

Leading Schools in Challenging Circumstances:
Transactional and Transformational Leadership
in Four Secondary Schools

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Abstract

The leadership of schools can make the difference between giving and denying individuals a chance of success in the modern global workplace. This thesis examines leadership within schools, focusing on securing success within a political environment. It explores the leadership of a sample of secondary schools in a Local Authority situated in an area of high social deprivation and identifies the impact the Headteachers of these schools have on staff, students and community. A qualitative approach is used to identify the thought processes of the school leaders and the styles they utilise, as well as matching their actions to existing theories of successful leadership. The research found that school leaders use transactional leadership in order to undertake task-based requirements, particularly those generated by national policies and governmental agencies. The development and success of the schools, however, can be accredited to instances of transformational leadership, the dominant leadership theory for the improvement of schools, especially in deprived areas.

This study argues that transformational leadership accelerates the progress of a school through the way that Headteachers inspire and develop individuals at all levels. In an area of high deprivation, successful transformational leaders form strong connections with individuals and become driven to raise aspirations and improve self-image. It was discovered that there is a strong two-way relationship where the Headteacher and the community influence and affect each other; this is essential for the development of the school, the community and the Headteachers, who developed a sense of privilege at being able to serve a deprived community, and were grateful for the opportunity to make a positive impact on other people's lives. The final conclusions are that analysis using the constructivist paradigm can explain this level of transformational leadership as the greater positive feedback such Headteachers receive encourages Headteachers to become even more transformational.

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Chapter 1

Context and Background to the Study

Introduction

This is a study of leadership in schools in challenging circumstances. More specifically it is an examination of the perceptions of their own leadership styles expressed by four secondary school Headteachers in one Local Authority. The analysis derives its conceptual framework from existing work on transactional and transformational leadership. The ability to lead an educational establishment through political and socio-economic changes, especially in an area of social deprivation, requires the skill to motivate, adapt and shape the attitudes of staff, students and the wider community. There are many different approaches to leadership, some of which overlap and interchange depending on the task in hand. Leadership styles and traits are complex and intricate entities that evolve over time depending on the desired outcomes, the people available to achieve these and the expectations of the leaders themselves. Eagly *et al* (2003), and Bass and Riggio (2006) have identified transformational leadership as the most successful method of successfully achieving this.

Although leadership is often considered to be a personal journey (Bowen, 1995) it is hoped that this study will, in some way, illuminate this journey for others. It may enable new Headteachers to accelerate their development, avoid pitfalls and build on the experience of others to move the schools forward, whilst also providing a clearer path to personal achievement. As Jorgenson (2006) noted, although learning how to be a successful Headteacher was a fulfilling journey, it would have been helpful to

be provided with an insight into the role from others who had already achieved this success.

The purpose of this study is to explore the extent to which transactional and transformational leadership are deployed by Headteachers in a sample of secondary schools in a socially deprived area and to identify where and when transformational leadership is successfully deployed. Others have undertaken research into the effective leadership of schools in challenging circumstances (Brighouse, 2004; Harris, 2002; and Day, 2007 for example). However, this study is distinctive in the way it uses the lens of transactional and transformational leadership to examine the detail of what a sample of the Headteachers do in one Local Authority and to explore the reasons behind the leadership choices they make. The study also goes further by using the constructivist paradigm to examine how these choices are related to the values that Headteachers hold and how these values are translated into action, a dimension omitted from other studies.

The first chapter details the aims and objectives of the study and provides a context for this particular study and for the political changes associated with the Local Authority within which it is situated. It identifies some of the issues associated with leadership and highlights the importance of good leaders in shaping the development of both teachers and their students, adopting the theoretical framework that Headteachers are the main driving force for a school's improvement. The implications of transactional and transformational leadership are then discussed, illustrating how these can lead to a greater and quicker development of individuals.

Aims and objectives

The complex nature of leadership has provided a platform for many researchers to explore and attempt to classify what is deemed as successful and as unsuccessful leadership, including where each type and style should be applied to gain maximum benefit. This provides the starting point for the aims of this study.

The aims of this study are:

- 1 To explore the extent to which transactional and transformational leadership are deployed by Headteachers in a sample of secondary schools in one socially deprived Local Authority.
- 2 To identify where and when transformational leadership is successfully deployed by Headteachers.

The objectives of this study are:

- 1 To undertake a comparison of transformational leadership with alternative methods of management and leadership in order to identify the key factors of transformational leadership.
- 2 To establish how far transformational leadership is the preferred method of leadership for Headteachers of schools in one socially deprived Local Authority
- 3 To explore how transformational leadership is implemented by Headteachers and establish the impact that this approach to leadership has on the schools and wider communities.

The rationale for these aims and objectives is to identify where and when Headteachers adopt particular approaches to leadership, and the benefits of these approaches. It is hoped that the identification of Headteachers' preferred styles, when coupled with the reasons associated with the decisions for favouring these styles, will result in greater understanding of the successful leadership of schools, especially those in challenging circumstances.

Research questions

The research questions emerged from the literature and were formulated following an analysis of the literature on leadership, specifically that comparing transactional and transformational leadership (see Chapter 2). This analysis established that there are key indicators that enable the classification of actions as either transactional or transformational in nature. The draft research questions were then refined to focus on this particular study by considering the influence of the challenging context in which these schools are situated. The correlation of data to these research questions identifies where and when transformational leadership is successfully deployed by Headteachers, and the extent to which Headteachers themselves accredit their success to incidences of transformational leadership.

The research questions as finally formulated are:

1. Is transformational leadership significant in schools in challenging circumstances?
2. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances regard themselves as transformational leaders?

3. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances transform followers using vision and communication?
4. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances value and build relations?
5. How do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances handle unpredictability?
6. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances believe in motivation as a vehicle for achievement?
7. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances relay their moral in their communications?
8. Can the successes of Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances be attributed to transformational leadership?

The first of these questions, in addressing the significance of transformational leadership to schools in challenging circumstances, provides an analysis of the importance of leadership style to the particular socio-economic circumstances associated with these schools. The extent to which Headteachers in these schools currently regard themselves as transformational leaders is explored in the second question, identifying which behaviours they exhibit that can be classified as transformational in nature. The following series of research questions maps the Headteachers' behaviours to specific traits of transformational leadership: vision and communication; valuing and building relations; handling unpredictability; using motivation to further achievement; and communicating their own moral values. These are tabulated in Figure 2.3. These indicators of transactional and transformational leadership are considered through the perspective of the challenging

circumstances experienced by the schools and communities in this study, in order to focus on the importance of transformational leadership to this very specific context. The research questions conclude by considering the extent to which the success achieved by these Headteachers can be attributed to transformational leadership, especially in the context of this study.

Context of the study

The schools within this study are considered to be facing challenging circumstances in that they serve areas with adverse economic conditions (DCSF, 2009). The Local Authority is situated in an urban, former mining area in the north of England and is ranked highly in all measured levels of deprivation, as detailed later in Chapter 3. The areas have high levels of crime and unemployment and staff in schools within the authority note that there is lack of positive parental involvement. The Local Authority's schools have attendance rates below national averages and many have teaching posts that it has proved impossible to fill, which are currently occupied by temporary staff. This leads to a lack of classroom consistency that has a negative effect on the behaviour of students and a demotivating effect on the permanent staff, both of which are considered to be significant factors for schools in challenging circumstances (DCSF, 2009) and are key priorities for leaders of such schools. These indicators of challenging circumstances are discussed in detail in Chapter 3.

The Local Authority within which this study is situated is currently undergoing turbulent times. As many other authorities have embraced educational changes and utilised them to ensure they progress at an accelerating rate, the national league tables (BBC, 2009) reveal that schools within this authority have made modest

improvements and have often risen and fallen without any clear pattern, showing no evidence of consistent improvement. Of the 17 secondary schools within this authority, four have been placed in special measures by Ofsted within the last ten years, and three others were placed in a category issuing them with a notice to improve (Ofsted, 2006, 2007 and 2008). One school left special measures and improved steadily for four years before dipping again and being placed back into special measures. This spurred the authority to take action, which it did by allying with a different authority where many of the schools are rated as outstanding by Ofsted. One of the schools within the high achieving authority was contracted to work with the failing school, which is taking part in this study. Within two terms under the new leadership, over 35 percent of staff had left or been removed and six of the seven senior leaders in this school were no longer employed. It was seen that the change in leadership was the most important action required to enable the school to improve (see Mercer *et al*, 2010).

The changing nature of schools, the political context of the authorities within which schools are situated, and the impact that poor headship can have on a school and its community, all reveal the importance of good leadership in today's schools (Day, 2009). Jacobson *et al* (2009) note that if schools are to succeed they must be led in a way that enables them to change quickly and develop more people in order to build a greater capacity for achievement. This then ensures the school follows a cycle of continual improvement at all levels, not just the criteria currently being used to judge schools for, if this does not happen, the school may be found lacking as these criteria change. It is thought that a transformational approach to leadership may be the solution to these issues, as it involves all workers in the school's development and

embeds a widespread enthusiasm for the development, (Bottery, 2004). The current study explores these issues.

Outline of the study

An opportunity sample of four secondary schools was selected from the same Local Authority to participate in this study, in an attempt to reduce any variables from the local authority dimension. The Headteachers and the Deputy Headteachers of these schools were interviewed regarding the leadership in existence in each school. Through an open exploration of the thoughts and actions of Headteachers, the importance of the belief patterns that influence leadership style was identified.

Data was collected using a series of semi-structured interviews which provided data from Headteachers to identify how leadership was implemented in secondary schools in the selected Local Authority. These interviews were mapped onto the research questions (Appendix 1) to identify: the Headteacher's vision for the future of the school and the importance of staff development in achieving this vision; the levels of communication required both for the success of the school and for the Headteacher's relationship with staff and students; how Headteachers adapt to unexpected circumstances that result in a deviation from their plans; and what they would like to change about the school. The results are presented and analysed in chapters 4, 5 and 6 before conclusions drawn from them are set out in the final chapter. In addition to the particular issues applying to schools situated within this Local Authority, there are also more general issues that apply to Headship; some of these are explored next.

Issues in leadership

It is now widely accepted that the Headteachers are mainly responsible for the generation of improvements within a school (Drago-Severson, 2002; Day, 2009). This is because, according to Liebman *et al* (2005), Headteachers are the major contributing influence on the school environment, and shape the direction and ethos of the school by their behaviours. Weinberger (2004) draws attention to the long-running craving for good leaders in all walks of life, and illustrates the many ways in which a leader can influence groups of people and entire organisations. This is even the case within a policy context where Headteachers have not been directly involved in the creation of a policy; they still act as the interface between the policy and the organisation, interpreting external policy requirements and applying their personal values and experience to these policies to shape them in a particular manner (Bell and Stevenson, 2006).

When the range of possible changes that a Headteacher can make is taken into account, it becomes apparent that this role is crucial to the success of a school. The benefits a school can receive when a Headteacher is focussed on supporting adult development are described by Drago-Severson (2002) who illustrates the difference that this can make to the daily learning of children within the school. One of the basic assumptions of this study, therefore, is that the most direct route to school improvement is through the role of the Headteacher. In order to explore this further, transactional and transformational leadership are chosen as the two leadership theories that have the greatest influence on Headteachers' leadership of schools.

Transactional leadership is very task-oriented and much less complex than the person-centred, inspirational leadership associated with transformational leaders (Drago-Severson, 2002). For leadership to be transformational it has to focus on the development of individuals, empowering them to achieve more, become flexible and develop a strong belief in their own abilities. These issues will be discussed in detail in Chapter 2.

Conclusions

This study will focus on the style of leadership provided by the Headteachers and explore the factors that influence them in deploying transactional and transformational leadership within their schools. It will examine the extent to which these two approaches to leadership are deployed and how this is influenced by the challenging circumstances within which the schools are located. The research design rests largely on semi-structured interviews with Headteachers and their Deputies. The detailed methodology will be developed in Chapter 3, along with the questions which are to be used to reveal the complex distinctions between different styles and types of leadership. With this complexity in mind, the next chapter will examine the literature relating to leadership and in particular to school leadership. It focuses mainly upon four styles of leadership and different theories of leadership. Finally it draws these together to conclude that the real distinction within leadership theories, both for empirical and for analytical purposes related to this study, is between transactional and transformational actions of leadership.

Chapter 2

Literature review: exploring the nature of leadership

Introduction

This chapter considers the literature pertaining to leadership, emphasising the nature of leadership and the attempts previously made by others to classify it. An understanding of what leadership is, and how it can be identified, is important to this study as it will enable incidences of leadership from Headteachers to be categorised in order to determine the nature and type of such incidences. The nature of leadership is compared with management, and several recognised styles of leadership are discussed. Leadership theories are also compared; this is an important aspect of the study as it reveals that leaders can adopt several styles, which are influenced by many factors. The political factors influencing educational changes are discussed, along with their implications for school leadership styles. Finally there is a focus on transactional and transformational leadership with the implications of these for the school context. The key features of transactional and transformational leadership are then summarised in a way that allows them to be used to explore further the extent to which each approach to leadership is deployed by the Headteachers in this study.

Concepts of leadership and management

Leadership is a contested concept; there are many views about what leadership is and one of the most common misconceptions in this identification appears to be the misunderstanding of the difference between the role of a manager and that of a leader. Vasu *et al* (1998) draw a distinct separation between these roles when they

suggest that leadership is over and above the routines of management. They describe the processes involved in management and point out that a manager acts as an interpreter who negotiates with others to get the job done, whilst leadership is the process of attempting to influence the behaviours of others. Hiebert and Klatt (2001) consider leadership to be the process of moving a group or groups in a direction; their research findings highlighted that this should be (mostly) in a non-coercive manner and will probably include some process of persuasion. The concept of a process of persuasion is supported in part by Murugan (2004) who suggests that while actions are taken by managers to achieve certain goals, actions become leadership when they involve altering the attitudes and personal perceptions of others in order to influence their behaviours.

A similar view is taken by Marquis and Huston (2005) who state that the manager is the one who accomplishes and conducts, whereas a leader is one who guides the course of action. Larson (2003) describes how leadership is crucial to the successful implementation of any major initiative. If this attribution of success is justified, then leadership is indeed the key factor when investigating the successful improvement of schools, especially when instigating change rather than maintaining current practices. The manner by which this is achieved, however, is open to debate and may, to some extent, depend on the leadership style being deployed.

Confused and contested leadership styles

Accepting that, for the purpose of school improvement, leadership has preference over management makes the analysis of leadership paramount. Bell (2007) identifies that many styles of leadership lie between the two extremes of autocratic leadership

and democratic leadership. This view is not shared by Shell (2003), who claims that there are other styles outside these groups, including laissez-faire and bureaucratic leadership. More complications arise when the substitute theory, trait theory, contingency theory or visionary styles of leadership are overlain on these classifications, and can be found to be either exclusive of particular styles, or inclusive of many.

The main feature which differentiates between leadership styles is the perceived leader input in the decision-making process. These are listed in the table below.

Leadership Style	Perceived Leader Input into the Decision-Making Process
Autocratic	High
Participative/Democratic	Medium
Bureaucratic	Low
Laissez-faire	Very Low/None

Figure 2.1 Perceived leader input into the decision-making process for different styles of leadership

The advantages and disadvantages of each style may depend on the context in which it is implemented.

When adopting an autocratic style the leader makes all the decisions; according to Mero *et al* (2000) autocratic leaders are indifferent to the needs or concerns of their subordinates, and merely assign duties to them without discussion or negotiation. Shell (2003) discusses this style of leadership in terms of power, where autocratic leaders views themselves as the source of all power, able to make all decisions for an

organisation with absolute authority. The advantage of autocratic leadership is that all subordinates know exactly where they stand within the organisation and know their only concern is to carry out the instructions given by the autocratic leader. The main disadvantage is that all incidences of creativity are stifled, the skills and abilities of subordinates are often overlooked and the development of subordinates is largely ignored.

In contrast, within participative or democratic leadership subordinates play a major part in the decision-making process (Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1973). Democratic leaders are very people-orientated and encourage employees to contribute to the decision-making process to such an extent that a bottom-up approach to decision making develops instead of a top-down one, as created by autocratic styles (Mayer and Clemens, 1999). This is accomplished by encouraging strong lines of communication between employees and their supervisors; Mero *et al* (2000) stress that the underpinning reasons behind the actions are to treat employees with dignity and make them feel they have a valuable contribution to make. However, Dorfman (2004) highlights that in practice many managers struggle to involve subordinates in the decision-making process to the extent required for successful participative leadership.

Whereas participative leadership can be interpreted as a reluctance to play the leadership role, a different type of abdication occurs in bureaucratic leadership for this provides a manner for the leader to distance themselves from the decisions and actions they need to take. Owens (1970) describes how bureaucratic leadership is almost a way for leaders to hide from the decision process, or at least to disassociate

themselves from it. The bureaucratic leader follows the rule book and must convince subordinates that the leader cannot deviate from it in order to help others, even if they want to. Adams *et al* (1980) refer to the bureaucratic leader as being more of a facilitator than a leader. They claim that bureaucratic leaders are not implementing their own style of leadership, but are instead implementing predetermined prevailing rules. Shell (2003) considers that there are advantages to this method in times when managers wish to remove themselves from a particular situation, or an unpopular decision. When bureaucratic leadership is exercised fully, it should result in leaders acting identically throughout the entire organisation. This may be viewed as advantageous, as it provides a method of disseminating best practice across separate departments, but it could also be viewed as disadvantageous as it does not allow leaders to excel through individuality.

Bureaucratic leadership provides a method of advocating responsibility by hiding behind rules, whereas laissez-faire leadership is a method of abdicating responsibility in a different way. Bass and Riggio (2006) describe laissez-faire leadership as an absence of, or a complete avoidance of, leadership. They state that it is the most ineffective style of leadership and consists of a leadership style based around inaction, almost like being without a leader at all. This requires that subordinates set their own goals and do not have any input from managers. An obvious disadvantage is that everyone within an organisation can be pulling in different directions, with no-one encouraging employees to move the organisation forward. There can be some advantages to this style of leadership; if the team being managed is considered to be a group of motivated, capable, professionals who are self-disciplined and have a desired outcome; then this style of leadership will provide

them with the freedom they require to deviate from existing paths and to develop new, creative methods.

Leadership, according to Hiebert and Klatt (2001), is an incredibly complex and varied topic; this degree of variation is probably necessary in order to deal with the complexities of human nature, as almost every type of personality generates its own style of leadership which, according to Davies (2007), is linked to the core moral values of the leader themselves. Although there is a diverse range of leadership styles there must be a common theme, otherwise it would not be possible to identify leadership. An exploration of theories of leadership could provide a means of identifying commonalities of leadership behaviour.

Theories of leadership

In addition to the different styles by which leaders exercise their power base, there are also several leadership theories that attempt to identify why leaders are successful. Taking a broadly chronological perspective and focusing on examples of the main types of leadership theory, this section will briefly consider: trait theory, contingency/situational theory, substitutes theory, transactional theory and transformational theory. Unlike leadership styles, leadership theories are not mutually exclusive, but some of the styles do provide a strong leaning towards one particular theory more than another. The following table identifies some of the theories and provides a brief overview of the key features associated with each.

Theory	What is it?
Trait Theory	Leadership based on the personal characteristics of the leader
Contingency/Situational Theory	Leadership depending on events
Substitutes Theory	Leadership can be replaced by other factors
Transactional Theory	Leadership as an exchange of rewards or punishments
Transformational Theory	Leadership through motivation and increased self-awareness

Figure 2.2 Description of leadership theories

It is possible to draw similarities between substitutes theory and bureaucratic leadership; the transformational theory with a participative/democratic style and the transactional theory with an autocratic style. The instances when these become similar and dissimilar may become more apparent with a more in-depth exploration of the above theories, the first of which will be the theory that good leaders possess particular traits that naturally bring about success.

One of the oldest theories that attempts to credit the success of leaders is trait theory, based on the Aristotelian philosophy that some people are born to lead. It is thought that some people have particular characteristics or personal traits that make them more likely to be a successful leader than others. Drenth *et al* (1998) show how the trait theory of leadership is based on the assumption that leaders have vision or charisma that their followers do not possess, but consider that it is impossible to find a single set of traits that guarantees good leadership; this is also voiced by Bell (2007) who explains that these traits are often abstract and difficult to define. Marquis and Huston (2005) compare previous supportive research against that of

others that are of the opinion that leadership is based more on collaboration than on charisma.

Unlike trait theory, situational theory does not claim that one person has a range of characteristics that will guarantee success, because here different situations call for different styles of leadership and there is no single preferable style of leadership (Boone and Kurtz, 2006). This concept is encompassed in the contingency theory of leadership and highlighted by Locke and Larsen (1999) who consider that different situations require different types of leaders. They stress the view that a good leader in one situation may not be a good leader in another situation, due to one of the most important variables relating to the leader, his or her followers. Bell (2007) stresses the notion that any leader needs followers and that it is impossible to examine the leadership without examining the group being led. It is feasible that certain followers could result in a leader being successful irrespective of the leader themselves, this is a form of substitutes theory and is an extension of situational theory, in that occasionally situations arise where variables that are independent of leadership, and can substitute for the requirement of leadership. Clarke *et al* (2006) provide examples of such variables and include ability, training and previous experience as factors that can lead to an effective performance from subordinates, even with unsatisfactory leadership.

Unlike situational theory, the concept behind transactional leadership is that the leader plays a major role by directly affecting the behaviours of followers; this theory focuses around the notion of a transaction being made between the leader and the followers:

Transactional leadership occurs when the leader rewards or disciplines the follower, depending on the adequacy of the follower's performance.

(Bass and Riggio, 2006:517)

Marquis and Huston (2005) argue that both the leader and the follower want something from the relationship, and this exchange is the reason for them adopting the role of leader or follower. These transactions can follow two routes (Eagly *et al*, 2003) and can be either positive rewards for satisfactory progress or actions to eliminate failures of expected standards. Bass and Riggio (2006) further note that transactional leadership has two main factors: contingent reward and management-by-exception. These two factors are also addressed by Albritton (1995) who considers that contingent rewards are based around subordinates reaching some agreed level of performance, whereas management-by-exception is used as a method of intervening whenever standards are not met and can be present in two forms, active or passive (Bass and Riggio, 2006).

Active management-by-exception involves the manager taking steps to monitor quality and standards, and then taking corrective action whenever work is found to be sub-standard. Passive management-by-exception occurs when managers wait for errors or mistakes to occur and then take action to rectify them. Both methods are reactive and are responsive to an identification of some unacceptable level of performance which can lead to a demotivation of subordinates. However, contingent reward is, according to Bass and Riggio (2006), reasonably effective in motivating subordinates to achieve higher levels of performance. This is a process where the leader makes it clear what is expected and promises to provide some form of reward, such as a monetary bonus, if the assignment is completed to a satisfactory level. Bank *et al* (2004) maintain that the future expectation of a reward can lead to a

successful team performance and motivate staff. In transactional leadership there is more emphasis on individuals taking responsibility for their own actions and wanting to make a difference. This in turn increases the maturity of the subordinates and improves the conditions for substitutes leadership and situational leadership, providing a more holistic leadership performance and an improved outcome. This basis of transactional leadership, where the leader-follower relationship is based upon some form of transaction, does not always need to be monetary and can, according to Hartog (2003), be the transaction of praise or recognition. She explains that if this is then coupled with a different perspective from the leader, such as the transaction of intellectual development, it can move towards transformational leadership.

Hartog (2003) states that transactional leadership and transformational leadership are not two completely separate dimensions of leadership, rather they are end points on a leadership continuum. However, transformational leadership can be viewed as a special case of transactional leadership. This occurs because during transformational leadership, both parties are receiving something and therefore a transaction is still taking place, the difference being the methods by which the leader motivates the follower. The transformational leader demonstrates qualities that motivate respect and pride by communicating values, purpose and the importance of the organisation's overall mission; they do this by focussing on the higher order growth of individuals:

Transformational leaders focus on developing and raising the awareness of their followers about the importance of satisfying higher order growth needs.

(Bass and Riggio, 2006)

These characteristics, often demonstrated by transformational leaders, include: optimism, excitement about goals, a belief in a future vision, a commitment to develop and mentor followers, and an intention to attend to the individual needs of these followers (Eagly *et al* 2003). Drysdale *et al* (2009) identified these factors as instrumental in creating sustainable improvements within a school. Albritton (1995) explains how it is possible to identify transformational leaders by their behaviours and by the response of their followers. He claims that the followers show a great deal of trust, respect and confidence in their leaders and identify with them as individuals. The transformational leader is constantly nurturing optimism and enthusiasm throughout the organisation, and will foster creativity and an environment where re-thinking and a questioning of assumptions are in place. Most of all, every individual within the organisation feels valued, involved, and believes that their contribution is important to the success of the organisation; this is a result of the leader generating a very strong shared vision (Blanchard, 2010).

Kurland *et al* (2010) link this shared vision strongly to transformational leadership because of its ability to motivate people to higher levels of effort and performance. The concept of a shared vision is identified by many researchers as important when examining transformational leadership. For example, Hybels (2002) states that vision is at the very core of leadership. He stresses the importance of this point by describing vision as the very fuel that leaders run on. Kurke (2004) agrees with this and believes that leaders are in the creation business; through the visualisation of a different future they change the world to be what they want it to be. The vision held by leaders not only serves as a map for future developments, but may be better understood for the purposes of analysis by locating any discussion of vision and

values within the constructivist paradigm which explores the links between values, vision and action.

The constructivist paradigm

The constructivist paradigm is a realisation that what is believed to be true is entirely constructed within our own minds and hence a change of thoughts can lead to a change of reality. Lambert (2009), describes how we construct meaning to new information by overlaying with our current beliefs, to alter our future actions. This, according to Hermans and Dupont (2002), describes how the external and internal are linked through the constructivist paradigm, in such a way that actions and the interpretation of actions cannot be separated from each other. The actions are taken to achieve some outcome, and this requires an understanding of the outcome and of the action, that is specific to each individual's perception. They illustrate how the image people have of the world and of themselves within this world dictates the manner in which they will act, with the statement "The self needs to manifest his or her self through his or her actions" (Hermans and Dupont, 2002:253). The way people see the world is linked to the actions they take because of their interpretation of how their actions influence the world as they see it. Thompson (1995) explains how this perception of the world is then considered by the individual to be knowledge, rather than interpretation, which informs future actions to such an extent that the knowledge becomes manifest.

The constructivist paradigm focuses on the internal nature of understanding and of projection. It provides a means of challenging understanding by asking questions about what is believed to be true, and how that conclusion is reached. The vision that

individuals hold for a possible future influences their actions and, in turn, moves them towards this future. They have a perception that they believe to be factual knowledge about actions that are required and about how the future will be shaped; this belief is so strong that it dictates every action, conversation and thought the individual has. When people hold beliefs that are this strong, the congruence between actions, conversations and thoughts moves them towards their perceived future, causing it to become manifested. The stronger the belief that people have, the greater this level of influence in manifesting their actions. This is especially true of Headteachers, whether they tend to adopt a broadly transactional or transformational approach to school leadership. However, school leadership does not take place in a vacuum. The options available to Headteachers, the resources within schools and their organisational structures and, often, their immediate priorities are determined by broader educational policy made at a local or, more likely, at national level.

Leaders as change agents

Bush (2003) analyses aspects of goal-setting in an attempt to reveal who is ultimately in charge of the direction of the school. He describes how the pressures emanating from the wider educational environment and governmental prescriptions leave Headteachers with no room for interpretation and thus dictate the vision they must carry. This argument is addressed by Wright (2001) who claims that governmental involvement pushes leaders to act as managers and rewards them for implementing governmental changes ruthlessly. He then questions the values this instils into pupils who may start to view people as cogs in a managerial machine, where the desired outcome alone is important, not the means by which this is achieved.

Gold *et al* (2003) researched the means by which ten outstanding school leaders accommodated the tensions between political direction and the freedom to lead with values; based on this they take a different stance on governmental imposition. They describe how these outstanding leaders were able to embody educational values while still operating within the political arena. Gold *et al* (2003) lean towards the aspects of transformational leadership as an approach for achieving this as the focus towards people and relationships is able to alter attitudes and beliefs. The findings of Gold *et al*'s (2003) case study are that these outstanding school leaders are able to mediate policy through their own value systems, and they are driven by personal and moral values that enable them to create a sense of institutional purpose and direction.

In his response to these findings, Wright (2003) questions the extent to which school leaders are truly able to re-focus external initiatives through their own value system, arguing that they may be deemed as outstanding leaders only because they are very good at implementing governmental directions while never taking their 'eye off of the ball'. Wright (2003) therefore argues that they adopt an approach that is sanctioned by Ofsted and does not defy any governmental guidelines. The alternative conclusion drawn by Bush (2003) is that governments may have the power to impose innovations upon schools, but it requires commitment and enthusiasm to implement the changes effectively, and this is where vision, drive and influence are dependent on the Headteacher. It is this level of drive and vision that is able to bring about changes, both in existing practices and also in attitudes, beliefs and behaviours. The acceptance of this outlook reveals the importance of leadership within schools,

where Headteachers need to implement successful changes while working within policy guidelines.

School leadership: contexts, concepts and realities

The policy context of school leadership

Change and improvement of schools is essential as the evolving educational environment means that it is now no longer sufficient to just maintain a school. In order to meet the diverse range of needs of a diverse range of stakeholders, a school must be led (Leithwood *et al*, 2004). The leadership and management of schools have moved through many definite fashions influenced by the changing nature of education; the political reasons for this are highlighted later in this chapter. There have been many different foci occurring over time, including a focus on the improvement of teaching methods and curriculum developments in the 1960s, later followed by a focus on the management of policies and organisation in the 1980s.

Currently, the focus within schools is dictated by national educational policy which informs institutional practice including decisions about pedagogy and the content of the curriculum, staff performance and development and the allocation of resources (Bell and Stevenson, 2006). These policies are influenced by both global trends and local priorities. Lingard and Ozga (2007) illustrate how the political environment leads governments to identify the actions they will or will not condone, which then lead to policy and in turn affects local authorities and individual schools; there are many examples that may be taken from the UK context.

The *Every Child Matters* agenda, a framework for national change initiated in 2003, is a significant example. By combining the social and educational services available for children it is intended to change the nature and levels of accountability to improve the quality of services provided so that every child can reach their potential irrespective of the personal obstacles they face (DfES, 2004a). This is achieved by providing national guidelines matching the duties of schools with those of other bodies to ensure they collaborate with each other and integrate the services offered for children and families. The way this is achieved is by setting a level of conformity across the organisations, and ensuring accountability exists for each organisation. Systems for monitoring and assessing the level of integration are in place to identify the successful, or unsuccessful, implementation of policies.

Other policies dictate the monitoring and measures used as performance indicators that will identify if schools are successful or not, including the tests and examination results upon which all schools are ranked. Some of these measures were subsequently changed as Key Stage 3 assessments were discontinued and replaced by more regular communications with parents (Curtis, 2008). Although the final examination was cancelled, the government offered assurances that high levels of accountability would remain in place and schools would continue to be measured and ranked. Ball (2006) finds that these measures do not focus on attitudes and perceptions, but instead emphasise measurable outcomes that can act as evidence that schools following the policies are demonstrating improvement and are moving towards excellence. These measures run through all schools and are filtered down to individual teacher level.

A similar emphasis on accountability can be found in the work of the Training and Development Agency, which holds teachers to account using a set of criteria within the professional standards for schools, against which teachers can be judged (TDA, 2009). These criteria provide descriptors of the skills, attributes and knowledge that teachers are expected to possess in order to be deemed as proficient in their role. Bell and Bolam (2010) describe how this list then acts as an accountability framework for managers within schools, allowing them to undertake a level of quality assurance across teachers and ensure a level of professionalism is in place. Armed with these measures of accountability, the government introduced a workforce reform that identified the duties that teachers can and cannot be asked to undertake. Blandford (2006) lists the changes that have been enforced upon schools under the workforce reform initiative, including not only changes to the duties undertaken by teachers and support staff, but also broader leadership and management roles of concern to the Headteacher, such as extending the school day to allow community access to enrichment activities and the development and coordination of multi-agency provision for children. She details how there has to be a change in the focus of current leadership practices to meet the policy guidelines given by the government. The implications are discussed by Bell and Bolam (2010) who describe the dilemma that arises for Headteachers asked to balance long-term improvements with immediate results, and their own vision for improvement with a set of external standards that need to be met; they state furthermore that workforce reform has led to radical changes in the roles and responsibilities of school leaders. However, Mercer *et al* (2010) also note that these reforms have left no space for school leaders to be autonomous or to lead through a dependence on their principles and ethics. This illustrates the extent to which governmental policies impact on the daily practices

within schools and how policy can dramatically change the way Headteachers view their leadership and management roles.

