

# **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

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**Doctorate in Education**

# **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

## **Abstract**

My thesis examines leadership within the context of school equality policy. I define leadership as the interaction of leaders, followers and situation. There were two research aims. To clarify, illustrate and evaluate the distinction between leadership and management; both theoretically and practically in relation to school policy. A second aim was to collect and examine the views of teaching staff from Head teachers to Teaching Assistants in three primary schools. These aims produced three research questions:

- Where does power and control lay in primary schools? Is power and control similar to leadership and management?
- What leadership characteristics come out of a primary school equality policy context?
- How and why are schools using leadership within the context of primary school equality policy?

Questions were addressed through a qualitative research design using a focused, in-depth case study approach. I collected and analysed semi-structured interviews from teaching staff and documentary evidence from Ofsted reports.

Research conclusions were: that leadership/power and control/management are similar when discussing school organisations. This view is supported by academic specialists (Crawford 2014). Analysis suggested that leadership and management can be seen as a continuum from wicked to tame complicated problems (Grint 2010; Western 2008) when developing school policy. Finally, this continuum seems to work at the micro school, meso schools and macro government levels. I found 8 major characteristics of school leadership including team, experience and respect which involved formal and informal leadership; however, interviewees saw formal leadership as central. Finally, the how and why of equality policy involved solo and distributed leadership; for the schools, shared leadership of Equality policy was seen as an important element in ensuring access and opportunity according to their ethos and vision and meeting internal and external accountability requirements. This research raised an issue concerning the paucity of Teaching Assistant voice in Ofsted reports and academic literature.

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## Declaration and Word Length

I hereby declare that, except where explicit attribution is made, the work presented in this thesis is entirely my own.

Word count (exclusive of appendices, the list of references and bibliographies but including figures and tables) **(49, 282)** words.

Stephen John Willoughby

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## **Acknowledgements**

I would like to thank my supervisor and friend Charlie Owen who has given positive encouragement in my struggle towards rigour in academic development and patient support on a personal level. Thanks Charlie it was much appreciated. Also I'd like to thank a number of specialists who have lead on the EdD modules; IFS and Thesis Workshops, particularly Bryan Cunningham; Peter Earley, Heidi Mirza and Jon Swain. They all supported my development of focused debate and effective presentation. Moreover, the students I met both formally and informally, particularly within my cohort gave me consistent and detailed feedback and support as critical friends. I would especially like to thank Steve Hannon who has regularly scrutinised my EdD work.

I want to acknowledge and thank the three case schools particularly the 18 interviewees who gave their time and open and detailed views on leading on equality policy. Without their invaluable input there would be no research. Finally, I would like to thank my friends and family who have had to put up with my focus on the EdD work especially my Wife who strongly supported and regularly checked my argument and prose.

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## **Reflective Statement: A Steep Learning Curve**

In this reflective statement I discuss and summarise my eight years of Doctorate of Education (EdD) work. I found it a steep and engrossing learning curve mostly enjoyable although at other times quite difficult. My statement contains my portfolio and four themes: a critical eye; professional practice; disability and ability and work and leisure.

## **Portfolio**

My portfolio includes four essays; an Institutional Focus Study (IFS) and my final Thesis.

- Essay One: Democratic Professionalism at Work: Race Equality Professionals Supporting School Audit and Strategic Planning for Equality Policy. The essay was developed and produced during the Professional Module in the 2007-8 Academic Year. A positive of the essay process was the support from academic staff particularly CAPITA when structuring the paper; a problem was that I needed to adjust my writing from short summarised professional reports to the more detailed flowing discussion of an essay. Looking back, I realise that I lacked the confidence to express my thoughts directly and my writing skills were not honed to an appropriate level.
- Essay Two: What are the Barriers to Teaching Assistants (TAs) Attendance at Race Equality Twilight INSET within Learning Trust Primary and Special Schools? Completed in 2007-8, was a more successful effort. My topic for this essay grew from the specialist and student debate during the Methods of Enquiry One module. I benefitted from the open and regular discussions, carrying out a literature review whilst continuing to battle with improving the structuring of my writing. Moreover, I began to link my academic development with my professional concerns about effective CPD for TA's. A problem was that I tended to discuss specialist author views without moving from description to critique. The recognition of TA roles in primary and special schools and their professional development became an area that I decided to consider further.

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- Essay three: Applying the Distributed Leadership Lens to a Professional Project in a London Education Authority. This was completed in 2007-8. This third essay was based on the Specialist Course which focused on school leadership. I was very interested in leadership because it was a major area of my professional employment. A constructive outcome from this unit was the development of my view on distributed leadership; however, again my writing tended to stay very descriptive; I talked *about* authors' views but stayed general, moreover, I didn't strongly and clearly develop my own argument; I hedged my bets; still lacking confidence!
- Essay four: Does the Qualifications and Curriculum Authority (QCA) English as an Additional Language (EAL) Summative Assessment Tool used in Current Practice Offer an Effective Means of Assessing Pupil Progress? was successfully completed in May 2009. This final essay was developed during Methods of Enquiry Two. The essay allowed me to produce my first research report based on the collection of data from semi-structured teacher interviews. Moreover, assessors felt that I was able to clearly sign-post my paper. However, again, though I was good at description, I remained frustratingly lacking in confidence to state my own position clearly enough in writing. Looking back at my essays, I now cannot believe the length of their titles!
- My IFS report was on 'Distributed Leadership within Assessment for Learning'. Completed May 2012. For this I returned to school leadership and was able to move beyond description and into critique; however, I didn't totally answer my own research questions.
- My thesis entitled 'Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy' was completed for submission and examination in 2015. A positive for me is that I have brought together leadership and my professional specialism of school equality. Moreover, I have been able to bring into focus the views of TA's. I am now thinking, writing and developing my own ideas with greater clarity. Possible problems have been limited time and cost; however, whatever the final outcome I have enjoyed the steep learning curve.



# **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

## **A Critical Eye**

During the EdD years I have developed a critical eye particularly through regular discussion, debate and presentation of issues. During the module sessions I was able to listen to different detailed views from students and professional academics and debate them. For example, I was able to debate the development of race equality policy at certain sessions. I prepared posters and spoken presentations on my areas of academic interest which were reviewed by tutors/supervisors, other students and friends. They would regularly give critical feedback. In 2014 I prepared a spoken and software presentation on my recent thesis particularly around the early analysis. The audience gave very positive and helpful feedback about my qualitative analysis, but suggesting that I focus first on the semi-structured interviews and consider the documentary evidence as subsidiary. I found that regular discussion, debate and presentation supported my effective development of suitably designed papers. For example, in the early essays I tended to simply report whereas in later work I became more critical and published a review of an academic book for Educate (an online magazine containing research summaries, literature and book reviews from students and staff within the Institute of Education). Finally, I argue that the regular involvement of critical friends has helped my reflection and on-going development of a critical eye.

## **Disability and Ability**

I was born as an albino with white skin, hair and poor sight. I've always had to wear coverings over my arms and legs particularly in bright sunlight; moreover, I use sunglasses and strong glasses regularly. Moreover, I then had a brain haemorrhage early in my forties which affected my higher order speech and language and writing abilities and worsened my sight. Whilst the skin issues were relatively limited, it has taken me several years to rebuild spoken and written word finding and ordering skills; as a registered blind person, I have on-going difficulties with sight when reading and typing due to holding my eyes in a particular focussed position. In order to deal with my disabilities; particularly reading, I learnt to read in short concentrated sessions followed by summarising and note taking onto my computer. Moreover, I asked the Institute of Education

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(IOE) administration to send me copies of materials prior to lectures, seminars and meetings which was sometimes a problem in the early days as was access to some lectures. However, things did improve over time. The IOE also had a steep learning curve as far as making reasonable provisions was concerned! That way I could prepare for sessions and the effective completion of papers. In short, I have disabilities but I also have found the ability to solve problems around this particularly with the understanding and useful support of the IOE.

### **Professional Development.**

As a professional educational consultant I had a depth of experience in primary and special schools in relation to teaching and learning particularly around the leadership of equality policy. For example, I had supported a large number of schools in developing written and on-going practice of these policies; however, this experience was based on my professional expertise and anecdotal stories from others. Moreover, I tended to produce summary reports and presentations to suit the purposes of LEA and School leaders. What I was dealing with was more strategic, involving the development and long term practice of school policy, rather than the day-to-day running of the schools. I wanted a more objective, open, research perspective to balance my professional experience. Hence I decided to apply to do an EdD where my work experience would link with a strong research approach. I have enjoyed the interaction of the professional and academic disciplines which have enriched my understanding and practice. For example, I have continued to improve equality practice for schools especially the development of research around student and parent views. Indeed, certain schools have asked me to regularly carry out small-scale research on school curriculum projects, particularly taking in the views of the school community. Furthermore, the interaction of the EdD process and my research experience has prompted me to support a more inclusive position for TAs as part of a school teaching staff. For example, a school I visited recently is presently considering involving TAs in regular after-school meetings with teachers.

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## **Work and Leisure**

When I was a full time professional employee with the local LEA I had a work timetable with clear commitments agreed but set by the employer. They paid, I did! Now I am a self-employed educational consultant partly due to the economic downturn following the bank crises and family issues. Being self-employed has meant that I have been able to focus directly on my EdD research, self-funded. I have also been able to develop certain lines of work with schools and will use my EdD knowledge to develop these further. Having said this, I enjoy a degree of leisure time in a way I couldn't when I was an employee. I can choose my work/play balance. My interests include enjoyable discussions with students and academic specialists; moreover, I am now able to support others in relation to their academic papers or preparing for the publication of book chapters. Of course the completion of the thesis will lead to a rebalance of my work/play life.

In conclusion, I have enjoyed the EdD process; the learning and development; the debate and presentation; the clear interaction between professional work and research but mostly the development of new friendships and possibilities. My steep EdD learning curve is coming to an end but I have loved it.

# **Thesis Introduction**

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

This thesis focusses on leadership within the context of school equality policy in primary schools. I define leadership as the interaction of leaders, followers and the situation. I will demonstrate the importance of interaction between leadership and equality policy. Following structured argument; effective literature review and rigorous examination of answers to my research questions, I recognise that school leadership is essentially formal and overt. Moreover, leadership, however spread within organisations, is itself held in place by the power and control of external sources. However, I concluded that leadership can operate more effectively as a flatter model, especially within the context of equality policy.

My reason for pursuing this topic is based on longstanding passion and convictions, both personal and professional. I was born an albino with the typical white skin, hair and very poor sight that comes with that condition, indeed I am legally blind. I came from a loving family but my Mother felt that I had to go away to an Educational (Warwickshire) authority special boarding school for the blind and visually impaired in order to have a good education. The academic education I received enabled me to achieve 'O' and 'A' level passes during the 1970s and move on to The London School of Economics where I gained my first degree with a 2:1 in 1980 in Policy. Thereafter, I attended Keele University and completed a Professional Graduate Certificate in Education (PGCE). I subsequently gained a Masters (MA) in Psychology and Special Educational Needs (SEN) from The Institute of Education during the 1990s.

My academic development was positive; however, the social side was more difficult partly due to living away in a restricted boarding school and therefore having a limited view of life when entering university and when I left school I had found that there was a high degree of prejudice or ignorance about being an albino or indeed having any disability. Due to all this I decided quite early on that I would become a teacher to support people in my state and give the profession a wider view of disability and more equality for all. I wanted to give a lead in this area which I have followed through in my professional life; teaching and supporting learning for those with a wide range of needs in mainstream and

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special schools and providing INSET and guidance on teaching and learning and Equalities whilst working as a consultant borough-wide.

As an educational professional for over 34 years I argue that my experience at the chalk face led to a clear understanding of the positives and problems of professional life. Positives included successful support of students' needs and the dedication and comradery of colleagues. However, a professional problem was the lack of clear leadership of equality practice both nationally and locally. For the purposes of this research I take the OFSTED (2003 p.73) definition of equality as providing fairness of access and opportunity for individuals and groups within a school community. For example; making reasonable provision for those with disabilities and other special needs. Moreover, I was interested in the examination of equality policy within schools from the perspective of school teaching staff, particularly the position of Teaching Assistants (TAs).

Nationally, it seemed that there was limited action on equality until the Race Equality Amendment Act (2000), so it is only over the last 14 years that equality has been on the front burner, in my view. My concerns around professional leadership on equality tended to link to anecdotal stories and events rather than objective examination; hence I took leadership as my focus and school equality policy as my context. I argue that my professional contribution is achieving a close up focus on leadership within the context of school equality policy from the perspective of teaching staff. By 'teaching' staff I mean qualified senior and class teachers and teaching assistants (TAs). In the early days I found that state schools, regarded teaching assistants as lesser mortals to be used as 'teacher helpers' by qualified teachers who had formal academic knowledge and an awareness of teaching practice. This has now changed but it is only relatively recently that TAs have also had the possibility to obtain qualifications linked to a national professional development system. I have found that a number of local school's employ TAs to support the learning of individual and groups of students in lessons and at break times. I believe that most schools still have some way to go in recognising TA contributions and utilising their true potential.

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

I use leadership within the context of school equality policy as the focus of my thesis. Leadership is a significant concept used academically, popularly and practically in both public and private organisations. Indeed, the labour government supported the development of a National College for Teaching and Leadership (NCTL, 2014) partly to support school leadership. Spillane and Healey (2010) argue that leadership practice is at the forefront of school tools to meet core teaching and learning objectives. I argue that the why of effective leadership must consider strategic planning, current political policy-drivers, and issues that come up out of the ordinary. Whereas management is part of a continuum that focusses on operational plans and regular cycles or systems (Western 2008). Like Gronn (2000), I define leadership as the interaction of leaders, followers, and situation over a time span which produces many different leadership characteristics such as sharing or teamwork. I explain the national context including the introduction by successive governments of legal requirements for schools to prepare and practise specific equality policy. When examining the context, I include the Equality Act (2010); government guidance (2014) and exemplars from LEAs who combine individual diversity and equality. For example, Camden (2012) see valuing diversity as one of their key principles within the school equality policy.

I argue that clear understanding of leadership within equality policy links directly to understanding wider leadership of any school. My research rationale focussed on gaining greater professional understanding of the preparation, development and effective practice of leadership within school equality policy, both for schools and local education authorities (LEAs) who work with them. I also believed that choosing this context would enable me to provide a more effective service to the schools I was working with. Moreover, I wanted to concentrate on one area of school policy. I was aware that I chose equality policy because I have gained professional expertise in the area, but also have personal interest due to my physical disability.

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My academic contribution to knowledge is as follows

- I argue that the conception of power is similar to leadership. It is seen as the interaction of the powerful or leader; the less powerful or followers and the situation, within a particular time period.
- I see control and management as similar in this research because I'm concerned with regular school systems, processes and cycles.
- I agree that Power/leadership and control/management lay on a continuum (Western 2008) from the long term vision and strategies of leadership through to the operational mid-term process.
- My research supports Grint's (2010) suggestion that leadership deals with wicked, complex difficult problems whereas management deals with tame complicated but linear problems.
- My research shines a light on national school equality policy at micro, meso and macro levels. The micro and meso of leadership of equality policy particularly similarities and differences within a school and across schools and the macro of government funding and accountability.
- I confirm the use of formal and informal leadership within schools (Harris 2014, 2008; Spillane 2010, 2006); however, these authors identify formal leadership as position or designated role whereas expertise or specialism is informal. However, I conclude that whilst expertise may begin within the informal arena, it becomes formal once adopted into the curriculum or timetable.
- I suggest that leadership and management can be both overt and covert. For instance, head teachers may delegate responsibilities for equality to specific teams or individuals but retain latent leadership given their position.

There were two major research aims: the first was to clarify, illustrate and evaluate the distinction between leadership and management; both as linked concepts and their practical use in primary schools particularly the practice of school Equality policy. A second aim was to collect and examine the views of school teaching staff inclusively, through head teacher and specialist qualified



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teachers and class teachers, and specifically, to teaching assistants (TAs). These aims produced three research questions

- Where does power and control lay in primary schools? Is power and control similar to leadership and management?
- What leadership characteristics come out of a primary school equality policy context?
- How and why are schools using leadership within the context of primary school equalities policy?

The first question considers the general understanding of leadership/power and management/control within primary schools whereas the second and third questions focus more on how and why schools develop equality policy. The research questions were addressed by the development of a qualitative research design using a focused case study approach. I used this design because I believed it provided the basis for an in-depth analysis of leadership in three schools.

When preparing my design, I focussed on using a qualitative case study approach using a well-known professional/academic model (Yin 2014); at the same time however, I realised that my design would require a degree of flexibility in development and creativity in relation to the eventual scope of the specific design. Thus my philosophical position moved somewhat towards constructivism where there are objective facts which can be interpreted in different ways. For example, Brown (2014 p.79) gives us an example of the social facts at a football match, such as the number of players, goals or corners, where managers or fans may have different interpretations of the facts. Furthermore, he goes on to suggest that Foucault brings together constructivism and power where the powerful set out the major interpretations of social facts for the unpowered through particular discourses or policy making. I found that constructivism was useful in my own approach because it allowed a range of interpretation from research interviewees within the case study schools and external inspection reports. Constructivism allowed the examination of a wide range of interpretation.

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The particulars of my case study design involved the collection and analysis of documentary evidence such as school Ofsted reports and preparation for semi-structured interviews. The semi-structured interviews involved three primary schools from within one inner city authority with six interviewees from each school. The interviewees were to be drawn from leaders and followers within the school situation. Documentary and semi structured evidence was to be qualitatively analysed in relation to similarity and difference in terms of event, concepts and theme (Rubin and Rubin 2005).

Analysis comprised two phases; the development and critique of events, concepts and themes in relation to research data; and the interpretation of main outcomes. The process moved from detailed outcomes from individual schools to the combination of all three. The positives of the design included the possibility for a detailed and deeper examination of leadership through specific case studies within my chosen context of school equality policy; an effective use of background insider knowledge and the capacity for regular critical friend support when reviewing and reflecting on design and outcomes. Possible problems included the relatively small sample of case studies and data. Moreover, insider research is generally acknowledged to tend towards a more subjective approach when selecting and using the design; however, I regularly reviewed and discussed the research and reflected on professional views in this area, throughout the research process.

I set out the areas which are discussed in detail in the following chapters:

- In chapter one I examine the context of school equality policy; including the national and local situation.
- Chapter two describes, examines and discusses the conceptual framework of the research; focussing on leadership/power and control/management.
- Chapter three considers the philosophical and practical use of my qualitative case study approach including; the methodological use of documentary and interview data collection; analysis and ethical position.

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- In chapter four I consider perceptions of leadership/power and management/control coming from samples collected within the separate schools and the similarities and differences between them.
- Chapter five contains interview data and a discussion on formal/informal and overt/covert leadership characteristics
- Chapter six discusses the how and why of leadership based on the analysis of documentary data and interviewee outcomes
- The conclusions chapter brings together the three research questions and answers; analytical outcomes; recommendations, and professional reflection.

# **Chapter One**

## **The Context: School Equality Policy**

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

I use chapter one to examine my chosen context of school diversity and equality policy; including the national and local situation. More specifically, I want to examine the leadership aspect of this important policy within three Local Authority primary schools. My rationale for the context was two-fold; 'diversity' and 'equality' policy was a national requirement for schools following the Equality Act 2010. The Department for Education (2013 p.7) says that "Under specific duties, governing bodies, local authorities and proprietors are required to draw up equality objectives every four years and annually publish information demonstrating how they are meeting the aims of the general public sector equality duty". I was working as an educational consultant in Equality Policy at that time, so assisting schools in drawing up their policies fell within my remit. I had long term professional interest in equality work; and sufficient experience and aptitude in supporting schools to embark upon clear and careful enquiry in order to gain further understanding of the current state of affairs in local schools and look at implications for school strategies.

- I begin with a discussion of important contextual definitions including; diversity, equality and policy.
- This is followed by a recent history of school diversity and equality policy at the national level particularly the passing of the Equality Act (2010).
- I then consider the production of diversity and equality policy at the local level; namely, local education authorities and schools.
- Finally, there is a discussion about possible contextual changes in the future both nationally and locally.

### **Diversity, Equalities and Policy**

In this section I discuss my use of the terms 'diversity, equality, policy and school' as they are central to my research context. Moreover, I will open the examination of balance between social diversity and equality.

I define diversity as the range of cultural or social differences between individuals within a school community. An illustration is where one student is a devout religious person whereas another is non-religious; both student positions and views are valued and seen as important but they are clearly different. A number

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of educational authorities at the national and local level see diversity as an important concept. For example, Ofsted talks about “differentiated inspection: tailoring the inspection to the school ... Inspections are informed by a considerable amount of performance and contextual data about schools, together with core documents and the school’s own evaluation of its effectiveness.” Ofsted 2003 p.6). Whereas, the London borough of Camden Education Authority (2012) produced ‘A whole school equality policy’ which includes statements on diversity to be used by their school; it states “We recognize, respect and value difference and understand that diversity is a strength” (2012 p.2).

I take the OFSTED (2003 p.73) definition of equality as providing fairness of access and opportunity for individuals and groups within a school community. For instance, the Disability Discrimination Act (2005) was enacted to support disabled groups with physical, emotional or mental needs. The term discrimination refers to unequal or unfair treatment. The Department for Education and Skills (DES, 2006) publication, ‘Implementing the Disability Discrimination Act in schools and early year’s settings’ was produced to guide and assist schools, ‘plan for and improve their access for disabled pupils including; the physical environment, curriculum and improvements in information’. Schools were asked to prepare, deliver and review their disability access plans with support from the local education authority. As a professional within an inner city educational authority, I was aware that many schools worked hard on improving their environment, curriculum and displays of useful disability information. Continued Professional Development, (CPD) as it is known in schools, played a very important part in this process. Moreover, they regularly reviewed their curriculum to ensure equality of access for these and other groups; such as, providing further lessons for children who required Additional English Language support. Thus, my use of equality involves a focus on social groups within a school community.

Before leaving the terms diversity and equality, I argue that there has been a constantly changing balancing act between the two. For instance, in the Conservative ‘Thatcher era’, the then government focused on individualism and

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parental choice as very important (Ball 2008 p.76) Conservative governments saw school selection as an individual parent/guardian priority. They required schools to publish their exam results for the public to examine and parents were encouraged to select the school for their children. I suggest that the Conservative government focussed on diversity; however, following the Labour Party win in the general election of 1997, there was a re-balance away from diversity towards equality with a particular priority on reducing disadvantage in schools. In their Manifesto (1997) they said “Our values are the same: the equal worth of all, with no one cast aside; fairness and justice within strong communities”. (Web-site document 2015). The DES (2004) produced and published a national strategy for primary schools with detailed booklets and videos on planning, delivering and reviewing teaching and learning programmes for all state schools including diversity and equality issues. Over the last 15 years a number of equality acts have shifted the emphasis away from diversity back towards equality.

I define the term policy as an important programme or strategy which a school community would agree, publish, practise, regularly monitor and review. A major, (centrally driven) school policy/strategy has a long term time-frame of three to five years, whereas a short/ to medium operational plan is of one to two years (Davies and Davies, 2011 p.16). Central policy may contain the school vision, aims or principles and statements around the specific areas of work such as the curriculum, teaching and learning; behavioural or equalities issues.

### **National Context of School Diversities and Equalities Policy**

I suggest that two important developments at the end of the 1990s affected national diversity and equality policy in schools. The first was the election of a Labour Government in 1997 and the passing of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000. The New Labour Government led by Tony Blair had made education a clear priority. Their manifesto wrote about ‘the cutting of school class sizes to 30 or under for five, six and seven year olds and to attack the low standards in certain establishments.’ A Labour Government would focus on ‘attacking educational disadvantage no matter where a school is’ (Labour Manifesto 1997). Certainly the Labour Government prepared and executed a national curriculum

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programme aimed at reducing disadvantage in state schools through the development of clear primary and secondary strategies in order to raise standards of attainment, particularly around literacy and numeracy, for all students. They also provided detailed models of continued professional development for school staff. These programmes were seen as major areas for inspection by Ofsted. Thus The Labour Government's priority for schools involved a focus on equality through raising educational standards across the board.

Another development around this time followed the tragic killing of Stephen Lawrence who was murdered in a racist attack by youths at a south London bus stop. Following the death of Stephen, major concerns began to emerge about institutional racism within the police force. An independent inquiry was chaired by Sir William Macpherson in 1998. The Inquiry concluded that the investigation into Stephen's death 'contained fundamental flaws that were attributed to professional incompetence, institutional racism and a failure of leadership. To combat these individual and organisational problems, the Inquiry urged the police service to examine how its policies and practices had allowed these flaws to exist, and set out a wide range of recommendations for improvement which have been described as the most extensive reform programme there has ever been on police-community relations' (Home Office Research 2005 p.1). The outcome of the Inquiry led directly to the passing of the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000, strengthening the previous Race Relations Act of 1976, of the Labour Government under James Callaghan. The Amendment Act placed a general duty on public authorities including schools;

- (a) To eliminate unlawful racial discrimination, and (b) To promote equality of opportunity and good relations between persons of different racial groups.

Race Relations Amendment Act 2000 Para 71, (1)

The elimination of 'unlawful' discrimination is about an intention to reduce racism in all its guises. For example, the Commission for Race Equality (CRE) prepared and published a framework for race equality policy to reduce racism (CRE 2002). Hence the elimination of race discrimination involved embedding of equality



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under the law. Moreover, the Act required the promotion of equality of opportunity and good relations between all races. Finally, the Act can be seen as the beginning of a thrust towards social equality which was started by the CRE. For example, LEAs and schools were required to prepare, monitor and review race equality policy.

Following the Amendment Act the CRE (2002) prepared a framework for a race equality policy for schools. The CRE was established by the Race Relations Act 1976, its mission statement was "We work for a just and integrated society, where diversity is valued. We use persuasion and our powers under the law to give everyone an equal chance to live free from fear of discrimination, prejudice and racism." The Commission's mission statement was strengthened following the Macpherson Enquiry (1999) and the Amendment Act (2000) including a focus on race equality in schools. The CRE published standards for race equality in schools (2000) which set out seven categories. One example was "Pupils – Personal Development, Attainment and Progress" (CRE 2000 p.17). The other categories were used to create a clear framework for race equality policy in schools; however, in 2002 this was amended and the new framework comprised eight categories of school work for inclusion in Schools' Race Equality Policies:

- Progress, attainment and assessment,
- Behaviour, discipline, and exclusions
- Pupils' personal development and pastoral care,
- Teaching and learning,
- Admission and attendance,
- The curriculum,
- Staff recruitment and professional development; and
- Partnerships with parents and guardians, and the community

Commission for Racial Equality (2002 p.4)

For example; the processes of student 'progress, attainment and educational assessment', required clear monitoring of the progress towards elimination of discrimination leading to equal opportunities and good relations within a school. The legal requirement was that any student's progress, attainment and

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assessment, either academic or practical required effective and regular review against the school race equality policy; particularly in relation to possible ethnic issues. Indeed, Ofsted and local education authorities (LEAs) were given the responsibility to monitor race equality in schools. Moreover, LEAs were to give advice and support for schools in this area. At this time (2001) I was appointed by my LEA to work in primary schools across the borough, helping them to provide support for ethnic minority groups and develop their race equality policy. There were a number of these posts across the country particularly in inner cities such as Manchester and Birmingham and Liverpool.

An interesting point here is that the categories identified within the framework were similar to the inspection framework of Ofsted (2003). Moreover, Ofsted clearly required inspectors to examine race equality practices in schools (Ofsted 2003 p.74). An illustration is where an inspector observes a classroom activity and finds positive harmonies between a mixed ethnic group of students who are learning about a country and culture unlike their own. Conversely, an inspection may have found disharmony, inadequate understanding or misinterpretation of race equality in a school and report this in their findings. Indeed, Ofsted saw race equality as an important aspect of inspection within educational establishments (Ofsted 2003 p.74).

Following the CRE and Ofsted, the DES (2004b p.3) prepared a document to deal with 'issues and outcomes around race equality policy'. Here, the focus was not so much on writing a race equality policy, rather offering support to schools in developing clearly linked educational targets. For instance, a specific exemplar target was 'To narrow a gap in levels of attainment between different ethnic groups' (DES, 2004b p.3). Certain establishments saw this as a central target because of the wide range of minority ethnic groups who required educational support.

The national structure or model of writing, delivering and reviewing school race equality policy became the preferred mode for later equality Acts such as the Disability Discrimination Act 2005; and Equality Act 2006. For instance, the

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structure of writing a school equality policy included statements of equality in major school policies such as teaching and learning and behaviour. On a positive note; from 2000 onwards there was a raft of legislation and policy aimed at strengthening access and opportunity for social groups such as ethnic minorities, disabilities and gender. However, possible problems were: the separation of the Acts and their policies and plans; the lengthy timescale to develop policy and the publication of materials for professional development in the area. To be explicit, writing a national policy and linked professional development materials required the support of specialists including academics, policy-makers and politicians. For instance, the DES (2006 p.48) referenced academic specialists (Barnes et al 2000) in their detailed publication on 'improving access for disabled pupils', as part of the 'Implementing Disability Act in schools and Early Years settings'. The fact that detailed materials for schools on implementing this Act were sent out in the following year (2006) may have been seen as a positive bonus given the demands and detail required in producing professional development publications by schools. Finally, I would suggest that the separate Acts, policies and professional school materials each covered a wide area of new work that required bedding in before the wider legislation of the Equality Act 2010. For instance, the DES and Disability Rights Commission also prepared comprehensive sets of written and video materials for schools to utilize and time was required for schools to develop, apply and monitor these multiple resources.

The Labour Government had committed to an Equality Bill in their election manifesto (2005). They subsequently established a department known as the Government Equalities Office to lead on the development of the Equality Bill that was passed as an Act in 2010. One important aspect of this Equality Act was the codifying of previous equality legislation and regulations around anti-discrimination and also to support the reduction and elimination of inequality in institutions, including schools. The codifying of the Equality Act led to nine protected characteristics:

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### Equality 2010 Protected Characteristics

- Age
- Disabilities
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Race
- Religion or belief,
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

**Table 1 Equality Act 2010 Protected Characteristics**

For example, the disadvantage of disability required the reduction of discrimination such as equal access, opportunities and positive relations. The Act directly says:

“(5) Having due regard to the need to foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it involves having due regard, in particular, to the need to: (a) tackle prejudice, and (b) promote understanding” (149(5), p.96).

What is also very apparent in the Act is that it requires the reduction of inequalities for protected socio-economic characteristics. This is made clear near the beginning of the Act. Moreover, ‘tackling prejudice and promoting understanding’, was seen as important. Indeed, it can be argued that the earlier requirements of equal access, opportunities and positive relations were brought into the present legislation from previous equality Acts. However, it is interesting to note that reducing inequalities is central to the Act whereas, it seems, providing a definition of equalities was problematic. For instance, there was no clear definition of equality at the beginning of the 2010 Act; instead the focus was on present inequalities.

The codification of the nine protected characteristics under the Equality Act meant that public institutions such as schools had legal responsibilities to ensure anti-discrimination and to promote a positive approach towards diversity and equality

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within their establishments. For instance, there is a chapter on the responsibilities of schools on anti-discrimination (Equality Act, Part Six, Chapter One).

‘The responsible body of such a school must not discriminate against a pupil:

- (a) in the way it provides education for the pupil:
- (b) in the way it affords the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service:
- (c) by not providing education for the pupil:
- (d) by not affording the pupil access to a benefit, facility or service:
- (e) by excluding the pupil from the school:
- (f) by subjecting the pupil to any other detriment’.

Equality Act (2010 p.55; paragraph, 84, section 2)

The codification of diversity, equality and anti-discrimination in schools took on board seven of the nine characteristics. However, at the beginning of the chapter on Schools, it stated

‘This chapter does not apply to the following protected characteristics—

- (a) age;
- (b) Marriage and civil partnership’

(Equality Act 2010 p. 54, Paragraph, 84)

I suggest that these areas were then seen as unrelated to schools because the lawful age for marriage was set at 16 years and beyond and therefore was beyond the remit of most schools. Nevertheless, I am not clear about this as pupils who marry at 16 may be, indeed, often are still attending secondary schools. Indeed, schools have not been left unaffected by concerns voiced around enforced marriages of minors and this might have implications in the future for reconsidering the exclusion of clauses (a) and (b).

### The Local Context

The local context involved the development of diversities and equalities policy on the ground, LEAs and schools worked out the details of written policy and practice: sometimes against a background of wide diversity and with a high proportion of new immigrant populations to support. For instance, the LEA took the Equality Acts and Regulations and turned them into clearer frameworks for the schools. An illustration is where a London inner city education authority prepared detailed written guidance on a ‘Race Equality Scheme’ (e.g. Learning Trust 2004a) and separate ‘Guidance for schools on dealing with racist incidents’

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(e.g. Learning Trust 2004b). The LEA set out its own position on race equality as an organisation but also provided linked guidance for schools; moreover, the authority required schools to submit data on racist incidents annually. Finally, the authority asked specialists and consultants to support local schools in developing their own scheme or policies in relation to race equality.

