

Abstract

This paper explores the differential possession and deployment of social, cultural and material resources by parents, and the effect of these processes on their willingness and ability to be involved with and intervene in their children's school life – what we have called parental voice. The data presented here is drawn from a study of parents at two secondary schools, a sub-sample of data from a larger study involving six schools. We consider the social positioning and behaviour of three cohorts of parents, those demonstrating high, low and intermediate levels of intervention with the school. Our conclusions stress both the similarities and differences in parents' experience of voice. Certainly parental access to and deployment of a number of social resources significantly affected how often, how easily and over what range of issues they approached the school. However, we also describe the overall character of parental voice in these two schools as individual, cautious and insecure.

Class, Culture and Agency: Researching parental voice

Introduction

This paper reports on the findings of a recently completed project which explored the individual and institutional social, cultural and material factors affecting the formation and expression of parental 'voice' in schools. We argue that, despite several careful and detailed studies in this area (eg Reay 1998, Crozier 2000, Lareau 1989), we do not fully understand the nuances of parents' relationships with schools, why particular parents interact in particular ways with schools and what resources, what orientations they call on in that interaction. These questions raise a highly complex set of issues and relationships between gender, ethnicity, social class, family culture and the positioning and responsiveness of individual school sites. We set out in this paper to explore in more detail the experiences, perceptions and actions of a sample of parents in two secondary schools. As noted, our focus was parental voice. Building on Hirschman's (1970) definition, we defined 'voice' in a broad and inclusive sense to incorporate varying reactions and interventions by parents to a range of educational issues. We wished to explore the differential possession and deployment of social, cultural and material resources by parents, and the effect of these processes on the formation and expression of voice.

In addition to explaining the role parents play in relation to their children's school, our research has broader relevance. We argue that parent-school interactions contribute to an understanding of the ways in which citizens have been conceived by and involved in the public sphere. Indeed, the changing relationships which parents have had with schools over the last fifty years can be said to reflect broader developments in the way in which the public has been conceived by, and involved in, the polity. The social democratic emphasis on the specialist knowledge of professional service deliverers created the public as *clients* in a polity characterised by passivity, dependency, and fragmentation. More recently, neo-

liberalism has sought to turn the public domain into a market in which the public exercise competitive *consumer* choice. Recent analyses of the public sphere argue that the 'age of professionalism' and neo-liberalism both neglected the necessity for, and significance of, co-operative action between *citizens* in order to address collective problems presented by, for example, instances of contested values (Dunn 1992; Giddens 1994). However, the predicament of the public domain is that there is little tradition of citizen participation and deliberative action with regard to public institutions. One of the tasks we set for ourselves was to study the experiences and motivations of the small group of parents who regularly attended the parents' forums in the two main case study schools. We hypothesised that such forums, despite the fragilities that beset them, could be understood as examples of what Yeatman (1994) terms 'little polities', that is a collective 'space' for negotiation between public service deliverers and users, and a mechanism for a participatory approach to decision-making (see Vincent & Martin 2000 for further analysis of the parents' forums). However, in this paper we concentrate on everyday 'communicative action', that is the apparently ordinary and unremarkable contact and communication between parents and teachers, the letters, 'phone calls, and occasional meetings at parents' evenings and elsewhere. We are interested in the issues that provoke parents to use their voice and when they stay silent, what resources they have to call on in their contacts with teachers, what responses they receive and how those determine their further interaction with the school.

Design and Methods

Six schools (three primary and three secondary), chosen from the results of a survey in twelve urban local authorities were involved in phase one of the research. They were all 'high activity' schools in terms of parental involvement, and we concentrated on speaking to key actors (headteacher, parent governors, parents heavily involved in school activities etc. See Martin & Vincent 1999 for further details). In phase two we focused on two secondary schools in order to study parental interventions in more detail. The schools, which we have called 'Willow' and 'Carson', both had active parents' forums (discussion-based groups of parents and teachers). They provided a useful contrast, being about the same size, with mixed social class populations.

However, Carson is a majority white (98%), co-educational school in a suburban location, and Willow, a multi-ethnic girls' school in an inner urban area. As part of our research in phase 1 we had already interviewed 15 parents from across the two schools who were regular attendees at the parents' forum. Throughout the research period, we maintained contact with these parents and attended forum meetings ourselves. In order to try and reach a wider socio-economic cross-section of parents we focused on a year group within Willow and Carson schools. We surveyed year 8 parents (becoming Yr. 9) (response rate 44%). We also contacted parents through friendship networks and at school events¹. We conducted follow-up interviews with 61 families across the two schools (bringing the total sample of parents interviewed across phases 1 and 2 to 76). Subjects covered included the parents' contact with the school, their knowledge of the parents' forum, any concerns, the strategies parents adopted to contact the school and the responses received. We also collected data on these families' occupations, ethnicity, housing and educational histories to allow us to locate them within specific class fractions. Additionally, we conducted repeat interviews with 26 key parent-respondents from the two schools. This was a valuable exercise allowing us to develop themes raised in the earlier interviews and also to introduce new lines of inquiry. During this period we also conducted 20 interviews with teachers and 11 with governors across the two schools.

The schools

Carson School is a mixed 11-16 secondary school in 'Castlehill' LEA (Local Education Authority). In 1998, it had 1,125 pupils. Like Willow, described below, it is a very popular institution. It is, in contrast with Willow, a largely white school, with just under 4% of its pupils coming from minority ethnic backgrounds. The low rate of eligibility for free school meals (just under 9% in 1998), may suggest some degree of homogeneity in family income terms. In 1998, 56.7% of Carson pupils achieved 5 or more GCSE grades of A*-C and 97.3% achieved 5 or more

¹ Contacting 'hard-to-reach' parents who might not reply to questionnaires was a difficulty. At Willow and Carson we attended parents' evenings (80-90% turnout at both schools) in order to make personal contact with potential respondents. We also made use of friendship networks and did achieve a mixed class group of respondents using the indicators of employment, education, and housing tenure.

grades A*-G. The school sets from Year 8, and is proud of its system of pastoral care as well as its academic achievement. The headteacher of 15 years (a white woman) has instituted the school motto, 'Progress through partnership'.