Mercer *et al* (2010) describe how the government's emphasis on public sector accountability resulted in all teachers having an annual appraisal to set future targets and make judgements on their previous individual performance, holding them accountable for achieving the criteria identified by national policies. This, according to Ball (2006), feeds into incentives and performance-related pay, allowing poor-quality teachers to be penalised. Although the use of performance-related review is not limited to teachers, it is used in this case to ensure everyone within a school is measured using criteria set by national policy, including Headteachers. For example the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH) details key skills that are used to identify if Headteachers are successful (Jones *et al*, 2010), including aspects of how to hold individuals to account for meeting performance indicators. All staff are now required to have passed, or at least have registered for, the NPQH before they are allowed to take up their first post as Headteacher. This provides a set of national standards for Headteachers which are deemed as essential for headship (DfES, 2004b). To ensure these standards are met, the government provided funding for Local Authorities to employ an external consultant in the role of National Challenge Advisor, to work alongside secondary school leaders (DCSF, 2009). The government also assures accountability is enforced through the use of Ofsted which has the power to sanction schools not meeting the inspection criteria (Mercer *et al*, 2010). Government involvement, therefore, ensures that Headteachers achieve the targets imposed, which encourages them to become more task-orientated, concerned with national benchmarks of success and with statistical deadlines for achievement.

As a result they are pushed to move away from a leadership focus on the development of people towards a more reactive, task-driven model of management.

By creating such a policy framework for schools, the government has achieved a level of centralisation where schools are no longer free to follow their own course of action, and has provided a level of consistency by which schools are able to be compared. This is outlined by Whitty (2002) when he considers the introduction of a national curriculum to identify the content that must be taught in all schools, and then the regime of Ofsted inspectors to hold schools accountable to these external measures. It is argued by Thrupp and Willmott (2003) that such policies lead to effectiveness being largely suspended for school improvement, where the management of schools becomes the important factor, in place of transformation. They explain that when centralisation is enforced, managerialism takes place as leaders no longer require high levels of values and morals, but instead follow the guidelines given by external sources. Effectively, the need to implement educational policies encourages Headteachers to favour management activities instead of transformational activities. This is contrary to the intention of educational policy makers, for as Mercer *et al* (2010) identify, policy makers attempt to drive forward an agenda that raises standards and combats the consequences of poverty and disaffection. In reality, a system has been created where measures of accountability replace the freedom of contextual diversity which then removes the Headteachers' practices from their ethical base. Thrupp and Willmott (2003) note, however, that although this level of centralisation has taken place, effective Headteachers adopt and interpret the policies to align them with their own moral values in order to develop schools that have the skills and characteristics matching those considered by

Headteachers to be essential. This reveals how good leaders are able to adapt their practices to maintain their own internal values while leading through a changing political environment.

A number of studies have explored how far the work of Headteachers has been constrained by national educational policy and how far heads have found ways of adapting such policy to meet the immediate priorities of their schools. (Broadfoot *et al*, 2000; Harris *et al*, 2003; Evans, 1998). Broadfoot *et al* (2000) interviewed Headteachers in 48 schools over an eight-year period (1989 to 1997), about their leadership style. They found that the most obvious effect of the changes was a shift in the Headteachers' focus, which often resulted in national educational policy being filtered through the Headteachers' professional experience and then adapted to meet the practicalities of their school. This process is explored by Bell and Stevenson (2006) who detail the levels required to translate policy into practice. When the policy has been formed and a strategic direction for its implementation been created, the policy is mapped onto the organisational principles to establish targets and success criteria. These are determined by the school leaders who also decide on the monitoring mechanisms that are to be established. Broadfoot *et al* (2000) go on to explain that in some cases Headteachers could not make the required change of focus and instead, took early retirement. However, the research does not attempt to identify if the leaders who remained were more inclined to be transformational leaders than those who left.

Research by Harris (2003) focused on Headteachers who had implemented and sustained high levels of improvement. The findings revealed a close match between

the frameworks they implemented, their everyday practices and their personal beliefs, implying that the Headteachers are, at least in part, transformational in their behaviour. Chapman (2003) also examined how barriers to school improvement were removed from schools in order to accelerate improvement. He found that in all cases the Headteacher was responsible for instigating changes that resulted in the improvements. Although this was not attributed directly to acts of transformational leadership, Evans (1998) also interviewed successful Headteachers and triangulated her findings using teacher interviews. She found the teachers' views about Headteachers to be very significant, particularly when viewed from a perspective of how the Headteacher influenced the teachers' attitudes. The level of trust in the Headteacher which was revealed could be attributed to the implementation of successful transformational leadership.

Clarke (2005) has also noted how Headteacher leadership is widely acknowledged to be instrumental in determining school effectiveness. He argues that where students had undergone significant improvements the Headteacher's leadership was an emergent theme, as was the evidence that the Headteacher genuinely had a great concern for the welfare of the student, as found in transformational leaders. Clarke (2005) points out that commitment to facilitating effective communication and establishing ownership of a shared culture were significant factors. MacBeath *et al* (1996) attribute student success to the Headteacher and their open, approachable style of leadership. In this case Headteachers were seen to be successful in empowering others to work more effectively for the good of the children. He describes how the leadership of empowerment was carried on the back of Headteacher's opinion that their sole function was to provide a sense of purpose and

focus for all school activities and for the community. All these successful attributes can be associated with the implementation of transformational leadership. A separate study into school leadership by Cox (1997) produced similar results. They showed that the attitude of the Headteacher was essential for the implementation of change, and identified that those who sanctioned a change but were seen to be indifferent or negative towards that particular change, contributed to it not being effectively implemented. They also found that Headteachers who tried to implement change through autocratic leadership styles were not completely successful and staff felt resentment to the changes. They concluded that both the leadership style and the attitude of the Headteacher are significant factors in the successful implementation of change. Verona and Young (2001) conducted a study into transformational leadership within schools and found that it significantly increased the pass rates achieved by students, while simultaneously improving the moral base of personal growth of individuals within schools. They concluded that transformational leadership is the most appropriate path for leadership within schools because it enables school leaders to address all the key aspects of education, including the moral dimension, and it matches the social and contextual requirements of modern schools.

After considering the styles of Headteachers, Evans (2000) argued that the actual style was not as important as the extent to which ideologies and beliefs were shared. She also noted that it was not simply the observable aspects of a Headteacher that constituted this style, but also the hidden, internal values that led to the Headteacher acting in a particular way towards others. Such ideologies could make an ineffective style of leadership work, or an effective style of leadership fail. Evans explains how

Headteachers who were dynamic and aware had much more of an impact than those who were set in their ways and had a narrow outlook on life, irrespective of the leadership style they implemented. The process of fostering positive leader-staff interaction was much more important than the outward style of the Headteacher, and Headteachers got the best out of staff when they were able to motivate them. The skills required to achieve this are described by Evans (2000), who explains that it is essential to focus on the individual, as every teacher has a diverse requirement of needs and one approach will not work for all.

It is evident, therefore, that no single approach to leadership style is universally appropriate. This view is supported by Poster *et al* (1999) and Clarke (2005), who point out that it is not necessarily the approach to leadership by Headteachers that makes the difference, but more the impact that heads have on individuals and on their culture, which becomes a two-way process between leader and follower. The ability of the Headteacher to change personally is noted by MacGilchrist *et al* (1995). Their study identified that several successful Headteachers changed their approach, irrespective of the success of their previous styles. These Headteachers claim to have developed a greater sense of vision and credibility that enabled them to view the school more as a whole. They also claimed that throughout these changes they had learned to open up and let go, which made them less controlling but more able to work as part of a team moving in and out of different leadership styles with more ease. These Headteachers also noticed that their relationships with parents and governors had also improved. However, Headteachers need to develop flexibility in their approach to school leadership.

This ability to be flexible has an effect throughout the rest of the school, as Percival and Tranter (2004) explain. The Headteacher's behaviour patterns become mirrored by the leadership team and start to permeate all aspects of school life. This is also noted by Kay *et al* (2003), who suggest that the Headteacher's characteristics become evident in others, drawing attention to the finding that the relationship between Headteacher and teacher appears to result in teachers modelling and amplifying the characteristics of the Headteacher to create something new and improved. This, according to Kay *et al* (2003), is a feature of transformational leadership, where the Headteacher is committed both morally and intellectually to the school and thus inspires others to new heights. Transformational leadership, therefore, is essentially value driven. It is the values that provide a sense of purpose and direction while enabling heads to be flexible in the approach to leadership.

A focus on transactional leadership and transformational leadership: a framework for analysis

It can be seen from the above analysis that a focus on transactional and transformational leadership can provide a framework within which to analyse the approaches to leadership adopted by Headteachers in this study. Schools are currently undergoing changes from traditional qualifications to new diplomas and work-related courses and the changing nature of education and its need for a major paradigm shift has sometimes resulted in leaders who are only able to lead through uncertainty (Cheng, 2001). The new changes require leaders who are able to motivate and invoke followers to perform better and take more responsibility for their own actions, enabling the organisations to become more fluid and able to adapt quickly when facing the changing environment. These are some of the features

present in transactional and transformational leadership and the most successful schools appear to be those where transformational leadership takes place and the Headteachers are leading through the levels of uncertainty to create value; Fairholm and Fairholm (2009) noted how value-based transformational leadership taps in to long-held organisational values that inspire followers.

Earley and Weindling (2004) argue that the National College for School Leadership's (NCSL) current thinking is in favour of a paradigm shift in leadership. Their research into successful Headteachers has found transformational leadership to be a model of excellence (Brighouse, 2004). They claim that, through transformational leadership, schools can raise the aspirations, confidence and prosperity of communities. NCSL has identified the need for Headteachers to believe in people and to inspire others to achieve greatness, traits associated with transformational leaders. Donovan (1993) describes how the transformational leader is a great person, who uses great ideas to move people forward, and in doing so brings about profound transformations that not only affect the organisation but also change the subordinates' everyday lives by making them morally enlarged, and in goes some way to transforming the world.

The potential degree of influence makes it incumbent on the leader to relay the correct messages and undertake the correct actions. Chapman's (2003) research into schools and teachers identified that incidences of developing high expectations and high moral values, fostering problem solving capabilities and building lasting relationships were due to these responsibilities being met. Transformational leaders devote a great deal to creating a shared vision, and when considering the example of

a school, Southworth (1998) describes how it is not only the Headteacher's vision that is important, but the collective vision. This vision should be all encompassing and should include aspects of moral achievements, social achievements and academic achievements, described by Fairholm and Fairholm (2009) as a values-vision. When a leader is able to foster a collective vision, then transformation takes place and all parties become contributors to it, with higher values and concerns. The benefits of this are evident as Bass and Riggio (2006) explain how groups with transformational leaders generate more problem-solving ideas, are more creative, and have greater clarification of solutions than groups with transactional leaders. In addition to this, the groups who have a transformational leader put in more effort, achieve better results and feel more personally satisfied. The importance of this in today's society is stressed by Bass and Riggio (2006) when they recommend that leaders, with a changing workforce, are more likely to be successful if they stimulate the creativity in followers than if they try to be the source of the creativity for a group of employees.

The transformational leader has the potential to change the very culture of the organisation and hence help shape and develop it as the requirements of the environment change. This is not necessarily the case for transactional leadership for, as Bass and Riggio (2006) describe, transactional leadership does not easily accept deviation from the operating systems and procedures that already exist within the organisation. The organisation is seen by transactional leaders to be mechanistic in nature, rather than organic and evolving. This means that organisations that are led by transactional leaders are less able to adapt to change and meet changes in demands from their internal or external environment. This implies that

transformational leadership should be favoured over transactional leadership, especially in view of the argument presented by Cheng (2001) for a major change in school leadership in the light of major technological changes and the consequent requirement for schools to change quickly and effectively to match the environment. When this is combined with the greater emphasis on collaboration between schools; the involvement of community members; parents and other stakeholders; and the requirement of schools to develop new school leaders plus the new developments in pedagogical understanding; there is a strong argument for school leaders to become transformational (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2009).

Harris (2003) contributes to these findings by highlighting the manner in which transformational leadership is linked with the constant questioning of current practices and the exploration of organisational conventions in order to emerge improved and more efficient. The nature of transformational leadership is discussed by Donovan (1993) who claims that it is more closely matched to the real-world requirements where things are constantly changing and systems are not fixed, well known, or able to be predicted. It is then more in line with the requirements of schools who are trying to adapt to provide greater achievements, while changing to meet new educational policies. There is therefore a body of evidence to indicate that this research should focus on transformational leadership, as it has the potential to yield greater achievements within schools.

Hartog (2003) states that inspirational, transformational leaders have a greater impact on the productivity and overall lives of subordinates than transactional leaders and that there is a very strong culture of trust between the two. Her research

reveals that the transformational leader is seen by the followers to be open and fair with high levels of integrity and that the leader has full faith in the behaviours of the subordinates, believing that they are constantly striving to become better and perform at a superior level, and that they are self-driven and self-motivated with the goals of the organisation at heart. This is in contrast to the findings of transactional leaders, where the relationship is found to be much weaker and issues of trust between subordinates and transactional leaders are often not self-sustaining but require constant reinforcement. The leader may only believe that the employee will do a good job if it is both checked upon completion and tied into the rewards they have been promised, and the subordinate may not trust the leader to have the employee's best interest at heart when assigning duties, but instead could be acting in a manner that could possibly be without integrity in order to secure a desired result.

Smith (2007) found that followers of transformational leaders are keen to take on new challenges because they have full faith in the leader's reasons for promoting them. This helps the followers to become more responsible and more proficient in their duties, and also develops them as a leader and a role-model for others to emulate. The similarity of virtuous friendship to transformational leadership becomes evident when the description of transformational leaders, as presented by Southworth (1998), is considered. Here there are examples to be found in a school setting, where a transformational leader will simultaneously support and challenge a subordinate in order to develop them to a high status and increased understanding. This results in much more of a shared leadership and a shared empowerment where a

partnership is set up that includes aspects of coaching, mentoring and professional learning.

Just as with virtuous friendship, leaders must constantly question their own values and practices, since leadership of this level is never value-free and one must always question the paradigm in which one is contained (Southworth, 1998); such questioning can in turn play a role in further developing the leader, to the mutual benefit of all parties. Harris (2003) agrees, stating that transformational leadership must focus on the moral values and value-laden activities of the leader and the methods by which these are disclosed to others which, according to Harris (2003) has an increasing emphasis on the culture of the organisation as it is shaped by the values and beliefs of its leaders and employees, as is predicted under the constructivist paradigm. The next step is to attempt to identify where this is taking place.

Implementing transformational leadership in a school setting

Following on from an awareness of how successful Headteachers revealed instances of transformational leadership within their practice, the implementation of such leadership to achieve results in schools is now examined. The improvement of student performance and achievement is a priority for all who work in education, but is undoubtedly the main priority of school leaders. Drago-Severson and Pinto (2003) describe how school leaders can only achieve this by focussing on teachers and attempting to develop them. The case study carried out by Drago-Severson and Pinto (2003) reveals that students perform better when the teachers are encouraged to grow and learn, enabling teachers to develop new skills that equip them to adjust and

overcome obstacles that may be identified as barriers to student learning. The case study undertaken by Liebman *et al* (2005) identified methods by which teachers could effectively achieve these skills. The methods centred around the school developing a professional learning community, creating a structure that focussed on the development of all. The achievement of such a structure calls for a purposeful and deliberate move towards this goal, and requires an input of direct leadership. Liebman *et al* (2005) describe the extent of this by depicting how leadership emphasises the learning community:

Findings indicated the principal has the ability to recognize leadership qualities in others, the school's mission/vision is connected to student learning, a leadership team supports and maintains the professional learning community, communication and collaboration are important to a professional learning community, coaching and mentoring assist in developing teachers and empowering others to take leadership roles, and the development of a learning organization promotes growth, learning, and empowerment opportunities for all.

(Liebman *et al* 2005:2)

Liebman *et al* (2005) touch upon many facets of leadership by the mention of: vision, intent, and collaboration. The means by which these should effectively be undertaken are also alluded to, with the use of terms such as coaching, empowering, and promoting growth. It becomes apparent that the role of the school leader is important in the development of this learning community and is the pivot upon which success balances.

Much attention is directed towards the perception of the changing nature of education. Jacobs (2007) describes how schools are in a constant state of crisis and leaders find it difficult to adapt at a rate that matches the changes in accountability, expected standards and social movements. This is in agreement with the research findings of Weinberger (2004), who explains how all organisations need to be in a

state of constant change in order to maintain a competitive edge. She claims that the main skill required by leaders is the essential ability to adapt quickly to constantly improve the effectiveness of actions and ensure they maintain a focus on the needs of the customer.

Maldonado *et al* (2003), in their research into moral leaders, illustrate why many feel that moral values are in decline and families, communities, faith and public moral philosophy are disappearing. Their findings reveal that the most significant factor in securing these values is that of positive moral leadership. They link together the notion of moral leadership and the ability to motivate and inspire followers. Maldonado *et al* (2003) explain how leaders can raise the consciousness of their followers by appealing to their moral values and helping to secure a focus on high values instead of on the base emotions such as fear. This is also addressed by Weinberger (2004) who discusses the role of emotional intelligence within leadership, noting that great leaders have the ability to ignite passion within people, inspiring them to be better than they currently are. The skills described of: empowerment, ability to inspire others and raise their belief in themselves, an increase in moral values and a nurturing of growth at all levels is often accredited the label of transformational leadership (Taylor Webb *et al*, 2004). Transformational leadership enables leaders to focus on important factors, adapt more readily to shifts in requirements and encourage a sense of enjoyment in learning and achieving, reducing the stress felt by individuals at all levels within schools.

Conclusions

The nature of management and leadership have been discussed and shown that leadership is the key to moving an institution forward, bringing about large-scale changes and achieving greater results. The power bases associated with leadership and the four different styles of leaders have been examined and a conclusion made that each of these styles can be beneficial for particular instances. Therefore all styles can be successful; it is the root theory behind the leadership that is of greater importance, as these can be used to identify the factors that create successful leadership and that some do not require a significant input from the leader in order to be successful. In a school setting where leadership through change is required, due to political developments, and continual improvements are desired, it is accepted that the Headteacher is the biggest influence on the development of the school, as found by Clarke (2005) and Kurland *et al* (2010). This framework was adopted and it was accepted that the Headteacher must exercise their power base fully to shape the development of the school, to bring about greater improvements. The two theories that place the leader at the heart of institutional development, having the greatest impact on the development of the institution, are transactional and transformational leadership.

Taylor Webb *et al* (2004) argue that transformational leadership is the preferred method for leading a school; its emphasis on moral values enables leaders to develop and inspire individuals, and this approach can in turn create a greater capacity for meeting future, unexpected developments and for nurturing the skills that enable people to become more self-reliant and independent achievers. However, to enable analysis to take place, one must first be able to identify where actions are

transformational and where they are transactional. Aspects of transformational leadership described by Anderson and Anderson (2001) illustrate how leaders become responsible for their own actions, emotions and results, which enable them to create their own experiences; this is the real strength of transformational leadership. Weaknesses of transformational leadership are, according to Northouse (2007), that there are no clear distinguishing parameters to separate transactional from transformational; actions are viewed as points on a scale between the two. However, methods of classifying actions as transactional or transformational can be identified, providing a means for the categorisation of actions taken by Headteachers and the factors that influenced the form of leadership when revealed through the interview process detailed in Chapter 3.

Using the descriptions of transformational and transactional leadership outlined above, it is possible to summarise the key features of transactional and transformational leadership into a range of broad classifications. Transactional leadership is described by Albritton (1995) as leadership where the leader utilises reward as a means of motivation, and expects some level of performance in return. This view is shared by Marquis and Huston (2005) who explain how both the follower and the leader want something from the relationship, and the leader focuses on the task to be achieved, rather than on the person undertaking the task. The use of this task-orientation creates a measure that can be used to judge standards and, according to Bass and Riggio (2006), transactional leaders take steps to monitor quality and standards and then take reactive measures in response to the findings of these measures. As transactional leaders are using external measures as a means of identifying success, they are less likely to accept changes from these criteria. Bass

and Riggio (2006) argue that transactional leaders do not easily accept deviation from the operating systems and procedures that already exist within the organisation, and are reluctant to accept changes in these procedures.

The key features of transformational leaders are identified by Eagly *et al* (2003) as being optimistic and excited about a future vision. People feature prominently in this future vision and Drysdale *et al* (2009) found that one of the main focuses of transformational leaders is their intention to develop and mentor followers. Transformational leaders are very person centred and, according to Albritton (1995), often give pep-talks and are constantly nurturing optimism and enthusiasm throughout the organisation, empowering subordinates to do more than they ever expected they could do. This is achieved by inspiring people, showing them that someone has a real belief in them as an individual and will provide continuous support to enable them to become more than they currently are. This level of inspiration is identified as the means by which transformational leaders address the followers' sense of self-worth and raise them to a level where they have a true commitment and involvement (Bass and Riggio 2006).

Similarly, it has been argued that transformational leaders are the ones who stimulate and inspire followers to achieve extraordinary outcomes and also develop their own leadership capacity (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2009), by linking their actions to their intrinsic core-values and beliefs. Hartog (2003) argues that transformational leaders have high levels of integrity while Harris (2003) identified that transformational leaders used their core-values to develop high expectations and high moral values in others. Southworth (1998) describes how transformational leaders constantly

question their own values and practices, in order to question the paradigm in which their values are contained. This in turn leads to leaders themselves being able to change, which is identified by Dunphy and Stace (2000) as an integral part of being transformational. This view is shared by Denny (2001) who stresses the importance of good leaders becoming more self-aware, having a greater understanding of all aspects of themselves and developing their emotional intelligence. This ability to change themselves results in leaders who are fluid and flexible in their approaches, constantly questioning and refining the thoughts behind their actions. A summary of the indicators by which transactional and transformational leadership can be identified in the work of Headteachers in this study is listed below. These indicators will be used to explore how far transactional and transformational leadership is deployed by the heads of four schools in challenging circumstances.

Transactional Leadership	Transformational Leadership
Task orientated	Person centred
Focuses on standards	Developing and changing
Uses external measures	Vision-focussed
Reactive and responsive	Inspirational
Does not easily accept deviation	Fluid and flexible
Utilises rewards as motivation	Links to core values
Does not change quickly	Able to change

Figure 2.3 Indicators of transactional and transformational leadership

In conclusion, this chapter has argued that the leadership of Headteachers is key to the success of any school. Headteacher leadership can best be understood in terms of transactional and transformational leadership, the key features of which have been

identified. While it can be argued that transformational leadership might be the most effective method of leading a school due to the extent to which it can facilitate improvements in the achievements of students, provide personal development for all and to prepare a school for success while in a unpredictable and changing environment, it is also necessary to consider the extent to which heads deploy transactional leadership and to identify the factors which result in the deployment of each approach to leadership. This then provides a focus for the research study, namely to identify where and when transformational leadership is successfully implemented practically within schools.

Chapter 3

Research Methodology

Introduction

Szostak (2004) describes how research falls into two perspectives, positivism and interpretivism, which he describes as being a distinction between actions and attitudes respectively. Positivists hold a view that reality exists as a universal truth that is separate from humans and independent to them, existing as a constant entity whether it is being observed or not (Bauer and Brighi, 2009). They believe that it is possible to discover and predict regularities in social phenomena and treat these as scientific cause-and-effect behaviours (Stephens and Leach, 1998). The interpretivist's perspective of reality, however, is very different. Interpretivists consider humans to be unique and separate from all other naturally-occurring phenomena; this is related to their ability to be self-conscious and aware of themselves and the role they play, modifying their behaviours to take into account internal and external states (Dyer, 2006). Interpretivists believe that there are not any underlying rules and instead social phenomena depend on the will of individuals, where "people socially construct the world in which they live" (Stephens and Leach 1998, p.72). However, viewing any research from one single perspective can become erroneous as noted by Szostak (2004) who draws attention to the notion that both extremes are problematic. He describes how positivists make observations to form their theories, but the observations they undertake and the interpretations they make are value-laden with non-scientific beliefs. Similarly, interpretivists apply scientific weighting to thoughts and, although they attempt to separate mind-sets from behaviours, they often attempt to understand the mind-sets through behaviours. An

alternative view is taken by Apruebo (2005) who expresses the belief that positivists and interpretivists complement each other, with interpretivists attempting to understand behaviours in order for positivists to predict what is successful based on this understanding. This is the epistemology of this study. It leans much more towards the field of interpretivism, as defined by Noblit and Hare (1988), in the manner by which it seeks to analyse the ontological positions of Headteachers in order to elicit the meanings behind their actions, but at the same time it attempts to construct a link between these meanings and the behaviours exhibited by Headteachers. The research questions linked to this thesis are explorative in the way they seek to interpret the behaviours of Headteachers and to search the Headteachers' own interpretation of their leadership style. This relies on attempts to understand the lived experiences of Headteachers, which may be unique in their insights and in the ways in which Headteachers communicate meanings they have associated to these experiences. Zoller and Kline (2008) describe how this sort of research is best suited towards an interpretivist approach, which they state is usually achieved using qualitative research methods, as this approach provides a means of attempting to interpret conversational messages. The attempt to draw a fit between attitudes through questioning and give meaning to these is defined by Guest (1991) as interpretive research, and is at the very heart of this research. Ifantidou (2001) goes further and explains how interpretivism is the method by which we explore thoughts and inferences rather than simple actions, a feature that is essential when attempting to identify Headteachers' own perceptions of their behaviours, and the manner by which they use this to construct their social world.

Dyer (2006) describes how the interpretivist's approach to the social world requires a broad set of research methods and means of analysing data, rather than a single unified method. The researcher can achieve this by following a qualitative approach where data can be interpreted to reveal how social experiences are constructed from particular situations, allowing the meanings that people attach to experiences to be discovered. This study therefore follows a qualitative methodology as its goal is to explore the thought-patterns of Headteachers by collecting data in an attempt to map Headteachers' actions onto existing leadership theories by analysing their beliefs. Qualitative research has many known disadvantages compared with quantitative research; the greatest of which being the limits to sample size compared to that of a quantitative sample (Gray, 2001) which in turn limits the possibility of generalizability of findings. Also, quantitative data allows more widely-accepted, scientific methods to be used when analysing data (Eisner, 1993). Nevertheless, a qualitative methodology also has many advantages that are better suited for the purpose of this study. Qualitative research provides greater scope for exploration of responses and provides opportunities to analyse thought patterns and to understand the subject's perspective (Parker, 2003) which is an advantage when attempting to explore the complex nature of leaders and their social interactions.

When interpreting such social interactions, the understandings extracted from the data can be enhanced if viewed from an appropriate position, either from an etic or an emic stance. Schumann (2009) describes how an etic research approach studies phenomena from the outside, providing an objective view of what is being studied. This, according to Ferraro (2006), has the problem associated with it that anthropologists must use their own categories and concepts to describe the culture

under analysis; one with which they are not directly associated. In contrast, Schumann (2009) describes how an emic research approach allows phenomena to be studied from the inside, where the context of local knowledge and interpretation is common to both the researcher and the parties being studied. This allows for a deeper understanding of behaviours and beliefs as the researcher has a greater awareness of the motives and daily experiences of the people in the study. Concerns associated with this type of research are noted by Pelto and Pelto (1978): firstly that the researcher and the people being studied have shared understandings and they may not seek to explain as fully as is necessarily, and secondly, any level of generalization may be hindered by the inability to convert findings out of the specific culture which was studied.

It is argued by Schumann (2009) that the etic and emic approaches do not need to be viewed as opposites but can in fact converge to enrich each other and bring greater dimensions to the analysis and interpretations of any study. Following this belief, this study can be viewed as both emic and etic in nature. Firstly, as the researcher is located in the Local Authority of this study and serving as a senior leader within one of the schools, the researcher is part of the culture-group being studied and able to share and interpret associated meanings. However, the researcher is also external to the group of individuals being studied, as the research focuses on Headteachers, allowing an outsider's objective interpretation to be applied to the data, in order to determine the leadership in place.

Chapter 2 revealed the need for good leaders to play their part in providing clear direction in a challenging political and social environment, and it was argued that it

is the Headteacher who impacts most on the development of a school. Two theories of leadership have been identified that place the leader at the centre of the developments: transactional and transformational theories of leadership. Albritton (1995) and Hartog (2003) suggest that transformational leadership is the preferred model for Headteachers because it focuses upon developing all individuals at all levels, while providing a means to evolve and adapt change. The focus on transformational leadership has generated a series of research questions for this present study to facilitate an analysis of the impact of transformational leadership. These questioned the nature of transformational leadership and the extent and methods used by Headteachers to adopt this style (see Appendix 1). The aims of this study are to explore the extent to which transactional and transformational leadership are deployed by Headteachers in four schools in challenging circumstances and to identify where and when transformational leadership is successfully deployed by Headteachers.

The research issues evolving from the literature review in Chapter 2 indicate that transactional and transformational leadership can be identified by the decisions and actions taken by the Headteacher, which are influenced by what already exists; the resources available; possible barriers to be overcome; and the attitudes of teachers. The indicators are listed in Figure 2.3 and can reveal if Headteachers have been transformational to the extent that their actions were deemed to be person centred and inspirational while also remaining vision-focussed, fluid and flexible, or if they were reluctant to deviate from their predesigned plans and constantly focussed more on the task than on the individuals achieving the tasks, as is the nature of transactional leadership. The comparison between actions which are deemed as transactional and those deemed as transformational, as listed in Figure 2.3, allowed

an exploration to take place into the extent to which transactional and transformational leadership was deployed and to identify where transformational leadership was successfully deployed by Headteachers within the schools in this study.

Research design

The research design for this study consisted mainly of semi-structured interviews with four Headteachers and their four Deputies. The schools selected were situated in one Local Authority and in the most recent Ofsted reports were identified as good, or making good progress. In previous inspections three of the schools received grades of 'good' or 'very good' but the Blue School, under different leadership, failed and was placed into special measures. All the schools are secondary schools in what might be described as challenging social circumstances. The sample used was an opportunity sample of four schools; comparisons and details of these schools are provided later in this chapter. The schools are, however, similar to other schools in the Local Authority (see Appendix 5) where each school can be compared by its GCSE achievements and Contextual Value Added results.

This study is based on the self-reported perceptions of Headteachers in relation to their own leadership styles. In research on educational leadership there is a long tradition of examining the leadership and management styles of Headteachers through self-reported studies. Ribbins and Marland (1994) show how the reflective perceptions of Headteachers are linked very closely to the actions they undertake; this is corroborated by the findings of Southworth (1995) that successful Headteachers have high levels of self-awareness. Day and Schmidt (2007) state that

the exploration of leadership perceptions can be discovered using the testimonies of the leaders themselves, and Fairholm and Fairholm (2009) argue that semi-structured interviews with the leaders is the most appropriate method, especially if coupled with a second means of analysing the context. To provide validation for the data collected from Headteachers, one Deputy Head from each school was also interviewed.

A separate dimension of validation arises from the positionality of the researcher, who is also employed as a Deputy Headteacher within one of the four schools and has been for ten years. During this time the researcher has met each of the Headteachers featured in this study on many separate occasions and has become very familiar with their institutions and their leadership. The researcher is aware of the community within which they serve and the impact of many of the changes they have initiated over the last decade. This helps to diminish the possibility of the Headteachers adopting a false modesty towards, or an exaggeration of, their achievements when self-reporting; provided the researcher has the freedom to explore the answers given by selecting an appropriate level of structure that enables further exploration of the responses offered.

Interviews fall into three main categories: structured, unstructured or semi-structured (Punch, 2005). Interviews are said to be structured when all the questions are pre-determined. Often the answers are pre-coded before the interview, in the case of those used in questionnaires, for example. This method has the advantage of being able to compare the responses of a large sample, but does not allow the exploration of the reasons behind the answers. By contrast, unstructured interviews have no pre-

determined questions but instead use general themes that allow the questions to form throughout the interview. This can provide a greater understanding of the individual and their thought patterns but makes it difficult to compare different individuals in order to identify generalisations, and as such the analysis is very time-consuming (Punch, 2005). Semi-structured interviews start with pre-determined questions, but allow the scope to expand and change throughout the interview, depending on the responses given. For the present research study, semi-structured interviews were chosen as the most appropriate method of providing a thorough understanding of the leadership styles currently in place within the involved schools, while also allowing comparisons to be drawn quickly between the responses of other school leaders. Interviews with Headteachers, Deputy Headteachers and Ofsted gradings were utilised in order to gather data and explore the thought patterns and the manner in which Headteachers successfully deploy leadership within their schools. This was not a simple task and without great scrutiny it is probable that important aspects of the interview could easily have gone unnoticed. A transcribed interview can easily lose some of the message relayed through voice pitch and tone and through body language. In order to re-live the interview whilst considering it from different perspectives, Gillham's (2005) advice was followed. He describes a method of videoing interviews for analysis and claims that this can make a distinct contribution to the range of data available, as well as aiding the validity of the data. Videoed interview data is more potent as it is less likely to be taken out of context, and presents more of the full story allowing it to be re-visited later. Gillham (2005) claims that a videoed interview conveys the live quality of the narrative, aiding the later analysis and interpretation.