Now of course a local education authority had influence over schools including inspection of schools and giving approved advice and support. However, individual school communities were expected to write and develop race equality policy beside their declared vision (CRE 2002 p.4). Moreover, the CRE asked schools to develop their own planning for the policy; drafting and discussing it with the school community including governors, parents and students. The specific school policy had to be published in printed form and/or placed on their website. Finally, schools were asked to monitor their policy regularly and discuss and develop ethnic equality in all areas of school life. This type of process was used in a number of authorities and particularly where there were a wide range of ethnic minorities. An illustration of the processes of developing school policy was in an establishment where I attended in my role as an advisor on equality issues. I met with the senior team and worked with them on a draft policy which then went to the staff and governors and parents for comment; changes were taken on board and it was completed and approved. The policy was regularly updated and led to race equality developments in the school's work. Other schools may have taken different paths in developing policy. However, I would say that they were aware of internal and external reasons to develop this good practice effectively; not least, because an Ofsted inspection would be looking very closely at their work in this area.

The process of drafting, discussing, agreeing, publishing, developing, monitoring and reviewing was used by LEAs and schools when implementing new equality legislation. Hence, the Equality Act 2010 required LEAs to support schools to develop their policies. A particular instance of policy developed from the Act is stated by the DES (2014 4.32) 'LEAs must, for the schools for which they are responsible, prepare accessibility strategies based on the same principle as the

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access plans for schools'. An example was where Camden Education Authority (2010) prepared a detailed format for writing, discussing and developing a school equality policy and its use. The document set out a draft mission statement which schools could use or adapt. However, I suggest that although an authority provides a possible mission/vision statement for the school, it was recommended that the school community consider the draft statement and discuss possible changes. Thus the situation for schools and LEAs involved a balance where authorities set out a possible framework; whereas the school prepared, monitored and developed their specific policies and other education practices.

Before leaving the local context I note that there were independent organisations at the national and local level who saw social equality as important and supported equality policy in schools. For instance, the Runnymede Trust (2003) produced a detailed book on the preparation and delivery of classroom lessons in a number of subjects such as mathematics, music or physical education. There were also local organizations and groups who actively supported social integration. For example, there were groups of ethnic drummers, poets and story tellers who would go into schools and advance positive community relationships.

### **Future Context**

Ongoing debate at national and local levels and the introduction of new or changed priorities affect diversity and equality policy. For example, the current Conservative Government has an educational focus on individual/parent choice. An example is their introduction of 'Free Schools' led by private organisations. The opposition Labour party was more focused on prioritising new schools in areas where there are shortages of school places and ensuring all teachers are qualified. They claimed that they would end what they describe as "the flawed Free Schools programme" (Changing Britain Together – Labour Plan p. 41 2015). This does not mean that either political party totally focuses on diversity or equality but they adjust the balance in manifestoes due to changing political and economic circumstances. For example, under a previous (Labour) Government cash spending on education was doubled between 1997 and 2009 and it was able to ring-fence a degree of monies to use on school equality in a developing

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economy; however, following the international bank crisis in 2008/9 and the subsequent reduction in the strength of the UK economy circumstances changed dramatically, particularly around state funding of the public sector.

There have been major reductions in funds for educational authorities and schools since 2010. LEAs have had to plan for redundancies and restructuring. There have been fewer specialists in equality taking on more responsibilities or being asked to change job due to the loss of funding. Schools also may find the results of restructuring and redundancies affecting their plans for diversity and equality provision. For example, one primary school I visited recently told me that they had to lose a number of teaching assistants who had been supporting special educational needs and/or students having English as an additional language. As the national and local contexts of school diversity and equality policy changes over time, it is not clear what the future holds for this highly important area of school work. Having discussed the research context in this chapter, I will now present my conceptual framework.



**Chapter Two**  
**Conceptual Framework of**  
**Power/Leadership and**  
**Control/Management**

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

In the previous chapter I examined my research context of school equality policy; in this chapter I clarify and critique my conceptual framework of power, control, leadership and management. I begin with a focused review of power and control and its relation to my context of school equality policy. This is followed by an exploration and interrogation of leadership and management and its similarities to power and control within the specific research context. Finally, I summarise and ensure clarity of my conceptual framework including the research focus and major questions.

### **Power**

The conception and practice of power has been debated for millennia; from the Classical Greek philosophers of Aristotle and Plato to the present. For instance, Plato discussed a new blueprint of political society whereas Aristotle wanted to improve the existing civilisation. Debates on power continue within the modern era where authors like Gallie (1955, 6) suggested that power is an 'essentially contested concept'. Indeed, my own professional experience suggests that schools regularly contest the meaning and use of power. However, many authors conceptualised and examined power in the 20<sup>th</sup> and early 21<sup>st</sup> centuries. I use some of their models when developing my own conception of power.

### **The Rationalist Argument**

A useful starting point was Max Weber (1910-14) and his typology of force and authority. Force or coercion can be understood as blatant compulsion where one person or group physically or mentally directly impose an action on another person or group against their will. An example in a school might be when an individual student intimidates another physically weaker student, forcing them to act against their will. Authority on the other hand is based on the legitimacy of one person's right over another. For example, a head teacher has formal authority over a school staff. Before discussing authority in detail it is important to note that power was and is seen as a capacity, ability or resource used by the powerful on the less powerful given a particular situation. Hence the Head Teacher has formal power over the staff and students within a school.

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Weber says authoritative power can come in three forms; charismatic, traditional and legal rational. Charismatic authority is based on the personal ability and persona of the particular leader, whom the followers are willing to obey. Clear examples include Gandhi, Chairman Mao or Nelson Mandela. School charismatic leadership has been found in the early leadership of A.S. Neill's progressive independent school, Summerhill, or Spillane's (2006, p.1) summary of the work of Brenda Williams, the Head of Adams School in Chicago's South Side. Traditional authority is based on the preservation and continuation of existing values and social norms: Ergo, Queen Elizabeth II is The Head of State in Britain, a position she inherited on the basis of traditional rules of succession of the monarchy. Similarly, faith schools adhere to traditional values and strictures based on their religious beliefs.

Finally, legal or rational authority is based on agreement between the powerful and less powerful, resulting in agreed rational legislation, rules, codes and contracts. Rational legal authority lays within a set of roles or offices within a given institution such as a school. A bureaucrat has authority over others based on their role within an organisation or establishment. The authority of such a person is held within a legal/rational position which carries certain rights and responsibilities. For instance, a head teacher's legal rational role involves rights and responsibilities clearly set out within a contract with the school. Rights and responsibilities are based on an agreed employment contract and job description. Rights may include making the final operational decision to use a particular form of equality policy; whereas responsibilities involve compliance with the acts and ensuring implementation and regular reporting on equality policy to their Governing Body.

Weber's conception of power has been used by a number of authors including Dahl (1957, 1961); Parsons (1967); French and Raven (1959) and Habermas (1990). Dahl (1957) defined power as a capacity where individual 'A has power over B to the extent that A can get B to do something that B would not otherwise do'. He researched the observable capacity of power by A, over B when making rational community decisions (Dahl 1961). The powerful were those who were

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successful in decision-making situations, whereas the defeated had less power and were therefore less able to influence decision-making. Parsons also saw power as an observable capacity; however, he saw power as a mechanism of legal authority. He took on board Weber's focus of authority but moved away from discussing force (Lukes 2005 p.31). Similar to Weber, French and Raven used the elements of coercion and legitimacy within their model of power but also added the features of expert, information, rewards and referent. For example, referent can be where a member of a school staff has trust and respect and is given support when dealing with an issue.

Finally, Habermas uses Weber's legal/rational authority when developing a model of democratic community or system. The Habermas model is based on his conception of communicative action 'which is oriented towards reaching agreement' (Brown 2014 p.93). For example, a theoretical full school staff meeting is planned to proceed with an open agenda, debate, agreed outcomes and next steps. It may be that not everyone does agree with the outcomes but the process was democratic. Indeed, Habermas goes on to a second premise; that 'people use everyday discourse to make claims of validity' (Brown 2014 p.93). He uses these precepts to focus on the development of relationships and networks of democratic rational institutions like schools. Similar to Weber, Habermas sees rational agreed policy as a way forward wherein power can be rational, and can lead to a democratic process.

Weber's conception of power had a number of benefits including a clear conception of power as a capacity or resource containing the interaction of the powerful, less powerful and situation which was used by a number of professional researchers. However, there are limitations:

- Weber's conception of power involves a capacity which is used by the powerful over the less powerful within a particular time and situation. For instance, a head teacher has power over a member of staff when leading a specific review of the member's work. Power goes one way.
- Weber's classical work focusses on force and authority. However, a number of authors also link influence to authority and its use to make overt

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demands through to persuasion based on the followers' values (Luke 2006) and Handy (1999). Hence, a head teacher can require staff to attend an Equality policy meeting but would probably choose to persuade them to attend a planning meeting for a multicultural event reflecting the joint values of the school.

- Weber's model begins with the individual; who has, or hasn't, got power within a particular situation. This does not mean that followers of Weber have no recognition of groups with power but they start with the individual. Certainly Dahl and Parsons begin with the power of the individual and then move towards discussion of groups or pluralist elites.
- Unlike Weber authors like Gramsci (1971) used a Marxian perspective focussing on two classes those who have and those who have not. His focus was on ideology which is directed by the haves on the have not's. Indeed, I suggest that certain American writers like C. Wright Mills (1956) moved towards a more Marxian position when he considers the main social groupings of business, political and military. Certainly Bachrach and Baratz (1970) suggest that the pluralist research project tends to ignore the agenda of a powerful individual or elite.
- The use of Weber's work tends towards observable power/authority and conflict; that which can be seen. This is an important aspect of examining power, however, Lukes (2005) suggests that there are also covert or latent conflicts to consider. For instance, a head teacher may not overtly lead on specific areas of school equality policy but uses latent authority based on their senior position.
- Educational academics like Gronn (2009 a/, b.), Leithwood (2009), and Spillane (2006; Spillane and Diamond 2007) discuss the importance of rational interaction between the school leaders and followers within the specific school situation; however, Habermas tends towards a more general rational theoretical model of democratic institutions and networks. The Habermas model of democratic government is very interesting because it moves away from bureaucracy to democracy. Rational theoretical models may work on paper but in practice there are also the realities of (possibly conflicting) passions and emotions to consider.

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Indeed, Davies and Brighouse (2008) consider the importance of a passionate leadership within education including schools. Rationality is important but there is also emotion to understand.

### **Constructionism**

A different yet important view of power is expressed by Foucault. Similar to rationalists like Habermas, Marx and Weber, Foucault examined the capacity of power and its relation to the powerful and less powerful within a particular situation and time. However, Foucault (2004) argues that rationalists look for objective, natural value-free universal truths; however, he suggests that these truths are developed by the powerful through constructionism. Foucault examined the rational planning of large hospitals and prisons in western countries during the 19<sup>th</sup> Century, He argues that the political and business interests of the powerful; their beliefs and truths took precedence over those of patients or prisoners. Hence rationalism, being based on the beliefs of the powerful over the less powerful, is not about universal truths, natural or value-free judgements. Foucault abandons rationalist universal truths in order to develop a critical evaluation of powerful value systems (Lukes 2005). For example, one can critique the rationalist view of the medical establishment against the views of the recipient patients using a critical eye.

Foucault's approach of careful critique also takes into account the emotional, including the emotional views of the powerless, such as hospital patients or prison inmates; their sensitivity and passions or passivity. Moreover, Foucault also recognises that powerful political and business groups have passions for continued power in their careers and continuance of their belief systems. Finally, Foucault's abandonment of rationalist universal truths leads us to focus on local power interests in specific contexts; the powerful and less powerful interests, both rational and emotional within an organisation or establishment. In order to examine the local context of power he considers its historical development through a critical eye. Foucault considers the local constructionism of developing an establishment such as a prison and the balance of power operating within it.

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I find Foucault's position valuable because it allows for the widening of the use of critique on the conceptions and use of power through presentation; debate; review; and continued reflection with critical friends. Moreover, his view can be applied to establishments such as schools, which is my present research area. I suggest that the critical eye approach will allow discussion and use of rationalist and emotional elements within education (Davies and Brighouse 2008). However, for me, there were two limitations to overcome in Foucault's work: first, although he examines establishments through a critical eye, he was not looking at my context of school policy. Second; Foucault looked exclusively at the local context rather than the national. In my research I consider power at both the local and national level, therefore I decided I needed to look elsewhere for further discussion on this area.

Foucault's (2004, 1980) work on power included a rejection of universal, natural, value-free truths and focussed on constructionism. Lukes (2005) developed Foucault's theorem. Lukes was concerned with standing back from particular views on power in order to examine them with a critical eye. For instance, he gives respect to Dahl (1957, 1961), Parsons (1957) and Bachrach and Baratz (1970) who saw power as a capacity for rigorous, observable examination. Moreover, Bachrach and Baratz also focussed on the agendas of the powerful over the less powerful. They introduce covert as well as overt/observable power conflicts. However, Lukes stepped away from these authors because he wanted to include latent and false power of both the powerful and powerless. In a situation of enslavement, for instance, whilst the powerful may use their capacity of intelligence and brute force to enslave the powerless; the powerless may use their latent power, (their superior numbers) to throw off the yoke of slavery.

Lukes and others introduce the concept of false power/ beliefs. In my view, whilst latent power can be researched; interpretations of false and real power require very careful explanation and continued review of researched events. Both Lukes and Foucault moved away from a rationalist, closed view of power into a more open constructionism, which required both a critical faculty involving standing back and an awareness of one's own precepts.

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Similar to Foucault, Lukes focussed on local power relations and conflicts within particular domains, such as the political. Like Foucault, he moves away from a generalist Marxian focus on class to the specifics of a domain or a clear context. The examination of power within a particular domain includes overt, covert and latent power. In my case, the selection of two research domains, the school (the local) and the governmental establishment (Ofsted) and the contexts of school equality policy both at the local establishment and the governmental levels. The local context involves the views of leaders and staff whereas the external government domain or context includes the DES and Ofsted inspection. Following Lukes I consider the overt, covert and latent aspects of power within the specific domains of local and national school equality policy. In order to focus on school power and policy I now critique the work of Basil Bernstein in relation to school power.

I first became aware of Bernstein's (2000) work on power when I was an undergraduate in the late 1970s. My understanding was that his early work focussed on his conception of social language as of an 'Elaborated Code' of the middle class and the 'Restricted Code' of the working class. The middle class code was the dominant code of power whereas the working class was the code of the dominated (Bernstein 1971). Later Bernstein used his code theory to examine the domain of education, where he considered the interaction of curriculum, pedagogy and assessment through the capacity of power. He was concerned about the what, who, how and why of power within education. For instance; why were some forms of education seen as powerful, whereas others were not? Similarly, I was interested in conceptualising power in relation to education and specifically school equality policy.

Bernstein sees power as a capacity or a boundary between physical or mental categories. An illustration of power boundary highlights the difference between middle class and working class housing based on the particular history of house building and social norms wherein the more affluent and educated had expectations of privacy, space and light that would have been beyond the reach of the lower orders. In Bernstein's conception power is defined as 'Classification' which can be strong or weak. In his model, a strong classification boundary leads



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to hierarchical leadership with strong top-down lines of power where the principal sends clear instruction to department heads down through to teachers and finally students. The approach tends towards formal authority with strong, clearly defined boundaries whereas weak boundaries lead towards a flatter structure where heads of department link with each or similarly teachers and students across departments. Clearly this view of power is not unlike Harris' later views on school hierarchy and the need for flatter school structures. Bernstein also defines control as the space within the power boundaries. Taking a school for example; in a strong school structure the Head teacher and senior leadership have power over the other staff and students. The subject/class teachers would have their academic content (prized knowledge); a venue to teach in; a tightly structured timetable with groups of students set by ability. Thus, senior management has power over the teacher but the teacher has power over the students. However, in a flatter school structure wherein the boundaries are weaker: power is shared to some extent. Even the students are viewed as arriving with their own experience and are expected to take a more active, participatory role in the classroom. Groups may be of mixed ability; students are encouraged to impart and share their knowledge within the school structure.

Before discussing possible power limitations, I want to note that Bernstein (2000) saw control as a major element of power. For him, control lies within the boundaries of power and is about social interaction. Bernstein's theory of control (or frame) is also about the timing or pace of task or activity. For example, planning the development of a school equality policy must take into account the time taken to draft, debate, complete and agree a new policy, including the setting of deadlines, by those holding the power.

Bernstein's model of power has certain limitations: his critics saw his writing as difficult to read or obscure. For instance, Pring (1975) argues that Bernstein's categories of weak and strong power are no more than dichotomies; whereas Gibson (1977) suggests that Bernstein's work on educational power was 'ambiguous at an operational level due to his specific use of technical language which is difficult for the layman to read.' Similarly, Walford (1994) discusses about a problem with readability of Bernstein's work. Indeed, I also found that his

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papers and books were difficult to read, partly due to his focus on a French Structuralism; not easy to unpick; moreover, his papers were developmental on the whole rather than complete entities. However, like Ceuse (2010) I found that, with careful attention, Bernstein's view of power could be read and used when conceptualising my own specific framework. Furthermore, Ceuse argues that the use of power or control is not a simple dichotomy of conflict, rather a range of realizations that his concepts covered.

A second limitation of Bernstein's work on power was his theoretical and empirical model according to authors like King (1981, 1976) and Dowling, (2009, 2001). King tested and criticised Bernstein's theory and empirical evidence on pedagogic practice. However, Tyler (1984) argued that King's statistical methods were severely flawed. More recently, researchers like Hoadley (2006) Wylie, (2008). and Cause 2010) have provided empirical evidence to support Bernstein's work. Dowling (2009 p. 2, and 2001 p.1) gave respect to Bernstein's methodology; however, he critiques the concepts of power and control and focus on power/classification. He says:

“I propose to retain a concept of classification and, in the construction of my own language, dispense with the other three. In my own language I use the term *institutionalisation* to refer to the extent to which a practice exhibits an empirical regularity that marks it out as recognisably distinct from other practices (or from a specific other practice).” (Dowling 2001 p.13)

Dowling states that he uses the concept of classification as a boundary between subjects such as mathematics and physics or the boundary between the specialist knowledge and the general. However, boundary strength in his language also includes subject activity or strategy. Classification is part of the wider concept of his 'Institutionalisation' of boundary and specific practice. Moreover, Dowling moves away from what he says was Bernstein's fixed point of scale through set strengths or weakness e.g. very strong ++ or --. I argue that Dowling's view on Bernstein's conception of school power is helpful around power and the awareness of moving from a fixed point. Nevertheless, in my research I want to use control as well as power because I see control as dealing with operational activities and regularity such as the regularity of school timetabling of

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lessons or breaks. More like Bernstein, I want to consider control within the boundaries of power. The Bernstein debate continues.

### **Control**

Like the conception of power; control is widely used; one general definition being “the power to influence people’s behaviour or the cause of events” (Concise Oxford Dictionary 2011, p.311). Interestingly this definition of control describes it as an element of power. Certainly Bernstein (2000) argues that control happens inside the box set by power; that power sets and limits control. Similar to Bernstein, I define control as a subset of power in the first instance; however, I believe that once out of the box control works on a continuum.

A second aspect of control is its degree of regularity, consistency and non-variable systems. I argue that control is similar to Weber’s model of institutional bureaucracy where an efficient and rational organisation of systematic processes and organized hierarchies are necessary to maintain order, maximize efficiency and eliminate favouritism (Weber 1910-14). This is not unlike schools where control focuses on regularity of procedures and codes; roles, systems and practices, and of curriculum timetabling.

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Description		Comment
<b>Weber</b>	Breaks power into four elements or, 'pure forms'; force/coercion on the one hand and authority on the other. Authority is then further divided into charisma, traditional and rational legal.	This is a useful initial model; for examining school systems; however, it tends towards a legal rational position which is bureaucratic. Position is all and tends towards rationality.
<b>Habermas</b>	Habermas builds on Weber's view of rational legal society and suggests the effective development of a democratic set of institutions including a democratic legislature.	Habermas may set out a clear rational model of democratic power; nevertheless, following Brown (2014) I suggest that rationality alone may not necessarily decide outcomes in establishments like schools. These organisations are driven by a number of interests including external and internal.
<b>Foucault</b>	Foucault suggests that power tends to be constructed within the local community, the work place and the family.	Certainly Foucault's discussion of local power construction is useful when looking at individual schools. Here power can be seen as constructed in the community of a school.
<b>Lukes</b>	Lukes defines power as a political position where the powerful have prepared an agenda that is able to influence the less powerful or powerless over time.	Power and influence is seen as important within any organisation, including schools. In my experience most schools have specific agendas set by the school Senior leadership to advance their aims and objectives.
<b>Bernstein</b>	Bernstein's focus on institutional education particularly brings together power and control within a school. Power forms the strength of boundary between subject knowledge and organisation structure whereas control works within the boundaries.	An important point here is that Bernstein brings control clearly into the picture as a concept. I think this is important because control in schools is seen in the regular cycles of timetabling; teaching processes and behaviour codes.

**Table 2 Summarising Different Authors Views on Power and Control**

# **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

## **Defining and Interrogating the Concepts of School Leadership and Management**

In this section I discuss the similarities and differences of power/leadership and control/management. This is followed by an examination of leader, follower and situation theories. I then focus further on leadership theory in relation to school equality policy. Finally, I summarise my conceptual framework.

### **Defining Power/Leadership**

Leadership is a thorny concept to define. There is a strong argument that the terms power and leadership are very similar:

- Power and leadership are capacities, abilities and resources used by the powerful/leaders over the less powerful/ followers given a specific situation. A simple illustration is the formal leadership or power of a Head teacher over their staff when developing equality policy.
- Power/leadership has a time element. For instance, school leaders are likely to set the time frame for the development of an equality policy involving staff meetings, practice, through to completion.
- Power/leadership can be overt or covert (Lukes 2005 p.29). A school meeting may have openness where, for instance, all staff are welcome, feel happy to give their views and agree outcomes. Covert may involve a closed meeting with a designated individual or small group given the agenda and responsibility to write the policy and share outcomes.
- Power/leadership can be seen as formal or informal within educational establishments such as schools (MacBeath 2009). Formality may include contracted roles or positions; whereas informal may include one-off tasks or initiatives set by an individual for themselves.
- Power/Leadership can be examined both at the micro and macro level. The micro level in my study focusses specifically on school leadership of equality policy and practice; whereas, at the macro level it is about the relationship between the schools and national governmental requirements.

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

So far, I have focussed on similarities between power and leadership, I will now consider some potential differences.

- American authors like Bachrach and Baratz (1970); Dhal (1961) and Parsons (1957) consider power in the political realm whereas UK writers like Grint (2010, 2005, 2000) and Western (2008) use the term leadership when discussing this sphere. I think that this is a minor language issue - a matter of terminology.
- A second possible difference is that certain authors (Weber (1910-14) and Lukes (2005)) see power as wider than leadership. They contend that power deals with force and authority, whereas leadership lies within an institution or establishment. For example, writers like Spillane (2006) and Crawford (2014 p.72) discusses authority and influence in relation to school leadership. Certainly I use leadership and power similarly, given my context of school equality policy.

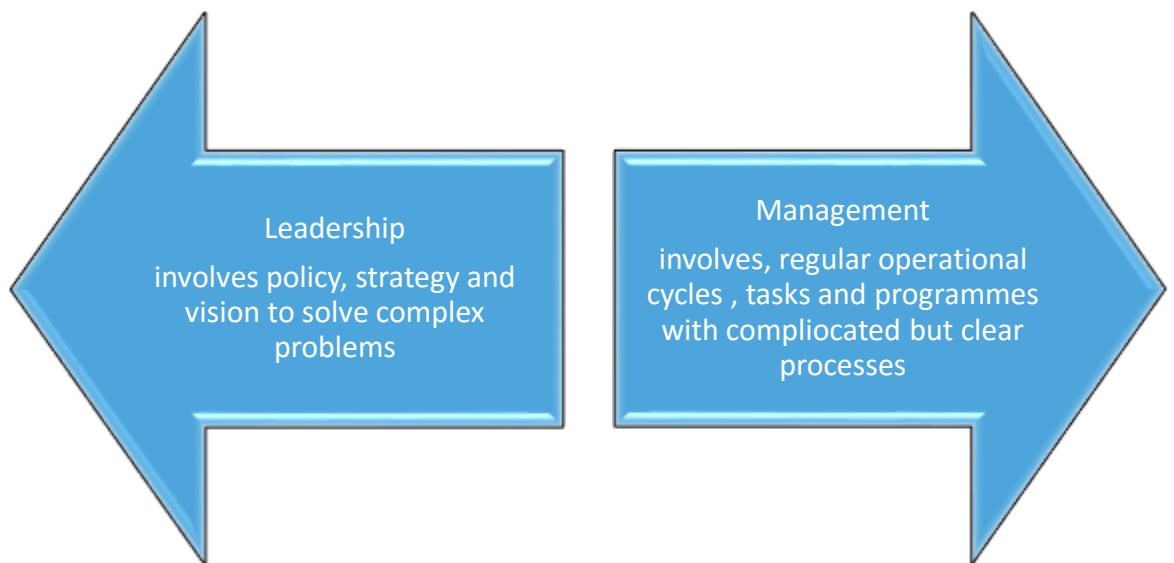
### **Defining Control/Management**

I conceive control and management as similar because these concepts both focus on complicated tasks; cycles systems and routines based upon set rational formulas or known procedures within clear parameters. Grint (2010 p.15) particularly argues that management is based on 'tame' problems. He defined tame as a complicated problem but resolvable through unilinear acts, that are likely to have occurred before. I suggest that my use of control is similar to management. An illustration of control/management is where a school may need to produce a new teaching timetable for the coming year; there will be a number of issues to deal with including the effective use of teaching staff, venues, the selection and size of student groups and their agreed timetabling in order to meet curriculum requirements. These management solutions will usually be based on previous practice and regularity. Finally, control/management like power/leadership can work at the micro level of the school and at the macro national level when examining educational systems such as Ofsted inspections or national curriculum tests.

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

Before leaving the definitions of power/leadership and control/management I want to discuss the relationship between the two conceptual groups. Authors like Rice (1965) discussed a psychological perspective of leadership and management where leadership required both conscious and unconscious awareness of the followers; whilst management focussed primarily on the conscious. I find this conception difficult because it requires interpretation; the conscious manifesto or vision of a school is possible to research but the unconscious is much more problematic. What and who do you examine in relation to the unconscious how and why? Unlike Rice, Western (2008 p/39) deals with the conscious and takes a more rational stance describing leadership and management characteristics as 'interchangeability' where "managers will also have some leadership qualities and responsibilities and vice versa" (Western 2008). This is a useful step forward but tends to see management and leadership as on the same continuum. Following Grint (2010) I see leadership as a wicked complex problem, difficult to solve; whereas management problems are tame, complicated, but solvable. In conclusion I see school management and leadership as two aspects of the same conception wherein management is seen as a rational, regular and systematic process, with a focus on operational planning; whereas leadership aspects include: vision; long term strategies; the direction of human resources; both individuals and teams, and material resources (Davies 2011 p.16). Finally, I follow Spillane and Healey (2010) in suggesting that leadership is placed in the foreground of the conceptual framework. My focus is on the wicked problem of leadership in the context of school equality policy. Below is a diagram which summarises the continuum of leadership and management.

## Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy



**Figure 1 The Leadership and Management Continuum**

### **Leader Theories**

The term leader is central to the development of leadership. In the course of attempting to define clearly my own position on the subject I read a wide range of leadership literature ranging from academic books, (Grint 2010, Bass 2008, and Western 2008): to popular business autobiographies; Branson (2005), Sugar (2010); and practical books on small business start-ups (Williams, 2014). Studies of school leadership provide their own examples of “influential and powerful figures, with the capacity to impose a very personal and egotistical regime in the school” (Lloyd 1985 p.304). Certainly, in my own professional experience (gained mainly in primary and special schools) I have come across a number of strong, influential and powerful head teachers where the head drives and supports a school vision and goals. To begin unravelling leadership theory I first examine the leader position. I suggest that two major types of leader theory have emerged in the modern era: trait theory focusses on innate personal qualities, whereas style theory tends towards the development of suitable social behaviours.

### Trait Theory

Specialists like Grint (2010) suggest that modern leadership theory goes back to the work of Thomas Carlyle (1795-1881) who saw the ‘Heroic Man’ as leader. He



## Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy

focused on the 'natural traits of historic and heroic leaders' such as Oliver Cromwell or Napoleon. In both cases these leaders brought, or heralded, fundamental political change; Cromwell supported the English House of Commons over the House of Lords and King; whereas Napoleon led major war campaigns to develop an empire for France, even crowning himself Emperor. According to Carlyle leaders have identifiable traits, such as confidence and the ability to take decisive action. His natural hero trait theory led to differing variants of his research during the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. When reviewing trait theory, Handy (1999 p.98) suggests three major qualities were claimed by researchers; they were intelligence, initiative and self-assurance. For example, the trait of intelligence enables a leader to solve complex problems. Grint (2010 p.84) added sociability and talkativeness to the mix. Certainly in my professional experience effective school leaders required a degree of sociability with staff to complete core work. However, I'm not sure that sociability can be defined as a leadership trait?

There are a number of criticisms in relation to trait theory

- I argue that Carlyle's rendition of trait theory is misogynistic in that he looks at male leadership and virtually ignores women. It can be argued that Carlyle's approach may have been a feature of the time and that leadership traits were able to be generalised. However, the focus on the male hero takes half the population out of his thesis; moreover, his generalisation of traits would be weakened. Indeed, his model of the heroic man would not support critical examination of modern equality policy.
- I find Trait theory is concerned about the group leader traits rather than the those of the follower (Grint 2010 p.84). Therefore, If using a trait model, I suggest that hero or leader trait examination leaves aside the traits of followers within the group.
- Authors like Western (2008 p.24), and Handy (1999 p.99) argue that ideal leader traits are difficult to define. Western proposes that a leader may demonstrate a leadership trait (or style) for each letter of the alphabet. In

## Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy

my experience of school leaders defining, the correct set of leadership traits for any given situation would be very difficult.

- Moreover, Handy notes that a trait is difficult to define in practice; however, they tend to be asked for in interview situations and within job selection criteria. In my own experience, job interview schemes contain a degree of trait focus; 'Do you possess the personal qualities required to lead this department/school?'

### Behaviour and Style Theories

Even given the problems of Carlyle's heroic-man traits, a number of authors have used similar conceptions of leadership. Behaviourists, such as McGregor (1960) likened traits to an individual leader's competencies. McGregor develops Carlyle's innate traits model where leaders can be taught to develop them into learnt skills or competences. He develops X/Y theories of leadership where the leader is aware of two types or sets of followers. The X theory where there are 'work-shy' employees who require coercion, control and direction. The leader may threaten followers with punishment when they fail to achieve organisational objectives. Finally, followers tend to prefer security above anything else. Theory Y suggests that followers see work as natural; they exercise self-direction; and job satisfaction and self-actualization is the major reward. Moreover, individuals seek responsibility and development and the average persons' potential is not being fully utilised. McGregor suggests that the X theory may work, particularly within an economic recession, but in general the Y theory was best for leadership (Western, 2008, p.30). Similarly, Blake and Mouton (1964) developed a 'managerial grid' of leader abilities within a similar X/Y model: X dealt with production concerns whereas the Y line focussed on people. The context was a country club and found a number of possible grid outcomes including a focus on people or task. However, the most effective seemed to be along the mid-line where the leader is an effective team player.

A strength of these behaviourist/style examples is that they include the space for individuals to develop their personal leadership traits or skills. For instance, school leaders may be able to attend a programme or course at the National

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

College of Teaching and Leadership in order to develop their professional effectiveness in developing equality policy. Furthermore, the authors discussed the positions of both leaders and the followers within an organisation. They preferred a Y theory where the leaders consider and recognise the potential of the followers alongside the requirements of the organisation. Indeed, the ever-changing complexity of school structures and systems has led to the development of flatter leadership, sharing out responsibilities and practices within schools. In my experience within schools, it is, common for a number of leaders to be required to develop and lead on new initiatives within a school. Members of senior leadership teams, class teachers and Teaching Assistants (TAs), who lead specific pupil groups, may take responsibility for specific areas such as literacy or numeracy. Indeed, it may be pupils who may lead in certain school functions (Harris 2008, Spillane 2006). The main point is that leaders give space for follower development within the organisation.

However, behaviour style theories are primarily based on achieving the aims and objectives of the organisation. For instance, a Y style theory enables followers to give their views and develop their skills whilst they are seen as sharing the same aims, goals and objectives of the organisation and present leader. staff views and suggestions on equality policy practice may be listened to and implemented; if they directly link with the vision, aims and objectives of the school. A second, limiting factor of style theory suggests that the leader sets the style in the first place. They set the style and its limits. There may be a degree of openness in Y theories but the extent of this is decided by the leader. Finally, behavioural/style theories focus on leader relations with the followers rather than the particular situations. For example, X/Y theories tend to exclude contingency issues (Handy (1999 p.102).

### **Follower Theories**

Bass suggests that leadership is about 'the leader-follower relationship and how leaders get people to do things' (Bass 2008, p.24). Similarly, Grint (2010 p.111) argues that 'perhaps the least understood or evaluated role is the followers without whom leaders cannot exist'. Indeed, both of these leadership specialists

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move away from a focus on the personality or position of the leader towards an understanding of the follower element and its relationship with the leader. A simple hypothetical example of the followers within schools might be the staff group and pupils with the Head teacher as the executive leader on an operational basis. Like all leaders, all followers have traits and behaviours and this can lead to conflict or dissent. Indeed, Spillane (2006) suggested that school followers may support or conflict with the leaders.