Willow is an 11-18 girls' comprehensive in 'North Park LEA', with approximately 1250 students. As the only single sex comprehensive in the LEA and given its geographical situation close to the centre of the borough, it recruits from across a wide area both within and beyond North Park LEA. It has a mixed race and a mixed social class population with 30% receiving free school meals. The main ethnic groups which make up the pupil population comprise white (UK), Turkish, African/Caribbean and Bangladeshi students². In 1998 the school achieved 43% A*-C passes at GCSE, the second highest in the LEA. The school's headteacher, a white woman, and other senior staff speak of their belief in Willow as 'a genuine comprehensive' with a full ability range. The school has a commitment to mixed ability teaching, which it maintains as a core belief, although with some trimming in recent years (setting in Yr. 10 to meet the demands of GCSE tiering, mentoring sessions for those perceived to be 'most able' from Yr. 8, and after-school extension classes). The headteacher, at one parents' forum meeting, spoke of her pride in the A-G passrate (95%) and about the importance of not letting that slip as the school worked to raise the A-C rate (See Gilborn & Youdell 2000, for examples of schools focusing their energies on students at the C/D borderline).

As noted above, both schools had a discussion-based parents' forum. At Carson, the membership was fixed, and drawn from those already heavily involved with the school's fund-raising committee. The forum met once a term and parents and staff could both bring forward issues for discussion, although the forum was mainly used by the headteacher as a consultative 'sounding board'. At Willow the forum meetings were open to all parents, and attended by a smaller number of staff than at Carson (usually just the head and one of the deputies). The meetings were chaired by a parent and usually attracted between 15 and 20 parents. Again, parents and teachers could bring forward issues for discussion (see Vincent & Martin 2000 for further consideration of the two forums).

² Figures for 1997-8 gave the ethnic breakdown as follows: 25% ESWI, 16% Black Caribbean, 12% Black African, 9% Bangladeshi, 7.5% Indian, 4% Pakistani, and 24% other ethnic groups.

Understanding voice

To gain some analytical purchase on the data collected, we divided the transcripts from our interviews with 76 families into three cohorts, which described the level of their involvement with the school – high, low and intermediate.

- *high* - those who go to meetings in addition to Parents' Evenings, and/or who initiate interaction with the school on a number of occasions concerning either welfare or achievement issues.
- *intermediate* - those who usually attend Parents' Evenings, and have perhaps one or two other instances of interaction with the school, not necessarily initiated by themselves. Don't generally attend meetings
- *low* - May have attended parents' evenings but otherwise have minimal contact with the school, unless initiated by school.

These cohorts formed the vertical axis of our analytical framework (see appendix 1). The horizontal axis was influenced by the work of Bourdieu, which is helpful in conceptualising the nuances of social formation. Bourdieu argues that social class is not simply 'a collection of occupations, but [is] primarily based around different kinds of capital' (Savage et al 1992 p.16; Bourdieu 1998). He discusses the concept of social space in which relationships are structured by distinctive differences.

Societies appear as social spaces, that is as structures of differences that can only be understood by constructing the generative principle which objectively grounds those differences. This principle is none other than the structure of distribution of the forms of power or the kinds of capital which are effective in the social universe under consideration – and which vary according to the specific place and moment at hand (Bourdieu 1998 p.32).

In order to map these structures of difference, we conceptualised the following dimensions for the horizontal axis of the framework: *social positions, habitus* and *capital*. Family, Bourdieu argues, is both a habitus generating institution and a key site for the accumulation of cultural capital (Bourdieu 1998 p.67, Reay 1998). The *social positions* which people occupy - which we define as class, gender and ethnicity - are each the focus of social construction, and in turn construct relations of commonality and difference. Recent research, including this project, has begun to explore the way in which choice of school and participation within school are affected by class, gender and ethnic differences (eg Gewirtz et al 1995; Reay 1998, David et al 1994, Vincent 1996).

The practices of each social position are shaped by *habitus*, or dispositions, a 'social inheritance' which condition the tastes, orientations and expectations towards education. For Bourdieu (1998) the distinctive characteristic of habitus is that it is a generative scheme of classification, of ways of thinking and feeling.

Habitus are generative principles of distinct and distinctive practices – what the worker eats and especially the way he eats it, the sport he practices and the way he practices it, his political opinions and the way he expresses them are systematically different from the industrial owner's corresponding activities. But habitus are also classificatory schemes, principles of classification, principles of vision and division, different tastes. The distinction between what is good and what is bad (Bourdieu 1998 p.8)

It can be argued that the deep cognitive classification of middle class groups for example, is to acquire schooling for their children, which affords relative advantage in the struggle to secure privileged positions in the labour market. The key social property which enables parents to secure this advantage is *capital*.³ We discuss below how the possession and deployment of material (i.e. goods and finances), social (networks and relationships) and cultural (knowledge and skills, social confidence) capital, were vital in

³ Diane Reay suggests Bourdieu understands habitus as lying beneath cultural capital generating its myriad manifestations (Reay 1998 p.28).

explaining variations in parents' expression of voice. Two points here: Everyone possesses capital, but in itself it is arbitrary, value being ascribed to particular forms (and not others) within particular fields. Second, parents may have similar resources of capital but may activate them differently (Lareau 1989). Individuals make choices about their actions; this is not a deterministic theory seeking to close down agency. However, the existence of a broad pattern of pervasive and systematic inequalities operating in and around social interactions is also discernible.

Individuals, by existing in social space encounter fields, but come with their own generating structures, inculcated in the process of their own development in the world. This habitus forms affinities and disaffinities with the structural relations or fields [in this case education] which surrounds them. As such individuals may be in or out of the game and may or may not have the necessary pre-existing capital to play it to their advantage (Grenfall & James 1998 p.25)

The characteristics, the form of parents' social spaces shape their 'voice' which we define as 'communicative action' (Habermas, 1984)⁴. Voice typically expresses purposes (e.g. informing, requesting, questioning) and feelings (e.g. concern, anger) the meanings of which are communicated in a variety of actions (e.g. speaking, writing, petitioning, protesting). Bourdieu powerfully illuminates the 'embodiment' of habitus - how we bear ourselves reveals the mark of social divisions on the body. Arguably, voice expresses the deeper classification of social space - its inclusion and exclusion - inscribed on the very acts of communicating meaning and purpose.