The video interview also goes some way to help include the context of the interview by capturing the setting, the environment and the feel of the actual setting (Gillham, 2005). This is an important factor for, as noted in Chapter 2, the environment in which the leadership is taking place is not separate from the leader or from the leadership actions. This provided the opportunity of analysing the data in more depth, identifying not only what was verbally communicated by the Headteacher, but also the manner in which it was communicated. By watching the video again at a later date, it is possible to revisit inferences from the interview that would otherwise have been lost by a written or audio account of the interview. A weakness in the interviewing process is that it is an attempt to understand the intentions of another. There are factors that make this difficult, as the understanding of terms and phrases chosen may have different implications for different individuals. In addition to this, the interview process requires the Headteacher to report actions, which may be filtered through their awareness of their intentions and desired outcomes. Due to this, it is feasible that the Headteachers may believe they deploy their leadership in a particular manner, whereas others may feel it is deployed in a different manner. It was anticipated that interviewing another member of staff within the school would provide a method of triangulation to enable links to be made between intention and outcomes.

The formation and layout of the semi-structured interview was guided by Wengraf (2001) who detailed the planning required before the interview in preparing the questions and ensuring they were open and could reveal the incidences that were being investigated. This preparation needed to be combined with a creative, exploratory mind-set required during the session, where the interviewer was

comfortable to allow the interview to take unexpected courses whilst still ensuring that it remained on track. Gillham (2005) describes how semi-structured interviews allow supplementary questions where the interviewer feels that the area of interest has not been fully explored. A series of supplementary questions were included in the interviews, to ensure that relevant points were addressed (see Appendix 3). According to Wengraf (2001), such questions can lead to a greater richness of information available for analysis after the interview session.

Willis (2006) believes that an interview using semi-structured questioning is the most suitable method for a study of this nature as it can reveal the attitude and reasoning behind behaviours, allowing an exploration of values and beliefs as well as providing the opportunity to reveal hidden perceptions. She explains that this method of interview, although time-consuming in analysis, can reveal a greater understanding of the reasons behind any infrastructural changes aimed at generating improvements in services, which is the direction this study is intending to follow. Semi-structured questions, delivered through a face-to-face interview are able to reveal unexpected insights that were not anticipated prior to the interview (Pretty, 1995) because it provides an opportunity to ask follow-up questions, a feature missing from structured interviews.

The intention was to explore the links between thoughts and leadership actions, and it was possible that experienced Headteachers may have unexpected trains of thought that had not previously been considered. If this became evident, a semi-structured interview provided the scope to explore this, permitting the interview to follow a tangential, unexpected course. This level of adaptability and structure made the

semi-structured interview an ideal vehicle to explore the thought patterns of Headteachers. Gillham (2005) claims that it is this level of flexibility, balanced with planning, that makes the semi-structured interview the most important way of gathering information of this nature. The reason given for this claim is that the time devoted to analysing and interpreting the data is balanced by the high quality of data generated and the opportunity for new interpretations to be discovered.

Even after preparing for the interview and testing and improving the questions, there are still many issues to be considered. Semi-structured interviews can be complex, requiring great skill in order to carry them out without bias if they are to reveal an accurate picture of the subject being studied. Eales (1987) describes how the use of language, length of pauses between questions and non-verbal cues can all affect the interview. Although it is difficult to measure the level of control one has over these factors, there are other factors that are easier to control; for example, it is possible to make the interviewees feel more comfortable by allowing them the option of being interviewed in their own surroundings, which may encourage them to talk more freely about their conceptions. A list of the benefits and problems associated with semi-structured interviews is provided by Livesey (2002), who claims that the personal nature of the semi-structured interview makes it very difficult to provide any level of validation. This concern was reduced in the present study by including a separate interview with a Deputy Headteacher from the same school.

In order to address the issues raised by Livesey (2002), the following precautions were taken into account. Firstly, the questions were created in consultation with an experienced interviewer associated with the field of educational research, and a pilot

study was undertaken to identify any leading questions, and to ensure that interviewees were allowed to provide an insight into their views. The interviews were also recorded in their entirety, allowing examination of unconscious cues from the researcher providing a guide towards expected answers. The interviewer also attempted to remain neutral throughout the interview, avoiding terms that could imply satisfaction or dissatisfaction, and instead aimed to portray only gratitude and a genuine interest in the responses provided by the interviewee. Finally, the interviewees were not provided with a description of the content or aims of the interview, other than to be informed that it was part of a study into leadership practices within the Local Authority. The four Headteachers and four Deputy Headteachers asked to take part in this sample all agreed without voicing any reservations.

Statistical information was utilised to ascertain the effectiveness of the leadership of the school, and although this information only provided a one-dimensional measure of a very complex study, it will make a contribution. The statistical information is in the form of the most recent grading given to the school by Ofsted when judging the school's overall effectiveness at achieving its purpose, and the percentage of students achieving five A* to C grades, including English and Mathematics. This is the measure formed from the accountability framework described in Chapter 2, and is currently used by the Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors through the Department for Children, Schools and Families (Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors, 2009). Statistical snapshots may complement the study, but they do not alleviate the problems associated with semi-structured interviews.

The questions formulated for the interview schedule for this study were intended to provide an exploration of the extent to which transformational and transactional leadership are being successfully implemented within schools, by the sample of Headteachers. The questions were open ended, providing opportunities for Headteachers to describe how they viewed their school, both in the past and in the future, with further questions identifying how Headteachers handle circumstances that cause them to deviate from their vision, a response that could reveal if Headteachers are transactional or transformational in their approach. The questions also explored staff development and staff involvement, motivation, leadership style and personal values and motivations. The questions provided the opportunity for Headteachers to reveal their commitment to developing individuals, their understanding of the school system as a whole and their links to the wider community.

The interview questions were refined following a pilot study conducted with the acting Head of one school (see Appendix 2). The pilot study confirmed that the semi-structured interview framework had the greatest potential to thoroughly understand the methods of leadership being implemented in the school. The reasons for selecting semi-structured interviews were discussed earlier in this chapter. However, the preliminary analysis of this pilot study revealed two areas for improvement. Firstly, it became apparent that the questioning was too vague and produced general answers without specific references to the thought patterns that dictated the Headteacher's actions. Secondly, the pilot showed that only interviewing the Headteacher did not provide the opportunity of analysing the intention from another perspective. To address these issues the questions were expanded to include

sub-sections, to be asked if the response did not already address the sub-points, in order to provide a greater insight into the involvement of staff members and the methods by which staff were developed within the school (Appendix 3 shows the modifications made from Appendix 2). The interview process was also extended to include a Deputy Headteacher from each school (Appendix 4). Each Headteacher recommended a suitable Deputy who they felt worked closely with them and could provide a greater insight into their leadership methods. This provided a level of confirmation and a means of analysing the Headteachers' actions from a different perspective.

The sample

There are 17 secondary schools within the specific Local Authority involved in this study. The Headteachers were asked by the researcher if they would be willing to take part in a research thesis focussed on the leadership of schools. Of the 17 Headteachers, four volunteered their time and their insights into leading a school. Following their interviews, each Headteacher was asked to nominate a Deputy Headteacher with whom they worked very closely, and who may be able to provide a greater insight into the school's leadership, especially within the context of their school. Each of the schools in this study is in a predominantly ex-mining area, described as having a high level of social deprivation (Noble *et al*, 2008) and it is this high level of social deprivation that provides the challenging circumstances within which the Headteachers of these schools operate. The number of students registered for free school meals is often used as a measure of deprivation, but in this instance this measure does not reveal the extent of the deprivation. All the schools, except the Red School, are slightly higher than the national average figures (Ofsted,

2006, 2007 and 2008), but there is some indication within the Local Authority that families are reluctant to claim free school meals, as it requires the completion of a written document and the submission of income evidence. An alternative measure is the Index of Multiple Deprivation, which does not rely on members of the community filing for benefits.

The latest Index of Multiple Deprivation is summarised using six different measures that allow Local Authority districts to be ranked according to how deprived they are relative to other districts (Noble *et al*, 2008).

The Index of Deprivation 2004 ... identifies that 26% of [the town's] Super Output Areas (SOAs) are in the worst 10% and over 40% are in the most deprived nationally. Five super output areas are in the worst 2% nationally. In the Education domain 37.5% of the [town's] SOAs are in the worst 10% nationally. Statements of deprivation analysis are provided to schools detailing the pupils SOAs and the index of multiple deprivation data.

(Teachernet, 2006)

The Local Authority in which this study is undertaken is ranked within the top 50 most deprived on each of the six district level measures, ranging from position 19 (on the employment deprivation scale) to position 45 (on local concentration of deprivation measuring the severity of multiple deprivation by focussing on hot spots of deprivation). The characteristics of high unemployment, low family income and households with education, skills or training deprivation create a community where aspirations are low and education is undervalued. Overall, the Local Authority is ranked as 41 out of 354. This authority shares similar characteristics with many others listed within the top 50 most deprived areas, as grouped in the English Indices of Deprivation 2007 (Noble *et al*, 2008). The Local Authority is one of high social deprivation, but is comparable to many others throughout the UK, as detailed later in this chapter.

Within the selected Local Authority there are 17 secondary schools and the four Headteachers within this study lead schools positioned within close proximity and have broadly similar catchment areas. They are typically larger than average comprehensive schools (Ofsted, 2006, 2007 and 2008) with a diverse range of students including a greater than average number with free school meals (Ofsted, 2006, 2007 and 2008) and a number with parents who are labelled as middle-class.

The four schools selected from those within the local authority for this study were chosen as an opportunity sample; possible sampling methods are grouped by Dyer (1995) into four types of probabilistic sampling methods: random, where all members have an equal chance of being selected; systematic, where a formula is used to make selection such as choosing every third person; stratified, where groups are formed with similar characteristics and it assumed that members within each group represent other members of the same group; and cluster where the sample is taken from within one of the groups for example from within one town. Dyer (1995) also groups four types of non-probabilistic sampling methods: quota, where the researcher chooses members from different groups based on the researcher's interpretation of their characteristics; judgemental, where the researcher uses their judgement or expert knowledge to select members; opportunity, where particular members are available and willing to take part at the time of the study; and volunteer, where members opt in to the sample often in response to an advert. The four probabilistic methods of selecting a sample from a population are assumed to be more representative of the population as they involve a degree of randomness. According to Miller and Brewer (2003) the scientific method of deciding on a suitable sample is to use a completely random process in order to ensure that it

facilitates generalisations. However, this is not always the most convenient or appropriate method and for this study an opportunity sample of four schools was used due to the scale of this study and the availability of the Headteachers.

Selecting a sample where the group are available at the time of the study and fit the criteria required is termed by Brown and Dowling (1998) as 'opportunity sampling'. They explain that this method of selecting a sample has benefits of a possible increase in openness and collegial approach to answering questions candidly, but also warn that it may not be a true representation of the available population. Perhaps one of the major weaknesses in any small sample is that it is unlikely to represent a true picture of all schools. Swetnam (2000) argues that, when circumstances lend themselves to an opportunity sample, it is important that one does not try to form grand theories from the small, select samples; instead the findings should, if possible, be presented in a way that involves fewer generalisations. However, Brown and Dowling (1998) argue that all researchers should attempt to form some level of generalisation from their local findings but, when this occurs from a small sample, there is a greater onus on the researcher to illustrate areas that lie inside or outside the setting and the empirical data, drawing attention to any possible sampling error.

As this opportunity sample may not be a true representation of Headteachers, there is some expectation of a sampling error (Dyer, 1995). Dyer explains that every sample has some level of error, as it is always a representation of a larger sample and the only true method of eliminating this error is to use the entire population instead of a sample. When it is accepted that there is some degree of sampling error, it falls upon the researcher to attempt to minimise the effects of this error, or take account of it in the findings. Nevertheless, Dyer (1995) argues that the sample, even when chosen by

opportunity, can still reveal results that are typical of the true population, but that this assumption must not be made. Instead there should be an expectation that the results be skewed by the selection process involved. Notwithstanding this, it is important to draw attention to the purpose of this research, which is not to generate generalisations for all schools, but instead to follow the description given by Pope and Mays (2006):

...take account of the distinctive goals of qualitative and quantitative research. For example, qualitative research frequently does not seek to generalise to a wider population for predictive purposes, but seeks to understand specific behaviour in a naturally occurring context.

(Pope and Mays, 2006:86)

The goals of this research, which are to explore the specific behaviour of four Headteachers, follow a line of 'reliability' that more closely matches those outlined by Bassey (1999) who describes how qualitative reliability can be seen as the extent to which someone working in a similar situation can relate their practice and decision-making to the research findings, hence providing transferability (Blaikie, 2010).

For a case-study such as this, the level of transferability can be considered to be more useful than any attempt at offering a degree of generalizability. Blaikie (2010) describes how the ability of the reader to recognise similarities between objects and issues can provide a level of congruence between the study being shared and other contexts. This is addressed by Lincoln and Guba (1985) who use the term "fittingness" to judge the possibility of transferability:

the degree of transferability is a direct function of the similarity between the two contexts, what we shall call "fittingness." Fittingness is defined as the degree of congruence between sending and receiving contexts. If Context A and Context B are "sufficiently" congruent, then working hypotheses from the

sending originating context may be applicable in the receiving context.

(Lincoln and Guba, 1985:124)

They explain that, in order to make a judgement of transferability, one needs information about both contexts. For this to be possible, the person wishing to make this judgement needs to be provided with sufficient information of the schools within the case study, so they can draw their own similarities between other schools.

The schools in this sample are similar to others in the local authority and to many schools elsewhere in the country, especially in ex-mining areas where there are still considered to be higher levels of deprivation (Noble *et al*, 2008), as discussed in the next section.

The four schools

The name of each school has been replaced with one of four colours (Blue, Red, Green and Yellow) to protect their identity. The authority in which the four schools are located has rankings below national averages on indicators such as attendance rates, number of students with Special Educational Needs (SEN) and number of students registered for free school meals (FSM). It is identified as a deprived authority using all measures of deprivation. However, each individual school has varying proportions of more affluent and poorer areas from which it draws its pupils. The Red School is in a relatively more affluent area than the other three schools. Its attendance rate is slightly higher than the national average while its SEN and FSM rates are slightly below the national average. Nevertheless, the Red School is located within a poorly ranked local authority and it draws a significant proportion of its pupils from areas with serious social problems. The other three schools are all below national averages on attendance rates and SEN. Although they have differing

proportions, the authority on the whole is deprived, and as such each of the four schools share characteristics related to this. Brighouse (2004) noted this phenomenon when he described how schools in predominantly white ex-mining towns, share issues arising from high levels of long-term unemployment. These characteristics include high turnover of staff, difficulties recruiting staff, concerns with student behaviour and some families who are switched off from education, finding it hard to see how education can make a difference to their lives. This means that many students are not seen typically to be self-starters with good personal learning skills. Instead they rely heavily on the input of the teacher; a committed, caring teacher can make these students excel in even the most unexpected of subjects (Brighouse, 2004).

The schools in the sample share other similarities. For example they were all awarded a Specialist Status under a government programme allowing schools to specialise in one or more chosen areas such as Engineering, Technology or Visual Arts. Over 85% of secondary schools have Specialist Status (Campbell, 2008), which provides the school with additional funding, but in return asks the school to form links with businesses and generate a four-year development plan identifying how Specialist Status will raise their achievement and enable them to make a positive contributions towards the community. To be awarded Specialist Status is itself a mark of success, as it requires the creation of a school vision that has the potential to raise academic achievement and cater for the needs of the community. Each of the schools was graded as 'good' (level 2) in their most recent Ofsted inspection. In previous inspections three of the schools were graded as 'good', with the Blue School being graded as 'inadequate' (level 4). Following this grading, the

Blue School was placed into special measures by Ofsted prior to the current Headteacher taking post. Since being placed in special measures, the Blue School has been inspected twice and received a grade of 'good' (level 2) for each inspection. This school was finally removed from special measures at the beginning of 2009. The Ofsted grading of level 2 across all four schools implied that all of these schools were being successfully led.

The students at three of the schools are within the 11-18 years age range whilst those at the Red School have an age range of 11-16 years. All four schools are designated as secondary community schools; a community school is run by the Local Authority which employs the staff, owns the school and controls the admission processes that allocate students to schools. In addition, community schools are expected to form strong links with the community they serve by sharing resources or offering community courses (DirectGov, 2010). When the measurements of levels of disadvantage and deprivation are considered, the students from the Red School are deemed to be broadly average (Ofsted, 2006, 2007 and 2008). However, the students at the other three schools have been identified as significantly below average. The achievement of students in the Red School has been consistent, around 58% to 60% throughout the previous four years, whereas those from the other three schools have shown variations, resulting in fluctuating results which have either risen above or fallen below the Government's benchmark score of 30% during the last four years. If schools fall below this benchmark, it may trigger an early inspection from Ofsted.

Three of the Headteachers have been in post for at least five years, with the Blue School Headteacher being the exception; she was appointed two terms ago and this is her first Headship. The Green School is the smallest of the four schools, having

only 780 students, which places it as a smaller than average comprehensive school in the country, whereas the other three are all larger than average, each with over 1,100 students. As regards the gender balance, the Blue School has a female Headteacher and male Deputy Headteacher. The Green School and the Red School have a male Headteacher and female Deputy Headteacher and the Yellow School has both a Headteacher and Deputy who are male. In the other three schools interviews were undertaken with one male and one female staff member. For three of the schools the interviews were carried out at the school itself, however, the Headteacher and the Deputy Headteacher of the Green School both requested that they be interviewed off site. An explanation for this was not given.

The four schools used in this study vary both in the number of students on roll and in their academic abilities and achievement. They are however situated in close proximity to each other and access similar student types from an ex-mining community. The opportunity sample, while not representative through random sampling, is in many ways typical of schools in the Local Authority because of the spread in GCSE results, the catchment areas served, the student age-ranges, the impact on value-added achievements and the social problems faced i.e. similar challenging circumstances.

Their ranking position compared to other schools within the authority, is provided for 2008 by the BBC News site (BBC News, 2009) and is a compilation of the standardised, moderated national results (Appendix 5). A summary is provided below identifying the current measure of five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and mathematics (Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors, 2009) and

the Contextual Value Added score which compiles the students' improvement in grades from entering to leaving the school, where 1,000 is the national average.

School name	Percentage of students achieving equivalent to five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and maths N=17	Contextual Value Added from KS2 to KS4 N=17
The Red School	60 – 3 rd highest in LA	1008.8 – 5 th highest in LA
The Blue School	35 – 9 th highest in LA	981.3 – 13 th highest in LA
The Green School	30 – 10 th highest in LA	1010.7 – 3 rd highest in LA
The Yellow School	28 – 13 th highest in LA	981.5 – 12 th highest in LA

Figure 3.1 Summary of Appendix 5, Statistical achievement of schools within the Local Authority (BBC News, 2009)

The one-year snapshot provides a crude ranking system for the schools, but a better indication of their performance is to consider the progress they have made in GCSE performance over the most recent four years, information which is shown in the graphs below. Each graph depicts the number of students achieving five grade A*-C GCSE including English and mathematics. This is shown in red, with grey being used to provide a comparison with the local authority and the national average.

The Red School has maintained a consistent performance since 2005. Its performance is consistently higher than the LA and national average.

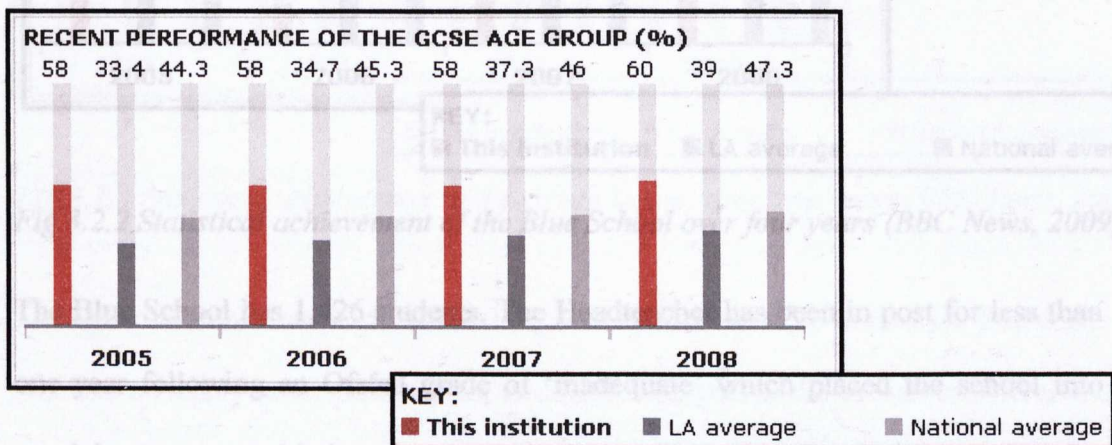


Fig 3.2.1 Statistical achievement of the Red School over four years (BBC News, 2009)

The Ofsted Inspection Report of the school provides a description of the school's context and an overall grading used as a national benchmark for ranking schools; all of the inspections were undertaken within the last three years.

The Red School has 1,315 students of the age range 11-16. The Headteacher has been in post for six years. Ofsted graded the overall effectiveness of this school as good and provided the following description for the school's context:

Pupils live in an area with broadly average social and economic indicators. A smaller than average proportion of pupils is eligible for a free school meal. A small number of pupils come from minority ethnic backgrounds. The proportion of pupils with identified learning needs and/or disabilities is broadly average. The school hosts a small local authority resource for visually and hearing impaired pupils. Specialist engineering school status was gained in September 2003.

(Ofsted, 2006:3)

The Blue School's performance has improved since 2005, and is now approaching the Local Authority and national averages.

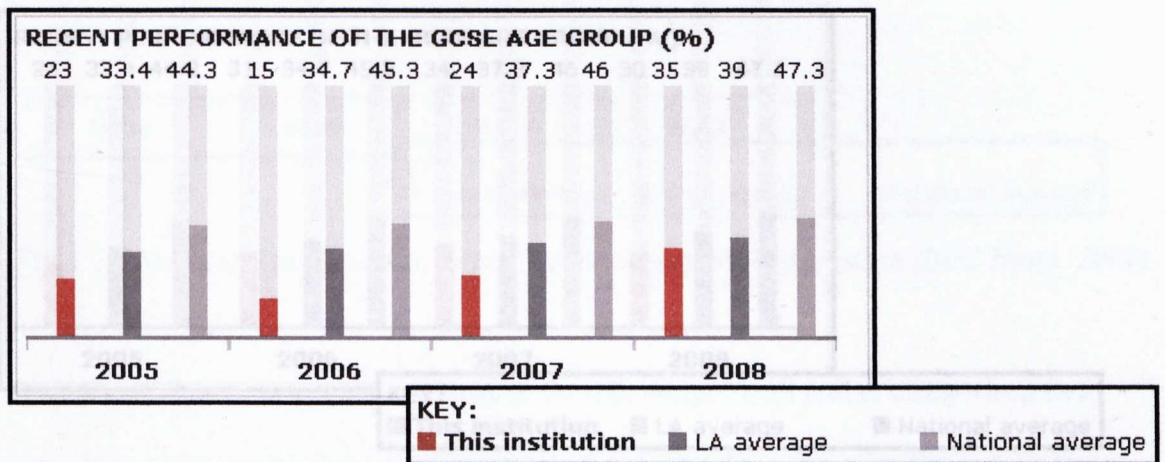


Fig 3.2.2 Statistical achievement of the Blue School over four years (BBC News, 2009)

The Blue School has 1,426 students. The Headteacher has been in post for less than one year following an Ofsted grade of 'inadequate' which placed the school into special measures and led to the removal of the existing Headteacher. Since the new

Head has been in post, there have been two monitoring visits by Ofsted, both of which graded the school to be making good overall progress. Ofsted provided the following description for the school's context:

Almost all of the students at this above average size school are of White British heritage. The proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. Students come from areas with higher than typical levels of disadvantage and the proportion known to be eligible for free school meals is above average. The school has specialist technology college status and has developed extended school provision. [...] The school has experienced staffing difficulties over the past few years. This includes the illness of the Headteacher. The Headteacher has recently been designated as the executive Headteacher and a deputy Headteacher has been designated as associate Headteacher with responsibility for running the school in the executive Headteacher's absence.

(Ofsted, 2008:3)

The Green School's performance has ameliorated slightly since 2005, but is not showing a year-on-year improvement.

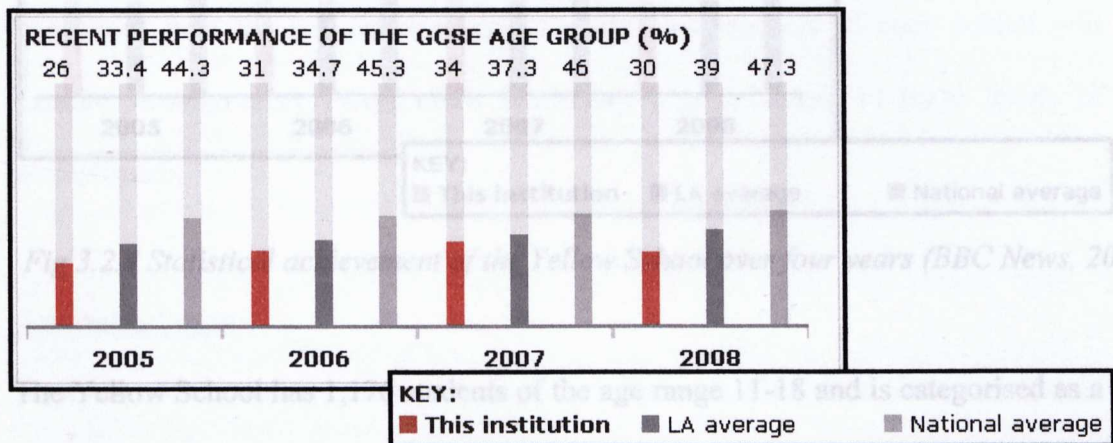


Fig 3.2.3 Statistical achievement of the Green School over four years (BBC News, 2009)

The Green School has 780 students. The Headteacher has been in post for five years and was a Deputy at the school prior to this. Ofsted graded the overall effectiveness

of this school as 'good' and provided the following description for the school's context:

[This] is a smaller than average school with 70 students in the sixth form. The school is in an ex-mining area [...]. The area has an unemployment rate that is well above the national average and the proportion of students eligible for free school meals is also higher than average. The vast majority of students are White British. A higher than average proportion of students has a statement of special educational need and the proportion of students with learning difficulties and/or disabilities is average. [The Green School] has had specialist technology status since September 2003.

(Ofsted, 2007:3)

The performance of the Yellow School improved since 2005, but declined somewhat during 2008.

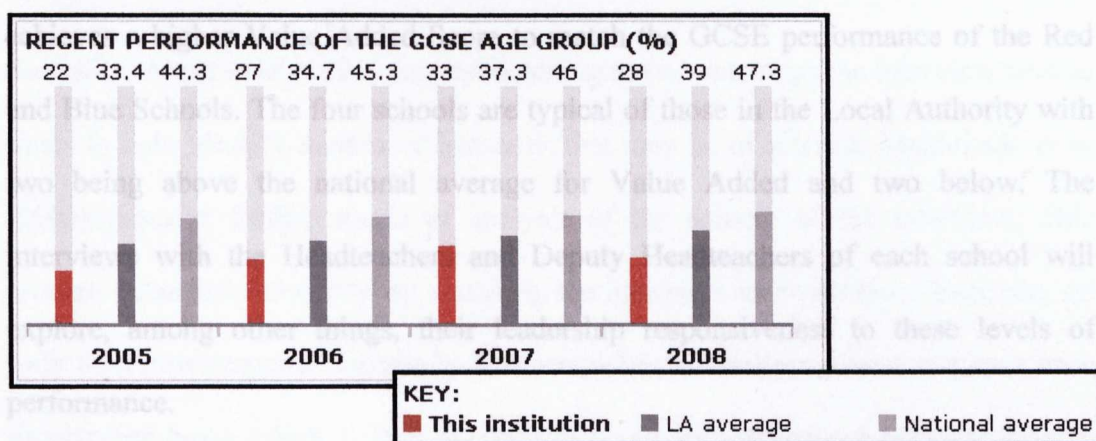


Fig 3.2.4 Statistical achievement of the Yellow School over four years (BBC News, 2009)

Analysis of data

The Yellow School has 1,176 students of the age range 11-18 and is categorised as a secondary, community school. The Headteacher has been in post for ten years. Ofsted graded the overall effectiveness of this school as good and provided the following description for the school's context:

[This] is a large comprehensive school with the majority of its students coming from areas of high social deprivation. It has a higher than average proportion of students entitled to free school

meals. There are lower than average numbers of students from minority ethnic backgrounds or with English as an additional language. The proportions of students with statements of special educational needs, or who need additional help with their learning, are broadly average. The school gained its specialist status in 2003.

(Ofsted, 2007:3)

None of the schools show any high-level continual improvements and of the four schools, three are below national and local averages.

These comparisons reveal that the Red School is a consistently higher performing school than the other three schools, with a Value Added Score above the average of 1000 (Figure 3.1). The other three schools are broadly similar in performance; however the Green School receives students of a lower entry level, and hence achieves a higher Value Added Score to match the GCSE performance of the Red and Blue Schools. The four schools are typical of those in the Local Authority with two being above the national average for Value Added and two below. The interviews with the Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers of each school will explore, among other things, their leadership responsiveness to these levels of performance.

Analysis of data

Analysis of the interviews can take place in many ways. Firstly, the interview should be immediately transcribed (Acker *et al*, 1991). If this is done quickly, then the interviewer may be able to record additional thoughts and feelings that were generated during the interview. For this reason, transcription was undertaken by the researcher, as it became apparent during the process that themes existed which could

have been missed without the full immersion involved in the process of completing the transcription.

To do this, two pieces of software were used: Express Scribe, an audio manipulation software that was used to aid the transcription process as it allowed the audio content of the interviews to be repeated or slowed down for ease of typing and Transana, a digital image management software that enabled the transcribed text to be synchronised to a video and an audio output transcript of. This aligned texts with sections of the video tape, so video clips of each line were tied together and analysed in conjunction with each other, enabling the transcripts to be placed in context when reviewing and analysing the data.

Secondly, Acker *et al* (1991) suggest listening to (or watching) the interview several times to help identify themes or instances that may be of interest. Maldonado *et al* (2003) describe further stages of analysis of the content of the interview. This process is carried out firstly by watching the interview in its entirety, focussing on each interview response separately and secondly, by analysing each response on a line-by-line basis, which is then broken down into key words and phrases. Finally, concepts are separated to relay meaning and understanding. This process should identify words or phrases that are strong enough to stand on their own, and group them into categories and sub-categories. This level of coding is essential for analysis of interviews; Foster (2006) describes a step-by-step approach to coding interviews using the transcription to create inductive categories and themes. These coding guidelines were followed by categorising each response as transactional or transformational and identifying which of the research questions the response related

to, using qualitative software analysis packages to aid the process. Analysis software can speed up the linking and analysing of common themes and can also give instant analyses of key words or phrases. The MAXQDA2007 software was used because it allows full coding, cross referencing and searching and also facilitates hierarchical coding and weighted scores to be assigned to texts. It enables the user to link memos to texts, where ideas and thought processes can be attached. These memos can in turn be included in the coding system. MAXQDA2007 has additional features that help to identify unanticipated findings, such as a range of analytical functions for identifying linked terms or phrases (Verbi, 2007). It also includes a module to analyse vocabulary and frequency of word usage and a separate module to create mind-maps of codes and categories used; this can often identify links that may go unnoticed without a visual representation. This is helpful, but not necessarily sufficient to ensure that the research is valid and reliable.

Reliability and validity

During the collection and analysis of data, issues of reliability and validity are of great importance to any research. Researchers need to take steps to ensure their findings are reliable and valid. Morris and Lobsenz (2003) illustrate how reliability depends on the accuracy and precision of the data; if something is identified reliably, then a similar research process would reveal the same result. This is difficult to achieve when analysing the constructivist concepts of leadership actions and thoughts. It is feasible that two researchers could deduce completely different reasons behind the same actions, Gillham (2005) claims that this will always be the case whenever researchers attempt to interpret meaning in data:

unless the researcher takes a very surface approach to analysing the interview data (simple descriptive 'categories' or the occurrence of particular words or phrases, for example), they are inevitably making some kind of interpretive construction of what the interviewee says. That it is done with system, rigour and reflection, and with careful attention to representative selection from the interview transcript, specifying the evidence for the inferences, does not alter the fact that a subjective construction is being made. There is a strange reluctance among researchers to acknowledge this.

(Gillham, 2005:6)

When data is analysed, it is always open to interpretation and all possible and legitimate understandings that can be formed from the same data must be taken into account. Morris and Lobsenz (2003) illustrate this by stating that it is commonplace to confuse judgement with fact and, left to their own devices, researchers are likely to form different judgements based on their personal experiences that they believe to be factual findings. It is important, therefore, to ensure that interviews are conducted rigorously and systematically. Gratton and Jones (2004) found that reliability can be enhanced through a standardisation of the interview process, using consistent recording methods and transcribing procedures. Rynes *et al* (2000) explain that the greater the structure used, the more likely it is that the process can be repeated, and therefore increasing reliability. In terms of the procedures and systems implemented, the more effort made to maintain consistency with logical, open and traceable describing systems, the closer one moves towards reliability and the interviews for this study were conducted in this way. The confirmation of data through additional interviews with Deputy Headteachers will also increase reliability because it then becomes possible to identify where the Headteacher and the Deputy in the same school share the same interpretations.