Grint (2010) has argued that the relationship between followers and leaders within a capitalist economy begins fundamentally with the basic agreement on transaction of monies. The behaviourist/stylist agenda widened the leader and follower transaction to include psychological and social aspects. However, their approach focussed on the leader and their power over the follower whereas Grint suggests that the theorising of followers involve a review of four pure types of relationship:

- The emperor who leads followers within a hierarchical society
- The cat-herder where there is anarchy and no leader
- The white elephant involving theocracy and divine leadership
- Wheelwright which is related to heterarchy and Socratic leaders

(Grint 2010 p.102),

Grint's review of followers moved from a focus on the traits and behaviours and control of the leaders to the interaction between leaders and followers. Moreover, he talked about a range of categories of interaction based on an X/Y model where the X line moves from strong hierarchy to anarchy where the Y line moves from superior leader to divinity. Based on Grint's model and my context of school equality policy, the most effective category would be a heterarchy where the school leadership were aware of their limits and listen carefully to their community. Finally, Grint argues that the relationship between followers and leaders is important and needs developing; but the situation is also an essential and equally important element.

Similar to Grint, Spillane (2006) proposes that the relationship between leaders and followers can have a large degree of fluidity, both formally and informally.

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

The formal positions of staff may vary due to the demands of changing roles, tasks and routines. For example, schools may develop a new Equalities role for an existing staff member. Informally, a lunchtime supervisor may volunteer to organise student activities. Clearly the follower element is more than an add-on to the leader's position and personality; within the school community followers have positions and personality traits as well; hence they interact together on a journey of leadership. Indeed, Gronn (2000 p.326) suggests that leadership is the 'emerging property of a group or network of interacting individuals'. I argue that it is important to define, understand and interpret the follower element because this is an essential part of the leadership concept.

### **Situation Theory**

A number of authors see situation as an important element of leadership including Grint (2010, 2005); Base (2008) and Spillane (2006). Indeed, Bolden et al (2003) suggests that the situation element of leadership is now an established area of theoretical and practical examination. "The approach sees leadership as specific to the situation in which it is being exercised. For example, whilst some situations may require an autocratic style, others may need a more participative approach," (Bolden 2003 et al p.6). They also propose that there may be differences in leadership styles at different levels within the same organisation. There are clear historical examples: Adam (2007), and Grint (2000), argue that the battle of Trafalgar (1805) was won by the British Navy under Nelson who gave his captains a clear line of command once the battle commenced, along with the discipline of the crews.

## Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy



**Figure 2** Turner, J. B. M. W. *The Battle of Trafalgar* (Oil Painting 1822)  
**Source: National Maritime Museum, London, Greenwich Hospital Collection**

Whilst it can be argued that the battle required a degree of autocratic leadership, it is well-documented that Nelson debated with his captains prior to battle; seeking the views of subordinate captains was seen as crucial to his command and his decision-making for the most suitable plan to confront and defeat the massed ships of the French and Spanish navies. Similarly, certain specialists in school leadership argue that many situations in such organisations require a participative approach (e.g. Spillane 2006 p.3). An example of an equalities situation within a school may be securing an agreement by TAs to regularly attend staff meetings after school. The planning may include timetabling; extra payment for TAs and suggesting items for the agenda. Agreement is around regular attendance.

Fiedler, in particular (1964, 1967) considers contingency theory based on the relationship between the leader and group and the structure of the specific task.

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He researched a number of organisations and his general conclusion was that they could further support the individual leader by either a) structuring the task, or b) providing them with more formal power, or c) changing the composition of the group. For instance, with formal description of leader responsibility, along with the power to set the agenda for meetings and assign specific tasks, a school can agree and develop a very clear equality policy. A strength of Fiedler's research is that he has a focus on the situation as well as the interaction of between the leader and situation; moreover, he gives possible solutions and approaches for solving situations. However, Handy suggest that Fiedler's work is based on a limited number of unusual organisations. Other authors like Vroom, (1970) consider developing sets of decision-making questions for leaders to consider when examining a specific contingency. Whereas Bolden et al (2003) reports on the last seventy years' development of leadership; noting the importance of leadership competency and the situational element.

Authors like Bolden (2003) and Handy (1999) consider contingency theory and best fit. For instance, Bolden et al (2003 p.6) says "A refinement of the situational viewpoint (and) focuses on identifying the situational variables which best predict the most appropriate or effective leadership style to fit the particular circumstances." Hence, an example of the above might be where a school has an emergency such as fire or flood, and the designated leader takes control; directing followers to leave the building; ensuring they are safe and informing the necessary authorities. On the other hand, the leadership of equality policy with its requirements for strategic planning and joint review, is a completely different matter, necessitating participation of all in the formation of agreed policy and practice. Handy (1999 p.107) discusses fit based on leader, follower, situation and environment any of which can be tight or flexible. I suggest that the first school leadership situation was "tight' the leader was in direct control whereas the second situation had a degree of flexibility. Clearly, best-fit is an important aspect of situation or contingency theory which I feel is important in my own conceptual framework.

# **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

## **The Leadership of School Equality Policy**

In this section I consider leadership/management in relation to school equality policy. A starting point is Leithwood's (2003 p.3) definition. He says, "At the core of most definitions of leadership are two functions: providing direction and exercising influence. Leaders mobilise and work with others to achieve shared goals". He goes on to say that school leadership is "a function more than a role. Although leadership is often invested in – or expected of – persons in positions of formal authority, leadership encompasses a set of functions that may be performed by many different persons in different roles throughout a school". I agree that direction and influence are leadership functions. What I wanted to explore was where, how and why does direction and influence come about around equality policy? Examples can be found along a continuum of leadership based on Grint's model of "Leadership, fellowship, commitment and Independence" (Grint 2010 p.102). At one end of the continuum the senior leadership strongly control direction and practice of equality policy through a formal hierarchy? Alternatively, the senior leadership allow a hierarchy where leaders and followers discuss, practice and review policy. School leadership history shows a movement from a focus on the Head teacher to a wider model of distributed leadership. In the 1980's, when a plethora of books on Head teacher leadership appeared, Head teachers were commonly depicted as heroes; decision-makers and pace-setters, steering schools under their direction. However, during the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century academic educational writers began to focus on a more collegiate culture of school leadership. A number of authors talked about the need for team work within schools (Crawford 1997) and distributed leadership (Gronn 2000, Earley 2013). My particular interpretation of equality policy leadership moves to a model of process leadership where power is shared in order to achieve the goal of equality of access and opportunity.

Authors like Gronn (2002, 2009 a, b), note that the movement from hero to process leadership has produced a number of normative theories which tend to be sent down from on high with limited empirical basis. Indeed, Bolden (2011) suggests that there are a number of process models of leadership including Distributed Leadership. Following Gronn I suggest that distributed leadership theory is useful because it has demonstrated theoretical validity and a degree of



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empirical data. For instance, Leithwood et al. (2009), Harris (2008) and Spillane et al (2007) give us empirical data on distributed leadership within schools. Harris, (Davies, 2005 p.160) says that there is a developing complexity within schools including physical distance between buildings, resulting in the flattening of cultural hierarchies, and barriers. She defined leadership/distributed leadership as “Multiple sources of guidance and direction, following the contours of experience in the organisation, made coherent through a common culture”. Her chapter focuses on *how* leadership practice is distributed among formal and informal leaders. Later, similar to Gronn, Harris discusses the development of a distributed leadership culture focussing on schools and the use of staff specialist expertise, moreover, like Leithwood she considers school functions or characteristics. In particular, she defines eight characteristics. Amongst these is, “leaders have expert rather than formal authority” (Harris 2008 p.112). This characteristic places an emphasis on personal or professional expertise rather than formal authority or position.

Similar to Harris, Spillane begins from a distributed leadership position. However, he sets out to develop a theoretical framework of school leadership involving the interaction of leaders, followers and situation. Like Harris and Leithwood he also returns to functions of school leadership rather than formal authority. Indeed, he sees Bass’s (1990 p.20) leadership function as both formal and informal (Spillane p.50). He defines formal leadership as ‘designated leaders who typically take responsibility for leadership routines. Similarly, MacBeath (2009 p.45) talks about formal roles and descriptions; hence informal leadership sits outside the formal. Spillane suggests that everything outside the designated roles within leadership falls into the informal aspect. Certainly Harris (2008 p.112) suggests that ‘expert authority for the task or activity’ is informal. Similar to the above I see formal leadership as clear descriptions of aims and objectives, with designated roles and routines such as a written timetable for developing, enacting and review of the school equality policy. However; I suggest that informal expertise tends towards the formal if it becomes routine. For instance, a TA might initiate and lead a dance group before or after school in the playground and the children enjoy it; however, if it is suggested that the TA regularly uses their expertise to lead dance

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

sessions, this moves towards a formal situation. In my experience routine moves inevitably to formality.

A second possible aspect of leadership is that of persuasion or magnetism. Spillane talks about influence and links it with motivation as important within his own theoretical model of distributed leadership. However, he states that “questions of effectiveness and direction of influence must be separated from leadership itself”, and he suggests that this function or characteristic may not necessarily bring about a desired outcome (Spillane 2006 p.11). Similar to Spillane I am interested in influence, particularly persuasion or the motivation of school members. I suggest that influence and leadership are closely linked. For instance, a Head teacher may attempt to persuade staff to participate in wider aspects of equality practice, such as establishing regular after-school cultural events. However, the staff have a choice to agree or reject that practice. Persuasion/Influence depends on a degree of trust between people. A high level of trust leads to effective influence whereas little trust leads to low influence and mistrust leads to resistance or opposition.

Spillane sets out a theoretical model of distributed leadership which moves through a ‘leadership plus’ position to ‘leadership practice’. Leadership plus is where leaders listen to followers but they make the final decisions; whereas practice depends on the shared efforts and expertise of all.

## Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy

Distributed Leadership	
<b>Leadership Plus</b>	Leadership plus involves formal and informal leaders who take control of particular areas such as leadership in a curriculum area/subject or leadership in the playground. These tend to be formalized roles or positions.
<b>Leadership Practice</b>	Leadership practice takes on board leadership plus, but includes the followers and the specific situation in decision-making. For instance teachers and Teaching Assistants where the interaction may be short such as a meeting or regular long term joint preparation, delivery and evaluation of a project

**Table 3 Distributed Leadership**

A school task may allow distributed or solo leadership depending on wicked or tame situations. I suggest that a Distributed leadership conception has some possible strengths, particularly when developing and practising equality policy.

- More heterarchical leadership where the structures between leaders and followers are flatter
- Wider grouping of leaders moving away from the solo leader
- More informal leadership; through wider consultation and open debate with the school community;
- The use of influence/persuasion with a high level of trust, rather than formal dictat and proclamation.

There are also possible problems with distributed leadership

- The formulation of a school's equality policy is a wicked problem
- Open debate between groups of leaders and followers can create time delays in agreement and decision-making.
- What if the focus is limited to task distribution?
- What if influence and trust is weak within the school establishment?
- Who makes the final decisions? Where does the buck stop?

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

Having discussed the use of hero/solo and distributed leadership models; I suggest that certain authors have tended towards hybrid models. For example, Gronn talks in detail about hybrid leadership involving solo and distributed leadership within the same task. Indeed, Authors like Gronn (2009, a, b,) and Crawford (2012) suggest that a more understandable model of leadership is based on a hybrid leadership which includes the thinking and action of solo and distributed forms. Earlier, I suggested an example of a crisis situation such as a fire or flood, where solo leadership would be preferable. However, the development of equality policy involves distributed leadership. Both examples provide us with an instance of a major school situation. Nevertheless, a particular situation, such as the development of equality policy, will lead to hybrid leadership which involves solo and then distributed leadership. For instance, the Head teacher will initiate the process of policy development based on the best advice; prioritising the initiative; setting a time-frame; enabling staff training; Following these decisions there may be distributed leadership where the senior leaders support the development of a draft policy which then goes to the staff for discussion and agreement. The practice of the policy may involve hybrid leadership where individual teaching staff implement the policy in their areas of work whereas the monitoring and review of policy is likely to be distributed. In conclusion I argue that hybrid leadership is useful because it allows a spectrum of leadership from the solo to the fully distributed within a specific situation and time period. In this research the hybrid leadership focusses on school equality policy.

### **Summarising My Conceptual Framework**

I originally discussed the concepts of power, control, leadership and management separately in order to examine their similarities and differences in relation to the context of school equality policy. I now summarise my conceptual framework.

- My literature review found that classic theorists like Weber saw power as force and authority whereas later experts focus on authority and influence (Dahl 1961). The focus of power on authority and influence is similar to that of leadership. Authority is based on the roles and positions of individuals and groups where influence runs from demands through to

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

persuasion (Handy 1999). In my research I use power and leadership as the same.

- Control and management have differences and similarities. One difference is that control can be conceptually wider than management since management lies within an organisation, whereas Weberian theory suggests that if power includes force, the strong link with control widens its use. However, like my use of power, my use of control lies within levels of organisations, therefore my use of control is similar to management. I argue that control/management focusses on the regularity of operational cycles, plans, policies, processes, systems and timetables. Unlike wicked complex problems; management is about detailed but tame issues (Grint 2010)
- Power/leadership and control/management concepts lie on a continuum where a complex wicked problem requires leadership, whereas a tame problem lies within the management domain.
- Power/Leadership – control/management continuum contains three major theory elements based on the leader, follower and the specific situation.

## Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy

In my research I am concerned about leaders, staff and the school equality policy practice.

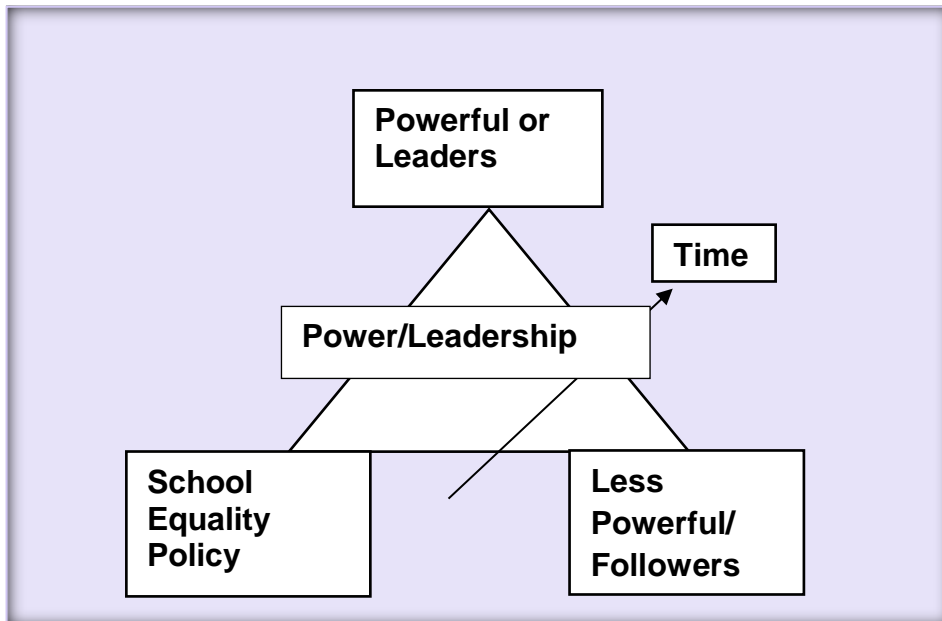


Figure 3 – Leadership elements

- Leadership/management contains a number of useful aspects including formal/informal, overt/covert and active and latent forms. For example, formal leadership is based on prescribed aims and targets, contracts, written description, role or position. Informal moves to influence, one off-tasks and activities outside the core work.

Leadership and Management Aspects of School Equality Policy	
<b>Formal</b>	<b>Informal</b>
Designated roles and written descriptions of school equality policy	Influence/persuasion; one-off processes and trust
<b>Overt</b>	<b>Covert</b>
Open leadership and management within the school equality policy	Latent or hidden leadership
<b>Solo</b>	<b>Distributed Leadership</b>
Single leader decision making on school equality policy	Wide leadership of staff with an open culture.

Table 4 – Leadership and Management Aspects of School Equality Policy

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

- I consider the development of leadership/management as a hybrid between solo and distributed leadership within the context of school equality policy. I suggest that hybrid leadership allows a continuum of leadership within a particular situation and time limit. The hybrid depends on best fit given the interaction of leader, follower and situation.

# **Chapter Three**

## **Methodological Design**



## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

In this chapter I describe, discuss and clarify my research design to examine leadership within the context of school equality policy. I chose to base my design on a qualitative case study approach (Yin 2014) to achieve depth of spoken and written understanding within a specific area of school leadership rather than employing a wider numerical, but shallower, quantitative model. I use a qualitative design to answer my three research questions. The first question considers conceptions of power, control, leadership and management within primary schools. My second and third questions are more specific to leadership in relation to equality policy within this sector. All three questions focus on core leadership in schools (Spillane 2006). The design involved the collection of documentary and interview data from three primary schools within one inner city local education authority. Data was analysed using a two stage model, particularly for interview data (Rubin and Rubin 2005). The first stage involved theme development, the second led to interpretation.

This chapter involves the examination of suitable methods and rationale for my:

- Research Aims and Questions
- Epistemological - knowledge decisions
- Methodological Approach
- Specific Research Methods: documentary and Interview collection
- Analytical Process
- Audience and Ethics

### **Aims and Questions**

There were two major research aims: the first was to clarify, illustrate and evaluate the distinction between leadership and management; both as linked concepts and their practical use in primary schools particularly the practice of school Equality policy. A second aim was to collect and examine the views of school teaching staff inclusively, through head teacher and specialist qualified teachers and class teachers, and specifically, to teaching assistants (TAs). These aims produced three research questions

- Where does power and control lay in primary schools? Is power and control similar to leadership and management?

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

- What leadership characteristics come out of a primary school equality policy context?
- How and why are schools using leadership within the context of primary school equality policy?

The first question considers the general understanding of leadership/power and management/control within primary schools. My second and third questions focus more on the what, how and why of school development of equality policy. The research questions were addressed by the development of a qualitative research design using a focused case study approach. I used this design because I believed it provided the best basis for an in-depth analysis of leadership in three schools.

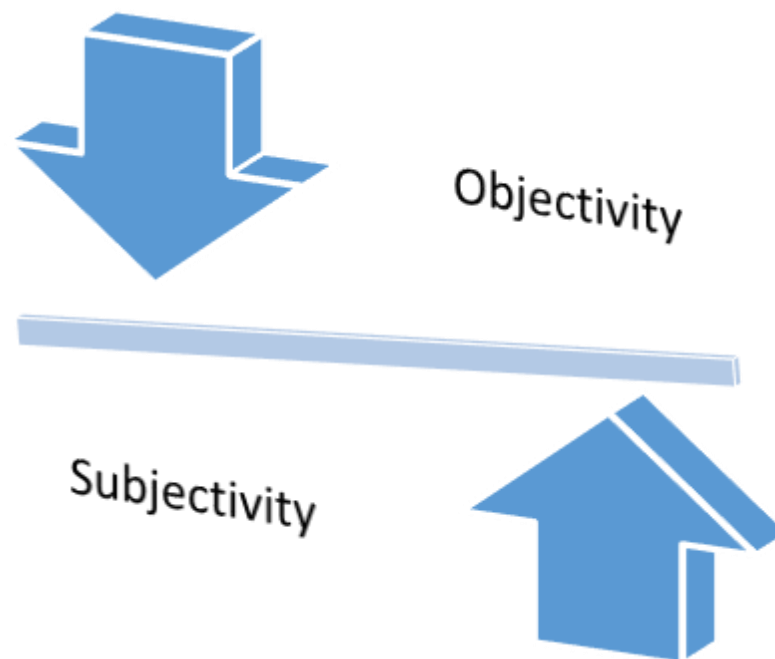
### **Philosophical Research Position**

My early understanding of objective and subjective aspects of research was that subjectivity happened outside the research process, whereas the processes themselves needed to be objective. However, I soon learnt that the balance of objectivity and subjectivity happens both within and without the research process. I was aware of the need for a critical research frame which would allow regular review and reflection. Like Letherby et al (2013)

“I am sensitive to issues of power and control throughout the whole research process and have always tried to highlight my role in the choice of research questions, methods and the selection and interpretation of responses, narratives and accounts when presenting research findings” (p. 30).

Moreover, I was aware of personal subjectivity based on my history and beliefs. For instance, I am strongly motivated to believe in equality for disabled people. I argue that a good researcher tries to be objective when preparing and working within the field; is aware that they are human and cannot be totally objective due to their history, temperament and beliefs. Indeed, a degree of subjectivity allowed personal reflection and a positive passion for the research project. In my case the mix of objectivity and subjectivity involved a critical examination of school equality policy.

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**Figure 4 Balancing of Objectivity and Subjectivity**

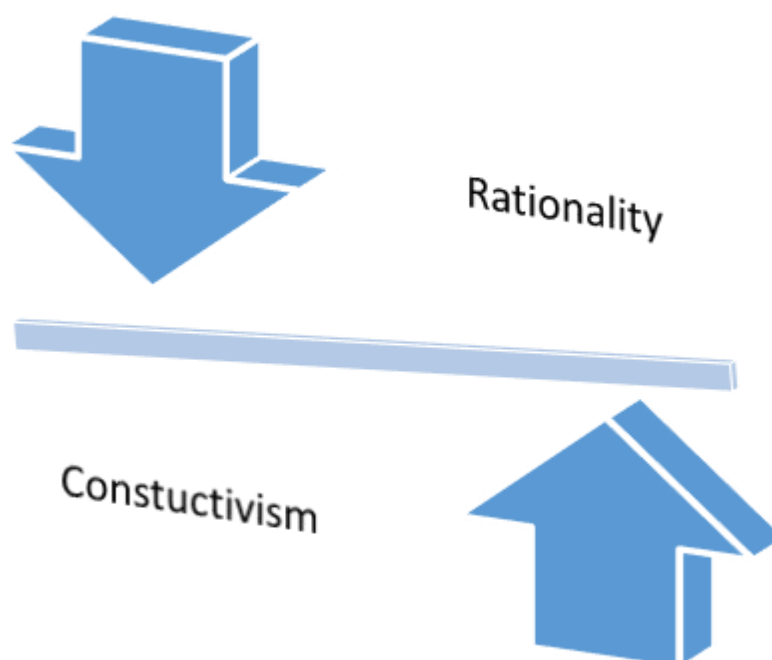
Whilst my philosophical research position is based on personal and professional experience as well as internal reflections. Nevertheless, I tried to maintain a balance between subjectivity and objectivity; to be neutral or impartial and ensure I approached my task with rigour, consistency and critical review throughout the research. For example; my design, selection, collection and analysis of research data involved careful ongoing reflection and review with critical friends. My critical friends included professional and interested parties who gave constructive and detailed feedback.

A second aspect of my philosophical position is the balance between rational models and constructivism. Brown (2014) asserts that rational argument only goes so far; following Foucault, he argues that 'research is constructivism based on the requirements of the powerful or authorised group'. I can give an example where the Labour government (1997), required the DfES and other research funding agencies, to focus specifically on improvements in student literacy and numeracy standards within schools. This was prior to introducing the National Literacy and Numeracy Strategy (2006). Here, the rationale was about raising

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standards of education for students in state schools in order to prepare them for working in the UK economy. We can say however, that constructivism on the other hand involved the furtherance of that government's doctrine that receiving a quality education should not be the preserve of the elite.

I argue that the relationship between the rational and constructivism in my research involved the use of rational models when interpreting leadership, power and control when examining school equality policy. However, these models are based on social facts which require specific interpretation (Nightingale et al 2002). The reality of the situation requires the rational process and outcomes of the research on the one hand; and the how and why of constructionism on the other; in this case the desire to find out more about the development and leadership of equality policy.



**Figure 5: Balancing Rationality and Constructivism**

### The planned approach

The planned approach focused on a qualitative design to answer the research questions in relation to leadership within the context of specific school policy. Indeed, my design utilised qualitative methods to collect and analyse three tranches of data: Ofsted reports; school written policy and one-to-one interviews

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with school staff. However, in searching for themes, I also incorporated quantitative methodology when considering the occurrence and frequency of regular phrases and terms found in my documentary and interview data. Authors like Silverman (2000 p.2), suggest that defining qualitative and quantitative approaches are difficult. He illustrates this with a table prepared by Halfpenny (1979 p.799) which I show below.

Qualitative	Quantitative
Soft	Hard
Flexible	Fixed
Subjective	Objective
Political	Value free
Case Study	Survey
Speculative	Hypothesis Testing
Grounded	Abstract

**Table 5 Qualitative and Quantitative Approaches**

Halfpenny's table, amongst other things, suggests that qualitative approaches are subjective and political whereas quantitative approaches are objective and value free. However, Silverman proposes that quantitative methods can be subjective and political. Indeed, Silverman goes on to advise that quantitative approaches may require a degree of flexibility in their interpretation. It can be argued that the presentation of government statistics can show the best school examination results. They can be seen as bias free from one angle where the best and worst results are based on external examinations. However, was the process of examination objective, rigorous or bias free? There has been much debate around the manipulation of pass levels and quality of examination marking in recent years. Yin (2014) sees case study models falling within both the qualitative and quantitative fields. Hence, the defining of qualitative and quantitative approaches was difficult. Following Robson (2002, 2011) I see the qualitative approach as a focus on words, language and meanings which are to be carefully and rigorously examined, whilst quantitative methods are based on a rigorous and clear consideration of numeric materials. The research approach depends on the specific research questions. In this research I focus on 'how and

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why' questions; therefore, my approach tends towards a qualitative methodology. Nevertheless, I used quantitative methods to present some summary tables showing the use and frequency of certain phrases and terms such as the use of 'Good' in Ofsted school reports. Therefore, my design employed a degree of mixed methods.

A second important aspect of my approach was the development of case studies working with schools that had already produced written equality policies and regularly monitored them. The research was undertaken in three primary schools within a single inner city education authority. I define the term case study similarly to Yin's (2014, p.16, 17) who sees it as:

'an empirical inquiry that investigates a contemporary phenomenon (the "case") in depth and within its real-world context, especially when the boundaries between phenomenon and context may not be clearly evident.' Yin (2014 p.16)

A positive aspect of a case study approach was the collection of interview data where initial interviewee statements are followed by clear linked examples. I wanted detailed feedback around school leadership in the specific context of equality policy. Therefore, my questions were tailored to allow interviewees scope to cover aspects of each question and they were asked to give examples from their own experience. The outcome was that interviewees gave full, detailed and informative answers to the questions.

Similarly, to Yin (2014) and Robson (2011 p.3) I suggest that the real world position is central to research design including the use of case studies. Yin went on to further define case studies

A case study inquiry

- copes with the technically distinctive situation in which there will be many more variables of interest than data points, and as one result
- relies on multiple sources of evidence, with data needing to converge in a triangulating fashion, and as another result
- benefits from the prior development of theoretical propositions to guide data collection and analysis' (Yin 2014 p.17)

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I suggest that Yin's definition is both detailed and user-friendly; moreover, this view allows a rigorous methodology which can be linked to a realistic view (Robson 2002). A particular strength of this case study approach was the ability to collect detailed evidence from specific institutions. It permitted depth of analysis that allowed the development and examination of initial and deeper themes directly linked to research questions. Furthermore, the case study approach gave space for the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative elements were the collection and analysis of written documentation and spoken responses of interviewees.

As previously stated, my design which was based on a qualitative case study approach (Yin, 2014), was used to examine leadership within the context of school diversity and equality policy. Data collection involved the sampling of Ofsted reports; school policies and interview data which was then analysed through methods suggested by Fairclough (2001) and Rubin and Rubin (2005). The three case study primary schools were situated within an inner city local education authority representing a very wide range of diversity and equality groups. Moreover, the authority had a history of monitoring and supporting school policy and practice in this area since the 1980s. I had worked within the Authority for many years; I knew many of the schools and they knew that I was interested in researching leadership and were willing to participate.

The recruitment of schools for the case studies began with the selection of schools. Most importantly I needed access to primary schools actively working on the writing and monitoring of diversities and equalities policy, (my chosen research context). Because time, and school openness to sharing of information were serious considerations I identified the schools from within the LEA that I worked in; I knew the schools and they knew me. I recruited the schools through meetings with the Head teacher and other school staff, providing a written summary of the research and explaining the research process (see appendix1); making it very clear that I sought the agreement of the wider staff group', not just the Head or senior leaders, because I required detailed views on leadership from a wide group of staff. The level of anonymity was discussed and agreed with the selected schools prior to commencement of the study. My approach involved

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initial and separate meetings with each Head teacher. The schools selected their own interviewees from volunteers. I also asked interviewees whether they still wanted to be involved before commencing individual interviews.

I give a short description of the three case study schools below

Description Of The Three Case Study Primary Schools	
<b>School A</b>	Built in the mid-sixties and situated in a mixed catchment area of private housing and low rise flats to the north of the borough. The school roll is around 300, (average). The Head teacher has been in post for 7 + years. Ofsted (2008) saw the school as 'Outstanding'.
<b>School B</b>	Situated in the east of the borough with a mix of mid-sixties and nineteenth century buildings with a catchment area of private housing and a council estate. The school roll is higher than average. The Head teacher has been in post 2+ years and was deputy head previously. The last Ofsted (2010) report graded the school as 'satisfactory to good'.
<b>School C</b>	The school is in the south of the authority housed in a nineteenth century building. The Catchment area is comprised of private housing and two large housing estates. The school is larger than average and the number of pupils receiving free school meals is well above average. The head teacher has been in post for 4+ years and the most recent Ofsted (2012) grade was 'good'.

**Table 6 Description of the three case study primary schools**

### Case Study Limitations and Practical Responses

My small-scale case study approach was limited by practical boundaries of time and situation. I had set myself a time limit of two years in which to complete the



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field study and carry out detailed analytical analysis; for this reason the research cases were limited to three primary schools within one authority. I also minimised the limitations of time through focussing on a specific aspect of school leadership; a detailed examination of equality policy leadership (Yin 2014 p.33). I used a single authority for two reasons; my insider knowledge of the particular authority and schools, and, as I was self-funding, I needed to control spending on time and travel.

A further possible limitation of the scale of my work was the need for an effective selection of significant research cases. Nisbet and Watt (1984 p.67) argue that the researcher's selectivity is not normally open to the checks which can be applied in rigorously systematic inquires such as large-scale surveys. It tends to be personal and subjective". I assert that my case studies were 'significant valid critical incidents' (Dunn, Pryor and Yates; 2005 p.23). of school policy leadership because:

- They were naturalistic settings (Stake 1998 p.94) rather than a prepared experiment;
- They were open to examination by the researcher and critical friends throughout the research. For example, schools allowed the examination of their written policies.
- The schools had prepared detailed documentation,
- School equality policy was reported externally by Ofsted.
- My selection was based on positive examples based on professional experience and external views such as Ofsted reports

Interestingly, Punch (2005) and Stake (1998) talked about the possibility of selecting negative cases such as the examination of damning Ofsted reports on schools. However, I chose positive examples from schools who had written policies that they were actively putting into practice in order to examine in depth the views and documentation of their policies.

I made use of analytical or, 'pattern matching' to examine the similarities and differences within each case study, and then across all three (Yin 2014 p.143). The patterns were based on the regularity of themes discussed by the

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interviewees and relevant documentary evidence. Moreover, the patterns were regularly tested against the research questions. For example, a major theme was that of 'team and teamwork' which was analysed within the case and across cases. I selected and pursued important patterns; however, I may have missed some of the subtler aspects which might be relevant in a further study. In continuance of my attempt to establish validity, I also examined similar case studies, (Leithwood 2009), (Earley 2013), and (Spillane and Diamond 2007), and (Harris 2008) all of which focussed on schools.

Authors like Yin (2014), Silverman (2000), Denscombe (1998) and Stake (1998) talk about the importance of triangulation as a form of research validity. I used internal triangulation within my separate methods of documentation and interviews. For instance, I triangulated specific answers by interviewees within a case and then across all three case studies. I also triangulated the interviewee answers against the Ofsted reports. Triangulation was helpful for finding major themes but it had limitations particularly in relation to depth. I chose to focus on the main research questions to stay on task.

### **External limits of case study validity:**

I now consider the limitations of generalisation within my particular research and my attempts to minimize this. First, my cases were complex containing numbers of variables; therefore, the traditional law of changing one or a limited number was unsuitable to my case study approach. Following Bassey (2001 p.6) I suggest that the traditional law can be widened from a singular within a given population to a set or a 'fuzzy' range of variables based on the selected question and the required accuracy of the answer. Hence part of my generalisation is the careful examination of similarities and difficulties of cases within comparable research and reviews of school leadership (Harris (2009), Leithwood (2009) and Spillane (2006).

