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IMPROVEMENT OR NOT? A STUDY OF THE IMPACT OF CHANGE IN AN INFANT SCHOOL

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M.A. by Research

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1997

The thesis examines the strategies used by the staff in an Infant School in responding to the demands of the 1988 Education Reform Act and whether the implementation of the reforms have had any impact on the standards of teaching and children's learning at Key Stage One. It considers the development of Primary Education and offers a critique of the debate about progressive and traditional teaching methods. The changing culture in the school following the 1988 Education Reform Act is examined in depth, in particular significant re-organisation to provide for the introduction of core subject teaching. A statistical analysis of the Standard Assessment Tests in England and Maths, the Quest Test in Reading and Number and the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability administered to over 200 children over the period 1991 - 1996 proved inconclusive with regard to improved children's performance and it is suggested a longer timescale may be required. Issues concerning the planning, implementation and management of school innovations are discussed and it is concluded that the subject based re-organisation at the school has realised a number of benefits.

- 6 OCT 1997

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Acknowledgements

I have enjoyed research and writing this thesis. I am not sure that my friends and extended family including Bracken, Bridey, Gemma and Georgie have enjoyed my writing it to anything like the same extent. To my dogs a day without a walk is a day wasted. I would like to thank Mary Brown for her unstinting word processing, David Galloway, my tutor, for his faith in me and encouragement and last, but not least, my husband for his patience - a virtue which, until recently, I never knew he possessed.

As for the writing itself, I can do no better than quote Peter Tymms

"The world is too complicated for words."

Quoted in Fitzgibbon (1996 p.151)

None of the material contained in this thesis has previously been submitted for a degree in the University of Durham or any other University.

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Chapter 1 : *Introduction and Context of the Thesis*

The 1988 Educational Reform Act set in motion a range of changes which have radically affected schools and altered the traditional relationships between schools and Local Education Authorities. Teachers' pay and conditions of service and control of the curriculum have been centralised and testing and inspections intensified. Other major changes include the accountability of headteachers and teachers through the powers of school governors and parents, the introduction of stronger management structures, school-based decision making through devolved budgets, and teacher appraisal, all intended to promote more cost effective and efficient schools.

In the late 1980's the Annual Report of the Senior Chief Inspector for Schools (DES 1990) indicated continuing concern over expectations, standards and the nature of the whole curriculum in primary schools. In the Autumn of 1989 the first statutory orders for English, Maths and Science Curriculum at Key Stage 1 were in place. DES Circular 5/89 (DES 1989) stated that from the autumn term (1989) all nine National Curriculum Subjects and RE were expected to have reasonable time devoted to them. For Key Stage 1 during the period 1989 - 1993 statutory orders for foundation subjects were serially issued. National Testing in the three core subjects started in 1990, initially as a trial run. Each year since then the form and nature of testing at Key State 1 has changed. In 1993, the whole curriculum was put out for review under Sir Ron Dearing, Chairman of the Schools Curriculum and Assessment Authority. Many teachers acknowledged that deficiencies existed in the education system and supported the introduction of the National Curriculum as a structure for more effective provision. The problem was that the time allocated to the core subjects was so great that there was not enough time left for the other subjects (DES Circular 5/89) Revision of the curriculum was inevitable.

The purpose of this research is to examine strategies used in an Infant School by the staff in responding to the demands of the 1988 Education Reform Act and to see if the implementation of the reforms and the consequent changes, have had any impact on standards of teaching and standards of children's learning at Key Stage 1. The development of primary education up to the 1988 Education Act is investigated in Chapter 2. Chapter 3 is a critique of the debate about progressive and traditional teaching methods and I argue that progressivism did not have the strangle-hold on teachers that many would have had us believe and that in practice most teachers were still using a mixture of methods of teaching. That pupils were failing and that teachers were failing the pupils was public rhetoric but I argue that it was not the teachers who

were failing but the fact that they were subject to attack by educationalists and politicians who failed to provide a clear and workable programme of change.

> "Schools, classrooms and school systems can and do improve and the factors facilitating improvement are either so exotic, unusual or expensive that they are beyond the grasp of .....ordinary schools."
>
> *(Clark, Lotto and Astuto (1984) quoted in Fullan (1991) page 47)*

In Chapter 4, I explore the form which the various factors and features of educational change have taken and look at the consequence of the changes for the primary school. I consider the changes to the headteacher's roles and how the fundamentals of good management and the features of it have changed. I then look at the overall effect this has had on other members of the teaching staff, particularly subject co-ordinators. In most discussions of education reform there is confusion between the terms "change" and "progress". Change does not necessarily mean progress and Chapters 5 & 6 discuss these issues.

Chapter 5 looks at the ways the 1988 Education Reforms Act changed the culture and structure of an infant school in the North East of England. Inherent in the organisational changes within the school to meet the demands of the new National Curriculum was the development of teacher professionalism. The interface between the individual teacher, the collective aims and objectives for the pupils and their implementation in an every day situation provided the structure and support to implement the change.

> "At that time (early 1992) although the National Curriculum was at an early stage of implementation, there was considerable doubt about whether many of the organisational arrangements and teaching methods commonly used in primary schools were suitable for teaching it successfully and for raising standards of achievement of pupils of all abilities in all subjects."
>
> *OFSTED (1994) paragraph 2)*

In Chapter 5, I look at whether the changes we made have, in practice, improved the teacher's teaching and children's learning and achievement through a comparison of Inspection Reports over the six year period.

In Chapter 6, I examine the statistical evidence provided by various test results to see whether the changes in the curriculum and the way in which it is delivered are reflected

in the measured performance of the children. Before doing this it was necessary to consider the validity of the Standard Assessment Test (SATS) and I do this by comparing their results with the those of Quest and Neale Tests.

The final chapter discusses a number of issues arising in Chapters 5 and 6 and sets out the conclusions of the thesis.

Chapter 2 : *Development of Primary Education*

Present day schools are the direct descendants of the 19th and early 20th Century elementary schools (5 - 11 years) which provided mass education with the 3R's (reading, writing and arithmetic) as its core to working class children. At the beginning of the century the influence of educationalists like Froebel, Montessori, Isaacs, Dewey and Macmillan attempted to move infant schools from places of instruction to instructive environments. The Hadow Report (1931) for the Board of Education stated

> "The curriculum of the primary schools is to be thought of in terms of activity and experience rather than as knowledge to be learned and facts to be stored".
>
> *(Quoted in Pollard et al (1994) page 11)*

The report went on to discuss the importance of developing "aesthetic sensibility, oral expression and manual skills" and the possibility of teaching by topics rather than separate subjects. The 1931 report was regarded as the key statement of progressivism; that children should learn through activity and interest with a less authoritarian role for the teacher. The Hadow re-organisation was patchy, though, and by 1939 was complete in only a few areas of the country. Ironically, although Plowden primary schools are usually thought of in terms of "revolution":

> "The change is a major one which is beginning to revolutionise the primary schools"
>
> *(Plowden (1967) paragraph 739)*

what was actually happening in the 1960's was the fulfilment of Hadow, not something new.

R.A. Butler's Education Act (1944) drawn up towards the end of the Second World War at a time of great optimism left primary teachers in control of a relatively child centred individualistic curriculum which emphasised pupils' age, abilities and aptitudes as relevant features in determining their education. Daily acts of worship and RE were the only teaching specified. Greater interest was being shown by educationalists towards child development and behaviour and psychological theory. As Maurice Galton et al (1980:p.36) observed

"The primary school was subject to sharply contradictory influences".

Conflicts between 11+ exam pressure where selection consisted of intelligence and "objective" tests in the 3R's and the consequent streaming for exam success and the child centred approach which stated that the schools' function was in Froebel's words "to make the inner outer" *(quoted in Bowen 1903 P.98)* clearly imposed restraints and tensions on teachers. Galton goes on to say

> "It is difficult to now reconstruct the intense pressure on schools and teachers that built up in the 1940's and 1950's relating to selection examinations, the league tables that parents drew up for local schools ..... This was the reality teachers had to face ... and was clearly a dominant influence relating both to teachers' objectives and, therefore, to the teacher's style and forms of organisation within the classroom." *(P.37-38)*

One feature of development in education this century has been the rapidity of change which schools have had to experience. Colin Conner and Brenda Lofthouse (1990 p.117) point out:

> "this may link with the contradiction between theory and practice which clearly developed after 1931 between the theory of the 'progressives' as crystallised in the 1931 report, and the actual practice of the junior schools as this persisted under the mounting constraints of the 11+" .

The english infant school on the other hand developed on its own lines and infant school teachers had much more freedom than teachers in the past, those abroad, and english junior school teachers.

The 1944 Act left primary teachers in control of a child centred individualistic curriculum. It took until the 1960's and a Conservative Minister of Education, Sir David Eccles (1960), to realise that Government "hardly ever discusses what is taught ... we treat the curriculum as though it were a subject ... about which it is "not done" for us to make remarks ...This reticence has been overdone. We could with advantage express views on what is taught".

Certainly primary education in the 1950's benefited from the economic expansion and optimism in the country. The post war upturn in births led to new building programmes and new designs in primary schools; emergency training of more teachers and the

foundation of new training colleges. Many reports have been written post war but perhaps the one which had most influence prior to the 1988 Education Act was the Plowden Report of 1967. The Plowden Committee was appointed by Sir Edward Boyle, Conservative Minister for Education in 1963. It was to examine primary education in general. The report covers over 1000 pages but by the beginning of chapter 2 the essence of the report was clear.

> "At the heart of the education process lies the child. No advances in policy, no acquisitions of new equipment have their desired effect unless they are in harmony with the nature of the child, unless they are fundamentally acceptable to him."
>
> *(Plowden (1967) paragraph 9)*

Essentially, the Plowden Report not only endorsed the general trend throughout the country towards active teaching and learning but encouraged such practices. It supported the views of many researchers and educationalists who believed that learning through discovery was more purposeful, involved more effort by the child and, therefore, resulted in more positive learning. To combat the obvious stress of individualised learning in the large classes of the 1950's and 1960's the Plowden Committee suggested group teaching as an organisational compromise.

> "Sharing out a teacher's time is a major problem. Only seven or eight minutes a day would be available for each child, if all teaching were individual." *(para 754)*. "Teachers therefore have to economise by teaching together a small group of children who are roughly at the same stage. Ideally, they might be better taught individually, but they gain from a longer period of their teacher's attention, even though it is shared with others, than they would from a few minutes of individual help" *(para 755)*.

Chief Education Officers, The Inspectorate and Local Education Authority Advisers were persuaded of the value of these new teaching approaches and pressure was put on schools to develop this active and individual learning. This caused conflict with the traditionalists and intense interest from abroad. In service courses organised by Local Authority Advisory Services encouraged teachers to change their style from a teacher centred approach and teaching children a rigid curriculum to a more flexible curriculum addressing the individual needs of the child. Child centredness not only dominated the thinking and planning of teachers but school buildings started to reflect these

philosophies and were built to produce an environment conducive to team teaching and the integrated day.

No study of educational change can be taken in isolation from the cultural changes of the country involved. The climate before Plowden was characterised by full employment, economic growth and commitment by the political parties to educational growth and expansion. This was the Britain of the 1950's and 1960's and, similarly, cultural changes affected education reform in Japan.

> "Japanese Education cannot be separated from Japanese life ... In response to economic and social changes, educational reform in Japan has focused on ways to diversify its uniform schooling. For the past decade and a half reformers have been trying to overhaul Japanese education. Despite bold and far reaching reform initiatives, implementation has been slow".
>
> *(Shimahara 1995)*

In Britain, by the mid 1970's growth in the economy and public services ceased. The oil crisis in 1973 heralded the start of a world-wide recession and major cutbacks in public expenditure. Somewhat earlier than these economic changes came the development of what has been called the "permissive society"; the tendency to put fewer constraints on children went hand in hand with the policy of Local Authorities to specifically encourage innovation and change and allow headteachers a high degree of autonomy in classroom practice. This was referred to in the Plowden Report

> "The willingness of teachers to experiment, to innovate and to change has been one of the mainsprings of progress in primary schools. This source of improvement will continue so long as we have forward and inventive teachers" *(para 115)*.

The development of the Curriculum Study Group (becoming later the Schools Council (1964)) which was constructed specifically to encourage and generate change bears testament to these developments. The Group was jointly funded by the DES and Local Authorities, and offered its beliefs and support to teachers. It believed that curriculum change could only be achieved by involving teachers nationally and locally in the identification of curriculum development projects. The Initial Language Project (1970), Mathematics in the Primary School; Science 5 - 13 were examples of their work. But the economic turnround, the changing culture and the cutbacks in public expenditure all

helped to fuel a growing disenchantment with this approach and during the 1970's criticism of the new primary methods gathered momentum. The publication of the Black Papers (Cox and Dyson 1969; Cox and Boyson 1975, 1977) criticising "progressive" ideas and parental concern and media interest in the William Tyndale Junior School, where the so called primary revolution was producing disastrous results, added to the debate. How much the Plowden Report reflected the culture of the time and how much it helped primary teachers is now very debatable but as Wright (1977 p.35) argues

> "Plowden was not so much the cause of progressivism as the legitimatism of it and that caused the frictions"

Certainly many of Plowden's initiatives were positive (Parental involvement, EPA Schools) and schools did benefit (Wright 1977). Teachers have subsequently become more aware of the need to relate the processes of learning to the content but as Gorwood (1991 p.83) states

> "we must still be concerned to commit the child to perspectives of learning which admit the importance of enjoyment and enthusiasm".

There was certainly a lot of confusion and unhappiness around this time. Marsh (1973 p.83) believed that it was not possible to

> "harmonise the needs of society in a curriculum" and that any consideration of this should "be based on what we know about individuals and their basic desire to seek out a meaning and make their world".

He goes on to argue there is no 'out there'.

> "There is no choice between feeling and objectivity. Perhaps educationalists have been mistaken in pleading for more curriculum time for affective activities such as art, movement and drama."

The 1978 HMI Survey on Primary Schools (DES (1978)) on the other hand completely failed to address the question of cultural, economic and political justifications for the primary curriculum

"Taking primary schools as a whole, the curriculum is probably wide enough to serve current education needs" *(para 8.67)*

Two publications - The Bullock Report on Language (1975) and Bennett's work on teaching styles (1976) were further evidence of the deterioration in classroom effectiveness with the former, signalling a change in style and perspective and recommending a national system for monitoring pupils' performance and the raising of literacy standards.

James Callaghan's Ruskin College speech in 1976 whilst acknowledging the

"enthusiasm and dedication of the teaching profession" *(p.332)*

expressed the Government's and the Country's unease at informal teaching methods and the lack of a "core curriculum of basic knowledge". It emphasised the importance of developing Britain's ability to earn a living in the world and thus the importance of teaching pupils the basics of literacy and numeracy and of developing skills for the future. The 1970's ended with the Thatcher Government inheriting the country's concerns about Britain's declining economy and moral values; and with the absence of consensus on educational goals, values and the functions of the DES, HMI and LEAs, and on teacher accountability and nature of teacher autonomy and professionalism.

What had, interestingly, been noticeable about education up to the 1970's was the absence of in-depth discussions and argument from the teachers themselves about changes in policy. The competence of teachers to respond to external pressures depends upon their abilities to understand, question, analyse, evaluate and make judgements. The development of the "emergent professional" as identified by Pollard et al (1994 p.13) from "caring middle class women of average intellectual ability" to the Bachelor of Education graduate teachers of the James Report (1972) and the development of Teachers Centres for continuing professional development added fuel to the educational fire. Teachers were more aware of their social responsibilities, of cultural and gender issues and of educational influences (sociological, psychological and philosophical) on their teaching and on children's learning. Pressure was being put on them from all quarters to adjust their professional ideology. Guidelines, discussion papers, directives issued forth from DES and HMI and were disseminated by Local Advisers through In Service Education, for example, Curriculum 11 - 16 (DES 1977); Primary Education Survey (DES 1978); Education 5-9 (DES 1982). In 1981 the Government Paper - The School Curriculum (DES 1981) stated

"The school curriculum is at the heart of education".

Here then was a major shift in ideology from the developmental tradition of children exploring and learning naturally to teachers teaching to a defined curriculum, structured and planned classroom organisation, increased use of whole class teaching and teacher assessment of pupil attainment. This was further developed in 1983 in the Schools Council's Working Paper (No.75 p.28) *Primary Practice* which stated that

> "not all schools provide a broad curriculum"

and believed that

> "describing the curriculum in terms of subjects should make it possible to discover whether each child is following a broad curriculum".

This was a major change of emphasis from the Inner London Education Authority Occasional Paper No. 13 which reaffirmed Plowden in asserting

> "rigid division of the curriculum into subjects tends to interrupt children's trains of thought and of interest and to hinder them from realising the common element of problem solving".

Innovations, curriculum development projects, debates about pedagogical skills, administrative issues, development of specialist teachers and of teacher expertise continued to gather pace during the 80's. Hardly a year went by without some educational reform being published. Local management of schools, parental choice, increased governor powers and responsibilities, open enrolment, teacher appraisal, pay and conditions of service for teachers, regular school inspections and finally in 1988 pupil entitlement - the National Curriculum.

The problem was how could we in a small infant school introduce a subject defined curriculum when child centred progressivism was the ethos embedded in the training of many of the inspectors, headteachers and teaching staff. Alexander (1984) acknowledges the primary school's strengths as

> "welcoming, attractive, friendly, purposeful environments" *(p.15)* but argues that "these strengths are sometimes offset by weaknesses in respect of curriculum and pedagogy".

The children's needs rather than their interest is the philosophy underlying the National Curriculum.

> "Children are to be equipped with the knowledge, skills and understanding that they need for adult life" *(p.3)*.

Concern for the curriculum cannot be, and is not, in opposition to concern for the child. The important question is how effectively have we introduced a subject oriented curriculum into an infant school where the training and experience of the teachers responsible for each class are steeped in the Plowden philosophy and where theme or topic work and integrated days have been the norm.

Chapter 3 : *Traditionalism v Progressivism*

Even after one hundred and fifty years of schooling in Britain we still know relatively little about life in an infant school from a child's point of view. What we do know is that teaching young children is a complex task. Unfortunately, there are no clear separations between the many different aspects of a teacher's job; in practice the boundaries become hazy. This holds true of any discussion between traditionalist and progressive teaching. It is a continuum and much of what is discussed will inevitably lie between the two extremes.

The traditional teaching movement believed in the inculcation of essential knowledge to passive pupils. Teachers presented a set amount of information to large numbers of children in a fixed time. The culture of the school was centred on academic subject learning taught in a formal manner and often achieved in competitive ways. A limited number of curriculum areas and narrow objectives were embodied in elementary schools whose aim was to achieve basic literacy and numeracy plus the social rules of punctuality, obedience and acceptance of authority. The methods of teaching were formal. Strict routines ensured discipline; and the seating of children in rows with regimented questions and answers ensured pupil focus on the teacher. The teacher's role was the giver of facts to be learned. The staff were mainly women and formal training was provided by the denominational training colleges and pupil / teacher centres. Tight central control of the curriculum and assessment, the inculcation of basic skills and moral order were the norm for schools and teachers.

In contrast, the progressive tradition, rooted in the work of philosophers such as Rousseau and later Dewey emphasised the importance of responding to the needs and interests of individual children and helping them to develop to their full potential following their own interests, exploring the environment and discovering information for themselves. As far back as 1974 Froome, one of the Black Paper authors, noted that although Dewey's perceptions of a teacher as co-learner

> "while attractive, in theory were impossible to reconcile with large classes and with children who might be unwilling participators in the educational struggle" *(p.14)*.

This was also later confirmed by other studies. Bennett (1976) pointed out thematic approaches were rare even in open plan schools; The DES in 1978 found that 25% of teachers taught no history or geography; and 80% taught no experimental or

observational science. The Hadow Report (1931) was the first official document to discuss the importance of "developing aesthetic sensibility, oral expression and manual skills" and the suggestion of teaching by topics rather than separate subjects was interestingly not challenged. In fact in the interwar years teachers were given greater autonomy to choose their own methods and curriculum and these "activities" methods were experimented with, particularly in infant schools and departments. Selleck (1972 p.156) studied in detail the growth of progressivism.

> "what mattered was that instead of the conflicting set of beliefs, ideas and practices which the New Educationists put before the teacher in 1914, the progressives had, by 1939 produced a reasonable uniform set of ideas and procedures ..... By that time a person who was being initiated into the educational culture of the english primary school ..... was being constantly confronted with ideas or practices which have been called 'progressive' ". It was not until after World War II that the actual primary school classroom practices were greatly modified."

Activity methods, promoted by training colleges, HMI and LEAs, began to spread. No defence of child centred education was thought necessary; it became, says Selleck, "the orthodoxy". Progressivism in the junior age range (7-11 years) took off more slowly. The tripartite system of education, developed as a result of the 1944 act, saw the emergence of the junior school and an education for children according to their aptitude and educational potential. The message was clear - successful children went to grammar schools. The system of streaming by ability and training for the 11+ became a dominant influence in the junior schools and this was reflected in their teachers' objectives, teaching styles and classroom organisation. Despite this, the 1950's witnessed a steady increase in commitment to child centred education throughout the primary sector which was based on the commitment of teachers and reinforced by HMI who saw examples of good practice and consequently supported the more active learning environment and experience oriented curriculum. As Wright (1977) says "progressive primary schooling is the outcome of very lengthy and gradual evaluation whose roots stretch way back into the last century".

A clear difference between traditional and progressive cultures is in the styles of teaching. The integrated day and team teaching became a means of implementing the new ideas. The most influential book on the integrated day was that of Brown and Precious (1968) who saw an integrated curriculum and team teaching as essential elements of an integrated day. They describe the integrated day as one in which the

school day is combined into a whole and has the minimum of timetabling. Their comprehensive book on a Leicestershire school is not only a reiteration of the Plowden philosophy but is proof, as shown in many classrooms throughout the country, that it could be put into practice. The integrated day or discovery method of teaching could, though, place a considerable strain on teachers and so shared expertise and team teaching were introduced in many schools. Children were organised into various sized groups according to the work being covered. Initial key sessions would be given by the individual group teacher and follow up activities in shared work areas, sometimes within or outside their immediate area, were established. Some open plan schools were deliberately designed and built for team teaching and the integrated day; some older buildings were modified. Many teachers believed that team teaching could be justified but, like other aspects of education, is dependant on many factors for its success. One of the most critical assessments of child centred education comes from Dearden (1976 p.97). He believed that

> "Success or failure (of the integrated day) will depend on the energy, competence and insight with which individual teachers choose, or are required to introduce this innovation. In practice, the integrated day would seem to represent anything from an embryonic university ... to a wet playtime all day!"

Didactic methods always seem to have their critics. The progressive culture, rooted in the writings of educational theorists - Froebel, Montessori and of the psychologist Piaget - saw education in developmental terms with step by step progression. Critics of progressive education believed it lacked any definition of curriculum content and:

> "that it had no adequate theory of knowledge to help it define the curriculum above the rhetorical level"
>
> *(Golby (1982) quoted on Connor and Lofthouse (1990 p.133)*

Undoubtedly, confusion and conflict within the progressive rhetoric led to confusion and conflict in practice. Nias (1989 p.70 quoting Ashton et al 1975) in her study of primary teachers found the teachers who held more child centred views than their colleagues tended to move school more often in order, she believed, to preserve their beliefs. She goes on to point out (p.98) how teachers spoke of the way in which they constantly puzzled over teaching methods. In an earlier work (1988, p.123), when considering the term informal education, she found teachers had no clear understanding of the term whereas they were able to describe formal teaching. She found general agreement that:

> "formal teaching was independent of numbers of pupils and described a set of assumptions about the nature of knowledge, of learning (and therefore teaching)".

All the teachers felt they used "formal teaching" at some time.

Attempts to identify good teachers and good teaching styles have, like progressivism, a long history. Bennett and Jordan (1975) researching into the teaching styles of primary teachers found that teachers had difficulty in categorising their approaches as either progressive or traditional. Bennett (1976) asked teachers in the North West of England what teaching behaviours they considered differentiated progressive and traditional teaching styles. He selected 11 different elements and these elements were translated into classroom behaviour. On initial analysis he found only 17% of teachers taught in a manner prescribed by Plowden, 25% were described as traditional (formal) and 58% a mixture of progressive and traditional styles. A lot of research in this field has been based on extremes of teaching styles and unclear terminology. Flanders in his 1965 work used labels of "direct and indirect teaching". (p.29) The 1978 DES Survey identified "exploratory and didactic" teachers. Galton (1980) and his colleagues in the Oracle Investigation identified four types of teacher - individual monitors, class enquirers, group instructors and style changers (p.120-126). Whether teachers can be classed into such simple groupings is debatable but what is significant is the effect on pupil achievement. Both Bennett (1976) and Bassey (1978 in a survey of 900 primary schools in Nottinghamshire) revealed that the majority of teachers were neither formal nor radical in their approach but favoured a mixture of formal practice and practical activities. The progressive teachers, as defined by Plowden, seemed to be rare. The Plowden Report described a pattern of teaching which represented a general trend towards the progressive style but what alarmed them was not so much the restricted spread of their philosophy but adverse conclusions, such as Bennett's, on its effectiveness in practice. With one exception, Bennett found, that formal teachers pupils produced superior scores in the basics of Reading, English and Maths and that scores were no worse in creative writing than in informal teaching. Bennett (p.162) concluded that

> "the central factor emerging from this study is that a degree of teacher direction is necessary, and that this direction needs to be carefully planned and that the learning processes provided need to be clearly sequenced and structured".

The results of the 1978 HMI Survey reiterated this

> "in classes where didactic approach was mainly used, better NFER scores were achieved for reading and mathematics than in those classes using mainly exploratory methods".