Validity is much harder to ensure. According to Gillham (2005), validity is mainly judged using external criteria and is a measure of how close the researcher is to attaining this external measure. Morris and Lobsenz (2003) describe validity as the degree to which we are measuring what we want to measure. Validity is the most important factor in research of this nature, as it is pointless to have reliable data that does not measure what is being investigated. Rynes *et al* (2000) conclude that interviewer training is important to ensure consistency of conducting interviews and recording data. In this study consistency was ensured because only one interviewer was involved. Accuracy of data recording was ensured by filming the interviews. Gratton and Jones (2004) note the importance of the communication taking place between the two parties in the interview. For example, it is possible for interviewees to interpret the question in a different manner from which it was intended, meaning their responses may not be valid for the question asked. Even if there is a joint understanding of the question, it may not be possible for the interviewee to give an appropriate answer clearly. In the present study, the piloting of questions and the trialling of interview procedures helped to overcome these difficulties.

Gratton and Jones (2004) point out that another consideration is that the responses given may be very localised in time; that is, they may only apply to the given situation and may not be long-term responses. In addition to this, the interviewee may give a different response to the same question if asked at a later date. The different factors associated with communication, and relaying feelings and emotions, make it very difficult to claim that any research is valid; nevertheless, some action can be taken to increase the validity of the research. Maldonado *et al* (2003) recommend that; to establish validity within a study, the videoed, transcribed

interviews should be analysed at different times, and using different methods. In this study the transcripts were read as written documents, listened to as audio documents, watched as video documents and were also analysed as combinations of all three. The interviews were also analysed as entire interviews, as well as in small sections broken into individual responses to questions. The sections from each interview were also analysed against each other to reveal incidences of the same findings across different participants, different locations and different times, implying a level of validity. These steps meant that it was possible to have confidence in the reliability of the data collected for this study.

Ethical concerns

As with any research, there are ethical aspects to be considered. Headteachers and other staff who agreed to take part in this study could not be granted full anonymity due to the content of the data required for analysis, a point illustrated by Leeson (2007) when considering the factual disclosures that can be traced when examining final reports. However, voluntary informed consent, as defined by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2004) was obtained from each participating member, along with their agreement to relinquish their right to anonymity. In an attempt to eliminate any levels of deception, a letter explaining the methodology, data collection and broad purpose of the study was sent prior to arranging the time of the interview, and all participants were informed of their freedom to withdraw at any time, without providing a reason (see Appendix 6). A level of respect was present for the individual, their opinions and the manner in which they conducted the interview, and for their time and the imparting of personal knowledge, which was used to ensure the research study was of value.

The British Educational Research Association Guidelines (BERA, 2004) point out that researchers need to recognise the participant's entitlement to privacy. Although all participants in this study were informed that the study was not confidential or anonymous, steps were still taken to make the data as anonymous as possible and to protect the participants from the ramifications of other parties accessing the research who may wish to contend a personal issue raised by a participant. To this aim, the Local Authority in which the study is being conducted is not referred to by name, neither are the four schools situated within this authority. Instead, each school is identified by a random colour: red, green, blue or yellow. These provided the opportunity to associate comments from particular schools, and align comments from the Deputy and the Headteacher of the same school, without directly disclosing the name of the school. In addition to this, the names of any people mentioned in the interviews were removed and action taken to ensure the unedited transcripts were not available to anyone not directly involved in the research. These can, however, be made available to examiners if necessary.

Conclusions

Chapter 3 has provided details of the small opportunity sample being studied and of the data collection and analysis methods. Due to the extremely complex nature of attempting to understand another individual's thought processes and the underpinning beliefs behind their actions, a qualitative methodology has been adopted. The issues associated with the validity and reliability of this study have been discussed and the limitations highlighted, especially those relating to the production of any form of generalisation. The main method of data collection was

interviews with Headteachers and their Deputies, although some statistical information about each school's examination results is included. An overview from Ofsted has also been included to allow for comparisons between the four schools. A pilot study was undertaken with an acting Headteacher which identified modifications to the questioning process needed to provide a deeper understanding of the reasons associated with the interviewees' responses. A method of analysis has been identified that allows for a systematic approach to the categorisations of the interview responses and an opportunity to identify common themes or patterns. Chapters 4 to 6 will look at the data gathered and present it in three different ways: the first two chapters will serve as a comparison between data indicative of transactional and of transformational styles of leadership; Chapter 6 groups responses that reveal where transformational leadership is successfully deployed, as identified by the questions posed by this thesis (see Appendix 1).

Chapter 4

Aspects of Transactional Leadership

Introduction

The procedures detailed in Chapter 3 provided a source of rich data which is collated in the following three chapters, the first of which focuses on transactional leadership. In Chapter 2 it was noted how Hartog (2003) argued that transactional and transformational leadership are separate dimensions of leadership. The data will therefore be presented from these two aspects and the responses from each school will be categorised into examples of transactional and transformational leadership.

As shown in Chapter 2, transactional leadership occurs when a transaction takes place between the leader and the followers; it becomes evident when the leader focuses on the seven indicators summarised in Figure 2.3. These indicators are utilised throughout this research as the means by which responses from Headteachers are classified as being either transactional or transformational in nature. One method of assigning the perceived importance of each indicator is to identify how often Headteachers make reference to it throughout their interview. If a feature is considered by the Headteacher to be of great importance, it may be incorporated in several responses relating to different questions about the school. Using this, the response categorisations are presented in order of frequency; for example, the subsection with most recorded instances was that of Headteachers being task orientated, implying that this is seen as very important to Headteachers.

Task orientated

Albritton (1995) showed how transactional leaders are much more task orientated than person orientated. Of the seven actions deemed to illustrate transactional leadership, shown in Figure 2.3, the most frequent one throughout the interviews was the idea that actions taken by the Head were task orientated, illustrating that their actions were transactional. This was demonstrated by the Headteacher of the Red School who, when asked about the formation of the school vision and the involvement of others in the creation of this vision, replied:

To be brutally honest, at the start it was effectively just me.
(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

This showed that when the Head was first appointed to the role, he was of the opinion that the school needed a vision and saw this task as a priority that was more important than the involvement of staff and as such was not open to input from others.

This was also conveyed by the Headteacher of the Blue School, who stated that she originally led the school using a vision that was:

top down, because of the very nature of the people coming in at senior leadership team level and saying this is how we are going to do things now.
(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

This demonstrated the Headteacher's opinion that the achievement of this task was best accomplished without an emphasis on staff involvement in the process.

The Deputy of the Yellow School also noted this when explaining how the Headteacher had set the vision for the school; during the interview he declared that:

It's been very much one leader in charge of a school, [who] does the total direction for that school and you get on board or you don't.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

This is an example of a Headteacher centring on the task above all else, including the individuals in the organisation, which is a strong indication of transactional leadership.

Another deputy revealed a similar example when he described the involvement with the Headteacher of the Blue School; he explained how the Senior Leadership Team had implemented a range of new systems following identification, from the Headteacher, of areas that needed changing. The Headteacher then provided a method of implementing a range of new tasks to achieve these improvements. The Deputy explained that:

first of all we had to put things and measures into place and it wasn't really open to consultation. It was about looking at a need, identifying where there was a problem and the strategies we could put in place.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

The Headteacher of the Blue School also endorsed an emphasis on tasks when describing the training that had taken place; she stated how she had set the agenda for training by deciding what was to be delivered, and by whom. She commented that:

a lot of our development is whole College stuff which has to be done this way because it's about explaining [to the staff].

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

The Headteacher's actions portrayed her belief that training was instrumental to achieving these tasks and purpose.

A similar view was expressed by the Headteacher of the Red School, when he described how the school evaluates the training given to staff; he stated that it was measured entirely by outputs. He approached the evaluation of training by asking:

where's the evidence that it's actually being used, how effectively is it being used, what's getting better because of it and if nothing, why are we doing it?

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

This illustrated that the Headteacher is centred on the school-improvement tasks that he wants in place and that training can be measured by the impact it has on his identified, measurable systems.

The Deputy of the Yellow School explained how they identify these measurable systems, using priorities that “tick the Ofsted box” by creating a school improvement plan and tracking system that sets a series of organisational goals that will lead to externally, measurable outcomes. This method of achieving the goals in this plan was explained by the Headteacher of the Yellow School, when he prioritised staff training into three levels and showed that his opinion of training staff is primarily about achieving the tasks associated with meeting the organisation's needs:

it is firstly about the needs of the organisation, secondly it is about the needs of individuals and thirdly it is about developing skills and expertise.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

The Headteacher felt it was more important to achieve a desired outcome than to develop followers, a dilemma noted by Bell and Bolam (2010) as emerging when educational policy impacts on school leadership. The Headteacher of the Green School also believed that staff development is a means of task-achievement. He reflected that:

staff development is linked to achieving that aim [identified in the school vision] by ensuring that the staff have got the pre-requisite

skills and knowledge to carry out their job effectively so that the department improvement plan, the college improvement plan which is based on the vision of raising aspiration and achievement, is in place and is running.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

This again highlighted the transactional aspect of tasks associated with moving the school towards a pre-decided goal by the achievement of a series of identified, formalised tasks recorded in the development plan.

When evaluating staff development, all schools revealed that they focused on the achievement of tasks. The Deputy from the Yellow School described how they:

have a formal evaluation like we would if you went on an outside course so they answer a questionnaire after what the purpose of it was, was it successful, what did they get from it, was the presenter up to standard.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

This view was apparent when the Deputy of the Blue School explained how they used the Performance Management cycle to check on the outputs achieved from training, stating:

they are evaluated through performance management.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

Similarly the Deputy of the Red School explained that training is delivered and evaluated through a planning cycle:

[training is identified and evaluated through the] school development planning cycle because, wherever possible we try to keep things as coherent as we can in that people's developments should reflect [what is in the planning], it is not that we discourage [a] free rein but if people are developing areas that are of interest to them they also ideally need to be of value to the school and by and large that's what's happening. They identify areas within their departmental development plan that they can take significant leadership of and the evaluation of that happens within the yearly cycle, performance management of course then plays a part because their performance management targets are related to this.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

Staff training was seen by school leaders as a means of achieving school targets and evaluated by comparing it to a series of predefined tasks; this was true throughout all four schools, where the type and level of staff training was tied into the school goals and was evaluated, wherever possible, through measurable outcomes and the performance management cycle. The nature of educational policy, as discussed in Chapter 2, creates a level of central control that prevents teachers from exploring their own interpretation of professionalism. Instead they have external standards imposed upon them, which are used annually to measure the performance of each teacher against a set of predetermined criteria.

Many of the school leaders also tied the training to the provision of a level of sustainability within the school. This was illustrated by the Head of the Blue School:

it is about on-going structures, it is about sustainability of procedures and making sure that, and I keep going back and I'm saying structures a lot, that is quite deliberately because you cannot just have an idea and launch it and then just hope that it happens, there's got to then be genuine accountability.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

Similarly the senior management of the Yellow School had developed a formalised method of tracking and measuring on-going improvement outcomes, using a quality assurance folder they had developed. This holds staff accountable for their outcomes and is a key part of the policy context of schools today; dictated by the Professional Standards for Teachers it acts as a framework of standards highlighting statements of a teacher's professional attributes; knowledge and understanding; and skills as published by the Training and Development Agency for schools (TDA, 2009). The quality assurance folder consisted of a series of scripts and templates to be completed by all line managers within meetings, to provide a systematic method of

monitoring and measuring the tasks undertaken across every department within the school. The Deputy confirmed that:

We have quality assurance folders, one for the line manager and one for the head of the department.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

The Deputy described this as a programme that provided a means of ensuring that departments remained on-task throughout the year.

The extent of the focus of the Blue School's leaders upon tasks resulted in staff being issued with temporary contracts for these specific tasks; the Deputy of the Blue School explained:

contracts are temporary, so your evaluation really is, has this person made an impact, and it is measured then to see ... here is your role, here are the targets that have been set for you through the year, and then have those targets been achieved, is this person right, do we renew this person's contract ... not everybody is suited to leading an initiative and therefore, because we've put in twelve and twenty-four month contracts, it means that then we've got a timeline in which to meet our targets and that's what it's evaluated on ... [following this evaluation a decision is made about] ... do we move this person forward or do we terminate the contract.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

There was also evident to suggest that here they view the achievements of students as a task-based activity, where the purpose is to ensure as many students as possible achieve as many qualifications as possible. The Deputy of the Blue School revealed that:

it is about getting as many students to achieve as possible.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

He gave an account of how students can continually re-take subjects or move between subjects when it becomes apparent that they will either fail a subject or become disengaged by it. This illustrated the ethos of the Blue School's Headteacher

that the learning processes followed by students was a means of achieving a qualification and that students should be actively encouraged to change subjects if they are in danger of not achieving a desirable grade.

Key Stage 3 lessons in the Blue School were seen in the same light, being viewed as a means of preparing students for Key Stage 4 recognised qualifications. The Deputy of the Blue School identified this when he said:

the Key Stage 3 curriculum is becoming a little bit outdated and it isn't equipping our students to get to that Key Stage 4.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

The education of students, therefore, is seen as a task to be completed and ultimately measured in terms of grades, rather than in the personal development of individuals.

The idea that these aspects are instrumental was strengthened by the Headteacher:

this school's got to make a lot of changes in a short space of time.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

a response demonstrating that the Headteacher's focus was on achieving a specific outcome as fast as possible. She also illustrated a strong emphasis on task-based achievement within a short time-frame, stating that:

I am genuine in my vision, knowing that I come with a track record ... of getting young people qualifications and once I've convinced people of that, which I hope I do on a daily basis, then some of the leadership is going to have to be a lot more tougher in terms of this is going to happen, and it's going to happen now, or next week, or by half term. It has to happen, and it's not negotiable and that's to do with accountability as well and people knowing that they must be fully accountable.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

The Headteacher also explained that she did not mind upsetting staff in order to achieve her preconceived tasks:

I can rub people up the wrong way I think, but I don't mind doing that because I try and cling on to what I'm doing.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

It was therefore acceptable to the Headteacher to implement measures that are not people-centred in order to achieve any tasks, a feature of transactional leadership.

The Headteacher of the Red School expressed a similar view when he commented that:

I reserve the right to say it will be like this because I do, and I will continue to, because at times ... it is good to talk, but at times we need to do, and we always review, we do, we always review, but at times there's still ... no lads, it's going to be like that, so just do it.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

The Headteacher took a task-orientated approach to ensuring his targets were implemented within the school, without question or consultation. The instances detailed here, illustrating how Headteachers are focussed on achieving tasks, provide evidence that they are behaving in a transactional manner. This may be taking place due to the political pressure to achieve results and meet the targets placed upon them, or to ensure they have evidence to provide to Ofsted that they are providing a good service. However, every Headteacher in the study demonstrated aspects of this orientation towards achieving tasks, especially when first appointed. This may be caused by the political context within which Headteachers operate, as noted by Bell and Stevenson (2006), and as such is not unique to this study or to any one authority, irrespective of the level of social deprivation associated with that authority. However, the idea that leadership styles have changed over time may be linked to the context of these schools, especially as some of the Headteachers had been Heads in other schools prior to moving to this socially deprived area. Although there is no direct evidence that the Headteachers in this study were transactional in their previous schools, analysis of the interviews did provide evidence that the Headteachers had become less transactional since leading in their current schools.

The interviews also demonstrated that leaders of all the schools were still transactional by the way they held a focus on maintaining and achieving measurable standards. This was often accomplished by making sure teachers were held accountable for their actions, and was the second most frequently referred to indication that their leadership was transactional.

Focus on standards

Transactional leaders often focus on the standards achieved by an organisation (Bass and Riggio, 2006). This was the second most frequently recurring theme in the Headteachers' responses, revealing transactional leadership as important in Headteachers' desire to improve or maintain standards. Throughout interviews with the staff in the Blue and Yellow Schools, the Headteachers often referred to their actions of holding people to high levels of accountability. The Headteacher of the Blue School proclaimed that:

We have to have systems and structures where accountability is key and expressed a need for genuine accountability.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

She proceeded to describe the system she favoured of continually reporting progress to a school leader as a method of ensuring accountability takes place, and then concluded that:

the truth of it is that only when there's that type of accountability do we ultimately ensure that things keep happening.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

The Headteacher of the Yellow School described his appreciation for different approaches to the accountability framework (TDA, 2009) stating how important it is that people are held accountable for the jobs they do. He also explained how being held accountable can be a tool for empowering staff, and acknowledging that they

are performing well. The continual references from these two Headteachers to accountability reveal a focus on standards that pervades the school at all levels. Similarly, the Deputy of the Yellow School reported how the Headteacher expressed a wish for a collaborative approach to leadership but would not let go of aspects where he felt standards were still not high enough. The Deputy stated:

There are some things that he wants still tied down a bit more
(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

This revealed that the Headteacher wanted to ensure accountability was in place if he felt standards were too low.

Although the other Headteachers did not refer directly to accountability to the same extent, it was still evident that they held teachers accountable for achieving high standards. For example, the Deputy from the Red School commented that the Headteacher expects her to:

maintain the quality of teaching and learning and performance
(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

The Deputy from the Green School considered that all development within the school should be linked to achieving and that her staff must have high standards because exam results had increased. She expressed a wish to:

continue to see, hopefully, an increase in exam success.
(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

The Headteacher of this school even referred to the standards of qualifications within his vision, stating:

I suppose that the vision is also to ensure that students leave
school with good qualifications.
(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

Standards of performance were also incorporated in the vision held by the leaders of the Yellow School where the Deputy Headteacher reported:

The vision has been to raise performance standards.
(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

This Deputy described how the Headteacher always focuses on achieving high standards and clarified this by saying that:

If you say to [the Headteacher] some things about the community aspects of it and about these projects, he's like, yeah but what about standards. He is looking at how he can improve standards consistently.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

The Deputy also referred throughout his interview to the Standards Agenda and levels of quality assurance. He illustrated how school leaders are influenced by the political aspects associated with accountability (TDA, 2009) and that this focus on standards is embedded within the Senior Leadership Team.

A similar focus was evident at the Blue School where the Deputy Headteacher described how targets are used to monitor standards, with ongoing tracking systems in place. This Deputy explained how the Headteacher always promoted high standards from the Deputy by providing;

constructive feedback on where I could have done better, you know, in delivering or suggested ideas of how to improve.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

Similarly, the Deputy from the Green School felt she was also held accountable by the Head for maintaining high standards; her performance was tracked and monitored through the Performance Management Systems.

This was also the case for the Deputy of the Red School who knew that she was held accountable for high standards through the Performance Management Systems, as well as by the measures achieved in examination results. Accountability for the progress made by students in a school will be increased by much more regular

information to parents, instead of just one final examination at the end of Key Stage 3 (Curtis, 2008). In view of this the Red School's Deputy explained that:

currently the departments are debating what to do now that SATs has disappeared and how we are going to ensure quality-control in terms of assessment, you know now that the external exam process is gone and what is going to replace that.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

It was evident that staff at all levels were held accountable for maintaining and measuring high standards and, where external levels were not available, it was important that some internal method of measuring standards within the school was in place.

The use of Ofsted as an external measure of standards, coupled with exam results, was utilised by the leaders of the Red School. The Deputy from the Red School described the process by which the Senior Leadership Team responded to examination results and to Ofsted visits. She explained how they analysed their progress after receiving feedback from these sources and ensured standards remained high by making sure their reassessments are:

aligned to the SEF, aligned to the school development plan taking shape and the departmental development plan being written. Largely in the summer term the leadership team will tend to meet together, either off site or on site, and have a look at and share and discuss.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

This highlighted how the Senior Leadership Team are included in the process of maintaining high standards and feel accountable for achieving and maintaining these. Many Headteachers referred to the need for the quality of education to be high, whilst the Headteacher of the Yellow School made references throughout his interview to this as a measure. He conveyed that the progress made in the school

should be considered in terms of quality learning experiences and explained how staff development needs to be about developing skills and expertise.

This was also evident when the Headteacher of the Blue School discussed the difference that getting a quality education can make for young people, and was supported by the Headteacher of the Red School, who justified the title that had been awarded to the school, of high performing specialist schools status, by the quality of teaching. He also compared the exam results obtained to an external measure that he felt was proof that standards were continuously high. This Headteacher also demonstrated an example of management by exception when he described how people within his school knew of these standards and that he would intervene if their behaviour or performance fell below the level he deemed to be acceptable.

The Headteachers' focus on maintaining and raising standards is achieved by ensuring all teachers are held accountable for their allocated duties. Securing accountability was discussed in Chapter 2 and is one of the National Standards for Headteachers which set out the professional knowledge, understanding and attributes deemed by the Department for Education Standards as necessary to carry out headship in the twenty-first century (DfES, 2004b). They define the expertise demanded of Headteachers in order to achieve targets and objectives and are the underpinning framework of the National Professional Qualification for Headship (NPQH), a qualification required for all new Headteachers and an external measure used by governors and Local Authorities to deem a potential Headteacher qualified to take on the role. Again this is a political pressure placed on all Headteachers, irrespective of the authority they work in or the background of the community they

serve. This requirement to achieve the standards dictated by the NPQH, and external measure of capability, may be in some way responsible for Headteachers acting as transactional leaders and having a focus on standards and external measures when leading their school.

Use of external measures

The analysis of Headteachers' focus on national standards also touched regularly on another indicator of transactional leadership, that of using external measures as a way of measuring schools. Such indicators show that Headteachers are driven by transactional, extrinsic, measures as opposed to transformational, intrinsic, measures. Not surprisingly, many schools referred to the measure of five A* to C passes at GCSE. This is a national method of judging the success of schools based on the percentage of students who score a grade C or above in five subjects in the GCSE examinations, and is one of the measures used nationally to rank schools (Chartered Institute of Educational Assessors, 2009). If not met, this is one of the external indicators that may lead to a school being classified as failing by Ofsted. The Blue School's Deputy stressed the importance of students achieving five A* to Cs, and the Green School's deputy described changes that had occurred in this school by referring to the performance of students against this external measure, she explained:

... in terms of student outcome, we've come from – in 2000 we were 15%, 5 plus A*s to C this year we were at 74%, last set of results.

(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

This is an external measure that many school leaders strive to improve, although the methods by which they reach this improvement can be varied. The Deputy at the Blue School described how the Senior Leadership Team had introduced a new course-work based curriculum that guaranteed almost everyone who attended school

regularly at least five A* to C grades. He explained that everyone in the school will follow:

a core curriculum which is maths, English, science, DT because we are a technology college, PE because that's part of the curriculum and IT.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

Of these courses, it was possible to achieve over five GCSEs in PE, science and IT without entering any examinations. However, the more recently implemented measure of five A* to Cs including English and Mathematics does require examinations. It is more difficult to improve and is an external measure that, when it had improved, Headteachers were keen to share during the interview. Headteachers often use these external measures of indicators of improvement; the Headteacher of the Green School anticipated that:

we will hopefully continue to see an increase in exam success and an increase in opportunities for our students

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Headteacher of the Red School reported that:

English and Maths went up, the functional skills went up, the percentage A to Cs came down slightly, but actually more kids passed more things that they'd ever done before, and that was a great statistic to hang on to.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

This showed how Headteachers are now required to measure the performance of their pupils using quantitative, definable results in the form of examination percentages.

The Headteacher of the Red School also referred to the more subjective judgements provided by Ofsted, as did the Deputy of this school, who explain how they reassess based on exam results and Ofsted visits:

there's always that tweaking process anyway after results come in because there has to be a response one way or another to what the results looked like, there was a response after Ofsted in 2006 and we are of course anticipating Ofsted again this new year coming so there are interim, you know moments where we have to stop and look and reassess

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

The Headteacher of the Blue School also demonstrated that she refocused following Ofsted inspections. She stated that, following a report from Ofsted:

we need to ensure that all our lessons are good or outstanding.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

When the Yellow School leaders referred to their Ofsted inspection the emphasis was on methods of measuring its impact in order to demonstrate how much the school had improved. They also used other statistical information, including measures of the socio-economic area, stating how these measures revealed the extent of social deprivation. The Headteacher stated:

I look at the social indexes factors; for instance in this school 38% of our students have lone parents, 51% live in the poorest 10% of housing stock in the country and 21% are on free meals. The indices of multiple deprivations are high and I think these issues have got to be tackled, the issues to do with child poverty.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

This demonstrated the Headteacher's use of external measures to identify his personal priorities and areas for intervention. The Headteacher of the Green School also used the external measure of the social deprivation of the area but he used it to identify that their statistical results were even more of an achievement. He quoted the measure of students who leave the school and are recorded as NEET (not in education, employment or training) as an external measure of success, by saying:

we are very proud of things like our NEET figure for example last year it was 0%, so there was no student from our year 11 who had a negative destination at all, which for the challenging community that we serve that's a massive indicator for improvement really.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Headteacher of the Green School also made references to the Government's *Every Child Matters* agenda (DfES, 2004a), discussed earlier as an external measure of success. The Headteacher used this to judge the school to be successful, he proclaimed that by:

making sure that students enjoy school and that they feel safe and secure in school and I suppose that the vision is as well to ensure that students leave school with good qualifications

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

These external measures were supported by statistical percentages gathered from either questionnaires or exam results.

The leaders of the Yellow School made reference to the National Challenge Advisor, (see Chapter 2), an externally appointed consultant who works with the school to help set targets and identify improvements or opportunities for future improvements (DCSF, 2009). The Yellow School's awareness of these external measures is such a priority that they are willing to alter their Self Evaluation Form (SEF) to ensure it matches those given by National Challenge Advisor. The Deputy Headteacher described this in detail when he said:

we had the National Challenge Advisor in yesterday and he wanted to change our SEF judgments and basically said that if we don't change our SEF judgments he would actually put in his report, because of National Challenge like, that he would put in his report that he didn't agree with our judgments on certain things. What I said was okay, we'll change them, because we don't want a report going in that says NCA doesn't agree with it.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

This illustrates how important external measures have become to the success of schools, to such an extent that the leaders are prepared to alter their internal judgements to ensure they are aligned with these external measures.

The manner in which Headteachers focus on the same criteria as those used by external bodies to deem the school successful is evidence that this focus on external measures is influenced by the political environment in which Headteachers operate. Again, this is a national pressure imposed on all Headteachers and is not specific to particular communities or authorities. Headteachers are concerned about published figures such as league tables and NEET figures and, as such, take on a transactional role of being concerned about external measures of success, rather than transformational, internal measures. This means that a Headteacher's actions are often reactive and responsive to the findings of these external measures, and this was the next most frequently-occurring aspect of transactional leadership traits.

Reactiveness and responsiveness

Examples of reactive and responsive actions illustrate a transactional leader (Bass and Riggio, 2006). These were evident in all the schools and were often related to the findings provided by external measures. For example, the Deputy from the Red School detailed how Ofsted can cause the school to become more responsive, based on their findings:

we have had a couple of occasions where either Ofsted or responding to something like post-16 where the deadlines and timings of things have been out of our control can tend to slightly make us rethink our development plans. It doesn't deflect from the overall whole school priorities because they're fixed and the development planning cycle is fixed, you know that's on the calendar and that doesn't alter that stays as it is. Where things may get blown slightly off course is

perhaps in the prioritisation of certain things happening in a certain time. Something may move to the top of the pile that would have been dealt with in a different way, but sometimes deadlines and timelines alter that are out of the school's control. Ofsted can throw up interesting things that you don't necessarily plan for.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

This is also a point made by the Deputy from the Blue School who said that the school is:

always going to have short term urgent issues, and these are always things that you've got to deal with

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

The Deputy from this school explained how he expects the school to be able to respond to issues and incorporates this into the long-term planning for the school. He said:

I think as long as you plan for these things to happen within your planning of the week, you know that you can create capacity during that planning in that you can say, look there's going to be times where I'm going to be pulled out for a day through an investigation or because something else has happened, the key is that you always make sure that you've got the long term vision, with a time-line of your different areas, so that you know you've got to hit those areas by that deadline and that it's not smooth running where you can just sit down in your office.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

This illustrates an acceptance from school leaders that part of their daily expectation is to react to changes that are unanticipated, by allocating free time for contingencies.

The Deputy from the Yellow School explained that they responded to a request from the Unions to ensure training was effective and not overly time-consuming. He explained:

it is actually the Unions that have prompted us to do this because what they have said is they want to ensure that this

session is being used effectively, which is a positive actually from the Union rather than the Union asking why we are doing this.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

Here the school responded to the request by, in their view, actively reacting in order to prevent future issues, a practice that is also shared by the Green School. The Headteacher here detailed his pre-emptive approach to managing the school by incorporating reflective thinking into his daily practices:

I think and look at things in a way that tends to minimise issues.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The practice of reflection and reaction in order to minimise future issues was also evident in other schools as well. The Deputy Headteacher of the Yellow School shared his concerns about previous attempts at communication within the community, explaining:

We've not actually, I don't think communicated that effectively in the last few years. I think we've communicated it to the groups that needed to hear it

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

He described how, in response to this, it has become a new priority for the school.

The Headteacher of the Blue School explained how she feels that her actions were often a response to the particular circumstances of the school and her awareness that, as these circumstances change, she would have to react in a different manner. She stated:

it can't continue to be like that and I think that's only because of the circumstances we are in, we have got a short amount of time to make a difference.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

In each school it was obvious that the Headteacher had to be responsive and needed to be able to react to changing circumstances, especially in response to Ofsted or

other external bodies and particularly if they provide an early indication of falling standards. This is a feature of transactional leadership. The need to behave in a transactional manner is dictated, at least in part, by the political environment within which Headteachers work. The feedback provided from Ofsted and examination results acts as a focus for Headteachers that directs them to become more reactive and responsive. Their actions are then influenced by the measures imposed upon them and by the priorities set elsewhere. They responded to this by becoming transactional and taking corrective measures to ensure, for example, that they match Ofsted's definitions of a good school. However these Headteachers did not easily accept deviation from their plans.

Resistance to deviation from plans; use of rewards as motivation; resistance to quick change

The three indicators of transactional leadership which were least frequently referred to will now be discussed. They all reveal the transactional behaviour of the leaders concerned, revealed by the way they view the organisation as mechanistic in nature, as opposed to being organic and constantly evolving (Bass and Riggio, 2006). When an organisation is viewed as mechanistic and un-evolving, there is a perception that there is a desired blue-print which the organisation should match. This means that deviation from the plan is erroneous and action should be taken to maintain the ideal model. This explains why transactional leaders do not accept deviation from their planned developments and are reluctant to make any quick changes.

When there is a preconceived mechanistic plan for the organisation, it is possible to identify whether actions are moving towards this, or away from it. Hence, rewards

and punishments can be used to steer the development of the organisation. As discussed in Chapter 2 this is an example of transactional leadership through management by exception, where leaders only become involved when they perceive a need to alter the behaviour of others as a possible means of achieving desired developments. Although the three indicators above were mentioned throughout the interviews, their influence was not as evident as the indicators evidenced in the four preceding sections, and the low frequency of references implies that they are not as important to Headteachers as achieving tasks, maintaining standards, using external measurements or reacting to these external measures.

Although the Headteacher of each school expressed the need to be responsive and reactive to changes, the Head of the Red School stated that he found the deviations to be annoying:

if it didn't annoy me then I wasn't committed in the first place,
sorry a simple equation, but I believe that
(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

There was evidence of the reluctance of the Headteacher of the Blue School to deviate from her plans. This newly appointed Headteacher brought practices from her previous school and it was clear that she intended to implement these without change. The timings of the school day were to be altered exactly to match her previous school, as was the offered curriculum content. The Headteacher expressed a reluctance to deviate from this vision claiming that:

I don't think I ever will deviate from that vision, because
otherwise it is not worth the paper it's written on is it.
(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

She also described the leadership structure at her previous school and the intention to mirror it at her new school, including the entire line management structure and the

method by which teams work together to ensure every leader has an understudy who is exposed to the systems in place. She claimed that this provides the capacity for staff to fill vacant positions whenever needed and explained that:

when [a] person leaves or the College expands, [then] somebody can slot up into another position and by doing this they need to be exposed to experience whole college issues, within that ... particular initiative.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

The implication is that the Headteacher does not expect to deviate from the previous school's structure and that she has no intention of allowing the staff to adapt in roles better suited to their individual skills and personalities, regardless of what that member may bring to the school. In other words, at least in this respect, her stance was instrumental and transactional.

A less important feature of transactional leaders is that they utilise reward as their main method of motivation. This can be achieved by providing praise or reprimands as psychological rewards (Kurland *et al*, 2010). Although this motivational method may have been in existence, there are very few references to it from interviews with either Headteachers or Deputy Headteachers. The only evidence comes from the Blue School where the Deputy makes references to providing temporary contracts for specific tasks, which implies there are some financial incentives associated with the undertaking of a new project. The Headteacher of this school explained how she judges staff development to be effective by their movement into higher paid positions, such as those of an Advanced Skills Teacher or Head of Department. However, it can also be possible that these statements do not refer to utilising reward as a method of motivation, but focuses on developing people by moving them into new positions, thus providing the opportunity for them to expand their skills and

experience and allowing them to gain exposure to a series of temporary projects that match their current developmental requirements.