Authors like Hammersley (2001) also see fuzziness as useful but suggest that a second issue was of generalisation of analytical propositions. He argues that the development of propositions required careful selection and robust examination. Indeed, Yin (2014 p.19) similarly argues that the case study researcher focusses

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on analytic generalisation. He says that case studies and experiments are generalizable to theoretical propositions and not to populations or universes'. Again Gerring (2004) sees a 'case study as an intensive examination of a single unit (such as a school) with an aim to generalise across a larger set of units'. Similar to Yin and Gerring, my research generalisation is limited to theoretical propositions particularly the propositions of leadership of primary school equality policy. For instance, a proposition was that interviewees would see that equality policy was a central theme in the school. Moreover, my propositions allowed critical discussion with external valid case studies e.g. Spillane and Kealey (2010) and Harris (2008).

**The limits of Reliability:** I minimised the limitations of reliability through contained credibility, transferability, dependability and confirmability (Lincoln and Guba, 1985). Credibility included on-going monitoring, review, presentation the use of critical friends and reflection. Moreover, I wanted credibility design analysis and conclusions against the reliability of the research questions. My design and findings have transferability based on detailed 'thick description both by interviewee answers and documentation from Ofsted reports. My design had dependability through using a format used by many other authors e.g. Rubin and Rubin (2005) on interviews and Fairclough (2001) on documentation. Indeed, the design can be used for other case studies projects in different LEAs as long as the research questions are similar. Finally, my research allowed confirmability by similar studies and external research in school leadership.

### **Insider Research**

I am a research insider within the three case study schools having previously given them regular professional support, particularly on diversity and equality policy issues. Indeed, part of the rationale and purpose was to assist with producing systems of effective written policy and practice in those establishments. An example is the continued monitoring of classroom teaching in relation to diversity and equality.

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Benefits of my insider research were a deep level of professional experience, understanding and insight into the schools, both formally and informally (Robson 2002, p.382), having observed them manage change over time. Formally, I was able to examine internal school documents such as draft policies and plans; informally I had had many conversations with the school members over a long period. Indeed, I had been professionally involved with School B for at least twelve years. A second benefit was that all three schools had an open door policy to a wide variety of visitors, from parents and professionals to volunteers. Hence they were happy to oblige in being case study schools. Finally, the limited time expended travelling to and between schools was another consideration.

Possible problems were the close professional relationship between the schools and myself: I had been aware of their values and beliefs, ethos and vision. In order to redress the balance, I used a rigorous and open process of research using critical review, (my own and others) and careful reflection. The processes and collection of data were, for instance, critically discussed in-depth with my supervisor, and other specialists in leadership and policy; I also delivered presentations and debated my work with other students within the university and outside, on a regular basis. My most strenuous critic was my wife, an ex-professional in the field of school leadership. The discussions were in-depth, had a consistency and lead to a clarity of purpose.

A second potential problem was restricting my research scope to a single LEA. However, I believe that I have demonstrated the positives above. The organisation of collecting and analysing data for a small-scale research project from out of borough establishments would have taken much longer; moreover, I would not necessarily have been able to collect the same quality of detailed information that I now have.

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## Data Collection

Following my design, data was taken from two sources; existing school documentation and semi-structured interviews.

Data Sources	
<b>Documentary Evidence</b>	School Documents <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Diversities and Equalities Policy</li><li>• School Ofsted Reports</li></ul>
<b>School Views</b>	Interviewees <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Head Teacher</li><li>• Senior Management</li><li>• Class Teachers</li><li>• Teaching Assistants</li></ul>

**Table 7 Data Sources**

### Documentary Data

Documentary data included the collection of the three schools' recent Ofsted inspection reports and their most recent equality policy documents. The case study schools had provided copies of their policies and further relevant written information including equality development planning arising from said policies. The policies had been approved by governors and published on their websites. My rationale (Yin 2014 p.125; Robson 2002 p.349) was to use the written policies as background documentary data for supporting the formulation of my interview questions particularly in order to elicit specific examples of equality practice. The collection of published Ofsted reports allowed me to examine, analyse and gain an external view of the school's work in this area and to compare and contrast this with the interviewee evidence.

I examined the most recently published Ofsted reports for schools A, B and C; I also compared these with previous Ofsted reports. For instance, the previous report on School C summarised the judgment of education as 'satisfactory' whereas the most recent report saw the school as 'Good'. Satisfactory and good are Ofsted's own terms which define certain categories of standards of school education. Their recommendation is to work towards being an 'Outstanding

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School'; I saw the Ofsted reports as an external source for examining each schools' leadership characteristics and equality policy.

Ofsted School Report	Description and Judgement
<b>Case Study School A</b>	<p>The last report was in 2008. The inspectors defined the school as 'Outstanding' and recommendations were to 'further develop early years' (Ofsted 2008 p.4,5)</p> <p>Leadership was seen as 'outstanding' including equality. They say "The head teacher provides excellent leadership", and "has established a very strong sense of common purpose and teamwork amongst staff and governors." Ofsted 2008 p.7)</p>
<b>Case Study School B</b>	<p>The last report was in 2012. The inspectors defined the school as 'Good' and recommendations were to further develop mathematics teaching and learning (Ofsted 2012 p.3)</p> <p>Ofsted inspectors saw leadership and management as 'good, including equality'. They say "Leadership and management are good because they share a common vision and ambition for improvement" (Ofsted 2012 p.5)</p>
<b>Case Study School C</b>	<p>The last report was in 2012. The inspectors defined the school as 'Good'. Recommendations were to further develop mathematics teaching and learning, matching lessons to children's needs more effectively. Ofsted said, School C had 'good' leadership and management. They said, "The head teacher has successfully worked with senior leaders to challenge and support teachers to raise pupils' achievement".</p>

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Also, “One teacher commented, ‘My voice is listened to and I feel supported.’” (Ofsted 2012 p.1, 3).

### Table 8 Ofsted School Reports

The collected documentary evidence from Ofsted reports was qualitatively analysed through the use of critical discourse analysis (CDA) based on the work by O’Regan (2006) and Fairclough (2001). This involved the careful examination of vocabulary, tense, grammar, image and genre against the three research questions of leadership characteristics the how and why and power and control within the context of school diversity and equalities policy.

An important implication was always going to be the time required to process the large number of documents requiring careful examination and analysis. Indeed, authors like Silverman (2000 p.42) suggest that researchers clearly limit their text data due to the required level of detailed analysis. Certainly, during the analytical phase, I found that I needed to reduce the schools’ written documentation I examined, whilst ensuring that I gathered enough information to enable me to answer the research question. I was able to do this by tightening and maintaining focus on my specific area of research.

### Limitations of Documentation within this Research

The major positives of using documentary data within my research design were: access to primary evidence on leadership and management as well as equality policy from external reports produced by Ofsted; there was easy access to these inspection documents and it was also cost effective. However, the reports were based on the inspectors’ external views based on standards set by the government of the time; Ofsted, is an instrument of the government, at the end of the day and it is they who set the value - added parameters. In practice, I found that the documents were limited in terms of detail particularly with regard to judgments on equality policy. Indeed, I found very little direct discussion about this policy yet it was seen as an important requirement and its practice required direct inspection.

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## Semi-Structured Interviews

I decided to use a semi structured interview process which allows a degree of flexibility of design within a clear interview structure. My rationale was to collect detailed views and examples from interviewees who were implementing the agreed policy. I went for depth and interviewee interpretation; however, I wanted to keep the interviews within a semi structured format so that the main questions were answered within a limited time span and range: King and Horrocks, (2010); Kvale and Brinkmann, (2009), Rubin and Rubin (2005). The criteria for selecting interviewees were: the volunteering, or clear agreement, of the interviewees; a representative range of interviewees from each school teaching staff, I particularly wanted to include at least three TA participants from each school. The staff volunteers were given the written materials and informed of the purpose of the research prior to participating. I particularly wanted the interviewees to have time to look at the interview questions and decide whether they were happy to take part. This was revisited before beginning the interview. The table shows the resulting range of interviewees coming from each school.

School A	School B	School C
Interviewee 1, Class Teacher	Interviewee 1, Deputy Head	Interviewee 1, Head Teacher
Interviewee 2, Teaching Assistant	Interviewee 2, Teaching Assistant	Interviewee 2, Inclusion Leader
Interviewee 3, Inclusion Leader	Interviewee 3, Teaching Assistant	Interviewee 3, Teaching Assistant
Interviewee 4, Head Teacher	Interviewee 4, Teaching Assistant	Interviewee 4, Teaching Assistant
Interviewee 5, Teaching Assistant	Interviewee 5, Class Teacher	Interviewee 5, Class Teacher
Interviewee 6, Teaching Assistant	Interviewee 6, Teaching Assistant	Interviewee 6, Teaching Assistant

**Table 9 Interviewee Positions**



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The semi-structured approach allowed a flow of views from the interviewees. Almost all of the 18 interviewees answered all of the questions in depth. There were two exceptions, where composite answers were given to questions on control. A number of interviewees gave very detailed examples about their own leadership of groups of students both in the classroom and on the playground and the examples given were focused on the interview questions. Finally, the interview schedule allowed regular review and reflection by the interviewer. I was able to check questions and answers on the tapes and consider if further interviewing was required.

Problems were the limited time and space to carry out interviews in the working day; the possible interruptions during the session interview session and the opportunity to set further meetings required clear timetabling which could be difficult. Having said this, these problems were relatively minor, and a positive was the interviewees said that they enjoyed the sessions because they had been able to reflect upon their equality practice and the leadership of it.

I set out a number of questions based on my main research criteria. For example; "Is there any informal leadership within the school?" focused on the second research question; as did, "Can you give examples of characteristics of Leadership in the Context of School Diversities and Equalities Policy?" The interview questions whilst being specific, were not closed; answers tended towards specific statements; the questions also required examples that allowed a wider view from the interviewee. Moreover, the questions were given to interviewees before the meeting to give them a chance to understand and reflect upon them from their particular viewpoint. Thus the questions allow a wider view than fully structured answers but neither were they leading to a completely open interview agenda.

I used a semi structured interview schedule with 18 interviews conducted on a one to one basis. There were six interviewees from three schools, (A, B and C). The schools were very cooperative despite their busy schedules; schools had to factor in time for individual interviewees to be able to meet with me for 45-60

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uninterrupted minutes. Interview schedules were set up with the head teacher, the specific policy leader; a class teacher and three teaching assistants (TAs). This was agreed by all three schools. I particularly wanted the views of teaching assistants because they represent an important human resource for schools, supporting teaching and learning within and outside formal lessons (Blatchford et al 2012). Two schools, (A and C) chose the head teacher, Special Needs Coordinator, a class teacher and three TA's whilst school B chose a Deputy Head teacher, a maths teacher/leader and four TA's. I believed that collecting the views on leadership from a range of school staff would give a more representative, wider and deeper research perspective. All interviewees and the interviewer signed a formal letter of agreement (See Appendix 2). There were two copies of the agreement form, one kept by the interviewer and one by the interviewee.

Interviewees were sent copies of a summary of the research proposal, the questions and the prepared agreement form to be signed at the interview, prior to their interviews. I wanted to give the interviewees sight of the materials in order to assist them to prepare themselves to reflect and give full answers. The arrangements of the semi-structured interview schedule included the awareness of the interviewee's needs; sometimes the interviewer was asked to meet with the interviewee in their classroom, office or another suitable space. Moreover, the interviewer worked around the interviewee's timetable.

Part of my rationale for semi-structured interviews was that I wanted to collect detailed data on the views of key interviewees on leadership within school diversities and equalities policy. The data was to be contrasted against documentary evidence. In pursuance of this I developed a number of open questions on particular topics relating to the three research questions. The topics included: leadership; formal and informal leadership within schools; characteristics of leadership within the school and the relationship with school diversities and equalities. A particular question used was "What is your understanding of leadership within your school? This open question allowed interviewees to consider and discuss their own views on leadership; however, following examination by critical friends, I added a supplementary. "Can you give

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examples of your understanding of leadership within in your school?” The aim of this linked supplementary question was to prompt clear examples of the interviewees’ views on leadership from their personal experience. I decided to ask a supplementary question asking for examples within all the main questions.

Although I had personally explained the research to groups of staff, I had requested that schools give interviewees copies of the questions; agreement letter and a short summary of the research before the interviews because I wanted them to have the opportunity to reflect upon them (See Appendix 2). In the event, whilst most received the information early some did not. To ensure that each interviewee was fully apprised I went through all the information above with them and explained the procedures prior to commencing the interview. I electronically recorded the interviews onto a Dictaphone and later moved the data onto a software programme on my computer which allowed careful listening and repeating of words, phrases and sentences. I also placed the material on a second data store to avoid possible technological loss or corruption. I then examined the raw data, made detailed transcripts and checked them carefully, returning frequently to the raw recorded data to ensure they were as close to the spoken word as reasonable retaining accurate interviewee voice and views on leadership, power and control and how this relates to diversities and equalities policy and practice within their schools.

Research Questions	Semi Structured Interview Questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>What leadership characteristics come out of a school diversities and equalities policy context?</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. What is your understanding of Leadership within your school? Can you give examples of your understanding of Leadership within in your school?</li> <li>2. Is there any informal leadership within the school? Can you give examples?</li> <li>3. What is your understanding of School Diversities and Equalities Policy? Can you give examples?</li> <li>4. What are the characteristics of Leadership within the context of</li> </ol>

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	<p>School Diversities and Equalities Policy? Can you give examples of characteristics of Leadership in the Context of School Diversities and Equalities Policy?</p>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>How and why are schools using leadership within the context of school diversities and equalities policy?</b></li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5. Who Leads on School Diversities and Equalities Policy? Can you give examples?</li> <li>6. Who follows on School Diversities and Equalities Policy? Can you give examples?</li> <li>7. How does the school use Leadership within the context of School Diversities and Equalities Policy? Can you give examples?</li> <li>8. Why is the school using this Leadership' model within the context of School Diversities and Equalities? Can you give examples?</li> </ol>
<p><b>Where does power and control lay within primary schools?</b></p>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>9. What is your understanding of power in the school both formal and informal? Can you give examples?</li> <li>10. How is that power distributed within the school formally and informally? Can you give examples?</li> <li>11. What is your understanding of control in the school both formal and informal? Can you give examples?</li> <li>12. How is that control distributed in your school formally and informally? Can you give examples?</li> </ol>

**Table 10: Research and semi-structured questions**

### Limitations of Semi Structured Interviews

My semi-structured interview schedule allowed interviewees to give detailed answers on school equality policy leadership; however, there were limits on time and space. The time required for preparing and sending the interview schedule; setting up and conducting interviews, all had to be considered alongside each

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school's requirements, and my own commitments elsewhere. Space for the interviews was allocated by the school and depended on availability of a suitable room.

Although the interview questions were the same for all interviewees they were open questions that allowed a degree of variation in the interpretation of the question. I didn't want standard or official answers; however, by asking the interviewees to give linked examples for their answers, I sought to minimise these standard answers.

### Analytical Process

My research plan contained clear general analytical principles and processes. The principles were based on a qualitative approach in order to analyse spoken and written data. My focus was on words and their meaning in terms of my research questions. In this study I examined documentary and semi structured interview evidence from three case study schools. Although the overall approach was qualitative, I used some quantitative methods to display the regular use of particular phrases in the data which directly related to the research questions. These were numerically recorded for continued analysis. Given my qualitative approach with certain quantitative methods I set out three general analytic principles suggested by Robson (2002, p.476); Silverman (2000 p.143) and Miles and Huberman (1994 p.12); they are reduction, display and conclusions.

**Reduction:** Similar to the above authors I see reduction as an analytical principle which 'refers to the process of selecting, focusing, simplifying, abstracting, and transforming the data that appear in written-up field notes or transcriptions...Data reduction is a form of analysis that sharpens, sorts, focuses, discards and or organises data in such a way that "final" conclusions can be drawn and verified' (Miles and Huberman 1994 p.12). Reduction in my analytical system was extraction, selection, focus and simplification of school case study data into themes directly linked to the research questions. An illustration is where both documentary and interview data contained a number of references to the leadership characteristic 'vision' (Harris 2008 p.112; Cotton 2003 p.29). The use

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of this term showed similarities and differences across the data therefore that required clarity and clear summarising in order to move to a final conclusion in relation to this leadership characteristic. Critical friends suggested that the principle of reduction was interesting but felt that my analytical system required the processes of classification; identification and patterns. Indeed, Yin (2014 p.132) suggests five different techniques for analysing data with the first as pattern matching. On reflection I found that whilst reduction is an important analytical principle it requires the rigorous and detailed processes behind it such as pattern matching. For example, careful interrogation of interviewees' transcripts, show a theme on the formal leadership position of the Head Teacher at their schools. Phrases around this theme were many and therefore there were a number of similar phrases through a number of transcripts.

**Display;** is expressed as 'an organised, compressed assembly of information that permits conclusion drawing and action' (Miles and Huberman 1994 p.11). The specific modes of analytical presentation within my thesis report include; diagrams, tables and pictures. For example, in this chapter I set out particular tables which show the roles of interviewees involved in this research.

**Conclusion-drawing:** In this thesis I interpret the term conclusion-drawing as an on-going flow that develops through systematic data collection and analysis (Miles and Huberman 1994 p.11). An illustration from this research is where the documentary data for a case study school suggests that there is shared leadership and management. Therefore, an initial conclusion might be that the school leadership involved, or included a number of staff. However, verification is required through the collected answers from school interviewees. The careful triangulation of both sets of data leads to a stronger conclusion. Moreover, the process of conclusion drawing involved continual review and reflection.

Moving from the principles to processes of my analytical system I employed a two phase model used by Rubin and Rubin (2005 p.201). 'The first phase is the systematic analysis of raw data into detailed transcripts memos and summaries. These transcripts, memos and summaries will attempt to consider concepts,

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events and themes which would begin to answer research questions. The placing of the data into specific classifications will require careful coding. In the second phase several paths are followed when considering the research questions and possible broader theoretical findings'. I now discuss the two phases in relation to my own research.

### **First Phase**

The original plan required the preparation of some general topic or 'bucket codes' Bucket or broad brush codes allowed me to organise large 'lumps' of data into general themes, as advocated by Bazeley (2007 p.67). For instance, I placed interviewee comments on leadership characteristics into one major themed bucket code which was then broken down into more specific codes. An example of a specific code is Team which sat within the broad brush stroke of leadership characteristics. 'Team' was derived from interviewee answers. Both bucket and specific codes also held my linked memos and defined topic areas, plus summary descriptions. Memos contained my notes on specific events and concepts, for instance, a memo on team which stated that I had found a number of interviewees saw team as an important aspect of school leadership.

Following the collection of specific data such as a school policy or an interviewee's answers, I carefully examined the material, based first against bucket codes, and then the more specific codes within them. I used NVivo (an electronic software package), to organise my data and analytical memos and summaries into a clear project. I had made memos in Word documents during early analysis but found NVivo a more efficient and effective tool. By placing all the memos and summaries in one place where they could be found easily; I had a clear project format where raw data, transcripts, and memo/summaries could be electronically linked, stored and copied. I held data material on three project files within NVivo including Ofsted reports; Equality Policies and interview data. All files contained full documents such as Ofsted Reports, Policy documents and interviewee transcripts. Following the development of my bucket codes (or NVivo nodes) from the research questions, topic areas and summary descriptions, an explicit set of summaries were produced following the completion of detailed

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transcripts. The summaries set out the initial major points found from the transcript or document (Miles and Huberman 1994 p.53).

### **Analytical Processing of Documentary Data**

I used critical discourse analysis (CDA) when examining the documentary evidence of Ofsted reports, equality policies and linked school plans. My rationale for this was that CDA would allow me to compare and contrast technical language used in formal documents with the spoken commentaries of interviewees and explore both similarities and differences. Fairclough (2001) sets out a model of CDA which begins with a careful examination of a particular text such as a school Ofsted report including vocabulary, grammar and text structure. This is followed by interpretation of the document and the links with similar documents. In my case, I examined the vocabulary, phrases, grammar and the overall structure of the three Ofsted reports from the case study schools. However, this form of organisation was specifically focused on the outcomes based on the research questions. CDA was a method to examine the Ofsted reports in relation to research questions.

### **Analytical Processing of Interview Data**

Document transcripts and summaries were carefully produced from raw data. For instance, I copied the raw voice data from interviews onto my computer and transcribed each interview carefully, regularly reviewing and checking particular words and phrases for accuracy. The transcripts contained detailed interviewee answers down to the particular words; however, I did not include all of the 'uhmms' and 'ahhs', but did note pauses as my analysis focuses on the meaning and views of interviewees (Rubin and Rubin 2005 p.204).

I put the written transcripts into Microsoft Word files and carefully re-checked them to ensure that the transcripts were as close to the interviewee's answer as possible. I then copied the word files to my NVivo interviews project; re-examined the transcribed data carefully and wrote a number of memos. Following this, I prepared summaries of each of the transcripts (Rubin and Rubin 2005 p.206), then used the Miles and Huberman (1994 p.53) plan for summarising transcripts:



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- What are the main issues or themes that struck you in this contact?
- Can I summarise the information you got (failed to get) on all of the target questions?
- Anything else that struck you as salient, interesting, illuminating or important in this contact?
- What new (or remaining) target questions do you have in considering the next contact with this site?"

I used these questions when collecting and analysing themes from the interview data; the process was also helpful for examining documentary evidence; allowed the development of clear memos and summaries of concepts and events. I define the term theme as an accurate summarising of a particular concept or event bringing together the views of written and spoken views on a particular topic such as 'teams'. The memos and summaries included overviews of individual transcripts; the summary interviewee answers across a specific question and summaries of themes. I then had a clear project format where raw data; transcripts; memo/summaries could be electronically linked, stored and copied for effective analysis. I held data material on three project files within NVivo including case study Ofsted reports; Equality Policies and interview data.

During analysis of main themes, I had made detailed summaries of individual interviewee transcripts, comparing and contrasting similarities and differences between one interviewees view and another. However, after critical discussion and reflection I moved to a model of finding, counting and examining certain recurring words or themes such as team/teamwork by using the NVivo 'Finding Tool'. Themes were then coded; these codes contained phrases and sentences related to the particular word or phrase used by the interviewee. I used two types of theme; 'concepts and events' (Rubin and Rubin (2005 p.208). which I define in the table below. Thus I moved coded data into specific types of theme directly related to my research questions.

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Concepts and Event Themes	
<b>Concepts</b>	Concepts are notions or meanings found in documentary or transcript data. For example a concepts are discussed both within documentary and interviewee answers such as school vision.
<b>Events</b>	Events are real occurrences that may be interpreted quite differently from differing perspectives. An illustration from my study was the similar or slightly different descriptions of a school celebration given by interviewees from their position and those coming from the position of an Ofsted inspector. Neither are necessarily absolutely objective.

**Table 11 Concepts and Event Themes**

### **Second Phase**

Whereas, in the first phase I carried out an analysis of the two types of data from the three case study schools; in the second phase, I attempted to move from a wide range of coding towards possible interpretation and new theory around leadership within school equality policy. I found that new descriptions and theory moved a view of leadership within school equality policy towards an interpretation of wider leadership both formal and informal.

New description and new theory was based on detailed analytical processes and critique of case study evidence in the first place moving; to new theory in an area of school leadership. For example, a possible conclusion is that schools require a continued move away from hierarchical leadership to a flatter position where leadership is held by teams of specialists (Harris 2008 p.112).

### **Ethics and Audience**

The main ethical issues were confidentiality and the anonymity of research data from case study schools. For instance, real names and places were not used. All interviewees were volunteers and were able to withdraw at any time. I sought

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Interviewee agreement and consent was documented, signed and copies were given at the interview. Any further documentary or interviewee data collection was based on continued confidentiality and the accountability requirements.

My approach to ethical issues was also set out in the Institute of Education ethics form. These issues were regularly reviewed and checked during discussion with the schools and critical friends against the research procedures and processes. However, in the event it was not necessary to go back to an interviewee to ask further questions around a previous topic given the detailed data collected initially.

Data storage followed the Data Protection Act (1998) requirements; for example, it will only be used for the specific research purposes that have been discussed and agreed with participants.

I personally informed the case study schools and interviewees in writing and verbally, that my research ethical review process was on-going and would apply to the writing of articles and linked papers following completion of my thesis.

My intended audiences include:

- A wide audience of academics
- The 18 participants and the three case study schools involved in the research
- Teaching professionals

# **Chapter Four**

## **Power/Leadership and Control/Management**

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In this chapter I discuss the answers coming from my first research question, where does power and control lay within primary schools?

- I begin with reporting and discussing the interviewees' understanding of power both formal and informal, and the way it is used within their separate case study schools; I then consider similarities and differences across the three samples
- I use a similar analytical interrogation to compare and contrast interviewee views and understanding of control within and between the school samples
- Finally, there is a discussion of interviewee answers against the views of specialists

### The Reporting of Interviewee Answers on Power

I start with an examination of interviewee conceptions of school power and then move on to their views about formal and informal power within the respective schools. The majority of the qualitative analysis is based on interview question nine "What is your understanding of power in the school both formal and informal?" and question ten; "How is that power distributed within the school formally and informally?"

### Interviewees' Conception of School Power

#### School A

All six interviewees talked about formal and informal school power; however, four spoke directly about their conception of power. For instance, a Class Teacher said

"My understanding of power within the school is that those who have influence and clout, get something done, whatever the issue." **(Class Teacher, Interviewee 1. School A).**

The interviewee's use of the terms 'influence' and 'clout' suggests two types of informal power; the first relates to a leader's or specialist's work with others to meet an agreed goal (Leithwood 2003 p.3). The interviewee gave an example of a school Science Coordinator

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“They will be in charge of getting science things done, but at the same time would ask a TA to help with that” **(Class Teacher, Interviewee 1, School A).**

The TA might be ‘asked’ but do they have a choice? The notion of clout indicates coercion with little choice e.g. the TA would not be asked but told. A second point regarding the initial interviewee’s statement is that people with power may use their influence or use coercion due to their position or charisma. The Head teacher talked about having the power to deal with issues:

“Power to me implies that you are able to get things done, so you need people to be following you, or if not following, they need to be pushed along by you” **(Head Teacher, Interviewee 4, School A).**

Like the previous interviewee the Head proposes that exercising power involves followers following; they can either have agreed goals or are sometimes directed towards the goal. One TA focused on staff:

“Power and respect from children especially” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 2, School A).**

Here power has a specific use; however, another TA separates power from leadership:

“It’s someone who’s down here who knows what needs to be done. It’s a difference between leadership and power, you know who’s got the power” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 6 School A).**

### **School B**

Four interviewees talked about their conception of power. A TA noted:

“My understanding of power in this school is obviously the Head. Now the Head, I say to everyone, is my boss, overall. --- The school needs a leader the Head is the leader of the school. So what they say should happen OK? That’s my idea of power. I just feel that it’s right” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 2, School B).**

An initial point here is that the interviewee focuses on the power of the Head Teacher as leader in the first instance and they expect to follow the leader’s directives. You follow the leader. However, further on they say,

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“everyone in the school, although we have a leadership team; every person in class; Teacher, TA, Cleaner, has some kind of power.”

Hence, although they see the Head Teacher as the major power, they also see everyone in the school as being in a position of some power in specific contexts.

The Deputy Head, talking about power, says:

“In the public sector you can be made to do something but the moment they turn their backs you are not going to do it; but, if you are inspired to do it - it will be done! It is about inspiring and encouraging and explaining.” **(Deputy Head, Interviewee 1, School B).**

This interviewee notes a possible problem of didactic leadership where a dictat may not be followed if the leader is no longer directly involved. They suggest that a move away from didactic or autocratic leadership towards explanation; encouragement and inspiring others, strengthens the hand of those in power.

A Class Teacher from the same school stated:

“people have the power to solve things, here and there in their classrooms for themselves.” **(Class Teacher, Interviewee 5, School B).**

I suggest that the teacher saw a degree of power held by those in a classroom setting; however, their sphere of influence seems to be perceived as restricted to within the classroom. A TA made a distinction between positive and negative power. They say:

“I think that power is a little negative, but I would say that power is important in any school - I have to have power to deal with a child’s needs, this is the positive side of power. The negative side is where we have the management which are powerful. In some schools inappropriately” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 3, School B).**

Another TA talked about personal power and “How we get along with our work - and respect each other.” This links back to the first interviewee’s point about everyone having power in the school.

### School C

Four separate interviewees within the third sample talked about their conception of power. The Head Teacher stated:

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“I think that there is a lot of power; we talked about this coming up to Ofsted and the school growing together. Power was about the aim to have a cohesive and collective approach where we’d all do the same thing. Consistency permeates across from the rights and responsibilities within the classroom; high expectations; marking; and how the learning environment looks. That power came from us all wanting the same vision - to be good.” **(Head Teacher, Interviewee 1 School C).**

There are a number of themes here; first, the power of a group working together in unison to achieve a clear goal: there was a priority to meet Ofsted recommendations prior to the next visit. This approach may have been discussed collectively, but likely ratified by the Head Teacher and Governors. Then, the interviewee saw communal power being developed through the agreed long-term vision for the school and strategies such as the equality policy. The Inclusion leader stated:

“I believe that everybody has power, power to learn. I don’t think it’s a top down power, I don’t think it is like the ‘great man theory’ or the big strong voice.” **(Inclusion Leader; Interviewee 2, School C).**

They also reflected on their own childhood experience:

“I didn’t have an experience at school where I learned in an environment that was incredibly regimented and where somebody was powerful.”

The Inclusion Leader made a similar point to the Head involving a collective approach of power when they focus on learning and an open environment within their school history. A linked but slightly different view of power is that from a TA who talked about the power that comes with being experienced and good at their work. They saw personal power coming with:

“Experience, you might not be high up the pay scale or within management, but, experience counts for a lot. People seek it out because it is invaluable.” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 3, School C).**



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They refer to their system of resourcing and organising teaching and learning assessments that they have developed for the school leadership. The fourth interviewee returned to influence rather than coercion.

### Summarising Interviewees' Conception of School Power

#### Similarities

All three samples contained comments on formal power such as position, rights and responsibilities or external Ofsted requirements. Also, interviewees within all three schools raised the notion of informal power: School A cited influence and clout, whilst school B considered inspiration and professional experience and School C also talked about professional experience.

#### Differences

In School C, an interviewee stated that everybody had a degree of power. Moreover, the school samples selected a number of different concepts of power e.g. School A noted clout whereas school B noted aspiration and School C talked about consistency and collaboration.

**Table 12 Summarising Interviewee Conceptions of Power**

### Formal Power

In this section I examine interviewee perception of formal power.

#### School A

The interviewees saw formal power as connected to leadership positions. The SEN Specialist Teacher said:

“Formally we have, as I said in question one, the leadership positions”

**(Inclusion Leader, Interviewee 3, School A).**

Another Class Teacher stated:

“A staff hierarchy would have the Head Teacher, Assistant Heads and then you've got the Management Team in charge of different facets”

**(Class Teacher, Interviewee 1, School A).**

Whilst the Head Teacher included the involvement of governors in relation to formal power; indeed, governors are required to ratify the school action plans for the completion, monitoring and evaluation of equality policy.

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An initial interpretation of interviewees' views on formal power may be that of a hierarchical structure of Governors, Head Teacher, Teachers, TAs and then Students; however, interviewees also talked about a flatter school model. One Teacher said:

“It’s certainly a flatter structure than in other schools. The Head sees themselves as a colleague first” **(Class Teacher, Interviewee 1, School A).**

The Head teacher, talking about a school culture said:

“Power to me implies that you are able to get things done, so you need people to be following you; here, I’m reasonably confident that most people are following and we’re not having to prod, or push too many people. When you’ve got a powerful culture then it’s hard for people to resist it. If the culture is powerful enough, it’s alright for me to stand up and be saying ‘You must do this, you must do that’, but it has to be more than that. So power kind of has to be shared. It has to be coming from all sorts of different sources.” **(Head Teacher, Interviewee 4, School A)**

Again, a TA said:

“The type of school that we work in, everybody has power” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 5, School A).**

Indeed, another TA talked about the ability and power to discuss issues with parents. They say that:

“We’ve got the power to speak to the parents” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 6, School A).**

Clearly the interviewees tend towards a discussion about a wider view of power which includes their awareness of the school culture, and their position and professionalism within it.

### School B

All the interviewees talked about formal power within the school.

A TA thought that:

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“The formal would be the hierarchy of the school” (**Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 4, School B**).

A Senior Teacher returns to the position of the Head Teacher; they say:

“We know that the buck stops with the Head, but there are other people. Power is held by different people as they have their areas of specific work. It’s actually devolving further. So, now there is a supporting math leader as well as a supporting literacy leader, we have middle leaders. It’s not a sense of power here, it is extensive responsibility” (**Class Teacher, Interviewee 5, School B**).

This seems to reflect a view of continued movement towards wider power webs which is not unlike those of Harris (2014) or Spillane (2006) on developing flatter distributed leadership within schools. Another aspect of formal power was seen as that of role where a TA talked about the power over children particularly on the playground:

“During the lesson time the teacher is in charge but at break time the TAs and LSAs they come in charge because they have to look after the children on the playground; so the shirt of power goes to them.” (**Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 2 School B**).

Here there is a continued focus on school structure but also a perception of a more fluid model of formal power-sharing.

The Deputy Head cited the wide distribution of formal power, starting from outside the school. They suggested:

“It comes from the Government, Ofsted, the Learning Trust, from the Head Teacher and then it’s through the school” (**Deputy Head Teacher, Interviewee 1, School B**).