However, the statistical validity of Bennett's 1976 analysis was re-examined five years later by Aitkin, Bennett and Hesketh (1981 p.170-186) with the conclusion that there is ground for three distinguishable but overlapping teaching styles, formal, informal and mixed. With regard to the relationship between these teaching styles and overall student progress, the re-evaluation concluded that the only significant teaching style differences were in English where the formal style had the highest mean and mixed the lowest with informal in the middle. In Mathematics, formal and informal were close and substantially above the mixed style. In Reading, informal had the highest mean, mixed the lowest and formal in the middle. The mixed style characterised by a relatively high frequency of disciplinary problems gave consistently the worst achievement results. These outcomes and the issues raised for future research studies of this kind were well described by Gray and Satterly (1981 p.187-196) in their follow-up work.

> "Whatever the conclusions to be drawn from this research we cannot ignore the fact that the formal - informal, traditional - progressive debate continues to represent one of the more popular ways of speculating on the effectiveness of teachers, regardless of the cautions of researchers to the contrary. If the present re-analyses and discussion of teaching styles have merely shown the need to supplement these approaches with others, then this will have served their purpose" (p.196)

That a mixture of styles existed in primary schools before the 1988 Education Reform Act is indisputable but that the progressive movement dramatically affected standards of education is still open to question and has caused continuous conflict over the last decade between the government, inspectors and teachers. There was not, I would argue, a wholesale move in schools to child centred education. My own evidence from working in over 20 primary schools in both full-time, part-time and supply teaching posts in 3 different counties is that only a small minority of classes represented the extremes of the two teaching styles and that the majority of classes were organised to allow for a combination of methods. Certainly group work, integrated days and topic work, were in operation. Furniture had been moved for group activities, teaching bays

were in evidence, curriculum areas had been established but much of the day was spent on formal instruction and this is borne out by the mixed responses of teachers in their aims for education. Strong on methods but weak on aims is a view often expressed on child centred education. But what are the characteristics of child centred aims? Dearden (1976 p.54) identifies child centred aims as relational rather than prescriptive of content to be learned.

> "They specify the various desirable ways in which the child should be related to what he does and learns rather than the content of the learning".

Because the new progressive school was so different to a traditional school it was inevitable that Plowden would compare and contrast the two. The aims of the traditionalists were the end product but, as Dearden goes on to point out, in progressivism the method is part of the aim.

> "What the child learns is thought to be of less importance than that he should develop good attitudes to learning it"

This was emphasised in Bennett's study (1976 p.151)

> "Informal teachers value social and emotional aims preferring to stress the importance of self expression, development of creativity and enjoyment at school". The traditionalists lay "much greater stress on the promotion of a high level of academic attainment".

A similar survey funded by the Schools Council (1975) sampled 1513 teachers in 21 schools. The teachers were given 72 aims and were asked to rate each one in order of importance. The major finding was that there was an enormous range and variety of opinion and,

> "that there is a close and logical connection between teachers' basic conceptions of the nature of primary education and the aims which they support " (p.72).

It is interesting that in the Plowden Report Heads of both infant and junior schools laid emphasis upon the all round development of the individual, using phrases such as whole personality, happy atmosphere etc, and that they admitted to having difficulty in reaching agreement on the aims of primary education the aims which they support.

In terms of teacher's aims, belief in the progressive movement (backed by Plowden) has had a long term influence on education in England as can be seen in King's Study (1978) of infant schools. But there is, of course, a difference between ideals and actual practice. Many studies on primary teachers in the 1970's and 1980's documented the gap between ideology and practical reality (Bennett (1976), Bassey (1978), Galton (1980), Alexander (1984). According to Andrew Pollard (1994 p.150).

> "It appears that, while attractive aims have dominated the ideologies of many primary school teachers, a limited range of cognitive aims have tended to be at least as significant in their practice".

he goes on to argue that teachers develop

> "coping strategies to reconcile their commitments with their circumstances and their beliefs with what is possible"

and Roy Lowe (1987 p.12) develops this further, believing the progressive ideology of the 1950's and 1960's, although profound, was not as radical in practice.

> "The outcome during the 1970's was an increasing distance between what was actually going on in primary schools, as revealed by a succession of reports and enquiries and what was commonly believed to be the case as presented in the popular press"

Similarly, Silcock (1993 p.108) found

> "unanimous approval in 1989, for child centredness; yet when related practices were scrutinised, these diverged not only from acknowledged tenets, but from the concrete details of the practices described."

The main findings of the Oracle Project, undertaken at the University of Leicester between 1975 and 1980, was that those teachers maximising the use of groupings also appeared didactic in their approach, emphasising telling and task supervision. HMI Surveys and relevant research studies have consistently suggested that child centredness exists more in rhetoric than reality. Ashton's Study (1975), the Oracle Study (Galton et al 1980) and the Bristaix Study of primary teachers in England and France (Broadfoot et al 1987) all demonstrated that teachers trod a middle path between the extreme positions. They described their teaching as

> "the moderate role", 'balancing out competing priorities", a mixture of didactic and liberal, allowing children to master basic skills and then to practise them in a way they themselves have opportunity to organise".
>
> *(Quoted in Pollard (1994 p.150)*

Proctor (1990 p.70) summarises the situation:

> "rather than discovery led, pupil centred, idealised image the more accurate generalisation of actual practice is one of a heavy preponderance of managerial interaction and the provision of routinised learning teachers".

The first "Black Papers" of the 1960's criticised progressive teachers for falling standards in primary school. Bennett's research reinforced their thinking as did the Oracle Project which cast doubt upon whether from a pedagogical point of view any revolution at all had taken place in the primary school. Measures to make teachers more accountable were demanded. Government demanded a core curriculum and monitoring of standards. Inspectors requested a broad and balanced curriculum and teacher development. That changes were needed is not contested by many primary teachers; after all, uncertainty and anxiety were not uncommon during the 1970's and 1980's. Several researchers noted the insecurity of teachers as to whether they were covering the right things in the right way (Broadfoot and Osborn (1988) Nias (1989)). One teacher in the PACE Study talked about the "vulnerability" of teachers prior to the new curriculum

> "You had very little framework, you were very much left to yourself to decide what to do and I think that is quite hairy when you look back".
>
> *(Quoted in Pollard (1994) p.88)*

If, as I have argued in this chapter, progressivism and a child centred approach exists more in theory than it actually does in practice and that in fact a combination of teaching styles has been used over the last four decades in most primary classrooms, then where do we go from here? An important feature of the national curriculum is to emphasise the product rather than the process. In fact Kenneth Baker (1987), as Minister of Education in 1987, emphasised to teachers

> "we shall not be telling schools how to organise the school days. It is the end result that matters, not the means of getting there".

Research over the last 20 years, I believe, has established a need to strike a balance between whole class teaching, group work and individualised working. The challenge for the infant schools in the 1990's was to balance the diverse demands of the national curriculum with an understanding of children's learning and development. We needed to address the issues of balance of academic achievement and social development as well as the question of how children learn with its related classroom pedagogy and child experience.

Chapter 4 : *The Effects of the Education Reform Act on Management of Primary Schools*

Schools are complex organisations. Each reflects the abilities of the pupils, the experience, expertise and skills of the staff and the quality and leadership of the management. Teaching and learning are supported and enhanced by effective and efficient management structures and the changes in these structures over the last decade will be explored in this chapter.

Until the late 1980's, educational administration was a partnership of government, local educational authorities and schools, working together to provide a community educational service. As previously discussed, educational provision was by the 1980's being criticised for failing to produce sufficiently high standards and the previous characteristics of "good practice" (Piaget (1926), (1950); Plowden (1967) and the child-centred approach were being seriously challenged. The Conservative Government, and particularly the period of Thatcherism in Britain, saw major changes in the management of primary education, indeed radical change in all spheres of education and across the whole public sector. This new approach was based on the belief that to operate efficiently all institutions must be exposed to the market and market forces. Economically, it was based on Thatcherite monetarism and, politically, on the view that public institutions and education professionals were inherently inefficient. In schools the model was based on the theory that, if schools were self-regulating and exposed to market forces, good schools would prosper and develop, poor schools would dwindle and close and competition for places would steadily improve standards in education.

At the outset at least, each area in the public sector thought it had been singled out for special treatment and that the treatment was totally inappropriate in its case. It was only with time that the breadth of the government campaign became clear, spreading, for example, right across health and education. These processes were thought by those in Britain to be unique to Margaret Thatcher and her supporters. But these changes were occurring across the developed world, with varying speeds and varying success in different counties. In fact, the impact of Government changes hit business too and was particularly marked where business operated as if it was in the public sector propped up by cash injection from the public purse.

Within the education sector in Britain, an early manifestation of these policies was the 1986 changes to the 1980 Education Act. The latter had ensured that each school would have its own Governing Body on which there would be at least two teacher and two parent representatives. In 1986, parents were given equal representation with Local Education Authorities. The accountability of schools and their governors became more obvious; copies of curriculum policy documents had to be made available to parents and an annual report issued. In 1988, provision was made for local management of schools and for opting out of local authority centres and this was given further impetus for primary schools by the 1993 Education Act.

Many of these innovations reflected the New Right pressure group's influence on the Conservative Government of the 1980's. Clive Chitty (1989) saw the "New Right" philosophy as having contradictory policy implications and the ambiguity reflected the division between those who emphasise the merits of a free trade economy, often referred to as the new liberals, and those who attach much more importance to a strong state, the so called new conservatives. The new conservatives' views (Brian Cox, 1980; and Roger Scrutton, editor of the Salisbury Review 1980) that education should embody a clear and traditional hierachy of values .... and be expressed in curriculum terms influenced the thinking of Sir Keith Joseph, Secretary of State at the DES (1981-1986). The New Right believed there should be a greater regulation of schooling in the form of a National Curriculum specified by the state. The New Liberal wing of the New Right on the other hand (Stuart Sexton (1987a) Director of the Educational Unit of the Institute of Economic Affairs and a former adviser to Sir Keith Joseph) argued in a letter to the Independent in November 1987

> "the best National Curriculum is that resulting from the exercises of the parental choice by parents and children acting collectively, and being provided collectively by governors and teachers in response to that choice".

He believed a National Curriculum should be dictated by the market instead of a nationalised one dictated by the Government (Sexton 1988). Both groups were critical of the existing form of local government control of education and advocated local management of schools. They saw greater institutional autonomy or a market led system as a necessary corrective to left wing local authorities in order to maintain traditional and cultural values. By 1987 (election year), the Conservative Party was committed to legislating for a national curriculum and the influence of New Right was undoubtedly reflected in educational legislation of this period. The confusion that ensued of an overloaded curriculum and pedagogical wrangling reflected the

Government's contradictory approach - centralised and market led curriculum innovations.

4.1 The Changing Role of the Headteacher

The influences of the New Right brought about considerable changes in the role of the headteacher. As Grace (1993) points out, prior to the New Right ideologies, headteachers in their schools enjoyed a large amount of pedagogical and cultural autonomy. The headteacher in Bernstein's terms (1977) was an agent not merely of cultural reproduction but potentially of cultural interruption or of attempted cultural transformation. This was an era in which headteachers were empowered as school leaders as never before, It will, as Grace says, probably be looked back on as the Golden Age of Education Headship. The changes of the 1980's, he believed, affected the power relations of school leadership by re-empowering school governing bodies; stressing greater community, parent and business involvement in the running of the school and stressing the need for effective mechanisms of monitoring and accountability in relation to measured outcomes (test results and league tables). He went on to identify two kinds of leadership expected of a headteacher:

a) Pedagogical or cultural
b) Moral

The former involved being an exemplar of excellent classroom practice to a prescribed curriculum and being a role model for other staff; the latter being an exemplar and transmitter of certain religious and moral values. Headteachers, he believed, lost their autonomy under a) because of the constraints of the National Curriculum and the needs of the school for a Financial Manager and Managing Director to enable the school to survive in a free market. Parents are the consumers and the aim was to maximise value added to get to the top of the league tables. The headteacher needs new skills to market the school and satisfy the consumers. This new form of enterprise empowerment replaces the old fashioned moral leadership and became a challenge to headteachers in post. It is clear the headteacher is in the middle of the relationship between those within the school and external forces, between these promoting change and those subject to change. The relationships and forces had to be managed in schools. How could headteachers do it? Fullan (1991 p.152) summarises the dilemma.

> "The expectations that Heads should be leaders in the implementation of changes which they have had no hand in developing and may not understand is especially troublesome. This becomes all the more irritating when those immediately above them also have not been involved in change development and may not fully understand the programmes either."

Fullan goes on to refer to the work of Block (1987) who, as a consultant to a supermarket chain in the USA, attempted to shift the decision making to the level of the store managers in the way that some schools have attempted greater school based decision making. In order to do this the chain store focused first on the store managers, the district managers, then divisional managers and finally the President. All managers complained they were powerless to achieve significant change without this first being achieved at the level above them. We can see, then, to attempt to change a system without changing the people who make it work is near impossible.

I will now consider how the changes of the late 1980's changed the role of the headteacher in primary schools by considering five important areas in more detail.

- Bureaucracy
- Stability of Environment
- Resourcing
- Routines
- The shift from Generalist to Subject Specialist

The **bureaucratic** changes in primary education have been dramatic. Prior to 1986 all rules and regulations were overseen by County Halls. They held, set and spent educational and school budgets. The main responsibility of the headteacher was to organise and oversee the teaching, assist colleagues, plan timetables and provide discipline. The headteacher set the aims of the school and teachers taught, with varying degrees of direction and support, what they thought was correct. Now more and more management and decision taking has been devolved to schools from central government. Money devolved through County Hall to headteachers and governors enables schools to make their own appointments, develop their own staff training, control their own budget and organise and maintain their premises. Only a minor share of responsibility is left in Local Authority hands and much of this is negotiable as the determination of the arrangements for school insurance, the music service, grounds

maintenance, the external school building and special educational needs is subject to annual decisions by headteachers and governors.

The pre-Thatcher era then provided the school with a **stable environment** through secure funding each year. Teacher arrangements changed very little, pupil numbers were not highly significant for the school, society itself was not changing fast and teachers and schools personnel were employed for life. In contrast, the stabilising influence of secure funding to schools has now been eroded. At the macro level only part of the County Council's money goes on education and they along with other areas like Social Services, Leisure and Highways have to bid for resources. Then, only after decisions have been made by education committees on the financing of areas like meals, transport and advisory services is money apportioned out to schools. At the local level many of the educational allocations from central government need to be bid for either by the county or by clusters of schools or indeed by individual schools. All this together with the changing educational priorities of Government (e.g. special education needs, assessment and testing, drugs education) results in considerable annual changes to school funding,

Society too is changing rapidly. Changes in the birth rate, the influence of market forces, technological development, the consequences of equal opportunities legislation, the development of nursery provision and changes in teachers pay and conditions, all these have helped to create a changing and often unstable school environment. Teachers no longer have jobs for life and this, together with the Government's influence on Initial Teacher Training, creates schools with an uncertain and insecure work force.

The general financial instability is reflected at school level. **Resourcing** a school was historically a major role of the headteacher and after money had been taken out for basics like books, paper, pencils, paints, money was divided between teachers for them to spend for their classrooms. Now, with the development of a subject orientated curriculum, the identification of subject needs and the consequent resource bidding are the task of curriculum co-ordinators and the priority they are given by school management informs the management plan.

A further feature of pre Thatcherite education was the existence of recurrent **routines**; the same teacher in the same class year in year out and in some parts of the country any move up the promotional ladder was determined by the length of service to the School and /or Local Authority. Teachers taught very much the same syllabus each year and the headteacher's role was to ensure this was done. The 1988 Education Reform Act and

the introduction of the National Curriculum and its associated assessment and testing procedures have led to radical organisational and professional changes. The teacher's range of responsibility has changed and teachers have moved to increased collaboration and interchange with colleagues in both planning and teaching. Evidence from the PACE Study indicates that there has been a steady move from teachers working with their own individual curriculum planning towards a more whole school co-ordinated approach and this is reflected in the changing yearly routines.

Career development, too, reflects not only classroom competence but the managerial development of curriculum and co-ordinator roles as well as breadth of experience. The **generalist teacher** trained in all subjects and "master of none" was the typical primary teacher. Subject specialism was not an imperative of teacher training (except for music which always was a bonus) and the generalist primary teacher was employed for life and moved (or was re deployed) only if necessary. The introduction of the National Curriculum has emphasised the primacy of separate subjects and from this has evolved the role of subject co-ordinators. These co-ordinators had, or have, developed experience in their subjects and are able to develop the subject within the school curriculum and support other staff in the teaching of the subject. This change of emphasis to subject development teaching was the focus of a lot of public debate in the late 1980s and became a key feature of the battle between progressivism and traditionalism. Its impact and effect on teaching in an infant school will be discussed in the following chapters together with the changing roles of the generalist teachers.

4.2 The Fundamentals of Management and the Effect of the 1988 Education Reform Act.

To manage any organisation effectively, a number of conditions are necessary - suitable staff, worthwhile goals, adequate resources, partnership and trust of others and, finally, accountability. Changes inherent in the 1988 Education Reform Act have meant headteachers have had to develop and extend their managerial roles into the world of financial management and, where public funding is inadequate, to look for alternative funding from businesses, parents and Parent Teacher Associations The changes also had implications for the appointment of suitable staff. The headteacher (together with their governors) is responsible for the appointment of new staff as well as the development of subject co-ordinators from existing staff. This has implications for the identification and training of suitable teachers who now have an important role to play in the development of National Curriculum subjects. The quality of the teaching staff is the most important resource in a school and their abilities to meet the various challenges

with which they are faced, puts demands both on initial teacher training and on the professional development of staff. That partnership and trust are essential in any institution, let alone schools, is not contestable. Headteachers and governors must work together for the good of the school and its pupils especially at a time of considerable change. When subject co-ordinators may now know more about their subjects than the headteachers, mutual respect and trust are of paramount importance.

Finally, perhaps the most fundamental change is accountability. During the 1980's the unequivocal message to teachers was that it was not the children but the teachers who were failing and accountability was demanded of teachers as never before. Headteachers, with the governors, became accountable to parents and the local community, to the Director of Education, and to Ofsted Inspectors for the day to day running of the school, its finances, teaching and learning and the curriculum and its associated assessment and testing. Staff of the school are accountable to pupils and parents for the teaching and learning as well as to the headteacher for the development and financial control of their curriculum area(s).

4.3 The Changing Requirements of the Management Team

(Heads, Deputies, Post Holders, Co-ordinators)

There are many variables both at school and at individual level that influence a teacher's stance towards change. Because the rules change does not mean there would necessarily be changes in practice and Fullan (1992) argues that the schools should be in the business of change because that is what they are there for, and teachers should be open to new ideas because that is what they expect of their pupils. The key to this, he says, is in "empowering teachers". Heads should create what Fullan calls "total schools" in which the culture of collaboration allows individuals to learn from each other and the social and professional environment in which they exist. "Commitment and skill in the change process" says Fullan on the part of organisational leaders and members is every bit as crucial as ideas about where the school should be heading" *(p.48)*.

After considering the work of Fullan (1992) and Grace (1995) and drawing on my own experience, I have identified six features of school management, looked at the effect of the Education Reform Act and shown how the diversification of tasks has "empowered" staff and helped the change processes. A school management team needs:

- Clear goals
- Performance monitoring
- Good Communication
- Professional advice
- Crisp decision taking
- Leadership and management

In defining **goals** for the development of the school, it is the responsibility of the headteacher and other post-holders to ensure that they are relevant and clear. Short, medium and long term objectives need to be interrelated and the sum of this whole is the basis of a future plan for the school identifying financial and educational targets for the following 2 - 3 years. Similarly, **Performance Monitoring** is a collective management issue. The responsibility of post holders and co-ordinators for monitoring their areas is an essential element of the monitoring of whole school issues like curriculum subject development, SAT results, parental involvement etc. None of this can take place effectively without efficient **communications** and a wide range of systems exist in all schools. It is essential that headteachers communicate effectively with:

- The Director of Education and other relevant outside agencies i.e S.C.A.A., OFSTED.
- Other relevant outside agencies i.e. social services, school health, speech therapists, health visitors, education psychologists etc.
- Governors
- Management team members, co-ordinators, teaching and non-teaching staff
- Parents
- Pupils

and that teachers communicate effectively with

- Headteacher and governors
- All other teaching staff
- Parents
- Non-teaching staff and support staff

- Team members and subject co-ordinators.
- Pupils

As happened in the hospital service during the last century, the practice of one surgeon performing the whole of an operation has long gone. So has the day of one teacher teaching one class in isolation. Teaching, like an operation, is essentially a team effort and, as such, demands effective channels of communication and the ability to offer specialist professional advice to others.

No institution can function effectively without **crisp decision taking** and **leadership** from the management. Headteachers now need the ability to prioritise needs, design and carry out plans, manage their own and staff time, rationalise funding issues and generally get things done. Similarly, co-ordinators need to keep abreast of educational thinking and curricular developments and make evaluations in terms of the needs of the whole school. The leadership role of headteachers affects the behaviour and attitudes of pupils, teachers, support staff, parents, governors and representatives of the local community. To a lesser extent deputies, post holders and co-ordinators exercise that leadership role across the same range of people with the curriculum co-ordinators aim being to use his/her subject knowledge to improve teaching and learning for pupils in that subject. The most important test of leadership is its impact on others and in primary schools it is the impact of adults on children.

In this chapter, I have considered the changing role of the headteacher and then looked at how the Education Reform Act has altered many of the fundamental structures needed for the effective management of an institution. I then considered the features of a management team and I looked at the effect of the Education Reform Act on these features. Finally, I will summarise the key tasks of the headteacher, based on my experience as a headteacher over the past seven years, and demonstrate how those tasks have diversified and cannot now be divorced from the tasks of senior teachers and co-ordinators.

4.4 Key Tasks

Headteacher		Senior Staff / Co-ordinators
SCHOOL ETHOS Headteachers now have the main responsibility for generating the ethos of the school. They must have clear values, courage, conviction and sense of urgency. If not, a dangerous vacuum will be created which would result in fragmentation and confusion amongst staff and pupils.	⟷	SUPPORT BY EXAMPLE Senior staff now must show by example what they expect from others and most importantly demonstrate exemplary classroom practice and support for colleagues in their task as classroom teachers.
OVERALL AIMS & OBJECTIVES OF THE WHOLE SCHOOL	⟷	SUBJECT AIMS & OBJECTIVES
SENIOR STAFF RECRUITMENT AND ROLES OF STAFF	⟷	CLASS TEACHER AND NON TEACHING STAFF RECRUITMENT
STAFF MOTIVATION	⟷	SUBJECT / STAFF MOTIVATION
JOB ROTATION	⟷	TEACHING & SUBJECT EXPERTISE
APPRAISAL	⟷	AREA RESPONSIBILITIES
PLANNING & MONITORING including: Planning priorities for development, monitoring progress, recording and reporting	⟷	SENIOR TEAM SUBJECT AREAS
PROFESSIONAL TRAINING & STAFF DEVELOPMENT Teaching & Non Teaching	⟷	SUBJECT & AREA DEVELOPMENT INDIVIDUAL & WHOLE STAFF DEVELOPMENT
REDUNDANCY & RETIREMENT		
CURRICULUM OVERVIEW	⟷	SUBJECT / AREA OVERVIEW

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT Buildings / Grounds / Salaries etc Area & Subject Funding	⟷	SUBJECT/AREA BIDDING FOR FUNDING
MARKETING	⟷	CORE SUBJECT RESULTS
PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT HOME SCHOOL PARTNERSHIPS STUDENT SUPPORT	⟷	ORGANISATION & SUPPORT

Serious and comprehensive reforms change the culture and structure of a school. In this chapter I have traced the effects of the reform changes on the roles of staff in the school and shown how a new form of teacher professionalism has emerged. In Chapter 5, I look at what effects this changing professionalism, together with the introduction of a subject oriented curriculum, have had on achievement of children in an infant school.

Chapter 5 : *The Changing School Culture*

The introduction of a National Curriculum, the opening up of the education system and the changing challenges to teacher professionalism all came at the time when schools were being asked to improve standards of achievement in children. In 1987 Sexton (1987b p.5) was scathing about British education. He said "the current education service seems to be:

- offering poor academic standards
- offering poor standards of discipline in behaviour
- inadequate in its response to modern technology and the needs of tomorrow's job
- staffed by disgruntled teachers who are poorly paid
- under-funded
- providing poor and inefficient management in schools"

Yeo (1994 p.130) believes

> "The primary school of today is not achieving its potential. It is not educating our children to a high enough standard. School is no longer a place to learn but a place to play, to enjoy oneself and perhaps, by the way, to pick up a smattering of what is, in many cases, useless knowledge. Even as I write, another report about the reading ability of 7 year olds has come out, showing standards are too low in many schools."

This indictment of the teaching profession was further emphasised in 1992 by Alexander, Rose and Woodhead (1992 paragraph 24-25)

> "Concerns about educational standards are expressed at two levels. There are particular worries about whether standards of literacy and numeracy have fallen in recent years; and there are wider concerns about whether the standards achieved by primary school pupils constitute an adequate preparation for the demands of life in modern society. On both levels it is clear that to function effectively in the 21st Century our children will need higher standards of literacy and numeracy than ever before"

This was reiterated by Campbell (1993 p.22) drawing upon DES Reports (1978) (1990) and Alexander (1992) in considering the relationship of the curriculum to standards.

> "Primary Education in England and Wales has been characterised by relatively low standards, especially in relation to children judged to be able. The common and facile explanation for this state of affairs was that teachers' expectations were too low, especially in inner cities and areas of poverty"..

Given the steady improvement which has taken place in G.C.S.E. and 'A' level results over the last three years (1993-1996), I consider this a hard criticism of the teaching profession and able pupils and it is encouraging that many researchers have disputed this assertion of falling standards. Robson and Smedley(1996 p.138) observed that

> "there is a substantial body of evidence, in the form of HMI Reports, indicating steady improvements pre National Primary Curriculum in the teaching of subject content in Primary Schools dating from the highly critical HMI National Survey. (DES 1978)".