The other Headteachers all felt that it was necessary to accept change. The Headteacher of the Yellow School described a strong belief in “change management” and detailed great developments in the school structure, ethos, culture and beliefs. The Head of the Green School was in agreement with this, speaking about recent changes in both school structures, he then described the changes in culture:

In terms of changes with regard to ethos, and things like that I suppose over the past eight years or so both myself and the previous head have worked very hard on looking at changes in culture and belief and those kind of things and that has led to a significant improvement in terms of outcomes as well. So as well as the structural changes there's also been a kind of ethical change as well, you could say within the school.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

Similarly, the Headteacher of the Red School supported this belief, particularly in respect of how essential it is to change. He revealed that he viewed his school as consisting of five different schools, one for each year group, each of which is, in his view, independent of the other four. This is because each year group is unique and requires a range of personalised initiatives that ensure the school best suits its individual needs. The pride with which these Headteachers described the changes they had brought to the school can be thought of as an indication that their preferred leadership style is not one of transactional leadership, but one directed towards transformation.

Finally, the aspect of transactional leadership with fewest responses was that the Headteacher does not change quickly. The Blue School was the only school that

provided evidence that it was delaying in making changes. This may be because the Headteacher of this school had only been in post for a few months and was, at the time of being interviewed, of the mind-set that her vision needed to be implemented into the school without deviation or adjustment. She arrived with a plan to alter the timings of the school day and reduce the lunch-time so that students would be unable to leave the school site for dinner. Shopkeepers arranged to meet the Head, who spent an evening listening to their concerns. However, she remained determined to continue with her plan to alter the timings of the day and demonstrated a similar reluctance to deviate from any set plans when negotiating with staff. During her interview she explained:

I am trying to accommodate people when they come and they have got their issues and they bring them to me, I'm not promising anything, I'm not committing to anything, but I'm listening to them at the moment.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

This could be interpreted as a willingness to listen, but a reluctance to make any changes based upon the outcome of these discussions. The other Headteachers in this study were intent on making changes to improve their schools.

Conclusions

One aim of this research is to explore the extent to which transactional leadership is deployed by Headteachers in each of the sample schools. Throughout Chapter 4 all the school leaders have demonstrated instances where they behaved as transactional leaders. Although some indicators were more evident than others, there is little doubt that the Headteachers in all the schools undertook actions that can be identified as transactional. This was most evident with the shortest serving Headteacher, but was plentiful across all eight interviews. A point to note is that transactional leadership

was more evident when Headteachers were new to the post, and has become less so as they have gained experience of serving within these socially deprived areas. It may be that as Headteachers gain experience, they gravitate more towards transformational and less towards transactional, or it may be that the unique environments within which they work, where they serve a community of high social deprivation, cause this change to take place. Alternatively, it could be that new Headteachers felt the need to change in difficult or unfamiliar circumstances and felt they had to do this by directing action, perhaps because they did not know where to place their trust. There was some evidence for the social area being responsible for this change; Headteachers who had served in more than one school, whose actions were still highly transactional when they arrived in this authority, have become less so as they have developed into the role of Headteacher of a school serving a community with a high social deprivation index.

The extent to which any Headteachers is transactional could be attributed to external pressures and the levels of comparing and benchmarking schools that are in place, rather than on their preferred leadership style. The Deputy of the Green School made such a reference when she described how the school used to be guided eight years ago, stating that they would not be allowed to achieve the results they used to, because of the new monitoring systems. She explained:

if we turned out 15% this year, not only the local authority but Ofsted and various other people would be all over us.
(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

This illustrates the levels of accountability felt by schools due to the external pressures from nationally set targets and Ofsted inspections. It is possible that transactional actions are ultimately influenced by political pressure forcing

Headteachers to focus on external measures and national standards instead of on the personal development of people, where they would prefer to focus. Headteachers are encouraged to be responsive to political changes and are constantly using new, government-dictated measures to compare themselves with others, with a real threat of being classified as a failing school if they do not meet these measures. The nature of political demands encourages Headteachers to hold some measures as constant as they are priorities set by external agencies, such measures prevent them from changing quickly or deviating from their long-term plans, even if they feel this would be more beneficial for their schools and their students. These external measures are in force for all schools, and as such are not necessarily reflective of the nature or background of the unique schools within this study. However, the level of high social deprivation experienced by these schools may be a factor influencing the level of transactional leadership that is taking place. Schools in such challenging circumstances may need to strive harder to meet national targets.

It is noticeable that transactional leadership actions are often associated with the day-to-day running of a school and the achievement of tasks, not with the growth and development of new educational movements, new ideas or of individual people. External political pressures hold Headteachers accountable for achieving specific, measurable benchmarks. This prevents them from fully pursuing their own path for school development, causing them to focus on national agendas and developments identified by Ofsted inspections. However, the achievement of these measurable outcomes may be better achieved when Headteachers focus on the less tangible goals of motivating followers and developing individuals. Such actions become more

evident in Chapter 5, where the responses from all eight interviews representing instances as transformational leadership were categorised.

Chapter 5

Aspects of Transformational Leadership

Introduction

In the previous chapter it was shown how far Headteachers in this study used transactional leadership. It was argued that this is mainly, but not exclusively, in response to externally-set targets and to externally-determined policy and procedures. In this chapter the data collected from interviews with Headteachers and Deputy Headteachers is used to classify and explore Headteachers' use of transformational leadership, using the seven main features of this approach to leadership that were illustrated in Figure 2.3. These are presented in order, from most frequent incidences to least frequent, as a means of illustrating how often Headteachers utilised these indicators across the many areas questioned. The frequency with which the Headteachers referred to each indicator is used to imply its perceived importance to Headteachers.

Person-centredness

One of the strongest features of transformational leaders is that they are very person centred (Albritton, 1995) and concentrate on developing others and empowering them to achieve. Of the seven actions deemed to reveal areas of transformational leadership, this characteristic was the most evident from the Headteachers. Throughout the interviews, Headteachers consistently revealed that they have a belief in students and staff as people with great qualities. The Head of the Red School described how he enjoyed developing others:

I like making a difference for people. I've seen people, particularly being a coach on the 'leading from the middle' and things, of that nature I've seen people develop and come on

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

An example of belief in others was given by the Head of the Green School when describing his belief in the merits possessed by children:

young people get a really bad press and it's just not true is it. I mean our students are on the whole well mannered, caring, brilliant kids.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The same view was in evidence when the Headteacher of the Blue School explained that:

Young people here are genuinely personable, and if you treat them with respect and are interested and involved in them, there's a real genuine interest to talk to you.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

The Deputy of the school believed that:

The students, the majority of students, the vast majority of the students are absolutely fantastic, absolutely fantastic in fact I've worked in several schools and this is the best set of students I've ever known and quite surprising really, very, very, very pleasant will make eye-contact with you will say good morning, will interact with you in a conversation.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

These statements illustrate a strong affinity to students as people, irrespective of examination performance or achievements within the school, a mind-set that, as Anderson and Anderson (2001) point out, is an important feature of transformational leadership.

A belief in the qualities possessed by students was also echoed by the Headteacher of the Red School when describing the benefits for teachers who attempt to motivate students. He demonstrated that he felt students' achievements were limitless,

provided they could be motivated, saying that students will “go through walls, they go through walls every week, that’s the beauty of being here”. The Headteacher expressed a recurring theme of how privileged he felt to be working in the school:

I’ve been privileged enough to work with them and hopefully, bring people on as far as I can possibly influence it, that also is a great motivating factor for me coming in. I love what I do
(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

The Headteacher of the Yellow School also identified with this feeling of privilege and even compared his expectations for his students with those for his own children:

I will fight for our kids, and I will fight for them in terms of that I want them to have the things that they haven’t had in terms of quality learning experience and it disappoints me when I hear or read about negative stuff about kids in communities, kids in this, kids in that, and I value them all enormously, from the least to the most and I do that in terms of wanting for them and the things that I hope I’ll give to my own children and this is an interesting and I think very pertinent philosophy that I have. I say to the staff in both schools that I have the privilege to run, that I expect no less for the children here than I do for my own children in the schools I send them to, and I think that’s a powerful statement in terms of what I want and what my expectations are.
(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

This feeling of being privileged to work with children was shared by the Deputy of the Red School when outlining her reasons for wishing to work in her school:

I’ve seen people develop and come on, you know not because of me, but I’ve seen that and I’ve been privileged enough to work with them and hopefully, you know, bring people on as far as I can possibly influence it, that also is a great motivating factor for me coming in.
(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

Another aspect evident from the interviews with the leaders of the schools was the desire to ensure students achieved their personal success. Both the Head and Deputy of the Green School made several references to this, with the Deputy describing this as one of the original aims of the school. She explained that:

one of the founding aims of [the Green School] which hasn't changed along way is that students come, achieve and believe in themselves.

(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

The Headteacher also supported this when he discussed his vision for the school:

Making sure that students enjoy school and that they feel safe and secure in school and I suppose the vision is as well to ensure that students leave school with good qualifications but also as good citizens.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Headteacher's holistic view focused on the students as valuable people, both in the employment arena and the community. The Deputy of the Blue School made reference to this as well when he said:

it's about getting as many students to achieve as possible and to aspire to doing the best that they can so that they can have the best life that they can.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

He continued to explain that this does not always mean academic qualifications, but could include other experiences:

you know qualifications aren't the be all and end all of a school education, it is [about] the variety that is there.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

The Deputy of the Green School detailed some of the extra activities that students do in the school:

One of the big things that we have done also is as well as the exam results we try and give the kids an absolutely massive range of pastoral activities, we do trips all over the place, there's hundreds of them go, they are going to Canada this year. But these are the large trips, but it is also about giving them the opportunity to look a little bit further than [this town] and to raise their aspiration, and realise there is a big world out there and that it is not just centred around [this town] and I think that is our aim and goal to give these kids the best chance in life that we can.

(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

The Head of Blue School was also keen to introduce new experiences for students and encouraged them to make pledges of ten things to do before going to university. One of these included taking part in an international visit in order to broaden their life experience.

Support for vulnerable students was also mentioned by the school leaders:

I think one of the things that we have been really good at is that the students who come from tough backgrounds actually come in and get an awful lot of support, they leave a lot of the baggage at the school gates and come in and feel quite secure and looked after.

(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

There are other students of course as well that have the social problems and again when...there's things here that we need to do for these students it's not just about, you know, excluding them or kicking them out ... this is something here that's really close to my heart that the vulnerable students in College, whether through behaviour or through social issues are the people that we really need to look after and those people that we need to higher their self-esteem and get them through College with good qualifications where they've got options when they're sixteen and they're not going to be just left out in the cold.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

A different theme that arose several times from the Blue School leaders, which strongly depicted their belief in the value of student input, was the desire to involve students more in their education within the school:

The other issue is students and using students in professional development and really recognising that if we are serious about co-construction and it's not just a buzz-word, that, if we are learning from each other all the time we can learn from our students, and it's about making sure that student voice is real within our college

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

This statement demonstrated the transformational view that all people learn from each other and that students are placed at the heart of the school as their opinions, views and value are recognised.

Transformational actions were also demonstrated through the involvement of staff, which was a theme that emerged as being of importance to the Headteachers. The Head of the Blue School recognised this when she said that “without the whole staff it can’t be done”, describing how:

staff are fundamental, I don’t just mean teaching staff, if it is about an ethos and a culture, if it’s about respect and the way we all treat each other and speak to each other, it’s every member of staff who works in our institution.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

Other school leaders also supported this approach:

... we have lots of forums where staff can raise ideas and challenge thinking and challenge the direction the school is going in as long as it’s kind of very productive and positive and it’s leading to improved outcomes, and I positively encourage that kind of debate and dialogue.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Head of the Green School made many references to the school ethos of involving and valuing staff, including the following statement:

if you’re involving staff comprehensively in the way you are trying to reach a vision and you’re trying to lead a school into a particular direction then that in itself is developmental.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

Attempting to ensure staff felt valued and challenged was also priority in the Green School:

we’ve invested a lot time, energy and money I suppose in ensuring that staff do feel as if they are valued and that they are constantly being challenged both pedagogically and also with regard to their career progression.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

if people are given the opportunity to develop their skills, then that's when they're happy and content in where they are working and what they are doing I think because, they have always got a new challenge.

(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

Involving staff in school development was also considered to be very important in the Yellow School:

staff are very much involved in the vision [there is] a lot of work to be done in sharing and agreeing the values of visions

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009).

we did a visioning day with all the staff as part of the training day and we asked them to look at what would be their vision for the college and the community

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

The Deputy of the Blue School described the support he had received from the Headteacher and the methods she used to encourage him. He defined her approach as:

very intently supportive and there's always a two-way dialogue, but it's also about letting me go and do what I need to do without too much interference, or very little interference to be honest.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

Within the schools it became evident that a strong belief in the staff was upheld by all the Headteachers in this study:

we as leaders recognise the talent that we've got and almost release that talent, so there's peer group learning, sharing good practice.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

it's very much about empowering and enabling people at all levels to succeed.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

their energies are correctly channelled where they want to be, which is in teaching and learning, [... and] if the balance is right, it's a hell of a power house.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

Headteachers also demonstrated faith in their staff when discussing the level of school leadership in place. The Headteacher from the Blue School explained how this is essential in order to be effective; she pointed out that:

my experience tells me that you can only be a totally effective leader, Headteacher, with an effective team around you, and I really do believe that.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

The Head of the Red School explained how he had expanded his leadership team to include new teachers, demonstrating the faith he has in the abilities of staff:

we've now got a senior leadership team but we've got a senior management team that's twice the size of the [original] senior leadership team ... and a minority are long serving, half of them were either NQTs [Newly Qualified Teachers] when I came, or have been appointed since

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

The importance of trust and belief in the team was supported by Headteachers of other schools, as well as by a Deputy:

trusting your team around you, and I mean trusting in every sense, trusting their qualities, trusting their skills, and you can't do it on your own, and I've seen that, you know in my experience of getting to this level, so it is about the team that you have around you, and I suppose as a good leader, it's about encouraging and recognising those things in your team.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

there is not one person around that table that I am not confident that they can do their job and I think that's the key aspect of [the Headteacher's] leadership and what he's [provided is the] ... ability for us to continue to evolve and develop as a college because we have got the individuals who can do that.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

so there is a strong element of get on and do it, and also I think it's important to mention that in terms of relationships with colleagues there is a sense of very warm, supportive relationships there, both within the senior leadership team and with the extended management team so there is a lot of trust and warmth there so that there is a sense of security a sense of confidence in dealing with each other.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

The Headteacher of the Red School was attempting to increase this level of self-belief in staff and the Deputy Headteacher described how some are still in the initial processes of developing this:

there's a lack of confidence amongst one or two of them, to really go for it, and they still feel the need to come and check that everything is fine, that they're afraid of making a mistake so there is still work to do, in taking that fear factor out of that process, so it's not entirely there, the intention is there, certainly with some people it has sunk in and they are beginning to run with things that they would ordinarily have felt the need to check on every five minutes.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

The level of trust from the Headteachers in the Deputies' abilities was evident in this statement made by the Deputy of the Yellow School, "[The Headteacher] gave me that freedom to do whatever I wanted and he gave me the opportunity". The Deputy of the Blue School shared his experience of being developed by the Headteacher:

I don't see myself by any means as a finished product, I've got to keep developing, but I'd also like to keep moving up as well and I feel that I can do that now. Whether I thought that I could do that two years ago to how I feel now, and the difference and the transformation in myself and my own development has been quite amazing because I don't think that I would have ever of thought that I would have been in this position.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

The development of leaders was also seen as a priority for the Headteacher of the Green School who stated that:

the general spirit I think of leadership at [the Green School] is that we are looking to create leaders, develop leaders, find leaders, wherever they are.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

According to the Deputy from the Yellow School, the Headteacher had created "a collective approach so that we work together." He clarified that, "I've always been confident and comfortable in my position in school and he's instilled that in me".

The Headteacher's ability to see the potential leadership skills in staff has resulted in his willingness to:

move people into positions, into promoted positions that at first you might have thought, am I ready for this, but I think what he is good at is spotting potential, putting you in place and letting you make mistakes but then supporting you in those mistakes as well.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

The Headteacher's belief in people was evident here and is demonstrated by his willingness to cope with and accept any mistakes arising from providing staff with new opportunities and challenges, accepting it as part of the development process that staff will go through as they move into these positions of leadership.

The Headteacher of the Green School explained how he recognises leadership at all levels; he elaborated by saying:

I feel that everybody's got a stake, everybody's a leader whether it's students, your cleaners, your kitchen staff, your deputy head, your head of department, your caretaker, everybody's got a stake haven't they, everybody leads, everybody sets examples, and that's the way that is the best way in my opinion.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Heads' underpinning belief in people is independent of their station or experience and is related to individuals and the qualities they possess. The Head of the Blue School stressed her excitement and enthusiasm in the notion that leadership is not just from the top down. This belief in people and the ability to match people to roles suitable to an individual's potential is what Deputies reported as one of the main attributes of the Headteachers:

in eight years [the Headteacher] has put together a team of individuals who are all happy in their positions, who are all motivated in their positions.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

The relationships that have been formed with parents and the community members are areas that also demonstrate the Headteachers' focus on people. It is vital to Headteachers that the community is involved in the future direction of the school, as this will be beneficial to the learning experiences of students (Leithwood and Jantzi, 2009). The Headteacher of the Green School explained how they are moving towards Specialist Trust Status because of the involvement with parents and the community. He provided the following description:

it's been the whole community really; both parents, students, governors, partners of the school, have all been involved in creating that vision that ethos for change and for improvement and I think by doing this is what's led to the trust really. The establishment of a cooperative trust in the school is what we need to galvanise the whole community into feeling that it has a stake and a part to play in driving these improvements forward. So in that sense I really do feel that it is a very comprehensive shift, it's not just one group of stakeholders, or me, or a leadership team who have actually been involved in that, it has been a comprehensive plan of action.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Headteacher of the Yellow School also shared this desire to involve the whole community in the development of the school; he explained:

it's about more partners in the vision, understanding what the benefits are to them and then how you go about doing that and clearly you've got to involve all staff, you've got to involve students, you've got to involve their parents, you've got to involve governors and by doing that, you necessarily involve the wider community and other stakeholders in your organisation whether it be those who are education stakeholders, partners and or a deeper and wider community who are included for instance student councils.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

When the Headteacher of the Red School discussed the community, he expressed an appreciation for the level of diversity of the wider community and an understanding that the contribution from the community is able to lead to improvements for all. He said that there is a:

multiplicity of communities and I think that's a strength, because I don't think anyone should dominate another and I don't believe that your geographically most, close physical community should dominate what you do ... It should be a major player in it, but it should be a player in it and the leavening you get from all those other communities makes it better for everybody.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

This community involvement theme is also shared by the Headteacher of the Blue School who described how she is keen to involve parents and community members in the education of students, believing that this will lead to a better experience for students as the community helps to shape the vision for the school. The Head of the Green School has already started this and he has:

done some quite interesting work on engaging parents, and over a year ago now I actually wrote to parents and invited them to a visioning session that involved a real range of parents as well as some of our most difficult parents I suppose you could say, the hard to reach parents, across to parents who have been very supportive in the past, I wrote to them specifically inviting them up to school.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

Throughout their interviews, all Headteachers described their belief in people and how they value the contributions that can be made by everyone. The Headteacher of the Yellow School described himself as being “passionate about people” and illustrated this when he talked about the levels of hope he saw within the community.

He said that he was distressed by the levels of:

poverty, and not just economic poverty but social poverty as well in terms of families, in terms of their aspiration and in terms of their expectations and yet, what I also see in every bit of our community is hope. I do believe that the vast majority of people don't want to be trapped inside with some of the negativity which they portray but that they don't know how they're going to get out of where they are at. I think schools, if they are to become the heart of the communities, have the key role to play in challenging and changing the culture of communities and improving the aspiration, attitudes and values of the people who are currently perhaps disenfranchised.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

This Headteacher went on to describe himself as a “missionary who feels privileged to be involved in shaping young people’s lives” and how he wanted to make schools in deprived areas friendlier places, where people can really flourish:

I believe that a lot of our schools have got to become kinder places in terms of how we speak to each other and what our expectations are.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

A commitment to helping and improving people was also evident in the Green School where the Deputy explained that the most important thing she had learned from the Head was to have a belief in people. This sentiment demonstrates the degree to which a Headteacher can be considered to be person centred, and provides evidence that the Headteacher takes a role in developing and changing people. Throughout the interviews Headteachers revealed a trust and belief in their staff and an intention to build self-confidence and facilitate wide involvement in future developments for the school.

However, when considering the children of these schools, the Headteachers went even further. They described the level of privilege they felt in being able to serve children from this socially deprived area. They not only focussed on the externally measured aspects of schooling, but also had a strong desire to provide students with a range of experiences that they were unlikely to receive without the school’s input, such as enrichment activities and international experiences. This was closely linked to the process of developing and changing individuals and the schools themselves, another factor of transformational leadership that Headteachers referred to throughout the interviews.

Development and change

Transformational leaders often see possibilities for others of which the people themselves are unaware. Bass and Riggio (2006) note how this feature of transformational leadership often enables people to achieve much more than with any other leadership style. This was the second most dominant recurring theme expressed by Headteachers in this study. They were continually seeking to develop and change both the people they are in contact with and the environment within which they operate. The following comments sum up this sentiment:

the more time you spend in the teaching profession, the more you see it as a way to bring about change.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

I need to recognise that changes have to be made in a short space of time, and actually getting on and doing it.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

There is a need for Headteachers to get into change management processes, we've got to get in to strategies of change [...] if you're not into change management and if you're not into thinking differently then perhaps you don't succeed.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

A change that the leader of each school is proud of is the move from traditional school into the national programme of specialist colleges. This is a government initiative discussed in Chapter 2 when identifying features of the schools within this study; the initiative offered schools additional funding and an affiliation with a network of schools whose focus is to raise achievement. To join this affiliation, Headteachers had to provide evidence that they had the potential to improve educational standards and could also form strong relationships with the communities which they serve (SSAT, 2009). The Head of the Green School referred to this change when he explained:

The other changes I suppose and big changes in recent times have been that we have become a specialist school, a technology

college. As a result of this and the success that we have had as a school we then became a mentor school and then a consultant school and most recently the biggest change has been that we are, from January the 1st 2009, becoming a foundation trust school.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

Similarly, the Head of the Red School expressed his pride in securing an engineering specialism:

we are part of the engineering specialist schools community, now that is a belter, born out of adversity, there are still only sixty, six years in, there were precisely eight when we joined.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

All of the schools were accredited with specialist status within the last five years. However, the Headteachers each seemed to regard the most significant change to be made was that which related to the school culture and ethos. The Head of the Blue School stated that she was “about creating culture and ethos and mission”. This claim was also made by the Head of the Green School when he said:

with regard to ethos, and things like that I suppose over the past eight years or so both myself and the previous head have worked very hard at looking at changes in culture and belief and those kind of things and this has led to a significant improvement.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

According to the Headteacher this change in ethos occurred because of:

relationships across the board. I think that the relationships between staff and students, relationships amongst staff, relationships with parents, all of these things are absolutely critical really, in terms of improvement.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Head of the Yellow School considered the change in ethos as his greatest achievement; he said:

I think the biggest change, [at this school] has been cultural change. By changing the culture of the organisation you are able to improve it more rapidly and it's still, I think, a clear future at getting with some strategic planning about what could be achieved and how it's going to be done.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

Other more tangible alterations described during the interviews, included modifications of the curriculum, where leaders from each school mentioned adjusting the curriculum to offer alternative courses that better meet the needs of their learners, and the implementation of alternative approaches to teaching and learning. References were often made to the engagement of children in lessons and alternative methods of delivery within the classroom, such as providing a variety of learning experiences or bigger blocks of time that allow learners to become immersed in projects. The Deputy of the Yellow School described the outcome from making changes to the curriculum and its delivery stating:

I think the impact of that has been fantastic.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

Each Headteacher highlighted the need for more changes to be made for the future success of the school. The Head and the Deputy of the Yellow School planned to introduce social and emotional aspects of learning (SEAL) into their school. The Deputy explained how important it can be for staff as well as for students:

developing the social and emotional aspects of learning the SEAL stuff and one of the key things we think for us is that our staff need it before the children do, because our staff don't know sometimes how to interact with the community that we serve, because a lot of them don't come from a community that is the same as this.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

The leaders of the Blue, Red and Green Schools wanted to create more leaders at all levels throughout the school, with the view that this would help in implementing change more quickly. Transformational leadership has a strong focus on developing

people to become more than they believe they can be; this leads to the creation of more leaders as well as a greater synergy between staff and the contributions they make. The Deputy of the Blue School pointed out the benefits of this and described the additional benefit of having more members of the school contributing to the development of new initiatives in order to bring about change:

we're always looking for change and we're always open to work with staff because I haven't and the other senior leaders haven't got a monopoly on good ideas. If we work together, co-construct with the students, co-construct with the staff it means that the college then has ownership because everybody's involved in it as opposed to it just being one person's vision.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

Concerns relating to the level of the future sustainability of implementing these changes were also discussed by the Deputy Headteacher of this school. He identified this as a major priority when initiating improvements. Throughout every interview it was apparent that the role of the Headteacher in all of the schools was to drive the school forward, using a process of identification and implementation of change to existing practices. Headteachers from all the schools were transformational in the manner in which they attempted to develop individuals and influence the ethos of the school.

All Headteachers adopted the government initiative by becoming a Specialist College, allowing them to tap into a network of additional resources and funding that could enable them to achieve their desired changes quicker. This factor may link to the community where these Headteachers operate, in that without quick changes and additional resources many students would pass through the school without experiencing the level of entitlement the Headteachers felt they deserved. The role of the Headteacher in acting as an agent for change is a trait of transformational

leadership that links strongly with the next most evident instance of transformational leaders, that they are vision-focussed.

Focus on vision

The ability to see a possible, improved future and to share this vision with others is a leadership skill that Hartog (2003) identifies as transformational to the extent that it can motivate colleagues. This was evident in all interviews. In every interview both Deputies and Headteachers could describe their vision for their school. These visions were focussed on raising standards and the aspirations of students by ensuring students were at the centre of the processes implemented within the school.

Examples of these were apparent in the interviews:

the vision is really to ensure that we raise aspirations and we raise achievement for all young people and we do that by hopefully looking at how we can meet their individual needs.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

A similar sentiment ran through the Head of the Yellow School's vision:

my vision is being focused on young people first and foremost and how we can enable and empower them to become successful adults and how they can become the change managers; not just for their own futures but in terms of the credibility of schools as they become the next generation of parents. What I mean by this is that we currently have generations of parents who have pretty poor experiences in our school and de facto have instilled these in their children. I think that's probably the factor for all schools in the areas where the socio-economic conditions are less favourable.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

The Head of the Yellow school expressed a view that, where there are poor socio-economic conditions, the context of the school plays an important role in the creation of a vision. The Head of the Blue School made an indirect reference to this when she compared the community to a smaller scale example of how education is being used to change the circumstances of underprivileged communities in South Africa:

the difference that you know that you can make when young people get a quality education is the only way that, over generations, South Africa is going to change. Now I actually believe that on a sort of national scale this is relevant to small communities as well, and I suppose that actually takes me all the way back to my vision and my passion about why we do it. So my vision for this school is that all the decisions that are made, all the procedures, everything that goes on in the classroom, the corridors and everything, is about asking that question, how does this benefit every young person? [...] the decisions we make, everything we do, is about putting students first [and] my vision is about realising the potential of every child in this school.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

A separate point made by every Headteacher was the requirement that this vision be shared by others. The Headteacher of the Blue School pointed out the importance associated with this:

if we as leaders don't really encourage every member of staff to share that vision it is not going to happen

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

This point was also made by the Head of the Yellow School, who said:

it's about more partners in the vision, understanding what the benefits are to them and then how you go about doing that and clearly you've got to involve all staff, you've got to involve students, you've got to involve their parents, you've got to involve governors and by doing that, you necessarily involve the wider community and other stakeholders in your organisation whether it be those who are education stakeholders, partners and or a deeper and wider community who are included, for instance student councils.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

This Headteacher also described how to achieve this shared vision by creating and relaying a consistent future image that would become associated with the message.

He went on to describe the importance of imparting a consistent message:

I think it's about being consistently on message and it's what you do, not just in terms of what you say but how you say it.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

The Head of the Yellow School explained how this vision must be underpinned by his own values:

staff are very much involved in the vision. I think the vision has to emanate from the leadership, the leader of the school and it comes I think from their own personal beliefs and values, but if it's not something that is shared, then people don't buy into it and I think in that respect, there's a lot of perhaps coaxing, mentoring and a lot of work to be done in sharing and agreeing the values of visions.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

He implied that his role was to not only to create the vision based on his values, but to also instil these values into others.

Another feature of this focus on vision was the Headteachers' belief that their vision was not yet complete:

there's still a way to go with some staff to see that delivering their sessions effectively actually is the best job they can do to help their colleagues in the school, because the kids then have total confidence.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

This Headteacher proceeded to describe an alternative future for the school, one where he needed to step aside and let someone else take the school to even greater heights. The belief by the current Headteacher that the agenda for the school will change and eventually outgrow him is, in his view, not only inevitable but also beneficial for the school. Interestingly, the Head of the Yellow School also discussed his future plans and the route he could see himself following after leaving the school:

I could make a contribution in terms of coaching, mentoring, empowering what I hope would be a new breed of head teacher and supporting them particularly in the emotional aspects of their job.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

Both Headteachers, therefore, believe that their schools need to continue to develop and that this might be facilitated, in future, by their successors. This is evidence that

that Headteachers tied together their personal values with the desire to develop and improve others, focussing on the sustainable development of their school rather than their present role. While this is a trait of transformational leaders, in this study the Headteachers had an even stronger focus on developing young people than adults. They showed the desire to develop staff and community members, but they wanted to also instil in these adults a desire to empower the young people within their school, as well as to focus on raising the aspirations that these students had. This may be because the Headteachers felt that students from a deprived background require additional intervention to raise their aspirations, in order to create a desire in them to escape from this level of deprivation. Not only did Headteachers create a vision based on their personal beliefs and values, but it was important to Headteachers that others shared this vision, that they felt a part of it and that they could play a significant role in seeing it come to fruition. This is strongly linked to the next most frequently occurring aspect of transformational leaders, that leaders are inspirational.

Inspiring others

According to Armstrong (2004) transformational leaders are inspirational in their dealings with others, creating a desire in others to achieve more and to drive themselves forwards. The importance of this was highlighted by the Headteacher of the Blue School when she explained that:

we've got to be as inspirational as we can; I have to be ... because there are some tough times ahead in terms of changes that have to be made.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

She then pointed out the importance of involving staff in order to achieve this level of motivation and to:

let them see that we are willing to take on their ideas.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

The involvement of staff was also mentioned by the Headteacher of the Green School who highlighted that he finds staff involvement to be the most effective way of communicating with staff. He went on to say:

we consult with staff, we have staff questionnaires, we have those forums where staff can raise issues about how they feel their own personal development is going and professional learning is going. I think there are lots of opportunities for staff to actually feed back and obviously we are constantly looking for opportunities as well which I think is crucial, I think about what it is that is going to move the institution further, who are going to be the key people to do that, sometimes that's driven by staff and sometimes it's driven by others.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The view that staff can feel inspired by being part of an establishment that is improving and has faith in them as individuals was also evidenced:

people feel that we are a school that is moving forward, that's prepared to take risks, you won't be discouraged from taking risks and it's positively encouraged really.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

we've started development because a couple of members of [...] young staff with three, four years' experience are now starting to deliver five, ten minute presentations on things that they are leading on.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

I am sure maybe this year, next year, they're looking at whole school, big whole school priorities rather than sort of mini projects that they will have done previously, so they are taking on more and more.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

The Deputy from the Green School explained that the Headteacher had encouraged a high proportion of staff to take the NPQH (National Professional Qualification for Headship) at a very early stage in their career. These actions may be seen as supporting the development of staff in that they portray a faith in staff and in their ability to achieve promotion in the future.

Another common factor, shared during the interviews, was the reference made to the level of motivation. The Deputy of the Yellow School described himself and the rest of the Senior Leadership Team as highly motivated, stating that:

not one of them is money motivated and I think because they see now that they have a voice and they have a say I do think it's the drive to them wanting to be involved.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

The senior leaders of the Green School identified that their staff are:

a highly motivated staff, I think and I include myself in that as well, and again I think that's because we work very closely and collectively as a team.

(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

Perhaps the most revealing aspect of the inspirational aspect of transformational leadership is the Deputies' belief that they are able to make a difference. The Deputy of the Red School described how she has been provided with a level of trust that fills her with confidence and is now sure that she can make a difference, she explained that she enjoys:

making a difference, [and likes] the fact that [she has] some autonomy and some power to change things.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

This view was shared by the other schools and the Deputy of the Yellow School explained:

I think it's about the old phrase of making a difference but, I think in this school it's true.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

Evidence that the Deputies in all the schools felt they were empowered and capable of making a real difference to the school in which they work shows the degree to which Headteachers in these schools created an environment where staff felt they were contributing to the future of the school, and played a significant role in shaping

the futures of others. This empowerment of individuals can have a profound transformational effect on an organisation (Albritton, 1995). Headteachers within these schools act as transformational leaders as they not only want to change and improve the current situations, but they also help others to know that they are also capable of achieving and that they can themselves make a significant difference. This reveals the extent to which Headteachers deploy transformational approaches to leadership. Another aspect that demonstrated Headteachers were deploying transformational leadership was identified during the interviews when Headteachers showed that they are fluid and flexible in their approach, and not rigidly following a predesigned plan, as with transactional leaders.