### **School C**

All the interviewees talked about formal power within their school. The Head suggested:

“On the formal side obviously that would be me dictating, in a funny way, not dictating, the non-negotiable, the expectation in the classroom, in marking and setting targets on pupil progress, and a classroom charter” (**Head Teacher, Interviewee 1, School C**).

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Here the Head sets the formal parameters of the work within the school whereas a TA talks about the formal hierarchy:

“Formal power within a school is that we are all answerable to the governors and that feeds down to the Head Teacher, the Deputy, SENCO, Assistant Head and Phase Leaders. There are coordinators, so, Curriculum Coordinators, literacy and Numeracy and Science and so on, and then the Class Teachers and NQTs and then TA’s. I work in Year Six so my Class Teacher is the Phase Leader for Year Five and Six. It feeds down within the school, not down within the classes obviously they all have the same, um, responsibilities but for their year group” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 3, School C).**

I use this quote because first, it gives a detailed formal hierarchy of positions within the school from the point of view of the TA. and, second, they see the TAs as holding the lowest position. A second TA comes back to role:

“I think power is localised to an individual’s role within the school. So that power is, you know, if you’re an Assistant Head you’ll have more, (in inverted commas) power, than a TA for example; but, it can be swung on its head” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 4 School C).**

They go on to talk about inverted power:

“An incident that I’ve witnessed I need to report to the SENCO or Assistant Head. There I’m in a more powerful position to give a truthful version of accounts.”

This statement moves away from formal structure or role towards a knowledge base even though it is a single incident; whereas the previous TA talked about more powerful knowledge-based formal roles such as Maths or Literacy Coordinator.

Finally, this TA went on to say:

“Where there is a scuffle or a fight, I will have to exercise my power, (or if I replace the word power with authority perhaps) to remediate and deal with it - the situation” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 4, School C).**

TA input in this instance furthered the hierarchical chain of formal power to include the interaction with students.

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### Summarising Interviewee Answers on Formal Power

#### Similarities

All three samples talked about formal hierarchies within the schools from the Head teacher through to TA's. For instance, a TA having formal power to supervise students at break times on the playground. There were also descriptions of a hierarchy that included middle leaders and certain, interviewees in schools A and C linked power and leadership through a focus on authority. Moreover, specific interviewees in schools A and B talked about a wider number of people having power not just the senior leadership.

#### Differences

In School A there was a notion of a flatter structure whereas in school B the main focus was on a wider hierarchical leadership which went beyond the school to the LEA and Ofsted. There was also the notion of power being held in subject knowledge and expertise (in mathematics). Finally, there was a consideration of leaders within lessons and on the playground. School C introduces the notion of formal non-negotiables such as expectations in the classroom. An interesting observation is that the Deputy Head from school B proposed that power flows from outside into the school and then filters down within it.

**Table 13 Summarising Interviewee Answers on Formal Power**

### Informal Power

#### School A

There was limited discussion around informal power, which may be due partly to the format of the question and the similarity to leadership questions already answered. Another point for consideration is the interviewees' conception of what constitutes 'informal power'. When describing informal power, a Class Teacher proposed an example where the Head Teacher might:

“talk Informally, a quiet chat with you, in a less threatening more comfortable scenario” **(Class Teacher, Interviewee 1, School A.)**

A TA said:

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“My Class Teacher is also my friend and so it’s important that you have this formal and informal” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 5, School A).**

### School B

Four interviewees talked directly about informal power. The Deputy Head states:

“We’ve got the informal layer of things like Rights Respected in school in terms of respecting others, and we’ve got that informal ethos” **(Deputy Head, Interviewee 1, School B).**

This view of informal power included two important points; first, the informal was based on an existing school ethos of respect and openness between people within the school community and its’ external interactions. Second the informal ethos was further reinforced through an external model relating to the UNICEF Rights Respected Programme. Informal power was seen here as a continuous process of respect which is regularly discussed by the community. A relatively young and inexperienced interviewee also made a point about the informal; they suggested:

“Thinking about what is informal power, the age differences and the experience levels of staff as well, that’s an informal one” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 4, School B).**

Another TA saw specific ways of dealing with students and staff as using power informally. They noted that a formal response to a student might be:

“You have to put this away now! Then it’s an order. Whereas If I say, can you please put this away, it is framed as a request; therefore, it is informal”.

Later, they gave another example; when discussing interactions with staff,

“Can you monitor that child and make sure that who are watching what they are doing?’ I’m not saying to you that you have to do it, I’m asking can you do it”. **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 2, School B).**

This interviewee clearly interpreted giving someone a choice rather than a command, as informal. Finally, a third TA talked about the use of informal power when devising appropriate strategies to help individual SEN Students access a new topic in mathematics or P.E. This interviewee’s contribution moves from a

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general view of informal power to very clear examples within the ethos of that school.

### School C

Four interviewees talked directly about informal power: The Head teacher stated “Informally all the teaching assistants - wanted the school to get to Good, (an Ofsted Inspection Grade). Everyone had that understanding”.

They went on to say that informal included the development of new teaching and learning initiatives:

“We have used iPads running a Two C Reading Project that was very successful last year. So now we are running it again informally and the TA’s are in charge. We are not part of it formally through the local authority we’re not part of that.” (**Head Teacher, Interviewee 1, School C**).

A TA talked about their informal work on the playground such as dealing with specific problems as they arose. An example from my own experience was where a student had a packet of sweets and wanted to be friends with others, the others were friendly as long as they had sweets but then returned to unfriendly after the packet was finished. A TA who had observed this behaviour talked with the group about ‘fairness and kindness’ encouraged the students to reflect on what they had done. This was a specific intervention, a one-off and was not taken further. Therefore, it remained informal in this instance.

Both interviewees talked about informality within the school teaching and learning atmosphere. In the first case it was about informality of developing a school initiative whereas in the second it involved the power of the TA to deal with a specific issue. The question here is that both interviewees talked about informal power within a formal model of teaching, learning and behaviour. A second TA focussed upon the development of an individual’s experience; they said:

“Informally, I suppose staff who have been here for a particularly long time who may not be as senior in the pay scale or whatever you term it but because of their experience for being in one place for a long, long

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time, or teaching for a long time, their views are sought and valued”  
**(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 3, School C).**

A Class Teacher commented:

“As I said before, the informal side of it is people come in with their ideas and just that of general power or understanding on an informal basis where, you know, again linking with the leading, where some people are coming up with ideas and the leaders are using those ideas”  
**(Class Teacher, Interviewee 6, School C).**

These two interviewees consider experience and the use of ideas as powerful and both made links to informal power-holding by individuals.

### Summarising Interviewee Answers on Informal Power

#### Similarities

Interviewees saw informal power as ‘sharing’, they include the friendships or charisma of staff and/or students within and beyond the school, or actions which go beyond the school core practices. One interviewee definitely saw certain work practices as informal; for example, the development of expertise in a TA voluntarily taking over and running computer reading schemes. Is this informal? Finally, there was a statement about ‘chats’ that take place outside of formal discussion.

#### Differences

I found a major difference in this study in that power in School A tended towards a focus on trust between individuals and teams, and limited paperwork; whereas schools’ B and C focussed on respect, and more formality including written documentation.

**Table 14 Summarising Interviewee Answers on Informal Power**

## The Reporting of Interviewees’ Answers on Control

In this section I report on individual interviewee’ interpretations of control within their schools and I comment on the similarities and differences between them. I begin with an examination of conceptions of control within the individual schools, before moving onto aspects of formal and informal control. The majority of the qualitative analysis is based on interviewee responses to questions eleven and



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twelve “What is your understanding of control in the school both formal and informal? Can you give examples? How is that control distributed in your school formally and informally? Can you give examples?”

### The interviewees' conception of Control

#### School A

The six interviewees talked separately about their conceptualisation of control. A TA suggested that:

“control, leadership, power and respect .... goes into one” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 2, School A).**

They also said,

“It is important to have control for many reasons, for health and safety reasons, for making it a safe and a secure place for children definitely, for including equal opportunities, behaviour management”.

I suggest that the TA's initial statement about a single concept bringing power and control together is interesting; certainly writers like Bernstein (1971-2000) produced a model of power and control within educational establishments; however, he sees them as separate elements of a theoretical model. Indeed, I argue that the actual interviewee sees control as regularity and management. Three interviewees talked specifically about control as regularity. For example, the school Inclusion Leader stated:

“If I was in charge more written systems would be in place. This school doesn't run like that but runs all the better for it. I'm just a bit more of a control freak” **(Inclusion Leader, Interviewee 3, School A).**

Again a Class Teacher noted:

“There is a control, I'm thinking of a kind of spider web where it is interconnected but one central point and I think the central point is the children. We're all working towards what we want best for the children” **(Class Teacher, Interviewee 1, School A).**

A second TA said that they had,

“A meeting with (a class teacher) and we've got a timetable for this week. I've got my timetable” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 6, School A).**

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All three talked about regularity of tasks within the school. Another developed control further and then linked it with management when they said:

“I think that management is consistent in a way that policies are there to work with and the fact that they have consistency” (**Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 5, School A**).

The Head teacher, conceptualised control within the box of power, stating that:

“Power gains control. It’s the way I see it. So if you’ve got the power to gain control, the control is what you do with the power. Control again comes from everyone understanding what’s expected” (**Head teacher, Interviewee 4, School A**).

First the Head teacher places power before control (Foucault 2004, Bernstein 2000). Second, it seems that control is exercised by everyone in the school; however, I suggest that control ultimately sits with the senior leadership who have responsibility for setting and maintaining expectations. In summary all six interviewees talked about control and nominated specific elements including regularity, management and the difference between power and control.

### School B

Two participants gave their definitions of control. A TA said:

“My definition of control is where you’ve been ordered to do something and that person is controlling you to do it! So you haven’t got no power to do anything else. Or you’ve given me a direction - I’ve got to go in that (direction). That’s my understanding of control. In a school setting I presume, we have that control, you are given guidelines and guidance and - you work in a structure that you have to follow as such” (**Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 2, School B**).

This TA was clear about their view of control wherein the follower must obey the controller or leader; there is no choice. However, when talking about their school establishment they focussed on guidelines and guidance whilst inferring that there was a degree of choice by the controlled. That there was room to make choices within the controlled space. A second TA built on this and said:

“I would still label control as positive control. It might not be clear when I say positive. For example, at the beginning of the term in September,

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we know what's happening in the school. This includes job positions and changes of job. They, the senior management, are in charge of all that. They control it!". (**Teaching Assistant Interviewee 3, School B**).

This interviewee, saw control in this context as a positive that kept the staff informed and that supported their professional effectiveness in the role they held within the school structures.

### School C

A Head Teacher; an Inclusion Leader and a Teaching Assistant (TA) talked about the conceptualisation of control from their view point. The Head Teacher stated:

"Control could be in the structures and how things are run. From the children's point of view maybe, it could be to 'stay on green' (our behaviour policy about responsibility, respect and ownership of your own behaviour)." (**Head Teacher, Interviewee 1, School C**).

The term 'Stay on Green' is a behaviour model for students used by the school; a traffic light system where green is good, amber indicates a problem and red highlights poor behaviour.

"Obviously as adults we're responsible for our behaviour and meshing together as a staff. I think I'm lucky at the moment, but previously, I had other members of staff that were trying to take control by not doing something that the school wanted to implement."

I suggest that the Head's conception of control includes school structure and process on the one hand and self-control by the school community on the other. Moreover, the interviewee also touched upon the possibility of conflict between school control and an individual's; hence, self-control may conflict with school control. The Inclusion Leader said:

"I must admit, I giggled when I read this, (the question on control) I suppose I shouldn't but control again, like power, is very interesting because it made it sound as if there was a controller at the head of the door. There isn't! What there are, what we have, are charismatic personalities in the school. And I think that this is totally different to control. And, I think that really does help. We do however, need children and adults to exercise self-control; I was thinking about that

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and the behaviour policy is very good” (**Inclusion Leader, Interviewee 2, School C**).

This interviewee’s view seemed to be similar to the Head teacher’s in that they both focussed on self-control for student and adult; however, they then moved away from control to consider charismatic power or personality. The TA refers to self-control and the control of others:

“I think that control is another ambiguous term, I wasn’t sure whether you meant self-control or control over others. If you mean both I can say I think my understanding of control is that we have to act on and within our remit to control the children and make it the most conducive environment to learning. So, we exercise that control” (**Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 4, School C**).

Whilst the three interviewees all talked about self-control and school control, the Inclusion Leader moved towards charismatic control, or the personal ability to control a situation rather than formal school control (Weber 1910-14).

### Summarising Interviewee Conceptions of Control

#### Similarities

All interviewees gave their views on control: school A, B and C all cited structure as an essential element of control; whereas School A specifically cited timetables and an individual expressed a strong preference for written systems.

#### Differences

In School A interviewees talked about similarity of power and control: the links to health and safety; ‘the spider of control’, and consistency. Whereas School B noted the use of guidelines and positive control; and School C mentioned respect, responsibility, self-control and a remit to control others including the students.

**Table 15 Summarising Interviewee Conceptions of Control**

### Formal Control

#### School A

The six interviewees provided their notions about formal control within their separate interviews. A Class Teacher said:

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“Control is formally distributed (through) the Governing Body, the Leadership Team, the Teachers, the TAs, that’s the formal structure - --You’ve got the Outside Agencies who work with them too; Social Workers, doctors and nurses who might come and deal with particular issues” **(Class Teacher, Interviewee 1, School A).**

Similarly, the Inclusion Leader said (of control):

“I’ve always found, the first port of call being that the child really needs it. It does the job, I’ve never had to slip into a ‘do it as I say do it” **(Inclusion Leader, Interviewee 3, School A).**

A TA, speaking of control, described:

“the flow of supporting children in the classroom or externally including groups; whole-class, at times, (and) managing playgrounds personally” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 2, School C).**

All three interviewees saw formal control as an essential part of student support with the student at the centre of school work, where regularity of structure allows continued beneficial control. Another interviewee (a TA) returned to the term ‘management’ which again they related to regularity. Finally, the Head Teacher came back to the view of ‘culture’:

“The school community understands ‘that’s not the way we do things here, or this is the way we do things here’. It’s a ‘we’ and it becomes a cultural thing.” **(Head Teacher, Interviewee 4, School A).**

### **School B**

The Deputy Head Teacher, said, of formal structures and regulations:

“In terms of Ofsted, and say the LEA code of conduct, (the LEA code attempts to define good school practice) there are all these rules and regulations - which is about formal control.” **(Deputy Head Teacher, Interviewee 1, School B).**

Similarly, a TA also sees the Code of Conduct as a central example of formal control:

“You’ve got to follow everything in the Code of Conduct. So, obviously, you’ve got to follow a set path, set patterns. The code of conduct comes from the LEA. Then we need to follow that because

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- we don't want to be sued. It protects us as well as the children."

**Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 2, School B).**

Here, both interviewees saw external regulations as part of formal control within their school. All members of staff were required to follow these requirements. Indeed, the TA believed that formal regulations supported the legal position of employees within the school. External regulation provides a basis for processes and system within and across schools. A Class Teacher went on to detail the formal structure of control as:

"Areas of management" (including) "People have subject areas; people have phases that they manage; - the (Class) Teacher manages the classroom, and the TA the LSA that work in their classrooms. The TAs and LSAs may have further management of a specific group of children or a specific intervention. There are very few people here who are not actually involved in the managing of something in some way." **(Class Teacher, Interviewee 5, School B).**

The focus was on a structure of management from teachers through to TA's. Interestingly this Teacher thought that the majority of staff in the school had management responsibilities. Similarly, a TA also saw management as part of formal control:

"The management gives us positions (at break time) someone in the first aid room and there would be some of us in the playground"  
**(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 4, School B).**

They also stated:

"Everyone needs to have some level of understanding of how to manage groups of children at one time. Behavioural problems that kind of thing. It all comes down to how you deal with it. Everyone here is involved with that."

However; here they were referring directly to the control or management of students which was seen as being required from all staff. A second TA further develops the element of management, linking it to school policy:

"You have to work according to behaviour policies and that's a strong thing because if it's followed throughout the school for the children

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that sort of shows you some kind of control for the children. 'This is the boundary I cannot cross!' **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 6, School B).**

I suggest that this second TA's statement brings their view of management and policy together.

Meetings were raised separately by two interviewees when answering the control questions. A TA talked about formal meetings between the senior management and the TA team, saying:

"Every Wednesday we've got a meeting with our Line Manager, they give us all the information it's very, very useful" **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 3, School B).**

The Deputy Head also cited meetings about classroom observation:

"We had to go round and check the use of additional adults, I think it was trying to encourage and enable people to see what the good aspects of their practice were; slightly remind people what they needed to have in place, and the reasons for that; but also, to thank them for their work". **(Deputy Head Teacher, Interviewee 1, School B).**

I argue here that the interviewees focussed on three aspects; regularity, management structure and the use of on-going meetings as important elements of control within the school.

### School C

The Inclusion Leader saw formal control as:

"Distributed throughout the school in every class, in every year group, in the leadership team as well. 'Distributed' makes me think about fairly and it is very fair. We have a very fair school. I can't think of any instances of unfairness. It has been great over the last couple of years watching the children become more self-controlled - you can really see 'Stay on green,' having effect". **(Inclusion Leader, Interviewee 2, School C).**

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There are two points here; first the interviewee talked about control being distributed through the school community including the development of students' self-control particularly 'over the last couple of years'. Second, the distribution of control within the school was seen as "fair - not unfair"! They saw this system of control as being part of general good practice. When answering the two questions on school control the Inclusion Leader also added a third aspect of control based around professionalism. They gave an example where the Head Teacher briefed the staff to follow certain guidelines and regulations within the school to reduce professional problems. I suggest that the interviewee sees the term professionalism as a control mechanism used by the school.

Other interviewees developed the controlling aspects of behaviour policy and professionalism within the school. A particular TA said

"Controlling may be by instructions like 'Stay on Green'. We have a green/traffic light system in class so every child will start on an even keel" (**Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 4, School C**).

This view is similar to the Inclusion Leader on two counts; both talked about the behaviour policy as an element of control and also that there was an awareness of fairness/equality in that control needed to be exercised with fairness or equity in interactions between staff and students.

In their (separate) interviews, a TA and a Class Teacher, considered formal control within professional systems in the school. The TA mentioned staff appraisal and the use of new teaching initiatives introduced by the senior leadership. The Class Teacher on the other hand detailed the use of meetings and the 'scrutiny of work' of both students and teachers.

The Head Teacher, talking about classroom control, stated:

"The Class Teacher and TAs have an expectation of what the children need to do well, supporting the children in their learning; giving feedback on how to develop; giving targets and - assertive mentoring. Most of those are formal because we expect this" (**Head teacher, Interviewee 1, School C**).



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Another interviewee, a TA, explained about being in control of a certain set of students.

“The children have been put into maths sets which is a new concept for our school. Previously they were taught as a class but with differentiation within the lesson. Now they are taught separately to ability. I teach the low ability from both classes, they come with me every day for their maths lesson. It’s not something that all TAs do, it’s just myself. The other maths groups are taught by class teachers and maths specialists” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 3 School C).**

The Head sets out their view of teaching and learning based on expectation, support and asking students to reflect on their next learning steps. This ‘assertive mentoring’ model seems to be defined, led and controlled by the senior leadership. A TA talks about the changed dynamics of the mathematics lessons; taking control of sessions; they believe that the structure works well because it gives the particular TA control over a regular set group of students.

### Summarising Interviewee Answers on Formal Control

#### Similarities

Data from the case study schools identified formal elements of control as administrative and self-control; regularity and management. School administrative control was seen as the cycles, systems, structures and processes of the core work of the school; certain interviewees focussed on self-control and gave particular school or personal circumstances. A number of interviewees saw regularity as a key component of control citing the use of formal codes, regulations and timetables. Finally, management in terms of consistency of structure, and process was perceived as an element of formal control.

#### Differences

A noticeable difference between interviewees’ focus on control was that the more senior participants tended to give an overview of formal control across the school whereas TA evidence detailed playground or student-group control.

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This was found to be the case across the three case study schools. More specifically an interviewee in School A talked about a 'We' culture of control rather than 'I'; whereas, in School B there was a discussion on behaviour policy. Finally an interviewee considered 'fairness'.

**Table 16 Summarising Interviewee Answers on Formal Control**

### Informal Control

#### School A

There was less data around informal aspects of control. Only two interviewees spoke directly about informal control. A Class Teacher gave two aspects of informal control from their standpoint, saying

“The librarian at the library, who sees the child once a week is informally in control. Because that child needs a book they will get it for them” **(Class teacher, Interviewee 1, School A)**.

In this extract the librarian's position was seen as informal: however, I find this problematic; the Librarian's role is formal. There are particular protocols for librarians about school visits. On the school side; there are formal policy requirements when taking students beyond school premises. There always has to be a named adult in charge. The second example concerned students;

“But then you'll get students' friends who've got control over them; peers outside of their classroom who've got control.”

I would suggest this example is informal, since friendships may extend way beyond the school and are not centred on core school work. The Inclusion Leader also made two points about informal control; saying,

“As far as informally goes, I think that it's the things that (the Head) doesn't necessarily have in black and white on a hard drive, at one click, of his fingers.” **(Inclusion Leader, Interviewee 3, School A)**.

They go on to state:

“People are trusted to get on with it and know what (was) discussed (and what) we're doing.”

The interviewee suggests that any activity not written down; but expected to happen, was a form of informal control, relying on mutual trust. I suggest, that while being trusted to do your job in a certain way may appear to indicate a degree

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of informal, or self-control, in a school establishment, being entrusted is predicated on acceptance of professional standards of control.

### School B

Four interviewees talked separately about informal control. The Deputy Head gave as an example:

“The Rights Respected ethos; encouraging a system we want to work in; and how we want to operate, and making it a respectful place to work in and having pride and purpose in an informal way.” **(Deputy Head Teacher, Interviewee 1, School B).**

The adoption of a particular programme (Rights Respected UNICEF) into the school ethos was seen as informal control where there are principles to follow as a school community; listening and being critical friends for each other. The ethos may not necessarily have had written rules; however, as an outside visitor to the school I was aware that classes led by the adults had made and displayed general charters or principals to follow. A TA, (interviewee 4) pondered about informal control by a Class Teacher over TA's, saying,

“Informally? So, control, especially, in the classroom, the teacher knows what you are capable of doing. She will give you specific children to work with so she understands that side of it.” They go on to say, “There would be some of us in the playground. We take it on ourselves to actually get the children up to lunch because they need to go up class by class (and) would help each other out to get the children in line you know”. **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 4, School B).**

A second TA also saw a certain amount of informal control on the playground when talking to students about instances of poor behaviour. They said:

“To talk to them to try to get them to understand why they are feeling in that way. Why they are doing what they are doing and sort of being a warning.” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 6, School B).**

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I believe that schools throughout the country would recognise this example as a more or less daily occurrence; in the past I personally experienced numerous instances where the TA or teacher on the playground had to intervene to ensure that there was a degree of equality. For instance, where certain groups, usually girls or disabled children were not allowed to join in a game of football. The Race Equality Amendment Act 2000 Schools have worked formally with students through their school codes of conduct to redress inequality and unfairness. Indeed, Research School A actively promotes mixed games and dance on the playground each morning.

### School C

Four interviewees separately discussed what informal control meant to them. A TA gives a description of a form of informality:

“Informally I could use examples on the playground or the dinner hall and there’s an element of control there but you have to keep order, otherwise no one has lunch and everyone’s hungry.” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 4, School C).**

This interviewee sees informal control in working on the playground or lunch hall, but it was weakly defined because they focus on order, particularly during the lunch break. Whilst a Class Teacher gave as an example:

“Informal basis, in terms of not written down; a book scrutiny or a planning scrutiny. It might be a passing comment as to ‘It would be better if you did something like that’. But sometimes it is more formal in terms of written and ‘these are your targets that need to be addressed’. So there will be formal or informal parts to that” **(Class Teacher, Interviewee 6, School C).**

This suggestion that informal control is based on a passing word rather than written notes or report is clearer than the earlier speaker’s; also, the illustration is limited to an aspect of work. The Inclusion Leader widens the view of school control:

“I think that informal control, in some ways, is when you behave fairly yourself to everyone that sets a good example for other people to do the same” **(Inclusion Leader, Interviewee 2, School C).**

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This interviewee cited leading by example as a means of informal control. The Head Teacher turned to attempting to resolve issues informally when conflict arises between a staff member and the school requirements. They stated that informal control:

“Can be quite abstractive, but it is control and because it’s informal it can navigate away from where you want the school to go to” (**Head Teacher, Interviewee 1, School C**).

Informal Control
<b>Similarities</b> Schools A and B talked indirectly about influence. Whereas A cited trust, B noted respect. However, similarities were limited.
<b>Differences</b> There were mixed views; some considered that spoken rather than written interaction was more likely to represent informal control. Whilst others suggested friendships as a mechanism for informal control. The spoken included a description of taking people aside for a ‘chat’ in the corridor or solving a specific dispute or conflict by talking it through on the playground or in the office. There was a view by a certain interviewee that student/student friendships represented a type of informal control; a control reaching beyond the classroom and school similar to that of staff friendships with other staff. One interviewee considered activities involving other professions as informal. Whereas, I would argue, that any kind of activity taking students and staff beyond the school must be classified as formal. At the end of the day, any adult with responsibility for leading a school group off the premises is in <i>loco parentis</i> and must retain overall responsibility for control.

**Table 17 Summarising Interviewee Answers on Informal Control**

## Discussion

### Power/ Leadership

I found that a number of interviewees within all three schools saw concepts of power and leadership as similar or inextricably linked. Moreover, one interviewee

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in School C suggested that everyone exercised a degree of power/leadership. Interviewees saw leadership based on professional role or position, such as that of a head teacher; leader of science, mathematics or inclusion, whereas others considered personal leadership traits such as charisma. Nevertheless, these positions are formal and based on legal contracts (MacBeath 2009). Finally, one interviewee particularly noted that power/leadership can be positive or negative. They suggest that in their school leadership seems to be positive, but they remember schools that used leadership negatively. Crawford suggests that the interaction of authority and influence is seen as power by authors in the USA; whereas those in the UK define the relationship as leadership. Moreover, Harris (2014, 2008) and Spillane (2010, 2006) argued that professional expert leadership was central school improvement whereas Davise suggests that leadership involves strategic long term planning. Caldwell (2008) considered the development of the charismatic leaders within schools. Davies and Brighouse (2008) cite personal passion and focus as an important element of effective leadership. I agree with the interviewees and authors about the similarity between power and control and its application in schools. However, I also suggest that the leadership of a school is a wicked problem (Grint 2010): not least because there are political drivers, both internal and external to consider.

### **Control/Management**

Interviewees in all three schools talked about the planned, systematic development of equality policy. The head teachers in each case had led on consultation, discussion and initial preparation of draft policy. Indeed, as a professional consultant, I was aware that the case study schools had also sought external professional advice on planning new equality policy following the Equality Act (2010). Interviewees also raised the subject of management of day-to-day problems, such as ensuring cover for absent staff; also the organisation of lesson and break time rotas and timetables. For example, one interviewee considered the rota for TAs working on the playground and noted the management problems when a TA is away. They described the discussions between TAs to resolve the rota issue agreeably and with respect. (Cotton 2004 p.57). Another remarked about the Inclusion leader's management of timetabling SEN reviews with parents and other agencies such as Speech Therapy. Davies

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(2011 p.79) sees timetabling as important when developing strategies. Finally, I argue that the interviewees examples were based on complicated but tame linear management problems (Grint 2010 p.15).

### **Leadership/Management Continuum at Micro and Meso Levels**

I viewed leadership and management as a continuum as suggested in my framework chapter. In answering my questions on leadership, I found that interviewees initially used the term leadership, (possibly partly due to the format of the questions). However, they then moved into detailed answers that were framed in terms of management. This somewhat reflects authors like Western (2008) who links leadership and management or Spillane (2010) who places leadership in the foreground with management sitting in the background. It seems to me that the continuum of Leadership/power and management/control can work at the micro, meso and macro levels. The interviewee data allowed detailed analysis at the micro level of participants within a school and the meso level of similarities and differences between schools.

### **Formal and Informal Leadership/Management**

Interviewees argued that formal leadership was comprised of roles, positions and linked policy and planning. For instance, they all stated that their schools had a formal leader of equality policy development: the head teachers of schools A and C and the deputy head in School B. The 'how' of developing the policies began with senior leadership commitment to initiating a process of written drafting with external consultation from the LEA, followed by discussion with the wider staff through full school meetings and within specific teams. As a professional insider I was aware that all three school leaders had developed timetables to meet the 'why' of the school goal set by school funders, to prepare and examine new written equality policies. Similar to the interviewees, authors like Harris (2014, 2008) MacBeath (2009) and Spillane (2006) suggest that formal leadership involves position, role, job description or contract. This authority is based on school values and vision (Davies 2011 p.25) and the external accountability such as Ofsted inspection. Given the similar views of interviewees and commentators I argue that formality was an important component when examining the leadership of school equality policy.

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

Given the specifics of formal leadership/management as defined above; the examination of informal led me to consider areas such as specialism or expertise (Harris (2008); or activities that go beyond core school work (Spillane 2006). Interviewees covered a wide range of situations where they described the use of staff specialists and/or experts as informal. For instance; in School B an interviewee recalled a situation where her SEN expertise was asked for by a colleague in relation to the needs of a particular student. The interviewee gave advice and support to their colleague informally. It was not a direct requirement coming from a senior leader. Hence, the 'how' was the informal use of SEN expertise by a trusted colleague meeting the 'why' of supporting another TA by offering professional advice and support. A second example promulgated was of a TA in School B volunteering to lead a group of students to develop handicrafts during break times. The students who had chosen to participate. They enjoyed the sessions and the school was later able to sell some of their craft work to raise funds for charities. In this second case the 'how' included initial expertise of a TA informally supported students learning at break times. The process was voluntary, open to all students and supported the equality of student learning. However, did this situation continue informally? Apparently these sessions were so popular they were later timetabled and supported by the senior leadership. I suggest that this situation then moved into the formal use of expertise. I argue that the informal becomes formal in any situation when they meet the central goals of the school.

### **Hierarchical Structures**

Foucault (2004) considered the hierarchies of prisons and hospitals whereas Bass (2008) focusses on business and Spillane and Diamond (2007) and Bernstein, examine schools. A number of interviewees considered hierarchies within schools. Some commented on a hierarchical chain of demands from the external authorities (Ofsted, DES and LEA) through to the internal, from the head teacher to the TA. This is an interesting suggestion. However, I argue that although government funding and Ofsted examines accountability schools have a degree of choice over the internal hierarchy of a school is based on clear authority and influence of agreed positions ratified by the governing body. Moreover, the hierarchy of a school can be strong or weak (Bernstein 2000) or



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tight or flexible (Handy 1999 p.107). For instance, certain interviewees considered the use of a strong hierarchy which regularly reviewed staff targets whereas others discussed the development flatter structures within their schools. A particular interviewee considered the situation where the school was preparing for an Ofsted inspection and the requirements coming through the hierarchy, for staff compliance were strong; whereas the debate and discussion of developing equality policy involved more open, flatter structures including regular feedback from staff. Authors like Harris (2014) and Hopkins (2007) also examine the movement in hierarchy from strong to weak and back due to the demands on the school leadership. Similar to Bernstein, I saw leadership/power and management/control move separately from strong or weak. However, like Dowling (1999) I believe it is difficult to set objective weak/strong points instead I examine difference between specific case study schools and widen that. I agree that school hierarchies can be weak or strong according to the situation. My research shows that all three schools had moved towards weakened leadership and management with flatter two-way discussion and practice, when developing equality policy.

### **Covert/Overt Leadership/management**

My analysis found that there were many examples of overt, observable forms of leadership: including coercion, exchange, rules, procedures and persuasion (Handy 1999, p.133). Certain interviewees in School A suggested that the head teacher can push members of staff to follow establishment goals by using their influence or 'clout', whilst Interviewees across the schools gave numerous examples of positive exchanges between staff such as a TA in School B sharing expertise on SEN with another whereas that other colleague gave detail about their experience of specific students. Indeed, I witnessed numerous formal exchanges in all three schools based on formal role, post and contract when visiting them. There were many examples of rules and procedures around the development of equality policy. For instance, certain interviewees within Schools B and C noted the regularity of staff meetings on developing and monitoring equality policy. Finally, interviewees noted examples of persuasion. For instance, leaders used persuasion with staff followers to agree certain equality policy developments such as evening community events. It can be argued that

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the events required agreement by the followers because this was moving beyond their usual formal roles. I argue that there was ample evidence of overt, observable leadership coming from careful analysis of my research data.

Handy (1999) considers covert unobserved leadership/power as environment and magnetism whereas Lukes (2005) examines latent leadership/power. Several interviewees within my study reflected upon the environment or culture of leadership within their schools; one spoke of an ethos that “gives us inspiration’. They suggested that the culture was positive and open; however, one interviewee in School B noted that they knew of another school that had a culture where ‘the senior leadership was negative and closed’.