Similarly, Judith Judd (1996)

> "Put simply, standards have risen in some ways and probably fallen a little in others. We have no way of knowing for sure. Her Majesty's Inspectors did no systematic reporting on individual schools in the fifties and sixties. Research suggests that reports of a crisis in literacy and numeracy are exaggerated."

This chapter describes the changing culture in my school and is central to my thesis. The School recognised that changes and improvements needed to be made. I describe how those challenges were met and ask, if improvements have been made, whether these are reflected in improved standards of achievement in the children.

I have tried to build up a picture of the impact of the implementation of the reforms over five years on:

a) School organisation. I have looked at the way in which this has developed by considering in turn:
   - Organisation and Management
   - Environment and Resources
   - Planning and Liaison
   - The Curriculum

- Teaching and Learning
- Policies and Schemes of Work
- Assessment and Recording
- Ethos

b) Teacher professionalism. Here I consider the development of responsibilities, expertise and teacher talents to meet the demands of the National Curriculum and whether the influence of the changes has effected an improvement in the teaching and learning of children in a nursery/infant school over the period.

5.1 School Organisation

Evidence to support this research has been taken from:

(i) Reports to Governors; monitoring and evaluation reports (which rely heavily on my own interpretation of events in which I was a participant)

(ii) Inspectors' and Advisers' views of the school before, during and at the end of this period.

(iii) Collated evidence from an analysis of SAT results at the end of Key Stage One, Quest results and Neale reading test results. (Chapter 6)

Within the context of this research it is recognised that school improvement and improvement in children's achievement take place over long periods of time. As Fullan (1991 p.106) points out

> "significant change in the form of implementing specific innovations can be expected to take a minimum of 2 to 3 years; bringing about institutional reforms can take five or more years",

although work with post Ofsted "failing schools" is indicating that significant change may be accomplished over shorter time spans than this. The relatively short timescale of this research is counterbalanced by the wide range of evidence from Inspectors' reports on the school, and the three different test scores administered to between 40 & 50 pupils over the period which are analysed in Chapter 6. Unlike previous educational reforms which allowed LEA's and schools to make or negotiate new developments, the pace of the recent changes imposed upon LEA's and schools was headlong. Consequently, the rapid pace of change has to be reflected in the short timescale for the research data. If one acknowledges Hardy's (1989) view that

> "change, after all, is only another word for growth, another synonym for learning ... learning is not finding out what other people already know, but is solving our own problems for our own purposes by questioning, thinking and testing until the solution is a new part of our life",
>
> *(Quoted in Boyne, Jardine and Holly. (1994 p.8))*

then an analysis of the effect of the rapid changes in the early 90's must have validity. The crux of change must essentially be how people come to grips within the world around them and, in this case, the change associated with the National Curriculum, classroom practice and schools accountability have, as discussed in Chapter 3, been associated with wide-ranging social, economic and political changes and trends.

The Setting

The school is a Infant and Nursery School situated in a town in the North East of England. In 1832 the town was a small hamlet consisting of a hall and a few cottages. It had a history going back to Roman times. In 1833 to the west of this hamlet the first pit and colliery houses were built - the beginning of the change of character of the area from an agricultural area to one where mining predominated until the 1970's. Although the building of houses on the southern side of the town started in the early 1900's, it was not until 1913 when a large farm and its buildings were demolished that the "new housing scheme" planned for by the local council truly got underway. Between 1923 & 1939 an area of approximately three square miles was developed, the housing consisting of rows or blocks of terraced houses, on the southerly aspect of the hill, all with long sloping gardens and attractive views.

In 1946 the council launched a further building plan to house the growing community, or rather in accordance with the 1937 Act, to re-house overcrowded families. Over the years this has resulted in the resettlement of households on a large council estate at the bottom of the hill. The estate is an example of planned communities, arranged in cul-de-sacs; tenants of these houses are predominately working class families. The area, however, consists of mixed housing. The houses at the top of the hill are either privately owned or rented; the houses lower down the hill are council owned in the main. The first church to be built in this area was dedicated in 1954 and was followed two years later by the opening of the present infant school which is the subject of this research. Eight years later in 1964 the junior and senior schools, community and youth

centres were built on the same campus as the infant school. The area was now seen as a community in its own right and not an offshoot of the town.

The infant school when it opened in 1956 comprised six classrooms, a large hall and a serving kitchen. The classrooms were arranged in pairs, leading off the main hall, and each pair of classrooms are connected by a short corridor which lead to six toilets. The cloakrooms and washbasins were recessed in the classrooms themselves. To gain access to the hall or playground children passed through adjacent classroom thus causing inconvenience to all concerned. Like many 1950 school buildings there were great expanses of window. In summer it could be extremely hot, in winter, owing to substantial heat loss and inefficient heating system, uncomfortably cold. The hall was extremely spacious and a good sized area for PE and drama. Unfortunately, due to the method of construction, all sounds reverberated and noise was magnified. Children were constantly asked to work quietly. When the school opened in November 1956, there were 50 children on roll and five members of staff. Within a year the school roll had trebled to 158 and during the following year to 204 pupils. The first inspection report on the school in October 1961 (P.40 of School Log; copy of the report given to Managers of School on 19.10.61).

> "This is the first report on this Infants' School which opened in new buildings in November 1956 with the present headmistress in charge. At the time of the inspection there were 215 pupils in six classes. The premises, which serve a big housing estate, provide an assembly hall, staff room, headteachers room, servery and six spacious classrooms grouped in pairs, each pair having its own toilet and cloakroom facilities. Easy access to the hard playing space and pleasant turf outside is available from each classroom. These well designed and carefully maintained premises are an ideal setting for infant education. Draught excluders are needed to the doors and windows of classroom 6 which is cold. The hall is excessively resonant. The school is well furnished and equipped with an ample supply of apparatus and carefully chosen books.
>
> The schemes of work are comprehensive and thoughtful, expressing clearly the aims of the school and giving guidance on methods. Many of the children enter the school without the background which would make them ready for formal education, but they are encouraged from the outset to join confidently in a useful range of occupations. Many pupils are of less than average ability. These problems act as a challenge to the staff who are aware of the wide range of ability in each class. Much effort is made to establish the technique of reading and of writing and the best pupils at the top of the school reach a creditable standard; there are some children who are very slow in acquiring these

techniques. A wide variety of attractive reading material is provided. Speech is seldom good but is at all stages ready and confident. A good supply of number apparatus is available and some of the slower pupils require much practical experience notably in Class 2; the youngest children need much oral work in numbers before the introduction of written sums.

The physical education shows that the pupils are well developed and confident in the use of the large apparatus and good repertoire of nursery rhymes and songs is known and the enthusiastic singing is obviously enjoyed; the school is fortunate in having three pianists on the staff. Art is lively in all classes and good use is made of the display boards recently provided. The morning assembly is reverent, a good atmosphere being created by the choice of pianoforte music played beforehand and by the hymn singing. Pupils regularly take turns in reading the prayers.

The transported mid-day meals, served in the hall are substantial and of good quality, and opportunities are taken to give some social training. The staff, under the inspiring leadership of the headmistress, are a hardworking and devoted team, unsparing in their efforts for the children. The school is a happy community playing an important part in the lives of the children who are learning and living together. The school gives them a sense of happiness and security."

School roll numbers stayed around the 200 mark for the following 17 years, dropping dramatically in 1978 due to the opening of a new school two miles away and children living nearby transferring to it. By September 1988 the school had 102 pupils on roll, one headteacher and four members of staff. Two classrooms were empty. In November 1988 the school was inspected by members of the Local Authority Advisory Service in order to obtain a view of the provision made in the school and to assist in identifying matters for further thought and action. This report will be referred to later in the text. In September 1989 National Curriculum teaching commenced. In October 1990 with 96 children on roll I was appointed as Headteacher from outside the school and a nursery class was opened in the school the following year. Over the following two years the school roll steadily grew and was soon running at a maximum capacity of around 200.

5.2 The Changes in School Organisation

The school prior to 1991 was a typical example of an english infant school; one reception class with one teacher and two intakes of pupils in September and January.

The teaching in this class was, historically and by necessity, basic and formal. Few children had pre-school experience - social skills, motor skills and pre-school experiences (in Number and English work) predominated in the teaching. The class teacher had spent almost all of her career in the school, working up through the ranks to become deputy head. On leaving the reception class the children moved into one of two classrooms, the brighter children into a year 1 class, the less able into a mixed age class with year 2 children. After one year the more able year 1 class moved into top class and the less able stayed where they were. All children moved into the junior school at the end of year 2.

The following paragraphs summarise the school in the late 80's as reported in the 1988 Inspection:

Organisation & Management

The Infant School, which was opened in 1956 shares a site with the Junior School. At the time of the inspection there were 102 pupils on roll organised into the following classes.

Age Range	No. on Roll
4 - 5	23
5 - 6	22
5 - 7	29
6 - 7	28

The staff consists of a Head Teacher, a Deputy Head Teacher and three members of staff.

The designation of responsibility and other aspects of management such as delegation of responsibility and involvement in policy making were weak or non-existent.

There is an urgent need to tighten up on matters of written school policy and to assign properly devolved responsibilities to members of staff. Many areas of the curriculum are undeveloped because staff responsibilities are unclear or undefined.

Staff in the Infant School display a caring, indeed a mothering attitude and yet do not take a very positive approach towards aspects of discipline and personal social education. There is, too, a lack of open-mindedness to new ideas and outside influences. The curriculum is narrow and the teaching is stereotyped and too much teacher-directed. Children are not encouraged to explore and expectations are low. There is a very mechanistic approach particularly to the teaching of language. Arrangements for assessment and recording are poor and are in need of urgent review. Overall documentation is poor and there is a lack of written policy.

Environment & Resources

The standard of display throughout the school during the course of the inspection was variable both in its quality and in the way in which it was displayed. The work displayed in the main hall and corridors in no way reflected the work displayed in the classrooms with the exception of the middle Infant area and the area used by the Language Enrichment Support team.

Resources in the Infant School generally are satisfactory.

Planning & Liaison

The designation of responsibility and other aspects of management such as delegation of responsibility and involvement in policy making were weak or non-existent.

Entry into school is preceded by visits to enable the children to familiarise themselves with school routine and this is good. The information gathered during this process, and by visits, undertaken by the teacher holding the responsibility, to the nearby nurseries, should form the basis for the curriculum in the reception class.

The Curriculum
The curriculum is narrowly conceived and is essentially subject based. There is a strong emphasis on mathematics and English work but many other areas are lost in rather unspecific topic work. It is difficult to identify the quantity and therefore the quality of work in science, environmental studies and creative work.

Work is rigid and teacher directed. There is little evidence of pupils being stretched or of them taking responsibility of their own work.

Teaching & Learning
This emerged as the key issue in the inspection. Because of the background of many of the pupils, staff generally show a caring and kindly attitude towards the pupils. This attitude is, however, completely undemanding. Staff claim that they expect a great deal in terms of basic skills in reading and writing but this was not in evidence during the inspection. Teachers appear not to expect children to work on their own, to show initiative and to respond in a mature way to the business of the school. Children are not pushed in the sort of way that might compensate for a lack of stimulation and help at home and as a result are not achieving to the level of their potential.

The dominant style is teacher-directed, the staff being rigid in their attitudes and methods of teaching. Overall, teaching is didactic and restricting for the children.

Policies & Schemes of Work (Guidelines)
There is a marked lack of anything of any note in writing in many areas where schools can now be considered to have statements of policy. Notable omissions here are policy statements on Equal Opportunities, Sex Education and Guidelines for Pastoral Care and Personal and Social Education.

Schemes of work in the Infant School are inadequate. What documentation exists is concerned mostly with content and contains very little on aims, objectives, methodology, assessment and resources. Documentation is particularly vague in areas such as science and humanities which tend to be delivered as themes and/or through topic work.

Assessment & Recording
Arrangements for the assessment and recording of pupil progress are very poor indeed. Little relevant and useful assessment goes on and what assessment is done tends to be formal and unrelated to children's classroom work. There is no overriding rationale for assessment. Records are kept by teachers but they are unhelpful documents which seem to serve little purpose in the teaching process.

Ethos
The school demonstrates a caring, indeed a mothering attitude to children, but there is not a considered policy. Discipline tends to be of the control and contain type and concerns itself with dealing with outcomes rather than planned intervention. The school should look positively to engendering and promoting self discipline through the teaching processes and the development of independent learning. This awareness of social responsibility should begin in the reception class. Experience of sharing ideas and working together in twos and small groups would assist this.

Following this report and changes required under the 1988 Education Reform Act considerable change for the staff in the school was an inevitable, albeit a reluctant, next step. More importantly how would change affect them; would it be a shared vision; in fact was there a clear vision for the future? Pollard (1994, p.2) points out

> "change is never without pain"

The security of the known and familiar for both pupils and staff was falling apart and as Woods (1990 p. vii/viii) says

"Schools ... are places of struggle ... Schools are also places of learning".

Learning had to go on. This feeling of uncertainty and anxiety was not just this individual school's concern prior to and at the start of the implementation of the National Curriculum but a feeling that permeated all primary schools although perhaps to a lesser extent.

But if one acknowledges Fullan's view (1991 p.130) that

"Change is a process, not an event"

and, if one considers the lack of national clarity about educational purpose and goals over the previous two decades and, as we did in Chapters 2 and 3, considers the development of primary education up to 1990, one is more fully able to understand the position of many schools at this time.

As Pollard et al (1994 p.88) point out

> "Several previous researchers have pointed to the insecurity experienced by individual teachers about whether they were covering the right things or whether they ought to have been doing more (Broadfoot and Osbourne (1988) Nias (1989). Another teacher in the PACE Study talked of the vulnerability of teachers before the National Curriculum when "you had very little framework, you were very much left to yourself to decide what's to do and I think that is quite hairy when you look back".

The theories of Froebel, Dewey and Piaget were taught to a generation of teachers and these teachers now occupy many senior positions in schools and LEA's. Alexander (1991 p.5) recorded a "widespread perception in primary schools that the LEA espoused particular versions of "good primary practice" and expected teachers to conform to these". He identified key aspects of this culture and how this culture developed through the influence of advisers, HMI and academics who effectively moulded teachers teaching and children's learning by an inculcation of society's values, beliefs and "pedagogic" assumptions. The demands of change upon this conformist culture as identified in the 1995 Ofsted Conference Report (p.16-17) is essentially what existing teachers have found so difficult.

Fullan (1991 p.30-31) describes the position like that which the school found itself in in the Summer of 1991.

> "The crux of change is how individuals come to grips with reality ... Change may come about either because it is imposed on us (by national events or deliberate reform) or because we voluntarily participate or even initiate change when we find dissatisfaction, inconsistency or intolerability in our current situation. In either case the meaning of change will rarely be clear at the outset and ambivalence will pervade the transition. Any innovation cannot be assimilated unless its meaning is shared".

The first eight months of my headship was taken up with monitoring and evaluating the curriculum content, the teaching and learning process, the strengths and weaknesses of the staff, the needs of the children, the views of governors and parents at the school. In the summer of 1991 the first monitoring paper and planning document was produced. In it I wrote

> "I have observed over the last eight months the progress of the children, their behaviour and the general ethos of the school. Behaviour is fair but a core of children spoil it for others. Many of these disruptive children lack a sense of worth and purpose at school; are rarely on task often because they do not fully understand what they are expected to do or, in many cases, it is too difficult for them; some children too have a disregard for social niceties like "please and thank you" as well as being unaware of what is acceptable and unacceptable behaviour.
>
> From September I am looking at organising the school into two teams:
>
> a) Early years
>
> b) Key Stage 1
>
> The early years will consist of the new nursery and one (perhaps two later) reception classes.
>
> The Key Stage 1 (in National Curriculum Terms Year 1 and Year 2) will be divided equally between three classrooms and three members of staff. (Two on permanent contracts). I will then organise Headteacher directed time to enable each of these teams to plan their work together; the early years to ensure progression between the two age groups; the Key Stage 1

team to ensure all children in each class have access to the same curriculum and learning opportunities. Hopefully, this organisation will enable me to:

- encourage team work and a better sharing of expertise
- ensure children who have a supply teacher (Deputy Head's class) get full curriculum entitlement.
- enable staff to have a full age range and a range of abilities in their room to teach (a morale booster for one teacher to see some of her children doing well instead of always having a poor mixed aged group)
- split children who do not get on with each other or a member of staff
- split up the children causing trouble

These proposals will be discussed at the June staff meeting"

In July 1991 I noted:

"The re-organisation of the school has been approved by both staff and Chair of Governors. The Key Stage One organisation was greeted with enthusiasm by Mrs A ... and scepticism by Mrs B ... With the support of Mrs. A I feel we can go ahead so will submit the proposals to the next Governors' Meeting."

Changes at the school from September 1991 took place within the context of changes in, and increased, staffing; changes in classroom organisation; provision of extra resources later to be supported by redesign and refurbishment of classrooms; and changes to the isolated and static practice which at that time characterised the school. Two members of staff had retired; new staff were appointed. A new early years wing was established consisting of two teachers and one nursery assistant. Re-organisation of key stage 1 classes took place in 1991. Three parallel classes of year 1 /year 2 mixed age classes were established each with a range of pupils of differing abilities. Staffing in these consisted of the two remaining teachers and a supply teacher. Staff reaction to this change was mixed. One member of staff had lost her "Year 2 top stream" and now faced the challenge of teaching Year 1 less able children many with special educational needs. A second member of staff was encouraged - she now had a wider range of abilities to cater for the challenges and rewards of more able children.

Collegiality and collaboration became the first step in the change process at the school. Where school and team planning was given priority, the sharing of ideas and the development of collaborative teaching were essential to the development of the school. Staff had agreed areas of responsibility and job descriptions. Attendance on "Baker" (Professional Development) days and at In-service courses enabled the staff to start to re-write policies and guidelines in line with the National Curriculum requirements.

At the end of 1991 the Directors' Report to Governors (based on six visits to the school that year) stated:

> *Organisation & Management*
> At the beginning of the Spring Term 1991 there were 114 pupils on roll. This generated a teaching establishment of Head Teacher plus 4. The children were organised in single age classes in three cases, the fourth class containing a mixture of reception and year 1 children. An imbalance in numbers has meant large classes in all year groups except year 2. Some re-organisation will be advisable next year once the nursery is functioning as part of the school.
>
> The teaching staff consists of Head Teacher, Deputy Head, one teacher with an 'A' allowance and two teachers at main professional grade. All staff have a responsibility for a National Curriculum subject area. This has been achieved by some re-allocation of responsibilities since the new headteacher took up her post. The new responsibilities are detailed in job profiles which have been produced through joint discussions with the teachers involved and the new headteacher.
>
> All members of staff have responsibility for a teaching group and the headteacher has this year been heavily committed to covering within the classroom due to staff absences. It is important that the full-time involvement of the headteacher in the classroom is kept to a minimum so that she can carry out her responsibilities for managing and monitoring the progress of the school effectively.
>
> At the beginning of 1989 the previous Head Teacher produced a National Curriculum Development Plan. This set targets over a three year period and identified priorities for the allocation of resources and staff development. Since taking up her post, the new headteacher has carried out a curriculum audit and as a result has produced a new management plan which identifies appropriate targets for development over the next three years.
>
> The aims of the school and information for parents have been set out in an impressive prospectus for parents. These documents have set a new tone and have improved the ethos of the school.
>
> *Environment & Resources*
> The open-plan nature of the school has caused problems in the past with the obtrusive storage of resources. Recent re-organisation of resources and a new policy on display in the school has resulted in a noticeable improvement in the environment which is now much more conducive to learning. The school should be encouraged to continue to examine ways in which it can improve the working environment.
>
> The provision of resources has not been systematic and was unrelated to school development plans. This has left gaps in provision. An audit has identified major shortfalls and the headteacher has begun to address these through the school management plan.
>
> *Planning & Liaison*
> The school has made significant progress in achieving its targets during the year and is aware of the main areas for concern which are still to be addressed. The most urgent areas for development are:
>
> 1) To develop co-operative planning and teaching strategies.
>
> 2) The school is making a determined attempt to establish a partnership between itself and the community it serves. Liaison with its partner school is also improving.

The Curriculum
Time is devoted to all subjects of the National Curriculum which increasingly are delivered through a sequence of themes. Some of the cross-curricular elements are also included and it is important that other cross-curricular themes are considered in the future when planning themes. The Annual Curriculum Return indicates that 60% of curriculum time is devoted to the three core subjects of English, Maths and Science with the remaining 40% for all the foundation subjects and R.E. There is a need to keep this balance under review. Adjustments may be necessary to ensure that all National Curriculum subjects and the cross-curricular elements are given adequate attention.

Teaching & Learning
Three sessions were spent observing the work of a cross section of teachers in the school. There were examples of open-ended challenging teaching where pupils were encouraged to be independent and resourceful. There were also lessons which provided examples of over-direction by the teacher and little stimulation or challenge for pupils. There was little evidence of collaborative teaching. Recent changes in staffing should help the school achieve more consistency in approaches to the planning and teaching the curriculum and the collaboration which is essential to ensure continuity and progression for pupils. The broadening of teaching styles is identified as an urgent area for development.

Policies & Schemes of Work (Guidelines)
During the course of the year the staff have undertaken a range of in-service activities both to enhance their own expertise and to help the introduction of National Curriculum subjects. School based staff development sessions have also been used effectively to carry out policy reviews and to develop and improve subject specific guidelines. The school is making good progress in this respect.

Schemes of work are in place for a number of curriculum areas but these need revising and rewriting taking account of the National Curriculum. The Headteacher is aware of this and has already started the process.

The School also has policy statements covering a range of areas. Many of these require updating and again the process has been started with the production of a policy on in-service training and a statement on the early years curriculum at South Stanley Infants School.

Assessment & Recording
This is not addressed in the report.

Relationships / Behaviour
The school has experienced a difficult year with severe problems of continuity caused by staff absences. Despite this the children are well behaved and relationships between teachers and pupils are generally sound.

Developments were coming in thick and fast. Whilst the new organisation in school was becoming established, Local Management of School and the staggered introduction of National Curriculum Subjects with associated assessment and testing were underway. The introduction of the National Curriculum clearly emphasised separate subjects but the security of clinging to "topic-based" teaching as the epitome of good practice was a matter of supreme importance to the staff.

The demands of the National Curriculum became a personal challenge and comments like "it's what we've always done" were frequently heard. The tension came as more subjects came on board, first the core, then the foundation subjects and RE and finally cross curricular issues. The teachers, welcomed to some extent the clarification that the National Curriculum offered and acknowledged a need for breadth, continuity and progression. What did become evident was that in some subjects they needed the

support and advice of other teachers to support them in their teaching. Concern too was mounting at the speed and extent of the documentation and the changes being recommended to teachers and headteachers from both the Government and LEA. The staff felt that they were being overwhelmed by documentation and time was not being allowed for consolidation of existing practice to enable problems particularly with record keeping and assessment to be solved. Time for the essential day to day running of the school was being squeezed. The teachers were beginning to feel demotivated by unreasonable demands and confused guidance. In 1991 Campbell and Neill (1992) looked at the work of Year 2 teachers and found their working week averaged 58.1 hours with those in the highest 20% working 72 hours a week. Time became the big issue in the early days of the National Curriculum implementation.

Despite these issues, the 1992 Directors' Report to the Governors showed that positive strides were being made by the school in most areas, although it was acknowledged at the time that the target setting was ambitious and might be unmanageable and unattainable in the short term. What had developed to date, though, was collaboration between staff in the development of long, medium and short term planning. The School reflected what Broadfoot and Osbourne's research highlighted (1993). They studied teachers' conceptions of professional responsibility through the comparative study of two different education systems in England and France - before both systems underwent major changes. The feature of English education was commitment to teacher autonomy and local responsiveness to children's needs. French teachers on the other hand had a narrower, more restricted, more classroom focused conception of their role with emphasis on formal teaching and the 3R's. English teachers then had a concept of their role as an "extended professional". Nias (1989 p.167), however, noted the concept of "bounded professionalism" to refer to english primary teachers

> "Teachers in this group have whole school perspectives and an interest in collaboration and collegiality, but are largely atheoretical and school bounded in their approach to other educational issues."

The entrenched attitudes of staff were highlighted in the Director's Report and the need for wider collaboration, and the opening up of classroom practice by staff (to pupils, parents and other teachers), and the headteacher (to staff and Governors) became an important aspect of the school's development.

The 1992 Director's Report on the school was based on a number of visits by the link Inspector to the school and to Governor's meetings. It is a reflection of discussions with

the Headteacher of the school management plan and practices and observations of classroom teaching. It commented as follows:

Organisation & Management
Pupil numbers were greater in the main school than the previous year, and the nursery unit was established. The Headteacher made organisational changes to try to ensure an even workload in dealing with year 2 assessments although this meant a large reception class for the probationary teacher in the Autumn Term.

The Headteacher's commitment to working in classes has been reduced and longer term cover for classes was arranged. Consideration has been given to the need to ensure efficient management by the appointment of a deputy head teacher and the advertising of a post holding an allowance, in line with the school management plan.

The management planning is undertaken by the Headteacher in consultation with the staff. Previous targets have focused on year group wings and team teaching approaches, the development of English, Early Years, and the National Curriculum, including assessment and record keeping. These have been appropriate areas for the school to address and ambitious targets were set. Progress has been made in all areas although further developments of these targets remain.

The most recent management plan includes special needs, the school environment, National Curriculum developments, whole curriculum planning and information technology. This major list of targets is an indication of the hard work that is going on in order to improve the education of the children, and the school will need to ensure proper review procedures with staff. The Headteacher is also aware of other major needs which have been identified for future years.