However, variation and difference are not the whole story. Robson and Butler (1999), writing about patterns of middle class consumption, refer to research identifying similarities and commonalities across different social groupings in terms of consumption styles, preferences, tastes, and beliefs. They warn against neglecting these. It may be the case therefore that, despite the way in which parents' possession and use of

⁴ The way in which voice is expressed can be understood as 'communicative action'. Whether through speech or writing, formally or informally, we actively communicate our claims, interests and identities. As such voice always presupposes others. See below for a typology of communicative action: *silence, conversation, storming, by-pass and exit*.

particular resources differentiates their experiences, and orientations to school, that there are also areas of shared experience and perception across the parental body as a whole. Indeed we found some examples here. All the parent-respondents, for example, were orientated towards achievement, none said, for instance, that they just wanted their children to be happy at school (although definitions of success and 'doing well' differed considerably across social groups). There was also a wide perception of risk. For at least some parents in each cohort (high, intermediate and low) there was a fear that the school may not be delivering an adequate education. Parental voice in response to that perception of risk varied considerably, of course, influenced, as we are suggesting, by their possession of resources of capital, and their ability to deploy these effectively.

To continue the explanation of our analytical frame: we attempted to analyse the expression of parental voice and the sense of *agency* (see appendix 1) that it revealed by exploring the interactions of individual dispositions (shaped within different social positions) with particular events, the *happenings*, which provoke parents to communicate with the school. Such parental responses we speculate reveal their underlying dispositions. The happenings we define as *welfare* issues (e.g. bullying, discipline), *achievement* issues (e.g. progress) and *systemic* issues (concerning whole school organisation). Parents' voices can express themselves in different ways. Communicative agency can take a number of forms in relation to the means chosen or the formality or emotional nature of expression. We formulated the following typology: *silence* (inaction, 'waiting and seeing'), *conversation* (dialogue, engaging with the system), *storming* (direct protest, anger), *by-pass* (making private arrangements e.g. employing tutors), *exit* (moving the child from the school).

The schools could *respond* to a parental expression of concern or a query in a number of ways. The institution could maintain a *silence*, or issue an *acknowledgement* (responding but doing nothing). It could demonstrate *activity* (doing something in response) which may or may not lead to sustained *change*, or it could respond by *blocking* any instances of parental assertion.

Analysing voice: the high/low/intermediate cohorts

Our analytical frame allowed us to analyse the characteristics of each individual respondent or couple. We mapped their social positioning, evidence of their habitus, their references to resources of social, material or cultural capital and their activation of these, the happenings (the issues over which they were concerned) parental agency (actions and responses in regard to their concerns) and how the institution responded to them.

All these groupings (high/low/intermediate) are to some extent contingent. The borders between them are not rigid and permanent but inexact and fluid. There is a continuum between and within cohorts, and individuals are situated at different points, at different times. Parental interventions do not, of course, occur in a vacuum, they are set within personal work-related and domestic contexts. Parental time and energy fluctuate accordingly. Parental willingness and ability to intervene in the workings of the school may also be shaped by particular sets of circumstances (e.g. bullying or a child's special needs) which can produce intense periods of interaction. There are limits to people's emotional energy, prolonged, intense contact wears people down. However, despite these caveats the cohorts are a useful analytical tool, throwing light on nuances and variations in parental behaviour. In what follows we have considered the cohorts as spanning the two schools. This analysis fits the sweep and direction of the data. However, the demographics of the two areas are very different, and the parents are, we suggest, representative of rather different class fractions within both the middle and working classes (for the relationships between class, place and identity see for instance, Massey 1995, Wynne 1998, Robson & Butler 1999). These differences in lifestyle and location affect the detail of their views and beliefs about education, and we are exploring these issues in another paper (Vincent 2001).

In relation to the vocabulary of *risk* and *trust* deployed below, we are clearly influenced by the work of Beck and Giddens (Giddens 1991, Beck 1992, Beck, Giddens & Lash 1994). Briefly, Giddens and Beck argue that in a fractured and global social world individuals can actively create a biography for themselves based on the opportunities and risks that the breaking down of formerly rigid customs and traditions, globalisation and the advance of technology have created (Beck 1992, Giddens 1994). However, Beck also notes that risks and opportunities are not equally distributed across the social spectrum.

The history of risk distribution shows that, like wealth, risks adhere to the class pattern, only inversely: wealth accumulates at the top, risks at the bottom. To that extent, risks seem to *strengthen*, not to abolish class society. Poverty attracts an unfortunate abundance of risks. By contrast the wealthy (in income, power or education) can *purchase* safety and freedom from risk.....The possibilities and abilities to deal with risks, avoid them or compensate for them are probably unequally divided among the various occupational and educational strata (Beck 1993 p.35, original emphasis)

In relation to trust, Giddens argues that in late modernity 'expert systems' cannot expect to sustain relationships with passive, dependent clients. With so many sources of knowledge available to lay individuals, a different, more active relationship, one which allows more scope for agency, needs to be constructed. Thus trust between individuals and institutions has to be won by the latter and actively sustained, a process requiring an institutional 'opening-out' (Beck et al 1994). We now turn to examine the cohorts in detail.

High interveners

This cohort of 27 parents (12 phase 2 parents, 15 drawn from phase 1) includes the regular attendees at the parents' forums at both schools. However the Carson forum parents, with the exception of one family are considered separately below, since these parents had relatively little contact with the school concerning their own children's

education. The 'high' cohort are largely white, overwhelmingly home-owners, most are higher educated public sector professionals (appendices 2 and 3). The most obvious form of activated capital in this group is cultural. In Willow in particular, there was considerable knowledge about education and familiarity with public meetings, mostly accrued from parents' employment in education or related occupations. These parents shared a feeling of responsibility for their children's education. They perceived a congested labour market with credential inflation, and were subsequently anxious to secure their children's future (see also Jordan et al 1994).

Mother: I think life is going to be harder for them, than it us for us. In a way you've got to fight to push them to get what's best for them. I suppose it's a slightly selfish thing as well, it's nice to think your kids are doing okay, and they're nice kids and they're doing alright. But I think life is going to be harder for them than us and you've got to make sure that they've got the best opportunity there is basically.

Father: I see it everyday. I would hate to think of them actually doing what people do inside our factory. I couldn't do it, it would drive me up the wall ...

M: Well you actually took Mark and showed him, didn't you?

F: Yes, try and give him a kick up the butt

(White mother and father, nurse and product engineer manager, Carson)

Other parents in the sample voiced these same feelings, but did not act on them in the particular way that distinguishes this cohort. Having a relationship with the school, overtly demonstrating your concern about your child's education, was to this cohort what *'people like us do'*. Most parents had a history of active involvement from primary school, and pre-school. One mother remarked that she started going to National Childbirth Trust (NCT) meetings and carried on from there! Given this, it is not surprising that most felt a sense of interconnection between home and school on aims and values. The high cohort were *'risk managers'*, they were not willing to leave education to the

school and left as little to chance as possible where their children's educational prospects were concerned.