### **Solo and Distributed leadership**

My detailed analysis of interviewee data suggests that certain equality policy tasks required solo leadership whereas others were distributed amongst a leadership team. Ergo, the school leader on equality policy makes decisions on initiating practice, whereas the teaching team deliver and take part in the review of practice. A TA in School C took the lead on the collection and storing of important student assessment materials whereas the teaching team selected and used appropriate resources. Authors like Grint (2010) Western (2008) and Spillane (2006) consider the movement from solo, heroic leadership by the head teacher to distributed leadership. Indeed, Harris (2008) and Gronn (2000) argued that the complexity of school systems and their improvement required distributed leadership through a wider group of specialists and teams. In fact, Spillane argued that distributed leadership necessitates interaction and on-going leadership practice rather than simple delegation by the head teacher. More recently Crawford (2012) and Gronn (2009 a, b,) suggest that the history and present practices of leadership involved a hybrid. An illustration is where the equality leader in the three school set out the aims and timetable of policy development whereas teams of teaching staff develop specific practices on access and opportunity for all members of the school community. I agree with Gronn that running a school is highly complex and therefore leadership problems may require both solo and distributed leadership at the same time. Certainly my research found this to be the case in relation to school equality policy.

**Chapter Five**  
**School Leadership**  
**Characteristics: Views of**  
**Interviewees**

## Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy

In this chapter I analyse and discuss interviewee responses arising from my second research question; what leadership characteristics come out of a school diversities and equalities context? The codes coming from my qualitative analysis were derived from interviewee views of the what, how and why of leadership characteristics within their particular schools. In this discussion I consider the characteristics identified by interviewees participating in my research project. The main leadership characteristics that interviewees talked about are shown in the table below.

Leadership Characteristics	School A Interviewees	School B Interviewees	School C Interviewees	All Interviewees
Team	5	3	5	13
Experience	4	5	2	11
Respect	1	4	5	10
Sharing	3	4	3	10
Role	3	1	4	8
Skills	2	1	4	7
Communication	3	3	0	6
Ethos	0	3	3	6
Totals	21	24	26	71

**Table 18 Leadership Characteristics**

The table shows a range of eight major leadership characteristics identified by the 18 interviewees which runs from Team through to Ethos. For instance, Team was represented by 13 interviewees across all three schools; whereas, only 6 interviewees from across 2 schools spoke of Ethos. Interviewees cited 21 characteristics overall; however, some were used by very few.

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## Team

During the analytical process I found that thirteen interviewees directly used the term team when discussing the leadership of school equality policy. Based on interviewee commentary I define 'team' as a particular school leadership characteristic, involving a leader or leaders; followers, and situation over particular time period. Spillane, (2006 p.53) describes a school team meeting involving literacy and heritage leaders; other staff and a focus on effective teaching assessment at a specific timed meeting. I found that interviewees gave direct answers about formal and informal; overt/covert and solo/team leadership. There were also clear descriptions of teams carrying out joint tasks and individuals performing solo tasks for the team.

Team Types	
Formal - Roles/positions and written descriptions	Informal – Influence/persuasion and trust; one-off processes
Overt – Observable groups e.g. Senior Leadership Team producing observable outcomes e.g. minutes.	Covert – Latent leadership within the team e.g. an experienced/respected member of the team

**Table 19 Team Types**

## Formal Teams

### School A

The Head teacher in School A says:

“In the end the head teacher is obviously the head of the school, so that’s me. What we’ve tried to do is to create a distributed leadership. So we’ve got two Assistant Heads and then I’ve got Subject Leaders and I think a strong team” **(Head Teacher; Interviewee 4, School A).**

Whereas a class teacher says:

“A staff hierarchy that would have the Head Teacher, the Assistant Heads and then you’ve got the Management Team in charge of different facets (including Equality Policy)” **(Class Teacher, Interviewee 1 School A).**

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Both interviewees considered the formal school senior leadership teams and individual role/position. They also suggest that these are overt. However, the second interviewee was aware of a hierarchy of school positions. A TA developed the notion of team within the classroom. They go on to suggest that they share the same behaviour management (including Equality Policy) in the classroom:

“I’m presently working with (a teacher) for eleven years and I think that we make a great team together. We use the same structure in class”

**(Teaching Assistant; interviewee 2, School A).**

The TA’s remarks highlight a notion of teamwork moving beyond general school positions into the world of the classroom; particularly the TA’s relationship with the Class Teacher. It is likely that the Class Teacher leads on teaching and behaviour practice in the classroom but it also seems that the TA’s views are listened to and both share similar practice. I suggest that this situation is similar to the views of authors like Blatchford et al (2012), who examined the development and complexity of TAs’ roles and their relationship with qualified Class Teachers. Indeed, the Head teacher of the school later describes the impact of formal TA meetings in unifying TA vision:

“I was struck how unified their kind of vision; their particular vision (was) within their own team and, that really has been formally lead in the sense that they have regular meetings” **(Head Teacher, School A).**

Finally, a TA states:

“We’ve got, ‘Reach to the stars’. So we’re all, kind of, in teams throughout the school. We use team points, house points, and give them out to children that are obviously achieving and for good behaviour and rewarding. So we reward that in our class and at the end of the week their points are collected and put up on the hall display for everybody else to see - it’s working as a whole team” **(Teaching Assistant; Interviewee 2 School A).**

This TA considers a wide range of teams throughout the school including student teams. They highlight equality of opportunity to gain ‘team/house points’ through positive achievement or behaviour.

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### School B

A member of the senior management in School B said:

“Teaching and learning is the responsibility of the leadership team, as opposed to that of the individual teacher. It has got to be a team’s responsibility rather than that of one person. So, if that goes down, (the standard of teaching and learning) it’s a reflection on the leadership, the quality of the leadership, for not having identified the weakness and not addressed the weakness.” **(Assistant Head Interviewee 1, School B).**

This interviewee speaks similarly about the importance of the senior leadership; they are aware of the requirements of ‘quality leadership in identifying and addressing school weaknesses’. The senior leadership team may lead but they also have other school responsibilities. However, they are not the only formal, overt team; a Class Teacher talked about “middle leadership team” (Class teacher, Interviewee 5, School B). There are leaders to ensure school tasks are completed but also they have responsibilities agreed by the school governors and followers in the school community. Similar to Spillane (2006) the interviewee is aware of core school work. A TA talked clearly about formal overt structure at the school:

“My idea of leadership in the school team is, like, the Head Teacher, Deputy Head, and in this school there is an assistant Deputy Head as well. If there are any issues, we can go to any one of those to sort problems out or ask questions to anything like that. That is my idea of a leadership - in the school” **(Teaching Assistant; interviewee 2, School B).**

The importance of this statement is twofold; first their view of structure is similar to the senior management; second, the TA can ask questions or solve problems with help from a senior leader. The effective discussion between school professionals like senior leaders and TAs suggest the possibility of a flatter hierarchical school structure (Harris 2008).

### School C

The Head teacher gives a deal of detail on overt formal school structure;

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“We have a leadership structure within the school, and the main structure is we have a leadership team that consists of myself, the deputy head, the assistant head and obviously then after that we have a senior management team which is more the middle management leaders and phase leaders who can be running either Early Years Foundation Stage, Year One and Two; Three and Four and Five and Six and then key areas of literacy and numeracy, RE and science”  
**(Head teacher; Interviewee 1, School C).**

The interviewee talked clearly about the formal structure of the school from the Head down to the specialists in literacy numeracy science and RE. There is more detail about phase and subject leaders; however, there is no mention of TAs as part of the formal team structure, although later in the interview TAs taking on extra roles were mentioned. Nevertheless, a TA at the school says,

“The Head; the deputy; the Leadership Team, can’t do it all by themselves --- the leaders they inspire and give confidence to everybody else to feel that they can lead as well; that it’s a group effort”  
**(Teaching Assistant: Interviewee 5, School C).**

The TA is aware of the formal structure but also feels that leaders inspire confidence in everyone. The TA view moves away from a hierarchical leadership to a flatter form where everyone can be involved and inspired. It is interesting that the TA had a wider view of teamwork across the school.

### Summarising Formal Team

#### Similarities

Interviewees in all three case studies schools identified the formal and overt nature of teamwork; individual’s and teams such as the head teacher who leads the senior leadership team. All teams had clearly defined tasks. For instance, during the interviews participants discussed tasks undertaken by middle leadership teams. A team in School B produced curriculum resources for Key Stage One maths whereas in School C a similar team worked on a new RE unit. The teams took the units back to a full Staff Meeting for debate. Formal teams were seen as important by all case study schools. There are a mix of teams but most teaching teams have regular meetings, roles and tasks such



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as the development of equality policy.

### Differences

Some interviewees included Governors and TA teams, whereas others consider teams such as the school 'Kitchen Staff'.

**Table 20 Summarising Formal Team**

## Informal Teams

### School A

The Head in School A considers informal teams:

“We tend to work quite informally to be honest. This is a small school and I think one of the benefits is that everybody knows what everybody else is doing and that’s quite good because if people know everybody’s roles there’s a lot of inter-connection between the work that gets done. You don’t get teams working in isolation. They’re working beside other teams and they can often crossover between teams” **(Head Teacher; Interviewee 4, School A)**.

Informal teams are seen as a positive and part of the particular ethos of school A, they ‘interconnect and crossover’. However, a Class Teacher **(Interviewee 1, School A)** says after discussing the formal,

“Informally, we’ve still got a hierarchy within teams.”

A possible covert form of teamwork was the latent leadership of the head teacher where everyone acknowledges that ‘at the end of the day the buck stops there’. Finally, a third interviewee noted there were:

“informal discussions and conversations that could be termed as ‘gossip’ in certain areas within the school”. **(Interviewee 3, Inclusion Leader, School A)**.

### School B

**The deputy Head, (Interviewee 1)** noted ‘the importance of a positive ethos’ when developing teams. I suggest that team ethos is based on school agreement supporting covert/latent leadership by the head teacher. A second interviewee discussed the informal advice passing between TAs when developing maths teaching resources for a particular student **(Interviewee 3, Teaching Assistant,**

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**School B).** Another TA talked about informal teamwork on the playground such as organising games for students or difference between formal and informal language when encouraging positive behaviour **(Interviewee 2, Teaching Assistant, School B).** They saw this as informal teamwork, (and possibly covert) because there were no actual written procedures or systems.

### School C

An example of the informal or covert may be where ‘there has been a word or two from the team leader to another member in the corridor’ **(Interviewee 6, School C).** The short discussion was seen as informal or ‘off the cuff’ but not necessarily as covert. An interesting proposition by a TA in School C is that TAs and children are in informal teams

“I think it would be back to saying it’s controlled by the Head; the Deputy, (the Leadership Team basically) and then on the informal side it is the Support Staff and the children”. **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 5, School C).**

Since all staff within the school had contracts and job descriptions and certain roles and responsibilities to perform I have difficulty in following this line of reasoning. Certainly the students position within a school is formalized.

### Summarising Informal Team

#### Similarities

All three case study schools noted informal discussions linked to teamwork. School A described the depth of understanding between people when working within a small school. Whilst one interviewee noted the informal gossip within such establishments. Similarly, School B interviewees considered informal discussion within teams such as the TA team. An interviewee in School C referred to short informal exchanges between two team members. However, I suggest that all head teachers exercise overt and latent leadership of their schools.

#### Differences

An interviewee in School A suggests that even informal leadership of teams comes back to a hierarchy which in the final moment becomes formal. This

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comes back to a covert or latent leadership by the senior leadership particularly the Head. Secondly a TA in school C saw the Head's job as more formal than that of a TA. This is interesting but in reality both Head teacher and TA positions are formal and overt.

**Table 21 Summarising Informal Team**

### Experience

I define experience here, as professional school leadership knowledge held by an individual or group. There were 11 interviewees in the three case study schools who discussed experience.

#### School A

Several interviewees in School A talked about experience; a Class Teacher discussed the wide range of professional experience across the school in areas of the curriculum and managing student behaviour. They also considered the long term experience of certain staff who led on 'special educational needs or child protection'. Indeed, they suggest that the TA system at the school includes a 'High Level Teaching Assistant at Level Three QCF,' who has:

"More knowledge and experience than a colleague on a level two, or than someone on a level one or who hasn't any qualifications" **(Class Teacher Interviewee 1, School A)**.

Similarly, a TA talked about their own and other TAs' past experience which is used by the school when developing teaching and learning. Another interviewee, (the Head Teacher) considers the professional experience of staff in relation to the curriculum, such as the specialist in Information Technology. However, they also discuss informal elements of staff experience such as:

"Experience of different kids and they share that knowledge spontaneously." **(Head Teacher, Interviewee 4, School A)**. Finally, a TA discussed their leadership of students, helping them to 'reach their fullest ability'. They explained how they used their own past experiences for students to examine but:

"not (to) model from - they can look at things differently through my eyes" **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 5, School A)**.

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### School B

Five interviewees cited experience: the Leader on Inclusion (Interviewee 1 School B) suggested the need for a leadership regime that would, 'inspire and encourage staff to develop their full professional abilities rather than being micro-managed according to their own experience'. Gaining this kind of experience is based on a 'moral purpose' or the vision of giving power and responsibility to the school community rather than on maintaining a high level of control of others. When A TA at the school discussed having the informal help of more experienced staff when solving a problem, they saw 'age and experience levels' as important. Indeed, a Class teacher's evidence also supported this view:

"Some of our TAs are new, but some of our TAs are experienced and are good TAs who see the whole school picture rather than the picture just inside their own classroom" **(Class Teacher, Interviewee 5, School B).**

Unlike the Inclusion Leader the TA talked about the specific importance of experiential skills to solve practical problems, whereas the Inclusion Leader focussed on a wider picture which one would expect given their different perspective and school position. However, the Class Teacher evidence showed that some TAs have wide experience and definitely have a wider picture than that of inside the classroom. Indeed, another TA at the school discussed their positive view of equality policy in relation to racism:

"Racism - I have not experienced it in this school. I've never been under estimated because I am second class, or I'm not white, or I'm not black". **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 3 School B).**

### School C

Two interviewees talked about experience; a TA said that there are:

"No barriers in terms of becoming senior management. It's more on experience and qualifications. The barrier wouldn't be because of race, gender, religion or anything like that. The acumen to become a member of management, or of the leadership team (is) experience". **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 3, School C).**

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This interviewee expressed the opinion that entry to senior management leadership was based on quality of experience and qualifications on the one hand, and equality practice on the other. Indeed, they went on to say that experience can be formal or informal.

The Inclusion Leader (Interviewee 2 School C) drew upon their personal experience when expressing the strong conviction that mutual respect for each other was 'important'; they referred to their personal history of learning as a child in school where they, 'were able to work in an atmosphere of positive learning without regimental structures', as an example. Throughout the answers this interviewee returned to respect as central to their present perspective and experience as an Inclusion leader.

### Summarising Experience

#### Similarities

Several interviewees across all three schools considered formal and overt professional experience. They discussed a range of professional experience. One particular interviewee discussed formal qualifications (PGCE or QCA). Others considered their experience in relation to the school curriculum or the organisation of break times.

Certain interviewees in all three schools discussed utilizing personal experience beyond the school in their workplace. A TA in School A talked about their use of personal experiences when discussing issues with student; whereas an interviewee in School C considered their own early experiences of school, 'as a child'.

#### Differences

A TA in school B gave a moving personal testimony of their positive experience of equalities practice within their school, specifically in terms of race.

**Table 22 Summarising Experience**

### Respect

Respect was a theme coming from 10 interviewees across the three case study schools. Respect was seen as a leadership characteristic which encompasses

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the trust and esteem of individuals and groups within the school community. Aspects discussed in interviews linked personal respect, the development of school equality policy and operational and strategic practices.

### School A

A particular TA talked about the personal respect given to them by the staff and the children at the school. They said:

“Definitely, I am well respected by the class - as well as other members of staff”.

Later they state:

“I would say power and respect from children especially. My example would be Wet Plays it really hard to do Wet Play, and um, for example we have Key Stage One in, apart from Reception, we have Year One and Year Two in one classroom and you’ve got to have that power and respect from the children because you’ve got two classes obviously it’s about sixty children” **(Teaching Assistant Interviewee 2, School A)**.

These two statements show an understanding of the respect and trust given by the school to the TA both from staff and children particularly when given the difficult situation of ‘wet play’ and the leadership of a large group of students for a period of time. Thus the TA felt that they had been empowered to lead the children and because the children respected them, it was not a case of them being coerced by the adult. It might be argued that members of staff on playtime duties must have a degree of respect from children, and vice versa, if playtimes are to proceed safely and successfully.

### School B

One TA in school B talks about respecting colleagues. They say:

“We work along with each other and also, we respect each other. Not having to come in and say that - ‘Oh I have the power and I’m a bit higher job than you and I can say this to you and can say that to you.’ So you know, you look at that person as the same as yourself”  
**(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 6, School B)**.

I suggest that similar to the earlier TA’s view (Interviewee 2, School A) respect

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and empowerment are linked. A second TA in School B talks about respect particularly between the students and staff:

“I’ve noticed that a lot of children in this school don’t call anyone else by colour or creed and we’ve got different religions here as well. Everything is respected; Eid is celebrated; Christianity is celebrated; Hinduism is celebrated. Assemblies have different cultures showing different dress weeks and donate monies. So, the policy and equalities are all clear and good. When you look in the playground, the children play together”

**(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 2 School B).**

This interviewee talks about respect within the school including professional/personal leadership around celebrations from a variety of cultures. They suggest that there is clear policy and positive activities are organised by the school leadership in relation to respect, including assemblies and specific educational / cultural events such as such as ‘Dress Week’.

### **School C**

In school C the Head teacher has a focus on respect. They say:

“Well it’s obviously inclusive policy, take respect for age, disability, gender, and behaviour. As far as I am concerned it’s all about belonging and being accepted and part of our community as a school. And I would say that this would be the case for anyone coming in”

**(Head Teacher, Interviewee 1 School C).**

The Head’s view begins with a focus on school policy and particularly inclusion policy involving different social groups, then goes on to talk about people being accepted in the school. Certainly the school has a clearly stated and specific community ethos because it is a Faith school.

The School Inclusion Leader also discusses school policy particularly around equality:

“Policy makes clear people’s responsibilities. If you look at the role of staff, teaching and non-teaching, all staff will ensure that pupils will be treated fairly, equally and with respect. I think that’s such an important thing” **(Inclusion Leader, Interviewee 2, School C).**

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The Inclusion Leader talks about people's responsibilities particularly the development of respect in relation to both staff and children. It seems that this interviewee sees Leadership of the development of respect and equality across the whole school community as a whole- school responsibility.

A TA at the school said:

"I hadn't looked at the policy until yesterday so I wanted to be prepared. My understanding of it is that there is wholesale inclusion based on a number of factors age, race, religion and gender are all irrespective when we make decisions about the children and their day to day life in school....so to give an example, we are running the Nativity at the moment; age race, gender will be irrespective, it will be based on auditions or choices, diplomatic choices made by Joan who's heading up the Nativity". **(Teaching Assistant, interviewee 4, School C).**

The TA linked school equality policy to daily practice and decision making when working with students. Certainly this TA focuses on 'irrespective' rather than directly talking about respect; nevertheless, I suggest that they show clear awareness of giving respect to different social groups. An interesting observation was that the TA had said that they only read the school equality policy the day before the interview; however, they gave detailed examples of school equality practice throughout the interview. I suggest that they had a clear understanding of equality from their stand point.

Thus far there has been a focus on respect within school policy and practice but, certain interviewees gave examples of the use of respect as a formal teaching and learning tool in the curriculum which leads to national certificates given by UNICEF. A senior leader in School B said:

"I think that informal leadership would be the ethos of the school. The 'Rights Respecting' programme works in terms of carrying out the long term vision rather than the day to day procedural management".

They go on to say:



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“Rights Respecting (is) at level two now with the Rights Respecting Status and is embedded throughout the school.” **(Deputy Head Teacher, Interviewee 1, School B).**

I suggest the development of ‘Rights Respecting’ takes the notion of respect further than general policy and becomes a stronger leadership focus.

### Summarising Respect

#### Similarities

Interviewees from all three schools focused on mutual respect and esteem between members of the school (colleagues and students). Respect was an important feature of formal and overt policy and practice noted by interviewees in Schools B, and C. Indeed all three schools had written policy on respecting rights and diversity, as part of their wider equality policy.

#### Difference

School B used a formal, external respect programme and qualification produced by UNICEF.

**Table 23 Summarising Respect**

## Sharing

I define the term ‘sharing’ as a school leadership characteristic which focuses on the interactions of leaders and followers given a particular school situation. For example, the head teacher may share a draft of a proposed Equality Policy for examination, debate and contributions during a school meeting. And members of staff, might share information and expertise in the staffroom.

### School A

The Head Teacher talked about a school culture which includes the sharing of power within the school:

“The kids don’t quite get it; but, if the culture is powerful enough, it’s alright to stand up and say, ‘You must do this, you must do that’, but it has to be more than that. So power is to be shared” **(Head teacher, Interviewee 4 School A).**

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Similarly, a Class Teacher talked about the sharing of professional knowledge between TA's:

“They (TAs) would be given more responsibilities and they would be asked to give examples of how to teach small groups or how to work with an individual they might have particular difficulties. So they are imparting their skills and are sharing with the other TA's” **(Class Teacher; Interviewee 1, School A).**

The first interviewee was concerned with the culture of the school, the second about the sharing of information and professional practice, whereas a third interviewee talks about the sharing of,

“Correct (and) sometimes incorrect information.” **Inclusion Leader, Interviewee 3, School A.**

The focus here was about the importance of accuracy of information shared and possible consequences.

### School B

The Deputy Head in School B made a comparable view of sharing to that of School A, but here the focus was on 'collaboration and team work'. The interviewee stated:

“It is about shared working at all times whenever possible. I found this on a personal level this year I tried more and more to work in collaboration in a team even of two. I found that this was strengthening my work” **(Deputy Head; Interviewee 1, School B).**

Moreover, they suggested that sharing and teamwork meant that 'parents were aware of joined up working at the school'. A stimulating point here is that the school widens its view on sharing to directly include parents. The interviewee in School B directly considers parents sharing in this area.

A Class Teacher/Maths Coordinator saw school ethos and values as central and something to be shared 'in order to move the school forward'. Another example of sharing given by the same interviewee was:

“The class teachers have their data package which is shared with the TA's” **(Class Teacher, Interviewee 5, School B).**

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Hence sharing with TAs is seen as important according to this interviewee. The other two interviewees were TAs; the first extended sharing beyond shared work into the area of sharing people's culture. For example, this interviewee talked to students, sharing information about their West Indian background. A second TA (interviewee 3) talked about the sharing of ideas:

“We all have our own ways, we all think differently, we all share things - ideas” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 3, School B)**.

### School C

Similarly, to schools A and B, Interviewees in school C discussed sharing information, knowledge and mutual support. For instance, Interviewee 1 spoke about a small group of staff who were planning a specific unit of work together which would involve sharing knowledge of the subject and methods of curriculum development. They said that the group ‘brought the planning back to the rest of the staff; moreover, they initiated the planning’. This interviewee's senior position intimates that the school is open to staff using their initiative and supportive of sharing knowledge, experience and ability. A second interviewee takes the notion of sharing directly when discussing shared leadership and power within the school. They say:

“Everybody shares responsibility for leadership whether in leading or learning. Everybody has power to do their best; power to achieve and that's how I am thinking about power. Respect is in there as well, because, when power is shared it is mutual respect between all adults and pupils” **(Inclusion Leader, Interviewee 2, School C)**.

The second interviewee not only discussed the sharing of school leadership and power within the school but also considered the shared awareness of developing an individual's achievement be they staff or student. Finally, a third interviewee gives a particular example of formal/informal sharing within the school community:

“We share with one another. We've had meals where everybody brings in a traditional dish from home” **(Teaching Assistant,**

The shared agreement and organisation, sanctioned by the Head Teacher, of a school meal representing different cultures from within the school was formal; the

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informal was the decision of individuals volunteering to choose amongst themselves to make a dish for the meal in their own home.

Summarising Sharing
<b>Similarity</b> Interviewees in the three schools suggest that sharing included professional information including curriculum or equality policy practice. An interviewee in School B defined sharing as a professional, formal requirement of working within the school.
<b>Differences</b> One particular interviewee in School C linked the sharing of leadership or power to respect.

**Table 24 Summarising Sharing**

### Role

I define the leadership characteristics of role similar to Harris (2008) but my current definition moves beyond the distributed leadership practice of school interaction to include strategic leadership (Davies 2005). I suggest that whilst the leadership role has a number of dimensions that may include interchangeability and elements of informality; essentially, it is about formal position within an organisation.

### School A

“Right, Ok, well obviously we have a hierarchy in the school and as the Head teacher I sit at the head of that, although the governing body at the moment is taking a much more active role in leadership” **(Head Teacher, Interviewee 4 School A)**.

The interviewee goes on to talk about their role around mission and strategic work of the school:

“Leadership is a much more strategic kind of role; management is about getting things done. Leadership is blue sky thinking the mission and all of that. When I first came here, thirteen years ago, I had a good

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

sense of the mission and it's not really changed" (**Head Teacher Interviewee 4, School A**).

The Head teacher said that there was a school hierarchy that they sat at the head of; Moreover, they had a role in developing strategy and mission/vision for the school and also talked about informal roles and teams which I noted in the 'team' leadership characteristic. The School Inclusion Leader describes formal role:

"It's your role, I'm your line manager I'm telling you to do it" (**Inclusion Leader Interviewee 3, School A**).

A TA at the school talked a lot about role, in fact I found the term was discussed seven times during their answers. They say:

"The school members, the staff members work together as a team, but someone within the Nursery would be the head (and) run the Nursery as the leader, that's how I look at it. So each member of staff here - has some kind of leadership in the roles that they do" (**Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 5, School A**).

The interviewee talks about the direct links between a school team staff and their individual roles; explicitly the School Nursery involves a staff team which has a clear leader role:

"Well I work as a team. I work with my Class Teacher closely because I'm in class. I also have a lot of other roles here at the school. I work in a group of lunchtime staff and we have a Supervisor we work closely with so if there's work other than my role, I'm asked to do, I will carry it out to the best of my ability" (**Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 5, School A**).

The second statement shows clearly that role is seen as formal including classroom work and lunch time supervision where there are leaders the TA works to. This does not mean that the TA has no input, indeed, they give an example of working closely with a specific Class Teacher. However, the TA's formal role is to follow the leadership of the Teacher or Meal Supervisor.

### **School B**

One interviewee talked about role in School B; they said

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“Well the teacher will be giving the lesson, so, I’m told by the teacher actually what my role would be in the class at that time. So, it could just be fitting in with her, a group lesson – the whole class” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 4 School B).**

In this statement the TA points out that their role in the classroom is decided by the Class teacher and it can change over the lesson. They might be helping the teacher with the whole class or supporting smaller groups. The statement tends towards hierarchical roles held by the teacher and TA with the TA in the subordinate position.

### **School C**

Interestingly, four interviewees in this school sample talked about role; one senior leader e TA’s and a Teacher. The senior leader says:

“I think everybody leads on the school diversity and equalities policy. It makes clear the Head Teacher’s role to implement the school’s equality plan and that (is) supported by the governing body. But I would say that everybody has an equal responsibility to lead on diversity and equality” **(Senior Leader, \* Interviewee 2, School C).**

The focus of the statement on school diversity and equality policy exemplifies the role of the Head to lead and implements policy with support from the governing body, but also suggests the whole school community has leadership responsibilities. However, I maintain that ultimately Leadership of implementation of the policy is not equal. It is a formal requirement laid upon the head teacher.

A TA contributed:

“My understanding of leadership in the school is, that ultimately, we are answerable to the Head teacher and the governors, the governing body. In respect of my role I am a Teaching Assistant in Year Six so in the first instance I report to my Class Teacher, who is also the Phase Lead and I have a role in the school as a Lunch Time Supervisor, we have a main Midday Meal Supervisor that we also answer to.” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 3 School C).**

This TA had two formal roles; they describe their roles within a school hierarchy from the Governing Body and Head downwards:

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“Perhaps asking a question, or some advice who may not be the person like your line manager or even management you might, you know, consider in the first instance. And also as an example with the children, where we’ve got a Buddy System, you know the children approach us in the playground. The buddies – I suppose you could look at it at two-tier as informal and formal because they have a role”  
**(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 3 School C).**

The TA goes on to talk about the school ‘Buddy System’ where students have a formal and informal role. What is important here is that the TA moves from informal roles into the arena of certain formalized student roles where a particular student is designated to give friendly support to another. For example, one student may be appointed to be a formal buddy with a new student to help them to adjust to their new situation.

The same TA discussed what they saw as an informal role they had in the school:

“On a termly basis we do assessments, QCA (Qualifications and Curriculum Authority) Assessments, and I oversee the materials for that and any problems, questions or anything with regards to it all. The other TAs will seek me out’. It’s informal if you like, I kind of have taken on the role of being in charge because I’m very organised and I like things to be just so” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 3 School C).**

Here, the TA’s statement moved their role beyond classroom or meal supervision to resourcing and looking after and organising QCA assessment materials. They saw it as an informal role, presumably because they volunteered in the first place. Nevertheless, I argue that it is formalised because assessments are regular, they happen termly, and are planned. The materials used for this work need to be centrally resourced and are used as part of the core school work. A Class Teacher suggests that

“Leading by example, thinking about how I work within a school and helping other teachers to kind of follow a good example. So it’s a role model and it’s working together with other leaders as well as the teachers to a common goal in terms of what our priorities are and

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helping us to address the priorities and helping us to carry out the priorities in our school” (Class Teacher Interviewee 6, School C).

Summarising Role
<b>Similarity</b> Interviewees across the three schools discussed professional formal and overt roles such as that of the head or a TA. A particular interviewee saw the Head role as ‘leading strategic work (such as equality policy) whereas a TA discussed their role in the school hierarchy and within the ‘Buddy System’ used in class and on the playground.
<b>Difference</b> One TA talked directly about informal roles which lay outside their particular contractual remit e.g. the collection and organisation of relevant materials for QCA Assessments.

**Table 25 Summarising Role**

### Skills

I used the Oxford Concise Dictionary definition of skill as the ability to do something well; expertise or dexterity (Oxford Concise Dictionary 2011, p.1352) My focus was on professional leadership characteristics. Seven interviewees from across the three case study schools looked at leadership characteristics in terms of skills.

### School A

A particular Class Teacher, in reflecting upon leadership characteristics, talked about delegating skills and knowledge to others. For example, they talked about their science teaching specialism and the imparting of these teaching skills to TA’s. They say:

“I’m the leader of Science but I will delegate to people to get science resources or to teach science in a certain way. So you have to basically manage your department or your area in an appropriate manner - impart skills and knowledge to those people within that area



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or department (including TAs)” (**Class Teacher, Interviewee 1, School A**).

Similarly, a TA in school A talks about a ‘teacher’s subject skills:

“They are the subject leaders so therefore they have to make sure that ‘this is in place and so that happens; or they have to make sure that, or they have to see, that it is happening for something else to happen because they have that power” (**Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 5, School A**).

A fascinating point here is that they note that the subject leader’s position and skills but not those of the their own (TA) skills within certain subjects.

A Class Teacher who also considered formal and informal leadership skills, says:

“The Inclusion Leader is in charge of special needs, he will go on a course, because he is the formal leader”.

Then on the informal:

“So for example a child who’s in charge of a group when they’re working in a group setting, they’re the leader of that group. They’re given the kudos and responsibilities to relay knowledge and skills to the rest of their group; but it’s not in a formal setting” (**Class teacher Interviewee 1 School A**).

This is very interesting; the setting for student skills is seen as informal, but at the same time they are, ‘given kudos and responsibilities’ within a school environment; therefore, can this be informal?

### **School B**

In School B a TA talked about the limited social skills of a student and how they tried to lead on social skilling for that student:

“From my experience the child I work with, he has very little understanding of social skills. For example, there was an incident when he tried to hug someone. He hugged them so tight that he was hurting them. So, I had to explain to him that when we’re actually kind and gentle you cannot be hurting anybody. You cannot be hurting

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anybody you have to try and see the other child and say to them ‘Are you OK?’ **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 6 School B).**

Similar to comments in School A, this TA describes focussing on children’s social skills; the leadership skill example given was the TA’s ability to explain the problems to the students and helping them to empathise with others.

During my professional career I have found many demonstrations of equality policy at work within classrooms, on playgrounds and on field trips. For instance, on one occasion I observed a TA with whom I was working; leading a mixed group of students on a walk round the local neighbourhood; encouraging them to look for similarities and differences; commenting on the cultural richness and diversity in order to develop their understanding of social/cultural diversity and geographical awareness.

### **School C**

The Inclusion Leader talks about staff skills developed within the school such as:

“The middle leaders develop their skills, and then of course, there are leaders in the classroom, each teacher is a leader of learning. The Teaching Assistant is a leader of a group, or work that takes place, or a Playground Supervisor is a leader of children in that (area)” **(Inclusion Leader, Interviewee 2 School C).**

This wide view of leadership skills takes into account qualified teachers, TAs and playground supervisors. A particular TA further widens the view of leadership skills to include students when they suggest that the school community supports student ‘leadership skills from an early age’. Two other interviewees extended skill sets even wider; the Head teacher considered the positive skills of external support for children whereas a Class Teacher proposed that schools should have an effective awareness of those having expertise:

“I think that whoever is the best person, or who’s showing the skills to be able to (do) something in particular, then they should be given that chance” (Class teacher, **Interviewee 6 School C).**

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### Summarising Skills

#### Similarity

The interviewees defined school leadership skills as; holding important knowledge and abilities that can be imparted to other adults or students; managing, delegating; recognising and utilising abilities and skills of others within the school community. Some believed that these leadership skills could be utilised formally and/or informally.