The school management plan was not presented as a single document for consideration by the governors, and it is recommended that this occurs in future. The School is recommended to prepare its management plan and involve staff and governors to a greater extent in its development, so that it becomes a base against which the school can judge itself.

The School is making good progress towards the achievement of its targets and should continue to develop the processes it has begun.

Environment & Resources
Work has continued in order to improve the environment and classrooms are now bright areas with some good display work. Outside areas are being improved, with an excellent area already available for the nursery.

The internal environment of the school has improved, with display related to the curriculum as a learning resource. The School has also worked to improve the external area for the benefit of the children.

Planning & Liaison
Collaboration now takes place in the development of the topics although teachers work mainly with their own classes.

Increasing use was made of adults in the classroom.

Further work will need to continue to ensure that the abilities of all children in a class are catered for, now that staff have had experience of this new form of organisation, with challenging target setting for individuals as appropriate.

A variety of in-service directly related to school developments was attended by members of staff. There was assistance from the Curriculum Support Team and the school operated joint professional development days with other institutions.

The Curriculum
The School has prepared a two year topic cycle to cover National Curriculum requirements, and will further address curriculum issues with a more stable staff. An emphasis has been placed on the development of reading related to home school links. The School has targeted areas for curriculum funding in relationship to the school management plan.

Teaching & Learning
Teachers work well to plan stimulating and varied activities for the classes, and there is a mixture of whole class, individual and group teaching in dealing with mixed age classes. The teachers made clear the requirements of the sessions. Pupils were mainly on task and showing enthusiasm for their work. Topic work was well established.

Where children were able to work in groups, with activities prepared to their ability, most progress was made, with children interested and on task almost all the time.

Policies & Schemes of Work (Guidelines)
Work is still required in the completion of documentation for schemes of work and policy statements.

Assessment & Recording
The management planning is undertaken by the Headteacher in consultation with the staff. Previous targets have focused on year group wings and team teaching approaches, the development of English, Early Years, and the National Curriculum, including assessment and record keeping. These have been appropriate areas for the school to address and ambitious targets were set. Progress has been made in all areas although further developments of these targets remain.

Ethos
Changes of staff have been a problem for the school again this year but the Headteacher has tried to minimise the effect on the children.

In the summer of 1992 the feeling of being swamped by change permeated the school. There was frustration at the amount of time being demanded by NCC and SEAC for record keeping and assessment and as quickly as one system was put in place more guidance arrived to replace it. The obligation of the school to deliver a broad and balanced curriculum with associated assessment in all subjects and testing in core subjects provided some difficulties for the staff who were aware that a high percentage of children in the school needed to master the basics in maths, reading and writing. Time allocation for subjects within the classroom was an overriding concern; demands on time meant time for listening to children read was decreasing. Campbell and Neill (1994 p.99) expressed what the staff were feeling. Whilst looking at time allocations for subjects over a four year period they concluded that

> "the policy for a broad and balanced curriculum ran into difficulties from the structural unmanageability of the serially invented curriculum".

The statutory testing of the basic subjects (English, Maths and Science (initially)) and the previous culture of stressing the basics in an infant school relative to the other subjects" made the situation worse. These national problems were further compounded within the school by its rapid growth as a result of a changing ethos, staff changes and the excellent way in which the new nursery was operating. A second reception class had

been established and in turn this led to classes at Key Stage 1 of 33 and 34 children. These large classes with their wide ability range of children; teaching of an overloaded curriculum and an entrenched belief that "good" infant practice was only possible in integrated topic based classrooms led to tensions in both staff and pupils. Pollard (1985) documented the practical difficulties that primary school teachers faced even in the mid 1980s with limited school resources, large class sizes, a high proportion of pupil/teacher contact time, compulsory attendance at school and external curricular expectations. He argued that teachers develop coping strategies to reconcile their commitments with their circumstances and their beliefs with what is possible. The experience in the school during the summer of 1992 was that described by Bennett and Kell (1989 p.25)

> "the difficulties and stress involved in attempting to deliver a differentiated curriculum in classes of sometimes wide age ranges containing children with generally low levels of language and personal skills, and differential experience of school, without adequate resources and assistance, while feeling under pressure from parents to achieve progress in the basics".

I would add that in our case the pressures were mainly coming from the governors, the LEA and the Headteacher. That there was a crisis developing in the Key Stage 1 classrooms was undoubtedly true. It was exacerbated by the teachers' entrenched beliefs that "good infant practice" was that children should work in groups, that groups should be pursuing different areas of the curriculum at any one time and that an "enquiry" or "exploratory" method of pupil/teacher interaction was desirable. Coping strategies were becoming evident. The teachers' priorities became the management of the children rather than the management of learning. Children were given safe, repetitive and routine tasks rather than challenging, tasks and opportunities to explore. Staff who had been appointed for their beliefs in active learning were resorting to formal, teacher-directed methods. As Campbell et al (1992 p.153) found when examining infant teachers' workloads as the National Curriculum came into schools

> "teachers were experiencing an enervating treadmill of hard work that rarely gave them a sense of what they had achieved, what they intended to do. One interviewee likened it to a running commentary at the back of her mind which was constantly saying "you haven't done this, you haven't done that, even though she was working flat out"

The authors identified three reasons for this:

a) That the range of topics expected of primary teachers had increased - especially with the adoption of curriculum co-ordinator responsibilities

b) The increased range of curriculum and assessment demands

c) The increase in school activities that has been built into teaching - INSET, inter-school liaison, meetings etc.

The PACE study echoed our experience:

> "In 1992 the pressure on teachers was clearly immense and nearly a quarter were beginning to change their teaching methods in order to be able to cope".
>
> *(Pollard 1994 p.155)*

The Director's Report to Governors for 1992/1993 states

> "Pupils continued to work at tasks set and application and involvement improved for individual children during the year. Although varying activities were provided, the setting of work at an appropriate level for the children in different groups remained a complex and difficult task which will continue to need consideration and evidence of the mounting stress for pupils and staff. Relationships between pupil and teacher vary, and consideration should be given, within the records of achievement focus, as to how the specific use of a mixture of regular praise and constructive criticism can aid pupils learning".

Despite the frustration of the year, the 1993 Director's Report showed a distinct progress in general school development reporting as follows:.

> ***Organisation & Management***
> The nursery unit in the school is now firmly established. Numbers in the main school continued to rise. Organisational arrangements of reception classes followed by vertical grouping are based upon a clear philosophy of providing progression and KS1 coherence. Steps have been taken to ensure that there is adequate adult involvement within classes.
>
> This school organisation is made possible also by the developing practice of teachers sharing the long, medium and short term planning. Alongside this there has been some shared planning in early years education, a development to be continued.

The management planning is undertaken by the Headteacher in consultation with the staff, and governors have been provided with information at an early stage in the development of the management plan, a process to be continued.

The most recent management plan includes further significant targets related to curriculum planning and special educational needs, teaching and learning styles and industry links, some subject reviews, progression and the development of records of achievement, resource organisation and environmental education. Although the management plan contains some performance indicators the way in which these are related directly to the specific annual targets are not clear and is an area which should be further considered.

The management plan is an impressive document laying down the school general and specific approaches through a well organised and clearly considered philosophy. Following the plan's approach will continue to build the strengths of the school. Consideration has been given to the relationship between the school's finances and the reaching of targets and this will increasingly become an area for governor involvement.

The Head Teacher is aware of the many developments which affect the school and consideration has been given to the appropriate staging of the school's involvement, while at the same time ensuring a rapid pace of change and improvement.

The school is making rapid progress in improving the environment, curriculum and learning of its pupils, based on a series of ambitious targets, but is also ensuring that this takes place within a well planned framework.

Environment & Resources
The environment continued to improve with an extension of the areas brought up to the school's standard. Provision of adequate space for administrative and secretarial tasks remains a problem.

Classrooms continued to be stimulating environments for pupils, with display used to celebrate children's work and also provide areas of enrichment. This has been helped by further decorating work.

Planning & Liaison
This school organisation is made possible also by the developing practice of teachers sharing the long, medium and short term planning. Alongside this there has been some shared planning in early years education, a development to be continued.

Teachers continued to develop their planning together while working in separate classes.

Following on from last year's Director's Report, the Headteacher continues to involve staff in planning and there has been an appropriate allocation of staff responsibilities with job profiles prepared for all staff. The responsibilities are subject to review, and consideration of the subject co-ordinators role in monitoring and evaluating progress is an influencing factor in that review process.

The staff continued to attend a variety of courses including longer term LEA courses and joint work with other schools, directly related to school developments. The school also made good use of available LEA services, including strong support from the curriculum support service, support from SENSS on approaches to learning, cluster group funding, and support and development time. Work continued on developing links with other phases of education for instance through the provision of a joint uniform. Appraisal has been introduced satisfactorily.

The Curriculum
Previous targets of the 1992/3 management plan have focused on special needs, the school environment, national curriculum developments, whole curriculum planning and information technology. This ambitious list of targets has resulted in a lot of hard work by staff and significant progress being made.

Information technology is in regular use in the classrooms and reference and reading materials for pupils have been improved.

Teaching & Learning
Although varying activities were provided, the setting of work at an appropriate level for the children in different groups remained a complex and difficult task which will continue to need consideration.

Policies & Schemes of Work (Guidelines)
Major strides have been made in the development of school-specific policies covering whole school and curriculum issues. These should help the school to operate in a coherent manner. Further work on the curriculum has continued and regular reviews take place.

Assessment & Recording

Ethos
Relationships between pupil and teacher vary, and consideration should be given, within the records of achievement focus, as to how the specific use of a mixture of regular praise and constructive criticism can aid pupils' learning.

I see from my files that in 1993 I noted the frustrations of staff during the year and put forward strategies for creating an environment which was more conducive to learning. The monitoring document for the summer term 1993 read as follows:

> "Mixed age classes together with the wide range of abilities and the increasing work load associated with the new National Curriculum are causing stress in classrooms at Key Stage One. Informal suggestions to consider subject groupings have been ignored. Ancillary support has been used fluently to support staff when and where necessary. I have therefore decided to look at a system of using the wide range of expertise in the school to group and subject teach Key Stage 1 pupils".

I saw a number of benefits and advantages from re-organising the teaching arrangements at Key Stage One so as to maximise the subject expertise of the staff and to provide a better working environment for the children. It seemed to me that

for the teachers

1. it would make best use of individual subject expertise in a way which would benefit staff and children through subject specialists teaching their own subjects. This approach could be used to stretch the potential of children in the second year.

2. it would help to foster a sense of purpose and involvement in subject planning and working out the arrangements for the new curriculum.

3. it would enable us to make effective use of INSET courses. Teachers directly involved in teaching the subject would attend courses and develop their expertise, cascading their subject to other staff after the course. Similarly, it

would enable us to make best use of curriculum development time enabling specialist staff to work with other staff in their classrooms where necessary.

4. teachers would be encouraged in seeing for themselves children's progression over a longer period and teacher assessment would be uninterrupted over two years.

for the teacher and children

5. it would provide a maximum of fifteen new children each year to be tested and assessed in each class in the foundation subjects and reading.

6. core subject testing could be undertaken by the specialist teacher.

7. continuity and progression would be enhanced as the children had the same teacher for two years.

8. the ethos and environment would be established in Year 1 and then transmitted to the new Year 1 by those proceeding to Year 2.

These ideas obviously needed to be developed and refined by all those who were to be involved. My first step was to discuss them with two local Inspectors. With their cautious encouragement I embarked upon the discussions with staff, governors and, finally, parents.

As a result, discussions on radical re-organisation of the school at Key Stage One commenced in Autumn Term 1993. Edwards and Knight (1994 p.148) referring to Fullan (1991) emphasise that

> "changing schools is about changing people. Change depends upon practitioners altering their beliefs, adding to or changing their knowledge, and revising their practice and routines. Change then like the learning it involves is very personal and can be very threatening. The most effective change is likely to happen in an environment where the quality of relationship is good enough to reduce people's feelings of threat; where people feel that colleagues will support them, where people expect to learn professionally; and where people expect to take risks because they knew that schooling is too complicated. for there to be risk-free, straight forward solutions to the practical issues that face them".

Part of my responsibility, as headteacher, was to establish with the staff our goals and the necessary changes to enable us to achieve these goals. What was important was that a team had been established and they had worked closely together for the previous two years in planning and evaluating their work. The Report of the Director to the Governing Body 1992/1993 states

> "This school organisation is made possible by the developing practice of teachers sharing the long, medium and short term planning" .... and "major strides have been made in the development of school with specific policies covering whole school and curriculum issues. Teachers continued to develop their planning together while working in separate classes".

Jillian Rodd (1994 p.115) quoted in Robson and Smedley (1996 p.51) suggested the following points to be borne in mind when implementing change that it

- is inevitable
- is necessary
- is a process
- occurs to individuals, organisations and societies
- can be anticipated and planned for
- is a highly emotional process
- can cause tension and stress
- is resisted by many people
- can be adjusted to by individuals and groups with the support of the leader. (P.115)

Certainly the staff and I experienced most of these points. The working collegiality that had developed allowed us to develop a system that we believed would enable us to meet the needs of the children, the staff and the National Curriculum requirement. One of the first things considered was the organisation of the classes at Key Stage One. Alexander (1992 p.170) brought to public attention the controversial issue of the efficiency of the class - teachers system. He noted

> "within the primary profession itself the class teacher system was fundamental to the point of impregnability. It was so central a part of the structure of primary schools, so basic to the primary teacher's sense of what being a teacher was all about, that to question it was unthinkable; it would strike at the primary teachers' very identity".

Whilst considering the class organisation I considered the strengths of the staff in the school and with the three Wise Men's (Alexander et al (1992)) debate of subject specialism ringing in my ears I proposed a system of subject-based classrooms. Both the Maths and Science Co-ordinators were well established in their subjects and in the school. Their classrooms could become subject based. The school ancillary was a competent and talented Art and Technology specialist. The room adjacent to the headteacher's room became the Art/Design Technology base. The Deputy Headteacher agreed to develop the English teaching at Key Stage 1 and she, together with the special needs teacher, agreed to move temporarily to a room in the adjacent Community Centre. The reactions of the staff to the proposed changes was initially mixed ranging from "a super idea, yes let's give it a go" to "well things can't get much worse". We agreed to a trial period of two terms as it was acknowledged that moving children to rooms off the premises was far from ideal.

After careful consideration of the needs of the children in the school at Key Stage 1 and the demands of the National Curriculum, we decided to allocate four mornings each week to the teaching of the three core subjects - Maths, English and Science; Design Technology and Art would become the fourth area.

We had 100 children, 5 teachers and 5 teaching areas. These children were divided into 5 groups on the basis of progress made, attitude to work and confidence. In each group, irrespective of age, the children were of similar levels of achievement in English and Maths. We were fortunate in the early days of this organisation that no child displayed wide differences of attainment in Maths and English. In later years where differences became evident further refinement of the system allowed us to cater for these children's needs. In other words instead of grouping a class by ability, we had grouped the whole of the Key Stage. The grouping consisted of:

a) 1 group of more able Year 2 pupils
b) 1 group of more able Year 1 pupils
c) 1 group of mixed aged Year 1 and Year 2 pupils who were functioning at the same level.
d) A language enrichment group of Year 1 pupils
e) A language enrichment group of Year 2 pupils.

These groups were colour coded for ease of administration. By necessity, groups d & e were kept small (between 9 & 13) to enable all staff, especially the SEN teacher, to develop and follow through individual education plans for these children. Groups a, b

and c ranged between 20-26 pupils depending on pupil numbers; group c, being a mixed age group has always been supported by the school auxiliary, giving it a staffing ratio of 1:13. A timetable was then devised (Figure 1 page 55). Our first issue in this process was not so much the curriculum content itself but its manageability within the system to allow children the access they needed. Irrespective of promises to "slim down" the curriculum (which in fact took place the following year), a high proportion of time needed to be allocated to English. (The speaking and listening element had been highlighted as an area of concern for three years.) The importance of this (particularly with children in groups d and e) and the other two core subjects was reflected in our timetabling.

The second issue was the length of these sessions. To enable staff to teach and the children to have the opportunity to consolidate and practice skills in both formal and practical sessions we decided to allocate sessions of at least an hour. Since the children in the school reflected local circumstances (62% of children free school meals; a high proportion of children from one parent families) we wanted to continue to ensure the school offered them security and stability. It was decided therefore to keep the movement between rooms to a minimum and sessions would be from registration to playtime and playtime to lunch time (approx. 1.1/4 hours each). Children therefore started each morning (and afternoon session) in their registration classroom. After morning registration each group moved to their timetabled room (initially, children were given coloured badges but this soon became unnecessary). They took their coats with them and at the end of the teaching session went straight outside for playtime. Coloured lines were painted on the playground and at the end of playtime children lined up in their colour group and were met by their next teacher. In the afternoons and all day Wednesday children returned to their classroom base. In the Autumn of 1993 with groupings decided upon and timetabling drafted, the proposed changes were submitted to the Governors and then the parents. Both groups supported the idea so the setting up of subject based classrooms went ahead in December 1993.

Figure 1 : Organisation of Teaching Groups at Key Stage One

	Science	Maths	English	D/T & Art	Language Enrichment Group
9:10 - 10:30 **MONDAY**	WHITE	BLUE	RED	GREEN	YELLOW (Eng)
10:45 : 12:00	YELLOW	RED	GREEN	WHITE	BLUE (Eng)
TUESDAY	GREEN	WHITE	BLUE	RED	YELLOW (Eng)
	RED	GREEN	WHITE	YELLOW	BLUE (Maths)
THURSDAY	WHITE	RED	GREEN	BLUE	YELLOW (Eng)
	RED	YELLOW	WHITE	GREEN	BLUE (Eng)
FRIDAY	BLUE	GREEN	RED	WHITE	YELLOW (Maths)
	GREEN	WHITE	YELLOW	RED	BLUE (Eng)
Sessions:					
Red	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	
Yellow	**1*①**	**1 (+1)**	**1 (+3)**	**1*②**	
White	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	***Figure 1***
Blue	**1*①**	**1 (+1)**	**1 + (+3)**	**1*②**	
Green	**2**	**2**	**2**	**2**	

①* Language of Science supplied in Language Enrichment Groups

②* D/T & Art activities available in afternoon sessions

The new arrangements commenced at the beginning of the Spring term in January 1994. Children in Key Stage 1 were divided between three parallel Year 1 / Year 2 classes on the basis of age of pupils, gender balance, personality clashes and friendship. This became their registration base for two years. For four mornings each week the children were grouped by ability and moved between subject based classrooms. The teachers in these classrooms were subject specialists and curriculum co-ordinators for their subject. It was their responsibility to teach, assess and to test all the Key Stage 1 children. (This includes doing the Year 2 SATS). In English, teacher assessment at the end of year 2 was supported by their class teacher recommendations. In the afternoons and for one full day each week the children stayed in their registration classrooms where they were taught by their class teacher the foundation subjects and R.E. (Except Design Technology and Art). These subjects were teacher assessed by the class teachers. Hearing the children read was the responsibility of the class teacher. A two year cycle of themes supported teaching at Key Stage One and themes were chosen to fit in with various Curriculum Programmes of study. English followed by Maths and Science were the priorities for the education of our pupils. We provided the children with practitioners with specialist knowledge in the belief that they would create productive classroom engagements. The integration was provided through our themes and supported the core teaching from the morning sessions. This was ensured by all staff attending weekly evaluation and planning meetings. An agreed system of medium and short term planning and evaluation was devised (and frequently adjusted over the following terms). Because of the high degree of co-operation in the school the joint planning ensured that not only the workload but also expertise was shared not just in the core, but also in the foundation, subjects. This has been particularly noticeable in PE, Geography, History and Dance where staff who had an interest or expertise in the subject have developed the knowledge and skills of the other team members. The outcome of the planning and evaluation was monitored weekly and termly by the Senior Management Team (Headteacher, Deputy Head and Allowance Holders).

Two months into the new system came the first stumbling block when the school auxiliary moved away from the North East. A teacher who had specialised in, and was interested in, Design and Technology was appointed. Her appointment was for .5 of a week. This meant she was in school for three mornings and one full day each week and was able to attend the after school evaluation and planning meetings. The afternoon sessions enabled the Headteacher to release each teacher in turn to develop their curriculum subject. This time has become an essential and invaluable part of school and staff development. An Inspection Report in the Spring of 1994 highlighted what our

monitoring and evaluation reports had identified during the first five months of the new organisation. "The new organisation was improving both the teaching and the learning in the school; the children were happier , more focused and motivated with their work; behaviour problems had been eradicated; parents and staff were happy and supportive but the movement of children to other, less than ideal, premises was not a long term proposition." Our concerns were repeated in the evaluation report following a one day inspection by the Authority.

Organisation & Management
The school is organised into two broad departments covering early years and Key Stage 1. Key Stage 1 organisation is based on parallel registration groups which are re-organised into subject based groupings for maths, English, science and technology. This has been supported by using the nearby community centre to provide extra space.

Job descriptions are in place for all staff. There is an "A" allowance holder responsible for liaison and the Head teacher and her deputy meet regularly. Whole staff meetings take place weekly and are timetabled termly in advance. These meetings focus on school development issues with agendas provided and minutes taken. Staff development needs are identified through these meetings as part of the school management planning process. This has helped to address a number of whole school training priorities. S.A.D. time is also used to support identified school developments.

Environment & Resources
The school environment is well cared for with display varying between good and very good.

The current school organisation is dependent upon the use of the community centre for English work. There is limited space available in this building and movement between the school and the centre involves significant use of time.

Classrooms are well organised and resources are well linked to subject areas and well deployed. Displays are generally good and provide added stimulus for learning.

Planning & Liaison
The curriculum is planned through a two year cycle with considerable subject focused teaching in years one and two. Medium and short term planning is collaborative with staff meeting each week to evaluate work done and to plan for the next week. This shared planning feeds the specialist plans for maths, English, science and technology required for the management of the settled groups in years one and two.

Nursery planning is developed through focused activities designed to meet specific pupil needs. This approach is supported by the maintenance of very comprehensive records and is linked to reception planning.

The school takes care to develop good relations with parents, a number of whom work alongside staff in classes and elsewhere in school.

The Curriculum
School policies are in place for all subjects of the National Curriculum. A great deal of attention is given to the development of language skills, both through specialist English sessions and through a well planned programme of phonic work in registration groups. Information technology is well used to support other activities.

The curriculum is generally well resourced and thus is supported by careful deployment of subject resources through the departmental system.

Teaching & Learning
The school is organised into two broad departments covering early years and Key Stage 1. Key Stage 1 organisation is based on parallel registration groups which are re-organised into subject based groupings for maths, English, science and technology. This has been supported by using the nearby community centre to provide extra space.

Lessons observed were well planned and carefully focused. The subject based approach and the use of ability grouping helps in this. There are good examples of differentiated activities within the ability groupings and this approach allowed sub groups of pupils to tackle the same aspect of mathematics at a variety of levels.

In the nursery a good range of construction activities are available and information technology is well used. Staff work hard to meet the wide range of ability and are supported by parental involvement. Adult intervention is well judged and helps to develop pupil understanding. There is, however, scope to re-assess the number and organisation of activities to avoid clutter in the nursery.

Assessment & Recording
Policy and general guidance is in place for assessment and a comprehensive recording system is in place. This ensures that the early years record informs National Curriculum records with recording of the cross-curricular elements being developed. The school recognises the need to establish more detailed, subject based guidance on assessment to ensure a uniform approach to coverage and frequency.

Ethos
Pupils are attentive and positive about their work. The school is characterised by positive atmosphere. Pupil movement is well managed with relationships between staff and pupils good. The school behaviour policy identified a system of rewards at class and whole school level with "good citizenship~" certificates awarded termly. The next step planned is to develop a similar system of sanctions and a booklet for parents.

This school has addressed difficulties created by mixed year groups in a thoughtful and carefully planned way. This approach can be further developed and refined by the professional and hard working staff. The team ethos is well established. Staff are well led and positive development is taking place.

The staff were enthusiastic about the new organisation of the school, and the Inspector's Report confirmed our belief in the new system. Other ways, though, had to be found to run the system within the limited space in the school. A solution was worked out whereby large P.E. apparatus was stored outside in a newly purchased container and apparatus carried in for large apparatus PE lessons one day each week. Moveable dining room tables, replacing the stacked tables around the hall, were stored in the kitchen. An English based teaching area was established in the hall adjacent to the small reference library. A language enrichment teaching area was also set up in another corner of the hall for the special education needs teacher. Screens were purchased to offer some privacy.

By the Summer of 1994 we had an agreed organisation at Key Stage 1 which we believed would meet the needs of the children, the school, and the National Curriculum and fully utilise the talents and the expertise of the staff in the school. Timetabling changed very little as staff felt comfortable with time allocation for their subjects which was within

thirty minutes of Sir Ron Dearing's recommended time allocations for core subjects. The following sixteen weeks afforded us time opportunity to consolidate the system before an Ofsted inspection in the Spring of 1995.

The Ofsted Report of 1995 confirmed our belief that the organisation of the school was right for our children in this school at this period of time. The main finding stated "This is a good school. It provides education for the pupils and makes a positive contribution to all aspects of their development." This was despite the fact that 47% of our children qualified for free school meals which is considerably higher than the national average and over twice the average in the Local Authority.