And I found since [daughter] has been living with me, I actually initiated meetings,.....I do not feel she has been stretched. I actually tried to look at the volume of homework that she is given and the diversity of homework as well and that has been addressed by the school...And I think also what I noticed was that the homework had not really been checked. There were spelling errors or grammatical errors or mathematical errors..It looked as if someone was scanning the homework rather than actually checking it, *and these were issues that I brought up with the teachers.*And I found that the other times I went into school was if my daughter got into trouble which to me became a very negative experience really.....So I really don't like that much. *So one of the things I told the teachers* was we would meet...just to talk about how she is getting on at school and how her work is getting on, and how she is relating to her school friends... and the teachers
(Black African father, runs own recruitment consultancy, Willow, *our emphasis*)

[Key stage 4] is the last stage of the race – you wonder if you're going to win or lose. Sometimes I have panics [about that]
(white parents, mother is primary school teacher, father is theatre manager, Willow)

As the quote above suggests, risk management is a contingent process – success can not be assumed. Frequent interventions did not always mean that problems would be resolved as parents wished, and in an earlier paper about the parents' forums we gave examples of the way in which even the high interveners experienced the schools as fairly impermeable institutions (Vincent & Martin 2000).

Risk assessment invites precision and even quantification, but by its nature is imperfect. Given the mobile characteristics of modern institutions, coupled to the mutable and frequently controversial nature of abstract systems, most forms of risk assessment contain numerous imponderables (Giddens 1991 p.6)

This is not to suggest that parents were dissatisfied with the school. In the main, the high cohort of parents were also loyal to and supportive of the school. However despite their positive orientation, they displayed restricted or '**managed trust**', assuming that they needed to keep in close contact. There was a feeling that education could not just be left to the school. This was more pronounced amongst the parent sample at Willow, possibly because of parents' feelings that at inner-city Willow in particular teachers were working under pressure. One mother described 'the shortcomings of any ordinary comprehensive in London',

The thing is one of the reasons why I go to the [forum] is so that I know what's happening in the school and I feel reassured you know, I know about all the problems, like the fact that there aren't enough maths and science teachers nation-wide and in London, it's acute. It's a problem at Willow...I mean you've got to be aware of all these things and try and, if necessary, to get a tutor for your child or whatever. But if your child gets into one of those [selective] schools you don't have to bother. I'd be surprised if I went to many PTA meetings if my child was in a school like that...I would go to some things obviously, I'd support the school [but] you wouldn't have to bother. I mean they don't have any trouble recruiting anyone...So from that point of view you could just think 'oh, phew. Sit back and relax' You wouldn't have to worry (white mother, librarian, Willow)

The Black African father quoted above commented,

I feel this school is doing what it needs to do and that's about it....I feel that parents need to do extra homework. I don't just mean homework that your child brings home, but more if your child is to excel. Not just to excel but to have what is average.

As a result, 'high' parents initiated contact and conversation with school over achievement (e.g. assignment to ability sets, homework), welfare (e.g. bullying, teacher-pupil relations) *and* more general systemic issues (teaching styles and materials, pastoral care policies). Their mode of enquiry was generally *conversation*, although they also used *by-pass* (e.g. employing tutors) when they felt it necessary. They were also willing to persist. One couple at Carson requested that their son be moved into a higher stream for science, were told it was not possible and then wrote to the head of science who agreed to the request. They also managed to change their younger son's tutor group, and were in the middle of pushing for one son's access to his chosen GCSE option, which was over-subscribed.

I had written a letter about that [science] and the teacher involved actually rang me at home personally, and [son] has actually now been moved into the top group. But I don't feel he would have done if it hadn't been for us complaining.[I wrote because] we weren't getting anywhere with parents' evenings. We just seemed to be fobbed off with, 'yes we'll look into it'. Nothing was really being done about it....[Refers to current situation of son not being able to do chosen GCSE option of graphic design] That's going to be something else that we are going to have to...It's almost as if you have to keep on and on and then once you've really complained they seem to take more notice of you then. I am not a person who likes to complain but at the end of the day he needs [a graphic design qualification] for his career (white mother, student nurse, father works in family heating and plumbing business)

However, a willingness to intervene on the child's behalf sat rather uneasily alongside a deference to professional opinion. This was strongest at Carson. Parents from across the three groups there voiced concerns about other parents 'interfering' too much – especially as either parent governors or forum members - with what should be the professional domain.

I have dealt with governing bodies at work and I have steered clear of them because I tend to feel they draw in, in certain cases, the wrong type of people who have got their own agenda they are trying to push through, and it perhaps isn't the right agenda for the school
(white father, both mother and father are local government officers, Carson)

In the main, 'high' parents insisted on their own knowledge over professionals' understandings only when severe welfare issues concerning their child arose (e.g. bullying, special needs, see Vincent & Martin 2000). One mother whose child was classified as having Aspergers Syndrome talks of her struggle in getting the school to recognise and appreciate her son's difference.

I can understand why parents get that angry. Because I couldn't get them to see my point of view.....I said 'you are not listening to what I am saying, This is a problem, it's not going to go away'. '...I didn't feel like I was getting any help. It was like me and him against the world (white mother, works in supermarket, father clerk of works at council, Carson⁵)

Her words were echoed by two parents at Willow whose daughter, classified as having dyspraxia, was being bullied.

⁵ This mother had had limited contact with the school when her elder daughter was a pupil there. She had become a high intervener through trying to ensure that her son's needs, as she saw them, were catered for by the school

Mother: You get this very defensive reaction, They don't like, it's almost saying, we don't like you being this articulate and having the knowledge' because they don't have the upper hand.