Fluidity and flexibility

Harris (2003) pointed out how transformational leaders have a high level of faith in human nature and often allow circumstances, and personalities, to play a part in the evolution of organisations in new, unforeseen directions. These unexpected developments can lead to paradigm shifts and improvements that could not have been anticipated or predicted. During the interviews there were very few examples that could be categorised as evidence that the newly appointed Headteacher of the Blue School adopted a fluid and flexible approach, which may imply that she was reluctant to exercise this level of transformational leadership within her new school, as it involved taking risks. Here, the Headteacher's only real evidence of flexibility is in the timings associated to her vision, she detailed:

The methods by which I achieve that vision, the deadlines, the timings may have to change, so I'm not to get frustrated and impatient with people. I need to recognise that sometimes practical situations may mean that it can't happen then, or that particular thing can't happen, so I might have to just adapt it and compromises may have to be made along the way, but students

will always come first in that compromise decision. Priorities may have to change, but I've got to keep the vision, because otherwise it will all just crumble won't it?

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

The Headteacher of the Yellow School revealed an acknowledgement of the need for leaders to be flexible. He said:

I think we've got to be very much reviewers in our lives and we've also got to be strategic thinkers and very objective thinkers and I think one of the things which is critical in terms of what we do, is how we handle situations and see what stops you in your track because I think that's an appropriate issue.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

He also discussed the need for them to be good managers of change, stating that Headteachers need to get into change management processes and understand the strategies of change. The Deputy disclosed that the Headteacher allowed people to make mistakes and to support them, knowing he could always work with the staff to develop them whilst rectifying these mistakes. The Deputy also stated that the Head had an attitude that is very much “let's do it and then worry about the processes separately” demonstrating that he felt confident in his ability to adapt to the situations that may arise from this approach, a trait that Anderson and Anderson (2001) identify as being transformational. However the Deputy was not as comfortable employing this approach as he pointed out:

sometimes I think we've jumped into a thing too quickly in a certain way and then we've had to go back and change it slightly and I think what we have to do as an organisation is to start to slow down a little bit at times.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

The leaders of the Red, Yellow and Green schools emphasised the importance of seeking the views of and consulting with others. This would seem to support a desire to demonstrate a level of flexibility within their future plans. The Head of the Green School explained:

we've got a lot of distributive leadership in the school. We have lots of forums where staff can raise ideas and challenge thinking and challenge the direction the school is going in as long as it's kind of very productive and positive and is leading to improved outcomes. I positively encourage that kind of debate and dialogue.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Headteacher also found the feedback crucial to ensuring the school moved forward, a view that was also demonstrated by the Red School where the Deputy described how staff play a part in deciding the future of the school through open discussion:

it is done through all these different levels, lots of open discussion and people make their recommendations.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

She also described how, in her opinion, the staff are able to adapt quickly to situations

we're not like a huge tanker that takes five miles to stop, we can adapt quite quickly, I don't think it used to be that way but I think we have got better at adapting quite quickly to change and I think part of the reason we can do that is because our leadership team has become larger. When it was a smaller leadership team with people with very defined and specific job roles it was sometimes harder to get people out of those, sort of out of that track they were in to then shift them and deviate them onto something else.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

The Headteacher of this school also demonstrated a flexible approach to staffing and developing the school. He identified that he had re-invented the school several times whilst he had been in post and was pleased to have high levels of diversity throughout. He was sufficiently flexible to accept that the school mission statement was interpreted differently by different members of staff:

we have one mission but it can be interpreted differently in MFL [Modern Foreign Languages], catering, creative and performing, sport, wherever. Same thing, but this is how it looks over here guys and it'll be interesting to see where we go next.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

He exemplified this belief in diversity several times. When describing how the school operated he stated that:

If you were to pick a random member of staff and ask them for a good exposition of what the school is about you will find diversity.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

He considered the school staff to be distinct and unique. All schools, in his opinion, were built on different personalities, different requirements and different skills. He described the benefits of encouraging flexibility and ensuring that different perspectives work together in harmony:

it's the interaction of different styles and the evolution of people who used to work one way and now quite clearly are working another, that keeps it, that leavens the place. I need the different approaches stitched together, bumping into each other, not conflicting but bumping, bumping in and getting energy off each other and that's a good thing. I hope we've got a pretty fair example of most anyone you can think of in the building, you know we've got the rampant optimists, the absolute stone bottom pessimists, the technically gifted, the technically inept who will muddle through, the massively pupil centred, possibly too much, the massively staff centred, the massively subject centred, yeah, keep rolling I could probably, you know if you gave me one I could tell you, and it's not chaos, it's not even organised chaos it's constructive diversity.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

This highlighted the Headteacher's level of flexibility in that he was able to accept these high levels of diversity and encourage these without the need to rein them into a preconceived model of his school. This Headteacher also described his relationship with the community and how it has been completely different in the different schools he has worked in before. He considered that the different communities had completely different requirements. He also revealed an enjoyment of entering into the unknown and described how many circumstances had made him reassess his approach and that this reassessment would often lead to an improvement in the level of planned outcomes. This acceptance of the unknown and confidence in being able

to adapt to it was summarised in his statement about his plans for moving the school forward:

we've done all this good stuff so what's next then? We think we know. It'll be interesting to find out.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

This statement demonstrated flexibility in allowing the staff enough freedom to evolve naturally to some extent.

The Headteacher of the Green School also demonstrated a similar ability to adapt to an unexpected future. He explained how he encouraged all staff to take risks and was always looking for initiatives that were innovative. He described how he adapts to different situations and the importance of reading and interpreting situations to ensure his actions match them. This was evident when he argued that he used:

different styles of leadership to suit different contexts or situations as well as sometimes having to operate in an autocratic way, sometimes you don't, but it depends on the context really doesn't it.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

This statement fully suggests that the Headteacher was aware of the need to be flexible and was prepared to alter his actions to meet this need.

Across all the sampled schools it was evident that Headteachers were able to adapt to a level of flexibility that allowed staff to develop and contribute. Staff were encouraged to take risks and the level of diversity across schools was seen as a strength to be celebrated. This accords with Jacobs' (2007) description of transformational leaders being confident to allow the school to grow through uncertainty and view this as an opportunity to move forward. This flexibility of transformational leaders is centred only in their approach and daily actions, but not

in their morals and core values, which are a permanent feature of how these Headteachers approach their work.

Links to core values

Transformational leadership is linked to a strong moral purpose and a set of core values (Anderson and Anderson, 2001). The importance of Headteachers' core values were demonstrated in two ways; firstly by the way Headteachers referred to their core values; secondly in the way that Headteachers sought to relay these core values to others. Elements of the Headteacher's core values were visible when the Head of the Green School talked about his belief in young people and his desire to ensure his actions met their individual needs. He described how grateful he was to be in a position where he could do this:

I'm very proud to serve the communities I do, predominantly working class communities but with real aspirations to improve.
(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Headteacher of the Blue School also discussed the desire to meet the needs of the individual and for the importance of equal opportunities, she explained:

I am passionate in every sense about equal opportunities in everything that that means.
(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

This view was shared by the Head of the Red School who explained how he saw the diversity of the community as a real strength and aimed to support each individual by ensuring he meets their needs. When describing the importance of achievement he related this to the needs of the students, pointing out that this was his reason for striving for improvement:

It's still about maximising what we do, we are about all the kids.
(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

These statements reveal some aspects of the core values of these Headteachers' respect for others and a belief that people can achieve.

The Deputy of the Yellow School expressed his view that the Headteacher fosters relationships based upon honesty and that this is partly responsible for him being so successful. The Headteacher gave an insight into some of his personal values when he described how his belief in children helps to drive him forward:

I will fight for our kids, and I will fight for them in terms of that I want them to have, the things that they haven't had in terms of quality learning experience and it disappoints me when I hear or read about negative stuff about kids in communities, kids in this, kids in that as I value them all enormously.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

The Headteacher also revealed his determination to ensure that he is true to his values, even in the face of adversity and external pressures that he considers may have been preventing him from making the changes that he knows are needed:

I think you have to be pretty bold and pretty determined to stand up for what you believe in when those constraints or shackles are repeatedly there.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

The Head of the Green School noted that it was just as important to him to ensure students became good citizens as it was to ensure that they achieve academic results, a view expressed by the Blue and Yellow Schools. The Headteacher of the Yellow School said it was about:

first and foremost [...] how we can enable and empower them to become successful adults.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

He also highlighted the need to develop self-respect, self-esteem and self-worth in individuals, the same point that was made by the Deputy of the Blue School. The Headteachers of the Green and the Yellow Schools went a step further with this,

implying that their goal was to ultimately improve the moral stance of society. The Head of the Green School explained:

the impact that you can have is immeasurable in how you can change people's lives for the better and improve society and so I think [I came into teaching for] very noble reasons really.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

Similarly, the Head of the Yellow School argued that:

[schools have] the key role to play in challenging and changing the culture of communities and improving the aspiration, attitudes and values of the people.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

The Headteachers are driven by values and a desire to share these values with others, both to improve the lives of their pupils and to strengthen their local communities. The Headteachers within this study all revealed considerable respect for others and a determination to provide learners with opportunities to raise their self-esteem and self-belief. They demonstrated a genuine caring for students as individuals, and a desire to meet their individual needs and ensure they received the same opportunities as others.

The strength of these values could explain why the Headteachers in this study are so passionate about providing opportunities for students within this Local Authority. The idea that students are from a socially deprived background conjures up a deficit notion of them as learners coupled with a view that the students are not receiving the same benefits as other students. This in turn encourages these Headteachers to provide more for their students in an attempt to remedy this situation and to ensure a level of fairness is achieved. As well as meeting students' needs, the Headteachers also wanted to help students to focus on self-development, enabling them to change. This fundamental belief of transformational leaders, that people can change, was not

confined to others; Headteachers also demonstrated that they themselves were still continually seeking to grow and change.

Ability to change

The belief in core values and the ability to develop further are traits associated with transformational leadership (Anderson and Anderson, 2001). Perhaps because of this, the Headteachers in this study saw themselves both as leaders of change and leaders who change. Evidence of the way in which Headteachers change over time was provided by the Deputy Head of the Red School, who stated that:

initially around the time that I was appointed I would say, it was fair to say that the head would have led most of those you know visions, those strategic visions were his, those strategic intents if you like were his, but very much shared by the governors and the senior leadership team as it was constituted then. Since then we've had a series of meetings and off site weekends away and that sort of thing, not just as a leadership team but with some of these extended leaders, middle leaders, who have come into the mix and we've gone off site to plan to look at the vision afresh.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

This shift in movement from the Headteacher acting independently from the rest of the school's leadership team to becoming a leader who involves the team more was also noted by the Deputy of the Yellow School:

he's getting better [the Headteacher] a perfect example of it would be that he wants to still have three separate lunches coming into this year and the leadership said no we don't want them. At one stage he said, this is an executive decision and I am saying it is three lunches, but he actually backed down when he said right I'll listen to your idea and by the end of the year we'd actually changed it to two lunches. Four years ago he would have never done this because it was he who was leading. He's started to realise that he has the capacity now underneath him to be able to pull away and just leave it and let it run.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

The Headteacher of the Red School agreed with this when he discussed his belief that he needs to keep re-inventing himself to ensure that he still has something to offer to in the school, or leave the school to someone else:

you can keep re-inventing yourself, or you can significantly re-invent yourself a reasonable number of times. Why I do this job still is that I still think the agenda, we haven't finished what I came to do, there will be a point where we will finish what I came to do and it is incumbent on me to get the hell out of the way at the right point, because the place is going to succeed again and will re-invent itself with somebody else. Somebody else, totally a new educational landscape, new challenges, brilliant technology, BSF, whatever, it will re-invent itself again or die.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

The Headteacher of the Blue School also described how she uses personal reflection as a means of checking and altering her actions, stating that she consciously tries to change her actions by relating them to her role model, her father:

my father, was a very successful man who was full of humility and a good moral man, and I try, in everything that informs me, to have him as my role model.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

The Head of the Yellow School identified that he actively sought to learn from external examples of good practice; he talked about his observations of foundation schools and academies and expressed his opinion that there was always something he could learn from sharing good practice in other schools, revealing that his is open to change and seeking ways to improve.

The Head of the Red School described how discussions with staff could produce changes in his beliefs, he explained:

I won't ask them to take an agenda forward unless I believe in it, I won't do it. There are things from the National Agenda that we do less of than other people might want us to do because I remain unconvinced, but I won't ask them to do it until I am.

They can convince me. You know that play can change because they can convince me, I'm happy with that, but I hope they accept my view. I believe they accept that when we do things, I do it with them, not to them.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

This would indicate that the Headteacher is open to changing his opinions and beliefs.

The interviews revealed that these Headteachers are aware of the need to change and improve and are not expecting to maintain their present mode of operation, even if it has been successful up to now. Moreover, the willingness to reflect and adapt was still linked very strongly to their values and beliefs, a characteristic of transformational leaders.

Conclusions

This chapter has shown how all Headteachers in this study deploy transformational leadership within their schools, especially when moving the school forward or developing people. The use of transformational leadership rests heavily on the core values of these Headteachers, all of whom are concerned to produce opportunities for both students and staff to grow as individuals. The Headteachers in this study have accepted the need to be fluid and flexible, with a confidence that radiates from the transformational belief that people will always rise to the challenge and triumph over unexpected circumstances. In each school, the Headteachers provided evidence that they helped others to share in the vision so that together they could be more than they currently are, creating an empowered proactive approach.

The Headteachers also showed a desire to create radical shifts in culture, behaviour and mind-set that would be long lasting and sustainable, a key feature of transformational leadership (Anderson and Anderson, 2001). These Headteachers do not view themselves as people who have nothing more to learn. They are constantly growing and improving, in line with the nature of transformational leadership. Included in this personal development is the extent and nature of their use made of transformational leadership by these Headteachers which has increased with the time they have spent leading their current school. The newly appointed Headteacher was seen to be less transformational in her approach than the longer-serving Headteachers., However, even the more experienced Headteachers provided evidence that their level of transformational leadership had increased since leading their current school, even when they had served as Headteachers in other schools prior to this post. This could suggest that it is the leading of a school within an area of high social deprivation that has, in some part, encouraged these Headteachers to become more transformational with a stronger focus on developing individuals and expanding their horizons and potential.

This development may also be influenced by the leader's core values and their desire to see fairness and equality for all. When serving in a socially deprived area there is a belief that students are not exposed to the same opportunities or life-chances that others receive, and as such there is a desire to provide more for them, especially in developing the way they see the world and raising their aspirations. Another common theme that emerged from these interviews was the feeling on the part of these Headteachers that it was a privilege to serve a socially deprived area in the way they do. They were all convinced that they were able to make a significant

contribution to the community in which their school was situated, and believed they had made significant improvements to the life-chances and aspirations of students within their schools. When analysed using the constructivist paradigm, these convictions would lead to the beliefs being manifested, a deeper discussion of this will be developed further in Chapter 6. It could be that a community that is socially deprived has more scope for the actions taken by Headteachers to have a bigger impact and yield greater results and greater rewards for the Headteachers. This in turn encourages the Headteachers to become even more transformational and to seek more opportunities to transform the lives of those within their schools. The next chapter will present the data to identify where the interview responses answer the original research questions.

Chapter 6

Headteachers Deploying Transformational Leadership in Challenging Circumstances

Introduction

The first aim of this study is to explore the extent to which transactional and transformational leadership is deployed by Headteachers in each of the participating schools in this socially deprived local authority. This has been analysed throughout Chapters 4 and 5, illustrating where both styles are in place across all the sample schools. The second aim of the study is to identify where transformational leadership is successfully deployed by these Headteachers. To achieve these aims a series of research questions were generated through the review of literature in Chapter 2:

1. Is transformational leadership significant in schools in challenging circumstances?
2. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances regard themselves as transformational leaders?
3. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances transform followers using vision and communication?
4. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances value and build relations?
5. How do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances handle unpredictability?
6. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances believe in motivation as a vehicle for achievement?

7. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances relay their moral values in their communications?
8. Can the successes of Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances be attributed to transformational leadership?

The data pertaining to these research questions has largely been presented in chapters 4 and 5. The following sections in this chapter will develop an analysis of the implications of these findings and examine the deployment of transformational leadership using the framework and data derived from the first seven research questions. The chapter will then explore in detail the evidence relating to the degree to which the success of Headteachers and their schools can be attributed to transformational leadership.

The deployment of transformational leadership

A key feature of transformational leaders, that the Headteachers within this study considered to be essential for serving in these socially-deprived schools, was the ability to make lasting and profound changes to the view of the world and underpinning values held by some pupils, staff and members of the wider community. This was a focus for Headteachers in these communities and was articulated by the Head of the Yellow School when he described how he felt he needed to change the culture of the entire community, so that the community members valued education more, he argued:

... we currently have generations of parents who had pretty poor experiences in our school and *de facto* that's instilled upon their siblings about the value of their schools and I think that's probably the factor of all schools in the areas where the socio-economic conditions are less favourable. So, there's significant

job to do there in changing the culture of communities as well and I believe that through learning that can be achieved.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

He then proceeded to detail his opinion that the values and beliefs of the school needed to be embedded in others, in order to improve the perception they have of themselves. He expressed this when he said:

I think professional development and continuing professional development for all staff including associate staff and anybody who works in the organisation whether it's the dinner ladies, the cleaners, you know, they've all got to be involved in the shared values and beliefs in the organisation about, and that's about developing respect, self-respect, self-esteem, self-worth.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

This illustrates his belief that what is needed to improve a school in a challenging socially-deprived area is a change of self-belief. The Headteacher felt that his responsibility was to deal with this to affect the entire community's level of deprivation:

38% of our students have lone parents, 51% live in the poorest 10% of housing stock in the country and 21% on free meals and indices of multiple deprivation are high and I think those issues would've got to tackle the issue to do with child poverty

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

He then concluded by stating the way he was achieving this, was by “bringing about a cultural change”.

The belief that he needed to bring about a change in the perceptions of others both inside and outside the school was also a key priority for the Headteacher of the Green School, and one that was not limited to members of the school.

[We] have worked very hard on looking at changes in culture and belief [...] I think probably the more time you spend in the teaching profession, the more you see it as a way to bring about change, and benefit to people's lives, both young people and again I think in addition to that the wider community as well, and the impact that you can have is immeasurable isn't it, in

how you can change people's lives for the better and improve society.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The constructivist paradigm would suggest that this belief that the Headteacher should and can make a major change, would direct his actions towards implementing it and would result in the change being manifested. This has proved to be the case.

The newly-appointed Headteacher for the Blue School had a different view. Although she was aware that transformational leadership needed to be implemented, by the manner in which she noted the changes that needed to take place and the extent of these changes, her approach was not transformational in nature as it focussed more on tasks than on people. She described how her vision would require new procedures:

[We need a] real radical change in terms of following procedures, so a real willingness to recognise that changes have to be made in a short space of time, and actually getting on and doing it.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

This was different to the transformational style of the Headteacher of the Green School who talked about his school priority, stating that “the vision is really to ensure that we raise aspirations”; a vision that had become part of the school ethos. The Deputy of this school expressed a similar statement when she explained that the vision was all about:

Raising aspiration and achievement and it's the aspiration comes first and I think the achievement follows that.

(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

She also explained how this was achieved, by altering the self-belief of student:

[We] give them [students] some belief in themselves. So I think in terms of raising aspiration, raising achievement that is, it is the vision of the school

(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

The creation of a shared vision is a feature of transformational leadership, and one that Headteachers in these schools considered to be mandatory. Furthermore, as Southworth (1998) describes, the transformational leader ensures the vision is carried by others, and is at the heart of their actions. This was evident when the Deputy of the Yellow School explained how the school vision was being implemented:

So I'd say that it's the leadership team, the staff is the community who now start to drive that vision, not just one individual person [...] we did a visioning day with all the staff as part of the training day and we asked them to look out what would be their vision for the college and the community
(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

The involvement of stakeholders in the creation of the vision gives them some ownership for the vision. This was also noted by the Headteacher of the Green School, as he described the how the vision was generated by:

all staff really and it's not just staff, it's been the whole community really both parents, students, governors, partners of the school, have all been involved in creating that vision [...] the engagement of the community is paramount to me and the way that we communicate that is by involving them really
(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

Transformational leaders have a belief in people and involve others in the creation of the vision as a means of motivating others to act on this vision; a point noted by the Head of the Yellow school when he explained how he involved others in the creation of the vision, but still used this as a means of altering the perceptions of those involved:

staff are very much involved in the vision. I think the vision has to emanate from the leadership, the leader of the school and it comes I think from their own personal beliefs and values, but if it's not something that is shared, then people don't buy into it and I think in that respect, there's a lot of perhaps coaxing, mentoring and a lot of work to be done in sharing and agreeing the values of visions.
(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

A similar stance was taken by the Headteacher of the Green School when he explained how he considered everyone to be a leader, from the cleaners and kitchen staff and from the students and Heads of department. He expressed his view that the involvement of others was needed to bring about change, claiming:

that's the best way in my opinion in the circumstances that our school is in that you can bring about change and effect change.
(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

This does not mean that the Headteachers are manipulating people to achieve their own gains, but instead believe they are acting in the best interests of their followers.

A belief that was articulated by the Headteacher of the Yellow School, who said:

I would described myself as being passionate about people, without necessarily agreeing them all the time and of course also having to do some difficult things with people which does affect their lives
(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

He proceeded to explain that his motivation was to empower others to succeed. This is one of the underpinning features of transactional leadership.

It is evident that all the Headteachers in this study referred to the need to alter the self-image that their followers had. This was seen as a way to raise aspirations and to enable others to share in the vision of an alternative, better future for all. The data revealed a theme amongst Headteachers, in that they involve others in the creation of this vision, inspiring them to believe in the vision as a real way forward. This involvement was not isolated to members of the school, but also had an emphasis on members of the community, revealing that Headteachers were aware of the importance of altering the perceptions of all members living within a socially-deprived area. This demonstrates the extent to which transformational leadership is significant in schools in challenging circumstances, as revealed by the importance

these Headteachers placed on the inclusion of values, the creation of a vision and the involvement of others. The Headteachers felt that the way to regenerate a community, and break a cycle of families being born into, and remaining in, poverty was not only to improve the achievements of their students, but also to transform the perceptions of the students and the community in which they live.

Do Headteachers see themselves as transformational leaders?

Once it is accepted that Headteachers in this study, serving in schools faced with challenging circumstances accredit some of their success to the ability to behave as transformational leaders by attempting to alter the perceptions of others, it poses the question about the extent to which they regard themselves as transformational leaders and, as such, construct a reality in which they are transformational. The Deputy of the Red School shared the desire for the leadership to become more transformational:

[...as far as the school leadership being transformational...], I would say it's getting there. Yes. I think [...] hand on heart I couldn't say it's totally there, I think it is getting there
(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

Nevertheless, the Headteachers and Deputies in this study stated that they believed the leadership was to some extent transformational, as stated by the Head of the Yellow School:

I think transformation of schools is something evidentially that I've been able to achieve
(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

furthermore, the Headteachers believed this could be accredited to the positive changes that had taken place, as illustrated by the Head of the Green School:

I think it [school leadership] is transformational, you only need to look at where the school was and where it is now, and the

way that we operate and the way that work and the way that we manage relationships
(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

The recognition of this ability to make significant changes and the focus of Headteachers, described earlier, on altering the aspirations and self-belief of people provides evidence that these Headteachers are intentionally acting as transformational leaders, both for individuals and for wider communities. This is especially important for schools in challenging circumstances where the Headteachers believe that the entire community needs to be empowered, to allow them to believe in a future vision where they can help themselves and achieve. One possible benefit of serving in a deprived area is that the actions taken by Headteachers have a proportionately greater impact on the lives of children and the general community, due to some community members having less access to enriching experiences. For Headteachers to be successful in these areas, they are required to maintain levels of optimism that prevent them from being negatively affected by the depressing and potentially demotivating surroundings.

The constructivist paradigm depicts a self-fulfilling outlook on life, so that people with negative mind-sets play a role in the creation of the negativity in which they find themselves. To be truly transformed, under the constructivist paradigm, people must first alter their mind-set to focus on positivity, which will in turn empower them to act upon this belief, enabling the creation of a new, more positive future. The modelling of this positivity is a characteristic noticed by Kurland *et al* (2010) and is evident in vision-focussed, transformational leaders. The level of deprivation within the communities where these schools are situated may create a situation where there is greater feedback to Headteachers, as they can easily see the benefits of their

actions, encouraging them to develop their level of transformational leadership to a greater extent than if they served in a different school. Indeed all these Headteachers viewed themselves as transformational in their operations, with an awareness of how they had shaped communities, transformed the lives of others and altered the self-belief of socially deprived individuals through their creation of a positive vision and the communication of this vision with as many stakeholders as possible.

Vision and communication in transformational leadership

Kurland *et al* (2010) find that being vision-focussed is a common trait of transformational leaders, and one that is needed to successfully deploy leadership in a transformational manner. In a school with a high degree of social deprivation, this is even more important as the leaders of these schools feel they need to create a vision that not only affects the school, but also infiltrates the beliefs of the entire community, as was revealed by the Deputy of the Yellow School:

... these children come from very deprived environments themselves. I think for me it's about making a difference to that community it's about trying to engaging with people.

(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

Not all the Heads subscribed to the view that wide participation in creating the vision for the school was essential. The newly appointed Head of the Blue School discussed aspects of creating a vision when she explained that it has to be:

top down, because of the very nature of people I suppose coming in at senior leadership team level and saying this is how we are going to do things now.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

In this instance, this Headteacher demonstrated a lack of transformational leadership attitudes regarding the involvement of others, which was very different from the approach described earlier by the Headteachers of the Green and Yellow Schools.

Nevertheless, the majority view among the Headteachers in this study was that engaging members of the wider school community in the creation of the vision was important. The vehicle for this was the process of communication, communicating an inspiring vision where people see themselves as capable of changing. The Green School Headteacher explained how he communicated the vision effectively by involving people in it:

the greatest way to communicate is to involve people isn't it of course, I mean that's what we've done.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

He described how he wrote to parents and invited them to attend a visioning session where they could play a part in the creation of the school vision. He expressed the importance of this by stating:

I think if people have bought into your vision and feel that they've been included in that then they're going to shift and they're going to move towards that end point, whatever that end point is because there never is one, you know but it's that continuing to improve. I think that if people feel that they've been invested in and that they've been listened to and that they've been supported and been given their opportunity that they will move along with you.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

When analysed under the constructivist paradigm, this belief that the way to effectively implement a vision in a community of high social deprivation is to involve others in its creation becomes manifest as it influences future actions. The Head of the Yellow School expressed a similar form of transformation. He explained how he communicates the vision by ensuring that he is consistently on message both in every conversation he has and in the actions he executes. This level of consistency plays a major role in the transformation of others and is also discussed by the Head

of the Blue School, who expressed a view that the message needed to be carried consistently by everyone, not only the Headteacher:

We are about creating culture and ethos and mission, mission statement, call it what you will, vision that everybody's singing from the same hymn sheet.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

She also pointed out that a failure to achieve this would result in the vision not being achieved because the transformation of ethos would not occur, she said:

it has to be an ethos in its true way because ultimately it is what's going on behind every classroom door and if we as leaders don't really encourage every member of staff to share that vision it's not going to happen.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

Communication can be seen, therefore, as an essential part of achieving the vision in order to transform followers which was noted in Chapter 2.

There is little doubt that the Headteachers in this study are guided by a vision of a better future, which is both an important aspect of the constructivist paradigm and a prerequisite for transformational leadership. In an area of high social deprivation, families may not value education highly and often do not see it as a means of breaking out of the poverty in which they find themselves, believing that schools have very little to do with the lives of people within the community (Harris, 2002). The Headteachers in these challenging circumstances use vision and communication to transform the perceptions of others, revealing new ways of thinking and behaving that empower pupils, parents and members of the wider community to take action towards helping themselves. The level of communication required to share the vision effectively, so that it is carried through the entire community, is dependent on their ability to influence followers and build strong relationships with stakeholders.

Valuing and building relationships

Harris (2003) noted how Headteachers who were successful transformational leaders fostered strong relationships between all parties who worked in their school. This is also evident from the interviews with the Headteachers in this study who all expressed a view that relationships should be based on mutual respect; the Headteacher of the Blue School stated that a “belief in mutual respect is what informs everything I do”. The Headteacher of the Yellow School described how respect was essential to engage students:

it’s a relationship which is engaging and I talk a lot about the culture of compelling engagement and what that means. I think essentially it’s about two way respect and that is about self-respect and it’s about being approachable and it is being prepared to listen to people and not always agreeing with them. I think that’s one of the biggest challenges that faces the school and there is no doubt and we can agree or disagree with it but you know, the school, the success of schools is about people who lead them from the top in terms of the impact that they have and then how students identify with them.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

This reveals the importance that Headteachers attach to relationships in a school with a high level of social deprivation. The Headteacher of the Green School also noted that, in his opinion, it is the challenging circumstances of the school that require this emphasis on relationships, stating that relationships were critical “in a school like mine anyway”. This Headteacher recalled how he had focussed on building a strong relationship between the school and the community from the very start:

... within about two days I was down in the community talking to parents about, often about issues with students, but actually in the community talking to parents and trying to find solutions so building relationships right at that point.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Headteachers discussed the importance of building partnerships between parents, the school and the community, with the Headteacher of the Blue School

stating that she feels privileged to be able to serve a deprived area and form relationships, as she believes the key to improving is in the three-way partnership between school, students and the community. This illustrates the level of value Headteachers place on the relationships that form within schools, and the actions they will take to facilitate the part that productive relationships play in the development of the school. Through this belief, Headteachers construct strong relationships that provide transformational leaders with the ability to transform the perceptions of others allowing a level of fluidity where thoughts and beliefs can be adapted to meet the changing needs of schools. Communities of high social deprivation are influenced greatly by political decisions and levels of recession; national trends can have a dramatic impact on the number of people in a family who have work, and on the financial benefits they receive. If Headteachers are to influence communities of high deprivation they need to be able to change quickly to meet the circumstances in which their communities find themselves.

Handling unpredictability

A significant feature of transformational leaders is that their belief in people provides them with an inner confidence that enables them to allow their organisation to evolve, instead of having to restrict everything to make it fit a predesigned template. Harris (2003) notes this as a key feature of transformational leaders and one that reveals that transformational behaviour is taking place. The Headteachers demonstrated different methods of handling unpredictability. The Head of the Blue School described how she holds onto the underpinning vision and refuses to allow circumstances to deviate her from this vision:

I don't think I will ever deviate from that vision, because otherwise it's not worth the paper it's written on is it? The

methods by which I achieve that vision, the deadlines, the timings may have to change, so I'm not to get frustrated and impatient with people, I need to recognise that sometimes practical situations may mean that it can't happen then, or that particular thing can't happen, so I might have to just adapt it, and compromises may have to be made along the way, but students will always come first in that compromise decision, priorities may have to change, but I've got to keep, I've got to keep the vision, because otherwise it will all just crumble won't it.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

The Headteacher of the Green School agreed, noting the importance of generating enough momentum to carry changes forward through unpredicted circumstance. He said we do this:

by being distributive I think and look at things in a way that tends to minimise issues. Where they do arise I suppose then you challenge that don't you, and you know, I think staff in the school and kids and parents are aware of where [the Green School] is going, and what we want to achieve and what we want to do and people buy into that.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Headteacher of the Red School described how he continually reassesses the situation and identifies what aspects can be salvaged and what changes need to be made, he said:

If it's blocked, or we can't do it, that has to be annoying first, because otherwise we wouldn't have wanted to do it. If we haven't thought it through to a point where we think it is right and ... sustainable ... we shouldn't have actually been doing it. So if it blocks it, we've lost something from the original concept haven't we. OK, go around again; what could we salvage out of that? ... the trouble is you can't always salvage an idea, if you can do half of it, it may be better not to do any of it, because it actually, was a whole package ... But on the other hand, usually out of that emerges a way forward which says OK if we are not doing this, or we have to do it that way for very, very powerful reasons, can we get back to that?

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

Finally, the Headteacher of the Yellow School described how he incorporates change management into his daily practices and imparts this to his team and to everyone in his school, describing the importance of being a critical thinker:

we've got to be very much reviewers in our lives and we've also got to be strategic thinkers and very objective thinkers and I think one of the things which is critical in terms of what we do is how we handle situations and so what stops you in your track and because I think that's an appropriate issue.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

He then proceeded to describe how he feels change management is a necessary part of school improvement, and should be something that everyone is trained for and expects. It is evident that the sets of data from each of the schools provided instances where the Headteachers of those schools acted as transformational leaders, and it is possible that their main areas of school success could be explained by the constructivist paradigm, where Headteachers view themselves as successful leaders who are able to lead in times of change by motivating and inspiring others.