The relevant paragraphs from the Ofsted Report are set out below. In selecting these extracts I have followed the scheme as identified and developed earlier in Chapter 5 *(see page 32 & 33)* in analysing the annual Director of Education's Reports to Governors. I have done this not only for ease of comparison but because it seems to me that this provides the broad picture for describing school development and improvement since all the components *(see page 32 & 33)* are interrelated. (The numbers relate to the paragraphs in the Ofsted Report, the headings are those of the Scheme on page 32 & 33)

Organisation and Management

38 The school has an adequate budget which is well managed. A sound financial position is maintained by the use of innovative strategies in the distribution and use of resources, particularly staffing. The school receives a stable budget share based on a consistently full annual intake of pupils. Major spending decisions are made in consultation with staff and with governors who set and monitor an effective budget through the finance committee and reports received at regular termly meetings. A sound system is in place for administering and controlling school finances which includes effective procedures for monitoring expenditure to ensure efficient spending.

39. A recent audit report by the LEA states that the school's systems for financial control are basically sound. The school has addressed the recommendations of the report. Financial resources are well managed to implement the requirements for maintenance and priorities for development which are identified in the school development plan. These are carefully linked to cost, timescale and staff training.

40. A thorough system of audit and review which involves curriculum co-ordinators, the deputy head teacher and the head teacher effectively determines curricular priorities which are overseen and approved by the governors. The implementation of the curriculum is systematically monitored by the head teacher and subject co-ordinators to ensure efficient use of time and resources.

41. Time is generally used efficiently by staff and pupils. Lessons begin promptly, pupils move through the school without delay and they waste little time changing for physical education.

42. Accommodation is well used, particularly that provided by the hall.

43. The quality of curriculum planning is generally good and successfully contributes to the fulfilment of the school's policies and aims.

44. Funds raised through school events are used effectively to support initiatives and to extend and enhance activities provided for pupils.

45. The school provides good value for money. However strategies to monitor the effects of resource allocation and major spending on the progress and achievement of pupils are to be further developed.

113. The nursery area offers an emotionally secure environment for young children which is attractive, suitably organised and appropriately resourced. Good staffing is provided by a teacher, nursery assistant, students and parent helpers who work well together in the interests of the pupils.

117. The curriculum provided in the nursery forms a sound basis for the National Curriculum.

147. The school has clear aims which are expressed in the school development plan and the school brochure. A range of policies has been developed to support them in key areas of the school's life and curriculum. Governors carry out their statutory responsibilities and provide support for the management of the school although this is insufficiently developed.

148. The head teacher provides strong and positive leadership which is effective in giving clear direction to the school's current work and providing a vision for the future.

150. The school development plan is well structured and is useful in identifying a balance between the distribution of resources and the identification of need. It also serves to focus and record longer term priorities which are beginning to emerge. Planning is generally thorough and the use of staff development funding and support and development time together with an analysis of teachers' contractual hours are clearly documented.

151. Routine administration and organisation are carried out effectively and procedures to ensure these are in place. The school clerk provides able assistance in the day to day running of the school.

153. The school is well managed by the head teacher and the staff team.

Environment & Resources

158. The school is attractive and in good condition. Pupil numbers are at a maximum and space in the school, although not generous, is used well. The imaginative use of areas such as the hall, in accordance with school aims and curriculum provision, maximises flexibility and promotes pupil achievement. Good use is made of display. Space within classrooms is used and organised well. Storage problems have been alleviated to a considerable degree and all staff work efficiently to minimise any minor disruption caused to the school day by storage or access difficulties. These arrangements do not have a detrimental effect on pupil achievement.

159. The tarmac playground at the rear of the school is small and limited for the numbers of pupils. Its surface is broken and potholed, and presents a safety hazard for pupils. This playground should be repaired as a matter of urgency.

160. An additional playground area, welcoming and secure or younger of more vulnerable children, has been created outside the Early Years classrooms. Pupils have planted bulbs on the steep bank adjoining the playground, increasing the children's awareness of both the hazard of this bank and of the environment.

161. Although the school is generally clean and well maintained, pupils' toilets are not kept clean to an acceptable standard during the school day. This is unsatisfactory and should be rectified. The lack of doors on some toilets does not offer pupils the sense of dignity represented by school aims.

Teaching & non-Teaching Staff

154. Staff availability, qualifications and deployment are effective in promoting pupil achievement. The expertise and experience of staff are appropriately utilised in development and monitoring of the curriculum. Support and development time is utilised effectively in promoting the curriculum. In-service training is appropriate and strikes a balance between individual needs and school development priorities. Appraisal is managed effectively. Non-teaching staff make a positive contribution to the quality of education.

155. Although whole-class sizes are large, internal arrangements are effective in deploying staff expertise to support pupil achievement. Staff are well managed.

Resources for Learning

156. Resources for learning are adequate in quality and quantity and appropriate for the curriculum. Management of resources, which is the responsibility of curriculum co-ordinators, is effective. Resources are accessible to pupils and to staff, are organised well and stored efficiently. Resources are used well to support topic work and to promote pupil independence.

157. The library, which is well used, has an appropriate range of fiction and non-fiction books. Other resources, including information technology, reinforce pupils' learning.

Planning & Liaison

40. A thorough system of audit and review which involves curriculum co-ordinators, the deputy head teacher and the head teacher effectively determines curricular priorities which are overseen and approved by the governors. The implementation of the curriculum is systematically monitored by the head teacher and subject co-ordinators to ensure efficient use of time and resources.

149. The management team and curriculum co-ordinators have a collective role in auditing the curriculum and the identification of resource needs. Good progress has been made in achieving the priorities stated in the school development plan through a strong team spirit, realistic deadlines and carefully identified tasks.

152. Communications within the school are well established. Staff meetings and curriculum planning and consultation sessions are scheduled and recorded through agenda and minutes. Good information is provided for parents through booklets such as the school brochure and letters are sent home frequently to keep them in touch with day to day events. The school operates an open door policy and staff are easily available for consultation. The school also seeks to maintain frequent contact with agencies which provide services to the school and with the local community.

145. The school's approaches to meeting the range of pupils' ability have promoted good achievement for the significant number of children with special needs. Pupils are advantaged by internal arrangements for differentiated grouping. Careful curriculum provision, based on effective planning, creates a positive quality of learning.

146. The whole-school approach to special needs is effective and Local Education Authority support teachers operate well within this framework. Communication and liaison are purposeful. The school is beginning to introduce individual education planning in accordance with the Code of Practice. This has yet to be extended into all teachers' subject and class planning. The statement about special needs in the school brochure is positive and helpful.

166. The school enjoys excellent relations with parents; the lack of a formal structure with parents has not inhibited the development of committed and involved parent teacher relationships. The school capitalises on all opportunities to establish links and has become involved in local and international charities. Liaison with schools to which the pupils transfer is excellent with reporting and curriculum links well established.

The Curriculum

141. The organisation of all Key Stage 1 classes in mixed year groups, with a two-year rolling programme for curriculum, is effective. These arrangements allow flexibility to match the curriculum to pupils' needs and to maximise pupil achievement.

142. The lack of any extra-curricular activities in the school is a weakness. The practice of encouraging pupils to take reading books home, and of involving parents in this, is useful and positive.

143. The school's equal opportunities policy is positive and reinforces school aims, with equal opportunities seen as the foundation for multi-culturalism and special needs. The policy,

which also covers gender and sets out guidelines, is implemented generally, and supports pupils' quality of learning and standards of achievement. The practice of listing boys and girls separately on class registers is not in accord with school aims and policy.

144. There are four pupils with statements of special educational needs in the school, with no misapplications from the National Curriculum. Procedures for identification and assessment of pupils with special needs are effective. The school is meeting statutory requirements with regard to provision and review of statements. Relationships with outside agencies are good.

Teaching & Learning

27. This is a good school. It provides good education for the pupils and makes a positive contribution to all aspects of their development.

28. Standards of achievement, in relation to pupils' ability are sound or better in almost all lessons. Standards are more variable in terms of national expectations but are sound overall.

29. Standards of achievement for pupils with special educational needs are good.

30. Standards of achievement in English mathematics and science are sound overall.

31. In other foundation subjects and RE standards of achievements are also sound.

32. Achievements in reading, numeracy and information technology across the curriculum are sound. Pupils' standard of achievement in writing across the curriculum varies but is sound overall.

33. In speaking and listening pupils' standard of achievement is often unsatisfactory.

Quality of Learning

34. The quality of learning is sound or better in 94% of lessons, in 32% of lessons the quality is good.

35. Most pupils follow instructions, concentrate and are clear about the objectives of lessons. They are well motivated and able to organise themselves.

36. In the few lessons where the learning is unsatisfactory pupils are overly dependant on the teacher, unwilling to respond to teachers' questioning, are easily distracted and lack concentration.

37. The quality of learning reflects the teaching and learning styles employed, teacher confidence and general ambience in the classroom.

Policies & Guidelines

139 The aims of the school are well represented in its broad and balanced curriculum. Time is allocated with an appropriate emphasis to meet pupils' needs. Requirements for National Curriculum and religious education are met and there is coverage of programmes of study and attainment targets. Policies, schemes of work and guidelines are appropriate. Governors discharge their curriculum responsibilities in accordance with requirements.

140. There are named co-ordinators for all National Curriculum subjects, for religious education and for Early Years. Shared responsibility for some curriculum areas works well and ensures overall curriculum monitoring. Roles of co-ordinators are well-developed, with support and development time used effectively. Rolling programmes for curriculum development and for policy review are properly targeted and monitored.

Assessment & Recording

130. The school has clear procedures for assessment recording and reporting which are consistently applied.

131. Good portfolios of work, which are carefully annotated, are maintained for individual pupils.

132. Statutory requirements are met and Standard Assessment Tasks (SATs) and teacher assessments are carried out efficiently and the results recorded. The school has identified the

results of the SATs as a performance indicator and the results are carefully monitored for indications on how the school can improve its performance.

133. The school as a marking policy but individual teachers' marking does not always comply with this is sometimes inaccurate.

134. The nursery has a useful baseline assessment which informs the work which is done with individual pupils.

135. The school recognises the need to update its National Curriculum records to comply with the new orders and has set aside time during a professional development day to review current practice.

136. Teachers generally use records and assessments well to inform their planning both for individual pupils and for particular cohorts. However, the information contained within pupils' individual education plans is yet to be reflected in teachers' planning.

137. Statement reviews for pupils having Special Educational Needs(SEN) have been completed and are up to date. The school is meeting statutory requirements concerning pupils with SEN.

138. The school holds parents evenings twice a year and provides a comprehensive annual report which meets statutory requirements and is valued by parents.

Ethos

23. The school has a clear ethos which reflects the values expressed in its aims and objectives. This provides a spiritual and moral dimension to life in the school where all pupils and adults are valued and treated with respect.

24. The school successfully contributes to the social and cultural development of its pupils.

25. The acts of collective worship, which meet statutory requirements, provide opportunities for inward reflection and for pupils to participate and contribute.

26. The school functions as an orderly and supportive community where there are clear expectations of behaviour. The school generally achieves its aims to promote a caring attitude and a sense of self-discipline.

55. The pupils' attendance record is very good. The school satisfies the statutory requirements and all aspects of registration are consistently maintained.

48. The school successfully contributes to the social development of its pupils and good relationships are a positive feature of the school.

50 The school functions as an orderly and supportive community where there are clear expectations of behaviour.

51. Pupils' behaviour does not affect the quality of learning and teaching although there are a minority of pupils who exhibit very challenging behaviour.

52. The school aims to promote a sense of self discipline and a caring attitude and generally achieves this. The documentation is clear and provides good guidance to staff. However, the school rules within the document are couched in negative terms and do not reflect the positive way in which staff generally address any difficulties with behaviour. Most staff are extremely skilled at defusing potentially difficult situations and handle difficult behaviour in a constructive and positive way.

53. There are inconsistencies in the rewards system which operates in the school, most teachers reward pupils appropriately but there are occasions when rewards are given indiscriminately and consequently they lose their worth.

54. The school policy is clear about expectations of pupils tidying up at the end of sessions. This is not consistently applied across the school.

The findings of this Ofsted Report reflected the development of the school, staff and pupils over the previous five years.

5.2 Teacher Professionalism

I now turn to the second area of my analysis, teacher professionalism *(see page 33)*. This is a broad and somewhat contentious subject. Nias (1989) has drawn attention to professional values in terms of personal fulfilment and self identity. Teaching in these terms brings intrinsic rewards associated with self motivation and commitment. However, change and its management clearly provide a challenge and need careful handling through a bottom-up approach. In my own thinking, I have been greatly influenced by McLaughlin (1995 p.8)

> "The policy problem for professional development is how to support teachers in reflecting critically on their practice and fashioning new knowledege and beliefs about content, pedagogy and learners ... Rather than being directed from on high, teachers are now central players in designing assessments and content standards .... Many teachers comment that, while it may be possible to learn alone, unlearning demands a supportive group setting .... Learning communities can only thrive when a culture of inquiry is developed in a school .... The challenge is to foster bottom-up reform with top down support .... Successful professional development policies will stay close to teacher's concerns and lived experiences, while recognising the necessity for serious intellectual work within supportive communities of practice".

The key issue for me is professional development. For example, in my own school I have been at pains to use professional development to give status and satisfaction to those who have been in post in the school for a considerable time.

> "As long as there is a need for improvement there will be a need for professional development" says Fullan (1991 p.344).

One of the essentials with the new organisation in the school was the development of teacher professionalism. However good (or otherwise) the organisation, administration, leadership, pupil intake and environment, improvement in children's achievement would be more difficult to initiate and sustain without staff of high quality in both teaching competency and pedagogic skills with a high level of confidence in their own

abilities. It is widely acknowledged that now, more than ever before, becoming a teacher is not a once and for all process and that professional development is a fundamental part of a teacher's role. To use Fullan's definition professional development is the

> "sum total of formal and informal learning experiences throughout one's career from pre-service teacher education to retirement".
>
> *(Fullan 1991 p.326).*

Prior to the James Report of 1972, teacher development was a combination of the apprenticeship system and academic study in psychology, history, philosophy and sociology. The James Committee recognised the need for teachers to have regular periods of study leave and personal development and the growth of INSET commenced. The decision was also taken that all new teachers were to be graduates. What emerged was a three stage process. The initial phase of training was a partnership between educational institutions and schools; teaching practice students went to school to practice what they learned in college. The second phase, the induction or probationary period was school based. The third phase was school and local authority based.

Before the 1960's, students once qualified, were under no pressure to continue professional development. Teachers' Centres were relatively new and it was left to individual teachers to decide if they wished to attend courses, get further qualifications and plan their own futures. The most popular route for promotion at this time was to develop a specialism and become a specialist post holder. As far back as the Plowden Report (1967) proposals were made " that teachers expert in the main field of teaching should give advice to their colleagues throughout the school" (para 556) and this was further endorsed by both the Bullock (1975) and Cockcroft Reports (1982). Voluntary course attendance enabled staff to open up promotion opportunities for themselves and to a limited extent advise on school practice and colleagues. In the late 1960's, the Schools Council, was set up as an agency to generate change. Curriculum reform was no longer the sole responsibility of individual schools and LEA's. The philosophy of the Schools Council, jointly funded by DES and LEAs, was to develop theoretical ideas about the curriculum into working projects. This approach was developed in the 1960's and 1970's by Stenhouse (1975) who believed that not only did schools need to incorporate research and philosophy in their own curriculum development but that, as only teachers themselves can create good teaching, they must play a central role in this and also develop <u>with</u> the curriculum. In-service training in the 1970's generally reflected the times - classroom based action research. Pollard (1994 p.13-14) suggests

that this practical theorising contributed to the strengthened professionalism of primary teachers. Others have argued the reverse and that many teachers had neither the time or inclination to engage in the complex models produced by the likes of the Schools Council.

> "The sheer output of papers and projects may be calculated to overawe rather than inspire many of the Council's potential customers" .
>
> *(Evans 1975 p293).*

In fact Steadman et al (1981) went as far as to say that,

> "when they looked at the extent to which Schools Council Projects had had an impact on teachers practice, they had remained doubtful about the findings. The reason lay not in the lack of impact but in the fact that projects could not be identified by the teachers. The material had been sold under the individual titles and the methods had not been marketed as Schools Council, but rather as good practice. Consequently, it was hard to identify the routes of influence because the projects were so to speak, inadequately tagged".
>
> *(Quoted in Constable, Farrow and Norton (1994 p.6)).*

It must be acknowledged that LEA's themselves were doing little to influence the quality of schooling in the 1960's and 1970's and Du Quesnay, President of the Society of Education Officers, suggested in her address to Education Officers (TES January 26th 1996):

"Too little has been done in the past to ensure rigour and relevance in teacher professional development and training."

Similarly Brighouse (1994 p.86-88)

> "Probably student unrest of 1968 which followed closely on the heels of the last of the great reports (Plowden) ... coinciding with the publication of the Black Papers, should have alerted LEA'S to the need to pay more attention to the development of quality and to the need for more accountability. Local Government reorganisation, however, occupied the minds and time of educationalists and politicians for the next 5 years ..... So the background of LEA influence on the quality of schooling is

> unpromising .... The understanding of the subtle ways in which LEA's might consciously influence the culture and assumptions of schooling was a rare commodity in the earlier years. Sadly it took nearly a decade for the lessons of Rutter and HMI to inform the actions of LEA's and by then it was too late. There were, of course, exceptions to this rather damning view of LEA involvement in educational development and some who were determined to influence quality frequently used whatever money they could scrape together for after school in-service courses in the evenings and at the weekends ..."

It is perhaps not surprising that during this time schools lacked purpose, motivation and clear goals. It is what Gordon and Lawton (1978) called "the problem of diffusion of innovation". A lack of positive relationships and adequate structure between all personnel within the education industry was the prime barrier to progress and Coulson and Cox, (1975 p.103) suggest until there was a change in leadership style of headteachers - from the 'traditional paternalistic' to one with more extensive delegation of responsibility, then the headteacher and the school will

> "continue to inhibit the professional development of the occupants of other posts in the school ..... and the exercise of judgement by other staff being curtailed and their professional status therefore being adversely affected."

Continued professional training then was not a high priority in schools in the 1960's and 1970's and it was not until the mid 1980's (DES 1985) that LEA's were required by Central Government to articulate policy and programmes of In-Service Training for Teachers. Henceforth, developments were to be linked closely with schools and staff development needs and initiatives were to be managed by staff in the schools themselves.

Lawrence Stenhouse's slogan "no curriculum development without teacher development" was central to the new approach, reiterated in Preedy. (1989 p.124)

> "Only teachers can create good teaching and thus it is imperative that they occupy a central role in developing the curriculum and that they develop with the curriculum"

and by Rosenholtz (1989) who pointed out that staff development cannot be separated from school development and cannot be taken forward through unconnected projects.

That change in the school was needed was an unavoidable fact and since the essence of change is learning new ways of thinking, new skills, new attitudes, new practices then it follows that staff development was essential. As discussed in Chapters 2 and 3, one of the striking features of the 1980's was the enormous changes in teachers' ideology. Staff had trained in the 1950's, 1960's and 1970's in specialised teacher training colleges (often detached from other Institutions of Higher Education) and qualified with certificates by being academically assessed and by satisfying the demands of teaching practice. In some instances teachers left college with a specialism in one subject e.g. music, PE, but more often the training was a generalist course covering the whole of the curriculum.

The child centred approach of that period was now being challenged by the belief that informal teaching methods were neglecting basic skills. This was compounded by the belief that the curriculum was too narrow and the 3R's were being taught to the virtual exclusion of other subjects. Text books and reading material lacked depth, balance and interest and teachers - even when following approved methods - were to blame. Campbell (1993) and Campbell and Neill (1994 p.2) argued that

> "evidence by HMI inspectors from 1978 onwards (DES 1978, 1982, 1985) and from most of the major research studies (Bennett et al (1980); Galton and Simon (1980); Mortimore et al (1988); Tizard et all (1988); Alexander (1992)) showed the primary curriculum in practice embodying modest expectations, especially of able pupils, a heavy concentration of time upon basics of number and reading, often presented through routine exercises and drills, and poor quality of learning in much of the "non-basic" curriculum notably in History and Geography. Provision in Science was patchy and unsystematic. Assessment was, at best, intuitive and not systematically recorded in the classroom, with the great majority of LEA's using norm referenced, standardised tests concentrating upon reading, number and intelligence (Gipps 1988) with hardly any formal assessment focused on the rest of the curriculum".

Similar findings were identified in my School Inspection Report of 1990 (paragraph 3)

> "The curriculum is narrowly conceived and is essentially subject based. There is a strong emphasis on mathematics and English work but many other areas are lost in rather unspecific topic work. It is difficult to identify the quantity and therefore the quality of work in science, environmental studies and creative work (paragraph 5) Arrangements

> for the assessment and recording of pupil progress are very poor indeed. Little relevant and useful assessment goes on, and what assessment is done tends to be formal and unrelated to children's classroom work. There is no overriding rationale for assessment. Records are kept by teachers but they are unhelpful documents which seem to serve little purpose in the teaching process."

The message to staff was clear. Their previous practice, (although in no way extreme progressivism) was redundant and there was a need to review the curriculum provision and teaching styles, particularly so in the light of the requirements of the National Curriculum. Morale was a difficult issue with national and local criticism, little relevant and structured INSET available, lack of promotion opportunities and no developed areas of responsibility. The school's position was not unique within Britain or, indeed, internationally. Stevenson and Stigler (1992) quoted in Ofsted (1995 p.19) compared primary education of the USA with that in Japan, China and the Pacific Rim countries

> "It is easy to blame teachers for the problems confronting American education ... The accusation is unfair. We do not provide teachers with adequate training and yet we expect that on their own they will become innovative teachers; we cast them in the roles of surrogate parents, counsellors and psychotherapists, and still expect them to be effective teachers; and we keep them so busy in the classrooms that they have little time and opportunity for professional development once they have joined the teaching profession".

This was a view supported by Ofsted (1996 paragraph 90) and in two earlier reports (1988 and 1993) which surveyed new teachers in school, and referred explicitly to the poor quality of aspects of initial teacher training and found that fewer than a third of the teachers surveyed in 1992 felt well prepared to teach reading"

With regard to my own school the School Inspection Report of 1988 and the development of a team teaching approach acted as a catalyst in identifying the needs of the school and of the staff for professional development and in-service training. Immediately following the 1988 inspection, co-ordinator roles were identified either because the teachers' qualifications were relevant (an ex secondary trained PE specialist became PE co-ordinator) or through an interest or willingness to take on a subject. As in other small schools, staff became responsible for two or three subjects and after allocation of their "main" role were given subjects because no-one else would do them.

e.g. The science co-ordinator was given I.T. because it was "similar" and no-one else wanted it. The school's position was not unlike that described by Webb and Vulliamy (1995 p.39)

> "Co-ordinators having responsibility for curriculum areas in which they have least qualifications and experience are a long standing source of jokes and myths in Primary Schools" and even in schools where they had been identified they noted "the authority of headteachers in curricular matters, the autonomy of class teachers in their own classrooms and the lack of non contact time and clerical assistance as major factors constraining the work of co-ordinators".

Lack of development in this area was highlighted in my school's 1988 Inspection Report.

> "The designation of responsibility and other aspects of management such as delegation of responsibility and involvement in policy making were weak or non-existent. There is an urgent need to tighten up on matters of written school policy and to assign properly devolved responsibilities to members of staff. Many areas of the curriculum are undeveloped because staff responsibilities are unclear or undefined."

When the National Curriculum was introduced, government agencies (NCC 1989 and SEAC 1990) maintained that the curriculum was building on teachers' professionalism and good practice. This view was contradicted by other educationalists who argued that in fact the National Curriculum presented a challenge to teachers' independence. Given the lack of development of teacher professionalism, of in-service education and co-ordinator roles up to the 1980's together with the intense criticism of the teaching profession one is left to wonder - what good practice? Ryan (1971 p.6) asked

> "Is 'teacher bashing' a fair attribution of fault for the problems in the education system, or a version of 'blaming the victims' of an under-funded enterprise."

Certainly, there may have been underfunding; certainly, there was lack of direction. The 1985 government directive to LEAs on in-service training saw a renewed emphasis on teacher in-service training and an opening up of career opportunities for some teachers. The dominance of training for the National Curriculum had led to a minority of teachers feeling courses were "rather repetitive and insufficiently shaped to their individual needs" (Ofsted 1996 paragraph 1992). As Day (1995 p.11) pointed out

> "In-Service provision in the early 1990s has focused upon "keeping teachers updated about recent reforms, in particular, the curriculum and has hindered personal development and continuing development of teaching practices and strategies".

The dominance of National Curriculum training had been highlighted in the 1990/1991 HM Chief Inspector's Report (DES 1992 paragraph 143).

> "Training for the National Curriculum and other matters arising from the E.R.A. dominated provision. The more precise targeting of funds through the GEST scheme increased inset provision related to national priority areas and reduced the range of that offered by LEA's .... The support provided for teachers taking further professional qualifications was reduced by many LEA's."

Over the period of this study co-ordinators in the school have attended a wide range of courses to develop their co-ordinator roles, their subject area expertise and, to a limited extent, their particular interests (e.g. early years, special needs). These courses have been of varying lengths from DES 20 day courses in Science, English and Geography to one off "twilight sessions". The courses have helped the school to implement curricular reviews and policies, identify the school's aims and objectives, develop subject policies and guidelines and latterly to help teachers to review their teaching styles through examining their own practice. I believe that this collaborative approach to teacher development has led to improvement in learning for the children. New school policies and guidelines have been developed as a result of the new National Curriculum orders and the LEA guidelines. Course material has been disseminated at staff meetings and on training days. Two things became very evident over this period. The first was confirmed in two national surveys (Wragg et al, 1989 Moses and Croll 1990) indicating that primary teachers were becoming aware of weaknesses in their subject knowledge. Secondly, there was a substantial change in expectation concerning the role of the co-ordinator. The speed with which requirements for subjects came in, the wide range of requirements for each subject and the change of role from curriculum co-ordinator to subject adviser to their colleagues added to teacher stress. There was more to implementing the new National Curriculum orders than reading the books. Alexander (1992 p.22) summed it up

> "Increased curriculum understanding does not come from reading National Curriculum Statutory Orders alone, nor does increased

> diagnostic skill come from merely having to keep records. Each of these attributes required a positive programme of professional development"

The new curriculum differed from what had gone before, and was a challenge to teachers' expertise (especially their subject knowledge).