Father: Teachers by their nature are a bit kind of authoritarian because they're in a class of getting 30 people to do what they want, and if parents don't do what they want then they get a bit naffed off by that you know, and I think, they don't like people who actually say 'it's not quite like that, it's like this', you know

M: I've absolutely no idea what I could do to change my approach and reaction, I don't know, I've got no ideas left. What can I do? I don't know (white parents, mother TV producer, father surveyor, Willow School)

The Carson parents' forum members

The remaining five families in this cohort are considered separately because their interaction with the school is largely circumscribed by their involvement in the parents' forum. Whilst very active in the forum and in fundraising activities, they maintained a distance between themselves and the details of the schooling process. This distance is inscribed in the interview transcripts. These parents talked at length about fundraising and the forum meetings. However, when asked about their relationship with the school in terms of their own children, their accounts were more general and less detailed than those proffered by the Willow parents and other 'high' Carson parents. They chose to stay within particular boundaries. They liked to feel they could 'have a say', but for the most part they confined their interventions to non-academic issues (although, at forum meetings, these issues – lockers, school dinners, sex education – were discussed with considerable energy, see Vincent & Martin 2000). We suggest that this orientation is strongly class related, or, to be more accurate, related to the particular class fraction to which this group of Carson forum parents belong. This is a class fraction which has experienced some success in income and occupational terms, despite a relative lack of success in educational terms. Education is valued. But their own educational

experiences have not, for the most part, bequeathed them with the sense of commonality that exists for the professional, middle class Willow parents between their assumptions, priorities, knowledge-base and those of the school.

Intermediate

This cohort of 22 families spanned the middle ground of our continuum, some nearer one end signifying high levels of intervention, others nearer the 'low' grouping. The cohort was mixed in terms of level of qualifications and ethnicity (appendix 2). Similarly, occupations varied from professional and managerial posts to more routinised clerical or manual work. This diversity relates to variations in material, social and cultural capital amongst the cohort. In comparison to the high cohort there were fewer education 'insiders', and this group generally had less knowledge about educational issues.

The recurrent theme in these accounts was that parents felt failed by their own schooling (8 were or had been mature students) and wanted their children to do better than they did. This cohort contained many parents who had been involved at primary school, but unlike the 'high' cohort, their level of involvement was not sustained into secondary school. They were very orientated to achievement and all attended parent-teacher consultations. This cohort, like the high parents, was engaged in *lay surveillance* of children's progress, monitoring homework for instance. Some did this only intermittently, whilst one or two others went beyond this playing a role of complementary educator. They emphasised to their children the importance of education as 'a key to your whole life' , a major priority' (Carson mothers).

However these parents did not generally include attendance at meetings - which held little appeal for them - as a part of their monitoring strategies. Several had some experience of attending at least one meeting (parents forum meetings or in one case an Annual Parents' Meeting). There was a sense amongst this cohort of the '*limits of conversation*', that is, little belief that their intervention would produce change. They spoke of it being 'naïve' (Willow mother) to imagine that as parents they could change

the way things are run in schools, of 'decisions being made by the same three people' (Carson mother) and of teachers 'sticking together like doctors' (Carson mother).

There are about three people on the governing body who actually make any decisions and the rest whatever they feel their role is and whatever they are told their role is, their role is simply to nod in agreement and ...to get things pushed through. The decisions are made by the people who are always going to make decisions, by the representatives from the authority and from the management of the school. And I feel that anyone else is wasting their time. They just make them feel important and feel they are having a say, and I can't see that system changing. (white mother, former teacher, now at home, father MD of furnace company, Carson school)

One Willow father protested at 'talk for talk's sake'. Discussing why such a small number of people attend the parents' forum at Willow, another 'intermediate' mother who had been to one meeting herself to petition for a reinstatement of school uniform, said,

They were good though with the meeting, they, as I said, they gave you that forum to actually speak about things and explain it, but I don't know if it's just a load of talk and then nothing's acted upon....If a lot of people think that they're going to be talked at as oppose to being involved in a conversation, they really will just not bother to give it the time of day (African/Caribbean mother, local government officer, single parent, Willow)

In addition to this several people identified the secondary schools (especially Willow which offered fewer opportunities for contact between parents and teachers than Carson) as much less accessible than their children's primary school. Connected to this uncertainty about interacting with the school, several mothers suggested that they and others disliked speaking up publicly at meetings .

By limiting their contact with the schools, and having in the most part jobs which were non education-related, they had less information available to them than the high cohort. Therefore, they effectively invested more trust in the schools, leading us to suggest the term balanced or **'partial trust'** to explain their position. Some intermediate parents tended towards the approach taken by the high cohort, and attempted to act as **'risk managers'**, but without the same degree of contact with the school. Others, especially at Willow, could be better described as **'risk balancing'**. They took certain steps in their home sphere to ensure any problems with their children's school-life were addressed, and would attend parents' evenings. However, education was not the focus it was for other 'intermediate' and 'high' parents.

A number of parents (6 out of 10) in the Willow 'intermediate' group were involved in other associational activities encompassing involvement in the church, and other voluntary and leisure activities. They derived a level of personal satisfaction from these, similar to that which we suggested elsewhere is experienced by the regular attendees at the two parents forums (Vincent & Martin 2000). As one mother said, voluntary activities have to be perceived as beneficial and satisfying if commitment is to be sustained,

I just think there's no such thing as 'I want to do good' 'I want to give', you know, there has to be a reciprocal process going on for it to work, they [volunteers in general] have to be getting something out of it as well as putting something into it, (white mother, MD of charity, single parent, Willow,)

The 'happenings' raised by the intermediate parents included welfare and achievement issues. It was on welfare issues that parents were readier to initiate forthright conversations with school. It was in this group that we found the few instances of 'storming', overwhelmingly incidents to do with their children's welfare and discipline.

I was at work one day and this phone call came and it was (the year head) to say there had been an incident at school about fighting. And it went on and this word comes zooming down the phone to me 'exclusion'. I merely used the word

back to her, 'solicitor'. And they said it hasn't reached the exclusion stage. And I said 'don't do anything else, I will come in and do you want me to bring my solicitor with me?' I thought if they are going to use threatening words like exclusion, I will use threatening words back. And I went to see the head. They got me to see her straight away. (white father, self employed gas engineer, mother clerical work, Carson)

We'd written [the class tutor] a letter, and I didn't approach him, 'cos I thought he was rather spineless, I approached the head of year, and she got back to me promptly, I must say, she did her job. I was quite pleased about that...I rang her at 9 o'clock in the morning, something like that...and said by 5 to 3 I want to be hearing from you today, before I leave [work], and she rang me at 5 to 3 on the dot. I said to her this is the situation, I'm extremely upset, I'm very angry and I don't want to have to come down there and deal with someone and their parents, so please do deal with the problem now, because this girl was stopping my daughter from going to school.....And she dealt with it, but the girl just kept on and then in the end we approached the girl and her parents as a family, the girl laid off... so that was that. (African/Caribbean mother, nurse, father bank teller, Willow)

Discipline, and the child's happiness are areas which engage the parent's primary role as carer, and therefore parents may be less restrained from commenting by deference to professional expertise. There is however a continuing deference amongst this cohort to professional authority, especially where academic and organisational/managerial issues are concerned. As noted above, there was considerable support from a majority of high and intermediate parents at Carson for professional autonomy.

