-decided Agenda	OFSTED pre-decided agenda	<b>14</b> 3,6,7,8,12,15,16,17,18,20,21,22,23,24
PE, SCP, T, JR, OE	School Circumstances affecting judgement grade	School Circumstances	<b>22</b> 1,2,3,4,7,8,11,12,13,14,15,17,18,19,21,23,24,25,26,28,29,30
PE, T, JR	Concern About Short or Reduced Observations Not Being a Fair Reflection of Classroom Practice	OFSTED Observation of Lessons- Length	<b>19</b> 2,3,8,9,10,12,13,14,15,18,19,20,21,22,24,25,27,28,29,30
PE, OE	Need for Dialogue to Produce Lasting Change	Dialogue	<b>11</b> 2,4,8,19,23,24,25,26,27,29,30
SCP, T, JR.	Academisation Influencing Frequency/Outcome of Inspections	Academies/Academisation	<b>11</b> 5,8,10,12,21,22,23,24,25,27,28
SCP, T	Excessive Data Emphasis as Result of Inspection	Data	<b>16</b> 1,3,7,8,10,15,16,18,21,22,23,24,27,28,29,30
SCP,T	Hijacking of School Priorities/ OFSTED as Drivers of Practice	OFSTED Judgements /Evidence	<b>16</b> 8,11,12,13,15,16,18,20,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30
SCP, T	LI Personality Influencing Inspection Tone/Focus/Outcome	LI Personality	<b>17</b> 1,2,3,7,8,14,15,16,18,20,21,23,25,27,29,30
PE, SCP, JR	OFSTED Shown an Artificial Best Behaviour 'Version' of the School/ Dilemma of Showing Day to Day Normal Practice or Putting on a Show/ Artificiality	OFSTED Judgements/Fear/Evidence	<b>14</b> 9,10,11,12,14,15,17,19,20,22,23,27,28,29
PE, SCP, OE,	Policies Conceived by School Principally or Solely for OFSTED/ Changes Made Solely for OFSTED	Formulaic Practices	<b>20</b> 2,3,8,10,11,13,15,16,17,18,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30
JR, OE	Diagnosis of Problems Without Support is Not Helpful	Dialogue	<b>13</b> 4,8,12,14,16,22,23,24,26,27,28,29,30
SCP, OE, T.	OFSTED Has Led to Excessive Caution and Formulaic Practices in Schools	OFSTED framework	<b>16</b> 2,8,9,12,14,16,17,18,23,26,28,29,30

WBR	Climate of Fear and Policies Produced to Generate Evidence for OFSTED Grinds Staff Down	Pressure from SMT/Fear	<b>13</b> 10,15,16,17,21,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30
JR	OFSTED Reports and Judgements are Superficial, Distortive, or Incomplete Neglecting Pupils Home Life	School Circumstances/OFSTED Judgements	<b>25</b> 2,3,4,7,8,9,10,11,12,13,14,15,16,17,18, 20,21,22,23,24,25,26, 27,28,30
OE	Accountability is Needed	Accountability, OFSTED Inspection SCH	<b>19</b> 3,6,8,10,13,15, 16,17,20,21,22,23,24,25,26,27,28,29,30
PE	Change in Personal Attitude Over Time	OFSTED Inspection SCH, Teacher insulation from inspection, Early OFSTED, OFSTED SEF years.	<b>11</b> 9,16,18, 20, 21,22,23,24,25,26, 27
WBR	Teacher Illness from SMT or OFSTED Pressure	Pressure from SMT, Pressure on teachers. SMT use of OFSTED, Teacher illness. Trust Teacher – SMT, Trust SMT- teacher.	<b>12</b> 5,10,12,15,17,20,24,25,27,28,29
OE	OFSTED has done more Harm than Good (Opposite gained 5 mentions in interviews 5,7,20,23.29)	OFSTED Framework/ OFSTED Pre-decided Agenda/ OFSTED Judgements	<b>18</b> 1,2,3,4,8,9, 12,13,14,15,16,17,19,21,22,24,25,30

## Appendix 11

### Sample Page of Experiential Code Collation

Transcribed from Original Hand-Written Document in Case Record (Stenhouse, 1978)

#### Letter 'M'

Morality (1)	Mopping Up (1)	Monitoring (20)	Middle School System (2)
Manipulation (1)	Mental Health (1)	Multiple Observation (1)	M.A.T. Agenda (4)
Mask (1)	Middle Leader Meeting (1)	Middle Leader (as rank) (5)	Mass Attendance (1)
M.A.T. Support (1)	Memory (7)	Main Scale (1)	MP Pressure (1)
Measurability (7)	Marking (21)	Medical Analogy (2)	Mentor School (1)
M.A.T. General mention (8)	Modular Science (1)	Middle School (1)	M.A.T. Advisors (1)
M.A.T. CEO (2)	Moving Goalposts (1)	Manipulation (1)	Mistake
Misleading (1)	Mirror (1)	Memory of OFSTED (4)	M.A.T. Expectation (2)
Meeting Preparation (1)	Mind Elsewhere (1)	Maternity Leave (3)	Micro-Management (4)
Monitoring Visits (1)	Multiple responsibilities (1)	Monitoring Inspector (5)	M.A.T. Procedures (1)
Media (1)	Method (1)	Monitoring Inspector Support (1)	Misinterpretation (1)
Metaphor (1)			