The school management plan, first produced in 1991, enabled us to identify annually the school's needs through whole staff learning, the development of individual teachers for resourcing the curriculum (generalist teaching and subject specialism), and the development of career paths for teachers. The quality of the courses in the early years left a lot to be desired and the dissemination to other staff was a reflection of the enthusiasm, skill and practical know-how of the presenter and the communication skills of the member of staff. Undoubtedly the longer, intensive courses in which staff were able to directly relate theory to practice within the school and enhance the work going on through knowledge of the school's present position have been more effective for the school and the developing professionalism of the teacher. This is confirmed by Constable, Farrow and Norton (1994 p.135)

> "Technical procedural approach to the implementation of change was adopted. The individual teacher was put in the position, not as the engaged professional but as implementer, as deliverer".

Certainly, issuing of certificates acknowledging the academic rigour associated with DES courses has led to enhanced professionalism for staff, particularly for teachers qualifying before the James Report. McLaughlin (1995 p.9) challenges policy matters to develop this "bottom up" reform with "top down support" so that

> "successful professional development that will stay close to teachers' concerns and lived experiences, while recognising the necessity for serious intellectual work with supportive communities of practice".

Following the new orders the first major task of co-ordinators was to produce policy documents and guidelines in consultation with other staff and to ensure adoption and revision of the orders following the Dearing Review As a result of this work, long and medium term plans throughout the school were revised and adjusted and monitoring structures were put in place to enable the co-ordinator to work with area teams and with individual classroom teachers. At first much of this work was done before or after school in headteacher's directed time or in pre-planned support and development time.

Since 1994, specific curriculum support time has been allocated to each co-ordinator and this regular free afternoon session every six weeks has given co-ordinators the opportunity to work in the classroom beside other staff and pupils. Planning this time has been the co-ordinator's own responsibility. Monitoring and evaluation feedback to senior staff and governors helps to inform annual management plans. Closely linked with policy and planning responsibilities is resource management. Identification, purchase, upkeep and repair of equipment and other resources and auditing and assisting colleagues in their use has given status to their subject, credence to attendance on courses and help in future planning for the school. Each member of staff is responsible for the budget of their curricular area to which I, as Headteacher, allocate resources within the overall school budget in order to provide devolved responsibility. Budget planning provides each member of staff with management responsibility and has resulted in a greater awareness, motivation and responsibility towards the upkeep of resources and reducing wastage. In addition to working with colleagues in classrooms and planning meetings, co-ordinators are responsible for identifying and planning staff training sessions, staff meetings or training days, and providing workshops and briefing sessions for parent and governors. Since the overriding theme of the school is collegiality and support, confidence in each other's expertise is essential and has helped to broaden each person's understanding of their professional roles. Hoyle (1974) uses the terms "restricted professionalism where teachers concentrate on their classrooms organisation and responsibilities" and "extended professionalism with teachers concerned with broader educational issues beyond the classroom". It has been interesting to observe how staff have become "extended professionals" to enable them to have control over the educational demands of the last five years and to achieve status and confidence not only within school but the wider community.

The responsibility of curriculum leadership, the introduction of appraisal and job descriptions, the linking of subject development as identified in the management plan, subject resource management, budget bidding, responsibility for planning and policy making, the role of subject inset provider, the responsibility of ensuring continuing and progression, the influences on classroom practice and the responsibilities of accountability, all these have facilitated the development of staff and built up their confidence and self esteem.

If one accepts Smedley and Robson's (1996 p.24) analysis of professionalism

> "developing professionalism is an ongoing process and has all the complexities of learning itself ... that professionalism is a developing continuum"

then the development of the role of subject co-ordinators to subject specialist teachers was a logical next step. In 1992 the DES commissioned a discussion document (Alexander, Rose and Woodhead 1992) in which the authors called for "an increase in subject teaching" and since the introduction of the National Curriculum great concern has been expressed about the ability of primary teachers to teach effectively in-depth all nine subjects, plus RE, of the National Curriculum.

Subjects became an important feature of the National Curriculum and Alexander, Rose and Woodhead (1992) believed that standards would only be raised when requirements of each subject had been dealt with clearly and systematically (para 72). In fact in their view

> "subject knowledge is a critical factor at every point in the teaching process - in planning, assessing and diagnosing, in task setting, questioning, explaining and giving feedback" (para 77).

Before the 1988 Act it was assumed that teachers' subject knowledge was sufficient to teach a specific age range. Research during the 1980's identified a growing consensus about the importance of subject matter. More recently, a considerable amount of time, effort and funding, for example, through INSET are being devoted to increasing the subject knowledge of primary teachers to enable them to deliver the National Curriculum more effectively. It is assumed that planning, organisational management and assessment will improve when teachers know more about their subject not least because of their gain in confidence. However, Shulman (1987) and Grossman (1992) raised the question as to whether improving the teacher' subject knowledge would guarantee that practice would improve and children would learn more as a result. Shulman argued that the quality of instruction was at least as important and that it was not simply a question of improved subject knowledge. The question was also raised as to whether given acknowledged weaknesses in mathematics and science backgrounds the existing knowledge base of many teachers was sufficiently strong to build one. Wragg, Bennett and Carre (1979 and 1989) and Bennet and Carre (1993) have shown that there are large gaps in Primary teachers' basic subject appreciation in English, Maths and Science. Galton suggests (1995 p.139) suggest that, although

> "considerable resources have been put into increasing the knowledge base of primary teachers, so far the evidence from the surveys of current practice at Key Stages One and Two has not indicated marked improvements .... other than in planning."

The National Curriculum specifies which detailed areas of knowledge children should acquire in each subject; it puts knowledge at the centre of the education process. Teachers' knowledge of subject matter, it is argued, is necessary to their understanding of the subject for their teaching. The problem of shortage of expertise in primary schools was also identified by Alexander, Rose and Woodhead (1992). They advocated that every primary school should have in school or access to, specialist expertise. In the 1993 Ofsted follow-up report they acknowledged that "The improvement of teachers' subject knowledge was widely acknowledged as of central importance if primary schools were to make the looked for progress with teaching the National Curriculum." (Para 32). On the other hand, as Kelly and Blenkin in Campbell (1993 p.58) point out, many early years practitioners believe that

> "a curriculum divided into subjects is, potentially, the most alienating form of curriculum for young children because it formalises experiences too soon and, in doing so, makes it distant from the every day common-sense knowledge and learning that the young child is familiar with and responsive to".

I would argue that the skills of the primary teacher are sufficiently developed to enable them to structure a learning environment to take account of the breadth of subjects through topic work for the younger children. As Edwards and Knight (1994 p.24) say

> "once the ground work of learning has been done and knowledge is organised in relatively simple subject based categories, creative connections may more easily be made and tested."

My observations and evaluation over the last two years in the subject classrooms have supported their assertion that

> "once there is curricular clarity about the key concept of a subject and ways of knowing that subject then teachers have been better able to highlight and shape important features of the learning experiences

offered to children and to start to develop subject discrete bodies of knowledge".

A subject framed curriculum may be seen by some critics as alien to the primary school ethos and an inferior model of secondary schooling. I would argue that, far from seeing the organisation at primary level as a watered down version of secondary organisation we have, after meeting the developmental learning requirements of very young children in the nursery and reception classes, provided a simple framework which builds on the children's previous experiences. By organising knowledge in this way we are giving children access to our culture. It is giving the children the opportunity to acquire knowledge and develop understanding and skills. It is allowing us scope to develop breadth and balance in a wide variety of subject areas, and it is instilling a work ethos in the pupils that is both purposeful and focused. When the National Curriculum was first introduced it was feared that imposition of 'content' would alter the freedom of teachers as to how they taught. It would lead to a fragmented curriculum, to disjointed teaching, to an end of topic work and an integrated approach. In fact, I would argue the opposite has happened. The staff are more knowledgeable about their subjects through intensive study of their specialism, are more confident in other subjects due to the support of colleagues and other staff, and are better able to match tasks to pupils. This new found confidence and the opportunity they have been given to work with "manageable" (maximum 24) groups of children, have enabled them to engage in developing alternative teaching strategies and techniques and in refining the suitability of using different teaching styles.

Time is available within teaching sessions to assess the stage which the child has reached, to differentiate work, to match tasks and therefore motivate the children, to plan and guide collaborative work and to provide time, space and structure to active learning. Time is available to teach children to think, to help them focus their thoughts (rather than unhelpful comments like "come on, get on with your work") and to develop as learners. The whole class (group) teaching is meeting the needs of everyone in the room since they are at similar levels and each subject session targets the needs of that group. The knowledge and skills taught, identified at the joint weekly planning meetings, are reinforced at other times in different contexts and with other staff. Whole class and group teaching, individualised work, topic work, an integrated approach are all used in the school and the balance of organisational strategies we employ allows us to meet the wide variety of learning styles of the children.

The Evaluation Report by the staff under my guidance at the end of the summer term 1995 stated

> "Without exception the children are generally much better behaved in school, particularly in the morning sessions. You can hear a pin drop in the school, the children are so on task. Teachers have reported children are more aware of what they are expected to do, more ready to settle, not so easily distracted and much more involved in what they are doing."

We feel we have built on the knowledge we have of child development and how children learn by increasing and improving our subject knowledge and skills of how to teach. At the same time we have endeavoured to provide a learning culture in the school, to promote collegiality and respect and confidence in oneself and in others. Subject expertise has been combined with sensible and manageable practical organisation to allow staff to deliver interesting and challenging learning experiences.

Chapter 6 : *Statistical Analysis*

I have described in the previous chapter the changes introduced in my own school in the context of the broad changes taking places nationally. In Chapter 6 I look at the quantitative evidence to try and see whether the changes in curriculum organisation taking place in this school over the period 1992 - 1996 were accompanied by significant changes in the children's measured achievement. Since it could be argued that the Standard Assessment Test Results (SATS) are on their own not a satisfactory indicator because of the changes in the National Curriculum and its assessment and changes in the tests themselves over the period, I have also looked at evidence from other tests to see if they are corroborated or contradicted in the SAT results. The tests which I examined and compared the results of were :

- The Standard Assessment Test Results (SATS) in English and Maths
- The Quest Tests in Reading and Number (1983)
- The Neale Analysis of Reading Ability covering Reading and Comprehension (1994)

The tests were administered to over 200 children over the period 1991 - 1996.

THE SAMPLE TESTS

The Standard Assessment Testing Results (SATS) are a compilation of the results of Tests (and/or tasks) and Teacher Assessment in the subject. Together they provide us with a picture of each child's attainment at the end of the infant phase of its education. The first experience Year 2 teachers had of assessing and testing against National criteria was in 1991 and it involved testing in English, Maths and Science. In 1995 the testing of Science was dropped. For the purposes of this study I have only considered the results in English and Maths. I acknowledge that many changes have been made to the National Curriculum and its assessment over the period of the study. Each year has seen changes to the structure of the tests and, in some years, changes in weighting in the Attainment Target in the subject. In 1995 there was a slimming down of the curriculum and the number of attainment targets to be assessed as well as the decision to report separately the results of the SATS and the teacher assessment. Nevertheless, I do not believe that these changes have been sufficient to invalidate a comparison of the results over the period. A broadly coherent pattern has emerged. The fact that the assessments have been made by the same members of staff over the period of the study and that there have been no major discrepancies between a particular child's teacher

assessment and test and task results reinforces my confidence in the results, and enables me to believe that they are of value. Part of this study is to consider their validity.

The Quest Test is administered in the Junior School in the September following the Key Stage One SATS. The Quest Test, developed in 1976, is a screening, diagnostic and remedial programme developed as a result of a research project involving a College of Education and a Child Guidance Centre. There have been no changes to this easily managed thirty minute whole class screening test over the period of the study. For the purposes of this study I looked at the statistics which identified pupils aged 7 - 8 years who were underachieving in reading and/or number work; the former by assessing basic word identification skills and reading comprehension, the latter by assessing basic number concepts - cardinality, ordinality addition and subtraction.

The scoring of the tests are as follows:

In Reading	0 - 14	have serious reading difficulties
	15 - 21	below average
	22 - 30	average and above.
In Number	0 - 25	have serious number difficulties
	26 - 31	below average
	32 - 43	average and above

If we consider that in National Curriculum terms, Year 2 pupils of National "average" ability are expected to be at Level 2 then one consideration in this study will be to see if SATS identify the same children as underachievers as those identified by the Quest Reading and Number Tests.

The Neale Analysis of Reading Ability was first published in 1958 and revised in 1994. It is administered to children in the Junior School in the September following the Key Stage One SATS and is a set of graded passages for testing rate, accuracy and comprehension in reading. Results are presented in terms of a 'raw score' (total marks attained) and then converted directly into Reading and Comprehension ages (RA & CA) which are analysed not only in the light of the child's chronological age but also with regard to the child's reading achievement in Key Stage One English. Due to the revision of the Neale analysis in 1994 care has been taken in the interpretation of the results.

THE DATA

Standard Assessment Tests / Tasks and Teacher Assessment 1991 - 1996

This data consists of the results of six successive cohorts of Year 2 pupils 1991-1996 tested and assessed in Maths, English and Reading (in total 259 pupils - 4,662 results. The range of scores are from W (Working towards Level 1) through to Level 3 and in reading the Level 2 is further subdivided within the range a - e (except in 1991). The child's subject level is derived from Profile Component Scores (which were resolved attainment target levels) which gave the subject score according to each year's Government prescribed weightings.

The Quest Test comprised of 211 pupils' results in Maths and English over a 5 year period 1992-1996 (2110 results). The range of scores ranged from 0 - 30 in Reading and 0 - 43 in Number. **The Neale Reading Analysis** comprised similarly 211 pupils' results in Reading and Comprehension over the same 5 year period - 2110 results. The scores ranged from 6 years 0 months to 10 years. In both cases the sample included those who transferred into the adjacent Junior School and were tested two months later. Pupils in the Infant School who transferred to other Junior Schools were not included.

THE NATIONAL SAT RESULTS

In the study use is also made of the National SAT and Teacher Assessment (TA) results in Maths and English as a comparison with the school's SAT results. In both cases the results are categorised as children achieving Level 1 and below (including S.T.W. - see table below) and children achieving level 2 and above. These scores in Maths and English span the period 1991 - 1996 but exclude 1993 when no national figures were available due to the industrial action of some of the teaching profession.

Key:	S	Pupils with statement disapplication
	T	Pupils with temporary disapplication
	W	Pupils working towards - Level 1

THE ANALYSIS

My starting point was to examine the correlation between the SAT results and the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability and whether these SAT results identify underachievement in relation to the Quest results. I then went on to consider if there have been any changes in achievement over the years by looking at the SAT means and Neale analysis means as well as the percentage of children who achieved level 2 and above in SATS. Finally, I compared School and National SAT figures and a comparison of measured performances in the Neale Analysis with the children's actual ages.

To consider the correlation between the SAT results and the Neale Analysis of Reading Ability I used the Spearman Rank Correlation Co-efficient. This enabled me to measure the association between the variables (SAT results and Neale Reading Age (RA) and SAT results and Neale Comprehension Age (CA) in an ordinal scale.

Table 1: **Neale Comprehension and Reading Age & English SAT Score 1992**

N.C.A. (Sep)	.5887 N (27) p<.001	
N.R.A. (Sep)	.2267 N (27) N.S.	.4699 N (27) p<.013
	E.SAT	N.C.A. (Sep)

Table Key		
N.C.A.	=	Neale Comprehension Age
N.R.A.	=	Neale Reading Age
E.SAT	=	English SAT score
Sep	=	The child's score in the September following the SAT results. (These are identified because other later scoresmay be used in a further study)

The correlations in Table 1 indicate that in 1992 there was a significant positive correlation (strong relationship) between the English SAT score and the Neale Comprehension Age and between the Neale Comprehension Age and the Neale Reading Age, but no significant correlation between the English SAT score and the Neale Reading Age. A reason for this may be the fact that the English SAT score encompasses a range of English skills, writing, spelling, handwriting and reading comprehension as well as reading itself. One would expect, therefore, a closer correlation between the SAT and the Neale Comprehension Score. The results in 1993 were very similar with no significant correlation between the English SAT scores and the Neale Reading Age scores (.159). On the other hand the 1994 and 1995 results showed all relationships correlated significantly and this improved relationship may be explained by the fact that the revised Neale tests were used with the 1994 cohort of children.

Changes again became evident in 1996. There was found to be no significant relationship between the Neale Comprehension scores and SAT score ($p<.145$) and similarly the relationship between the Neale Reading Age score and SAT score just failed to reach 0.05 level of statistical significance ($p<.06$). This could in part be explained by the fact that in 1996 there were radical changes in the scoring of the English test and assessment results. The tests and assessment were far more demanding of the children than in previous years and many Level 1 and 2 children achieved lower levels than previous years. Secondly, we had a high percentage of statemented children with moderate learning difficulties in that year who were not included as they had not reached the minimum of the Neale scores and consequently 'N' was significantly lower than in the previous year.

Table 2: Neale Comprehension & Reading Age & English SAT Scores (1992-1996 inclusive)

N.C.A. (Sep)	.6244 N (192) P<.000	
N.R.A. (Sep)	.6600 N (192) P<.000	.8118 N (194) P<.000
	E.SAT	N.C.A. (Sep)

If we consider Table 2, the figures for the 5 years, we can see that overall there are significant correlations between the Neale Reading Scores, Comprehension Scores and

English SAT Scores so a fair measure of confidence may be attached to the SAT results over that period of time. This is reinforced by the data in tables 3 & 4.

Table 3 shows the spread of the Neale Reading Scores against the English SAT score and Table 4 the Neale Comprehension scores against the English SAT scores. Both show the spread of reading ages and comprehension scores against the SAT levels of achievement.

Table 3: Distribution of the Neale Reading Accuracy Scores (Sept) and English SAT Scores (1992 - 1996)

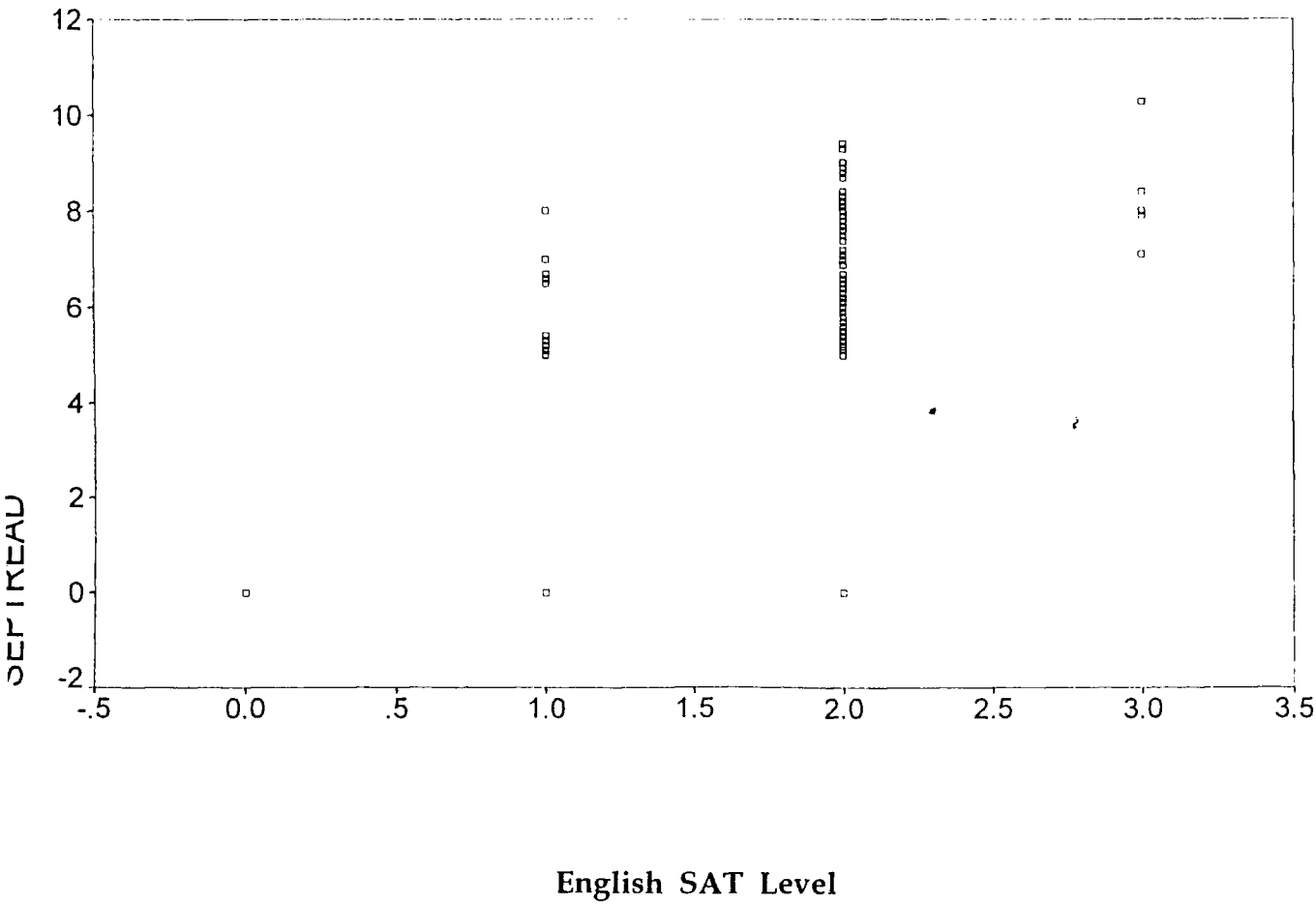
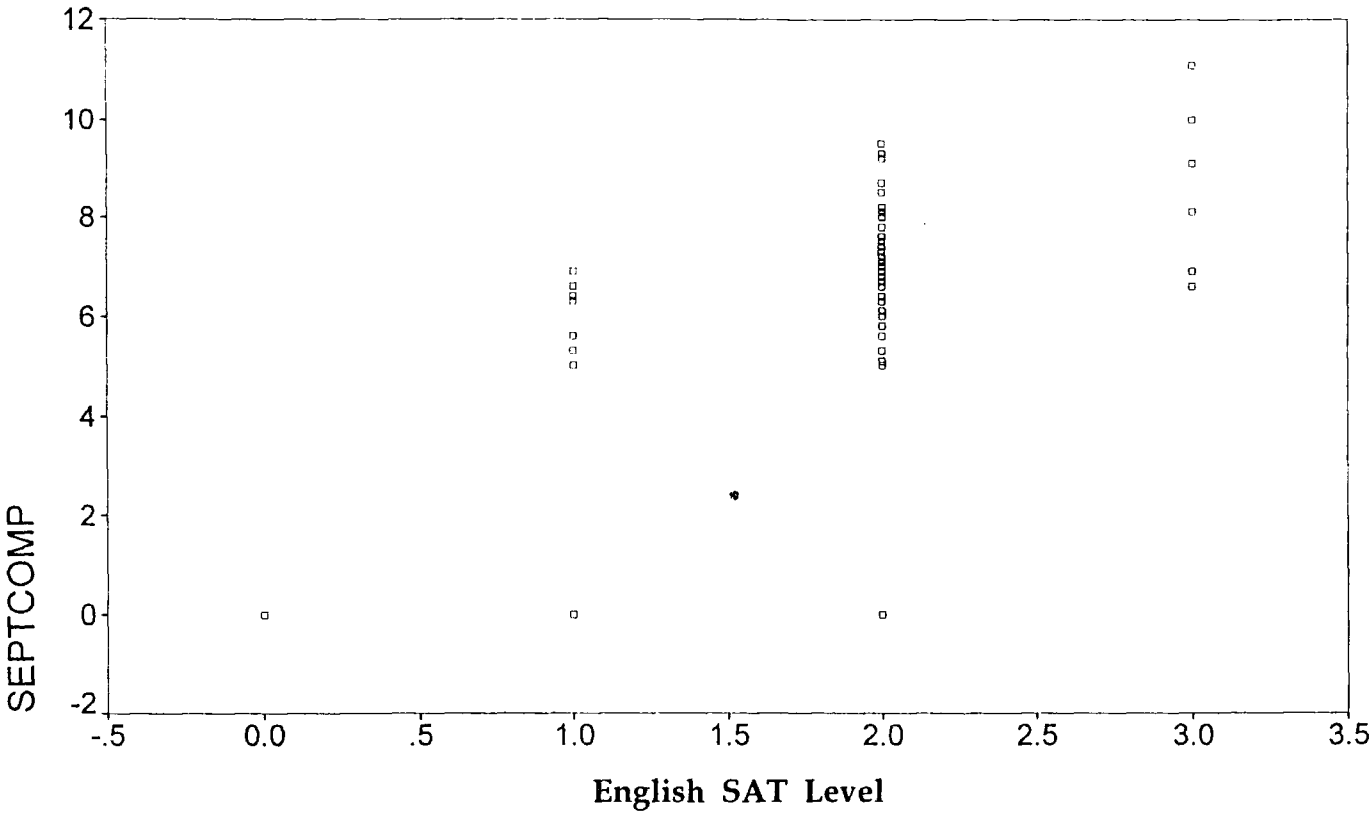


Table 4: Distribution of the Neale Comprehension Scores (Sept) and English SAT Scores (1992 - 1996)



I then went on to consider the reliability of the Quest Number and Reading Scores in predicting SAT levels in Maths and English using Logistic Regression. This would give some indication of the validity of the SAT scores as a reliable measurement of performance. For this level S.T.W. & 1 were combined into a score of 1 and levels 2 and above into a score of 2. Of the original 211 pupils, 24 pupils were excluded from this analysis because of missing data due, in the main, to the child being absent on test days.