[The school has] someone who says 'do it my way, be it right or wrong'. And you need that in management. How many has the [headteacher] got? 60 teachers and 1,000 kids. You can't have someone say 'well, let's have a

meeting about it'. People want the answer, be it right or wrong. I think if you've got a weak headmaster or headmistress, and you've got a strong governing body, I would think it is like hell....It's all down to the captain of the ship (white father, self employed gas engineer, Carson)

I think the parents take over too much personally....Well, the teachers teach and it's their job to teach in the school, and then you get parents going around, they could be anybody, and they try to have too much input sometimes on the PTA...There seems to be some people who want to run the show (white father, engineer, mother shop-work, Carson)

Intermediate parents were ready to mention concerns at parents' evenings but with less of the certainty and forthrightness that characterises their interaction on welfare issues. One mother at Willow for instance felt 'pushy' for writing about her daughter's difficulties in maths, although she was quite confident to intervene in other welfare issues. Another mother regretted the tone of a letter she had written to her daughter's history teacher.

I wrote the sort of letter I might write at work when I was irritated about something, so it was, I can't even remember what I did say, but a couple of times I could have used more chatty phrases, rather than 'I need some clarity on this'...In the tone of her response, I have the impression I perhaps touched a nerve, or whatever. She responded in the same tone.....my background is in nursing and my training is in counselling, psychotherapy, so it's a bit picking up cues or aiming to, so in reading the letter I thought, oh I could have dealt with this a bit differently, possibly.....The letter seemed to me to be a bit defensive, and I think I had in some ways, made that happen by the tone of my letter. The tone of my letter, it wasn't particularly accusational, [but] it wasn't warm at all, and I know better than that really (white mother, social services manager, father director of voluntary organisation, Willow)

When it comes to interventions with school, unless a crisis issue presented itself, these parents, like the high parents, considered their strategies carefully. They monitored, questioned, but rarely challenged in any sustained fashion.

The low cohort

This cohort contained 27 families. This typology clearly shows up the ethnic divide between cohorts at multi-ethnic Willow. There are 15 families in the Willow 'low' group, 12 out of 15 are from minority ethnic groups (appendix 2). Only one was formally educated past 16, and post-16 training was limited. Whilst material capital in this group was varied, cultural capital in relation to education was limited. There was relatively little knowledge of the education system and many parents were educated abroad. The Carson 'low' group was more varied in occupational terms and knowledge of the system, but again personal experience of post-16 education was limited. These transcripts revealed discernible reluctance about participating in school meetings. There was a shared feeling it was not for 'people like us'.

I've never been one of those mothers that gets involved in committees. I really can't speak for Willow, because I don't know, but with [the primary school]..I did try to get involved. They wanted a class rep so I thought oh well, I'll do that, I can do that. They'd all been on this committee for years all these women and there was no-one to help, they expected you to know, you're supposed to know what to do, and there was no-body to go to and say, sorry but I've never done this before, what do I actually do?...I must admit it's a lot of, there seems to be a lot of middle and upper classes with big houses and nothing to do in the daytime, so they must be seen to be involved (white mother, administrator, private sector company, father manager of wholesale business, Willow)

Some 'low' parents, echoing the reasons for non-participation given by the 'intermediates', did not see forum meetings as useful, as one father said,

participants did not talk about 'real' things and lacked decision-making power. Also for many of this group, there were language barriers. Some of this cohort, were disillusioned and disappointed with the schools concerning lack of communication, lack of teacher knowledge of pupils, confounded expectations of achievement, and inadequate provision.

She's coming to an age when it is important, she's going up the ladder and we really want to know, and we don't know the system, we can't help. We would have liked the school to help us with a meeting or a letter of explanation about all this [SATs and GCSEs] , but there was nothing whatsoever (translated response, Turkish speaking mother, both parents self-employed hairdressers, Willow)

Last month they sent me a report saying that my daughter was late for school. I wasn't happy because I didn't know. What worried me was why it was left to go without my knowing. Sixteen times she came late for school. I wasn't happy that they should let it go sixteen times without me knowing. So I actually wanted to make a complaint about that, but from the letter written to me, I didn't know who to talk to...Previously when they write, they say 'Year 7', 'Year 8 head of year'. They didn't say anything this time, other than she had been absent or late to school sixteen times. So I couldn't talk back to them (Black African father, both parents unemployed, Willow)

One mother at Carson said,

I have been through every consultation evening for [older son], and I bet there is only one teacher who could put a name to me. I don't feel it's a close relationship...I don't particularly feel there is much interest in each individual child, probably because the school is too big. And that's having a son who did well in his GCSEs. He passed every one – 10 and a half grades A-C, and I don't think the teachers could name me.

In relation to her younger son who was told, despite his very high marks in French, to do German at GCSE because the French group was oversubscribed, she commented,

That instance I gave with the French and German, I didn't feel...It was just a case of that's it and you can lump it. And I don't know what more you can do in situations like that (White mother, widow, at home, Carson⁶).

Yet the reactions of this cohort were typically characterised by silence or restrained responses which did not communicate any of the anger which was sometimes felt towards the school. Given their lack of active contact with the school, their difficulties in some cases with monitoring their children's progress (due to lack of communication, different systems, different language), all the low group in effect relied on the school to educate their children. There were some instances of by-pass (e.g. employing tutors by the more economically secure) but little suggestion of the close monitoring and surveillance in which the high and some of the intermediate parents engaged. Neither is the familiarity the high group had with the school, its procedures and its organisation mirrored in this group. They are '*risk-allowing*'. This 'low' group can be divided into two: ***trust given*** and ***trust-forced***.

Those in the trust-forced group, mostly Willow parents, were the more anxious and frustrated about their children's progress. There was a strong desire for more information and communication. They found the school difficult to access. Their aspirations were layered with what Giddens (1984) would call 'deep ontological insecurity', in some cases stemming from the dislocation caused by migration. The trust-given group were generally happier about the school, but saw home and school as separate spheres. They felt no need to interact with the school unless problems arose, as the following quotations illustrate.