Certain interviewees in all three schools talked about formal overt leadership skills in leading student groups. A and C considered curriculum leadership and all three samples included examples of social leadership skills.

#### Difference

A particular interviewee in School A noted the degree of leadership skills by students. This is interesting, but students are clients and not professional leaders in schools.

School C widened the leadership skills beyond the work learning in the classroom and included lunchtime supervision skills. Moreover one interview considered the space for people to develop new leadership skills.

**Table 26 Summarising Skills**

### Communication

I define communication as the exchange and transmission of selected ideas and information between people within the school. Six interviewees, (four TAs and two senior leaders) from the case study schools saw communication as an essential element of leadership:

“Leadership for me is a communication it’s the most important part in the school. Leadership and communication for me is the most important. Let’s say, whatever they plan, whatever the leadership planned they want to know as LSAs, as TAs, as Teachers. And if we have good communication from the leadership we are running our school very well” (**Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 3, School B**).

This TA sees communication as a central characteristic of leadership within the school and sees communication expressed as an important downward model

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from senior management through to TAs; whereas a second TA at the school says:

“Leadership in our school is not just management it’s everyone - TA’s, LSA’s, Teachers, because the key thing is communication. And with communication if you come across any kind of issues, or any kind of barriers you want to cross regarding a child or regarding what you are doing, you can talk between yourselves. If you then find it necessary to go to leadership then obviously you would take that point upon going to leadership” **(Teaching Assistant, Interviewee 6 School B).**

Whilst this interviewee clearly sees communication as a key characteristic of leadership, they view leadership structure as flatter; good communication involves everyone, not just the school senior leadership. They suggest that communication between colleagues is important at every level.

A Head Teacher gave this example:

“Equality Policy leadership is about communication; it’s about consultation; about communication implementation and it’s about involving everybody. Leadership is not just someone’s wearing the arm band or wearing the badge everybody has to lead on it actually” **(Head teacher, Interviewee, 4 School A).**

Here, communication as a leadership skill is viewed as more than imparting information or issuing instructions; (the development of Diversity and Equality policy) involves dialogue and consultation and action; and is seen as essential to ensuring that outcomes of communication are effective.

### Summarising Communication

#### Similarity

All six interviewees saw the ability to communicate clearly as an important leadership characteristic. The forms of communication tend toward the overt and formal although there was reference to informal exchanges.

#### Difference

Some interviewees focus on clear communication from the senior leadership down through the school structure to the TAs and students; others considered

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the effectiveness of two-way communication. A Head teacher clearly saw communication implementation as a leadership characteristic.

### Table 27 Summarising Communication

#### Ethos

I define ethos as the spirit, attitudes and/or beliefs of the schools taking part. Ethos can be pragmatic; caring; controlling; aspirational; inspirational; nurturing. Six interviewees gave their views on school ethos as a leadership characteristic. The data on Ethos came from Schools B and C.

#### School B

The Deputy Head says:

“I think that informal leadership would be the ethos of the school. The ‘Rights Respecting’ work in terms of carrying out the long term vision. So, I think that that is informal” **(Deputy Head, Interviewee 1, School B)**.

I argue that the ethos within a school is first developed by the senior leadership because they are required by central and local government to develop a suitable ethos based on requirements such as the 2012 quality policy, Homework, Behaviour and the local context and they ‘set the tone.’ Hence, the Deputy Head is directly involved in developing ethos and vision. Later in this interview, the interviewee linked ethos to assemblies, circle time and school council meetings.

The points and examples given do suggest that Ethos can be linked to Vision because they are seen as connected and developmental. However, can ethos be described as informal? Is the regular use of programmes, assemblies or circle times informal?

A TA talks about the need for everybody to be aware of the school ethos ‘which is instilled into the students’ **(Interviewee 2 School B)**. The TA’s position focussed on the understanding of the ethos and the teaching of that to the students. It seemed to move from generalisation to more specific top-down leadership practice in relation to the school ethos.

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### School C

The Head teacher talked about ethos in relation to the school's religious principles:

“It's in line with our mission statement and faith belief of respecting. That's probably not what you want to hear, maybe, but that it permeates through this ethos that is it. It should be seamless really with an equality and a disability policy” (**Head teacher, Interviewee 1 School C**).

In bringing together the Roman Catholic beliefs and the leadership on school equality policy here, values, policy and ethos were seen as integral. The Inclusion Leader supports this view; however, they also link the concept of school vision. They say:

“It's really nice to see these things actually written out for all staff to see and I think our vision as a school reflects the way we operate in a diverse and equal kind of ethos” (**Inclusion Leader Interviewee 2, School C**).

This interviewee went on to state that the school gave all staff a set of job criteria to support and develop the school ethos. Finally, a third interviewee returned to the discussion about instilling the school ethos into students

### Summarising Ethos

#### Similarity

A number of interviewees in both school identified the characteristic of leading on ethos as important and link it to vision and policy. They define school ethos as the values or philosophy which bring together a school community. The interviewees move towards formal examples of the school ethos although one talked about informality in a way that I found problematic. The ethos is actively or tacitly agreed by staff to meet the declared vision and goals of the school.

#### Difference

The ethos of Schools A and B are based on secular values, whereas school C is a faith school.

**Table 28 Summarising Ethos**

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## Discussion

This discussion examines the main leadership characteristics in relation to school equality policy. I consider the interviewee answers and relevant literature when stating my own critical position.

- Interviewees cited eight major leadership characteristics within the context of school equality policy which had similarities with other authors who had examined leadership. For instance, Harris (2008) and Handy (1999) also discussed the leadership characteristic of role and team/group whereas Leithwood et al (2009) research data noted the importance of skills and experience. Obviously these authors use the characteristics based on their own specialist interpretation. Harris, for example, identified role as a characteristic when researching the development of distributed leadership within seven schools; whereas Handy discusses and explains the overall understanding of roles within organisations. Following analysis of interviewee leadership characteristics (including role); I concluded that their selection of characteristics had both validity and reliability; based on detailed interviewee answers and my literature review.

Willoughby 2016	Leithwood et al 2009 p.245	Harris 2008 p.112	Handy 1999 p.118
Team	Skills	Vision	Group Role
Experience	Qualities	Expert Leaders	Individual Role
Respect	Commitment	Collaborated	Learning
Sharing	Good Ideas	Teams	
Role	Experience	Communities	
Skills	Respect	Goals	
Communication	Formal Leader	Roles and tasks;	
Ethos		Enquiry.	

**Table 29 Authors Views on Leadership Characteristics**

- A number of interviewees from the three case study schools gave examples of equality policy leadership practice. They discussed teamwork, sharing, experience, respect and role. involving the preparation, delivery and review of equality events such as 'Equality Week' in School B and 'Black History Month' which was an LEA wide strategy. For instance, School B had

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developed an Equality Week. The planning process which required shared team/s discussion and agreement for the programme; was led by the Deputy head who had the role of inclusion/equality leader. From the detailed statements and my own personal professional experience, I conclude that most LEA primary schools regularly celebrate equality of access and opportunity using teamwork, sharing of knowledge and expertise, respect and an awareness of roles. Moreover, I believe that schools develop their knowledge of equality policy practice based on their specific context or situation, (Gronn 2000).

- A number of interviewees in all three schools deliberated on respect. and the importance of respect throughout the school community; particularly when developing equality policy. Schools B and C used the UNICEF model. I agree with Handy (1999 p.140), that mutual respect is the basis of trust; also with Cotton (2004) who cites respect as important within schools. I therefore believe that trust based on mutual respect is an important element of successful equality policy leadership.
- A number of interviewees and authors considered the leadership characteristics of role, skills, communication and ethos. Both interviewees and authors discussed the use of leadership skills particularly those of the senior team and their roles. I argue that this aspect was the main focus of leadership skills rather than a wider examination of teams and individuals such as TA skills and voice. Indeed, in my literature search for this research I found that Reassessing the Impact of Teaching Assistants (Blatchford et al 2013) was one of the few major pieces of research on TA impact and their views. In my experience TAs have a wealth of experience and skills when working with student groups in or out of the classroom; hence their contribution needs to be clearly recognised, evaluated and utilised throughout a school teaching team.
- My interrogation of interviewee evidence revealed that there was both formal and informal communication within schools. Interviewees at all levels in the school hierarchy saw communication; both spoken and written between different individuals and teams within the school; as an important conduit that allowed them to attain the aims and goals of equality practice and, 'get



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the job done'. I believe that effective communication allows open sharing of views and experience in a two-way interaction. However, like Grint, (2010) and Spillane (2006), I recognise that the leader usually initiates communication and dialogue on policy matters.

- Finally, specific interviewees noted the ethos or values of the school and its culture. For instance, an interviewee in School B focussed on the development of an open ethos where there was respect and a clear involvement of students. Similarly, an interviewee in School C considers respect ethos but also notes the school faith beliefs. School C moves from a secular to a religious ethos where there was 'love for all'. Authors like Crawford (2014), Davies (2011) and Cotton et al (2004) consider the importance of the values or vision of a school and its agreement by the staff establishment. Preedy, Glatter and Wise (2003) discuss school culture in detail. I suggest that in this research ethos and culture is seen as similar. an interviewee from School A discussed the school culture and suggested that it had a degree of buoyancy; an ethos upheld and contributed to by the whole staff, rather than controlled purely by the head. In my experience, given the complexity of schools their ethos or values need to be clearly stated, agreed and reviewed regularly.

**Chapter Six**  
**The How and Why**  
**Of School Leadership**  
**Characteristics**

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

I have reported and discussed the interviewee perceptions of school leadership characteristics. In this chapter I examine the how and why of school leadership within the context of equality policy viewed from three different perspectives. To this end, I examine the literature; my conceptual framework and methodological tools, set out in Chapters 2 and 3.

- The first interpretation explores the how and why of the leadership of school equality policy from the perspective of interviewees. I look at the similarities and differences within and between case study schools.
- The second interpretation explores the how and why of leadership of school equality policy from the perspective of Ofsted Inspection reports. I consider the similarities and differences between Ofsted Inspection reports and interviewee views. An Ofsted inspection is formal and is required to make judgments and recommendations on the running of a school and its leadership. This includes reporting on Leadership of Equality policy and practice. The interviewees on the other hand give us a more subjective, insider view on leadership within their particular institutions and provide a wealth of detail about their personal experience of Equality policy in practice at their schools.
- The third, reflects my research findings on the how and why of leadership, after objective examination of collected data, and my professional insider knowledge of the history of the three schools' development of Equality policy.

### **The Interviewee Perspective**

The senior leaders within all three schools tended towards a general picture of equality policy practice; they saw the 'how' of specific leadership as necessarily encompassing leading on policy, practice and management of everybody within the school community including staff, students and visitors to the school. Class Teachers and TAs mostly focussed on the leadership aspects of specific specialist areas such as the support for a child having limited social skills (p.145). Every interviewee gave detailed answers that addressed the question of the how of school equality policy leadership. I believe that the evidence coming from interviewees participating in the three case study schools demonstrates that they

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perceived equality policy and shared good practice as an important how of school leadership. Certainly as a professional insider and researcher within the schools I was aware that all three establishments had produced clear written policy, led by senior managers in the area prior to the Equality Act (2010).

The interviewee interpretation of the why of leadership within school equality policy included for example: compliance with legislation; national and LEA priorities and the specific school context, vision and ethos.

An important aspect of the how and why of school equality policy leadership discussion was practice both formal and informal. Interviewees were asked specific questions in this area and their answers tended to focus on the formal structures and systems. Interviewees talked about formal leadership such as the senior and middle/phase leadership teams and teamwork (p.125). Certainly there was some discussion around informal leadership, similar to that of Harris (2008) and Spillane (2006). Authors and interviewees talk about informal expertise when developing leadership particularly around creating knowledge such as the introduction of new mathematical or behavioural management practices.

The why of formal/informal leadership from the interviewee perspective begins with formal external requirements; however, the degree of formal/informal leadership comes back to the senior leadership approach. All three sets of interview samples saw leadership structures as central because they led to a cohesive organisation. They saw the informal as arising from individuals or groups responding to a situation and using their initiative in spontaneous actions within the school community. I argue that informal practices become formal once they happen regularly, particularly when the senior leadership are aware of it; sanction it and make use of it. For instance, an interviewee talked about a staff member who led an informal lunchtime activity for a small group of children which happened now and again; however, it soon became a regular feature by popular demand; the senior leadership supported it and it went on to become a timetabled activity; hence, it became formal.

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A final aspect of the how were the leadership characteristics produced by the interviewees. I found eight major characteristics including, team (p.126), experience (p.131), respect (p.133), sharing (p.137, role (p.140), skills (p.144), communication (p.147) and ethos (p.149), as was reported in the previous chapter. There were actually 21 characteristics discussed in all; however, the remaining characteristics were raised by a minority of between 1 and 4 interviewees. A particular instance was collaboration as discussed by one interviewee. They defined collaboration as the strengthening of teamwork based on a shared school vision. Unlike Harris (2008 p.112), I did not find collaboration as a major characteristic, possibly due to the fact that terminology has changed in schools and collaboration is now more commonly being described as teamwork.

The interviewee answers on the why of equality policy leadership are based on their professional experience and their perspective on the practices and vision within the school in which they work; set against the background of each institution's stance. School A focusses on their vision statement which is defined as 'Team work makes the dream work'. Schools B and C use a set of seven policy statements provided by an LEA; an example is "All learners are of equal value. Whether or not they are disabled, whatever their ethnicity, culture, national origin or national status, whatever their gender and gender identity, whatever their religious or non-religious affiliation or faith background and whatever their sexual orientation" (Camden LEA 2010). An initial view might suggest that the vision or why of school A may be different from schools' B and C, because school A uses their own model whereas the other two have adopted the LEA equality format. Nevertheless, careful examination of interviewee answers and written policies suggest that all three schools focus on the educational needs of the individual and/or group of students. Interviewees in one school also discussed their school's religious values, linking the why to their faith. Being an insider I was aware that all three schools regarded Equality policy as more than a paper exercise and had directly involved the teaching staff in preparing written policy; for instance, they had regular staff meetings to discuss in detail the production and review of a living policy before approval by the Governors. I argue that written

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policy means little if there is not the clear agreement of the school community on an on-going basis.

In summary interviewees suggest that school leadership requires everyone's input to support equality policy. Equality policy is seen by interviewees as a central element of all three schools' vision and ethos. The how of developing the equality policy is similar within all three schools; however, School A and B tend to place the student's educational and emotional needs as the central priority whereas school C also considers specific religious principles.

### **An Ofsted inspection perspective**

My interpretation of the how and why of school equality policy leadership is based on the statements and recommendations in recent Ofsted reports. This includes a description of Ofsted school inspection and possible problems; an examination of individual reports given the research questions and compares and contrasts the similarities and differences with the interviewee interpretation.

#### **Description**

The 'Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills' (Ofsted) is a non-ministerial government department which was established following the Education Schools Act 1992. Part of its present brief is the inspection and public reporting on state primary schools against a set of national standards. The focus of standards includes "the achievement of pupils, quality of teaching, behaviour and safety of pupils and leadership and management" (Ofsted framework 2012). My area of interest is with the external Ofsted reports on School A (2008), School B (2012) and School C (2012); particularly those sections dealing with leadership. However, prior to this discussion. I need to make certain general points about OFSTED reports.

- The reports are external formal inspection documents that set out judgements and recommendations. They are placed on the Ofsted website and are open to public examination.
- The inspection reports are independent of school establishments; however, Ofsted is not totally independent because their work is funded

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by parliament and the government of the day appoints the chief inspector. Thus funders will have influence on appointments and inspection focus. Recently Ofsted (2015) deepened a focus on diversity and equality around faith schools following issues in Birmingham and Bradford.

- Ofsted's brief is to make judgements and grade schools based on set criteria; educational standards and 'value for money' in schools. The standards and judgement of what constitutes value for money are sometimes debated by academics and educational practitioners.

### **My examination of School A's Ofsted report**

Ofsted inspectors reported that School A. (2008) had an excellent standard of education for students; and their professional judgements led to an inspection 'Grade 1' based on their observations, judgments and recommendations. Reporting on school leadership and management they said:

"The head teacher provides excellent leadership. He has established a very strong sense of common purpose and teamwork amongst staff and governors. Pupils' personal and academic development is at the heart of every new initiative and innovation. The leadership team works exceptionally well to establish systems and frameworks that guide the work of the school. Systems for monitoring how well it is doing are rigorous and exceptionally well used to inform future planning. Pupils' progress is tracked very thoroughly and tailored support provided for all those who need it. Subject leaders are thoughtful and reflective about how their areas are developing and have a positive impact on pupils' learning. Governors work well in partnership with the school and are improving their monitoring roles" (Ofsted Inspection 2008 p. 7).

I argue that the inspection report on the How of leadership includes the quality of the Head Teacher, teamwork of staff and governors and a common purpose or vision. The Why, is about enabling student personal and academic development. There are similarities between the statements of the Ofsted inspection report and those of the interviewees.

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### Similarities and differences between Ofsted Report and Interviewee position

#### Similarities

- Both discussed four particular characteristics: quality of Headship, teamwork, common purpose and vision. An illustration is that of 'team' where each describe the structure of teams including governors, senior leadership and subject leaders and both also noted the roles of the governing body; moreover, both groups tended towards commenting on formal rather than informal teamwork. Ofsted inspectors have a clear framework of criteria and standards with a limited timescale for reporting. All of the interviewees had insider knowledge of working within formal teams in their schools and had job descriptions and contracts.
- Explicitly the Ofsted report commented positively on excellent systems of school work such as monitoring and tracking of students. Interviewees also discussed management systems and processes such as monitoring and reviewing areas of work such as equality policy. At first glance school management systems are different from leadership; school leadership focuses on developments like the preparation of new equality policy projects or linked problem solving and strategic planning: whereas management processes have regularity, clear process and plans. An example is the yearly update and organisation of a school lesson timetable. Like Spillane (2006), I suggest that leadership and management have 'routines and tools'. An Ofsted report brings together leadership and management as one area of inspection.
- Both the inspection report and interviewees address the why of equality policy. The inspection report praises the school focus on the personal and academic development of the students. Similarly, the interviewees see student development as a central aim of their school.

#### Differences

- The Ofsted report was based on a national framework which includes equality criteria, however, there is no direct statement about equality within the leadership section of their report.



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- The report talked about governors and qualified teacher teams but did not mention TA teams. This school had a TA team who met every week with a member from Senior Leadership; this was not referred to.
- The report talked about three leadership characteristics i.e. trait, team and common vision; whereas data from interviewees produced a larger set. A possible reason for this was that the inspection had to cover a wide range of standards in a short time with limited human resources. Whilst the interviewees had more time to comment in-depth on leadership and the context of school equality and the shared preparation of projects and innovations to meet their needs.

**Table 30 Similarities and Differences between the Ofsted Report and Interviewee Position: School A**

### My examination of School B's Ofsted reports

Ofsted inspectors reported that School B. (2012) had a good standard of education for students; and their professional judgements led to an inspection Grade 2. The formal technical inspection text (Fairclough, 2001) was similar to that of School A; however, this report used a bullet point format with a separation of eight leadership and managements inspection judgements. For instance, an initial general judgement was:

“Leadership and management are good because they share a common vision and ambition for improvement. They know the school’s strengths and work effectively for improvement whenever weaknesses are identified. As a result, the school has improved significantly from its previous inspection” (Ofsted Inspection 2012 p.5).

The inspection judgement stated that the school had good leadership and therefore included leadership practice in relation to equality policy. Inspectors saw the how of good equality policy leadership of the school as the development of sharing and joint vision. The inspectors saw the how, of good leadership characteristics within the school included: formal sharing; a common vision and accountability. Sharing embraced positive inspection judgments on a clear school vision for the future; strategies such as continued professional development, and joint meetings between teachers to discuss and monitor student progress.

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Inspectors talked about the accountability of teachers to governors and senior leaders. Inspectors say:

“Leaders and governors ensure that teachers are accountable for pupils making good progress, and that pay is very closely connected to pupils’ achievement” (Ofsted Inspection 2012 p.5).

A simple understanding of the inspectors’ view would be that the teacher’s accountability is to the senior leader’s requirements particularly in relation to good student progress; however, inspectors also talk about a common vision; therefore the leaders valued other teacher’s views.

For the Ofsted Inspectors the why of examining leadership included; achieving a significant improvement in standards since the previous inspection; moving from a satisfactory to a good grade; sharing the vision and involving all of the school community and ensuring systems and structures provided equal opportunities for all students.

I found some similarities between external inspection views and those of certain interviewees.

### Similarities and differences between Ofsted Report and Interviewee Position

#### Similarities

- Both inspectors and certain interviewees directly discussed the school sharing and vision. Explicitly the Deputy Head directly discussed sharing ideas joined up working which and vision similar to inspection views.
- Both groups referred to management processes where inspectors talked about the management of student progress whereas a School TA considered the regular management of student groups.

#### Differences

- There was a wider set of leadership elements from school interviewees including experience, respect, skills, communication and ethos.
- The interviewees talked about informal leadership outside the formal timetable e.g. one-off sessions between a TA and a group of students
- Inspectors are aware of equality but formally they focus on equal opportunities for students:

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“Leaders use data about pupils’ progress very effectively to ensure that all groups of pupils make good progress and to hold teachers to account for the progress of their pupils. As a result, all pupils have equal opportunities to achieve well” (Ofsted Inspection 2012 p.5).

There were clear reasons why inspectors focused on the equal opportunities for students; inspectors are required to base their judgement against the school evaluation and their own classroom observations of student progress. This includes evaluating the effects of equality policy. Interviewees on the other hand are commenting on their personal experience of making policy and putting it into practice within a single community; they are aware of the needs of the students but also include aspects of equalities for staff and parent/carers.

- Inspection commentary emphasises senior leadership and leaders of teachers; there is no direct reference to TAs as leaders or as followers which is discussed by interviewees.

**Table 31 Similarities and Differences the between Ofsted Report and Interviewee Position: School B**

### **My examination of School C’s Ofsted reports**

Ofsted inspectors reported that School C. (2012) had a good standard of education for students; and their professional judgements led to an inspection ‘Grade 2 for Criteria 2’. There was a focus on value for money and OFSTED’s national standards for students’ education. The report contained a section on leadership and management with seven manager judgements. There was also

a general judgement at the beginning of the section, which was:

“The head teacher has successfully worked with senior leaders to challenge and support teachers to raise pupils’ achievement. One teacher commented, ‘My voice is listened to and I feel supported.’ The support provided to teachers to further develop their teaching skills has ensured that the quality of teaching continues to improve” (Ofsted Inspection 2012b p.5).

This initial judgement opened the how of leadership within the report. For instance, inspectors cited characteristics such as: challenge; skills, support and listening. Explicitly, teachers’ voices were listened to, and the voice of the teacher

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in the Inspection report was deemed to describe a degree of teamwork between senior leaders and other teachers. The use of these characteristics were said to be found in the interaction between the leaders and the teacher-followers of teaching and learning within this school organisation. When participating in my research, the Head Teacher had laid emphasis upon the need for two-way interaction and a flatter, less hierarchical leadership in the school. These were not the only leadership characteristics in the section for example there was a positive statement on

“The school has accurately and rigorously evaluated its performance and plans for further improvement are precise, with clear success criteria and lines of accountability” (Ofsted Inspection 2012 p.5).

Although it can be said that the characteristics of accountability or planning can be linked to leadership they are directly discussed as whole school judgments. The why of good school leadership was; supporting educational needs including both individual and student group requirements in order to achieve the national school standards set by state funders.

### Similarities and differences between Ofsted Report and Interviewee Position

#### Similarities

- Both the Ofsted report and interviewees made references to leaders listening to followers. I suggest that the support was about sharing information, views and working practices. Both the inspectors and the interviewees commented on the shared tracking of student progress.
- Both the report and interviewees discussed school equality. The Ofsted report particularly, considers the school equal opportunities policy.  
“The school operates an effective equal opportunities policy that tracks pupils’ progress to ensure that all groups of pupils achieve well” (Ofsted Inspection 2012 p. 5).

Interestingly the Ofsted report’s description of equal opportunity policy considered it in terms of management processes rather than leadership. Having said that, the report recognised that the policy was effective focussed on opportunities for all students. However, the interviewees’ commentary also included references to equality for staff and the whole-

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school community. To be fair, the inspectors' brief was to focus on student education, whereas the interviewees focus extended to wider institutional equality policy and practice.

- Both considered school management processes such as the monitoring of equality policy and progress. The Ofsted report praised the clear systems and processes of management cycles such as precise school improvement plans; systems for tracking of student progress and the collection of data for developing clear targets. Interviewees described school processes in relation to the school equality policy within the school and beyond such as planning charity events

### Differences

- Whilst the Ofsted report contains formal statements that address the judgements made according to set standards and criteria, the interviewees also consider informality in relation to equality policy within their school.
- The Ofsted report discusses the interaction between senior management and teachers; what is not clear is whether they are referring to qualified teachers only, or do they also consider TAs? It is difficult to decide whether TA work is seen by Ofsted as having any leadership qualities because this is not clearly defined in the section. Thus the particular difference between external reporting and interviewees was that school interview data contained the views of TAs on their contributions in leadership (corroborated in senior leadership statements) including; leading student groups and full classes as well as leading other TAs in behaviour management, material resourcing or providing special educational needs support.

**Table 32 Similarities and Differences between the Ofsted Report and Interviewee Position: School C**

In summary: I found that Ofsted reported on a common school vision; shared working practices and a positive relationship with governors, in each of the case study schools. This was also reflected within the interviewee responses to questions on leadership of equality policy in their schools. A major difference

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between the two sets of data was that the interviewee evidence cited informal leadership on equality policy within their schools. Moreover, whilst the Ofsted reports allude to senior leaders, qualified teachers and their teams I was not able to find data on TA leadership within any of the Ofsted reports.

I argue that the Ofsted reports gave me a useful second tranche of evidence on school equality policy; however, there are two caveats. First, Ofsted is a civil service department funded by government. When government changes new influence is brought to bear according to the current party's political aims and priorities. Hence, New Labour, concerned with equity of access, asked the inspectorate to focus on equality policy, leadership and numeracy; whereas the Conservative government was concerned about individualism and diversities, the examination of primary school academies and private 'Free Schools'. I don't suggest that there is a direct response by Ofsted to governmental political priorities; nevertheless, government is the funder and therefore their priorities have a major influence. Secondly, the Ofsted framework limits the definition and range of standards and of value added. The standards focus on the leadership and management of teaching and learning by qualified teachers and particularly senior leadership; however, I saw little discussion of TA professional standards, value-added impact (or otherwise) in classrooms or at school leadership and management levels.

### **The Third Interpretation**

My final interpretation reflects upon the research question; How and why are schools using leadership within the context of primary school equalities policy? The discussion considers the interaction of the school leader, followers and the situation (Western (2008 p.23) Spillane (2006 p.3).

### **Leaders**

A number of authors discuss formal school leadership particularly formal positions or designated role based on contracts, job descriptions, imperatives and evaluations, (Harris 2014, MacBeath 2009, and Spillane 2006). This is a

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bureaucratic/legal view of the how of leadership or authority; where schools have a clear hierarchy with the Head as the executive leader and a body of professionals below them. My examination of research data revealed that the case study schools each had a complex hierarchical structure with the Chair of Governors and Head teacher at the top followed by a Senior Leadership team; below that were Middle Leaders; Class Teachers and TA's. There were also non-teaching personnel including the Site Manager/School Keeper and Kitchen staff. Ultimately, the how of leading practice, writing and evaluating equality policy sits with the Head, their decisions then ratified by the Governing Body. Of course leadership of these case study schools was complex and each of them had senior; middle; class, and group leaders, such as the TA teams. Each of the schools also cited teams of students and members of School Council as leaders. The Head Teachers of Schools A and C were the leaders of equality policy development whereas in School B this was the responsibility of a Deputy Head. All three schools saw equality policy as an important focus of affective senior leadership. This is a 'why' of school equality leadership. However, it was made clear across the spectrum of interviewees that having formal leadership structures within each school didn't mean that the views of the staff and students were ignored, particularly around equality policy. Indeed, from my direct professional (insider) experience I observed that all three schools had staff meetings and separate student meetings on developing equality policy.

A strength of the bureaucratic/legal model of leadership is that it gives a clear description of lines of responsibility for decision making up and down the hierarchy; it is based on rational authority that directly links position and enumeration. Moreover, decisions, processes and outcomes may be placed with certain individuals such as the lead on school equality policy, the buck stops there, so do it well! However, this model of school leaders can tend towards an ivory tower approach where the Head and Leadership Team know best! They know all they need to write and deliver until there is an important unforeseen issue or, possibly contentious situation brought to them. Moreover, position or role does not necessarily deal with the 'contours or climate or culture,' (Harris 2005) within the complex policy requirements of the school communities involved.

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

Similar to Harris (2014) and Leithwood et al (2009), I found a wide set of leaders with different specialisms and skills within my case study schools. On first glance this fits with a leadership plus model (Spillane 2006) where the head and senior leadership work together on developing equality practice within the school. However, interviewees and Ofsted inspectors stated that the whole staff worked together on functions/core work. Talents, expertise and skills were shared within their school communities. This moves us more to his leadership plus. to the practice model of interaction between leaders, followers and, situation (in this case, producing equality policy).

I agree with Harris and Spillane that professional expertise can be informally utilised, particularly in the first instance; however, I argue that an effective senior leadership will recognise the skills and talents of individuals and teams and deploy them formally, to meet the needs of the school. I define expertise as professional and therefore formal: first, because all members of staff, be they class teacher or TA, all perform formal leadership roles that include class, group and individual leadership of students. They all have legal/contractual responsibilities for students in their care and have knowledge and expertise in this area. Second, I also suggest that work carried out in a school whether it be by volunteer; lead expert or specialist may be seen as informal for a short time but very soon becomes formalised either due to agreement or awareness by senior leadership or regular input of the specialist leader. For instance, in the research an interviewee talked about a craft activity led by a TA one break time in order to support a small group of students. They enjoyed this and the activity began to happen regularly due to positive influence of the senior leadership. Without that support the activity would no longer exist because they are the gatekeepers (Harris 2014). Thus I argue that informality can only last for a short time because the continued use of expertise by an individual or group soon becomes formal.



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A further aspect of the how, of individual school leaders coming from my interviewee data was that of personality or charisma. For instance, a particular interviewee said:

“.....what there are, what we have, are charismatic personalities in the school” **(Interviewee 2, Inclusion Leader School C).**

Personality traits and skills are an aspect of leadership according to (Grint 2010, Western 2008) therefore an understanding of leadership personality traits becomes necessary. An individual's style of leadership may be open or closed according to their personality traits. An open personality tends towards an open and shared style of working with a focus on innovation and progress whereas a closed personality tends towards a more controlling, secretive persona limited discussion and a focus on demand rather than debate. The case study schools in my own research were judged by the Ofsted inspectors to have an agreed and common purpose and sharing of experience, and skills, which would seem to indicate a more open style of leadership. Interviewee evidence similarly described a culture of leadership that encouraged sharing of skills, information and views. Furthermore, interviewees also saw themselves as leaders. Harris, (2014, 2009, 2008 and 2005) argues that leaders have knowledge/expertise which they share with the rest of the school within a climate or culture of innovation, two-way debate and interactive working. Whereas Wiliam, focusses on leadership through learning communities where the leader/s are experts in particular areas of educational knowledge and innovation (Wiliam, 2009). I propose that leaders in this context are knowledge creators and innovators and may come from any area and role within the school community.

Before leaving leaders, I want to address the notion of students as leaders within schools. Some interviewees saw students as leaders, particularly those who took part in school leadership initiatives such as the Buddy system, or representing their class on the school council. For instance, one interviewee said that certain student representatives asked the school to spend funds on new toilet facilities which was approved by the senior leadership. Whilst both of these examples might be said to give students leadership practice, I would say that students remain learners and clients in any school situation, even when captaining the

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school cricket team. The leadership of others by students, requires the approval and support of professional staff.

### **Followers**

I next considered the how and why of positions and persona of followers in relation to equality policy. Formal positioning or role places the followers in a clear bureaucratic and hierarchical structure. A number of interviewees saw themselves as followers because they were outside of the senior leadership structure. However, my findings suggest that the notion of a fixed leadership structure was sometimes challenged by the followers. Some teacher/followers were in fact asked to join senior management teams because they were the gatekeepers leading and sharing expertise in a specific area. In another school the senior leaders prepared a programme for Black History Week, which was then revised after consultation and interaction with the followers who were to lead on many aspects.

A second aspect of followers is their professionalism, their expert knowledge base and openness or willingness to learn. For example, a number of interviewees talked about following leaders within teams and meetings, and then of leading informal chats where other followers or even leaders, had a chance to understand and discuss learning issues. It was said that the case study schools had regular meetings where the Head or Senior Leadership would give a briefing on a learning issue which was then opened out to the rest of the staff for discussion. Indeed, a TA said that their voice was listened to particularly with regard to the students they teach. Spillane (2006), gives an example of a meeting where the Head Teacher/Principal might open a meeting but then hand over to leaders in different areas such as literacy and Caribbean Heritage who were developing a joint curriculum project; The Principal at that point became a follower. Correspondingly my analysis found followers/leaders sometimes exchanged positions.