From the data an equation was formulated to generate a probability score.

Probability score = -7.3812 x (Numquest score x .3325)

Probability score = -5.2811 x (Readquest score x .4583)

If this probability score was < .5 the predicted SAT score was 1 and if the probability score was >.5 the predicted score was 2.

Table 5: **Prediction Table for SAT Maths using Quest Maths (all years)**

	Predicted SAT Levels		
Actual SAT Levels	**1**	**2**	**Percentage Correct**
1	35	18	66.0%
2	12	122	91.0%

I examined (see table 5) the validity of the Maths SATS in relation to Quest Maths. Of the 53 children achieving Level 1 Quest correctly predicted 35 (66.0%). Of the 134 achieving Level 2, Quest correctly predicted 122 (91.0%). Whilst the overall accuracy was 84%, this would suggest that Quest is a poor predictor of SAT scores at low level but a good predicter at the high level. Of the 30 incorrect predictions 12 pupils (9.0%) did better than predicted i.e achieved Level 2 whereas 18 pupils (34.0%) did worse. It is worth noting that 8 (26.7%) of the 30 cases were borderline in terms of their probability (5 of those achieving better than expected and 3 worse than expected). In examining more closely the individual cases the borderline children had all achieved Level 2's in English and/or Science and therefore the Maths score may have been reflected in a marginal lack of success in that subject at that particular time. Of the other 22, 6 of the children were a little highly strung and their Quest Score may have been a reflection of their unease at being in a new environment. Thirdly, there is the time factor of 2 - 3 months between the two tests. A similar analysis was undertaken with the English SAT and Reading Quest Scores.

Table 6: **Prediction Table for SAT English using Quest Reading (all years)**

Actual SAT Levels	Predicted SAT Levels		
	1	2	Percentage Correct
1	41	13	75.9%
2	10	121	92.4%

Table 6 shows the predictability of the English SATS from the Quest Reading Results. Of the 54 children achieving Level 1, 41 (75.9%) were correctly predicted. Of the 131 children achieving Level 2, 121 (92.4%) were correctly predicted. As with Quest Number and Maths SATS Quest Reading is a good predicter at the higher level and a not so good at the low level (but better than Quest Maths is for Maths SATS). The overall accuracy for Quest Reading is 87.6% as compared with 84.0% for Quest Maths. Of the 23 incorrect predictions 11 (47.8%) were borderline, 6 doing better than expected and 5 doing worse. The reasons for the inaccuracy of the prediction may be similar to the Maths reasons or may be because of the dissimilarity between the Quest Reading Test and the English SAT.

The frequency table below (Figure 7) shows the number of instances for each value and broadly reflects SAT scores.

Table 7: **Observed Groups and Predicted Probabilities for English**

```
        80 +                                                          +
           |                                                          |
           |                                                          |
F          |                                                          |
R       60 +                                                        2 +
E          |                                                        2 |
Q          |                                                        2 |
U          |                                                        2 |
E       40 +                                                        2 +
N          |                                                        2 |
C          |                                                        2 |
Y          |                                                        2 |
        20 +                                                        2 +
           |                                                       22 |
           |1                   2      2      2     2     2   2     2 222|
           |111   1  1    1     1      1      1     1     2   2   2 2 222|
Predicted  ------------------------------------------------------------
  Prob:    0            .25            .5            .75            1
  Group:   1111111111111111111111111111122222222222222222222222222222222
           Predicted Probability is of Membership for 2.00
           Symbols: 1 - 1.00
                    2 - 2.00
           Each Symbol Represents 5 Cases.
```

My next task was to investigate whether SATS identify under-achievement in Maths and English in relation to the Quest Maths and Quest Reading Scores and tables 8 and 10 recorded these scores.

Table 8: **Relationship between Quest Number Score & Maths SAT Level (all years)**

	MATHS SATS				
	- 1.00(w)	1.00	2.00	3.00	Row Total (Quest)
Numberquest Score (0 - 25)	3 3.9 100.0	46 59.7 86.8	28 36.4 21.9		77 40.5%
(26 - 31)		6 10.5 11.3	51 89.5 39.8		57 30%
(32 - 43)		1 1.8 1.9	49 87.5 38.3	6 10.7 100.0	56 29.5%
Column Total (SATS)	3 1.6%	53 27.9%	128 67.4%	6 3.2%	190 100.0

Note: In each box the first figure is the actual number of children, the second is the percentage which this is of the row total, the third the percentage of the column total.

Two things are apparent from Table 8. First, one can see that there is a broad relationship between Number Quest and the SAT Scores. Second, If one combines the low Number Quest scores (0-25 plus 26-31) with low levels for Maths SATS (Level W plus Level 1) it can be seen that Number Quest accounts for 70.5% (40.5% plus 30.0%) of the children compared with 29.5 (1.6% plus 27.9%) in SATS. Thus Numberquest identifies many more low achievers than does SATS.

Following this, I examined the relationship between the two tests by calculating Spearman Correlation Co-efficient having ranked the data as shown in the table 9 below.

Table 9: **Correlation between Maths SAT Scores and Quest Number**

Year	Corr.	N
92	.2713 (.127)	33
93	.6141 (.000)	30
94	.6649 (.000)	40
95	.7562 (.000)	47
96	.8411 (.000)	40
Overall	.6831 (.000)	190

Spearman Correlation

The Spearman Correlation shows a significant correlation between Maths SAT and Numquest in each year (except for 1992). One can see that the Quest Score relationship with the SAT Scores has improved over the years. This may be seen as evidence for the increasing validity of Maths SATS, since the Quest scores have remained relatively constant.

Table 10: **Relationship between Quest Reading Score & English SAT Score (all years)**

	ENGLISH SATS				
	- 1.00(w)	1.00	2.00	3.00	Row Total (Quest)
Read Quest (0 - 14)	3 3.6 100.0	51 61.4 94.4	29 34.9 23.2		**83** **44.1%**
(15 - 21)		2 3.8 3.7	50 94.3 40.0	1 1.9 16.7	**53** **28.2%**
(22 - 30)		1 1.9 1.9	46 88.5 36.8	5 9.6 83.3	**52** **27.7%**
Column Total (SATS)	**3** **1.6%**	**54** **28.7%**	**125** **66.5%**	**6** **3.2%**	**188** **100.0**

Note: In each box the first figure is the actual number of children, the second is the percentage which this is of the row total, the third the percentage of the column total.

As with Table 8 there is clearly a broad relationship between Read Quest and the SAT Scores. Again combining the low Read Quest scores 0 - 14 plus 15 - 21 with low levels for English SATS (Level W plus Level 1) it can be seen that Read Quest accounts for 72.3% (44.1% plus 28.2%) of the children compared with 30.3% (1.6% + 28.7%) in SATS. It will be noted that the Read Quest conclusion of low achievement is much greater than is the SATS.

I then looked at the SAT results for reading which for the period 1992 - 1996 are set out in Table 11. The percentages of those pupils achieving Level 1 and below are similar: in Table 10, 30.3% (i.e. 1.6% plus 28.7%) for the English SATS as a whole; in Table 11 36.6% for Reading SAT. Similarly, with the percentage of those achieving Level 2 and above 69.7% (66.5% plus 3.2%) and 63.4% (54.7% plus 8.7%) respectively. This suggests that the Reading SAT gives broadly the same results as the overall English SAT.

Table 11: **Reading SAT Scores 1992 - 1996**

	Value	Frequency	Percent	
	1	63	36.6	
	2	4	2.3)	
	2a	33	19.2)	
	2b	24	14.0)	
SAT Rating	2c	21	12.2)	54.7
	2d	7	4.1)	
	2e	5	2.9)	
	3	15	8.7	
		---	---	
	Total:	**172**	**100.0**	

I then went on to examine the relationship between the two English tests (SATS and Quest Reading, by calculating the Spearman Correlation (Table 12).

Table 12: **Correlation between English SAT Scores and Quest Reading**

Year	Corr.	P	N
92	.7263	(.000)	33
93	.6018	(.001)	28
94	.7261	(.000)	40
95	.7948	(.000)	47
96	.6799	(.000)	40
Overall	.7240	(.000)	188

From the results set out in Table 12 I conclude that the results were similar to the Maths results in showing a significant correlation between the English SAT and Quest Reading results for each year and the relationship has remained broadly the same over the years.

I next went on to look at the Mean Scores in English and Maths SATS.

Table 13: **Summary of Mean Maths SAT Results 1992 - 1996**

	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
1992	1.8462	.3655	39
1993	1.8387	.3739	31
1994	1.7111	.4584	45
1995	1.7593	.6424	54
1996	1.5122	.6753	41
Total:	**1.7286**	**.5426**	**210**

Table 14: **Summary of Mean English SAT Results 1992 - 1996**

	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
1992	1.8718	.5221	39
1993	1.8333	.3790	30
1994	1.6444	.4841	45
1995	1.7037	.5707	54
1996	1.6098	.6663	41
Total:	**1.7225**	**.5455**	**209**

These tables show us that in both Maths and English the levels of achievement deteriorated in 1994 (particularly in English) and in 1996 (particularly in Maths). In 1996 this could be a reflection of the high percentage of statemented pupils in that year and the fact that in both subjects the tests and assessment were more difficult for a child to achieve Level 2 (an average 7 yr old). The 1995 cohort of children were known to be a better year group and this is marginally reflected in maths but is more pronounced in English. 1996, on the other hand, did contain a high percentage of special needs children (27.4%) with four of these children having statements. The only other year that contained a statemented child was in 1993. One of the reasons for the high number of children with moderate learning difficulties being in the school was because the Local Authority acknowledged (later reinforced in the Ofsted Report) that the school's organisation was particularly conducive to the integration of special needs children into

the mainstream school and that the children were receiving high quality specialist help together with mainstream class integration. The 1994 results might be accounted for by a specific teaching situation.

Similar results were seen when we considered the mean results of the Neale Reading Results and Comprehension Results *(Tables 15 & 16).* 1995 reflected better results in comparison with 1994 and 1996. The 1994 Neale Comprehension results were the lowest so far recorded, a reflection of the restandardisation of the test in that year.

Table 15: **Summary of Neale Reading Results 1992 - 1996**

	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
1992	6.5217	2.4471	35
1993	6.7923	2.8125	31
1994	4.2975	2.9474	40
1995	4.8621	2.8956	48
1996	3.9385	3.1982	40
Total:	**5.1631**	**3.0656**	**194**

Table 16: **Summary of Neale Comprehension Results 1992 - 1996**

	Mean	Std Dev	Cases
1992	6.0357	3.5869	35
1993	6.0177	2.8088	31
1994	3.8053	2.7912	40
1995	5.1208	2.3259	48
1996	4.3457	2.6417	40
Total:	**4.9981**	**2.8976**	**194**

The variation in the results over the five years has been affected by many factors both internal and external. The internal results are directly influenced by the cohorts of pupils that year and to a lesser extent the understanding of the teachers doing the testing and assessment. This is mitigated after 1993 by the subject co-ordinator having always assessed and tested their own subject. External factors in SATS were common to both

the school and national results so I therefore went on to compare school and national figures (Tables 17 & 18). The figures used are the results of all children in Year 2 who were assessed and tested. Some of these children did not transfer to the Junior School so were not tested by the Neale and Quest tests.

Table 17: **Percentage of Children Reaching Level 2 and above in ENGLISH SAT**

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
School Level 2 & above	39	79	79	62	65	66
National Level 2 & above	78	77	-	80	80	79
Difference	-39	+2	-	-18	-15	-13

Table 18: **Percentage of Children Reaching Level 2 and above in MATHS SAT**

	1991	1992	1993	1994	1995	1996
School Level 2 & above	36	85	79	71	65	56
National Level 2 & above	72	78	-	81	78	82
Difference	-36	7	-	-10	-13	-26

In table 17 & 18 I looked at the percentage of children reaching Level 2 and above in English (table 17) and Maths (Table 18) using the total numbers of children tested or assessed at key Stage One rather than the smaller number going into the adjacent junior school (See page 3). I then considered the difference between the School's performance and the national performance. As can be seen in Table 17 standards in English in School against national figures are showing a slight improvement over the last three years whereas in Mathematics they have declined.

Using the Spearman Correlation I compared the childen's actual ages at the time of the Neale Reading test with their reading age and comprehension age.

Table 19 **Comparison of Actual Ages with Neale Reading & Comprehension Age (1992 - 1996)**

Reading Age	.8048 N (141) p<.000	
Actual Age	.0596 N (150) p<.469	-.0299 N (147) p<.719
	Comprehension Age	**Reading Age**

Overall, as one might expect, the reading age and the comprehension ages correlated in a positive way for all years. (Corr = .8048, N = 141, P = 0.00). However, the lack of a significant correlation between the comprehension age and the actual age and between the reading age and the actual age is interesting.

Tables 20 and 21 show us the distribution of the differences between actual age and reading and comprehension age. Negative differences indicate a child's ability is greater than his/her chronological age would indicate, while positive differences indicate a child's ability is less than his/her chronological age. On average the reading age of the sample (147 cases) is .74 lower than the child's actual age and the comprehension age is on average 1.05 years less than the actual age.

Table 20: **Difference between Actual Age and Reading Age (1992 - 1996)**

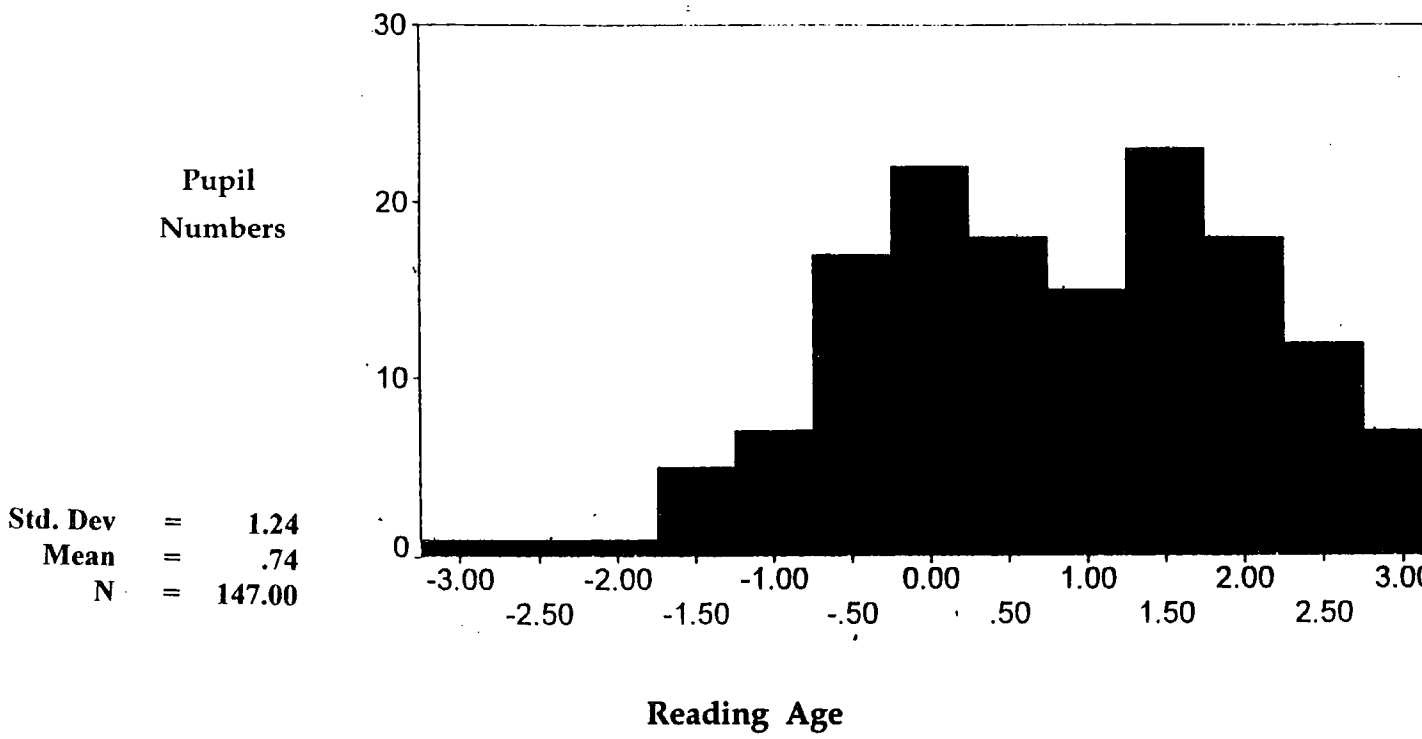


Table 21: **Difference between Actual Age and Comprehension Age (1992 - 1996)**

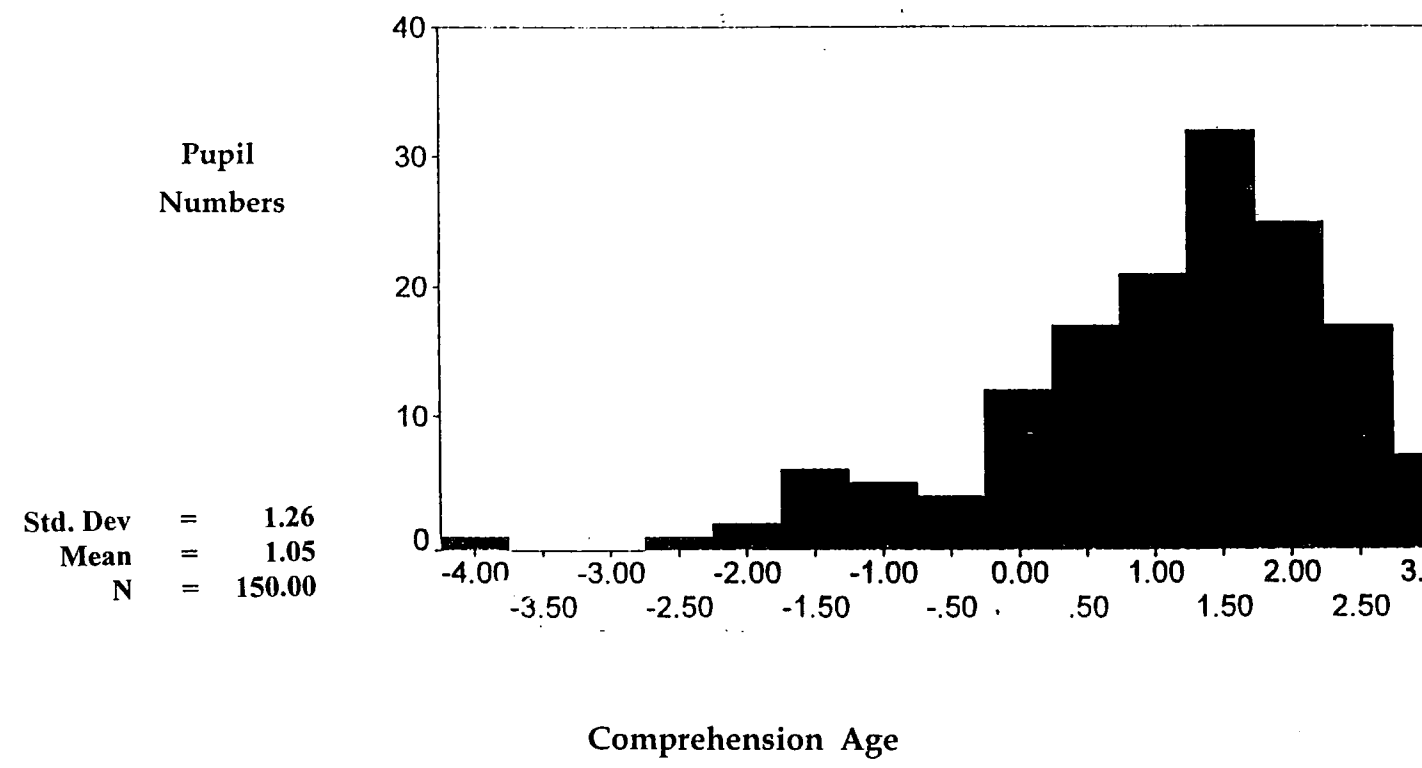
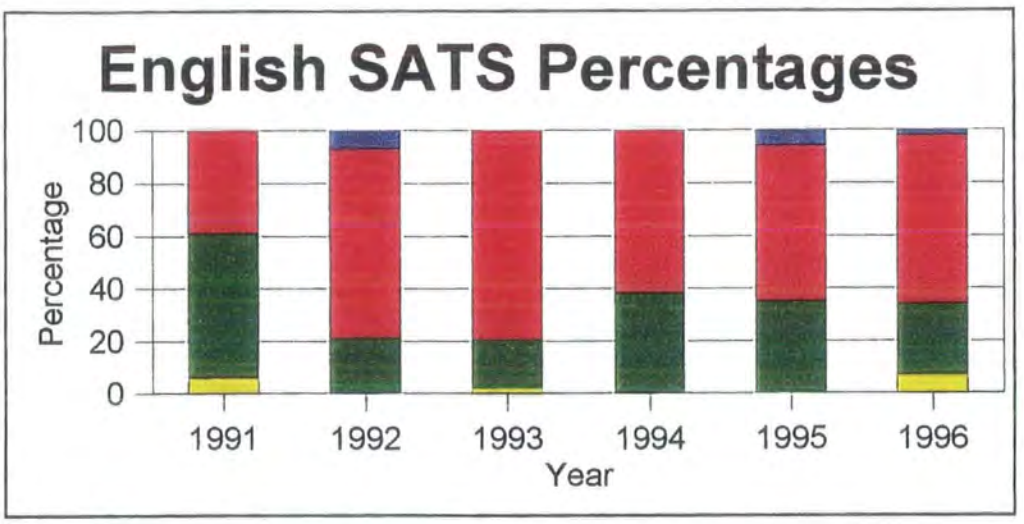
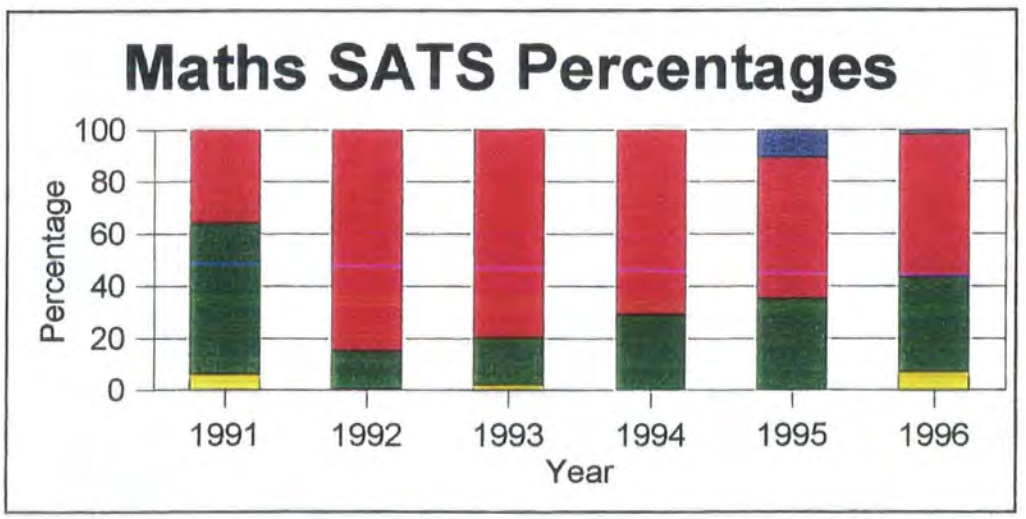


Table 22 shows clearly the different percentages of each level for English and Maths SATS for each year 1991 - 1996.

Table 22: **English and Maths SATS Percentages**





Key.

(W) Working towards Level 1 -- Yellow.
Level 1 -- Green.
Level 2 -- Red.
Level 3 -- Blue.

Evaluation of the Results

I suggest that there is reasonable consistency between the results of the three different tests in general terms and the comparison with Quest and the Neale suggests that SATS do present a reliable picture of attainment over the period. There is a significant correlation between the English SAT results and the Neale Reading scores and comprehension scores *(see pages 82 & 83).* If we look at both Reading Quest and Maths Quest, Quest in both cases is a poor predicter of SAT scores at the low level but a reasonable predictor of Level 2. (The prediction at low level for Maths is somewhat better than for English) *(see pages 85-90).*

The evidence regarding changes in the children's performance over the 5 years is less conclusive. If we examine the mean Maths and English results they appear to show a significant deterioration in 1994 (particularly in English) and again in 1996 (particularly in Maths) *(see page 91).* For English this was borne out in the Neale Reading and Comprehension results for the same period *(see page 92).* Comparison with the national results cannot be exact but if we look at the percentage reaching Level 2 and above it is interesting to note that, apart from the first year (1991), the biggest gap between school performance and the national figures was in English in 1994 and in Maths in 1996 *(see page 93).* On average over the whole period the reading age of the children in the school was seven and a half months lower than their actual age and their comprehnsion age twelve and a half months behind their actual age *(see page 95).* Looking more closely at the 1996 Mean SAT results I note *(see page 91)* that the cohort contained a high percentage of children with statements whereas the 1995 cohort were felt by staff in the school to be a good year group. I am also aware that there were some changes in teacher input at times during this period. The differences in performance over the period therefore may well be no more than year on year variance. Table 22 shows clearly the different percentages of each level for the English and Maths SATS for each year 1991 - 1996.

The evidence then does not give give any indication of changes in performance as a result of the changes that have taken place in the School, particularly the core subject teaching organisation at Key Stage One introduced in January 1994. It may be that the enthusiasm and commitment of the teachers as a result of these changes were reflected in the children's good results in 1995 and that the quality of the 1996 cohort, with a high percentage of children with statements, was the main cause of the disappointing results that year. In reality it is far too early to tell. When the 1997 - 1999 results are available, a significant pattern may change. Then again it may not.