⁶ Despite this mother having been a widow since her children were babies, she got letters from the school addressed to 'Mr and Mrs'.

It [the school] is good, very good, we have no complaints, because when my daughter comes, I ask her what she did, what she didn't and she said it is very good, and she is happy with the teachers. So we have no complaints...She gets her homework and she finishes her homework and she gets merits and she is happy, and if she is happy then we are happy (Indian father, unemployed, mother at home, Willow)

I've never really felt that I needed to be involved. I send the kids to school to be educated and I do my bit here and I expect the school to do their bit, and while it's all going perfectly well,,,there's really no need for me to be up there every 5 minutes, there really isn't (white mother, administrator private sector company, father, manager of wholesale business, Willow)

Int: Would you like any more information on how they're progressing? Do you think that's enough?

Mother: Yes, I do, because the teachers have got enough to do really. And I know they have a lot of homework so the teachers must have a lot to mark.
(white mother, at home, father transport mechanic, Carson)

I think it is the feedback off [son] [that makes me think the school is welcoming]. He has told me, he has no problem with any of his teachers, he gets on well. If he has got a problem, he can go and talk to them. I think that is just where I have got it from, I think well, if I was worried about anything, I would be able to go and see any one of them and it wouldn't fall on deaf ears (White mother, works in warehouse, father glazier, Carson)

By contrast those parent who were classified as trust-forced were far less satisfied, but did not know how to remedy this situation.

They don't get a lot [of information] about their own child, they're saying that at the end of the year they do get a report, but they want more. They want to know about their child's special abilities or skills you know, when she finishes school, what can she do?..All they get is, yes, she's OK...[The daughter] can't read that well...She [the mother] is saying, she has spoken to the teachers about this, and their response was, well compared to the other girls she's quite good, but they don't feel she is. The mother is saying because we can't speak the language that well, we can't go that far. It's a lot more difficult to use a child [as an interpreter] to say well, you know my parents think I can't read and write well.....[The parents are asking] so it's really up to the parents. If that doesn't happen, if the parent doesn't go up to the school and say I want to do more, then school doesn't do anything about it? (Turkish speaking parents, translated response, father is a shop owner, mother at home, Willow).

'Happenings' involved welfare issues or (less so) events focusing on academic progress. However, our mapping of parents' reactions to their concerns starkly revealed the increasing frequency of silence amongst the low cohort when compared with others. This was especially so in response to academic issues.

Conclusions

Within public policy and professional practice there have been deep domain assumptions which understand 'the parent' to be responsible for apathy, inertia and the resulting non-participation in their children's schooling. Yet our study is one of a growing number (Crozier 2000, Reay 1998, Vincent 1996, 2000, Lareau 1989) which suggest that the vast majority of parents are orientated to their children's academic progress, (and that much of the work this involves is conducted by mothers, Vincent & Martin 2000, Reay 1998). This support does not always translate into an active relationship with the school. That development is a strongly class-related process. We have demonstrated that access to and deployment of social, cultural and material resources shapes parental voice in school.

The research findings question the extent to which many of the parent-respondents can engage in 'reflexive encounters with expert systems' (Giddens 1991 p.143) and suggests that such expert systems are robust in the authority they are able to impose on lay publics. Different reactions may be hidden under the guise of parental silence. As Giddens also states, 'attitudes of trust, as well as more pragmatic acceptance, scepticism, rejection and withdrawal uneasily co-exist in the social space linking individual activities and expert systems' (1991 p.7). This describes the range of differential parental responses to school that we uncovered during this project. Parents' own education, their access to relevant cultural capital, their material circumstances, all these factors operate to set boundaries on who develops an active and effective 'voice' within the school, and who is silent and defers to professional control, regardless of the degree of scepticism and mistrust with which they might do so.

We uncovered considerable cynicism, especially from 'intermediate' and 'low' parents about the activities of the parents' forums, a feeling that such groups could engineer little change, and that, therefore attending meetings was not a rational investment of time and effort. Indeed the parents' forums were fragile collectivities, beset by the limited agenda the school allowed it to pursue (especially in the case of Carson), and the motivations of parents which often appeared to revolve around individual concerns (especially in the case of Willow, but see Vincent & Martin 2000). We also, although it is not described in detail here, uncovered considerable 'quietening' of parents' voices by the school. Unwieldy and unresponsive school systems, and allowing parents only to voice opinions in a limited range of areas contributed to the deflection of parental energy and voice. Many of the sample, whatever their concerns or the amount of social and cultural resources they had to deploy found both schools to be fairly impermeable institutions.

Thus we conclude by stressing both the similarities and the differences in parents' experience of voice. The social spaces parents occupy, their habitus, their resources of capital all made a significant difference as to how often, how easily and over what range

of issues they approached the school. For those parents - mainly routine white collar workers, skilled and unskilled manual workers and the unemployed – who maintained low levels of intervention with regard to the school, their habitus, their ‘social inheritance’ (see above) led them to avoid ‘interference’ with the schools, despite the reservations and concerns some held. School was seen as a separate sphere with its own language and procedures which were distant and not easily available for parents to access. By contrast, the largely professional parent group who maintained a high level of intervention with the schools operated from within an entirely different disposition towards education. Their habitus in relation to education, their sense of what ‘people like us do’ emphasised home school interaction and communication and a parental responsibility to monitor children’s achievement and the school provision, as well as demonstrating, in times of good relations at least, overt support for the schools. These differences have profound implications for the families concerned.

However, there are also similarities across the parental sample, demonstrated by the finding that within the sample group – which includes public sector professionals, private sector (mostly) middle management, routine white collar workers, skilled and unskilled manual workers and the unemployed – there were relatively few trenchant, resolute voices. We suggest, tentatively, that the explanation for this lies in the positioning of the particular class fractions represented here. They are characterised by their support for the two schools, their professional sympathy (especially amongst the public sector professionals) and a continuing deference to professional expertise (for accounts of mobilisation by other more vocal social groups, see Reay 1998, Birenbaum Carmelli 1999, Ball & Vincent 2001). Parents would engage in an individual campaign to have their child moved to another set or class (particularly at Carson) or to stop bullying (both schools), But there were no major instances of collectives of parents successfully causing the school to implement major changes in procedures and organisation (although some attempts were made to affect change with regard to the mixed ability policy and the style of maths teaching at Willow, and uniform at Carson). Thus we conclude that parental voice in the schools we studied was most often individual,

cautious and insecure, evidently lacking in a sense of entitlement to speak in the public arena of the school.