Thus I see followers in the research rather as interactors whose voice is heard, and often, listened to. Similar to the leader aspect, the how, of followers included

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position, teamwork, voice and utilising expertise in order to achieve the why, of effective equality policy.

### **Situation**

Situation is the third element of leadership which I examine in the context of school equality policy. The how returns to leader and follower interaction in developing equality policy. The why is the compliance with legal requirements of the Equality Act (2010), reaching agreement with LEA's working with the local community and responding to the needs of the community within particular schools. The context of equality policy leadership includes strategic planning, delivery, monitoring and evaluation processes. The three Ofsted Reports covered general school planning, delivery and monitoring and specifically about Equal Opportunities Policy for students in the schools. Interview transcripts, (including the views of TAs), also covered these points. Of course the context might have been fraught with problems and possible conflicts, indeed Spillane (2006) suggests that changes (a practical and/or new development) can cause possible divisions. In fact, some interviewees suggested that there had been differences of opinion when developing new equality policy; however, the majority said that reviewing and developing equality policy had been helpful and positive for the school community. Indeed, all three schools had developed policy in this area prior to the Equality Act (2010). A practical example was that all three schools had regular equality events such as the Black History Month during October which involved social and educational occasions for the school community. Thus I suggest that the situation or context of equality policy is the why, of leadership.

# **Thesis Conclusions**

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## **Thesis Conclusions**

In this chapter I distil my thesis position on leadership within the context of school equality policy. I chose the research topic for the reasons stated in my introduction and because it was an important and present professional issue. Government funders required state primary schools to further develop leadership within equality policy. I was working as an LEA Consultant supporting schools in that area and wanted to deepen my professional and personal understanding of school leadership and strategic planning; I continue to work professionally in this realm although I now work as a private consultant to schools.

My research aims were to find new and important empirical knowledge on leadership of school Equality policy: I also wanted to gain a greater understanding of the way professionals worked and interacted, particularly from the viewpoint of TA's, because there was limited information in that particular area. The research questions were

1. Where does power and control lay in primary schools? Is power and control similar to leadership and management?
2. What leadership characteristics come out of a primary school equality policy context?
3. How and why are schools using leadership within the context of primary school equality policy?

These questions led to a conceptual framework and a qualitative design with some quantitative data presentations (Nesbit and Watts, Bassey (2001) and Hammersley (2001)). I collected documentary and interview data from three case study schools and carefully analysed, compared and contrasted my data with specialist literature. I now revisit each research question and offer my conclusions.

### **Where does power and control lay in primary schools? Is power and control similar to leadership and management?**

- 1) So who does hold the power and control in a primary school? I conclude that whilst there is a degree of power sharing, ultimately the Head teacher holds the reins of power both overt and covert (Lukes (2005), Handy (1999). and Foucault, (1980). Furthermore, my research journey and

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professional experience lead me to conclude that power and leadership are similar.

- 2) I found that the majority of interviewees saw power as similar to leadership. An interviewee from School A for example, observed, 'my earlier answers on school leadership were the same when discussing power'. Certain authors like Lukes (2005), Dahl (1957, 1961); Parsons (1957) discuss power in relation to authority and influence whereas others like Grint (2010), Spillane (2010) and Bass (2008) examine leadership. Crawford (2014) suggests that the conception of power and leadership are similar; certainly this was corroborated by my research.
- 3) My research data showed that control and management were seen as analogous when considering school equality policy. Bernstein (1971-2000) used the term control when examining school process and pace; whereas others like Davies (2011, 2005) use 'management'. Dowling (2001) argues that though Bernstein's concept of power was helpful he criticised the use of control. However more recently Cause (2010); Wylie, (2008) and Hoadley, (2006) see control as important when examining schools. Based on the evidence, I argue that leadership/power and management/control were similar within my research context.
- 4) Interviewees, Ofsted and authors saw strong linkage between school leadership and management. Participants viewed equality policy as complex; involving wide community debate and agreement; whereas the timetabling of policy development, though complicated, was unilinear. Earley, (2013 p.163) suggests state schools developed management systems to meet government requirements which moved to a leadership focus following a change of government in 1997. Certainly specialists like Spillane (2010) suggest that school leadership is now to the fore. I conclude that leadership and management is directly linked and can be seen as two ends of a continuum (Western 2008) where school leadership

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deals with wicked strategic problems, such as equality policy, whilst management is tame and operational (Davies 2011, Grint 2010).

- 5) I further conclude that my research reveals a continuum of leadership/management working at both the micro and macro level; both, within interviewee answers and Ofsted reporting, and in my comparison of similarities and differences of the three schools. Authors like Bull (1987) examined the micro politics of individual schools; whereas, Harris (2008) and Spillane (2006) examined individual schools but also considered the similarities of groups of case studies.
- 6) I found that leadership was seen as formal within the schools in my study; that formal leadership/management, authority and influence, was regarded as particularly important when it came to leading school equality policy. Certain participants considered the possibility of informal leadership situations where individual staff worked beyond their job descriptions. Harris (2014) defines expertise and specialism as informal. Whilst I concur that specialist or expert activity can be described as informal when first initiated; I conclude that if any activity directly links with core school work and happens regularly, it becomes formal.
- 7) All three case study schools had developed a flatter hierarchy when developing equality policy. There were leaders working at senior, middle and TA levels because of the complex situation. In conclusion primary school policy leadership can be tight or flexible (Handy (1999 p140)
- 8) The majority of data from the interviewee answers and Ofsted reports was based on overt leadership of equality policy. Authors like Lukes (2005 and Handy (1999) consider overt observed leadership and covert leadership in relation to culture and charisma. I argue; based on the research and my professional experience, that the three schools worked towards an open culture with shared values and vision. However, I was aware that the head teachers exercised latent leadership based on their formal position, whilst

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some interviewees noted the possibility of charisma of any member of staff being influential, however, there was limited data from the evidence of this being an important factor in their consideration of equality policy leadership.

- 9) Finally, interviewees described a hybrid form of the development and practice of school leadership where the head teacher or specific specialist may prepare a draft equality policy whereas the school teaching team meet to discuss debate and agree the policy and practice. Crawford (2012) and Gronn (2009 a, b,) consider the solo/distributed leadership hybrid model within schools. Handy (1999) describes the hybrid positioning of school leadership between tight to flexible due to interaction and particular circumstance. I argue that the interaction of school leaders, followers, and equality policy situation, culture and timing will generally lead to hybrid leadership outcomes.

### **What leadership characteristics come out of a school equality policy context?**

Eight major characteristics came out of my research: Team, Experience, Respect, Sharing, Role, Skill, Communication and Ethos were seen by the interviewees as important elements of good leadership of equality policy. Preedy, Glatter and Wise (2003) discuss school leadership cultures. Schools can have an open or closed culture. I argue that effective equality policy requires a degree of openness in the school culture or ethos. The three schools I examined reflected a culture of sharing, respect, and openness in the content and detail of their answers to the research questions.

I conceptualised my leadership characteristics through the interaction of leaders, followers and situation, similar to Bolden (2011, 2003), Grint (2010) and Gronn (2000). Furthermore, I found school leadership characteristics similar to Leithwood, (2009); Harris (2008); and Handy (1999). For instance; Leithwood spoke about sharing whereas Harris considered role. A difference is that my leadership characteristics were developed and analysed within the specific



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context of school equality policy. I went towards depth rather than attempting to look at the whole – school system of leadership.

### **How and why are schools using leadership within the context of primary school equality policy?**

My research on leadership within school equality policy suggests that a major how was found in the detail of achieving the development of a clear long term strategic picture for equality policy and in the detail of putting this into practice. I found that the senior leadership in the research schools described the wider picture and detailed operations of equality policy, whereas the TAs gave detailed evidence of knowledge and understanding of equality policy actions when supporting groups and individual students. This outcome was reflected, to an extent, within Ofsted reports. However, I found no direct link or reference to TA leadership role within equality policy or practice in any of the schools' Ofsted reports.

I found that the answer to the 'why' question was the requirement to develop and sustain equality within the core work of the school for all of the individual communities. However, equality policy work was already viewed by each of these schools as an important aspect of their schools mission or vision. Another important imperative was meeting the requirements of the Equality Act and Government funding agency (Ofsted). Hence state schools are required to meet government standards, including value-added. However, I also concluded from the documentary data that the leadership/management standards of Ofsted tend to concentrate on qualified senior and middle leaders with no attention paid to the work of TA leads or any evaluation of the value they added.

My conclusion is that the 'how' of leadership has formal and informal aspects. MacBeath (2009), discusses formal and informal leadership. MacBeath identifies a difference between formal contracts, descriptions and posts, and the culture of the school; I certainly concluded, that however relaxed the culture of a primary school is there is still latent power the direct or even implicit agreement of the

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senior leadership moves an informal activity or voluntary task into the formal, particularly if that task or activity becomes a regular or timetabled role.

### **Recommendations**

An initial recommendation is that TAs be more directly included in school leadership hierarchies, not least because they are a valuable human resource which should not be wasted. For instance, the data coming from TA research answers on school equality policy leadership was rich, giving very detailed information about their leadership responsibilities for students both in and out of the classroom. TAs hold valuable, (often in-depth) knowledge about individuals and groups of students around their learning and behaviour, including outside of the classroom situation. They are part of the school teaching staff and therefore require the same level of communication; continued professional development and respect as other qualified teachers. An implication of this recommendation is that schools learn better how to maximise the impact of their Teaching Assistants (Blatchford 2012).

A second, but linked recommendation, is that the leadership and management of TAs and commentary on their leadership roles, needs a clear space within Ofsted reports. The findings from the research together with my professional experience of many years support my strong belief that TA work should constitute a value-added element of any school; yet Ofsted inspections continue to judge senior, middle and class teacher leadership exclusively.

A final recommendation is to take forward new research bringing together leadership, management, power and control in a different set of case study primary schools. I used schools with good to excellent reports. I suggest that it would also be interesting to look at schools that are deemed to be moving towards, or are already, in special measures.

### **Professional Reflections**

As a professional specialist in leadership within the context of school equality policy I wanted to research strategic planning and practice in the area, both for

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the wider school community and my own development. Whilst I had professional and personal experience of leadership within the context of school equality policy, this was based on the immediate operational needs of school communities. After some consideration I concluded that it would be useful to carry out an in-depth critical study around leadership of this important area.

My research project began and continued throughout within a self-imposed rigorous regime of regular discussion with professional critical friends both within my workplace and outside. Indeed, a work colleague who had suggested that I do a doctoral thesis in my professional area of expertise, regularly examined and discussed my early work. Moreover, this rigorous research process widened my critical friendship activities to include other students and academics on a very regular basis. Continued discussion, debate and presentations in UCL and elsewhere, helped me to focus clearly on research issues and problems including that of academic writing.

Originally, I began my research when working for an inner city authority but am now working privately as a self-employed educational consultant to schools. My present occupation has included carrying out surveys through interviewing and analysing student and parent views on specific areas of teaching and learning as well as the reviewing of school equality policy with governors. My understanding and advice has been based not just on previous professional expertise but has also benefitted from my research activities.

There were a range of professional problems and positive outcomes of the research which included:

- One problem was the relatively short time-span for the research due to the needs of the schools.
- Professional research seems to have a short shelf-time so I wanted to get my research out there within a reasonable time-schedule.
- Research costs were high for a self-funder and needed to be kept to a certain level.

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- The topic of leadership within school equality policy and practice had a clear history and required regular developmental review due to national and local requirements. It was an important area of professional work.
- Being a professional insider within the three case study schools I was able to collect and analyse a wealth of detailed evidence from interviewees which would have been less likely if I were an outsider.
- A very big positive for me was that I enjoyed the whole process and despite the difficulties I learnt a lot.

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# **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

## **Appendix 1**

Below is my thesis proposal which was sent out to the case study schools for the community to examine

**Institution of Education**

**Doctorate in Education**

**Thesis Proposal**

**Leadership Theory within School Diversities  
and Equalities Policy**

**May 2012**

**Stephen J. Willoughby**

# Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy

## Abstract

### Leadership Theory within School Diversities and Equalities Policy

'Leadership Theory' focuses on how leaders organise groups of people to achieve common goals. I will focus on school leadership within School Diversities and Equalities Policy. My general aim is to evaluate, clarify and illustrate Leadership Theory within educational institutions, particularly schools. The specific aims are to examine and explore Leadership Theory within the context of school Diversities and Equalities Policy and to illustrate and clarify the use of Leadership Theory in practice. This is an umbrella policy and it states the agreed vision and values of a school. Based on these aims, my questions are on the leadership characteristics; the how and why, and power and control within schools particularly in terms of specific policy.

I use a flexible design that will include the collection and analysis of documentary evidence and semi-structured interviews. The two data forms allow contrasting views where documentary evidence is formal such as OFSTED Reports whereas interview answers are less formal. Documentary evidence will be taken from school plans, policies and reports. The interview schedule will comprise a sample of professionals undertaking a range of roles within the participating schools. The interview questions will be sent to each interviewee prior to interview.

### Introduction

As an educational professional and researcher, I am very interested in Leadership Theory within institutions particularly schools. Authors (Harris 2008, Kayrooz and Fleming, 2008) argue that Leadership Theory came back into vogue in the 1920s particularly the heroic leader. Moreover, national policymakers require clear theoretical models to develop and recruit leaders. An example is the establishment of the National College for School Leadership. Leadership Theory focuses on how leaders organise groups of people to achieve common goals. I will concentrate on school leadership within 'School Diversities and Equalities Policy'. This policy states the agreed vision and values of a school. I use school policy as my context because this has been my specialist area for some years.

### My research aims are to:

- Evaluate, clarify and illustrate Leadership Theory within educational institutions particularly schools.
- Examine and explore Leadership Theory within the context of school Diversities and Equalities Policy.
- illustrate and clarify the use of Leadership Theory in practice within the context of this umbrella policy

Thus, my research questions are

- What leadership characteristics come out of a school diversities and equalities policy context?
- How and why are schools using leadership within the context of school diversities and equalities policy?
- Where does power and control lie within schools?

# Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy

The main sections of this proposal are:

- Background and Rationale
- Context
- Theoretical Framework
- Methodology
- Research Timetable
- References

## **Background and Rationale**

I've been a professional teacher for over 30 years and am currently a private educational consultant for primary mainstream and special schools. A major area of my work is on School Diversities and Equalities Policy. I use the phrase School Diversities and Equalities Policy in this proposal because it brings together to diverse terms Diversities and Equalities. The term 'Diversities' is the acknowledgement and respect of differences within and between groups of people whereas 'Equalities' is the framework that enables opportunity, access, participation and contribution that is fair and inclusive.

Policy in this area has been formally developing nationally and locally since as early as 2000 with the Race Relations Amendment Act following the Stephen Lawrence Enquiry. State Schools were asked to prepare policy based on their specific context. More recently Parliament has passed the Equality Act 2010. It brought together a number of Diversities and Equalities for state schools to implement as a duty. Schools were asked to prepare policies and linked plans which would be agreed, regularly monitored and reviewed by the specific community. At present, I'm advising and supporting schools in reviewing and monitoring their policy particularly given the government's timetable to have policy in place by April 2012.

I consider School Diversities and Equalities Policy as an umbrella policy developed over time by the school community with external support. Monitoring is both internal and external and policy is directly linked to school vision. However, my professional consideration is one thing, effective research in this area is another; therefore I will use School Diversities and Equalities Policy as my research context.

## **Rationale**

Part of my rationale for the proposed research area is the professional development of a deeper knowledge and understanding of specific policy and clear advice and support to schools. From the position of a person with a registered blind disability I have long had a personal interest in all forms of inclusion policy, however, my present rationale places School Diversities and Equalities Policy as the specific context or vehicle to examine leadership because it is an area of professional expertise. Thus, the lens is Leadership Theory within schools.

The main features of the research rationale are to



## Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy

- develop a clearer professional understanding of School Diversities and Equalities Policy for advising and supporting school:
- build a clearer professional picture on Leadership within School Diversities and Equalities Policy
- increase academic, policy makers and practitioners understanding of Leadership within schools

### Research Context

School Diversities and Equalities Policy is the context of this research. Nationally 'Diversity' is the acknowledgement and respect of differences within and between groups of people or individuals. For example a school community may have members who hold differing views and practices on religion or life style. It can be argued that diversity allows a wider understanding of different cultures. Certainly, I have visited professionally a number of schools which support diversity whereas authors like Cotton et al (2003) saw and suggested developments in this area. Equality is the framework that enables opportunity, access, participation and contribution that is fair and inclusive. Finally, nationally Diversities and Equalities links directly to inclusion policy.

Inclusion in school involves the process of increasing the participation of children in, and reducing their exclusion from, the cultures, curriculum and communities of school life. It is a process whereby all children are educated, as far as possible, within age appropriate mainstream classroom with support provided by teaching staff to prepare for a wide range of success. It is suggested that diversities, equalities and inclusion work involves the identification and minimising of barriers to learning and participation and the maximizing of resources to support learning and social participation.

Since 2000 there has been a national focus on Diversities and particularly Equalities for instance, the Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000 placed a General Duty on public authorities and schools to:

- Eliminate unlawful discrimination; and
- Promote equality of opportunity and good relations between people of different racial groups' (Learning Trust 2004 p4)

This act was followed by others including Disabilities (2005) and Gender Equality Act 2006. These acts asked for state schools to prepare and monitor linked policies. By 2010 there were a number of equalities stated within the Equality Act, including:

- Age
- Disabilities
- Gender
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Pregnancy and Maternity
- Reassignment - Homophobia
- Race
- Religion or belief,
- Sex
- Sexual orientation

# Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy

Equality Act 2010

All state schools are now in the process of reviewing their Diversities and Equalities Policies in relation to community aims and external accountancy based on the Equality Act 2010. I suggest that Diversities and Equalities Policy:

- Is an umbrella policy which includes all diversities and equalities guidelines and principles
- States the agreed vision and values of a school.
- Is linked to clear written and monitored planning. For example Camden (2010) laid out a general Equality Plan for schools to sign up to.

The local context for the research involves one inner city local authority. One is an inner city and the second would be an urban authority. Within this authority I have chosen three mainstream primary schools within the inner city authority and one from the urban authority. I chose the three schools from the inner city authority because they were happy to take part whereas I am still looking for an urban authority school. Time is not on my side and therefore I must move with what I have. It may be that I take four schools from the inner city authority.

The three schools so far already chosen are:

- 'A' Built in the mid sixties and lies to the north of the authority and has a mixed catchment area of private housing and low rise flats;
- 'B' It lays to the east of the borough with a mix of mid sixties and nineteenth century buildings with a catchment area of private housing and a council estate;
- 'C' The third school is in the south of the authority with a nineteenth century building with a new reception entrance built a couple of years ago. The catchment area is from private housing and two housing estates.

## Theoretical Framework

The lens of research is on theoretical leadership; therefore, the theoretical framework is wide. In my previous research study I focused directly on a specific model of leadership theory known as Distributed Leadership. 'Leadership extends within and between organisations: this doesn't mean everyone leads but that everyone has the potential to lead under the right conditions' (Harris 2008). I propose that Distributed Leadership is an important theoretical and practical model (Harris 2009; Leithwood et al 2009 and Spillane 2006); however, it is not the only one to examine within school leadership. For example; Davis and Brighthouse (2008) edited a book on 'Passionate Leadership in Education'. Their main focus is on emotional leadership delivered by a senior member of school staff. Their position is different to distributed leadership because the focus is on the Head teacher's leadership and passion rather than group of leaders or even leadership delegation.

There are a number of theoretical leadership models which can be placed into general categories or themes. For example 'Passionate Leadership' theory may be part of an emotional theme of school leadership. Themes are useful when categorising and placing a wide range of theory such as leadership theory. However, these categories or themes are based on the position of the

## Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy

commentator. Bass et al (2008) sets out a wide range of themes such as trait which are used to propose a link between 'theory, research and management applications'; whereas Cherry (2012) considers eight themes which where the context is educational psychology. A third organisation of themes was prepared by Bolden et al (2003) how categorised themes of leadership theory on an examination of contingency leadership theory. My categorisation is based on a clearer understanding of leadership theory and practice in schools and where control and power lie. Therefore I have decided to set out an initial set of themes based on the authors above and my general aim. They include the 'Great Man Theory; Trait Theory; Behaviour Theory, Situational Leadership; Contingency Theory; Transactional Theory and Transformational Theory

Authors give clear descriptions of the Great Man Theories. Bass et al (2008) talks about a long written history of this theme; for example Machiavelli's (1532) Prince where the strong leader has the right to control. I propose Leaders may be charismatic, physical or spiritual or all three. For instance Henry the Eighth certainly used physical and spiritual leadership to sack the Roman Catholic monastic residencies when establishing the English Church. Modern commentators talk about the use of 'The Great Man' within educational institutions (Spillane 2006) where the Head Teacher/Principal becomes a hero. He/she runs the show. However, deeper analysis shows that Great Man theories are short lived in school communities and require propping up with other models as Spillane concludes; 'Head Teachers require other staff to support their position'. I conclude that the 'Great Men' theory may in practice require further investigation.

Trait theories link to the previous theme where the focus is on the individual leader the difference is examination of particular attributes. Leaders have specific characteristics which separate them from other non leaders. It is argued that this model was in vogue in the 1939s; however, I suggest that educational leadership texts continue to contain aspects of trait theory. For instance Brighouse (2008) focuses on the position of the Head Teacher as 'passionate leader'. I argue that trait is different from the Great Man due to a move from traditional authority to individual abilities; however, both themes place the leadership on the single individual such as the Head Teacher or Principle.

Behavioural theory has been used in schools particularly through the developing Behaviour policy and practice (Parliamentary Education Committee (2011)). School regularly require internal leadership in this area. As a professional I have taken part in and observed the development of Behaviour Policy within a number of institutions. Leadership role and practice was directly linked to these policies. School policies may differ between institutions and also between the written form and practice. These areas require examination because they directly interact with a Diversities and Equalities umbrella policy.

The fourth theme of was defined as 'Situational Leadership' which focuses on a person's expertise to lead a specific situation. This is not necessarily a role but rather the leadership of a specific task or project. For instance a member of the school community may lead on a particular task such as the organisation of a

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

school trip. The task is over once the trip has happened. Again there are aspects of school leadership theory which link to Situational Theory.

Contingency theory is a refinement of the situational viewpoint. Hence, school leadership theory requires the most effective style to use in a specific situation. For example the leader of the school trip may decide on an open or closed style of leadership on the trip outside the school. The openness may include school community suggestions; delivery and review of the trip whereas closure suggests the opposite.

Transactional approach emphasizes the importance of the relationship between leader and followers. This approach is similar to Spillane's (2006, 2010) examination of educational institutions in relation to the position of leaders, followers and situation. Leaders and followers positions are central. However, Spillane's model defines followers and leaders as changeable over time and situation the focus is on being a specialist in the lead position.

Transformational theory has a clear relationship with the literature and practice on school improvement such as Harris 2009; Hopkins 2008 and Fullan (2002). Both academics and policy makers have been focused on transformation of schools particularly around capacity building for leaders. For example I have taken part in leadership policy development in a particular inner city authority for the past five years.

I propose that the detailed review of these seven categories or themes of Leadership Theory within the context of School Diversities and Equalities Policy may allow the possibility to synthesise for new theoretical perspective. This is a small study that will utilise ongoing critical friendship networks when collecting and analysing Leadership Theory.

### **Methodology**

My general research aim is to define, examine and explore effective theory and practice within educational institutions particularly schools. A specific aim is to examine the lens of Leadership Theory within the particular school context of Diversities and Equalities Policy. The lens of Leadership Theory is wide; it contains a range of themes; however, it may be reduced to a specific theoretical leadership model during the research process. Distributed Leadership is one model where an institution widens the leadership of roles and tasks beyond senior management (Harris 2009, Gronn 2009 and Spillane 2006). The second aim will illustrate and clarify school leadership theory and practice within Diversity and Equalities Policy. It moves from theoretical examination to observations on leadership practice within school Diversity and Equalities Policy.

My research questions are

- What leadership characteristics come out of a school diversities and equalities policy context?
- How and why are schools using leadership within the context of school diversities and equalities policy
- Where does power and control lie within schools?

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The first two questions are specific, the data and conclusions are related to the case study schools whereas the third question is general and gives evidence to a wider audience of teaching professionals.

The research aims and questions were examined by critical friends including participants at two doctoral conferences. For instance, participants at the second conference saw the aims and questions as 'very interesting'; however, one participant proposed that the research presentation required a clear hypothesis. On reflection, my hypothesis is that:

- The aims and research questions give a framework for evaluating, clarifying and illustrating leadership theory and practice within educational institutions particularly schools.
- My study will highlight a range of possible options around leadership theory and practice for those within educational institutions particularly schools.

The aims, questions and hypothesis are based on the professional requirement to examine leadership in relation to specific school policy. As an Educational Consultant I support schools to develop and lead on Diversity and Equalities. Moreover, as a researcher I have been interested in leadership theory and practice for a number of years. My professional and researching beliefs are grounded in rigor, the networking of critical friends; reflection and a positive view for the future of leadership within schools as they go through and face some very difficult times.

### **Research Design**

This research methodology is based on a flexible design (Robson 2002 p163) where research structure and timetable can be changed when required. Flexible design would allow changes or reorganization from the conception of research aims and questions through to analytical options and the judgment of conclusions. Moreover, flexibility allows a mix of qualitative and quantitative techniques within research methodology. My specific flexible design uses a comparative case study approach where data is taken from four primary schools. A particular strength of this approach is the ability to collect detailed evidence from specific institutions. It permits depth of analysis that allows the development and examination of initial and deeper themes directly linked to research questions. Furthermore, the case study approach gives space for the collection and analysis of qualitative and quantitative data. The qualitative element will be the collection and analysis of written documentation and semi-structured interview answers by specific participants. The use of quantitative methods will include the description and summary outcomes from individual participants to all case study schools. These methods are based on literature trawl of research design plus recent research experience.

The adoption of a case study approach led to the selection of four primary schools from an inner city authority. I use four case study schools within one authority because I was given entry early in the preparation of this proposal; moreover, my professional background allowed the development of a long term critical friendship with these schools and I want to explore the leadership within them in some depth.

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## Examination of specific sources

Data collection will be taken from two data sources; school documentation and semi- Documentary evidence will comprise of school plans, policies and reports. The school plans are defined as major school development or improvement plan (SDP). These plans are based on internal discussions and debate, monitoring and practice; plus, external support and evaluation. These plans contain strategic priorities to meet the school policy and vision. Hence, policy and vision set down a school's formal aims. School reports include OFSTED and authority reviews. These documents give a flavour of a school's policy planning values and vision. Moreover, it will be interesting to see where one school's vision and policy is similar to another and where they differ.

My rationale for semi-structured interviews is that I want to collect data on the views of key participants on the theory and practice of leadership within school Diversities and Equalities Policy within four primary schools. This data can be contrasted against documentary evidence. Moreover, I intend to develop a semi structured interview schedule that allowing participant's space for their views.

Four Case Study Schools	
School Views	Teaching Staff <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Head Teacher</li><li>• Senior Management</li><li>• Class Teacher</li><li>• Teaching Assistants</li></ul>
Insider Researcher	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Participant Consultant</li></ul>

## The sample

The time and scope of the research will be limited to a small sample of four school case studies. The initial time period is two years. The sample of schools will be taken from two authorities; three schools from one inner city and one urban authority. Participants will be selected from these agreed schools. Four participants will be taken from each school. Participants will have particular positions for instance there will be a Teaching Assistant's views within each establishment. My rationale is to get the views of individuals; the specific groups of professionals such as Teaching Assistants, the general view of the school and contrasts between them. I intend to give the sample the questions prior to interview so that they have time to think about their answers.

Benefits of the sample include the detailed experiences of key participants and my insider awareness of the case study schools. Problems may include a degree of bias in the selection of particular case studies which is why I particularly want to take my research beyond one authority.

## Analysis

My analytical examination of documentary and interview data is based on the 'Qualitative Data Analysis' model by Miles et al (1994) and further developed by

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

Bazeley, (2007). Early analysis will follow the first document from the school or initial participant interview. Interviews will be recorded onto Dictaphone for later transcription. Analysis will be regularly examined against my flexible design and research questions. Transcription of data will be carefully collected and checked and place on NVivo software. Transcripts will be placed in separate documents for example a school plan or the particular set of answers by a participant. Memos may contain research thought or summaries of data whereas nodes contain specific transcript. The use of documents, memos and nodes allow the clear development of specific themes (Rubin and Rubin (2005)) in this case Leadership Theory and Practice.

Themes will be developed from similar outcomes between documents or between participants. This will be the first level of analysis. A second level will involve the similar outcomes between participants and documents. In the first and second levels I look at the single case study school, in the third level of analysis I will bring together summaries from the individual schools to one based on four schools on leadership theory and practice.

The research aims are to produce coherency of research design, findings and conclusions and prepare a clear report to agreed audiences. To support this I will keep detailed memos throughout the process using NVivo software. The longer term aim is to evaluate and effectively support the interactive refinement of this aspect of leadership particularly from the schools' perspective.

### **Ethics and Audience**

The main ethical issues are the involvement of professional within the four case studies in relation to the degree of confidentiality and the accountability of the research process, findings and reporting. My approach to ethical issues will be developed on my Institute Of Education ethics form.

My intended audiences include:

- A wide audience of academics
- The 16 participants and the four case study schools involved in the research
- Specialist teaching professionals

## Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy

<b>Initial Strategic Research Timetable</b>	<b>Actions</b>
<b>Phase 1</b>	<b>Project Preparation</b>
February – June 2012	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Prepare thesis proposal abstract and poster for Institute of Education (23, 2, 2012)</li> <li>• Prepare Abstract and Power Point Presentation for STORIES Oxford University (13,3, 2012)</li> <li>• Prepare Abstract and Presentation for Agency Cambridge University (June)</li> <li>• Prepare Abstract and Power Point Presentation For IOE Conference</li> <li>• Complete IOE Ethics Form</li> <li>• Detailed literature review linked to the research question. Examine arguments, identify contradictions and formulate own position. Revisit my on epistemic perspective and methodology.</li> <li>• Prepare initial interview and observation schedule including regular dialogue with critical friends</li> <li>• Agree four case study schools</li> <li>• Commence NVivo journal</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 2</b>	<b>Collect and Analyse Data</b>
July 2012 – July 2013	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Collect, transcribe and analyse interviews with participants.</li> <li>• Observational data will be collected</li> <li>• Begin analysis of data at first level</li> <li>• All analysis will be regularly reviewed against the research question.</li> <li>• Continue detailed journal process.</li> <li>• Draft write up of methodology outcomes</li> </ul>
<b>Phase 3</b>	<b>Completion of Final Report</b>
August 2013 – June 2014	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Second level analysis of documentary and semi-structured interview answers</li> <li>• Conclusions will finally be completed</li> <li>• The report begins early due to the flexible design written plans, reviews, data analysis, journal notes and on-going reflection will affect the final report. This material will be placed on NVivo for examination by critical friends</li> <li>• The final report will attempt to review the research effectively with clear coherent conclusions.</li> </ul>

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## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

**Appendix 2** contains the research agreement letter of interviewees and a note for interviewees about the interview questions

### **Leadership Theory and Practice with the Context of School Diversities and Equalities Policy**

#### **Research Agreement Letter**

Dear participant,

This project collects documentary and interview data from three case studies schools on 'Leadership Theory and Practice within the context of 'School Diversities and Equalities Policy'. The research is based on trust and clear on-going agreement between participants and the researcher.

The agreement is that:

- The researcher will ask a schools' permission to examine specific documentation and to initiate a interview schedule with staff participants
- The interview schedule material will have been sent to the participant prior to the interview date for examination
- The researcher will ask participants permission before tape recording the interview
- The researcher will focus on the questions emailed to the participant
- The participant can discontinue the interview at any time
- The participant can decline to answer any question
- Confidentiality: The research interviewer will not use, nor disclose to any persons any matters resulting from informal discussion with the participant prior to or after interview
- The participant will be given a copy of the final paper or summary

We the undersigned have both read and agreed to the interview schedule above.

Signatures:

Participant \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

Researcher \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

## **Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy**

### **Dear Participant**

Thank you very much for taking part in my research on Leadership within Diversity and Equality Policy I do not define leadership or equalities policy because I would like your own views on this research area.

Below are set of 12 questions on leadership and school policy which will be used during the interview session. Can you have a careful look at the prior to the interview? It would be very helpful to me if you were able to give an example when answering each of the questions during the interview.

**Steve Willoughby**

# Leadership within the Context of School Equality Policy

## Appendix 3

### Useful Abbreviations

Commission for Race Equality	CRE
Continued Professional Development	CPD
Department of Education and Skills	DES
Local Education Authority	LEA
The National Collage for Teaching and Leadership	NCTL
Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills	Ofsted
Qualification Credit Framework	QCF
Religious Education	RE
Special Educational Needs Coordinator	SENCO
Teaching Assistants	TA
United Nations Children's Fund (formerly <b>United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund</b> ).	UNICEF