Chapter 7 : *Three Issues and a Conclusion*

A number of issues arise from the two preceeding chapters, not least the relationship between the qualitative analysis in chapter 5 and the quantitative evaluation in Chapter 6 which, in the end, I found inconclusive for the timescale under consideration.

These issues which I wish to discuss before setting out the conclusions of the thesis are:-

- What has been the impact of national changes upon curriculum organisation at school level?
- What are the main points relating to the planning and implementation of a major school level innovation?
- What ways are there of evaluating a school improvement initiative?

7.1 The Impact of National Changes on Curriculum Organisation at School Level

The outside factors which set in motion the considerable changes in the school described in this study were twofold and both occurred in 1988, the Education Reform Act and the critical Local Authority Report on the school two years before my appointment *(See Chapter 5, pages 37 and 38).* Local Management of Schools following from the 1988 Act put responsibility in the hands of Governors which, in practice, gave the Headteacher a major role. The changes which ensued were a matter for the Governors and Headteacher to manage. The critical Local Authority Report on the School meant that considerable change for the better was not only desirable but essential and the support of the Governors for the Headteacher's plans were soon forthcoming *(see page 41).* It was in this environment that the National Curriculum had to be phased in. Since the school was already engaged in a process of re-organisation and change, the National Curriculum changes were, therefore, the easier to accommodate. It did, though, increase the total size of the change.

The introduction of the National Curriculum impacted in a number of different ways. In terms of the organisation of classes, three parallel classes of mixed age children were established to ensure that all children had equal access to the subjects of the new National Curriculum. At the same time this re-organisation served to extend and

strengthen the collegiality of the Key Stage One team. In terms of subject content, this was continually adjusted and refined to try to meet the national requirement and their subsequent adjustment e.g. The Dearing Review. Assessment and testing were also major factors. Apart from the time and effort involved, they provided a development framework for subject delivery and future planning taking account of the children's learning needs as identified through their assessment and testing. Subsequently, they also focused attention on teacher and children's performance and on the important considerations of how teachers teach and how children learn.

Another impact of national changes on the school was the development of whole school aims. In my view, a key element in an effective school is the explicitness of the aims which it sets itself and that everyone connected with the school understands and commits themselves to these aims. Medium and short term targets then needed to be interwoven into the management plans to enable these aims to be achieved. Our first task was to agree the overall aims for the school and to secure consensus and agreement so that targets could be set. Over the following two years each area of the curriculum was addressed in detail and specific aims were agreed for curriculum subjects, class curricular provision and cultural and moral development.

The annual targets for the school were, in the first instance, numerous and comprehensive but by drawing up a three year development plan we were able to draw up a programme built on the previous year's target. This process can be illustrated by looking at one of our initial aims to improve reading standards.

Year 1: Evaluate standards of reading and parent involvement in supporting reading. Purchase of new reading scheme, home school reading books and booklets.

Year 2: Establish a school reference library.

Year 3: Audit library books provision and possible purchase of books; organise referencing.

Year 4: Audit classroom books and reading corners. Possible purchase of furniture and books.

Once the targets had been agreed, flexibility needed to be built into the system to allow for the new government initiatives that were coming thick and fast. New curriculum

subjects, assessment and testing, special education need provision etc were incorporated as, and when, necessary. Although, at this time, the targets seemed difficult to achieve the delegation of responsibilities not only gave staff confidence but also enhanced the importance of support and collegiality of the team. To quote Purkey and Smith (1985 quoted in Harris, Jamieson and Russ p.35).

> "The staff of each school is given a considerable amount of responsibility and authority in determining the exact means by which they address the problem of increasing academic importance. This includes giving staff more authority over curricular and instructional decisions and allocation of building resources."

The successes of the team approach together with a growing awareness of the extensive demands being placed on staff time led us to look in more detail at the school organisation and structure. Since teaching and learning are paramount, it follows that the organisation of classrooms or teaching areas is the central point. What was needed was effective classroom organisation, particularly at Key Stage One, to enable us to provide children with the knowledge, understanding and skills to flourish in today's society. To be effective, the organisation of these learning environments had to cater for a wide ability range and the learning needs of all the children in the school. Undoubtedly, where teachers hold high expectations of pupils' ability the pupils are more likely to achieve and the need to raise these expectations was of major importance.

To address these dual demands we saw one way forward was to group all the Key Stage One children. We believed it was the best way we could individualise curriculum provision and teach the knowledge and skills demanded of a broad curriculum. By grouping in the core subjects (and Art and Design Technology) for part of the week (four mornings) and retaining the classroom base as their 'home base' for the other six sessions we would be able to meet the developmental and emotional needs of young children for security and stability. The impact of the changes were profound:

> **For the teachers** it gave increased self-confidence and enhanced status arising from the deployment of their subject expertise. They were able to work with manageable, differentiated sized groups and plan and cater for each child's individual needs. Assessment and testing became part of the overall subject planning and all staff were able to share and develop individual pupils' talents and curricular needs. Progression and continuity were unimpeded for the whole of the Key Stage.

For the children, it gave access to individual or group support in the core subjects. The knowledge and expertise of the teachers ensured quality of provision together with continuity and progression from lesson to lesson. Children were interested, motivated and on task as distractions were few and far between. Home bases at the start of each day and in the afternoons gave security and younger children access to work with children of a wider range of abilities.

For the parents and governors, there was confidence that the children were being taught in a meaningful learning organisation - an organisation where the learning of the staff was deemed as necessary and as important as the learning of the pupils themselves.

7.2 The Planning and Implementation of a Major School Level Innovation.

Actual change in classrooms and its effectiveness in a school do not happen instantly. Their planning and implementation extend over a period of time and throughout this period - and beyond - refinement and restructuring inevitably continue. Later analysis of the planning, introduction, management and evaluation of this current initiative perhaps implies a carefully thought out and logical progression; in practice it was very much a reaction to external pressures. It is only afterwards that a coherent pattern emerged. One of the very considerable advantages that only became clear later was that this process of change, whilst bringing worries with it, nevertheless by our reaction to the external pressures i.e. the taking of positive and radical action, also carried with it the fact that we were in charge and doing something about it. The worrying question - which I will return to later was - were we right or were we going up a blind alley. All staff acknowledged 'our backs were against the wall'. But in the early stages the fact that we were doing something - something new and different, carried with it its own excitement.

Planning

I would identify two essential features at the planning stage. First, that the innovation had to be a balanced top down and bottom up operation with the former carefully and sensitively introduced. Second, close consideration of the internal and external environment to ensure the suitability and practicality of what is proposed including the availability of finance.

The early planning of the innovation was undertaken after initial analysis of children's progress, behaviour and general ethos of the school. As a result of these observations, and the building of a nursery, organisation of distinct teaching groups was undertaken (Early Years and Key Stage One). This was made easier by the appointment of new staff who, coming from outside, saw the benefits to be gained from working in a team situation and who were vocal in sharing views and ideas. The key issues which drove this innovation forward came in 1992 when the workload of the infant teachers became unbearable. The abilities of staff to teach through topic work in an integrated learning environment with mixed age children of widely different abilities and to ensure that the knowledge and skills of the different curriculum subjects were adequately covered stretched them to the limit. Their willingness to try was admirable; their frustration at trying to deal with the bombardment of external initiatives before the previous one was established was demoralising and exhausting. By the summer of 1993, I was aware of the urgent need to develop strategies for creating an environment more conducive to learning. My thoughts about subject teaching with young children advanced after careful thought about the strengths of staff in the school. The expertise of the teaching and non teaching statt at Key Stage One made this a very attractive option.

Discussions with two LEA Advisors helped me to clarify my thoughts and ideas and structure an initial outline. These ideas were then presented to the staff. The initial discussions with the staff were encouraging and their involvement and consequent ownership of the initiative were crucial to its realisation. Agreement, for a trial period, ensued and with governor support the details of the changes were addressed over the following weeks.

Implementation

The implementation process is described in detail in Chapter 5 *(see pages 53-59)*. A key feature of successful implementation is the flexibility to be able to adjust to take account of internal and external changes as the original plan is overtaken by events. The rationale for this new organisation was shared with parents in the autumn of 1993 and the start of the new organisation went ahead in January 1994. Every facet of the organisation had been addressed by the staff and procedures were put into place to ensure the change over was smooth for the children.

The first stumbling block came within two months with the resignation of a member of staff but financial resources, due to increased pupil numbers and careful budgeting, were such that a part-time specialist teacher could be employed. Regular evaluations over the next two terms confirmed our beliefs that the re-organisation would improve both the teaching and learning environment for pupils and staff and after considerable internal re adjustment in the summer of 1994 the re-organisation of subject bases was finalised. The auditing and centralising of resources and the attendance of staff on INSET courses throughout the year enabled the staff to go into this new organisation with confidence and assurance that they had the ability and resources to teach across the whole age range each week. External evaluation by local authority inspectors during this time were both helpful and encouraging and the external inspection by OFSTED in the Spring of 1995 confirmed our belief in the new arrangements.

7.3 Ways of Evaluating a School Improvement Initiative

One of the keys to the success of an educational initiative is the extent to which the results of the regular monitoring of the initiative contribute to the eventual decision as to what should be further developed and disseminated. Evaluation is a complex term as is the process of evaluation. Evaluation assists us in a wide variety of ways and at different levels if systems and performances are to improve. Evaluation of this school innovation was equally as complex, but, more importantly perhaps, evaluation decisions were supported by regular monitoring of classroom teaching and pupil learning from the Key Stage One staff.

Fullan (1991) provides a useful analysis of the factors involved in change and leading to the success of a school based initiative.

i) Characteristics of change e.g. perceived need for changes, their potential complexity, clarity, quality ' practicality.

ii) Local characteristics specific to the school e.g. the managerial skills of the Headteacher, teaching staff and governing body.

iii) External factors operating beyond the school and LEA e.g. the National Curriculum, and External Reports.

iv) Implementation and institutionalisation of change.

The characteristics and factors in Fullan's model were addressed and analysed in the change process in the school. We were clear about the changes for which we planned. The need for them was recognised by all at the school not only as of high priority but as essential, in fact, inevitable. Additionally, the initial changes identified from the 1988 Local Authority Report were clarified and adjusted in the light of the changing circumstances. The external factors, such as the National Curriculum requirement provided us with a continuing impetus. As to whether the changes have been institutionalised, Fullan argues that when schools and the education system are in a relatively stable state new systems can take from three to five years. Clearly this new organisation was introduced at a time of great change, both nationally and locally but undoubtedly it is accepted by all that are involved in it, teaching staff, pupils and parents. The qualitative results show radical improvement judged by OFSTED criteria. The quantitative results are still inconclusive.

Nevo (1995) in his comprehensive book on school based evaluation gives us access to a narrower yet still comprehensive model. He defines (p.52) school based evaluation as "a systematic activity which uses information to describe educational objects and judge their merit and worth". He goes on to point out that "students and their achievements should not be the only object of school evaluation" and that typical objects of school evaluation could be:

i) Evaluating students
ii) Evaluating resources (instructional material)
iii) Evaluating school projects and programmes
iv) Teacher evaluation
v) Evaluation of the school as a whole

Nevo suggests (p.156/7) the following indicators as a way of assessing the quality of a school and although it may not be possible to obtain data for all of them a majority would provide a broad picture of school quality. This demonstrates quite clearly how one simple indicator gives a very limited view of a whole school's quality.

1. ***Community and students served by the school***
   - 1.1 nature of community served by the school
   - 1.2 community / parent involvement
   - 1.3 students' socioeconomic background
   - 1.4 students' aptitude level
   - 1.5 special groups of students

2. *School vision*

2.1 school goals and objectives

2.2 pedagogical perspective

2.3 admission and retention policies

2.4 integration policy

2.5 perspectives on authority & responsibility6

2.6 evaluation policy

2.7 management style

3. *School personnel*

3.1 quality of teachers

3.2 quality of administrators

3.3 quality of support personnel

3.4 student / teacher ratio

3.5 school personnel turnover

3.6 staff development & in-service training

4. *Material resources*

4.1 school size

4.2 school budget

4.3 size of classes

4.4 instruction hours per week

4.5 classroom space

4.6 laboratories & libraries

4.7 computer equipment

4.8 sport and recreation facilities

4.9 landscaping

5. *Educational programes & activities*

5.1 major educational programs

5.2 selective & high quality programs

5.3 programs for special groups of students

5.4 extra-curricular activities

5.5 tutoring and remedial programs for slow learners

5.6 innovative/experimental school projects

5.7 participation in national/regional projects

5.8 community & parent involvement programs

5.9 self-evaluation & planning activities

6. *School achievement*

6.1 school holding power

6.2 student achievement on national/regional tests

6.3 student achievement in research studies

6.4 student achievement on school initiated tests

6.5 student achievement on national competitions

6.6 achievements of school graduates

6.7 judgment by professional inspectors & supervisors

6.8 parent satisfaction

6.9 school awards and national recognition

The narrow task of evaluation is relatively simple. What are the aims of the initiative? Have they been achieved? What changes have taken place? If we consider the school initiative described in Chapter 5, the aims were to improve the teaching and learning environment for staff and pupils in order that pupils may achieve success in terms of the new national curriculum orders. Undoubtedly, some of these aims have been met as can be seen from the spring 1994 evaluation report *(see Chapter 5 p.56-7)*. Similarly, the positive ethos that permeates the school is an example of the development of self esteem and feelings of success - a job well done - of both pupils and staff. It may be that the test results have not displayed any radical changes but the school does not simply teach to the tests; it is equally concerned in developing the whole child. Without doubt self esteem and morale has improved greatly for pupils and staff over the period of this study.

If we refer to Nevo's school assessment indicators, we see from the 1988 report that the school needed to address a very high percentage of these issues either directly or indirectly. The changes were indeed complex and interlinked and needed to be widely addressed, by Governors, the Headteacher, teaching staff, ancillary staff and with the support, financial and otherwise, of the LEA. None of the issues could stand alone and the intermingling of development was dependent on the support and involvement of everybody connected with the school. For example, the professional development of staff was dependent on a sound LEA In-Service Education Service. The improvement of the internal environment was dependent on a) the careful management of finance and b) the support of caretaking and cleaning staff. The development of Key Stage teaching was dependent on the commitment of teaching staff and the agreement of Governors and parents. The changes, initially identified in 1988, were important but not exclusive to the period of the study with regard to what Fullan refers to as 'external factors'. From

1990 onwards the rate at which Government initiatives were devolved to the schools was unprecedented. As a result, as my thesis highlights, radical restructuring became necessary. Evaluation of each of these changes has taken place to a greater or lesser extent but essentially it allowed us to refine our practice and develop a system that suited staff and pupils. The structure set out in Chapter 5 *(see page 32)*, shows how our year in year out monitoring and evaluations allowed us to change and develop, albeit at different rates, the different aspects of school life. Improvement in organisation and management was evident in 1991 but only limited development had occured in environment and resource issues and planning and liaison. Assessment and recording were a non-starter at that time! The 1992 report acknowledges the improvements in the environment and planning systems but highlights the need for challenging target setting.

Clearly external reports were important to the evaluation of the whole school but there were other external factors affecting the school's development. Local Management, the National Curriculum, Special Needs, Assessment and Testing etc all had a profound impact and evaluation of our strategies for implementing these recommendations was equally important. *(See Chapter 5, page 49, para 5; page 49 para 8; page 58 para.4; page 59, no.40).*

What has been the effect of the changes on the staff? Quite simply, without the commitment of the staff the changes could not have been accomplished. There has been little change in staffing (none at Key Stage One) which demonstrates their commitment and the challenges which the new organisation gave them. The effect on the school and the teaching environment has been immense. Radical re-organisation of the classrooms led to auditing and re-organisation of all the school resources which in turn led to an increase in efficiency in their management. Curriculum delivery is clear and unfettered and effective use is being made of teaching time throughout the week. Evaluation of subject teaching time has been ongoing throughout this study and is still subject to annual reviews. Without doubt, one of the more positive effects has been the effect these changes have had on the Governors and parents. The involvement of the Governors has been crucial and their involvement and influence in promoting and securing changes became more and more evident as the initiative developed. Collaboration developed slowly at first but the trust that ensued led to a more active involvement of Governors in class activities. Parents too started to visit and share the successes of children's achievements. Attendance at school functions and open evenings increased. The effect on the local community has been equally encouraging. Support agencies are frequent visitors offering help and support for pupils, and this

multi-agency involvement in the children's development is appreciated by all families. Pupil numbers have doubled so that parents, in the local community, appreciate that this new initiative is right for their children at this time in this particular school. This support, initially internal but increasingly broadly based, has been one of the indicators of the success of the initiative.

7.4 : Conclusion

The scope and plan of this thesis was set out in Chapter One. In Chapter Two I examined the development of Primary Education - the Pre 1900's Elementary Curriculum (payment by results); the Elementary Curriculum (1900 - 1944) dominated by the 3R's; the Primary Curriculum (1944 - 1968) influenced by the 11+ and intelligence testing through to a laissez-faire Primary Curriculum (1968 - 1988) and finally an "entitlement" curriculum (1988 to present day). Each era reflected the cultural changes in the country at this time and in Chapter Three I looked in more detail at the development of traditionalism and progressivism and how primary schools, post war, reflected the time of growth and optimism by developing active and individual learning. Certainly the economic turnaround and changing culture of the 1970's made different demands on the teaching profession but I believe that post-Plowden progressivism did not dramatically sweep through our Primary Schools. Certainly, teachers were being asked to adjust their professional ideology. Their traditionalist experiences were being challenged and the child-centred approach advocating that the child's own experience was fundamental to the learning process was being espoused by DES, HMI, Teacher Training Institutes and LEA's as "good" practice. The criticisms of the next decade that informal methods neglected basic skills led to a period of disillusionment. Teachers, even when following officially endorsed methods, seemed to be in the wrong and frequently came under attack from Government, press and public. In Chapter Four I went on to study the effect of the comprehensive reforms of the 1980's on the culture and structure of an Infant School and how a new professionalism emerged for the management team and teaching staff. This was followed in Chapter Five by an examination of the main changes in my own School in terms of school organisation, the curriculum and teacher professionalism. Chapter Six considered whether the changes have, in practice, improved the children's academic achievement in Maths and English. That there has been a major change in the Headteacher's role from the traditional role of institutional, pedagogical and moral leader to that of middle manager, administrator and facilitator is undeniable. The 1988 Report on the school demonstrates this development. "The designation of responsibility and involvement in policy making were weak or non existent". By 1992, changes were underway. "The management planning is

undertaken by the headteacher in consultation with staff ..... but was not presented as a single document for consideration by Governors ... ... and it is recommended that it involves Governors and staff to a greater extent ..."

In 1993 it was noted that the above recommendation had been implemented and the 1995 Ofsted Report addressed this issue in no less than five paragraphs - 38, 40, 147, 148 & 150.

The perspective of headteachers referring to "my school" has been replaced by "our school" and the sharing of power and responsibility with the Governing Body has enabled a collaborative partnership to form, albeit not an equal one. The importance of a headteacher being a "people manager" cannot be overestimated and, as the last ten years have shown, they have needed to be perpetual learners. Local Management of Schools and its associated responsibilities have meant that the definition of the headteacher's role has altered radically. If we refer to the School Reports under the headings Ethos, Environment and Resources, we again see a developing picture. "The school demonstrates a caring, indeed mothering attitude to children, but there is not a considered policy" (1988). "Recent re-organisation of resources and a new policy on display in the school have resulted in a noticeable improvement in the environment which is now more conducive to learning" (1991). 1992 & 1993 saw further development of both the internal and external environments for the benefit of both pupils and staff with the 1994 report stating "classrooms are well organised and resourced, are linked to subject areas and well deployed "and with reference to ethos pupils are attentive and positive about their work". The 1995 Ofsted Report acknowledged these developments by describing the school as attractive and in a good condition, that resources supported topic work and promoted pupil independence; the library and information technology resources reinforced pupil learning; and the school's clear ethos reflected the values expressed in its aims and objectives.

If we accept that the leadership role of the headteacher affects the behaviour and attitudes of pupils, teachers, support staff, parents, Governors and representatives of the local community *(See Chapter 4 : P.28)* then the most important test of leadership is the impact on others. The impact on adults can be seen by looking at planning and liaison and the impact on children by looking at the curriculum and teaching and learning. If we refer to the 1988 report; "The designation of responsibility and other aspects of management such as delegation of responsibility and involvement in policy making were weak or non existent." By 1991 "significant progress in achieving targets had been made" and other areas for development had been identified. The 1993 report

showed further development in internal collaboration and inter school liaison with the 1994 and 1995 reports identifying collaborative short and medium term planning "with staff meeting each week to evaluate work done and plan for the next week" (1994). "Careful curriculum provision, based on effective planning creates a positive quality of learning" (1995); "staff meetings and curriculum planning and consultation sessions are scheduled and recorded" (1995), and "a thorough system of audit and review which involves curriculum co-ordinators, the Deputy Headteacher and the Headteacher effectively determines curricular priorities which are overseen and approved by Governors" (1995). External liaison over this period was developed with parents, outside agencies and other educationalists and this is again acknowledged in the Ofsted Report. "Good information is provided for parents ..... , the school enjoys excellent relations with parents, it seeks to maintain frequent contact with agencies which provide services to school and with the local community", and "the whole school approach to special needs is effective and LEA support teachers operate well within this framework. Communication and liaison are purposeful".

A similar picture emerges for the development of teaching and learning and the curriculum. In the 1988 report teaching and learning emerged as "the key issue" of the inspection ..... "the dominant style is teacher directed, the staff being rigid in their attitudes and methods of teaching. Overall, teaching is didactic and restricting for the children." Here then we have a school which played lip service to the progressive movement (topic work and integrated days) and which lacked "open-mindedness to outside influences and new ideas". The teaching was "stereotyped and teacher directed. The curriculum narrowly conceived and essentially subject based with a strong emphasis on Maths and English." Unfortunately, the school did not reflect the findings of the 1978 HMI Survey *(see Chapter 3 : P.16)* that in classes where the didactic approach was mainly used, better NFER scores were achieved in Reading and Maths. Sadly the school was failing the children on every count: "it was inward looking; it did not stretch the children; it did not compensate for lack of stimulation and help at home, it did not expect children to work on their own, to show initiative or respond in a mature way to the business of the school. " To quote Woodhead (The Education Guardian : 11.2.92) "The problem is an unthinking mediocrity that results in a totally unacceptable waste of human potential. The teachers in these mediocre schools may not espouse extreme child centred philosophies but they fail their children. They fail them by not demanding enough, by not knowing enough themselves, by relying too heavily on questions and praise when instruction and honest feedback would achieve much more, by failing to teach". By 1991, the Director's Report to the Governors acknowledged that the school was now teaching a broader curriculum but with limited development in

teaching and learning styles. By 1992, with new and more stable staffing, wider styles of teaching were being employed stimulating the interests of pupils. By 1993 the pressures arising from an overloaded curriculum were evident and the issue of differentiation in large mixed age classes needed to be addressed. On the other hand, acknowledgement was made of "the hard work and significant progress being made by the staff in addressing the demands of the National Curriculum subjects, whole curriculum planning, special needs and information technology." The 1994 report was the turning point and following reorganisation at Key Stage One it was observed that "lessons were well planned and carefully focused. The subject based approach and the use of ability grouping helps in this. There are good examples of differentiated activities within the ability groupings and this approach allowed groups to tackle the same aspect of Maths at a variety of levels". "Positive development is taking place." This was further emphasised in the 1995 Ofsted Report *(see Chapter 5 : page 61 : para 141).* The development of teaching and learning styles reflected the progress made by the school in meeting the needs of the pupils and developing their full potential. From paragraphs 27 - 37 *(see Chapter 5 : p.62)* we see that the school was identified as a "good" school with the quality of learning in 94% of the lessons being sound or better and 32% of lessons being good.

The overall development of the school over the seven year period was undoubtedly a reflection of the demands placed upon it by the Government, LEA, Governors, parents and pupils themselves. The 1995 Ofsted Report allowed us to believe that we had met the challenges and emerged as a school of which we could be proud. The changes have improved the teachers' planning, the internal and external environment, the ethos of the school. We have broadened the curriculum and integrated procedures for assessment recording and reporting. Staff have been given time and opportunity to develop a range of teaching methods within the different organisational strategies to give the children opportunities to master new skills and knowledge.

The question is whether these beneficial changes are reflected in the measured achievements of the pupils. The statistics in Chapter Six show a coherent picture emerging from the SAT, Neale and Quest results. Standards have not deteriorated dramatically over the period but neither has there been a significant improvement. The 1992 and 1993 SAT figures were probably a reflection of the newness of the tests and the inexperience of the staff in administrating tests and assessing children and the scores for the next three years (1994 - 1996) are not sufficiently different to draw any conclusions. They are in a range that would reflect the general abilities of a year group or changes within the test itself. If we go on to look at the school results in comparison with

national results (Tables 17 & 18) we see the school is significantly underachieving but in English, at least, the gap is narrowing.

Undoubtedly the changes which have taken place in the school have provided the children with an environment more conducive to learning; the children are taught the basic subjects in manageable sized ability groups and taught by teachers whose professional development has ensured in-depth knowledge of their specialist subject. The teachers have developed their range of teaching styles to meet the needs of the children and of the curriculum and have provided evaluation, assessment and planning strategies which are both informative and informing. But children's learning is not simply a matter of the teachers teaching. It is not simply that knowledge and skills need to be internalised. The mark of successful learning is the application of knowledge and skills and the success, or otherwise, of this is a reflection of the value and beliefs of the teacher. Teaching is an art and as such demands, in a Lawrence Stenhouse's words, a "reflective practitioner". We have now embarked on a programme of looking at "parts of the whole subject" and critically examining what everyone in the school is doing.

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