All the Headteachers identified different methods of dealing with change and unpredictability. Although it is difficult to rank the individual responses, it could be argued that the Headteachers of the Yellow and Red Schools are transformational in their approach due to their expectation of the need to reflect and adapt. Similarly, the Headteacher of the Green School, by utilising the diverse skills of others to form a team that has the ability to handle unexpected situation, could also be viewed as transformational. However, the Headteacher of the Blue School uses a fixed vision and is unwilling to deviate from it; such an approach could be transformational in its use of a vision, but could also be seen as transactional in its reluctance to adapt or change.

The use of motivation as a vehicle for achievement

Schools situated in areas of high deprivation are faced with students who have low aspirations and a lack of self-belief. The Headteachers in this study noted that it is essential to change this ethos if the school is going to improve. A key aspect of transformational leaders is that they lead through motivation (Hartog, 2003). The belief that the development of people is the motivating force that leads them to achieve was expressed by the Headteacher of the Yellow School, who shared his thoughts on training young people to become change managers. In a school faced with challenging circumstances the Headteacher's focus was on raising the aspirations and the self-belief of an entire community. Empowering students to become change managers in the community could accelerate the improvement and create a level of sustainability where the community members become actively involved in bringing about changes. The Headteacher explained:

my vision always is being focused on young people first and foremost and how we can enable and empower them to become successful adults and how they can become the change managers.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

If Headteachers are to deploy transformational leadership successfully, their colleagues must carry the message with motivation and inspiration and the Headteachers must believe in this as a vehicle for achievement, in order to construct it. When members of a school in challenging circumstances are motivated, they develop a belief in themselves that alters their actions, enabling them to overcome the mental barriers associated with poverty. The Head of the Red School highlighted this when he used the metaphor of motivated students going through walls:

when they're not motivated you will not move one millimetre, they'll be very nice about it, they don't get in your face they just won't do it, it won't get done. Motivated, they'll go through

walls, they go through walls every week, that's the beauty of being here.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

The positive emotions this requires in all parties are generated, according to Cameron (2006), when people experience virtuousness and value-based leadership, which elevates them to new levels of job satisfaction and pride, motivating them to achieve more. This is in agreement with the findings of Sun (2009) who states that transformational leaders empower colleagues to “realize the organizational goals and even make extra efforts for the benefit of the organization” (Cameron, 2006:352).

Relaying moral values in communications

It is widely accepted (Bell and Stevenson, 2006; Hartog, 2003) that for transformational leadership to be deployed successfully, the leader must relay their values through the interactions they have with others. This is particularly important in a school in challenging circumstances due to the level of motivation and personal pride that can be generated through value-based leadership (Cameron, 2006).

The data collected from the Headteachers in this study illustrates clearly the importance they attached to relaying their own moral values in their communications. When considering the significance of transformational leadership in schools in challenging circumstances, it became evident that the Headteachers had a moral belief that students in socially deprived areas deserve more. The Headteacher of the Yellow School expressed his belief that the issues associated with deprivation needed to be tackled, and the Headteacher of the Blue School detailed how she had a desire to raise the life chances of her students:

our community here is in I think, one of the most deprived constituencies in terms of, you know, the raw sort of income of

our young people, or our families. If that's the case, and I do believe ... [it is, then] the way that you affect a person's life chances is by the qualifications that they receive and therefore the number of paths that are open them to choose what they want to do. If we believe in all that on a very simple level, then of course.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

Similarly, the belief that people are fundamentally good was demonstrated when the Headteacher of the Blue School described how all parents have aspirations and all parents want the best for their children:

it's not just a middle-class ... aspiration that their children do well, I don't believe that. I think it is something inbuilt in any parent.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

The Headteacher of the Green School acknowledged one of the effects of the school's challenging circumstances on the students, describing how he relates to the worst behaved children in his school:

even the students who present challenging behaviour sometimes, when you are talking to them individually, then you know, you can get through to them.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

This Headteacher also stated directly that he looks for the best in people, he confirmed:

I am a very positive person and I always look for the best in people and in situations and I think that's the only way that you should live your life really.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

This attitude was demonstrated most clearly by the Headteacher of the Yellow School who confirmed his faith in the aspiration of the whole community, including those families in economic and social poverty. It was also clear that he believed in the school's role as an enabler of positive change in that community:

I would describe the community around our school as mixed and I think it ranges from middle-class, fairly successful, aspirational and affluent to poverty you know, and not just

economic poverty but social poverty as well in terms of families, in terms of their aspiration and in terms of their expectations and yet, what I also see in every bit of our community is hope. I do believe that the vast majority of people don't want to be trapped inside with some of the negativity which they portray but they just don't know how they're going to get out of where they are.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

This shows that the Headteacher believes that people retain an element of hope and would like to break free from the negative habits and negative circumstances they are currently in. It also reveals the extent to which this Head, at least, sees the school and its leadership as having a key role to play in the wider, socially deprived community. Using the constructivist paradigm, it could be argued that the Headteachers' beliefs become realised, manifesting a reality where the children within the school are motivated by the Headteacher to become aspirational in their views.

The Headteacher of the Blue School also revealed a desire to make fundamental changes to the daily behaviour of people:

I don't just mean teaching-staff, it is about an ethos and a culture. It is about respect and the way we all treat each other and speak to each other, it's every member of staff who works in our institution.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

Heads from all of the schools in these communities made references to the need to teach better behaviour, with the Headteacher of the Green School referring to the behaviour of some students as “challenging”, and the Head of the Red School describing how he has one-to-one chats with students to modify their behaviour. The manner in which people relate to each other is mentioned by the Head of the Yellow School who expressed his belief that:

a lot of our schools have got to become kinder places in terms of, you know, how we speak to each other and what our expectations are.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

Another strong underpinning moral belief shared by Headteachers is the desire for everyone to achieve and do well, particularly against a background of challenging circumstances:

Clearly our community here is in ... one of the most deprived constituencies ... I do believe that the way that you affect a person's life chances is by the qualifications that they receive and therefore the number of paths that are open them to choose what they want to do. I just think there is so much potential, in this school, so my vision is about realising the potential of every child in this school.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

This deep rooted belief in better opportunities for children in this socially deprived area an example of what Davies and Brighouse (2010) term passionate leadership with a moral foundation. The Headteachers share their values and vision, but go beyond this to construct an environment where people learn from each other, so that everyone is developed. This goes further than a duty to achieve for students when attending the school, to a desire to achieve for students after they leave, and for members of the community. The desire of these Headteachers to go beyond their school responsibilities and affect the lives of the community is a choice made by the Headteachers that reflects their moral purpose and their wish to provide improvements to the lives of others, where they perceive there to be a lack due to high poverty.

The Headteacher of the Yellow School talked about the learning journey of young people:

I often say that I'm on a mission and I often say I am doing missionary work and I think being a Headteacher is a privilege.

I think to shape people's lives, to shape the learning journey of young people, to shape the learning journey of the school and to develop the community are very privileged things to be able to do. I think if you've got the skills to do it, it's a great gift and you know, I feel fortunate that I can do it and I think demonstratively so.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

All the statements provide an insight into each Headteacher's personal values and were relayed during the interview, providing an understanding of their moral viewpoints and underpinning belief in helping people. The links between transformational leadership and the moral character of the leader are addressed by Bass and Steidlmeier (2006) who argue that the one is characterised by the other, and they cannot be separated. The values these Headteachers carry with them may be responsible for their desire to work in a socially deprived area where they perceive they can make a bigger difference. The Headteachers believe in people, they believe in raising aspirations where they are low and they believe in providing opportunities for all. When examined with reference to the constructivist paradigm, such beliefs allow this desire to transform the lives of others, and can be understood in terms of transformational leadership which facilitates the changes to people's lives that the Headteachers hope to achieve. This then provides the Headteachers with evidence that their actions are successful, which in turn spurs them to become more action-driven, transforming the lives of even more people; this could explain why transformational leadership is more successful in schools in challenging circumstances.

Headteachers as transformational leaders: the evidence for success

When Headteachers are transformational, they create a workforce of staff who share the school's vision, model organisational values and demonstrate high performance

(Bush, 2003). They are involved in the decision-making processes and their levels of creativity are fostered to form an organisation that is focussed on the development of people, while being able to adapt to unexpected changes in order to maintain improvement. It is these features that lead the Headteachers in this study to consider transformational leadership to be linked very strongly to their areas of success. In this particular study, the ability to raise the aspirations and self-belief of others, while simultaneously being able to adapt quickly to political changes, are very important for the success of schools in socially deprived areas. When attempting to measure the level of this success a range of criteria are available, some tangible such as examination results and some less tangible, such as changes of ethos. Analysis of the successful leadership in these schools will focus on the impact that these Headteachers believe they have had: the impact on students' achievement; on raising their aspirations; the impact on relationships within the school; the impact on staff and student motivation; the changes in status for the schools; and the impact these Headteachers have had on the wider community.

Impact on students

There is evidence that the Headteachers have had a positive impact on the aspirations and achievements of students within their schools. Aspiration and achievement are thought to be linked, as the Headteacher of the Green School highlighted when he stated his belief that his achievements could be accredited to the changes he had secured in altering the self-beliefs of people:

Ten years ago our students really didn't believe in themselves; they didn't believe they could do it and so there was a change in ethos that went off and it started with the staff, but it is about a change in belief that went on in getting our students to think and believe that they could also do it

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

This improvement is evident in the way the Green School achieved a high Contextual Value Added score (see Appendix 5) revealing that students attending the Green School made more progress than most other schools in similar circumstances. This improvement also applied to the tangible areas such as the shift that the school has made in the attitudes and aspiration of students. The Headteacher explained how the school has affected this to such an extent that:

when students do come to us, they are engaged and they want to learn and they want to achieve and they want to aspire to better things.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Head of the Green School described how he believes they have transformed followers by changing the way students view themselves. He detailed how the vision has encompassed this when he said that the:

vision is really to ensure that we raise aspirations and we raise achievement for all young people.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

This Headteacher demonstrated his success in raising the aspirations of students by mentioning the fact that every child who left last year either continued with their education or secured employment, a statistic he was proud of.

The Headteacher of the Red School explained how he shared his vision constantly with students to raise their aspirations and involve them in the development of the school:

I have a concept or two in mind about where the next generation [are to go] ... so, they contribute by doing, I sometimes don't necessarily communicate first go, and I know that, or second go, or third go, but we keep communicating.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

This is also demonstrated by the Deputy of the Green School who explained that it has taken a great deal of time to achieve the success they have, and that they have

managed to raise aspirations and achievement by creating a vision that is now shared throughout the school and is understood by the majority of people within the school.

The impact that the sharing of a vision can have on raising the aspirations of children from a community with a high level of social deprivation was made apparent by the Deputy of this school:

One of the big things that we have done also is as well as the exam results we try and get the kids an absolutely massive range of pastoral activities, we do trips all over the place there's hundreds of them go, they are going to Canada this year. But, just about, there are the large trips but just about giving them the opportunity to look a little bit further than [this town] and to raise their aspiration, and realise there is a big world out there and that it is not just centred around [villages within this town] and I think that is how our aim our goal and to give these kids the best chance in life that we can.

(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

The Green School also demonstrated instances of success that could be attributed to aspects of transformational leadership; for example it is important to the Headteacher that students in this community are developed as whole people, by not just focussing on exam results. He illustrates this when he said:

Making sure that students enjoy school and that they feel safe and secure in school and I suppose that the vision is as well to ensure that students do not only leave school with good qualifications but also as good citizens and I think that the changes that we've had over the past few years are beginning to show the reward for that.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

Throughout the interviews the Headteachers referred to the need to raise the aspirations and the self-belief of learners, as they felt this was essential in a school in challenging circumstances. The Headteachers from all schools described their greatest change as their change in ethos:

I think the biggest change [at this school] has been cultural change.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

The Headteachers believed that their ability to raise aspirations was as important as anything else they were able to achieve, and was a result of their ability to form and foster strong relationships.

Impact on relationships

The relationships Headteachers wanted to foster throughout the school were modelled by the Headteachers themselves, and this was expressed by the Deputy of the Red School:

you get to the working relationship, so I feel that that's very much, led by the head's own working relationships with us.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

These Headteachers felt that their relationships were part of their transformational leadership style and were responsible for the outcomes they achieved; when describing the leadership of his school, the Headteacher of the Green School said:

I think it is transformational, you only need to look at where the school was and where it is now and the way that we operate and the way that we work in managing relationships and situations has led to a massive increase in outcomes and long may it continue.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

He also stressed his understanding that relationships are essential for the success of a school in challenging circumstances. This Headteacher's belief that cultures need changing to generate improvements relies upon the ability to form strong relationships across all parties; he described this as being critical when he said:

if you're going to talk about change and improvement I think that for me one of the absolutely key things that's led to that change and that shift in culture and dynamic is relationships across the board. I think relationships between staff and students, relationships amongst staff, relationships with parents,

all of these things are absolutely critical really in terms of improvement, in my opinion, in a school like mine anyway.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

He then quoted the statistics of the school's most recent student questionnaire, with 98% of students expressing the opinion that the Green School is a good place to be.

It is also evident that Headteachers value relationships that they are not part of, for example, the Green School Headteacher described his pride when staff run pastoral trips for students:

the staff are prepared to put on [a range of trips] for students again [which] builds those very positive relationships and that I would say is intrinsic really to improvement.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Deputy Headteachers also shared first-hand experience of the value that Headteachers associate with positive relationships, as all of them felt that they have a very strong, positive relationship with the Headteacher. The Deputy of the Blue School described his relationship with the Head as:

an open relationship and it's about and what [the Head] has done in that she has been completely honest and forthright and hidden nothing from me and it's about that ownership that I feel that I've got ownership within the leadership of the College and again that I know that I can trust [the Head], I can talk to [her] about anything, you know, let's say there are particularly difficulties without actually feeling intimidated I'm not feeling the fact that you know I've failed by asking ... it's a very constructive relationship.

(Blue School Deputy Head – interview 22/10/2008)

He also described the Headteacher as being "extremely supportive". A similar message was relayed by the Deputy of the Red School who described the relationship with the Headteacher as being:

very positive, very warm, there is a lot of mutual respect and trust there, I certainly feel that, I certainly feel that I am trusted to take the initiative and get on and crack on with things that I don't necessarily need to bother him with all the time although I

am conscious to make sure that he's in agreement with the decisions that I'm making.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

The Deputy of the Red School also revealed that she thinks the Headteacher has selected staff because of the relationships he knows he can form with them. She expressed a view that she and the other Deputy Headteachers share the belief that he has selected them for their differences and the contribution their diversity can bring to the school:

myself and another colleague were appointed at the same time to do specific things at that time and we often say that [the Head] obviously had a very clear idea in his head what he wanted. We work well together, we complement each other but we are totally different and whether by accident or design that has benefited both us and we believe the school. I'm sure there's been an element of planned approach to the recruitment of certain members of the leadership team.

(Red School Deputy Head – interview 18/12/2008)

The Headteachers felt that relationships were essential to the success of their schools, with the Headteacher of the Green School stating that focussing on relationships was “absolutely key” to motivating followers.

Impact on staff and student motivation

The interviews revealed that Headteachers believe in motivation as a vehicle for achievement. They describe their staff as motivated, which, when examined through the constructivist paradigm would manifest in the way the Headteacher communicates and relates to staff, encouraging them to become the way they are represented in the Headteacher's thoughts. The Headteacher of the Green School pointed out:

we are a highly motivated staff, I think and I include myself in that as well and again I think that's because we work very closely and collectively as a team. It's evident throughout the whole of the school really, there's lots of professional dialogue

that goes on lots of thinking about learning and pedagogy, people feel that we are a school that is moving forward, that's prepared to take risks, that they won't be discouraged from taking risks and it's positively encouraged really. So we're always looking to innovate and to learn best practice or next practice from other schools, from other colleagues.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Deputy of the Yellow School also described how the Senior Leadership Team is a motivated team. He went on to describe how this could be accredited to the Headteacher of the school, stating that:

in eight years [the Head] has put together a team of individuals who are all happy in their positions, who are all motivated in their positions [...] there is not one person around that table that I am not confident that they can do their job and I think that's the key aspect of [the Head's] leadership and what he's left is that legacy, he's left that ability for us to continue to evolve and develop as a college because we have got the individuals who can do that and it is about taking risks on some people.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

The Headteacher of the Red School pointed out the benefits of having people who are motivated, as quoted earlier in this chapter, he explained how motivated people can “go through walls” and when the level of motivation is right. He continued to describe how motivated staff become “a hell of a power house”. This is a particular advantage in a challenging school where staff members need to overcome the apathy and low self-esteem associated with poverty and deprivation. He also described how he manages to motivate people, by using praise wherever possible, no matter how small an achievement. He believes that you should always use praise as this can inspire people. Although the other Headteachers did not explicitly draw attention to this fact, it should be noted that all four of the Deputy Headteachers viewed themselves as motivated, which could be the result of working alongside a transformational leader.

Headteachers also described how the involvement and development of staff can lead to them becoming more personally motivated and result in greater achievements. The Head of the Green School explained that:

engaging the community, different stakeholders, that's part of their development as well and I think that if you're involving staff comprehensively then in your way you are trying to reach a vision and you're trying to lead a school into a particular direction. That in itself is developmental.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

The Deputy Headteacher of this School described how the Head is a great believer in providing opportunities for staff to develop themselves and she attributed this to her career progression within the school, as well as her loyalty to that school. She explained how she was encouraged to take the National Professional Qualification for Headteachers (NPQH) when she was a Head of Science. She acknowledged:

we probably, for a small school, have the highest percentage of staff that hold the NPQH. Probably more than most of the schools in the country because [the Head] is always the one to say you know you can do this.

(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

The Headteacher of the Yellow School also discussed methods of developing people at all levels to affect their self-image by fostering “shared values and beliefs in the organisation”. The Deputy of this school provided evidence of how this Headteacher’s honest approach instilled his staff with confidence when he said:

he's always been honest with me and [...] I've always been confident and comfortable in my position in school and he's instilled that in me

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

Further examples of the success of transformational leadership were also provided by the Deputy of this school, when he describes the impact that the Headteacher has made to the Senior Leadership Team. He explained that the Headteacher has created

a leadership team who are all motivated and happy in their positions, but more importantly he:

left that ability for us to continue to evolve and develop as a college because we have got the individuals who can do that and it is about taking risks on some people.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

He also described how the Headteacher is:

good at spotting potential, putting you in place and letting you make mistakes but then supporting you in those mistakes as well.

(Yellow School Deputy Head – interview 13/03/2009)

This illustrates how the Headteacher is able to motivate and inspire his team to an extent that they feel empowered and driven to create improvements. In a school in challenging circumstances, the development of more transformational leaders provides a greater ability to adapt quicker, evidence that this achievement can be attributed to aspects of transformational leadership.

Conversely, the strong belief that Headteachers hold for motivation as a vehicle for success is also demonstrated in a negative form by the Head of the Blue School when she expressed her opinion about staff who are not motivated; she pointed out that:

the majority [of staff are] very motivated, having said that, even in the short time I've been here I am aware that for some staff, they are not on the bus and I can see that already, they haven't got that amount of passion and drive and motivation about putting young people first, that is my vision, and ultimately people make a decision and I think for the majority that would be a positive decision, but maybe not for all.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

This could link to the newly-appointed Headteacher's current emphasis on transactional leadership rather than transformational, resulting in only partial success in motivating staff.

Changes to the status of the school

The change of status involved in schools becoming Specialist Colleges may also have a motivating effect on staff and students. The Headteacher of the Red School described how he had successfully gained engineering status which, he stated, was an indicator of high performance:

What we've changed is that we've taken, I hope, everything that made the previous [Red School] successful and we've interpreted it very differently, two specialisms, high performing specialist schools status, engineering. [...] and applied learning has been the obvious one to come after that. The concept this school would be able to achieve National Status for applied learning six years ago, vocational applied learning, no it would have been not accepted, it's just taken as blindingly obvious now, that that's where we go next.

(Red School Head – interview 18/11/2008)

All the Headteachers were proud of their Specialist Status. It was seen as an achievement, and was offered as by the Deputy Headteacher of the Green School as evidence of school improvement, leading to the further achievement of becoming a mentor for other schools. She detailed how the school:

has become a trust school. We became an RATL school which is a Raising Attainment Transforming Learning school for the SSAT [Specialist Schools and Academies Trust] and we're an accredited mentor school with them. So in terms of titles they're the changes that occurred but within that obviously there are so many things that change within the school at the same time when becoming a specialist technology college. Changes in terms of student outcome, we've come from – in 2000 we were 15%, 5 plus A*s to C this year we were at 74%, for last set of results.

(Green School Deputy Head – interview 15/01/2009)

Although the change from school to Specialist College is only a structural change, it does reward the schools with additional community funding, enabling them to become more involved with the community.

Impact on the wider community

All the schools in this study are community schools, and the Headteachers viewed their community involvement as a very important measure of their success. The Headteacher of the Yellow described himself as a key player in the transformation of the community; he later went on to say:

School leaders have a pre-eminent role in terms of shaping the future of communities and that they have to be seen in some of the public debates about the regeneration issues and about the future of what's going on.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

This Headteacher described how he takes opportunities to promote this vision at community events, including speaking at the local church; the Deputy at this school stated that the Head was constantly communicating with community groups, including addressing the town council. This intent to transform the community is a level of transformation that was also demonstrated by the Head of the Green School, who expressed the idea that his school is an engine for change:

my impact or the school's impact, it's not for me to say, but I think that it has been crucial and I think it will continue to be significant as well because of some of the things that we are proposing to put in place around our cooperative trust, on co-location of services onto school site, so really the school, even though we are outside of the community, will be at the very heart of the community, and be really an engine for change I think, an engine for improvement in the broader community.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

This understanding of the transformational potential of Headteachers throughout the community is shared by the Head of the Blue School when she says:

we're affecting what happens to this community, because if the young people here have a pride and an attachment to their community and yet they go on and do wonderful things with their lives, or maybe you know, stay on in the sixth form for example, to be the first to do that in the family and then the next step, be the first to go on to higher education, it's going to take

time and a couple of generations to make that difference but it will make the difference to what's going on around here.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

She also pointed out that:

That's recognising I suppose that Headteachers or leaders in education have a great deal of influence and power and actually I suppose they do.

(Blue School Head – interview 29/09/2008)

This acceptance that schools have an influence on their community was of concern to the Head of the Yellow School, who felt that schools needed to change the attitudes of people, even if they are disenfranchised:

I think schools, if they are to become the heart of the communities, have the key role to play in challenging and changing the culture of communities and improving the aspiration, attitudes and values of the people who are currently perhaps disenfranchised.

(Yellow School Head – interview 13/02/2009)

This Headteacher is viewed as very successful by the Local Authority and was asked to lead a second, failing school within this authority, perhaps because it was felt that the community needed a change of ethos if it were to succeed.

The interview with the Headteacher of the Green School showed a similar community focus. He had a desire to involve others and to value their opinions and views, even when these views and opinions are critical. He provided the following example when describing an open evening for parents:

I outlined my vision for the school and how I felt we needed to change in order to improve further and then I asked ... [parents] for their views whether that fitted in with the way they were thinking, so we were talking about increased community provision on site, and more engagement with community and the parents were very positive and also very critical as well, they came up with some really good ideas.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

He revealed how he felt about members of his school and the community when he said:

everybody leads, everybody sets examples, and that's the way that is, that's the best way in my opinion in the circumstances that our school is in that you can bring about change and effect change.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

Here the Headteacher made reference to the importance, in schools in challenging circumstances, of all parties relaying a positive message as they are all responsible for instigating change and all have a leadership role. He made the point that the community has an influence on his students, but the students also have an influence on the community:

we've done a lot of work on improving educational outcomes for students but there is a feeling that although we've done this work with them in the school once the students leave us and go into the community, what they are doing and how they spend their time is important in shaping that community.

(Green School Head – interview 09/12/2008)

Conclusions

The Headteachers in this study felt their transformational leadership style was responsible for the successes they had in leading a school in challenging circumstances, due to the Headteachers' endeavours to alter the perceptions and self-belief of followers. The Headteachers believed strongly in a vision which was focussed on changing the school ethos to empower students and raise aspirations. The involvement and development of followers was very important to Headteachers within this study, as they felt their responsibility was to impact on the culture of the entire community, not only on the students within their school. The Headteachers approached this task by involving others in the creation and sharing of the vision, and nurturing a level of sustainability that would enable the vision to be

communicated by more people. This was also seen as a means of inspiring others, by encouraging them to believe in an alternative future where their circumstances are improved, and where they are empowered to contribute towards bringing about this improvement.

The development of strong relationships, used to motivate followers, was seen as crucial to the success of these Headteachers. Such relationships also enabled staff to adopt the organisational values set by the Headteacher and carry these throughout the school; a view supported by MacBeath *et al* (1996), who explain how staff work more effectively for the good of children when the Headteacher is successful at empowering them and providing them with a sense of moral purpose. Bass and Steidlmeier (2006) argue that for leadership to be truly transformational it must be grounded in moral foundations, a criterion that was notable for Headteachers serving in these communities, by the relationships they formed. Bass and Steidlmeier (2006) state that transformational leadership becomes moral leadership when the truth is told, when promises are kept and when negotiations are fair and choice free. The Headteachers in this study practised moral leadership based on the values of honesty, respect, and trust (Cameron, 2006). They modelled their values for other to replicate in the way they fostered relationships and demonstrated a genuine belief in people, helping to raise the aspirations of others. The Headteachers felt relationships were critical in schools situated in areas with high social deprivation, and the ability to form these relationships was a key to their success. They nurtured relationships between all members of the school as well as throughout the wider community, and they felt this generated instances of mutual respect, enabling the school to have a greater influence on the lives of others.

The link between moral leadership and transformational leadership is essential for these Headteachers, and is supported by the findings of Bellingham (2003), who states that values and vision are critical ingredients for creating long-lasting, sustainable changes as the leader's values become the principles on which the organisation functions. The ability to create sustainable changes is one of the factors that encourage Headteachers in these socially deprived communities to adopt a transformational style, and may be a factor that encourages Headteachers of this nature to work in schools situated in challenging circumstances. The desire that these Headteachers possessed, of wanting to make a difference by improving the life-chances of people, lends itself to a socially deprived community where they can quickly see the impact of their actions; similarly, the ability to see this impact encourages the Headteachers to be transformational in their actions. It was noted that the newly appointed Head of the Blue School was, at the time of the interview, less transformational than the other Headteachers in the sample; this may be because Headteachers become more transformational as they serve in a school of high social-deprivation, due to the constructivist paradigm. Such a shift occurs because such a school requires that the Headteacher becomes inspirational and maintains a positive attitude that, in turn, leads to the manifestation of the Headteacher's desired vision. This may take place because the Headteachers ground themselves in their fundamental values, searching for fairness and equality for members of community in challenging circumstances. The Headteachers feel morally bound to provide the best options possible for members of the community. This then enables them to achieve even greater successes, helping realise their vision and re-enforce their desire to help more people, for as Hargreaves and Fink (2007) note, when we are

able to pursue our own moral purpose in interactions with others, our own energy levels and long-term effectiveness cease to become depleted.

Chapter 7

Conclusion: Leading in Challenging Circumstances

Introduction

This unique study considered the leadership styles of a sample of Headteachers working within one Local Authority which is described as being in challenging circumstances. There were two key aims to this study. The first was to explore the extent to which the Headteachers in this study report that they deploy transactional and transformational leadership. The second was to identify where and when transformational leadership is deployed by Headteachers. Through semi-structured interviews, data was collected from the Headteachers and their Deputies to identify the Headteachers' leadership style and the factors affecting their choice of approaches to leadership. The analysis was conducted within a theoretical framework derived from transactional and transformational leadership theory and linked to the constructivist paradigm, which explores the relationship between values and leadership action. This theoretical framework made it possible both to examine at a conceptual level the approaches to leadership adopted by the Headteachers and to explore in detail their leadership choices and the factors which either facilitated or constrained those choices.

The Local Authority in this study is situated in northern England, in an ex-mining area with high levels of deprivation. This is reflected in the schools by low attendance rates, concerns about behaviour and difficulties in recruiting teachers. The Local Authority has found it difficult to make any significant, lasting improvements to schools and several have been placed in special measures over the

last four years. Others have been issued with a notice to improve from Ofsted and have managed to meet the benchmark targets within a year of receiving the notice, preventing them from being placed in special measures. One of the schools in this study, the Blue School, has been placed in special measures twice, which spurred the Local Authority to seek support from another authority where many of the schools are judged as good or better. The Blue School's leadership was replaced and all the schools in this sample are now considered to be led by successful Headteachers.

An opportunity sample of 24 per cent of the Headteachers from this Local Authority was selected, thus providing a means of reducing variables that may be inherent in a sample of schools drawn from a range of local authorities. The use of an opportunity sample of Headteachers willing to take part in the study facilitated openness and a collegial approach to answering questions candidly. A qualitative methodology was adopted to collect the majority of data, using semi-structured interviews with both Headteachers and their Deputies. As with the studies undertaken by Drysdale *et al* (2009) and Kurland *et al* (2010) this study places great emphasis on the Headteachers' self-reported styles, in the belief that Headteachers have a strong understanding of their actions and the implications of these (Southworth 1995). Deputies from each school were interviewed to provide a means of verifying and testing statements made by the Headteachers. The validity was improved through a range of different analysis methods for decrypting and cross-checking the data collected. Statistical and inspection data was also utilised to provide context to the schools, including examination grade trends and the most recent Ofsted reports.

The schools within the sample are all secondary, comprehensive schools with Specialist Status. Three of the schools have a sixth form but the highest achieving school, the Red School, does not. The Green School is slightly smaller than average, as measured by the number of students on roll, but the other three schools are all larger than an average comprehensive school. The catchments for all schools are broadly similar, with the Red School having slightly higher than average achieving students on entry, and the others having lower than average, with the Green School having the lowest-achieving students on entry. The schools' characteristics mean they represent a good spread of the schools within the authority and, while not being statistically representative, are typical examples of those schools.

The Headteachers in this study came to their present schools in different ways. The Blue School is led by a Headteacher and Deputy who were seconded from a secondary school in a different authority, neither of whom has held a position at this level before. The Head of the Green School was the Deputy of this school and accepted the role when the Headteacher retired seven years ago. The other two Headteachers have been Heads in different authorities and have served as Headteachers in this authority for over ten years. The Head of the Yellow School was asked by the Authority to take over the leadership of a second, failing, school within the same authority at the start of this academic year. Although it is difficult to make a judgement on the ability of the Headteachers, due to the complexities involved in leadership, the assumption is made that these Headteachers are successful following their most recent Ofsted reports where each school was given a grading of 'good' by Ofsted. In addition to this, none of the schools led by these Headteachers have ever been placed in special measures, or given a notice to

improve by Ofsted. This means comparisons with other schools by external organisations, who use all existing criteria set by governmental agencies to measure the standards of schools, find these schools to be successful and to have good leadership. The Deputies have all worked with the Headteachers for over five years and, with the exception of the Blue School, have all been serving in their current school for at least this time. The accounts of Deputy Headteachers are considered suitable as an additional means of exploration in this study, as the Deputies often work closely with the Headteacher and may have an insight into the motivations and thought processes that lead to the actions and outcomes seen by others.

This study takes as its starting point existing definitions of transactional and transformational leadership (Albritton, 1995; Bass and Riggio, 1996; Drago-Severson, 2002; and Eagly *et al*, 2003), to provide an analytical framework for the leadership actions of Headteachers. Based on the argument advanced by Bottery (2004) and Liebman *et al* (2005), it accepts that Headteachers can have a greater effect on the daily practices of people within schools by adopting transactional and transformational approaches. Both transactional and transformational leadership theories place the Headteacher at the heart of school developments, by the manner in which these theories allow leaders to exercise their power base. Transactional leadership focuses on fostering the notion of transactions taking place between the follower and the leader, whereas transformational leadership focuses on the leader inspiring and motivating followers, fostering within them a desire to improve and achieve. Hence, this study was based on the generally accepted assumption that the work of the Headteacher is the most influential aspect of a school's success or failure. The Heads in this study certainly took this view.

When these Head's deployment of transformational leadership was analysed using the criteria generated in Chapter 2, it was found that Headteachers were most transformational when their desire was to be person-centred, concentrating on the development of individuals rather than being concerned with results or outcomes.

The use of transactional and transformational leadership in schools in challenging circumstances

Eagly *et al* (2003), Davies (2007) and Northouse (2007) point out the benefits of both transactional and transformational leadership to the work of Headteachers. However, it was found in this study the transactional mode of leadership was used to respond to the political pressures exerted upon Headteachers while achieving levels of accountability, whereas transformational leadership was used to enhance and develop the school and its members (Leithwood *et al*, 2004), which was found to be the primary focus of Headteachers within this study. Murugan (2004) and Cameron (2006) argued that Headteachers adopt a transactional approach to undertake managerial duties due to the simplified manner in which progress can be tracked and measured. The findings of this study were that all the Headteachers in this study used aspects of transactional leadership with some reluctance because they felt compelled to address managerial tasks.

When the actions of these Headteachers were analysed, mapped onto instances of transactional leadership and grouped in order of frequency, it was clear that the Headteachers adopted a transactional approach most often when concentrating on the completion of tasks and ensuring the maintaining of high standards. External pressures placed on the Headteachers within this study were found to be linked very

strongly with the decision of the Headteachers to adopt a transactional approach to leadership. These external pressures included: securing targets set for examination results, preparing for and responding to Ofsted, and comparisons to benchmarks of measures published as part of national agendas.