References

- BALL, S. & VINCENT, C. (2001) New class relations in education: the strategies of the 'fearful' middle classes, in J. DEMAINE (ed.) *Education Sociology Today* (London, Palgrave)
- BECK, U. (1992) *Risk Society: Towards a New Modernity* (London, Sage)
- BECK, U., GIDDENS, A. & LASH, S. (1994) *Reflexive Modernization* (Cambridge, Polity)
- BIRENBAUM-CARMELI, D. (1999). Parents who get what they want: on the empowerment of the powerful, *Sociological Review*, 47(1) pp. 62-90.
- BOURDIEU, P. (1998) *Practical Reason*, (Cambridge, Polity)
- CROZIER, G. (1998) Parents and schools: partnership or surveillance? *Journal of Education Policy*, 13, (1) pp.125-136.
- CROZIER, G. (2000) *Parents and Schools* (Stoke, Trentham Press)
- DAVID, M. WEST, A. AND RIBBINS, J (1994) *Mothers' Intuition? Choosing Secondary Schools*, (London, Falmer).
- GEWIRTZ, S., BALL, S. & BOWE, R. (1995) *Markets, Choice and Equity* (Buckingham, Open University Press)
- GIDDENS, A. (1991) *Modernity and Self Identity: Self and Society in the Late Modern Age*. (Cambridge, Polity Press)
- GILLBORN, D. & YOUDELL, D. (2000) *Rationing Education* (Buckingham, Open University Press)
- GRENFELL, M. ET AL (1998) *Bourdieu and Education* (London, Falmer Press)
- HABERMAS, J. (1984) *The Theory of Communicative Action. Volume 1, Reason and Rationalisation of Society*, (London, Heinemann)
- HIRSCHMAN, A. (1970) *Exit, Voice and Loyalty*. (Cambridge, MA, Harvard University Press).
- LAREAU, A. (1989) *Home Advantage* (London, Falmer Press)
- MARTIN, J. & VINCENT, C. (1999) Parental voice: an exploration, *International Studies in the Sociology of Education*, 9, (2), pp.133-154.

- MASSEY, D. (1995) Reflections on gender and geography, in T. Butler & M. Savage (eds.) *Social Change and the middle classes* (London, UCL Press)
- REAY, D. (1998) *Class Work* (London, University College Press)
- ROBSON, G. & BUTLER, T. (1999) Plotting the middle classes in London. Paper posted at [www. uel. ac.uk/sociology](http://www.uel.ac.uk/sociology)
- ROSE, D. AND O'REILLY, K (1998) *The ESRC Review of Government Social Classifications*, (London, ESRC/Office for National Statistics)
- SAVAGE, M., BARLOW, J., DICKENS, P., AND FIELDING, T. (1992) *Property, Bureaucracy and Culture* (London, Routledge)
- VINCENT, C. & MARTIN, J. (2000) School-based parents' groups – a politics of voice and representation? *Journal of Education Policy* 15 (5) pp.459-480.
- VINCENT, C. (2001) Social class and parental agency *Journal of Education Policy*. 16 (4) pp.347-364.
- VINCENT, C. (1996) *Parents and Teachers: Power and Partnership* (London, Falmer Press).
- VINCENT, C. (2000) *Including Parents? Education, Citizenship and Parental Agency* (Buckingham, Open University Press)
- WYNNE, D. (1998) *Leisure, lifestyle and the new middle class* (London, Routledge)
- YEATMAN, A. (1994) *Postmodern Revisionings of the Political* (London, Routledge)

Appendix 1 – Framework for analysis for parent voice – Phase 2: Willow and Carson Schools

<u>Parents</u>	<u>Social Positions:</u> Ethnicity, gender, class (occupation, educational qualifications, housing tenure)	<u>Habitus</u> Dispositions	<u>Capital</u> Material, social and cultural	<u>Happenings</u> Instances of contact with school, or subjects of parental concerns	<u>Agency</u> Parental responses to happenings *	<u>Institutional responses</u> School responses to parental voice **
High cohort						
Intermediate cohort						
Low cohort						

* We further sub-divided parental *agency* as follows:

- silence (inaction, ‘waiting and seeing’)
- conversation (debate, dialogue, engaging with the system)
- storming (direct protest, anger)
- by-pass (making own arrangements which by-pass the school eg employing tutors)
- exit (moving the child from the school)

** We further sub-divided *institutional responses* as follows:

- silence (not responding to parent)
- acknowledging (responding but doing nothing)
- activity (doing something in response)
- change (implementing change that affects status quo)
- blocking (response which resists parental assertion)

Appendix 2: High, intermediate and low cohorts – the socio-economic breakdown

NB: based on a sample group of 76 families, 61 from phase 2 and 15 from phase 1.

Occupation

NB We classified the respondents’ occupations using the Rose and O’Reilly (1998) socio-economic classification in its full version which has 14 categories. For ease of reference we present a summary here, using the five class scale the review also proposes. Where we interviewed a couple with both parents working, we classified them by whichever occupation had the highest rating. Where we interviewed individual respondents, their own occupation and not that of their partner is used.

Cohorts	Class 1 Managerial and professional	Class 2 Intermediate	Class 3 Small employers and own account workers	Class 4 Supervisors/ craft related	Class 5 Working class (including never worked/long term unemployed)	Totals
High	16	5	2	2	2	27
Intermediate	11	5	3	0	3	22
Low	4	5	2	4	12	27
Totals	31	15	7	6	17	76

Education

Cohorts	Up to 16	Post-16	Degree	Unknown	Totals
High	7	4	7	9*	27
Intermediate	6	7	9	0	22
Low	17	9	1	0	27
Totals	30	20	17	9	76

* The high number of unknowns here is due to the presence in this group of phase 1 forum parents. We did not collect the detailed socio-economic information in phase 1 that we did in phase 2 (although much of it emerged during interview).

Ethnicity

Cohorts	White	African /	South Asian	White other	Totals
----------------	--------------	------------------	--------------------	--------------------	---------------

		Caribbean			
High	24	3	0	0	27
Intermediate	16	4	2	0	22
Low	15	4	5	3	27
Totals	55	11	7	3	76

Housing

Cohorts	Owner occupier	Housing association / council rent	Private rent	Unknown	Totals
High	24	2	0	1	27
Intermediate	19	3	0	0	22
Low	13	9	4	1	27
Totals	56	14	4	2	76