Thus, transactional leadership tended to be evident when Heads in this study were constrained by external pressures, rather than using their intrinsic desire for improvement. It was found that these Headteachers adopted this role of transactional leader in order to: embed policies, identify and deal with underperformance, or respond to Ofsted inspections. The mechanistic approach to leadership under a transactional style provides Headteachers with a rigid set of tracking criteria against which they can measure progress following intervention. These Headteachers favour this method when justifying their actions to governmental agencies, due to the level of rigidity and simplified methods of measuring success. The implication of these findings is that Headteachers are pushed towards the less developmental style of transactional leadership wherever they lose autonomy or are held accountable by external measures produced by external, political pressures. In schools situated in challenging circumstances, where the community is very susceptible to political changes and schools need to adapt quickly, and where schools feel they are constantly under scrutiny from external agencies needing to meet benchmark targets, this desire to be graded 'good' by Ofsted becomes even more essential. It takes self-confidence born of experience to cope with such pressures.

Perhaps this explains why the least experienced Headteacher (of the Blue School) tended to use transactional rather than transformational leadership, whilst believing

that she was transformational in her approach. This was demonstrated when she identified her reluctance to deviate from her 'vision' of a school structure utilised in her previous school. The vision was obviously not conceptualised in the future as there was concrete evidence of how this structure worked. This can possibly be explained by her inexperience of running a school and her belief that the previous school model worked, so a replication of this would also work. Similarly, there was evidence that the other Headteachers in the sample were more transactional when they were new to the post. The implications of this are that a new Headteacher may attempt to implement a familiar, successful model into a different surroundings, without allowances being made for different skills, personalities or resources.

When the Headteachers in this sample behaved in a transformational manner they were extremely vision driven, acting as change agents with the intention of bring about long-term, sustainable improvements to their school or community. When acting as transformational leaders the Headteachers placed great emphasis on their core values and on the collaboration and involvement of others in the creation and achievement of an inspirational vision. The context of the schools, and their communities, is a major factor in determining the leadership style of the Headteachers. Serving in socially deprived areas, the Headteachers expressed desires to raise aspirations above all else. They often referred to their values of wanting equality and fairness for all. The study then explored the data further by examining how far the Headteachers regarded themselves as transformational leaders and the importance that the Heads in this study attached to values, communication, motivation and building relationships within the school and in the wider community. An assessment of the criteria was undertaken which might be used to judge the

extent to which these Heads might be regarded as successful, and how far success might be attributed to transformational leadership.

This study also found that the Headteachers in this study change over time to become more transformational. This may, in part, be explained by an analysis based on the constructivist paradigm which suggests that, due to the enhanced feedback Headteachers receive when serving in a socially deprived area, there is a close link between the values espoused by the Headteachers and their perceptions of reality in challenging circumstances. In a socially deprived area the actions of Headteachers have a greater impact and produce faster feedback, which in turn reinforces the belief of the Headteacher that they are able to make significant improvements to transform their community, and then affects the Headteachers' actions and thoughts, moving them towards a reality where they do indeed make greater, significant changes, by becoming a transformational leader. The positive feedback from changes, and the desire to make greater changes produce a loop that moves Headteachers towards transformational leadership and even beyond.

The implications for schools can be significant as the performance and ability of all staff are improved, raising the standards of schools in socially deprived areas. Successful Headteachers adopt transformational leadership as a means of increasing flexibility to maximise the resources at their disposal while bringing about sustainable improvements and igniting the belief in people that they can achieve and that they are equal in potential to all others. It was noted that the sampled Headteachers in these challenging circumstances went beyond the expected level of transformational leaders and became more passionate about wanting to help more

community members who, they felt, existed in social and economic poverty. The Heads had a genuine concern for individuals, including those who had already left the school, and those who are not even associated with the school. It is possible that positive feedback from serving a deprived community generates a stronger desire in Headteachers to continue to serve, and provides the purpose needed for Headteachers in challenging circumstances to persevere and succeed.

The school context, as well as the professional experience, influenced the preferred style chosen by the Headteachers studied. The longer-term sustainable development of a school in challenging circumstances requires leadership that is embedded in a culture focused on moral purpose and the educational success of all and is voiced in a vision that is carried by staff, students and members of the community. This then lends itself towards a transformational approach, as the changes that develop are embedded into the fabric of the workforce and generate sustainable improvements. When a Headteacher is concerned about whole-school improvement, that concern can create deep changes in culture and ethos, and they utilise the skills associated with transformational leaders. This was evident in the interviews with Headteachers, especially in their methods of creating and sharing a vision for their school and in the choice of leadership for addressing the issues grounded in a community context and, in this study, the challenging circumstances within that community. When developing long-lasting changes, whether in the context of a school or of an entire community, it is through transformational leadership that the future vision is embraced, and that more members become involved. Transformational leaders are able to influence more people due to their ability to inspire others and lead by

example. Their foundation for leadership is based in their moral values, which drives them through adversity and leads to greater achievements for all.

This study shows, therefore, that the studied successful Headteachers in challenging circumstances in this particular authority adopt both transactional and transformational approaches to leadership, depending partly on the circumstances and partly on their experience as Headteachers. While each of these approaches to leadership tends to be used by the Headteachers in this study for different purposes, there is no doubt that the Headteachers in this case study favour transformational leadership based on participation and collaboration and a commitment to supporting their staff and facilitating professional development wherever possible. This approach to transformational leadership was grounded in a strong value system, a sense of moral purpose and a strong commitment to the local community, and enabled these Headteachers to cope with both the educational and social challenges that they encountered on a daily basis and to be successful by having the capacity to translate these values and beliefs into actions.

The impact of values and moral purpose on leadership style

In contrast to the external, political pressures that encouraged the Headteachers to become transactional, it was found that internal measures encouraged these Headteachers to become transformational in nature. The moral aspects associated with transformational leadership, coupled with the development of others, mean that not only is the achievement of followers lifted, but the moral standing of all parties is raised. This then builds greater capacity for a school, empowering staff to function with a greater level of independence, while still striving for the organisational goals

shared by all. Where the Headteachers were transformational, they articulated a belief in a desire to see others succeed and improve, for the sake of personal development, rather than for the targets of the school. This was not limited to the students or staff attending the school, but extended to school-leavers and members of the community not directly associated with the school, and illustrated that the Headteachers operated a level of moral leadership and value-based leadership, showing that their prescribed duties as school Headteachers were grounded in moral foundations and relied upon the internal values of leaders.

The Headteachers' reliance upon their own values was evident throughout all examples of transformational leadership in this study. The Headteachers involved had a foundation of moral values that, they believed, underpinned all of their actions. These included the right for everyone to be treated with respect, and for all to be given every opportunity to succeed irrespective of their background or starting position within the school. Although these values were fixed, the Headteachers also revealed instances of how they constantly checked their values and questioned the paradigm within which they are acted, especially when dealing with unexpected events. The methods by which Headteachers in this study dealt with unexpected events varied from: using self-reflection, constantly questioning current beliefs, to holding on to the vision. Evidence of relaying their values when communicating was provided by all of the Headteachers, who felt they had a clear awareness of their beliefs and moral groundings. Thus the Headteachers' use of transformational leadership was an emergent theme for success and was linked to their actions, as dictated by their core values.

The constructivist paradigm: an element of transformational leadership?

The constructivist paradigm, explored in Chapter 2, facilitates a deeper understanding of the relationship between values and action accepting that, as Headteachers adapt with the school, both the school and the ability of Headteachers to be transformational improve together. The analysis in Chapter 6 revealed how the Headteachers' beliefs had brought about changes within their schools. The belief by Headteachers that they are able to make changes plays a part in the manifestation of the changes themselves. The constructivist paradigm shows how the views of possible alternative futures that Headteachers have goes some way towards both shaping their actions and enabling them to achieve desired outcomes. Thus, it recognises the connection between action and the espoused world view of the actor. Constructivism posits that actors, in this case Headteachers, take a critical stance toward ways of understanding the world that are often taken for granted. The Heads in this study certainly recognised the relationship between the wider context and their leadership styles. When Headteachers carry with them a very positive world-view, in which they believe they can have a positive effect on people and on their lives, then Headteachers' actions, thoughts and communications relay this congruent message and influence others. This then encourages the changes to become realised throughout the school.

This study provided evidence that, in schools in challenging circumstances, there is a greater desire for Headteachers to adopt a transformational approach due to their perceived need to bring about major changes, and due to the values of Headteachers ensuring they provide equality in a deprived area. Although many other studies (Hybels, 2002, and Anderson and Anderson, 2001) reveal that transformational

leadership is considered the most appropriate route for bringing about successful changes, they do not investigate either the centrality of values to such processes or the level of desire on the part of Headteachers to want these changes, especially when situated in an area where they feel social justice is lacking. Lambert (2009), however, in her analysis of constructivist leadership, provides examples of how the perception of inequality is a higher-level value that can produce outrage in value-driven individuals, directing them to find solutions to address any equality discrepancies. She does not, though, link this with the process of finding solutions through transformational leadership. Leithwood and Jantzi (2009) and Harris and Thompson (2006) recognise the importance of Headteacher leadership, as does Rhode (2006) when she examined moral leadership, although leadership is not conceptualised as transformational in these studies. However, Harris and Thompson (2006) in common with Flintham (undated) and the NCSL model of school leadership in challenging circumstances (NCSL, undated) under-conceptualise leadership and underplay the importance of values linked to action. Day (2007) does note the tensions on Heads produced by imposed and self-generated change in schools and recognises the importance of values, but does not link this to an analysis of how values are translated into action or to an exploration of the nature of leadership at a conceptual level. A similar omission is found in Bass and Steidlmeier (2006) who do claim that transformational leadership is grounded in moral foundations and the values of the leader but who do not go on to explore the link between values and action, which is provided in this present study through an analysis based on the constructivist paradigm.

This study found that Headteachers serving in challenging circumstances believed that their key role was to adopt transformational leadership in order to bring about change and in order to alter the perceptions that students, staff and the community have about schools. This focus upon change meant that the Heads felt the need to relay their values and vision constantly, encouraging others to act as change agents and to play a role in improving the community, which resulted in them adopting a transformational approach. In so doing, these Headteachers used transformational leadership to influence the beliefs of others and shape the communities within which they serve. It has been argued, in this thesis, that although transformational leadership may be beneficial to the development of all schools, it is even more important to schools in challenging circumstances. When serving in such schools, it was found that these Headteachers gravitate towards transformational leadership whenever possible and accredit instances of this as being responsible for their successes, although the Heads understood that they could not necessarily bring about the required changes alone, they needed active collaboration from colleagues.

The increased possibility of extended collaboration with colleagues inside the school and with members of the wider community may also be a factor that encourages Headteachers to favour transformational leadership over other styles, especially when this study shows that the sampled Headteachers believe that their transformational leadership actions are what makes them successful and allows them to implement new ideas while developing individuals. This is of vital importance when Headteachers are required to lead through the uncertainty associated with the changing nature of education, especially in socially deprived areas where political changes can have severe effects on the community. Such a level of uncertainty

requires that Headteachers be more flexible and able to meet the real-world requirements of constantly changing systems, and encourage them to move away from the fixed nature of transactional leadership and towards the fluid, evolving nature of transformational leadership.

To facilitate collaboration colleagues need to be highly motivated. In this study Headteachers revealed their belief in motivation as a vehicle for achievement and approached this almost as tacit knowledge that was factual and implicit. The interviews with Deputy Headteachers showed that they had been encouraged and motivated, enabling them to push forward with change and make creative breakthroughs, helping to foster improvements in education and further developments in the capabilities of everyone within the school. Every Headteacher within this study placed great importance on the transformational characteristics of raising aspirations and changing the self-beliefs of others. The Headteachers discussed the motivational aspects of their role as if it was not optional but fundamental and absolute, implying that they could not perform without the ability to inspire their followers.

The improvement and development of all staff does not exclude the Headteacher; it is in the nature of transformational leadership that Headteachers constantly question their own beliefs, and reflect on their practices and their tendency to be learners who develop over time. The Headteachers in this study revealed their belief that they are constantly developing and searching for ways to improve personally. This links with the finding that these Headteachers have changed over time and provides the opportunity for the Headteacher to grow and develop alongside the staff, resulting in

a school that is constantly improving, developing greater capacity, and able to adapt to meet the needs of individuals, while simultaneously aligning with new political agendas that are implemented.

Lambert (2009) notes the importance of continued professional development when she discusses the constructivist learner. She explains how new experiences and new information are assimilated by looking for patterns and constructing meanings from them. These newly-constructed meanings then alter all future actions. This study takes Lambert's work further by considering the marriage between the constructivist paradigm and the perception of the Headteacher's view of reality in challenging circumstances. In a socially deprived area, the actions of Headteachers have a greater impact and produce faster feedback. This in turn reinforces the belief of the Headteacher that they are able to make significant improvements to transform their community, which in turn affects the Headteachers' actions and thoughts, moving them towards a reality where they do make greater, significant changes, by becoming a transformational leader. The positive feedback from changes, and the desire to make greater changes produce a loop that moves Headteachers towards transformational leadership and even beyond. As the Head of the Blue School pointed out when discussing her students, her entire belief system was centred on ensuring students were always placed first and that there was a mutual respect between staff and students. She described her experiences of students, since coming to the Blue School, by saying that "young people here are genuinely personable" and, "I feel quite positively welcomed by the students". This Headteacher also demonstrated a similar view when she described her belief in how the Senior Leadership Team should function, describing them as an effective team. She also

expressed her belief that her team was very skilled, effective and completely trustworthy in every sense, revealing that this level of mutual respect was evident.

The Head of Yellow School considered that schools need Headteachers who are strategic thinkers who can solve problems. By seeking out problems to solve, this Headteacher was able to create a reality where, as a successful Headteacher, he is able to remove obstacles and find creative solutions. The Head of the Green School also showed how he is a constructivist when he revealed his feelings about the relationships within his school, explaining that in his view relationships are the one key feature that is critical to a school's success. He proceeded to describe how he considered his relationship with staff and students to be very positive, and how this had been a priority for him, taking action to ensure good relationships are formed. He then accredited the success of the school to the developments they had made in forming these stronger relationships. Throughout his interview he described the actions he had taken to forge relationships by including others in decisions and providing opportunities for people to work together.

These views provide examples that the success achieved by the Headteachers can be attributed to a constructivist paradigm, by the way they identify what success will mean to them and then use the actions they take to create precisely those circumstances where success can be achieved, a concept that explains why transformational leadership can be attributed to the successful leadership of schools. The constructivist paradigm implies that transformational leadership is the side-effect of the thought patterns and beliefs of the Headteacher who wants to bring about transformations through person-centred actions, communications and

outcomes which are significant features of transformational leadership. Hence, when Headteachers were asked to describe their outlook on life; all the Headteachers provided examples of a belief in being positive. They demonstrated awareness that they can instigate change and were confident that they could make significant changes. The belief that a school can improve, and that people are fundamentally good and want to succeed, was held by all the Headteachers and had not been contradicted through experience. The Headteachers' strong belief in people could in some way help to identify and explain their success and clarify why these Headteachers have a real commitment to believing and serving people. There was, however, some evidence to suggest that this is a characteristic that appears to develop over time and that Headteachers evolve with the schools they are leading. This may also be attributed to the thought patterns of Headteachers changing over time as they receive positive feedback from their actions, justifying their beliefs. The constructivist paradigm demonstrates how a positive world view, based on strongly held values, can produce transformative action. Thus, in this environment where there is large deprivation, the Headteachers studied believe they are successful if they can raise aspirations and motivate followers towards improvements. To achieve this, the Headteachers act as transformational leaders and even go beyond transformational in their level of devotion to caring for the whole individual. The immersion into this passion to help others results in a strong desire to improve the life-chances of others and affords the privilege of being able to serve people who require this level of change. This then becomes a focus for the Headteacher's thoughts and affects the belief of Headteachers that they can make a greater impact and provide even more opportunities and aspirational developments for their community. This in turn forms a strong self-fulfilling prophecy which, when

referenced from the constructivist paradigm, enables Headteachers to generate their beliefs and strengthen their faith in this even more, creating a development cycle of improvement and of wanting to create more improvements for pupils, colleagues and members of the wider community.

Commitment to staff, students and community

As was argued above, one of the key features of transformational leadership is a concern on the part of Headteachers for the welfare of colleagues and pupils. Throughout the data collected for this study there were instances of this commitment that exceeded the expected level of care and provision for staff and students. The Headteacher of Green School highlighted his concern for students after they leave school, voicing his worries about their development and continued learning opportunities after they have left his school roll. This was supported by the Deputy of the Green School, who explained that one thing the Headteacher has taught her is to have a “belief in people and [in the] progression of people”, emphasising the high level of moral and value-driven leadership.

When Headteachers are truly passionate about leading they tap into their values, developing a higher level of care for the follower as a person. This stance was taken by the Head of the Yellow School when he talked about the hope that he had for the community, sharing his desire to address economic and social poverty. He pointed out that schools have a key role to play in changing the culture of communities and improving the aspirations, attitudes and values of people in that community. The Headteacher expressed his concerns that community members want help but are unaware of how to obtain it. This Headteacher described the level of deprivation he

saw around his community and his desire to help when he explained how he wanted to develop organisational values to make schools kinder places. There was further evidence of this desire when he talked about developing students to such an extent that they could become future change-managers for this and other communities. He considered his aspirations for students to be on par with those for his own children. He described how he wanted to empower young people to become successful adults who could then act as change-agents affecting the success of others. This Headteacher was asked, at the start of this academic year, to run a second school within the Local Authority of 17 schools, an invitation which he accepted.

Throughout the study the Headteachers revealed that they felt privileged to work with children in such deprived areas. This revelation was a unique finding and was not identified in the previous research. The context of these schools was of great importance to the Headteachers, providing them with a sense of purpose and a determination to make a difference to such a deprived area. The Headteacher of the Yellow School noted how, being a Headteacher, he was privileged to be allowed to shape both: people's lives and the learning journey of young people. This view was also apparent throughout the interview with the Headteacher of the Green School when he talked about the level of deprivation found in the ex-mining community catchment area and how proud he was to serve in a working-class community.

It is not possible to know if the Headteachers have always felt this way, or if their feelings have been changed by the followers they led. In Chapter 2 it was shown that there is an interaction between leaders and followers that results in a perceivable shift in both parties. If this is the case, the Headteacher of the Blue School may

embark on a similar journey as she leads, for the first time, a school in an area of high social deprivation. During this journey she may become more caring and more inspirational as predicted by the descriptors of transformational leadership. It is also feasible to postulate that other Headteachers may develop into transformational leaders when placed into a school of this nature, due to their desire to bring about major changes in both attitude and social conditions.

Limitations and future research

While the findings of this study are robust, they are limited in their generalisability by a number of factors. The first is the size of the sample, namely that it looks at only four Headteachers situated in one Local Authority at one instant in time. This makes it difficult to generalise; it does not, however, reduce the validity, reliability or significance of the findings. Although the study examines a sample of four out of 17 Headteachers, the sample of Headteachers is a fair representation of those within the Local Authority (Appendix 5). The Local Authority itself serves an area with a high Index of Multiple Deprivation. However, comparisons were made to other Local Authorities that show it has similar features to many other authorities ranked in the 50 most deprived nationally, and as such the findings may be representative of other schools facing challenging circumstances, providing the possibility of transferability. The biggest drawback to this study, being time-limited by the nature of doctoral research, is that it only provides a snapshot in time and does not re-visit the Headteachers throughout the course of their development. A further limitation is that the study is largely based on the self-reporting of Headteachers about their leadership style, although data from Deputy Headteachers was used to corroborate the views expressed by the Headteachers and the positionality of the researcher

provides further corroboration. Future research might usefully explore wider perceptions of the Headteachers' leadership styles by collecting data from a cross-section of staff in the schools, and in addition to this, future research might explore other aspects of some of the findings that emerged from this study.

The idea that Headteachers change over time would require a more extensive study to establish the leadership styles of Headteachers and identify changes in these during their time serving within particular schools. The study would benefit from a more extensive sample across different and similar authorities to establish the degree of change that can be attributed to the level of social deprivation found in this study. This would enable the study to confirm if transformational leadership is more essential in areas of high social deprivation, and if the socially-deprived area plays a role in creating the level of transformational leadership within the Headteacher. The present study revealed a great level of privilege amongst Headteachers serving in this socially-deprived area. Future research is required to identify the factors that influence this feeling of privilege. It may be unique to socially-deprived areas, unique to successful Headteachers or an individual personal trait common across many samples. Further investigation would be required to find if this feeling of privilege is linked to the level of success achieved by Headteachers. At the same time, a larger study across Local Authorities, conducted over a longer time period, would facilitate a more detailed examination of the extent to which the claim made for the constructivist paradigm, that it can demonstrate how a positive world view based on strongly held values can produce positive outcomes, is verifiable.

Finally, there is scope for greater exploration into the amount of success within schools that can be explained by the constructivist paradigm. The general outlook of all Headteachers in this study was positive; a comparison would need to be undertaken with Headteachers who had different outlooks on life to investigate the extent to which this plays a role in the manifestation of their thoughts. Further, the level of congruence Headteachers have across their thoughts, actions and communications could be explored, to identify if all three are required to create the level of influence needed to bring visions to existence, or if one or more of these features is more dominant. Future research is also required to investigate links between the constructivist paradigm and the level of community social deprivation. Without high levels of social deprivation there may not be as much feedback on the changes implemented by Headteachers, which may in turn not generate as much faith in their ability to make great changes; it would therefore be useful to compare the approaches to leadership adopted by Headteachers in different socio-economic circumstances. Although future research would expand and enhance this study, the findings of this study are still important and are able to stand alone. They reveal the attitudes of Headteachers faced with leading schools situated in challenging circumstances, and provide an insight into their choice of leadership style adopted in order to generate school-wide improvements while meeting political pressures, and the reasons behind the Headteachers' choices.

Final conclusion: leading in challenging circumstances

The challenging circumstances in which the four Heads in this study operate are a significant part of the context which helps to determine the leadership styles that they adopt. Transactional and transformational leadership are both deployed in these

schools but for different purposes. Transactional leadership is implemented for task-orientated actions and, although it does not develop a school, it is necessary to underpin the smooth running of the school, especially when meeting targets set by national policies and external organisations. This is vital in a Local Authority such as this, where underperformance of schools is a constant concern.

Transactional leadership provides the groundwork to move the school forward, as it will ensure that the school is viewed as successful when subjected to external measurement criteria, providing greater freedom for the Headteacher than a school that is viewed as failing. Education policy requires educational organisations to increase pupil participation and standards as well as to have the ability to provide guidance and support during difficult social times (Stevenson, 2006). This is tied to the funding received by Headteachers; often the funding needed to achieve it is considered to be insufficient, resulting in an imbalance between expected increases in performance and the level of resources available (Whitfield, 2000). In order to be successful in today's climate, Headteachers in schools must excel in all areas if they are to meet government agendas. Transactional leadership alone cannot secure this level of performance, especially when funding is insufficient to provide financial motivation for staff through monetary transactions. The National College of School Leadership has addressed the leadership of schools, identifying that higher levels of success can be achieved by embedding transformational leadership in development plans for leaders at all levels within schools in order to increase motivation and staff development, providing a workforce which is both inspirational and aspirational.

It was found in this study that successful Headteachers are transformational but, in a socially deprived area, they go beyond the expected level of transformational leadership to become even more inspirational, with even more emphasis on altering the perceptions of others. They have a strong belief in people and see more in them than others do. This is a reflection of the constructivist paradigm which shows that Headteachers have faith in their ability to shape the future of their schools, coupled with a positive outlook. The level of faith in the future is shared through the Headteachers' communication when relaying their values and morals, with a strong focus on the idea that all people can continue to improve at all levels. These Headteachers are inspirational, motivational and focussed on developing individuals, all of which are characteristics which are classified as transformational. A forum for communication is provided where moral purpose, belief in people and support are relayed to such an extent that they become self-fulfilling and, as explained using the constructivist paradigm, the Headteacher's thought patterns are manifested, resulting in a school that is successful and creating greater capacity than other schools by the manner in which all followers are able to step up and develop themselves. The Headteachers receive continual feedback from their experiences that encourages them to become even more transformational, creating a desire in them to help more people and empower more individuals to achieve greater things.

This study has shown that these Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances all deploy both transactional and transformational leadership. However, it is clear that transactional leadership tends to be utilised largely because the Headteachers are required to respond to targets and other outside pressures, mainly of a mechanistic or managerial nature, which forces Headteachers to focus on

immediate results and detailed supervision of staff performance. Headteachers in this study argue that such transactional leadership contributes little of value to the overall development and success of their schools while, at the same time, limiting the extent to which they can act autonomously and be guided by their own ethical values. It is the transformational leadership activities that largely facilitate long-term improvements in pupil attainment and the development of staff, and that strengthen valuable links with the wider community. Each of these Headteachers made it clear that their transformational leadership, firmly grounded in a clear set of values and beliefs that inform their approach to headship, was their preferred approach to the leadership of their schools. They highlight the particular importance of these values in the challenging contexts within which they work and identify the key role that transformational leadership plays in their success. It could be argued, therefore, that a reduction in the externally-imposed accountability and reporting factors that produce an emphasis on transactional leadership might enable Headteachers to concentrate their attention on the more important and more effective transformational activities. It is possible that the additional resources thus created would facilitate a greater degree of transformational activity and result in an even greater beneficial impact on the school, students and local community.

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APPENDIX 1

RESEARCH QUESTIONS TO BE ADDRESSED

1. Is transformational leadership significant in schools in challenging circumstances?
2. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances regard themselves as transformational leaders?
3. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances transform followers using vision and communication?
4. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances value and build relations?
5. How do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances handle unpredictability?
6. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances believe in motivation as a vehicle for achievement?
7. Do Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances relay their moral values in their communications?
8. Can the successes of Headteachers in schools in challenging circumstances be attributed to transformational leadership?

APPENDIX 2

QUESTIONS USED IN THE PILOT STUDY

- Q1) Can you describe some of the changes your school has gone through?
- Q2) What is your vision for the future of the school?
- Q3) Can you describe the importance of staff development in achieving this vision?
- Q4) Can you tell me what levels of communication you feel are needed to get your vision across?
- Q5) Could you describe your relationship, the one you have with students and staff?
- Q6) Can you describe how you handle circumstances that cause you to deviate from your plans?
- Q7) Can you describe the community that your school is part of?
- Q8) Why do you do this job?
- Q9) If you could change one thing about this school, what would it be?
- Q10) How would you describe the motivation of staff?
- Q11) How important to you is it that other people share you vision?
- Q12) What are children like in this school?
- Q13) Can you tell me about your personal, general outlook on life?
- Q14) Is there anything else you'd like to add?

APPENDIX 3

QUESTIONS USED IN HEADTEACHER INTERVIEWS

- 1) Describe some of the changes your school has gone through
- 2) What's your vision for the future of the school?
 - Where are staff involved in creating the vision?
 - How are you going to achieve this?
 - How do you communicate the vision?
- 3) Describe the importance of staff development in achieving this vision.
 - What staff development takes place?
 - How is it organised?
 - How is it evaluated?
- 4) Can you tell me, what levels of communication you feel are needed to get your vision across?
 - How do you ensure this takes place?
- 5) Describe your relationship, the one you have with students and with staff.
 - How have you developed this relationship?
- 6) Describe how you handle circumstances that cause you to deviate from your plans.
- 7) Describe the community that your school is part of.
 - How have you cultivated this?
 - What role have staff played in shaping this?
- 8) Why do you do this job?
- 9) If you could change one thing about this school, what would it be?
- 10) How would you describe the motivation of staff?
- 11) What are the children like in this school?
- 12) Tell me about your personal, general outlook on life
- 13) What is the main style of leadership in this school?
 - What form does it take/how does it take place?
 - Would you say it is transformational (vision based and person driven)?
- 14) Is there anything else you'd like to add?

APPENDIX 4

QUESTIONS USED IN DEPUTY HEADTEACHER INTERVIEWS

- 1) Describe some of the changes the school has gone through
- 2) What's the vision for the future of this school?
What involvement did you have in the creation of this vision?
How is the vision communicated to others?
- 3) Describe the importance of staff development in achieving this vision.
What staff development takes place?
What staff development have you personally had, during the last year?
How was it organised?
How did you evaluate it?
- 4) How would you describe the levels of communication within this school?
What action is taken to ensure good communication?
- 5) Describe the Head's relationship with you.
What has the Head done to developed this relationship?
- 6) Describe how the school handles circumstances that cause deviations from your plans?
- 7) Describe the community that your school is part of?
What has been undertaken to cultivated this?
What role have you played in shaping this?
- 8) Why do you do this job?
- 9) If you could change one thing about this school, what would it be?
- 10) How would you describe your level of motivation?
- 11) What are the children like in this school?
- 12) Tell me about your personal, general outlook on life
- 13) What is the main style of leadership in this school?
What form does it take/how does it take place?
Would you say it is transformational (vision based and person driven)?
- 14) Is there anything else you'd like to add?

APPENDIX 5

STATISTICAL DATA FOR ALL SCHOOLS WITHIN THE LOCAL AUTHORITY FOR THE ACADEMIC YEAR 2007-08

Statistical achievement of Schools within the Local Authority, collated by BBC News (2009).

School name	Percentage of students achieving equivalent to five GCSEs at grades A* to C including English and maths	Contextual Value Added from KS2 to KS4
School name removed	66	1015.1
School name removed	66	993.2
The Red School	60	1008.8
School name removed	56	1004.6
School name removed	50	1002.1
School name removed	40	1002.9
School name removed	37	1025
School name removed	37	988.8
The Blue School	35	981.3
The Green School	30	1010.7
School name removed	30	983.8
School name removed	29	980.8
The Yellow School	28	981.5
School name removed	26	1010.6
School name removed	24	980.1
School name removed	21	971.9
School name removed	19	976.4

APPENDIX 6

Participant Information Sheet

1. **Research Project Title:**

To Examine The Role Of Transformational Leadership As Used By Headteachers To Transform Schools

2. **What are you asking me?**

I would like to invite you to take part in a research project for the University of Sheffield.

Before you decide, it is important for you to understand why the research is being done and what it will involve.

Please take time to read the following information carefully and discuss it with others if you wish.

Ask me if there is anything that is not clear or if you would like more information.

Take time to decide whether or not you wish to take part.

Thank you for reading this.

3. **What is the purpose of the project?**

The study is part of a two year investigation that hopes to reveal the key skills and personal traits utilised by Headteachers that enable them to successfully lead schools and re-shape communities.

4. **Why have I been chosen?**

You have been selected, along with other experienced Headteachers in this authority, because it is felt that you are a successful leader with skills that should be shared. This geographical area has many social-economic factors that make community involvement an essential dimension to the role of the Headteacher.

5. **Do I have to take part?**

Your participation is entirely voluntary. It is up to you to decide whether or not to take part. Refusal to take part will involve no penalty or mention of your refusal.

If you do decide to take part you will be asked to sign a consent form. However, you are still free to withdraw at any time, without penalty and without giving a reason.

6. **What will happen to me if I take part?**

You will be interviewed about your views, belief, practices and experience.

It is expected that an interview will last less than an hour, and will take place at a venue of your choice.

There is a possibility that a follow-up interview may be requested, however, you are always free to decline any activity.

7. **What do I have to do?**

Just be yourself. Provide honest and open responses to the questions you are asked, and reveal as much of your beliefs, values and reasoning as you can.

8. **What are the possible disadvantages and risks of taking part?**

The information you share will be available and open to analysis.

9. What are the possible benefits of taking part?

Whilst there are no immediate benefits for those people participating in the project, it is hoped that this work will further the knowledge of school leadership in towns similar to the one where you work. This in turn may accelerate the development of new Headteachers, enabling them to reach a higher standard, and provide more benefits for all learners.

10. What happens when the research study stops?

When this short study reaches its completion, the information will be added to the body of educational research stored at the University of Sheffield where it will be available for anyone to view. The findings may be shared with other interested parties.

11. What if something goes wrong?

If you are not comfortable with the procedure, or feel misled in anyway, you can withdraw from the study at any time.

You are also free to retract any statement(s) you made during interviews, and these will be removed from the study.

If you would like to complain about me, or the way I have conducted my research, please contact The University's Registrar and Secretary at:

School of Education
The University of Sheffield
388 Glossop Road
Sheffield
S10 2JA

12. Will my taking part in this project be kept confidential?

No. This is not an anonymous study.

13. What will happen to the results of the research project?

The results are likely to be published in 2009-2010 and copies will be available in the University library.

Data collected during the course of the project might be used for additional or subsequent research, but this will require your written consent.

14. Who has reviewed the project?

The project has been reviewed by the University Research Ethics Committee and is in line with guidance given by the Departmental Ethics Review Procedure.

15. Contact for further information

You can contact me at: *Personal Details Removed*

If you decide to take part, please retain this information sheet, and one of the consent forms for your records.

Sign and return ONE of the consent forms.

Thank you for your time